

CHAPTER 8: THE IRAQI POLICE SERVICE

The Iraqi Police Service (IPS), Iraq's local and provincial police force, is fragile throughout Iraq.¹⁵³ On the one hand, training for the Iraqi Police Service is improving, and in some areas the police are patrolling neighborhoods more regularly, manning security checkpoints, and working with the Iraqi Army and Coalition forces to combat insurgent groups. On the other hand, the Iraqi Police Service faces many challenges. The Ministry of Interior (MOI), which supports the Iraqi Police Service, is highly dysfunctional. Infiltration of the Iraqi Police Service by militia members, insurgents, and criminals is widespread in some parts of Iraq. The police are not sufficiently equipped to combat their enemies, nor do they have the support and sustainment systems to function effectively. The Iraqi Police Service lacks investigative capabilities and sufficient intelligence and information systems, and it operates in an environment without a strong foundation in the rule of law. The Iraqi Police Service is an important part of the long-term solution for stability in Iraq, but it will be at least a few more years before the police can contribute significantly to bringing real security to the provinces. In the interim, they will continue to rely on the Coalition to provide key enablers such as intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities.

Overview of the Iraqi Police Service

During the years of Saddam Hussein's rule, Iraqi police were at the bottom of the hierarchy of security forces. Although there were more than 60,000 police in the force, they were poorly trained and equipped. In addition, they were often brutal and corrupt, and as a result they were widely feared by the Iraqi public. Reflecting that public distrust, looters targeted and destroyed many police stations, vehicles, and pieces of equipment in the wake of the 2003 invasion.¹⁵⁴ In an effort to begin reestablishing security in Iraq, the Coalition Provisional Authority called the Iraqi police back into service; and in May 2003, the Department of Justice determined that the Iraqi Police Service needed to be significantly reorganized, retrained, and reequipped in order to be effective.

Six months later the United States began a recruiting and training program for the police, relying on 500 police advisors reporting to the Department of State. By early 2004, however, it was clear that the State Department-led police training program was not sufficiently effective, primarily because of the challenging security situation. In March 2004, President Bush assigned responsibility for the police training effort to the Department of Defense. This was unprecedented; historically, the departments of Justice and State have taken the lead in training indigenous police forces. Placing the military in charge does ensure that police trainers are more secure, but it also has resulted in greater emphasis on counterinsurgency operations than on civil policing and more traditional law enforcement activities.

¹⁵³ The most solid example of civil policing the Commission saw in Iraq was in the Kurdish province of Sulaymaniyah, but it must be noted the Kurdish provinces have benefited from years of being a virtually autonomous area in Iraq.

¹⁵⁴ Interviews with Iraqi police officials in Baghdad, July 2007. See also Robert M. Perito, "Reforming the Iraqi Interior Ministry, Police and Facilities Protection Service," Testimony before the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, 110th Cong., 1st sess., March 28, 2007.

Today there are more than 230,000 police in the Iraqi police force. The U.S. Civilian Police Assistance Transition Team (CPATT), the military-led organization within the Coalition with responsibility for mentoring and advising the Iraqi Police Service, has trained approximately 164,000 police, but the Department of Defense estimates that only 40 to 70 percent of these Coalition-trained recruits are still serving in the police force.¹⁵⁵ However, the existence of ghost payrolls makes it difficult to generate reliable estimates of the precise number of personnel available for duty. It now is clear that tens of thousands of Iraqi police have entered the force without going through the Coalition training program; rather, they have been directly hired by provincial authorities, often at the urging of local sheikhs or other tribal elders.

The Iraqi Police Service falls under the Ministry of Interior, led by Minister Jawad al-Bolani. The police force is organized into provincial police departments with district chiefs, as well as into police departments in the major cities. The provincial directors of police (PDoPs) report to the provincial governors and are typically selected at the provincial government level from a pool of candidates validated by the Ministry of Interior, a process that is more art than science. Most provincial, district, and major city police forces include patrol police, station police, traffic police, and highway patrol police. There are some specialized units for forensics and criminal evidence, but in general the forensic and investigative capabilities of the Iraqi Police Service range from quite weak to nonexistent. The provinces also have Emergency Response Units (ERUs) that are similar to SWAT (special weapons and tactics) teams in the United States.¹⁵⁶

Training and equipment for the Iraqi Police Service have improved markedly in the past few years, but significant challenges remain in both areas. Today there are three police academies that train police officers (mainly front-line supervisors such as sergeants and lieutenants) and six regional training centers throughout Iraq that offer a 10-week training course for new police recruits, known as *shurtas*. This basic training for Iraqi *shurtas* includes courses on defensive tactics, patrolling, democratic policing, and firearms, as well as other subjects. Many classes are conducted by Iraqi instructors. Police who have not gone through the Civilian Police Assistance Transition Team training pipeline do typically receive at least 80 hours of very basic training. Recognizing the need to standardize training, the Coalition has a long-term plan to put all police on the MOI payroll through the 10-week course as soon as possible. In addition to the 10-week basic training for *shurtas*, newly recruited police officers attend a 9-month training course at one of Iraq's training academies. The police colleges also offer a three-year advanced course for police officers. Training for the more specialized Emergency Response Units takes place at the Camp Dublin Specialized Training Center in Baghdad.

Although on average the Iraqi Police Service has received more than 80 percent of the basic equipment deemed essential for its mission, many police stations still lack uniforms, weapons, and





¹⁵⁵ Coalition forces have trained just over 164,000 police as of August 2007, according to information from CPATT officials in MNSTC-I. See also Department of Defense, *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq*, March 2007, p. 31 (reports of this title, submitted to Congress in accordance with section 9010 of various Department of Defense appropriation acts, are cited hereafter as 9010 Report).

¹⁵⁶ There is also a national-level Emergency Response Unit in the National Police, containing about 600 personnel.

vehicles, as well as spare parts and ammunition.¹⁵⁷ Iraqi police are authorized to be equipped with two uniforms, a pistol, an AK-47, sets of flexible handcuffs, and individual body armor. Police use high-frequency radios and typically patrol in unarmored Nissan pickup trucks or midsize sport utility vehicles.

Led by a two-star U.S. general, the Civilian Police Assistance Transition Team oversees about 900 senior police advisors and works closely with Coalition Police Transition Teams (PTTs). The Coalition began using Police Transition Teams in 2006 to develop closer partnerships with the Iraqi Police Service and to provide day-to-day advising and mentoring of the Iraqi Police Service. Today more than 220 Police Transition Teams throughout Iraq are working side by side with Iraqi police at the provincial, district, and police station levels.¹⁵⁸ Like the Military Transition Teams, the Police Transition Teams report to Multi-National Corps–Iraq (MNC-I), led by Lieutenant General Raymond Odierno. Police Transition Teams are typically composed of 11 to 15 individuals and are led by military personnel who range in rank from staff sergeants to lieutenant colonels, depending on the level of the station that the team mentors. The deputy leaders are senior international police advisors, and the rest of the team is made up of a mix of military police and civilian police advisors. There are about 1,200 police stations in Iraq, and because the number of Police Transition Teams is not large enough to partner or monitor every station, the Coalition generally has insight into about 25–30 percent of them (for the Operational Readiness Assessment level definitions for the Iraqi Police Service, see Figure 17).¹⁵⁹

Figure 17: Iraqi Police Operational Readiness Assessment Level Definitions

-  **A Level 1 unit is capable of planning, executing, and sustaining independent law enforcement operations.**
-  **A Level 2 unit is capable of planning, executing, and sustaining independent law enforcement operations with ISF or coalition support.**
-  **A Level 3 unit is partially capable of conducting independent law enforcement operations in conjunction with coalition units.**
-  **A Level 4 unit is forming and/or incapable of conducting independent law enforcement operations.**

Source: MNSTC-I

¹⁵⁷ 9010 Report, March 2007, p. 31. See also CPATT, “Iraqi Police Service,” briefing provided in July 2007. While the national average for basic equipment is 80 percent, some provinces in Iraq are still experiencing shortfalls in particular categories of equipment. These shortfalls vary from province to province in size and type.

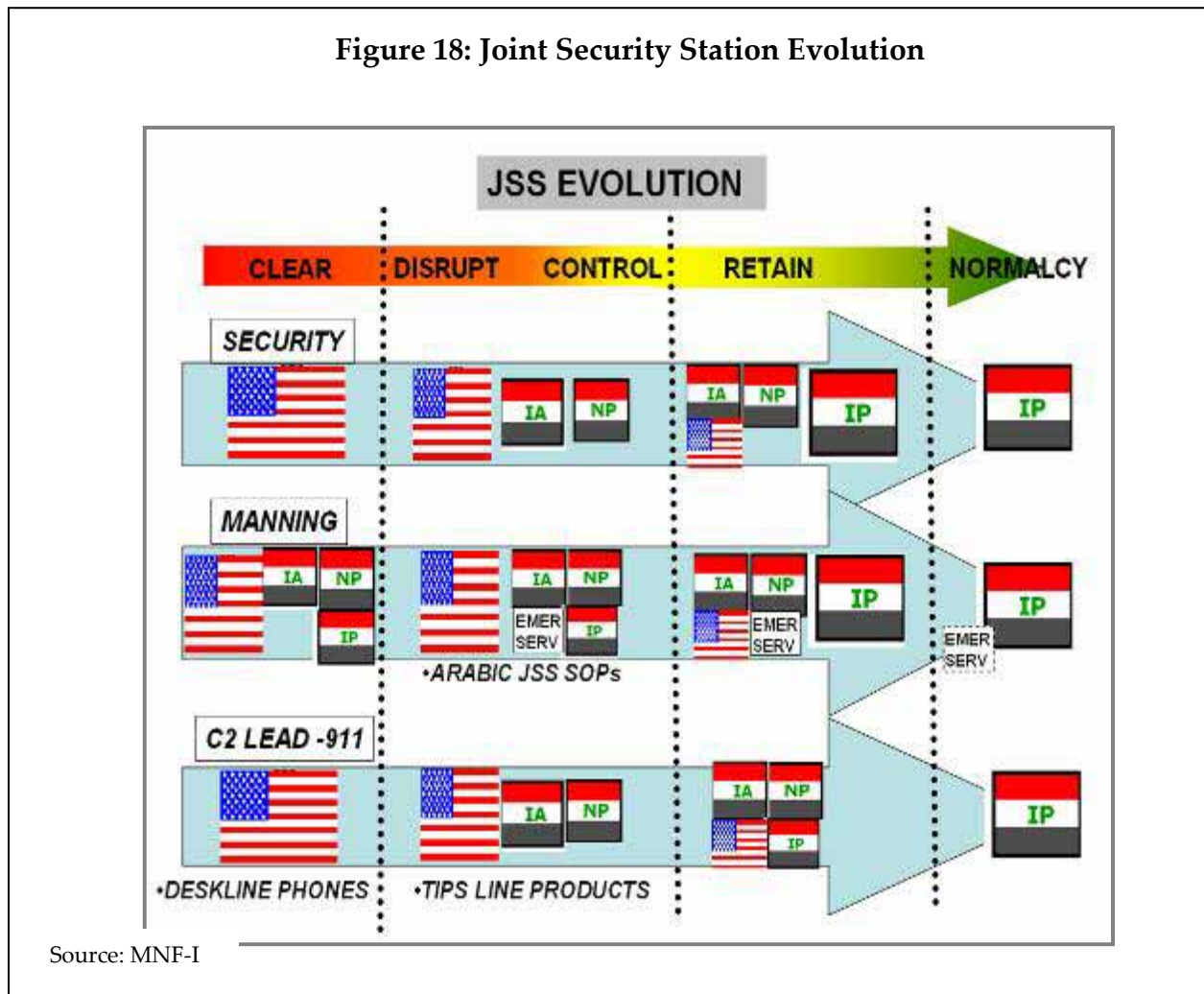
¹⁵⁸ CPATT briefing, July 2007. Currently there are 10 provincial PTTs, 65 District PTTs and 148 station PTTs; see 9010 Report, March 2007, p.32.

¹⁵⁹ CPATT briefing, July 2007. Four hundred of the almost 1,200 police stations are in areas under Provincial Iraqi Control. Of the remaining 800 stations, 200 are too dangerous for PTTs to visit. There are sufficient PTTs to visit just over half of the remaining 600 stations in the country.

