



Multi-National Force - Iraq Strategy, Plans and Assessment

SPA STRATEGY INFORMATION PAPER

9 September 2005

(U) Subject: Strategic Assessment of Operation RESTORING RIGHTS

1. ~~(S//REL)~~ Purpose: To assess the potential effects of Operation RESTORING RIGHTS on the strategic environment.
2. ~~(S//REL)~~ Background: Coalition Forces and Iraqi Security Forces in Tall Afar are ready to begin the major combat phase of Operation RESTORING RIGHTS on or about 10 September 2005. Third ACR and the 3 IA Division will conduct offensive operations to destroy the enemy support base and neutralize the insurgency in Tall Afar. Following major combat operations, 3 ACR and 3 IA Division will transition to area security operations and consequence management. Post-conflict operations will be the responsibility of the ITG supported by the Coalition. This review examines how Operation RESTORING RIGHTS may shape the strategic environment; identifies strategic risk and opportunities in the wake of this operation; and determines what actions we should take to mitigate risk or exploit opportunities.
3. ~~(S//REL)~~ Potential Outcomes: Our assessment proceeds from two sets of assumptions reflecting potential outcomes of Operation RESTORING RIGHTS. Outcome "A" assumes the operation achieves its stated mission, endstate and key tasks within the intended timeline. Outcome "B" assumes the operation achieves its stated mission, endstate and most key tasks. However, outcome "B" also assumes most of the risks identified in the plan come to fruition and significantly extend the operational timeline.

Outcome "A"

- Combined operations destroy the enemy's support base in Tall Afar and neutralize the insurgency in five days of major combat operations.
- Combined operations minimize civilian casualties and collateral damage; effective consequence management prevents alienation of the population.
- All planned CERP projects completed within 30 days and a "sense of normalcy" returns to Tall Afar.
- IA and IPS are prepared at the end of operations to assume lead of security operations in Tall Afar leading up to the Referendum.

Outcome "B"

- A significant part of the enemy in Tall Afar evades the operation and move to outlying communities.
- Overwhelming perception is that the operation is an attack on Sunni Turkomen.
- Lack of skilled infantry in IA results in increased collateral damage and casualties.
- Enemy re-establishes network in Tall Afar due to lack of permanent IA/IPS security in the city.
- Operation degrades capability of 3 IA Division delaying transition to security lead in Ninawa province.

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- The ITG is unable to deliver on humanitarian assistance and reconstruction promises.

4. ~~(S//REL)~~ Assessment of Outcome “A:”

~~(S//REL)~~ Security: Successful operations in Tall Afar can directly facilitate accomplishing two of MNF-I’s campaign objectives (*Insurgents and terrorists neutralized; A wedge driven between the insurgents and the population of Iraq*) and make significant inroads towards the third part of our endstate (*deny Iraq as a safe haven for terrorists*). Tall Afar also presents the opportunity to demonstrate to the coalition nations that Iraq is on the path to self-reliance and making progress in both security and governance. Tall Afar presents both opportunities and risk for ISF. Demonstrated effectiveness in Tall Afar could increase morale and confidence within the ISF, increase the Iraqi people’s confidence in ISF and subsequently generate momentum for CF to ISF security transition.

~~(S//REL)~~ Governance: The ITG can demonstrate decisive and unified political action by taking control of the city from T&FF and subsequently strengthening the perception of its legitimacy and security leading up to the referendum and national elections. A possible governmental amnesty program should only occur immediately after successful major combat operations. Amnesty offered after a favorable decisive outcome can highlight the ITG’s sincerity about reintegration and serve as a pilot program for a broader post-election amnesty program. MNF-I C2 assesses the insurgents remaining in the city as hard-core T&FF who will not be receptive to amnesty offers, thus any potential program deserves careful consideration before implementation. The end of combat operations will present an opportunity for the ITG to follow through on security success by rapidly delivering humanitarian assistance and resources for reconstruction. To exploit the full potential of this opportunity, the ITG must have a communications plan ready that highlights its success.

