

THE U.S. ARMY CAMPAIGNS IN IRAQ

AND
**TRANSITION
WITHDRAWAL**

THE U.S. ARMY IN OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM AND
OPERATION NEW DAWN, 2009–2011



KATELYN K. TIETZEN-WISDOM

THE U.S. ARMY CAMPAIGNS IN IRAQ

The Surge, 2007–2008

*The Conflict with ISIS: Operation Inherent Resolve, June 2014–
January 2020*

*Transition and Withdrawal: The U.S. Army in Operation IRAQI
FREEDOM and Operation NEW DAWN, 2009–2011*

Cover: Service members salute while the U.S. national anthem plays during a flag casing ceremony that marked the end of Operation New Dawn, at the former Sather Air Base, in Baghdad, Iraq, 15 December 2011.

(U.S. Army)

TRANSITION **AND**
WITHDRAWAL
THE U.S. ARMY IN OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM AND
OPERATION NEW DAWN, 2009–2011

by
Katelyn K. Tietzen-Wisdom

Center of Military History
United States Army
Washington, D.C., 2023

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Tietzen-Wisdom, Katelyn K., author. | Center of Military History, issuing body.

Title: Transition and withdrawal : the U.S. Army in Operation IRAQI FREEDOM and Operation NEW DAWN, 2009-2011 / by Katelyn K. Tietzen-Wisdom.

Other titles: U.S. Army in Operation IRAQI FREEDOM and Operation NEW DAWN, 2009-2011 | U.S. Army campaigns in Iraq.

Description: Washington, D.C. : Center of Military History, United States Army, 2023. | Series: The U.S. Army campaigns in Iraq | In scope of the U.S. Government Publishing Office Cataloging and Indexing Program (C&I); Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) distribution status to be determined upon publication. | Includes bibliographical references.

Identifiers: LCCN 2023014056 (print) | LCCN 2023014057 (ebook) | ISBN 9781959302025 (paperback) | ISBN 9781959302025 (Adobe pdf)

Subjects: LCSH: United States. Army--History--21st century. | Iraq War, 2003-2011--Campaigns. | Military assistance, American--Iraq. | United States--Military policy--History--21st century. | United States--Military relations--Iraq. | Iraq--Military relations--United States. | Iraq--History--2003-

Classification: LCC DS79.76 (print) | LCC DS79.76 (ebook) | DDC 956.7044/342--dc23/eng/20230405 | SUDOC D 114.7/7:IR 1

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2023014056>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2023014057>

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
STRATEGIC SETTING	5
Command Structure and U.S. Forces in Iraq.....	6
The Iraqi Landscape	6
Insurgents and Militias	10
Iraqi Political Challenges	15
Status of Forces Agreement, 2008.....	18
MNF-I: JANUARY–DECEMBER 2009	23
Operating Under the Security Agreement.....	23
American Combat Operations	28
The American Advisory Mission.....	32
Fielding Iraqi Security Forces	37
Leaving Iraqi Cities	42
A New Direction	50
USF-I: JANUARY 2010–AUGUST 2011.....	53
U.S. Command Consolidation	53
Challenges to Iraqi Stability	53
Iraqi Parliamentary Elections, March 2010	57
Operation NEW DAWN.....	60
Iraqis Prepare for American Departure.....	62
Renewed Negotiations	71
The Final Year	72
END OF USF-I: SEPTEMBER–DECEMBER 2011.....	77
Withdrawal Waterfall.....	77
Leaving Iraq	80
ANALYSIS.....	83
APPENDIX.....	90
ABBREVIATIONS	91
THE AUTHOR	92
FURTHER READINGS	93
NOTES.....	95

MAPS

Iraq 2007–2008.....	2
Demographic Makeup, Baghdad, 2006 and 2009	7
MNF-I, January 2009	15
Area Under Kurdish Control, Northern Iraq, 2009.....	27
Mashadani Raid, Fadhil, Baghdad, 28–29 March 2009	31
Leaving the Cities, Baghdad, June 2009.....	46
Islamic State of Iraq, Bombing Campaign, August 2009.....	48
USF-I, January 2010.....	54

Combined Security Mechanism, 2010–2011.....	56
Battle of Palm Grove, Hadeed, Iraq, 10–13 September 2010.....	66
Withdrawal Routes, Iraq To Kuwait, 2009.....	81

CHARTS

Battalion Waterfall.....	79
Base Closures, 2009–2011	81
Casualty/Incident Relationship of Iraqi Civilians, 2009–2011.....	86

ILLUSTRATIONS

Saddam Hussein’s unfinished “Victory over America” palace.....	5
Damaged statue of Saddam Hussein in the Green Zone	8
Sandstorm at Forward Operating Base Falcon	12
General Odierno addresses U.S. and Iraqi Army soldiers ...	17
President Bush and Iraqi Prime Minister Maliki	20
An Iraqi man rides his bike past campaign posters.....	25
President Obama delivers remarks to service members and civilians	26
An Iraqi soldier scans for snipers.....	29
An Iraqi Army Humvee moves into Baghdad’s Fadhil neighborhood	32
M109A6 Paladin at Forward Operating Base Falcon.....	36
The Sons of Iraq meet with U.S. soldiers	38
Peshmerga soldiers “Pass in Review” during graduation ceremonies	43
U.S. Army soldier with 1st Cavalry Division investigates unexploded ordinance	49
American soldiers sprint to a UH–60 Black Hawk helicopter	52
Soldiers from 2d Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, during combined checkpoint training.....	55
Commandos from the 40th Iraqi Army Brigade conduct pre-election Combined Aerial Response Force rehearsals	58
General Odierno relinquishes command of USF-Iraq	62
First Lt. John Powell explains operating procedures for MNF-I, January 2009	64
Iraqi Army soldiers and U.S. soldiers search houses.....	69
U.S. soldiers in formation alongside Iraqi Army soldiers before a base transfer ceremony.....	72

Iraqi soldiers secure an area after coming into simulated
contact with enemy forces 74
S. Sgt. Cale Chaney, section leader, and paratroopers
walk through a field 77
General Austin and Cmd. Sgt. Maj. Joseph R. Allen
case the USF-I flag..... 82
Two Iraqi children in front of an armored vehicle 87
Iraqi Prime Minister Maliki gives a speech 88

INTRODUCTION

Nearly three years after the U.S.-led coalition overthrew Saddam Hussein and the Ba'athist regime, Sunni insurgents and Shi'a militants drove Iraq toward the brink of civil war. To prevent the collapse of the nascent Iraqi government, in early 2007 President George W. Bush ordered the deployment of five additional U.S. Army brigades. This surge campaign sought to protect the Iraqi population, degrade enemy capabilities, and restore stability. Aided by Iraqi governmental and tribal forces, American efforts significantly reduced violence and it appeared that the country was finally on the road to recovery by the fall of 2008. Given the improved conditions, the Bush and Maliki administrations began transitioning security responsibilities to the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF). The United States and Iraq signed a status of forces agreement, which called for all U.S. forces to depart the country no later than 31 December 2011.

The U.S. Army shifted from combat to stability operations by focusing on advising and assisting the ISF. To mark this transition, Operation IRAQI FREEDOM gave way to Operation NEW DAWN in September 2010. The progress of the ISF and security in Iraq remained uneven, however, and the American and Iraqi governments struggled to negotiate the terms of a new agreement that would allow for the continued presence of U.S. forces. Uncertainty over whether they would reach an agreement complicated the advisory mission. U.S. Army units trained their ISF counterparts while carrying out drawdown tasks, including handing American equipment and bases over to the Iraqis. With Washington and Baghdad leadership at an impasse, in October 2011 President Barack H. Obama ordered the withdrawal of American forces. The U.S. Army departed Iraq by mid-December, leaving behind only a small contingent of personnel housed at the U.S. embassy in Baghdad. After eight years of war, the Iraqis were on their own.

With this series of commemorative pamphlets, the U.S. Army Center of Military History aims to provide soldiers and civilians with an overview of operations in the wars after 11 September 2001 and to remember the hundreds of thousands of U.S. Army personnel who served on behalf of their nation. These publications are dedicated to them.

JON T. HOFFMAN
Chief Historian



Map 1

In September 2008, the commander of coalition forces in Iraq, General Raymond T. Odierno, informed his command that they were about to enter a “pivotal period in the campaign for a secure, stable, and prosperous Iraq.”¹ The U.S.-led coalition had overthrown Saddam Hussein’s Ba’thist Regime in 2003. Two years later, sectarian conflict between the country’s Sunni and Shi’a Muslims had pushed Iraq to the brink of civil war. Hundreds of Iraqis were dying daily because of the violence, and the state was on the verge of collapse by the summer of 2006. Moreover, the Iraqi Army and police proved unable to maintain security, undermining American plans to turn over governing responsibilities to Iraqi leaders as soon as possible. While the U.S. considered a new approach, several prominent Sunni tribes, no longer willing to tolerate the actions of extremist Sunni militants, began supporting coalition efforts to defeat the insurgency.

American strategy shifted when President George W. Bush launched the surge campaign and deployed five more U.S. Army brigades to the country beginning in January 2007. Focusing on counterinsurgency, the new commander—General David H. Petraeus—ordered American soldiers to operate in Iraq’s densely populated areas to protect people and root out insurgent groups. With this expanded force and change in tactics, the coalition secured Baghdad, degraded major insurgent groups, and reduced violence across the country. By the fall of 2008, the surge had achieved its major objectives and the U.S. prepared for a new phase in its campaign to secure Iraq.² However, although General Odierno touted the gains of the prior eighteen months, he also warned his command that “our work is far from done.”³

STRATEGIC SETTING

As violence subsided, General Odierno, who had replaced General Petraeus as Multi-National Force–Iraq (MNF-I) commander in the fall of 2008, sought to capitalize on the returning sense of normalcy in Baghdad and the city’s surrounding provinces. The American mission in Iraq shifted from defeating insurgents and militias on the battlefield to stability and reconstruction operations.⁴ These actions included promoting civic engagement, good governance, and reconciliation among the different Iraqi political and ethnic factions. Coalition forces would also continue to advise and assist Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) so that they could assume the task of securing their own country.⁵ The U.S. Army now concentrated on building up the ISF while simultaneously preparing for the eventual withdrawal of American forces from Iraq.



Saddam Hussein's unfinished "Victory over America" palace, near Victory Base Complex
(Maj. Christopher K. Brown)

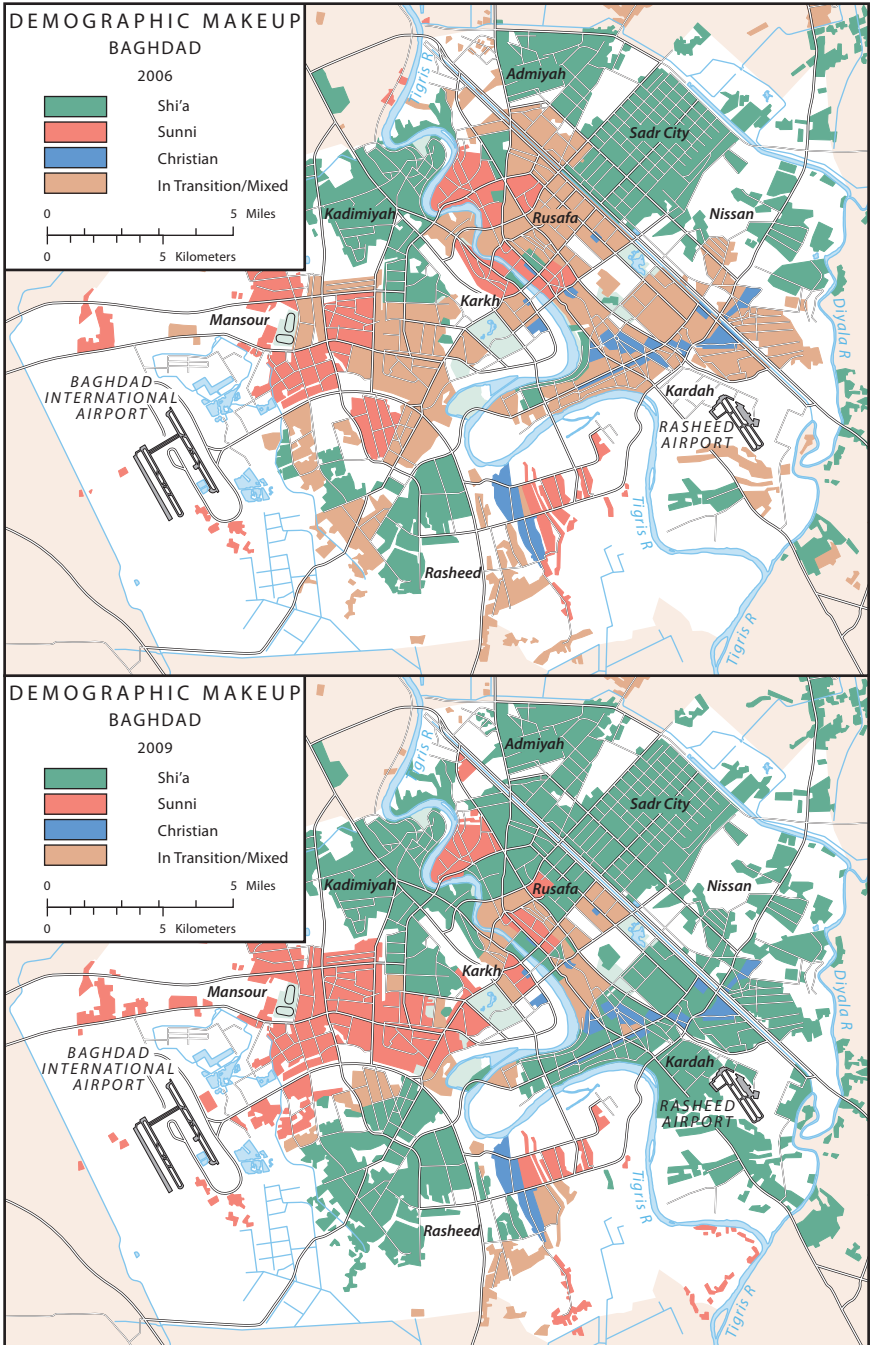
COMMAND STRUCTURE AND U.S. FORCES IN IRAQ

The U.S. military command structure in Iraq remained largely as it had been since before the surge began. MNF-I headquarters was responsible for military strategic planning and decision-making, as well as coordinating with the U.S. civilian mission to Iraq, the Iraqi government, and coalition partners. Rotating Army corps headquarters staffed the next lower echelon, Multi-National Corps–Iraq (MNC-I), which focused on operations. MNC-I divided Iraq into areas of responsibility and assigned each to a division, which then allocated territory to its maneuver brigades. General Lloyd J. Austin III's XVIII Airborne Corps had assumed command of MNC-I in 2008. Coalition special operations forces came under Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force–Arabian Peninsula. Also falling under MNF-I, Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq (MNSTC-I) trained the ISF. Military Transition Teams were a critical part of this effort. Attached to Iraqi forces at the division, brigade, and battalion levels, the teams provided advice and coordinated with U.S. forces.⁶

Throughout 2008, the coalition had begun redeploying units from Iraq without replacing them, bringing down the total force from twenty U.S. brigades (at the height of the surge in the summer of 2007) to fourteen by the end of 2008.⁷ Many of the United States' coalition partners began withdrawing their forces in late fall 2008. In October, the Polish contingent turned over control of Multi-National Division–Central South to U.S. forces.⁸ The South Koreans vacated Kurdistan in early December, ending Multi-National Division–Northeast's humanitarian mission. MNC-I subsequently redrew the battlespace boundaries. Multi-National Division–North (MND-N), expanded to encompass Kurdistan.⁹ Farther south, Multi-National Division–Baghdad (MND-B) assumed control over Baghdad Province, including the southern portions that the Multi-National Division–Center (MND-C) previously held. General Odierno in turn shifted MND-C's boundaries to cover Maysan, Al Muthanna, and Dhi Qar Provinces in anticipation of the withdrawal of British forces from that region.

THE IRAQI LANDSCAPE

Iraq is comprised of three major ethnoreligious factions: Sunni Arabs, Shi'a Arabs, and Kurds. Representing around 20 percent of the Iraqi population, Sunni Arabs had dominated Saddam Hussein's inner circle. As such, they enjoyed far greater privileges



Map 2

than the Shi'a and Kurds under the Ba'athist dictatorship. The Shi'a, constituting around 60 percent of Iraqis, had long suffered repression, intimidation, deportation, and murder under the Ba'athist regime.¹⁰ Sunni populations centered in western Iraq and areas north of Baghdad, whereas the Shi'a largely occupied southern Iraq. Shi'a enclaves filled Baghdad, the capital, but it also had large Sunni neighborhoods (*Map 2*).¹¹

Iraq's Kurds, who account for 20 percent of the population and are predominately Sunnis, reside in northern Iraq.¹² Tensions between Iraqi Arabs and Kurds, stemming from disputes over oil, territory, and governance, date back to the formation of the Iraqi state in 1921. Authorities in Baghdad repeatedly suppressed Kurdish attempts to form an independent state, and Kurdish subjugation continued under Saddam Hussein. His Ba'athist regime unleashed several waves of violence against the Kurds in an effort to solidify Baghdad's control over the population. One such case was the forced removal of Kurds from disputed areas during the *Al-Anfal* (Spoils of War) campaign (1987–1988). Saddam also deployed chemical weapons on Kurdish civilians, most notably on the village of Halabja in March 1988.¹³

The U.S.-led invasion in 2003 upended Iraqi society and created a power vacuum in which each sectarian and ethnic bloc vied for power. In the post-Ba'athist world, however, the majority Shi'a, with American backing, controlled the state.¹⁴ By 2006, a Shi'a coalition led by Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of the Da'wa Party dominated the Iraqi government.¹⁵ Many Sunnis struggled to adapt to this new reality. The coalition decrees on de-'Ba'athification and disbanding the Iraqi Army alienated the Sunni population from the new order.¹⁶ For many Sunnis, resentful of the Shi'a ascendancy and fearful of Shi'a persecution, the growing insurgency against the coalition appeared to offer a chance to



Damaged statue of Saddam Hussein in the Green Zone
(M. Sgt. Joseph L. Myrick)

reclaim positions of privilege and power.¹⁷ Former Ba'athists, Sunni tribal leaders, religious extremists, and foreign fighters—all opposed to the American occupation and eager to impose their beliefs on Iraq—soon organized attacks against coalition forces and Iraqi targets.¹⁸

With Saddam gone, the Kurds aimed to secure a favorable position in the new Iraqi government. Iraq's 2004 provisional constitution preserved the Kurdish Regional Government. That autonomous governing body, first established in 1992 after the Americans and Europeans enforced a no-fly zone over northern Iraq to protect Kurdish refugees, oversaw Iraqi Kurdistan.¹⁹ Of greater significance, coalition authorities also allowed the Kurds to continue to command and deploy their own militia, the Peshmerga (those who face death).²⁰ The Kurds made significant gains in the national government as well. Jalal Talabani, the founder and leader of one of the more influential Kurdish political parties, became president of Iraq in April 2005.²¹ However, Kurdish aspirations threatened Maliki's political survival, and he therefore intended to quash any Kurdish dreams of independence.²²

The surge campaign left the Maliki administration and affiliates in a relatively strong political position. The spring 2008 offensives, where coalition forces regained control over the Shi'a enclaves of Sadr City in Baghdad and the southern city of Basra, neutralized potential rivals and further solidified Maliki's grip over the state.²³ Shi'a militants, leaders, and officials built close connections with the government. In addition, elements of the Shi'a-dominated Iraqi police force continued to act as a state-sponsored sectarian militia. As they had done before the surge, national police units attacked Sunni civilians, driving many out of Baghdad. With the Iraqi state firmly in Shi'a control, Maliki formulated plans to keep his Sunni and Kurdish adversaries in check.

For the coalition, the transition from security to stability operations in the fall of 2008 would not be easy. Vigilantes and insurgents continued to target civilians, security forces, and government officials.²⁴ Sectarianism permeated Iraqi society and politics, dividing families and towns. Whole neighborhoods of Baghdad remained segregated by concrete blast walls built by coalition forces during the surge to impede and control insurgent movements.²⁵

The road to recovery for Iraq also required substantial humanitarian aid. According to some estimates, more than 50,000 Iraqi civilians died from violence between 2006 and 2007. The conflict also triggered a massive refugee crisis. The United Na-

tions recorded that the fighting had displaced more than 4 million Iraqis by 2008. By the Iraqi government's estimate, more than 270,000 families had fled their neighborhoods—including more than 90,000 from Baghdad since 2006—in the wake of ethnic and sectarian cleansing. Fearing reprisals, many Iraqis hesitated to return to their homes.²⁶

Most Iraqis continued to face incredible hardship, having only limited access to basic amenities such as food, healthcare, and education. There was a persistent lack of electricity.²⁷ The conflict severely damaged critical civil infrastructure, including water treatment and sewage centers. In addition, Iraq was experiencing a severe drought, which slowed agriculture production and further depleted its water supplies. These conditions allowed cholera and measles to spread in the fall of 2008. As oil prices declined because of a global recession, the Iraqi government opted to cut more than \$17 billion from its proposed 2009 budget to stem a growing financial crisis.²⁸ As a result, numerous aid and infrastructure recovery projects collapsed.

INSURGENTS AND MILITIAS

By late 2008, the surge had significantly reduced the capabilities of the Iraqi insurgency. But the campaign did not eliminate those enemies altogether. As combat operations wound down in 2009 and 2010, the U.S. Army would confront familiar foes, as hostile factions and militia groups—both Sunni and Shi'a—remained active and lethal.

The most powerful Shi'a militant movement was cleric Muqtada al-Sadr's *Jaysh al-Mahdi* (JAM), or the Mahdi Army. Sadr came from an influential Shi'a religious family with a long history of activism against the Ba'hist regime. His support base centered in Sadr City, a neighborhood in eastern Baghdad. Inhabited by more than 2.5 million predominately poor Shi'a, the district, originally called Saddam City, had been renamed in 2003 for his famous father, Grand Ayatollah Muhammad al-Sadr. Muqtada al-Sadr founded Jaysh al-Mahdi in response to the 2003 invasion, with his forces battling U.S. and coalition troops in Baghdad and Najaf not long after Saddam's removal. His fighters repeatedly clashed with American and British soldiers in Basra as well. JAM became an effective grassroots civil and military entity within Iraq's Shi'a population. Sadr also led a formidable political movement, the Office of the Martyr Sadr, which won several seats in the Iraqi parliament. Not long after American and Iraqi forces battered his militias in southern Iraq in

the spring of 2008, Sadr announced the reorganization of JAM.²⁹ One component of the militia focused solely on civil and political projects, and a new “special forces” unit—called the Promised Day Brigades—operated as the covert military wing of his party.

A mercurial figure, Sadr often tempered his aggressive stance against the coalition so he could build support with more moderate elements in the country. In response, a number of breakaway militias sought to pursue a more radical and aggressive campaign against the coalition than Sadr had permitted. These groups included organizations such as *Kata'ib Hezbollah* (Brigades of the Party of God) under Abu Mahdi al-Munhadis, and *Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq* (League of the Righteous), led by Qais al-Khazali.³⁰ Despite their differences in leadership and strategy, the coalition referred to them collectively as Special Groups.

Both Sadr's main militia and the breakaway Special Groups often acted as Iranian surrogates, receiving weapons, training, and funding from Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps and its international operations contingent, the Quds Force.³¹ A Shi'a-dominated theocracy, Iran had interests in Iraq predating the 2003 invasion. The Iraqi cities of Najaf and Karbala were home to sacred Shi'a mosques, shrines, and schools. The two countries also shared a turbulent history. The 1979 Iranian revolution, which saw the ouster of the U.S.-backed Shah and the establishment of the new Islamic Republic, terrified Saddam and the Ba'athists. In September 1980, Saddam ordered the invasion of Iran, leading to a devastating eight-year war.³²

The 2003 coalition invasion of Iraq altered the geopolitics of the region. Delighted by the elimination of Saddam and the Ba'athist party, Iran wanted to extend its sphere of influence over Iraq and solidify Shi'a domination of the country. It also wanted to prevent Iraq from becoming a western, democratic stalwart or a launching point for future American operations in the region.

Iran's strategy in Iraq focused on removing U.S. forces from the country and securing the political advancement of Iraq's Shi'a, using allied militias such as the Special Groups as its proxies.³³ Iranian-supplied weapons accounted for over 40 percent of U.S. casualties. The most notorious of these were the sophisticated explosively formed projectiles which could pierce armored vehicles. Militants also used flatbed trucks as mobile launchers to unleash rocket barrages against American bases.³⁴

By relying on the Special Groups, Iran maintained plausible deniability for attacks against U.S. forces. Still, Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps found it difficult to exert effective command



Sandstorm at Forward Operating Base Falcon in Baghdad near the end of 2008

(M. Sgt. Joseph L. Myrick)

and control over what were often wayward militants. Whereas some groups, such as Kata'ib Hezbollah, worked closely with the Quds Force and its leader Qasem Soleimani, Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq were not always subservient to Tehran's strategy. Even Sadr had a contentious association with Iran, oscillating from mutual acceptance to outright hostility.³⁵

Infighting between different Shi'a groups led Sadr to suspend operations against American forces in the summer of 2007.³⁶ Although many Special Groups continued their attacks, the overall threat posed by Shi'a groups significantly declined as the surge campaign progressed. As Americans conducted operations against militia commanders and safe havens, many Shi'a militants, including Sadr, fled to Iran. Not everyone escaped, however, as coalition forces arrested and detained some Shi'a leaders.³⁷ The Special Groups also suffered heavy losses during the spring 2008 offensives.

Despite the hammering they received at the hands of coalition forces in 2007 and 2008, several Sunni insurgent groups began reorganizing in the fall of 2008.³⁸ Pouring over Iraq's poorly guarded border, foreign fighters from Syria and other Arab states helped replenish numbers lost in combat. Directly west and separated by vast, open desert, Syria became a major depot of fighters, weapons, and funding for militia networks flowing into Iraq. Bashar al-Assad, Syria's president, hoping to strengthen his regime's position in the region, was eager to take advantage of the chaos following the invasion. Frustrating the Americans,

Damascus hosted and coordinated with Ba‘thist exiles, former Iraqi military commanders and intelligence agents, Al Qaeda operatives, and Shi‘a supporters.³⁹ Thanks to Assad’s blessing, Syria became a safe haven and a staging point to launch subversive operations into Iraq.

Jaysh Rijal al-Tariq al-Naqshabandi (The Army of the Men of the Naqshbandi Order), a Ba‘thist-Sufi militant organization based in northern Iraq, resumed attacks on Iraqi government personnel, U.S. forces, and Kurdish nationalists with improvised explosive devices (IEDs).⁴⁰ *Ansar al-Islam* (Supporters of Islam) also conducted operations throughout northern Iraq. The group, which had emerged in the Kurdistan area in 2001, consisted of a mix of Kurdish and Arab Salafists who endeavored to impose *shari‘a* (Islamic law) in the territory under its control.⁴¹ It quickly aligned itself with Al Qaeda and allegedly received funding and weapons from Osama bin Laden’s organization.⁴²

The main target of the surge—al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI)—also regrouped in the north. Operating primarily in and around Mosul, AQI targeted the city’s non-Sunni and non-Arab communities.⁴³ AQI surfaced in Iraq in October 2004 after Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, a Jordanian jihadist, swore allegiance to Osama bin Laden. Yet, the relationship was anything but harmonious, and AQI’s connection to Bin Laden’s group was only tenuous. Zarqawi’s disdain for Islamic scholars and the Shi‘a ran counter to Al Qaeda’s philosophies and practices. His violent conduct toward fellow Muslims—Zarqawi held the radical view that he and his followers could excommunicate them—deeply troubled the Islamic world. And yet, still eager to support jihad in Iraq and beyond, Al Qaeda could not alienate Zarqawi.⁴⁴

During the summer of 2006, AQI suffered several significant setbacks. In June, American forces killed Zarqawi. Shi‘a militias also repulsed the group’s bid to take control of Baghdad.⁴⁵ In October, Zarqawi’s successors attempted to rebrand AQI by establishing the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI).⁴⁶ However, ISI’s desire for complete independence and refusal to submit to Bin Laden’s control widened the divide between the two groups by the end of the surge campaign. Two new leaders emerged: Abu Umar al-Baghdadi and Abu Ayyub al-Masri. Abu Umar, a former police officer fired by the Ba‘thist regime because of his religious extremism, served as ISI’s “commander of the faithful.”⁴⁷ Al-Masri, an Egyptian, was the ISI war minister and head emir.

Multiple offensives in 2007 and 2008 had badly mauled AQI/ISI and its affiliates, breaking their operational infrastructure in and around Baghdad and their former bases in Anbar Province. As a result, ISI retreated to Mosul. The group focused on restoring its foreign fighters, funding, and weapons networks. Although far from the capital, ISI remained a critical security threat. As Maj. Gen. David G. Perkins—the director of strategic efforts at coalition headquarters—argued, “for the [ISI] to win, they have to take Baghdad. To survive, they have to hold on to Mosul.”⁴⁸

Coalition operations in late 2008 drove many ISI fighters from Ninewa Province’s major urban centers.⁴⁹ But the tense situation in Mosul and the surrounding regions endured.⁵⁰ The violence produced devastating economic consequences as the unemployment rate in Mosul skyrocketed. Militants continued to attack Kurdish targets and government institutions. Suicide bombers linked to ISI targeted police recruitment centers and popular restaurants in the area.⁵¹ Radical Islamists assassinated members of northern Iraq’s small Christian community as well. As 2008 ended, Ninewa Province remained highly volatile. Although November 2008 saw the lowest number of security incidents in Iraq countrywide since 2003, attacks against U.S. forces and civilians continued at a high rate in the north.⁵² The threats came from insurgents and even Iraqi soldiers who attacked their American partners.⁵³

In late 2008, Prime Minister Maliki seized on an opportunity to assert his authority in northern Iraq by attempting to restrain what he saw as a restive Kurdish community. In July, he launched an offensive into Diyala Province. Believing the area already was cleared of insurgent forces, American commanders expressed concern over this decision and warned that Iraqi troops would be moving along “sensitive ethnic and sectarian fault lines.”⁵⁴ The Americans also noted that both Shi’a and Sunni commanders were “eager for a fight against the Kurds.”⁵⁵

Confirming U.S. fears, Iraqi Army units triggered a stand-off with the 34th Peshmerga Brigade in Khanaqin in late August.⁵⁶ General Mark P. Hertling’s 1st Armored Division—responsible for U.S. operations in northern Iraq—deployed American advisers and troops to prevent further fighting. In September, Iraqi political leaders in Baghdad and the Kurdish capital of Erbil ordered their respective forces to stand down, but with limited success. Continued political negotiations and additional American advisers deployed to the area helped avert further



Map 3

altercations.⁵⁷ These actions did not settle these disputes entirely, however. Instead, the Kurds once again questioned their political relationships with the prime minister and accused Maliki of trying to monopolize power.⁵⁸ Maliki, for his part, continued to resist Kurdish demands for territory and oil revenues.⁵⁹ Insurgent activity in northern Iraq further compounded these stressors.

IRAQI POLITICAL CHALLENGES

The Iraqi Army's summer 2008 Diyala offensive concerned the Americans for another reason—Maliki saw it as an opportunity to undermine the Sons of Iraq movement. Since the removal of

the Ba'athist regime, many Sunnis felt alienated from the new Shi'a-dominated Iraqi government. Yet, by 2006, Sunni tribes in western Iraq, especially in Anbar Province, had grown tired of ISI's brutality toward their communities. In the fall of that year, tribal leaders moved to support U.S.-led efforts to remove the insurgents. As a result, men from these tribes soon enlisted in local police forces and formed volunteer security units. These "Awakening" groups also supplied intelligence to coalition forces. The coalition designated these groups the Sons of Iraq (SOI).⁶⁰

However, Maliki viewed the irregular groups as a threat and began weakening them. Maliki focused on Sunni leaders in Diyala in the summer of 2008, a move that jeopardized the success of the surge.⁶¹ General Hertling later recalled that the operations "spiked the sectarian violence" in the area.⁶² Furthermore, the summer offensive indicated that Maliki would sacrifice uncovering insurgent elements in favor of settling political scores, as some raids appeared to target Sunni politicians who were critical of the prime minister.⁶³ Another action that unnerved U.S. commanders and Iraqi civilians was Maliki's takeover of the Iraqi Special Operations Force. By moving loyalists into leadership positions and purging Kurds and Sunnis, Maliki risked transforming the Iraqi Special Operations Force—once the elite unit within the ISF—into a factional "Praetorian guard."⁶⁴

All told, the 2008 summer and fall operations revealed the level to which sectarianism and corruption continued to permeate the Iraqi government.⁶⁵ As the American surge wound down, the Maliki administration co-opted virtually all Iraqi institutions and doled out influential positions and contracts to select Shi'a militia members and politicians. This left a state fraught with financial mismanagement and effectively degraded its civil service. By the fall of 2008, outside observers assessed Iraq as one of the most corrupt states in the world.⁶⁶

Corruption and sectarianism also plagued the Iraqi Security Forces. The U.S. Army's training, advising, and equipping of the Iraqi military played a critical role in American strategy. MNF-I would ensure that the Iraqis could stand independently and maintain all security and governing responsibilities without American help before U.S. forces withdrew from the country (*Map 3*). By December 2008, there were more than 233,000 members of the Ministry of Defense, which included the Iraqi Army, Navy, Air Force, and training support. Another 4,000 soldiers served in counter-



General Odierno, Multi-National Force–Iraq commander, addresses U.S. and Iraqi Army soldiers during his visit to Forward Operating Base Kalsu, 1 November 2008.
(U.S. Army)

terrorism roles. The Ministry of Interior, housing the Iraqi police and border patrol, had more than 380,000 members.⁶⁷

Despite its continued expansion, MNF-I and U.S. ground commanders worried about the reliability of the ISF. Many Iraqi soldiers took bribes from insurgents.⁶⁸ Shi'a officers prone to sectarian tendencies dominated the ISF. Sunni members constantly complained of mistreatment and lack of pay.⁶⁹ Additionally, institutional problems lingered. The force lacked a sufficient number of reliable noncommissioned officers (NCOs) and the Iraqi government continued to bar Sunnis who had been affiliated with the Ba'athist party from service. Iraqi training centers also lacked proper and sufficient equipment and facilities. This, combined with logistical procurement issues, stalled training.

