



The Iraqi Security Forces: Local Context and U.S. Assistance

By Michael Knights

Since the dissolution of Iraq's various security services¹ in August 2003, the United States has played the leading role in the formation of the new Iraqi Security Forces (ISF). Although its development of the ISF has been beset by failures in conception and execution, the U.S. military provided the broad plan for the future development of these forces, designing an orderly series of transitions from U.S. to Iraqi Army leadership in internal security (now complete), from Iraqi Army to police primacy in internal security (not yet complete), and toward Iraqi self-reliance in external security (unlikely to be completed until at least 2020).² Iraqis are now in charge of advancing the U.S.-designed plan, however, and their historical narratives, current politics, and future economic priorities are already changing the trajectory of ISF development in subtle ways. Going forward, the success of U.S. security cooperation with Iraq will rely more than ever on a clear understanding of these factors and the fashioning of an assistance effort that takes them into account.

Gap between U.S. and Iraqi Plans

The three-stage U.S. plan for developing the new ISF³ has unfolded as follows:

- **Phase 1: Shift to Iraqi leadership in internal security.** This transition began in 2006 and was completed in 2010—the United States has turned over all internal security missions to Iraqi government leadership.
- **Phase 2: Shift to police primacy.** U.S. policy has been to support a transition to police primacy in all eighteen provinces by the end of 2011. According to former interior minister Jawad al-Bolani, this entails Iraqi police forces having “primary responsibilities for internal security under civilian authority in accordance with the Constitution and consistent with the rule of law.”⁴ In practical terms, this requires the transfer of operational control over internal security missions from the Iraqi Army–led regional operations centers to the Ministry of Interior–led Provincial Joint Coordination Centers. The army is then expected to shift its focus to external defense and border security, while the paramilitary Federal Police and Iraqi Police take over the internal security mission.
- **Phase 3: Shift to Iraqi military leadership in external security.** As the Iraqi Army assumes full

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responsibility for external security, the Federal Police will turn over primary internal security responsibility to the local Iraqi Police while retaining its ability to function as a light infantry reserve force in wartime. The Federal Police will thus provide overwatch and backup to both the Iraqi Police (for internal security) and the army (for external defense).⁵

In reality, the incomplete second and third phases are likely to unfold less tidily and over a longer period than initially supposed. Full police primacy, as defined above, may not be instituted across Iraq for many years, if at all. As later sections of this paper will show, several political and historical indicators suggest that the Iraqi federal government will resist police primacy in strategic governorates because it would devolve too much authority and responsibility to the provincial level.⁶ Moreover, Iraqi self-reliance in external defense may not be feasible for some time. Even if Baghdad plows ahead with ISF development as quickly as possible, senior Iraqi leaders (e.g., Defense Ministry chief of staff Gen. Babakir Zebari) and U.S. experts (e.g., D. J. Elliott) believe that the country will not be able to develop true self-reliance on this front until 2020–2022.⁷ This paper takes that assessment a step further, outlining some of the specific factors that may prevent Iraq from rapidly developing a warfighting military capable of countering Iran.

The withdrawal of U.S. forces—scheduled for completion by December 31, 2011—requires a further set of adjustments to ISF development plans. When the multiphase approach was first designed, planners did not envision total withdrawal by that date. In December 2010, however, Iraqi prime minister Nouri al-Maliki appeared to decisively rule out any new security agreement before the deadline, stating, “The last American soldier will leave Iraq. This agreement is not subject to extension, not subject to alteration. It is sealed.”⁸ Today, both Baghdad and Washington are willing to consider retaining some U.S. military units in Iraq in 2012. Yet if Iraqi politicians cannot forge the consensus required to publicly request an extension of the U.S. presence, the only U.S. military personnel serving in the country would work within an Office of Security Cooperation for Iraq (OSC-I) under the U.S. embassy’s aegis, unless special circumstances required other arrangements on a temporary basis. This would effectively normalize the

U.S.-Iraqi security relationship, putting it on a similar footing with that of most other countries in the region. Yet such normalization may not be advisable at the current stage of ISF development.

Withdrawing all U.S. forces before Iraq becomes self-reliant in external defense would create an unintended deterrence gap. General Zebari pointed to this prospect on August 12, 2010, noting, “If I were asked about the withdrawal, I would say to politicians: the U.S. army must stay until the Iraqi army is fully ready in 2020.”⁹ Given its domestic political concerns and legacy of past military actions, however, Iraq might not be self-sufficient in external defense even by 2020, at least as defined by the United States. Certain prominent Iraqi political factions that suffered the depredations of a strong Iraqi military during the Saddam era—particularly Kurds and Shiite Arabs—may resist bolstering the ISF past a certain point, and regional states with influence in Iraq may seek to restrain further rearmament as well. In addition, some Iraqi leaders may question the need for a major military buildup in light of the country’s significantly changed strategic circumstances (discussed later) and pressing civil reconstruction agenda.

Taken together, these real-world factors are likely to cause significant deviation from the planned speed and trajectory of ISF development. Full transition to self-reliance in external defense will prove very difficult until Iraq formulates a National Security Strategy that surpasses the short-term 2005 NSS, which did not look beyond stabilization of internal security.¹⁰ Indeed, the basic premise of the transition to police primacy is a pertinent place to begin discussing the context of ISF development in the coming years, since disengaging the Iraqi Army from the internal security mission will be more difficult than has been supposed.

Uneven Approach to Terrorism and Insurgency

The “primary mission” identified in Iraq’s 2005 NSS was “the defeat of terrorism and insurgency.” To a considerable extent, this remains the ISF’s main job. Indeed, the Iraqi Army is still largely focused on that mission despite the constitution’s admonition against a military role in internal security.¹¹ Significant swaths of the country continue to face threats from al-Qaeda militants who target the ISF and civilians, from criminal-political

syndicates loosely connected to the Saddam regime, or from Iranian-backed Shiite militias.¹² Iraqis remain highly sensitive to any security crises that hint at the government's inability to impose law and order. Government responses to high-profile bombings in Baghdad in recent years are an indicator that internal security is still the ISF's priority mission.¹³ And in some urban areas such as western Baghdad, the ongoing U.S. drawdown has thrown the Iraqi Army and Federal Police fully onto the front lines of delicate counterinsurgency campaigns requiring a high level of finesse and commitment. In some of these cases, the ISF has become part of the problem rather than part of the solution, acting as an irritant along ethnic and sectarian fault lines.¹⁴

Although the Federal Police and Iraqi Police have gradually taken on certain security responsibilities in urban areas, the federal government is still more likely to turn to the Iraqi Army as its instrument of choice due to the military's strong connection to the federal command structure and its reputation as one of the country's most respected institutions. In contrast, the Iraqi Police is struggling to cast off decades of public derision as the lowest of Iraq's security forces.¹⁵ Some army commanders actively resist the development of police capabilities in their areas of responsibility and have been instructed by Baghdad to remain in charge of internal security for the foreseeable future.¹⁶ Furthermore, the army is still better suited to operating in remote rural areas and across difficult terrain due to its routine deployment of soldiers away from their home provinces and its superior cross-country and logistical capabilities.