~~(S//REL)~~ Economic Development: Before current operations began in Tall Afar, a combined total of USD 3.5 million was allocated for reconstruction (USD 2.4 million in CERP and USD 1.1 million in IRRF). The initial planning factor for potential damage to infrastructure and housing in major combat operations is USD 50 million. The ITG has expressed its willingness to fund the total cost for reconstruction that results from major combat operations. As long as the ITG delivers on this promise, the total funds identified in CERP, IRRF and the ITG pledge should be sufficient to cover the cost of post-hostilities reconstruction.

~~(S//REL)~~ Communicating: Coalition Force and ITG strategic communications should counter AQI propaganda and aggressively shape national, regional and international perceptions about operations in Tall Afar. A common message must stress that operations in Tall Afar are necessary to protect all Iraqis from T&FFs and maintain Iraqi sovereignty. Furthermore, in the post-combat reconstruction phase of the operation, an inability by the ITG to provide adequate humanitarian assistance and coordinate reconstruction efforts could turn a tactical victory in to a strategic failure. The ITG must be prepared to deliver and successfully execute humanitarian assistance and reconstruction to Tall Afar and, as equally important, the ITG must communicate its success nationally, regionally and internationally.

5. ~~(S//REL)~~ Assessment of Outcome “B:”

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(S//REL) Security: If T&FF move operations to outlying communities in Tall Afar, it would allow them a key base of operations to: (1) facilitate the flow of foreign fighters entering Iraq via northern 1.4a and (2) plan and direct attacks in Ninawa province, particularly the strategic city of Mosul, during the critical pre-referendum period. If unresolved, the underlying cultural tensions in Tall Afar could also provide a pretext for some antagonists to intensify sectarian violence throughout greater Iraq. A significant defeat for ISF, or disproportionately high collateral damage or civilian casualties caused by ISF operations, would decrease overall confidence and complicate CF to ISF security transition. Consideration of the impact of Iraqi Army and Police units' performance in Tall Afar on the broader security transition plan should be a factor in their employment in major combat operations.

(S//REL) Governance: The ITG could significantly damage opportunities for broader Sunni engagement by missteps in Tall Afar. Unless the ITG carefully justifies the reasons for conducting major combat operations in Tall Afar, Iraqi Sunnis will likely perceive its actions as an attempt to impose Shi'a control over Tall Afar and unjustly punish the Sunni Turkomen majority. Unchecked, this misperception would significantly weaken the position of Sunni moderates who support cooperation with the ITG and participation in the political process. Moreover, this outcome precludes any offer of amnesty as amnesty should only be offered from a position of strength and success.

(S//REL) Economic Development: If the ITG fails to deliver on its pledge to fund reconstruction following major combat operations, CERP and IRRF funds currently allocated for Tall Afar will be insufficient to cover the delta. This situation would play into the AIF most likely COA: regain lost ground in major combat operations by exploiting a vigorous propaganda campaign in the post-hostility phase of operations. MNF-I would have two options in this situation: (1) redirect IRRF funding from other projects to Tall Afar or (2) execute reconstruction projects within existing means. Since this operation is in response to terrorist activity, option (2) presents the ITG and CF an opportunity to execute a paradigm shift in our counterinsurgency strategy by prioritizing resources to those cities that cooperate with ISF and be less generous to intransigents that provide safe haven to T&FF. In short, this option would communicate the message throughout Iraq that support to terrorists will lead to decisive military action by CF and ISF whereas cooperation with the ITG leads to economic aid and prosperity.

(S//REL) Communicating: Iraq's broader Sunni population, as well as its Sunni neighbor Syria, could view operations in Tall Afar as a sectarian attack on the Sunni majority there by a Shi'a dominated ITG and ISF. Turkey could acquire the same perception with an added ethnic Turkomen dimension. Coalition Force and ITG strategic communications should counter AQI propaganda and aggressively shape regional, national and international perceptions about operations in Tall Afar by emphasizing operations in Tall Afar are necessary to protect all Iraqis from T&FFs and maintain Iraqi sovereignty. Furthermore, as in Outcome "A", in the post-combat reconstruction phase of the operation, an inability by the ITG to provide adequate humanitarian assistance and coordinate reconstruction efforts could turn any tactical gain into a strategic failure. The ITG must be prepared to deliver humanitarian assistance and reconstruction to Tall Afar and, as equally important, be able to communicate success both internally and to the broader international audience.