As the year drew to a close, Maliki had reason to feel optimistic. He had cracked down on Shi'a rivals in Basra, reinforced his control over Baghdad, and further marginalized the Sunni community. He also successfully stymied the SOI movement. U.S. commanders had hoped that integrating the SOI into Iraq's security forces would help reconcile Iraqi Sunnis and Shi'a.⁷⁰ In contrast,

the idea of Sunni-dominated militias constituting a formal part of the ISF was anathema to Maliki's vision of the state.⁷¹ As the Americans began transferring authority over SOI groups to the Iraqi government, the prime minister delayed hiring the fighters into the military and police and continued to harass and arrest several Awakening leaders.⁷² The future looked bleak for the Sons of Iraq volunteers as they faced persecution by the Iraqi government and retribution by Sunni insurgents angered at the betrayal of their sect.⁷³

STATUS OF FORCES AGREEMENT, 2008

The U.S. Army's mission in Iraq grew more complicated as American and Iraqi political leaders planned the next phase of the war. Several United Nations Security Council resolutions had sanctioned the presence of American forces in Iraq from June 2003 to 2008.⁷⁴ In the fall of 2007, however, Baghdad signaled that it would not support any further United Nations mandates. Without the United Nations, U.S. troops required a bilateral accord to authorize American actions in Iraq. American and Iraqi negotiators struggled throughout 2008 to agree to a status of forces agreement.⁷⁵ Several significant issues prolonged the discussions. These included the proposed immunity for American contractors from Iraqi prosecution, the extent of Iraqi sovereignty over security operations, and the final withdrawal deadline for U.S. troops.

Domestic pressures in Washington D.C. and Baghdad compounded these problems. Iraqi public opinion polling showed civilians remained highly concerned with the overall security situation and bleak living standards.⁷⁶ The potential security agreement with the United States divided Iraqis as well, with some believing the deal would weaken Iraq whereas others held that it sanctioned foreign occupation.⁷⁷ To undercut any potential rivals, Maliki also had to outmaneuver other Iraqi politicians and religious leaders who were eager to see U.S. forces leave immediately.⁷⁸ Conversely, President Bush was mindful of the upcoming U.S. presidential election. He wanted to provide a "stable footing" for his successor and give the next administration time to negotiate a new withdrawal deadline.⁷⁹

In October, U.S. State and Defense Department officials briefed American lawmakers while Maliki submitted a draft of the proposed deal to Iraq's National Security Council.⁸⁰ In mid-November, the Iraqi Cabinet approved the terms with the Iraqi Parliament ratifying it shortly after.⁸¹ The agreement

contained a legal framework and a timeline for U.S. forces to withdraw from Iraq by the end of 2011. It also barred unilateral American operations. Although it granted U.S. military and civilian personnel immunity from prosecution in Iraqi courts, the protections did not extend to contractors. Moreover, it stipulated that the Iraqi government would be in complete control of all eighteen of Iraq's provinces and Baghdad International Airport by 1 January 2009. U.S. troops would vacate Iraq's cities by 30 June 2009 and consolidate on forward operating bases. Finally, all U.S. military personnel would depart Iraq by 31 December 2011.⁸²

In early November, Americans elected a new president: Illinois Democratic Senator Barack H. Obama. A skeptic of the decision to invade Iraq, the president-elect had framed the war in Afghanistan as one of "necessity," whereas Iraq was a "war of choice." As such, he signaled his intention to refocus American attention on the conflict in Afghanistan. He had also campaigned on plans to withdraw U.S. troops from Iraq on a fixed timetable.⁸³ Although the Bush administration had handled the negotiations, the new Obama administration would now have the responsibility to adhere to the security arrangement.

President Bush and Prime Minister Maliki marked the agreement in a joint press conference on 14 December 2008 in Baghdad.⁸⁴ As the event began wrapping up, Iraqi journalist Muntadhar al-Zeidi stood up and threw both of his shoes at President Bush. Before security could subdue him, al-Zeidi hurled insults at the American president and invoked the memory of the women and children who had been killed during the war.⁸⁵ It was an ominous reminder that the future partnership between the United States and Iraq would remain tense.

Several entities claimed victory with the deal. To strengthen his position for the January 2009 provincial elections, Maliki amplified his calls for a complete American withdrawal. Sadr and other Shi'a militant group leaders now had leverage, because extending the 2011 deadline would jeopardize Maliki's political future. Although Iran had initially believed the agreement granted the U.S. too much control, it now counted down the days for the American departure. Special Group activity throughout the country increased as militants who had been biding their time in Iran began to return.⁸⁶ The Sadrist and the Special Groups started carving out their own spaces in the government and the streets of Iraq.⁸⁷ For the Sunnis, this accord enshrined future Shi'a domination, as many believed that the U.S. had handed Iraq over to the Iranians.⁸⁸



President Bush and Iraqi Prime Minister Maliki sign diplomatic documents in Baghdad, Iraq, 14 December 2008.

(U.S. Army)

For the time being, as evidenced by the downturn in the number of attacks and security incidents, the surge campaign appeared to have turned the tide and quelled the insurgency. Iraqi civilian deaths declined by 80 percent between June 2007 and December 2008. In 2007, 26,000 Iraqi civilians died, but in 2008, that number dropped to 10,000.⁸⁹ These gains continued with the violence diminishing by a further 93 percent in the last quarter of 2008 as compared to the rest of the year.⁹⁰ Coalition deaths also decreased by 88 percent at the same time, and ISF deaths had fallen by 84 percent.⁹¹ Finally, between 1 October 2008 and 31 December 2008, the number of security incidents fell to around 1,100, representing a 90 percent drop from the summer of 2007.⁹² All told, these figures suggested the diminished capacity of insurgent groups.

General Odierno remained hopeful as the new year approached. In a holiday message to the force, the MNF-I commander stated that 2009 would bring “new and complex

challenges.”⁹³ He argued that the upcoming Iraqi elections were possible because of the sacrifices of U.S. service members, including more than 1,200 killed between January 2007 and December 2008.⁹⁴ The new year presented an opportunity to advance security gains and cement the conditions for “lasting stability” in Iraq.⁹⁵ However, the Maliki government had already signaled its vision of lasting stability was not necessarily the same as that of the Americans.

MNF-I: JANUARY–DECEMBER 2009

OPERATING UNDER THE SECURITY AGREEMENT

General Odierno believed four “drivers of instability” still plagued Iraq after the surge: competition over state power and resources; weak government institutions; recurrent extremist activity; and foreign interference from Syria and Iran.⁹⁶ In addressing these factors, the U.S. Army now found its mission in Iraq dictated by new rules of engagement for the Americans. Some of these stipulations—including that only Iraqi authorities could issue search and arrest warrants and that Americans must turn over all criminals and captured persons to the Iraqis within twenty-four hours—limited the U.S. Army’s freedom of maneuver.⁹⁷ Iraqi and American political leaders further constrained the Army’s mission. With Sunni and Shi’a militants subdued, Iraqi Prime Minister Maliki reinforced his grip over the Iraqi state. Maliki was eager for the Americans to depart, and he made it clear that he had no intention of extending any of the deadlines. The new American president, Barack H. Obama, was committed to ending the U.S. combat mission according to the timetable.

In accordance with their new commander in chief’s plans, the U.S. Army prepared to draw down and end American combat operations in Iraq. Accordingly, it pursued three objectives: promoting reconciliation between the Sunnis and Shi’a; eradicating remaining insurgent elements; and training the ISF. By this point, the Iraqi Army had 175 combat battalions and 5 Iraqi Army infrastructure security battalions. There were also five Iraqi Special Operations Force battalions.⁹⁸ However, despite this growth, MNSTC-I assessed that it would take at least eight to twelve years for the ISF to become a “mature and fully self-reliant military establishment.”⁹⁹

The first days of 2009 foreshadowed troubles. On 1 January, U.S. forces turned over to the Iraqi government the command of the Green Zone, a large district in central Baghdad that housed the administrative headquarters for the American diplomatic mission.¹⁰⁰ Prime Minister Maliki immediately handed authority over the Green Zone to the Baghdad Brigade

and Counterterrorism Unit. Comprised of 4,000 elite soldiers, Maliki had pulled the Baghdad Brigade and Counterterrorism Unit out of the Ministry of Defense hierarchy and placed it under his direct authority in April 2007. Since then, the unit had acted as Maliki's private security force, and he used it to intimidate political rivals and reinforce his control over the central government.¹⁰¹

In the face of increasing pressure from Maliki's government, Sunni unity fractured. Political coalitions collapsed, with various Sunni political blocs boycotting parliament or attacking one another.¹⁰² Maliki's administration continued to arrest Sunni leaders across Iraq, accusing them of terrorism.¹⁰³ Meanwhile, insurgents continued to stage attacks. Suicide bombers repeatedly targeted Iraqi and Iranian Shi'a pilgrims in the Baghdad area.¹⁰⁴

Iranian-backed militias and Special Groups ramped up activity in eastern Baghdad as well. American intelligence concluded that Iran had resumed arming, training, and equipping militants tied to Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq and Kata'ib Hezbollah. As the MNC-I commander, General Austin, noted, "we know that some elements that were working with Shiite elements left the country, went to Iran, and came back."¹⁰⁵ Moqtada al-Sadr remained a powerful influence as well, even from exile in Iran.

The January provincial elections—similar to Americans electing their state legislatures—was Iraq's first crucial political test after the surge.¹⁰⁶ Because the Iraqi constitution gave provincial governments considerable power and influence, the outcome would highlight broader Iraqi political trends for the upcoming national elections. Although an Iraqi electoral commission claimed a 90 percent voter turnout, rates reached only as high as 60 percent and as low as 40 percent, depending on the province. The four provinces comprising the Kurdish territory did not participate because of power-sharing disputes with the Shi'a political parties. Maliki's coalition, The State of Law, won 20 percent of the national vote—far short of a majority.¹⁰⁷

Nevertheless, the Americans were pleased with the outcome. Sunnis did not boycott the vote as they had in 2005.¹⁰⁸ Although a few disruptive incidents occurred—for example, authorities discovered some fake voting boxes and arrested a few individuals for bribery—the election went relatively smoothly.¹⁰⁹ Parties that ran on platforms emphasizing improving security and strengthening public services fared better than the sectarian and ethnic parties. General Odierno and Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker released a joint statement celebrating the success,



An Iraqi man rides his bike past campaign posters lining a wall in Baghdad's Adhamiyah District, 28 January 2009, the first day of voting in country's second election since the fall of Saddam Hussein.

(U.S. Army)

“We congratulate the Iraqi authorities, their security forces, and the Iraqi election commission for their careful preparation and administration of these elections. These elections mark a significant milestone for the people of Iraq and are a major step forward in Iraq’s democratic development.”¹¹⁰ For many American officials, the peaceful process justified the surge campaign’s sacrifices and hard-fought gains.

Although President Obama had criticized the prior administration’s policy in Iraq, he kept some key national security team members from the Bush administration in place. Some of these individuals had played important roles in implementing the surge campaign. Citing a desire for continuity at the Pentagon, President Obama retained Robert M. Gates as Secretary of Defense.¹¹¹ In addition, Crocker continued to serve as U.S. Ambassador to Iraq.

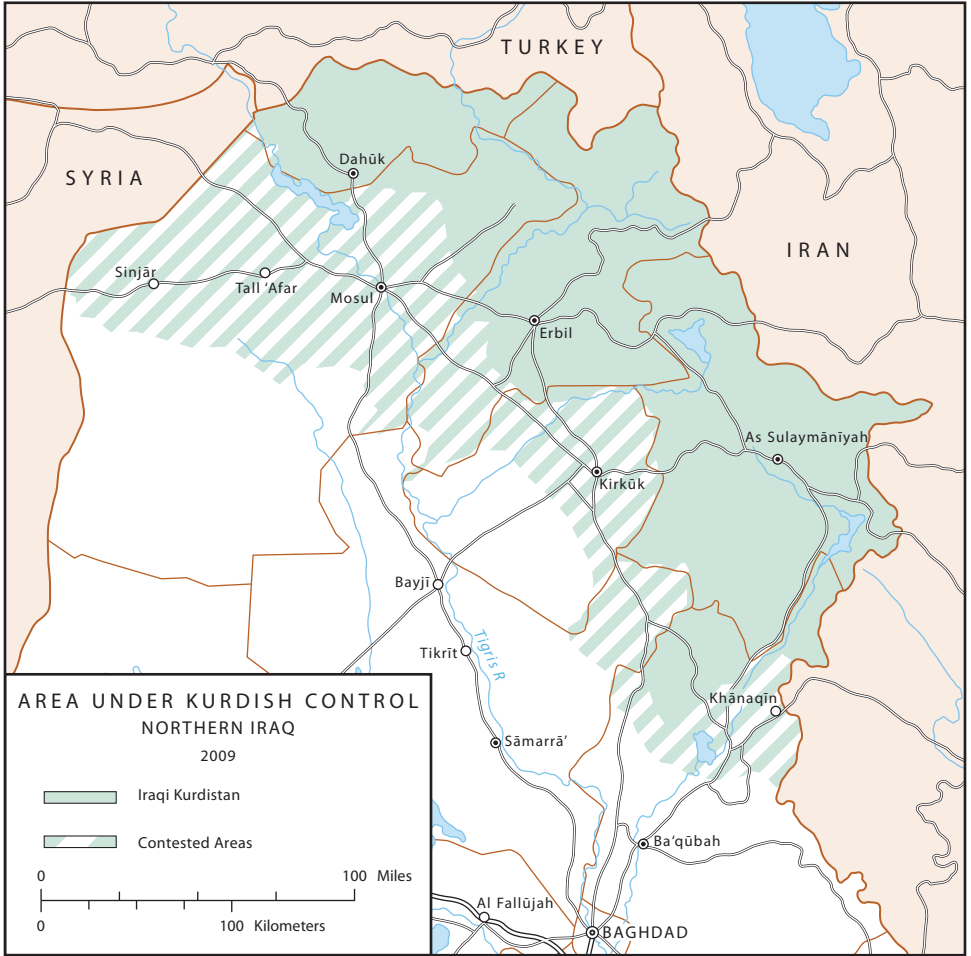
In a speech delivered on 27 February 2009 at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune in North Carolina, President Obama hailed the surge a success. He declared that the United States needed to end its direct role in the war in Iraq, arguing that it was time to reorient U.S. national security policy toward Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the Arab-Israeli conflict.¹¹² The president planned to remove all combat brigades from Iraq by 31 August 2010. At that point, U.S. troops would focus on advising and training the



President Obama delivers remarks to service members and civilians during a visit to U.S. Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, 27 February 2009.
(U.S. Navy)

ISF in counterterrorism and security missions. Proclaiming that Americans would leave Iraq by the end of 2011, President Obama reasoned that the United States was “leaving Iraq to its people” and beginning the “work of ending this war.”¹¹³

More than 140,000 U.S. troops remained in Iraq in February 2009, compared to the 171,000 at the peak of the surge campaign in October 2007.¹¹⁴ In March, as coalition forces continued their departure and the American mission shifted, MNC-I updated its zones of responsibilities. Maj. Gen. Daniel P. Bolger and the 1st Cavalry Division relieved Maj. Gen. Jeffery W. Hammond’s 4th Infantry Division in Baghdad. The United Kingdom handed over its bases in Basra to the Americans at the end of the month, and British combat troops began departing shortly after.¹¹⁵ This left Maj. Gen. Michael L. Oates’s 10th Mountain Division in command of security operations in all of Iraq south of Baghdad. MNF-I later renamed this zone Multi-National Division-South. Finally, U.S. Marines continued to hold Anbar Province under Multi-National Force-West. In February, II Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward) under Maj. Gen. Richard T. Tryon replaced I Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward) under Maj. Gen. John F.



Map 4

Kelly. By the end of the summer, only U.S. troops remained of what was once an international coalition.¹¹⁶

AMERICAN COMBAT OPERATIONS

At the beginning of 2009, ISI still had the capacity to launch attacks against vital strategic and soft targets. A mass casualty incident—detonating an IED at a checkpoint or deploying a suicide bomber into a market or government building, for example—had the potential to simultaneously generate publicity for the group and undermine the civilian population’s faith in their neighbors and government. As one ISI writer later remarked, one strategic target, especially one of political importance, could “show the world and the Muslim community within Iraq that their government is weak and unable to protect even itself—so how can they protect their citizens?”¹¹⁷

As his 25th Infantry Division took over the MND-N area of operations (*Map 4*) from General Hertling’s 1st Armored Division, Maj. Gen. Robert L. Caslen observed that “remnants” of the insurgency remained active.¹¹⁸ ISI staged attacks against politicians, police officers, civil servants, and U.S. forces.¹¹⁹ In addition, it continued infiltrating local police and military units to target U.S. forces.¹²⁰ In early February, a vehicle-borne IED in Mosul killed the commander of the 3d Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, and three soldiers in his security detail.¹²¹ Later that month, on 24 February, an Iraqi police officer opened fire on another police outpost in Mosul, killing an American military police officer, an interpreter, and two Iraqi police officers.¹²² On 2 May, an Iraqi soldier killed two soldiers in the 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, just south of Mosul.¹²³

To address the growing violence in Mosul, the Americans and Iraqis launched Operation NEW HOPE in mid-February.¹²⁴ Their objective was to arrest terrorist suspects, reinforce ISF positions, and conduct search-and-raid operations against insurgent safe houses and weapons caches across Mosul.¹²⁵ The mission included six U.S. battalions from the 25th Infantry Division and the 2d and 3d Iraqi Army divisions, totaling around 5,000 American soldiers and 36,000 ISF troops. The operation apprehended more than seventy suspected terrorists on the first day.¹²⁶ Concurrent with NEW HOPE, the 25th Infantry Division also launched Operation NINEWA RESOLVE to clear neighborhoods outside Mosul.¹²⁷ American and Iraqi units used tactics performed with regularity throughout the surge



An Iraqi soldier scans the rooftops for snipers near a market in Mosul on 23 March 2009.
(U.S. Army)

campaign—clearing areas of insurgent forces, establishing outposts, and building a permanent security presence.

As ISI operatives fled the city, Mosul's residents passed intelligence to U.S. forces. This led to the apprehension of ISI's "Minister of Oil," Ali Mahmud Mohammed, 200 kilometers to the south near Ba'qubah.¹²⁸ Yet, although ISI suffered setbacks, Operation NEW HOPE was typical of U.S. Army actions in Iraq after the surge: short-term success against a weakened but still aggressive insurgency.¹²⁹

Shortly after, in early March, the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, and ISF units moved throughout Balad Ruz in the Diyala Governorate. MND-N intelligence found that ISI cells planned to attack Ba'qubah and Baghdad and terrorize Shi'a farmers and civilians throughout Diyala.¹³⁰ This area had seen coalition forces sweep through in 2006, 2007, and again in 2008.¹³¹ In this operation in 2009, units cleared out insurgent weapons caches, sanctuaries, and bunker complexes.¹³² American and Iraqi soldiers also delivered humanitarian aid to local Iraqi residents.¹³³

Meanwhile, the security situation in the city of Baghdad remained problematic. Suicide bombers struck the capital city in April, killing more than seventy Shi'a pilgrims.¹³⁴ A month later, a suicide bombing took the lives of three U.S. soldiers who were on patrol in Baghdad's Dora neighborhood.¹³⁵ ISI also targeted U.S. service members north of the city. Although the spring saw a significant drop in violence across Iraq, U.S. military personnel still were caught in the crosshairs.¹³⁶

Dealing with Adil al-Mashadani, a prominent Awakening Council leader in Baghdad, highlighted the delicate balancing act the U.S. had to perform to both maintain security and support the Iraqi government. Although the Americans had backed Mashadani during the surge—his militia helped secure Fadhil, a Sunni-dominated neighborhood in eastern Baghdad—both the coalition and Iraqis suspected he previously had supported Al Qaeda.¹³⁷ Mashadani had begun running Fadhil as his own fiefdom. Because of his criminal enterprises, including extorting bribes from local business owners and arming insurgent cells, U.S. commanders began referring to Mashadani as the “don” of Fadhil.¹³⁸

In December 2008, the Iraqi government in early March, had issued a warrant for Mashadani's arrest, accusing him of terrorism and murder. Although these accusations were not unfounded entirely, the Iraqi government's move appeared motivated more by politics than justice. Mashadani was a harsh critic of Maliki and his government's mistreatment of Sunni volunteer fighters. He also threatened to support the insurgency if this treatment persisted. Nevertheless, the Americans considered Mashadani to be a necessary evil. He largely confined his illicit activity to one neighborhood, and he held considerable influence within the SOI community. “You're screwing with something that doesn't need to be screwed with,” protested Lt. Col. Craig A. Collier, commander of the 3d Squadron, 89th Cavalry Regiment. He warned any commander who moved on Mashadani would have a “hornets' nest” on their hands.¹³⁹

Instead of seizing him immediately, General Bolger's 1st Cavalry Division worked with the Iraqi Baghdad Operations Command to squeeze Mashadani out of Fadhil, thereby avoiding a major confrontation (*Map 5*). Informally recognized as Operation *SHWEY SHWEY* (in Arabic dialect, this phrase means slowly and easily), elements of the 3d Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division assisted the 43d Iraqi Army Brigade as it gradually moved into the area to set up checkpoints and search for weapons caches. The objectives were to curtail Mashadani's mafia-style



Map 5

operations and give the Americans and Iraqis a better sense of the tightly compartmentalized neighborhood.

Yet, in late March 2009, Iraqi National Police surprised the Americans and the Iraqi Army and arrested Mashadani. His loyalists reacted violently, trapping elements of the 43d Iraqi Army Brigade within the neighborhood and forcing the 5th Squadron, 73d Cavalry Regiment (Airborne), to quickly muster a rescue team. Additional reinforcements later arrived, including elements of the 9th and 11th Iraqi Armored Divisions. After a twenty-four-hour standoff, Mashadani's fighters surrendered. It would take another week to clear and secure Fadhil completely. The entire operation ended with no American casualties.¹⁴⁰

The Sunni community was outraged.¹⁴¹ Mashadani's media coordinator accused the Americans of betraying the Sons of Iraq.

Other prominent Awakening leaders voiced concerns that this incident indicated that Maliki's Shi'a-dominated government would arrest future Sunni critics. Outlandish accusations made by Iraqi Army Maj. Gen. Qassim Atta that Mashadani was "leading an armed military wing of the Ba'ath party" did little to ease tensions.¹⁴² The Mashadani incident was one of several examples in which the U.S. Army found it increasingly difficult to work with a more assertive Maliki government.

In April, Lt. Gen. Charles H. Jacoby Jr.'s I Corps replaced General Austin's XVIII Airborne Corps as MNC-I.¹⁴³ As the number of American and coalition troops decreased rapidly, I Corps focused on a strategy of working "by, with, and through" the ISF to further secure Iraq.¹⁴⁴ General Jacoby tapped into his division and brigade commanders' expertise and experience. As many of these officers had served in Iraq previously, he granted them significant leeway as they planned and carried out operations in their respective areas.¹⁴⁵



An Iraqi Army Humvee moves into Baghdad's Fadhil neighborhood after two days of sporadic gunfire between Iraqi security forces and Awakening Council militias, 29 March 2009.

(U.S. Army)

THE AMERICAN ADVISORY MISSION

In May 2009, Col. Peter A. Newell's 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, designated as an advise and assist brigade, arrived at Tallil Air Base in southern Iraq.¹⁴⁶ This marked the

first deployment to Iraq of this type of unit, which was a slight adaptation of the already existing brigade combat teams (BCTs). Adding the “advise and assist” moniker signaled the shift in the American war effort from conducting combat operations to focusing on security force assistance.¹⁴⁷ While maintaining their offensive and defensive capabilities, the Army now enhanced the new BCTs with assets that would help American commanders and soldiers arm, train, and equip the Iraqi Security Forces.¹⁴⁸

The Army had begun testing the advise and assist brigade concept before this first official deployment. In June 2008, Col. Philip F. Battaglia’s 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, arrived in MND-C to operate in Dhi Qar, Maysan, and Al Muthanna Provinces for a twelve-month rotation.¹⁴⁹ The unit partnered with the 10th Iraqi Army Division and its four maneuver brigades, three provincial police departments, and the 11th Brigade of the Directorate of Border Enforcement.¹⁵⁰ Lessons derived from this arrangement combined with the newly released Field Manual 3–07.1—which codified how brigade combat teams should perform within the framework of a security assistance mission—helped shape how the Army deployed the advise and assist brigades.¹⁵¹ Colonel Newell’s brigade relieved Colonel Battaglia’s unit.

Advisers trained and assisted their Iraqi counterparts—the army, police, and border forces—in intelligence acquisition, air and logistics support, ordnance disposal, command and control, and operational planning. Using Army funding, the brigades also continued to work on civil capacity and infrastructure projects that provided better access to healthcare, water, sewage, and power. Several commanders focused on plans that produced a “tangible success,” something that best served the local community and that made the Iraqi Security Forces look capable in the eyes of the civilians.¹⁵²

This shift toward an advisory mission, however, did not mean that these units would forsake conducting stability operations.¹⁵³ As Colonel Newell argued, “we absolutely trained and certified [our combat skills] before we made the significant transition to supporting, advising, and assisting operations.”¹⁵⁴ These brigades also maintained their “capacity for full spectrum operations” to provide force protection, secure the Iraqi population, and degrade insurgent elements when needed.¹⁵⁵

Serving in an advise and assist brigade required a major shift in mindset for U.S. service members. Many of those serving in the units had already seen combat in different parts of the country

over multiple tours. This was a different undertaking, however. The combat mission was technically over, and it was time to help the Iraqi Security Forces carry out their own security operations. To do so, the Americans needed to step aside and encourage the Iraqis to find their own solutions to their problems. More importantly, no matter their military occupational specialty or place within the chain of command, all U.S. Army soldiers were to act as advisers.¹⁵⁶

As American combat units had done previously, advise and assist brigades coordinated activities with various supporting entities operating in their area of responsibility. Some of these were already on the ground before the brigade arrived in the country. They included interagency groups such as U.S. special operations forces, U.S. State Department officials, and Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs). A mix of civilian, diplomatic, and military officials, the PRTs worked to improve Iraqi governance and civil capacity. In some instances, the U.S. Army collaborated with foreign-led PRTs; such was the case for the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, and its Italian PRT partner in southern Iraq.¹⁵⁷

Other tailored for the operating environment augmented the advisory mission. They included, among others, human terrain experts, civil affairs specialists, and psychological operations teams. These elements, however, only were given to a unit because of the upcoming mission and therefore were not considered organic—or a permanent component—to the brigade.

As the Army mission shifted to advising the ISF, more emphasis was placed on the advise and assist brigades to bolster the efforts of the Stability Transition Teams (STTs). Also referred to as Military Transition Teams, which had been utilized in the war previously, STTs consisted of a mix of approximately fourteen field grade officers and NCOs, depending on the area of operations. The Army designed these teams for the task of advising foreign military and local security forces.¹⁵⁸ Embedded within Iraqi units, STTs granted the ISF access to American assets.¹⁵⁹ American brigades and the STTs worked with their local partners to devise and perform a wide array of exercises and training—such as combative drills, weapons proficiency instruction, medical evacuations, and planning procedures—at the behest of Iraqi commanders.¹⁶⁰

These stability teams were either attached to a brigade before deployment, undergoing training and integration, or already on location before the change of command.¹⁶¹ While

advisors had their own taskings, they often had to rely on their assigned American brigade or battalion for resources. This included weapons, technology, local security, mobility, and manpower. The maneuver commander would then often allocate and rotate platoons or companies to the advisor team so that they may complete their mission. Yet while the STTs operated independently, they still fell under the purview and protection of the local advise and assist unit, and the officer in charge of the advisory mission ultimately reported to the advise and assist brigade commander.¹⁶² This created two parallel but complementary chains of command: the maneuver commander and the advisory leader.¹⁶³

The U.S. Army altered its training regimen as advise and assist brigades began rotating into Iraq. Before deploying, soldiers, officers, and advisers attended courses on several topics: civil affairs, language, policing, border patrol, governance, and Iraqi culture.¹⁶⁴ Depending on the mission, brigades also received specialized training from U.S. interagency groups. Because the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, was slated to rotate into a space that saw high rates of smuggling activity along the Iraq-Iran border, the unit's soldiers and advisers received instruction from the U.S. Border Patrol in El Paso, Texas.¹⁶⁵ Other battalions and brigades received training from the State Department, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Homeland Security, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.¹⁶⁶ Training occurred in Iraq as well. At the Phoenix Academy in Camp Taji, just northwest of Baghdad, officers and advisers received focused training from subject matter experts and STT personnel.¹⁶⁷

Training shifts occurred for field exercises as well. At the National Training Center in Fort Irwin, California, the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment—the center's permanent opposition force—replicated Iraqi Security Forces by planning and executing operations as the host nation units would. American teams served as advisers, helping when needed. Training at the Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk, Louisiana, also entailed mission readiness exercises, which combined counterinsurgency tactics with security force training assistance.¹⁶⁸ To emphasize the upcoming advisory mission, units in these drills supported the operations of their “host nation” rather than leading or planning them.

The advisory mission was an evolving process. The U.S. Army tried to inform brigades of their area of operations well in advance, affording commanders plenty of time to plan accordingly. If possible,



M109A6 Paladin at Forward Operating Base Falcon
(M. Sgt. Joseph L. Myrick)

brigades granted significant leeway for their battalion commanders to stage logistics and establish force placement as they saw fit. Although units arrived generally intact, flexibility was key. In various instances, the mission required commanders to retask units within their brigades. A field artillery battalion, for example, could end up working in a civil capacity with PRTs and the Iraqi media. In other cases, the brigades inherited assets already on location. Colonel Newell's 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, assumed responsibility for naval units operating on the waterways in and around Basra. This naval component was not organic to his brigade, but it nevertheless fell under 4th Brigade Combat Team's authority given their area of operation. As more of these brigades deployed to Iraq, officers learned the good and the bad from their predecessors and sister units and adjusted as needed.¹⁶⁹

The advisory mission was also not a uniform experience. The dynamic between the Americans and Iraqis heavily depended on the makeup of the local ISF partner and the conditions of the operating area. The 2d Iraqi Army Division, for example, resisted training with the Americans, and Iraqi officers, such as Iraqi Ground Forces Commander Ali Ghaidan Majid, preferred to remain in good standing within Iraqi political circles than in working alongside the U.S. Army. Other American commanders had better experiences working with the Iraqi police rather than the Iraqi Army and vice versa.¹⁷⁰

The quality of the partnership between the Iraqi chain of command and their American counterparts also mattered. This experience differed throughout MNC-I's battle spaces. Some ISF units, like the 2d Federal Police Division, proved eager to coordinate with the Americans. Others, for various reasons—political attitudes or incompetent leadership—were not. American commanders found work-arounds for these obstacles. For example, 2d Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, compelled ISF commanders to participate in hunts for Kata'ib Hezbollah rocket cells operating north of Ba'qubah.¹⁷¹

Advising, however, ultimately rested on the personalities of both the Americans and Iraqis. For many U.S. brigade and battalion commanders, a good indication of the temperament and quality of their ISF counterparts was how well Iraqi commanders coordinated and communicated with local Iraqi religious, political, and community leaders. Within the American chain of command, although the integration of STTs and other advisers had improved, operational control issues persisted. Because the advisory team leader (an Army colonel) and the maneuver commander (an Army colonel or lieutenant colonel at the battalion level) both reported to the brigade commander (another Army colonel) clashes over rank and seniority materialized from time to time.¹⁷²

Advisory work was frustrating in other ways as well. For some, the size and scope of their mission was immense. Single brigades, in some instances, were responsible for covering Iraqi territory the size of South Carolina. This meant long lines of communications and extensive travel to reach forward bases or Iraqi partner locations. Adding to the stresses, some areas had an insufficient number of PRTs or STTs to assist civil capacity or advising tasks. As the number of U.S. brigades in Iraq decreased, the onus of training the ISF fell on fewer American soldiers and advisers. Lt. Col. Kirk C. Dorr's 5th Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, around 800 soldiers, partnered with more than 16,000 police officers in the 2d Iraqi Federal Police Division. The continued drawdown limited personnel strength, spurred equipment handovers, and shaped training calendars. In short, a steadily increasing number of tasks fell to a rapidly decreasing number of U.S. Army units.¹⁷³

FIELDING IRAQI SECURITY FORCES

The deployment of advise-and-assist designated brigades occurred at the same time Iraqi Security Forces were taking over

a greater share of the security mission. The Iraqi government had sought to expand the size of the Ministry of Defense from nearly 224,000 to 352,000 troops by the spring of 2009.¹⁷⁴ However, plunging oil revenues and the global recession forced Baghdad to significantly cut the ISF's budget.¹⁷⁵ The U.S. had hoped that integrating the Sons of Iraq with the Iraqi Security Forces would allow the Iraqi Army to meet its force requirements.¹⁷⁶ The Americans had formally transferred the authority of all SOI groups to the Iraqi government in late April, and they believed that incorporating the SOI into the ISF would help to promote reconciliation between the Sunni fighters and the Iraqi government. Maliki had previously pledged to place 20 percent of the approximately 95,000 SOI members into the Iraqi security apparatus and then place the remaining 80 percent into civilian positions or provide them training for employment within the private sector. However, the ISF had incorporated less than 5,000 SOI by midspring.¹⁷⁷

American financial management of the SOI program caused additional complications. The U.S. government spent more than \$370 million on these fighters between 2007 and 2009.¹⁷⁸



The Sons of Iraq meet with U.S. soldiers for reconciliation, at Joint Security Station War Eagle, in Baghdad, 29 July 2009.
(U.S. Army)

The Sons of Iraq volunteer groups first formed under difficult operational and tactical conditions—during the height of the sectarian violence—and the government improvised the system for organizing and managing them. The U.S. Army had originally conceived these Sunni fighters as a stopgap force and had not intended them to become a formal component of the ISF. As such, and because of on-the-ground demands, there were no formal standard operating procedures for handling these groups.¹⁷⁹ Congressional regulators later noted that U.S. units did not always document SOI activities with daily status reports and attendance tracking. Likewise, there was lax control over finances as money was managed or allocated poorly. The Americans often gave payments directly to the leaders and not to each fighter and took SOI leaders for their word about how many fighters they represented or commanded. A lack of cash control and the inability to verify receipts or vouchers meant that the U.S. could not track how many individuals participated in the program. Nor could they confirm if money given for equipment purchases produced such transactions.¹⁸⁰ Already predisposed against Sunnis, the Maliki administration would not hire inadequately documented SOI fighters.