Challenges for the Iraqi Police Service

Though 2006 was to be “the Year of the Police,” it is widely viewed as having been less than successful.¹⁶⁰ At the same time, it is clear that in the past year, the Iraqi Police Service has made some progress. The police in the Kurdish region are relatively solid and are providing basic security in the three Kurdish provinces. Not only are they policing their own neighborhoods, they also have opened the police training center in Sulaymaniyah to police recruits from across the country, and the region has accepted internally displaced persons from other parts of Iraq with relatively few ensuing security problems. In Habbaniyah in Anbar province, efforts to recruit police locally are thriving, and the training being conducted at the Habbaniyah regional training center is encouraging. Finally, while the sectarian influences on the police are far greater in ethnic and religiously mixed areas like Baghdad, even there the joint security stations have demonstrated that the police can begin to establish a more meaningful neighborhood presence if Coalition forces provide mentoring and oversight (for a snapshot of the transition plan for Joint Security Stations, see Figure 18).

Figure 18: Joint Security Station Evolution



¹⁶⁰ Perito, “Reforming the Iraqi Interior Ministry, Police and Facilities Protection Service.”

During its assessment, the Commission met with officials at the departments of Defense and State involved in efforts to develop the Iraqi Police Service. While in Iraq, the Commission held discussions with more than 20 American officials and 25 Iraqi officials directly involved with the Iraqi Police Service. Commissioners visited 15 police-related facilities throughout Iraq, including police stations, joint security stations, and a number of police training centers and colleges.

It is clear from the Commission's extensive interviews and site visits that the Coalition and the Government of Iraq (GOI) have invested significant effort and resources into the development of the Iraqi Police Service, but considerable challenges remain in a number of areas—notably, in recruiting, training, equipment, information sharing, investigations and forensics, and the creation of a justice system.

Recruiting

Finding: The emphasis on local recruiting and assignment in the Iraqi Police Service is showing promise in establishing security at the local level; strong personnel vetting processes will remain vital.

The Commission was struck by the fact that there is no shortage of Iraqis who wish to volunteer for service.¹⁶¹ Despite many bombings of police recruit queues, and a suicide bombing at the Baghdad Police College in 2005 that killed more than 27 recruits, Iraqis continue to sign up for the Iraqi Police Service. Their actions, in part, are undoubtedly driven by economic necessity, but it also seems to suggest that these Iraqis perceive a stake in bringing security to their communities.

Local recruiting for the police has emerged as a focal point in the overall development of the Iraqi Police Service, reflecting the professional law enforcement view that policing is most effective when performed at the neighborhood level by people with ties to the local community. The most visible example of this emphasis on local recruiting has been the “Anbar Awakening” movement in the western Sunni stronghold of Anbar province, but it was widespread in each province the Commission visited.

One benefit of local recruiting is that recruits know their communities and are known themselves in turn, but the need for robust vetting efforts to ensure that local police forces are not infiltrated by militia, terrorists, or criminals remains strong.¹⁶² Though the vetting of police recruits is improving, it is still a challenge.¹⁶³ When an Iraqi seeks to join the Iraqi Police Service, as either a shurta or an officer, he now is required to provide a retinal scan and set of fingerprints. The biometric results are then provided to the MOI for a criminal history check. Candidates who have a previous criminal history are reviewed by the MOI Internal Affairs Division. Criminal history checks are more complicated in Iraq than in many other places because of the sizable number of Iraqis who were unfairly charged with crimes by Saddam's regime. If a criminal record appears to be largely a result of political activity or perceived crimes against the state, candidates are given the

¹⁶¹ The large numbers of willing recruits are encouraging, but the Commission also notes that this abundance can contribute to problems in quality if recruits are not sufficiently vetted and trained, as discussed in more detail later this chapter.

¹⁶² Vetting is also critical to ensure that local recruits meet physical fitness and literacy standards.

¹⁶³ Interviews with CPATT officials, July 2007.

opportunity to explain their backgrounds rather than being automatically barred from the police service. In addition to providing the biometric information, police recruits also fill out a questionnaire similar to that used for a basic background check in the United States. If recruits do not have a known criminal record and if they pass the literacy and physical fitness requirements, they must pass a vetting interview before entering the training center or police academy.

***Recommendation:** The MOI and the Civilian Police Assistance Transition Team should work closely with provincial authorities to ensure that established vetting procedures are used consistently throughout the country to combat militia, criminal, and terrorist infiltration of the Iraqi Police Service.*

The MOI now has a process in place to vet police recruits, but many perceive this vetting process as selecting and rejecting candidates along sectarian lines. Infiltration of the police service by militia and other criminal elements is widespread in some areas, particularly in the south. Some but not all of this infiltration can be attributed to the relative immaturity of the Iraqi databases used for background checks and to police departments' having begun only recently to collect biometric data. Efforts by local tribal authorities to generate recruits for the police service are encouraging, but to ensure that this cooperation is beneficial for Iraqi security it is crucial that provincial police chiefs and local commanders be required to emphasize universal and consistent application of established vetting procedures.

Establishing provincial police selection boards with appropriate representation among ethnic and sectarian groups, as well as various aspects of the Iraqi Police Service community, could help formalize this localized vetting process. In particularly difficult cases, it may be appropriate to require candidates to submit to a polygraph test. Even if rarely used, the possibility of having to take such a test may prove a powerful incentive for recruits to be more transparent about their associations and allegiances.

Training

***Finding:** Police training in Iraq is improving, particularly in areas where training is led by Iraqi instructors partnered with civilian police advisors.*

Training for police in Iraq has improved considerably in the past two years, but the progress is fragile. The regional police training center in Habbaniyah appears to be a model for police training in Iraq, as was the training center the Commission visited in Sulaymaniyah. At the Habbaniyah center, the 10-week training class for Iraqi shurtas covered a wide range of basic policing subjects as well as specific challenges, such as the threat of suicide bombers. Iraqi instructors lead most of the training, and the students appear very eager to learn. Progress was less evident at the Baghdad Police College, where most if not all of the training courses are led by American instructors. Not surprisingly, Iraqi recruits appear more receptive and attentive in courses taught by fellow Iraqis, but it is not clear there are sufficient numbers of qualified Iraqi personnel to staff all six regional police training centers and three police academies.

The continuing instability of the security environment in many parts of Iraq creates problems for military and civilian Coalition trainers as they try to do their jobs. In some areas, trainers have difficulty getting to training sites safely, and in a few cases, they have actually come under attack while conducting training. Finally, though the basic training program for shurtas and police officers is now in place, there also is a need for police command staff training, including first-line and mid-level manager training, to develop the leadership cadre of the Iraqi Police Service over the long term.

Recommendation: *The Civilian Police Assistance Transition Team should continue transitioning the lead for training to the Iraqis wherever possible and should consider instituting a “train the trainers” program throughout the provinces to facilitate this process.*

Having Iraqi instructors direct police training courses is clearly the most effective and desirable way to train incoming recruits. The Civilian Police Assistance Transition Team should accelerate its efforts to put Iraqi instructors in the lead at all training centers throughout the country. Establishing a robust “train the trainers” program would facilitate this effort and potentially free up civilian police advisors—who are already in scarce supply—to serve in larger numbers on Police Transition Teams.

Finding: *U.S. military officers rather than senior civilian law enforcement personnel lead the Coalition training effort for the Iraqi Police Service; this arrangement has inadvertently marginalized civilian police advisors and limited the overall effectiveness of the training and advisory effort.*

Because security conditions in Iraq were becoming difficult by 2004, National Security Presidential Directive 36 placed the Department of Defense in charge of the Coalition effort to train the Iraqi police. While it was clear to the Commission that the military has not intentionally sought to minimize the role of civilian police advisors in Iraq, in practice the Coalition’s efforts to help develop the Iraqi Police Service have not been fully effective. Military leaders in the Civilian Police Assistance Transition Team do not have backgrounds in civilian law enforcement. In addition, the military leadership of the Civilian Police Assistance Transition Team changes about once a year; five different generals have commanded the Civilian Police Assistance Transition Team since it was established, and none of them have been military policemen by military occupational specialty. Although the Coalition program to train the Iraqi police has been ongoing for four years, one advisor noted to the Commission that “we have not had four years to implement a training plan; we have implemented a one-year training plan four times in a row.”

Civil policing is fundamentally different from military policing. In civil policing, the police depend on the “consent” of those they police; it therefore requires spending considerable time building relationships with the communities being served. Civil police are trained to use defensive techniques, and to use deadly physical force only as a last resort. In contrast, military police are focused on force protection, intelligence gathering, and support of combat soldiers and combat operations.

Civilian police advisors do not have the lead role in Civilian Police Assistance Transition Team programs. In many cases, the international police advisors working within the Civilian Police Assistance Transition Team feel marginalized and unable to make contributions commensurate with

their experience. This perceived marginalization is even more frustrating for the police advisors because they are better positioned to have influence in the Iraqi culture, which favors age; while most of the international police advisors are either retired or very senior law enforcement professionals, most military officers leading Police Transition Teams are captains or majors who are too young to merit their Iraqi partners' respect.

***Recommendation:** Leadership of the Coalition Police Assistance Training Team and the Police Training Teams should be transferred to senior civilian law enforcement professionals.*

The departments of Defense, State, and Justice should move quickly to establish a revised division of labor for the Iraqi police training program that would enable a senior civilian law enforcement officer with professional experience comparable to that of a two-star general to lead the Coalition Police Assistance Training Team. The level of violence in Iraq dictates that the police training programs remain indivisible from the broader military Coalition effort in Iraq in the near term; at least initially, therefore, the civilian leader of the Civilian Police Assistance Transition Team should continue to report to the Commanding General, Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq.

The key reform needed at this time is to ensure that a senior civilian law enforcement official is providing the day-to-day leadership of Civilian Police Assistance Transition Team activities. A major responsibility for the civilian head of this organization should be to work in close partnership with the MOI on developing and approving a strategic plan for civilian policing that includes the phased transition of the police development process to full Iraqi control.

Consistent with shifting leadership of the Civilian Police Assistance Transition Team from the military to the civilian law enforcement community, Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq should also work with Multi-National Corps–Iraq to put international police advisors in charge of the Police Transition Teams in the field. Today the Police Transition Teams are led by military officers, with civilian international police advisors serving as deputies. In the future, Police Transition Teams should be led by civilian international police advisors, with military police officers serving as deputies. Because many areas of Iraq remain dangerous, Coalition forces should continue to provide force protection for the civilian police training effort and the Police Transition Teams.

As part of the recommendation above, and to assist the overall Coalition effort to train and mentor the Iraqi Police Service, the Commission recommends establishing an international advisory board to monitor the civilian police transition program, track its progress, and make recommendations to the Government of Iraq and the Civilian Police Assistance Transition Team. This advisory board would be composed of senior civilian law enforcement personnel with experience establishing and training indigenous police forces. Not only would this body provide an additional perspective on civil policing issues for the Iraqi government and the Coalition, it also could help ensure that lessons learned from past experiences are properly brought to bear as Iraq continues to develop its police force.

Over the longer term and if the security situation in Iraq improves sufficiently, it would be appropriate to transfer lead responsibility for police training in Iraq out of the Department of

Defense entirely. The departments of State and Justice both have extensive experience with civilian policing and the training of indigenous police forces. Ideally, the lead agency with responsibility for police training in Iraq would be determined after careful study of the utility of making a single agency in the U.S. government responsible for this task. During this study, consideration must be given to the ongoing and future tasks that address the rule of law, such as upgrading Iraqi courts, strengthening the Iraqi prison system, and training an Iraqi marshals system.¹⁶⁴

***Finding:** The number of civilian international police advisors is insufficient to the task of training the Iraqi Police Service.*

When Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq was initially established in 2004 and envisioned training a force of about 135,000 Iraqi police, the Civilian Police Assistance Transition Team requested funding for 6,000 police advisors for that training effort. Congress provided authority and funds to hire only 1,000 personnel. Today there are more than 230,000 police in the Iraqi Police Service, and it appears likely that the force will continue to grow in the foreseeable future. To assist the Ministry of Interior with development and training of this force, the Civilian Police Assistance Transition Team relies on just over 900 international police advisers and approximately 3,500 military personnel serving in Police Transition Teams.

