

*HIGHLIGHTS OF THE  
IRAQ STRATEGY REVIEW*

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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL  
JANUARY 2007

**Summary Briefing Slides**

# *Guiding Principles*

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- Success in Iraq remains critical to our national security and to success in the War on Terror.
- Failure in Iraq would have disastrous consequences for the United States, the region, and our allies.
- There is no silver bullet solution in Iraq. Every option involves trade-offs across various risks.

# *Relationship to the War on Terror*

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- Iraq remains a central front in the Global War on Terror.
- Al-Qaida in Iraq has declared and shown its intentions to establish a caliphate in Iraq and then to expand the caliphate widely.
  - Sowing sectarian violence in Iraq has been and remains the central strategy of al-Qaida in Iraq to reach the goal of creating a caliphate.
- The Freedom Agenda is advanced by the survival and strengthening of Iraq's democratic institutions.
  - Winning in Iraq will not end the War on Terror, but it will make success in the War on Terror much easier.
  - Failing in Iraq would make succeeding in the War on Terror vastly more difficult.

# *The Regional Picture*

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- Our allies in the region are concerned about negative Iranian influence in Iraq.
  - Support for the Iraqi Government, however, can help stabilize the region.
- Iran has been cultivating influence in Iraq through all means at its disposal.
  - Iran's threat involves both lethal action and the burrowing of Iranian actors into Iraqi institutions.
- Syrian actions, while posing less of a strategic threat to Iraq than Iranian actions, exacerbate the tactical challenge faced by the Iraqi government.

# *Present Situation*

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- **We have achieved many of our initial objectives in Iraq.**
  - Saddam Hussein's regime is no longer an organized threat to Iraq, its neighbors, or the United States.
  - Iraq is governed by a freely elected government under a permanent constitution.
  - Democratic institutions have been established and are enabling Iraqis to shape their own state.
  - Per capita incomes have increased (\$743 to \$1593 according to the World Bank, although inflation also has risen) and Iraq has performed under its IMF agreement.
- **But the situation in Iraq has grown increasingly complex over the past 12 months.**
  - Al-Qaida terrorism and a vicious insurgency are now combined with sectarian violence.
  - The national government is eager to take lead responsibility, but it is hampered by a lack of governmental capability and widening sectarian divisions.
  - Power centers are devolving, with events outside the international zone becoming more relevant to national trends.
- **The political process has shown signs of maturation, but meaningful reconciliation has yet to be achieved.**
  - Iraqi leaders have not yet achieved a single vision for a unified Iraq.
- **Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) have grown in effectiveness, but the levels of violence with which they must cope continue to increase.**
  - Professionalism and effectiveness are improving but are not yet consistent across the force.
  - Some members of the ISF, notably the police, are contributing to sectarian violence.
  - Despite more than 300,000 trained and equipped members of the ISF, substantially fewer numbers are present for duty on a given day.
    - Combat losses, desertion, attrition, and leave account for the majority of those absent.

# *Present Situation*

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- **The situation in Baghdad has not improved despite tactical adjustments.**
  - The situation in Baghdad determines nationwide trends; its stabilization has been seen as key to a unified Iraq.
  - The Government of Iraq has not yet delivered promised essential services.
  - Limitations on operations have hindered the execution of security plans.
  - Force levels overall in Baghdad have been inadequate to stabilize a city of its size.
- **Iraqi support for the Coalition has declined substantially, in part due to failure of security over the past year.**
  - In the absence of security, communities are turning to “self-help.”
- **In his public and private statements, Prime Minister Maliki articulates a positive vision where all Iraqis are protected by the rule of law.**
  - Execution and delivery on pledges remain vital.

# Key Assumptions

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## Previous

- Primary challenge is a Sunni-based insurgency.
- Political progress will help defuse the insurgency and dampen levels of violence.
- National Compact is within the grasp of Iraqi leaders and will have meaningful impact on security.
- Majority of Iraqis will support the Coalition and Iraqi efforts to build a democratic state.
- Region has a strategic interest in the stabilization of Iraq.
- Majority of Iraqis and Iraqi leaders see their interests as best advanced by a unified Iraq.
- Dialogue with insurgent groups will help reduce violence.
- Iraqi Security Forces are gaining in strength and ability to handle Iraq's security challenges.

