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Iraq: Post-Saddam Governance and Security

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Summary

Operation Iraqi Freedom succeeded in overthrowing Saddam Hussein, but Iraq remains unstable because of Sunni Arab resentment and a related insurgency, compounded by burgeoning Sunni-Shiite violence. According to its November 30, 2005, “Strategy for Victory,” the Bush Administration indicates that U.S. forces will remain in Iraq until the country is able to provide for its own security. President Bush has said he believes that, over the longer term, Iraq will become a model for reform throughout the Middle East and a partner in the global war on terrorism. However, mounting U.S. casualties and financial costs — without clear signs of security progress — have intensified a debate within the United States over the wisdom of the invasion and whether to wind down U.S. involvement without completely accomplishing U.S. goals.

President Bush, particularly after a visit to Baghdad on June 13, 2006, has asserted that U.S. policy in Iraq is showing important successes, demonstrated by two elections (January and December 2005) that chose an interim and then a full-term parliament and government, a referendum that adopted a permanent constitution (October 15, 2005), progress in building Iraq’s security forces, and economic growth. While continuing to build, equip, and train Iraqi security units, the Administration has been working to include more Sunni Arabs in the power structure, particularly the security institutions; Sunnis were dominant during the regime of Saddam Hussein but now feel marginalized by the newly dominant Shiite Arabs and Kurds. The Administration believes that it has largely healed a rift with some European countries over the decision to invade Iraq, and it points to NATO and other nations’ contributions of training for Iraqi security forces and government personnel.

Administration critics, including some in Congress, believe the U.S. mission in Iraq is failing and that major new policy initiatives are required. Some believe that U.S. counter-insurgent operations are hampered by an insufficient U.S. troop levels. Others maintain that sectarian violence is placing U.S. forces in the middle of an all out civil war in Iraq and that the United States is incurring casualties without concrete results. Others believe that a U.S. move to withdraw might undercut popular support for the insurgency and force compromise among Iraq’s factions. Still others maintain that the U.S. approach should focus not on counter-insurgent combat but on reconstruction and policing of towns and cities cleared of insurgents, a plan the Administration says it is now moving toward under an approach termed “clear, hold, and build.”

This report will be updated as warranted by major developments. See also CRS Report RS21968, *Iraq: Elections, Government, and Constitution*, by Kenneth Katzman; CRS Report RL31833, *Iraq: Recent Developments in Reconstruction Assistance*, by Curt Tarnoff; CRS Report RL31701, *Iraq: U.S. Military Operations*, by Steve Bowman; and CRS Report RL32105, *Post-War Iraq: Foreign Contributions to Training, Peacekeeping, and Reconstruction*, by Jeremy Sharp and Christopher Blanchard.

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Iraq: Post-Saddam Governance and Security

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).¹ Iraq had been a province of the Ottoman empire until British forces defeated the Ottomans in World War I and took control of what is now Iraq in 1918. Britain had tried to take Iraq from the Ottomans in Iraq 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, who was only four years old.

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 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 Baathist 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, who ruled until the Baath Party coup of July 1968. Following the Baath seizure, Bakr returned to government as President of Iraq and Saddam Hussein, a civilian, became the second most powerful leader as 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

¹ See Eisenstadt, Michael, and Eric Mathewson, eds, *U.S. Policy in Post-Saddam Iraq: Lessons from the British Experience*. Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2003. Members of the Hashemite family rule neighboring Jordan.

Saddam's urging, and Saddam became President of Iraq. Under Saddam Hussein, secular Shiites held high party positions, but Sunnis, mostly from Saddam's home town of Tikrit, dominated the highest party and security 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.

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 militarily overthrow Saddam Hussein in the 1991 war because the United Nations had approved only the liberation of Kuwait, because the Arab states in the coalition opposed an advance to Baghdad, and because the Administration feared becoming bogged down in a high-casualty occupation.² 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 rebels. Many Iraqi Shiites blamed the United States for not intervening to prevent suppression of the uprisings. 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.

About two months after the failure of these uprisings, President George H.W. Bush reportedly sent Congress an intelligence finding that the United States would try to promote a military coup against Saddam Hussein. The Administration apparently believed that a coup from within the regime could produce a favorable government without fragmenting Iraq. After a reported July 1992 coup failed, there was a U.S. decision to shift to supporting the Kurdish, Shiite, and other oppositionists that were coalescing into a broad movement.³

Support for Iraq's opposition was one facet of broader U.S. policy to pressure Saddam Hussein. The main elements of U.S. containment policy during the 1990s consisted of U.N. Security Council-authorized weapons inspections, an international economic embargo, and U.S.-led enforcement of "no fly zones" over northern and southern Iraq. The implementation of these policies is discussed in CRS Report RL32379, *Iraq: Former Regime Weapons Programs, Human Rights Violations, and U.S. Policy*, by Kenneth Katzman.

² Bush, George H.W., and Brent Scowcroft. *A World Transformed*. Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. 1998.

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

Major Anti-Saddam Factions

Although U.S. policy after the 1991 war emphasized containment, the United States built ties to and progressively increased support for several of the secular and religious opposition factions discussed below. Some of these factions have provided major figures in post-Saddam politics, while also fielding militias that are allegedly conducting acts of sectarian reprisals in post-Saddam Iraq.

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 have authoritarian leaderships. The INC’s Executive Committee selected Ahmad Chalabi, a secular Shiite Muslim from a prominent banking family, to run the INC on a daily basis. Chalabi, who is about 66 years old, was educated in the United States (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) as a mathematician. As an Iraqi governance structure was established, Chalabi was one of the rotating presidents of the Iraq Governing Council (IGC). Since 2004, Chalabi has allied with and then fallen out with Shiite Islamist factions; he was one of three deputy prime ministers in the 2005 transition government, with a focus on economic issues. Chalabi temporarily served as Oil Minister in December 2005, and he reportedly continues to play a role in oil decisions. (A table on U.S. appropriations for the Iraqi opposition, including the INC, is an appendix).⁴

Another secular group, the Iraq National Accord (INA), was 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).⁵ It is led by Dr. Iyad al-Allawi, a Baathist who purportedly helped Saddam Hussein silence Iraqi dissidents in Europe in the mid-1970s.⁶ Allawi, who is about 60 years old (born 1946 in Baghdad), fell out with Saddam in the mid-1970s, became a neurologist and presided over the Iraqi Student Union in Europe. He survived an alleged Saddam regime assassination attempt in London in 1978. He is a secular Shiite Muslim, but many INA members are Sunnis.

⁴ Chalabi’s father was president of the Senate in the monarchy that was overthrown in the 1958 military coup, and the family fled to Jordan. He 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, he was convicted in absentia of embezzling \$70 million from the bank and sentenced to 22 years in prison. The Jordanian government subsequently repaid depositors a total of \$400 million. In a fallout with his former U.S. backers, 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. The case was later dropped.

⁵ Brinkley, Joel. “Ex-CIA Aides Say Iraq Leader Helped Agency in 90’s Attacks,” *New York Times*, June 9, 2004.

⁶ Hersh, Seymour. “Annals of National Security: Plan B,” *The New Yorker*, June 28, 2004.

The INA enjoyed Clinton Administration support in 1996 after squabbling among other opposition groups reduced their viability.⁷ However, the INA proved penetrated by Iraq's intelligence services, which 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 KDP, to help it capture Irbil from the PUK. The incursion enabled Baghdad to also rout remaining INC and INA operatives in the north. Allawi has emerged as a significant figure in post-Saddam politics, as discussed below, including serving as interim Prime Minister (2004-2005).

The Kurds.⁸ The Kurds, who are mostly Sunni Muslims but are not Arabs, are probably the most pro-U.S. of all major groups. They have a historic fear of persecution by the Arab majority and want to, at the very least, preserve the autonomy of the post-1991 Gulf war period. Many younger Kurds want to go beyond autonomy to outright independence. The Kurds, both through legal procedures as well as population movements, are trying to secure the city of Kirkuk, which the Kurds covet as a source of oil. The Kurds achieved insertion of language in the permanent constitution requiring a vote by December 2007 on whether Kirkuk might formally join the Kurdish administered region. For now, both major Kurdish factions are participating in Iraqi politics, the PUK more so than the KDP. PUK leader Talabani was IGC president in November 2003, and the KDP's Barzani led it in April 2004. Talabani has been Iraq's president since March 2005. On June 12, 2005, the 111-seat Kurdish regional assembly (also elected on January 30, 2005) named Barzani "president of Kurdistan."

Shiite Islamists: Ayatollah Sistani, SCIRI, Da'wa Party, and Sadr. Shiite Islamist organizations have emerged as the strongest factions in post-Saddam politics; Shiites constitute about 60% of the population but were under-represented in all pre-2003 governments. Several Shiite factions cooperated with the U.S. regime change efforts of the 1990s, but others had no contact with the United States. The undisputed Shiite religious leader, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, maintained a low profile during Saddam Hussein's regime and was not involved in U.S.-backed regime change efforts during the 1990s. As the "*marja-e-taqlid*" (source of emulation) and, since 1992, as the most senior of the four Shiite clerics that lead the Najaf-based "*Hawza al-Ilmiyah*" (a grouping of seminaries), he is a major political force in post-Saddam politics.⁹ He has a network of agents (*wakils*) throughout Iraq and in countries where there are large Shiite communities.

Sistani, about 84 years old, was born in Iran and studied in Qom, Iran, before relocating to Najaf at the age of 21. His mentor, the former head of the *Hawza*, was Ayatollah Abol Qasem Musavi-Khoi. Like Khoi, Sistani generally opposes a direct

⁷ 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.

⁸ For an extended discussion, see CRS Report RS22079, *The Kurds in Post-Saddam Iraq*, by Kenneth Katzman and Alfred B. Prados.

⁹ 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.

role for clerics in government, but he believes in clerical supervision of political leaders. He wants Iraq to maintain its Islamic culture and not become Westernized, favoring modest dress for women and curbs on sales of alcohol and Western music and entertainment.¹⁰ He suffers from heart problems that required treatment in the United Kingdom in August 2004.

Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI). Within the UIA, SCIRI shares power with the Da'wa (Islamic Call) Party and other factions. SCIRI founders were in exile in Iran after a major crackdown in 1980 by Saddam, who accused pro-Khomeini Iraqi Shiite Islamists of trying to overthrow him. During Khomeini's exile in Najaf (1964-1978), he was hosted by Grand Ayatollah Muhsin al-Hakim, father of the Hakim brothers that founded SCIRI. The Ayatollah was then head of the *Hawza*. SCIRI leaders say they do not seek to establish an Iranian-style Islamic republic, but many SCIRI members follow Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamene'i, and SCIRI reportedly receives substantial amounts of financial and other aid from Iran. SCIRI also runs several media outlets. Although it was a member of the INC in the early 1990s, SCIRI refused to accept U.S. funds, although it did have contacts with the United States.

Abd al-Aziz al-Hakim, a lower ranking Shiite cleric, is SCIRI's leader; he served on the IGC and is a member of parliament from the UIA slate, but he has taken no government position. One of his top aides, Bayan Jabr, is now Finance Minister, and another, Adel Abd al-Mahdi, is a deputy president.

Da'wa Party/Ibrahim al-Jafari and Nuri al-Maliki. Another major Shiite Islamist party is the Da'wa (Islamic Call) Party. Da'wa supporters tend to follow senior Lebanese Shiite cleric Mohammad Hossein Fadlallah rather than Iranian clerics. Da'wa did not directly join the U.S.-led effort to overthrow Saddam Hussein during the 1990s. Its leader is Ibrahim al-Jafari, who is about 56 years old (born in 1950 in Karbala) and was Prime Minister during April 2005-April 2006. A Da'wa activist since 1966, he fled to Iran in 1980 to escape Saddam's crackdown on the Da'wa, later going to London. Opposition from Sunnis and Kurds caused him to withdraw as nominee for the new unity government and be replaced by number two Da'wa leader, Nuri Kamal al-Maliki (see text box below).