The number of international police advisors currently working in Iraq is simply insufficient to the task. The Civilian Police Assistance Transition Team’s emphasis on placing advisors out in the field wherever possible and on partnering advisors with police at police colleges and training centers is significantly improving the quality of the Iraqi Police Service and is facilitating the transition of responsibility to Iraqi police trainers. However, there are not enough police advisors to establish these partnerships in the depth and breadth that is needed to support the development of a 230,000-person force in a country as large as Iraq.

***Recommendation:** The Coalition – not just the United States – should fund and recruit the requisite number of international police advisors.*

Fielding more international police advisors is essential to the police training effort. The White House and the Department of State should aggressively encourage Coalition partners to fund and recruit at least another 2,000 advisors as part of a broader effort to support reconstruction efforts. To create momentum, the U.S. Congress and Department of State should work closely to fund at least 1,000 of those 2,000 additional police advisors positions, drawing more extensively than in previous years on the very large pool of law enforcement officials in the United States.

***Finding:** Training programs to date have emphasized quantity of police trained over quality of training, thereby undermining the long-term effectiveness of the force in favor of force generation efforts.*

¹⁶⁴ The Iraq Study Group and well-known international policing experts such as Robert M. Perito have recommended that the Department of Justice be made the lead agency. See Iraq Study Group (James A. Baker, III, and Lee H. Hamilton, co-chairs), *The Iraq Study Group Report: The Way Forward – A New Approach* (New York: Vintage Books, 2006), pp. 81–82.

Since 2004, there has been considerable focus on building up the Iraqi Police Service as quickly as possible. Reporting by the Department of Defense on the Iraqi Police Service has emphasized the numbers of police trained by Coalition forces—even after it became clear that neither the Coalition nor the Ministry of Interior knew how many of those Coalition-trained police were remaining in the force. The Iraqi Police Service has grown dramatically as provincial chiefs of police have become more independent from the central government, hiring thousands of recruits directly into the force at the provincial and local levels. In discussions with Civilian Police Assistance Transition Team officials, it was clear that balancing the police force's goals for quantity and quality is a constant struggle. This balancing act is made more difficult by the significant shortage of police force leaders, a result of the passive police culture under Saddam and the more recent de-Ba'athification process. Meanwhile, there are too few international advisors to establish field training officer programs and other similar quality initiatives on a large scale.

***Recommendation:** Particularly in light of a significantly high number of personnel in the Iraqi Police Service who have not yet undergone Coalition training, the Ministry of Interior and Civilian Police Assistance Transition Team should seek higher-quality police recruits and vet them more carefully as they continue to address the training backlog.*

Emphasizing quantity over quality of police recruited and trained is likely to result in a less effective Iraqi Police Service over the long term. The Civilian Police Assistance Transition Team should work closely with the MOI and provincial authorities to establish a plan for putting the more than 65,000 direct-hire police through the 10-week shurta training course. In discussions with Civilian Police Assistance Transition Team officials, Commissioners noted several instances in the past two decades when major urban police departments in the United States responded to short-term security needs by deciding to emphasize quantity of police over quality. In each case cited, the short-term emphasis on numbers resulted in weak vetting and training of recruits, and those weaknesses in turn led directly to major police scandals years later that had lasting negative effects on those police departments and on their effectiveness in their communities. To ensure that quality is the focus in developing the Iraqi Police Service, the Coalition may want to consider a comprehensive audit of the police training program that will clearly establish its breadth, depth, and consistency.

***Finding:** The Iraqi Police Service lacks a formal police leadership academy, a deficiency that impedes leadership development.*

The Commission observed that most if not all Iraqi police leaders are former military officers and have no formal training or experience in civil policing. The absence of any leadership training for these senior officers is significantly slowing the development of a corps of strong, capable leaders in the Iraqi Police Service. This lack of senior leaders with training in civil policing is impeding the effectiveness of the service as a whole. A particular shortfall is the absence of a training program to develop first-line supervisors (generally officers at the sergeant level in the United States). First-line supervisors are invaluable to any police force and provide a vital bridge between senior police leadership and junior officers.

Recommendation: *The Iraqi Police Service should work with its Coalition advisors to establish a formal Iraqi Police Academy that is focused on developing civil policing skills in senior officers and includes a separate first-line supervisor training program.*

A leadership academy focused on providing training for senior Iraqi police officers would complement the existing police academies offering nine-month and three-year programs for entering police officers and would enable the more rapid development of a leadership corps across all levels of the Iraqi Police Service. A program aimed specifically at developing first-line supervisors would be an important part of the curriculum for such an academy and would ensure continuity of leadership from junior officers all the way up to senior police leaders. All such advanced courses should incorporate a clear set of standards that outline what the Iraqi people can expect from the Iraqi Police Service. This set of behaviors will become the foundation of a disciplinary code, based on a fundamental respect for human rights, and will help to promote confidence in the Iraqi Police Service overall.

Equipment

Finding: *The Iraqi Police Service is underequipped to combat the threats it faces and suffers persistent shortfalls in vital equipment.*

There is a stark contrast between the lightly outfitted Iraqi police and the Coalition patrols that move around cities like Baghdad in armored Humvees or Stryker vehicles manned with soldiers outfitted in 60–80 pounds of full body armor and bristling with weapons. Reflecting this contrast in equipment levels, members of the Iraqi Security Forces, including the Iraqi Police Service, are killed at three times the rate of Coalition forces in Iraq. The day the Commission met with the Baghdad chief of police, two policemen had already been killed; and the day before, police in five patrol vehicles were killed. This casualty rate, which would make national headlines in the United States, was clearly not unusual for Baghdad.

Not only are the Iraqi police ill-equipped in the face of heavily armed terrorist groups and sectarian militias—particularly in Iraq’s urban areas—but in many areas they have not received all of their basic equipment and supplies and lack sufficient spare parts to keep equipment in working order. The Baghdad police chief told the Commission that more than 50 percent of his vehicles are non-operational at any given time. At the Habbaniyah police training center, the local police chief and international police advisors told the Commission that requests to the MOI for ammunition for marksmanship training had gone unanswered for months.¹⁶⁵ Because the Ministry of Oil routinely fails to provide required fuel to the Ministry of Interior, many police departments are not able to conduct vehicle patrols. Many of these shortfalls are linked to the lack of administrative capacity in the MOI—particularly the absence of systems to track personnel and their equipment—that was discussed in the preceding chapter. They could be resolved if the MOI established a more capable sustainment system.

¹⁶⁵ Interestingly, one day before the Commission’s visit to the training center, 200,000 rounds of ammunition arrived.

Recommendation: *Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq should work with the Iraqi government to provide adequately armored vehicles and heavier weaponry to the Iraqi Police Service, particularly to police stations in urban areas or other areas where improvised explosive device (IED) and explosively formed penetrator (EFP) attacks are prevalent.*

Culturally, Iraqi police are far more tied to the station house than are American police. To establish security in Iraqi neighborhoods, the shurtas will have to leave the stations and go on patrol. Iraqi police will be more inclined to conduct patrols if they feel protected, and they will be far better protected in armored vehicles than in Nissan trucks. Many mid-level Civilian Police Assistance Transition Team officials and Police Transition Team leaders told the Commission that they had recommended the provision of armored vehicles for the police and expressed uncertainty as to why these recommendations had not yet been acted on. Similarly, as long as Iraqi police are confronting rocket-propelled grenades, mortars, and other forms of indirect fire, Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq should move quickly to find a mechanism to get far more armored vehicles and at least some quantity of heavier weapons to the Iraqi Police Service.

Information Sharing

Finding: *Quality intelligence is central to the ability of the Iraqi Police Service to take the lead for security, but intelligence supporting police operations is limited and information sharing with other security agencies is weak.*

The Iraqi Police Service has its own intelligence system, but it is largely confined to the tactical level. There is very little understanding in the Iraqi armed forces or in the Ministry of Interior (where many senior officials are former military officers) of how to use intelligence effectively to support policing operations. Information sharing between the Iraqi Police Service and other elements of the security forces in Iraq—primarily the Iraqi Army and the National Police—is spotty due to security concerns (fueled by deep and long-standing mistrust) and the absence of a solid information technology infrastructure to enable secure communications.

Establishing Police Transition Teams and Military Transition Teams to work with the Iraqi Army has helped the flow of information from Coalition forces to the Iraqi Police Service, but this information flow is largely internal within each province. There is very little communication between police forces in different provinces, a lack that is particularly troublesome in light of the need to conduct effective counterterrorism and counterinsurgency operations and to track organized and other criminal activity.

The joint security stations in Baghdad and the partnering of Coalition forces with security forces in the provinces have significantly strengthened intelligence operations, but in many areas the general public remain reluctant to cooperate with the Coalition or Iraqi security forces. Tips hotlines are now widely advertised throughout the country, but they are not always widely used. At one joint security station in Baghdad, police and local community leaders highlighted the distribution of tips hotline cards; however, U.S. military police noted privately that most people in the neighborhood were far too fearful of retribution from Jaysh al-Madhi (often referred to as JAM or the Madhi Army) to use the hotline.

Recommendation: *All Iraqi security agencies and the Iraqi Police Service must work together to establish information-sharing systems, practices, and protocols that meet their requirements. The MOI should work with the provinces to establish mechanisms to share information from the national level down.*

The ministries of Interior and Defense, with assistance from the Civilian Police Assistance Transition Team and the Coalition Military Assistance Transition Team, need to work together to develop the means to share intelligence with the Iraqi police in a way that protects operational security but retains information that will be useful to local police. This is not an easy problem to solve, as the United States itself has recently been reminded—the events of September 11 have spurred a renewed focus on the best ways to share information between the military, national intelligence services, and the police. That said, information sharing in Iraq between the military, the intelligence services, the police, and Coalition forces is rudimentary at best. It needs to be significantly developed and strengthened if the Iraqi police are ever to be the main providers of internal security for Iraq.

The MOI and the Civilian Police Assistance Transition Team also need to work with the provinces to establish mechanisms to share information among the provincial police departments. Today it is almost impossible to track criminal activities from one province to another, or to verify trans-province patterns of activity. Iraq will not be able to establish a mature policing system in the absence of mechanisms to share information between provincial departments of police. Creating these mechanisms would also contribute to a sense of a national policing effort in Iraq.

Investigations and Forensics

Finding: *The Iraqi Police Service has extremely weak investigative and forensic capabilities that greatly limit its effectiveness.*

The Commission was struck in its interviews and site visits by the weakness of the Iraqi Police Service's investigative and forensic capabilities. The day before the Commission arrived in Iraq for its first visit, a suicide vehicle bombing in Irbil killed more than 150 people—yet it was not clear in interviews what organization within the Iraqi Security Forces had the responsibility to investigate the crime, or even whether the crime would be investigated at all.

When Iraqi police are on patrol, or are called to a crime scene, they have very little ability or legal authority to secure a crime scene; collect, secure, and analyze evidence; and question witnesses or suspects. A partial explanation for their relative powerlessness is that in the Iraqi criminal justice system, unlike the American criminal justice system, the lead role in criminal investigations is held by the judiciary rather than by the law enforcement community. Moreover, the Iraqi criminal justice system traditionally puts tremendous emphasis on securing a confession in order to convict an individual of a crime, which in turn encourages the use of torture to avoid acquittals. Because confessions are seen as all-important, there is almost no appreciation for the value of physical evidence or corroborating witness statements.

The Civilian Police Assistance Transition Team is working with the MOI to change this cultural bias, but it is a slow process and the need for enhanced investigative training is urgent. The Baghdad Crime Lab was devastated in the wake of the invasion in 2003, but it has rebuilt some of its explosive ordnance disposal (EOD), ballistics, and fingerprint database capabilities with support from the British. In addition, the Baghdad Police College now offers courses in criminal investigation that cover subjects ranging from the basics of securing a crime scene to analyzing physical evidence such as footprints. The criminal investigation training facilities that the Commission visited at the Baghdad Police College and police training center at Sulaymaniyah in the north were comparable to many facilities in the United States. The challenge for the future is clearly going to be putting sufficient numbers of police through these training courses so that the Iraqi Police Service can quickly and dramatically improve its ability to investigate and analyze crime scenes.

