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A STUDY OF THE PROVINCES WITHIN THE UK AOR

1. At the Op COS on Tues 22 Apr, CDI was tasked with providing an assessment of the provinces within the UK AOR. A general assessment is attached, with details for each province/governorate contained in annexes.

[signed on CHOTS]

PS/CDI

Enclosure

1. Assessment of Provinces within UKAOR

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DECLASSIFIED**ENCLOSURE 1 TO****CDI 2/12/5/1****DATED 28 APR 03****GENERAL ASSESSMENT OF PROVINCES WITH UK AOR****HUMAN FACTORS ASSESSMENT****Demographics in the UK AOR**

1. Over 80% of the population in the UK AOR is Shi'a.
2. The main cities in the UK AOR are:

City	Population
Basrah	1,337,600
An Nasariyah	535,100
Al Kut	381,500
Al Amarah	340,100
Az Zubayr	168,000
Suq ash Shuyukh	155,600
Ash Samawah	124,400

Tribal Dynamics in the UK AOR

3. The overwhelming majority of tribes in the UK AOR have welcomed the removal of the regime. A number of tribal leaders are actively co-operating with Coalition forces, and others have expressed a willingness to do so. Some tribes do, however, remain suspicious of Coalition intentions.
4. There is potential for inter-tribal conflict in the aftermath period. The main axis for this will be between formerly pro and anti-regime tribes. Some southern Iraqi tribes have strong relations with Iran, and will be influenced by Iranian policy. Bedouin/non-Bedouin tensions, particularly over the Persian ancestry of some tribes, could be a cause of friction. Traditional tribal enmity over land or blood debt in the UK AOR is unlikely to be destabilising.
5. The most significant pro-regime tribes in the UK AOR are the Sunni Sa'dun tribe, located in the Basrah and Dhi Qar governorates, and the Shi'a Khafaji tribe, located in the Dhi Qar governorate. Members of these tribes are likely to be the focus of revenge attacks in the coming months.
6. The Coalition should avoid favouring individual tribal groups, and need to co-opt major groups into governance or face opposition.
7. The large Shi'a tribes and confederations which have members distributed throughout the 5 governorates – namely the Albu Muhammad, Bani Hujaym, Bani Lam, Bani Malik, Bani Mansur, Bani Rabi'a, Bani Rikab, Bani Sa'id, Bani Tamim and Shammar Toqa – should be

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represented in new political structures in southern Iraq, in order to reflect the region's demographics.

8. Further detailed information on current tribal dynamics in the UK AOR is limited.

Religious Dynamics in the UK AOR

9. A number of religious leaders are currently vying for influence over the Shi'a population. However, it is judged that the population recognise Grand Ayatollah Al Uzma Haj Sayyid 'Ali Husayn Sistani as the supreme religious authority in Iraq. Sistani is based in Najaf, and most local clerics in the UK AOR are believed to be his followers. Significant differences between Iraqi and Iranian Shi'ism render it highly unlikely that Iraqi Shi'a will align themselves with Iran in the aftermath period.

10. However, there is strong evidence that Iranian-backed groups are attempting to increase their influence in southern Iraq. There is a possibility that latent anti-Coalition sentiment among the population, exacerbated by civil unrest and the humanitarian situation, will be utilised by these groups to increase their leverage during Phase IV.

11. A number of tribes have provided logistical support and personnel to Iranian-backed groups. There are now estimated to be at least 1,000 active members of the Iranian-backed Badr Corps in southern Iraq, located in the Maysan, Basrah and Dhi Qar governorates. There is some evidence that the Corps is attempting to undermine support for the Coalition among the populace.

12. The Badr Corps - along with its political wing, the Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI) - is judged to be working through certain members of the clerical establishment in order to gain leverage in the region.

13. With the controls of the regime now lifted, further outbreaks of violence are likely as the various Shi'a factions attempt to gain political and social influence in the new Iraq.

INFRASTRUCTURE ASSESSMENT

14. In addition to the general overview below, specific infrastructure details of the 5 UK AOR provinces are provided as separate annexes. There is insufficient detail available at this time to give a complete picture:

General

15. During the earlier phases of Op TELIC, the majority of Iraq's national critical infrastructure was placed on either the Restricted Target List (RTL) or the No Strike List (NSL). The notable exceptions were civilian and military telecommunication facilities, military logistics and buildings closely associated with the regime. However, we have received very little Battle Damage Assessment (BDA) and, of that received, the level of detail precludes a comprehensive significance assessment. Furthermore, the BDA received does not reflect damage caused by artillery or small arms fire. As a consequence the following assessments should be regarded as incomplete.

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Airfields

16. Twenty of Iraq's principal airfields with hard surface runways fall within the UK AOR. The most significant of these is Basrah International Airport. Some 17 of these airfields were included in the systematic Iraqi Airfield Denial Programme, with the runways and operating surfaces being obstructed in various manners, including the use of earthen berms and derelict vehicles.

17. Whilst it is understood that a number of these airfields have been cleared as Forward Operating Bases for Coalition forces (notably Sarabadi – cleared by USMC, and Tallil – cleared for USAF), others remain obstructed and are unusable by fixed wing aircraft. Four airfields: Basrah International, Sarabadi, Tallil and Ubadayh Bin Al Jarrah have been, or are in the process of being, cleared. The remaining 16 still obstructed airfields in the AOR would require varying but significant effort to restore them to full operating capability.

