



Wargame 1-14: Iraqi Futures Analysis STRATEGIC WARGAMING SERIES

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The findings contained in this report are based on the results of an academic wargame conducted at the United States Army War College 6-7 November 2013. Except where expressly indicated, the ideas presented are derived directly from the comments of wargame participants. The views contained in this report are intended to inform senior Army and Defense leaders including, but not confined to, members of the Army Staff, Geographic Combatant Commands and Army Service Component Commands. This report does not express the policies or official views of the United States Government, the Department of Defense or the United States Army.

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STRENGTH *and* WISDOM

United States Army War College Strategic Wargaming Series Wargame 1-14 Iraqi Futures

Executive Summary

On 6-7 November 2013, the U.S. Army War College Center for Strategic Leadership and Development (CSLD) conducted an unclassified tabletop exercise (TTX) to develop insights into how the combatant commander and the Army can use the military instrument of power, in conjunction with other instruments of national power, in a whole of government effort to help Iraq to be a sovereign, stable, and self-reliant country, and deny support and safe haven to terrorists. The TTX was conducted blind to the new United States Central Command (CENTCOM) Theater Strategy; however, post-TTX the author and analysts referred to the Theater Strategy in developing this report.

Overall, participants had a pessimistic view of Iraq's future. Iraq is a fragile state and becoming more fragile daily. The causes of this instability are mostly internal and ultimately will have to be solved by the Iraqi people, by and for themselves. Until they do so, the United States and other concerned parties will have to remain engaged and actively assist where they can in order to deescalate the current level of violence, prevent a new cycle of escalating violence, and shape the environment to allow the Iraqi people time to solve their problems. That said, external factors aggravate Iraq's problems and cannot be ignored. Iran has significant interests at stake in Iraq and cannot be excluded from efforts to improve security and governance or fully reintegrate Iraq into the region.

CSLD analysis identified two sets of findings that appear to account for the participants' pessimistic view of Iraq's future. There are factors internal to Iraq that are feeding political alienation, especially among the Sunni Arab population, and regional factors that contribute to internal instability in Iraq. In addition, participants developed a third set of findings regarding the U.S. role in Iraq and the region.

Key Findings

Factors Internal to Iraq

Effects on Security: Increasing political alienation, especially among Sunni Arabs, has led to renewed support for Al Qaida in Iraq (AQI) and other violent extremist organizations (VEOs).

- The inability or unwillingness of the Shi'a dominated government to include all elements of the population is the key factor driving political violence.
- AQI activities, especially attacks on Shi'a targets, contribute to the internal unrest and are leading Iraq toward civil war.
- The central government's inability to control Iraq's border and provide adequate internal security provides conditions in which these VEOs can operate freely.
- Bombings and other political violence and resulting casualties have increased sharply and the government response, which often appears to Sunni Arabs to unduly target them, not only has failed to quell the violence, it sometimes has exacerbated the conditions causing the violence.
- Iraq is showing signs of civil war if not already there.

Effects on U.S. Goals for Iraq: The Iraqi government is widely perceived as not just, as not equally representing all Iraqis and as not accountable for its actions.

- Major underlying root causes are spreading and deepening political alienation and institutional inadequacies.
- Lack of a fair rule of law framework continues to undermine progress towards a democratic country that is, “just, representative, and accountable.”
- Lack of a Hydrocarbon Law with an agreed formula for distributing revenues to the regions and provinces impedes effective development of large areas, fosters the sense that Sunnis [and Kurds] do not share government benefits to the same extent as Shi’a Arabs and feeds the spread and depth of political alienation.

Regional Dynamics

Conditions and events in Iraq both affect and are affected by other conditions and events in the broader region; this is especially true of the growing VEO threat in Iraq and the ongoing civil war in Syria.

- Instability in region has taken on a new, more troubling form. In the past instability was manifested as interstate conflict, such as the Arab-Israeli wars, or violent overthrow of governments, especially those friendly to the United States. Now, systemic instability is appearing—many states in the region are inherently unstable because they currently do not, and some cannot, meet the security or other basic needs of their populations, and the people are increasingly dissatisfied and willing to act against their governments.
- Most of the U.S. desiderata regarding Iraq—“sovereign, stable, self-reliant, and fully responsible; denies support and safe haven to terrorists; integrated into the community of nations; [with] worldwide ties through trade and commerce; [and that] contributes to peace and security of the region”— are more about how the United States sees Iraq fitting into and interacting with the region and the world than how Iraq fares internally.
- A destabilizing regional environment exacerbates tensions in an already tense area and acts as an accelerant to Iraq’s declining internal security. Any destabilization elsewhere in the region will quickly add to Iraq’s internal problems.
- The region contributes to Iraq’s instability more than Iraq contributes to instability elsewhere in the region.