An impressive example of the Coalition's efforts to enhance the investigative capabilities of Iraq's civil security forces is the Major Crimes Task Force in Baghdad. Following a wave of high-profile murders in 2004 and early 2005 that essentially went uninvestigated, the U.S. Department of Justice approached the MOI and proposed a joint U.S.–Government of Iraq task force to build an indigenous capacity to investigate and prosecute these types of high-profile assassinations. The task force is composed of 12 American law enforcement agents and 11 vetted Iraqi officers, as well as five translators. One Iraqi investigative judge is assigned to the task force full-time. The Task Force has successfully investigated a number of very high profile murder cases and has broken up a number of covert, unsanctioned interrogation centers. It is highly professional, but it does not have the capacity to handle the volume of cases generated in Baghdad, much less the entire country. Moreover, the high visibility of the task force's investigations has forced all of its Iraqi personnel to live inside the International Zone, and it has become apparent that they cannot safely resettle in Baghdad when their tenure ends.

***Recommendation:** As the Iraqi Police Service continue to develop, Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq should work with the MOI to increase the investigative and forensic capabilities of the police service by expanding the Major Crimes Task Force, increasing the number of crime lab facilities in major cities, increasing training courses for criminal investigators, and establishing an investigator rank within the police service.*

No police force can be effective if it cannot secure and investigate crime scenes. The Ministry of Interior, with support from the Civilian Police Assistance Transition Team, needs to make development of investigative and forensic skills within the Iraqi Police Service a major area of emphasis and must give the police greater authority to conduct investigations. The Major Crimes Task Force should be expanded significantly so that it can at least begin to handle the large volume of cases in Baghdad. Ideally, each province would have its own Major Crimes Task Force, equipped with an automated database to track criminal activity and facilitate information sharing. In light of the substantial history of terrorists using criminal activity to fund acts of terror, the Major Crimes Task Force should also expand its efforts into investigating significant criminal financial activities, as well as murders and other violent crime. Finally, the Iraqi Police Service should create an investigator rank so that it can begin training police to specialize in investigative and forensics skills.

Creation of a Justice System

***Finding:** The Iraqi Police Service is but one element of a broader justice system that is not yet well established in Iraq.*

The Commission did not conduct a detailed assessment of the overall judicial system in Iraq as such an investigation was beyond the scope of its mandate, but interviews made clear that a major challenge to effective policing is the absence of a well-developed judicial system. To establish lasting security in Iraq, the police must be linked to a functioning court and prison system. Police must be able to put suspects in jail while they await trial; sufficient numbers of investigative judges need to be able to conduct investigations thoroughly and without fearing for their lives; and when the legal system succeeds in convicting a suspect, criminals need to be able to serve out their sentences in well-run prisons. Iraq currently lacks this kind of coherent judicial framework. Fundamentally, the rule of law does not yet exist in Iraq. Police and judicial officials often view each other with mutual suspicion, jails are woefully overcrowded, investigative judges and their families are often targets of intimidation and violence, and courthouses are run down and poorly secured.

***Recommendation:** The Government of Iraq, particularly the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Justice, should collaborate to create and implement a framework to enable the rule of law in Iraq. The Coalition should continue to strongly support these efforts.*

Like the Iraq Study Group, the Commission strongly recommends that the Government of Iraq launch a major initiative to establish a functioning judicial system in Iraq, and that the Coalition strongly support that program.¹⁶⁶ A new focus on developing the rule of law in Iraq could build on ongoing Coalition initiatives, such as the relatively new rule of law compound that establishes a “safe zone” for members of the judiciary and their families, as well as the European Union rule of law mission in Iraq (EUJUST LEX) that has trained almost 1,500 senior Iraqi criminal justice officials. Establishing the rule of law will require expanding the number and improving the quality of detention centers, rebuilding courthouses and improving their physical security, training many more prosecutors and judges, providing for the safety of judicial system officials and their families, and establishing mechanisms to root out corruption and political influence in the judicial system.

A Long-Term Vision for Policing in Iraq

***Finding:** The police are central to the long-term establishment of security and stability in Iraq. Today, the Iraqi Police Service is incapable of providing security at a level sufficient to protect Iraqi neighborhoods from insurgents and sectarian violence.*

Although today the Iraqi Army has a considerable role in providing internal security in Iraq, ultimately the Army will focus on external defense of the country and it will be the Iraqi police who will safeguard the country’s internal security. The Iraqi police today are operating in what is essentially a battlefield environment while trying to prepare for the day when more traditional civil

¹⁶⁶ See Iraq Study Group, *The Iraq Study Group Report*, p. 83.

policing is possible. Given this challenge, the Iraqi policing strategy will likely need to follow an evolutionary process, much like the police experience in Northern Ireland.

At the height of The Troubles, the police in certain parts of Belfast were restricted to responding to calls from the public and conducting limited patrols. As many as 16 British Army soldiers were required to support just two police officers on patrol, when under normal conditions these police would patrol alone. Over time, as the security situation began to improve, police officers conducted patrols in groups of two armored vehicles with three officers in each. Later, police could patrol in armored SUVs, and today police officers are starting to patrol on bicycles in what used to be the most dangerous neighborhoods. This transformation did not happen quickly; the British Army only recently ended its support to police activities in Northern Ireland after 38 years of military operations. Reductions in the military presence supporting police activities in Northern Ireland were linked to increased security on the ground, which in turn was the result of increasing political stability over time.

***Recommendation:** The Civilian Police Assistance Transition Team should work closely with the Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Defense to develop a detailed strategic plan to transition primary responsibility for internal security in Iraq from the Iraqi Army to the Iraqi Police Service.*

Working closely with the ministries of Interior and Defense, the Civilian Police Assistance Transition Team should help the Government of Iraq develop a detailed plan to shift primacy for Iraq's internal security from the Iraqi Army to the Iraqi Police Service. This plan should outline core policing principles as well as milestones for the evolution of the policing process. One core principle should be the requirement that an Iraqi police officer is always the face of a patrol for the public, and is in charge of the patrol, regardless of the size of the military escort. Another core principle should be that the military provides a secure platform to enable police to execute their primary function of upholding the rule of law until that secure platform is no longer necessary. This kind of strategic plan would include benchmarks to assess the evolution of policing away from the Army and toward the Iraqi Police Service. Such benchmarks might include the ability to replace Army units with police personnel without loss of control over an area, or the ability to rely on military capabilities only for specialized functions such as helicopter support. Whatever the milestones, a central concept in the policing plan needs to be the establishment of civil policing as the standard. Even if for many years this civil police force can function only with substantial military support, as was the case in Northern Ireland, the concept of a civil police force responsible for public security must be instituted from the outset as a societal norm.

Conclusion: The Iraqi Police Service is incapable today of providing security at a level sufficient to protect Iraqi neighborhoods from insurgents and sectarian violence. The police are central to the long-term establishment of security in Iraq. To be effective in combating the threats that officers face, including sectarian violence, the Iraqi Police Service must be better trained and equipped. The Commission believes that the Iraqi Police Service can improve rapidly should the Ministry of Interior become a more functional institution.

CHAPTER 9: THE NATIONAL POLICE

Despite efforts to reform the Iraqi National Police, the organization remains a highly sectarian element of the Iraqi Security Forces and one that for the most part is unable to contribute to security and stability in Iraq. The Iraqi National Police is almost exclusively Shi'a. Trained for counterinsurgency operations, the force is constituted largely of former soldiers. The National Police suffers from significant quality problems and a lack of clarity about whether it should be a paramilitary or a police organization.

Overview of the Iraqi National Police

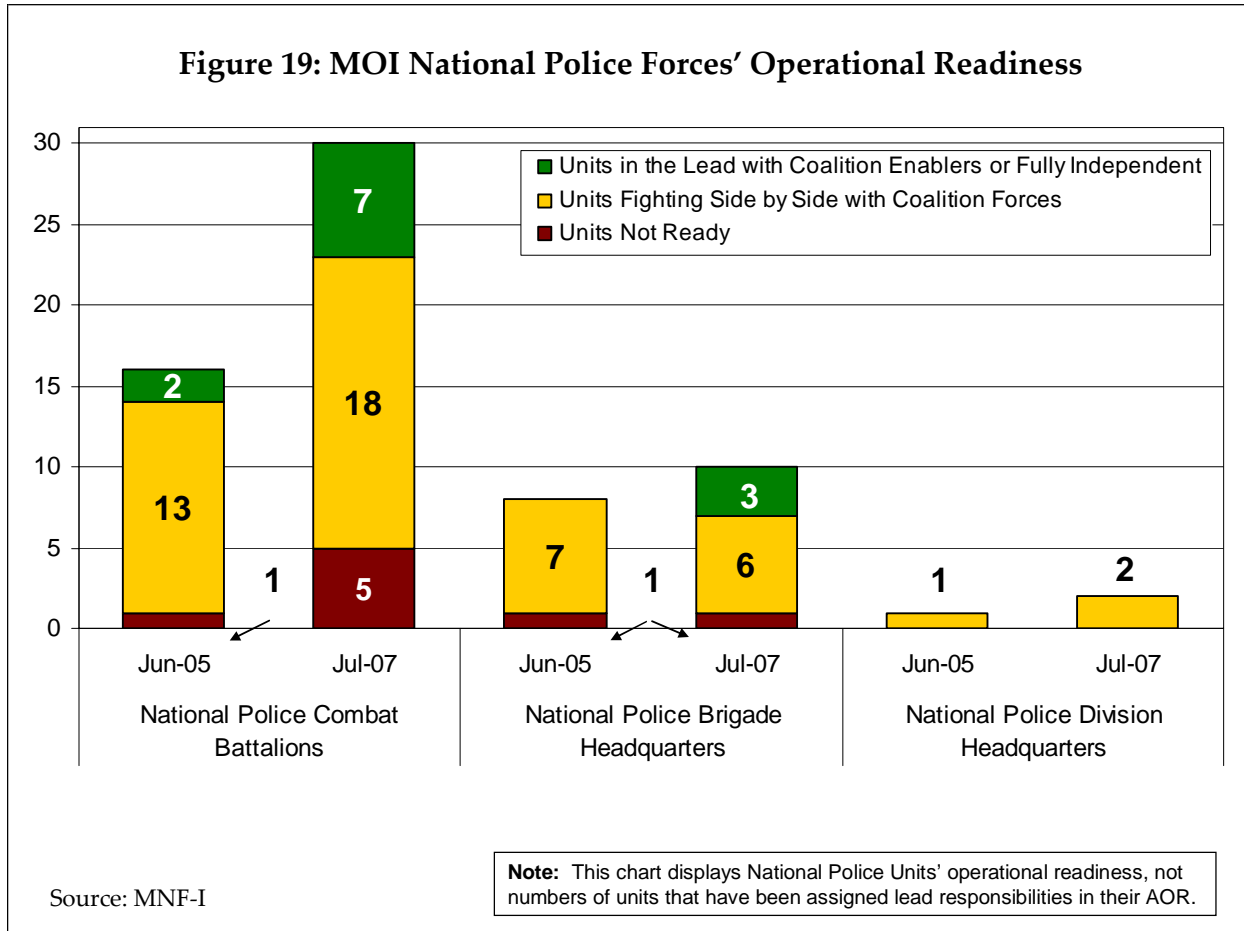
In addition to the Iraqi Police Service, Iraq also has just over 25,000 National Police, organized into two divisions. Intended to serve as a bridging force between the Iraqi Police Service and the Iraqi Army, the National Police is widely viewed as highly sectarian and is mistrusted by the Iraqi Police Service, the Iraqi Army, and the Iraqi public.

The roots of the National Police are varied. As the insurgency in Iraq grew more violent toward the end of 2003, the Coalition decided to create what it called "heavy police units" using former Iraqi soldiers. These public order battalions and the Emergency Response Unit (ERU) were composed largely of Sunnis and reported to the Ministry of Interior (MOI). In September 2004, under the leadership of Interior Minister Bayan Jabr, the MOI created Special Police Commandos that were largely Shi'a units; then in January 2005, the MOI created the 1st Special Police Mechanized Brigade.¹⁶⁷ In April 2006, Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq persuaded the MOI to combine all of these different units into a single organization, the National Police. The Shi'a-dominated Special Police Commandos became the 1st National Police Division, and the public order battalions became the 2nd National Police Division.

