



Iraq: Post-Saddam Governance and Security

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Summary

The Obama Administration is facing a security environment in Iraq vastly improved over that which prevailed during 2005-2007, although still not completely peaceful or without potential to deteriorate significantly. The overall frequency of violence is down to post-Saddam low levels, yet, since May 2009, insurgents have increased high profile attacks and the Obama Administration appears increasingly concerned about Iraq's ability to maintain security. These attacks did not derail the June 30, 2009, U.S. withdrawal of combat troops from major cities and have not, to date, caused a modification of the February 27, 2009, announcement by President Obama that all U.S. combat brigades would be withdrawn by August 31, 2010. This would leave a residual presence of 35,000–50,000 U.S. trainers, advisers, and mentors, with these to be withdrawn by the end of 2011. The drawdown is in line with a U.S.-Iraq "Security Agreement" that took effect January 1, 2009.

Despite the fact that recent high profile attacks have not stimulated a return to sectarian warfare in Iraq, some U.S. officials believe that a U.S. military presence might be needed beyond 2011 to ensure further political progress and produce a unified, democratic Iraq that can govern and defend itself and is an ally in the war on terror. Others worry that the many remaining political disputes among Iraqi factions—and particularly between the Kurds and the central government—could escalate and reignite civil conflict; this concern was a theme of the three day visit to Iraq by Vice President Biden during the July 4, 2009, weekend. The political disputes were a factor in the competition for January 31, 2009, provincial elections, and are continuing as Iraq heads toward the next national elections in January 2010. The provincial elections went ahead peacefully and produced a victory for Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki and his allies, but also exposed splits between Maliki and other erstwhile Shiite allies. These former allies, in August 2009, formed a new coalition to compete against Maliki's slate in the upcoming elections.

The security progress in 2008 and 2009 came after several years of frustration that Operation Iraqi Freedom had overthrown Saddam Hussein's regime, only to see Iraq wracked by a violent Sunni Arab-led insurgency, resulting Sunni-Shiite sectarian violence, competition among Shiite groups, and the failure of Iraq's government to equitably administer justice or deliver services. Mounting U.S. casualties and financial costs—without clear movement toward national political reconciliation—stimulated debate within the 110th Congress over whether a stable Iraq could ever be achieved, and at what cost. With an apparent consensus within the Administration to wind down the U.S. combat in Iraq, U.S. economic and security aid to Iraq has been reduced since FY2008.

For further information, see CRS Report RS21968, *Iraq: Politics, Elections, and Benchmarks*, by Kenneth Katzman; *Iraq: Politics, Elections, and Benchmarks*, by Kenneth Katzman; and CRS Report RL31833, *Iraq: Reconstruction Assistance*, by Curt Tarnoff.

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Iraq has not previously had experience with a democratic form of government, although parliamentary elections were held during the period of British rule under a League of Nations mandate (from 1920 until Iraq's independence in 1932), and the monarchy of the Sunni Muslim Hashemite dynasty (1921-1958). The territory that is now Iraq was formed from three provinces of the Ottoman empire after British forces defeated the Ottomans in World War I and took control of the territory in 1918. Britain had tried to take Iraq from the Ottomans earlier in World War I but were defeated at Al Kut in 1916. Britain's presence in Iraq, which relied on Sunni Muslim Iraqis (as did the Ottoman administration), ran into repeated resistance, facing a major Shiite-led revolt in 1920 and a major anti-British uprising in 1941, during World War II. Iraq's first Hashemite king was Faysal bin Hussein, son of Sharif Hussein of Mecca who, advised by British officer T.E Lawrence ("Lawrence of Arabia"), led the Arab revolt against the Ottoman Empire during World War I. Faysal ruled Iraq as King Faysal I and was succeeded by his son, Ghazi, who was killed in a car accident in 1939. Ghazi was succeeded by his son, Faysal II.

A major figure under the British mandate and the monarchy was Nuri As-Said, a pro-British, pro-Hashemite Sunni Muslim who served as prime minister 14 times during 1930-1958. Faysal II, with the help of As-Sa'id, ruled until the military coup of Abd al-Karim al-Qasim on July 14, 1958. Qasim was ousted in February 1963 by a Baath Party-military alliance. Since that same year, the Baath Party has ruled in Syria, although there was rivalry between the Syrian and Iraqi Baath regimes during Saddam's rule. The Baath Party was founded in the 1940s by Lebanese Christian philosopher Michel Aflaq as a socialist, pan-Arab movement, the aim of which was to reduce religious and sectarian schisms among Arabs.

One of the Baath Party's allies in the February 1963 coup was Abd al-Salam al-Arif. In November 1963, Arif purged the Baath, including Prime Minister (and military officer) Ahmad Hasan al-Bakr, and instituted direct military rule. Arif was killed in a helicopter crash in 1966 and was replaced by his elder brother, Abd al-Rahim al-Arif. Following the Baath seizure of power in 1968, Bakr returned to government as President of Iraq and Saddam Hussein, a civilian, became the regime's number two—Vice Chairman of the Revolutionary Command Council. In that position, Saddam developed overlapping security services to monitor loyalty among the population and within Iraq's institutions, including the military. On July 17, 1979, the aging al-Bakr resigned at Saddam's urging, and Saddam became President of Iraq. Under Saddam, secular Shiites held high party positions, but Sunnis, mostly from Saddam's home town of Tikrit, dominated the highest positions. Saddam's regime repressed Iraq's Shiites after the February 1979 Islamic revolution in neighboring Iran partly because Iraq feared that Iraqi Shiite Islamist movements, emboldened by Iran, would try to establish an Iranian-style Islamic republic of Iraq.

Table I. Iraq Basic Facts

Population	27.5 million
Demographics	Shiite Arab - 60%; Kurd - 19% Sunni Arab - 14%; Christian and others - 6%; Sunni Turkomen - 1%. Christians are: 600,000 - 1 million total (incl. Chaldean, Assyrian, Syriac, Armenian, and Protestant). Others are: Yazidis (600,000); Shabak (200,000); Sabeian-Mandaeen (6,000).
Area	Slightly more than twice the size of Idaho
GDP	\$112.8 billion (purchasing power parity—ppp- 2008)
GDP per capita	\$4,000 per year (ppp, 2008)
Real GDP Growth	About 7.8% in 2008; was 0.4% in 2007
2009 Iraqi Government Budget	2009 budget of \$60 billion in expenditures adopted by Iraqi cabinet on January 25, and by parliament on March 5, 2009. Envisions \$43 billion revenue, and \$17 billion deficit. About \$45 billion spent in 2008, including: about \$9 billion in capital projects; \$9 billion for Iraqi Security Forces costs (\$11 billion planned for 2009); \$3.7 billion in direct grants to the Arab provinces; and \$5.5 billion to the Kurdish region (KRG gov't and three KRG provinces)
Reserves of Foreign Currency and Gold	About \$35 billion total: About \$10 billion in "Development Fund for Iraq" (DFI, held in N.Y. Federal Reserve); \$5.7 billion in Central Bank; and \$13.8 billion in Iraqi commercial banks (Rafidain and Rasheed). About \$5.5 billion to be used to buy 40 new Boeing civilian passenger aircraft. Requirement to deposit oil revenues in DFI, and international auditing requirement, extended until December 31, 2009, by U.N. Security Council Resolution 1859 (Dec. 22, 2008). The Resolution also extends Iraqi assets protections from lawsuits/attachment.
Unemployment	18.2% official rate, but could be as high as 30%.
Inflation Rate	12.9% core rate in 2008; about the same as 2007 levels; 32% in 2006
U.S. Oil Imports	About 700,000 barrels per day (other oil-related capabilities appear in a table later)
Food Rations	Used by 60% of the population; goods imported by government from national funds.

Sources: CIA, *The World Factbook*; State Department, *International Religious Freedom Report*, October 2009; DOD, *Measuring Stability Report*, June 2009; various press and other documents.

Policy in the 1990s Emphasized Containment

Prior to the January 16, 1991, launch of Operation Desert Storm to reverse Iraq's August 1990 invasion of Kuwait, President George H.W. Bush called on the Iraqi people to overthrow Saddam. That Administration decided not to try to do so militarily because (1) the United Nations had approved only liberating Kuwait; (2) Arab states in the coalition opposed an advance to Baghdad; and (3) the Administration feared becoming embroiled in a potentially high-casualty occupation.¹ Within days of the war's end (February 28, 1991), Shiite Muslims in southern Iraq and Kurds in northern Iraq, emboldened by the regime's defeat and the hope of U.S. support, rebelled. The Shiite revolt nearly reached Baghdad, but the mostly Sunni Muslim Republican Guard forces were pulled back into Iraq before engaging U.S. forces and were intact to suppress the rebellion. Many Iraqi Shiites blamed the United States for not intervening on their behalf. Iraq's Kurds, benefitting from a U.S.-led "no fly zone" set up in April 1991, drove Iraqi troops out of much of northern Iraq and remained autonomous thereafter.

The thrust of subsequent U.S. policy was containment through U.N. Security Council-authorized weapons inspections, an international economic embargo, and U.S.-led enforcement of no fly zones over both northern and southern Iraq.² President George H.W. Bush reportedly supported efforts to promote a military coup as a way of producing a favorable government without fragmenting Iraq. After a reported July 1992 coup failed, he shifted to supporting (with funds) the Kurdish, Shiite, and other oppositionists that were coalescing into a broad movement.³

The Clinton Administration, the Iraq Liberation Act, and Major Anti-Saddam Factions

During the Clinton Administration, the United States built ties to and progressively increased support for several Shiite and Kurdish factions, all of which have provided leaders in post-Saddam politics but also field militias locked in sectarian violence against Iraq's Sunnis who supported Saddam's regime. (See **Table 7** on Iraq's various factions.) During 1997-1998, Iraq's obstructions of U.N. weapons of mass destruction (WMD) inspections led to growing congressional calls to overthrow Saddam, starting with an FY1998 appropriation (P.L. 105-174). The sentiment was expressed in the "Iraq Liberation Act" (ILA, P.L. 105-338, October 31, 1998). Signed by President Clinton despite doubts about opposition capabilities, it was viewed as an expression of congressional support for the concept of promoting an Iraqi insurgency with U.S. air power. That law, which states that it should be the policy of the United States to "support efforts" to remove the regime headed by Saddam Hussein, is sometimes cited as indicator of a bipartisan consensus to topple Saddam's regime. It gave the President authority to provide up to \$97 million worth of defense articles and services to designated opposition groups. In mid-November 1998, President Clinton publicly articulated that regime change was a component of U.S. policy toward Iraq. Section 8 of the ILA stated that the act should not be construed as

¹ Bush, George H.W., and Brent Scowcroft. *A World Transformed*. Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. 1998.

² Discussed further in CRS Report RL32379, *Iraq: Former Regime Weapons Programs and Outstanding U.N. Issues*, by Kenneth Katzman.

³ Congress more than doubled the budget for covert support to the opposition groups to about \$40 million for FY1993, from previous levels of \$15 million-\$20 million. Sciolino, Elaine. "Greater U.S. Effort Backed To Oust Iraqi." *New York Times*, June 2, 1992.

authorizing the use of U.S. military force to achieve regime change. The ILA did not terminate after Saddam Hussein was removed; Section 7 provided for post-Saddam “transition assistance” to groups with “democratic goals.”

The signing of the ILA coincided with new Iraqi obstructions of U.N. weapons inspections. On December 15, 1998, U.N. inspectors were withdrawn, and a three-day U.S. and British bombing campaign against suspected Iraqi WMD facilities followed (Operation Desert Fox, December 16-19, 1998). On February 5, 1999, President Clinton designated seven groups eligible to receive U.S. military assistance under the ILA (P.D. 99-13): the Iraqi National Congress (INC); Iraq National Accord (INA); the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI); the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP); the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK); the Islamic Movement of Iraqi Kurdistan (IMIK);⁴ and the Movement for Constitutional Monarchy (MCM).⁵ The Administration judged the opposition insufficiently capable to merit combat training or weapons; the trainees did not deploy in Operation Iraqi Freedom or into the Free Iraqi Forces that deployed to Iraq. The following is discussion of the major anti-Saddam groups.

- **Secular Groups: Iraqi National Congress (INC) and Iraq National Accord (INA).** In 1992, the two main Kurdish parties and several Shiite Islamist groups coalesced into the “Iraqi National Congress (INC)” on a platform of human rights, democracy, pluralism, and “federalism” (Kurdish autonomy). However, many observers doubted its commitment to democracy, because most of its groups had authoritarian leaderships. The INC’s Executive Committee selected Ahmad Chalabi, a secular Shiite Muslim, to run the INC on a daily basis. (A table on U.S. appropriations for the Iraqi opposition, including the INC, is an appendix).⁶
- **The Iraq National Accord (INA),** founded after Iraq’s 1990 invasion of Kuwait, was supported initially by Saudi Arabia but reportedly later earned the patronage of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).⁷ It is led by Dr. Iyad al-Allawi. The INA enjoyed Clinton Administration support in 1996 after squabbling among INC groups reduced the INC’s perceived viability,⁸ but Iraq’s intelligence services arrested or executed over 100 INA activists in June 1996. In August 1996, Baghdad launched a military incursion into northern Iraq, at the invitation of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), to help it capture Irbil from the rival Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK). In the process, Baghdad routed both INC and INA agents from the north.
- **The Kurds,**⁹ who are mostly Sunni Muslims but are not Arabs, are probably the most pro-U.S. of all major groups. Historically fearful of persecution by the Arab majority, the Kurds seek to incorporate all areas of northern Iraq where Kurds are

⁴ Because of its role in the eventual formation of the radical Ansar al-Islam group, the IMIK did not receive U.S. funds after 2001, although it was not formally de-listed.

⁵ In May 1999, the Clinton Administration provided \$5 million worth of training and “non-lethal” equipment under the ILA to about 150 oppositionists in Defense Department-run training (Hurlburt Air Base) on administering a post-Saddam Iraq.

⁶ The Jordanian government subsequently repaid depositors a total of \$400 million.

⁷ Brinkley, Joel. “Ex-CIA Aides Say Iraq Leader Helped Agency in 90’s Attacks,” *New York Times*, June 9, 2004.

⁸ An account of this shift in U.S. strategy is essayed in Hoagland, Jim. “How CIA’s Secret War On Saddam Collapsed,” *Washington Post*, June 26, 1997.

⁹ For an extended discussion, see CRS Report RS22079, *The Kurds in Post-Saddam Iraq*, by Kenneth Katzman.

are prevalent into their three-province “region,” which is run by a Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). Both major Kurdish factions—the PUK led by Jalal Talabani, and the KDP led by Masud Barzani—are participating in Iraqi politics but there is growing friction between the Kurds and the central government. Together, the KDP and PUK may have as many as 100,000 *peshmerga* (militia fighters), most of which are providing security in the KRG region and other cities where Kurds live (but not Baghdad); some are in the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and serve throughout Iraq. Peshmerga have sometimes fought each other; in May 1994, the KDP and the PUK clashed with each other over territory, customs revenues, and control over the Kurdish regional government in Irbil.

- **Shiite Islamists: Ayatollah Sistani, ISCI, Da’wa, and Sadr Factions.** Shiite Islamist organizations have become dominant in post-Saddam politics; Shiites constitute about 60% of the population but were under-represented and suffered significant repression under Saddam’s regime. Several of these factions cooperated with the Saddam-era U.S. regime change efforts, but others did not. The undisputed Shiite religious leader, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani is the “*marja-e-taqlid*” (source of emulation) and the most senior of the four Shiite clerics that lead the Najaf-based “*Hawza al-Ilmiyah*” (a grouping of Shiite seminaries).¹⁰ He was in Iraq during Saddam’s rule but he adopted a low profile and had no known contact with the United States. His mentor, Ayatollah Abol Qasem Musavi-Khoi, was head of the *Hawza* until his death in 1992. Like Khoi, Sistani is a “quietist”—generally opposing a direct political role for clerics—but he has influenced major political issues in the post-Saddam era.¹¹
- **Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI) and the Da’wa Party.** These two groups are mainstream Shiite Islamist groups and generally pro-Iranian, ISCI the more so. The late founder of Iran’s Islamic revolution Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini’s was in exile in Najaf, Iraq during 1964-1978, hosted there by Grand Ayatollah Muhsin al-Hakim, then head of the *Hawza*. Ayatollah Hakim’s sons, including the late ISCI leader Abd al-Aziz al-Hakim (he died on August 26, 2009, and has been succeeded by his son, Ammar al-Hakim), were members of the **Da’wa (Islamic Call) Party** when they were driven into exile by Saddam’s crackdown in 1980, which coincided with the start of the war with Iran in September 1980. He accused the Da’wa of attempting to overthrow him.
- Under Iranian patronage, the Hakim sons broke with Da’wa and founded the Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI) in 1982. Although it was a member of the INC in the early 1990s, SCIRI refused to accept U.S. funds, although it had contacts with U.S. officials. The group changed its name to **ISCI** in May 2007. It has been considered the best organized party within the “United Iraqi Alliance” (UIA) of Shiite political groupings, with a “Badr Brigade” militia, numerous political offices, and a TV station. The Da’wa Party did not directly join the U.S.-led effort to overthrow Saddam Hussein during the 1990s. It is the party of Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki, who succeeded another Da’wa leader,

¹⁰ The three other senior Hawza clerics are Ayatollah Mohammad Sa’id al-Hakim (uncle of the leader of the Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, Abd al-Aziz al-Hakim); Ayatollah Mohammad Isaac Fayadh, who is of Afghan origin; and Ayatollah Bashir al-Najafi, of Pakistani origin.

¹¹ For information on Sistani’s views, see his website at <http://www.sistani.org>.

Ibrahim al-Jafari, who served as transitional Prime Minister during April 2005-April 2006. See text box on Maliki later in this paper.

- The faction of an “insurgent” Shiite Islamist leader, **Moqtada Al Sadr**, emerged as a significant factor after the fall of Saddam Hussein. This faction was underground in Iraq during Saddam’s rule, led by Moqtada’s father, Ayatollah Mohammad Sadiq Al Sadr, who was killed by the regime in 1999. See text box.

Post-September 11, 2001: Regime Change and War

Several senior Bush Administration officials had long been advocates of a regime change policy toward Iraq, but the difficulty of that strategy led the Bush Administration initially to continue its predecessor’s containment policy.¹² Some believe the September 11 attacks provided Administration officials justification to act on longstanding plans to confront Iraq militarily. During its first year, the Administration tried to prevent an asserted erosion of containment of Iraq by achieving U.N. Security Council adoption (Resolution 1409, May 14, 2002) of a “smart sanctions” plan. The plan relaxed U.N.-imposed restrictions on exports to Iraq of purely civilian equipment¹³ in exchange for renewed international commitment to enforce the U.N. ban on exports to Iraq of militarily useful goods.

Bush Administration policy on Iraq clearly became an active regime change effort after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. In President Bush’s State of the Union message on January 29, 2002, given as major combat in the U.S.-led war on the Taliban and Al Qaeda in Afghanistan was winding down, he characterized Iraq as part of an “axis of evil” (with Iran and North Korea). Some U.S. officials, particularly then-deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz, asserted that the United States needed to respond to the September 11, 2001 attacks by “ending states,” such as Iraq, that support terrorist groups. Vice President Cheney visited the Middle East in March 2002 reportedly to consult regional leaders about confronting Iraq militarily, although the Arab leaders opposed war with Iraq and urged greater U.S. attention to the Arab-Israeli dispute.

Some accounts, including the books *Plan of Attack* and *State of Denial* by Bob Woodward (published in April 2004 and September 2006, respectively), say that then Secretary of State Powell, Central Intelligence Agency experts, and others were concerned about the potential consequences of an invasion of Iraq, particularly the difficulties of building a democracy after major hostilities ended. Other accounts include the mid-2002 “Downing Street Memo”—a paper by British intelligence officials, based on conversations with U.S. officials—saying that the Administration was seeking information to justify war against Iraq. President Bush and then-British Prime Minister Tony Blair deny this. (On December 20, 2001, the House passed H.J.Res. 75, 392-12, calling Iraq’s refusal to readmit U.N. weapons inspectors a “mounting threat.”)

The primary theme in the Bush Administration’s public case for the need to confront Iraq was that Iraq posted a “grave and gathering” threat that should be blunted before the threat became urgent. The basis of that assertion in U.S. intelligence remains under debate.

¹² One account of Bush Administration internal debates on the strategy is found in Hersh, Seymour. “The Debate Within,” *The New Yorker*, March 11, 2002.

¹³ For more information on this program, see CRS Report RL30472, *Iraq: Oil-For-Food Program, Illicit Trade, and Investigations*, by Christopher M. Blanchard and Kenneth Katzman.

