

MERIA

TRANSFERRING AMERICAN MILITARY VALUES TO IRAQ

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The President of the United States expressed his desire to build a democratic Iraq that could serve as an example to the rest of the Arab and Islamic nations. The American military was the instrument chosen to build an Iraqi security structure that could fight terrorism and still promote ethical leaders and democratic values. However, efforts to transfer American military values to Iraq have been a failure. The leaders of the Iraqi Joint Security Forces have politely listened to what the Americans have determined is best for them and then have gone back to doing what they feel is best for them—namely situational leadership, corruption, and human rights violations.

INTRODUCTION

There never was an Iraqi army, let alone an Iraqi nation state, until British efforts after World War I. The purpose of this paper is to look at American efforts to recreate an Iraqi army using American military values—values supportive of democracy and human rights—in the post-Saddam era. America has made a multibillion dollar¹ effort to create what President George W. Bush called a “free Iraq at the heart of the Middle East... a watershed event in the global democratic revolution.”² American leaders said they wanted

LEADERSHIP AND VALUES IN THE OLD IRAQI MILITARY

Prior to the 2003 invasion, the purpose of the Iraqi security services under all governments was to ensure the survival of the Sunni-dominated national government located in Baghdad. Under Saddam Hussein, the Iraqi Army and security services maintained internal security, repressed revolts by the Kurds and Shi'a, attacked Iran in 1980, invaded Kuwait in 1990, and fought the Anglo-American invasions of 1991 and 2003.

After the 1991 war, the Iraqi Army was capable of terrorizing and intimidating civilians,³ but it could not do much more. It was a defeated, totally corrupted force that had learned not to take initiative and not to question

an Iraqi military committed to defeating terrorism that respects human rights and the rule of law. They championed a diverse Iraqi military led by civilian and military leaders of character and integrity. They also wanted a military that rejected political, sectarian, and self-serving influences. This paper will look at the success and future of the American experience in Iraq. The Bush Administration chose the military option over all other options to transfer American values to a conquered Iraq. Therefore, it is important to investigate and assess the successes and failures of the Operation Iraqi Freedom project.

unethical orders. The army was under-resourced, as Saddam gave preferential treatment to his more politically reliable Republican Guards and Special Republican Guards. His loyal Sunni officers did know how to tactically employ the units and weapons of what had been the fourth largest military force in the world. Force quality was an issue since “the uprisings following the Gulf War triggered a continuing series of purges in the Iraqi military that lasted until Saddam’s fall, while a vast number of promotions inflated the ranks of senior officers and filled slots with loyalists and incompetents.”⁴

The culture of the army itself was a key problem. Assertive mid-level officers were considered a threat by their superiors, and various secret police forces “minded” the officer corps for loyalty. No Iraqi officer could

afford to be a leader in a system in which the supreme leader, Saddam Hussein, perceived persons with leadership abilities as potential threats to regime survival.⁵ There were no quality standards, no ways to measure competency. Graduation from service schools could be bought in a system where nepotism and favoritism were rampant.⁶ One could be qualified on paper, but the paper was not indicative of actual performance or capability.

Junior officers were also conditioned not to show initiative. They did not anticipate what needed to be done. They did not use their non-commissioned officers (NCOs) to support them in organizing and preparing the enlisted soldiers for dangerous military duties. Junior officers ended up doing what would be considered NCO work in Western armies. The NCOs were not trained, not educated, and not key partners of their officers. Many were illiterate. The training of the Shi'a and Kurdish conscripts was restricted to teaching low-level skills, while Sunni soldiers learned the high-level command and staff skills necessary to administer one of the largest armies in the world. In the 2003 war, various Iraqi forces resisted the Anglo-American invaders for 30 to 40 days, but the Iraqi military did not formally surrender to the American-led Coalition forces. Saddam's Army and Republican Guard troops just melted away while their paramilitary counterparts continued to resist the Coalition forces.