The ISF is also likely to develop its capabilities in a far less systematic way than originally envisioned by U.S. force planners. This is because Iraqi officials and commanders have differing tolerance levels for certain types of terrorism and insurgent violence. As U.S. influence diminishes post-withdrawal, these Iraqi leaders will prioritize resources to develop and maintain some capabilities while allowing others to deteriorate. For instance, Iraqi leaders seem to have a very high tolerance for the country's numerous and relatively ineffective incidents of low-level insurgency, which come across as mere background noise to politicians and commanders still desensitized by years of intense insurgency.¹⁷ Harassment-style small-arms fire and low-yield roadside bombs that cause few casualties do not overly concern ISF leaders.

Likewise, the Shiite-led federal government likely does not view internecine killings within the Sunni Arab community as a priority, as evidenced by its laissez-faire demobilization of the Sons of Iraq police auxiliary units in areas such as Baghdad and the ISF's uninterest in the resultant Sunni-on-Sunni violence.¹⁸

Indeed, the Iraqi government accepts that not all parts of Iraq are under its control at all times, such as border areas that are routinely violated by smugglers and militants or small rural areas that serve as safe havens for terrorist groups. This aspect of Iraqi security policymaking is not new: Baghdad effectively surrendered large swaths of the Kurdistan region to *peshmerga* control for years beginning in the 1970s, and even the Saddam regime was forced to accept its inability to dominate all of the marshland and border areas in southern Iraq from the 1980s onward. Similarly, Prime Minister al-Maliki seems to treat areas such as Anbar and Maysan as special cases, content with passing the fine detail of internal policing to local authorities for long periods of time.¹⁹ And as with many other security issues, a strong streak of pragmatism runs through Iraqi decisionmaking on the policing of remote areas. In short, some problems and areas simply matter more to the federal government than others.

For example, Baghdad has shown almost zero tolerance for breakdowns in law and order in certain cases. As mentioned previously, one obvious class of intolerable incidents is mass casualty attacks that make the government appear impotent, particularly those undertaken in the political and media hub of Baghdad or during high-profile events such as annual pilgrimages. Likewise, the government reacts forcefully whenever Iraqi factions or foreign militants attempt to humiliate it with heavy rocket attacks on the International Zone in Baghdad. In March 2008, for example, al-Maliki responded to such barrages with a full-scale army invasion of Sadr City, a hitherto-unthinkable operational and political gamble. Effective attacks on critical infrastructure would likely spark a rapid government reaction as well. Similarly, the return of large-scale oil smuggling would be of deep concern to Baghdad, particularly if it occurred on a scale that gave southern militias the financial and political clout to mount a comeback. Indeed, the open display of weapons by civilian militiamen is a red line for the ISF and would likely elicit a strong reaction in any province.

In light of these sensibilities, the Iraqi government may have little desire to pursue certain operational tasks and capabilities that are particularly important to both Iraqi and U.S. interests:

Strategic counterinsurgency. The Iraqi government seems uncommitted to the kind of skillful population-focused counterinsurgency that proved so effective during the U.S.-led “surge” in 2008. In western Baghdad, eastern Anbar, and Babil, such efforts appear to be diminishing as the U.S. military presence ends. Predominantly Shiite-led ISF units in these areas are increasingly divorced from local communities, acting much like coalition forces did when they first arrived in 2003.²⁰ And since demobilizing the Sons of Iraq and other local auxiliary forces, the government has done little to compensate for the loss of this key link to local communities.²¹

Ethnic confidence-building measures. In areas such as the Disputed Internal Boundary districts in northern Iraq, both Baghdad and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) have shown uncertain commitment to the U.S.-initiated combined security mechanisms, designed to build confidence and facilitate joint federal-Kurdish patrolling. Although the central government and KRG have come to agreement on the absorption of many *peshmerga* into the federally funded security forces,²² the ISF’s ethnic fabric could easily unravel in the event of a serious federal-KRG standoff in northern Iraq. For instance, the ISF’s Kurdish-manned Regional Guard Brigades and significant segments of other army and Foreign Police brigades would still answer entirely to KRG orders during such a crisis, despite being paid by Baghdad. Unfortunately, convincing evidence indicates that the combined security mechanisms cannot survive without the presence of some U.S. or international monitors.²³

Anticorruption efforts. Although corruption has reduced public faith in the security forces across Iraq, the ISF’s various leaders do not view it as a priority. On September 15, 2009, U.S. Forces-Iraq commander Gen. Ray Odierno told the BBC: “Endemic corruption within the Iraqi system, not only the security forces but the system, is still probably the biggest problem facing Iraq.”²⁴ The military was already suffering from serious corruption during the last decade of the Saddam era, but the problem has worsened significantly since 2003.

The widespread practice of buying command appointments is particularly destructive because it places corrupt officers at the head of divisions, brigades, and battalions. Such commanders then commit theft and fraud to recoup their “investment” in the job. These activities result in significant undermanning of ISF units, which overstrains existing personnel and reduces operational effectiveness. And practices such as extortion at checkpoints and military prisons directly harm the ISF’s relationship with the civilian population. Criminality in the ISF also makes it easier for terrorist groups and foreign states to penetrate the security establishment.²⁵

Securing the Iranian Border

Although Iraq faces challenges on all of its borders, the 1,488-kilometer boundary with Iran is the most pressing concern.²⁶ Political, religious, and economic rivalries with Iran have been a constant strategic dilemma for Iraq’s current generation of military leaders, who have dealt with Iranian border violations and paramilitary meddling or proxy warfare their entire professional careers. Analysis of both the Baath and post-2003 eras reveals a high level of continuity in Iranian interference and paramilitary operations in Iraq since 1980.²⁷ For instance, the marsh routes used to smuggle proxy fighters, rockets, and roadside bombs into Iraq are almost exactly the same today as they were during the Iran-Iraq War and the 1990s. Likewise, Iranian proxy attacks in Iraq since 2003 have involved many of the same operational bases, tactics, and procedures seen during the Saddam era.²⁸

The ISF thus has a deep understanding of the operational challenge posed by Iranian border violations. The longevity of such violations also means that Iraqi decisionmakers have developed a high tolerance for cross-border interference. Iraq has experienced more than thirty years of Iranian rocket attacks, assassinations, border guard skirmishes, shallow incursions, artillery strikes, and airspace violations. Before 2003, Baghdad was not a passive recipient of such interference: on the contrary, the Baath regime retaliated in kind throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Since 2003, however, the government has not employed a retaliatory policy to deter Iranian intervention. As a result, the new Iraqi security leadership is facing familiar problems without the traditional raft of solutions.

