Iraqi Force Development: A Current Status Report

July 2005-February 2006

Anthony Cordesman
Arleigh A. Burke Chair in Strategy
ACordesman@aol.com

With the Assistance of William D. Sullivan

Working Draft: February 15, 2006

Executive Summary

In spite of the problems facing Iraqi forces, they have made major progress. Changes in the US-led Coalition advisory effort have led to steadily higher selection and training standards and better equipment and facilities. Embedding US training teams in each new Iraqi unit, and pairing them with US combat units until they could operate on their own, has made a major qualitative difference in the field. More and more Iraqi units have come on-line.

The end result is that the Coalition now sees three pillars for the successful ISF development. The first is proper training and equipping of the ISF. The second is the assignment of transition teams; third is the partnership with coalition forces. The corresponding development of fully effective Ministries of Defense and Interior may well be becoming a fourth.

As of late January 2006, Iraqi forces already totaled some 227,300 personnel. These included 106,900 in the armed forces under the Ministry of Defense: 105,600 army, some 500 air force, and some 800 navy. They included 120,400 in the police and security forces under the Ministry of Interior: 82,400 police and highway patrol, and 38,000 other MOI forces.

A total of more than 130 army and special police battalions, with some 500-800 men each, were fighting in the insurgency. This was seven more battalions than in late October. The army alone had built up to 102 battalions, approaching a current goal of 110 combat battalions. The number of Iraqi brigades (with a nominal three battalions each) had grown from nearly zero in early 2005 to 31. There were eight divisions in formation and Iraq was headed towards a total of 10.

By early December, a total of 50 battalions were at Level 1-3 readiness and active in dealing with the insurgency. In March 2005, there were only three battalions manning their own areas — all in Baghdad. A total of 24 battalions were in charge of their own battle space in October and 33 in late December. In January 2006, the US army transferred an area of operation to an entire Iraqi army division for the first time in Qadissiya and Wassit provinces, an active combat area south of Baghdad. In early February 2006, 40 of the army's 102 battalions had taken over security in the areas where they operated, and in contested areas, such as parts of Fallujah, Ramadi and Samarra.[1]

This progress occurred in spite of the fact that the Sunni Arab insurgents focused their attacks on fellow Iraqis and hit hard at every element of Iraqi forces. The insurgents also struck at virtually every other element of Iraqi society, and attacked Shi'ite Arab and Kurdish political leaders, religious figures and journalists, other members of the Iraqi elite, and ordinary citizens -- often in the form of suicide bombings that created mass casualties. The most extreme Sunni Islamists clearly had the goal of paralyzing the Iraqi political process, and such extremist groups attacked Shi'ite and Kurds in a way that seemed designed to provoke a major civil conflict.

Such progress, however, is not yet sufficient to guarantee either any meaningful force of Iraqi victory, or the ability of the US to make major troop withdrawals and still claim success. The following remaining problems in shaping effective Iraqi forces must still be addressed:

  ○   Ensuring that they will act as national forces, and not Shi'ite and Kurdish forces,

  ○   Giving Iraqi combat battalions better balance and support,

○   Giving the security and police forces the same level of training and advisory support as the regular Iraqi forces,

○   Matching force development with political development and inclusiveness, and

○   Supporting Iraqi forces with effective governance by civil authorities.

Regular Iraqi military forces still lack balance. They are still lightly equipped, and an initial emphasis on putting as many combat units into the field as possible, means they lack adequate headquarters, support, and logistic units. As a result, major further improvements are still needed in the regular forces that will take well into 2007, and require sustained US advisory efforts, aid, and military support – both as operators and as trainers/advisors for at least several years after 2007.

As for the political dimension, most top Iraqi officials, and senior Iraqi Arab Shi'ite and Kurdish political leaders, continue to stress the importance of developing Iraqi forces that maintain a rule of law, and respect for human rights in spite of the insurgent attacks.   They stress the need to fight corruption, and change the past culture of Iraq's military and police forces to stress professionalism and promotion by merit.

Nevertheless, the Ministry of the Interior failed to act effectively to implement such goals and allowed some elements of its special security units to act as a virtual extension of Shi'ite efforts to attack the Sunnis. While he has since taken some corrective steps, major new efforts have had to be undertaken to reform the forces of the Ministry of the Interior and both the special security services and police. Such efforts are only beginning to have an impact, although the Ministry of Interior has fired the commanders responsible for the worst abuses.

More broadly, the police still cannot act as an effective force in many areas of the country, and have many elements that lacked both competence and loyalty to the central government. These problems were compounded in Sunni areas by the difficulty of finding forces loyal to the national government. They were compounded in Shi'ite areas by loyalty to Shi'ite religious parties and intimidation by -- or partnership with -- Shi'ite militias. Many of the police were also local, and lacked the training and discipline of the police units trained and equipped by the Coalition and central government.

Both Iraqi forces and civil government are still far too slow to occupy the areas where the insurgents were defeated by the military and security forces. This lack of governance and the ability to establish security without military forces remained a major problem in many parts of the country, but made it difficult to exploit Iraqi and Coalition military victories in areas favorable to the Sunni insurgents.

The Course of the Insurgency

The war in Iraq also remains all too real. MNF-I intelligence estimates that the number of insurgent attacks on coalition forces, Iraqi forces, and Iraqi civilians; and acts of sabotage; rose by 29% in 2005. The total rose from 26,496 in 2004 to 34,131 in 2005.[2] These attacks have had a relatively consistent average success rate of 24% (attacks that cause damage or casualties.)[3]

At the same time, there has been a shift to attacks on Iraqis, rather than Coalition troops. A total of 673 US troops were killed in 2005, versus 714 in 2004, and the number of wounded dropped from 7,990 to 5,639, a drop of 29%.[4] US forces saw fewer casualties largely because more Iraqi forces were in the field and there were no major urban battles like the battle of Fallujah, and also

because the insurgents shifted to Iraqi targets that were more vulnerable and had far more political impact at a point where it have become clear that the US and its coalition partners wanted to withdraw many of their forces.

These trends scarcely mean the insurgency is "winning." It is not able to increase its success rate, establish sanctuaries, win larger-scale military clashes, or dominate the field. It is active largely in only four of Iraq's 18 governorates. (Some 59% of all US military deaths have occurred in only two governorates: Al Anbar and Baghdad.)[5] Much of its activity consists of bombings of soft civilian targets designed largely to provoke a more intense civil war or halt the development of an effective Iraqi government, rather than progress towards control at even the local level. So far, the insurgency has done little to show it can successfully attack combat-ready Iraqi units, as distinguished from attack vulnerable casernes, recruiting areas, trainees or other relatively easy targets.

At the same time, the insurgents are learning and adapting through experience. They have shown the ability to increase the number of attacks over time, and they have hit successfully at many important political and economic targets. Provoking civil war and undermining the Iraqi political process may not bring the insurgents victory, but it can deny it to the Iraqi government and the US, and the Sunni insurgents continue to strike successfully at politically, religiously, and ethnically important Shi'ite and Kurdish targets with suicide and other large bombings.

The insurgents continue to carry out a large number of successful killings, assassinations, kidnappings, extortions, and expulsions. These include an increase in the number of successful attacks on Iraqi officials, Iraqi forces, and their families, and well over 2,700 Iraqi officials and Iraqi forces were killed in 2005. The Department of Defense estimated that 2,603 members of the Iraqi forces had been killed in action by October 2005, far more than the 1,506 members of US forces that had been killed in action up to that date.[6] The insurgents continue to succeed in intimidating their fellow Sunnis. There is no way to count or fully assess the pattern of such low level attacks, or separate them from crime or Shi'ite reprisals, but no one doubts that they remain a major problem.

Suicide attacks have increased, and killed and wounded Iraqis in large numbers. The number of car bombs rose from 420 in 2004 to 873 in 2005, and the number of suicide car bombs rose from 133 to 411, and the number of suicide vest attacks rose from 7 in 2004 to 67 in 2005.[7] In case after case, Shi'ite civilians and Sunnis cooperating with the government were successfully targeted in ways designed to create a serious civil war.

The use of roadside bombs (improvised explosive devices IEDs) remains a major problem for US and other Coalition forces. The total number of IED attacks nearly doubled from 5,607 in 2004 to 10,953 in 2005. While the success rate of IED attacks dropped significantly, from 25-30% in 2004 to 10% in 2005, they still had a major impact. During 2005, there were 415 IED deaths out of a total of 674 combat deaths, or 61.6 % of all combat deaths. IEDs accounted for 4,256 wounded out of a total of 5,941, some 71.6% of the wounded. From July 2005 to January 2006, IEDs killed 234 US service members out of a total of 369 total combat deaths, or 63.4%. They accounted for 2314 wounded out of 2980 total combat wounded, or 77.7 %.

To put these numbers in perspective, IEDs caused 900 deaths out of a total of 1,748 combat deaths, or 51.5 % during the entire post-Saddam fall from March 2003 and January 2006. IEDs caused 9,327 wounded out of a total of 16,606 or 56.2%.[8] However, the numbers of personnel killed and wounded by IEDs are scarcely the only measure of insurgent success. Casualties may

have dropped but the number of attacks has gone up. IED attacks tie down manpower and equipment, disrupt operations, disrupt economic and aid activity, and interact with attacks on Iraqi civilians and forces to limit political progress and help try to provoke civil war.

Insurgents carried out more than 300 attacks on Iraqi oil facilities between March 2003 and January 2006. An estimate by Robert Mullen indicates that there were close to 500 and perhaps as many as 600-700. His breakdown of the number of attacks was: pipelines, 398; refineries, 36; oil wells, 18; tanker trucks, 30; oil train, 1; storage tanks 4; and 1 tank farm.

The end result was that oil production dropped by 8% in 2005, and pipeline shipments through the Iraqi northern pipeline to Ceyan in Turkey dropped from 800,000 barrels per day before the war to an average of 40,000 barrels per day in 2005. In July 2005, Iraqi officials estimated that insurgent attacks had already cost Iraq some $11 billion. They had kept Iraqi oil production from approaching the 3 million barrel a day goal in 2005 goal that the Coalition had set after the fall of Saddam Hussein, and production had dropped from per war levels of around 2.5 million barrels a day to an average of 1.83 million barrels a day in 2005, and level of only 1.57 million barrels a day in December 2005.[9] These successes have major impact in a country where 94% of the government's direct income now comes from oil exports.

The impact of such attacks has been compounded the ability of insurgents to steal oil and fuel. The New York Times has quoted Ali Allawi, Iraq's finance minister, as estimating that insurgents were taking some 40 percent to 50 percent of all oil-smuggling profits in the country, and had infiltrated senior management positions at the major northern refinery in Baji: "It's gone beyond Nigeria levels now where it really threatens national security…The insurgents are involved at all levels." The Times also quoted an unidentified US official as saying that, "It's clear that corruption funds the insurgency, so there you have a very real threat to the new state…Corruption really has the potential of undercutting the growth potential here." The former oil minister, Ibrahim Bahr al-Ulum, had said earlier in 2005 that, "oil and fuel smuggling networks have grown into a dangerous mafia threatening the lives of those in charge of fighting corruption." [10]

In short, there are cycles in an evolving struggle, but not signs that the struggle is being lost or won. For example, the number of attacks peaked to some 700 per week in October 2005, before the October 15th referendum on the constitution to 430 per week in mid-January, but this was more a function of insurgent efforts to peak operations in sensitive periods than any outcome of the fighting. Similarly, the number of US killed has averaged some 65 per month since March 2003. The total of US killed was 96 in October 2005, 84 in November 68 in December, and 63 in January 2006.[11] This reflected shifts in the cycles of attacks and in their targets. US experts estimated that some 500 Iraqis were killed between the December 15, 2005 elections and mid-January 2006, an "average" period in US casualties.[12]

There have, as yet, been no decisive trends or no tipping points: simply surges and declines. This, however, does not mean the counterinsurgency campaign cannot be won. Much of the reason the insurgency continues is that Iraqi forces are not yet deployed in the strength to replace Coalition troops and demonstrate the legitimacy of the Iraqi government in the field.

The Impact of the December 15, 2005 Election

Success in developing Iraq's forces is interactive with success in creating a more stable and inclusive political system. In fact, the political dimension of force development has become

increasingly important, as Iraq has taken over primary responsibility for its own destiny. The December 15, 2005 election changed the political landscape of Iraq in ways whose impact is currently impossible to determine, but will play a critical role in determining the success or failure of the Iraqi force development effort.

The final results for the December 15, 2005 elections gave the Sunnis significant representation, in spite of complaints about fraud. The new Council of Representatives had 275 seats and the final results for the election, which were certified on February 9, 2006, gave the main parties the following number of seats: Iraq Alliance (Shi'ites) 128 seats, Kurdish coalition 53, The Iraqi List (Secular "Allawi list") 25, Iraqi Accordance Front (Sunnis) 44; Iraqi front for National Dialogue (Sunni) 11. The Shi'ite coalition won 47% of the 275 seats; the Kurdish coalition won 19%, the two main Sunni parties won 20%, and Allawi's secular nationalists (with significant Sunni support) won 9%.[13]

If the election results in an inclusive national political structure that gives Iraq's Sunnis incentives to join the government and political process, many current Iraqi Sunni insurgents are likely to end their participation in the insurgency and the more extreme elements will be defeated. The risk, of course, is that either Iraqi forces will not be successful, or that the political process will fail.

It may be the fall of 2006 before the full impact of the December 15, 2005 election in Iraq is clear. It will certainly be months before the full nature of the new political structure it has created has been negotiated and every element of the new government is in place. There is still some risk that significant numbers of Sunnis will not accept the result, or that some combination of the insurgency and tension between Sunni and Shi'ite may divide the country.

So far, the election has not unified Iraqis or defused the insurgency. The Iraqi Electoral Commission and outside observers have concluded that electoral abuses were minor, and that the elections were fair. However, there is still a serious risk that Iraq will divide or experience a more intense and overt form of civil war.

Iraqi public opinion is deeply divided along ethnic and sectarian lines, and this large of unity threatens Iraq's ability to create an inclusive and effective government. A poll of Iraqis conducted after the election in early January of 2006 found that while some 66% of all Iraqis polled thought the elections were fair, this was not a meaningful picture of how Iraqis felt in ethnic and sectarian terms. While 89% of Iraqi Arab Shi'ites thought it was fair, as did 77% of Iraqi Kurds, only 5% of the Sunnis polled agreed. Put differently, only 33% of all Iraqis, 11% of Arab Shi'ites, and 19% of Kurds thought the elections were not fair, but 94% of Arab Sunnis *did* feel they were unfair. [14]

Iraqis felt much the same about the prospects for the new government. A total of 68% of all Iraqis, 90% of Arab Shi'ites, and 81% of Kurds thought the new government would be legitimate, but only 6% of Arab Sunnis. While only 31% of all Iraqis, 10% of Arab Shi'ites, and 15% of Kurds thought the new government would *not* be legitimate, but 92% of Arab Sunnis agreed. [15]

Iraqis disagree over more than the election and the future government. When they were asked whether ousting Saddam was worth the cost and suffering caused by the war and its aftermath, 77% of all Iraqis, 98% of Arab Shi'ites, and 91% of Kurds thought the new government would be legitimate, but only 13% of Arab Sunnis. While only 22% of all Iraqis, 10% of Arab Shi'ites,

and 15% of Kurds thought the ousting Saddam was not worth it, but 83% of Arab Sunnis agreed. In a similar vein, 64% of all Iraqis, 84% of Arab Shi'ites, and 76% of Kurds thought Iraq was moving in the right direction, l, but only 6% of Arab Sunnis. A total of 93% of Iraqi Arab Sunnis thought that Iraq was moving in the wrong direction.[16]

Political stability requires effective Iraqi forces, but political instability could easily divide the new Iraqi forces, converting them into largely Shi'ite and Kurdish units, and pushing out Sunnis -- potentially as part of the insurgency. It has again exposed both the fact that Iraqi force development is totally dependent on Iraqi political success, and that successful force development must pay as much attention to internal politics and the political nature of an insurgency as to force effectiveness. It has also shown that any effort to develop effective military forces must be matched by an effort to develop effective security and police forces and ones that will not ally themselves with militias or other irregular forces that can divided the country.

These issues again are reflected in Iraqi opinion polls conducted in early 2006. The coalition forces had very uncertain popularity in Iraq – a result consistent with all previous polls from late 2003 onwards. Some 47% of all Iraqis approved attacks on US-led forces, versus 7% approved attacks on Iraqi forces and roughly 1% attacks on Iraqi civilians. Some 41% of Arab Shi'ites, 16% of Kurds, and 88% of Arab Sunnis approved of attacks on US led forces. [17]

Almost all Iraqis wanted US-led forces to leave Iraq: 35% wanted withdrawal by July 2006, and 70% wanted withdrawal in two years. Once again, however, there are striking differences. Only 22% of Arab-Shi'ites wanted the US to withdraw in six months, although 71% wanted withdrawal in two years. Some 13% of Kurds wanted the US to withdraw in six months, and only 40% wanted withdrawal in two years. In the case of Sunnis, however, 83% wanted the US out in six months and 94% in two years. [18] When the question was asked differently, Iraqis seemed somewhat less divided. A total of 29% were willing to wait and only reduce US forces when the situation improved in the field. This included 29% of Arab Shi'ites, 57% of Kurds, and 29% of Arab Sunnis. This at least in part reflected concerns about the quality of Iraqi forces.

Iraqis praised the US force development effort more than they praised any other aspect of the US assistance effort, but such praise was relative. Only 33% felt the US was doing a good job. Another 44% approved but thought the US was doing a poor job, and 23% disapproved. Again, major differences occurred by sect and ethnicity: Some 54% of Kurds felt the US was doing a good job, 42% approved but thought the US was doing a poor job, and only 9% disapproved. In the case of Arab Shi'ites, however, only 37% felt the US was doing a good job, 52% approved but thought the US was doing a poor job, and 11% disapproved. And, in the case of Arab Sunnis, only 6% felt the US was doing a good job, 20% approved but thought the US was doing a poor job, and 74% disapproved.

As a result, Iraqis had very mixed views about how soon Iraqi forces would be ready to take over the mission. The poll found that 35% of all Iraqis wanted US led forces to withdraw in six months (83% Sunnis), and 35% more in two years (11% Sunnis). However, only 39% felt Iraqi forces were ready to deal with security challenges on their own (38% Sunni). A total of 21% felt Iraqi forces would need help from outside forces for another year (21% Sunnis). A total of 26% felt Iraqi forces would need help from outside forces for two years (31% Sunnis), and a total of 12% felt Iraqi forces would need help from outside forces for three years or more (5% Sunnis).

The good news for both Iraq's political and force development is that there is far more unity about avoiding attacks on Iraqi forces and civilians. Only 7% of Iraqis approved attacks on Iraqi forces and 93% disapproved. Even among Sunnis, only 24% "approved somewhat," and 76% disapproved, of which 24% disapproved strongly. When it came to attacks on Iraqi civilians, only 7% of Iraqis approved attacks on Iraqi forces and 99% disapproved. So few Sunnis approved that the results in these categories were not meaningful, while nearly 100%% disapproved, of which 95% disapproved strongly.

The end result is that 2006 is a year that can see both successful political compromise and major further progress in developing Iraqi forces, or see the division of the country and Iraq's forces. Success can be relative. Virtually any form of compromise that most Shi'ites, Sunnis, Kurds, and other minorities can accept is good enough to be defined as "success." Any force development effort that avoids the division of the regular armed forces, ends most abuses in the Ministry of the Interior and security forces, makes the police more professional and neutral, and gradually limits the role of the militias will also be success.

It has become all too apparent that "victory" for the Coalition will be defined as the successful Iraq application of the art of compromise, and that the goal of "transforming" Iraq into some shining example to the region was always little more than a neoconservative hope. Iraq may well end in becoming a stable and unified nation, with a strong degree of pluralism, and a far stronger rule of law and protection of human rights. This future, however, is still years in the future, and it never made sense to assume that Iraq's example would impact heavily on progress in other Middle Eastern states. In the real world, progress occurs one nation at a time.

Red Teaming the Impact of the Insurgency on Iraqi Force Development

The alternative is not victory for the insurgency -- the Sunni insurgents are a divided minority within a minority, and a minority that only has serious support from only a relatively small part of Iraq's population.

It can, however, be national paralysis, civil war, or separation. There is no certain way to know the motives behind the new series suicide attacks, bombings, and killings that began in January 2006, but there are good reasons for such attacks as seen from the viewpoint of hard-line insurgents. One key insurgent objective is to block the creation of a stable coalition that includes Arab Sunnis, Arab Shi'ites, and Kurds, and any following efforts to make an inclusive coalition government successful.

Bloody attacks on Shi'ites and Kurds are a key way to do this. So is attempting to discredit the whole process of governance by exploiting political and economic vulnerabilities like the rise in fuel and gas prices in late 2005, and attacking/threatening refineries to make things worse. At least for the near term, the primary goal of hard-line insurgents is logically to disrupt coalition building and discredit the government.

This, however, is only part of the strategy hard-line Sunni Islamist insurgents will logically follow. They also need to maintain their Sunni base and attack/discredit Sunnis moving towards compromise. This did not make sense during the elections. Security was at an all time peak that US and Iraqi forces could not sustain.

Giving Arab Sunnis legislative power made sense to at least some Sunni insurgents as long as those elected used it to check Shi'ite power and limit coalition building. Zarqawi and Al Qa'ida still opposed the elections, but others were willing to wait and intimidate the Sunnis who gained

office, exploit charges of election fraud, and make it clear that it was safe to oppose coalitions and compromise within the political system, but not to oppose the insurgency.

If one "red teams" insurgent motives at the start of 2006, there were also reasons for insurgents to be more optimistic about what they might accomplish during the coming year that might counter the successes in Iraqi politics and force development:

○ The insurgents showed by early January that they still could mount large numbers of attacks. The Coalition forces stressed that the number of attacks has risen, but that successes had dropped. It was far from clear this is true if one considered the impact of the successful attacks, and such claims ignored the key point that the insurgents were still strong enough for the number of attacks to increase.

○ Some key aspects of the fracture lines between Sunni and Shi'ite were still growing. The Arab Sunni vs. Arab Shi'ite and Kurd tensions in the security forces were gradually becoming more serious, although the US and UK were making major new efforts to control and ease them. Sectarian divisions within the Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior continued to grow. The new army continued to become steadily more Shi'ite and there were still growing problems in promoting Sunni officers. The police remained divided along sectarian and ethnic lines.

○ These problems increased by putting new Iraqi units into the field, many in areas where they created sectarian friction.

○ The election was proving to be highly controversial among Sunnis, with all kinds of charges and conspiracy theories. Many who voted, voted against the constitution and as a check to the growth of Shi'ite and Kurdish power.

○ It was clear than any new Iraqi coalition that did emerge would be inherently unstable even if it did include Sunni groups that were willing to compromise. The new Iraqi government faced at least 6-8 months in which ongoing political debates had to occur over federation, control of oil resources and revenues, power of taxation, allocation of government funds, role of religion in government and law, and virtually every other "hot button" issue.

The tragedy of this strategy is that a failure by the new Iraqi government, and/or the division of the new Iraqi forces, almost certainly means that most Iraqi Sunnis will suffer more than the Shi'ites and Kurds. They will live in the area where the real fighting takes place, their economy will continue to deteriorate, and they will get little oil money and few government services. There is no charismatic Iraqi Sunni leader; radical insurgents like Zarqawi and Al Qa'ida can only disrupt the nation, not lead Iraq's Sunnis. The insurgents only have limited foreign support, the hard-line insurgents were a distinct minority within the Sunni majority, and most of the successes in building up the new Iraq forces are real enough so that alienating the Shi'ites and Kurds might well backfire if the country did divide into more serious civil conflict.

Yet, this simply may not matter to hard-line Sunni insurgents. At least some would welcome a divided Iraqi as a means to their broader goal of weakening moderate regimes throughout the region and polarizing its people in ways that push Sunnis toward Islamist extremism. In any case, the immediate goal of many insurgents is not to win, or to implement a given program (most such insurgents have no coherent practical program). It is rather to deny victory and success to the newly elected Iraqi government and push the US and Coalition out in a war of attrition. From a "red team" view, this goal must still seem all too possible and most insurgents seem to be acting on this strategy.

Prospects for Development in 2006 and the Search for National Unity

No analysis of Iraqi force developments can ignore the fact there are still many threats to national unity and there are still a long list of political, military, and economic uncertainties that

will shape the outcome of the insurgency and the success of the Iraqi force building effort. This list includes the nature of the new government that will emerge out of the December 15, 2005 election, and the efforts to forge an inclusive government, and deal with all of the issues raised by the new constitution.

Ambassador Khalilzad provided an excellent description of the political developments that are needed to allow Iraqi force development to succeed in an op ed in the <u>Los Angeles Times</u> on February 14, 2006:[19]

> To build on this progress, Iraq's leaders now need to agree on a process to unite the country.
>
> First, they need to form a government of national unity. This is not a matter of dividing up ministries, with each used to favor the parochial interests of the minister's ethnic or sectarian community or political faction. Rather, it means selecting ministers from all communities who will build political bridges, who are committed to a unified Iraq and who have demonstrated professional competence. Getting the next government right is far more important that getting it formed fast. Iraqi leaders also must agree to a decision-making process that gives political minorities confidence that the majority will share power and take their legitimate concerns into account. Iraqi leaders believe that this could be accomplished by forming a council composed of key Iraqi leaders to focus on issues of national importance.
>
> Elected leaders need to govern from the center, not the ideological extremes. This is particularly true in the security area, where the new government must continue increasing the capability of Iraqi security forces while ensuring that Defense and Interior Ministry officials are chosen on the basis of competence, not ethnic or sectarian background. In addition, the government must begin the process of demobilizing the factional militias across the country.
>
> Next, Iraq's leaders need to agree on a true national compact for their country—a vision and set of political rules that will produce stability and progress. The new constitution gave responsibility to the new national assembly to address several key unresolved questions, including drawing up guidelines for federalizing non-Kurdish regions and dividing responsibilities among various levels of government. In these negotiations, Iraqi leaders must strike agreements that will win greater Sunni Arab support and create a near-consensus in favor of the constitution. Then, Iraq's leaders must forge an understanding with those insurgents who are willing to lay down their arms, join the political process and, perhaps, even enlist in the fight against the terrorists. Many are willing to do so, as evidenced by the clashes between insurgents and terrorists in western Iraq.
>
> As the insurgents shift away from armed struggle, they are seeking assurances that regional powers will not be allowed to dominate Iraq and that Iraqi leaders will limit de-Baathification to high-ranking officials, integrating all those who did not commit crimes into mainstream society. Sunni Arab rejectionists are joining the process of building a new and democratic Iraq. This not only opens the door for insurgents to permanently renounce violence and join the political process in order to stabilize Iraq, it also isolates the terrorists who are the enemy of all Iraqis, while setting the stage for the emergence of a strong and independent Iraq.

Iraqi internal politics could still lead to a major civil conflict between ethnic factions and sects. It is too soon to predict how well Iraqi forces can or cannot supplement, whether they will remain unified and serve the nation and not give factions, and the extent to which they can eventually replace Coalition forces. The nation-building aspects of the "war after the war" remain a struggle in progress, and there still is no way to know whether the light at the end of the tunnel is daylight or an oncoming train.

This analysis documents many positive trends, but it also shows that Iraq, the US and its allies, and the world can "lose" the struggle in Iraq as well as win it. Such a defeat is not *probable*, but it is *possible*. There is no one variable that could produce such a "defeat," and there is no agreed definition of what "victory" or "defeat," mean. A "defeat" could take the following forms:

- A war of attrition whose cost and casualties eventually meant the Bush Administration lost the public and Congressional support necessary to go on fighting.

- The open failure of US efforts to create effective Iraqi military, security, and police forces and any ability to phase down the US and MNF presence at an acceptable rate.

- A large-scale Iraqi civil war -- where some combination of Arab Sunni versus Arab Shi'ite, Arab versus Kurd, secularist versus theocrat, or struggle for authoritarian rule made continuing the Coalition presence purposeless or untenable.

- The collapse of effective Iraqi governance because of divisions between Shi'ite, Sunni, and Kurd.

- The creation of a religious state without the pluralism and tolerance critical to a US definition of victory.

- The creation of open or de facto divisions in Iraq that allied the Iraqi Shiites with Iran and created the equivalent of a Shi'ite crescent divided from the Sunni part of the Arab and Islamic world.

- The continued failure of US aid and Iraqi economic development to meet the needs and expectations of the people and the destabilizing impact of long-term, large-scale unemployment.

- The failure to meet popular expectations regarding personal security, reductions in crime, availability of key services like water and electricity, and education and medical care.

- Demands by an Iraqi government that US forces leave on less than friendly terms.

- Domestic US political conditions that lead to the enforcement of some "exit strategy" that made the US leave before a stable Iraq can be created.

- The isolation of the US from its regional and other allies, most remaining members of the Coalition and the support or tolerance of the UN.

The variables in this list are interactive and can combine in a wide range of ways to produce different real-world scenarios for "defeat." Furthermore, the cases on this list are simply the key candidates; there are many more scenarios that might possibly occur.

Defining "Victory" and the Future Role Iraqi Forces Should Play

"Winning" is equally hard to define. Iraq will be unstable for at least the next 5-10 years, and what appears to be "victory" could become a "defeat" if later political and economic upheavals created a hostile regime, chaotic country, or state with a theocratic or strong man regime so far from democracy that it made our current fight futile. The most likely "best case" outcome is now the kind of "victory" that produces an unstable, partially dependent state, with a unified and pluralistic regime but one that is scarcely an American client.

Iraqi forces can help create the conditions for "victory," but neither they nor the Coalition forces can defeat the insurgency by military means alone. Victory or defeat will ultimately be determined by the Iraqi political process and has already become an Iraqi responsibility. Counterterrorism and counterinsurgency require political and economic, as well as military, solutions. At least as much depends on Iraqi capability to build on the foundation provided by outside aid, and to create the right kind of political and economic context for military success. Serious problems have emerged from the inability of the Iraqi Government to follow up on US and Iraqi military and security efforts and to establish effective governance at both the central government level and in the field.

Iraqis must work out a form of power sharing that can include Arab Shi'ite, Arab Sunni, Kurds, Turcomans, and Iraq's smaller minorities. The politics of ethnic and sectarian tension and rivalry cannot be resolved by force in any stable or lasting way. Only the Iraqis can bridge the gaps

between Sunni and Shi'ite, Arab and Kurd, and various Shi'ite factions. Only Iraqis can find the proper way of sharing the nation's oil wealth, and find the right balance between a secular and religious state.

In any case, Iraq, the Coalition, and friendly outside states can only succeed if they recognize that the level of progress required to produce any meaningful definition of "success" or "victory" in all of the necessary areas will be a matter of years, if not a decade. No matter how impatient policymakers may be, history still takes time. It is certain that there will be reversals, even if the ultimate result is success.

Iraqi Attitudes Towards the Security Situation in Iraq

(Support Shown in Percent)

	Total	Kurd	Shi'ite Arab	Sunni Arab	Other
Attacks on US Forces in Iraq					
Strongly Approve	23	8	9	77	5
Approve Somewhat	24	8	32	11	38
Disapprove Somewhat	29	18	41	9	24
Strongly Disapprove	23	63	18	3	31
Don't Know/No Answer	1	3	-	0	2
Attacks on Iraqi Government Forces					
Strongly Approve	1	-	2	-	0
Approve Somewhat	6	-	2	24	2
Disapprove Somewhat	27	13	19	52	47
Strongly Disapprove	66	86	78	24	51
Don't Know/No Answer	-	-	0	0	0
Attacks on Iraqi Civilians					
Strongly Approve	-	-	0	0	0
Approve Somewhat	1	-	1	0	0
Disapprove Somewhat	4	1	5	5	0
Strongly Disapprove	95	98	94	95	100
Don't Know/No Answer	0	0	0	0	0

Source: WorldPublicOpinion,org, "What the Iraq Public Wants-A WorldPublicOpinionPoll, January 2-5, 2006, some of 1000, with 150 Sunni Arab over-sample.

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Introduction

This report is an excerpt of a book-length report on the development of Iraqi forces. It focuses on recent developments and the political impact of the recent election on Iraqi force developments.

The constitutional referendum on October 15, 2005 approved the draft constitution, and laid the groundwork for an election of a permanent government on December 15, 2005. It scarcely, however, united the country. The new draft constitution had many gaps that would have to be filled by the new legislature, and its debate has constantly raised many divisive issues like the nature of federalism, control over taxes and revenues, the role of religion in government, and the future control of oil resources. It did not deprive the insurgency of popular support, unite the country, or create the kind of political conditions that bridged ethnic and sectarian differences. It was more a prelude to future political struggle than a turning point.

It was also clear that Iraqi forces were still far from being able to takeover the bulk of the security mission. While progress continued to be made in the effort to recruit, train, and equip Iraqi forces -- by steps rather than leaps -- both sides understood that the effort to stand up a self-sufficient ISF remained very much a work in progress and would take at least several years. On October 31, 2005, Iraq asked the United Nations Security Council to let the US-led multinational force remain in Iraq for another year, acknowledging that Iraq's own troops could not yet assure national security. Just a day later, Donald Rumsfeld, speaking at a Pentagon briefing, did not rule out the possibility of increasing U.S. presence in Iraq as the December election drew near.[20]

Iraqi Military and Security Forces after the October 15, 2005 Constitutional Referendum

On October 31, 2005, Iraq asked the United Nations Security Council to let the US-led multinational force remain in Iraq for another year, acknowledging that Iraq's own troops could not yet assure national security. Just a day later, Donald Rumsfeld, speaking at a Pentagon briefing, did not rule out the possibility of increasing U.S. presence in Iraq as the December election drew near.[21]

The Bush Administration Announces its Strategy for Victory in Iraq and for Iraqi Force Development

Enough progress was made to provide increasing hope that Iraqi force development would be a key part of a successful overall strategy in Iraq. President Bush stressed this progress when he reacted to negative US public opinion polls by giving a series of four speeches on Iraq before and after the December 15th election.

The Three Phase Strategy for Iraq

President Bush summarized his strategy for dealing with Iraq as follows in his speech on December 18th,[22]

> Reconstruction efforts and the training of Iraqi Security Forces started more slowly than we hoped. We continue to see violence and suffering, caused by an enemy that is determined and brutal - unconstrained by conscience or the rules of war.

> Some look at the challenges in Iraq, and conclude that the war is lost, and not worth another dime or another day. I don't believe that. Our military commanders do not believe that. Our troops in the field,

who bear the burden and make the sacrifice, do not believe that America has lost. And not even the terrorists believe it. We know from their own communications that they feel a tightening noose - and fear the rise of a democratic Iraq.

The terrorists will continue to have the coward's power to plant roadside bombs and recruit suicide bombers. And you will continue to see the grim results on the evening news. This proves that the war is difficult - it does not mean that we are losing. Behind the images of chaos that terrorists create for the cameras, we are making steady gains with a clear objective in view.

America, our Coalition, and Iraqi leaders are working toward the same goal - a democratic Iraq that can defend itself ... that will never again be a safe haven for terrorists ... and that will serve as a model of freedom for the Middle East.

We have put in place a strategy to achieve this goal - a strategy I have been discussing in detail over the last few weeks. This plan has three critical elements.

First, our Coalition will remain on the offense - finding and clearing out the enemy ... transferring control of more territory to Iraqi units ... and building up the Iraqi Security Forces so they can increasingly lead the fight. At this time last year, there were only a handful of Iraqi army and police battalions ready for combat. Now, there are more than 125 Iraqi combat battalions fighting the enemy ... more than 50 are taking the lead ... and we have transferred more than a dozen military bases to Iraqi control.

Second, we are helping the Iraqi government establish the institutions of a unified and lasting democracy, in which all of Iraq's peoples are included and represented. Here also, the news is encouraging. Three days ago, more than 10 million Iraqis went to the polls - including many Sunni Iraqis who had boycotted national elections last January. Iraqis of every background are recognizing that democracy is the future of the country they love - and they want their voices heard…

Third, after a number of setbacks, our Coalition is moving forward with a reconstruction plan to revive Iraq's economy and infrastructure – and to give Iraqis confidence that a free life will be a better life. Today in Iraq, seven in 10 Iraqis say their lives are going well - and nearly two-thirds expect things to improve even more in the year ahead. Despite the violence, Iraqis are optimistic - and that optimism is justified.

In all three aspects of our strategy - security, democracy, and reconstruction - we have learned from our experiences, and fixed what has not worked. We will continue to listen to honest criticism, and make every change that will help us complete the mission.

...My fellow citizens: can we win the war in Iraq - we are winning the war in Iraq…We are approaching a New Year, and there are certain things all Americans can expect to see. We will see more sacrifice - from our military ... their families ... and the Iraqi people. We will see a concerted effort to improve Iraqi police forces and fight corruption. We will see the Iraqi military gaining strength and confidence, and the democratic process moving forward. As these achievements come, it should require fewer American troops to accomplish our mission. I will make decisions on troop levels based on the progress we see on the ground and the advice of our military leaders - not based on artificial timetables set by politicians in Washington. Our forces in Iraq are on the road to victory - and that is the road that will take them home.

These speeches provided the first detailed explanation of US strategy for nation building, stability operations, and force development since the fall of Saddam Hussein more than two years earlier. While they were political, and inevitably tended to exaggerate success and understate risks, they clearly reflected an attempt to correct the administration's initial grand strategic mistakes in going to war, and to take advantage of the very real successes now taking place in Iraqi force development.

The Details of the Bush "Security Track"

The Bush Administration summarized its views of this progress, as well as the details of the security track of its strategy, in a formal report it issued on November 30th. While it again focused on success and understated problems and risks, the report provided an in-depth explanation of US military strategy, and goals for Iraqi force development, that both

supplemented the President's speeches and provided clear benchmarks for judging future success:[23]

Strategic Summary: Clear, Hold, Build

The security track is based on six core assumptions:

- First, the terrorists, Saddamists, and rejectionists do not have the manpower or firepower to achieve a military victory over the Coalition and Iraqi Security Forces. They can win only if we surrender.

- Second, our own political will is steadfast and will allow America to keep troops in Iraq—to fight terrorists while training and mentoring Iraqi forces—until the mission is done, increasing or decreasing troop levels only as conditions warrant.

- Third, progress on the political front will improve the intelligence picture by helping distinguish those who can be won over to support the new Iraqi state from the terrorists and insurgents who must either be killed or captured, detained, and prosecuted.

- Fourth, the training, equipping, and mentoring of Iraqi Security Forces will produce an army and police force capable of independently providing security and maintaining public order in Iraq.

- Fifth, regional meddling and infiltrations can be contained and/or neutralized.

- Sixth, while we can help, assist, and train, Iraqis will ultimately be the ones to eliminate their security threats over the long term.

Strategic Logic Behind the Security Track

We are helping the Iraqi Security Forces and the Iraqi government take territory out of enemy control (clear); keep and consolidate the influence of the Iraqi government afterwards (hold); and establish new local institutions that advance civil society and the rule of law in areas formerly under enemy influence and control (build).

- Efforts on the security track include offensive operations against the enemy, protection of key communication and infrastructure nodes, post-conflict stabilization operations, and the training, equipping, and mentoring of Iraqi Security Forces. Coalition transition teams are embedded in all Iraqi Army battalions to provide assistance and guidance when needed.

The model that works is clear—it is resource intensive, requires commitment and resolve, and involves tools across the civilian and military spectrum, including:

- The right balance of Coalition and Iraqi forces conducting offensive operations;

- Preparation for such operations through contact and negotiation between local and federal Iraqi government officials;

- Adequate Iraqi forces to provide security for the population and guard against future intimidation;

- Cooperation with and support for local institutions to govern after Coalition forces leave;

- Prompt disbursal of aid for quick and visible reconstruction;

- Central government authorities that pay attention to local needs.

How will this help the Iraqis—with Coalition support—defeat the enemy and achieve our larger goals?

- Offensive operations disrupt enemy networks and deprive enemy elements of safe havens from which they can rest, train, rearm, and plan attacks against the Coalition, the Iraqi government, and Iraqi civilians.

○ Localized post-conflict operations—providing security, economic assistance, and support to civilian institutions in newly cleared areas—further isolate enemy elements from the rest of the population and give Iraqis space to participate in a peaceful political process.

○ Infrastructure protection helps ensure that the Iraqi government can collect revenues and provide basic services to the people, which is critical to building confidence in the government and weaning support away from insurgents.

