

## The Security And Political Impacts Of Disbanding The Iraqi Armed Forces After 2003-War

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Article Info	Abstract
<p><b>Article History</b></p> <p>Received: January 27, 2021</p> <p>Accepted: April 11, 2021</p> <hr/> <p><b>Keywords :</b> Iraqi Armed Forces, 2003-War, Coalition Provisional Authority, ISIS</p> <p><b>DOI:</b> 10.5281/zenodo.4679635</p>	<p><i>The Coalition Provisional Authority formally issued the Order Number two in the 23rd of May, 2003, to disband the Iraqi armed forces, and dissolve the Iraqi Ministry of Defense. The order of disbanding came after the Iraqi armed forces had already been disintegrated when it had been defeated in the war and the invasion of Iraq in 2003. The emergence of the insurgency groups that had begun to fight the United States troops and targeted civilians starting sectarian crisis led the Coalition administration to establish Iraqi national forces to take charge of the counterinsurgency. In the 8th of August, 2003, Paul Bremer, the Administrator of the Coalition Provisional Authority of Iraq, Issued a decision, Order Number 22, of establishing new Iraqi armed forces. The Study has concluded that the processes of disbanding the Iraqi Army has left Iraq with no experienced army that could defend the people of Iraq. This, in turn, led to the emergence of several armed militias who serve political and regional interests causing a lot of death and destruction for Iraq for several years. Armed militias took advantage of the political chaos in Iraq and the lack of experience in the Iraqi Armed Forces to be vital players in the political life and the future of Iraq.</i></p>

### Introduction

After the invasion of Iraq, the Coalition Provisional Authority formally issued the Order Number two in the 23<sup>rd</sup> of May, 2003, to disband the Iraqi armed forces, and dissolve the Iraqi Ministry of Defense. According to this Order, the Ministry of Media, Ministry of Security Affairs, Iraqi Intelligence Service, the Office of the National Security, the Directorate of General Security, the Special Security Forces, all military units, Saddam Hussein's Guards, other armed groups, such as the Republican Guards, the Republican Special Guards, the Directorate of the Military Intelligence, Quds Army, the Emergency Forces, all military organization, and all military and paramilitary groups such as Ba'ath party's armed groups are dissolved .

The order of disbanding came after the Iraqi armed forces had already been disintegrated when it had been defeated in the war and the invasion of Iraq in 2003. The defeat of the Iraqi armed forces had disintegrated the Iraqi armed forces as the Iraqi soldiers and officers escaped and left their fields taking off their uniforms, and went home to be safe. Because of the absence of security and armed forces from the cities, the weapons of the army with most of the equipment had been stolen by the civilians.

The United States and the new Iraqi political and security leaders had targeted the former officers of the Iraqi armed forces. The American forces targeted the high ranks officers in order to investigate them to find the place of Saddam Hussein and arrest him, and for other security purposes. The Iraqi new leaders who had been opponents of the Saddam regime targeted the former officers of the armed forces and the security forces in order to revenge or as they claimed, to make justice, on one side, and to prevent any potential threat to the new democratic regime on the other side.

### [The Iraqi Leaders and Disbanding the Iraqi Army](#)

The majority of the Iraqi new leaders had been the opponents of Saddam Hussein and his regime since he had been Vice President of Iraq in 1960s until his overthrow in 2003. They believed that the Iraqi Armed forces had been the main tool of Saddam Hussein dictatorship. They suffered from what they used to call "Saddam Hussein armed forces". Therefore, when they became in power, they called for the De-Baathification of the institutions of Iraq on one side, and clearing the armed forces and the security forces from the men who were loyal to Saddam Hussein.

According to that perspective, they did not trust the former Iraqi senior military officers. Moreover, they claimed that they had been generally Saddam Hussein's men, and if they continued presenting and serving in the new Iraqi armed forces, it would be dangerous and a threat to their new regime. They believed that the Iraqi former armed forces would not allow to create a democratic regime, in other words, they would not allow to leave power to the Shia nor Kurdish to take part in process of ruling Iraq. Therefore, they started with making a list of some leaders of the former armed forces, in order to exit them from the political or security institutions of

Iraq. In order to prevent the former military officers, the new political parties by their militias targeted the former military officers and threatened their lives, Therefore they to escape form their cities and most of them escaped from Iraq.

#### The Decision of Rebuilding New Iraqi Armed Forces

The following few months of the invasion of Iraq, some cities including Baghdad, al-Anbar, Diyala, Salah al-Deen had witnessed the emergence of the insurgency groups that had begun to fight the United States troops on hand, and targeted civilians starting sectarian crisis on the other hand. Therefore, the Coalition administration decided to establish Iraqi national forces to take charge of the counterinsurgency.

