Muddling Through: An Analysis of Security Force Assistance in Iraq

A Monograph

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From 2003 to 2011 the US military invested eight years of warfighting and almost $25 billion to build, train, equip, and sustain the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) in order to achieve a peaceful and secure Iraq. Several leaders within the Obama administration at the time remarked that ISF were ready to take over the defense of their country following the US military withdrawal. Three years later, in a shocking overturn, the ISF disintegrated in the face of an ISIS advance on Mosul. This monograph re-examines the efforts to build, train, equip, and sustain the ISF from 2003 to 2011 using the lens of security force assistance (SFA) planning and its relevant doctrine in order to better assess why the Iraqi Army was not prepared to face an external threat from ISIS. The conclusions are that, rather than doctrinal failures, large-scale institutional failures within the Department of Defense and the Department of State led to an inability to focus on the most important aspects of security sector reform, namely, investments in defense institutions critical to sustain military forces for the long term. The implications of these observations are critical to future SFA efforts, as the US government seeks to continue a long-term strategy of advising and assisting foreign partners in order to strengthen their own stability and security.

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Abstract

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From 2003 to 2011 the US military invested eight years of warfighting and almost $25 billion to build, train, equip, and sustain the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) in order to achieve a peaceful and secure Iraq. Several leaders within the Obama administration at the time remarked that ISF were ready to take over the defense of their country following the US military withdrawal. Three years later, in a shocking overturn, the ISF disintegrated in the face of an ISIS advance on the northern Iraqi city of Mosul. This monograph re-examines the efforts to build, train, equip, and sustain the ISF from 2003 to 2011 using the lens of security force assistance (SFA) planning and its relevant doctrine in order to better assess why the Iraqi Army was not prepared to face an external threat from ISIS. The conclusions are that, rather than doctrinal failures, large scale institutional failures within the Department of Defense and the Department of State led to an inability to focus on the most important aspects of security sector reform, namely, investments in defense institutions critical to sustain military forces for the long term. The implications of these observations are critical to future SFA efforts, as the US government seeks to continue a long-term strategy of advising and assisting foreign partners in order to strengthen their own stability and security.

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Acknowledgement

Acronyms

CENTCOM	US Central Command
CPA	Coalition Provisional Authority
DoD	US Department of Defense
DoS	US Department of State
FID	Foreign Internal Defense
JCISFA	Joint Center for International Security Force Assistance
JTF	Joint Task Force
MNF-I	Multinational Forces-Iraq
MNSTC-I	Multinational Security Transition Command-Iraq
MOD	Iraq's Ministry of Defense
MOI	Iraq's Ministry of Interior
OSC-I	Office of Security Cooperation-Iraq
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
NSC	National Security Council
ORHA	Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Affairs
PH IV	Phase IV "Stability"
SFA	Security Force Assistance
SIGIR	Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction
SSR	Security Sector Reform

Illustrations

Introduction

> Do not try to do too much with your own hands. Better the Arabs do it tolerably than that you do it perfectly. It is their war, and you are to help them, not to win it for them. Actually, also, under the very odd conditions of Arabia, your practical work will not be as good as, perhaps, you think it is.
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> — T. E. Lawrence, *Twenty-Seven Articles*

At 2:30 a.m. on June 6, 2014, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) launched an assault on the northern Iraqi city of Mosul with several hundred of its fighters.[1] Mosul, the Sunni-dominated provincial capital of Nineveh, is Iraq's second largest city and home to approximately two million Iraqis. Lt. Gen. Mahdi Gharawi, the operational commander of Nineveh province, led the Iraqi Security Forces in the region and was charged with protecting the city. Defending the city were elements of the 2nd and 3rd Iraqi Army Divisions in addition to local police. On the books these security forces numbered close to 25,000, but in reality, were much less due to "ghost soldiers," which were men on the rolls receiving salary who did not report for duty.[2]

The ISIS fighters that raced towards Mosul in pickup trucks on June 6 originally hoped to seize a neighborhood for a few hours before being repulsed as a show of force, and to harass the Iraqi Army in response for the killing of a senior ISIS commander two days prior.[3] As the ISIS fighters approached west of the city, the forward Iraqi Army defenses began to retreat. ISIS fighters seized military vehicles and weapons (many supplied by US forces) and executed captured Iraqi soldiers and police on the spot. Gharawi ordered Iraqi units to cordon off the infiltrated neighborhoods, but by June 8, sensing the collapse of Iraqi defenses, ISIS surged in hundreds more vehicles and fighters, and activated sleeper cells within the city to attack police

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[1] Ned Parker, Isabel Coles, and Raheem Salman, "Special Report: How Mosul Fell: An Iraqi General Disputes Baghdad's Story," *Reuters*, October 14, 2013, accessed October 3, 2016, http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-mideast-crisis-gharawi-special-report-idUKKCN0I30ZA 20141014.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

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and military checkpoints. By the evening of June 9 most of western Mosul was overrun and the 2nd Iraqi Army Division in eastern Mosul was deserting the city.[4]

The video footage from Mosul was shocking; approximately 1,500 ISIS fighters, outnumbered fifteen to one, had defeated elements from two Iraqi Army divisions without a substantial fight. As a result of Mosul's fall to ISIS, over half a million Iraqis were displaced from the city.[5] ISIS reportedly seized six Black Hawk helicopters, tons of vehicles, equipment and weaponry, and millions of dollars from the Mosul Bank.[6] Thousands of prisoners were released from Mosul's jail, with many offered the option of joining ISIS or execution on the spot.[7] Furthermore, the evaporation of Mosul's defenses unleashed a two-day charge by ISIS that ended within ninety-five miles of Baghdad, causing the further the collapse of four Iraqi divisions and the capture or deaths of thousands of Iraqi soldiers.[8]

The speed with which Iraqi security forces evaporated was another major humiliation for the military and the government of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki. Not only had the Iraqi Security Forces lost western Anbar province earlier in 2014 to ISIS, but now ISIS had seized Iraq's second largest city. More disappointing, this failure was after the United States had, since 2003, expended $24.33 billion on training, equipping, and sustaining the Iraqi Security Forces and providing infrastructure for the Ministries of Defense and Interior.[9] Moreover, in 2011, as US

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[4] Ibid.

[5] BBC News, "Islamic State: What Has Happened since the Fall of Mosul?" *BBC News,* June 10, 2015, accessed October 4, 2016, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-32784661.

[6] "The Capture of Mosul: Terror's New Headquarters," *Economist,* June 14, 2014, accessed October 3, 2016, http://www.economist.com/news/leaders/21604160-iraqs-second-city-has-fallen-group-wants-create-state-which-wage-jihad.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Parker, Coles and Salman.

[9] Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction (SIGIR), "Learning from Iraq: A Final Report from the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction," *Global Security*, March 6, 2013, accessed November 25, 2016, http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/2013/sigir-learning-from-iraq.pdf.

forces withdrew from Iraq, Denis McDonough, the US Deputy National Security Adviser, had told reporters that "One assessment after another about the Iraqi security forces came back saying these guys are ready, these guys are capable, these guys are proven."[10]

In retrospect, the Iraqi Army of 2014 was not ready or capable of repelling a small and uncoordinated assault by ISIS. Much has been written about the multifaceted reasons for the Iraqi Army's failure. Some Pentagon officials attributed it to a lack of leadership within the ranks, leading to a "disorganized, poorly led, politicized and corrupt force," while others have pointed to deep sectarian and ethnic divisions within an army without any clear national identity.[11] Many Iraqis have laid the blame squarely on Prime Minister al-Maliki's shoulders for political policies and military actions that isolated and aggravated the Sunni population in Iraq.[12] Others have narrowly criticized the Iraqi Army's 2nd Division for not applying appropriate counterinsurgency strategies in Mosul itself, creating a hostile population that supported ISIS as they entered the city.[13] Finally, some, like Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter and President Barack Obama, have even suggested a problem in the "will of Iraqis" to fight ISIS and defend themselves.[14]

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[10] Scott Wilson and Karen DeYoung, "All US Troops to Leave Iraq by the End of 2011," *Washington Post,* October 21, 2011, accessed October 3, 2016, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/all-us-troops-to-leave-iraq/2011/10/21/gIQAUyJi3L_story.html.

[11] Peter W. Galbraith, "Should We Give Up on the Iraqi Army?" *Daily Beast,* March 4, 2015, accessed November 25, 2016, http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2015/03/04/can-we-just-give-up-on-the-iraqi-army.html.

[12] Ishaan Tharoor, "Why the Iraqi Army Keeps Failing," *Washington Post,* May 19, 2015, accessed November 25, 2016, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2015/05/19/why-the-iraqi-army-keeps-failing/.

[13] Yasir Abbas and Dan Trombly, "Inside the Collapse of the Iraqi Army's 2nd Division," *War on the Rocks,* July 1, 2014, accessed November 25, 2016, http://warontherocks.com/2014/07/inside-the-collapse-of-the-iraqi-armys-2nd-division/.

[14] Matt Schiavenza, "Why Iraq's Military Has No Will to Fight," *The Atlantic,* May 25, 2015, accessed November 25, 2016, http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/05/why-iraqs-military-has-no-will-to-fight/394067/.

Primary Research Question

This monograph acknowledges that the Iraqi Army's failure to defend Mosul against ISIS cannot be isolated to any one reason, but rather is an amalgamation of many systemic issues, from the tactical ways that the army fought street-by-street, to problems in their organization and leadership, to the strategic political issues of a weak government plagued by sectarian conflict. But as US military planners look to further aid and assist the Iraqi Army, are there changes in how the military should conduct security force assistance (SFA) missions? Did the US Army's plan to build, advise, and assist the Iraqi Army contribute to the problems that Iraq experienced in Mosul? Are there lessons for other SFA missions across the globe? This monograph posits that yes, there were important decisions that US military campaign planners made from 2003 to 2011 that contributed to the Iraqi Army's failure in 2014. By understanding these crucial planning decisions, and their implications, military planners can better account for unintended consequences of their plan to build foreign security forces for future SFA operations. Therefore, the primary research question of this monograph is: Using the Iraq War as a case study, what are potential consequences of SFA planning decisions that may contribute to state instability, and are these risks not adequately addressed in current Army and Joint SFA doctrine?

This monograph's hypothesis is that there were three primary consequences in the application of SFA principles in Iraq from 2003 to 2011:

1. The decision to build a large standing Iraqi army in 2007 led to predictable friction and confrontation between the increasingly powerful Iraqi military and a weak Iraqi government, which would cause the Iraqi government to undermine the military after the withdrawal of US forces from Iraq;

2. The decision to structure the Iraqi army as a "hold" counterinsurgency force, focused on population security and checkpoint operations, led to inherent vulnerabilities

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against an enemy that was utilizing conventional maneuver-centric tactics designed to

defeat in detail military forces;[15]

3. The decisions to primarily focus on Iraqi "operating" forces rather than institutional

"generating" or "executive" forces led to an inevitable erosion of capabilities after the

United States withdrew in 2011.

These unintended consequences of planning decisions, affecting the military's relationship with

its government, the type of military created, and the investment into operational support

organizations, are essential to understand and anticipate long-term effects during the planning

phase of SFA operations. In the case of Iraq, if the rate of atrophy of the Iraqi Army's capabilities

was anticipated, perhaps the US military would have restructured its long-term assistance to the

Iraqi military rather than precipitously withdrawing in 2011. The planning implications from the

lessons observed by the Iraqi Army in Mosul are critical for any future SFA operation.

Methodology

This monograph will approach an analysis of the contributions of SFA planning to the

performance of the Iraqi Security Forces by first tracing the evolution of SFA doctrinal principles

that the US military operated under from 2003 to 2011 while training, equipping and organizing

the Iraqis. Second, a historical review utilizing planning documents by Multinational Security

Transition Command-Iraq (MNSTC-I), the headquarters charged with building the Iraqi Security

Forces, and reviews by the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction (SIGIR), will

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[15] Iraqi's counterinsurgency focus largely created an army and police force that would man dozens of checkpoints in a given city to limit insurgent movement and logistics as well as assure the population that their security forces were out protecting the nation. This checkpoint emphasis is characteristically static in nature, compared with conventional military operations that use movement and maneuver to isolate and destroy enemy forces. In this regard, the Iraqi Army's checkpoints in Mosul were not mutually supporting and could be defeated individually and sequentially (in detail) by a smaller ISIS force. An emphasis on counterinsurgency checkpoints and a lack of training in combat maneuver and the mutual reinforcement of checkpoints prevented the Iraqi Army from quickly massing their military power against a relatively smaller enemy force.

illustrate how SFA was executed during the Iraq War. Third, reports from various think tanks and government agencies will be utilized to help identify the weaknesses in the Iraqi Security Forces that may have contributed to their inability to defend Mosul in 2014. These weaknesses will be examined and evaluated using the framework of current SFA doctrine to consider if the failures could have been mitigated or prevented. Finally, recommendations will be proposed to address the implications for future SFA efforts by the US military.

Limitations and Assumptions

There are two primary limitations to this research. First, as noted in the introduction, the failure of the Iraqi Security Forces to counter ISIS will narrowly be examined from the lens of US planners executing SFA principles and generating an operational plan. This monograph does not seek to ignore the importance of the many other contributing factors to the Iraqi Army's failure, but rather seeks to focus on the SFA planning variable in order to provide useful observations for future doctrinal development and planning efforts. The second limitation is the availability of primary unclassified sources for research. The monograph will rely on historical planning documents, after-action reviews, and academic articles written during the war about the SFA efforts.[16]

Moreover, this monograph assumes that SFA played an important role in affecting the Iraqi Army's performance. The author's own bias from working with the Iraqi Army's development will be minimized through the use of third-party evaluations of the impact and effectiveness of SFA on the buildup of the Iraqi Army. However, as much of the after-action reports on the SFA mission in Iraq were self-reported by many of the same mentors that trained the Iraqis, and it is human nature to minimize reporting on failure and over-report success, the

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[16] Several unclassified planning documents encountered were marked "For Official Use Only" and could not be considered due to their classification for this monograph.

sources used may not provide a completely objective perspective. Additionally, while extrapolating appropriate lessons from the SFA experience in Iraq may be useful, there is always a threat to the validity of such lessons, as the context of future SFA missions with other nations will invariably be different.

Section Summary

This monograph examines the primary research question: What are potential consequences of SFA planning decisions that may contribute to state instability, and are these risks not adequately addressed in current Army and Joint SFA doctrine? This monograph's hypothesis is that the Iraqi military's relationship with its government, the type of military created, and a lack of investment into operational support organizations, led to state instability and attenuation of military capabilities. The primary case study used to test this hypothesis will be the SFA planning efforts in Iraq from 2003 to 2011, prior to Iraq's failure to effectively stop the advance of ISIS in 2014.

