

Enclosure 1

## Gradual Empowerment

Initially our goals should be to:

1. Prevent regional escalation of the conflict and ensure that Iraqi civil unrest does not undermine the sovereignty or stable functioning of neighboring governments and limit destructive foreign interference in Iraq's internal affairs.
2. Prevent use of Iraq as an effective platform for transnational terrorism by denying Iraq as an effective sanctuary and by retaining the ability to monitor and strike terrorist safe havens while the GoI continues to build capacity to do so on its own.
3. Prevent large-scale sectarian violence, limit scope and impact of large scale sectarian violence/cleansing, and assist in the protection and repatriation of IDPs.
4. Buttress a minimally functioning Iraqi Government, continuing to strengthen and develop a long-term security relationship with an internationally recognized, slowly progressing, and minimally functioning GoI by improving local, provincial, and national governmental capacity with initial priority to Iraqi Security Forces.

**Phase I: Setting the Conditions for a "Gradual Empowerment" (July-December 2007):** In the near-term, CF and ISF continue to conduct "surge" operations to create a more secure and stable environment for the Iraqi people and allow space and time for the GoI and ISF to develop. Through this year, CF and ISF continue to protect Iraqis by employing population control measures, interdicting accelerants of violence into vulnerable "mixed" areas, and conducting intelligence-driven strike operations to defeat AQIZ and Shi'a extremists. Also, CF will continue to partner with the ISF to increase its capacity to progressively assume greater security responsibility. To demonstrate an intent to cede more responsibilities to Iraqis over time, the Coalition will off-ramp one brigade combat team between December 2007 and February 2008. Ultimately the transition from Phase I to Phase II requires CF to redouble efforts to develop local ISF and local/provincial governments on the periphery and begin identifying and retrograding unnecessary support capability in order to clear the way for more significant force reductions in Phase II.

The series of tactical "wins" and increasing US political pressure are creating opportunities to refine our mission and posture and "branch" from the current strategy; the military "surge" has generated some positive momentum; yet distinct problems remain that only Iraqis can solve. "Grass roots" movements to reject AQIZ in some areas are apparent; large numbers of Sunnis are also more willing than in the past to volunteer for the ISF. Consolidating these tactical "wins" into durable strategic success requires the GoI to assume more responsibility for security and reconciliation while we are still physically able to provide them the time and breathing space necessary to do so. In spite of our tactical "wins" the GoI still remains weak and fractured. The approach outlined here deliberately lowers the CF profile, gives Iraqis more responsibility, and forces them by circumstances to become more capable.

**Phase II: “Gradual Empowerment” (January – December 2008):** A phased and controlled reduction of CF from the periphery while maintaining the “surge” in the “mixed” sectarian areas of central Iraq. The phase allows for the gradual rebalancing of internal security burdens from CF to Iraqis; it slowly enables Iraqis to assume responsibility for a number of distinctly Iraqi problems; and it permits the U.S. to begin posturing to secure its minimum strategic goals. This phase witnesses the beginning of significant CF reductions. CFs, however, continue to partner extensively along sectarian faultlines in central Iraq and maintain the ability to conduct independent combat operations. CFs will gradually reduce their security presence in Iraq’s outlying provinces. As CFs reduce, GoI gradually assumes increased control over the periphery. In support, CFs provide mission support and collective training from newly established JRSBs in the outlying provinces and CT missions in support of the GoI.

- Tactical successes of the military “surge” provide the opportunity to begin gradually rebalancing security responsibilities and commitments in some areas of Iraq. Both an improved environment and Iraqi attitudes about the environment allow some change. We are observing:
  - Iraqi people rejecting al-Qaeda and assisting ISF and Coalition Forces to “liberate” areas from AQ
  - Large numbers of Sunnis volunteering for the police and army
  - A willingness among some armed groups to establish ceasefires
  - Growing confidence and professionalism among the Iraqi Army
  - Majority of al-Anbar residents feel an increased sense of security
  - A significant increase in the intelligence provided to both CF and ISF
  - Improved confidence of the Iraqi people in the IA, especially in the more homogenous provinces
- Combined, these factors allow us to gradually put ISF in control of internal security in the outlying or peripheral provinces (Anbar, Ninevah, SAD, etc) while reducing most CF and transitioning the role of those that remain to operational over-watch and border security. We will begin to reduce but maintain sufficient combat presence in and around Baghdad to provide essential security support to a GOI that is forced by circumstances to conduct national reconciliation.
- Other key aspects of the “rebalancing” effort include:
  - Continuing to maintain combat power, robust ISF partnered focus, and support to the government in “mixed”, volatile areas around Baghdad and its surrounding belts while GOI continues to build capacity.
  - Turning over Provinces on the periphery to shorten our LOCs and reducing our footprint (versus “thinning the lines” everywhere at once).
  - Establishing Joint Regional Support Bases (JRSB) in outlying provinces where Advisory/Assistance BDEs, & CJSOTF continue to strike terrorist capabilities, build local ISF capacity, and where possible, empower development of provincial governance.
  - Concentrating renewed Coalition efforts on border security (specifically, Iran & Syria).
  - Pushing and then assisting Iraqis in reaching local accommodations

