



CASE STUDY NO. 3  
COMPLEX OPERATIONS CASE STUDIES SERIES

## **Right and Wrong, Balanced on the Edge of a Spear: U.S. Forces at a Mosque in Baghdad**

Joshua Potter

**KAREN GUTTIERI**  
SERIES EDITOR  
Naval Postgraduate School



## COMPLEX OPERATIONS CASE STUDIES SERIES

Complex operations encompass stability, security, transition and reconstruction, and counterinsurgency operations and operations consisting of irregular warfare (United States Public Law No 417, 2008). Stability operations frameworks engage many disciplines to achieve their goals, including establishment of safe and secure environments, the rule of law, social well-being, stable governance, and sustainable economy. A comprehensive approach to complex operations involves many elements—governmental and nongovernmental, public and private—of the international community or a “whole of community” effort, as well as engagement by many different components of government agencies, or a “whole of government” approach. Taking note of these requirements, a number of studies called for incentives to grow the field of capable scholars and practitioners, and the development of resources for educators, students and practitioners. A 2008 United States Institute of Peace study titled “Sharing the Space” specifically noted the need for case studies and lessons. Gabriel Marcella and Stephen Fought argued for a case-based approach to teaching complex operations in the pages of *Joint Forces Quarterly*, noting “Case studies force students *into* the problem; they put a face on history and bring life to theory.” We developed this series of complex operations teaching case studies to address this need. In this process, we aim to promote research and to strengthen relationships among civilian and military researchers and practitioners.

The [Center for Complex Operations](#) (CCO) emphasizes the importance of a whole of government approach to complex operations and provides a forum for a community of practice and plays a number of roles in the production and distribution of learning about complex operations, including supporting the compilations of lessons and practices.

Dr. Karen Guttieri at the [Naval Postgraduate School](#) provided the research direction and overall leadership for this project.

Center for Complex Operations, National Defense University, Washington, DC 20319.  
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## **Right and Wrong, Balanced on the Edge of a Spear: U.S. Forces at a Mosque in Baghdad**

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You are assigned to work with an Iraqi (host-nation) military unit as an advisor. You are anxious, and not because of the assignment itself. You have watched news telecasts and read some journal articles and a book on the history of Iraq. You have determined that this is a dangerous place, filled with improvised explosive devices (IEDs) on the roadsides and people who do not appear to share your culture or values.

Your senses are heightened, and you are irritable. No one has been able to tell you in detail what to expect. You need to find a simple way to understand the people that seem alien to you so that together you can determine how to reduce conflict in the area.

You know your role: Lead an eleven-man U.S. military transition team (MiTT), directed by the Iraq Assistance Group, to provide training, advice, equipment, and assistance to Iraqi security forces.<sup>1</sup>

And you know some of the common issues that MiTTs encounter: convoluted Iraqi chains-of-command, lack of direct and indirect logistical support from coalition forces (mostly U.S.), poor training standards adopted by Iraqi security forces, high operational tempo (daily routine patrols and weekly shooting engagements are common), and infiltration of militia groups into the Ministry of Interior forces, such as the paramilitary Iraqi Special Police (including commando and public order units).

Success as an advisor requires you to keep in mind other, equally important issues—the training you provide and the effect of your actions can impact the legitimacy of U.S. and Iraqi forces in the eyes of the local people.

### **THE GOLDEN MOSQUE**

On February 22, 2006, the Golden Mosque in Samarra was destroyed by several bombs placed inside the shrine. This shrine holds deep significance

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1. As a key component to the foreign internal defense strategy, these transition teams (MiTTS) are members of the U.S. military, serve a one-year deployment, and work directly with the newly formed Iraqi Security Forces units.

to the followers of Shi'a Islam, as they believe it is where the Twelfth Imam disappeared and will eventually reappear as the Messiah. The Sunni extremist group, Al Qaeda in Iraq, under the direction of Abu Mohamed al-Zarqawi, was widely suspected to be responsible for destroying this holy Shi'a shrine. Its destruction had violent repercussions throughout Iraq, centered on the mosques. The attacks deepened ethnosectarian divisions among the Iraqi people. Hundreds were killed in the aftermath by raging sectarian militias (such as Jayish al-Mahdi and Badr Organization forces) that had infiltrated the Iraqi security forces.

