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**COSSEC**

**DEVELOPING CAPABLE AND EFFECTIVE IRAQI SECURITY FORCES**

**ISSUE**

1. To inform COS on the prospects for developing capable and effective Iraqi Security Forces (ISF).

**TIMING**

2. Routine. For COS OOC.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

3. COS are invited to note:
  - a. Progress to date on developing capable and effective ISF has been characterised by:
    - (1) Too much emphasis on the Physical Component of Fighting Power at the expense of the Conceptual and Moral Components.
    - (2) A tendency towards optimism in 'talking-up' the levels of current and anticipated progress in delivering the Physical Component of the ISF.
    - (3) A desire to find short-term fixes and silver bullet solutions to problems which defy such an approach.
  - b. But the situation is much better than it might have been:
    - (1) The Iraqi National Security Strategy (INSS) has identified the requisite structures, capabilities, priorities and funding to be applied to ISF development.
    - (2) The requisite manpower, training and equipment is resourced.
    - (3) The need to build, as a priority, capability rather than capacity is recognised.
  - c. But political frustration about the pace of progress remains at the highest levels of US, UK and Iraqi government. In the immediate future this is likely to be reflected in a tension between:
    - (1) Applying short-term energy and resources into achieving 'quick-wins' which allow the ISF to play a real part in dealing with the

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immediate security problems up to and including the elections in Jan 05, and in doing so shore-up the credibility of the IIG.

(2) Developing the more rounded capability which will allow, by early 2006, the ISF to successfully assume the demands of prosecuting a complex counter-insurgency, without the intimate support of the MNF-I.

d. Our strategy must be to manage this tension by:

(1) In the short term: ensure that the ISF rapidly develop, albeit on a limited scale, the capability to deal with immediate situations and threats. Pivotal to this is the development of the Iraqi Intervention Force (IIF) (as a principal partner in prosecuting Allawi's 'Seven Cities Initiative') and the Police Counter-Terrorist capability.

(2) In the medium-term: continue to develop the fully-rounded capability which the ISF will need to prosecute a complex counter-insurgency on their own. Pivotal to this is a greater emphasis on conceptual (doctrine, intelligence architecture, operational C2) and moral (leadership training, vetting, operational inoculation) elements of capability.

e. We must resist nugatory initiatives. A complex counter insurgency does not lend itself to decisive manoeuvre by mechanised divisions. We must also ensure that we remain steadfast in developing the capabilities which serve the MNF-I exit strategy and the subsequent ability of Iraq to handle Strategic Stand-off.

#### BACKGROUND

4. The short history of the development of the ISF is, in retrospect, not pretty. Policy decisions by the CPA to disband the Iraqi Armed Forces and to embark on de-Baathification; the lack of a strategy regarding Iraq's future security sector architecture; a plethora of bottom-up initiatives to meet the immediate demands of a deteriorating security situation; bureaucratic complexity in allocating resources to meet the manning, training and equipment needs of the new security structures: all these factors have bedevilled progress.

5. To such problems have been added others, born of frustration, ignorance and human frailty. There has been a fascination with the Physical Component of Fighting Power (manpower, equipment and training) to the detriment of both the Moral Component (the ability of the force to 'endure in adversity') and the Conceptual Component (the purpose, design and structure of the force). There has been an understandable tendency by some to 'talk-up' the timescales for delivering the physical component of the force. And there have been a plethora of initiatives and pressures that seek silver-bullet solutions to problems which defy the alchemist's approach.

#### CURRENT SITUATION

6. The current situation is, however, much better than the history might suggest and frustration needs to be tempered with reality:

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a. The Conceptual Component. The INSS, although not officially signed off, has produced the broad underpinning for the Security Sector Architecture. The troops-to task analysis has identified the capabilities and capacities required to populate that architecture; and it has been properly costed. The INSS also recognises the need to place the priority for development on those institutions and capabilities needed for countering a terrorist insurgency.

b. The Moral Component. The moral component represents the most hard-earned and most easily lost element of fighting power. Last April demonstrated the folly of pushing ill-prepared forces too quickly into operational circumstances for which they had not been trained and prepared. More recently the committal of ISF has been carefully managed and the IFF, ING, IPS and Iraqi Army SF have been instrumental in setting the conditions for recent successes.

c. The Physical Component. The latest Petraeus plan predicts that by the end of 2005 the ISF will have a total strength of 234,000, equipped and trained to tackle the majority of threats faced in Iraq. The planned uplifts thereafter will create a total force of 265,000 by Jan 06. In a shorter time-frame, by the end of 2004, the ISF should be capable of conducting up to 3 concurrent surge/offensive operations drawing on 9 IIF battalions and 6 IPG Public Order battalions.

7. Such progress, however, must be set in the context of significant political frustration at the highest levels of Iraqi, US and UK government. Capable and effective ISF are fundamental both to the IIG's political credibility and to the international coalition's exit strategy. In this respect the development of the ISF in the coming months will be the subject of a tension between two desires:

a. One desire will be that of underpinning the political credibility of the IIG and meeting the immediate demands of the security situation up to and including the elections. This tension will be epitomised by demands for quick-wins, for resources to be diverted into symbolic rather than real capability, and for risk to be taken in pushing less capable/poorly equipped/prepared ISF into the vanguard of operations.

b. The other desire will be that of creating the rounded capability needed by subsequent Iraqi governments to effectively prosecute a complex counter insurgency without the intimate support of MNF-I capability. Such a requirement does not yet have the immediacy it deserves, since it involves investment in competencies – largely moral and conceptual – which take time to create.

## FUTURE STRATEGY

8. Our future strategy must therefore balance this tension. Specifically:

a. Short Term. In the short term we must give priority to developing the capability of those elements of the ISF which are optimised for prosecuting the counter-insurgency campaign. These elements (principally SF, IIF, IPS CT and ING) will, for some time yet, need to operate with the intimate support of the MNF-I. Their committal to operations will need to be carefully managed to ensure that the conditions for success always exist. They must play, and be seen to play, a pivotal role in Allawi's 'seven cities initiative.' At the same time we must resist the pressure

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to divert resources into symbolic capabilities which have no practical part to play in the prosecution of a counter-insurgency campaign.

b. Medium Term. In the medium term (but action is needed now in order that the requisite capabilities are nurtured) we must create the competencies to allow the Iraqis to assume sole responsibility for the campaign. Pivotal to this is the development of leadership; the creation of an intelligence architecture which has genuine penetration of terrorist organisations; and the development of a national operational C2 architecture which is able to apply ISF capability in time and place in order to have operational effect.

### CONCLUSION

9. One conclusion to be drawn from this analysis is that the current political frustration at the lack of progress in ISF development may be mis-directed. It is focussing too much on short-term, physical and – to an extent – symbolic representations of capability; it is not focussing enough on the capabilities which will actually allow Iraq to fight its own campaign. The need to meet this latter requirement may be brought closer in time as a result of elections in the new year.

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