In the 8<sup>th</sup> of August, 2003, Paul Bremer, the Administrator of the Coalition Provisional Authority of Iraq, Issued a decision, Order Number 22, of establishing new Iraqi armed forces. The U.S. military forces had started to reactivate the Iraqi Ministry of Defense, and named a minister of defense to work under the supervision of the U.S. military in Iraq. The Administration of the Coalition Provisional Authority had called Iraqis to join the new Iraqi army, which they had called the National Defense Forces. The United States took the responsibility of training the new-born Iraqi army units.

To make it legal, the new Iraqi armed forces need to be built according to the law. At the time, Iraq had been ruled by the Coalition Provisional Authority and its administrator, Paul Bremer who had been sent by the President of the United States, George W. Bush. Therefore, he had the power to issue Order Number 22 of rebuilding the Iraqi armed forces.

In the introduction of Order Number 22, Paul Bremer addresses the importance of the presence of armed forces in the country that must be in charge to defend the state, and maintain the stability in the country. National forces are important for self-defend and a step for regaining the authority and sovereignty of the state.

Pursuant to his authority as the head of the Coalition Provisional Authority, Paul Bremer had issued the CPA Order Number 22 on seventh of August 2003. The leadership of the CPA had been conscious of the importance of starting promptly to establish a new military force looking forward a national self-defense of free and democratic Iraq at the conclusion of the authority and the presence of the CPA in Iraq. With the acknowledgment of the need to support and engage with Iraqi governmental new-born institutions as they develop regarding the structure, institutions, and the roles that national armed forces of Iraq are supposed to play (CPA Order No. 22, 2003).

The United States' announced plan was to establish a democratic regime in Iraq. To accomplish that plan, it was necessary to issue new rules. Although the rules had been issued before the Iraqi constitutional referendum in October 2005, Paul Bremer had given himself the authority to replace the former laws with new ones.

In order to legitimate the establishment of the Iraqi new armed forces, the leadership of the Coalition Provisional Authority had made sure that the new law would not be disturbed by the previous law of pre-2003 era. Therefore, the laws that shaped the Iraqi armed forces which had been: the Law Code Number 13 of 1940 of the Iraqi Military, the Procedures of the Iraqi Military Code Number 44 of 1941, the Legal Notification of Personnel Number 106 of 1960, the Law Number 28 of 1972 of the Military Punishment, and the Penal Code Number 32 of 1984 of the Popular Army had all been suspended (CPA Order No. 22, 2003).

#### The Mission and Command Structure of the New Iraqi Army

According to CPA Order 22, the establishment of the new Iraqi army was the first step toward the establishment of the new Iraq's national defense force. The core mission of the new Iraqi army was to provide a capability in support of the security of Iraq during the period of the presence and the authority of the Coalition Provisional Authority. The continued existence of the new established Iraqi military during the period of the CPA's presence in Iraq would be subject to the future government of Iraq which established by the Iraqi people and recognized by the international community (CPA Order No. 22, 2003).

The New army of Iraq and national defense forces' mission was generally the military defense of the Iraqi nation. That included the defense of the territory of Iraq, and the responsibility for the military protection of population, the security of critical installations, facilities, lines of the communication and supply, and infrastructure. During the period of the Coalition Provisional Authority's presence in Iraq, the tasks of the new military of Iraq, according to Order 22, was to provide the basis for professional, effective, and non-political armed forces for the military defense of Iraq after the withdrawal of the Coalition Provisional Authority from Iraq. The Iraqi armed forces shall be participating in domestic relief operations associated with natural or human-made disasters in addition to humanitarian relief missions. But it shall not be involved in the political affairs or domestic law enforcement functions (CPA Order No. 22, 2003).

#### Terms and Conditions of the Military Service

In order to regulate the process of joining the Iraqi armed forces, Order 22 contained the terms and conditions of the armed forces enlistment. The CPA leadership organized the age for the enlistment, and the term of the military service. The service in the new armed forces is voluntary, and the set term of enlistment which cannot be extended except in cases of emergencies as officially announced by the administrator. The Order sets the minimum age for the enlistment to the new armed forces to be eighteen years old (CPA Order No. 22, 2003).

There are some important criteria that determine the suitability for the service in the Iraqi new armed forces, listed in paragraph 4 of chapter "Enlistment", such as: demonstrated minimum scholastic aptitude, demonstrated physical ability. While they must not be accused for human rights violations or war crimes, or being involved in the security or political control organs of the Saddam Hussein regime or being part of any organization that is considered as extremist, which advocates the use of violence for political purposes whether internally or internationally (CPA Order No. 22, 2003).

