

# Victory over Terrorism

By JEFFREY PHILIP TREISTMAN

## ESSENTIAL SERVICES AS COUNTERINSURGENCY STRATEGY

U.S. Army (Roszario Williams)

**B**y 2006, U.S. Iraq policy, based on the 2005 *National Strategy for Victory in Iraq*, appeared to be failing. The February bombing of the al-Askari Mosque sparked a wave of sectarian violence that seemed to push Iraq to the brink of civil war. The United Nations estimated nearly 25,000 Iraqis fell victim to violence over the course of 2006, and nearly 1,000 U.S. troops were killed. Violence had reached record levels and thousands began to flee the country, crippling the entire nation. Analogies to the Vietnam War were increasingly drawn.

On January 10, 2007, President George W. Bush announced a “new way forward in Iraq” that would improve security by focusing predominantly on Baghdad where the majority of the violence transpired.<sup>1</sup> The plan called for intensifying American involvement while simultaneously pressing the government of Iraq to assume a leading role. A “surge” of an additional 21,500 troops would provide breathing room for political reconciliation and economic development. This new strategy would become known as the Baghdad Security Plan, or *Fardh al-Qanoon* (FAQ) in Arabic.

The preponderance of postsurge analysis is devoted to military operations and their subsequent efficacy in reducing levels of violence by concentrating on troop deployments, tactics, and intelligence. Such studies are valuable, but only to a certain extent. Any holistic appraisal must also consider noncombat

counterinsurgency strategies that addressed social issues—in particular, essential services. Reminiscent of Lebanon’s Hizballah, militias in Baghdad sought ascendancy over services as a means to solidify control and influence. Therefore, the most pragmatic remedy for long-term stability in Iraq was not necessarily countering militants with force, but securing the populace’s allegiance to their government through the provision of services and opportunities for employment.

The fundamental issue was that the average citizen was physically and economically vulnerable to malign influences. It became imperative for the coalition to counter militias by guaranteeing the well-being of Baghdad’s residents. Emphasizing reconstruction projects not only improved the delivery of services, but also, more importantly, provided employment, reestablished the integrity of the Iraqi government, and created stakeholders in the overall process.

### Importance of Services

Counterinsurgency (COIN) theorists posit that there is no direct correlation between the availability of essential services and violence.<sup>2</sup> Specifically in terms of Iraq, some areas had far lower levels of violence and less accessibility to services than others. On the other hand, unemployment and illiteracy in an atmosphere of competing factions made

individuals economically vulnerable and thus susceptible to malevolent influences. The vacuum created by political power struggles was certainly not propitious and allowed militias to supersede official institutions in providing public goods and employment. Militants were able to offer employment to those with little work experience, education, or training, and in return the conscripts received a salary, immunity from attack, and a social sense of belonging.

As a result, it became increasingly evident that provision of services would be indispensable in countering both insurgents and militias. A cooperative effort emerged between the U.S. Embassy and coalition forces that emphasized essential services as a central COIN tactic. Jobs generated from official reconstruction initiatives were extremely valuable in thwarting recruitment efforts of malignant actors. At the same time, government-sanctioned projects reduced the public’s dependency on extralegal groups for services and simultaneously strengthened the government’s integrity. Finally, tapping local labor pools engendered stakeholders in neighborhood construction projects and fostered an intolerance to sabotage. The strategy was tremendously vital in enervating the strength of militias in Baghdad.

In contrast, attempts to pass key legislation intended to eliminate political incentives

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of terrorists proved slow and inadequate. Parliamentarians within the secure confines of the International Zone were far too removed from the realities of neighborhood conflict to be effectual. The dissolution of the FAQ Political Committee was certainly demonstrative of this reality. The apparent inadequacy of

added that he had received full support from the prime minister.

However, on the afternoon of March 23, a member of Zoubai's security team detonated a ball bearing suicide vest inside Zoubai's residence. Severely injured, Zoubai spent several months recuperating in Jordan.

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legislation, however, did not deter the prime minister from devising alternative political solutions and establishing an official cabinet committee to address essential services.