- It is critically important to maintain robust CJSOTF coverage with ODA teams, specifically focused in areas with reduced or little coalition force presence. Scalable strike packages will be established centered around ODA and Iraqi forces enabled with ISR and Strike assets.
- CF continue Phase I security activities in central Iraq.
  - CF will deliberately begin to reduce presence in Baghdad, the Belts (Mahmudiya and Arab Jabour), and Diyala, as these areas achieve stability.
  - CFs, working jointly with ISF, continue to clear and hold in volatile areas as necessary, establishing JSSs with CF, IA, IP is cleared, Joint Security Stations are established working together.
- CF is prepared to support Iraqi efforts to restore control in Basrah (GOI economic Center of Gravity) on a contingency basis if requested with scalable “Strike” packages.
- CF handover security responsibility in outlying regions one province at a time.
  - For example, we will start the handover of Anbar in DEC 07 and complete it by APR 08. Simultaneously, we will be set conditions for handover in Ninevah and Salah ad Din.
  - As we reduce combat presence on the periphery and hand over control, CF will provide continuing essential security support to GOI/ISF from the JRSBs. (An exception will be in key flashpoint cities in southern SaD — Samarra, Balad, etc where CF BNs will remain, controlled and supported by the BCT in Diyala).
  - Gradual handover and rebalancing of security responsibilities will allow CF to conduct an ordered withdrawal from outlying provinces while slowly giving the GOI more authority over security and governance.
- During Phase II, CF will gradually establish Regional Advisory/Assistance units in key locations around the country. These units will operate from JRSBs and include training and advising capability, QRF, combat aviation, and SOF. They will:
  - Provide rotational coverage of ISF units to battalion level in their AOs basis.
  - Provide ISF access to combat enablers
  - Develop ISF combat enablers and sustainable tactical and operational logistics.
  - Assist with platoon, company, and battalion-level collective training.
  - Maintain scalable “Strike” Packages for selective independent and joint Iraqi-CF missions.
- Focus funds on underwriting stability.
  - As we reduce our physical security presence, we need to be more strategic in how we spend our funds.
  - PSA (discussed above) will provide Divisions, PRTs, BDEs and affiliated e-PRTs with a framework to make financial investment, reconstruction, and development decisions for areas of greatest need and highest payoff.
- GOI is not short of funds; however, it does have difficulties executing its budget.
  - We will continue to provide significant support to Iraqis to ensure effective budgeting and equitable GoI resource allocation, regardless of sect or ethnicity.

- JRSBs will position Coalition to monitor GOI funding and development issues and increase GOI capacity in the provinces.

- **Enclosure 2** outlines the concept of “rebalancing” nationwide.
- **Enclosure 3** shows a “conditions based” reduction to 10 BCTs NLT JUNE 09 and 5-6 BCTs by JUNE 2010 supporting efforts to rebalance security responsibilities and focus CF efforts on securing minimum strategic goals.

**Phase III: “Safeguard Iraqi Progress” (January 2009 – May 2010):** GOI and ISF take control nationwide. Coalition focused on transition in the center from tactical to operational over-watch. Final JRSBs are completed and MNC-I/MNF-I merge into a single headquarters. During this phase, CFs will progressively reduce their independent combat operations, scale back embedded partnership efforts, and gradually transition to supporting the GoI from an increasing number of JRSBs. Throughout, they will continue to strike terrorist safehavens and be prepared to secure the minimum strategic goals outlined at the outset.

