

U.S. Army Sgt. Scott Monahan, a tactical human intelligence team leader, collects an entourage of children while on a civil affairs mission in the Rabi area of Adhamiyah, Baghdad, on February 26, 2007.

February 10, 2007 – March 5, 2007

Enforcing the Law: The Baghdad Security Plan Begins

by **KIMBERLY KAGAN**

This report, the second in a series, describes the purpose, course, and results of Coalition operations in Baghdad during the first three weeks of Operation Enforcing the Law (also known as the Baghdad Security Plan), from General Petraeus' assumption of command on February 10, 2007, through March 5. It describes the flow of American and Iraqi forces into Baghdad; American and Iraqi command relationships; the efforts of those forces to prepare positions and develop intelligence in critical neighborhoods; the limited clearing operations that the forces already in Baghdad have conducted; and operations against the so-called Mahdi army, or Jaysh al Mahdi, in Baghdad. It describes and evaluates the apparent responses of the Jaysh al Mahdi and al Qaeda to these preparations and early operations, and highlights some of the differences between this operation and last year's offensives in Baghdad, Operations Together Forward I and II.

Mission

President Bush announced an increase in U.S. forces in Baghdad on January 10, 2007, in his “New Way Forward” speech. The mission of U.S. troops in Iraq would be “to help Iraqis clear and secure neighborhoods, to help them protect the local population, and to help ensure that the Iraqi forces left behind are capable of providing the security that Baghdad needs.”¹ Military commanders convert the president’s goals into a concrete hierarchy of military objectives and tasks. Although U.S. forces attempted to clear and secure neighborhoods in Baghdad at intervals in summer and fall 2006, General George Casey’s priority was turning the responsibility for security over to Iraqi forces as quickly as possible.² The goal of securing the population of Iraq, particularly Baghdad, is now paramount in American strategy.

Command Structure and Organization

A new command team is executing the president’s policy. General David Petraeus replaced General Casey as the commander of Multi-National Forces – Iraq on February 10, 2007. General Petraeus has overall responsibility for accomplishing the security, training, and recon-

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struction missions in Iraq. He requests troops for Iraq through the United States Central Command (CENTCOM), which oversees U.S. forces throughout the Middle East. Admiral William Fallon is replacing General John Abizaid as CENTCOM commander on March 16, 2007. General Petraeus and Admiral Fallon advise the president about the forces required to accomplish the goals the president has set for U.S. forces in Iraq. General Petraeus also integrates military activities with those of civilian U.S. government departments and agencies in Iraq, especially the U.S. Mission in Iraq (where Ambassador Ryan Crocker will soon replace Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad). Lieutenant General Raymond Odierno has served as the commander of Multi-National Corps – Iraq since December 14, 2006. General Odierno oversees mili-

tary operations throughout Iraq. When U.S. forces are allocated to Iraq, General Odierno determines which units flow into Baghdad. He also decides how to allocate resources to other Iraqi provinces.

The Iraqis have developed a new command structure to help them execute Operation Enforcing the Law, the Baghdad Security Plan. Prime Minister Nouri Kamal al-Maliki has appointed Lieutenant General Aboud Qanbar to command all the Iraqi Security Forces in Baghdad during the operation: Iraqi Army, Iraqi Police, and Iraqi National Police. This is the first time that the Iraqi government has designated an official responsible for operations in Baghdad and for all assets in the capital. U.S. commanders work with General Qanbar to execute the plan. They rely on unity of effort, rather than unity of command: that is to say, they operate toward a common goal and purpose, but U.S. commanders give orders to U.S. forces, and Iraqi commanders give orders to the Iraqi forces.³

General Qanbar has organized his own command structure for the Baghdad Security Plan. He has two Iraqi deputy commanders to help him

oversee operations, one on each side of the Tigris. General Qanbar's deputy commanders control the Iraqi forces allocated to their sectors. General Qanbar has allocated one Iraqi brigade to each of ten security districts in Baghdad. Baghdad has nine administrative districts, but there is a tenth security district because General Qanbar divided the Karada District in half, placing two Joint Security Stations there.⁴ A U.S. battalion and Iraqi Police and National Police have also been allocated to each district where operations are occurring.⁵

Major General Joseph Fil, the commander of Multi-National Division – Baghdad, is the U.S. commander who oversees the Baghdad Security Plan on a daily basis.⁶ He described the goal of the first operation of the Baghdad Security Plan in a press conference: “Prime Minister Maliki has launched Fard al-Qanun, which translate[s] as ‘enforcing the law.’ . . . [T]hrough this operation, the government of Iraq is seeking to show the Iraqi people and the international community that it is able to protect all its citizens, regardless of sect or ethnicity. An improved security situation will provide the government of Iraq with a breathing space to reach out to the country’s different groups, through a process of national reconciliation, to ensure them all a stake in the future of Iraq.”⁷

Operational Concept and Design of the Baghdad Security Plan

U.S. and Iraqi commanders have developed a concept of operations that allows them to link the goals and achievements of small-unit operations with the larger goal of helping the Iraqi government secure its citizens and engage them in legitimate political processes.

During an insurgency, the government and insurgents struggle to win the loyalty of the population. Most people are neutral—they favor neither side. The small percentage of people who adamantly support the insurgents or the government attempt to win the remaining population to their side.⁸ *The Iraq Report* has already documented the way in which Sunni extremist insurgents and Shiite militias alternately terrorized the residents of the Karkh District of Baghdad prior to the two battles on Haifa Street in January

2007, when U.S. forces raided the area but did not remain behind.⁹ One purpose of Operation Enforcing the Law is to demonstrate the legitimacy and effectiveness of the Iraqi government by helping it establish the rule of law. Protecting the population and building the capacity of the Iraqi government are the core goals of the Baghdad Security Plan.