### Political Dynamics

Baghdad's political parties, personalities, and demographics played a fundamental role in shaping the outcome of FAQ and the delivery of services. The political dynamics were bewildering and were made even more complicated when accounting for the discrepancies between local and national perspectives. The most salient political partition existed between religious sects. Sunnis were predominantly aligned with the Tawafuq bloc, which was comprised of three separate political parties: the Iraqi Islamic Party, the Iraqi People's Conference, and the National Dialogue Council. The initial chairman of the FAQ Essential Services Committee, Deputy Prime Minister Salam al-Zoubai, was a notable member of this alliance. Meanwhile, the majority of Shia belonged to the Islamic Supreme Council in Iraq (ISCI) but would often vie with the Sadrist Trend and its militant wing, Jaysh al-Mahdi (JAM), for political primacy in Baghdad. The power struggle among these differing parties, both internal and external, created a political vacuum that would be detrimentally filled by militants.

**Essential Services Committee.** In support of FAQ, Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki formed the Essential Services Committee, to be headed by Zoubai. The committee was to facilitate the repair and delivery of essential services immediately following combat activity and would then submit a weekly status report to the prime minister during the Iraq Executive Steering Committee (IESC)<sup>3</sup> meeting. During a meeting with Deputy Chief of Mission Daniel Speckhard on January 10, 2007, Zoubai confirmed that he would be responsible for the portfolio and

His absence proved debilitating to efforts to improve the delivery of essential services. Without Zoubai's authority, his advisors felt powerless and were timid in presenting reconstruction developments to the prime minister. The assassination attempt severely hampered reconstruction efforts, and the eventual withdrawal of the Tawafuq political bloc in August 2007 ended Zoubai's involvement.

In November, the prime minister designated Ahmed Chalabi as temporary lead for Baghdad services. From the commencement of his appointment, however, his role and responsibilities remained fluid. Chalabi did not occupy a constitutionally recognized cabinet position, and the Baghdad Amanat,<sup>4</sup> governor, Provincial Council,<sup>5</sup> and ministers did not necessarily recognize his authority in this seemingly ad hoc appointment. Furthermore, he did not have direct access to an official channel of government financial resources. Despite these administrative hurdles, he remained actively engaged, and Iraqi citizens tended to swarm Chalabi in public settings with their petitions. He cheerfully admitted that the purpose of his committee was "to provide band-aids, not structural solutions to problems." Indeed, Maliki's intent in putting Chalabi in charge of the committee was to produce quick, tangible solutions to the problems of Baghdad's citizens.

**Manipulation of Services.** As Iraqi officials struggled to organize themselves, various nonstate actors took full advantage of the government's vacillation and quickly filled the leadership vacuum. Contingent upon their own political loyalties, militias pursued distinctive agendas to manipulate essential services to their advantage. Whereas Sunni insurgents wanted to undermine the government's legitimacy by destroying infrastructure, Shia militias aspired to supersede the government with their own informal networks. Each posed its

own unique set of obstacles and challenges to the government.

Al Qaeda in Iraq favored a more ideological approach, seeking to dictate social mores and religious customs at the expense of humanitarian assistance. Consequently, their oppressive tactics proved counterproductive as local citizens became increasingly disenchanted. Sunni extremists also focused on insurgent activities that attracted Coalition Forces/Iraqi Security Forces reprisals that often harmed innocent civilians and neighborhood property.<sup>6</sup>

On the other hand, many Shia militias were initially mobilized in an effort to neutralize the growing atmosphere of fear and insecurity sparked by mounting sectarian tensions. The purging of local communities may have begun under the precept of removing terrorist threats but quickly devolved into sectarian displacement. In turn, the displacement afforded militia leaders a window of opportunity to consolidate neighborhood control.

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A variety of intimidation tactics were employed to secure the obedience of local residents once they had effectively expelled their sectarian adversary. These methods included bribery, verbal or physical assault, assassination, or public execution. After establishing their hegemony, militants would then coopt local officials and hijack government resources.

