

## JIC Assessment, 11 May 2005

### THE IRAQI SECURITY FORCES

*This paper was discussed and approved by the JIC at its meeting on 11 May 2005.*

#### Key Judgements

- I. There are some signs that the confidence and capability of parts of the Iraqi security forces (ISF) are growing: more Iraqis may be willing to fight. But whether this trend is maintained will depend to a significant extent on the degree to which the Iraqi Transitional Government (ITG) succeeds in reaching out to the Sunnis. Early indications are not positive.
- II. Leadership, command and control, training, equipment, discipline and logistic support continue to present significant challenges to the ISF. Funding issues remain serious and unresolved. Ethnic and political divisions within the ISF could be deepened if not carefully managed by the ITG. Effective Iraqi intelligence organisations will be critical for success. They are developing, but remain at present largely unproductive and unco-ordinated.
- III. Early signs from the Iraqi Army's partnering arrangements with the MNF are positive; the benefits of the military transition teams will be felt increasingly during the year. But ISF capacity to take on the toughest elements of the insurgency is likely to improve only slowly this year (the more capable units now number some 16,000, up from 4,000 in December).
- IV. The Multinational Force (MNF) intent – provincial-level Iraqi control of security throughout the country by the end of November 2005 – is unrealistic. It is likely to be possible only in some northern Kurdish and central/southern Shia provinces. In the five predominantly Sunni provinces, including Baghdad, it will not be possible until well into 2006 at the earliest: here, continued close and large-scale MNF support will be essential if the insurgency is to be degraded. The MNF aspiration for national Iraqi security control by mid 2006 will not be achievable.
- V. Organised crime is rife in Iraq. The Iraqi police service (IPS) is ineffective. There is no proper investigative system, no nationally integrated justice system and in many areas no properly functioning prison service. The IPS has not been developed as quickly as the armed forces: this imbalance is likely to continue and might make it more difficult for coalition forces to disengage.

#### Policy Implications:

- The willingness of the ITG to reach out to the Sunnis and keep in check sectarian tendencies, especially on de-Ba'athification, will be critical in shaping the effectiveness of the ISF and reducing the strength of the insurgency.
- The development of an ISF capable of taking on the Sunni insurgency will largely determine the MNF withdrawal plans and timetable, though we also need to bear in mind that the presence of the MNF is a major factor driving the insurgency.
- The existing emphasis on the development of ISF command and control, leadership and intelligence capabilities should be maintained.

- The rate of development of the IPS remains a cause for concern; if this does not speed up it could impact on the MNF withdrawal plans. More effort needs to be put into supporting the MOI.
- A continued emphasis should be placed on building respect for Human Rights in the ISF and particularly the IPS.

## THE IRAQI SECURITY FORCES

*This paper was commissioned by OD Sec and examines the Iraqi security forces, their strengths and weaknesses, and prospects. It updates [the JIC Assessment] issued on 15 December 2004.*

### Current Force Levels

1. The Iraqi security forces (ISF) have grown by some 37,000 since the end of December 2004. Nominally, the Iraqi army now numbers some 72,000 and the Ministry of the Interior has over 86,000 "trained and equipped" personnel, the large majority employed in the Iraqi police service (IPS) (see Annex). Quantitatively, the growth of the ISF to a nominal 160,000 now has been impressive and has resulted in a more visible presence in many areas of Iraq. But the overall figures should be treated with caution: they do not take account of significant absenteeism or provide a guide to real capability.

### Effectiveness

2. Expansion has been matched by some progress in effectiveness. Military and police units generally performed well protecting the elections in January. There have been increasing examples of a willingness to stand and fight: eg, on 18 April the IPS defeated an attack on a police station in Mosul by over 20 insurgents. The ability of the more capable Iraqi army units to conduct complex operations with the Multinational Force (MNF) is improving, helped by embedded advisors. Mutual trust and confidence in some units is growing. In Baghdad the 40<sup>th</sup> Iraqi Army Brigade has been given its own area of responsibility within the city, including the notorious Haifa Street.

3. But the picture is mixed. The number of units capable of taking the fight to the insurgents in Sunni areas remains small. The nationally deployable Iraqi Intervention Forces (IIF) and Special Police Commandos have increased to some 16,000<sup>1</sup> from 4,000 in December. While absenteeism is generally lower than last year, in late April the IIF 6<sup>th</sup> Brigade in Mosul was at well below 50% strength. Standards of training and equipment within these rapidly generated units can also vary. The ISF remain totally dependent on MNF support for strike capability from armour, artillery and air. Of some 70 army battalions, none are assessed by MNF as fully capable. The effectiveness varies across Iraq. In the more benign UK area in the south progress has been good: the Iraqi 10<sup>th</sup> Division has 6 battalions deployed on operations across the region, all at over 90% strength. The situation in the Sunni heartlands is more difficult: in March some Iraqi army battalions in Ramadi and Fallujah were operating at around 30% strength.

