

Iraq

Multinational Force in Iraq (MNF-I)

- Authorization Date 16 October 2003(UNSC Res. 1511), 8 June 2004 (UNSC Res. 1546)
- Start Date November 2003
- Force Commander General Raymond Odierno
- Strength as of 30 September 2008 Troops: 147,330

NATO Training Mission in Iraq (NTM-I)

- Authorization Date 8 June 2004 (UNSC Res. 1546), 30 July 2004 (Establishment of NATO Training Implementation Mission in Iraq [NTM-I]), 16 December 2004 (modified into full-fledged training mission)
- Start Date August 2004
- Force Commander Lieutenant-General Frank G. Helmick (United States)
- Budget \$27.2 million (September 2007–October 2008)
- Strength as of 30 September 2008 Troops: 205

By the end of 2008, violence in Iraq had reached its lowest levels since the arrival of US-led coalition forces in 2003, making room for progress in further development of organic Iraqi security structures and concerted dialogue regarding the withdrawal of foreign forces. By December, civilian casualties had dropped to below 500 per month, down from the height of over 3,000 per month in 2006, and overall attacks on civilians and military had dropped by 80 percent. While the stabilization of Iraqi

security is a significant achievement considering the violent and chaotic four years that followed the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime, it is not certain that these advances are permanent. The fundamental nature of the conflict has gone unchanged, as stark divisions along sectarian lines continue to impede political progress on issues crucial to national cohesion.

Starting in May 2003, Iraq was governed by the Coalition Provisional Authority, led by the United States under its obligations as an occupying power. Iraqi sovereignty was restored with the creation of an interim government on 28 June 2004. The Multinational Force Iraq (MNF-I), which succeeded the coalition forces, is deployed at the request of the Iraqi government and authorized by Security Council Resolution 1546 (2004). Apart from the United States, which supplies the bulk of the MNF-I's 147,000 troops, leading contributors as of late 2008 included the United Kingdom and Romania.

MNF-I's mandate is subject to ongoing Iraqi consent. Its mission is to contribute to security in the country, including through combat operations against forces hostile to the transition and by training and equipping Iraqi security forces.

Along similar lines, since August 2004, NATO's Training Mission in Iraq (NTM-I) has, at the government's request, provided training and logistical support to the developing Iraqi Security Forces. NTM-I's support targets mid-to senior-level military staff, with an eye toward building a professional military leadership.

The UN Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI) was established in 2003. Following an August 2003 bomb attack on its headquarters that killed Special Representative Sergio Vieira de Mello and twenty-one staff members, the remaining staff relocated to Amman, Jordan,

until 2004, when it returned to the Baghdad headquarters to resume its mandated task of giving support to Iraq in establishing new governing structures. During 2007, the Security Council enhanced UNAMI's mandate to involve greater political efforts toward advising and assisting political facilitation, and the promotion of regional cooperation between Iraq and the countries of the region.

Elections in 2005 led to the inauguration of Nouri al-Maliki as prime minister, and it was hoped that consensus around an agenda for national reconciliation would follow soon thereafter. However, such hopes were dashed with the deterioration of the political and security situations. In the face of a dire security situation in early 2007, President George W. Bush announced a change in MNF-I's approach in Iraq. Otherwise known as "the surge," the plan enlarged US commitments by approximately 40,000 troops, which brought the total number of US forces to a height of over 170,000, allowing for increases in counterinsurgency operations and an overall heightened presence in and around Baghdad.

The dramatic decrease in violence during 2008 was partially attributable to the surge, but this result was also a function of the convergence of several other positive developments during the year. Most important was the halting of military operations by Moktada al-Sadr, leader of the powerful Mahdi army, which had controlled large swaths of Baghdad and the surrounding areas and impeded the extension of government authority. The continued development of the Iraqi security forces also gave a tremendous boost to the surge operations. Newly trained forces were able to shoulder significant counterinsurgency and security responsibilities, extending the authority of the Iraqi government. By the end of the year, MNF-I support to the Iraqi security forces had resulted in the training and operational readiness of over 560,000 troops and police, but their ability to contain a resurgence of violence without the backstopping of MNF-I forces remained uncertain. Finally, the growing dissatisfaction with

UN Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI)

Authorization and Start Date	14 August 2003 (UNSC Res. 1500); expanded 8 June 2004 (UNSC Res. 1546); expanded 10 August 2007 (UNSC Res. 1770)
• SRSB	Staffan de Mistura (Sweden)
• Budget	\$302.1 million (1 January 2008–31 December 2009)
• Strength as of 31 October 2008	Troops: 222 Military Observers: 7 International Civilian Staff: 290 Local Civilian Staff: 378

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insurgent operations among minority Sunni elements steered them to join MNF-I forces in the battle against Al-Qaeda-related militants through the establishment of local militias known as "Awakening Councils." By August 2008, all of the additional surge forces had been withdrawn.

The stabilization of the security environment was not matched by progress in political reconciliation, however. UNAMI continued to support the development of Iraqi governing structures throughout the year, but these efforts proved difficult, as exemplified in the process of passing provincial election legislation, which was fraught with difficulties over ethnic representation of the Sunni, Shi'a, and Kurdish groups. The law was approved in September, but provincial elections scheduled for October were delayed until January 2009 while questions of political reconciliation still lingered. Meanwhile, the development of Iraq's rule of law institutions moved at a slow pace due to a lack of local capacity and frequent intimidation and assassination of judges.

By the end of the year, progress made in Iraq led to negotiations regarding timelines for the withdrawal of MNF-I forces. A US proposal for MNF-I forces to remain in operation under a diminished, over-the-horizon capacity until 2011 was met with considerable opposition from Iraqi

authorities, who saw the proposal as providing an open invitation for long-term occupation. While the UN mandate authorizing the MNF-I's presence was to expire at the end of 2008, concerns remained over Iraq's ability to sustain the security gains registered since 2006.

In mid-November the Iraqi cabinet and its US counterparts signed an agreement that ensured the withdrawal of US troops in three years.

The agreement was then approved by the Iraqi parliament and presidency council in early December, thus defining Iraqi and US engagement and the role of US forces until 2011. The agreement was met with a mild uptick in violence throughout the country, a development that underscored the fragility of the security gains made and the magnitude of political reconciliation still to be achieved.