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*****Overview*****

Uniqueness and an Iraq Affirmative

Last month President Obama formally ended the U.S combat role in Iraq. What does this mean if you spent all summer writing a case that reduces U.S. military presence in Iraq? Do you have to start over with an entirely new case?

Not necessarily; there is evidence in this file that will help debaters argue that the 50,000 or so troops remaining in the country are still engaged in combat operations and that the shift in strategy is mainly at the rhetorical level and not an operational one. Debaters can also argue that a decrease in U.S. troops means an increase in private military contractors (PMCs) under the direction of the State Department. Debaters can assert that PMCs still constitute a military presence.

This file also contains evidence to help you when you are negative against an Iraq affirmative. If you are negative, you can use Obama's recent withdrawal to your advantage. 50,000 is a much smaller number than the 170,000 that were on the ground in 2007. It is important for negatives to pressure affirmatives to read evidence that takes the withdrawal into account or that post-dates September 1, 2010. Many of the impact cards will be years old and not appropriate for the level of conflict that exists today.

Also, be sure to make the affirmative team specify the new roles of the troops in Iraq. This file includes evidence that the troops remaining will have a substantially different function than what most of the affirmative evidence assumes. Force the affirmative team to read quality evidence to the contrary and keep them on the defensive.

*****Affirmative*****

Troops Still Engage

It will be business as usual in Iraq. There is no meaningful distinction between combat and non-combat troops.

CBS News 8/2

(Brian Montopoli, Iraq Withdrawal: What are Non-Combat Troops?, August 2, 2010, http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-503544_162-20012367-503544.html)

But **it's worth thinking a little bit more about what the role of American forces in Iraq will really be once our combat troops have left.** Last year, I asked Defense Secretary Robert Gates to explain the difference between combat troops and "non-combat" troops. The **"non-combat" troops**, I noted, **will still be capable of engaging the enemy.** Gates insisted there would be a significant difference between the activities of combat and non-combat troops. "All of the combat units will be out of Iraq by the end of August [2010] and those that are left will have a combat capability," he said. **"There will be,** as the president said, **targeted counterterrorism operations. There will be continued embeds with some of the Iraqi forces in a training capacity and so on.**" He continued: "So there will be the capability, but the units will be gone, and, more importantly, the mission will have changed. And so the notion of being engaged in combat in the way we have been up until now will be completely different." So **while the troops will be "non-combat," they will still be engaged in "targeted counterterrorism operations" and working and fighting alongside Iraqi forces, according to Gates. The military and administration's parsing of combat and non-combat troops strikes many as amounting to a distinction without a difference.** In February of last year, Washington Post Pentagon reporter Thomas Ricks stated flatly on CBSNews.com's "Washington Unplugged" that **"There is no such thing as non-combat troops."**

Troops Still Engage

“Withdrawal” is just a PR stunt. Troops will still be engaged in combat missions, they’ve just be renamed.

The Washington Post, 8/22

(Kenneth M. Pollack, The Washington Post, Five myths about the Iraq troop withdrawal, August 22, 2010, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/08/19/AR2010081905642.html>)

Not even close. **Of the roughly 50,000 American military personnel who remain in Iraq, the majority are still combat troops** -- they're **just named something else**. **The major units still in Iraq will no longer be called "brigade combat teams" and instead will be called "advisory and assistance brigades."** **But a rose by any other name is still a rose, and the differences in brigade structure and personnel are minimal. American troops in Iraq will still go into harm's way. They will still accompany Iraqi units on combat missions** -- even if only as "advisers." **American pilots will still fly combat missions in support of Iraqi ground forces. And American special forces will still face off against Iraqi terrorist groups in high-intensity operations.** For that reason, **when American troops leave their bases in Iraq, they will still**, almost invariably, **be in full "battle rattle" and ready for a fight.**

Troops Still Engage

“Withdrawal” is a form of Orwellian double-speak. There is no fundamental difference between the troops staying and the troops leaving.

Foreign Policy 8/3

(Joshua Keating, *Foreign Policy*, What's the Difference Between Combat and Noncombat Troops?, August 3, 2010, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/08/03/what_s_the_difference_between_combat_and_noncombat_troops)

Whatever you want them to be. The distinction is more political than military. The White House says the remaining troops will "train and advise Iraqi Security Forces; conduct partnered and targeted counterterrorism operations; and protect ongoing U.S. civilian and military efforts." All of this has the potential to involve quite a bit of combat. When asked about the distinction, Defense Secretary Robert Gates said last year that thought the units in Iraq will still have combat capability, "the notion of being engaged in combat in the way we have been up until now will be completely different." It's true that the majority of U.S. troops left in Iraq will rarely leave base, but that's already the case. However, the units involved are certainly prepared for combat should the need arise. For instance, the first division deployed in support of the new noncombat mission -- which the Obama administration decided in February to rechristen Operation New Dawn -- is the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Division, and armored cavalry unit. The remaining U.S. troops will participate in combat patrols with Iraqi forces. (This isn't new. According to the U.S. military, independent operations have not been carried out for several months, and the Iraqi government's approval of any combat mission has been required since the 2008 Status of Forces Agreement.) U.S. special operations troops will continue, in partnership with Iraqi forces, to conduct counterterrorism raids against insurgent groups. Additionally, Iraqi forces are still largely dependent on the United States for air support, artillery and medical assistance.

Troops Still Engage

Remaining troops will still be engaged in military operations.

Momot 10

(Monthly Review, "Combat Troop Withdrawal" from Iraq and the Threat of Another War: Interview with Arshin Adib-Moghaddam, <http://mrzine.monthlyreview.org/2010/aam060910.html>)

It is officially stated that the US troops who will stay in Iraq until 2011 will not be engaged in military operations. **Is it possible or is it a kind of wishful thinking? We shouldn't forget that President Obama's announcement declaring the end of 'combat operations' in Iraq is the second 'official end' to the war.** George W. Bush announced as early as in March 2003 that 'major combat operations in Iraq have ended' and that from now on the 'coalition is engaged in securing and reconstructing that country'. **Through the rhetoric of the return of combat troops, President Obama wants to fulfil one of his major campaign promises, but it is improbable that US troops will not be engaged in small-scale military operations.** Having said that, their capacity to launch wider strategic operations is curtailed and the US Army is likely to rely more extensively on reconnaissance missions, intelligence operations, or targeted bombardments with unmanned drones comparable to operations in Afghanistan/Pakistan.

Troops Still Engage

All troops are combat troops. Obama's withdrawal is a media spin to gain public favor.

Kamps 8/31

(Anthony, TheUwcpost.com, All soldiers are combat soldiers, August 31, 2010, <http://www.uwmpost.com/2010/08/31/all-soldiers-are-combat-soldiers/>)

However, hype created by the media is giving Obama all the credit. But make no mistake — you will not hear the Obama administration give any due credit to anyone but themselves. They have no choice at this point. **They need all the good PR they can get, with the economy still in the dumps, unemployment rising, and spending out of control** — even if it is at the expense of a former president who gets more blame than he deserves. **As the headline “Combat troops are being withdrawn from Iraq” sweeps the nation, there are questions that the American people should be asking: What is the definition of “combat troop”?** Is it limited to the infantry divisions of the military? **There is no such thing as a “non-combat troop.”** Then you must ask, Which soldiers go on combat missions? All military, active or retired, will tell you the honest answer: all of them. If you wear a uniform, you are expected to be able to perform on a combat mission. Why else would all soldiers go through basic training? In a guest post by retired U.S. Army Colonel Andrew Berdy on Tom Ricks' *Foreign Policy* blog, “The Best Defense,” Berdy sums up the situation well: “Can you explain to me how, or why, the myth of ‘all combat troops out of Iraq’ is allowed to be perpetuated by the press, much less by our senior military leadership? Yes, the mission has changed. But units like my son's Stryker Brigade (not the one that just left!) are, and always will be, combat infantry units. **This is fiction pure and simple. I just don't get how the nation has swallowed this and why members of the media are not reporting facts . . . rather than the political PR message the Administration wants portrayed.** Does anyone not think that the likelihood of continued combat operations is a reality? **When casualties are taken by these ‘non-combat forces,’ will those casualties be characterized as ‘non-combat’ as well?** Does the public not understand that the secondary mission of our remaining forces is to be prepared to conduct combat operations either to defend themselves or to support Iraqi forces if requested? And **when these train-and-assist ‘non-combat’ units have to engage in, dare I say, combat operations, what will the Administration say then?**

Troops Still Engage

Troop withdrawal is a fiction. Troops are remaining on the ground and continue to be involved in military operations.