The JAM militia, and to a lesser extent ISCI, operated a sophisticated extralegal governance network to manage their interests and even set up subordinate offices that focused on administrative tasks including finances, public relations, and technical affairs. Citizens would therefore become artificially beholden to militias for services, employment, and security. These extralegal institutions eroded government credibility and perilously installed militant leaders who were not accountable to the local population.

Formal government institutions were incapable of stopping or even complicit in the militias' attempts to manipulate Baghdad's

services. In particular, corruption was abundant at both national and provincial levels. Officials would simply siphon finances, appoint militants to influential positions, or redirect reconstruction projects to areas dominated by their respective political parties. The Board of Supreme Audit, the independent Iraqi agency that served as a watchdog to monitor financial and administrative operations of the government, was inadequately equipped to investigate the accusations and was equally plagued with political interference, intimidation/assassination of agents, and limited resources.

The combination of institutional ineptitude and inability of Iraqi officials to delineate responsibilities among themselves highlighted the inchoate nature of the government. Many were uncertain of their legal authorities and lacked the conviction necessary to spearhead public policy. This allowed municipal directorates to be held hostage by the actors who sought their control. Representatives of various U.S. Government agencies urged the Iraqis to adopt procedures that would instill transparency and mitigate vulnerabilities, particularly in the delivery of essential services.

**Improving Essential Services**

Perhaps the most significant impediment to rebuilding Baghdad’s infrastructure was the absence of communication among the politicians who managed the city’s institutions. The plethora of independent funding sources precluded synchronization of projects and fostered an atmosphere of haphazard reconstruction. Meanwhile, corruption and militia interference inhibited local access to services. The U.S. Government continuously encouraged the government to implement administrative reforms, and as a result the Joint Planning Committee and Project Clean Delivery were launched as cooperative ventures.

**Joint Planning and Reconstruction Committees.** It became astonishingly evident that Iraqi officials failed to communicate with each other at even the most basic levels. Ministries did not fully appreciate the interdependence of their respective sectors. For example, the delivery of clean water to Baghdad residents required fuel to run electric generators, and subsequently water treatment facilities required electricity to power pumping units. Above all, security was needed to protect the linear infrastructure that actually delivered the product. These requirements clearly encompassed many different ministerial

portfolios, the extent of which was not fully appreciated by the Iraqis.

Reconstruction initiatives were also pursued simultaneously by several entities without knowledge of each other’s activities. The efforts were both duplicative and counterproductive. It was not uncommon for one agency to repave a neighborhood street only to see it excavated by another agency the following week to lay new sewage pipes.

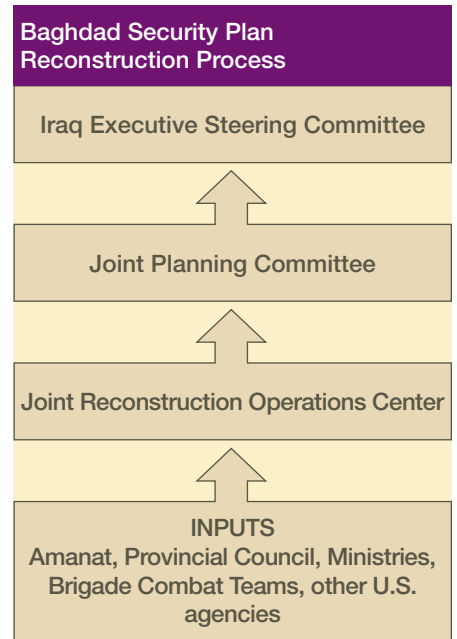
To redress the problem, the Department of State and Multi-National Force in Iraq (MNF-I) established the Joint Reconstruction Operations Center (JROC) and Joint Planning Committee (JPC). By decree of Fragmentary Order #06-468, the concept of operations stated:

*The Joint Reconstruction Operations Center will be a single-source fusion center that provides a common operating picture of all non-kinetic projects and programs that impact the Baghdad Security Plan (BSP). The JROC will conduct planning that synchronizes and integrates non-kinetic projects and programs in support of BSP. During the execution of a plan the JROC will monitor and track the status of each project and program followed with an assessment of the effect created.*<sup>7</sup>