U.S. Role in Iraq and the Region:

- The achievement of U.S. policy objectives regarding Iraq will not necessarily result in an Iraq that is pro-U.S.
- The U.S. relationship with Iraq must be addressed within the broader strategy addressing the whole region.
 - Take into account the interests of all regional actors, including Iran and other U.S. adversaries.
 - Establish an ‘OSCE¹-like’ forum to address regional security issues.

¹ Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

Report on the Iraqi Futures Wargame

Overview

On 6-7 November 2013, the U.S. Army War College Center for Strategic Leadership and Development conducted an unclassified Tabletop Exercise (TTX) to develop unclassified insights into how the combatant commander and the Army can use the military instrument of power, in conjunction with other instruments of national power, in a whole of government effort to help Iraq to be a sovereign, stable, and self-reliant country, and deny support and safe haven to terrorists. CSLD invited 22 participants including subject matter experts from the U.S. Army War College faculty, U.S. students, International Fellows from the Middle East, U.S military and civilian officials dealing with Iraq, and scholars from academia and think tanks. The participants were divided into two groups that were similar in composition and each group was given an alternative future for Iraq in 2028, an arbitrary date for the exercise selected to allow enough time for potential events to happen and to cause the participants to think beyond the next 6 months.

Purpose

Identify actions that might be required of the Army Staff, combatant command and ASCC in shaping Iraq to be sovereign, stable and self-reliant, and deny support and safe haven to terrorists.

Objectives

- Determine how the military instrument of power, in conjunction with the other instruments of national power, can contribute to Iraq being stable, secure, and self reliant and denying support and safe haven to terrorists.
- Examine the consequences for the United States and the region if Iraq becomes or does not become a stable, secure, and self reliant state that denies support and safe haven to terrorists.
- Identify the strategic consequences of U.S. action or inaction.
- Identify policy recommendations if appropriate.
- Provide insights into the conditions where U.S. policy objectives are no longer feasible.

Methodology

The TTX was conducted blind to the new CENTCOM Theater Strategy; however, post-TTX the author and analysts referred to the Theater Strategy to develop this report.

One group was given a positive future depicting Iraq in 2028 as envisioned in the 2010 U.S. National Security Strategy (NSS): Iraq is (1) sovereign, stable, self-reliant, and fully responsible; (2) just, representative, and accountable; (3) denies support and safe haven to terrorists; (4) is integrated in the community of nations; (5) has worldwide ties through trade and commerce; and, (6) contributes to peace and security of the region.

The second group was given a negative future depicting Iraq in 2028 as completely opposite to NSS vision: Iraq is (1), critically unstable; (2) the central government retains tenuous control of the capital only; (3) reliant upon international aid

and remittances; (4) divided along sectarian and ethnic lines; (5) unable to control international borders; (6) unable to secure its population against crime; (7) a safe haven for terrorists; and (8) contributes to regional instability.

Participants were asked to consider the future as given to them and assess the impact of that future on U.S. policy objectives. They were then asked what key events could put Iraq on a path to this end state, what would be the regional consequences of this future, and how other actors would view this future Iraq.

Having established a shared understanding of the path Iraq would have to follow to reach the future as given to them, the participants were then asked a series of questions about U.S. use of the instruments of national power to either draw Iraq toward the positive future or deflect it away from the negative future. Finally, they were asked to assess the strategic and regional consequences of these actions and inactions, and for any policy changes that need to be made to execute any of these proposed actions.

Following the event, CSLD analysts reviewed the data and provided their insights to the report author.

Results

The group examining the positive future was highly skeptical that Iraq could fully achieve the U.S. goal of “an Iraq that is sovereign, stable, and self-reliant [with] . . . an Iraqi Government that is just, representative, and accountable and that denies support and safe haven to terrorists” by 2028.² This skepticism stemmed from multiple reasons ranging from the broad assessment that aiding the development of Iraq so that it would fit this description is necessarily a multigenerational project that cannot be fully achieved within the next 15 years, to very specific failings of the Maliki government compounded by demographic and economic trends and external regional factors such as spillover from the Syrian civil war and Iranian influence. On the other hand, the group examining the negative future in which none of the U.S. policy goals were attained by 2028 had little difficulty accepting the plausibility of that future. Furthermore, when the two groups were combined, and they were asked to describe the likely path of Iraq’s evolution in the near- to mid-term, they described a path very similar to the events the negative group had identified as indicators of movement toward the negative future. In short, from the perspective of the likelihood that Iraq is on a path toward fulfillment of U.S. policy goals, the answer was clearly no. This report will address why the exercise participants believed that is so and will suggest steps that the U.S. Government might take to reduce the likelihood of a negative future for Iraq.

