



# Responsible Partnership

## The Iraqi National Security Sector after 2011

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Barak A. Salmoni

Policy Focus #112 | May 2011



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Front cover: Graduates of the Iraqi Air Force Technical Training School receive certificates of completion, Contingency Operating Base Warrior, October 2010. (Image courtesy of headquarters, 4th Inf. Div. Public Affairs / Spc. Kandi Huggins, 1st AATF, 1st Inf. Div.)

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# About the Author

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**Barak A. Salmoni** is a visiting defense fellow at The Washington Institute. An expert in the intrastate conflicts, regional rivalries, and military capabilities of Muslim-majority countries, he served most recently as a political scientist at the RAND Corporation, where he supported the U.S. intelligence community, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and the uniformed services.

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The opinions expressed in this Policy Focus are those of the author and not necessarily those of The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, its Board of Trustees, or its Board of Advisors.



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Barak A. Salmoni  
*April 2011*



# Executive Summary

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AS THE DEADLINE FOR U.S. withdrawal from Iraq approaches, the most important element of the American mission remains reestablishing the country's security forces. Although these forces have made notable progress, Iraq still lacks an adequately developed national security architecture: the military is not yet able to defend the country's territorial integrity or people, while the government's national security decisionmaking institutions are neither well developed nor cohesive. Such deficits have implications for Iraqi independence and stability.

Coping with these persistent threats requires both capable military forces and professional institutions. In light of Iraq's perilous internal and external security environment, U.S. policymakers acknowledge that the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) require continued external assistance from the United States. At the same time, the Obama administration has embraced the "responsible drawdown" of troops by the end of 2011. As politically desirable as that goal may be, it could impose more difficult policy choices in the coming years. If the United States does not remain comprehensively involved in Iraq's security sector, a future U.S. president may be faced with a stark choice: either abandoning Iraqis to an unfriendly regime that rends the nation's fabric or intervening again to prevent a country in crisis from sparking a regional conflict. Neither choice would be worthy of the blood and treasure the American people have invested in Iraq since 2003.

Given the high stakes, this study examines five crucial issues:

- The current and potential future trajectory of ISF development and its implications for Iraq's military capabilities.
- Technical competence within Iraq's national security institutions, with a focus on areas where improvement is particularly necessary.

- Trends in Iraqi civil-military relations, including recommendations for steering them away from dysfunctional models of the past.
- Likely Iraqi capabilities by December 2011 in view of current U.S. plans for post-2011 security cooperation.
- New options for developing Iraq's national security sector in order to better serve U.S. policy goals.

## ISF Capabilities and Force Development

The ISF's current deficits would quickly become apparent if Iraq were forced to defend itself against conventional forces from any one of its neighbors. Even more important in the near term, the ISF would have serious difficulty autonomously attacking and neutralizing well-fortified concentrations of insurgents in Iraq. Such an effort would prove much more costly in material and human terms for the ISF than for a more broadly developed military force. It would also require much more time—perhaps too much to overcome the momentum of a large-scale domestic uprising. Until recently, ISF commanders benefited from generous U.S. operational support, but at a time of continuing U.S. drawdown and transfer to Afghanistan, Iraq's force complexion is not appropriate for a fully sovereign state whose neighbors are well armed with increasingly sophisticated offensive weapons.

Although current trends in Iraqi force development do not reflect a clear strategic direction, three options seem most viable at the moment:

- Continuing on the path established by recent U.S.-mentored decisions: that is, building an army and air force optimized for countering internal violence and interdicting cross-border infiltration by militants.
- Building a military that boasts large numbers of sophisticated and heavy weapons systems in order to assert Iraq's sovereignty and return the country to a position of regional geopolitical significance.

- A mix of the first two options: building military forces capable of aiding (or, if needed, superseding) law enforcement organizations in countering domestic instability, while demonstrating both national sovereignty and regime power to Iraqi citizens.

## National Security Institutions

In order for a country's national defense elements to serve as a cohesive framework, they must exhibit integration, cooperation, and mutual support among civilian and military participants alike. As of early 2011, however, Iraq's uniformed services have not yet developed the means of, or inclination toward, such integration and collaboration. This deficit has in turn hindered the struggle against internal violence and made the Iraqi security network quite porous.

From armed services to government ministries, the ISF's senior echelons are divided among multiple headquarters, centers, and offices—a situation that has led to overlapping authorities and crisscrossing responsibilities. Not only are these entities new and inefficient on their own, but their ability to coordinate and share information remains very poor. In particular, Iraq's national security sector has significant problems in the realms of planning, policy articulation, budgeting, acquisition, and overall decisionmaking. Interministry coordination and responsiveness to input from the uniformed services are also deficient. These skills are essential to an autonomous, self-sustaining, and credible national security capability. Yet learning them takes time—for both individuals and institutions.

## Civil-Military Relations

Iraq is burdened with a legacy of military intrusion into politics, Saddam-era manipulation of security apparatuses, and concerns regarding the influence of ethnosectarian and political party affiliations. Current developments reflect these patterns. Over the past few years, for example, a multiheaded national security and intelligence architecture has emerged. By design, its individual components work against each other, or at least in mutual ignorance. This architecture matches the mindset of Iraqi leaders, whose Baath-era

backgrounds of underground opposition and mistrust animate civil-military relations today.

These leaders may view politicizing the ISF's management as an effective strategy for maintaining their personal and party position while hedging against potential coups. Yet such an approach endangers both them and the coherence of the Iraqi state itself. There are several plausible scenarios for military intrusion into politics over the next decade, including various degrees of coup (e.g., the military could support one set of political leaders against their rivals or topple the civilian leadership altogether). The politicization of military capabilities therefore remains a core developmental challenge in Iraq's national security sector, requiring sustained attention to ensure that forces are loyal to the institutions they serve and not to individuals, political parties, or primordial identities.

## "Responsible Partnership" after 2011

The United States intends to remove all of its military forces from Iraq by December 2011, unless Baghdad requests otherwise and Washington agrees. Yet the persistent problems in Iraq's national security sector—incomplete force building, technical incompetencies within the national security institutions, and dysfunctional civil-military relations—present challenges to Washington's responsible drawdown plan, warranting reassessment of the timeline for complete withdrawal.

Iraq's national security architecture is quite new and populated by relatively inexperienced leaders. Moreover, despite recent arms acquisitions, Iraq will not be self-sufficient in defensive capabilities by December 2011—protecting the country's airspace and borders will require assistance from another country's armed forces. Similarly, if the ISF is to meaningfully integrate new weapons systems, it will need help from substantial numbers of foreign—likely U.S.—personnel. Therefore, the projected state of the ISF by year's end has implications for the duration and scope of American military activities in Iraq.

With the transition to Operation New Dawn in August 2010, much of the U.S. burden for building and reforming the Iraqi security sector falls on the Department of State and the U.S. embassy in Baghdad,

particularly after 2011. The State Department is expected to function at a high level of intensity in a semipermisive environment, and in domains where it has little experience. This expectation poses many challenges with regard to capacity, effectiveness, and oversight.

All of these considerations point to the desirability of a residual U.S. military presence in Iraq after 2011. In addition to ensuring internal security and deterring foreign meddling, the United States has several important interests in the larger Arabian Peninsula and Persian Gulf region that influence the broader Middle East as a whole. These include preserving state stability; controlling interstate conflict; limiting the transnational proliferation of extremist ideologies as well as the material and human enablers of violence; ensuring the free movement of energy resources; and preventing Iranian nuclear proliferation. If Iraq became unstable or aggressive due to dysfunctional, politicized national security institutions, U.S. interests would be jeopardized on all of these fronts. As such, Washington should take a “responsible partnership” approach in planning its future security relationship with Baghdad.

Specifically, responsible partnership entails a post-2011 U.S. military presence that is eliminated in a phased fashion based on Iraqi readiness. Likely extending the mandate of U.S. Forces–Iraq by a number of years, a small-though-credible military presence—fewer than 10,000 uniformed personnel, but significantly more than the “dozens to hundreds” currently envisioned by Washington—would contribute to Iraq’s defense while closely overseeing a train-and-advise mission spanning the field forces and ministries. A moderate-size contractor complement would also participate. Over time, U.S. military personnel and units would withdraw as their functions were replaced by Iraqi capabilities, while the contractors could remain behind to continue training and maintenance.

## Conclusion

Given America’s goals in Iraq and the Middle East, policymakers should reconsider the magnitude and functions of the post-2011 U.S. presence in Iraq’s security sector and encourage the new government in Baghdad to support responsible partnership. Such an approach would extend the timeline of U.S. departure somewhat, with a focus on helping Iraq ensure external defense and internal security, build the ISF as a sovereign force, and continue to develop its national security institutions.

Responsible partnership also entails encouraging NATO countries to maintain substantial involvement in this developmental process, reducing the burden on the United States. Any NATO participants would benefit from the alliance’s two-decade history of facilitating—and, in some cases, undergoing—security sector reform, particularly with regard to institutional competency, legislative reform, civil control of the military, and use of the military for domestic security.

The engagement and influence envisioned by this approach are crucial to ensuring vital U.S. interests. An Iraq with gaps in national defense capabilities would remain subject to violence, intrigue, and predatory influence by neighbors working against regional stability. Alternatively, an Iraq whose civil-military relations and security policies recalled the pre-2003 years could itself prey upon its citizens and neighbors. Such developments could push Iraq toward ethnosectarian warfare and fragmentation, greatly escalating regional tensions. This would be particularly problematic in an era of accelerated arms acquisitions and Iranian nuclear aspirations. In short, unless Washington reconsiders the nature and timing of its withdrawal plan, it may soon face scenarios that drastically reduce U.S. influence in Iraq, harm American credibility among regional partners, and embolden regional rivals.



# Introduction

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AS THE DEADLINE FOR U.S. withdrawal from Iraq approaches, the most important element of the American mission remains reestablishing the country's security forces. This challenge has been made more difficult by the need to simultaneously rebuild all other sectors of Iraq's government while conducting counterinsurgency efforts with a relatively small force. From the start, the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) were expected to participate in complex combat operations during the formation process. Unlike in postwar Germany, Japan, or South Korea, the United States had to build the country's forces from scratch, in the absence of cohesive national leadership, and in the midst of internal warfare supported by external actors.

Given these conditions, Iraq's national security sector has made notable progress. Beginning with the training of individual soldiers, the United States and its coalition partners built an army out to the division level, as well as local and national police forces, capable special operations forces, a nascent air force, and a coastal patrol navy. In practical terms, the ISF can now execute local counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations. Individual ISF units of greater size can coordinate with each other, while service branches have developed cohesion and corporate identity. At the apex stands a joint headquarters, the retooled civilian Ministries of Defense and Interior, and a national counterterrorism force.

All the same, Iraq still lacks an adequately developed national security architecture. The military is not yet able to defend the country's territorial integrity or people, while the national security decisionmaking institutions are neither well developed nor cohesive. These deficits have implications for Iraq's independence and stability.

Moreover, the environment both inside and outside Iraq remains perilous. Turkey and Iran have routinely violated their neighbor's sovereignty over the past several years, either directly or through proxies.<sup>1</sup> And Tehran's nuclear progress has elevated regional tensions and spurred a new arms buildup in the Persian Gulf

and beyond. Elsewhere, domestic political realignment in Egypt and Tunisia, ongoing turmoil in Libya, Yemen, Syria, and Bahrain, as well as calls for change in Jordan, Algeria, and Morocco have all created uncertainty among governments throughout the region. Iraq itself has witnessed popular protests since early February 2011, aimed at perceived regime incompetence in providing governance and essential services. Originating in Baghdad, these demonstrations have since spread to surrounding provinces, flaring up in the Kurdistan Regional Government in late March and resulting in the deaths of a number of protestors as well as security personnel.<sup>2</sup>

Additionally, internal violence rebounded during and even after the government formation process that followed Iraq's national elections in March 2010,<sup>3</sup> likely as a result of the persistent "interministerial conflict, ethno-sectarian tensions, and malign Iranian influence" identified by U.S. diplomats in Baghdad.<sup>4</sup> This violence included mass-casualty terrorist attacks in November 2010 and January 2011, smaller attacks in March 2011, and an assassination campaign against ISF and government officials that intensified during the same period. The campaign has also featured repeated attacks on government and security facilities as well as actions that harmed private citizens. These political and security challenges, as well as surging popular dissatisfaction with Baghdad, have required the military to continue its internal security role.<sup>5</sup>

Coping with these persistent threats requires both capable military forces and professional decisionmaking institutions. Without the latter stewarding the former, the ISF will be unable to meet the country's numerous challenges. This goal is even more critical given the country's history prior to 2003, during which unhealthy civil-military relations doomed political stability and national cohesion. Shortly after British mandatory authorities prematurely departed Iraq in 1932, a string of military coups forced a reinvasion a decade later in order to safeguard British lanes of communication to South Asia.<sup>6</sup> From the end of

World War II until 1958, military officers remained in politics, briefly governing the country during mass disturbances in 1952 and later competing in factions to control or unseat civilian leaders. After 1958, military officers followed each other in rapid succession.

In 1968, Saddam Hussein used the military to attain power and then brutalized and emasculated its leadership. Foreign adventures in the 1980s and after resulted in horrific loss of life while diminishing internal stability and aggravating regional tensions. Indeed, civil-military relations have been the bane of modern Iraq's history, and recent trends among the country's leaders suggest they have not transcended that history.

At the end of 2008, Washington signed a Status of Forces Agreement with Baghdad stipulating that U.S. forces are to withdraw from Iraq by December 2011. In the spirit of that agreement, the United States formally ended its combat mission in the country in August 2010, rechristening Operation Iraqi Freedom as Operation New Dawn. U.S. officials now seek to demilitarize the bilateral relationship by expeditiously transferring responsibilities for assisting the Iraqi government from the U.S. Department of Defense to the Department of State.

These moves are animated by Washington's policy goal of fostering a "sovereign, stable, and self-reliant" Iraq,<sup>7</sup> with a "just, representative, and accountable" government that provides "neither support nor safe-haven to terrorists."<sup>8</sup> After 2011, the U.S. commitment to supporting Iraq's government and people will endure through a "whole-of-government approach" designed to achieve a "long-term strategic partnership...based on mutual interests."<sup>9</sup> That partnership is to cover a host of diplomatic, economic, and cultural issues.

Still, the call for "close cooperation concerning defense and security arrangements without prejudice to Iraqi sovereignty"<sup>10</sup> remains the paramount concern in U.S. policy. While aspiring to full Iraqi security responsibility based on the ISF's recent improvement,<sup>11</sup> U.S. policymakers acknowledge that Iraqi forces "will continue to require external assistance for some time."<sup>12</sup> Therefore, the Obama administration

has pledged "continued U.S. support to the ISF...to ensure steady improvements in Iraqi capabilities and... facilitate Iraq's long-term cooperation with the United States and other regional states."<sup>13</sup>

President Obama has also upheld his predecessor's agreement to withdraw troops by the end of 2011. Yet in order to ensure adequate care and prudence, the administration's "responsible drawdown" policy has embraced a phased redeployment during the course of 2011.<sup>14</sup> During that time, residual forces have been tasked with advising and equipping the ISF and carrying out counterterrorism and force protection efforts.<sup>15</sup> Then, beginning in January 2012, the security partnership will be managed by the U.S. embassy through an Office of Security Cooperation, whose small numbers of military personnel will work for the ambassador in Baghdad. Ultimately, by demilitarizing the bilateral relationship, the administration's policy shows Iraqis that Washington intends their country to have full sovereignty and equal-partner status with the United States.

Discussion of Iraq's national security institutions can quickly spiral into a general study of the country's domestic politics, broader regional issues, and international security. This Policy Focus concentrates on the current status of Iraq's national security sector and the approaches Washington might take to ensure that the sector is capable, professional, and conducive to stability. The first chapter discusses existing and potential paths in force development, examining the implications of each route for Iraqi military capabilities. Chapter 2 examines Iraq's national security institutions, assessing their technical competence and areas where improvement is needed. Chapter 3 examines Iraq's nascent civil-military relations, highlighting emergent trends and ways to shape them. Chapter 4 assesses likely Iraqi capabilities by December 2011 and current U.S. plans for post-2011 security cooperation. The study closes with recommendations for developing Iraq's national security sector in line with the spirit of Operation New Dawn and the goals of U.S. policy.

# 1 | ISF Capabilities and Force Development

THE MILITARY BRANCHES of the Iraqi Security Forces currently comprise just over 210,000 members. Larger numbers are usually cited for the ISF—if high-end Ministry of Interior personnel are included, the figure increases to 256,000, and if all of the ministry’s personnel are included, the total comes to 780,107.<sup>16</sup> Yet this study focuses on the Iraqi Army, Air Force, Navy, National Counter-Terrorism Force, and Federal Police, as they are the most credible contributors to both internal security and external defense.