Multiple operations contribute to these overall goals. General Fil described the operational design of the Baghdad Security Plan: “This new plan involves three basic parts: clear, control and retain. The first objective within each of the security districts in the Iraqi capital is to clear out extremist elements neighborhood by neighborhood in an effort to protect the population. And after an area is cleared, we’re moving to what we call the control operation. Together with our Iraqi counterparts, we’ll maintain a full-time presence on the streets, and we’ll do this by building and maintaining joint security stations throughout the city. This effort to re-establish the joint security stations is well under way. The number of stations in each district will be determined by the commanders on the ground who control that area. An area moves into the retain phase when the Iraqi security forces are fully responsible for the day-to-day security mission. At this point, coalition forces begin to move out of the neighborhood and into locations where they can respond to requests for assistance as needed. During these three phases, efforts will be ongoing to stimulate local economies by creating employment opportunities, initiating reconstruction projects and improving the infrastructure. These efforts will be spearheaded by neighborhood advisory councils, district advisory councils and the government of Iraq.”¹⁰

General Fil explained that the “hold” and “build” phases of Operations Together Forward I and II (the operations in Baghdad in summer and fall 2006) did not require the application of military forces or the extensive use of U.S. soldiers because of the way they were defined and designed. The “control” phase, and even the “retain” phase of the Baghdad Security Plan, will involve the application of military force to ensure that the security of the people of Baghdad is solidly established and sustained.

The Baghdad Security Plan, therefore, aims to establish area security, in doctrinal terms.¹¹ American and Iraqi commanders are approaching this task in a number of different ways, of which military clear-and-control operations are only a part. In addition to the Joint Security Stations, commanders have turned some markets into pedestrian-only zones; vehicles deliver their goods before the market opens and then leave the area.¹² In this way, they reduce opportunities for insurgents to conduct mass-casualty attacks (although it is not possible to eliminate all such opportunities in a busy city). Commanders have also changed the traffic patterns in Baghdad to alter the routes that terrorists and insurgents usually take in an effort to disrupt their operations and force them to move through areas they do not control and are not as familiar with, thereby making them more vulnerable to coalition forces and less effective.¹³

Available U.S. and Iraqi Forces

To help the Iraqi government secure Baghdad, President Bush authorized five additional brigade combat teams (BCTs) to flow into Iraq while extending the tours of some units already in-country, meeting General Petraeus's request for forces. One additional BCT will become operational in Iraq each month, from early February into early June. General Odierno and the Iraqi government have evidently decided to begin elements of the Baghdad Security Plan before all the forces arrived in theater.

Although President Bush authorized a troop increase of five Army BCTs plus smaller units of Marines, only one, the 2nd BCT of the 82nd Airborne Division, arrived in Baghdad before Operation Enforcing the Law began. Its deployment added between 2,700 and 3,000 troops to Baghdad, which, along with the Iraqi Army and police



Army Gen. David H. Petraeus claps during the Multi-National Force - Iraq change of command ceremony on February 10, 2007. During the ceremony, Army Gen. George W. Casey, Jr. relinquished command to Petraeus. U.S. Army Photo by Sgt. Curt Cashour

units, have brought the total U.S. forces in the city above 35,000, and the total with Iraqi forces to between 90,000 and 112,000.¹⁴ The second additional BCT, 4th Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, arrived in Iraq on March 1, 2007.¹⁵

Units from the Iraqi Army began to arrive in Baghdad from other parts of the country before Operation Enforcing the Law began. They include: the 3rd battalion, 1st Brigade of the 3rd Division from Al Kasik (outside the northern city of Mosul); the 4th Battalion, 1st Brigade of the 4th Division from Tikrit (north of Baghdad in Salah ad Din province); and the 4th Brigade of the 1st Division from Habbaniyah (west of Baghdad in al-Anbar province), all of which arrived

with about 70 percent of their soldiers. Battalions from the 3rd brigade, 4th Division from Suleimaniyah and Kirkuk (Kurdish units from northern Iraq) also arrived, the first at only 56 percent strength. The Iraqi Army has also sent the 1st Brigade of the 2nd Division from Irbil (also a Kurdish unit).¹⁶ The government of Iraq has drawn units into Baghdad from the northern and western part of the country, rather than from the south, for the beginning of the Baghdad Security Plan. These forces have been added to the brigades of the 6th Iraqi Army division that has long been stationed in Baghdad.

Iraqi units arriving in Baghdad with 70 percent of their soldiers are effectively at their full deployable strength, since about 25 percent of Iraqi soldiers are on leave at any given time, and the Iraqi Army retains about 10 percent of Iraqi soldiers in garrison to protect their infrastructure, rather than deploying them. Some units have arrived with higher proportions of their total troop complements.¹⁷

During Operations Together Forward I and II last year, the three Iraqi brigades requested did not arrive in Baghdad. MNF-I examined the reasons for this failure and corrected many of them. Iraqi Army units have successfully deployed to Baghdad for Operation Enforcing the Law in part because of increased capacities of the Iraqi government and more successful deployment procedures. Iraqi soldiers received two weeks of training before they deployed, two weeks of training in Baghdad, combat pay, hazardous duty pay, and a fixed six-month term and end-date for their deployment. Iraqi soldiers were offered none of these basic incentives or preparations in previous operations. They also now reside with U.S. units in the Joint Security Stations, so they have proper housing in Baghdad—something else that was lacking in the previous effort.¹⁸

The government of Iraq plans to rotate all Iraqi Army Brigades through Baghdad in order to ensure that they have the chance to deploy and partner with U.S. units to give them combat and

peacekeeping experience. And Lt. General Qanbar has shifted the areas of operation for the Iraqi Army units that had been in Baghdad this fall and winter, to ensure that they do not act upon any local loyalties or antipathies they might have developed to residents or militias in a district or neighborhood.¹⁹

