

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**RETOOLING THE SECURITY ADVISER**

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## **ABSTRACT**

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Since at least mid-2004, success in Iraq has been predicated on Iraqi security forces taking responsibility for their own security, freeing U.S. forces for redeployment or for other tasks in theater. This paper will discuss the personal challenges in training of the Iraqi military, particularly their non-traditional role in maintenance of domestic order. Research will cover the challenges faced and the lessons learned by a brigade adviser taking a unit after basic training graduation through initial operations within the region, to full combat operations supporting coalition forces in Samarra and Fallujah.



## RETOOLING THE SECURITY ADVISER

Since at least mid-2004, success in Iraq has been predicated on Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) taking responsibility for their own security, freeing U.S. forces for redeployment or for other tasks in theater. Within Iraq, our military strategy must be broad and encompassing enough to deal with several different components: sectarian violence (Shiites, Sunnis, and Kurds), Baathists, religious and fundamentalist/extremists with ties to al-Qaeda. Since the Hussein regime was removed from power, building a new ISF has been the main strategic effort within Iraq.

Our Strategy for Victory is clear. . . We will need to help the Iraqi people build a new Iraq with a constitutional, representative government that respects civil rights and has security forces sufficient to maintain domestic order and keep Iraq from becoming a safe haven for terrorists. To achieve this end, we are pursuing an integrated strategy along three broad tracks . . . the Political, Economic and Security tracks. The Security Track involves carrying out a campaign to defeat the terrorists and neutralize the insurgency, developing Iraqi security forces and helping the Iraqi government.<sup>1</sup>

This year will be crucial as we transition to total control by the Iraqi government and pass on all of the security responsibilities to the Iraq security forces. Although all strategists' theories talk about total war and the instruments necessary to achieve success, Clausewitz was clear that war was a natural extension of politics. In this case, war or the de-escalation of hostilities is tied to politics by way of negotiation and is seen as the option of achieving a political compromise necessary to stabilize Iraq and prevent it from falling into all-out civil war. While these negotiation efforts continue, the U.S. must continue improving the security within Iraq, which centers on the rebuilding of the Iraqi police and armed forces. The rebuilding of the Iraqi army is one area within the pillar of security in which the United States has been relatively successful. These efforts must continue if we are to achieve the President's long term objective for victory in Iraq – "Iraq is peaceful, united, and secure, well integrated into the international community, and a full partner in the global war on terrorism."<sup>2</sup>

The National Strategy for Victory in Iraq states that "the training, equipping, and mentoring of ISF will produce an army and police force capable of independently providing security and maintaining public order in Iraq."<sup>3</sup> These Iraqi security forces capable of independent operations would then replace U.S. and coalition forces and take responsibility for security and stability, advance the rule of law, and defeat the insurgency within the country. However, the political decision to dissolve the Iraqi military was not tied to the overall national strategy and was a

mistake. The disbanding of the Iraqi military and police forces left a security vacuum in the country and CENTCOM and CFLCC did not have a plan to replace them.<sup>4</sup>

To fill this void, the Coalition Military Assistance Training Team (CMATT) was formed by MG Paul Eaton with “the mission to construct a new Iraqi army from scratch, an army that includes a land component, maritime component, and a small air force.”<sup>5</sup> The task of training this new army fell to the adviser support training teams, later renamed Military Training Teams (MiTTS).

This paper draws information from interviews and after action reports of subject matter experts and will address the challenges of the adviser in standing up a new army able to provide security for its own country. The purpose of this paper is to examine the critical aspects of training, equipping and employing a newly formed army from scratch and possible future employment and discuss some of the mistakes U.S. and coalition forces made in standing up this new army.

#### Formation of the New Iraqi Army

On 23 May 2003, L. Paul Bremer signed Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) Order No. 2, “Dissolution of Entities.”<sup>6</sup> This order applied to the Defense Ministry, all related national security ministries and offices, and all military formations, including the Republican Guard, Special Republican Guard, Baath Party Militias, and the Fedayeen Sadaam. The order terminated the service of all former military members, noted that payments would be made, and announced that the coalition planned to create a New Iraqi Army “as a first step in forming a national self-defense capability for a free Iraq. Under civilian control, the force would be “professional, non-political, militarily effective, and representative of all Iraqis.”<sup>7</sup> This order formally disbanded the old Iraqi army, declaring it illegal. The wisdom of this decision will not be addressed in this paper but it did set the conditions for building a new army from scratch which included the tasks of manning, equipping, and training it so that it could provide internal security for Iraq.

