Report Documentation Page

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1. REPORT DATE 06-15-10	2. REPORT TYPE Master's Thesis	3. DATES COVERED 07-30-09 to 06-15-10
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE "Local Security, Policing, and Counterinsurgency: Lessons From Iraq"		5a. CONTRACT NUMBER
		5b. GRANT NUMBER
		5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER
6. AUTHOR (S) Ms. Adrienne Lauzon, U.S. Department of Defense		5d. PROJECT NUMBER
		5e. TASK NUMBER
		5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME (S) AND ADDRESS (ES) National Defense University, Joint Forces Staff College, 7800 Hampton Blvd, Norfolk, VA, 23511-1702		8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME (S) AND ADDRESS (ES)		10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM (S)
		11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER (S)

12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT
Approved for public release; distribution unlimited

13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

14. ABSTRACT

Over more than seven years, events in Iraq have demonstrated the need for robust and capable local security forces to prevent the emergence of an insurgency and reduce violence once one has begun. Time and opportunities lost as a result of inadequate local security can take years to overcome once an insurgency becomes entrenched. Local forces are the first line of defense in protecting the civilian population, gathering intelligence and neutralizing low-level criminals before they can organize into or support an insurgency. Restoration of local security cannot be an afterthought, nor can it be abandoned at the expense of developing national-level military and paramilitary forces. Development of local security forces must be a central element of planning in the earliest stages. Planners should focus on ensuring sufficient numbers of "good enough" local forces are in place as early as possible upon the cessation of combat operations, with longer-term plans developed for training and equipping the right mix of police forces with the right capabilities.

15. SUBJECT TERMS

16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT Unclassified Unlimited	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 84	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT Unclassified	b. ABSTRACT Unclassified	c. THIS PAGE Unclassified			19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (including area code) 757-443-6301

JOINT FORCES STAFF COLLEGE
JOINT ADVANCED WARFIGHTING SCHOOL

**LOCAL SECURITY, POLICING, AND COUNTERINSURGENCY:
LESSONS FROM IRAQ**

by

Adrienne Lauzon

U.S. Department of Defense

**A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Joint Advanced Warfighting School
in partial satisfaction of the requirements of a Master of Science Degree in
Joint Campaign Planning and Strategy. The contents of this paper reflect
my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Joint Forces
Staff College or the Department of Defense.**

This paper is entirely my own work except as documented in footnotes.

Signature: _____

June 17, 2010

Thesis Adviser: Dr. Paul Melshen, PhD

ABSTRACT

Over more than seven years, events in Iraq have demonstrated the need for robust and capable local security forces to prevent the emergence of an insurgency and reduce violence once one has begun. Time and opportunities lost as a result of inadequate local security can take years to overcome once an insurgency becomes entrenched. Local forces are the first line of defense in protecting the civilian population, gathering intelligence and neutralizing low-level criminals before they can organize into or support an insurgency. Restoration of local security cannot be an afterthought, nor can it be abandoned at the expense of developing national-level military and paramilitary forces. Development of local security forces must be a central element of planning in the earliest stages. Planners should focus on ensuring sufficient numbers of "good enough" local forces are in place as early as possible upon the cessation of combat operations, with longer-term plans developed for training and equipping the right mix of police forces with the right capabilities.

ACKNOWLEGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

The United States Government will usually insist upon the establishment of an efficient and well-trained armed native force, free from political influence and dictatorial control.

– U.S. Marine Corps Small Wars Manual[1]

One of the key tenets of the United States' strategy for winning the "long war" on terrorism and violent extremism is to build the capacities of international partners to maintain security within their own borders. The goal of this effort is to deny safe haven to terrorists and prevent regionally destabilizing conflicts. As explained in the 2008 National Defense Strategy, "by helping others to police themselves and their regions, we will collectively address threats to the broader international system."[2]

Already a challenging endeavor, Security Force Assistance (SFA) becomes even more complex when combined with counterterrorism and counterinsurgency efforts. Recent policy and planning guidance clearly indicates that the Defense Department anticipates irregular warfare and counterinsurgency to continue to be a central focus of the U.S. military in coming years. Defeating insurgencies was listed as the Number Two priority in the 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review, with SFA listed at number three. The guidance is clear though that such efforts will be conducted with the ultimate goal of transitioning control to stable host-nation governments, as "there are few cases in which

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[1] United States Marine Corps, *Small Wars Manual* (New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2009), Section 12-3, 2.

[2] U.S. Government, *2008 National Defense Strategy* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2008), 10.

the U.S. Armed Forces would engage in sustained large- scale combat operations without the associated need to assist in the transition to just and stable governance.[3]

This guidance reflects recent efforts of U.S. forces in Afghanistan and Iraq to fight simultaneous insurgencies, build indigenous security forces and transition security to these forces.

> U.S. forces have been training, advising, and assisting Afghan and Iraqi security forces so that they can more effectively uphold the rule of law and control and defend their territories against violent non-state actors. In these contested environments, partnered COIN, in which Afghan and Iraqi units operate in tandem with U.S. forces, is an effective way to train and advise forces while conducting combat operations against insurgents. These partnered host-nation units have the advantage of knowing the terrain, language, and local culture. Partnering with U.S. forces in return allows them to train and learn by doing. [4]

However, these efforts have been far from simple. Each of these efforts is individually complex; when combined as part of a larger campaign the challenges are significant. U.S. experiences over the last several years have brought to light numerous challenges and problems in building host-nation forces while simultaneously fighting an insurgency. U.S. forces are tasked with securing the population, destroying insurgent networks, and attempting to build robust host-nation forces loyal to the interests of a state which is still being formed. Efforts to build security forces are particularly difficult when force development is not backed by security sector development, improved ministerial capacity and legitimate host-nation governance. In societies marked by high levels of factionalism, sectarianism, or ethnic conflict this can be even more problematic. In some

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[3] U.S. Government, *Quadrennial Defense Review* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2010), 20.

[4] Ibid.

cases, attempts to implement short-term security solutions may compromise longer-term stability, particularly when the security forces are working on behalf of factional, sectarian, or ethnic interests instead of the interests of the national government.

U.S. counterinsurgency strategy has evolved significantly since the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan began. The key tenets of this strategy are now well understood by U.S. forces and have been employed in both conflicts. The tasks for U.S. and host-nation forces fighting a counterinsurgency effort are to establish and uphold the rule of law and protect the civilian population. The reasoning, as outlined in counterinsurgency doctrine, is that the population is the center of gravity in an insurgency – protecting the civil population is essential in denying insurgents and terrorists areas of operation and in promoting the legitimacy of the national government.

Doctrine provides limited guidance on which types of forces are of highest priority in a counterinsurgency mission. In many cases the catch-all term of "host nation security forces" is employed, without drawing significant differentiation between requirements for different types of security forces. According to *Field Manual 3-07.1: Security Force Assistance,* "security force assistance will extend beyond military forces to the full range of security forces, including but not limited to military, paramilitary, police, and intelligence forces; border police, coast guard, and customs officials; and prison guards and correctional personnel – that provide security for a host nation and its relevant population or support a regional security organization's mission."[5]

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[5] Department of the Army, *Field Manual 3-07.1: Security Force Assistance* (Washington: Department of the Army, 2009) 1-1.

However, police, particularly local police, are in a unique position to undermine critical requirements for an insurgency. An effective law enforcement presence can restrict the freedom of movement of insurgents, target criminals who provide logistical and financial support for the insurgents, protect the civilian population and enhance legitimacy of the government. Effective law enforcement emphasizes the ability of the government to provide security, one of the most basic needs of the population. If the desired end state is establishment of a stable government backed by robust security sector and enforcement of rule of law, the police capabilities will be a crucial effort. The mission of local police will be to *maintain* law and order, while the mission of national police is to *re-establish* it where it has collapsed, augmenting the efforts of the local police.

This paper posits that building, strengthening and partnering with local security forces (primarily police, but may include auxiliary local forces) is an often overlooked, but crucial effort in both preventing an insurgency from taking root and disrupting an existing insurgency. This paper argues that local security efforts play a key role in the critical missions of protecting the civilian population, denying terrorists areas of operation, gathering intelligence, and enforcing the legitimacy of the sovereign government, and augmenting counterinsurgent forces. Local police, in short, maintain security and rule of law. They should be balanced by a robust national capability to respond to emergencies. When primacy is given to developing local security forces, overall stability improves. Likewise, when inadequate attention is devoted to the development of local security forces, the security situation can quickly spiral out of control.

This paper looks specifically at the case of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, in which insufficient attention was given to develop and maintain community policing in early days, which had a deleterious effect on security and allowed insurgents, militias and terrorists to gain a foothold. As the security situation deteriorated, the problem became increasingly difficult to correct, particularly when compounded by intimidation, corruption and militia infiltration of the local and national police forces. The focus on Iraq as a case study is ideal because of the multiple types of host-nation security forces utilized during various periods of the conflict. Furthermore, lessons from the Iraq war will also likely play a significant part as doctrine for both counterinsurgency and security force assistance continues to be refined in coming years.

The structure of this paper follows security force development in Iraq through several phases. Chapter Two analyzes planning considerations for host-nation police development using an ends-ways-means model, citing examples from Iraq. Chapter Three examines successes and failures of community policing in the first few months of the war, before the insurgency had become entrenched, and identifies lessons learned for post-invasion policing. Chapter Four looks at challenges faced by the police as terrorist and insurgent forces systematically targeted and intimidated them, and the resulting impact on the overall security situation. Chapter Five discusses the problem of militia and factional infiltration of the Ministry of Interior and its impact on rule of law enforcement and government legitimacy. Finally, Chapter Six looks at efforts to reform security forces and the resurgence of community policing, including the Sons of Iraq.

CHAPTER II: CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE JOINT PLANNER

The organization of an adequate armed native organization is an effective method to prevent further domestic disturbances after the intervention has ended, and is one of the most important functions of the intervention since the United States armed forces may have superseded or usurped the functions of armed forces of the country concerned at the beginning of the intervention. It is obvious that such armed forces must be restored prior to withdrawal.[1]

-U.S. Marine Corps Small Wars Manual

Although the restoration of law and order will ultimately be a key task of phases IV and V, filling the local security void should be given a priority of effort at the earliest stages of an operation. A failure to fill the immediate security vacuum – through effective and capable host nation security forces or through occupying forces – can have long term negative consequences on the security situation and allow an insurgency to develop.

The lessons from U.S. experiences with host nation policing in Iraq can shed some light on considerations for the joint planner in anticipation of future counterinsurgency operations that will involve host nation security force development. From a policy perspective, the need to develop law enforcement capabilities is clear. However from a planning perspective, combining traditional military activities with

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[1] United States Marine Corps, *Small Wars Manual*. 12-3.

development of host-nation internal law enforcement capabilities presents challenges and necessitates cooperation with, in many cases, other U.S. agencies as well as international partners. Given the value in early establishment of policing, these planning efforts cannot be delayed. Approaching the problem from a traditional ends-ways-means construct, we can identify the most likely sources of risk and associated mitigation considerations. This chapter provides an overview of key considerations for the joint planner to fill the local security void. In subsequent chapters, we will explore how risk and mitigation successes and failures on policing impacted the security environment and the overall mission in Iraq.

An Ounce of Prevention: Timing is Critical

The role of effective local law enforcement has the most impact before an insurgency has been able to become entrenched. After an insurgency is underway, military and paramilitary capabilities may become necessary. However, in the critical period before an insurgency takes root, police are in a key position to restrict the activities of criminals who might later join or support an insurgency. To understand this, it is important to remember that nearly all insurgencies follow a methodical trajectory in their development. For most, this includes significant time forming, selecting leadership, and gaining support of neutral elements of the population. In Mao Zedong's approach, insurgencies have three distinct stages. In Phase I, the group organizes, consolidates and preserves itself; in Phase II it progressively expands, and in Phase III it focuses on the destruction of the enemy.[2] Likewise, the Central Intelligence Agency's "Guide to the

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[2] Mao Tse-Tung, *On Guerilla Warfare* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 21.

Analysis of Insurgency" identifies four essential phases: 1) pre-insurgency, in which leadership emerges, 2) organizational, in which an infrastructure is built, operatives recruited and trained, supplies acquired, and domestic and international support sought, 3) guerrilla warfare, in which the group employs hit-and-run attacks and 4) mobile conventional warfare, in which larger units operate as military units.[3]

Both those who study and practice insurgency agree that a key component of insurgent success is popular support for the insurgents and control of key territory. For Mao, a critical part of the first phases is the development of "local 'home guards' or militia" who are not active fighters but "collect information, force merchants to make 'voluntary' contributions, kidnap particularly obnoxious local landlords, and liquidate informers and collaborators."[4] The CIA manual highlights those who provide indirect support to the insurgents, noting that "support of the people is vital to the survival of the insurgents who depend on them for food, shelter, recruits and intelligence. The government's challenge is to regain the allegiance of a population already alienated by government failures to address basic grievances."[5] This is particularly challenging for newly formed governments, like those in Iraq or Afghanistan, who are assuming power in a highly fractious society and who already have only tenuous control over all areas of the country.

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[3] Central Intelligence Agency, *Guide to the Analysis of Insurgency*. (Washington: Central Intelligence Agency, 2009), 3.

