

Demobilizing, Reforming, and Rebuilding the Iraqi Armed Forces & Dismantling and Transforming Iraq's Military Industries

Friday, November 15, 2002

Paper

Formulas for the Management of the Iraqi Armed Forces after Saddam

By Sadoun al-Dulaimi

Introduction: A Brief Theoretical Framework

For over two decades, the Iraqi Armed Forces methods of action, structure and movements have been subject to the temper of the security establishment, in response to the atmosphere of suspicion and mistrust in which Saddam exists, and which he tries to dispel by propagating security organizations, diversifying their areas of specialization, and giving them greater authority. He is personally fond of security work, and behaves like a security cell under conditions of performing a duty. Therefore, he has tied the primary security establishments to his personal office, through what is called the National Security Council. Not satisfied with that, he carried the methods of security operations into the various state sectors and throughout its institutions. Then he did the same to the forming blocks of Iraqi society. Even the Ba'th Party was turned into an army of informants, armed with uncertainty and suspicion toward each other.

This makes the ruling authority in Iraq uniquely strange, not only because of the multitude of security establishments, and the use of the country's economic, military and human resources for the purpose of protecting ruling authority's security and preserving its existence, but also because it has given a particularly deviant and unique meaning to the concept of security. The rule in civilized, and not-so-civilized, states is that the political system derives the strength of its security and its continued *raison d'être* from the general state of security and stability that exists in society. The ruling authority in Iraq, on the other hand, has managed to usurp the security and safety of the Iraqis for its own benefit and by the use of all possible methods, based on a sick assumption it adopted over three decades ago, which can be summarized thus: **The strength of the ruling authority is based on the fragmentation of the social and psychological unity of the Iraqi people.**

Based on this assumption came the manipulation of the components of the Iraqi social fabric, in the name of sectarianism, ethnic division, tribalism or regionalism. All this makes the Iraqi citizen exist in a state of perpetual fear from the accusation of treason, disloyalty to the homeland, or conspiracy with foreign powers. This has become evident in the composition and functions of the Armed Forces. Based on this introduction, and in line with the objectives of this research, we have found it useful to separate the Iraqi Armed Forces into two major segments:

1. **The Public (General) Army**

2. **The Private (Special) Army**

1- The Public Army: This refers to the Iraqi military establishment which has been in existence for decades, and which forms part of the legacy of the modern state of Iraq since its creation in 1921. Although Iraq has lived through an assortment of political systems, the overall loyalty of the Public Army as an institution has remained to Iraq as the homeland. This was aided by the diversified composition of the General Army, which was largely a reflection of the ethnic, sectarian and religious structure of Iraqi society. Saddam Hussein's security paranoia led him to realize that he cannot gain the absolute loyalty of the General Army. Consequently, he adopted a system of purges, or "cleansing" (as he called it) against the elements within the officer corps that were less than loyal. He then began enforcing the methods of security operations on the larger establishment, by expanding the scope of operation of Military Intelligence, creating the Military Security, and transforming both organizations into a security apparatus engaged in monitoring and surveillance. In addition, there was a growing intensity in oppressive measures, designed to lower the financial and moral status of the Public Army's officers and enlisted personnel in comparison to those of the Private Army.

A field study of some units in the Public Army revealed that a high percentage of soldiers, and a substantial percentage of officers, considered their service in the army full of psychological, social and economic suffering, and that their discharge from service would be a great advantage, because they would primarily be released from their bondage and can then look forward to building a new life.

