David H. Naylor

Editor

Al Qaeda in Iraq

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PREFACE

In explaining the decision to invade Iraq and oust Saddam Hussein from power, the Administration asserted, among other justifications, that the regime of Saddam Hussein had a working relationship with the Al Qaeda organization. The Administration assessed that the relationship dated to the early 1990s, and was based on a common interest in confronting the United States. The Administration assertions were derived from U.S. intelligence showing a pattern of contacts with Al Qaeda when its key founder, Osama bin Laden, was based in Sudan in the early to mid-1990s and continuing after he relocated to Afghanistan in 1996.

Critics maintain that subsequent research demonstrates that the relationship, if it existed, was not "operational," and that no hard data has come to light indicating the two entities conducted any joint terrorist attacks. Some major hallmarks of an operational relationship were absent, and several experts outside and within the U.S. government believe that contacts between Iraq and Al Qaeda were sporadic, unclear, or subject to alternate explanations.

Another pillar of the Administration argument, which has applications for the current U.S. effort to stabilize Iraq, rested on reports of contacts between Baghdad and an Islamist Al Qaeda affiliate group, called Ansar al-Islam, based in northern Iraq in the late 1990s. Although the connections between Ansar al-Islam and Saddam Hussein's regime were subject to debate, the organization evolved into what is now known as Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQ-I). AQ-I has been a numerically small but operationally major component of the Sunni Arab-led insurgency that frustrated U.S. efforts to stabilize Iraq. Since mid-2007, in part facilitated by combat conducted by additional U.S. forces sent to Iraq as part of a "troop surge," the U.S. military has exploited differences between AQ-I and Iraqi Sunni political, tribal, and insurgent leaders to virtually expel AQ-I from many of its sanctuaries particularly in Baghdad and in Anbar Province. U.S. officials assess AQ-I to be

weakened almost to the point of outright defeat in Iraq, although they say it remains lethal and has the potential to revive in Iraq. Attacks continue, primarily in north-central Iraq, that bear the hallmarks of AQ-I tactics, and U.S. and Iraqi forces continue to conduct offensives targeting suspected AQ-I leaders and hideouts.

As of mid-2008, there are indications that AQ-I leaders are relocating from Iraq to join Al Qaeda leaders believed to be in remote areas of Pakistan, near the Afghanistan border. That perception, if accurate, could suggest that AQ-I now perceives Afghanistan as more fertile ground than is Iraq to attack U.S. forces. The relocation of AQ-I leaders to Pakistan could also accelerate the perceived strengthening of the central Al Qaeda organization.

Chapter 2 - The Administration is claiming success in significantly reducing violence in Iraq to the point where additional U.S. troop reductions can be considered, attributing the gains to a "troop surge" announced by President Bush on January 10, 2007 ("New Way Forward"). With the 28,500 "surge" forces withdrawn as of July 2008, Defense Department reports assess that overall violence is down as much as 80% since early 2007, to levels not seen since 2004, but that progress can be "fragile and tenuous" if not accompanied by fundamental political reconciliation and economic development. The Administration believes that additional "conditions-based" reductions in U.S. forces, continued building of Iraq's security forces, and likely further political progress in Iraq — is likely to produce a unified, democratic Iraq that can govern and defend itself and is an ally in the war on terror. The Administration argues that Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki is increasingly recognized as capable, and that Iraqi legislative action in Iraq since the beginning of 2008 represents a substantial measure of the progress on political reconciliation that was envisioned would be facilitated by the surge.

However, U.S. disagreements with Maliki's proposed timeline for a U.S. withdrawal have prolonged negotiations on a U.S.-Iraq agreement that would govern the presence of U.S. forces in Iraq beyond December 2008. Provincial council elections, originally planned for October 1, 2008, and considered crucial to further reconciliation, are now unlikely to be held in 2008 because a split between the Kurds and Iraq's Arabs over the status of Kirkuk has thus far prevented passage of a needed election law. There are still substantial tensions between the Shiite-dominated government and those Sunni leaders and fighters who have been key to combating Al Qaeda and stabilizing large parts of Iraq, and continued concerns over the degree to which the Shiite faction of Moqtada Al Sadr will integrate into the political process.

The progress comes after several years of frustration that Operation Iraqi Freedom had overthrown Saddam Hussein's regime, only to see Iraq wracked during

2004-2007 by violence caused by Sunni Arab resentment and a related insurgency, resulting Sunni-Shiite sectarian violence, competition among Shiite groups, and the failure of Iraq's government to equitably administer justice or deliver services. Mounting U.S. casualties and financial costs — without clear movement toward national political reconciliation — stimulated debate within the United States over whether the initial goals of the intervention — a stable, democratic Iraq that is a partner in the global war on terrorism — could ever be achieved, and at what cost. Partly because there is a perception that the troop surge has succeeded, there has not been the required level of support in Congress to mandate a troop withdrawal, a timetable for withdrawal, although there is growing support for compelling Iraq to fund key functions now funded by the United States.

See also CRS Report RS2 1968, *Iraq: Reconciliation and Benchmarks*, by Kenneth Katzman; CRS Report RL3 1833, *Iraq: Reconstruction Assistance*, by Curt Tarnoff; and CRS Report RL33793, *Iraq: Regional Perspectives and U.S. Policy*, coordinated by Christopher Blanchard.

Chapter 1

AL QAEDA IN IRAQ: ASSESSMENT AND OUTSIDE LINKS*

Kenneth Katzman

ABSTRACT

In explaining the decision to invade Iraq and oust Saddam Hussein from power, the Administration asserted, among other justifications, that the regime of Saddam Hussein had a working relationship with the Al Qaeda organization. The Administration assessed that the relationship dated to the early 1 990s, and was based on a common interest in confronting the United States. The Administration assertions were derived from U.S. intelligence showing a pattern of contacts with Al Qaeda when its key founder, Osama bin Laden, was based in Sudan in the early to mid-1990s and continuing after he relocated to Afghanistan in 1996.

Critics maintain that subsequent research demonstrates that the relationship, if it existed, was not "operational," and that no hard data has come to light indicating the two entities conducted any joint terrorist attacks. Some major hallmarks of an operational relationship were absent, and several experts outside and within the U.S. government believe that contacts between Iraq and Al Qaeda were sporadic, unclear, or subject to alternate explanations.

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* Excerpted from CRS Report Order Code RL32217, dated August 15, 2008.

Islam and Saddam Hussein's regime were subject to debate, the organization evolved into what is now known as Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQ-I). AQ-I has been a numerically small but operationally major component of the Sunni Arab-led insurgency that frustrated U.S. efforts to stabilize Iraq. Since mid-2007, in part facilitated by combat conducted by additional U.S. forces sent to Iraq as part of a "troop surge," the U.S. military has exploited differences between AQ-I and Iraqi Sunni political, tribal, and insurgent leaders to virtually expel AQ-I from many of its sanctuaries particularly in Baghdad and in Anbar Province. U.S. officials assess AQ-I to be weakened almost to the point of outright defeat in Iraq, although they say it remains lethal and has the potential to revive in Iraq. Attacks continue, primarily in north-central Iraq, that bear the hallmarks of AQ-I tactics, and U.S. and Iraqi forces continue to conduct offensives targeting suspected AQ-I leaders and hideouts.

As of mid-2008, there are indications that AQ-I leaders are relocating from Iraq to join Al Qaeda leaders believed to be in remote areas of Pakistan, near the Afghanistan border. That perception, if accurate, could suggest that AQ-I now perceives Afghanistan as more fertile ground than is Iraq to attack U.S. forces. The relocation of AQ-I leaders to Pakistan could also accelerate the perceived strengthening of the central Al Qaeda organization.

See also: CRS Report RL31339: *Iraq: Post-Saddam Governance and Security*, by Kenneth Katzman.

Part of the debate over the Bush Administration decision to use military action to overthrow the regime of Saddam Hussein centers on whether or not that regime was allied with Al Qaeda. In building an argument that the United States needed to oust Saddam Hussein militarily, the Administration asserted that Iraq constituted a gathering threat to the United States because it continued to develop weapons of mass destruction (WMD) that it could potentially transfer to international terrorist groups, including Al Qaeda, with which Iraq was allied. This combination produced the possibility of a catastrophic attack on the United States, according to the Administration.

The first pillar of the Administration argument for ousting Saddam Hussein — its continued active development of WMD — has been researched extensively. After the fall of the regime in April 2003, U.S. forces and intelligence officers in an "Iraq Survey Group" (ISG) searched Iraq for evidence of WMD stockpiles. A "comprehensive" September 2004 report of the Survey Group, known as the "Duelfer report,"[1] said that the ISG found no WMD stockpiles or production but said that there was evidence that the regime retained the intention to reconstitute WMD programs in the future. The formal U.S.-led WMD search ended December 2004,[2] although U.S. forces have found some chemical weapons caches left over from the

Iran-Iraq war.[3] The UNMOVIC work remained formally active until U.N. Security Council Resolution 1762 terminated it on June 29, 2007.