[4] Mao*, On Guerilla Warfare,* 21.

[5] Central Intelligence Agency, *Guide to the Analysis of Insurgency*, 8.

As explained in a study by the Joint Special Operations University, countries who fail to develop adequate law enforcement capabilities are more at risk for developing insurgencies.

> Many countries experiencing insurgency have failed to recognize the importance insurgents place on eliminating law enforcement as a precursor to their seizing space to establish bases and alternate governance. Countries that have a weak policing effort initially, or who have given in and pulled back on their police and local law enforcement resources, soon experience failure in dealing with insurgency as it emerges. In such cases, the government response is often to order mobilization and deployment of the military instead of funneling more resources to the policing effort.[6]

In these earliest stages of insurgency, however, basic local security and law enforcement can have the greatest impact. Police are particularly effective because of their familiarity with the community and relationships with community leaders. As will be discussed in later chapters, this was a critical factor in the success of the al-Anbar Awakening in Iraq, an ad hoc community law enforcement and stabilization effort put in place to augment formal security efforts. Police can also employ such tactics as establishing checkpoints and enforcing curfews, which restrict the freedom of movement of would-be insurgents and deny them an area of operations. Perhaps most importantly, however, police can help remove logistical support for the insurgency by targeting low-level weapons smugglers and criminals who support the insurgents.

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[6] Joseph Celeski, *Policing and Law Enforcement in COIN - The Thick Blue Line* (Hurlburt Field, FL: The JSOU Press, 2009), 8.

Ends: Establishing the Rule of Law

The ultimate goal of security force assistance in a counterinsurgency will be to employ effective host nation forces who are not only capable of dealing with terrorist threats, but who protect the civilian population and enforce the rule of law. Creating effective police is as, if not more, important as ensuring the state has a paramilitary capability to target terrorists. Characteristics of effective host nation security forces are addressed in FM 3-24, described as "honest, impartial, and committed to protecting and serving the entire population, operating under the rule of law, and respecting human rights." These forces should be "loyal to the central government and serving national interests, recognizing their role as the people's servants and not their masters…and represent the host nation's major ethnic groups and are not seen as instruments of just one faction."[7] FM 3-24 also notes that police "often consist of several independent but mutually supporting forces" including criminal and traffic, border, transportation, and specialized paramilitary strike forces, and may be organized on a local or national system. Ultimately, the guidance states that "whatever police organization is established, Soldiers and Marines must understand it and help the host nation effectively organize and use it. This often means dealing with several police organizations and developing plans for training and advising each one."[8]

The planner will have a number of considerations when specifying the "ends" of the security structure. Perhaps most importantly, the planner will need to determine how

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[7] Department of the Army, and Marine Corps Combat Development Command, *Field Manual 3-24: Counterinsurgency* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 2006), Table 6-2.

[8] Ibid., 6-92.

many host nation forces will be needed to conduct law enforcement, stabilization, defense

and emergency response. This is a highly complex question with few easy answers,

particularly in the earliest stages of operations when military and law enforcement

functions are likely to be mixed. A RAND study in 2005 noted that in terms of total

forces, "existing analysis suggests that force ratios of 1,000 troops or more per 100,000

inhabitants may be necessary during conditions where there is the potential for severe

instability" while "literature suggests that police ratios of 150 or more per 100,000

inhabitants are necessary in unstable conditions."[9] However, the study notes that such

levels are not always necessary; they will be determined by the security situation. Worth

remembering too is that the security situation will be dynamic, and more forces may be

needed later if the security situation deteriorates. However, counterinsurgency studies

traditionally warn against a "trickle in" effect, noting the effectiveness of overwhelming

force at the earliest stage to prevent an insurgency from becoming entrenched.[10] As LTG

James Dubik, commander of the Multi-National Security Transition Command in Iraq

(MNSTC-I) from 2007-2008 noted:

> The worse the security situation is – multiple, complex attacks,
> high levels of violence – the harder it is to create or improve
> fledging security forces. Job one, then, is to apply enough force to
> reduce violence to an acceptable level as quickly as possible, and
> then keep it down. This is especially true with respect to local
> police forces. When insurgents or criminals can intimidate local
> police or their families, one cannot expect police to function. For
> this reason, creating or improving a nation's security forces will

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[9] Seth Jones, Jeremy Wilson, Andrew Rathmell, and K. Jack Riley, *Establishing Law and Order After Conflict* (Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, 2005), 19.

[10] United States Marine Corps, *Small Wars Manual*, 4.

likely be a sequential project – military before police, national
police before local police, for example. [11]

For this reason, the planner should assume that the security situation will necessitate high

levels of law enforcement and estimates should trend toward the cautious.

Next, the planner will need to determine what kinds of forces will be needed and

how many of each. In most "normalized" countries, there is a much higher number of

police than military forces, with local police being the largest effort. Many governments

retain some type of paramilitary national-level force, such as a national police force,

gendarmerie, or *Carabinieri*. In many countries as well, these forces are traditionally

used as a tool to repress any threats to the regime. In such countries, which include Iraq,

special care must be taken to ensure they are not seen as a tool of oppression by a

factional interest. As will be discussed in Chapter Five, this became a major concern in

Iraq as sectarian interests assumed control over security ministries.

> Who wields force is also important. If the HN police have a reasonable
> reputation for competence and impartiality, it is better for them to execute
> urban raids; the populace is likely to view that application of force as
> more legitimate. This is true even if the police are not as well armed or as
> capable as military units. However, local circumstances affect this
> decision. If the police are seen as part of an ethnic or sectarian group
> oppressing the general population, their use may be counterproductive.
> Effective counterinsurgents thus understand the character of the local
> police and popular perceptions of both police and military units. This
> understanding helps ensure that the application of force is appropriate and
> reinforces the rule of law.[12]

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[11] James Dubik, *Building Security Forces and Ministerial Capacity: Iraq as a Primer*
(Washington, DC: Institute for the Study of War, 2009), 22.

[12] Department of the Army, *Field Manual 3-24: Counterinsurgency* (Washington, DC:
Department of the Army, 2006), 1-143.

The planner must also consider the training time that will be necessary to field any new police forces. The New York City Police Department, managing one of the world's largest training programs, trains 6,000 new officers each year. By comparison, in 2003 estimates in Iraq were that at least 40,000 completely new police recruits would need to be trained and fielded. The planner must make every attempt to estimate accurately the time required to complete such a mission. While there are undoubtedly training capabilities on which to draw, planners must consider that adequately training and fielding tens of thousands of new police cannot happen immediately.

Finally, planners must consider what capabilities beyond training will be necessary for the police to function effectively. This will most likely include ongoing partnership and advising after the initial training period. The effectiveness of partnership was clearly demonstrated in later years in Iraq and will be discussed in greater detail in later chapters. These efforts improve both the capabilities and confidence of fledgling forces, as well as the confidence of the local population. U.S. forces might also be necessary to assist with logistics for these new forces. Additionally, other initiatives will be necessary to ensure the long-term success of the police. New forces must be matched with corresponding developments in ministerial capacity, a functional judicial system, detention facilities, and anti-corruption and internal affairs capabilities, for example. These initiatives will almost certainly include expertise and capabilities from other U.S. Agencies, including the Departments of State and Justice; these organizations should be brought in at the earliest stages of planning.

Finally, the planner must consider metrics for success of new force development. This will be a crucial requirement, particularly as domestic patience for ongoing

operations wears thin and political leaders seek evidence of progress. As experience in Iraq demonstrated, numbers of forces trained and equipped will not portray an accurate picture of the capabilities of new forces. A 2005 Rand Study sought to identify measureable outcomes of performance which included crime rates (especially homicides and violent crime), other crime indicators, level of political violence and insurgency, number of international police, military and civilian casualties, and perception of rule of law, security and corruption.[13] While these indicators are not necessarily ideal, they can provide a snapshot on the overall security situation and therefore the effectiveness of law enforcement indicators.

Means: Assessment of Available Assets

When planning for security force development, the planner will need to make a thorough assessment of the existing capabilities of police forces and what these capabilities will be after major combat operations have been completed. In this stage, intelligence assessments will be critical in facilitating appropriate planning for force development. The planner will need to know how many forces are currently in place, their capabilities and loyalties and their willingness to fight. What conditions will be necessary to ensure former police to return to their duty station? Will these police be willing to carry out basic law enforcement activities? These considerations may include emergency funding such as Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP) funds.

Next, planners will need to consider the availability and capabilities of police trainers. This is a complex issue, as it will almost certainly be an interagency effort. The

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[13] Jones et al, *Establishing Law and Order After Conflict,* 24.

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State Department has typically maintained responsibility for training of police, but in a

major combat environment, responsibility may be given to the military (at the discretion

of the President). Department of Justice may also be able to send training specialists. FM

3-24 notes "police are best trained by other police" but notes that "the quick reaction

capability of these agencies is limited, although they can attain necessary levels when

given time."[14] These efforts may also be more limited in a high threat environment, as

"these forces work more effectively when operating in a benign environment or when

security is provided separately."[15] In Iraq, for example, much of the early police training

effort was conducted in Jordan. International partners may also be called on to provide

specialized training and material support.

> Although their support frequently plays more of a legitimizing role,
> multinational partners also assist materially in training HN security forces.
> Some nations more willingly train HN forces, especially police forces,
> than provide troops for combat operations. Some multinational forces
> come with significant employment restrictions. Each international
> contribution is considered on its own merits, but such assistance is rarely
> declined. Good faith efforts to integrate multinational partners and
> achieve optimum effectiveness are required.[16]

Multinational efforts can also support rule-of-law development, as in the example of the

European Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo, which "[offers] support through monitoring,

mentoring and advising our local colleagues in the police, judiciary and customs

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[14] Department of the Army, and Marine Corps Combat Development Command, *Field Manual 3-24: Counterinsurgency*, 6-16.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid., 6-17.

following best European practices."[17]   The United Nations also maintains more than

12,000 UN police, who can provide advising, mentoring and training of police and law

enforcement agencies. In 2000 the Panel on United Nations Policing and Peace

Operations stated that the primary goal of United Nations Police (UNPOL) should be to

"to focus primarily on the reform and restructuring of local police forces in addition to

traditional advisory, training and monitoring tasks."[18] UNPOL have been utilized in

Eastern Slavonia, Kosovo, and East Timor.

Ways: How to Build a Local Security Force

When considering the "ways" of achieving effective host-nation police, the

planner will need to consider a number of factors. First, how will security forces be

recruited? Recruitment will ultimately be one of the most decisive factors in success or

failure of the security forces. The host-nation government will likely have considerable

input at this stage, but every effort must be made to ensure that recruitment requirements

do not preclude the participation of particular ethnic or sectarian groups. In Iraq, literacy

requirements set by the Iraqi government were a serious impediment to recruiting police

in many rural areas, particularly al-Anbar. In some cases, U.S. forces implemented

literacy-training programs to ensure that the best recruits would be able to meet the

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[17] EULEX Kosovo - European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo. "Strategy - EULEX Kosovo"; avaialabl from http://www.eulex-kosovo.eu/?id=27 (accessed February 10, 2010).

[18] United Nations, "United Nations Police"; available from http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/sites/police/index.shtml (accessed January 15, 2010).

recruiting standards.[19] De-Baathification requirements were also a concern, particularly in attracting leadership, as many previous military and police leaders in Sunni areas had served as mid- to senior-level Baathists. Another consideration is tribal or militia affiliation. Militias became a serious concern in Shia areas; a large body of anecdotal reporting, including from U.S. advisors, indicates that after 2005, militants affiliated with Muqtada al-Sadr's Jaysh al-Mahdi militia had infiltrated the local police in many mixed and Shia areas.

These concerns raise another issue that planners must consider. What kind of oversight will U.S. forces have over the recruitment and performance of these forces? Will advisors be able to remove ineffective or corrupt police or have the authority to stop a mission that appears to be conducted for partisan interests? What kind of cooperation will be needed from the host-nation government? These details will need to be addressed in cooperation with the host-nation government to avoid situations in which advisors are unable to stop corrupt or partisan activity by these forces.

Planners will also need to consider the training standards and requirements for the police. How will training be conducted? These questions will likely be answered in consultation with the Department of State, Department of Justice, or international training organizations, but U.S. forces may also be required to assist with initial training for expediency. Such ad hoc training was conducted by U.S. forces at the beginning of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM to develop Iraqi Civil Defense Corps troops; this will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

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[19] United States Forces - Iraq, "First Graduation of Literacy Program in Hawijah"; available from www.usf-iraq.com/?option=com_content&task=view&id=23020&Itemid=128 (accessed March 1, 2010).

The planner must also consider the requirements of ongoing partnership after host-nation police have been trained and fielded. What will the equipment, logistical, and emergency support requirements be in order to ensure that police can continue to willingly and effectively perform their duties? As will be discussed in Chapter Four, insurgents are likely to target police and their families; protection may need to be provided to ensure that intimidation efforts do not succeed in preventing the police from doing their jobs.

Risk Assessment and Mitigation

Assessment of risk in training host nation police in a counterinsurgency will be a crucial task at the outset of planning. Failure to deploy sufficient law enforcement capabilities can have an immediate deleterious effect on the security environment, as was evident in the first few months of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, which will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3. Given the number of complex considerations involved in ensuring adequate numbers of law enforcement capabilities are on the street immediately following the cessation of Phase III operations, the risk of insufficient or inadequate forces is high.