DISBANDING THE IRAQI MILITARY

After the occupation of Baghdad by American troops in April 2003, the Americans allowed widespread looting in Baghdad and elsewhere to occur. The U. S. commanders failed to declare martial law and put a stop to the chaos and disorder. The military claimed they did not have enough troops, and U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld explained that "Freedom's untidy.... Free people are free to make mistakes and commit crimes and do bad things."⁷ The Coalition had no real plans on what to do with Iraq after the Saddam regime fell.

Secretary Donald Rumsfeld appointed a retired ambassador, Paul Bremer, as the ruling proconsul of the occupation government, known as the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA). Bremer arrived in Baghdad on May 12, 2003, and within his first week in Iraq, a country he had never visited nor whose language could he speak,⁸ he issued his famous "de-Ba'athification order."⁹ The results were the dismissal of all government administrators who were members of the Ba'ath Party and had served in the top four levels of Iraq's government. To receive a top-level administration position during the Saddam era, a person normally had to be a member of the Ba'ath Party. All the dismissed government administrators were laid off without any severance pay or pensions. Many were the very people who had the skills and knowledge to administer and operate all the ministries of the Iraqi government, especially the security services. The government and government-owned industries were the principal employers in Iraq. Revenue from domestic Iraqi oil production provided 95 percent of the budget for the Iraqi government. With most of the government ministries, universities, hospitals, utilities, and industries destroyed in a multibillion dollar looting spree and with the government administrators dismissed from duty, the economy collapsed and has never recovered.

One week later, on May 23, 2003, Ambassador Bremer ordered the disbandment of all Iraqi military and security services.¹⁰ Arbitrary dismissal rather than rehabilitation and utilization of former government officials and security forces left the Coalition military forces without indigenous Iraqi security forces to enforce law and order in Iraq during the chaos, anarchy, and criminal violence that followed the fall of the Saddam regime. The dismissed soldiers and police could have been recalled to active service not only to maintain law and order, but to help economic recovery by performing manpower-intensive public work programs.¹¹ Under Ambassador Bremer, the occupation government had no coherent plan for the demobilization, disarmament,¹² and

reintegration (DDR) into society of 720,000 unemployed soldiers and police¹³ whose principal skill set was in conducting organized violence.¹⁴ All serious international post-conflict reconstruction and stabilization efforts include DDR as a critical and early part of their reconciliation and peace-building efforts.¹⁵ The security of Saddam's storage sites for arms, ammunition, explosives, and other military hardware used for combat was not to be a top priority for the Coalition occupation of Iraq.^{16[16]} Those unsecured ammunition and high-explosive sites were soon looted and served as sources of supply for the Sunni resistance movement and Shi'a militias.¹⁷

The police, like the military and the various secret police forces of the Saddam regime, had been instruments of repression rather than instruments of public safety, rule of law, and justice in Iraq. They also melted away after the Coalition invasion, leaving anarchy in the streets of Iraq, since the American-led Coalition had insufficient troops and was unwilling to enforce law and order. The CPA's initial security plan was to reactivate security forces for local policing, border security, and infrastructure security. A national army for Iraq was not in their game plan. The mission of the new Iraqi security forces was restricted to internal security—to protect the American-established government (consisting of the formerly repressed Shi'a and Kurdish political groups) from threats emerging from the alienated Iraqi Sunni community. The United States of America vowed to protect post-Saddam Iraq from any external threats, just as the British did when they created the first Iraqi Army in the 1920s. The dismissal of former Ba'athists and the failure of the Coalition to secure the explosives storage sites coupled with the failure to use the existing soldiers of the defeated Iraqi security forces immediately in order to maintain law and order directly facilitated the emergence of a significant Sunni-based insurgency in Iraq. Saddam's paramilitary units—soldiers from disbanded security forces, Sunni Iraqi nationalists, and jihadist terrorists—eventually morphed into a major anti-American, and later anti-Iraqi government, national resistance movement.