The second pillar of the Administration argument — that Saddam Hussein's regime had links to Al Qaeda — is relevant not only to assess justification for the invasion decision but also because an Al Qaeda affiliate (Al Qaeda in Iraq, or AQ-I) became a key component of the post-S addam insurgency among Sunni Arabs in Iraq. The Administration has maintained that the Al Qaeda presence in Iraq, fighting alongside Iraqi insurgents from the ousted ruling Baath Party, members of former regime security forces, and other disaffected Iraqi Sunni Arabs, demonstrates that there were pre-war linkages. On the other hand, most experts believe that Al Qaeda and other foreign fighters entered Sunni-inhabited central Iraq after the fall of Saddam Hussein, from the Kurdish controlled north and from other Middle Eastern countries. These foreign fighters are motivated by an anti-U.S. ideology and a target of opportunity provided by the presence of U.S. forces there, rather than longstanding ties to the former Iraqi regime, according to this view.

BACKGROUND ON SADDAM - AL QAEDA LINKS

On March 17, 2003, in a speech announcing a 48-hour deadline for Saddam Hussein and his sons to leave Iraq in order to avoid war, President Bush said:

> ...the [Iraqi] regime has a history of reckless aggression in the Middle East. It has a deep hatred of America and our friends. And it has aided, trained, and harbored terrorists, including operatives of Al Qaeda."[4]

The Administration argument for an Iraq-Al Qaeda linkage had a few major themes: (1) that there were contacts between Iraqi intelligence and Al Qaeda in Sudan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan dating from the early 1990s, including Iraq's assistance to Al Qaeda in deployment of chemical weapons; (2) that an Islamist faction called Ansar al-Islam (The Partisans of Islam) in northern Iraq, had ties to Iraq's regime; and (3) that Iraq might have been involved in the September 11, 2001 plot itself. Of these themes, the September 11 allegations are the most widely disputed by outside experts and by some officials within the Administration itself. Some Administration officials, including President Bush, have virtually ruled out Iraqi involvement in the September 11 attacks while others, including Vice President Cheney, have maintained that the issue is still open.[5]

Secretary of State Powell presented the Administration view in greater public detail than any other official when he briefed the United Nations Security

Council on Iraq on February 5, 2003, although most of that presentation was devoted to Iraq's alleged violations of U.N. requirements that it dismantle its weapons of mass destruction (WMD) programs. According to the presentation:[6]

> Iraq and terrorism go back decades.... But what I want to bring to your attention today is the potentially more sinister nexus between Iraq and the Al Qaeda terrorist network, a nexus that combines classic terrorist organizations and modern methods of murder. Iraq today harbors a deadly terrorist network headed by Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi, an associate and collaborator of Osama bin Laden and his Al Qaeda lieutenants. Going back to the early and mid-1990s, when bin Laden was based in Sudan, an Al Qaeda source tells us that Saddam and bin Laden reached an understanding that Al Qaeda would no longer support activities against Baghdad.... We know members of both organizations met repeatedly and have met at least eight times at very senior levels since the early 1990s.... Iraqis continued to visit bin Laden in his new home in Afghanistan [after bin Laden moved there in mid- 1996].... From the late 1990s until 2001, the Iraqi embassy in Pakistan played the role of liaison to the Al Qaeda organization ... Ambition and hatred are enough to bring Iraq and Al Qaeda together, enough so Al Qaeda could learn how to build more sophisticated bombs and learn how to forge documents, and enough so that Al Qaeda could turn to Iraq for help in acquiring expertise on weapons of mass destruction.

Secretary Powell did not include in his February 5, 2003, briefing the assertion that Iraq was involved in the September 11 plot. Some analysts suggest the omission indicates a lack of consensus within the Administration on the strength of that evidence. In a January 2004 press interview, Secretary Powell said that his U.N. briefing had been meticulously prepared and reviewed, saying "Anything that we did not feel was solid and multi-sourced, we did not use in that speech."[7] Additional details of the Administration's argument, as well as criticisms, are discussed below.

Post-Saddam analysis of the issue has tended to refute the Administration argument on Saddam-Al Qaeda linkages, 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.[8] In his book "At the Center of the Storm" in May 2007 (Harper Collins Press, pp. 341-358), former CIA Director George Tenet indicated that the CIA view was that contacts between Saddam's regime and Al Qaeda were likely for the purpose of taking the measure of each other or take advantage of each other, rather than collaborating. Others note, however, that some of Tenet's pre-war testimony before Congress was in line

with the prevailing Administration view on this question, contrasting with the views in his book. In March 2008, a study by the Institute for Defense Analyses, written for the U.S. Joint Forces Command, and based on 600,000 documents captured in post-Saddam Iraq, found that Iraq during the early to mid-1990s actively supported Egyptian Islamic Jihad, which in 1998 formally merged with Al Qaeda, but that the documents do not reveal "direct coordination and assistance between Saddam Hussein's regime and Al Qaeda."[9]

Major Themes in the Administration Argument

Some of the intelligence information that the Bush Administration relied on to judge linkages between Iraq and Al Qaeda was publicized not only in Secretary of State Powell's February 5, 2003, briefing to the U.N. Security Council, but also, and in more detail, in an article in *The Weekly Standard*.[10] Vice President Cheney has been quoted as saying the article represents the "best source of [open] information" on the issue.[11] The article contains excerpts from a memorandum, dated October 27, 2003, from Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Douglas Feith to Senators Pat Roberts and Jay Rockefeller, the then chairman and vice chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee. The memorandum reportedly was based on research and analysis of intelligence and other information by the "Office of Special Plans," an Iraq policy planning unit within the Department of Defense set up in early 2002 but disbanded in the fall of 2002. The following sections analyze details of the major themes in the Administration argument.

Links in Sudan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan
The "DOD memorandum," as well as other accounts,[12] include assertions that Iraqi intelligence developed a relationship with Al Qaeda in the early 1990s, brokered by the Islamist leaders of Sudan. At the time, Osama bin Laden was in Sudan. He remained there until Sudan expelled him in mid-1996, after which he went to Afghanistan. According to the purported memo, the Iraq-Al Qaeda relationship included an agreement by Al Qaeda not to seek to undermine Saddam' s regime, and for Iraq to provide Al Qaeda with conventional weapons and WMD. The Administration view is that Iraq was highly isolated in the Arab world in the early 1990s, just after its invasion of Kuwait in August 1990, and that it might have sought a relationship with Al Qaeda as a means of gaining leverage over the United States and a common enemy, the regime of Saudi Arabia. From this perspective, the relationship served the interests of both, even though Saddam was a

secular leader while Al Qaeda sought to replace regional secular leaders with Islamic states.

The purported DOD memorandum includes names and approximate dates on which Iraqi intelligence officers visited bin Laden's camp outside Khartoum and discussions of cooperation in manufacturing explosive devices. It reportedly discusses subsequent meetings between Iraqi intelligence officers and bin Laden and his aides in Afghanistan and Pakistan, continuing until at least the late 1990s. The memorandum cites intelligence reports that Al Qaeda operatives were instructed to travel to Iraq to obtain training in the making and deployment of chemical weapons. Secretary of State Powell, in his February 5, 2003, U.N. briefing, citing an Al Qaeda operative captured in Afghanistan, stated that Iraq had received Al Qaeda operatives "several times between 1997 and 2000 for help in acquiring poison gases."

According to press accounts, some Administration evaluations of the available intelligence, including a reported draft national intelligence estimate (NIE) circulated in October 2002, interpreted the information as inconclusive, and as evidence of sporadic but not necessarily ongoing or high-level contacts between Iraq and Al Qaeda.[13] Some CIA experts reportedly asserted that the ideological differences between Iraq and Al Qaeda were too large to be bridged permanently.[14] For example, bin Laden reportedly sought to raise an Islamic army to fight to expel Iraqi troops from Kuwait following the Iraqi invasion in August 1990, suggesting that bin Laden might have viewed Iraq as an enemy rather than an ally. According to some accounts, the Saudi royal family rebuffed bin Laden's idea as unworkable, deciding instead to invite in U.S. forces to combat the Iraqi invasion. The rebuff prompted an open split between bin Laden and the Saudi leadership, and bin Laden left the Kingdom for Sudan in 1991.[15] Ideological differences between Iraq and Al Qaeda were evident in a February 12, 2003, bin Laden statement referring to Saddam Hussein's regime — dominated by his secular Arab nationalist Baath Party — as "socialist and infidel," although the statement also gave some support to the Administration argument when bin Laden exhorted the Iraqi people to resist impending U.S. military action.[16]

As noted above, Iraq had an embassy in Pakistan that the Administration asserts was its link to the Taliban regime of Afghanistan. However, skeptics of a Saddam-Al Qaeda link note that Iraq did not recognize the Taliban as the legitimate government of Afghanistan when the Taliban was in power during 1996-2001. It was during the period of Taliban rule that Al Qaeda enjoyed safehaven in Afghanistan. Of the 12 Al Qaeda leaders identified by the U.S. government in 2003 as either "executive leaders" or "senior planners and coordinators," none was an Iraqi national.[17] This suggests that the Iraqi nationals did not have the sanction of Saddam Hussein to join

Al Qaeda when he was in power. An alternate explanation is that very few Iraqis had the opportunity to join Al Qaeda during its key formative years - the years of the anti-Soviet "jihad" in Afghanistan (1979-1989). Young Iraqis who might have been attracted to volunteer in Afghanistan were serving in Iraqi units during the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war, and were not available to participate in regional causes.