When assessing risk, the planner should identify circumstances that will lead to a misalignment of the ends, ways and means. Is the current police force capable of securing critical infrastructure and protecting the population? If the nation's police force quit en masse during combat operations, how can they be enticed to return to work? What will their loyalties be? What kinds of capabilities and training will they require? If there will need to be large-scale training efforts, what is the timeline until these forces can be fielded? The risk assessment should include a realistic assessment of the timeline

and metrics for fielding any new forces – a timely and expensive task and one that will be constrained by facility availability and the limitations of interagency and multinational partners.

If the risk assessment reveals problematic misalignment between the ends, ways and means of the policing goals, the planner must mitigate this risk through other means. At the earliest stages, it is likely that risk mitigation will involve U.S. or international forces fulfilling law enforcement functions in order to protect critical infrastructure and prevent wide-scale unrest. However, these functions must be clearly delineated in the planning stage. In the case of Iraq, lack of agreement over the responsibility of U.S. forces to respond to looting resulted in widespread destruction of critical infrastructure that had lasting consequences, including a reduction in basic services and an opportunity for militias to gain footholds. However, the impact of visibility of occupying forces should not be underestimated. One of the major changes of the "surge" in 2007 was an increase in U.S. force visibility – conducting regular patrols in neighborhoods, which sent a message to criminals, insurgents and terrorists that forces were indeed present. It also increased the comfort of the population, which in turn led to greater cooperation by the neutral population in providing useful information about insurgents and criminals.

Risk mitigation may also involve attempts to field rudimentary auxiliary host-nation forces to augment U.S. efforts and put a "local face" on operations. As will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Three, units in Iraq attempted such an effort in the weeks immediately following the cessation of major combat operations. However, using such forces is in and of itself a risky move. It should be remembered that these forces are not professional forces and will be limited by their training, equipment, capabilities, and

their willingness to conduct operations against certain targets, particularly against other local citizens. Additionally, the loyalties and motivations of these auxiliary forces will need to be carefully considered, particularly if they are affiliated with pre-existing militias. For example, cooperation with Kurdish *Peshmerga* forces risked raising the ire of Turkey, as well as inflaming Sunni Arab populations in disputed areas of Northern Iraq (particularly Mosul and Kirkuk).

This is not to say that auxiliary forces cannot be effective, but they must be managed with exceeding care and used for limited purposes. In other words, they cannot be used as a complete substitute for professional law enforcement forces, and their employment must be carefully managed through partnership with U.S./coalition forces, with an ultimate plan for either their disarmament or incorporation into a formal security force. The al-Anbar Awakening and later the Sons of Iraq would prove a good example of this type of management during the later years of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM.

Another consideration in risk mitigation might be substituting different host nation forces for one another. This may be particularly useful in an environment like Iraq, where the cultural norm was for national-level assets such as the Special Republican Guard and the secret police to have the primary responsibility for security, with local police generally ranking among the least important and least effective of all the security forces. In Iraq, the Iraqi Army is traditionally more respected than the police, and while police forces were still being trained and fielded, could in some cases be used in a limited capacity, such as establishing checkpoints and conducting counterinsurgency raids. However, their utility in performing basic police work was limited. And as will be

discussed in Chapter Five, reliance on national police controlled by sectarian interests fueled distrust between different segments of the population.

In summary, a planner must give considerable attention to mitigating the risk of having insufficient community policing. The benefits of local police can be enormous in preventing an insurgency from taking root, and eventually such a force will be a requirement for the successful termination of the operation. However, the likelihood of such a force being in place immediately or even quickly is very low, and the planner must consider alternative options for ensuring law and order are maintained the local level while a professional force backed by appropriate ministerial capability can be developed and employed.

CHAPTER III: FAILURE TO SEIZE THE INITIATIVE (2003-2004)

"I've got three 'red lines' about Iraq. We must leave behind a professional, uncorrupt police force, attentive to human rights; we must not have an army involved in internal affairs, and no militia; and we should pass sovereignty to an Iraqi government elected on the basis of a constitution."

— L. Paul Bremer, 2003

"In some places, where the local government is not determined or its officers have all fled, the leaders among the masses call upon the people to resist, and they respond."

— Mao Zedong[1]

As discussed in the previous chapter, timing is critical in establishing rule of law and local security. The immediate aftermath of major combat has been called the "golden hour" and "includes a timeframe of several weeks to several months during which external intervention may enjoy some popular support and international legitimacy when potential spoilers may have insufficient time to organize."[2] Failure to fill the immediate security vacuum with sufficient occupying or international forces can allow militias, warlords, criminals and insurgents to develop a foothold, creating long-term problems for the occupying force as well as the fledgling host-nation forces. In Iraq, the "golden hour" was squandered and insurgencies were able to take root.

The insurgency in Iraq did not begin immediately after the invasion. Following the collapse of the regime in April of 2003, the security situation was more or less stable

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[1] Mao, *On Guerilla Warfare,* 72.

[2] Jones et al, *Establishing Law and Order After Conflict,* 19.

for several months, until a series of attacks in late summer indicated that the situation had begun to deteriorate. By April of 2004, two large uprisings – a Shia uprising in Sadr City and areas of the South, and a Sunni uprising in Fallujah that spread to other Sunni areas – presented a serious challenge to the U.S. occupation. In both of these cases, the Iraqi security forces were unable or unwilling to counter the threats, and the U.S. had primary responsibility in addressing the uprisings. The timing could not have been worse as the U.S. was preparing to transfer sovereignty to a new Iraqi government, and the incidents cast doubt on the stability and capabilities of the new Iraqi government.

This chapter examines the conditions that led to the April incidents – the failure of planning for policing, misguided efforts to establish local security, and the results of these failures. It also highlights some successes and near misses. Finally, it provides an analysis of this phase and identifies lessons learned with the goal of providing insight to future planners and warfighters.

Planning and Implementation of Police Development

By most accounts, the Office for Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA) and its replacement, the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), were largely ineffective in restoring basic law and order quickly. During the period from April to May in 2003, "Iraq descended into chaos, with widespread looting and vandalism of infrastructure, the emergence of pervasive organized crime, and massive increases in the incidents of assaults, rapes and homicides."[3] However, this report caveats that "while

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[3] Ahmed Hashim, *Insurgency and Counter-Insurgency in Iraq* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), 292-293.

ORHA can be blamed for not 'gaming' the possibility of such a scenario, it cannot be blamed for the disappearance of the police from the streets and the fact that U.S. combat personnel are not trained for the maintenance of law and order."

In fact, other sources claim that assessments and 'gaming' had been conducted prior to the beginning of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. According to one account, the Justice and State Departments conducted an assessment of the number of police trainers that would be needed in Iraq.

> As the war approached, the [National Security Council] asked the Justice Department to draw up a plan for the Iraqi police. The job fell to Richard Meyer, then the deputy director of the department's international training program, who had helped rebuild police forces after conflicts in the Balkans and Haiti. He started with a basic assumption: you couldn't be sure if Iraqi police would stay on the job, or if they were any good. Working with international policing specialists at the State Department, Meyer crafted a proposal that called for 5,000 international law enforcement advisers who would help to train Iraq's police force. If it became necessary, the advisers would be able to carry out police duties themselves, as international police officers did in Kosovo.[4]

That initial assessment was followed by a secondary assessment after the war began, in which a small team of advisors from the Justice Department visited Iraq to conduct an assessment, determining that 6,660 police advisors should be "immediately" dispatched to Iraq.[5]

Despite the recommendations for 6,660 advisors, little immediate action was taken. By August of 2003, the CPA had begun a national program to develop the Iraqi Police Service. Bernard "Bernie" Kerik, the former commissioner of police for New

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[4] Rajiv Chandrasekaran, *Imperial Life in the Emerald City: Inside Iraq's Green Zone* (New York: Vintage, 2007), 94-95.

[5] Ibid., 95.

York City, was brought in as Interim Minister of Interior and senior police advisor, and the State Department had begun implementing a program to develop and train police officers in Jordan. Kerik recommended that a first step would be to call back police who had served under Saddam. According to Bremer, by July more than 15,000 had returned to duty[6] and Kerik assessed that "at best" there were maybe 32,000 police, but their capabilities were in serious doubt. Even with 32,000 police, this left a significant gap between the current capabilities and the recommended 65,000-75,000 man police force that would be needed at a minimum.[7] According to a different source, by July of 2004 approximately 25,000 former police had returned to duty and completed a three-week training course, and 5,502 new recruits had completed the 8-week training course at either the Jordan or Baghdad training center.[8]

Regardless of the exact numbers, Kerik's tenure as the police advisor bore little fruit in terms of actual police development, and the numbers by late 2004 were far short of what would be required to provide stability. By some accounts he was able to create a small unit that conducted independent operations under his guidance, but little progress was made toward development of a robust training program or an interim solution. According to a U.S. Army study, by the spring of 2004, it was clear that:

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[6] L. Paul Bremer and Malcolm Mcconnell, *My Year in Iraq: The Struggle to Build a Future of Hope* (New York: Threshold Editions, 2006), 128.

[7] By 2005 the Coalition's goal was to train and equip 135,000 police by the end of 2006. The estimated number of police needed would grow to 188,000 by 2006, according to the Civil Police Assistance Training Team. By the end of 2008 that number was 275,300.

[8] Anthony Cordesman, *Inexscusable Failure: Progress in Training the Iraqi Army and Security Forces as of Mid-July 2004* (Washington, DC: Center For Strategic And International Studies, 2006), 6.

The Coalition's attempts to give Iraq a professional law enforcement institution had become the victim of inaccurate assumptions about post-Saddam Iraq, a worsening security environment, and traditional Iraqi antipathy toward the profession. Simply put, neither the CPA nor CJTF-7 had the resources to give the police programs the priority they needed to surmount the historical and cultural obstacles in their way. In the spring of 2004 many Iraqi police simply dissolved in the cities where Sunni and Shia armed groups rebelled. Not until the fall of 2004 would the [Iraqi Interim Government] and the Coalition be able to revamp their police building efforts in any significant way.[9]

Despite the intentions of the CPA, by the time the CPA transferred authority to the Interim Iraqi Government in June of 2004, more than 70% of the police in Iraq had yet to receive any of the mandated CPA-funded training.[10]

By spring of 2004, a training program administered by the Department of State was in place in Jordan, with much of the training conducted by contractors, as well as foreign nationals from Jordan, Canada, Sweden and Austria.[11] Another academy was established in Baghdad. The effort was slow, with advisors often raising concerns about the quality of the recruits,[12] however the training program did graduate approximately 3,500 police recruits per month for nearly two years. Due to the worsening security situation, "the goal for recruiting American police advisors plummeted from 6,500, to

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[9]Timothy R. Reese and Donald P. Wright, *On Point II: Transition to the New Campaign: The United States Army in Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, May 2003-January 2005 (*Washington, DC: Dept. Of The Army, 2008), 445.

[10] Chandrasekaran, *Imperial Life in the Emerald City*, 326.

[11] Dale Gavlak, "Money, Mandate Ends for Iraqi Police Training Academy in Jordan," *Associated Press.* October 16, 2006, http://www.military-quotes.com/forum/money-mandate-ends-iraqi-police-t26774.html (accessed December 17, 2010).

[12] Paula Broadwell, "Iraq's Doomed Police Training," *Boston Globe*, August 30, 2005, http://www.boston.com/news/globe/editorial_opinion/oped/articles/2005/08/30/iraqs_doomed_police_training/ (accessed December 17, 2010).

1,500, to less than 350 by spring of 2004."[13] The police training issue was further

complicated by a National Security President Directive (NSPD-36) issued by President

Bush in March of 2004 which designated the Department of Defense to "direct all U.S.

Government efforts and coordinate international efforts in support of organizing, training

and equipping all Iraqi security forces." This meant that the Department of State, who

traditionally held the primary role in training police, would be supporting the Department

of Defense.[14] The police training mission would be conducted primarily by the Civil

Police Assistance Training Team (CPATT) under MNSTC-I.

Despite the efforts by late 2004 to establish a training effort, the U.S. lost a

critical opportunity to both stabilize Iraq and build security forces who could enforce the

rule of law. In a scathing report issued in 2004, Dr. Anthony Cordesman of the Center

for Strategic and International Studies highlighted these failures.

> The fact remains, however, that the U.S.-led coalition cannot be
> excused for its failure to reconstitute effective security forces and
> police, for trying to restrict the development of Iraqi armed forces
> to a token force to defend Iraq's borders against external
> aggression, or for ignoring the repeated warnings from U.S.
> military advisory teams about problems in the flow of equipment
> and in creating the necessary facilities. The U.S. failed to treat the
> Iraqis as partners in the counterinsurgency effort for nearly a year,
> and did not attempt to seriously train and equip Iraqi forces for
> proactive security and counterinsurgency mission until April 2004
> – nearly a year after the fall of Saddam Hussein and two-thirds of a
> year after a major insurgency problem began to emerge.[15]

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[13] United States Institute of Peace, "Iraq's Interior Ministry: Frustrating Reform"; available from http://www.usip.org/resources/iraq-s-interior-ministry-frustrating-reform (accessed December 17, 2010).