Many Shi'a also did not welcome the Americans and British as liberators, but considered them as occupiers, perhaps due to mistrust generated from the betrayal of the 1991 rebellion against Saddam by the U.S. government.¹⁸

Within a relatively short period of time after the invasion, the anti-Coalition resistance movement emerged and attacked major political targets to isolate Coalition and Iraqi allies from both the Iraqi people and the assistance and support of the international community. The compounds of the Jordanian embassy, the United Nations, and the International Committee of the Red Cross were attacked with devastating vehicle bombs.¹⁹ Attacks on Coalition troops continued to increase, demonstrating that it would take more than police forces to suppress terrorist attacks by the resistance. Insurgency attacks grew for a year, but Secretary Rumsfeld and the occupation government refused to admit that the resistance consisted of anything other than Ba'athist "bitter enders," al-Qa'ida terrorists, and foreign fighters. Without indigenous Iraqis to help police their own country, the unfamiliar Coalition forces were blind and failed to provide internal security for Iraq. Their lack of cultural intelligence led to gross and abusive mistakes in counterinsurgency operations that alienated Iraqis²⁰ and played into the hands of the insurgents.²¹ The CPA spent billions of dollars from seized Iraqi government accounts located at the U.S. Federal Reserve Bank and from banks in Iraq; these seized monies were used to try to jumpstart the economy, without obvious results. Millions, maybe billions, of dollars disappeared into the corrupt world of well-connected U.S. contractors and Iraqi politicians appointed by the occupiers.²² By 2006, the corruption in Iraq was so bad that Transparency International rated Iraq as one of the most corrupt countries in the world.²³ Corruption in the Iraqi military and police would continually drag down the effectiveness and efficiency of the Iraqi security forces.²⁴

CREATING THE NEW IRAQI ARMY

One year and three months after the 2003 invasion, the Americans created a new Coalition command, the Multinational Security Transition Command-Iraq (MNSTC-I), to build the “New Iraqi Army.” The MNSTC-I headquarters were located at Camp Phoenix inside the Baghdad International (Green) Zone. It was to serve as the senior joint and combined command for activating, training, equipping, and advising Iraqi military and police forces. Major General David Petraeus, who had completed a successful tour as commander of the 101st Airborne Division in northern Iraq, was promoted to lieutenant general and selected to command the advisory and training effort. His mission was to rebuild the Iraqi Army from scratch since all their facilities and equipment had either been looted or destroyed during or after the 2003 invasion.²⁵

The New Iraqi Army discontinued the tradition of giving Sunnis preferential treatment in officer selection and assignment. The Shi’a majority and the Kurdish minority—who had never been given the opportunity to develop the administrative and military skills necessary to organize and lead the military, security services, and government bureaucracy effectively during the Saddam era—were now nominally in charge of the interim government and the military. Some senior Sunni officers were certified as “clean” and brought back into the New Iraqi Army in 2004. The “de-Ba’thification” process continued to severely restrict which former Sunni officers could be recalled to active duty to help reconstitute the New Iraqi Army. The majority of new officer cadets were either Shi’a or Kurd. The key concept for defeating the insurgency has been to organize and build a new Iraqi army so it could take over the combat role of American units in fighting Iraqi insurgents. As sufficient Iraqi forces were trained, organized, equipped, and determined “capable” of managing the counterinsurgency and counterterrorist campaign in Iraq, the Coalition forces would progressively withdraw from Iraq.

Working with their Iraqi military counterparts, MNSTC-I trainers took new

recruits through their basic and specialty training. They also conducted officer training and NCO development courses at various regional military training centers and service schools. Once the new recruits graduated from training, they were assigned to existing or newly created Iraqi units. Those units were assigned a Coalition counterpart unit that continued their collective training and provided logistical support and operational mentorship until the Iraqi units were rated fully combat-capable and could be transferred to the operational control of the Iraqi Ministry of Defense (MOD). MNSTC-I also coordinated Coalition efforts to train and equip the non-military Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) consisting of the Iraqi Police Service, the National Police, the Facility Protection Service, and the Border Security units as part of the transition of security responsibilities to the Iraqi Ministry of Interior (MOI).

