



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on August 24, 2010

In Defiance of the Constitution, 49,000 Troops Still Deployed in Iraq

Many of the nearly 50,000 combat troops waking up in the same Iraqi bivouacs would be surprised to learn that the “final combat brigade” has left Iraq and that Operation Iraqi Freedom has ended.

As the cameras rolled, so did the tracks of the heavy mechanized vehicles carrying the troops of the Army’s 4th Stryker Brigade. Entering Kuwait, the soldiers would populate tent cities, awaiting their re-deployment home to their stateside headquarters in Fort Lewis, Washington.



As the 4th Brigade boards military transport aircraft for the flight to Germany and then home, many of their comrades are moving into the barracks they quickly abandoned in their zeal to leave behind the less-than-friendly confines of their desert camp.

The Army’s 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, a unit in the 25th Infantry Division based in Schofield Barracks in Hawaii, will assume the 4th’s duties, albeit under the less martial designation of “Advise and Assist Brigade.” All the military units remaining in Iraq will undergo similar rebranding.

The “Stryker” in Stryker comes from the principal vehicle used by such units. The Stryker is an 8-wheeled armored vehicle used widely by the U.S. Army. As originally designed, it would take only 96 hours from the time the unit received orders to deploy to the time boots were on the ground in theater.

According to information on the unit’s website, each Stryker Brigade Combat Team consists of three Infantry Battalions, one Reconnaissance (Cavalry) Squadron, one Fires (Artillery) Battalion, one Brigade Support Battalion, one Brigade Headquarters and Headquarters Company, one Network Support Company, one Military Intelligence Company, one Engineer Company, and one Anti-Tank Company.

The men and women of the 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team are a small part of the 49,000 service personnel still occupying Iraq. There are various heavy and light infantry brigades, as well as two combat aviation brigades. All of these units form the core of the Advise and Assist Brigades. The regular army troops are joined in their mission to advise and assist by two National Guard infantry brigades.

As quoted by the [Army Times](#), Army spokesman Lt. Col. Craig Ratcliff claims that the National Guard units are in Iraq “for security.”

The Advise and Assist Brigades are chosen from one of the Army’s three standard brigade combat teams: infantry, Stryker, and heavy. These are the Army’s new basic deployable units. A brigade combat team consists of one combat arms branch maneuver brigade, and its attached support and fire units. Brigades are typically commanded by a colonel, though a few are under the command of a general



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officer. A Brigade Combat Team (BCT) deploys rapidly, supports itself, and ideally does not rely on support from the division headquarters.

Kate Brannen, staff writer for the *Army Times*, cites the army's security force assistance manual as evidence of the force's intent to "retain their inherent capability to conduct offensive and defensive operations." The more things change, the more things stay the same. The change in name, therefore, indicates nothing more than the predetermined rebranding of our military force in Iraq without any corresponding alteration in the scope of their mission.

In order to facilitate the fluid shift between the offensive and defensive aspects of their mission, the Army has created a specialized training program for the brigades deployed in Iraq. The report in the *Army Times* mentions lessons in city management, civil affairs, and border patrol. Perhaps when our army is finished patrolling the borders of Iraq, they can use that training in doing the same thing at home, as authorized by the Constitution and required by the terrifying situation along our southern border.

While the names of our combat units in Iraq may have been softened, the determination of the adversary to kill the American occupying forces has not. On August 15, Specialist Jamal M. Rhett, 24, of Palmyra, New Jersey, was killed in Ba Qubah, Iraq, of wounds suffered when insurgents attacked his vehicle with grenades. He was a medic assigned to the 1st Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment, of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team. "He was my knight in shining armor," Michelle Watson said of her only child, a 2003 graduate of Burlington County Institute of Technology's Westampton campus. "He was always there for me in a time of need. When I was sick, he would cook for me."

Unfortunately for Mrs. Watson and her family, there was no safety in advising and assisting. Specialist Rhett is dead and many of his fellow soldiers are sure to follow. As a matter of fact, on Sunday, August 22, the first American soldier was killed since the official end of combat operations in Iraq. The Pentagon has not revealed either the identity of the fallen soldier or the circumstances surrounding his death.

On September 1 Operation Iraqi Freedom ends and Operation New Dawn begins.

A truly new day in America will dawn on the day our elected officials refuse to fund the largest government program ever — the protracted, undeclared foreign "wars" that continue to sap our nation's economic might and demand the lives of so many young Americans.

It is essential to recognize that the Constitution grants no power of preemptive war or of advising and assisting other nations in the securing of their streets and borders. Sovereign nations by definition must assume the responsibility for providing those crucial services to their citizens. It is not only that our national government deploys troops into the combat zones of the world; rather, it is that these theatres of military operations are created by the presence of our troops landing in the role of occupiers. We have the right and obligation to defend our own borders, but we are without justification for imposing our sensibilities of good government (or permitting the imposition of a native minority's notion of such) on the nations of the world.

U.S. Army General Ray Odierno, the senior commander in Iraq, told [CNN's Candy Crowley](#) that while the Pentagon did not anticipate the need for a wholesale return to a fully combat role in Iraq, that option would not be removed from the table.

He did assure reporters that it would require a "complete failure" of Iraqi forces to make a change of mission necessary."



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“[The Iraqi forces] have been doing so well for so long now that we really believe we’re beyond that point,” Odierno added.

While experience teaches us that General Odierno’s optimistic prediction for the future stability of Iraq is unfounded, it is yet to be hoped that we are not beyond the point of reclaiming our government from the imperialists and statist that have robbed the treasury of our country to finance the perpetual presence of the imperial forces of the United States in all the provinces of the world.

Photo: In this photo taken on Aug. 21, 2010, U.S. Army soldiers from 4th Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment — supposedly the last American combat brigade to serve in Iraq — salute during the casing ceremony at Camp Virginia, Kuwait: AP Images



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