Section Two will review literature on SFA doctrine and planning principles, particularly the SFA doctrine available to US Army planners from 2003 to 2011. Section Three will examine a historical review of the debates and decisions made to build and equip the Iraqi Army. Included in this chapter will be an analysis whether these decisions were actually in accordance, or in deviance, to SFA planning principles of that time and whether the failures of the Iraqi Army in 2014 can be linked to these decisions. Section Four will examine SFA doctrine since the 2011 withdrawal of US combat forces and whether the newest additions can account for the failures of the Iraqi Army in 2014. Section Five will address implications for future SFA operations and recommendations for doctrine, policy, and US strategy.

SFA Doctrine Review

This section will detail the history of SFA doctrine and planning principles available to US Army planners from 2003 to 2011. This analysis will be limited to concepts applicable to the development and conceptual planning for the Iraqi Army. The section concludes by highlighting some of the major evolutionary concepts and principles within SFA doctrine and literature within the US Army and Joint community.

Relationships between SFA, FID, SC, and SA

Before beginning a historical analysis of the development of SFA doctrine during the Iraq War, it is important to clarify a few important and often misused concepts and definitions for the development and training of host nation forces. Most often confused are the differences between foreign internal defense (FID), security force assistance (SFA), security assistance, and security cooperation. Authors often use these terms interchangeably as there is much overlap behind their meaning, though there are nuanced differences.

Security cooperation is considered an umbrella term to describe the US Department of Defense (DoD) interactions "with foreign defense establishments to build defense relationships that promote specific US security interests, develop allied and friendly military capabilities for self-defense and multinational operations, and provide US forces with peacetime and contingency access to a host nation."[17] Security cooperation occurs in hundreds of countries worldwide and is directed by the Defense Secretary's Guidance for Employment of the Force by tasking combatant commanders to develop theater campaign plans specifying their overarching security cooperation frameworks.[18]

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[17] Joint Publication (JP) 3-22, *Foreign Internal Defense* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2010), x.

[18] Joint Publication (JP) 1, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2013), II-4.

Foreign Internal Defense (FID) and security assistance activities are included under the umbrella of security cooperation (Figure 1). FID is the participation by civilian and military agencies of a government "to free and protect" another government and its society "from subversion, lawlessness, insurgency, terrorism, and other threats to their security."[19] FID covers a full range of measures but primarily focuses on a host nation's internal defense and development and serves to aid the government facing internal threats. Security assistance, like FID, is a broad encompassing term, but focuses on "the provision of defense articles, military training, and other defense-related services by grant, loan, credit, or cash sales in furtherance of US national policies and objectives."[20] So, while security assistance is a necessary and principal element of FID, it is much broader than FID alone and is represented by the overlap between security assistance and FID (Figure 1).

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[19] Joint Publication (JP) 3-22, *Foreign Internal Defense*, ix.

[20] Ibid., I-10.

THE RELATIONSHIP OF SECURITY COOPERATION, SECURITY ASSISTANCE, AND FOREIGN INTERNAL DEFENSE

Security Cooperation

Security Cooperation

Security Cooperation

Security Assistance

FID Direct Support

FID Combat Operations

FID Indirect Support

Security Cooperation

LEGEND

Security assistance directed at bolstering capabilities to defend against external threats

Security assistance directed at supporting a host nation's internal defense and development program under foreign internal defense

Foreign internal defense (FID)

Figure 1. The Relationship of Security Cooperation, Security Assistance, and Foreign Internal Defense. *Source*: Joint Publication (JP) 3-22, *Foreign Internal Defense* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2010), I-12.

Security Force Assistance, on the other hand, is related with FID but is also different in its scope and authorities. According to doctrine, similar to FID, SFA is DoD's contribution to an interagency effort "to support and augment the development of the capacity and capability of foreign security forces and their supporting institutions to facilitate the achievement of specific objectives shared by the [US government]."[21] While FID is established in US law as funded and authorized programs for host nation internal defense, SFA is a general term that entered the military lexicon around 2006 to encompasses a range of activities to enhance the capacity and capability of partner nations by organizing, training, equipping, building, and advising and

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[21] Ibid., I-16.

assisting foreign security forces.[22] At the operational and strategic levels, SFA and FID both

focus on preparing foreign security forces to "combat lawlessness, subversion, insurgency, and

terrorism from internal threats," but SFA also "prepares foreign security forces to defend against

external threats."[23] In short, FID and SFA are both subsets of security cooperation, and many of

the actual activities may fall under both categories; but neither FID nor SFA are subsets of each

other.[24]

When SFA is compared to the other categories of foreign partnering, SFA can occur in

peacetime and war, and includes interagency partners (unlike security cooperation), it can seek to

build foreign capacity to combat internal and external threats (unlike FID), and SFA encompasses

training and advising of foreign forces (unlike the limited scope of security assistance).

For the purposes of this monograph, specifically looking at the context of building the

Iraqi Security Forces, FID and SFA most closely describe the mission to build the Iraqi Security

Forces. The differences in how the terms are used in the literature reveals nuances in

authorizations, funding, and the purpose of the Iraqi Army. But while the intended purpose of the

Iraqi Army is an important question to consider (whether for internal policing or to defend against

external threats), the goal for US security cooperation activities in Iraq was to build a capable

military that could do both.[25] Additionally, from a planning perspective, much of the literature

available for planners which describes the planning principles for FID corresponds with the same

principles for SFA, due to the close overlap in activities. Moreover, FID was the dominant

doctrinal concept in the early years of US efforts in Iraq, as SFA did not emerge as a widely-used

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[22] Ibid., VI-30.

[23] Ibid., VI-31.

[24] Ibid., VI-32.

[25] National Security Council, "Principals Committee Review of the Iraq Policy Paper," Rumsfeld Papers, October 29, 2002, accessed March 7, 2017, http://library.rumsfeld.com/doclib/sp/4136/2002-10-29%20From%20Condoleezza%20Rice%20re%20Principals'%20Committee%20Review%20of%20Iraq%20Policy%20Paper.pdf.

term until after 2006. As a result, the research for this monograph pulls from both FID and SFA literature, but "SFA" will be the predominant term used to describe the building of the Iraqi Security Forces.

A History of SFA and FID Doctrine

The following section will highlight security cooperation doctrine—primarily FID and then, later, SFA—that was available to planners during the initial invasion of Iraq in 2003 through the occupation and eventual withdrawal in 2011. Of particular interest in the doctrine is the dramatic evolution of SFA as a concept during the course of the Iraq War and SFA's eventual doctrinal incarnation which aided planners in thinking through the effects of the planning decisions to build the Iraqi Army. While the doctrine analyzed in this monograph is certainly not comprehensive of all the resources available at time, the publications chosen for the purposes of this analysis were done so because these doctrinal references were specifically cited in reference lists provided to military transition teams and SFA planners in 2007 by the Joint Center for International Security Force Assistance (JCISFA).

In 2006, JCISFA was stood up at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, by the then-Combined Arms Center Commander, Lt. Gen. David Petraeus. JCISFA's mission was to:

> [I]nstitutionalize lessons and best practices from security force assistance (SFA) operations to better prepare US and partner nation forces to rebuild security infrastructure during stability, security, transition, and reconstruction operations. Serve as the DOD Center of Excellence and US Armed Forces focal point to provide advice and assistance for international security force assistance mission.[26]

In short, at the time, JCISFA was a central hub for all things SFA. The reference lists published in JCISFA handbooks after 2007 serve as a good approximation for the doctrinal references most

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[26] Rob Thornton, "What is Security Force Assistance and What is JCISFA," *Small Wars Journal,* March 2, 2008, accessed December 15, 2016, http://smallwarsjournal.com/blog/what-is-security-force-assistance-what-is-jcisfa.

likely used by planners during the initial planning for the Iraqi Army SFA mission, in addition to those used by planners through the withdrawal in 2011.

US Army Field Manual 31-20-3 (September 1994)

During the initial phases of the Iraq War and the subsequent occupation phases of the conflict, most of the FID doctrine resided within the US Special Forces community. One of the primary guiding documents was Field Manual (FM) 31-20-3, *Foreign Internal Defense Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Special Forces,* published in September of 1994. Operational planners tasked with creating a new Iraqi Army would have questioned FM 31-20-3's usefulness, as it was written more for tactical level advising, focusing on battalion, company, and team level FID/SFA operations. While FM 31-20-3 provides a useful guide for how to deploy special forces to train a pre-existing military force in tactical skills useful to combat an insurgency, it does not cover how to design and build a military from the ground up, as was the case in Iraq in 2003.

Field Manual 31-20-3, while more useful at the tactical level, does have some important concepts for military planners at the operational and strategic levels. In the conceptual overview of FID operations, FM 31-20-3 briefly highlights "imperatives" that Special Forces must consider during FID operations. Of use for military planners during the Iraq mission was, first, recognizing the political implications of FID and, second, understanding the long-term sustainment challenges of FID. Reflecting the fact that FID itself is a political activity with potential political impacts on the environment, FM 31-20-3 states "every act . . . has a political impact . . . Whether conducting operations independently or in coordination with conventional operations, they must consider both short- and long-term political effects."[27] This idea reflects the notion that with highly

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[27] Field Manual (FM) 31-20-3, *Foreign Internal Defense Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Special Forces* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2010), 1-4.

charged political activities, such as the development of military forces, the potential for larger

system effects, or unintended consequences, is high.

A second imperative useful to Iraq planners that FM 31-20-3 illustrates is the importance

of only creating programs that are sustainable in the long-term without US assistance. FM 31-20-

3 states:

> SF personnel involved in a FID effort must avoid advising or training the HN forces in
> techniques and procedures beyond their capabilities to sustain . . . SF personnel must
> recognize the need for programs that are durable, consistent, and sustainable, both by the
> [host nation] and the United States. They do not begin programs that are beyond the
> economic or technological capacity of the [host nation] to maintain without US
> assistance. US-funded programs are counterproductive if the populace becomes
> dependent on them and funding subsequently is lost.[28]

The implications of this imperative within FM 31-20-3 are large. In essence, the concept

for FID in FM 31-20-3 is limited to situations where foreign host governments already have a

pre-existing capacity to support military forces. In such cases, special forces performing FID

missions are capable of improving the capabilities of pre-existing military units. However, in

situations where the United States must build units from the ground up, provide their logistics,

and also consider the defense institutions required to sustain these forces, FM 31-20-3 helps to

identify the risk involved, as the host nation may not be able to sustain the programs or the

population may become dependent on US military support. The scope of the SFA mission in Iraq

would be akin to the larger scale mission, but the concerns presented in FM 31-20-3 still hold true

for Iraq case.

Joint Publication 3-07.1 (April 2004)

US Army doctrine for FID operations as described in FM 31-20-3 was almost a decade

old by the time of the Iraq invasion. Joint Publication (JP) 3-07.1, *Joint Tactics, Techniques, and

Procedures for Foreign Internal Defense,* released in April 2004, provided a needed update to the

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[28] Ibid., 1-6.

evolving missions of military assistance to foreign nations within the current operational

environment. JP 3-07.1 was a major addition for DoD FID operations compared to FM 31-20-3.

First, rather than specifically focusing on the special forces aspects of the FID mission, JP 3-07.1

reflected the joint and conventional aspects of the FID mission. Second, JP 3-07.1 clarified that

the combatant command's J-5 Plans and Policy Directorate role in FID was to look out five to ten

years, providing mid-term and long-term objectives for military support to FID programs.[29]

Joint Publication 3-07.1 also listed their own five planning imperatives for integrating

FID into strategies and plans. Similar to the notions of long-term sustainability and understanding

unintended consequences that were presented in FM 31-20-3, the third planning imperative of JP

3-07.1 states:

> Understand long-term or strategic implications and sustainability of all US assistance
> efforts before FID programs are implemented. This is especially important in building
> HN development and defense self-sufficiency, both of which may require large
> investments of time and materiel. Comprehensive understanding and planning will
> include assessing the following:
>
> > (1) The end state for development.
> >
> > (2) Sustainability of development programs and defense improvements.
> >
> > (3) Acceptability of development models across the range of HN society, and the
> > impact of development programs on the distribution of resources within the
> > HN.
> >
> > (4) Second-order and third-order effects of socio-economic change.
> >
> > (5) The relationship between improved military forces and existing regional,
> > ethnic, and religious cleavages in society.
> >
> > (6) The impact of improved military forces on the regional balance of power.
> >
> > (7) Personnel life-cycle management of military personnel who receive
> > additional training.

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[29] Joint Publication (JP) 3-07.1, *Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Foreign Internal Defense (FID)* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2004), II-7.

(8) The impact of military development and operations on civil-military relations in the HN.[30]

For purposes of the Iraqi Army case study, of particular interest are points 2, 4, 5, 6 and 8. From the viewpoint of JP 3-07.1 it is clear that, from a FID planning perspective, it is important for planners to consider if host nation forces will be sustainable in the long-term by the host nation itself, as well as what will be the second and third order effects of building or improving a military to the political, ethnic, religious cleavages in society or civilian-military relations with the government in general.

A weakness of JP 3-07.1, however, is that the focus of FID is still based on an assumption that the host nation has the requisite sustainment and generating institutions to support a military force. JP 3-07.1 emphasizes planning principles of maximizing host nation sustainment capabilities, but ignores a scenario where the host nation may have none.[31] Likewise, there is no mention of how planners may need to create or conduct an assessment of generating institutions like recruiting and training facilities, or executive level institutions like a Ministry of Defense. Similarly, the doctrinal guidance for intelligence in FID operations is primarily enemy- and tactically-focused, rather than answering some of the civilian-military or internal ethnic conflict intelligence requirements that JP 3-07.1's planning imperatives seem to articulate. JP 3-07.1, while certainly an improvement over FM 31-20-3 in expanding the planning considerations and joint/conventional contributions for FID, still did not sufficiently advise planners for the scale and scope of the tasks required for the Iraq SFA mission.

JCISFA Transition Team Handbooks (August and December 2007)

By late 2006, increasing violence in Iraq resulted in a change in operations as part of President George W. Bush's "surge" which was led by Gen. David Petraeus. In addition to

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[30] Ibid., III-1 – III-2.

