

~~SECRET/REL MCF-I~~



**Building Legitimacy &
Confronting Insurgency In Iraq**
15 July 2004



Strategy Team Members:

MG Hank Stratman

(b)(6)
(b)(3), (b)(6)
(b)(6)
(b)(3), (b)(6)

(K)
(UK)

DCG Pol/Mil, MNF-I
Senior Advisor, US Embassy
OGA
C2X, MNF-I
CIG, MNF-I
OGA
Pol/Mil, US Embassy
CIG/MNF-I

~~SECRET/REL MCF-I~~

Copy 2 of 15

~~SECRET/REL MCF I~~

BUILDING LEGITIMACY AND CONFRONTING INSURGENCY IN IRAQ

END STATES AND BOTTOMLINE

INTERMEDIATE STATE: Internationally recognized elections in Iraq leading to the transitional government and constitutional process.

END STATE: Iraq at peace with its neighbors, with a representative government that respects human rights of all Iraqis, and with security forces sufficient to maintain domestic order and deny Iraq as a safe haven for terrorists.

BOTTOM LINE: As of this writing, July 15, 2004, the insurgency is stronger than it was nine months ago and could deny the IIG legitimacy over the next nine months. In response, the coalition must find ways to strengthen the IIG in all dimensions of national power (political/economic/security) and facilitate political reconciliation. Otherwise the insurgency will grow more violent and the elections and constitutional process will be endangered.

CURRENT SITUATION

Sovereign Iraq's viability, as embodied in the IIG and the planned electoral and constitutional processes, is threatened by an insurgency principally led by well-funded Sunni-Arab-Rejectionists (SAR) centered on Former Regime Elements (FRE), particularly Ba'ath party members. The insurgents under Ba'ath influence comprise several factions -- ranging from the explicitly religious to Arab nationalists to Saddam loyalists. There is not a monolithic Ba'ath Party controlling efforts but a loose system of leadership, with no single leader. Many of the leading figures and key facilitators are now based outside of Iraq, mostly in Syria. Foreign Islamic extremists are a relatively small, if lethal, problem in Iraq while 1.4b is hoping to win influence over Iraq's political and electoral process without having to provoke a Shi'a-based insurgency (for which it is preparing, nonetheless).

The Sunni Arab/FRE Resistance and the foreign Islamic extremists share the desire to see the coalition lose its will to fight for the rule of law and representative government in Iraq -- and to

~~SECRET/REL MCF I~~

~~SECRET/REL MCF I~~

cause the failure of the IIG -- so that they can assume direct or indirect control over its affairs. The insurgency and public support are further complicated by organized and often violent crime. The combined strength of insurgents under the influence of the Ba'athist leadership is estimated at 8,000 - 12,000. The ethnic, sectarian and tribal militants are estimated at 2,000 - 4,000. The Islamic extremists are estimated <1000.

Although the IIG enjoys early popular support, it has a weak hold on the instruments of governance and has to manage a war-battered economy, a fragile and damaged infrastructure and the meddling of some neighboring states, especially 1.4b Polling continues to highlight that the Iraqi public are most concerned about security (especially crime) and job creation (especially public sector jobs).

Political reconciliation is at an early stage but is already being actively pursued by the IIG. We have limited visibility (intelligence and outreach) into the Sunni political mindset and our economic reconstruction programs have not been shaped to support reconciliation.

The coalition's military capability (MNF-I) is more mature than its political and economic capabilities. However, all three dimensions are hampered by the lack of a unifying strategy, inadequate intelligence, ineffective strategic communications support, and the embryonic nature of IIG counterparts.

MNF-I efforts to man, train and equip the ISF have embraced the imperative that Iraq must quickly develop the security forces required to attack the insurgency, defend its infrastructure, police its streets, and secure its borders. In conducting offensive operations, however, the coalition is confronted by the paradox that applying force often stimulates insurgency. The situation is further complicated because MNF-I is still perceived as an occupying force by the large majority of Iraqis.

