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Threats, and International Relations
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“Iraqi Force Development”

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A Statement by

**Anthony H. Cordesman
Arleigh A. Burke Fellow in Strategy**

**CENTER FOR STRATEGIC AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES, 1800 K STREET, NW, WASHINGTON, DC 20006
TELEPHONE: (202) 887-0200; FACSIMILE: (202) 775-3199 WWW.CSIS.ORG**

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Please note: This analysis is in no sense intended to be an authoritative survey or picture of Iraqi views It is based on a limited number of briefings and interviews made on a non-attribution basis. Some quotes are paraphrased to make their meaning clearer in English.

My testimony today will focus on the development of Iraqi military and security forces, and their evolving capabilities, and for this hearing I would like to concentrate on how these developments are seen from an Iraqi perspective.

Much of the discussion about Iraqi forces in the US comes from American observers. Iraqi officials and officers, however, present a different perspective. Recent discussions and exchanges of e-mails with a select number of Iraqi Ministry of Defense officials and officers do not act as any kind of authoritative survey or substitute for systematic and comprehensive investigations in the field. They do, however, provide enough information to show that the Iraqis who are directly involved are approaching the challenges they face with considerable realism.

I also would like to look beyond today's numbers. Far too much of the recent discussion of Iraqi forces focuses on trying to find some magic bottom line number and not on the different capabilities of different elements of Iraqi forces, forces and how these are likely to change over time.

The key policy issue is not how many mission capable Iraqis there are right at this moment, but rather is there a system in place to ensure that capable Iraqi military and security forces continue to develop over time. This testimony will try to address these questions from an Iraqi point of view.

Forces That Are "Only 10 Months Old"

The Iraqis actually involved in shaping Iraq's new forces seem to have few illusions about the magnitude of the challenges they face, but still remain optimistic and believe their capabilities are steadily improving. They are quite frank about the need for better training and experience, and better equipment.

At least in private conversation, they are equally frank about leadership problems, corruption, and a lack of experience. They understand the challenges of having to create a more inclusive government and deal with the conflicting interests of Sunni, Shi'ite, Kurd and other factions. They understand the uncertainties inherent in having to deal with two elections and a constitutional referendum in the course of 2005, and the new problems this will create for governance.

At the same time, the Iraqis actually involved in shaping Iraq's new forces are not pessimistic. Most believe that Iraqi forces are growing steadily better with time, will acquire the experience and quality to deal with much of the insurgency during 2005, and should be able to secure much of the country by 2006.

It is worth noting in this regard that the Iraqis are by definition "survivors." Outsiders are sometimes surprised by polls that show Iraqis remain surprisingly optimistic about the future. Iraqis, however, have already been through a great deal: Authoritarian swings ever since the Monarchy, the October War, the conflict with the Kurds in the 1970s,

Saddam's first blood purge in 1979, the Iran-Iraq War, the Gulf War, UN sanctions, the uprisings and low-level civil conflict that followed, and the Coalition invasion. Moreover, the Iraqis who actually work in developing military, security, and police forces show no nostalgia about the "good old days" under Saddam. They know what Iraqi forces really were, the capabilities the new government actually inherited, and what Iraqi forces must now become.

Iraqis who are directly involved in shaping Iraq's new forces also have far fewer illusions about the nature of the task involved than outsiders. They know the weaknesses in the forces that existed under Saddam, and in the initial Coalition efforts to create effective Iraqi forces.

One point that senior Ministry of Defense officials made repeatedly in interviews in late February 2005 was that the Iraqi force structure were "only 10 months old." Unlike outside critics, they did not believe the primary problems in quality came from the disbandment of Iraqi forces right after the fall of Saddam Hussein. They acknowledged that the Iraqi military forces had largely disbanded themselves during the course of the fighting, that the Iraqi military had virtually disintegrated, facilities were destroyed and/or looted, and much of their major combat equipment had been destroyed or been rendered inoperable.

Failure to Foresee Insurgency, Not Postwar Disbandment, is the Key Past Problem

Iraqi defense officials and officers are far less critical of the "de-Baathification" of the military and security forces by the CPA than outside Iraqis. They acknowledge that the war, desertions, and looting left few units and facilities intact, and that most were not worth preserving.

Some did blame "Debaathification" for failing to retain key personnel or anticipate would happen to those with no political and career options. Many of the Iraqis involved did feel, however, that Shi'ite exile elements in the interim government had considerable responsibility for the pressure they put on the CPA to take a hard line stand on Debaathification – and did not simply blame US officials. Such Iraqis also felt that the Interim Government made a major error in not reaching out to Baath and Sunni elements who had had to go along with Saddam's regime, and in allocating positions in fixed shares to Shi'ite Arabs, Kurds, and Sunni Arabs, rather than trying to create national government.

In general, the Iraqi officials and officers involved in creating Iraqi forces saw the most serious problem behind the lack of effectiveness of Iraqi forces until late 2004 as the result of a failure on the part of the CPA and US military to anticipate the threat of a major insurgency, and to train and equip regular military, security, and police force for this mission.

They stressed that the initial goals in creating new Iraqi military and security forces were to avoid the abuses of the past and to avoid creating a threat to democracy. As a result,

the pace and scale of the military effort was slow to the point of reaching only token levels. The military were being shaped as a light border defense force which would only emerge with anything approaching serious capabilities long after the Iraqis finished drafting a constitution and had successfully create a new democratic government.