- *WMD Threat Perception.* Senior U.S. officials, including President Bush, particularly in an October 2002 speech in Cincinnati, asserted the following about Iraq's WMD: (1) that Iraq had worked to rebuild its WMD programs in the nearly four years since U.N. weapons inspectors left Iraq and had failed to comply with 16 U.N. previous resolutions that demanded complete elimination of all of Iraq's WMD programs; (2) that Iraq had used chemical weapons against its own people (the Kurds) and against Iraq's neighbors (Iran), implying that Iraq would not necessarily be deterred from using WMD against the United States; and (3) that Iraq could transfer its WMD to terrorists, particularly Al Qaeda, for use in potentially catastrophic attacks in the United States. Critics noted that, under the U.S. threat of retaliation, Iraq did not use WMD against U.S. troops in the 1991 Gulf war. A "comprehensive" September 2004 report of the Iraq Survey Group, known as the "Duelfer report,"¹⁴ found no WMD stockpiles or production but said that there was evidence that the regime retained the intention to reconstitute WMD programs in the future. The formal U.S.-led WMD search ended December 2004,¹⁵ although U.S. forces have found some chemical weapons left from the Iran-Iraq war.¹⁶ UNMOVIC's work was formally terminated by U.N. Security Council Resolution 1762 (June 29, 2007).
- *Links to Al Qaeda.* Iraq was designated a state sponsor of terrorism during 1979-1982 and was again so designated after its 1990 invasion of Kuwait. Although they did not assert that Saddam Hussein's regime was directly involved in the September 11 attacks, senior U.S. officials asserted that Saddam's regime was linked to Al Qaeda, in part because of the presence of pro-Al Qaeda militant leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi in northern Iraq. Although this issue is still debated, the report of the 9/11 Commission found no evidence of a "collaborative operational linkage" between Iraq and Al Qaeda.¹⁷ A March 2008 study by the Institute for Defense Analyses for the Joint Forces Command, based on 600,000 documents found in post-Saddam Iraq, found no direct ties between Al Qaeda and Saddam's regime. (See CRS Report RL32217, *Al Qaeda in Iraq: Assessment and Outside Links*, by Kenneth Katzman.)

Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF)

As major combat in Afghanistan wound down in mid-2002, the Bush Administration began deploying troops to Kuwait, the only state that agreed to host a major invasion force. By early 2003, there were enough U.S. forces in place to order an invasion of Iraq. In concert, the Administration tried to build up and broaden the Iraqi opposition, particularly those composed of ex-military officers. According to the *Washington Post* (June 16, 2002), the Administration also authorized stepped up covert activities by the CIA and special operations forces against Saddam Hussein. In August 2002, the State and Defense Departments invited six major opposition groups to Washington, D.C. and began training about 5,000 oppositionists at Tazsar air base in

¹⁴ Duelfer report text is at <http://news.findlaw.com/hdocs/docs/iraq/cia93004wmdrpt.html>.

¹⁵ For analysis of the former regime's WMD and other abuses, see CRS Report RL32379, *Iraq: Former Regime Weapons Programs and Outstanding U.N. Issues*, by Kenneth Katzman.

¹⁶ Pincus, Walter. "Munitions Found in Iraq Renew Debate." *Washington Post*, July 1, 2006.

¹⁷ *9/11 Commission Report*, p. 66.

Hungary.¹⁸ The Administration blocked a move by the main factions to declare a provisional government before entering Iraq, believing that doing so would prevent the emergence of secular groups.

In an effort to obtain U.N. backing for confronting Iraq—support that then Secretary of State Powell reportedly argued was needed—President Bush addressed the United Nations General Assembly (September 12, 2002), saying that the U.N. Security Council should enforce its 16 existing WMD-related resolutions on Iraq. The Administration then gave Iraq a “final opportunity” to comply with all applicable Council resolutions by supporting Security Council Resolution 1441 (November 8, 2002), which gave the U.N. inspection body UNMOVIC (U.N. Monitoring, Verification, and Inspection Commission) new powers of inspection. Iraq reluctantly accepted it and WMD inspections resumed November 27, 2002. In January and February 2003, UNMOVIC Director Hans Blix and International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director Mohammad El Baradei briefed the Security Council on the inspections, saying that Iraq failed to actively cooperate to satisfy outstanding questions, but that it had not denied access to sites and might not have any WMD.

Congressional and Security Council Action

The 107th Congress debated, and ultimately adopted, H.J.Res. 114, authorizing the President to use military force to “defend the national security of the United States against the continuing threat posed by Iraq” and “to enforce all relevant U.N. Security Council resolutions against Iraq.” It passed the House October 11, 2002 (296-133), and the Senate the following day (77-23). It was signed October 16, 2002 (P.L. 107-243).

No U.N. Security Council resolution authorizing force was adopted. Countries opposed to war with Iraq, including France, Russia, China, and Germany, said the latest WMD inspections showed that Iraq could be disarmed peacefully or contained indefinitely. On March 16, 2003, a summit meeting of Britain, Spain, Bulgaria, and the United States, held in the Azores, rejected that view and said all diplomatic options had failed. The following day, President Bush gave Saddam Hussein and his sons, Uday and Qusay, an ultimatum to leave Iraq within 48 hours to avoid war. They refused and OIF began on March 19, 2003.

In the war, Iraq’s conventional military forces were overwhelmed by the approximately 380,000-person U.S. and British-led 30-country¹⁹ “coalition of the willing” force, a substantial proportion of which were in supporting roles. Of the invasion force, Britain contributed 45,000, and U.S. troops constituted the bulk of the remaining 335,000 forces. Some Iraqi units and irregulars (“Saddam’s Fedayeen”) put up stiff resistance, using unconventional tactics. Some evaluations (for example, “Cobra Two,” by Michael Gordon and Bernard Trainor, published in 2006) suggest the U.S. military should have focused more on combating the irregulars and less so on armored forces. No WMD was used by Iraq, although it did fire some ballistic missiles into Kuwait; it is not clear whether those missiles were of U.N.-prohibited ranges (greater than 150 km). The regime vacated Baghdad on April 9, 2003, although Saddam Hussein appeared with supporters

¹⁸Only about 70 completed training at Tazsar air base in Hungary, eventually serving as translators during the war. Deyoung, Karen, and Daniel Williams, “Training of Iraqi Exiles Authorized,” *Washington Post*, October 19, 2002.

¹⁹ Many of the thirty countries listed in the coalition did not contribute forces to the combat. A subsequent State Department list released on March 27, 2003 listed 49 countries in the coalition of the willing. See *Washington Post*, March 27, 2003, p. A19.

that day in Baghdad's Sunni Adhamiya district, near the major Sunni Umm al-Qura mosque. (Saddam was captured in December 2003, and on November 5, 2006, was convicted for "willful killing" of Shiite civilians in Dujail in 1982. He was hanged on December 30, 2006.)

Post-Saddam Transition and Governance

U.S. goals are for a unified, democratic, and federal Iraq that can sustain, govern, and defend itself and is an ally in the global war on Islamic militancy. The formal political transition from the Saddam regime to representative government is largely completed, but tensions remain among the dominant Shiite Arabs, Sunni Arabs that have been displaced from their former perch in Iraqi politics, and the Kurds who fear renewed oppression by all of Iraq's Arabs. There are also substantial schisms within these communities.

Transition Process

The transition to Iraqi sovereignty has taken place in several stages, as discussed below.

Occupation Period/Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA)

After the fall of the regime, the United States set up an occupation structure, believing that immediate sovereignty would favor established anti-Saddam factions and not necessarily produce democracy. The Administration initially tasked Lt. Gen. Jay Garner (ret.) to direct reconstruction with a staff of U.S. government personnel to administer Iraq's ministries; they deployed in April 2003. He headed the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA), under the Department of Defense (DOD), created by a January 20, 2003, Executive Order. The Administration largely discarded the State Department's "Future of Iraq Project," that spent the year before the war planning for the administration of Iraq after the fall of Saddam.²⁰ Garner and aides began trying to establish a representative successor regime by organizing a meeting in Nassiriyah (April 15, 2003) of about 100 Iraqis of varying views and ethnicities. A subsequent meeting of over 250 notables, held in Baghdad April 26, 2003, agreed to hold a broader meeting one month later to name an interim administration.

In May 2003, President Bush, reportedly seeking strong leadership in Iraq, named Ambassador L. Paul Bremer to replace Garner by heading a "Coalition Provisional Authority" (CPA). Bremer discontinued Garner's transition process and instead appointed (July 13, 2003) a non-sovereign Iraqi advisory body: the 25-member "Iraq Governing Council" (IGC). In September 2003, the IGC selected a 25-member "cabinet" to run the ministries, with roughly the same factional and ethnic balance of the IGC (a slight majority of Shiite Muslims). Although there were some Sunni figures in the CPA-led administration, many Sunnis resented the new power structure as overturning their prior dominance. Adding to that resentment were some of the CPA's decisions, including "de-Baathification"—a purge from government of about 30,000 Iraqis at four top ranks of the Baath Party (CPA Order 1) and not to recall members of the Saddam-era armed forces to

²⁰ Information on the project, including summaries of the findings of its 17 working groups, can be found at <http://usinfo.state.gov/products/pubs/archive/dutyiraq/>. The project cost \$5 million and had 15 working groups on major issues.

service (CPA Order 2). Bremer and others maintain that recalling the former regime's military would have caused Shiites and Kurds to question the prospects for democracy.

Transitional Administrative Law (TAL)

The Bush Administration initially made the end of U.S. occupation contingent on the completion of a new constitution and the holding of national elections for a new government, tasks expected to be completed by late 2005. However, Grand Ayatollah Sistani and others agitated for early Iraqi sovereignty, contributing to the November 2003 U.S. announcement that sovereignty would be returned to Iraq by June 30, 2004, and national elections were to be held by the end of 2005. That decision was incorporated into an interim constitution — the Transitional Administrative Law (TAL), drafted by the major factions and signed on March 8, 2004.²¹ The TAL provided a roadmap for political transition, including (1) elections by January 31, 2005, for a 275-seat transitional National Assembly; (2) drafting of a permanent constitution by August 15, 2005, and put to a national referendum by October 15, 2005; and (3) national elections for a full-term government, by December 15, 2005. Any three provinces could veto the constitution by a two-thirds majority, which would trigger a redrafting and re-vote by October 15, 2006. The Kurds maintained their autonomy and militia force.

Sovereignty Handover/Interim (Allawi) Government

The TAL did not directly address how a sovereign government would be formed. Sistani's opposition scuttled a U.S. plan to select a national assembly through nationwide "caucuses," causing the United States to tap U.N. envoy Lakhdar Brahimi to select a government,²² which began work on June 1, 2004. The handover ceremony occurred on June 28, 2004. Dominated by the major factions, this government had a president (Sunni tribal figure Ghazi al-Yawar), and a Prime Minister (Iyad al-Allawi, see above) who headed a cabinet of 26 ministers. Six ministers were women, and the ethnicity mix was roughly the same as in the IGC. The defense and interior ministers were Sunnis.

As of the handover, the state of occupation ceased, and a U.S. Ambassador (John Negroponte) established U.S.-Iraq diplomatic relations for the first time since January 1991. A U.S. embassy opened on June 30, 2004; it is staffed with about 1,100 U.S. personnel.²³ The Ambassador is Christopher Hill, previously U.S. negotiator on North Korea nuclear issues, replacing Ryan Crocker, who took over from Zalmay Khalilzad (July 2005-April 2007). As of January 2009, the new U.S. Embassy, built by First Kuwaiti General Trading and Construction Co. has been open and functioning. It has 21 buildings on 104 acres.²⁴ In conjunction with the handover:

- Reconstruction management and advising of Iraq's ministries were taken over by a State Department component called the "Iraq Reconstruction and Management Office" (IRMO). With the expiration of that unit's authority in April 2007, it was

²¹ The text of the TAL can be obtained from the CPA website at <http://cpa-iraq.org/government/TAL.html>.

²² Chandrasekaran, Rajiv. "Envoy Urges U.N.-Chosen Iraqi Government," *Washington Post*, April 15, 2004.

²³ See CRS Report RS21867, *U.S. Embassy in Iraq*, by Susan B. Epstein.

²⁴ An FY2005 supplemental appropriations, P.L. 109-13, provided \$592 million (of \$658 million requested) to construct a new embassy in Baghdad; an FY2006 supplemental appropriation (P.L. 109-234) provided \$1.327 billion for U.S. embassy operations and security.

renamed the “Iraq Transition Assistance Office” (ITAO). ITAO’s focus is promoting efficiency in Iraq’s ministries and Iraq’s management of the projects built with U.S. reconstruction funds. The authority has also expired for a separate DOD “Project Contracting Office (PCO),” under the Persian Gulf Division of the Army Corps of Engineers. It is training Iraqis to sustain its projects, which were mainly large infrastructure such as roads, power plants, and school renovations.

Elections in 2005 ²⁵

After the handover of sovereignty, the focus was on three votes held in 2005 that established the structure of Iraqi governance that continues today:

- *Transition Government.* On January 30, 2005, elections were held for a transitional National Assembly, 18 provincial councils (four-year term), and the Kurdish regional assembly. The Sunni Arabs, still resentful of the U.S. invasion, mostly boycotted, and no major “Sunni slates” were offered, enabling the Shiite United Iraqi Alliance (UIA) to win a slim majority (140 of the 275 seats) and to ally with the Kurds (75 seats) to dominate the national government.
- *Constitutional Referendum.* Subsequently, a constitution drafted by a committee appointed by the elected government was approved on October 15, 2005. Sunni opponents achieved a two-thirds “no” vote in two provinces, but not in the three needed to defeat the constitution. The crux of Sunni opposition was the provision for a weak central government (“federalism”): it allows groups of provinces to band together to form autonomous “regions” with their own regional governments, internal security forces, and a degree of control over local energy resources. Sunni regions lack significant proven oil reserves. Article (137) of the constitution provided for a special constitutional amendment process, within a set six-month deadline, to mollify Sunnis, but not completed to date.
- *First Full Term Government.* In the December 15, 2005 election for a full four year term government, some Sunnis, seeking to strengthen their position to amend the constitution, fielded electoral slates—the “Consensus Front” and the National Dialogue Front. With the UIA alone well short of the two-thirds majority needed to unilaterally form a government, Sunnis, the Sadr faction, secular groupings, and the Kurds demanded Jafari be replaced and accepted Nuri al-Maliki as Prime Minister (April 22, 2006). Maliki won approval of a cabinet on May 20, 2006 (see table on the cabinet composition).

Political Reconciliation, 2009 Elections, and “Benchmarks”

Many observers believe that successful reduction of the U.S. presence in Iraq depends on durable political reconciliation.²⁶ There have been major legislative and political achievements since 2008, including: adoption of a De-Baathification reform law, an amnesty law for detainees, a law

²⁵ CRS Report RS21968, *Iraq: Politics, Elections, and Benchmarks*, by Kenneth Katzman. This report also contains a table with Iraq’s performance on enumerated “benchmarks.”

²⁶ On January 10, 2007, President Bush stated that the surge would give the Iraqi government “the breathing space it needs to make progress in other critical areas.” <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2007/01/20070110-7.html>

stipulating the power of provincial councils, passage of the 2008 and 2009 national budgets, and the holding of provincial elections peacefully on January 31, 2009.

However, as indicated by the June 2009 appointment of Vice President Biden to oversee Iraq policy, and his related July 4, 2009, weekend visit to Iraq, the reconciliation process is judged incomplete and could cause major new violence as U.S. troop levels and political influence are reduced. Although factions are forming alliances across sectarian lines, the Sunni—Shiite split has not fully healed, as evidenced by several major suicide bombings since June 2009, and KRG-central government differences are as wide as ever. Vice President Biden and other U.S. officials have been stressing the need to pass national oil laws and to improve provision of public services, and implied that reconciliation was an Iraqi process that the United States could assist Iraq with but could not or would not implement by itself. Some observers say that other major legislation, including an anti-corruption law and a law adopting a national flag, remain deadlocked as well. However, the main focus of U.S. officials during October 2009 has been prodding Iraqi factions to reach agreement on an election law needed to hold national elections on January 16, 2010, as planned.

Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki

Born in 1950 in Karbala, has belonged to Da'wa Party since 1968. Named leader of his faction of the party in June 2007, replacing Ibrahim al-Jafari. Expert in Arab poetry, fled Iraq in 1980 after Saddam banned the party, initially to Iran, but then to Syria after refusing Iran's orders that he join Shiite militia groups fighting Iraq during the Iran-Iraq war. Headed Da'wa offices in Syria and Lebanon and edited Da'wa Party newspaper. Advocated aggressive purge of ex-Baathists as member of the Higher National De-Baathification Commission after Saddam's fall and continues to seek rapid execution of convicted Saddam-era figures, earning him criticism among Sunnis for sectarian bias. Elected to National Assembly (UIA list) in January 2005 and chaired its "security committee." Publicly supported Lebanese Hezbollah (which shares a background with Da'wa Party) during July-August 2006 Israel-Hezbollah conflict, prompting congressional criticism during July 2006 visit to Washington DC. Has tense relations with ISCI, whose activists accuse him of surrounding himself with Da'wa members. Prior to 2007, repeatedly shielded Sadr's Mahdi Army militia from U.S. military sweeps, but later fell out with Sadr. Several factions now accuse him of trying to govern through intimidation and force by the security forces, as did Saddam Hussein.

January 31, 2009, Provincial Elections and Context²⁷

The January 31, 2009, provincial elections appeared to boost Sunni-Shiite reconciliation to some extent, although the elections might have caused further strains between the KRG and the central government. Under a 2008 law, provincial councils in Iraq choose the governor and provincial governing administrations in each province, making them relatively powerful bodies that provide ample opportunity to distribute patronage and guide provincial politics. The elections had been planned for October 1, 2008, but were delayed when Kurdish restiveness over integrating Kirkuk and other disputed territories into the KRG caused a Talabani veto of the July 22, 2008, election law needed to hold these elections. The major political blocs agreed to put aside the Kirkuk dispute and passed a revised provincial election law on September 24, 2008, providing for the elections by January 31, 2009. The revised law stripped out provisions in the vetoed version to allot 13 total reserved seats (spanning six provinces) to minorities, although in October 2008, the

²⁷ For more information on the elections and Iraqi politics, see CRS Report RS21968, *Iraq: Politics, Elections, and Benchmarks*, by Kenneth Katzman.

COR adopted a new law restoring six reserved seats for minorities: Christian seats in Baghdad, Nineveh, and Basra; one seat for Yazidis in Nineveh; one seat for Shabaks in Nineveh; and one seat for the Sabeen sect in Baghdad.

In the elections, in which there was virtually no violence on election day (although five candidates and several election/political workers were killed pre-election), about 14,500 candidates vied for the 440 provincial council seats in the 14 Arab-dominated provinces of Iraq. About 4,000 of the candidates were women. The average number of council seats per province is about 30,²⁸ down from a set number of 41 seats per province (except Baghdad) in the 2005-2009 councils. The new Baghdad provincial council has 57 seats. Voters were able to vote only for a party slate, or for an individual candidate (although they must also vote for that candidate's slate as well)—a procedure that encouraged voting for slates, not individuals. About 17 million Iraqis (any Iraqi 18 years old or older) were eligible to vote. Turnout was about 51%, somewhat lower than expected.

The vote totals were certified on March 29, 2009. As of April 13, in accordance with the provincial elections law, the provincial councils began to convene under the auspices of the incumbent provincial governor, and to select provincial council chairpersons and deputy chairperson. The councils have selected provincial administrations, some of them in advance of a May 12, 2009, deadline to do so. The term of the provincial councils is four years from the date of first convention.

Key Outcomes and Implications

One of the major outcomes of the election was the strengthening of Maliki's post-election political position, because of the strong showing of his "State of Law" list. Still, in most provinces in the Shiite south, Maliki's candidates have entered into coalitions, including in some cases with Sadrist, to gain control of the provincial administration in that province. This means that U.S. hopes that the elections would marginalized Sadr's faction, represented mainly in the "Independent Liberals Trend" list, were not completely realized. Still, the poor electoral showing of the Sadrist to win control of any councils could reflect voter disillusionment with parties that field militias—which many Iraqis blame for much of the violence that has plagued Iraq since the fall of Saddam Hussein.

It is ISCI that was most severely weakened by the provincial elections. It had been favored because it is well organized and well funded. ISCI favors more power for the provinces and less for the central government; centralization is perceived as Maliki's preferred power structure. Some observers believe that the poor showing for ISCI was a product not only of its call for devolving power out of Baghdad, but also because of its perceived close ties to Iran.