## Iraqi Army

Just under 200,000 strong, the Iraqi Army has fourteen divisions spread throughout the country.<sup>17</sup> Over the past two years, better force generation efforts have improved the training experience for new recruits and produced follow-on courses for officers at all levels. If this trend continues, tactical competence and confidence should improve continually among field units and staffs.

At present, the Iraqi Army is optimized for urban small-unit operations close to base, against paramilitary opponents equipped with small arms, rockets, mortars, and unarmored vehicles. The army’s own equipment includes up-armored vehicles and a limited number of tanks and armored personnel carriers, distributed unevenly across the force (see table 1). Small arms, heavy machine guns, and rocket-propelled grenades are supplemented by smaller numbers of heavy mortars and artillery, also distributed unevenly. Human intelligence collection is relatively strong, permitting effective arrests and raids, but the army lacks integrated intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) networks. In short, the Iraqi Army is equipped as a motorized counterinsurgency (COIN) and counterterrorism (CT) force, able to plan and conduct combat operations involving multiple brigades.

## Iraqi Air Force

Along with the army, the Iraqi Air Force is a logical component of nationwide defense against internal and

external threats. Currently, it remains much smaller than its pre-2003 predecessor, with just over a hundred aircraft, up from around 70 in late 2008.<sup>18</sup> These consist mostly of transport aircraft (C-130) and helicopters (Mi-17), with the latter able to perform surveillance and reconnaissance. Recent orders also include helicopters able to combine reconnaissance and light ground attack (e.g., the Bell 407 and OH-58C, Aerospatiale SA-342, and Eurocopter EC 635), as well as trainers (T-6As) that can be used in a ground attack mode.

A major constraint for the Iraqi Air Force is manpower, which is currently around 5,600 personnel. This figure reflects a concerted recruitment effort since late 2008, when the air force had only 2,000 members. More than numbers, however, is the “severe shortage of mid-career officers”; more than 50 percent of pilots will reach retirement age before 2020, leaving a gap in experienced fliers and service leaders.<sup>19</sup> About a third of the service’s ground crews will also retire within the next ten years.

Given these material and personnel shortcomings, the Iraqi Air Force has restricted itself to air mobility, casualty evacuation, and ISR missions. Although it has performed these missions well, Iraq is far from providing for its own air-to-air and surface-to-air defense, and it lacks an air support and fixed-wing transport capacity encompassing the needs of the ground forces. Furthermore, absent a “significant focus on training,” the air force will lack the airmen necessary “to meet internal security requirements or provide for air sovereignty by December 2011.”<sup>20</sup>

## Iraqi Navy

The Iraqi Navy differs from the army and air force in that it does not have countrywide responsibilities. It is also the smallest of Iraq’s military services, currently in the midst of a recruitment drive to expand beyond its June 2010 end-strength of 2,910 officers and sailors. Its mission is to secure Iraq’s territorial waters and oil infrastructure in the Umm Qasr sector, where its operational headquarters are located.

**Table 1. Major ISF Platforms Estimated On-Hand, November–December 2010**

| CATEGORY                                  | MODEL/TYPE              | NUMBER        | CATEGORY   | MODEL/TYPE   | NUMBER    |
|---|-------------------------|---------------|--|--------------|-----------|
| <b>Ground Systems</b>                     |                         |               | <b>Air Platforms</b>   |              |           |
| <b>Armor</b>                              | <b>Total</b>            | <b>239</b>    | <b>Fixed Wing</b>  |              |           |
|   | M1A1                    | 43            | <b>Recon</b>   | <b>Total</b> | <b>34</b> |
|   | T-72                    | 120           |  | Sama CH-2000 | 16        |
|   | T-55                    | 76            |  | King Air 350 | 10        |
| <b>Tracked armored personnel carriers</b> | <b>Total</b>            | <b>861</b>    | Cessna RC-208  | 8            |           |
|   | M113                    | 327           | <b>Trainer</b>   | <b>Total</b> | <b>28</b> |
|   | BMP-1                   | 434           |  | C-208        | 5         |
|   | Spartan                 | 100           |  | C-172        | 12        |
| <b>Wheeled armored personnel carriers</b> | <b>Total</b>            | <b>2,350</b>  |  | T-6A         | 11        |
|   | BTR-80                  | 98            | <b>Transport</b>   | <b>Total</b> | <b>29</b> |
|   | BTR-94                  | 50            |  | C-130E       | 3         |
|   | Dzik-3                  | 600           |  | AN-32B       | 2         |
|   | Fuchs                   | 20            |  | KingAir      | 24        |
|   | Mohafiz                 | 60            | <b>Rotary Wing</b>   |              |           |
|   | OTOKAR                  | 600           | <b>Command and control/<br/>intelligence,<br/>surveillance, and<br/>reconnaissance</b> | <b>Total</b> | <b>18</b> |
|   | REVA                    | 200           |  | Bell 206     | 10        |
|   | Badger ILAV             | 600           | <b>Transport</b>   | OH-58C       | 8         |
|   | M1117                   | 122           |  | <b>Total</b> | <b>70</b> |
| <b>Tactical vehicles</b>                  | <b>Total</b>            | <b>11,600</b> |  | Mi-17        | 54        |
|   | Humvee                  | 10,820        | UH-II  | 16           |           |
|   | Land Rover              | 780           | <b>Attack</b>  | <b>Total</b> | <b>16</b> |
| <b>Utility trucks</b>                     | <b>Total</b>            | <b>23,910</b> |  | EC-135       | 10        |
|   | Light 4x4               | 10,820        |  | SA-342       | 6         |
|   | Medium 6x6              | 7,250         | <b>Naval Vessels</b>   |              |           |
|   | Five-ton or larger      | 5,840         | <b>Light ships/<br/>corvettes</b>  | <b>Total</b> | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>Howitzers</b>                          | <b>Total</b>            | <b>24</b>     |  | Saettia MK4  | 4         |
|   | M109A5 155 mm SP        | 6             | <b>Medium<br/>patrol boats</b>   | <b>Total</b> | <b>8</b>  |
|   | Type 83 152 mm<br>towed | 18            |  | Predator     | 5         |
| <b>Mortars</b>                            | <b>Total</b>            | <b>1,230</b>  |  | Swiftships   | 3         |
|   | 120 mm                  | 565           | Interceptor  |              |           |
|   | 81 mm                   | 665           | <b>Small<br/>patrol boats</b>  | <b>Total</b> | <b>50</b> |
|   |                         | Defender      |  | 26           |           |
|   |                         |               | FAB  | 24           |           |

Source: D. J. Elliott, "Appendix C: Equipment," from the "Iraq Order of Battle" pages, *Montrorse Toast* blog, [http://home.comcast.net/~djjac/site/?/page/Iraq\\_Order\\_of\\_Battle](http://home.comcast.net/~djjac/site/?/page/Iraq_Order_of_Battle).

The navy operates two squadrons. The patrol squadron is equipped with four Italian-built Saettia MK4 patrol boats (PS700 series in Iraqi parlance), boasting machine guns and a 30 mm cannon. The small boat squadron is equipped with six Defender-class boats, which will constitute the majority of Iraqi naval vessels once more than thirty have been acquired. These vessels are suited to search and seizure and can mount a light machine gun, in addition to sailors' armaments.<sup>21</sup>

Although the Iraqi Navy has long been a lower priority in ISF funding, the recent order of fifteen U.S.-built Swiftship Interceptors—three of which had arrived in Umm Qasr by February 2011—signals the greater importance now being placed on branches beyond the army. Smaller than the Saettias but much larger than the Defenders, the Interceptors are an important added capability. Mounting a 30 mm remote-controlled cannon aided by ballistic computing, as well as .50 caliber and 7.62 mm machine guns, these coastal patrol boats allow the navy to rapidly perform stop-and-search operations, take on vessels of equal or greater size, and counter smugglers or other irregular maritime threats.<sup>22</sup>

As with the air force, however, the Iraqi Navy faces manpower challenges, in part because it has had to postpone recruitment drives several times. Fully training its personnel to operate the Interceptors in a timely fashion may therefore prove difficult. Iraq has no naval tradition to fall back on, since its navy was all but destroyed in 1991. Furthermore, like other services, the navy faces gaps in command and control, ISR, shipboard maintenance, and infrastructure, along with difficulties in operational communications between Baghdad and Umm Qasr.<sup>23</sup> It also lacks aviation and missile assets, hindering its surveillance and standoff engagement capabilities.<sup>24</sup>

Still, the navy's small size, manageability, emergent esprit de corps, and sustained U.S. and British naval advisor support have allowed it to make noteworthy progress in its modest mission profile.<sup>25</sup> In 2010, the U.S. Defense Department judged the service to be "on track to achieve its short and medium term transition milestones,"<sup>26</sup> exemplified by its ability to conduct fifty patrols per month, a 300 percent increase over the

previous year.<sup>27</sup> Although small, the Iraqi Navy is a critical factor in both ensuring overall border security and protecting Iraq's southern port and oil infrastructure from state and nonstate challenges.

### **Iraqi Special Operations Forces**

Alongside the services controlled by the Ministry of Defense, the most capable of Iraq's military forces are the Special Operations Forces (ISOF) and Federal Police (FP). ISOF is part of the Iraqi National Counter-Terrorism Force, itself part of the Counter-Terrorism Service, a quasi-ministry not yet approved by parliament but reporting directly to the prime minister through the minister of state for national security affairs. At just under 4,500 soldiers, ISOF is a small force, but its capabilities are considered excellent with respect to intelligence, operations, and training. Currently, it is organized into two brigades: one headquartered in Baghdad, the other broken into four regional commando battalions in Basra, al-Asad, Mosul, and Diyala. At times working with FP units, ISOF provides the government leadership with an effective strike force in the capital and in provinces outside the army chain of command, though the service is still reliant on U.S. forces for airlift and armed air support.<sup>28</sup>

### **Iraqi Federal Police**

Known until recently as the National Police and intended to function as a nationwide gendarmerie at the central government's disposal, the Federal Police is currently a three-division motorized paramilitary force tasked with COIN and CT missions. Controlled directly by the Ministry of Interior, the FP could also support the army in the event of foreign invasion. Its more than 40,000 members are relatively well trained and equipped with up-armored Humvees, wheeled armored vehicles, and a limited air assault capacity.

The FP suffers from sustainment, logistical, and facilities shortfalls similar to those of the army. These include the lack of dedicated training for its logistics personnel; greatly limited ability to perform mobile resupply, maintenance, and other sustainment functions; inadequate stocks of needed equipment; and a logistics cadre that is quite small relative to the

operational units it supports.<sup>29</sup> Nevertheless, as it integrates the provincial police emergency response units and generates its own specialized and quick-reaction units in order to gain a brigade-sized presence in each province, the FP will provide Baghdad with a centrally controlled internal security arm autonomous from the army and local police, and of high quality. The FP is currently considered to be “fully capable of conducting effective battalion-level COIN operations throughout Iraq” and has succeeded in its efforts “to combat terrorism and reduce large-scale social unrest.”<sup>30</sup>

## Overall Status

At present, the force complexion just described would not allow Iraq to protect its sovereignty or project power. First, the Iraqi Army has not yet meaningfully integrated the heavy weapons—such as modern tanks, self-propelled and towed artillery, antiarmor missiles, and infantry fighting vehicles—that would allow it to deter or blunt an assault by another country’s conventional forces. Likewise, the air force could not defend the airspace over ground forces or operate in ground attack mode if the need arose. Second, ISF bases and personnel are not substantially hardened; they could not withstand a sustained air-ground bombardment by an opposing force. Third, force-building initiatives have heretofore prioritized generating combat units over developing mobility, sustainment, and logistical capabilities. As such, the army could not move all its forces into an engagement in a timely fashion if asked to do so, nor could it sustain them far from rear-area bases for significant periods of time.<sup>31</sup> Overall, then, the ISF exhibits gaps in capabilities in addition to insufficiently developed capabilities.

These deficits would immediately become apparent if the ISF were tasked with large-scale defensive operations against conventional forces from any one of Iraq’s neighbors. Likewise, offensive operations across Iraq’s borders are completely beyond the army’s current capabilities. Even more important given Iraq’s near-term threats, the conventional military and police forces would still experience serious difficulties if asked to autonomously attack and neutralize well-fortified concentrations of insurgents.<sup>32</sup> This implies that subduing

a well-organized and determined domestic insurrection would require the ISF’s entire weight. Given current inadequacies in command, control, communications, mobility, and logistical support, such an effort would prove much more costly in material and human terms for the ISF than for a more broadly developed military force. It would also require much more time—perhaps too much to overcome the momentum of a large-scale domestic uprising.

## Force-Building Options

Until recently, ISF commanders benefited from generous U.S. provision of “combat enablers,” either from partnered units or embedded training teams. These enablers have included personnel specializing in ground- and air-based ISR, combat engineering, explosive ordnance disposal, medevac, medical care, fire support, air defense, and logistical support.<sup>33</sup> Given such ready assistance—along with the nature of the challenges the ISF has faced so far and regional concerns about Iraq’s belligerent past—the limitations on ISF capabilities have made sense. Yet at a time of continuing U.S. drawdown and transfer of enablers to Afghanistan, this kind of force complexion is not appropriate for a fully sovereign state, particularly one with well-armed neighbors acquiring increasingly sophisticated offensive weapons.

For example, several of Iraq’s Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) neighbors, including Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates, have embarked on multidecade modernization programs built on U.S. military systems. Advanced multirole fighter aircraft as well as precision munitions are being combined with surface-to-air missile networks, well-armed helicopter fleets, and latest-generation armor.<sup>34</sup> Much of this arms acquisition stems from the Iranian threat.<sup>35</sup> Indeed, the United States likely hopes to provide Arab partners with an edge over Iran in order to dissuade Tehran from regional intimidation.<sup>36</sup> Still, while it is intended to “bolster forces of moderation” and give U.S. partners “complete aerial superiority” over Iran,<sup>37</sup> GCC force building also widens the yawning gap between these countries and Iraq. This is likely a disheartening development to national security leaders in Baghdad,

who must also account for Syria and Iran's large (albeit aging) arsenal of armor, artillery, rockets, and aircraft.

Neighbors with sophisticated weapons and fully developed air-land capabilities are not necessarily neighbors with aggressive intent. Yet the Gulf region is one of historic military tensions and rivalry, often expressed through the competitive acquisition of weapons. And although Iraq's current leaders at least declaratively reject the former Baath regime's pretensions to hegemony, they still consider their nation worthy of seeking regional preeminence and developing "the most capable and influential force in the region."<sup>38</sup> This self-image may strongly influence military development programs going forward.

**COIN, CT, and U.S. presence.** Should Iraq's national security leadership seek to strategize force development over the next several years, it has a number of options. The first is to continue on the path created by U.S.-mentored decisions over the past few years: namely, building an army and air force optimized for COIN, CT, and interdiction of cross-border infiltration by militants. This force would require high mobility, both within specific areas of operations and throughout the country, in order to mass security forces at momentary hotspots. Weapons systems would need to be heavy enough to overwhelm dug-in or well-armed opposition, yet light enough to limit collateral damage.

A mostly motorized ground force reliant on wheeled vehicles (Humvees, light armored vehicles) would be appropriate for this model, mounting light and medium weapons as well as heavy mortars. Likewise, the air force would need to emphasize country-wide mobility, ISR, and ground attack capabilities through a mix of fixed- and rotary-wing aircraft. At the same time, a limited complement of heavier weapons systems—either concentrated in specific units or providing a mechanized edge to an otherwise motorized force—would be prudent, entailing acquisition of tracked armored personnel carriers and tanks. If deployed in appropriate task force formations and supported by precision ground-attack air assets, this kind of ground force could hinder external assault for a limited time, though it would not be able to defend Iraq's

borders or undertake power projection for any significant period. An enduring reliance on U.S.-provided air defense, regionally prepositioned ground forces, and security guarantees would thus be necessary. In light of its goals and limitations, this kind of force development plan can be dubbed "COIN+CT+U.S. presence."

**Power projection and national sovereignty.** On the other side of the spectrum, Iraq's second option would be a military boasting large numbers of sophisticated and heavy weapons systems in order to assert national sovereignty and return the country to a position of regional geopolitical prominence. Although one can see elements of this kind of force in current Iraqi acquisition strategies, a "national sovereignty" military would be a departure from the ISF's development trends under U.S. influence.

Under this approach, the Iraqi Army would be mostly mechanized, with growing numbers of latest-generation armored fighting vehicles and tanks along with heavy and self-propelled artillery and rocket systems, similar to Syria and Iran's ground forces. Rather than apportioning these systems to a few select divisions, Iraqi force planners would likely distribute them across the army, optimizing all divisions for decisive defensive operations as well as offensive operations across the border. Baghdad would also seek to build an integrated air defense systems (IADS) network, both to counter aircraft and missiles and cover ground forces advancing into another country.

Meanwhile, the air force would likely bolster its countrywide transport, ISR, and ground attack platforms with significant numbers of multirole fighter aircraft on par with Saudi Arabia's. Iraq would also seek to develop sizable and well-equipped special operations forces able to penetrate deeply into surrounding countries with their own logistical and intelligence support. Such forces could likewise be tasked with rapidly quelling any internal uprisings in coordination with a paramilitary CT force.