Like the Iraqi Police Service, the National Police is part of the Ministry of Interior. The National Police Commander is Major General Hussein al-Awadi, who reports to Minister of Interior Jawad al-Bolani. The National Police today comprises eight brigades organized into two divisions, a single mechanized brigade, a quick reaction force battalion, and a national-level Emergency Response Unit containing about 600 personnel. The Coalition has trained more than 31,000 National Police, but it appears that only about 25,000 are still serving. National Police missions include counterterrorism and counterinsurgency operations, military assistance for civil disturbances, and protection of high-level dignitaries. The original concept for the National Police was to use it as a reinforcement force for the Iraqi Police Service. If an incident in a province could not be adequately addressed by local police, the MOI could deploy a National Police brigade to assist and bring the situation under control. If the National Police and the police combined still could not bring the situation under control, the MOI could request deployment of Iraqi Army forces. In this way the National Police was conceived as being employed domestically in a fashion somewhat similar to

¹⁶⁷ Some experts assert that the various units created by Minister Jabr were made up of fighters from Shi'a militia organizations. See Robert M. Perito, "Reforming the Iraqi Interior Ministry, Police, and Facilities Protection Service," testimony before the House Armed Services Committee, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, 110th Cong., 1st sess., March 28, 2007.

how the National Guard can be used in the United States, but it is not clear whether the National Police in its current form can execute this kind of mission effectively (for its operational readiness, see Figure 19).



The National Police achieved 100 percent of its authorized equipment levels at the end of 2006. National Police personnel are outfitted with small arms, medium machine guns, rocket-propelled grenades, and body armor. National Police units have light, medium, and heavy pickup trucks, as well as sport utility vehicles. In recognition of the need for heavier equipment, given National Police involvement in counterinsurgency operations, plans have been made to up-armor more than 1,300 of the SUVs and trucks.¹⁶⁸ The 1st Mechanized National Police Brigade has approximately 60 M-1117 armored security vehicles, 50 Ukrainian armored personnel carriers derived from the Soviet BTR-80, and 115 South African-made Reva armored personnel carriers. In the future, the National Police aspires to have rotary wing aircraft, cargo planes, more armored vehicles, mortars, mine detectors, and unmanned aerial vehicles, but it is not clear when or whether this equipment will be acquired.

¹⁶⁸ Walter Pincus, "US to Armor Plate Iraqi Police Vehicles," *Washington Post*, December 16, 2006.

Until late 2006, training for the National Police was not standardized, and it focused largely on counterinsurgency and paramilitary operations. In October 2006, the Coalition removed the entire 8th Brigade of the 2nd National Police Division from operations and arrested its officers, who were implicated in the kidnapping of 26 Sunnis and the death of 7 of those individuals. This incident made clear the need for standardized training and reorientation of the National Police. Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq launched the National Police Transformation Program, which in its initial stages included limited vetting and three weeks of traditional police training—the first police training that any members of the National Police had received.

The National Police Headquarters, in cooperation with the Civilian Police Assistance Transition Team, now operates three major training facilities. New recruits undergo six weeks of basic training at the National Police Academy in Numiniyah. Basic, officer, and noncommissioned officer training is offered at Camp Solidarity, located in northern Baghdad. Finally, more specialized training, such as SWAT (special weapons and tactics) training and Emergency Response Unit training, is offered at Camp Dublin, just south of Baghdad. The Civilian Police Assistance Transition Team started a mandatory four-week training course to address concerns about National Police activities after the 8th Brigade was taken out of operations. This process, sometimes referred to as “re-bluing,” is a month-long basic training program in policing skills, such as human rights training and policing in a democracy, as well as tactical training, such as patrolling and checkpoint operation.¹⁶⁹ All nine National Police brigades will have completed the re-bluing training by early October 2007.

Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq and Multi-National Corps–Iraq provide important technical advice, training, and mentoring to the National Police. The Civilian Police Assistance Transition Team plays a key role in National Police training and capacity building within the MOI to support the National Police. Multi-National Corps–Iraq is responsible for 41 National Police Transition Teams, 38 of which are partnered with National Police battalions, as well as 2 teams that are partnered with the division headquarters, and 1 team assisting National Police Headquarters. Fourteen international police advisors work with the National Police. The National Police Transition Teams work with National Police units on a daily basis, providing mentoring and assistance in the field. A major recent focus for the Civilian Police Assistance Transition Team and the National Police Transition Teams has been implementing the first two phases of the four-phase National Police Transformation Program. Under Phase 1, the National Police Transition Teams conducted technical inspections of each of the National Police battalions to identify deficiencies in areas such as personnel accountability, uniforms, fuel supplies, spare parts, and maintenance capabilities. The teams also conducted quick-look inspections and command climate surveys to get a more qualitative assessment of the National Police units.

Challenges for the National Police

The National Police is the subject of considerable concern both inside and outside Iraq. The Commission was struck by the almost universally negative descriptions of the National Police

¹⁶⁹ “Department of Defense Bloggers Roundtable with Colonel Mark R. French,” http://www.defenselink.mil/home/blog/docs/20070730_French_Transcript.pdf.

voiced by Iraqi police, Army officers, and members of the general public. The National Police has been regularly accused of sectarian abuse and illegal activities. Reports of Iraqi security forces' involvement in death squad activities have most frequently been traced to this organization, particularly its former commando units.¹⁷⁰ Members of the National Police were also heavily implicated in the 2005 prisoner torture scandal, and the most recent former Commanding General of Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq, Lieutenant General Martin Dempsey, remarked in late 2006 that “the National Police is the biggest worry, about 20 to 25 percent of them probably need to be weeded out.”¹⁷¹ The Commission also observed that the Coalition’s sheer need for large numbers of security forces to bring the fight to al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) and the militias may be hindering its ability to consider, in partnership with the Government of Iraq, what makes the most sense for the future of the National Police.

Finding: In its current form, the National Police is not a viable organization. Its ability to be effective is crippled by significant challenges, including public distrust, sectarianism (both real and perceived), and a lack of clarity about its identity—specifically, whether it is a military or a police force.

Sectarianism

National Police members are largely recruited from Baghdad and the largely Shi’a southern provinces of Iraq. Efforts to recruit Sunni men into the National Police have generally been unsuccessful. As a result, the National Police force is 85 percent Shi’a, 13 percent Sunni, and 2 percent other affiliations; given its composition and past activities, it is widely perceived as highly sectarian.

In an effort to curb sectarian behavior, the National Police Commander has recently replaced 8 of 9 brigade commanders and 17 of 27 battalion commanders—but serious perception problems remain. As part of the Baghdad Security Plan that began in February 2007, two National Police battalions were supposed to deploy to Baghdad, one from the northern part of Iraq and another from the Tikrit/Samarra region, but ultimately political resistance prevented their transfer.¹⁷²

The Commission heard police chiefs and senior police officials describe the National Police as “very sectarian,” “making daily mistakes with the Iraqi people,” “a burden on the MOI,” and “not a national force at all.” Even with the re-bluing training largely completed, sectarianism in the National Police may still be more than just a perception problem. The MOI is seeking to establish an additional National Police brigade in Samarra; but while the National Police leadership has proposed that its composition be 45 percent Sunni and 55 percent Shi’a, the Office of the

¹⁷⁰ Olga Olikier, “Iraqi Security Forces: Defining Challenges and Assessing Progress,” testimony before the House Armed Services Committee, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, 110th Cong., 1st sess., March 28, 2007, p. 5; available at www.rand.org/pubs/testimonies/2007/RAND_CT277.pdf.

¹⁷¹ U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Armed Services, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, *Stand Up and Be Counted: The Continuing Challenge of Building the Iraqi Security Forces*, 110th Cong., 1st sess., July 2007, pp. 87–88.

¹⁷² CPATT briefing, July 2007.

Commander in Chief (which reports directly to the Prime Minister) has proposed that the personnel be 1 percent Sunni and 99 percent Shi'a.¹⁷³

Quality

The National Police faces many of the same challenges in maintaining quality forces as do the Iraqi Army and Iraqi Police Service. For example, the National Police struggles to ensure that sufficient personnel are present for duty; the existence of ghost payrolling also complicates determinations of present-for-duty numbers at any given time. And like the other forces, the National Police faces a shrinking pool of quality recruits, it lacks sufficient leaders and noncommissioned officers, and it does not have an effective logistics system.

Of the approximately 25,000 National Police authorized by the MOI, on average only about 65 percent are actually present for duty on a given day. While a handful of National Police units are assigned a full complement of personnel, only two of these units have more than 80 percent of their assigned personnel present for duty.

Meetings with Civilian Police Assistance Transition Team officials highlighted additional quality concerns regarding the National Police. The pool of sufficiently high quality recruits is shrinking; identifying literate recruits has become a big challenge. In 2007 the replenishment goal for the National Police is 14,000 recruits—more than half of the entire standing National Police force. Unless this replenishment goal is an aberration, the high percentage of new recruits annually will make it hard to maintain the quality of the National Police over time. The absence of sufficient leaders is another serious concern for the National Police, where officer strength is less than 45 percent of what is authorized by the MOI. Like the Iraqi military, the National Police does not have noncommissioned officers, who could assume some of the leadership responsibilities in the organization. Finally, like the Iraqi military and Iraqi Police Service, the National Police lacks a functioning logistics or supply chain management system. As a result, the National Police struggles to maintain and repair equipment, and its operational readiness is degraded.

Future Missions and Command and Control Arrangements

There is considerable debate within the Coalition and in the broader defense community about the future of the National Police. Should it be a light infantry, a counterinsurgency force, or a civil police force? The National Police has largely been trained as a counterinsurgency force, although the Phase 2 re-bluing training places much greater emphasis on traditional police activities and includes a focus on human rights and the rule of law. At the same time, Phase 3 training under the National Police Transformation Plan is centered on a 90-day course with an emphasis on counterinsurgency operations. Presentations from Iraqis on the future of the National Police tended to emphasize “preventing rebellions,” undertaking counterterrorism operations, and preventing the movement and activities of militias.¹⁷⁴ The lack of clarity surrounding the National Police mission is

¹⁷³ CPATT briefing, July 2007.

¹⁷⁴ Meetings with Iraqi National Police officials, July 2007.

further reflected in how the National Police is equipped. An American general noted that “we ask the National Police to fight as Iraqi Army, but they are equipped like regular police.”

Command and control arrangements for the National Police are part of the broader debate about this organization’s future. Some argue that the MOI needs a set of security forces under its control that can deploy nationwide, but the National Police is not well-embedded in the ministry. There are five deputy ministers in the MOI, one of whom is responsible for security, including the provincial police—but this deputy minister is not responsible for the National Police. The National Police commander reports directly to the Minister, an arrangement that may, whether fairly or unfairly, fuel perceptions of sectarianism. Others argue that the National Police is essentially composed of soldiers, not police, and should be brought under the Ministry of Defense. Senior police officials noted that under the Baghdad Security Plan, the National Police in Baghdad are already under the operational control of the Ministry of Defense.

***Recommendation:** The National Police should be disbanded and reorganized under the MOI. It should become a much smaller organization under a different name with responsibility for highly specialized police tasks such as explosive ordnance disposal, urban search and rescue, special threat action, and other similar functions.*

Although the National Police cannot be effective in their current form, there is a need for the Ministry of Interior to have a security force under its control that can augment provincial police forces when necessary. The MOI, with support from the Civilian Police Assistance Transition Team, should dissolve the National Police and draw on a portion of its former personnel to establish a network of National Emergency Support Teams (NESTs), with one team in each province. To avoid many of the problems with the current National Police, NEST units should be ethnically and religiously diverse and should reflect the population makeup of their provinces.

These NEST teams would focus on providing capabilities to the police forces in each province that are necessary but too specialized in most instances to be maintained at the local level—for example, explosive ordnance disposal; consequence management for chemical, biological, nuclear, or radiological events; urban search and rescue; air support; marine/riverine patrol; and civil disturbance response. To sustain the high level of capabilities associated with these specialized missions, NEST teams would require specialized training and equipment similar to that available to the existing national-level Emergency Response Unit.