4. ISF progress is being hampered by poor national and provincial political leadership. There is no coherent Iraqi counter-insurgency policy and the balance of responsibility between the MOD and MOI and other government departments is undefined. It is too early to say whether the newly-appointed ministers will be able to address these issues quickly. MOD and MOI capacity to manage the ISF is developing only slowly, particularly in the MOI: there continue to be cases of the ISF not being paid [...]. Basic command and control capability is growing: the National and Provincial Joint Co-ordination Centres' (PJCC) staffs are

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<sup>1</sup> MOI Special Police Commando and Emergency Response unit and MOD IIF and Special Operations unit.

being trained and communications infrastructure is in place, and can work effectively. But the system is still some way from being fully operational: only one of the PJCCs is judged by MNF as fully capable. ISF leadership quality is patchy and there has been slow progress establishing the NATO-run Staff College. Divisional and brigade headquarters are being set up, but the majority are not effectively manned, trained or equipped. Independent logistic support is minimal and MNF believe it will be at least 12 months before even a limited capability is in place.

5. Iraqi intelligence organisations will be critical for success: they are developing but are still largely unproductive and unco-ordinated. There are separate MOD and MOI units in addition to the Iraqi National Intelligence Service (INIS). Provincial and local structures are also emerging. A number of these are under the control of rival militias and political groups; some are Iranian financed. The degree to which these organisations are able – or willing – to be absorbed into a national structure is unclear. The tensions between the Ministers of Defence and Interior, and the addition of a new Ministry of State for National Security, will complicate the issue.

### **A Difficult Environment**

6. Attacks on the ISF have continued to account for about 10-20% of the total. But they have suffered a disproportionately high casualty rate: since November 2004 the ISF and MNF have both averaged around 16 casualties a day. The ISF are generally less well protected and present more targets as they take on more security responsibilities. They continue to be hit hard by suicide bombers. Kidnapping and murder is also common. But despite the sustained attacks and intimidation, morale and recruitment is holding up. The ISF also remain popular according to polling, but probably not in hardline Sunni areas.

7. The ISF continue to be penetrated by insurgents [...] In Shia areas penetration takes a different form with political groupings seeking to exert control over the local ISF. The loyalty of the IPS in particular is fragile: the potential for collusion with militants is high. In Najaf there was fighting in April between rival police backed by competing political militias. [...]

8. The behaviour of some members of the ISF is criminal. Interrogation practices can fall well below international human rights standards [...] Corruption, including bribery and embezzlement, remains endemic. There is intelligence of some action being taken against corrupt police officers, but we do not know how much is being tackled; some police officers involved in anti-corruption work have been murdered.

### **The Security Plan**

9. The current build-up programme is on track numerically with the ISF growing to some 230,000 by the end of 2005, reaching a final total of 270,000 by November 2006. We do not know whether the Iraqi Transitional Government (ITG) will change this plan. New ministers have yet to settle in and it is too soon to judge whether fears of a deepening de-Ba'athification programme, including wholesale change among the senior leadership of the ISF, will be realised. Changing the shape and programme of the ISF will be difficult, particularly as funding issues remain serious and unresolved. The MOD current budget provision of some \$1.3bn falls well short of the Iraqi Interim Government's (IIG) authorised budget of \$3.1 bn. US

supplemental funding of around \$1.1bn has been confirmed by the Senate. There will still be a deficit of up to \$0.7bn.

10. The MNF has realigned its mission and plans to develop a partnership with the ITG to gradually hand over the counter-insurgency campaign to the ISF. This partnership will be developed at all levels between the MNF and ISF and include the deployment of transition teams to the Iraqi Army and some special police units. Some military transition teams have already deployed, the remainder will have done so by June. Special police transition teams have also deployed as have some provincial partnership teams. But security concerns continue and may constrain their effectiveness.

### **Prospects for Progressive Hand-over**

11. There are some positive signs that confidence and capability of parts of the ISF are growing: more Iraqis may be willing to fight. Much will depend on the ITG matching this momentum in the political process, particularly by broadening its support to include more Sunnis. The early signs have not been positive. The rejection by the Shia United Iraqi Alliance of many of the Sunni candidates for the ITG – largely on the grounds of former Ba'athist connections – has exacerbated already deep-rooted Sunni fears. A statement by the SCIRI leader al-Hakim has aroused fears about further extensive de-Ba'athification; and the paucity of Sunni Arabs in the Transitional National Assembly committee to draft the constitution risks further alienating them. The fatwa issued in early April by 62 Sunni clerics urging Sunnis to join the ISF is encouraging; but also reflects the fear of Shia dominance of the ISF. The present ethnic composition of the ISF is not clear, but the deployment of largely Shia or Kurdish ISF units into Sunni areas has met hostility in the past and this will remain a constraint. Integrating ethnic militias remains to be addressed and will be a major challenge. The Kurds seem determined to maintain the independence of the peshmerga. If not carefully managed by the ITG, ethnic and political divisions within the ISF could be deepened.

12. It will take time for a critical mass of the ISF to build up experience and robustness and be able to fully take over the counter insurgency campaign. The early signs from the partnering arrangements with the MNF are positive; the benefits of the military transition teams will be felt increasingly during the year. No specific timetable has been set for the progressive hand over of security responsibility to the Iraqis and the process will vary from province to province. The ITG have not yet pressed the issue, and we judge they are likely to take a pragmatic approach. The ITG will have to balance the wish of many Iraqis to see the withdrawal of the MNF against a need to ensure that the insurgency does not worsen.