[14] George W. Bush, "NSPD 36: United States Government Operations in Iraq." Federation of American Scientists, available from www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/nspd/nspd051104.pdf (accessed May 11, 2004).

[15] Cordesman, *Inexcusable Failure: Progress in Training the Iraqi Army and Security Forces as of Mid-July 2004*, 2.

The growing insurgency by this time would mean that greater emphasis would need to be placed on training national-level forces with paramilitary capabilities and administered by the Ministry of Interior. Issues surrounding this program will be discussed in greater detail in subsequent chapters.

The Military's Efforts to Develop Local Forces

Despite ORHA and the CPA's failures to quickly implement a robust police training program, efforts were made by military units to develop local forces to augment their efforts and give local nationals a role in their security. These units were called the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps (ICDC), functioning as ad hoc paramilitary units for each province, created by each U.S. division. The concept was developed by LTG Sanchez and GEN Abizaid and was modeled on similar programs from Kosovo. The units were viewed as an interim solution to security problems, as "U.S. Army units in Iraq simply could not wait 6 years, 2 months, or even 18 months for CPA programs to bear fruit. Moreover, Sanchez and Abizaid viewed the program as temporary and likely to be folded into the CPA's broader efforts in the near future."[16]

The ICDC's missions varied, from basic law enforcement to protection of infrastructure, to assisting U.S. forces in counterterrorism operations. According to a U.S. Army report, "many U.S. units were proud of their ICDC units and credited them with filling a huge void that the CPA could not address at this point in the campaign"[17]

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[16] Reese and Wright, *On Point II,* 440.

[17] Ibid.

The units underwent approximately three weeks of rudimentary training with their U.S. counterparts.

However, the ICDC had mixed results, by many accounts. The lack of formalized structure, training, support or equipment combined with an increasingly dangerous mission as security deteriorated limited their effectiveness. The mixed results also undercut senior U.S. support for them. Bremer in particular was unimpressed with their capabilities, viewing them as an unofficial security force which would undercut his vision of an Iraq secured by professional security forces, with neither armies or militias involved in security. Because the ICDC were "neither police nor full-time soldiers, [they] existed in a dangerous grey zone between these two poles."[18] Despite his misgivings, and under pressure from U.S. military leaders, Bremer issued CPA Order 28 on 3 September, which formalized the ICDC as part of the Iraqi Armed Forces with the New Iraqi Army. However, this would change the mission of the ICDC from being a passive local security organization charged with protecting the population, to having a more active counterterrorism role.[19]

The impact of this mission shift, combined with the aforementioned limitations of the ICDC capabilities, became clear during operations in Fallujah in 2004, when the ICDC largely refused to support U.S. forces in their mission to capture insurgents responsible for the murder of U.S. contractors. According to Bremer's own account

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[18] Reese and Wright, *On Point II*, 441.

[19] This mission was formalized in 2004 when the Iraqi Interim Government folded the ICDC into the Iraqi National Guard.

As the Marines pushed deeper into the city, the Iraqi police and Civil Defense Corps forces backstopping them either abandoned their posts or went over to the other side. The local police commissioner was caught working with the insurgents. Iraqi Civil Defense soldiers had proven to be 'useless' according to a senior Marine officer. Almost half of the first battalion of the New Iraqi Army deserted on their way to Fallujah. Of the five battalions of the Civil Defense force in Baghdad, almost a third did not report for duty Tuesday, April 6. The battalions recruited from Sadr City had 80 percent absenteeism. All over the south, Iraqi policemen were absent or passive. "So much for the Iraqis taking over their own security, I told Dick."[20]

Despite the attempts of the civilian authorities and military to shift blame, the debacle of early attempts to establish security was obvious. However, part of the problem may have been using forces that were initially designed for local security to conduct counterinsurgent operations on behalf of U.S. forces, who were growing increasingly unpopular in al-Anbar at this time. In other words, the lack of capabilities of these fledgling forces may have been compounded by their being used in inappropriate missions. Using local forces to backstop U.S. operations at that time tested the loyalties of the forces, many of whom would be more loyal to members of their own community than to an occupying force.

There were, however, some successes in local security in 2003. A U.S. Army report notes that some units throughout the country actually attempted to establish local police units in addition to the ICDC. These efforts were on the initiative of the local commander and not coordinated through the CPA, but many of them were fairly effective, despite the ad hoc nature of the efforts.

One of the most notable successes was under MG David Petraeus of the 101st Airborne Division, which occupied Northern Iraq. The case of Mosul is particularly

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[20] Bremer and Mcconnell, *My Year in Iraq,* 328.

noteworthy because of the large number of former regime elements; more than 100,000 former members of Iraq's intelligence and security services lived in Mosul at the time of the invasion.[2122] Additionally, ethnic tensions were high, with Kurdish forces controlling large swaths of Ninawa province, including portions of eastern Mosul. Their assistance in the invasion increased their presence, further exacerbating existing tensions. Immediately following the collapse of the regime, MG Petraeus seized the initiative and immediately worked to restore local governance and security, convening the local council and using CERP funds to ensure local workers and police were paid and able to continue working.[23] As a result, in Mosul there was no collapse of civil order that was seen in other areas of Iraq. Mosul remained one of the most stable areas of Iraq until the 101st Airborne Division departed.[24] It should be noted that the force that replaced the 101st was much smaller and less able to respond to threats. However, the fact remains that Mosul was one of the few successes of local security during that critical time period.

Consequences of the Failure of Local Security

The failure of the U.S. effort to fill local security needs, or field local forces who could, had lasting implications for the security environment. In Sunni areas, locals lost

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[21] Thomas E. Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq* (New York: The Penguin Press HC, 2006), 228.

[22] Eric Hamilton, *The Fight for Mosul: March 2003 - March 2008* (Washington: Institute for the Study of War, 2008), 4.

[23] Joe Klein "Good General, Bad Mission," *Time Magazine*. http://www.time.com/time/columnist/klein/article/0,9565,1587186,00.html (accessed January 4, 2010).

[24] Ricks, *Fiasco*, 231.

confidence in the ability of U.S. forces to fill their basic needs, and loss of critical

infrastructure meant a reduction in essential services to which they had grown

accustomed. This created an opening for insurgent networks to grow, and for terrorist

groups to gain a foothold. These problems were compounded by de-Baathification and

the dissolution of the Iraqi Army, which significantly increased dissatisfaction with the

CPA and the new Iraqi Government. It will never be known if an insurgency was

inevitable in the Sunni areas due to these policies, but it is clear that the problems were

compounded by the security situation.

In Shia areas, one of the most obvious consequences was the rise of Muqtada al-

Sadr's Jaysh al-Mahdi militia, a Shia insurgency that was never expected and has

remained a security threat for the duration of the conflict. The rise of the Jaysh al-Mahdi

can be clearly tied to the lack of security in the immediate aftermath of the regime

collapse. Muqtada al-Sadr acted quickly upon the fall of the regime in April of 2003 to

secure his position as a leader of both the Sadrist movement and the Shia community. He

obtained the support of Grand Ayatollah Hairi in Qom, Iran, and quickly mobilized his

existing support network in lower-class Shia neighborhoods, particularly Sadr City, home

to nearly 3 million impoverished Shia Iraqis, approximately 10% of the population of

Iraq. Within weeks, "the Sadrists claimed to have fifty thousand volunteers organized in

predominantly Shia east Baghdad, collecting refuse, directing traffic, and distributing

hospital meals." Other volunteers guarded power stations. The network of volunteers

provided badly needed social services and security at a time when Baghdad was mired in

looting and a security vacuum. Within months Sadr loyalists controlled most mosques, hospitals, schools, and welfare centers in Sadr City.[25]

Security became an even more crucial factor for the militia as the war entered its second year. Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), under the leadership of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, undertook a campaign to target Shia civilians, underscoring the inability of either the Coalition or the fledgling Iraq government to protect the population. In a particularly brutal attack in March of 2004, more than 178 Shia pilgrims were killed and hundreds wounded by bombings in Baghdad and Karbala during the Ashura pilgrimage.[26] The need for a group like Jaysh al-Mahdi, the armed wing of the Sadrist movement, to protect the Shia civilian population became even more pronounced. Throughout 2005, Jaysh al-Mahdi continued to organize and provide security in Shia neighborhoods. The Sadrists' control of the Ministries of Health and Transportation, as well as large numbers of local Iraqi Police units, allowed some fighters to obtain official uniforms, weapons and vehicles. The militia would be a key player in the sectarian violence that nearly ripped the country apart in the aftermath of the bombing of the al-Askari "Golden Mosque" shrine in 2006.

Thus, by the time a robust police training effort was finally in place by the end of 2004, the situation had deteriorated so significantly that police alone would no longer be capable of providing security. The "golden window" of opportunity had been lost. LTG

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[25] Patrick Cockburn, *Muqtada Al-Sadr and the Battle for the Future of Iraq.* 2008 (New York: Scribner, 2008), 117.

[26] "Thousands Mourn for Shiite Bombing Victims," ABC News, March 4, 2004, "http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2004/03/04/1058458.htm (accessed May 10, 2010).

Dubik's statement that **"creating or improving a nation's security forces will likely be a sequential project – military before police, national police before local police, for example"**[27] was undoubtedly the case at that point. By that time, the security situation was so far gone that a massive influx of military and paramilitary forces was necessary to stabilize the worst areas of Iraq.

Lessons Learned

Planners can learn several things from the early successes and failures to build local security in Iraq in the first year. First, plan for the worst or prepare branches or sequels for the event of an insurgency. As counterterrorism expert Bruce Hoffman noted in 2005, "the fact that military planners apparently didn't consider the possibility that sustained and organized resistance could gather momentum and transform itself into an insurgency reflects a pathology that has long afflicted governments and militaries everywhere: the failure not only to recognize the incipient conditions for insurgency, but also to ignore its nascent manifestations and arrest its growth before it is able to gain initial traction and in turn momentum."[28] Considerations for local policing must be a key part of the planning process. Assessments of needs are useless if not tied to a specific plan of implementation, particularly when such needs require massive interagency and multinational efforts to support.

Also, time is of the essence. The security void must be filled at the local level, by occupying forces, by professional security forces, or by "good-enough" auxiliary forces

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[27] Dubik, *Building Security Forces and Ministerial Capacity: Iraq as a Primer,* 22.

[28] Bruce Hoffman, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq (Occasional Paper)* (Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, 2005), 3.

partnered with the U.S. as soon as possible. These efforts should be strengthened at the first sign of insurgency or unrest. The utility of "good-enough" forces should not be underestimated, but they should only be used for local security. Had the ICDC been used primarily to fulfill a local security mission with the support of U.S. forces, their performance would likely have been significantly better. The ICDC lacked the capabilities and loyalties to the new government and the U.S. to conduct counter-terrorism operations in conjunction with U.S. forces. Second, robust local security can have a significant impact in stabilization, as evidenced in Mosul. Giving the population "buy-in" to their local security and governance can protect critical infrastructure, increase support for the new government and the occupying force, and deny terrorists areas in which to operate.

CHAPTER IV: THE WAR ON POLICE (2004-2006)

*"It is exactly the strategy of the terrorists to create a vacuum of
disorder and lawlessness" – Bruce Hoffman, RAND Corporation[1]*

By the end of 2004, greater attention was being paid to the issue of security force

training. MNSTC-I was established with LTG Petraeus at the helm, with different

sections assigned to police and military development. Police academies were established

in Baghdad and Jordan, with several regional academies also created, with the goal of

training and fielding 135,000 police by the end of 2006. But by this time as well, it was

clear that the Iraqi Police suffered from three key problems: a lack of capability,

questions of loyalty, and intimidation. Each of these problems was complex and

compounded by the others, creating a nearly intractable problem in which the police were

either too inept, too corrupt, or simply too scared to do their jobs. The intimidation and

targeting would have a significant effect in fueling the insurgency, as the police were

unable to perform their key mission.

> Countering an insurgency requires a police force that is visible day and
> night. The host nation will not gain legitimacy if the populace believes
> that insurgents and criminals control the streets. Well-sited and protected
> police stations can establish a presence in communities as long as the
> police do not hide in those stations. Police presence provides security to
> communities and builds support for the HN government. When police
> have daily contact with the local populace, they can collect information
> for counterinsurgents.[2]

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[1] "After Handover: Security Top Priority in Iraq," *CNN*, Jun 28, 2004,
http://www.cnn.com/2004/U.S./06/28/after.handover/index.html (accessed March 20, 2010).

[2] *Field Manual 3-24: Counterinsurgency*, 6-96.

By 2005 the Iraqi Police would emerge as the top target for the terrorists and insurgents. The problem of intimidation and militia influence would continue through 2006, despite strong efforts to build a police force.

Specific numbers of police murdered during the first few years of the war vary widely; the number is likely in the thousands. A report prepared by the Inspectors General for the State and Defense Departments noted in 2005 that "with a high [Iraqi Police] casualty toll (over 1,600 policemen have lost their lives over the past year), widely publicized incidents in which the IP failed in the face of attacks, and skepticism among foreign observers, there is a perception that training programs have produced 'cannon fodder'—numbers of nominal policemen incapable of defending themselves, let alone the Iraqi public."[3] In 2006 the Iraqi Minister of Interior stated that more than 12,000 had died in the line of duty since 2004.[4] Although exact numbers are difficult to independently verify, most accounts indicate that thousands of police were likely killed; these numbers do not take into account intimidation and murder of family members. These attacks are still ongoing – on 3 March 2010 suicide bombers killed 33 people, mostly police, in attacks on a police station and in the hospital emergency room where

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[3] United States Departments of Defense and State, *Interagency Assessment of Iraq Police Training* (Arlington: United States Department of Defense Office of the Inspector General, 2005), 1.