The key deliverable of the JROC was a weekly brief to the JPC, which was intended to provide strategic direction. Committees included a myriad of both government of Iraq and U.S. Government implementing agencies, but more importantly, members were derived from local Iraqi organizations to ensure community interests were adequately represented. The group reviewed neighborhood projects, verified mechanisms were in place to deliver essential services, and adjudicated conflicts between different organizations. In attempting to maximize

*Joint Planning Committee members were derived from local Iraqi organizations to ensure community interests were adequately represented*

resources, the JPC concentrated on what became known as SWET-H (sewage, water, electrical, trash, and health). Any conflict that could not be resolved in the JPC would theoretically be elevated to the IESC. In practice, however, this never occurred.



Ryadh al-Falahi, an advisor to Zoubai, served as JPC chairman and provided national oversight to an otherwise local endeavor. His role was vital in verifying that district councils were actively committed to representing their community. Falahi also had the ability to understand the indigenous mindset, which was often culturally difficult for coalition members to perceive. To satisfy the U.S. Government objective of appearing impartial, Falahi provided a sense of legitimacy and an aura of Iraqi ownership to a committee that was otherwise wholly American.

The JPC offered a forum in which Iraqi leaders vented frustrations and supported local development efforts. Perhaps most notably, it allowed Iraqis to jointly manage financial expenditures with their American colleagues. This was a vital arrangement considering that roughly 30 percent of projects funded by the U.S. Government were disputed by Baghdad’s district councils and/or Amanat. Consequently, the JPC served to counter perceptions of misdirected funding and ensured that demand equitably met supply.

In and of itself, the JPC was a momentous feat, but it admittedly failed to achieve the aspirations originally envisioned by Washington. The lack of a higher Iraqi authority, particularly Zoubai, rendered Falahi powerless to elevate issues to the IESC. Furthermore, absence of the mayor, Provincial Council chairman, and governor meant that decisions made during the JPC were not guaranteed to be enforced by provincial leadership.

Instead, the JPC simply became a medium for situational awareness. This was not necessarily a negative outcome since the government of Iraq had limited knowledge of ongoing projects within the city. The committee also cultivated an environment in which Iraqis became acquainted with one another. State Department attendees frequently witnessed Iraqi officials exchanging contact information for the first time. Most importantly, the JPC introduced an administrative mechanism that encouraged cooperation and dialogue among all Iraqi agencies. Such horizontal linkages were nonexistent during the previous regime. The effect was an improvement in communications among all relevant parties, which the U.S. Embassy considered a significant achievement of the FAQ.

To capitalize on the success, internalization of the JPC was crucial to ensure long-term sustainability. Since its inception, the goal had always been to transfer the JPC to the Iraqi government, but the difficulty was determining *who* would actually assume ownership. The U.S. Government privately debated the merits of national versus provincial control within the context of the new federalist structure of Iraq. At the same time, the Iraqis grappled with similar questions as they struggled to form their new nation. Until a settlement could be reached, the JPC continued to be managed entirely by the Americans with Iraqi participation.

On March 13, 2008, however, the Baghdad Provincial Council finally took possession of the JPC and hosted the meeting for the first time at its headquarters. The committee would now be chaired by council member Nazar al-Sultani, who in his opening remarks noted the historical significance of the transition. Over the course of the following months, the Provincial Council slowly accepted responsibility for administrative duties, including drafting and distributing meeting notes. Sultani even announced on June 12 a new JPC format in an effort to streamline the overall process.

By the end of 2007, the JROC/JPC had successfully spawned similar forums. The Joint Rural Planning Committee (JRPC) expanded the JPC concept into the outlying Qadas (rural districts) of Baghdad Province. The initiative immediately proved successful by applying lessons learned from the JPC, and was central in reaching out to communities that consisted mainly of Sunnis dispersed



Iraqi firefighters attempt to control blaze after terrorist rocket attack on oil pipeline in Kirkuk

U.S. Air Force (Samuel Bendett)

along tribal lineages. Meanwhile, the Executive JPC, which had to that point been limited only to coalition members, incorporated provincial Iraqi counterparts to form the Baghdad Provincial Executive Planning Session (BPEPS). Cochaired by Provincial Council chairman Mueen al-Khademy and coalition representatives, the BPEPS was largely restricted to strategic discussions pertaining to economic development and essential services.