Mosques are considered "protected areas" by the Geneva Convention and the Laws of Land Warfare. U.S. forces are typically forbidden to enter a mosque even when conducting an intelligence-driven operation. It was up to the Iraqi security forces to conduct the search. It was known that imams (religious clerics) were often under heavy pressure by religious-affiliated militias to store weapons and known insurgents.

Sharia courts were sometimes held in mosques. Citizens would be kidnapped, bound and gagged, then transported to a mosque for trial. These courts were presided over by the local militia leaders and, at times, Shi'a clerics in the mosque. Members of the community would present evidence against the accused. If the accused was found to be a "good Muslim" by the Sharia court, he would be released; if not, he was summarily executed and his body dumped in the street.

#### **SITUATION: APRIL 1, 2006**

At approximately 8:00 p.m. on April 1, 2006, a reliable intelligence source provides a tip: Seven civilian hostages are being held in a mosque in Abu Descheer, with a Sharia court under way. If the captives are not rescued, they likely will be executed. Jayish al-Mahdi (Arabic for Army of the Messiah, a Shi'a militia loyal to Muqtada al-Sadr) is heavily present in the area and in firm control of the suspected mosque. They are estimated to have two hundred armed fighters in the area. To date, they have not directly attacked coalition forces. They use a mix of armed subversion and extortion to control the local population, under the guise of a neighborhood watch program.

When Operation Scales of Justice was initiated in Baghdad in March 2006, the U.S. brigade took tactical control of the Iraqi public order brigade forces in the area. Prior to this operation, there was no formal command relationship between the Iraqi national police—who worked for the Iraqi Ministry of Interior—and U.S. forces.

Through direct coordination with the U.S. battalion on the ground and the MiTT leadership, the U.S. brigade orders MiTT and the Iraqi security forces battalion to raid the mosque and rescue the hostages.

Two battalion-level MiTTs are operating in the area: SHADOW and WILD CARD. They are directly controlled by their brigade-level MiTT, known as LION.

In passing the verbal tasking order to SHADOW, Major Campbell, LION team commander, clearly states his intent: “This has been going on long enough—burn it down.”

Due to the extreme risk of initiating a firefight, SHADOW is reinforced by WILD CARD (twenty U.S. soldiers total) and four Bradley fighting vehicles as a quick reaction force; they are ten minutes away. SHADOW is the lead element for the coalition forces.

At the assembly point (less than two kilometers away from the targeted mosque), the MiTT is to link up with an Iraqi force (thirty Iraqis) plus a leader from an Iraqi unit brigade. The latter is not familiar with Iraqi security forces battalion tactical operations. The Iraqi colonel states, “I am in charge and will be leading this raid. What is the plan?”

The Iraqi colonel is not a commander and is not known to MiTT members. (It was later determined that he was a staff officer on the Iraqi brigade staff.) After a quick inspection, SHADOW finds that the Iraqi forces are not in the proper uniform and are uninformed of the target of the raid (this is a common procedure to protect operational security). Furthermore, the Iraqi lieutenant, who is assigned to be the assault team leader, is widely regarded as a poor-quality officer by both Iraqi and U.S. forces.

The local Iraqi battalion commander (who normally would be present for such a high-profile raid) is notably absent. SHADOW contacts him and asks if he would be joining the operation. The Iraqi replies, “I have been informed that the brigade commander wants to change leadership and told me specifically not to attend this mission.”

MiTT headquarters (Major Campbell) informs SHADOW that the U.S. division (led by a two-star general) has not approved the mission—although the brigade commander (a colonel) has done so. Major Campbell suggests the team put the operation on hold.

While preparing to launch the raid, a member of SHADOW captured his thoughts on video. As the MiTT member states, through the frustration and gravity of the decision facing him, he is “living the dream.”

You are SHADOW 6 – the commander. What actions do you take?