In fact, the Americans and the Iraqi government had legitimate concerns regarding the Sons of Iraq. Numerous members had connections to insurgent elements before joining the movement. Many tribal chiefs and local leaders turned to coalition forces only when Zarqawi's group targeted their financial operations or assassinated members of their tribes or community. Others joined when it appeared the tide had turned against the insurgency.¹⁸¹ Money proved a strong motivator, with fighters' salaries backed by U.S. funds. As the program began to expand beyond Anbar Province in 2007, one of Maliki's political advisers went as far as to argue that the Americans were "preparing Iraq for a civil war by arming Sunni tribes."¹⁸² Maliki was apprehensive about the sudden emergence of a large, unregulated, and armed Sunni militia force. According to Ambassador Christopher R. Hill, who had replaced Crocker in April 2009, Maliki believed them to be "terrorists who were now getting paid for operating checkpoints."¹⁸³

The Iraqi government showed little change in attitude, and it was slow to hire and integrate SOI fighters into the Iraqi security apparatus. In June, the U.S. Department of Defense reported to Congress that, on top of persistent payment delays, vocational training for SOI members had "not gained traction" within the

Maliki administration.¹⁸⁴ Baghdad's handling of the Sons of Iraq only reinforced the Sunnis' deepening sense that the Shi'a were marginalizing them. Troublingly, many Sunni fighters began to leave the program.¹⁸⁵ This was likely because of various factors—the surge campaign winding down, American plans to leave, the lack of reliable salaries, and actions undertaken by the Maliki government. Prominent Awakening leaders warned that unless they could transition the Sons of Iraq volunteers into paying posts within the Iraqi Security Forces or other forms of employment, their fighters would return to the insurgency.¹⁸⁶

The ISF also confronted a number of problems now that the Americans were withdrawing slowly from Iraq.¹⁸⁷ Corruption, sectarianism, neglect, and mismanagement plagued Iraq's armed forces. There were high rates of absenteeism within the officer corps and worsening drug and alcohol abuse.¹⁸⁸ The noncommissioned officer corps was very weak, and American trainers noted that Iraqi officers refused to respect or communicate with their NCOs.¹⁸⁹ Over 24 percent of the ISF's personnel were not qualified and more than 15 percent of Iraqi soldiers were illiterate.¹⁹⁰ Iraqi soldiers lacked critical training and planning expertise and the Ministry of Defense was slow to train soldiers in maintenance and technical repairs. Iraqi commanders struggled to assume responsibility for several training programs and facilities created by the Americans.¹⁹¹ Moreover, the ISF remained heavily dependent on foreign assistance for training and equipment and still lacked modern aircraft, artillery, and boats.¹⁹²

In addition, the Iraqi Ministry of Defense often required the Prime Minister's direct approval for even the smallest of operations. ISF commanders rarely conducted operations against insurgents, militias, or individuals with "close ties to the ruling political coalition."¹⁹³ In contrast, Maliki quickly approved actions against Sunni groups. Shi'a fighters captured in joint ISF-US operations rarely faced criminal prosecution thanks to their political connections.¹⁹⁴

U.S. ground commanders and advisers found joint operations with their Iraqi partners ran the gamut from excellent to dreadful.¹⁹⁵ Despite touting their sovereignty and chastising the Americans as occupiers, "with barely covered resentment and frustration on all sides," both the Iraqis and Americans knew that the ISF remained wholly dependent on the U.S. for its training and logistical support.¹⁹⁶ In building the new Iraqi Army, MNSTC-I had focused on raising battalions, but had not

built an adequate, organic logistical capability into the force. Consequently, this forced the ISF to rely on U.S. assistance for “critical enablers, such as reconnaissance, maintenance, and aviation support.”¹⁹⁷ As one MND-B official noted, the Iraqi government and ISF sought to “squeeze the U.S. for all the ‘goodies’ that we can provide between now and December 2011, while eliminating our role in providing security and resisting our efforts to change the institutional problems that prevent the ISF from getting better.”¹⁹⁸

To a certain extent, the United States had unrealistic expectations regarding Iraq’s logistical situation. Since 2005, a significant amount of American-made military materiel sent to Iraq came from Foreign Military Sales, an arms transfer program that saw the U.S. Department of Defense play an intermediary role between major defense contractors and foreign governments.¹⁹⁹ However, bureaucratic constraints stemming from Washington, including tedious approval procedures and a requirement that the Iraqis pay in full rather than in installments, significantly delayed the delivery process. Other funding programs required the Iraqis to pay at least 20 percent for weapons purchases.²⁰⁰ Just after the surge concluded, Baghdad had agreed to purchase \$5 billion worth of equipment from the Americans.²⁰¹ However, the global financial crisis and declining oil prices forced the Iraqi government to curtail this defense spending to focus on the struggling economy. Although they preferred U.S. equipment, Foreign Military Sales complications compelled the Iraqis to turn to other countries, such as Serbia, Ukraine, and China, for economic aid or alternative deals.²⁰² These long intervals also meant that the Iraqi Army units would continue to field a mix of Soviet-era vehicles used in Saddam’s era and newly arrived American pieces. This mixture inadvertently created two parallel and competing systems for doctrine, logistics, and communications.

American plans and designs were not always compatible with what the Iraqis actually needed. The U.S. government had allocated more than \$51 billion to rebuild the Iraqi state by the end of spring 2009.²⁰³ The U.S. Department of State and Department of Defense began turning over reconstruction and civil developments to the Iraqis with little planning or notice. Many of these transfers happened without input from Baghdad, hampering any centralized processing or management. Several schemes were unwelcomed by Iraqi communities as they could neither operate nor repair the equipment and facilities independently.²⁰⁴ In some instances, the Iraqis abandoned obscure U.S. military-funded

projects, such as a concert hall in Sadr City and a multimillion dollar hotel in Baghdad.²⁰⁵

LEAVING IRAQI CITIES

Despite the ongoing violence, the Americans readied for the drawdown and end of combat operations.²⁰⁶ American fears that the withdrawal would only encourage militants to rebuild their strength and renew their offensive against the Iraqi government were seemingly confirmed as Special Groups and other Shi'a militias escalated their attacks throughout the spring.²⁰⁷ In April and May, MNF-I recorded multiple incidents, including bombings, rocket attacks, and snipers, against U.S. troops and bases in Maysan, Al Qadisiyah, Wasit, Babil, and Basra Provinces.²⁰⁸ The Special Groups likely hoped to pressure the Iraqi and American governments to abandon any plans to extend the withdrawal deadline.²⁰⁹

Pursuing insurgent networks—either Sunni or Shi'a—required the U.S. Army to weigh certain political risks. Raids against suspected holdouts that resulted in the deaths of Iraqi civilians angered not only local residents, but also officials in Baghdad. No matter the circumstances, every Iraqi noncombatant killed by U.S. forces galvanized Iraqi opposition to the American presence in Iraq.²¹⁰ One incident in particular triggered severe backlash from the Maliki government. In late April, U.S. special operations forces raided a house in Kut, an important transit point on the route between Baghdad and Iran, believing the residents were affiliated with the Special Groups. Two Iraqis were killed, including the wife of a prominent local sheikh. U.S. officials later determined that the unit targeted the wrong house.²¹¹ Outraged over the botched operation, Maliki called for the U.S. to “hand over those responsible for this crime to the courts.”²¹² MNF-I scrambled to quell tensions as protests exploded across Iraq.²¹³

The Americans were also apprehensive about growing ethnic tensions in northern Iraq because of deepening hostilities between the Arabs and Kurds. General Odierno had seen the conflict between the two as the “number one driver of instability in Iraq.”²¹⁴ Various Kurdish leaders refused to cooperate with the Arab-dominated central government in Baghdad.²¹⁵ The January 2009 elections escalated tensions after Sunni candidates secured over 50 percent of the seats in Ninewa Province.²¹⁶ Despite this, Kurdish leaders refused to recognize the new Sunni governor.²¹⁷ As General Jacoby lamented, “just when you thought you were



Peshmerga soldiers “Pass in Review” during graduation ceremonies 8 April 2010, in Dohuk Province, Iraq.

(U.S. Army)

concentrating on getting out of the cities, you were trying to keep the Kurds from ceding from the union.”²¹⁸

U.S. soldiers navigated a complex political environment in Iraqi Kurdistan. Since the invasion, Peshmerga units had partnered and trained with the Americans.²¹⁹ However, the Kurds were not a monolithic entity. Two factions competed for control: the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan led by the Talabani family, and the Kurdistan Democratic Party led by the Barzani family. Within the Peshmerga, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan and the Kurdistan Democratic Party loyalists competed with one another and fielded their own security and intelligence units.²²⁰ Both vied for influence with their U.S. Army partners as well. In some instances, these factions attempted to use the Americans to gain an advantage over the other.²²¹ Further complicating the relationship between the Peshmerga and U.S. forces were legal questions surrounding the nature of “Kurdistan” versus the “province of Kurdistan.” U.S. laws prohibited the direct arming of the Peshmerga by Americans because they did not consider the Kurds an independent nation-state. Instead, all armaments were routed through Baghdad first. Given Maliki’s apprehension regarding Kurdish expansion, however, transfers to the Peshmerga were virtually nonexistent.²²²

The U.S. Army also had to keep an eye on Turkey's activity in the area as Ankara sought to curtail Kurdish ambitions of greater autonomy in northern Iraq and eastern Turkey. Of particular concern for the Turks was the Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK), a militant group first formed in the late 1970s to wage guerrilla war against Ankara in the name of Kurdish independence.²²³ Although the United States and European Union had designated the PKK as a terrorist organization, Turkish incursions into northern Iraq against PKK targets further strained the already tenuous security situation.²²⁴ American units even detected Turkish movement in and around Dohuk, a city 70 kilometers from the Iraq-Turkey border, prompting visits by U.S. commanders.²²⁵

As these political feuds played out throughout the spring, Army units continued to mediate between the two groups.²²⁶ However, even with the Americans in the area, the chances of firefights remained. In early June, a visit by a prominent local Sunni Arab politician to the town of Zummar led to a shootout between Kurdish Peshmerga forces and Iraqi police. Later that month, the 26th Brigade, 7th Iraqi Army Division, moved through the Kurdish-dominated town of Makhmur, located in the Erbil Governorate, while traveling to Mosul. Interpreting the movement as an act of aggression, Peshmerga forces blocked the road. A standoff ensued, prompting U.S. units to rush into the area to prevent hostilities from escalating.²²⁷ Unfortunately, no signs from Baghdad suggested that the Maliki administration intended to find a solution to the tensions in the region anytime soon.

The Americans vacated Iraq's cities on 30 June 2009. In the days preceding, Sunni and Shi'a militants escalated attacks, likely hoping to create the impression that the Americans were leaving because of their actions.²²⁸ Massive bombs rocked Sadr City on 24 June, killing more than 75 Iraqi civilians at a market.²²⁹ U.S. troops also came under fire from Shi'a militants, and between 28 and 29 June, five soldiers died in IED attacks.²³⁰ Following the attacks, Maliki reaffirmed that "those who think that Iraqis are unable to defend their country are committing a fatal mistake."²³¹

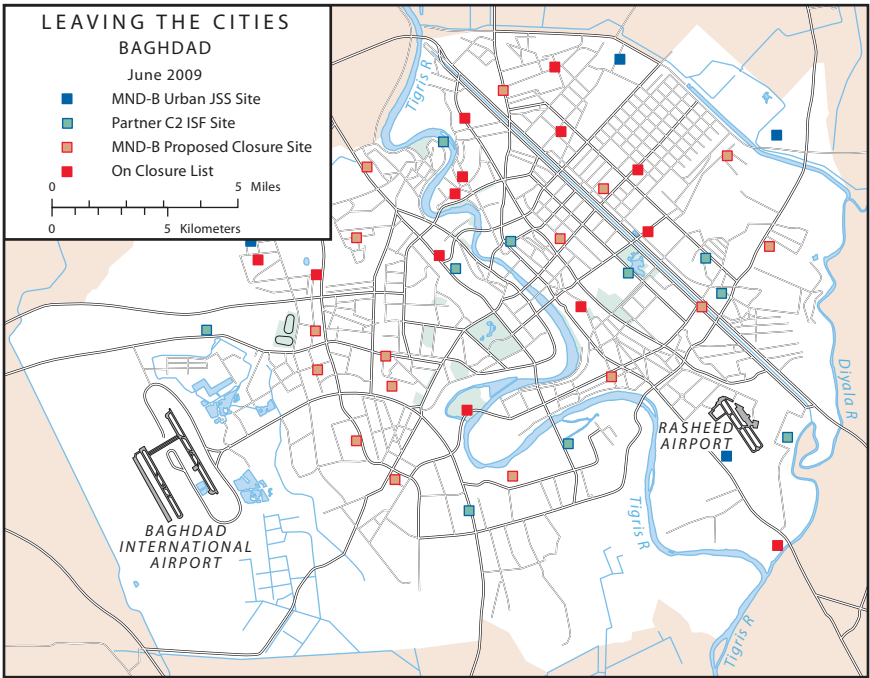
When the withdrawal day came, combat troops redeployed to American installations just outside urban areas, and they could not serve warrants nor reenter cities without the express consent of the Iraqi government.²³² The U.S. would need to rely on its Iraqi counterparts more than ever before.²³³ Moving outside a

major urban area like Baghdad was a complicated task. During the surge, the Americans had nine brigades and more than eighty joint security stations and combat outposts in the city and the surrounding Baghdad belt districts. More than fifty bases closed in MND-B's area of operations alone.²³⁴ However, the Americans encountered political obstacles as they merged and closed these facilities. Whereas the MND-B commander, General Bolger, wanted the Iraqis to keep running seventeen joint security stations, they opted to maintain only fourteen. In addition, the Maliki government closed three stations in the Shi'a militant stronghold of Sadr City.²³⁵

Leaving 1,000 American noncombat troops and advisers at the remaining joint security stations, MND-B resettled its brigades in combat outposts located on the outer edges of the capital.²³⁶ Camp Taji sat more than 30 kilometers north from the city center. Forward Operating Base Hammer was 20 kilometers to the east whereas Forward Operating Base Falcon was less than 15 kilometers south of the Green Zone. American units also moved into Victory Base Complex, a collection of U.S. military installations surrounding the Baghdad International Airport. Given these distances, the Americans reasoned they would be close enough to assist the ISF if called, but also far enough outside the city to abide by the security agreement.²³⁷

The 2008 accord also stipulated that the Americans would transfer their detainees to the Maliki government. From a peak of 26,000 in December 2007, American forces now held around 15,000 detainees.²³⁸ However, the U.S. feared that the Iraqi government would release many of the remaining detainees and that many of those freed could return to insurgent activity.²³⁹ The corrupt Iraqi judicial system and Maliki's sectarianism exacerbated these concerns.²⁴⁰ Some prisoner transfers were politically motivated and controversial as well. In June, per Maliki's request, MNF-I released Laith al-Khazali, a conspirator of the January 2007 Karbala attack in which militants captured and killed five U.S. Army soldiers.²⁴¹ The Americans also later released five Iranian Quds Force operatives to the Iraqi government after Maliki met with Iranian officials.²⁴² These prisoner releases contributed to Sunni fears that the United States sanctioned the Shi'a ascendancy, as several of the Iraqis released from American custody joined Shi'a political parties.²⁴³

The prime minister designated 30 June as a national holiday, ordering fireworks and a massive parade to commemorate the departure of American troops from Iraqi cities (*Map 6*).²⁴⁴



Map 6

As U.S. troops repositioned themselves outside urban areas, General Odierno publicly voiced confidence in the capabilities of the Iraqi government and ISF.²⁴⁵ However, many Sunnis felt abandoned by the Americans. In late July, the Iraqi Army's 42d Brigade arrested several Awakening leaders in the Adhamiya district in northern Baghdad. As one Sunni leader lamented, "the Americans created the Awakening movement here. Before June 30, when we had a problem, we could go to them, and they would fix it. Now we don't have anyone to talk to, we are just hanging out in the streets."²⁴⁶

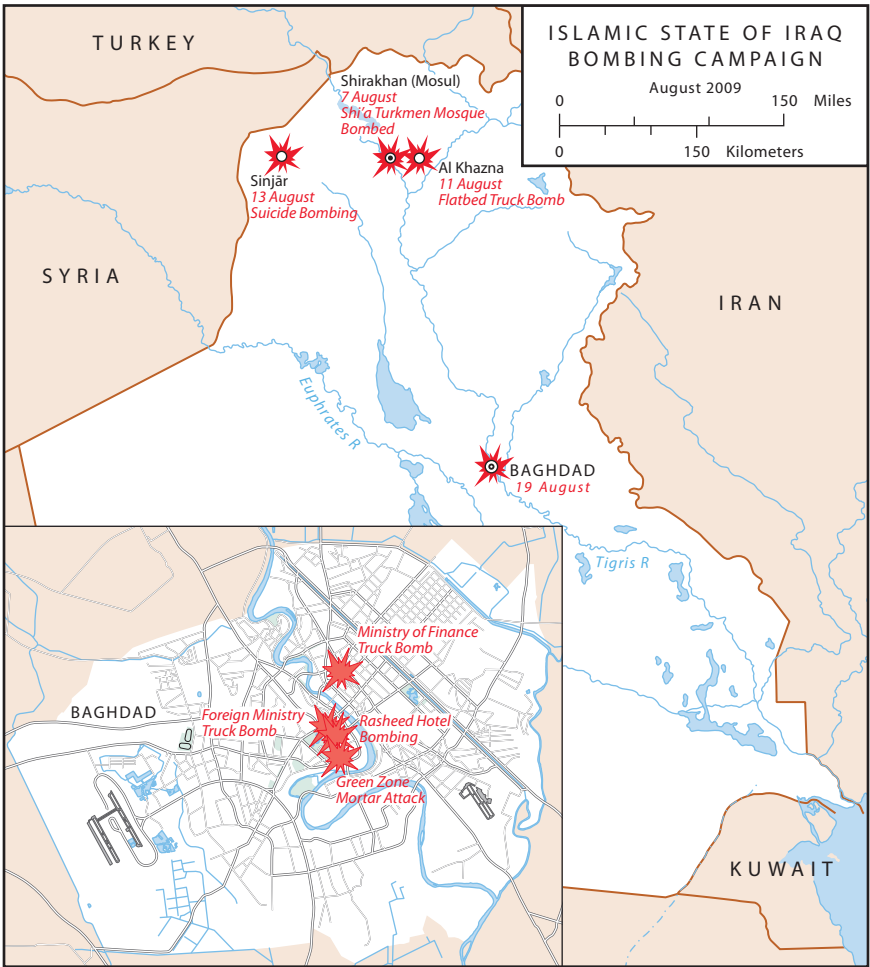
The move out of the cities did not mean that American units were "stuck behind the wire."²⁴⁷ Despite restrictions outlined in the security arrangement, Army brigades and battalions conducted operations against high-value targets and militant groups who attacked their forces or installations.²⁴⁸ Sometimes the ISF joined these operations. If the situation warranted an immediate reaction, they often did not.²⁴⁹ Nevertheless, the absence of U.S. forces in Iraqi cities created a power vacuum, as many ISF units were unprepared to assume command over security operations in such large urban areas. As a result, militia commanders and local lead-

ers rushed to consolidate their control over territory and resources.²⁵⁰ American ground commanders also worried that militants would continue to target U.S. troops to send “signals or messages” to their political rivals and patrons.²⁵¹

These fears proved to be well-founded. In mid-July, an ISI blast about 322 kilometers north of Baghdad in Al Sharqat injured seven soldiers.²⁵² Four days later, militants attacked Contingency Operating Base Basra with mortars, killing three Americans.²⁵³ Militants even targeted Ambassador Hill in July when a roadside bomb struck his convoy traveling in Dhi Qar.²⁵⁴ Although no one was hurt or killed, the attack signaled the increasing audacity of many Shi'a militant groups.²⁵⁵ U.S. bases and troops also experienced frequent indirect fire attacks. Near Ba'qubah, the 1st Battalion, 23d Infantry Regiment, faced continuous rocket attacks. The Iraqi government, however, refused to permit the unit to engage the Shi'a militia cells it believed were responsible.²⁵⁶ In the fall, the U.S. Army and the ISF observed a troubling uptick in Special Groups activity, interdicting smugglers and locating weapons caches in Kurdistan and southern Iraq.²⁵⁷ American intelligence analysts argued that these attacks were designed to prevent the U.S. from sending in more troops to Iraq and influence the approaching 2010 parliamentary elections.

As the Americans settled outside Iraqi cities, ISI stepped up attacks in northern Iraq. Mosul remained unstable as insurgents assassinated workers, contractors, police, and religious leaders.²⁵⁸ Within six weeks of U.S. forces leaving, nearly seventy police officers were murdered in the city.²⁵⁹ The group targeted Iraq's minority populations as well. In early August, bombings destroyed a Shabak village about 16 kilometers from Mosul, killing nearly fifty farmers and laborers.²⁶⁰ Insurgents also struck Turkmen and Yazidi mosques and villages.²⁶¹ As General Odierno saw it, ISI was trying to “extend its tentacles back into Baghdad” by reestablishing a strong base in Ninewa Province first.²⁶²

On 19 August, ISI bombed the Iraqi Finance and Foreign Ministries in Baghdad, killing more than 100 and wounding another 1,200 (*Map 7*). The Iraqi government refused American offers of assistance after the bombing.²⁶³ The government swiftly detained several suspects not affiliated with ISI and broadcast their so-called confessions before ISI took credit for the attack on 25 August.²⁶⁴ The bombings revealed significant flaws in the ISF's security designs and halted plans to dismantle the numerous blast walls coalition forces had erected beginning in 2005.²⁶⁵



Map 7

Although ISI had not regained its 2006–2007 capabilities, U.S. officials feared that the group was still capable of destabilizing the Shi'a-led government and fostering political turmoil.²⁶⁶ The fact that insurgents had killed more than 160 police officers and soldiers from January through September further compounded these anxieties.²⁶⁷

Prime Minister Maliki and his supporters cast blame for the attacks against a wide range of opponents, including Iran, Ba'athists in Syria, Saudi Arabia, and even a number of Iraqi officials.²⁶⁸ Maliki did not accuse the Islamic State of Iraq for several reasons. The prime minister had called the U.S.

withdrawal from the cities a “great victory.” He further declared that the government had “succeeded in putting down the sectarian war that was threatening the unity and the sovereignty of Iraq” without recognizing the American contribution.²⁶⁹ Maliki had wanted to claim that he had driven out the “occupiers” and now had the ability to effectively secure and govern the country. The bombings had shattered this vision. With his credibility now on the line, Maliki contended that Ba‘thist elements still operated underground in the country with foreign support.²⁷⁰ Adhering to this conspiratorial thinking, he pointed to a historical and personal enemy—Ba‘thist persecution of the Da‘wa Party had forced Maliki himself to flee the country in 1979—rather than acknowledge the Islamic State of Iraq’s ability to carry out high-profile attacks.

The bombings also torpedoed Maliki’s hopes that his State of Law coalition would easily sail to victory in the parliamentary elections to be held in early 2010. Condemning Maliki for failing to deliver on his security promises, several influential Sunni and Shi‘a politicians withdrew their support and joined other



U.S. Army soldier with 1st Cavalry Division investigates unexploded ordinance outside of Baghdad, 7 September 2009.

(U.S. Army/Joint Combat Camera Center)

alliances instead.²⁷¹ As he attempted to navigate the political fallout, ISI operatives struck again in late October. Car bombs destroyed the Ministry of Justice and the Baghdad Provincial Council buildings. More than 130 people were killed and at least 700 were wounded. Although Maliki quickly blamed the Syrians and Ba'athists, ISI again claimed responsibility.²⁷² Many Iraqis took the attacks as a sign that the prime minister could not secure and protect them. Although levels of violence in Baghdad had diminished considerably since the surge—from nearly sixty attacks a day in the spring of 2007 to less than ten by the fall of 2009—civilian deaths by suicide bombings in the capital had surpassed the 2008 toll, rising from 429 to 458 dead.²⁷³ The 1st Cavalry Division grimly assessed that ISI would continue to “conduct attacks with near impunity” in and around Baghdad.²⁷⁴

A NEW DIRECTION

In late 2009, the Obama administration's decision to shift greater attention to Afghanistan began to impact American operations in Iraq. At the time of President Obama's inauguration in January, 32,000 American service members were in Afghanistan. Between February and March, he added a further 21,000.²⁷⁵ In late August, the commander of U.S. and allied forces in Afghanistan, General Stanley A. McChrystal, requested even more help. President Obama eventually announced the deployment of 30,000 additional soldiers to Afghanistan in December. The first of these units would arrive in the spring of 2010, with the others following by that fall.²⁷⁶ American forces in Iraq felt the ramifications almost immediately as troops and resources diverted to Afghanistan. Over 40 percent of the equipment for the Afghan surge force came from Iraq. In addition, U.S. commanders in Iraq soon found other vital resources, including intelligence and reconnaissance assets, requisitioned from their units.²⁷⁷ Frustrated by the change of pace in Iraq, some service members longed to see combat in Afghanistan.²⁷⁸

The new presidential administration began to have an impact on operations in Iraq in other ways. The amicable relationship that had existed during the surge campaign between the American civilian mission and military command in Iraq quickly deteriorated throughout 2009. Ambassador Hill arrived in Baghdad in the spring of 2009 intending to “civilianize” the U.S. mission in Iraq.²⁷⁹ President Obama wanted the U.S. State Department to have primary responsibility in Iraq by September

2010. Hill argued that Iraq was now stable and subsequently asserted control over the withdrawal process.

MNF-I struggled to adapt to this new reality.²⁸⁰ For many American commanders, the relationship between Ambassador Hill and General Odierno harkened back to when the American civilian and military entities openly and repeatedly clashed during the early occupation in 2003.²⁸¹ However, mindful of this past, the MNF-I commander wanted a “clean transition.”²⁸² Planning between the embassy and MNF-I resulted in a new Joint Campaign Plan in November 2009. It laid out a road map for how the American military would transfer security and nation-building responsibilities to the U.S. embassy, the Department of State, and the Iraqi government.²⁸³ The shift in the mission was not easy. As Colonel Newell of the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, argued, “the hardest thing to do sometimes is step back and not be in charge.”²⁸⁴

In September, Col. Mark R. Stammer and the 1st Brigade, 82d Airborne Division, took over Camp Ramadi after relieving two U.S. Marine Corps regimental combat teams. In November, the 3d Brigade, 3d Infantry Division, under Col. Peter L. Jones, assumed responsibility of the combat outpost in Iskandariya. Falling under Multi-National Division-South, the brigade operated in Babil, Karbala, Najaf, Al Qadisiyah, and Wasit Provinces. Maj. Gen. Anthony A. Cucolo’s 3d Infantry Division also relieved the 25th Infantry Division in the north. In October, U.S. troop levels had reached 120,000, down nearly 23,000 since January. General Odierno stated the U.S. Army was following a “responsible drawdown” but would redeploy more soldiers after the Iraqi parliamentary elections in 2010.²⁸⁵ However, leaving Iraq generated logistical challenges. The Army considered transporting all equipment home cost-prohibitive, prompting the Americans to transfer millions of dollars of property and hardware to the Iraqis.²⁸⁶

ISI launched a coordinated attack in December with devastating results. This time, the group bombed several targets in Baghdad: the Karkh Federal Appeals Court, a police patrol, the headquarters of state-run Rafidain Bank, and Iraq’s judicial institute. More than 120 Iraqi civilians were killed and another 500 were wounded.²⁸⁷ Just like the August bombings, Prime Minister Maliki quickly blamed the Syrians and Ba’thists. Yet, these allegations did not stave off the ensuing political firestorm in which several members of the Iraqi parliament blamed Maliki and his administration for failing to prevent such attacks. He

then relieved General Abud Qanbar, the head of the Baghdad Operations Command, to avoid a no-confidence vote from the Iraqi parliament. However, when Iraqi politicians continued blaming Maliki, he countered with accusations that ISI sympathizers had infiltrated the ISF and carried out the bombings. MNF-I warned the prime minister that his claims would only validate Iraqi civilian suspicions that the ISF could not protect them.²⁸⁸

Despite the tumultuous year, violence remained well below the levels seen in 2006–2007.²⁸⁹ “By, with, and through” their Iraqi partners, U.S. Army units continued to target IED and insurgent networks.²⁹⁰ U.S. leaders were optimistic about the upcoming national parliamentary election slated for March 2010, hoping that it could ease societal divisions. The Obama administration believed the forthcoming vote signaled that “the Iraqis and their leaders are committed to taking control of their future, and to resolving their differences peacefully and in accord with the Iraqi constitution.”²⁹¹ MNF-I anticipated that a successful and peaceful election would allow U.S. forces to complete the scheduled drawdown.



American soldiers sprint up to a UH–60 Black Hawk helicopter during a combined air assault mission, 26 October 2009, north of Baghdad.

(U.S. Army)

USF-I: JANUARY 2010– 10 AUGUST 2011

U.S. COMMAND CONSOLIDATION

On 1 January 2010, MNF-I merged with MNC-I and other operational-level headquarters to form United States Forces–Iraq (USF-I).²⁹² The areas of operations subsequently shifted (*Map 8*). USF-I split Iraq into three parts: United States Division–North (USD-N), United States Division–Center (USD-C), and United States Division–South (USD-S). USD-C now encompassed Baghdad and western Iraq. The new headquarters then restructured MNSTC-I as the Advise and Train Directorate.²⁹³ With a single staff managing the tactical, operational, and strategic planning for Iraq, USF-I had three overarching objectives: continuing the drawdown; supporting the Iraqi parliamentary elections in March; and preparing for the end of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. More than 100,000 American soldiers remained in Iraq at this time.²⁹⁴ According to the withdrawal plan, half that number would leave by the end of August.

CHALLENGES TO IRAQI STABILITY

As the withdrawal deadline set by the 2008 security agreement neared, USF-I planners worried that the ISF could neither “defend against external threats” from Iran or other neighbors nor conduct combined arms operations. Nevertheless, General Odierno continued to plan as best he could as his force strength gradually decreased.²⁹⁵ U.S. forces continued to hunt down insurgents, launching raids in northern Iraq in January and targeting senior ISI operatives, many of whom oversaw the group’s foreign fighter networks. Although the group struck hotels frequented by foreigners in Baghdad and attacked Shi’a pilgrims in Karbala, the group maintained its primary focus on Mosul.²⁹⁶ In early 2010, the northern city was the most violent



Map 8

in Iraq per capita and ISI regularly launched attacks against Christians, Kurds, civil servants, and the ISF.²⁹⁷ Also in the north, Jaysh Rijal al-Tariq al-Naqshabandi remained a threat to American and Kurdish forces with its IED network operating in the Tigris River Valley.²⁹⁸

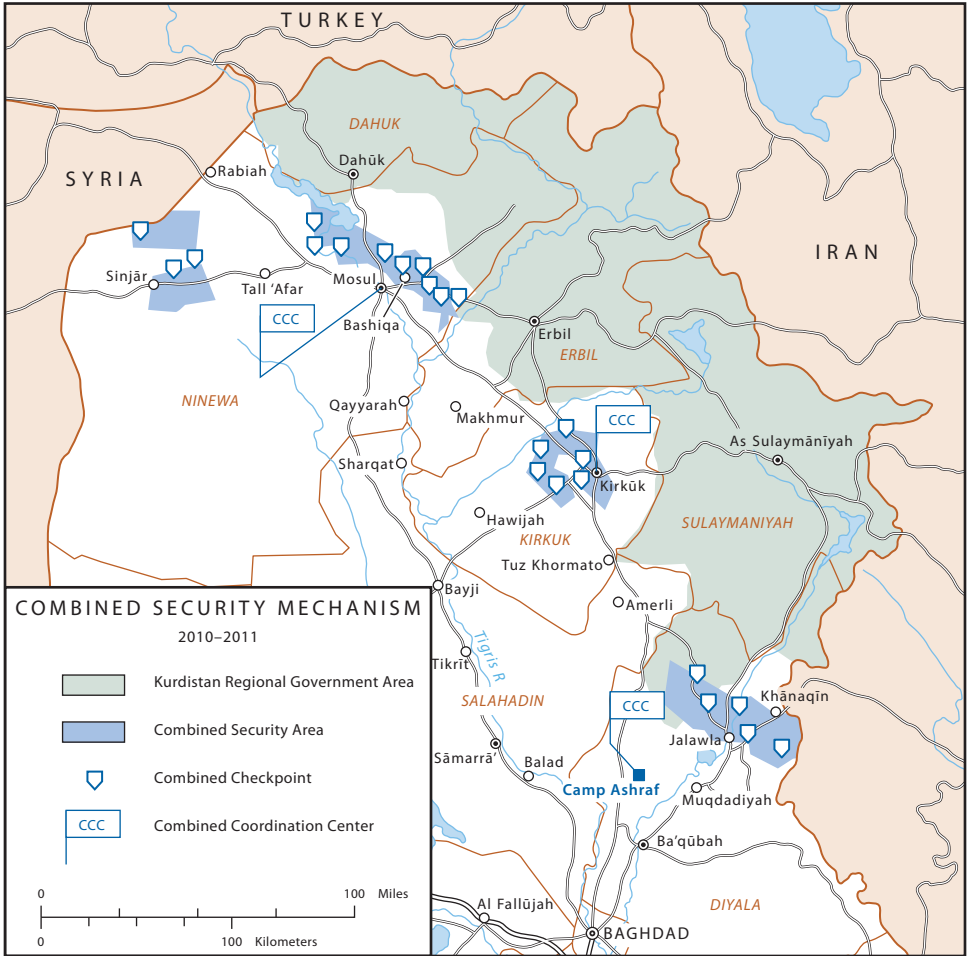
In the fall of 2009, Prime Minister Maliki and the Kurdish Regional Government President Massoud Barzani requested assistance from MNF-I to alleviate tensions in the area. In response, the Americans and the Iraqi government formally established the Combined Security Mechanism in northern Iraq by the end of the year (*Map 9*). This arrangement called for Iraqi



Soldiers from 2d Brigade Combat Team, 3d Infantry Division, during combined checkpoint training held at Forward Operating Base Marez, in northern Iraq.
(U.S. Army)

Army troops, Iraqi police officers, and Kurdish Peshmerga to conduct joint patrols and operate checkpoints in twelve designated security zones along the Green Line, the regional divide between Arab and Kurdish claimed areas. General Jacoby, Iraqi Army Lt. Gen. Ali Ghaidan, and senior Kurdish officials determined checkpoint locations in Diyala and Ninewa Provinces, and near the city of Kirkuk.²⁹⁹

Many U.S. leaders believed that elites, rather than regular Arabs and Kurds, fanned these ethnic tensions. As one of USD-N's brigade commanders, Col. George L. Swift noted, "the



Map 9

problem was not that a Kurdish policeman and an Iraqi soldier would necessarily go to guns on each other . . . it was because their leadership would.”³⁰⁰ The Americans hoped the newly signed pact would defuse hostilities and promote coordination between the Arabs and Kurds as they focused on fighting ISI together. Nearly 1,000 U.S. troops also served in these combined checkpoints.³⁰¹ American units attempted to remain a neutral party and a “conscience [*sic*], honest broker.”³⁰² Recognizing the region’s historical and political grievances, Lt. Col. Christopher L. Connelly, a battalion commander with the 1st Armored Division, reasoned, “What we’re doing is forcing the wound to close.”³⁰³ USF-I commanders hoped the agreement would help “de-conflict, defuse, and create a safe and secure environment between the Kurdish and Arab forces.”³⁰⁴

The combined security mechanism encountered its first test in February when Ninewa’s Sunni governor and his security detail attempted to travel through the Kurdish-dominated eastern area of the province. A firefight broke out after Peshmerga and Kurdish police forces blocked his way, resulting in both sides taking hostages. As the crisis unfolded, U.S. units quickly interceded. Negotiations between American officials and the Iraqi government eventually ended the standoff, with all hostages released.³⁰⁵ Unfortunately, this was not the last of this type of incident.