- As CF presence reduces to 10 BCTs and below, we will begin thinning out the center.
  - Reductions will occur in less contentious areas first. As CF assume operational over-watch, CoPs and JSSs will revert to ISF control in Baghdad and the belts.
  - By the summer of 2009, all JRSBs will be fully operational.
  - Maintain robust CJSOTF coverage with ODA teams specifically focused in areas with reduced or little coalition force presence. Scalable strike packages will be established centered around ODA and Iraqi forces enabled with ISR and Strike assets.
- Reductions of 4 BCTs in this phase will bring CF to enduring PH IV presence of 5-6 BCTs operating from JRSBs (and a theater reserve). A fuller discussion of JRSBs follows in Para 4d.
- The ISF has made tremendous strides in the last six months. We have observed:
  - Willingness to fight and take casualties
  - More effective command and control structures
  - Increased manning of units
  - Tactical operating proficiency
  - Some improvement in professionalism, discipline and esprit de corps
  - Ability to conduct independent operations
- However, ISF still has a ways to go and we must address three major obstacles to development:
  - Continued sectarianism — most pronounced in Iraq’s “mixed” areas.
  - Inadequate logistical support and combat enablers— at best, slowly maturing.
  - Inadequate equipping and force design
- Continued population control, partnership, and security presence in the “mixed” center off-sets the effect of ISF sectarianism, while a durable presence in JRSBs enables CF to assist with ameliorating the most urgent logistical and enabler gaps. Long term focus of ISF development will be on higher level collective training and building ISF enabler and logistics capabilities.

- Gradual rebalancing of security responsibilities begins on the periphery. This enables CF to focus decreasing resources on security, partnership and training in “mixed” areas, while allowing local ISF in the more homogenous periphery to stand on their own earlier.
- As CF reduce presence over time, we can neither provide the support structure nor guarantee the security conditions necessary for CF training teams imbedded in ISF units nationwide.
- Building capable and effective ISF continues to be important, yet we cannot create the ISF in our own image. Therefore, we will continue developing the ISF through a variety of methods tailored to the needs and conditions of particular areas. In general, this means that:
  - On the periphery, we will develop ISF to the extent that we can. Parallel to GoI reconciliation efforts, CF will support, train and equip these forces and assist in their deliberate and complete integration into the national ISF structure. However, we will cease embedding training and transition teams once CF are substantially withdrawn from those areas. Time, GoI reconciliation efforts, and good faith on all sides will determine whether they are ultimately fully integrated and loyal to the central government.
  - Extensive partnership and embedding with ISF will continue in the “mixed” center until June 09. Stable reconciliation of competing sectarian communities will likely take significantly more time to occur in these areas.
- We will develop regional training centers to emphasize company and battalion-sized operations and, in the end, seek to ensure ISF reach company-level, combined arms, COIN proficiency.
- Many have recommended a robust embedded ISF advisory effort, even in the absence of a large-scale combat presence. However, embedded training/transition teams with all or even a majority of Iraqi units is not suitable for Iraq in the near-term. This is true for the following reasons:
  - Security conditions in more remote areas put embedded teams at an unacceptable personal risk absent a robust combat presence in close proximity.
  - Support structure required for embedded transition teams nationwide approaches the large-footprint required today for potentially limited long-term value.
  - Much of the ISF demonstrates questionable loyalty to the central GoI (loyalty to a sect, political party, or tribe more common). Embedded trainers will have little if any strategic impact on what is essentially a cultural issue.

**Phase IV: Strategic Over-Watch from Joint Regional Support Bases (2008-2011?):**

Durable long-term commitment at the request of the GOI to safeguard Iraq’s continued progress and secure our minimum objectives at lower costs. This phase (as yet undetermined duration) will see CF underwriting continued Iraqi political and security development and securing minimum U.S. goals from a fixed set of JRSBs strategically located throughout the country.

- By June 2010, CF will have 5-6 BCTs established in 5 JRSBs. A JRSB will consist of a joint, combined, and inter-agency team, led by a 1 or 2-star General. While the USM-I/MNF-I continue to support central GOI, JRSBs will partner with and buttress provincial and local governments, subsuming PRTs. JRSBs would be established in Al-Asad, Q-West, Anaconda, Victory, and Talil or Delta IAW the timeline in **Enclosure 3**.
- JRSBs will enable us to:
  - Support each region and sect, deny terrorist sanctuary, deter mass sectarian violence, train and build Iraqi Security Forces, and monitor regional interference
  - Tie the provinces into the central government as it develops the capacity to govern responsibly.
  - Maintain close working relations with the GOI through imbedded representatives from the local, provincial, and national government to share intelligence and coordinate support.
  - Support continued training and equipping of the ISF. JRSBs will be the regional “hub” for ISF training. CF conduct platoon and higher level collective training and conduct advisory visits to improve ISF capability. IA Divisions and Provincial Iraqi Police establish Regional Iraqi Training Center to conduct advanced individual training, and NCO and Officer Academies. JRSBs provide new equipment fielding to the ISF and assist in increasing ISF logistical capacity.
  - Provide mission support to ISF. Embedded IA Division and Provincial IP operations cells share intelligence and are in position to request CF support for missions beyond their capability.
  - Provide a link for support to the GOI at the local/regional level from the UN and international NGOs.
  - Could serve as a base of operations for neighboring countries wishing to establish a Consular presence.
- **Enclosure 4** provides a concept sketch for the structure and composition of the JRSB.