Therefore we believe it would be necessary to preserve the basic structural components of the Public Army, which can be reformed and rehabilitated much more easily than the Private Army. This can be achieved through the following means, among others:

- Discharge those who do not wish to continue serving in that institution, provided that suitable measures are taken to provide them with other work opportunities. This would not be difficult in a country such as Iraq, which will require reconstruction, and which does possess the necessary resources for that task.
- Retire high ranking officers. Provide assistance to some of them in locating suitable jobs in the civil service or in private projects, or small-business management.
- Utilize lower and middle ranking officers, especially those who wish to continue serving in the army, after rehabilitating them according to the formulas of the new military service and its defense creed.
- Provide incentives to attract young people to enlist in military service in order to transform the military into a professional, quality corps.
- Review and revise the law of mandatory military service (the draft), in light of the nature of the new era.
- Create necessary constraints in order to distance the military establishment from the political currents of the country, with their narrow and occasionally conflicting interests.
- In determining the size of the armed forces, keep in mind the internal and external threats to Iraq, in addition to its geographic location.

2- The Private Army: This consists of the military forces that were created and used primarily for the purpose of defending and protecting the ruling authority. These are forces that Saddam created in response to his own security needs and endless paranoia. Most important among these forces are the various bodies of the Republican Guard, and the security institutions (General Security, Special Security, Intelligence, Military Intelligence) and the assorted militias that derive from them, and several emergency units and special operation forces throughout the country. Saddam's perpetual concern was the creation of ethnically and religiously homogenous military forces, in order to guarantee their absolute loyalty to the greatest extent possible. This explains why Sunni Arabs constitute about 90% of the Private Army. These forces enjoyed the best training and armament programs to protect the ruling authority from any external or internal attack, as well as to provide it with the capability of defeating the Public Army if it tried to mutiny against the ruling authority. These were some of the crucial reasons which made the Private army stronger, in training and weaponry, at the expense of the Public Army

Formulas for Dealing With the Private Army After Saddam:

There are two existing, and conflicting, approaches, at least among the various groups within the Iraqi opposition, towards dealing with these forces in post-Saddam Iraq.

The First Approach is inclined towards eliminating these forces and obliterating them wherever they may be found, and presenting whatever elements remain to special tribunals to determine their fate, on the grounds that they have committed crimes against Iraq, the Iraqi people, and Iraqi interests. Some even go so far as to advocate the liquidation of these forces and their members at the onset of the transformation on the grounds that they are a source of evil, in addition to being the protective fence around the ruling authority.

The Second Approach is more realistic, and takes into consideration the large number of the members of these forces, which stand at over half a million. Many of these elements believe that they were serving Iraq in some form. Some found themselves in these forces as a result of the lack of opportunities and choices within a political system that turned fighting and warfare into a profession with large privileges. These elements believe that, ultimately, they merely implemented the policy of the ruling authority, in the same way as the forces of the Public Army or any other institution in the state of Iraq. Therefore, liquidating or eliminating them, or even erasing their role completely, would be a continuation of the cycle of violence and would further complicate Iraq's problems. This approach does not view the forces of the Private Army as one cohesive homogenous unit. Rather, they can be differentiated in terms of quality, quantity, structure, tasks, privileges, degree of loyalty, and the degree of Saddam's trust they enjoy.

Therefore, we find it necessary to deal separately with each force or establishment in the Private Army when it comes to making decisions about discharging, reforming, or restructuring them. We should not adopt the policy of mandatory discharge, because this will have many negative political, economic and social effects, and may have negative repercussions on the entire future era.

- **The Republican Guard:** The method of changing the regime will reflect inevitably on the approach of dealing with these forces before any other. A fierce fight on the side of Saddam certainly will not be rewarded with warmth after the transformation. Therefore, those who give up and abandon their defense of the ruling regime will be offered one of two choices:

- a. They can remain in service, provided they go through intensive reform and rehabilitation training courses.
- b. They can be discharged from service in return for some moral and financial incentives, or pensioned off, and assisted in finding other employment or starting small businesses.

Those who have committed crimes against Iraqis would be presented before special tribunals to determine their fate.

In general, the Republican Guard must be returned to its natural function within the ranks of the Public Army.