[4] "More Than 12,000 Iraqi Police Casualties in 2 Years," *CNN,* October 7, 2006, http://www.cnn.com/2006/WORLD/meast/10/06/iraq.main/index.html (accessed April 1, 2010).

the victims were being treated.[5]

The level of intimidation was clear in incidents when the police simply abandoned their posts. In one of the most notorious incidents, in Mosul (which months earlier had been a rare enclave of relative stability under the 101st) in 2004, the police were faced with a constant barrage of attacks and assaults. The reduction of U.S. troops in the area meant a decrease in contact between U.S. forces and the increasingly besieged police. According to journalist Thomas Ricks, after the 101st rotated out, "police officials who had visited daily were now seen only weekly or monthly," and the police were feeling increasingly isolated.[6] In one of the most notorious incidents, on 10 November, hundreds of insurgents launched a series of coordinated attacks on the police. By the next day, one police station had been captured and two destroyed, and the entire 4,000-man police force was overrun in hours, with most abandoning their posts. It took a massive effort between U.S. forces and Kurdish elements of the Iraqi army to reclaim the city.[7]

Similarly, in al-Anbar, the security forces largely collapsed in 2004 after the operations in Fallujah, and the remaining forces were widely seen as being infiltrated by criminal and terrorist networks. From 2004-2005, al-Qaeda fighters conducted a systematic campaign of terrorizing the local population into submission and ensuring that

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[5] Steven Lee Myers and Marc Santora, "In Iraq, Early Vote Is Marred by Attacks." *The New York Times,* March 5, 2010, http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/05/world/middleeast/05iraq.html (accessed April 1, 2010).

[6] Ricks. *Fiasco*, 324.

[7] Hamilton, *The Fight for Mosul,* 9.

local security forces would not be reestablished. In the words of the current Director of

Provincial Police, MG Tarqi Yusif Muhammad al-Thiyabi:

> [Al-Qaeda] started killing officers – high-level officers, tribal leaders,
> former police officers. Any person that was part of establishing the police
> again was killed. If they didn't find a former police officer, they killed his
> relative – his father, or his brother, or his next of kin. That's why they
> were able to control all the areas. It reached a level where they were able
> to walk down the streets in the neighborhood without even being armed.[8]

The situation would continue to decline in al-Anbar until 2006. A widely leaked

report in August of 2006 declared that "al-Qaeda is the dominant organization of

influence in al-Anbar" surpassing Iraqi institutions.[9]

The intimidation of police was not limited to Sunni areas. Although Shia militias

largely infiltrated security forces in mixed and Shia areas, conflict between the militias

sometimes spilled into the security forces. In one such incident, in August of 2006, a

conflict in Amarah between local Badr/ISCI-affiliated provincial security forces and

Jaysh al-Mahdi fighters culminated in Jaysh al-Mahdi seizing control of the city, taking

control of police stations and vehicles.[10] Representatives of Prime Minister Maliki and

local leaders negotiated a ceasefire, but the event underscored the continuing inability of

Iraqi Security Forces to maintain control against the growing threat of the militia.

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[8] U.S. Marine Corps, *Al-Anbar Awakening: From Insurgency to Counterinsurgency in Iraq, 2004-2009 Volume II, Iraqi Perspectives* (Quantico: Marine Corps University Press, 2009), 181.

[9] Dafna Linzer and Thomas E. Ricks, "Anbar Picture Grows Clearer, and Bleaker," *Washington Post,* November 27, 2006, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/11/27/AR2006112701287.html (accessed February 4, 2010).

[10] John Anderson, "Shi'ite Militia in Show of Strength: Sadr Fighters Briefly Take Over City in Iraq" *The Boston Globe*, October 21, 2006, http://www.boston.com/news/world/middleeast/articles/2006/10/21/shiite_militia_in_show_of_strength/ (Accessed November 7, 2009)

Capability

The IG report noted a consistent emphasis of quantity over quality of trained police forces, noting "widely publicized incidents in which the IP failed in the face of attacks."[11] A big problem in capability was a willingness to fight. This was a frequent complaint of those who worked with the police. This was partly a cultural problem linked to the traditional role of the local police in Iraqi society – they had typically stayed in their stations, not conducted patrols, and been regarded as the least effective of Iraq's security forces under the Saddam regime. So even those police who had returned to the force after the invasion needed re-training and continued partnership with advisors to be able to effectively police. Leadership was also specifically cited as an issue in changing some of these cultural problems in the Iraqi Police. Given the Coalition's emphasis on building new recruits, leadership training had suffered.

> The problem starts with a relative shortage of mid-level leaders and managers. Many police chiefs and their deputies are accustomed to the [Iraqi Police] culture that prevailed during the Saddam Hussein era. Old habits and methods (e.g., reliance on forced confessions, taking the initiative only when directed, and rigid delineation of responsibilities) work against effective and efficient policing. The need for attention to these aspects is self-evident. In instances where good leadership is present (often provided by Coalition military personnel or International Police Liaison Officers (IPLOs), IPs perform satisfactorily and stand their ground in the face of attacks. The absence of such leaders correlates closely with instances in which IP stations have been overrun, often with shocking casualties among ill-prepared and ill-led policemen.[12]

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[11] United States Departments of Defense and State, *Interagency Assessment of Iraq Police Training*, 9.

[12] Ibid, 16.

Corruption and Militia Influence

A joint State and Defense IG Report in mid-2005 noted that at the training academies "recruitment and vetting procedures are faulty. Despite recent improvements, too many recruits are marginally literate; some show up for training with criminal records or physical handicaps; and some recruits allegedly are infiltrating insurgents."[13] Insurgent infiltration was a problem in Sunni and Shia areas, but Shia militias would grow to be an increasing problem, particularly after Shia factions took control of the Ministry of Interior after the formation of the Iraqi Interim Government in 2005, which will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter. The greatest impact was the Badr Corps infiltration of the national police, but at the local level many Iraqi Police officers were also members of the Jaysh al-Mahdi. The situation became worse as the Ministry of Interior took an increasingly active role in training and fielding of its own forces.

Militia infiltration of the security forces, particularly the police, seriously undermined public confidence in the new government. In Baghdad and other mixed areas, the police were viewed by the Sunni population as a tool of Shia (and therefore Iranian) oppression of Sunnis. Militia and insurgent influence became a serious threat when sectarian violence skyrocketed in 2005-2006, with many citizens unable to differentiate between militants wearing police uniforms and real police carrying out legitimate operations. Even in cases when police were not directly involved in these incidents, corrupt individuals in the force were providing militants with uniforms, trucks and weapons so they could conduct sectarian violence.

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[13] United States Departments of Defense and State, *Interagency Assessment of Iraq Police Training*, 3.

Lessons Learned

Between 2004-2006, the problems facing the police were massive and exacerbated by a deteriorating security situation. Many of the lessons learned were explicitly laid out in the IG report issued in mid-2005, but they did not bring significant improvements in the capabilities of police or the security situation, although some of these reasons will be laid out in more detail in the next chapter. The local police in many cities were simply unable to defend themselves against the rising insurgent threat due to poor training, poor leadership, and the seriousness of the threat. Some important considerations can be gleaned from this period.

First, partnership and in-service training is essential beyond the initial training period. New recruits were offered eight weeks of training at the service academies and then released into police services marked by insufficient leadership and cultural problems. Continued partnership with advisors would have helped protect them in the face of the rising threat and helped them learn critical skills. Second, police training must be balanced by ministerial capacity. Internal affairs and vetting of new recruits is essential to ensure that poor quality or insurgent-affiliated recruits do not enter the training pipeline in the first place. This also requires that partisan interests do not control the ministry itself, a difficult challenge when in 2006 ministries were assigned to each of the various factions who comprised the Iraqi Government. Finally, quantity must be balanced with quality. As would be seen in 2007, a high quantity of minimally-trained forces can improve the security situation, but they must operate under strict parameters and partner with more capable security forces.

CHAPTER V: THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR (2005-2006)

The Ministry of Interior is rife with political and sectarian intrigues and is struggling to be even partially effective as a government institution.
– Report of the Independent Commission on Security Forces in Iraq, 2007

The third year of the war, 2006, began with a declaration from MNF-I that it was to be the "Year of the Police." It was indeed a major period of transition – the first parliamentary election had just been held and the new government was in the process of forming. Additional Military Police (MP) units and International Police Liaison Officers (IPLOs), under contract with the State Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement, were deployed to assist with the mentoring, advising and assessing of police. The Ministry of Interior (MOI) planned to have 79,000 local police, Public Order Battalions (POBs) and Special Police Commandos numbering 50,000 and a mechanized police brigade of 6,000.[1] The POBs, Commandos, and mechanized brigade were intended to serve as national paramilitary/gendarmerie units. By this time, greater emphasis was placed on developing national police with paramilitary capabilities who could respond to the growing insurgency; local police were no longer capable of controlling the security situation at the local level. Although training of local police continued, it was minimal and there was little continuing training beyond the initial

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[1] United States Departments of Defense and State, *Interagency Assessment of Iraq Police Training*, 5.

training period. The lack of focus on local police was evident in an August 2006

mandated report to Congress, in which assessments of the IPS in 13 of Iraq's 18

provinces could not be conducted because of the shortage of Police Training Teams.[2]

The Commandos and POBs enjoyed initial success due in part to their training by

U.S. forces, who were more comfortable training these paramilitary units than civilian

police.[3] The 2005 Inspector General report on the security forces noted that "although

initiated by the Coalition, the Iraqi government has sanctioned and accepted sponsorship

of these units by virtue of their capability to quell large-scale insurrection. The POBs

have been deployed throughout the country and have proven particularly valuable in

providing security in large communities where police functions have failed."[4] However,

the eventual success of these nascent forces and the government they supported would

ultimately depend on whether or not they were capable of acting as a non-partisan

security force and gaining the trust of the population. Under the Baathist regime, the

MOI served as the secret police and intelligence wing, functioning essentially as

praetorian guards for the regime. The MOI was the only security ministry not dissolved

by the CPA, and its main structures remained in place. However, it would soon be under

new leadership.

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[2] *Measuring Security and Stability in Iraq: Report to Congress, August 2006* (Washington, DC: U.S. Congress, 2006), 45.

[3] Christopher Allbritton, "Why Iraq's Police Are a Menace." *Time Magazine,* March 20, 2006, http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1175055,00.html (accessed September 30, 2009).

[4] United States Departments of Defense and State, *Interagency Assessment of Iraq Police Training*, 28.

Militia Influence

Following the toppling of the regime in 2003, the CPA and the Iraqi Governing

Council (IGC) initially assumed control of Iraq's security institutions, including the MOI.

In 2005, Bayan Jabr, a senior member of the Supreme Islamic Council of Iraq (SCIRI),

became the Minister of Interior. SCIRI, one of the key parties in the new Iraqi

Government, was a dissident group of Iraqi Shia based in Iraq since the 1980s and backed

by its militant wing, the Badr Brigade (later called the Badr Corps), a 10,000-man strong

militia. The Badr Corps was a highly capable military force with nearly two decades of

training provided by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps. Under Jabr's leadership,

senior members of the Badr Corps assumed leadership roles throughout the ministry, and

its members took control of the Commando, Public Order and Mechanized battalions.

Factions competing for control of the all-important security forces, particularly the

gendarmerie forces, overran the ministry level leadership as well. According to a 2007

Los Angeles Times article on the situation:

> The third- and fifth-floor administrative departments are the domain of
> Prime Minister Nouri Maliki's Islamic Dawa Party, a Shiite group. The
> sixth, home to border enforcement and the major crimes unit, belongs to
> the Badr Organization militia. Its leader, Deputy Minister Ahmed
> Khafaji, is lauded by some Western officials as an efficient administrator
> and suspected by others of running secret prisons. The seventh floor is
> intelligence, where the Badr Organization and armed Kurdish groups
> struggle for control. The ninth floor is shared by the department's
> inspector general and general counsel, religious Shiites. Their offices
> have been at the center of efforts to purge the department's remaining
> Sunni employees. The counsel's predecessor, a Sunni, was killed a year
> ago.[5]

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[5] Ned Parker, "Interior Ministry Mirrors Chaos of a Fractured Iraq," *Los Angeles Times,* July 30, 2007, http://articles.latimes.com/2007/jul/30/world/fg-interior30 (accessed January 4, 2010).