Ansar Al-Islam Presence in Northern Iraq

Another major theme in the Administration assertions was the presence in Iraq of a group called Ansar al-Islam (Partisans of Islam). This aspect of the Administration's argument factored prominently in Secretary of State Powell's U.N. presentation, and is the most directly relevant to analysis of the Al Qaeda presence in Iraq today. Ansar al-Islam is considered the forerunner of Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQ-I).

Ansar al-Islam formed in 1998 as a breakaway faction of Islamist Kurds, splitting off from a group, the Islamic Movement of Iraqi Kurdistan (IMIK). Both Ansar and the IMIK were initially composed almost exclusively of Kurds. U.S. concerns about Ansar grew following the U.S. defeat of the Taliban and Al Qaeda in Afghanistan in late 2001, when some Al Qaeda activists, mostly Arabs, fled to Iraq and associated there with the Ansar movement. At the peak, about 600 Arab fighters lived in the Ansar al-Islam enclave, near the town of Khurmal.[18] Ansar fighters clashed with Kurdish fighters from the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), one of the two mainstream Iraqi Kurdish parties, around Halabja in December 2002. Ansar gunmen were allegedly responsible for an assassination attempt against PUK "prime minister" of the Kurdish region Barham Salih (now a deputy Prime Minister of Iraq) in April 2002.

The leader of the Arab contingent within Ansar al-Islam was Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, an Arab of Jordanian origin who reputedly fought in Afghanistan. Although more recent assessments indicate Zarqawi commanded Arab volunteers in Afghanistan separate from those recruited by bin Laden, Zarqawi was linked to purported Al Qaeda plots in the 1990s and early 2000s. He allegedly was behind foiled bombings in Jordan during the December 1999 millennium celebration, to the assassination in Jordan of U.S. diplomat Lawrence Foley (2002), and to reported attempts in 2002 to spread chemical agents in Russia, Western Europe, and the United States.[19]

In explaining why the United States needed to confront Saddam Hussein's regime militarily, U.S. officials maintained that Baghdad was connected to Ansar al- Islam. In his U.N. presentation, Secretary of State Powell said:

Iraq today harbors a deadly terrorist network headed by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, an associate and collaborator of Osama bin Laden and his Al Qaeda lieutenants.... Baghdad has an agent in the most senior levels of the radical organization, Ansar al-Islam, that controls this corner of Iraq.... Zarqawi' s activities are not confined to this small corner of northeastern Iraq. He traveled to Baghdad in May 2002 for medical treatment, staying in the capital for two months while he recuperated to fight another day. During this stay, nearly two dozen extremists converged on Baghdad and established a base of operations there.... From his terrorist network in Iraq, Zarqawi can direct his network in the Middle East and beyond.

However, some accounts question the extent of links, if any, between Baghdad and Ansar al-Islam. Baghdad did not control northern Iraq even before Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), and it is questionable whether Zarqawi, were he tied closely to Saddam Hussein's regime, would have located his group in territory controlled by Saddam's Kurdish opponents.[20] The Administration view on this point is that Saddam saw Ansar as a means of pressuring Saddam Hussein's Kurdish opponents in northern Iraq.

The September 11, 2001, Plot

The reputed DOD memorandum reportedly includes allegations of contacts between lead September 11 hijacker Mohammad Atta and Iraq intelligence, including as many as four meetings between Atta and Iraq's intelligence chief in Prague, Ahmad Samir al-Ani. The DOD memo says that al-Ani agreed to provide Atta with funds at one of the meetings. The memo asserts that the CIA confirmed two Atta visits to Prague — October 26, 1999, and April 9, 2001 — but did not confirm that he met with Iraqi intelligence during those visits. The DOD memo reportedly also contains reports indicating that Iraqi intelligence officers attended or facilitated meetings with Al Qaeda operatives in southeast Asia (Kuala Lumpur) in early 2000. In the course of these meetings, the Al Qaeda activists were said to be planning the October 12, 2000, attack on the U.S.S. Cole docked in Aden, Yemen, and possibly the September 11 plot as well.

As noted above, Secretary of State Powell reportedly considered the information too uncertain to include in his February 5, 2003, briefing on Iraq to the U.N. Security Council.[21] President Bush did not mention this allegation in his January 29, 2003, State of the Union message, delivered one week before the Powell presentation to the U.N. Security Council. President Bush said on September 16, 2003, that there was no evidence Saddam Hussein's regime was involved in the September 11 plot; he made the statement in response to a journalist's question about

statements a few days earlier by Vice President Cheney suggesting that the issue of Iraq's complicity in September 11 is still open.[22]

There is dispute within Czech intelligence that provided the information on the meetings, that the Iraq-Atta discussions took place at all, particularly the April 2001 meeting. In November 2001, Czech Interior Minister Stanislav Gross said that Atta and al-Ani had met, but Czech Prime Minister Milos Zeman subsequently told U.S. officials that the two had discussed an attack aimed at silencing anti-Saddam broadcasts from Prague.[23] Since 1998, Prague has been the headquarters of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, a U.S.-funded radio service that was highly critical of Saddam Hussein's regime. In December 2001, Czech President Vaclav Havel said that there was a "70% chance" the meeting took place. The U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) eventually concluded, based on records of Atta's movements within the United States in April 2001, that the meeting probably did not take place and that there was no hard evidence of Iraqi regime involvement in the September 11 attacks.[24] Some press reports say the FBI is more confident than is the CIA in the judgment that the April 2001 meeting did not occur.[25] Al Ani himself, captured by U.S. forces in 2003, reportedly denied to U.S. interrogators that the meeting ever happened.[26]

AL QAEDA AND THE IRAQ INSURGENCY

Whether or not Al Qaeda leaders and Saddam Hussein had a relationship, a major issue facing the United States is the degree to which Al Qaeda elements are threatening the U.S. effort to stabilize post-Saddam Iraq. Commenting on the Iraq insurgency in its early stages, President Bush said in a speech on September 8, 2003, that "We have carried the fight to the enemy.... We are rolling back the terrorist threat to civilization, not on the fringes of its influence but at the heart of its power."[27] In his January 20, 2004, State of the Union message, President Bush said, "These killers [Iraq insurgents], joined by foreign terrorists, are a serious, continuing danger."[28] Similar statements followed in subsequent years as the Administration sought to assert that Iraq had become the "central front" in the broader post-September 11 "war on terrorism," and that it is preferable to combat Al Qaeda in Iraq rather than allow it to congregate elsewhere in the region and hatch plots inside the United States itself.[29] In a January 10, 2007, major speech announcing the U.S. "troop surge," President Bush made similar points:

... we will continue to pursue al Qaeda and foreign fighters. Al Qaeda is still active in Iraq. Its home base is Anbar Province. Al Qaeda has helped

make Anbar the most violent area of Iraq outside the capital. A captured al Qaeda document describes the terrorists' plan to infiltrate and seize control of the province. This would bring al Qaeda closer to its goals of taking down Iraq's democracy, building a radical Islamic empire, and launching new attacks on the United States at home and abroad.

In a July 24, 2007, speech specifically on the issue,[30] President Bush said:

> ... Our troops are... .opposing ruthless enemies, and no enemy is more ruthless in Iraq than al Qaeda. They send suicide bombers into crowded markets; they behead innocent captives and they murder American troops. They want to bring down Iraq's democracy so they can use that nation as a terrorist safe haven for attacks against our country....

Critics of this view maintain that Al Qaeda or pro-Al Qaeda elements were motivated by the U.S. invasion to enter Iraq to fight the United States there. According to this argument, the U.S. presence in Iraq has generated new Al Qaeda followers — both inside and outside Iraq — who might not have become active against the United States had the war against Iraq not occurred. This view draws some support from the unclassified "key judgments" of a July 2007 National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) that said:

> ...we assess that [Al Qaeda central leadership's] association with AQ-I helps Al Qaeda to energize the broader Sunni extremist community, raise resources, and to recruit and indoctrinate operatives, including for homeland attacks.[31]

Other critics maintain that the Administration has emphasized an "Al Qaeda" component of the insurgency as a means of bolstering U.S. public support for the war effort in Iraq. According to this view, the Administration has repeatedly attempted to link in the public consciousness the Iraq war to the September 11 attacks in part because of consistent public support for a military component of the overall war on terrorism.

AQ-I Strategy and Role in the Insurgency

In analyzing the debate over Al Qaeda involvement in Iraq, a major question is the degree to which AQ-I has driven the insurgency against U.S. forces and the government of Iraq. Few dispute that there has been, from almost the inception of

the insurgency in mid-2003, a "foreign fighter" component. In November 2003, early in the insurgency, one senior U.S. commander in Iraq (82nd Airborne Division commander Maj. Gen. Charles Swannack) said, in response to reports that foreign fighters were key to the insurgency: "I want to underscore that most of the attacks on our forces are by former regime loyalists and other Iraqis, not foreign forces."[32] At that time, other commanders emphasized the foreign fighter role in the insurgency by asserting that the high profile suicide bombings that occurred were having a significant impact in undermining U.S. and international confidence in the U.S. ability to stabilize post-Saddam Iraq. As examples of such attacks that caused doubt in the U.S. ability to stabilize Iraq, commanders cited the August 19, 2003 bombing of U.N. headquarters in Baghdad and the August 29, 2003, bombing of a major mosque complex in Najaf that killed the leader of the large Shiite faction Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, Mohammad Baqr Al Hakim. (The group renamed itself in June 2007 as the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq, ISCI).