Similarly, the development of police and security forces was placed under the Ministry of the Interior and little coordination took place with the military effort under the Ministry of Defense. Security forces were given minimal paramilitary and intelligence elements, and most were initially assigned to low-grade facility protection forces like the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps (ICDC) – the predecessor to the National Guard. The ICDC was recruited locally with minimal attention to manpower quality and given minimal equipment and facilities.

Iraqi military and security forces were developed and deployed by each of the five major division areas under the Multinational Coalition (MNC), and to meet the priorities and security needs of the MNC, rather than a new, sovereign Iraqi government. This led to a lack of any cohesive follow-up to the initial training efforts, and an inevitable dependence on MNC forces for equipment and all forms of serious combat, service, and logistic support.

Iraqi police forces were created and recruited with minimal coordination and seen as little more than “beat cops” that required token training and equipment. In general, they were not shaped to deal with looting and Iraq’s rapidly growing crime problems, much less the problem of security.

They were created on a “helter-skelter” basis -- with little equipment and training and minimal facilities. Much of this effort occurred at local levels with little attention to manpower quality, and the Ministry of the Interior often had no serious picture of the strength of given local police forces, much less any picture of their quality and leadership.

Many police were chosen by local leaders more as a matter of patronage than as part of an effort to create effective forces, and corruption and favoritism were rampant. Vetting was little more than a “by guess and by God” effort, and little attention was paid to past training, education, and physical condition – problems that were equally serious in the ICDC/National Guard.

At a technical level, the Iraqis involved in these efforts feel that the US was far too slow to provide anything like adequate numbers of experienced personnel; to see that the police and security effort had to be coordinated with the military effort, and to understand that the mission was counterterrorism and counterinsurgency and not building conventional military and police forces. They note that most initial cadres had no knowledge of how to deal with Iraqis or a different culture, that the high levels of rotation meant that personnel did not have the necessary on the job training and personal contacts, and that US and MNC constantly changed focus and were different in each of the five major operational areas under MNC control.

Waiting Until the Spring of 2004 to Begin an Effective Program

For virtually the entire existence of the CPA, leadership positions in all of the forces were more a matter of politics than effectiveness, and inefficiency and corruption were often ignored. The transfer of sovereignty took place under conditions where there were no fully functioning ministries or governments in the governorates. The selection of new Ministers of Defense and the Interior create new problems and led to the disorganization of existing efforts – as well as the collapse of efforts to put an end to the militias that had shown considerable early promise and success.

Like many American officers and experts directly involved in this mission under the CPA, and after the transfer of power, Iraqi officials and officers feel that serious efforts to train effective forces only began in June 2004, and did not really gather serious momentum until September 2004. This is why Iraqi Ministry of Defense officials, and military and security officers, repeatedly referred to Iraqi forces as being, “only 10 months old” at a conference in late February 2005.

Iraqis Do not See the Past as the Defining Prologue to the Future

Yet, this same background helps explain why Iraqi officials and officers remain relatively optimistic about the future. Iraqi officials and officers feel, however, that progress is now certain to be made if the new Iraqi government shows suitable leadership, cohesion, and inclusiveness.

They show little belief in the kind of conspiracy theories that blame the US and MNC for deliberately keeping Iraqi forces weak and seeking a permanent occupation. If anything, they are more worried that the US and MNC will not provide the continuing support they need. While some feel Iraqi forces may be able to largely stand on their own against the insurgents by the end of 2006, they also feel that they may still need support from US armor, artillery, air, special forces, and intelligence. Some feel that a major US and MNC advisory, training, equipment, and aid effort will be needed through 2010.

More generally, Iraqi officials and officers have considerable confidence in the US, British, and other MNC officers involved in helping Iraq to train and organize Iraqi forces. There are criticisms of the US and MNC effort. Some Iraqis are critical at the level of equipment they are getting and do see Iraq as being treated by a “dual standard” that leaves Iraqi forces much more vulnerable than US and MNC forces.

Iraqis also note that some of US and MNC combat forces they work with have inadequate training for working with foreign forces, rotate too quickly to acquire and exploit the expertise they need to work with Iraqis in the field, lack adequate indoctrination into the current strengths and weaknesses of Iraqi forces, and sometimes treat them unfairly and not as partners.

At the same time, Iraqi officials and officers feel that most of the US and MNC teams they work with do have Iraqi interests at heart, and they feel the training effort is getting steadily better. None expect to get Western standards of advanced equipment and technology versus the kind of equipment better suited to Iraq. They also welcomed the

recommendation of the Luck mission to insert US officers and NCOs into Iraqi units to provide leadership and unit cohesion and combat training as an essential next step in creating a transition to effective and independent Iraqi forces.

Iraqis also seem somewhat bemused by the US debate over how many Iraqi forces are properly trained and equipped and can engage the insurgents. They point out that no Iraqi forces as yet have all of the strength in terms of armor, firepower, and support to engage in main force combat without US support. They point out that Iraqi forces differ sharply in capability not only by force element, but in terms of experience, capability, and leadership at the battalion level within each different branch of the Iraqi military, security, and police forces.

At the same time, they also point out that virtually every element of the military, security, and police forces can perform some function in terms of improving security and that the situation is improving steadily as new and better trained/equipped forces come on line; Iraqi forces are organized and manpower is better selected, and Iraqi officers and other ranks gain experience. From their perspective, the issue is not whether the glass is two-thirds empty or one-third full, it is how rapidly it is filling.

Emerging Iraqi Forces

Iraqi officials and officers readily acknowledge that Iraqi forces still have a long way to go, that they still lack proper training and equipment, and that transition to two new Iraqi governments in 2005 will create turbulence under the best of circumstances. They made it clear that they cannot predict how the new government would behave or how the constitutional process and efforts at inclusion would change Iraqi security policy.