CSLD analysis identified two sets of findings that appear to account for the participants’ pessimistic view of Iraq’s future. These are factors internal to Iraq that are feeding political alienation, especially among the Sunni Arab population, and regional factors that contribute to internal instability in Iraq. In addition, they developed a third set of findings regarding the U.S. role in Iraq and the region.

² The White House, National Security of the United States, May 2010, page 25, accessed on line, Nov 25, 2013 at http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss_viewer/national_security_strategy.pdf.

Factors Internal to Iraq Feed Political Alienation

- Economic and Demographic Factors

Like almost all of its neighbors in the Middle East and North Africa, Iraq is under pressure from long-term economic and demographic trends that are creating economic insecurity and social and political unrest. The “Youth Bulge” and lack of jobs increase unemployment and instability and lead to internal unrest. Each year a growing cohort of young, relatively educated youth enter a labor market that is unable to employ them. Thus, un- and underemployment (unemployment is officially at 16%³), even in an oil-rich state like Iraq are high and likely to increase. Participants also noted that the lack of opportunity and security in Iraq resulted in a migration of professionals out of the country resulting in a “brain drain.”

Some Iraqi people have lost hope. If ‘some’ becomes ‘many’ or ‘most’ it should be a true cause for U.S. concern because when hope is lost, those with the means to do so will emigrate, contributing to the brain drain and those without the means to emigrate are more likely to become prime recruiting material for violent extremist organizations (VEOs), both internal and external to Iraq. The emigration weakens the Iraqi economy and VEOs threaten security.

Although Iraq boosted oil exports to a 30-year high of 2.6 million barrels per day in 2012, from 2.2 million in 2011,⁴ participants expressed concern that future foreign investment in the oil sector, needed to sustain or increase these levels, is unlikely if the security environment continues to decline, or the government fails to adopt a Hydrocarbon Law⁵ addressing the distribution of oil revenues and providing potential investors with a predictable legal environment. Without increased revenues to fund development of other sectors of the Iraqi economy with greater job creation capacity than the oil sector, unemployment will continue to grow and feed social and political unrest.

The failure of the Iraqi central government to adopt a basic Hydrocarbon Law that distributes oil revenues to the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and the provinces is a major factor feeding the perception of unfair treatment among Iraqi Sunni Arabs and Kurds. Furthermore, the failure of the central government to invest in infrastructure and other development in Sunni and Kurdish areas also feeds the perception of unfairness and contributes to growing and deepening political alienation.

- Weak Rule of Law and Political Representation

Other factors contributing to the growth and deepening of political alienation include the lack of a ‘just’ rule of law environment; uneven application of the

³ CIA World Fact Book, accessed on line 25 Nov 2013, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/iz.html>

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ The drafters of the Iraqi constitutional side-stepped the divisive issues of specifying how oil revenues were to be shared between the central government and the region/provinces and where the authority to award contracts to develop the country’s petroleum resources would reside by incorporating intentionally vague language in Articles 111 and 112 of the Iraqi constitution on the assumption that the first session of the Council of Representatives and the Federation Council would adopt a ‘Hydrocarbon Law’ addressing these issues. However, to date, they have been unable to do so.

Accountability and Justice Act⁶ (de-Ba'athification) that is perceived by Sunnis as being much harsher on them than on other Iraqis, the lack of minority representation in politics, the military and the economy; i.e., the perception that Sunnis do not hold key positions of power and lack the opportunity to achieve these positions; persecution and imprisonment of Sunni Arabs; failure of the government to provide basic services, compounded by the lack of uniformly provided services across the country. These Sunni grievances are shared to some extent by Iraqi Kurds and even some Iraqi Shi'a Arabs. However, participants noted a trend toward weakening of Iraqi national identity with a concomitant strengthening of ethno-sectarian sub-national identities (Sunni Arab, Shi'a Arab, Kurd, others). [As these sub-national identities gain in strength relative to a common national identity as Iraqis, contact between members of the various groups is likely to lessen, and with less contact, awareness that others are in the same boat is reduced and further weakens the common identity.]⁷

All of the aforementioned Sunni grievances are compounded by a widely shared misperception among Sunnis that they comprise a much larger portion (~40%) of the total population than they really do (~20%). Without a reliable national census to offset this misperception, most Sunnis believe that they are even more underrepresented and are receiving a far smaller share of benefits from the government than they actually are and do. Reality is bad enough but perception makes it worse.