As a result, the United States has consistently focused on combatting Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, his foreign fighter network in Iraq, and his successors. On March 15, 2004, his Ansar al-Islam group was named as "Foreign Terrorist Organization" under the Immigration and Nationality Act. On October 15, 2004, the State Department named the "Monotheism and Jihad Group" — the successor to Ansar al-Islam — as an FTO. The designation said that the Monotheism group "was.. .responsible for the U.N. headquarters bombing in Baghdad."[33] Later that month, perhaps in response to that designation, Zarqawi changed the name of his organization to "Al Qaeda Jihad Organization in the Land of Two Rivers (Mesopotamia - Iraq) — commonly known now as Al Qaeda in Iraq, or AQ-I. The FTO designation was applied to the new name.

Along with the designations came stepped up U.S. military efforts to find and capture or kill Zarqawi. There were several reported "near misses," according to press reports.[34] However, on June 7, 2006, U.S. forces were able to track Zarqawi to a safe house in Hibhib, near the city of Baqubah, in the mixed Sunni-Shiite province of Diyala, and an airstrike by one U.S. F- 16 mortally wounded him.

A related group is Ansar al-Sunna, an offshoot of the Zarqawi network that was operating in northern Iraq, including the Kurdish areas and areas of Arab Iraq around Mosul. It was named as an FTO as an alias of Ansar al-Islam when the latter group was designated in March 2004, and Ansar al-Sunna remains on the FTO list. Ansar al-Sunna changed its name back to Ansar al-Islam in November 2007; however, the group has always maintained some distance from AQ-I. For example, it did not join the AQ-I umbrella group called the "Islamic State of Iraq."

In its most significant attack, the group claimed responsibility for February 1, 2004, twin suicide attacks in Irbil, northern Iraq, which killed over 100 Kurds, including some senior Kurdish officials.[35] Another major attack — attributed to Ansar al-Sunna by the State Department "Country Reports on Terrorism: 2006" (released April 2007 by the State Department Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism) — was the December 2004 suicide bombing of a U.S. military dining facility at Camp Marez in the northern city of Mosul, which killed 13 U.S. soldiers. The State Department terrorism report for 2007 said that Ansar al-Sunna/Islam "continues to conduct attacks against a wide range of targets including Coalition Forces, the Iraqi government and security forces, and Kurdish and Shia figures."

AQ-I Strategy

Before his death, Zarqawi had largely set AQ-I's strategy as an effort to provoke all out civil war between the newly dominant Shiite Arabs and the formerly pre-eminent Sunni Arabs. In this strategy, Zarqawi apparently calculated that provoking civil war could, at the very least, undermine Shiite efforts to consolidate their political control of post-Saddam Iraq. If fully successful, the strategy could compel U.S. forces to leave Iraq by undermining U.S. public support for the war effort, and thereby leaving the Shiite government vulnerable to continued AQ-I and Sunni insurgent attack. The strategy might have been controversial among Al Qaeda circles, as evidenced by a purported letter (if genuine) from the number two Al Qaeda leader, Ayman al-Zawahiri, to Zarqawi, in July 2005. In that letter, Zawahiri questioned Zarqawi' s strategy in Iraq by arguing that committing violence against Shiite civilians and religious establishments would undermine the support of the Iraqi people for AQ-I and the Sunni "resistance" more broadly.[36]

To implement its strategy, AQ-I under Zarqawi focused primarily on spectacular suicide bombings intended to cause mass Shiite casualties or to destroy sites sacred to Shiites. Several suicide bombings were conducted in 2005 against Shiite celebrations, causing mass casualties. The most significant attack the February 22, 2006, bombing of the Shiite "Golden Mosque" in Sunni-inhabited Samarra (Salahuddin Province), widely attributed to AQ-I. The attack largely destroyed the golden dome of the mosque. It touched off widespread Shiite reprisals against Sunnis nationwide and is widely considered to have started the "civil war" that raged from the time of the bombing until late 2007, when it began to abate. On several occasions, President Bush has said that Zarqawi largely succeeded in his strategy, although he and other senior Administration officials did not, even at the height of the violence in late 2006, characterize the Iraq as in a state of "civil war." AQ-I's

most lethal attack, and the single deadliest attack of the war to date, was the August 2007 truck bombings of Yazidi villages near Sinjar, in northern Iraq, killing an estimated 500 persons, mostly Yazidis.

By the end of 2006 and in early 2007, most senior U.S. officials were identifying AQ-I as a driving force, or even the driving force, of the insurgency. In his "threat assessment" testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee on February 27, 2007, Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency Gen. Michael Maples called AQ-I "the largest and most active of the Iraq-based terrorist groups." On April 26, 2007, at a press briefing, the overall U.S. commander in Iraq, Gen. David Petraeus, called AQ-I "probably public enemy number one" in Iraq. On July 12, 2007, US. military spokesman in Iraq, Brig. Gen. Kevin Bergner, said that AQ-I was responsible for 80 to 90% of the suicide bombings in Iraq, and that defeating it was a main focus of U.S. operations. Some U.S. commanders said that, while most foreign fighters going to Iraq become suicide bombers, others are contributing to the overall insurgency as snipers, logisticians, and financiers.[37] However, other U.S. commanders noted — and continue to note — that these major bombings constituted a small percentage of overall attacks in Iraq (which in early 2007 numbered about 175 per day), and that most of the U.S. combat deaths came from roadside bombs and direct or indirect munitions fire likely wielded by Iraqi Sunni insurgent fighters.

2007 Iraqi Sunni "Awakening" Movement/ U.S. Operations and "Troop Surge"

In January 2007, President Bush articulated a new counter-insurgency strategy developed by Gen. Petraeus and others, based on assessments within the Administration and outside, that U.S. policy was failing to produce stability. The deterioration in the previous U.S. strategy was attributed, in part, to the burgeoning sectarian violence that AQ-I had helped set off. The cornerstone of the new strategy was to increase the number of U.S. troops in Baghdad and in Anbar Province in order to be able to protect the civilian population rather than conduct combat operations against militants. The U.S. "troop surge" reached full strength in June 2007.

The U.S. troop surge was intended to try to take advantage of a growing rift within the broad insurgency that was being observed by U.S. commanders in Iraq as early as mid-2005. The Zarqawi strategy of attempting to provoke civil war, and some of its ideology and practices in the Sunni areas, were not universally popular among Iraq's Sunnis, even among some Sunni insurgent groups. Strategically, Iraqi Sunnis have discernible political goals in Iraq, and some AQ-I tactics, such as attacks on Shiite civilians, were perceived as preventing future power sharing compromise

with the Shiites. AQ-I fighters have broader goals, such as defeating the United States and establishing a Sunni-led Islamic state in Iraq that could expand throughout the region. Iraqi Sunni insurgents believed that attacks should be confined to "combatant" targets — Iraqi government forces, most of which are Shiite, Iraqi government representatives, and U.S. and other coalition forces.

Other Iraqi Sunnis resented AQ-I practices in the regions where AQ-I fighters congregated, including reported enforcement of strict Islamic law, segregation by sex, forcing males to wear beards, and banning all alcohol sales and consumption. In some cases, according to a variety of press reports, AQ-I fighters killed Iraqi Sunnis who violated these strictures. Other Sunnis, particularly tribal leaders involved in trade and commerce, believed that the constant fighting provoked by AQ-I was depriving Iraqi Sunnis of their livelihoods. Others believe that the strains between AQ-I and Iraqi Sunni insurgent fighters were a competition for power and control over the insurgency. According to this view, Iraqi Sunni leaders no more wanted to be dominated by foreign Sunnis than they did by Iraqi Shiites or U.S. soldiers. During 2003-2006 these strains were mostly muted as Iraqi Sunnis cooperated with AQ-I toward the broader goal of overturning the Shiite-dominated, U.S.-backed power structure in Iraq.

The first evidence of strains between AQ-I and Iraqi Sunni insurgents emerged in May 2005 in the form of a reported battle between AQ-I fighters and Iraqi Sunni tribal militiamen in the western town of Husaybah. Still, U.S. commanders had not, at this point, articulated or developed a successful strategy to exploit this rift. Meanwhile, Zarqawi was attempting to counter the strains developing between AQ-I and Iraqi Sunni political and insurgent structures. In January 2006, AQ-I announced formation of the "Mujahidin Shura Council" — an umbrella organization of six groups including AQ-I and five Iraqi Sunni insurgent groups, mostly those with an Islamist ideology. Forming the Shura Council appeared to many to be an attempt by AQ-I to demonstrate that it was working cooperatively with its Iraqi Sunni hosts and not seeking their subordination. To further this impression, in April 2006, the Council announced that an Iraqi, Abdullah Rashid (aka Abu Umar) al-B aghdadi, had been appointed its leader, although there were doubts as to Baghdadi's true identity. (In July 2007, a captured AQ-I operative said Baghdadi does not exist at all, but was a propaganda tool to disguise AQ-I's large role in the insurgency.[38]) Iraqi Sunni insurgent groups dominated by ex-Baath Party and ex-Saddam era military members apparently did not join the Mujahidin Shura. AQ-I continued to operate under the Mujahidin Shura umbrella at least until Zarqawi's death.