They acknowledge the limits to their ability to plan and manage Iraq's force development in any orderly way. Even if the course of the insurgency was predictable, Iraqi military and security developments are very much a matter of improvisation and uncertainty. Iraqi officials and officers also have no clear budget for force planning, no way to predict the level of US and other MNC aid.

An Iraqi briefing on current force developments did clarify some aspects of the path that Iraqi forces will follow over the coming year. At the same time, the Iraqi MOD officials giving the briefing had staff elements actively involved in preparing briefings for the new government and the possibility of a new Minister of Defense and/or Minister of the Interior.

Several also privately noted that that three changes were needed in current plans that depended more on the US and MNC than Iraqi politics and decisions:

- First, to develop and implement plans to create Iraqi forces more quickly that are equipped and deployed to stand on their own.
- Second, to develop common plans with the US and MNC to phase down the role of MNC forces according to common criteria and in ways where both sides have

the same expectations, allowing Iraqis to predict the future level of MNC aid and remaining capability.

- Third, to develop mid-term plans to create forces with enough support and heavy land and air weapons to eventually replace all MNC forces other than those remaining in an advisory and training role.

Force Development Principles and Strategy

Iraqi officers stress that Iraqi forces are still being developed in ways that are compatible with the emergence of an Iraqi democracy. This means force development on the basis of the following six principles:

- Democracy
- Civilian control of the military
- Transparency
- Rule of law
- Responsibility and accountability
- Equality and justice among religions

Developing Effective Ministries and "Governance"

Iraqi officials make it clear that Iraq is still in the process of developing an effective Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior, and anything approaching a coordinated national security structure at the top. The development of effective structures to manage police and internal security forces at the governorate and local level is even more of a work in progress. They estimate that it will take at least all of 2005, and much of 2006, to evolve a stable and more comprehensive overall structure for handling the "governance" aspects of Iraq's military, security, and police forces.

At the same time, they state that cooperation among the Ministries and at the national-regional-local level is slowly improving. They note that communications are better, and there is more experience in day-to-day coordination. They feel relations with the US and other MNC elements are good, and note that the Iraqi government now has a national security coordination committee that is scheduled to meet twice a week as well as a higher level Joint Coordination Group at the Minister-Deputy Minister level.

While officials and officers understand they face a 2005, in which there may well be two sets of upheavals in the Iraqi government and key ministries involved in national security, they also feel that the Ministries are gradually acquiring experience civilian personnel, adequate facilities and equipment, and adequate communications.

They also note that the Interim Government did develop the outline of a national strategy for the next 5-7 years. This strategy was based on the following elements:

- Threat analysis.

- Analysis of the interests of neighboring states, other nations, and the international community and the resulting diplomatic and security requirements.
- The strategy needed to develop armed forces and security forces, and the resulting requirements in terms of force size and equipment.
- Economic and social strategy.

At the same time, they are fully aware that nothing is stable in terms of current force plans, they have little ability to plan in terms of known budgets, and levels of aid, are still highly dependent on the US and MNC for many aspects of funding and support, and face a situation in flux in terms of the politics and structure of their own government as well as the realities dictated by the course of the insurgency.

Iraqi Intelligence

Iraqis clearly understand that their present intelligence capabilities are very limited, and they remain dependent on the US and MNC except at the local level. They acknowledge they are deeply penetrated at every level by hostile agents and that this is likely to continue until the new government acquires far more popular legitimacy and Sunnis and Iraqi Islamists give it more support. They also acknowledge that current Iraqi counterintelligence capabilities are limited, and that vetting is often cursory and uncertain.

Iraqi officers and officials do, however, feel that Iraq is beginning to develop effective intelligence capabilities. These intelligence capabilities are divided into three major groups: Military intelligence in the Ministry of Defense, the Police Intelligence Directorate in the Ministry of the Interior, and the Iraqi National Intelligence Services in the Prime Minister's office.

Military Intelligence is being developed as a key priority, and Iraq hopes for extensive further training help from the intelligence sections of NATO countries. More broadly, both actionable operational intelligence and counterintelligence are seen as key priorities at every level, and Iraqi officers and officials make it clear that they see that "good intelligence is more important than good weapons."

The MOI has also created a special intelligence section to support "quick intervention" operations and is steadily attempting to improve intelligence and counterintelligence efforts in the field at the level of the security and police services.

Iraqi Views of the Threat

Iraqis disagree in detail regarding almost all of the issues covered in this analysis, and sometimes presented very different views of how serious they took the threat from Syria and Iran, how and whether they quantified various threat forces, and how serious they saw given extremist, terrorist, and insurgent elements as being. There was also no agreement on whether the threat was getting better or worse, although most felt the election was a major step forward and that insurgent attacks were less successful than they feared.

Like the US and MNC, they see four major threats:

- *Zarqawi and Outside Islamist Extremist Organization Fighters:* Mostly foreign Arab and from other countries. Cannot quantify, but numbers are small and probably well under 1,000. The problem is their methods of attack have great impact.
- *Former Regime Elements (FRE)s:* Large numbers, and a mix of true supporters of the Ba'ath, alienated Sunnis, paid volunteers, temporary recruits, and other Iraqis. No way to quantify, but some feel is in the 15,000 to 30,000 level depending on how estimate full time and part time fighters.
- *Iraqi Native Islamist Extremist Organization Fighters:* Small and just emerging. Cannot quantify, but numbers are small and probably well under 500. The problem is their methods of attack can mirror image outside extremists and have great impact.
- *Organized Crime:* The major source of violence and insecurity in at least 12 of the 18 governorates. Often seem to cooperate with terrorists and insurgents. Many different levels of seriousness, but numbers are very high, as is impact.