~~SECRET/REL MCF I~~

~~SECRET/REL MCF-I~~

DISCUSSION

Although the IIG enjoys early popular support, it has yet to establish its legitimacy. Reducing violence and creating jobs are critical to enabling it to push ahead with the electoral/constitutional process. Concomitantly, fence-sitters, insurgency sympathizers and leadership must be won over through amnesty, political reconciliation, and economic opportunity while intransigent elements are increasingly hit hard by ISF vice MNF-I forces. The SAR/FRE insurgency -- largely based in the Sunni Triangle and which may last for many years -- must be the primary target of this strategy. Foreign Islamic extremists are a relatively small, if lethal, force in Iraq, but they share the same immediate goals as the SAR/FRE insurgency and must be included as an ancillary target of this strategy. A Shi'a insurgency is not a first-order problem over the next 6-9 months. This would change if elections are not held, and the delay is not negotiated with Shi'a leadership.

All this calls for a change in the way we deploy our current political, economic and military assets and integrate them with IIG efforts. As the capital and national seat of power, Baghdad is important, but equally important is engagement within the Sunni-triangle, where we have to do more economically and politically. It is here -- in the embittered Sunni community -- that the key battleground for extinguishing the insurgency lies.

Now that the war-fighting and pre-insurgency phases of the conflict are over, military power must be employed differently. Unless framed within a convincing political rationale and precisely targeted, the application of force strengthens the insurgency and causes it to grow. The coalition's military capability (MNF-I) has to assume a lower profile, push the ISF forward when trained and ready (especially the police, who are well-regarded by the public), and emphasize intelligence-generated precision strikes. Ongoing review of security forces should give even more emphasis to police on Iraq's streets and borders to deal with the continuum of crime-insurgency-terrorism. The vigorous, intelligence-driven use of police units by the IIG in these two arenas will bolster its legitimacy in the public eye and advance the counterinsurgency at the same time. The new Iraqi Army will likewise play a vital counterinsurgency role.

~~SECRET/REL MCF-I~~

~~SECRET/REL MCF I~~

Simultaneously, we need to do a better job resourcing and maximizing intelligence capabilities while interfacing them with Iraqi intelligence.

In the economic sphere, we have programs and assets that can be exploited to political effect, strengthening the IIG's hand in critical areas. Marginal reallocations of economic reconstruction and development funds coupled with adjustments in sequencing and geographical distribution can be used to achieve more job creation and economic development in Baghdad and the Sunni Triangle over the next six to nine months. This will require detailed analysis, planning and close civilian-military cooperation.

A democratic state, even if incorporating troublesome elements (authoritarian and FRE) would be preferable to any insurgency-generated outcome. As reconciliation goes forward, we must be mindful that an opportunity exists to shape a unifying Iraqi identity by using it to diminish the scale of the SAR/FRE insurgency while building a new effort to define Zargawi et al and meddlesome neighbors, not the MNF-I, as Iraq's adversaries. This effort is already underway as evidenced by statements by the prime minister and president.

The UN's role in guiding the electoral/constitutional process is crucial to providing international legitimacy to the IIG and its successors. The best chance for representative government, rule of law and national unity lies in helping/forcing the IIG through the upcoming electoral/constitutional agenda.

The political framework for all of the above is currently being established by the IIG-embassies-and-MNF-I. This is a relatively new cluster of allies, however, and the "message" of coordinated support for the IIG in its mission has a long way to go to achieve public clarity. The uncertainties of actually being able to administer elections in December/January complicates matters. This suggests that redoubling efforts to support the electoral process, including stepped-up interactions with the UN, are in order.

~~SECRET/REL MCF I~~

~~SECRET/REL MCF-I~~

ASSUMPTIONS

- Military/security forces can contribute to the counterinsurgency effort but cannot win it.
- A reduced and redeployed MNF-I can be sustained against popular opposition at the behest of a government that enjoys legitimacy in the eyes of the majority—nonetheless, foreign forces will never be broadly welcomed in Iraq.
- Offering the IIG greater opportunity to shape the military/political/economic agenda in Iraq will accelerate achieving UNSCR 1546 end state objectives; it will also deprive the insurgency of a powerful rationale in its opposition to both the IIG and the coalition, i.e., that the IIG is our puppet.
- Coalition military and economic initiatives can deliver a politically persuasive mix of public safety and jobs/economic growth sufficient to boost the IIG's legitimacy over the short term.
- Although heavily influenced by Islam as a motivator and unifier, the insurgency will not expand into an extremist Islamic insurgency.

STRATEGY – STRENGTHENING LEGITIMACY & ATTACKING INSURGENCY

The IIG should be invited to call for a comprehensive, fully publicized, security review of the MNF-I and ISF roles with special attention paid to police and border forces. Privileging the IIG as a sovereign entity addressing the security agenda will strengthen its position vis-à-vis both the insurgency and the public at large.

