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IRAQ: SECURITY SECTOR REFORM

Introduction

1. Security sector reform (SSR), if carried out successfully, should lead to Iraq giving up its attachment to WMD, dismantling its oppressive network of spies, informers and secret police, scaling down its huge armed forces and reforming its criminal-justice system. If SSR goes well, the Iraqi administration after Saddam Hussein (SH) will be much less likely to pose the same threat to the region and to its own people. SSR will thus be a key task for the immediate post-SH administration, whether that is a new Iraqi government, a UN-led administration or a coalition military governorate.
2. This paper sets out what security sector reform is; describes briefly what we know of the organisations that work in Iraq's security sector; and lists the issues that SSR in Iraq will have to address.

What is SSR?

3. The security sector of a state typically comprises those bodies, civil and military, responsible for protecting the state and communities within it eg the armed forces, the police, the intelligence agencies and the courts. Security sector reform (SSR) addresses how the security sector is structured, managed and resourced and the obstacles governments face in bringing security institutions to account. Accountability, affordability and appropriateness are often the SSR watchwords. When the security apparatus is manifestly too big, as it is in Iraq, SSR is partly about turning swords into ploughshares.
4. SSR should not be considered in isolation from other key post-SH issues such as political reform and economic reconstruction. Indeed, these three subjects are interdependent. For example, the question as to whether the Kurds should have their own security forces is clearly linked to the nature of any political autonomy they will enjoy within Iraq. Likewise, the size of Iraq's armed forces and police will depend, inter alia, on government funding, for which there will be many competing priorities.

Possible types of government in Iraq after Saddam

5. If military action removes Saddam's regime, an American general will find himself 'governing' Iraq on the first day after. We envisage that a military governorate should give way, after some weeks, to a multinational administration, probably under UN auspices. But it is possible that the US may decide to stay in charge, inviting other countries and organisations to contribute to the new administration in specific areas. Whichever it is, UN or US-led, this interim, second stage government will, in due course, hand power back to the Iraqi people, probably through newly created government structures.

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6. Any interim administration must enjoy international legitimacy in order to survive and to improve the chances that the structures it puts in place will endure. The legal base for post-conflict actions will depend, in the initial stages, on the legal base for military action. That could be Security Council authorisation to enforce Iraqi compliance with its WMD obligations. But such a basis is not likely to be capable of being maintained long after the end of hostilities. That suggests that the coalition will need to return to the UN for further authorisation.

7. Alternatively, it is possible, perhaps as a result of the threat of military action but before any invasion starts, that Saddam could be replaced in a coup d'état, most likely with another general taking his place. In that case, the new Iraqi authorities might well govern without outside assistance. Any involvement of the international community in SSR would have to be negotiated with the new Iraqi government.

8. The type of administration that emerges after Saddam will have a marked implication for SSR and disarmament, demobilisation and resettlement (DDR), including the mechanism by which these activities are coordinated. For example, the World Bank and UNDP are key agencies for DDR. How they will work will depend on the type of post-conflict government established. And for DDR to succeed, the Kurds and Shia will have to have confidence in the new political framework or process being created.

Good government and SSR in Iraq

9. In Iraq, a first task of a new, post-SH administration will be to stabilise the country and provide a degree of law and order. This stabilisation phase is not part of SSR but is a necessary condition of it. For once stability has been achieved, SSR can begin. However, the process of stabilisation is likely to shape SSR. The stabilisation phase may include disarming the Iraqi security apparatus, the cantonment of GoI security personnel, the establishment of special courts to try war criminals, and the release of political prisoners. All these issues have a bearing on SSR and should be included in an SSR plan.

10. In its broadest sense, SSR in Iraq will be about reforming a regime that has ruled by terror into one that rules on consensual, humanitarian principles. SSR should be seen within the overall policy framework of promoting good government. Two very important elements of SSR, where the overlap with good government can be seen clearly, concern the police and the judiciary. We do not know much about these sectors. But they will both be crucial to establishing public confidence in the new Iraq.