In order to sustain a "national sovereignty" force and provide it with a true deterrent and power-projection capability, Baghdad would need to make a significant investment in the ISF's material support

base (i.e., workshops, depots, and military industries). It would also need to generate a meaningful logistical capability to sustain ongoing operations within and beyond Iraq's borders.

This kind of force begins to sound much like the Iraqi military of the 1980s (though even Saddam Hussein's forces did not have the logistical support they needed). Yet despite Arab and Iranian concerns that the development of such a force would signal Baghdad's intent to return to regional intimidation, the force's most likely purpose would be to give Iraq parity with its neighbors rather than dominance over them. And if developed prudently, a robust military would not feature a large, conventionally armed regime security force akin to the Saddam-era Republican Guard.

In any case, a security structure of this sort would take more than a decade to build, requiring extensive external aid and advice from the United States and other countries. Of course, the motive for building this kind of military could very well be declarative: Baghdad may simply wish to display its national sovereignty, power, and regional significance to its citizens and other governments rather than demonstrating it through force.

**Defensive credibility.** Iraq has a third option for force development that lies between the previous two approaches: building a military capable of aiding (or, if necessary, superseding) law enforcement organizations in countering domestic instability, while also displaying national sovereignty and regime power to Iraqi citizens. Much of this force would be highly mobile and motorized, with appropriate air assets and IADS networks covering critical regions and infrastructure. Weapons systems would need to be of a caliber, range, and precision that allowed the ISF to outgun internal violent actors while limiting injury to civilians and destruction of civilian infrastructure.

At the same time, Baghdad would likely seek to develop a small number of ground and air units able to exact a particularly high cost on any state seeking to invade Iraq, support armed antigovernment proxies, or infiltrate weapons or terrorists into Iraq. These units, likely distributed throughout the army's divisions at

brigade strength, would possess not only mobile, heavy weapons systems able to mass at critical points, but also precision-guided munitions as force multipliers and organic air defense capabilities. Paired with multirole aircraft, this heavy mechanized component could also function as an offensive air-ground task force reinforced by lighter motorized units, with logistical sustainment permitting Iraq to enter several kilometers into an aggressor country's territory and threaten critical nodes. Meanwhile, the navy would likely complement its small boats and coastal patrol craft with a naval aviation component as well as short-range ship-to-ship missiles, perhaps mounted on corvettes slightly outsize the existing Saettias.

Taken together, these elements would constitute a "defensive credibility" force. The ISF would resemble the forces of various U.S. allies in the Persian Gulf, though scaled up to Iraq's territorial and demographic size. Such a force would not be able to stop a determined invasion or air attack, but it could render such a move quite painful for would-be aggressors. And Baghdad would still likely require security guarantees from the United States, as do other regional Arab states. Alternatively, it could seek cooperative regional security relationships—a less likely prospect.

## Current Acquisitions

Current trends in Iraqi force development do not demonstrate a clear strategic choice of one approach over another, but rather a desire to enhance internal security capabilities while also acquiring the trappings of a national sovereignty force. Along the latter lines, Iraq has formally begun the process of acquiring American-made F-16s, which would allow it to counter Syria and Iran's air forces and provide a ground attack capability. The first delivery is to consist of eighteen aircraft, though Baghdad ultimately seeks up to five squadrons' worth.<sup>39</sup> The air force is also actively looking for jet trainers from both the United States and Europe.<sup>40</sup> Likewise, by early 2011, more than 60 M1A1 Abrams tanks had arrived at Iraq's Besmaya Combat Training Center for integration into the army, out of a total planned order of 140.<sup>41</sup> Stryker-class light armored vehicles are being

delivered as well, along with several battalions' worth of U.S.-built field artillery. The latter will consist mostly of towed 155 mm howitzers and 120 mm mortars, with a small self-propelled component.<sup>42</sup>

These acquisitions suggest a heavier national sovereignty force with at least a limited offensive capability. Indeed, recent commentary—along with a U.S. push for “police primacy” in internal security—suggests that the Iraqi military now prefers to move toward an external defense focus, implying a more robust force.<sup>43</sup> It is not clear, however, whether Iraq's political leadership has such a preference, or whether ongoing domestic instability will permit ISF military components to forgo substantial contribution to internal defense in the near term. As such, orders for armored cars, mobile command-and-control tents, thousands of Humvees, and armed reconnaissance helicopters indicate a continued emphasis on internal security capabilities.<sup>44</sup>

Furthermore, many of Iraq's current or projected acquisitions can be used in both contexts. This is the case for the 440 M113 armored personnel carriers Baghdad requested recently from the United States, supplemented by a similar number of BTR-4 infantry fighting vehicles from Ukraine.<sup>45</sup> And projected acquisitions of Apache gunships, additional Mi-17s, and Bell-407s would give the ISF armed reconnaissance, transport, ground attack, and airborne command-and-control assets appropriate to both COIN/CT contexts and conventional force-on-force engagements. Finally, Iraq's planned acquisition of additional C-130 transports and Ukrainian-built An-32s will afford air mobility useful in both categories.<sup>46</sup>

Therefore, it remains uncertain whether Iraq's force-building efforts reflect a strategy with a clear schedule and priorities rather than a series of marginally integrated decisions. The latter may be the case. Although

some observers have referred to a two-stage plan (2006–2011 and 2011–2015) for developing the ISF as well as a three-phase blueprint (2007–2011, 2012–2016, and 2016–2020) approved by Baghdad in 2007,<sup>47</sup> the Iraqi government has not generated any publicly available force development plans or programs that suggest an overall strategy with adequate detail. And aside from a very general, little-read document produced by the U.S.-sponsored Iraqi National Security Council in 2007,<sup>48</sup> Baghdad lacks an overarching national security strategy to drive a defense strategy and subsequent force development programs.<sup>49</sup>

Accordingly, current ISF force-building efforts most likely emerge from internal political developments, budgetary constraints and opportunities, the guidance of U.S. advisors, and lobbying efforts by U.S. and international arms manufacturers. In addition, interservice bureaucratic lobbying and “mission creep” have resulted in multiple services seeking similar weapons systems. For example, the air force, army, and ISOF have all sought combat and transport helicopters, and the latter two services have moved to establish their own aviation units.<sup>50</sup> Finally, Baghdad's attitude toward force building is bound to be influenced by a current-events-based reading of regional threats balanced against the enduring image of Iraq held by national security leaders. If so, Iraq will likely muddle along to a larger and heavier ISF and continue using it for internal security.

In light of these and other factors, Baghdad would be wise to develop a force-building strategy to guide acquisitions and training over the next decade. Yet doing so requires national security institutions that are capable of formulating and implementing such a strategy. Unfortunately, these institutions remain underdeveloped in Iraq.

## 2 | Iraqi National Security Institutions

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ENSURING A COHESIVE national security framework requires that individual elements exhibit integration, cooperation, and mutual support among both civilian and military participants. To achieve this end, a country's armed forces must have the necessary means and inclination. The Iraqi Security Forces and the institutions meant to oversee Iraq's national security require much capacity-building in this regard.

As described in chapter 1, Iraq's uniformed services have until recently lacked the means for individual units above brigade level to interoperate, while air and naval forces have been inadequate to support army operations. Additionally, they have not had the chance to develop a culture or doctrine of unity. Friction persists between the Iraqi Army and the various police forces; they have worked in support of each other at the tactical level, but U.S. encouragement was usually required to spur such cooperation. Likewise, the Iraqi Special Operations Forces and even regular army units tasked with protecting the senior regime leadership continue to operate without reference to the military chain of command. All of these factors may have implications for Iraq's long-term civil-military relations—they have already prolonged and hindered the struggle against internal violence and made the country's security network quite porous. Yet one must keep in mind that the ISF has not yet had the opportunity to develop the means or inclination toward integration and collaboration.

### Higher-Level Headquarters

Above the level of individual service branches, Iraq's national security institutions require further development before the ISF can function as a fully coherent contributor to internal and external defense. These institutions are both military and civilian, and although some have precedents in the pre-2003 era, they are all extremely young in their current incarnations, having only developed capacity in the past two to three years. Even in this short time, however, such institutions have proliferated, often through a process of accretion prompted by operational challenges

or intragovernmental politics. As a result, the Iraqi national security architecture includes organizations with overlapping responsibilities and autonomous chains of command.

This organizational proliferation can best be seen by looking at Iraq's national security institutions from the bottom up. Such a perspective highlights the top-down implications of institutional arrangements whereby growing numbers of tactical-level units and territorial headquarters are assembled under multiple operational-level commands and higher joint headquarters, whose numbers have also increased over the past few years. Ultimately, capable national-level institutions are needed to oversee the operational functions of all such organizations, in addition to developing strategies for national defense and policies for force generation, structure, and administration.

Currently, the integrating entity above the country's army divisions is the Iraqi Ground Forces Command. It came into being in 2006, but only in 2008 did it begin to take charge of the bulk of the army's recently generated field forces. Although the IGFC is intended to plan and direct ground operations, its capacity to do so is severely constrained by inexperience as well as limited technical and logistical means.<sup>51</sup>

Above the IGFC is the Joint Headquarters/Joint Forces Command, meant to integrate the generation and fielding of all Iraqi military services. As such, the JHQ/JFC combines operational roles with many institutional army functions, including administration, personnel policies, training, and education. The JHQ/JFC, in turn, is subordinate to the Iraqi National Command/National Operations Center. Reporting to the prime minister, the NOC is staffed by members of the various ministries concerned with security (chiefly the Defense and Interior Ministries), along with senior service commanders and leadership from the Iraqi National Intelligence Service. The NOC is tasked with coordinating countrywide operations, theoretically through seven regional operations centers in Baghdad, Basra, Ninawa, and elsewhere.

It is at this level, however, where multiple command centers become problematic. In Baghdad, for example, one finds the NOC, the Baghdad Operations Center, the Interior Ministry's National Command Center, and the Defense Ministry's Joint Operations Center.<sup>52</sup> Furthermore, the Iraqi Counter-Terrorism Service—integrating the National Counter-Terrorism Force and the ISOF—is not part of the IGFC or Joint Force structure. Although the service theoretically integrates with the NOC, its current chain of command leads exclusively to the Office of the Prime Minister, in coordination with the Office of the Commander-in-Chief.<sup>53</sup> Ultimately, the multiple headquarters, centers, and offices within the ISF's senior operational echelons lead to overlapping authority and crisscrossing responsibilities. Not only are these entities new and inefficient on their own, but their ability to coordinate and share information—functions required by the architecture's design—remains very poor.

By preventing vertical integration and horizontal coordination, the current dysfunctional system has encouraged a personal-connections style of command and control at both the planning and operational level. It has also resulted in a chain of command that allows Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki to bypass both ministers and higher headquarters in his use of Iraq's national security organs. When replicated by subordinate civilian and military leaders, this approach produces a multiheaded architecture that has a significant impact on civil-military relations, as discussed in the next section.

## Ministries

The overlapping headquarters just described are intended to manage the training and deployment of Iraq's forces. The day-to-day management of the ISF as a whole and the long-term stewardship of its human and material development are the responsibility of Iraq's (technically) civilian ministries, primarily the Office of the Prime Minister and the Defense and Interior Ministries. It is at this level that the most overarching capacity deficits are evident. Although they have demonstrated varying levels of improvement over the past three years, these national security leadership ministries remain

very poor at planning, policy articulation, budgeting, acquisition, and overall decisionmaking. Interministry coordination and responsiveness to input from the uniformed services also remain deficient.

In mid-2010, the U.S. government summed up these capacity deficits as follows: "Iraqi national security C2 architecture continues to be poorly defined and overly centralized, which inhibits planning, decision making, and the ability to execute coordinated operations at all levels, and may encourage decisions made outside the established chain of command."<sup>54</sup> The Ministry of Defense in particular was cited for its

limited capability to generate relevant and applicable defense policies and plans...There is no institutional process for feedback, approval, and implementation...Senior Iraqi leadership has resisted publishing formal policy documents, which contributes to the existing sluggish decision-making practices at all levels. The MoD leadership often disregards the requirements generated by its subordinate staffs...The linkage between capability requirements, strength levels, equipment purchasing, and budgeting is almost nonexistent.

Indeed, such shortcomings continue to inhibit both institutional development and attention to the operating forces' needs, complicating equipment acquisition and distribution, force building, infrastructure development, and logistical support to garrison and deployed units. For example, the defense minister's "close personal authority over approval of most expenditures and infrastructure builds"<sup>55</sup> often allows him or other senior ministry officials to make high-level appointments in the operating forces.<sup>56</sup> The Prime Minister's Office has also intruded upon force planning and acquisition decisions, at times even dominating operational decisionmaking, as seen in 2008–2009.<sup>57</sup>

Also of concern, U.S. observers concluded that the majority of Defense and Interior functionaries tasked with providing continuity and policy stability were unqualified as of early 2009, yet preferred not to pursue available training.<sup>58</sup> By spring 2010, their openness to professional development had increased, and multi-year planning was beginning to emerge in the Interior Ministry.<sup>59</sup> Even today, however, "a vast gap exists in

understanding, implementing, and integrating” the processes necessary to achieve desired strategic and operational results.<sup>60</sup> Put more bluntly by a former U.S. advisor in Iraq, the ministries “are unable to take the basic steps to manage the force development process.”<sup>61</sup>

These gaps are reflected in the two ministries’ continuing inability to execute allocated budgets. Although execution rates improved significantly in 2009—by more than 90 percent for both ministries—it is not yet certain whether the figures represent a permanent departure from much lower rates in 2006–2008.<sup>62</sup> The Ministry of Defense continues to exhibit shortcomings in allocating funds for support, sustainment, and infrastructure, while “cumbersome procedures” inhibit coordination with the Ministry of Finance.<sup>63</sup> The latter has also held back from fulfilling additional funding requests for equipment and personnel, whether due to

fiscal conservatism or interministerial rivalries.<sup>64</sup> Either way, U.S. assessments have found that hypercentralized decisionmaking and a lack of long-range funding plans are seriously hampering the Defense Ministry’s efforts to improve the ISF.<sup>65</sup>

Given the fledgling nature of Iraq’s ministries, these shortcomings are to be expected. And although ministry staff and leaders may have backgrounds in the country’s previous military or defense establishment, they have little experience with Western-style planning and administrative processes, nor are they accustomed to dealing with matters of national security in a budget-constrained environment requiring internal and external collaboration. These skills are essential to an autonomous, self-sustaining, and credible national security capability, but learning them takes time—for both individuals and institutions.

## 3 | Civil-Military Relations

CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS in Iraq are closely tied to the national security sector's technical competencies, and just as important. From the 1930s to the 1970s, the military's intrusion into politics strangled the Iraqi state, perpetuated instability, and politicized the security sector.<sup>66</sup> Saddam's subsequent harsh efforts to control the security organs neutered their leadership while militarizing society, with no evident benefit for the military's capabilities. Transcending this legacy and cultivating healthy interactions within the security sector are critical for long-term success in Iraq.

### Regional Trends

Iraq's pre-2003 civil-military practices fit the typical Middle Eastern model, whereby national security is defined in ways that render the military inherently political. For many countries in the region, the fundamental strategic purpose of security forces is to ensure regime survival. A related purpose is to assert national sovereignty and the state's monopoly on politics and violence—to both citizens and foreign governments. Middle Eastern regimes have therefore sought to use military force against any domestic threat, whether violent, political, or rhetorical. They have also sought to ensure that the state's coercive organs are not turned on the regime itself. In short, the goal has been to “opposition-proof” the state while “coup-proofing” the regime.<sup>67</sup>

Certain approaches flow from these goals. In the most basic terms, national security institutions are not judged by their ability to defeat external threats, since such threats are often not the regime's paramount concern. Rather, militaries must look good enough and large enough to cow domestic opposition and deter foreign aggression through a visual rhetoric of might: armies must parade well enough and, on occasion, crack down on troublemakers dramatically enough to communicate through violence. This permits shortfalls in training, manning, operational performance, and logistics. Indeed, coup-proofing a regime usually works against balanced force development in these

areas because such capabilities would give the military dangerous autonomy from the ruler.

Other regional approaches to preserving regimes from their security forces have involved sidelining charismatic military leaders and creating a highly centralized culture in which even tactical decisions are referred to chiefs of staff, ministers, and the prime minister or president himself. This centralization of command and control also permits senior civilian leaders to violate procedures and intrude arbitrarily into military decisions, thereby satisfying their need to tame the military while appearing to soldiers and civilians as the true masters of national affairs.<sup>68</sup>

Coup-proofing has also led regime leaders to seek high-quality forces for use against domestic opposition, wayward regime elements, and external enemies. This usually involves establishing an internally divided security architecture, including a small but effective component that the leadership can control directly. Examples include the Saudi Arabian National Guard, the pre-2003 Iraqi Republican Guard, and two Syrian organs: the current Republican Guard and the 1980s-era Defense Companies (Saraya al-Difa). This divide-and-manipulate approach usually involves pitting conventional military forces against special forces, with intelligence organizations working to keep both in check and the regime in power.