IRAQI PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS, MARCH 2010

The Americans eyed the forthcoming March parliamentary elections with cautious optimism. Four major political coalitions vied for power: the Kurdish Alliance; the Sunni-dominated Iraqiyah Alliance, led by a secular Shi’a Ayad Allawi; Maliki’s State of Law; and the Iranian and Shi’a-supported Iraqi National Alliance. Before the election, the Accountability and Justice Commission—a Shi’a-dominated entity that continued the work of de-Ba’thification—recommended that parliament and the electoral commission ban several hundred Sunni candidates with alleged links to the Ba’thist Party. Parliament did so accordingly, badly weakening the Iraqiyah coalition.³⁰⁶

Election day witnessed limited violence and a high turnout. U.S. brigade commanders coordinated with their local Iraqi partners, offering access to helicopters or quick reaction forces if requested.³⁰⁷ In some cases, U.S. Army officials stepped in to mitigate local disputes. In Kirkuk, Colonel Swift’s 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division, acted as “referees,” helping to dispel rumors



Commandos from the 40th Iraqi Army Brigade conduct pre-election Combined Aerial Response Force rehearsals with advisers from 1st Battalion, 77th Armor Regiment, at Contingency Operating Base Adder, near Nasiriyah, Iraq, 2 March 2010.
(U.S. Army)

and provide additional security when requested.³⁰⁸ Likewise, U.S. units near Baghdad and in southern Iraq remained on alert. However, the Americans generally found that the ISF handled the situation well.³⁰⁹ President Obama hailed the election, declaring that “the Iraqi people have chosen to shape their future through the political process.”³¹⁰

The election, however, did not resolve the tensions afflicting Iraq’s politics. Out of 325 available seats, Allawi’s coalition secured 91 compared to Maliki’s 89. Per Iraqi law, Allawi had the right to form a government. Unwilling to accept this, Maliki used his control over the Iraqi judiciary to secure a controversial ruling from Iraq’s Supreme Court stating that the party that organized a coalition first could govern Iraq, not the party that had won the most seats. The prime minister then demanded, and was granted, a recount in Baghdad.³¹¹ Furthermore, Iraqi courts, packed with Maliki appointees, disqualified many victorious Sunni candidates.³¹² Maliki and his supporters embarked on a campaign to threaten members of the electoral commission and assassinate rival politicians.³¹³ According to Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force–Arabian Peninsula commander

Col. Mark E. Mitchell, Maliki went as far as to target Sunni election candidates with his own “hit squad.”³¹⁴

The Iraqi state soon devolved to a caretaker government in which Maliki’s incumbent administration remained in charge but with limited powers.³¹⁵ Although he could not sign new laws or enter into new financial agreements until the various Iraqi political parties reached a power-sharing agreement, Maliki held his position as prime minister. Iran subsequently maneuvered to secure its interests. To keep Maliki in power, politicians with ties to Tehran worked behind the scenes to undermine Allawi, while Shi’a militants rearmed and reorganized. Attacks linked to Special Group units soon followed.³¹⁶ American diplomatic buildings and facilities within the Green Zone came under repeated rocket fire as did other U.S. bases and installations.³¹⁷ Warning of the likelihood of further attacks, General Odierno specifically blamed Kata’ib Hezbollah.³¹⁸ To the Americans, Iran was testing the waters, seeing how far it could escalate events as U.S. troops prepared to withdraw.³¹⁹

As the political chaos unfolded, Sunni insurgents struck police and army checkpoints, markets, churches, and civil buildings throughout the spring and summer.³²⁰ Several Awakening leaders, including Khudair Hamad al-Issawi, were assassinated.³²¹ ISI cells also hit Shi’a villages, mosques, markets, and pilgrimage sites.³²² Sunni militants coordinated attacks across Iraq in the summer, striking cities and towns from Mosul to Basra.³²³ ISI seemed to be growing in confidence and strength, and some observers worried that the ISF could not protect Iraq’s civilian population.

However, beginning in March 2010, covert American and Iraqi counterterrorism efforts dealt blows against ISI. In March, Iraqi Security Forces captured the ISI *Wali* (or governor) of Baghdad, Manaf al-Rawi, who had allegedly masterminded the fall 2009 bombing campaign. His interrogation yielded vital information on ISI’s operational planning and courier system. In mid-April, U.S. special operations forces targeted a house near Tikrit, northwest of Baghdad, resulting in the death of ISI leaders Abu Umar al-Baghdadi and Abu Ayyub al-Masri.³²⁴ In the residence, U.S. forces found detailed leadership rosters, accounting documents, and situation reports. This information led to additional raids against insurgents.

By May, the Americans believed they had captured or killed 75 percent of ISI’s leaders.³²⁵ Strikes against the group’s oil networks further diminished their operational capacity. ISF and

U.S. officials also weeded out insurgents who had infiltrated the police and civil groups.³²⁶ General Odierno concluded that ISI was “struggling” to recruit new fighters, and its leadership was in disarray.³²⁷ The deaths of al-Baghdadi and al-Masri marked a turning point in the Iraqi and American campaign against ISI. The organization had faced several reversals since 2006 and many Iraqi jihadists, frustrated with the group’s ideological bent, began excluding foreigners with ties to Al Qaeda from their groups.³²⁸

Joint U.S.-Iraqi efforts degraded the capabilities of Ansar al-Islam, an ally of Al Qaeda, as well. U.S. special operations forces had conducted operations against the group in northern Iraq, capturing several key leaders.³²⁹ Fakri Hadi Gari, a deputy who had served as a critical “operational director” and financier, was arrested in Mosul. Acting on a tip from sources in Kurdistan, the ISF and American advisers apprehended Abu Abdullah al-Shafi, the group’s leader, near Baghdad not long after the raid on the ISI hideout in Tikrit.³³⁰ Shafi had close ties to Osama bin Laden and organized attacks in Mosul, Kirkuk, Erbil, and Baghdad against ISF and Shi’a targets before his capture.

OPERATION NEW DAWN

On 31 August 2010, President Obama declared the end of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. On 1 September, Operation NEW DAWN began. The name change signified the official shift in the U.S. Army’s mission from combat to noncombat. General Lloyd J. Austin III assumed command of USF-I the same day. Lt. Gen. Robert W. Cone’s III Corps served as the nucleus for USF-I’s operational headquarters and Cone became the USF-I deputy commanding general for operations.³³¹ James F. Jeffrey replaced Christopher Hill as ambassador to Iraq. Less than 50,000 American troops remained in the country. General Austin had seven advise-and-assist-designated brigades spread across three division-controlled areas of operations.³³² Another 4,500 U.S. special operations forces soldiers remained in the country as well. From 281 bases in November 2009, U.S. forces would now maintain less than 100 installations.³³³

As American troops departed Iraq, the size of territory for which each brigade was responsible grew. Major General Cucolo’s 3d Infantry Division commanded three brigades in USD-N: 1st Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, near Kirkuk; the 2d Brigade, 3d Infantry Division, near Mosul; and the Stryker-equipped 2d Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, near Ba’qubah. In USD-C, Maj. Gen. Terry A. Wolff’s 1st Armored

Division had two brigades: 1st Brigade, 3d Infantry Division, based outside of Baghdad, and 4th Brigade, 3d Infantry Division, operating in Anbar Province. In the south, USD-S, under Maj. Gen. Vincent K. Brooks's 1st Infantry Division oversaw the 3d Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, at Tallil Air Base, and 3d Brigade, 3d Infantry Division, at Iskandariya.³³⁴

Iraq remained a dangerous place. U.S. Army casualties had fallen precipitously since the end of the surge, from 314 deaths in 2008 to 148 in 2009. American fatalities fell a further 60 percent by the end of summer 2010.³³⁵ However, U.S. soldiers remained in the crosshairs of Sunni and Shi'a militants. Enemy action still took the lives of American soldiers as combat units departed the country.³³⁶ In one ominous sign, an Iraqi soldier opened fire at a compound in Salahuddin Province, killing two and wounding nine. It occurred just days after the end of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM.³³⁷

During the fall, the coalition observed an uptick in violence across Iraq. In January 2010, an average of six Iraqi civilians were killed per day, but now in August, it had risen to almost fourteen per day.³³⁸ These casualty figures were nowhere near the numbers of the summer of 2006, when more than 11,000 Iraqis died between June and September.³³⁹ Yet they indicated that Iraqis were still "vulnerable to sporadic, low-grade violence, and well-coordinated mass-casualty attacks."³⁴⁰ Many refugees remained fearful of returning home, with the civilian death toll for 2010 climbing to more than 4,000.³⁴¹ Despite suffering repeated setbacks earlier in the year, ISI still attacked Shi'a and Christians in Baghdad in such numbers that many decided to flee the city.³⁴² As General Austin noted, the Sunni insurgency had "an impressive ability to regenerate capability."³⁴³

To galvanize supporters and claim credit for driving out the Americans, Shi'a militias, with Iranian support, attacked U.S. targets, including the American embassy in Baghdad.³⁴⁴ Maliki released Shi'a militants with political connections from prison to win support from the Shi'a community and strengthen his bid to remain prime minister.³⁴⁵ Moreover, U.S. intelligence detected the return of Special Groups commanders, many of whom had fled to Iran during the surge. This included Ismail Hafiz al-Lami, an Asa'ib Ahlal-Haq commander linked to the torture and killing of Sunni detainees.³⁴⁶

However, the Shi'a militant movement was hardly a unified force. While the Special Groups strengthened their positions, conflicts with Sadrists intensified. Although Sadr remained in



General Odierno relinquishes command of United States Forces–Iraq by passing the unit colors to Marine General James Mattis, commander of U.S. Central Command, at the change of command ceremony, 1 September 2010.

(U.S. Army)

Iran, his Promised Day Brigades started to exert more influence in Shi'a-dominated areas of Iraq. Sadr's allies increased their control over schools, hospitals, and other service ministries, and the cleric remained zealously anti-American and amplified his calls for the immediate departure of U.S. troops.³⁴⁷ As the competition for government seats surged, fighting between Sadr's forces and Asa'ib Ahlal-Haq escalated.³⁴⁸ His influence complicated the situation for Maliki, the Americans, and Iran. He was a powerful rival to the prime minister, the United States considered him complicit in the killings of American soldiers, and Tehran worried he would undercut its ambitions in Iraq by dividing the Shi'a community.³⁴⁹

IRAQIS PREPARE FOR AMERICAN DEPARTURE

Meanwhile, the Iraqi Security Forces remained a work in progress. MNSTC-I believed that the ISF could achieve minimum

essential capabilities—the ability to secure the civilian population and the facility to provide the initial defense against any external conventional force—by December 2011 if it achieved certain conditions. First, it needed a strong and reliable police force to maintain internal security. It also had to strengthen its naval and airpower capabilities. Finally, Iraqi forces must improve their ability to conduct combined arms operations.³⁵⁰ Yet, as 2010 ended, observers in the U.S. believed the ISF was in no better shape and no closer to attaining these objectives than they were a year earlier.³⁵¹

The Iraqi Army had grown to more than 205,000 members, and the Iraqi police was more than 592,000 individuals strong, but it had a long way to go. Iraqi Army battalions still failed to appear for field exercises or complete long-term training cycles. Moreover, shortcomings in Iraqi training plans pushed many units to the edge of combat ineffectiveness. Iraqi leaders rarely granted units enough time to rest, rearm, and retrain. This problem was so grave that General Austin stated his number one concern as the withdrawal approached was that Iraq's armed forces lacked a proper training management system.³⁵²

Branches of the ISF collectively struggled. The Iraqi Air Force and Navy existed mainly on paper.³⁵³ Coordination across the different ISF units, both for intelligence and logistics, was nonexistent.³⁵⁴ The Ministry of Interior's forces faced more problems than the Ministry of Defense. The Iraqi police were unprepared to assume internal security responsibilities from the Iraqi Army. The U.S. State Department, which had the duty to arm and train these police officers, already was understaffed and underfunded. American governmental reports on the Iraqi police painted the organization as incompetent and unable to carry out basic policing duties and procedures, let alone secure the country.³⁵⁵

Overall, deficient logistics and staffing systems hindered the ISF's structure. As a result, the Iraqis could not maintain the assets and equipment given to them by the Americans. Although the Maliki administration attempted to purchase American M1A1 Abrams tanks, U.S. commanders feared the Iraqis would be unable to maintain them without American support.³⁵⁶ American auditors warned that if the army could not mend these issues—ranging from funding, command and control, and logistics—before the withdrawal was complete, they likely would never fix them.³⁵⁷

Political interference persisted as well. The Maliki government cracked down on the few remaining Sons of Iraq fighters in the armed forces, forcing many to quit. Although Baghdad and Washington touted reconciliation, the Iraqi government had only hired 37,000 SOI members, approximately 4,500 into the ISF and 32,500 in other government positions, by the spring of 2010. Even then, the Iraqi government considered the offer of a job—no matter the pay, position, or location—as evidence of reconciliation and integration, even if the applicant turned down the post.³⁵⁸

The Iraqi government used other forms of reprisals. The Ministry of Interior fired police officers in Anbar, a Sunni-dominated province, citing their lack of qualifications or missteps in the employment approval process. As many of these officers had connections to certain Awakening leaders, several SOIs and locals saw this as another round of retribution. Some SOI members, frustrated by the lack of pay and retaliation from ISF officials, returned to insurgent activity.³⁵⁹



First Lt. John Powell explains operating procedures for a combined security checkpoint in the Diyala province, 23 August 2010.
(U.S. Army)

With the number of security incidents rising in Diyala Province throughout the summer of 2010, the Iraqis sought to curtail ISI activity in the area. One point of particular concern was Hadeed, a village about 10 kilometers northwest of Ba'qubah which had been a base for ISI elements for years. In 2006, U.S. forces had killed Zarqawi in a safehouse not far from the village. Four years later, the ISF assessed that ISI intended to make Hadeed a launching point for renewed attacks against Iraqi security and government institutions. In mid-September 2010, Iraqi forces launched a four-day clearing operation against ISI after receiving intelligence from locals regarding their movements. Iraqi Army Lt. Gen. Ali Ghaidan, the commander of Iraqi Ground Forces, declared the objective of Operation NAKHIL (Arabic for palm) was to hunt down insurgents who were constructing bombs on a number of rural farms.³⁶⁰

After imposing a curfew over the area, the Iraqi Army moved into the palm groves (*Map 10*). However, the ISF botched its first assault, and its units failed to coordinate with one another. Iraqi companies were also ill-equipped, with Iraqi officers later remarking that battery teams lacked mortars. The significantly smaller ISI force—some assessments estimated as few as four and no more than twenty-five fighters—stalled the Iraqi advance with grenades and snipers. By the third day, the situation was deteriorating rapidly. As some ISF units fled the grove, the Iraqis asked the U.S. Army for assistance. Troops from Col. Malcolm B. Frost's 2d Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, and U.S. special operations forces arrived on the scene, providing critical artillery and air support. The Americans then helped the ISF cordon off the area, allowing them to resume ground operations. The fighting ended after U.S. aircraft dropped two 500-pound bombs on the insurgent positions. Unfortunately, although the ISF suffered more than thirty casualties, most from friendly fire, the ISI team escaped largely intact.³⁶¹

Iraqi Security Force morale was running low before the battle. A week before the operation commenced, suicide bombers had penetrated an Iraqi military building in Baghdad, killing eighteen Iraqi soldiers. Confidence fell again after Hadeed, with one Iraqi lieutenant commenting, "If it wasn't for American air support and artillery, we would never have dreamed of entering that orchard." Another lamented, "if it wasn't for God and the Americans, we would never have won this." Events just days after the battle further undermined Iraqi resolve. Protests erupted in Fallujah after an ISF raid on a suspected insurgent

BATTLE OF PALM GROVE

HADEED, IRAQ

10-13 September 2010



Reinforcements from FOB Warhorse



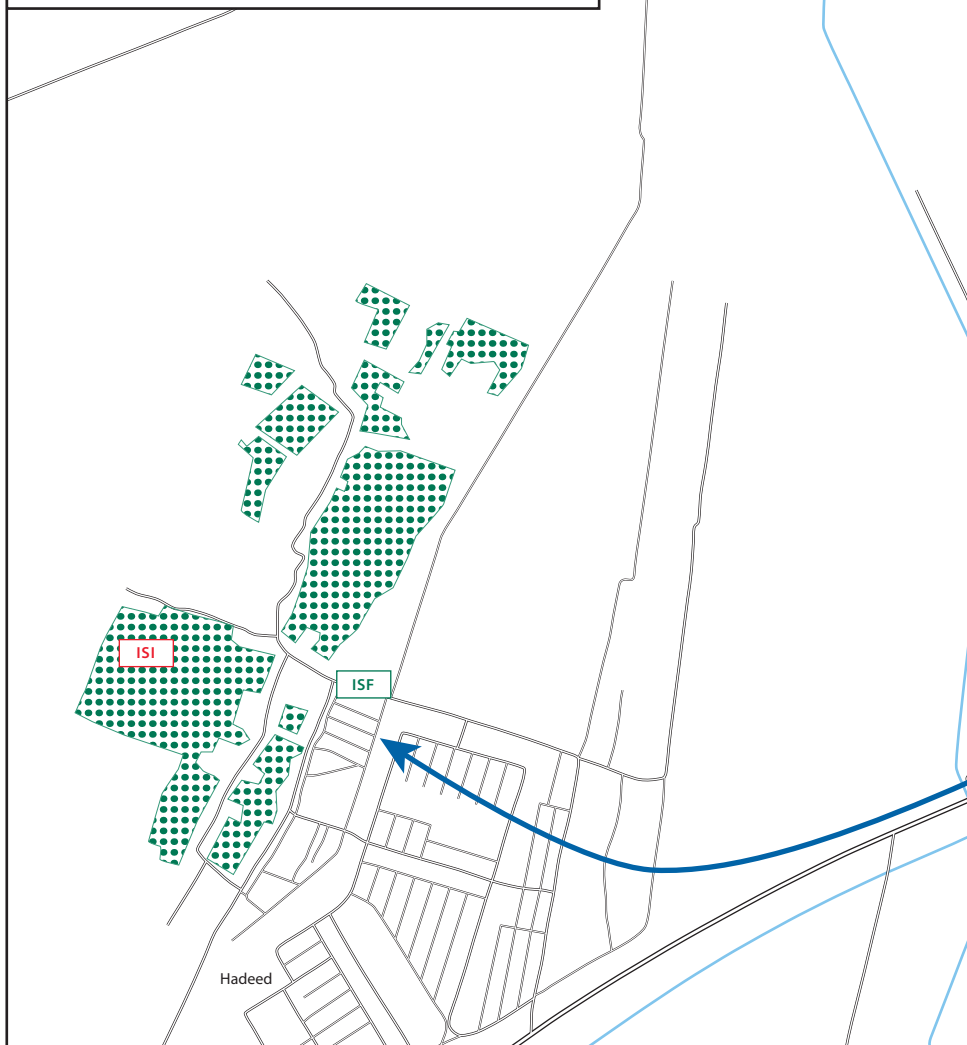
Palm Grove

0

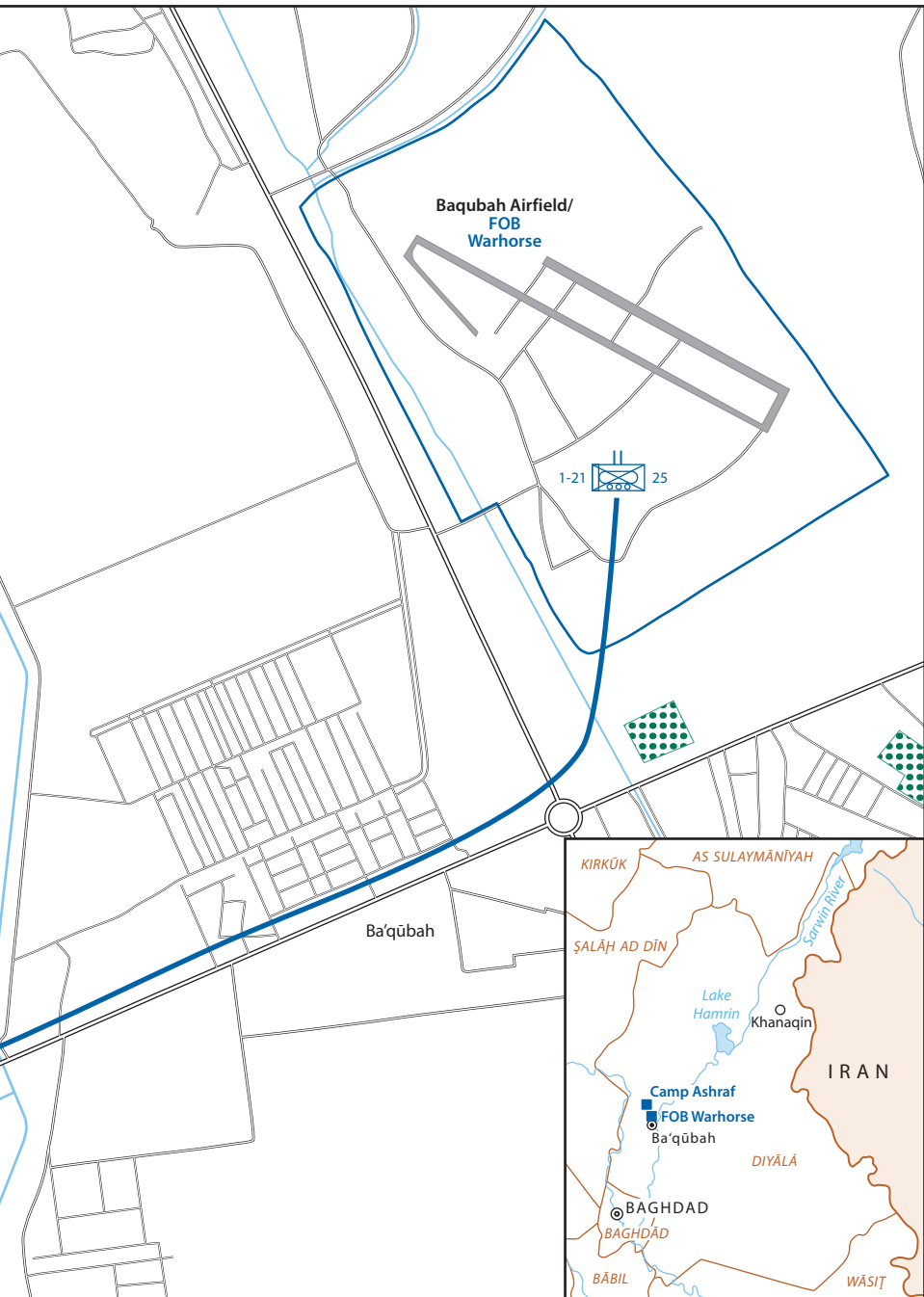
1 Mile

0

1 Kilometer



Map 10



hideout killed several civilians, including a young child and an elderly woman.³⁶²

Despite the outcome at Hadeed, not all Americans were discouraged. For one, Lt. Col. Robert A. Forte, the deputy commander of the 2d Brigade, commended the ISF's initiative for conceiving and launching the operation. He also acknowledged that ISF had encountered difficult fighting conditions because of the "deep, dense, jungle terrain."³⁶³ Iraqi commanders appeared eager to learn from their mistakes by asking the Americans to help conduct an after action review of the operation. As a result, Iraqi soldiers and U.S. troops from the 25th Infantry Division held a month-long training exercise in another palm grove similar to the one near Hadeed. One of the brigade's battalion commanders, Lt. Col. Robert J. Molinari, noted the ISF's chaotic command climate. There had been too many high-level officers on the scene and the Iraqis granted little autonomy to company commanders and platoon leaders. The Americans, therefore, decided to focus on the fundamentals of soldiering by retraining the Iraqis on platoon formations and close combat tactics. Colonel Frost concluded that Hadeed was a "wake-up call" for the ISF.³⁶⁴

Operation NAKHIL illustrated that the ISF needed significant improvements to its platoon and company-level training plans, and that it required a better operational organization. Moreover, it indicated that the ISF still possessed limited capability for conducting wholly independent actions. Although firepower had played a critical role in the battle, the Americans had not yet furnished the Iraqi Army with the hardware required—howitzers, M1A1 tanks, armored personnel carriers, and radar systems—to sustain these types of maneuvers. In the year prior, the United States had ceased directly funding the Iraqi Security Forces. Because of a slow-moving bureaucracy and a chaotic political environment following the March elections, the Iraqis never developed a reliable procurement system that could assume or replace American management.³⁶⁵ Furthermore, when equipment finally began arriving in late 2010, Iraqi budget shortfalls jeopardized the ISF's ability to run the necessary maintenance programs.³⁶⁶ Because of these delays and shortcomings, the Iraqis remained dependent on U.S. artillery and combat power.

The September battle also served as a timely reminder for the U.S. Army. Although the Americans were confident that they could have easily overwhelmed the insurgents in Hadeed, it



Iraqi Army soldiers and U.S. soldiers search houses in Baqubah, Iraq, 27 September 2010.
(U.S. Army)

was no longer their place to plan and carry out such operations. As his noncommissioned officers and junior officers lobbied to join the action in Diyala, Colonel Molinari reminded them that “If I send you out there, you will probably eliminate the threat. But that’s not the mission. The mission is to get [the ISF] to do it.”³⁶⁷ Still, in light of the fight within the palm groves, several American commanders and soldiers began wondering if all the years of funding and training the ISF had been worth it.³⁶⁸

Along with combat operations, U.S. detention facilities also wound down as the end of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM approached. Camp Cropper, Camp Bucca, and Camp Taji were in Iraqi hands.³⁶⁹ Handovers continued despite Iraq’s problematic judicial system. Allegations of torture, abuse, corruption, and political retribution marred the Iraqi Ministry of Justice’s reputation. In addition, Iraqi authorities had limited knowledge of how to process and handle eyewitness testimony, classified information, and modern forensic evidence. Prison breaks also increased in frequency.³⁷⁰

Two factors complicated base handovers and closures. American brigades and battalions had to balance training the ISF while preparing to leave their installations and forward

operating posts. The cap on forces and continuing redeployment of troops created a dilemma for these units: as the withdrawal deadline approached, there were fewer and fewer troops to accomplish the growing number of tasks. Consolidating bases also meant that American soldiers would no longer have continuous contact with ISF soldiers because the soldiers would now need to “commute” from the now more limited number of U.S. bases to the Iraqi frontlines.³⁷¹ For militant groups, these service members were now targets of opportunity. As many Shi’a groups had close ties to the Maliki government and various units within the ISF, USF-I decided to disclose its handover timetable to the Iraqis only when transfers were “imminent” to prevent leaking information to militants who may have wanted to take advantage of any troop movements.³⁷²

Complicating matters further were Maliki’s continued efforts to consolidate control over the Iraqi state. Although ostensibly a caretaker prime minister pending the formation of a new government, Maliki nevertheless continued to purge Sunnis perceived to be disloyal from the Ministry of Defense and intelligence services. General Odierno feared Maliki would try to stage a “rolling coup d’état of the Iraqi state” that could destabilize the country and jeopardize the drawdown.³⁷³ As the stalemate in Iraq’s parliament dragged on, many American officials lobbied the Obama administration to withdraw its support for Maliki.³⁷⁴

In an ironic twist, the Americans and Iranians came to the same conclusion regarding who should be the new prime minister. Tehran played a vital role in keeping Maliki in power, viewing him and his coalition as a conduit for greater influence over Iraq. In September, Qasem Soleimani admonished Iraqi leaders to come to an agreement or risk losing access to Iranian patronage. Believing that Iraq needed a reliable Shi’a leader and seeing no other viable alternatives, the U.S. ultimately supported Maliki.³⁷⁵ In November, the Shi’a and Kurdish political factions agreed to keep Maliki as prime minister. This bargain, finalized in December, ended the 278-day caretaker government.³⁷⁶ Soon after, Kata’ib Hezbollah celebrated the deal by launching rockets at Camp Victory and Forward Operating Base Kalsu.³⁷⁷ Because of the rising number of coordinated rocket attacks—a telltale sign of Iranian assistance—USF-I believed that Iraq’s Shi’a militants and Iran were pursuing a strategy to ensure the Americans would leave the country in 2011.

Many American commanders worried about Iraq after the U.S.-withdrawal. When asked in December 2010 what Iraq

would look like in the future, USD-C commander, General Wolff, answered: “At this point, I just don’t know.”³⁷⁸ Several Americans sensed that Iraqis were anxious about the possible power vacuum. Although some Iraqi Army units were eager to see the U.S. leave, others, including the Kurdish Peshmerga, were anxious about the upcoming departure of their allies. To alleviate their partners’ concerns, many U.S. advisers tried to stay on the line as long as possible and delay consolidating their troops onto larger American bases.³⁷⁹ Others tried to conduct shows of force by having tank companies patrol their areas of operations. However, decision makers in Baghdad often prevented these movements, deeming them too aggressive.³⁸⁰

RENEWED NEGOTIATIONS

With just a year left on the original 2008 agreement, the U.S. and Iraqis looked to negotiate a new security agreement. Entering 2011, the U.S. Army prepared for two possibilities: withdrawing entirely from Iraq or leaving a residual force behind. Many American officials believed Iraq still required a substantial number of U.S. troops to remain in the country for training the ISF, engaging in counterterrorism operations, and maintaining strong American influence in the region.³⁸¹ Even President Obama agreed it was important to keep some American troops in Iraq past the 2011 deadline.³⁸² Several Iraqi commanders shared these sentiments. They specifically feared Iranian intentions in the country after the withdrawal. The Iraqi Army Chief of Staff, General Babker Zebrai, argued that the U.S. should stay in Iraq until 2020.³⁸³ However, the political uncertainties stemming from the March 2010 parliamentary elections, and the resulting eight-month caretaker government, stalled negotiations over a potential residual presence. In the meantime, the Obama administration debated internally over the size of this force. Although U.S. Central Command preferred to keep 25,000 troops in Iraq, the American president envisioned no more than 10,000.³⁸⁴

Two critical issues quickly materialized. The Obama administration wanted a new agreement ratified by the Iraqi Parliament, and it wanted Baghdad to guarantee immunity for U.S. troops stationed in Iraq. Maliki resisted both. In his mind, advancing or agreeing to a new agreement would give his rivals the chance to label him as an American puppet.³⁸⁵ Influential politicians and religious figures called for the Maliki administration to deny an extension. Sadr demanded Maliki stop meeting with American military and diplomatic staff.³⁸⁶



U.S. soldiers stand in formation alongside Iraqi Army soldiers before a base transfer ceremony on Joint Security Station Hussayniyah, 14 May 2011.

(U.S. Army)

Joint U.S.-Iraqi counterterrorism raids resulting in civilian deaths further galvanized Iraqi calls for the Americans to leave, generating constant political crises.³⁸⁷ Without a new deal, the 2008 status of forces agreement would expire at the end of December. If these talks ultimately failed, Americans would have to wait for the Iraqi government to formally extend the deadline.

THE FINAL YEAR

The year 2011 began ominously. First, Moqtada al-Sadr returned to Iraq four years after fleeing to Iran.³⁸⁸ Soon after his arrival, his militia group, the Promised Day Brigades, launched rockets at the Green Zone from their bases in eastern Baghdad and attacked American convoys.³⁸⁹ Second, as part of a prisoner exchange, the Iraqi government released Qais al-Khazali of Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq. He resumed his militia's political and military operations, which focused on driving the Americans from Iraq.³⁹⁰ Third, Sunni and Shi'a militants, sometimes aided by rogue elements of the ISF, broke out of several prisons.³⁹¹ The Islamic

State of Iraq bombed Shi'a pilgrims and funeral processions and embarked on a campaign of assassinations against ISF officials, Kurdish leaders, and Iraqi politicians.³⁹² Finally, an Iraqi soldier killed two U.S. trainers at a checkpoint in northern Iraq, straining American morale.³⁹³ At this same time, tumult engulfed the Middle East and North Africa. In January 2011, demonstrators, frustrated by state corruption and discouraged by their social and economic prospects, ousted the Tunisian government. Inspired by these events, protests erupted across the regions in early 2011. Seemingly stable autocratic regimes, like Hosni Mubarak's Egypt, collapsed after decades of rule. Dubbed the Arab Spring, it further complicated the situation in Iraq. To Maliki's dismay, antigovernment marches spread throughout Iraq, culminating in what organizers called the "Day of Rage" on 25 February 2011. Iraqi students protested high poverty rates, corruption, food shortages, and unreliable electricity.³⁹⁴ Although these protests did not reach the same magnitude as the Egyptian and Tunisian protests, they did occur in every major Iraqi city. Maliki responded with force, dispatching riot police to break up rallies, censoring the media, and arresting journalists critical of his government. As the political unrest unfolded, Arabs and Kurds in northern Iraq clashed over territory near Kirkuk.³⁹⁵

The United States watched these events with unease. American advisers and civilian staffs across Iraq had previously documented that almost every province and governorate could not provide stable services and, as a result, local economies were lagging.³⁹⁶ American troops, primarily confined to their bases, had to rely on their Iraqi counterparts for information as the demonstrations spread.³⁹⁷ In addition, the protests upended ISF training plans as Maliki deployed troops to various hotspots. These included the Maysan Province, where the prime minister believed Sadr-linked affiliates were exacerbating disturbances and fomenting tensions.³⁹⁸

Quashing the demonstrations emboldened the prime minister. Throughout the year, Maliki expanded his control over Iraqi agencies that oversaw the central bank and elections. He stripped members of parliament of the ability to propose legislation and instead assumed this responsibility himself.³⁹⁹ Bribery flourished as the Maliki administration offered jobs and positions to incentivize loyalty. With a government marred by corruption and nepotism, several administrative and ministerial posts remained unfilled by the end of the year.⁴⁰⁰ Maliki's power expanded in the Iraqi security apparatus as he served as acting



Iraqi soldiers secure an area after coming into simulated contact with enemy forces during squad movement drills at al-Ghuzlani Warrior Training Center, 3 January 2011.