Description of the security structures

11. Iraq's security apparatus is the most important instrument of state control in Saddam's regime. It has been fundamental to the preservation of his rule. As well as protecting the president, the security agencies are responsible for maintaining internal security; preventing external threats to the regime; and conducting foreign operations. Additionally, these agencies play a role in procuring and concealing Iraq's WMD

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programmes. Specialised agencies provide signals intelligence and limited imagery intelligence. A list of security sector organisations is given in annex A.

12. The security apparatus consists of a network of security and intelligence agencies. The number and size of these agencies has grown over time. Their individual responsibilities often overlap, deliberately (it is claimed) to promote competition between them and to ensure none becomes too powerful. Sunni Arabs who make up less than 15% of the population of Iraq dominate the security organisations. The top ranks and key positions are held by 'Tikriti' Sunnis – a minority of Sunnis from tribes living around SH's hometown, Tikrit. The very top men are members of SH's family. The higher up the security organisation one goes, therefore, the more the incumbents start to resemble SH himself. // !

13. One way to visualise how Iraq's security organisations relate to one another is to think of a series of concentric circles. At the centre sits SH and his family. The outermost circle is the Iraqi people. The next circle in from the Iraqi people is the regular army, one of whose jobs is to protect all the organisations closer to SH than it from the Iraqi people. Then comes the Republican Guard, which protects the circles close to SH from the regular army. Next, the Special Republican guard protects SH and his kinsmen from the Republican guard and so on and so on.

Iraq's security needs

14. The future size and shape of Iraq's security forces need to match the likely future threats it will face. These include potential internal and external challenges. The internal threats are concerned with secessionist pressures from Kurds and Shia. Ideally, the new political process in Iraq, leading to a new constitutional arrangement, will largely defuse them. But we should not dismiss the risk that central authority in Iraq will disintegrate and be replaced by regional or tribal-based warlords. An associated and possibly greater threat is that any post-war economy will be heavily criminalised. The systems and networks, established over the last decade to evade sanctions, are likely already to have links to international criminal organisations. A criminalised economy would make Iraq less stable politically and lead to high levels of tax evasion, reducing resources for public services and SSR.

15. Externally, Iraq is situated in a dangerous region. Iran is a traditional enemy. Iraq and Syria are rivals, two countries divided by a common political party. There is no love lost with Israel which, like Iran and Syria, possesses WMD. Relations with Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf states will remain wary for the foreseeable future. Turkey will continue to see Iraq through the prism of Kurdish aspirations. So the case for Iraq retaining strong conventional forces can be made. However, Iraq's neighbours will want to have their say in the future development of Iraq's armed forces. And they may want to see Iraq have weaker armed forces than is consistent with the objectively assessed external threat.

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Issues raised by SSR in Iraq

16. Here are some of the issues that any SSR plan for Iraq must address.

(a) What security structures would be appropriate for a post-SH Iraqi government?

Before we can begin to draw up an SSR plan, we need to have some idea of what the end structure should be. How do we arrive at that? We shall need to make an assessment of the threats – internal and external – to the new Iraqi administration (see above). We shall need to know what the future constitutional shape of Iraq is to be. And we should have some idea of the tasks that a reformed security sector should undertake in a reformed Iraq. We need to bear in mind affordability too. The classic way to draw up such a plan would be to undertake a comprehensive review of the armed forces. Such a review would have to consider:

- How to match the size, tasks and organisation of the new security structures to the future constitutional development of the country. A federal Iraq, with the provinces enjoying a high degree of autonomy, would probably have different structures from a highly centralised Iraq.
- The network of international treaties and obligations to which Iraq is a party.
- How to develop genuinely national structures that are not captured by a minority group within Iraq. In particular, to what extent should the Kurds, who are not much represented in the security apparatus today, be integrated into the national structures?
- How to ensure that the structure is affordable relative to other demands on GoI revenues. The process of assessing appropriate size, tasks and organisation is likely to be iterative. The ideal structure may not be affordable relative to the demands on the Iraqi exchequer. This analysis will clearly depend on projections for the likely long-term oil price with Iraq as a major supplier.
- To what extent should the international community offer security guarantees to provide for long-term regional security and compensate Iraq for weaker armed forces?

(b) Who should be in charge of SSR?