Some participants noted that many Kurds suffer from the same discriminatory treatment by the Shi'a Arab majority as the Sunni Arabs yet they do not appear to be as politically alienated as the Sunni Arabs. In one group, a participant offered that the Kurdish political leaders appreciate that they have made significant progress since 1991 and enjoy relatively good security, prosperity and control of their own affairs to a significant extent. Consequently, the participant posited that the Kurdish leaders 'pragmatically' do not want to upset the apple cart and take any action that would cause Baghdad [or Ankara] to lash out at them. All of the participants in that group accepted this as a plausible explanation of the disparity in overt behavior between Sunni Arabs and Kurds. Consequently, it is important to note that although Kurdish Iraqis are not displaying behaviors that indicate political alienation it should not be assumed that such alienation from the central government is absent in Kurdistan. Indeed, as another participant aptly pointed out, the Kurds have been largely alienated from Baghdad since the foundation of modern Iraq following the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire after World War I.

- Iraqi Government Failure

Participants identified many areas of governance in which the central government in Baghdad appears to be failing—ranging from inadequate or maldistributed infrastructure development, through absence of the rule of law and uneven application of existing law, failure to adopt and implement critical legislation

⁶ On January 12, 2008, the Iraqi parliament passed the "Law of the Supreme National Commission for Accountability and Justice." The new law replaced the earlier framework governing Iraq's De-Ba'athification policies.

⁷ Bracketed [] material has been inserted by the report author to explain or expand a point made by TTX participants.

such as the Hydrocarbon Law or adequately define the relationship between the central government and the provinces and regions; to the excessive concentration of power in the hands of the Prime Minister, Nouri al-Maliki. They categorized many of these failings as institutional inadequacy.

Rather than catalog all of these failings, we will use the Iraqi military as a prime example of institutional inadequacy. Not all of the Iraqi military's problems are of its own making; it has been misused as a law enforcement agency for internal security, because law enforcement agencies in Iraq have been incapable of providing internal security in all parts of the country. The focus of the military on internal security limits its capability and capacity to perform more appropriate missions of border security and external defense. Unsecure borders, especially the one with Syria, allow cross-border movement of VEOs, weapons and other illicit goods, contributing to the level of violence in both Iraq and Syria.

When military forces act improperly, there are unintended consequences such as undermining public trust and exacerbating communal tensions. The misuse of the Iraqi military for internal security is aggravated by the lack of training or disregard for the rule of law while executing these law enforcement and internal security missions, resulting in abusive behaviors. Minority populations perceive the Iraqi military is not representative of the population at large, especially in key leadership positions, which are held mainly by Shi'a. The combination of abusive behavior and under representation of minorities in the military create the perception that the military is an instrument of Shi'a repression, undermining trust in the military and the government at large and further alienating minority communities.

Internal policies and practices of the Iraqi military also have negative consequences for the broader society. Lack of opportunity for training and education, especially in the junior ranks can create frustration for those who joined to gain job skills to increase their potential for economic betterment. Participants reasoned that young Iraqis might enter the military thinking they would be able to get education and training only to find that the good training opportunities went to the senior military personnel even though it was more advantageous to the military as an institution to train the younger soldiers. Not only does this create frustration, it can also be the catalyst for them to seek counter-productive opportunities such as crime and terror, where their military training makes them more attractive to VEOs as recruits and more dangerous than others to Iraqi society.

Prime Minister al-Maliki was viewed by most of the participants as a significant part of the problem. He has not been a catalyst for unification and has not pushed to foster Iraqi national identity [common sense of identity as Iraqis, i.e., 'we are all Iraqis']; instead, he is broadly viewed as representing the interests of the Shi'a Iraqis, not Sunnis, Kurds or other minorities. This sectarian bias and his closeness to Iran have been major contributors to the lack of trust of the government by the Sunni Arabs and Kurds. There was a strong perception of excessive consolidation of power in the office of the prime minister. Al-Maliki isolates and marginalizes potential strong political opponents and has been accused of labeling political opponents as terrorists and leveraging the existing terrorist threat to gain political momentum. This concentration of power in Maliki's hands is a major factor in exacerbating Sunni alienation.

- Effects on Security

Increasing political alienation, especially among Sunni Arabs, has led to renewed support for Al Qaida in Iraq and other VEOs. Al Qaida in Iraq (AQI) is sometimes seen as the defender of the Sunnis and the protector of Sunni beliefs. AQI activities, especially attacks on Shi'a targets, contribute to the internal unrest and are leading Iraq toward civil war. AQI and other Islamist VEOs are once again seizing an opportunity in Iraq to advance their agenda, increasing the level of violence, enflaming Sunni-Shi'a antagonisms and using sanctuary in western Iraq to support operations in Syria. The inability of the central government to control Iraq's border and provide adequate internal security provides conditions in which these VEOs can operate freely. Bombings, other political violence and casualties⁸ have increased sharply and the government response, which often appears to Sunni Arabs to unduly target them, not only has failed to quell the violence, it sometimes has exacerbated the conditions causing the violence. There is an increase in militia activity filling the government security void. Iraq is showing signs of civil war if not already there. One participant suggested that "Maliki [or his successor] turning loose the Shi'a militias" would indicate that threshold had been crossed. As the sectarian violence in Iraq continues and grows, the temptation for the government to keep the Iraqi military focused on internal security will increase, making it more difficult to transition to border security and external defense.