Although there is no public evidence that Jafari or Maliki were involved in any terrorist activity, 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. Lebanese Hezbollah was founded by Lebanese clerics loyal to Ayatollah Baqr Al Sadr and Khomeini, and there continue to be personal and ideological linkages between Lebanese Hezbollah and Da'wa (as well as with SCIRI). Hezbollah 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.

Moqtada al-Sadr Faction. Moqtada Al Sadr is emerging as a major figure in Iraq. He is the lone surviving son of the revered Ayatollah Mohammed Sadiq al-

¹⁰ For information on Sistani's views, see his website at [<http://www.sistani.org>].

Sadr (the Ayatollah was killed, along with his other two sons, by regime security forces in 1999 after he began agitating against Saddam). He has been viewed as a young firebrand who lacks religious and political weight. However, the established Shiite factions, as well as Iranian diplomats, are building ties to him because of his large following, particularly among poorer Shiites.

By participating fully in the December 15, 2005, elections, Sadr appeared to distance himself from his uprisings in 2003 and 2004, although tensions between Sadr's militia forces and international (particularly British) forces in Iraq are flaring again in 2006. During 2003-2004, he used Friday prayer sermons in Kufa (near Najaf) to agitate for a U.S. withdrawal, and he did not join any Iraqi governments. In the January 30, 2005, elections, Sadr started moving into the political process by permitting some of his supporters to join the UIA slate. Pro-Sadr candidates also won pluralities in several southern Iraqi provincial council elections and hold 6 seats on Basra's 41-seat provincial council.

Smaller Shiite Factions. Another Shiite grouping, called *Fadilah* (Virtue), holds about 15 seats in the 2006-2010 parliament as part of the UIA coalition. Loyal to Ayatollah Mohammad Yacoubi, it is a splinter group of Moqtada al-Sadr's faction and is perceived as somewhat anti-U.S. It also holds seats on several provincial councils in the Shiite provinces and controls the protection force (Facilities Protection Service) for the oil installations in Basra. This has made *Fadilah* a major force in that city, helping it, with Sadr's help, to try to wrest control of the provincial government there.

Other Shiite parties operating in southern Iraq include fighters who challenged Saddam Hussein's forces in the southern marsh areas, around the town of Amara, north of Basra. One goes by the name Hezbollah-Iraq and is headed by guerrilla leader Abdul Karim Muhammadawi, who was on the IGC. Hezbollah-Iraq apparently plays a major role in policing the relatively peaceful Amara (Maysan province). Another pro-Iranian grouping that wields a militia is called Thar Allah (Vengeance of God). A smaller Shiite Islamist organization, the Islamic Amal (Action) Organization, is headed by Ayatollah Mohammed Taqi Modarassi, a moderate cleric. Its power base is in Karbala, and it conducted attacks there against regime organs 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. Islamic Amal won two seats in the January 30 election and has a member in the new cabinet (Minister of Civil Society Affairs).

Clinton Administration Policy/Iraq Liberation Act

From the time of Iraq's defeat of the INC and INA in August 1996 until 1998, the Clinton Administration had little contact with opposition groups. During 1997-1998, Iraq's obstructions of U.N. weapons of mass destruction (WMD) inspections led to growing congressional calls to overthrow Saddam, beginning with an FY1998 supplemental appropriations act (P.L. 105-174). The sentiment was reflected even more strongly in the "Iraq Liberation Act" (ILA, P.L. 105-338, October 31, 1998). This law, signed by President Clinton despite doubts about opposition capabilities, was viewed as an expression of congressional support for the concept of promoting

an Iraqi insurgency with U.S. air power. The Bush Administration has cited the ILA as evidence of a bipartisan consensus that Saddam should be toppled.

Table 1. Dominant Anti-Saddam Factions/Leaders

Iraq National Accord (INA)/Iyad al-Allawi	Consists of many 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.
Kurds/KDP and PUK	Two main Kurdish factions. Talabani became president of Iraq after January 2005 and remains so. Barzani has tried to secure his clan's base in the Kurdish north. Together, field up to 100,000 <i>peshmerga</i> militia. Their joint slate won 75 seats in January election but only 53 in December.
Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani	Undisputed leading Shiite theologian in Iraq. No formal position in government but has used his broad Shiite popularity to become instrumental in major questions facing it and in U.S. decisions on Iraq. Helped forge UIA and brokered compromise over the selection of a Prime Minister nominee in April 2006. Strongly criticized Israel's July 2006 offensive against Lebanese Hezbollah.
Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI)	Best-organized and most pro-Iranian Shiite Islamist party. 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. Controls 5,000 fighter "Badr Brigades" militia. As part of United Iraqi Alliance (UIA-128 total seats in December election), it has about 30 of its members in parliament. Supports formation of large Shiite "region" composed of nine southern provinces.
Da'wa (Islamic Call) Party	Oldest organized Shiite Islamist party (founded 1957), active against Saddam Hussein in early 1980s. Founder, Mohammad Baqr al-Sadr, was ally of Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini and was hung by Saddam regime in 1980. Does not have an organized militia. Has a lower proportion of clerics than does SCIRI. Part of UIA, controls about 28 seats in parliament.
Moqtada Al-Sadr Faction	Young (about 31) relative of Ayatollah Mohammad Baqr Al Sadr and son of Ayatollah Mohammad Sadiq Al Sadr, was in Iraq during Saddam's reign. Inherited father's political base in "Sadr City," a large (2 million population) Shiite district of Baghdad. Mercurial, has both challenged and worked with U.S. personnel in Iraq. 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. Formed "Mahdi Army" militia in 2003 which now has as many as 20,000 fighters. Now part of UIA, controls 32 seats in new parliament and ministries of health, transportation, and agriculture. Opposes formation of Shiite "region" in the south.

The ILA stated that it should be the policy of the United States to “support efforts” to remove the regime headed by Saddam Hussein. In mid-November 1998, President Clinton publicly articulated that regime change was a component of U.S. policy toward Iraq. Section 8 states that the act should not be construed as authorizing the use of U.S. military force to achieve regime change. The ILA did not specifically terminate after Saddam Hussein was removed from power. Section 7 provides for post-Saddam “transition assistance” to Iraqi groups with “democratic goals.” The law also gave the President authority to provide up to \$97 million worth of defense articles and services, as well as \$2 million in broadcasting funds, to opposition groups designated by the Administration.

The signing of the ILA coincided with new crises over Iraq’s 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 made seven opposition groups eligible to receive U.S. military assistance under the ILA (P.D. 99-13): INC; INA; SCIRI; KDP; PUK; the Islamic Movement of Iraqi Kurdistan (IMIK);¹¹ and the small Movement for Constitutional Monarchy (MCM). In May 1999, the Clinton Administration provided \$5 million worth of training and “non-lethal” defense articles under the ILA. During 1999-2000, about 150 oppositionists underwent civil administration training at Hurlburt air base in Florida, including Defense Department-run civil affairs training to administer a post-Saddam government. The Hurlburt trainees were not brought into Operation Iraqi Freedom or into the Free Iraqi Forces that deployed to Iraq. However, the Clinton Administration decided that the opposition was not sufficiently capable to merit weapons or combat training.

Post-September 11, 2001: Regime Change and War

Several senior Bush Administration officials had long been strong advocates of a regime change policy toward Iraq, but the difficulty of that strategy led the and the Bush Administration initially continued its predecessor’s emphasis on containment.¹² Some accounts say that the Administration was planning, prior to September 11, to confront Iraq militarily, but President Bush has denied this. During its first year, Administration policy tried to strengthen containment of Iraq, which the Administration said was rapidly eroding, 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

¹¹ 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.

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

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

in exchange for renewed international commitment to enforce the U.N. ban on exports to Iraq of militarily-useful goods.

Policy Shift During 2001-2002

Bush Administration policy on Iraq changed to 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 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 deputy Defense Secretary 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 countries about the possibility of confronting Iraq militarily, although the leaders visited reportedly urged greater U.S. attention to the Arab-Israeli dispute and opposed war with Iraq. Some accounts, including the book *Plan of Attack* by Bob Woodward (published in April 2004), say that then Secretary of State Powell 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 reported memoranda (the "Downing Street Memo") by British intelligence officials, based on conversations with U.S. officials. That memo reportedly said that by mid-2002 the Administration had already decided to go to war against Iraq and that it sought to develop information about Iraq to support that judgment. President Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair deny this. (On December 20, 2001, the House passed H.J.Res. 75, by a vote of 392-12, calling Iraq's refusal to readmit U.N. weapons inspectors a "mounting threat" to the United States.)

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.

- *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 caches left over from the Iran-Iraq war.¹⁶ The UNMOVIC search remains technically active.¹⁷

- *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 had a direct connection to 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.¹⁸

Operation Iraqi Freedom

Although it is not certain when the Administration decided on an invasion, in mid-2002 the Administration began ordering a force to the region that, by early 2003, gave the President that option. In concert, the Administration tried to build up and broaden the Iraqi opposition and, according to the *Washington Post* (June 16, 2002), authorizing stepped up covert activities by the CIA and special operations forces to destabilize Saddam Hussein. In August 2002, the State and Defense Departments jointly invited six major opposition groups to Washington, D.C. At the same time, the Administration expanded its ties to several groups, particularly those composed of ex-military officers. The Administration also began training about 5,000 oppositionists to assist U.S. forces,¹⁹ although only about 70 completed training at an air base (Taszar) in Hungary.²⁰ They served mostly as translators during the war.

In an effort to obtain U.N. backing for confronting Iraq — support that then Secretary of State Powell reportedly argued was needed — President Bush urged the

¹⁴ The full text of the Duelfer report is available 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, Human Rights Violations, and U.S. Policy*, by Kenneth Katzman.

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

¹⁷ For information on UNMOVIC’s ongoing activities, see [<http://www.unmovic.org/>].

¹⁸ *9/11 Commission Report*, p. 66.

¹⁹ Deyoung, Karen, and Daniel Williams, “Training of Iraqi Exiles Authorized,” *Washington Post*, Oct. 19, 2002.

²⁰ Williams, Daniel. “U.S. Army to Train 1,000 Iraqi Exiles,” *Washington Post*, Dec. 18, 2002.

United Nations General Assembly (September 12, 2002) that the U.N. Security Council should enforce its 16 existing WMD-related resolutions on Iraq. The Administration subsequently agreed to give 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. In January and February 2003, UNMOVIC Director Hans Blix and International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director Mohammad al-Baradei briefed the Security Council on WMD inspections that resumed November 27, 2002. Although they were not denied access to suspect sites, they criticized Iraq for failing to actively cooperate to clear up outstanding questions, but also noted progress and said that Iraq might not have retained any WMD. The Bush Administration asserted that Iraq was not complying with Resolution 1441 because it was not pro-actively revealing information.

During this period, Congress debated the costs and risks of an invasion. It adopted H.J.Res. 114, authorizing the President to use military force against Iraq if he determines that doing so is in the national interest and would enforce U.N. Security Council resolutions. 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).

In Security Council debate, opponents of war, including France, Russia, China, and Germany, said the pre-war WMD inspections showed that Iraq could be disarmed peacefully or contained indefinitely. The United States, along with Britain, Spain, and Bulgaria, maintained that Iraq had not fundamentally decided to disarm. At a March 16, 2003, summit meeting with the leaders of Britain, Spain, and Bulgaria at the Azores, President Bush asserted that diplomatic options to disarm Iraq had failed. The following evening, 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-country²¹ “coalition of the willing” force assembled, a substantial proportion of which remained afloat or 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 and used unconventional tactics. Some post-major combat evaluation (“Cobra Two,” by Michael Gordon and Bernard Trainor, published in 2006) suggest the U.S. military should have focused more on combating the irregulars rather than bypassing them to take 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 prohibited ranges (greater than 150 km). The regime vacated Baghdad on April 9, 2003, although Saddam Hussein appeared with supporters that day in Baghdad’s largely Sunni Adhamiya district.