THE U. S. ARMY RESERVE’S TRAINING OF THE IRAQI ARMY

Since U. S. Army Special Forces, considered the best trainers for foreign forces, were not available to train the New Iraqi Army,²⁶ other training options had to be explored.²⁷ The U.S. Regular Army did not want to strip out their trainers from the Army Training Centers in America to send to Iraq. All active duty divisions were either in Iraq or were preparing to go back and were thus not available to take over the Iraqi training base mission.²⁸ The active Army and Marine Corps have been historically reluctant to assign their best officers and NCOs to serve as advisors or trainers for foreign forces.²⁹ Advisory assignments to foreign armies are not considered favorable for the career advancement of American officers.³⁰ Therefore, the mobilization and deployment of U. S. Army Reserve (USAR) Training Divisions to Iraq was considered the best available option for providing American trainers. The Training Divisions were designed to provide a surge capability to conduct initial entry and advanced skills training for new American soldiers in the event of partial mobilization. Elements of

various Army Reserve Training Divisions were rotated into Iraq on a 12-month tour of duty starting in 2004 and became a major manpower source for the MNSTC-I training and advisory structure.³¹

THE ROLE OF THE NATO TRAINING MISSION IN IRAQ

Although several of the European NATO allies of the United States and the United Kingdom refused to support the 2003 invasion of Iraq, many of those same nations later became concerned about regional instability resulting from the insurgency and the possible collapse of the new Iraqi government. They thus responded favorably to requests for NATO help in Iraq. The political leadership of the democratic NATO nations approved the training of Iraqi officers inside and outside of Iraq on June 24, 2004, at the Istanbul Summit. A NATO Training Mission—Iraq (NTM-I)—was established in December 2004 to coordinate training in Iraq. The commander of MNSTC-I wore two hats since he also was the NTM-I commander. The principle thrust of NATO effort was to provide professional military education and training for senior and mid-level Iraqi officers and junior officer commissioning courses.³² To support that mission, NTM-I rebuilt the physical and academic components of the Iraqi Joint Staff College, located at the al-Rustamiyya base in the southeastern section of metropolitan Baghdad. This effort was led by an Italian brigadier general with a mostly Italian staff, and it utilized instructional materials from the Rome-based NATO Defense College.³³ Another Coalition (mostly British) effort, the mentorship of the Iraqi Military Academy at al-Rustamiyya (I-MAR) where new officer cadets are trained, was transferred to NTM-I sponsorship in 2006.³⁴ Saddam Hussein failed the qualification exam for I-MAR when he was a young man and starved the Academy for resources when he was dictator.

READINESS OF THE NEW IRAQI OFFICERS

The performance of the Iraqi Joint Forces (IJF) was disappointing in 2004-2005. Some of the battalion level units mutinied and refused to deploy to conflict areas or to fight.³⁵ If they were going to assume greater combat responsibility from the largely American Coalition forces, they would have to do better. MNSTC-I conducted a survey of Iraqi military leaders from the Ministry of Defense and the IJF General Staff down to battalion level to identify their own perception of their leadership performance and acceptance of American-defined professional military ethics. A similar parallel survey was completed by their Coalition advisors. The surveys indicated a great variance between what the Iraqis thought of their own leadership performance and ethical behavior as compared to the parallel assessment survey completed by their Coalition advisory counterparts. The MNSTC-I advisory community recognized that the Coalition had trained and built a large Iraqi Security Forces, but not the quality force needed to defeat the Sunni insurgency. Something would have to be done to improve the professionalism of the Iraqi forces.³⁶ Part of the problem was that the American trainers and mentors tended to treat their Iraqi trainees with disrespect and contempt. Personal dignity, honor, and respect are very important values to Iraqis. To be treated with disrespect or dishonor may require revenge or, at the very least, result in a subtle subversion of American-directed efforts by their Iraqi counterparts.³⁷ While MNSTC-I was able to increase significantly the production of trained soldiers to man the New Iraqi Army in 2004-2006, it could not solve problems associated with corruption by Iraqi military leaders. Starting at the Baghdad Ministry of Defense and descending to the lower levels of command, billions of dollars in U.S. military assistance were wasted or siphoned off in corrupt scams by Iraqi government officials.³⁸