The shift to increased integration with Iraqi Sunni insurgents continued after Zarqawi's demise. After his death, Abu Ayub al-Masri (an Egyptian, also known as Abu Hamza al-Muhajir) was formally named leader of the Mujahidin Shura Council

(and therefore leader of AQ-I). According to the State Department terrorism report for 2006, al-Masri "continued [Zarqawi's] strategy of targeting Coalition forces and Shi'a civilians in an attempt to foment sectarian strife." In October 2006, al-Masri declared the "Islamic State of Iraq" (ISI) organization under which AQ-I and its allied groups now claim their attacks. ISI appeared to be a replacement for the Mujahidin Shura Council. In April 2007, the ISI named a "cabinet" consisting of a minister of war (al-Masri), the head of the cabinet (al-Baghdadi), and seven other "ministers."

The "Awakening" Movement Against AQ-I

The AQ-I efforts to improve cooperation with the Iraqi insurgents did not satisfy the entire Sunni community, even though that community remained resentful of the Shiite-dominated government of Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki and its perceived monopoly on power. In August 2006, U.S. commanders began to receive overtures from Iraqi Sunni tribal and other community leaders in Anbar Province to cooperate with U.S. efforts to expel AQ-I and secure the cities and towns of the province. This became known as the "Awakening" (As Sahawa). In September 2006, 23 Sunni tribal leaders in Anbar, led by a tribal sub-leader named Abd al-S attar Al Rishawi, formed an "Anbar Salvation Council." The Council initially recruited about 13,000 young Sunnis from the province to help secure Ramadi, Fallujah, and other Anbar cities. The Council survived the September 13, 2007 killing of Rishawi by a suicide bomber believed to belong to AQ-I. Rishawi's brother (Shaykh Ahmad al-Rishawi) later took over the group and, along with the governor (Mamoun Rashid al-Awani) and other tribal figures from Anbar, visited Washington D.C. in November 2007 and in June 2008 to discuss the security progress in their province.

The U.S. "troop surge" included the addition of 4,000 U.S. Marines in Anbar Province. This additional force apparently emboldened the Anbar Salvation Council to continue recruiting Sunni volunteers to secure the province and purportedly convinced Anbar residents to increase their cooperation with U.S. forces to prevent violence. U.S. commanders emboldened this cooperation by offering funds ($350 per month per fighter) and training, although no U.S. weapons, to locally recruited Sunni security forces. These volunteers are now referred to as "Sons of Iraq" – there are about 103,000, of which about 80% are Sunnis. The 20% who are Shiites are opposed to Shiite extremist groups such as that of Moqtada Al Sadr. To retain the loyalty of the Sons of Iraq, U.S. officials are trying to fold them into the official Iraqi Security Forces (ISF), which would then pay their salaries. However, the Shiite- dominated Maliki government fears that the Sunni fighters are trying to burrow into the ISF with the intent of regaining power in

Iraq, and have only agreed to accept about 35,000 Sons of Iraq fighters onto the ISF payrolls, not all of which are Sunni. U.S. commanders say that this hesitation by the Maliki government risks driving the Sunnis back into insurgent ranks and back into cooperation with AQ-I. Some Sons of Iraq have already abandoned their positions out of frustration, particularly in Diyala Province, although they have not necessarily resumed insurgent activity.

By June 2007, at the height of the U.S. troop surge, Gen. Petraeus called security improvements in Anbar "breathtaking" and said that security incidents in the province had declined by about 90%. He and other commanders reported an ability to walk incident free, although with security, in downtown Ramadi, a city that had been a major battleground only months earlier and which U.S. military intelligence experts reportedly had given up as "lost" in late 2006. General Petraeus testified in April 2008 that he estimates that Anbar Province could be turned over to Provincial Iraqi Control by July 2008, although the handover has been delayed by a power struggle between the Awakening tribal figures and the more urban, established Iraqi Sunni parties such as the Iraqi Islamic Party (IIP).

The positive trends observed in Anbar encouraged other anti-AQ-I Sunnis to join the Awakening movement. In May 2007, a Diyala Salvation Council was formed in Diyala Province of tribal leaders who wanted to stabilize that restive province. In early 2007, Amiriyah was highly violent, but was stabilized by the emergence of former Sunni insurgents now cooperating with U.S. forces as a force called the "Amiriyah Freedom Fighters." Other Baghdad neighborhoods, including Saddam stronghold Adhamiyah, began to undergo similar transformations. In Baghdad, the U.S. military established supported this trend in the course of the Baghdad Security Plan ("troop surge") by establishing about 100 combat outposts, including 33 "Joint Security Stations" in partnership with the ISF, to clear neighborhoods of AQ-I and to encourage the population to come forward with information about AQ-I hideouts. Prime Minister Maliki said on February 16, 2008 that AQ-I had been largely driven out of Baghdad, and assessment that has not been subsequently contradicted by U.S. officials.

Gen. Petraeus attempted to increase the momentum of the Awakening Movement and the Sons of Iraq program with extensive U.S.-led combat[39] against AQ-I and its sanctuaries. The large scale operations included those related to the troop surge in Baghdad, and two other large operations — Phantom Thunder and Phantom Strike. Operation Phantom Thunder (June 2007), was intended to clear AQ-I sanctuaries in the "belts" of towns and villages within a 30 mile radius around Baghdad. Part of the operation reportedly involved surrounded Baquba, the capital city of Diyala Province, to prevent the escape of AQ-I from the U.S. clearing operations in the city. A related offensive, Operation

Phantom Strike, was conducted in August 2007 to prevent AQ-I from establishing any new sanctuaries.To maintain pressure on AQ-I, in January 2008, the U.S. military conducted Operation Iron Harvest and Operation Iron Reaper to disrupt AQ-I in northern Iraq.

Current Status of AQ-I

General Petraeus appeared before four Committees of Congress during April 8-9, 2008 to discuss progress in Iraq.[40] He testified that the assistance from the Sons of Iraq, coupled with "relentless pursuit" of AQ-I by U.S. forces, had "reduced substantially" the threat posed by AQ-I. On May 10, 2008, CIA Director Michael Hayden said Al Qaeda is on "the verge of a strategic defeat in Iraq" because of its reduced presence and activity in large parts of Iraq. On August 10, 2008, Gen. James Conway, Commandant of the Marine Corps, told journalists that AQ-I had permanently lost its foothold in large parts of Iraq, that it is no longer welcomed by Sunni populations in Iraq, and theat AQ-I fighters had begun to shift their focus to Afghanistan where their efforts against the United States might be more effective. In late July 2008, a reputed AQ-I leader in Anbar told the *Washington Post* that AQ-I leader Abu Ayyub al-Masri had left Iraq to go to Afghanistan, or to the border areas of Pakistan where Al Qaeda leaders are believed to be hiding.

On the other hand, General Petraeus testified and has said in other settings that AQ-I remains highly active in and around Mosul, and views Mosul as key to its survival in Iraq, because it is astride the entry routes from Syria. He testified that AQ-I is "still capable of lethal attacks" and that the United States must "maintain relentless pressure on the organization, on the networks outside Iraq that support it, and on the resource flows that sustain it." He also testified that Al Qaeda's senior leaders ..."still view Iraq as the central front in their global strategy" and "send funding, direction, and foreign fighters to Iraq." On August 12, 2008, the U.S. National Intelligence Officer for Transnational Threats, Ted Gistaro, in prepared remarks, told a Washington, D.C. research institute (Washington Institute for Near East Policy) that

> Despite setbacks in Iraq, AQ-I remains Al Qaeda's most prominent and lethal regional affiliate. While Al Qaeda leaders likely see the declining effectiveness of AQ-I as a vulnerability to their global recruiting and fundraising efforts, they likely continue to see the fight in Iraq as important to their battle with the United States. [Osama] bin Laden and [Al Qaeda deputy leader Ayman] al-Zawahiri since late 2007 have issued eight statements to rally supporters, donors, and prospective fighters by publicly portraying the Iraq jihad as part of a wider regional cause to "liberate" Jerusalem.

Estimated Numbers of Foreign Fighters

Although there have been differences among commanders about the contribution of the foreign fighters to the overall violence in Iraq, estimates of the numbers of foreign fighters have remained fairly consistent over time, at least as a percentage of the overall insurgency. As early as October 2003, U.S. officials estimated that as many as 3,000 might be non-Iraqi,[41] although, suggesting uncertainty in the estimate, Gen. Abizaid said on January 29, 2004, that the number of foreign fighters in Iraq was "low" and "in the hundreds."[42] A September 2005 study by the Center for Strategic and International Studies estimated that there were about 3,000 non-Iraqi fighters in Iraq - about 10% of the estimated total size of the insurgency. The State Department report on terrorism for 2007 (Country Reports on Terrorism: 2007, released April 30, 2008) says AQ-I has a "membership" estimated at 5,000 - 10,000, making it the largest Sunni extremist group in Iraq. This estimate is somewhat higher than what many experts might expect in light of the official U.S. command assessments of the weakening of AQ-I by U.S. operations and strategy.