One subset of problems that ISF leaders recognize is the significant potential for maritime border clashes with Iran in both the Shatt al-Arab waterway and Iraq's territorial waters in the Persian Gulf. Historically, the demarcation of the maritime border has been contentious, and current economic developments in Iraq seem likely to exacerbate these tensions. The rapid expansion of Iraq's ports and oil export infrastructure will increase the level of traffic and economic activity in the littoral area, which may intersect with sharper economic rivalry between the two countries in the future. For instance, it is uncertain how the bilateral relationship will change if, as seems likely, Iraq overtakes Iran as an oil producer. Tehran has a proven record of cross-border interference in Iraq's littoral, including threats to shut down Iraqi export facilities as well as harassment and detention of Iraqi and foreign personnel in Iraqi waters. These littoral areas represent a critical vulnerability for Baghdad due to the overwhelming proportion of government revenue earned through southern exports and the equally dominant proportion of Iraqi imports arriving through southern channels.²⁹

Land infiltration poses additional border security problems. As mentioned earlier, the level of continuity in Iranian cross-border operations since the 1980s is uncanny.³⁰ Although the Iraqi government is well aware of such violations, the lack of reliability and capacity among its border forces prevents effective control. Criminal corruption, Iranian penetration, and intimidation of border security personnel are endemic at key crossing areas,³¹ and some parts of the border are in danger of slipping into a gray zone where Iranian influence rivals or overshadows that of Baghdad. Certain border areas in Maysan and Wasit provinces already receive electricity and clean water from Iran, and many Iraqi border guards make regular visits to family members living in Iran.³² These factors underline the complicated nature of security issues on the border, where Iranian infiltration is not limited to criminal or militant activity but also encompasses the full gamut of political and economic tools. In contrast, the ISF still has only a rudimentary presence along the border, and these personnel have no mandate or budget to engage in "hearts and minds" operations.

Another set of challenges arises from more overt foreign military incursions into Iraqi territory. Although

these included Turkish incursions in the north as recently as 2008, the Iranian military remains the most serious threat. In December 2009, Iran's temporary seizure of a well in the Fakka oil field in Maysan sparked demonstrations throughout Iraq and condemnations by southern tribal leaders.³³ Tehran has also engaged in artillery fire against targets in Iraqi territory. On average, Iran shells Kurdish rebel camps in northern Iraq twice per month, and as recently as June 2010, Iranian ground forces penetrated up to ten kilometers over the border near Penjwin to destroy rebel arms caches.³⁴ Incursions by Iranian unmanned aerial vehicles have also been observed since the late 1990s.³⁵ Manned aerial incursions into central Iraq happened occasionally during the 1990s, and today, Iranian helicopters sometimes undertake rocket attacks in northern Iraq. Such incursions may recommence in central and southern Iraq if U.S. combat air patrol forces leave the country at the end of 2011 as planned.

Although Iraqi decisionmakers have a fairly high tolerance for overt Iranian incursions, public reaction to the Fakka incident underlined Baghdad's growing need to demonstrate that it can deter or push back against such infiltration. As with other issues, the government's key motivator is the desire to avoid public loss of face. Until 2003, Baghdad's mutually hostile relationship with Tehran allowed it to employ the full range of defensive and deterrent options in response to Iranian border violations. This included basing and sponsoring the Mujahedin-e Khalq opposition movement as it launched terrorist attacks inside Iran. Yet the current strategic relationship between the two countries is significantly altered: officially, they remain in a state of war, but in reality, Iraq's Shiite-led government acts on the assumption that an unofficial nonaggression pact is in place.³⁶ This not only precludes retaliatory strikes, but also places ISF border commanders in a difficult position when they witness Iranian violations. Further complicating matters, the ISF considers littoral border policing to be a diplomatic issue falling under the Foreign Ministry's jurisdiction.³⁷ Thus, even if ISF units were operating at a high level of capability and could resist tribal, criminal, and foreign interference, they would still be hesitant to fully enforce the border with Iran due to the lack of a clear foreign policy and security strategy on that front.

Transitioning to External Security

The 2003 defeat and disestablishment of the Iraqi military forced Baghdad to start almost from scratch in developing external defense capabilities. Yet Iraq's strategic circumstances have also been greatly altered since the Saddam era:

- First, and perhaps most important, the relationship between the federal government and the Kurds has changed significantly. Although military tensions and other issues still persist between Baghdad and Irbil, the scale and scope of the problem have diminished. During the Saddam era, more than half of Iraq's Army and Republican Guard divisions were constantly employed in the north, either undertaking counterinsurgency operations (in the 1970s and 1980s) or defending the "Green Line" separating the KRG from federal Iraq (1991 onward).³⁸ Despite ongoing disagreements with other political and ethnic groups, the Kurdish parties are now an intrinsic part of the political fabric in Baghdad. For the first time since Iraq became a state, the requirement to periodically pacify and garrison Iraqi Kurdistan is simply not a central factor in the government's force planning.³⁹
- Second, and nearly as important, the Iraqi government no longer identifies Iran as an enemy nation. To be sure, the border situation is tense, the general sense of rivalry remains, and some parts of Iraqi society are violently opposed to Iran. Yet the tension between the two countries has been significantly diminished by Iraq's post-2003 rebirth as a Shiite-led state. As mentioned earlier, many Iraqi politicians believe that Baghdad has effectively committed to a nonaggression pact, collaborating with Iran on numerous economic ventures and insisting that the 2008 U.S.-Iraq Security Agreement include language forbidding the use of Iraqi territory for attacks on other countries.
- Third, the Middle East has changed since Iraq began its military buildup in the 1960s. Inter-Arab and Iraqi-Turkish military competition has declined steeply. The Arab-Israeli conflict no longer factors heavily in Arab defense planning, at least beyond Israel's neighbors. The Cold War is no longer an aggravating factor driving rearmament and militarism in Iraq. And given the

broad rejection of Saddam Hussein's adventurism—the cause of Iraq's economic ruin over three decades—Baghdad is not building a military that could be used to coerce the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states.