○ Putting capable Iraqis forward in the fight increases the overall effectiveness of U.S.-Iraqi operations, as Iraqis are better able to collect intelligence and identify threats in their neighborhoods.

○ As Iraqi forces become more and more capable, our military posture will shift, leaving Coalition forces increasingly focused on specialized counter-terrorism missions to hunt, capture, and kill terrorist leaders and break up their funding and resource networks.

Progress on the Security Track

Our clear, hold, and build strategy is working:

○ Significant progress has been made in wresting territory from enemy control. During much of 2004, major parts of Iraq and important urban centers were no-go areas for Iraqi and Coalition forces. Fallujah, Najaf, and Samara were under enemy control. Today, these cities are under Iraqi government control, and the political process is taking hold. Outside of major urban areas, Iraqi and Coalition forces are clearing out hard-core enemy elements, maintaining a security presence, and building local institutions to advance local reconstruction and civil society.

○ Actionable intelligence is improving. Due to greater confidence in the Iraqi state and growing frustration with the terrorists, Saddamists, and rejectionists, Iraqi citizens are providing more intelligence to Iraqis and Coalition forces. In March 2005, Iraqi and Coalition forces received more than 400 intelligence tips from Iraqi citizens; in August, they received 3,300, and in September more than 4,700.

○ Iraqi forces are growing in number. As of November 2005, there were more than 212,000 trained and equipped Iraqi Security Forces, compared with 96,000 in September of last year. In August 2004, there were five Iraqi army battalions in the fight; now more than 120 Iraqi army and police battalions are in the fight. Of these battalions, more than 80 are fighting side-by-side with Coalition forces and more than 40 others are taking the lead in the fight. More battalions are being recruited, trained, and fielded. In July 2004 there were no operational Iraqi brigade or division headquarters; now there are seven division and more than 30 brigade headquarters in the Iraqi army. In June 2004, there were no Iraqi combat support or service support battalions; now there are a half dozen operational battalions supporting fielded Iraqi units.

○ Iraqi forces are growing in capability. In June 2004, no Iraqi Security Force unit controlled territory. The Coalition provided most of the security in Iraq. Today, much of Baghdad province is under the control of Iraqi forces, the cities of Najaf and Karbala are controlled by Iraqi forces, and other Iraqi battalions and brigades control hundreds of square miles of territory in other Iraqi provinces. A year ago, the Iraqi Air Force had no aircraft; today its three operational squadrons provide airlift and reconnaissance support and Iraqi pilots are training on newly arrived helicopters. A year ago during the operation to liberate Fallujah, five Iraqi battalions took part in the fight. For the most part, they fell in behind Coalition forces to help control territory already seized by Coalition units. No Iraqi units controlled their own battle space. In September 2005, during Operation Restoring Rights in Tall Afar, eleven Iraqi battalions participated, controlling their own battle space, and outnumbering Coalition forces for the first time in a major offensive operation. Over the last six months, the number of patrols being conducted independently by Iraqi forces has doubled, bringing the overall percentage to nearly a quarter of all patrols in theater.

○ Iraqis are committed to building up their security establishment. Despite repeated and brutal attacks against Iraqi Security Forces, volunteers continue to outpace an already substantial demand. In the past several months alone, nearly 5,000 recruits have joined from Sunni areas. In the recently cleared Tall Afar, more than 200 local volunteers have begun police training before returning to help protect their city. In Anbar, Sunnis have lined up to join the Iraqi army and police, planning to return to their home province and help protect it from terrorists.

○ Iraqis are taking on specialized missions central to overall success. Four Strategic Infrastructure Battalions, with more than 3,000 personnel, have completed training and will soon assume the specific mission of guarding vital infrastructure nodes from terrorist attack. A Special Police Unit highly trained for hostage rescue has almost 200 operators and is conducting operations almost every week in Baghdad and Mosul. In the past several months, hundreds of Iraqi soldiers have undergone intensive special operations training and are now in the fight, hunting, killing, and capturing the most-wanted terrorist leaders.

○ Iraq is building an officer corps that will be loyal to the Iraqi government, not a particular group or tribe. The Iraqi army now has three officer academies training the next generation of junior officers for its army. In September, NATO inaugurated a new military staff college in Baghdad that will eventually train more than 1,000 senior Iraqi officers each year. Today, however, Iraqi instructors are teaching the vast majority of Iraqi police and army recruits. By training the trainers, we are creating an institutional capability that will allow the Iraqi forces to continue to develop and grow long after Coalition forces have left Iraq.

Continued Challenges in the Security Sphere

Even with this progress, we and our Iraqi partners continue to face multiple challenges in the security sphere, including:

○ Countering the intimidation and brutality of enemies whose tactics are not constrained by law or moral norms;

○ Building representative Iraqi security forces and institutions while guarding against infiltration by elements whose first loyalties are to persons or institutions other than the Iraqi government;

○ Neutralizing the actions of countries like Syria and Iran, which provide comfort and/or support to terrorists and the enemies of democracy in Iraq;

○ Refining our understanding of the constantly changing nature of, and relationships between, terrorist groups, other enemy elements, and their networks;

○ Addressing the militias and armed groups that are outside the formal security sector and central government command;

○ Ensuring that the security ministries—as well as the fighting forces—have the capacity to sustain Iraq's new army;

○ Integrating political, economic, and security tools—and synchronizing them with Iraqi government efforts—to provide the best post-conflict operations possible.

Increasing Manning, Deployment Activity and Control of Battlespace

Whatever their omissions and understatements may have been, the President's speeches and report were valid in claiming that there was continuing progress of some kind at virtually every level. All 27 battalions of the nine brigades of the new Iraqi Army had become operational as early as March 20, 2005, and the number of active battalions in the Army and security forces continued to rise throughout the rest of 2005.[24]

The overall increases in force strength from July 2005 to January 2006 are shown in **Figure 31** for the Ministry of Defense and **Figure 32** for the Ministry of Interior. Both figures reflect a steady growth in total manpower strength to a total of 227,300 by late January 2006, although the rate was slowing as the Iraqi and MNF-I effort was shifting from force creation to force development.

Figure 31

Ministry of Defense Force Levels: 7/27/05 to 1/23/06
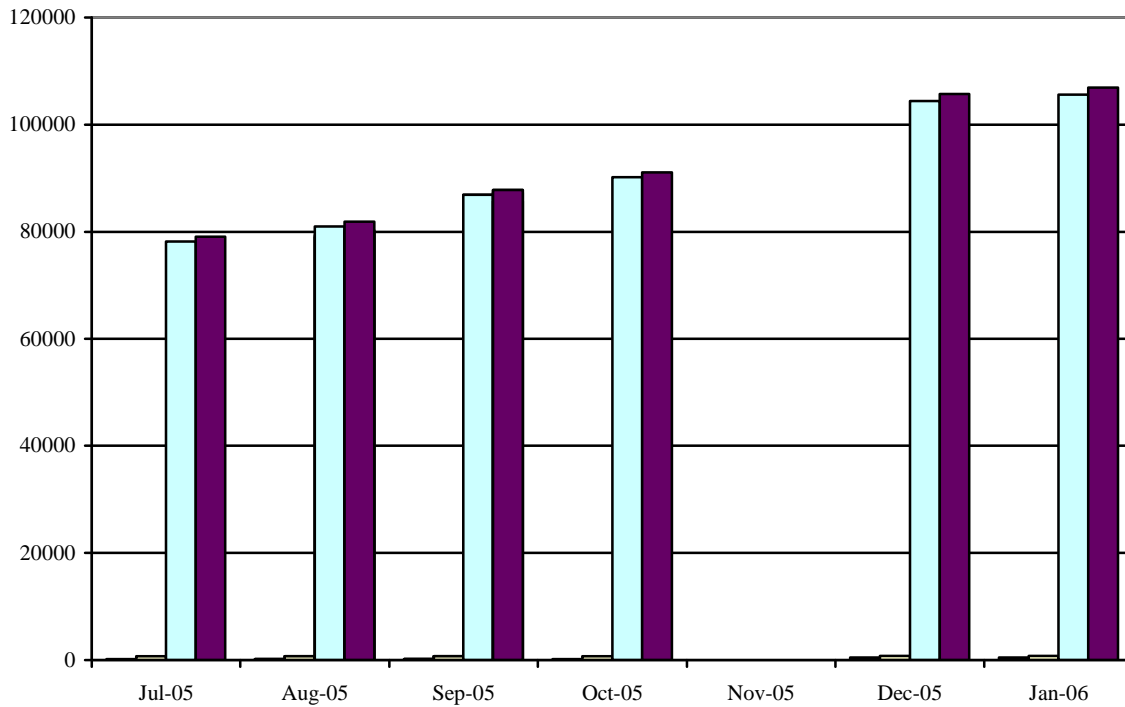
	7/27/05	8/3/05	8/17/05	8/24/05	9/7/05	9/14/05	9/21/05	9/28/05	10/5/05	12/28/05	1/23/06
Air Force	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	500	500
Navy	700	700	700	700	700	700	700	700	700	800	800
Army	78200	79400	79000	81000	84800	86400	86900	86900	90200	104400	105600
Total	79100	80300	79900	81900	85700	87300	87800	87800	91100	105700	106900

Source: Data drawn from Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs Iraq Weekly Status Reports, US Department of State

Figure 32

Ministry of Interior Force Levels: 7/27/05 to 1/23/06
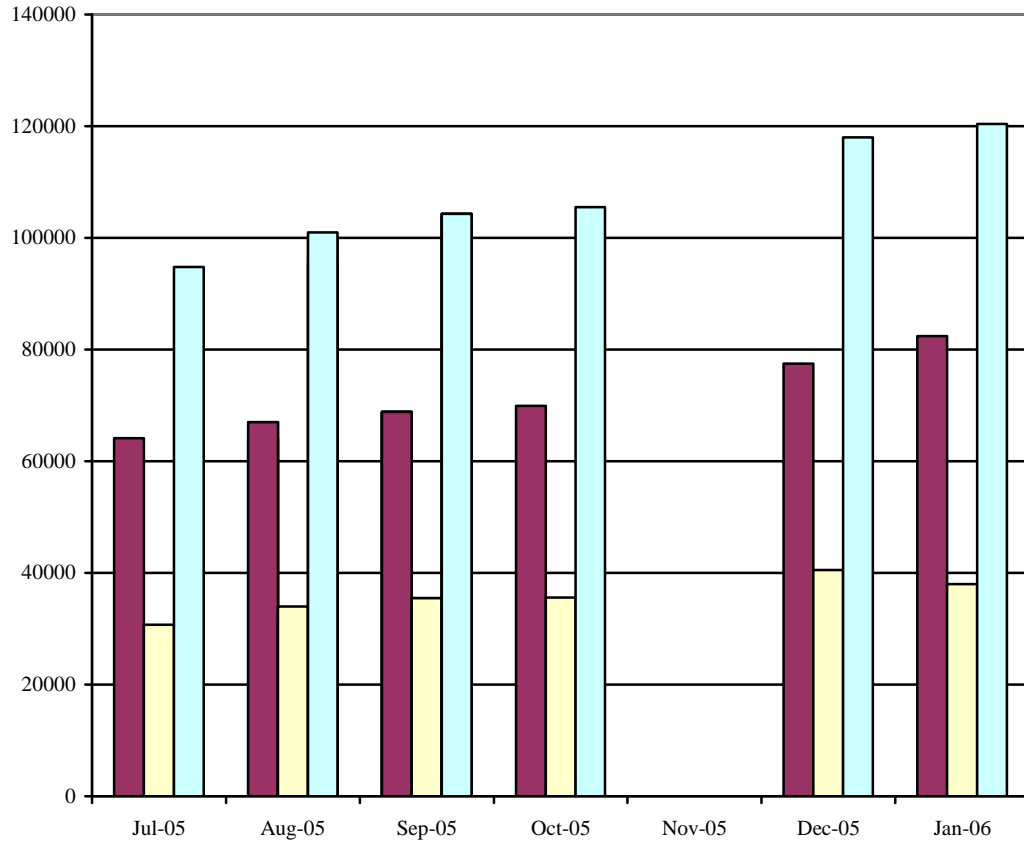
	7/27/05	8/3/05	8/17/05	8/24/05	9/7/05	9/14/05	9/21/05	9/28/05	10/5/05	12/28/05	1/23/06
■ Police & Highway Patrol	64100	64100	67000	67000	68800	68800	68800	68800	69900	77500	82400
□ Other MOI Forces	30700	31300	32900	34000	35000	35500	35500	35500	35600	40500	38000
□ Total	94800	95400	99900	101000	103800	104300	104300	104300	105500	118000	120400

Source: Data drawn from Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs Iraq Weekly Status Reports, US Department of State. Note: Unauthorized absences personnel are included in these numbers

Progress in the Force Evaluation Matrix

The Iraqi units being deployed or serving in the field still fell short of Level 1 readiness, but this had little practical impact. They all were rated either Level 2 or Level 3, and Level 2 forces could function with considerable effectiveness, they simply lack the kind of higher-level headquarters, support, and logistical forces that were still in formation. What was more important was the tendency to report on both Level 2 and Level 3 readiness as if the forces involved had similar capability. There were the major differences in real. Many Level 3 units still had very limited value.[25]

During a September 30, 2005 press briefing, Gen. Casey explained that previous Coalition estimates that there were three Level 1 units actually counted one brigade with two battalions, and that these units failed to meet these re-adjusted standards upon re-evaluation. Upon re-evaluation, it was found that only one battalion out of 110 met standards for the top tier of readiness. In terms of troops, this means that no more than 750 troops out of some 200,000 were rated at Level 1.[26]

Casey further explained, however, that a Level 1 readiness ranking was often a meaningless indicator for the effectiveness of combat battalions in all but the most demanding roles. Units that rated Level 2 and 3 were still functioning units, Level 2 units could be highly effective in combat, and Level 3 units could perform many routine. Moreover, no fixed number of Level 1 units was needed as a gauge for handing over the mission and withdrawing most US troops. He cited the example of the September 2005 Tall Afar strike, which consisted of one US brigade, three Iraqi brigades, and an Iraqi infantry division.

Figure 33 shows that at the time of the Casey press briefing, slightly more than three dozen battalions were rated as capable of "taking the lead" in counterinsurgency operations, provided that the US was providing advisory support, attacks helicopters, logistics and medical support, as well as combat troops.[27] At the briefing, Donald Rumsfeld stressed that overall ISF growth was more important than trying to gauge success by shifting readiness assessments.

The effectiveness of battalions rated Levels 2 was significant in the vast majority of the missions Iraqi forces had to perform, and allowed Iraqi forces to become the more and more visible face Iraqis saw in day-to-day security operations -- a key factor in influencing political perceptions and creating the feeling the new government was legitimate. At Level 2, battalions were capable of planning and successfully executing counterinsurgency operations, with minimal support of Coalition forces. Since 2004, the number of Army combat battalions had risen from zero to 88.

Casey also said that MNSTC-I was now focusing on building up combat enablers and logistic support within the regular forces, so as to increase the independence of MOD forces from Coalition assistance. Development of complementary combat support and combat service support continued at the tactical and operational levels. A multi-layered logistics system had been designed, was approved by the Multi-National Force-Iraq and the Ministry of Defense (MOD) in early 2005, and was being built. The system consisted of national-level supply contracts, regional and local base support units, motor transport regiments in each division, and headquarters and services companies in each combat battalion. Because MOD does not yet have organic maintenance capability, MNSTC-I had implemented an interim national maintenance contract.[28]

○ Figure 33 shows the levels at which MOD Iraqi battalions were participating in counterinsurgency operations as of 9/19/05.

○ Figure 34 shows the estimated MOI special police force capabilities participating in counterinsurgency operations as of 9/19/05.

○ Figure 35 shows MOD combat force capabilities by number of battalions taking the lead or operating independently in counterinsurgency operations.

Figure 35 shows a total of fully 36 were taking the lead in operations or fully independent by September, while 52 more were engaged in side-by-side fighting with Coalition forces. According to an October 2005 Executive report to Congress, their projected end strength was 131,000, with force generation to be completed by 2006.

It is not possible to provide an equally detailed breakout for the end of 2005, but the total number of battalions continued to rise quickly through the end of the year. President Bush gave a speech on December 18, 2005 stating that more than 125 Iraqi combat battalions were fighting the enemy, and 50 were taking the lead. Ambassador Khalilzad stated that Iraqi forces had risen to 128 battalions by the end of December, with 75 fighting side-by side with coalition forces and 53 taking the lead in the fight.[29]

In March 2005, there had only been three battalions manning their own areas — all in Baghdad. A total of 24 battalions were in charge of their own battle space in October and 33 in late December. In January 2006, the US army transferred an area of operation to an entire Iraqi army division for the first time in Qadissiya and Wassit provinces, an active combat area south of Baghdad. In early February 2006, 40 of the army's 102 battalions had taken over security in the areas where they operated, and in contested areas, such as parts of Fallujah, Ramadi and Samarra.[30]

Figure 33

Estimated MOD Forces Capabilities as of 9/19/05

Component	Iraqi Units Actively Conducting Counterinsurgency Operations	
	Battalions Fighting Side by Side with Coalition Forces	Battalions in the Lead with Coalition Support or Fully Independent
Iraqi Army & Special Operation Combat Forces	52	36
	Iraqi Units Actively Supporting Counterinsurgency Operations	
Combat Support, Combat Service Support, and Training Units	2	3
Air Force	0	3
Navy	0	2

Source: Department of Defense, <u>Report to Congress Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq</u>, report to Congress is submitted pursuant to the section entitled "Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq" of House Conference Report 109-72 accompanying H.R. 1268, Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act for Defense, the Global War on Terror, and Tsunami Relief, 2005, Public Law 109-13, October 2005

Figure 34

Estimated MOI Special Police Forces Capabilities as of 9/19/05

Component	Iraqi Units Actively Conducting Counterinsurgency Operations	
	Battalions Fighting Side by Side with Coalition Forces	Battalions in the Lead with Coalition Support or Fully Independent
Public Order Battalions	12	0
Mechanized Battalions	2	1
Special Police Commando Battalions	12	0
Emergency Response Unit	0	1

Source: Department of Defense, Report to Congress Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq, report to Congress is submitted pursuant to the section entitled "Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq" of House Conference Report 109-72 accompanying H.R. 1268, Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act for Defense, the Global War on Terror, and Tsunami Relief, 2005, Public Law 109-13, October 2005. **Note: For conventional police forces, transition readiness has not yet been assessed.**

Figure 35

MOD Combat Forces Capability: Battalions in the Lead or Fully Independent

	August 04	February 05	June 05	September 05
■ Total Army and Spec Ops Battalions in the Fight	5	69	79	88
□ Battalions in Lead or Fully Independent	1	21	24	36
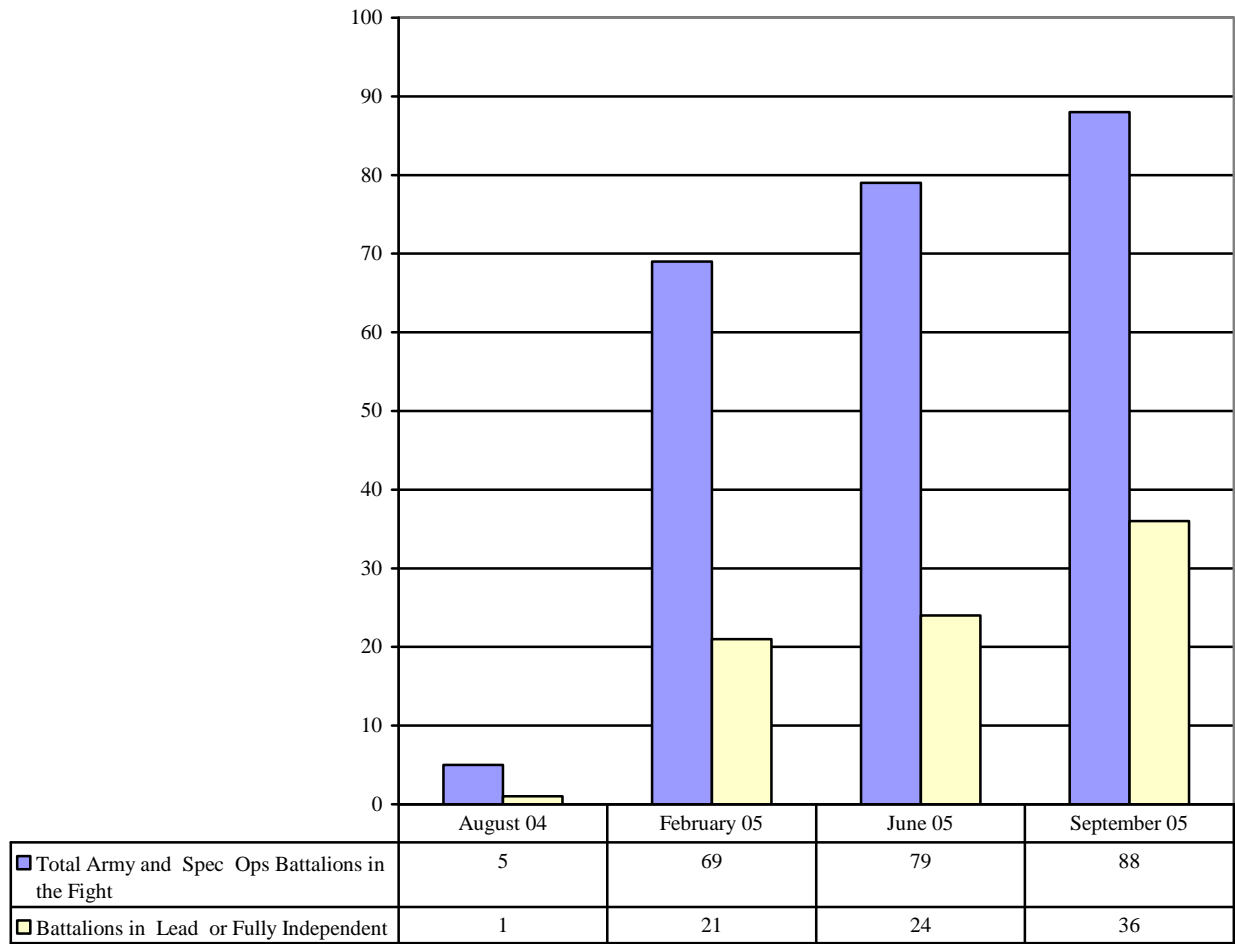
NOTE: Includes Special Operations Forces but does not include combat support or combat service support units.
Source: Adapted from "Measuring Stability in Iraq," October 2005, pp. 30 & 31

Growing Control of "Battlespace"

The rapid increase in the rate of Iraqi deployments was also reflected in reporting by General Casey. He noted that Iraqi Security Forces had conducted about 160 combined or independent operations at the company level and above in May 2005. By September, that number was up to 1,300. Casey further stated that some 60,000 to 70,000 more Iraqi forces would be available to provide security during the October 15 referendum than were available during the January 2005 elections, and that this number would increase to 100,000 more Iraqi security force personnel by the time of the next parliamentary election on December 15, 2005. The growth was so significant, he said, that he only had to ask for an additional 2,000 troops to help protect the October 2005 referendum and December election progress, compared to 12,000 in January for the first election.[31]

The Coalition continued to transfer more "battlespace" in relative secure areas to Iraqi forces. For example, the U.S.-led multinational force in Iraq officially handed over military control of parts of central Baghdad to the Iraqi Army's Sixth Division in October 3, 2005. The move transferred control of security responsibilities for the Karkh and Rasafa districts. Figure 36 shows Iraqi National Force deployments by location between July 1, 2004 and October 19, 2005. This figure shows an increase in deployed battalion strength from 6 battalions in two cites in early July to 45 battalions in 11 cities in mid-October.

Once again, there are inconsistencies in some of the reporting on these developments. Ambassador Khalilzad described progress by the end of the year as "More than 30 battalions have assumed control of their own areas of responsibility, including about 60% of Baghdad, and significant zones in other parts of the country."[32] This total appears to be lower than that in Figure 36, but it clearly is a more selective figure. Other reporting of Iraqi control of battlespace showed a steady rise in the areas covered between October and end December.

During this time, MNSTC-I continued to help Iraq fill out the mix of force capabilities needed for battle management, combat and service support, and logistics and other aspects of sustainability as part of its effort to enable a fully independent ISF. One key to this effort was the creation of a competent officer corps with all the necessary specialized training; another was the creation of working combat support and combat service support capabilities, as well as the attendant specialized support and logistical training. Figure 37 provides data on the numbers of ISF personnel who had received or were receiving CS and CSS training as of November 2005.

Transfer of Bases Back to Iraqi Forces and Coalition Force Cuts

The Coalition continued to transfer control of its bases to Iraqi command. For example, the US Army handed over its base in Najaf, giving Iraqis full control of the city on September 6, 2005. On September 28, 2005, the US handed over its base in Karbala, south of Baghdad, giving Iraqis full control of the city.

President Bush stated on December 18, 2005 that, "we have transferred more than a dozen military bases to Iraqi control." Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld stated in a press conference on December 23rd that the US had now transferred some 17 bases to Iraqi forces, and that United States has not discussed basing American troops in Iraq, and would do so only following negotiations with the new Iraqi government. He stated that, "At the moment, there are no plans for long-term bases in the country."[33]

Secretary Rumsfeld said any discussion of such bases would take place with the permanent government, but that the US has been working with successive transitional governments about the nature of American presence in the country. He also said that the US would base troops in the nation only if it would be mutually beneficial, and he did not know if the Iraqi people would even want American forces to remain after the mission is complete. If they were to want American forces to remain, he said still did not envision any permanent presence, and any such force would have to fit in to the overall US global basing strategy.

US officials continued to avoid the establishment of a timeline for withdrawal. Visiting with US troops in Iraq on December 23, Donald Rumsfeld announced adjustments in troop deployments that would reduce the number of forces in Iraq by the spring of 2006 to below the current high of 160,000. Rumsfeld said that troop levels would drop below the 138,000 "baseline" with further reductions to be considered in 2006. On the same day, the Pentagon announced that total US combat brigades deployed to Iraq would drop from 17 to 15.[34] Neither Rumsfeld nor any other official set a goal or schedule for Coalition troop reductions during the rest of the year.

The public statements of Iraq and Arab officials continued to stress early Coalition withdrawals. At a reconciliation conference in Cairo on November 21st, sponsored by the Arab League, Iraq's political factions jointly called for a timetable for withdrawal of foreign forces. The conference was comprised of about 100 Sunni, Shiite and Kurdish leaders, many of who were running in the December 15 election.

The Shiites to the Sunni population than a serious political move, however, saw this statement, more as a gesture. While demands for rapid withdrawal had strong public support among Sunnis, Shiites had long favored milestones rather than timetables for withdrawal. The final text of the statement also did not specify when this proposed timetable for withdrawal should begin. [35] With some notable exceptions like the Moqtada Al Sadr, most Shiite leaders continued to accept the idea that US withdrawal should only follow the establishment of an effective ISF.

Figure 36

Iraqi National Force Deployment: 1 July 2004 vs. 19 October 2005

(In Numbers of Combat and Support Battalions)

Location	1 July 2004	19 October 2005
Baghdad (Greater Area)	0	4
Baquba (CE)	0	4
Fallujah (CS)	0	6
Hillah (CS)	0	2
Al Kasik (NW)	0	6
KMTB (CE)	3	3
Mosul (NC)	0	1
Numaniyah (CS)	0	3
Ramdi (CW	0	11
Taji (SC)	3	5
Tal Afar (NW)	0	3

Source: Department of Defense, Report to Congress Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq, report to Congress is submitted pursuant to the section entitled "Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq" of House Conference Report 109-72 accompanying H.R. 1268, Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act for Defense, the Global War on Terror, and Tsunami Relief, 2005, Public Law 109-13, October 2005

Figure 37

Number of ISF Personnel Who Received CS/CSS Training as of November 2005

Combat Support Courses	
Intelligence	795
Engineers	866
Signal	582
MPs	748
Combat Service Support Courses	
Bomb Disposal	207
Transportation	1971
Maintenance	790
Supply	667
Logistics Officer	250
Medical	498
Administration	369
Instructor Training	615

Source: MNSTC-I, November 2005

Ongoing Force Developments

The following major force developments were taking place in the different forces under the command of the two ministries.

- ○ *Ministry of Defense*

    · In September of 2005, the Ministry of Defense continued to take over more training functions from the Coalition, including three Regional Training Centers. By this time, the MOD was in charge of the Iraqi Army Service and Support Institute (formerly the Combat Service and Support School), the Military Intelligence School, the Military Police School, and the Engineering School. These Iraqi-led schools and training centers were meant to better enable Iraqis to continue improvements in their ability to provide tactical logistical support and combat enablers to the combat battalions.

- ○ *Ministry of Interior*

    · By the fall of 2005, that force had grown to nearly 10,000 commandos trained and equipped, with 2,000 coming online between July and September of 2005. This placed MNSTC-I ahead of its projection to train and equip 9,800 Commandos by the October 15 referendum. The Government of Iraq had authorized a total force of more than 11,800 Commandos, which MNSTC-I planned to train and equip by May 2006.[36]

    · By September 2005, a total of 67,500 Iraqi Police Service members had been trained and equipped, an increase of 5,500 since July 2005. This fell behind due course for 75,000 IPS trained and equipped by the time of the October 15, projected by MNSTC-I. However, MNSTC-I maintained that it would still reach its full-authorized complement of 135,000 IPS by February 2007.

    · By September 2005 more than 44,400 police recruits had completed the eight-week basic police training at the Jordan International Police Training Center and the Baghdad Police College, as well as seven smaller regional academies. The police training curriculum was increased between July and September 2005, and new police academy graduates were receiving informal mentoring from veteran Iraqi police.[37]

    · As of September 2005, there were 28 Special Police Force battalions capable of combat operations, an increase of 13 since July 2005. Along with the Iraqi Army, the Special Police Commandos and the Public Order Police contributed to operations in Tal Afar, and the 1st Special Police Mechanized Brigade was assigned to provide route security to reduce the incident of insurgent attacks along the highway from the International Zone to Baghdad International Airport.[38]

    · The Government of Iraq had authorized a total force of more than 28,300 Border Police, which MNSTC-I plans to train and equip by May 2006. These forces were organized into 36 battalions to man the 258 border forts around Iraq. As of September 20, 152 forts had been completed, with a total of 250 projected to be reconstructed or renovated by November 30, 2005; all border fort construction was scheduled to be complete by January 2006. To stem the flow of foreign fighters from Syria, priority was given to work on the Iraqi-Syrian border in the summer of 2005.[39]

- ○ *Other*

    · NTM-I completed instructor training for 24 Iraqis in July 2005. The class included nine Iraqi colonels and 15 lieutenant colonels. Eighty-eight Iraqi students started pilot Joint Staff College courses on September 25.[40]

    · On September 27, 2005 Dr Ibrahim Jaafari, Prime Minister of Iraq, and Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, Secretary General of NATO, opened a new staff college for the Iraqi army, in Rustimiyah in southeast Baghdad. They were accompanied by the Iraqi Interior Minister Bayan Jaber, the head of the Iraqi armed forces, Gen. Babiker Zebari and the Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, US

Marine General James Jones. The College began courses that day for 90 trainees drawn from the rank of major and lieutenant colonel in the Iraqi army. The courses were being given by Iraqi trainers supported by NATO trainers.

Operational Developments and Chronology

The following chronology provides case examples of operational progress and setbacks for the Iraqi security forces during this period. Similar case examples continued into early 2006, although Iraqi forces became steadily more proactive, and less vulnerable to insurgent attack, as they gathered experience in the field.

○ **October 15, 2005**—In Baghdad, a suicide car bomber drives his vehicle into a truck carrying Oil Ministry staff, killing at least 6 people and wounding 14. Two of those killed were policemen and most of the remaining victims were from the Oil Ministry. Unconfirmed incidents were also reported in Basra and Ramadi. A roadside bomb targeting an Iraqi military convoy east of Baquba kills 3 soldiers and wounds 3. In Latifiyah, mortars land on a checkpoint overnight, killing 3 Iraqi soldiers and wounding 2. Two police units open fire on each other outside a polling station in the Amil district of Baghdad. Four civilians are wounded by the gunfire. In the Ghazaliya district of Baghdad, police injure 1 woman and 1 man in separate incidents in which police suspected insurgent activity. One policeman is wounded when 3 roadside bombs targeting a police patrol are detonated in the Amiriyah district of Baghdad. In Hilla, police defuse a car bomb with 12 mortar rounds. Joint U.S. and Iraqi troops engage in clashes with insurgents using mortars, rockets, and machine guns in the Ramadi province.

○ **October 16, 2005**—In Fallujah, gunmen throw grenades into a market, resulting in the deaths of 2 Iraqi soldiers. Three additional soldiers are wounded by the attack. U.S. and Iraqi army troops conduct a joint operation in Mahmudiyah, killing 11 insurgents and arresting 57. Militants assassinate Colonel Saad Abbas Fahil, a security advisor at the Iraqi Interior Ministry, in front of his home in the Saydiya district of Baghdad. His son, who was also present at the time of the attack, was wounded.

○ **October 17, 2005**—In Kirkuk, gunmen kill two Iraqi police officers. In Baiji, a roadside bomb strikes a joint U.S.-Iraqi army patrol, killing 2 Iraqi soldiers and wounding 7. Police discover the bodies of 8 men who appeared to have died from gunshot wounds to head. All of the men are believed to be Iraqi soldiers.

○ **October 18, 2005**—In the al-Wasiti district of Kirkuk, militants ambush a group of Iraqi army soldiers, killing 1 soldier and wounding 3. Talib al-Dulaimi, Deputy Governor of the Anbar province, is killed along with his bodyguard in Ramadi.

○ **October 19, 2005:** In Baghdad, militants kill Muhsin Chitheer, a former Iraqi Army lieutenant colonel under Saddam Hussein. Elsewhere in Baghdad, gunmen fire upon a police checkpoint near the Hai Al-Adil highway, killing 4 police officers and wounding 11. Differing reports on the same incident indicated that there had been 3 police deaths and 2 policemen wounded. A firefight lasting several hours ensued. In the Ghazaliya district of Baghdad, 2 Iraqi police commandos die and 3 are wounded in clashes between security forces and insurgents. A roadside bomb in Fallujah kills 2 Iraqi soldiers and injures 2. Iraqi security forces set up checkpoints in Dujail ahead of the trial of Saddam Hussein. A member of the Kurdish Peshmerga militia is wounded, along with 2 other unidentified individuals, by a car bomb in Kirkuk. Iraqi security forces arrest Yasser Sabawi Ibrahim, an ousted nephew of Saddam Hussein, on suspicion of helping to finance the insurgency in Iraq by channeling funds from family members abroad. The arrest comes several days after he was forced back into Iraq from Syria by Syrian authorities. Iraqi police arrest a car bomb maker in Kirkuk, after discovering a wired vehicle containing 2 mortar rounds, 2 Katusha rockets, and TNT. Militants open fire on a joint U.S.-Iraqi patrol in Hit. Iraqi police subsequently arrest 9 men who all tested positive for explosives residue.

○ **October 20, 2005:** In Baquba, a policeman is wounded when a suicide car bomb detonates his explosives in front of a government building. The incident also causes 3 civilian deaths and 13 injuries, as well as damage to the government building, 10 nearby shops, and a parked car. Elsewhere in Baquba, a second suicide bomber targets a police checkpoint; however, no casualties are reported. British Army chief General Sir Mike Jackson gives a statement to the BBC, indicating that militia elements have infiltrated the police force in Basra, and implicates some degree of involvement on the part of Iran. Gunmen shoot and kill 1 Iraqi soldier in Baiji. In the Dora district of Baghdad, insurgents kill an Iraqi intelligence officer on his way to work. Three of his guards are wounded. Also in Baghdad, a mortar round lands on a school, killing a child and 2 guards, and wounding 4 children. Armed men in Iraqi army uniforms kill a man and his 2 sons in an attack on a house in Iskandariya. Other gunmen dressed as policemen kidnap the head of a concrete company in the al-

Mansour neighborhood of Baghdad. In Khalis, a suicide car bomber driving an old military fuel truck detonates his explosives near the base for Iraqi rapid reaction forces, killing 1 Iraqi police officer and wounding 8. Another suicide car bomber targets a coalition convoy in Diyala traveling to a nearby compound. Four Iraqi civilians die from the attack, and 13 Iraqis are wounded, including 3 policemen. Firefights between insurgents and Iraqi Army and U.S. forces break out in the streets of several different districts in Ramadi, killing at least 1 civilian and wounding 1. Militants kill 5 policemen in a drive-by shooting in Karmah. In Abayachi, an Iraqi Army patrol confiscates a roadside IED consisting of a 130 mm round with a radio-controlled ignition device.

o **October 21, 2005:** In northern Baghdad, gunmen open fire on a minibus, killing 3 Iraqi army soldiers and wounding 4 Iraqi police commandos.

o **October 22, 2005:** In southern Baghdad, a roadside bomb targets an Iraqi police patrol in the Al-Madaan area, killing 1 policeman. Also in southern Baghdad, a roadside bomb kills a second policeman in an unrelated attack. Mortar fire in the western Al-Yarmouk area of Baghdad injures a third Iraqi policeman. Ansar al-Sunna announces the slaying of 6 Iraqis, including 4 contractors working for the U.S. and 2 members of the National Guard—1 in Ramadi and 1 in Mosul. On Jaffa Street in central Baghdad, Iraqi security forces engage in a confrontation with militants, and subsequently arrest 6 of the insurgent fighters. Two Iraqi soldiers are wounded during the clash. Iraqi soldiers in Ramadi seize and detonate a car wired with bombs.

o **October 23, 2005:** In central Baghdad, a car bomb targets an Iraqi police patrol, killing 4 people, at least 2 of which were policemen, and injuring 13, including at least 1 policeman. In Tahrir Square in downtown Baghdad, a suicide bomber drives his vehicle into 2 police vehicles, killing 2 policemen and 2 civilians, and wounding 11 others. In Tikrit, a bomb kills a police colonel and his 4 children in front of their house. The explosion sparks a fire in nearby oil tanker, destroying the colonel's house as well. East of Tikrit, near Baquba, a series of drive-by shootings results in the deaths of 1 police colonel, 3 civilians, and a Shi'ite student-cleric. The Iraqi police find a potential IED in Al Bayaa. The device contained a 120 mm shell with TNT and small bottles of gas with nails.

o **October 24, 2005:** In the Al Shaab neighborhood of Baghdad, a car bomber targeting an Iraqi police patrol kills 2 Iraqis and wounds 5. Elsewhere in Baghdad, gunmen kill an Iraqi soldier and a girl standing in front of her nearby house in an attack on an Iraqi army checkpoint in the western part of the city. Two other Baghdad attacks include a drive-by shooting that kills a policeman, and a roadside bomb that fatally wounds 2 policemen. In Kirkuk, a roadside bomb detonates near the convoy of Ibrahim Zangana, a senior member of the Kurdish Democratic Party. The blast seriously wounds Zangana, as well as killing 1 of his bodyguards and injuring another. Also in Kirkuk, an Iraqi policeman dies after a car bomb explodes near his patrol. One policeman is fatally shot in a drive-by incident in Mosul. In eastern Baghdad, a car bomb targeting a police patrol destroys the targeted patrol car and wounds 5 Iraqis. A suicide car bomber detonates his explosives near a police checkpoint in Mussayyib. The blast wounds 1 police officer and 1 civilian. A triple bomb series in Baghdad targets the Palestine Hotel, which houses many foreign reporters. The attack was partially foiled by Iraqi security forces, as the drivers of the third car bomb did not make it all the way to the hotel before their explosives were detonated; however, several passers-by were killed. Police reported that all 3 explosions stemmed from car bombs, but a journalist claimed that the first 2 were rockets. Casualty reports also differed, with the U.S. announcing 6 civilian deaths and 15 wounded, and Iraqi national security advisor Mouwafak al-Rubaie reporting at least 20 deaths (including 4 or 5 police officers) and 40 wounded. Al-Rubaie also announced his belief that the attack was an attempt to take over the hotel and claim hostages, although Deputy Interior Minister Hussein Kamal disputed this theory.

o **October 25, 2005:** In Baghdad, a policeman is killed in a drive-by shooting. This incident was the only one specifically described in Baghdad, although reports indicated that a series of 3 bombs and 5 shootings killed a total of 2 people (the policeman and a young boy) and wounded 34 Iraqis, most of whom were police officers. A drive-by shooting in Mosul results in the death of 1 policewoman. A suicide car bomber detonates his explosives in Sulaimaniyah near the Ministry of Peshmerga Affairs. Six Peshmerga and 3 civilians are killed, 2 Peshmerga and 2 civilians are wounded. Elsewhere in Sulaimaniyah, a suicide car bomber crashes into the 7-car convoy of Mullah Bakhtiyar, a senior Kurdish official in President Talabani's Patriotic Union of Kurdistan party, killing 1 guard, wounding 2 guards, and damaging 2 cars in the convoy. A suicide car bomber targets an Iraqi army checkpoint in Baquba; however, the only deaths reported were those of the driver and a companion. A second companion of the driver was injured. In Ramadi, 3 dead bodies of Iraqi army soldiers in plainclothes are discovered. They all appeared to have died from gunshot wounds to the head. In the Ghazaliya district of Baghdad, 2 policemen are killed and 7 wounded when gunmen ambush a vehicle transferring prisoners. There were no reports of prisoner casualties. The Iraqi Prime Minister's office releases a statement announcing the capture of Monem Shakem al-Qubaisi, the alleged "main terrorist financier in Fallujah." Police announce the discovery of 8 corpses of Iraqi border guards near the Saudi

border in western Iraq, 155 miles from Kerbala. All of the border guards were blindfolded with their hands tied behind their backs.