In Afghanistan, SSR was hampered by the lack of international institutional architecture to tackle it. The UN declined to lead. The G8 eventually took on the role of co-ordinating SSR. The process of developing an SSR strategy with international participation was slow and painful. In Iraq's case, we should give a higher priority to organising SSR much earlier, ie ideally before military action. We will not have all the answers beforehand. But the international community could agree a forum for discussing SSR. Good articulation between the body charged with overseeing SSR and the post-SH interim administration will be critical.

- The US may insist on pursuing certain SSR issues alone – eg rounding up Saddam's criminals and dismantling the security agencies. We should ensure that activity fits into a comprehensive SSR plan, which spells out who will be responsible for what. That might involve splitting activity by function, as in Afghanistan, or by region or by some combination of both. We will need to decide which model is best suited to Iraq. Some idea of what roles the US, the World Bank, DPKO and UNDP will have in a post-SH Iraq will be important.

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(c) Methodology.

There are a number of issues – imposition v. cooperation; reform v. abolition; the degree of involvement of Iraq's neighbours; sequencing.

- Reforming strong, vested interests will be resisted. In the short term, a US military or UN-led government would be able to impose new structures. But the international community will need to persuade the new Iraqi administration to work with the new structures if they are to endure over the long term. So some method of getting the emerging Iraqi administrative class to buy into the new plan will be important.
- We shall need to train the new administration to continue the good work after the international community leaves (and to enable us to leave). We should not overlook the importance of capacity-building issues.
- There is also the question of incremental reform versus de-Nazification (or in Iraq's case, de-Tikritisisation). Should we remove all those parts of the security apparatus whose loyalty to the ancien regime was underpinned with ties of kith and kin (answer, surely, yes)? How far does that extend – further than the SSO and the Special Republican Guard? Should we, a priori, exclude the Tikriti clan from senior posts in a post-SH administration or should we try to identify individual Tikritis, not implicated in past abuses, ready to work for Iraq's long-term political and institutional reform?
- Linked to that, are there parts of the security sector we can identify now that should be dismantled entirely? The inner circle security agencies, eg the SSO and Saddam's martyrs, must be ripe for abolition. And are their parts that will be broadly reliable after SH goes? In which category should we put the civilian police and the judiciary?
- Some SSR tasks will have a greater priority than others. Arguably, a civilian police will need to be established earlier than a new military structure, as coalition forces will effectively be guarding Iraq's borders. The coalition will not have the manpower to police traffic and pursue common criminals.
- And sequencing will need to take account of different end timings as well as different starts. Certain SSR activities, finding and destroying WMD, will begin on the first day after. But they may also be completed well before others, eg police training.

(d) Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration.

DDR must go hand in hand with SSR. Slimming down a bloated security sector will involve getting rid of the untrained, the incompetent and the politically unacceptable as well as the merely superfluous. The precedents for managing DDR have been a mixture of efforts by the International Organisation for Migration and UNDP, with varying degrees of success. In Afghanistan, DDR was held up by disagreement over the size and shape of the future national armed forces. But the DDR plan for Iraq will face the international community with other challenges.

- To what extent should those members of the security apparatus who have committed crimes against the Iraqi people be punished? Do we pursue all the torturers or just the leaders? What mechanisms should be created to bring them to justice (eg international courts or reformed Iraqi domestic courts or a mixture of both)? How do we carry out judicial and penal reform in parallel.

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- How can we resettle or rehabilitate those pro-Saddam individuals removed from the security sector, particularly those Sunni Arabs from Tikriti tribes, so that they do not work clandestinely for the re-establishment of a SH-type regime?
- How do we minimise the scope for revenge by ordinary Iraqis against their former oppressors?
- How do we ensure clarity as between the roles of UNHCR and host governments with respect to Iraqi soldiers seeking asylum in activities such as screening, cantonment, disarmament and repatriation? Can we learn from the experience gained from the displacement of army mutineers after the 1991 intifada in Southern Iraq?
- To prevent the knowledge of WMD escaping from Iraq, how do we stop the scientific community from accepting lucrative offers to continue developing WMD in other countries?

(e) Qualitative as well quantitative change.