- There are establishments within the ranks of the Private Army that can be considered part of the legacy of the state of Iraq, since they have been in existence for over five decades. These include General Security and Military Intelligence, which contain accumulated technical skills that might be useful in the post-Saddam era. For example, the **General Security** contains large administrations that handle economic and criminal affairs, and others involved with technical and research issues that is always be useful because they represent levels of expertise and knowledge that have accumulated over decades.

As for the sections that cover political issues and which were created and developed to confiscate freedoms and pursue opposition forces and free thought, these will certainly not be part of the approach described above. One should keep in mind that those who were involved in hounding free thought possessed unique qualities in comparison to their colleagues who worked in more technical, knowledge-based and expertise-based areas.

It is also necessary to reconnect the General Security to the Ministry of Interior, as used to be the case, and to disconnect it from the office of the Presidency, where it became part of the National Security Council headed by Saddam.

- **Military Intelligence:** With the exception of some corrupt and criminal elements, especially those who worked in the political sections and in military security, it may be possible to utilize some elements from this establishment, depending upon the circumstances of the coming era. They could be returned to their principal duties within the army, which will always require these services.
- As for the "**Private Security**", the "**General Intelligence**", and the assorted branches of these establishments such as the Emergency Forces, the Presidential Guard, Saddam's Partisans (Fida'is), and the Special Operations units, which were created in response to the needs of the head of state and his philosophy of survival, and which have formed and developed their skills on this basis, it is our belief that they cannot be maintained or rehabilitated. We believe they will fight fiercely for Saddam. It may be possible to consider discharging the survivors, under certain restrictions, and presenting the criminals among them to special tribunal to receive their punishment.

Finally, we believe it would be useful to consider carefully the question of dealing with the forces of the Private Army before and during the change. This will help us avoid many complications and crises. Therefore, these forces will need clear and open reassurances that:

1. they will not be a target of revenge, while Saddam remains or after he is gone, and
2. they will keep some of their privileges at a level that will preserve their dignity, and
3. that their role in the future will not be eliminated entirely.

The Post-Saddam Era and National Security:

While it is possible to have different opinions about the nature of the future defense policy or military doctrine of the Iraqi Armed Forces, there might be no disagreement

about the possible effect of internal and external threats on the stability of national security.

In this respect, we have found that most policies of the Opposition are inclined toward romantic notions of dealing with critical issues. Primary among these are questions of security and how to confront them after the removal of the Saddam regime. It is well known that security requires realistic policies and accumulated expertise. This cannot be imported, as it depends on a multitude of internal factors and data. Its implementation will be the first gauge of the seriousness and validity of the alternative.

Accordingly, we propose the establishment of an entity that will address security planning and will be in charge of formulating security policies, in accordance with the the following guidelines:

1. Determining the suitable procedures and formulas for dealing with the existing security establishments before and after the transformation.
2. Formulating the basic concepts of security and of creating security establishments that match the nature of the post-Saddam era, and determining the methods needed to confront internal and external threats to national security.
3. Taking advantage of international expertise, particularly from democratic sources, for the purpose of building a solid security policy in the context of protecting basic freedoms and the respect of human rights. Therefore, we see that the assistance of international expertise should be provided in the following contexts:
 - Providing opportunities for participation in educational and training courses, especially for decision-makers and those in charge of formulating security policies, in order to study the role of security establishments and the limits of their authorities in democratic systems, and
 - Providing needed professional and technical assistance, and training opportunities to guarantee the success of the requirements of security work, and
 - Training opportunities in technical and professional areas for security decision-makers, especially in the areas of preventive and remedial security, in order to familiarize them with the best practices in these areas, and
 - Support for scientific research methods with practical and theoretical expertise, and an exchange of experts and studies in this area, and
 - Assistance in creating training courses for data analysis, using modern methods, and
 - Cooperation in security areas by means of bilateral security agreements to support and develop local security skills, and
 - Assistance in providing essential electronic equipment and infrastructure.

Sadoun al-Dulaimi defected from Iraq in 1991 and now serves as a colonel for the Iraqi opposition.