○ **October 26, 2005:** In Fallujah, 3 Iraqi soldiers are killed and 2 wounded from a roadside bomb explosion. Four Iraqi soldiers are brought to a hospital in northeastern Haditha after being tied up, blindfolded, and shot by insurgents. Reports did not indicate the day in which these soldiers in Haditha were actually shot. Iraqi security forces conduct raids in Hurriya neighborhood of Baghdad and take into custody 20 suspected terrorists, along with quantities of ammunition. Elsewhere in Baghdad, gunmen open fire on several cars of guards for Financial Resources Minister Abdullatif Rasheed, although no casualties were reported. Two Iraqi policemen die in an insurgent attack on their police station in Ramadi. In Baghdad, gunmen kill Nabil Moussawi, an official at the Iraqi Ministry of Culture, and seriously wound one of his guards. Also in Baghdad, militants fire upon a convoy of guards for the Iraqi minister of water resources and subsequently wound 2 people. The Minister was not present at the time of the attack.

○ **October 27, 2005:** Southeast of Baghdad in Nahrawan, clashes between the Shi'ite Mahdi Army and Sunni insurgents result in the deaths of 14 Mahdi Army militiamen and a policeman. Fourteen people were wounded, including 2 policemen and 12 members of the Shi'ite militia and civilians. Later reports varied considerably, saying that the clash occurred between villagers and policemen in civilian clothes, and that casualties included 25 police and 2 civilian deaths. Four villagers were arrested in the battle. Police Lt. Colonel Mahdi Hussein is killed in a drive-by shooting in Dora. In Kirkuk, a police Lt. Colonel Ardjman Abdullah dies from a drive-by shooting. Elsewhere in Kirkuk, 2 bombing target police patrols, killing 1 policeman and wounding 6. Insurgents fire a mortar round at the Iraqi Army headquarters in Fallujah, sparking return fire by Iraqi forces that mistakenly hit a car carrying teachers to a school. One teacher is killed and 2 are wounded. The bodies of 3 engineers working at an Iraqi army base are discovered in Baquba. Elsewhere in Baquba, 1 policeman is killed and 5 others are wounded in clashes between police and insurgents. Another policeman in Baquba is found dead in his car. Three Iraqi soldiers are killed and 4 soldiers and 7 civilians are wounded when insurgent throw a grenade at an Iraqi army checkpoint south of Baghdad in al-Madain. The body of police officer Ali Jassin is found in Tuz Khurmatu, following his abduction from Tikrit on Wednesday, October 26th. A remote control car bomb targeting an Iraqi army patrol in Hawija kills 1 soldier and 3 other Iraqis. In a southern Baghdad district, gunmen shoot and kill a police major. Iraqi security forces and Task Force Baghdad troops detain 19 men in the Dora neighborhood of Baghdad following an explosion near the soldiers' location.

○ **October 28, 2005:** In Fallujah, 1 Iraqi soldier is killed and 1 wounded from after a roadside bomb explodes near their patrol. Iraqi Rapid Reaction Forces kill 2 gunmen during an operation in Khamishli to free approximately 24 hostages. Five of the hostages are found dead of gunshot wounds. Iraqi security forces and Coalition forces discover a weapons cache at a mosque east of Al Asad. Iraqi Border Patrol forces detain 4 people suspected terrorists at a checkpoint near the Syrian border. Basra police confirm the seizure of evidence implicating the Iranian intelligence agency in the recent violence in Basra, after Iraqi security forces conduct a raid on Yusif al-Musawi's Tha'rallah Movement in the city. Police note that documents confiscated prove Iran's involvement in plots to assassinate political officials, financial and logistical support, and participation in military and other armed operations. Majid al-Sari, Defense Advisor for the southern region confirms actions taken by the Iraqi security forces on the Iran-Iraq border to prevent infiltration by insurgents. He notes the arrest of an Afghani affiliated with Al Qa'ida while he was attempting to cross the border. The Diyala Police Directorate confirms the 25 October arrest of 9 Iranians attempting to cross the border into Iraq and the confiscation of a quantity of drugs, which was in the possession of one of the detainees.

○ **October 29, 2005:** Abu Mahmoud, a suspected member of Al Qa'ida of Saudi Arabian descent who was believed to be planning attacks on Iraqi security forces and Coalition representatives is killed in U.S. air strikes in Huseiba. Iraqi police arrest 9 Iranians attempting to cross the border illegally. Reports indicate that Iraqi security forces in Basra have developed a new strategy for securing the border between Iraq and Iran. Iraqi troops arrest a suspected terrorist and seize a large cache of weapons and ammunition. Gunmen attack the northern Baghdad residence of a police colonel, killing the colonel and his bodyguard, and wounding his wife and nephew. Elsewhere in Baghdad, gunmen open fire on an Iraqi Army checkpoint, killing 3 Iraqi soldiers and wounding 7. Three militants are killed in return fire by Iraqi troops. In Kirkuk, 5 Iraqi policemen die from an explosion targeting an Iraqi police patrol. An Iraqi soldier and the brother of a policeman and shot and killed in Baghdad.

○ **October 30, 2005:** In Fallujah, a roadside bomb kills 2 Iraqi soldiers. Other Iraqi soldiers retaliate with gunfire, and mistakenly kill a woman and boy who are passing by the scene. Gunmen open fire on the motorcade of Deputy Trade Minister Qais Dawoud Hassan, killing 2 of his bodyguards and wounding 6 bodyguards and a passerby. The minister himself was wounded in the shoulder. A roadside bomb targets an Iraqi police patrol in Mahmudiyah. There were no reports of police casualties; however, the attack kills 2

civilians and wounds 3. Sunni Arabs, including police and civilians, threaten to topple the government of Ninevah during protests following the removal of provincial police chief Ahmed Mohammed al-Jibouri. The protesters believe that the regional administration is dominated by Kurds, and that the dismissal of al-Jibouri was for political and ethnic reasons, rather than for the alleged charges of corruption.

○ **October 31, 2005:** Northeast of Baghdad in Bani Saad, 2 soldiers are killed and 7 wounded after 2 mortar rounds strike an Iraqi Army base. Iraqi police uncover the bodies of 14 people buried in a shallow grave east of Tal Afar. The corpses appeared to have been dead 1-3 months. Fourteen people appeared to have been bound and shot in the head, while the remaining 2 had been decapitated. Two policemen are injured in a bomb attack on their patrol in Kirkuk. Iraqi police arrest 56 insurgents suspected of coordinating attacks in Saladin during a search campaign in the Al-Tein neighborhood near Tikrit University. Iraqi police report that they killed 2 insurgents and arrest 3 during clashes in Kerbala. Several mortars fall on the Iraqi Army headquarters in Baquba, killing 2 Iraqi soldiers and wounding 4. In Sinjar, a suicide bomber targets an Iraqi army checkpoint, killing 1 person and wounding 7. Reports did not distinguish between civilian and military casualties. Two Iraqi soldiers are killed and 4 are wounded following the detonation of a roadside bomb in Fallujah. A car bomb in northern Baghdad targets an Iraqi police patrol, killing 4 people and damaging 2 civilian cars after detonating prematurely. No police casualties were reported. Iraqi President Jalal Talabani criticizes the United States for not sufficiently coordinating its actions with Iraqi Army troops and police, citing this as a major reason that the recent upsurge in violence has not subsided. Ukrainian Army instructors have begun training 35 sappers for the Iraqi police teams in the Wasit province at the regional training center of the Iraqi security forces.

○ **November 1, 2005:** In Baghdad, Iraqi police commandos mistakenly kill 1 civilian. Police in Balad discover 2 corpses, 1 of which was a police officer and was found in a river, and another which was unidentified and found in a nearby village. A police officer was abducted from his home near Samarra. A roadside bomb targets an Iraqi police commando patrol southbound on the Saydiya highway extending out of Baghdad. One civilian is wounded, but no police casualties were reported. A police patrol in the Jurf al-Nadaf region of Baghdad strikes a roadside bomb, killing 1 civilian and injuring 3 others, including 1 policeman. Gunmen open fire on a police patrol al-Qadssiyah highway, killing 1 policeman and 1 policewoman. Police arrest 2 suspects believed to be involved with the 31 October car bombing in a Basra marketplace, one of which was identified by authorities as a Sunni fundamentalist. A boy suicide bomber detonates his explosives in Kirkuk, injuring the city's police chief General Khattab Abdullah Areb and his driver. At least 3 policemen are killed by a roadside bomb near Mahmudiyah. Iraqi and U.S. forces conduct a series of raids in Mosul, arresting 11 people suspected of terrorism. Iraqi police seize a weapons cache in Qayarrah.

○ **November 2, 2005:** In southeastern Baghdad, 9 Iraqi soldiers are killed and 9 more wounded in 2 separate attacks on their Army patrol. Elsewhere in Baghdad, a roadside bomb targeting an Iraqi police patrol in the southern area of the city kills 5 Iraqi civilians. The Iraqi Defense Minister invites some officers of Saddam Hussein's former army to enlist in the new Iraqi security forces as part of an effort to reach out to Sunnis. One Iraqi soldier dies and 4 are wounded when a roadside bomb targets their patrol in Fallujah. Gunfire after the explosion kills 2 civilians. Militants fire upon an Iraqi police patrol in western Baghdad, wounding one policeman. Gunmen attack the Ninevah chief of police in northern Baghdad, wounding 2 of his guards but leaving the chief himself unharmed. Iraqi police drag a corpse from a river in Khasim, and identify the dead as a senior member of the city council of Khasim who had been abducted 3 days prior. Iraqi Army soldiers and U.S. troops engage in a gun battle with 15 armed insurgents northeast of Ramadi, and subsequently discover a cache of weapons and 3 Iraqi Army uniforms in the vicinity. Iraqi police detain 3 suspected terrorists in Jamessia.

○ **November 3, 2005:** In southeastern Baghdad, police find 11 bodies, including some who died by gunshot wounds and others who had been beheaded. Iraqi police have been unable to identify the victims. Iraqi Army soldiers detain a suspected terrorist during a raid in eastern Mosul.

○ **November 4, 2005:** In Baghdad, Sunni insurgents attack a police checkpoint, killing 6 Iraqi police officers. Insurgents fire mortar rounds at an Iraqi police checkpoint in Buhriz, and then 8 cars of insurgents arrive and open fire on the checkpoint. At least 6 policemen are killed and 10 wounded. Militants kill Tarijk Hasan, a former colonel in the Iraqi Air Force, while he was driving in Baghdad. In Tuz Khormato, a roadside bomb strikes an Iraqi convoy, killing 5 police commandoes with the Iraqi Interior Ministry, and wounding 4 others. Iraqi police detain 11 suspected terrorists in Tal Afar. Iraqi police and military police detain 9 suspected terrorists in Mosul.

○ **November 5, 2005:** A total of 3,500 U.S. and Iraqi troops launch "Operation Steel Curtain," a joint attack on the insurgent-held town of Husaybah near the Syrian border. The stated aim of the mission is to secure the Syrian border region of the Anbar province ahead of the Parliamentary election scheduled for December 15. The new offensive is part of the wider Operation Hunter, which aims to secure the Euphrates River Valley region from terrorists and establish a permanent security presence along the Iraqi-Syrian border. Al Qa'ida

releases a statement claiming responsibility for the 3 November abduction and subsequent killing of 14 members of the Iraqi security forces. The authenticity of the statement was not confirmed. In northern Baghdad, a roadside bomb detonates, killing 5 Iraqi police commandos and wounding 3.

○ **November 6, 2005:** A roadside bomb targets an Iraqi police patrol in Mahawil, killing 1 policeman and injuring 3. Iraqi police respond to a tip about an IED at a school in Adhamiyah that was found to be wired for detonation when the children exited the school. The police Explosive Ordinance Disposal (EOD) team safely dispose of the grenade, as well as another found in the same area. Members of the Iraqi 3rd Public Order Brigade find a group of insurgents placing a bomb on a road east of Salman Pak. A firefight between police and militants ensues, ending in 1 insurgent death and another insurgent evading capture. Iraqi police safely dispose of the bomb.

○ **November 7, 2005:** Operation Steel Curtain continues, with the U.S. military announcing that 36 suspected insurgents have been killed in the past 2 days, including 17 killed from air strikes. Neither the U.S. nor the Iraqi government has reported any civilian casualties, although Al Qa'ida in Iraq has warned that it will increase insurgent violence unless the offensive is abandoned within 24 hours. The Al Qaeda statement threatened to destroy the homes of all Iraqi soldiers and government workers in retaliation for comments by the Iraqi Defense Minister that individuals who sheltered terrorists should consider their homes targeted by the offensive. Iraqi soldiers shoot and kill 3 suspected terrorists dressed in women's clothing and carrying weapons near the entrance to the safety zone for displaced persons. Iraqi troops identified them as foreign fighters. A car bomb attack at sundown targets a police patrol in the Doura district of Baghdad. Six police officers are killed as well as 3 civilians, and 10 people are injured, including a number of policemen. In Kirkuk, 2 soldiers are killed and 14 wounded when a suicide car bomber detonates his explosives near a checkpoint. Elsewhere in Kirkuk, a policeman is shot and killed by insurgents. At least 2 Iraqi soldiers are killed and 13 injured in a suicide car bombing targeting Iraqi soldiers guarding oil pipelines in Thibban.

○ **November 8, 2005:** In Dali Abbas, a roadside bomb explodes near an Iraqi patrol car, killing 4 soldiers and critically injuring 1. Iraqi police uncover 5 decomposed corpses in Rustumiya. The identities of the dead are not yet clear. A roadside bomb targets an Iraqi police patrol south of Kirkuk in Daquq, killing 2 policemen and wounding 3. In southern Basra, a colonel in the Iraqi security forces is killed along with his brother when a roadside bomb strikes their vehicle as they are driving. Insurgents kill 1 policeman and injure 5 in an ambush on an Iraqi police patrol in Baquba. Gunmen attack an Iraqi army patrol in Ameriyat al-Fallujah, killing 2 soldiers and wounding 5. The U.S. military announces that Husaybah has been secured and that members of Al Qaeda have been neutralized there. The completed Operation Steel Curtain reportedly achieved in the arrest of 180 suspected insurgents—including some Africans and Asians—and the killing of 36 additional militants.

○ **November 9, 2005:** In Baquba, a suicide bomber detonates his explosives near an Iraqi police patrol, killing 7 policemen and wounding 9 others, most of whom were civilians.

○ **November 10, 2005:** In Baghdad, 2 suicide bombers target a restaurant frequented by Iraqi police, killing at least 35 people and injuring 25 upon detonation of their explosives. One report estimated that at least 7 of the dead were police officers, while the rest were civilians. Al Qaeda in Iraq claimed responsibility for the attack. Iraqi troops uncover 27 corpses near Jassan. All of the dead were blindfolded, had their hands bound, and appeared to have died from gunshot wounds. Gunmen fatally shoot 2 police officers in Mosul. In Tikrit, a car bomb detonates outside of an Army recruiting center, killing 10 people and wounding 20. A car bomb wounds 2 policemen after exploding near an Iraqi police patrol in eastern Baghdad. Militants ambush a group of policemen in southern Baghdad, injuring 4. Gunmen shoot and kill an intelligence officer in Basra. Iraqi officials announce the arrest of Hatem al-Hassani, the brother of Iraqi Parliament speaker Hajim al-Hassani, under suspicion that he is the emir of a terrorist group. This is in contrast to an earlier report by Iraqi police that Hatem al-Hassani had been kidnapped.

○ **November 11, 2005:** Gunmen open fire on the Embassy of Oman in the Mansour district of western Baghdad, killing an Iraqi police officer and an embassy employee, and wounding 2 additional police officers. Elsewhere in Baghdad, clashes between insurgents and police in the Ghazaliya district end in 1 insurgent death and 1 police wounding. Hospital sources reported 5 police deaths from the incident. In central Baghdad, a makeshift bomb injures 3 Iraqi policemen after it explodes near their patrol. Militants ambush an Iraqi police vehicle near Baquba, and subsequently kill 3 Iraqi policemen and a baby. Insurgents target an Iraqi police patrol in Qamishli, killing 1 policeman and wounding 3. Joint U.S.-Iraqi forces discover 2 corpses that appeared to have died from gunshot wounds in the Ghazaliya district of Baghdad. Also in Baghdad, gunmen attack an Iraqi police patrol, killing 1 policeman and wounding another. The U.S. military announces that a new joint U.S.-Iraqi operation to root out terrorists in the town of Karabilah near the Syrian border was begun on 9 November. The offensive is an extension of Operation Steel Curtain, and is intended to target terrorists who escaped the Husaybah offensive.

○ **November 12, 2005:** An Iraqi Red Crescent doctor reports to have found 54 bodies, some of women and children, in the rubble left in Husaybah by the U.S.-Iraqi Operation Steel Curtain. There was no immediate response from U.S. or Iraqi sources regarding the finding. In Kirkuk, 1 Iraqi policeman dies and another is seriously wounded after an insurgent attack on their patrol. Iraqi police detain 360 suspects in a major operation in the Diyala province. A judge and several politicians were among those arrested. Clashes between Iraqi police commandoes and insurgents end in 1 insurgent death.

○ **November 13, 2005:** Iraqi forces discover 10 civilian corpses near the Iraq-Iran border close to Badra town. All of the bodies had been blindfolded and had their hands bound, showed signs of torture, and were riddled with bullet wounds. Iraqi police in Mosul find the dead body of Colonel Mohamed Sheit who appeared to have been shot multiple times in the head and chest. The colonel had originally been abducted on 11 November. In the Jarf El-Sakhr area south of Baghdad, Iraqi security forces kill a suspected insurgent and detain another after they were found planting a bomb. The militant was killed during an exchange of fire. A roadside bomb explodes near an Iraqi military patrol, wounding 5 soldiers. The Iraqi Ministry of Defense announces the donation of 77 tanks and 36 troop carriers by NATO and the Hungarian government. The Iraqi government is spending $3 million to update and develop the tanks. A car bomb is detonated near a police station in the Dora district of Baghdad. No casualties were reported.

○ **November 14, 2005:** A booby trapped car detonates near the entrance to the Green Zone in Baghdad, killing 1 Iraqi police officer, 2 South African contractors from Dyncorps and another foreign contractor, and 4 civilians. The attack appeared to target the contractors' convoy. An explosion in the Dora district of Baghdad causes the death of 1 Iraqi policeman. On the Al-Khayzaran road in western Baghdad, a bomb is detonated near the patrol of the Karkh emergency squad, killing 1 Iraqi and 3 others. Five hundred Iraqi troops and 1,500 American soldiers storm the town of Ubaydi, near the Syrian border, in a continuous effort to eradicate foreign fighters in the western Anbar province under Operation Steel Curtain. At least 1 Iraqi soldier is injured, along with 2 civilians. Throughout the day, more than 70 militants are killed and 100 detained as part of the offensive. Reports indicate that a roadside bomb targeting an Iraqi Army patrol killed 3 civilians and injured 4, although the location of the bombing was not immediately available. A roadside bomb strikes an Iraqi police commando patrol in the Sadiyah district of Baghdad, killing 1 commando and wounding 3. Elsewhere in Baghdad, a roadside bomb in the Camp Sarah area explodes after the passage of an Iraqi Army convoy. Three people are killed and 4 wounded, and a civilian car is destroyed.

○ **November 15, 2005:** In eastern Kirkuk, gunmen kill 4 Iraqi police officers in an ambush. Elsewhere in Kirkuk, a roadside bomb detonates, killing 3 police officers and wounding 3. A car bomb planted near a restaurant in eastern Baghdad explodes, causing the deaths of 2 policemen. Six policemen were injured in the same incident. The Iraqi Defense Ministry announces that Iraqi forces have arrested 70 insurgents in a variety of operations throughout the day. Five of those arrested were suspected of planning to assassinate an unnamed ambassador in Iraq. A suicide car bomber detonates his explosives near an Iraqi Army checkpoint in Mahmudiyah, killing 3 soldiers and wounding 7 other people, 3 of whom were civilians. One policeman is killed in a clash between police and insurgents in Mosul. Seven others are injured during the firefight. Elsewhere in Mosul, 2 civilians and 4 policemen, including 1 ranking officer, die in another clash between a police patrol and militants. U.S. and Iraqi forces release Hatem al-Hassani, the brother of Iraqi Parliament speaker Hajim al-Hassani, after he was cleared of all charges against him.

○ **November 16, 2005:** In Mikaithfa, Iraqi police discover 3 corpses, all of who appeared to have died by gunshot wounds. Gunmen in Mosul kill 3 Iraqi policemen from the Facility Protection Service, a government-run security force. Elsewhere in Mosul, militants kill an Iraqi traffic policeman. A roadside bomb detonates near the motorcade of the head of police in Baiji, seriously wounding the officer along with 5 of his bodyguards. [41]

While Iraqi performance in operations was becoming steadily more reassuring, it was also clear that it would be well into 2006, and probably well into 2007, before Iraq had all of the security capabilities it needs in these areas, and their effectiveness would continue to depend on both substantial Coalition support and upon the success and inclusiveness of Iraqi politics.

Developments in the Regular Military Forces

At the beginning of 2005, MNF-I set a goal of deploying 270,000 ISF forces by 2006. In October 2005, military planners revised that number upwards to 325,000 by 2007, knowing that further increase would probably be needed in the future. At the time that these revised estimates were

formulated, the total number of trained and equipped ISF troop levels was a little above of 200,000.

This led to new debates over the feasibility of near-term US troop level reductions in Iraq.[42] On November 22, US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice told CNN that the number of Coalition forces in Iraq would come down, citing the progress being made in the build-up of the Iraqi Security Forces. This comment followed Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld's comments a week earlier that he wanted to move the US commitment of troops in Iraq from a peak of well over 160,000 to a baseline of 138,000 after the December 15th election, and from 17 to 15 brigades.

The US made this cutback, in large part because more Iraqi forces were coming on line. No senior official or officer attempted to predict the schedule for further US reductions, or for how quickly Iraqi forces would deploy and take over missions from the coalition forces. Secretary Rumsfeld did make it clear, however, that the President's plan for Iraqi force development would lead to major further reductions over time, and would be success driven. He also stated that the US had no current plans to maintain a long-term presence.

Senior US officers stated on background in December 2005 and January 2006 that they hoped US forces could drop well below 100,000 by the end of 2006, and some said they hoped below 70,000. These figures were similar to those set forth by Mowaffak al-Rubie, the Iraqi governments national security advisory, and the chairman of the joint US-Iraqi committee planning the transfer of security responsibilities to Iraqi forces, at the end of January 2006.[43] While some critics said US withdrawals were driven more by problems in keeping US active and reserve forces deployed, Iraqi forces did steadily takeover more battlespace and came on line in significant numbers.

Continuing Manpower Issues

While most of the progress in the regular military forces took place in the army and special operations forces, the other services improved as well. At the same time, a break out of actual total Iraqi regular military manning versus requirement shows just how much progress Iraqi forces still had to make.

This breakout is shown in Figure 38, and if one looks at the force-wide totals in the "Big Roll-Up" in this figure, it is clear that Iraqi forces still had only 62% of their authorized officers, and 61% of their NCOs, but were overmanned with enlisted manpower at 120%, much of which was still of limited quality and would have to be cut, depending upon its performance in combat. The Iraqi regular military was at 92% of its authorized strength as of December 10, 2005.

As for the individual services:

○ The army had 62% of its officers and 61% of its NCOs, and 121% of its enlisted manpower. Figure 38 also shows, however, that the AWOL rates were negligible for officers (.04%), very low for NCOs (1.6%), and low for overall manning (2%).

○ The navy had 109% of its officers, 130% of its NCOs, and 126% of its enlisted manpower. This reflected a force very much in transition, and much of the manpower surplus was likely to be used in the future. The AWOL rates were so low as to be meaningless.

○ The air force was still very much in formation and far from being manned at effective levels. It had only 55% of its officers, 32% of its NCOs, and 40% of its enlisted manpower. The AWOL rates were so low as to be meaningless.

Sectarian and Ethnic Composition of the ISF

The sectarian and ethnic composition of the ISF was also becoming a steadily more serious issue by the fall of 2005. The debate over federation in drafting the new constitution had raised the prospect of dividing the country along ethnic and sectarian lines. At the same time, the constant stream of bloody attacks on Shi'ites and Kurds, and horrific suicide bombings, led to increasing talk -- and sometimes action -- about revenge. The security services in the Ministry of Interior were increasingly found to either tolerate revenge attacks by Shi'ite militias like the Badr Organization, or to conduct them.

The new Iraqi army did not take such reprisals against Sunnis, but the issue of ethnic representation in the army was an increasing concern to the MNF-I, US commanders and officials, and the Iraqi leaders seeking to hold the country together. This prompted a major new recruiting drive targeting Sunni enlistment. Between August and October, 4,000 Sunnis were recruited, and were undergoing training by later October, according to one US military official in Baghdad.[44]

Political tensions continued to rise, however, as did Shi'ite and Kurdish anger at the ongoing suicide bombings and other attacks by Sunni Islamist insurgents, and such recruiting scarcely offset the fact that most army forces were Shi'ite and Kurdish. As of late December 2005, some US commanders in Iraq claimed that the ranks of the Iraqi Army were roughly representative of the national population – about 60 percent Shiite, 20 percent Sunni, and 15 to 20 percent Kurdish.

Few Iraqis, or US officers directly within their advisory effort, agreed with this assessment. Maj. Gen. Salih Sarhan, a Shiite, said that the majority of the soldiers were coming from the south, and were Shiite as of late December. Nearly all of the Iraqi army's recent recruits had come from southern Shiite cities, including highly religious cities like Karbala and Najaf, where unemployment was high. The 8th and 10th divisions, for example, were almost completely Shi'ite. Meanwhile, the 2nd and 4th divisions in the north – and some elements of the 3rd -- were overwhelmingly Kurdish. Sarhan said that the two army divisions in Baghdad were more evenly split.[45]

The elections that came towards the end of the year also seemed to reflect Shi'ite and Kurdish dominance of Iraqi forces. In contrast to the surge in Sunni participation in the political process that led to a high Sunni vote in the December 15th parliamentary election, Sunni Arab representation in the ISF remained proportionately low.

A special tally that consisted mainly of ballots cast by security forces, but also included votes by hospital patients and prisoners, showed that only about 7 percent of votes were cast for the three main Sunni Arab party. Because Iraqis were overwhelmingly thought to have voted along sectarian lines, many officials believed that this vote reflected low representation of Sunnis in the ISF.

The Kurdish Peshmerga militiamen seemed to have a disproportionately large representation in the Iraqi Security Forces. The special tally revealed that 30 percent of the votes cast went to the principal Shiite political alliance and 45 percent of the votes went to the main Kurdish slate of candidates. Lt. Col. Fred Wellman, a spokesman for the military command that oversaw training of Iraq forces, said that he did not have detailed estimates on the ethnic composition of the ISF, yet admitted that Arab Sunni representation was lagging.[46]

The problem of ethnicity in the ISF was further underlined in an incident in late December 2005. The US sought to hand over a key area in Baghdad – the area containing the fortified Green Zone - to the 5th Brigade of the Iraqi 6th Division. This handover involved the transfer of Forward Operating Base Honor in the palace district, but was delayed when the Shi'ite and Kurdish-dominated government rejected the Sunni officer the US had groomed since August to take over the mission. Over strong US objections, the Iraqi government nominated an unnamed candidate from the mostly Shiite city of Kut to assume command of the 5th brigade, 6th division of the Iraqi Army, and take command of central Baghdad.

US officials worried that the move represented the sect-based rejection of a Sunni officer, Col. Muhammed Wasif Taha, who they considered to be the best qualified for the job. Taha was a 23-year veteran of the Iraqi Army. He had denied claims that he was a member of Saddam Hussein's elite Special Republican Guard and a high-ranking member of the Ba'ath Party, and had the confidence of his largely Shi'ite units. While the transfer finally did come in February 2006, the Iraqi government seemed to deliberately downplay the evident simply because Taha had been given the position.[47]

There were, however, some more positive signs. The January 2005 election had led more Sunnis to volunteer. The effort to recruit more Sunnis, including ex-Ba'athists and officers that had begun after the October 15th constitutional referendum had some success and this success increased after Sunni participation in the December 15th elections brought more Sunnis into the national assembly.

The first batch of former, largely senior Sunni enlisted soldiers that were recruited back into the army graduated from the NCO academy at Al Kisik on December 25th. This class had been selected in May, and expanded from 50 to 250 in the effort to recruit more Sunnis and experienced soldiers. More expanded classes were underway.[48]

Figure 38

Iraq Armed Forces Manning – By Service: December 10, 2005

NAVY				
	AUTH	ASSN	AWOL	%FILL
Officer	118	129	0	109%
Enlisted	513	669	4	130%
Totals	631	798	4	126%
AIR FORCE				
	AUTH	ASSN	AWOL	%FILL
Officer	318	175	0	55%
Enlisted	581	187	1	32%
Totals	899	362	1	40%
ARMY ROLL-UP				
	AUTH	ASSN	AWOL	%FILL
Officer	8885	5509	24	62%
NCOs	42394	25784	410	61%
Enlisted	55808	67292	1731	121%
Totals	107087	98585	2165	92%
BIG ROLL-UP				
	AUTH	ASSN	AWOL	%FILL
Officer	9321	5813	24	62%
NCOs	42394	25784	410	61%
Enlisted	56902	68148	1736	120%
Totals	108617	99745	2170	92%

Source: Iraq Reconstruction Management Office, U.S. Department of State, December 10, 2005

The Army

As of September 2005, the Iraqi Army had 88 combat battalions conducting counterinsurgency operations. The 88 battalions present as of October 2005 were created in 18 months' time. The battalions included almost 75,000 trained and equipped soldiers organized into nine infantry divisions and one mechanized division, with an additional 12,000 troops to provide support, training and special security functions. As is noted in Figure 40, 36 of these battalions were "in the lead" in operations by the fall of 2005, either with Coalition support or fully independent. Another 52 engaged in side-by-side fighting with Coalition forces.[49]

These totals rose even further by the end of the year. Total Army manpower was over 104,000. As has been noted earlier, President Bush gave a speech on December 18, 2005 stating that, "At this time last year, there were only a handful of Iraqi army and police battalions ready for combat. Now, there are more than 125 Iraqi combat battalions fighting the enemy ... more than 50 are taking the lead ... and we have transferred more than a dozen military bases to Iraqi control."

Similarly, Ambassador Khalilzad stated that Iraqi forces had risen by the end of December from, "a mere handful (of battalions) to 128, with 75 fighting side-by side with coalition forces and 53 taking the lead in the fight. More than 30 battalions have assumed control of their own areas of responsibility, including about 60% of Baghdad, and significant zones in other parts of the country."[50]

Progress in Armored and Heavy Forces

The Iraqi army was also regaining some armored capability. It had a new heavy division was designated the 9th Motorized Rifle Division, made up of two mechanized brigades comprising nine maneuver battalions, and with was to include two battalions of T-72 tanks, two of T-55 tanks, and five of BMP-1 armored personnel carriers.[51] The 1st Mechanized Brigade of this division took over battle space in the Taji area some 25 miles north of Baghdad in January 2006, less than a year after becoming fully operational. It was equipped with T-55s and MTLBs, and largely complete, except for some logistic and supply elements.[52]

By December 2005, 220,000-strong Iraqi Security Forces, including the army and paramilitary police, had received a total of about 600 armored vehicles. They did, however, still have a requirement for nearly 3,000 more, including more than 1,500 armored Humvee utility vehicles.[53]

Transfer of Battlespace to Iraqi Army Forces

As the President and Ambassador made clear, Coalition forces were increasingly turning over key areas and cities to Iraqi Army control in the summer and fall of 2005. These transfers included such activities as:

- June 1 -- The Multinational Force officially transferred full responsibility for security at a base in Dibbis to the Iraqi Army.

- August 21 -- The Multinational Force turned over Camp Zulu in As Suwayrah, Iraq, in the Central South sector, to the Iraqi Army.

- August 31 -- The Iraqi Base Support Unit assumed control of all perimeter force protection in a sector in Kirkuk.

- September 6 -- The MNF handed over security responsibility in Najaf.

- o Iraqi Army units continued to assume security responsibility in the western region, conducting independent security and offensive operations in Rawah and combined zone reconnaissance near the Syrian border.

- o September 6, 2005 -- The U.S. Army handed over its base in Najaf, giving Iraqis full control of the city. Najaf, 100 miles south of Baghdad, is the holiest city in Iraq for Shiite Muslims and was the scene of heavy fighting last year between the U.S. Army and the militia of radical Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr.

- o September 28, 2005 -- The US Army handed over its base in Karbala, south of Baghdad, giving Iraqis full control of the city.

- o September 29, 2005 -- British forces handed over their main base in the city of Basra to the Iraqi military to allow it to take over the main security duties there.

- o October 3, 2005 -- The U.S.-led multinational force in Iraq officially handed over military control of parts of central Baghdad to the Iraqi Army's Sixth Division. The move transferred control of security responsibilities for the Karkh and Rasafa districts.

These transfers became so routine by late 2005 that there is little point in going on with a detailed chronology, but they did not always go smoothly. There were cases where the US had to quietly reassume the mission or reinforce the Iraqis. There also, however, were real successes.

The U.S. military pulled hundreds of troops out of the southern city of Najaf on September 6, 2005, transferring control to the Iraqi military. It did so in spite of the fact that the city was the site of clashes between US forces and Moqtada al-Sadr's Shiite Mehdi Army in August 2004. And in August 2005, tensions surged again when clashes erupted between Sadr's men and Iraqi Interior Ministry forces seen as loyal to a rival Shiite bloc, the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq. Nineteen died in those battles. The Iraqi force replacing the departing US troops was composed primarily of Shiite Muslims.[54]

On September 15, 2005, Muaffak al-Rubbaie, who chairs the committee responsible for security transfers to Iraqi forces, said that Iraqi troops were soon expected to take control of Karbala, Samawa, and Nasiriyah as well. He further suggested that the gradual process of handing over such urban areas to Iraqi control would allow for US troops to begin exiting the country.[55]

In a White House press conference on September 28, 2005, President Bush praised the increasing effectiveness of the Iraqi Security Forces. Bush cited that increasingly Iraqi forces were being left behind to secure cities after Coalition assaults. Bush continued:

> At this moment, more than a dozen Iraqi battalions have completed training and are conducting anti-terrorist operations in Ramadi and Fallujah. More than 20 battalions are operating in Baghdad. And some have taken the lead in operations in major sectors of the city.
>
> In total, more than 100 battalions are operating throughout Iraq. Our commanders report that the Iraqi forces are operating with increasing effectiveness. As Iraqi forces show they're capable of keeping the terrorists out, they're earning the trust and confidence of the Iraqi people, which ensures the success of a free and democratic Iraq.[56]

On October 12, 2005, an article on Jim Dunnigan's Strategypage.com described the efforts to turn the security mission over to Iraqi forces as follows:[57]

> Despite the controversy over independent operations certification that has been in the news recently, the Iraqi military has clearly been coming into their own. Iraqi combat divisions have taken over security work in several parts of the country. On October 3, the 6th Iraqi Division assumed formal authority over Baghdad's central and northern districts, where it has been operating for several months. Also operating in the Baghdad area is the Ninth Iraqi Division (Mechanized), which has been teamed up with the U.S. 1st

Armor in raiding operations over the major road networks. The Iraqi 4th Division has been conducting raids and cordon and searches along the Tigris River Valley north of Baghdad, up to Tikrit. The Iraqi 2nd Division has been operating with good success in extending control in and around Mosul out to Tal Afar. A battalion of the Iraqi 2nd Division was moved to Tal Afar at the end of August by the Iraqi 23rd Air Transport Squadron (operating C-130 airplanes). This was the first report of the new Iraqi Army supported by the new Iraqi Air Force.

The on-going Anbar (central Iraq) province campaign has been firmly anchored by the 1st Iraqi Division, which is also called the Iraqi Intervention Force (IIF). This Iraqi Division has and continues to conduct operations in and around the gateway cities of the Euphrates River Valley – Fallujah, Ar Ramadi, Rawah, and Al Khalidiyah. Units of this Division have a year or more of combat experience. The Division consists of 4 brigades (each with 3 battalions). The IIF has received intense training for urban operations including the art of street fighting and building clearing. In addition to the Intervention force, the Iraqi Army has two elite battalions. The Commando Battalion is a Ranger-type strike force. The Iraqi Counter-terrorism Battalion is trained for insertion and extraction to conduct hostage rescue or leadership raids. These elite forces are selected for experience and undergo extensive screening and background checks. The operations by their nature are more elusive to track.

The Iraqi 5th Iraqi Division has been undergoing training exercises in and near Kirkuk including raids and mass casualty training. The training includes actual operations. At the end of August, elements of the Iraqi 5th Iraqi Division performed six-day combined operations involving elite Iraqi Special Operations Forces. The 8th Iraqi Division operates and trains on the road network between the two rivers south of Baghdad. Several battalions of this Division have completed initial certification toward independent operations. The training is focused on counter-insurgency operations, cordon and search, check points, and patrolling. The training for independent brigade and division operations is continuing. Like all training beyond basic in the new Iraqi army, "live" action is involved, since Iraqi 8th Iraqi Division units have reportedly conducted over 100 operations capturing weapon's caches and apprehending suspected terrorists.

US Army Maj. Gen. Joseph Taluto, commander of the 42nd Infantry Division and Task Force Liberty talked to reporters via teleconference from Baghdad on October 28. He told Pentagon reporters that the number of bases under his command had dropped from 27 to 17 during his tenure, due to transfer to Iraqi forces. Taluto was responsible for anti-insurgent operations in former Hussein strongholds such as Tikrit.[58] As of late November, with 1,000 security operations per month throughout Iraq, the ISF was leading about 25 percent of all operations around the country, compared to 13 percent in May 2005.[59] On November 18, the DoD handed over its 28th base to Iraqi forces with the handover of FOB Danger in Tikrit.

On December 23, 2005, the US Embassy in Baghdad announced that there were now more than 216,000 trained and equipped Iraqi troops, up from 115,000 in November 2004. According to a fact sheet issued by the US Embassy, there were more than 50 Iraqi battalions leading counterinsurgency operations at that time.

Thirty-three Iraqi battalions were now "controlling battle space" throughout the country, with Iraqis controlling 30 of 110 forward operating bases. The release of this information coincided with statements from Donald Rumsfeld and the DoD the same day outlining plans to reduce US presence in Iraq in 2006, based upon the demonstrated improved size and capabilities of the ISF. The fact sheet provided the following additional details:

○ More than 125 Army and Special Police battalions were in the fight, with more than 50 battalions in the lead on counterinsurgency operations.

○ ISF displayed improved performance during recent combat operations such as Tal Afar (In September 2005, About 5,000 Iraqi troops and 3,800 US troops stormed Tal Afar, arresting over 800 suspected Sunni insurgents and killing 300 more.)

- ○ ISF displayed improved performance during recent combat operations in the Western Euphrates River Valley. (Joint force of 2,500 Americans and 1,000 Iraqis launched operation to root out militant enclaves near the Syrian border over the weekend of November 5.)

- ○ Fifty percent of Baghdad Province under operational control of ISF.