- Fourth, Baghdad's relationship with the United States has shifted since 1990. Previously, Iraq was a pariah state associated with weapons of mass destruction and saddled with constant U.S. military containment; today, the U.S. military supports Iraq, and neighboring Iran has become the pariah associated with WMD proliferation.

By any standards, then, Iraq's strategic situation has been radically transformed since the last time the country developed its external security forces.

To get a sense of the kind of military foundation the new Iraq will build on, it is worth briefly reviewing the force that Baghdad could theoretically field in the near future (say, by 2016–2020). In quantitative terms, this force could approach in size the mid-1970s Iraqi military that undertook a grueling multiyear counterinsurgency campaign against the Kurds in the north.⁴⁰ Iraq would need until at least 2020 to develop conventional war-fighting capabilities (i.e., armored or mechanized forces plus artillery, close air support, and logistics) on par with the "go to war" force it fielded at the outset of the Iran-Iraq War in September 1980.⁴¹ In qualitative terms, Iraq will build its external defense capabilities by drawing on a very mixed set of officers, noncommissioned officers, and members of other ranks. Some Iran-Iraq War veterans and experienced soldiers remain, but many officers are so-called *dimaj* troops, meaning they were inserted into the command structure as political appointees and did not undergo military education or training.⁴² Moreover, the new class of junior officers trained with U.S.-influenced syllabi have no conventional warfare experience. Accordingly, transitioning troops from internal security missions to external defense training may be more difficult than anticipated.

If developed as rapidly as possible, the Iraqi military in 2020 could be a significant force with a wartime mobilization potential of more than thirty divisions, including up to seven armored or mechanized divisions, fourteen light infantry divisions, plus ten internal security divisions (of motorized light infantry) drawn

from the Interior Ministry and Department of Border Enforcement. Yet even in that maximalist scenario, the ISF would almost certainly lack most of the vital assets that Iraq brought to its previous conventional wars, such as extensive minefields; deep reserves of stored equipment and ammunition, particularly to support armored and artillery forces; logistics; air defense; offensive airpower; strategic missiles; and chemical weapons.⁴³ As Defense Ministry chief of staff General Zebari noted, whether conditions are ideal or not, Iraq will probably fail to satisfy most of the recognizable benchmarks for self-reliance in external security by 2020.

Of course, one should not assume that Iraq will press ahead full speed with military rearmament—in fact, that scenario seems unlikely, given the government’s current composition. Many Iraqi factions may object to further military development, including Kurdish and Shiite politicians who suffered repression under Saddam or who wish to limit federal authority over the regions and provinces. Iran may use its influence over some senior Iraqi leaders to restrain rearmament and complicate or slow Iraq’s absorption of U.S. military hardware and training. And some politicians will likely point to Iraq’s deficit in services and infrastructure as a reason to oppose spending on rearmament at a time when the country arguably faces little threat of foreign invasion. All these factors seem to have influenced Baghdad’s decision to delay procurement of F-16 fighters in order to divert funding to the food rationing system in the 2011 budget.⁴⁴

Taking the political, historical, and economic context of ISF development into account, three main options for Iraq’s external security force structure emerge:

- **Pushback force.** Baghdad may decide to downsize the relatively large military developed for the post-2003 counterinsurgency mission in order to divert government funding toward civilian reconstruction. Under this scenario, the military’s external security capabilities might be limited to as few as five or six heavy brigades (less than two heavy division equivalents) and perhaps a dozen light infantry divisions. The Federal and Iraqi Police would probably not be required to assume wartime mobilization roles under this option. This force would be capable of posturing during crises—for example, to show Iran that any attempt to militarily coerce Iraq would entail risks.
- **Minimum deterrent.** Alternatively, Baghdad could restrict or slow rearmament rather than aborting it completely, resulting in a military capable of delaying a determined attack from Iran for a short period. Taking this path would require some recognition at the national level that Iran remains a threat, while still allowing the government to adopt a non-confrontational or nonoffensive model of defense. This model—akin to the doctrine adopted by some GCC states such as Kuwait—assumes that an Iranian attack would be deterred by a combination of the initial delaying action, military reinforcement by an external security guarantor (probably the United States), and international pressure. A minimum deterrent force could be quite small and affordable, involving three or four armored or mechanized divisions plus a dozen light infantry divisions and limited use of police forces as wartime reserves. To establish a reliable deterrent, this sort of force would probably need to use a range of force multipliers such as terrain barriers (e.g., minefields), maneuver, and qualitative advantages in training and equipment.
- **Military powerhouse.** Iraq could also press forward with full-scale rearmament as described previously, developing a force designed to deter or defeat even a determined Iranian attack. Building this sort of military would require explicit recognition that Iran remains the key threat to Iraq—an unlikely scenario except under a strongly nationalist, cross-sectarian government of the sort that does not currently exist in Baghdad. Developing a powerhouse force might itself become a cause for renewed tension with Tehran, especially in combination with aggressive hydrocarbon development that results in Iraq quickly overtaking Iran in oil production and reserves. Such a force would likely include up to seven armored or mechanized divisions plus fourteen light infantry divisions and ten or more internal security divisions, the last drawn from mobilization of all Federal Police units during wartime. It would also include strong

armor, artillery, logistics, air defense, and offensive airpower assets. If Baghdad chooses this route, it would probably develop the force as quickly as possible, which would strain civilian reconstruction to some degree. At the same time, such a military could serve as a “prestige” force, befitting the economic powerhouse that Iraq may well become.

Who Will Design Iraq’s Future Military?