[31] Ibid., III-1 – III-12.

receiving additional manpower, the surge shifted the focus to a population-based

counterinsurgency strategy rather than a threat-based strategy, which required embedding advisor

teams with Iraqi military and police units at the tactical level. Such daily interactions and partner

nation developmental requirements were new for US conventional forces conducting SFA. To

alleviate this deficiency, JCISFA released two handbooks in late 2007 to assist these transition

teams. Due to their handling restrictions, the contents of these handbooks are not explained in

depth in this monograph, but can be summarized in short as being drafted for transition team

members embedded at tactical level echelons of the Iraqi security forces. As a result, their scope

and focus is more toward the practical skills needed by transition team members like rapport

building, cultural understanding, battle drills, and tactics, techniques and procedures. While

highlighting the FID imperatives from 2004's JP 3-07.1, the Transition Team handbooks do not

go into sufficient detail to serve as a guide for planners designing the Iraqi Security Forces.[32]

JCISFA Security Force Assistance Planner's Guide (February 2008)

In early 2008, the US military finally began to expand their SFA guidance for the scale

and scope of SFA missions that Operation Iraqi Freedom would become. On February 14, 2008,

JCISFA released their Security Forces Assistance Planners' Guide. The 2008 SFA Planner's

Guide, in contrast to FM 31-20-3, but expanding on JP 3-07.1, was primarily designed for US

combatant command level planners and provided guidance for equivalent level joint, combined,

interagency, and other planners in the execution of SFA operations.[33]

The 2008 SFA Planner's Guide brought several contributions over the previous doctrine.

First, SFA/FID was better articulated as "nested planning" across tactical and operational

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[32] Both JCISFA Transition Team Handbooks are classified as UNCLASSIFIED//FOUO. The summary of both handbooks is approved for full UNCLASSIFIED release by JCISFA. Mark Lauber, email message to author, March 28, 2017.

[33] JCISFA, *Security Force Assistance Planner's Guide* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: JCISFA, 2008), ii.

objectives tied to campaign, operational and strategic objectives (Figure 2).[34] By articulating the

importance of the operational and strategic elements of SFA, the 2008 SFA Planner's Guide

helped elevate the role of SFA/FID out of the historical realm of special forces and into that of

conventional military operations under the purview of operational and strategic headquarters. The

2008 SFA Planner's Guide highlighted the important fact that "SFA depends not only on creating

reliable tactical units and achieving tactical objectives, but also [depends] on developing the

operational and strategic infrastructure to employ, support, and sustain those units and achieve the

strategic end state."[35] As an example, 2008 SFA Planner's Guide warned that:

> SFA effectiveness cannot be determined simply by measures of performance like the
> number of units formed or the level of proficiency achieved. Africa has numerous scrap
> yards that are filled with derelict Soviet equipment from once functional units that attest
> to the futility of training and equipping tactical security units without developing a
> system to sustain them.[36]

[34] Ibid., 5.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Ibid.

Levels of Planning: US Planners and Host Nation
Planners*
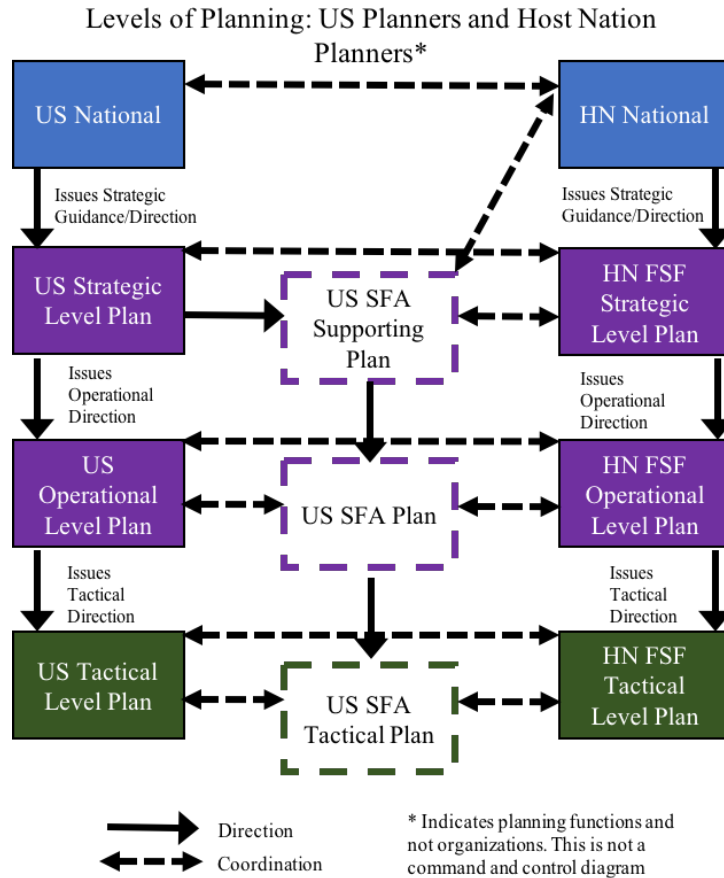
Figure 2. Planning Levels and Relationships of SFA. *Source*: JCISFA, *Security Force Assistance Planner's Guide* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: JCISFA, 2008), 5.

A second contribution of the 2008 SFA Planner's Guide was to articulate the various scope and scale of SFA operations. The 2008 SFA Planner's Guide categorized three types of SFA environments:

1. Constructing a foreign security force from the ground up;

2. Reconstructing one based on some of the existing capabilities and structure; or

3. Reinforcing an existing foreign security force lacking structure and or capabilities to meet real or perceived threats.[37]

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[37] Ibid., 7.

Each of these SFA environments required very different tasks performed by the advising force and different scale and scope of operations in order to support the SFA efforts.

Similarly, each of these environments would require different approaches, for example, constructing a foreign security force from the ground up requires a large investment into institution building, described as a "generate phase," as well as embedded tactical advisors, described as an "employ phase." In comparison, an environment that is mostly reinforcing an existing foreign security force may mostly focus embedded advisors within the "employ phase."[38]

The third contribution that the 2008 SFA Planner's Guide brought to SFA operations that was absent in previous doctrine was frameworks for planners to conceptualize phasing and transitions in SFA operations (Figure 3). A phase is a "planning and execution tool used to divide an operation in duration or activity," according to US Army doctrine, "usually involving a change of mission, task organization, or rules of engagement."[39] Likewise, transitions "mark changes of focus between phases or between the ongoing operation and execution of a branch or sequel."[40] Phasing allows commanders to arrange tasks that cannot be conducted simultaneously, either because of the lack of resources, or because changing environmental conditions are needed for an operation or campaign to progress. As the 2008 SFA Planner's Guide articulates, the scope and scale of the SFA mission, whether augmenting already existing foreign security forces or building a foreign security force from the ground up, requires very different strategies and resourcing that may change over time based on objectives across phases.

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[38] Ibid.

[39] Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 3-0, *Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2016), 2-8.

[40] Ibid.

Campaign Phases and Security Force Assistance Phases
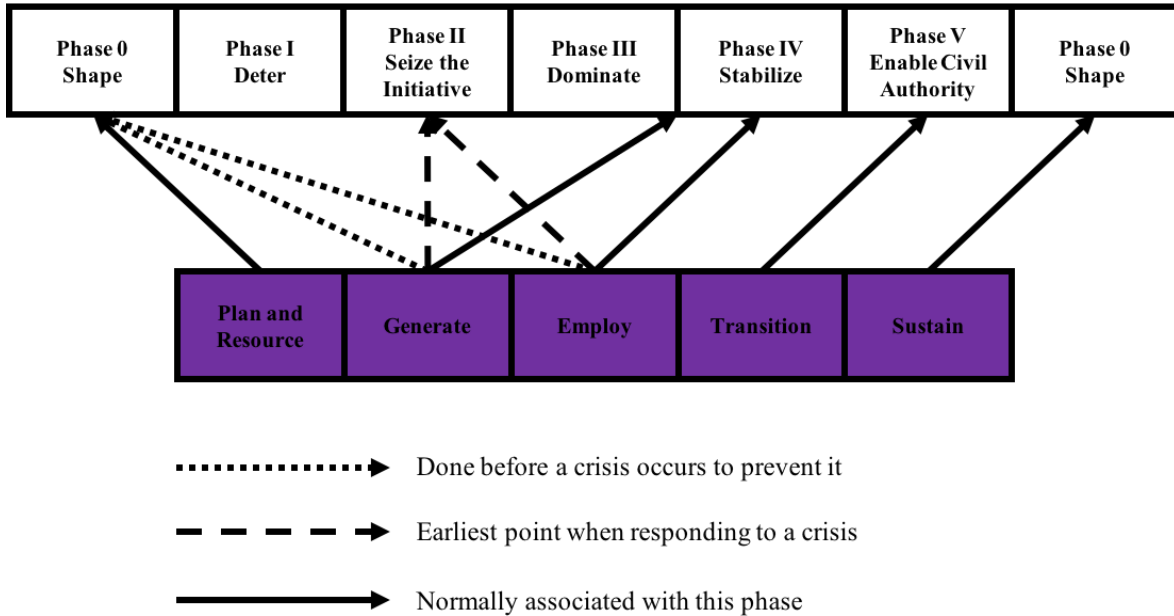
Figure 3. Campaign and Security Force Assistance Phases. *Source*: JCISFA, *Security Force Assistance Planner's Guide* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: JCISFA, 2008), 6.

The 2008 SFA Planner's Guide addresses in detail the conceptual frameworks for each of these SFA specific phases (Figure 3). During the plan and resource phase, SFA plans must be nested at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels with the overall military campaign plans. During the generate phase, the primary tasks are to organize, train, equip, rebuild and advise.[41] Within the generate phase, institutional development becomes a critical component, especially in circumstances like Iraq in 2003 when the government and military evaporated as a result of the invasion and subsequent efforts of De-Ba'athification. As the 2008 SFA Planner's Guide highlights, "A critical component of the SFA plan is the development of the public sector institutional infrastructure during Force Generation (e.g., MOD, MOI, National Security Council, Human Rights Ombudsman) to support the new military and police forces."[42] During the generate

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[41] JCISFA, *Security Force Assistance Planner's Guide*, 8.

[42] Ibid., 44.

phase contributions from all USG agencies are important to develop these institutions as many of the government and security functions are outside the expertise of military advisers. The employ phase primarily focuses on employing the foreign security forces in the way in which it was designed. During this phase, the roles of the foreign security forces will be on security, offense, defense, and stability operations while the SFA campaign transitions to primarily military advising of tactical operations. In the employ phase, advisement of the generating activities is still occurring and important, but conceptually the priorities of the SFA mission shifts to employing the foreign security forces. During the transition phase, the United States seeks to transition duties and responsibilities to the host nation forces, with the end state of eventually removing the advisers. The transition phase is followed by a sustain phase where the SFA program has been turned over to a steady state organization such as the Office of Defense Cooperation.[43]

Important during planning for each of these phase transitions is an interagency assessment of whether the host nation is capable of supporting and maintaining the institutions and forces necessary for the long-term goals of the US' SFA program in that country. If the transition and sustain phases of the SFA campaign are inadequately assessed or planned the SFA campaign may not succeed as the foreign security forces eventually are unable to either independently generate forces or fail to maintain their current forces, or if the government chooses to dismantle their forces despite facing continued threats. Similarly, if the underlying SFA goals remain of long-term strategic importance, then US assistance will still be required throughout the sustain phase, and it is unrealistic to expect a complete disengagement from all SFA activity.

Ultimately, the real value of the 2008 SFA Planner's Guide was in updating SFA doctrinal concepts for the size and scope of SFA operations in Iraq and later Afghanistan. SFA

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[43] Ibid., 10-11.

concepts finally were institutionalized into strategic and operational planning, scaled for efforts

that may involve rebuilding an entire host nation security apparatus (and the institutions

necessary to support), as well as building frameworks for each phase of an SFA campaign

synchronized across time as shown in figure 4. The 2008 SFA Planner's Guide represented an

important improvement to conceptual thinking of SFA for military planners.

Compilation of the SFA Phases

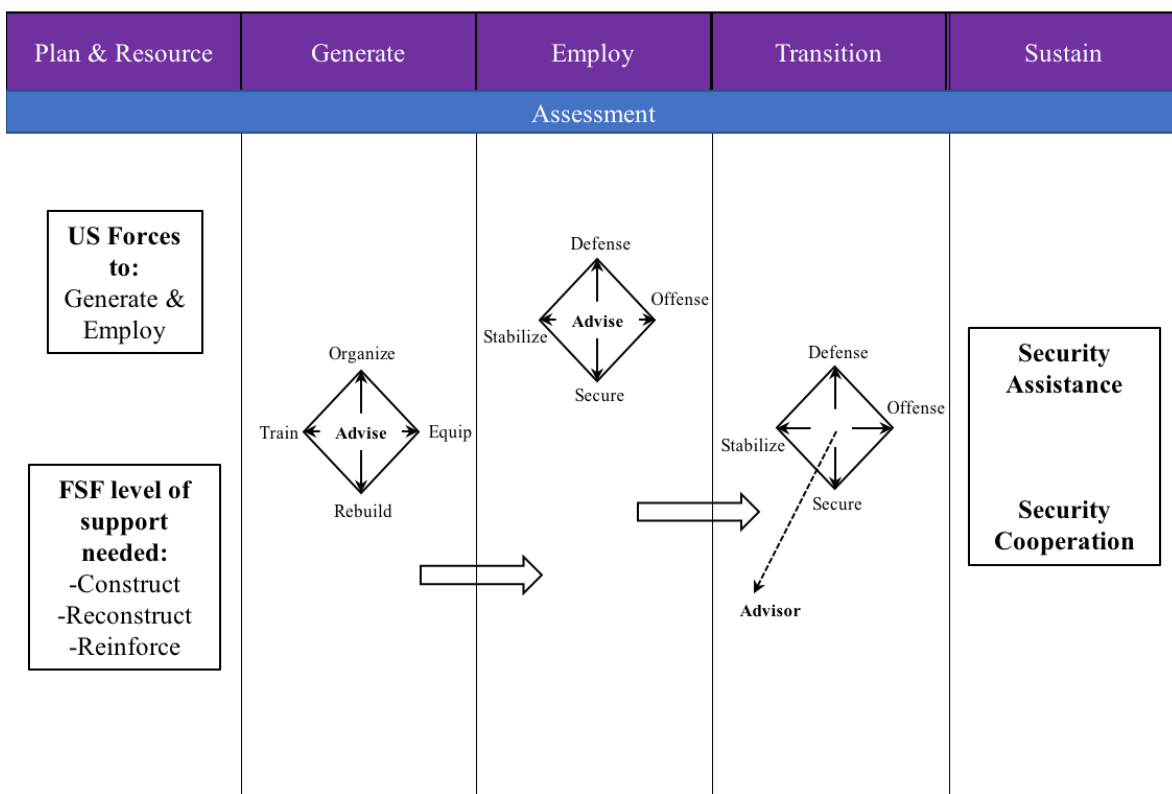

Figure 4. Compilation of the SFA Phases. *Source*: JCISFA, *Security Force Assistance Planner's Guide* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: JCISFA, 2008), 12.