Tait 8/20

(Robert, Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty, U.S. Iraq Troop Withdrawal 'In Name Only' As Country Faces Uncertain Future, August 20, 2010, http://www.rferl.org/content/US_Iraq_Troop-Withdrawal_In_Name_Only_As_Country_Faces_Uncertain_Future_/2133094.html)

But even amid such domestic and regional power realignments, **the depiction of the August 19 troop departure as a final U.S. withdrawal is something of a fiction**. While U.S. combat operations will officially terminate at the end of this month, when 6,000 support troops withdraw, another **50,000 U.S. forces will remain until the end of 2011, officially in an "advisory" capacity but with the potential to become more directly involved if the need arises**. In reality, **U.S. military input is almost certain to remain tangible**, especially given the recent warning from Iraq's top army officer, Lieutenant General Babaker Zebari, that his troops may not be ready for another decade and that the United States is pulling out too soon. The United States is likely to stay closely involved in Iraq's defense irrespective of its troops' presence, says Hamid Fadhil, professor of political science at the University of Baghdad. He notes that U.S. Embassy in Baghdad is the biggest in the world in terms of size and number of employees. "But I have to mention that **Iraq is still dependent on the U.S. in many ways**," Fadhil adds. "For example, **there is some ambiguity when it comes to the aspect of external security and about the commitment of the U.S. to defend Iraq from any external attack.**"

Withdrawal → Privatized Defense

Withdrawal will lead to the increase of Private Military Contractors

Tait 8/20

(Robert, Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty, U.S. Iraq Troop Withdrawal 'In Name Only' As Country Faces Uncertain Future, August 20, 2010, http://www.rferl.org/content/US_Iraq_Troop-Withdrawal_In_Name_Only_As_Country_Faces_Uncertain_Future_/2133094.html)

One key component of Iraqi security likely to remain in the hands of the United States is air defense, a role Iraq is presently unequipped to adopt since it lacks an air force. **Following the departure of U.S. forces next year, responsibility for training Iraqi police to deal with insurgents is to be taken over by the State Department. The task will be carried out by contractors and is certain to result in a rapid increase in the presence of private security organizations.** Already, according to "The New York Times," the State Department is planning to double the number of private security guards to around 7,000 to protect civilians. Rogers says **the U.S. troop drawdown will not end the involvement of external forces but will simply privatize it** -- ensuring a large foreign involvement for many years to come. "I think for the next 18 months, the reality is that there is going to be a large formal American military presence," Rogers says. **You may call them advise-and-assist brigades, but they do have a combat function if need be. "But what is clearly going to happen is the privatization of foreign-security involvements in Iraq.** That's already at a pretty heavy level, with many tens of thousands of security personnel from abroad. That I think, if anything, will at least increase but certainly not diminish. So in a sense, **there is a transition over the next 18 months to two years towards at least a partial privatization of foreign security intervention in Iraq. I think that will persist for a long time.**"

*****Debating Against an Iraq 1AC*****

Iraq Non-Unique

The mission has changed substantially, for all practical purposes, the combat role is over.

Center for American Progress 8/19

(Lawrence Korb and Laura Conley, Center for American Progress, Obama Is on Track with Iraqi Troop Withdrawal: Last Full U.S. Combat Brigade Leaves but Iraq Has Work to Do, http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2010/08/obama_troop_withdrawal.html, 2010)

Moreover, **the final full combat brigade's withdrawal shows the Iraqi people and the world that the United States has no desire to remain an occupying power.** This is particularly significant because the United States is struggling to reverse Taliban momentum in a nearly nine-year war in Afghanistan and Muslim publics increasingly demonstrate a loss of confidence in the United States. The Pew Research Center noted earlier this year that U.S. opinion is "slipping in some Muslim countries where opinion had edged up in 2009." In Egypt, for example, the U.S. favorability rating dropped from 42 percent last year to 33 percent this year. Jordan has a similar story: U.S. approval dipped from 31 percent to 26 percent over the same period. But while efficiently pulling out our troops is important in helping reverse these trends, the last full U.S. combat brigade's departure from Iraq is not a sea-change in U.S. military efforts there. **For all practical purposes, the United States' active combat role in Iraq ended last year. U.S. combat forces withdrew from Iraqi cities to American bases by June 30, 2009 in accordance with the terms of the U.S.-Iraq Security Agreement signed by the George W. Bush administration and Prime Minister Nouri Al Maliki. U.S. forces have been available to aid their Iraqi counterparts over the last year, but they are no longer in the lead and are not permitted to take on combat missions in the country unless specifically requested to do so by the Iraqis.**

Iraq Non-Unique

The mission has shifted to being civilian led, and the military responsibilities belong to the Iraqis.

BBC News 8/2

(Obama confirms plan for US troop withdrawal from Iraq , <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/10839342>, 2010)

The remaining 50,000 troops will stay in the country in order to train Iraqi security forces, conduct counterterrorism operations and provide civilians with ongoing security, said Mr Obama. An agreement negotiated with the Iraqis in 2008 states that these troops must be gone from the country by the end of next year. But the president warned the US had "not seen the end of American sacrifice in Iraq". He added: "But make no mistake, **our commitment in Iraq is changing - from a military effort led by our troops to a civilian effort led by our diplomats.**" Meanwhile, according to the US military, 222 people died in attacks last month. Baghdad says 535 lost their lives - which would make July the deadliest month in the country for more than two years.

Iraq Non-Unique

Operations have ended and the troop number has radically dropped. You should highly scrutinize their scenario.

Guardian 9/1

("Barack Obama ends the war in Iraq. 'Now it's time to turn the page' "<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/sep/01/obama-formally-ends-iraq-war>, 2010)

Barack **Obama formally brought an end to US combat operations in Iraq** last night, seven years and 165 days after the invasion began, and declared it was time for America "to turn the page". In a televised address to the nation from the Oval Office, the president said America had paid a huge price for the war begun by George W Bush to topple Saddam Hussein. "Tonight, I am announcing that **the American combat mission** in Iraq **has ended**. Operation Iraqi Freedom is over, and the Iraqi people now have lead responsibility for the security of their country," he said. Iraqi prime minister Nouri al-Maliki hailed the restoration of sovereignty to Iraq: "Iraq today is sovereign and independent. With the execution of the troop pullout, our relations with the [United States](#) have entered a new stage between two equal, sovereign countries." **A ceremony is to be held in Baghdad today**, attended by the US vice-president, Joe Biden, and Maliki, **to** mark the **handover** of **responsibility for military operations from the US to Iraqi forces**. Obama, whose early opposition to the invasion helped propel his White House candidacy, presented last night as the near-fulfilment of a key 2008 presidential election campaign pledge to end the war. "This was my pledge to the American people as a candidate for this office. Last February, I announced a plan that would bring our combat brigades out of Iraq, while redoubling our efforts to strengthen Iraq's security forces and support its government and people. That is what we have done," he said. **The number of US troops in Iraq has dropped from a high of 170,000 in 2007 to 50,000, whose mission changes from today from combat to assisting the Iraqi army. All 50,000 are scheduled to leave by the end of next year**, unless the Iraqi government requests a few hundred or few thousand remain behind.

Iraq non-Unique

The combat mission has ended and there is an ongoing transition away from U.S. forces.

USA Today 8/12

(Obama's Iraq withdrawal plan already underway, <http://content.usatoday.com/communities/theoval/post/2010/08/obamas-iraq-withdrawal-plan-already-under-way/1>, 2010)

Tony Blinken, national security adviser to Vice President Biden, said that **as the hand-off of security responsibility to the Iraqis moves forward, there is a "big picture" emerging: "The number of security incidents is dramatically down. The capacity of the Iraqi security forces is significantly up.** And politics has emerged as the basic way of doing business in Iraq." **The 50,000 U.S. troops remaining in Iraq after August will have an "advise and assist" role.** That means things like "providing assistance on communications, on logistics, on intelligence," Blinken said. "And there will be partnered counter-terrorism operations." **The months ahead will include another gradual withdrawal process: All U.S. troops are slated to be pulled out of Iraq by the end of next year.**