Developments in Iraq today recall these approaches to civil-military relations. Over the past few years, a multiheaded national security and intelligence architecture has emerged. By design, its individual components work against—or at least in mutual ignorance of—one another. This approach results in no small measure from the personal experiences of Iraq's current national security leaders, whose backgrounds in underground opposition, jockeying for position, and mistrust animate civil-military relations today.

### Iraqi National Security Structures

Since the 2005 national elections, Iraq's national security architecture has evolved into a three-legged stool

of sorts. One leg consists of Defense Ministry forces, including the army, air force, and navy. Federal Police (FP) forces constitute the Interior Ministry leg, bolstered by the provincial Iraqi Police Service. These first two legs are composed of legislated bodies, making them theoretically accountable to the parliament and judiciary.

The third leg is built partially from nonconstitutional bodies reporting solely to Prime Minister al-Maliki, indicating a return to the divide-and-manipulate approach. The first of these bodies with no legal basis or oversight is the Office of the Commander-in-Chief, run by Farouk al-Araji within the Office of the Prime Minister. Originally intended by coalition advisors as a kind of national security affairs coordinating group for the prime minister, the OCC has since been staffed with Maliki's close political allies and used to exert direct administrative and operational authority over security matters.<sup>69</sup> Through the OCC, Maliki also controls two Presidential Protection Brigades that are formally part of the Iraqi Army, in addition to the 56th Brigade. Although the latter body, known as the "Baghdad Brigade," is formally part of the army's 6th Division and is tasked with Green Zone security, it is largely beyond the army/Defense Ministry chain of command. Operating throughout the capital and even beyond, this brigade reports directly to the OCC through the Baghdad Operations Center (BOC) commander. Equipped with tanks and armored personnel carriers, it and several other OCC-controlled security battalions in the capital area are under Maliki's sole oversight.<sup>70</sup>

Another divide-and-manipulate element is the Counter-Terrorism Service (CTS), which is broadly overseen by the minister of state for national security affairs (MSNSA), a post currently held by Shirwan al-Waili. The position was established by Maliki's predecessor, Ayad Allawi, to counter Muwaffaq Rubaie, his coalition-appointed national security advisor whom he considered too solicitous of Iran. Although the MSNSA and CTS currently lack a legal basis, they control the country's most effective security branch, the Iraqi Special Operations Forces (ISOF), as well as an intelligence arm that is independent of the military

and the National Intelligence Service (INIS).<sup>71</sup> The CTS works in coordination with, and is semisubordinate to, the OCC.

Furthermore, given the current close coordination between ISOF and the FP's Baghdad emergency response unit (ERU) via the BOC, all of Iraq's ERUs might at some point be brought under the CTS, perhaps paving the way for integration of provincial ERUs and ISOF battalions. If this should happen, the CTS would provide the prime minister with a potent force reaching throughout the country, relatively free from parliamentary oversight.<sup>72</sup> It could act as an opaque counterweight to Defense and Interior Ministry forces, allowing Iraqi leaders to suppress a broad swath of threats defined as terrorism.

Alternatively, the FP could remain outside the CTS and thereby counterbalance it, whether due to agreement between the prime minister and an allied interior minister or—more ominously—competition between them. Some observers have already suggested that the army units reporting directly to the OCC are intended as just such a counterbalance to ISOF, which is considered to be very close to its U.S. advisors rather than unquestioningly subservient to its OCC administrators.<sup>73</sup> In the words of one U.S. intelligence advisor in Iraq, the current OCC-CTS combination "looks and smells very much like a Saddam-era structure, where the prime minister has his hand on the throttle and can use it as he sees fit."<sup>74</sup>

## Intelligence Organs

Iraq's national-level intelligence structure is another element of the divide-and-manipulate strategy. Like the Interior Ministry's National Information and Investigation Agency and the Defense Ministry's Directorate-General for Intelligence and Security—broadly analogous to the FBI and Defense Intelligence Agency, respectively—INIS reports to the cabinet. With the exception of its domestic collection and analysis functions, INIS is similar to the CIA, which helped to establish it. Meanwhile, the Joint Headquarters (JHQ) Military Intelligence Directorate performs functions broadly resembling those of the U.S. Joint Staff J-2 and service-level intelligence organs.

Beyond these legislated entities are other intelligence branches that have no legal basis and are unaccountable beyond the OCC and prime minister. The MSNSA itself boasts more than 2,000 employees who collect and analyze a wide variety of intelligence at the minister's direction, making it a rival to INIS in both function and intent. A second extralegal intelligence body is the Office of Information and Security (OIS), headed by Abu Ali al-Basri. Part of the Prime Minister's Office, the OIS reports solely to Maliki and likely targets Baathists as well as political rivals both in and outside the current government.

As with the multiple headquarters just described, these intelligence organs overlap in responsibilities and areas of focus. Established at times with the deliberate intent to hem each other in, they inhibit efficient collection, analysis, sharing, and operational dissemination of intelligence across Iraq's national security community. Even worse, individual organs or intelligence officers often purposely frustrate their counterparts' efforts. Beyond impeding the effective use of intelligence to counter internal threats and external challenges, these professional and structural rivalries are often politically driven, resulting in damage to institutional coherence.

As such, intelligence policy in Iraq today runs the risk of entrenching extralegal approaches that invite leaders to consider political and security interests as identical. More broadly, the prime minister's monopolization and centralization of coercive power through the CTS, OCC, BOC, and intelligence services hampered the government formation process that followed the March 2010 elections. Both opponents and potential coalition partners have sought to roll back Maliki's power in this domain—though it is by no means certain that other leaders would refrain from similar practices if they were in a position to exploit such power.<sup>75</sup> (For an illustration of the various relationships that shape the Iraqi national security and intelligence architecture, see figure 1.)

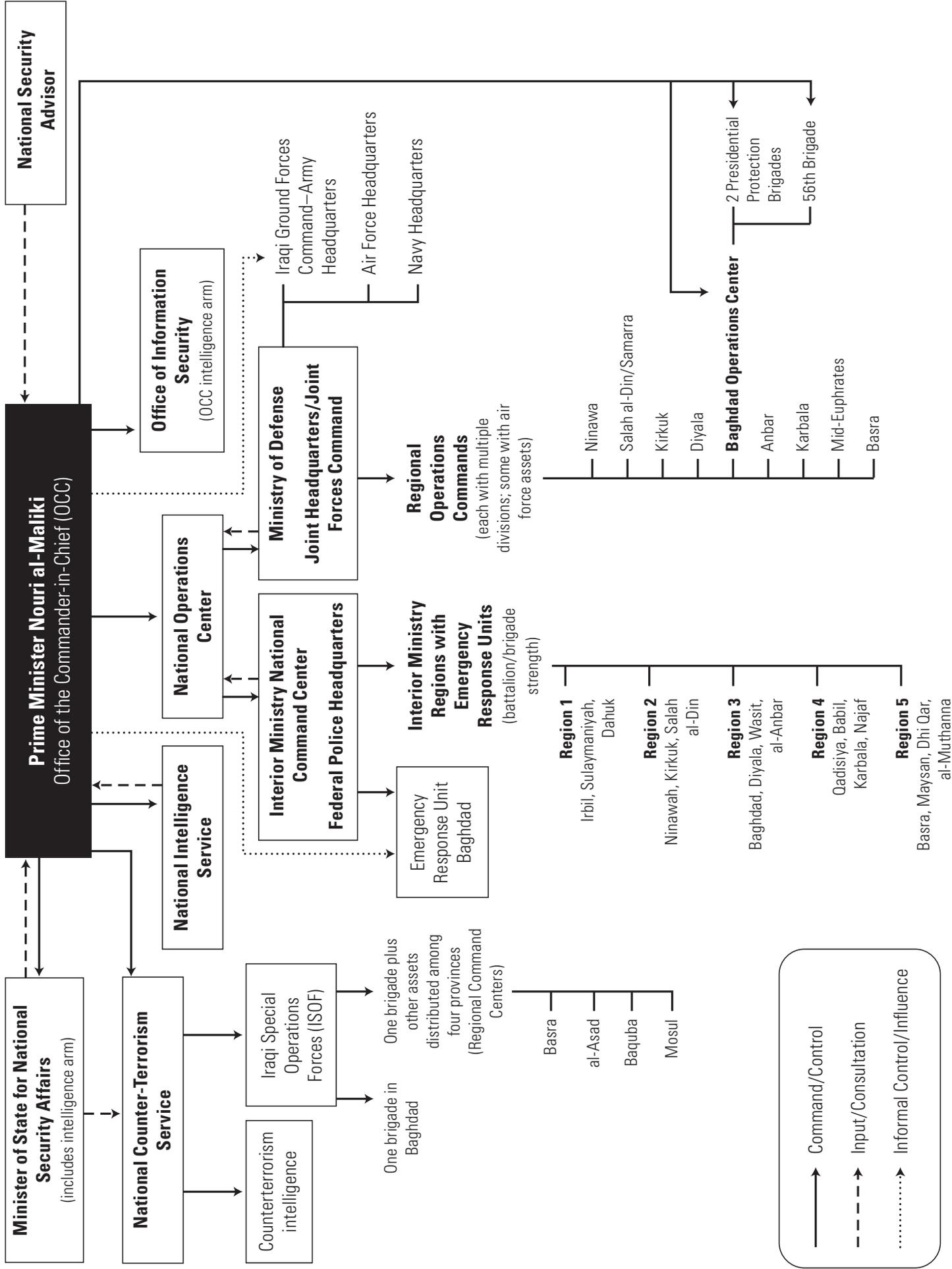
### Leadership Style and Background

The ongoing politicization of the Iraqi Security Forces derives in part from the leadership style of senior Iraqi

officials. Maliki, for example, tends to view the ISF as both untrustworthy and at his personal disposal. Using the OCC, he and his closest allies have politicized the process of granting or removing operational commands. This has interrupted force development, undermined unit cohesion, and encouraged field commanders to maneuver politically as they aspire for leadership. Therefore, Maliki has encouraged a secretive brand of national security decisionmaking through the OCC, BOC, and CTS, restricted to a small coterie of confidants and excluding both other Iraqis and coalition mentors. Symbolic of this approach is his continuing tendency to bypass or meddle with the workings of the very bodies designed to ensure that security policies succeed, such as the JHQ, Iraqi Ground Forces Command (IGFC), and Joint Operations Centers. Such conduct reveals a misunderstanding of the strategic, operational, and tactical levels of leadership, stunts the maturation of senior-level national security decisionmaking, and contravenes the intent of Iraqi law.<sup>76</sup>

Beyond the personal style of any one leader, the officials who populate senior positions in the Iraqi national security community all emerged from the same paradigm of Middle Eastern and Iraqi regime practices. Unsurprisingly, then, they have not yet been able to transcend two generations of experience in the past few years. Moreover, the troubled emergence of the new Iraq has energized ethnosectarian and political concerns as factors in the country's civil-military relations.

This dilemma becomes clear when one reviews the individuals who occupied Iraq's most senior national security positions as of late 2010. Although all three of the country's major groups—Shiite Arab, Kurdish, and Sunni Arab—were represented, Shiites dominated these positions, including IGFC commander Ali Ghaidan, navy commander Muhammad Jawad, BOC commander Ahmed Hashem (as well as his predecessor, Abud Qanbar, a relative of Maliki), and FP commander Hussein Jassim al-Awadi, as well as the Defense Ministry's director-general, Mohan al-Furayji (an extremely influential figure who previously headed the Basra Operations Center), and inspector-general, Ashraf Zaji.<sup>77</sup>



**Fig. 1. Iraqi National Security and Intelligence Architecture, January 2011**

Furthermore, many of the civilians among Iraq's national security elite are affiliated with Saddam-era Shiite resistance groups that are now political parties. Shirwan al-Waili, the influential MSNSA, is a member of the Islamic Dawa Party, as are OCC head Farouk al-Araji (known as the "shadow minister of defense") and CTS director-general Talib Shaghati. The current BOC deputy commander is also Dawa-affiliated. Similarly, Interior Minister Jawad al-Bulani has been a part of multiple Shiite political groupings, while former interior minister and current finance minister Bayan Jabr is affiliated with the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI), as is Ashraf Zaji. Current INIS head Jawdat al-Obeidi has had links to both Dawa and ISCI.<sup>78</sup> And although little is known of the OIS head whose *nom de guerre* is Abu Ali al-Basri, he is a close confidant of Maliki, likely with a background in Dawa or a similar faction.

Kurds and Sunnis are less well represented, though Babakir Zebari, a Kurd with a *peshmerga* background, occupies the potentially crucial position of Joint Forces commander. Air force commander Anwar Hama Amin is also Kurdish. Although Defense Minister Muhammad Jassim al-Obeidi is a Sunni Arab claiming roots in al-Anbar, none of Iraq's other senior national security posts appear to be occupied by individuals of that ethno-sectarian persuasion.<sup>79</sup>

A Shiite-dominated national security leadership might be tempted to use the ISF to protect the perceived interests of the Shiite community, especially during periods of instability, thus alienating the security forces from other Iraqi constituencies. Beyond ethno-sectarian interests, many officers and officials attained their positions due to political agreements or power-balancing efforts between Maliki and others. For example, although Babakir Zebari is a competent military leader, he has retained his position because he is close with the leadership of the Kurdistan Regional Government; KRG president Massoud Barzani is his nephew. Likewise, Amin became air force commander because he was the senior Kurdish aviator at the time, and the position has customarily gone to a Kurd since 2003.

Conversely, ISCI-affiliated leaders have used a small number of strategically located posts to influence the

security realm. Ahmad Zaji, for example, has launched investigations of Defense Ministry officials and senior officers as a way to block measures that ISCI perceives as unfavorable. Likewise, former interior minister Jabr turned the precursor of the FP into a virtual servant of the Shiite Badr Organization, while as finance minister he has denied funding requests from Dawa- or Kurdish-supported officials in the Defense and Interior Ministries.<sup>80</sup>

Finally, some senior leaders have risen to prominence due to factors besides Shiite or Kurdish interests. For example, Joint Forces deputy chief of staff Nasier Abadi, while technically a Shiite, is secular in orientation and unaffiliated with any political group. The grandson of a former Iraqi premier, he is the country's most experienced fixed-wing aviator and thus respected in the operating forces, overshadowing air force commander Amin. He is also highly respected by his American patrons—a key impetus for Baghdad to retain him given the leadership's desire to develop a U.S.-equipped air force.<sup>81</sup> (For a summary of top Iraqi national security leaders and their backgrounds, see table 2.)