The NEST teams, while provincially based, could be deployed nationally if an area of the country needed substantial infusions of specialized capability. If deploying to assist the Iraqi Police Service, provincial NEST teams should come under the authority of the local police commander.

The existing national-level Emergency Response Unit in the National Police contains 600 personnel. The Civilian Police Assistance Transition Team personnel spoke highly of the ERU and indicated that it was a very competent organization. If each province were to have a NEST team of about 300 people, the overall size of the NEST network would be about 6,000 personnel—only 25 percent of the existing National Police force. Former National Police personnel that did not remain as part of the NEST forces could be readily absorbed into the Iraqi Army or the Iraqi Police Service. In light of the sectarian problems that have plagued the National Police, it would be important to

ensure that all former National Police members seeking to transfer to the Iraqi Army or Iraqi Police Service are sufficiently vetted prior to being accepted into either of those organizations.

Conclusion: The National Police have proven operationally ineffective. Sectarianism in its units undermines its ability to provide security; the force is not viable in its current form. The National Police should be disbanded and reorganized.

CHAPTER 10: THE DEPARTMENT OF BORDER ENFORCEMENT

The Iraqi Department of Border Enforcement and the Ports of Entry Directorate are showing uneven but improved capabilities in some locations in Iraq. Although both entities have some effective top-level leadership and have improved Iraqi border security since 2003, considerable challenges remain. For example, the Ministry of Interior (MOI), which oversees the Department of Border Enforcement (DBE), does not have authority over the nation's sea and air ports of entry. In addition, border forts, border fort annexes, and land ports of entry have only modest levels of the basic equipment they need for their personnel and daily operations, and they lack the larger pieces of equipment necessary for inspecting and monitoring the people and cargo crossing the nation's borders. Border enforcement personnel often work in conditions lacking adequate life support services and are without sufficient logistical support to meet requirements. The importance of effective border enforcement to Iraq's overall security necessitates substantial improvements in these areas and a significantly greater sense of urgency on the part of the Iraqi central government and Ministry of Interior, as well as the continued assistance of Coalition Border Transition Teams for the foreseeable future.

Overview of the Department of Border Enforcement

Iraq has 2,268 miles of land border in addition to 36 miles of coastline. Although the Department of Border Enforcement existed during the Saddam era, border security functions at that time were performed mainly by the Iraqi military and the comprehensive network of secret police. At present, the Department of Border Enforcement has a force of only 37,710 personnel to secure the border.¹⁷⁵

In the wake of the 2003 invasion, the Coalition and the Government of Iraq built the new Department of Border Enforcement from scratch.¹⁷⁶ The Iraqi Department of Border Enforcement, which was created under Coalition Provisional Authority Order 26 on August 24, 2003, is part of the Ministry of Interior.¹⁷⁷ Although the MOI is responsible for all border forts, annexes, and land ports of entry, the Ministry of Transportation (MOT) maintains control over sea and air ports of entry. On several occasions, both Coalition and Iraqi officials told the Commission that the reasons for this division of responsibilities have more to do with ministries consolidating power than with advancing the overall mission of border security. Eventually, they agreed, all ports of entry should be under the MOI's domain.¹⁷⁸ Accordingly, in 2008 the responsibility for air and sea ports of entry will shift to the MOI.

The Director of the Department of Border Enforcement is Major General Moshen, whom Coalition officials view as resourceful, effective, and an excellent administrator. Brigadier General Farhoud, who was acting director for the Ports of Entry Directorate when the Commission first

¹⁷⁵ CPATT Support Forces briefing, July 2007.

¹⁷⁶ Department of Border Enforcement and Ports of Entry Directorate overview briefing, July 2007.

¹⁷⁷ CPA Order 26, "Creation of the Department of Border Enforcement"; available at http://www.cpa-iraq.org/regulations/20030824_CPAORD_26_Creation_of_the_Dept_of_Border_Enforcement.pdf.

¹⁷⁸ Department of Border Enforcement and Ports of Entry Directorate overview briefing, July 2007.

visited, is also very highly regarded. He had been replaced by Brigadier General Ali by the time of a subsequent visit. Despite the current strength of its top-level leadership, the department has experienced a high level of turnover. For example, as of July 2007, the Ports of Entry Directorate had functioned under 10 different directors in a 15-month period.¹⁷⁹

The Department of Border Enforcement is organized into five divisions, one for each of Iraq's five geographic regions (as determined by the department). Each division has two to three brigades.¹⁸⁰ Today, there are a total of 12 brigades and 42 battalions, 38 of which are dependent on Coalition support.¹⁸¹ At present, there are 258 Coalition-constructed and supported border forts, 112 department-constructed annexes, and another 47 annexes under departmental construction. The Department of Border Enforcement and its Coalition partners have a five-year plan to bring the total number of constructed border forts and annexes to 723,¹⁸² and to reduce the distance between forts to an average of 6 to 9 miles.

The Department of Border Enforcement generally recruits from local populations near its facilities to man land border crossings. Some current border enforcement agents are former Ba'athist-era military, and most joined the Department of Border Enforcement because its jobs are considered easier and safer than those in the Iraqi Army. The Department of Border Enforcement addressed chronic personnel shortages in 2006 by cross-leveling manpower from existing Department of Border Enforcement facilities and by increasing hires. As a result, staffing levels are now at 98 percent across the department and its facilities, though its personnel are not necessarily equally trained. The Department of Border Enforcement did not establish a comprehensive training program until August 2004, and its training capacity remains modest.¹⁸³

While the Department of Border Enforcement has overall authority for Iraqi border security, the Ports of Entry Directorate is the component within the Department of Border Enforcement that has responsibility for the land ports of entry into the country. The Ports of Entry Directorate was only recently moved under the jurisdiction of the Department of Border Enforcement, but it was transferred without a budget—an oversight that presents a significant problem. Currently, the Department of Border Enforcement is able to provide for some but not all of the Ports of Entry Directorate's needs. There are 17 land ports of entry in Iraq, 12 of which are currently functioning; 4 were closed in February 2007 as part of the enhanced security measures then put into place in an effort to focus border resources on the Iranian and Syrian crossings where they are most urgently needed.¹⁸⁴ One additional crossing at Al Qa'im will open in November 2007. Although some have been closed, other land ports of entry are receiving significant investments. For example, the Ports of Entry Directorate intends to make Al Qa'im on the Syrian border a model border crossing and has invested \$21 million into a construction project to make the facility state-of-the-art.¹⁸⁵

¹⁷⁹ CPATT Support Forces briefing, July 2007.

¹⁸⁰ Interviews with DOD officials, July 2007.

¹⁸¹ Department of Defense, *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq*, June 2007, p. 35 (reports of this title, submitted to Congress in accordance with section 9010 of various Department of Defense appropriation acts, are cited hereafter as 9010 Report).

¹⁸² MNSTC-I Border Forces briefing, July 2007.

¹⁸³ CPATT briefing, July 2007 (staffing levels); MNSTC-I Border Forces briefing, July 2007 (training).

¹⁸⁴ 9010 Report, June 2007, p. 35.

¹⁸⁵ MNSTC-I Border Forces briefing, July 2007.

Today the Department of Border Enforcement has about 87 percent of the basic equipment it requires. In some areas, such as firearms and radios, the department appears to have 100 percent of its needed equipment. At the same time, some required equipment has never been issued at all. Equipping rates for the Ports of Entry Directorate are lower—about 68 percent on average, with particular shortages in patrol vehicles, flatbed trucks, uniforms, generators, and body armor.¹⁸⁶ In addition, major items of equipment, including technology-based systems used to track people and cargo coming across the borders, are insufficient in both quantity and quality, as will be detailed later in this chapter.

Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq works with the MOI and the Department of Border Enforcement to provide training and advice, primarily through advisors from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and Border Transition Teams working in the field. Most Border Transition Teams are composed of about 13 personnel—a mix of military personnel, contractors, and DHS employees. Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq has identified a total requirement for 70 Border Transition Teams amounting to more than 900 people, but the Coalition has not been able to fill this requirement.¹⁸⁷ Today there are just 28 Border Transition Teams distributed across the Department of Border Enforcement’s five geographic regions.

Although Border Transition Teams are stationed throughout Iraq, the Coalition has chosen to focus its 28 existing teams on difficult border crossings and rely on decent relations with countries such as Turkey and Kuwait to ensure sufficient border security in more stable areas.¹⁸⁸ The more successful land ports of entry have Border Transition Teams (also called Ports of Entry Transition Teams) that live and work with their Iraqi counterparts. For example, the port of entry director at Trebil indicated that the Border Transition Team assigned there was critical to their mission, a sentiment echoed by Iraqi officials at the Zurbatiya Port of Entry.

Challenges for the Department of Border Enforcement

The Commission met with several officials in the Iraqi Department of Border Enforcement and the Ports of Entry Directorate, held discussions with many Coalition Border Transition Team advisors, and visited multiple land ports of entry, including Zurbatiya, Trebil, and Walid. Though it is clear that border security is better today than it was in the wake of the invasion, when people and goods flowed unchecked across borders, the Department of Border Enforcement and the Ports of Entry Directorate face significant challenges and are not yet providing adequate border security for Iraq.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁸ Interview with DOD officials, July 2007.

Ministry of Interior

***Finding:** The overall capacity of the Department of Border Enforcement and the Ports of Entry Directorate is undermined by weak MOI capacity. Further, border security commanders have little confidence that the MOI will address their needs and concerns.*

The MOI is often not in control of the land ports of entry under the Ports of Entry Directorate's jurisdiction. The Deputy Minister of Interior for Support Forces, Major General Admed al-Khafaji, told Commissioners that the Kurds, not the MOI, administer the land ports of entry in the Kurdish autonomous region. Even more troubling, in separate meetings with the Director of the Ports of Entry Directorate and Deputy Minister al-Khafaji, it was made clear to the Commission that four land ports of entry in the south are run by militia and are not under MOI control. Furthermore, efforts to install department-assigned directors at those land ports of entry were thwarted by the militia in place. The sea port of entry at Umm Qasr as well as other, smaller sea ports of entry are also reportedly controlled by militia. None of the tariffs collected at these militia-run ports of entry end up in the national coffers, and the Department of Border Enforcement has little insight as to how these ports are administered.

Both the Deputy Director of the Department of Border Enforcement and the Ports of Entry Director also expressed immense frustration with their inability to obtain funding from the MOI for infrastructure development, fuel, ammunition, and personal equipment. Border forts and annexes often experience difficulty getting required fuel and lack reliable access to electrical power. Some border fort commanders pay for fuel out of their own pockets to enable their forces to patrol. In extreme cases, Border Transition Teams have facilitated fuel delivery from Coalition resources. It is common for requests to languish for months at the MOI without explanation, and local commanders are sometimes ignored by the MOI for secular reasons.

***Finding:** The divided responsibility for land, sea, and air ports of entry between the Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Transportation, together with the lack of unity of effort between these ministries, undermines the effectiveness of the Department of Border Enforcement and the Ports of Entry Directorate.*

The systemic weakness of the MOI is exacerbated by the lack of MOI jurisdiction over Iraq's sea and air ports of entry, which are currently controlled by the Ministry of Transportation. It is the Commission's assessment, based on numerous observations and discussions, that the Ministry of Transportation is equally as corrupt and dysfunctional as the Ministry of Interior. As a result, there are no MOI personnel present to even monitor activities at the sea and air ports of entry, which are likely the entry points for foreign fighters as well as equipment for improvised explosive devices and vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices, and are the staging grounds for smuggling operations.¹⁸⁹

Even at those land ports of entry where the MOI is responsible for border security, the lack of definition regarding ministerial responsibilities continues to undermine border security. Land ports of entry, though under MOI authority, involve up to 15 other ministries with border security–

¹⁸⁹ Department of Border Enforcement and Ports of Entry Directorate overview briefing, July 2007.

related functions. When the MOI appoints a port director, for example, that individual typically has no control over the non-MOI ministries and agencies (Finance, Transportation, Customs, Justice, etc.) that also operate at the border crossing. Without unity of command, or even unity of effort between the MOI, MOT, and other ministries, the Ports of Entry Directorate personnel have no choice but to compete for authority with representatives of other ministries.