Some Iraqis also felt elements of various militias were becoming a problem, but the details are unclear. Iraqi officials also point out that they feel MNC estimates are misleading because they seem to only include hardcore insurgents. They also feel that the Minister of Defense was generally correct in including some 200,000 sympathizers in one guess at the threat. "It does no one any good to deny the insurgents have major public support, particularly in Sunni areas. Our political problem is much more important than our military one."

Manpower Issues Affecting Force Development

Iraq officers and officials feel that the problems of Debaathification have been largely overcome and that the Ministry of Defense and armed forces are now open to all except hardliners and extremists. They feel that ex-Baathist officers and NCOs now play a critical role in every branch of the military, security, and police services; that many are Sunni, and that the MoD and MOI are now actively seeking to recruit as many experienced personnel as possible.

They indicate that a deliberate effort is being made to create a "national force" that includes Shi'ites, Sunnis, Kurds, and other minorities. They also state that Debaathification is not being applied in ways that prevent the recruitment of qualified Sunni officers and other ranks, or men from military and other forces who were not directly involved in the repressive and violent acts of Saddam Hussein's regime. It is not clear, however, what the mix of different sects and ethnic groups really is, and how much of the Iraqi force is truly national in the sense of mixing such groups. The goal seems to be to avoid local, sectarian, and ethnic forces in the regular military and elite security forces, but some units do seem largely ethnic.

They also have to deal with serious problems in the composition of some existing forces. Recruiting and composition of National Guard and police units was local in the past,

sometimes with virtually no vetting other than the support of some local chief or political figure. This has often led to politically appointed leaders with little real capability and forces lacking the will, physical condition and/or literacy to be effective.

Iraqi officials and officers clearly want this situation to change, and note that Iraq's various forces are being purged of low grade and suspect manpower, which is being retired or paid to leave. This process is still underway, however, and Iraqis note that there is still a strong tendency to politicize senior appointments and to fail to remove incompetent and corrupt officials and officers for political reasons or because of family and ethnic ties.

Some Iraqi officers also pointed out that force development is constantly affected by the lack of security and Iraq's lack of economic development. One noted that personnel from other areas did not know the ground and local condition, stood out in Iraq's highly localized society, and were vulnerable for this reason. At the same time, local personnel were subject to pressure or attacks on their families and from local insurgents who almost immediately learned their functions and either attacked them or sought to use them for intelligence and infiltration. The fact that many are driven to volunteer out of economic pressure and desperation. This can produce recruits with little real motive to fight.

Pay and leave present additional problems. Bases and casernes generally do not provide housing and this leaves families vulnerable. Many personnel have to visit their families and provide their pay in cash and this means a high percentage of forces on leave. At the same time, recruits and actives that go on leave are vulnerable to pressure and intimidation. The lack of protected vehicles, uncertain discipline in taking leave, and a lack of experience make new volunteers especially vulnerable.

One Iraqi official noted that even though he was senior enough so that his family could be housed safely in a government area, he had reservations about what would happen to the rest of his extended family, left his family in place, and concealed his duties from everyone in his home town except family members and close friends.

Iraqis do, however, feel that many of these conditions may be temporary. As more and more trained and equipped Iraqi forces come on line, they will be able to establish a steadily better structure for force protection and a steadily better overall climate of security. If currently hostile Iraqi Sunnis can be included in the government, the remaining native insurgents and all outside insurgents will become more isolated, and the areas in which they can operate will become steadily more limited. In short, they are optimistic enough to feel that time is on their side, and the insurgents will be much less effective in attacking Iraqi forces once they reach the numbers, quality, and experience planned for mid-to-late 2005.

Creating an Effective Iraqi Training Structure

Iraqi officers and officials acknowledge that training remains a serious problem. They again cite the fact that serious training efforts are "only 10 months old," and they note that training does not occur at the factory level. Even when trainees have advanced

courses, they are still need leadership, experience, unit cohesion, and the support of experience personnel.

These conditions are only beginning to exist in the various Iraqi forces, and the need for experience cadres of leaders is one reason they welcome the idea of have experience US and MNC officers embedded in new Iraqi units until they have the leadership and experience to act on their own. (Iraqi officers do, however, express concern that US officers and personnel who lack area skills and experience in working with Iraqis are often impatient and over-demanding, and tend to bully the Iraqis they are supposed to inspire and train.)

Iraqis understand that current training periods are very short, and those involved in Iraqi force development are far less likely to talk about the competence of the men trained under Saddam's regime than Iraqis with no practical experience. They see how serious the training problem really is.

They note, however, that Iraq simply does not have time to train its military, security, and police forces under ideal conditions, and that in-unit training can be more useful in any case. They feel that basic training is useful largely in instilling discipline and fundamentals, and that Iraqi military, security, and police forces in the field are constantly being forced to adapt to changes in insurgent and criminal behavior and find that this requires them to "learn and relearn" from field experience and to meet real-world local conditions.

One officer noted that "our tactical conditions and training needs change constantly in terms of detailed requirements, sometimes in ways that mean training has to be revised on a monthly basis. One real problem that we all have is that much of our training – under Saddam and now – is for fighting conventional forces. We are only gradually developing effective training for counterterrorism and counterinsurgency."

Facilities and equipment are also seen as continuing problems. Effective forces require training, leadership, and unit cohesion, but they also require adequate equipment, secure facilities, and facilities in the right areas. Improvements are taking place in the three latter area, but Iraqis feel they lag behind requirements, and caution that all of the elements of force quality have to be brought into balance for each element of the military, security, and police services for training efforts to be effective.