US Army Field Manual 3-07 (October 2008) and Field Manual 3-07.1 (May 2009)

By 2005, as the US military focused more on nation-building in Iraq than combat

operations, the Department of Defense issued DoD Directive 3000.05, which represented a

radical shift in thinking, placing stability operations at the same priority as combat operations.[44]

During this period, the military utilized the label "full spectrum operations" to reflect the reality

that the military was performing conventional combat simultaneously with stability tasks.

Tactical leaders at battalion, company, and platoon levels found themselves in unfamiliar roles

negotiating among tribal elders, restoring public utilities, advising government officials, and

rebuilding schools and hospitals. The result of this change in the character of the Iraq War,

reflected in DoD Directive 3000.05, led to a doctrinal update of US Army Field Manual 3-07,

Stability Operations in October 2008. FM 3-07 sought to provide a comprehensive approach to

stability operations in order to leverage military capabilities to establish a safe and secure

environment; facilitate reconciliation among local or regional adversaries; establish political,

legal, social, and economic institutions; and help transition responsibility to a legitimate civil

authority operating under the rule of law.[45]

Field Manual 3-07 helped to codify that security sector reform (SSR) is an essential

component of stability operations. While DoD has the primary role of reforming, restructuring,

and reestablishing the armed forces and defense sectors, SSR was still very much a whole-of-

government operation.[46] Likewise, FM 3-07 emphasized that SSR does not seek to implement

Western paradigms for the security sector in a host nation—SSR programs must be tailored to

challenges unique to each environment.[47] Understanding the host nation's unique environmental

challenges are critical, especially considering that significant obstacles to SSR could be endemic

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[44] US Department of Defense, DoD Directive 3000.05, *Military Support for Stability, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction (SSTR) Operations* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, November 2005).

[45] Field Manual (FM) 3-07, *Stability Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2008), vii.

[46] Ibid., 6-2.

[47] Ibid., 6-6.

corruption and limited host-nation public administration and public management capacities.[48] But

most importantly, any SSR plan must be "informed and guided" by a host-nation security strategy

and defense policy, for without buy-in and integration into a host-nation plan, any SSR will be

unsustainable in the long-term.[49] The key quality for SSR planning ultimately must be sustainable

long-term solutions by the host nation, but also a recognition that substantial external support and

resourcing may be required for defense institutions if the host nation lacks that capacity.

By the spring of 2009, the US Army had also updated FM 3-07.1, *Security Force*

Assistance, written for Brigade Combat Team headquarters, whose use was intended to guide

tactical leaders in the employment of a Brigade Combat Team for a SFA mission under SSR.[50]

FM 3-07.1 was an important update for the US Army in codifying much of the conceptual

frameworks, like SFA tasks by phases, as shown in Figure 5, and established by the JCISFA 2008

SFA Planner's Guide. Furthermore, FM 3-07.1 articulated these frameworks by describing how a

Brigade Combat Team translates them for tactical application, with advisors partnered at the local

level with foreign security forces. While useful for US Army tactical units advising in the

"employ" phase of SFA operations, FM 3-07.1 did not provide any additional conceptual

assistance for operational and strategic planning for a SFA campaign.

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[48] Ibid.

[49] Ibid.

[50] Field Manual (FM) 3-07.1, *Security Force Assistance* (Washington, DC: Government Printing
Office, 2009), iv.

Plan & Resource	Generate	Employ	Transition	Sustain
Assessment				

US Forces to: Generate & Employ

FSF level of support needed:
-Construct
-Reconstruct
-Reinforce

Organize

Train Advise Equip

Rebuild

Defense

Stabilize Advise Offense

Secure

Defense

Stabilize Offense

Secure

Advisor

Security Assistance

Security Cooperation
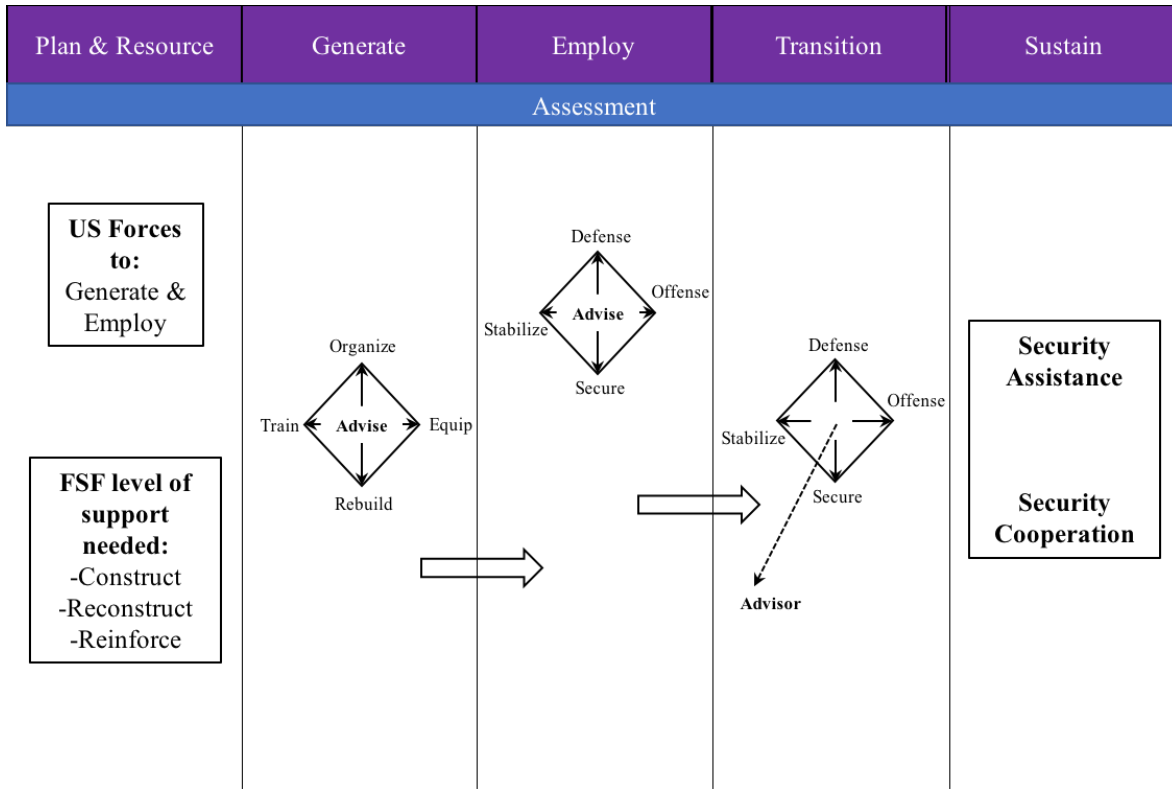
Figure 5. Security Force Assistance Tasks, Activities, and Assessment. *Source*: Field Manual (FM) 3-07.1, *Security Force Assistance* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2009), 2-11.

Joint Publication 3-22 (July 2010)

In 2010, the Joint Staff updated JP 3-07.1 from 2004 to JP 3-22, *Foreign Internal Defense*. This update represented an attempt to again bring doctrine up to speed with the scope that FID operations were encompassing not just in Iraq and Afghanistan, but globally.[51] While much in JP 3-22 remained unchanged from JP 3-07.1, an important conceptual addition was a new discussion regarding transition and redeployments. With the looming 2011 withdrawal of US combat forces in Iraq, transitional planning of the FID/SFA mission would become an important task. As stated in JP 3-22:

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[51] Other examples of US FID operations include: El Salvador, Colombia, the Philippines, and the Republic of Georgia. Joint Publication (JP) 3-22, *Foreign Internal Defense* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2010), I-3.

A poorly conducted termination of FID operations can have a long-term impact on USG relations with the HN, the region, and, potentially, in more than one region. Some level of operations normally will continue well after intensive FID support has ended. The possibility of an extended presence by US military forces to assist FID operations should be considered during the initial planning and recommendation for execution.[52]

While JP 3-22 does not provide insight on the conditions or indicators that might yield to a poor termination or handoff, it seems to be a prescient warning for what would eventually happen with the Iraqi Security Forces only four years later.

Section Summary

Between the 2003 Iraq invasion and the 2011 US military withdrawal, US doctrine guiding SFA and FID operations changed tremendously. What began as early 1990s doctrine guiding more niche local tactical level missions conducted by special forces evolved into doctrine reflecting the much larger and conventional nature of SFA and FID that the missions in Iraq and Afghanistan would become. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates highlighted this important change in a November 2007 speech, where he said, "Arguably the most important military component in the War on Terror is not the fighting we do ourselves, but how well we enable and empower our partners to defend and govern themselves. The standing up and mentoring of indigenous army and police—once the province of Special Forces—is now a key mission for the military as a whole."[53]

Much of the driving change for the SFA and FID doctrine, however, was not some forethought of future operations, but rather was a race to close the gap between the lessons learned in the ongoing SFA and FID operations in Iraq and Afghanistan and the doctrine that guided it. While early planners in 2003 had little doctrinal guidance in how to think or develop

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[52] Joint Publication (JP) 3-22, *Foreign Internal Defense*, VI-40.

[53] Robert M. Gates, "Kansas State University Landon Lecture" (Lecture, Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas, November 26, 2007), accessed November 27, 2016, https://www.k-state.edu/media/newsreleases/landonlect/gatestext1107.html.

the security forces in Iraq, by 2011 the doctrine reflected a rich and deep understanding of the nuances involved in FID and SFA, whether conducting small scale partnerships or large scale efforts to rebuild an entire country's security apparatus.

In tracing the doctrinal developments during this time period, a few key concepts are relevant to the case study of the failure of the Iraqi Army in 2014. First, SFA or FID must be integrated into planning at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels. The objectives, goals, planning considerations, and approach at each level of operations has important consequences for the overall success of the program. Second, to sustain long-term operational SFA or FID objectives (unlike short-term tactical objectives), a host-nation requires defense institutions that can generate forces and manage them through executive level ministries. A critical component of a SFA or FID plan might be to develop and mentor those generating and executive level functions in order to support the employment of tactical forces. Third, sustainability of forces by the host nation is of utmost importance for long-term success and for US forces to transition from a more heavily involved role. Fourth, like conventional operations, SFA and FID must operationalize planning through phasing and transitions. The requirements and priorities of SFA and FID shift over time, and even after the withdrawal of US forces, there may still be long-term assistance and requirements that the host nation needs that must be built into any overall SFA or FID campaign.

When analyzing the doctrine, it is clear that at least conceptually, many of the problems that the Iraqi Security Forces would face by 2014 were nominally accounted for in the guidance provided by doctrine as of 2010. The warnings were apparent; SFA doctrine writers seemed to predict that just because the environment in 2011 was promising, conditions could still turn for the worse—as evidenced by their example of junkyards of Soviet equipment in Africa. But just because doctrine articulated these warnings, it does not mean that they were necessarily accounted for in the building of the Iraqi Security Forces. The next section will examine a historical review of the decisions and debates made by planners to build and equip the Iraqi

Army. This section will analyze whether these decisions were in accordance with, or deviated from, SFA planning principles of that time, and whether the failures of the Iraqi Army in 2014 can be linked to these decisions. If there is a deviance between doctrine and implementation, an important question is: why? The utility of SFA as a whole could be in question if planners and the Army accounted for these problems and the Iraqi Army still failed because of them.

Planning for a New Iraqi Army

The following section outlines the historical case study of the military and interagency efforts to plan for the development of a new Iraqi Army from 2003 to 2011. Each subsection represents either major transitions of command over who was responsible for developing the Iraqi Security Forces, or represents major reframing of the problem as to role, purpose, or scope of the Iraqi Army.

Fragmented Interagency Planning for Post-War Iraq (2001-2003)

After the September 11, 2001 attack on the United States, senior national security leaders, to include then-Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, began to re-examine whether the United States needed to address the threat of Saddam Hussein's regime. On September 29, 2001, Rumsfeld directed an update of the existing Iraq war plan to then-commander of US Central Command (CENTCOM), Gen. Tommy Franks. The initial planning guidance given by Rumsfeld was that the United States would not engage in a lengthy military occupation after the fall of Saddam's regime. Rumsfeld assumed that the "Phase IV," or stability operations, that would follow the end of major combat operations would be handled by the State Department, which would quickly hand off control of the country to a postwar provisional Iraqi government without the need for a large commitment of US military forces. Because of this planning assumption,

CENTCOM primarily focused on the combat aspects of the Iraq war plan, which was first briefed to President Bush on December 28, 2001. [54]

The logic of Rumsfeld's postwar assumptions was that if the United States provided large amounts of assistance and governance help to the Iraqis it might create a "culture of dependency" he believed was apparent in other interventions.[55] The US Department of State disagreed with Rumsfeld's postwar assumptions. In their opinion, because of the competing ethnic and sectarian groups within Iraq, as well as the disrepair of effective democratic institutions after years of authoritarian rule under the Saddam regime, Iraq would require a longer transitional period over the course of several years that would need to be assisted by the United States.[56]

Contrary to some of the DoD's initial planning assumptions, on August 29, 2002, the National Security Council (NSC) issued a memorandum entitled "Iraq: Goals, Objectives, Strategy," which articulated that the US strategy would be to work with Iraqi opposition and "demonstrate that the US and coalition partners are prepared to play a sustained role in providing security, humanitarian assistance, and reconstruction aid."[57] According to the memo this aid would: establish an interim administration to transition to an elected Iraqi government; reform Iraqi military and security institutions; preserve and reform the Iraqi bureaucracy; start political, economic, and security reconstruction; and provide immediate humanitarian assistance among other priorities.[58]

According to the Special Inspector General Iraq Reconstruction (SIGIR), as a result of the ambitious objectives within the August 2002 NSC memo, "the Joint Staff instructed

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[54] Special Inspector General Iraq Reconstruction (SIGIR), *Hard Lessons: The Iraq Reconstruction Experience* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2009), 7.

[55] Ibid., 8.

[56] Ibid.

[57] National Security Council.

[58] Ibid.

