



# SPECIAL REPORT

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## ABOUT THE REPORT

This report chronicles U.S. efforts to train and equip an indigenous constabulary force to control insurgent and militia violence in Iraq. The United States does not have constabulary forces. In earlier conflicts, the United States called upon the United Nations or European allies to provide a *gendarmerie*.

In Iraq, the UN police forces that were a feature of peace operations in the Balkans were not available, leaving the United States with only one option—to develop an Iraqi constabulary force under fire.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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*Robert M. Perito*

## The Iraq Federal Police

### U.S. Police Building under Fire

## Summary

- In 2004, the U.S.-led coalition and Iraqi security forces faced a growing challenge from insurgents and militia groups as the country drifted toward civil war. In street battles with heavily armed insurgent and militia groups, Iraq's fledgling police units mutinied under fire and resigned en masse, pointing out shortfalls in the U.S. police training program.
- In response, the U.S. government transferred leadership of the U.S. police assistance program from the State Department to the Defense Department, which created heavy police tactical units capable of dealing with armed groups. At the same time, the Iraqi interior ministry independently organized police commando units composed of former Iraqi soldiers that successfully fought alongside U.S. military forces.
- In 2005, the installation of a new Iraqi government and the escalation of sectarian violence brought a change in the composition of the Iraqi police commando units. The new interior minister, a senior Shiite party official, enabled members of Shiite militia groups to take over the police commando units and engage in the kidnap, torture, and murder of Sunnis.
- To control police death squads, the U.S. military combined all of Iraq's heavy police and police commando units into a new entity, the Iraq National Police (INP). In October 2006, the U.S. military began a program to retrain police commando units that were engaged in sectarian violence.
- Over the following year, Iraq's new interior minister, Jawad al-Bolani, undertook a program to reform the INP, appointing a new commanding general, purging the officer corps, and inviting a training team from the Italian Carabinieri to provide advanced instruction for INP units.
- In 2007, INP units successfully partnered with U.S. combat brigade teams that were deployed to Baghdad as part of President Bush's surge of U.S. military force into Iraq. Over the next two years, the valor of Iraqi constabulary units and their acceptance in both Sunni and Shiite areas brought a new name, the Iraq Federal Police (IFP), and the deployment of an IFP unit to every province in the country.

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- Lessons learned in the development of an indigenous police constabulary in Iraq should be applied to current and future stability operations.

The Iraqi Police (IP) was the only institution in Saddam Hussein's interlocking network of intelligence and security services to remain intact at the end of major combat operations in Iraq. The Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) decision to disband the Iraqi army and Saddam's security and intelligence network spared the Iraqi police and the interior ministry. Unfortunately, the IP had been at the bottom of Saddam's bureaucratic hierarchy of security agencies and suffered from years of mismanagement, deprivation of resources, and lack of professional standards. A U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) assessment team found that the IP's 60,000 members had little understanding of basic police skills. Most of its senior officers had graduated from the national police college, but its noncommissioned officers and patrolmen had little formal education. Under Saddam the IP had been militarized, and its doctrine, procedures, and weapons were completely unsuited to policing in a democratic society. Iraqis saw the IP as part of a cruel and repressive regime and described its officers as brutal, corrupt, and untrustworthy. Iraqi police officers had remained at their posts until U.S. forces entered Baghdad, then took their personal weapons and went home to protect their families. In the civil disorder that followed, police infrastructure was heavily damaged or completely destroyed by looters and arsonists. Rampaging mobs destroyed police stations, stole police vehicles, and walked away with weapons and equipment. Police returned to find their stations gutted or reduced to smoldering ruins.<sup>1</sup>

In the aftermath of the looting of Baghdad, the U.S. military had to make a public appeal for the Iraqi police to return to duty. On April 14, 2003, joint patrols of U.S. soldiers and Iraqi police made their first appearance on Baghdad's streets. Police who returned to duty lacked leadership, organization, and logistic support. In May 2003, a DOJ assessment team determined that the Iraqi police could not restore public order and would require substantial U.S. assistance. The assessment team's recommendation was not acted upon, however, until the growing Iraq insurgency caused the United States to open police training centers in Amman, Jordan, and in Baghdad, in December 2003 and January 2004, respectively. The first graduates of these programs began serving in March 2004, but by that time, the level of insurgent and criminal violence had escalated and the situation in Iraq was slipping out of control.

## Department of Defense Takes Over the Police Training Program

In November 2003, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld requested that Major General Karl Eikenberry assess the shortcomings of the Iraq police assistance program. Eikenberry reported that the CPA training effort was underresourced, disorganized, and incapable of producing a competent Iraqi police force. The report concluded that the U.S. military should take over training for police as well as the Iraqi army.<sup>2</sup> In the spring of 2004, as the CPA's deadline for returning sovereignty to the Iraqis approached, Washington determined that only the U.S. military had the resources required to fast-track the police assistance program. In May 2004, President George W. Bush signed National Security Presidential Decision Directive 36, which formally transferred responsibility for the IP train-and-equip program from the State Department to the Department of Defense (DOD).<sup>3</sup> A month later, the CPA's work ended and formal sovereignty returned to the Iraqi interim government. Ambassador L. Paul Bremer departed Baghdad on June 28, 2004, a day in advance of the announced schedule for transfer of authority to the Iraqis.

