

## OPERATION "IRAQI FREEDOM"

JUNE, 2003  
(POSTSCRIPT)

At the present time (October 2004), American, British, and various allied forces are still deployed in Iraq, maintaining a tense, difficult, and often violent occupation. It is to be hoped that this occupation will end as soon as is humanly possible, hopefully after the general elections in January 2005, bringing to a close over three decades of inhuman brutality and frightful carnage, punctuated by bestial atrocities, rape, and the exploitation of every resource Iraq and the Iraqi people possessed.

Even now, more than a year and a half after the cessation of formal combat and the collapse of the Ba'athist regime, it is too soon to make any definitive statements concerning either the conduct of the war or its long-term consequences. Therefore, in this postscript, I begin with the composition and assets of the Iraqi armed forces as they existed shortly before the outbreak of hostilities, in the hope that this information will improve your understanding of the events that occurred in April of 2003.

### IRAQI ARSENAL

2003

Vehicles: 250+T-72 1,600+(T-54/-55, T-62, T-59/-69), and a few "Chieftain" Tanks, 300x(EE-9 "Cascavel", AML-90, "Ferret", ERC-90, FUG-70) Armored Cars, 3000+ (BMP-1, BMP-2, M-113, BTR-50/-60/-152, OT-64, and M3 "Halftrack") APCs  
AT Weapons: 3,000+ AT-3, AT-4, "Milan", VCT/HOT, SS-11, and "Swingfire" ATGM's  
Artillery: 1,500+ (Towed 85mm, 100mm, 122mm, 130mm, and 152mm, 155mm GHN-45, 155mm G5 Pieces, 155mm (SP) GCT/AUF-1, 120mm and 160mm Mortars), 250x122mm BM-21, 18xASTROSII  
SSMs: 500+Mobile SCUD-B/-C, 62x"Al Samoud-2"  
Anti-Aircraft: 4,000+ (Towed (23mm, 35mm, 40mm, 57mm, 85mm) AA Guns, 100xSP ZSU-57/2, Some ZSU-23/4, I-HAWK, SA-7,  
Combat Aircraft: Fixed Wing: 6xTu22, 20xMiG-23/27, 45xMirage F-1, 15xSu-20/-22, 15xSu-25, 35xJ-7, 10xMiG-25/29, 40xMiG-21,  
Helicopter: 50+(Mi-24, Gazelle (HOT), Alouette III, Super Frelon), 50xBO105, 30xMi-4, 25xMi-6, 100xMi-17, 50xMi-8  
Small Arms: 7.62mm (AK47M, Qadis, and SKS) rifles, 9mm (Sterling and PPS-43) submachineguns, 7.62mm (M72B1, MG34, RPD, and SGM) machineguns, 12.7mm DShk heavy machineguns, and .303" "Bren" light machineguns.

- Notes:
- 1) All numbers are approximate. The Iraqi military suffers from chronic shortages of spare parts and trained technicians.
  - 2) Total Active Military Manpower: 450,000 (expandable to 1,000,000 on mobilization).
  - 3) Para-military Forces: 4,800 Internal Security and Border Guard Troops.
  - 4) Iraq People's Army AKA "Saddam's Fedayeen": 30,000 - 40,000
  - 5) "Al Quds" Liberation Army: (Numbers Unknown)
  - 6) the Iraqi Navy consisted of less than 600 personnel in late 2002. Total Air Force personnel numbered 40,000.
  - 7) Iraqi Land Forces were divided into four categories:
    - Republican Guards - Two Armored Divisions, 2 Mechanized Divisions, Three Motorized Divisions
    - "Special" Republican Guards - Three Infantry Brigades, One Mechanized Brigade
    - Regular Army - Three Armored Divisions, Three Mechanized Divisions, Eleven Infantry Divisions
    - "Baghdad Brigades" - Three Armored Brigades, Two Mechanized Brigades
  - 8) The Republican Guard was actually an army within the army. It was routinely equipped with the best equipment available and assigned nothing but volunteer personnel. These were carefully screened for political reliability and personal devotion to Saddam. Military prowess, combat experience, or previous criminal record were not considered important.
  - 9) Note increases in the number of Iraqi SSMs and Combat Aircraft despite a ten-year "Trade Embargo".
  - 10) The Iraqi Air Force made almost no contribution whatever to the 2003 war.

### SITUATION: OCTOBER 2004

It has now been a year and a half since Saddam's "Holy Warriors" gave up their uniforms and returned to what they do best: bullying, extortion, rape, torture, kidnapping, and the gleeful slaughter of helpless victims. It is still too soon for conclusions and I refuse to make any sweeping political statements or military predictions based on the incomplete, misleading, or sometimes deliberately misleading reports provided by the commercial news media. This is one of the real and often irksome disadvantages of being a retired intel type. I no longer have access to truly reliable, first-hand, data, gathered by dispassionate professionals whose single aim is to develop an accurate picture of enemy strength, dispositions, capabilities, and intentions. Everything I hear, see, or read is filtered through several layers of other people's agendas. Since you and I are in very much the same position, please remember this when evaluating war news. NOTHING WHATEVER IS PRECISELY AS IT SEEMS! NOTHING! It will be years and years before enough verifiable information is gathered to make scientific discourse or an informed evaluation of various actions taken and their consequences even possible, never mind accurate! Until then, treat all reports as suspect.

### COALITION FORCES: OCTOBER 2004

United States: (Front-Line Combat Contingents)

US CENTCOM - Ground Forces ~ 170,000 pers.