Another issue is the rate of flow of foreign fighters into Iraq. U.S. commanders said in July 2007 that approximately 60-80 foreign fighters come across the border every month (primarily the Iraq-Syria border) to participate in the Iraq insurgency.[43] Press reports say that U.S. commanders estimate that the flow slowed to about 40 in October 2007, in part because of a U.S. raid in September 2007 on a desert camp at Sinjar, need the Syrian border, that was the hub of operations to smuggle foreign fighters into Iraq.[44] General Petraeus testified in April 2008 that about 50 - 70 foreign fighters were still coming across the Syrian border into Iraq, and that Syria "has taken some steps to reduce the flow of foreign fighters through its territory, but not enough to shut down the key network that supports AQ-I." In June and July 2008, U.S. commanders estimate the flow at about 20-30 fighters per month.

Another issue is the specific nationalities of the foreigners. One press report in July 2007, quoting U.S. officials in Iraq, said that about 40% of the foreign fighters in Iraq are of Saudi origin.[45] The November 22, 2007 *New York Times* article, cited above, says that Saudi Arabia and Libya accounted for 60% of the 700 foreign fighters who came into Iraq over the past year. That article was consistent with the findings of a study produced by the Combating Terrorism Center of West Point (Al Qa' ida's Foreign Fighters in Iraq), based on records of 700 foreign nationals who had entered Iraq, and whose papers were found in Iraq by U.S.-led forces near Sinjar, along the border with Syria, published in February 2008.[46] The Sinjar records indicated that, of the 595 records in which a country of origin was stated, about 245 were of Saudi origin; about 110 were of Libyan origin; about 48 were of Syrian origin; 47 were of Yemeni origin; 45 were of Algerian origin; about 40 were of

Moroccan origin and a similar amount were of Tunisian origin; about 20 were or Jordanian origin; about 8 were of Egyptian origin; and 20 were "other."

Linkages to Al Qaeda Central Leadership

If the reports of significant AQ-I relocations to the Pakistan tribal areas bordering Afghanistan are correct, this would suggest that the links are tightening between AQ-I and Al Qaeda' s central leadership as represented by Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri. Both Al Qaeda leaders are widely believed to be hiding in areas of Pakistan near the border with Afghanistan, and many assessments since 2007 say that Al Qaeda is enjoying increasing freedom of movement and action in the border regions. If Al Qaeda' s ranks are now augmented by an influx of AQ-I fighters from the Iraq battlefront, it could be argued that Al Qaeda' s overall capabilities to attack the U.S. homeland, or to undermine U.S. efforts to stabilize Afghanistan, have been increased. U.S. commanders in Afghanistan say they are seeing growing signs of Al Qaeda involvement in the insurgency in Afghanistan, beyond financing and logistical facilitation, although it is not certain whether any of this added assistance to the Afghan insurgency is coming from fighters recently relocated from Iraq. The issue of how the United States is combatting the Afghan insurgency, both in Afghanistan and increasingly through direct action on the Pakistani side of the border, is discussed in CRS Report RL30588. *Afghanistan: Post-War Governance and Security*. On the other hand, as noted above, the fact that AQ-I fighters and leaders are leaving Iraq represents a blow to Al Qaeda and could weaken its ability to recruit new adherents.

The links between AQ-I and Al Qaeda' s central leadership might be tightening, but they are not new. As discussed above, on July 24, 2007, President Bush devoted much of a speech to the argument that AQ-I is closely related to Al Qaeda' s central leadership. The President noted the following details, including:

- In 2004, Zarqawi formally joined Al Qaeda and pledged allegiance to bin Laden. Bin Laden then publicly declared that Zarqawi was the "Prince of Al Qaeda in Iraq." President Bush stated that, according to U.S. intelligence, Zarqawi had met both bin Laden and Zawahiri. He asserted later in the speech that, according to U.S. intelligence, AQ-I is a "full member of the Al Qaeda terrorist network."
- After Zarqawi' s death, bin Laden sent an aide named Abd al-Hadi al-Iraqi to help Zarqawi' s successor, al-Masri, but al-Iraqi was captured before reaching Iraq.

- That a captured AQ-I leader, an Iraqi named Khalid al-Mashhadani, had told U.S. authorities that Baghdadi was fictitious. In July 2007, Brig. Gen. Bergner, a U.S. military spokesman, told journalists that Mashhadani is an intermediary between al-Masri and bin Laden and Zawahiri.
- That AQ-I is the only insurgent group in Iraq "with stated ambitions to make the country a base for attacks outside Iraq." Referring to the November 9, 2005, terrorist attacks on hotels in Zarqawi' s native Jordan, President Bush said AQ-I "dispatched terrorists who bombed a wedding reception in Jordan." Referring to an August 2005 incident, he said AQ-I "sent operatives to Jordan where they attempted to launch a rocket attack on U.S. Navy ships" docked at the port of Aqaba.

Some experts believe that links between Al Qaeda' s central leadership and AQ-I have been tenuous, and that the few operatives linking the two do not demonstrate an ongoing, substantial relationship. Others point to the Zawahiri admonishment of Zarqawi, discussed above, as evidence that there is not a close connection between the two. Still others have maintained that there is little evidence that AQ-I seeks to attack broadly outside Iraq, and that those incidents that have taken place have been in Jordan, where Zarqawi might have wanted to try to undermine King Abdullah II, whom Zarqawi opposed as too close to the United States. Since the 2005 attacks noted above, there have not been any attacks outside Iraq that can be directly attributed to AQ-I.

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Chapter 2

IRAQ: POST-SADDAM GOVERNANCE AND SECURITY[*]

Kenneth Katzman

ABSTRACT

The Administration is claiming success in significantly reducing violence in Iraq to the point where additional U.S. troop reductions can be considered, attributing the gains to a "troop surge" announced by President Bush on January 10, 2007 ("New Way Forward"). With the 28,500 "surge" forces withdrawn as of July 2008, Defense Department reports assess that overall violence is down as much as 80% since early 2007, to levels not seen since 2004, but that progress can be "fragile and tenuous" if not accompanied by fundamental political reconciliation and economic development. The Administration believes that additional "conditions-based" reductions in U.S. forces, continued building of Iraq's security forces, and likely further political progress in Iraq — is likely to produce a unified, democratic Iraq that can govern and defend itself and is an ally in the war on terror. The Administration argues that Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki is increasingly recognized as capable, and that Iraqi legislative action in Iraq since the beginning of 2008 represents a substantial measure of the progress on political reconciliation that was envisioned would be facilitated by the surge.

However, U.S. disagreements with Maliki's proposed timeline for a U.S. withdrawal have prolonged negotiations on a U.S.-Iraq agreement that would govern the presence of U.S. forces in Iraq beyond December 2008.

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[*] Excerpted from CRS Report Order Code RL31 339, dated September 8, 2008.

Provincial council elections, originally planned for October 1, 2008, and considered crucial to further reconciliation, are now unlikely to be held in 2008 because a split between the Kurds and Iraq's Arabs over the status of Kirkuk has thus far prevented passage of a needed election law. There are still substantial tensions between the Shiite-dominated government and those Sunni leaders and fighters who have been key to combating Al Qaeda and stabilizing large parts of Iraq, and continued concerns over the degree to which the Shiite faction of Moqtada Al Sadr will integrate into the political process.

The progress comes after several years of frustration that Operation Iraqi Freedom had overthrown Saddam Hussein's regime, only to see Iraq wracked during 2004-2007 by violence caused by Sunni Arab resentment and a related insurgency, resulting Sunni-Shiite sectarian violence, competition among Shiite groups, and the failure of Iraq's government to equitably administer justice or deliver services. Mounting U.S. casualties and financial costs — without clear movement toward national political reconciliation — stimulated debate within the United States over whether the initial goals of the intervention — a stable, democratic Iraq that is a partner in the global war on terrorism — could ever be achieved, and at what cost. Partly because there is a perception that the troop surge has succeeded, there has not been the required level of support in Congress to mandate a troop withdrawal, a timetable for withdrawal, although there is growing support for compelling Iraq to fund key functions now funded by the United States.

See also CRS Report RS2 1968, *Iraq: Reconciliation and Benchmarks*, by Kenneth Katzman; CRS Report RL3 1833, *Iraq: Reconstruction Assistance*, by Curt Tarnoff; and CRS Report RL33793, *Iraq: Regional Perspectives and U.S. Policy*, coordinated by Christopher Blanchard.

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

Faysal ruled Iraq as King Faysal I and was succeeded by his son, Ghazi, who was killed in a car accident in 1939. Ghazi was succeeded by his young son, Faysal II.