(U.S. Army)

head of both the Ministry of Interior and Defense.⁴⁰¹ By this point, the Iraqi government had ceased recruiting any remaining SOI and some of those previously hired SOI members had their salary or rank stripped by the interior ministry.⁴⁰²

Events in Diyala Province signaled that Iran was continuing to extend its sphere of influence across Iraq. At the time, more than 3,000 members of the People's Mujahedin Organization of Iran (MeK) continued to reside at Camp Ashraf. An Iranian political-militant organization opposed to the Islamic Republic of Iran, MeK first arrived in Iraq during Saddam Hussein's reign.⁴⁰³ The group fell under United Nations protection after signing a cease-fire agreement with coalition forces in 2003. The camp was effectively a gated community in which the dissidents lived in relative peace and security. ISF forces previously attacked Camp Ashraf in July 2009, leaving 11 dead and more than 400 injured.⁴⁰⁴ With the American withdrawal from Iraq imminent, Iran ramped up calls for the MeK's expulsion from Iraq. Maliki acquiesced to the Iranian request and launched a military operation against Ashraf in mid-April. Although Colonel Frost tried to persuade ISF commanders to delay the operation, the 5th Iraqi Army Division launched an assault, killing some 34

MeK and wounding more than 300 others. The violence only ended when Colonel Frost and his troops arrived on the scene.⁴⁰⁵

To thwart any new deal that would permit U.S. forces to stay in Iraq past 2011, the Special Groups and their affiliates pursued a dual strategy of striking Iraqi security institutions and American bases. Qais al-Khazali's Asa'ib Ahlal-Haq targeted Iraqi Army officers, nearly assassinating the commander of the 6th Iraqi Army Division.⁴⁰⁶ Attacks against U.S. targets ramped up as the year progressed, from 93 incidents in February to 162 in April. Eleven U.S. soldiers lost their lives in April.⁴⁰⁷ In early June, Kata'ib Hezbollah claimed responsibility for a rocket barrage that killed six Americans at Camp Loyalty and three more at Forward Operating Base Shocker.⁴⁰⁸ In July, Asa'ib Ahlal-Haq hit American bases in Maysan Province with rockets. By the end of the month, thirty-three Americans had died from hostile fire.⁴⁰⁹ When General Austin accused the Iraqi government of not engaging Shi'a militias, Maliki brushed off the claims. U.S. officials attributed the prime minister's behavior to growing Iranian influence within Iraqi political parties.⁴¹⁰ Special Groups activity in USD-S reinforced this assessment. In one instance, a Sadrist on Basra's provincial council attempted to ban the USF-I from moving within the province.⁴¹¹ American bases in the south endured repeated rocket attacks.⁴¹²

Also concerning was the fact that by the summer of 2011, ISI was recovering from the spring of 2010. Under new leadership, it replenished its coffers and deployed covert units to assassinate political and tribal opponents. Its fighters began infiltrating Iraqi institutions across Iraq. An ISI spokesman issued a blunt warning, "the days of Zarqawi are going to return soon."⁴¹³ Throughout the year, Sunni insurgents launched a number of high-profile attacks. In March, ISI operatives staged a complex attack in Tikrit involving car bombs, hostage taking, and suicide bombers that killed five ISF soldiers and more than fifty civilians. Among the dead were local council members and journalists.⁴¹⁴ Before the skirmish, the Pentagon had hoped to avoid replacing the departing 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division. However, in the aftermath, the 4th Brigade, 1st Armored Division, moved into USD-N.⁴¹⁵ ISI assassinations of military, police, and state officials also increased, including the killing of Ali al-Lami, the head of the de-Ba'thification committee, in June.⁴¹⁶ As the Iraqi government dismissed concerns about the escalating violence, ISI struck again in August, simultaneously hitting Shi'a, Chris-

tian, and even Sunni neighborhoods in seven different cities.⁴¹⁷ Frustrated by the “paralysis at the strategic level,” the deputy commander of USF-I, Lt. Gen. Frank G. Helmick, warned that without a new security agreement, American troop withdrawals would continue despite the “uptick” in violence. He further cautioned that if Baghdad requested assistance, it may be too late for the U.S. Army to “turn around.”⁴¹⁸

END OF USF-I: SEPTEMBER–DECEMBER 2011

WITHDRAWAL WATERFALL

As fall approached, northern Iraq remained volatile. Although the Americans continued to assume overwatch positions, Arabs, Kurds, and Turkmens, each armed with their own militias, jockeyed for position in the area.⁴¹⁹ U.S. Army units and the local Iraqi Arab and Iraqi Kurdish populations fretted over what would happen once the Americans left.⁴²⁰ A USF-I assessment from the summer warned that Arab and Kurdish tensions remained “a potential flashpoint in northern Iraq.”⁴²¹ As the likelihood of a new status of forces agreement diminished, USF-I removed U.S. troops and advisers as slowly as possible from combined



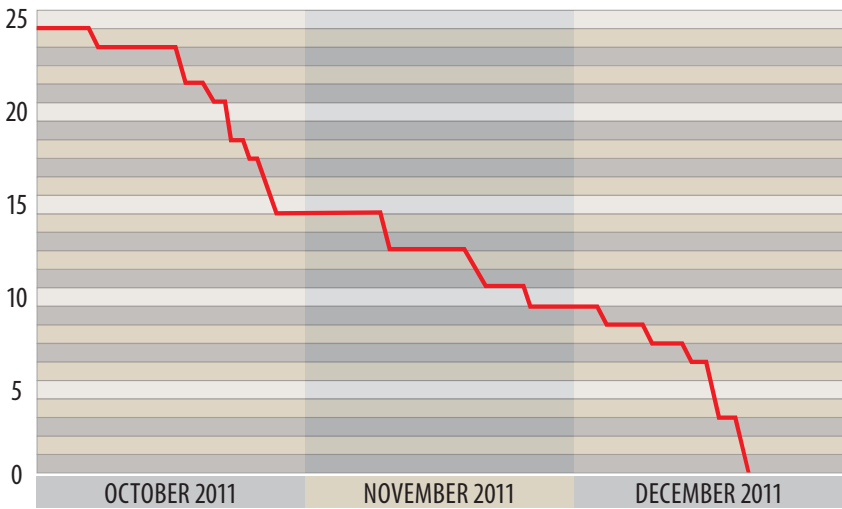
S. Sgt. Cale Chaney, section leader, and paratroopers walk through a field parallel to a main convoy route on 15 November 2011, searching the area for roadside bombs.
(U.S. Army)

checkpoints along the boundary between Kurdish and Arab territory, seeking to delay final departure.⁴²² Events in the fall seemed to confirm the wisdom of this policy when Peshmerga units moved back into Khanaqin in September claiming to be hunting down insurgents. Instead, the Kurds appeared to have staged the move as a pretext to annex the district.⁴²³

By the fall of 2011, the ISF climbed to more than 933,000 personnel, up from 793,000 in late 2010.⁴²⁴ Of the Ministry of Defense branches, the Iraqi Army was the largest with 200,000 soldiers compared to the Air Force's 5,000 airmen and the Navy's 3,600 sailors. Within the Ministry of Interior, the Iraqi police reached around 325,000 officers, with another 324,000 in training and other protective services.⁴²⁵ Yet, quantity could not compensate for the ISF's qualitative weaknesses. The Iraqi government lacked formal long-term training plans or specific objectives for the police and armed forces.⁴²⁶ Despite acquiring several key pieces of firepower from the Americans, including howitzers and M1A1 tanks, General Austin conceded that it was unlikely the ISF would be able to secure districts such as Sadr City in Baghdad without U.S. assistance.⁴²⁷ Moreover, as the U.S. withdrawal approached, the Iraqi prime minister purged the security forces of commanders deemed too close to the Americans.⁴²⁸ Maliki also targeted Sunni officers, replacing five of fourteen division commanders with party loyalists. In addition, Iraqi special forces regularly attacked Sunni groups while ignoring Shi'a targets.⁴²⁹

As the withdrawal deadline approached, the U.S. Army continued to rotate units in and out of Iraq.⁴³⁰ When the headquarters of USD-S began redeploying—the 36th Infantry Division, from the Texas National Guard—in late August, USD-C expanded its area of responsibility into southern Iraq.⁴³¹ The withdrawal process, however, complicated Army logistics. With troops leaving, questions arose over who would monitor incoming and outgoing equipment and manage electrical and sewage utilities.⁴³²

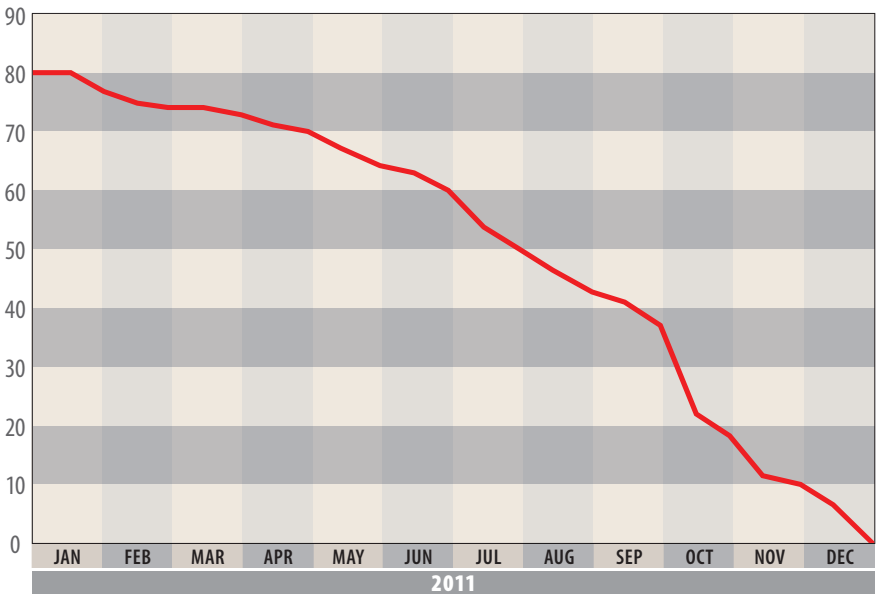
In October, President Obama offered to limit a residual force to 3,000–5,000 troops.⁴³³ Yet, the Iraqis still declined to provide immunity for U.S. troops once the deadline passed. Therefore, on 21 October, he announced that all U.S. forces would leave Iraq by the end of the year.⁴³⁴ The United States had less than 60 days to redeploy 40,000 soldiers and 36,000 contractors. Although the U.S. Department of Defense transferred military and nonmilitary equipment to the State Department and Afghanistan, more than 860,000 pieces of equipment, including wheeled vehicles, remained in Iraq.⁴³⁵



Battalion Waterfall

Soldiers and equipment departed Iraq through convoys into Kuwait or by flying out of the country. As the deadline approached, the redeployment accelerated so quickly that a graph of troop numbers over time resembled a waterfall. Only 17,000 troops remained in Iraq by November.⁴³⁶ The U.S. Army expedited equipment handovers to Defense Department elements outside Iraq, the American diplomatic mission, and the Iraqis. Some units had not yet completed the allotted deployment time in the country which forced the Army to plan for an influx of forces in Kuwait.⁴³⁷ By the beginning of December, the U.S. footprint had shrunk to five bases, with 500 to 800 soldiers leaving Iraq daily.⁴³⁸ In all, twenty-four battalions departed Iraq. Many used Main Supply Route Tampa (Iraqi Highway 1), which ran from Mosul to southern Iraq, reaching the Kuwaiti border crossing.⁴³⁹

At the height of the surge campaign, the Americans operated nearly 500 bases and installations in Iraq. By late fall 2011, nearly all were either closed or transferred to either the State Department or the Iraqi government.⁴⁴⁰ The U.S. Department of Defense retained six facilities which were located in Baghdad, Besmaya, Kirkuk, Taji, Tikrit, and Umm Qasr.⁴⁴¹ The withdrawal waterfall complicated this transfer process, as there were too few troops to conduct a proper handover.⁴⁴² While preparing to turnover Camp Victory to the Iraqis, USF-I shifted its command centers to Al Asad Air Base and Kuwait.⁴⁴³



Base Closures

LEAVING IRAQ

Prime Minister Maliki visited Washington, D.C. just before American troops withdrew from Iraq. At the White House, he celebrated Iraq’s “democratic process” and argued that the country had become “reliant completely on its own security apparatus and internal security.”⁴⁴⁴ He further touted the strength of the Iraqi-American alliance. However, as General Austin cased the colors for the end of mission ceremony—signifying the end of Operation NEW DAWN—at Camp Victory three days later on 15 December, Maliki’s reserved seat sat empty. Other high-level Iraqi officials also snubbed the ceremony, indicating that the relationship between Baghdad and Washington would be tense in the future.⁴⁴⁵

As the withdrawal deadline approached, the U.S. Army continued to rotate units out of Iraq.³⁸⁸ When the headquarters of USD-S began redeploying--the 36th Infantry Division, from the Texas National Guard--in late August, USD-C expanded its area of responsibility into southern Iraq.³⁸⁹ The withdrawal process, however, complicated Army logistics. With troops leaving, questions arose over who would monitor incoming and outgoing equipment and manage electrical and sewage utilities.³⁹⁰

On 18 December, the last American convoy, comprised of soldiers from Colonel Douglas C. Crissman's 3d Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, departed Contingency Operating Base Adder



Map 11

near Nasiriyah at 0230 and crossed into Kuwait at dawn (*Map 11*). USF-I subsequently dissolved.⁴⁴⁶ Although the U.S. had worried that militants would target the convoys, they reached the border safely. Even then, Iraqis only learned about the final movement after the Americans settled in Kuwait.⁴⁴⁷ Just days before, the United States also turned over its last detainee—Ali Musa Daqduq, the operative who orchestrated the January 2007 Karbala attacks—to the Iraqis.⁴⁴⁸

The day after the Americans left, Maliki called for a no-confidence vote against his Sunni Deputy Prime Minister Saleh al-Mutlaq. Alleging connections to sectarian death squads, Maliki

also attempted to arrest Vice President Tariq al-Hashemi, who promptly fled to Iraqi Kurdistan. Furthermore, as he sidelined opposition parties in parliament, Maliki announced that he would be running for a third term, reneging on his promise not to do so after the February protests.⁴⁴⁹ As Mutlaq forewarned, “there will be a day whereby the Americans will realize that they were deceived by al-Maliki . . . and they will regret it.”⁴⁵⁰

Addressing soldiers at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, as the withdrawal neared completion, President Obama announced that “one of the most extraordinary chapters in the history of the American military will come to an end. Iraq’s future will be in the hands of its people.” Although the president declared that this was the end of “America’s war,” the U.S. military maintained a limited presence in Iraq under the Office of Security Cooperation–Iraq (OSC-I).⁴⁵¹ Consisting of only 150 military personnel and with U.S. Army Lt. Gen. Robert L. Caslen in command, OSC-I was the last U.S. Department of Defense entity left in Iraq. However, it was accountable to the American diplomatic mission and under the purview of the U.S. State Department. OSC-I did not have any security agreements on footprint size or facility access with the Iraqi government at the time. Nevertheless, this small contingent would continue monitoring Iraq’s situation while also training and equipping the ISF.⁴⁵² Only time would tell if the Iraqis could achieve security and stability on their own.



Gen. Lloyd J. Austin III, commander, United States Forces–Iraq, and Cmd. Sgt. Maj. Joseph R. Allen case the USF-I flag during a ceremony marking the end of Operation *NEW DAWN* and the war in Iraq.

(U.S. Army)

ANALYSIS

Between 2009 and 2011, the U.S. Army aimed to cement the gains of the 2007–2008 Iraqi surge campaign. In contrast to the surge, however, new political realities meant that the Army no longer had complete control over security and stability operations in the country. Instead, it often found itself occupying a secondary role. As the political process played out over whether U.S. forces would remain in Iraq past 2011, the Army focused on assisting the Iraqi government in expanding its governing capabilities, mitigating Arab-Kurdish tensions, eliminating insurgents, and advising the Iraqi Security Forces.

A number of signs indicated that Iraq was becoming a safer and more stable country. Between December 2008 and December 2011, violence fell significantly across Iraq. Whereas the U.S. had more than 300 fatalities in 2008, that number plunged to less than 150 in 2009. Around sixty Americans died in 2010 and also in 2011. Iraqi civilian casualties also dropped. In 2008, more than 10,000 died; that number shrank to 5,300 in 2009, and about 4,000 in 2010. The rate of suicide bombings and attacks against Iraqi police and military personnel also declined.⁴⁵³

Other statistics, however, painted a troubling picture. Despite the considerable drop in security incidents, Iraq was still a dangerous place. The number of Iraqi civilian deaths in 2011 remained roughly the same as in 2010: security incidents killed nearly 350 Iraqis per month in America's final year in Iraq.⁴⁵⁴ Between 2009 and 2011, there was a monthly average of 260 bombings in Iraqi cities. Baghdad continued to be the most volatile area in Iraq, followed by Diyala and Ninewa Provinces. Further adding to Iraq's societal pressures was that more than 2.6 million civilians were displaced internally and unable to return home.⁴⁵⁵ High unemployment hindered Iraq's economy, and essential services, such as clean water and electricity, remained out of reach for millions of Iraqi

civilians. The Iraqi government required substantial foreign financial and reconstructive assistance to address these issues. As combat operations wound down, however, the Army struggled to shift funds to civil infrastructure needs. Congress appropriated less money for Iraq, and the U.S. Department of Defense downsized budget requests while allocating assets to other missions, including Afghanistan.⁴⁵⁶

Throughout 2009, U.S.-led counterinsurgency efforts continued to degrade the operational capacity of the Islamic State of Iraq. By mid-2010, American commanders believed that the group had been “degraded” to the point that they could only carry out “periodic attacks.”⁴⁵⁷ Many officials in Washington believed that American combat operations and counterinsurgency raids had subdued the insurgency in Iraq.⁴⁵⁸ The death of Al Qaeda founder and leader Osama bin Laden in May 2011 contributed to the sense that the global jihad movement was collapsing. Although Army and American leaders did not discount ISI’s capacity to project violence, they did not believe that the movement would have the ability to replicate its 2005–2006 capabilities.⁴⁵⁹

However, although no longer a strategic threat, ISI was far from eliminated. Between 2009 and 2011, the surviving leadership shifted its center of operations from Baghdad to Mosul, going to ground while maintaining and fortifying its command-and-control systems.⁴⁶⁰ Reviewing its activities during the 2006–2008 sectarian fighting, the group devised new tactics and commanded its followers to prepare for the departure of the Americans. Predicting that the withdrawal would trigger political infighting among Iraqi Sunnis, the insurgents wanted to weaken rivals, recruit disillusioned fighters from the SOI program, and coalesce antigovernment opposition under ISI’s umbrella. New guidance then called for fighters to target Sunni Muslims, whom they considered to be traitors, rather than U.S. military personnel. ISI embarked on a campaign to assassinate Iraqi government officials and perceived hostile tribal leaders. To avoid a repeated “Awakening-style backlash,” members also approached hesitant tribes with more restraint and sought to engage with them diplomatically.⁴⁶¹ As it implemented the new strategy, ISI waited for U.S. troops to leave Iraq and for the Maliki administration to further alienate the Sunnis.

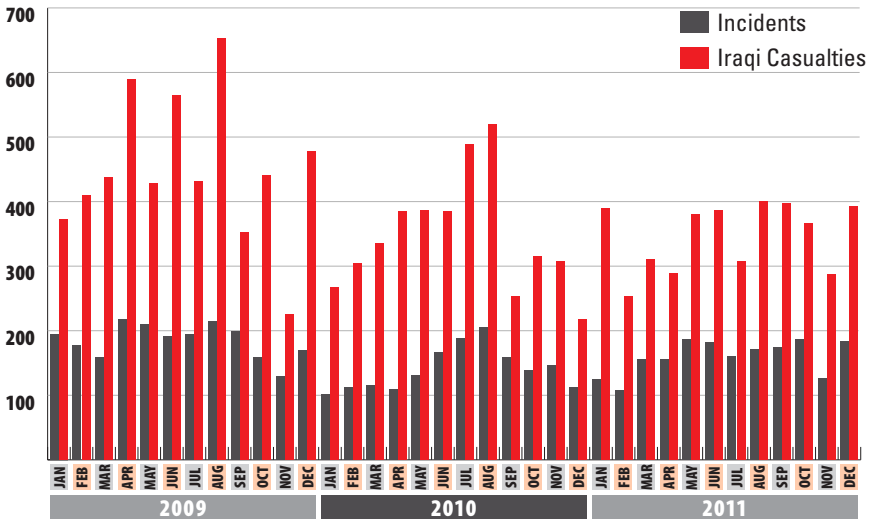
The security gains from the surge campaign ultimately set the conditions for the U.S. Army to transition from combat

operations to security force assistance. American advisory efforts had improved over earlier endeavors to train the Iraqi Security Forces. Advise and assist brigades maintained the combat power of a brigade combat team, but an increase of assets, enablers, and advisers now enhanced them. Although not always stress free, changes in command relationships, training, and planning helped the shift in mission emphasis. There was, however, still room for improvement. As Operation NEW DAWN neared conclusion, Congress determined that the brigades still required additional resources and personnel, including more subject matter experts, logisticians, and intelligence officers. Congressional analysts and the Army alike also noted the need to improve the integration of advisers into their units to better assist the mission and minimize disruption within the chain of command.⁴⁶²

Many soldiers believed the advise and assist structure provided a working road map to finish training the ISF and ensure Iraq remained stable after the United States departed.⁴⁶³ However, sectarianism, corruption, and other problems seemingly entrenched in the Iraqi armed forces made the advisory mission a challenge. Shi'a officers dominated the force, and Maliki's policies corroded the upper echelons of the military's leadership.⁴⁶⁴ Broader Iraqi cultural and institutional legacies also posed obstacles to trainers.⁴⁶⁵ The Iraqi military lacked a reliable noncommissioned officer corps, and its branches remained marred by deficiencies in leadership, training, and equipment.⁴⁶⁶ The U.S. Army thus found it difficult to build a professional, American-style, Iraqi military force capable of conducting combined arms operations. Whether this was the best approach to begin with was an open question, but lack of time and resources severely limited the options available to American advisers.

The U.S. Army progressively lost influence as the status of forces agreement deadline loomed. Consigned to bases and outposts outside Iraqi cities, U.S. troops and advisers also grew disconnected from their Iraqi counterparts. Friction between Iraqi and American commanders increased as the former desired greater autonomy despite continuously relying on the latter for firepower and other forms of assistance. The Maliki administration also failed to finance and maintain training exercises and facilities.

The Army stepped aside as Iraqi commanders took charge of planning and overseeing military offensives—it offered



CASUALTY/INCIDENT RELATIONSHIP OF IRAQI CIVILIANS, 2009–2011

advice, but the Iraqi commanders did not always accept it. The ISF ultimately had its own agenda, some of which ran counter to U.S. priorities.⁴⁶⁷ However, unable to change the terms laid out by the 2008 status of forces agreement and the new rules of engagement, Army commanders and advisers had to weigh several moral and legal issues in their area of operations before determining the best course of action. The complicated Iraqi political scene further compounded this process. The policies of the Maliki government—such as choosing not to support the Sons of Iraq program, limiting operations against Shi’a militants, and politicizing the Iraqi security apparatus—did not make these decisions easy.

As the Americans trained their Iraqi partners, the Obama administration’s strategic shift to Afghanistan compelled Army commanders in Iraq to relinquish weapons, equipment, and personnel for that effort. Furthermore, the U.S. State Department gradually assumed more responsibility for the American mission. Competing visions over how to best handle the handover and prepare for the withdrawal led to a spike in tensions between the U.S. Embassy and Army headquarters in Baghdad.

Domestic pressures in Iraq and the United States played a significant role in the decision to withdraw. Since the 1990–1991 Gulf War, Iraq had either been in conflict with the United States or occupied by American forces. The Iraqi people were



Two Iraqi children in front of an armored vehicle in a village north of Baghdad on 17 November 2011.
(U.S. Army)

ready for an era that did not involve the continuous presence of U.S. soldiers in their country. Iraqi politicians were wary of openly supporting any security agreement, however limited, with the Americans. The trauma of the 11 September 2001 attacks and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq had taken a collective toll on American society. The onset of a global financial crisis in 2008 only further compounded these stresses. By the end of President George W. Bush's tenure, the American public was ready to move on from the Middle



Iraqi Prime Minister Maliki gives a speech during the Government of Iraq ceremony at the Al Faw Palace at Victory Base Complex, Iraq, 1 December 2011.

(U.S. Air Forces Central)

East. The new president, Barack H. Obama, made every effort to honor his campaign pledge to leave Iraq. From here, his administration aimed to reorient American national security interests to Afghanistan and the Pacific.⁴⁶⁸

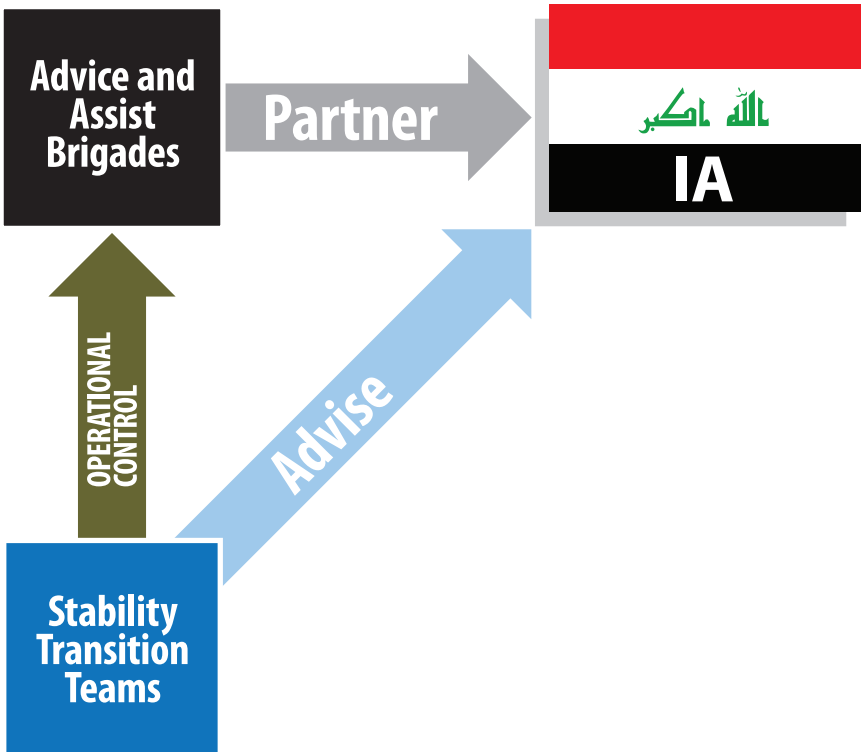
The situation in Iraq was somewhat uncertain in December 2011. The country still faced intermittent violence, and its political system was fragile. And yet, Iraq appeared to be on the road to a level of stability it had not experienced since 2003. Several Army commanders had hoped that a residual force would remain behind to continue training and advising their Iraqi partners. Nevertheless, there was no imminent military or political crisis at the time that would have warranted the Americans to disregard the terms laid out by the 2008 security agreement and extend U.S. troop presence without explicit Iraqi consent. As a result, the United States departed Iraq hoping to close a chapter on a tumultuous eight

years. More than one million U.S. Army soldiers saw combat in Iraq between March 2003 and December 2011. More than 4,500 American service members lost their lives, and 32,000 were wounded.⁴⁶⁹ Moving forward, both the U.S. and Iraqi governments concluded it was now time for Iraq to control its own destiny.

APPENDIX

Command Relationship Between Stability Transition Teams, Advise and Assist Brigades, and Iraqis

Source: Presentation, Stability Transition Team, 2d Advise and Assist Bde, 25th Inf Div, 29 Jan 2010.



ABBREVIATIONS

AQI	Al Qaeda in Iraq
BCT	brigade combat team
IED	improvised explosive device
ISF	Iraqi Security Forces
ISI	Islamic State of Iraq
JAM	Jaysh al-Mahdi
PKK	Kurdistan Worker's Party
MeK	People's Mujahedin Organization of Iran
MNC-I	Multi-National Corps–Iraq
MND-B	Multi-National Division–Baghdad
MND-C	Multi-National Division–Center
MND-N	Multi-National Division–North
MNF-I	Multi-National Force–Iraq
MNSTC-I	Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq
NCOs	noncommissioned officers
OSC-I	Office of Security Cooperation–Iraq
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
SOI	Sons of Iraq
STT	Stability Transition Team
USD-C	United States Division–Center
USD-N	United States Division–North
USD-S	United States Division–South
USF-I	United States Forces–Iraq

THE AUTHOR

Katelyn K. Tietzen-Wisdom is a military historian at the U.S. Army Center of Military History. She specializes in the history of the Iraqi Ba'ath Party and American military operations during the Iraq War. She holds a PhD in military history from Kansas State University, an MA in history from Clemson University, and a BA in history and political science from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

FURTHER READINGS

- Brennan, Richard R. Jr., Charles P. Ries, Larry Hanauer, et al. *Ending the U.S. War in Iraq: The Final Transition, Operational Maneuver, and Disestablishment of United States Forces–Iraq*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2013.
- Fishman, Brian H. *The Master Plan: ISIS, Al Qaeda, and the Jihadi Struggle for Final Victory*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2016.
- Gordon, Michael R., and Bernard E. Trainor. *The Endgame: The Inside Story of the Struggle for Iraq, from George W. Bush to Barack Obama*. New York: Pantheon Books, 2012.
- Rayburn, Joel D. and Frank K. Sobchak, eds. *The U.S. Army in Iraq, vol. 2: Surge and Withdrawal, 2007–2011*. Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College Press, 2019.
- Watson, Mason W. *The Conflict with ISIS: Operation Inherent Resolve, June 2014–January 2020*. The U.S. Army Campaigns in Iraq. Washington, DC: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 2022.

This monograph is a preliminary history of this campaign; a more detailed account is in preparation. To assist the author in fully capturing the U.S. Army's role in the operation, CMH encourages readers to send comments, corrections, and additional information via email to usarmy.mcnair.cmh.mbx.answers@army.mil or via mail to 102 Fourth Ave., Fort McNair, DC 20319.

NOTES

1. Rpt, Gen. Raymond T. Odierno, 16 Sep 2008, sub: Multi-National Force-Iraq Commander's Counterinsurgency Guidance, Baghdad, Iraq, Historians Files, U.S. Army Center of Military History, Washington, D.C. (Hereinafter Hist Files, CMH).

2. Nicholas J. Schlosser, *The Surge, 2007–2008*, The U.S. Army Campaigns in Iraq (Washington, DC: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 2017), 88–90.

3. Gen. Raymond T. Odierno, “MNF-I Change of Command,” speech, Baghdad, Iraq, 16 Sep 2008, Hist Files, CMH.

4. Col. Joel D. Rayburn and Col. Frank K. Sobchak, eds., *The U.S. Army in Iraq: Surge and Withdrawal, 2007–2011* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College Press, 2019), 436.

5. Andrea R. So., “A Multi-National Security Transition Command—Iraq Status Report,” Backgrounder 33, Institute for the Study of War, 20 Jun 2008, <https://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/reports/MNSTC-I%20Status%20Report.pdf>.

6. Sgt. Joshua Risner, “To Build an Army: Military Transition Team Cornerstone to 6th IA Success,” *Army Times*, 20 Mar 2009, https://www.army.mil/article/18504/to_build_an_army_military_transition_team_cornerstone_to_6th_ia_success.

7. Catherine Dale, *Operation IRAQI FREEDOM: Strategies, Approaches, Results, and Issues for Congress*, (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2 Apr 2009), 49, <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA500337.pdf>.

8. S. Sgt. Carlos M. Burger and Sgt. Rodney Foliente, “WarHorse Brigade, Lonestar Battalion Uncases Colors at Echo,” *Warhorse Rider*, 1, no. 2 (Oct 2008): 10–11, https://static.dvidshub.net/media/pubs/pdf_4064.pdf.

9. Deployment Sum, HQ, 25th Inf Div, OIF 09-11, 1–2, Hist Files, CMH.

10. Joseph Sassoon, *Saddam Hussein's Ba'th Party: Inside an Authoritarian Regime*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 259–61, 283; Samuel Helfont, *Compulsion in Religion: Saddam Hussein, Islam, and the Roots of Insurgencies in Iraq* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 54–57, 77, 87, 121–23, 149–54.