ENEMY SITUATION

Sectarian Violence in Baghdad

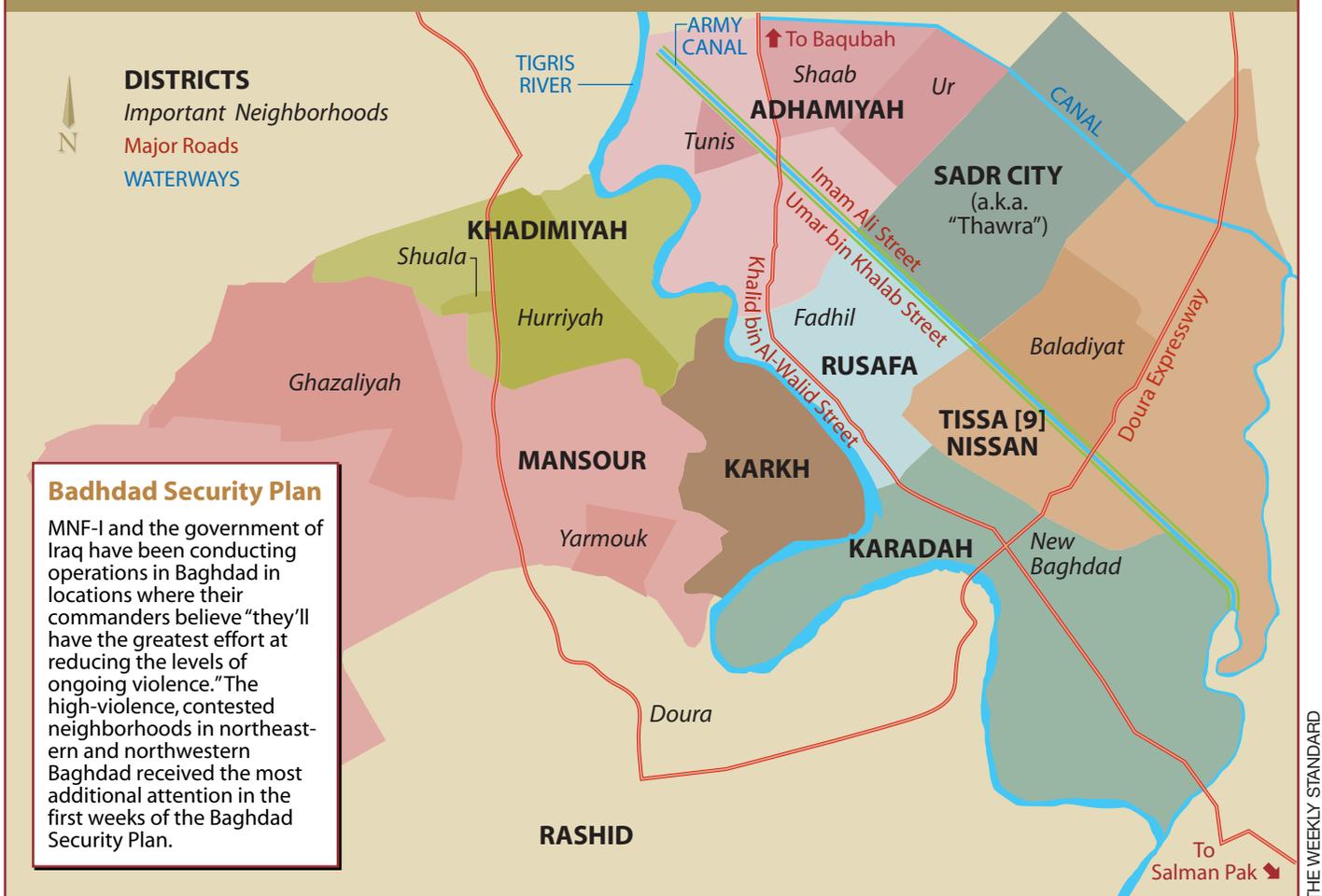
Sectarian violence in Baghdad does not occur simply because Sunni and Shiites live in close proximity—mixed neighborhoods have existed in Iraq for centuries, and have rarely been a source of widespread violence. Rather, organized, armed groups foment sectarian violence in the city for their own ends. Al Qaeda and other Islamic extremist groups use car and truck bombs to inflict civilian casualties for the purpose of inciting retaliatory attacks by Shiite groups and to generate strategic effects on American public opinion. Shiite and Sunni groups kidnap, torture, and execute members of the other sect residing in Baghdad. These extra-judicial killings prompt further retaliatory attacks, armed neighborhood vigilante groups, and widespread criminality.

Some of al Qaeda's most spectacular recent attacks occurred before Operation Enforcing the Law began, suggesting an attempt to derail the troop increase and the beginning of the Baghdad Security Plan. For example, al Qaeda exploded two vehicle-borne bombs in the al-Shugra marketplace in eastern Baghdad on February 12,²⁰ and suicide bombers were responsible for the explosions at Mustansiriyah University in mid-January.²¹

Execution-style killings in 2006 occurred most frequently in a few neighborhoods in Baghdad: the Sunni areas of Doura, Rashidiya, and Adhamiya; the Shiite areas of Sadr City, New

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THE NINE DISTRICTS OF BAGHDAD



THE WEEKLY STANDARD

Baghdad, and Shuala.²² Sunnis have largely left the once-mixed Sinek market in Baghdad in December, where a Shiite armed group kidnapped 50 merchants, released Shiites, and presumably held or executed the Sunnis.²³

Over the winter of 2006-2007, vigilante groups and militias have crystallized the borders between mostly Sunni and mostly Shiite neighborhoods: separating the Sunni neighborhood of Fadil from the Shiite neighborhoods of Sadirya and Sheik Omar, which had strong economic links after the toppling of Saddam Hussein's regime and before the Samarra mosque bombing in February 2006.²⁴ Many residents have left the neighborhoods of Ghazalia, Mansour, Doura, and Adhamiya.²⁵

As Operation Enforcing the Law began, General Qanbar announced that the government of Iraq intended ultimately to move squatters

(including Shiites) from homes that they had illegally occupied and resettle displaced families that could legally claim residence in a home.²⁶ This policy presumably aims to allow Sunni and Shiite families to settle together in the neighborhoods of Baghdad from which they have been displaced, including the once mixed sectarian neighborhoods. This policy will be part of the reconciliation process that Iraqi lawmakers envision if the Baghdad Security Plan succeeds.

The Jaysh al-Mahdi in Sadr City

Both Sunni and Shiite extremists have perpetrated sectarian violence, but execution-style extra-judicial killings have been the hallmark of the Shiite militias, particularly some elements of the Mahdi army.

The Jaysh al-Mahdi, as this militia is called in

Arabic, is based in Sadr City, in eastern Baghdad. Militiamen have controlled the entrances to that neighborhood and its thoroughfares, protecting residents from outsiders and inducing residents to join the militia. The Mahdi army had been controlling access to Sadr City through checkpoints on the main roads entering it, sometimes co-run with the National Police.²⁷ Sadr's organization has raised the quality of life in the former slum by providing jobs, money, and services, following the model of Hezbollah and Hamas, which attempt to undermine a legitimate government by performing its functions. Many of Sadr City's inhabitants have benefited from Sadrist. But Sadr City is rather isolated from the mixed and Sunni areas of Baghdad. The Army Canal forms the western border of Sadr City. The Army Canal and the roads along its edges (Imam Ali Street and Umar bin Khalab Street) bisect eastern Baghdad, running from northwest to southeast. The canal diverts some of the Tigris from north of Baghdad and reenters the river to the south of the city. Another canal forms Sadr City's eastern border.