## ACRONYMS

HTT	Human Terrain Team
IED	improvised explosive device
MiTT	Military transition team
VBIED	vehicle-borne improvised explosive device



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The purpose of this case study is to provide a framework to understand the complex operational environment facing a U.S. advisor team and to empower you to ask the right questions that will help you achieve your goals as an advisor. This case is based on the experience of the author, who served as SHADOW 6 commander during the raid.

This case study will take students through the leadership challenges faced by an advisor team in Iraq. The discussions are intended to provide an understanding of local politics, including an appreciation for the expectations and needs of the people; to identify signs of corruption among host-nation partners; and to assess how military assets and resources can be used to improve the chances of operational success.

### **CASE DISCUSSION WORKSHEET**

The target audience for this case study includes the following:

- military advisors;
- members of a coalition military force;
- international or military law students; and
- cultural anthropologists assigned to Human Terrain Teams (HTTs).

### **Certain Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes to Be Developed**

#### ***Knowledge***

- multicultural dimensions to complex problems in a conflict zone;
- subtext of how Iraqi security forces intend to exercise authority and to change their commanders;
- indicators of a baited ambush;

Human Terrain Teams are composed of military personnel, linguists, area studies specialists, and civilian social scientists. Each HTT is recruited and trained as a team for a specific region, then embedded with their supported unit. The brigade combat team (BCT) commander determines the extent of the HTTs interaction and relationships with the rest of the BCT staff and subordinate units. HTTs do not collect actionable military intelligence, nor do they participate in lethal targeting. The HTTs . . . support the commander with open-source, unclassified socio-cultural analysis, performing a non-combat support role. The HTTs mission is to increase the ability of brigades, battalions, companies, platoons, and squads to understand the local populace that they live with and must operate among. . . .

*Source:* Human Terrain System, HTS Components, at <http://humanterainsystem.army.mil/components.html> (accessed April 14, 2010).

- impact of Sharia law on society; and
- mosques as sites protected by international law, though that status can be tested.

***Skills***

- use of influence with host-nation counterpart;
- tactical decision-making;
- force protection in a time-constrained environment;
- preparation for possible counterattacks from the civilian population; and
- understanding of Iraqi military culture.

***Attitudes***

- use host-nation forces (rather than U.S. forces) to clear a dangerous area;
- empower the legitimacy of host-nation security forces;
- force credibility in the eyes of the indigenous people; and
- respect for protected sites.

**ANALYSIS AND PROCESS**

Challenge the target audience to adopt different roles in order to understand different perspectives and critical issues.

**Perspectives to Consider**

- the Iraqi patrol leader;
- the Iraqi commander;
- the U.S. commander;
- the U.S. transition team chief (SHADOW 6); and
- the people of Abu Descheer, observing the unfolding operation.

## Questions to Ask

### *Role of an Advisor*

What is the relationship between the U.S. and Iraqi security forces?  
How do we support and develop the host-nation security forces?

### *Perception of Legitimacy*

Who holds the power in this scenario?  
Are you willing to abdicate power for self-preservation?

### *Impact of Attacks against Civilians*

Who wins when the bodies are left in the street?

### *Military Use of a Recognized Protected Site*

What are the rules of engagement for a protected site (mosque).

## TEACHING PLAN

Before class, distribute Handout 1. This handout provides situational reports faced by the SHADOW team leader.

Handouts 2 and 3 can be distributed at the end of the case discussion and can lead the case debrief. An epilogue and report by the actual SHADOW 6 leader could serve as useful reference points for class participants.

## Introduction

Give the case to the class, and allow five minutes to read the material.

At the conclusion, show the video clip of the SHADOW team leader who faced this situation.

### *Identify the Actors: U.S. and Iraqi*

#### *Opening Questions*

What is the situation?  
What should SHADOW 6 do?

#### *Change the Perspective*

Place students in the role of the different actors identified above. What is the actor's perspective? Is the actor's perspective influenced by other actors? How would the other actors react to any action of SHADOW 6?