11. Sabrina Tavernise, “District by District, Shiites Make Baghdad Their Own,” *New York Times*, 23 Dec 2006, <https://www.nytimes.com/2006/12/23/world/middleeast/23shiites.html>; Michael Knights, “Predicting the Shape of Iraq's

- Next Sunni Insurgencies,” *CTC Sentinel*, 10, no. 7 (Aug 2017): 13–22. <https://ctc.westpoint.edu/predicting-the-shape-of-iraqs-next-sunni-insurgencies/>.
12. “Iraq,” The World Factbook, CIA.gov, 21 Dec 2022, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/iraq/#people-and-society>.
13. David McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds* (I.B. Tauris, 2003), 357–63.
14. Ali A. Allawi, *The Occupation of Iraq: Winning the War, Losing the Peace* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), 137–39, 163–69, 213–15, 339–40, 388–402, 414–17.
15. Joel Rayburn, *Iraq After America: Strongmen, Sectarians, Resistance* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, Stanford University, 2014), 9–36.
16. James P. Pfiffner, “U.S. Blunders in Iraq: De-Baathification and Disbanding the Army,” *Intelligence and National Security* 25, no. 1 (Feb 2010): 76–85.
17. Anthony H. Cordesman, “Iraq’s Insurgency and Civil Violence: Developments through late August 2007,” Center for Strategic and International Studies, 22 Aug 2007, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/iraqs-insurgency-and-civil-violence>; Mansoor Moaddel, Mark Tessler, and Ronald Inglehart, “Saddam Hussein and the Sunni Insurgency: Findings from Values Surveys,” *Political Science Quarterly* 123, no. 4 (Winter 2008–2009): 623–44.
18. Col. Joel D. Rayburn and Col. Frank K. Sobchak, eds., *The U.S. Army in Iraq: Invasion, Insurgency, and Civil War, 2003–2006* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College Press, 2019), 169–75.
19. Charles Tripp, *A History of Iraq* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 254–55.
20. Kenneth Katzman, *The Kurds in Post-Saddam Iraq*, RS22079, (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 1 Oct 2010), 1–7.
21. “President Welcomes President Talabani of Iraq to the White,” George W. Bush Whitehouse Archives, 13 Sep 2005, <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2005/09/20050913-5.html>.
22. Rayburn, *Iraq After America*, 139–41.
23. Schlosser, *The Surge*, 84–88.
24. Rpt, United Nations (UN) Ofc for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, sub: Iraq Humanitarian Update, No. 2, Oct 2008, Hist Files, CMH.
25. Michael M. R. Izady, “Urban Unplanning: How Violence, Walls, and Segregation Destroyed the Urban Fabric of Baghdad,” *Journal of Planning History* 19, no 1, (Feb 2020): 52–68.
26. Ian Livingston and Michael O’Hanlon, “Iraq Index: Tracking Variables of Reconstruction & Security in Post-Saddam Iraq,” Brookings Institution, (Nov 2011), 15, <https://www.brookings.edu/iraq-index/>; Database, Iraq Body Count, n.d., <https://www.iraqbodycount.org/database>; Joel Wing, “International Organization for Migration’s Year End Report on Displaced Iraqis In Anbar, Baghdad & Diyala Provinces,” Musings on Iraq, 17 Dec

2008, http://musingsoniraq.blogspot.com/2008/12/international-organization-for_17.html.

27. Rayburn and Sobchak, eds., *The U.S. Army in Iraq: Surge and Withdrawal*, 438; Joel Wing, “Baghdad’s Electricity Plan,” Musings on Iraq, 24 Nov 2008, <http://musingsoniraq.blogspot.com/2008/11/baghdads-electricity-plan.html>.

28. Joel Wing, “Latest United Nations Report on Cholera Epidemic—Updated,” Musings on Iraq, 23 Oct 2008, <http://musingsoniraq.blogspot.com/2008/10/latest-united-nations-report-on-cholera.html>; Patrick Cockburn, “Iraqis Protest Proposed Deal to Allow US Troops to Stay in Iraq Until 2011,” Democracy Now, Global Policy Forum, 21 Oct 2008, <https://archive.globalpolicy.org/political-issues-in-iraq/withdrawal/47815-iraqis-protest-proposed-deal-to-allow-us-troops-to-stay-in-iraq-until-2011.html>; Associated Press, “Iraq Plans to Cut 2009 Budget by \$13 Billion,” 31 Oct 2008, Hist Files, CMH. Ahmed Rasheed, “Iraq Parliament Likely to Cut 2009 Budget, Again,” Reuters, 28 Feb 2009, Hist Files, CMH. “Iraqi Government Approves \$67 Billion Budget for 2009,” Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 11 Nov 2008, Hist Files, CMH.

29. Phil Williams and Dan Bisbee, “Jaish al-Mahdi in Iraq,” Chapter 2, PRISM | National Defense University, *Journal of Complex Operations*, 24 May 2016, <https://cco.ndu.edu/News/Article/780108/chapter-2-jaish-al-mahdi-in-iraq/>; Michael Knights, “Iran in Iraq: The Role of Muqtada al-Sadr,” The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 8 Feb 2011, <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/iran-iraq-role-muqtada-al-sadr>; Marisa Cochrane, “Iraq Report 12: The Fragmentation of the Sadrist Movement,” Institute for the Study of War, Jan 2009, <https://www.understandingwar.org/report/fragmentation-sadrist-movement>.

30. Rayburn, *Iraq After America*, 187–88; Richard R. Brennan Jr., Charles P. Ries, Larry Hanauer, et al., *Ending the U.S. War in Iraq: The Final Transition, Operational Maneuver, and Disestablishment of United States Forces—Iraq* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2013), 136–40.

31. Michael Knights, “The Evolution of Iran’s Special Groups in Iraq,” *CTC Sentinel*, 3, no. 11 (Nov 2010): 12–16, <https://ctc.usma.edu/the-evolution-of-irans-special-groups-in-iraq/>.

32. Pierre Razoux, *The Iran-Iraq War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), 1–67.

33. Joseph Felter and Brian Fishman, “Iranian Strategy in Iraq: Politics, and ‘Other Means,’” Combatting Terrorism Center at West Point, 13 Oct 2008, <https://ctc.westpoint.edu/iranian-strategy-in-iraq-politics-and-other-means/>; Ray Takeyh, “Iran’s New Iraq,” *Middle East Journal*, 62, no. 1 (Winter 2008): 13–30.

34. Michael Knights, “Iran’s Ongoing Proxy War in Iraq,” The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 16 Mar 2009, <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/irans-ongoing-proxy-war-iraq/>; Daniel Bolger, *Why We Lost: A General’s Inside Account of the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2014), 269–70.

35. Michael Eisenstadt, Michael Knights, and Ahmed Ali, “Iran’s Influence in Iraq: Countering Tehran’s Whole-of-Government Approach,” Policy Focus 111, The Washington Institute, 26 Apr 2011, x, <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/irans-influence-iraq-countering-tehrans-whole-government-approach>.

36. Bill Roggio, “Sadr Calls for Mahdi Army Ceasefire,” FDD’s Long War Journal, 29 Aug 2007, https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2007/08/sadr_calls_for_mahdi.php; Cochrane, “The Fragmentation of the Sadrist Movement.”

37. Knights, “Iran’s Ongoing Proxy War in Iraq”; Bfg, Marisa Cochrane, “Asaib Ahl al-Haq and the Khazali Special Groups Network,” Institute for the Study of War, 13 Jan 2008, <https://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/reports/Asaib%20Ahl%20al%20Haq%20and%20the%20Khazali%20Special%20Groups%20Network.pdf>.

38. Brennan, Ries, Hanauer, et al., *Ending the U.S. War in Iraq*, 140–41.

39. Don van Natta Jr. and Douglas Jehl, “A Nation At War: Intelligence Reports; Syria Harbors Iraqis and Grants Transit to Hezbollah, U.S. Asserts,” *New York Times*, 15 April 2003.

40. Bolger, *Why We Lost*, 269; Michael Knights, “The JRTN Movement and Iraq’s Next Insurgency,” *CTC Sentinel*, 4, no. 7 (July 2011): 1–6, <https://ctc.westpoint.edu/the-jrtm-movement-and-iraqs-next-insurgency/>.

41. Cathy Scott-Clark and Adrian Levy, *The Exile: The Stunning Inside Story of Osama Bin Laden and Al Qaeda in Flight* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2017), 152.

42. Mapping Militants Organizations, “Ansar al-Islam,” Stanford Center for International Security and Cooperation, Dec 2018, <https://cisac.fsi.stanford.edu/mappingmilitants/profiles/ansar-al-islam>.

43. Interv, Bill Hemmer with Gen. Raymond T. Odierno, America’s Newsroom, 21 Oct 2008, Hist Files, CMH.

44. Jamileh Kadivar. “Exploring Takfir, Its Origins and Contemporary Use: The Case of Takfiri Approach in Daesh’s Media,” *Contemporary Review of the Middle East* 7, no. 3 (Sep 2020): 259–85; Brian H. Fishman, *The Master Plan: ISIS, Al-Qaeda, and the Jihadi Strategy for Final Victory* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2016), 31–66.

45. Info Paper, MNF-I Counter-IED Operational Integration Center, 10 Feb 07, sub: Taji DOCEX Points to Baghdad Belt Strategy Vulnerability, 2, Hist Files, CMH.

46. William McCants, *The ISIS Apocalypse: The History, Strategy, and Doomsday Vision of the Islamic State* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2015), 33–39.

47. Cole Bunzel, “From Paper State to Caliphate: The Ideology of the Islamic State,” The Brookings Project on U.S. Relations in the Islamic World, 19 (Aug 2015), 17, <https://www.brookings.edu/research/from-paper-state-to-caliphate-the-ideology-of-the-islamic-state/>.

48. Rod Nordland, "Expectations to Iraq Deadline Are Proposed," *New York Times*, 26 Apr 2009.
49. Joel Wing, "New Security Offensive in Mosul?," Musings on Iraq, 2 Nov 2008, <https://musingsoniraq.blogspot.com/2008/11/new-security-offensive-in-mosul.html>; Ernesto Londono, "No. 2 Leader of Al-Qaeda in Iraq Killed," *Washington Post*, 16 Oct 2008.
50. Joel Wing, "Mosul Remains One of the Most Violent Cities in Iraq," Musings on Iraq, 28 Nov 2008, <http://musingsoniraq.blogspot.com/2008/11/mosul-remains-one-of-most-violent.html>.
51. Timothy Williams, "Iraq Bomb Kills 48 in Volatile North," *New York Times*, 11 Dec 2008.
52. Rpt, Nicholas Schlosser, sub: Army Killed in Action, Surge Campaign, Jan 2007–Dec 2008, Hist Files, CMH; "Iraq Fatalities," Iraq Coalition Casualty Count, n.d., <http://icasualties.org/App/Fatalities?d-date-equals=2008&sort=d-date&order=asc&page=45&rows=100>.
53. Sam Dagher, "Iraqi Soldier Reportedly Kills 2 G.I.s," *New York Times*, 12 Nov 2008; Michael Gordon and Bernard Trainor, *The Endgame: The Inside Story of the Struggle for Iraq, from George W. Bush to Barack Obama* (New York: Vintage Books, 2013), 553–54.
54. Rayburn and Sobchak, eds., *The U.S. Army in Iraq: Surge and Withdrawal*, 412.
55. *Ibid.*, 413.
56. Sherah Raouf, "Standoff Over Iraqi Town Stokes Tension with Kurds," Reuters, 31 Aug 2008, <https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSLV159246>.
57. Sean Kimmons, "Diyala Town's Allegiance: Iraq or Kurdistan?" *Stars and Stripes*, 8 Sep 2008, <https://www.stripes.com/news/diyala-town-s-allegiance-iraq-or-kurdistan-1.82828>.
58. Joel Wing, "Could Maliki Be Deposed?" Musings on Iraq, 23 Nov 2008, <https://musingsoniraq.blogspot.com/2008/11/could-maliki-be-deposed.html>; Missy Ryan, "Kurd-Arab Tension May Threaten Iraq Calm," Reuters, 12 Nov 2008, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iraq-kurds-arabs/kurd-arab-tensions-may-threaten-iraq-calm-idUSTRE4AC06E20081113>.
59. Kenneth M. Pollack, "The Battle for Baghdad," *National Interest*, 103 (September/October 2009): 8–17; Katzman, *The Kurds in Post-Saddam Iraq*, 6–7.
60. See Carter Malkasian, *Illusions of Victory: The Anbar Awakening and the Rise of the Islamic State* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017). 160–64.
61. Rayburn and Sobchak, eds., *The U.S. Army in Iraq: Surge and Withdrawal*, 412; Marisa Sullivan, "Maliki's Authoritarian Regime," Middle East Security Report 10, Institute for the Study of War, April 2013, 11–14, <https://www.understandingwar.org/report/malikis-authoritarian-regime>.
62. Interv, Combat Studies Institute (CSI) Contemporary Ops Study Team (COST) with Gen. Mark Hertling, Feb 2010, 14, Hist Files, CMH.

63. Sinan Salaheddin, "Police: Iraqi Troops Raid Diyala Governor's Office," Associated Press, 19 Aug 2008, Hist Files, CMH.
64. Rayburn and Sobchak, eds., *The U.S. Army in Iraq: Surge and Withdrawal*, 415–17.
65. Sullivan, "Maliki's Authoritarian Regime," 6–7.
66. Joel Wing, "Iraqi Corruption Remains Endemic," Musings on Iraq, 1 Oct 2008, <http://musingsoniraq.blogspot.com/2008/10/iraqi-corruption-remains-endemic.html>.
67. Quarterly Rpt, Special Inspector Gen of Iraq Reconstruction (SIGIR), Jan 2009, Table 2.10, 48, Hist Files, CMH; Sam Gollob and Michael O'Hanlon, "Iraq Index", (Aug 2020), 11.
68. Rayburn and Sobchak, eds., *The U.S. Army in Iraq: Surge and Withdrawal*, 444.
69. Liz Sly, "Iraq Plans to Cut Sunni Fighters' Salaries," *Chicago Tribune*, 2 Nov 2008.
70. Stephen Farrell, Alissa Rubin, Sam Dagher, and Erica Goode, "As Fears Ease, Baghdad Sees Walls Tumble," *New York Times*, 10 Oct 2008.
71. Nir Rosen, *Aftermath: Following the Bloodshed of America's Wars in the Muslim World* (New York: Nation Books, 2010), 532.
72. Campbell and O'Hanlon, "Iraq Index," 12; Mary Beth Sheridan, "A Delicate Changing of the Guard," *Washington Post*, 2 Oct 2008.
73. Fishman, *The Master Plan*, 142–43; Craig Whiteside, "War Interrupted, Part I: The Roots of the Jihadist Resurgence in Iraq," *War on the Rocks*, 5 Nov 2014, <https://warontherocks.com/2014/11/war-interrupted-part-i-the-roots-of-the-jihadist-resurgence-in-iraq/>.
74. Alex Conte, *Security in the 21st Century: The United Nations, Afghanistan, and Iraq* (Oxford: Routledge, 2022), 139–62.
75. Chuck R. Mason, *Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA): What Is It, and How Has It Been Utilized?* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 5 Jan 2011), 1–34.
76. Rpt, U.S. Department of Defense (DoD), sub: Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq, Sep 2008, 28–30, Hist Files, CMH; "Joel Wing, "Iraq Center for Research & Strategic Studies' Survey of Iraqis," Musings on Iraq, 26 Oct 2008, <http://musingsoniraq.blogspot.com/2008/10/iraq-center-for-research-strategic.html>.
77. Suadad al-Salhy, "Analysis on the Spot: SOFA, from inside Parliament," *New York Times*, 24 Nov 2008; Joel Wing, "The Status of Forces Agreement," Musings on Iraq, 26 Nov 2008, <http://musingsoniraq.blogspot.com/2008/11/status-of-forces-agreement.html>.
78. Mary Beth Sheridan, "Sadr Followers Rally Against U.S. Accord," *Washington Post*, 22 Nov 2008.
79. Bob Woodward, *Obama's Wars* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2010), 76; George W. Bush, *Decision Points* (New York: Crown, 2010), 389–90.

80. Karen DeYoung, "Gates, Rice Brief Lawmakers on Draft Accord with Iraq," *Washington Post*, 17 Oct 2008.
81. Campbell Robertson and Stephen Farrell, "Pact, Approved in Iraq, Sets Times for U.S. Pullout," *New York Times*, 16 Nov 2008.
82. Brennan, Ries, Hanauer, et al., *Ending the U.S. War in Iraq*, 62–64.
83. Brian Glyn Williams, *Afghanistan Declassified: A Guide to America's Longest War* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 233; Carter Malkasian, *Illusions of Victory*, 218–19; Michael Cooper and Jeff Zeleny, "Obama Fuels Pullout Debate with Remarks," *New York Times*, 4 Jul 2008.
84. "President Bush and Iraq Prime Minister Maliki Sign the Strategic Framework Agreement and Security Agreement," George W. Bush Whitehouse Archives, 14 Dec 2008. <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2008/12/20081214-2.html>.
85. Rosen, *Aftermath*, 375–76.
86. Aswat al-Iraq, "3 Iranian Revolutionary Guards Arrested in Wasit," 20 Oct 2008, Hist Files, CMH; Ernesto Londono, "Odierno Alleges Iranian Mischief," *Los Angeles Times*, 14 Oct 2008; Claire Russo and Marisa Cochrane, "Recent Attacks in Iraq: Al-Qaeda in Iraq or Special Groups?" Backgrounder 35, Institute for the Study of War, 6 Oct 2008, <https://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/reports/SG%20and%20AQI%20Attacks%20Backgrounder.pdf>.
87. Joel Rayburn, *Iraq After America*, 195–98; Kenneth Katzman, *Iran-Iraq Relations* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 13 Aug 2010), 6–7.
88. Rosen, *Aftermath*, 529.
89. Gollob and O'Hanlon, "Iraq Index" (Aug 2020), 12; Database, Iraq Body Count, n.d., <https://www.iraqbodycount.org/database/>.
90. Aswat al-Iraq, "Violence Toned Down By 93% During Last Quarter Of 2008–U.S. Army," 9 Jan 2009, Bloggernizer, <http://bloggernizer.blogspot.com/2009/01/violence-toned-down-by-93-during-last.html>.
91. Quarterly Rpt, SIGIR, 30 Jan 2009, 43, Hist Files, CMH.
92. Ibid.
93. Msg, Gen. Raymond Odierno to MNF-I, Baghdad, Iraq, 20 Dec 2008, sub: Holiday Note, Hist Files, CMH.
94. Rpt, Nicholas Schlosser, sub: Army Killed in Action, Surge Campaign, Jan 2007–Dec 2008, Hist Files, CMH.
95. Msg, Gen. Raymond Odierno to MNF-I, Baghdad, Iraq, 20 Dec 2008, sub: Holiday Note, Hist Files, CMH.
96. Brennan, Ries, Hanauer, et al., *Ending the U.S. War in Iraq*, 123–26.
97. "An Agreement Between the Republic of Iraq and the United States of America Regarding the Withdrawal of the American Forces from Iraq and Regulating their Activities During Their Temporary Presence in It," Hist Files, CMH.
98. Rpt, DoD, sub: Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq, Mar 2009, 34, <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA496831.pdf>.

99. Bfg, MNSTC-I, sub: Shaping the Long-Term Security Partnership with Iraq,” 24 Feb 2009 in Brennan, Ries, Hanauer, et al., *Ending the U.S. War in Iraq*, 159–60.

100. Timothy Williams, “Iraq Takes Control of Green Zone and Basra Airport,” *New York Times*, 1 Jan 2009; Andrea Stone, “U.S. Hands Green Zone to Iraqis,” *Army Times*, 12 Jan 2009.

101. Qais Mizher and Sudarsan Raghavan, “Arrests in Iraq Seen as Politically Motivated,” *Washington Post*, 19 Dec 2008.

102. Kim Yoshino and Ali Hameed, “More Iraq Parliament Members Pull Out of Sunni Bloc,” *Los Angeles Times*, 12 Jan 2009.

103. Joel Wing, “Here Comes the Carrot for Diyala’s Sons of Iraq,” Musings on Iraq, 9 Jan 2009, <http://musingsoniraq.blogspot.com/2009/01/here-comes-carrot-for-diyalas-soi.html>.

104. Sam Dagher and Mudhafer al-Husaini, “Bomber at Iraqi Shrine Kills 40, Including 16 Iranian Pilgrims,” *New York Times*, 4 Jan 2009.

105. Knights, “Iran’s Ongoing Proxy War in Iraq.”

106. Stephen Farrell and Alyssa Rubin, “Under Tight Security, Elections Are Calm in Iraq,” *New York Times*, 31 Jan 2009.

107. Joel Wing, “Early Returns for Provincial Elections,” Musings on Iraq, 5 Feb 2009, <http://musingsoniraq.blogspot.com/2009/02/early-returns-for-provincial-elections.html>.

108. Allawi, *The Occupation of Iraq*, 334–47, 389–93, 415.

109. Aswat al-Iraq, “Serious Electoral Violations Reported in Erbil, Tal Afar,” 31 Jan 2009, Hist Files, CMH.

110. Stephen Farrell, “Election Reaction: U.S. Embassy and U.S. Military,” *New York Times*, 1 Feb 2009.

111. Peter Baker and Thom Shanker, “Obama Plans to Retain Gates at Defense Department,” *New York Times*, 25 Nov 2008.

112. Trista Talton, “Out of Iraq,” *Army Times*, 9 Mar 2009.

113. Karen De Young, “Obama Sets Timetable for Iraq Withdrawal, Calling It Part of Broader Middle East Strategy,” *Washington Post*, 28 Feb 2009.

114. Livingston and O’Hanlon, “Iraq Index,” (Jan 2009), 23.

115. Campbell Robertson and Alan Cowell, “U.S. Takes Over as Britain Begins Basra Pullout,” *New York Times*, 4 Jan 2009.

116. Rod Nordland and Timothy Williams, “Iraq Force Soon to Be a Coalition of One,” *New York Times*, 28 Jul 2009.

117. “The Fallujah Memorandum—Chapter 2: Balanced Military Planning,” in *The ISIS Reader*, Haroro J. Ingram, Craig Whiteside, and Charlie Winter, eds., (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 125–28.

118. Interv, Steven Clay, COST, with Lt. Gen. Robert L. Caslen, MND–North Commander and 25th Inf Div Cmdr, 19 Jul 2012, Hist Files, CMH.

119. Joel Wing, “Operation New Hope in Mosul,” Musings on Iraq, 2 Mar 2009, <http://musingsoniraq.blogspot.com/2009/03/operation-good-hope-in-mosul>.

html; Qais Mizher and Zaid Sabah, “Three Sunni Candidates Slain Days Before Elections,” *Washington Post*, 30 Jan 2009; “Highlights in Terrorist Activity—February 1, 2009 to February 28, 2009,” *CTC Sentinel*, 2, no. 3 (Mar 2009): 1–3, <https://ctc.westpoint.edu/highlights-in-terrorist-activity-february-1-2009-to-february-28-2009/>.

120. Ofc of Public Affairs Press Release, “Alleged Terrorist, Charged with Murder of Five American Soldiers, Extradited to the United States,” U.S. Department of Justice, 23 Jan 2015, <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/alleged-terrorist-charged-murder-five-american-soldiers-extradited-united-states>; Quarterly Rpt, SIGIR, 30 Jan 2009, Hist Files, CMH.

121. Pfc. Sharla Perrin, 3d BCT, 1st Cav Div, MND-N, “Greywolf Battalion Commander Killed by IED in Mosul; Dies Alongside Three of His Personal Security Detail,” U.S. Army, 19 Feb 2009, https://www.army.mil/article/17106/greywolf_battalion_commander_killed_by_ied_in_mosul_dies_alongside_three_of_his_personal_security_d.

122. Sudarsan Raghavan, “U.S. Soldiers Killed as Two Iraqi Policemen Fire on Troops in Mosul,” *Washington Post*, 25 Feb 2009; “Iraqi Police Attack U.S. Soldiers, Translator Killed,” Reuters, 24 Feb 2009, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iraq-violence/iraqi-police-attack-u-s-soldiers-translator-killed-idUSTRE51N4CY20090224>.

123. Ernesto Londono, and Dlovan Brwari. “Iraqi Soldier Kills 2 U.S. Troops, Wounds 3,” *Washington Post*, 3 May 2009.

124. AAR, MND-N, G5 Plans, Task Force Lightning, OIF 09-11 End of Tour, 4; Deployment Sum, 25th Inf Div; both in Hist Files, CMH.

125. “U.S. and Iraq Launch New Bid to Eradicate al Qaeda,” Reuters, 22 Feb 2009, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iraq-military/u-s-and-iraq-launch-new-bid-to-eradicate-al-qaeda-idUSTRE51L0YE20090222>.

126. Rayburn and Sobchak, eds., *The U.S. Army in Iraq*, 466; “Iraqis Fear U.S. Pullout of Volatile Mosul,” Associated Press, 9 Mar 2009, Hist Files, CMH.

127. AAR, MND-N, G5 Plans, Task Force Lightning, 6–7; Cmd Rpt, 1st Cav Div, MND-B, Fiscal Year 2009, 92, Hist Files, CMH.

128. “Highlights in Terrorist Activity,” *CTC Sentinel*.

129. Joel Wing, “Operation NEW HOPE in Mosul—Update,” Musings on Iraq, 31 Mar 2009, <http://musingsoniraq.blogspot.com/2009/03/operation-new-hope-in-mosul-update.html>; Final AAR, 3d Heavy Bde Combat Team, 1st Cav Div, Oct 2009, 28–29, Hist Files, CMH.

130. Capt. Brian Herzog, Untitled Manuscript, Maneuver School Center of Excellence Army Writing Program, Class 1-10/Seminar 7, 2009, Hist Files, CMH.

131. Kimberly Kagan, “The Battle of Diyala, February 11, 2007–April 25, 2007,” Iraq Report, The Institute for the Study of War, <https://www.understandingwar.org/report/battle-diyala>.

132. Seth Robson, “Welcome Home 172nd Infantry Brigade: Bring Back Balad Ruz,” *Stars and Stripes*, 4 Dec 2009; AAR, MND-N, G5 Plans, Task Force Lightning, 10, Hist Files, CMH.

133. Sgt. Jeremy Pitcher, “Operation GLAD TIDINGS OF BENEVOLENCE II,” *Lightning Strikes*, 1, no. 4 (May 2009): 14–15, https://static.dvidshub.net/media/pubs/pdf_5265.pdf; Interv, Steven Clay, CSI, with Lt. Gen. Robert L. Caslen, Cdr, MND–North, and the 25th Inf Div Cdr, 19 Jul 2012, Hist Files, CMH.

134. Ernesto Londoño and Aziz Alwan, “Suicide Bombers Kill More Than 70 in Baghdad, Diyala Province,” *Washington Post*, 23 Apr 2009.

135. Peter Walker, “Three U.S. Soldiers Killed in Baghdad As Bombs in Iraq Claim 25 Lives,” *Guardian*, 21 May 2009.

136. Steven Lee Myers, “Bomber Attacks G.I.’s Meeting with Baquba Officials,” *New York Times*, 20 Apr 2009; Gina Chon, “U.S. Says Attacks in Iraq Are Down 50% So Far in May,” *Wall Street Journal*, 25 May 2009; Liz Sly, “Iraqi Casualties Fall to Record Low in May,” *Los Angeles Times*, 1 Jun 2009.

137. Geoff Ziezulewicz, “Empowered by the U.S., Imprisoned by Iraqis,” *Stars and Stripes*, 24 Sep 2009; Michael Gordon and Trainor, *The Endgame*, 593.

138. Capt. James P. Kirby, “A Deal with the Devil: The 2009 Battle of Al Fadhil,” Maneuver School Center of Excellence Army Writing Program, 15 Nov 2011, 14, Hist Files, CMH.

139. John Leland, “Iraq Sentences Sunni Leader to Death,” *New York Times*, 19 Nov 2009; Bolger, *Why We Lost*, 260–61.

140. Bolger, *Why We Lost*, 262–67.

141. Rayburn and Sobchak, eds., *The U.S. Army in Iraq: Surge and Withdrawal*, 470–71.

142. Alissa J. Rubin, “Guns Go Silent After 24-Hour Face-Off in Baghdad, But Tensions Remain High,” *New York Times*, 29 Mar 2009.

143. Sgt. Lindsey Bradford, “Fort Lewis-Based Soldiers Take Reigns of Multinational Corps Iraq,” U.S. Army, 7 Apr 2009, https://www.army.mil/article/19354/fort_lewis_based_soldiers_take_reigns_of_multinational_corps_iraq.

144. Overview, 1st Div Advise and Assist Bde, sub: Augmented Adviser BCT-S Block A Training, 29 May 2009, Slide 8, Historian Files, CMH; Brig. Gen. Peter C. Bayer Jr., “Back in the Fight—I Corps as Multinational Corps-Iraq,” Association of the U.S. Army, 2 Sep 2009, <https://www.ausa.org/sites/default/files/Bayer.pdf>.

145. Bolger, *Why We Lost*, 272.

146. Kate Brannen, “Upon Return Home: First Advise and Assist Brigade Will Return To Full-Spectrum Operations.” *Inside the Army* 22, no. 3 (Jan 2010): 1–11, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24831467>.

147. Sgt. Benjamin Kibbey, “Advise and Assist Brigade: A Familiar Unit with a New Mission in Iraq,” U.S. Army, 25 Aug 2010, <https://www.army>.

mil/article/44206/advise_and_assist_brigade_a_familiar_unit_with_a_new_mission_in_iraq; For lineage, see <https://history.army.mil/html/forcestruc/lh.html>.

148. Presentation, Col. Peter Newell 4th BCT, 1st Armd Div, sub: Advise and Assist Planning, 7 Apr 2009, slides 3, 9, Hist Files, CMH.

149. Cmd Rpt, 1st Cav Div, MND-B, Fiscal Year 2009, 94, Historian Files, CMH.

150. Col. Philip Battaglia and Lt. Col. Curtis Taylor, “Security Force Assistance Operations: Defining the Advise and Assist Brigades,” *Military Review* (Jul–Aug 2010): 2, 3, 8–9.

151. Presentation, Newell, sub: Advise and Assist Planning, slide 9.

152. Presentation, sub: I Corps After Action Review: Advisory and Assistance Brigade (AAB), n.d., Courage-AAB-Annex_100201 v 2.6, slide 1, Annex_Brief_Development_of_AAB, I Corps Collection, Hist Files, CMH; Presentation, 2/25 Stryker Brigade Combat Team, sub: Operation IRAQI FREEDOM & Operation NEW DAWN Executive Summary, Jul 2010–Jun 2011, slides 26 and 27; Interv, author with Col. Kirk Dorr, 5–7 Cav Sqdn, 18 Aug 2022, Hist Files, CMH.

153. Brennan, Ries, Hanauer, et al., *Ending the U.S. War in Iraq*, 145.

154. “Department of Defense Bloggers Roundtable with Col. Peter Newell, Subject: Completion of Advise and Assist Brigade Mission,” Federal News Service, 30 Apr 2009, Hist Files, CMH.

155. Presentation, Newell, sub: Advise and Assist Planning, slide 9; Interv, author with Col. George Swift, 29 Jul 2022, Hist Files, CMH.

156. Interv, author with Col. Lance C. Varney, 23 Aug 2022; Interv, author with Dorr, 18 Aug 2022; Interv, author with Col. Peter Newell, 15 Aug 2022; Info Paper, 4th Bde, 1st Armd Div, sub: Advise and Assist Information, 10 Aug 2009, 7; Interv, author with Col. Pete Jones, 16 Aug 2022; all located in Hist Files, CMH.

157. Presentation, TRADOC, sub: “Modular Brigade Augmented for Security Force Assistance,” slide 6, Mission Statement, 8 Jul 2009, Hist Files, CMH; Interv, author with Varney, 23 Aug 2022.

158. Interv, Lt. Col. Ed Jacobsen, Center for Army Lessons Learned Theater Observation Detachment Ofor at Multi-National Division–South with Maj. Rob Boone, Stability Transition Team Dep, 3d Bde, 3d Inf Div, 7 Dec 2009; Hist Files, CMH; Presentation, Stability Transition Team, 2d Advise and Assist Bde, 25th Inf Div, 29 Jan 2010, sub: “Road to War: Pre-Deployment Training”, slides 2 and 3, Hist Files, CMH; Exec Sum Presentation, 2d Advise and Assist Stryker Bde Combat Team, 25th Inf Div, Op IRAQI FREEDOM and Op NEW DAWN, Jul 2010–Jun 2011, slide 24, Hist Files, CMH.

159. Presentation, Stability Transition Team, 2d Advise and Assist Bde, 25th Inf Div, slides 6 and 12.

160. 2d Lt. Joseph Dennis, “Iraqi Army, Air Force Conduct Joint Training,” 25 Jun 2010, Defense Visual Information Distribution Service (DVIDS), <https://www.dvidshub.net/news/51986/iraqi-army-air-force-conduct-joint-training>;

S. Sgt. Jeff Hansen, “Battle Drill Training with 6th IA [Iraqi Army] MiTT [Military Transition Team],” DVIDS, 13 Dec 2009, <https://www.dvidshub.net/news/42692/battle-drill-training-with-6th-ia-mitt>; Spc. Samuel Soza, “U.S. and Iraqi Soldiers Target Weapon Proficiency,” 15 Jun 2010, U.S. Army, https://www.army.mil/article/40865/u_s_and_iraqi_soldiers_target_weapon_proficiency; Interv, author with Dorr, 18 Aug 2022.

161. Presentation, Stability Transition Team, 2d Advise and Assist, 25th Inf Div, sub: Road to War, slides 2–7.

162. Interv, author with Col. Gerald Boston, 1 Aug 2022, Hist Files, CMH.

163. Presentation, Stability Transition Team, 2d Advise and Assist, 25th Inf Div, Jan 2010, sub: CMD [Command] Relationships, slide 1, Hist Files, CMH; Presentation, Col. Peter Newell, 4th BCT, 1st Armd Div, 7 Apr 2009, sub: Advise and Assist Planning, slides 13–14, Hist Files, CMH.

164. Presentation, 4th BCT, 1st Armd Div, sub: Advise and Assist Planning, slide 6; Lt. Col. Joshua J. Potter, *American Advisors: Security Force Assistance Model in the Long War* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, 2011), 40–41.

165. Col. Robert D. Morschauer, “The Brigade Combat Team–Stability and Security Force Assistance Operations,” U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA, Feb 2010, 10–13, <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA518257.pdf>; Gary Sheftick, “Deploying Brigade to Test ‘Advise and Assist’ Concept,” U.S. Army, 1 May 2009, https://www.army.mil/article/20528/deploying_brigade_to_test_advise_and_assist_concept; Interv, Lindy Kyzer, Army Public Affairs, with Col. Peter Newell and Anna Prouse, Provincial Reconstruction Team Leader, Department of Defense Bloggers Roundtable with Col. Peter Newell, 20 Jan 2010, Hist Files, CMH.

166. Interv, author with Dorr, 18 Aug 2022; Rayburn and Sobchak, eds., *The U.S. Army in Iraq: Surge and Withdrawal*, 524.

167. S. Sgt. Dilia Ayala, “Service Members Receive Potentially Life-Saving Training at Phoenix Academy,” DVIDS, 14 Apr 2009, <https://www.dvidshub.net/news/32373/service-members-receive-potentially-life-saving-training-phoenix-academy>.

168. Dennis Steele “Advisory Training Shifts to Fort Polk—Army Establishes Enduring Mission,” *Army* 59, no. 9, (2009): 49; Sfc. Ken McCooey, “Tiger Brigade Tasked with Training Army Combat Advisors,” 21 Sep 2009, U.S. Army, https://www.army.mil/article/27632/tiger_brigade_tasked_with_training_army_combat_advisors.