This progress continued into early 2006. By early February 2006, a total of some 130 army and special police battalions, with some 500-800 men each, were fighting in the insurgency. This was seven more battalions than in late October. The number of Iraqi brigades (with a nominal three battalions each) had grown from nearly zero in early 2005 to 31. There are eight divisions in formation and Iraq was headed towards a total of 10.

By early December, a total of 50 battalions were at Level 1-3 readiness and active in dealing with the insurgency. In March 2005, there were only three battalions manning their own areas — all in Baghdad. A total of 24 battalions were in charge of their own battle space in October and 33 in late December. In January 2006, the US army transferred an area of operation to an entire Iraqi army division for the first time in Qadissiya and Wassit provinces, an active combat area south of Baghdad. In early February 2006, 40 of the army's 102 battalions had taken over security in the areas where they operated, and in contested areas, such as parts of Fallujah, Ramadi and Samarra.[60]

The army alone had built up to 102 battalions, approaching a then current goal of 110 combat battalions, In January 2006, the US army transferred an area of operation to an entire Iraqi army division for the first time in Qadissiya and Wassit provinces, an active combat area south of Baghdad. In early February 2006, 40 of the army's 102 battalions had taken over security in the areas where they operated, and in contested areas, such as parts of Fallujah, Ramadi and Samarra.[61]

Iraqi Army Combat Manning

The Army was making real progress in developing effective personnel. NCO and specialist training improved, officers and NCOs now had considerable experience, and most training institutions were now functional. The Iraqi Military Academy at Al Rustamiyeh, modeled on the British academy at Sandhurst, graduated its first year-long course of 73 officer cadets on January 19, 2006.[62] The NCO academy at Q-West Base Complex was also fully functional, and provided training to NCOs which had already demonstrated their capability by serving in Iraqi forces. A "master trainer program" to teach Iraqi NCOs how to train other Iraqi soldiers was underway and producing significant numbers of graduates by January 2006.

Nevertheless, much of the Iraqi army's combat unit structure still consisted primarily of combat battalions, rather than balanced forces, and much of its division structure was still badly undermanned. Figure 39 shows both how different the authorized manning levels of Iraq's divisions were at the time, and just how badly key elements of many of Iraq's divisions still were in mid-December 2005.

Figure 39 also shows that some divisions appeared to have high or surplus manning, but actually had a major shortage of officers and NCOs:

- ○ The 1st Division had an excess of enlisted manpower, but only about a third of its authorized officers and NCOs.

- ○ The 2nd Division had an excess of enlisted manpower, but only about a third of its officers and NCOs.

o The 3rd Division had an excess of enlisted manpower and NCOs, but only about 82% of its officers.

o The 4th Division was critically imbalanced with 92% of its officers and 234% of its enlisted manpower, but virtually no NCOs.

o The 5th Division had 136% of its authorized enlisted manpower, but only about 75% of its officers and NCOs.

o The 6th Division had more than twice the authorized strength of Iraq's smallest division, It still, however, had 101% of enlisted manpower, and about 75% of its officers and NCOs.

o The 7th Division had 97% of its enlisted manpower, but less than half of its authorized officers and NCOs.

o The 8th Division had a massive excess of authorized enlisted manpower (159%), but only about 70% of its officers and NCOs.

o The 9th Division had most of its authorized enlisted manpower, 115% of its NCOs, but only about half of its officers.

o The 10th Division had 80% of enlisted manpower, but less than 60% of its officers and NCOs.

Figure 39

Iraq Army Combat Unit Manning by Division: December 10, 2005

1st Division TAJI

	AUTH	ASSN	AWOL	%FILL
Officer	763	429	5	56%
NCOs	4044	1144	21	28%
Enlisted	5222	7016	366	134%
Totals	10029	8589	392	86%

2nd Division AL KINDI

	AUTH	ASSN	AWOL	%FILL
Officer	763	624	0	82%
NCOs	4044	4492	83	111%
Enlisted	5222	6477	137	124%
Totals	10029	11593	220	116%

3rd Division AL KASIK

	AUTH	ASSN	AWOL	%FILL
Officer	589	365	5	62%
NCOs	3060	1220	16	40%
Enlisted	3934	4610	69	117%
Totals	7583	6195	90	82%

4th Division TIKRIT

	AUTH	ASSN	AWOL	%FILL
Officer	683	627	0	92%
NCOs	3670	0	0	0%
Enlisted	4748	11108	330	234%

Totals	9101	11735	330	129%

5th Division KIRKUSH

	AUTH	ASSN	AWOL	%FILL
Officer	615	443	3	72%
NCOs	3474	2597	52	75%
Enlisted	3947	5363	124	136%
Totals	8036	8403	179	105%

6th Division BAGHDAD

	AUTH	ASSN	AWOL	%FILL
Officer	1219	798	5	65%
NCOs	6858	5365	132	78%
Enlisted	8952	9012	225	101%
Totals	17029	15157	362	89%

7th Division RAMADI

	AUTH	ASSN	AWOL	%FILL
Officer	589	269	1	46%
NCOs	3060	1446	39	47%
Enlisted	3934	3799	127	97%
Totals	7583	5514	167	73%

8th Division DIWANIYA

	AUTH	ASSN	AWOL	%FILL
Officer	622	417	0	67%
NCOs	3129	2286	24	73%
Enlisted	4001	6349	181	159%
Totals	7752	9052	205	117%

9th Division TIJI

	AUTH	ASSN	AWOL	%FILL
Officer	439	236	5	54%
NCOs	1216	1393	11	115%
Enlisted	3129	2953	51	94%
Totals	4784	4582	67	96%

10th Division BASRAH

	AUTH	ASSN	AWOL	%FILL
Officer	669	365	0	55%
NCOs	3434	1991	5	58%
Enlisted	4408	3452	11	78%
Totals	8511	5808	5	68%

Source: Iraq Reconstruction Management Office, U.S. Department of State, December 10, 2005

Iraqi Army Support Manning

Iraq was making progress in creating logistic and support units. The Taji National Depot became active during 2005. The Iraqi Army Service and Support Institute (IASSI) at Taji Military Training Base were in fully operation by late 2005. Some 600 Iraqi "leaders" were taking course in supervisory level logistics, transport, maintenance, supply, administrative, and medical specialties by December.[63] The initial intake of 330 students per month was expanding to the point where it reached some 1,100 students in early January.

However, Iraqi army manning and readiness was far more erratic in the case of support units, many of which were still in formation:

- ○ Figure 40 shows that only a few Base Support Units (BSUs) approached the kind of manning levels that could make them effective. It should be noted, however, that many facilities had high levels of specialization and that higher percentages of officers and NCOs were sometimes necessary.

- ○ Figure 41 shows that the high command structure, logistic command, training and doctrine command, and national depot were all still largely "paper units," with no meaningful manpower.

- ○ Figure 41 also shows the Ministry of Defense had all its authorized manpower. This report, however, is of uncertain validity. The Ministry was often overmanned, and had substantial numbers of personnel seconded to it.

- ○ Figure 42 shows that engineering units, a key element of combat support, were making significant progress.

Figure 40

Iraqi Base Support Unit Manning: December 10, 2005

AL KASIK BSU				
	AUTH	ASSN	AWOL	%FILL
Officer	72	13	0	18%
NCOs	374	60	0	16%
Enlisted	589	792	1	134%
Totals	1035	865	1	84%
AN NUMANIYA BSU				
	AUTH	ASSN	AWOL	%FILL
Officer	67	54	0	81%
NCOs	311	302	0	97%
Enlisted	461	432	0	94%

Totals	839	788	0	94%

NEW AL MUTHANA BSU

	AUTH	ASSN	AWOL	%FILL
Officer	42	22	0	52%
NCOs	174	23	0	13%
Enlisted	205	0	0	0%
Totals	421	45	0	11%

AR RUSTAMIYA BSU

	AUTH	ASSN	AWOL	%FILL
Officer	47	9	0	19%
NCOs	197	11	0	6%
Enlisted	306	3	0	1%
Totals	550	23	0	4%

HABANIYA BSU

	AUTH	ASSN	AWOL	%FILL
Officer	51	2	0	4%
NCOs	264	37	0	14%
Enlisted	461	290	59	63%
Totals	776	329	59	42%

KIRKUK BSU

	AUTH	ASSN	AWOL	%FILL
Officer	8	16	0	200%
NCOs	24	32	0	133%
Enlisted	48	0	0	0%
Totals	80	48	0	60%

KIRKUSH BSU

	AUTH	ASSN	AWOL	%FILL
Officer	45	35	0	78%
NCOs	211	99	3	47%
Enlisted	333	442	12	133%
Totals	589	576	15	98%

TAJI BSU

	AUTH	ASSN	AWOL	%FILL
Officer	82	55	0	67%
NCOs	439	1523	0	347%
Enlisted	746	2	0	0%
Totals	1267	1580	0	125%

TALLIL BSU

	AUTH	ASSN	AWOL	%FILL
Officer	50	29	0	58%
NCOs	0	0	0	0%
Enlisted	274	514	0	188%
Totals	324	543	0	168%

BSU ROLL-UP

	AUTH	ASSN	AWOL	%FILL
Officer	464	135	0	51%
NCOs	1994	2087	3	105%
Enlisted	3423	2475	72	72%
Totals	5881	4797	75	82%

Source: Iraq Reconstruction Management Office, U.S. Department of State, December 10, 2005

Figure 41

Iraqi Army Command and Support Unit Manning: December 10, 2005

Iraqi Ground Forces Command				
	AUTH	ASSN	AWOL	%FILL
Officer	315	65	0	21%
NCOs	507	1	0	0%
Enlisted	298	0	0	0%
Totals	822	66	0	8%
Logistics Command				
	AUTH	ASSN	AWOL	%FILL
Officer	0	0	0	0%
NCOs	0	0	0	0%
Enlisted	0	0	0	0%
Totals	0	0	0	0%
Training and Doctrine Command				
	AUTH	ASSN	AWOL	%FILL
Officer	0	0	0	0%
NCOs	0	0	0	0%
Enlisted	0	0	0	0%
Totals	0	0	0	0%

National Depot				
	AUTH	ASSN	AWOL	%FILL
Officer	0	0	0	0%
NCOs	0	0	0	0%

Enlisted	0	0	0	0%
Totals	0	0	0	0%

Ministry of Defense

	AUTH	ASSN	AWOL	%FILL
Officer	408	408	0	100%
NCOs	158	158	0	100%
Enlisted	51	51	0	100%
Totals	566	566	0	100%

SIBS

	AUTH	ASSN	AWOL	%FILL
Officer	225	212	0	94%
NCOs	1575	984	0	62%
Enlisted	1835	2319	0	126%
Totals	3635	3515	0	97%

Source: Iraq Reconstruction Management Office, U.S. Department of State, December 10, 2005

Figure 42

Iraq Army Engineering Unit Manning: December 10, 2005

TAJI				
	AUTH	ASSN	AWOL	%FILL
Officer	41	32	0	78%
NCOs	140	59	0	118%
Enlisted	295	71	0	72%
Totals	573	162	0	85%

Source: Iraq Reconstruction Management Office, U.S. Department of State, December 10, 2005

Iraqi Special Operations Forces

Iraqi Special Operations Forces (ISOF) included approximately 1,300 trained and equipped soldiers organized into a single brigade with two battalion-sized operational units: the Iraqi Counter-Terrorism Task Force and the Iraqi Commandos. A Special Operations Support Battalion and Special Operations training organization have also been activated. The latter two were assessed at "Initial Operating Capability," providing only limited capabilities as of September of 2005.

The Commandos and the Iraqi Counter-Terrorism Task Force conducted frequent reconnaissance and direct action missions including "Operation Restoring Rights" in Tall Afar in the fall of 2005, as well as several precision raids conducted in and around Baghdad. The ISOF operated primarily with U.S. equipment to enhance interoperability with U.S. Special Forces, sustainability, and the long-term bilateral working relationship.

This equipment included the M4 carbine, M240 machine gun, M2 .50 caliber heavy machine gun, and High Mobility Multi-purpose Wheeled Vehicles (HMMWVs). Fielding of individual equipment continued during the past quarter, as did fielding of eight M113 Armored Personnel Carriers (APCs). Although the ISOF is fully equipped for combat operations, they still lack the organic ground and air mobility assets necessary for rapid deployment throughout the country.[64]

Air Force

The Iraqi air force also made progress, although it was scarcely the symbol of Iraqi strength that had existed under Saddam Hussein. It had been a formidable force by regional standards, but Iraqi air power crumbled under the strain of the Gulf Wars, the US-UK enforcement of no fly zones, and the invasion. Iraq's fighter and surface-to-air inventory had been effectively destroyed. Many fighters had been destroyed on the ground or in the air by Coalition forces. Many of Iraq's more advanced aircraft, such as MiG-29s, were flown to Iran for safekeeping during the Gulf War, and had never been returned. Its surface-to-air had been largely destroyed

during the interwar period and the invasion, and Iraqi destroyed most of its remaining combat aircraft during the invasion by burying and dispersing them in ways that made them permanently inoperable. [65]

Figure 43 provides a more detailed look at the Iraqi air force inventory from 1990 to 2005. Data regarding Iraq's inventory before the start of major military operations in 2003 are not precise, as various intelligence figures differ. It is clear, however, that Saddam's air force assets were greatly reduced during Desert Storm. Iraq's air force played the following role before and during the Coalition invasion:[66]

Like so much of Saddam Hussein's military build-up, there was no reason that Iraqi forces should now seek anything like the force levels that existed before the invasion. Nevertheless, it was clear that a new Iraqi Air Force did need to emerge, and one that eventually had the combat strength necessary to defend the country as well as deal with country insurgency.

Creating a new Iraqi Air Force, however, was anything but easy, and the new Iraqi air force still had serious problems even in operating small numbers of systems in late 2005. As **Figure 44** shows, the air force was also badly short of manning for its dedicated combat, service, and logistic support units.

In early September 2005, the service grounded six of the eight surveillance aircraft that it acquired in September 2004. The planes were Jordan Aerospace Industries SAMA CH2000s, equipped with forward-looking infrared sensors. The squadron was left with just two FLIR-equipped Seeker aircraft, acquired in 2004 from Jordan-based Seabird Aviation.

The grounding, according to a U.S. military adviser to the squadron, was more the product of a contract dispute than the fault of the IAF. While the adviser declined to give specifics on the nature of the dispute, the performance of the aircraft seemed to be in question, with an industry expert citing possible problems related to the CH2000's ability to operate effectively in the heat of the Iraqi summer.[67]

The disputed SAMA surveillance craft were purchased as part of a U.S. assistance package aimed at building up the Iraqi air force. As of October 2005, Iraq was operating three Lockheed Martin C-130 transports donated from surplus U.S. stocks, plus small numbers of Aerocomp Comp Air 7SLs, Sama CH2000s, and Seabird SB7L-360 Seekers, Bell UH-1 Hueys, and 5 Model 206 Jet Rangers donated by the UAE. This inventory, however, only provided for basic airlift capabilities and surveillance, and the transport of government officials and other VIPs. Close air support and air attack capabilities are still provided by Coalition forces.

In October, the planning staff at South Carolina-based Central Air Forces Command was assessing what the Iraqi air force would need to fill out its portfolio of air assets. According to Brig. Gen. Allen Peck, then-Commander of Coalition air operations in Afghanistan, an enhanced yet still-limited package would include counterinsurgency, intelligence, reconnaissance, and increased surveillance and airlift capabilities. A light attack aircraft such as the Raytheon T-6A/B Texan II had been discussed as one option.[68]

By December, however, the Iraqi Air Force was beginning to operate its C-130Es more effectively and was beginning to deploy the 23rd Transport Squadron from the US-supported Ali Base in southern Iraq to a new permanent base called "New Al Muthana." The Joint Headquarters Center of the Iraqi Headquarters had become more active in mission planning and assignments, the air force was beginning to use encrypted communications, and during one

exercise, it flew nine C-130E missions with 117 passengers and 106,000 pounds of cargo during a five-day period.[69].

The IAF also resumed helicopter training in late 2005, after problems with spare parts shortages. These problems had sidelined the training squadrons fleet of Jet Rangers for several months, The 2nd and 12th squadrons, with UH-1s, were somewhat more active initially, but their UH-1Hs began to be sent back to the US for reconfiguration into Huey IIs in January 2006.

Figure 43

Iraqi Air Force Equipment: Historical Figures 1990 to 2005

Type			Week Ending		
	1990	1995	2000	2002	2005
Bomber	16	~6	~6	~6	-
Tu-22	8	4	4	4	-
Tu-16	4	-	-	-	-
H-6D (PRC)	4	2	2	2	-
Fighter/Attack	390	216	116	96	-
J-6 (PRC MiG-19)	30	30	-	-	-
MiG-23	90	70	40	20	-
Mirage F-1 EQ/BQ	94	55	45	45	-
Su-7	30	20	-	-	-
Su-20/Su22	70	45	15	15	-
Su-25	60	25	15	15	-
Su-24	25	1	1	1	-
Fighter	245	140	90	85	-
J-7 (PRC MiG-21)	40	35	35	35	-
MiG-21	150	75	40	40	-
MiG-25	25	15	5	5	-
MiG-29	30	15	10	5	-
RECON	~12	~5	~5	~5	16
CH2000	-	-	-	-	8
SB7L-260	-	-	-	-	2
Comp Air SL7	-	-	-	-	6
MiG-21	5	-	-	-	-
MiG-25	7	5	5	5	-
AEW					
II-76 Adnan	2	-	-	-	-
TANKER					
II-76	1	2	2	2	-
TRANSPORT					
C-130E	-	-	-	-	3
An-2	10	5	5	20	-
An-12	10	5	5	3	-
An-24	6	6	6	6	-
An-26	2	2	6	6	-
II-76	19	4	4	4	-
TRAINING					-
AS-202	35	20	20	20	-
EMB-312	80	70	60	50	-
L-29	50	20	-	-	-
L-39	50	50	50	50	-
MB-233	16	8	-	-	-
PC-7	50	25	25	25	-
PC-9	30	30	15	12	-
Yak-11	10	-	-	-	-

*The figures for 1990 and 1995 reflect estimated total aircraft inventory, and during this timeframe most of these aircraft could be assumed to be operable. From 2000 on, the figures reflect operational aircraft only. Thus, the change from 1995 to 2000 reflects a reduction in the estimated number of operable aircraft, rather than the total number of extant airframes, which is probably largely unchanged. Data taken from GlobalSecurity.org, available at http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/iraq/air-force-equipment.htm

Figure 44

Iraqi Navy and Air Transportation Unit Manning: December 10, 2005

NAVY				
	AUTH	ASSN	AWOL	%FILL
Officer	118	129	0	109
Enlisted	513	669	4	130
Totals	631	798	4	126
AIR FORCE				
	AUTH	ASSN	AWOL	%FILL
Officer	318	175	0	55
Enlisted	581	187	1	22
Totals	899	362	1	40

Source: Iraqi Reconstruction Management Office, December 10, 2005.

Navy/Coast Guard

The Iraqi Navy was still in the process of becoming an effective light coastal defense force in the fall of 2005, although recruiting had improved after it adopted the Direct Recruit Replacement program started by the army. The first such naval training program had begun in May. Its naval infantry battalion was being trained for point defense of oil platforms -- a key mission in securing oil exports. In a Defense Department Briefing on September 22, 2005,

By September of 2005, the Iraqi Navy was operating five Predator Class Patrol Boats (PB), 24 Fast Aluminum Boats (Dual Outboard Engines), and ten Rigid Hull Inflatable Boats. The naval forces were further equipped with various small arms and Night Vision Devices. Plans called for the Iraqi Navy to be equipped with three al-Faw class patrol boats by December 2005 and with an additional three by September 2006. However, design deficiencies (e.g., seawater strainers below the waterline) and construction shortcomings (e.g., poor welding) of the one Al Faw boat delivered to date caused delays in fielding the patrol boats.[70]

Iraqi naval forces were also working with US forces in defending Iraq's two oil terminals in the Gulf – the Al Basra Oil Terminal (ABOT) and the Khawr Al Amaya Oil Terminal (KAAOT). The oil exports through these terminals were generating nearly 80% of Iraq's revenue -- less aid -- in late 2005. Iraqi marines had taken full control of the defense of KAAOT, supported by Coalition ships and naval forces in the area. A total of some 50 Iraqi marines worked with a total of some 70 US sailors.[71]

Iraqi coastguard activity was active enough to lead with a clash with Iranian forces in mid-January 2006. They boarded and Iranian ship in the Shatt al-Arab waterway between Iraq and Iraq, some 27 kilometers south of Basra, because they believed it was smuggling oil. Speedboats from the Iranian Navy attacked them, killing one and detaining nine.[72]

Vice Admiral David Nichols reported on the state of the Iraqi Navy. VADM Nichols was the Commander of US Naval Forces Central Command out of Bahrain:

> The Iraqi navy, though small, is already integrated into our maritime security ops in the northern Gulf as well as Iraqi navy marines aboard the Iraqi oil platforms in the northern Gulf… the Iraqi navy, as I said, is fairly small -- about six patrol boats, a total of about 700 sailors, and there are around 400 marines or so. But they have pretty much continuous patrol boat presence in -- again, in our Northern Gulf Maritime Security Ops. Because the Iraqis know the lay of the land and understand what they're looking at out there a lot better than we do. They've been very helpful there. The Iraqi navy marines, as I mentioned, we have them aboard the oil platforms now. And in the not-too-distant future -- and I'm calling that about November -- most of the security effects aboard the oil platforms will be Iraqi navy marines.

> So, on the one hand, there's good progress there by the Iraqi navy, as I think there is overall in Iraq in terms of building the security capability. On the other hand, there is plenty of work to be done there to continue to help the Iraqi navy build, particularly the sustainment, logistics support, other kind of capacity it's going to need to be operationally effective.

VADM Nichols described the Navy's future equipment needs -- planes, ships, and increased capabilities -- as follows in September 2005: [73]

> Well, you know, I think there's good news there. One of the tendencies when you're -- is to go for big ships and big airplanes, kind of blue-water navy sort of capability. But the Iraqis, again, with the help of this U.K.-led team that's part of MNSTC-I -- the Multinational Security Transition Command -- I think they've got their requirements in the right quadrant. They know that they need things like small patrol boats that give them the ability to enforce sovereignty inside their territorial waters, and in the

waterways Shatt al-Arab and Khor Abdullah, which are the key to the re-establishment of legitimate commercial activity in southern Iraq.

I would say the biggest -- the most important thing is not in terms of their requirements in terms of platforms. But again, I'll go back to my last point. It's about building the ability to sustain, and again, MNSTC-I and others, including us, are working hard with them to help them on that. I mean, it's going to be a gradual and an iterative process, and I believe that we're going to be involved in maritime security ops in the northern Gulf for a while.

As Figure 44 has shown, the navy was also badly short of manning for its dedicated combat, service, and logistic support units.

Creating a More Balanced Officer Corps

New efforts were made to include Sunni and former Ba'athist officers and create truly national forces. At the end of major combat operations in 2003, some 400,000 to 500,000 Iraqi soldiers, who had served Saddam Hussein and his Ba'ath party, were relieved of their duties in the disbanding of the Iraqi Army. After more than two years of the insurgency that followed, the Iraqi Army invited former Ba'athists to return to the ranks. On November 2, 2005, the Iraqi Army invited junior Iraqi officers who had served under Saddam Hussein to serve in the ISF.

The move was meant to both help fill the officer corps, and to re-enfranchise the predominantly Sunni Arab cadre of soldiers who had been denied the opportunity of joining the new Iraqi Army in 2003. Recruits to the Iraqi Army had so far been largely Shi'ite or Kurdish, but fought primarily in Sunni areas. This made Iraqi forces appear to be sectarian and ethnic and led some Sunnis to reject participation in the new government and support or tolerate the insurgency.

Senior officers still were not invited back -- the rank of officers accepted into the new Iraqi forces could be no higher than major under the old regime -- although some former senior officers under Saddam had already been selectively recruited back to senior positions in the new army. A statement by the Ministry of Defense indicated that all returning ex-Ba'athist soldiers would undergo a screening process, including interviews designed to screen out potential insurgent elements.[74]

Moreover, it became harder for Sunni officers to hold senior positions with time and not easier. Major efforts were made to block an outstanding Sunni officer from taking command of the Iraqi Army unit that took over command of a security zone in the area near the Green Zone in Baghdad in January 2006. In early February, the Iraqi government, suddenly enforced a six-month-old order from the Iraqi Debaathification Commission that led to the dismissal of 18 Iraqi generals, colonels, and majors -- most Sunni Arabs from Anbar. [75]

More consistent progress occurred in the broader officer training effort. As of November 2005, MNSTC-I reported the following progress in terms of ISF personnel matriculating through professional development and education programs:

- Joint Staff College Instructors: 24

- Joint Staff College Students (Junior/Senior Courses): 88 in training

- Military Academy Graduates (IMAR and Zakho): 377

- Military Academy Cadets (IMAR and Zakho): 657 in training

- Squad Leader and Platoon Sergeant Courses: 441

     ○   Contracting Capacity Course: 170

On December 25, in Al Kisik, the first batch of former Iraqi Army senior enlisted soldiers were inducted into the new Iraqi army after graduating from the Noncommissioned Officer Academy. During their time at the NCO academy, the soldiers went through 23 days of training in marksmanship, close combat, map reading, mission preparedness, search and seizure, and squadron and platoon leadership development.[76]

Figure 45 details the numbers of officers, enlisted, and NCOs who had attended RTC, Academy, and ITB/Branch Schools through December 10, 2005. It shows a low fill level on many areas for both officers and NCOs, and an excess in enlisted ranks.

Figure 45

Iraq Armed Forces Personnel Details – Schools

RTC Schools				
	AUTH	ASSN	AWOL	%FILL
Officer	78	20	0	26
NCOs	411	94	5	23
Enlisted	30	60	9	200
Totals	519	174	14	34
Academy Schools				
	AUTH	ASSN	AWOL	%FILL
Officer	138	103	0	75
NCOs	140	69	0	49
Enlisted	295	202	0	68
Totals	573	374	0	65

ITB/Branch Schools				
	AUTH	ASSN	AWOL	%FILL
Officer	183	93	0	51
NCOs	280	196	0	70
Enlisted	211	178	0	84
Totals	674	467	0	69
Schools Roll-Up				
	AUTH	ASSN	AWOL	%FILL
Officer	216	123	0	57
NCOs	551	163	5	30
Enlisted	325	262	9	81
Totals	1092	548	14	50

Source: Iraq Reconstruction Management Office, U.S. Department of State, December 10, 2005

Equipment

Supply problems continued to persist in the fall of 2005. These problems were reflected in the fact that:

- Iraqis continued to patrol in civilian pickup trucks that offered little protection against roadside bombs, while their US trainers ride alongside them in Humvees.

- Although some 300 million rounds of ammunition had now been supplied, distribution was often still a problem for all kinds of items at the unit level. There were also still reports of isolated cases where some Iraqi soldiers had new pistols but no bullets, while others had night vision goggles and no batteries with which to power them. As might be expected with forces growing this quickly, supply and distribution in the field were still sometimes problems.

- Training teams continued to lack Arabic interpreters.

Some US and Iraqi soldiers blamed the supply problems on a corrupt Iraqi Defense Ministry, which had been reorganized by American authorities following the 2003 invasion, although some such charges seemed to be more the product of political differences than exceptional levels of corruption.

The coalition began to carry out more intensive procurement training, and began to hold three-day training workshops for Iraqi procurement specialists. These training sessions were sponsored by the Ministries of Defense and Interior, MNSTC-I, and the Joint Contracting Command Iraq/Afghanistan.

In October, Iraqi government officials issued an arrest warrant for former Defense Minister Hazim Shaalan and 27 other officials in the alleged disappearance of more than $1 billion from the ministry that was intended for weapons to modernize the army.[77] This followed on US military officials' claims in July 2005 that an elaborate Iraq MOD kickback scheme has led to the loss of $300 million the preceding year, and to the delivery of substandard helicopters, armored personnel carriers, and machine guns.[78]

Yet, there was important progress as well. **Figure 46** summarizes the ongoing deliveries to Iraqi forces during 2005. The US effort was producing major results, and the coalition had organized a NATO Training Mission-Iraq's Equipment and Synchronization Cell to work with the Iraqi Ministries of Defense and Interior, address their needs, and ensuring that donations actually met Iraqi requirements.

This effort helped ensure that Iraqi forces finally began to get significant amounts of armor. Under a $5 million contract with Iraq's Ministry of Defense, Washington-based Defense Solutions was refurbishing 77 T-72M1 tanks, four BT-55 recovery vehicles, 38 BMP armored fighting vehicles, and containers of parts donated by Hungary. This Hungarian equipment was worth some $80 million, and was the largest single element of some $115 million worth of equipment provided by NATO countries during 2005. Denmark, Estonia, Latvia, Romania, and Slovenia were among the other major donors.[79]

The tanks had originally been built in Poland and the Czech Republic, and were mothballed in Hungary, one of the few countries authorized by the US government to do business in Iraq. The refurbishing was part of the effort to stand up the Iraqi Army's first armored division by December.

Fact sheets provided by MNSTC-I in December showed that the 220,000-strong Iraqi Security Forces, including the army and paramilitary police, had received about 600 armored vehicles, yet had a requirement for nearly 3,000 more, including more than 1,500 armored Humvee utility vehicles.[80]

Figure 46

Equipment Developments: June 2004-End 2005

Equipment Issued Since June 2004

(Includes US & Ministry purchases, and NATO deliveries, through November 3, 2005)

Item	Ministry of Defense Forces	Ministry of Interior Forces	Total
Uniforms	436,337	335,880	772,217
Helmets	119,532	27,020	146,552
Body Armor	95,153	132,232	227,385
Radios	15,868	14,513	30,381
AK-47s	94,883	95,874	190,707
Pistols	17,028	149,292	166,320
Machine Guns	8,310	2,190	10,500
Ammunition	203,265,978	137,462,093	340,728,071
Vehicles	12,123	8,306	20,429

Source: MNSTC-I, November 2005

Total Equipment Issued in Calendar 2005

Item	Total
Assault Rifles	95,313
Machine Guns	4,473
Body Armor	94,465
Pick-Ups (LUV)	3,060
Sedans	521
Batons	83,240
Handcuffs	105,578

Source: MNSTC-I, December 31, 2005.

Progress and Problems in the Iraqi Special Security Forces and Police

There was progress within the special security and polices forces as well. A total of 67,500 Iraqi Police Service IPS members had been trained and equipped by September 2005, an increase of 5,500 since July 2005. This fell behind MNSTC-I's goal of 75,000 IPS trained and equipped by October 15, 2005. However, the total rose to 40,500 MOI forces and 77,500 police and highway police by end-December: a total of 118,000. MNSTC-I seemed to have good reason to claim it could still reach its full-authorized complement of 135,000 IPS by February 2007.

As a more tangible indication of the role the police were playing, some 1,497 Iraqi special security and police were killed during 2005, and 3,256 were wounded. The insurgents increasingly made the police a major target in an effort to keep them from deploying and playing an active role.[81]

The US also laid out a broad strategy for further improvements in the police force in a fact sheet the White House issue on January 10, 2006:[82]

> …The Coalition Will Focus Efforts On Improving The Performance Of Iraqi Police. Iraqi Army and police are increasingly able to take the lead in the fight, yet the Iraqi police still lag behind the Army in training and capabilities. One of the major goals in 2006 is to accelerate Iraqi police training and improve the performance of the Ministry of Interior's Special Police, the border police, and the local station police.
>
>> T*he Coalition Will Work To Improve The Interior Ministry's Special Police*. The Interior Ministry's Special Police are the most capable Iraqi police force, and about 19,000 trained and equipped - near our goal for a complete force. Many are professional and diverse, but recently some have been accused of committing abuses against Iraqi civilians. To stop abuses and increase professionalism, the Coalition is working with the Iraqi government to make adjustments in the way these forces are trained. Human rights and rule of law training is being increased. A new Police Ethics and Leadership Institute is being established in Baghdad. To improve capabilities, Iraqi Special Police battalions will be partnered with Coalition battalions so that American forces can work with and train their Iraqi counterparts.
>>
>> *The Coalition Is Helping To Increase The Border Police To Defend Iraq's Frontiers And Stop Foreign Terrorists From Crossing Into The Country*. Manning entrances by land, sea, and airports across the country, Iraq now has 18,000 border police on the job, with the goal of 28,000 trained and equipped by the end of 2006. To better train border police, a new customs academy in Basra has been established, and the Coalition is embedding border police transition teams with Iraqi units, made up of Coalition soldiers and assisted by Department of Homeland Security experts. Iraqi border forces are growing increasingly capable and taking on more responsibility. In November, these forces took the lead in protecting Iraq's Syrian border. The Coalition expects to hand over primary responsibility for all of Iraq's borders to Iraqi border police later this year.
>>
>> *The Coalition Is Helping Iraqis Increase The Size And Capabilities Of The Local Station Police*. These local Iraqi police forces need the most work. There are now over 80,000 local police officers across Iraq - a little more than halfway toward the goal of 135,000. To improve the capabilities of these local police, the Coalition is partnering local Iraqi police units with teams of U.S. military police and international police liaison officers, including retired U.S. police officers. These officers will work with provincial police chiefs and focus on improving local police forces in nine key cities that have seen intense fighting with the terrorists - Baghdad, Baquba, Fallujah, Kirkuk, Mosul, Najaf, Ramadi, Samarra, and Tal Afar.

Nevertheless, the Special Security Forces and police remained a problem. Training had to be stepped up. The police training curriculum was increased between July and September 2005, and

new police academy graduates were receiving informal mentoring from veteran Iraqi police. Some IPS station commanders still questioned the adequacy of initial training, but were continuing training at the station level.[83]

The US and Coalition again had to reorganize their entire effort to advise the Ministry of the Interior. As of October 1, 2005, MNSTC-I took operational control of the former Iraq Reconstruction Management Office (IRMO) MOI and MOD missions. Those two groups, formerly under the control of the US State Department, then became known as P3 MOI and MOD-AST, respectively.[84] The State Department continued to be unable to provide all of the advisors needed, and it had become clear that the development of the police had to be integrated with the development of the armed forces as long as every element of the Iraqi forces had to fight a counterinsurgency campaign and remained under constant attack.

As one senior military advisor, with long experience in Iraq, put it, "This is another indicator of how the civil-military balance is out of whack...in the U.S., not just in Iraq. Development of the ministries is critical to development of the ISF, which is critical to our overall strategy in Iraq. Yet the State Department failed to provide adequate funding or guidance for the IRMO people who were given this task."

Three other major problems that affected MOI force development were:

- o Growing complaints that the special security forces served Shi'ite and Iranian interests and killed and abused Sunnis,

- o Reports of infiltration of special security and police forces by insurgents and,

- o Continuing equipment delivery shortfalls. Because the police were often recruited by local police chiefs with little Coalition oversight, infiltration tended to be somewhat higher in the police than in the military and paramilitary forces. As Figure 46 has already shown, efforts to equip MOI forces remained limited through the fall of 2005; the assets delivered through October 8, 2005 fell significantly short of requirement.

Growing Reports of Security Force and Police Abuses

The transfer of responsibility to Iraqi forces was creating problems as well as solutions. While it reduced the public profile of Coalition forces, and the perception they were "occupiers," it also exposed the deep ethnic divisions within the Iraqi forces. This was particularly true of the special security and police forces in the Ministry of the Interior, and it became increasingly clear that the Minister tolerated abuses of Sunnis, and links between the security forces, police, and militias like the Badr Organization.

These problems were particularly apparent in the greater Baghdad area. When the US Army Haifa Street base became the first base in Baghdad to be handed over the Iraqi control in February 2005, the handover was hailed as a major success in the training effort and a step toward Iraqi control of the security mission. Yet the gradual handover of security responsibilities in Baghdad had some setbacks, and more and more reports of brutality by the security forces began to emerge.

In late November 2005, Ayad Allawi -- Iraq's prime minister until April 2005 -- issued a public warning regarding the state of human rights in Iraq: "Iraq is the centrepiece of this region. If things go wrong, neither Europe nor the US will be safe." The remark came as part of a broader condemnation of the abuses taking place in Iraq, largely, he said, at the hands of fellow Shi'ites in the government. Allawi likened these abuses to the abuses of Saddam Hussein's regime:

"People are doing the same as [in] Saddam Hussein's time and worse," adding that the situation had become so bad that he had ordered his own security detail to fire on any police that attempted to approach his headquarters without prior notice.[85]

Shi'ite and Kurdish elements within the special security forces, police, and other elements of the Ministry of Interior were acting as sectarian and ethnic forces in ways that were becoming an increasing problem. By late 2005, US officials and military sources were complaining that the MOI and Minister Bayan Jabr were not informing them of some MOI and police operations. They expressed particular concern about the actions of the MOI's Maghawir or Fearless Warrior special commando units, and that they were carrying out illegal raids and killings. This 12,000-man force had a number of Sunni officers and had originally been formed under the authority of former Prime Minister Iyad Allawi.

The MOI had recruited large numbers of new Shi'ite members after the new government was formed in April 2005, and its commander, General Rashid Flaih Mohammed was reported to have acknowledged that the unit had had some problems. Sunni police commanders like Brigadier General Mohammed Ezzawi Hussein Alwann, commander of the Farook Brigade, were also purged from the MOI forces, along with junior officers.[86]

The discovery on November 15, 2005 that some 169 Sunnis were held in unacceptably harsh conditions in a bunker in Baghdad, at the Jadiyra prison near the Al Sama palace, raised further issues. Many were tortured, and the Special Investigative Unit carrying out the detentions was an MOI unit run by an MOI brigadier general and colonel. The colonel was an intelligence officer said to have been reporting directly to Jabr.

There was little initial Iraqi follow-up to this discovery, although Prime Minister Jaffari and Minister of Interior Jabr promised an investigation, and DVDs were found of some of the abuses and broadcast over satellite television. This lack of initial follow-up below Jaffari's level occurred in spite of intense pressure by US Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad, the State Department, General Casey and others in the US Command in Baghdad. The Inspector General of the MOI, Nori Nori, was fired without explanation on December 1st. In contrast, Faroq Mohsin Khalil, a spokesman for the Human Rights Ministry, called the allegations baseless.[87]

Yet, the validity of such charges was reinforced when a joint American-Iraqi raid on an MOI detention center early December discovered similar abuses. Some 625 more prisoners were found in the basement of the detention center, which was run by commando units in the MOI. They were severely overcrowded, some appeared to be abused or tortured, and 13 had to be hospitalized.[88]

The situation was made still worse by charges that Iranian personnel had been present, and when Sami al-Anbaggi, the Director General of the MOI, contradicted the US officers present at the raid. He said that some of the prisoners had merely been slapped, and that the prisoners that were hospitalized were only suffering from headaches.[89] In fact, US officers had found that 12 of the prisoners had had bones broken; fingernails pulled out, had been given electric shocks, and had been burned with cigarettes.[90]

On November 17, the United States expanded its existing probe of alleged prison abuses to include all Iraq-run detention sites. Law enforcement officials from the FBI, Justice Department, US Embassy, and US-led military forces would aid an Iraqi-appointed citizens group in the prison investigation. These abuses were so serious that US and Iraqi officials promised an

inspection of all of the more than 1,000 detention centers being run in Iraq.[91] There were, however, uncertainties surrounding some other charges, as Sunni Islamic insurgents had every reason to try to implicate the security services. Some of the killings in late November involved key Sunni politicians like Ayad Alizi and Al Hussein, leading members of the Iraqi Islamic Party, which was a member of the Sunni coalition competing in the December 15th elections. Shi'ites seemed to have little reason to strike at such targets.[92]

On December 27, the Bush administration suggested that the prisons where hundreds of detainees were abused were only "nominally" under the control of the central government in Baghdad. State Department spokesman Adam Ereli stated that "The problem has clearly not been solved and the problem is widespread."

These developments led to major changes in the advisory effort to both the special security forces and the regular police. While the details are discussed later, the Bush Administration took these problems so seriously that President Bush made the efforts to correct them a major part of his speech on the war to the Veterans of Foreign Wars on January 10, 2006, and made improvements in the security forces and police a major part of US strategy in Iraq:[93]

> Our commanders tell me that the Iraqi army and police are increasingly able to take the lead in the fight. Yet the Iraqi police still lag behind the army in training and capabilities --and so one of our major goals in 2006 is to accelerate the training of the Iraqi police. We'll focus our efforts on improving the performance of three categories of the Iraqi police. First, we will work to improve the Special Police under the Ministry of Interior, who are fighting alongside the Iraqi army against the terrorists and Saddamists. Second, we will expand and strengthen the border police charged with securing Iraq's frontiers. And, third, we will increase our focus on training local station police, so they can protect their communities from the criminals and terrorists.