The New Iraqi Army's primary responsibilities would be border protection, securing roads and installations, and disposing of unexploded ordnance leftover from the war. This mission quickly grew into a mission to defeat counterinsurgency forces and has evolved into the present day prevention of civil war. In order to defeat the insurgency, Iraqis need strong military and police forces. Iraqi troops know their people, language, and culture and therefore they bring the skills and knowledge to the fight that coalition forces could not. They know who the terrorists are and are more capable of earning the trust of their countrymen. The premise being that as Iraqi

forces grew in size and capability, they would help keep a better hold on cities and increasingly take the lead from coalition forces. The goal was to train enough Iraqi forces to carry the fight against the terrorists.

### Progress in Training Iraqi Security Forces

The training of the security forces has come a long way in the two and half years that the U.S. and coalition forces have been training them. There are now approximately 231,000 combined security forces constituting more than 160 battalions operating within Iraq. More importantly, these increasingly capable Iraqi forces have assumed greater responsibility for the security of their country with fourteen of the eighteen provinces now secure.

A Combat adviser influences his ally by force of personal example. You coach, you teach, and you accompany in action. Finally an adviser provides the connection and expertise to bring to bear fires, service support, and other combat multiplier. All accolades given to the leader you support.<sup>8</sup>

However, the training strategy was flawed on two fronts; the use of Reserve Component as advisers to execute the training and secondly, “the decision to rush to get security forces to the fight as a visible measure of effectiveness vice focusing on extensive quality training.”<sup>9</sup> Initially the Reserve Component soldiers were not organized for success as they assumed the training mission. The initial adviser training was rushed and poorly resourced. Advisers were given minimal training before being dispatched to theater and introduced to their Iraqi counterparts to begin training.

The Army did not execute its own war plans. In time of war, the Reserve Component Training Division would be activated to replace the active duty counterparts doing the training mission in the institution training base. That alone would have freed up 1000 active duty trainers, the best in the Army, to execute the training mission in Iraq.<sup>10</sup>

“Multinational Force-Iraq and the Multinational Security Transition Command-Iraq adopted a strategy of getting Iraqi security forces to the fight versus establishing a deliberate training program that produced competent and confident Iraqi security forces.”<sup>11</sup> A more deliberate training plan would have resulted in fewer forces initially but would have ensured better trained and equipped forces that were ready to enter the fight over the long haul.

Now two years later, the training of the advisers is where it needs to be as they are now better equipped to train, coach, and mentor their Iraqi counterparts.<sup>12</sup> One can argue that at the operational and strategic level, if the plan up front had stated that the CMATT mission was going to be a deliberate training mission focused on quality versus quantity, the security mission

would be farther along than it is now without the issues that plagued the Iraqi military initially, poor training and high desertion rates.

Using the CMATT program of instruction for eight weeks of basic training and stated Mission Essential Task List (METL) as a guide, the Adviser Support Team (AST's) developed standard operating procedures (SOPs) and trained the senior leaders of the brigade and battalions. This training lasted for a period of approximately six weeks until the new recruits would arrive at the military training base. The training program consisted of basic infantry tactics which include entering a building and clearing a room, conducting a platoon attack, and convoy live fire. Concurrently the AST and the battalions within the brigade conducted medical and sniper training along with training leaders on planning, which included the Military Decision Making Process (MDMP), as well as command and control.

Following graduation, the battalions would begin conducting security operations at the platoon, company, and battalion level. These operations consisted of Traffic Control Points (TCP), security patrols, and cordon searches. Once training for an operation began, the Iraqi soldiers were almost always willing to perform any task given to them. They performed well under fire; many very coolly and deliberately executing battle drills, taking positions, and returning fire.

The soldiers grasped relatively complex drills very easily such as room clearing with a four man stack, machine gun crew/section drill, reacting to contact from a convoy through herringbone, dismount and fire and maneuver, etc. When they were able to rehearse the plans with leaders and perform even the most basic drills or rehearsals with soldiers, there was never any doubt that the soldiers could grasp the concept and execute it to standard.<sup>13</sup>

The legacy of Saddam Hussein was a big problem. . . We are trying to create a professional NCO corps. Such a thing has never existed anywhere in the region. Not in regular units, not in police forces, not in the military."<sup>14</sup>

The noncommissioned officers (NCO) were very receptive to the concepts of leadership as presented to them during training. However, the NCO corps was extremely limited in its effectiveness for a number of reasons. First and foremost was friction with the officer corps. This area will be addressed in more detail, but 90% of Iraqi Army officers either did not grasp or rejected the concept of NCO leadership. The next factor which severely limited the effectiveness of NCOs was lack of experience and tradition. The vast majority of the NCOs had only a few months more experience than the recruits. The most striking example of this was a battalion Command Sergeant Major (CSM) who had had a total of eight weeks experience and was 24 years old. It was nearly impossible for this individual to effectively perform as a CSM and this was not a unique case, but typical of NCO selection.