A major figure under the British mandate and the monarchy was Nuri As-Said, a pro-British, pro-Hashemite Sunni Muslim who served as prime minister 14 times during 1930-1958. Faysal II, with the help of 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-S alam al-Arif. In November 1963, Arif purged the Baath, including Prime Minister (and military officer) Ahmad Hasan al-Bakr, and instituted direct military rule. Arif was killed in a helicopter crash in 1966 and was replaced by his elder brother, Abd al-Rahim al-Arif. Following the Baath seizure of power in 1968, Bakr returned to government as President of Iraq and Saddam Hussein, a civilian, became the regime's number two — Vice Chairman of the Revolutionary Command Council. In that position, Saddam developed overlapping security services to monitor loyalty among the population and within Iraq's institutions, including the military. On July 17, 1979, the aging al-Bakr resigned at Saddam's urging, and Saddam became President of Iraq. Under Saddam, secular Shiites held high party positions, but Sunnis mostly from Saddam's home town of Tikrit, dominated the highest positions. Saddam's regime repressed Iraq's Shiites after the February 1979 Islamic revolution in neighboring Iran partly because Iraq feared that Iraqi Shiite Islamist movements, emboldened by Iran, would try to establish an Iranian-style Islamic republic of Iraq.

Table 1. Iraq Basic Facts

Population	27.5 million
Demographics	Shiite Arab - 60%; Kurd - 19% Sunni Arab - 14%; Christian and others - 6; Sunni Turkomen - 1%. Christians are: 600,000 - 1 million total (incl. Chaldean, Assyrian, Syriac, Armenian, and Protestant). Others are: Yazidis (600,000); Shabak (200,000); Sabean-Mandaean (6,000).

Table 1. (Continued).

Comparative Area	Slightly more than twice the size of Idaho
GDP	$100 billion (purchasing power parity, 2007)
GDP per capita	$3,600 per year (2007)
GDP Growth Rate	6.3% in 2007; anticipated 7% in 2008
2008 Iraqi Government Budget	First formulated in October 2007 and passed by Iraqi parliament Feb. 13, 2008, based on anticipated total $38 billion revenue, including $31 billion from oil and $6.7 billion from other sources. Included: $42 billion total expenses, including $13.2 billion for capital investment; $8.2 billion for Iraqi Security Forces costs ($11 billion planned for 2009); $2.5 billion in direct grants to the Arab provinces; $800 million to the Kurdish provinces. (In 2007, Iraq spent 28% of its $12 billion capital budget, and the provincial governments spent 40% of theirs.) Supplemental budget adopted in July based on expected $70 billion oil revenue for 2008. Revised budget now provides over $21 billion in capital investment for all of 2008; $300 million in "Iraqi CERP" for use by U.S. military in small reconstruction projects; $163 million for "Sons of Iraq" (see report text); $510 million for small business loans; $196 million for joint training and reintegration programs for former insurgents; $350 million for reconstruction in battle zones including Mosul, Basra, and Sadr City and Shula districts in Baghdad; and $190 million to assist internally displaced persons. GAO report of August 2008 says that, even with supplemental budget, 2008 surplus might still range from $16 billion-$28 billion, if past spending patterns hold.
Reserves of Foreign Currency and Gold	About $30 billion total: About $10 billion in "Development Fund for Iraq" (held in N.Y. Federal Reserve); $5.7 billion in Central Bank; and $13.8 billion in Iraqi commercial banks (Rafidain and Rasheed). About $5.5 billion to be used to buy 40 new Boeing civilian passenger aircraft.
Unemployment Rate	17.6% official rate, according to Central Statistics Office of Iraq; could be as high as 50% in some areas.
Inflation Rate	12.2 core rate in 2007; 32% in 2006
U.S. Oil Imports	About 700,000 barrels per day (other oil - related capabilities appear in a table later in this paper)
Food Ration System	Rations, used by 60% of the population, cut by 50% in December 2007 because $7.2 billion not approved by Iraqi government.

POLICY IN THE 1990S EMPHASIZED CONTAINMENT

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

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

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

During the Clinton Administration, the United States built ties to and progressively increased support for several Shiite and Kurdish factions, all of which have provided leaders in post-Saddam politics but also field militias locked in sectarian violence against Iraq's Sunnis who supported Saddam' s regime. (See table 7 on Iraq's various factions.) During 1997-1998, Iraq's obstructions of U.N. weapons of mass destruction (WMD) inspections led to growing congressional calls to overthrow Saddam, starting with a FY1998 appropriation (P.L. 105-174). The sentiment was expressed in the "Iraq Liberation Act" (ILA, P.L. 105-338, October 31, 1998). Signed by President Clinton despite doubts about opposition capabilities, it was viewed as an expression of congressional support for the concept of promoting

an Iraqi insurgency with U.S. air power. That law, which states that it should be the policy of the United States to "support efforts" to remove the regime headed by Saddam Hussein, is sometimes cited as indicator of a bipartisan consensus to topple Saddam' s regime. It gave the President authority to provide up to $97 million worth of defense articles and services, as well as $2 million in broadcasting funds, to opposition groups designated by the Administration. In mid-November 1998, President Clinton publicly articulated that regime change was a component of U.S. policy toward Iraq. Section 8 of the ILA stated that the act should not be construed as 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 provided for post-S addam "transition assistance" to Iraqi groups with "democratic goals."

The signing of the ILA coincided with new Iraqi obstructions of U.N. weapons inspections. On December 15, 1998, U.N. inspectors were withdrawn, and a three-day U.S. and British bombing campaign against suspected Iraqi WMD facilities followed (Operation Desert Fox, December 16-19, 1998). On February 5, 1999, President Clinton designated seven groups eligible to receive U.S. military assistance under the ILA (P.D. 99-13): the Iraqi National Congress (INC); Iraq National Accord (INA); the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI); the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP); the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK); the Islamic Movement of Iraqi Kurdistan (IMIK);[4] and the Movement for Constitutional Monarchy (MCM). In May 1999, the Clinton Administration provided $5 million worth of training and "non-lethal" equipment under the ILA to about 150 oppositionists in Defense Department-run training (Hurlburt Air Base) on administering a post-S addam Iraq. The Administration judged the opposition insufficiently capable to merit combat training or weapons; the trainees did not deploy in Operation Iraqi Freedom or into the Free Iraqi Forces that deployed to Iraq. The following is discussion of the major groups working against Saddam Hussein's regime, either with the United States or separately.

• *Secular Groups: Iraqi National Congress (INC) and Iraq National Accord (INA)*. In 1992, the two main Kurdish parties and several Shiite Islamist groups coalesced into the "Iraqi National Congress (INC)" on a platform of human rights, democracy, pluralism, and "federalism" (Kurdish autonomy). However, many observers doubted its commitment to democracy, because most of its groups had authoritarian leaderships. The INC's Executive Committee selected Ahmad Chalabi, a secular Shiite Muslim, to run the INC on a daily basis. (A table on U.S. appropriations for the Iraqi opposition, including the INC, is an appendix).[5]

- *The Iraq National Accord (INA),* founded after Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait, was supported initially by Saudi Arabia but reportedly later earned the patronage of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).[6] It is led by Dr. Iyad al-Allawi. The INA enjoyed Clinton Administration support in 1996 after squabbling among INC groups reduced the INC's perceived viability,[7] but Iraq's intelligence services arrested or executed over 100 INA activists in June 1996. In August 1996, Baghdad launched a military incursion into northern Iraq, at the invitation of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), to help it capture Irbil from the rival Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK). In the process, Baghdad routed both INC and INA agents from the north.

- *The Kurds*,[8] 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, to the chagrin of Turkey, are focused on expanding the high degree of autonomy they enjoy in their three-province "region," which is run by a Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). Both major Kurdish factions — the PUK led by Jalal Talabani, and the KDP led by Masud Barzani — are participating in Iraqi politics, but the PUK more so. Together, the KDP and PUK may have as many as 75,000 *peshmerga* (militia fighters), most of which are providing security in the Kurdish- controlled provinces of Dahuk, Sulaymaniyah, and Irbil Provinces. Kurdish parties pay the *peshmerga* with party funds, but Kurdish leaders have sought, unsuccessfully to date, to have them paid from the national budget. Some are in the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF), deployed mostly in northern cities. Peshmerga have sometimes fought each other; in May 1994, the KDP and the PUK clashed with each other over territory, customs revenues, and control over the Kurdish regional government in Irbil. *Peshmerga* have been largely uninvolved in Sunni-Shiite Arab sectarian violence.