In light of these individual relationships and backgrounds, a certain species of national security politics has emerged in Iraq over the past four years. Again, Shiites dominate the architecture. Within this group, Maliki has used regular institutions as well as the non-constitutional CTS and OCC to ensure Dawa supremacy, with ISCI attaining certain positions through which it can exert obstructive influence. Because of the need to ensure continued Kurdish buy-in, Baghdad has allotted some senior positions to Kurds. Furthermore, some unaffiliated Sunnis have been given token slots, while a small number of leaders have retained their positions and influence because they are important to the force-building relationship with the United States. Yet effective power remains with Maliki's mostly Dawa confidants, in particular through their use of the CTS, OCC, and BOC to bypass regular Defense and Interior Ministry chains of command.<sup>82</sup>

This leadership group's shared professional background also bodes ill for healthy relationships within the officer corps, as well as between military and

**Table 2. ISF Leader Affiliations**

| <b>NAME</b>                          | <b>POSITION</b>                                 | <b>SECT/<br/>ETHNICITY</b> | <b>PART OF<br/>PRE-2003<br/>MILITARY</b> | <b>IMPRISONED/<br/>CASHIERED<br/>BY SADDAM</b> | <b>FLED IRAQ<br/>BEFORE 2003</b> | <b>PESHMERGA</b> | <b>ISLAMIC<br/>DAWA PARTY</b> | <b>ISCI</b> |
|--------------------------------------|---|----------------------------|--|--|----------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Nouri al-Maliki</b>               | Prime minister                                  | Shiite                     |  |  | ●                                |                  | ●                             |             |
| <b>Shirwan al-Waeli</b>              | Minister of state for national security affairs | Shiite                     | ●  | ●  |                                  |                  | ●                             |             |
| <b>Farouk al-Araji</b>               | Director, Office of the Commander-in-Chief      | Shiite                     | ●  |  |                                  |                  | ●                             |             |
| <b>Talib Shaghathi</b>               | Director-general, Counter-Terrorism Service     | Shiite                     | ●  |  |                                  |                  | ●                             |             |
| <b>Muhammad Jassim<br/>al-Obeidi</b> | Minister of defense                             | Sunni Arab                 | ●  | ●  |                                  |                  | ●                             |             |
| <b>Jawad al-Bulani</b>               | Minister of interior                            | Shiite                     | ●  | ●  |                                  |                  |                               |             |
| <b>Bayan Jabr</b>                    | Minister of finance                             | Shiite                     |  |  | ●                                |                  |                               | ●           |
| <b>Jawdat al-Obeidi</b>              | Head of Iraqi National Intelligence Service     | Shiite                     | ●  | ●  |                                  |                  | ●                             | ●           |
| <b>Bahakir Zehari</b>                | Chief of staff, Joint Forces                    | Kurdish                    | ●  |  |                                  | ●                |                               |             |
| <b>Nasier Abadi</b>                  | Deputy chief of staff, Joint Forces             | Shiite                     | ●  |  |                                  |                  |                               |             |
| <b>Abud Qanbar</b>                   | Deputy chief of staff for operations            | Shiite                     | ●  | ●  |                                  |                  | ●                             |             |
| <b>Ahmed Hashem</b>                  | Commander, Baghdad Operations Center            | Shiite                     | ●  |  |                                  |                  |                               |             |
| <b>Ali Ghaidan</b>                   | Head of Iraqi Ground Forces Command             | Shiite                     | ●  | ●  |                                  |                  | ●                             |             |
| <b>Anwar Hama Amin</b>               | Commander of the air force                      | Kurdish                    | ●  |  |                                  | ●                |                               |             |
| <b>Muhammad Jawad</b>                | Commander of the navy                           | Shiite                     | ●  |  |                                  |                  |                               |             |
| <b>Ashraf Zaji</b>                   | Inspector-general, Ministry of Defense          | Shiite                     | ●  |  |                                  |                  |                               | ●           |
| <b>Mohan al-Furayji</b>              | Director-general, Ministry of Defense           | Shiite                     | ●  | ●  |                                  |                  |                               |             |
| <b>Hussein Jassim<br/>al-Awadi</b>   | Commander, Federal Police                       | Shiite                     | ●  |  |                                  |                  |                               |             |

civilian leaders. All of the top military officers, along with Interior Minister Bulani and MSNSA Waili, served in the pre-2003 military, some rising to senior ranks. This is to be expected given Iraq's need to build the ISF so quickly. Yet it also means that, in addition to technical competency deficits, these leaders have absorbed the norms and practices of Saddam's security forces, including the tools of survival. Likewise, some of them—such as Zebari, Furayji, Ghaidan, Zaji, Jabr, Jassim al-Obeidi, and Waili—were persecuted or cashiered from the army under Saddam, or even fled Iraq to join armed resistance against the Baath regime.<sup>83</sup>

Thus, whether part of the previous regime or outside of it, Iraq's current national security leaders relied on oppositional politics, mistrust, shifting alliances, covert action against a sitting ruler, intracommunity feuding, and extralegal use of force as means of survival before 2003. The past few years have not shown them the utility of acting otherwise, particularly Maliki and his closest confidants in the OCC, OIS, MSNSA, and BOC. Consequently, officials at all levels operate among colleagues who may be inclined to jockey for position either in the national security hierarchy or in the political field, and who may hold positions for the implicit purpose of blocking rival initiatives. If this culture continues to take root, it could undermine Iraq's fragile institutional cohesion and further politicize the national security process, particularly during times of heightened tension.

### Military Intrusion into Politics

Although Iraq's political leaders seem to view current ISF management practices as an effective means of maintaining their personal and party position while hedging against a potential coup, this strategy courts several scenarios that would endanger both the leaders themselves and the coherence of the Iraqi state. The following are among the most plausible scenarios for military intrusion into politics over the next decade:

- **Military coup against regime elites.** Political meddling in national security matters could ultimately provoke discontent and mistrust among

senior uniformed leaders who feel marginalized, particularly if they believe that the political leadership lacks popular credibility or is acting in a feckless and incompetent manner. This kind of military coup from outside the regime's core elite is a real concern not only because of Iraq's past, but also because the ISF's operating forces are the most cohesive, self-aware, and professionalized component of the Iraqi state today, far outpacing their civilian counterparts.

- **Corrective coup.** Conversely, military leaders who obtain power and influence via political alliances could opt for armed action if they believe their positions are in jeopardy due to weakened civilian patrons. In such a case, these leaders could pursue a corrective coup to shore up existing patrons or install new civilian leaders who are more reliable. They could then either return to the barracks or assume political leadership themselves. Politically promoted military leaders could also feel compelled to topple civilian patrons who threaten to jettison them.
- **Intimidation.** If the civilian core elite feel threatened by changing political alliances or legislative and legal measures that curb their control over coercive organs, they might be tempted to use the military forces at their direct disposal, as well as forces commanded by politically promoted protégés, to intimidate and eliminate rivals or alter the structures of governance.

Any of these scenarios could fragment the ISF as various actors mobilize members of their ethnic and sectarian communities within the military.<sup>84</sup> If such efforts spread into civilian society, politically motivated use of the ISF could destabilize the state itself.

The politicization of military capabilities thus remains a core developmental challenge in Iraq's national security sector, in large part because it works against badly needed technical professionalization and can subvert a working political order. To cultivate healthy civil-military relations, Iraq must ensure that its coercive forces are loyal to the institutions they serve and not to individuals, political parties, or

primordial identities. In addition, regime elites must be discouraged from using the ISF for narrow political or personal purposes. Progress on the former issue has been slow, while tendencies related to the latter issue are worrisome.<sup>85</sup> As such, establishing healthy civil-military relations will require much more than simply securing civilian control of the military—it will take years of mentorship and advice aimed at the current generation of senior national security leaders, along with comprehensive efforts to socialize the emerging generation of officers and officials.

Unfortunately, Iraq's new government has yet to exhibit encouraging signs in this regard. Since the 2010 national elections, Maliki has further centralized coercive power by assuming the role of acting defense minister, and efforts to more evenly distribute national security responsibilities among elected officials have been stymied. For example, Maliki's State of Law Alliance and Ayad Allawi's Iraqiyah party initially agreed to establish a National Council

for Strategic Policies (*al-majlis al-watani li-l-siyasat al-istratijiya*) headed by Allawi and including representatives from other major parties. Yet questions regarding the council's legal and constitutional basis—some legitimate, some politically motivated—had prevented its activation as of February 2011. Furthermore, politicians have continued to debate whether the council should be given directive authority or a merely consultative role. Although Iraqiyah members claim that the body is intended to function similarly to the U.S. National Security Council, continuing disagreement about such issues threatens the longevity of the current coalition government while allowing Maliki to uphold his model of civil-military relations and politicized national security decision-making. Conversely, the council's full emergence could result in dueling nodes of power and loyalty within the national security structure, with implications for both security policy effectiveness and domestic stability.<sup>86</sup>

## 4 | The Dilemma of 2011

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FAITHFUL TO THE 2008 Status of Forces Agreement, the United States intends to remove all of its military forces from Iraq by December 2011 unless Baghdad requests otherwise and Washington agrees. In either scenario, the Iraqi security sector will have taken only its first tentative steps toward self-reliance by that date. As described in previous chapters, the Iraqi Security Forces exhibit underdeveloped capabilities and even outright gaps in some areas, leaving them unable to deal with certain types of threats. Therefore, Iraq's most substantial deficits—in force building, civil-military relations, and the technical competencies of its national security institutions—will be far from remedied by the date U.S. forces are to depart.

Of course, other U.S. partners in the Middle East also exhibit deficits in one or more of these categories. Yet countries such as Saudi Arabia do not confront the levels of domestic violence or external interference seen in Iraq. Given the greater challenges confronting Iraq, deficits that are tolerable elsewhere would expose the Iraqi government and people—and U.S. policy goals—to much greater risk. Indeed, the persistent problems in Iraq's national security sector could undermine the Obama administration's "responsible drawdown" policy, warranting reassessment of the timeline for complete U.S. withdrawal.

### Projected ISF Status

Despite recent and planned acquisitions, Iraq's defensive capabilities will not be self-sufficient by December 2011, leaving the country unable to defend its borders or airspace on its own.<sup>87</sup> Currently, observers rate the ISF as performing credibly in tactical-level counter-insurgency and counterterrorism (at least with U.S. logistical support and combat enablers). Yet it is questionable whether the few remaining months of U.S.-assisted force building would enable Baghdad to subdue large-scale foreign-supported domestic terrorism or insurrection quickly enough to preserve the still-fragile body politic. Significantly, many of the major platforms described in chapter 1 have only just begun

to arrive in Iraq and will not be fully integrated until well after 2011. F-16s, for example, will not arrive until 2013, while the delivery of M1A1s will not be complete until December 2011 at the earliest, assuming they can avoid the delays that have characterized other arms transfers to Iraq. In almost all cases, deliveries are to be phased over several years, requiring a decade for completion when one accounts for extended training of Iraqi pilots, crewmen, technicians, and commanders both at home and abroad, as well as the necessary maintenance and sustainment infrastructure.

Both U.S. and Iraqi military assessments recognize these problems. The United States has defined a "minimum essential capability" (MEC) for the ISF to reach by December 2011: "MEC means that Iraqi security ministries, institutions, and forces can provide internal security and possess minimum foundational capabilities to defend against external threats."<sup>88</sup> Yet the Pentagon has projected critical deficits in several areas. For example, the Iraqi Army "will not achieve a foundation for defense against external threats before December 2011 because of equipment procurement timelines and subsequent training requirements...for the M1A1 fleet, artillery units, and key mechanized enablers." And although the air force is improving, it will be short of MEC in the critical categories of "airspace control (the ability to surveil their airspace, warn of an incursion, and respond kinetically) and fixed-wing airlift."<sup>89</sup>

Furthermore, outside observers have noted that all ISF components lack critical capabilities in logistics, operational sustainment, and institutional support. This includes spare parts and repair workshops, as well as qualified maintenance personnel and contracts, whether for legacy systems from before 2003 or new systems scheduled to enter the ISF arsenal over the next decade.<sup>90</sup> James Jeffrey, the U.S. ambassador to Iraq, acknowledged these problems in early 2011, adding that "gaps will remain" in counterterrorism capabilities and intelligence fusion at the tactical, operational, and cross-ministry levels, accompanied by shortfalls in

collaboration and information sharing across much of the national security architecture.<sup>91</sup>

Some Iraqi generals have been blunt regarding the gaps they will face after 2011. In August 2010, Joint Forces chief Babakir Zebari asserted that the ISF was not ready to assume full control of Iraq's defense, and that "the U.S. Army must stay until the Iraqi Army is fully ready in 2020."<sup>92</sup> Two months later, he noted the need for "a means of transportation, communications and efficient civilian and military intelligence services. We still do not have air or naval forces worthy of their names... This is why I have come out against this rushed American troop withdrawal."<sup>93</sup> The Iraqi Air Force commander concurred, stating that his service branch could not be completed "in the modern military sense" before 2020.<sup>94</sup> Meanwhile, Defense Minister Muhammad Jassim al-Obeidi indicated that large numbers of military advisors and trainers will be "inevitable" after 2011, though he sidestepped the issue of direct U.S. troop contributions. Elaborating, he stated, "We have equipment such as tanks, aircraft, naval equipment, and it's all coming from the United States. They won't be fully ready until 2016, so how are we going to train on them? By mail? We will need the help of specialists and experts and trainers, and those people are going to need life support and force protection."<sup>95</sup>

Although Iraq's civilian leaders largely discount such comments, the U.S. and Iraqi military assessments have significant implications. In short, if Iraq is to defend its airspace and borders, it will require help from another country's armed forces to do so. Furthermore, if the ISF is to acquire and meaningfully integrate new weapons systems, it will require assistance from substantial numbers of foreign—likely U.S.—personnel. Therefore, the current and projected status of the ISF may necessitate changes in the duration, size, and scope of American military activities in Iraq. At base such changes suggest the need for a post-2011 U.S. presence larger than that being contemplated by Washington, which currently plans to leave behind "small numbers of military personnel" after December, in the realm of "dozens or maybe hundreds."<sup>96</sup> Even if the ISF reaches MEC by the end of 2011, such numbers would not permit Iraq to decisively confront internal

threats or defend itself from foreign aggression on its own, barring a dramatic change in recent trends.

Similarly, Iraq's national security institutions continue to exhibit serious capacity gaps in planning, budgeting, programmatic stewardship, and accountability. These gaps are largely a result of staff inexperience, along with an administrative culture that is dangerously bureaucratic, centralizing, and protective of organizational turf. Iraq's national security architecture requires a unified vision, trust, and professionalism in order to be successful. In stable countries with advanced military services, these kinds of systems have been the product of negotiation, experience, debate, and lessons learned from mistakes. Yet Iraq's national security architecture is quite new and still evolving, having crystallized only in the past four years. It is also populated by relatively inexperienced leaders. As a result, its capacity to meet the material and human resourcing needs of the current force structure remains limited. Likewise, Iraq's leaders have not demonstrated an aptitude for articulating the sort of force-building priorities that could drive plans for implementation according to persistent and emerging threats over the next decade.

If Iraq's national security institutions are to achieve adequate capacity, U.S. observers believe that "coalition mentorship and partnership will be necessary for several years."<sup>97</sup> Such partnership is needed not only to improve technical competencies in planning, managing, and budgeting, but also for the long-term task of ensuring that Iraq develops its own capacity to sustain and improve these competencies. The latter goal requires that Baghdad build "an institutional training infrastructure," which has proven to be "a huge challenge" thus far.<sup>98</sup> Absent sustained mentorship and maturation, the "strategic dysfunctions" of these institutions could undermine Iraq's uniformed services themselves.<sup>99</sup> As a January 2011 U.S. government report put it, problems in the military and its oversight agencies "could affect [the ISF's] ability to lock in hard-won security gains."<sup>100</sup>

Finally, ongoing civil-military practices suggest that the legacy of the pre-2003 era and the ethno-sectarian strife that followed it remain the dominant

**Table 3. Estimated Gaps in Iraq’s Minimum Essential Capabilities by December 2011**

| PRIORITY 1  | LIKELY GAPS | PRIORITY 2  | LIKELY GAPS |
|---|-------------|---|-------------|
| MAINTAINING INTERNAL STABILITY AND SECURITY         |             | DEFENDING AGAINST EXTERNAL AGGRESSION                   |             |
| Conducting counterterrorism operations              |             | Defending littoral waters                               |             |
| Securing oil infrastructure                         |             | Providing intelligence support to national policy       |             |
| Securing territorial waters                         |             | Establishing interministerial security coordination     | ●           |
| Providing intelligence support to ground operations |             | Sustaining forces at national level                     | ●           |
| Providing operational-level command and control     | ●           | Conducting combined arms and joint defensive operations | ●           |
| Sustaining operations                               | ●           | Establishing advanced leader development education      | ●           |
| Providing air-ground tactical mobility              |             | Maintaining a mature training base                      | ●           |
| Basic organizing, manning, training, equipping      | ●           | Mobilizing a reserve force                              | ●           |
| Providing essential services to bases               | ●           | Providing all-weather day and night fixed-wing airlift  | ●           |
| Providing rotary-wing lift                          |             | Controlling national airspace                           | ●           |
| Establishing terminal airspace control              |             | Conducting air-to-ground attacks                        | ●           |

Source: U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee, “Iraq: The Transition from a Military Mission to a Civilian-Led Effort,” 112th Congress, 1st Session, January 31, 2011, p. 21, <http://foreign.senate.gov/press/chair/release/?id=de3f68c1-2db2-4c9b-b062-935955ce9019>.

influences on how most Iraqi national security leaders function. As one close observer commented, “The military culture of the Baathist-Soviet model under Saddam Hussein remains entrenched.”<sup>101</sup> Therefore, the United States continues to face the enormous task of helping to build a new security sector while reforming the previous sector’s norms and practices, which have persisted into the new era through leaders molded by the Baath order.<sup>102</sup> As suggested throughout this study, failure to reform these critical aspects of the security architecture could imperil Iraq’s stability. (For more on the gaps in Iraq’s MEC, see table 3.)