It may prove easier to change the shape of the security sector than its culture. But a change of culture will be necessary if the Iraqi people are to be truly liberated from ruthless totalitarianism. Creating a secure and safe environment in which people are free to pursue their own livelihoods without fear of intimidation from the state will be most people's main priority. It is partly a question of human rights. How do we reform the working culture of the security sector, particularly the police and the courts, so that it operates on the basis of humanitarian values in support of a legitimate government? It is also a matter of getting parts of the security sector off their addiction to WMD, which will anyway be a necessary objective for lasting disarmament in Iraq.

(f) Accountability.

This goes to the heart of the international community's efforts to introduce good government in Iraq. The new SSR structures should ideally be accountable to civilian control. Our goal should be to enshrine the principle of civilian oversight through executive and legislative arrangements for the management and supervision of the security sector. This is key to establishing a fully accountable security apparatus which is responsive, rather than antagonistic, to the needs of the Iraqi people.

Conclusions

17. This paper is a 'living document' intended for discussion. So any conclusions at this stage are necessarily provisional. But some themes have begun to emerge.

- From the outset, SSR should be at the centre of our post-conflict work, rather than outside it as happened in Afghanistan.
- Learning from Afghanistan and experience in other countries, we should begin discussing the mechanism for the international community's engagement in SSR before military action begins.
- As any SSR plan will have to address a number of complicated issues, we should set up a UK working group now to start the detailed assessment to enable us to engage with the US (and the academic community in the UK) on SSR.

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- SSR cannot be considered in isolation. Right-sizing the security structures will depend on the future constitutional make up of Iraq, an assessment of the tasks that they should carry out and an assessment of what is affordable relative to other demands on the Iraqi exchequer.
- The new Iraqi administration should be involved as early on as possible in the process so as to feel ownership of the new structures which, in turn, should improve the chances of success.
- There are some security organisations, staffed with Tikritis and Saddam's kinsmen and with a record of oppression, which should have no future in a post-SH Iraq. These must be dismantled. But others probably can and should be reformed.
- DDR and some system for punishing offenders in the present regime will be crucial to preventing ousted pro-SH elements from working to undermine the new government. DDR will have to include a scheme for keeping scientific knowledge of WMD away from proliferators.
- We need to find out more about the civilian police and the judiciary.
- The more SSR is rooted in an overall good government policy, the more likely it is to succeed.
- Ministers will need to decide the level of engagement of the UK in SSR, given our limited and stretched resources.

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Annex A : Organisations in the Iraqi security sector

- (a) **The National Security Council.** Chaired by SH or his son QH, it oversees the work of all other security agencies. In practice, the links between the other agencies and SH and QH are more informal and direct, often bypassing the NSC.
- (b) **The Special Security Organisation** (*Al Amn al-Kas*). 2,000 people. The most powerful, loyal and most feared agency, headed by QH. It is responsible for (a) the security of the president and of presidential facilities; (b) supervising and checking the loyalty of other security services; (c) monitoring government ministries; (d) supervising operations against Iraqi Kurds and Shias; (e) purchasing foreign arms and technology; and (f) securing Iraq's most important military industries, including concealing its WMD. The SSO is nebulous and highly secretive and operates on a functional, rather than a geographical basis. The members of SSO are primarily drawn from Saddam's own tribe, the Abu Nasr, or from his home district of Tikrit. The SSO and SH's regime depend on each other for their survival.
- (c) **The Directorate of General Security** (*Al-Amn al-Amma*). 8,000 people. The oldest security agency in the country, created during the British mandate. It is essentially a political security police force, tackling political dissent and economic and political criminal behaviour. In addition, the DGS supports the domestic counter-intelligence work of other agencies. In 1991, SH provided it with a paramilitary wing, *Quwat al-Tawari*, to reinforce law and order, although these units are ultimately under SSO control. According to Scott Ritter, DGS units were found to have hidden Iraqi ballistic missile components.
- (d) **The Directorate of General Intelligence** (*Al-Mukhabarat*). 4,000 people. Created out of the Ba'ath party, it is responsible for internal and international operations. Its internal activities include monitoring the Ba'ath party and other grass roots organisations, suppressing Shia and Kurdish opposition, carrying out counter-espionage, and monitoring foreign embassies and foreigners in Iraq. Its external activities cover monitoring Iraqi embassies abroad, collecting intelligence, aiding opposition groups to hostile regimes, conducting sabotage, subversion and terrorist operations, monitoring (and occasionally murdering) opposition elements outside Iraq, and maintaining an international network of informants.
- (e) **The Directorate of Military Intelligence** (*Al-Istikhbarat al-Askariyya*). 6,000 people. Its main functions are ensuring the loyalty of the army's officer corps and gathering military intelligence from abroad. But it is also involved in foreign operations, including assassinations.
- (f) **Military Security Service** (*Al-Amn al-Askari*). 6,000 people. Established as an independent entity in 1992, its function is to detect disturbances in the military.