Third US Army

10th Mountain Division

1st Cavalry Division

2<sup>nd</sup> Armored Cavalry

1st Infantry Division [Mech]

81<sup>st</sup> Armored Brigade

2<sup>nd</sup> Bde / 25th Infantry Division

30<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade (Mech)

Marine Forces CENTCOM [MARCENT]

1<sup>st</sup> Bn / 23rd Marines

3<sup>rd</sup> Bn / 1st Marines

1<sup>st</sup> Bn / 8th Marines

US Marine Corps Cammand

1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division (1MarDiv)  
 2<sup>nd</sup> Marine Aircraft Wing (2MAW)  
 3<sup>rd</sup> Marine Aircraft Wing (3MAW)  
 11<sup>th</sup> Marine Expeditionary Unit (11<sup>th</sup> MEU)  
 24<sup>th</sup> Marine Expeditionary Unit (24<sup>th</sup> MEU)  
 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Expeditionary Force (IMEF)

United Kingdom: (For United Kingdom forces "Operation Iraqi Freedom" bears the name "Operation Telic".)

Despite considerable internal conflict and widespread anti-war media coverage, The UK is still America's firmest ally in Iraq. The Blair government has come through crisis after crisis since April 2003, but the Prime Minister shows no signs of abandoning his allies. British military professionalism has been exemplary and the contributions made by the British contingent have been significant.

3<sup>rd</sup> Armored Division ~ 11,000 pers.  
 20<sup>th</sup> Armored Brigade  
 1<sup>st</sup> Mechanized Infantry Brigade  
     Queen's Royal Hussars  
     1<sup>st</sup> Bn / The Light Infantry  
     1<sup>st</sup> Bn / The Royal Regt of Wales  
     2<sup>nd</sup> Bn / The Parachute REGT  
     1<sup>st</sup> Bn / The Royal Scots  
     1<sup>st</sup> Bn / The Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders  
     26<sup>th</sup> Regt Royal Artillery  
     35<sup>th</sup> Regt (Royal Engineers)  
     9<sup>th</sup> / 12<sup>th</sup> Royal Lancers (-)

Notes: 1. The UK's military contribution will be reduced by about 30% during October. The 1<sup>st</sup> Mechanized Infantry Brigade is to be replaced by the 4<sup>th</sup> Armored Division, equipped with Warrior IFVs instead of tanks. 1<sup>st</sup> Mec Bde contains six battle groups at 800 men each. 4<sup>th</sup> Armored will have four or five groups of similar size.  
 2. 1<sup>st</sup> Bn / The Black Watch along with one hundred-seventy Royal Engineers, stationed in the Southeast corner of Iraq near Basra, have not been included in the above numbers as they are part of a separate command. The US has asked that these troops be released for duty elsewhere in Iraq. On Friday, 22 October 2004, this permission was granted.

Spain

Throughout the 1990's relations between Spain, the UK, and the US had been growing stronger and more cordial year by year. The centrist government of Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar had shown itself to be not only cooperative, but actually eager to join western efforts to curtail terrorist activities worldwide. Therefore, despite considerable financial difficulties and vocal leftist domestic opposition, when the US called for allies to help remove the Saddam Government and liberate Iraq, the Spanish responded with admirable courage, making what was, for them, a major military effort.

On 8 April 2003, three vessels of the Royal Spanish navy arrived in the Persian Gulf. There they unloaded nine hundred personnel as part of the US-led coalition engaged in "Operation Iraqi Freedom". Next day the Amphibious Landing Ship *SPS Galicia* offloaded a forty-bed hospital and fifty-three medical personnel, an NBC "Decon" team, and a Construction Battalion. The *Galicia* also offloaded twenty tons of humanitarian aid, nearly 30,000 Muslim rations, eight tons of "safe" drinking water, 10,000 blankets, 30 large tents, and a water desalinization plant.

The Spanish fared rather well, and their soldiers earned the respect of those American and British troops serving alongside them. Casualties had been fairly light (seven had been killed in a single tragic incident), and the US had been sure to underwrite much of the financial hardship involved. Then, on Thursday, 4 March 2004, several bombs planted in a crowded Madrid railway station went off, killing 200 and injuring another 1,500 innocent citizens.

The Spanish Left could smell the blood in the water. Aznar's regime was blamed for "inviting the attention" of Al Qa'ida by allying Spain with the US. Despite sincere British and American declarations of support and solidarity, the damage had been done. The timing had been nearly perfect. General elections were only four days away! The Left was swept into power on the promise of an immediate pullout from Iraq. There were no apologies, no statements of regret, and no hand wringing. 30 June 2004 was set as the date for completion of the withdrawal, which went off as planned.

Others:

Italy	3,085	
South Korea	2,800	
Poland	~2,400	
Ukraine	~1,400	
Netherlands	1,345	
Romania	700	
Japan	~550	
Denmark	496	
Bulgaria	~485	
El Salvador	380	
Hungary	300	
Australia	~300	(Australia calls this "Operation Falconer".)
Mongolia	180	
Georgia	159	
Azerbaijan	151	

Portugal	128
Latvia	122
Czech Republic	~110
Lithuania	105
Slovakia	105
Albania	71
Estonia	55
Tonga	~45
Kazakhstan	29
Macedonia	28
Moldova	12
Norway	10
TOTAL	~14,900

**FINAL NOTE**

Information on troops strengths and dispositions are readily available on the Internet and have thus far been updated regularly. If you like, you may visit: ([www.globalsecurity.org](http://www.globalsecurity.org)) or ([www.fas.org](http://www.fas.org)).