“This situation could have been alleviated by allowing the leadership within the battalions to have greater authority in promoting their soldiers, even senior grades when necessary.”<sup>15</sup> Even when this authority was granted, the bureaucracy of the Iraqi Army often prevented it from being executed effectively. The NCOs grasped the concept of NCO leadership but generally did not grasp the importance and the subtleties of operating as fire teams within squads and platoons. They repeatedly demonstrated an ability to fire and maneuver but could not get to the "graduate level" of bonding four men into a fire team, similarly integrated into a squad, and maneuvering with a machine gun team. When led by U.S. advisers, the platoons grasped these concepts easily and performed effectively.

NCO training should focus on the actual execution of duties such as conducting inspection of tactical gear, backwards planning, enforcing standards such as inspecting guard posts, correcting deficiencies/administering punishment, and then actually executing the schedule without any outside prompting. Hands-on training of Iraqi NCOs through team and squad drills was the most effective way to get them to retain the training. The Iraqi Army NCOs have great potential to become critical assets to their Army, given time enough to gain valuable experience which they were not given. However, none of these things will be effective in the establishment of any NCO corps until the leadership roles are accepted, properly understood, and inculcated by the officers.

This major flaw, encountered repeatedly by the Adviser trainers, was the lack of empowerment of the NCOs and the rudimentary command and control procedures they used. This seriously inhibited the Iraqi unit's ability to maneuver, react, or operate with any degree of independence or initiative.

The greatest deficiency in the Iraqi Army was the officer corps. The majority neither understood basic concepts, such as command and control, task organization, or seemed apathetic when it came to learning. Despite numerous opportunities of instruction and practical exercises, whenever the staff was allowed to operate independently (without direct AST involvement), the officers that had served in the old army would immediately revert back to old army methods. These methods were based upon Soviet style doctrine and ran counter to the flexible, adaptive, and effective force the AST was trying to institutionalize. Officers needed to be taken out and forced to navigate with maps from their initial training with the army. A large percentage of the commanders and staff failed repeatedly to grasp the concept of command and control. During operations officers never attempted to maintain situational awareness of the location/control of their units and often disregarded graphic control measures with adjacent units (they did better with physical control measures, terrain features, etc.). A large portion of the officer

corps lacked the ethical or moral character required to lead units in combat or garrison. The majority were unwilling to remain on duty with their unit for any length of time without taking "special passes" or extended leaves.

There were two main reasons for the initial failures of the officer corps. The first was the conditions set by the transfer of authority (TOA). TOA occurred once an Iraqi Army battalion completed its basic training and then was assigned to Multinational Corps – Iraq (MNC-I). MNC-I would then attach the battalion and later the brigade to a Coalition Brigade. With TOA and subsequent appointment of some senior leaders, there was a very distinct message perceived by the field grade officers within the brigade that the army would operate in the same manner it had previously under the former Saddam Hussein regime since they believed they were now capable of independent operations. Immediately from that time on, many of the senior officers of the brigade, battalion, and staffs began to falsify records, extort money from soldiers, steal weapons and equipment, and embezzle money from the payroll. Prior to TOA, officers accepted the parameters and procedures put into place by the U.S. AST.

The second reason is that nearly 100% of the Kurdish officers deserted the brigade, with deliberate timing, and when leaving most stole weapons and vehicles. While Kurdish enlisted soldiers often performed very effectively, the Kurdish officers made almost no pretense of cooperation or a desire to support the national government outside of Kurdistan which caused turmoil within the unit for several months.

It takes time to root-out problem officers. During this time a great deal of damage had already been done to the efficiency of the unit, and the unit would be left extremely short of officers. The positive side is that junior officers in each of the units who might be untainted by experience or corruption of the old army could be promoted to higher ranks. They quickly grasped tactical instruction, utilized NCOs, and were trustworthy. Even officers from the old army who are trustworthy failed to have the skills necessary to conduct operations effectively and seemed unable to learn or apply instruction given to them. The majority of the officers of the old army were ineffective at best and a true cancer at worst. The greatest success was achieved by placing proven junior officers in key positions and with officers who had not been members of the old army. A concerted effort should be placed on getting rid of the senior officers from the old army who cannot conform and perform effectively, making way for the very rapid promotion of junior officers, even when this requires moving up multiple ranks.