In Iraq, the Civilian Police Advisory Training Team (CPATT) was established under control of the Multi-National Force-Iraq—later the Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq

(MNSTC-I)—and assigned responsibility for training, equipping, and mentoring the Iraqi police. CPATT was led by a British brigadier general with a civilian deputy from the U.S. Department of Justice and included both military and civilian personnel. CPATT's initially small staff was augmented by the U.S. 89th Military Police Brigade, which provided the manpower to oversee the reconstruction of Iraqi police facilities, handle the distribution of new equipment and vehicles, and run the central maintenance facilities.<sup>4</sup> Transferring responsibility for civilian police training to the U.S. military was unprecedented. In all previous peace operations, State and the DOJ had led police assistance programs.<sup>5</sup>

Unfortunately, the transfer of responsibility from State to DOD and the restoration of Iraqi sovereignty were not accompanied by a meeting of the minds among CPATT, State and Justice along with their contract advisers, the U.S. military battle space commanders, and the Iraqis. Instead there was fundamental disagreement on three critical issues: the mission of the Iraqi police, its relationship to U.S. military forces, and its role in countering the insurgency. The State Department and the DOJ's civilian police advisers wanted to create a community police service that would operate under the leadership of provincial police chiefs. The U.S. military concluded that the security situation required the creation of a militarized counterinsurgency police force, and that community-based policing would have to wait. The Iraqis, whose views their American counterparts generally discounted, would eventually act on their own to counter the threat from insurgents and sectarian militias.

The State Department and DOJ police advisers believed the U.S. military did not understand the ethos or the practical requirements for training law enforcement officers and was intent on simply putting Iraqi guns on the street to reduce pressure on coalition forces. DOJ civilian police advisers changed the name of the organization from the Saddam-era Iraqi National Police to the Iraqi Police Service (IPS) to emphasize what they believed should be the new police personnel's community service orientation. DOJ advisers wanted to create a lightly armed civilian police organization that used community-policing techniques and operated according to Western democratic standards for professional law enforcement. DOJ police advisers argued that Iraq's security problems were best resolved by relying on investigations and arrests to incarcerate criminals and terrorists. Since State and the DOJ ran the training program in Amman, the police cadets that returned to Iraq were trained and equipped for community policing. The security environment in Iraq was not, however, conducive to community policing—and sadly, many of the Iraqi police cadets had sought training in Jordan because of the opportunity it provided to be safely out of the country, if only for a short time.

The DOJ advisers' arguments for creating a community-oriented police service failed to convince their military counterparts. Once the newly minted community police officers graduated from the Amman training facility or the police academy in Baghdad, they were used as combatants in the growing conflict against insurgent and sectarian militia forces. The numbers for trained police thus were virtually meaningless, as they related to personnel who were prepared for a different mission. Iraqi police were provided with side arms, which were useless against insurgents and militia members armed with AK-47s. Use of the police in combat operations pitted poorly led and inappropriately trained and equipped patrolmen against heavily armed former military personnel, veteran security operatives, and foreign terrorists. Iraq's civilian police were subjected to repeated attacks from car bombs and fighters equipped with rocket-propelled grenades and other military weapons.<sup>6</sup> Involvement in the fighting against insurgents and militias turned the police into a primary target for terrorist attacks, aimed at breaking police resolve and demonstrating the danger of cooperating with the coalition.<sup>7</sup> Operating from unprotected facilities, the Iraqi police patrolled in thin-skinned vehicles, lacked body armor, and took increasingly grievous casualties. In just two years (2004–06), the Iraqi

***Use of the police in combat operations pitted poorly led and inappropriately trained and equipped patrolmen against heavily armed former military personnel, veteran security operatives, and foreign terrorists.***

police suffered 12,000 casualties, including 4,000 killed, according to Major General Joseph Peterson, the commander of the U.S. Civilian Police Assistance Training Team in Iraq.<sup>8</sup>

## Onset of Civil War

In early 2004, terrorist attacks by al-Qaeda in Iraq on Shiite shrines and pilgrims in Baghdad, Karbala, and other cities produced bitter criticism from Shiite leaders of coalition and Iraqi security forces and demands for the legalization of sectarian militias to guard neighborhoods and places of worship. Militias had been banned under CPA Order Number 91,<sup>9</sup> but militia groups, such as the Kurdish peshmerga and the Shiite Badr Brigade, were well-established and included tens of thousands of fighters. As sectarian attacks continued, militia forces openly deployed and challenged Iraq's fledgling security forces. In Mosul and other Iraqi cities, Iraqi police mutinied under fire, abandoned their posts, and deserted en masse after repeated insurgent and militia attacks. In testimony before Congress on March 5, 2004, Lieutenant General John Abizaid, United States Central Command (CENTCOM) commander, said Iraqi security forces had been rapidly recruited in large numbers and still lacked adequate training and equipment as well as a clear chain of command. These shortcomings were particularly evident in the Iraqi police, the general said, who were not trained or equipped to respond to attacks by organized militia or insurgent groups.<sup>10</sup>