> The Interior Ministry's Special Police are the most capable of the Iraqi police forces. There are now about 19,000 Iraqi Special Police trained and equipped -- which is near our goal for a complete force. Many of these Special Police forces are professional; they represent all aspects of society. But recently some have been accused of committing abuses against Iraqi civilians. That's unacceptable. That's unacceptable to the United States government; it's unacceptable to the Iraqi government, as well. And Iraqi leaders are committed to stopping these abuses. We must ensure that the police understand that their mission is to serve the cause of a free Iraq -- not to address old grievances by taking justice into their own hands.

> To stop abuses and increase the professionalism of all the Iraqi Special Police units, we're making several adjustments in the way these forces are trained. We're working with the Iraqi government to increase the training Iraqi Special Police receive in human rights and the rule of law. We're establishing a new Police Ethics and Leadership Institute in Baghdad that will help train Iraqi officers in the role of the police in a democratic system -- and establish clear lesson plans in professional ethics for all nine Iraqi police academies. To improve their capability, we will soon begin implementing a program that has been effective with the Iraqi army -- and that is partnering U.S. battalions with Iraqi Special Police battalions. These U.S. forces will work with and train their Iraqi counterparts, helping them become more capable and professional, so they can serve and protect all the Iraqi's without discrimination.

> Second, we're working to increase the number of border police that can defend Iraq's frontiers and stop foreign terrorists from crossing into that country. Iraqis now have 18,000 border police on the job, manning land and sea and airports across the country. Our goal is to have a total of 28,000 Iraqi border police trained and equipped by the end of this year.

> To better train Iraqi police, we've established a new customs academy in Basra. We're embedding border police transition teams with Iraqi units, made up of coalition soldiers and assisted by experts from our Department of Homeland Security. The Iraqi border police are growing increasingly capable and are taking on more responsibility. In November, these forces took the lead in protecting Iraq's Syrian border, with coalition forces playing a supporting role. In other words, they're beginning to take the lead and take responsibility for doing their duty to protect the new democracy. And as more skilled border police come

on line, we're going to hand over primary responsibility for all of Iraq's borders to Iraqi border police later on this year.

Finally, we're helping Iraqis build the numbers and capabilities of the local station police. These are the Iraqi police forces that need the most work. There are now over 80,000 local police officers across Iraq -- a little more than halfway toward our goal of 135,000. To improve the capabilities of these local police, we're taking a concept that worked well in the Balkans and applying it to Iraq -- partnering local Iraqi police stations with teams of U.S. military police and international police liaison officers, including retired U.S. police officers.

These officers will work with provincial police chiefs across Iraq, and focus on improving local police forces in nine key cities that have seen intense fighting with the terrorists. By strengthening local police in these cities, we can help Iraqis provide security in areas cleared of enemy forces and make it harder for these thugs to return. And by strengthening Iraqi local police in these cities, we'll help them earn the confidence of the local population, which will make it easier for local leaders and residents to accelerate reconstruction and rebuild their lives.

The training of the Iraqi police is an enormous task and, frankly, it hasn't always gone smoothly. Yet we're making progress -- and our soldiers see the transformation up close. Army Staff Sergeant Dan MacDonald is a Philadelphia cop who helped train Iraqi police officers in Baghdad. He says this of his Iraqi comrades: "From where they were when we got here to where they are now, it's like two different groups of people. They're hyped-up, they look sharp, they're a lot better with their weapons. I'd take these guys out with me back home." If he's going to take them back home in Philadelphia, they must be improving. (Laughter and applause.)

As we bring more Iraqi police and soldiers online in the months ahead, we will increasingly shift our focus from generating new Iraqi forces to preparing Iraqis to take primary responsibility for the security of their own country. At this moment, more than 35 Iraqi battalions have assumed control of their own areas of responsibility -- including nearly half of the Baghdad province, and sectors of south-central Iraq, southeast Iraq, western Iraq, and north-central Iraq. And in the year ahead, we will continue handing more territory to Iraqi forces, with the goal of having the Iraqis in control of more territory than the coalition by the end of 2006.

As Iraqi forces take more responsibility, this will free up coalition forces to conduct specialized operations against the most dangerous terrorists, like Zarqawi and his associates, so we can defeat the terrorists in Iraq so we do not have to face them here at home. (Applause.) We will continue to hand over territory to the Iraqis so they can defend their democracy, so they can do the hard work, and our troops will be able to come home with the honor they have earned.

I've said that our strategy in Iraq can be summed up this way: As the Iraqis stand up, we will stand down. And with more Iraqi forces demonstrating the capabilities needed to achieve victory, our commanders on the ground have determined that we can decrease our combat forces in Iraq from 17 to 15 brigades by the spring of 2006. That's what they've decided. And when they decide something, I listen to them. This adjustment will result in a net decrease of several thousand troops below the pre-election baseline of 138,000 U.S. troops in Iraq. This decrease comes in addition to the reduction of about 20,000 troops who were in Iraq largely to assist with the security during the December elections.

The US soon gave these words more tangible meaning. On January 15, 2006 it announced that it would send 2,000 more MPs to help train the Iraqi police, and that these advisors would begin expanding to cover local police stations and provincial and district headquarters in all of Iraq's 18 provinces. These personnel were to be formed into transition teams of 12-24 men and women with military police, civilian trainers and translators. Soldiers from the 49th Military Police Brigade in the Army National Guard were also to be stationed in nine key cities: Baghdad, Ramadi, Fallujah, Kirkuk, Baquba, Samarra, and Mosul as well as the provincial and district headquarters.[94]

To put this effort in perspective, there then were a total of some 500 civilian and military police advisors, few of which were deployed in the field. As a result, the new advisory effort was a

close match in numbers to the some 2,500 US uniformed military already embedded in Iraqi military units and in the border police. The US also announced on January 15th that it had now trained and equipped some 80,000 police, well over half of the goal of 135,000 that MNF-I had established for 2007.[95]

The Iraqi government and MNSTC-I also stepped up efforts to review the payrolls for the police, and to ensure that all police and recruits had had their credentials checked, and were included in a vetted data base that included fingerprints and retinal scans. Paying for "phantom" police personnel continued to be a serious problem.

The Problem of Ties to the Badr Organization and SCIRI

There were good reasons for these actions, and the other US and Iraqi government efforts described later in this analysis. It was all too clear that a number of MOI special security and police units had ties to various Shi'ite militias. Moreover, so many members of the Shi'ite and Kurdish militias had joined such units and the police, that the lines between them and the militias were often unclear.

Although the CPA had tried to establish legal barriers to maintaining militias by issuing Order 91 in April 2004, the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI) and the faction of Abdul Aziz al-Hakim still had large militia elements. These were forces that Sunni groups increasingly accused of committing atrocities against them since the spring of 2005. Al Dawa, the Badr Organization, and the Iraqi Hezbollah remained potential security problems, and Sunnis feel particularly threatened by the Badr Organization.

A provision in the Iraqi Constitution allowing for regional security forces complicated matters further. Article 9 of the August 28 draft of the constitution stated that that "Forming military militias outside the framework of the armed forces is banned." However, Article 18 established that "The regional government shall be in charge of all that's required for administering the region, especially establishing and regulating internal security forces for the region such as police, security and guards for the region."[96]

Leading Shi'ite politicians also showed how such forces might be used. In late November 2005, Abdul Aziz Hakim, leader of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, called for the United States to allow Iraqi militias to take a more active role against insurgents, saying that the insurgency would only be defeated should the US let Iraq get tough. Hakim was not an elected official, but was the overseer of the party's armed wing, the Badr Organization. He claimed the United States had quashed Iraqi plans that could have dealt with the insurgency more swiftly than the current progress. His calls for a tougher stance on the Sunni insurgency were also mixed with renewed calls for a massive federal region in the Shi'ite south during a more than hour-long conversation from his home and office in Baghdad, underlining the potential instability and divisiveness that SICRI and the Badr Organization could foment.[97]

It was clear that any regional forces could be a source of serious problems for both Iraq and the Coalition, and for the development of national and responsible Iraqi forces. One concern was that the light arms supplied to the security forces and police, and heavy weaponry provided to the Iraqi National Army, might end up in the hands of these regional, ethnic, or sectarian forces – forces like the Badr Organization in the south. The stockpiling of U.S.-supplied arms by competing ethnic and sectarian forces would at a minimum add to sectarian tensions, and might be critical in any serious civil war.[98]

The Bush Administration summarized the risks posed by Shi'ite militias as follows in its October 13, 2005 report to the Congress on "Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq":

> More than a dozen militias have been documented in Iraq, varying in size from less than a hundred to tens of thousands of members. Some were organized in loose cellular structures, while others had a more conventional military organization. Some were concentrated around a single locale, while others had a more regional footprint. Some of them were wholly indigenous, while others received support such as training, equipment, and money from outside Iraq.

> Typically, the militias were armed with light weapons and operated as cells or small units. Even if they do not take up arms against the government, militias can pose a long-term challenge to the authority and sovereignty of the central government. This was the driving force behind the creation of Coalition Provisional Authority Order 91 and the Transition and Re-Integration Committee. For the same reason, Article 27 of the Transitional Administrative Law and Article 9 of the draft Iraqi Constitution prohibit armed forces or militias that are not part of the Iraqi Armed Forces.

> The realities of Iraq's political and security landscape work against completing the transition and re-integration of all Iraqi militias in the short-term. Provided the constitution is ratified in October, the government elected in December will have a four-year term of office, and it will have the task of executing the militia-control provisions of the constitution. Although it is often referred to as an Iraqi militia, the Jaysh al Mahdi (or "Mahdi Army") of radical Shia cleric Muqtada al Sadr fought Coalition Forces and Iraqi forces in April and August of 2004. The Peshmerga and the Badr Organization are viewed as militias by the Iraqi government and Coalition Forces, while the Mahdi Army is viewed as a potentially insurgent organization.

> ○ Badr Organization. Officially known as the Badr Organization for the Reconstruction and Development, it is the militia of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iran (SCIRI), the largest Shi'ite party in Iraq. It is reported to have links with both Iranian and Iraqi intelligence services and provides protective security for many Shi'ite religious sites as well as religious and secular leaders. Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani is protected by the Badr militia. The Badr Organization has been implicated in the revenge killings of Ba'athists and has also been involved in combat and street fighting with Muqtada al-Sadr's Mahdi Army.

> ○ Jaysh al Mahdi. The Mahdi Army of Muqtada al-Sadr engaged in open combat with Coalition and Iraqi forces in April and August of last year, most notably in the battles in and around Najaf. The Mahdi Army has continued to exist after an October 2004 ceasefire agreement, although the Iraqi government has made repeated calls for its disbandment. The exact size of the organization is unknown. There is evidence that they are supplied from sources outside of Iraq, most notably Iran.

These charges relating to Iran's role in the Badr Organization and MOI forces also became more serious towards the end of 2005.[99] General Casey stated that, "They're putting millions of dollars into the south to influence the elections. It's funded primarily through their charity organizations and also Badr and some of these political parties. A lot of their guys (Badr) are going into the police and military…It's not infiltration. They're upfront about it (their militia affiliation) and day-to-day things are okay. But then there's a crisis. What you see happening is that people are signing up but their loyalties are more to a militia leader than the chief of police."

Casey also confirmed that the militias were responsible for the abuse or killing of Sunni Arabs, "I don't know that it's the Badr Corps that's doing it…or the Mehdi that's doing it, but I have no doubt that people who are associated with those groups are involved."

General Munatzar Jassim al-Sammari, who had been in charge of Iraq's special security forces until he was removed by Jabr and had left Iraq, made more specific charges although these charges were not confirmed. The general claimed that a senior Iranian intelligence officer had been in charge of the detention facility the US raided in mid-December, that the officer was named Tahseer Nasr Lawandi, and worked directly under the Kurdish Deputy Minister of the

MOI, General Hussein Kamel.[100] Lawandi had been a Colonel in Iranian intelligence and had been given Iraqi citizenship on May 12, 2004.

Ironically, one of the leaders of the Badr Organization, Hadi al-Amari, was scarcely reassuring when he coupled his denial of any Iranian influence to the statement that, "Allawi receives money from America, from the CIA. All they talk about is our funding from Iran. We are funded by some Gulf countries and the Islamic Republic of Iran. We don't hide it." [101]

Reports also began to surface that the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq was separately recruiting young Iraqi Shi'ite men and sending them to Iran for training as either part of the Badr Organization or as separate operatives. Specific reference was made to training at the Khomeini training base near the Khavaran-Semman highway, These reports came from Iranian opposition sources with ties to terrorists, and could not be confirmed in depth, but Coalition and Iraqi officials gave them some credibility. [102]

This publicity and pressure from the US government and senior Iraqi political figures did lead the Minister of Interior to take a more proactive role. In early January, Minister Jabr fired three top commanders of the special security services as well as a 136-man unit in the Basra area that was blocking the work of the MOI's internal affairs office. The commanders who were dismissed included the heads of the 1st and 2nd Brigade of the Public Order Division and the head of the 2nd Commando Brigade. The 2nd Commando Brigade had been a major source of abuses by the security services and its name was also changed from the "Wolf Brigade" to the "Freedom Brigade." The MOI also agreed to transfer all prisoners and detainees from the small facilities run by individual units to one of the central units within 48 hours, and place these facilities under the Ministry of Justice.[103]

This did not, however, solve the problem at either the national or local level. It was clear that Iraqi forces needed additional training and additional efforts to mix Arab Sunnis into units that often showed a largely Shi'ite or Kurdish face. It was also clear that any inclusive national political compromises now depended on Sunni confidence that neither the Ministry of Defense nor Ministry of the Interior would be Shi'ite-dominated, and used against the Sunnis.[104]

The Special Problems Posed by Sadr's Mehdi Militia

Coalition officials stated on background that these risks would be far greater if weapons fell into the hands of anti-Coalition militias, or elements of the special security forces and police joined them. The Mehdi Militia of the Moqtada Al Sadr was of particular concern. His organization was increasingly accused of political assassinations and kidnappings in 2005. Sadr's Mahdi Army also expanded its control over certain areas in cities like Basra and Sadr City, and created an environment of fear according to local accounts.[105]

Sadr's supporters sponsored demonstrations calling for US forces to leave Iraq in April 2005, and top Sadr aides in his Independent National Bloc issued warnings to Ibrahim Jafari, then the prime minister designate, that he must pay more attention to these demands or that the Sadr faction might leave the United Iraqi Alliance and become an active part of the opposition. [106] The group also demanded the release of some 200 Sadr activists arrested during earlier fighting and that all criminal charges against Sadr be dropped.[107]

Sadr was able to exploit the political weakness and divisions of other Shi'ite movements in the south and their lack of ability to govern, as well as the fact other hard-line Islamist movements won significant numbers of seats in local governments in key areas like Basra.[108] In the summer

of 2005, Sadr attempted to collect one million signatures on a petition that asked the Coalition to leave Iraq in what appeared to be a burgeoning attempt to recast himself as a major political force within Iraq. Sadr's Council for Vic and Virtue launched at least one attack on secular students in Basra for having a mixed picnic.[109]

Sadr revived the Mahdi Army, which was again beginning to be openly active in parts of Southern Iraq such as Basra, Amarah, and Nasiriyah, and still had cells in Najaf and Kut as well. While some US official sources stated the army was relatively weak, it began to hold parades again, and while only limited numbers of arms were displayed, it was clear that such weapons were still available in the places where they had been hidden during the fighting the previous year.[110]

Other signs pointed to the steadily rising influence of the Mahdi Army. In Baghdad's Sadr City, home to 2 million Shiites, by the fall of 2005 residents had begun to carry Mahdi-issued identification cards to assure safe passage into certain parts of the city, or into certain buildings. The cards are widely carried by the Mahdi Army, in open defiance of central government control and security in Sadr city, and even independent contractors operating in Baghdad had bought into the system in order to carry out business in the Shiite ghetto.[111]

By the late spring of 2005, the Mahdi Army seemed to be the largest independent force in Basra, played a major role in policing Amarah, and had effectively struck a bargain with the government police in Nasiriyah that allowed it to play a major role. By the late fall of 2005, some sources estimated that some 90% of the 35,000 police in Northeast Baghdad had ties to Sadr and the Mahdi forces. They were reported to be playing a major role in pushing Sunnis out of Shi'ite neighborhoods.[112]

Unlike most militias, the Mahdi Army had the active participation of Shi'ite clergy, mostly "activists" who strongly supported Sadr. One reason for their rebirth was the lack of effective action by the government. For example, the government police in Nasiriyah had 5,500 men, but was 2,500 men short of its goal.[113]In August 2005, Basra police Chief Hassam Sawadi said that he had lost control over three-quarters of his police force, and that men in his ranks were using their power to assassinate opponents.[114]

Sadr remained publicly supportive of the political process in Iraq, and urged Shiites to avoid sectarian fighting with the Sunni population. Yet, while Sadr urged his followers not to be drawn into sectarian fighting, his organization was accused of a rash of political assassinations and kidnappings in the Shiite south in the summer of 2005. On August 24, 2005, seven people died in an attack on Sadr's office in Najaf, which led to unrest among Shiite populations there and in other cities. Sadr's movement also began to publicly reassert in the late in late summer of 2005, capitalizing on the release of Hazem Araji and other Sadr leaders from prison.

Sadr did continue to call for calm and continued his public support of non-reprisal. He sided with anti-federalist Sunni leaders during the drafting and review of the Iraqi constitution[115] He also supported continued Shiite political involvement in the new government, although many feared that he eventually wanted to see a fundamentalist government appear.

Yet, his organization also staged several large demonstrations as a show of strength. In mid-September, militiamen from the Mahdi Army in Basra directly engaged in battles against US and British troops. Shootouts between supporters of Sadr and Coalition forces also erupted in Sadr City during the last week in September. On October 27, members of the Mahdi army clashed

with Sunni gunmen outside of Baghdad. The fighting, which occurred in the village of Bismaya in the Nahrawan area south of Baghdad, claimed more than thirty lives.[116] The militia battles in October proved to be the deadliest in months.

Sadr officials were quite open about the Mahdi Army's role in an October 27 gun battle in Nahrawan. The Shiite militia descended on a Sunni Arab kidnapping ring after the Sunnis had abducted and mutilated a Sadrist. Sadr officials distanced themselves that same month, however, from the kidnapping of "The Guardian" newspaper reporter Rory Carroll. A Sadr aid, Sheik Rubaie said that the Mahdi Army had nothing to do with the abduction, and that the militiamen were acting without approval of the organization.[117] This denial, however, scarcely improved the situation. In late November, Sadr's militiamen ambushed a group of Sunni fighters on a plantation near Baghdad to avenge the deaths of one of their fellow Shiite militiamen. At least 21 bodies were left behind as Sadr's men left the scene.

As a sign of his enduring power, Sadr entered into a new political alliance with the two largest Shiite parties in the country on the very same day his forces battled militias in Bismaya. The alliance brought together Prime Minister Ibrahim Jafari's Dawa Party, the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, and Sadr's supporters. The move made Moqtada Sadr an even larger player in Iraqi politics. Because of the deal, Sadr-backed candidates would appear on the same ticket alongside members of the Shiite-led government in the December elections. Sadr had earlier pledged to support the elections but said he would not be supporting any particular list of candidates.

Although US officials were encouraged by Sadr's pledge to support the December 15 elections, they remained cautiously optimistic in the fall of 2005. Sadr has continuously refused to disband his militia, which continued to grow in power and influence in the fall of 2005. There were also reports that many Mahdi members had joined the police and other government security forces, contributing to the already fragmented nature of the Iraqi security forces.

Efforts to disband and disarm the remaining militias may at best be an administrative fiction until the Kurdish, Shi'ite, and Sunni groups involved become convinced that the new government is legitimate, will serve their interests, and can provide true security.

If these groups should agree to demobilize, the legal basis for such a program remains in place. Moreover, converting a substantial part of the Peshmerga to a border security force might help deal with the most serious problem Iraq faces, which is to integrate the Kurds into a federal system where they are truly part of an Iraqi nation but still feel secure. Converting and disbanding the Shi'ite militias should also become progressively easier if the Iraqi government demonstrates that the Shi'ite majority has finally achieved a fair share of power and the nation's wealth.

The fact remains, however, that massive amounts of arms will almost certainly continue to be hidden or be readily available, given the number of arms already disbursed among Iraq's population. Moreover, reconstituting or creating new militias will be all too easy if ethnic and sectarian differences become violent, and Lebanon and the Balkans are clear warnings that "national" military, security, and police forces can suddenly fracture along partisan lines and become instruments of civil war.

The Peshmerga Problem

The Kurdish Peshmerga militias have so far presented fewer problems than the Shi'ite militias, but former Peshmerga militia are a major part of or dominate the manning in a number of ISF units. The Peshmerga effectively controls the regional security operations in the Kurdish dominated provinces in the north, and Kurdish actions in the Kirkuk area and other mixed ethnic and sectarian areas near the Kurdish zone have increasingly caused friction with other Iraqis.

By late 2005, the relatively high level of Kurdish militiamen now in the Iraqi Army, security forces, and police had become another cause of growing concern in the effort to create a cohesive fighting force. According to some estimates, Kurdish leaders had inserted about 10,000 of their militia members into Iraqi Army divisions in Northern Iraq in order to lay the groundwork for gaining control of oil-rich Kirkuk, and perhaps a portion of Mosul, in an effort to secure the expanded borders of an independent Kurdistan.

A Kurdish soldier named Gabriel Mohammed, serving in the Iraqi army, remarked to a Knight Ridder reporter that "It doesn't matter if we have to fight Arabs in our own battalion…Kirkuk will be ours." In another anecdotal episode, Iraqi Army Col. Talib Naji, a Kurd, said that he would resist any efforts to dilute the Kurdish presence in his brigade: "The ministry of Defense recently sent me 150 Arab soldiers from the south. After two weeks of service, we sent them away. We did not accept them. We will not let them carry through with their plans to bring more Arab soldiers here."[118]

There were Sunni complaints about Peshmerga-dominated ISF units operating in Sunni Arab areas, as well as complaints about Shi'ite units. The Peshmerga was accused of intimidating other Iraqi ethnic groups, and "soft" ethnic cleansing, in areas like Kirkuk and it was often difficult to be sure that Kurdish dominated security force and police units were not involved. There also were repeated charges by Turcoman groups that they were being abused by Kurdish dominated ISF units and the Peshmerga, as well as charges by the Kurdish political opponents of the PUK/KDP, the parties that dominate and control the Peshmerga, that they have been subject to the same abuses.

The issue of Kirkuk was a growing concern as well. Capt. Greg Ford, intelligence officer for the First Brigade of the 101st Airborne Division, estimated in December 2005 that 85,000 to 350,000 Kurds had moved back into the Kirkuk region since 2003. Coveted for its oil reserves, Kirkuk has been the object of Kurdish ambitions to capture an ethnic majority in the city that Saddam Hussein had "Arabized" over decades of rule. While ethnic Turcomans had a similar claim to the city – as well as the Arab population, many of whom were moved to the region during Hussein's reign – worries were heightening that Kurdish militia dominance in the region through the Peshmerga forces was setting the stage for ethnic conflict.[119]

This situation became much worse after the December 15th election. The Kurds scored a victory that the Arabs and Turcomans claimed was the result of packing the region with outsiders. Soft ethnic cleansing increased as did pressure on non-Kurds and incidents of ethnic violence rose. Elsewhere other Iraqi military and security forces complained that Kurds worse unauthorized uniform patches labeling them as Kurds, acted more as Kurds than Iraqis, and sometimes did not speak Arabic – creating problems in Arab areas and in dealing with other members of the Iraqi forces.

There is no clear way to put such charges and complaints in perspective. At a minimum, however, the interaction between the ISF and Peshmerga presented a growing political and security problem and a further source of division within the country and Iraqi forces. In the worst case, it risked becoming another major fault line that could divide Iraqi forces along ethnic lines. At the same time, there were few practical short- to medium-term alternatives to the de facto preservation of Kurdish forces. The Kurds had little historical reasons to trust "national solutions" in an Arab-dominated nation. It seemed likely, therefore, that some form of Kurdish forces had to be preserved as part of any political compromise or solution reached by the new government elected on December 15th.

It was also clear that as of early February 2006, the efforts to reassure Sunnis that they could trust the security forces and police had not yet taken hold. If anything, the situation in Baghdad had grown worse. At the same time, Iraqi politicians were attempting to create a unity government, more and more rumors and reports surfaced that death squads were attacking Sunnis. No clear figures were available, but it was clear that Sunnis were being killed and detained, and the security forces and police were usually blamed within the Sunni community in spite of repeated denials by the Ministry of the Interior and other officials in Iraq's Shiite-led government.[120]

In one case that was becoming all too typical, a total of 14 bodies was found dumped in the Shula neighborhood of Baghdad on February 5, 2006. They were bound and blindfolded, shot in the head, and showed signs of torture. The Association of Muslim Scholars, a Sunni religious group, claimed they were members of a group from a Sunni mosque that the police had arrested two days earlier. The bodies of 16 other men had been found in Baghdad's eastern suburbs on February 2, 2006.

While no evidence tied the killings to Iraqi forces, Baha Aldin Naqshabandi, a spokesman of the Iraqi Islamic Party, the nation's largest Sunni party, charged that "Forces of the Ministry of the Interior are making attacks in many districts of Baghdad and arrest people without any accusation, simply because they are Sunni people." Naqshabandi went on to warn of "nationwide civil disobedience" if such raids and detentions did not stop. [121]

The U.N. Assistance Mission for Iraq was quoted as stating, "Scores of individuals are regularly detained in the middle of night and without judicial warrant. The rule of law continues to be challenged by the existence of militias and other groups who continue to act with impunity, confirming an urgent need for the State to assert control over its security forces and all armed groups in the country." [122]

Sunni Militias

The pressure on Arab Sunnis from the Arab Shi'ites and Kurds helped fuel the insurgency, but it also led those Sunnis willing to cooperate with the Coalition and new Iraqi government to develop their own forces. Many were local and informal, operating at the tribal and neighborhood level. In some cases, the end result was a force that was not loyal to either the insurgency or supportive of the Coalition and new Iraqi government. Some forces were part of the insurgency, and others were formed to deal with the threat posed by the more extreme Sunni Arab insurgents, such as the Zarqawi movement.

In a number of cases, the Coalition and new Iraqi government either helped create such militias or support them. In the border area and part of Western Iraq, for example, MNF-I and the Iraqi

government found it was cheaper and more effective to buy the loyalty of local tribal militias than fight the insurgents – particularly in those areas where outside insurgents had alienated the local residents. These developments led US Army Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch to go so far as to say that "The local insurgents have become part of the solution and not part of the problem."[123]

The Iraqi Minister of Defense, Saadoun Dulaymi, strongly encouraged this development, and MNF-I provided funds, weapons, and some training. US officers and Ambassador Khalilzad met with key leaders. In some Sunni urban areas and towns, police forces were created that came close to being local militias, at least in terms of their recruiting base. In other areas, Sunnis were organized at the tribal or local level in an effort to protected key facilities and projects, like oil pipelines. These efforts were given further incentive when a bombing by Zarqawi forces killed some 70 Arab Sunnis at a recruiting station in Ramadi in January 2006. [124]

Mithal Alusi, a Sunni Arab parliamentarian, was quoted as saying that, "There is a change…After these attacks, and after the elections, we find the people are eager to be rid of the terrorists." Sheikh Osama al-Jadaan, of the Karabila tribe in Anbar province was quoted as saying that, "They claim to be striking at the US occupation, but the reality is they are killing innocent Iraqis in the markets, in mosques, in churches, and in our schools," although he also noted that, "We are caught in the middle between the terrorists coming to destroy us with their suicide belts, their TNT, and their car bombs, and the American Army that destroys our homes, takes our weapons, and doesn't allow us to defend ourselves against the terrorists." [125]

At the same time, other Sunni voices gave a different message. Sheikh Abdel Salaam al-Qubaysi, a leader of the Muslim Scholars Association, a hard-line Sunni group with much of its base in Anbar, stated that, "These are just a few sheikhs who want to get political power by claiming to be fighting the terrorists, and to be speaking for the resistance…They are slaves in the pockets of the occupation. They have no weight in the streets." He also blamed the attacks in Anbar on foreign Shi'ites, "We know that 40,000 militants from Iran have to come to Iraq," he says. "I don't rule out that they did this to prevent Sunni Arabs from joining the Iraqi Army." [126]

As has been discussed earlier, the results were sometimes mixed. Some groups became involved in the equivalent of an auction between the Coalition and new Iraqi government and the insurgents. Some took the money and continued to support the insurgency. In a number of areas, however, the results were positive. Success varied by individual case.

What was more threatening was that some Sunni Arabs sought to form their own militia at the national level to counter Shi'ite and Kurdish forces. In early February, a force called the "Anbar Revolutionaries" emerged which opposed the more extreme elements of the insurgency like Al Qa'ida, but also was created to help secure Arab Sunnis against Arab Shi'ite and Kurdish pressure and attacks. According to press reports, this force was composed largely of former Ba'ath loyalists, Saddam, moderate Iraqi Sunni Islamists and other Arab Sunni nationalists. It was organized partly to resist pressure from Arab Sunni Islamist extremists, but its main purpose was to deal with the threat from the Shi'ite Badr Brigades,

One Sunni Arab official involved was quoted as saying that, "The Anbar Revolutionaries are here to stay, we need them to protect the people…Sunnis do not have the Shi'ite Badr (Brigades) or the Kurdish Peshmerga. In these times when sectarian tension is high, such a force is needed." Another was quoted as saying, "It is our right to defend ourselves."

Hazem Naimi, a political science professor, was quoted as saying that, "Tribal leaders and political figures found that al Qaida's program is harming the political efforts and progress the Sunni political leaders are making, because al Qa'ida rejects all politics...Sunnis feel that the Shi'ites have taken over the government and now it is their state…The Badr Brigades are in the interior ministry and under the interior ministry's name they go to towns, kill and arrest."

It is clear that Sunni participation in the government, Iraqi forces, and the militia is dependent on the ability of the new Iraqi government to reassure Sunnis about their day-to-day security and its ability to compromise with issues like the control of oil and other revenues, the nature of central versus local power, the nature of any federation, allowing Ba'ath leaders to return to the government, the role of religion in law and governance, and the other key aspects that will shape Iraq's character as a state.

It is also clear that further purges of Sunnis from the government, military, and security services can only make things worse. Such mistakes are exemplified by the implementation without warning of a six-month-old order from the Iraqi Debaathification Commission that led to the dismissal of 18 Iraqi generals, colonels, and majors -- most Sunni Arabs from Anbar. [127]

Training Efforts

Important qualitative changes were taking place in the MNSTC-I approach to training MOI forces, but the net impact sometimes did more to improve their effectiveness than to insure they truly serve Iraq's needs as a nation, as distinguish from sectarian and ethnic interests. The initial approach to training had entailed a traditional Western-style classroom setting, with a curriculum focused on post-conflict environments and an emphasis on policing in a democracy. Seventy-five percent of the trainees' time was spent in classroom lectures, and field training was conducted only with 9mm pistols. There were no Iraqi instructors.

MNSTC-I reported that a more hands-on approach had been developed in 2005, including five days of training in an anti-terrorism module, 15 days of training on practical survival skills and scenario-based training, and weapons training with 9mm and AK-47s. MNSTC-I also reported that by November, 41 Iraqi instructors were on staff, with expectations for that number to grow to 100. [128]

Figure 47 gives the MNSTC-I training definitions for MOI forces as of November 2005. By November, MNSTC-I said that 111,226 Iraqi MOI forces had been trained. The following MOI training academies were active in Iraq as of November 2005: [129]

- o Mosul Regional
- o 1st Mechanized Academy (Tadji)
- o Tadji IHP
- o CMP Dublin DPS Academy (Baghdad)
- o Special Police Commando Basic
- o Al Hillah Regional
- o Irbil Police College
- o AS SULAYMANIAH DBE
- o AS SULAYMANIAH Regional
- o Baghdad Police College
- o Numinayah POB Academy

- ○ Al Kut Regional
- ○ Al Kut DBE
- ○ Basrah Regional
- ○ Basrah DBE

Figure 47

MNSTC-I Training Definitions for MOI Forces as of November 2005

COMPONENT	TRAINING
Iraqi Police Service	New Recruits: 10-Week Training Serving, Academy Graduates: 3-Week Transition Integration Program; Specialized Training; Refresher Training
Public Order & Mechanized Police	6-Week and 5-Week Specialized Training
Special Police Commandos	6-Week Specialized Training
Emergency Response Unit	4-Week Basic; 4-Week Advanced Specialized Training
Dept. of Border Enforcement	4-Week Academy and Specialized Training
Highway Patrol	3-Week Academy Training
Bureau of Dignitary Protection	3-Week Initial Training, 2-3-Week Advanced Training; Follow-on Mentoring by US Contractors and Navy Seals

Source: MNSTC-I, November 2005

Special Police Forces

These improvements in training were particularly important in improving the effectiveness of the Special Security Forces, and those forces that received the most Coalition vetting and training seemed to have fewer ethnic and sectarian abuses. There was, however, a complex mix of forces. The Ministry of Interior (MOI) forces now consisted of the Iraq Police Service (IPS), Special Police (Police Commandos, Public Order Police, and the Mechanized Police), the Emergency Response Unit, Border Forces, the Highway Patrol, and Dignitary Protection. According to an October 2005 Executive report to Congress, MOI force generation was then planned to be complete by August 2007. Projected end strength was set at approximately 195,000.

The Special Police included three separate organizations: the Special Police Commandos (providing light infantry for counter-insurgency operations), the Mechanized Police (providing light armor for counter-insurgency operations), and the Public Order Police (specializing in re-establishing order in high-risk environments). By the summer of 2005, the Special Police Forces had developed a clear command structure under Major General Adnan Thabit, and the mechanized battalions were being organized into the 8th Mechanized Police Brigade. Police training was now supported by regional academies in Iraq, in addition to the training center in Jordan. Regional academies now existed in Adnon, Mosul and Sulaymaniah in the north; As Asad, Taji, Baghdad, Hillah, and Kut in the Center; and Basrah in the south.

The readiness and deployments of these units has already been touched upon at the start of this chapter. As of September 2005, there were 28 Special Police Force battalions capable of combat operations, an increase of 13 since July 2005. Along with the Iraqi Army, the Special Police Commandos and the Public Order Police contributed to operations in Tal Afar, and the 1st Special Police Mechanized Brigade was assigned to provide route security to reduce the incident of insurgent attacks along the highway from the International Zone to Baghdad International Airport.[130]

New recruits to the Special Police Commandos, who were typically seasoned military veterans, underwent six weeks of intense training at the Special Police Commando academy in northern Baghdad. Each training cycle was designed to accommodate 300 to 500 students. The syllabus spanned weapons qualification, urban patrolling techniques, unarmed combat apprehension, use of force, human rights and ethics in policing, introduction to Iraqi law, vehicle check points, and improvised explosive device characteristics and recognition.

By the fall of 2005, that force had grown to nearly 10,000 commandos trained and equipped, with 2,000 coming online between July and September of 2005. This placed MNSTC-I ahead of its projection to train and equip 9,800 Commandos by the October 15 referendum. The Government of Iraq had authorized a total force of more than 11,800 Commandos, which MNSTC-I planned to train and equip by May 2006. Some 8,900 were in service by January 2006, with four brigades of up to 2,600 men each.[131]

- o Figure 48 shows Iraqi Special Police deployments between July 1, 2004 and October 19, 2005.

- o Figure 49 provides numbers of Special Police personnel who had attended the various listed courses as of November 2005.

As has already been described, however, some of these forces used their new capabilities to serve the interests of Shi'ite groups like SCIRI, and Kurdish interests, and became involved in various abuses of Iraqi Sunnis. This led to the changes in the command of the Iraqi security

forces described earlier. It also led the Coalition to change its approach to training such forces.
[132]

In late December, the US military announced that it would pair American military units with Iraqi commando teams and other MOI special police units accused of abuse. The embed plan was to be based upon that used by the US military with the Iraqi Army. The planned transition teams were to consist of MPs and other military specialists, as well as international police liaison officers and international police trainers.[133]

On December 29, 2005, a senior US commander in Iraq said that the US was planning to significantly increase the number of US soldiers advising Iraqi police commando units in light of the recent spate of abuse findings and allegations. At the time, groups of about 40 American soldiers each were attached to seven of the nine special Iraqi police brigades. The new plan, to be put into effect in and around Baghdad, would entail all Iraqi units getting American advisers, with the total number of advisers increasing by several hundred.[134]

According to one senior US military official, the mentoring program was aimed specifically at former militia forces with the Ministry of Interior, which was dominated by the currently governing Shi'ite religious parties, and whose forces were made up largely of those parties' factional fighters.

In late December, Gen. William Webster, commander of Multinational Division Baghdad, echoed plans to increase the numbers of teams working with Iraqis in his command. He pointed out that Baghdad was 60 percent under Iraq control: 50 percent of Iraq controlled by the 6th Iraqi Army Division and 10 percent controlled by Iraqi special police.[135]

Perhaps the best description of the progress being made in such units, their problems, and the evolving role of US advisors, comes from a briefing by Colonel Jeffrey S. Buchanan, the, commander of the 2nd Brigade of the 75th Division and commander of the special police transition teams for the National Police Commando Division and 1st Mechanized Police Brigade of the Iraqi Ministry of Interior. Colonel Buchanan and the majority of his teams had been working with the Iraqi security forces since late March of 2005, and provided a "hands-on" picture of the situation as of early February 2006: [136]

> Our teams have been working with the police commandos and the mechanized police brigade for the past 10 months… We do have a number of soldiers that have experience as police officers. The initial group that deployed with me are dominantly active-component soldiers, and most of those guys have -- honestly have experience just operating in the armed forces. However, we also have MPs -- military policemen -- included in that population.
>
> Now since we first deployed over here, we've had a number of replacements and fillers. As our team strength changed from eight to 11, the armed forces sent us additional men to beef up our team strength. Most of the fillers that came in -- or a number of the fillers that came in were actually from the Reserve components, National Guard and U.S. Army Reserve. A lot of them are MPs, as military policemen, but in civilian life serve in various police departments. In addition to that, I have one international police liaison officer who serves with me on my team, and he serves as my primary adviser for law enforcement.
>
> …one thing that is different during the year of police is that we are embedding police transition teams with normal Iraqi police services throughout the country. And these are coalition advisers that perform a similar mission as myself and my men do with the national police or police commandos. And we hope that through this partnership and embedding coalition advisers in each police department, we will increase their proficiency along the way.
>
> Now specifically addressing the issue of the police commandos, we have a national academy that we send them to, and we are changing the curriculum of the police—the national police forces academy to include

more and more law enforcement and rule of law training. We're also bringing in mobile training teams formed of international police advisers that will serve with each unit for a period of six months—correction, six weeks—and take each unit through very specific training on law enforcement. We think we're making great progress in the behavioral dimension.

… the police commandos first formed, with one battalion, in August of 2004. The genesis of the division is fairly unique for Iraqi security forces, in that they initially formed without coalition assistance…The division's mission is to conduct counterinsurgency operations, to gather intelligence, and capture or kill enemy forces in order to establish a secure environment for other security forces to operate in…The commandos typically accomplish that mission by conducting raids, cordon-and-search operations, reconnaissance, and by defending fixed sites. The commando division has four brigades, and each of those has a headquarters and three battalions.

…The authorized strength is more than 2,600 men in a commando brigade and more than 11,000 in the division. The commandos operate both independently and in concert with other coalition forces… The most common mission profile is the battalion-sized operation, but they frequently conduct brigade-sized operations and have even performed with multiple brigades.

… Regarding background, the commandos generally come from one of two sources. Most of them served in security forces of the previous regime. The two sources are the Iraqi army's -- the old Iraqi army's special forces and the Directorate of General Security, the special operations forces, for the Ministry of Interior. And in fact the commando division commander comes from the second source. The national police force's commander comes from the first, army special forces. The two of them met when they were serving a sentence in Abu Ghraib for attempting to overthrow Saddam Hussein, and they served together, if you will, when they were stuck in a cell together for five years. And that's when they first formed a bond.