CENTCOM that it should begin planning to administer Iraq for an interim period after the invasion. This order appeared to counter the earlier Rumsfeld presumption that the Defense Department would not bear principal responsibility for managing the country after the combat phase concluded."[59] Simultaneously, the Department of State and USAID also conducted their own post-Saddam planning efforts called "The Future of Iraq Project," which brought together two hundred Iraqi exiles with governance and international development experts.[60] According to the SIGIR, these efforts were fragmented and piecemeal, and reflected a broken interagency process.[61]

Based on the expanded mandate by the August 2002 NSC memo, the Joint Staff put additional pressure on Phase IV planners to think through the requirements of post-war Iraq. On December 11, 2002, the Joint Staff was briefed by the Phase IV planning team, who assumed that there would be no Iraqi government after the war and that the planners were anticipating chaos. Realizing the potential magnitude of the Phase IV problem, Lt. Gen. George Casey, then Director of the Joint Staff, established a joint task force (JTF), JTF-4, led by an Army brigadier general, in order to augment CENTCOM's planning of the Phase IV efforts.[62]

By January 20, 2003, the NSC passed National Security Policy Directive 24 (NSPD-24), which gave the DoD, primarily under CENTCOM, the responsibility for "help[ing] meet the humanitarian, reconstruction, and administration challenges facing the country in the immediate aftermath of the combat operations."[63] In order to assist CENTCOM in this task, NSPD-24

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[59] SIGIR, *Hard Lessons*, 9.

[60] The National Security Archive, *New State Department Releases on the "Future of Iraq" Project,* September 1, 2006, accessed March 21, 2017, http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/ NSAEBB/NSAEBB198/.

[61] SIGIR, *Hard Lessons*, 15-16.

[62] Ibid., 33.

[63] The White House, "NSPD-24: Iraq Post War Planning Office," January 20, 2003, accessed March 11, 2017, https://fas.org/irp/offdocs/nspd/nspd-24.pdf.

created an interagency postwar planning office which would later be called the Office of

Reconstruction and Humanitarian Affairs (ORHA) led by retired Army Lt. Gen. Jay Garner.

CENTCOM stood down their humanitarian planning teams, but continued reconstruction

planning under JTF-4, leading to confusion as to what were the differences between ORHA and

JTF-4. According to the SIGIR:

> The division of duties between ORHA and JTF-4 was ambiguous. [The commander of JTF-4] saw JTF-4 as more than just an organization to assume control of CENTCOM Phase IV Planning. Casey, who launched JTF-4 before ORHA's formation, had intended it to become the command center for postwar operations in Iraq, led by a three-star general. In this formulation, JTF-4—not ORHA—would have the postwar operational lead after the fall of Saddam's regime. . . . ORHA's creation fundamentally altered this vision but the new arrangement was anything but clear. CENTCOM's leadership was not happy with either ORHA or JTF-4. Although Rumsfeld envisioned ORHA as a "module that fit within the CENTCOM structure," military commanders viewed it an unwanted interloper.[64]

Beyond the ambiguous chain of command, from January 2003 through the invasion of

Iraq in March, ORHA started with no staff and no office space; Garner found himself fighting for

personnel mostly from retired officials or personnel from outside the government since both the

State Department and DoD were not completely supportive of the office. Moreover, according to

the SIGIR, from a planning perspective, no previous planning products from US Department of

State (DoS), USAID, or several DoD offices were passed on to ORHA to assist in their planning

efforts.[65] Essentially, ORHA was starting from scratch, lacked support from both DoD and DoS,

and had to compete with the Joint Staff, who were simultaneously supporting a concurrent

planning team under JTF-4.

By the time of the invasion in March 2003, not only were there conflicting assumptions

as to the scope and duration of US postwar reconstruction and governance of Iraq, but postwar

planners also lacked any unity of effort across the interagency—a violation of key doctrinal

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[64] SIGIR, *Hard Lessons*, 38.

[65] Ibid., 36.

principle for security cooperation, SFA, and FID operations articulated in doctrine at the time. However, while some planners, like those in JTF-4, assumed that there was a good possibility that no intact Iraqi government (and security apparatus) would exist after the conflict, others at CENTCOM and within DoD were operating under the assumption that there would be an intact bureaucracy and that ORHA would only be required for a very short period to facilitate a rapid transition to an interim Iraqi government. Under these assumptions, from a FID and SFA perspective, minimal US military resources would be needed to support the Iraqi Army after the fall of Saddam's regime.

A couple of key insights immediately emerge during these early planning stages. First, no matter how good the doctrine is, poor assumptions can scuttle effective planning. The DoD's initial assumptions that the US military's involvement in Iraq would be short and that the Iraqi government would stay in place led planners to believe that US military requirements would be minimal. Once those planning assumptions were updated to cover the scope and scale of the military's humanitarian and governance efforts, months had already been lost to planners. Second, bureaucratic infighting and unclear lines of authority can trump any doctrine that urges interagency cooperation and unity of effort. During this time period the NSC was not able to force cooperation and unity of effort between the DoD, DoS, or even within the DoD, as was the case between OHRA and JTF-4. The result of these challenges was an inadequately resourced and poorly conceived Phase IV strategy, and the lack of an institution or organization equipped to quickly assume the mission that Phase IV would become.

Coalition Provisional Authority: Disbanding the Iraqi Army (2003-2004)

DoD assumptions that ORHA could quickly turn over authority and sovereignty to an interim Iraqi government immediately proved false. By April 30, only two weeks after Garner arrived in Baghdad, President Bush installed L. Paul Bremer as his Presidential Envoy to Iraq to

lead the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA).[66] The collapse of the Iraqi government and the

worsening security situation, with looting spread across the country, required the United States to

provide an occupying authority rather than a quick political transition office as DoD had hoped.[67]

ORHA had been forced to do a cold start on post-war planning when the NSC created them in

January 2003, but now the CPA would also have their own cold start as Bremer (who had no

previous post-conflict reconstruction experience) quickly replaced ORHA less than six months

after its creation with the CPA.

The CPA's first executive order was Order Number 1: De-Ba'athification, which

removed the top four layers of Saddam's Ba'ath political party and the top three layers of senior

management of every single government ministry, affiliated corporations and other government

institutions.[68] Lt. Gen. Ricardo Sanchez, the commander of Coalition forces in Iraq later said,

"The impact of this De-Ba'athification order was devastating. . . . Essentially, it eliminated the

entire government and civic capacity of the nation. Organizations involving justice, defense,

interior, communications, schools, universities, and hospitals were all either completely shut

down or severely crippled, because anybody with any experience was now out of a job."[69]

One week after CPA Order 1, a second order, CPA Order Number 2: Dissolution of

Entities, disbanded not just the Iraqi military, but also the Ministry of Defense, Ministry of

Information, Ministry of State for Military Affairs, the Iraqi Intelligence Service, the National

Security Bureau, the Directorate of National Security, and the Special Security Organization.[70]

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[66] Michael Gordon and Bernard Trainor, *The Endgame: The Inside Story of the Struggle for Iraq, from George W. Bush to Barack Obama* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2012), 12.

[67] SIGIR, *Hard Lessons*, 71.

[68] Coalition Provisional Authority, "Order Number 1: De-Ba'Athification of Iraqi Society," Baghdad, Iraq, May 16, 2003.

[69] SIGIR, *Hard Lessons*, 74.

[70] Coalition Provisional Authority, "Order Number 2: Dissolution of Entities," Baghdad, Iraq, May 23, 2003.

Over 500,000 soldiers were put out of work without compensation, and pensions were terminated for anyone with the rank of colonel or above. The CPA's decision to disband Iraq's entire security apparatus caught many by surprise. The decision was widely unpopular among American commanders in Iraq.[71] More alarming, the NSC had not vetted the decision, in fact, the NSC Iraq coordinator Frank Miller had expected the army to continue after the regime change, as the Phase IV stability and reconstruction planning required it.[72] Condoleezza Rice, Colin Powell, and the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, Gen. Peter Pace, all told the SIGIR that they had no idea the CPA's order was coming, but in the end, they tried to show a unified front with the President's man, Ambassador Bremer.[73]

The logic to disband the old Iraqi Army and build a much smaller new force was rooted in the historical experience of the Iraqi Army. Analysis written at the time noted that Iraqi Army had a history of not just brutal internal repression of the population, but also "at least 10 times in Iraq's history, the army intervened to change the government, either by actual coup, threatened coup, or political pressure."[74] While the Iraqi Army was viewed by Phase IV "Stability" (PH IV) planners as necessary to assist in reconstruction, Bremer did have a justifiable logic that the "old" Iraqi Army could pose a long term challenge for a democratically elected Iraqi government. At a minimum, reforms were needed to transform the Iraqi Army's identify from one of repression and occasional political meddling to one embracing "constitutional civilian control, military professionalism, respect for human rights, as well as ethnic and religious inclusiveness."[75] How to achieve this was the question, and Ambassador Bremer believed that it was better to start anew.

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[71] Gordon and Trainor, 14.

[72] SIGIR, *Hard Lessons*, 75.

[73] Ibid., 76.

[74] Joseph McMillan, "Building an Iraqi Defense Force," *Strategic Forum* no. 198 (June 2003): 1.

[75] Ibid., 7.

The impact of CPA Orders 1 and 2 was clear, however. The SFA and FID planning to this point, though fragmented and uncoordinated, relied on a key planning assumption—that the Iraqi military would stay intact and would be available for stability and reconstruction tasks. Within the framework of SFA and FID doctrine, this planning assumption envisioned an environment requiring much less SFA and FID forces than an environment where the government had completely collapsed. The CPA decisions (which were executed without any interagency coordination) instantly changed the environment, making the SFA/FID mission one of constructing a foreign security force from the ground up—a task that planners and the US military as a whole were woefully unprepared for.

Under the auspices of CPA Order Number 2, the CPA would form a new Iraqi Army. The responsibility for training the new Iraqi Army fell to US Army Maj. Gen. Paul Eaton, who arrived in Iraq on June 13, 2003, to command the Coalition Military Assistance Training Team.[76] The new Iraqi Army would be a volunteer-based, civilian-controlled force, numbering approximately 40,000, organized into three light infantry divisions and trained over two years.[77] Another order, CPA Order Number 22, also constrained the role of the new Iraqi Army: "The New Iraqi Army shall not have, or exercise, domestic law enforcement functions, nor intervene in the domestic political affairs of the nation."[78] The CPA envisioned the new Iraqi Army as a small force with a mission strictly limited to external defense.

According to the SIGIR, Eaton admitted that the only real policy direction he received about the new Iraqi Army came from a twenty-four-page PowerPoint presentation from CENTCOM.[79] Moreover, Eaton had zero participation from the US Army staff and US Army

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[76] SIGIR, *Hard Lessons*, 128.

[77] Ibid.

[78] Coalition Provisional Authority, "Order Number 22: Creation of a New Iraqi Army," Baghdad, Iraq, August 7, 2003.

[79] SIGIR, *Hard Lessons*, 128.

Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC)—the institution the US Army uses to generate and train forces. The Coalition Military Assistance Training Team began planning how to man, train, equip and employ the estimated 40,000-man new Iraqi Army with only five staff members and an estimated start date of six weeks, or by August 1, 2003.[80] Further complicating Eaton's task was the initial two-year period to reach an end strength goal for the Iraqi Army was later reduced to one year by Secretary Rumsfeld because of the worsening security situation in the summer of 2003.[81] The escalating violence would be especially problematic as the plans to build the Iraqi Army during this time continued to operate under the assumption, according to Gen. Sanchez's political military advisor, that "things would be back to normal and we would be moving out of there [within six months]."[82]

The NSC, DoD, and CPA's time-horizon planning assumptions would continue to haunt the United States through 2004 as the Coalition Military Assistance Training Team and their police equivalent—Coalition Police Assistance Training Team—struggled to accelerate training the Iraqi Security Forces. The CPA continued to view their role as temporary, facilitating the sovereignty handover to Iraqis in June of 2004 under the auspices of the UN Security Council Resolutions. This transition, however, was challenged by the firing of practically all experienced Iraqi government officials, especially within the Ministry of Defense. The CPA's short time horizons resulted in it narrowly focused on the prevailing security challenges at the time, primarily on generating police, Iraqi national guard units (to augment the police), and the Iraqi Army for external defense—at the expense of longer-term reforms such as building a new Ministry of Defense that could sustain these forces.[83]

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[80] Ibid.

[81] Ibid., 129.

[82] Gordon and Trainor, 18.

[83] SIGIR, *Hard Lessons*, 130.

Further complicating the CPA's transition timeline was the worsening security situation. Beginning in April 2004, uprisings engulfed much of Iraq as Sunni insurgents began attacking coalition forces in Falluja, Baghdad, Ramadi, Samarra, Tikrit, and Muqtada Al Sadr's Shia Mahdi Army occupied Rajah and Sadr City.[84] The uprisings were a disaster for the Iraqi Security Forces, as many proved unwilling to fight. Police units collapsed in Sunni cities and in the Shia south. From April 2 to 16, 2004, the Iraqi National Guard units faced widespread desertion: 30 percent in Northern Iraq, 49 percent in Baghdad, 30 percent in the south-central region, and 82 percent in western Iraq.[85] The widespread failure of the Iraqi Security Forces in April 2004 forced a reframing of the security problem for planners. Police units would need to be heavily equipped to combat well-armed insurgents, and the Iraqi Army (contrary to CPA Order 22) would not be used just for external threats but also for internal security, and all security forces would be specially trained for counterinsurgency operations.[86]

This short period under the CPA also highlights some important insights into the United States' SFA efforts in Iraq. First, in regards to a larger challenge of the handoff between plans and execution, there was little continuity or a proper transition between PH IV planners at JTF-4 or the OHRA and the ultimate executive agency at CPA that would implement the plan. PH IV planners required the preservation of the Iraqi Army for reconstruction tasks but when CPA disbanded the Iraqi Army and performed De-Ba'athification, it completely changed the environment that planners had anticipated and resourced a strategy for. Thus, continuity between plans and operations remains a critical task and is even further complicated when the executing agency is completely separate from the organization that conducts the initial planning.

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[84] Ibid., 133.

[85] Ibid.

[86] Ibid., 134.

The CPA period also highlights where doctrine fell short for military planners. With the CPA decision to completely dismantle the security apparatus, military planners were unprepared to conceptualize the undertaking of what would become a mission of building a military from the ground up. The initial tendency within SFA and FID doctrine was towards a small scale and tactical focus, but because of the CPA orders the US military would need to conduct an undertaking of training hundreds of thousands of soldiers and police. Moreover, "repurposing" military forces in SFA and FID also had major impacts to strategy. The initial CPA strategy called for a military that was almost exclusively designed for external threats, but as the Iraqi police quickly became overwhelmed by the security situation, both the military and police would need to be repurposed towards counterinsurgency operations.