169. Interv, author with Boston, 1 Aug 2022; Interv, author with Maj. Gen. Malcolm Frost, 17 Aug 2022, Hist Files, CMH; Info Paper, 4th Bde, 1st Armd Div, sub: Advise and Assist, 10 Aug 2009, 8–9, 14, Hist Files, CMH; Interv, author with Newell, 15 Aug 2022; Interv, author with Jones, 16 Aug 2022; Interv, author with Varney, 23 Aug 2022.

170. Interv, author with Newell, 15 Aug 2022; Interv, author with Varney, 23 Aug 2022; Interv, author with Boston, 1 Aug 2022; Interv, author with Frost, 17 Aug 2022; Interv, author with Dorr, 18 Aug 2022.

171. Info Paper, 4th Bde, 1st Armd Div, sub: Advise and Assist, 10–12; Interv, author with Dorr, 18 Aug 2022; Interv, author with Frost, 17 Aug 2022.

172. Presentation, Commander's Outbrief, 2d Stryker Bde Combat Team, 25th Inf Div, 26 Aug 2011, sub: Advise and Assist/Security Force Assistance (STT), Key Leader Interview Program, Center for Army Lessons Learned, slides 9–10, Hist Files, CMH; Interv, author with Frost, 17 Aug 2022.

173. Interv, author with Newell, 15 Aug 2022; Interv, author with Varney, 23 Aug 2022; Interv, author with Jones, 16 Aug 2022; Interv, author with Dorr, 18 Aug 2022; Interv, author with Boston, 1 Aug 2022.

174. Quarterly Rpt, SIGIR, 30 Jan 2009, 48.

175. Campbell Robertson and James Glanz, "For Iraq, Global Recession Hits a Key Moment," *New York Times*, 26 Feb 2009; Rayburn and Sobchak, eds., *The U.S. Army in Iraq: Surge and Withdrawal*, 462; Quarterly Rpt, SIGIR, 30 Apr 2009, Table 2.14, sec 2, "Update on Iraq Reconstruction"; Steven Lee Myers, "Concerns Mount on Preparedness of Iraq's Forces," *New York Times*, 7 May 2009.

176. Rpt, Lt. Col. Jeffery Kulmayer, MNC-I Reconciliation and Engagements Chief, sub: For POTUS: Sons of Iraq Primer, 26 Aug 2008, Hist Files, CMH. Press Release, MNF-I, sub: Iraqi Government Assumes Responsibility for All Sons of Iraq and Resolves Delays in Salary Payments, 1 Apr 2009, Hist Files, CMH.

177. Kenneth Katzman, *Iraq: Post-Saddam Governance and Security*, RL31339, (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 29 Dec 2009), 22–23; Quarterly Rpt, SIGIR, 30 Apr 2010, 11, Hist Files, CMH.

178. SIGIR, *Learning from Iraq: A Final Report from the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction* (Arlington, VA: Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, 2013), 100.

179. Schlosser, *The Surge*, 55–59.

180. Rpt, SIGIR, sub: Sons of Iraq Program: Results Are Uncertain and Financial Controls Were Weak, 28 Jan 2011, Hist Files, CMH.

181. Farook Ahmend, "Sons of Iraq and Awakening Forces," *Institute for the Study of War*, Feb 2008, <https://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/reports/Backgrounder%2023%20Sons%20of%20Iraq%20and%20Awakening%20Forces.pdf>; Col. Gary W. Montgomery and CWO4 Timothy S. McWilliams, *Al-Anbar Awakening*, vol. 2, *Iraqi Perspectives: From Insurgency to Counterinsurgency in Iraq, 2004–2009* (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps University Press, 2009), 72, 158, 165; Mark Chamoun, "The Why and How of the Anbar Awakening: It's Rise and Fall," *Journal of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations*, 12 (2020): 38–53; Dale Kuehl "Testing Galula in Ameriyah: The People are the Key," *Military Review*, (Mar–Apr 2009): 72–80; Najim Abed al-Jabouri and Sterling Jensen, "The Iraqi and AQI Roles in the Sunni Awakening," *PRISM* 2, no. 1 (Jul 2012): 3–18.

182. Dale Andrade, *Surging South of Baghdad: The 3D Infantry Division and Task Force Marne, 2007–2008*, Global War on Terrorism, (Washington, DC: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 2010), 214.

183. Interv, Ambassador Christopher R. Hill with Dr. Lynee Garcia, COST, 14 May 2012, Hist Files, CMH.

184. Rpt, DoD, sub: Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq, Dec 2009, 25, https://dod.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/Master_9204_29Jan10_FINAL_SIGNED.pdf.

185. Myriam Benraad, “Iraq’s Tribal “Sahwa”: Its Rise and Fall,” *Middle East Policy* 18, no. 1 (2011): 121–31.

186. Rod Nordland and Alissa J. Rubin, “Sunni Fighters Say Iraq Didn’t Keep Promises,” *New York Times*, 23 March 2009.

187. Quarterly Rpt, SIGIR, 30 Apr 2009; Rpt, SIGIR, sub: “Security Forces Logistics Contract Experienced Certain Cost, Outcome, and Oversight problems,” 26 Apr 2009, 6–15; both in Hist Files, CMH.

188. Timothy Williams and Omar Al-Jawoshy, “Drug and Alcohol Abuse Growing in Iraqi Forces,” *New York Times*, 24 Oct 2010.

189. Michael Hoffman, “Fragile Future,” *Army Times*, 7 Mar 2011.

190. Jane Arraf, “Iraqi Army: Almost One-Quarter Lacks Minimum Qualifications,” *Christian Science Monitor*, 22 May 2009, <https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Middle-East/2009/0522/p06s07-wome.html>.

191. Quarterly Rpt, SIGIR, 30 Apr 2009, Section 2, 55–56.

192. Ernesto Londono, “Plunging Oil Prices Force Iraq to Cut Security Jobs,” *Washington Post*, 18 May 2009.

193. Brennan, Ries, Hanauer, et al., *Ending the U.S. War in Iraq*, 70.

194. Capt. Timothy Donohue, “Operation APACHE TRIFECTA,” Maneuver School Center of Excellence Army Writing Program, 19 Aug 2012, 3–4, 5–12, Hist Files, CMH.

195. Thom Shanker, “General Says Iraq Troop Reductions May Quicken,” *New York Times*, 29 Sep 2009; Internal Memo, Col. Timothy R. Reese, Ch, Baghdad Ops Cmd Advisory Team, MND-B, in Michael R. Gordon, “U.S. Adviser’s Blunt Memo on Iraq: Time ‘To Go Home,’” *New York Times*, 31 Jul 2009, <https://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/31/world/middleeast/31advtext.html?searchResultPosition=65>.

196. Rod Nordland, “Iraqis Take the Lead, With U.S. Trailing Closely,” *New York Times*, 8 Aug 2009.

197. Brennan, Ries, Hanauer, et al., *Ending the U.S. War in Iraq*, 70.

198. Gordon, “U.S. Adviser’s Blunt Memo on Iraq,” <https://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/31/world/middleeast/31advtext.html?searchResultPosition=65>.

199. Rpt, SIGIR, *Learning from Iraq*, 48, 95.

200. Brennan, Ries, Hanauer, et al., *Ending the U.S. War in Iraq*, 163.

201. “Baghdad Strikes a \$5 Bln US Defence Deal,” France 24, 14 Feb 2009, <https://www.france24.com/en/20090214-baghdad-strikes-5-bln-us-defence-deal->

202. Rayburn and Sobchak, eds., *The U.S. Army in Iraq: Surge and Withdrawal*, 281–82; Interns, “Ukraine Reaches \$2.5 Billion Arms Deal with Iraq,” *Kyiv Post*, 9 Dec 2009, <https://www.kyivpost.com/article/content/ukraine-politics/ukraine-reaches-25-billion-arms-deal-with-iraq-54687.html>; Ahmed Rasheed, “China Starts Iraq’s First Foreign Oil Work in Decades, Reuters, 2 Jan 2009, <https://www.reuters.com/article/iraq-china/china-starts-iraqs-first-foreign-oil-work-in-decades-idUKL237515420090102>.

203. Quarterly Rpt, SIGIR, Apr 2009, 2, 27, 151.

204. Rpt, SIGIR, sub: Asset-Transfer Process for Iraq Reconstruction Projects Lacks Unity and Accountability, 26 Apr 2009, Hist Files, CMH. Joel Wing, “U.S. Reconstruction in Iraq Coming to an End,” Musings on Iraq, 2 Jun 2009, <http://musingsoniraq.blogspot.com/2009/06/us-reconstruction-in-iraq-coming-to-end.html>.

205. Ernesto Londono, “U.S. ‘Money Weapon’ Yields Mixed Results; Review of Military Program Sought,” *Washington Post*, 27 Jul 2009.

206. Brennan, Ries, Hanauer, et al., *Ending the U.S. War in Iraq*, 69.

207. Elisabeth Bumiller, “General Sees a Longer Stay in Iraq Cities for U.S. Troops,” *New York Times*, 8 May 2009.

208. Joel Wing, “The Return of the Special Groups,” Musings on Iraq, 28 Jul 2009, <http://musingsoniraq.blogspot.com/2009/07/return-of-special-groups.html>.

209. Knights, “The Evolution of Iran’s Special Groups,” 12–16.

210. Timothy Williams, “Soldiers Kill Iraqi Couple During Raid at Home,” *New York Times*, 24 Jan 2009; Alissa J. Rubin, “U.S. Military Violated Security Agreement Twice in 2 Weeks, Iraqi Leaders Say,” *New York Times*, 6 Feb 2009.

211. Aref Mohammed, “Iraq Says U.S. Raid Violated Security Pact,” Reuters, 26 Apr 2009, <https://www.reuters.com/article/oukwd-uk-iraq-raid-idAFTRE53P2GB20090426>.

212. Steven Lee Myers, “After a U.S. Raid: 2 Iraqis Dead, Protests and Regrets,” *New York Times*, 26 Apr 2009.

213. “Iraq Rules Out Extension of U.S. Withdrawal Dates,” Reuters, 3 May 2009, <https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-iraq-usa-withdrawal-sb-idUKTRE5430SW20090504>; Emma Sky, *The Unraveling: High Hopes and Missed Opportunities in Iraq* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2015), 290–92; Bill Roggio, “US Breaks Up Mahdi Army ‘Promised Day Brigade’ Cell in Al Kut,” FDD’s Long War Journal, 26 Apr 2009, https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2009/04/us_breaks_up_mahdi_a.php.

214. Interv, Gen. Raymond T. Odierno with Steven Clay, CSI, COST, 10 May 2012, Hist Files, CMH.

215. Rayburn and Sobchak, eds., *The U.S. Army in Iraq: Surge and Withdrawal*, 498.

216. Quil Lawrence, “A Precarious Peace in Northern Iraq,” Middle East Research and Information Project, 1 Oct 2009, <https://merip.org/2009/10/a-precarious-peace-in-northern-iraq/>.

217. Sam Dagher, “Tensions Stoked Between Iraqi Kurds and Sunnis,” *New York Times*, 18 May 2009; Ramzy Mardini, “Factors Affecting Stability in Northern Iraq,” *CTC Sentinel*, 2, no. 8 (Aug 2009): 17–20, <https://ctc.westpoint.edu/factors-affecting-stability-in-northern-iraq/>.

218. Interv, Gen. Charles Jacoby, Cmdg Gen Multi-National Corps-Iraq with Dr. Lynne Garcia, CSI, 4 Jun 2012 and 13 Jul 2012, Hist Files, CMH.

219. See Lt. Dennis P. Chapman, “Security Forces of the Kurdistan Regional Government,” U.S. Army War College, 2 Feb 2009, <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA510826.pdf>.

220. Feike Fliervoet, “Fighting for Kurdistan? Assessing the Nature and Functions of the Peshmerga in Iraq,” Clingendael, Netherlands Institute for International Relations, March 2018, 15–16, <https://www.clingendael.org/pub/2018/fighting-for-kurdistan/>.

221. Interv, author with Boston, 1 Aug 2022; Interv, author with Swift, 29 Jul 2022.

222. Michael Knights, “The U.S., the Peshmerga, and Mosul,” *Al Jazeera*, 28 Jul 2016, <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2016/7/28/the-us-the-peshmerga-and-mosul>; Bryant Jordan, “House Weighs Directly Arming Kurds in Northern Iraq, Skirting Baghdad,” *Military.com*, 8 Dec 2015, <https://www.military.com/daily-news/2015/12/08/house-weighs-arming-kurds-northern-iraq-skirting-baghdad.html>; David S. Cloud and Brian Bennet, “U.S., Allies Rush Heavy Weapons to Kurds to Fight Militants in Iraq,” *Los Angeles Times*, 11 Aug 2014.

223. See Aliza Marcus, *Blood and Belief: The PKK and the Kurdish Fight for Independence* (New York: New York University Press, 2007).

224. Rpt, Bureau of Counterterrorism, U.S. Dept of State, sub: Foreign Terrorist Organizations, n.d., <https://www.state.gov/foreign-terrorist-organizations/>; Rpt, Commission Staff Working Document, European Commission, sub: Turkey 2019 Report, 5 May 2019, 5, 17, <https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2019-05/20190529-turkey-report.pdf>.

225. Interv, author with Boston, 1 Aug 2022.

226. Rpt, International Crisis Group, 28 Sept 2009, sub: Middle East Report No. 90: Iraq’s New Battlefield: The Struggle over Ninewa, 13, Hist Files, CMH; Gordon and Trainor, *The Endgame*, 599–603.

227. AAR, MND-N, G5 Plans, 1 Feb 2010, sub: Task Force Lightning, OIF 09-11 End of Tour, 8, Hist Files, CMH; Larry Hanauer, Jeffery Martini, and Omar Al-Shahery, *Managing Arab-Kurd Tensions in Northern Iraq After the Withdrawal of U.S. Troops* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2011), 6–7.

228. Rod Nordland, “Spate of Attacks Tests Iraqi City and U.S. Pullout,” *New York Times*, 23 Jun 2009.

229. Alissa J. Rubin and Duriad Adnan, “Bomb Kills at Least 76 in Baghdad,” *New York Times*, 24 Jun 2009.

230. “Four 120th CAB Soldiers Honored for Their Service,” U.S. Army, 12 Jul 2009, https://www.army.mil/article/24279/four_120th_cab_soldiers_honored_for_their_service.

231. Tim Cocks and Muhanad Mohammed, “Iraq Regains Control of Cities as U.S. Pulls Back,” Reuters, 30 Jun 2009, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iraq-usa-troops-sb/iraq-regains-control-of-cities-as-u-s-pulls-back-idUSTRE55T10I20090630>.

232. Rpt, Bianca Adams, 1st Cav Div, MND-B, sub: 2009 Command Report—Baghdad, 10 Oct 2010, 92–93, Hist Files, CMH.

233. Interv, author with Swift, 29 Jul 2022; Interv, author with Jones, 16 Aug 2022; Interv, author with Dorr, 18 Aug 2022.

234. Adams, sub: 2009 Command Report—Baghdad, 82.

235. Rayburn and Sobchak, eds., *The U.S. Army in Iraq: Surge and Withdrawal*, 478–79.

236. Adams, sub: 2009 Command Report—Baghdad, 19, 82–84.

237. Jim Muir, “‘No Delay’ in US Withdrawal from Iraq,” BBC News, 27 April 2009, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/8020815.stm; Interv, author with Dorr, 18 Aug 2022; Interv, author with Jones, 16 Aug 2022.

238. Presentation, MNF-I Cmd Conf, TF-134, MNF-I, Dep Cmdg Gen Detention Ops Maj. Gen. Douglas M. Stone, USMC, 15 Dec 2007, sub: Strategic Changes in Detention Operations, Box 47, Gen. David Petraeus Papers, National Defense University, Washington, DC; Anna Fifield, “Fears for Iraqi Prisoners after Handover,” *Financial Times*, 30 Dec 2008; Livingston and O’Hanlon, “Iraq Index,” (Nov 2011), 12.

239. Deborah Haynes, “US Risks Fanning Violence As It Opens Gates of Iraqi Detention Camps,” *The Times* (UK), 20 Apr 2009.

240. Rpt, DoD, “Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq,” Sep 2008, 4, 5, 42; Abdulrahman Dhiyab, “Iraqi Prisons’ Conditions Appalling, Says Minister,” *Azzaman*, 18 Dec 2008.

241. Alissa J. Rubin and Michael R. Gordon, “U.S. Frees Suspect in Killing of 5 G.I.’s,” *New York Times*, 8 Jun 2009; Press Release, 4th BCT (Abn), 25th Inf. Div., sub: Four Suspects Seized, Linked to Karbala Attack, 25 Jan 2007.

242. Steven Lee Myers, “Americans Release Iranian Detainees to Iraq,” *New York Times*, 10 Jul 2009.

243. Rayburn, *Iraq After America*, 195–98; Gordon and Trainor, *The Endgame*, 609; Rod Nordland and Sam Dagher, “U.S. Will Release More Members of an Iraqi Militia,” *New York Times*, 17 Aug 2009.

244. Bolger, *Why We Lost*, 273.

245. Derrick Henry, “U.S. Commander Says Iraq Forces Ready,” *New York Times*, 28 Jun 2009.

246. Rod Nordland, “Arrests of Sunni Leaders Rise in Baghdad,” *New York Times*, 29 Jul 2009; Rosen, *Aftermath*, 528.

247. Interv, author with Dorr, 18 Aug 2022.

248. See Agreement Between the United States of America and the Republic of Iraq On the Withdrawal of United States Forces from Iraq and the Organization of Their Activities during Their Temporary Presence in Iraq, Article 24, https://www.acq.osd.mil/log/LOG_CSD/policies.html/SE_SOFA.pdf.

249. Interv, author with Jones, 16 Aug 2022; Interv, author with Frost, 17 Aug 2022.

250. Donohue, "Operation APACHE TRIFECTA," 3–4, 5–12.

251. Memo, Reese, 30 Jul 2009.

252. Timothy Williams, "7 U.S. Soldiers and Linguist Wounded in Iraq," *New York Times*, 13 Jul 2009.

253. Timothy Williams, "3 U.S. Soldiers Die in Attack at a Base in Southern Iraq," *New York Times*, 17 Jul 2009.

254. "U.S. Ambassador to Iraq Unhurt by Convoy Bomb," Reuters, 13 Jul 2009, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iraq-violence-ambassador-sb/u-s-ambassador-to-iraq-unhurt-by-convoy-bomb-idUSTRE56C1BA20090713>.

255. Christopher R. Hill, *Outpost: Life on the Frontlines of American Diplomacy*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2014), 1–11.

256. Donohue, "Operation APACHE TRIFECTA," 3–4.

257. Adams, sub: 2009 Command Report—Baghdad, 51–52, 57; Thom Shanker, "General Says Iraq Troop Reductions May Quicken," *New York Times*, 29 Sep 2009; Suadad al-Salhy, "Arms Finds in Hitherto Quiet South Iraq Ring Alarms," Reuters, 31 August 2009.

258. Steven Lee Myers and Campbell Robertson, "Insurgency Remains Tenacious in North Iraq," *New York Times*, 10 July 2009; Joel Wing, "Little Changed in Security Situation in Mosul," Musings on Iraq, 9 Jul 2009, <http://musingsoniraq.blogspot.com/2009/07/little-changed-in-security-situation-in.html>.

259. Rayburn and Sobchak, eds., *The U.S. Army in Iraq: Surge and Withdrawal*, 488.

260. Human Rights Watch, *On Vulnerable Ground: Violence against Minority Communities in Ninewa Province's Disputed Territories*, (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2009), 8, 10, 30, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2009/11/10/vulnerable-ground/violence-against-minority-communities-nineveh-provinces-disputed>.

261. "Double Suicide Bombings Kill More Than 20 in Iraq," Associated Press, 13 Aug 2009, Hist Files, CMH; Sam Dagher, 43 Killed in Attacks Against Iraqi Shi'ites," *New York Times*, 8 Aug 2009.

262. Thom Shanker, "General Says Iraq Troop Reductions May Quicken," *New York Times*, 29 Sep 2009.

263. Brennan, Ries, Hanauer, et al., *Ending the U.S. War in Iraq*, 70.

264. Steven Lee Myers, "Iraq Military Broadcasts Confession on Bombing," *New York Times*, 23 Aug 2009; Liz Sly, "Al Qaeda-Linked Group Claims Two Recent Baghdad Bombings That Killed 95," *Los Angeles Times*, 26 Aug 2009.

265. Khalid al-Ansary, “Iraq Minister Suspects Security Forces Role in Blasts,” Reuters, 22 Aug 2009, <https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-iraq-security/iraq-minister-suspects-security-forces-role-in-blasts-idUKTRE57L0SC20090822>; Sam Dagher, “2 Blasts Exposes Security Flaws in Heart of Iraq,” *New York Times*, 19 Aug 2009.

266. William H McMichael, “Official: Al-Qaida ‘Cannot Sustain’ New Iraq Attacks,” *Army Times*, 21 Sep 2009; al-Jabouri and Jensen, “The Iraqi and AQI Roles in the Sunni Awakening,” 3–18; Rpt, Greg Shapland, “Elite Bargains and Political Deals Project: Iraq’s Sunni Insurgency (2003–2013) Case Study,” Stabilisation Unit, UK Government, Feb 2018, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/766033/Iraq_case_study.pdf.

267. Marc Santora, “Attacks Muddle American Plans to Draw Down in Iraq,” *New York Times*, 8 Sep 2009.

268. Zaid Sabah, “Iraqi Officials Say Security Forces May Have Colluded in Bombings,” *Washington Post*, 23 Aug 2009; Hamza Hendawi, “Analysis: Al-Maliki’s Quarrel with Syria over Baghdad Bombings Backfires on Iraqi Premier,” Associated Press, 12 Sep 2009, Hist Files, CMH.

269. Rayburn, *Iraq After America*, 45–46; Alissa J. Rubin, “Iraq Marks Withdrawal of U.S. Troops From Cities,” *New York Times*, 30 Jun 2009.

270. Gordon and Trainor, *The Endgame*, 604.

271. Joel Wing, “Maliki’s New State of Law List May Not Be Enough,” Musings on Iraq, 6 Oct 2009, <http://musingsoniraq.blogspot.com/2009/10/malikis-new-state-of-law-list-may-not.html>.

272. John Leland, “Iraq Makes Sweeping Arrests over Baghdad Blasts,” *New York Times*, 30 Oct 2009; “Iraq Seeks UN Inquiry into Blasts,” Al Jazeera, 27 Oct 2009, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2009/10/27/iraq-seeks-un-inquiry-into-blasts>.

273. Gollob and O’Hanlon, “Iraq Index” (2020), 13–14; Livingston and O’Hanlon, “Iraq Index” (Nov 2011), 14.

274. Adams, 2009 Command Report—Baghdad, 56–57.

275. Carter Malkasian, *The American War in Afghanistan*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2021), 219–21; Woodward, *Obama’s Wars*, 96–98, 109–10.

276. Sten Rynning, *NATO in Afghanistan: The Liberal Disconnect*, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2012), 158, 205; Woodward, *Obama’s Wars*, 83; Michelle Tan, “Shake Up at the Top: McKiernan’s Firing Indicates New Direction, But Raises Many Questions” *Army Times*, 25 May 2009; Malkasian, *The American War in Afghanistan*, 233–39.

277. Michelle Tan, “No Easy Exit,” *Army Times*, 24 Aug 2009; Brennan, Ries, Hanauer, et al., *Ending the U.S. War in Iraq*, 273; Rayburn and Sobchak, eds., *The U.S. Army in Iraq: Surge and Withdrawal*, 494.

278. Mohammed Abbas, “Frustrated in Iraq, U.S. Troops Eye Afghan Action,” Reuters, 1 Nov 2009, <https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSL1160336>.

279. Hill, *Outpost*, 351.
280. Brennan, Ries, Hanauer, et al., *Ending the U.S. War in Iraq*, 77–78.
281. Rayburn and Sobchak, eds., *The U.S. Army in Iraq: Surge and Withdrawal*, 496–97.
282. Thom Shanker, “General Says Iraq Troop Reductions May Quicken,” *New York Times*, 29 Sep 2009.
283. Brennan, Ries, Hanauer, et al., *Ending the U.S. War in Iraq*, 71–74, Appendix F.
284. Elisabeth Bumiller, “With Boots in Iraq, Minds Drift to Afghanistan,” *New York Times*, 31 Jul 2009.
285. Rod Nordland, “General Lays Out Pace of Iraq Pullout,” *New York Times*, 12 Oct 2009.
286. Marc Santora, “Leaving Iraq Is a Feat That Requires an Army,” *New York Times*, 8 Oct 2009.
287. Aswat al-Iraq, “Today’s Blasts Leave Federal Appeal Court 100% Devastated,” 8 Dec 2009, Hist Files, CMH; Ernesto Londono, “At Least 127 Dead in String of Baghdad Bomb Attacks,” *Washington Post*, 12 Aug 2009.
288. “Al-Qaeda Group Claims Iraq Attack,” BBC, 10 Dec 2009, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/8405235.stm; David Kenner, “Maliki Blames Syria for Iraq Chaos,” *Foreign Policy*, 10 Dec 2009, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2009/12/10/maliki-blames-syria-for-iraq-chaos/>; Rayburn and Sobchak, eds., *The U.S. Army in Iraq: Surge and Withdrawal*, 491.
289. Joel Wing, “U.S. Military and Intelligence Counts Of Iraqi Deaths,” *Musings on Iraq*, 16 Dec 2010, <http://musingsoniraq.blogspot.com/2010/12/us-military-and-intelligence-counts-of.html>; Livingston and O’Hanlon, “Iraq Index,” (30 Nov 2010). 12-16, 20.
290. Adams, 2009 Command Report—Baghdad, 53–58.
291. “Statement by the Press Secretary on the Passage of Iraq’s Revised Election Law,” Obama White House Archives, 7 Dec 2009, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/statement-press-secretary-passage-iraqs-revised-election-law>.
292. Brennan, Ries, Hanauer, et al., *Ending the U.S. War in Iraq*, 74–76.
293. Rayburn and Sobchak, eds., *The U.S. Army in Iraq: Surge and Withdrawal*, 493.
294. Livingston and O’Hanlon, “Iraq Index,” (Nov 2011), 13.
295. Discussion, Lt. Col. Joel Rayburn with Gen. Raymond T. Odierno, Chief of Staff of the Army, 4 Oct 2013, Washington, DC in Rayburn and Sobchak, eds., *The U.S. Army in Iraq: Surge and Withdrawal*, 493.
296. Nada Bakri, “Iraq Insurgency Group Says It Bombed Baghdad Hotels,” *New York Times*, 27 Jan 2010; Marc Santora, “Another Attack on Pilgrims in Iraq,” *New York Times*, 3 Feb 2010.

297. Joel Wing, “Review of Security Situation in Mosul–2009,” Musings on Iraq, 8 Jan 2010, <http://musingsoniraq.blogspot.com/2010/01/review-of-security-situation-in-mosul.html>; Joel Wing, “Mosul Remains as Violent as Ever,” Musings on Iraq, 4 Aug 2009, <http://musingsoniraq.blogspot.com/2009/08/mosul-remains-as-violent-as-ever.html>.

298. Interv, author with Swift, 29 Jul 2022; Interv, author with Boston, 1 Aug 2022.

299. Hanauer, Martini, and Al-Shahery, *Managing Arab-Kurd Tensions in Northern Iraq*, 7–9; Gordon and Trainor, *The Endgame*, 611–12; Rayburn and Sobchak, eds., *The U.S. Army in Iraq: Surge and Withdrawal*, 499.

300. Interv, Steven Clay, COST, with Col. George Larry Swift, Cdr, 1 BCT, 1 Armd Div, USD-N, 10 Jan 2012, Hist Files, CMH.

301. Rod Nordland and Sam Dagher, “U.S. Will Release More Members of an Iraqi Militia,” *New York Times*, 17 Aug 2009; Brennan, Ries, Hanauer, et al., *Ending the U.S. War in Iraq*, 151–52; Joel Wing, “Joint Iraqi-Peshmerga-U.S. Patrols Begin in Disputed Territories,” Musings on Iraq, 24 Jan 2010, <http://musingsoniraq.blogspot.com/2010/01/joint-iraqi-peshmerga-us-patrols-begin.html>.

302. Interv, Jacoby with Garcia, 4 Jun 2012 and 13 Jul 2012.

303. Steven Lee Myers, “Rivalries in Iraq Keep G.I.’s in the Field,” *New York Times*, 26 Jan 2010.

304. Interv, Jacoby with Garcia, 4 Jun 2012 and 13 Jul 2012; Michael Gordon and Andrew W. Lehren, “Tensions High Along Kurdish-Arab Line,” *New York Times*, 23 Oct 2010; Joel Wing, “U.S.-Iraqi-Peshmerga Joint Patrols Get Off To Rough Start,” Musings on Iraq, 12 Mar 2010, <http://musingsoniraq.blogspot.com/2010/03/us-iraqi-peshmerga-joint-patrols-get.html>; “A ‘Grave Threat’ in Iraq,” *Army Times*, 24 Aug 2010, Library and Archives, CMH.

305. Joel Wing, “Political Disputes Continue in Ninewa,” Musings on Iraq, 8 Feb 2010, <http://musingsoniraq.blogspot.com/2010/02/political-disputes-continue-in-ninewa.html>; Rosen, *Aftermath*, 553; Gordon and Trainor, *The Endgame*, 611–13.

306. “Iraqi Election Commission Bans 500 Candidates,” BBC, 15 Jan 2010, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8461275.stm>; “Iraq Panel Urges Vote Ban for Sunni Leader, Parties,” Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 8 Jan 2010, https://www.rferl.org/a/Iraq_Panel_Urges_Vote_Ban_For_Sunni_Leader_Parties/1924353.html; Joel Wing, “Salahaddin’s Governor Dismissed for Baathist Ties,” Musings on Iraq, 8 Nov 2010, <http://musingsoniraq.blogspot.com/2010/11/salahaddins-governor-dismissed-for.html>.

307. Interv, author with Newell, 15 Aug 2022; Interv, author with Jones, 16 Aug 2022.

308. Interv, author with Swift, 29 Jul 2022.

309. Interv, author with Dorr, 18 Aug 2022.

310. Steven Lee Myers, “As Iraq Tallies Vote, U.S. Says Pullout Plans Are ‘on Track,’” *New York Times*, 6 Mar 2010.

311. Ben Lando and Margaret Coker, “Baghdad Recount Extends Political Turmoil,” *Wall Street Journal*, 20 Apr 2010; See also Sullivan, “Maliki’s Authoritarian Regime,” 19–20.

312. Steven Lee Myers and Sam Dagher, “Election Ruling in Iraq Favors Prime Minister,” *New York Times*, 26 Apr 2010.

313. Anthony Shadid, “Gunmen in Iraq Kill Politician Aligned with Allawi Coalition,” *New York Times*, 5 Jun 2010; Gordon and Trainor, *The Endgame*, 614–20.

314. Rayburn and Sobchak, eds., *The U.S. Army in Iraq: Surge and Withdrawal*, 509.

315. Ahmed Rasheed, “Sunni-Backed Vote Winner Seeks Caretaker Government,” Reuters, 28 Apr 2010, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iraq-election/sunni-backed-vote-winner-seeks-caretaker-government-idUKTRE63R1PK20100428?edition-redirect=uk>.

316. Thom Shanker, “General Says 2 Iraq Politicians Have Ties to Iran,” *New York Times*, 16 Feb 2010.

317. Tim Arango, “In Rare Deadly Attacks, Rocket Hits Iraq’s Green Zone,” *New York Times*, 22 Jul 2010; Aswat al-Iraq, “3 U.S. Soldiers Wounded in Rocket Attack on Nasseriya Base,” 23 Jul 2010, Hist Files, CMH; Aswat al-Iraq, “3 Wanted Men Captured for Firing Rockets on U.S. Base in Kut,” 24 Jul 2010; Aswat al-Iraq, “4 Rockets Hit Delta Base in Wasit,” 21 Jul 2010, Hist Files, CMH; Aswat al-Iraq, “U.S. Camp in Diwaniya Comes Under Rocket Attack,” 24 Jul 2010, Hist Files, CMH; Joel Wing, “Have Iran’s Summer Attacks Upon American Forces in Iraq Begun?,” *Musings on Iraq*, 27 Jul 2010, <http://musingsoniraq.blogspot.com/2010/07/have-irans-summer-attacks-upon-american.html>.

318. Timothy Williams and Tim Arango, “Commander in Iraq Warns of Attacks on U.S. Bases,” *New York Times*, 13 Jul 2010; Bill Roggio, “Iranian-Backed Shia Terror Group Remains a Threat in Iraq: General Odierno,” *FDD’s Long War Journal*, 13 Jul 2010, https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2010/07/iranianbacked_shia_t_1.php.

319. Timothy Williams, “Where Iraq Meets Iran, Guards See Shifting Lines,” *New York Times*, 9 May 2010.

320. Steven Lee Myers, “Coordinated Attacks in Iraqi Cities Kill More Than 100,” *New York Times*, 10 May 2010; Khalid D. Ali and Timothy Williams, “Car Bombs Hit Crowds Outside Bank in Baghdad,” *New York Times*, 20 Jun 2010; Anthony Shadid, “Qaeda in Iraq Says It Was Behind Latest Attacks,” *New York Times*, 28 Aug 2010; Liz Sly, and Raheem Salman, “Deadly Assault Exposes Iraq’s Delicate State of Security,” *Los Angeles Times*, 29 Jul 2010; Sameer Yacoub, “Al-Qaida Militants Kill 5 Iraqi Troops, Plant Flag,” Associated Press, 3 Aug 2010, Hist Files ,CMH.

321. Yasmine Mousa and Timothy Williams, “Iraqi Sunni Leader and His Family Are Killed in an Ambush,” *New York Times*, 17 Jun 2010; Tim Arango, “Iraqi Sunnis Frustrated as Awakening Loses Clout,” *New York Times*, 3 May 2010.

322. Timothy Williams and Omar al-Jawoshy, “New Bombings Strike Shiites in Iraq,” *New York Times*, 8 Jul 2010; Timothy Williams, “Car Bomb Kills 13 in Iraqi Village,” *New York Times*, 21 Jul 2010; Anthony Shadid, “Death Toll Rises in Iraq Car Bombing,” *New York Times*, 7 Aug 2010.