The training received by the officers prior to their arrival in no way prepared them to plan, conduct command and control, or support operations. A course of approximately two weeks duration should be established with separate advisers/instructors training the key leaders, such as

company commanders and the battalion staff. The AST provides hours of instruction on all aspects of planning, MDMP with little success. ASTs should be solicited for the names of junior officers who show promise and formal invitations should be made from the U.S. Army Infantry School, United States Marine Corps Amphibious Warfare School, etc., for these individuals to come to the United States and attend these courses. Even one graduate of formal training in the United States, in a unit would pay huge dividends. As reported in The Iraq Study Group Report, the Iraqi Army is challenged in several areas, some of which have been discussed.

Units lack leadership. They lack the ability to work together and perform at higher levels of organization – the brigade and division level. Leadership training and the experience of leadership are the essential elements to improve performance.<sup>16</sup>

Given some of the factors outlined above, the Adviser Support Team is absolutely overwhelmed in its capability to train and assist a battalion in becoming operational based upon the scope of the requirements. Because of the current deficiencies in leadership among the officer corps, the AST must supervise every aspect of a unit's training, planning, operations, and administration. The AST does not have the time or personnel to provide training to the organization staff to ensure they perform effectively. The AST composition of ten combat arms NCOs and officers is adequate for the basic necessities of forming, training, and leading the brigade or battalion. A ten-man AST is very capable of implementing a comprehensive training program for individual infantry soldiers, infantry squads, platoons, and companies. However, training individual basic level skills, basic infantry tasks, and battle drills takes all of an AST's focus, energy, and effort. Battalion AST's are unable to properly train specialty platoons and Military Occupational Specialties such as medics, mortars, and communications. Separate training courses, similar to the course recommended for staff and commanders, should be established and conducted. These courses should be given by dedicated teams of instructors and should be separate from each organization's normal training.

While infantry training can effectively be conducted in almost any condition, one insurmountable challenge for any future adviser team is the language barrier. The most unexpected aspect of serving in CMATT as an adviser was the lack of interpreters. The U.S. military needs to look at providing language training and pick an officer that has served in the theater prior who has had the experience of training soldiers (i.e., the Institutional Training Base) before assigning him or her the role of an adviser. A working knowledge and understanding of the language is essential.

## Challenges Working With Coalition Forces

Early in 2005 LTG Petraeus, Commander of the Multinational Security Transition Command – Iraq (MNSTC-I), changed the emphasis from simple head counts of Iraqi troops to an assessment of unit readiness based on a four-part classification scheme: Level 1, the highest, was for "fully capable" units—those that could plan, execute, and maintain counterinsurgency operations with no help whatsoever; Level 2 was for "capable" units, which can fight against insurgents as long as the United States provides operational assistance (air support, logistics, communications, and so on); Level 3, for "partially capable" units, included those that could provide extra manpower in efforts planned, led, supplied, and sustained by Americans. The remaining two thirds of Iraqi Army units, and half the police, were in this category; Level 4, for "incapable" units, were those that were of no help whatsoever in fighting the insurgency.<sup>17</sup>

The concept was for U.S. trained Iraqi security forces as they reached Level 3 or higher would take the lead in defense of a specific region of their country allowing U.S. forces to initially stand in the background to support the Iraqi military and the police, leading to a phased redeployment of U.S. Forces.

Do not try to do too much with your own hands. Better the Arabs do it tolerably than you do it perfectly. It is their war, and you are here to help them, not win it for them. Actually, also, under very odd conditions of Arabia, your practical work will not be as good as, perhaps, you think it is. It might take longer, and it might not be as good as you think, but if it is theirs it will be better.<sup>18</sup>

Sectarian violence is on the rise and U.S. forces are being drawn back into the conflict, which goes counter to the U.S. disengagement strategy. The need for trained and ready Iraqi Army forces that will fight is approaching a critical juncture.

The first Iraqi Army infantry battalions finished basic training in early 2004 and were immediately required in combat without complete equipment ... absent-without-leave rates among regular army units were in double digits and remained so for the rest of the year. You can pay people to go through basic training and take moderate risks. But unless they're really loyal to a government, as the risks go up, they will run.<sup>19</sup>

The average AWOL rate for the units in both Operations Baton Rouge and al-Fajr was 40 – 45%. This was good and bad news for the ASTs. The bad news is that the AWOL was not confined to just the lower enlisted, it also included the officers. The good news was that the soldiers, NCOs, and officers that did stay were there because they believed in what they were doing and were ready to fight.

The progress and growth of the Iraqi Army was clearly seen when you compared the assaults that took place in Samarra and Fallujah in 2004. The major difference in each of these operations was how the coalition forces employed the ISF. In the discussion that follows, ISF employment in Samarra and Fallujah will focus at the operational and tactical level; however, there is no mistake that the use of the ISF would have strategic implications (the disengagement of U.S. forces from combat operations in Iraq so that they could begin redeployment and the Iraqi government taking over its sovereign responsibilities of providing governance and security for Iraq) as these were the first steps at Iraq taking responsibility for its own security.