The Order mentions that persons who join the armed forces are not basically required to have a military experience. The volunteers don't have to be former soldiers or officers, or having military experiences to enlist in the new Iraqi armed forces. However, the persons who are not meeting the applicable standards, including the criteria which are listed in paragraph 4 of chapter "Enlistment", or being involved in Ba'ath Party are not allowed to join the new Iraqi armed forces, except with specific permission of the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA Order No. 22, 2003).

### **The Members of the New Iraqi Army and the Political Activities**

It is highly essential to determine the relations between the armed forces soldiers or officers and the political activities. In the democratic countries, armed forces personnel are not allowed to be involved in the political activities neither political decision making progress. The United States aimed to establish professional armed forces that are meant to be independent from the political leadership, to prevent the interference of the armed forces in the political life simultaneously to prevent the control of the political leaders over the professionalism of the armed forces.

According to Order Number 22, the members of the New Iraqi Army are not allowed to be members of any political party, association or organization. They cannot participate in any political party, organization or association's activities. In addition, members of the armed forces are prohibited from any publicly statement or suggestion of any political opinion, including efforts for indoctrinating other members of the armed forces or other people with political ideology. This section does not limit the political rights of the members of the armed forces of voting in elections for political office organized on a local or national basis (CPA Order No. 22, 2003).  
The United States' Policy against the Iraqi Armed Forces

The disbanding of the Iraqi armed forces had not been because of the administrator of the Coalition Provisional Authority Paul Bremer's order of disbanding, it had been because of the war itself. This does not mean that the United States had not played a significant role in the continuation of disbanding the Iraqi armed forces. Destroying the Iraqi armed forces and minimizing the Iraq's power are major interests of the United States in the regions of the Persian Gulf and the Middle East. For many analysts, the United States aimed to minimize the power and the effectiveness of the Iraqi armed forces for several reasons: First to protect the newborn democratic regime. They believed that it had not been possible to establish a democratic regime while they keep the same army that used to oppress the Iraqi people in several occasions since 1980 until 2003. That army that they did not trust, because they believe that Saddam Hussein's army is loyal to Saddam Hussein himself.

The second reason is to protect the United States' allies in the regions of the Middle East and Persian Gulf, mainly Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Israel. As Saddam Hussein had invaded Kuwait in 1990, and threatened Saudi Arabia and Israel. Keeping such powerful armed forces would reemerge that threat any time in the future.

The third reason is the desire of the United States to maximize its influence and hegemony in the regions of the Middle East and Persian Gulf. The hegemony needs weak armies in the region to enable the United States and its forces to be present in the region to ensure the flow of the oil from the Persian Gulf without being disturbed. Therefore, the United States is accused of destroying the State of Iraq and the continuation of disbanding the Iraqi armed forces.

The United States' invasion of Iraq and the overthrowing of the former regime resulted the collapse of the state of Iraq, which had been more significant than the ineptitude of the new elite that ruled Iraq. The invasion of 2003 had fallen apart the law, security, and the security order of Iraq, claiming that it all should be reconstituted whether in old or new form. In the aftermath of the war of 2003 and the invasion, the Iraq's boundaries had become meaningless and opened for the decision making power to across to the capitals of the neighboring countries, Amman, Tehran, and Damascus.

Following thirteen years of sanctions that hollowed out the capacity of the Iraqi government, the state of Iraq was destroyed in the aftermath of the entrance of the United States' forces into Baghdad. The state of Iraq suffered from violence and looting for the first weeks of the invasion which damaged and destroyed the

administrative capacity. The looters took the weapons of the armed and security forces, occupied and looted the police offices and military bases. The arms of the armed forces and security forces had been in the civilians' hands (Dodge, 2007).

After destroying the Iraqi constitutional institutions by leaving them without protection from the looters, the United States continued destroying Iraq by the orders of de-Ba'athification Iraqi institutions, and disbanding the Iraqi armed forces. This made between 20,000 and 120,000 civilian and military officers unemployed and threatened by the United States forces as well as the new Iraqi forces. According to analysts such as Toby Dodge, by de-Ba'athification the Iraqi institutions and disbanding the Iraqi armed forces, the United States aimed to remove the Iraqi institutional memory (Dodge, 2007).

Two interlinked problems drove the instability in Iraq in the early times of the invasion of Iraq, first is the complete collapse of the capacity of the state and the constitutional institutions of Iraq, and the policy that led to disbanding of the Iraqi armed forces which resulted an acute security vacuum. Immediately after the invasion, small armed groups were established in small areas, in addition to the external Iraqi and foreign armed groups that entered Iraq to take part in ruling the state by deploying violence in order to gain power. All that was supported by the lack of professional local forces to keep security as most of them had been targeted by the United States' forces (Dodge, 2007).