In April, Sunni insurgents launched a coordinated offensive against coalition forces in Fallujah, Baghdad, Ramadi, Samarra, and Tikrit, while the Mahdi Army took control of Najaf and Sadr City in Baghdad. Newly trained Iraqi military and police forces refused to fight or were quickly overwhelmed. Under pressure from militia groups, Iraqi police units completely collapsed in Fallujah, Najaf, Karbala, and Kut, with some 3,000 police deserting in a single week. Iraqi police and military failures in battle raised serious concerns about U.S. training programs and intentions at the time to rapidly transfer responsibility for internal security to Iraqi forces. Of the 200,000 Iraqi security forces that had been rushed into service, only 5,000 Iraqi army personnel were fully trained and equipped to conduct counterinsurgency operations. None of the Iraqi police units were trained or equipped to fight organized enemy units armed with military weapons. Clearly, the United States needed to rethink its strategy for developing Iraqi security forces.<sup>11</sup>

***The U.S. military was determined to create an Iraqi police force that could protect the Iraqi government against the insurgency and hostile militias.***

Faced with a growing threat from well-organized and heavily armed groups, the U.S. military was determined to create an Iraqi police force that could protect the Iraqi government against the insurgency and hostile militias. To confront the insurgent and militia threat, the U.S. military created heavily equipped police units composed of former Iraqi soldiers that were trained to conduct counterinsurgency operations. These were not true constabulary (*gendarme*) forces, normally defined as police forces with military capabilities; these were military forces that received little or no police training, although they were subordinate to the Ministry of the Interior. According to Lieutenant General David Petraeus, then in charge of training Iraq's security forces, there was a need for specialized police units that could bring combat power to the fight and fill the capability gap between lightly armed Iraqi street cops and the Iraqi army.<sup>12</sup> The U.S. military thus recruited special 750-man police battalions composed mostly of Sunnis who had formerly served in the Iraq army's special forces. These newly created units included emergency response units, based on U.S. special weapons and tactics (SWAT) teams and designed to conduct high-risk arrests; a mechanized police unit, used for rapid response, fixed-site security, and cordon and search operations; public order battalions, intended for crowd control and performing routine police functions in hostile environments; and mechanized police units that were heavily armed and specially trained for counterinsurgency operations.<sup>13</sup> These units were sent to flash points in Samarra, Fallujah, and Baghdad, where they were expected to fight alongside U.S. military forces.

At the same time, Falah al-Naqib, Iraq's minister of interior, began recruiting special police commando units for counterinsurgency operations independent of U.S. authorities. Unlike its position in Iraq's defense ministry, the United States had few advisers in the interior ministry and little control over the recruiting of Iraqi police personnel. When the IPS performed poorly in battles against the Mahdi Army, Naqib turned to his uncle, General Adnan Thavit, for help. A former Air Force intelligence officer, Thavit was involved in a failed attempt to overthrow Saddam and had served time in prison before being released along with thousands of other prisoners before the U.S. intervention. Thavit recruited commando units composed of unemployed but seasoned officers and men from Saddam's republican guard and special forces. These units began conducting patrols and engaged in skirmishes with insurgents and militia fighters.<sup>14</sup>

The appearance of the Iraqi commandos caught the U.S. military by surprise. Initially called pop-up units by U.S. soldiers who stumbled upon them in abandoned buildings and bombed-out military bases, the police commandos did not look like a coherent fighting force. Composed of ragged and poorly equipped men, the commandos were mostly Sunnis with a mix of Shiites and minority groups who were personally loyal to their commanders and bound together by tribal and family backgrounds. But numbering as many as 15,000 men, with names such as the Defenders of Baghdad and the Amarah Brigade, the units had the internal cohesion, experience, and determination that were missing in the U.S.-organized Iraqi security forces.

The problem for U.S. authorities lay in determining the extent of the units' loyalty to the Iraqi government and how they could be used to help coalition forces counter the insurgency.<sup>15</sup> Initially U.S. military commanders reacted coolly to what the United States officially designated as irregular Iraqi ministry-directed brigades. U.S. commanders were reluctant to provide arms and training because they feared the units might turn against the central government. In fighting against insurgents and militia, however, these units distinguished themselves by their steadiness under fire when regular Iraqi police and army units broke and ran. Writing in the *Washington Post*, columnist David Ignatius described a battle in which Iraqi police commandos stayed with their U.S. adviser, Colonel James Coffman, Jr., when they were ambushed by insurgents in Mosul. In four hours of intense fighting, the commandos suffered four members killed and thirty-eight wounded but drove off the attack. Afterward, Coffman, who was wounded in the battle, proudly told Ignatius, "Our guys stood and fought!"<sup>16</sup>

## Crest of Sectarian Violence

Police commando units provided increased firepower, military prowess, and a partial answer to the problem of inadequate Iraqi security forces. In January 2005, the Iraqi police and army enjoyed temporary success in providing security for national elections so that eight million Iraqis could safely vote. The installation of Iraq's transitional government in May 2005 resulted in a change of leadership in the interior ministry and the nature of the Iraqi police commando units. Before leaving his post as interior minister in April 2005, Minister Naqib warned Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld that the Shiite political parties who were taking office would hijack the police commando units and use them for their own purposes.<sup>17</sup> Naqib's fears were well founded. Bayan Jabr Solagh, a senior official of the Shiite Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), was appointed interior minister. Jabr placed leaders of the Badr Brigade, the armed wing of SCIRI, in key positions in the ministry and recruited thousands of Shiite militiamen to replace Sunnis in the Special Police Commando units. At the same time, militia loyal to the radical Shiite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr also infiltrated the ministry. Members of the Sadrist Mahdi Army used police uniforms and their



official status to pass through checkpoints and as cover for sectarian violence. During Jabr's one-year tenure, from April 2005 to May 2006, members of the IPS and Special Police Commando units acted as death squads, kidnapping, imprisoning, torturing, and killing Sunnis. Iraqis reported that gunmen in police uniforms routinely abducted people from their homes, cars, and—in one particularly flagrant case—hospital beds. Bullet-riddled bodies, some showing marks of torture, routinely were found in the streets of Baghdad by U.S. troops on their morning patrols.<sup>18</sup>