Khalid Bin Al-Walid Street is the major road connecting Sadr City with the rest of eastern Baghdad and with Baqubah to its north. The road skirts poor Shiite neighborhoods on Sadr City's northern outskirts, including Shaab and Ur. It crosses the Army Canal. It then reaches a nexus of secondary roads that criss-cross the neighborhoods in Adhamiya between the Army Canal and the Tigris. The secondary roads lead westward to bridges across the Tigris, and thence to the northwestern district of Khadimiyah and its neighborhoods. If one continues instead southeast along Khalid Bin Al-Walid Street, one reaches east-central Baghdad and the district of Rusafa, and about five other bridges across the river. And if one continues on Khalid Bin Al-Walid Street from those locations, the road leads directly to the Doura Expressway, the highway that rings eastern and southern Baghdad. The Doura Expressway links

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the neighborhoods east of the Tigris, including Sadr City, with neighborhoods in the southwest of the city, including the highly-contested Doura. Khalid Bin Al-Walid Street then runs southeast, becoming the road to Salman Pak, where U.S. forces identified and destroyed an al Qaeda car bomb network in early February.²⁸

Adhamiya, and particularly the subdistricts of Shaab and Ur, have been important bases for the Jaysh al-Mahdi (JAM).²⁹ Because of the road network, they are the neighborhoods through which militiamen probably travel when entering or leaving the northern or western fringes of Sadr City. Other neighborhoods ringing Sadr City have served as JAM bases, including Baladiyah, Talabiyah, and Raminiya.

The Jaysh al-Mahdi beyond Sadr City

Elements of the Mahdi army have responded to the sectarian violence that began after the Samarra Mosque bombing by displacing Sunnis from neighborhoods east of the Tigris, expanding Shiite residential areas and militia strongholds beyond Sadr City. JAM relies on the neighborhoods around Sadr City to perpetrate violence in other areas of Baghdad, including the execution of civilians. These executions, in turn, help JAM or its elements establish control of new neighborhoods.

By mid-February, Shiites dominated ten formerly mixed neighborhoods in Baghdad. They had taken over neighborhoods in East Baghdad (the eastern side of the Tigris) where Sadr City is situated and the Jaysh al-Mahdi and its subgroups operate.³⁰ The Jaysh al-Mahdi has been expanding the territory it controls westward across the Tigris. By mid-January, it had displaced Sunnis from the Hurriyah neighborhood in western Baghdad.³¹ Jaysh al-Mahdi death squads have been operating for months in the Doura neighborhood in Rashid. Coordinated mortar fires from a

Shiite neighborhood on the east bank of the Tigris suggest, though do not prove, that Jaysh al-Mahdi, not the Sunni insurgency, was fighting against U.S. troops Karkh during the second battle for Haifa Street (January 24-25).³²

A POLITICAL AND MILITARY CHALLENGE: PRIME MINISTER MALIKI AND MUQTADA AL-SADR

Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki has handled Muqtada al-Sadr warily since he came into office in May 2006. Parliamentary politics have caused some of Maliki's hesitations. Muqtada al-Sadr and Abdul Aziz al Hakim, both leaders of important parliamentary blocs, helped to place Maliki in power at the head of the United Iraqi Alliance, the Shiite pseudo-party that is the largest single grouping in the Iraqi parliament. The relative military strength of Sadr's Mahdi army and Hakim's Badr Corps militias has also constrained Maliki, whose Dawa party does not have an armed wing of its own. Both Sadr's and Hakim's militias have operated independently of Iraqi Army structures for the most part, and in a complicated interconnected manner with the National Police, which they (especially the Mahdi army) have heavily infiltrated. In addition, Sadrists control several important portfolios, including Health, Agriculture, and Transportation and had significant control over the Interior Ministry (which controls the police) as well.

On January 11, after President Bush announced the surge but before the Baghdad Security Plan officially began, Prime Minister Maliki ordered leaders of the Shiite militias to disarm or face attack.³³ Maliki soon announced, "When military operations start in Baghdad, all other tracks will stop. . . . We gave the political side a great chance, and we have now to use the authority of the state to impose the law and tackle or confront people who break it."³⁴ As early as January 14, some leaders of the Mahdi army successfully ordered militia members not to wear their black uniforms, including face masks, or carry their weapons.³⁵ They withdrew their checkpoints from certain neighborhoods, including Tal-

biyah (just outside Sadr city) and Hurriyah, where the Mahdi army had recently displaced Sunni residents. Some people in civilian clothes nevertheless guided traffic.³⁶ Muqtada al-Sadr ordered the Mahdi army not to fight the government of Iraq or U.S. forces during the Islamic holy month of Muharram.³⁷

Maliki's First Moves Against Rogue Sadrists

U.S. and Iraqi Forces have systematically removed rogue leaders of the Mahdi army who did not respond to Sadr's orders not to fight, or who had engaged in criminality, such as leading kidnapping and execution rings, through their official positions. U.S. and Iraqi forces had killed or captured five leaders in the Mahdi army by January 19. After midnight on Tuesday, January 16, U.S. and Iraqi forces killed or captured a high-level Mahdi army figure in Sadr City.³⁸ At two o'clock in the morning on January 19, U.S. and Iraqi forces conducted a raid on a Shiite holy site in Baladiyah, on the east side of the Tigris. They captured and arrested Sheik Abdul-Hadi al-Darraj, Sadr's media chief in Baghdad, and a few of his associates.³⁹ Darraj allegedly assassinated members of the Iraqi Security Forces and coordinated cells perpetrating sectarian violence against civilians.⁴⁰ A spokesman for Prime Minister Maliki emphasized that Iraqi Security Forces could arrest any person who committed illegal acts, but that the government did not wish to fight the Mahdi army.⁴¹