The United States' invasion of Iraq was controversial and disputed. In the early years of the invasion, specifically at the beginning of 2007, the Iraqi government released figures estimated that over 30,000 Iraqi civilians, soldiers and police officers had been killed during in the first year of the invasion of Iraq. According to the Iraqi government, more civilians and police officers and soldiers were killed in the following years than the first year (Dodge, 2007). For some former officers of the armed forces, the political, security, and the social environment of Iraq did not welcome the former officers of the Iraqi armed forces to return to the military service.

The United States targeted many senior officers of the Iraqi armed forces because, as they claimed, still had connections with the leadership of the overthrown regime. The United States' Authority believes that the high ranking officers of the former Iraqi armed forces still taking orders from Saddam Hussein who had still been hiding. Many officers of the Iraqi armed forces were arrested in the early months of the invasion in order to be under investigation to get information about the place of Saddam Hussein and his close team, and for being accused for leading and training new insurgent armed groups.

Abu Ghraib Prison became the United States' military prison in the aftermath of the invasion of Iraq in 2003. Many former officers had been arrested and were taken as prisoners. In Abu Ghraib Prison in the west of Baghdad. In addition to the criminals, the suspected of security detainees of actions against the coalition forces. They arrested number of suspected former high ranking officers who had been leaders of the resistance as well as the leaders of the insurgency against the coalition forces (Hersh, 2004).

Over 200 Iraqi officers of the former Iraqi armed forces were arrested by the United States' forces in the aftermath of the invasion of Iraq in 2003 and 2004, and put in prisons in the center and south of Iraq. Some of them had been captured or arrested during the battles between the United States forces and the former Iraqi armed forces in late March and early April in 2003. They had been kept in prisons until the United States had withdrawn at the end of 2010, to deliver them to the Iraqi government before leaving Iraq. The Iraqi government had subjected the former officers to show trials that ended with sentences ranging from life imprisonment to execution (al-Jaff, May 28, 2018).

Most of the officers in the detainees or prisons were high ranking officers of brigadier generals onwards, Iraqi military pilots and officers of the Iraqi Special Forces, the Republican Guard officers, the Iraqi Navy officers, and infantry and the Iraqi Missile Forces officers, as well as experts and scientists at the Military Industrialization Commission. Most of them have been kept in al-Hout prison in the south of Iraq, al-Kadhimiya prison in Baghdad, prison in Babylon, and another in Basra (al-Jaff, May 28, 2018).

The former leaders of the Iraqi armed forces had seen what the United States' forces had done with their fellows. They had not felt safe in Iraq, and they suddenly had become unemployed and threatened. Therefore, they had no choice but leaving Iraq for their lives to other countries, or leading insurgency in order to return the former regime, or to regain their rights again.

### **Rebuilding the Iraqi Armed Forces**

Following the Order number 22, the administration of the Coalition Provisional Authority had begun the progress of rebuilding the Iraqi armed forces. To accomplish that goal, the Coalition Provisional Authority led by the United States had to establish recruiting, training, arming systems. Therefore, the Coalition created the Coalition Military Assistance Training Team (CMATT).

The Coalition leadership decided to establish first a three-division corps, with about 12,000 military members per division. According to the planners of the coalition, at the time of need, the corps may be grown. The primary goal of the United States had been to build strictly defensive forces which could never threaten the neighbors of Iraq. The plans of the United States' administration for Iraq had been to limit its military capabilities for not being an offensive country as it used to be.

According to a contract with the Coalition Provisional Authority, the SAIC took responsibility for recruiting for the Iraqi armed forces. The SAIC set up recruiting stations in the cities of Iraq in July 2003. The SAIC excluded those who had not been healthily fit to the military service and submitted the list of accepted men to the Coalition commanders. Then, The Coalition Military Assistance Training Team (CMATT) had been created in June, 2003, under the leadership of Major General Paul Eaton. He was responsible for recruiting as well as training the new military forces. The training staff of (CMATT) had eventually grown to about 200 trainers, from the United States, Britain, Italy, Spain, Australia, and some other Coalition countries. It was a forty eight million dollars for one year to assist CMATT for providing the trainers and award support to the Vinnell Corporation (Bensahel, Oliker, Crane & Brennan, 2008).