Although Iraq has witnessed significant military involvement in government decisionmaking in the past, this does not necessarily mean that the new ISF will dictate the scale and speed of its own future development. From 1936 to 1968, “the Iraqi military’s role in politics [fell] under the rubric of praetorian regimes.”⁴⁵ In particular, Iraq was subject to “military moderator” regimes in 1936–1941 (where the military was able to veto certain policies) and “military ruler” regimes in 1958–1968 (where the military directly seized power). Yet Saddam Hussein’s dictatorship eradicated the military’s influence over government policy and seeded the armed forces with political appointees from the Baath Party—the “totalitarian penetration” model of civilian control over the military. Civilian control arguably continued in modified form after Saddam’s fall.

Indeed, since 2003, the emerging Iraqi military has most closely mirrored the “liberal democratic” model, with its structure, budget, and operations controlled by a civilian government. The military’s limited role in politics is partly a function of ethnic, sectarian, and factional fractures, which prevent the formation of a collective identity or set of interests within the ISF.⁴⁶ And although the situation falls well short of the “totalitarian penetration” model, Prime Minister al-Maliki has attained a firm grip on the military command-and-control structure. His Office of the Commander-in-Chief has proven to be an effective tool of centralized control over military appointments, and his placement of loyalists in regional and provincial operations centers has given him a similar hold over operations. When General Zebari stated that he supported a U.S. military presence beyond the withdrawal date sanctioned by the prime minister and the government-ratified security agreement, al-Maliki spokesman Ali Dabbagh told Al-Arabiya television that the comment

was merely a personal view, and that government policy dictated no U.S. soldier would remain after 2011. He added, “Politicians respect the point of view of military personnel, but in the end, the decision is made by politicians.”⁴⁷

The ISF is thus unlikely to be a strong driver of maximal rearmament. In addition to lacking a forceful voice in government decisionmaking, the military is as divided politically as the civilian leadership. Kurdish and Shiite political and military blocs may not support the development of a strong new ISF with a nationalist agenda, and the military has been unable to protect even its own budget, as seen in the aforementioned diversion of F-16 funding to the civilian budget. As long as Iraq’s politics remain divided along ethnosectarian lines, military development will be delayed, distorted, and restricted, adding another complication to the task of planning and delivering U.S. security assistance.

Policy Recommendations

In 2005, it became necessary to introduce an interim National Security Strategy and force-development plan in order to begin the process of building the ISF. But for any plan to remain relevant, it must change to account for new strategic contexts and operational needs. Iraq’s history, politics, strategic culture, and defense economics provide the context for future U.S. security assistance. The three-phase transitional plan established in 2005–2006 is still important, but the local context of ISF development means that the plan will probably not unfold as neatly or quickly as envisioned. In all likelihood, the transition to police primacy will proceed unevenly, while the Iraqi Army’s assumption of the external security mission will take far longer than originally hoped.

In addition to adjusting expectations, U.S. policymakers should consider several specific recommendations for shaping future assistance based on a fuller understanding of the Iraqi context:

- **Recognize America’s ability to narrow the deterrence gap.** Even after the last American military unit leaves Iraq in December 2011, the United States will remain an important part of the military

balance between Iraq and Iran. Deep U.S. commitment to Iraq's security, through whatever mechanism both governments can agree on, will give Baghdad the confidence to stand up for its own interests when Iran imposes demands or tests its influence, demonstrating that Iraq has a strong potential ally if Tehran overplays its hand. As one Iraqi general stated, "Americans focus on the numbers of U.S. forces in Iraq, but numbers are not the most important thing." The intangible effect of a close U.S.-Iraqi strategic relationship will be to narrow the deterrence gap until Iraqi forces are more fully developed.⁴⁸

- **Maintain military ties in the face of nationalism.** The period since 2003 has effectively been the Mandate era redux: a return to the foreign occupation of pre-independence Iraq.⁴⁹ The coming years will probably witness a nationalist backlash against any remaining foreign presence, as Iraqis reassert control over all institutions. Signs of such backlash have already emerged: private security companies have been subject to new restrictions verging on harassment, while U.S. forces have felt the push of Iraqi sovereignty since the June 2009 removal of unilateral American patrols from the cities. At the strategic level, U.S. security assistance will be affected by the same postcolonial impulses that have restricted tactical operations in Iraq since 2009. Patience and subtlety will be necessary during a period marked by Iraqi oversensitivity and political discord on the issue of U.S. military presence.
- **Reset the relationship.** Although the planned withdrawal of all U.S. military units by year's end may disrupt short-term security assistance efforts, it could also be a positive development in the longer term, resetting the bilateral relationship to a level that satisfies both sides. In the United States, such a reset could help policymakers draw a line under the Iraq war (i.e., 2003–2011) and begin viewing the country in purely strategic terms, on its merits as a future strategic partner on security, energy, and democratization issues. To some extent, Iraq could then be characterized as a fresh problem with a fresh menu of potential solutions.
- **Recognize the near-term restrictions on Iraqi policy toward Iran.** Iraq's new deterrent policy toward Iran is complex but not illogical from an Iraqi perspective. Many Iraqi politicians have a fine-tuned understanding of Tehran's strategic calculus toward their country, and they may well be correct in their assessment that Iran will not invade Iraq during the next decade so long as Baghdad avoids certain red lines such as *long-term Iraqi basing of U.S. combat aircraft or a major expansion of Iraq's offensive force*. In many ways, this attitude mirrors the traditional GCC approach of deterring Iranian aggression through a mixture of political, military, and economic means, including both inducements and subtle threats.

Iraq's current weakness is one driver for its conciliatory policy toward Iran. Another may be a genuine desire to avoid the carnage of another major war with its neighbor—an attitude that is to be welcomed and reinforced so long as it can be balanced with other long-term Iraqi interests. Whatever the case, Baghdad will formulate its own manner of dealing with Iran, and it may differ greatly from the U.S. approach.

Even so, the United States can promote synergy on the Iran front. First, Washington can demonstrate patience and play the long game, counting on Iraq to grow more assertive as it stabilizes itself and outstrips Iran as an energy producer. In addition, the United States can play the same word games with Iraq that it does with GCC states, couching border security efforts and military ties in nonthreatening terms even when they are intended as deterrent measures against Iran. For instance, Washington could emphasize the need to prevent drug smuggling as justification for helping Iraq seal its eastern border. No matter how close the Iraqi government appears to get to Tehran, decisionmakers in Baghdad understand the leverage they can maintain over Iran by having the United States as an alternative or additional security partner.
- **Remain committed to confidence building between Iraqi factions.** Some missions will cause disagreement between Washington and Baghdad but must still be attempted for the good of the bilateral relationship. One such mission is maintaining confidence- and security-building measures along the

trigger line between federal and KRG-controlled areas. Another is carrying out reconciliation and population-focused counterinsurgency initiatives in the Sunni Arab areas. In advocating the continuation of these missions, the United States enjoys the important advantage of being perceived as a well-respected, honest broker by many Iraqis (with some significant exceptions, of course). Iran will never be viewed in this manner, no matter how much effort it employs in Iraq. Through its massive expenditure in blood and treasure, as well as its evident commitment and good intentions, the United States has earned a special relationship with Iraq, and these ties should be preserved. America has been the glue in Iraq's fragile post-2003 political environment—Washington should view this fact as a source of leverage to encourage Iraqis to invite an extended U.S. military presence in Iraq, not as a potential impediment to future bilateral relations.