According to the 2007 Report of the Independent Commission on the Security Forces in Iraq, directed by Congress and headed by James Jones, General USMC (Ret.), the MOI is "rife with political and sectarian intrigues and is struggling to be even partially effective as a government institution." Worse, perhaps, as the high levels of sectarianism in the MOI, were reports that the organization was largely ineffective in fulfilling its basic mission of providing even basic security for the population. According to the Independent Commission on the Security Forces of Iraq, when senior field commanders were surveyed regarding the progress of the Iraqi Security Forces, all reported unsatisfactory progress toward ending sectarian violence and achieving national reconciliation.[6]

Beyond the problem of ministerial capacity, the Commando and POBs were a growing concern. Reports of illegal raids and extrajudicial killings by these forces were common in 2005 and 2006, and several incidents gave veracity to these accusations. U.S. advisors to the MOI had increasingly limited oversight on the operations of these units. According to Anthony Cordesman, "by late 2005, U.S. officials and military sources were openly complaining that the MOI and Minister Jabr were not informing them of some MOI and police operations and privately acknowledged that they had observed prisoner abuse."[7] In one incident which gained widespread attention, in November of

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[6] *Report of the Independent Commission on the Security Forces of Iraq: Hearing Before the Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives, One Hun* (New York: Government Printing Office, 2008), 88.

[7] Anthony H. Cordesman and Emma R. Davies, *Iraq's Insurgency and the Road to Civil Conflict [Two Volumes]* (Washignton, DC: Praeger Security International Multi-Volume, 2007).

2005, U.S. Forces raided a bunker in Jadriyah, eastern Baghdad being used a detention center by the MOI. 173 Sunni prisoners were found being held without warrants, and many showed signs of torture.[8] The individuals in charge of the detention center reportedly worked directly for Minister Jabr, with many reportedly members of the Badr Organization. Most of the individuals responsible for the bunker returned back to work at the MOI and no disciplinary action was taken, despite pressure by the U.S.[9] In another incident, 1,400 prisoners were found at a location known as "Site 4" in "overcrowded, unsafe, and unhealthy conditions" and had "suffered systematic physical and psychological abuse" by MOI personnel.[10]

The bombing of the al-Askari Shrine in Samarra on 22 February 2006 ignited the simmering sectarian tensions nearly instantly into a brutal civil war. Within hours of the bombing, Jaysh al-Mahdi fighters and Shia militants were mobilized throughout Baghdad and other cities, establishing checkpoints, attacking Sunni mosques, and murdering Sunni civilians. For the next year, violence increased every month as death squads asserted control over Baghdad and surrounding areas, forcing Sunni families from their homes and murdering Sunni civilians in massive numbers. According to one Jaysh al-Mahdi

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[8] Edward Wong and Sabrina Tavernise. "Iraqi Rift Grows As Secret Prison Enrages Sunnis" *The New York Times*, November 17, 2005, http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9F05E1DC113EF934A25752C1A9639C8B63&sec=&spon=&pagewanted=1 (accessed February 10, 2010).

[9] U.S. Department of State, "2008 Human Rights Report: Iraq" U.S. Department of State. http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2008/nea/119116.htm (accessed April 1, 2010).

[10] Sudarsan Raghavan, "57 Iraqis Charged In Abuse At Prison" *Washington Post*, November 6, 2006, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/11/06/AR2006110601353.html (accessed April 4, 2010).

death squad leader, "it was very simple, we were ethnically cleansing. Anyone Sunni was guilty."[11] As sectarian violence increased throughout 2005, there was a general perception that Iraqi security forces, particularly those affiliated with the Ministry of Interior, were complicit by not only allowing, but directly facilitating, the violence.

> So black is the reputation of the National Police, that after the Feb. 22 bombing of the Askariya shrine in Samarra, many Sunnis said the perpetrators were Interior Ministry troops who were looking for a pretext to start a civil war. Their fears were further fueled in the bloody two days after the attack, when Iraq became a sectarian slaughterhouse. Instead of protecting citizens from each other, National Police units stood by as Shi'ite rioters — and rival militiamen from Muqtada al-Sadr's Mahdi Army — stormed Sunni mosques and swarmed over Sunni neighborhoods, according to numerous reports, including some confirmed by U.S. Gen. George Casey, commander of American forces in Iraq.[12]

According to David Kilcullen, "when I asked one member of a Baghdad Sunni community about rumors that death squads dressed as Iraqi National Police had been picking up Sunni men from the street, torturing and killing them, and then dumping the bodies as a warning to Sunni communities, he laughed. 'What do you mean, 'dressed in police uniforms?' he replied. 'Call them what they are – the police.'"[13]

The concerns of Sunnis were echoed in the Iraqi Study Group Report in 2006, which declared that "Iraqi police cannot control crime, and they routinely engage in sectarian violence, including the unnecessary detention, torture, and targeted execution of Sunni Arab civilians. The police are organized under the Ministry of the Interior, which

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[11] Cockburn, *Muqtada al-Sadr,* 185.

[12] Christopher Allbritton, "Why Iraq's Police Are a Menace," *Time Magazine,* March 20, 2006, http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1175055,00.html (accessed September 30, 2009).

[13] David Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerrilla: Fighting Small Wars in the Midst of a Big One* (New York: Oxford University Press, U.S.A, 2009), 127.

is confronted by corruption and militia infiltration and lacks control over police in the provinces."[14] The ISG recommended that the entire national police should be transferred to the Ministry of Defense, where they could be more closely monitored and trained by U.S. forces, with the Ministry of Interior working on reforming to improve policing. However, even elements of the Iraqi Army, which was increasingly taking on the role of policing and enforcing public order by the end of 2006, was suffering from militia infiltration. Counterinsurgency theorist David Kicullen commented in early 2007 that "we did a counterintelligence assessment of an Iraqi Army battalion in central Baghdad and found that every senior commander and staff were either Jaysh al-Mahdi, doing criminal activity with Jaysh al-Mahdi, or intimidated by Jaysh al-Mahdi."[15]

Beyond the POBs and Commandos, the Ministry of Interior loosely oversaw a large network of security forces known as the Facilities Protection Service (FPS). This 150,000 man-strong "force" consisted largely of independent units assigned to each of the ministries, which were in turn assigned to factions of the Iraqi government. Together, these forces comprised the largest paramilitary force in the government, and were infiltrated by the militias whose parties controlled each ministry. Although nominally under the MOI, Minister Jabr claimed that the FPS operated independently, and U.S.

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[14] James Baker, Lee Hamilton, Lawrence Eagleburger, Vernon Jordan, Edwin Meese III, Sandra Day O'Connor, Leon Panetta, William Perry, Charles Robb, and Alan Simpson, *The Iraq Study Group Report* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2006), 13.

[15] Ricks, *The Gamble,* 173.

officials agreed that it had "no central command, oversight or paymaster."[16] The Iraqi

Study Group recognized the threat posed by this group, recommending that it be brought

under the control of the MOI noting that "simply disbanding these units is not an option,

as the members will take their weapons and become full-time militiamen or

insurgents…they will need to be vetted, retrained, and closely supervised. Those who are

no longer part of the Facilities Protection Service need to participate in a disarmament,

demobilization, and reintegration program."[17]

Militia infiltration in the security forces was compounded by the factional

interests of the Iraqi government. As the Iraqi Study Group report highlighted in

December of 2006, "the composition of the Iraqi government is basically sectarian, and

key players within the government too often act in their sectarian interest…and too many

Iraqi ministries lack the capacity to govern effectively."[18] Effective policing and security

would require a concerted effort by the Iraqi government to challenge the militias.

However, the fledgling government, headed by Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki, was

largely beholden to the militias. Although Sadr had previously opposed the Iraqi

Governing Council, for the 2005 election he agreed to support the Shia United Iraqi

Alliance, which included SCIRI, in exchange for Sadrist control of key service ministries.

The Sadrists were given control of the Ministries of Health, Transportation and

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[16] Ellen Knickmeyer, "Iraq Begins to Rein In Paramilitary Force" *Washington Post,* May 15, 2006, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/05/13/AR2006051300843.html (accessed January 4, 2010).

[17] Baker et al, *The Iraqi Study Group Report,* 14.

[18] Ibid., 15.

Education, and Jaysh al-Mahdi militants operated under the cover of the FPS and other sections in these ministries. Perhaps more importantly, however, was Maliki's unwillingness to allow security operations in Shia neighborhoods, particularly Sadr City. The teeming Shia slum in East Baghdad, home to nearly 10% of the Iraqi population, served essentially as a safe haven for Jaysh al-Mahdi, with U.S. forces not allowed to conduct operations.[19]

The Brink of Collapse

The impact of militia infiltration of the police on the security situation was severe. Sectarian violence which was either directly supported by the police or encouraged through a permissive environment led to significant demographic shifts in the capital, as Sunnis fled to Sunni areas of Iraq or left the country. The sectarian nature of policing reinforced Sunni fears that the new government was an Iranian puppet intent on their destruction. As counterinsurgency theorist David Kilcullen noted, our "strategy at the time relied on handing over to the Iraqi government the responsibility for population security, but the terms of the conflict had changed: the government was a sectarian combatant in the war that started after Samarra, not a politically neutral 'honest broker' that governed in the interests of all Iraqis."[20] By late summer in 2006, bodies of thousands of victims of sectarian violence were brought to the Baghdad morgue each month[21] and increasingly pessimistic policy recommendations centered around the idea of

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[19] Ricks, *The Gamble,* 56.

[20] Killcullen, *The Accidental Guerilla,* 126.

[21] Andy Mosher, "Baghdad Morgue Tallies 1,815 Bodies in July," *Washington Post, August 9, 2006,* http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/08/09/AR2006080901773.html (accessed November 26, 2009).

a "soft partition" of Iraq. A 2007 Brookings Institute report noted that "the time may be approaching when the only hope for a more stable Iraq is a soft partition of the country. Soft partition would involve the Iraqis, with the assistance of the international community, dividing their country into three main regions."[22]

Already dissatisfied with the new government, Sunnis grew increasingly tolerant of insurgent and terrorist groups who targeted the government and the security forces. Sunni areas became so ungovernable that a 2006 report by a U.S. Marine Corps Colonel in al-Anbar presented a grim outlook on the status of the province, noting that "the steady rise in attacks from mid-2003 to 2006 indicates a clear failure to defeat the insurgency in al-Anbar."[23] The report's author emphasized the role of sectarianism in the situation in al-Anbar: "from the Sunni perspective, their greatest fears have been realized: Iran controls Baghdad and Anbaris have been marginalized."[24]

In an effort to quell the violence, Operation TOGETHER FORWARD was launched in summer of 2006 (the operation was conducted in two phases, with Phase II beginning in August). The operation involved an increase in patrols by Iraqi and U.S. forces in Baghdad combined with a tighter curfew. However, the operation largely failed

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[22] Edward Joseph, and Michael O'Hanlon, *The Case for Soft Partition in Iraq* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institute, 2007), 1.

[23] Dafna Linzer and Thomas E. Ricks, "Anbar Picture Grows Clearer, and Bleaker," *Washington Post,* November 27, 2006, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/11/27/AR2006112701287.html (accessed February 4, 2010).

[24] Ibid.

to stem the growing tide of sectarian violence in the capital. Both the Iraqi Police and the

Iraqi Army were implicated in the failure.

> The results of Operation Together Forward II are disheartening. Violence
> in Baghdad—already at high levels—jumped more than 43 percent
> between the summer and October 2006. U.S. forces continue to suffer
> high casualties. Perpetrators of violence leave neighborhoods in advance
> of security sweeps, only to filter back later. Iraqi police have been unable
> or unwilling to stop such infiltration and continuing violence. The Iraqi
> Army has provided only two out of the six battalions that it promised in
> August would join American forces in Baghdad. The Iraqi government
> has rejected sustained security operations in Sadr City. Security efforts
> will fail unless the Iraqis have both the capability to hold areas that have
> been cleared and the will to clear neighborhoods that are home to Shiite
> militias.[25]

This assessment by the Iraqi Study Group highlighted the failure of the Iraqi security

forces and the need for effective policing, as well as the insufficient numbers of U.S.

forces to hold any secured areas.

Lessons Learned

Thus the Year of the Police, 2006, ended with security deteriorating even further,

despite continued efforts to train and equip police and military forces. The Ministry of

Interior did achieve its goal of training 187,800 police and border patrol personnel.[26]

However, the focus on developing elite national counterinsurgency forces came at the

expense of building local law enforcement capabilities. Furthermore, sectarianism,

corruption and ineffectiveness remained rampant in the Ministry of Interior, and to some

extent in the Iraqi Army. With so many problems at the top, it was inevitable that the

police forces under its control would also be controlled by factional interests.   It was

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[25] Baker et al, *The Iraq Study Group Report,* 15.

[26] "Iraq's Interior Ministry: Frustrating Reform." United States Institute of Peace.
http://www.usip.org/resources/iraq-s-interior-ministry-frustrating-reform (accessed December 17, 2009).

clear by the end of 2006 that unless the problems at the top were addressed, there would

be little improvement with the police on the streets. However, fixing the problems at the

top would require a coordinated whole-of-government approach, with advisors from the

Departments of Justice and State taking a central role in advising and assisting the

Ministry of Interior to reform. It would also take a consistent message from the U.S.

military, through such operations as raiding problematic detention facilities, that U.S.

forces would not tolerate extra-judicial activities by these forces.