### Operation Baton Rouge – Samarra

Following approximately one month of operations around Kirkush Military Training Base (KMTB) the 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade, deployed to the vicinity of Samarra. There, the assault was led by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade Combat Team (2BCT), 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division, which was task organized for combat with five coalition battalions comprised of 3,000 Americans, and three Iraqi National Guard battalions and one Iraqi Army Battalion made up of 2,000 Iraqis troops.

On 19 September an Iraqi Army platoon-sized security patrol operating in conjunction with forces, was attacked by a suicide car bomb while conducting a "flash"/impromptu Traffic Control Point (TCP). This resulted in one Killed in Action (KIA) and 14 Wounded in Action (WIA) for the 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion. Among the WIA were the US adviser to the Iraqi company and his translator who were accompanying the patrol. On 22 September, the battalion had its second major contact while moving in conjunction with a U.S. force during a convoy to establish a TCP. Enemy forces executed a complex ambush attacking the convoy with an Improvised Explosive Device (IED), small arms, and Rocket Propelled Grenade (RPG) fire. Immediately upon contact, the company, in conjunction with U.S. forces, conducted a react to contact drill, dismounted, returned fire, and maneuvered on the enemy. Upon suppressing the ambush the convoy continued on to the TCP.

On 1 October the battalion minus participated in Operation Baton Rouge to secure Samarra. The mission of Operation Baton Rouge was "to kill or capture anti-Iraqi forces (AIF) and return the city to competent civilian control."<sup>20</sup> The 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade planners gave the battalion two independent objectives within the city. The battalion's first objective was the Samarra Drug Institute (SDI) and its second objective was the Spiral Minaret (Figure 1) historic complex.

The battalion initiated combat operations to clear the SDI factory on 2 October. The SDI factory was secured early that morning with a number of security guards taken prisoner, but no enemy was found on the objective. In the face of limited but increasing resistance from adjacent

neighborhoods, to include small arms fire and IEDs, the battalion, under the direction of the Battalion ASTs, sent one rifle company to assault and clear the second objective, the Spiral Minaret. The second objective was secured by approximately 1000 hours. The battalion continued to take small arms and indirect fire from adjacent neighborhoods until U.S. forces cleared them.



Figure 1 – Spiral Minaret, Samarra, Iraq.

The coalition forces' operations lasted three days and ended on 4 of October. The battalion immediately transitioned into execution of its assigned tasks under Phase IV of the operational plan. These tasks included company-sized combat patrols throughout Samarra and the establishment of three TCPs to the north and northeast of the city. The battalion continued to operate alongside U.S. forces during numerous cordon/search operations and impromptu TCPs within Samarra. Operation Baton Rouge was hailed a coalition and more importantly, an Iraqi Security Forces' success. The use of the Iraqi security forces not only added combat power to the coalition, but also strategically it was seen as a stabilizing force to prevent a potential power vacuum that might occur. Overall it demonstrated the credibility of the ISF.<sup>21</sup> At the lower echelons the soldiers of the battalion proved to be very effective when well led. They were able to endure harsh physical conditions, performed effectively during extended operations, and required little logistical support in the form of food, water, and comfort items. Samarra was finally secured on 5 October 2004.

#### Operation Al-Fajr - Fallujah

In Fallujah, Operation al-Fajr began with nine coalition battalions (comprised of roughly 10,000 American troops) and with six Iraqi battalions supporting (consisting of roughly 2,000 Iraqi soldiers). The Iraqis fought and sustained casualties but were primarily limited to protecting the flanks of coalition forces and securing ground already cleared.

It's a man-on-man fight, a classic infantry battle. . .If you've got a guy sitting in a house with two grenades, who knows he is going to die, we're going to root these guys out, house by house.<sup>22</sup>

The assault on the city was an attempt to regain control of the city from insurgents in preparation for national elections scheduled for January 2005. Since Fallujah was in Al-Anbar province, all ISF forces were under a Tactical Control (TACON) relationship with the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division who then attached the 1<sup>st</sup> Iraqi Intervention Brigade to Regimental Combat Team (RCT) 1 and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Iraqi Army Brigade (-) which consisted of the brigade headquarters and the 5<sup>th</sup> Iraqi Battalion to RCT 7. RCT 7 then task organized the 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion companies with a Marine company from 1/3 Marine Battalion. The 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion was task organized with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade Combat Team from the 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division which was responsible for the cordon of Fallujah during the operation.