By assuming responsibility for municipal reconstruction efforts, the government of Iraq began to demonstrate its functionality and dedication to the people of Baghdad. Iraqi ability to effectively mobilize resources became a source of great pride. Although in many respects the government may not have been entirely proficient by Western standards, it nevertheless strove to improve essential services. The internalization of the JPC symbolized a great step forward in achieving Iraqi goals.

**Project Clean Delivery.** Corruption was quite pervasive throughout Iraq but was particularly acute in the fuel sector. Security assessments found that the majority of attacks on Iraq's oil infrastructure were financially motivated. The sale of crude oil derived from interdictions funded the illicit activities of varying groups, including insurgents, militias, and criminals. The interdiction of pipelines forced the government to use tanker trucks as alternative means of

distribution, but these too proved to be an easy target for theft and smuggling.

The incapability of the Ministry of Oil to adequately perform administrative functions such as contracting and strategic planning was relentlessly exacerbated by assassinations, kidnappings, and intimidation. A dearth of qualified technocrats to fill critical positions within the ministry did not bode well for other operations. Moreover, the minister, Husayn al-Shahristani, was believed to be incompetent. He was accused of sectarianism and often signed contracts that appeared exceedingly preferential to Iran.

Municipal fuel supplies were highly susceptible to corruption. Databases that recorded deliveries were egregiously fabricated and did not reflect actual quantities. The U.S. Energy Fusion Cell also discovered that ministerial tankers delivered fuel to fictitious gas stations that were later revealed to be abandoned buildings or empty lots. Residents were ultimately forced to purchase from the black market, which funded and perpetuated militia activities.

Project Clean Delivery was a pilot project initiated in December 2007 and entirely led by the Iraqi government via the National Security Advisor's (NSA's) office. The U.S. Embassy originally conceived the program but assumed a merely supporting and advisory role during its implementation. The purpose of Project Clean Delivery was to develop the Iraqi capacity to remove malign



U.S. Air Force (Manuel J. Martinez)

Iraqi prime minister attends opening ceremonies of reconstructed Sarafiya Bridge in Baghdad, May 2008

actors and corrupt administrators from the supply chain of kerosene delivery in Baghdad. This was achieved through intensive monitoring and by ensuring delivery of product at the government rate. These tactics proved efficacious and ultimately eliminated a key source of revenue for Baghdad's militant gangs. Overall, the process allowed government participants to understand the value of inter-ministerial coordination and synchronization with security agencies.

In April 2008, the Iraqi interagency team reported that 90 percent of kerosene reached target neighborhoods, equating to 5 million liters delivered to 50,000 families in 12 neighborhoods. This was considered a major accomplishment in comparison to previous statistics, and the militia's reaction to Project Clean Delivery testified to its success. JAM assassinated two neighborhood council members for their participation and threatened several others. The NSA lead, Saeed Jabour, concluded that "you can't expect to transform a system that has corruption everywhere and not have problems. They are inevitable."

**Failure to Build.** The emphasis on public services as a counterinsurgency stratagem still faced enormous obstacles beyond U.S. Government control. Internal Iraqi government power struggles and the ensuing political vacuum complicated Baghdad's reconstruction. The Department of State, specifically the Iraq Reconstruction Management Office, had invested a great deal of faith in the capability of Zoubai to advance the Essential Services Committee. Unfortunately, Tawafuq's withdrawal

created a leadership void that severely hindered the implementation of policy during FAQ. For example, in the summer of 2007, U.S. and Iraqi engineers jointly formulated a list of proposed sewage projects estimated at \$26 million and anticipated that Zoubai would work with his counterparts to secure supplemental funding. His absence, however, caused these projects to languish until they were eventually incorporated into Iraq's 2008 budget.