At the same time, Iraqi officials do believe that real progress has been made in creating the kind of training organization and facilities that are needed. They feel the facilities for effective basic training are now in place, and that training time and training in more advanced skills can be expanded as force levels become more adequate and the immediate demand for personnel is less critical.

Academies for more advanced training exist at the Joint Headquarters level. Past academies in Irbil and Sulaymania are back on line and have been modernized, and a new academy in Baghdad is coming on line. A former regime training center in Tikrit has

been reopened, initially with MNC support, but now with Iraqi training cadres. Iraq is beginning to create the kind of high level training facilities it needs at the Ministry level, and plans to create a staff college, war college, and center for National Security Studies. Much does depend, however, on getting MNC, NATO country, and other outside support. "It will be at least several years before we have the skills to take over advanced training on our own."

Iraqi officers and officials are not currently in any rush to eliminate outside training and advisors – in fact they welcome every offer of training from new countries and every new sign of outside support. They welcome the help they have had from Egypt, the UAE, and Jordan in addition to the MNC countries, and hope for new training contributions from Germany, Italy, Norway, and France.

They feel such multinational contributions are highly useful – in spite of the potential problems in different training methods and interoperability. They do, however, recognize the need for standardization and coordination training efforts over time, and want to take over the overall leadership and organization of training as soon as possible.

While Iraqis do not use the term as such, they also note that as Iraqi forces expand to reach significant levels of capability, they will have the "critical mass" to provide a far more effective overall training and leadership structure, less pressure and more time for training, and be able to take over far more of the mission from the US and MNC. Iraqi officials and officers hope for "full capability" in 2006, but acknowledge they will need MNC aid and support in training, equipment, and other areas through 2010.

Iraqi Military Force Development

Iraqi officials and officers discuss Iraqi force developments in general terms and have not provided detailed numbers or force descriptions. They also question the US search for the exact number of "effective" Iraqi forces. They see Iraqi forces as in a constant state of development. They feel it is unfair to judge them at this time, given the history of Iraqi force development, and that many past problems are being rapidly overcome and most of the remaining problems will be overcome during the course of the coming year.

They feel that all Iraqi forces can be used effectively in some missions, but are careful to point out that fully effective Iraqi forces with enough armor to operate offensively against insurgent forces without extensive MNC support are just coming on line. As one Iraqi put it, "What do you want to count and what tasks do you want to judge it by? Why do you want to count what we are rather than what we are becoming?" (*For the sake of reference, current data provided by the Multinational Command (MNC-1) are shown as attachments to this report.*)

Iraqi officials and officers understand that they cannot form stable force plans at this point in time. They realize that force goals are in flux, and that equipment, deployment, and facility plans are almost certain to change. They understand the volatility of the Iraqi political climate, as well as the inability to either predict their budgets or the level of MNC aid.

Iraqis also believe that one of the major challenges they face at the Ministry, service, and unit level is to create an effective and cohesive C⁴I system (command, control, communications, computers, and intelligence), and particularly to create an effective intelligence system that can properly be integrated into Iraq's developing command, control, communications, and computer capabilities.

The Army

Iraqis feel that the Iraqi Army has advanced to the point where the Chief of Staff's office has an operating formal structure with Deputy Chiefs of Staff for Operations, Administration, and Training.

Iraqi Army forces are also currently developing according to a plan that calls for:

- Three Light Infantry Divisions of three brigades each, which each have two battalions. Two of these divisions are complete in terms of training and organization and a third is one the way. These forces lack armor and protected vehicles, and do not have heavy firepower. They do, however, have light weapons, medium machine guns, and mortars.
- A mechanized division is being created. Only one battalion of this force is as yet in service, although a second is nearly completion.
- There are now two special forces brigades with a division Headquarters, and the Iraqi Army has the goal of creating a third brigade.
- The Army units are relatively small with battalions averaging around 400-600 men. Manpower is vetted and selected with more care than in other Iraqi forces, men have more combat experience, and training is more systematic both in the formal training phase and at the unit level.

Iraqi officers see a number of major challenges for the development of the Army. One is to give it the training and equipment necessary to operate as a fully independent force and eventually replace MN C forces. A second is the need to redeploy Army units away from casernes and locations chosen for MNC convenience and security so it can meet Iraqi government priorities and needs. The third is to create a more stable plan for force expansion, and one that takes into account the problems created by the merger of the Army and National Guard.

Merging the National Guard into the Army

The National Guard is being merged into the Army and this presents some problems. The National Guard is the successor to a low-grade force called the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps (ICDC), which was recruited and vetted largely on a local level for glorified security guard duty. Training and equipment was very limited; leadership owed more to politics and regional needs than effectiveness, and much of its manpower lacked the necessary physical condition, education, and loyalty.

The ICDC/Guard was also created on the basis that each of the five MNC commands or regions essentially created a separate force, largely on the basis of recruiting by local leaders. Each MNC originally created National Guard companies at the MNC brigade

level without any headquarters, and with very limited basic training. This produced rapid force expansion but without force quality.

The National Guard has since, however, been slowly purged of some of its low quality leadership and manpower – which has been retired or paid to leave. Changes have taken place in equipment, selection, training, and organization. It was initially organized largely at the company level. This was later expanded to battalions that became very large, sometimes reaching 1,000 men; A size too large to be effective.

On paper, the National Guard that is being merged into the Army has six divisions of three brigades each, with three battalions of 3-4 companies each – most of which only have light infantry weapons. There are no mortars or heavy machine guns.