18. Of the 20 airfields, 12 have an assessed Load Classification Number (LCN) of 39 and are capable of sustained air transport operations by C-130 aircraft, whilst Basrah International has an LCN of 82 and is assessed as being capable of sustained operations by the heaviest of aircraft. Those airfields with a lower assessed LCN eg Basrah Maqal (25), may be capable of supporting C-130 aircraft under operational circumstances.

Ports and Inland Waterways

19. Until major clearance operations in the Shatt al Arab are conducted, Basrah will be unavailable for major port operations. Umm Qasr is currently Iraq's principal commercial port and is beginning to be used as a point of entry for humanitarian relief. However, its capacity is severely limited until wrecks are cleared and major dredging recommences. The port equipment is limited due to poor maintenance, however, no damage from the conflict was reported.

Roads

20. South-east Iraq has an effective all-weather, modern system of 2 and 3-lane roads linking the southern ports and cities to the North. Roads are generally in good condition although recent heavy Coalition traffic and tracked vehicles on main supply routes may have caused some damage to surfaces. Although it has been reported that many bridges were prepared for demolition, only one on a major route has been destroyed (Route 6 on the southern approaches to Baghdad).

Railways

21. There is a key rail link of approximately 580 km which runs between the port of Umm Qasr and Baghdad, with an 18 km branch line into Al Basrah. It is a single track, non-electrified, standard gauge railway (1,435 mm). There are no reports of damage due to the conflict and it is assessed that the tracks remain in good operational condition. The small stretch of track from Umm Qasr to Al Basrah was recently reactivated by UK forces with local assistance.

Telecommunications and Broadcasting

22. The current state of the Iraqi C3 and broadcasting networks is assessed to be in various stages of degradation, with certain key networks rendered non-operational. Lengthy and costly

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repairs need to be carried out to the coaxial and fibre optic cable networks in order to restore full connectivity, the time scale of which are not determinable without close scrutiny of degradation sustained. Similarly Radio Relay networks require restoration but not of the same magnitude. The Public Switched Telephone Network was disrupted when a number of exchanges throughout the area were functionally destroyed. This limits the flexibility and capacity of the network.

23. Other systems in use include Long Range Cordless Telephones (LRCT) (also reported as High Powered Cordless Phones (HPCP)) and MK-14 networks, which were initially used only by high-level entities but as other networks became less available and reliable, their use became more widespread. In addition to the above two systems, the usage of INMARSAT and Thuraya surged, as Iraq's access to international communications via its international PSTN gateways was denied due to degradation of the systems. Latterly, the main users of INMARSAT and Thuraya in Iraq were assessed to be overwhelmingly non-hostile, being mainly press, NGOs or allied forces entities.

24. The obvious means of reconstituting the Iraqi telecommunications system to a fully useable system would be to rebuild the backbone microwave network, the primary city telephone exchanges and the primary satellite ground-stations. However, to provide a "quick fix" to offer a communications capability within a matter of days, a GSM system could be put in place, similar to that introduced in Afghanistan. This could be so engineered as to afford connectivity from Baghdad to the nationwide PSTN.

Oil and Gas

25. The AOR is an extremely oil-rich region, incorporating over two thirds of Iraq's proven oil reserves, significant export routes and a substantial refining capacity. Little of the southern oil infrastructure was damaged during Op TELIC. However, most of the oil-related installations ground to a halt as Coalition forces approached the southern oil fields and oil workers stayed away. The knock-on effect has been a virtual cessation in the movement of crude oil for export to Turkey and to the export terminals in the Gulf. It is also probable that Al Basrah's refining capability has, at best, been significantly reduced by the lack of manpower and movement of crude oil. There is significant storage capacity for both crude oil and refined products in the AOR, but again it is effectively redundant unless it can be accessed and transported.

Electric Power

26. The original power system in Iraq was well designed and contained a strong element of in-built redundancy. However, due to damage caused during the first Gulf War and compounded by a serious lack of maintenance since, the practical limit for generation and transmission prior to the recent conflict was around 40-50% capacity. Power cuts were widespread and prolonged, and continue to be so. It is assessed that whilst the power plants are operating (albeit at their reduced capacities), there may be problems with transmission of the power caused by conflict damage to powerlines. Many industrial and civilian facilities have their own power supplies, mainly in the form of diesel generators. Electricity is generated from a conventional mix of oil-fired thermal and gas turbine plants. There are no nuclear power plants.

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Water Utilities

27. The water and sewage system of Iraq as a whole is only partially operational as a result of damage sustained during Op DESERT STORM, subsequent inadequate maintenance and a severe lack of spare parts and treatment chemicals due to sanctions. Although some water treatment plants do operate and provide limited levels of potable water, the majority is either inoperable or operated at substantially reduced levels. Since the conflict, 60% of the water distribution system has been re-established for Al Basrah city and 450,000+ litres of bottled water is being delivered daily. Water is tankered in to smaller settlements, usually every other day. Sewage treatment plants are barely functioning. It is doubtful that the system can be restored to a reliable service without extensive investment of money, time and equipment.

Medical Infrastructure

28. Prior to Phase IV, the medical care and supplies available from the medical system were known to be very limited and it was assessed that the infrastructure would be quickly overwhelmed by the consequences of any conflict. The shortages of medicines and other medical material that existed prior to the conflict have been aggravated by looting. However, NGOs have restocked most of the major hospitals although there remains the continuing problem of persuading Iraqi health professionals to return to their posts.

Annexes:

- A. Basrah Governorate
- B. Maysan Governorate
- C. Dhi Qar Governorate
- D. Muthanna Governorate
- E. Wasit Governorate

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