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- (g) **The Special Republican Guard** (*Al-Haris al-Jamhuri al-Khas*). Headed by QH, it serves as a Praetorian Guard, protecting presidential sites and escorting SH on travels within Iraq. It is fiercely loyal. The SRG are the only troops normally stationed in Baghdad. It consists of four brigades, three infantry and one armoured. The SRG also has its own artillery battalions, air defence and aviation assets. Units consist mainly of individuals from tribes loyal to SH. The SRG has played a role in securing WMD warheads and maintains control of a few launchers.
- (h) **The Republican Guard Forces Command**. This is the principle warfighting organisation. It is used for internal security, to defend the regime and to lead offensive action. Its 75,000 men are formed into two corps, with HQs in Tikrit and Salman Pak. The RGFC contains 650 of Iraq's most capable tanks and has its own depth artillery. It includes two Special Forces brigades.
- (i) **Ba'ath Party** The Ba'ath party is the only legal political party in Iraq. It pervades all aspects of Iraqi life. It has branches in every Iraqi institution and membership of the party is essential for promotion. Within the Ba'ath party, there is a security office (*Amn al Hizb*) and a military bureau. Each party cell contains elements from the police and security services. The party pursues deserters, investigates the homes and families of deserters and political oppositionists, maintains checkpoints to control streets and traffic, collects information on anti-regime activities and mobilises the population for military training. It is used by the regime as a means of social control.
- (j) **Project 858** (*Al Hadi project*) is the organisation responsible for collecting, processing, exploiting and disseminating signals, communications and electronic intelligence.
- (k) **Saddam's Martyrs** (*Fedayeen Saddam*). The *Fedayeen*, with a total strength reportedly between 30,000 and 40,000 troops, is composed of young soldiers recruited from regions loyal to Saddam. The unit reports directly to the Presidential Palace, rather than through the army command, and is responsible for patrol and anti-smuggling duties. Though at times improperly termed an "elite" unit, the *Fedayeen* is a politically reliable force that can be counted on to support Saddam against domestic opponents.
- (l) **Al Quds brigades**. Set up by the regime in 2001, these are sometimes referred to as a 'people's army'.
- (m) **The Tribal Chief's Bureau** (*Maktab al-Shuyukh*) was created after the Gulf war as a vehicle for paying tribal leaders to control their people, spy on possible dissidents and provide arms to loyal tribesmen to suppress opposition.
- (n) **The regular army**. The officer class of the regular army are mainly Sunni Arabs. The soldiers are conscripts, mainly Shias.

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- (o) **The police.** We know relatively little about the ordinary Iraqi police. A lot of police work is carried out by the Ba'ath party.

Security structures outside the central government of Iraq

- (p) The Kurdish controlled northern regions of Iraq lie beyond the reach of Baghdad. They too have security structures which will need to be factored into SSR. They mainly consist of **Kurdish militia** (*peshmerga*). The KDP are reported to have some 15,000 – 40,000 fighters, while the PUK have some 10,000.
- (q) In the south of Iraq, **the Badr Corps of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution**, which are said to number between 3,000 and 8,000, conducts guerrilla operations. It is largely dependent on the Iranian military for equipment and training.
- (r) The **Mojahedin e-Khalq** (MEK), a terrorist organisation based in Iraq, targets Iranian interests, mainly in Iran, with the support of the Iraqi government.

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