#### *Followup Questions*

What rules of engagement should be applied?  
Who holds the power in this scenario?

How can information operations (creative use by the media) be exploited in this scenario—from all sides?<sup>2</sup>

### **Closure**

Ask, “What is the ‘right’ answer?”

Distribute Handouts 2 and 3. Allow the class time to read the material, either for immediate class discussion or for use in the case debriefing session.

### **Debriefing**

Conduct a debriefing to capture lessons learned—a board plan is provided below. These lessons may prove helpful in future training iterations.

Conclude the debriefing by answering the question, How did this case study change or shape my perceptions or actions?

### **BOARD PLAN**

BOARD 1: SHADOW 6 response and driving factors

BOARD 2: Implications of rules of engagement and who holds the power

BOARD 3: Use of information operations

BOARD 4: Additional considerations for further discussion, if time permits

BOARD 5: Lessons learned

### **ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND**

The following provides responses to frequently raised points by the students when the author ran the case. These responses may prove interesting in conducting the discussion.

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2. From Chapter 3, Counterinsurgency Operations, Section IV Information Operations: “The Army defines information operations as the employment of the core capabilities of electronic warfare, computer network operations, psychological operations, military deception, and operations security, in concert with specified supporting and related capabilities, to affect or defend information and information systems, and to influence decision making (FM 3-13). The goal of IO is to gain and maintain information superiority at decisive points.” See <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/policy/army/fm/3-07-22/ch3-iv.htm> (accessed April 14, 2010).

Request additional U.S. military support.

It is not available. The U.S. commander in the area did not want to add to the quick reaction force, other than the four Bradley fighting vehicles. The U.S. commander did not want to force a decisive engagement in a mosque involving U.S. forces, and four heavily armored Bradley fighting vehicles were deemed sufficient to rescue the U.S. MiTT if the situation required an immediate extraction.

Request additional Iraqi military support.

It is not available. The Iraqi battalion commander was called by SHADOW 6 to explain why his meager patrol force seemed ill-prepared for a serious raid that would likely end up with heavy casualties without a sufficient show of force or back up force in the area. The Iraqi battalion commander (from the Third Battalion, Fourth Public Order Brigade) ultimately cried and said that he was sorry: "I am not permitted to send the right people to do this job." SHADOW 6 believed the public order brigade commander prevented sending a better Iraqi force, with the full understanding that the raid mission would be handicapped from the start.

Request U.S. aircraft to support the operation.

Not available. The MiTT is not equipped with unmanned aerial vehicles, which are often used in surveillance for this type of raid or urban assault missions. The U.S. attack helicopters were not on station during this time frame—though they did appear around 1:00 a.m., when the Iraqi special operations forces element attempted to conduct a raid on the same mosque. They revealed several built-up bunkers in and around the mosque, which were considered well-prepared defensive positions.

Was the public order brigade openly affiliated with Jayish al-Mahdi?

Yes. Less than six weeks prior to this incident, the MiTT leadership had proved direct ties between this public order battalion and Muqtada al-Sadr's militia, Jayish al-Mahdi. The public order brigade commander was replaced with Colonel Muhammed (from the case study). This was a source of friction between the MiTT and the public order brigade leadership; however, the MiTT and Colonel Muhammed had an excellent working relationship. On the day following the Golden Shrine bombing, Jayish al-Mahdi agents attacked and beat Colonel Muhammed's eighteen-year-old son. This was a direct act of intimidation, though SHADOW 6 and Colonel Muhammed worked well together.

**HANDOUT 1 [before class meets]**

What was happening in the Baghdad neighborhood of Abu Descheer in spring 2006?

Below are some selected entries from the daily tactical reports of the transition team commander (SHADOW 6) that describe the situation on the ground.