The repurposing of forces was not a simple task. Maj. Gen. Eaton, in charge of training the Iraqi Army, recalled that "Iraqi recruits had been told that their role would be to protect the nation against external threats. Nothing had been said to the recruits about pursuing enemies, the vast majority of them Iraqi insurgents inside Iraq."[87] As a result, the Iraq Army faced increased desertions due to the difficulty of selling this new task to soldiers.

MNSTC-I: Building a Counterinsurgency Force (June 2004-2009)

By June 2004, the CPA transferred sovereignty to the interim Iraqi government, led by Prime Minister Ayad Allawi. CENTCOM consolidated coalition military forces under Multinational Forces-Iraq (MNF-I), led by Gen. George Casey. Ongoing military operations were managed by MNF-I's subordinated headquarters Multinational Corps-Iraq. MNF-I was also assigned the responsibility for organizing, training, and equipping Iraqi security forces, which MNF-I delegated to its subordinate headquarters MNSTC-I led by Lt. Gen. David Petraeus.

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[87] Gordon and Trainor, 60.

The widespread failure of Iraqi Security Forces in April 2004 presented Petraeus and his planners with a problem that needed a new approach. They began with some fundamental questions. "We started by figuring out what we wanted those forces to do," Petraeus told the SIGIR in interviews, "What are their tasks and purposes? Number two, based on certain assumptions, what types of forces do you need? How are you going to organize them?"[88] The assessment was the CPA had not adequately trained or equipped the police to handle insurgent threats, and the military was limited to external security, not internal policing. Therefore, Iraqi Security Forces needed to grow substantially in order to provide more military and police who were both trained and equipped for counterinsurgency operations. Under MNSTC-I the Iraqi Army grew from three divisions to ten and integrated the Iraqi National Guard units into the Iraqi Army.[89]

From 2004 to 2005, however, the challenge for Petraeus and MNSTC-I was on "operating forces." According to the SIGIR, "equipment procurement lagged behind training, and logistical support was nonexistent."[90] Other assessments concurred, noting widespread flaws across recruitment, training, and equipping of the ISF rendered a force "totally unprepared to contribute measurably to the country's security."[91] MNSTC-I raced to expand training sites, build new police stations and army bases around the country, and equip the Iraqi Security Forces with sufficient heavy weaponry, vehicles, communications equipment, body armor, and other equipment needed to fight the insurgency.[92]

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[88] SIGIR, *Hard Lessons*, 193.

[89] Ibid., 196.

[90] Ibid., 194.

[91] Barak A. Salmoni, "Iraq's Unready Security Forces: An Interim Assessment," *Middle East Review of International Affairs* 8, no. 3 (September 2004): 11.

[92] SIGIR, *Hard Lessons*, 194-202.

By the late spring of 2005, MNSTC-I also expanded its Iraqi advisory program, called Military Transition Teams. Small advisory teams of US officers and senior noncommissioned officers were embedded at almost every Iraqi brigade throughout the country. The increasing size of Iraqi Army tactical units, enhanced with better training and capabilities, and supported by increased partnerships with Military Transition Teams advisors, did lead to success on the battlefield. Despite the widespread failures of the Iraqi Security Forces to quell the April 2004 uprisings, Iraqi forces by January 30, 2005, were widely lauded in providing security for the election at 5,200 polling sites where more than eight million Iraqis voted.[93]

But while the focus on tactical "operational forces" was slowly making progress; the priority was on the security situation at the expense of the "generating" and "executive" level institutions in the government. Petraeus admitted that in June 2004, "There wasn't even a Ministry of Defense building, much less something that you would call a Ministry of Defense . . . only about five guys with cell phones and a couple of old generals."[94] Further complicating the development of the Ministry of Defense was that MNSTC-I did not become responsible for institutional building at the ministerial level until October 1, 2005. Previously, the US mission under the embassy and the Iraq Reconstruction Management Office was responsible for advising the Iraqi ministries, and their offices made very little progress especially within the Ministries of Defense and Interior.

Once MNSTC-I took formal responsibility for the security ministries MNSTC-I sent sixty-eight advisors to develop and advise the Ministry of Defense. Additionally, a separate joint headquarters of about fifty personnel was established to improve Iraq's senior military staff to enhance their command and control capabilities.[95] The Interior Ministry was even more

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[93] Ibid., 197.

[94] Ibid., 200.

[95] Ibid., 286.

dysfunctional than the Ministry of Defense, crippled by sectarian infighting and intra-Shi'a rivalries. MNSTC-I sought to improve Interior's capabilities with ninety advisors who had to operate in their own building with heavily armed escorts due to tremendous danger.[96]

Sectarian conflict proved to be an increasing problem going into 2006 as Iraqi stood on the precipice of a civil war between multiple Sunni and Shia armed groups. The sectarian strife further limited an already ineffective Iraqi government. Because of the increasing violence and fragility of the government, President Bush unveiled a new strategy in Iraq in January of 2007. The United States would surge over 20,000 troops, with the primary purpose of reducing violence in population centers. Rather than withdrawing US troops from population centers (believing that their presence contributed to tensions), the US military would instead live among the population by building smaller outposts in the midst of population centers to increase security presence and partnerships with the Iraqi Security Forces. Leading the surge as the new MNF-I commander would be Gen. David Petraeus, the former MNSTC-I commander.

Violence in Iraq continued to spike through the 2007 surge as coalition forces and the growing ISF patrolled areas previously ignored. The violence levels became an important assessment metric for planners at MNSTC-I, now led by then Lt. Gen. Martin Dempsey, by trying to foresee the eventual needed end strength of the Iraqi Security Forces. The conclusion in mid-2007, according to several assessments including Dempsey's congressional testimony, was that the ISF at their current force levels were not sufficient in size or capabilities to counter the insurgent threat.[97] The capabilities gap was especially worrisome if the US military reduced

[96] Ibid., 288.

[97] James L. Jones, *The Report of the Independent Commission on the Security Forces of Iraq* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, September 2007), 12, 14; US Congress, House of Representatives, Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee of the Committee on Armed Services, *The Development of the Iraqi Security Forces,* 110th Cong., 1st sess., 2007, 9.

combat forces beyond 2008. The recommendation was to continue to focus on operating forces by increasing the size of the Iraqi Army from ten to thirteen divisions by the end of 2008.[98]

By mid-2008, violence began to recede across the country, and the surge was widely viewed as a success. This historical review does not seek to analyze the success of the surge, but several reasons attributed to decreases in violence, including additional US military forces and Sunni Arab tribes, disillusioned by the atrocities of Al Qaeda, who turned in droves against insurgents. Building on this success, coalition pressure also began to successfully reign in Shia militia activity. Simultaneous to the military surge was a corresponding civilian surge overseen by US Ambassador Ryan Crocker, composed of civilian experts to assist in governmental capacity building. All of these inputs helped to relieve pressure in Iraq by buying time and building capacity for a struggling ISF. According to the SIGIR, attesting to the increasing performance of the Iraqi Army, during 2008 the Iraqi Army successfully performed clearing operations in Basra and Sadr City with limited US support, and "overall attacks in late 2008 fell to their lowest levels since 2003."[99]

However, despite the confidence of the SIGIR in the improving capabilities of the Iraqi Army in 2008, others were not so optimistic. Anthony Cordesman, at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, believed that "MNF-I reporting continues to sharply exaggerate the real-world readiness of Iraqi Army units, and the ability of the ISF to takeover security responsibility in given governorates."[100] Moreover, Cordesman accused DoD reporting on the progress of ISF development as "fundamentally misleading and lacking in integrity, and has done a major disservice in leading the Congress and others to have unrealistic expectations of what can be

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[98] Jones, 14.

[99] SIGIR, *Hard Lessons*, 316.

[100] Anthony Cordesman and Adam Mausner, "Iraqi Force Development 2008" (Report, Center for Strategic and International Studies, May 2008), 4.

accomplished within a given timeframe."[101] Cordesman cited the "hundreds, if not thousands" of ISF personnel that deserted and turned their weapons over to Shia militias during the Basra operation.[102] Similarly, the DoD used Basra as an example of a successful transition to Iraqi control in a March 2008 quarterly report, but less than a month after the transition to local Iraqi provincial control, the city was engulfed in major violence.[103]

Despite an overly optimistic DoD view of the progress of ISF development, there were military voices raising alarms about the ISF's prospects. US Army Lt. Gen. James Dubik, who commanded MNSTC-I from June 2007 to August 2008, wrote in August 2009 that "in fragile, failing, or failed states, it may take a generation for an indigenous force to reach a level of self-sustainment, in which case the US must prepare to engage in a long-term cooperative security arrangement with the host nation."[104] To Dubik's point, the institutions necessary to build and maintain armies takes years to develop. Moreover, "MNSTC-I's role was not just to "train and equip" but rather to create a security enterprise," but the US military's investment into developing the institutions necessary to build, support, and maintain the ISF came late in the conflict and with lackluster investment.[105] Many of Dubik's challenges, while as MNSTC-I commander, were in the complexity of reforming a security sector. "Operational units could grow much faster than a ministry's administrative or procedural habits," wrote Dubik, reflecting the difficulty of accelerating ministry development, especially around "artificial timelines set by Washington."[106]

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[101] Ibid., 8.

[102] Ibid., 13.

[103] Ibid., 19.

[104] James M. Dubik, *Building Security Forces and Ministerial Capacity: Iraq as a Primer* (Washington, DC: Institute for the Study of War, August 2009), 3.

[105] Ibid., 6.

[106] Ibid., 8.

Many of Dubik's conclusions of the importance of SSRs, building ministerial capacity, and the danger of a short-term focus on operational forces, were learned by MNSTC-I as they struggled with their mission to build the ISF. As shown during this monograph's doctrine review, much of the supporting doctrine arose in the midst of these challenges and was not available to planners at that time.

Another important point Dubik made in 2009 was that the focus of MNSTC-I and MNF-I from 2004 to 2009 was the development of ISF conducting internally focused counterinsurgency, but these forces would need to eventually transition their size, composition and training to defend against external enemies.[107] Doctrine at this point had not yet assisted planners in providing advice for the transitions necessary for SFA and FID operations to move from wholesale SSRs to something less intensive after a US withdrawal. It was not until 2010 that JP 3-22 added a section on "transitions and redeployments," articulating exactly the point Dubik made in 2009. Dubik would later elaborate on these "strategic transitions" necessary for SFA planners:

> At some point during the set of operational transitions, there will be the temptation to claim that the conflict is over. Unfortunately, insurgencies do not end when the fighting lulls. Seeing an end or a significant reduction in violence may indicate that battles have mostly been won, but it is not an indication that the war is over. . . . Further, the U.S seemed to equate the withdrawal of American military forces in December of 2011 with the establishment of "normal state-to-state" relations. In effect, by doing so, the administration moved from a state of operational transition to "normal relations," ignoring strategic transition all together.[108]

Dubik's point was that just because violence had significantly decreased by 2010, it did not mean that the ISF were ready to independently manage their security. The United States would need a long-term partnership to continue to advise and mentor, and especially develop the generating and executive level institutions of the ISF. The United States would run a risk that the ISF would not

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[107] Ibid., 3.

[108] James Dubik, *Operational Art in Counterinsurgency: A View From The Inside* (Washington, DC: Institute for the Study of War, May 2012), 31.

survive if the United States chose to walk away entirely, and it was important for military

planners to manage a strategic transition as the United States withdrew forces.

Ultimately, years of ISF development under MNSTC-I highlights that SFA and FID must

balance investments into institutions like a Ministry of Defense, and necessary military training

and logistics organizations, necessary to grow, organize, maintain and sustain security forces. The

tendency within SFA and FID doctrine had always been small scale focus on operating forces, but

MNSTC-I quickly saw that their SFA efforts would not be sustainable in the long-term after a US

withdrawal without progress in these other important institutions. Moreover, as shown during and

after the surge, without adequate political reconciliation, partner nation security forces can

become rife with performance problems fueled by corruption, infighting, and desertion.

Planning for the US Military Withdrawal (2010-2011)

On January 1, 2010, MNF-I and its subordinate commands merged under a single

command, US Forces-Iraq, to manage the drawdown of US combat forces and eventual

withdrawal. The Iraq Training and Advisory Mission assumed responsibility from MNSTC-I for

ISF training.[109] By June 30, 2011, the Iraqi Army had 193,421 personnel focused primarily on

domestic security and were in the lead for security of fourteen of nineteen of Iraq's provinces.[110]

The Iraqi police were by far the largest portion of the ISF, and the Government of Iraq's long-

term plan was to transfer security responsibilities from the Iraqi Army to the Iraqi police in order

to transition army units to focus on training for external defense.[111] Security had improved

significantly from the surge (Figure 6), the SIGIR noted that overall violent attacks had dropped
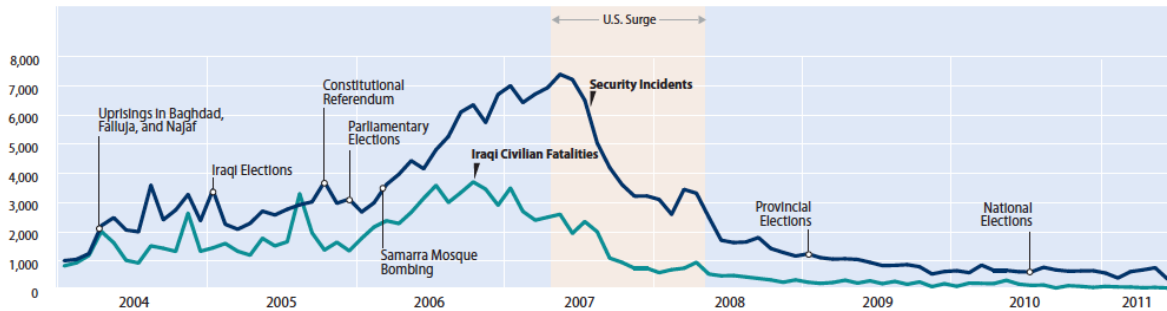
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[109] SIGIR, "Learning from Iraq: A Final Report from the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction," 46.

[110] Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction (SIGIR), *Quarterly Report and Semiannual Report to the United States Congress* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, July 2011), 75.

[111] Ibid.

from 145 per day in 2007 to about 13 per day in 2011.[112] However, there were still alarming

numbers of mass-casualty attacks and political assassinations ongoing throughout the country.