THE U.S. INSTITUTION FOR LEADERSHIP & ETHICS

The MNSTC-I leadership responded to the dismal results of the survey with the goal of “build[ing] a formal institution focus on doctrinal development and education and training to professionalize the IJF in specific areas of ethics and leadership.”³⁹ The purpose of the institution was to inform and influence key leaders, the military, the public, and other ethics compliance organizations that the leadership of the Iraqi military was serious about ensuring that their Joint Forces were guided by professional and ethical leaders. It was assumed that serious cultural change in the Iraqi military could take at least two generations.⁴⁰ The institution was named the Iraqi Center for Professional Military Values, Principles, and Leadership (CMVPL) and was located at al-Rustamiyya Base near the Joint Staff College (JSC) and the Iraqi Military Academy (IMAR). The initial budget for the CMVPL was \$8 million—more than enough to cover personnel costs for 13 American contractors, four U.S. soldiers, some Iraqi staff members and translators/interpreters, as well as contracting costs for computers, vehicles, furniture, and building rehabilitation. The Center utilized a state of the art computer network to prepare instructional materials. The proposal for the Center indicated that 23 Iraqi officers would serve as instructors and counterparts to the American contractor staff. The Americans would train the Iraqi officers so they could instruct and assist at the Joint Staff College, service schools, regional training centers, and military academies. The Iraqi officers assigned to the Center were expected to be computer literate, English speakers, and Joint Staff College graduates.⁴¹ These were tough personnel requirements for a wartime Iraqi army to support, considering that Iraq had been under a UN-directed economic embargo for 12 years and that only a limited number of people had access to new computer technology or opportunities to learn English. Any officer who spoke English was also jealously guarded by his own command, which needed his ability to communicate with its Coalition counterparts.

The mentorship responsibility for the Center was scheduled to be handed over to NATO in 2007 as part of the plan to transfer most programs dealing with higher-level education to NTM-I. Whether the Iraqis will actively participate in the Center and use their own funds to continue the Center’s operation in 2008 and beyond remains unknown. MNSTC-I will probably not continue to fund the Center in fiscal year 2008.

When the Center was established the Iraqi military did not have a functioning staff agency responsible for defining Iraqi military doctrine. Doctrine consists of fundamental principles by which the military forces or elements guide their actions. It is authoritative but requires judgment in application.⁴² Therefore, without an accepted doctrine for military leadership and professional military ethics, the Center did not have a way it could help propagate the concepts into the Iraqi military education and training system. Thus the “2004 U.S. Officership Concept Paper,” written by nine professors at the United States Military Academy in West Point, New York, was adapted for publication under the byline of Major General Mohammed Najm al-Din Zayn al-Din Naqshabandi in the *U. S. Army Military Review Magazine*, published both in English and Arabic. The general, an Iraqi Kurdish officer, was designated the first commander of the Iraqi Training and Doctrine Command.⁴³ The seven page article, entitled “Officership in the Iraqi Armed Forces,” had only three references, and they were all from American or British military history texts. It appeared that the editors of the article universally replaced the words “American Army” with the words “Iraqi Army.” Everything else appeared to be pure American military leadership and officership doctrine.

The Center’s major activity in 2006 was to adapt the United States Military Academy (West Point) leadership and ethics curriculum to what the Americans understood to be the Iraqi context. The curriculum was broken down into one hour multimedia classes using PowerPoint presentation software. The PowerPoint classes were then translated into Arabic by the Center translators. The plan was that Iraqi Army officers at the Center would

teach Iraqi instructors at the service schools, training centers, military academies, and Joint Staff College. The “train-the-trainers” approach would hopefully extend quality leadership and ethics knowledge to the whole army. In typical “get it done” fashion, the Americans had their own professional military doctrine translated into Arabic and renamed “Iraqi military leadership and ethic doctrine.” This was done without the participation of Iraqi officers in the process. One retired Iraqi major general, Nabil Abd al-Qadir, who had served in the old Iraqi Army, was hired to serve as advisor to the Center. He remained at the Phoenix Base to liaison with the Iraqi senior military headquarters and MNSTC-I.⁴⁴ No Iraqi active duty officers were assigned to the Center in 2006. An Iraqi brigadier and colonel, but no instructors or trainers, were first assigned to the Center in 2007; a year after the launch of the CMVPL project.