CHAPTER VI: REFORM AND A REFOCUS ON LOCAL SECURITY (2007-2009)

> *"Our top priority is to help the Iraqis protect their population. So we've*
> *launched an offensive in and around Baghdad to go after extremists, to*
> *buy more time for Iraqi forces to develop and to help normal life and civil*
> *society take root in communities and neighborhoods throughout the*
> *country. We're helping enhance the size, capabilities and effectiveness of*
> *the Iraqi security forces, so the Iraqis can take over the defense of their*
> *own country. We're helping the Iraqis take back their neighborhoods from*
> *the extremists." – President George W. Bush, 12 July 2007*[1]

After the 2006 U.S. midterm election, which was widely viewed as a referendum on the Iraq War, President Bush announced a new strategy for Iraq. The strategy, which followed months of consultations with experts inside and outside of the military, was comprised of six elements: 1) let the Iraqis lead 2) help Iraqis protect the population 3) isolate extremists 4) create space for political progress 5) diversify political and economic efforts and 6) situate the strategy in a regional approach.[2] The first two of these elements would hinge on the ability of the Iraqis to protect their own civilian population, at that time a nearly impossible task for the reasons laid out in the previous three chapters. Although not overtly stated by Bush, the new strategy would entail a "hearts and minds" approach to counterinsurgency, promoted by General David Petraeus who took command of Multi-National Force-Iraq in Feburary of 2007. The approach, codified in the

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[1] *"*White House Press Conference on Iraq: Bush Warns Terrorist Threat to U.S. Will 'Outlast My Presidency,'" *Washington Post*, July 12, 2007. http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/07/12/AR2007071200937.html (accessed February 22, 2010).

[2] "Fact Sheet: The New Way Forward in Iraq," *The White House Office of the Press Secretary,* 10 January 2007. http://merln.ndu.edu/archivepdf/iraq/WH/20070110-3.pdf (accessed April 10, 2010).

Counterinsurgency Field Manual whose writing Petraeus oversaw at Fort Leavenworth in 2006, centered on the idea of the civilian population as the center of gravity in an insurgency. As such, effective counterinsurgency strategy must protect the civilian population first.

But with an absence of effective security forces loyal to Iraq over their factional interests, protecting the civilian population would require a massive influx of U.S. troops in addition to an overhaul of the security force training program. Additionally, a program begun by U.S. Marines in al-Anbar province to partner with irregular tribal forces as auxiliary security forces, called at the time *Sahawa al-Anbar* (the al-Anbar Awakening) would be expanded to other Sunni areas. As discussed in the previous chapter, the focus on developing elite counterterrorism-capable forces had come at the expense of local security, and many areas of Iraq had virtually no police presence or basic law and order by the end of 2006. In many ways, the surge would correct the failures of pre-war planning to provide local security, and the result would be a marked decrease in violence. Although there were multiple facets to the new strategy enacted by General Petraeus, this chapter focuses primarily on the changes in Iraqi security conducted in partnership with the U.S., which would facilitate a longer-term improvement in the security situation. These changes would be become even more crucial with the signing of the security agreement between the U.S. and Iraq in December of 2008,[3] which called for a withdrawal of U.S. combat forces from Iraqi cities by June of 2009, and a full withdrawal by December of 2010.

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[3] The Security Agreement is officially titled the "Agreement Between the United States of America and the Republic of Iraq On the Withdrawal of United States Forces from Iraq and the Organization of Their Activities during Their Temporary Presence in Iraq"

Refocusing the Training Mission

One of the biggest changes involved an overhaul of the mission to train and equip the Iraqi Forces under MNSTC-I. LTG James Dubik took command of MNSTC-I in early 2007 and implemented several new approaches. First, he de-emphasized the transition to Iraqi control which had previously marked the U.S. strategy, and focused instead on creating a more effective force. Second, steps were undertaken to purge the security forces of militia infiltration and increase accountability. This would require an overall weakening of militias in Iraq through U.S. operations as well as strong pressure on the Iraqi government to confront the militias. But it also necessitated the removal of some commanders and troops. In the National Police, the overall commander, both division commanders, all of the brigade commanders, and about 70-80% of the battalion commanders were replaced.[4] In addition, each brigade was taken offline for re-training and refitting.[5] Only a few of these commanders were ever charged, but the replacements did effectively send a message that militia control of the security forces would no longer be tolerated.

Finally, Dubik increased the quantity of security forces (from 400,000 to 560,000 by 2008) and decreased basic training, focusing instead on the idea of "sufficiency." According to LTG Dubik, "if we focused too much on quality, we could end up with a high-quality security force but take so long that we could lose the war…equally possible if we focused on quantity, we could produce large numbers of poorly trained security

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[4] Ricks, *The Gamble,* 198.

[5] Dubik, *Building Security Forces and Ministerial Capacity: Iraq as a Primer,* 12.

forces that would not be able to win the war."[6] Additionally, Dubik recognized that the

security force must be large enough to have its presence felt by the population and after

consulting with a number of independent sources, set a goal of 600,000-650,000 forces.[7]

The increased numbers were matched by a focus on recruiting and training, especially in

the police. As part of NATO Training Mission-Iraq, the Italian *Arma dei Carabinieri*

were asked to conduct leadership training for each Iraqi National Police battalion. Dubik

also recognized the importance of the local police, and implemented a two-step training

program.

> The first step was a two week pre-basic training course that all new police
> had to complete before they could assume duties. This pre-basic training
> was necessary so that the large numbers of new police, thousands of
> whom came from the Sons of Iraq program and some of whom were
> former insurgents, could safely assume the duties assigned to them.
> Following this pre-basic training, and as training centers and academies
> came online, all police would be required to complete the full basic police
> training program mandated by the Ministry of Interior – a process
> remains ongoing. The Coalition Forces and the Iraqis recognized the risk
> of this two-step approach. Both wanted the full training program
> completed right from the start, but time and war-fighting requirements led
> us to conclude otherwise. We deemed the two-step sufficient in this case
> because the greatest risk in the near-term was failing to generate forces
> that were "good enough." [8]

MNSTC-I also focused on assisting the police on training in forensics, internal affairs,

facilities and leadership. Additional efforts at the Ministries of Interior and Defense

focused on building ministerial capacity to ensure that the improved security forces were

maintained by effective ministries. Additionally, experts from across the U.S.

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[6] Dubik, *Building Security Forces and Ministerial Capacity: Iraq as a Primer,* 10.

[7] Ibid, 10.

[8] Ibid, 12.

government were also brought into to assist the Iraqi Ministry of Justice in developing its judicial system, a crucial component of any lasting security sector reform.

Partnership

Partnership was also a crucial component of the development of the security forces. Beyond training, equipping, and fielding the Iraqi Security Forces, U.S. forces and police advisors would work side-by-side with Iraqis, embedding training teams with them starting with their initial training and remaining until the unit was performing operations. According to one trainer, "our experience has been that if you live with, plan with, execute with [the Iraqis], you stand a greater chance of success – success being defined as their progressive increase in responsibility and leading to independent actions."[9] The increased focus on partnership allowed new recruits to spend less time in training academies and instead gain hands-on experience with their Coalition counterparts. It also alleviated one of the big obstacles police faced in late 2003-2004 – maintaining their own security despite being a key target for militants.

Partnership was enhanced by the formation of Joint Security Stations (JSS), outposts in volatile locations where U.S. forces, Iraqi Army and Iraqi Police members lived and worked together. The heavily fortified security stations enhanced cooperation among the Iraqi security forces, but also instilled confidence that the U.S. would support the Iraqis when they were targeted. They also sent a message to the population that neither the Iraqis or Americans would abandon the goal of security. The JSS program

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[9] U.S. Marine Corps, *Al-Anbar Awakening, Vol I,* 189.

was welcomed by both American and Iraqi forces. According to an American trainer at

the JSS in Zafariniyah, Baghdad, the JSS program had proved beneficial.

> Once the people started seeing they could trust us, the information started
> to flow. The situation is extremely manageable now. We have days when
> we have a found [improvised explosive device] or small-arms fire that you
> hear. The difference now is the Iraqi army and Iraqi police tell us they
> found the [improvised explosive device] before it went off.[10]

Although the JSS program was not without difficulties, it provided much-needed support

for the security forces in highly dangerous areas and allowed them to develop their skills

under close U.S. mentorship.

Government Changes

Despite the efforts to develop and field an effective security force, it was clear

that all of these initiatives would be for naught if the Iraqi government was unwilling to

confront militia infiltration, intimidation and influence in the Iraqi government. Prime

Minister Maliki was in a difficult position, needing the support of the Shia populace but

also recognizing the need to rein in the militias. The U.S. supported him through a

whole-of-government approach that focused on developing ministerial capacity,

particularly in the security sector. Some of the reforms were a result in the changes of

leadership in senior levels of the MOI. Jawad Bulani, an independent Shiite unaffiliated

with either ISCI or Jaysh al-Mahdi, was appointed to replace Bayan Jabr. Working

closely with the Coalition, the MOI under Bulani enacted an internal affairs program "so

aggressive that its internal affairs [was] the subject of multiple assassination attempts and

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[10] Michelle Tan, "Security Stations Support Constant Presence," *Army Times* March 5, 2007, http://www.armytimes.com/news/2007/03/ATbaghdadsecurity070304/ (accessed February 10, 2010).

the division's investigators subject to multiple attacks – over a dozen of which were unfortunately successful."[11] However, the results of the effort were significant. According to a 2007 report released by the MOI, the ministry had "fired or re-assigned more than 10,000 employees, including high-ranking police, who were found to have tortured prisoners, accepted bribes or had ties to militias."[12] Additional firings and disciplinary actions of police continued in 2008. In addition to purging corrupt and sectarian elements of the MOI, Bulani also instituted other reforms to improve the administrative capacity of the ministry.

> Because of these reforms, MOI is less politically charged than it was during the years of constantly shifting political and security dynamics. Political influence remains in the ministry but not to the divisive level that existed in 2007. Much progress originated from the ministry's senior leadership who have acknowledged previous problems and made addressing them a top priority. The challenge now is making the reforms permanent in order to withstand future changes in leadership or government.[13]

Emphasis on human rights and accountability has continued, with a Director of Human Rights position added in the Ministry and several investigations of prisoner abuse. Although additional work needs to be done from transitioning the Iraqi police from an emphasis on counterinsurgency capabilities to basic law enforcement, the Ministry has undoubtedly improved significantly since 2006.

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[11] Dubik, *Building Security Forces and Ministerial Capacity: Iraq as a Primer,* 14.

[12] Rick Jervis, "Iraq Ousts 10,000 in Security Ministry," *U.S.A Today*, March 4, 2007, http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/iraq/2007-03-04-security-ministry_N.htm (accessed January 4, 2010).

[13] Robert Perito and Madeline Kristoff, *Iraq's Interior Ministry: The Key to Police Reform* (Washington, DC: U.S. Institute of Peace, 2009), 3.

Additionally, Maliki himself began taking a more hard-line approach to Jaysh al-Mahdi, due in part to the militia's increasing violence against other Shia groups. He was strengthened by the commitment of the U.S. to assist in these efforts. In August of 2007, severe fighting between Jaysh al-Mahdi fighters and Badr-affiliated Iraqi police in the holy city of Karbala resulted in the deaths of several Shia pilgrims and severely undermined the credibility of the militia.[14] Following the violence, Sadr ordered a "freeze" on the militia's activities. According to his spokesman, the freeze was "in order to rehabilitate [the Mahdi Army] in a way that will safeguard its ideological image" and included suspending attacks on the "occupiers."[15]

Despite the freeze, some militants affiliated with the Mahdi Army continued to fight Iraqi and Coalition forces, and in 2008 the Iraqi government launched a series of offensives against these militants in Basrah, with the support of U.S. forces. Although the operation was initially regarded as "a huge mess"[16] by Coalition officials, it represented a crucial turning point in the war, indicating that the Iraqi Government was no longer willing to tolerate the militia's activities.

> Mr. Maliki had responded to a challenge from Shiite militias in Basra by
> mounting a hasty operation. The military campaign caught American
> officials by surprise and appeared to sputter at the start as the Iraqi forces
> faced logistical problems and more than 1,000 desertions. But as the
> Basra operation proceeded and Iraqi troops began to pour into the city,
> militia commanders drifted away. Mr. Maliki was strengthened
> politically in his drive to shape an image as a strong and decisive leader,

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[14] Mite Valentinas, "Iraq: Fighting in Karbala Raises Specter of Broader Shi'ite Clashes." *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty,* August 29, 2007, http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078410.html (accessed November 7, 2009)

[15] "Sadr 'Freezes' Militia Activities." *British Broadcasting Company*, August 29, 2007.

[16] Ricks, *The Gamble,* 280.

the kind of leader many Iraqis, Sunni and Shiite, think is needed to
control the country.[17]

The Basrah operation was followed by additional crackdowns on Sadrist strongholds in
Sadr City, Amarah, and other areas of the south. The crackdown resulted in a huge wave
of popular support for Maliki, whose "rule of law" electoral coalition swept the January
2009 elections in Southern Iraq and Baghdad.

The Sons of Iraq

The Sons of Iraq program began as a movement known as Sahawa al-Anbar (the
al-Anbar Awakening) in al-Anbar province in 2006. Controversial at times, the program
would ultimately prove so successful that it would be expanded into some of the most
unstable areas of Iraq, particularly in the Sunni Triangle (the volatile area between
Mosul, Ramadi and Baghdad). Although the Awakening and Sons of Iraq have been
derided as payoffs for tribes,[18] these efforts must be understood in the context of their
origins as a comprehensive local security initiative in Iraq's most unstable province in
2006.