### U.S. Embassy Leadership and the Contractor Role

With the transition to Operation New Dawn, much of the U.S. burden for building and reforming the Iraqi security sector is to fall on the State Department and the U.S. embassy in Baghdad, particularly after 2011. In this respect, more than 1,200 tasks currently carried out by U.S. military forces have been identified for either transition to the embassy or elimination. In order to accomplish its mission, the embassy is planning an unprecedented expansion of functions in the security assistance realm. It also intends to grow its force-protection initiatives in order to compensate

somewhat for lost capabilities as U.S. troops depart. These initiatives include augmented convoy security, rapid contingency response, and regional intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR). Such efforts entail the acquisition of mine-resistant ambush-protected vehicles (MRAPs) and greater numbers of helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft. In short, the State Department is expected to function at a high intensity level in a semipermissive environment, and in domains where it “has little experience.”<sup>103</sup>

To make up for this lack of experience, the department intends to hire thousands of contractors for training Iraqis as well as for force protection. Regarding the latter function, more than 5,000 private security contractors (PSCs) will be under the authority of the embassy’s regional security officer. Although Washington will likely work out an agreement with Iraq permitting these PSCs to use deadly force if necessary, Baghdad will probably impose limitations on PSC immunity from prosecution—especially when off duty—and require heightened coordination with Iraqi security agencies. Any escalation of force incidents or infractions of laws regulating the PSCs would not only subject the embassy to legal complications, but also cause political difficulties and turn public opinion against the United States. In short, the embassy’s PSC coordination and oversight role will be much greater than it currently is, given the projected doubling in contractor numbers. And at a time when PSCs will be under much closer scrutiny by both Iraqis and the U.S. government, the PSCs’ legal status will likely remain “a grey area.”<sup>104</sup>

Meanwhile, in order to train and advise the ISF and service weapons systems obtained from the United States, large numbers of private military contractors (PMCs) will work under the guidance of the Office of Security Cooperation (OSC), whose 157 full-time staffers will be periodically augmented by visiting specialists assisting Iraq with military purchase procedures.<sup>105</sup> Over time, tens of thousands of U.S. PMCs will likely rotate through Iraq. These same personnel could ostensibly provide direct support to the ISF in the realm of theater-wide ISR if contracted to do so through the U.S. government. The PMC arrangement

has worked well in other regional countries, Saudi Arabia being the chief example. For the most part, PMCs who implement U.S. security cooperation in Iraq will be subject to Iraqi law and will have no inherent right to self-defense. Personal security needs will have to be met through either Iraqi federal and local forces or U.S./international PSCs. Given the country’s persistent instability, PMC security in Iraq may entail greater challenges than in other regional cases.

Just as important as PMC security, the employment of PMCs for training and advisory purposes will entail certain dilemmas. Although contracted by the OSC, PMCs will likely function in many domains, which could result in a lack of oversight. Enforcing common training approaches and evaluating contractor effectiveness via standardized metrics could prove quite challenging. Ensuring continuity of relationships among PMCs, Iraqi instructors, and Iraqi students will be difficult as well given the possibility of PMC transience in the first years after 2012. Moreover, even the strongest Iraqi relationships with PMCs will not hold the same benefits as close Iraqi relationships with U.S. officials, whether in the strategic sense or in terms of improving the ISF’s capabilities. For one thing, contract trainers are not representatives of the United States, so their priorities will not center on furthering U.S. policy goals. Moreover, given Iraq’s uncertain security conditions and the fact that PMCs will not be permitted to provide their own force protection, their ability to provide training in the field or advise the ISF on operations will be rather minimal. Finally, the logic driving PMCs will be to maximize profit and reduce risk—hardly a guaranteed model for developing ISF capabilities as efficiently as possible. In fact, contractors already have an uneven track record in training the ISF, with poor experiences early on resulting in much closer U.S. military involvement.<sup>106</sup>

In addition to the operational, legal, and political challenges raised by extensive use of contractors, the embassy’s capacity to coordinate all of its missions will necessarily be limited at first. In January 2012, the embassy will find itself managing a contractor contingent larger than today’s by several orders of magnitude—as many as 7,000 or more U.S. and foreign

nationals.<sup>107</sup> The State Department may not be able to generate the necessary oversight capacity for this contingent by the end of 2011, nor is it clear that the department has the metrics to evaluate its own abilities or performance in the realm of contractor oversight. Indeed, a State Department–led security assistance effort may not reach required levels of efficacy in a timely fashion even after 2011, particularly if violence increases or the Iraqi government remains unstable. This is especially worrisome because relationships with Iraqi officials will need to be maintained even more closely after December. Specifically, Washington will need to reassure its Iraqi partners of continuing U.S. commitment to them at a time when malign elements will see a new opportunity to destabilize the Iraqi government and stoke intercommunal friction.

State Department officials have themselves called into question the embassy’s ability to lead the mission in Iraq by the end of 2011. A late 2010 audit report from the department’s inspector-general suggested the need to “stringently evaluate” whether current plans to transition efforts away from the military will allow U.S. officials to carry out their work amid the increased violence forecasted for early 2012. It also called for “clearer and more timely high-level focus and policy guidance from Washington” as well as faster planning and inter-agency coordination, so that the United States can avoid “overselling what it can and will accomplish.”<sup>108</sup>

Washington’s current plan places another critically important limitation on U.S. security engagement in Iraq. Namely, contractors are not soldiers, and military personnel under the OSC will not have any authority to act as a military force. In other words, the United States will not have any organized, authorized, or capable force on the ground in Iraq after 2011—a period when Baghdad will be unable to provide for external defense on its own and will face internal challenges that could overwhelm the ISF. If conditions worsen to the point of threatening government survival and state cohesion, the United States will not have the local means to help the ISF. Washington will then be faced with the choice of moving forces into theater rapidly—with some delay and logistical difficulty—or doing nothing.

Moreover, the projected U.S. presence in Iraq will not meaningfully deter or hinder regional rivals or hostile military forces. For example, if Iran pursues adventurism in Iraq, the United States will have nothing on the ground to counter such actions or shore up the resolve of the Iraqi government and other regional partners. This is particularly significant given that Article 27 of the Status of Forces Agreement obligates the United States, upon Baghdad’s request, to deter “any external or internal threat or aggression against Iraq that would violate its sovereignty, political independence, or territorial integrity, waters, airspace, its democratic system or its elected institutions,” using “appropriate measures, including diplomatic, economic, or military measures.”<sup>109</sup> Although the agreement expires in December 2011, Iraqi leaders may seek similar follow-on assurances. Squaring a limited U.S. presence with such assurances will be difficult, again bearing in mind that Iraq’s conditions differ from those of countries where a predominantly contractor-led model works.

Of course, these limitations also mean that the United States will have almost no in-country ability to protect U.S. facilities, official personnel, or the thousands of American PMC/PSCs if the situation in Iraq deteriorates. As such, a January 2011 Senate Foreign Relations Committee report concluded that a planned U.S. presence of about 17,000 officials and contractors spread over fifteen locations in Iraq could prove untenable without continued military engagement, as it would subject remaining Americans to a level of physical danger “normally unacceptable for diplomats.”<sup>110</sup>

### **Kurdish Integration and the U.S. Military Role**

One particularly challenging element of U.S. security efforts is the integration of Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) forces into the ISF. The Kurdish issue touches on several matters of concern to the future of Iraq, including political integration, ethnic rights, the central government’s relationship to Iraq’s different regions (and the issue of federalism in general), and control over resources, to name a few. These issues deserve their own study, but one in particular—the ISF’s relationship with the KRG’s security

forces (KSF)—is critical to the future of Iraq’s security capabilities.

This relationship depends on several variables. First, KRG security organs—*peshmerga* (army), Zerevani (paramilitary police), and Asayesh (internal security)—have until recently been divided between Kurdistan’s two major political forces, the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK). Only in 2010 were PUK and KDP chains of command completely united under the KRG-wide Ministry of Peshmerga Affairs and Kurdish Regional Ministry of Interior. This paved the way for establishing apolitical Regional Guard Brigades (RGBs) from *peshmerga* forces.

Second, the integration of KSF units with the ISF has proceeded very slowly. Since late 2007, two division-size *peshmerga* elements have been identified for integration into the ISF as the 15th and 16th Divisions of the Iraqi Army, providing central government forces with a mountain operations capability. This initiative has been halted several times, however, due to mistrust, equipment standardization problems, and concerns about the KRG’s loss of command and control over these units and their potential deployment outside Kurdistan. The larger political issues of the KRG’s relationship with Iraq and the status of disputed areas and resources (e.g., Kirkuk, oil) have also prevented large-scale, speedy KSF-ISF integration.

Yet various smaller, more encouraging steps have been taken. Particularly in disputed areas, or in parts of the north and east where KSF and ISF units operate near each other, combined security operations and checkpoints have featured U.S. forces as mediators, mentors, and enablers of Kurdish-Arab security cooperation. Such “tripartite operations” have been an “effective mechanism to enhance security and dampen Arab-Kurd tensions” in these areas. When such frictions have arisen, *peshmerga* and ISF units have preferred negotiation and accommodation to confrontation, given the tripartite arrangement. Yet “as U.S. forces depart, opportunities for miscalculation or provocation may rise.”<sup>111</sup>

Close U.S. participation and mediation have also been successful in the realm of integrating individual

brigade-sized KSF units into the Iraqi Army and Federal Police (FP). Over the past several months, both Baghdad and the KRG have taken important U.S.-encouraged steps in this regard. In April 2010, the central government recognized Kurdish RGBs as part of the ISF, thereby making them eligible for both U.S. training and the ISF’s own courses and schools. This initiative also made the RGBs eligible to receive U.S.-provided equipment entering ISF stocks. In April–May 2010, the Iraqi Ministry of Defense and KRG Ministry of Peshmerga Affairs established liaison offices with each other, and in July 2010, Baghdad authorized inclusion of RGB personnel in army training courses, signaling the integration of four RGBs into the ISF.

Similar steps have been taken toward FP-Zerevani integration. In May 2010, the Interior Ministry in Baghdad recognized the latter as lawful Iraqi security elements. The ministry also signed a tripartite plan with the Kurdish Regional Interior Ministry and the U.S. military for integrated training, equipping, and operating of Zerevani and FP forces. The ultimate goal of this U.S.-mentored process was full integration of the Zerevani as the Kurdish region’s FP units. Although the Zerevani had been receiving limited training from coalition forces since 2009, they are now entitled to the same U.S. training and equipment provided to the ISF as a whole.

By pushing for these integration measures, the United States has helped create partnered units to preserve the tripartite arrangement.<sup>112</sup> Such an approach could also serve as a model for integration of most Kurdish units into the Iraqi Army, FP, and Department of Border Enforcement structure while leaving a portion of them under the KRG’s control—akin to successful approaches used in the Balkans during the 1990s.<sup>113</sup> More important to note, however, is the criticality of U.S. military involvement in the ISF-KSF relationship. It is the U.S. military presence, trusted by both Kurdish and Arab Iraqis, that has prevented more serious friction, promoted ISF-KSF collaboration, and facilitated *peshmerga* integration into Iraq’s military, through both targeted training and overall stewardship.

The third issue affecting KSF integration is the overall relationship between the KRG and the central

government. In this respect, forward momentum in the security sector could fall victim to a myriad of political, economic, and transnational disagreements, which could even reverse progress. Yet with regard to including Kurdish contributions in the development of Iraq's national security sector, the U.S. military is particularly well placed compared to other U.S. government entities. It has the credibility and track record to push integration further, given its focus on professional competencies, its shared identity with other professional soldiers, and its relationships and local knowledge. The U.S. embassy lacks this background, and the expanded diplomatic presence it plans to establish in Kirkuk and Mosul will not fully substitute for the level of engagement the U.S. Army has had with Kurdish and Iraqi forces. Likewise, it is highly unlikely that U.S. security contractors would quickly or credibly fill the departing U.S. military's shoes. Hired to train, such contractors would not be empowered to mediate between Kurdish and Arab soldiers or resolve conflicts between units as representatives of U.S. policy—nor would they likely symbolize, to Kurds in particular, an enduring U.S. commitment to stability and regional integration.

### **U.S. Interests and Responsible Partnership**

All of these considerations point to the desirability of a residual U.S. military presence in Iraq after 2011, both to ensure internal security and deter foreign meddling. Moreover, the United States has several important interests in the larger Arabian Peninsula and Persian Gulf region that influence the Middle East as a whole, such as preserving state stability; controlling interstate conflict; limiting the transnational proliferation of extremist ideologies as well as the material and human enablers of violence; ensuring the free movement of energy resources; and preventing Iranian nuclear proliferation. If Iraq became unstable or aggressive due to dysfunctional, politicized national security institutions, U.S. interests would be jeopardized on all of these fronts.

Indeed, after focusing on Iraq for its own sake over the past few years, the United States is beginning to view the country through a regional lens. As senior

U.S. officials have affirmed, this means ensuring that the Iraqi security sector can contribute to the broader interests the United States shares with its regional partners. This goal will be difficult to reach by the end of 2011, bringing into question whether current U.S. withdrawal plans can meet all of America's policy objectives in Iraq. It may therefore be prudent to revisit the timeline of "phased redeployment" in order to safeguard Iraq's security and stability and ensure adequate development of its national security institutions.

Although a new departure schedule would require a renegotiated Status of Forces Agreement with Baghdad, this sort of responsible drawdown—in which a residual force remains in Iraq for a few more years—would serve as a foundation for responsible partnership in the long term. Such an approach would also be worthy of the material and human investment that the United States and its coalition partners have made in Iraq since 2003, and would align with the Obama administration's approach to Operation New Dawn in the context of broader U.S. regional interests.

Specifically, the responsible partnership recommended in this study would entail a post-2011 U.S. military presence that is eliminated in a phased fashion as critical Iraqi capabilities fully emerge. Likely extending the mandate of U.S. Forces–Iraq (USF-I) by a number of years, a small-though-credible military presence would contribute to Iraq's defense while closely overseeing a train-and-advise mission spanning the field forces and the ministries. A moderate-size contractor complement would also participate. American personnel and units would withdraw as their functions were replaced by Iraqi capabilities, based on joint U.S. and Iraqi government assessments. And even after the military withdrawal, contractors could remain in the country under the OSC's auspices in order to continue training and maintenance.

This approach would reflect the spirit of Operation New Dawn and the intent of current U.S. policy, while increasing the likelihood of actually meeting that policy's goals.<sup>114</sup> By extending the drawdown in more of a conditions-based direction and embracing a multi-year timeline, responsible partnership would enable the maturation of critical capabilities and sensibilities in the

Iraqi national security sector. Preserving “an intense, sustained military-to-military engagement” could also cultivate the Iraqi leadership’s confidence in the United States and in their own institutions,<sup>115</sup> allowing Washington to exert positive influence as Iraq continues to face internal stresses and challenges from neighbors.

In addition, responsible partnership would allow the United States to make good on obligations such as those described in Article 27 of the Status of Forces Agreement, or to offer Baghdad assurances similar to those Washington has quietly provided to other Arab states. For example, this approach would meet the Article 27 requirement that Iraqi territory “not be used as a launching or transit point” for U.S. actions against other states. At the same time, a small, residual U.S. presence would show Iran and its proxies that Washington is serious about the article’s other main provision: securing Iraq’s territorial integrity and domestic stability.

Finally, if USF-I’s structures, procedures, and relationships were preserved beyond 2011, the U.S. embassy would not be forced to hastily increase the tempo and range of its activities in order to maintain relationships with Iraqis and provide physical

security to large numbers of civilian officials. Instead, the phased drawdown of military forces could be synchronized with transition of functions from USF-I to the embassy. In this respect, responsible partnership would align with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee’s support for “a continued but restricted follow-on military presence” after 2011.<sup>116</sup>

Indeed, senior U.S. officials have left the door open to keeping residual forces in Iraq after 2011 should Baghdad ask for them.<sup>117</sup> According to Defense Secretary Robert Gates, while the initiative for any continued troop presence “clearly needs to come from the Iraqis,” U.S. officials “will stand by and be ready to have that discussion if and when they want to raise it.”<sup>118</sup> Some reports suggest that Iraqi security leaders have quietly sounded out American officials on the matter.<sup>119</sup> Likewise, KRG officials have repeatedly advocated a continued U.S. military role in Iraq over the past two years, particularly in areas fraught with Arab-Kurdish tension.<sup>120</sup> Therefore, extending the responsible drawdown for the purpose of fostering responsible partnership would be an effective way to support Iraqi needs as well as U.S. policy goals.

## 5 | Policy Recommendations

**BOTH U.S. POLICY GOALS** in Iraq and wider U.S. regional interests argue for a modest-size residual military presence in Iraq after 2011. Accordingly, policymakers should reconsider the magnitude and functions of U.S. involvement in Iraq's security sector and actively encourage Baghdad to support the sort of responsible partnership described in the previous chapter and as follows. Although much smaller than the 50,000 American troops stationed in Iraq prior to September 2010, the residual force recommended here would exceed the current U.S. plan, which envisions a "connecting tissue" of "dozens to hundreds" of U.S. officers accompanied by contract trainers.<sup>121</sup> Responsible partnership would extend the withdrawal timeline, focusing on three main objectives consonant with Operation New Dawn: strengthening Iraq's external defense and internal security; building the Iraqi Security Forces to the point where a substantial U.S. presence is no longer needed; and continuing to develop the country's national security institutions while reforming their practices.