The Center was charged with assisting the Iraqis to overcome a tradition of human rights abuses that had been passed down from the Saddam era and that continued under Operation Iraqi Freedom. Influencing the ethical behavior of soldiers and their military units in war have been vital components of the Center’s mission. Both the Iraqi Army and the various Ministry of Interior police forces are working to overcome a tradition of the past Saddam era.⁴⁵ The Center incorporated into their curriculum existing Arabic learning resources concerning international humanitarian law and the Law of Armed Conflict, available from the International Committee of the Red Cross.⁴⁶ Convincing the Iraqis that the U.S. military had the moral authority to lecture them on military ethics was a challenge due to instances of sanctioned prisoner abuse,⁴⁷ the Abu Ghraib prisoner torture/sexual abuse scandal,⁴⁸ the Haditha killings,⁴⁹ and the Mahmudiyya atrocities.⁵⁰ The United States did take action in response to the Haditha massacre by requiring all U.S. military and contractor personnel serving in Iraq to receive special ethics training.⁵¹ The ethical behavior of American soldiers and Marines continued to be an item of great concern to the leaders of the occupation forces after a Mental Health Advisory Team

(MHAT) reported that more than one-third of all soldiers and Marines surveyed responded that torture should be allowed, and less than half the soldiers and Marines said they would report a team member for unethical behavior.⁵² General Petraeus, now the senior U. S. commander in Iraq (Multi-National Force-Iraq), issued a letter to all American service members “to take the ‘moral high ground’ when dealing with insurgents and the Iraqi people.”⁵³ Press reports and public opinion surveys conducted in Iraq indicated the lack of cultural sensitivity, unethical behavior, and excessive indiscriminate violence and human rights violations by the U.S. military have alienated the majority of the Iraqi public from the Coalition.⁵⁴

The unethical behavior of the CMVPL American program manager, a U.S. Army lieutenant colonel, jeopardized the success of the Center even before its official establishment. The officer negotiated for the use of four of the 18 JSC and IMAR faculty houses for use by the new center, but then he occupied the whole faculty housing area, thereby preempting Iraqi officers and their families from an on-base living area safe from terrorists. His unethical behavior undermined any serious acceptance of the Center by the Iraqis and their Coalition advisors. The IMAR Iraqi staff considered the officer a liar and placed the American-led Coalition effort under suspicion since, from their perspective, he appeared to have the support of higher command. The Iraqis at IMAR renamed the CMVPL the “unethical ethics” center. The most serious result of the officer’s unethical behavior was that Brigadier General Imad, the commandant of the Academy, was captured by terrorists when commuting to his off-base home and tortured to death.⁵⁵ The CMVPL was moved out of the faculty housing area in 2007 and relocated to the Green Zone in Baghdad.

THE DESIRED END STATE

The strategy for the United States of America, like that of the British in the 1920s-1940s, was to build an Iraqi army that supported the goals and interests of the

creators. The army-building process was similar, but the context for building the New Iraqi Army was different. In both situations the goal was the same: to build a strong security force that would ensure the preservation of a friendly united Iraqi nation-state, with its central government administrative center in Baghdad. The army-building context faced by the Coalition was different from that of the British in the sense that the Shi'a and Kurds, who had been considered the major threats to all previous Iraqi governments, constituted the central government in post-Saddam Baghdad. The Coalition perceived the contemporary threats to the survival of the regime to come from the supporters of the former Sunni Arab-dominated Saddam regime, Sunni Iraqi nationalists, and foreign jihadists. The jihadists have converged on Iraq to fight in what they feel is the principal battleground in the global struggle with "Western crusaders" and their local collaborators. In addition to internal and foreign Sunni resistance, the majority of Iraqi Sunnis and Shi'a opposed the Coalition troops from almost the beginning of the occupation. President Bush said his goal was to "help the Iraqi people build a new Iraq with a constitutional, representative government that respects civil rights and has security forces sufficient to maintain domestic order and keep Iraq from becoming a safe haven for terrorists."⁵⁶ The political-military goals of the Americans were more ambitious than simply organizing and training security forces to protect their client government; they wanted a radical political change in how the country would be governed. Ambassador Bremer appointed a transitional government that was based on proportional representation of most ethnic, religious, and exiled political groups. That model of government was seen by the Sunni Arab minority as stacked against them, since with only 20 percent of the population they could never compete politically with the Shi'a Arabs, who constitute 60 percent of the population.⁵⁷

MEANS AND WAYS TO GET TO AN END STATE

Since the occupation of Iraq, the United States has provided about \$19 billion to train, equip, and sustain 350,000 Iraqi security and law enforcement personnel.⁵⁸ Additionally, 160,000 U.S. troops and tens of thousands of private military contractors are in Iraq to prosecute the counterinsurgency.⁵⁹ The "train and turnover" strategy used since the invasion has failed to bring a stable, secure, and democratic society free of terrorists to Iraq.⁶⁰ The growing Iraqi security forces were supposed to take over the security burden from the Coalition forces so that their combat forces could revert to a supportive role and withdrawal as conditions improved. The problem is that conditions did not improve, and instead only worsened.⁶¹ The strategy of killing terrorists, training the Iraqi security forces, and then turning over the combat mission to them was not leading to President Bush's victory in Iraq. In January 2007, he ordered a change in American strategy, with an increase of an additional 21,000 American troops for duty in Iraq as part of a "surge." Those additional forces are focused on securing Baghdad—the administrative, cultural, and geographical center of Iraq—and surrounding provinces from terrorists and sectarian violence. His change in strategy recognized that the people of Iraq are the "center of gravity" for the war.⁶² If they are not secure from violence, poverty, and unemployment, the nation cannot be secured. How long the American people, another "center of gravity," will tolerate the continued U.S. occupation of Iraq is a problematic factor. Indications are that the U.S. Congress may respond to the will of the American people and force the Bush Administration to begin a withdrawal process by setting benchmarks to limit the significant continued presence of American forces in Iraq.⁶³

The "surge" has been billed as an essential increase of forces necessary to secure "victory." Actually, it is necessary to stave off defeat, because even with a significant increase in Iraqi security forces and billions of dollars of aid assistance, they have proved incapable of

achieving a military solution to what is essentially a political problem revolving around the sharing of power and resources. General Petraeus, appointed in 2007 as the new senior Coalition commander, is responsible for implementing the new American counterinsurgency strategy in Iraq.⁶⁴ He is an able and experienced leader who has provided his troops with a revised counterinsurgency doctrine. The troops are now trained to be culturally sensitive and to help the Iraqis with community policing and economic jumpstart programs. He is not expected to focus the troops on home invasions looking for “terrorists” to kill or capture.⁶⁵ Petraeus’s task is made more difficult by the fact that he inherits—and is being tasked with reversing—an extremely negative legacy of American incompetence, stupidity, and insensitivity to Iraqi needs and wants. Four years of Coalition failure will be a difficult challenge to overcome in Iraq, if at all possible. The current partnering of American military units with Iraqi Army and police units may be the best way to transfer American ethical and leadership values to the Iraqi security forces. Personal examples of ethical and courageous leadership by Americans officers and NCOs will have far more influence on Iraqis than the PowerPoint presentations shown at service schools. Iraqis value personal relationships, and “partnering” is an effective way to facilitate trust and friendship between the Iraqis and their partners. This type of partnership in combat operations and training was very successful in Vietnam. It helped to prepare the Vietnamese security forces for the eventual withdraw of the American Army.⁶⁶