***Recommendation:** The Government of Iraq should establish clear guidelines to facilitate unity of effort between the MOI and MOT for border security and move quickly to consolidate overall responsibility for border security under the MOI.*

Bringing unity of effort and centralized authority to all Iraqi ports of entry—land, sea, and air—will likely require the direct involvement of the Deputy Minister of Interior for Support Forces, the Minister of Interior, and possibly the attention of the Prime Minister as well. Because the current division of responsibility between the MOI and the MOT regarding land, sea, and air ports of entry has more to do with politics than with a logical, functional division of labor, a solution will not come overnight. In the near term, a good start would be allowing MOI personnel to work with MOT personnel at sea and air ports of entry and to participate in some aspects of inspection and administration.

***Finding:** The MOI has not created standardized concepts of operations, operating procedures, or processes for the Ports of Entry Directorate to apply at Iraq's land ports of entry; each appears to be run according to the initiative—or lack thereof—of the local commander.*

Policies and procedures at land ports of entry often defy logic. For example, at land ports of entry with Iran and Jordan, the contents of trucks from those nations are loaded into Iraqi-licensed vehicles and driven by Iraqi drivers through the land port of entry. Since the invasion in 2003, this downloading at the Iranian border has been conducted on the Iranian side of the border behind berms and fencing that block the view of Iraqi security forces. When the Iraqi trucks subsequently arrive at the Iraqi border, the inspections are cursory at best. Commissioners witnessed officials looking at the documentation provided by the driver and occasionally opening the door of a tractor-trailer, looking inside a van, or climbing over the loaded cargo. However, there was no evidence of cranes or forklifts to off-load and inspect cargo. Although the coordination now occurring between Iraqi and Jordanian land ports of entry will likely result in some improved efficiency, steady gains in effectiveness nationwide are unlikely absent standardized procedures and processes across all land ports of entry.

Equipment

***Finding:** Many land ports of entry have neither the quantity nor the quality of monitoring and detection systems required for border security operations to function effectively.*

The distribution of major security equipment to track people and goods crossing the borders at land ports of entry throughout the five regions is uneven and inadequate. Most land ports of

entry use outdated, inefficient systems to monitor cargo and track people.¹⁹⁰ At many border crossings, even this substandard equipment is either broken or nonexistent, as the Commission observed during visits to Zurbatiya, Trebil, and Walid. Backscatter radars, if assigned, are often inoperable, and there is a dire lack of the forklifts or cranes required to access cargo for inspection. The Commission saw no logical method for apportioning even this outdated equipment. Further, even if adequate and functioning systems were in place to screen cargo and track people, loopholes would remain. For example, there are limited mechanisms in place for the personnel working at the border crossings to share intelligence with local police, so that even a functioning watch list might prove somewhat ineffectual.

Lack of adequate security equipment has an immediate impact on the Ports of Entry Directorate's capacity to function. The Deputy Director of the Department of Border Enforcement estimated that 95 percent of all traffic entering or leaving Iraq by land passes through the land ports of entry. However, only a small amount of all traffic entering these ports of entry is inspected. Port directors do not have adequate technical or mechanical means to inspect a higher volume, and the lack of technological solutions and equipment causes huge backups at the land ports of entry—waiting lines of vehicles from neighboring countries sometimes exceed 10 miles. When commissioners visited the crossing at Walid, the backup from Iraq to Syria was estimated at 15 miles, and Border Transition Team members at Trebil on the Jordanian border estimated the wait to enter Iraq at three weeks.

***Recommendation:** The Coalition should continue to emphasize to the MOI that the territorial integrity of the country relies heavily on the Department of Border Enforcement's ability to secure the borders and that funding for detection and monitoring equipment for those forces should be accorded a very high priority to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of ports of entry security forces.*

The Ports of Entry Directorate requires facilities, infrastructure, and equipment that can better check incoming personnel and cargo at the land ports of entry; its needs include concrete ramps, tarmacs, and space to conduct inspections as well as equipment such as forklifts, cranes, backscatter radar, lighting systems, and metal detectors that will enable personnel to inspect cargo. Indeed, current backscatter systems may not be sufficiently rugged or powerful enough to make an impact at Iraqi border crossings. Gamma-ray scanners such as the VACIS machine—often used in the United States—would be more useful, but also far more costly for the MOI. A senior Ports of Entry Directorate official told the Commission that if Iraqi land ports of entry were equipped with even 10 percent of the equipment used by neighboring countries, the ports of entry would function adequately.¹⁹¹ In addition to direct inspection equipment, the Department of Border Enforcement needs technical solutions such as electronic surveillance to monitor sections of the borders not covered by the department's current forts and annexes. In short, infiltration of foreign fighters, contraband, and weapons through the land ports of entry will likely continue until the necessary equipment, technology, and personnel to screen and inspect a greater percentage of incoming traffic and people are provided.

¹⁹⁰ MNSTC-I Border Forces briefing, July 2007.

¹⁹¹ Meeting with senior Ports of Entry Directorate official, July 2007.

Support Systems

***Finding:** The Department of Border Enforcement lacks sufficient logistics, support systems, and infrastructure to sustain many of its forces in the field.*

Many of the logistics and support system challenges that plague the Army and other elements of the Iraqi security forces are also major problems for the Department of Border Enforcement. Maintaining equipment can be difficult, particularly because in some areas it is simply too dangerous to move vehicles and other large pieces of equipment to repair facilities. Centralization of distribution in the MOI can mean that access to appropriate quantities and types of arms and ammunition is impeded. Weapons are obtained by submitting a request memo to the director general of logistics, and units must pick up the requested goods at the MOI in Baghdad. Obtaining fuel is similarly complex, time-consuming, and bureaucratic. Logistics support exists at the local level with little assistance from the MOI. Port directors and Department of Border Enforcement commanders are generally left to their own devices to support their forces with what little money they receive from the central government.

Finally, living conditions and capacity appear problematic in some border stations. In some regions, there are significant challenges related to poor life support services and lack of area Forward Operating Bases, particularly in the southeast. There is also significant unevenness in quality among the installations at different ports of entry—ranging from adequate infrastructure and staffing at some to a lack of even basic buildings at others.¹⁹²

***Recommendation:** Coalition forces should strongly encourage the Department of Border Enforcement to implement its national Headquarters Distribution Plan while continuing to provide logistical and maintenance support in the near term so that Department of Border Enforcement and ports of entry personnel can accomplish their mission.*

The Department of Border Enforcement needs to establish a logistics system that is driven from the top down, satisfies the requirements of provincial and local commands, and accounts fully for all personal and unit equipment. Central to this system is a mechanism that reduces the need to travel great distances from the Department of Border Enforcement forts and annexes for vehicle maintenance. Another important element of a functioning distribution and support system would be a communications network that links Department of Border Enforcement locations with one another and with the nearest land ports of entry, providing a means to pass intelligence between port directors, Department of Border Enforcement and Ports of Entry Directorate personnel, and the MOI. This system should also be centrally linked to the Iraqi Army and police.

¹⁹² Meeting with senior Ministry of the Interior official, July 2007.

Corruption

***Finding:** Corruption is a serious problem at many land ports of entry. This fact has not yet been adequately addressed.*

Corruption continues to erode the territorial integrity of Iraq by reducing the ability of the central government to legitimately collect import tariffs, by enabling contraband to pass undetected, and by undermining the efforts of the Department of Border Enforcement. The Commission found that even points of entry under Iraqi and Coalition control suffer from pervasive corruption. In addition, the presence of several ministries at a single land port of entry fosters corruption because multiple parties at each land port of entry can maneuver for a cut of a particular type of good (e.g., agricultural commodities). Moreover, it is likely that at least some ministries view border crossings permissively once they receive their own share of kickbacks. In addition, Iraqi and Coalition officials told the Commission that personnel at the border crossings are often discouraged from doing their jobs “too well,” lest they disrupt lucrative smuggling operations that benefit senior-level officers in the MOI. To address these issues, the central government has changed leadership in some areas, taken punitive action in some instances, and at times has even sent delegations to try to address corruption at the border crossings, but these efforts have not been particularly successful.¹⁹³ Coalition forces are trying to stem existing corruption by training all border crossing personnel to a common standard and by using a “train the trainers” approach.

Two additional areas that provide ample opportunity for corruption are the taxation of people and goods entering the country and the transportation of fuel across the border.¹⁹⁴ Border Transition Team members told the Commission that large amounts of tax revenues never make it to the MOI, and in some cases tax revenues that arrive at the MOI are not ultimately deposited in the national treasury.¹⁹⁵ Transport of refined fuel into Iraq is another major source of corruption. The movement of fuel back and forth across borders for refinement and distribution provides ample opportunities for payoffs and fuel “skimming.” Efforts to reduce opportunities for tampering with fuel distribution have been rejected as too expensive, but such dismissals may simply reflect an unwillingness to build new systems that reduce opportunities for corruption.

***Recommendation:** Eliminating corruption will most likely be a generational undertaking in Iraq, but Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq, Multi-National Corps–Iraq, and civilian agencies should work together to try to increase Border Transition Team oversight of Department of Border Enforcement and Ports of Entry Directorate facilities, as well as to develop a standardized training program emphasizing leadership and professional ethics.*

Some short-term solutions can be put in place, such as an increased Border Transition Team presence at land ports of entry and more consistent punitive actions for those involved in corrupt practices at the border. However, corruption cannot be eliminated with a single training course or

¹⁹³ Corruption was so prevalent in Region 2 that the central government sent members of the Commission for Public Integrity to the port of entry; but because the investigators were Shi’a in a Sunni region, little was accomplished.

¹⁹⁴ Interviews with former Coalition Brigade Transition Team leads, June 2007.

¹⁹⁵ For example, one port of entry in May 2006 recorded collecting \$2.3 million in taxes on the basis of a specific amount of traffic across the border. Seven months later, in December 2006, the same port of entry processed the same amount of traffic and collected only \$300,000, with no explanation given for the discrepancy.

the implementation of an isolated new policy. It is a pervasive problem that will require real change within the Department of Border Enforcement and increased capacity—and, more importantly, will—in the MOI to exert central government authority over Iraqi border security.

Conclusion: Iraq's borders are porous. The Department of Border Enforcement suffers from poor ministerial support from the MOI. Border forces often lack the equipment, infrastructure, and basic supplies to conduct their mission. Overall border security is further undermined by the division of responsibilities between the MOI and the Ministry of Transportation. Corruption and external influence and infiltration are widespread. Absent major improvements in all these areas, Iraq's borders will remain porous and poorly defended.

CHAPTER 11. CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

Having responded to our Congressional tasking, the Commission would like to offer some additional thoughts relative to the findings and conclusions of our work. Though we were not asked specifically to comment on such related subjects as Iraqi governance, or the general trends associated with our ongoing national efforts, the three weeks the Commission spent on the ground in Iraq, coupled with the extraordinary access it was provided, enabled Commissioners to arrive at informed opinions with regard to the overall trends on Iraq. This final chapter offers a compendium of our thinking on the subject and provides some answers to the unasked question: “What does this all mean in terms of the future in Iraq?”

Assessment Recap. Though the overwhelming conclusion of the Commission is that the Iraqi government holds the key to the most pressing problem of sectarian violence, the progress of the Iraqi Army is certainly real. It is, however, limited to an increased capability to combat the internal security threats in Iraq. While still lacking in combat support and combat service support capabilities, the new Iraqi armed forces (most especially the Army) show clear evidence of developing the baseline infrastructures that lead to the successful formation of a national defense capability.

The Ministry of Defense is assessed as being one of the better functioning agencies of the Iraqi government. There is evidence to show that the emerging Iraqi soldier is willing to fight against the declared enemies of the state, with some exceptions remaining along ethnic lines. The Commission concurs with the view expressed by U.S., Coalition, and Iraqi experts that the Iraqi Army is capable of taking over an increasing amount of day-to-day combat responsibilities from Coalition forces. While a more advanced ability to function independently remains in the future, there is currently great focus on the requirements and capabilities necessary to achieve this long-term goal.

As the pace of development continues, we wish to underscore that the standard for acceptable Iraqi military readiness should not be “mirror imaged” to the U.S. standard. “Good enough” in terms of Iraqi military capabilities will indeed be “good enough.” This is particularly true with regard to the development of logistics capacities.