As the United States and the Government of Iraq removed rogue JAM leaders, the Sadrists responded by ending a boycott on attending parliament that they had begun in November when Prime Minister Maliki met with President Bush in Amman, Jordan. Without the 30 Sadrists, parliament had difficulty achieving the quorum of members necessary to meet and legislate.⁴² Furthermore, the leader of Sadr City's neighborhood council promised that he and residents would cooperate with the Iraqi government's security plan.⁴³ Militia members in other Shiite neighborhoods of Baghdad, such as Shuala, also reported that they had been ordered to put down all arms,

hide them, and avoid confrontation.⁴⁴

Some leading Sadrists, apparently fearing for their safety as some of their colleagues were arrested, left their homes. Some went from Baghdad to Najaf, and others headed for Syria and Iran, Prime Minister Maliki's office reported on January 31.⁴⁵ The Deputy Health Minister, a Sadrist, remained in Baghdad. On February 8, U.S. and Iraqi forces raided the Ministry of Health and arrested him. He is alleged to have diverted government funds to militias and allowed the use of hospital facilities to perpetrate sectarian violence.⁴⁶ A few days earlier, U.S. and Iraqi forces killed the director of Muqtada al-Sadr's political office in Baqubah, in Diyala Province, where al Qaeda and the Mahdi army have been conducting reprisal attacks against one another by terrorizing civilians.⁴⁷

By the end of January, Muqtada al-Sadr had left Iraq for Iran, whether for safety or to seek assistance. It is not clear whether he planned to remain in the vicinity of Tehran for a short or long visit. U.S. officials reported his absence on February 14, the day that Operation Enforcing the Law began.⁴⁸

Any Mahdi army member who continues to fight U.S. and Iraqi forces, contravening Muqtada al-Sadr's orders not to do so, is a rogue member of the militia and subject to arrest. Since Operation Enforcing the Law began, U.S. and Iraqi forces have continued to arrest rogue JAM leaders: for example, a financier and weapons trafficker in Raminiya, in northern Baghdad,⁴⁹ and a punishment ring in al Mashru.⁵⁰ They have also arrested militia members.⁵¹ The Mahdi army has not resisted the BSP as an organized group or with Sadr's formal support. Both Sadr and Hakim have reiterated their support for the BSP and their orders to their followers not to attack Sunnis or to resist coalition forces. This support from the heads of the three major Shiite parties is a marked difference between the current

■ Both Sadr and Hakim have reiterated their support for the BSP and their orders to their followers not to attack Sunnis or to resist coalition forces. This support from the heads of the three major Shiite parties is a marked difference between the current operation and Operations Together Forward in 2006.

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Decisive Operations: U.S. and Iraqi Forces Flow into Baghdad

In January 2007, U.S. forces generally operated from Forward Operating Bases (FOBs) on the outskirts of the city, as they have for several years. Some Iraqi army units lived in the neighborhoods, advised by a handful of U.S. troops. For example, a Military Training and Transition (MiTT) team advised a brigade of the 6th Iraqi Army Division, which resided and operated in eastern Baghdad.⁵² Another brigade of the 6th Iraqi Army Division responded first to attacks in Kadhamiyah, a district in western Baghdad, suggesting that it resided there.⁵³ In January, the Iraqi forces responded first in an emergency, and they called in U.S. troops when they were not able to handle a situation. The previous *Iraq Report* described how U.S. troops flowed in and out of neighborhoods in Baghdad, conducting raids, strikes, and sweeps.

After President Bush announced the troop increase for Baghdad in mid-January, many U.S. forces stationed in the Baghdad prepared to move from their FOBs into the city. They and new forces that flow into Baghdad build and man Joint Security Stations in Baghdad's neighborhoods.

The Baghdad Security Plan relies on U.S. and Iraqi forces securing the population. Major General William Caldwell, the spokesman for MNF-I, explained, "... [W]e have realized, to protect the population ... we the coalition force ... can't be living on some big operating base. We need to move our forces off those big operating bases down into the city and be co-located with our Iraqi counterparts, both the Iraqi army and the Iraqi police, so that we have a better feel for what's going on in that neighborhood."⁵⁴ Accordingly, the United States and Iraqi Forces have moved

into Joint Security Stations (JSSs). There will be at least one JSS in each district of Baghdad. The Joint Security Station houses U.S., Iraqi Army, Iraqi Police, and National Police troops. They reside together in the districts. They share a mission, operational concepts, and information. They are also partnered together, so that the Iraqi Security Forces can learn best practices by operating alongside American troops daily, in the JSS and in the neighborhoods.

By February 6, U.S. forces had built and occupied two Joint Security Stations in western Baghdad, accompanied by Iraqi soldiers and police.⁵⁵ By February 8, U.S. forces had built 10 new Joint Security Stations and began to reside in them jointly with Iraqi Police, National Police, and Iraqi Army units.⁵⁶ As soon as the 2nd BCT of the 82nd Airborne Division arrived, some of its units immediately constructed the Joint Security Station in Hurriyah, a formerly Sunni neighborhood in western Baghdad, which JAM had recently contested. It took the paratroopers only three days, with the help of Engineers.⁵⁷ By February 21, there were fourteen JSSs.⁵⁸

Units then radiated further into Baghdad from the larger hubs of the Joint Security Stations by establishing Combat Outposts (COPs). Forces already stationed in or near the city constructed two COPs in Ghazaliya: COP Casino, housing a company of U.S. soldiers and some Iraqi Army units, was the first of its kind, planned before the troop increase began; and nearby COP Wildcard was completed by January 23.⁵⁹ There is now (and possibly was then) a Joint Security Station in that neighborhood.⁶⁰ Paratroopers constructed and occupied COP Callahan in Adhamiya in eastern Baghdad.⁶¹ COP War Eagle, the new home of the 2nd Battalion of the 82nd Airborne Division's 319th Airborne Infantry Regiment, is located in Adhamiya on the Tigris.⁶²

The concept of Joint Security Stations and Combat Outposts is not new. U.S. forces occupied company-level combat outposts in Baghdad after the invasion in 2003, but U.S. commanders withdrew them to FOBs, consistent with the previous view that U.S. forces were an irritant to the insurgency.⁶³ U.S. commanders have also implied that Joint Security Stations previously existed in Bag-

dad.⁶⁴ U.S. forces have been projecting forces into Ramadi using combat outposts to place troops inside the city, rather than in FOBs.⁶⁵

MNF-I and the government of Iraq have been conducting operations in Baghdad in locations where their commanders believe "they'll have the greatest effort at reducing the levels of ongoing violence."⁶⁶ The high-violence, contested neighborhoods in northeastern and northwestern Baghdad received the most additional attention in the first weeks of the Baghdad Security Plan.