…we've had two incidents in the past 10 months of AIF infiltration. The first one occurred was a new a recruit who was a -- who detonated a suicide vest when he came into the second commando brigade compound and joined in a formation of his fellow commandos. That was the first case. The second case we actually had three members of the mechanized police that were arrested by MOI (Ministry of Interior) forces about two days after a vehicle-borne IED crashed into a mechanized brigade police checkpoint adjacent to Route Irish, and they were implicated in that they helped set up the attack, if you will.

… the commandos actually do a very good job vetting all recruits, which is one of the reasons why we are not full strength... We have about 8,900 out of 11,000 authorized. But they're really searching for quality rather than quantity. They recruit only through word of mouth. We don't have recruiting centers set up in a mall or something like that. And basically, every guy that comes in is known to some of his fellow comrades, which is a way that they have of cutting down potential infiltration.

…The first unit deployment was to Mosul in November of 2004, and the division still has one battalion on duty there. The initial deployment was followed by subsequent missions to Samarra in February of 2005 and Ramadi in March, and short-term deployments to Salman Pak in April and Tall Afar in September of 2005. The division currently has eight battalions in Baghdad and four deployed to the other provinces.

..The Mechanized Police Brigade is deployed in the Baghdad area and is comprised of three battalions and a headquarters…The primary focus of the mechanized police is to secure Baghdad's airport road, Route Irish.

….The coalition forces support all of these teams, all of these forces with special police transition teams. The SPTTs have a number of duties, and the first of those is to coach, teach and mentor the commandos and mechanized police brigade during training, during preparation for combat and during combat operations…Secondly, we serve as liaisons between the coalition forces and the national police and provide coalition support during operations…Lastly, we provide assessments of capabilities and limitations during the transition to Iraqi control.

To get the job done, we have a total of 21 teams, with one team embedded in each organization down to the battalion level. Each team consists of 11 American servicemen, mostly sailors -- or correction, mostly soldiers and Marines and two to four Iraqi interpreters.

…you likened them to Carabinieri or gendarmerie, and, in fact, that's where we're going to. But as I said, the police commanders were initially formed based on an Iraqi initiative driven by the previous Minister of

the Interior, and the purpose was to fight the insurgents. As such, they are essentially, and have been to date essentially operating as urban light infantry rather than police forces.

….Now we think that the future is to take them to a true national police force to where they're badge carrying and qualified officers enforcing the Iraqi rule of law throughout the provinces. So that's the future. That's not where we are right now. And we have a plan during 2006, which is the year of the police in Iraq, to put steps in place to actually get these guys fully trained and get there.

… you asked about Sunnis hating Shi'as or Shi'ite Arabs hitting Sunnis, et cetera -- I'd like to tackle that up front because I've read a lot of things in the media that have quoted -- or have used quotes like, "Shi'ite-led Ministry of Interior Forces." And, in fact, the police commandos are representative of the population of Iraq. We have in each brigade between 50 to 70 percent of the troops are Shi'ite Arabs, and -- or Shi'a Arabs, and between 20 and 40 percent are typically Sunni Arabs. We have a small Kurdish population in two of the four brigades.

Additionally to that, looking at the leadership of the division, half of the battalion commanders are Sunni and half are Shi'a. One of the battalion commanders is a Kurd and one of the brigade commanders is actually a Sunni-Turkmen. So half of the brigade commanders are Sunni and Shi'a as well.

This representative population, when we have a representative population like this, they tend to treat people fairly regardless of where they are in Iraq… We have not seen any problems with sectarian-shaped violence or sectarian-driven motives within the police commando division.

…I don't have my hands on any specific figures that would demonstrate a measure of improvement in one area or the next. But what I can tell you is that the security situation is improving, say, in the town of Samarra, where we have the 1st Commando Brigade operating in. Anecdotally over the past eight months or so, we've seen a lot more participation of the community in policing themselves. We see shop owners out on the streets selling goods, where they weren't there before.

…obviously, these guys -- one of their strengths is that they're aggressive, and so what we try to do is ensure that their aggressiveness does not go over the top and is -- and that they operate in accordance with Iraqi law. We do address it. We address it intentionally through training. We address it through leadership, through our leadership, so that they can follow our example, and we address it during operations by being there with them on every operation.

There have been times where we have had to intervene to keep them from going in a wrong direction, and that might have been in a situation where we're operating in a crowded battlespace, for example, with a number of coalition or Iraqi army units. There's the potential for unintended consequences of contact if these guys don't stay within the confines of their operation. Well, they tend -- like I said, they tend to be aggressive, and they will hunt down the enemy. If -- sometimes that aggressiveness has the potential to get them into trouble -- in other words, take them across unit boundaries or things like this -- and so we have had to get involved at times like that to stop it. But the fact is that we are addressing it, and we think that we're being effective in helping to shape their behavior.

… I don't have specific figures. I can tell you it's very infrequent. And the last case that I know of that we had a situation that was a commander getting over-aggressive on the ground, occurred about two months ago in Samarra. And actually, our troops did not intervene. The commando brigade commander in Samarra intervened, apprehended one of his battalion commanders who was destroying civilian property in response to some of his men being attacked; actually had the guy removed from the force and fined him to pay back the shop owners whose property he destroyed.

…I personally have had to intervene on one occasion, and this was in Tall Afar, by the way, which was the specific case that she mentioned. We were in a -- we got in a firefight, and the commanders apprehended a -- one of the suspected insurgents. And they continued to fight with the guy after he should have been under control, so we intervened to stop that….I would like to say something about shaping behavior versus changing values. Right now, we've done -- we've had a tremendous impact shaping behavior, and I think that we're making strides towards changing values. But the fact is most of the people in this country have learned and operate the way they do based on 35 years of experience…They have learned a certain way of operating in the past. Right now we're shaping behavior, we're starting to affect values, but changing values is going to take a long time.

Values, understanding what it's like to be a servant of society and in a democratically elected -- as part of a democratically elected government is something that is going to take time to learn. And I don't have an answer on when they will achieve the standard, if you will. But it is going to take time. And as I said in an earlier question, it's an open-ended mission until we achieve final success, if you will.

…We are to -- and we're under orders -- and we won't hesitate to enforce the orders, if we need to -- to stop illegal acts or abuse. And so we have rules of engagement. Rules of engagement are honestly shaped to -- shaped towards enemy forces and to protect the civilians. And we could use escalation of force, if we had to, to protect all innocent life. If that's what it took -- if that's what it took to protect innocent human life, we could (shoot Iraqi police officers.)

I know that there is an investigation ongoing. (of the Iraqi Interior Ministry jail in Baghdad.) I don't know the results of the investigation. I don't know if there are other secret prisons that have been found or what the situation of that might -- of those cases may be…We do maintain two detention facilities. They're not secret. We've been involved with them and providing oversight, advice and medical treatment. We invite Iraqi Ministry of Human Rights and Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Interior joint inspection teams in to check the conditions. And so it's not that we have a jail or something that we suddenly found. We have two facilities and they're in the open, and we've been providing support all along the way.

…The commandos and the SPTTs who serve with them make tremendous sacrifices for the good of their country. And honestly, it's humbling to know these men. They serve the people and they do it voluntarily. For the Iraqis, a volunteer force is a new concept, but they're starting to learn that democracy is far more complex than simply choosing those who govern you. Democracy requires individual sacrifice for the good of society, and these men are doing just that.

…In the past year alone, the 1st Commando Brigade has suffered 99 men killed in action and 140 wounded. Those who remain honor their fallen comrades by continuing to serve. They, like their coalition teammates, put the needs of their fellow men, their units and their nations above their own.

Figure 48

Iraqi Special Police Deployments: 1 July 2004 vs. 19 October 2005

(in Numbers of Combat and Support Battalions)

Location	1 July 2004	19 October 2005
Baghdad (Greater Area)	0	20
Fallujah	0	2
Habbaniyah (CS)	0	0
Hillah (CS)	0	1
Kaski (N)	0	0
Mosul	0	2
Numaniyah (CE)	0	0
Quaim	0	2
Ramadi	0	1
Rutbah area	0	2
Samarra	0	2
Tajir (CN)	0	0
Talil (SE)	0	0
Umm Qasr (SE)	0	0
Zahko (N)	0	0
Zubayr (SE)	0	0

Source: Department of Defense, <u>Report to Congress Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq</u>, report to Congress is submitted pursuant to the section entitled "Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq" of House Conference Report 109-72 accompanying H.R. 1268, Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act for Defense, the Global War on Terror, and Tsunami Relief, 2005, Public Law 109-13, October 2005

Figure 49

Special Police Courses/Personnel Attended as of November 2005

Special Police Courses	
Basic Criminal Investigation	2,678
Internal Controls	667
Violent Crimes and Kidnapping	1,114
Junior, Mid-Level, and Senior Management and Leadership	1,427
Organized Crime, Drug Enforcement, and Criminal Intelligence	859
Interviews and Interrogations	755
Explosive Hazard Awareness and Post-Blast Investigation	262
Counter-Terrorism Investigations	220
Critical Incident Management and Incident Command System	836
SWAT (28 Provincial Teams)	769
Dignitary Protection, Motorcade Escorts, and Site Security	1,578
Election Security	828

Source: MNSTC-I, November 2005

Developments in the Coalition Police Training Effort

As was the case with the special security forces, regular police presented problems throughout the country because many acted as local forces with sectarian, ethnic, and local loyalties. Others were far too passive, and either allowed violence and crime to continue, or let militias and locally recruited police and security services perform much of the mission. Detainee and prisoner abuse was a problem with some elements of the regular police, as well as the special security services, with reports of Shiite MOI personnel using their power to detain and torture Sunni adversaries.

The fact that President Bush made correcting these problems a major priority was striking in itself, but overall problems in the security and police forces were so serious by the end of 2005 that US civilian and military leaders highlighted the need for better training by saying that 2006 would be the "the year of the police."[137]

In a joint statement in early January, Ambassador Khalilzad and General Casey both emphasized the importance of the police:[138]

> "Democratic countries depend on police forces that protect everyone and are well trained and equipped. Totaling more than 118,000 members, Iraq's police force is moving forward towards living up to its full potential as the provider of security to Iraq's neighborhoods and upholder of the rule of law in the nation.

> As the insurgency is neutralized, the police will be the key instrument to deal with terrorists and criminals. For that reason together with the Iraqis, we are calling 2006 the year of the police. Police operating under the rule of law are also vital to the continued stability of the 14 provinces that are not grappling with an insurgency day to day and to preserving an environment conducive to international investment.

> We are putting more resources into helping Iraq have effective police forces by reviewing the vetting process to avoid infiltration by militias, investing additional resources into the training and equipping program, bringing more than 100 additional trainers and putting more U.S. military advisors (Police Transition Teams) to work side-by-side with them. Iraqi Police already played a critical role in Iraq's march toward becoming an independent and stable nation in the Middle East—January's parliamentary election, October's constitutional referendum and last month's national election.

> The United States is proud to be a part of the new Iraq. We continue to work with the Iraqi Police as this great country takes its rightful place."

Ambassador Khalilzad went further, and made controlling the militias an equal priority,[139]

> "Iraq's leaders will need to work together to reform security institutions and eliminate a number of militias and other armed groups. They are a threat to Iraqi security and could produce future civil conflict and warlordism. The Iraqi constitution prohibits the formation of militias outside the "framework of the armed forces."

> As Iraqi security forces develop and as the political process moved forward, the Iraqi government with support from the international community needs to implement a comprehensive Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration plan. Such a plan has been developed since the fall of Saddam. It is time for it to be implemented.

Increasing the US Advisory Effort and Expanding the Team Approach

In mid-January of 2006, the US Military announced that American commanders would be assigning more than 2,000 Army military police advisers to work side by side with Iraqi police officers. The effort was to begin in Baghdad, expanding by the end of January to local stations and provincial and district headquarters in all 18 provinces. The initiative was set to greatly increase the size and scope of then-current field training by 500 international civilian police advisers and some military police units.

At the time, some 80,000 local police officers across Iraq were certified as trained and equipped, more than halfway toward the goal of 135,000 by early 2007. The Pentagon had budgeted more than $1 billion to train, field and equip Iraqi Interior Ministry forces during 2006, of which the police were by far the largest component, according to a spokesperson for the military. Under their new assignment, military police that had been doing more general training of police officers would be working more directly with Iraqi police and civilian advisers in local stations, as well as at district and provincial headquarters.

Soldiers from the 49th Military Police Brigade, an Army National Guard unit, were to be assigned to police stations in nine major Iraqi cities -- Baghdad, Ramadi, Fallujah, Najaf, Babil, Kirkuk, Baquba, Samarra and Mosul -- as well as to dozens of provincial and district headquarters. Among their focuses would be helping the Iraqis process crime scenes, conducting joint patrols with Iraqi beat officers and emphasizing proper arrest and handcuffing techniques. Slightly more than two-thirds of the brigade's 3,000 soldiers -- military police drawn from a mix of active duty, National Guard and Army Reserve units -- were expected to participate in the program.[140]

The US military also sought to improve the police by expanding the work of "transition teams" within the MOI police force and step up civilian contractor involvement with local police across Iraq.[141] One of its major goals was to establish a police force that could operate in Western Iraq, and in the Sunni areas where much of the insurgency was based. Major General Stephen Johnson, the commander of MNF-I forces in Western Iraq put it this way, [142]

> "(the level of violence) has cycled up and down over the course of the last several months that we've been here." (However, we are now maintaining a persistent coalition presence.) "This presence is providing the conditions under which Iraqi police will be introduced and assist the local governments in assuming a greater role in providing services for their people…The reintroduction of a professional police force in Al Anbar will provide local leaders with security and the stability they need to take care of their own…security conditions will improve, as will opportunities for good governance, reconstruction, and economic development…"

In spite of the deep divisions in the country, Sunni Iraqis did continue to volunteer for the police, and did so in spite of continuing intimidation, killings, and bombings. One such bombing even managed to penetrate in the Ministry of Interior in Baghdad on National Police day, January 9, 2006) killing 14 and wounding 24.[143]

Another bloody bombing took place in a police recruiting station in Ramadi in early January, killing 70, including two US soldiers and three Iraqi soldiers. Yet, the coalition sweeps through Western Iraq and new efforts to reach out to local Sunni religious, political, and tribal leaders did have an impact. The Coalition was able to create an "Al Anbar Security Council" with some 200 Iraqi Sunni members, a new sweep along the Euphrates netted some 11 tons of explosives in 72 sites. Iraqi Commando units had relocated to Ramadi in late December and steep up their operations.[144]

Most important, well over 230 Sunni young men showed up at the police recruiting station in Ramadi when it reopened a week after the bombing. The same happened in the Samarra area even after a bus carrying failed police recruits was ambushed and 31 men were killed after a US roadblock diverted them to a less secure route.[145] Although there had been little Sunni cooperation in police recruiting and operations at the start of 2005, many complaints now shifted to the fact the Iraqi army and commando units in Western Iraq were large Shi'ite and Kurdish, and calls for Sunni forces and a role in the security decisions of the newly elected government.[146]

Problems in the US Advisory Effort

Increasing the US advisory effort did, however, present serious problems. There were many "police," militia elements, and tribal forces operating in Iraq that were not part of the official national police force "trained and equipped" by the Coalition and Iraqi government and neither the US military nor central government was in a position to try to take control of all of them, or provide either training or the kind of leadership they needed to act as "national" versus local forces serving sectarian and ethnic, or local parochial, interests.

It was difficult to find expert transition teams to cover the army and special security services, and there was no way to provide such teams for most of the regular police elements scattered throughout the country.

There also was a legacy of tension between the US military advisors, who now had responsibility for all aspects of training the forces in the Ministry of Interior, and the civil advisors selected by the State Department. One ex-advisor made this tension clear in the following statement:

> "I've been on the ground with the police mission for almost a full year now, and in no big way can point to anything that has been accomplished….The State Department has forced the civilian advisors on the military who in no way wants them involved. What little bit the advisors were able to accomplish in the past is quickly deteriorating as the military is taking their independent reporting abilities away.

> The U.S. Army only plans to rubber stamp its way through the police stations. They want to hand out a few guns, some cheap uniforms, ballistic vests that in many cases aren't ballistic, then be done with it.

> I thought after the IG report pointed out problems that some things might go forward. The military response is to turn and run in the opposite direction with its latest program. The mission has changed directions every sixty days for the last year, never staying the course on any project.

> The Captains and Lieutenants out in the field run roughshod over programs that they have no clue about. I simply can't understand why they don't leave chasing down insurgents, and securing the borders to the military, and leave the civilian police program to the people they hired to do the job."

Insurgent infiltration of MOI forces remained another concern. On December 6, 2005, explosions from two suicide bombs ripped through Baghdad's main police academy, killing at least 36 police officers and wounding 72 other people. The attack was the deadliest in months in Baghdad, and underscored the continuing vulnerability of Iraqi police to insurgent pressure and attacks. According to Iraqi officials at the academy, each of the 838 cadets was meticulously searched each time upon entrance.

The fact that the suicide bombers were able to penetrate and strike inside the academy pointed to the continuing issue of insurgent penetration of personnel in police forces and respective academies. Al Qaeda in Mesopotamia, led by Sunni Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, claimed responsibility for the attack, and explained that the attack had been aimed specifically at officers recruited from the ranks of the Shiite Badr Organization.[147] The incident highlighted continued sectarian strife being played out in the police and security forces, and came on the heels of growing evidence of abuse of Sunnis by Shiite members of MOI forces.

All of these problems were further compounded by a lack of local governance, and the ability to support the Iraqi military, security forces, and police with civil efforts that demonstrated the government was in place as a functioning authority and could provide effective services. Many parts of Iraq, including key areas like Basra, acted as largely independent authorities. This was true in many of the areas favorable to Sunni insurgents, even ones "liberated" by the Coalition

and Iraqi forces. In many cases, the Coalition provided most civil-military services, while the Iraqi government had little more than a token presence.

Iraq was making very real progress in many areas of force development, but there were good reasons to call for a "year of police." The effort was badly out of balance in terms of providing local security, "national" and inclusive forces, and police that served national rather than local, sectarian, and ethnic interests. Moreover, security was not yet supported by effective governance – creating problems that interacted with the lack of any effective political compromises between Arab Sunni, Arab Shi'ite, and Kurd.

Training

The Iraqi police did, however, make progress in many aspects of its training. On December 1, 2005, the Iraqi Police Service graduated 248 police officers from basic training at the Mosul Police Academy. The 10-week training program was designed to provide fundamental and democratic policing skills based on international human rights standards. Emphasis was on tactical operations, and the curriculum had recently been modified to increase combat survival and police skills training while emphasizing teamwork and cohesion. By December, more than 51,600 Iraqi police officers had completed the basic training course, with an additional 37,000 having completed the three-week Transitional Integration Program developed for police officers serving, but who had little or no basic training.[148]

On December 29, the Iraqi Police Service Baghdad Police College graduated 173 police officers from advanced and specialty courses. The courses consisted of Basic Criminal Investigations with 50 graduates, Advanced Criminal Investigations with 17 graduates, Interview and Interrogations with 24 graduates, Violent Crime Investigation with 26 graduates, Critical Incident Management with 24 graduates, First Line Supervision with eight graduates, Mid-Level Management with 12 graduates and Executive Leadership with 12 graduates.

These courses had the following content:

- The Basic Criminal Investigation course covered topics such as theft, burglary, arson, robbery, sexual offenses and homicide investigation. Participants also received instruction and hands-on training in fingerprinting, photography, tool marks and plaster casting techniques. To date, 2,936 police officers had previously completed the Basic Criminal Investigations course.

- The Advanced Criminal Investigation course provided participants with advanced investigative techniques used in a variety of situations, particularly in homicide, kidnapping, terrorism and bombing investigations. This course had graduated 175 students to date.

- The Interviews and Interrogations course covered advanced interview and interrogation techniques and includes instruction on the preservation and protection of human rights and the importance of ethical behavior during interviews and interrogations. Previously, 893 students had completed this course.

- The Violent Crime Investigation course introduced participants to investigative techniques used in a variety of situations, particularly in violent crimes against persons such as armed robbery, rape and murder. To date, 902 students had graduated from this course.

- Critical Incident Management was designed to provide participants with the understanding and application of skills for managing critical incidents. To date, 692 students had graduated from this course.

○ The First-Line Supervision course focused on major leadership areas for front line supervisors including human rights training, ethics and corruption, policing in a democracy and interpersonal skills critical to effective leadership. To date, 540 students had graduated from this course.

○ Mid-Level Management was a course designed for supervisors responsible for managing first-line supervisors and their assigned personnel. A total of 467 students had graduated from this course to date.

○ Executive Leadership covered executive level concepts of planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting and budgeting. Other topics included visionary leadership, organizational values, interpersonal communication skills, motivational techniques and strategies, along with strategic planning. To date, 444 officers had graduated from this course.

The officers who participated in these courses had previously either completed an eight-week basic training course for new recruits or a three-week transitional integration program designed for prior-service officers. The newly graduated police officers were to immediately report for duty at their respective stations.[149]

Operational Police Activity

The impact of this training was reflected in successful police activity at a number of levels. For example, the Iraqi government began" Operation National Unity" on September 29, 2005. This effort included the Baghdad police, Public Order police, Special Police Commandos, and Mechanized police. The operation involved more than 20,000 police officers and 5,000 special police, and by early November had resulted in 83 suspected terrorists killed, 1,393 suspects and 39 stockpiles of weapons confiscated. As of November 5, Iraqi police forces had conducted 189 raids on suspected terrorist hideouts, 781 searches, and 10,330 roadside checkpoints throughout the Baghdad area. [150]

Other examples of Iraqi police activity included:

○ October 30 – in Baghdad, Iraqi police forces with the 3rd Public Order Brigade raided a suspect terrorist hideout, detaining four men. One was suspected of playing a role in IED attacks as well as providing video of beheadings to Arab media.

○ November 14 – joint raids with Iraqi police and soldiers resulted in the detainment of 23 suspected insurgents in Latifiyah, along with the seizure of several weapons.

○ November 16 – Iraqi police and soldiers detained 15 men in a raid in Al Qamishly. The men were suspected of crimes ranging from IED attacks to operating death squads targeting Iraqi police.

○ November 23 – Members of the 2nd Public Order Brigade and Baghdad police officers seized a stockpile of grenades and detonation chord while conducting search operations in Zafaraniya District. The cache included 58 grenades and more than 10 meters of detonation chord.

○ December 12 – Iraqi police arrested five people transporting a bomb in their vehicle in An Najaf. The bomb consisted of a 60 mm mortar round, TNT, and plastic explosives. The detainees were turned over to the Najaf Police anti-crime unit for processing and further investigation.

○ December 14 – Iraqi border police detained four individuals trying to smuggle 137 cases of cigarettes across the Iraqi border.

○ December 15 – Iraqi police responded to a protest that temporarily closed a polling site 25 km northeast of Ad Dawr.

Iraqi Border Forces

By September of 2005, approximately 17,000 Border Police had been trained and equipped. This number lagged the projection of 21,000 border forces by the October 15 referendum.[151] However, the Government of Iraq had now authorized a total force of more than 28,300 Border Police, which MNSTC-I planned to train and equip by May 2006. These forces were to be organized into 36 battalions that would man the 258 border forts around Iraq.

A total of 250 forts were projected to be reconstructed or renovated by November 30, 2005; all border fort construction was scheduled to be complete by January 2006. To stem the flow of foreign fighters from Syria, priority was given to work on the Iraqi-Syrian border in the summer of 2005.[152] Figure 50 shows the progress in Iraqi border fort development as of October 18, 2005.

The US Marines had also taken an unorthodox approach to training local forces in border patrol missions in the western desert. In the desert region near the Iraqi-Syrian border, Marines created a force of local tribesmen called the Desert Protection Force. Col. Russell Smith, Iraqi security forces coordinator for the 2nd Marine Division, described the utility of this local force during a November 2005 interview: "The Desert Protectors are tribesmen who know their areas like the back of their hand, and know where the foreign fighters and terrorists are and know who they are."[153] A local Sunni militia was found to be necessary in dealing with Sunnis, and this was scarcely the only case.

By late 2005, there were more and more cases where local Sunni tribal and community groups had turned against the more extreme Sunni Islamic insurgents. As a result, it became increasingly possible to work with local Sunni leaders, while the more extreme insurgents found it harder to find sanctuary or support. This included clashes in key Sunni towns like Ramadi, and while it was far too soon to talk about any decisive shift in Sunni alignment, large numbers of Sunnis did continue to seek to join Iraqi forces, and intelligence experts indicate that there was an increase in the information being provided in both the border area and other parts of Western Iraq.

Figure 50

Iraqi Border Fort Development

(as of October 18, 2005)

	MND-NC Turkey & N. Iran	MND-CS Iran Cent	MND –SE Kuwait & S. Iran	MND-W Saudi	MND NW Syria & Jordan	Total
Complete	45	14	50	29	25	163
Under Construction	45	6	13	14	17	95
Total	90	20	63	43	42	258

Source: MNSTC-I, November 2005

Iraqi Intelligence Capabilities

Iraqi intelligence was improving as well. An example of a success that was partly based on Iraqi intelligence was seen in the joint Coalition-Iraqi strike on Tall Afar in mid-September 2005. In a

video-teleconference with reporters on September 13, Third Armored Cavalry Regiment Commander Col. H.R. McMasters told reporters that the involvement of Iraqi troops played a key role in the success of the operation. About 5,000 Iraqi security forces and around 3,500 U.S. troops participated in Tall Afar operations during the first two weeks of September, the colonel said.[154]

McMasters credited the integration of Iraqi troops into operations as key to collecting good intelligence on the whereabouts and identities of insurgents operating in and around the city. Coalition and Iraqi forces had killed 118 terrorists and captured 137, while suffering one US killed and 11 wounded and eight Iraqis killed and 19 wounded during the Tall Afar strike, according to McMasters.[155]

At a September 29 hearing of the House Armed Services Committee, Donald Rumsfeld pointed to a sharp increase in tips coming into Coalition or Iraqi authorities, which he said had increased from 480 tips in March 2005 to over 3,300 in August 2005.[156] Figure 51 depicts the number of tips from the Iraqi population from March 2005 through August 2005, as recorded by MNC-I.

On December 17, in Kirkuk, local residents caught and detained two men who were allegedly digging around a weapons cache of 12 mortar rounds. The citizens reported the incident to local authorities and turned the men over to the Iraqi army and Coalition forces that responded to the scene. Later, on December 21, Coalition forces raided a home in Baghdad and discovered 15 rocket launchers in the process of being built and one 57 mm rocket ready to be fired. The equipment was seized, but there were no inhabitants of the house present during the raid. The raid was the result of a tip from a local citizen in east Baghdad.[157]

The kind of information provided is illustrated by the following examples of tips received by Iraqi and Coalition forces following the October 15, 2005 election:

- ○ October 18 – An Iraqi citizen led Coalition forces from 2nd Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment to a weapons cache in west Baghdad. The cache consisted of 10 rocket-propelled grenade rounds and numerous 60mm mortar rounds.

- ○ November 23 – in the Tissa Nissan district of Baghdad, a tip from a local resident led to the location of a weapons cache and resulted in the capture of bomb making materials.

- ○ November 23 – in the Al Bawi region members of the 3rd Public Order Brigade detained three men after responding to a citizen's tip about a car laden with explosives. The group found three artillery shells rigged as roadside bombs.

- ○ December 17 – in Kirkuk, local residents caught and detained two men who were allegedly digging around a weapons cache on 12 mortar rounds. The citizens reported the incident to local authorities and turned the men over to the Iraqi army and Coalition forces that responded to the scene.

- ○ December 21 – Coalition forces raided a home in Baghdad and discovered 15 rocket launchers in the process of being built and one 57 mm rocket ready to be fired. The equipment was seized, but there were no inhabitants of the house present during the raid. The raid was the result of a tip from a local citizen in east Baghdad.[158]

Figure 51

Number of Intelligence Tips Received from the Iraqi Population
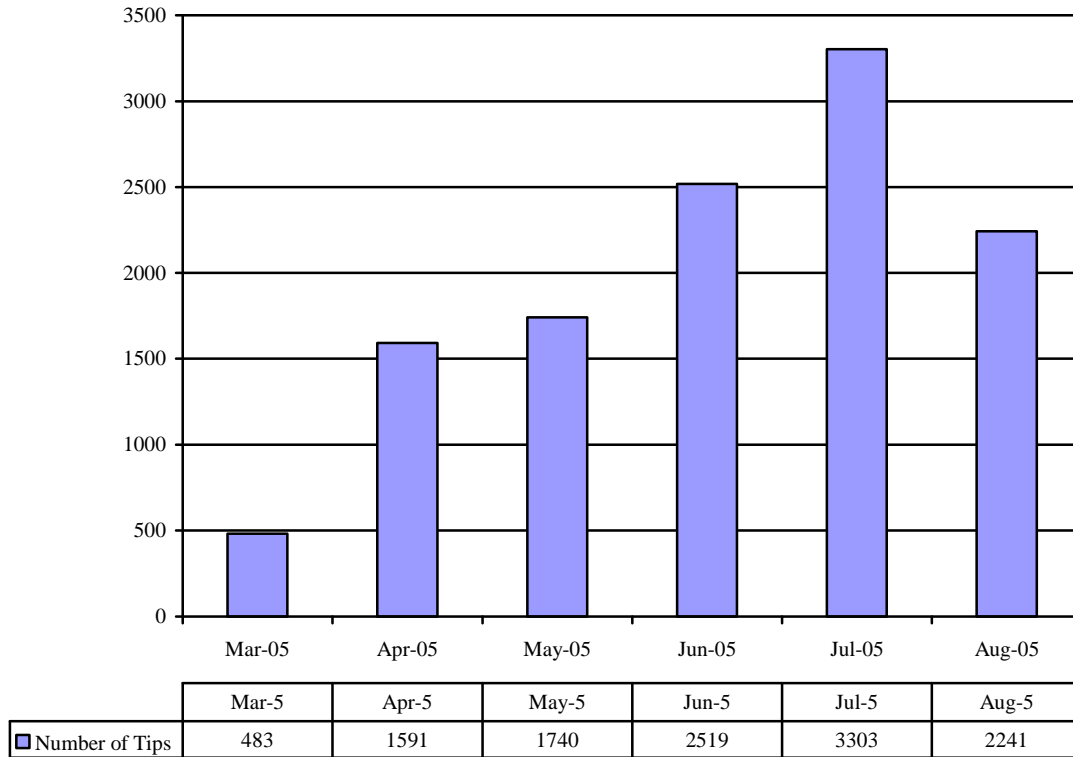
	Mar-5	Apr-5	May-5	Jun-5	Jul-5	Aug-5
Number of Tips	483	1591	1740	2519	3303	2241

Source: Department of Defense, <u>Report to Congress Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq</u>, report to Congress is submitted pursuant to the section entitled "Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq" of House Conference Report 109-72 accompanying H.R. 1268, Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act for Defense, the Global War on Terror, and Tsunami Relief, 2005, Public Law 109-13, October 2005. Data supplied by MNC-I (includes tips reported to multiple sources).

Financing and Corruption

The Ministry of Defense and Ministry of the Interior continued to experience problems with budgeting and financing, in spite of ongoing improvements in their management structure and coalition advisory efforts. Still outspent the budget given them by the Ministry of Finance, although there was insufficient transparency to know how much.

Procurement remained a particularly controversial area. There were many charges of corruption in addition to the major charges brought against Hazem Shaalan, the defense minister under former Prime Minister Ayad Allawi, in August 2005. While at least some of the charges that Shaalan misappropriated part of $1.3 billion in military contracts may have been politically motivated, it was clear that the were many kickbacks, cases of favoritism, bribes, and other forms of lesser corruption in both the Ministry of Defense and Ministry of the Interior.[159]

One of the most serious charges came, however, over the mishandling of tribal forces that were supposed to help protect Iraq's oil exports. In early February 2006, Radhi Hamza al-Radhi, the chairman of Iraq's Commission on Public Integrity, announced that Meshaan al-Juburi, a member of the new Iraqi National Assembly had been indicted in December for stealing millions of dollars from the funds that were supposed to pay Sunni tribes to protect a critical oil pipeline against attacks and was suspected of giving some of the funds to insurgents.[160]

Juburi was a Sunni who had broken with Saddam Hussein in 1989, and fled the country. He had been active in the opposition to Saddam before the invasion, and had tried to take control of Mosul after Saddam's fall. He was a member of the Juburi tribe, which had members in this insurgency, and had been asked to organize 17 battalions of soldiers to protect the pipeline in 2004.

He was accused of both taking much of the money that was supposed to go to these pipeline protection units, and allowing insurgents to play a role in the oil protection battalions. He may have created some 200-300 phantom members of each 1,000-man battalion to take money the pay and food for non-existent security personnel. He also may have set up ambushes so the insurgents could seize weapons being delivered to the units.

Ali Ahmed al-Wazir, the commander of the second battalion of the first brigade of the Special Infrastructure Brigades, based in the Wadi Zareitoun district, was identified a the battalion commander hired by Mr. Juburi, and who organized insurgent attacks on the pipeline. It was reported that both Juburi and his son had fled the country just after they were indicted.

At nearly the same time, the director of a major oil storage plant near Kirkuk was arrested Saturday, with other employees and several local police officials, and charged with helping to orchestrate a mortar attack on the plant on February 2, 2006. [161]

These incidents were of importance for several reasons. The government derived some 94% of its income from oil exports, and an article in the New York Times quoted Ali Allawi, Iraq's finance minister, as estimating that insurgents were taking some 40 percent to 50 percent of all oil-smuggling profits in the country, and had infiltrated senior management positions at the major northern refinery in Baji: "It's gone beyond Nigeria levels now where it really threatens national security…The insurgents are involved at all levels." The Times also quoted an unidentified US official as saying that, "It's clear that corruption funds the insurgency, so there you have a very real threat to the new state…Corruption really has the potential of undercutting the growth potential here." The former oil minister, Ibrahim Bahr al-Ulum, had said earlier in

2005 "oil and fuel smuggling networks have grown into a dangerous mafia threatening the lives of those in charge of fighting corruption." [162]

Progress Following the December 15, 2005 Election

The December 15, 2005 election changed the political landscape of Iraq in ways whose impact is currently impossible to determine, but will play a critical role in determining the success or failure of the Iraqi force development effort. It may be the fall of 2006, before the full impact of the December 15, 2005 election in Iraq is clear. It will certainly be months before the full nature of the new political structure it has created has been negotiated and every element of the new government is in place. There is still a serious risk that significant numbers of Sunnis will not accept the result, or that some combination of the insurgency and tension between Sunni and Shi'ite may divide the country.

The Course of the Insurgency

The war in Iraq remains all too real. MNF-I intelligence estimated in January 2006 that the number of insurgent attacks on coalition forces, Iraqi forces, and Iraqi civilians; and acts of sabotage; rose by 29% in 2005. The total rose from 26,496 in 2004 to 34,131 in 2005.[163] These attacks had a relatively consistent average success rate of 24% (attacks that cause damage or casualties.) [164]

At the same time, there was a shift to attacks on Iraqis, rather than Coalition troops. A total of 673 US troops were killed in 2005, versus 714 in 2004, and the number of wounded dropped from 7,990 to 5,639, a drop of 29%.[165] US forces saw fewer casualties largely because more Iraqi forces were in the field and there were no major urban battles like the battle of Fallujah, and also because the insurgents shifted to Iraqi targets that were more vulnerable and had far more political impact at a point where it have become clear that the US and its coalition partners wanted to withdraw many of their forces.

These trends scarcely mean the insurgency is "winning." It is not able to increase its success rate, establish sanctuaries, win larger-scale military clashes, or dominate the field. It is active largely in only four of Iraq's 18 governorates. (Some 59% of all US military deaths have occurred in only two governorates: Al Anbar and Baghdad.)[166] Much of its activity consists of bombings of soft civilian targets designed largely to provoke a more intense civil war or halt the development of an effective Iraqi government, rather than progress towards control at even the local level. So far, the insurgency has done little to show it can successfully attack combat-ready Iraqi units, as distinguished from attack vulnerable casernes, recruiting areas, trainees or other relatively easy targets.

At the same time, the insurgents have clearly learned and adapted through experience. They have shown the ability to increase the number of attacks over time, and they have hit successfully at many important political and economic targets. Provoking civil war and undermining the Iraqi political process may not bring the insurgents victory, but it can deny it to the Iraqi government and the US, and the Sunni insurgents continue to strike successfully at politically, religiously, and ethnically important Shi'ite and Kurdish targets with suicide and other large bombings.

The insurgents continue to carry out a large number of successful killings, assassinations, kidnappings, extortions, and expulsions. These include an increase in the number of successful attacks on Iraqi officials, Iraqi forces, and their families, and well over 2,700 Iraqi officials and Iraqi forces were killed in 2005. The Department of Defense estimated that 2,603 members of the Iraqi forces had been killed in action by October 2005, far more than the 1,506 members of US forces that had been killed in action up to that date.[167]The insurgents continue to succeed in

intimidating their fellow Sunnis. There is no way to count or fully assess the pattern of such low level attacks, or separate them from crime or Shi'ite reprisals, but no one doubts that they remain a major problem.

Suicide attacks have increased, and killed and wounded Iraqis in large numbers. The number of car bombs rose from 420 in 2004 to 873 in 2005, and the number of suicide car bombs rose from 133 to 411, and the number of suicide vest attacks rose from 7 in 2004 to 67 in 2005.[168] In case after case, Shi'ite civilians and Sunnis cooperating with the government were successfully targeted in ways designed to create a serious civil war.

The use of roadside bombs (improvised explosive devices IEDs) remains a major problem for US and other Coalition forces. The total number of IED attacks nearly doubled from 5,607 in 2004 to 10,953 in 2005. While the success rate of IED attacks dropped significantly, from 25-30% in 2004 to 10% in 2005, they still had a major impact. During 2005, there were 415 IED deaths out of a total of 674 combat deaths, or 61.6 % of all combat deaths. IEDs accounted for 4,256 wounded out of a total of 5,941, some 71.6% of the wounded. From July 2005 to January 2006, IED's killed 234 US service members out of a total of 369 total combat deaths, or 63.4%. They accounted for 2314 wounded out of 2980 total combat wounded, or 77.7 %.

To put these numbers in perspective, IEDs caused 900 deaths out of a total of 1,748 combat deaths, or 51.5 % during the entire post-Saddam fall from March 2003 and January 2006. IEDs caused 9,327 wounded out of a total of 16,606 or 56.2%.[169] However, the numbers of personnel killed and wounded by IEDs are scarcely the only measure of insurgent success. Casualties may have dropped but the number of attacks has gone up. IED attacks tie down manpower and equipment, disrupt operations, disrupt economic and aid activity, and interact with attacks on Iraqi civilians and forces to limit political progress and help try to provoke civil war.

Insurgents carried out more than 300 attacks on Iraqi oil facilities between March 2003 and January 2006. An estimate by Robert Mullen indicates that there were close to 500 and perhaps as many as 600-700. His breakdown of the number of attacks was: pipelines, 398; refineries, 36; oil wells, 18; tanker trucks, 30; oil train, 1; storage tanks 4; and 1 tank farm.

The end result was that oil production dropped by 8% in 2005, and pipeline shipments through the Iraqi northern pipeline to Ceyan in Turkey dropped from 800,000 barrels per day before the war to an average of 40,000 barrels per day in 2005. In July 2005, Iraqi officials estimated that insurgent attacks had already cost Iraq some $11 billion. They had kept Iraqi oil production from approaching the 3 million barrel a day goal in 2005 goal that the Coalition had set after the fall of Saddam Hussein, and production had dropped from per war levels of around 2.5 million barrels a day to an average of 1.83 million barrels a day in 2005, and level of only 1.57 million barrels a day in December 2005.[170] These successes have major impact in a country where 94% of the government's direct income now comes from oil exports.

In short, there were cycles in an evolving struggle, but not signs that the struggle is being lost or won. For example, the number of attacks peaked to some 700 per week in October 2005, before the October 15th referendum on the constitution to 430 per week in mid-January, but this was more a function of insurgent efforts to peak operations in sensitive periods than any outcome of the fighting. Similarly, the number of US killed has averaged some 65 per month since March 2003. The total of US killed was 96 in October 2005, 84 in November 68 in December, and 63 in January 2006.[171] This reflected shifts in the cycles of attacks and in their targets. US experts

estimated that some 500 Iraqis were killed between the December   15, 2005 elections and mid-January 2006, an "average" period in US casualties.[172]

As yet, there were no decisive trends or no tipping points: simply surges and declines. This, however, does not mean the counterinsurgency campaign could not be won. Much of the reason the insurgency continues is that Iraqi forces are not yet deployed in the strength to replace Coalition troops and demonstrate the legitimacy of the Iraqi government in the field.