MONTHLY SECURITY INCIDENTS AND CIVILIAN FATALITIES, 1/2004–6/2011

Note: Data not audited. Totals for June 2011 civilian fatalities include data through June 19, and totals for June 2011 security incidents include data through June 17. "U.S. Surge" denotes period when at least 150,000 U.S. troops were in Iraq.

Figure 6. Monthly Security Incidents and Civilian Fatalities in Iraq 1/2004-6/2011. *Source*: Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction (SIGIR), *Quarterly Report and Semiannual Report to the United States Congress* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, July 2011), 70.

As part of the US military's transition towards a smaller force, commanders had

previously estimated that 14,000 to 16,000 soldiers would remain in Iraq after 2011 in order to

ensure stability and continue to advise, mentor, and assist the ISF.[113] However, because of a

disagreement with the Iraqi government as to the legal status of US service members and

contractors under a newly negotiated Status of Force Agreement, the Obama administration

decided to withdraw all combat forces out of Iraq by the end of 2011. As a result of the

unexpected end to the DoD mission in Iraq, the DoS would instead be the lead agency, managing

a $6.8 billion operation with about 16,000 personnel.[114]

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[112] Ibid., 70.

[113] Adam Mausner and Anthony Cordesman, "Iraq and US Strategy in the Gulf: Shaping US Plans After Withdrawal" (Report, Center for Strategic and International Studies, October 2011), 2.

[114] Ibid.

The reality, however, was that the DoS was downsizing their own mission rather than increasing their activities to backfill a rapidly withdrawing US military. In April 2011, the DoS closed ten Provincial Reconstruction Team offices with a plan to close the rest by September of that year.[115] The DoS initially planned to maintain a Regional Embassy Office in Mosul, but was forced to abandon that idea due to budgetary constraints.[116] Despite downsizing their political mentoring mission, the DoS was also replacing the US military as the lead agency for mentoring the Iraqi police, and the DoS allocated only 190 advisors to accomplish the mission in ten provinces.[117] At the time, several observers had severe misgivings as to the DoS's ability to manage the mission in Iraq. As Center for Strategic and International Studies researchers Mausner and Cordesman wrote in 2011:

> DoS does not appear to have learned from its mistakes in training the Iraqi Police. According to a recent SIGIR report, only 12 [percent] of the budget to train the Iraqi police has actually gone to police training, with most of the money going to "the security, transportation and medical support of the 115 police advisers hired for the program." It also appeared that as of October 2011, DoS did not have a real plan for how to train the Iraqi Police force, beyond some vague powerpoint slides. Furthermore, this program was originally intended to have over 300 trainers working with the Iraqi police—yet due to budget cutbacks now only 115 are operating. This does not bode well for the future of the Iraqi Security Forces, or for the American mission in the region.[118]

As for the Iraqi Army, the MNF-I mission was transferred to the Office of Security Cooperation-Iraq (OSC-I), which reported to the US Embassy in Iraq. The OSC-I staff included 118 military personnel, 9 civilians, 30 local staff, and an estimated additional 3,000 contractors providing life support, security, and transportation assistance.[119] According to the SIGIR, OSC-I was created to support the Iraqi forces by advising, training, assisting, and equipping the force,

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[115] SIGIR, *Quarterly Report and Semiannual Report to the United States Congress*, 3.

[116] Ibid.

[117] Ibid.

[118] Mausner and Cordesman, "Iraq and US Strategy in the Gulf: Shaping US Plans After Withdrawal," 22.

[119] SIGIR, *Quarterly Report*, 41.

providing professional military education, and planning for joint military exercises.[120] In 2011, planners anticipated that as the Iraqi Police assumed more independent security responsibilities, the Iraqi Army could start to train on more externally focused skills by the next year, like combined-arms operations.[121] US Government funding supported this transition, as "the broad range of equipment purchases in 2009-2010, totaling $2.29 billion, focuses on acquiring artillery, armor, and heavy wheeled equipment to support this evolution."[122]

Doctrine was finally catching up for planners by the 2011 withdrawal of US forces in Iraq. JP 3-22 articulated the conceptual thinking needed in transitions and redeployments of a SFA or FID operation. In this regard, planners sought to handover responsibilities of advising and mentoring the police to the DoS and transitioned military partnerships to OSC-I. Likewise planners in both the US military and the Iraqi military began efforts to transition the Iraqi military away from counterinsurgency operations towards a more externally focused role. But it seems where this strategy fell short was in the resourcing of it—both the DoS and OSC-I lacked the resources, manpower, and commitment to invest and partner with the Iraqi security forces to actually combat the natural atrophy of capabilities caused by withdrawing tens of thousands of military advisors and mentors from the country.

After the US Military Withdrawal: Iraqi Security Forces (2012-2014)

In the SIGIR's final 2012 assessment it noted that, at the time of the US military's departure, "Iraq's MOD lacked critical capabilities in logistics, intelligence and operational sustainment."[123] Likewise, "weaknesses, in counterterrorism and intelligence capabilities at the tactical, operational, and cross-ministry levels impeded collaboration and information sharing

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[120] Ibid., 42.

[121] Ibid., 76.

[122] SIGIR, "Learning from Iraq," 94.

[123] Ibid., 97.

throughout the national security framework."[124] As for the Iraqi Police and Ministry of Interior, by the time the DoS had taken over the training mission, "A SIGIR review . . . determined that no formal assessments of capabilities had ever been made, as was required," and in essence, no one really knew the capabilities of the police upon the US withdrawal.[125]

In June 2014, the Center for Strategic and International Studies released a report on the status of the Iraqi Army that gives a concurrent assessment of the Iraqi Army at the time of their failure in Mosul. The report was unsurprisingly critical of Iraq's military capabilities:

> The various elements of the ISF had some combat units with considerable capability, but also many units that were not yet ready for independent operations. The army lacked many of the support and command structures it needed, effective [intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance] assets, effective mobility and artillery capability, and was not supported by an effective Ministry of Defense. . . . The Ministry of the Interior was also substantially less ready than the Ministry of Defense and far more politicized. It is not surprising, therefore, that the ISF could not prevent violence from rising steadily through 2013.[126]

Unfortunately, during the two and half years after the US withdrawal from Iraq, the Iraqi Security Forces became a political tool for Prime Minister al-Maliki. Maliki became the acting Minister of Defense and Minister of the Interior, utilizing the ISF to consolidate political control and repress his rivals, as well as emplacing "political commissars" into the force structure to maintain control.[127] Moreover, despite the well-intentioned post-withdrawal US military plan, "support to the Iraqi police was largely eliminated," and "there are no training agreements for the Iraqi military post-withdrawal."[128] The results were clear: as the DoS and OSC-I took over responsibility for continued mentoring and partnership with the ISF, but the Iraqi military was

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[124] Ibid.

[125] Ibid., 99.

[126] Anthony Cordesman and Sam Khazai, "Shaping Iraq's Security Forces" (Report, Center for Strategic and International Studies, June 2014), 6.

[127] Ibid., 8.

[128] Ibid., 18.

quickly atrophying in capabilities, resorting to corruption, and increasingly being divided along sectarian and ethnic lines.

Many of the warning signs of an Iraqi Army unready for transition and unprepared for the maintenance of their security forces were apparent as early as 2010. JP 3-22, written in 2010, warned of the consequences of "poorly conducted transitions" perhaps eluding to General Dubik's observations in 2011 that "Simply put, Iraq does not have a military capability to defend its own borders."[129] While a transition plan was pieced together for OSC-I to continue military-to-military partnerships in 2011, Dubik forewarned:

> [E]ven robust offices of security cooperation are primarily aimed at facilitating the sale of military equipment through the Foreign Military Sales program, assisting the host nation with limited training, and coordinating the host nation's participation in military education and training in the United States. These functions are necessary in Iraq, but they are not sufficient.[130]

Without a proper long-term partnership, and a properly planned "strategic transition," the Iraqi Army risked losing many of the gains achieved over the years prior.

In view of this poor strategic transition, the Iraqi Army of 2014 can be characterized as a shell of the force they previously were. By the time of the US military withdrawal they were a counterinsurgency-proficient force with a desire to transform into a force capable of fighting external conventional threats, however, that transition never occurred. Without an effective Ministry of Defense and without a political environment conducive to maintaining a unified force, the Iraqi Army atrophied and their eventual failure to adequately resist against ISIS was arguably predictable. The ISF required a long-term investment from the United States (both military and civilian) to assist them in institution building and to apply pressure on their political system to maintain the Iraqi Security Forces' progress.

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[129] James Dubik, *The US in Iraq Beyond 2011: A Diminishing But Still Vital Role* (Washington, DC: Institute for the Study of War, February 2011), 7.

[130] Ibid., 8.

Section Summary

This section examined key events and decisions related to the efforts of military planners in the SFA and FID efforts of the Iraqi Army from 2001 through 2014. In this historical review, many critical errors were reviewed in the SFA planning efforts, ranging from poor interagency synchronization, poor assumptions, changing purposes of the Iraqi Security Forces, challenges of wholesale SSR, and the poor handling of a strategic transition to host nation control. But in regards to the initial research question of whether the planning efforts to build the Iraqi Army were in accordance to SFA doctrine, the historiography shows that by and large, SFA and FID doctrine trailed the operational problems that military planners encountered in building a new Iraqi Army.

Because of gaps in institutional knowledge to perform SFA, organizations like JCISFA were created to capture lessons learned from the front line in commands like MNSTC-I, so that this institutional knowledge could be codified into future doctrinal publications and guides. By 2010, the US military expanded the SFA and FID body of knowledge significantly to help planners think through many of the challenges involved with large scale SSR, the necessity of long-term SFA partnerships, and the challenge of SFA transition to full partner nation independence.

Security Force Assistance and FID doctrine had matured exponentially by 2011, however, it seems that the lessons captured fell on deaf ears as the strategic transition for the SFA mission fell to a DoS incapable of providing the resources necessary to maintain progress within the Iraqi Security Forces. The next section describes SFA and FID doctrine updates since 2011.

SFA Doctrine Since the 2011 US Military Withdrawal

This section summarizes SFA and FID doctrine since the 2011 US military withdrawal

from Iraq.[131] The additional principles articulated will be considered in the conclusion section

where the US SFA mission in Iraq will be examined in whole.

In January 2016 JCISFA released an update to their SFA Planner's Guide which

documented many of the lessons learned from the most recent challenges of the large scale SFA

missions in Iraq and represented a marked improvement over previous SFA guiding documents.

The guide embodies the maturation of ten years of JCISFA's mission to "institutionalize lessons

and best practices from security force assistance (SFA) operations."[132] A dominant lesson within

the guide is the need for military forces to avoid the tendency to focus exclusively on advising

operating forces, such a combat units. Instead, planners must build into their approach balanced

efforts that address the executive and generating institutions necessary for partner nation military

forces to successfully meet their objectives and sustain themselves. The guide affirms that SFA

planning starts "long before the point when that capability needs to be employed," and requires a

long-term commitment that continues even after meeting the operational requirements of

developing a foreign security force.[133]

The JCISFA 2016 Guide provides a useful level of detail for each SFA phase (plan,

generate, employ, transition, sustain) previously unaddressed in all prior editions and US Army

and US Joint doctrine. Moreover, an added chapter addresses the unique challenges of selecting

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[131] Joint Doctrine Note 1-13, *Security Force Assistance*, was released in April of 2013 as a "pre-doctrinal publication" in order to begin to incorporate "validated best practices and procedures." Unfortunately, JDN 1-13's conciseness leaves out much that previous publications like the 2008 JCISFA SFA Planner's Guide, US Army Field Manual 3-07 (October 2008), Field Manual 3-07.1 (May 2009), or JP 3-22 (July 2010), brought to the body of literature for SFA planning. Joint Doctrine Note (JDN) 1-13, *Security Force Assistance* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2013), i.

[132] Thornton.

[133] JCISFA, *Security Force Assistance Planner's Guide* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: JCISFA, 2016), 1-13 and 2-9.

and training the right personnel for SFA. If a critical task of SFA is to find a balance between training, advising and mentoring across operational forces, generating institutions, and executive institutions, then it is incumbent on the US SFA mission to find the right personnel—especially in the generating and executive functions. As the 2016 guide reminds planners:

> [P]ersonnel assigned to develop the [Foreign Security Forces'] supporting institutions need to know how these types of organizations operate; knowing how to shoot, move, and communicate is not enough, nor is it the point in this specific case. The trend for the Services to draw a vast majority of its advisor personnel from the operating forces complicates requirements where tactical expertise does not equate to institutional-level competence.[134]

The idea that uniformed military from the operating forces may not be best suited to advise civilians running a Ministry of Defense or Ministry of Interior is an important idea—namely because the rest of the US government lacks the expeditionary capacity to quickly respond or integrate into SFA requirements to assist widespread capabilities gaps in these generating or executive institutions. Without fault to JCISFA, the capability gap they address, while important for planners to mitigate as much as possible, is difficult to address with the US military and government's current organizational structure and expeditionary capabilities.

Analysis and Recommendations for the Future of SFA

Initial Research Question

The primary research posed in this monograph was: What are potential consequences of SFA planning decisions that may contribute to state instability, and are these risks not adequately addressed in current Army and Joint SFA doctrine? In order to answer this question, the author used the historical case study of the SFA planning efforts in Iraq from 2003 to 2011. This monograph's initial hypothesis was that there were three primary unintended consequences in the application of SFA principles in Iraq from 2003 to 2011:

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[134] Ibid., 10-2.

1. The decision to build a large standing Iraqi army in 2007 led to a predictable friction and confrontation between the increasingly powerful Iraqi military and a weak Iraqi government, which would cause the Iraqi government to undermine the military after the withdrawal of United States forces from Iraq;

2. The decision to structure the Iraqi army as a "hold" counterinsurgency force, focused on population security and checkpoint operations, led to inherent vulnerabilities against an enemy that was utilizing conventional maneuver-centric tactics designed to defeat in detail military forces;

3. The decisions to primarily focus on Iraqi "operating" forces rather than institutional "generating" or "executive" forces led to an inevitable erosion of capabilities after the United States withdrew in 2011.

Case Study Findings

Inherent in this monograph's initial premise was that there were failures in SFA and FID doctrine that contributed to the failures of the Iraqi Army. This monograph found that planners generally did not have access to mature SFA and FID doctrine during the course of the Iraq War because the scope of the efforts to build the Iraqi Security Forces are unprecedented in recent US military history. However, once organizations like MNSTC-I grappled with the challenges of building the Iraqi Security Forces over years of effort, doctrine did emerge out of the conflict as a mature guide to aid planners in thinking about the complexity of building security forces from the ground up.