- **Identify security assistance that Iraqis value.**

Given the current tolerance levels and objectives of Iraqi leaders, Baghdad will value U.S. assistance on some operational tasks and capabilities much more than on others. One such focus area is strategic counterterrorism against cells capable of attacking high-profile targets. Others include counter-indirect fire capabilities around the government center and international airport in Baghdad, along with protection of key points such as the southern export infrastructure bottleneck at Basra.⁵⁰ Metropolitan command-and-control systems and the general provision of intelligence capabilities will also be highly valued, as will any capability that prevents government embarrassment or reduces the risk of Baghdad losing control over key metropolitan areas, critical infrastructure, or major events.

- **Mobilize public-private partnerships.** Both the U.S. military and American companies are well placed to provide Iraq with significant technology components post-2011. Accordingly, Washington should lend strong support to U.S. companies that wish to operate in Iraq, helping them capitalize on the strong personal bonds between Iraqi and U.S. military leaders. Many of the latter will retire to work in private

military companies (PMCs) and security firms that could support ISF development. Although competition from European and Asian technology vendors will be strong, the Iraqi government has a unique appreciation of how valuable U.S. security assistance can be. Baghdad has learned firsthand that American intelligence gathering, aviation, logistics, and training are superior to the British, Russian, Chinese, and French assistance received in the past. Buoyed by oil revenues, Iraq will dedicate significant resources to security-related procurement, operations, and maintenance, particularly in support of priority mission areas such as police development, counterterrorism, and critical infrastructure protection. If the U.S. military cannot provide support in all of these areas for political reasons, the American private sector could be a useful substitute.

For instance, PMCs have been able to develop strong and enduring partnerships with Gulf nations in the past, as evidenced by the Office of the Program Manager—Saudi Arabian National Guard (OPM-SANG). Based on American military doctrine, this training, logistics, and support services project has been run by a U.S.-Saudi joint venture company since 1975. In general, the stigma associated with armed U.S. private security companies in Iraq does not apply to unarmed PMCs, so these support firms should be used as widely as possible. In addition, the U.S. embassy in Baghdad should give PMCs strong support to help them garner benefits such as realistic export-control authorizations from Congress, significant U.S. funding consideration (via the Foreign Military Sales and Foreign Military Financing programs), as well as visas, payments, legal protection, and security support from the Iraqi government.

- **Help secure the border with Iran.** Iraq must build a new toolkit of responses to deal with the immensely complicated security challenge on the border with Iran. Restoring Iraq's territorial integrity along the porous border is a strategic priority for two reasons. First, Iranian-backed militancy and intelligence penetration of Iraq have everyday negative effects, described in both this study and The Washington Institute's detailed 2011 paper on the subject.⁵¹

Second, an unsecured border imposes a broader handicap on Iraqi conventional defense against Iran, giving Tehran potential advantages in surprise, infiltration, and advanced “jump-off” areas for an invasion. To counter these risks, Iraq must incrementally strengthen its intelligence and border forces with U.S. assistance.

Such improvements to border security will not be enough, however. Washington should also support the development of technical surveillance and physical barriers along the border, which could reduce the overall challenge by limiting the number of vulnerable points and providing better visibility to national-level authorities who may be less susceptible to local corruption and intimidation. As in other areas, Baghdad may place particularly high value on special access to U.S. technical security solutions. Developing Iraq’s border forces through a long-term security assistance program similar to OPM-SANG would be a sensible way of ensuring strong, lasting U.S. guidance on ISF development in this vital sector.

- **Reduce fears of Iraq’s military.** U.S. security assistance could support the development of a “minimum deterrent” Iraqi force capable of “nonoffensive defense,” that is, defending the country’s territorial integrity without raising military tensions with Iran or alarming other neighbors. This kind of ISF would fulfill a number of contextual requirements. It would benefit Iraq’s status as a regional power without rekindling uncomfortable issues related to its past wars of conquest. It would also deter Iranian expansionism without adding impetus to the rivalry or sparking a new arms race between the two states. In addition, U.S. involvement could reassure some Iraqis (particularly Kurds and Sunni Arabs) that the ISF will not

reemerge as a coercive force dominated by one political or ethnosectarian bloc.

- **Improve police training so that the Iraqi Army can focus on external defense.** Police training is difficult, and the United States does not have a track record of resounding success in this challenging field. Yet the longer Baghdad leans on the Iraqi Army to provide internal security, the slower its transition to external defense will be, resulting in a widened deterrence gap. Accordingly, initiatives such as the NATO Training Mission–Iraq and some form of extended U.S. military training to the Interior Ministry’s Federal Police service should be given priority, even above training the army for external defense. A State Department international law enforcement program based out of the International Zone in Baghdad would likely struggle to replicate the progress that NATO and the U.S. military have made in the development and fielding of the Federal Police in Iraq. Only an extensive military-led effort can finish the job of paramilitary police training and allow the Iraqi military to turn fully to external defense.

Conclusion

Iraq’s military and internal security forces have undergone constant adaption for more than four decades, spanning the major counterinsurgencies in Kurdistan during the 1970s, the Iran–Iraq War, the 1991 Gulf War, the post-1991 rationalization of the Saddam military, and the post-2003 period. Through each of its iterations, the ISF has been shaped not only by external wars, but also by local factors. The future success of U.S. security assistance will rely more than ever on a clear understanding of the strategic, political, and cultural context of Iraq’s security sector development, as well as the fashioning of initiatives that take this context into account.