Over the summer and into the fall of 2005, there was an ever more deafening crescendo of sectarian violence involving attacks by uniformed police on Sunnis. On August 25, 2005, gunmen wearing police uniforms dragged thirty-six Sunni men from their homes in the Huriya neighborhood of Baghdad and left their bodies showing signs of torture near the Iranian border. After an investigation, a judge ordered the commander of the Volcano Brigade commando unit arrested for the murders, but the warrant was never executed. The Wolf Brigade, perhaps the most notorious of the Special Police Commando units, was discovered to have illegally detained and tortured more than 1,400 prisoners.<sup>19</sup> On July 4, 2004, members of the 759th U.S. Military Police Battalion discovered 170 malnourished and badly abused Iraqi prisoners, mostly Sunnis, at a secret prison facility on the grounds of the interior ministry. The Americans wanted to free the captives, but U.S. military authorities ordered them to withdraw and leave the facility in the hands of the Iraqi police.<sup>20</sup> In November 2005, American soldiers discovered a secret prison in Baghdad's Jadiriya neighborhood run by the Wolf Brigade where 173 malnourished and badly abused prisoners, mostly Sunnis, were held and tortured.<sup>21</sup>

## **U.S. Military's Effort to Control Abuses by Iraqi Police**

In January 2006, the MNSTC-I responded to sectarian police violence by launching an effort to reorganize police training and impose discipline, declaring 2006 the Year of the Police in Iraq. In April, the MNSTC-I convinced the Ministry of the Interior to combine the U.S.-created public order battalions and the Iraqi-organized Special Police Commando units into a new organization, the Iraq National Police (INP). The Special Police Commando units became the First National Police Division; the public order battalions became the Second National Police Division. The new INP was subordinate to the interior ministry along with the IPS. National police officers were equipped with small arms, medium machine guns, rocket-propelled grenades, and body armor. INP units were given unarmored pickup trucks and sport utility vehicles, leaving them vulnerable to roadside bombs and insurgent attacks with heavy weapons. Plans called for replacing thin-skinned INP vehicles with armored vehicles from various donor countries over time.<sup>22</sup>

Initially, U.S. advisers conceived of the INP as a bridge between the IPS, which was responsible for traffic control, crime prevention, and routine police functions, and the Iraqi army. The INP would back up the IPS and take over when the IPS was outgunned and more firepower and armor were required. If the INP could not control the situation, the MOI would request military assistance. Unfortunately, the sectarian nature of the INP forces and the deep distrust in police commando units from Iraqi citizens and other Iraqi police and military units made it impossible for the INP to play that role. The distrust in the INP extended to their American advisers. A former U.S. Army adviser to the infamous Wolf Brigade told National Public Radio that his charges would conduct proper neighborhood searches when U.S. soldiers were present but would go back at night to kidnap and kill Sunnis and burn down their houses. The adviser recalled an instance when U.S. advisers were led into an ambush by Wolf Brigade members. His advice to Americans training for similar advisory missions was to "never let your guard down ever!"<sup>23</sup>

National elections for a permanent Iraqi government were held on December 15, 2005; at that time, sectarian violence was intense enough to border on civil war. After the elections, rival political parties negotiated for five months over the choice of a prime minister and the appointment of a new government. On May 20, 2006, Nouri al-Maliki was named prime minister, but backroom bargaining continued over the choices for key ministries, including interior. It was not until June 8, 2006, nearly six months after the election, that Prime Minister Maliki appointed a new interior minister, Jawad al-Bolani, a compromise candidate chosen because he lacked a political base and did not pose a threat to any faction. Bolani was a Shiite and former Air Force engineer with no police experience but a reputation as a competent administrator. To ensure that the police would not become the tool of any political faction, Bolani was given strong deputies from the Dawa, Badr, and Kurdish parties. His predecessor, Bayan Jabr, was appointed as the new minister of finance, where he retained control of the funding for the interior ministry and the direct payment of police salaries.<sup>24</sup>