²¹ 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. The 49 country list can be found in the *Washington Post*, March 27, 2003, p.A19.

Post-Saddam Governance and Transition

According to the Bush Administration's November 30, 2005, "Strategy for Victory," the U.S. long-term goal is to enable Iraq to be stable, unified, and democratic, able to provide for its own security, a partner in the global war on terrorism, and a model for reform in Middle East. The political transition in post-Saddam Iraq has advanced, but insurgent violence is still widespread, and sectarian violence has increased to the point that senior U.S. officials say that it is now the pre-eminent security threat in Iraq, with "potential" for full fledged civil war.

Occupation Period, Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), and Ambassador Paul Bremer. After the fall of the regime, the United States set up an occupation structure, reportedly grounded in Administration concerns that immediate sovereignty would favor major factions and not produce democracy. The Administration earlier blocked a move by the major factions to declare a provisional government before the invasion. 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), within the Department of Defense, created by a January 20, 2003 executive order. The Administration's immediate post-war policy did not make use of an extensive State Department initiative, called the "Future of Iraq Project," that spent at least a year before the war drawing up plans for administering Iraq after the fall of Saddam. The State Department project, which cost \$5 million, had 15 working groups on major issues.²²

Garner tried to quickly establish a representative successor Iraqi regime. He and then White House envoy Zalmay Khalilzad (now Ambassador to Iraq) organized a meeting in Nassiriyah (April 15, 2003) of about 100 Iraqis of varying views and ethnicities. A subsequent meeting of over 250 notables was held in Baghdad (April 26, 2003), ending in agreement to hold a broader meeting one month later to name an interim administration. However, senior U.S. officials reportedly disliked Garner's lax approach, including tolerating Iraqis naming themselves as local leaders. In May 2003, the Administration named ambassador L. Paul Bremer to replace Garner by heading a "Coalition Provisional Authority" (CPA), which subsumed ORHA. The CPA was an occupying authority recognized by U.N. Security Council Resolution 1483 (May 22, 2003).

Bremer suspended Garner's political transition process and decided instead to appoint an Iraqi advisory body that would not have sovereignty. On July 13, 2003, he named the 25-member "Iraq Governing Council" (IGC), and in September 2003, the IGC selected a 25-member "cabinet" to run individual ministries, with roughly the same factional and ethnic balance of the IGC itself (a slight majority of Shiite Muslims). Major IGC figures included the leaders of the major anti-Saddam factions, but it was perceived in Iraq as an arm of U.S. decision-making. In the process of forming this council, some Sunni figures emerged, including Ghazi al-Yawar, a pro-Western Sunni elder (Shammar tribe). However, many Sunnis resented

²² 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 U.S. invasion and opposed the U.S.-backed Iraqi governing bodies. Adding to Sunni resentment were some of the CPA's most controversial decisions, including the decision not to recall members of the armed forces to serve in a new Iraqi security force, and to pursue "de-Baathification" — a purge from government of about 30,000 persons who held any of the four top ranks of the Baath Party. The IGC also authorized a war crimes tribunal for Saddam and his associates.

Handover of Sovereignty and Transition Roadmap

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, Ayatollah Sistani and others agitated for early Iraqi sovereignty and direct elections. In November 2003, the United States announced it would return sovereignty to Iraq by June 30, 2004, and that national elections would be held by the end of 2005.

Transitional Administrative Law (TAL). The CPA decisions were incorporated into an interim constitution, the Transitional Administrative Law (TAL), which was drafted mostly by the major anti-Saddam factions (signed on March 8, 2004).²³ It provided a roadmap for political transition, as follows:

- Elections by January 31, 2005, for a 275-seat transitional National Assembly. A permanent constitution would be drafted by August 15, 2005, and put to a national referendum by October 15, 2005. National elections for a permanent government, under the new constitution (if it passed), would be held by December 15, 2005. The new government would take office by December 31, 2005.
- Any three provinces could veto the constitution by a two-thirds majority. If that happened, a new draft was to be developed and voted on by October 15, 2006. In that case, the December 15, 2005, elections would have been for another interim National Assembly.
- The Kurds maintained their autonomous "Kurdistan Regional Government." They were given powers to contradict or alter the application of Iraqi law in their provinces, and their *peshmerga* militia were allowed to operate.
- Islam was designated "a source," but not the primary source, of law, and no law could be passed that contradicts such rights as peaceful assembly; free expression; and the right to strike and demonstrate.

Interim (Allawi) Government/Sovereignty Handover. The TAL did not directly address the formation of the interim government that would assume sovereignty. Sistani's opposition torpedoed an initial U.S. plan to select a national assembly through nationwide "caucuses." After considering other options, such as

²³ The text of the TAL can be obtained from the CPA website [<http://cpa-iraq.org/government/TAL.html>].

the holding of a traditional assembly, the United States tapped U.N. envoy Lakhdar Brahimi to select that government.²⁴ The interim government, dominated by senior faction leaders, was named on June 1, 2004 and began work immediately. The formal handover ceremony occurred on June 28, 2004, two days before the advertised June 30 date, partly to confuse insurgents. There was a ceremonial president (Ghazi al-Yawar), and Allawi was Prime Minister, with executive power, heading 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 ministries were headed by Sunni Arabs.

U.N. Backing of New Government/Coalition Military Mandate. The Administration asserts that it has consistently sought U.N. and partner country involvement in Iraq efforts. Resolution 1483 (May 6, 2003) recognized the CPA as an occupying authority, 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).²⁵ The size of UNAMI in Iraq has increased to a few hundred, headed by former Pakistani diplomat Ashraf Jahangir Qazi. In a further attempt to satisfy the requirements of several major nations for greater U.N. backing of the coalition military presence, the United States obtained agreement on Resolution 1511 (October 16, 2003), formally authorizing a “multinational force under *unified* [meaning U.S.] command.”

Resolution 1546 (June 8, 2004) took U.N. involvement a step further by endorsing the 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. It also gave UNAMI a major role in helping the interim government prepare for the two elections in 2005, and it authorized a coalition component force to protect U.N. personnel and facilities. The Resolution:

- “authorize[d]” the U.S.-led coalition to secure Iraq, a provision interpreted as giving the coalition responsibility for securing Iraq. Iraqi forces are “a principal partner” in the U.S.-led coalition, and the relationship between U.S. and Iraqi forces is spelled out in an annexed exchange of letters between the United States and Iraq. The U.S.-led coalition retained the ability to take 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.” The Security Council reviewed the mandate in advance of the June 8, 2005, deadline, and no alterations to it were made. However, on November 11, 2005, in advance of the termination of the mandate, the Security Council adopted Resolution 1637

²⁴ Chandrasekaran, Rajiv. “Envoy Urges U.N.-Chosen Iraqi Government,” *Washington Post*. Apr. 15, 2004.

²⁵ On August 12, 2004, its mandate was renewed for one year and on Aug. 11, 2005 (Resolution 1619), for another year.

extending the coalition military mandate to December 31, 2006, unless earlier requested by the Iraqi government. The Resolution also required review of the mandate on June 15, 2006. No changes were made to the mandate at that time.

- deferred the issue of the status of foreign forces (Status of Forces Agreement, SOFA) to an elected Iraqi government. No SOFA has been signed to date, and U.S. forces operate in Iraq and use its facilities under temporary memoranda of understanding. Major facilities include Balad, Tallil, and Al Asad air bases, as well as the arms depot at Taji; all are being built up with U.S. military construction funds in various appropriations. However, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld told journalists in July 2005 that U.S. military lawyers are working with the Iraqis on a SOFA or other arrangements that would cover U.S. operations in Iraq for the duration of U.S. involvement there. (The conference report on P.L. 109-234, an FY2006 supplemental appropriation, deleted provisions prohibiting the use of appropriated funds to enter into a basing rights agreement with Iraq.)
- established a 100-seat “Interim National Council” to serve as an interim parliament. The body, selected in August,²⁶ did not have legislative power but was able to veto government decisions with a two-thirds majority. The council held some televised “hearings;” it disbanded after the January 2005 elections for a parliament.

Post-Handover U.S. Structure in Iraq. The following were additional consequences of the sovereignty handover, designed in part to lower the profile of U.S. influence over post-handover Iraq.

- As of the June 28, 2004, handover, the state of occupation ceased. Subsequently, a U.S. Ambassador (John Negroponte) established U.S.-Iraq diplomatic relations for the first time since January 1991. A U.S. embassy formally opened on June 30, 2004; it is staffed with about 1,100 U.S. personnel.²⁷ Negroponte was succeeded in July 2005 by Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad, who was previously Ambassador to Afghanistan and who takes an activist approach. An FY2005 supplemental appropriations, P.L. 109-13, provided \$592 million of \$658 million requested to construct a new embassy in Baghdad and to fund embassy operations. The large new embassy complex, with 21 buildings on 104 acres, is under construction. The FY2006 supplemental appropriation (P.L. 109-234) provides \$1.327 billion for U.S. embassy operations and security.

²⁶ Tavernise, Sabrina. “In Climax To a Tumultuous 4-Day Debate, Iraq Chooses An Assembly,” *New York Times*, Aug. 19, 2004.

²⁷ See CRS Report RS21867, *U.S. Embassy in Iraq*, by Susan B. Epstein.

- Iraq gained control over its oil revenues and the Development Fund for Iraq (DFI), subject to monitoring for at least one year (until June 2005) by the U.N.-mandated International Advisory and Monitoring Board (IAMB). Iraq also was given responsibility for close-out of the “oil-for-food program.”²⁸ Resolution 1483 (May 22, 2004) ended that program as of November 21, 2003.
- Reconstruction management and advising of Iraq’s ministries were taken over by the State Department through the U.S. Embassy and a unit called the “Iraq Reconstruction and Management Office (IRMO).” IRMO, headed since June 2006 by Ambassador Joseph Saloom, has about 150 U.S. civilian personnel working out of four major centers around Iraq (satellites of the U.S. Embassy) — Hilla, Basra, Kirkuk, and Mosul, and 15-20 of them report to IRMO. (These centers, except for Basra, have now been converted to Provincial Reconstruction Teams, or PRTs, discussed further below.) A separate “Project Contracting Office (PCO),” headed by Brig. Gen. William McCoy (now under the Persian Gulf division of the Army Corps of Engineers), funds infrastructure projects such as roads, power plants, and school renovations.

Governmental and Constitution Votes in 2005

After the handover of sovereignty, the United States and Iraq began focusing on the three national votes that would be held in 2005. These votes and resulting governments are discussed in CRS Report RS21968, *Iraq: Elections, Government, and Constitution*, by Kenneth Katzman.

January 30, 2005, Elections/New Government. On January 30, 2005, elections were held for a transitional National Assembly, 18 provincial councils, and the Kurdish regional assembly. Sunnis, still resentful of the U.S. invasion, mostly boycotted, and no major Sunni slates were offered. This enabled the UIA to win a slim majority (140 of the 275 seats) and to ally with the Kurds (75 seats) to dominate the government formed subsequently. PUK leader Jalal Talabani was named president; Ibrahim al-Jafari became Prime Minister. U.S. officials said publicly this government was not sufficiently inclusive of the Sunni minority, even though it had a Sunni Arab as Assembly speaker; deputy president; deputy prime minister; Defense Minister; and five other ministers.

Permanent Constitution. Despite Sunni opposition, the constitution was approved on October 15, 2005. Sunni opponents achieved a two-thirds “no” vote in two provinces but not the three needed to defeat the constitution. The crux of Sunni opposition to it is its 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 large role in controlling revenues from any new energy discoveries. The Sunnis oppose this

²⁸ For information on that program, see CRS Report RL30472, *Iraq: Oil-for-Food Program, Illicit Trade, and Investigations*, by Kenneth Katzman and Christopher Blanchard.

concept because their region, unlike those dominated by the Kurds and the Shiites, lacks oil and they depend on the central government for revenues.

As part of their efforts to forge a unified political structure, U.S. officials hope that the constitution will be modified in 2006 to accommodate these Sunni concerns. Under a last-minute agreement before the October 15 referendum, the new permanent government is to name another constitutional commission to propose amendments to the constitution (within four months of its inauguration). The amendments require approval by an Assembly majority, and then would be put to a national referendum to be held two months later. However, some observers say that the continued schisms in Iraqi politics will delay the constitutional commission from even beginning work until September 2006. The Sunnis, perhaps realizing that they might not win concessions, are said not to be pushing to begin the amendment process.

December 15, 2005, Election. In this election, some anti-U.S. Sunnis moved further into the political arena, including those who offered a broad slate (“The Concord Front”), and another Sunni slate, the Iraqi Front for National Dialogue, headed by constitution negotiator Saleh al-Mutlak. The results were court-certified on February 10, formally beginning the formation of a government, but the convening of the “Council of Representatives” was delayed until March 16 by wrangling over the post of Prime Minister. The UIA, by a narrow internal vote on February 12, named Jafari to continue as Prime Minister. With the UIA alone well short of the two-thirds majority needed to unilaterally form a government, Jafari came under stiff opposition from Sunnis, the secular groupings, and the Kurds. In mid-April, he stepped aside, and his top Da’wa aide, Nuri al-Maliki, was nominated Prime Minister by the Council on April 22. Talabani was selected to continue as president, with two deputies Adel Abd al-Mahdi of SCIRI and Tariq al-Hashimi of the Concord Front. A Council leadership team was selected as well, with Mahmoud Mashadani as speaker.

Maliki had until May 21 to name a cabinet and achieve its confirmation. Amid U.S. and other congratulations, Maliki named and won approval of a 39-member cabinet (including deputy prime ministers) on May 20, 2006. Among his permanent selections were Kurdish official Barham Salih and Sunni Arab Salam al-Zubaie as deputy prime ministers. Four ministers (environment, human rights, housing, and women’s affairs) are women. Of the 34 permanent ministerial posts named, a total of seven are Sunnis; seven are Kurds; nineteen are Shiites; and one is Christian (minister of human rights, Ms. Wijdan Mikha’il). Ayatollah Sistani loyalist Hussein Shahrstani was named Oil Minister, even though he has no evident oil background; controversial SCIRI official Bayan Jabr moved to Finance Minister (from Interior); and KDP activist Hoshyar Zebari remained Foreign Minister. Sadr loyalists were named to the ministries of agriculture, health, and transportation.

All factions have agreed to form an over-arching council on security and economic matters, in which all factions would be represented, although the President and Prime Minister would still have the authority to override the council’s decisions. The council is not provided for in the new constitution. Maliki has also launched a “reconciliation” initiative designed to broker a resolution of sectarian differences, although without major breakthrough to date. Some of his program has floundered

over the definition of who might be eligible for an “amnesty” in exchange for ceasing anti-government activity.

Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki
<p>Born in 1950 in Karbala, has belonged to Da’wa Party since 1968. Fled Iraq in 1980 after Saddam banned the party, initially to Iran. Fled to Syria when he refused Iran’s orders that he join pro-Iranian Shiite militia groups fighting Iraq during the Iran-Iraq war. Headed Da’wa offices in Syria and Lebanon and edited Da’wa Party newspaper. Elected to National Assembly in January 2005 and chaired its “security committee.” Believed to support Kurds’ efforts to incorporate Kirkuk into the Kurdish region.</p>

Maliki did not immediately name permanent figures for the major posts of Interior, Defense, and Ministry of State for National Security because major factions could not agree on nominees. After several weeks of negotiation, on June 8, 2006 he achieved Council of Representatives confirmation of three compromise candidates. The Defense Minister is Gen. Abdul Qadir Mohammad Jasim al-Mifarji, a Sunni who had been expelled from the Iraqi military and the Baath Party for criticizing Saddam’s decision to invade Kuwait in 1990. More recently, he commanded operations of the post-Saddam Iraqi Army in western Iraq. The new Interior Minister is Jawad al-Bulani. He is a Shiite from the UIA bloc but is an engineer by training and not closely affiliated with any of the major UIA component factions. The choice for Minister for National Security was Sherwan al-Waili, a Shiite who is from a faction of the Da’wa Party. He has served in post-Saddam Iraq as head of the provincial council in the city of Nassiriyah, as well as an adviser in the national security ministry.

The elected Iraqi governments have received some diplomatic support, even though most of its neighbors, except Iran, resent the Shiite and Kurdish domination of the regime. As of July 2006, there are 46 foreign missions in Iraq, including most European and Arab countries. Jordan has appointed an ambassador and Kuwait has pledged to do so, but these and other diplomatic upgrades have been largely on hold since attacks on diplomats from Bahrain, Egypt, Algeria, and Morocco in 2005. Iran upgraded its representation to Ambassador in May 2006. At an Arab League meeting in late March 2006, Arab states pledged to increase their diplomatic representation in Iraq, and to consider other help (aid, debt relief) to bolster the Iraqi government. In June 2006, in the latest attack on diplomats, five Russian diplomats were killed by gunmen and abductors.

Although too bogged down with domestic issues to play a major role in the region, Iraqi leaders, including Maliki, have generally criticized Israel for “aggression” against Lebanon during the July 2006 Israel-Hezbollah crisis. Maliki’s expression of support for Hezbollah (which, as noted above, shares a background with his Da’wa Party) caused congressional criticism of him during his July 2006 visit to Washington DC. His outlook was shared by other major Iraqi Shiite figures including Sadr, who threatened to send Mahdi forces to help Hezbollah, and Ayatollah Sistani, who issued a pronouncement strongly criticizing Israel for attacks that have killed Lebanese civilians.

Table 2. Major Sunni Factions in Post-Saddam Iraq

Ghazi al-Yawar (Iraqis Party)	Yawar has cooperated with the U.S. since the invasion. Served as President in the Allawi government and deputy president in the post-January 2005 government, but he is not in the post-2005 permanent government.
Iraqi Concord Front (Tariq al-Hashimi and Adnan al-Dulaymi)	The Front is led by Iraqi Islamic Party (IIP), headed by Tariq al-Hashimi. IIP withdrew from the in January 2005 election but led this Sunni coalition to compete in December 2005 elections. Critical of but accepts U.S. presence. Includes Iraqi General People’s Council of Adnan al-Dulaymi and the Sunni Endowment. The Front holds 44 seats in new parliament. Hashimi named a deputy president on April 22.
Iraqi Front for National Dialogue (Saleh al-Mutlak)	Mutlak, an ex-Baathist, was chief negotiator for Sunnis on the new constitution, but was dissatisfied with the outcome and now advocates major revisions to the new constitution. Holds 11 seats in the new parliament. Parliament Speaker Mahmoud Mashadani, a hardliner, is a senior member.
Muslim Scholars Association (MSA, Harith al-Dhari and Abd al-Salam al-Qubaysi)	Hardline Sunni Islamist group, has boycotted all post-Saddam elections. Believed to have ties to and influence over insurgent factions. Wants timetable for U.S. withdrawal from Iraq.
Iraqi Insurgents	Numerous factions and no unified leadership, although an eight group “Mujahedin Shura” was formed in early 2006, led by an Iraqi (Abdullah Rashid al-Baghdadi). Some groups led by ex-Saddam regime leaders, others by Islamic extremists. Major factions include Islamic Army of Iraq, Muhammad’s Army, and the 1920 Revolution Brigades.
Foreign Fighters/ Zarqawi Faction	Estimated 3,000 in Iraq. Have been led by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, a Jordanian national, killed in a U.S. airstrike on June 7, 2006. Succeeded by Abu Hamza al-Muhajir. His faction is part of Mujahedin Shura. Advocates attacks on Iraqi Shiite civilians to spark civil war. Related foreign fighter faction, which includes some Iraqis, is Ansar al-Sunna, but this group is not in the Mujahedin Shura.

Democracy-Building and Local Governance/FY2006 Supplemental.

The United States and its coalition partners have tried to build civil society and democracy at the local level. U.S. officials say Iraqis are freer than at any time in the past 30 years, with a free press and the ability to organize politically. A State Department report to Congress in July 2006 detailed how the FY2004 supplemental appropriation (P.L. 108-106) “Iraq Relief and Reconstruction Fund” (IRRF) is being spent (“2207 Report”):

- About \$1.014 billion is allocated for “Democracy Building.”
- About \$71 million is allocated for related “Rule of Law” programs.
- About \$159 million is allocated to build and secure courts and train legal personnel.
- About \$128 million is allocated for “Investigations of Crimes Against Humanity,” primarily former regime abuses.
- \$10 million is for U.S. Institute of Peace democracy/civil society/conflict resolution activities.
- \$10 million is for the Iraqi Property Claims Commission (which is evaluating Kurdish claims to property taken from Kurds, mainly in Kirkuk, during Saddam’s regime).
- \$15 million is to promote human rights and human rights education centers.

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), some of the democracy and rule of law building activities conducted with these funds, aside from assistance for the various elections in Iraq in 2005, include the following:

- 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 laws, promote legal reform, and support the drafting of the permanent constitution.
- Activities to empower local governments, policies that are receiving increasing U.S. attention and additional funding allocations from the IRRF. These programs include (1) the “Community Action Program” (CAP) through which local reconstruction projects are voted on by village and town representatives. About 1,800 community associations have been established thus far; (2) Provincial Reconstruction Development Committees (PRDCs) to empower local governments to decide on reconstruction priorities; and (3) Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), which are local enclaves to provide secure conditions for reconstruction, as discussed further later in this paper. The conference report on an FY2006 supplemental appropriation (P.L. 109-234) designates \$50 million in ESF for Iraq to be used to keep the CAP operating. The House-passed and the Senate version of an FY2007 foreign aid appropriation, H.R. 5522, earmarks another \$50 million in ESF for the CAP.

- Programs to empower women and promote their involvement in Iraqi politics, as well as programs to promote independent media.
- Some funds have been used for easing tensions in cities that have seen substantial U.S.-led anti-insurgency combat, including Fallujah, Ramadi, Sadr City district of Baghdad, and Mosul.

In addition to what is already allocated, the FY2006 regular foreign aid appropriations (conference report on P.L. 109-102) provides \$56 million in FY2006 funds for democracy promotion. It incorporated a Senate amendment (S.Amdt. 1299, Kennedy) to that legislation providing \$28 million each to the International Republican Institute and the National Democratic Institute for democracy promotion in Iraq. The FY2006 supplemental appropriation (P.L. 109-234) provides \$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).

Economic Reconstruction and U.S. Assistance

The Administration asserts that economic reconstruction will contribute to stability, although some aspects of that effort appear to be faltering. As discussed in recent reports (most recently the one issued in July 2006) by the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction (SIGIR), the difficult security environment has slowed reconstruction. For more detailed information on U.S. spending and economic reconstruction, see CRS Report RL31833, *Iraq: Recent Developments in Reconstruction Assistance*, by Curt Tarnoff.

The primary vehicle for reconstruction funding is the IRRF. Total funds of \$20.917 billion for the IRRF came from 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). Of those funds, about \$19.1 billion has been obligated, and, of that, about \$15.16 billion has been disbursed, as of July 25, 2006. Other reconstruction funds have been appropriated (for Iraqi security forces, for example, as discussed below) but are not included in the IRRF. According to State Department weekly reports, the sector allocations for the IRRF are as follows:

- \$5.036 billion for Security and Law Enforcement;
- \$1.315 billion for Justice, Public Safety, Infrastructure, and Civil Society;
- \$1.013 billion for Democracy;
- \$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 for debt relief for Iraq);

- \$410 million for Education, Refugees, Human Rights, Democracy, and Governance (includes \$99 million for education); and
- \$213 million for USAID administrative expenses.

FY2006 Supplemental/FY2007. To continue reconstruction, the Administration requested FY2006 supplemental funds of \$1.6 billion and \$479 million for FY2007, mainly to help sustain infrastructure already built with U.S. funds. The FY2006 supplemental appropriation (P.L. 109-234) provides \$1.485 billion. The House passed FY2007 foreign aid appropriation (H.R. 5522) provides \$305.8 million in ESF for Iraq reconstruction, about \$175 million less than requested. It also provides requested funds for counter-narcotics (\$254 million) and anti-terrorism (\$18 million). The Senate version of that bill provides the total requested (\$752.785 million), but it allocates the funds as \$453.77 million in ESF; \$108 million in democracy funds (DF); \$171.6 in INCLE (international narcotics and law enforcement funds); and \$18.23 million in anti-terrorism funds (NADR, non-proliferation, anti-terrorism, demining, and related programs).

Oil Industry. The oil industry is the driver of Iraq's economy, and rebuilding this industry has received substantial U.S. attention. Before the war, it was widely asserted by Administration officials that Iraq's vast oil reserves, believed second only to those of Saudi Arabia, would fund much, if not all, 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 it has become a target of insurgents and smugglers. Insurgents have focused their attacks on pipelines in northern Iraq that feed the Iraq-Turkey oil pipeline that is loaded at Turkey's Mediterranean port of Ceyhan. (Iraq's total pipeline system is over 4,300 miles long.) The attacks, coupled with corruption, smuggling, and other deterioration, has kept production and exports below expected levels, although high world oil prices have more than compensating for the output shortfall. The northern export route has been shut since early 2006, but might now is coming back into operation at levels of about 100,000 barrels per day. The United States imports about 660,000 barrels per day of crude oil from Iraq. The Iraqi government needs to import refined gasoline because it lacks sufficient refining capacity. The alleged smuggling of oil, particularly by the Fadila party that has many members in the oil industry, has been a source of intra-Shiite rivalry and clashes in Basra, as well as depriving the central government of some revenue. Lines for gasoline often last many hours.

A related issue is long-term development of Iraq's oil industry and which foreign energy firms, if any, might receive preference for contracts to explore Iraq's vast reserves. Russia, China, and others are said to fear that the United States will seek to develop Iraq's oil industry with minimal participation of firms from other countries. Iraq's interim government has contracted for a study of the extent of Iraq's oil reserves, and it has contracted with Royal Dutch/Shell to formulate a blueprint to develop the gas sector. Poland reportedly is negotiating with Iraq for possible investments in Iraq's energy sector. In December 2005, it was reported that a Norwegian company, DNO, has contracted with the Kurdish administrative region to explore for oil near the northern city of Zakhō, raising the concerns of Iraq's Arabs who view this as a move by the Kurds to control some Iraqi oil revenues. The company says the field might eventually produce about 100,000 barrels per day.

Table 3. Selected Key Indicators

Oil						
Oil Production (weekly avg.)	Oil Production (pre-war)	Oil Exports	Oil Exports (pre-war)	Oil Revenue (2004)	Oil Revenue (2005)	Oil Revenue (2006 (to date))
2.24 million barrels per day (mbd)	2.5 mbd	1.81 mbd	2.2 mbd	\$17 billion	\$23.5 billion	\$17.6 billion
Electricity						
Pre-War Load Served (MWh)	Current Load Served	Baghdad (hrs. per day)	National Average (hrs. per day)			
102,000	120,000	7.4	11.6			
Other Economic Indicators						
GDP Growth Rate (2006 anticipated by IMF)			10.6%			
GDP	\$18.9 billion (2002)		\$33.1 billion (2005)			
New Businesses Begun Since 2003			30,000			

Note: Figures in the table are provided by the State Department "Iraq Weekly Status Report" dated July 26, 2006. 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 has lifted most U.S. sanctions on Iraq, beginning with Presidential Determinations issued under authorities provided by P.L. 108-7 (appropriations for FY2003) and P.L. 108-11 (FY2003 supplemental):

- On July 30, 2004, President Bush issued an executive order 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.) The order did not unblock Iraqi assets frozen at that time.
- 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.²⁹

- 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. The Administration is attempting to persuade other countries to forgive Iraq's debt, built up during Saddam's regime, and estimated of Saddam Hussein. The debt is estimated to total about \$116 billion, not including reparations dating to the first Persian Gulf war. In 2004, the "Paris Club" of 19 industrialized nations agreed to cancel about 80% of the \$39 billion Iraq owes them. However, with the exception of Kuwait, the Persian Gulf states that supported Iraq during the Iran-Iraq war have not to date firmly agreed to write-off Iraq's approximately \$50 billion in debt to those countries (Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, and Qatar). 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.³⁰ On December 13, 2004, the World Trade Organization (WTO) agreed to begin accession talks with Iraq.

Security Challenges, Responses, and Options

In several speeches on Iraq since late 2005, President Bush has cited successful elections and the growth of the Iraqi security forces to assert that U.S. policy will produce a stable Iraq, while acknowledging many of the unexpected security and political difficulties encountered. Congress has mandated two major periodic Administration reports on progress in stabilizing Iraq. A Defense Department quarterly report, which DOD has titled "Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq," was required by an FY2005 supplemental appropriation (P.L. 109-13). The latest version was issued in May 2006 and provides some of the information below. Another report, first issued April 6, 2006 ("1227 Report"), was required by Section 1227 of the Defense Authorization Act for FY2006 (P.L. 109-163).

The Insurgent Challenge

The Sunni Arab-led insurgency against U.S. and Iraqi forces has defied most U.S. expectations in intensity and duration. Although hesitant to assess the size of

²⁹ 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.

³⁰ For more information, see CRS Report RL33376, *Iraq's Debt Relief: Procedure and Potential Implications for International Debt Relief*, by Martin A. Weiss.

the insurgency, U.S. commanders say that insurgents probably number approximately 12,000-20,000. Some Iraqi (intelligence) officials have publicly advanced higher estimates of about 40,000 active insurgents, helped by another 150,000 persons in supporting roles. Insurgent attacks — characterized mostly by roadside bombs, mortar and other indirect fire, and direct weapons fire as well as larger suicide bombings — numbered about 100 per day during most of 2005, and DOD officials in early August 2006 put that number at about 120 attacks per day, including both insurgent and sectarian-related attacks.

As discussed in the Administration's "National Strategy for Victory in Iraq" (November 30, 2005), many of the insurgents are motivated by opposition to perceived U.S. rule in Iraq, to democracy, and to Shiite political dominance. Others want to bring the Baath Party back into power, although, according to many experts, some would settle for a larger Sunni role in governance without the Baath. Still others are pro-Al Qaeda fighters, either foreign or Iraqi, that want to defeat the United States and spread radical Islam throughout the region. The insurgent groups are believed to be loosely coordinated within cities and wider provinces. However, in early 2006, a group of insurgent factions announced the formation of a national "Mujahedin Shura (Council)" purportedly consisting mostly of Iraqi factions but including foreign fighters.

Despite their growing coordination, the insurgents have failed to derail the political transition,³¹ although they have succeeded, to some extent, in painting the Iraqi government as ineffective and stimulating a debate in the United States over the continuing U.S. commitment in Iraq. Since March 2006, insurgent groups have conducted several large-scale (50 insurgents fighters or more) attacks on police stations and other fixed positions, in at least one case overrunning a station and freeing prisoners from it. In July 2006, insurgents reportedly attempted to "take over" large sections of Baghdad but were beaten back by Iraqi and U.S. forces. Other targets include not only U.S. forces and Iraqi officials and security forces but also Iraqi civilians working for U.S. authorities, foreign contractors and aid workers, oil export and gasoline distribution facilities, and water, power, and other infrastructure facilities. Whole neighborhoods of Baghdad, including Amiriya, Jihad, Amal, and Doura, appear to be hosting insurgents, not to mention the Anbar Province city of Ramadi, for example. One recent press account quotes Iraqis as saying that the upscale and previously quiet Baghdad district of Mansour is now penetrated by insurgents. The recent trends in the violence, particularly the now frequent abductions of groups of 50-80 persons at a time in broad daylight from workplaces in Baghdad, demonstrates the ability of insurgents (and Shiite militias) to operate openly.

Some observers note increasing violence in formerly quiet northern Iraq. Bombings and other attacks in Kirkuk, contested by the Kurds, Arabs, Turkomans, and others, has increased in recent weeks. Turkish leaders have signalled that

³¹ For further information, see Baram, Amatzia. "Who Are the Insurgents?" U.S. Institute of Peace, Special Report 134, Apr. 2005; and Eisenstadt, Michael and Jeffrey White. "Assessing Iraq's Sunni Arab Insurgency." Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Policy Focus No. 50, Dec. 2005.

Turkish forces might move into northern Iraq to defeat anti-Turkish Kurdish guerrillas (PKK) that have safe-haven in Kurdish northern Iraq.

The U.N. Security Council has adopted the U.S. interpretation of the insurgency in Resolution 1618 (August 4, 2005), condemning the “terrorist attacks that have taken place in Iraq,” including attacks on Iraqi election workers, constitution drafters, and foreign diplomats in Iraq. The FY2006 supplemental (P.L. 109-234) provides \$1.3 million in Treasury Department funds to disrupt insurgent financing.

Foreign Insurgents/Zarqawi Faction.³² A numerically small but politically significant component of the insurgency is non-Iraqi. A study by the Center for Strategic and International Studies released in September 2005 said that about 3,500 foreign fighters are in Iraq. According to the study, the foreign fighters come mostly from Algeria, Syria, Yemen, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt, with Saudis constituting only about 350 of the 3,000 estimated foreign fighters. The Department of Defense said on October 20, 2005, that 312 foreign fighters had been captured in Iraq since April 2005.

A major portion of the foreign fighters were commanded by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, a 40-year-old Jordanian Arab who reputedly fought in Afghanistan during the 1980s alongside other Arab volunteers against the Soviet Union. He was killed in a June 7, 2006, U.S. airstrike and has been succeeded by the little known Abu Hamza al-Muhajir (also known as Abu Ayyub al-Masri), an Egyptian national. Zarqawi came to Iraq in late 2001, along with several hundred associates, after escaping the U.S. war effort in Afghanistan. He made his way to northern Iraq, after transiting Iran and Saddam-controlled Iraq, eventually taking refuge with a Kurdish Islamist faction called Ansar al-Islam³³ near the town of Khurmali.³⁴ After the Ansar enclave was destroyed in OIF, Zarqawi went to the Sunni Arab areas of Iraq, naming his faction the Association of Unity and Jihad. He then formally affiliated with Al Qaeda (through a reputed exchange of letters) and changed his faction’s name to “Al Qaeda Jihad in Mesopotamia.” It is named as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO), assuming that designation from the earlier Unity and Jihad title,³⁵ which was designated as an FTO in October 2004.

The foreign fighters have been a U.S. focus because of their alleged perpetration of large scale suicide and other bombings against both combatant and civilian targets. This trend began with major suicide bombings in 2003, beginning with one against

³² See CRS Report RL32217, *Iraq and Al Qaeda: Allies or Not?*, by Kenneth Katzman.

³³ Ansar al-Islam originated in 1998 as a radical splinter faction of a Kurdish Islamic group called the Islamic Movement of Iraqi Kurdistan (IMIK). Based in Halabja, the IMIK publicized the effects of Baghdad’s Mar. 1988 chemical attack on that city. Ansar is named by the State Department as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO).

³⁴ Chivers, C.J. “Repulsing Attack By Islamic Militants, Iraqi Kurds Tell of Atrocities,” *New York Times*, Dec. 6, 2002.

³⁵ An Islamist website broadcast a message in October 2004, reportedly deemed authentic by U.S. agencies, said that Zarqawi’s group had formally allied with Al Qaeda. For text, see [<http://www.state.gov/p/nea/rls/31694.htm>].

U.N. headquarters at the Canal Hotel in Baghdad (August 19, 2003),³⁶ followed by the August 29, 2003 bombing in Najaf that killed SCIRI leader Mohammad Baqr Al Hakim. The foreign fighters, and related factions, have also kidnapped a total of over 250 foreigner workers, and killed about 40 of those. In an effort to stoke Sunni — Shiite civil war in Iraq, Zarqawi's group apparently was responsible for the February 22, 2006, attack on the Askariya Shiite mosque in Samarra that has sparked significant sectarian violence. Zarqawi's successors issued a purported statement on June 13, 2006 that they would continue to emphasize attacks on Shiite civilians. In actions intended to spread their activities outside Iraq, Zarqawi's faction reputedly committed the August 19, 2005, failed rocket attack in the Jordanian port of Aqaba against two U.S. warships docked there, as well as the November 10, 2005, bombing of Western-owned hotels in Amman, Jordan.

Outside Support. Numerous accounts have said that insurgent leaders are receiving help from neighboring states to funnel money and weapons to their fighters in Iraq.³⁷ Others believe that outside support for the insurgency is not decisive. In September 2005, U.S. ambassador Khalilzad publicly accused Syria of allowing training camps in Syria for Iraqi insurgents to gather and train before going into Iraq. These reports led to U.S. warnings to and imposition of additional U.S. sanctions against Syria and to the U.S. Treasury Department's blocking of assets of some suspected financiers of the insurgency. Syria tried to deflect the criticism by moves such as the February 2005 turnover of Saddam Hussein's half-brother Sabawi to Iraqi authorities. Since January 2006, senior U.S. commanders in Iraq have said they have been receiving increased cooperation from Syria to prevent insurgent flows across those borders.

Other assessments say the insurgents, both Iraqi and non-Iraqi, receive funding from wealthy donors in neighboring countries such as Saudi Arabia,³⁸ where a number of clerics have publicly called on Saudis to support the Iraqi insurgency. Some reports say that some influential Saudis want the Saudi government to provide direct support to Sunni insurgents in Iraq as a means of protecting the Sunni minority, although the government apparently is resisting doing so on the grounds that militants might return to Saudi Arabia to commit violence.

On June 22, 2006, General Casey reiterated past assertions by Defense Secretary Rumsfeld and Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Peter Pace that the Qods (Jerusalem) Force of Iran's Revolutionary Guard is assisting armed Shiite factions in Iraq with explosives and weapons. The most likely recipient is the Shiite faction of Moqtada al-Sadr. Because of Iran's support for Shiite militias, the United States and Iran confirmed in March 2006 that they would conduct direct talks on the issue of stabilizing Iraq, and U.S. officials say such talks would not expand to include

³⁶ Among the dead in the latter bombing was the U.N. representative in Iraq, Sergio Vieira de Mello, and it prompted an evacuation of U.N. personnel from Iraq.

³⁷ Blanford, Nicholas. "Sealing Syria's Desolate Border," *Christian Science Monitor*, Dec. 21, 2004.

³⁸ Krane, Jim. "U.S. Officials: Iraq Insurgency Bigger." Associated Press report published in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. July 9, 2004; Schmitt, Eric, and Thom Shanker. "Estimates By U.S. See More Rebels With More Funds," *New York Times*, Oct. 22, 2004.

bilateral U.S.-Iran issues such as Iran's nuclear program. Iran subsequently said the talks are not needed because Iraq has a new government, and no talks have been held, to date. For more information, see CRS Report RS22323, *Iran's Influence in Iraq*, by Kenneth Katzman.

Sectarian Violence/Militias/Civil War?

The security environment in Iraq has become more complex over the past year as Sunni-Shiite sectarian violence has increased. Top U.S. officials have said recently that sectarian-motivated violence has now displaced the insurgency as the primary security challenge in Iraq. U.S. officials, both military and civilian, have said the sectarian violence risks becoming all-out civil war, but that they do not consider Iraq in a civil war now. The sectarian violence worsened after the February 22, 2006, bombing of the Askariya Shiite mosque in Samarra. The destruction of its dome set off a wave of purported Shiite militia attacks on about 60 Sunni mosques and the killing of about 400 persons in the first days after the sectarian attacks. Since then, the violence has taken the form of weapons fire abductions and bombings of locations, including mosques and markets, frequented by the rival sect. Many of those abducted turn up bound and gagged, dumped in rivers, facilities, vehicles, or fields. UNAMI said in July 2006 that this type of violence is now claiming about 100 Iraqi lives per day. Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld said in March 2006 that Iraqi forces, not U.S.-led international forces, would take the lead in trying to suppress any all-out civil war.

The sectarian violence is difficult to curb because the Sunnis are blaming the Shiites for using their preponderant presence in the emerging security forces — as well as their party-based militias — to commit atrocities against Sunnis. Sunnis report that Shiite militiamen who have joined the security forces are raiding Sunni homes or using their arrest powers to abduct Sunnis, some of whom later show up killed. Sunnis hold U.S. forces partly responsible for the violence because U.S. forces built the Iraqi security forces and have allowed the Shiite and Kurdish militias to continue to operate. The Shiites, for their part, are blaming Sunni insurgents for attacking Shiite civilians.

Officials from the International Organization of Migration (IOM) said in July 2006 that there are now as many as 180,000 internally displaced persons in Iraq (Iraqis who are fleeing their homes in mixed Baghdad neighborhoods) or provinces because of threats from one sect or the other.³⁹ To counter the Shiite-led violence, in February 2006, Sunni Arabs are forming militias, such as the *Anbar Revolutionaries*, to guard against Shiite and Kurdish sectarian attacks. Other Iraqis are setting up neighborhood watch squads and impromptu checkpoints to strangers from entering their neighborhoods.

The sectarian violence has caused U.S. officials to assert that the new government must not only better vet their new security forces but also control or dismantle the eleven independent militias identified by Iraqi officials. Although U.S.

³⁹ Knickermeier, Ellen. "Thousands of Iraqis Flee to Avoid Spread of Violence." *Washington Post*, March 29, 2006.

commanders have, to date, mostly tolerated the presence of militias, there are indications that U.S. forces are moving to curb them, with or without direct Iraqi government assistance. During July 17-24, 2006, for example, U.S. and Iraqi forces conducted 19 operations against purported sectarian “death squads.” In late 2005, U.S. forces uncovered militia-run detention facilities and arrested those running them. U.S. forces — as well as the new Interior Minister Jawad Bolani — are also moving to prevent militiamen from joining the security forces. In an effort to curb sectarian violence, the Administration announced on July 25, 2006, during the visit of Prime Minister Maliki, that about 4,000 additional U.S. troops were being assigned to Baghdad (supplementing the 9,000 U.S. forces there previously) to patrol neighborhoods and prevent insurgent and militia activities.

The three major militias are discussed below.

- *Kurdish Peshmerga.* Together, the KDP and PUK may have as many as 100,000 *peshmergas* (fighters), most of whom are operating as unofficial security organs in northern Iraqi cities. Some are integrated into the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and deploy in such cities as Mosul, Tal Affar, and Baghdad. Peshmerga units 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.
- *Badr Brigades.* The militia of SCIRI numbers about 5,000 and is led by Hadi al-Amiri (a member of parliament). The Badr Brigades were recruited, trained, and equipped by Iran’s Revolutionary Guard, aligned with Iran’s hardliners, during the Iran-Iraq war, during which Badr guerrillas conducted forays from Iran into southern Iraq to attack Baath Party officials. Most Badr fighters were recruited from the ranks of Iraqi prisoners of war held in Iran. However, many Iraqi Shiites viewed SCIRI as an Iranian puppet and Badr operations in southern Iraq during the 1980s and 1990s did not shake Saddam’s grip on power. The Badr “Organization” registered as a separate political entity, in addition to its SCIRI parent, for the elections in 2005.
- Badr militiamen play unofficial policing roles in Basra, Najaf, and elsewhere in southern Iraq, and many Badr members also reputedly are in the ISF, particularly the police, which is led by the SCIRI-dominated Interior Ministry. A related militia, called the “Wolf Brigade” (now renamed the Freedom Brigade) is a Badr offshoot that is formally part of the police. It is also led by a SCIRI activist.
- *Mahdi Army.* U.S. officials say Sadr’s Mahdi Army militia has now grown to about 20,000 fighters, representing a regaining of its strength since U.S. military operations suppressed Mahdi uprisings in April and August of 2004. In those cases, fighting was ended with compromises under which Mahdi forces stopped fighting (and in some cases traded in some of their weapons for money) in exchange for lenient treatment or releases of prisoners, amnesty for

Sadr himself, and reconstruction aid. The Mahdi Army has since, with tacit U.S. and coalition approval, patrolled Sadr City and parts of other Shiite cities, particularly Basra. However, Mahdi assertiveness in Basra — coupled with the allied *Fadila* party's attempts to counter SCIRI and control the Basra provincial government — has partly accounted for a sharp deterioration of relations since July 2005 between the Mahdi Army and British and U.S. forces. Since then, about 25 British soldiers have died in suspected Mahdi attacks in southern Iraq, including a British helicopter shot down in May 2006. In one dispute in 2005, British forces forcibly rescued British special forces soldiers taken into official custody in Basra. In mid-2006, there have been some U.S. casualties in areas where Sadr is strong, including Sadr City, Diwaniyah, and Kut, suggesting that there could be renewed major clashes with the Mahdi Army at some point.

U.S. Efforts to Restore Security

At times, such as after the capture of Saddam Hussein in December 2003 and after all three elections in 2005, U.S. officials have expressed optimism that the insurgency would subside. As outlined in the “National Strategy for Victory in Iraq,” the Administration continues to try to refine its stabilization strategy.

“Clear, Hold, and Build” Strategy/Provincial Reconstruction Teams.

The Administration is pursuing 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, based partly on an idea advanced by Andrew Krepinevich in the September/October 2005 issue of *Foreign Affairs*,⁴⁰ says that the United States should devote substantial resources to preventing insurgent re-infiltration and promoting reconstruction in selected areas, cultivating these areas as a model that would attract support and be expanded to other areas and eventually throughout Iraq. In conjunction with the new U.S. strategy, the Administration has formed Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), a concept used in Afghanistan. Each PRT is civilian led, composed of about 100 U.S. State Department officials and contract personnel, to assist local Iraqi governing institutions, such as the provincial councils (elected in the January 2005 elections), representatives of the Iraqi provincial governors, and local ministry representatives. As reported in the *Washington Post* on January 15, 2006, the concept ran into some U.S. military objections to taking on expanded missions at a time when it is trying to draw down its force. The internal debate has apparently been resolved with an agreement by DOD to provide security to the U.S.-run PRTs.

Thus far, five PRTs have been inaugurated: in Mosul, Kirkuk, Hilla, Baghdad, and Anbar Province. According to the July 2006 “2207 Report,” U.S. officials plan to form up to eight additional U.S.-led PRTs, with an unspecified number of others to be run by coalition partner forces or the Iraqis. To date, Britain has formed a PRT in Basra, and Italy has formed one in Dhi Qar province.

⁴⁰ Krepinevich, Andrew. “How to Win in Iraq,” *Foreign Affairs*, Sept./Oct. 2005.

PRT Funding. The FY2006 supplemental request asked for \$400 million for operational costs for the PRTs as well as \$675 million for development grants to be distributed by them. The enacted version, P.L. 109-234, contained some cuts to the operational portion of the Administration request.

U.S. Counter-Insurgent Combat Operations. The Administration position is that continued combat operations against the insurgency — and increasingly against the sectarian militias — are required. About 131,000 U.S. troops are in Iraq (down from 160,000 there during the December election period and down from 2005 baseline levels of 138,000), with about another 50,000 troops in Kuwait and the Persian Gulf region supporting OIF. U.S. military headquarters in Baghdad (Combined Joint Task Force-7, CJTF-7) is now a multi-national headquarters “Multinational Force-Iraq, MNF-I,” headed by four-star U.S. Gen. George Casey. Lt. Gen. Peter Chiarelli is operational commander of U.S. forces as head of the “Multinational Corps-Iraq.”

A major focus of U.S. counter-insurgent combat remains Anbar Province, which includes the cities of Fallujah and Ramadi, the latter of which is the most restive of all Iraqi cities and which is assessed to have virtually no functioning governance. An additional 1,500 U.S. troops were sent to Ramadi in May 2006 to combat U.S./Iraqi apparent loss of control there, and they continue to surround some neighborhoods to pressure insurgents in the city. About 40,000 U.S. troops are in Anbar alone. Differing degrees of combat continue consistently in about two dozen other Sunni-inhabited towns, including Baqubah, Balad, Tikrit, Mosul, Samarra, Hit, Haditha, and Tal Affar, as well as several small towns south of Baghdad, such as Yusufiya. In the run-up to the December 15 elections, U.S. (and Iraqi) forces conducted several major operations (for example Operations Matador, Dagger, Spear, Lightning, Sword, Hunter, Steel Curtain, and Ram) to clear contingents of foreign fighters and other insurgents from Sunni cities along the Euphrates River.

Casualties. As of August 2, 2006, 2,579 U.S. forces and about 225 coalition partner soldiers have died in OIF, as well as over 125 U.S. civilians working on contract to U.S. institutions in Iraq. Of U.S. deaths, 2,430 have occurred since President Bush declared an end to “major combat operations” in Iraq on May 1, 2003, and about 1,935 of the U.S. deaths were by hostile action. See CRS Report RS22441, *Iraqi Civilian, Police, and Security Force Casualty Estimates*, by Hannah Fischer.)

Building Iraqi Security Forces (ISF)⁴¹

A major pillar of U.S. policy is to equip and train Iraqi security forces (ISF) that could secure Iraq by themselves. President Bush stated in his June 28, 2005 speech, “Our strategy can be summed up this way: As the Iraqis stand up, we will stand down.”⁴² The most recent DOD “Measuring Stability” report, released May 2006,

⁴¹ For additional information, see CRS Report RS22093, *Iraq’s New Security Forces: The Challenge of Sectarian and Ethnic Influences*, by Jeremy Sharp.

⁴² Speech by President Bush can be found at [<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/> (continued...)]

generally reiterates U.S. official statements of progress in Iraq and contains details of efforts to improve the training and performance of the ISF.

The tables below detail the composition of the ISF and provide Administration assessments of force readiness. As of July 21, there are 275,100 total ISF: 115,000 “operational” military forces under the Ministry of Defense and 160,100 police and police commando forces “trained and equipped” under the Ministry of Interior. The commander of the ISF training mission, the Multinational Transition Security Command - Iraq (MNSTC-I), Gen. Martin Dempsey, said in late June 2006 that the total force goal of 325,000 ISF would be reached by the end of 2006. However, police figures include possibly tens of thousands (according to the GAO on March 15, 2005) who are absent-without-leave or might have deserted. The police generally live in their areas of operation, and attendance is hard to account for.

U.S. commanders say they are making progress preparing ISF units to assume greater responsibility. U.S. officials and reports praised their performance in each of the three election days in 2005, and General Casey praised the ISF’s performance after the February 22 Samarra mosque bombing, although he did note some police units allowed militia fighters through checkpoints to attack Sunnis. In March 2006, the commander of MNF-I Gen. Peter Chiarelli said that ISF forces might control 75% of Iraqi territory by the end of 2006. A U.S. general (Kurt Cichowski) said on July 7, 2006 that ISF forces might have security responsibility for half of Iraq’s 18 provinces by the end of 2006. As of May 2006, U.S. and partner forces have now turned over to the ISF 34 out of 111 forward operation bases, and responsibility for “battle space” in several areas, including the following:

- about 90 square miles of Baghdad, including Sadr City, the International (Green Zone), Haifa Street, and Dora district — National Police and 6th Iraqi Army Division (IAD);
- the entire province of Muthanna, turned over to ISF control on July 13, 2006 in conjunction with the pullout of Japanese ground forces from the province;
- nearly the entire provinces of Wasit, Qadissiyah, Najaf, and Babil — 8th IAD (mostly Shiites);
- areas south and west of Mosul — 2nd and 3rd IAD, respectively;
- large parts of restive Salahuddin Province, including Tikrit, and of Tamim Province, including Kirkuk — 4th IAD (mostly Kurdish); and
- areas west of Baghdad, including Abu Ghraib and the area around Habbaniyah (the first part of Anbar Province turned over to the ISF) — 1st and 6th IAD;

However, some U.S. commanders and outside observers say that the ISF continue to lack an effective command structure, independent initiative, or

⁴² (...continued)
2005/06/print/20050628-7.html].

commitment to the mission, and that it could fragment if U.S. troops draw down.⁴³ U.S. commanders have told journalists recently that it is common for half of an entire ISF unit to desert or refuse to undertake a specified mission.⁴⁴ A report on the Iraqi police by the offices of the Inspector General of the State and Defense Departments, released July 15, 2005, said that many recruits are only marginally literate, and some recruits are actually insurgents trying to infiltrate the ISF (p.3).⁴⁵

A major issue is ethnic balance; U.S. commanders have acknowledged difficulty recruiting Sunni Arabs into the ISF and have said this is a deficiency they are trying to correct. Most of the ISF, particularly the police, are Shiites, with Kurdish units mainly deployed in the north. There are few units of mixed ethnicity, and, as discussed above, many Sunnis see the ISF as mostly Shiite and Kurdish instruments of repression and responsible for sectarian killings. That the new Interior Minister is not viewed as a hardline Shiite partisan might bring some corrective steps into the police. Even before his appointment, some Sunnis had been recruited to rebuild police forces in Mosul and Fallujah, which had virtually collapsed in 2004. As indicators of difficulty, in May 2006, new Sunni recruits deserted a graduation ceremony immediately after learning they would be deployed in Shiite-dominated areas of Iraq.

There are growing allegations that some of the 145,000 members of the Facilities Protection Force, which is not formally under any ministry, may be involved in sectarian violence. The U.S. and Iraq began trying to rein in the force in May 2006 by placing it under some Ministry of Interior guidance, including issuing badges and supervising what types of weapons it uses.

ISF Funding. The accelerated training and equipping of the Iraqis is a key part of U.S. policy. The Administration has been shifting much U.S. funding into this training and equipping mission; according to the State Department, a total of \$5.036 billion in IRRF funds has been allocated to build (train, equip, provide facilities for, and in some cases provide pay for) the ISF. Of those funds, as of July 25, 2006, about \$4.912 billion has been obligated and \$4.576 billion of that has been disbursed. A FY2005 supplemental appropriation (P.L. 109-13) provided an additional \$5.7 billion to equip and train the ISF, funds to be controlled by the Department of Defense and provided to MNSTC-I. (When spent, that would bring total ISF funding to \$11 billion.) The FY2006 supplemental (P.L. 109-234) provides about \$3 billion of those funds, but withholds the remaining ISF facilities construction funding.

⁴³ Fallows, James. "Why Iraq Has No Army." *Atlantic Monthly*, Dec. 2005.

⁴⁴ Castaneda, Antonio. "Iraqi Desertions Complicate U.S. Mission." *Associated Press*, January 31, 2006.

⁴⁵ Inspectors General. U.S. Department of State and U.S. Department of Defense. *Interagency Assessment of Iraqi Police Training*. July 15, 2005.

Table 4. Ministry of Defense Forces
(As of July 21, 2006)

Force	Size/Strength	IRRF Funds Allocated
Iraqi Army	113,200 total; goal is 131,000. Forces in units are in 104 battalions (about 70,000 personnel), with 71 battalions (about 50,000) able to lead operations. 57 battalions (about 40,000) control their own "battle space." Trained for eight weeks, paid \$60/month. Has mostly East bloc equipment, including 77 T-72 tanks donated by Poland.	\$1.097 billion for facilities; \$707 million for equipment; \$656 million for training, personnel, and operations
Iraqi Intervention Force	About 3,000 personnel, included in Army total above. Trained for 13 weeks.	
Special Operations Forces	About 1,600 divided between Iraqi Counter-Terrorist Force (ICTF) and a Commando Battalion. Trained for 12 weeks, mostly in Jordan.	
Strategic Infrastructure Battalions	About 2,900 personnel in seven battalions to protect oil pipelines, electricity infrastructure. The goal is 11 battalions.	
Mechanized Police Brigade	About 1,500. Recently transferred from Ministry of Interior control.	
Air Force	About 700, its target size. Has 9 helicopters, 3 C-130s; 14 observation aircraft. Trained for six months. UAE and Jordan to provide other aircraft and helos.	\$28 million allocated for air fields (from funds for Iraqi Army, above)
Navy	About 1,100, about the target size. 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 Qasra, Basra port, and Khor al-Amaya oil terminals. Some training by Australian Navy.	
Totals	115,000	
U.S./Other Trainers	U.S. training, including embedding with Iraqi units, involves about 10,000 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 5. Ministry of Interior Forces
(As of July 21, 2006)

Force	Size/Strength	IRRF Funds Allocated
Iraqi Police Service (IPS)	135,000, including 1,300 person Highway Patrol. (About the target size.) Gets eight weeks of training, paid \$60 per month. Not organized as battalions.	\$ 1.806 billion allocated for training and technical assistance.
Center for Dignitary Protection	About 500 personnel	
National Police	About 24,300. Comprises "Police Commandos," Public Order Police," and "Mechanized Police." Organized into 28 battalions, 2 of which (about 1,500) are "in the lead" in counter-insurgency operations. Six battalions (about 4,000) control security in their areas. Overwhelmingly Shiite, but U.S. is attempting to recruit more Sunnis. Gets four weeks of counter-insurgency training.	
Emergency Response Unit	About 300, able to lead operations. Hostage rescue.	
Border Enforcement Department	About 22,600. Controls 258 border forts built or under construction. Has Riverine Police component to secure water crossings.	\$437 million, \$3 million of which is allocated to pay stipends to 150 former regime WMD personnel.
Totals (all forces)	160,100. Goal is 195,000	
Training	Training by 2,000 U.S. personnel as embeds and partners. Pre-operational training mostly at Jordan International Police Training Center; Baghdad Police College and seven academies around Iraq; and in UAE. 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	Technically outside MOI. About 145,000 security guards protecting economic infrastructure.	\$53 million allocated for this service thus far.

Coalition-Building and Maintenance⁴⁶

Some believe that the Bush Administration did not exert sufficient efforts to enlist greater international participation in peacekeeping originally and that the U.S. mission in Iraq is being complicated by diminishing foreign military personnel contributions. As of July 21, 2006, 27 other countries are contributing about 19,000 forces, but that total is expected to fall as 2006 progresses. Poland and Britain lead multinational divisions in central and southern Iraq, respectively. The UK-led force (UK forces alone number about 7,500) is based in Basra; the Poland-led force (Polish forces number 1,700, down 800 from 2005 levels) is based in Hilla. Poland says it might withdraw its remaining forces by the end of 2006.

The coalition size has shrunk since 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. On the other hand, many nations are replacing their contingents with trainers for the ISF or financial contributions or other assistance to Iraq. Among other changes are the following.

- Italy reduced its force from 3,200 in September 2005 to about 1,500 currently. They are based in the southern city of Nasiriyah (Dhi Qar Province). Prime Minister Romano Prodi says all Italian troops will be out by the end of 2006.
- Ukraine, which lost eight soldiers in a January 2005 insurgent attack, completed withdrawal of its remaining 1,500 forces after the December 2005 elections.
- Bulgaria pulled out its 360-member unit after the December 15 Iraqi elections. However, in March 2006 it said it had sent in a 150-person force to take over guard duties of Camp Ashraf, a base in eastern Iraq where Iranian oppositionists are located.
- South Korea withdrew 270 of its almost 3,600 troops in June 2005, and, in line with a November 2005 decision, withdrew another 1,000 in May 2006, bringing its troop level to about 2,200 (based in Irbil in Kurdish-controlled Iraq). The remainder will stay through 2006.
- Japan completed its withdrawal of its 600-person military reconstruction contingent in Samawah on July 17, 2006. The Australian forces protecting the Japanese contingent (450 out of the total Australian deployment in Iraq of 1,350) moved to other areas.

⁴⁶ For additional information on international contributions to Iraq peacekeeping and reconstruction, see CRS Report RL32105, *Post-War Iraq: Foreign Contributions to Training, Peacekeeping, and Reconstruction*, by Jeremy Sharp and Christopher Blanchard.

- Denmark said in May 2006 it will keep its forces in Iraq (Basra), although it withdrew 80 of its 530-person force in May 2006.
- In July 2006, Romanian leaders began debating whether to withdraw or reduce its 890 forces in Iraq.

NATO/EU/Other Offers of Civilian Training. As noted above, all NATO countries have now agreed to train the ISF through the NTM-I, as well as to contribute funds or equipment. Several NATO countries and others are offering to train not only Iraqi security but also civilian personnel. In addition to the security training offers discussed above, European Union (EU) leaders have offered to help train Iraqi police, administrators, and judges outside Iraq. At the June 22, 2005 Brussels conference discussed above, the EU pledged a \$130 million package to help Iraq write its permanent constitution and reform government ministries. The FY2005 supplemental appropriations (P.L. 109-13) provides \$99 million to set up a regional counter-terrorism center in Jordan to train Iraqi security personnel and civil servants.

Options and Debate on an “Exit Strategy”

Some Members say that major new initiatives need to be considered to ensure success of the U.S. mission in Iraq. As U.S. public support for the U.S. commitment in Iraq has appeared to decline, debates have emerged over several congressional resolutions proposing an “exit strategy.” Some of the ideas widely circulated among Members and other policy experts are discussed below.

Troop Increase. Some have said that the United States should increase its troops in Iraq in an effort to prevent insurgents from re-infiltrating areas cleared by U.S. operations. Some experts believe the extra troops needed for such an effort might number about 100,000.⁴⁷ The Administration asserts that U.S. commanders feel that planned force levels are sufficient to complete the mission, and that U.S. commanders are able to request additional forces, if needed. About 700 additional forces were sent to Iraq briefly following the February 22 Samarra bombing to help prevent a descent into all out-civil war. Some experts believe that troop level increases would aggravate Sunni Arabs already resentful of the U.S. intervention in Iraq and that even many more U.S. troops would not necessarily produce stability and would appear to deepen the U.S. commitment without a clear exit strategy. Others believe that increasing U.S. force levels would further the impression that the Iraqi government depends on the United States for its survival.

Immediate Withdrawal. Some Members argue that the United States should begin to withdraw virtually immediately. Supporters of this position tend to argue that the decision to invade Iraq and change its regime was a mistake in light of the failure thus far to locate WMD, that the large U.S. presence in Iraq is inflaming the insurgency, and that remaining in Iraq will result in additional U.S. casualties without securing U.S. national interests. Those who take this position include the approximately 50 Members of the “Out of Iraq Congressional Caucus,” formed in

⁴⁷ Bersia, John. “The Courage Needed to Win the War,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Aug. 9, 2005.

June 2005. In November 2005, Representative John Murtha, a ranking member and former chairman of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, publicly articulated a similar position, calling for an “immediate” pullout (over six months). His resolution (H.J.Res. 73) called for a U.S. withdrawal “at the earliest practicable date” and the maintenance of an “over the horizon” U.S. presence. A related resolution, H.Res. 571 (written by Representative Duncan Hunter, chairman of the House Armed Services Committee), expressed the sense “that the deployment of U.S. forces in Iraq be terminated immediately;” it failed 403-3 on November 18, 2005. Other bills, such as H.R. 3142, H.Con.Res. 197, state that it [should be] U.S. policy not to maintain a permanent or long-term presence in Iraq. The FY2006 supplemental (P.L. 109-234) omitted a provision to this effect that was in the House version.

Withdrawal Timetable. Another alternative is the setting of a timetable for a U.S. withdrawal. This has been exemplified by H.J.Res. 55, introduced by Representative Neil Abercrombie, which calls on the Administration to begin a withdrawal by October 2006. H.Con.Res. 348, introduced by Representative Mike Thompson, calls for a redeployment of U.S. forces no later than September 30, 2006. In November 2005, Senator Levin, who takes the view that the United States needs to force internal compromise in Iraq by threatening to withdraw, introduced an amendment to S. 1042 (FY2006 defense authorization bill) to compel the Administration to work on a timetable for withdrawal during 2006. Reportedly, on November 10, 2005, Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee John Warner reworked the Levin proposal into an amendment that stopped short of setting a timetable for withdrawal but requires an Administration report on a “schedule for meeting conditions” that could permit a U.S. withdrawal. That measure, which also states in its preamble that “2006 should be a period of significant transition to full Iraqi sovereignty,” achieved bi-partisan support, passing 79-19. It was incorporated, with only slight modifications by House conferees, in the conference report on the bill (H.Rept. 109-360, P.L. 109-163).

The issue was raised again in summer of 2006. On June 22, 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 amendment, 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. On July 31, 2006, 12 Democrats, including House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi and Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid, reportedly wrote to President Bush calling for the beginning of a U.S. withdrawal by the end of 2006, although without a suggested deadline for completing that pullback, along with a “transition to a more limited mission.”⁴⁸

Responding to the November 2005 congressional action, President Bush and U.S. commanders remained adamant in their stated opposition to the setting of any timetable for troop pullouts, let alone an immediate pullout. During and after his June 13, 2006, visit to Baghdad, President Bush again appeared to rule out a pullout by stating that the United States would uphold its “commitment” to the Iraqi

⁴⁸ Babington, Charles and Jim VendeHei. Hill Democrats Unite to Urge Bush to Begin Iraq Pullout. Washington Post, August 1, 2006.

government, although he did suggest in trip-related comments that Iraqi officials need to plan their own future. Supporters of such positions maintain that the Iraqi government would collapse upon an immediate pullout, representing a victory for terrorists. H.Res. 861, stating that "... it is not in the national security interest of the United States to set an arbitrary date for the withdrawal or redeployment" of U.S. forces from Iraq passed the House on June 16 by a vote of 256-153, with 5 voting "present."

Troop Reduction. The House and Senate debate occurred a few days before press reports appeared that General Casey, during a visit to Washington in late June, had presented to President Bush options for a substantial drawdown of U.S. forces in Iraq, beginning as early as September 2006. According to reports of the Casey plan, which the Administration says is one option and is dependent on security progress, U.S. force levels would drop to about 120,000 by September 2006, with a more pronounced reduction to about 100,000 by the end of 2007. The new reports are similar to some previous reports of plans for reduction. Previous such reported plans, such as those discussed in late 2005, have tended to fade as the security situation has not calmed significantly, and the July 2006 increase in U.S. troops patrolling Baghdad casts doubt on whether U.S. forces will be reduced in 2006.

Re-Working the Power Structure. Both the Administration and its critics have identified the need to bring more Sunni Arabs into the political process. As noted, U.S. Ambassador Khalilzad has been reaching out to Sunni groups, with some success, and some believe that a key to progress in this effort will be U.S. ability to persuade the Shiites and Kurds to agree to major amendments to the constitution during the four month amendment process that begins after a new government is seated. An unknown is what package of incentives, if any, would persuade most Sunnis to end support for the insurgency and fully support the government. Many experts believe that the Sunnis will only settle for a share of power that is perhaps slightly less than that wielded by the majority Shiites, even though the Shiites greatly outnumber Sunni Arabs in Iraq.

Some commentators believe in a more substantial re-distribution of power. They maintain that Iraq cannot be stabilized as one country and should be broken up into three separate countries: one Kurdish, one Sunni Arab, and one Shiite Arab. However, many Middle East experts believe the idea is unworkable because none of the three would likely be self-sufficient and would likely fall firmly under the sway of Iraq's powerful neighbors.

Another version of this idea, propounded by Senator Biden and Council on Foreign Relations expert Leslie Gelb (May 1, 2006, *New York Times* op-ed) is to form three autonomous regions, dominated by each of the major communities. According to the authors, doing so would ensure that these communities do not enter an all-out civil war with each other. 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.

Negotiating With the Insurgents. In addition to exploring power sharing arrangements with moderate Sunni leaders, the Administration — and the Iraqi government — appears to have adopted a recommendation by early critics of U.S.

policy to negotiate with some Sunni figures representing the insurgency (including members of the MSA) and even with some insurgent commanders. Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld confirmed to journalists in June 2005 that such discussions had taken place, and Iraqi President Talabani said in May 2006 that he had had talks with insurgent factions as well. The U.S. talks reportedly have been intended to help U.S. forces defeat Zarqawi's foreign insurgent faction. No major insurgent faction has lain down arms in response to any talks with U.S. personnel or Iraqi officials, although Iraqi leaders say some insurgent groups have expressed tentative interest in the amnesty plan. The insurgents who have attended such talks reportedly want an increased role for Sunnis in government and a timetable for U.S. withdrawal. Some U.S. officials appear to believe that talking directly with insurgents increases insurgent leverage and emboldens them to continue attacks.

Accelerating Economic Reconstruction. Some believe that the key to calming Iraq is to accelerate economic reconstruction. According to this view, accelerated reconstruction will drain support for insurgents by creating employment, improving public services, and creating confidence in the government. This idea appears to have been incorporated into the President's "National Strategy for Victory in Iraq" document and the formation of the PRTs, as discussed above. Others doubt that economic improvement alone will produce major political results because the differences among Iraq's major communities are fundamental and resistant to economic solutions. In addition, the U.S. plan to transfer most reconstruction management to Iraqis by the end of 2007 might indicate that the Administration has not found this idea persuasive.

Internationalization Options. Some observers believe that the United States needs to recruit international help in stabilizing Iraq. One idea is to identify a high-level international mediator to negotiate with Iraq's major factions. In a possible move toward this option, in March 2006 President Bush appointed former Secretary of State James Baker to head a congressionally recruited "Iraq Study Group" to formulate options for U.S. policy in Iraq. (The conference report on H.R. 4939 provides \$1 million for operations of the group.) However, there is no public discussion, to date, that Baker himself might be such a mediator, and most experts believe that a mediator, if selected, would likely need to come from a country that is viewed by all Iraqis as neutral on internal political outcomes in Iraq. Another idea is to form a "contact group" of major countries and Iraqi neighbors to prevail on Iraq's factions to compromise. This idea is reflected in S.J.Res. 36, introduced May 8, 2006 by Senator Kerry.

Other ideas involve 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. However, the idea floundered because of opposition from potential contributing countries.

Table 6. U.S. Aid (ESF) to Iraq's 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 (Apr. 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*, Apr. 2004.

Figure 1. Map of Iraq



Source: Map Resources. Adapted by CRS. (K.Yancey 7/21/04)