6. (S//REL) Risk.

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- A significant defeat for ISF, or disproportionately high collateral damage or civilian casualties caused by ISF operations, would decrease overall confidence and complicate CF to ISF security transition.
- The ITG could significantly damage opportunities for broader Sunni engagement and weaken the position of Sunni moderates who support cooperation with the ITG and participation in the political process.
- Tall Afar reconstruction could significantly exceed available funds.
- Tall Afar could serve as a pretext to incite broader sectarian violence across Iraq by extremists.
- Operations in Tall Afar could extend in time and decrease CF and ISF available for referendum support in Ninawa and other Sunni populated provinces in October.
- Iraqi-Turkish diplomatic relations could suffer a set-back as a result of misperceptions about necessity of operations in Tall Afar.
- A post-operations failure in HA or reconstruction reinforces negative perceptions regarding the ITG's ability to govern.

7. ~~(S//REL)~~ Opportunities:

- A successful campaign reinforces the perception that the ITG is on the path to self-reliance by recognizing a threat to its sovereignty, taking control of the situation and controlling military forces to affect a positive outcome.
- ISF demonstrated effectiveness in Tall Afar could increase morale and confidence within the ISF, increase the Iraqi people's confidence in ISF and subsequently generate momentum for CF to ISF security transition—the ready-made first test bed for the ink spot methodology SPA and others are formulating as a strategic way ahead in the post-election environment.
- The ITG can demonstrate decisive and unified political action by taking control of the city from T&FF and subsequently strengthening its perception of legitimacy and security control leading up to the referendum and national elections.
- An amnesty program offered after a favorable decisive outcome can highlight the ITG's sincerity about reintegration and serve as a pilot program for a broader post-election amnesty program.
- CF and the ITG could alter our counterinsurgency approach: prioritize resources to those cities that cooperate with ISF and be less generous to intransigents that provide safe haven to T&FF.
- Tall Afar presents an opportunity to communicate ITG readiness and self-sufficiency to the nation and its regional neighbors by delivering humanitarian assistance and reconstruction.
- Clear chance to employ and sustain border control measures for the long run that will more effectively seal the borders and restrict/diminish the flow of foreign fighters along one of the enemy's most prevalent infiltration routes.

8. ~~(S//REL)~~ Actions:

- Ensure the proper combat employment of the ISF is in line with their current capabilities to allow a rapid transition to security lead in the post-hostilities phase.
- Assist ITG in planning, synchronizing and executing delivery of humanitarian assistance and reconstruction.

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- Assist ITG in developing a communications strategy that realistically portrays post-conflict HA and reconstruction plans.
- Assist ITG in engagement of Sunni population to support actions against T&FF in Tall Afar.
- Make a decisive, joint CF-ITG commitment to fund Tall Afar reconstruction immediately.
- Develop contingency plan for security operations in Ninawa and other heavily Sunni populated provinces should operations in Tall Afar extend through October referendum.
- Assist ITG in diplomatic engagement with Turkey, Syria and Jordan.
- Develop a joint communication strategy to shape regional, national and international perceptions about operations in Tall Afar.

9. ~~(S//REL)~~ Conclusion: MNF-I is entering the decisive phase of our campaign as the UNSCR 1546 political process reaches a highpoint. Neutralizing Terrorists and Foreign Fighters (T&FF) and restoring Iraqi control to their borders is crucial to creating the security conditions to make the political process decisive and establish irreversible momentum in the campaign. Operations in Tall Afar present an opportunity to the ITG to create momentum in the security and governance lines of operation in northern Iraq and help make the political process decisive.

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