## Now

- Primary challenge is violent extremists from multiple communities; the center is eroding and sectarianism is spiking.
- While political progress, economic gains, and security are intertwined, political and economic progress are unlikely absent a basic level of security.
- Effective national reconciliation may or may not take the form of a comprehensive package or deal; it could come about as the product of piecemeal efforts.
- Iraqis increasingly disillusioned with Coalition efforts.
- Many Arab states remain wary of throwing their full support behind the Iraqi Government.
- While still committed to a unified Iraq, many Iraqis are also advancing sectarian agendas -- as hedging strategies, pursuit of narrow interests, and due to history.
- Dialogue with insurgents has not improved security and may not produce strategic gains in current context.
- Many elements of ISF are in the lead but not yet ready to handle Iraqi security challenges independently.

# *Strategic Goals and Objectives*

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- Our strategic goal in Iraq remains the same: A unified democratic federal Iraq that can govern itself, defend itself, and sustain itself, and is an ally in the War on Terror.
- While our strategic goal requires a long-term relationship with Iraq, we are at a new phase in the effort and must sharpen the objectives we believe are achievable in the next 12-18 months.
- The objectives in this new phase are:

1. Defeat al-Qaida and its supporters and ensure that no terrorist safe haven exists in Iraq.
2. Support Iraqi efforts to quell sectarian violence in Baghdad and regain control over the capital.
3. Ensure the territorial integrity of Iraq and counter/limit destructive Iranian and Syrian activity in Iraq.
4. Help safeguard democracy in Iraq by encouraging strong democratic institutions impartially serving all Iraqis and preventing the return of the forces of tyranny.
5. Foster the conditions for Iraqi national reconciliation but with the Iraqi Government clearly in the lead.
6. Continue to strengthen Iraqi Security Forces and accelerate the transition of security responsibility to the Iraqi Government.
7. Encourage an expanding Iraqi economy including by helping Iraq maintain and expand its export of oil to support Iraqi development.
8. Promote support for Iraq from its neighbors, the region, and the international community.



# *Major Strategic Shifts*

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## **Iraqis Are in the Lead in Ensuring Success – U.S. in Support Role**

- Place the responsibility for success on the Iraqis
- Recognize and expect that sectarian violence must be addressed by Iraqis
- Encourage Iraqis to reach national reconciliation
- Urge Iraqi Government to serve Iraqis in an impartial way

## **The Primary Mission Is Helping Iraqis Provide Security to the Population**

- Help Iraqis provide greater levels of security in Baghdad in order to enable political and economic progress
- Help Iraqis create the security environment in which political deals needed to sustain security gains can be made
- Bolster Iraqi capabilities and transfer responsibility to able units as part of this effort

## **Moderates Will Be Vigorously Supported in their Battle with Violent Extremists**

- Counter extremist portrayal of Iraq's conflict as Sunni vs. Shi'a, rather than moderates vs. extremists
- Recognize and act upon the reality that the United States has a national interest in seeing moderates succeed
- Build and sustain strategic partnerships with moderate Shi'a, Sunnis, and Kurds

## **We Will Diversify our Political and Economic Effort in Iraq to Achieve Our Goals**

- Increase attention to developments outside of the International Zone – emphasize flexibility
- Help Iraqi provincial governments deliver to their constituents and interact with Baghdad
- Extend the political and economic influence through the expansion of our civilian effort

## **We Will Further Integrate Our Civil and Military Efforts**

- Harness all elements of national power; further augment joint civilian-military efforts throughout theater
- Resource at levels that assume a resilient enemy and realistic assessment of Iraqi capacity over the next 12 months

