

IRAQ: CIVILIAN ASPECTS OF POSSIBLE MILITARY EXPANSION PLANS

Summary

An extension of the UK Area of Operations into Najaf and Qadisiyah, the creation of an UK-led Corps HQ for the South, or a combination of both, would require adequate arrangements for civil liaison and economic reconstruction. Information on political and reconstruction situation is limited. A civilian recce has not yet been possible. Reconstruction in Qadisiyah province is proceeding reasonably well, but is dependent on the security situation. Najaf province is more difficult because of security in Najaf city. The key challenge in both provinces is unemployment. Civilian support for a military deployment to Najaf and Qadisiyah could require 9-12 civilian reconstruction advisers plus 4 police advisers, 20 police mentors, 3 prison advisers, 2 judicial advisers and up to 3 political advisers to the military forces. Deployment of an ARRC-based Corps HQ would require 3-7 advisers located in the HQs, governorates and in Baghdad/Basra. Political liaison officers might also be needed in the 4 provinces where there is not an existing UK presence. Programme funding is not a significant constraint as PMO and other funds are already allocated, but we would face an important challenge to ensure effective disbursement. Adequate civilian support possible for either military option, subject to recce and the security situation allowing the deployment of advisers.

Detail

If the UK takes on additional area responsibilities in southern Iraq, it is essential to ensure that there is an adequate civilian underpinning to the military deployment. There should be a civilian element accompanying the military formations to ensure that high standards of political sensitivity and liaison with Iraqi civil structures are maintained. We need also to ensure that UK military responsibilities are linked to work by DFID to reduce unemployment and poverty and, where necessary, to appropriate capacity building in the Iraqi system (particularly in the public administration, police, justice and prison sectors). DFID and FCO have not been able to conduct a recce in the two provinces because of security constraints. Therefore the assessment below is based on a limited number of sources of varying reliability.

Situation in Najaf and Qadisiyah

Unlike the MND(SE) area, neither province suffered significant war damage (recent or Iran/Iraq) or physical damage from Ba'athist persecution of Shia (although there was significant Saddam-era institutionalised neglect). The key problem is unemployment.

Qadisiyah is a mainly agricultural area with the population evenly split between urban and rural. US\$9m of CPA assistance has been disbursed

across the normal range of sectors and US\$1m on a local government project; there are no problems with disbursement beyond the norm. The Programme Management Office (PMO) is planning a large number of programmes, but none has started yet. Reportedly, there are good relations between the CPA and local council, and the Governor is an effective technocrat.

Najaf province is largely desert, with the exception of Najaf city itself and its neighbour Al-Kufa. Most of the population is urban. The CPA has not provided information on disbursement of reconstruction funds. But it is clear that the security situation in the city, as well as the exclusion of non-Muslims from the extensive religious areas of the city, has constrained development efforts. It therefore seems likely that CPA reconstruction work in Najaf is less advanced, though pilgrims and the Iranians have brought in new money. If the security situation normalises, there is a good prospect of self-regeneration in Najaf from the economic activity coming from city's role as a pilgrimage centre. Addressing development issues in Najaf is a priority, given the city's pivotal political significance. The new Governor is well regarded.

Civilian support for military expansion to Najaf and Qadisiyah

There are six areas in which civilian support for reconstruction would be desirable:

- A. Immediate benefits for the local population through Quick Impact Projects (QIPs). These could be funded from US CERPS money and/or HMG money disbursed by the military with advice from a DFID adviser;
- B. Longer term reconstruction. In the early stages this will mainly come from the Supplemental, with some from the UN/World Bank International Reconstruction Financing Facility for Iraq (IRFFI). This might need UK advisors to be implanted with the PMO as is planned for Basra;
- C. Ensuring salaries and other normal recurrent government expenditure comes through, and is well spent. This is mainly a matter for the Iraqis' own budget system. An option would be to support to the Iraqi Governorate Teams including on planning and budgeting, with advisors requiring easy access to the local authority;
- D. Support for the political process and civil society. Ensuring that national level programmes on civil society support and political development were fully exploited in/targeted to the two provinces;
- E. Police trainers/mentors;
- F. Advisors on Judiciary/Prison capacity building.

This package could require 6-8 development advisors and 4 police trainers to mentor the Chief of Police and develop civil/military training initiatives. A further 20 international police advisers would be required for mentoring across the provinces. Additionally, 3 prison advisors would be required to work alongside the current CPA (South) team. A dedicated judicial adviser specialising in the criminal justice sector would be required for each province.

A major constraint on making these commitments (particularly B-F above) is the uncertain security environment. More work, starting with a recce visit to the provinces, would be needed before DFID or the FCO could decide whether it was possible to put people in.

In addition there would be a requirement for political advice:

- Political Advisers (POLADs) – 2-3 (one per battlegroup and HQ);
- Senior Arabist (probably FCO) political advisor in Najaf.

This amounts to a commitment of, perhaps, 10-12 reconstruction advisors and political officers plus up to 29 police/prisons/judicial advisors. Additional funds for reconstruction should not be necessary, as there are already CPA/PMO funds available. The key task would be to ensure that these funds are fully and effectively disbursed. An exception might be QIPs funds, but a conditional element of taking on the territorial extension might reasonably be that the US provision for CERPs (the US QIPs equivalent) in these provinces be transferred to us.

HQ ARRC deployment

If the UK chose to deploy the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps (ARRC) HQ, the requirements would be more limited at between 3-7 civilian advisers:

- A POLAD in the ARRC and a civil liaison officer in HQ MND(CS);
- A Senior Arabist (probably FCO) as a political advisor focussing on links with the Shia plus, if appropriate and feasible, four additional political advisors in the governorates where the UK did not have military forces on the ground.
- A requirement to ensure good linkages between the whole southern area and Baghdad on disbursement of reconstruction funds. But this might not require any additional development/reconstruction advisors on the ground rather increased work and focus at national/regional level.

Under either military option, the additional forces would arrive after the hand-over of sovereignty. The Iraqi governorate staff should be working direct with ministries in Baghdad. The CPA will have left, but the contractors funded by the US\$18.6bn US Supplemental should have started work. By September, the demand for power should be starting to fall as the summer heat recedes.

Conclusion

On present information, we conclude that:

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- Working alongside any additional military role in southern Iraq, the UK's key development objective would be to ensure that existing projects went ahead and that all available funds was effectively disbursed;
- reconstruction costs should not fall to the UK: existing funds, already allocated, should remain available;
- if there were gaps in reconstruction funding, we should look to the US for additional resources for infrastructure projects in the areas under UK command.

The overall assessment was that, subject to the security situation allowing the deployment of advisers, the civilian implications of either military option are manageable.

Cabinet Office
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