This gives the Guard a large force on paper, but most of which has serious – if not crippling -- force quality problems if it has to be used in offensive operations. It is useful, however, for a wide range of security duties like manning checkpoints and providing area security in low to medium threat areas. “It can support the army and the police, but it is not a counterinsurgency force and it cannot lead the way.”

It is obvious that the Guard still needs major reorganization, more training, and better equipment. Iraqi officers could not, however, provide a clear plan for what the Guard will become as it is merged with the Army.

The Air Force

Iraq is just beginning to develop an air force. It does, however, now have a Major General in Command and a functioning headquarters and staff. It is acquiring C-130s for “strategic mobility,” and helicopters for transport, support, reconnaissance, and combat support missions. Helicopter gunships will be its initial combat weapon. It does not yet have clear force plans or plans to acquire modern fixed-wing combat aircraft.

Navy/Coast Guard

The Iraqi Navy is just becoming a light coastal defense force.

Ministry of the Interior Forces

There is some obvious rivalry and tension between Iraqis serving in the Ministry of Defense and Ministry of the Interior, but cooperation does seem to be improving. In general, even Ministry of Interior officials have little praise for most of the Iraqi police, which they feel has low overall recruiting and training standards, and can do little more than passively man police stations and carry out minimal police duties in relatively secure areas. The police is seen as slowly improving in such areas, but generally ineffective in dealing with levels of crime that are a major security problem in the areas where insurgents have little capability and impact. Militias are often the de facto police in high crime areas.

The Ministry of the Interior has, however, created elite units like the SOS Police forces that are carefully selected and trained, are mobile, have adequate communications, and

are directly under the Ministry of the Interior. This force now has elements in Baghdad and every governorate.

The Iraqi special forces or Quick Intervention Forces are another elite force in the Ministry of the Interior, with the training, leadership, and equipment to provide security in medium to high threat areas.

Iraqi traffic, immigration, and civil defense police are also felt to be getting better selection, leadership, training, and equipment.

The Border Police are slowly improving and now have better facilities, protection, and equipment, but Iraqis feel it may be several years before they can correct their past leadership, selection, training, and equipment problems.

“Tipping Years” versus “Tipping Points”

No Iraqi official or officer saw the elections or any other recent or planned event as a “tipping point.” Instead, they saw a process that would take one to two years to complete, and where there were a host of uncertainties. Different Iraqis focused on different issues, but most showed considerable realism regardless the ongoing challenges they faced:

- Deal with increasing more aggressive insurgent and extremist attacks, and efforts to split Arab Sunni, Arab Shi'ite, Kurds, and other minorities.
- Create fully effective ministries, limit corruption, and purge low quality and passive leaders, officials, and officers.
- Implement a force development plan for the armed forces and manage the integration of Army and National Guard.
- Create effective intelligence, counterintelligence, and C⁴I capabilities.
- Develop and implement plans to acquire more adequate equipment, force protection, and facilities.
- Begin a systematic transition to forces that can operate without MNC support.
- Redeploy Iraqi forces to meet Iraqi, rather than MNC, needs.
- Restructure, train/retrain, and purge the police forces to make them both effective crime fighters and an aid in counterinsurgency and counter terrorism.
- Deal with the transition to two new governments in 2005, with possibly two new sets of Ministers of Defense and Interior, plus different political leaderships and goals.
- Adapt to any new laws and mandates growing out of the creation of a new constitution.
- Cope with ethnic and religious tensions.

- Find ways to integrate militia elements into the regular forces/police forces, and have the rest go back to civilian life; implement the now largely abandoned CPA plan.
- Find some way to get stable and predictable budgets and levels of aid; negotiate at least a predictable level of medium-term aid.

These are not insurmountable challenges, but Iraqi officials and officers do not find them to be daunting ones. As has been pointed out earlier, Iraq is a nation of remarkably experienced “survivors.” The Iraqis involved in developing Iraq’s military, security, and police forces are more, however, than “survivors.” They seem committed to their mission and they believe that – in time – it can be successful in spite of all the problems they face.

Table One***US MNC-1 Summary of "Trained and Equipped" Iraqi Forces as of February 28, 2005***

Force Element/Component	Operational	Trained and Equipped
Ministry of Defense		
Army	58,992	-
Air Force	186	-
Navy	517	-
Total	59,698*	-
Ministry of the Interior		
Police and Highway Patrol	-	55,274
Other MOI Forces	-	26,798
Total	-	82,072**
Total Trained and Equipped	-	141,761

***Unauthorized absences are not included in these numbers.**

****Unauthorized absences are included in these numbers.**

*Table Two**MNSTC-1 Progress Summary as of February 25, 2005*

The Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq continues to assist the Iraqi government in the organization, training, equipping, and advising of Iraqi Security Forces, as well as in the rebuilding of security force bases, training academies, border forts, and other facilities. While there have been setbacks, and challenges remain, there has also been enormous progress. On 1 July 2004, for example, there was one "deployable" or "national" battalion available to the Iraqi Ministries of Interior and Defense (i.e., a unit that could be moved to a trouble spot anywhere in the country). Now there are 48 such battalions and 92 battalions conducting operations in total, in addition to regular police, border guards, and other security force elements. All told, there are more than 139,000 trained and equipped Iraqi police, soldiers, sailors, and airmen.

The following list highlights some of the accomplishments in the development of Iraqi Security Forces since 1 July 2004.