- Effects on U.S. Goals for Iraq

The Iraqi government is widely perceived as not just, as not equally representing all people and as not accountable for its actions. Major underlying root causes are spreading and deepening political alienation and institutional inadequacies. Lack of a fair rule of law framework continues to undermine progress towards a democratic country that is, "just, representative, and accountable." Lack of a Hydrocarbon Law and an agreed formula for distributing revenues to the regions and provinces impedes effective development of large areas of the country, fosters the sense that Sunnis [and Kurds] do not benefit from the government to the same extent as Shi'a Arabs and feeds the spread and depth of political alienation.

Regional Dynamics

It is worth noting up front that most of the U.S. desiderata regarding the future Iraq—"sovereign, stable, self-reliant, and fully responsible; denies support and safe haven to terrorists; integrated into the community of nations; [with] worldwide ties through trade and commerce; [and that] contributes to peace and security of the region"—are more about how Iraq fits into and interacts with the rest of the region and the world than how Iraq fares internally.

⁸ The death toll for 2013 rose to 7157 through the end of November, up from 3,238 in all of 2012, according the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq, cited by BBC News, "Iraq violence: Cafe car bomb kills 11 in central town, 9 December 2013, accessed at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-25299117>.

Conditions and events in Iraq both affect and are affected by other conditions and events in the broader region; this is especially true of the growing VEO threat in Iraq and the ongoing civil war in Syria. Overall the participants found that a destabilizing regional environment continues to exacerbate tensions in an already tense area and acts as an accelerant to Iraq's declining internal security. In their view, the region contributes to Iraq's instability more than Iraq contributes to instability elsewhere in the region. Most shared the view that any destabilization elsewhere in the region will quickly add to Iraq's internal problems.

Since the end of World War II, when the United States became politically engaged in the Middle East, **regional stability** has consistently been a U.S. national security interest in the region, and there has been almost constant concern about instability, but these terms have not always had the same meaning. Some scholars, statesmen and policy makers use instability to mean only the presence of interstate conflict, especially armed conflict, and stability to be its absence. Others also include threats to the continuity of incumbent regimes, especially when those regimes are friendly and the threats are of violent overthrow. When discussions of regional stability/instability take place and these meanings are unstated and mixed, the participants, despite using the same word, are trying to convey vastly different concepts. Within this TTX, it was not always clear which of these meanings the participants were using at various points in the dialog.

At present, there appears to be a third and more troubling form of instability in the region, systemic instability, by which the author of this report means that many states in the region are inherently unstable because they currently do not, and some cannot, meet the needs of their populations in terms of physical or economic security or other basic needs, and the people are increasingly dissatisfied and willing to act on their dissatisfaction. Governments must either reform to meet the needs of their people or they will fall, continuing on their present trajectory only leads to eventual overthrow. We have already seen this in Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen and Syria and are beginning to see it again in Iraq.

- Regional security is collapsing contributing to the collapse of Iraqi security.

The Syrian civil war is spilling over into Iraq and Iraqi security issues are spilling over into Syria. Sunni fighters flow back and forth across the unsecured border. These groups are often infiltrated with Al-Qaeda affiliates and members of other VEOs.

Because the Iraqi military is not focused on national defense or border security,⁹ Iraq remains vulnerable to infiltration by VEOs and refugee flows from the conflict in Syria. Increased under- or ungoverned space in Syria and Iraq, especially the inability of both governments to control their mutual border contributes to increasing freedom of movement for VEOs.

Refugees from the Syrian civil war continue to increase along with the need for U.S. regional partners to provide them food, water, medical aid, etc. If western Iraq becomes more insecure, Syrian refugees there will seek other refuge and Sunni Iraqis may once again become refugees. For both groups, Jordan is the most likely destination and it is already overburdened with Palestinian, Iraqi and Syrian refugees from past and present conflicts.

⁹ See the discussion above in the section titled: [Iraqi Government Failure](#)

- Regional Conditions That Contribute to Instability

From within the region, state boundaries are viewed as artificial. From this perspective, current state borders and resulting ethno-sectarian population mixes were forced on the region by European colonial masters to suit their purposes and not those of regional natives. On top of their other challenges the current governments must deal with the consequences of this historical legacy.