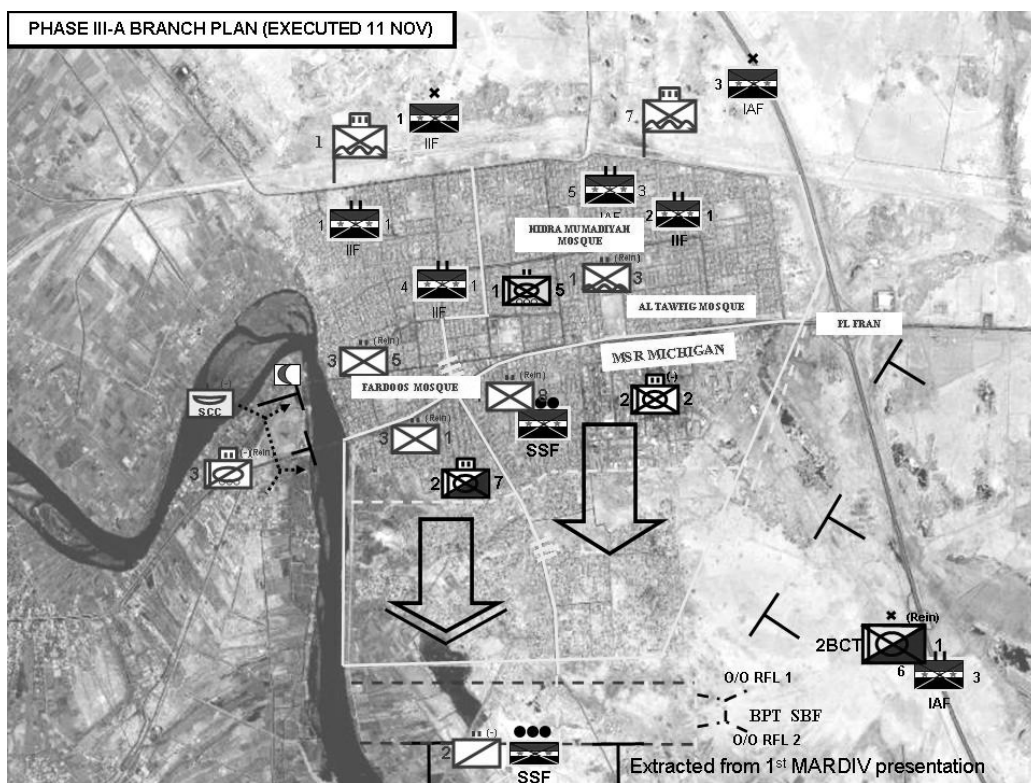


Figure 2 – Maneuver Graphics from Operation Al-Fajr.

On 9 November, U.S. and ISF began the operation and U.S. troops and ISF secured the neighborhood of Jolan in the northwestern part of the city with less resistance than expected. Critical to the control of the city was the seizure of three mosques. On 10 November 2004 the 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade of the Iraqi Army had seized Al Tawfiq Mosque with support from the U.S. Marines from the 7th Regimental Combat Team. The Iraqi Police Service's Emergency Response Unit assisted with the capture of the Hydra Mosque (Figure 2) with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade of the Iraqi Intervention Force and U.S. Marines from the 7th RCT who had captured

the site. American marines and soldiers, followed by ISF, captured the Muhammadia Mosque in one of the largest battles in Fallujah.

By November 13, U.S. forces had achieved control of most of the city and house-to-house clearing operations would follow. That same day, the Iraqi national security adviser claimed that more than 1,000 insurgents had been killed in fighting in Fallujah, with an additional 200 captured.

On 16 November 2004, U.S. and ISF forces had secured Fallujah but there was still sporadic instances of insurgent activity. U.S. Marines were still involved in fighting in certain sections of the city while Iraqi forces conducted search and cordon operations around Fallujah. In the largest cordon search operation, the Iraqi Army's 6th Battalion, 3rd Brigade, executed a cordon and search mission north of the city with assistance from the 1st Cavalry Division that resulted in the detention of 17 individuals and netted some small arms.

The battle for control of Fallujah was a critical opportunity for Iraqis to be in charge, to show the insurgents and more importantly the Iraqi people that the emerging Iraqi government was taking the lead toward independence and sovereignty of Iraq. Can you label Fallujah as a success? Maybe. Yes ISF did take part in the operations, but they would not have been as successful as they were without the ASTs that planned, coordinated, and then fought alongside the ISF.