Operation Enforcing the Law Reaches Sadr City

After the targeted raids aimed at rogue Jaysh al-Mahdi leaders, U.S. and Iraqi forces conducted a coordinated series of operations to reach Sadr City. These operations began in the first week of February, and continued into March. U.S. and Iraqi forces in Adhamiya prepared the groundwork for entering Sadr City by securing bordering neighborhoods such as Shaab and Ur.⁶⁷

A week before Operation Enforcing the Law began, troops from the 5th Battalion, 20th Infantry Regiment (from the 2nd Infantry Division's 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team) conducted highly-focused raids on specific sites in Shaab where insurgents operated. They began by striking the homes of known insurgents. Troops then searched a nearby lot filled with abandoned cars. They discovered body armor and uniforms which militia members use to impersonate legitimate Iraqi Security Forces. They went on to a compound containing a factory and warehouses, to search for bomb-making materials. Finally, they went to a school nearby to gather additional information about the insurgents. Tips from local Iraqis had helped U.S. troops target these insurgents. These and similar raids aimed to remove illegal weapons from Shaab and Ur, and to detain suspected insurgents found there.⁶⁸

A few days later, the Iraqi Police began to man the checkpoints in and out of Sadr City without militiamen in uniform. The Iraqi Army also arrived in force on Sadr City's fringes.⁶⁹ Some U.S. and Iraqi troops began operating inside of Sadr City around this time.⁷⁰

The 5th Battalion, 20th Infantry Regiment and its Strykers opened the way for broader operations by the newly arrived paratroopers from the 2nd BCT, 82nd Airborne Division. During the first days of Operation Enforcing the Law, paratroopers and Iraqi forces from COP Callahan met the residents of their area by going from door to door, introducing themselves, learning names, drinking tea with inhabitants, collecting business cards, and asking questions about the neighborhood.⁷¹ A week later, these troops knocked on the doors of residents in Shaab and Ur and searched their homes.⁷²

The U.S. and Iraqi Forces patrolling the neighborhoods thereby began to develop intelligence about locally-based insurgents. In Adhamiya, forces captured an insurgent (linked to a car-bombing ring, so probably associated with Sunni Islamic extremists) who had based himself in a hospital during the “knock-and-search” operations to avoid interrogation.⁷³

While the house-to-house operations continued, U.S. and Iraqi forces also interdicted the flow of fighters and supplies through those neighborhoods into Sadr City. They managed vehicle checkpoints, for example, and searched cars passing through. Paratroopers at a new checkpoint in Shaab detained men driving through that neighborhood with the corpses of four executed victims in the trunk of their car.⁷⁴ In 2006, Jaysh al-Mahdi fighters often buried their victims in pre-dug burial pits outside of Sadr City.⁷⁵

Coalition and Iraqi forces pushed outside these northern neighborhoods in succeeding days to preclude militia activity elsewhere in Baghdad. For example, they secured the perimeter of the Barantha Mosque in central Baghdad, and Iraqi forces entered it and captured a large weapons cache used by militia groups.⁷⁶ Likewise, they captured rogue Jaysh al-Mahdi leaders in the troublesome Karadah district, which protrudes from the east bank of the Tigris toward the Karkh and Doura neighborhoods.⁷⁷

During the last days of February and the first days of March, U.S. and Iraqi forces targeted important individuals who remained in Sadr City, raids that typically precede substantial forces entering an area. They arrested sixteen suspects, leaders of and participants in a rogue Jaysh al-Mahdi cell, whom they alleged organized sectarian kidnapping and execution.⁷⁸

U.S. and Iraqi presence spread further into Sadr City from Forward Operating Base Loyalty on its eastern edge. The sector received two additional U.S. battalions and a new Iraqi Army unit, the 1-4-1 Infantry Battalion, which rotated into Baghdad from Falluja. These Iraqi forces arrested a suspect who tried to pass through a joint U.S. and Iraqi checkpoint on the Zafaraniyah Freeway into Sadr City without inspection, by claiming that he was a member of the Jaysh al-Mahdi, as indeed, he apparently was.⁷⁹

On March 4, 600 U.S. and 550 Iraqi forces, with armored vehicles, began to go house-to-house in the Jamil neighborhood in Sadr City, knocking on doors and speaking with residents. The soldiers came from four different brigades: 2nd BCT, 82nd Airborne Division, and two Stryker companies from 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, from the United States Army; and the 8th Brigade, 2nd Iraqi National Police Division, and the 3rd Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 10th Iraqi Army Division.⁸⁰ They said that their efforts were a prelude to opening up a JSS in Sadr City.⁸¹ One resident said, ““They thanked us with respect and a smile. . . . I am happy that such a campaign is done in my neighborhood. It doesn’t upset me, as it is aiming to clear the area of weapons.”” Another resident reported that ““troops came into his home only after ensuring that his mother and sister would not be disturbed.”” He added, ““One of the Americans asked my brother about his classes and how school is, and they also asked my father if he was doing OK and how was his health. . . . I didn’t hear any gunshots, nor did we hear about

■ After a house-to-house search in Sadr City in early March, one resident said, “They thanked us with respect and a smile. . . . I am happy that such a campaign is done in my neighborhood. It doesn’t upset me, as it is aiming to clear the area of weapons.”

any clashes.”⁸² The armored vehicles left the area after the operation, and U.S. and Iraqi forces dismantled their traffic control checkpoints.⁸³ The initial clearing operations took several days, at the end of which U.S. and Iraqi forces have been establishing a JSS in Sadr City, which will bring the total number up to fifteen.⁸⁴

Operations West of the Tigris

The presence of U.S. and Iraqi forces west of the Tigris aimed to protect the population there from encroaching Jaysh al-Mahdi fighters and kidnapping rings, as well as spectacular attacks by Islamic extremist groups. Company A, 1st Battalion, 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, was attached to 2nd BCT, 1st Infantry Division. Together with Iraqi forces, they operated from the new Joint Security Station in Hurriyah.⁸⁵ Their tactics, techniques, and procedures were similar to those used across the river in Adhamiya: door-to-door visits, patrols, cordon-and-search operations, and targeted raids against suspects.

Hurriyah is a historically Sunni neighborhood on the west side of the Tigris, recently contested and perhaps resettled by elements of the Jaysh al-Mahdi. Consequently, the residents of Hurriyah did not initially provide U.S. or Iraqi troops with information about insurgents or criminals operating in their area, according to the U.S. company commander there, because a local militia had influence over the inhabitants.⁸⁶ To facilitate cooperation, the U.S. command team met with the community leaders in the Hurriyah Neighborhood Advisory Council to discuss local security issues and other concerns.⁸⁷ Even as the troops attempted to earn the trust of the population, they captured criminals and weapons.