Tawafuq's departure proved an unexpected political affair and left Washington with few alternatives. Department of Defense and State officials expressed their disapproval of the boycott and were disappointed with Tawafuq's apparent lack of regard for Baghdad's development. During a meeting with the author on October 24, 2007, Vice President Tariq al-Hashimi seemed completely oblivious to the implications that Tawafuq's withdrawal would have for efforts to improve essential services. Nevertheless, the Americans understood the nature of the dispute and realized that the matter would have to be resolved internally among the Iraqis as part of the natural growing process of the country. The U.S. Government would instead foster other Iraqi partnerships, most conspicuously with Chalabi.

**Lights Out on Chalabi.** In light of Chalabi's notorious past, U.S. officials internally disputed how to best approach his new role as head of the Essential Services Committee. Some were eager to establish a rapport with Chalabi, who could potentially petition for requisite services, while others proposed marginalizing him in favor of bolstering

existing municipal institutions. The end result was consistent U.S. Government attendance at Chalabi's committee meetings but refrainment from forging intimate relations. In essence, the State Department merely reported on deliberations within the committee.

By spring of 2008, a plethora of reports began to surface that implicated Chalabi in associating with JAM Special Groups. He was also accused of other nefarious activities, including arms sales and money laundering. Of course, the acknowledged conventional difficulty with information is the inability to substantiate its veracity, but the quantity and consistency of the reporting proved particularly alarming. If the reports were indeed factual, it was assayed that Chalabi's actions were not likely to have been motivated by malice or sectarianism, but rather personal gain consistent with his *modus operandi*.

Regardless, the reports compelled both MNF-I and the U.S. Embassy to alter their respective postures and no longer engage with Chalabi or his staff. Furthermore, a moratorium had been placed on the issuance of all International Zone badges for Chalabi's office, and existing U.S. visa applications were denied to various staff members. The prime minister took a similar course of action by officially removing Chalabi as head of the Essential Services Committee and instructing him to no longer attend the IESC.

The author estimated that the decision to marginalize Chalabi would have only a negligible effect on Baghdad services. He had been a nominal contributor to the city's development, and his staff infrequently attended various intergovernmental coordination meetings. Moreover, the U.S. Embassy's Iraq Transition and Assistance Office and the Provincial Reconstruction Team both believed that Baghdad's essential services should be predominantly led by provincial leaders (governor, Provincial Council chairman, and mayor). Baghdad was unique in that the majority of services were managed by the Amanat rather than ministries, although the ministries still played a critical role.

### A Symbol of Success

Overall, the government of Iraq proved relatively adept in responding to the enormous challenges faced in Baghdad. A

prominent symbol of its success during the FAQ was the rebuilding of the Sarafiya Bridge. Constructed by British engineers in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the bridge was an important commercial and transportation link over the Tigris River and a source of national pride. Sadly, on April 12, 2007, suicide bombers detonated a truck laden with explosives while driving over it. The blast destroyed the bridge and brought down the main central spans, negatively affecting commerce and municipal traffic flow. Baghdad's residents were deeply demoralized by its destruction.

Despite some initial obstacles, all efforts to rebuild the Sarafiya Bridge were orchestrated autonomously by the Iraqi government with limited U.S. assistance. Construction, managed entirely by the Ministry of Construction and Housing, was completed on time and within budget and was officially reopened on May 27, 2008. The undertaking demonstrated the government's capacity to independently pursue emergency reconstruction of crucial infrastructure and became one of the most significant Iraqi accomplishments of the FAQ. Indeed, during the May 26, 2008, IESC, Prime Minister Maliki called the bridge's reopening a "victory over terrorism."

Depending on their respective affiliations, American politicians are persistent in their attempts to label the Baghdad Security Plan as either a success or failure. Militarily, the surge could certainly be hailed as a success when juxtaposed against statistical trends, but such operations were only intended to provide space for political reconciliation and economic development. These aspects were the sine qua non of Iraq's long-term stability but were much more difficult to quantify. In the absence of pivotal legislation or significant expenditures, they could only be measured subjectively, often based on tacit developments. The establishment of horizontal linkages and improved lines of intercommunication among Iraqis as a result of the JPC was a painstaking process that could only be ascertained over a prolonged period and exemplifies the challenge in perceiving such subtleties.