The IIG should be invited to review the coalition's planned reconstruction and economic development projects against its political priorities. A key question we both must ask is how to achieve maximum immediate job growth in the Sunni Triangle and build support for the IIG. To

~~SECRET/REL MCF-I~~

~~SECRET/REL MCF-I~~

this end, the Embassy/MNF-I should create a flexible funding plan for counterinsurgency and line up the instrumentalities to disburse these monies in the Sunni Triangle.

MNF-I should reassess its methods of operation and rules of engagement following TOS. Greater emphasis must be placed on intelligence generated operations and precision strikes.

Coalition intelligence against the insurgents must be reviewed to improve collection, resources, and the interface with and strengthen IIG's indigenous intelligence capabilities (national, military and police).

The coalition must support IIG efforts at political negotiation with SAR/FRE leaders, backing the IIG's efforts to offer some of them amnesty, political space and economic opportunity. The quid pro quo is that these leaders must cooperate in defining Zarqawi and other Islamic extremists as "the enemies of Iraq" and help eliminate them. This must be done without alienating the Shi'a and Kurds.

We must pursue a vigorous initiative that strengthens IIG strategic communications capabilities in key ministries, starting with the prime minister.

On both the civilian and military sides of the house, we must prepare, coordinate and institute plans that ensure moderate, democratic parties and individuals are able to compete effectively in the upcoming elections. Concomitantly, we must convince the UN leadership to fulfill UNSCR 1546 obligations while encouraging the Iraqi Independent Electoral Commission not only to carry out its work but communicate its efforts to the public as it does so.

We also must work with the IIG to pursue an IIG-led regional initiative to attack all elements of the insurgency: sanctuaries, funding and leadership.

Finally, we must identify ways in which other international players, bilateral, multilateral, or institutional, can reinforce the IIG's legitimacy and thereby strengthen its hand in the counterinsurgency. NATO's planned training assistance is a good example.

~~SECRET/REL MCF-I~~

~~SECRET/REL MCF-I~~

IMPLEMENTATION TASKS

POLITICAL:

- Establish a unified strategic communications team within MNF-I and the Embassy which blends IO, PA and psyops resources into a cohesive program – coordinate program with IIG counterparts across full spectrum of policy priorities.
- Consult on establishing an office of strategic communication with the PM (other key ministries to follow).
- Formalize Embassy/MNF-I contacts with key tribal and provincial leaders with an emphasis on, but not exclusive to, the Sunni Triangle.
- Facilitate national reconciliation by providing support to the IIG as appropriate (policy, incentives, intelligence, communication and logistics).
- Produce an action plan to support moderate, democratic political parties and individuals to ensure their participation in elections.
- Encourage the IIG to continue to pursue initiatives for regional support for Iraq's border security and to deny assistance and funds to insurgent leaders.

SECURITY:

- Reassess MNF-I operations to identify changes in posture to support counterinsurgency strategy and expedite transfer of primacy to ISF.
- Develop and implement plans for a comprehensive security review in partnership with the IIG, that establishes a conditions based redeployment/exit strategy and re-evaluates police and border requirements.
- Conduct top to bottom review of methods of operating to reflect the changed environment post-TOS.
- Assist IIG in developing National JOC, JHQ and regional and provincial C2 coordination structure and integrate with MNF-I counterparts.
- Identify counterinsurgency support funds for the MNC-I and divisions in support of the economic effort (job creation).

~~SECRET/REL MCF-I~~

~~SECRET/REL MCF I~~

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND RECONSTRUCTION:

- Develop options for increasing job growth and economic development in the Sunni Triangle and Baghdad within the next six to nine months.
- Propose well publicized, high-level consultations with IIG on overall economic development and reconstruction plans emphasizing job growth.
- Support IIG efforts to obtain loans and assistance from international lenders, creditors and investors; publicize.

INTELLIGENCE:

- Identify gaps in our intelligence effort and develop, prioritize and agree on intelligence requirements in the context of the insurgency.
- Identify intelligence structures, organization, systems and personnel that are inadequately resourced for counterinsurgency operations.
- Determine how the coalition can develop and build Iraqi intelligence and interface effectively Iraqi capabilities with the coalition's.
- Develop a mechanism for disseminating threat information relevant to the personal safety and operations of contractors, UN and NGO personnel and other actors working in the MNF-I AOR.

~~SECRET/REL MCF I~~