Ethnic and sectarian identity is growing stronger across the region in general, while national identity is growing weaker in Iraq in particular. If other governments in the region respond to internal instability in ways that foster political alienation, as is happening in Iraq, they are also likely to experience a weakening of national identity.

Some participants viewed the increasing sectarian violence between Sunni and Shi'a Iraqis as a prelude to or microcosm of a broader sectarian conflict that may engulf the region. AQI and similar groups are sometimes seen as defenders of the Sunnis and protectors of the Sunni belief system in Iraq. This gives it appeal among Sunni populations across the region. Because AQI is perceived in Iraq and the region as 'of foreign origin relative to Iraq' some of the exercise participants considered this to be a regional, rather than Iraqi phenomenon. Saudi Arabia and other regional states with Sunni governments consider themselves to have a stake in protecting the rights of Iraqi Sunni Arabs and countering Iranian influence.

Other regional dynamics are affecting Iraq or being affected by Iraq. Additionally, some regional oil producing states are concerned that Iraq's potential oil production capacity will undermine their economies if that potential is realized. Iranian acquisition of nuclear weapons would further destabilize the region. The underlying reasoning for a nuclear Iran adding instability appeared to be that it would trigger an Israeli strike on Iran, if not a U.S. strike or lead to other regional states pursuing nuclear weapons.

- Regional perceptions.

The perception by regional states and actors exists that the United States, having broken Iraq bore an obligation to fix it and that by pulling out of Iraq prematurely the United States failed to fulfill its obligation. This perception can lead or has already led to fractured U.S. relationships in the region.

Exercise participants noted that the U.S. 'pivot to Asia' has caused a perception of U.S. disengagement from region opening the door for an increase in Russian and Chinese influence, most visibly through arms sales. Participants discussed that this could either help quell violence by providing needed weapon systems or accelerate internal Iraq violence if the systems are used by the Maliki government for political gains.

There is a general mistrust of Iraq by other regional actors, especially the Sunni Arab states. This mistrust prevents Iraqi inclusion in regional partnerships, military exercises, and the normalization of relations. This problem is compounded by Maliki's perceived relationship with Iran. The perception of Iranian-Maliki collusion reinforces the notion of a 'Shi'a axis' and alienates Iraq from other regional neighbors. Post-TTX analysis indicates that perceptions such as excessive Iranian influence on Iraq derive at

least in part because regional actors, especially governments, are viewing events through the lens of a growing Sunni-Shi'a dispute.

Participants offered two contradictory explanations for how Iranian attainment of nuclear weapons would increase Iran's influence on Iraq. One explanation is that Iraq under Maliki would benefit from the increased power of its nuclear armed partner. The other was that Iraq would feel compelled to comply with a nuclear armed Iran's demands.

- Contrary Regional Views on the Threat to Security.

Both the people and the governments in the region look at the threat differently from Americans and the U.S. Government; many times these views are much different from U.S. perspectives of the regional threat. In particular, many participants felt that AQI was not perceived as big a threat as thought by the United States. When the understanding of the threat differs, it undermines development of common or compatible policies with partners in the region.

- Other regional dynamics

One group saw potential formation of eastward leaning oil conglomerates with the possibility of an "OPEC-like" formation which would include Iraq, Russia and Iran. The group believed this conglomerate would continue to supply India and China and expand its influence in the region. The report author discounts the view that any new group of oil producers could emerge as 'OPEC-like,' as conditions that allowed OPEC to form and to temporarily dominate the global oil market do not exist and are unlikely to be recreated. Thus, while such a group of oil producers may form and attempt to gain influence in the region, it would be unlikely that they would be able to dominate the global trade in oil. Further, it is unremarkable that oil from this region would be sold to China and India, they are large emerging markets and relatively proximate to the region.

Summary

In sum, Iraq is a fragile state and becoming more fragile daily. The causes of this instability are mostly internal and ultimately will have to be solved by the Iraqi people, by and for themselves. Until they do so, the United States and other concerned parties will have to remain engaged and actively assist where they can in order to deescalate the current level of violence, prevent a new cycle of escalating violence, and shape the environment to provide the Iraqi people time to solve their problems. That said, external factors aggravate Iraq's problems and cannot be ignored. Iran has significant interests at stake in Iraq and cannot be excluded from efforts to improve security and governance or fully reintegrate Iraq into the region. In addition, perceptions often amplify some aspects of the truth, compounding problems and making them harder to solve.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions Regarding the U.S. Role in the Region

- U.S. policy objectives regarding Iraq are aspirational and are unlikely to be fully achievable. The achievement of these objectives will not necessarily result in an Iraq that is pro-U.S. Iraq must be addressed within the broader context of a strategy that addresses the region as a whole.