The difference between the new Iraqi Army’s ability to meet and overcome internal threats vice being capable of defending Iraq against external aggression is significant and must be well understood. While Iraq’s Army, in particular, is moving toward greater capacity to achieve the former capability, the latter remains a future goal. This is to be expected, given the relatively short timeframe and the enormous task of rebuilding the Iraqi armed forces, which were defeated in 2003 and dismantled by Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) policy directive.

The Commission noted the adverse effects of duplicate chains of command and intelligence structures within the government and concludes that they are redundant and unnecessary. They also fuel the perceptions of mistrust and sectarianism throughout the national defense community.

Offsetting the positive direction of the armed forces and the Ministry of Defense is the less positive trend of Iraqi police development, and the distinctly negative trend found in the Ministry of

Interior. Sectarian partisanship, bureaucratic inefficiency, the Ministry of Interior's reputation for corruption, a near universal rejection of the National Police as currently formed and administered, and a weak and ineffective Department of Border Enforcement continue to impede Iraq's overall progress towards security and stability.

Bureaucratic bungling and ministerial incapacity are often perceived as intentional acts of sectarian bias. Achieving competence and transparency in ministerial operations and decision-making can ease this problem. While there have been some recent efforts by the Minister of Interior to reshape his ministry, much remains to be done.

The most visible sign of police success remains at the local level, where police units are organized along ethnic lines representative of their communities. The Commission believes that it should be acceptable for local police to reflect the ethno-sectarian makeup of the communities they serve. This pragmatic accommodation may be necessary until such time that national reconciliation efforts have succeeded in making sectarian and ethnic associations secondary to a prevailing sense of Iraqi national identity. The makeup of Iraq's police forces is key to bringing stability to the neighborhoods. Unfortunately, the Commission cannot report favorably on the current situation. This is due in large part to the government's failure to achieve consensus in establishing policies and practices that promote national reconciliation.

There are still too few indications that police units, the armed forces, and their respective ministries, work well together in the aggregate. National reconciliation efforts must recognize and seek to address perceptions, whether fact or fiction, that fuel sectarian animosity by improving ministerial capacity, increasing governmental transparency, and establishing more effective lines of communication between the government and all constituencies.

The Commission wishes to underscore the problems and delays associated with the U.S. Foreign Military Sales system, as other official visitors to Iraq have recently reported. Any prolonged delays in providing equipment for which the Iraqi government has already paid directly hampers progress in developing Iraq's military capabilities. The Commission was surprised by the magnitude of the Foreign Military Sales problem in Iraq, and noted the extreme frustration it has caused our military commanders and the Iraqi government. The Department of Defense and the Department of State have been made aware of this problem. Commissioners who have significant career experience with the Foreign Military Sales system believe it is in need of major reform if it is to support our global policies. Foreign Military Sales as a national program is in need of overall reform, a fact well known to those of us who have served previously in senior positions.

The Surge. Much has been said about "the surge" in operations in the Baghdad region. Though not fully recognized, there have always been two principal participants in the implementation of this tactic; the Iraqi Security Forces and Coalition forces. The Iraqi component of the surge began in January 2007, and the U.S. surge contribution became operational in May of this year. The Commission wishes to underscore that the surge should not be viewed as the introduction of a new strategy. It is more accurate to describe it as a tactic supporting our overall national strategy in Iraq.

The surge, if successful, will play an important role in enabling the evolution of our strategy. There are signs of encouraging tactical successes in the Baghdad capital region, which remains the epicenter of enemy focus and of their competing strategy. Unable to achieve conventional military victory, the opposing forces must rely on spectacular bombing attacks on innocent Iraqi citizens, as well as ISF and Coalition forces. As the international media is mostly Baghdad-based, successful attacks receive disproportionate coverage relative to some very real progress achieved in other areas of the country, such as Anbar province. The result, unfortunately, is enemy momentum in the battle of strategic messaging despite the growing popular rejection of terrorist ideology in that region. The people's outrage at al Qaeda's savagery and their realization that it is a movement not of liberation but of occupation, has helped transform this province from being the most violent to being one of the least violent in Iraq. Coupled with the emerging capabilities of the Iraqi Security Forces and the promise of the Coalition's "clear, hold, and build" tactic, there are some encouraging indications of a positive trend in this region.

Strategic Shift. The strategic implications of such continuing successes are encouraging. Coalition forces could begin to be adjusted, realigned, and re-tasked as the Iraqi Army is able to take on more responsibility for daily combat operations. The Commission finds it reasonable to believe that such adjustments could begin in early 2008, depending on the continuing rate of progress of the Iraqi Security Forces.

The circumstances of the moment may continue to present the opportunity for considering a shift in the disposition and employment of our forces. This could be characterized as a transition to a "strategic overwatch" posture. Such a strategy would include placing increasing responsibilities for the internal security of the nation on the ISF, especially in the urban areas. Coalition forces could be re-tasked to better ensure the territorial defense of the state by increasingly concentrating on the eastern and western borders and the active defense of the critical infrastructures essential to Iraq. Existing threats from Syria, coupled with the alarming increase in Iranian presence, and their combined threats to Iraq's stability, more than justify new strategic thinking. Though Iraq's armed forces are currently incapable of countering both internal security missions and the nation's external threats simultaneously, the Commission believes that the Iraqi Army has taken an important first step in proving its increasing competence in combating the nation's internal threats. The next step will come in time.

The Commission concludes that the evidence of Iran's increasing activism in the southeastern part of the country, including Basra and Diyala provinces, is compelling. Left unaddressed, this escalating threat will most certainly have the effect of delaying efforts to resolve sectarian difficulties, provide security and stability in the nation, stimulate economic reform, enhance the rule of law, and fight corruption. The current rise of the Jaysh al-Mahdi in the region is evident, and the Iranian influence over the militant arm of this militia is increasing. It is an accepted fact that most of the sophisticated weapons being used to "defeat" our armor protection comes across the border from Iran with relative impunity.

The Syrian border is more generally associated with the flow of foreign fighters, who are entering Iraq at an estimated rate of 75-80 per month. There are allegations that training camps for these fighters exist in Syria. Any increased Coalition presence capable of bringing focus to the border regions will help reduce the external threats facing Iraq and, the Commission believes, will

cause the two nations in question to reassess their current destabilizing policies and practices. The Commission believes that an “overwatch” strategy, focusing on the border regions, will more comprehensively address the most serious threats facing Iraq. A key to implementing any future plans to assist Iraqi Security Forces lies in maintaining the presence and the critical contributions of the various transition teams assigned by the Coalition to work with, train, and help develop Iraqi Security Force units; they represent indispensable links in our overall effort to transform the ISF.

Perceptions and reality are frequently at odds with each other when trying to understand Iraq’s problems and progress. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the impressions drawn from seeing our massive logistics “footprint,” our many installations, and the number of personnel (military and civilian), especially in and around the Baghdad region. The unintended message conveyed is one of “permanence”, an occupying force, as it were. What is needed is the opposite impression, one that is lighter, less massive, and more expeditionary. The decision to occupy Saddam Hussein’s former palace complex with our military headquarters, while expedient in 2003, has most likely given the wrong impression to the Iraqi population. We recommend that careful consideration of the size of our national footprint in Iraq be reconsidered with regard to its efficiency, necessity, and its cost. Significant reductions, consolidations, and realignments would appear to be possible and prudent.

The Commission believes that it would be important to establish an Iraqi-Coalition Transition Headquarters designed to shape, coordinate, and monitor all aspects of transition efforts. Such a headquarters should be composed of Iraqi and Coalition civilian and military personnel, and should be jointly led by senior civilian authorities. In this manner, momentum of transition could be carefully monitored, recorded, and future plans could be more visible than they are at present. For all of its great work, Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq is not designed to be such a headquarters, though it would certainly play a critical role were one to be established. Visible and consistent progress toward transition ought to be one of the most important efforts of our presence in Iraq.

Provincial Iraqi Control (PIC). To further reinforce the image that we are not “occupiers” in Iraq, the Commission recommends that consideration be given to implementing two additional efforts. The first is to reform the system by which we transfer authority to the Iraqi government. The current process seeks to apply standard criteria to each of Iraq’s 18 provinces in order to determine when total responsibility should be transferred to regional authorities.

To date, 7 out of 18 provinces have been transferred under this system. Upon close inspection however, the Commission was unable to conclude that current metrics for transfer of control were being uniformly applied to each province. Further, the Commission became convinced that the conditions in many of Iraq’s 18 provinces are so diverse that a uniform standard cannot be achieved, to include those pertaining to security and stability. Disparities are most visible when conditions in northern Iraq (Kurdish region) and southern Iraq (Shi’a region) are compared. In the north, three provinces have been transferred to Provisional Iraqi Control and one finds evidence of good governance, stability, security, a functioning police force, a developing economy, and public order. In the south, where four provinces have been transferred to Provisional Iraqi Control, conditions are completely different as evidenced by the rise of the Iranian-influenced Jaysh al-Mahdi, Shi’a-on-Shi’a violence, and excessive militia influence. Recently, as if to underscore the

point, two southern governors have been assassinated. Nonetheless, considerations are under way to transfer Basra to Provincial Iraqi Control. Such a decision would be enthusiastically supported by the British Regional Coalition commander (Multi-National Force–South) who considers his forces to be an impediment to progress in the region.

The Commission believes that each of Iraq's provinces should be transferred to Iraqi control as a matter of policy. The existing PIC system is not an effective vehicle; it is difficult to understand, impossible to apply uniformly, and actually impedes momentum and progress toward goals which should be to cede to Iraqi governmental institutions at the local, regional and national levels as much authority and responsibility as possible.

Such transfer of authority should be supplemented by the necessary levels of mentoring and assistance to ensure success. The Commission has discovered that the Government of Iraq wishes to be given control and responsibility for all of its provinces. Our current policy of determining when a province may or may not be controlled by its own government reinforces the popular perception of the Coalition as an occupation force. This may contribute to increased violence and instability. Granting Iraq full control of its provinces is symbolically important and vests the Iraqi government with the responsibility it needs in order to mature and develop. The workload of the Coalition resulting from such a policy would be unchanged.

The Commission wishes to emphasize that there is a fine line between assistance and dependence. Identifying those areas in which Iraqis can do things on their own, even if in ways different from those we prefer, should be acceptable wherever possible. Additional focus and help in improving the infrastructure of the country, and an increasing capability to ensure general access to basic needs such as water, power, fuel, schools, and public sanitation, will have a large impact in gaining popular support for the central, regional, and local governments.

Status of Forces Agreement. The second recommendation the Commission wishes to offer is that consideration be given to pursuing an agreement akin to a Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) with the Government of Iraq. Appropriately drawn, it would have the effect of codifying our relationship with the host nation, reinforcing its sovereignty and independence, and would be consistent with other such agreements we enjoy with many nations where we have a military presence. Ancillary to such an agreement, we believe that all our bases in Iraq should demonstrate evidence of Iraqi national sovereignty (Iraqi headquarters and national flag). Placing Iraqi units close to Coalition forces, when and where possible, will have a positive effect on the development of national security forces.

Goals and Benchmarks. Before closing, the Commission emphasizes the vital importance of setting strategic goals, benchmarks, and metrics designed to serve the needs of all "stakeholders", including commanders, public policymakers, and the public. Such goals must be part of all planning and implementation efforts and must be among the most visible aspects of our mission to restore Iraq to its rightful and respectable place among nations.

Concluding Thoughts. The Commission wishes to thank Congress for the opportunity to conduct an independent review of the capabilities of the security forces of Iraq. While much remains to be done before success can be confidently declared, the strategic consequences of failure, or even

perceived failure, for the United States and the Coalition are enormous. We approach a truly strategic moment in this still young century. Iraq's regional geo-strategic position, the balance of power in the Middle East, the economic stability made possible by the flow of energy to many parts of the world, and the ability to defeat and contain terrorism where it is most manifest are issues that do not lend themselves to easy or quick solutions. How we respond to them, however, could well define our nation in the eyes of the world for years to come.

At the end of the day, however, the future of Iraq and the prospects for establishing a professional, effective, and loyal military and police service, hinges on the ability of the Iraqi people and the government to begin the process of achieving national reconciliation and to ending sectarian violence. For the time being, all progress seems to flow from this most pressing requirement.