The CMATT had excluded the commanders and the high rank officers of the former armed forces. According to the United States' administration in Iraq and the new leaders of Iraq, the commanders and the leaders of the Iraqi former armed forces had been potential threats to the new-born regime's stability. While they targeted the former leaders of the armed forces, they started by recalling the low level officers from the former army of Saddam Hussein's regime, the levels which had been less than colonel. The order of Bremer had excluded the levels of colonel and above from joining the new military service. The coalition leaders had thought that the reforming the defense sector had to be through de-Ba'athification and replacement of former Iraqi leader with democratic, professional and civilian-led defense sector. The U.S. civil as well as military officers had not realized the bad effects of that order, mainly it had raised the number of the enemies of the United States' presence in Iraq (Bensahel, Oliker, Crane & Brennan, 2008).

The new Iraqi army consists of land forces, air forces, and navy. In the 25<sup>th</sup> of June, 2003, the Coalition Provisional Authority had signed a contract with Vinnell Corporation, a military provider firm, or as it is described a private security firm, for training nine thousands recruits, of a forty four thousands person, under the name of the "New Iraqi Army". The process management had been under the Coalition Military Assistance Training Team that had been under Major General Paul Eaton.

In the 3<sup>rd</sup> of September, 2003, the Coalition Provisional Authority issued Order Number 28 that formed the Iraqi Civil Defense corps to be a temporary agency of security and emergency service for complementing the military operations that conducted by the Coalition troops in Iraq. General George W. Casey, the Chief of Staff of the United States Army had created Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq to take the responsibility for building and training the new Iraqi armed forces, in additional of the Iraqi Ministry of Interior (Rathmell, Oliker, Kelly, Brannan & Crane, 2005).

In the aftermath of the Coalition Provisional Authority's dissolution in the 28<sup>th</sup> of June, 2004, and after the request of the Iraqi government, the Coalition had chosen to stay in Iraq under the United Nation Mandate for helping the new-born Iraqi government to develop its armed and security forces, and defeat the insurgency. General Casey ordered the Coalition troops to shift their focus from fighting the insurgency to training the Iraqi armed forces and the security forces. The main strategy of the United States in Iraq until 2006 had been to develop host-nation security forces to be a cornerstone of the United States counter-insurgency doctrine (Rathmell, Oliker, Kelly, Brannan & Crane, 2005).

The United States had two components of training the Iraqi new armed forces, the first component had been by sending Iraqi new officers to the United States to train in the Near East South Asia Center at the National Defense University in Washington, D.C. The training had remained two weeks, then they had been taken to the U.S. Institute of Peace for a one week course. The purpose of that effort, which had taken place in the spring of 2004, had been to provide the future military commanders of Iraq with a fundamental understanding of civilian control over military and defense sector (Rathmell, Oliker, Kelly, Brannan & Crane, 2005).

The second component had comprised short classes and on-the-job training in the military bases in Iraq, those classes had been supervised by the defense advisors from the countries of the coalition. The program of training was assisted briefly by contract trainers who had been providing several courses on the various components of the ministry of defense and the armed forces, ranging from policy to logistics. (Rathmell, Oliker, Kelly, Brannan & Crane, 2005).

The United States had established Special Forces under the U.S. direct command to be in the front of battles against the terrorist or any armed groups fighting against the United States' presence in Iraq. That Special Forces are called "The Counter Terrorism Service", such forces were created carefully, trained and armed in a way to be leading special operation of counterinsurgency and counterterrorism.

### [The Counterinsurgency Operations Led By the United States and the Response of the Iraqi Army](#)

The Iraqi army refused to be involved in the counterinsurgency operations led by the United States against Sunni insurgency such as in Fallujah, or Shiite insurgency such as in al-Najaf. It had been for several reasons, as some said they were not ready for military operations, as the training had not been sufficient or that kind of street fighting was not familiar to the Iraqi soldiers at the time. However, according to the Iraqi officers and soldiers, they assured that they refused to fight in sectarian battles under the leadership of the American commanders. They claimed that the United States aimed to plant sectarian seeds in the Iraqi society, one of their steps for that purpose, had been to push the Iraqi ethno-sectarian groups to face each other.

During the history of Iraq, the Iraqi military officers had never obeyed foreigners' orders. For many witnesses, the Iraqi officers willingly disobeyed the American officers' orders, and the Iraqi soldiers used to obey the orders of the Iraqi officers instead of the American officers when they give different orders.

The examples of the attitudes of the Iraqi officers as well as soldiers to the military operations led by the United States Forces in Iraq shows that the majority of the Iraqi forces disobeyed the orders of the United States' officers in Iraq. Such as the Battle of al-Najaf in August 2004, and the Operation al-Fajr in Fallujah in Nov-Dec 2004

#### **The Battle of al-Najaf in August 2004**

Paul Bremer, the administrator of the Coalition Provisional Authority, made a decision to shut down "Al-Hawzah" weekly newspaper that belonged to Muqtada al-Sadr, who had been calling for fighting the United States' presence in Iraq. Al-Sadr had rejected that action and his followers attacked Spanish military convoys, as well as the Spanish military base near the city resulting death of 13 soldiers. Which pushed them to leave the city, and the Marines to confront Muqtada and his army. The U.S. Forces declared their goal of arresting or killing Muqtada al-Sadr, who announced that he would continue fighting the invaders until his last breath. The battle lasted eight days and the confrontation had been bloody and caused hundreds of casualties (Kozlowski, 2009).