### Recommendation

Building on the lessons learned over the past four years, it is imperative that the U.S. military continues to adapt as this conflict will potentially go on for decades. In the short term, the institutional Army and the Joint community must take the lessons learned from operations in Iraq and Afghanistan and insert those lessons back into the force. The military's first step in that process was when the Secretary of Defense (SECDEF) directed the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) to consider creating a center to institutionalize security force advising and training lessons. The Vice Chairman of the Joint Staff (VCJCS) recommended the formation of the Joint Center for International Security Force Assistance under the Combined Arms Center Commander at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.<sup>23</sup>

The Joint Center for International and Security Force Assistance (JCISFA) captures and analyzes security force assistance lessons from appropriate operations in order to advise Combatant Commanders and Services on appropriate doctrine, practices and proven Tactics, Techniques and Procedures (TTPs) to efficiently prepare for and conduct security for assistance missions.<sup>24</sup>

In addition to applying the lessons learned from ongoing operations, Joint and Army planning needs to adjust. During initial phase of the planning process, one of the first questions that needs to be asked is what will the security look like at endstate, and how will you build the security forces? Operations flow from planning and if you get the planning right then the operation should go well.

In the long term, the military must continue to work solutions and procedures to train and equip future advisers looking at integration along Doctrine, Organization, Training, Materiel, Leadership and Education, Personnel, and Facilities (DOTMLPF) lines to ensure that we do not make the same mistakes and are more effective the next time. The Army has taken steps to institutionalize security force advising and training lessons learned with the stand up of the Joint Center for International and Security Force Assistance (JCISFA) at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. JCISFA now collects and analyzes the lessons learned from Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) in order to identify the operational trends and best practices in applying doctrine and tactics, techniques, and procedures in training.

In order to synchronize the sustaining and training strategy to enhance the development of Iraqi Security Forces, the Army, Air Force, and Navy have consolidated transition team training at Fort Riley, Kansas, with the Army as the lead agent. The Army has given the mission of training, manning, equipping, deployment, redeployment, and reintegration of organized transition teams to the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division.

To address the “P” or personnel issue of DOTLMPF, if we continue to train security forces as we fight this war on terror, it is essential that military uses the best Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers and Soldiers, Airmen, Marines, and Sailors to accomplish the mission. There needs to be a deliberate effective training program focused on the critical tasks that those soldiers and units will have to accomplish to be successful. The Army opted to use an ad hoc team to begin training security forces in Iraq and wanted those security forces on the street quickly to show the American people and Congress that progress was being made. In addition, partner Iraqi Army divisions, brigades, and battalions with coalition counterpart units until they have proven that they can stand alone. The Army’s institutional training base has the best trainers in the world and the Army needs to leverage that ability.

## Conclusion

Although there are other serious problems facing Iraq today (sectarian violence, insurgents, and corruption to name a few), the first key step is handing over security of Iraq to a trained security force, one component of which is the Iraqi Army. As scholars and historians

compare the mistakes made in Iraq to those made in Vietnam, it is hard to miss the comparison about the reluctance to use country's security forces. The challenges facing the American adviser and the importance of that mission to the strategic success of the U.S. policy in Iraq cannot be over stated.

In some cases, U.S. Forces in Iraq have been reluctant to use the Iraqi Army, steady progress has been seen because of changes made in the training of the Iraqi troops. Based on lessons learned from earlier experiences, the Coalition Military Training Teams (CMATT) changed its approach to training. Iraqi Army recruits now receive about eight weeks of basic training, the same as new U.S. Army recruits. With Coalition help, the Iraqis established schools for the Iraqi military services, an Iraqi military academy, a noncommissioned officer (NCO) academy, a military police school, combat service support school, engineer school, intelligence school, and a bomb disposal school. NATO has established an Iraqi Joint Staff College as well. There is also an increased focus on leadership training, including professional development for Iraqi squad leaders, platoon sergeants, warrant officers, and sergeants major.

The most significant change in terms of troop levels in 2005 was the number of trained and equipped Iraqi Security Forces (ISF). In January 2005, there were 127,000 total Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior security forces, or 78 battalions. About a year later, there were approximately 231,000 combined security forces constituting more than 160 battalions. More important, these increasingly capable Iraqi forces are assuming greater responsibility for combating the insurgency.<sup>25</sup>

Iraqi forces continue to improve and are taking the lead within their country. This progress is especially clear when comparing the assaults in Samarra and in Fallujah in 2004. In Samarra, the assault was led by five coalition battalions of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade, 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division – with one Iraqi Army battalion supporting. In Fallujah, the assault was led by nine coalition battalions - with six Iraqi battalions supporting. The Iraqis fought and sustained casualties but were primarily limited to protecting the flanks of coalition forces and securing ground already cleared. Many Iraqi units conducted their own anti-terrorist operations and controlled their own battle space. ISF stayed behind to ensure the city's safety and move ahead with reconstruction projects.