Despite the change in leadership at MOI, police involvement in sectarian violence continued unabated. By autumn, the U.S. military could no longer postpone dealing with the INP commando units' role in sectarian violence and death squad activities. In September, press reports indicated that U.S. officials had warned Iraqi leaders that, under the Leahy Amendment, U.S. law prohibited assistance to foreign security forces that committed "gross violations of human rights." The warnings came after a joint U.S.-Iraqi inspection of a detention facility, known as Site 4, found evidence of the Wolf Brigade's systematic use of torture.<sup>25</sup> On October 5, 2006, U.S. military forces took their first direct action to deal with sectarian violence by INP commando units: U.S. soldiers removed the entire 8th Brigade of the 2nd National Police Division from duty and arrested its officers after the brigade was implicated in a raid on a Baghdad food factory and the kidnapping of twenty-six Sunni workers, seven of whom were executed.<sup>26</sup> Action against the 8th Brigade was the first step in CPATT's National Police transformation program to remove all the INP brigades from service for limited vetting and three weeks of police training—in many cases, the first training of any kind that INP personnel had received.<sup>27</sup> For the remaining eight INP brigades, the transition process, called re-bluing, was extended to one month and included training in respect for human rights and democratic policing, plus tactical training in patrolling and checkpoint operations. To improve the INP's public image, the names of national police units were changed. The Wolf Brigade was renamed the Freedom Brigade. The national police were also issued new uniforms with digital patterns that would be difficult to duplicate.

It took more than a year to retrain all nine INP brigades and abuses continued in the interim. Iraqi officials had sought to counter allegations of police involvement in sectarian killings by claiming that the perpetrators were wearing counterfeit police uniforms. On November 14, 2006, 80 gunmen wearing the new digital police commando uniforms raided the Ministry of Higher Education in Baghdad, kidnapping 159 academics and other members of its staff. The attackers arrived in a fleet of 20 police vehicles and had lists of names of those they intended to abduct. As the education minister was a member of the Iraqi Accordance Front, a Sunni political party, observers saw the operation as an act of sectarian violence.<sup>28</sup> On March 28, 2007, Shiite police went on a rampage in the northwestern town of Tal Afar, killing as many as 60 Sunnis after a massive truck bomb shattered the market in the majority Shiite community. Police and Shiite militants roamed Sunni neighborhoods firing into homes and at people on the street. The shooting ended when Iraqi Army troops occupied the town, arrested 18 policemen identified by the families of Sunni victims, and imposed a curfew.<sup>29</sup> On May 29, 2007, gunmen wearing digital police uniforms cordoned off an area in eastern Baghdad and kidnapped 5 British security guards in a well-coordinated midday operation. Iraq's foreign minister, Hoshiyar Zebari, assigned responsibility for the raid to Iraqi interior ministry police.<sup>30</sup>

On July 30, 2007, the *Los Angeles Times* reported that Iraq's interior ministry had become an "eleven-story powder keg of factions" where hostile militias and criminal organizations controlled various floors and settled their differences by assassinations in the parking lot. The article described offices guarded by armed men and officials who feared the elevators and took the stairs accompanied by heavy security. The article went on to describe the MOI as a command center for "militias that kill under the cover of police uniforms and remain above the law." The article noted that the ministry's third floor was the domain of Prime Minister Maliki's Dawa Party, while the sixth floor housed units controlled by the Badr Organization militia. The intelligence division on the seventh floor directed death squads and secret prisons. The ninth floor housed Kurdish units. U.S. military personnel described the handful of U.S. police advisers at the ministry as confined to the top floor of the building, where they drank tea, drafted policy statements in English, and had no influence with the Iraqis. The *Los Angeles Times* credited Minister Bolani with attempting to rein in the situation but said he was thwarted by a web of political alliances that prevented reform.<sup>31</sup>

## **U.S. Launches a Surge of Forces to Reverse the Tide of Battle**

U.S. efforts to control the INP commando units coincided with the Bush administration's comprehensive review of the U.S. conduct of the war and implementation of the president's strategy for a New Way Forward in Iraq. In a January 10, 2007 address from the White House library, President Bush announced he was sending an additional 20,000 American troops to quell the sectarian conflict in Iraq. The president said spiraling violence was "unacceptable" to the American people and required a change in strategy. He also reported that the Iraqi government had put forth an aggressive plan, which included appointing new commanders for Baghdad and deploying eighteen Iraqi army and national police brigades across the nine districts of the capital. Iraqi forces would operate from local police stations—conducting patrols, manning checkpoints, and going door-to-door to gain the trust of the people. U.S. troops would work alongside the Iraqis to help clear and protect neighborhoods from insurgents. To implement the new strategy, the president appointed a new American commander in Iraq, Lieutenant General David Petraeus, author of the U.S. Army's new doctrine on counterinsurgency warfare, which stressed the importance of protecting local citizens over hunting insurgents.<sup>32</sup> Deploying large numbers of U.S. forces into areas previously controlled by insurgents and militia groups brought a sharp spike in levels of fighting in Baghdad and in Anbar province during the first six months of 2007.

In September 2007, a report by an independent congressional commission on the security forces of Iraq delivered a scathing critique of the interior ministry and the INP. Led by Marine General James Jones, former North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) supreme commander, the commission's fourteen members included retired military officers and DOD officials as well as several serving police chiefs and former police advisers. The commission made three trips to Iraq, visiting Iraqi facilities and interviewing American and Iraqi officials and Iraqi citizens. The members concluded that the MOI was crippled by sectarianism and corruption and lacked the leadership and administrative capacity to support the forces under its control. They recommended major organizational changes to improve the ministry's effectiveness. The commission said it also received uniformly negative reports about the INP, which it described similarly as riddled with sectarianism and corruption, distrusted by the public, and operationally ineffective. Noting the poor quality of INP personnel, low levels of literacy, an overwhelming majority of Shiites, and a lack of appropriate leadership, the commission strongly recommended that the INP be disbanded and reorganized under the ministry of defense with a new name and responsibility for ordnance disposal, search and rescue, and other unarmed functions.<sup>33</sup>