Iraqis Attitudes Before the Election

For all of political tensions and divisions in Iraq, the election was one that most Iraqis welcomed. Iraqis had mixed feelings about the overall pace of events in Iraq. A new ABC-Time Oxford Research International poll released in the week before the election indicated that some 71% of Iraqis (although largely Shi'ite and Kurd) felt their own lives were going well. Only 44% saw similar progress for the country, but 69% expected situation to get better in the next year. (Only 35% saw a favorable future in Sunni provinces.)

Some 57% still saw security as the country's top priority, although 60% now felt secure in their own neighborhoods, versus 60% in June 2004, and 61% said local security was now good versus 49% in February 2004.

Nevertheless, Iraqis went into the election with considerable optimism. ABC reported that "Three-quarters of Iraqis express confidence in the national elections being held this week, 70 percent approve of the new constitution, and 70 percent — including most people in Sunni and Shiite areas alike — want Iraq to remain a unified country."

The number of Iraqis that preferred democracy as a political system had risen from 49% in February 2004 to 57% in December 2005, while the number preferring an Islamic state had dropped from 21% to 14% and the number calling for a single strong leader for life had dropped from 28% to 26%.

Iraqis – at least Arab Shi'ites and Kurds – also showed growing confidence in the Iraqi forces and more confidence than they did in the national government. The ABC analysis of "Where Things Stand" in Iraq issued in mid-December noted that,

> "Today, faith in the electoral process runs high (with the exception of the disaffected Sunnis) and confidence in public institutions has risen. This is particularly true for the Iraqi Army — up from 39 percent to 67 percent, and the police — up from 45 percent to 69 percent.

> "A smaller majority says they are confident in their local and national leaders — but … basic interest in politics has soared. The percentage of Iraqis reporting such an interest has gone from 39 (November 2003) to 69 today. Asked what sort of government they wish for, 57 percent of Iraqis told us they would prefer a democratic state; 26 percent answered "strong leader"; only 14 percent expressed a preference for an Islamic state.

> "… While a slim majority nationwide (51 percent) approve of their local government, sectarian differences are obvious. Iraq's Shiites and Kurds — two populations widely persecuted under Saddam Hussein — are not surprisingly filled with hope and high expectations for the country's current and future political leaders. By large margins, Shiites and Kurds approve of the recently adopted constitution and are confident that the elections will bring positive change. They also give the young Iraqi government generally good marks.

Voting on Ethnic or Sectarian Lines Without a Clear Agenda for the Future

It was clear long before the actual voting that this would be an election where most Iraqis would vote for the few names they knew at the top of a ticket -- and make a choice between key national, ethnic, and sectarian parties -- without really knowing what a given party ticket or leader really stood for in any detail.

Most Iraqis never saw the candidate lists in full before they went to the polls. The number of candidates also vastly exceeded the number of offices. Not only were most of the major parties mixes of very different voices and beliefs, but there were 7,655 candidates on 996 candidate lists, 307 political entities (single candidates and political parties), and 19 coalitions. In Baghdad, for example, the ballot paper had 106 candidate lists with 2,161 candidates for 59 seats in the Council of Representatives. There were 212 political contestants on the national ballot.

Yet, in spite of this diversity, it was clear that the election would center around a few key parties:

> --*United Iraqi Alliance or Unified Iraqi Coalition, #555*: Shi'ite. Led by Abd al-Aziz al-Hakim. This mixed Hakim's Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), the Moqtada Sadr's group, Al Dawa, and the group led by then Prime Minister Ibrahim Jafari.

> --*Iraqi Front for National Dialogue or Hewar National Iraqi Front*: Salih al-Mutlaq heads this list and split the Iraqi Dialogue Council because he opposed the constitution. The list includes five such political groups.

> --*Iraqi Accordance Front or Tawfoq Iraqi Front, #618*: Sunni. Led by Adnan al-Dulaymi and Tariq al-Hashimi. Included three Sunni parties that boycotted the January 30, 2005 election: National Dialogue Council, Iraq Islamic Party (Hashimi), and Iraqi People's Conference. Supported amending constitution, weakening federalism, eliminating Shi'ite and Kurdish dominated Iraq forces, liberalizing admission of former Ba'athists to political process.

> --*Iraqi National List or National Iraqi List, #731*: Shi'ite & Sunni. Led by Iyad Allawi (Prime Minister is previous government.) Includes Independent Democrats Grouping, National Democratic Party, and Communist Party.

> --*Kurdistan Coalition List or Kurdistan Gathering, # 730*: Kurdish. Led by Mas'ud Barzani and Jalal Tababani (then President). Combined the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) and Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP). Smaller Kurdish, Turcoman, and Chaldean Christian elements.

> --*National Congress Coalition, #569*: Largely Shi'ite but some Sunnis. Led by Ahmad Chalabi (then a Deputy Prime Minister. Includes Constitutional Monarchy Movement. Mix of religious and secular voices.

The Full Meaning of the Results Remains Uncertain

It was almost inevitable that years of sectarian and ethnic tension and violence would polarize the electorate. It was equally apparent that no election held in mid-insurgency could be perfect, and that tensions were so high that some abuses were inevitable, and there would be charges of corruption and violence – even if some were invalid or exaggerated. Furthermore, since the Sunnis were almost certain to emerge as a minority with far less political power than in the past, and the more secular nationalists were likely to be weak relative to sectarian and ethnic parties, it was likely that they would be the key sources of complaint.

Voting by Governorate, Not Nationwide

This time, however, the vote was by area and not nation-wide, and did allow much better representation by ethnic and sectarian group. Each of Iraq's 18 provinces was considered a

separate voting district; the number of parliamentary seats allotted to each district was based on the population of the province. There were 275 seats in the National Assembly, and 230 were distributed amongst the 18 governorates according to the number of registered voters in each governorate. Baghdad Province, the largest province, had 59 of the 230 seats in the Council.

The remaining 45 seats out of the 275 were distributed as compensatory seats to political entities whose proportion of the vote received nationally was lower than the number of seats they obtained. Political entities won seats in a governorate in proportion to the share of votes they receive in the election in that governorate.

The voting produced some 690 formal complaints and thousands of additional complaints had already been made about the way in which the election was conducted by December 20th – with reports of thousands of additional complaints in process. There were at least 20 complaints that the Iraqi Election commission already regarded as serious. Nevertheless, the preliminary results showed that some 11 million ballots had been cast in all 18 provinces, and reported on a count of some 7 million votes.

Anbar was the only governorate with a relatively low percentage, and even that was 55%. The others ranged from 62% to 87% and the national average was 70%. What was particularly important was that preliminary estimates showed the Sunni vote in a critical Sunni province like Al Anbar went from a total of 2% of the registered voters in January 2005, to 32% in the October referendum over the Constitution and may have exceeded 60% in the December election.

This initial count covered some 89-99% of the vote in 11 out of 18 provinces. The Shi'ite Coalition, the United Iraqi Alliance (UIA), seemed to dominant the Shi'ite vote, while the Sunni dominated Iraqi Consensus Front (ICF) dominated the Sunni vote. The UIA won 86.9% of the vote in a Shi'ite dominated province like Maysan. As might be expected, the Kurdish coalition party dominated the Kurdish provinces, winning 95.1% of the preliminary count in Erbil (Irbil).

In Baghdad Province, the largest and most mixed province, the UIA won 1.4 million votes, or 59%. The ICF won 14%, and the more secular and nationalist list of Ayad Allawi won 13.7%. The Shi'ite list of Ahmed Chalabi won only about 0.5%. It was not clear from the preliminary results that any one party could win a majority.

Voting by Major Party Grouping

A more detailed count is shown in Figure 52. It shows just how polarized the vote was by sect and ethnic group by province. At the same time, it is a warning about just how hard it could be to divide much of Iraq by sect and ethnic group without civil war or ethnic cleansing, and the similar difficulties in creating functional federations on the same basis.

Figure 52

Iraqi Election: Uncertified Partial Results – Parties Garnering 5% of Vote or More, by Province

PROVINCE	RELIGION/SECT	VOTES	PERCENT%
Anbar (Total of 9 seats)	Sunni		
Tawafoq Iraqi Front		272707	73.75%
Hewar National Iraqi Front		66322	17.94%
Babil (Total of 11 seats)	Shi'ite, some Sunni		
United Iraqi Coalition		418919	75.74%
National Iraqi List		48593	8.79%
Baghdad (Total of 59 seats)	Shi'ite & Sunni		
Unified Iraqi Coalition		1398778	58.46%
Tawafoq Iraqi Front		454107	18.98%
National Iraqi List		330082	13.80%
Basrah (Total of 16 seats)	Shi'ite, some mixed		
Unified Iraqi Coalition		615255	77.46%
National Iraqi List		87538	11.02%
Diyala (Total of 10 seats)	Kurd, Sunni,		
Tawafoq Iraqi Front	Shi'ite Arab	182223	36.77%
Unified Iraqi Coalition		110285	22.26%
Kurdistani Gathering		66508	13.42%
National Iraqi List		52624	10.62%
Hewar National Iraqi Front		50971	10.29%
Dohuk (Total of 7 seats)	Kurd, some minority		

Kurdistani Gathering		355084	89.97%
Islamic Union of Kurdistan		28957	7.34%
Erbil (Total of 13 seats)	Kurd		
Kurdistani Gathering		628181	95.15%
Karbala (Total of 6 seats)	Shi'ite, some Sunni		
Unified Iraqi Coalition		230211	76.02%
National Iraqi List		35502	11.72%
Tamim/Kirkuk (Total of 9 seats)	Mixed Kurd, Sunni,		
Kurdistani Gathering	Shi'ite, Turcoman,	266737	51.89%
Hewar National Iraqi Front	Minority		14.24%
Iraqi Turcoman Front			11.62%
Tawafoq Iraqi Front			6.17%
Missan/Maysan (Total of 7 seats)			
Unified Iraqi Coalition	Shi'ite	275505	86.86%
Muthana (Total of 5 seats)	Shi'ite, small Sunni		
Unified Iraqi Coalition		176222	86.42%
Najaf (Total of 8 seats)	Shi'ite		
Unified Iraqi Coalition		302573	82.03%
National Iraqi List		28777	7.80%
Ninewa/Nineveh (Total of 19 seats)	Sunni, Kurd,		
Tawafoq Iraqi Front	Shi'ite, some	302518	36.88%
Kurdistani Gathering	minority	157476	19.20%
National Iraqi List		91661	11.17%

Hewar National Iraqi Front		82976	10.11%
Unified Iraqi Coalition		61038	7.44%
Qadisiyyah (Total of 8 seats)	Shi'ite, some Sunni		
Unified Iraqi Coalition		269609	81.38%
National Iraqi List		28296	8.54%
Salahaddin (Total of 8 seats)	Sunni, some Shi'ite		
Tawafoq Iraqi Front		164116	33.67%
Hewar National Iraqi Front		94180	19.32%
National Iraqi List		52116	10.69%
Liberation and Reconciliation Gathering		45490	9.33%
Unified Iraqi Coalition		35951	7.38%
Sulaymaniya (Total of 15 seats)	Kurd		
Kurdistani Gathering		685900	87.13%
Islamic Union of Kurdistan		85145	10.82%
Theqar/Dhi Qar (Total of 12 seats)	Shi'ite		
Unified Iraqi Coalition		499582	86.63%
National Iraqi List		29028	5.03%
Wasit (Total of 8 seats)	Shi'ite/Sunni		
Unified Iraqi Coalition		279616	80.68%
National Iraqi List		28053	8.09%

Note: Kurds are mixed, but largely Sunni. Sunni in this table equals Sunni Arab; Shi'ite equals Shi'ite Arab. Source: Adapted from Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq website, December 20, 2005, available at: http://www.ieciraq.org/English/Frameset_english.htm

Figure 52 shows the results were highly polarized and in ways that provided few signs of corruption or falsifying the results in ways that would have a major impact on the most probable result:

- o The Shi'ites dominated the south, and had a majority in nine provinces, with a total of 81 seats, as well as in Baghdad, which has a total of 59 seats.

- o   The Sunni had a majority in four provinces, which had a total of 46 seats

- o   The Kurds had a majority in four provinces, which had a total of 44 seats

- o   The secular or nationalist parties did not have a majority in a single province.

At the same time, **Figure 53** also shows that the vote was mixed in many governorates, and the dangers of assuming that Iraq can easily be divided into federations, or separated along sectarian and ethnic lines. There also was a significant secular or nationalist voice in many Shi'ite provinces. At least five governorates emerged as so mixed that any division by sect or ethnicity might well trigger ethnic cleansing or civil war, and they had a total of 115 seats – half of those elected by governorate.

Figure 53

Results of the Iraq Election by Sect, Ethnicity, or "Nationalism"
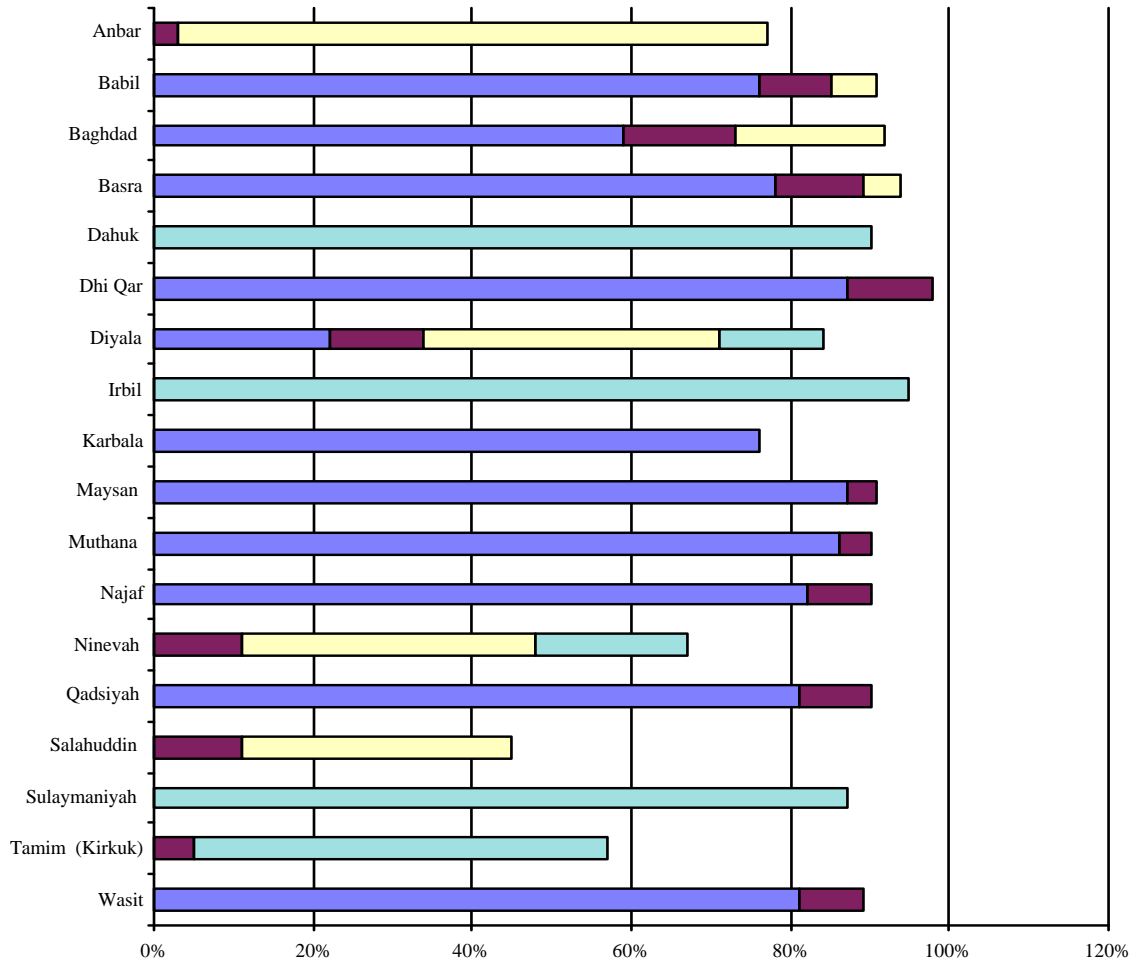
	Wasit	Tami m (Kirk	Sulay mani yah	Salah uddi n	Qadsi yah	Nine vah	Najaf	Muth ana	Mays an	Karba la	Irbil	Diyal a	Dhi Qar	Dahu k	Basra	Bagh dad	Babil	Anba r
□ KCL-Kurd		52%	87%			19%					95%	13%		90%				
□ IAF-Sunni				34%		37%						37%			5%	19%	6%	74%
■ INL & NCC - Nationalist	8%	5%		11%	9%	11%	8%	4%	4%			12%	11%		11%	14%	9%	3%
■ UIA-Shi'ite	81%				81%		82%	86%	87%	76%		22%	87%		78%	59%	76%	

Note: Only counts major parties: KCL=Kurdistan Coalition List; INL=Iraqi National List (Ayad Allawi), NCC=National Congress Coalition (Ahmed Chalabi), IAF=Iraqi Accordance Front, UIA=United Iraqi Alliance.

Source: Adapted from the Washington Post, December 21, 2005, p. A23 based on Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq results as of December 20, 2005.

The Impact of the December 15, 2005 Election

Success in developing Iraq's forces is interactive with success in creating a more stable and inclusive political system. In fact, the political dimension of force development has become increasingly important, as Iraq has taken over primary responsibility for its own destiny. The December 15, 2005 election changed the political landscape of Iraq in ways whose impact is currently impossible to determine, but will play a critical role in determining the success or failure of the Iraqi force development effort.

The final results for the December 15, 2005 elections gave the Sunnis significant representation, in spite of complaints about fraud. The new Council of Representatives had 275 seats and the final results for the election, which were certified on February 9, 2006, gave the main parties the following number of seats: Iraq Alliance (Shi'ites) 128 seats, Kurdish coalition 53, The Iraqi List (Secular "Allawi list") 25, Iraqi Accordance Front (Sunnis) 44; Iraqi front for National Dialogue (Sunni) 11. The Shi'ite coalition won 47% of the 275 seats; the Kurdish coalition won 19%, the two main Sunni parties won 20%, and Allawi's secular nationalists (with significant Sunni support) won 9%.[173]

It may be the fall of 2006 before the full impact of the December 15, 2005 election in Iraq is clear. It will certainly be months before the full nature of the new political structure it has created has been negotiated and every element of the new government is in place. There is still some risk that significant numbers of Sunnis will not accept the result, or that some combination of the insurgency and tension between Sunni and Shi'ite may divide the country.

A Deeply Divided Iraqi Population

So far, the election has not unified Iraqis or defused the insurgency. The Iraqi Electoral Commission and outside observers have concluded that electoral abuses were minor, and that the elections were fair. However, there is still a serious risk that Iraq will divide or experience a more intense and overt form of civil war.

Iraqi public opinion is deeply divided along ethnic and sectarian lines, and this large of unity threatens Iraq's ability to create an inclusive and effective government. A poll of Iraqis conducted after the election in early January of 2006 found that while some 66% of all Iraqis polled thought the elections were fair, this was not a meaningful picture of how Iraqis felt in ethnic and sectarian terms. While 89% of Iraqi Arab Shi'ites thought it was fair, as did 77% of Iraqi Kurds, only 5% of the Sunnis polled agreed. Put differently, only 33% of all Iraqis, 11% of Arab Shi'ites, and 19% of Kurds thought the elections were not fair, but 94% of Arab Sunnis *did* feel they were unfair. [174]

Iraqis felt much the same about the prospects for the new government. A total of 68% of all Iraqis, 90% of Arab Shi'ites, and 81% of Kurds thought the new government would be legitimate, but only 6% of Arab Sunnis. While only 31% of all Iraqis, 10% of Arab Shi'ites, and 15% of Kurds thought the new government would *not* be legitimate, but 92% of Arab Sunnis agreed. [175]

Iraqis disagree over more than the election and the future government. When they were asked whether ousting Saddam was worth the cost and suffering caused by the war and its aftermath, 77% of all Iraqis, 98% of Arab Shi'ites, and 91% of Kurds thought the new government would be legitimate, but only 13% of Arab Sunnis. While only 22% of all Iraqis, 10% of Arab Shi'ites,

and 15% of Kurds thought the ousting Saddam was not worth it, but 83% of Arab Sunnis agreed. In a similar vein, 64% of all Iraqis, 84% of Arab Shi'ites, and 76% of Kurds thought Iraq was moving in the right direction, l, but only 6% of Arab Sunnis. A total of 93% of Iraqi Arab Sunnis thought that Iraq was moving in the wrong direction.[176]

Political stability requires effective Iraqi forces, but political instability could easily divide the new Iraqi forces, converting them into largely Shi'ite and Kurdish units, and pushing out Sunnis -- potentially as part of the insurgency. It has again exposed both the fact that Iraqi force development is totally dependent on Iraqi political success, and that successful force development must pay as much attention to internal politics and the political nature of an insurgency as to force effectiveness. It has also shown that any effort to develop effective military forces must be matched by an effort to develop effective security and police forces and ones that will not ally themselves with militias or other irregular forces that can divided the country.

Iraqi Attitudes Towards Iraqi Forces and US Withdrawal and Military Assistance

These issues again are reflected in Iraqi opinion polls conducted in early 2006. The coalition forces had very uncertain popularity in Iraq – a result consistent with all previous polls from late 2003 onwards. As **Figure 54** also shows, some 47% of all Iraqis approved attacks on US-led forces, versus 7% approved attacks on Iraqi forces and roughly 1% attacks on Iraqi civilians. Some 41% of Arab Shi'ites, 16% of Kurds, and 88% of Arab Sunnis approved of attacks on US led forces.[177]

Almost all Iraqis wanted US-led forces to leave Iraq: 35% wanted withdrawal by July 2006, and 70% wanted withdrawal in two years. Once again, however, there are striking differences. Only 22% of Arab-Shi'ites wanted the US to withdraw in six months, although 71% wanted withdrawal in two years. Some 13% of Kurds wanted the US to withdraw in six months, and only 40% wanted withdrawal in two years. In the case of Sunnis, however, 83% wanted the US out in six months and 94% in two years. [178] When the question was asked differently, Iraqis seemed somewhat less divided. A total of 29% were willing to wait and only reduce US forces when the situation improved in the field. This included 29% of Arab Shi'ites, 57% of Kurds, and 29% of Arab Sunnis. This at least in part reflected concerns about the quality of Iraqi forces.

Iraqis praised the US force development effort more than they praised any other aspect of the US assistance effort, but such praise was relative. Only 33% felt the US was doing a good job. Another 44% approved but thought the US was doing a poor job, and 23% disapproved. Again, major differences occurred by sect and ethnicity: Some 54% of Kurds felt the US was doing a good job, 42% approved but thought the US was doing a poor job, and only 9% disapproved. In the case of Arab Shi'ites, however, only 37% felt the US was doing a good job, 52% approved but thought the US was doing a poor job, and 11% disapproved. And, in the case of Arab Sunnis, only 6% felt the US was doing a good job, 20% approved but thought the US was doing a poor job, and 74% disapproved.

As a result, Iraqis had very mixed views about how soon Iraqi forces would be ready to take over the mission. The poll found that 35% of all Iraqis wanted US led forces to withdraw in six months (83% Sunnis), and 35% more in two years (11% Sunnis). Iraqis also were relatively confident about the impact of such withdrawals. Some 35% thought US withdrawals would increase the number of violent attacks (13% Sunnis), 34% thought crime would rise (12%

Sunni), and 33% though interethnic violence would increase (18% Sunnis). A total of 73% felt US withdrawal would increase the willingness of factions in the national assembly to cooperate (62% Kurd, 69% Arab Shi'ite, and 87% Arab Sunni.)

At the same time, only 39% felt Iraqi forces were ready to deal with security challenges on their own (38% Sunni). A total of 21% felt Iraqi forces would need help from outside forces for another year (21% Sunnis). A total of 26% felt Iraqi forces would need help from outside forces for two years (31% Sunnis), and a total of 12% felt Iraqi forces would need help from outside forces for three years or more (5% Sunnis).

The good news for both Iraq's political and force development is that there is far more unity about avoiding attacks on Iraqi forces and civilians. Only 7% of Iraqis approved attacks on Iraqi forces and 93% disapproved. Even among Sunnis, only 24% "approved somewhat," and 76% disapproved, of which 24% disapproved strongly. When it came to attacks on Iraqi civilians, only 7% of Iraqis approved attacks on Iraqi forces and 99% disapproved. So few Sunnis approved that the results for "approve" were not statically meaningful. Nearly 100%% disapproved, of which 95% disapproved strongly.

Figure 54

Iraqi Attitudes Towards the Security Situation in Iraq

(Support Shown in Percent)

	Total	Kurd	Shi'ite Arab	Sunni Arab	Other
Attacks on US Forces in Iraq					
Strongly Approve	23	8	9	77	5
Approve Somewhat	24	8	32	11	38
Disapprove Somewhat	29	18	41	9	24
Strongly Disapprove	23	63	18	3	31
Attacks on Iraqi Government Forces					
Strongly Approve	1	-	2	-	0
Approve Somewhat	6	-	2	24	2
Disapprove Somewhat	27	13	19	52	47
Strongly Disapprove	66	86	78	24	51
Attacks on Iraqi Civilians					
Strongly Approve	-	-	0	0	0
Approve Somewhat	1	-	1	0	0
Disapprove Somewhat	4	1	5	5	0
Strongly Disapprove	95	98	94	95	100
What Should the New Iraqi Government Ask the US to Do About US-led Forces?					
Withdraw all in 6 months	35	13	22	83	36
Gradually withdraw in 2 years	35	28	49	11	14
Reduce only as security Situation improves	29	57	29	4	46
Would the US Withdraw in 6 months If asked by Iraqi government?					
Would	23	17	32	5	14
Would Not	76	77	67	94	82
How Capable are Iraqi Security Forces?					
Strong enough now	39	22	45	38	33
Still need foreign help	59	73	55	58	67
How much Longer Will Iraqi Forces Need Foreign Help?					
1year	21	5	25	21	25
2 years	26	31	21	31	33
3 years or more	12	33	8	5	7

Note: the percentages for "Refused/Don't Know" are all 5% or lower and are not shown.
Source: WorldPublicOpinion.org, "What the Iraq Public Wants-A WorldPublicOpinionPoll, January 2-5, 2006, sample of 1000, with 150 Sunni Arab over-sample.

2006 as a Tipping Year in the "Long War"?

The end result is that 2006 is a year that can see may well see successful political compromise and major further progress in developing Iraqi forces. At the same time, if Iraqi politics fail, it is unclear Iraqi force development can succeed. The year could also result in the division of both the country and Iraq's forces, and make the US presence and advisory effort difficult to untenable.

Even success is certain to be relative. Virtually any form of compromise that most Shi'ites, Sunnis, Kurds, and other minorities can accept is good enough to be defined as "success." Any force development effort that avoids the division of the regular armed forces, ends most abuses in the Ministry of the Interior and security forces, makes the police more professional and neutral, and gradually limits the role of the militias will also be success.

It has become all too apparent that "victory" for the Coalition will be defined as the successful Iraq application of the art of compromise, and that the goal of "transforming" Iraq into some shining example to the region was always little more than a neoconservative hope. Iraq may well end in becoming a stable and unified nation, with a strong degree of pluralism, and a far stronger rule of law and protection of human rights. This future, however, is still years in the future, and it never made sense to assume that Iraq's example would impact heavily on progress in other Middle Eastern states. In the real world, progress occurs one nation at a time.

Yet, the alternative is not victory for the insurgency -- the Sunni insurgents are a divided minority within a minority who has serious support from only a relatively small part of Iraq's population. It can, however, be national paralysis, civil war, or separation. There is no certain way to know the motives behind the suicide attacks and bombings that began in January 2006, but there are good reasons for such attacks as seen from the viewpoint of hard-line insurgents. One key insurgent objective has been block the creation of a stable coalition that includes Arab Sunnis, Arab Shi'ites, and Kurds, and any following efforts to make an inclusive coalition government successful.

Bloody attacks on Shi'ites and Kurds are a key way to do this. So is attempting to discredit the whole process of governance by exploiting political and economic vulnerabilities like the rise in fuel and gas prices in late 2005, and attacking/threatening refineries to make things worse. At least for the near term, the primary goal of hard-line insurgents is logically to disrupt coalition building and discredit the government.

This, however, is only part of the strategy hard-line Sunni Islamist insurgents will logically follow. They also need to maintain their Sunni base and attack/discredit Sunnis moving towards compromise. This did not make sense during the elections. Security was at an all time peak that US and Iraqi forces could not sustain.

Giving Arab Sunnis legislative power made sense to at least some Sunni insurgents as long as those elected used it to check Shi'ite power and limit coalition building. Zarqawi and Al Qa'ida still opposed the elections, but others were willing to wait and intimidate the Sunnis who gained office, exploit charges of election fraud, and make it clear that it was safe to oppose coalitions and compromise within the political system, but not to oppose the insurgency.

If one "red teams" insurgent motives at the start of 2006, there were also reasons for insurgents to be more optimistic about what they might accomplish during the coming year that might counter the successes in Iraqi politics and force development:

- The insurgents showed by early January that they still could mount large numbers of attacks. The Coalition forces stressed that the number of attacks has risen, but that successes had dropped. It was far from clear this is true if one considered the impact of the successful attacks, and such claims ignored the key point that the insurgents were still strong enough for the number of attacks to increase.

- Some key aspects of the fracture lines between Sunni and Shi'ite were still growing. The Arab Sunni vs. Arab Shi'ite and Kurd tensions in the security forces were gradually becoming more serious, although the US and UK were making major new efforts to control and ease them. Sectarian divisions within the Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior continued to grow. The new army continued to become steadily more Shi'ite and there were still growing problems in promoting Sunni officers. The police remained divided along sectarian and ethnic lines.

- These problems were being increased by rushing new Iraqi units into the field, many in areas where they created sectarian friction.

- The election was providing to be highly controversial among Sunnis, with all kinds of charges and conspiracy theories. Many who voted, voted against the constitution and as a check to the growth of Shi'ite and Kurdish power.

- It was clear than any new Iraqi coalition that did emerge would be inherently unstable even if it did include Sunni groups that were willing to compromise. The new Iraqi government faced at least 6-8 months in which ongoing political debates had to occur over federation, control of oil resources and revenues, power of taxation, allocation of government funds, role of religion in government and law, and virtually every other "hot button" issue.

The tragedy of this strategy is that a failure by the new Iraqi government, and/or the division of the new Iraqi forces, almost certainly means that most Iraqi Sunnis will suffer more than the Shi'ites and Kurds. They will live in the area where the real fighting takes place, their economy will continue to deteriorate, and they will get little oil money and few government services. There is no charismatic Iraqi Sunni leader, radical insurgents like Zarqawi and Al Qa'ida can only disrupt the nation, not lead Iraq's Sunnis. The insurgents only have limited foreign support, the hard-line insurgents were a distinct minority within the Sunni majority, and most of the successes in building up the new Iraq forces are real enough so that alienating the Shi'ites and Kurds might well backfire if the country did divide into more serious civil conflict.

The tragedy for Iraq is that this simply may not matter to hard-line Sunni insurgents. At least some would welcome a divided Iraqi as a means to their broader goal of weakening moderate regimes throughout the region and polarizing its people in ways that push Sunnis toward Islamist extremism. In any case, the immediate goal of many insurgents is not to win, or to implement a given program (most such insurgents have no coherent practical program). It is rather to deny victory and success to the newly elected Iraqi government and push the US and Coalition out in a war of attrition. From a "red team" view, this goal must still seem all too possible and most insurgents seem to be acting on this strategy.

Shaping the Nature of Iraqi Politics as Iraqi Forces Come On-Line

The very fact Iraq held a real election for a sovereign government with a legislature with a four-year tenure was an important achievement. In spite of complaints by some of the leading parties, the election seems to have only had a limited number of major glitches, and only limited

violence occurred. Sunnis did participate in large numbers, and the overall turn out was relatively high.

Everything depends, however, on whether this success can be turned into a more lasting political process. Voting takes only a matter of minutes, but creating an effective government and functioning political system takes months to begin, and years to complete. The Iraqi election can only be successful if Iraqi politics and governance are successful, and move towards unifying the country and ending support for the insurgency. It may be months before a new government is in place, and it must then come to grips with completing a new constitution and dealing with virtually every major issue that defines the role of government and the new Iraqi state.

Iraq also faces the need to simultaneously expand the role of Iraqi military, special security, and police forces. These are the key to both defeating the insurgents and maintaining national unity. They are critical to the legitimacy of the new government, which must show that its forces can replace most Coalition forces, and that its police can establish local security and a rule of law.

In any case, the final results of the election are only one factor that that counts in determining how political power evolves over the months to come, or exactly which parties get a given number of representatives in the new national assembly. It is rather how well Iraqis can play "let's make a deal." The election did not resolve any major issue confronting the Iraqi people. It was not a "turning point," but a "trigger." It started a political process that will determine, during the course of 2006, whether Iraq has a solid chance of emerging out of its present turmoil with stability, as well as the success or failure of the Coalition in Iraq

The elections created the following schedule for political action:[179]

--Final voting results expected in first week of January

--15 days after the final election results are announced, the newly elected Council of Representatives (National Assembly in the old government) meets for the first time. Is supposed to elect a speaker.

--The Council of Representatives must then negotiate among its members, without a clear deadline, to elect a Presidential Council with a president and two deputy presidents. They must be approved by two-thirds of the Council of Representatives. (This allows a Sunni, Shi'ite, and Kurd to share the presidency, but this is not required.)

--15 days after the Council of Representatives approves the Presidential Council, it is supposed to agree on a prime minister (in practice, chosen by the major parties). The Presidential Council must unanimously approve the choice.

--No more than 30 days later, the new Prime Minister is to announce his cabinet.

-- The Council of Representatives must then begin a four-month review of the constitution.

--The Council of Representatives must approve any amendments by a majority. (Goes up to two-thirds after four months.)

--Two months later, the nation votes on a revised constitution.

During the six to ten months following the December 15, 2005 election, the newly elected Iraqi assembly must form a government, transform vaguely defined political parties and coalitions into specific courses of action, allocate power by ethnic or sectarian faction, and come to grips with all of the issues raised by the constitution. If they succeed in creating an inclusive structure in virtually any peaceful form, Iraq succeeds. If they fail, the Coalition fails almost regardless of its military success, and that of the new Iraqi forces, and Iraq will move towards division, paralysis, civil conflict and/or a new strongman.

What the Elections Did and Did Not Show About the Prospects for Iraqi Political Unity

The election results do provide some important indicators, but most results are ambiguous and the election results do not reveal several key aspects of Iraqi politics. They also do not indicate whether Sunnis, and others who object to the results, will actually participate in the new government and/or support a peaceful political process. Furthermore, they strongly indicate that any government that did not act as a national unity coalition, or emphasize unity and inclusion, could trigger serious ethnic cleansing or civil war.

Indicators: Voting in the four most troubled provinces where the insurgency has the most support (Anbar, Salahuddin, Nineveh, and Diyala)

To some extent, the results showed the relative strength of the more centrist Sunnis, and more "nationalist" Sunni insurgent movements, versus the strength of the hard-line neo-Salafi religious extremist movements who opposed voting. Voting levels were relatively high, particularly compared to past Sunni participation.

It should be noted, however, that some insurgent organizations and many Sunni leaders opposed to federation and the constitution in its current form did call for participation. Voters can remain opponents and insurgents.

(i) Some insurgents and pro-insurgents voted simply to create a counterweight to the Shi'ites and Kurds. One can still support violence and vote.

(ii) Voting pro-Sunni did not mean willingness to accommodate the new government; that will depend on the efforts over the months that follow to define the constitution and the way in which the new government operates.

(iii) Such voting did not mean support for the US or Coalition. The December 2005 ABC-Time-Oxford Research International poll showed Iraqi Sunnis still decisively reject a US and Coalition role in Iraq. It also reveals they have serious mistrust about the new Iraqi government and armed forces.

Moreover, the ABC analysis of the December 2005 ABC-Time-Oxford Research International poll found that Sunnis saw a steady deterioration in their provinces when they were asked about whether conditions were good.

Figure 55

Are Local Conditions Good? Change in Results from 2004 to 2005

(In Percent)

Area Polled	All	Shi'ite	**Sunni**	Mixed	Kurdish
Overall conditions of life	+1	+21`	**-26**	+6	-4
Crime Protection	+13	+7	**-22**	+45	+13
Security	+12	+22	**-19**	+29	+14
Jobs	+12	+31	**-12**	+16	+9

Source: ABC News Poll: Where Things Stand, "Poll Finds Broad Optimism in Iraq, But Also Deep Divisions Among Groups," ABC News, December 23, 2005.

Only 27% of Sunnis approved the constitution versus 82% for Shi'ites. And, only 37% of Sunnis were confident in the Army versus 87% for Shi'ites. These figures are striking because the poll could not fully sample the Sunni areas were support for the insurgency was strongest.

Sunni attitudes were particularly polarized in Al Anbar, the western province where the insurgency is strongest. Only 1% of those polled felt the US invasion was a good thing, and no respondent placed any faith in US or Coalition forces. Nearly 50% of those polled in Al Anbar called instability their greatest problem. This was more than 17% more than in the other Sunni provinces. Only 13% said their local security situation was good, and only 28% expected it to improve. Only 20% of those polled approved of the new constitution, although 60% did believe the December 15, 2005 elections would produce a more stable government.

Sunni Islamist Extremist Opposition to the Elections and Their Results

While many mainstream Iraqi Sunnis, and their political and religious leaders advocated participation in the elections and government, and an effort to work with the system -- at least to the point of blocking Shi'ite and Kurdish power and amending the constitution -- the more radical Sunni movements strongly opposed such participation and threatened any Sunnis in their areas of influence who voted.

A coalition of five Jihadi Salafist groups in Iraq (the Qa'ida organization in Iraq; the Victorious Army; Abu Baker Brigades; the Islamic Jihad Brigade; the Brigade of Propagation of Virtue and Prohibition of Vice) met and issued the following statement on December 12, 2005:

> "What is going on in Iraq and the conspiracy being weaved against jihad and Mujahideen headed by the crusaders and those who agree with them on what is called the political process. This process is like other previous process; they are the satanic projects that aim to degrade the Mujahideen and the creed.

> "It is swearing to God the new conspiracy of (Dayton) coming back again, those bad people are trying to get us sit to negotiate with them, and with the infidels and with those who violate the credence of our mosques and homes, the honor of our women for the sake of national unity.

"In the mid of all these bad situations that Moslem are going through including the killing and the detaining of the Sunnis, the role played by the apostates trying not to have Islamic state in Iraq formed.

"…They have reached a solution concerning the political process, coming as follows:

·   We reject the political process to God and that we are free from any relations with, or those who have ties with the apostate government of what is so called the political process.
·   To join the so called the political process is religiously forbidden, and it contradicts the legitimate policy of God which is the holy Quran.
·   To pursue with Jihad, fighting for the word of God, and to establish an Islamic state."

Sunni Insecurity versus Shi'ite and Kurdish Security

Given this background, it is not surprising that Sunnis felt more threatened than other Iraqis, although this perception can be by insurgents and criminals, and not simply by a loss of power or Shi'ite dominated forces and militias. ABC summarized its polling on Sunni attitudes on security versus those of other ethnic and sectarian groups as follows:

"Sixty-one percent of Iraqis now say they feel security is better than it was before the war; that represents a 12 percent increase since we last asked, and a fairly startling counterweight to the prevalent view in the press. Having said that, these numbers are driven almost entirely by Shiites and Kurds who were treated so brutally under Saddam Hussein.

"…By contrast, among Iraq's Sunnis — for whom "security" was almost ironclad under Saddam — a whopping 90 percent report their security is worse today. In 2005, the majority of insurgent attacks have been concentrated in four of Iraq's 18 provinces, which are home to roughly 45 percent of the country's population: Ninevah, Al Anbar, Baghdad and Salah ah Din. Attacks have focused primarily on members of the Iraqi Security Forces, members of the Multinational Forces, Iraqi civilians and government officials — as well as foreign diplomatic and media personnel."

