

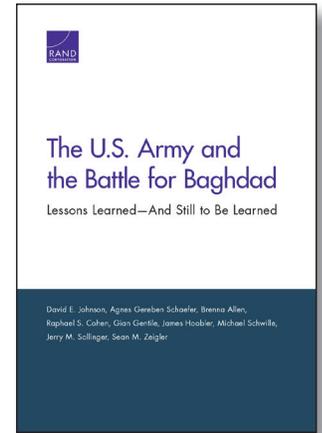


# The U.S. Army and the Battle for Baghdad

## Lessons Learned—And Still to Be Learned

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To help the U.S. Army and U.S. Department of Defense retain institutional knowledge and capabilities and fully prepare leaders for future conflicts, RAND researchers recount the Army's efforts in the Iraq War, especially in Baghdad, and offer lessons learned and recommendations.



### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- Using primary and secondary sources, what is the history of the Battle for Baghdad?
- What are the strategic lessons learned from the conflict?



### KEY FINDINGS

The history of the Battle for Baghdad is recounted from prewar planning to withdrawal

- In this report, the Iraq War and the Battle for Baghdad are divided into the following periods: prewar planning, occupation, GEN George Casey's command, the troop surge, and withdrawal. These periods frame the analysis, and each is mined for lessons. The history recounted in the report focuses on events and actions from the national command level down to tactics and techniques employed by combat brigades. It also includes decisions and actions by both military and civilian leaders, because both had an effect on ground operations.
- The evidentiary base for the report's history of the war comes from a broad literature review, primary sources, and interviews, including with former senior military commanders and national security officials.

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The overarching lessons learned from the Battle for Baghdad could help leaders avoid the same mistakes in future conflicts

- The Army needs to anticipate and take steps to prevent insurgencies.
- Capacity and capability matter, and the “whole of government” beyond the military could not provide them in Iraq.
- Robust and high-quality headquarters are critical.
- As the Army continues to perform the training and advising mission, developing competent advisers and understanding sustainable outcomes are key.
- Building and advising foreign armies should enable them to operate without direct U.S. engagement.
- Military transition teams and advisers are key to developing forces that provide sustainable security.
- The Battle for Baghdad provides a wealth of information about how to reimagine future urban combat.
- Army professional military education is critical in preparing Army leaders for the future.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

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- The capabilities described in this report are ones that the Army needs to develop to ensure that victory on the battlefield is not subsequently sacrificed by failure to develop the necessary capabilities in host-nation security forces. Tough choices need to be made, and institutional preferences make them even tougher.
- The Army should prepare to prevent insurgencies; build more capacity for the challenges the Army faces in the future; continue efforts to provide sufficient military government capabilities; provide robust division, corps, and theater Army headquarters; establish an entity to prepare trainers and advisers; when designing efforts to build indigenous security forces, account for the ability of such forces to operate absent large-scale U.S. support; make advisement a necessary assignment for advancement, and continue efforts to structure the Army for the mission of advising; understand and institutionalize lessons from the Army’s recent urban warfare experiences; and prepare senior leaders for the strategic and policy realms in which they will operate.