Improved conditions in Iraq muted the effect of the Jones Commission report in Washington. By September 6, 2007, when General Jones presented the commission's report to Congress, the combat brigade teams that composed the surge were in place in Baghdad. General Petraeus had redeployed U.S. military units into the capital's neighborhoods to protect Iraqi citizens. With the resulting decline in violence, the U.S. military rejected the commission's call to disband the INP and start over. Speaking to the *Washington Post* by telephone, Major General Rick Lynch, the U.S. military commander for Baghdad, said the situation was "past the point where we could just fire everyone and start over." He said the surge required both U.S. and Iraqi forces, and the INP was holding areas of the city that U.S. forces had cleared. Removing the INP, he said, would leave a security gap that the insurgents would fill quickly. Lynch admitted that some INP units still engaged in sectarian violence and were feared by Sunnis who "saw them as the enemy." However, Lynch said, "the two INP units in his area, which had been through re-bluing, were great and were doing what needed to be done."<sup>34</sup>

In taking their position, U.S. military officials were encouraged by reforms within Iraq's interior ministry and the prospect that training teams from the Italian Carabinieri would soon be involved in retraining the INP. In Baghdad, Interior Minister Bolani had been stung by the Jones Commission's criticism, particularly its call for disbanding the INP. Bolani assigned a small group of trusted senior police officers to conduct their own evaluation of the INP in light of the report's findings. The Iraqi evaluation team confirmed the sorry state of the INP but recommended accelerating the reform effort rather than disbanding the force. Bolani appointed a new INP commander, Lieutenant General Hussein al Awadi, a highly regarded military officer who previously commanded the Iraqi Army Staff College. Awadi demanded and received assurances that he could fire corrupt commanders and transfer poor performers. He recruited a staff of competent young officers from among the top Army Staff College graduates to supervise a four-step program for transforming the INP into a reliable security force.<sup>35</sup>

Awadi's reform program involved removing the commanding officers at the division, brigade, and battalion levels that had been implicated in sectarian violence. In all, the commanders of the two INP divisions, seven of the nine brigade commanders, twenty-five of the twenty-seven battalion commanders, and eight hundred rank and file personnel were removed from the INP, although no one was arrested or disciplined for their actions. Awadi continued the program of taking individual brigades offline in succession and providing them with their first training in basic police skills. These brigades were then paired with U.S. military units, which were co-located with INP units to conduct joint operations. This enabled U.S. troops to monitor INP activity closely and prevent human rights abuses. It also enabled U.S. forces to serve as role models and provide on-the-job training in planning, patrolling, and other functions. In addition to the partner units, MNSCT-I created forty-one national police transition teams (NPTTs) composed of military and contract civilian police advisers that were assigned to formally monitor the performance of all thirty-eight INP battalions, all divisions, and the INP headquarters. The NPTTs assessed all units to determine equipment levels and readiness and provided on-the-spot training and mentoring.<sup>36</sup>

In the third phase, individual battalions were rotated through a training program in leadership and advanced police skills conducted by training officers from the Italian Carabinieri who arrived Iraq in the fall of 2007. In Italy, the Carabinieri are both military police and an internal security force. Their duties range from riot control and criminal investigation to border patrol. In earlier peacekeeping operations, the Carabinieri had worked in tandem with NATO military forces and drew heavily on their extensive experience in Bosnia and Kosovo. The Italians' participation in the INP training process was the key to transforming the INP from a rogue force into a competent constabulary. Without the involvement of professional

European *gendarmes*, U.S. military and contract police personnel would not have had the technical skills or the corporate culture required to transform the INP. At a new, U.S.-built training facility at Camp Dublin near Baghdad's airport, the Italians, led by Colonel Fabrizio Parrulli, provided training in counterinsurgency, counterterrorism, and crowd control. More important, the Carabinieri discussed the difference between the role of the police and the army and served as role models for their Iraqi counterparts.<sup>37</sup>

Upon arrival at Camp Dublin, Iraqi trainees were deprived of weapons, cameras, and recording devices, given a physical examination, and subjected to identification procedures. The Carabinieri training program consisted of basic, intermediate, and advanced courses in police and military skills, with advanced levels of training reserved for outstanding graduates who were groomed as future instructors. The training included a leadership package for commissioned and noncommissioned officers on management-related subjects. The Italians also provided training in specialized skills, such as VIP close protection, sharpshooting, and self-defense. The objectives of the training were to develop the trainees' physical and motivational skills, instruct trainees in technical subjects, develop a culture of safety in training and operations, and promote respect for human rights and restraint in the use of force. Basic training was provided in two month-long courses separated by a one-week break. Trainees had to pass a final examination in physical conditioning and police and military skills. High performers were invited to stay on and were trained as future instructors. Poor performers were dismissed from the training for disciplinary violations and inappropriate behavior, particularly failure to comply with regulations for using firearms or failure to attend class.<sup>38</sup>

Perhaps the most important aspect of the Carabinieri training was the extensive amount of time spent with trainees in discussing the role of police in a democratic society and the moral and ethical responsibilities of a police officer in performing his duties. The Italian trainers sought to impress upon the Iraqis the importance of behaving appropriately in dealing with the public and respecting the rights and personal dignity of their fellow citizens. To introduce a spiritual element into the training and build relationships with their students, the Italian training teams developed a common prayer that they said every day with the Iraq trainees, both to demonstrate their own spirituality and to tap into the religious fervor of many of their students. The prayer was designed to capture the moral authority inherent in the police officer's duty to enforce the law, maintain order, serve others, and keep the peace.