323. Tim Arango, “Iraqi Insurgents Plant Qaeda Flag in Baghdad,” *New York Times*, 29 Jul 2010; Anthony Shadid, “Coordinated Attacks Strike 13 Iraqi Cities,” *New York Times*, 25 Aug 2010.

324. Steven Lee Myers, “Iraqi Insurgent Group Acknowledges Killing of Two Leaders,” *New York Times*, 25 Apr 2010.

325. Rayburn and Sobchak, eds., *The U.S. Army in Iraq: Surge and Withdrawal*, 503–5; Bill Roggio, “Al Qaeda in Iraq Is ‘Broken’, Cut Off From Leaders in Pakistan, Says Top US General,” FDD’s Long War Journal, 5 Jun 2010, https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2010/06/al_qaeda_in_iraq_is-3.php.

326. Joel Wing, “Al Qaeda in Iraq Takes More Losses, But Keeps On Ticking,” Musings on Iraq, 5 Jul 2010, <http://musingsoniraq.blogspot.com/2010/07/al-qaeda-in-iraq-takes-more-losses-but.html>.

327. Thom Shanker, “Qaeda Leaders in Iraq Neutralized, U.S. Says,” *New York Times*, 4 Jun 2010.

328. Fishman, *The Master Plan*, 146–47; McCants, *The ISIS Apocalypse*, 146.

329. Capt. Scott Quigley, “Ranger Special Operations Raid in Iraq,” Maneuver School Center of Excellence Army Writing Program, 22 Feb 2011, Hist Files, CMH.

330. Bill Roggio, “Iraqi Troops Detain Deputy Leader of Ansar al Islam,” FDD’s Long War Journal, 4 Aug 2009, https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2009/08/iraqi_troops_detain.php; Bill Roggio, “Iraqi Forces Arrest Leader of Ansar al-Islam,” FDD’s Long War Journal, 4 May 2010, https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2010/05/iraqi_forces_arrest.php.

331. Michael R. Gordon and Elisabeth Bumiller, “In Baghdad, U.S. Officials Take Note of Milestone,” *New York Times*, 1 Sep 2010; Roger M. Dey, “USF-I Celebrates 235 Years of Army History,” U.S. Army, 19 Jun 2010, https://www.army.mil/article/41135/usf_i_celebrates_235_years_of_army_history.

332. Anthony Shadid, “U.S. Troop Count Dips Below 50,000 in Iraq,” *New York Times*, 24 Aug 2010; Kate Brannen, “Combat Brigades in Iraq Under Different Name,” *Army Times*, 21 Aug 2010.

333. Rayburn and Sobchak, eds., *The U.S. Army in Iraq: Surge and Withdrawal*, 493; Brennan, Ries, Hanauer, et al., *Ending the U.S. War in Iraq*, 262.

334. Ernesto Londono and Craig Whitlock, “Despite Political Uncertainties in Iraq, U.S. Sticking with Drawdown Plan,” *Washington Post*, 14 May 2010.

335. Gollob and O’Hanlon, “Iraq Index,(Aug 2020), 8–9.

336. Anthony Shadid, “Suicide Car Bomber Kills 5, Including 2 U.S.

Soldiers, in Iraq,” *New York Times*, 11 Jun 2010; Tim Arango, “G.I.’s Find Bullets Still Flying at Outpost in Iraq,” *New York Times*, 14 May 2010; Aswat al-Iraq, “Sniper Kills U.S. Soldier in Tikrit Before Combat Troops Withdrawal,” 31 Aug 2010, Hist Files, CMH; Steven Lee Myers, “G.I. Deaths Are First for U.S. After Combat Mission’s End,” *New York Times*, 7 Sep 2010.

337. Liz Sly and Riyadh Mohammed, “2 U.S. Soldiers Killed in Iraq,” *Los Angeles Times*, 8 Sep 2010.

338. Joel Wing, “Iraqi Deaths Continue To Climb in 2010,” Musings on Iraq, 16 Sep 2010, <http://musingsoniraq.blogspot.com/2010/09/iraqi-deaths-continue-to-climb-in-2010.html>.

339. Database, Monthly Death Count, Iraq Body Count, 2006. <https://www.iraqbodycount.org/database>.

340. Quarterly Rpt, SIGIR, 30 Apr 2010, 46.

341. Rpt, UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) Iraq, sub: Monthly Statistical Update on Return–December 2009,” Jul 2010, Hist Files, CMH; Gollob and O’Hanlon, “Iraq Index” (Aug 2020), 12.

342. Martin Chulov, “Iraqi Christians Flee Baghdad After Cathedral Massacre,” *Guardian*, 17 Dec 2010; Hamid Ahmed, “Attacks Target Iraq’s Christians Again, Kill 5,” Associated Press, 10 Nov 2010, Hist Files, CMH.

343. Steven Lee Myers, “Commander in Iraq Assesses Foe and Friend,” *New York Times*, 13 Nov 2010.

344. Rayburn and Sobchak, eds., *The U.S. Army in Iraq: Surge and Withdrawal*, 521; Felter and Fishman, “Iranian Strategy in Iraq,” 13 Oct 2008.

345. Ned Parker, “Sadr Sees Star Rise Again in Iraq,” *Los Angeles Times*, 25 Nov 2010.

346. Gordon and Trainor, *The Endgame*, 326, 440, 485, 488, 596.

347. Jack Healy, “Cleric’s Anti-U.S. Forces Poised for Gains in Iraq,” *New York Times*, 19 Dec 2010.

348. Joel Wing, “Sadrist Gain Control of Maysan Governorship,” Musings on Iraq, 30 Dec 2010, <http://musingsoniraq.blogspot.com/2010/12/>.

349. Brennan, Ries, Hanauer, et al., *Ending the U.S. War in Iraq*, 136; Tamer El-Ghobashy and Mustafa Salim, “Public Enemy or Savior? An Iraqi City Could Reveal the True Moqtada al-Sadr,” *Washington Post*, 4 Jul 2018.

350. Info Paper, MNSTC-I, sub: Terms of Reference, Iraqi Security Forces Capabilities, 15 Oct 2009; Bfg, MNF-I, sub: ISF Terms of Reference, 26 Oct 2010 in Brennan, Ries, Hanauer, et al., *Ending the U.S. War in Iraq*, 160–61.

351. Quarterly Rpt, SIGIR, 30 Oct 2010, 74.

352. Rayburn and Sobchak, eds., *The U.S. Army in Iraq: Surge and Withdrawal*, 527–29.

353. Liz Sly, “Iraq Needs Help Defending Its Borders After U.S. Troops Leave in 2011,” *Los Angeles Times*, 12 Aug 2010; Joel Wing, “F–16 Deal For Iraq On Hold Until New Government Formed,” Musings on Iraq, 5 Nov 2010,

<http://musingsoniraq.blogspot.com/2010/11/f-16-deal-for-iraq-on-hold-until-new.html>.

354. Steven Lee Myers, Thom Shanker, and Jack Healy, “Politics in Iraq Casts Doubt on a U.S. Presence After 2011,” *New York Times*, 18 Dec 2010.

355. Rpt, SIGIR, sub: Iraqi Security Forces: Police Training Program Developed Sizeable Force, But Capabilities Are Unknown, 25 Oct 2010, Hist Files, CMH; Rpt, Inspector Gen, U.S. DoD, Special Plans and Ops, sub: Assessment of U.S. Government Efforts to Develop the Logistics Sustainment Capability of the Iraq Security Forces, 17 Nov 2010, 31, 59–60, <https://media.defense.gov/2010/Nov/17/2001712565/-1/-1/1/ISF10Nov10.pdf>.

356. Press Release, USF-I, “Iraq-Purchased M1A1s Roll Off Production Line, Head to Iraq,” 30 Jun 2010, <https://www.dvidshub.net/news/54148/first-shipment-iraqi-purchased-m1a1-tanks-arrives>; Joel Wing, “First Abrams Tanks To Arrive in Iraq By August 2010,” Musings on Iraq, 9 Jul 2010, <http://musingsoniraq.blogspot.com/2010/07/first-abrams-tanks-to-arrive-in-iraq-by.html>.

357. Rpt, SIGIR, “Iraqi Security Forces” 25 Oct 2010; Quarterly Rpt, SIGIR, 30 Oct 2010.

358. Quarterly Rpt, SIGIR, 30 Apr 2010, 55; Michael Gisick, “Sons of Iraq Face Weakened Power,” *Stars and Stripes*, 3 Jan 2010, <https://www.stripes.com/news/sons-of-iraq-face-weakened-power-1.97716>; Martin Chulov, “Sons of Iraq Turned the Tide for the US. Now They Pay the Price,” *Guardian*, 13 May 2010.

359. Leila Fadel, “Iraq’s Awakening Stripped of Their Police Ranks,” *Washington Post*, 26 Sep 2010; Timothy Williams, and Duraid Adnan, “Sunnis in Iraq Allied With U.S. Quitting to Rejoin Rebels,” *New York Times*, 16 Oct 2010; Robert Reid, “Without Pay, Iraqi Sunni Fighters Threaten to Quit,” Associated Press, 28 Mar 2009, Hist Files, CMH; Marc Santora, “Iraq Arrests 2 Sunni Leaders, Raising Fears of Violence,” *New York Times*, 19 May 2009.

360. Haidar Ibrahim, “Iraqi Forces May Launch Operations Across Diyala,” AK News, 15 Sep 2010, Hist Files, CMH; Photo, DoD, “U.S. Army and Iraqi Soldiers Maneuver Through a Palm Grove in Pursuit of Insurgents in Diyala Province, Iraq,” 13 Sep 2010. <https://www.defense.gov/Multimedia/Photos/igphoto/2001162005/>.

361. Haidar Ibrahim, “Iraqi Forces Announce the End of “NAKHIL” Operation in Diyala,” AK News, 14 Sep 2010, Hist Files, CMH; Kelly McEvers, “Battle Raises Questions on Iraq Security Readiness,” NPR, 4 Oct 2010, <https://www.npr.org/2010/10/04/130323848/battle-raises-questions-on-iraq-security-readiness>; Shashank Bengali and Mohammed al Dulaimy, “US Troops Still Forced to Bolster Iraqi Forces in Battle,” *Christian Science Monitor*, 19 Sep 2010, <https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Middle-East/2010/0919/US-troops-still-forced-to-bolster-Iraqi-forces-in-battle>; Timothy Williams, “More Post-Combat U.S. Gunfire in Iraq,” *New York Times*, 12 Sep 2010.

362. Bengali and al Dulaimy, “US Troops Still Forced to Bolster Iraqi Forces” 19 Sep 2010.
363. Ibid.
364. McEvers, “Battle Raises Questions on Iraq Security Readiness,” 4 Oct 2010; Interv, author with Frost, 17 Aug 2022.
365. Michael Knights, *The Future of Iraq’s Armed Forces*, Al-Bayan Center Publication Series 8, (Baghdad, Iraq: Al-Bayan Center for Planning and Studies, Mar 2016), 39, <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/media/2168>.
366. Rpt, Inspector Gen, “Assessment of U.S. Government Efforts” 17 Nov 2010; Joel Wing, “Iraqi Security Forces Can’t Sustain Themselves,” Musings on Iraq, 17 Jan 2011, <http://musingsoniraq.blogspot.com/2011/01/iraqi-security-forces-cant-sustain.html>.
367. McEvers, “Battle Raises Questions on Iraq Security Readiness,” 4 Oct 2010.
368. Rayburn and Sobchak, eds., *The U.S. Army in Iraq: Surge and Withdrawal*, 525–27; Michael R. Gordon, “In Iraq, Clearer Image of U.S. Support,” *New York Times*, 13 Sep 2010.
369. Quarterly Rpt, SIGIR, 30 Oct 2010, 84; Livingston and O’Hanlon, “Iraq Index” (Nov 2011), 12; Tim Arango, “Transfer of Prison in Iraq Marks Another Milestone,” *New York Times*, 14 Jul 2010; Rayburn and Sobchak, eds., *The U.S. Army in Iraq: Surge and Withdrawal*, 532.
370. Ned Parker, “Secret Prison Revealed in Baghdad,” *Los Angeles Times*, 19 Apr 2010; “Iraq: Detainees Describe Torture in Secret Jail,” Human Rights Watch, 27 Apr 2010, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2010/04/27/iraqi-detainees-describe-torture-secret-jail>; “Iraq Detainees Decrease,” *Army Times*, 14 Sep 2009, Library and Archives, CMH; Ned Parker and Raheem Salman, “Four Al Qaeda in Iraq Militants Escape from U.S. Custody,” *Los Angeles Times*, 10 Sep 2010; Martin Chulov, “Iraqi Officials Investigate Warden’s Involvement in al-Qaida Jailbreak,” *Guardian*, 25 Jul 2010.
371. Interv, author with Newell, 15 Aug 2022; Interv, author with Jones, 16 Aug 2022; Interv, author with Boston, 1 Aug 2022; Interv, author with Dorr, 18 Aug 2022.
372. Bfg, Brig. Gen. Rock Donahue, USF-I J7, sub: Transition of Engineer Activities, United States Forces–Iraq J7, to RAND, Baghdad, 26 Jun 2011, slide 13; see also Brennan, Ries, Hanauer, et al., *Ending the U.S. War in Iraq*, 94.
373. Quote from Hill, *Outpost*, 371; Anthony Shadid, “U.S. Commander Fears Political Stalemate in Iraq,” *New York Times*, 29 Aug 2010.
374. Ali Khedery, “Why We Stuck with Maliki—and Lost Iraq,” *Washington Post*, 3 Jul 2014, https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/why-we-stuck-with-maliki--and-lost-iraq/2014/07/03/0dd6a8a4-f7ec-11e3-a606-946fd632f9f1_story.html.
375. Sky, *The Unraveling*, 334–38; Hill, *Outpost*, 384.

376. “Iraqi Parliament Approves New Government,” BBC, 21 Dec 2010, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-12047721>; David Rohde, Warren Strobel, Missy Ryan, and Ned Parker, “Our Man in Baghdad,” *Atlantic*, 1 Jul 2014, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2014/07/nouri-maliki-united-states-iraq/373799/>.

377. Jack Healy and Yasir Ghazi, “Iraqi Leaders Delay in New Government,” *New York Times*, 21 Nov 2010.

378. Steven Lee Myers, Thom Shanker, and Jack Healy, “Politics in Iraq Casts Doubt on a U.S. Presence After 2011,” *New York Times*, 18 Dec 2010.

379. Interv, author with Boston, 1 Aug 2022; Interv, author with Frost, 17 Aug 2022; Interv, author with Dorr, 18 Aug 2022.

380. Interv, author with Boston, 1 Aug 2022; Interv, author with Swift, 29 Jul 2022.

381. Rayburn and Sobchak, eds., *The U.S. Army in Iraq: Surge and Withdrawal*, 519.

382. James Jeffrey, “Behind the U.S. Withdrawal from Iraq,” The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2 Nov 2014, <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/behind-us-withdrawal-iraq>.

383. Liz Sly, “Iraqi Official Foresees a U.S. Military Presence Until 2016,” *Los Angeles Times*, 8 Sep 2010; Tim Arango, “Taking Lead, Iraqis Hope U.S. Special Operations Commandos Stay,” *New York Times*, 2 July 2011.

384. Rayburn and Sobchak, eds., *The U.S. Army in Iraq: Surge and Withdrawal*, 541–42.

385. Adam Entous, and Julian Barnes, “Iraq Troop Talks Falter,” *Wall Street Journal*, 22 Apr 2011.

386. “US Seeking to ‘Occupy’ Mideast: Iraqi Cleric,” Associated Press, 4 Nov 2011, Hist Files, CMH; Aseel Kami, “U.S. Military Trainers Could Be Targets: Iraq’s Sadr,” Reuters, 7 Aug 2011, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iraq-sadr/u-s-military-trainers-could-be-targets-iraqs-sadr-idUSTRE7760ZD20110807>.

387. Timothy Williams and Duraid Adnan, “Iraqi-U.S. Raid Near Fallujah Leaves 7 Dead,” *New York Times*, 15 Sep 2010; Tim Arango, “After a Botched Raid in Iraq, Competing Facts and Unified Blame,” NYT at War Blog, 2 Aug 2011, <https://archive.nytimes.com/atwar.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/08/02/after-a-botched-raid-in-iraq-competing-facts-and-unified-blame/>; Michael S. Schmidt, “Iraqi Civilians Died in Raid, Complicating Pullout Talks,” *New York Times*, 6 Aug 2011.

388. “Anti-U.S. Cleric Muqtada Al-Sadr Returns To Iraq,” Associated Press, 5 Jan 2011, Hist Files, CMH.

389. “Major Attacks, Mahdi Army,” Center for International Security and Cooperation, Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies, Stanford University, n.d., https://cisac.fsi.stanford.edu/mappingmilitants/profiles/mahdi-army#highlight_text_17016.

390. "Extremist Leaders: Qais al-Khazali, Counter Extremism Project, n.d., <https://www.counterextremism.com/extremists/qais-al-khazali>.
391. "Twelve Insurgents Escape from Prison in Iraq's Basra," Reuters, 14 Jan 2011, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iraq-security/twelve-insurgents-escape-from-prison-in-iraqs-basra-idUSTRE70D47P20110114>; Joel Wing, "More Escapes From Iraq's Prisons," Musings on Iraq, 31 May 2011, <http://musingsoniraq.blogspot.com/2011/05/more-escapes-from-iraqs-prisons.html>.
392. Michael S. Schmidt, "Qaeda Affiliate Is Blamed in Iraq Suicide Bombing," *New York Times*, 5 May 2011.
393. Michael Hoffman, "Fragile Future," *Army Times*, 7 Mar 2011.
394. Joel Wing, "The State of Iraq's Provinces," Musings on Iraq, 2 Jan 2011, <http://musingsoniraq.blogspot.com/2011/01/state-of-iraqs-provinces.html>.
395. Joel Wing, "February 25, Day of 'Rage,'" Musings on Iraq, 27 Feb 2011, <http://musingsoniraq.blogspot.com/2011/02/february-25-iraqs-day-of-rage.html>; Sinan Salaheddin, "12 Killed as Iraqis Protest in 'Day of Rage,'" Associated Press, 25 Feb 2011, Hist Files, CMH; "Iraq: Attacks by Government-Backed Thugs Chills Protests," Human Rights Watch, 30 Jun 2011, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2011/06/30/iraq-attacks-government-backed-thugs-chill-protests>; Aaron Davis, "In Kirkuk, A Test of U.S. Peacekeepers' Lasting Impact," *Washington Post*, 8 Feb 2011; Interv, CSI with Lt. Gen. David Perkins, 4 May 2012, Hist Files, CMH.
396. Stephanie McCrummen, "In Iraq Protests, A Younger Generation Finds Its Voice," *Washington Post*, 17 Mar 2011; Joel Wing, "American Teams Predicted Causes of Protests in Iraq," Musings on Iraq, 18 Mar 2011, <http://musingsoniraq.blogspot.com/2011/03/american-teams-predicted-causes-of.html>.
397. "Protests Put Iraq Security to the Test," *Army Times*, 7 Mar 2011, Library and Archives, CMH.
398. Muhanad Mohammed, "Iraq Military Cracks Down on Militias, Arms Smuggling," Reuters, 3 Jul 2011, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iraq-violence-crackdown/iraq-military-cracks-down-on-militias-arms-smuggling-idUSTRE7621OL20110703>.
399. Michael Schmidt and Jack Healy, "Maliki's Broadened Powers Seen as a Threat in Iraq," *New York Times*, 4 Mar 2011.
400. Joel Wing, "Evolution of Iraq's Government From 2010–2011," Musings on Iraq, 10 November 2011, <http://musingsoniraq.blogspot.com/2011/11/evolution-of-iraqs-government-from-2010.html>; Quarterly Rpt, SIGIR, 30 Oct 2011.
401. Aaron Davis, "In Iraq, Military Still Seen as Dysfunctional," *Washington Post*, 9 Jun 2011.
402. Leila Fadel, "Iraq's Awakening Stripped of Their Police Ranks," *Washington Post*, 26 Sep 2010.

403. Jeremiah Goulka, Lydia Hansell, Elizabeth Wilke, and Judith Larson, *The Mujahedin-e Khalq in Iraq: A Policy Conundrum* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2009, 2–6.

404. Timothy Williams, “Clashes at Iranian Exile Camp in Iraq,” *New York Times*, 29 Jul 2009.

405. Interv, author with Frost, 17 Aug 2022; Iraq Raid on Iranian Exiles’ Camp Ashraf ‘Killed 34,” BBC, 14 Apr 2011, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-13087538>.

406. Rayburn and Sobchak, eds., *The U.S. Army in Iraq: Surge and Withdrawal*, 533.

407. “US Army: Iranian Quds Force Has Investment Projects in Karbala and Najaf to Support Armed Groups in Iraq,” Alsumaria, 30 Apr 2011, Hist Files, CMH; Aaron C. Davis, “April Is Deadliest Month for U.S. Troops in Iraq Since 2009,” *Washington Post*, 30 Apr 2011.

408. Chelsea J. Carter, “U.S. Military Blames Shiite Militia in Iraq for Killing of Five Soldiers,” CNN, 6 Jun 2011, <http://www.cnn.com/2011/WORLD/meast/06/12/iraq.us.troops/index.html>.

409. Joel Wing, “June 2011 Deadliest Month for U.S. Forces in Iraq in Over Two Years,” Musings on Iraq, 29 Jun 2011, <http://musingsoniraq.blogspot.com/2011/06/june-2011-deadliest-month-for-us-forces.html>; Tim Arango, “Spike in U.S. Deaths in Iraq Raises Worries,” *New York Times*, 26 Jun 2011.

410. Elisabeth Bumiller, “Gates Sees Iran as a Consideration for U.S. Troops in Iraq,” *New York Times*, 24 May 2011.

411. Rayburn and Sobchak, eds., *The U.S. Army in Iraq: Surge and Withdrawal*, 543.

412. Michael S. Schmidt, “Militants Aided by Iran Fired at G.I.’s in Iraq, Officials Say,” *New York Times*, 13 Oct 2011.

413. Michael Schmidt, “Threat Resurges in Deadliest Day of Year for Iraq,” *New York Times*, 15 Aug 2011.

414. “Al Qaeda Claims Responsibility for Iraq’s Tikrit Attack,” Reuters, 2 Apr 2011, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iraq-violence-qaeda/al-qaeda-claims-responsibility-for-iraqs-tikrit-attack-idUSTRE7310R520110402>.

415. Rpt, 1st Cav Div Association, sub: Iraqi NEW DAWN, Jul 2012, 1–3. Hist Files, CMH. Interv, author with Lt. Gen. D. Scott McKean, 8 Mar 2023, Hist Files, CMH.

416. Michael Schmidt and Yasir Ghazi, “As Baghdad Violence Evolves, Officials Grapple with New Scourge: Assassinations,” *New York Times*, 4 May 2011; Qassim Abdul-Zahra, “Al-Qaida Claims Killing of Anti-Saddam Purger,” Associated Press, 17 Jun 2011, Hist Files, CMH.

417. Jim Loney, “Iraq Toll Still High a Year After U.S. Combat Halt,” Reuters, 1 Sep 2011, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iraq-violence-toll/iraq-toll-still-high-a-year-after-u-s-combat-halt-idUSTRE7802WF20110901>;

Michael S. Schmidt, "U.S. Report Finds Security Deteriorating in Iraq," *New York Times*, 30 Jul 2011.

418. Walter Pincus, "General: Time Running Out for Iraq to Ask U.S. Forces to Stay," *Washington Post*, 23 Jun 2011.

419. Aswat al-Iraq, "Kirkuk Arabs Threaten to Form a Force to Protect Them, Statement," 20 Sep 2011; Hist Files, CMH; Muhanad Mohammed, "Kurdish Troops on Patrol in Iraq's Restive Diyala," Reuters, 9 Sep 2011, <https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-iraq-security-kurds/kurdish-troops-on-patrol-in-iraqs-restive-diyala-idUKTRE7884D320110909>; Interv, CSI with Perkins, 4 May 2012.

420. Michael Hoffman, "Readying for New Order," *Army Times*, 28 Feb 2011.

421. Brennan, Ries, Hanauer, et al., *Ending the U.S. War in Iraq*, 152–54.

422. Andrew E. Kramer, "Fate of a U.S. Base Heightens Tensions in Iraq's Contested North," *New York Times*, 18 Nov 2011.

423. Muhanad Mohammed, "Kurdish Troops on Patrol in Iraq's Restive Diyala," Reuters, 9 Sep 2011, <https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-iraq-security-kurds/kurdish-troops-on-patrol-in-iraqs-restive-diyala-idUKTRE7884D320110909>.

424. Quarterly Rpt, SIGIR, 30 Oct 2010, 74.

425. Rpt, SIGIR, *Learning from Iraq*, 95.

426. Rpt, SIGIR, sub: Iraqi Police Development Program: Opportunities for Improved Program Accountability and Budget Transparency, 24 Oct 2011, Hist Files, CMH; Michael Knights, "The Iraqi Security Forces: Local Context and U.S. Assistance," Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1 Jun 2011, <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/iraqi-security-forces-local-context-and-us-assistance>.

427. Andrew Tilghman, "Iraq Not Asking U.S. to Stay, Ambassador Says," *Army Times*, 14 Feb 2011; Tim Craig, "With 'Big Gun', Iraqi Soldiers See Hope," *Washington Post*, 19 Jun 2011.

428. Ramzy Mardini, "Maliki Arrests Potential Opposition," Institute for the Study of War, 14 Dec 2011, <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/maliki-arrests-potential-opposition>.

429. Brennan, Ries, Hanauer, et al., *Ending the U.S. War in Iraq*, 188; Interv, Steven Clay, CSI, COST, with Lt. Gen. Robert W. Cone, Dep Cmdg Gen, USF-I Ops, 27 Feb 2012, Hist Files, CMH; Tim Arango, Duraid Adnan, and Yasir Ghazi, "U.S. Loses Ally as Iraqi General Waits for Trial," *New York Times*, 27 Jul 2011..

430. Andrew Tilghman, "Iraq Not Asking U.S. to Stay, Ambassador Says," *Army Times*, 14 Feb 2011; Tim Craig, "With 'Big Gun', Iraqi Soldiers See Hope," *Washington Post*, 19 Jun 2011.

431. Ramzy Mardini, "Maliki Arrests Potential Opposition," Institute for the Study of War, 14 Dec 2011, <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/maliki-arrests-potential-opposition>.

432. Michael Hoffman, "Turning Off the Lights," *Army Times*, 21 Feb 2011.
433. Michael S. Schmidt and Tim Arango, "U.S. Cuts Back the Proposed Size of Its Force in Iraq," *New York Times*, 15 Oct 2011.
434. Scott Wilson and Karen DeYoung, "All U.S. Troops to Leave Iraq by the End of 2011," *Washington Post*, 21 Oct 2011.
435. Michelle Tan, "Military on Track to Withdraw Troops, Equipment from Iraq," *Army Times*, 31 Oct 2011.
436. Brennan, Ries, Hanauer, et al., *Ending the U.S. War in Iraq*, 275–76, 287, 466–74. Rayburn and Sobchak, eds., *The U.S. Army in Iraq: Surge and Withdrawal*, 552–54.
437. Michelle Tan, "Where Do Soldiers Go?" *Army Times*, 7 Nov 2011; Michelle Tan, "A Kuwait Christmas for Some," *Army Times*, 14 Nov 2011.
438. Dennis Steele, "The Sun Sets on Operation NEW DAWN, but Shadows Remain," *ARMY Magazine*, 62 (1) Jan 2012, 52–55, Library and Archives, CMH.
439. Brennan, Ries, Hanauer, et al., *Ending the U.S. War in Iraq*, 283–87.
440. Rpt, USF-I J7, sub: Base Closure Smartbook, Feb 2011, 46–47; Rpt, USF-I, sub: Closure/Transfer Line of Operations, Update to Gen. Lloyd J. Austin III, 29 Sep 2010, 24, both in Brennan, Ries, Hanauer, et al., *Ending The U.S. War in Iraq*.
441. Inspector Gen, U.S. DoD, sub: Assessment of the DoD Establishment of the Office of Security Cooperation-Iraq, DODIG-2012-063, 16 Mar 2012, 4, 22, <https://media.defense.gov/2012/Mar/16/2001712359/-1/-1/1/DODIG-2012-063.pdf>.
442. Brennan, Ries, Hanauer, et al., *Ending the U.S. War in Iraq*, 257–59.
443. Rayburn and Sobchak, eds., *The U.S. Army in Iraq: Surge and Withdrawal*, 552–54.
444. "Remarks by President Obama and Prime Minister al-Maliki of Iraq in a Joint Press Conference," Obama White House Archives, 12 Dec 2011, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2011/12/12/remarks-president-obama-and-prime-minister-al-maliki-iraq-joint-press-co>.
445. Michael S. Schmidt, "A Withdrawal Ceremony in Iraq, Observed by Few Iraqis," *New York Times*, 15 Dec 2011.
446. Brennan, Ries, Hanauer, et al., *Ending the U.S. War in Iraq*, 292.
447. Tim Arango and Michael S. Schmidt, "Last Convoy of American Troops Leaves Iraq," *New York Times*, 18 Dec 2011.
448. Charlie Savage, "U.S. Transfers Its Last Prisoner in Iraq to Iraqi Custody," *New York Times*, 16 Dec 2011.
449. Liz Sly, "Iraq Political Crisis Erupts as Last U.S. Troops Leave," *Washington Post*, 17 Dec 2011; Joel Wing, "Iraq's Maliki Reneges on Remarks Not to Seek a Third Term as Premier," *Musings on Iraq*, 21 Dec 2011, <http://musingsoniraq.blogspot.com/2011/12/iraqs-maliki-reneges-on-remarks-not-to.html>.

450. Arwa Damon and Mohammed Tawfeeq, “Iraq’s Leader Becoming a New ‘Dictator,’ Deputy Warns,” CNN, 13 Dec 2011, <http://www.cnn.com/2011/12/13/world/meast/iraq-maliki>.

451. “Remarks by the President and First Lady on the End of the War in Iraq,” Obama White House Archives, 14 Dec 2011, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2011/12/14/remarks-president-and-first-lady-end-war-iraq>.

452. Brennan, Ries, Hanauer, et al., *Ending the U.S. War in Iraq*, 165–70, 261–62; Rayburn and Sobchak, eds., *The U.S. Army in Iraq: Surge and Withdrawal*, 572–74; C. Todd Lopez, “The Office of Security Cooperation Maintaining a Presence in Iraq Once Soldiers Go Home,” U.S. Army, 30 Nov 2011, https://www.army.mil/article/70048/the_office_of_security_cooperation_maintaining_a_presence_in_iraq_once_soldiers_go_home.

453. Gollob and O’Hanlon, “Iraq Index” (Aug 2020), 8, 14; Livingston and O’Hanlon, “Iraq Index” (Nov 2011), 4; Iraqi Body Count, Maximum Record Killed from 2007 to 2011 by Month, <https://www.iraqbodycount.org/database/>.

454. Iraqi Body Count, Maximum Record Killed from 2007 to 2011 by Month, <https://www.iraqbodycount.org/database/>.

455. Gollob and O’Hanlon, “Iraq Index” (Aug 2020), 13–15.

456. Rpt, SIGIR, *Learning from Iraq*, 64–66.

457. Richard Shultz, “The Irreducible Minimum’ An Evaluation of Counterterrorism Operations in Iraq,” *PRISM* 7, no. 3 (May 2018): 109.

458. Ian Fisher, “In Rise of ISIS, No Single Missed Key but Many Strands of Blame,” *New York Times*, 18 Nov 2015.

459. Timothy Williams, “Insurgent Group in Iraq, Declared Tamed, Roars,” *New York Times*, 27 Sep 2010.

460. Danielle F. Jung, Pat Ryan, Jacob N. Shapiro, Jon Wallace, “Managing a Transnational Insurgency: The Islamic State of Iraq’s ‘Paper Trail,’ 2005–2010,” Occasional Paper Series, Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, 15 Dec 2014, <https://ctc.usma.edu/managing-a-transnational-insurgency-the-islamic-state-of-iraqs-paper-trail-2005-2010/>.

461. “A Strategic Plan to Improve the Political Position of the Islamic State of Iraq,” in Ingram, Whiteside, and Winter, *The ISIS Reader*, 107–45; Haroro J. Ingram, Craig Whiteside, and Charlie Winter, “Lessons from the Islamic States’ ‘Milestone’ Texts and Speeches,” *CTC Sentinel*, 13, no. 1, (Jan 2020): 14, <https://ctc.usma.edu/lessons-islamic-states-milestone-texts-speeches/>.

462. Rpt, U.S. Government Accountability Office, “Iraq and Afghanistan: Actions Needed to Enhance the Ability of Army Brigades to Support the Advising Mission,” GAO-11-760, 2 Aug 2011, <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-11-760.pdf>.

463. Info Paper, 4th Bde, 1st Armd Div, sub: Advise and Assist, 10 Aug 2009, 15; Interv, author with Frost, 17 Aug 2022.

464. Michael R. Gordon, *Degrade and Destroy: The Inside Story of the War Against the Islamic State, from Barack Obama to Donald Trump* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2022), 65, 259.

465. Kenneth M. Pollack, *Armies of Sand: The Past, Present, and Future of Arab Military Effectiveness* (New York, Oxford University Press, 2019), 149, 166–68. Pesach Malovany, *Wars of Modern Babylon: A History of the Iraqi Army from 1991 to 2003* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2017), 833–46.

466. D. J. Elliot, “Iraqi Security Forces Order of Battle, Aug. 2011,” *Defense Industry Daily*, 9 Aug 2011, <https://www.defenseindustrydaily.com/iraqi-security-forces-order-of-battle-aug-2011-07029/>; D. J. Elliot, “Iraqi Security Forces Order of Battle, January 2011,” *Defense Industry Daily*, 12 Jan 2011, <https://www.defenseindustrydaily.com/iraqi-security-forces-order-of-battle-jan-2011-06726/>.

467. David Zucchini, “Iraq Troops Doubt Own Army Despite U.S. Training, Aid,” *Los Angeles Times*, 3 Nov 2014.

468. Kenneth G. Lieberthal, “The American Pivot to Asia,” *Brookings*, 21 Dec 2011, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-american-pivot-to-asia/>.

469. Rpt, DoD, sub: Casualty Status as of 10 a.m. EST, 13 Feb 2023, <https://www.defense.gov/casualty.pdf>.



IRAQI SOVEREIGNTY 1 JANUARY 2009 – 31 AUGUST 2010



NEW DAWN 1 SEPTEMBER 2010 – 31 DECEMBER 2011