Operations:

- On election day, 30 January 2005, an estimated 130,000 Iraqi Security forces provided the inner two rings of security for over 5,200 polling sites. Not a single polling site was penetrated, and several Iraqi Security Force members gave their lives while stopping suicide bombers that day.
- In the fall and winter of 2004, Iraqi forces fought alongside Coalition forces in Najaf, Samarra, Fallujah, Baghdad, North Babil, Mosul, and a host of other locations. In Fallujah alone, Iraqi forces lost eight of their members and had more than 40 wounded. Hundreds of other Iraqi Security Force members have also lost their lives serving their country during this period as well. Although Iraqi forces have endured casualties in many of their operations, have been attacked multiple times each day, and have suffered losses through brutal intimidation attacks, there remains no shortage of volunteers; in fact, basic training courses are ongoing for thousands of former soldiers to bring Iraqi Regular Army and Intervention units up to strength.

Ministry of Defense:

- Iraqi Regular Army and Intervention Forces grew from one operational battalion in June 2004 to 24 operational battalions, with three more scheduled to become operational over the next five weeks. With the incorporation of the Iraqi National Guard into the Army on Army Day, 6 January, along with the addition of battalions from the Defenders of Baghdad Brigade and the Muthana Brigade (both Iraqi initiatives) and the other battalions listed below, the total number of Army battalions conducting operations is 76.
- Iraq's 1st Mechanized Battalion became operational in mid-January, along with a tank company and a transportation battalion; the remaining elements of the 1st Mechanized Brigade will be trained and equipped by the summer.

- Iraq's Special Operations Forces now include a superb Counter-terrorist Force and a Commando Battalion, each of which has conducted dozens of successful operations.
- Iraq's Navy is now operational, with five 100-foot patrol craft, 34 smaller vessels, and a naval infantry regiment that recently completed training.
- Iraq's Air Force has three operational squadrons equipped with nine reconnaissance aircraft that operate both day and night, and three US C-130 transport aircraft. One more squadron, comprised of two UH-1 helicopters (to be followed by 14 more and by 4 Bell Jet Rangers from the UAE), stood up at the end of January.
- Iraq's two Military Academies reopened in mid-October and each graduated a pilot course of new lieutenants, 91 total, on 6 January 2005. The new year-long military academy course has already begun. And training by the NATO Training Mission-Iraq of Iraqi Staff College instructors will begin in April.

Ministry of Interior:

- Iraq's Special Police Forces grew from zero operational battalions in June 2004 to 16 operational battalions by the end of January. Eight Police Commando battalions are now operational, with one more in training. Six Public Order Battalions are operational, with three more in training. Additionally, the Mechanized Police Brigade, organized into two battalions, recently completed training and began operations in late January, using fifty BTR-94 wheeled, armored vehicles. It received the first two of 50 American-made armored security vehicles at the end of February.
- The Iraqi Police Service has over 55,000 trained and equipped police officers, up from 26,000 six months ago. Of the nearly 30,000 police officers who have been trained in the last six months, over 13,000 were former police who underwent three-week transition course training and over 16,000 were new recruits who underwent eight-week basic training. More than 43,000 additional police are on duty and scheduled for training.
- Five basic police academies are now operational; together, they produce over 3,500 new police officers each month from the 8-week course, a course recently modified to better prepare the new police officers for the challenging environment in which some may serve. Several other regional academies are under construction.
- Iraq's National Police Emergency Response Unit is now operational, and its elements have conducted operations in Baghdad, Fallujah, and Mosul.
- Iraq's First Special Border Force Battalion is operating on the Syrian border in western Anbar Province; the Second Battalion completes training in February, and a third will begin training in March.
- Five provincial SWAT teams have been trained, three more are in training, and twelve more are scheduled for training over the next six months.

Other:

- Members of the NATO Training Mission-Iraq are now helping to advise and train the Iraqi staffs of the National Joint Operations Center, the Ministry of Defense Operations Center, and the Ministry of Interior Operations Center, as well as the Armed Forces Joint Headquarters and Ministry of Defense. NATO trainers are also assisting the cadre of the Iraqi Military Academy and, in 2005, NATO trainers will help Iraq reestablish its Staff College and War College. A number of NATO nations have already provided equipment for Iraqi Security Forces and a host of training opportunities in NATO countries, with many additional offers extant.
- Enormous amounts of equipment have been delivered to Iraqi Security Forces since 1 July:
 - More than 129 million rounds of ammunition, with another 100 million recently received and put into eleven ammo storage areas around the country
 - 108,000 pistols
 - 98,000 AK-47s
 - 111,000 sets of body armor
 - 6,600 vehicles
 - 66,000 helmets
 - 5,400 heavy machine guns
 - 22,000 radios
- Over \$1.7 billion of the \$1.91 billion appropriated for construction and reconstruction projects for Iraqi Security Forces has already been committed. Projects include four multi-brigade installations, hundreds of police stations and border forts, countless headquarters and barracks, a number of training centers, and many operating bases.

Table Three***US Department of Defense Summary of State of Iraqi Security Forces at End-2004 as of January 21, 2004***

MNSTC-I continues to assist the Iraqi government in the organization, training, equipping, and advising of Iraqi Security Forces, as well as in the rebuilding of security force bases, training academies, border forts, and other facilities. While there have been setbacks, and challenges remain, there has also been enormous progress. The following list highlights accomplishments in the development of the ISF over the past year.

Operations

- In 2004, Iraqi forces fought alongside Coalition forces in Najaf, Samarra, Fallujah, Baghdad, North Babil, Mosul, and a host of other locations. In Fallujah alone, Iraqi forces lost eight of their members and had more than 40 wounded. Well over a thousand others have also lost their lives serving their country.