Most participants viewed these objectives as a “wish list” rather than strategic policy objectives that the United States planned to pursue “full force”—to full achievement. Establishing metrics against full achievement of these potentially unattainable goals could generate impatience and overreach; trying to do too much, too fast, or doing things for the Iraqis that they need to do themselves. In short, we need to accept progress toward these goals, without discarding them entirely.

The accomplishment of current U.S. policy objectives does not necessarily result in an Iraq that is pro-U.S. Participants felt strongly that a ‘representative and accountable’ Iraqi government would not be pro-U.S. Further the policy objectives appear to be based on the unstated assumption that a pro-U.S. successful Iraq is a necessity for U.S. strategic objectives.

A significant reduction in available resources resulting from the pivot to the Asia-Pacific region and the current U.S. fiscal climate may require the USG to focus on mitigation strategies for managing the consequences of instability in Syria, Iraq and elsewhere in the region.

Recommendations

Considerations affecting Recommendations

Throughout the TTX, participants identified significant considerations that should be taken into account in the formulation of U.S. policy toward Iraq and associated strategies and implementations plans, including the CENTCOM Theater Strategy and Theater Campaign Plan. They also offered recommendations that from their various perspectives would improve the likelihood of progress toward existing U.S. policy objectives. These considerations and recommendations are enumerated below.

Internal Iraqi Conditions: The conditions internal to Iraq cannot be effectively addressed by outside intervention alone. Durable solutions can only come from the Iraqis themselves; therefore, the United States must limit itself to offering advice and assistance to the Government of Iraq that will enable it to address the conditions causing political alienation and feeding the current cycle of violence. It can encourage the Maliki and successor governments to do the right things, and most importantly, stop doing the wrong things.

Regional Conditions: Security erosion in Iraq cannot solely be attributed to a series of internal failings. Regional security is also collapsing, which exerts negative pressures against an already fragile Iraqi security environment. A regional solution is needed and it must take into account Iran's national interest and the spillover effects from the Syrian Civil War. As the United States shifts priorities to the Asia-Pacific region its ability to influence events in the Middle East will decline and other actors, notably China, Russia and Iran will have opportunities to increase their influence. We should expect a decrease of U.S. influence¹⁰ due to the perception of diminished U.S. credibility and diminished U.S. military presence in the region. This effect will diminish over time only if the United States maintains some presence and demonstrates the ability to act effectively to preserve its interests, when necessary.

Recommendations for CENTCOM

These recommendations are aligned with the Strategic Approach described in the CENTCOM Theater Strategy of 1 September 2013 and are identified as (M) Manage, (P) Prevent, or (Sh) Shape activities. Because of the design and longer term timeframe of the TTX, most of these recommendations are for shaping activities. The Army should support CENTCOM and ARCENT's manage, prevent and shape efforts in Iraq by providing requisite resources.

Internal Iraqi Conditions

- (M/P) Provide Intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) support and conduct intelligence sharing to increase the effectiveness of the Iraqi forces in defending their borders and creating a stable and secure country, and to prevent internal miscalculation.
- (Sh) Leverage the special trust Iraq has with the U.S. military through the Office of Security Cooperation-Iraq (OSC-I). Several participants advocated a reversal of the downsizing of OSC-I.
- (Sh) Through OSC-I, discourage Iraqi officials from deleting training, support and sustainment lines from major equipment FMS cases so that the US equipment does not deteriorate and send a signal of poor US equipment and support.
- (Sh) Use International Military Education (IMET) to maintain contact with the military and set the example for institutional reform. Focus efforts on Rule of Law education and continued development of a professional military with representation of Iraq's population in all levels.
- (Sh) Focus IMET resources on professional military education (PME) and (M/P) use other Security Cooperation programs for law enforcement¹¹ so that Iraq can achieve border security first as a precondition for quelling internal unrest.

¹⁰ Since regional influence is based in large part on the perception of power, small changes in relative power can generate large swings in influence, at least temporarily.

¹¹ Arms Export Control Act (AECA), Section C4.5.7.3, Police Training. While the AECA does not prohibit police training, both DSCA and DoS must approve the offering of defense articles and services (to include training) via FMS. The Foreign Assistance Act (FAA), with certain exceptions, generally prohibits the use of FAA-authorized funding for police training. Section 660(b), FAA, provides the exceptions. Source: Security Assistance Management Manual, DSCA 5105.38-M, at <http://www.samm.dsca.mil>.