The prayer, entitled *The Policeman*, was read as follows:

God is great and merciful. God is the power that moves the universe and lives in all things. God is everything but He is above all the personification of the universal good and the good is the maximum value of social life.

In the world we don't have to distinguish black men and white ones, cultured and ignorant, Muslim and Christian, because all men are an expression of God. We all are descendants of the Prophet Abraham and we are all God's creatures.

In absolute meaning, there are no rich men or poor men because a rich man knows all his money cannot buy the thing he needs most. A poor man can feel pleased with himself even if he has little.

There are people, without distinction of race, that have a very high religious spirituality. There are people that in their personal space—their family and their work—that have great spiritual knowledge.

In the World a supreme division exists between good and evil. We can distinguish two kinds of human beings: good men who walk along God's path, and bad men who take Satan's way.

The policeman represents the good in the World. All criminals are evil. In the fight between good and evil, the policeman is a tool of God.

You are the angels of God and you should believe this every day when on duty. A loyal and honest policeman is the angel of God that fights evil because he represents the good that defeats evil.

Only if a policeman is a professional can he achieve success. To become a professional, he must train hard and work for the people among the people.

***The most important aspect of the Carabinieri training was the extensive amount of time spent with trainees in discussing the role of police in a democratic society and the moral and ethical responsibilities of a police officer.***

Unfortunately, the policeman may die in the line of duty. This is a certain sign of the will of God. If the policeman fully performed his duty, his sacrifice will not be in vain. "Only those who do good will enter Paradise" God says in the Holy Text.

The Iraqi National Police will have its heroes, living and dead as it always happens. From every drop of blood shed by these unique and true martyrs in the line of duty will arise a new generation of brave men who will live in a better World, full of serenity and prosperity.

The first class of 430 INP cadets completed the seven-week program in transitional police skills in late December 2007. Battalion-sized training rotations of INP cadets continued on a routine basis through the fall of 2009. As a fourth stage of the training, units received follow-on professional courses over time.<sup>39</sup>

## Future Role of the Iraqi National Police

Efforts to improve INP performance coincided with a long-running debate in both Washington and Baghdad over whether the INP should become part of the Iraqi army. As early as November 2006, the report of the congressionally mandated Iraq Study Group recommended that the INP should be transferred to the Ministry of Defense, where it would benefit from more rigorous U.S. military supervision and could better perform its counterinsurgency mission.<sup>40</sup> Advocates for transferring the INP to the Iraqi army noted that the INP did not have police powers to make arrests, conduct investigations, or collect evidence. Like the U.S. military, the INP could detain suspected insurgents that were held in U.S.- and Iraqi-run prison camps, often for years. However, the INP had no relationship with the Iraqi judicial system, and U.S. authorities, who saw the INP as a fighting force, did not encourage it. As conditions began to stabilize in 2008, detractors wondered why Iraq needed a second police force in addition to the IPS, which patrolled Iraqi cities and was responsible for directing traffic and controlling crime.

The INP's commander, General Awadi, argued that his organization had demonstrated its value on the battlefield and would develop its ability to deal with organized crime, drug trafficking, and civil disturbances—challenges that would exceed the competence of ordinary police. He pointed out the INP's sacrifices, including the deaths of 1,650 and wounding of 3,000 of its officers over the previous four years. Other supporters believed that the INP was crucial to eventually establishing civilian police primacy for internal security in Iraq and removing the Iraqi army from that role. The INP was the only civilian security force available to the interior ministry for confronting insurgents and militia groups that continued to carry out attacks, although at significantly reduced levels.<sup>41</sup> Improved leadership and professional skills were evident in the performance of the INP units that were deployed from late 2007 through 2008. The INP also continued to demonstrate its mettle on the battlefield, where it stood and fought alongside the Iraqi army in Basra, Sadr City, Diyala, and Mosul, in contrast to the IPS, which often ran away rather than engage in hostilities. The Iraqi interior ministry worked to fill the ranks of the INP to an authorized level of 44,263 by increasing the number of Sunnis in the force in order to achieve an ethnic and sectarian balance. Recruitment and training of officers lagged, however, as the INP was only able to meet 42 percent of its leadership requirements.