### U.S. Forces in Iraq

The post-2011 U.S. military presence could focus on training, advising, and substantial operational assistance in the realm of airspace security and defense of territorial integrity. To meet its goals—namely, exerting deterrence without prolonging a substantial footprint in Iraq or diminishing combat power available for operations in Afghanistan—this residual force would likely require one heavy mechanized advise and assist brigade (AAB) with an aviation component,<sup>122</sup> paired with a task-organized air expeditionary wing (AEW).<sup>123</sup> In terms of troop numbers, a relatively small U.S. Forces–Iraq (USF-I) contingent of 5,000 to 10,000 personnel would be warranted at first, drawing down as Iraqi readiness increased after 2011.<sup>124</sup>

Retaining a naval presence would also be prudent. By December 2011, the Iraqi Navy will likely reach minimum essential capability in terms of defending territorial waters and oil infrastructure. According to

recent Defense Department assessments, however, the oil-protection mission is so important to Iraq's economy as to "mandate a higher level of capability," which would in turn entail "a regional presence that can respond to emergencies" as the Iraqi Navy "matures."<sup>125</sup> Such a presence in Iraq's waters—to include training, infrastructure support, and riverine operations—might also discourage Iranian maritime adventurism in the northern Gulf while facilitating overall border security and hindering criminal and terrorist smuggling.

Additionally, responsible partnership entails retaining an information operations (IO) capability in Iraq after 2011, along with the Special Operations Forces already projected to remain in theater. Functioning at the unit and national level, IO assets could work with the U.S. embassy's public diplomacy officers to ensure a coordinated strategic communication campaign aimed at positively shaping the views of Iraqi leaders, military personnel, and citizens regarding the U.S. contribution to their nation's stability. This IO-aided campaign could also help expose malign Iranian influence.

### Iraqi Force Building

Alongside USF-I's assistance role, cooperation on force building and security sector reform could proceed apace through the Office of Security Cooperation, headquartered in the U.S. embassy.<sup>126</sup> The principle determining the substance and timeline of U.S. involvement in force building would be to develop Iraqi self-sufficiency in dealing with realistic internal and foreign threats while ensuring that the national security apparatus contributes to the maturation of Iraq's nascent democracy. Building the ISF into the sort of "defensive credibility" force described in chapter 1 would thus be appropriate.

Such a force could deter foreign incursion and communicate national sovereignty to its citizens through a preponderance of agile motorized infantry and armed transport helicopters, reinforced by a small but heavy mechanized complement. Its limited ground offensive and reprisal capabilities would be supplemented

by air defenses able to counter invading forces before they reach Iraqi population centers or critical infrastructure. Ideally, Iraq's military services would gradually remove themselves from domestic matters, but in the interim, a defensive credibility force would allow Baghdad to counter persistent, well-armed, and well-organized internal threats throughout the next decade. This is important because, notwithstanding the desire for "police primacy," internal security in Iraq remains precarious, with regression to effective insurgency a distinct possibility.<sup>127</sup>

At the same time, a defensive credibility approach would not raise regional fears or threaten other U.S. partners because it would not result in a power projection force. The magnitude and timeline of building out such a force should therefore be synchronized with U.S. security assistance efforts among Iraq's Arab neighbors, allowing U.S. regional efforts to reinforce each other while diminishing mistrust. This in turn could provide the basis for a regional security architecture that increases mutual confidence among U.S. partners and enables them to counter shared threats. Such an architecture could eventually justify substantial decreases in forward-positioned American forces and, if necessary, facilitate potential U.S. military movements through the region. Although the primary initial purpose of U.S. assistance should be Iraqi security and political stability, a defensive credibility force could also further the secondary goal of promoting a regional approach to security among U.S. partners.

### National Security Institutions

In the realm of capacity building and civil-military relations, responsible partnership could take a two-pronged approach: one part focused on increasing the capabilities of current Iraqi officials, the other focused on preparing tomorrow's civilian and military leaders to be stewards of Iraq's higher security headquarters and ministries. For the first prong, the United States should seek to retain military and civilian advisors at the senior-service, joint-headquarters, and ministry levels for as long as possible. These personnel should have the experience and seniority to earn the confidence of Iraqi leaders as they tactfully advise them in

the planning, budgeting, and oversight of security sector programs, as well as in the operational management of a joint force.

Ensuring professional relationships among different ministries and headquarters will also require major effort. By modeling certain behaviors, relating their own experiences, and focusing on specific processes and initiatives, U.S. advisors could encourage senior Iraqi leaders to reduce bureaucracy, decentralize, and take into account the stated needs of subordinate force commanders. Moreover, by suggesting certain courses of action or presenting divergent perspectives, advisors could exert tacit influence on national security leaders. This could in turn promote a stronger legal basis and accountability structure for Iraq's security organs, particularly those reporting solely to the prime minister. And by cultivating professionalism and technical expertise, advisors could reduce the politicization of senior officer selection and encourage depersonalized national security decisionmaking.

In a related fashion, preserving an advisor presence could facilitate the advancement of Iraqis who are particularly adept at their jobs or inclined toward a strong relationship with the United States. In tandem with a residual military presence after 2011, a strong contingent of U.S. advisors could provide such officers with the psychological support needed to resist Iranian or other foreign interference in Iraqi security policies. At the very least, a sustained advisor presence would diminish the creeping opacity of Iraqi national security processes likely to attend U.S. drawdown.

These factors should dictate the number, location, and kind of U.S. advisors deployed within the Iraqi national security architecture. The United States should also seek to place advisors in security-related parliamentary committees, given that members of these bodies may go on to positions of influence within the security sector itself, as did Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki.<sup>128</sup> Such personnel could provide input on the technical and process-related issues of national security, thereby cultivating an Iraqi capacity akin to U.S. congressional committee staffs.<sup>129</sup>

In addition, Washington should encourage Iraqi officials to attend institutional leadership seminars in

the United States, as well as U.S. command-post and mission-rehearsal exercises. Likewise, mobile educational teams should visit Iraq frequently, as they do for other allied countries undergoing security sector reform.

As for Iraq's future national security leaders, the United States should include as many as possible in American and NATO professional military education programs, at the staff college level and above. Likewise, civilian programs that develop managerial and organizational leadership competencies should be made available to rising ministerial leaders, with incentives built in for Iraqi participation. In choosing civilian schooling, the United States should look beyond government training resources, supporting Iraqi attendance in American universities and professional programs.

In addition, a strong U.S. investment in Iraq's own national security educational system is important, including curriculum development assistance, help with planning educational progression and requirements, and sustained provision of U.S. and international instructors. Particularly promising Iraqi instructors should be invited to U.S. and NATO schools, and permanent institutional linkages between Iraq's system and those of other countries should be encouraged. Such efforts not only increase competencies, they also drive a culture of national security professionalism through an emergent instructional cadre embodying its norms and acting as proponents for security sector reform.<sup>130</sup>

### International Involvement

Responsible partnership also entails encouraging NATO countries to maintain substantial involvement in all of the above initiatives. One particularly important element is the NATO Training Mission–Iraq (NTM-I). Emerging in late 2004 and reauthorized by a 2009 Iraqi-NATO agreement, the mission currently consists of 177 deployed personnel. Its focus remains leader development through professionalization of training and education efforts in the ISF and related ministries. NTM-I also provides out-of-country learning opportunities for Iraqis and supports doctrine development. At present, the mission is supported by NATO Trust Funds, which face severe shortfalls in 2011 and afterward. The United States should therefore

shore up the NTM-I budget by donating to the Trust Fund and finding other creative means of supporting NATO efforts in Iraq.<sup>131</sup>

Continued NATO involvement in institutional capacity building and leader development would reduce both the burden on the United States and the appearance of American domination of the Iraqi security sector. Moreover, NATO allies have a two-decade history of facilitating and undergoing security reform. As seen in the Balkans, the broader Middle East, and Iraq itself, certain NATO countries possess niche capabilities in the realms of institutional competency, legislative reform, civil control of the military, use of the military for domestic security, and civil-military relations. Although multinational efforts in tactical-level advising and force building are less useful given differences in skill levels and preferences, the United States should seek prolonged NTM-I partnering in the institutional, educational, and cultural aspects of Iraq's security sector reform.<sup>132</sup>

A further benefit of NATO participation is that member states such as Britain, France, and Germany also have security relationships with other Arab Gulf states. This is important because, as discussed previously, Iraqi policy on force building and capacity development should include a broader regional approach to security. If, in the words of one U.S. official, "we're developing a truly regional defensive capability" in the Persian Gulf, that capability should include Iraq.<sup>133</sup> Although previous efforts toward security partnership among Arab states have foundered on mistrust and unbalanced capabilities,<sup>134</sup> persistent NATO security cooperation with these countries—combined with NTM-I development and reform of Iraq's security architecture—may cultivate mutual trust. Indeed, an ongoing and intense U.S./NATO presence in Iraq's security sector would increase confidence among Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) governments, reducing their impetus to isolate Baghdad or interfere in Iraqi domestic affairs.<sup>135</sup>

This confidence might also prepare Arab states to take some of the initial, easier steps toward regional cooperation efforts that incorporate Iraq, such as military-to-military talks, student exchanges, limited information sharing, and multinational exercises

focusing on humanitarian response, airspace deconfliction, and other nonoffensive activities. Including Iraq in certain GCC committees would help as well.<sup>136</sup> One mechanism for seeking such cooperation could be expansion of the Gulf Security Dialogue (GSD) to include both Iraq and NATO states engaged in the region. In addition to increasing Iraqi regional integration and serving broader U.S. geopolitical interests, Baghdad's participation in a retooled GSD could reassure neighbors with shared concerns.<sup>137</sup>

### Political and Economic Reservations

Two types of arguments can be made against a residual U.S. presence in Iraq, one political, the other economic. Politically, the United States has developed Iraq's security sector on the premise that Baghdad is Washington's bilateral and regional partner, not an emerging Iranian client. Yet observers have frequently articulated concerns about the Iraqi government's tilt toward Iran, due largely to Shiite Islamist influence and Prime Minister al-Maliki's intermittent solicitousness toward Tehran. Additionally, various reports have suggested that Iranian involvement resulted in Muqtada al-Sadr's endorsement of Maliki as the leader of the next government. If the new government has a significant number of Sadrists representatives or members of the Shiite Badr Organization in sensitive posts, then Iraq's security-related ministries may soon be staffed with increasing numbers of officials who are uncomfortably well disposed toward Iran.<sup>138</sup>

Such a development would increase mistrust among Sunni Arab states, diminishing the prospects of Iraqi inclusion in any regional approach to cooperative security. More fundamentally, it could lead some to question the utility of further support to Iraq's security organs, given the problem of politicized military appointments discussed throughout this study. In fact, an Iran-inclined Iraqi government might be resistant to continued U.S. security engagement. Yet Washington would still have every interest in preserving U.S. influence in the ISF and security-related ministries, and an even greater need to cultivate professionalism and pro-American attitudes among Iraq's senior and emerging military leaders. Although perhaps insufficient, a

significant U.S. presence would be necessary for exerting influence under such circumstances.

Alternatively, if the ISF's operational elements become more professional, cohesive, and united by a shared corporate identity, both commanders and rank and file may grow to detest a government paralyzed by deadlock or without popular legitimacy. Negative ISF sentiment toward the government would be aggravated if the latter continued to politicize senior officer appointments, failed to appropriate adequate funds to the ISF, meddled in technical matters, or was perceived as a client of Tehran. Over time, such sentiment could drive a wedge between the military and government. Despite Maliki's assiduous maneuvers to the contrary, Iraq's security forces could then decide to reenter politics, particularly if civilian political deadlock were accompanied by domestic instability.<sup>139</sup> ISF elements could also intrude on politics in order to support the current regime or the interests of a particular ethnosectarian community.

These kinds of scenarios might seem to argue against continuing comprehensive U.S. engagement after 2011. Yet if such circumstances were to emerge, U.S. policymakers would benefit from a recent past of close military-to-military cooperation with the ISF. As suggested previously, the kind of cooperation envisioned in responsible partnership is the most effective means of cultivating technical expertise and nonpartisan professionalism among the Iraqi military leadership—the same characteristics that would help prevent the most damaging abuses of military government. Likewise, the level of engagement foreseen in a responsible partnership would permit the United States to influence Iraq's military leaders away from foreign adventurism and toward the subsequent civilianization of politics.

In addition to concerns about Iraq's domestic politics, an enduring military presence would expose the United States to criticism that it is continuing the occupation and denying Iraqis their sovereignty. Of course, some segments of the Iraqi population and political class would view any kind of U.S. presence as occupation regardless of its size. To other Iraqis, however, a residual presence could signal Washington's commitment to their country's stability, its awareness

of U.S. responsibility for the maturation and good conduct of Iraq's nascent security institutions, and its willingness to counter foreign interference in Iraq's internal politics, domestic stability, and regional alignments. Likewise, as a symbol of U.S. support, the presence of American advisors, trainers, educators, and military forces can strengthen the backbone of Iraq's national security leaders as they work to oppose foreign interference. In terms of countering regional criticism, continued U.S. engagement in Iraq's national security affairs could show GCC countries that Washington is committed to preventing Baghdad from ever threatening them again. This would in turn make them more amenable to Washington's desire for closer economic, political, and security ties between Baghdad and other friendly Arab capitals. At the same time, the U.S. presence would show Iran that Washington will not permit Iraq to exchange Saddam-era oppression for subjugation to Tehran's influence.

Economically, the price tag of U.S. involvement in Iraq has been a recurrent concern among U.S. legislators. Although the Iraqi Security Forces Fund (ISFF) has for several years been a means to quickly provide a high volume of training and materiel to Iraq, Congress is now much less willing to meet the funding levels sought by U.S. officials. In this spirit, some will argue that a larger U.S. presence after 2011 will keep costs high at a time when they need to come down.

To be sure, extending USF-I in the manner described in this chapter would require new Overseas Contingency Operations funding that would otherwise be unnecessary. Yet in light of the specific post-2011 force recommendations discussed throughout this chapter—around one-fifth of August 2010 troop numbers—the level of such funding would likely be much lower than it is currently. Additionally, Iraq's "significant" cash reserves, coupled with its tremendous potential oil wealth at a time of high prices, will "allow it to pay more of its security costs now and in 2011."<sup>140</sup> And if oil income trends or global economic conditions render planned big-ticket items prohibitively expensive, Baghdad could take advantage of less costly acquisition strategies that still produce a capable defensive credibility force.<sup>141</sup>

As such, efforts by the United States, NATO countries, the International Monetary Fund, and other actors should emphasize improvements in Iraqi accounting, budget execution, and reporting so that Baghdad can better use its funds. Likewise, U.S. technical assistance to Iraq's Defense, Interior, and Finance Ministries regarding the Foreign Military Sales (FMS) process—which is conducted using a combination of U.S. and Iraqi funds—can help build capacity in these areas. This should permit Baghdad to use more of its own funds when acquiring materiel through FMS, facilitating a move away from the ISFF and direct U.S. provision of military equipment. Indeed, notwithstanding the management shortcomings reviewed above, U.S. Defense Department inspectors assessed that Iraq had paid for 63.9 percent of FMS deliveries as of the beginning of 2011.<sup>142</sup>

Similarly, a sizable and well-managed Iraqi security budget could permit a greater U.S. emphasis on International Military Education and Training (IMET) rather than Foreign Military Financing (FMF). The former is the mechanism that funds foreign officials' participation in U.S. education and training programs, while the latter is the vehicle for funding foreign government acquisitions of U.S. equipment. FMF is thus much more burdensome to the U.S. taxpayer.<sup>143</sup> As Baghdad begins to take on an increasing share of FMS costs, however, Washington could continue substantial levels of IMET funding while reducing FMF, resulting in overall lower costs. This would also reinforce the emphasis on training, education, and capacity building as the keys to a more professional security sector in Iraq. The Iraqi government has a say in how much it wishes to take advantage of IMET, so adjusting the program's rules to permit use of IMET funds for NATO-provided learning opportunities could encourage Iraqi choices that foster a healthy security sector. (For a sampling of data relating to ISFF, IMET, and U.S.-Iraqi cost-sharing on FMS, see tables 4–5.)

## Conclusion

Signaling the transition to a civilian-led effort in Iraq, Operation New Dawn also implies a desire for a post-2011 bilateral relationship resembling those between

**Table 4. Iraqi Security Funding: Total ISFF and IMET Allocations since 2005\***

| PROGRAM | 2005  | 2006  | 2007  | 2008  | 2009  | 2010  | 2011 REQUEST |
|---------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------------|
| ISFF    | 5,490 | 3,007 | 5,542 | 3,000 | 1,000 | 1,000 | 2,000        |
| IMET    | –     | –     | 1     | 2     | 2     | 1     | 2            |

\*All data in millions of U.S. dollars. Sources: Anthony Cordesman, Adam Mausner, and Elena Derby, *Iraq and the United States: Creating a Strategic Partnership* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2010); Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, *Quarterly Report and Semiannual Report to the United States Congress* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, July 30, 2010, and January 30, 2001, editions), <http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA528700&Location=U2&doc=GetTRDoc.pdf>.

