



HEADQUARTERS
MULTI-NATIONAL FORCE – IRAQ
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Guidelines for Achieving Sustainable Stability

Since January 1, 2009, Multi-National Force-Iraq has been operating under the provisions of the US-Iraq Security Agreement (SA). The SA reflects Iraq's status as a sovereign nation, and it, along with the Strategic Framework Agreement (SFA), provides the basis for a long-term, comprehensive, strategic partnership between the United States and Iraq.

Security conditions in Iraq have improved, but remain fragile and reversible. We are currently in a period of transition as the Government of Iraq undertakes political change and our forces adjust their footprint across the country. Despite changes to our operating environment, however, our mission remains the same – as members of a joint and coalition team, we and our Iraqi partners continue to conduct full spectrum operations. The counterinsurgency (COIN) principles that we have followed and which have proven so successful are unchanged, and we practice them by, with, and through our Iraqi partners. While stability operations have always been an important element of our COIN strategy, they must now assume greater importance within our campaign. Though different parts of Iraq require different approaches, the following guidelines must shape our operations:

Understand all aspects of the environment – Lead, think, and adapt: Iraq is a complex and ever-changing environment, and conditions on the ground are different across the country. Strive to understand local, civil, tribal, provincial and governmental relationships and institutions. Leaders must teach their teams to respond to changing conditions. Always update TTPs to meet emerging challenges. Stay alert and avoid complacency by maintaining our professional standards, and recognize that every action by a member of the Coalition could have strategic implications. Our enemies will continue to respond to our successes, and we must always be ahead of their reactions. This struggle is ultimately the Iraqis' to win, so we must empower them to accomplish the tasks that we have traditionally accomplished and assist them to become agile and adaptive in this dynamic environment.

Foster GoI legitimacy: We must become completely transparent and coordinate at all levels of our partnership. The long-term viability of Iraq depends on the Iraqi people believing that their interests are best served by their elected officials in accordance with the Iraqi Constitution. We must continue to help build competent, capable, and professional police forces and armed services that merit the faith and confidence of the Iraqi people – regardless of ethnicity or sect. Realize that governance, like politics, is local. Pay attention to what the Iraqi people are saying, and help guide Iraqi officials into providing the requisite public services and educational and commercial opportunities that the populace yearns for. When the Iraqi people truly believe that their future – and their children's future – will be better because of the GoI, we know we are achieving success.

Focus on institutions, not individuals: The key to sustainable stability in Iraq is strong, transparent, and effective institutions – political, economic, diplomatic, and rule of law. We must synchronize our interagency efforts to strengthen these institutions and create conditions for private investment. In this effort, focus on the middle – the mid-level government official, the middle manager. This is where the strength of a professional institution lies. Avoid temporary, “quick fixes” to problems if the solution undermines the long-term viability of the institution.

Develop a comprehensive approach: While assisting our Iraqi partners to address the extremely complex issues facing their nation, we must bring to bear all the resources and expertise of the United States government, the United Nations, international organizations, and private sector entities to achieve unity of effort. This approach must be founded on cooperation, the sharing of information and

resources, and commitment to a common goal. The full integration of military, civilian, and international capabilities, both US and Iraqi, is vital to achieving stability in Iraq.

Promote accommodation and set the stage for reconciliation: Unresolved political and territorial disputes and the lack of a unified national vision by Iraq's leaders continue to undermine the long-term stability of Iraq. These issues are difficult and complex, and they cannot be solved overnight. Encourage accommodation and help Iraqis take the first steps toward reconciliation. We must understand – and impress upon our Iraqi partners at every level – that the process of political accommodation is an essential aspect of representative government, and political and economic competition must be conducted by non-violent means.

Balance tactical and operational risk: Across Iraq we will stay partnered with the ISF while we 'thin' our presence on the ground. As local situations change, continue to assess risk to ensure every operation is focused on specific, achievable, and relevant objectives. Remember that we will always defend ourselves, and we will conduct operations across the full spectrum of conflict as required to advance Iraq's stability. I charge all of you to establish strong relationships with our partners and be transparent regarding all operations.

Empower subordinates: Every member of every team can and must contribute to mission success. Assign tasks to the junior members of teams and provide them the resources to accomplish the mission. The range of challenges in Iraq requires that we build flexibility and agility into units of all sizes by cross-training members. All of us can and must effectively engage our Iraqi partners and the people of Iraq we encounter on every mission.

Uphold moral and ethical standards: The personal example that each of us sets through our daily conduct is a powerful force multiplier. We must engage our Iraqi counterparts knowing that our actions reflect our moral values. In all that we do, we must positively represent our nation and our fellow citizens back home. Respect each other and our Iraqi hosts equally, and let our deeds demonstrate the highest virtues of free citizens who are serving in Iraq with dignity.

Stay focused on the population: The Iraqi people remain the decisive "terrain" in our campaign. Maintain the focus on their security, their needs, and their well-being, and continue to treat them with the utmost honor and respect. By continuing to help build a GoI that is just, representative, honors and upholds basic human rights and fundamental freedoms, and is accountable to its people's needs, we can make the choice of the people of Iraq to support their government an easy one.

While Iraq's complex, dynamic environment will require adjustments in how we operate, our mission remains unchanged. It remains the greatest of privileges to serve with you in this critical endeavor. I thank you for your hard work and continued dedication, and I look forward to working with you as we strive to build a bright and prosperous future for a sovereign, stable, and self-reliant Iraq.



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Commanding