To bolster the case for maintaining the INP, on June 8, 2008, General Awadi introduced a code of ethics for the INP modeled on the Law Enforcement Code of Ethics of the International Association of Chiefs of Police. At a press conference, Awadi stressed the importance of the code in establishing performance standards for INP officers based on respect for human rights and the rule of law.<sup>42</sup> By late fall the INP was on track to meet its goal of providing a national-level rapid response police capability to deal with large-scale civil

***Supporters believed that the INP was crucial to eventually establishing civilian police primacy for internal security in Iraq and removing the Iraqi army from that role.***

disturbance and insurgent and terrorism operations. While still primarily located around Baghdad, the INP had begun to deploy to stations outside the city. Prime Minister Maliki directed the creation and deployment of a third INP division as the first step toward stationing the INP in all provinces in Iraq.<sup>43</sup>

By January 2009 the situation in Iraq had changed markedly. The surge of U.S. troops into Iraqi neighborhoods to protect the population, the Sunni awakening, the rise of the Sons of Iraq, and Moqtada al-Sadr's decision to stand down his militia brought a 63 percent drop in civilian deaths compared with 2007.<sup>44</sup> The U.S. combat brigade teams that comprised the surge had returned home the previous July. Under the newly completed U.S.-Iraq Strategic Framework and Security Agreement (SFA), Iraq assumed responsibility for its own security and took formal control of combat operations and detention facilities. On February 27, President Barack Obama announced a plan to begin the phased drawdown of U.S. forces from Iraq by August 31, 2010, and the transition of U.S. forces from combat operations to training and support of Iraqi security forces. In July 2009, U.S. troops completed their withdrawal from neighborhood combat posts in Iraqi cities and towns and redeployed to military bases, where they had little contact with the Iraqi people. During the withdrawal, INP units escorted U.S. military units as they redeployed from urban areas to bases in the countryside. The security situation continued to improve, with the number of incidents falling to levels not experienced since early 2004. Insurgent and militia groups retained the ability to conduct high-profile and deadly terrorist attacks, particularly in Diyala and Ninewa provinces and in some parts of Baghdad. Where insurgents and militia groups still posed a challenge, the INP showed increased ability to plan and execute its own operations with limited technical support from U.S. forces.<sup>45</sup>

Commensurate with the INP's improved performance and expanded presence, the name of the force was changed on August 1, 2009, to the Iraq Federal Police (IFP). According to a spokesman, the new name reflected the objectives of Iraq's national unity government and the plan to establish a brigade headquarters in every province including the Kurdish north within two years. The spokesman said the IFP had proven in many areas that it could restore peace and order. He noted the IFP had 42,000 personnel serving in four divisions of seventeen brigades, including one dedicated to providing security during the reconstruction of the al-Askari mosque in Samarra. In addition to expanding geographically, the IFP assumed new security missions that resulted in the creation of three new units: the Embassy Protection Force, the Central Bank of ISF protection force, and the Antiquities/Ruins Security Force. These specialized forces resulted from Iraqi police officials visiting Italy and noting that the Carabinieri had similar units. The IFP had diversified its forces to achieve a better ethnic and sectarian balance, but budget shortfalls were expected to make it difficult for the IFP to achieve its newly authorized strength of 60,000 members.

## Conclusion

Mob violence in Iraq demonstrated the need for the U.S. military to be able to call upon the assistance of police constabulary forces to control rioting, looting, and general civil disorder. Confronted with widespread looting in Baghdad, U.S. military forces were unwilling to use their weapons against unarmed civilians and were reduced to standing aside while mayhem ensued. Unlike in earlier peace operations in the Balkans, U.S. authorities could not turn to the United Nations or other allies to provide police resources. After the destruction of the UN headquarters on September 22, 2003, the world organization's role was limited to diplomatic initiatives and assisting with Iraqi national elections. Not until four years after the U.S. intervention did a contingent of trainers from the Italian Carabinieri arrive to meaningfully contribute to the police assistance program. In the interim, the U.S. military was

left to rely on its own resources, contract police advisers, plus the efforts of the Iraqis to create indigenous paramilitary forces to control the insurgency and militia-inspired violence. This effort to create indigenous constabulary forces went awry when Iraqi-created police commando units engaged in sectarian violence. Fortunately, this tragic chapter of sectarian conflict in Iraq was balanced by the positive story of U.S. and Iraqi efforts to reform the police commando units and to create the Iraq Federal Police.

In creating the IFP, the following lessons emerged that could be applied to future stability operations.

- **Agreement on the roles and missions of the police at the outset of the operation is essential.** The inability of the State Department, DOJ, the U.S. military, and Iraqis to achieve a common understanding of the roles and missions of the Iraqi police resulted in a disconnect between the training provided and the mission the police were required to perform. This resulted in the United States both claiming credit for training indigenous police and using them in ways for which they were unprepared, with disastrous consequences. That the Iraqi authorities were virtually ignored left them free to create police units independent of the U.S. assistance program and beyond U.S. control.
- **Serving professional police officers can be role models, an essential element in successful police training programs.** The role of Italian Carabinieri was essential to turning the IFP from a rogue force into a national asset. The Italians provided training on police skills but spent more time discussing ethical issues and the moral obligation of police to protect society. That their Italian mentors were engaged in national service in their own country made a lasting impression on the Iraqi trainees.
- **Militarization of the police will produce a force that is inconsistent with the country's long-term needs.** Assigning responsibility for training Iraq's police to the U.S. military produced a highly militarized force with little ability to enforce the rule of law. Setting aside the IFP, which was designed as a paramilitary force, providing military-style training to the IPS created a force of some 400,000 personnel that was inconsistent with Iraq's postconflict requirements. As evidence, on October 1, 2011, responsibility for Iraq police training will be transferred back to the State Department. The new State Department police assistance program will contract civilian police personnel to provide advice and technical assistance on training in community policing skills and law enforcement.<sup>46</sup>



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