Cordon-and-search operations in northern Baghdad, probably from the Hurriyah Joint Security Station, revealed a large weapons cache, including 600 rounds of rifle ammunition.⁸⁸ Troops from COP War Eagle, in Adhamiya on the east bank of the Tigris, operated across the river in western Baghdad. For example, the 325th Special Troops Battalion, from the newly arrived 2nd

BCT of the 82nd Airborne Division, operated in Tunis, a neighborhood in northwestern Baghdad. They raided the home of a Shiite man who ran a kidnapping and torture ring, terrorizing both Sunni and Shiite victims. They apprehended the suspect, who was wounded in the raid but taken for medical treatment, and found his cellphone—which they expected would lead to the discovery and arrest of other members of the crime ring.⁸⁹ Unit coordination on both sides of the Tigris suggests that forces are identifying the flow of fighters between neighborhoods and sharing their intelligence about those movements.

As the efforts into Sadr City began, those in west-central Baghdad, where some of the first COPs and JSSs were situated, continued. Residents have been informing U.S. and Iraqi forces at the Joint Security Station in Ghazaliya about large weapons caches in their neighborhood, which they subsequently secured. The neighborhood’s high-crime rate dropped significantly after the JSS became operational.⁹⁰ Ghazaliya is significant territory because it extends from the western border of Baghdad, near Abu Ghraib, into the city center. The road through Ghazaliya to Abu Ghraib continues to the insurgent hotspots of Falluja. Insurgents seem to flow along this route into Baghdad, and a major al Qaeda figure was captured in Abu Ghraib in March.⁹¹

Enemy Reactions

Muqtada al-Sadr ordered the Jaysh al-Mahdi not to fight U.S. and Iraqi forces at the outset of the Baghdad Security Plan. Consequently, Jaysh al-Mahdi members who continued to wear uniforms, bear weapons illegally, or operate kidnapping and execution cells were by definition rogue elements and Sadr did not take any meaningful action to prevent them from being captured or killed. U.S. and Iraqi forces were working to prevent such rogue and criminal elements from operating, with some success: the number of extra-judicial killings (executions) fell significantly in the first three weeks of the operation.⁹² It is not clear what such figures measure. Many militia members presumably returned to daily life, and are waiting to see the outcome

of events. Many have hidden their arms; some have fled Baghdad to fight elsewhere: “Mahdi army sources said that their heavy weaponry had been moved from Sadr City or hidden since the announcement.”⁹³ Others continued to kidnap and torture victims in Baghdad and outside. Doura, in southwestern Baghdad, remained a hotspot for such killings and for spectacular al Qaeda reprisals.

Al Qaeda and other Sunni extremist groups responded more violently to the impending surge. They attacked civilians with mass-casualty weapons, such as vehicle bombs and suicide vests. Their attacks were well-planned and coordinated. These spectacular attacks usually occurred against targets in Shiite neighborhoods in East Baghdad. Al Qaeda continued its signature car and suicide bomb during the Baghdad security operations. Some of its most spectacular attacks occurred at a Baghdad market (February 18), Mustansiriya University in central Baghdad (February 25), and the old Baghdad book market (March 5).⁹⁴ Such attacks continued in Eastern Baghdad and Sadr City. Vehicle and suicide bombs in February also occurred in contested neighborhoods such as Dora, or in the neighborhoods that lie on the borders between sectarian districts: such as Baya and Sadiya in the Rasheed District, or Yarmouk just to its north in the Mansour District. Karadah was also a hotspot for al Qaeda attacks.

Shaping Operations

The previous edition of *The Iraq Report* explained how al Qaeda fighters have been moving fighters and weapons (particularly for car-bombs) around the outskirts of Baghdad and into the city. During the first month of Operation Enforcing the Law, U.S. forces continued to capture and destroy fighters, safehouses, and weapons caches in the southern belt around Baghdad. General Odierno sent a battalion of U.S. forces to Diyala Province to reinforce the efforts to defeat al Qaeda there. A future edition of *The Iraq Report* will describe these shaping operations, the events in Anbar Province, and their relationship to the ongoing fight in Baghdad.

CONCLUSIONS

Some U.S. and Iraqi military operations in early February prepared the urban terrain of Baghdad for the large number of forces flowing in. Targeted raids eliminated important leaders and known weapons caches in Adhamiya, Sadr City, and their borders. Disrupt-and-leave operations, such as the Haifa Street fight, in late January permitted U.S. and Iraqi forces to move into the Karkh district. U.S. forces have constructed and occupied bases for themselves in some parts of the city.

The Baghdad Security Plan began on February 14, 2007, and is still in the early part of its first phase (clearing neighborhoods). During the “clear” phase of a counterinsurgency operation, tactical commanders “remove all enemy forces and eliminate organized resistance in an assigned area” with offensive tactics, techniques, and procedures. They may conduct targeted raids, like the ones on Haifa Street in January or the ones against rogue Jaysh al-Mahdi leaders in January and February. They also conduct cordon-and-search operations to find weapons caches or other enemy strongholds.⁹⁵

The JSSs and COPs are essential to securing the population by allowing U.S. and Iraqi forces to maintain a continuous presence in threatened neighborhoods. Troops saturate a small area with patrols to begin to secure the population. Then, like police officers on the beat, U.S. and Iraqi Security Forces try to develop an image of their neighborhood and a sense of its people and routines. The patrols also attempt to establish a working relationship with residents. U.S. forces conducted 20,000 patrols in the second week of February, up from 7,400 in the first week of the month.⁹⁶ Although the number of patrols does not indicate success or failure, it does indicate a fundamental change in the practices of small units in Baghdad or the number of small units actively operating in Baghdad.

The network of JSSs and COPs also allows the counterinsurgent force to expand from more secure areas to less secure areas, in theory and in practice.⁹⁷ In late February, forces flowed

through Adhamiya to Sadr City. As U.S. and Iraqi forces advanced into these areas, targeted raids proceeded to the central areas of the Tigris River. Since January, such targeted raids have generally preceded the insertion of U.S. and Iraqi troops into an area.

Clearing is not a quick operation, in theory or in practice. U.S. and Iraqi forces have been disrupting the enemy in Baghdad, particularly in Adhamiya and Kadhamiya, the northeastern and northwestern districts of the city.