The elections brought Sunni Muslims ever further into the political structure, as was hoped, although the process created opportunity for infighting within this community. Sunnis boycotted the January 2005 provincial elections and were therefore under-represented in the administrations of mixed provinces, particularly Diyala, Nineveh, and Baghdad. In part, the January 2009 elections helped incorporate into the political structure the tribal leaders ("Awakening Councils") who recruited the Sons of Iraq fighters who had turned against Al Qaeda in Iraq and helped secure much of Iraq in 2008. These Sunni tribalists offered election slates and showed strength at

²⁸ Each province is to have 25 seats plus one seat per each 200,000 residents over 500,000.

the expense of the established Sunni parties, such as the IIP, particularly in Anbar Province. The elections also exposed strains within the IIP-led Accord Front, the main Sunni bloc, to the point where it fractured in favor of smaller Sunni-based election blocs.

The elections created an additional potential flashpoint in that hardline Sunni Arabs wrested control of the Nineveh provincial council from the Kurds, who won control of that council in the 2005 election. A Sunni list (al-Hadba'a), won a clear plurality there and has taken control of the Nineveh provincial administration. Al Hadba'a openly opposes Kurdish encroachment in the province and is committed to the "Arab and Islamic identity" of the province. Nineveh contains numerous territories inhabited by Kurds and which have been a source of growing tension between the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and the central government in Baghdad. Some near clashes have taken place in Nineveh since May 2009 when Kurdish *peshmerga* have refused to allow the new Al Hadba'a governor and the police chief to cross into Kurdish areas of the province. As a result of the friction, the overall U.S. commander in Iraq, Gen. Raymond Odierno, reportedly has proposed to deploy U.S. forces to partner with Iraqi forces and with *peshmerga* in Nineveh and other parts of the north to build confidence between the Kurds and the central government.

New Coalitions and Elections Going Forward

The various Iraqi factions are maneuvering in advance of the January 2010 national elections. Apparently because of its weakness, ISCI reportedly tried to enlist the support of Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, the senior clerical leader in Iraq, to call for reconstituting the UIA for the January 16, 2010, National Assembly elections. Maliki, still in a strong position as various factions tried to gain his alliance, was noncommittal.

However, ISCI regrouped and dealt Maliki a potential political setback on August 24, 2009, when it led the formation of a new coalition to compete in the January 2010 national elections. The grouping, called the Iraqi National Alliance, includes: ISCI, the Sadr movement; former Da'wa leader Ibrahim al-Jafari; former U.S. anti-Saddam ally Ahmad Chalabi; and the Shiite Fadhiha (Virtue) Party that has been strong in Basra. Maliki did not join the coalition because the grouping did not promise that, if it is victorious, it would renominate Maliki as Prime Minister. It is not clear who the bloc's choice might be, although speculation centers on Western-educated economist and ISCI senior figure Adel Abd al-Mahdi, who is now a deputy President.

On October 2, Maliki countered by forming a broad, cross-sectarian coalition of his own, but dominated by his State of Law Coalition. The pro-Maliki bloc includes 40 parties or organizations, although the major Kurdish parties appear to want to run separate from Maliki. In addition, Maliki apparently failed to incorporate into his new coalition some senior Sunni tribal figures who emerged as powerful leaders from the "Awakening" movement that led to the expulsion of Al Qaeda in Iraq from Anbar Province. The Abu Risha clan is one such group that apparently has not come under Maliki's tent.

Before the January 2010 elections can be held, however, the COR must pass an election law regulating the holding of those elections, and a voter registration process would need to be implemented. As of October 28, 2009, the National Assembly has missed several deadlines, the most recent being on October 20, to pass that election law. The Assembly is divided over the election system, although the parliamentary deputies are now reportedly leaning toward Grand Ayatollah Sistani's position to hold an open list vote (voting for candidates, not just party slates). There is still a dispute over how to apply the election in disputed Kirkuk province, where Kurds

fear that the election law drafts would cause Kurds to be underrepresented in the election. Failure to pass the election law could lead to a delay beyond the currently planned January 16 date.

By July 31, 2009, district and sub-district elections were to take place, although there are no evident preparations for those, to date. The U.N. mission in Iraq says these will likely be held some time in 2010, after the national elections. Several other possible elections in Iraq are as yet unscheduled. For example, there are to be provincial elections in the three Kurdish controlled provinces and the disputed province of Kirkuk, subsequent to a settlement of the Kirkuk dispute. There could be a referendum on any agreed settlement on Kirkuk; and a vote on amendments to Iraq's 2005 constitution if those are agreed by the major political blocs.

Moqtada Al Sadr

Moqtada Al Sadr is the lone surviving son of the Ayatollah Mohammed Sadiq al-Sadr, who was killed, along with his other two sons, by regime security forces in 1999 after he began agitating against Saddam. Sadr inherited his father's political base in "Sadr City," a large (2 million population) Shiite district of Baghdad, but is also strong in and has challenged ISCI for control of Diwaniyah, Nassiriyah, Basra, Amarah, and other major Shiite cities. Since late 2007, he has reportedly been in Qom, Iran, studying Shiite Islamic theology under Iranian judiciary head Ayatollah Mahmud Shahrudi and Qom-based Iraqi cleric Ayatollah Kazem Haeri. Sadr is married to the daughter of Da'wa Party founder and revolutionary Shiite theologian Ayatollah Mohammad Baqr Al Sadr (a cousin of his father).

Although Moqtada Al Sadr was initially viewed as a young firebrand lacking religious and political weight, he is now viewed as a threat by the mainstream Shiite factions. Increasingly perceived as clever and capable—simultaneously participating in the political process to avoid confrontation with the United States while denouncing the "U.S. occupation" and occasionally sending his militia into combat against the United States and rival Iraqi factions. He has a large following among poor Shiites who identify with other "oppressed Muslims" and who oppose virtually any U.S. presence in the Middle East. Sadr formed the "Mahdi Army" militia in 2003. Sadr supporters won 30 seats in parliament under UIA bloc but pulled out of the bloc in September 2007; the faction also has two supporters under the separate "Messengers" list. Prior to its April 2007 pullout from the cabinet, the Sadr faction held ministries of health, transportation, and agriculture and two ministry of state posts. In June 2008, his office announced it would not run a separate electoral list in upcoming provincial elections and that most of the Mahdi Army would transform into a political movement, leaving several hundred fighters in "special companies" authorized to fight U.S. and partner forces in Iraq. In August 2008, stated intention to convert part of Mahdi Army to nationwide charity arm ("mumahidun"—"trail blazers") to compensate for government ineffectiveness, but leaving his level of commitment to purely political as opposed to violent action still uncertain. His faction opposes the Shiite "region" in the south, opposes a draft oil law as a "sellout," and opposed the SOFA with the U.S. Sadr still clouded by allegations of involvement in the April 10, 2003, killing in Iraq of Abd al-Majid Khoi (the son of the late Grand Ayatollah Khoi and head of his London-based Khoi Foundation). There is discussion throughout this report about Sadr's faction.

The Kurds and the Central Government

As noted, the Kurds remain engaged in the political structure in Baghdad, but they are increasingly at odds with Maliki over the lack of progress in resolving the status of Kirkuk and other disputed territories. There are also tensions over central government opposition to the KRG's decision to move forward on oil and gas development deals in advance of a national oil law. (Iraq's Oil Minister has called the deals—and a separate KRG oil law—illegal.) Some of these tensions caused the KRG, in October, to halt exports of oil under their separate contracts with international energy firms until Baghdad compensates these firms as agreed.

The Kurds are concerned that the planned departure of U.S. forces from Iraq will leave them at the mercy of the more numerous Arabs in Iraq. Central government opposition caused the Kurds

to refrain from voting on a separate KRG constitution during the July 25, 2009, KRG elections. Yet, in May 2009, the Kurds did reach agreement with Baghdad to allow the exportation of some newly discovered oil in the KRG region via the national pipeline grid; the proceeds are collected by Baghdad and 17% goes to the KRG. (This is the current revenue sharing percentage agreed for all general revenues.)

The Kurds insist on eventual implementation of Article 140 of the constitution that mandated a referendum on whether Tamim (Kirkuk) Province will affiliate formally with the Kurdistan Regional Government. The Bush Administration persuaded the Kurds to grudgingly accept a delay of the referendum (constitutionally mandated to be held by December 31, 2007) in favor of a temporary compromise under which the UNAMI produces recommendations on whether or not to integrate some Kurdish-inhabited cities into the KRG, including Khanaqin, Mandali, Sinjar, Makhmour, Akre, Hamdaniya, Tal Afar, Tilkaif, and Shekhan. A June 2008 UNAMI report leaned toward the Kurds on some of these territories, but with Arab Iraq on other territories, such as Hamdaniya and Mandali. UNAMI announced on August 20, 2008, that it would propose, hopefully by late October 2008, a “grand deal” on Kirkuk and other dispute territories, to be ratified by the constitutionally-mandated referendum. That proposal was delayed, although UNAMI provided to the parties additional findings on the disputed territories on April 22, 2009. That report apparently provided for shared Baghdad-KRG control of Kirkuk. All parties have said they would use the report as a basis for negotiations, but the report has not to date propelled movement toward an agreement.

The Kurds—reportedly using their intelligence service the *Asayesh*—have been trying to strengthen their position in Kirkuk by pressuring the city’s Arabs, both Sunni and Shiite, and Turkomans to leave. The adopted provincial elections law not only postponed the provincial elections in Kirkuk and the three KRG provinces, but provided for a COR committee to issue a report on the Kirkuk/disputed territories dispute by March 31, 2009. That report has not been issued, to date.

Iraqi Pledges and Status of Accomplishment

During 2008, the Bush Administration asserted—in a May 2008 informal update to two reports mandated by P.L. 110-28—that most of the required “benchmarks” of progress were completed and will promote reconciliation, although the lasting effects will largely depend on implementation. *A chart on Iraq’s performance on the 18 benchmarks stipulated in P.L. 110-28 is in CRS Report RS21968, Iraq: Politics, Elections, and Benchmarks, by Kenneth Katzman.*

Regional and International Diplomatic Efforts to Promote Iraq Stability

The Iraqi government is receiving growing diplomatic support, even though most of its neighbors, except Iran, resent the Shiite and Kurdish domination of the regime. Then Ambassador Crocker testified during April 8-9, 2008, that the U.S. lamented that, at that time, there were no Arab ambassadors serving in Iraq, depriving the Arab states of countervailing influence to Iran’s ties to Iraqi factions. In part responding to the U.S. pressure, during 2007-2008, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Kuwait, Jordan, Syria, Qatar, Oman, and Egypt either sent ambassadors to Iraq or announced that they would. Most of those embassies have now been established, and Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Oman have been sending diplomats to Iraq to arrange the logistics of establishing embassies. In January 2009, Iraq appointed its first Ambassador to Syria in almost 30 years. In July 2009, Yemen named an Ambassador to Iraq.

In major visits, Jordan's King Abdullah visited Iraq on August 11, 2008, becoming the first Arab leader to do so. Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad visited March 2-3, 2008. Turkey's Foreign Minister Tayyip Recep Erdogan visited in July 2008 and the Turkish President, Abdullah Gul, visited in March 2009, the first such visit by a Turkish head of state in three decades. In a major step toward reconciliation, Kuwait's Foreign and Deputy Prime Minister Mohammad Al Sabah visited Iraq in February 2009.

The United States built regional support for Iraq through an ongoing "Expanded Ministerial Conference of Iraq's Neighbors" process, consisting of Iraq's neighbors, the United States, all the Gulf monarchy states, Egypt, and the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council). The first meeting was in Baghdad on March 10, 2007. Iran and Syria attended, as did the United States. A follow-on meeting in Egypt was held May 3 and 4, 2007, in concert with additional pledges of aid for Iraq under an "International Compact for Iraq (ICI)" and agreement to establish regional working groups on Iraq's security, fuel supplies, and Iraqi refugees. Those groups had several meetings. The third full "Expanded Neighbors" meeting was held in Kuwait on April 22, 2008, and it is not certain if, or when, future such meetings would occur, because Iraq's stabilization has reduced the urgency for this process. No progress on debt relief or related issues were made at a meeting of the Iraq Compact countries in Sweden on May 30, 2008. Bilateral U.S.-Iran meetings on Iraq are discussed below.

Human Rights and Rule of Law

The State Department's report on human rights for 2008, released February 25, 2009, said that: "Insurgent and extremist violence, coupled with weak government performance in upholding the rule of law, resulted in widespread and severe human rights abuses."²⁹ Similarly, the October 26, 2000, report on International Religious Freedom attributed restrictions on the free exercise of religion (by religious minorities) to "terrorists, extremists, and criminal gangs," while praising the Iraqi government for endorsing free exercise of religious rights.

Status of Christians. One major issue is that the Christians of Mosul (Nineveh Province) have blamed the Kurds for threatening them to leave the province in order to strengthen the Kurdish position there. In the run-up to the January 2009 provincial elections, about 1,000 Christian families reportedly fled the province in October 2008, although Iraqi officials report that most families returned by December 2008 and the issue appears to have faded in 2009. Some Iraqi Christians blamed the attacks on Al Qaeda in Iraq, which is still somewhat strong in Nineveh Province and associates Christians with the United States. UNAMI coordinated humanitarian assistance to the Christians and others displaced. Previously, some human rights groups alleged Kurdish abuses against Christians and other minorities in the Nineveh Plain, close to the KRG-controlled region. Kurdish leaders deny the allegations. The FY2008 Consolidated Appropriation earmarked \$10 million in ESF from previous appropriations to assist the Nineveh plain Christians. A supplemental appropriation for 2008 and 2009 (P.L. 110-252) earmarked another \$10 million for this purpose.

Before the latest rounds of violence in Nineveh, more than 100,000 Christians had left Iraq since the fall of Saddam Hussein. Christian priests have been kidnapped and killed; the body of Chaldean Catholic archbishop Faraj Rahho was discovered in Mosul on March 13, 2008, two

²⁹ Report is at: <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2008/nea/119116.htm>

weeks after his reported kidnapping. However, some Christians in Baghdad have felt safe enough to celebrate Christmas at churches in Baghdad since 2007. An attack on the Yazidis in August 2007, which killed about 500 persons, appeared to reflect the precarious situation for Iraqi minorities. U.S. military forces do not specifically protect Christian sites at all times, partly because Christian leaders do not want to appear closely allied with the United States.

A State Department report to Congress details how the FY2004 supplemental appropriation (P.L. 108-106) “Iraq Relief and Reconstruction Fund” (IRRF) has been spent for programs on democracy and governance (“2207 Report”). These programs are run by the State Department Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (State/INL), USAID, and State Department Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL):

- About \$1.014 billion from the IRRF was for “Democracy Building,” including programs to empower women and promote their involvement in Iraqi politics, as well as programs to promote independent media. Subsequent appropriations specifically on that issue included (1) FY2006 regular foreign aid appropriations (P.L. 109-102)—\$28 million each to the International Republican Institute and the National Democratic Institute for Iraq democracy promotion; (2) FY2006 supplemental appropriation (P.L. 109-234)—\$50 million in ESF for Iraq democracy promotion, allocated to various organizations performing democracy work there (U.S. Institute of Peace, National Democratic Institute, International Republican Institute, National Endowment for Democracy, and others); (3) FY2007 supplemental appropriation (P.L. 110-28)—\$250 million in additional “democracy funding;” (4) FY2008 and FY2009 supplemental appropriation (P.L. 110-252)—\$75 million to promote democracy in Iraq. For FY2010, \$382 million is requested for rule of law, good governance, political competition, and civil society building.

Of the IRRF:

- About \$71 million was for “Rule of Law” programs; and about \$15 million was to promote human rights and human rights education.
- About \$159 million was to build and secure courts and train legal personnel, including several projects that attempt to increase the transparency of the justice system, computerize Iraqi legal documents, train judges and lawyers, develop various aspects of law, such as commercial law, promote legal reform. There are at least 1,200 judges working, reporting to the Higher Juridical Council.
- \$10 million was for the Commission for the Resolution of Real Property Disputes (formerly the Iraqi Property Claims Commission) which is evaluating Kurdish claims to property taken from Kurds, mainly in Kirkuk, during Saddam’s regime.
- Other ESF funds have been used for activities to empower local governments, including the “Community Action Program” (CAP) through which local reconstruction projects are voted on by village and town representatives (about \$50 million in funding per year); related Provincial Reconstruction Development Committees (PRDCs); and projects funded by Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), local enclaves to provide secure conditions for reconstruction.

U.N. Involvement in Governance Issues

Several U.N. resolutions assign a role for the United Nations in post-Saddam reconstruction and governance. Resolution 1483 (cited above) provided for a U.N. special representative to Iraq, and “called on” governments to contribute forces for stabilization. Resolution 1500 (August 14, 2003) established U.N. Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI).³⁰ Now largely recovered from the bombing of its headquarters in 2003, UNAMI is headed by Ad Melkert (July 7, 2009), who replaced Swedish diplomat Staffan de Mistura. UNAMI staff exceeds 120 in Iraq (80 in Baghdad, 40 in Irbil, and others in Basra and Kirkuk), with equal numbers “offshore” in Jordan.

UNAMI’s responsibilities are expanding. U.N. Security Council Resolution, 1770, adopted August 10, 2007 and which renewed UNAMI’s mandate for another year, enhanced its responsibility to be lead promoter of political reconciliation in Iraq and to plan a national census. As noted above, it is the key mediator of the Kurd-Arab dispute over Kirkuk and other disputed territories, as discussed above. UNAMI also played a major role in helping prepare for provincial elections by updating voter registries. It is extensively involved in assisting with the constitution review process. U.N. Resolution 1830 of August 7, 2008, renewed UNAMI’s expanded mandate until August 2009. (*In Recommendations 7 and 26 and several others the Iraq Study Group calls for increased U.N. participation in promoting reconciliation in Iraq.*)

Economic Reconstruction and U.S. Assistance

The Bush Administration asserted that economic reconstruction would contribute to stability.³¹ Since the fall of Saddam Hussein, a total of about \$50 billion has been appropriated for reconstruction funding (including security forces). A major source of reconstruction funds was the Iraq Relief and Reconstruction Fund. About \$20.9 billion was appropriated for the IRRF in two supplemental appropriations: FY2003 supplemental, P.L. 108-11, which appropriated about \$2.5 billion; and the FY2004 supplemental appropriations, P.L. 108-106, which provided about \$18.42 billion.

However, as violence began to diminish in late 2007 and 2008, the Bush Administration concurred with the substantial bipartisan sentiment that Iraq, flush with oil revenues, should begin assuming the financial burden for its own reconstruction and security costs. In FY2008 and 2009, U.S. aid to Iraq, particularly aid to the ISF, has fallen from earlier levels. In FY2009, including an FY2009 supplemental appropriation (H.R. 2346, P.L. 111-32), about \$609 million in civilian economic aid was provided, and \$500 million for such functions have been requested for FY2010. For more detailed breakdowns of U.S. aid to Iraq, see CRS Report RL31833, *Iraq: Reconstruction Assistance*, by Curt Tarnoff.

The IRRF funds were spent as follows:

- \$5.03 billion for Security and Law Enforcement;

³⁰ Its mandate has been renewed each year since, most recently by Resolution 1700 (August 10, 2006).

³¹ In Recommendation 67, the Iraq Study Group called on the President to appoint a Senior Advisor for Economic Reconstruction in Iraq, a recommendation that was largely fulfilled with the February 2007 appointment of Timothy Carney as Coordinator for Economic Transition in Iraq. That position was held during 2007-9 by Amb. Charles Ries.

- \$1.315 billion for Justice, Public Safety, Infrastructure, and Civil Society (some funds from this category discussed above);
- \$1.014 billion for Democracy (breakdown is in the above section);
- \$4.22 billion for Electricity Sector;
- \$1.724 billion for Oil Infrastructure;
- \$2.131 billion for Water Resources and Sanitation;
- \$469 million for Transportation and Communications;
- \$333.7 million for Roads, Bridges, and Construction;
- \$746 million for Health Care;
- \$805 million for Private Sector Development (includes \$352 million in debt relief);
- \$410 million for Education, Refugees, Human Rights, Democracy, and Governance (includes \$99 million for education); and
- \$213 million for USAID administrative expenses.

Oil Revenues

Before the war, it was widely asserted by Administration officials that Iraq's vast oil reserves, believed second only to those of Saudi Arabia and the driver of Iraq's economy, would fund Iraq's reconstruction costs. The oil industry infrastructure suffered little damage during the U.S.-led invasion (only about nine oil wells were set on fire), but protecting the infrastructure from post-Saddam insurgents and rebuilding it (Iraq's total pipeline system is over 4,300 miles long) has received substantial U.S. and Iraqi attention. That focus has shown success as production has been near pre-war levels since May 2008. Still, corruption and mismanagement are key issues. In addition, the Iraqi government needs to import refined gasoline because it lacks sufficient refining capacity.