Notes

1. The dissolved security services included Ministry of Defense forces such as the Army, Air Force, Navy, and Department of Border Enforcement; Ministry of Interior forces such as the Iraqi Police, Federal Police, Emergency Police, Customs Police, National Information and Investigations Agency, and Oil Field Police; Counter-Terrorism Service forces such as the Special Operations Forces, Iraqi Intelligence Service, and the various facilities protection services utilized by ministries. See http://www.iraqcoalition.org/regulations/20030823_CPAORD_2_Dissolution_of_Entities_with_Annex_A.pdf for a complete listing.
2. See D. J. Elliott, “Thoughts on ISF Development and Iraq’s Ability to Defend Itself,” *Montrose Toast* blog, January 16, 2011, <http://home.comcast.net/~djyae/site/?/blog/view/84/&PHPSESSID=87537bd796b922728a3f3d6c877eb552>.
3. For a recent discussion of the three-phase development plan, see D. J. Elliott, “Emergency Response Brigades Return to Iraqi Federal Police?” *Montrose Toast* blog, January 24, 2011, <http://home.comcast.net/~djyae/site/?/blog/category/27/&PHPSESSID=c0f25ec196651d61b1d08d5d2faa172e>.
4. Quoted in U.S. Army Combined Arms Center, “The Constitution,” USACAC briefer, August 26, 2010, http://usacac.army.mil/cac2/coin/repository/knowledge_center/coin_center_files/coin_center_briefings/dco_monthly_mtg/26Aug2010/Rule_of_Law_Presentation_Notes.docx.
5. *Ibid.*
6. Such provinces include Baghdad, Basra, Ninawa, and Kirkuk. During interviews with the author conducted in 2010, several Iraqi Army divisional and brigade commanders confirmed that no full transition to police primacy is intended in these governorates.
7. General Zebari has stated that Iraq will not be able to defend its borders until at least 2020. See Jim Loney, “Are the Iraqi Security Forces Ready or Not?” Reuters, August 12, 2010, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2010/08/12/us-iraq-usa-pullout-idUSTRE67B3LS20100812>. Elliott reached a similar conclusion in the previously cited “Thoughts on ISF Development” article.
8. Quoted in Sam Dagher, “Iraq Wants the U.S. Out,” *Wall Street Journal*, December 28, 2010, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970204685004576045700275218580.html>.
9. See Loney, “Are the Iraqi Security Forces Ready?”
10. Iraqi National Security Council, *Iraq First: Iraqi National Security Strategy 2007–2010* (July 2007), <http://smallwarsjournal.com/documents/iraqinationalsecuritystrategy.pdf>.
11. See Article 9 of the Iraqi constitution (full text of the October 2005 draft version available on the *Washington Post* website at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/10/12/AR2005101201450.html>).
12. The provinces facing the greatest internal security threats are Baghdad, Salah al-Din, and Anbar. Other provinces that witness periodic spikes of violence are Ninawa, Diyala, Kirkuk, Babil, and Maysan.
13. For instance, following the September 2009 bombings in the capital, Prime Minister al-Maliki not only implied potential Syrian involvement (prompting an international crisis with Damascus), but also removed one of his top allies in the ISF’s Baghdad Operations Center. See “Iraq Orders Security Shakeup after Baghdad Suicide Bombings Kill 127,” Associated Press, December 9, 2009, http://articles.nydailynews.com/2009-12-09/news/17941693_1_al-maliki-suicide-bombings-interior-minister-jawad/2.
14. The 24th, 54th, and 56th Iraqi Army Brigades are good examples of this phenomenon in Baghdad. See Michael Knights, “Free Rein: Domestic Security Forces Take Over in Iraq,” *Jane’s Intelligence Review* (November 4, 2010), http://www.janes.com/news/security/jir/jir101104_1_n.shtml.
15. For a detailed explanation of the direct command-and-control relationship between the Prime Minister’s Office and provincial Iraqi Army headquarters, see International Crisis Group, *Loose Ends: Iraq’s Security Forces between U.S. Drawdown and Withdrawal*, Middle East Report no. 99 (October 26, 2010), pp. 5–8, <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/middle-east-north-africa/iraq-syria-lebanon/iraq/099-loose-ends-iraqs-security-forces-between-us-drawdown-and-withdrawal.aspx>.
16. For example, the army’s 2nd Division in Mosul has restricted freedom of movement and activity for developing police forces in order to maintain its lead role in urban security. Such interference was reported to the author during interviews

conducted in 2010 with Iraqi Army divisional and brigade commanders, and echoed by U.S. personnel with insight into the views of senior ISF officials.

17. Iraq suffered approximately the same number of reported security incidents in all of 2010 that it had previously suffered during the single worst month of internal conflict (October 2006). As a result, ISF leaders believe that Iraq is now very safe by post-2003 standards. (Statistics provided by Olive Group, the longest-operating security company in Iraq.)

18. Once again, the 24th and 54th Iraqi Army Brigades provide key case studies of this phenomenon. See International Crisis Group, *Loose Ends*. See also Knights, “Free Rein.”

19. Al-Maliki has consistently treated Anbar in this manner from the outset, delegating security leadership to the provincial level and supporting Sunni Arab “Awakening” movements there (in contrast to his less staunch support for such movements in Baghdad and Diyala). More recently, Maysan has emerged as an enclave in which the government appears willing to allow stronger influence by Muqtada al-Sadr’s movement and Iranian economic and security interests.

20. Knights, “Free Rein.”

21. Michael Knights, “Settling Sons—Sunni Groups Fear Iraqi Government Repression,” *Jane’s Intelligence Review* 21, no. 6 (May 8, 2009), <http://www.janes.com/products/janes/defense-security-report.aspx?ID=1065927940>.

22. This emerging agreement has numerous facets. First, Iraqi Kurds are already spread throughout the ISF, serving as any other Iraqi citizens would. Some units have high proportions of Kurds (e.g., various battalions and brigades in the 3rd and 4th Army Divisions; KRG-based units of the Department of Border Enforcement), posing a potential challenge if federal and KRG authorities clash. Over the next two years, eight federally funded Regional Guard Brigades will become operational, all of them light-infantry *peshmerga* units under the KRG’s full operational control. Similarly, three or four new Federal Police brigades will be raised, trained, and equipped by the federal Ministry of Interior yet placed under the KRG’s operational control. In addition to these forces, the KRG already maintains its own police force and intelligence services (the Asayesh, Parastin, and Zanyari) and a reserve of *peshmerga* not connected to the federal security forces.

23. These views were expressed during numerous author interviews with U.S. personnel possessing knowledge of combined security mechanism functionality and the ethnic weave of ISF formations in northern Iraq.