Fourteen of the eighteen provinces are being secured by ISF with coalition forces in support. The four remaining provinces of Al-Anbar, Baghdad, Diyala, and Salah ad-Din are not secure and are the focus of the U.S. and ISF as they attempt to stem the possible move to civil war. Success, according to our Iraqi Security Strategy, is centered on building up the Iraqi forces and letting them take more and more of the lead in securing their nation. It is very

important that we not lose sight of the fact that it is not business as usual. Our very best officers and noncommissioned officers need to be involved in the training of the ISF.<sup>26</sup>

Strategically, in order to set conditions for success, it is very important that we put a larger presence of U.S. forces embedded in each Iraqi unit. Now our multinational forces in Iraq are moving in this direction. We have in most cases shown gradual improvement in the ISF but in order to succeed the military needs to make the case for patience and persistence to see this through.

“MNF-I’s main military effort in Iraq centers around training and building increasingly capable and loyal ISF. MNSTC-I leads this effort and over the past year, steady progress has been made, especially in terms of Iraqi forces’ willingness and ability to engage in combat.”<sup>27</sup> The importance of the U.S. adviser can not be over stated if we are going to have success. The adviser provides not only the military expertise as a coach, teacher, and mentor to the ISF but also reassures these same forces that they have a partner who will fight along side them no matter the situation. Given the new political environment in the United States, the time table for ISF to take responsibility for security of their nation will be accelerated. The role of the adviser in building Iraqi self confidence, teaching them to plan and execute military operations, and continually coaching and mentoring them on the full spectrum of combat operations should be the main effort. For the U.S. to achieve its operational and strategic objectives, the ASTs must be manned with the Army’s best and brightest tactical leaders that have basic language skills and have theater combat experience and understand the culture.

## Endnotes

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>4</sup> COL James Greer, Deputy Director Joint Center for International Security Force Assistance, interview by author, 31 January 2007, Washington, D.C.

<sup>5</sup> Eliamar Castanon, “Benning Troops Train Iraqi Army Iraqi Soldiers being Trained to Army Standard,” *The Bayonet*, 5 May 2004; available from [www.tradoc.army.mil/pao/training\\_closeup/050104.html](http://www.tradoc.army.mil/pao/training_closeup/050104.html); Internet; accessed 20 January 2007.

<sup>6</sup> Coalition Provisional Authority, Order No. 2, May 2003, 2.

<sup>7</sup> L. Paul Bremer, III, with Malcolm McConnell, *My Year in Iraq, The Struggle to Build a Future of Hope* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2006), 57.

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<sup>9</sup> Greer interview.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> MAJ James Lechner, 7<sup>th</sup> Iraqi Battalion Senior Adviser, After Action Review, 15 June 2005, Baghdad, Iraq. Cited with permission of LTC Lechner.

<sup>14</sup> James Fallows, "Why Iraq Has No Army," *The Atlantic Monthly* 296 (December 2005), 65.

<sup>15</sup> Lechner, 5.

<sup>16</sup> James A. Baker, III, and Lee H. Hamilton, Co-Chairs, *The Iraq Study Group Report* (New York, Vintage Books, December 2006), 8.

<sup>17</sup> Jim Garamone, "Petraeus Details Iraqi Military Progress," Defense Link News (5 October 2005), available from [http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Oct2005/20051005\\_2947.html](http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Oct2005/20051005_2947.html); Internet; accessed 24 November 2006.

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<sup>19</sup> MG John R.S. Batiste, and LTC Paul R. Daniels, "The Fight for Samarra: Full-Spectrum Operations in Modern Warfare," *Military Review* 85 (May-June 2005), 16.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>22</sup> Matt M. Matthews, "Operation al Fajr: A Study in Army and Marine Corps Joint Operations," available from [http://www-cgsc.army.mil/carl/download/csipubs/matthews\\_fajr.pdf](http://www-cgsc.army.mil/carl/download/csipubs/matthews_fajr.pdf); Internet; accessed 14 February 2007.

<sup>23</sup> LTC Troy Thomas, "JCISFA – Joint Center for International Security Force Assistance," briefing slides available from [http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/training/wjtsc06\\_1jcisfa.ppt](http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/training/wjtsc06_1jcisfa.ppt); Internet; accessed 3 February 2007.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., slide 3.

<sup>25</sup> GEN John P. Abizaid, "2006 Posture of the United States Central Command," available from <http://www.centcom.mil/sites/uscentcom2/General%20Abizaid%20Statements/2006%20Posture%20Statement.aspx#V>; Internet; accessed 3 February 2007.

<sup>26</sup> Greer, interview.

<sup>27</sup> Abizaid, V. Iraq.