**FEBRUARY 21, 2006**

Third Battalion, Fourth Public Order Brigade, responded to another VBIED (vehicle-borne improvised explosive device) in Abu Descheer this evening. The VBIED was a remote-controlled device placed in a Mercedes fifteen-seat passenger bus. The driver parked the bus on Market Street, where a similar VBIED was placed on January 4, 2006—next to the poster of Muqtada al-Sadr—and walked away. The driver detonated the VBIED, which caused six other vehicles to catch fire. A passing patrol from the local Iraqi police captured the suspect at the site, who still had the detonator. Local police began casualty evacuation, as the Third Battalion, Fourth Public Order Brigade, forces cordoned the area. Several shots were fired by friends and families of the civilian casualties into the air (this was done in frustration and as a gesture of anger).

**Impact:** Ten Iraqi civilians killed, fifteen Iraqi civilians wounded, six civilian vehicles destroyed

A U.S. battalion, SHADOW team, was on site minutes after detonation—the bus was still burning. U.S. forces assisted with crowd control and preserved the site for investigation during daylight hours. The Third Battalion, Fourth Public Order Brigade, detained a suspicious man fleeing from a taxi (after being ordered to stop by the brigade at Checkpoint 28). The brigade forces ran him down and held him until we arrived. An x-spray<sup>3</sup> of the suspect was conducted; the suspect may have been drunk—appeared to be, anyway. The suspect tested positive for TNT exposure and was sent to a battalion detention facility for processing before being turned over to the brigade. The suspect was a little bloody—as he fell when being detained by the brigade. He was treated well, however.

**Final note:** The Iraqi brigade commander arrived on site shortly after SHADOW's arrival, in order to “ensure the situation was under control.”

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3. A test kit used to determine if gunpowder residue can be found on a suspect.

**FEBRUARY 22, 2006**

The commander of the Third Battalion, Fourth Public Order Brigade, responded to reports of two Sunni mosques under attack in Abu Descheer. Within five minutes, he led his forty-man force (twelve vehicles), without assistance from U.S. forces. Upon arrival on the scene, the Rahman Mosque was destroyed by a rocket-propelled grenade and small arms fire. The Jasym Mosque was still on fire when the brigade arrived. The brigade helped to extinguish the fires and soothe the civilian population. During a search of the debris in the Jasym Mosque, Third Battalion, Fourth Public Order Brigade, shurta hassa (Arabic for special police, another term for public order battalion) seized fifteen kilograms of TNT and a detonation cord. It was not rigged together, so it was likely in storage in the basement of the mosque. The TNT was photographed and transported to Fourth Public Order Brigade headquarters. No one was detained. No injuries reported at the scene. No shots fired by brigade forces. The brigade commander stayed on site until 2100 hours, submitting regular reports.

Without U.S. support or prior coordination, Third Battalion, Fourth Public Order Brigade, and Second Battalion, Fourth Public Order Brigade, conducted a cordon and knock of muhallah 858, following an intelligence report from their brigade headquarters that “forty armed, masked men were seen in muhallah 858 [Abu Descheer].” They were believed to be militia (Mahdi Army or Badr Organization are both highly present in this area) under the protective auspices of an armed “neighborhood watch.” During this search, the brigade did approach the local mosque and spoke with the imam but did not enter the mosque. Led by the brigade commander, the operation yielded negative results: No masked men detained, no weapons seized.

**FEBRUARY 23, 2006**

An intelligence report claims that three hundred IEDs and thirty VBIEDs were being prepared for use in the vicinity of Baghdad (source: Fourth Public Order Brigade).

The commander, Third Battalion, Fourth Public Order Brigade, continues to loosely control the situation in Abu Descheer. The Mahdi militia are not a visible presence in the area when SHADOW team or public order brigade are around.

Additionally, all vehicles will be searched at certain traffic control points (such as traffic control point 20) in the area starting February 24. Only restricted civilian traffic will be allowed out of Horojab (location of a strong Sunni presence in the farm land, located adjacent to and south of the Abu Descheer neighborhood).

The traffic control points have been reinforced with a mobile quick reaction force that will float between the various traffic control points in Abu

Descheer. There are twenty-five men in the quick reaction force, stationed at traffic control point 10.

The public order battalion (shurta hassa, in Arabic) now guards each mosque.

The streets around each mosque (Shi'a and Sunni) are blocked off from vehicle traffic.