24. BBC News, “U.S. Warns against Forgetting Iraq,” September 15, 2009, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8256134.stm>.

25. These views were expressed during numerous author interviews with U.S. personnel who have insight into ISF performance and the perceptions of Iraqi commanders. In addition, Iraqi Army divisions are reportedly able to remain anchored to their recruitment areas by appealing to politicians from their predominant sectarian, ethnic, or factional component. For a detailed look at ISF corruption, see Knights, “Free Rein.”

26. Before 2003, Iraq developed the ISF with an eye on potential cross-border military threats from Turkey and Syria, but force development in the post-Saddam era has not focused as much on those two states. One reason is that they now pose less of a threat. Turkey has modified its stance toward Iraq; in 2008, Ankara ceased almost all cross-border incursions to pursue the Kurdistan Workers Party. Since then, Turkey has arguably been a positive, stabilizing force in Iraqi politics and economic development. As for Syria, the demise of the Iraqi Baath Party reduced one source of friction between Baghdad and the rival Baathist regime in Damascus. Even so, Syria is still considered a difficult neighbor due to the movement of al-Qaeda and Iraqi Baathist diehards across the border, as well as the Assad regime’s close relationship with Iran. As a result, the Iraqi Army appears set on permanently basing its 7th Division in the western desert area of Anbar province to continue the traditional role of a blocking force facing Syria.

27. See Joseph Felter and Brian Fishman, *Iranian Strategy in Iraq: Politics and Other Means* (Countering Terrorism Center, West Point, October 13, 2008), <http://www.ctc.usma.edu/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/Iranian-Strategy-in-Iraq.pdf>; Barbara Slavin, *Mullahs, Money, and Militias: How Iran Exerts Its Influence in the Middle East*, Special Report no. 206 (U.S. Institute for Peace, June 2008), <http://www.usip.org/files/resources/sr206.pdf>; and International Crisis Group, *Iran in Iraq: How Much Influence?* Middle East Report no. 38, March 21, 2005, <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/middle-east-north-africa/iran-gulf/iran/038-iran-in-iraq-how-much-influence.aspx>.

28. Michael Knights, “The Evolution of Iran’s Special Groups in Iraq,” *CTC Sentinel* (November 2010), p. 12, <http://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/the-evolution-of-iran-s-special-groups-in-iraq>. See also Knights, “Iran’s Ongoing Proxy War in Iraq,” PolicyWatch no. 1492 (Washington Institute for Near East Policy, March 16, 2009), <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateC05.php?CID=3029>.

29. In November 2009, Tehran staked a claim to the anchorage at Khor al-Amayah offshore oil terminal, stating that it was in Iranian territorial waters. The incident underlines Iran's ability to hinder Iraq's oil export capacity. See Issam al-Chalabi, "Iraq's Oil Export Outlets," *Middle East Economic Survey* 52, no. 48 (November 30, 2009), posted at <http://www.iraqoilforum.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/12/Issam-al-chalabi-mees4.pdf>.
30. Areas such as the central marshes in Maysan and Majnoon have been infiltration points for thirty years, with the same small waterways, islands, villages, and causeways functioning as routes for both Iranian agents and civilian smugglers.
31. For example, a U.S. official asked one Iraqi Department of Border Enforcement commander why he did not stop the cross-border movements that could clearly be observed from his headquarters. He replied that even if he were able to stop smugglers and foreign militants from moving through his sector, he would be either removed from his position by corrupt superiors or killed. Under such circumstances, which are common at smuggling thoroughfares, border forces are rendered ineffective. (Author interview with U.S. official in southern Iraq, February 8, 2011.)
32. Anecdotal reporting by a U.S. military analyst (September 2010) and an oil industry analyst based in an Iraqi border oil field (September 28, 2010).
33. Alice Fordham, "Anti-Iranian Demonstrations Spread across Iraq in Oil Well Dispute," *Times* (London), December 24, 2009, <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/iraq/article6967001.ece>.
34. Statistics provided by Olive Group.
35. See Knights, "The Evolution of Iran's Special Groups," p. 14.
36. When Baghdad signed a security agreement with the United States in November 2008, it insisted on language ensuring that Iraq would not be used as a springboard or corridor for attacks on Iran—in accordance with Tehran's demands. See Article 27 of the agreement, "Deterrence of Security Threats," available at http://graphics8.nytimes.com/packages/pdf/world/20081119_SOFA_FINAL_AGREED_TEXT.pdf.
37. Author interview with U.S. official in southern Iraq, February 8, 2011. Other ISF interviewees have described the unease of senior ISF commanders in such cases.
38. Until 2003, Baghdad still had sixteen of twenty-four such divisions deployed along or supporting the Green Line. See Anthony Cordesman and Ahmed Hashim, *Iraq: Sanctions and Beyond* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997), pp. 236–239.
39. There is no public record of the national threat assessment that underpins ISF force generation. Yet the process is transparent to Iraqi participants from all ethnosectarian blocs, including the Kurds, so one can safely assume that overrunning the KRG with federal forces is not an official planning factor.
40. Ibrahim al-Marashi and Sammy Salama, *Iraq's Armed Forces: An Analytical History* (London: Routledge, 2008), pp. 5–7.
41. Ibid.
42. See International Crisis Group, *Loose Ends*, p. 24, fn. 127.
43. For a cogent discussion of these and other shortfalls, see Elliott, "Thoughts on ISF Development."
44. "Iraq Diverts F-16 Budget for Food Rations," Agence France-Presse, February 14, 2011, <http://www.defensenews.com/story.php?i=5706504&c=MID&s=TOP>.
45. Al-Marashi and Salama, *Iraq's Armed Forces*, pp. 5–7.
46. Ibid.
47. Loney, "Are the Iraqi Security Forces Ready?"
48. Author interview with an Iraqi general in Washington, DC, April 2011.
49. Al-Marashi and Salama, *Iraq's Armed Forces*.
50. Other key points include the Common Seawater Supply Facility that will support water injection to the southern oil fields, the large refineries at Bayji and elsewhere, major power stations, and overland oil export pumping stations and pipelines.

51. Michael Eisenstadt, Michael Knights, and Ahmed Ali, *Iran's Influence in Iraq: Countering Tehran's Whole-of-Government Approach*, Policy Focus no. 111 (Washington Institute for Near East Policy, April 2011), <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateC04.php?CID=342>.

POLICY NOTES