**Table 5. Iraqi-U.S. Cost-Sharing: Significant FMS Cases, 2005–2010**

|                                 | IRAQI FUNDING                  | U.S. FUNDING                   |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>M1 tanks</b>                 | \$690 million                  | \$700 million                  |
| <b>M1 sustainment</b>           | \$200 million                  | \$320 million                  |
| <b>C-130J transports</b>        | \$400 million                  | \$410 million                  |
| <b>Mi-17 CT helicopters</b>     | \$189.4 million                | \$155.6 million                |
| <b>Armed scout helicopters</b>  | \$402.2 million                | \$43 million                   |
| <b>35-meter patrol boats</b>    | \$95 million                   | \$254 million                  |
| <b>T-6A trainers</b>            | \$110 million                  | \$99.8 million                 |
| <b>Offshore support vessels</b> | \$27 million                   | \$82.8 million                 |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                    | <b>\$2.114 billion (50.6%)</b> | <b>\$2.065 billion (49.4%)</b> |

Sources: U.S. Government Accountability Office, “Iraqi-U.S. Cost Sharing: Iraq Has a Cumulative Budget Surplus, Offering the Potential for Further Cost-Sharing,” Report to Congressional Committees, September, 2010, p. 21, <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d10304.pdf>; “Government of Iraq vs. United States Contributions to Foreign Military Sales Cases, 2005–Present,” Institute for the Study of War, August 31, 2010, <http://www.understandingwar.org/press-media/graphsandstat/foreign-military-sales-iraq>.

Washington and other regional partners. This entails supporting the ISF through “security cooperation” rather than security provision—that is, a relationship intended to “promote specific U.S. security interests, develop allied and friendly military capabilities for self-defense and coalition operations . . . harmonize views on security challenges, and provide U.S. forces with peacetime and contingency access.” Security cooperation also aims to help partners “optimize their forces to provide regional security.”<sup>144</sup> This tends to involve encouraging strategically coherent force building, augmenting institutional capabilities, and promoting security sector reform. Persistent advising and intense military-to-military contacts, along with multinational training and education, are the best means to accomplish these goals.<sup>145</sup>

As discussed throughout this study, however, Iraq will not be able to defend itself against external aggression by the end of 2011, and subduing sustained internal violence by determined insurgents will be a tremendous challenge. The ISF will only be in the initial phases of integrating critical equipment, while the government institutions responsible for overseeing the military will likely lack the technical competencies required to meet persistent security threats. Moreover, the brand of civil-military relations that characterized the pre-2003 era will still animate the Iraqi national security sector. Lastly, and perhaps most fundamentally, dangerous tensions will persist among the country’s ethnosectarian and political blocs.

For all these reasons, the standard security cooperation relationship that the United States enjoys with

other countries will not suffice for Iraq by the end of 2011. Although the principle of “responsible draw-down” remains sound, its timeline of total military withdrawal by year’s end entails a significant risk of failing to meet U.S. policy goals, which include a “long-term strategic partnership” with a “sovereign, stable, and self-reliant” Iraq that contributes to regional security. To mitigate this risk, the United States should retain a residual military presence in Iraq after 2011, remaining closely involved in the country’s national security sector by developing relevant government institutions and providing security. That is the basis of responsible partnership.

Much more than the “connecting tissue” currently envisioned by Washington, such a partnership would ensure credible deterrence of external threats and lend the ISF backbone and capacity in key areas as it contains domestic challenges. It would also give Iraq time to develop the capabilities implicit in new weapons systems, increase the prospects for healthy civil-military relations, and bolster political stability through sustained, intense interaction between U.S. and Iraqi security officials. Furthermore, by deferring the final withdrawal of U.S. troops by a few years, responsible partnership would embody the prudence that President Obama has called for in disengaging from Iraq, while enabling critical, positive U.S. influence on the country’s national security and political institutions.

Indeed, this approach would set the stage for a regular security cooperation relationship in future years.

More than a matter of pride or justifying sunken investments, responsible partnership envisions a level of engagement and influence that is crucial to ensuring vital U.S. interests. An Iraq with gaps in national defense capabilities would remain subject to violence, intrigue, and predatory influence by neighbors working against regional stability. Alternatively, an Iraq whose civil-military relations and security policies recalled the pre-2003 years could itself prey upon its citizens and neighbors. Such developments could push the country toward ethnosectarian warfare and fragmentation, greatly escalating regional tensions. This would be particularly problematic in an era of accelerated arms acquisitions and Iranian nuclear aspirations. These scenarios would also drastically reduce U.S. influence in Iraq, harm American credibility among regional partners, and embolden regional rivals.

If the United States does not remain comprehensively involved in Iraq’s security sector over the coming years, a future administration may be faced with two choices: abandoning Iraq to an unfriendly regime that rends the country’s fabric, or intervening again to prevent a country in crisis from sparking regional conflict. Neither choice would be worthy of the blood and treasure the American people have invested in Iraq since 2003.

# Notes

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54. Defense Department, "Measuring Stability June 2010," p. 66.
55. U.S. Defense Department, "Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq: September 2008 Report to Congress," September 26, 2008, p. 48.
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58. U.S. Defense Department, "Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq: December 2008 Report to Congress," January 9, 2009, p. 32.
59. Defense Department, "Measuring Stability June 2010," pp. 55–56.
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119. See Gareth Porter, “U.S. Envoy Secretly Offered Troops in Iraq after 2011,” *IntelDaily.com*, November 17, 2010, <http://inteldaily.com/2010/11/u-s-envoy-secretly-offered-troops-in-iraq-after-2011>.
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121. See Gordon, “Civilians to Take Lead.” See also “U.S. Sticks to Iraq Timetable, Says Only ‘Dozens’ Might Stay.”
122. A heavy AAB is customarily based on an armored brigade combat team (BCT). While retaining the ability to conduct full-spectrum operations, such a brigade is augmented with training and units specifically geared toward assisting security forces. For current U.S. doctrine on AABs, see chapter 4 of the Army Department Headquarters publication *Security Force Assistance* (FM 3-07.1) (May 2009), <http://usacac.army.mil/cac2/Repository/FM3071.pdf>. The 1st BCT of the 1st Armored Division is an example of a heavy AAB

- currently deployed to Iraq; it was preceded by the division's 4th BCT. See Kate Brannen, "Combat Brigades in Iraq under Different Name," *Army Times*, August 21, 2010, <http://www.armytimes.com/news/2010/08/dn-brigades-stay-under-different-name-081910/>.
123. This AEW should include the following: an operations group capable of carrying out missions and advising the Iraqi Air Force on key matters (e.g., air defense, support operations on behalf of the army, and ISOF), a maintenance group with a training and advising capability, a scaled-down mission support group, and a medical group. Regardless of where the AEW elements are based, they would be patterned after the 321st AEW (currently training and advising the Iraqi Air Force) while retaining the capabilities of the 332nd AEW (which has a patrol/combat role). See the U.S. Air Force webpages dedicated to the 332nd AEW (<http://www.balad.afcent.af.mil/library/factsheets/factsheet.asp?id=4032>) and 321st AEW (<http://www.sather.afcent.af.mil/units/index.asp>).
  124. This force size is not markedly greater than the U.S. military presence in Kuwait during the decade before 2003. In the case of Kuwait, however, U.S. forces did not consist of permanent, designated units. Instead, force levels were maintained through rotations of various units into theater for specific training and exercise purposes. Something resembling either this or the U.S. Marine Corps "unit deployment program" to Okinawa could be used to lessen the burden on particular units in Iraq, while also diminishing the appearance of U.S. "homesteading" in Iraq. Yet the logistical challenges of frequent unit rotation, as well as the diplomatic requirements of new agreements with Baghdad for each unit rotation and exercise, may argue against replicating the Kuwait experience in Iraq—at least for the first few years after Operation New Dawn ends.
  125. "Defense Department, "Measuring Stability March 2010," p. 68.
  126. "Leadership Insight: Barbero."
  127. For more on internal security and insurgency scenarios in Iraq, see remarks by Michael Knights during "Iraq: Between Democracy and Disorder," Policy Forum held at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, October 22, 2010, <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateC07.php?CID=546>; see also Michael Harari, "Status Update: Shi'a Militias in Iraq" (Institute for the Study of War, August 16, 2010), [http://www.understandingwar.org/files/Backgrounder\\_ShiaMilitias.pdf](http://www.understandingwar.org/files/Backgrounder_ShiaMilitias.pdf).
  128. Maliki chaired the Iraqi National Assembly's Security Committee in 2005–2006. See "Iraqi in Transition: Profile—Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki," PBS *NewsHour* website, May 10, 2006, [http://www.pbs.org/newshour/indepth\\_coverage/middle\\_east/iraq/keyplayers/index.html](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/indepth_coverage/middle_east/iraq/keyplayers/index.html). Badr Corps leader Hadi al-Ameri currently heads this same committee and may do so in the new parliament.
  129. In order for a U.S. advising effort to meaningfully further these goals, horizontal and vertical integration of efforts would be required, including close synchronization among advisors in various offices and echelons. The need for such integration has been recognized previously: see Multi-National Security Transition Command, Iraq Public Affairs Office, "U.S. Political Advisors Focus on Civil-Military Cooperation in Iraq," press release, August 9, 2009, [http://www.usf-iraq.com/?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=27552&Itemid=128](http://www.usf-iraq.com/?option=com_content&task=view&id=27552&Itemid=128).
  130. Efforts have been made in this direction over the past year. See remarks by Lt. Gen. Michael D. Barbero at the Institute for the Study of War, June 18, 2010, <http://www.understandingwar.org/files/BarberoTranscript.pdf>. See also U.S. Forces–Iraq Public Affairs Office, "U.S. Army War College, Iraqi National Defense University Strengthen Educational Partnership," press release 20100719-01, July 19, 2010, <http://www.usf-iraq.com/news/press-releases/us-army-war-college-iraqi-national-defense-university-strengthen-educational-partnership>.
  131. See Jorge Benitez, "NATO's Training Mission in Iraq 'Faces a Significant Shortfall,'" *NATO Source* blog, Atlantic Council website, August 13, 2010, <http://www.acus.org/natosource/natos-training-mission-iraq-faces-significant-shortfall>. See also "NATO's Assistance to Iraq," NATO Training Mission–Iraq website, March 9, 2010, [http://www.jfcnaples.nato.int/ntmi/information/NTMI\\_Assistance%20to%20Iraq.html](http://www.jfcnaples.nato.int/ntmi/information/NTMI_Assistance%20to%20Iraq.html); Rick Lynch and Phillip D. Janzen, "NATO Training Mission–Iraq: Looking to the Future," *Joint Forces Quarterly* 40 (first quarter, 2006), [http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/jfq\\_pubs/4005.pdf](http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/jfq_pubs/4005.pdf).
  132. For more on various countries' experience with security sector reform, see Andrew Cottey, Tim Edmunds, and Anthony Forster, "Democratic Control of Armed Forces in Central and Eastern Europe: A Framework for Understanding Civil-Military Relations in Post Communist Europe," One Europe or Several? Working Papers 1 (One Europe Programme, 1999); also see their book *Democratic Control of the Military in Postcommunist Europe: Guarding the Guards* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001); see also Walter B. Slocombe, Phillipp Fluri, and Simon Lunn, eds., "NATO, EU, and the Challenges of Defense and Security Sector Reform," Geneva Center for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, 2007; Alan Bryden and Heiner Hanggi, eds., "Reform and Reconstruction of the Security Sector," *DCAF Yearbooks* 2 (2004).
  133. Joby Warrick, "U.S. Steps Up Arms Sales to Persian Gulf Allies," *Washington Post*, January 31, 2010, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/01/30/AR2010013001477.html>; Defense Security Cooperation Agency, "DSCA Campaign Support Plan 2010," January 1, 2010, C-1, C-2, [http://www.dscamilitary.com/programs/Program\\_Support/DSCA%20CSP%20no%20names.pdf](http://www.dscamilitary.com/programs/Program_Support/DSCA%20CSP%20no%20names.pdf).
  134. Jim Garamone, "Cooperative Defense Initiative Seeks to Save Lives," American Forces Press Service, April 10, 2000, <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=45075>; "Gulf Region Buying More Arms but Cooperation Lags," TradeArabia, October 14, 2010, <http://www.thefreelibrary.com/Gulf+region+buying+more+arms+but+cooperation+lags.-a0239429681>; Joseph Kostiner, "The GCC States and the Security Challenges of the Twenty-First Century," *Mideast Security and Policy Studies* no. 86 (Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, September 2010), pp. 29, 45, 46, <http://www.biu.ac.il/Besa/MSPS86.pdf>.
  135. "Iraq's New Reality: Finding Its Role in the Middle East," Stimson Center/Center for International Governance Innovation, March 2010, pp. 7–8, <http://apps.stimson.org/pub.cfm?ID=941>.
  136. See "Iraq to Join GCC Trade Federation," MENAFN.com, August 23, 2009, [http://www.menafn.com/qn\\_news\\_story\\_s.asp?StoryId=1093266761](http://www.menafn.com/qn_news_story_s.asp?StoryId=1093266761).
  137. Christopher M. Blanchard and Richard F. Grimmett, "The Gulf Security Dialogue and Related Arms Sale Proposals," Congressional Research Service, October 8, 2008, p. 2, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/weapons/RL34322.pdf>.
  138. "U.S. Won't Support a Maliki-Sadr Alliance," United Press International, October 15, 2010, [http://www.upi.com/Top\\_News/Special/2010/10/15/US-wont-support-a-Maliki-Sadr-alliance/UPI-65021287152280](http://www.upi.com/Top_News/Special/2010/10/15/US-wont-support-a-Maliki-Sadr-alliance/UPI-65021287152280); Michael Knights, "Iran's Influence in Iraq: Game, Set, but Not March to Iran," *Guardian*, October 17, 2010, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/oct/17/iran-influence-iraq-tehran>; Michael Knights, "End in Sight for Iraq's Government Stalemate," PolicyWatch no. 1708 (Washington Institute for Near East Policy, October 5, 2010), <http://washingtoninstitute.org/templateC05.php?CID=3257>; Martin Chulov, "Iran Brokers Behind-the-Scenes Deal for Pro-Tehran Government in Iraq," *Guardian*, October 17, 2010, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/oct/17/iraq-government-iran-tehran-deal>; Marina Otraway and Danial Kaysi, "Iraq: Movement without Progress," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, October 18, 2010, <http://carnegieendowment.org/publications/index.cfm?fa=view&id=41743>.

139. Ned Parker, Raheem Salman, and Saas Fakhriideen, "Iraq Looks to Shi'ite Leader for a Way out of Political Crisis," *Montreal Gazette*, August 17, 2010, <http://www.montrealgazette.com/life/IRAQ+IMPASSE/3409224/story.html>; Tim Arango, "U.S. and Iraqi Interests May Work against Pullout," *New York Times*, August 10, 2010, [http://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/11/world/middleeast/11iraq.html?\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/11/world/middleeast/11iraq.html?_r=1); Anthony Shadid, "Iraqi Leaders Fear for Future after Their Past Missteps," *New York Times*, August 17, 2010, [http://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/18/world/middleeast/18baghdad.html?\\_r=1&hp=&pagewanted=all](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/18/world/middleeast/18baghdad.html?_r=1&hp=&pagewanted=all).
140. U.S. Government Accountability Office, "Iraqi-U.S. Cost Sharing," p. 6; "Iraq: The Awakening of an Economic Giant," *Financial Times*, September 15, 2010, <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/9208ae8a-c0e4-11df-99c4-00144feab49a.html>.
141. For example, rather than acquiring a full run of M1A1 tanks, Iraq could obtain greater numbers of T-72s from new NATO members that are upgrading to German Leopards (e.g., Hungary and Slovakia) or from older members disposing of M60s (e.g., Greece and Spain). Baghdad could then take advantage of substantial upgrade packages for the M60 that improve its mobility and armor while giving it the same armament as the M1A1, but at half the price. Iraqi forces could also maximize the Excess Defense Article program with the United States, opt for U.S. Marine Corps-style LAV-25s rather than Strykers, or obtain used F-16s coming out of U.S. service. These options would not provide the same benefit to the U.S. arms industry, however. See Elliott, "Iraqi Ground Forces 'Total Force' Mobilization Structure."
142. Special Inspector General, *Quarterly Report* (January 30, 2011), p. 73.
143. For general discussion of these programs, see Curt Tarnoff and Marian Leonardo Lawson, "Foreign Aid: An Introduction to U.S. Programs and Policy," Congressional Research Service, April 9, 2009, <http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/124970.pdf>. It should also be noted, however, that FMF is used to purchase U.S.-built weapons and equipment, recycling tax dollars back into the U.S. economy.
144. "Joint Capability Areas Tier 1 and Supporting Tier 2 Lexicon, Post 24 August 2006 JROC," <http://www.mors.org/UserFiles/file/meetings/06bar/luke.pdf>, p. 40; see also Defense Security Cooperation Agency, "DSCA Campaign Support Plan 2010." For a helpful discussion of security cooperation approaches and priorities in a regional sense, see Derek S. Reveron, "Weak States and Security Assistance," *PRISM* 1, no. 3 (June 2010), pp. 27–42, <http://www.ndu.edu/press/weak-states.html>.
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