In regards to the initial hypotheses, the case study does show that, as early as 2003, analysts did predict that there would be an inherent tension between a large standing Iraqi Army and its political government. This was one of the reasons the CPA wanted to start new and with a very small force. FID doctrine accounted for this as well, as it provided a framework to think

about the civil-military implications of a SFA or FID effort. The second hypothesis was that the Iraqi Security Forces would stay a counterinsurgency force, however, the case study shows that there was an intent in the final withdrawal plans for the Iraqi Army to transition to an externally focused force. Unfortunately, the DoS was inadequately resourced to advise that transition, the Iraq Ministry of Defense did not have the fiscal resources, and could not generate and sustain that type of force, and the political conditions under al Maliki's government prevented the Iraqi Army from progressing. The final hypothesis, that the United States primarily focused on operating rather than generating or executive level forces, was strongly supported. This however, was not for lack of trying. MNSTC-I recognized it needed to invest more into the ministries, but there was a lack of expertise within DoD to do so, and the short timeline of the US withdrawal did not permit the type of long term partnership necessary to actually build those institutions into sustainable enterprises capable of maintaining the Iraqi Security Forces.

What this case study shows is that, in addition to the hypotheses proposed above, institutional issues—rather than doctrinal ones—within and between the DoD and US government created many of the problems faced by the Iraqi Army. Poor continuity between planning efforts, poor unity of command, inadequate resourcing, poor handovers from DoD to DoS, and a civilian apparatus without the needed expeditionary capability to actually perform SFA and FID all contributed to a poorly executed "strategic transition" upon the US military withdrawal in 2011. Because the Iraqi Security Forces did not have a solid foundation of Iraqi government support, within three years their security apparatus disintegrated when challenged by ISIS.

US military planners started their PH IV planning handicapped from the start. As the case study shows, poor assumptions can scuttle any plan. A failure to assume DoD PH IV responsibilities resulted in lost focus of the reconstruction PH IV requirements. DoD planners initially thought the DoS would be in charge of reconstruction, or the UN. When they realized

that reconstruction would be a task after combat operations, and that DoD would be the lead agency, they had already lost months of planning time. Additionally, a failure to assess that the Iraqi police would be a reliable security force created a poor assumption as to the size and scope of required forces needed for PH IV operations. This assumption also had cascading effects in that a "new Iraqi Army" was intended to only perform external security but later had to be repurposed to provide internal security because of the Iraqi police's failure.

Stability operations, reconstruction, and SFA are inherently interagency, whole-of-government operations—and interagency efforts require unity of command for unity of effort. The initial Iraq War planning clearly showed a NSC incapable of managing and moderating bureaucratic infighting between DoD, DoS, CENTCOM, and ad hoc organizations like the OHRA and CPA. Each organization approached PH IV planning with their own conflicting assumptions not only in regards to the security environment in Iraq, but also US government obligations in Iraq, and what the other US agencies and organizations would bring to the mission. In aggregate, subject matter expertise, vital to these planning efforts, was available to PH IV planning, but because there was no unity of effort across the interagency (nor a large-scale commitment of resources to the PH IV planning), the planning process was effectively broken. Instead of integrating the efforts of several agencies, the White House instead chose to make DoD the lead agency, but the DoD did not effectively partner with the DoS.

Continuity is critical between planners and the executing agent. The CPA decision to disband the Iraqi Army and execute large-scale De-Ba'athification appears to be conducted in a vacuum without the knowledge of DoD, DoS, or the NSC. Would Ambassador Bremer have made that same decision if he had known that DoD planners had spent a year anticipating using the Iraqi Army for reconstruction? Would he have made the same decision had he known that DoS planners anticipated the Iraqi Police were not expected to be able to secure the population and would require large amounts of coalition advisors to assist? It is hard to believe he would, at

least in the quick manner he made that decision without consultation of the other agencies and with the planners that spent time thinking about the PH IV operation. But the case in Iraq shows that no matter how good planning might be, if there is no continuity because of messy organization changes, big mistakes can occur.

The US military was and still is unprepared to conduct SFA and FID for the scope and scale of the Iraq War efforts. The US military is very good at training and partnering with operational forces—infantry battalions, artillery battalions, special forces, etc. But the US military lacks expertise and expeditionary capability in building generating institutions—like an equivalent Training and Doctrine Command or Defense Logistics Agency—and even more so executive institutions—political organizations like a Ministry of Defense or Ministry of Interior. These institutions require tens of thousands of expert civilians in the US every day to run effectively and it is simply not sufficient to send a midgrade officer or noncommissioned officer, who has no experience in an equivalent generating or executive agency, to stand one up. Former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld also came to this same conclusion, "It has been a concern of mine that the US Government lacks a standing capability in the area of reconstruction and that there is no long-established team of civilians, let alone an experienced joint civilian-military team, to handle the challenges of major post-conflict tasks."[135] Former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice agreed, "That's why the President has now said that we need a civilian response corps that can do those activities. But clearly, we didn't have the right structure."[136] If future SFA efforts require wholesale SSR the United States will need to provide a largescale and expeditionary cadre of civilians or contractors with experience in running generating and executive level agencies to assist a partner nation in standing up their security enterprise. This

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[135] SIGIR, *Hard Lessons*, 32.

[136] Ibid., 323.

cannot be done after operating forces are built, but rather needs to be a simultaneous undertaking (or occur before hostilities begin).

Security Force Assistance planners must focus on "strategic transitions." The level of effort for planning at the end of an SFA mission must invariably match, if not exceed, the level of planning at the beginning. How well the United States transfers authority and responsibility to partner nations can make or break an SFA mission. Referring back to this monograph's initial hypothesis, experts knew before the war began that there has always been a questionable relationship in Iraq between the Army and the government. The Army had a history of coups and under Saddam was used to hold power and repress the population. It is arguably predictable that, after the United States withdrew its military forces from Iraq, that a Shia-dominated Iraqi government might actually undermine their Army through Sunni purges, and neuter it to maintain it just as a minimal token force. Likewise, the literature supports that prior to the US military withdrawal there were many warning signs and indicators that Iraq was still a counterinsurgency-trained force, and lacked the ability to fight against external threats in a fashion untied from fixed security locations like checkpoints or bases. Similarly, by 2011, many knew that the executive or generating agencies were still in large part ineffective—especially in the Ministry of Interior.

The United States faced a tough dilemma, because the political environment in Iraq would not support continued US military presence under a newly negotiated status of forces agreement. President Obama was understandably constrained in a future US military role in Iraq, however, the warning signs that the ISF were in trouble should have dictated that any SFA gap that the US military was leaving needed to be filled by someone—arguably the DoS and OSC-I. As the case study shows, however, that role of the US Embassy in Iraq, the DoS and OSC-I, was never seriously funded, manned, or supported. The DoS and embassy sought to close PRT locations and dramatically reduce their funding across Iraq rather than increase it to replace the withdrawing US military presence. OSC-I mostly fell back into their comfort zone of managing

foreign military sales programs as the nominal advisement programs quickly fell apart. Additionally, from a planning perspective, the SFA and FID programs, were no longer managed by DoD headquarters, but rather fell to the US Embassy and the DoS. Strategic transitions should account for these changes in management and maintain the necessary continuity throughout in order to maintain a cohesive logic and strategy even when absorbed by other agencies.

Implications for Future SFA Missions and Recommendations

The central SFA problem rising from the Iraqi Army's most recent defeat in Mosul in 2014 is: How does the United States prevent a partner nation from atrophying in capabilities upon the decrease of US SFA programs? Put another way, how does SFA ensure sustainable progress by partner nations after the conclusion of large SFA partnerships? The answers to this have important implications and applicability for future SFA missions and partnerships.

Security Force Assistance literature in its current form has gradually improved its conceptual approaches—through the promotion of a balanced operational approach across operating forces, generating forces, and executive institutions. Similarly, it also addresses the need for constant assessment and evaluation of partner nation needs and the need for strategic transitions between campaign phases. The Iraqi Army's need to shift back to an external focus from an internal counterinsurgency focus was one of these transitions.

The primary weakness within the current approach and frameworks, however, is that first, it is arguable if the US military has the necessary expeditionary civilian expertise to invest in generating and executive institutions. Second, even if the US military did have civilian expeditionary expertise, do other departments, like the DoS, who might manage elements of an SFA partnership, have the capacity and training to properly manage and sustain an effective SFA program? By all indications, and with agreement from former Secretaries of Defense and State, the answer to both of these dilemmas is no. Because of these capability gaps within not only the

DoD, but also the US government in general, the following recommendations are proposed in this monograph.

Recommendation 1

Develop an expeditionary interagency capability to plan and conduct SFA operations.

The DoD is the only US government organization with the capacity to perform large-scale stability operations (as well as the only organization with a robust planning culture), however, as shown in the Iraq Case Study the NSC is not a sufficient moderator of bureaucratic infighting between US government departments and agencies. Moreover, the DoD is a necessary but not sufficient element of SFA. The DoD requires integrated interagency expertise when wholesale SSR is a SFA mission objective. The 2013 SIGIR final report recommend that the US government should "create an integrated civilian-military office to plan, execute, and be accountable for contingency rebuilding activities during stabilization and reconstruction operations." [137] Similar to this notion, contingency stabilization and reconstruction operations must also include SFA and FID tasks when SSR is an essential component. In the cases of smaller scale SFA operations with mature partners, a JTF headquarters is capable of managing the mission, however, the DoD is not capable of widespread mentoring and advising of governmental organizations as is necessary in the largest and most difficult SFA endeavors. Moreover, an integrated civilian-military office would be responsible for the planning and execution of a wide scale SFA operation (and most likely as part of a larger stability operation). In this manner, it would alleviate many of the continuity problems faced early on in the Iraq case study.

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[137] SIGIR, "Learning from Iraq," xii.

Recommendation 2

Integrate the US Army's Advise and Assist Brigade Concepts with interagency enablers and consider C2 relationships within an SFA interagency headquarters.

The US Army is currently exploring new types of brigade organization in order to address many of the articulated capability gaps of stability operations, advising, assisting, and mentoring partner nations. A weakness of this method associated with the SFA problems addressed in this monograph is that the manning of these Advise and Assist Brigades are limited to the US Army's current expertise from the combat operational force. These brigades may be well suited with the right manpower and capabilities mixes to train host nation operational forces such as infantry or armor battalions, however they will still be ill-suited to manage wholesale SSR within ministries, agencies, and departments. The US Army should continue to develop this needed capability but these concepts should be integrated into a larger integrated civilian-military apparatus as indicated in Recommendation 1, and/or integrate joint and interagency expertise within its' own organizational structure if the Advise and Assist Brigade will be used beyond operating force advisement.

Recommendation 3

Iraq will need a long-term SFA mission to assist in building executive and generating institutions after the defeat of ISIS.

As General Dubik has written, "there will be the temptation to claim that the conflict is over. Unfortunately, insurgencies do not end when the fighting lulls. Seeing an end or a significant reduction in violence may indicate that battles have mostly been won, but it is not an indication that the war is over."[138] The same can be said in Iraq's efforts to defeat an external threat like ISIS. The US military has returned to Iraq after the 2014 fall of Mosul and, as of the

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[138] Dubik, *Operational Art in Counterinsurgency*, 31.

writing of this monograph, invested another three years to advise, train, assist, and build operational forces capable of fighting ISIS. This monograph argues that the Iraqi Army will atrophy again after the United States leaves, because the US military has never committed to a long-term effort to advise and build the capacity of their Ministry of Defense or Interior. Such a commitment is vital to avoiding a repeat of the ISF failures in 2014. This effort may not be a military-led mission, however what this mission does need is to be both enduring and fully resourced, otherwise the United States may find itself yet again in Iraq, fighting yet another opponent that the Iraqi Army is incapable of resisting.

Conclusion

This monograph examined whether the doctrine available to the US military's Iraq SFA planners set conditions for the eventual failure of the Iraqi Army to defend Mosul against ISIS in 2014. The conclusion of this case study analysis is that SFA and FID doctrine was quite sparse at the beginning of the conflict and provided planners with little value. However, SFA doctrine matured greatly by 2011. Rather than doctrinal issues, this monograph argues that it was institutional failures, such as problems of planning continuity, unity of effort between the DoD and DoS, lack of adequate resourcing into building Iraq's defense institutions, and a poorly executed transition after the withdrawal, that contributed most to the Iraqi Army's failure in 2014.

Security Force Assistance and FID, as doctrinal concepts, went through a tremendous evolution throughout the conflict as planners wrestled with many challenges inherent with the wholesale SSR of the Iraqi Security Forces. By the eventual withdrawal of US military advisors in 2011, both doctrine and literature reflected the importance of building effective "generating" and "executive" functions within the Iraqi government to sustain Iraq's forces, as well as the importance of a strategic transition where Iraq needed to adapt their military towards external threats. Unfortunately, neither key task occurred, as the United States did not leave in place an

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effective command structure or a commitment of resources under the US Embassy and OSC-I to manage a long-term program to assist the Iraqi Security Forces.

Without the direct intervention of the United States, the Iraqi government undermined the progress of their own military by purging Sunni officers, sowing discontent, promoting corruption, undermining morale, and degrading efforts to transition the force into one able to address external threats. The Iraqi Army in 2014 had atrophied in capabilities, and simply dissolved in the face of ISIS' conventional offensive on Mosul. These results, while not linked to doctrinal deficiencies, can be ultimately linked to a poor strategic transition of SFA efforts by the US government as well as widespread institutional failures while conducting SFA.

In the most immediate future, these conclusions hold special weight for a future US military commitment to Iraq. The US Army is currently partnered with Iraqi forces to retake Mosul and restore Iraqi sovereignty. There will be a risk of prematurely declaring "mission complete," and quickly withdrawing US forces out of Iraq once again. However, as seen from 2011 to 2014, one of the underlying conditions that led to the failure in 2014 is a fragile Iraqi military due to poor generating and executive institutions. The Iraqi military is at risk of atrophying again unless the US government commits to a long-term partnership to help the Iraqi government build their security sector in total. This endeavor does not necessarily need to be an expensive one, but rather, it requires long-term patience and a commitment of personnel with expertise who are able to assist their Iraqi counterparts in designing and building a sustainable security sector. If the United States does not make this commitment, it is likely Iraq will continue to face both internal and external pressures requiring US military assistance. A commitment to doing SFA correctly, over the long-term, is a worthwhile investment in Iraq's stability, prevents the need for US combat forces in another conflict, and ensures that the blood and treasure the United States has already invested was not in vain.

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