A related issue is long-term development of Iraq's oil industry and which foreign energy firms, if any, are receiving preference for contracts to explore Iraq's vast reserves. International investment has been assumed to depend on the passage of the hydrocarbons laws, and some are concerned that draft national oil laws, if adopted and implemented, will favor U.S. firms. A June 29, 2009, auction of eight Iraqi fields yielded only one firm agreement, although others might follow subsequent negotiations. Previously, a Russian development deal with Saddam's government (the very large West Qurna field, with an estimated 11 billion barrels of oil) was voided by the current government in December 2007. However, in November 2008, the Iraqi government approved the Saddam-era (1997) deal with Chinese firms to develop the Ahdab field, with an estimated value of \$3.5 billion. South Korea and Iraq signed a preliminary agreement on April 12, 2007, to invest in Iraq's industrial reconstruction. Talabani's visit to Seoul in February 2009 resulted in a \$3.6 billion agreement for South Korea to develop oil fields in the Basra area, and to build power plants. (*In Recommendation 63, the Iraq Study Group says the United States should encourage investment in Iraq's oil sector and assist in eliminating contracting corruption in that sector.*)

There are a number of investors in the KRG region—investment that the central government calls “illegal” in the absence of national oil laws. They include Norway's DNO (now exporting from the Tawke field); Switzerland's Addax and Turkey's Genel Enerji (now exporting from the Taq

Taq field); South Korea's Korea National Oil Company (KNOC, Qush Tappa and Sangaw South blocks); Canada's Western Zagros; Turkish-American PetPrime; Turkey/U.S.'s A and T Energy; Hunt Oil, and Dana Gas (UAE). However, as noted, the Kurds are dependent on the national oil pipeline system for their export routes and this dependence caused a dispute that caused the KRG to suspend oil exports in October 2009.

Table 2. Selected Key Indicators

Oil						
Oil Production (weekly avg.)	Oil Production (pre-war)	Oil Exports	Oil Exports (pre-war)	Oil Revenue (2007)	Oil Revenue (2008)	Oil Revenue (2009)
2.51 million barrels per day (mbd)	2.5 mbd	1.88 mbd	2.2 mbd	\$41.0 billion	\$61.9 billion	\$28.5 billion
Electricity						
Pre-War Load Served (MWh)	Current Load Served	Baghdad (hrs. per day)	National Average (hrs. per day)			
102,000	124,000	16.6 (11.9 year ago)	18.3 (13.7 year ago)			

Note: Figures in the table are provided by the State Department "Iraq Status Report" dated October 14, 2009. Oil export revenue is net of a 5% deduction for reparations to the victims of the 1990 Iraqi invasion and occupation of Kuwait, as provided for in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1483 (May 22, 2003). That 5% deduction is paid into a U.N. escrow account controlled by the U.N. Compensation Commission to pay judgments awarded.

Lifting U.S. Sanctions

In an effort to encourage private U.S. investment in Iraq, the Bush Administration lifted nearly all U.S. sanctions on Iraq, beginning with Presidential Determinations issued under authorities provided by P.L. 108-7 (FY2003 appropriations) and P.L. 108-11 (FY2003 supplemental).

- On May 22, 2003, President Bush issued Executive Order 13303, protecting assets of post-Saddam Iraq from attachment or judgments. This remains in effect and the Bush Administration pledged to continue this protection beyond the December 31, 2008, expiration of the U.N. "Chapter 7" oversight of Iraq. U.N. Security Council Resolution 1859 continues application of this protection to other U.N. member states.
- On July 29, 2004, President Bush issued Executive Order 13350 ending a trade and investment ban imposed on Iraq by Executive Order 12722 (August 2, 1990) and 12724 (August 9, 1990), and reinforced by the Iraq Sanctions Act of 1990 (Section 586 of P.L. 101-513, November 5, 1990 (following the August 2, 1990 invasion of Kuwait).
- On September 8, 2004, the President designated Iraq a beneficiary of the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP), enabling Iraqi products to be imported to the United States duty-free.

- On September 24, 2004, Iraq was removed from the U.S. list of state sponsors of terrorism under Section 6(j) of the Export Administration Act (P.L. 96-72). Iraq is thus no longer barred from receiving U.S. foreign assistance, U.S. votes in favor of international loans, and sales of arms and related equipment and services. Exports of dual use items (items that can have military applications) are no longer subject to strict licensing procedures.³²
- The FY2005 supplemental (P.L. 109-13) removed Iraq from a named list of countries for which the United States is required to withhold a proportionate share of its voluntary contributions to international organizations for programs in those countries.

Debt Relief/WTO Membership/IMF

The Administration is attempting to persuade other countries to forgive Iraq's debt, built up during Saddam's regime—estimated to total about \$116 billion (not including the U.N.-administered reparations process from the 1991 Persian Gulf war). To date, Iraq has received about \$12 billion in debt relief from non-Paris Club bilateral creditors, and \$20 billion in commercial debt relief. The U.S. Treasury estimates Iraq's remaining outstanding debt, including that still owed to the Paris Club at between \$52 billion and \$76 billion.

The Persian Gulf states that supported Iraq during the Iran-Iraq war have been reluctant to write off Iraq's approximately \$55 billion in debt to those countries (mainly Saudi Arabia and Kuwait with about \$25 billion each). However, the UAE agreed on July 6, 2008, to write off all \$7 billion (including interest) of Iraqi debt. Iraq settled its debt (including some debt write-off) with Bulgaria in August 2008. The Gulf states are also far behind on remitting aid pledges to Iraq, according to the GAO.³³

On December 17, 2004, the United States signed an agreement with Iraq writing off 100% of Iraq's \$4.1 billion debt to the United States; that debt consisted of principal and interest from about \$2 billion in defaults on Iraqi agricultural credits from the 1980s.³⁴ On December 15, 2007, Iraq cleared its debts to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) by repaying \$470 million earlier than required and has a Stand-By Arrangement with the Fund. On December 13, 2004, the World Trade Organization (WTO) began accession talks with Iraq.

Security Challenges and Responses

Since the fall of Saddam Hussein, the United States has employed a multi-faceted approach to securing Iraq. In late 2006, the effort was determined by the Administration to be faltering as violence and U.S. casualties escalated. However, a strategy revision in January 10, 2007 – a so-called “troop surge,” took advantage of an Iraqi Sunni turn against hardline militants and paved

³² A May 7, 2003, Executive Order left in place the provisions of the Iran-Iraq Arms Non-Proliferation Act (P.L. 102-484); that act imposes sanctions on persons or governments that export technology that would contribute to any Iraqi advanced conventional arms capability or weapons of mass destruction programs.

³³ <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d08365r.pdf>

³⁴ For more information, see CRS Report RL33376, *Iraq's Debt Relief: Procedure and Potential Implications for International Debt Relief*, by Martin A. Weiss.

the way for a quieting of the security environment. In February 2009, President Obama announced a winding down of U.S. military involvement in Iraq by the end of 2011.

U.S. military headquarters in Baghdad (Combined Joint Task Force-7, CJTF-7) is a multi-national headquarters “Multinational Force-Iraq, MNF-I,” is headed as of September 2008, by General Raymond Odierno. His predecessor, Gen. David Petraeus, took over as head of U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) on October 31, 2008.

Sunni Arab-Led Insurgency and Al Qaeda in Iraq

Until 2008, the duration and intensity of a Sunni Arab-led insurgency defied many expectations, probably because it was supported by much of the Iraqi Sunni population that felt humiliated at being ruled by Shiites and Kurds. Some Sunni insurgents have sought to restore Sunni political dominance generally; others to return the Baath Party to power. The most senior Baathist still at large is longtime Saddam confidant Izzat Ibrahim al-Duri, and press reports say the central government has refused U.S. urgings to negotiate with his representatives to end their opposition.

Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQ-I), founded by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi (killed in a June 7, 2006, U.S. airstrike), has been a key component of the insurgency because it has been responsible for an estimated 90% of the suicide bombings against both combatant and civilian targets, including a large majority of the high profile/mass casualty attacks (HPAs). AQ-I’s strategy was to provoke Sunni-Shiite “civil war” as a means of undermining U.S. support for continued involvement in Iraq. AQ-I was initially composed of Sunni fighters from the broader Arab and Islamic world who have come to Iraq to fight U.S. forces and Shiite domination of Iraq, but the DoD “Measuring Stability” report of June 2009 says it is increasingly composed of Iraqi nationals. Its goals were originally *jihadi*, and not necessarily Iraq-specific, but it has evolved into more of an Iraq-focused organization.

At its height, the Iraqi Sunni insurgency (both native Iraqi and AQ-I) did not derail the political transition,³⁵ but it caused rates of U.S. casualties and Sunni-Shiite violence sufficient to stimulate debate in the United States over the U.S. commitment in Iraq. Using rocket-propelled grenades, IEDs (improvised explosive devices), mortars, direct weapons fire, suicide attacks, and occasional mass kidnappings, Sunni insurgents targeted U.S. and partner foreign forces; Iraqi officials and security forces; Iraqi civilians of rival sects; Iraqis working for U.S. authorities; foreign contractors and aid workers; and energy and utility facilities. In 2007, insurgent groups exploded chlorine trucks to cause widespread civilian injury or panic on about ten occasions; another chlorine attack occurred in January 2008. Another 2007 trend was attacks on bridges, particularly those connecting differing sects. At the height of the insurgency, several Sunni-dominated neighborhoods of Baghdad, including Amiriya, Adhamiya, Fadhil, Jihad, Amal, and Dora (once a mostly Christian neighborhood), were serving as Sunni insurgent bases. Sunni insurgents also made substantial inroads into the mixed province of Diyala, pushing out some Shiite inhabitants, and in Nineveh province as well, where the insurgency remains active.

³⁵ For further information, see Baram, Amatzia. “*Who Are the Insurgents?*” U.S. Institute of Peace, Special Report 134, April 2005; and Eisenstadt, Michael and Jeffrey White. “*Assessing Iraq’s Sunni Arab Insurgency.*” Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Policy Focus No. 50, December 2005.

Sunni “Awakening” and “Sons of Iraq” Fighters

A major turning point emerged in August 2006 when Iraqi Sunnis in highly restive Anbar Province sought U.S. military assistance in turning against the AQ-I because of its commission of abuses such as killings of those cooperating with the Iraqi government, forced marriages, and attempts to impose strict Islamic law. The Sunni Iraqi turn against AQ-I, which may also have been motivated by a desire to see normal commerce return to the Sunni areas, was begun by tribal figures calling themselves the “Awakening” (As Sahawa) or “Salvation Council” movement. Some of these figures are discussed above in the sections on Iraqi politics.

In concert with the 2007 “troop surge,” U.S. commanders took advantage of this Awakening trend by turning over informal security responsibility to former militants called “Sons of Iraq” (SoI), in exchange for an end to their anti-U.S. operations. (About 80% are Sunni and 20% are anti-extremist Shiites, according to the U.S. military.) These fighters were first recruited in Anbar by the various Awakening and Salvation Council leaders. Other urban, non-tribal insurgents from such groups as the 1920 Revolution Brigades later joined the trend and the number of SoI reached about 95,000-100,000. They were given some Defense Department funds and entered into information-sharing arrangements with U.S. forces—policies that were controversial because of the potential of the Sunni Iraqis to potentially resume fighting U.S. forces and Iraqi Shiites. U.S. officials say no new weapons were given to these groups, although some reports say U.S. officers allowed these fighters to keep captured weaponry.

The SoI program caused some tensions between Maliki and U.S. officials. Fearing empowering Sunnis particularly in the security services, Maliki and his Shiite allies have resisted U.S. plans to integrate all SoI into the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF), instead agreeing to allow only 20% of the SoI to join. The remainder were to be vetted for other civil service positions, or given education and training for private sector employment. As of April 2009, the Iraqi government has been paying all the SoI fighters (about \$350 per month), and SoI concerns that the payments might stop have, for the most part, not been realized. As of the end of September 2009, 23,000 SoI had joined the ISF or received civilian jobs, and 5,000 more will do so in October 2009 in Baghdad.

Outside Support for Sunni Insurgents

Although the flow of foreign fighters through Syria into Iraq has diminished significantly from the 80+ flowing in per month during 2006 and 2007, the June 2009 “Measuring Stability” report said that Syria remains the “primary gateway” for Iraq-bound foreign fighters.” However, as a result of the major August 19 bombings in Baghdad mentioned above, which the Iraqi government said originated with persons who entered from Syria, Iraq and Syria withdrew their ambassadors. Iraq moved additional police forces to the border with Syria. The U.S. view that Syria remains a gateway was in evidence with a reported U.S. raid over the border into Syria on October 27, 2008, reportedly killing an AQ-I organizer of fighters from Syria into Iraq. However, as part of a broader U.S. outreach to Syria and a perception of somewhat greater Syrian cooperation on this issue in recent years, in August 2009, U.S. CENTCOM sent several officials to Syria to discuss ways to cooperate with Iraq and the United States to further prevent the flow of fighters into Iraq. In late June 2009, the Obama Administration said the United States will return an ambassador to Syria after a four year hiatus.

Other assessments say the Sunni insurgents, both Iraqi and non-Iraqi, receive funding from wealthy donors in neighboring countries such as Saudi Arabia, where a number of clerics have publicly called on Saudis to support the Iraqi insurgency.

Table 3. Key Security/Violence Indicators

Indicator	Current Level
Number of U.S. forces in Iraq	"Surge" declared ended on July 31, 2008. U.S. total is about 120,000 (14 combat brigades); 165,000 was "surge" peak. U.S. outposts to fall to 50 by August 2010.
U.S./Other Casualties	4,354 U.S. forces; 3,475 by hostile action. 4,202 since end to "major combat operations" (May 1, 2003). About 260 coalition (including 170 British). 1,000+ civilian contractors. About 35 U.S. killed per month during October 2007-March 2008; increased to 50 in April 2008 but declined to 19 in May 2008 and only 9 in March 2009, lowest since the war began. However, 25 killed in May 2009 was highest of 2009. 100+ per month killed in 2007.
Partner forces in Iraq	Almost all partner forces scheduled to leave by July 2009. Down from 28,000 in 2005.
AQ-I fighters	1,300-3,500 commonly estimated, precise figures not known
Number of Iranian Qods Forces in Iraq	150+. Shiite militias have killed over 200 U.S. soldiers with Qods-supplied Explosively Formed Projectiles (EFP's).
Iraq Civilian Deaths	Less than 10/day, down from down from 100/day in December 2006, including sectarian murders per day (33/day pre-surge). However, increase to 451 in April, up from 191 in January 2009, and 288 in February 2009. Only 140 killed in May 2009, but spiked to 447 in June 2009.
Number of all Attacks/day	Reduced to about 20/day as of June 2009, lowest since 2003. Down from 200/day in July 2007. Major car and other large suicide bombings down 85% from pre-surge, and attacks in Anbar down 90%, but substantial increase in HPA's since April 2009.
Shiite militiamen	60,000 (including 40,000 Mahdi), although most now adopting low profile. Mahdi Army has fractured into political organization and break-away armed factions including Khata'ib Hezbollah (named a Foreign Terrorist Org on July 2, 2009), Promised Day Brigade, Special Groups, and Asa'ib al-Haq. The latter reconciled with government in August 2009.
Sons of Iraq Fighters	75,000 remaining, net of those integrated into ISF or given civilian jobs. All now paid (\$350/month) by Iraqi government. Had been paid by DOD (CERP funds). \$100 paid per IED revealed. DOD has spent over \$300 million on this program (CERP).
Iraqis Leaving Iraq or Displaced since 2003	2 million left, incl. 700,000 to Jordan, 1 million to Syria; another 2 million internally displaced or relocated. Some returned due to reduced violence and host country pressure.
Iraqi Army and Police Battalions in operations/In the Lead	185 Iraqi Army battalions in operations. Over 110 Army battalions and 18 National Police battalions operate with limited or minimal U.S. support.
Total ISF	About 616,000 "assigned" (on payrolls, not necessarily present on duty). Budgeted total is 720,000.
Number of Provinces Under ISF Control	13: Muthanna, Dhi Qar, Najaf, Maysan, Irbil, Dahuk, and Sulaymaniyah (latter three in May 2007), Karbala (October 29), and Basra (December 16), Qadisiyah (July 16, 2008); Anbar (September 1, 2008); Babil (October 23, 2008); Wasit (October 29, 2008)
Provincial Reconstruction Teams/Joint Security Stations	24 total. 8 are "e-PRTs"-embedded with combat units. Of remainder 15 are U.S.-led; 1 is partner-led (Italy, Dhi Qar). There are 4 "provincial support teams" (PST's). The number of PRT's is expected to fall to 6 by 2001 in line with U.S. drawdown plans. Over 100 Joint Security Stations in Baghdad closed in concert with U.S. withdrawal from the cities by June 30, 2009. Iraq refused U.S. request to continue to deploy combat forces in Sadr City, Mosul, and other still restive areas.

Sources: Information provided by a variety of sources, including U.S. government reports on Iraq, Iraqi statements, the Iraq Study Group report, DOD Measuring Stability reports, and press reports, including Reuters Alertnet. See below for tables on total numbers of Iraqi security forces, by force component.

Sectarian Violence and Shiite Militias/Civil War

Causing much of the deteriorating security environment in 2006 and early 2007 was the increase in Sunni-Shiite sectarian violence that many observers were characterizing as “civil war.” The severe phase of sectarian violence was set off by the February 22, 2006, AQ-I bombing of the Askariya Shiite mosque in Samarra, which set off a wave of Shiite militia attacks on Sunnis in the first days after the mosque bombing. Top U.S. officials said in late 2006 that sectarian-motivated violence—manifestations of an all-out struggle for political and economic power in Iraq—had displaced the Sunni-led insurgency as the primary security challenge. Since November 2007, there has been a dramatic drop in Sunni-Shiite violence—attributed to the U.S. “troop surge” and the “ceasefire” of the Mahdi Army, called by Sadr in August 2007. Militia-based Shiite parties were largely rejected by voters in the January 31, 2009, provincial elections.

Some believe that overall sectarian violence is lower because the civil war caused a segregation of Sunnis and Shiites, particularly in Baghdad, and this segregation could explain why major HPA’s since April 2009 have not produced major new sectarian violence. Some observers say Sunnis largely “lost” the “battle for Baghdad,” with some accounts saying that Baghdad was about 35% Sunni Arab during Saddam’s rule but was reduced by the violence to about 20%. Many victims of sectarian violence turn up bound, dumped in about nine reported sites around Baghdad, including in strainer devices in the Tigris River. The Samarra mosque was bombed again on June 13, 2007 and their were reprisal attacks on Sunni mosques in Basra and elsewhere, although the attack did not spark the large wave of reprisals that the original attack did, possibly because the political elite appealed for calm after this second attack. The shrine is being reconstructed, with the help of UNESCO.

Discussed below are the major Shiite militias that participated in the violence, and some of which are still active. Not all Shiite militias have necessarily been against the United States or its policies in Iraq.

- *Badr Brigades.* The Badr Brigades, because they are linked to the mainstream ISCI faction, have not been considered an anti-U.S. militia or an insurgent groups. During 2005-2007, ISCI’s Badr militia folded into the ISF, particularly the National Police and other police commando units. The Badr Brigades were originally recruited, trained, and equipped by Iran’s hardline force, the Revolutionary Guard, during the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war, in which Badr guerrillas conducted forays from Iran into southern Iraq to attack Saddam regime targets. Badr fighters were recruited from the ranks of Iraqi prisoners of war held in Iran. However, many Iraqi Shiites viewed ISCI as an Iranian puppet and Badr operations in southern Iraq during the 1980s and 1990s did not shake Saddam’s grip on power. This militia is led by Hadi al-Amiri (a member of the COR from the “Badr Organization” of the UIA). In late 2005, U.S. forces uncovered militia-run detention facilities (“Site 4”) and arrested those Badr Brigade and related Iraqi police running them.
- *Mahdi Army (Jaysh al-Mahdi, JAM)/Special Groups.* This is the militia formed by Sadr in 2004 and discussed throughout this report. It has been considered anti-U.S., as discussed in the context of U.S. relations with the Sadr movement, discussed throughout. The March 2007 “Measuring Stability” reports said this militia had “replaced AQ-I as the most dangerous accelerant of potentially self-sustaining sectarian violence in Iraq.” U.S. assessments of the JAM subsequently softened as the JAM largely abided by Sadr’s “ceasefire” of JAM activities in

August 2007. Sadr's ceasefire declaration might have represented an effort not to directly confront the U.S. "troop surge."