**5. Risk and risk mitigation.** Risk to this strategy is the likelihood of failure or prohibitive cost associated with securing minimum U.S. strategic goals. Any course of action adopted now is by nature *high risk* in these terms. Key risks and mitigation measures are outlined below.

- **Risk: A functioning political consensus is not reached in Iraq.** Shi’a dominated GOI continues to implicitly or explicitly pursue a sectarian agenda. Should the GOI fail to meaningfully reconcile with the Sunnis or fail to allow them to join the ISF, Sunni-based resistance to the GoI and support for AQIZ is likely to rebound. This hazards Shi’a extremist blowback and indiscriminate GoI targeting of Sunni communities — ultimately, open civil war. Any and all of these present heightened challenges to all four minimum goals. **Mitigation:** Pressure GoI (specifically the PM and affiliates) to work with Presidency Council + 1 and other community leaders to reach accommodation with Sunnis and form a broad, functioning political alliance of national unity. Continue to focus CF security efforts and ISF partnership in the “mixed” sectarian regions of Iraq and employ robust JRSBs as a hedge against GoI failure.
- **Risk: Shi’a extremist activity continues to undermine the stable functioning of the GOI to such an extent that GoI loses all credibility.** If Shi’a extremists so

undermine GoI development that it becomes non-functional or if GoI continues to tolerate the existence of armed Shi'a extremists groups operating outside its control, it hazards losing control of key regions in the country — Baghdad and Belts, Diyala, Shi'a SE. **Mitigation:** Coalition continues to pressure GOI to take a two pronged approach with Shi'a extremists. Specifically, conduct political outreach to mainstream OMS/JAM and military action against JAM special groups. Monitor other key Shi'a groups (specifically, the Badr Organization) for the emergence of active extremist behavior. Continue to posture CF in Iraq's "mixed" center and continue military pressure on violent Shi'a extremists.

- **Risk: GOI loss of control over Basra.** Continued instability between competing Shi'a groups threatens the viability of the Iraqi state. Loss of control in Basra or loss of Basra to a separatist Shi'a group would deny Iraq of most of its sole source of independent revenue. **Mitigation:** Encourage the GoI to restore responsible order to Basra. Support GoI security efforts in the extreme SE by positioning a JRSB vicinity of Basra. CF will be prepared, on a contingency basis, to support GoI restoration of legitimate order in Basra in extremis at the request of GoI.

- **Risk: Neighboring countries deliberately support resistance and extremist groups in Iraq in an attempt to accelerate sectarian violence.** To defend vulnerable communities in the absence of reconciliation and/or to prevent GoI/CF success, neighboring states undertake deliberate efforts to fuel sectarian conflict. Doing so would challenge the security of all of our minimum strategic goals. **Mitigation:** DoS engages diplomatically with neighboring states to ensure that all regard a minimally functioning GOI as a shared national interest. CF deliberately posture and mission forces to prevent irresponsible "sectarian" interference by external powers and prepare to limit the effects should they succeed in doing so.

**5. Conclusion.** Identification of initial strategic goals for Iraq and outlining a strategy intended to secure them are realistic and pragmatic steps. The strategy above puts increasing responsibility on the GoI, commensurate with its current desire for greater sovereignty and it focuses continued CF security efforts where they are most needed to achieve stability. While no strategy now can ensure a stable, unitary Iraq, increasingly rebalancing responsibilities in Iraq and gradually empowering the Iraqis to assume greater control allows the Coalition to progressively reduce its commitment and still protect its adjusted minimum goals. In the end, it also postures the Coalition to hedge against a more general failure of the GoI by positioning the Coalition to more effectively soften what will inevitably be a hard landing for key Iraqi regions in the event the GoI fails. This strategy is not a universal solution for Iraq. It is based on an objective assessment of Iraq's conditions and gives the Coalition and Iraqis the best opportunity for success within current limitations.