The point is that the Iraqi soldiers did not generally participate in that battle, leaving it to the Marines to fight Muqtada and his followers. Muqtada al-Sadr, and many of his soldiers took refuge in the Imam Ali Mosque, the holiest Islamic place in Iraq. Being in Imam Ali Mosque had strengthened their position, that no one can ever make the decision to attack that holy place. Therefore, Iraqi soldiers had stayed away from this battle and refused to be deployed to it (Kozlowski, 2009).

#### **The Operation al-Fajr in Fallujah in Nov-Dec 2004**

In Fallujah, the Fallujah Brigade, the local Force established by Marines to hold the city, had failed to accomplish its mission of keeping security after the Marines pulled out of the city. The insurgents, had completely controlled the entire city. They came from out of the city in small groups with foreign leaders. The leader of al-Qaeda Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, and the local leaders of insurgency Abdullah Janabi and Omar Hadid turned Fallujah to the a supplement base of terrorism operations in all over Iraq.

When insurgents stole equipment, vehicles, and weapons from the Fallujah Brigade's base. The I Marine Expeditionary Force decided to return to Fallujah. Although the forces urged the civilians to leave the city in an effort to reduce the casualties among civilians, less than 500 civilians had left the city. The Marine battalions entered the city covered by the U.S Air Forces. They attacked specific insurgent targets, and killed about 3000 to 4500 and destroyed thirty three mosques that had been used by the insurgents.

The operation was too complicated and violent for the Iraqi National guard to participate. The Iraqi soldiers strongly refused to be deployed in this battle. They considered it as a sectarian violence against Sunni community as most of the soldiers were Shiite. They also refused to obey direct orders of foreign commanders. Additionally, as many soldiers said, they did not want to fight sons of their tribes.

#### [The Involvement of the Iraqi Army in Operations from 2008 to 2011](#)

Nuri al-Maliki who remained in power from 2006 to 2014, had strongly confronted the insurgents, such as the Shiite Mahdi army in Baghdad, Basra, Dhi-Qar, and some other cities. On the other side fought al-Qaeda terrorist organization. Most of these battles had been with major assistance of the Coalition Forces.

#### [The Iraqi Counter Terrorism Service](#)

The United States had established Special Forces under the U.S. direct command to be in the front of battles against the terrorist or any armed groups fighting against the United States' presence in Iraq. That Special Forces had been called "The Counter Terrorism Service", such forces had been created carefully, trained and armed in a way to be leading special operation of counterinsurgency and counterterrorism.

The Counter Terrorism Service was established after 2003 invasion of Iraq by the United States forces. The Golden Division and the Special Operations Forces. The Iraqi Counter Terrorism Service became under the direct supervision and leadership of the United States in Iraq. It became the most powerful, organized, effective forces among all the Iraqi armed forces.

The Counter Terrorism Service mainly contains Shia Arabs and Kurds with few Sunnis. The United States' Security Forces led the effort of recruitment and selecting the volunteers from all over Iraq, ensuring that they represented all Iraqi people. The commanders of the service, had been sent to Jordan to be trained with the Special Forces of Jordan as well as the United States' Army Special Forces. In two years, in 2005, 1,440 well trained men returned Iraq to operate under the United States' command (Witty, 2018).

The Iraqi Counterterrorism Service is a quasi-ministerial level organization that was created by the United States as an independent Organization separated from the Iraqi Ministry of Defense. It includes the Iraqi Counter Terrorism headquarters, the Counterterrorism Command, and the three Brigades of the Iraqi Special Operations Forces. It is considered as the United States' core strategy as it is an indigenous power to combat terrorism and insurgency. Therefore, the United States have been funding, arming and training the Iraqi Counter Terrorism Service since its creation (Witty, 2018).

In 2005, the Iraqi Counterterrorism Service including the Iraqi Special Operations Forces had been provided by the United States Central Command with a fund of 237 U.S. Dollars to be used for training and equipping the Iraqi Counterterrorism Forces. The amount was used for repairing and renovating the facilities and procure equipment. By the end of 2005, the forces moved from its central basis in the Radwaniyah Palace to another former military basis also close to the Baghdad International Airport.