Muqtada al-Sadr's decision not to fight at the beginning of the Baghdad Security Plan, and his flight from Iraq to Iran, minimized Jaysh al-Mahdi resistance in January, February, and early March. U.S. and Iraqi forces have not, however, eliminated enemy forces and organized resistance, even in those areas. Rogue elements of the Jaysh al-Mahdi continue to operate in Baghdad. This is not surprising, as some of the fragmented insurgent network remains (as it often does) after the clearing operations begin.

Counterinsurgent forces then attempt to prevent insurgents from operating in a specific area. They provide continuous security for the inhabitants. They deny reentry into an area by establishing checkpoints. They patrol the area to disrupt and capture insurgents who have remained or reinfiltrated the area. And they work constantly with local leaders to secure the support of the local populace to the government, rather than to the insurgency.⁹⁸ These ongoing processes reduce the population's support for the insurgency, as well as the level of violence.

Continued clearing operations, as well as controlling operations, rely on the intelligence picture that U.S. and Iraqi soldiers develop in their neighborhood. Local people share information about the enemy as they feel secure, have access to and confidence in the troops around them, and are confident that the government serves their future better than the insurgents. U.S. and Iraqi forces have not been in neighborhoods long enough to develop a comprehensive picture, nor to receive

■ U.S. and Iraqi forces have not been in neighborhoods long enough to develop a comprehensive picture, nor to receive large numbers of tips. That process takes at least a month, and sometimes several.

large numbers of tips. That process takes at least a month, and sometimes several. Commanders in Iraq have been emphasizing that the reduction in violence will be slow, levels of violence are likely to rise and fall unpredictably for the next several months.

General Odierno and General Qanbar committed U.S. and Iraqi forces to Baghdad as they became available in February and March. This "rolling surge" focuses forces on a handful of neighborhoods Baghdad, and attempts to expand security out from those neighborhoods. This process, also, takes time. This edition of *The Iraq Report* traces the effects of Operation Enforcing the Law after only one additional U.S. brigade arrived in Baghdad. The last brigade will become operational in June.

A big advantage of a "rolling surge" is that the population and the enemy sense the continuous pressure of ever-increasing forces. Iraqis have not seen such a prolonged and continuous planned increase of U.S. forces before—previous increases have been smaller and/or focused on specific events such as elections, after which it was expected that the additional troops would be withdrawn. A disadvantage of a "rolling surge" is that the enemy continues to function in some areas of Baghdad or simply leaves the city to await the expected departure of the additional troops. The net result of the continued, increasing presence of U.S. forces appears to be having an important psychological, as well as practical, effect on the enemy and the people of Iraq.

The flow of troops into Baghdad has further reduced the levels of certain types of violence. In the first three weeks of Operation Enforcing the Law, U.S. and Iraqi forces significantly reduced the number of execution-style killings that have been the hallmark of rogue Jaysh al-Mahdi groups. Metrics that focus exclusively on the number of violent acts do not indicate whether the counterinsurgency effort, or even the security effort, is succeeding. As Muqtada al-Sadr has cho-

sen not to fight and left the country, the decrease in executions may indicate one of several possibilities: that militia members have largely abandoned their terror tactics; that the Jaysh al-Mahdi leadership is in disarray and reorganizing, and its cells cannot function without new command and control; that fighters have left Baghdad; that weapons have left Baghdad; or that constant troop presence has rendered militias unable to operate as effectively as they had before the Baghdad Security Plan. These possibilities are not mutually exclusive, nor do they firmly indicate how Jaysh al-Mahdi and its subgroups will react in the future.

The number and frequency of vehicle and suicide bombs indicates continued al Qaeda activity in Baghdad. This consistency may show that al Qaeda is flowing into Baghdad to avoid inhospitable areas in the provinces or to wage a campaign in the city; that the decrease in militia activity has rendered it more effective; that U.S. and Iraqi force presence has (whether intentionally or coincidentally) disabled the Mahdi army more than it has disabled al Qaeda; that the Mahdi army was effective in stopping al Qaeda attacks; or that al Qaeda is expending its most valuable resources intensely now because its leadership does not think that it will have the opportunity to create as much chaos later. Again, these possibilities are not mutually exclusive, nor do they predict future al Qaeda behavior.

Since January 2007, U.S. and Iraqi forces have been increasingly effective against al Qaeda around Baghdad: in Ramadi, in the belt south of Baghdad stretching from Yusifiyah to Salman Pak, and northeast in Diyala Province. The previous *Iraq Report* traced many of these operations in January and early February. They have continued in February and early March, and a future *Iraq Report* will describe them and their consequences. Al Qaeda has therefore been reacting to military pressure throughout the belt circling Baghdad. The pressure outside Baghdad shapes al Qaeda's

reaction to the Baghdad Security Plan, and the BSP shapes al Qaeda's reaction to activity in the Baghdad belt. U.S. and Iraqi forces have deprived al Qaeda of the initiative—the enemy is reacting to American operations. Only time will show the consequences of this complex dilemma for the al Qaeda organization.

While, or perhaps because, the Jaysh al-Mahdi has avoided fighting with U.S. and Iraqi troops, and as executions have fallen, al Qaeda has increased the number and variety of spectacular attacks in Baghdad. The aim of such attacks seems consistent: namely, to spark sectarian violence. It seems likely that al Qaeda leaders wish to incite the Shiite population of Baghdad to take up arms and continue fighting, in order to discredit the government of Iraq and the United States. So far, the Shiite population has not reacted to these attacks as dramatically as it did on previous occasions. It is likely that another goal of these al Qaeda attacks is to break the will of the American people to continue the fight, possibly even to turn off the “surge” before it takes full effect.

Counterinsurgency aims at securing the population by many means, and counting the number of violent enemy acts during the clear phase does not demonstrate the success or failure of Operation Enforcing the Law. Earlier metrics that focused on the training of Iraqi Security Forces and the transition of Iraqi provinces to the nominal control of the Iraqi government likewise did not measure success or failure. Rather, counterinsurgencies follow multiple lines of operation, including combat and civil security operations, the development of host nation security forces, the provision of essential services, the development of government capacity, and short- and long-term economic development. No single line of operations leads to success. All of these logical lines of operation contribute to securing the population, the first and most essential goal of counter-insurgency.⁹⁹

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