Section 3. Situation in Iraq

1. Security Situation in Iraq and Security Measures

In 2006, the bombing of a Shiite mosque in Samarra in central Iraq triggered an intensification of sectarian violence, leading to deterioration in the security situation particularly in Baghdad, and presenting a serious obstacle to political processes and economic reconstruction in Iraq. In response to this situation, and based on consultations with the Government of Iraq and others, U.S. President George W. Bush announced a new policy for Iraq in January 2007, which included a “surge,” with the dispatch of more than 20,000 U.S. military personnel. In addition, Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki of Iraq launched renewed public security measures in Baghdad and other regions in February 2007.

Through the cooperation of Iraq, the United States and other countries, some improvements have been witnessed in the overall public security situation from the latter half of 2007, with reductions in the number of security incidents and casualties of terrorist attacks. In particular, Al Anbar Province in western Iraq, which was formerly a hotbed of terrorism second only to Baghdad, has shown significant improvements in public security. Factors for this improvement in public security include: the increased numbers of multinational forces and Iraqi security forces, the conduct of counterinsurgency operations to safeguard the Iraqi people and to pursue terrorists, and the collective efforts of the Iraqi people who have come to contribute to local security through the attitudinal shift, and the declaration of a ceasefire by a Shiite leader al-Sadr.

Attacks on multinational forces, Iraqi security forces and civilians by terrorists and Islamic extremists continue by a variety of means such as improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices (VBIEDs). The security situation in Iraq is therefore still fragile and unpredictable. In addition, the influence of neighboring countries has also been noted. In particular, it is reported that Iran has been providing weapons and training to Iraqi militia organizations, and also that Islamic radicals are infiltrating Iraq from Syria regardless of the effort of the Government of Syria.

2. Trends in Multinational Forces in Iraq

As of May 2008, military units from 6 countries, including approximately 150,000 U.S. troops, are deployed in Iraq tasked with maintaining security and reconstruction assistance. The basic idea underlying the activities of the multinational forces is that the presence of such forces is necessary until Iraqi security forces are able to maintain security on their own. Consequently, the multinational forces assert that they cannot set out in advance a deadline for terminating their activities, even while insisting that their involvement in Iraq is not indefinite. In general terms, while the capability of Iraqi security forces is improving, it is thought that more time will be needed until these forces are able to maintain order and stability in Iraq independently.

Meanwhile, the transfer of security responsibilities from multinational forces to Iraqi authorities is proceeding in the provinces in which the capabilities of Iraqi security forces have been enhanced and local conditions have improved. Thus far, the security responsibility has been transferred in 10 provinces, including southeastern Muthanna Province, in which the Ground Self-Defense Force (GSDF) was engaged in humanitarian and reconstruction assistance activities. (See Fig. I-1-3-1)
Based on these changes in the situation in Iraq, there have also been changes in the scale of multinational forces. In April 2008, the United States announced that given progress in the security situation in Iraq, the “surge” troops would be returned home by the end of July. Following that, it was noted that time would be required to assess the overall situation before an additional judgment was made on further troop reductions. In October 2007 the United Kingdom announced the reduction of 2,500 troops stationed in Iraq. However, following clashes between Iraqi security forces and militias in Basra Province in southeastern Iraq, in April 2008 the United Kingdom announced a temporary halt to troop reductions, stating that it would maintain a force of around 4,000 troops for the time being.

In December 2007, the U.N. Security Council adopted Resolution 1790, extending the mandate of the multinational force until the end of 2008. However, in a document submitted to the United Nations Security Council requesting an extension of the stationing of multinational forces, Prime Minister al-Maliki announced that the Government of Iraq considers this to be its final request for the extension of the mandate of multinational force. Based on these developments, the Governments of Iraq and the United States are proceeding with deliberations concerning the future stationing of multinational forces.

3. Efforts by the Iraqi Government and International Community toward Reconstruction

Breakthroughs in the situation in Iraq will require not only security measures, but also political efforts by the Iraqi government on its own initiative to promote national reconciliation. In January 2008, the Iraqi Council of Representatives adopted a number of significant laws, including the Accountability and Justice Law, which enables former Ba’ath Party members who were purged from public offices since 2003 to reassume public...
positions. This represents a significant step forward toward the realization of national reconciliation in Iraq.

In addition, many countries have contributed to Iraqi reconstruction through the dispatch of troops and bilateral and multilateral assistance programs. Since 2005, the United States and others have deployed Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) made up of military and civilian personnel to provide support to local governments in Iraq. The United States has also increased the number of PRTs as part of a process giving greater emphasis to military and non-military cooperation, and currently PRTs led by the U.S. and others conduct activities in all provinces of Iraq. The United Nations has also been coordinating reconstruction, development and humanitarian assistance through the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI).

The Iraq Compact, an international framework to build a new partnership between the Iraqi government and the international community, was launched in May 2007. The Compact stipulates the common policy objectives and the measures to be taken, of both the Iraqi government and international community for the next five years in the areas of governance, security, and economic reconstruction.