As a result of the rise of terrorism and insurgency in Iraq in the aftermath of the invasion of Iraq by the Coalition Provisional Authority led by the United State and the decision of disbanding the Iraqi Armed Forces and the Security Forces. In late 2003, the U.S. Secretary of Defense and U.S. Central Command had decided to establish a special Iraqi unit in order to be an Iraqi counterterrorism unit. The U.S. forces led the progress of selecting volunteers from all over Iraq representing Kurds, Sunnis and Shias of Iraq to establish what would become later the Iraqi Counter Terrorism Force (ICTF).

The Iraqi Counter Terrorism Service had been called Iraqi Special Operation Forces when it had been considered as a part of the Coalition Forces units. In a plan to grow it, the Iraqi Special Operation Forces started to expand in 2007 to be 440 men regional command battalions. Then continued growing to develop counterterrorism centers in different regions of Iraq working under the Counter Terrorism Command. It established and developed terrorist network mapping, and provided supports to the operations in their regional battalions (Witty, 2018).

The Iraqi Counter Terrorism Service became the main fighting power of the Iraqi armed forces, leading the counterterrorism and counterinsurgency operations in all over Iraq. As it is described as very well trained and fund by the Americans, it has direct links to the United States Forces during the invasion years, and even after the withdrawal of the United States from Iraq in 2011 (Witty, 2018).

The Iraqi Counterterrorism Service including Iraqi Special Operations Forces were involved in every major combat operation in Iraq as well as special military missions. They were trusted to operate in the most hostile fields, the Counterterrorism and the Special Forces gained the reputation of the most successful Iraqi military units. The units of the Counterterrorism Service including the Special Forces were deployed in "Charge of the Knights" operation in Basra in 2008, which was considered as the major governmental military operation that lasted several months combating the Mahdi Army, the largest Shiite militia in Iraq (Witty, 2018).

Most of other missions of the Iraqi Counterterrorism Service have been of short duration, normally lasting less than a day, but generally they conducted missions every nights. All the missions of the units of the Counterterrorism Service including its special units were accompanied and initially directed by United States Security Forces. After each operation, the American advisers and supervisors used to give assessments in order to identify the weaknesses and then to determine what was needed for additional trainings.

Such special U.S. method of training has improved the capabilities of the Iraqi Counterterrorism Service until it took the lead in both planning and coordinating sensitive military missions. In the battlefields, they looked like the United States Security Forces soldiers due to the equipment they used, the moves they made while they are in the operations. They were very well known as the best Arab Special Operations Forces at least in the Middle East and Persian Gulf (Witty, 2018).

#### **The Battles of Al-Sadr City In 2008**

With support from the coalition forces, the Prime Minister al-Maliki directed the Iraqi army to stop the rocket attacks in Baghdad and defeat, what he called, the criminal militias that centered in Sadr City on 25th of March 2008. The U.S forces led the operation that isolated Al-Sadr City then seized control of most of the rocket bases, and maintained Al-Mahdi Army by targeting its leaders.

That battle of Sadr City had provoked Muqtada's followers' feelings of anger around Iraq, mainly southern cities of Iraq. In al-Qadisyah, Dhi-Qar, Basra, Misan, and some other cities, had witnessed violence by Al-Mahdi Army. This led Nuri Al-Maliki to spread the military operations to those cities. One of the strongest and most complicated operations was the battle of Basra in the south of Iraq in 2009.

### **"Charge of Knights" Operation in Basra in March 2008**

In 25th of March 2008, the Iraqi military led by the Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki himself had launched security offensive called *Saulat al-Fursan "Charge of Knights"*. The operation aimed to restore stability to the city and the rule of law to the city by defeating criminal elements in the city. In addition to the intelligence and air assistance provided by the Coalition commanders, The Special Operations Forces of Iraq, conventional forces and Iraqi military helicopters as well as Iraqi Border Enforcement Transition Teams had been involved to be deployed along the border of Iran in order to prevent weapons flow (Chchrane, 2015).

Basra city witnessed fierce fighting. It was not been easy to defeat the criminal militias, over one thousand members of the Iraqi Security Forces were deserted from the service and had not obeyed the commands. Most of the deserters were the newest brigade of the fourteenth Iraqi Army Division that had finished training just few weeks before the operation begun. Most of the police members in the city also deserted, they did so because they had been threatened by Al-Sadr's Mahdi army (Chchrane, 2015).

When the Iraqi forces had controlled the cities, Muqtada Al-Sadr had no choice but to call for a ceasefire ordering his men off the streets in March 30. During the following days, Hadi al-Amiri, the head of the Badr Organization and Ali al-Adeeb, a member of Dawa party, the party of Nuri al-Maliki flew to Iran, where Muqtada Al-Sadr had been living and negotiated and made the agreement of ceasefire (Chchrane, 2015).

### **The fall of Mosul, Al-Anbar, Salahul-Deen in the hands of ISIS**

In June 2014, less than a thousand of self-proclaimed Islamic State fighters lightly armed defeated more than 30,000 regular soldiers of Iraqi army in June of 2014. When the Jihadi militants shocked the world by racing across the Iraqi desert, attacking a seemingly far superior garrison of Iraqi soldiers, and seizing control of the second largest city in Iraq. This was an unexpected defeat, the senior officers of the Iraqi army scoffed at the request made by Mosul security leaders to increase the troops in Mosul claiming the efficiency of the Iraqi Special Forces in the City. At the end of the day, Mosul and large areas in Iraq were fallen under the Islamic State and the Iraqi Armed Forces were easily defeated (Parker, Coles, & Salman, October 14, 2014).

The clear disintegration of the Iraqi Armed forces after the disastrous defeat by a fewer number and less armed Islamic State's fighters led to a debate among the civilian and military leaders. The civilians accused the military leaders of the rampant corruption, high rates of absenteeism, low training standards, and poor cohesion. On the other side, the military officers accused the civilian leaders of failing to provide adequate guidance, and not providing enough funding. Such debates illustrate a flaw in Iraqi civil-military relations (Gaub, 2016).

### **The Effects of Disbanding the Iraqi Armed Forces on the Security**

It was a clash in a regular war, which means that both armies aimed to destroy each other. With no question either before or after the war, the United States and its allies were going to win this war and defeat the Iraq army and occupy and control the Iraqi land. That what happened in just twenty one days. That was the practical disbanding of the Iraqi armed forces. In the aftermath of the Operation Iraqi freedom, the Iraqi armed forces had been officially disbanded by the CPA, Coalition Provisional Authority. Which made Iraqi people lived with the fact that there was no army to defend or unify the nation. This what Iraq had exactly experienced. In order to protect themselves on one hand, and seek to gain the power on the other hand, several armed groups had entered Iraq and others were established. Each group were led by political or ethnic elites (Katzman, 2015).

#### **Internal and External Political Effects of Disbanding the Iraqi Armed Forces**

The internal and external politics of Iraq had been effected by disbanding the Iraqi armed forces. Internally, as the Iraqi armed forces are meant to be the power of the country that defends it in wartime and keep the unity of the society in peacetime. The political falter progress in Iraq was because of the lack of the strong Iraqi armed forces. The main political parties had been leading armed groups which, in turn, strengthen their position in the government, the stronger their armed groups are, the more effective parties in the parliament will be. The clash between two parties in the government threatens the security of Iraq, when they order their armed groups to fight against each other. Such as what happened in Basra in 2009 as an example.

Externally, the lack of strong armed forces in Iraq encouraged the global and regional states to interfere in the Iraqi issues. It is fact that they have interfered in the Iraqi political and security issues. The United States, Russia, Iran Saudi Arabia, Turkey are the main countries that have hands in Iraq. Specifically Iran has the largest portion of the Iraqi politics and security, as it is ruled by Shia authority that supports the Shia majority of Iraq. Those countries have funded armed groups in Iraq and supported political parties in Iraq. That funding and supporting has weakened the central government in Baghdad, which seemed divided to those parties and the countries behind them. The most important reason of all that is the absence of strong government protected by strong and professional armed forces.



## Conclusions

The present study has concluded the following:

1. The Iraqi Armed Forces were not disbanded by an order, rather, they are dissolved because of war itself.
2. The United States wanted to guarantee their interests in Iraq through removing any potential threatening represented by the former Iraqi Armed Forces who are accused as being loyal to Saddam Hussein especially on the level of high ranking.
3. The United States was the major responsible for the shape, equipment, and training of the new Iraqi Armed Forces.
4. The new Armed Forces refused to participate in the operations that led by the United States, as they were devoted to fight the people of Iraq.
5. The processes of disbanding the Iraqi Army has left Iraq with no experienced army that could defend the people of Iraq. This, in turn, led to the emergence of several armed militias who serve political and regional interests causing a lot of death and destruction for Iraq for several years.
6. Armed militias took advantage of the political chaos in Iraq and the lack of experience in the Iraqi Armed Forces to be vital players in the political life and the future of Iraq.
7. Disbanding the Iraqi Armed Forces cost Iraq an economic burden represented by providing the equipment and training for the new forces.
8. Iraq passed through variable security challenges starting with the battle of Najaf to ISIS in 2014. These street battles provided the Iraqi Armed Forces with wide experience to make them the most experienced forces in the Middle East.

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