Regional Conditions

Within the context of a U.S. whole-of-government broader regional strategy, CENTCOM should:

- (Sh) Increase military support for Iraq throughout the region:
 - (Sh) Conduct joint exercises and invite regional partners with Iraq. Advocate Iraqi inclusion in defensive exercises which are not a threat to Iran. Encourage extensive media coverage of these exercises.
 - (Sh) Support GCC military exercises with only regional forces with U.S. forces notably absent.
 - (Sh) Encourage and support PME exchanges among regional partner countries.
- (Sh) Assist in the integration of Iraq into the community of nations by:
 - (Sh) Conducting joint multinational regional exercises where Iraq can show its flag as a regional member. Use defensive or humanitarian scenarios that do not pose a threat to Iran.
 - (Sh) Encouraging and conducting PME exchanges with the region, and support intra-regional PME exchanges by encouraging Iraq send its officers to PME in other U.S. partner countries and encourage those partner countries to accept Iraqi officers at their PME institutions.

Recommendations for Implementation through Interagency Partners

Internal Iraqi Conditions

- (M/P) Encourage the Iraqis to establish a clear delineation of missions between law enforcement and military roles and to improve Iraqi Police capabilities and capacity to handle the internal security threats so that the military can focus on securing the borders and defending against external threats.
 - (M/P) Encourage the Iraqi Government to make reparations to persecuted Sunnis; end PM Maliki's involvement in the Sunni endowment; and encourage the development of Sunni autonomy and an offer of amnesty as a show of good faith.
 - (M/P/Sh) Assist the Iraqi Government in developing a strategic communications campaign to use the media to publicize the steps they are taking to close the sectarian divide, establish just rule of law and increase the salience of Iraqi national identity for all Iraqis.
 - (M/P/Sh) Ensure that the military and diplomatic messages sent to Iraq by the United States are coordinated and support the same goal. Avoid mixed or conflicting messages from the strategic communication standpoint.
 - (P/Sh) Condition security cooperation and assistance programs and/or economic assistance on Iraqi compliance with rule of law requirements. For example, condition the delivery of US M1A1 tanks to the disbandment of the de-Ba'athification Commission, clear progress in the enforcement of human rights, opening of prisons to inspection. Other issues that might be linked to FMS include abolishing the Accountability and Justice Act (de-Ba'athification), establishing an Independent Iraqi judiciary, conducting Rule of Law training for Iraqi security forces, ending PM Maliki's involvement with the Sunni endowment. Such conditionality must be used judiciously and with full awareness of significant risk that it could lead to Iraq turning to other supplies.
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- (Sh) Encourage private sector economic development in Iraq. Help create an economic atmosphere which entices those who have left as part of the “brain drain” to return and provides job opportunities for “Youth Bulge” generation Iraqis. Focus efforts on sectors that will maximize job growth and reduce unemployment.
- (Sh) Encourage Iraq to improve the climate for Foreign Direct Investment.

Regional Conditions

- (M) Continue to assist and generate regional support for the refugee situation created by regional conflict, especially the current Syrian situation.
- (P) Prepare for increasing instability as the refugee problem worsens and possibly leads to civil war and the internal collapse of Lebanon and other states.
- (M/P/Sh) The United States should approach Iraq as part of a regional strategy that includes development of an ‘OSCE-like’¹² regional security forum.
 - (Sh) Use diplomacy to build consensus for this regional security forum. The organization must be open to all regional states, ally and adversary alike.
 - (Sh) Use this OSCE-like forum to support regional meetings involving all concerned parties for resolution of the Syrian conflict. A stable Syria is needed as a precursor to accomplishing the U.S. policy objectives toward Iraq.
- (M/P) Increase diplomatic contact with all relevant regional actors including Iran and the Assad government of Syria.
 - (M/P) Engage Iran bilaterally.
 - (M) Pursue a diplomatic solution to Syrian crisis.
- (Sh) Consider alternate offshore strategies—“Offshore Balancing.”
- (Sh) Support and encourage engagement of Iraq by our regional partners.
- (P/SH) Assist in the integration of Iraq into the community of nations by:
 - (P/Sh) Encouraging extensive media coverage and strategic communication to generate public support in Iraq and increase national identity.

Recommendations for the Army

- Continue to support a Lieutenant General as the OSC-I Chief. Given the special relationship this office has had with Iraqi leadership, the symbolism of the office to the Iraqis is significant.
- Support continuation of higher manning levels for OSC-I.
- Make resourcing Iraqi military training opportunities in the United States at Army institutions a priority – meaning they are guaranteed a seat.
- Readily respond to requests to support increased mil-to-mil training exercises/events.
- Consider potential demands to reinstate ground forces in expanded roles for security cooperation/assistance, advise and assist missions, training exercises, and exchanges.
- Look for opportunities to provide foreign military sales at least cost possible.
- Update security cooperation/assistance doctrine to account for operating in a country where the security situation is not benign.

¹² Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe