

FEBRUARY 2011

LIEUTENANT GENERAL JAMES M. DUBIK, U.S. ARMY (RETIRED)

IRAQ REPORT 15

THE U.S. IN IRAQ BEYOND 2011

A DIMINISHING BUT STILL VITAL ROLE



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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LTG Dubik assumed command of Multi National Security Transition Command-Iraq (MNSTC-I) on June 10, 2007. During this final command, he oversaw the generation and training of the Iraqi Security Forces. Previously, he was the Commanding General of I Corps at Ft. Lewis and the Deputy Commanding General for Transformation, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command. He also served as the Commanding General of the 25th Infantry Division.

Dubik has held numerous leadership and command positions with airborne, ranger, light and mechanized infantry units around the world. He was commissioned a second lieutenant of infantry from Gannon University as a Distinguished Military Graduate in 1971, and he retired from service on September 1, 2008.

He holds a Bachelor's of Arts degree in Philosophy from Gannon University, a Master's of Arts degree in Philosophy from Johns Hopkins University and a Master of Military Arts and Sciences Degree from the United States Army Command and General Staff College. His awards include the Distinguished Service Medal, Defense Superior Service Medal, four awards of the Legion of Merit, five awards of the Meritorious Service Medal, and numerous Army Commendation and Achievement Medals. He is ranger, airborne and air assault qualified and holds the expert infantryman's badge, master parachutist badge as well as the Army Staff Identification Badge.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The challenge for the United States is to help Iraq sustain a stable peace.
- U.S. policy objectives cannot focus only on withdrawing U.S. forces, but must also focus on the important security functions that will remain in Iraq beyond 2011 and will continue to demand U.S. involvement.
- In the case of Iraq, American forces troops still execute at least four functions critical to a stable peace in Iraq, and these functions will not be completed entirely by year's end. These security functions are:
 - Moderating Crises. The presence of the U.S. military continues to mitigate against the rekindling of sectarian tensions and advance national reconciliation.
 - Security Force Development. The U.S. military is still needed to help Iraqi military transform from a counterinsurgent force to one focused on external defense. U.S. support is also required to transform Iraq's police as well as its judicial and confinement systems.
 - Self-Defense Offset. The U.S. military can provide assurance that Iraq's borders are being defended while Iraq develops its own defense capability. It can also provide the Iraqi-purchased equipment and training associated with proper self-defense forces, and can even participate in any regional defense arrangement that the countries in the region find necessary and useful.
 - Counter-Terrorism Support. Iraqi counter-terrorism units are among the best of the nation's security forces; however, they still rely on a mix of their robust human intelligence networks and U.S. technical intelligence and analytic support.
- The U.S. will not need a stand-alone military headquarters as it has in U.S. Forces-Iraq, but must restructure the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad to successfully execute the remaining security functions.
- The following three organizations that fall under the authority of the U.S. Embassy-Baghdad might meet the requirement:
 - A specially constructed Office of Security Cooperation-Iraq to facilitate the sale of military equipment through the Foreign Military Sales program, assist the host nation with limited training, and coordinate the host nation's participation in military education and training in the United States. The Office of Security Cooperation in Iraq must also have a robust training cell and a well-developed logistics trainer/advisor capability.

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- An expanded Defense Attaché Office that can also participate in a joint U.S./Iraqi commission established to investigate serious sectarian violence and have observers along the disputed internal boundaries.
- An Interagency Task Force for Police Primacy and Rule of Law Development that could assist the Iraqi Ministries of Interior and Justice, as well as assist in the planning for and execution of transfer of internal security responsibility from Iraq's military to its police as determined by the Government of Iraq.
- The Office of Security Cooperation-Iraq and the Defense Attaché Office should be subordinated to a senior military commander.
 - This commander must be senior enough and have the right experience to be of assistance to the U.S. Ambassador to Iraq, to execute the operational and strategic task required, to have sufficient ability to influence decisions and actions in the Pentagon, and to be recognized by the Iraqi security ministries and senior military headquarters as a peer.
 - This senior military commander might even be the head of a U.S. Joint Military Assistance Command with dual reporting to the Ambassador and to the Commander, U.S. Central Command.
- After 2011, in addition to the three U.S. organizations suggested above, two multi-national organizations also seem appropriate, and U.S. participation in each of the organizations discussed below would be important.
 - NATO Training Mission-Iraq can help the Iraqi military write doctrine, provide staff and leader training at various levels, and assist in restarting Iraq's professional military education program.
 - A multi-national peace keeping headquarters responsible for adjudicating and enforcing decisions would continue the positive results of the hard work of these past several years. U.S. participation could come from an expanded Defense Attaché Office.
- In addition to the security measures discussed above, Iraq needs assistance in its economic development.
- Now that the Government of Iraq is formed, the United States can help that government structure the broad set of policies and programs necessary to sustain the "better peace" that so many have sacrificed to achieve.

THE U.S. IN IRAQ BEYOND 2011

A DIMINISHING BUT STILL VITAL ROLE

By Lieutenant General James M. Dubik, U.S. Army (Retired)

Today, the United States' position in Iraq recalls Henry Stimson's warning: "The construction of a stable peace is a longer, more complex, and greater task than the relatively simple work of war-making."¹ The hard work, perseverance, blood, and sacrifice of Americans and Iraqis have gotten Iraq to a better place than many thought possible in 2007: The challenges before the U.S. and Iraq are no longer reversing the trends of violence, reducing insurgent attacks, creating Iraqi security forces, or nursing the birth of a legitimate government. Now, the challenge for the U.S. is to help Iraq sustain a stable peace.

If Iraq's peace and stability are to be lasting, the United States must commit itself to the work of peace just as it committed itself to the duties of war. U.S. policy objectives cannot focus only on withdrawing U.S. forces, but must also focus on the important security functions that will remain in Iraq beyond 2011 and will continue to demand U.S. involvement. The U.S. will not need a stand-alone military headquarters as it has in U.S. Forces-Iraq, but must restructure the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad to successfully execute the remaining security functions.

U.S. Ambassador James Jeffrey and General Lloyd Austin are working to close down U.S. Forces-Iraq and transition responsibility to the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad by the end of this year. This necessary change is in the interests of both the United States and Iraq, but it is not merely a matter of packing up and flying home. As Fred Ilke warns: "Governments tend to lose sight of the ending of wars and the nation's interests that lie beyond it precisely because fighting a war is an effort of such vast magnitude... [but] it is the outcome of the war, not the outcome of the campaigns within it, that determines how well ... plans serve the nation's interests."² The outcome of the war in Iraq is not yet assured. The decisions made this year are important. Though Iraq is no longer making front-page headlines, the voices of the many thousands of Iraqi, U.S. and allied casualties are saying

to all, "Out of sight should not mean out of mind."

In the case of Iraq, American forces troops still execute at least four functions critical to a stable peace in Iraq, and these functions will not be completed entirely by year's end. These security functions are:

Moderating Crises

The presence of the U.S. military continues to mitigate against the rekindling of sectarian tensions. Arab-Kurd, Sunni-Shia, Shia-Shia, and Muslim-Christian tensions all still smolder just below the surface stability in Iraq. These divisions have begun to heal, but no one should be surprised that they need more time and the right political and security conditions to heal completely. Some of these wounds have resulted from the recent insurgency; others are from previous sectarian pogroms. These tensions might motivate any one of the country's ethnic and religious factions to hijack portions of the Iraqi Security Forces. And, indeed, there is already a concern that Muqtada al Sadr and his Hezbollah-like organization will seek to obstruct movement toward a stable peace. The Iraqi Security Forces are capable and are growing more so every day; however, many Iraqi leaders acknowledge that the presence of the United States is still crucial to their country's nascent stability.

The U.S. military presence also has a positive effect on progress toward national reconciliation. As the events in Iraq over the past three years have shown, and as the American national experience following the Civil War also demonstrated, full reconciliation is a slow, incremental process, often riddled with fits and starts, breakthroughs and setbacks, hope and disappointment. In the end, national reconciliation can only result from Iraqi initiatives and actions, and yet the positive effect of the U.S. military presence in the last three years is undeniable. That presence, in conjunction with positive actions taken by the Iraqi government, assures Iraqi minorities and former insurgents that it is safe to join the political process.

So, while the U.S. presence must continue to diminish if Iraq is to achieve a true and lasting national stability, this withdrawal must be carefully calibrated. The U.S. has made the mistake of acting on unrealistic timelines in Iraq before, a mistake that resulted in a dire situation in 2006. Though the situation in Iraq today is nowhere near as perilous as it was in 2006, the United States must avoid being seduced by the same temptations.

In addition to mitigating sectarian tensions and advancing national reconciliation, the U.S. military presence also assists Iraqi



Police recruits gather in formation as part of the Baghdad police force expansion.



The author meets with former Iraqi National Security Advisor, Dr. Mowaffak al-Rubaie.

officials in responding to crises. The scars of sectarian violence and the legacy of thirty years of brutal repression under Saddam Hussein have created an environment in which reactions to provocations and crises are potentially devastating to Iraq's fledgling democracy. Nerves are still raw, receding hatred still operant, and suspicions still high. The U.S. military presence provides a degree of situational awareness, information processing, and decision-making power that brings calm to potentially explosive situations. The fact that the long governmental formation period was one of relative calm demonstrates that the Iraqi governmental decision-making processes are improving significantly. The hard work done by U.S. senior diplomats and military leaders, however, contributed not only to the inclusive government that was finally formed but also to the calm during the formation period.

Finally, over the coming years the Government of Iraq must transition responsibility for day-to-day internal security from the Iraqi military to the Iraqi police. This transition to police primacy will be difficult even under the best of circumstances.

Some Iraqi communities have already witnessed the police assume primary security

responsibilities. But in other communities, especially those of mixed sect populations, where violence was most viral and where trust in police was low, tension and anxiety will accompany the departure of the military and transition to police primacy. The process of transition in these places will be slow and will benefit from the stabilizing, confidence-building presence of U.S. forces.

Security Force Development

Over the past three years, the Iraqi Security Forces have grown in size as well as in competency and confidence. The Iraqi people have become more confident in these forces. But this growth is not over.

Police transformation will take decades. Under the leadership of the previous Minister of Interior, Jawad Bolani, the Iraqi Police had already made an amazing transformation. In 2007, many did not believe the Iraqi Police would ever be the increasingly professional force it is today. U.S. military leaders, Department of State and Department of Justice officials, and the contractors hired through these departments have all contributed to the success achieved.

The need for continued development remains, however. Moving from a confession-based system to an evidence-based system, for example, will take years of training, education, and institutional development. This development will involve



Visiting the Baghdad Police College.



The former Minister of Interior speaks at the Iraqi Federal Police graduation ceremony.

not only the Iraqi Police but also Iraq’s judicial and confinement systems, as well as continued U.S. involvement.

2011 is the right time to transfer the development of police and law enforcement systems from U.S. military oversight to State Department responsibility. The time is also right to expand the focus to include a coherent police, law enforcement systems, judicial, and confinement strategy.

Plans to complete such a transfer are being drafted, but the current drafts are lacking. Too much money may be spent recreating an “army” to protect Department of State police trainers and advisors, on an “air force” to move and support them, and on upgrading regional facilities to State Department mandated force protection and living condition standards, leaving too little money allocated to field the number of actual trainers and advisors needed to do the work. Additionally, too little attention is being given to the total coherence of the plan, and how each element fits together as a whole—police training and education, the law enforcement systems that link ministerial-to-local police headquarters; training, education, and development of the full range of judicial positions from judges to lawyers and from clerks to bailiffs; and construction, training, and professionalization of a local-through-national confinement system.



Visiting an Iraqi Army combat outpost in Baghdad.

The previous Minister of Defense, Abdel Qadr Jassem, and Chief of Iraq's Joint Forces, General Babkir Zebari, have also improved Iraqi's military proficiency and performance over the past three years. Like the work done by the Interior Ministry, the work of Iraq's Defense Ministry and Joint Headquarters has not been easy, but it has increased the levels of professionalism and competency to impressively higher levels each year. Both men acknowledge, however, that the work toward a fully professional military is far from over.

What is now primarily an internal security, counter-insurgency military must become a professional self-defense force. Toward this end, the Iraqi military is buying a new fleet of U.S. military equipment for their Air Force and Army. General Babakir understands, however, that having equipment is not the same as being able to use it. Furthermore, he understands that extensive and repetitive training from the individual and crew level to the commander, staff, and collective unit level are critical elements of building military proficiency. Both he and the Defense Minister also acknowledge that the direct, long-term involvement of the U.S. military in this professionalization process is not just desirable but essential.

Self-Defense Offset

Simply put, Iraq does not have a military capability to defend its own borders. Such a capability is the normal right and duty of any sovereign nation. The Iraqi Navy has a foundational capability to protect its territorial waters and oil platforms, but even this capability is nascent. Neither Iraq's air force nor its army is capable of defending the territorial sovereignty of its nation. Steps are underway to purchase the necessary equipment and conduct part of the training associated with building this capability, but purchasing equipment and the conducting training necessary to build a self-defense capability is the easy part of this task.

The harder part is diplomatic. On one hand, given Iraq's past, its neighbors will seek some assurance that the capability Iraq builds will be only for legitimate self defense. On the other hand, given the behavior of some of Iraq's neighbors, Iraq also would benefit from some kind of regional confidence-building or defense-transparency arrangement.

The U.S. military can play a three-fold role in this area. First, it can provide assurance that Iraq's borders are being defended while Iraq develops its own defense capability. Second, it can provide the Iraqi-purchased equipment and training associated with proper self-defense forces. Third, it can participate in any regional defense arrangement that the countries in the region find necessary and useful.



The former Minister of Defense and the author en route to visit Iraqi Army units.

Counter-Terrorism Support

Iraqi counter-terrorism units are among the best of the nation's security forces. Their performance in recent years, often in conjunction with U.S. special operations forces, has contributed directly and significantly to Iraq's improved security situation. These units have reduced foreign fighters and insurgent networks in ways that U.S. or coalition forces could not have accomplished alone.

To do what they have done, and are still doing, Iraqi counter-terrorism units rely on a mix of their robust human intelligence networks and U.S. technical intelligence and analytic support. Together, these intelligence capabilities form the strong backbone to a counter-terrorism capability essential to preventing foreign fighters from rekindling an insurgency and insurgents networks from reforming and threatening the stability of Iraq's fledgling government. Ending U.S. support would have a significant and adverse affect on counter-terrorism operations within Iraq.

Each of these four functions is critical to continued stability in Iraq and continued progress toward normalcy. Each will continue beyond December 2011, the date set for the withdrawal of all U.S. forces from Iraq. Questions remain over who will perform these functions and how these tasks will be performed. For understandable domestic political reasons—both in Iraq and in the United States—the solutions likely will not entail the extension of U.S. Forces-Iraq as the governing headquarters responsible for execution of these functions. “The political struggle within each country affects everything that matters in ending a war,” Fred Ikle writes in *Every War Must End*, “delicately balanced coalition governments are particularly constrained in coping with...fundamental decisions.”³ The Governments of Iraq and the United States, though for different reasons, are both “delicately balanced coalitions.”

Yet some solution that matches the realities on the ground and furthers the interests of both Iraq and the United States must be crafted. This solution could be in finding the right combination of a set of organizations embedded in the U.S. Embassy-Baghdad and multi-national organizations in which the U.S. participates.

The following three organizations that fall under the authority of the U.S. Embassy-Baghdad might meet the requirement.

A Specially Constructed Office of Security Cooperation-Iraq

Even robust offices of security cooperation are primarily aimed at facilitating the sale of military equipment through the Foreign Military Sales program, assisting the host nation with limited training, and coordinating the host nation's participation in military education and training in the United States. These functions are necessary in Iraq, but they are not sufficient.

In addition to the above functions, the Office of Security Cooperation in Iraq must contain a training cell strong enough to coordinate an exercise regime that fulfills three purposes. First, the exercise regime must be synchronized with the training requirements—from the individual through large unit levels—associated with transforming the Iraqi Army from a counterinsurgency-focused force to a proper national self-defense force, training and incorporating the Kurdish Regional Government's local forces into the overall Iraqi military structure, and creating an Iraqi Air Force that can defend its nation's air space. Second, the exercise regime must also be designed to demonstrate the U.S./Iraqi commitment to protect Iraq's territorial sovereignty. Last, the program must provide the U.S. Ambassador with a practiced reinforcing capability should force protection requirements deteriorate and demand such a force.

The Office of Security Cooperation in Iraq must also have a well-developed logistic trainer/advisor capability. One of the most difficult aspect of creating a self-sustaining military is establishing the right supply and maintenance institutions, systems, policies, procedures, and programs in the Ministry of Defense and Joint Headquarters as well as in both regional and local organization. This work is well underway and has been for several years. But establishing a working national logistics system is not an easy task, and creating the repeatable and transparent habits of procurement, distribution, reporting, repair, and removal at all levels takes time.

Further, the Office must contain a cell that can augment, advise, and continue to improve the capabilities of Iraq's three national operations centers—military, police, and governmental. Finally, it must house a special operations coordination and support cell that ensures the Iraqi counter-terrorism forces have sufficient intelligence and support to continue its aggressive actions against our common enemies who remain in Iraq or who seek to return.

An Expanded Defense Attaché Office

The duties of a Defense Attaché vary by country. In Iraq, attaché office should have two important purposes, in addition to the “routine” tasks assigned to a Defense Attaché Office.

First, it should participate in a joint U.S./Iraqi commission established to investigate serious sectarian violence. Such a commission would have to be founded upon negotiations between the two sovereign nations—the U.S. and Iraq. Such a commission, whose charter could be limited in duration, would contribute greatly to preventing rumors and accusations from reaching a crisis level. The commission should be made up of senior representatives of all major sectors of the Iraqi population; U.S. participation would help ensure objectivity and transparency. Such a commission would contribute to

growing confidence in the Iraqi Government's dedication to and ability to serve all of its citizens.

Second, the Defense Attaché should have observers along the disputed “Green Line.” These observers would not have to be assigned to the already established joint checkpoints. Their presence at each organization that adjudicates disputes, however, would contribute to building confidence along the disputed internal boundaries. As with the commission mentioned above, U.S. participation in adjudication of disputes could be limited in duration.

The Office of Security Cooperation-Iraq and the Defense Attaché Office should be subordinated to a senior military commander—senior enough and with the right experience to be of assistance to the U.S. Ambassador to Iraq, to execute the operational and strategic task required, to have sufficient ability to influence decisions and actions in the Pentagon, and to be recognized by the Iraqi security ministries and senior military headquarters as a peer. This senior military commander might even be the head of a U.S. Joint Military Assistance Command with dual reporting to the Ambassador and to the Commander, U.S. Central Command.

An Interagency Task Force for Police Primacy and Rule of Law Development

This interagency task force should be led by the Department of State, but it should have representatives from the Departments of Justice and Defense.

An interagency task force, with a designated lead agency, would increase the coherency among the components of a rule of law program—police, law enforcement systems and institutions, prosecutorial and judicial, and confinement. The State Department's contribution—in addition to having the responsibility for overall program leadership and management—would center on training,

educating and developing police, and establishing the law enforcement systems from the ministerial to local levels that are needed to sustain a national police program. The Justice Department would contribute to the rule of law program with International Criminal Investigative Training and Assistance Program personnel as well as to the gradual improvement of Iraq's judicial and confinement systems. The Defense Department would provide institutional memory to the Iraqi state concerning the activities that have already brought Iraq's police and law enforcement systems to the positive position where they are now. Second, it would provide protection, transport, and logistical support for task force activities. Third, it would augment the interagency task force's staff with experienced staff officers to assist in planning, preparing, coordinating, executing, and assessing the broad enterprise for which the task force is responsible.

In addition to assisting the Iraqi Ministries of Interior and Justice, the interagency task force would also assist in the planning for and execution of transfer of internal security responsibility from Iraq's military to its police as determined by the Government of Iraq. Such an Interagency Task Force would represent a huge step forward in establishing coherency among the multiple agencies now involved in supporting the development of the rule of law.

After 2011, in addition to the three U.S. organizations suggested above, two multi-national organizations also seem appropriate, and U.S. participation in each of the organizations discussed below would be important.

NATO Training Mission-Iraq

NATO Training Mission-Iraq has performed vital tasks since its inception. In addition to helping the Iraqi military write doctrine, NATO countries have contributed to training Iraq's Navy and Marines, providing staff and leader training at various levels, and assisting

in restarting Iraq's professional military education program. Having multiple NATO nations represented in Iraq also helped senior Iraqi leaders see alternative ways to approach professionalizing a military force and running a Ministry of Defense and Joint Headquarters.

The utility of NATO Training Mission-Iraq will continue beyond December 2011 in at least two major areas: first, assisting in professionalizing the Iraqi military education systems from Non-Commissioned Officer academies and Officer branch schools, through mid-level officer education and staff training, to high-level war colleges; second, in coordinating leader training and education for Iraqi military leaders in individual nations' school systems as well as in NATO's school system.

A Multi-National Peace Keeping Headquarters

Recent attacks in Kirkuk confirm that one of the most volatile issues in Iraq concerns the disputed internal boundaries with Iraq's Kurdish Region. There, sectarian tensions and vast hydrocarbon resources combine with the still-fresh memory of Saddam's near-genocidal policies toward the Kurds. The potential for a crisis resulting from these tensions led Iraq and the U.S. to establish joint checkpoints at key locations along the boundary consisting of the Iraqi and U.S. forces and Kurdish Peshmerga who live and patrol together. In addition to the checkpoints, a multi-level adjudication process was established to resolve problems at the lowest possible level. The result has been a rise in confidence and a reduction in tension.

The inclusive government formed by Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki will help sustain this rise, but while there is confidence that the checkpoints will operate sufficiently well without U.S. forces, there is less confidence in an adjudication process that excludes U.S. presence. A multi-national peacekeeping headquarters responsible for adjudicating and enforcing decisions would continue the



Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki visits Iraqi Army training.

positive results of the hard work of these past several years. U.S. participation could come from an expanded Defense Attaché Office.

Of course, a stable peace requires more than security. In addition to the security measures discussed above, Iraq needs assistance in its economic development. Such assistance should be seen as an opportunity not only to help a sovereign nation recover from decades of decayed leadership and a brutal insurgency, but also to enhance our nation's security and provide opportunities for American businesses. U.S. policy should not just encourage Iraq to develop business-friendly legislation as well as other policy actions that would help accelerate recovery in Iraq and the United States. Our diplomats should help the Government of Iraq draft the necessary documents.

Reconstruction and infrastructure development—physical and human—also contribute to a stable peace. Most often reconstruction is associated with physical construction—roads, bridges, air and seaport improvements, water, agriculture, and energy development. These programs are certainly needed, but Iraq's human infrastructure also needs to grow. Education, language, management skills, and technical expertise all suffered during the Saddam years. Iraq must not only recover from the effects of its insurgency—physical, psychological, and social—it must also recover from three decades that prevented any preparation for national

success in today's global economy. Iraqis are hard working and resourceful; their human capital potential is high. They need our help in tapping that potential, and in helping them, we would be helping ourselves as well.

The *sine qua non* in all of this revolves around recognizing facts on the ground as they really are and engaging the Government of Iraq through proper diplomatic discourse. As 2011 unfolds, progress in one or more of the areas described above may obviate the need for some of the functions or organizations suggested. But a clear-eyed understanding of what must be done is always the best starting point. Now that the Government of Iraq is formed, the United States can help that government structure the broad set of policies and programs necessary to sustain the “better peace” that so many have sacrificed to achieve. Reasonable investments now—in attention, targeted assistance, and resources—will ensure that the huge investments we have already made will not have been in vain.

The hard work of ending the war in Iraq began with the “surge” of 2007: Slowly, security conditions improved. Steadily, levels of violence have been reduced. Gradually, the Iraqi Security Forces assumed responsibility for their own security. Incrementally, the Government of Iraq increased its inclusiveness, legitimacy, and proficiency. None of this happened easily. And the work is not yet complete.

NOTES

¹ Henry Stimson, “The Challenge to America” quoted in *The American Encounter: The United States and the Making of the Modern World*, James F. Hoge, Jr. and Fareed Zakaria, editors (New York: Basic Books, 1997), page 150.

² Fred Charles Ikle, *Every War Must End* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), pages 84-98.

³ Fred Charles Ikle, *Every War Must End*, page 2.

