

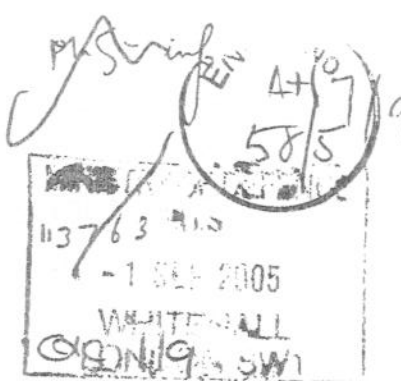
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SECRETARY OF STATE

MSU 4/5/2C

PRIME MINISTER



UPDATE ON PROGRESS OF THE IRAQI SECURITY FORCES (ISF)

You asked for a note on Iraqi Security Forces. This note provides an update on the progress of the Iraqi Security Forces which incorporates comment from UK personnel currently in Baghdad. It is authentically realistic and avoids undue over optimism.

Summary

Numerically, generation of ISF remains on track, but significant development in key capability areas is still needed:

- At the tactical level Iraqi Ministry of Defence (IMOD) forces are progressing well, but their operational headquarters are still short of the capacity to direct and sustain independent operations;
- Despite significant investment, several areas – equipment husbandry and sustainability, as well as an effective command and control capability – remain a cause for concern;
- IMOD lacks basic competences in financial management and budgeting, acquisition and logistics; this has been compounded by endemic corruption, which has created a culture of bureaucratic over-centralisation;
- Progress of the Ministry of Interior (MOI) forces has lagged, with the capability of the Iraqi Police Service (IPS) across Iraq 12 months behind that of the Army, but their training and equipment programmes should improve during 2006.

These problem areas are being addressed and progress continues to be made; with the focus on quantity rather than quality, this inevitably will take time. The work of the Joint Commission of Transition to Iraqi Self-Reliance will define the conditions that will control the pace of security handover to the Iraqis; these conditions will include periodic assessments of the effectiveness of the ISF.

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Ministry of Defence (IMOD) Forces

(1) Trained and equipped IMOD forces now total just below 80,000 personnel; they will reach full authorised strength (currently 106,000) in November 2006.

According to the latest figures compiled in theatre, which assessed the ISF's operational capability, the Iraqi Army has 82 battalions<sup>1</sup> deployed in combat, only two of which are capable of executing and sustaining counter-insurgency operations independently of coalition forces. Some 31 battalions are capable of undertaking such operations with ISF in the lead with some coalition support. The rest are capable of conducting operations only when operating alongside coalition forces; a further 19 battalions are still being formed.<sup>2</sup>

(2) The first mechanised brigade, initiated by former PM Allawi, is presently conducting operations in conjunction with coalition forces. By the time of the referendum in October, it should be in the lead in conducting operations with coalition support; two further brigades, completing the Mechanised Division, should be formed by mid-2006. All units will primarily be equipped with ex-Soviet tanks and armoured vehicles.

(3) Logistics support has been given greater priority than previously. 10,000 dedicated personnel are to be trained by November 2006. Various levels of logistics support should be in place by then, but even so, this is likely to be insufficient to support all IMOD forces and so remains a potential block to effective Iraqi self-reliance.

<sup>1</sup> A battalion averages about 800 personnel.

<sup>2</sup> Coalition "Transitional Readiness Assessments" grade ISF units and headquarters from Level 1 (capable of planning, executing and sustaining counter-insurgency operations without coalition support), Level 2 (capable...with some coalition support), Level 3 (partially capable of counter-insurgency operations in conjunction with coalition units) and Level 4 (unit forming). Embedded "transition teams" now exist at all levels of the ISF command chain and are key in providing advice and, where necessary, stiffening to Iraqi tactical commanders (at unit level US personnel live and operate with Iraqi battalions, this is not the case with UK personnel). The teams also provide the qualitative judgment on a range of criteria (manning, equipment, command and control, leadership) to assess ISF transitional readiness, which ensures a measured introduction of units into combat.

- (4) The ISF were generated for counter-insurgency operations before the parent operational headquarters had been established to plan and conduct such military activity. Coalition personnel continue to underpin the ISF command chain, training and mentoring, to establish the necessary functions which will enable autonomous operations.
- (5) IMOD weaknesses also remain in financial management and budgeting. Reallocation of the 2005 budget is underway to secure military salaries for the remainder of the year and this will impact adversely on the equipment budget. The annual cost of sustaining IMOD forces is about \$4bn, more than the existing budget, which will bring longer-term affordability into question; corruption exacerbates the problem. Across the board the IMOD lacks the administrative capacity and procedures, which an established professional civil service would bring – much effort is being invested by the coalition to alter this.
- (6) As for the span of political control of the ISF by the Iraqi government, the succession of short term “power sharing” governments has not created the conditions for the generation of coherent policies. The next Iraqi government should, at least, have time to develop comprehensive policies. The relationship with regional/provincial government is a key part of the ongoing debate over the constitution. Armed militias are a reality and cannot be ignored; both the Kurds and Shia have them and their presence is implicit in the form of local militias to protect businesses mentioned in PM Ja’afari’s twelve-point security statement. We must beware that the ISF we are creating does not migrate into yet more locally owned militias.

#### Ministry of Interior (IMOI) Forces

- (7) Trained and equipped IMOI forces number just over 95,000 personnel, and should reach full strength (193,500) in 2007.
- (8) The Iraqi Police Service (IPS) will be the largest component (135,000), but remains riven with bribery, corruption, intimidation and politicisation. IPS

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and the more robust Special Police Commandos have been linked to human rights abuses and extra judicial killings. Training is in place to deal with this. On the margins of the IPS, there is evidence of complicity with the insurgents, particularly in attacks against the coalition. Notwithstanding this, the Special Police Commando and Public Order Battalions continue to perform well, conducting successful counter-insurgency operations relieving pressure from the coalition in the main cities.

(9) Across Iraq, the rule of law is hampered by institutional fragility in the police and criminal justice system. Shortcomings in basic infrastructure, equipment, training and specialist capabilities such as forensics continue to limit IPS performance.

(10) Overall, the IPS is probably about a year behind the development of the Iraqi Army; but the position is uneven across the country, with better progress in the south and the north of Iraq. This means that in the difficult areas like central/western Iraq, the IPS will not be in a position to contribute significantly to breaking the back of the insurgency until about this time next year. In MND(SE), increased military support to the police training effort will accelerate their development; but nationally, only a marked shift in emphasis, combined with a more permissive environment, will redress the IMOD/IMO disparity and enable more progress to be made.

(11) The Department for Border Enforcement (DBE) numbers 16,000 and will reach full strength (28,000) by December 2005. The DBE has developed significantly over the last 6 months and is now conducting operations on the Jordanian and Syrian borders with coalition support. New border forts will provide the infrastructure from which to bound Iraqi territory and plans are in place for the necessary communications, vehicles and training.

### Equipment

(12) Equipment, infrastructure and training continue to be delivered via the Petraeus plan. To give an idea of the scale and diversity of this programme, in

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the week ending 31 July 05 over 1000 vehicles, 4,500 weapons, 3000 sets of body armour and 3.5m rounds of ammunition were issued to the ISF; funding was provided (\$19m) for Police Stations in Mosul and Tall 'Afar; and a \$10m contract for a further 11 Police Stations was awarded.

(13) ISF equipment management and accountability remain a concern, while the sheer scale of the equipment programme means that the IMOD and IMOI are struggling to manage. Corruption and inefficiency have also undermined the Iraqi equipment acquisition process. These difficulties are compounded by financial chaos, the result of poor budgeting, and a lack of medium term planning and prioritisation. A further challenge to ISF longer-term sustainability is the heterogeneous equipment systems being supplied, which will prove more difficult to replace and repair.

(14) Poor communications remain a constraint, but are gradually being improved. A new voice and data system will link 50 military bases from January 2006, and a Ministry of Communications initiative promises broadband connectivity between 35 government locations in due course.

(15) The UK has little influence over the focus and delivery of the Petraeus plan, but we continue to provide equipment to the ISF in MND(SE) under Op OSIRIS; a further £38m has been requested from HMT to fund a second tranche of equipment and infrastructure projects, covering weapons, vehicles and barracks' construction.

Ministry of Defence

(J.R.)

28 August 2005

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