The Americans have built an Iraqi Army focused on the combat aspects of counterinsurgency. The Iraq Joint Forces need to develop self-sustaining logistical, medical, intelligence, and aviation capabilities necessary for their joint forces to fight the insurgency or resist an invasion without American support.⁶⁷ The Iraqis could remain dependent on the American military or contractors for these resources for many years to come. One of the Coalition’s concerns is that the Iraqis may not accept dependency on the United States of

America for those capabilities and may instead turn to their Iranian neighbors for training, intelligence, medical, and logistical support. The various factions of the Shi’a alliance that control the Iraqi government (in cooperation with Kurdish parties) have been supported by Iran. The Iranians provide their Iraqi friends with financial resources and covert forms of assistance. They provided Iraqi Shi’as sanctuary in Iran from the tyranny of Saddam Hussein for decades. The Shi’a Arabs dominate the New Iraqi Army and the Iraqi police forces. These forces are also infiltrated by Shi’a militias that are supported and influenced by Iranian forces.⁶⁸ The United States has spent a considerable amount of time and effort training and equipping the Iraqi Security Forces and does not want to see them come under the control or influence of Iran. However, that could happen. The conflict in Iraq is strongly influenced by the perception and reality that the United States is an active supporter of the Israel’s occupation of Palestine, their 2006 bombings of Lebanon, and their struggle with Iran concerning who will be the dominant regional power in the Middle East.

U.S. SPECIAL FORCES SHOULD BE THE LAST TO LEAVE IRAQ

The Americans will have to seek an accommodation with the Iranians and their Iraqi Shi’a allies in order to leave Iraq without having to fight their way out. If they are lucky and after most of the conventional forces are withdrawn, they might be able to leave behind small unobtrusive contingents of Special Forces⁶⁹ to continue to train selective elements of the Iraqi Army and to assist in the counterinsurgency effort against remaining jihadist terrorists who might not accept a political solution to their demands.⁷⁰ The Special Forces, with their cultural knowledge, language skills, and communications equipment, could also serve as a liaison between the withdrawing Coalition forces, the Iraqi military, police, and militias, and the other foreign powers—such as Turkey, which may have its own or proxy forces in Iraq. When and if a peace process were to emerge, they would

also be an excellent tool to assess if the various Iraqi political factions and foreign powers actually terminate their assistance to the irregular forces operating in Iraq. The Special Forces were very successful at the beginning of the occupation in empowering Iraqi communities to help themselves, but were quickly removed from that mission.⁷¹ They should be used to help phase out the American intervention in Iraq.

CONCLUSION

The IJF have not embraced the American “Operation Iraqi Freedom” project, as exhibited by their failure to suppress the Shi’a militias or to accept and promote the American-operated Iraqi Center for Military Principles, Values, and Leadership. The reason the IJF leadership has not supported the project is because their political leaders do not appreciate the American-stated values of the rule of law, diversity, and human rights. As for the Bush Administration, it has lost its enthusiasm to bring democracy to the Middle East, as it faces the collapse of its Iraqi project. The Americans are losing their influence over the IJF and police as they assume more operational responsibility from the Coalition forces. The IJF have the popular support of the Shi’a, as exhibited by a 71 percent favorable opinion poll of Baghdad Shi’a.⁷² The military and police

are Shi’a and Kurdish-dominated and reflect the interests and priorities of the Central and Kurdish regional governments. Hopefully the Iraqi Shi’a Arabs and Kurdish elites will create the political space for a reconciliation process with their alienated Sunni Arab neighbors. Such an opening to the Sunni Arabs would have to include a new respect for human rights, fairness, and impartiality on the part of the Shi’a dominated Iraqi Security Forces. The Sunni Arabs must also reject extremism and respond to any serious reconciliation efforts on the part of the Baghdad government. The ISF can reform and reflect the values of democracy, diversity, and human rights, but their Iraqi political masters must lead the way in a major military ethical culture shift similar to the desegregation of the United States military by the executive order of President Harry Truman after World War II.

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