The impetus for the al-Anbar Awakening came from a "split" between al-Qaeda
in Iraq and the tribal population of the province.[19] From 2004-2006, al-Qaeda conducted

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[17] Michael Gordon, and Alissa Rubin, "Operation in Sadr City Is an Iraqi Success, So Far." *The New York Times,* May 21, 2008, http://www.nytimes.com/2008/05/21/world/middleeast/21sadr.html?_r=1 (accessed February 17, 2010).

[18] Sam Dagher, "Will 'Armloads' of U.S. Cash Buy Tribal Loyalty?." *The Christian Science Monitor,* November 8, 2007, http://www.csmonitor.com/2007/1108/p01s04-wome.html (accessed March 1, 2010).

[19] Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerilla,*173.

a systematic campaign of intimidation against the population of al-Anbar, focusing on targeting provincial leaders, security forces, and tribal leaders. In 2005, the organization conducted an assassination campaign against 12 sheikhs who had formed an "al-Anbar People's Council"[20] and terrorized other community leaders. In a February 2009 interview, the head of an Iraqi women's nongovernmental organization detailed the terror during that time:

> They killed doctors and said that it was because they treated Americans. The doctors fled the country. They killed mullahs and said it was because they liked Americans. Soon there were no men left to kill, so they started killing women and children. They killed women and said that it was because their husbands were policemen. They killed children and said it was because their fathers were policemen. I cannot describe the horror we lived in. Those were very bitter days. Those days we lived in hell. We looked like ghosts out of a cemetery.[21]

According to counterinsurgency strategist David Kilcullen, who served as a senior advisor to MNF-I in 2007, the breaking point involved al-Qaeda's practice of forcing marriages with local women in order to cement alliances with the tribes. These marriages were "often so forced and so violent that they were tantamount, even in tribal eyes, to rape."[22] Al-Qaeda's heavy-handedness created an opportunity for American forces to gain the support of the population. However, they would have to overlook the fact that many of these tribal elements had previously fought U.S. forces.

Under the leadership of Sheikh Abdul Sattar Al-Rishawi, who had lost several family members to al-Qaeda, 25 of the provinces' 31 tribes agreed to join together to

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[20] Ricks, *The Gamble,* 62.

[21] U.S. Marine Corps, *Al-Anbar Awakening, Vol II,* 21.

[22] Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerilla,* 171.

drive al-Qaeda out al-Anbar. After a meeting of the tribes on September 16, 2006,

Sheikh Rishawi announced that the tribes had reached a decision to resist al-Qaeda, and

had sent a letter to the Iraqi government requesting support. They also sought support

from the Americans. Sheikh Rishawi said the tribes could offer "30,000 young men

armed with assault rifles who were willing to confront and kill the insurgents and

criminal gangs that have torn at the fabric of tribal life in al-Anbar."[23] These tribal

members, known as the al-Anbar Awakening, cooperated with U.S. and Iraqi Security

Forces, providing intelligence on al-Qaeda and assisting in patrols and providing local

security.

Once the tribes began to turn against al-Qaeda and work with the Americans, they

provided thousands of recruits to join the security forces. Al-Anbar's police had been

virtually non-existent since 2004. The first police station in al-Anbar was opened in May

of 2006 in al-Jazeera, with 60 recruits sent by a local tribal leader to the training academy

in Jordan. The station was almost immediately attacked by al-Qaeda, but with the

support of U.S. forces, the small force remained operational.[24] Literacy requirements, as

well as the limited training capabilities of the Police Academy in Jordan, were major

hurdles for formal incorporation of these new recruits into the Iraqi Police, so three

"emergency battalions" for these new forces were formed with the reluctant support of

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[23] Paul Von Zielbauer, Khalid al-Ansary, and Ali Adeeb, "Iraqi Tribes to Join Forces to Fight Insurgents," *The New York Times,* September 17, 2006, http://www.nytimes.com/2006/09/17/world/middleeast/17cnd-iraq.html?_r=2&ei=5094&en=55ed48eed408153d&hp=&ex=1158552000&oref=slogin&partner=homepage&pagewanted=print (accessed February 10, 2010).

[24] U.S. Marine Corps, *Al-Anbar Awakening, Vol II,* 186.

the Iraqi government.[25] They received one week of training from SEAL teams and were

given weapons.[26] Police recruiting and training continued as the Awakening took shape,

however. By February of 2009 the Provincial Director of Police could accurately state

that he "started with 30 fighters and now I have 28,000 police."[27] By that time al-Anbar

was among the most stable of Iraq's provinces, with security formally transferred to

Provincial Iraqi Control on September 1, 2008, just two years after the devastating

assessment that the province was all but lost.[28]

The awakening movement spread beyond al-Anbar as U.S. forces realized the

value these groups could provide, and the awakening members realized the benefit in

ridding their areas of al-Qaeda. By 2008, Awakening movements (renamed the Sons of

Iraq), had spread to most of the Sunni and mixed provinces, with more than 95,000

members in total.[29] Most of the Sons of Iraq were placed under contract with the U.S.

(the Iraqi government assumed control of their pay in 2009). Some groups adopted

badges and uniforms.

> In nearly every case, local security forces were created from the ground
> up, with sheikhs, tribal leaders, and other power brokers entering into
> security contracts with coalition forces. Lists of potential recruits were
> then vetted by U.S. and Iraqi officials. These groups, which were self-
> armed, have formed a kind of neighborhood-watch program, coordinating

[25] U.S. Marine Corps, *Al-Anbar Awakening, Vol II*, 190.

[26] Ricks, *The Gamble,* 67.

[27] U.S. Marine Corps, *Al-Anbar Awakening, Vol II*, 192.

[28] "Iraq takes control of Sunni Anbar from US forces," *Australian Broadcasting Company*,
September 1, 2008, http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/09/01/2352517.htm (accessed March 1,
2010).

[29] Greg Bruno, "Finding a Place for the 'Sons of Iraq'." *Council on Foreign Relations,* January 9,
2009, www.cfr.org/publication/16088/#p3 (accessed March 1, 2010).

operations with U.S. and Iraqi combat commanders in their particular regions.[30]

By most accounts, the program led to significant improvements in the security situation in previously volatile areas.[31] However, the Sons of Iraq program's status as an unofficial security force necessitated regulation and a plan for its long-term incorporation into the formal security forces of Iraq. This was necessary to assuage the concerns of the Iraqi government, who feared the U.S. was funding a large militia of irregular Sunni forces – some of whom had participated in the insurgency - who could challenge the Shia-led government. The Iraqi Government agreed to transfer 20-30% of the Sons of Iraq into the Iraqi Police Service or the Iraqi Army, and provide jobs training for others,[32] but progress has been slow, and some Coalition officials have raised concerns about the commitment of the Iraqi government to transition these forces.[33] A high-profile arrest of a Sons of Iraq leader in the Fadhil district of Baghdad in 2009 increased these concerns, as have delays in the transition of these forces into the security services or jobs programs. Despite concerns over the future of the Sons of Iraq program, its utility in providing an essential "neighborhood watch"

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[30] Greg Bruno, "Finding a Place for the 'Sons of Iraq'." *Council on Foreign Relations,* January 9, 2009, www.cfr.org/publication/16088/#p3 (accessed March 1, 2010).

[31] Killcullen, *The Accidental Guerilla*, 173.

[32] Greg Bruno, "Finding a Place for the 'Sons of Iraq'." *Council on Foreign Relations,* January 9, 2009, www.cfr.org/publication/16088/#p3 (accessed March 1, 2010).

[33] Michael Gisick, "'Sons of Iraq' Face Weakened Power," *Stars and Stripes,* January 3, 2010, http://www.stripes.com/article.asp?section=104&article=66989 (accessed February 25, 2010).

function in previously ungoverned areas was clear in the security gains in the most volatile areas of Iraq between 2006 and 2008.

Lessons Learned

One of the key themes of the surge was the idea of "good enough" forces. LTG Dubik called the question of quantity or quality a "false" dichotomy and stressed the importance of fielding enough forces who were "good enough" to tamp down the violence, demonstrate the resolve of the Iraqi Government, and increase the confidence of the populace. Of course, "good enough" forces are not a long-term solution – the capabilities of formal security forces will improve with on-the-job experience and continued training programs. But in the interim, sufficient numbers of "good enough" forces can make a significant impact in bringing the security situation under control.

Secondly, a non-elite, low-level force that performed little more than an expanded neighborhood watch function was a critical force multiplier for beleaguered U.S. and Iraqi Forces. Despite the consistent focus to train and develop National Police, it was a motley group of tribesmen without uniforms or formal training that, with the support of the U.S. and Iraqi Governments, was a critical factor in turning the tide of violence in al-Anbar and other restive provinces. These Sons of Iraq fulfilled basic elements of counterinsurgency strategy by protecting the population and providing crucial intelligence to U.S. forces against al-Qaeda. Of course, auxiliary forces must operate under strict parameters and eventually be incorporated into either a formal security force or

disbanded entirely. However, in a dire security situation they can be an important "good enough" solution. Perhaps if the U.S. had continued to allow the ICDC to conduct basic local security functions in 2003, it could have had a positive impact on the security situation.

Finally, improved security forces will not meet the desired strategic goals if not paired with a robust ministerial capacity and judicial system. Corruption and infiltration at the top levels will engender corruption and infiltration in the ranks, and any improvements to the forces will only be short-lived. Such an effort requires a whole-of-government approach, and is crucial if lasting improvements are to be realized.

CHAPTER VII: CONCLUSION

Over more than seven years, events in Iraq have clearly demonstrated the need for robust and capable local security forces to prevent the emergence of an insurgency and reduce violence once one has begun. Local forces are the first line of defense in protecting the civilian population – a key tenet of counterinsurgency – particularly in a volatile situation. They are also in possibly the best position to gather intelligence and neutralize criminal groups and low-level criminals before they can organize into or support an insurgency. Restoration of local security cannot be an afterthought – it must be a central element of planning. As the history of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM demonstrates, the time and opportunities lost by inadequate local security can take years to overcome.

Failure to plan for filling local security needs can lead to loss of confidence in the government, loss of critical infrastructure, and allow insurgent groups to establish themselves with support from a disaffected population. It is no coincidence that the groups which posed the greatest threat to Iraq's long term stability and security all made a concerted effort to either target or infiltrate the police. Al-Qaeda's campaign of targeting police left more than 10,000 police dead in a four-year period, with the remaining police largely unwilling to conduct law enforcement activities. And the Shia militias' infiltration of the security forces in mixed and Shia areas allowed them to conduct sectarian intimidation with impunity while at the same time undermining the populace's confidence in the security forces, causing a rapid increase in the cycle of violence in 2005-2006. Only an influx of 20,000 U.S. troops, combined with retraining of security forces, and fielding of an auxiliary security force was able to stem the

violence. Efforts continue to this day to continue the development of Iraq's security forces to ensure its long-term stability and viability.

The question of the exact type, size, and capabilities of local security is less important at the early stages than getting sufficient numbers of "good enough" forces in place. This was perhaps one of the most important lessons of the surge – imperfectly trained police or auxiliary police are better than no security at all, and their shortcomings can be offset by partnership with U.S. or Coalition forces. While ideally the long term goal will be for this local force to be incorporated into the local police, during times of crisis these forces can be augmented by national-level troops, international troops or police, or irregular auxiliary forces. However, these augmenting forces are not ideal and can exacerbate a deteriorating situation if not closely regulated and balanced with a strong effort to train and field local forces. Additionally, planners must be careful not to focus on developing elite national policing units - whose purpose is to *restore* security - at the expense of developing local police, whose purpose is to *maintain* security.

Had planners given serious attention to local security at the outset of the war, through careful consideration of estimates prepared by the Department of Justice and State, or consultation with UNPOL or other international policing experts, plans could have been developed to ensure adequate local security was in place immediately following the cessation of combat activities. Although planning for local security is no simple matter, sufficient consideration must be given at the earliest stages of planning to allow interagency and international partners sufficient time to prepare to develop training efforts and plans for longer term partnership.

Additionally, the lessons of Iraq demonstrate that host-nation security forces are worthless if they cannot put loyalty to their country above factional or sectarian interests. Indeed, the problems facing Iraq in 2004-2006 were complex, but sectarianism and factionalism in the security forces, especially the national police, only served to undermine public confidence in the government and its security forces. Partnership becomes key in ensuring that the forces are conducting authorized missions on behalf of national and not sectarian interests. Furthermore, significant effort needs to be given to building ministerial capacity and reforming the government at the top levels.

One of the most powerful lessons from the U.S. experience in Iraq is the need for a coordinated whole-of-government approach in building host-nation security. Many elements of the U.S. government have equities in training, equipping, and partnering with host-nation forces. Additionally, a whole-of-government approach becomes even more important in developing ministerial capacity, particularly in the Ministries of Interior and Justice. Expertise from the legal and law enforcement community is essential in helping a country like Iraq develop a criminal justice system which can process detainees and enforce the rule of law. The problem must be viewed holistically and treated with a holistic response. We can hope that the lessons from Iraq will shape planning for future conflicts and future security force assistance efforts.

Appendix A: Map of Key Locations

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