## **Embedding Our Iraq Strategy in a Regional Approach is Vital to Success**

- Iraq is a regional and international challenge
- Intensify GOI and USG efforts to expand regional and international help, counter Iran and Syria meddling
- Invigorate diplomatic efforts to improve the regional context

## **We Must Maintain and Expand Our Capabilities for the Long War**

- Acknowledge that succeeding in Iraq is the immediate challenge, but it is not the last challenge
- Ensure we have adequate national capabilities to fight the long war, on the military and civilian side

# *Key Operational Shifts*

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## *Previous*

- Primary security focus was on transferring responsibility to Iraqis; with less focus on population security
- Coalition conceived and led Baghdad security plans.
- Restrictive ROE hindered execution of Baghdad security plan.
- Focused efforts on brokering National Compact among elites.
- Outreach, sometimes unilateral, to Sunnis.
- Helped build government capacity across the board.
- Acknowledged continued Syrian and increasing lethal Iranian interference in Iraq.
- Trained ISF to 325,000 end-strength.
- Political and economic efforts focused mainly in green zone, work with all national ministries.
- Military and civilian efforts coexisted outside of Baghdad.
- Modest embedding with Iraqi units.
- Gradual transfer of security responsibility to ISF.

## *Way Ahead*

- Primary security focus is on helping Iraqis provide population security; will facilitate the transfer of security responsibility to Iraqis
- Iraqi-conceived, Iraqi-led Baghdad security plan.
- Iraqi leaders committed to permissive ROE and non-sectarian, non-political command and control arrangements.
- Equal focus given to local political developments outside the international zone. Hold Iraqi Government to benchmarks it has announced
- GOI leads outreach to insurgents; maintain outreach and keep door open for Sunni moderates.
- Target assistance to vital functions only; build capacity outside green zone especially at provincial level.
- Counter Iranian and Syrian action that threatens Coalition forces.
- Expand size of Iraqi Army; conduct fundamental review of Iraqi police.
- Double political and economic presence outside international zone to better promote local accommodation.
- Civilian and military effort integrated in the field and in planning.
- Selective and significant increase in embedding program.
- Accelerate transfer of battlespace and Provincial Iraqi Control to Iraqis.

# Key Tactical Shifts

## By Iraqis

- Commitment to non-interference in operations of the Iraqi Security Forces
- Commitment to go after all those who violate the law, regardless of sect or religion
- Three additional Iraqi army brigades to Baghdad
- Restructuring of security arrangements in Baghdad: one military commander, two subordinates, one Iraqi army brigade for each district
- Expansion of Iraqi Army to add units, provide replenishment for 30,000 positions, and increase the deployability of forces on a national basis

### MOD Forces will grow from:

- 10 Army Divisions to 13
- 36 Army Brigades to 41
- 112 Army Battalions to 132
- Development of National Operations Center, National Counter-Terror Force, and National Strike Force
- Reform of the Interior Ministry to increase transparency and accountability, transform National Police into a professional force, transform local police and Facilities Protection Service

### *Political/Economic*

- Reform of Cabinet as suggested in Dec 16 PM Maliki speech
- Completion of Budget – money for economic programs
- Release of Iraqi funds
- Launch of International Compact

## By U.S.

- Increase in U.S. troops; five additional brigades committed to Baghdad.
  - Partnering of U.S. battalions to Iraqi brigades in nine districts of Baghdad
- Increase U.S. forces available to support Iraqi operations in Anbar, and step up pressure on al-Qaida
- Remobilize the National Guard to support rotations
- Expansion of U.S. embed program and partnering
- Doubling of PRTs and PRT civilian personnel in Iraq
- Integration of PRTs and BCTs in most areas
- Request to Congress to support the creation of a Civilian CERP for PRT leaders
- Jobs creation programs to support operations in Baghdad and Anbar
- Increase operations against Iranian actors
- Deployment of security assets to the Gulf region
- Launch of International Compact, early 2007
- Increase in end-strength of U.S. Army and Marine Corps
- Request to Congress to allow State to reimburse civilian agencies that send employees to Iraq