The curfew is in effect 2000 to 0600 hours, and it is enforced. During this time, only public order brigade, coalition, and local Iraqi police are permitted on the roads. Iraqi army, Iraqi facility protective service, and militia forces are not permitted on the streets.

While passing out the brigade commander's guidance to the checkpoints, the commander of Third Battalion, Fourth Public Order Brigade, discovered two dead bodies on the side of the Chicken Run Road (one kilometer west of checkpoint 20). The dead bodies were both young Iraqi men, shot in the face. He contacted the local police to take care of the bodies and continued the mission. Later, another brigade patrol discovered three more dead bodies four hundred meters north of checkpoint 20. One of the bodies was identified as a Sunni imam, and another was an officer in the former regime's army. The third body (male) was unidentified. Again, local police were called to take the bodies away.

**HANDOUT 2**

What follows are the unabridged comments from SHADOW 6 in his official report. The name of the Iraqi commander was changed to a pseudonym for security purposes.

***SHADOW Team Commander's Comments on Events of April 1, 2006***

Recent events have demonstrated some challenges operating between the U.S. and Iraqi senior leadership. This is largely due to the fact that the independence that Ministry of Interior forces had during the winter no longer exists. In short, the Ministry of Interior national police are currently tactical control to the U.S. division commanders while the Iraqi parliament is being seated (Operation Scales of Justice). In my assessment, this is a mixed blessing. While the Iraqis benefit from the basic combat training, fuel, and other resources provided by the United States, the fledgling Iraqi systems of logistics, personnel, intelligence, contracting, and administration have taken several large steps backwards (the Iraqis are now even more reliant upon the U.S. forces to solve their problems). U.S. forces have the ultimate decision-making authority in which Ministry of Interior operations are conducted; this increases the transparency of the Ministry forces but retards their decision-making role. The result: the Ministry forces have no campaign plan or vision for how to prevent this insurgency from becoming a greater civil war. While the Iraqis have maintained some great tactical training and operational experience, they do not possess operational wisdom or strategic vision. If the senior Iraqi leadership does possess these gifts, it is not translated down to tactical level commanders. This is a difficult road, and our teams recognize that "failure is not an option."

As an example of how operational decisions (or indecisions) directly affect the battlespace, an intelligence-driven raid against a mosque was canceled last night. In essence, the raid was a hostage rescue mission in heavily Jayish al-Mahdi territory (specifically, seven blindfolded hostages were observed by a reliable source to enter a Jayish al-Mahdi-controlled mosque—a location where forty-nine reported suspicious incidents were reported in recent months). After gathering the Combined Operations and Integration Center, a brigade support team (LION), a local Iraqi force (thirty shurta hassa for the assault and interior security element), two additional U.S. support teams for the outer cordon, and three U.S. infantry patrols nearby to react as a quick reaction force poised to execute a hostage rescue mission, the Fourth Infantry Division denied permission for the mission. Rather than stand-down the mission completely, however, we received a report that the Iraqi Ministry of Interior might still approve the rescue mission, which might allow the Fourth Infantry Division to reconsider its position. At the time, we were set-up in our attack position—we waited for an hour less than one kilometer away from the objective. Due to the last-minute nature of the mission, we were unable to receive attack aviation support in order to get eyes on the objective. After an hour, as the on-site U.S. lead,

we recommended to cancel the mission, as we had lost our tactical initiative and surprise.

This was the hardest decision I have ever had to make—seven hostages could be tortured or killed as a result. I had to cancel the mission because our delay in the decision-making process permitted Jayish al-Mahdi to fortify and prepare a heavy response, which could have created another “Mogadishu scenario.” As we vacated our attack position, Jayish al-Mahdi forces fired several tracers into the air in apparent celebration. We returned to our base, and our Iraqi counterparts returned to theirs.

Several hours later, just before dawn, an Iraqi special mission unit appeared in the area and requested a quick reaction force from the U.S. infantry battalion on the ground. They also came to the Fourth National Police and requested my cellphone number in order to inform me that I was supposed to be their support team for a raid on the mosque. When the Iraqi special mission unit did not receive any overt support, they departed the area without conducting the raid.