13. The MNF intent is to have moved to provincial-level Iraqi control<sup>2</sup> of security throughout the country by the end of November 2005, subject to a comprehensive series of governance and security criteria being met. We judge this intent to be realistic only in some of the more benign northern Kurdish and central/southern Shia provinces. In the UK area the expectation is to be able to hand-over provincial control in 2 provinces by October; the remaining 2, including Basra, will not be ready until at least March 2006. The ISF capacity to take on the toughest elements of the insurgency is likely to increase only slowly this year: we judge that hand-over of provincial control in the five predominantly Sunni provinces, including

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<sup>2</sup> Provincial Iraqi Security Control is defined as ISF able to lead in planning, directing, conducting and sustaining counter-insurgency operations with coalition support.

Baghdad, will not be possible until well into 2006 at the earliest. In these areas continued close and large-scale MNF support will be essential if the insurgency is to be degraded. MNF aspirations to hand over to national Iraqi security control<sup>3</sup> by mid 2006 are also unachievable. We cannot yet judge when this hand-over could occur.

14. The insurgent threat is only one factor. Organised crime, including murder, kidnapping and smuggling, is rife. The IPS is ineffective, there is no nationally integrated justice system and in most areas no properly functioning prison service. The IPS has not been developed as quickly as the MNF-backed armed forces and this imbalance is likely to continue and might make it more difficult for coalition forces to disengage.

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<sup>3</sup> National Iraqi Security Control is defined as ISF able to lead in planning, directing, conducting and sustaining counter-insurgency operations across Iraq. MNF would be in overwatch with a reducing operational profile, presence and basing footprint. MNF would consolidate to contingency operating bases and a few forward operating bases.

## ANNEX: Iraqi Security Force Levels (as at 25 April 2005)

## Iraqi Security Forces - Ministry of Interior

COMPONENT	AUTHORISED		CURRENTLY TRAINED AND EQUIPPED <sup>4</sup>		PROJECTED 100% AUTHORISED TRAINED & EQUIPPED	
	25 Apr 05	29 Nov 04	25 Apr 05	29 Nov 04	25 Apr 05	29 Nov 04
POLICE	135,000	135,000	56,459	47,342	Nov 06	Jul 06
CIVIL INTERVENTION FORCE	4,800 <sup>5</sup>	3,720	4,726	1,091	Jul 05	Jul 05
EMERGENCY RESPONSE UNIT	400	270	233	168	Dec 05	Feb 05
BORDER ENFORCEMENT	28,360	29,360	15,583	14,593	Aug 06	Aug 06
HIGHWAY PATROL	6,300	6,300	1,127	370	Jul 06	TBD
DIGNITARY PROTECTION	500	500	500	484	Mar 05	Dec 04
SPECIAL POLICE COMMANDO UNITS	4,450 <sup>6</sup>	4,450	7,399	1,650	Mar 05	Jan 05
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>175,361</b>	<b>179,600</b>	<b>86,027</b>	<b>65,698</b>	<b>Nov 06</b>	<b>Aug 06</b>

## Iraqi Security Forces - Ministry of Defence

COMPONENT	AUTHORISED		CURRENTLY OPERATIONAL		PROJECTED FULL OPERATIONAL CAPABILITY	
	25 Apr 05	29 Nov 04	25 Apr 05	29 Nov 04	25 Apr 05	29 Nov 04
REGULAR ARMY AND INTERVENTION FORCE <sup>7</sup>	36,315	33,584	26,551	4,775	Jul 05	Jul 05
NATIONAL GUARD <sup>8</sup>	56,727	61,904	39,961	43,445	Jul 05	Sep 05
SPECIAL OPS	1,967	1,967	845	587	Sep 05	Sep 05
AIR FORCE	453	502	193	167	Nov 05	TBD
NAVY/COASTAL DEFENCE	582	582	521	484	TBD	TBD
IRAQI ARMY (MECHANIZED AND ARMOUR)	1,679	n/k	1,359	n/k	Jul 05	n/k
COMBAT SUPPORT, SERVICE SUPPORT, & TRAINING UNITS	5,367	n/k	3,081	n/k	Jun 05	n/k
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>103,090</b>	<b>98,539</b>	<b>72,511</b>	<b>49,458</b>	<b>Nov 05</b>	<b>Mar 06</b>

<sup>4</sup> Does not reflect losses in Iraqi Police and Dept of Border Enforcement due to casualties and AWOLs.

<sup>5</sup> Including Public Order Battalions: does not include 1,320 authorised manning for 8th Mech Bde.

<sup>6</sup> End strength authorisations for the Special Police Commando Bns are being re-examined by the MOI.

<sup>7</sup> Including some 7,800 in the Iraqi Intervention Force Division.

<sup>8</sup> Dissolution of the National Guard was announced on 9 January 2005. Battalions previously under the National Guard will migrate into the Regular Army over the next several months.