Equally difficult to discern, but of tantamount importance, was the overall capacity of the Iraqi government. By and large, the author noticed measured progress in the cabinet members' ability to identify and present issues of concern to the IESC. Previously, discussants often were unprepared,

and the resultant briefings were haphazard. By January 2008, however, visible improvements began to surface. During the January 11 IESC, the Minister of Displacement and Migration identified specific problems requiring government attention, and on January 25, the Deputy Minister of Communications deftly articulated the current status of his ministry, complete with graphic representation. Both presentations indicated an increasing capability to recognize and convey matters within their respective sectors. Moreover, the IESC Secretariat conducted 6-month and 1-year self-assessments of accomplishments and shortcomings of each FAQ supporting committee, a remarkable feat given the level of maturity of the Iraqi government.

### *military operations that targeted Shia militias in both Basrah and Sadr City and Sunni terrorists in Mosul evinced Maliki's impartiality*

The author observed a gradual improvement in Maliki's capability as prime minister. He appeared more confident in his position and became increasingly intolerant of unresponsive cabinet members. Military operations initiated in March 2008 that targeted Shia militias in both Basrah and Sadr City and Sunni terrorists in Mosul evinced Maliki's impartiality. He proclaimed in April that the events "have proven that we are neutral, not biased, that we did not take the side of this party or this sect against another. We have also proven there is no security for any sect unless other sects can be guaranteed their security."

These developments were not exclusive to the executive branch, as legislative officials also exhibited maturation. The February 13, 2008, passage of several pieces of legislation demonstrated that the Council of Representative's speaker, Mahmoud Mashadani, was becoming more comfortable as leader of the parliament and testified to his ability to negotiate between dissimilar political blocs.

Above all, Iraqi officials were cognizant of the value of using essential services as a counterinsurgency tactic. Zoubai asserted to State Department officials at the onset of the FAQ that "security and services cannot be separated." On June 11, 2008, the deputy prime minister's chief of staff, Khalid al-Juboory, affirmed the significance of services

as a COIN policy, stating that "providing electricity, providing education, and rehabilitating detainees will help solve the problem of militias. . . . We have learned that many join militias simply for money and are not necessarily religious extremists." Khalid stressed that electrical reconstruction projects would provide employment that would reduce the incentive to join militias and added that "electricity also limits movements of terrorists at nights and opens shops." Ultimately, "electricity solves security and services problems." In this respect, President Bush's January 10, 2007, address proved particularly astute in proclaiming that "a successful strategy for Iraq goes beyond military operations. Ordinary Iraqi citizens must see that military operations are accompanied by visible improvements in their neighborhoods and communities."<sup>8</sup>

Any comprehensive appraisal of counterinsurgency tactics in Iraq must recognize the delivery of essential services as one of the most significant components of a multifaceted strategy. Supported by the United States, the Iraqi government pursued initiatives that eliminated opportunities for malign non-state actors to operate while simultaneously boosting its own credibility. Such policies reinforced other factors to engender overall positive trends in Baghdad that saw a weakening of the influence of militias and insurgents and a strengthening of the legitimacy and efficacy of the government of Iraq during the execution of the Baghdad Security Plan. **JFQ**

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> "Fact Sheet: A New Way Forward in Iraq," January 10, 2007, available at <[www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2007/01/20070110-3.html](http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2007/01/20070110-3.html)>.

<sup>2</sup> Bruce Pirnie and Edward O'Connell, *Counterinsurgency in Iraq 2003–2006* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2008).

<sup>3</sup> The Iraq Executive Steering Committee was Congressional Benchmark #8.

<sup>4</sup> The Amanat is the Baghdad equivalent to a city hall.

<sup>5</sup> The Provincial Council is the executive body that oversees issues pertaining to the entire province of Baghdad, including human rights, energy production, public relations, and essential services.

<sup>6</sup> The emergence of Awakening Councils is illustrative of local communities collectively rejecting al Qaeda in Iraq's draconian tactics.

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Army, Fragmentary Order #06–468, September 10, 2006.

<sup>8</sup> "Fact Sheet."