- *JAM Offshoots.* Since the winding down of the Baghdad and southern Iraq battles discussed below, U.S. commanders have been watching several Shiite militias that likely represent offshoots and are not necessarily completely under Sadr's control. First and foremost have been the so-called "Special Groups," which Sadr has publicly acknowledged remain active and are not technically held to a strict ceasefire. Others Shiite militias are offshoots of the Special Groups, including *Asa'ib Al Haq*, *Kitaib Hezbollah*, and the *Promised Day Brigade*. The latter force, which Sadr is urging members of other militias to join, appears to represent an effort by Sadr, to consolidate all ex-JAM fighters into one force under his control. In August 2009, *Asa'ib al-Haq* reconciled with the government and U.S. forces released some of its members who were in detention, including some allegedly linked to the killing of 5 U.S. soldiers in Karbala in 2007. On July 2, 2009, the Treasury Department named *Khata'ib Hezbollah* as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) under the Immigration and Naturalization Act. *Khata'ib* is the only Shiite militia group named as an FTO to date.

Shiite-on-Shiite Violence/March 2008 Basra Battles

U.S. reports and officials say the Shiite militias could again undermine Iraqi stability over the long term as U.S. forces depart. Shiite-against-Shiite violence increased in 2007 and accelerated at times in 2008, perhaps because Maliki and ISCI feared that the Sadr faction was trying to use its militia force to achieve political influence commensurate with what it believes is its popularity. In 2007 and 2008, there was consistent but varying levels of internecine fighting among Shiite groups in southern Iraq—primarily between the Badr-dominated ISF police and army units on the one side, and Sadr's JAM on the other—in a competition for power, influence, and financial resources. The most violent single incident took place on August 28, 2007, when fighting between the JAM and the ISF (purportedly mostly Badr fighters within the ISF) in the holy city of Karbala, triggered by a JAM attempt to seize control of the holy sites there, caused the death of more than 50 persons, mostly ISF and JAM fighters. The popular backlash led Sadr to declare the JAM ceasefire in August 2007. Despite the cease-fire, intra-Shiite skirmishing later increased as international forces, particularly those of Britain, reduced their presence in southern Iraq; Britain redeployed its forces from the city to Basra airport in September 2007, and it handed over control of the province to the Iraqis on December 16, 2007. There had been no major concentrations of U.S. troops there, leaving the security of the city entirely the responsibility of the ISF. (In early May 2009, Britain turned its Basra base over to U.S. forces.)

On March 26, 2008, Maliki ordered the launch of an ISF offensive (Operation Charge of the Knights) against the JAM and other militias in Basra, in an effort to reestablish "rule of law." Sadr read the move as an effort to weaken his movement in advance of planned provincial elections. In the fighting, the Badr-dominated ISF units initially performed poorly; many surrendered their vehicles, weapons, and positions to JAM militiamen, forcing the U.S. and British military to support the ISF with airstrikes, mentors, and advisers. The fighting on March 30, 2008, with an Iran-brokered proposal by Sadr and welcomed by the Maliki government, that did not require the JAM to surrender its weapons. As a result of a settlement that appeared to be on Sadr's terms, the offensive was at first considered a setback to the ISF. However, as a result of subsequent U.S. and Britain-backed operations by the ISF, JAM activities in Basra and nearby provinces (Maysan, Qadisiyah) were reduced.

Simultaneous with the Basra combat and since, JAM fighters in the Sadr City district of Baghdad fired volleys of 107 mm Iranian-supplied rockets on the International Zone, killing several U.S. soldiers and civilians. U.S. and ISF forces subsequently pushed into the southern districts of Sadr City to take the rockets out of range. Since a May 10, 2008, agreement for the JAM to permit ISF forces (but not American forces) to patrol northern Sadr City, the district—and JAM activities in general—has quieted considerably. As a result of the setbacks, Sadr announced in July 2008 a transformation of his movement and of the JAM into a cultural and social organization, although with continued military activities by 2008 of “special companies” of Mahdi fighters authorized to fight. The “Special Group” fighters, mentioned above, some of whom have retreated into Iran, are said to be amenable to influence by Tehran, as are fighters of the other JAM offshoots discussed above. In June 2009, there was some resumption of rocket attacks into the International Zone, presumably by Sadrist fighters, and other Shiite militias were said to be fielding weaponry in the Basra area in August 2009.

Iranian Support

The June 2009 Measuring Stability report continues to identify Iran as a significant challenge to Iraq’s long term stability and independence and a host of the Shiite militias discussed above. However, more recent U.S. assessments indicate less direct Iranian involvement in militant activity in Iraq, possibly because of the rejection of militant violence by Iraqi voters.

These assessments do not diminish the fact that—as expressed in a February 11, 2007, U.S. defense briefing in Baghdad, and highlighted in the Petraeus and Crocker testimonies of April 8-9, 2008, that Iran has been deeply involved in supporting Shiite militia activity in Iraq. The statements discussed have accused the Qods (Jerusalem) Force of Iran’s Revolutionary Guard—in concert with Lebanese Hezbollah—of aiding the JAM with explosives and weapons, including the highly lethal “explosively forced projectiles” (EFPs). From December 2006 to September 2007, U.S. forces arrested 20 alleged Iranian Revolutionary Guard Qods Forces and other agents; another was arrested on November 18, 2008. U.S. forces released nine of them in November 2007, and another in December, and released the remainder to Iraqi custody in June 2009, at which time they promptly were allowed to return to Iran. On August 12, 2008, the U.S.-led coalition arrested nine Hezbollah operatives in Baghdad; they were allegedly involved in smuggling Iranian weaponry to Shiite militias in Iraq. (For more information, see CRS Report RS22323, *Iran’s Activities and Influence in Iraq*, by Kenneth Katzman.)

Iran’s support for Shiite militias contributed to a U.S. decision to conduct direct talks with Iran on the issue of stabilizing Iraq, a key recommendation of the December 2006 Iraq Study Group (*Recommendations 9, 10, and 11*). The Bush Administration initially rejected that recommendation; the President’s January 10, 2007, Baghdad security initiative included announcement of an additional aircraft carrier group and additional Patriot anti-missile systems to the Gulf, moves clearly directed against Iran. The two sides held their first direct talks in Iraq, at the Ambassador level, on May 28, 2007. Another meeting was held on July 24, 2007, with a decision to form a U.S.-Iran working group to develop proposals for both sides to help ease Iraq’s security difficulties. The group met for the first time on August 6, 2007. Following U.S. assessments of reduced Iranian weapons shipments into Iraq, the United States agreed to another meeting with Iran in Baghdad, but the planned December 18, 2007 meeting was postponed over continuing U.S.-Iran disagreements over the agenda for another round of talks, as well as over Iran’s insistence that the talks be between Ambassador Crocker and Iranian Ambassador Hassan Kazemi-Qomi. In May 2008, Iran suspended talks in this channel because of the U.S. combat in Sadr City, which Iran says is resulting in civilian deaths, and in February 2009 Iran said that there

would be no further such meetings. There has been no change in the Iranian position despite the outreach to Iran undertaken by President Obama.

Although Iranian influence might be fading, many Iraqi leaders continue to look to Tehran for advice, guidance, and assistance. In January 2009, Maliki made his fourth visit to Iran as Prime Minister, this time purportedly to reassure Iran about the implementation of the U.S.-Iraq SOFA. Iran also pressed Maliki to take control of “Camp Ashraf,” where about 3,500 Iranian oppositionists of the People’s Mojahedin Organization of Iran have been protected by U.S. forces, even though the PMOI is named by the United States as a Foreign Terrorist Organization. Iraq has taken control of the camp, and is threatening to expel the activists, although not to “forcibly” deport them to Iran. However, an altercation at the Camp took place on July 27, 2009, when Iraqi police forces established a police post at the Camp. At least ten PMOI were reportedly killed in the clashes, although the United States did not actively intervene to stop the clash.

Iraq’s Northern Border

Security on Iraq’s northern border remains fragile, although not to the point of imminent crisis as existed in late 2007. Turkey fears that the Iraqi Kurds might seek independence and thereby spark similar separatist drives among Turkey’s Kurds. The leading force for Kurdish separatism in Turkey is the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK), also referred to as Kongra Gel (KGK). Turkey alleges that Iraq’s Kurds (primarily the KDP, whose power base abuts the Turkish border) are actively harboring the anti-Turkey PKK (Kurdistan Worker’s Party) guerrilla group in northern Iraq that has killed about 40 Turkish soldiers since September 2007. Turkey’s parliament in October 2007 approved a move into northern Iraq against the PKK and mobilized a reported 100,000 troops to the border area. The Turkish military has used that authority sparingly to date, possibly because U.S. officials are putting pressure on KRG leaders not to harbor the PKK, and because U.S. officials are reportedly sharing information on the PKK with Turkey. The Iraqi Arabs generally favor cooperating with Turkey—and in September 2007 signed an agreement with Turkey to pledge such cooperation. The issue dominated the expanded neighbors meeting in Istanbul on November 2, 2007, as well as Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan’s and President Abdullah Gul’s meetings with President Bush (November 5, 2007, and January 7, 2008, respectively). As evidence of some calming of the issue, Turkey’s President Abdullah Gul visited Baghdad on March 23, 2009, including a meeting with Iraqi President Talabani (a Kurd). Turkey’s Foreign Minister conducted a long-delayed visit to Iraq in August 2009.

Tensions had escalated in July 2007 when Barzani indicated that the Iraqi Kurds were capable of stirring unrest among Turkish Kurds if Turkey interferes in northern Iraq. Previously, less direct threats by Turkey had prompted the U.S. naming of an envoy to Turkey on this issue in August 2006 (Gen. Joseph Ralston (ret.), former Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff).

Another emerging dispute is Iran’s shelling of border towns in northern Iraq that Iran says are the sites where the Party for a Free Life in Kurdistan (PJAK), an Iranian Kurdish separatist group, is staging incursions into Iran. Iran has threatened a ground incursion against PJAK and Iraq said on September 9, 2007, in remarks directed at Iran and Turkey, that its neighbors should stop interfering in Iraq’s affairs. The Obama Administration named PJAK a foreign terrorist entity under Executive Order 13224 on February 5, 2009, although primarily for its affiliation with the PKK and activities against Turkey rather than for its activities against Iran.

The Current Situation and U.S. Drawdown Plans

The Bush Administration and the Obama Administration have attributed much of the positive developments in Iraq since 2008 to the 2007 “troop surge.”³⁶ The “surge”³⁷ consisted of deployment of an additional 28,500 U.S. forces to Iraq—17,500 combat troops (five brigades) to Baghdad; 4,000 Marines to Anbar Province; and the remainder support troops and military police. The plan envisioned that these forces, along with additional Iraqi forces, would hold neighborhoods cleared of insurgents and thereby cause the population to reject militants. The forces were based, along with Iraqi soldiers, in about 100 fixed locations—both smaller Combat Outposts and the larger “Joint Security Stations.”³⁸

Among the surge accomplishments are some districts formerly written off as AQ-I strongholds, such as Amiriyah, the former Baathist stronghold of Adhamiyah. The formerly highly violent Doura district of Baghdad, for example, is bustling with normal commerce.

However, there is concern that recent major bombings could jeopardize the progress that has been accomplished. Of particular concern have been High Profile Attacks (HPA’s)—one on August 19, 2009 against the Foreign and Finance ministries; and one on October 25, 2009 against the Justice Ministry and Baghdad provincial government office. The latter bombing killed about 150 Iraqis; the former killed about 100. Both attacks devastated their target buildings.

Other HPA’s have been conducted in Nineveh Province, where AQ-I is said to retain a substantial presence, in disputed Kirkuk, and in Baghdad. Some believe AQ-I is mainly targeting Shiite civilians, possibly in an effort to reignite sectarian violence, although without success in achieving that objective. Other reports say that ex-Baathists are increasingly active in attempting to reinvigorate the insurgency, and Baathists are accused by the Iraqi government of the major attacks mentioned above. Others believe that insurgents want to demonstrate their continued strength in advance of the January 2010 national elections. Despite the recent major bombings, the overall U.S. military assessment, as expressed by Gen. Odierno in testimony on September 30, 2009, is of continued overall security progress.

The overall reduction in violence contrasts with the period during 2004-2007, when the major focus of U.S. counter-insurgent (“search and destroy”) combat was Anbar Province, which includes the cities of Fallujah and Ramadi (provincial capital), the latter of which was the most

³⁶ Previously, Congress has mandated two major periodic Administration reports on progress in stabilizing Iraq. A Defense Department quarterly report, titled “Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq,” was required by an FY2005 supplemental appropriation (P.L. 109-13), and renewed by the FY2007 Defense Appropriation (P.L. 109-289). Another report (“1227 Report”), is required by Section 1227 of the Defense Authorization Act for FY2006 (P.L. 109-163). As noted above, P.L. 110-28 mandated the July 15, 2007 and September 15, 2007 progress reports on the “troop surge,” as well as a GAO report due September 1, 2007 and an outside commission report (“Jones Commission”) on the Iraqi security forces.

³⁷ The plan, commonly referred to by officials as the “troop surge,” in many ways reflects recommendations in a January 2007 report by the American Enterprise Institute entitled “Choosing Victory: A Plan for Success in Iraq.”

³⁸ Congressional reaction to the troop surge decision was relatively negative. In House action, on February 16, 2007, the House passed (246-182) a non-binding resolution (H.Con.Res. 63) expressing opposition to the sending of additional forces to Iraq. However, on February 17, 2007, the Senate did not vote to close off debate on a version of that resolution (S. 574). Earlier, a resolution opposing the troop increase (S.Con.Res. 2) was reported out of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on January 24, 2007 (12-9 vote). A February 1 cloture motion failed.

restive of all Iraqi cities and in which the provincial governor's office was shelled nearly daily during 2006. In the run-up to the December 15, 2005, elections, U.S. (and Iraqi) forces conducted several major operations ("Matador," "Dagger," "Spear," "Lightning," "Sword," "Hunter," "Steel Curtain," and "Ram") to clear contingents of insurgents from Sunni cities in Anbar, along the Euphrates River. None of these operations produced lasting reductions in violence. Realizing the weakness of its strategy, in its November 2005 "National Strategy for Victory in Iraq," the Administration articulated a strategy called "clear, hold, and build," intended to create and expand stable enclaves by positioning Iraqi forces and U.S. civilian reconstruction experts in areas cleared of insurgents. The strategy envisioned that cleared and rebuilt areas would serve as a model that could expand throughout Iraq. The strategy formed the basis of Operation Together Forward (I and II) of August-October 2006.

In conjunction with the U.S. strategy, the Administration began forming Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), a concept used extensively in Afghanistan. Each PRT in Iraq is civilian led, composed of about 100 personnel from State Department, USAID, and other agencies, including contract personnel. The PRTs assist local Iraqi governing institutions, such as the provincial councils, representatives of the Iraqi provincial governors, and local ministry representatives. There are now 24 PRTs, of which 8 are embedded with U.S. military concentrations (Brigade Combat Teams), but the number is to shrink to six in concert with the U.S. military drawdown discussed below.

Troop Withdrawal Plan

Having reduced all major violence indicators (numbers of attacks, Iraqi civilian deaths, and other indicators) to close to the low post-invasion 2003 levels, the "surge" was declared ended on July 31, 2008. In late August 2008, Gen. Petraeus recommended a drawdown of an additional 8,000 forces by February 2009; Gen. Petraeus later amended the recommendation to remove the 8,000 forces by the end of 2008. Those forces departed, leaving U.S. force levels at about 130,000 by the June 30, 2009, U.S. pullout from Iraqi cities.

On February 27, 2009, President Obama clarified U.S. plans to draw down U.S. troops in line with his stated intentions and the U.S.-Iraq Security Agreement. U.S. bases in the cities were closed in conjunction with U.S. fulfillment of its pledge, under the U.S.-Iraq Security Agreement (effective as of January 1, 2009) to pull combat troops out of cities by June 30, 2009. U.S. forces in Baghdad have redeployed to about eight or nine larger bases at the edges of or just outside the city itself. Iraq refused U.S. requests to continue to base some combat forces in Sadr City and in parts of Mosul that are still restive. On June 30, 2009, Maliki declared the withdrawal from the cities as a "victory" and declared a "national holiday," as Iraqi forces took over U.S. checkpoints from redeploying U.S. forces.

According to President Obama's withdrawal plan, all U.S. combat troops are to depart in 19 months—by August 31, 2010,—leaving a "residual presence" of about 35,000–50,000 primarily to train and advise the ISF and to perform counter-terrorism missions against AQ-I. They would remain there until the end of 2011 at which time the Security Agreement requires all U.S. forces to be out of Iraq.

The drawdown, which senior U.S. military spokesman Brig. Gen. Stephen Lanza said on October 13, 2009, is roughly on track with previous plans despite recent HPAS's, is to be "back-loaded." At the time of the June 30, 2009, redeployment from the cities, the size of the U.S. military presence stood at about 130,000. In line with planning, the force is at about 120,000 at the end of

October 2009, and will drop to about 110,000-120,000 by the time of the Iraqi national elections on January 16, 2010. After that, the force is expected to shrink to about 50,000 by the end of August 2010, and focus on training and supporting the ISF. Then, the “residual” force of trainers and mentors will come out between August 2010 and December 2011.

However, in the context of increasing frequency and lethality of high profile attacks in northern Iraq and in Baghdad that raises questions about Iraqi capabilities, there is wide speculation that U.S. troops will still be needed after this time and the Security Agreement might be amended to allow a presence beyond then. Some of these forces could be trainers or other mentors for the ISF. Reflecting growing Administration nervousness that security is deteriorating, President Obama said in July 2009 that the draw-down could be altered in response to developments in Iraq but he did not indicate that U.S. forces would be added if security deteriorates.

Other questions are raised by Gen. Odierno’s plan in August 2009 to partner U.S. forces with the ISF and *peshmerga* in northern Iraq. Some observers say it is not clear what are the criteria to end such a partnering program, and there is concern that this could constitute an open-ended commitment that keeps U.S. troops in Iraq beyond the end of 2011.

Building Iraqi Security Forces (ISF)

Whether U.S. troops need to stay in Iraq beyond 2011 to prevent a major unraveling could be determined by the continued progress of the ISF. General Odierno stated, in interviews conducted in conjunction with the U.S. redeployment out of Iraqi cities, that the United States judges the ISF as likely to be able to handle its increasing security responsibilities as the United States draws down. Gen. Odierno did not alter that assessment in his September 30, 2009, testimony before the House Armed Services Committee.

As the basis for the early confidence in the ISF’s ability to secure Iraq after 2011, U.S. commanders and others point to the increase in the number of ISF units capable of operating with minimal coalition support or are in the lead and to their performance in ongoing combat operations against AQ-I in northern Iraq. Recent *Measuring Stability* reports, including the latest one covering the period through June 2009, have praised the ISF for growing professionalism and proficiency. U.S. officials have attributed some of the progress to Interior Minister Jawad Bolani for trying to remove militiamen and death squad participants from the ISF. Numerous other ISF commanders are said by U.S. officials to be weeding out sectarian or non-performing elements from ISF and support ministry ranks. The National Police, which has about 42,000 as of April 2009, is now considered more effective and professional, without its wholesale disbanding and rebuilding that was recommended by the “Jones Commission” report of 2007. U.S. officials say the Interior Ministry headquarters has been almost completely transformed and is no longer factionalized as it was in 2007.

