

British Troops Mobilizing on the Iranian Border

By [Mahdi Darius Nazemroaya](#)

Global Research, August 30, 2006

30 August 2006

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)
In-depth Report: [IRAN: THE NEXT WAR?](#)

“The belief in the possibility of a short decisive war appears to be one of the most ancient and dangerous of human illusions” Irish writer and patriot, Robert Wilson Lynd

The Ambiguous Claim of British Disengagement from Iraq

The British government has claimed that it will reduce the shifting figure of approximately 7,500 British troops¹ to approximately 4,000 troops, within a year. It must also be noted that the reported figures on the actual number of British troops and military personnel in Iraq are also subject to variation(s). Also conventional military force is being replaced with mercenary forces or private security firms that have been flooding Iraq since the beginning of the Anglo-American occupation. Reminiscent of the pledges of the White House is the British transition plan for southern Iraq. The ‘transition plan,’ which British officials eagerly cite, seems to be empty, only posturing, and token in nature. Even as it is acknowledged publicly more troops are actually being deployed to Iraq and the Iraqi border with Iran, including mercenaries or private contractors who number in the tens of thousands. “So many British security firms are cashing in on the violence in Iraq that armed private security men now outnumber most of the national army contingents in the country [Iraq].”²

With the aid of these official and much publicized claims the British government is trying to give the public impression that it is gradually disengaging from Iraq and preparing the grounds to officially hand power over to the Iraqi military, police, and security forces in southern Iraq, except in the proximity of both the city of Basra and the province of Basra

From the foreign affairs editorial briefing of the British news source, *The Times* (U.K.):

“This year Britain has been noisily moving ahead with the “transition” plan (...) This could mean that by mid-2007 Britain would have fewer than 4,000 soldiers in Iraq, consolidated around Basra, three officials said in a joint briefing. (...) “We’ll maintain a sizeable force [in Basra] to protect that investment”

So far nothing is really guaranteed in regards to the pull-out of British troops from Iraq by British authorities. The aim(s) of British commanders and officials is to give a false impression that British troops will be disengaging from Iraq and that British troop levels will be reduced. This is a misleading projection and façade. It has been arranged to appease the “political appetite” for British disengagement/withdrawal from Iraq. The United States has similarly been promising and forecasting troop reductions in Iraq while in reality it has been increasing U.S. troop figures and the American military presence in the Middle East.

Concealed Programme: Retrospective on the build-up to the Anglo-American Invasion of Iraq

When military operations are handled with the aim of satisfying political interests (“political appetite”) there is a definite synchronization between political maneuvering and military strategy. Simply said, there are more reasons and considerations above and beyond what is portrayed publicly.

It has been revealed that the Bush Administration in close consultation with the British government of Tony Blair took the decision in July 2002 to invade Iraq. The decision(s) for war were made and the rest of the build-up to the Anglo-American ‘war of invasion’ was just posturing to brake-in the public, including the international diplomacy taking place at the United Nations.

In fact the plan to invade and occupy Iraq predates the Bush-Blair decision(s) and appears to go further back into the 1990s; in other words it could not have been a decision taken by the American President and British Prime Minister, but a decisive and long-term objective executed on behalf of broader economic and strategic interests. These two leaders served the interests that control the economies, mainstream media, and national policies of the United States and Britain.

Previous administrations or governments, regardless of so-called political orientation⁴, in the United States and Britain paved the way or the road to the 2003 invasion of Iraq. The grounds for the invasion and occupation of Iraq was years in the making and cemented gradually through strategic brinkmanship. The defensive capabilities and conventional means of any resistance in Iraq—at one time the most powerful Arab nation—were eroded through time by the British and American governments and military forces. These concurring governments, successively weakened Iraq, despite of any supposed political differences. It seems that they were all executing different steps/stages in the same programme. Iraq was weakened through such mean as United Nations Security Council Sanctions. This also includes the ‘internationally unlawful’⁵ no-fly zones mandated over Iraq under humanitarian pretext, which were not authorized by the U.N. Security Council, and the erosion of the Iraqi military’s defensive capabilities during more than a decade of bombing.

It similarly seems that Iraq was manipulated after the bloody Iraq-Iran War into invading Kuwait by the United States. The Iraqi government had consistently complained after the Iraq-Iran War that the United States along with Iraq’s fellow OPEC members such as Kuwait and the U.A.E. were deliberately lowering the market prices of world oil supplies to subjugate Iraq and manoeuvre it into intense debt and economic breakdown. President Saddam Hussein of Iraq even felt grossly betrayed after he was egged onto attacking Iran by the United States and the Arab sheikdoms of the Persian Gulf. Subsequently after the large-scale damage of Iraq, including the military and economy, because of the war with Iran, President Saddam Hussein ordered the invasion of Kuwait to make up for his losses—that was of course under the impression that ‘the United States had given Iraq the green light to invade neighbouring Kuwait.’⁶

In retrospect, one should also note that the preparations for an invasion of Iraq took years and after the liberation of Kuwait when the United States had the chance to support the relatively bloodless overthrow of President Saddam Hussein by military officers, Arab groups, democratic forces, and the Kurds they deliberately did not. This is a question in

itself that has an ominous answer. In reality the war against Iraq was carried on after liberation of Kuwait by the Bush Sr. and Clinton administrations till the ground was fertile enough for an invasion force.

It is in the same manner that the ground for confrontation with Iran is being paved under the pretext of accusations that Iran desires to produce nuclear weapons. As with Iraq, the road towards confrontation with Iran will be paved in steps including the demonizing of Iran and a military build-up alongside Iranian borders. The use of sanctions would help brake down the strength of the population and cause internal friction. Internal discord could be used as a trump card to have fifth columnist forces, based along party, ethnic or sectarian lines working from within Iran.

Scott Ritter, a former American U.N. weapons inspector, has written in a widely published article titled "U.S. war with Iran has already begun," that the United States has already started paving the path for a conflict with Iran: "The reality is that the U.S. war with Iran has already begun. As we speak, American over flights of Iranian soil are taking place, using pilotless drones and other, more sophisticated, capabilities."

The decision was made to invade Iraq in July 2002 and through the execution of a presidential authorization in August, 2002 before the actual offensive in 2003. What are the chances that such a decision has also been made in regards to Iran already? Mobilization for war could be underway by all sides and all other activities a mere act. There is already a set precedent for this type of action on the part of the United States and the British government. The mobilization of British troops that are configured to 'execute offensive operations' only strengthens this premise.

British Commanders: "Protecting the Investment"

In practice, British troops will either be officially or formally handing 'nominal power' to the Iraqi military, police, and security forces, while still keeping real authority. This process is a continuation of the existing one in Iraq, but under a new name. The British military will either continue current operations or change or expand the focus of British military objectives in Iraq. The mobilization of light, flexible rapid deployment British forces near the Iranian border that can quickly move at an instant notice is the new function that the British are now undertaking. This metamorphosis is taking place under the mandate to fight smuggling and the alleged entry of weapons into Iraq from neighbouring Iran.

The false premises for renovation of practice in Iraq that the British forces are supposedly undertaking is even compromised by the British statements that Britain, along with the United States, will protect their "investments" in Iraq by not absolutely withdrawing. This is highlighted by an article written by Kim Sengupta of the British paper 'The Independent.'

From the British daily, *The Independent*⁷:

"A force of around 4,000 British troops will stay behind in Iraq for an indefinite period, even after all provinces controlled by the UK are handed over to the Baghdad government in nine months' time, senior defence sources said yesterday.

The soldiers will be positioned at a base in Basra ready to act to "protect the investment" made by U.S. and British forces in the country, it was disclosed."

At first one might assume that the “investment” is inclusively indicating Basra or Iraq and/or Iraqi oil resources, but after careful scrutiny one can not rule out plans for the configuration of an Anglo-American ‘New Middle East’ (formerly termed the Greater Middle East) or even what lies west of Basra and Iraq...[8](#)

The announcement(s) of British troop level reduction are firstly misleading and secondly could be made in anticipation of future events only known to British and Coalition political and military planners—plans that the public are in the dark about. Once again, the political considerations of the operation are apparent from the stated objective of satisfying “political appetites.”

British Rapid Deployment Units

There is already a shift in operations and troop mobility underway in Iraq. British troops will no longer be stationary, but be mobile and patrolling or roaming Iraqi territory in mobile formations with rapid deployment capabilities.

Rapid deployment capabilities are qualities that allow a unit or sub-unit to move ahead of an invading or defensive force for diverse missions; they are characteristics of light infantry, including para-troopers, and light cavalry units. Lighter forces are flexible on account of their quick speed and light formation. Rapid deployment capabilities also allows a unit to conduct reconnaissance work into enemy territory, sabotage, infiltration of enemy territory and installations, perform raids, impede enemy movement(s) and advance(s), attack behind enemy lines, and execute ambushes.

Rapid deployment units can also be used to capture and secure vital installations or strategic points such as oil refineries or airfields, where an advancing force can create a bridgehead or supply point or secure vital resources. In particular, light infantry and light cavalry units are ideal rapid deployment ground units for performing ‘seek and destroy missions,’ and patrolling operations, in coordination with other military units, to prevent enemy infiltration or enemy forces from invading. If there were to be a major war between two neighbouring forces of almost equal strength the probability of the use of light units of infantry and cavalry with rapid deployment units would be indispensable. A war between Iranian forces and the American-led Coalition forces would be one employing such units on its frontiers.

There are also approximately 2,500 British troops stationed in the Persian Gulf many with rapid deployment capabilities, that are ready for instant deployment or to engage in military operation concerned with Iraq at an instant notice.

Under what circumstances are Rapidly Deployable Ground units Utilized?

The use of light and quick ground units is one that corresponds to an operation or mission that can be very volatile and quickly changing with many unexpected events. These types of units are very flexible in their operation(s). A war or conflict with Iran and or an Iranian reaction to aerial bombardments of its nuclear energy facilities could be an operation of unpredictable characteristics because of the largely unknown nature and capabilities of the Iranian Armed Forces. Using mobile, rapid deployment is a strategy which is ideal when an army is in territory heavily concentrated or with the ‘potential to be heavily concentrated by enemy forces.’ When in enemy territory where you can be easily surrounded it would be a grave mistake to stay stationary in such places like a military base where you could face a

siege and be targeted by an enemy that knows where to find you. That is why a mobile and light unit that can rapidly deploy and redeploy on multiple operations and missions is ideal. One of the objectives is not to let the enemy forces know where you are located; therefore your units will constantly be in movement or prepared for rapid movement(s). Also, light units can disperse easily under enemy fire and they can also secure enemy facilities at a rapid pace, avoiding enemy forces or air power to an extent. In addition to their flexibility, lighter military units are less detectable, harder to find, and harder to attack. These types of units can also easily disappear and vanish or dissolve similar to an advantage possessed by guerrilla forces.

The area(s) the British troops are abandoning are heavily pro-Iranian and probably have Iranian operatives and intelligence assets reporting on the activities and locations of the British forces. If one is expecting a war with an Iranian military which is able to strike various targets with an advanced missile force then mobility and fast movement vis-à-vis rapid deployment ground units is necessitated. British troops, especially if they are located near the Iranian border, are in a position where they are obliged to be mobile if they are expecting future hostilities, especially from a larger Iranian force that can overwhelm the border(s).

Also if a war is to be waged against Iran, British units can not only stay immobile in bases unless protecting highly important, strategic resources or points, such as the Green Zone in Baghdad, but would need to be mobile with 'offensive capabilities' to engage Iran in combat. The mobility of troops and units signifies 'offensive action' and not the defensive role or security role that stationary troops or units in military bases symbolize. Speed, flexibility, mobility, and the ability for offensive military action(s) will be significant in any possible future campaign against Iran.

British Cover-Up in Southern Iraq

The British Army unit, the Queen's Royal Hussars on August 24, 2006 'abandoned' their base near Amarah (Al-Amarah) the capital city of the province of Maysan. Incidentally the Queen's Royal Hussars are a light cavalry unit. Their base like many other British and Coalition troops' bases in Anglo-American occupied Iraq has been under heavy attack and this is something that has continued from the onset of the entrance of British and American forces into Iraq—to be frank these attacks are not in essence anything new.

There seems to be a cover up of the events leading to the desertion. Muqtada Al-Sadr and many other Iraqis hailed it as a defeat of the British. The British military dismissed extensively the widely believed reports in Iraq and the Middle East that British soldiers were forced out by southern insurgents, but this seems to be very doubtful in light of the severe pillaging of the abandoned British base's property and supplies only hours after the British left the base. According to the CBC, Rifaat Taha Yaseen of the Iraqi Army's 10th Division told Associated Press Television News that "The British forces left Abu Naji [their base] and the locals started looting everything," and that "They [the locals] took everything from the buildings."⁹ The British equipment and apparatus were scheduled to be transported elsewhere, but this did not materialize because the base was stripped naked in hours with the British military unable to do anything. Iraqi forces also said they were not informed of the spontaneous desertion of the British base, something that the British military rejects by asserting that the 'hand-over of the base to Iraqi authorities was co-ordinated with Amarah administrators in advance.' It is transparent that the base was abandoned without delay and that there is some sort of cover-up or media spin of events underway in regards to the

British desertion of their positions in Maysan.

Major-General Charlie Burbridge, a British military spokesman tried to downplay the looting of the British Army base and the Iraqi resentment towards the occupation of Iraq by foreign troops. The Major-General said that the looting of the British base “was more of an attempt to improve one’s [meaning the Iraqis] quality of life by making off with an air conditioner,” and that “the crux of the issue is economic, its not malice [against British troops or the occupation]. Call it a peace dividend.”

Iraqi Accusations that Britain is mobilizing for an attack on Iran

British commanders have conveniently cited the attacks on the army base¹⁰ of the Queen’s Royal Hussars as motivation for the light cavalry regiment’s departure or desertion. What is noteworthy about the abandonment of the British base in Maysan is that British troops have been redeployed onto the Iranian border. The unit has also simultaneously downgraded to even lighter, more flexible, and quicker equipment by “giving up their Challenger tanks and Warrior armoured fighting vehicles in favour of stripped-down Landrovers armed with machineguns and “will remain constantly on the move and be re-supplied by air drops.”¹¹

Concerned leaders of Iraqi society are accusing the British and American forces of getting ready to attack neighbouring Iran from Iraq. As a result of these accusations and the military movements themselves, British officials including Dominic Asquith, the British Ambassador to Iraq, have stressed that the redeployment of British troops on the Iranian border are not British preparations for military attacks or an invasion of Iran, but rather a crack down on smuggling and the entrance of weapons into Iraq from Iran.

While British officials are maintaining no desire or preparations for a conflict with Iran, more British troops are being mobilized and deployed to Iraq at the same time. The Light Infantry of the 2nd Battalion, another unit with rapid deployment capabilities, is deploying to the southern Iraqi border with Iran. The 2nd Battalion is being sent to Iraq under the pretext of working in the Rear Operations Battle Group which will provide escorts for military convoys and security for British forces and bases in Basra.¹²

Why are Italian troops leaving Iraq?

Furthermore, the Italian government has plans to pull out its 2,700 troops within September, 2006. It is alluding to the move as part of Italy’s commitment to provide more than 3,000 Italian troops for an international force due in South Lebanon, after the Israeli siege of Lebanon. There is also an alternative explanation for the departure of the soldiers of certain nations such as Italy from occupied Iraq. That explanation is that if there is a possible war with Iran or Iran and Syria, then Anglo-American occupied Iraq will be a theatre of war under which ‘all Coalition’ troops will come under Iranian and Syrian fire. In such a case the populations of countries such as Japan or countries in Europe such as Italy who are fiercely anti-war in their perspective(s) will hold their own government, the United States, and the British government accountable for the deaths of their nationals—in other words there would be ferocious opposition to a war with Iran and Syria if these nations faced national casualties that incited domestic outrage. In this scenario the Anglo-American war effort would be greatly impaired and most covert or overt support by foreign governments could be endangered because of their publics.

British military positions in Iraq & the Iranian oil fields in Khuzestan

The province of Maysan is north of Basra and borders the important Iranian province of Khuzestan. What is strategically important about the Iranian province of Khuzestan is that it is where most of Iran's oil is produced. Khuzestan is conveniently next to Iraq and would be one of the first—if not 'the first'—strategic objectives or goals to secure if Iran were to be invaded and vital Iranian oil supplies kept on the market.¹³ Its vast oil fields and refineries would bolster the Coalition forces and secure the vital flow of energy. Khuzestan's proximity to British and Coalition forces—forces that are increasingly becoming or defined by rapid deployment capabilities—does betray a strategic and tactical strategy that is no mere coincidence. This also adds further context to the Iranian claims that the British are involved in cross-border operations to destabilize Khuzestan and Iran. The mysterious bombings of public areas and government buildings in the Iranian province did commence with the start of the Anglo-American occupation of Iraq. The occupation of Khuzestan under the pretext of stopping Iran from allegedly making nuclear weapons would come as no surprise for those who believe the War on Terror, the American-led wars in Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, and Iraq are all part of a concealed war for oil and energy resources or those who believe that the United States has a regime-change agenda for Iran. An invasion and occupation of Khuzestan alone would also put the oil wealth of the entire Middle East under Anglo-American control.

Khuzestan: A Potential Kosovo?

If Iran were to be invaded and defeated, much as Yugoslavia was by NATO, Khuzestan could find itself in a "state of autonomy" under Anglo-American protection much like Kosovo. Something Iran would never accept. It is also no mere coincidence that the British government—whose forces are bordering Khuzestan—have strong ties with the separatist movements outside Iran declaring to represent Khuzestan. These are also groups which the British government fosters. It is also these groups or self-portrayed 'fronts for independence' that claim to be behind attacks in Khuzestan, Iran; something that the Iranian government has repeatedly held the British government, along with others, responsible for.

In the days, weeks, and months ahead Khuzestan and southern Iraq will come under further focus as British troops mobilize their rapid deployment ground units—the type needed for waging war and invasion—on the Iranian border and a showdown looms ahead between Iran and the United States over the Iranian nuclear energy program and its ultimate fate.

Note: Readers are welcome to cross-post this article with a view to spreading the word and warning people of the dangers of a broader Middle East war. Please indicate the source and copyright note.

Notes

1 Approximately 7,500 British troops were reported to be station in Iraq as of July 2006. This figure does not reflect auxiliary forces or British forces in the region that serve the Iraqi mission and the American-led Coalition forces.

2 Fisk, Robert; Britain's Secret Army in Iraq: Thousands of Armed Security men who answer to nobody; The Independent, March 28, 2004; Middle East

Note: This connotes a sign of the modern transformations brought about by the advent of the commercialization of the world. Governments, nation-states, and even corporations are employing private armies—something that means that military forces loyal to nations are

being replaced by forces only loyal to their paymasters. This is one of the dark faces of globalization. As the nation-state is morphing and diluting, so are its institutions, including collective security and defence.

3 Maddox, Bronwen; Britain can't pull out but it might be able to slither away; The Times (U.K.); August 23, 2006; Foreign Editor's briefing

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,30809-2324718,00.html>

4 In elections all around the world, candidates from separate and supposedly different political spectrums and ideologies have created the illusion of alternatives to issues, but have implemented carried out the same political agendas (ranging from monetary issues, defensive policy, and legislature to foreign policy) with little variation(s).

5 No-fly Zones: the legal position; BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) News; February 19, 2001; Middle East

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/1175950.stm

"However, unlike the military campaign to expel Iraqi forces from Kuwait, the no-fly zones were not authorised by the UN and they are not specifically sanctioned by any Security Council resolution."

"But critics of the no-fly zones point out that the resolution did not say the Security Council was acting under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, which provides for enforcement action."

6 Omar, Kaleem; Is the US State Department still keeping April Glaspie under wraps?; Jang News Group December 25, 2005

Also published by Information Clearing House

<http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article11376.htm>

7 Sengupta, Kim; UK troops to stay in Iraq 'to protect investment' ; The Independent, August 23, 2006; U.K. Politics

<http://news.independent.co.uk/uk/politics/article1221071.ece>

Also published by Information Clearing House

<http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article14671.htm>

8 The "investment" could be monopolization of all the oil and gas resources of the Middle East, which would be completed by controlling and occupying either the Iranian province of Khuzestan or all Iran. Occupying Iran would also open up the gateway to the energy resources of the Caspian and Central Asia. Could Iran be the 'investment?' Then again the word protected is used, thus regressing the term to annotate Iraq and/or Iraqi oil resources.

9 Hani, Haidar; Military base looted after Britons leave, raising concerns about hand-over plan; CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Association) News; August 23, 2006; Canadian Press

<http://www.cbc.ca/cp/world/060825/w082572.html>

10 The name of the British Army base where the Queen's Royal Hussars were posted is Camp Abu Naji

11 Colvin, Ross; British troops quit Iraq base, Adopt WWII tactics; Reuters, August 24, 2006

<http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/L24546480.htm>

12 Soldiers to be deployed to Iraq; BBC (British Broadcast Corporation) News; August 29, 2006

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/scotland/edinburgh_and_east/5295610.stm

13 The securing of the Straits of Hormaz, in the Persian Gulf, for oil tankers and international traffic are also another factor in securing the flow of Iranian and Persian Gulf oil onto the world market.

The original source of this article is Global Research

Copyright © [Mahdi Darius Nazemroaya](#), Global Research, 2006

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Mahdi Darius Nazemroaya](#)

About the author:

An award-winning author and geopolitical analyst, Mahdi Darius Nazemroaya is the author of The Globalization of NATO (Clarity Press) and a forthcoming book The War on Libya and the Re-Colonization of Africa. He has also contributed to several other books ranging from cultural critique to international relations. He is a Sociologist and Research Associate at the Centre for Research on Globalization (CRG), a contributor at the Strategic Culture Foundation (SCF), Moscow, and a member of the Scientific Committee of Geopolitica, Italy.

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca

www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca