

CRS Report for Congress

Iraq: Post-Saddam Governance and Security

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Summary

Operation Iraqi Freedom overthrew Saddam Hussein's regime, but Iraq remains unstable because of Sunni Arab resentment and a related insurgency, compounded by Sunni-Shiite violence that some believe is now a civil war. Mounting U.S. casualties and financial costs — without clear signs of security progress — have intensified a debate within the United States over whether to wind down U.S. involvement without completely accomplishing initial U.S. goals. U.S. Defense Department reports are expressing more pessimism about security in Iraq and they, as well as Bush Administration officials, are expressing some frustration at the unwillingness of the Iraqi government to disband sectarian militias that are committing violence against civilians of rival sects. U.S. difficulties in Iraq are discussed in the December 6, 2006, report of the Iraq Study Group co-chaired by former Secretary of State James Baker and former House International Relations Committee chair Lee Hamilton, which called the Iraq situation “grave and deteriorating.”

Administration officials say President Bush, who says that progress is slower and less extensive than was expected, addressed the nation on new initiatives in Iraq on January 10, 2007. He announced a deployment of an additional 21,500 U.S. forces to help stabilize Baghdad and restive Anbar Province, as well as other measures to create jobs and promote political reconciliation. He and other officials have previously asserted that U.S. policy has shown some important successes: 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 worked to include more Sunni Arabs in the power structure, particularly the security institutions.

Some in Congress — as well as the Iraq Study Group — believe that major new initiatives are required that do not involve additional U.S. forces. Some legislation in the 110th Congress, including S.Con.Res. 2, S.Con.Res. 4, and S.Con.Res. 7, oppose the President's announced increase; other bills support the Iraq Study Group's recommendations focusing on intensified regional diplomacy to enlist help from neighboring states to calm their protegee factions in Iraq. Some Members and outside experts believe that sectarian violence is placing U.S. forces in the middle of civil war and that setting a timetable for withdrawal, or otherwise reducing U.S. support for the Baghdad government, might force compromise among Iraqi factions.

This report is updated regularly. 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 RL33793, *Iraq: Regional Perspectives and U.S. Policy*, coordinated by 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 The territory that is now Iraq was formed from three provinces of the Ottoman empire after British forces defeated the Ottomans in World War I and took control of the territory in 1918. Britain had tried to take Iraq from the Ottomans earlier in World War I but were defeated at Al Kut in 1916. Britain's presence in Iraq, which relied on Sunni Muslim Iraqis (as did the Ottoman administration), ran into repeated resistance, facing a major Shiite-led revolt in 1920 and a major anti-British uprising in 1941, during World War II. Iraq's first Hashemite king was Faysal bin Hussein, son of Sharif Hussein of Mecca who, advised by British officer T.E Lawrence ("Lawrence of Arabia"), led the Arab revolt against the Ottoman Empire during World War I. Faysal ruled Iraq as King Faysal I and was succeeded by his son, Ghazi, who was killed in a car accident in 1939. Ghazi was succeeded by his son, Faysal II, 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, with the help of his pro-British Prime Minister Nuri al-Sa'id who had also served under his predecessors, 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

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.

security services to monitor loyalty among the population and within Iraq's institutions, including the military. On July 17, 1979, the aging al-Bakr resigned at Saddam's urging, and Saddam became President of Iraq. Under Saddam 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 try to do so militarily because (1) the United Nations had approved only the liberation of Kuwait; (2) Arab states in the coalition opposed an advance to Baghdad; and (3) 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 rebellion. Many Iraqi Shiites blamed the United States for not intervening on their behalf. Iraq's Kurds, benefitting from a U.S.-led "no fly zone" set up in April 1991, drove Iraqi troops out of much of northern Iraq and remained autonomous thereafter.

Subsequent to the war, the thrust of U.S. policy was containment, consisting 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.³ However, President George H.W. Bush did pursue regime change as well, to some extent, including reportedly sending 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.⁴ However, the United States did not undertake any military action specifically on behalf of these groups.

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

³ 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.

⁴ 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.

The Clinton Administration and Major Anti-Saddam Factions

During the Clinton Administration, 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 had 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 65 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, and he has since left Iraq for London. (A table on U.S. appropriations for the Iraqi opposition, including the INC, is an appendix).⁵

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).⁶ It is led by Dr. Iyad al-Allawi, a Baathist who purportedly helped Saddam Hussein silence Iraqi dissidents in Europe in the mid-1970s.⁷ 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. The INA enjoyed Clinton Administration support in 1996 after squabbling among other opposition groups reduced their viability.⁸ However,

⁵ 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.

⁶ Brinkley, Joel. “Ex-CIA Aides Say Iraq Leader Helped Agency in 90’s Attacks,” *New York Times*, June 9, 2004.

⁷ Hersh, Seymour. “Annals of National Security: Plan B,” *The New Yorker*, June 28, 2004.

⁸ An account of this shift in U.S. strategy is essayed in Hoagland, Jim. “How CIA’s Secret (continued...)”

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 rout INC and INA agents in the north.

The Kurds. The Kurds, who are mostly Sunni Muslims but are not Arabs, are probably the most pro-U.S. of all major groups. Historically fearful of persecution by the Arab majority, the Kurds want to, at the very least, preserve the autonomy of the post-1991 Gulf war period. The Kurds, both through legal procedures as well as population movements, are trying to secure the mixed city of Kirkuk, which the Kurds covet as a source of oil, and they have adopted a new oil development law that some see as an attempt to secure oil resources located in the Kurdish region for the Kurds alone. 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. (The Iraq Study Group report, released December 6, 2006, in Recommendation 30 believes that this referendum should be delayed, a proposal strongly criticized by Kurdish leaders.)⁹ For now, both major Kurdish factions — the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) led by Jalal Talabani, and the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) led by Masud Barzani — are participating in Iraqi politics, the PUK more so than the KDP. Both were on the IGC; Talabani went on to become Iraq's president, while Barzani, on June 12, 2005, was named "president of Kurdistan" by the 111-seat Kurdish regional assembly that was elected on January 30, 2005.¹⁰

Shiite Islamists: Ayatollah Sistani, SCIRI, Da'wa Party, and Sadr. Shiite Islamist organizations have become dominant 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, remained in Iraq, albeit with a low profile, during Saddam Hussein's regime, and he 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.¹¹ He has a network of agents (*wakils*) throughout Iraq and among Shiites outside Iraq.

⁸ (...continued)

War On Saddam Collapsed," *Washington Post*, June 26, 1997.

⁹ The report can be obtained at [<http://www.usip.org>].

¹⁰ For an extended discussion, see CRS Report RS22079, *The Kurds in Post-Saddam Iraq*, by Kenneth Katzman and Alfred B. Prados.

¹¹ 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.

About 85 years old, Sistani 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 role for clerics in government, but he believes in clerical supervision of political leaders. He wants Iraq to maintain its Islamic culture and favors modest dress for women, and curbs on sales of alcohol and Western music and entertainment.¹² He was treated for heart trouble in the United Kingdom in August 2004.

Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI). Within the “United Iraqi Alliance” (UIA) of Shiite political groupings, SCIRI shares power with other factions, but SCIRI’s influence is bolstered by the fielding of a militia force, the “Badr Brigades.” 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 Ayatollah Khomeini’s exile in Najaf (1964-1978), he was hosted by Grand Ayatollah Muhsin al-Hakim, father of the Hakim brothers (including current leader Abd al-Aziz) 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 SCIRI reportedly receives substantial amounts of financial and other aid from Iran. 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. When Abd al-Aziz al-Hakim visited Washington D.C. in early December 2006, the Bush Administration reportedly urged him to give greater support to the government of Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki.

Da’wa Party/Ibrahim al-Jafari and Nuri al-Maliki. The Da’wa (Islamic Call) Party is both an ally and sometime rival of SCIRI. Da’wa did not directly join the U.S.-led effort to overthrow Saddam Hussein during the 1990s. Its leader is Ibrahim al-Jafari, a Da’wa activist since 1966 who fled to Iran in 1980 to escape Saddam’s crackdown, later going to London. He was transitional Prime Minister during April 2005-April 2006. His successor as Prime Minister, Nuri al-Maliki, is the number two Da’wa leader. 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 Da’wa founder Ayatollah Mohammad 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. As discussed further throughout this paper, Moqtada Al Sadr is emerging as a major — some believe the most powerful — figure in Iraq. He has been viewed as a young firebrand who lacks religious and political weight. However, the more established Shiite factions, as well as Iranian diplomats, are building ties to him because of his large following, particularly among poorer Shiites who identify with other “oppressed Muslims” and who are therefore skeptical

¹² For information on Sistani’s views, see his website at [<http://www.sistani.org>].

of any U.S. presence in the Middle East. By fully participating in the December 15, 2005, elections, Sadr appeared to distance himself from his uprisings in 2003 and 2004, although tensions flared again in 2006 between his militia forces and international (particularly British) forces in Iraq as well as against rival Shiite factions and Iraqi security forces. During 2003-2004, he used Friday prayer sermons in Kufa (near Najaf) to agitate for a U.S. withdrawal. Pro-Sadr candidates also won pluralities in several southern Iraqi provincial council elections. (In Recommendation 35, the Iraq Study Group recommended that the United States try to talk to Sadr, as well as Sistani, as well as with other parties except Al Qaeda-Iraq.)

Table 1. Major Shiite, Kurdish, and Secular Factions

Iraq National Accord/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	Talabani became president of Iraq after January 2005 and remains so. Barzani has tried to secure his clan's base in the Kurdish north. Many Kurds are more supportive of outright Kurdish independence than are these leaders. Together, the two factions field up to 100,000 <i>peshmerga</i> militia. Their joint slate won 75 seats in January 2005 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 political questions. 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. However, acknowledges that his influence is waning and that calls for Shiite restraint are unheeded as Shiites look to armed parties and militias for defense in sectarian warfare. Refuses to meet U.S. officials.
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. Current leader is his younger brother, Abd al-Aziz al-Hakim, a lower ranking Shiite cleric and a member of parliament (UIA slate), but he holds no government position. One of his top aides, Bayan Jabr, is now Finance Minister, and another, Adel Abd al-Mahdi, is a deputy president. Controls "Badr Brigades" militia. As part of UIA, SCIRI has about 30 of its members in parliament. Supports formation of Shiite "region" composed of nine southern provinces. Has tense relations with Da'wa Party despite common ideology and heritage.
Da'wa (Islamic Call) Party	Oldest organized Shiite Islamist party (founded 1957), active against Saddam Hussein in early 1980s. Its founder, Mohammad Baqr al-Sadr, uncle of Moqtada Al Sadr, was ally of Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini and was hung by Saddam regime in 1980. Da'wa members tend to follow senior Lebanese Shiite cleric Mohammad Hossein Fadlallah rather than Iranian clerics, and Da'wa is not as close to Tehran as is SCIRI. Has no organized militia and a lower proportion of clerics than does SCIRI. Part of UIA, controls about 28 seats in parliament.

Moqtada Al-Sadr Faction	Young (about 31), the lone surviving son of the revered Ayatollah Mohammed Sadiq al-Sadr (killed, along with his other two sons, by regime security forces in 1999 after he began agitating against Saddam). Inherited father's political base in "Sadr City," a large (2 million population) Shiite district of Baghdad, but also strong in Diwaniyah, Basra, Amarah, and other major Shiite cities. Mercurial, has both challenged and tacitly worked with U.S. forces 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, although some militia elements now believed beyond Sadr's control. Now part of UIA, controls 32 seats in new parliament and ministries of health, transportation, and agriculture (plus one organization of ministerial rank) and supports Prime Minister Maliki. However, those parliamentarians boycotted parliament for three months following the late November 2006 meeting between Bush and Maliki. Opposes large Shiite "region" in the south. Does not meet with U.S.
Fadilah Party	<i>Fadilah</i> (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 the Sadr's faction. Holds seats on several provincial councils in the Shiite provinces and controls the protection force (Facilities Protection Service) for the oil installations in Basra. Governor of Basra Province is <i>Fadilah</i> member, helping party's efforts to dominate the provincial government there.
Hezbollah Iraq	Headed by ex-guerrilla leader Abdul Karim Muhammadawi, who was on the IGC and now in parliament. Party's power base is southern marsh areas around Amara (Maysan Province), north of Basra. Party militiamen play major role in policing areas of the province.
Islamic Amal	A relatively small faction, Islamic Amal (Action) Organization is headed by Ayatollah Mohammed Taqi Modarassi, a moderate cleric. Power base is in Karbala, and it conducted attacks there against Saddam regime in the 1980s. Modarassi's brother, Abd al-Hadi, headed the Islamic Front for the Liberation of Bahrain, which stirred Shiite unrest against Bahrain's regime in the 1980s and 1990s. Islamic Amal won two seats in the January 30 election and has a member in the new cabinet (Minister of Civil Society Affairs).
Ayatollah Hassani Faction	Another Karbala-based faction, loyal to Ayatollah Mahmoud al-Hassani. His armed followers clashed with local Iraqi security forces in Karbala in mid-August 2006. Hassani, along with <i>Fadilah</i> , are considered opponents of Iran because of Iran's support for SCIRI and Da'wa Party.

Iraq Liberation Act. 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 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.

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);¹³ and the 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. About 150 oppositionists underwent Defense Department-run civil administration training at Hurlburt air base in Florida to teach them how to administer a post-Saddam Iraq. However, the Administration decided that the opposition was not sufficiently capable to merit weapons or combat training. These trainees were not brought into Operation Iraqi Freedom or into the Free Iraqi Forces that deployed to Iraq.

Post-September 11, 2001: Regime Change and War

Several senior Bush Administration officials had long been advocates of a regime change policy toward Iraq, but the difficulty of that strategy led the Bush Administration initially to continue its predecessor’s emphasis on containment.¹⁴ 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 equipment¹⁵ in exchange for renewed international commitment to enforce the U.N. ban on exports to Iraq of militarily-useful goods.

¹³ 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.

¹⁴ One account of Bush Administration internal debates on the strategy is found in Hersh, Seymour. “The Debate Within,” *The New Yorker*, Mar. 11, 2002.

¹⁵ 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.

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 major combat in the U.S.-led war on the Taliban and Al Qaeda in Afghanistan was winding down, he characterized Iraq as part of an "axis of evil" (with Iran and North Korea). Some U.S. officials, particularly 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 books *Plan of Attack* and *State of Denial* by Bob Woodward (published in April 2004 and September 2006, respectively), say that then Secretary of State Powell 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,"¹⁶ found no WMD stockpiles or production but said

¹⁶ The full text of the Duelfer report is available at [<http://news.findlaw.com/hdocs/docs/>

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 2004,¹⁷ although U.S. forces have found some chemical weapons caches left over from the Iran-Iraq war.¹⁸ The UNMOVIC work remains formally active.¹⁹

- *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.²⁰

Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF)

In mid-2002, the Administration began ordering a force to the region that, by early 2003, gave the President an active option to invade Iraq. 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 against Saddam Hussein. In August 2002, the State and Defense Departments jointly invited six major opposition groups to Washington, D.C., and 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,²¹ although reportedly only about 70 completed training at an air base (Taszar) in Hungary, eventually serving as translators during the war. At the same time, the Administration opposed a move by the major factions to declare a provisional government, believing that doing so would prevent the emergence of secular, pro-democracy groups after Saddam's fall.

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 United Nations General Assembly (September 12, 2002) that the U.N. Security

¹⁶ (...continued)
iraq/cia93004wmdrpt.html].

¹⁷ 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.

¹⁸ Pincus, Walter. "Munitions Found in Iraq Renew Debate." *Washington Post*, July 1, 2006.

¹⁹ For information on UNMOVIC's ongoing activities, see [<http://www.unmovic.org/>].

²⁰ *9/11 Commission Report*, p. 66.

²¹ Deyoung, Karen, and Daniel Williams, "Training of Iraqi Exiles Authorized," *Washington Post*, Oct. 19, 2002.

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, and no U.N. resolution authorizing force was adopted. 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-country²² “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 mostly Sunni Adhamiya district. (Saddam was captured in December 2003, and subsequently tried in Iraq and, on November 5, 2006, convicted for “willful killing” of Shiite civilians in Dujail in 1982. He was hanged on December 30, 2006.

²² Many of the thirty countries listed in the coalition did not contribute forces to the combat. A subsequent State Department list released on March 27, 2003 listed 49 countries in the coalition of the willing. See *Washington Post*, Mar. 27, 2003, p. A19.

Post-Saddam Governance and Transition

According to January 2007 statements by President Bush, U.S. goals are for an Iraq that can sustain, govern, and defend itself and is a partner in the global war on terrorism. Administration officials have, for the most part, dropped an early goal that Iraq serve as a model of democratic reform in the Middle East.

Early Transition Process

The formal political transition has advanced, but has still not achieved the level of political reconciliation needed to cause an end to or reduction in levels of violence.

Occupation Period/Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA). After the fall of the regime, the United States set up an occupation structure, reportedly grounded in concerns that immediate sovereignty would favor major factions and not produce democracy. The Administration initially tasked Lt. Gen. Jay Garner (ret.) to direct reconstruction with a staff of U.S. government personnel to administer Iraq's ministries; they deployed in April 2003. He headed the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA), 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.²³ Garner tried to quickly establish a representative successor Iraqi regime. He and 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. Senior U.S. officials reportedly disliked Garner's toleration of Iraqis naming themselves as local leaders, for example.

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 discontinued Garner's political transition process and instead appointed a non-sovereign Iraqi advisory body. On July 13, 2003, he named this 25-member "Iraq Governing Council" (IGC), and in September 2003, the IGC selected a 25-member "cabinet" to run the ministries, with roughly the same factional and ethnic balance of the IGC itself (a slight majority of Shiite Muslims). Although there were some Sunni figures in the CPA-led political structure, many Sunnis resented the U.S. invasion and opposed the IGC, which was widely perceived in Iraq as an arm of U.S. decision-making. Adding to Sunni resentment were some of the CPA's most controversial decisions, including not to recall members of the armed forces to service and to pursue "de-Baathification" —

²³ 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/>].

a purge from government of about 30,000 Iraqis at four top ranks of the Baath Party. (In Recommendation 27, the Iraq Study Group says that the United States should encourage the reintegration of ex-Baathists into national life.)

Transitional Administrative Law (TAL). The Bush Administration initially made the end of U.S. occupation contingent on the completion of a new constitution and the holding of national elections for a new government, tasks expected to be completed by late 2005. However, 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.

The CPA decisions were incorporated into an interim constitution, the Transitional Administrative Law (TAL), signed on March 8, 2004.²⁴ Drafted by the major anti-Saddam factions, it provided a roadmap for political transition, including (1) elections by January 31, 2005, for a 275-seat transitional National Assembly; (2) drafting of a permanent constitution by August 15, 2005, and put to a national referendum by October 15, 2005; and (3) national elections for a 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. Under the TAL, 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,” and their *peshmerga* militia were allowed to operate.

Sovereignty Handover/Interim (Allawi) Government. 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 several other options, the United States tapped U.N. envoy Lakhdar Brahimi to select a government.²⁵ Dominated by senior faction leaders, it was named and began work on June 1, 2004. The formal handover ceremony occurred on June 28, 2004, two days before the advertised June 30 date, partly to confuse insurgents. There was a president (Ghazi al-Yawar), and Iyad al-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 ministers were Sunnis.

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 (cited above) provided for a U.N. special representative to Iraq, and “called on” governments to contribute forces for stabilization. Resolution 1500 (August 14, 2003) established U.N. Assistance

²⁴ The text of the TAL can be obtained from the CPA website at [<http://cpa-iraq.org/government/TAL.html>].

²⁵ Chandrasekaran, Rajiv. “Envoy Urges U.N.-Chosen Iraqi Government,” *Washington Post*, Apr. 15, 2004.

Mission for Iraq (UNAMI).²⁶ The size of UNAMI in Iraq has increased to a few hundred, headed by former Pakistani diplomat Ashraf Jahangir Qazi, primarily focused on promoting political reconciliation, election assistance, and monitoring human rights practices and humanitarian affairs. In an attempt to satisfy the requirements of several nations for greater U.N. backing of the coalition force presence, the United States achieved adoption of Resolution 1511 (October 16, 2003), authorizing a “multinational force under *unified* [meaning U.S.] command.” (In Recommendations 7 and 26 and several other recommendations, the Iraq Study Group calls for increased U.N. participation in reconciliation and international diplomacy on Iraq.)

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, as well as authorizing a coalition component force to protect U.N. personnel and facilities. The Resolution contained the following provisions:

- It “authorize[d]” the U.S.-led coalition to secure Iraq, a provision interpreted as giving the coalition responsibility for security. 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.
- It stipulated that the coalition’s mandate would be reviewed “at the request of the government of Iraq or twelve months from the date of this resolution” (or June 8, 2005); that the mandate would expire when a permanent government is sworn in at the end of 2005; and that the mandate would be terminated “if the Iraqi government so requests.” Resolution 1637 (November 11, 2005) and Resolution 1723 (November 28, 2006) each extended the coalition military mandate for an additional year (now lasting until at least December 31, 2007), unless earlier “requested by the Iraqi government.” The renewal resolutions also required review of the mandate on June 15, 2006 and June 15, 2007, respectively.
- Resolution 1546 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. Former Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld said in July 2005 that U.S. military lawyers are working with the Iraqis on a SOFA or other

²⁶ Its mandate has been renewed each year since, most recently by Resolution 1700 (Aug. 10, 2006).

arrangements that would cover U.S. operations in Iraq for the duration of U.S. involvement there.

- In subsequent related developments, the Defense Appropriation for FY2007 (P.L. 109-289) contains a provision, first passed in the House version of the measure, prohibiting use of U.S. funds to establish permanent military installations or bases in Iraq. The same law contains a provision that the Defense Department not agree to allow U.S. forces in Iraq to be subject to Iraqi law. (In Recommendation 22, the Iraq Study Group recommends that the President should state that the United States does not seek permanent military bases in Iraq.)
- It established a 100-seat “Interim National Council” to serve as an interim parliament. The body, selected in August,²⁷ 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 handover, designed in part to lower the U.S. profile in 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.²⁸ Negroponte was succeeded in July 2005 by Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad, who was previously Ambassador to Afghanistan and who takes an activist approach. Subject to Senate confirmation, he will be succeeded by Ryan Crocker, currently Ambassador to Pakistan. 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) provided \$1.327 billion for U.S. embassy operations and security. (In Recommendations 73-76, the Iraq Study Group report lays out several initiatives that could be taken “to ensure that [the United States] has personnel with the right skills serving in Iraq.”) In conjunction with the handover, in addition:

- 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). Resolution 1723 (November 28, 2006) extends the IAMB monitoring of the DFI until December 31, 2007, subject to review by June 15, 2007. Resolution 1546 also gave Iraq

²⁷ Tavernise, Sabrina. “In Climax To a Tumultuous 4-Day Debate, Iraq Chooses An Assembly,” *New York Times*, Aug. 19, 2004.

²⁸ See CRS Report RS21867, *U.S. Embassy in Iraq*, by Susan B. Epstein.

responsibility for close-out of the “oil-for-food program;”²⁹ Resolution 1483 ended that program as of November 21, 2003. (In Recommendation 23, the Iraq Study Group says the President should restate that the United States does not seek to control Iraq’s oil.)

- 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 outside Baghdad at the 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.

Elections 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. 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. (Discussed further in CRS Report RS21968, *Iraq: Elections, Government, and Constitution*, by Kenneth Katzman.)

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 was 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 concept because their region, unlike those dominated by the Kurds and the Shiites, lacks oil and they depend on the central government for revenues. A promised special constitutional review, intended to mollify Sunnis, has not been completed. (In Recommendation 26, the Iraq Study Group recommends that this review be conducted on an urgent basis. Recommendation 28 says that all oil revenues should accrue to the central government, not regions.)

²⁹ For information on that program, see CRS Report RL30472, *Iraq: Oil-for-Food Program, Illicit Trade, and Investigations*, by Kenneth Katzman and Christopher Blanchard.

December 15, 2005, Election. In this election, some harder line Sunnis moved into the political arena: the Sunni “Consensus Front” and Iraqi Front for National Dialogue put forward major slates. The results were court-certified on February 10, formally beginning the formation of a government, but the convening of the “Council of Representatives” (COR) was delayed until March 16 by wrangling over the post of Prime Minister. With the UIA alone well short of the two-thirds majority needed to unilaterally form a government, Sunnis, the secular groupings, and the Kurds succeeded in ousting Jafari as Prime Minister and, with Sadr’s support, engineering selection instead of his top Da’wa aide, Nuri al-Maliki (April 22, 2006). Talabani was selected to continue as president, with two deputies Adel Abd al-Mahdi of SCIRI and Tariq al-Hashimi of the Consensus Front. (The former has lost one and the latter has lost three siblings to sectarian violence in 2006.) A COR leadership team was selected as well, with hardline U.S. critic Mahmoud Mashadani as speaker.

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). Sadr loyalists were named to the ministries of agriculture, health, and transportation. 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 COR confirmation of three compromise candidates for those posts.

Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki

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.” Publicly supported Hezbollah (which shares a background with his Da’wa Party) during July-August 2006 Israel-Hezbollah conflict, prompting congressional criticism of him during his July 2006 visit to Washington DC. Believed sympathetic to Kurds’ efforts to incorporate Kirkuk into the Kurdish region. Has tense relations with SCIRI, whose activists accuse Maliki of surrounding himself with Da’wa members and shutting SCIRI out of his inner circle. Believed to be politically dependent on Sadr’s support and has, to date, refused to fully crack down — or allow sustained U.S. crackdowns — on Sadr’s Mahdi Army militia, causing U.S. frustration. In October 2006, said he is an ally of the United States but is “not America’s man in Iraq.” Following the Bush-Maliki meeting in Jordan on November 30, 2006, President Bush reiterated that Maliki is “the right guy for Iraq.”

Maliki Government and Milestones

According to the Administration and the Iraq Study Group, the Iraqi government has put forward several milestones to achieve national reconciliation:

- (1) By September 2006, formation of a committee to review the constitution under the special amendment process promised; approval of a law to implement formation of regions; approval of an investment law; and approval of a law for the Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC);
- (2) by October 2006, approval of a provincial election law (which would presumably lead to more Sunnis on provincial councils; the 51-seat Baghdad city council has only one Sunni Arab, for example); and approval of a new oil law;
- (3) By November 2006, approval of a new de-Baathification law; and approval of a flag and national anthem law;
- (4) By December 2006, approval of laws to curb militias; and to offer amnesty to insurgent supporters;
- (5) By January 2007, completion of the constitutional review process;
- (6) By February 2007, the formation of independent commissions to oversee governance;
- (7) holding of a referendum on the special amendments to the constitution;
- (8) by April 2007, Iraqi assumption of control of its military;
- (9) by June 2007, the holding of provincial elections;
- (10) by September 2007, Iraqi security control of all 18 provinces; and
- (11) by December 2007, Iraqi security self-reliance.

As of President Bush's January 10, 2007, speech announcing new initiatives in Iraq, only a few of the milestones have been completely met — the formation of a constitutional review committee (although it has not completed drafting amendments); approval of a law on regions formation; and approval of an investment law. The law on regions (adopted October 12, 2006) has proved controversial because of Sunni opposition, and in an effort to defuse tensions, the major factions agreed to delay the formation of any new region for 18 months. In work on the oil law, in August 2006, the major factions agreed to share oil revenue on the basis of population size. On January 17, 2007, Iraqi leaders said they were close to a final draft on the new law and that it might soon be submitted to parliament, although there are still reported differences over the central government's review process for energy deals with foreign firms; the Kurds want the right to sign such deals without much government interference. The IHEC law is also close to completion, according to U.S. officials in Iraq. Complicating movement on lawmaking has been the failure to achieve a quorum in parliament on most days since November 2006, although the return to parliament of the Sadr bloc in January 2007 might improve attendance.

Iraqi leaders also announced on January 17 that they had returned 700 ex-Baathists to their jobs. In addition, several Iraqi Army divisions are now under Iraqi control and the Iraq Security Forces now have security control for the provinces of Muthanna, Dhi Qar, and Najaf.

In other efforts, U.S. officials have reportedly tried to forge a new parliamentary coalition among mainstream Shiites, Sunnis, and secular blocs that would exclude Sadr. This strategy reportedly ran into opposition from Ayatollah Sistani, who has sought to ensure full cooperation among all Shiite blocs. Some take the view that, should Maliki not cooperate with the President's January 10, 2007, plan and refuse or fail to curb Sadr and his Mahdi Army, the United States might try to engineer his replacement by deputy president and SCIRI leader Adel Abd al-Mahdi; President Bush's meeting with SCIRI leader Hakim in Washington, DC in early December 2006 fed such speculation.

Regional and International Relations. The Iraqi government has received diplomatic support, even though most of its neighbors, except Iran, resent the Shiite and Kurdish domination of the regime. 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. 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, although movement on appointments has been slow because of attacks on diplomats from Bahrain, Egypt, Algeria, Morocco, and Russia in 2005 and 2006.

At the same time, Turkey is complaining that Iraq's Kurds are harboring the anti-Turkey PKK guerrilla group in northern Iraq, and Turkey has been threatening to send in forces if the U.S.-led coalition and the Iraqi Kurdish factions do not arrest members of that group who are in Iraq. The threat prompted the U.S. naming of an envoy to Turkey on this issue in August 2006 (Gen. Joseph Ralston, ret, former Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff).

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, now a deputy president. IIP withdrew from the January 2005 election but led the Sunni “Concord” coalition in December 2005 elections. Critical of but accepts U.S. presence. Coalition Includes Iraqi General People’s Council of Adnan al-Dulaymi, and the Sunni Endowment. The Front holds 44 seats in new parliament. Hashimi visited the United States in December 2006 and met with President Bush, expressing support for a new governing coalition that would exclude Sadr’s faction.
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; in July 2006, he called the U.S. invasion “the work of butchers.”
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. Dhari attended October 2006 meeting in Mecca with other Iraqi religious figures, agreeing to condemn sectarian killings. Nonetheless, Iraqi government issued a warrant for Dhari’s arrest in November 2006 for suspected ties to the Sunni insurgency, causing Dhari to remain outside Iraq.
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). Proclaimed an “Islamic State of Iraq” led by Baghdadi (October 2006). Some groups led by ex-Saddam regime leaders, others by Islamic extremists. Major Iraqi factions include Islamic Army of Iraq, New Baath Party, Muhammad’s Army, and the 1920 Revolution Brigades.
Foreign Fighters/ Al Qaeda in Iraq	Estimated 3,000 in Iraq. Were led by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, a Jordanian national, until he was killed in U.S. airstrike June 7, 2006. Succeeded by Abu Hamza al-Muhajir. 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 October 2006 details 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); and
- \$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), local enclaves to provide secure conditions for reconstruction, as discussed in the section on security, below. The conference report on an FY2006 supplemental appropriation (P.L. 109-234) designated \$50 million in ESF for Iraq to be used to keep the CAP operating. That level of aid is expected in FY2007 under provisions of a continuing resolution (P.L. 109-383).

- 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 August 2006, another \$130 million in U.S. funds (and \$500 million in Iraqi funds) were allocated to assist Baghdad neighborhoods swept by U.S. and Iraqi forces in “Operation Together Forward.”
- As noted above, according to Iraq’s national timetable, a law on elections for provincial councils was to be drafted by the end of October 2006 and provincial elections to be held by June 2007, although it appears that this timetable will not be met. (Recommendation 29 of the Iraq Study Group report says provincial elections “should be held at the earliest possible date.”)

In addition to what is already allocated, the FY2006 regular foreign aid appropriations (conference report on P.L. 109-102) 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) provided another \$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). A female American staffer for NDI was killed in an ambush in Baghdad on January 17, 2006.

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 by the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction (SIGIR), the difficult security environment has slowed reconstruction.³⁰ For more detailed information on U.S. spending and economic reconstruction, see CRS Report RL31833, *Iraq: Recent Developments in Reconstruction Assistance*, by Curt Tarnoff.

A total of about \$34 billion has been appropriated for reconstruction funding, of which \$20.917 billion has been appropriated for the “Iraq Relief and Reconstruction Fund” (IRRF) in two supplemental appropriations: FY2003 supplemental, P.L. 108-11, which appropriated about \$2.5 billion; and the FY2004 supplemental appropriations, P.L. 108-106, which provided about \$18.42 billion. Of the IRRF funds, about \$20.244 billion has been obligated, and, of that, about \$16.936

³⁰ The defense authorization bill for FY2007 (P.L. 109-364) set October 1, 2007, for termination of oversight by the SIGIR. However, P.L. 109-440 extends that term until 10 months after 80% of the IRRF have been expended but includes FY2006 reconstruction funds for Iraq in the definition of the IRRF. The SIGIR’s mandate is therefore expected to extend until some time in 2008.

billion has been disbursed. According to State Department reports, the sector allocations for the IRRF are as follows:

- \$5.03 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. An 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). Foreign Operations programs for FY2007 are currently operating under the terms of a continuing appropriations resolution (P.L. 109-383, as amended) that provides funding at the FY2006 level or the House-passed FY2007 level, whichever is less. The continuing appropriations resolution expires on February 15, 2007.

The FY2007 Defense Appropriation (P.L. 109-289) provides another \$1.7 billion for the Iraqi security forces (discussed further below) and \$500 million in additional funds for the Commanders Emergency Response Program (CERP) under which U.S. military can expend funds for small construction projects intended to build good will with the Iraqi population. (In Recommendation 64, the Iraq Study Group says that U.S. economic assistance to Iraq should be increased to \$5 billion per year rather than be “permitted to decline.” Recommendation 67 calls on the President to appoint a Senior Advisor for Economic Reconstruction in Iraq.)

Iraq provides some additional funds for reconstruction. In 2006, and again in 2007, the Iraqi government allocated \$2 billion in Iraqi revenues for development activities. It has committed an additional \$10 billion in unspent funds for reconstruction under President Bush’s January 10 plan, discussed further below.

Oil Revenues. 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 compensating for the output shortfall. The northern export route was shut in early 2006 but is now operating. The Iraqi government needs to import refined gasoline because it lacks sufficient refining capacity. (In Recommendation 62, the Iraq Study Group says that the Iraqi government should accelerate oil well refurbishment and that the U.S. military should play a greater role in protecting oil infrastructure.)

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 a pending oil law might seek to develop Iraq's oil industry with minimal participation of firms from other countries, and both China and Russia, reportedly with some success, are pushing to include provisions in any new oil law that would give preference to development contracts signed during the Saddam era. Among newer investors, Poland reportedly is negotiating with Iraq for possible investments in Iraq's energy sector. As referenced above, in December 2005, it was reported that a Norwegian company, DNO, had contracted with the Kurdish administrative region to explore for oil near the northern city of Zakho, raising the concerns of Iraq's Arabs who view this as a move by the Kurds to control their own oil revenues. The field might eventually produce about 100,000 barrels per day. (In Recommendation 63, the Iraq Study Group says the United States should encourage investment in Iraq's oil sector and assist in eliminating contracting corruption in that sector.)

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 (2006)	Oil Revenue (2007 to date)
1.21 million barrels per day (mbd)	2.5 mbd	1.08 mbd	2.2 mbd	\$17 billion	\$31.3 billion	\$1.0 billion
Electricity						
Pre-War Load Served (MWh)	Current Load Served	Baghdad (hrs. per day)	National Average (hrs. per day)			
102,000	83,000	4.5	7.5			
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			
U.S. oil imports from Iraq			660,000 bpd			

Note: Figures in the table are provided by the State Department "Iraq Weekly Status Report" dated January 24, 2007. 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.³¹

- 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.³² On December 13, 2004, the World Trade Organization (WTO) agreed to begin accession talks with Iraq.

Security Challenges, Responses, and Options

Since the fall of Saddam Hussein, the United States has employed a multi-faceted approach to stabilizing Iraq. However, the Iraq Study Group said in its December 6 report that the "...situation in Iraq is grave and deteriorating,"³³ a view that appears widely shared by experts, and President Bush, in his January 10, 2007, speech on Iraq, said "The situation in Iraq is unacceptable to the American people and it is unacceptable to me." The deterioration in security is, at least partly, the result of growing sectarian violence — which some major news organizations now openly call a "civil war" — superimposed on a tenacious Sunni-led insurgency. The following sections analyze the U.S.-led approach to securing Iraq.

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

³¹ 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.

³² For more information, see CRS Report RL33376, *Iraq's Debt Relief: Procedure and Potential Implications for International Debt Relief*, by Martin A. Weiss.

³³ p.xiii of the Executive Summary of the Iraq Study Group Report. December 6, 2006.

appropriation (P.L. 109-13), and renewed by the FY2007 Defense Appropriation (P.L. 109-289). The latest version was issued in November 2006 and provides some of the information below. Another report, first issued April 6, 2006 (“1227 Report”), is required by Section 1227 of the Defense Authorization Act for FY2006 (P.L. 109-163).

Sunni Arab-Led Insurgency

The Sunni Arab-led insurgency against U.S. forces and the Iraqi government has defied official U.S. expectations in intensity and duration. The Administration’s “National Strategy for Victory in Iraq” (November 30, 2005) said that many insurgents are motivated by opposition to perceived U.S. rule in Iraq, to democracy, and to Shiite political dominance. Others want to return the Baath Party to power, although, according to many experts, some would accept a larger Sunni political role 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 Iraqi insurgent factions announced the formation of a national “Mujahedin Shura (Council)” purportedly including Al Qaeda in Iraq.

Despite their growing coordination, the insurgents failed to derail the political transition,³⁴ although they have succeeded, to some extent, in stimulating high levels of sectarian violence and debate in the United States over the continuing U.S. commitment in Iraq. Sunni insurgent groups have conducted several large-scale (50 insurgents fighters or more) attacks on police stations and other fixed positions during 2006, as well as several mass kidnappings of 50 or more people at a time from fixed locations. Other targets of their grenades, IEDs (improvised explosive devices), mortars, and direct weapons fire are U.S. forces and Iraqi officials and security forces, as well as Iraqi civilians of rival sects, Iraqis working for U.S. authorities, foreign contractors and aid workers, oil export and gasoline distribution facilities, and water, power, and other infrastructure facilities. A *New York Times* report of December 19, 2006, said that Sunni insurgents had succeeded in destroying many of the power stations that feed electricity to Baghdad, contributing to the relative lack of power there. Whole Sunni-dominated neighborhoods of Baghdad, including Amiriya, Adhamiya, Jihad, Amal, and Doura, not to mention the Anbar Province city of Ramadi, have increasingly served as Sunni insurgent bases, and these districts are also the front lines of sectarian warfare with Shiite militias pushing west from the largely Shiite districts east of the Tigris River in Baghdad. Sunni insurgent violence flared in the Haifa Street area of Baghdad in January 2007.

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 and foreign

³⁴ For further information, see Baram, Amatzia. “*Who Are the Insurgents?*” U.S. Institute of Peace, Special Report 134, April 2005; and Eisenstadt, Michael and Jeffrey White. “*Assessing Iraq’s Sunni Arab Insurgency.*” Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Policy Focus No. 50, December 2005.

diplomats in Iraq. The FY2006 supplemental (P.L. 109-234) provides \$1.3 million in Treasury Department funds to disrupt insurgent financing.

Table 4. Key Security/Violence Indicators

Indicator	Previous Level	Current Level
Number of U.S. forces in Iraq	160,000 (most of 2005 during election periods)	approximately 135,000 (before post-January 10, 2007 "surge")
Partner country forces in Iraq	28,000 (2005)	14,650 from 25 other countries
Number of Insurgents (Iraqi citizens)	-	25,000 U.S. estimates; Iraqi estimates run to 40,000, plus 150,000 supporters
Number of non-Iraqi Fighters in Insurgency	-	1,300 - 3,500
Number of Iranian intelligence personnel and Revolutionary Guard Qods Force alleged in Iraq		150+
Number of Attacks/day (all types)	120/day (mid-2006)	150/day
Attacks on Infrastructure	13/day (2004)	1/day
Iraqi Police Killed		12,000
Number of Shiite militiamen	20,000 (2003)	80,000 (60,000 Mahdi, 15,000 Badr, 5,000 other)
Internally Displaced Persons	300,000 (August 06)	460,000
Iraqis Leaving Iraq (since fall of Saddam)	-	1.4 million (incl. 700,000 to Jordan, 600,000 to Syria)
Iraq Civilian Deaths	38/day (end 2005)	34,000 total: 94/day (all 2006)
Iraqi Army Battalions engaged in operations	-	104
Iraqi Army and Special Operations Battalions in the Lead on Operations	57 (May 2006)	94
National Police Battalions in the Lead	6 (May 2006)	5
Number of Provinces Under Iraqi Security Control	0 (end 2005)	3 (Muthanna, Dhi Qar, and Najaf. Maysan and Wasit to be handed over by February 2007)

Sources: Information in this table is provided by a variety of sources, including U.S. government reports on Iraq, Iraqi statements, the Iraq Study Group report, U.N. figures, and press reports.

Note: Additional figures on total numbers of Iraqi security forces, by force component, is contained in **Tables 5 and 6**, below.

Al Qaeda in Iraq/Zarqawi Faction.³⁵ A numerically small but politically significant component of the insurgency is non-Iraqi, constituted as an organization called Al Qaeda-Iraq. The faction was founded by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, a Jordanian Arab who reputedly fought in Afghanistan during the 1980s alongside other Arab volunteers against the Soviet Union.³⁶ 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.

Al Qaeda-Iraq has been a U.S. focus from very early on in the war because of its 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 U.N. headquarters at the Canal Hotel in Baghdad (August 19, 2003),³⁷ followed by the August 29, 2003, bombing in Najaf that killed SCIRI leader Mohammad Baqr Al Hakim. The faction, and related factions, have also kidnapped a total of over 250 foreigner workers, and killed about 40 of those. Zarqawi's strategy was to spark Sunni-Shiite civil war, an outcome that President Bush has said largely succeeded in accomplishing that objective. In actions intended to spread its activities outside Iraq, Al Qaeda-Iraq 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 for Sunni Insurgents. Numerous accounts have said that Sunni insurgents are receiving help from neighboring states (money and weapons),³⁸ although others believe that outside support for the insurgency is not decisive. Largely because of this outside support, the first 17 recommendations of the Iraq Study Group report call for intensified regional diplomacy, including multi-lateral diplomacy with Syria and Iran, in an effort to persuade outside parties not to stoke the violence in Iraq by aiding or protegee factions in Iraq.

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.

³⁵ See CRS Report RL32217, *Iraq and Al Qaeda: Allies or Not?*, by Kenneth Katzman.

³⁶ Zarqawi himself 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-Islam near the town of Khurmal. 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 (Iraq)." It is named as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO), assuming that designation from the earlier Unity and Jihad title, which was designated as an FTO in October 2004.

³⁷ 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.

³⁸ Blanford, Nicholas. "Sealing Syria's Desolate Border," *Christian Science Monitor*, Dec. 21, 2004.

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. The latest DOD "Measuring Stability" report says that Syria provides help to Sunni insurgents, mainly Baathist factions.

Other assessments say the Sunni insurgents, both Iraqi and non-Iraqi, receive funding from wealthy donors in neighboring countries such as Saudi Arabia,³⁹ where a number of clerics have publicly called on Saudis to support the Iraqi insurgency. Press reports say that Saudi officials told visiting Vice President Cheney in November 2006 that the Saudis might be compelled to assist Iraq's Sunnis if the United States withdraws from Iraq.

Sectarian Violence and 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 now say that sectarian-motivated violence — manifestations of an all-out struggle for political and economic power in Iraq — has now displaced the Sunni-led insurgency as the primary security challenge in Iraq. Several Members and outside experts now describe trends in Iraq as a "civil war." Senior U.S. officials have said the sectarian violence risks becoming all-out civil war, but that they do not consider Iraq in a civil war now. The Iraq Study Group report does not use that term to characterize the multi-faceted violence in Iraq.

Most trace the escalation of sectarian violence to the February 22, 2006, Al Qaeda-Iraq 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 (including mortar fire), abductions, and attacks on mosques, markets, and apartment buildings frequented or inhabited by members of the rival sect, intended at least in part to drive rival sects out of mixed neighborhoods. Press accounts (*New York Times*, December 24, 2006) say the attacks are converting mixed Sunni-Shiite districts of Baghdad, such as Hurriya, into predominantly Shiite districts. Many of those abducted turn up bound and gagged, dumped in rivers, facilities, vehicles, or fields. The sectarian violence was given further impetus by suicide bombings on November 23, 2006, that killed more than 200 mostly Shiites. Sunnis are accusing the Shiites of using their preponderant presence in the emerging security forces, as well as their party-based militias, to commit the atrocities, but many Shiites, for their part, blame Sunni insurgents for the instigation.

The sectarian violence has caused U.S. officials to assert that the new government must dismantle 23 known militias. Of them, seven, including the peshmerga and the Badr Brigades, were recognized in CPA Order 91 as "anti-

³⁹ 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.

Saddam forces” and were given incentives in that Order to disband. U.S. forces have conducted some operations to curb them, particularly the Mahdi Army of Sadr. In late 2005, U.S. forces uncovered militia-run detention facilities (“Site 4”) and arrested those (Badr and related Iraqi police) running them. U.S. officials as well as the new Interior Minister Jawad Bolani are moving to remove militiamen and death squad participants from the security forces. In October 2006, Bolani fired 3,000 Ministry employees for alleged sectarian links, and he fired two major commanders of National Police components. On October 3, 2006, an entire brigade of National Police were taken out of duty status for retraining for alleged toleration of sectarian killings in Baghdad.

However, in comments to journalists in late 2006, U.S. commanders have expressed frustration with Maliki for forcing them to release suspected Mahdi militia commanders and to dismantle U.S. checkpoints in Sadr City, set up to try to prevent Shiite sectarian militiamen from operating. U.S. officers blamed these restrictions, in part, for the failure of “Operation Together Forward.” That Baghdad security operation involved about 4,000 additional U.S. troops deployed in Baghdad (supplementing the 9,000 U.S. forces there already), focused on such violent districts as Doura, Amiriyah, Rashid, Ghaziliyah, and Mansour. U.S. commanders said, early on in the operation, that violence in these districts had dropped substantially, over 50% in some cases. However, in late October 2006, U.S. military officials said publicly that the operation had not reduced violence overall and would be “re-focused.” Also contributing to the failure was Iraq’s deployment of only two out of the six battalions committed to the operation (only 1,500 soldiers out of 4,000 committed). In an apparent attempt to demonstrate increased cooperation following President Bush’s announcement on January 10, 2007, of a new security plan, it was reported that, in recent weeks, the Maliki government had arrested a total of about 600 Mahdi Army commanders, and he has communicated to Sadr that Maliki would no longer stand in the way of operations against the Mahdi forces.

An additional Shiite threat came unexpectedly in January 2007 from a previously little known faction called the “Soldiers of Heaven.” The group massed several hundred fighters outside Karbala in a purported plot to attack Shiite pilgrims and senior clerics there during the Shiite celebration of Ashura. Some Iraqi officials said the group sought to carry out wanton destruction to prepare for the return of the “Hidden Imam” — the twelfth Imam of Shiite Islam whose return would supposedly usher in a new era of purification. Many of the group’s members, and its leader, were killed or captured in a one-day battle on January 27, 2007, by Iraqi forces backed by U.S. air power and ground operations.

Iraqi Christians and their churches have become major targets of Shiite and Sunni armed factions, viewing them as allies of the United States. Since the fall of Saddam Hussein, as many as 100,000 Christians might have left Iraq, leaving the current size of the community in Iraq at about 600,000 - 800,000. The two most prominent Christian sects in Iraq are the Chaldean Catholics and the Assyrian Christians.

The three major organized militias in Iraq are discussed below:

- *Kurdish Peshmerga.* Together, the KDP and PUK may have as many as 100,000 *peshmergas* (fighters), most of which are providing security in the Kurdish regional area (Dahuk, Sulaymaniyah, and Irbil Provinces). Some are in the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and deployed 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. *Peshmerga* do not appear to be involved in the Sunni Arab-Shiite Arab sectarian violence gripping Iraq.
- *Badr Brigades.* This militia 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, during elections in 2005. Badr militiamen play unofficial policing throughout southern Iraq, and many Badr members also reputedly are in the National Police.
- *Mahdi Army.* The November 2006 "Measuring Stability" report says this militia "has replaced Al Qaeda in Iraq as the most dangerous accelerant of potentially self-sustaining sectarian violence in Iraq." This represents a gaining of strength since U.S. military operations suppressed Mahdi uprisings in April and August of 2004. That fighting was ended with compromises under which Mahdi forces stopped fighting in exchange for lenient treatment or releases of prisoners, amnesty for Sadr himself, and reconstruction aid. Mahdi assertiveness since 2005 accounted for a sharp deterioration of relations between the Mahdi Army and British and U.S. forces, and between Sadr and other Iraqi leaders more generally. At least 35 British soldiers have died in suspected Mahdi attacks in southern Iraq since 2005, including a British helicopter shot down in May 2006. Mahdi forces also shelled a British base near Amarah in August 2006, contributing to a British decision to leave the base, and the militia took over Amarah briefly for a few days in late October 2006. Since mid-2006, there have been some U.S. casualties in Sadr strongholds, and some reports suggest that it was a Mahdi faction that killed 5 U.S. soldiers in Karbala on January 20, 2007. Some experts, citing independent-minded Mahdi commanders such as one named Abu Deraa, believe Sadr himself has tried to rein in Mahdi violence but no longer has full control of his armed following.

Iranian Support. U.S. officials have repeatedly accused Iran of aiding Shiite militias and provided increasingly specific evidence based on arrests of Iranian agents in December 2006 and January 2007 and on serial numbers of explosives discovered in Iraq. U.S. military officials have continued to assert that it is mostly the Qods (Jerusalem) Force of Iran's Revolutionary Guard that is providing armed Iraqi Shiite factions (most likely Sadr's Mahdi forces) with explosives and weapons. Because of Iran's support for Shiite militias, the United States and Iran announced in March 2006 that they would conduct direct talks on the issue of stabilizing Iraq, but Iran subsequently said the talks were not needed because Iraq had a new government, and no talks have been held. The Iraq Study Group (Recommendations 9, 10, and 11) says that the United States should engage Iran multilaterally to enlist its assistance on Iraq, but in an interview with journalists on December 14, 2006, Secretary of State Rice rejected the Study Group recommendation by saying that the United States would not likely bargain with Iran, such as electing not to try to sanction Iran for its nuclear program advancement, to obtain its assistance in stabilizing Iraq.⁴⁰ A clearer sign of the Administration position came in the President's January 10, 2007, initiative, which included announcement of an additional aircraft carrier group and additional Patriot anti-missile systems to the Gulf, moves clearly directed against Iran. At the same time, U.S. forces arrested alleged Iranian Revolutionary Guard Qods Forces agents — two at a SCIRI compound in Baghdad and five more at a compound in Irbil. The Iraqi government compelled the release of the first two arrested; the others are still held. The *Washington Post* reported on January 26, 2007, that the Administration has altered its policy to allow for U.S. forces to combat Iranian agents in Iraq directly if they are observed actively assisting Iraqi armed factions. (For more information, see CRS Report RS22323, *Iran's Influence in Iraq*, by Kenneth Katzman.)

U.S. Efforts to Restore Security

For the nearly four years since the fall of Saddam Hussein, the Administration has tried to refine its stabilization strategy, with increasing focus on curbing sectarian violence. Options for further alterations, set to be announced in January 2007, are discussed later in this paper.

“Clear, Hold, and Build” Strategy/Provincial Reconstruction Teams. In its November 2005 “National Strategy for Victory in Iraq,” the Administration publicly articulated a strategy called “clear, hold, and build,” intended to create and expand stable enclaves by positioning Iraqi forces and U.S. civilian reconstruction experts in areas cleared of insurgents. The strategy, based partly on an idea advanced by Andrew Krepinevich in the September/October 2005 issue of *Foreign Affairs*,⁴¹ 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 could eventually expand throughout Iraq. The strategy formed the basis of Operation Together Forward (I and II) as well as the President's January 10, 2007, initiative, discussed below.

⁴⁰ Kessler, Glenn. “Rice Rejects Overture to Iran and Syria,” *Washington Post*, December 15, 2006.

⁴¹ Krepinevich, Andrew. “How to Win in Iraq,” *Foreign Affairs*, Sept./Oct. 2005.

In conjunction with the U.S. strategy, the Administration has formed Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), a concept used extensively in Afghanistan. Each PRT is civilian led, composed of about 100 U.S. State Department and USAID 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. The concept ran into some U.S. military objections to taking on expanded missions, but the debate was resolved with an agreement by DOD to provide security to the U.S.-run PRTs. Thus far, ten PRTs have been inaugurated, of which the following seven are run by the United States: Mosul, Kirkuk, Hilla, Baghdad, Anbar Province, two in Salah ad-Din Province, and Baquba. Of the partner-run PRTs, Britain has formed a PRT in Basra, Italy has formed one in Dhi Qar province, and South Korea runs one in Irbil. In conjunction with the President's January 10, 2007, strategy announcement, plans are to open an additional twelve PRTs, including six more in Baghdad and three more in Anbar. These plans will necessitate adding 400 diplomats and contractors to staff the new PRTs.

PRT Funding. The FY2006 supplemental request asked for \$400 million for operational costs for the PRTs, of which the enacted version, P.L. 109-234, provides \$229 million. The requested \$675 million for development grants to be distributed by the PRTs is fully funded through the ESF appropriation for Iraq in this law. In connection with the President's January 10, 2007 initiative and its provision to add PRTs, the Administration will ask for \$414 million in additional FY2007 funds for PRTs.

U.S. Counter-Insurgent Combat Operations. The Administration position is that continued combat operations against the insurgency. U.S. military headquarters in Baghdad (Combined Joint Task Force-7, CJTF-7) is a multi-national headquarters "Multinational Force-Iraq, MNF-I," headed by four-star U.S. Gen. George Casey. As of December 2006, the head of Multinational Corps-Iraq, is Lt. Gen. Ray Odierno.

A major focus of U.S. counter-insurgent combat has been Anbar Province, which includes the cities of Fallujah and Ramadi (provincial capital), the latter of which is the most restive of all Iraqi cities and which is assessed to have virtually no functioning governance. However, a reported assessment by a U.S. intelligence officer in August 2006 said that U.S. efforts in Anbar were failing and that the province is "lost" politically. Still, there are about 40,000 U.S. troops in Anbar conducting combat primarily in and around Ramadi. In the run-up to the December 15, 2005, 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 January 30, 2006, 3,075 U.S. forces and about 250 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, 2,929 have occurred since President Bush declared an end to "major combat operations" in Iraq on May 1, 2003, and about 2,475 were by hostile action. Estimates of Iraqi civilian death rates are noted in the "security indicators" table above. As of January 2007, about 650 U.S.

civilian contractors have been killed in Iraq. (See CRS Report RS22532, *Iraqi Police and Security Forces Casualty Estimates*, and CRS Report RS22537, *Iraqi Civilian Deaths Estimates*, both by Hannah Fischer.)

Building Iraqi Security Forces (ISF)⁴²

A major pillar of existing U.S. policy has been to equip and train Iraqi security forces (ISF) that could secure Iraq by themselves, although recent Administration reviews have caused a move away from this strategy. President Bush stated in a June 28, 2005 speech, “Our strategy can be summed up this way: As the Iraqis stand up, we will stand down.”⁴³ Iraqi proposals for the timetables for Iraqi security control are by April 2007, Iraq is to assume full control of its military. By September 2007, Iraq is to have security control of all 18 provinces; and, by December 2007, it is to be completely self-reliant. The Iraq Study Group recommends that the training and equipping of the ISF should be completed by the first quarter of 2008 (Recommendation 42.) With the total ISF goal of 325,000 virtually reached, Defense Department plans in late 2006 were to increase the number of U.S. forces embedded with or mentoring the ISF from 4,000 to well over 10,000, a plan endorsed by the Iraq Study Group report (Recommendations 43 and 44). However, the President’s January 10, 2007, plan relies more heavily on embedding of U.S. forces with the ISF rather than transferring security responsibilities to the ISF.

The tables below detail the composition of the ISF and provide Administration assessments of force readiness. As of January 10, 2007, there are 323,000 total ISF: 134,700 “operational” military forces under the Ministry of Defense and 188,300 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), is Gen. Martin Dempsey. 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 live in their areas of operation, and attendance is hard to account for. Because of the deficiencies in ISF performance discussed below, the target level of the ISF has been increased to about 400,000.

Although U.S. commanders are skeptical about Iraq’s security timetable, U.S. forces have turned over greater formal responsibility to the ISF. Areas under ISF control or leadership are not necessarily pacified or stable, as noted by the major battle in Najaf on January 27, 2007. At least one-third of the ISF is now under Iraqi operational control. U.S. and partner forces have now turned over to the ISF 40 out of 111 forward operation bases, and as shown in the earlier table, three whole provinces — and large parts of many of the other 15 provinces — have been turned over to ISF control. (A map showing area under Iraqi control and ISF lead can be found in the Iraq Weekly Status Report of the State Department, available at [<http://www.state.gov/p/nea/ci/c3212.htm>]).

⁴² For additional information, see CRS Report RS22093, *Iraq’s New Security Forces: The Challenge of Sectarian and Ethnic Influences*, by Jeremy Sharp.

⁴³ Speech by President Bush can be found at [<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2005/06/print/20050628-7.html>].

The most recent DOD “Measuring Stability” report, released November 2006, reiterates U.S. official statements of progress in building the ISF, while continuing previous criticisms, including the observation that the ISF continue to lack an effective command structure, independent initiative, or commitment to the mission, and that it could fragment if U.S. troops draw down.⁴⁴ 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.⁴⁵ Iraqi forces also were unable to prevent looting of the British base, cited above, abandoned by British forces in August 2006 in Amarah. On the other hand, some U.S. commanders praised their performance in the January 27, 2007, Najaf battle for detecting and then confronting the large, armed formation.

A major issue is ethnic balance and involvement in sectarian violence. U.S. commanders have consistently 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. One controversial element of the January 10, 2007, new Baghdad security plan is its apparent reliance on several mostly Kurdish brigades, a deployment likely to be resented by both Shiite and Sunni Arabs in the capital.

One positive trend noted by U.S. officials is what they say is increasing tribal cooperation in Anbar Province. According to press reports, tribal leaders have, in recent months, persuaded 2,000 men (almost all Sunni) to join the ISF in the province, and these forces are participating in securing the border with Syria.

The Iraq Study Group and other reports reserve their most vocal criticism for the police forces, particularly the National Police, because of rampant corruption and alleged involvement in sectarian violence, as noted throughout this paper. In 2005, U.S. officials stated that 2006 would be the “year of the police,” but little progress has now been noted. The Iraq Study Group (Recommendations 50-61) contain several suggestions for reforming and improving the police, including assigning the lead role in advising and training the anti-crime portions of the police forces to the U.S. Department of Justice, and transferring those police forces that are involved in anti-insurgency operations to the Ministry of Defense from their current organizational structure under the Ministry of Interior.

Weaponry. Most observers say the ISF are severely underequipped, dependent primarily on donations of surplus equipment by coalition members. Some of its equipment is discussed in the table below. The October 2006 report of the SIGIR ([<http://www.sigir.mil/reports/quarterlyreports/default.aspx>]) notes problems with tracking Iraqi weapons; of the approximately 370,000 weapons turned over to Iraq by the United States since Saddam’s fall, only 12,000 serial numbers were properly recorded. Some fear that some of these weapons might have fallen into the hands of

⁴⁴ Fallows, James. “Why Iraq Has No Army.” *Atlantic Monthly*, December 2005.

⁴⁵ Castaneda, Antonio. “Iraqi Desertions Complicate U.S. Mission.” *Associated Press*, Jan. 31, 2006.

insurgents or sectarian militias, although it is also possible the weapons are still in Defense and Interior Ministry stocks but are not catalogued. (In Recommendation 45, the Iraq Study Group said the United States should encourage the Iraqi government to accelerate its Foreign Military Sales requests for U.S. arms and that departing U.S. combat units should leave behind some of their equipment for use by the ISF.)

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 September 20, 2006, about \$4.938 billion has been obligated and \$4.621 billion of that has been disbursed.
- An 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. Of that amount, about \$4.7 billion has been obligated. *Therefore, the total obligated (spent) for the ISF to date is about \$9.6 billion.*
- The FY2006 supplemental (P.L. 109-234) provided another \$3 billion for the ISF but withholds the remaining ISF facilities construction funding.
- The FY2007 Defense appropriations law (P.L. 109-289) provides an additional \$1.7 billion to train and equip the ISF. Some Defense officials said in late October 2006 that there might be a supplemental FY2007 request for additional ISF funding in conjunction with the decision to train more ISF than the 325,000 current goal.

Table 5. Ministry of Defense Forces
(As of January 24, 2007)

Force	Size/Strength	IRRF Funds Allocated
Iraqi Army	123,700 total; current goal is 131,000. Forces in units are in 112 battalions (about 70,000 personnel). 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 900, 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, 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	134,700	
U.S./Other Trainers	U.S. training, including embedding with Iraqi units (10 per battalion), involves about 4,000 U.S. forces (increasing to 10,000), run by Multinational Security Transition Command - Iraq (MNSTC-I). Training at Taji, north of Baghdad; Kirkush, near Iranian border; and Numaniya, south of Baghdad. All 26 NATO nations at NATO Training Mission - Iraq (NTM-I) at Rustamiyah (300 trainers). Others trained at NATO bases in Norway and Italy. Jordan, Germany, and Egypt also have done training.	

Table 6. Ministry of Interior Forces
(As of January 24, 2007)

Force/Entity	Size/Strength	IRRF Funds Allocated
Ministry of Interior	Total size unknown. 3,000 employees dismissed in October for corruption/sectarianism.	
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
Dignitary Protection	About 500 personnel	
National Police	About 24,400. Comprises "Police Commandos," Public Order Police," and "Mechanized Police." Organized into 28 battalions. Overwhelmingly Shiite. Gets four weeks of counter-insurgency training. Iraq Study Group (Recommendation 50) proposes transfer to MOD control.	
Emergency Response Unit	About 300, able to lead operations. Hostage rescue.	
Border Enforcement Department	28,100. Controls 258 border forts built or under construction. Has Riverine Police component to secure water crossings. Iraq Study Group (Recommendation 51) proposes transfer to MOD control.	\$437 million (incl. \$3 million for stipends to 150 former WMD workers.
Totals (all forces)	188,300. Current Goal is 195,000	
Training	Training by 2,000 U.S. personnel (DOD-lead) 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. Iraq Study Group (Recommendation 57) proposes U.S. training at local police station level. Countries doing training aside from U.S.: Canada, Britain, Australia, Sweden, Poland, UAE, Denmark, Austria, Finland, Czech Republic, Germany (now suspended), Hungary, Slovenia, Slovakia, Singapore, Belgium, and Egypt.	
Facilities Protection Service (FPS)	Growing allegations that some of the 145,000 members of the FPS, which are attached to individual ministries, are involved in sectarian violence. 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. (In Recommendation 54, the Iraq Study Group says the Ministry of Interior should identify, register, and otherwise control FPS.)	\$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. Partner country total forces are in the security indicators table above, and a list of contributing countries, although not force levels, can be found in the Department of State's "Iraq Weekly Status Report" referenced earlier. Britain continues to lead a multinational division in southern Iraq, based in Basra, but Britain says it will likely halve its force by mid-2007. A Poland-led force (Polish forces number 900, down from a high of 2,600 in 2005) has been based in Hilla and includes forces from the following foreign countries: Armenia, Slovakia, Denmark, El Salvador, Ukraine, Romania, Lithuania, Latvia, Mongolia, and Kazakhstan. However, Poland is facing out its role and might withdraw its remaining forces by the end of 2006.

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

- Ukraine, which lost eight soldiers in a January 2005 insurgent attack, withdrew most of its 1,500 forces after the December 2005 elections.
- Bulgaria pulled out its 360-member unit after the December 2005 elections. However, in March 2006 it sent in a 150-person force to take over guard duties of Camp Ashraf, a base in eastern Iraq where Iranian oppositionists are 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 deployment has been extended until the end of 2007.
- 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, and security in Muthanna was handed over to ISF control.

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.
- Italy completed its withdrawal in December 2006 after turning over Dhi Qar Province over to ISF control.
- 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 also train 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.

Iraq Study Group Report, President's January 10 Initiative, Legislation, and Other Options

President Bush, Congress, and observers have debated U.S. policy in Iraq amid widespread concurrence, including from President Bush, that progress in Iraq has been unsatisfactory. The President has said he weighed the December 6, 2006, report of the Study Group, as well as input from several other reviews under way, including one directed by Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Peter Pace and another under direction of the National Security Council, in formulating the new initiative for Iraq announced on January 10, 2007. In the immediate run-up to the speech, a number of senior personnel shifts were announced: U.S. Ambassador Khalilzad is to be replaced by Ambassador to Pakistan Ryan Crocker, Gen. Abizaid is to be replaced as CENTCOM Commander by Admiral William Fallon; and Gen. Casey is to be replaced as head of MNF-I by General David Petraeus, who previously led U.S. troops in the Mosul area and, on another tour, established the training and equipping program for the ISF. Robert Gates replaced Donald Rumsfeld as Defense Secretary in December 2006.

The President's January 10, 2007, initiative on Iraq is intended primarily to bring security to Baghdad and create conditions under which Iraq's communities can reconcile. The plan, which in many ways reflects recommendations in a January 2007 report by the American Enterprise Institute entitled "Choosing Victory: A Plan for Success in Iraq,"⁴⁷ includes the following:

⁴⁷ The two principal authors of the report are Frederick W. Kagan and Jack Keane (General, U.S. Army, ret.).

- the infusion of an additional 17,500 U.S. forces to Baghdad and 4,000 Marines to Anbar Province. The plan envisions that these forces, along with additional Iraqi forces, will be able to secure and hold neighborhoods and areas cleared of insurgents and thereby cause the population not to depend on militias or other armed elements for security. Many of the U.S. forces are to be in place by February 1 and the deployment completed by April 2007;
- cooperation from the Iraqi government, such as progress on the reconciliation steps discussed earlier;
- the commitment of 3 Iraqi brigades (about 6,000 soldiers), and an unspecified number of police commandos and regular police, in nine sectors of Baghdad. Iraq is to designate a commander and deputy commander of Baghdad;
- commitment of the Iraqi government to allow U.S. and Iraqi forces to conduct raids and patrols against Shiite militias, which presumably will bring U.S. forces into conflict with the Mahdi Army. However, there is substantial outside skepticism that the Maliki government will uphold the commitment to conduct even-handed security operations against Shiite militias and against Sunni insurgents in Baghdad, and press reports say there are U.S.-Iraq disagreements over how to implement the plan with respect to precisely that issue;
- commitment of \$10 billion in unspent Iraqi funds for reconstruction; and
- provision of at least \$1.2 billion in new U.S. aid, including \$414 million for PRTs, and the remainder for job creation and CERP projects, in part to revive long-dormant state-owned factories.

The President's January 10 plan appears to deviate substantially from many aspects of the Iraq Study Group report. The Iraq Study Group was launched in March 2006; chosen by mutual agreement among its congressional organizers to co-chair are former Secretary of State James Baker and former Chairman of the House International Relations Committee Lee Hamilton. The eight other members of the Group are from both parties and have held high positions in government. The group was funded by the conference report on P.L. 109-234, FY2006 supplemental, which provided \$1 million for operations of the group. The Group submitted its report to President Bush on December 6, 2006 (full text at [<http://www.usip.org>]). Some of the specific recommendations have been discussed throughout this paper when developments relevant to the recommendation are analyzed. Among the major themes of the 79 recommendations, along with comparable or contrasting features of the President's plan, are the following:

- Heightened regional and international diplomacy, including with Iran and Syria, and including the holding of a major international conference in Baghdad (Recommendations 1-12). The President's

January 10 initiative was highly critical of both Iran and Syria and outlined additional measures to prevent both states from interfering in Iraq; in the case of Iran, the President announced that a second aircraft carrier group would go to the Persian Gulf and related measures.

- As part of an international approach, renewed commitment to Arab-Israeli peace (Recommendations 13-17). This was not a major feature of the President's plan, although he did discuss stepped up U.S. diplomacy on this issue.
- Additional economic, political, and military support for the stabilization of Afghanistan (Recommendation 18). This was not specified in the President's plan, although there is reported consideration of a U.S. troop and aid increase for Afghanistan.
- Setting milestones for the Iraqi government to achieve political reconciliation, security, and governance, including possibly withholding some U.S. support if the Iraqi government refuses or fails to do so (Recommendations 19-37). The President's plan does not threaten to reduce support for the Iraqi government if it fails to uphold its commitments.
- Prioritizing training of the ISF rather than U.S. direct combat (Recommendations 40-45). The President's plan prioritizes U.S. combat but includes substantially increased U.S. embedding with Iraqi units.
- Giving greater control over police and police commando units to the Iraqi Ministry of Defense, which is considered less sectarian than the Ministry of Interior that now controls some of these forces, and reforming the Ministry of Interior (Recommendations 50-58). The President's plan, according to a White House fact sheet released on January 10, requires reform of the Ministry of Interior.
- Securing and expanding Iraq's oil sector (Recommendations 62-63). The President's plan expects Iraq to pass a pending oil law, which would, in part, encourage foreign investment in Iraq's energy sector.
- Increasing economic aid to Iraq and enlisting more international donations of assistance (Recommendations 64-67). The President's plan includes increases in aid, as discussed above.
- Ensuring that the United States has the right skills serving in Iraq and has sufficient intelligence on developments there (Recommendations 73-79). This is not specifically addressed in the President's plan.

Reaction on key foreign policy and defense committees to the President's plan appeared to be negative, judging from hearings on Iraq held right after the plan was announced. The contention appeared to center on the announcement that additional U.S. forces would go to Iraq, and many experts say additional forces will delay the time when Iraq's security forces can handle their own security affairs. Others say that increasing troops does not resolve the underlying political differences in Iraq. Supporters of the plan said that it offers substantially more prospects of success than any of the likely alternatives. Since the President's speech, several congressional resolutions have been introduced that oppose the increase in U.S. forces, including H.R. 353, H.R. 438, H.Con.Res. 23, H.Res. 41, and S.Con.Res. 2, the latter reported out of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on January 24 (12-9 vote). Senator Warner introduced a slightly different version, S.Con.Res. 4, with language considered less critical of the Administration. On February 1, 2007, Senator Warner introduced a resolution, S.Con.Res. 7, that purportedly adopts elements of both S.Con.Res. 2 and S.Con.Res. 4 in an apparent effort to win broad Senate support. Another Senate resolution, S. 233, would prohibit the expenditure of U.S. funds for a troop increase, and another, S. 308, would require congressional authorization for an increase in forces. Some Members say they plan legislation supporting the President's initiative and opposing any binding efforts to limit funds for the deployment.

The sections below discuss options that have been under discussion even before the release of the Iraq Study Group report, and some of the ideas discussed may be similar to some of the recommendations of the Study Group as well as the President's plan.

Altering Troop Levels or Mission

Even before announcing his January 10 plan, President Bush opposed major reductions in troop levels or changes to their mission, stating that the United States must uphold its "commitment" to the Iraqi government and maintaining that the Iraqi government would collapse upon an immediate pullout. Other consequences, according to the Administration, would be full-scale civil war, an emboldening of terrorists that might have safe haven in Iraq, and the drawing in of regional powers to the fighting in Iraq. Others argue that the loss of the Iraq effort could cause terrorists to attempt attacks in the United States itself. In the 109th Congress, H.Res. 861 stated 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; the resolution passed the House on June 16 by a vote of 256-153, with 5 voting "present."

Troop Increase. Some observers (but not the Study Group report) have said that the United States should increase troops levels in Iraq even further to tamp down sectarian violence and prevent Sunni insurgents from re-infiltrating areas cleared by U.S. operations. The American Enterprise Institute paper mentioned above recommends that at least 20,000 additional U.S. forces would be required to secure Baghdad, a number roughly in line with the President's January 10 plan. However, the AEI report's authors say that a troop "surge" needs to be relatively sustained,

lasting at least 18 months, to have the desired effect,⁴⁸ although U.S. officials, including Defense Secretary Robert Gates, have thus far talked about six months.

Immediate Withdrawal. Some Members argue that the United States should begin to withdraw immediately, maintaining that the decision to invade Iraq 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 most of the approximately 50 Members of the “Out of Iraq Congressional Caucus,” formed in June 2005. In November 2005, Representative John Murtha, ranking member (now chairman) of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, publicly called for an “immediate” pullout (over six months). His resolution in the 109th Congress (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, mostly in Kuwait (some say U.S. troops could be based in the Kurdish north) from which U.S. forces could continue to battle Al Qaeda - Iraq. 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. Representative Murtha has introduced a similar bill in the 110th Congress (H.J.Res. 18); a Senate bill (S. 121) as well as a few other House bills (H.R. 663, H.R. 455, and H.R. 645) contain similar provisions.

Other Members argue that U.S. forces are now policing a civil war rather than fighting an insurgency. Some have introduced legislation (H.R. 508 and H.R. 413) that would repeal the original authorization for the Iraq war.

Withdrawal Timetable. Another alternative considered in the 109th Congress is the setting of a timetable for a U.S. withdrawal or the beginning of a withdrawal. The Iraq Study Group suggests a winding down of the U.S. combat mission by early 2008 but does not recommend a firm timetable. In the 109th Congress, this option was typified by H.J.Res. 55, introduced by Representative Neil Abercrombie, which called on the Administration to begin a withdrawal by October 2006. H.Con.Res. 348, introduced by Representative Mike Thompson, called for a redeployment of U.S. forces no later than September 30, 2006. In the 110th Congress, Senator Obama said on January 30, 2007, that he would introduce legislation to set a deadline for withdrawing combat troops from Iraq by March 31, 2008.

In the 109th Congress, the timetable issue was debated extensively. 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

⁴⁸ Keane, Jack and Frederick Kagan. “The Right Type of Surge,” *Washington Post* op-ed, December 27, 2006.

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 bipartisan 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). On June 22, 2006, the Senate debated two Iraq-related amendments to an FY2007 defense authorization bill (S. 2766). One, offered by Senator Kerry, setting a July 1, 2007, deadline for U.S. redeployment from Iraq, was defeated 86-13. Another 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.

Troop Reduction. Depending on the results of the President’s January 10, 2007, initiative, some might revive debate on a possible troop reduction. U.S. officials have said that success of the January 10 initiative might pave the way for an eventual U.S. force reduction, although some envision a reduction if the plan does not succeed and the Administration adopts recommendations close to those of the Iraq Study Group. General Casey, during a visit to Washington in late June 2006, 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 said was one option 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 plan faded, as have all previous such reduction plans, when the security situation did not calm.

International and Regional Diplomacy

As noted above, many of the Iraq Study Group recommendations propose increased regional, multi-lateral, and international diplomacy, beyond steps already taken by the Administration. One idea, included in the Study Group report, is to form a “contact group” of major countries and Iraqi neighbors to prevail on Iraq’s factions to compromise. In the 109th Congress, these ideas were included in several resolutions, including S.J.Res. 36, S.Res. 470, S.J.Res. 33, and S. 1993, although several of these bills also include provisions for timetables for a U.S. withdrawal. In the 110th Congress, a few bills (H.Con.Res. 43 and H.Con.Res. 45) support the Iraq Study Group recommendation for an international conference on Iraq.

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. Some Iraqi leaders believed that such peacekeepers would come from Sunni Muslim states and would inevitably favor Sunni factions within Iraq. On the other hand, several experts believe that the lack of progress in stabilizing Iraq is caused by internal Iraqi disputes and processes and that new regional or international steps would yield minimal results. For more information, see CRS Report RL33793, *Iraq: Regional Perspectives and U.S. Policy*, coordinated by Christopher Blanchard.

Another idea is to identify a high-level international mediator to negotiate with Iraq’s major factions. Some Members of Congress wrote to President Bush in

November 2006 asking that he name a special envoy to Iraq to follow up on some of the Administration's efforts to promote political reconciliation in Iraq.

Political Reconciliation and Reorganization

Some proposals involve different methods for altering Iraq's power structure so that no major ethnic or sectarian community feels excluded or has incentive to back violence. The Iraq Study Group report recommends seeking the involvement of the United Nations, Iraq's neighbors, and other interested countries in promoting reconciliation within Iraq.

Reorganize the Power Structure. Some experts believe that adjusting U.S. troop levels would not address the underlying causes of violence in Iraq. Those who want to build a unified and strong central government, including the Bush Administration, have identified the need to assuage Sunni Arab grievances through the political process. The Administration has tried to accomplish that objective, in part by prodding the dominant factions to move forward on the reconciliation steps discussed earlier, although without success to date. There is little agreement on what additional or alternative package of incentives, if any, would persuade most Sunnis leaders — and their constituents — to fully support the government. Some believe that Sunnis might be satisfied by a wholesale cabinet reshuffle that gives several leading positions, such as that of President, to a Sunni Arab, although many Kurds might resent such a move because a Kurd now holds that post.

Decentralization and Break-Up Options. 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 Shi'ite Arab. 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. A former U.S. Ambassador and an adviser to the Kurds, Peter Galbraith, also advocates this option. According to this view, decentralizing Iraq into autonomous zones would ensure that Iraq's territorial integrity is preserved while ensuring that these communities do not enter all-out civil war with each other. 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.

Critics of both forms of this idea believe that any segregation of Iraq, legal or de-facto, would cause parts of Iraq to fall firmly under the sway of Iraq's powerful neighbors. Others believe that the act of dividing Iraq's communities in any way would cause widespread violence, particularly in areas of mixed ethnicity, as each community struggles to maximize its territory and its financial prospects. This recommendation was rejected by the Iraq Study Group as potentially too violent and difficult to implement.

Negotiating With Insurgents. A related idea is to negotiate with insurgents. The Iraq Study Group report welcomes contact with almost all parties in Iraq, with the exception of Al Qaeda-Iraq (Recommendations 34-35). The Administration — and the Iraqi government — appears to have previously adopted

this recommendation to some extent. As noted, U.S. Ambassador Khalilzad and various Iraqi leaders, such as President Talabani, have reached out to Sunni politicians known to have ties to the insurgency. Former Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld confirmed to journalists in June 2005 that such discussions had taken place between insurgent representatives and some U.S. military commanders in the field. The U.S. talks reportedly have been intended to help U.S. forces defeat Zarqawi's foreign insurgent faction. However, no major insurgent faction has lain down arms in response to any talks with U.S. personnel or Iraqi officials. The insurgents who have attended such talks reportedly want an increased role for Sunnis in government, a timetable for U.S. withdrawal, and a withdrawal of the Shiite-dominated ISF from Sunni regions. Some U.S. officials appear to believe that talking directly with insurgents increases insurgent leverage and emboldens them to continue attacks.

“Coup” or “Strongman” Option. Another option began receiving discussion in October 2006 as Iraqi elites began to sense a growing rift between the Administration and Maliki. Some Iraqis believe the United States might try to use its influence among Iraqis to force Maliki to resign and replace him with a military strongman or some other figure who would crack down on sectarian militias. However, experts in the United States see no concrete signs that such an option might be under consideration by the Administration. Forcing out Maliki would, in the view of many, conflict with the U.S. goal of promoting democracy and rule of law in Iraq.

Economic Measures

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 was incorporated into the President's January 10 initiative and, prior to that, in the decision to form 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.

Another idea has been to set up an Iraqi fund, or trust, that would ensure that all Iraqis share equitably in Iraq's oil wealth. In an op-ed in the *Wall Street Journal* (December 18, 2006) Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton and Senator John Ensign supported the idea of an “Iraq Oil Trust” modeled on the Alaska Permanent Fund.

Table 7. 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*, April 2004.

Figure 1. Map of Iraq



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