Still, previous assessments were less optimistic, giving cause for concern about the aftermath of a U.S. departure. Then-MNSTC-I commander Gen. Dubik and the Iraqi Defense Minister both separately stated in January 2008 that the ISF would not be ready to secure Iraq from internal threats until 2012, and from external threats until 2018-2020, despite the expanding size of the ISF. In testimony before the House Armed Services Committee on July 9, 2008, Gen. Dubik shortened that time frame somewhat, saying that the ISF could assume the lead internal security role between 2009 and 2012. The outer edge of that range is beyond the December 31, 2011, U.S. withdrawal date. (*Recommendations 42, 43 and 44 of the Iraq Study Group report advised an increase in training the ISF, and completion of the training by early 2008.*)

Prior to 2008, the ISF was mostly the subject of criticism. Some observers had gone so far as to say that the ISF has been part of the security problem in Iraq, not the solution, because of incidents of ISF member involvement in sectarian involvement or possible anti-U.S. activity. Even today, many units remain unbalanced ethnically and by sect, and some are still apparently penetrated by militias or insurgents. In addition:

- According to observers, appointments to senior commands continue to be steered toward Shiite figures, primarily Da'wa Party members, by Maliki's "Office of the Commander-in-Chief" run by his Da'wa subordinate, Dr. Bassima al-Jaidri. She reportedly has also removed several qualified commanders who are Sunni Arabs, causing Sunni distrust of the Iraqi military, and she reportedly has routinely refused to follow U.S. military recommendations to place more Sunnis in security positions. The Iraqi counter-terrorism bureau forces report to him, and not to the Defense or Interior ministries.
- The 90,000 members of the "Facilities Protection Force," (FPS), which are contract security guards attached to individual ministries, have been involved in past sectarian violence. The United States and Iraq began trying to rein in the force in May 2006 by placing it under Ministry of Interior supervision, including issuing badges and supervising what types of weapons it uses. (*In Recommendation 54, the Iraq Study Group says the Ministry of Interior should identify, register, and otherwise control FPS.*)

The reliance on the ISF represents a return to the U.S. strategy first articulated by President Bush in a June 28, 2005, speech, when he said, "As the Iraqis stand up, we will stand down."³⁹ Responsibility for training the ISF lies with the commander of the U.S.-led ISF training mission, the Multinational Transition Security Command-Iraq (MNSTC-I)—Lt. Gen. Michael Barbero.

ISF Weaponry

Most observers say the ISF are severely underequipped, dependent primarily on donations of surplus equipment by coalition members. The Iraqi Army is using mostly East bloc equipment, including 77 T-72 tanks donated by Poland, but is in the process of taking delivery of 4,200 Humvees from the United States. The United States has sold Iraq under Foreign Military Sales (FMS) about \$5.5 billion worth of equipment thus far, and about \$5 billion in additional potential sales—including M1A1 Abrams tanks, Stryker light armored vehicles, helicopters, and patrol boats—were notified to Congress on December 9, 2008.

With increasing U.S. concern that Iraq will not be able to defend its airspace after 2011, Iraq has asked to purchase 36 F-16 aircraft. The request is under review under the Foreign Military Sales process, although observers say the request is unlikely to be approved, at least for now. U.S. officials have previously refused to provide the Iraqi Air Force with combat aircraft, because of the potential for misuse in sectarian or political conflict. On the other hand, Iraqi officials are assessing the condition of 19 combat aircraft (MiG 21's and 23's) flown to Serbia by Saddam Hussein for repair in the late 1980s, and which could form a core combat air force.

³⁹ Speech by President Bush can be found at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2005/06/20050628-7.html>.

Press reports in early January 2009 say Iraq plans to buy up to 2,000 retrofitted T-72 tanks from Eastern European suppliers. The tanks would serve as the core of Iraq’s armored force, which now has about 149 tanks. On July 3, 2009, Iraq and visiting French Prime Minister Francois Fillon announced a tentative military sales and training agreement, and in March 2009, France sold Iraq 24 Eurocopters at a cost of \$500 million. France reportedly has also proposed to Iraq a sale of 18 Mirage F-1’s. The European Union reportedly is discussing with Iraq sales of small arms. In October 2007, it was reported that Iraq also is ordering \$100 million in light equipment from China to equip the ISF police forces. Iraqi President Talabani said part of the rationale for the China buy was the slow delivery of U.S. weapons. (In Recommendation 45, the Iraq Study Group said the United States should encourage the Iraqi government to accelerate its FMS requests.)

Table 4. ISF Funding

FY2003 and FY2004	\$5.036 billion allocated from \$20+ billion “Iraq Relief and Reconstruction Fund,” see above.
FY2005	\$5.7 billion in DOD funds from FY2005 supplemental appropriation (P.L. 109-13).
FY2006	\$3 billion appropriated by FY2006 supplemental (P.L. 109-234).
FY2007	Total of \$5.54 billion appropriated from: FY2007 defense appropriation (P.L. 109-289)-\$1.7 billion; and from FY2007 supplemental (P.L. 110-28)—\$3.84 billion (the requested amount).
FY2008	\$3 billion (revised) request. FY2008 regular appropriations (Consolidated, P.L. 110-161) provide \$1.5 billion. Second supplemental (P.L. 110-252) provides another \$1.5 billion, bringing the FY2008 total to the Administration request.
FY2009	An FY2009 bridge supplemental (P.L. 110-252) provides \$1 billion. The FY2009 supplemental requests asks that this amount be rescinded and re-appropriated to remain available through the end of FY2010.
FY2010	No additional funding for the ISF for FY2010
Total	\$23.276 billion provided or appropriated

Table 5. Ministry of Defense Forces

(From DoD Measuring Stability reports. Numbers might not correspond to those actually on duty.)

Force	Size/Strength "Assigned"
Iraqi Army	196,127 assigned. Authorized size is 174,805. Trained for eight weeks, paid \$60/month. Commanders receive higher salaries. 165 total battalions formed; 208 planned. 110 battalions need minimal U.S. support.
National Counterterrorism Forces	5,400 assigned. Authorized size is 6,190. Technically a separate "Counter-terrorism bureau" not under MOD, but reporting to Prime Minister. Trained for 12 weeks.
Training/ Support	19,990 assigned. Authorized level is 22,345
Air Force	2,148. Authorized level is 3,690. Has about 85 total aircraft, including: 9 helicopters, 3 C-130s; 14 observation aircraft. Trying to buy U.S. F-16s. Trained for six months.
Navy	1,887. Authorized level is 3,596. Has a Patrol Boat Squadron and a Coastal Defense Regiment. Fields about 35 patrol boats for anti-smuggling and anti-infiltration. Controls naval base at Umm Qasr, Basra port, and Khor al-Amaya oil terminals. Some training by Australian Navy.
Totals	Approx. 226,000 assigned. 210,626 authorized.
U.S./Other Trainers	U.S. training, including embedding with Iraqi units (10 per battalion), involves about 4,000 U.S. forces, run by Multinational Security Transition Command -Iraq (MNSTC-I). Training at Taji, north of Baghdad; Kirkush, near Iranian border; and Numaniya, south of Baghdad. All 26 NATO nations at NATO Training Mission- Iraq (NTM-I) at Rustamiyah (300 trainers). Others trained at NATO bases in Norway and Italy. Jordan, Germany, and Egypt also have done training.

Table 6. Ministry of Interior Forces

Force/Entity	Size/Strength Assigned
Iraqi Police Service (IPS)	305,831 assigned. Authorized level is 334,739. Gets eight weeks of training, paid \$60 per month. Not organized as battalions; deployed in police stations nationwide.
National Police	43,538 assigned. Authorized level is 46,580. Comprises "Police Commandos," "Public Order Police," and "Mechanized Police." 33 battalions formed. 18 need limited U.S. support. Overwhelmingly Shiite. Gets four weeks of counter-insurgency training.
Border Enforcement Department	40,976 assigned. Authorized level is 45,550. Controls over 250 border positions built or under construction. Has Riverine Police component to secure water crossings. Iraq Study Group (Recommendation 51) proposes transfer to MOD control.
Totals (all MOI forces)	390,345 assigned. 426,869 authorized.
Training	Training by 3,000 U.S. and coalition personnel (DOD-lead) as embeds and partners (247 Police Transition Teams of 10-15 personnel each). Pre-operational training mostly at Jordan International Police Training Center; Baghdad Police College and seven academies around Iraq; and in UAE. Iraq Study Group (Recommendation 57) proposes U.S. training at local police station level. Countries doing training aside from U.S.: Canada, Britain, Australia, Sweden, Poland, UAE, Denmark, Austria, Finland, Czech Republic, Germany (now suspended), Hungary, Slovenia, Slovakia, Singapore, Belgium, and Egypt.
Facilities Protection Service (FPS)	Accounted for separately, they number about 90,000, attached to individual ministries.

Coalition-Building and Maintenance

Virtually all non-U.S. foreign troops have now left Iraq -- in line with a law passed by the COR in December 2008 enabling remaining contingents to remain until July 31, 2009. Some believe that, partly because of the lack of U.N. approval for the invasion of Iraq, the Bush Administration was never able to enlist large scale international participation in peacekeeping. Even at the height of foreign participation (2004-2005), many of the non-U.S. force contributions were small and appeared to be mostly intended to improve relations with the United States. Some nations are pledging to continue training the ISF or to increase contributions in Afghanistan.

Substantial partner force drawdowns began with Spain's May 2004 withdrawal of its 1,300 troops. Spain made that decision following the March 11, 2004, Madrid bombings and subsequent defeat of the former Spanish government that had supported the war effort. Honduras, the Dominican Republic, and Nicaragua followed Spain's withdrawal (900 total personnel), and the Philippines withdrew in July 2004 after one of its citizens was taken hostage. Among other recent major drawdowns are:

- Ukraine, which lost eight soldiers in a January 2005 insurgent attack, withdrew most of its 1,500 forces after the December 2005 Iraqi elections. Bulgaria pulled out its 360-member unit at that time, but in March 2006 it sent in a 150-person force to take over guard duties of Camp Ashraf, a base in eastern Iraq where Iranian oppositionists are held by the coalition. (That contingent was shifted to Baghdad in July 2008.)
- South Korea began reducing its 3,600 troop contribution to Irbil in northern Iraq in June 2005, falling to 1,200 by late 2007. The deployment was extended by the South Korean government until the end of 2008 at a reduced level of 600. They have now completed their pullout.
- Japan completed its withdrawal of its 600-person military reconstruction contingent in Samawah on July 12, 2006, but it continued to provide air transport (and in June 2007 its parliament voted to continue that for another two years). That air mission has now ended as the U.N. mandate expiration approaches.
- Italy completed its withdrawal (3,200 troops at the peak) in December 2006 after handing Dhi Qar Province to ISF control.
- In line with a February 21, 2007 announcement, Denmark withdrew its 460 troops from the Basra area.
- In August 2007, Lithuania withdrew its 53 troops.
- In 2007, Georgia increased its Iraq force to 2,000 (from 850) to assist the policing the Iran-Iraq border at Al Kut, a move that Georgian officials said was linked to its efforts to obtain NATO membership. However, in August 2008, the United States airlifted the Georgian troops back home to deal with the Russian incursion into Georgia. They, and the Kazakh contingent, held a "closeout" ceremony on October 20, 2008, in Wasit, where they were based.
- Poland's 900 troops (down from a high of 2,600 in 2005) left Iraq in December 2008. Poland had led the multinational force based near Diwaniyah and included forces from: Armenia, Slovakia, Denmark, El Salvador, Ukraine, Romania, Lithuania, Latvia, Mongolia, and Kazakhstan. Tonga, the Czech Republic, and

- Azerbaijan held mission close-out ceremonies in early December 2008. Romania completed its departure in June 2009.
- On June 1, 2008, in line with announcements by Australia's Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, Australia's 550 person contingent left Iraq. The contingent had already been reduced from 1,500 troops. Australia will provide \$160 million in aid to Iraqi farmers, and will keep naval and other forces in the region. Australian civilians training the ISF and advising the Iraqi government will remain.
 - Britain has constituted the last large non-U.S. foreign force in Iraq, but its forces, too, are now almost all out of Iraq. In line with plans announced in 2007, British forces were reduced from 7,100 to about 4,000, adopting an "overwatch" mission in southern Iraq. On March 31, 2009, Britain handed over its main base in Basra to the United States, and on April 30, 2009, it formally ended its combat mission and began withdrawing its remaining 3,700 forces. On October 13, 2009, the Iraqi National Assembly approved a security agreement with Britain that will permit about 100 British personnel to secure Iraq's southern oil ports and train the Iraqi Navy and other ISF forces.

NATO/EU/Other Civilian Training

As noted above, all NATO countries have agreed to train the ISF through the NTM-I, as well as to contribute funds or equipment. In keeping with an agreement with visiting Prime Minister Maliki in April 2008, NATO expanded the equip and train mission for the ISF. Several NATO countries and others trained civilian personnel. In addition to the security training offers discussed above, European Union (EU) leaders trained Iraqi police, administrators, and judges outside Iraq. An April 2009 memorandum of understanding permitted NTM-I to stay until July 31, 2009, but negotiations to continue the mission through 2011 are ongoing.

Coalition Mandate/SOFA

Even though the invasion of Iraq was not authorized by the United Nations Security Council, the Bush Administration asserted that it had consistently sought and obtained U.N. and partner country involvement in Iraq efforts. U.N. Security Council Resolution 1483 (May 22, 2003) recognized the CPA as a legal occupation authority. To satisfy the requirements of several nations for U.N. backing of a coalition force presence, the United States achieved adoption of Resolution 1511 (October 16, 2003), authorizing a "multinational force under *unified* [meaning U.S.] command."

Resolution 1546 (June 8, 2004) took U.N. involvement further by endorsing the U.S. handover of sovereignty, reaffirming the responsibilities of the interim government and spelling out the duration and legal status of U.S.-led forces in Iraq, in addition to authorizing a coalition force to protect U.N. personnel and facilities. It specifically:

- "Authorize[d]" the U.S.-led coalition to contribute to maintaining security in Iraq, a provision widely interpreted as giving the coalition responsibility for security. Iraqi forces are "a principal partner" in—not commanded by—the U.S.-led coalition, as spelled out in an annexed exchange of letters between the United States and Iraq. The coalition retained the ability to take and hold prisoners.

- Stipulated that the coalition’s mandate would be reviewed “at the request of the government of Iraq or twelve months from the date of this resolution” (or June 8, 2005); that the mandate would expire when a permanent government is sworn in at the end of 2005; and that the mandate would be terminated “if the Iraqi government so requests.” Resolution 1637 (November 11, 2005), Resolution 1723 (November 28, 2006), and Resolution 1790 (December 18, 2007) each extended these provisions for an additional year, “unless earlier “requested by the Iraqi government,” and required interim reviews of the mandate on June 15 of the years of expiration, respectively. The December 2007 extension came despite a vote in Iraq’s parliament (with 144 votes in the 275 seat body) to approve a “non-binding” motion, led by the Sadr faction, to require the Iraqi government to first seek parliamentary approval. The mandate expired as of December 31, 2008.
- Gave Iraq gained control over its oil revenues (the CPA had handled the DFI during the occupation period⁴⁰) and the Development Fund for Iraq (DFI), subject to monitoring (until at least June 2005) by the U.N.-mandated International Advisory and Monitoring Board (IAMB). Resolution 1859 (December 22, 2008) renewed for one year the provision that Iraq’s oil revenues will be deposited in the DFI and that the DFI will be audited by the IAMB. The Resolution also continued the U.N. protection for Iraqi assets from attachments and lawsuits. Resolution 1546 gave the Iraqi government responsibility for closing out the U.N.-run “oil-for-food program” under which all oil revenues were handled by a U.N. escrow account; Security Council Resolution 1483 had ended the “oil for food program” as of November 21, 2003.

U.S.-Iraq Security Agreement

During 2007, Iraqi leaders began agitating to end the Chapter 7 U.N. status of Iraq, viewing that as a legacy of Saddam’s aggression. On November 26, 2007, President Bush and Prime Minister Maliki signed a “Declaration of Principles” (by video conference) under which the U.N. mandate would be renewed for only one more year (until December 31, 2008) and that, by July 2008, Iraq and the U.S. would complete a bilateral “strategic framework agreement and related Status of Forces agreement (SOFA, now called the Security Agreement), that would replace the Security Council mandate. The agreements were needed to keep U.S. forces operating in Iraq beyond the expiry of the U.N. mandate, and would outline the future political and economic relationship between the two countries. (Section 1314 of P.L. 110-28, a FY2007 supplemental, says that the President shall redeploy U.S. forces if asked to officially by Iraq’s government.)⁴¹

The Security Agreement and related strategic framework agreement were negotiated, and approved by Iraq’s parliament on November 27, 2008, by a vote of 149-35 (91 deputies not voting), considered sufficient but not the overwhelming consensus urged by Ayatollah Sistani. However, the parliament passed that day a related law requiring a national referendum on the pact by July 31, 2009, which could trigger a termination of the pact one year subsequently. Legislation adopted by the COR would provide for this referendum but defer it to be coincident with January

⁴⁰ For information on that program, see CRS Report RL30472, *Iraq: Oil-For-Food Program, Illicit Trade, and Investigations*, by Christopher M. Blanchard and Kenneth Katzman.

⁴¹ CRS Report RL34362, *Congressional Oversight and Related Issues Concerning the Prospective Security Agreement Between the United States and Iraq*, by Michael John Garcia, R. Chuck Mason, and Jennifer K. Elsea

30, 2010 national elections. If the referendum rejects the pact, the Iraqi government could withdraw from the pact one year after the referendum, putting the full U.S. withdrawal early in 2011 rather than at the end of 2011.

The ratified draft is in effect as of January 1, 2009, following signature by Iraq's presidency council on December 11, 2008. The Security Agreement provides significant immunities from Iraqi law for U.S. troops (while performing missions), and for civilian employees of U.S. forces, but not for security contractors.⁴² It also delineates that U.S. forces must coordinate operations with a joint U.S.-Iraq military committee. The agreement does include a timetable for a U.S. withdrawal, which the Iraqi side insisted on. The Bush Administration had repeatedly rejected firm timetables for withdrawal, but the Security Agreement sets that timetable as the end of 2011. As discussed above, it also stipulates that U.S. combat forces will cease patrols in Iraqi cities as of June 30, 2009. The U.S. draw-down plans articulated by President Obama on February 27, 2009, appear to be within these timetables. The final draft also included a provision, not in previous drafts and intended to mollify Iran, that U.S. forces cannot use Iraq as a base to attack other countries. Under the pact, the "Green Zone" or "International Zone" was handed over to Iraqi control on January 1, 2009.

The Security Agreement does not allow for permanent U.S. bases in Iraq. The facilities used by U.S. forces in Iraq do not formally constitute "permanent bases." This is in line not only with Iraqi insistence on full sovereignty but with recent U.S. legislation including: the Defense Appropriation for FY2007 (P.L. 109-289); the FY2007 Defense Authorization Act (P.L. 109-364); an FY2007 supplemental (P.L. 110-28); the FY2008 Defense Appropriation (P.L. 110-116); P.L. 110-181 (FY2008 defense authorization); the FY2008 Consolidated Appropriation (P.L. 110-161); FY2008/9 supplemental; the Continuing for FY2009 (P.L. 110-329), the FY2009 defense authorization (P.L. 110-417), and a FY2009 supplemental (P.L. 111-32) contain provisions prohibiting the establishment or the use of U.S. funds to establish permanent military installations or bases in Iraq. Most of these laws also stipulate that the United States shall not control Iraq's oil resources, a statement urged by Recommendation 23 of the Iraq Study Group report.

Also passed by the COR on November 27, 2008, were non-binding resolutions designed to ease Sunni concerns over government abuses and repression and thereby attract their support for the pact. The resolutions called for a release of eligible Sunni detainees and for more sectarian balance in the security forces. Most of the opposition in the COR came from the Sadr movement. His followers had held demonstrations against the pact in Baghdad prior to the vote.

⁴² P.L. 109-289 (FY2007 DOD appropriations) contains a provision that the Defense Department not agree to allow U.S. forces in Iraq to be subject to Iraqi law. A similar provision involving prohibition on use of U.S. funds to enter into such an agreement is in the FY2008 Consolidated Appropriation (P.L. 110-161).

Iraq Study Group Report, Legislative Proposals, and Options for the Obama Administration

A key question is what options the Obama Administration might consider if security in Iraq deteriorates as the United States reduces its military and political involvement there.⁴³ On the other hand, the U.S. withdrawal plan appears set and very few observers have been advancing any new U.S. options for Iraq policy.

Iraq Study Group Report

The Iraq Study Group report, produced in late 2006, was seen by some as offering recommendations that were later adopted and assisted policy formation. Among the most significant of the 79 recommendations, some of which were discussed previously and many of which came to be adopted by the Bush Administration, are the following:⁴⁴

- Transition from U.S.-led combat to Iraqi security self-reliance (Recommendations 40-45), with continued U.S. combat against AQ-I, force protection, and training and equipping the ISF. The “troop surge” strategy rejected an early transition to ISF-led combat, but the Bush Administration noted that the Iraq Study Group expressed support for a temporary surge.⁴⁵
- Heightened regional and international diplomacy, including with Iran and Syria, and including the holding of a major international conference in Baghdad (Recommendations 1-12). After appearing to reject this recommendation, the Bush Administration later backed a regional diplomatic process, as discussed.
- As part of an international approach, renewed commitment to Arab-Israeli peace (Recommendations 13-17). This was not a major feature of President Bush’s 2007 Iraq plan, although he later stepped up U.S. diplomacy on that issue.
- Additional economic, political, and military support for the stabilization of Afghanistan (Recommendation 18). This was not specified in President Bush’s Iraq plan, although, separately, there were increases in U.S. troops and aid for Afghanistan. The Obama Administration has placed significant weight on this recommendation. (See CRS Report RL30588, *Afghanistan: Post-Taliban Governance, Security, and U.S. Policy*, by Kenneth Katzman.)