Although Iraqi forces have endured casualties in many of their operations, have been attacked multiple times each day, and have suffered losses through brutal intimidation attacks, there remains no shortage of volunteers; in fact, basic training courses are ongoing for more than 4,400 former soldiers to bring under strength Iraqi Regular Army and Intervention units additional forces.

Ministry of Defense

- In less than a year, Iraqi Regular Army and Intervention Forces grew from one operational battalion to 21 battalions, with six more scheduled to become operational over the next month. And with the incorporation of the Iraqi National Guard into the Army on Army Day, 6 January, the total number of battalions conducting operations is 68.
- Iraq's Muthanna Brigade, originally organized and trained by the Iraqis to provide local security, now has three battalions in operations, including one each in Baghdad, Fallujah, and North Babil, and one more in training.
- Iraq's Navy is now operational, with five 100-foot patrol craft, 34 smaller vessels, and a naval infantry regiment that recently completed training.
- Iraq's Air Force has three operational squadrons equipped with nine reconnaissance aircraft that operate both day and night, and three US C-130 transport aircraft. One more squadron, comprised of two UH-1 helicopters (to be followed by 14 more and by 4 Bell Jet Rangers from the UAE), will stand up later this month.

- Iraq's Special Operations Forces now include a superb Counter-Terrorist Force and a Commando Battalion, each of which has conducted dozens of successful operations.
- Iraq's first mechanized battalion became operational in mid-January, along with a tank company and a transportation battalion; the remaining elements of a mechanized brigade will be trained and equipped by the summer.
- Iraq's two Military Academies reopened in mid-October and each graduated a pilot course of new lieutenants, 91 total, in early January 2005. The new year-long military academy course has already begun. And the Iraqi Staff College will begin its pilot course in several months.

Ministry of Interior

- The Iraqi Police Service has over 55,000 trained and equipped police officers, up from 26,000 six months ago. Of the nearly 29,000 police officers who have been trained in the last six months, over 13,000 were former police who underwent three-week transition course training and over 15,000 were new recruits who underwent eight-week basic training. More than 38,000 additional police are on duty and scheduled for training.
- Five basic police academies are now operational; together, they produce over 3,500 new police officers from the 8-week course each month, a course recently modified to better prepare the new police officers for the challenging environment in which some may serve. Several other regional academies are under construction.
- Iraq's Mechanized Police Brigade recently completed training and will begin operations in mid-January, using fifty BTR-94 wheeled, armored vehicles.
- Seven Police Commando battalions are now operational, with one more in training and additional battalions planned.
- Six Public Order Battalions are operational, with six more planned.
- Iraq's National Police Emergency Response Unit is now operational, and its elements have conducted operations in Baghdad, Fallujah, and Mosul.
- Iraq's First Special Border Force Battalion is operating on the Syrian border in western Anbar Province; the Second Battalion begins training in early February.
- Five provincial SWAT teams have been trained and fifteen more are scheduled for training over the next six months.

Other

- Members of the NATO Training Mission-Iraq are now helping to advise the National Joint Operations Center, the Ministry of Defense Operations Center, and the Ministry of Interior Operations Center, as well as the Armed Forces Joint Headquarters. In 2005, NATO Mission members will help Iraq reestablish its Staff College and War College. A number of NATO nations have already provided equipment for Iraqi Security Forces and a host of training opportunities in NATO countries

- Enormous amounts of equipment have been delivered to Iraqi Security Forces since 1 July:

- More than 69 million rounds of ammunition, with another 148 million recently received and put into twelve ammo storage areas around the country
- 70,000 pistols
- 49,000 AK-47s
- 84,000 sets of body armor
- 5,700 vehicles
- 54,000 helmets
- 1,700 PKM heavy machine guns
- 20,000 radios

- There is roughly \$1.91 billion in ongoing construction and reconstruction projects for Iraqi Security Forces, and over \$1.71 billion of that money has already been committed. Projects include four multi-brigade installations, hundreds of police stations and border forts, countless headquarters and barracks, a number of training centers, and many operating bases.

Table Four
Training Periods and Definitions for Each Force Element

MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR FORCES

COMPONENT	TRAINING
Iraqi Police Service	Former Academy Graduates: 3 Week Transition Integration Program New Recruits: 8 Week Academy Mid-Careers: Specialized Training and Sustainment Training
Civil Intervention Force	5 Week Specialized Training
Special Police Commandos	3 Week Specialized Training
Emergency Response Unit	8 Week Specialized Training; Follow-on Mentoring by Advisors
Dept of Border Enforcement	4 Week Academy and Specialized Training
Highway Patrol	3 Week TIP Training and 8 Week Academy Training
Bureau of Dignitary Protection	3 Week Initial Training, 2-3 Week Advanced Training Follow-on Mentoring by US Contractors and Navy SEALs

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE FORCES

Iraq Regular Army	Cadre: 4 Weeks; Basic Training: 8 Weeks
Iraqi National Guard	Basic Training: 3 Weeks; Collective Training: 4 Weeks
Iraqi Intervention Force	Cadre: 4 Weeks; Basic/Collective Training: 8 Weeks Urban Operations Training: 5 Weeks
Iraqi Regular Army & Intervention Force	Direct Recruit Replacement Training: 3 weeks for former soldiers, followed by unit training
Iraqi Special Ops Force - Commando Battalion - Counter Terrorist Task Force	Field Training Provided by US Special Forces (Small Unit Tactics and Ranger-type training) Selection and Assessment, foll'd by 13-week Special Operator Course
Air Force	Varies by specialty: 1-6 months
Navy	8 Week Basic Followed by Specialized Training at Umm Qasr