Sunni faith in the Iraqi Army fell by 13% between mid-2004 and the winter of 2005, while Shi'ite faith increased by 22%. In December 2005, Sunnis were 50% less confident in the army than Shi'ites and 23% less confident in the police.

Indicators: Broader Sunni Strength and Attitudes Towards the Government

Many Sunnis almost certainly voted largely to assert a Sunni voice in government as a counterbalance to being excluded, not because they believe that they will be treated fairly, that the political process is working, or that all forms of armed resistance are illegitimate.

The ABC analysis of the December 2005 ABC-Time-Oxford Research International polling results found that Iraqi Arab Sunnis had very different attitudes from Arab Shi'ites. Only 43% of Sunnis described life as good versus 86% for Shi'ites. Only 9% of Sunnis felt things in Iraq were going well versus 53% for Shi'ites. Only 7% of Sunnis felt the US had a right to invade versus 59% for Shi'ites. Only 11% of Sunnis said they felt "very safe" versus 80% for Shi'ites.[180]

As **Figure 56** shows, a post-election poll in early January had similar results. Some 93% of Arab Sunnis felt Iraq was headed in the wrong direction versus 36% of all Iraqis, and only 16% of Arab Shi'ites and 23% of Kurds – although 40% of Iraqi minorities did feel the same as most Sunnis. Some 94% of Arab Sunnis thought the elections were not "free and fair" versus only 33% of all Iraqis, 11% of Shi'ites, and 19% of Kurds.

Sunni attitudes were generally far less favorable towards the government and the elections than Shi'ites and Kurds. The poll found that, "The contrast among Sunnis is stark: Only 27 percent approve of the constitution; 48 percent say they are confident regarding the elections; and only

12 percent believe the government has done a good job." It also found that Sunni confidence in the elections was just 48% versus 80% elsewhere.

As Figure **56** also shows, when Sunnis were asked their current preference for a type of government, only 38% favored democracy versus 57% for all Iraqis, 75% in mixed areas like Baghdad, 63% in Kurdish areas, and 45% in Shi'ite areas. As the table below shows, the poll found that Sunnis had a more favorable attitude towards democracy when they looked five years into the future. It also found, however, that Sunnis were still much more likely to prefer a strong leader for life over democracy than other Iraqis.

It also seems likely that those Sunnis who favored democracy sometimes did so more because they opposed an Islamic state they felt would be dominated by Shi'ites than because of any basic faith in democracy. Some 88% in Sunni governorates also favor a unified Iraq versus only 56% in Shi'ite provinces, but this again seems likely to reflect a fear of the loss of oil wealth, power, and isolation as well as a deep belief in national unity.

Figure 56

Iraqi Political Divisions by Iraqi Ethnic Group and Arab Religious Sect

Iraqi Attitudes Towards the Security Situation in Iraq: Early January 2006

(Support Shown in Percent)

	Total	Kurd	Shi'ite Arab	Sunni Arab	Other
Iraq is:					
Headed In Right Direction	64	76	84	6	60
Headed in Wrong Direction	36	23	16	93	40
Parliamentary Elections Were:					
Free And Fair	66	77	89	5	49
Not Free and Fair	33	19	11	94	51
New Parliament Will Be Legitimate:					
Will	68	81	90	6	51
Will Not	31	16	10	92	47
Suffering From Ousting of Saddam Was:					
Worth It	77	91	98	13	64
Not Worth It	22	8	2	83	31

Note: Small percentages of don't know and refused to answer are not shown.

Source: WorldPublicOpinion.org, "What the Iraq Public Wants-A WorldPublicOpinionPoll, January 2-5, 2006, sample of 1000, with 150 Sunni Arab over-sample.

Preferred System of Government: Sunni, Shi'ite, and Kurd: Post-Election, December 2005.

 (In Percent)

What Iraq Needs in Five Years	All	Shi'ite	**Sunni**	Mixed	Kurdish
Democracy	64	59	55	74	61
Islamic State	12	24	4	8	14
Stronger Leader	18	11	34	11	17

Source: ABC News Poll: Where Things Stand, "Poll Finds Broad Optimism in Iraq, But Also Deep Divisions Among Groups," ABC News, December 23, 2005.

Sunni Political Parties

The election results did not indicate that Sunnis were deprived of large numbers of votes, and the Sunni parties should get roughly the same number of seats as the Kurds. It seems unlikely that the Shi'ites and Kurds can get the 184 seats they would need to have the two-thirds majority they need to form a new government, or to ignore the Sunnis in any case. Nevertheless, the initial Sunni reaction has been to dispute the election results, make a host of charges (some 700 complaints by late December 21, 2005), and call for new elections.

It is far from clear how serious these calls are, but the previous issues and attitudes explain why the Sunnis are hostile to Shi'ite and Kurdish control and how sensitive the political situation is. There is a serious risk of division or paralysis in the process of political inclusion, although political negotiations are obviously underway, and compromise may well be possible.

If the Sunni parties do chose to participate in the new government, the fact remains that they are divided and unproven, and have leaders and candidates whose behavior may be very different when it comes to forming a coalition, serving in the legislature, or taking office.

The key Sunni parties included two very different coalitions:

- o **Iraqi Accord(ance) Front, Iraqi Consensus Front, or Tawafoq Iraqi Front**: This list, led by Adnan al-Dulaymi, has three predominantly Sunni parties and largely supports the constitution:

    - General Conference of the People of Iraq (GCPI), led by Adnan al-Dulaymi
    - Iraqi Islamic Party, led by Tariq al-Hashimi
    - National Dialogue Council led by Khalaf al-Ulayyan.

- o **Iraqi Front for National Dialogue or Hewar National Iraqi Front:** Salih al-Mutlaq heads this list and split the Iraqi Dialogue Council because he opposed the constitution. The list includes the following political groups:

    - Christian Democratic Party led by Minas al-Yusufi
    - Arab Democratic Front led by Fahran al-Sudayd
    - National Front for a Free and United Iraq led by Hasan Zaydan
    - United Sons of Iraq Movement led by Ali al-Suhayri.
    - Iraqi National Front

The Iraqi Islamic Party supported the constitutional referendum and divided key elements of the nascent Sunni political structure long before the election. Adnan al-Dulaymi's General Conference of the People of Iraq and the NDC agreed to merge with the Islamic Party to form the Iraqi Accord Front, Al-Mutlaq split with the National Dialogue Council (NDC) and some smaller parties under the name the Iraqi Front for National Dialogue. The Association of Muslim Scholars refused to participate on the grounds that multinational forces should first announce a timetable for withdrawal.

The preliminary results showed that there were many mixed sectarian and ethnic areas in Iraq. The voting for Iraqi Accord(ance) Front or Tawafoq Iraqi Front seems to have gotten some 19% of the total national vote to date. This was particularly important since the key party in this group was one of the few Sunni partiers to openly endorse the constitution while the Iraqi Front for National Dialogue or Hewar National Iraqi Front was more hostile to it.

If one compares the vote for these two parties by governorate, the results were mixed. The Iraqi Accord(ance) Front or Tawafoq Iraqi Front got 74% of the preliminary vote in Anbar, 19% in

Baghdad, 37% in Diyala, 6% in Kirkuk, 37% in Nineveh, and 34% in Salahiddin, The Iraqi Front for National Dialogue or Hewar National Iraqi Front got 18% of the preliminary vote in Anbar, 10% in Diyala, 14% in Kirkuk, 10% in Nineveh, and 19% in Salahiddin.

Indicators: Nationalist versus Sectarian and Ethnic Parties

The results showed that Iyad Allawi and the Iraqi National List or National Iraqi List, #731 got a relatively limited level of support: 9% in Babil, 14% in Baghdad, 11% in Dyala, 12% in Karbala, 8% in Najaf, 11% in Nineveh, 9% in Qadisyyah, 11% in Salahaddin, 5% in Theqar and 8% in Wasit. This was not a bad result in national terms, but scarcely the result that made the party the key power broker some of its leaders hoped.

The end result was that Allawi's party made complaints about the electoral process similar to the Sunnis. Many of the expectations this group might do well, however, were based on the attitudes of elites in the Baghdad area, and not on the realities of a divided Iraq.

The results were also tainted by personal attacks on Allawi. The campaign led to an increasingly bitter set of exchanges between Allawi and leading Shi'ite politicians in the UIA, and even to threats by the Badr Organization to overthrow any Allawi government that emerged out of the election. Allawi had received money from the CIA during his opposition to Saddam Hussein, and he was attacked during the campaign as a tool of the US.

Moreover, as has been touched upon earlier, many Iraqis saw a need to vote an ethnic or sectarian ticket in this election rather than risk "wasting" their vote on a minority party. They did so even though the new ABC-Time Oxford Research International poll did not show strong support for religious government. ABC reported that, "Preference for a democratic political structure has advanced, to 57 percent of Iraqis, while support for an Islamic state has lost ground, to 14 percent (the rest, 26 percent, chiefly in Sunni Arab areas, favor a 'single strong leader.')"

Indicators: Voting in the Kurdish Areas

The results provided a strong indication of Kurdish strength, and the two main Kurdish political parties in the ruling Coalition of Barzani and Talibani -- the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) -- seem likely to emerge with around 20 percent of the vote. They also succeeded in dominating the Kurdish vote in the election and keeping smaller parties like Islamic Union from winning a meaningful number of seats.

The voting did not reveal how many Kurds still wanted independence, the level of tension in the Kurdish dominated areas over issues like oil and Kirkuk, the level of tension between the Barzani and Talibani factions, or the level of tension with other ethnic groups like the Turcomans.

Accordingly, the results did not serve as a prediction of how the Kurds will behave, and be treated, in the very different government that must emerge out of the elections. Even before the election, Jalal Talibani said the presidency would be a hollow part of the new government structure. Arab Shi'ites may become more interested in compromise with Arab Sunnis than with the Kurds.

The flow of money that previously kept the KDP and PUK unified to the extent there have only been minor armed clashes is also uncertain. The Kurds face serious revenue issues as oil for food and aid phase down. They already lost most of their revenue from smuggling shortly after Saddam fell when the CPA virtually abolished most Iraqi tariffs.

Non-Indicators: Shi'ite Intentions and Unity

The vote for the Shi'ite coalition ticket showed that the UIA was clearly the dominant party and might get some 120 or more seats. Ahmed Chalabi did not succeed in capturing a large part of the Shi'ite vote or convincing other groups he stood for an effective secular or national program. His new party only captured a token vote in most areas.

At the same time, the results did not provide a picture of how flexible or inclusive the main Shi'ite parties will be, or how the Shi'ite parties will behave after the Coalition.

The present Prime Minister, Ibrahim Jafari, was seen as both popular and weak, but no clear alternative has as yet emerged. Many feel that Deputy President Adel Abdul Mahdi has emerged as a strong potential leader, but much depends on how the election results for the United Iraqi Alliance (UIA) are translated into actual decisions about its leadership and how it will behave.

As has been discussed earlier, national polls before the election showed less support for a religious type of government, and local reporting shows some dissatisfaction with local religious governments. However, hard-line Shi'ite factions control Basra and a significant part of Baghdad, and even if the national leaders have cohesive positions, it is not clear how well they will speak for local government and politics in the Shi'ite dominated provinces.

The United Iraqi Alliance (UIA) was clearly the key Shi'ite party and will probably remain an umbrella coalition of Shi'ite parties after the election. Its status, however, is much more uncertain than in the January 2005 election. The key parties still in the UIA are the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI) and the Islamic Al-Da'wah or Dawa Party; members of cleric Moqtada al-Sadr's movement and these parties have many internal tensions. For example, one Sadr supporter, Fattah al-Shaykh, seems to have dropped out because of Sadr, failure to adopt a decisive stand "on participation in the elections." A number of former UIA participants have left to form or join other parties and coalitions.

Key UIA leaders like the Moqtada Al-Sadr and Abdul Aziz Al Hakim differed sharply over critical issues like federation. Sadr strongly opposes it, and Hakim strongly favors it. Sadr is always an explosive political uncertainty, and has reasserted himself as a major political voice in Baghdad, Basra, and elsewhere as well as a major anti-US voice. Hakim's post election political role could be particularly critical because he is the leader of the Shi'ite Islamist Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), and plays a major role in the actions of the Badr Organization, which is blamed for many of the Shi'ite attacks on Sunnis. He also has ties to the present Minister of the Interior, who is blamed for tolerating some of the abuses by government prisons and the special security units.

Ahmad al-Chalabi's Iraqi National Congress and the Constitutional Monarchy Movement were part of the UIA in the last election but left to form the National Congress Coalition It is too soon to count out the ever-ambiguous Ahmad Chalabi, but he did not do well in any area in Iraq, and could not win a personnel seat in the election in the Baghdad governorate.

Another uncertainty is the future role of the most important unelected figure in Iraq, the Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani. Sistani's role may be particularly critical in deciding how seriously Shi'ites pursue separatism under the guise of federation, versus inclusive politics and national unity.

Non-Indicators: The Lack of Support for the US and Coalition Forces

Iraqi public opinion did reveal how unpopular US and Coalition forces were, but the election was not really fought on the role of such forces or how long the US and Coalition forces should stay. The mid-December ABC-Time Oxford Research International poll provided a strong warning that voting will not mean an endorsement of the US and Coalition, regardless of what faction Iraqis vote for.

ABC summarized the results as follows:

> "…half of Iraqis now say it was wrong for U.S.-led forces to invade in spring 2003, up from 39 percent in 2004.

> "The number of Iraqis who say things are going well in their country overall is just 44 percent, far fewer than the 71 percent who say their own lives are going well. Fifty-two percent instead say the country is doing badly.

> "There's other evidence of the United States' increasing unpopularity: Two-thirds now oppose the presence of U.S. and Coalition forces in Iraq, 14 points higher than in February 2004. Nearly six in 10 disapprove of how the United States has operated in Iraq since the war, and most of them disapprove strongly. And nearly half of Iraqis would like to see U.S. forces leave soon.

> "Specifically, 26 percent of Iraqis say U.S. and other Coalition forces should "leave now" and another 19 percent say they should go after the government chosen in this week's election takes office; that adds to 45 percent. Roughly the other half says coalition forces should remain until security is restored (31 percent), until Iraqi security forces can operate independently (16 percent), or longer (5 percent)."

Fear of the US Forces as a Security Threat

Polls also provided important insights about how Iraqis viewed security and the need for Iraqi forces. A total of 37% said that a lack of security, chaos, civil war, internal trouble, or division of the country was the worst thing that could happen to Iraq in the next year. An additional 12% cited terrorism. Some 9% of Iraqis polled said that the worst thing would be for Coalition forces ***not*** to leave the country.

A total of 49% of all Iraqis polled still said they felt unsafe, and cited terrorism as the main reason. However, when they were asked what they did to feel more safe, 67% said they avoided US forces, 52% said they avoided checkpoints, 47% said they avoided the police and government buildings, and 43% said they were careful about what they said.

Another ABC report on the situation in Iraq in mid-December noted that,

> "Iraqis who do not feel safe tell us they take a variety of measures to protect themselves. Sixty-seven percent say they avoid U.S. forces; one in two stays clear of checkpoints if possible; and 43 percent are careful about what they say in public. Again, these are figures for Iraqis who say they feel less safe than before.

> "The impact of security shortfalls remains significant. Violence has hampered reconstruction, in western and central Iraq in particular, and it has meant that badly needed funds for electricity, clean water, education and salaries for health care professionals are spent instead on security. In one stunning measure of "Where Things Stand" in Iraq we found that as of October 2005, approximately $5 billion of the $18.4 billion appropriated by the U.S. Congress for reconstruction in Iraq had been diverted to security needs.

> "Many parents have become more afraid to allow their children, girls in particular, to attend school, and some Iraqis are too frightened even to visit the doctor when sick.

> "… a strange calm pervades some cities where local militias have seized power. Nowhere is this more apparent than in Karbala, a major city in southern Iraq where such militia appear to have infiltrated the police and security forces. It's a development that outsiders, and some locals, view with fear and dismay —

how, after all, can the true authorities hold power and garner respect when bands of armed men outside the government set up checkpoints and rule the streets? Yet many locals — in Karbala at least — report that these militias have improved security. An "iron hand" may be at work, and it may be a fleeting calm, but for the moment it is noticed and appreciated."

A Zogby poll showed that some of the sentiments behind these results went far beyond Iraq. The poll found that 84% of Egyptians polled said their attitudes towards the US have grown worse over the last year, 62% of Jordanian, 49% of Lebanese, 72% of Moroccans, 82% of Saudis, and 58% of those in the UAE. These results tracked in many ways with polling done by the Pew Trust, and it is interesting to note the causes. When Zogby asked what the most important factor in determining Arab attitudes towards the US were, he got the following results (Figure 57):

Figure 57

Most Important Factor in Determining Attitude Towards US in 2005

Factor	Egypt	Jordan	Lebanon	Morocco	Saudi Arabia	UAE
War in Iraq	57	48	34	45	49	31
President Bush's Promotion of Democracy and Reform	4	6	16	2	9	9
Developments in Arab-Israeli Front	8	13	19	8	8	7
American Treatment of Arabs And Muslims	28	28	22	40	32	41
Other	0	3	4	2	0	5

Source: Zogby International, Attitudes of Arabs: 2005, December 7, 2005, p. 14.

Lack of Support and Gratitude for the US Aid Effort

There was negligible support or gratitude for the US aid effort: Only 18% percent of the Iraqis polled described the post-war construction efforts in their area as "very effective." At total of 52% said they were ineffective or had never occurred at all. Only 6% saw the US as playing a main role in the reconstruction process and only 12% gave credit to the government.

Non-Indicators: Support for the Current Government and Political Process

The voting did not show how many Iraqis voted primarily because they feared other ethnic and sectarian groups and were seeking to strengthen their own. It certainly did not reflect faith in the government elected in January. Many Shi'ites saw Prime Minister Ibrahim Jafari as weak and ineffective – some for being too Shi'ite and some for not-being Shi'ite enough. This is of more than passing importance because Jafari remains the leader of both Al Dawa (a key Shi'ite political faction) and the Shi'ite coalition – the United Iraqi Alliance (UIA).

The Importance of Security

Once again, the ABC-Time Oxford Research International poll provided useful results. ABC reported that,

> "Surprisingly, given the insurgents' attacks on Iraqi civilians, more than six in 10 Iraqis feel very safe in their own neighborhoods, up sharply from just 40 percent in a poll in June 2004. And 61 percent say local security is good — up from 49 percent in the first ABC News poll in Iraq in February 2004.

> "Nonetheless, nationally, security is seen as the most pressing problem by far; 57 percent identify it as the country's top priority. Economic improvements are helping the public mood. Other views, moreover, are more negative: Fewer than half, 46 percent, say the country is better off now than it was before the war…The number of Iraqis who say things are going well in their country overall is just 44 percent, far fewer than the 71 percent who say their own lives are going well. Fifty-two percent instead say the country is doing badly."

These comments need to be put in context. They do not break out the results by province or ethnic/sectarian group. The Shi'ites and Kurds living in the relatively safe provinces have every reason to be far more optimistic about security and life than other Iraqis. Nation-wide results disguise more than they reveal in describing an insurgency that is driven by a Sunni minority that cannot be more than 20% of the total population and which is scarcely united around the insurgents.

Sunni versus Shi'ite Differences

The ABC report on "Where Things Stand" indicates there were major differences between Sunni and Shi'ite:

> "Virtually all signs of optimism vanish when one is interviewing Iraq's Sunni Muslims. There's more on this in the Local Government section of the report; suffice for now to cite a pair of poll results. While 54 percent of Shia Muslims believe the country is in better shape than it was before the war, only 7 percent of Sunnis believe the same. Optimism about security — 80 percent of Shias and 94 percent of Kurds say they feel safer — is absent among Sunnis. Only 11 percent of Iraq's Sunni Muslims say they feel safer than they did under Saddam.

> "Overall, there is a Rorschach-test quality to all this. One could easily sift through the research and field reporting and conclude that Iraq is in danger of collapse; one could almost as easily glean from the same data that there is great cause for optimism.

> "At the heart of the "collapse" scenario is a litany of dashed hopes. Many Iraqis cannot understand why — two-and-a-half years after the Americans arrived — electricity and sewage are not more reliable, why more reconstruction projects have not reached their neighborhoods, why corruption remains so prevalent and why their local (and in many cases democratically elected) officials have not changed things for the better.

> "Yet there are ample reasons for optimism: The burgeoning commerce that now touches nearly all corners of the country; an economy growing, thanks in part to the high price of oil; per-capita income up 60 percent, to $263 per month; improvements in health care and education; and the widely held belief that next week's elections will make a positive difference. Seventy-six percent of Iraqis told us they were "confident" the elections would produce a "stable government" — and despite the sectarian divisions, few Iraqis express concern about civil war."

A Real-World Economic Crisis, Not Progress

Ironically, this latter statement illustrates the dilemmas and contradictions in reporting on Iraq and Iraqi attitudes. The rise is per capita income is a national average based on dividing the total population into the total GNP measured in ppp terms. It is driven as much by a flood of wartime income and aid as oil revenue, and while there is certainly more money in the national economy, its distribution is unquestionably far less equitable than at the time of Saddam Hussein. A small minority has benefited from the flood of military and aid spending, but large numbers of additional Iraqi are unemployed (over 20% in many Shi'ite areas and as high as 40% in some Sunni areas), and the gap between rich and poor has increased.

As ABC reported in its mid December poll,

> "Unemployment overall is difficult to gauge. There is a growing 'informal economy,' and many Iraqis have taken second jobs. A U.N. survey published in May 2005 put unemployment at 18.4 percent; this is almost certainly a low-end figure…nationwide unemployment currently hovers between 27 percent and 40 percent.

> "…The work rolls remain decimated because of the purging of the old army and much of the old Ba'athist apparatus. Whatever the political benefits or costs of that much-debated policy, there is no question that it put a great many Iraqi men out of work. Further, the Iraqi government no longer finds it practical or feasible to employ the sprawling work force that existed during the rule of Saddam Hussein."

As Figure 58 shows, this result was scarcely unique. Other polls produced similar results, and show just how little credibility most aspects of the US aid effort had with Iraqis:

Figure 58

Iraqi Attitudes Towards the US Aid Effort in Iraq

(Support Shown in Percent)

	Total	Kurd	Shi'ite Arab	Sunni Arab	Other
Training Iraqi Security Forces					
Approve and US doing good job	33	54	37	6	23
Approve but US is doing poor job	44	42	52	20	67
Disapprove	23	4	11	74	9
Assisting with the Economic Development Of Iraq					
Approve and US doing good job	29	36	36	5	26
Approve but US is doing poor job	46	51	53	19	67
Disapprove	25	12	11	76	7
Assisting with the Development Of Iraq's Oil Industry					
Approve and US doing good job	28	41	35	4	21
Approve but US is doing poor job	44	46	51	20	55
Disapprove	27	12	14	76	14
Help Build Government Institutions					
Approve and US doing good job	23	37	27	4	5
Approve but US is doing poor job	50	57	59	15	79
Disapprove	27	6	14	80	14
Develop Infrastructure (Roads, Electricity, etc.)					
Approve and US doing good job	20	24	26	4	2
Approve but US is doing poor job	52	57	62	16	81
Disapprove	34	11	24	81	14
Meet Community and Local Needs					
Approve and US doing good job	25	39	29	6	9
Approve but US is doing poor job	45	48	54	14	67
Disapprove	30	11	17	80	23

Note: The results for refuse to answer or don't know have been deleted. The percentages are too small to be relevant.

Source: WorldPublicOpinion,org, "What the Iraq Public Wants-A WorldPublicOpinionPoll, January 2-5, 2006, some of 1000, with 150 Sunni Arab over-sample.

The Issues that Must Be Resolved following the Elections

Both Iraqi and US officials caution that it may take up to several months after the results to agree on a new government. Even if the period is much shorter, simply dividing up titles in the executive, legislature, and government will not necessarily indicate who actually has power or the capability to use it.

Post-Election Coalitions will be More Important than the Election Results

The coalitions of Sunni, Shi'ite, Kurdish, and nationalist factions that emerge during this process may tell far more about the future than actual voting strength or numbers of legislators. Even then, however, coalitions may shift from issue to issue, and may take on a very different form once the government is actually formed and begins to operate.

One key issue will be how close the UIA and Kurds come to winning a simple majority – a key issue in the election. If not, the diverse coalitions described earlier must find some way to agree on a national unity government. The choices of a Presidency Council, Prime Minister, and of the key Ministers – Defense, Interior, Oil and Finance – may well do more to define power in practice than the elections. So, however, may the kind of legislative alliances that define how the Constitution is completed, amended and interpreted.

Critical areas for political decision-making and the choice of leaders will be:

> (i) The requirement that two-thirds of the newly elected national assembly has to agree on the "Presidential council" and the president and two vice presidents who must nominate a prime minister for approval by the assembly. This not only adds a major new political issue to selection of a prime minister, it raises real issues about the real world aftermath. The presidential council seems weak on paper, but could bargain and in any case will be much stronger if the prime minister is not strong and his coalition is weak.

> (ii) Whether the Ministry of Defense continues under Sunni leadership, and to emphasize a truly national army and one that is sensitive to Sunni concerns.

> (iii) Whether the Ministry of Interior is brought under control, moves away from its recent tendency to tolerate or carry out Shi'ite revanchism, and becomes effective in creating truly national special security and police forces.

> (iv) Whether the Oil Ministry has professional leadership and moves forward decisively to renovate oil and gas facilities, and carry out exploration and development of a kind that will ease the tension between factions. There have so far been far too many studies, and far too few tangible actions and results.

> (v) Whether the Ministry of Finance gets leadership that can actually manage resources and the budget, bring overspending in other ministries under control, and deal with the necessary compromises over how to handle oil and other state revenues and taxation.

As a result, the period following the election is much more likely to be an exercise in political power than one in the rule of law – particularly because it is Iraqi politicians who will decide the way that efforts to change the constitution are implemented and, not lawyers.

If power is exercised in a moderate and inclusive way, Iraq may well move forward as a unified state. If power becomes polarized, or is used at the expense of Sunnis or "nationalists," the result can be paralysis, division, or civil war.

Post-Election Timing and Political Dynamics: Politics versus Force

The political dynamics are demanding. The debate over the constitutional referendum, and the constitution, opened up virtually every key issue in Iraqi politics, and created a process where the constitution needs to be completed and can only be amended by simple majority for a relatively short time. The new government will also inherit a budget deficit, the need to take over management of more of the aid process, and immediate issues over the control of oil revenues.

More importantly, the new government will inherit an ongoing insurgency and a climate where suicide attacks on Shi'ites and Kurds have been increasingly mixed with Shi'ite military and Special Iraqi Security forces attacks on Sunnis. Even if some or many of the more "moderate" or

nationalist Sunni insurgents do come over to the government side, the more extreme and Islamist insurgents face the fact that this is a critical time window in which they must do everything possible to provoke the Shi'ites and Kurds, prevent compromise, and move towards a civil war or at least paralysis and disintegration of the political process.

This also, however, is the time when Shi'ites who want federalism or to dominate Iraq must act politically or through their own efforts at violence, and Kurds who want nationhood must act.

The good news is that many more Iraqi forces will come online at the same time, and that a successful political process will probably be supported by a successful military and police effort. The two do, however, go in tandem, and a failed or non-inclusive political process could divide the Iraqi armed forces or polarize them against the Sunnis.

Key Post-Election Issues

There is no reason to assume that Iraq's new government must solve every issue at once, or that it must find all such answers soon after the new government is formed. Compromise, delay, and deferral are excellent political solutions; so are half-measures and cosmetic actions. Governments muddle through because political realities force them to, and because "muddling" is far more stable and uniting than acting with clarity and efficiency.

Nevertheless, anyone attempting to interpret the election results must be aware just how many critical issues the last few years, and the debate over the constitution, have unleashed. The new government must deal directly or indirectly with the following practical issues – none of which have been addressed with meaningful clarity by the political parties running in the election.

Finishing and Amending the Constitution

Finessing the constitution left many areas unfinished or ambiguous (some 35-50 laws have to be passed to complete it) and pushed most of the controversial issues off on the new government. This government will have many members of the new assembly – particularly Sunni -- who ran on tickets calling for amendments to the constitution and sometimes opposing it. The government also faces pressure to act during the four-month period where the national assembly can amend it by a simple majority.

The assembly will probably have to agree on a general and inclusive document at this time in order to present all of its amendments in a single referendum, but – as the discussion below details -- many issues affecting the constitution affect the most controversial political issues affecting Iraq and the new government. There may well be more passion than reason.

The final amendments to the constitution before the October 15th referendum called for the following process:

> --First: The House of Representatives shall form at the beginning of its work a committee from its members to represent the key components of the Iraqi society. The mission of the committee is to present a report within four months including the recommendations of the necessary amendments to the constitution. The committee will be dissolved after presents its suggestion.

> --Second: The amendments will be submitted to the Council of Representative for voting and it considered approved if it obtains the majority of the votes.

> --Third: The amended articles approved by the Council of Representative (as indicated in item 2 above) will be presented to the people for vote in a public referendum within two months from the date of the approval of the amendments by the Council of Representatives.

--Fourth: The amendment will be agreed upon if it obtains the majority of votes and not rejected by two thirds of voters in 3 Governorates.

--Fifth: Suspension of Article 122 (related to the amendment of the constitution). The article will return to effect after the changes are made.

Some reporting still says the Assembly needs a two-thirds majority to pass amendments, while some senior Iraqi politicians have talked as if the assembly vote alone would be enough. Any package of amendments would be subject to the same terms as the October 15th referendum, and it will be equally difficult for any one political grouping to impose their will on the constitutional text as was last summer (though the Kurdish and Shia parties will no doubt be informed by the knowledge a Sunni Arab vote would probably not be able to defeat a joint proposed amendment from their camps).[181]

This means that the election can only be a prelude to a much more intense effort to include Sunnis in the political process, convince them that participation is more rewarding than violence and insurrection, and find compromises over revenues, power, control of the Iraqi forces, and other issues.

Sunni politics will also have to evolve. The current parties are more self-selected than legitimate, and there is little unity over issues like the role of religion in the state, the definition of nationalism, how Sunni rights can and should be preserved, etc. The fact Sunni parties lag more than two years behind Shi'ite and Kurdish parties will be a serious issue.

The Kurds will also have to define their role in a new Iraq where they do not get preferential financing, oil for food money, or major smuggling revenues. They need to define both their own level of unity and how they will really relate to the rest of Iraq. Issues like control of oil revenues and divided ethnic areas like Kirkuk are already time sensitive. So is the political role Kurds will play at the national level in the new government.

Other Key Issues

The Iraqi political process must also deal with all of the other issues shown in Figure 59

Figure 59:

The Post Election Political Challenges the New Government Must Meet

The Problem of Federalism

The Iraqi constitution leaves the definition and practice of federalism so ambiguous that it can border on confederation, autonomy, or separatism. Some form of near-autonomy is vital in resolving the Kurdish question but could tear the Arab portion of the country apart, trigger sectarian separatism and soft ethnic cleansing, and create impossible problems in terms of revenues, oil, control of the Iraqi forces, etc.

The acid test may be the choices Shi'ites make for nationalism over federalism.

National, governorate, and local power

At a different level, the constitution and political processes to date combine to leave major uncertainties overt the de facto power of the central government to control given governorates and particularly over the level of independence of local authorities in cities like Baghdad and Basra. These are key practical day-to-day issues of governance versus ethnic and sectarian divisions and federalism, but all interact and affect critical issues like money, power, religion, and control of security forces.

At the same time, the new legislature must come to grips with allocating senior positions at the national level, and defining the relative strength of the prime minister, presidency, ministers, etc. Defining the

practical allocation of power at the top often has little to do with electoral results or party leadership. Iraq will have to find its own approach to doing this under a new political system and constitution.

Control of the Military, Security Forces, and Police and Shaping the Role of the Militias

The Coalition has brought Iraqi forces to the point where they should allow significant reductions of Coalition forces in 2006, and Iraqi forces to take over most visible security missions on the ground. If the process is well managed and sustained, it can be a prelude to the withdrawal of all Coalition forces over time, although an advisory role and some enabling and support forces may be necessary through 2010.

Everything will depend, however, on the political dimension, and the effort to bring unity and inclusion. It will depend on creating truly national military and special security forces, and police who are both effective and serve the cause of unity and human rights – not simply local authority.

Control over (Sharing of) Oil

Oil is the practical symbol of wealth and power. Control over oil revenues is control over some 85% of state earnings, and control over the exploration and development of new and existing oil reserves is already a critical political issue. The constitution leaves this issue ambiguous; political pressure will almost certainly force the issue over the first six months the new government is in session.

These near-term problems are further complicated by pipeline and export route politics; the integration of important aspects of the oil and gas infrastructure on a national level; the lack of refinery capacity and gross overdependence on product imports; and unsustainable subsidized prices for gasoline, cooking fuel, heating oil, etc.

Control of Taxation and Revenues

Money, taxation, and duties will be key issues that extend far beyond the control of oil export revenues, and again help shape the debates over federalism and central versus local authority.

"Balancing" the Budget, Aid, Debt, and Reparations

Iraq does not need to truly balance its budget, but it needs much better fiscal management. The new government inherits a fiscal mess disguised as an annual budget and plan. It will need to show it can take over much of the aid process in terms of management and execution, and find ways to distribute it more equitably.

The government will almost certainly have to appeal to the US and the world for another major aid effort at a difficult time, and must follow up on the effort to achieve forgiveness of debt and reparations.

Investment Policy

The same issues that can either polarize or unify Iraqi politics are critical to the climate shaping domestic and foreign investment, and suitable laws and regulations still need to be drafted or confirmed.

Defining the Rule of Law

The constitution leaves many ambiguities, as does actual Iraqi practice to date. The issue is compounded by permeating corruption, inefficiency and delay, and a major debate over the role of religion and Sharia in shaping the rule of law. Striking practical differences in interpretation and enforcement now exist at the local level.

Defining the Practical Nature of Human Rights

Like the rule of law, the constitution leaves as many open areas as it closes. In any case, it is practice, not the letter of the law that counts. Some issues can be deferred and Iraqi standards are not those of the US and EU.

The basic security of the individual, and human rights as they apply to protection of different ethnic and sectarian groups, are issues that cannot be deferred. Soft ethnic cleansing, enforcement of religious practices, and police and security force abuses are also issues requiring early action.

Defining the Role of Religion in the State

Once again, the debate over the constitution almost forces the government to find early solutions and compromises. So does the nature of the political campaign, and Shi'ite and Sunni politics. Inclusive and moderate Islamic solutions will not be a problem. Hard-line efforts, particularly the kind of Shi'ite-dominated efforts like the "555" campaign could be intensely divisive.

Defining the Role of the Coalition and Coalition Forces

Most top Iraqi political figures are aware of how much they need Coalition forces and support. It is clear, however, that this is usually a matter of necessity, not friendship or love. The Iraqi people clearly want the Coalition out; the debate is over. Many new legislators have also campaigned on at least an indirectly anti-Coalition ticket.

The new government will have to come to grips with debates over deadlines for withdrawal, limits on Coalition actions, status of forces agreements, and a host of other issues relating to Coalition forces and influence. It will do so in a largely hostile political environment with new Sunni voices.

Prognosis

that are needed to allow Iraqi force development to succeed in an op ed in the <u>Los Angeles Times</u> on February 14, 2006:[182]

To build on this progress, Iraq's leaders now need to agree on a process to unite the country.

First, they need to form a government of national unity. This is not a matter of dividing up ministries, with each used to favor the parochial interests of the minister's ethnic or sectarian community or political faction. Rather, it means selecting ministers from all communities who will build political bridges, who are committed to a unified Iraq and who have demonstrated professional competence. Getting the next government right is far more important that getting it formed fast. Iraqi leaders also must agree to a decision-making process that gives political minorities confidence that the majority will share power and take their legitimate concerns into account. Iraqi leaders believe that this could be accomplished by forming a council composed of key Iraqi leaders to focus on issues of national importance.

Elected leaders need to govern from the center, not the ideological extremes. This is particularly true in the security area, where the new government must continue increasing the capability of Iraqi security forces while ensuring that Defense and Interior Ministry officials are chosen on the basis of competence, not ethnic or sectarian background. In addition, the government must begin the process of demobilizing the factional militias across the country.

Next, Iraq's leaders need to agree on a true national compact for their country—a vision and set of political rules that will produce stability and progress. The new constitution gave responsibility to the new national assembly to address several key unresolved questions, including drawing up guidelines for federalizing non-Kurdish regions and dividing responsibilities among various levels of government. In these negotiations, Iraqi leaders must strike agreements that will win greater Sunni Arab support and create a near-consensus in favor of the constitution. Then, Iraq's leaders must forge an understanding with those insurgents who are willing to lay down their arms, join the political process and, perhaps, even enlist in the fight against the terrorists. Many are willing to do so, as evidenced by the clashes between insurgents and terrorists in western Iraq.

As the insurgents shift away from armed struggle, they are seeking assurances that regional powers will not be allowed to dominate Iraq and that Iraqi leaders will limit de-Baathification to high-ranking officials, integrating all those who did not commit crimes into mainstream society. Sunni Arab rejectionists are joining the process of building a new and democratic Iraq. This not only opens the door for insurgents to permanently renounce violence and join the political process in order to stabilize Iraq, it also isolates the terrorists who are the enemy of all Iraqis, while setting the stage for the emergence of a strong and independent Iraq.

This list of task, and the previous lists of problems other post-election tasks described in this analysis, present many real challenges that Iraq must meet at the political level for Iraqi force development to be successful and have lasting meaning. Sunni inclusiveness also remains

uncertain. Yet, there are few real deadlines and many areas where muddling through and ambiguity will work or buy time. With good political leadership, finding workable approaches should not be daunting, much less impossible. Iraqi public opinion polls also indicate that Iraqis will not insist on final solutions, only ask for a good beginning.

There are still serious problems in creating the kind of police forces Iraqis need to defeat the insurgents and provide security. There also have been growing problems with Shi'ite elements in the Ministry of Interior special security units that have treated Sunnis unfairly and may have attacked and killed Sunnis in political and revenge attacks. There is ongoing progress in both areas, however, and the election takes place at a time when significant overall improvements are taking place in Iraqi forces.

As of early February 2006, Iraqi forces already totaled some 227,300 personnel. These included 106,900 in the armed forces under the Ministry of Defense: 105,600 army, some 500 air force, and some 800 navy. They included 120,400 in the police and security forces under the Ministry of Interior: 82,400 police and highway patrol, and 38,000 other MOI forces.

There were a total of some 130 army and special police battalions, with some 500-800 men each, were fighting in the insurgency. This was seven more battalions than in late October. The army alone had built up to 102 battalions, approaching a current goal of 110 combat battalions. The number of Iraqi brigades (with a nominal three battalions each) has grown from nearly zero in early 2005 to 31. There are eight divisions in formation and Iraq is headed towards a total of 10.

By early December, a total of 50 battalions were at Level 1-3 readiness and active in dealing with the insurgency. In March 2005, there were only three battalions manning their own areas — all in Baghdad. A total of 24 battalions were in charge of their own battle space in October and 33 in late December. In January 2006, the US army transferred an area of operation to an entire Iraqi army division for the first time in Qadissiya and Wassit provinces, an active combat area south of Baghdad. In early February 2006, 40 of the army's 102 battalions had taken over security in the areas where they operated, and in contested areas, such as parts of Fallujah, Ramadi and Samarra.[183]

Yet, the key to giving these force developments meaning will be political pragmatism, inclusiveness, and compromise. As such, it will be far more important for the new government to avoid divisive mistakes than have dramatic successes. Post-election Iraq will be a "close run thing," and everything will depend on the quality of Iraq's new leaders. The odds of success, however, are at least even -- if success is defined as a government that can preserve the core of the nation, reach critical compromise, and move forward in ways that steadily diminish both the insurgency and Shi'ite and Kurdish pressures to divide the nation.

Any such success will unite the country and reduce or end the threat of serious civil war. Success will not, however, bring an early peace. Hard-line insurgents will have every possible incentive to strike at successful political leaders and a successful political process. Those who believe in ethnic and sectarian division also face a critical six- to eight-month time window in which to push their causes at the expense of efforts at national unity. At least for much of 2006, neither Iraqi political success nor a steadily more effective set of Iraqi forces is likely to put an end to a stream of violent acts of terrorism. Politics will often be brutal and anything but pretty. This, however, is not a sign of failure, and it may well be a sign of success.

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