⁴³ For a comparison of recent legislative proposals on Iraq, see CRS Report RL34172, *Operation Iraqi Freedom and Detainee Issues: Major Votes from the 110th Congress*, by Kim Walker Klarman, Lisa Mages, and Pat Towell.

⁴⁴ A CRS general distribution memo, available on request, has information on the 79 recommendations and the status of implementation.

⁴⁵ Full text of the report is at <http://www.usip.org>. The Iraq Study Group itself was launched in March 2006; chosen by mutual agreement among its congressional organizers to co-chair were former Secretary of State James Baker and former Chairman of the House International Relations Committee Lee Hamilton. The eight other members of the Group are from both parties and have held high positions in government. The group was funded by the conference report on P.L. 109-234, FY2006 supplemental, which provided \$1 million to the U.S. Institute of Peace for operations of the group.

- Setting benchmarks for the Iraqi government to achieve political reconciliation, security, and governance, including possibly withholding some U.S. support if the Iraqi government refuses or fails to do so (Recommendations 19-37). The Bush Administration at first opposed reducing support for the Iraqi government if it failed to uphold commitments, but President Bush signed P.L. 110-28, which linked U.S. economic aid to progress on the benchmarks.
- Giving greater control over police and police commando units to the Iraqi Ministry of Defense, which is considered less sectarian than the Ministry of Interior that controls these forces (Recommendations 50-61). These recommendations were not adopted.
- Securing and expanding Iraq's oil sector (Recommendations 62-63). The United States has consistently prodded Iraq to pass the pending oil laws, which would encourage foreign investment in Iraq's energy sector.
- Increasing economic aid to Iraq and enlisting more international donations of assistance (Recommendations 64-67). President Bush's 2007 security plan increased aid, as discussed above, although U.S. aid is now being reduced because of improved Iraqi financial capabilities.

In the 110th Congress, an amendment to H.R. 2764, the FY2008 foreign aid bill, would have revived the Iraq Study Group (providing \$1 million for its operations) to help assess future policy after the “troop surge.” The provision was not incorporated into the Consolidated appropriation (P.L. 110-161). In the Senate, some Senators from both parties in June 2007 proposed legislation (S. 1545) to adopt the recommendations of the Group as U.S. policy.

Further Options: Altering Troop Levels or Mission

The sections below discuss options that were under discussion before the Iraq Study Group report, the troop surge, or the November 2008 U.S. presidential election.

Further Troop Increase

Some argued that the “surge” was too limited—concentrated mainly in Baghdad and Anbar—and that the United States should have increased troops levels in Iraq even further to prevent Sunni insurgents from re-infiltrating cleared areas. This option faded during 2008 because of progress produced by the surge, and virtually no expert or official argues for this option at this time. However, some believe President Obama might revisit this question if security deteriorates sharply as U.S. troops in Iraq thin out, although most observers believe that the United States is not likely to send additional troops to Iraq once a major drawdown has begun in earnest.

Immediate and Complete Withdrawal

The Bush Administration consistently opposed this option, arguing that the ISF were not ready to secure Iraq alone and that doing so would result in full-scale civil war, possible collapse of the elected Iraqi government, revival of AQ-I activities, emboldening of Al Qaeda more generally, and increased involvement of regional powers in the fighting in Iraq. Supporters of the Bush Administration position said that Al Qaeda terrorists might “follow us home”—conduct attacks in the United States—if there were a rapid withdrawal.

Those who advocated rapid withdrawal maintained that the decision to invade Iraq was a mistake, that the large U.S. presence in Iraq could reignite the insurgency, and that U.S. forces are still policing a civil war. Those who supported an immediate withdrawal include most of the approximately 70 Members of the “Out of Iraq Congressional Caucus,” formed in June 2005. Some Members of this group have criticized the Obama draw-down plan as too slow, and questioned why as many as 50,000 U.S. forces would remain after August 2010.

In the 109th Congress, Representative John Murtha, ranking member (now chairman) of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, introduced a resolution (H.J.Res. 73) calling for a U.S. withdrawal “at the earliest practicable date” and the maintenance of an “over the horizon” U.S. presence, mostly in Kuwait, from which U.S. forces could continue to battle AQ-I. A related resolution, H.Res. 571, expressed the sense “that the deployment of U.S. forces in Iraq be terminated immediately;” it failed 403-3 on November 18, 2005. Representative Murtha introduced a similar bill in the 110th Congress (H.J.Res. 18).

Withdrawal Timetable

The Bush Administration had long opposed mandating a withdrawal timetable on the grounds that doing so would allow insurgents to “wait out” a U.S. withdrawal. The Iraq Study Group suggested winding down of the U.S. combat mission by early 2008 but did not recommend a firm timetable. Forms of this option exhibited some support in Congress. Iraqi leaders also long opposed a timetable, but their growing confidence caused Maliki to negotiate a relatively firm withdrawal timetable in the Security Agreement.

Various legislation to require a U.S. withdrawal timetable did not become law. A binding provision of an FY2007 supplemental appropriations legislation (H.R. 1591) required the president, as a condition of maintaining U.S. forces in Iraq, to certify (by July 1, 2007) that Iraq had made progress toward several political reconciliation benchmarks, and by October 1, 2007 that the benchmarks have been met. Even if the requirements were met, the amendment would require the start of a redeployment from Iraq by March 1, 2008, to be completed by September 1, 2008. The bill passed the House on March 23, 2007. The Senate-passed version of H.R. 1591 set a non-binding goal for U.S. withdrawal of March 1, 2008. The conference report retained the benchmark certification requirement and the same dates for the start of a withdrawal but made the completion of any withdrawal (by March 31, 2008, not September 1, 2008) a goal rather than a firm deadline. President Bush vetoed the conference report on May 1, 2007, and the veto was sustained. The revised provision in the FY2007 supplemental (P.L. 110-28) is discussed above.

A House bill, (H.R. 2956), which mandated a beginning of withdrawal within 120 days and completion by April 1, 2008, was adopted on July 12, 2007 by a vote of 223-201. A proposed amendment (S.Amdt. 2087) to H.R. 1585 contained a similar provision.

On November 13, 2007, some in Congress revived the idea, in an FY2008 supplemental appropriation (H.R. 4156), of setting a target date (December 15, 2008) for completion of a U.S. withdrawal, except for force protection and “counter-terrorism” operations. The bill passed the House but cloture was not invoked in the Senate. The debate over a timetable for withdrawal continued in consideration of an FY2008 supplemental appropriation, but was not included in the enacted version (P.L. 110-252).

In the 109th Congress, the timetable issue was debated extensively. In November 2005, Senator Levin introduced an amendment to S. 1042 (FY2006 defense authorization bill) to compel the

Administration to work on a timetable for withdrawal during 2006. Then-Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee John Warner subsequently submitted a related amendment that stopped short of setting a timetable for withdrawal but required an Administration report on a “schedule for meeting conditions” that could permit a U.S. withdrawal. That measure achieved bi-partisan support, passing 79-19, and was incorporated into the conference report on the bill (H.Rept. 109-360, P.L. 109-163). On June 22, 2006, the Senate debated two Iraq-related amendments to an FY2007 defense authorization bill (S. 2766). One, offered by Senator Kerry, setting a July 1, 2007, deadline for U.S. redeployment from Iraq, was defeated 86-13. Another, sponsored by Senator Levin, called on the Administration to begin redeployment out of Iraq by the end of 2006, but with no deadline for full withdrawal. It was defeated 60-39.

Troop Mission Change

Some have long argued that the United States should not be policing Iraqi cities and should instead scale back its mission to: (1) operations against AQ-I; (2) an end to active patrolling of Iraqi streets; (3) force protection; and (4) training the ISF. This option appears to be encapsulated in President Obama’s announcement of February 27, 2009.

In mid-2008, the previous U.S. Administration had judged that security conditions had improved to the point where the U.S. mission could be reduced gradually to an “overwatch” posture focused on supporting and training Iraqi forces rather than taking the lead on combat operations. The mission change idea was incorporated into the Security Agreement, which requires U.S. forces to pull out of Iraqi urban areas by June 30, 2009. A change of mission was proposed by several Senators for consideration of the FY2008 defense authorization (H.R. 1585), but was not in the conference report on the bill.

Planning for Withdrawal

In 2007, some Members maintained that the Bush Administration should plan for a withdrawal if one were decided. Bush Administration officials said they would not publicly discuss the existence or form of such planning because doing so would undermine current policy. However, Secretary of Defense Gates toured facilities in Kuwait in August 2007 in what was reported as an effort to become familiar with the capabilities of the U.S. military to carry out a redeployment. Then Senator Hillary Clinton reportedly was briefed on August 2, 2007 by Defense Department officials on the status of planning for a withdrawal, and she later introduced legislation on August 2, 2007 (S. 1950), to require contingency planning for withdrawal. In the House, H.R. 3087 (passed by the House on October 2, 2007 by a vote of 377-46) would have required the Administration to give Congress a plan for redeployment from Iraq.

Requiring More Time Between Deployments

Some Members who favored a U.S. draw-down did so on the grounds that the Iraq effort was placing too much strain on the U.S. military. A Senate amendment to H.R. 1585, requiring more time between deployments to Iraq, was not agreed to on September 19, 2007 because it only received 56 affirmative votes, not the 60 needed for passage. A similar House bill, H.R. 3159, was passed in the House on August 2, 2007 by a vote of 229-194.

Stepped Up International and Regional Diplomacy

As noted above, many of the Iraq Study Group recommendations proposed increased regional and international diplomacy. One idea, included in the Study Group report, was to form a “contact group” of major countries and Iraqi neighbors to prevail on Iraq’s factions to compromise. The Bush Administration took significant steps in this direction, including the multilateral and bilateral meetings on Iraq discussed above. Some experts expected the Obama Administration to continue this trend, but the international and regional dimension of the Iraq stabilization mission has faded since 2008 as Iraq has stabilized and as the Obama Administration has indicated a wind down of the mission. Some argue, however, that the regional dimension is even more crucial now to compensate for and address possible deterioration that will follow the U.S. drawdown.

In the 110th Congress, a few bills (H.R. 744, H.Con.Res. 43, and H.Con.Res. 45) support the Iraq Study Group recommendation for an international conference on Iraq. In the 109th Congress, these ideas were included in several resolutions, including S.J.Res. 36, S.Res. 470, S.J.Res. 33, and S. 1993, although several of these bills included timetables for a U.S. withdrawal.

Other ideas involved recruitment of new force donors. In July 2004, then-Secretary of State Powell said the United States would consider a Saudi proposal for a contingent of troops from Muslim countries to perform peacekeeping in Iraq, reportedly under separate command. Some Iraqi leaders believed that such peacekeepers would come from Sunni Muslim states and would inevitably favor Sunni factions within Iraq. With international partners now departing, such ideas are not widely discussed among experts.

Another idea was to identify a high-level international mediator to negotiate with Iraq’s major factions. Some Members of Congress wrote to President Bush in November 2006 asking that he name a special envoy to Iraq to follow up on some of the Administration’s efforts to promote political reconciliation in Iraq. This proposal faded as security stabilized in 2008.

Reorganizing the Political Structure, and “Federalism”

Some experts say that Iraq’s legislative achievements and security improvements have not produced lasting political reconciliation and that, at some point, Iraq will again see high levels of violence. Were that to occur, some might argue that the Obama Administration will need to press Iraqis to overhaul the political structure to create durable political reconciliation.

Reorganize the Existing Power Structure

Some believe that the existing Iraqi government should be reorganized by the United States to be more inclusive of resentful groups, particularly the Sunni Arabs. However, there is little agreement on what additional or alternative incentives, if any, would persuade Sunnis leaders and their constituents to fully support a government that is headed by Shiites. Sunni resentment is unlikely to ease because Shiite domination is likely to continue following the scheduled 2010 national elections for a new National Assembly.

Some have believed that Sunni Arabs might be satisfied by a wholesale cabinet/governmental reshuffle that gives several leading positions, such as that of President, to a Sunni Arab, although many Kurds might resent such a move because the Kurds expect to hold onto that post. The ability of the U.S. to determine a new power structure might be limited, even if there were a

decision by President Obama to try to do so. Some maintain that Sunni grievances can be addressed in the constitutional review process under way. Others oppose U.S.-led governmental change because doing so might appear to be un-democratic.

Some argue that Iraq could adopt the “Lebanon model” in which major positions are formally allotted to representatives of major factions. For example, Iraqis might agree that henceforth, the President might be a Sunni, the Prime Minister might be Shiite, and the COR Speaker might be Kurdish, or some combination of these allocations. Some believe such a system has worked relatively well in Lebanon helping it avoid all out civil war since the late 1980s, although others argue that Lebanon is perpetually unstable and that this model is not necessarily successful.

Support the Dominant Factions

Another view expressed by some is that the United States should place all its political, military, and economic support behind the mainstream Shiite and Kurdish factions that have all along been the most supportive of the U.S.-led overthrow of Saddam. According to this view, sometimes referred to as the “80% solution” (Shiites and Kurds are about 80% of the population),⁴⁶ most Sunni Arabs will never fully accept the new order in Iraq and the United States should cease trying to pressure the Shiites and Arabs to try to satisfy them.

Opponents of this strategy say that it is no longer needed because Sunnis have now begun cooperating with the United States, and are beginning to reconcile with the Shiites and Kurds. Others say this is unworkable because the Shiites have now fractured, and the United States now supports one group of Shiites against another—the Sadrists and their allies. These factors demonstrate, according to those with this view, that it is possible to build a multi-sectarian multi-ethnic government in Iraq. Others say that Iraq’s Sunni neighbors will not accept a complete U.S. tilt toward the Shiites and Kurds, which would likely result in even further repression of the Sunni Arab minority. Still others say that a further U.S. shift in favor of the Shiites and Kurds would contradict the U.S. commitment to the protection of Iraq’s minorities.

“Federalism”/Decentralization/Break-Up Options

At the height of the violence in Iraq in 2006 and 2007, some maintained that Iraq could not be permanently stabilized as one country and should be broken up, or “hard partitioned,” into three separate countries: one Kurdish, one Sunni Arab, and one Shiite Arab.⁴⁷ This option is widely opposed by a broad range of Iraqi parties as likely to produce substantial violence as Iraq’s major communities separate physically, and that the resulting three countries would be unstable and too small to survive without domination by Iraq’s neighbors. Others view this as a U.S. attempt not only to usurp Iraq’s sovereignty but to divide the Arab world and thereby enhance U.S. regional domination. Still others view any version of this idea, including the less dramatic derivations discussed below, as unworkable because of the high percentage of mixed Sunni-Shiite Arab families in Iraq that some say would require “dividing bedrooms.” This recommendation was rejected by the Iraq Study Group as potentially too violent.

⁴⁶ Krauthammer, Charles. “The 20 Percent Solution.” *Washington Post* op-ed, July 20, 2007.

⁴⁷ The pros and cons of some of these plans and proposals is discussed in Cordesman, Anthony. Pandora’s Box: Iraqi Federalism, Separatism, “Hard” Partitioning, and U.S. Policy. Center for Strategic and International Studies, October 9, 2007.

A derivation of the partition idea, propounded by Senator (now Vice President-elect) Joseph Biden and Council on Foreign Relations expert Leslie Gelb (May 1, 2006, *New York Times* op-ed), as well as others, is forming — or allowing Iraqis to form—three autonomous regions, dominated by each of the major communities. A former U.S. Ambassador and adviser to the Kurds, Peter Galbraith, as well as others,⁴⁸ advocates this option, which some refer to as a “soft partition,” but which supporters of the plan say is implementation of the federalism already enshrined in Iraq’s constitution. According to this view, decentralizing Iraq into autonomous zones would ensure that Iraq’s territorial integrity is preserved while ensuring that these communities do not enter all-out civil war with each other. Others say that decentralization is already de-facto U.S. policy as exhibited by the increasing transfer of authority to Sunni tribes in the Sunni areas and the relative lack of U.S. troops in the Shiite south.

Proponents of the idea say that options such as this were successful in other cases, particularly in the Balkans, in alleviating sectarian conflict. Proponents add that the idea is a means of bypassing the logjam and inability to reconcile that characterizes national politics in Iraq. Some believe that, to alleviate Iraqi concerns about equitable distribution of oil revenues, an international organization should be tapped to distribute Iraq’s oil revenues.

Opponents of the idea say it was proposed for expediency—to allow the United States to withdraw from Iraq without establishing a unified and strong central government that can defend itself. Still others say the idea does not take sufficient account of Iraq’s sense of Iraq national identity, which, despite all difficulties, is still expressed to a wide range of observers and visitors. Others maintain that any soft partition of Iraq would inevitably evolve into drives by the major communities for outright independence. Observers in the Balkans say that the international community had initially planned to preserve a central government of what was Yugoslavia, but that this became untenable and Yugoslavia was broken up into several countries.⁴⁹ Others say, drawing some support from recent events between Turkey and the Iraqi Kurds, that the autonomous regions of a decentralized Iraq would inevitably fall under the sway of Iraq’s neighbors. Still others say that, no matter how the concept is implemented, there will be substantial bloodshed as populations move into areas where their sect or group predominates.

The federalism, or decentralization, plan gained strength with the passage of on September 26, 2007, of an amendment to the Senate version of H.R. 4986 (P.L. 110-181), an FY2008 defense authorization bill. The amendment passed 75-23 (to H.R. 1585, the original version that was vetoed over other issues), showing substantial bipartisan support. It is a “sense of Congress” that states that:

- The United States should actively support a political settlement, based on the “final provisions” of the Iraqi constitution (reflecting the possibility of major amendments, to the constitution, as discussed above), that creates a federal Iraq and allows for federal regions.
- A conference of Iraqis should be convened to reach a comprehensive political settlement based on the federalism law approved by the COR in October 2006.

⁴⁸ Joseph, Edward and Michael O’Hanlon. “The Case for Soft Partition.” *USA Today*, October 3, 2007.

⁴⁹ CRS conversations in Croatia, October 2007.

- The amendment does not specify how many regions should be formed or that regions would correspond to geographic areas controlled by major Iraqi ethnicities or sects.

Subsequently, with the exception of the Kurds and some other Iraqi Arab officials, many of the main blocs in Iraq, jointly and separately, came out in opposition to the amendment on some of the grounds discussed above, although many of the Iraqi statements appeared to refer to the amendment as a “partition” plan, an interpretation that proponents of the amendment say is inaccurate. A U.S. Embassy Iraq statement on the amendment also appeared to mischaracterize the legislation, saying “As we have said in the past, attempts to partition or divide Iraq by intimidation, force, or other means into three separate states would produce extraordinary suffering and bloodshed. The United States has made clear our strong opposition to such attempts.” Some Iraqis criticized the visit of Vice President Biden during July 3-5, 2009 for his former support for the federalism concept, although U.S. officials publicly responded by saying the idea of segregating Iraq into three autonomous regions is not U.S. policy.

“Coup” or “Strongman” Option

Another option that received substantial discussion in 2007, a time of significant U.S. criticism of Maliki’s failure to achieve reconciliation, is for the United States to oust Maliki, either through force or by influencing the COR to vote no confidence in his government. Some believe Maliki should be replaced by a military strongman, or by someone more inclined to reach compromise with the restive Sunni Arabs. This option could imply that the United States might express support for those parliamentary blocs opposed to Maliki. Some say former Prime Minister Allawi still is trying to position himself as an alternative figure, claiming that his term in office was characterized by non-sectarianism and rule of law.

Possibly in part because Maliki has emerged as a stronger leader than initially observed, experts in the United States see no concrete signs that such an option might be under consideration by President Obama. Using U.S. influence to force out Maliki would, in the view of many, conflict with the U.S. goal of promoting democracy and rule of law in Iraq. Others say the planned U.S. draw-down has reduced U.S. influence to the point where the United States could not implement this option, even if such a decision were made to do so.

Economic Measures

Some believe that the key to permanently calming Iraq is to accelerate economic reconstruction. Accelerated reconstruction could, in this view, drain support for insurgents by creating employment, improving public services, and creating confidence in the government. This idea was incorporated into the President’s January 10, 2007, initiative. Others doubt that economic improvement alone would produce major political results because the differences among Iraq’s major communities are fundamental and resistant to economic solutions.

Another idea has been to set up an Iraqi fund, or trust, that would ensure that all Iraqis share equitably in Iraq’s oil wealth. In an op-ed in the *Wall Street Journal* (December 18, 2006) then Senator Hillary Clinton and Senator John Ensign supported the idea of an “Iraq Oil Trust” modeled on the Alaska Permanent Fund. The two put this idea forward in legislation on September 11, 2008, (S. 3470).

Many Members believe that Iraq, now relatively flush with revenues and unspent assets, should begin assuming more of the financial burden for Iraq and that the United States should sharply cut back reconstruction funding for Iraq. Some Members advocate that any or all U.S. reconstruction funding for Iraq be provided as loan, not grant. A similar provision to make about half of the \$18 billion in U.S. reconstruction funds in the FY2004 supplemental (P.L. 108-106), discussed above, was narrowly defeated (October 16, 2003, amendment defeated 226-200). A provision of the FY2009 defense authorization (P.L. 110-417) calls for U.S.-Iraq negotiations for Iraq to defray some U.S. combat costs, a provision to which the Administration took exception in its signing statement on the bill. The Administration argues that Iraq is already assuming more of the burden, and, as discussed above, U.S. assistance to Iraq has dropped sharply since FY2007.

Table 7. Major Factions in Iraq

Major Shiite and Kurdish Factions	
Iraq National Accord (INA)/Iyad al-Allawi	The INA is a secular bloc (Iraqis List) now in parliament. Allawi, about 62 years old (born 1946 in Baghdad), a former Baathist who helped Saddam silence Iraqi dissidents in Europe in the mid-1970s. Subsequently fell out with Saddam, became a neurologist, and presided over the Iraqi Student Union in Europe. Survived an alleged regime assassination attempt in London in 1978. He is a secular Shiite, but many INA members are Sunni ex-Baathists and ex-military officers. Allawi was interim Prime Minister (June 2004-April 2005). Won 40 seats in January 2005 election but only 25 in December 2005. Spends most of his time outside Iraq and reportedly trying to organize a non-sectarian parliamentary governing coalition to replace Maliki. Still boycotting the cabinet but Allawi has become more politically assertive after faring well in January 2009 provincial elections.
Iraqi National Congress (INC)/Ahmad Chalabi	Chalabi, who is about 68 years old, educated in the United States (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) as a mathematician. His father was president of the Senate in the monarchy that was overthrown in the 1958 military coup, and the family fled to Jordan. Taught math at the American University of Beirut in 1977 and, in 1978, he founded the Petra Bank in Jordan. He later ran afoul of Jordanian authorities on charges of embezzlement and he left Jordan, possibly with some help from members of Jordan's royal family, in 1989. In April 1992, was convicted in absentia of embezzling \$70 million from the bank and sentenced to 22 years in prison. One of the rotating presidents of the Iraq Governing Council (IGC). U.S.-backed Iraqi police raided INC headquarters in Baghdad on May 20, 2004, seizing documents as part of an investigation of various allegations, including provision of U.S. intelligence to Iran. Case later dropped. Since 2004, has allied with and fallen out with Shiite Islamist factions; was one of three deputy prime ministers in the 2005 transition government. No INC seats in parliament, but has chaired Higher National De-Baathification Commission prior to passage of law to reform that process and resisted de-Baathification reform efforts. Now serves as liaison between Baghdad neighborhood committees and the government in attempting to improve public services, giving him entree to senior U.S. military and diplomatic officials. However, U.S. reportedly broke contact with him again in May 2008 following reports an aide, Ali Faysal al-Lami, is assisting <i>Asa'ib al Haq</i> Shiite militia faction. Survived assassination attempt on convoy on September 6, 2008. Key figure in formation of anti-Maliki Iraqi National Alliance in August 2009.
Kurds/KDP and PUK	Together, the main factions run Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) with its own executive headed by KRG President Masud Barzani, Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani, and a 111 seat legislature (elected in January 30, 2005 national elections). PUK leader Talabani remains Iraq president, despite health problems that have required treatment outside Iraq. Barzani has tried to secure his clan's base in the Kurdish north and has distanced himself from national politics. Many Kurds are more supportive of outright Kurdish independence than are these leaders. Kurds field up to 100,000 <i>peshmerga</i> militia. PUK split in advance of July 25, 2009, KRG elections, weakening that faction. The breakaway faction won an unexpectedly high 25 seats in the Kurdistan National Assembly

	<p>(out of 111). Joint KDP/PUK slate won 75 seats in January 2005 national election but only 53 in December 2005. Strongly oppose implementing oil law draft that would place 93% of Iraq's oil fields under control of a revived Iraqi National Oil Company (INOC). Both factions intent on securing control of Kirkuk. Both factions, but particularly PUK, shaken by strong showing of dissident Change List (breakaway from PUK) in July 25 KRG elections.</p>
Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani	<p>Undisputed leading Shiite theologian in Iraq. About 87 years old, he was born in Iran and studied in Qom, Iran, before relocating to Najaf at the age of 21. No formal position in government but has used his broad Shiite popularity to become instrumental in major political questions. Helped forge UIA and brokered compromise over the selection of a Prime Minister nominee in April 2006. Criticized Israel's July 2006 offensive against Lebanese Hezbollah. However, acknowledges that his influence is waning and that calls for Shiite restraint are unheeded as Shiites look to militias, such as Sadr's, for defense in sectarian warfare. Does not meet with U.S. officials but does meet with U.N. Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI). Has network of agents (<i>wakils</i>) throughout Iraq and among Shiites outside Iraq. Treated for heart trouble in Britain in August 2004 and reportedly has reduced his schedule in early 2008. Advocates traditional Islamic practices such as modest dress for women, abstention from alcohol, and curbs on Western music and entertainment. Advocates open list voting in January 2010 elections.</p>
Supreme Islamic Council of (ISCI)	<p>Best-organized and most pro-Iranian Shiite Islamist party and generally allied with Da'wa Party in UIA. It was established in 1982 by Tehran to centralize Shiite Islamist movements in Iraq. First leader, Mohammad Baqr Al Hakim, killed by bomb in Najaf in August 2003. Subsequent leader was younger brother, Abd al-Aziz al-Hakim, a lower ranking Shiite cleric and a member of parliament (UIA slate), but who held no government position. Hakim lost battle to lung cancer on August 26, 2009, and was succeeded by son Ammar. A top ISCI figure, Bayan Jabr, is now Finance Minister, and another, Adel Abd al-Mahdi, is a deputy president. Hummam al-Hammoudi chairs the constitution review commission. ISCI controls "Badr Brigades" militia. ISCI has 29 members in parliament. Supports formation of Shiite "region" composed of nine southern provinces and dominates provincial councils on seven of those provinces. Supports draft oil law to develop the oil sector, and broad defense pact with the United States. Did unexpectedly poorly in the provincial elections but is core of Iraqi National Alliance competing in 2010 elections.</p>
Da'wa (Islamic Call) Party	<p>Oldest organized Shiite Islamist party (founded 1957), active against Saddam Hussein in early 1980s. Its founder, Mohammad Baqr al-Sadr, uncle of Moqtada Al Sadr, was ally of Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini and was hung by Saddam regime in 1980. Da'wa members tend to follow senior Lebanese Shiite cleric Mohammad Hossein Fadlallah rather than Iranian clerics, and Da'wa is not as close to Tehran as is ISCI. Has no organized militia and a lower proportion of clerics than does ISCI. Within UIA, its two factions (one loyal to Maliki and one loyal to another figure, parliamentarian Abd al-Karim al-Anizi, control 25 seats in parliament. Da'wa generally supports draft oil law and defense pact with U.S. Previous leader Ibrahim al-Jafari left the party in June 2008 and formed his own movement. The Kuwaiti branch of the Da'wa allegedly committed a May 1985 attempted assassination of the Amir of Kuwait and the December 1983 attacks on the U.S. and French embassies in Kuwait. (It was reported in February 2007 that a UIA/Da'wa parliamentarian, Jamal al-Ibrahimi, was convicted by Kuwait for the 1983 attacks.) Lebanese Hezbollah, founded by Lebanese Da'wa activists, attempted to link release of the Americans they held hostage in Lebanon in the 1980s to the release of 17 Da'wa prisoners held by Kuwait for those attacks in the 1980s. Major victor in January 2009 provincial elections and could still prevail in January 2010 elections.</p>
Moqtada Al-Sadr Faction	<p>See text box above.</p>
Fadilah Party	<p>Loyal to Ayatollah Mohammad Yacoubi, who was a leader of the Sadr movement after the death of Moqtada's father in 1999 but was later removed by Moqtada and subsequently broke with the Sadr faction. <i>Fadilah</i> (Virtue) won 15 seats parliament as part of the UIA but publicly left that bloc on March 6, 2007 to protest lack of a Fadilah cabinet seat. Holds seats on several provincial councils in the Shiite provinces and dominates Basra provincial council, whose governor, Mohammad Waeli, is a party member. Also controls protection</p>

	<p>force for oil installations in Basra, and is popular among oil workers and unions in Basra. Opposes draft oil law as too favorable to foreign firms. Considers itself opposed to Iranian influence in Iraq and wants a small (one to three provinces) Shiite region in the south. Instrumental in Basra petition to form a province. Lost badly in provincial elections, including loss of control of Basra provincial council. Part of new Iraq National Alliance coalition.</p>
Hezbollah Iraq	<p>Headed by ex-guerrilla leader Abdul Karim Muhammadawi, who was on the IGC and now in parliament. Party's power base is southern marsh areas around Amara (Maysan Province), north of Basra. Has some militiamen. Supports a less formal version of Shiite region in the south than does ISCI. Won chair of provincial council in Maysan following January 31, 2009, elections.</p>
Tharallah	<p>Led by Sayyid Yusuf al-Musawi. Small Shiite faction in southern Iraq formed from former marsh guerrillas against Saddam. Purportedly pro-Iranian.</p>
Islamic Amal	<p>A relatively small faction, Islamic Amal (Action) Organization is headed by Ayatollah Mohammed Taqi Modarassi, a moderate cleric. Power base is in Karbala, and it conducted attacks there against Saddam regime in the 1980s. Modarassi's brother, Abd al-Hadi, headed the Islamic Front for the Liberation of Bahrain, which stirred Shiite unrest against Bahrain's regime in the 1980s and 1990s. One member in the cabinet (Minister of Civil Society Affairs).</p>
Ayatollah Hassani Faction	<p>Another Karbala-based faction, loyal to Ayatollah Mahmoud al-Hassani, who also was a Sadrist leader later removed by Moqtada. His armed followers clashed with local Iraqi security forces in Karbala in mid-August 2006.</p>

Major Sunni Factions

Iraqi Accord Front (Tariq al-Hashimi and Adnan al-Dulaymi)	<p>Often referred to by Arabic name "Tawafuq," the Accord Front is led by Iraqi Islamic Party (IIP), headed by Tariq al-Hashimi, now a deputy president. Former COR Speaker Mahmoud Mashadani, a hardliner, is a senior member; in July 2006, he called the U.S. invasion "the work of butchers." IIP withdrew from the January 2005 election but led the "Accord Front" coalition in December 2005 elections, winning 44 seats in COR. Front critical but accepting of U.S. presence. Front opposed draft oil law as sellout to foreign companies and distrusts Shiite pledges to equitably share oil revenues. Pulled five cabinet ministers out of government on August 1, 2007 but Hashimi stayed deputy president. Front later rejoined the cabinet. Grudgingly supported Security Agreement with U.S. but demanded side pledges on governmental treatment of Sunnis. Front included Iraqi General People's Council of the hardline Adnan al-Dulaymi, and the National Dialogue Council (Mashhadani's party), but these parties competed separately, sometimes allied with other factions, in January 2009 provincial elections. Dulaymi widely accused by Shiite leaders of hiding weapons for Sunni insurgents, using properties owned by his son.</p>
Iraqi Front for National Dialogue	<p>Head is Saleh al-Mutlak, an ex-Baathist, was chief negotiator for Sunnis on the new constitution, but was dissatisfied with the outcome and now advocates major revisions. Bloc holds 11 seats, generally aligned with Accord front. Opposes draft oil law on same grounds as Accord front. Competing separately from Accord, fared well in provincial elections, particularly Salah ad-Din province, home province of Saddam.</p>
Muslim Scholars Association (MSA)	<p>Hardline Sunni Islamist group led by clerics Harith al-Dhari and Abd al-Salam al-Qubaysi, has boycotted all post-Saddam elections. Believed to have ties to/influence over insurgent factions. Wants timetable for U.S. withdrawal from Iraq. Iraqi government issued a warrant for Dhari's arrest in November 2006 for suspected ties to the Sunni insurgency, causing Dhari to remain outside Iraq (in Jordan). Headquarters raided at behest of pro-government Sunni Endowment organization in November 2007. Opposes draft oil law and U.S. defense pact. No MSA list in the provincial elections.</p>
Sunni Tribes/ "Awakening Movement"/ "Sons of Iraq"	<p>Not an organized faction per se, but begun in Anbar by about 20 tribes, the National Salvation Council formed by Shaykh Abd al-Sattar al-Rishawi (assassinated on September 13) credited by U.S. commanders as a source of anti-Al Qaeda support that is helping calm Anbar Province. Some large tribal confederations include Dulaym (Ramadi-based), Jabbari (mixed Sunni-Shiite tribe), Zobi (near Abu Ghraib), and Shammar (Salahuddin and Diyala regions). Trend has spread to include former Sunni insurgents now serving as local</p>

	anti-Al Qaeda protection forces in Baghdad, parts of Diyala province, Salahuddin province, and elsewhere. Generally supportive of Security Agreement with U.S. Did not do as well as expected in provincial elections, although this movement placed first in Anbar. Some tribes allied with Maliki for 2010 national elections.
Iraqi Insurgents	Numerous factions and no unified leadership. Some groups led by ex-Saddam regime leaders, others by Islamic extremists. Major Iraqi factions include Islamic Army of Iraq, New Baath Party, Muhammad's Army, and the 1920 Revolution Brigades.
Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQ-I) / Foreign Fighters	AQ-I was led by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, a Jordanian national, until his death in U.S. airstrike June 7, 2006. Succeeded by Abu Hamza al-Muhajir (Abu Ayyub al-Masri), an Egyptian. Now mostly an Iraqi organization under the banner of the "Islamic State of Iraq."

Table 8. Iraq's Government

Position	Name	Ethnicity/Bloc/Party Status
President	Jalal Talabani	Kurd/PUK
Deputy President	Tariq al-Hashimi	Sunni/Accord front
Deputy President	Adel Abd-al-Mahdi	Shiite/UIA/ISCI
Prime Minister	Nuri Kamal al-Maliki	Shiite/UIA/Da'wa
Deputy P.M.	Barham Salih	Kurdistan Alliance/PUK
Deputy P.M.	Rafi al-Issawi	Sunni/Accord front
Min. Agriculture	Ali al-Bahadili	independent Shiite named in October 2007, replaced resigned Sadrist
Min. Communications	Faruq Abd al-Rahman	Accord Front
Min. Culture	Mahir al-Hadithi	Accord Front
Min. Defense	Abdul Qadir al-Ubaydi	Sunni independent
Min. Displacement and Migration	Abd al-Samad Sultan	Shiite Kurd/UIA
Min. Electricity	Karim Wahid	Shiite/UIA/independent
Min. Education	Khudayir al-Khuzai	Shiite/UIA/Da'wa (Anizi faction)
Min Environment	Mrs. Narmin Uthman	Kurdistan Alliance/PUK
Min. Finance	Bayan Jabr	Shiite/UIA/ISCI
Min. Foreign Affairs	Hoshyar Zebari	Kurdistan Alliance/KDP
Min. Health	Saleh al-Hasnawi	Independent Shiite named October 2007; was held by UIA/Sadr bloc.
Min. Higher Education	Dr. Abd Dhiyab al-Ujayli	Accord Front/IIP
Min. Human Rights	Mrs. Wijdan Mikhail	Christian/Allawi bloc/boycotting
Min. Industry and Minerals	Fawzi al-Hariri	Christian Kurd/Kurdistan Alliance/KDP
Min. Interior	Jawad al-Bulani	Shiite independent
Min. Justice	Dar Nur al-Din	Kurdistan Alliance. Confirmed by COR on Feb. 19, 2009. Lawyer, judge by training.
Min. Housing and Construction	Mrs. Bayan Daza'i	Kurdistan Alliance/KDP
Min. Labor and Social Affairs	Mahmud al-Radi	Shiite/UIA/Independent

Position	Name	Ethnicity/Bloc/Party Status
Min. Oil	Husayn al-Shahristani	Shiite/UIA/Independent/close to Ayatollah Sistani
Min. Planning	Ali Baban	Sunni/formerly Accord Front/IIP
Min. Trade	Vacant. Abd al-Falah al-Sudani resigned, arrested May 2009	Shiite/UIA/Da'wa (Anizi faction)
Min. Science and Technology	Ra'id Jahid	Sunni/Allawi bloc/Communist/boycotting
Min. Municipalities and Public Works	Riyad Ghurayyib	Shiite/UIA/ISCI (Badr)
Min. Transportation	Amir Isma'il	Shiite independent
Min. Water Resources	Latif Rashid	Kurdistan Alliance/PUK
Min. Youth and Sports	Jasim al-Jafar	Shiite Turkomen/UIA
Min. State for Civil Society	Mrs. Wijdan Mikhail	Christian/Allawi bloc/boycotting
Min. State National Dialogue Affairs	Akram al-Hakim	Shiite/UIA/ISCI (Hakim family)
Min. State National Security	Shirwan al-Waili	Shiite/UIA/Da'wa
Min. State Foreign Affairs	Dr. Muhammad al-Dulaymi	Accord Front
Min. State Provincial Affairs	Khalud al-Majun	female, independent
Min. State Tourism and Antiquities	Qahtan al-Jibburi	Shiite independent
Min. State for Women's Affairs	Dr. Nawal al-Samarr	Accord Front, female
Min. State for COR Affairs	Safa al-Safi	Shiite/UIA/independent

Table 9. U.S. Aid (ESF) to Iraq's Saddam-Era Opposition

(Amounts in millions of U.S. \$)

	INC	War crimes	Broadcasting	Unspecified opposition activities	Total
FY1998 (P.L. 105-174)	—	2.0	5.0 (RFE/RL for "Radio Free Iraq")	3.0	10.0
FY1999 (P.L. 105-277)	3.0	3.0	—	2.0	8.0
FY2000 (P.L. 106-113)	—	2.0	—	8.0	10.0
FY2001 (P.L. 106-429)	12.0 (aid in Iraq)	2.0	6.0 (INC radio)	5.0	25.0
FY2002 (P.L. 107-115)	—	—	—	25.0	25.0
FY2003 (no earmark)	3.1	—	—	6.9	10.0
Total, FY1998-FY2003	18.1	9.0	11.0	49.9 (about 14.5 million of this went to INC)	88.0
FY2004 (request)	—	—	—	0	0

Notes: According to the U.S. Government Accountability Office (April 2004), the INC's Iraqi National Congress Support Foundation (INCSF) received \$32.65 million in U.S. Economic Support Funds (ESF) in five agreements with the State Department during 2000-2003. Most of the funds—separate from drawdowns of U.S. military equipment and training under the "Iraq Liberation Act"—were for the INC to run its offices in Washington, London, Tehran, Damascus, Prague, and Cairo, and to operate its *Al Mutamar* (the "Conference") newspaper and its "Liberty TV," which began in August 2001, from London. The station was funded by FY2001 ESF, with start-up costs of \$1 million and an estimated additional \$2.7 million per year in operating costs. Liberty TV was sporadic due to funding disruptions resulting from the INC's refusal to accept some State Department decisions on how U.S. funds were to be used. In August 2002, the State Department and Defense Department agreed that the Defense Department would take over funding (\$335,000 per month) for the INC's "Information Collection Program" to collect intelligence on Iraq; the State Department wanted to end its funding of that program because of questions about the INC's credibility and the propriety of its use of U.S. funds. The INC continued to receive these funds even after Saddam Hussein was overthrown, but was halted after the June 2004 return of sovereignty to Iraq. The figures above do not include covert aid provided—the amounts are not known from open sources. Much of the "war crimes" funding was used to translate and publicize documents retrieved from northern Iraq on Iraqi human rights; the translations were placed on 176 CD-Rom disks. During FY2001 and FY2002, the Administration donated \$4 million to a "U.N. War Crimes Commission" fund, to be used if a war crimes tribunal is formed. Those funds were drawn from U.S. contributions to U.N. programs. See General Accounting Office Report GAO-04-559, *State Department: Issues Affecting Funding of Iraqi National Congress Support Foundation*, April 2004.

Figure I. Map of Iraq



Source: Map Resources. Adapted by CRS.

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