U.S. forces have learned several things from this experience and respectfully recommend the following:

- mission approval prior to committing forces on the battlefield;
- establish a standing quick reaction force from the national police brigade to hit such targets, on-call 24/7 (seems like a good mission for the Iraqi National Police);
- develop target intel packages within our sectors and pass those to the operation officers in order to plan raids;
- rehearse the use of the quick reaction forces before deeming them ready to fight;
- receive alerts when Iraqi forces are entering into our area; and
- request that Iraqi special mission units use the indigenous national police units as a outer cordon, as they are the forces on the ground who are responsible for area security within their battlespace.

### **HANDOUT 3: EPILOGUE**

#### **ONE DAY AFTER THE RAID WAS CANCELED**

On April 1, 2006, the bodies of six Iraqi civilians were discovered on the streets of the Abu Descheer neighborhood, two streets from the mosque we had planned to raid. Each body, with wrists bound, was shot in the head.

Colonel Muhammed was summoned to a meeting to discuss his performance failures in this sector. The division commander and his senior staff recommend that he be replaced, due to three vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices in Abu Descheer on March 20, 2006.

#### **FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF THOSE IN THE U.S. MILITARY**

Colonel Muhammed is the finest battalion commander we have seen in the Fourth Public Order Brigade. While he has a personality conflict with his commander and senior staff officers, it would be a grave mistake to replace him at this critical point in the Ministry of Interior forces development.

U.S. Army forces have seen vast improvements in every aspect of the Third Battalion, Fourth Public Order Brigade, performance since Colonel Muhammed took command on February 15, 2006.

His unit has conducted nearly twice as many combined patrols as either of the other battalions in Fourth Brigade. Local Iraqi police forces and U.S. soldiers were integrated into the patrols. Iraqi officers and noncommissioned officers have taken charge and led U.S. soldiers on dismounted patrols.

The Third Battalion, Fourth Public Order Brigade, has improved the security, level of alertness, uniform standards, and cleanliness at each of the four permanent traffic control points.

The brigade has conducted more training in the past eight weeks than in the previous three months, in spite of an increased operations tempo. We have had eight days of dedicated training in the past two months—under the previous commander, only two days were permitted.

#### **Training Provided**

- Short-range marksmanship
- Personnel search
- Vehicle search
- Traffic control point operations
- Guardmount procedures
- Tactical operations center
- Detainee operations
- Raid
- Cordon and search

The shurta wadaniyah (National Police) have graduated twenty students from the National Police Mobile Training Team on forward operating base Falcon, in preparation to become noncommissioned officers—including Colonel Muhammed’s son, who was the “honor graduate” of the month-long training.

The Third Battalion, Fourth Public Order Brigade, now has an administrative tactical operations officer—something that no previous battalion commander was able to achieve.

The brigade has improved its systems of accountability and supply by empowering subordinates (something uncommon in Iraqi systems).

In short, under Colonel Muhammed’s leadership, the Third Battalion, Fourth Public Order Brigade, is providing real security in the contentious areas of Abu Descheer and Abuethia. We look forward to encouraging the brigade commander to discuss any perceived shortcomings with him and to help correct any deficiencies. We further hope that the commander is applying those same standards to his other battalion commanders.

#### **APRIL 15, 2006**

Colonel Muhammed was fired today by the brigade commander. No explanation was given. The former battalion deputy commander, Colonel Samir, is now the commander of the Third Battalion, Fourth Public Order Brigade.

Center for Complex Operations  
National Defense University  
300 5th Avenue SW  
Fort Lesley J. McNair  
Washington, DC 20319

Telephone  
Commercial: 202-685-2529  
DSN: 325-2529  
Fax: 202-685-3581

Web Site  
<http://ccoportal.org>

Dr. Karen Guttieri  
Naval Postgraduate School  
1411 Cunningham Road  
GE-306  
Monterey, CA 93943

Contact Information  
831-656-2294  
[guttieri@nps.edu](mailto:guttieri@nps.edu)