- *Shiite Islamists: Ayatollah Sistani, ISCI, Da'wa, and Sadr Factions.* Shiite Islamist organizations have become dominant in post-Saddam politics; Shiites constitute about 60% of the population but were under-represented and suffered significant repression under Saddam's regime. Several of these factions cooperated with the Saddam-era U.S. regime change efforts, but others did not. The undisputed Shiite religious leader, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani is the *"marja-e-taqlid"* (source of emulation) and the most senior of the four Shiite clerics that lead the Najaf-based "*Hawza al-Ilmiyah*" (a grouping of Shiite seminaries).[9] He was in Iraq during Saddam's rule but adopted a low profile and had no known contact

with the United States. His mentor, Ayatollah Abol Qasem Musavi-Khoi, was head of the *Hawza* until his death in 1992. Like Khoi, Sistani is a "quietist" — generally opposing a direct political role for clerics — but he has weighed in on major political issues. [10]

- *Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI) and the Da'wa Party.* These two groups are mainstream Shiite Islamist groups and generally pro-Iranian, ISCI the more so. During the exile of the late founder of Iran's Islamic revolution Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's in Najaf, Iraq (1964-1978), he was hosted by Grand Ayatollah Muhsin al-Hakim, then head of the *Hawza*, and the father of the Hakim brothers (including current leader Abd al-Aziz al-Hakim). The Hakim brothers were members of the *Da'wa (Islamic Call) Party* when they were driven into exile by Saddam's crackdown in 1980, who accused Shiite Islamists of trying to overthrow him, a crackdown that coincided with the start of the war with Iran in September 1980. Under Iranian patronage, the Hakims broke with Da'wa and founded the Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI) in 1982. Although it was a member of the INC in the early 1990s, SCIRI refused to accept U.S. funds, although it had contacts with U.S. officials. The group changed its name to **ISCI** in May 2007. It is considered the best organized party within the "United Iraqi Alliance" (UIA) of Shiite political groupings, with a "Badr Brigade" militia, numerous political offices, a TV station, and other arms. ISCI says it does not seek an Iranian-style Islamic republic, but ISCI has received financial and other aid from Iran.
- The Da'wa Party**,** which did not directly join the U.S.-led effort to overthrow Saddam Hussein during the 1990s and which does not have an organized militia arm, is an ally and sometime rival of ISCI. The leader of its main faction in Iraq was 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, was named Da'wa leader in July 2007, and Jafari was expelled from the party entirely in June 2008.
- The faction of an "insurgent" Shiite Islamist leader, *Moqtada Al Sadr***,** is emerging as a major factor in Iraqi politics. This faction was underground in Iraq during Saddam's rule, led by Moqtada's father, Ayatollah Mohammad Sadiq Al Sadr, who was killed by the regime in 1999. See text box later in this paper for more information on him and his faction.

POST-SEPTEMBER 11, 2001: REGIME CHANGE AND WAR

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

Bush Administration policy on Iraq clearly became an active regime change effort after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. In President Bush's State of the Union message on January 29, 2002, given as major combat in the U.S.-led war on the Taliban and Al Qaeda in Afghanistan was winding down, he characterized Iraq as part of an "axis of evil" (with Iran and North Korea). Some U.S. officials, particularly then-deputy Defense Secretary 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 Arab leaders opposed war with Iraq and urged greater U.S. attention to the Arab-Israeli dispute.

Some accounts, including the books *Plan of Attack* and *State of Denial* by Bob Woodward (published in April 2004 and September 2006, respectively), say that then Secretary of State Powell and others were concerned about the potential consequences of an invasion of Iraq, particularly the difficulties of building a democracy after major hostilities ended. Press reports in May 2007 indicated that warnings of such difficulties were issued by the CIA before the invasion. Other accounts include reported memoranda (the "Downing Street Memo") by British intelligence officials (based on conversations with U.S. officials) saying that by mid- 2002 the Administration was seeking information to justify a decision, already made, to go to war against Iraq. President Bush and then-British Prime Minister Tony Blair deny this. (On December 20, 2001, the House passed H.J.Res. 75, 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,"[13] found no WMD stockpiles or production but said that there was evidence that the regime retained the intention to reconstitute WMD programs in the future. The formal U.S.-led WMD search ended December 2004,[14] although U.S. forces have found some chemical weapons left from the Iran-Iraq war.[15] UNMOVIC's work was formally terminated by U.N. Security Council Resolution 1762 (June 29, 2007).
- *Links to Al Qaeda.* Iraq was designated a state sponsor of terrorism during 1979-1982 and was again so designated after its 1990 invasion of Kuwait. Although they did not assert that Saddam Hussein's regime was directly involved in the September 11 attacks, senior U.S. officials asserted that Saddam's regime was linked to Al Qaeda, in part because of the presence of pro-Al Qaeda militant leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi in northern Iraq. Although this issue is still debated, the report of the 9/11 Commission found no evidence of a "collaborative operational linkage" between Iraq and Al Qaeda.[16] A March 2008 study by the Institute for Defense Analyses for the Joint Forces Command, based on 600,000 documents captured in post-Saddam Iraq, found no direct ties between Al Qaeda and Saddam's regime. (See CRS Report RL32217, *Iraq and Al Qaeda*, by Kenneth Katzman.)

Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF)

As major combat in Afghanistan wound down in mid-2002, the Administration began ordering a force to Kuwait (the only state that agreed to host a major invasion force) that, by early 2003, gave the President an 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 ties to other groups composed primarily of ex-military officers.[17] The Administration blocked a move by the main factions to declare a provisional government before entering Iraq, believing that doing so would prevent the emergence of secular groups.

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

Congressional and Security Council Action

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

No U.N. Security Council resolution authorizing force was adopted. Countries opposed to war, including France, Russia, China, and Germany, said the latest WMD inspections showed that Iraq could be disarmed peacefully or contained indefinitely. On March 16, 2003, a summit meeting of Britain, Spain, Bulgaria, and the United States, held in the Azores, rejected that view and said all diplomatic options had

failed. The following day, President Bush gave Saddam Hussein and his sons, Uday and Qusay, an ultimatum to leave Iraq within 48 hours to avoid war. They refused and OIF began on March 19, 2003.

In the war, Iraq's conventional military forces were overwhelmed by the approximately 380,000-person U.S. and British-led 30-country[18] "coalition of the willing" force, a substantial proportion of which were in supporting roles. Of the invasion force, Britain contributed 45,000, and U.S. troops constituted the bulk of the remaining 335,000 forces. Some Iraqi units and irregulars ("Saddam's Fedayeen") put up stiff resistance and used unconventional tactics. Some evaluations (for example, "Cobra Two," by Michael Gordon and Bernard Trainor, published in 2006) suggest the U.S. military should have focused more on combating the irregulars 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 U.N.-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, near the major Sunni Umm al-Qura mosque. (Saddam was captured in December 2003, and on November 5, 2006, was convicted for "willful killing" of Shiite civilians in Dujail in 1982. He was hanged on December 30, 2006.)

POST-SADDAM TRANSITION AND GOVERNANCE

According to statements by the Administration, U.S. goals are for a unified, democratic, and federal Iraq that can sustain, govern, and defend itself and is an ally in the global war on terrorism. Administration officials have, for the most part, dropped an earlier stated goal that Iraq serve as a model of democratic reform.

Transition Process

The formal political transition has advanced since the fall of Saddam Hussein, but has not achieved political reconciliation among the newly dominant Shiite Arabs, Sunni Arabs that have been displaced from their former perch at the apex of Iraqi politics, and the Kurds who have felt perennially oppressed by Iraq's Arabs.

Occupation Period/Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA)

After the fall of the regime, the United States set up an occupation structure, reportedly based on 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), under the Department of Defense (DOD), created by a January 20, 2003, Executive Order. The Administration largely discarded the State Department's "Future of Iraq Project," that spent the year before the war planning for the administration of Iraq after the fall of Saddam.[19] Garner and aides began trying to establish a representative successor regime by organizing a meeting in Nassiriyah (April 15, 2003) of about 100 Iraqis of varying views and ethnicities. A subsequent meeting of over 250 notables, held in Baghdad April 26, 2003, ended in agreement to hold a broader meeting one month later to name an interim administration.

In May 2003, the Administration, reportedly preferring what they perceived as stronger leadership in Iraq, named Ambassador L. Paul Bremer to replace Garner by heading a "Coalition Provisional Authority" (CPA). Bremer discontinued Garner's transition process and instead appointed (July 13, 2003) a non-sovereign Iraqi advisory body: the 25-member "Iraq Governing Council" (IGC). In September 2003, the IGC selected a 25-member "cabinet" to run the ministries, with roughly the same factional and ethnic balance of the IGC (a slight majority of Shiite Muslims). Although there were some Sunni figures in the CPA-led administration, many Sunnis resented the new power structure as overturning their prior dominance. Adding to that resentment were some of the CPA's controversial decisions, including "de-Baathification" — a purge from government of about 30,000 Iraqis at four top ranks of the Baath Party (CPA Order 1) and not to recall members of the armed forces to service (CPA Order 2). Bremer and others maintain that recalling the former regime armed forces would have caused mistrust among Shiites and Kurds about the prospects for democracy in post-Saddam Iraq.

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, pressure that contributed to the November 2003 U.S. announcement that sovereignty would be returned to Iraq by June 30, 2004, and national elections were to be held by the

end of 2005. That decision was incorporated into an interim constitution —
the Transitional Administrative Law (TAL), drafted by the major factions and
signed on March 8, 2004.[20] The TAL provided a roadmap for political
transition, including (1) elections by January 31, 2005, for a 275-seat transitional
National Assembly; (2) drafting of a permanent constitution by August 15,
2005, and put to a national referendum by October 15, 2005; and (3) national
elections for a full-term government, by December 15, 2005. Any three provinces
could veto the constitution by a two-thirds majority. In that case, a new draft
would be written and voted on by October 15, 2006. The Kurds maintained their
autonomous KRG and their *peshmerga* militia.

Sovereignty Handover/Interim (Allawi) Government

The TAL did not directly address how a sovereign government would be
formed. Sistani' s opposition scuttled a U.S. plan to select a national assembly
through nationwide "caucuses."

After considering other options, the United States tapped U.N. envoy
Lakhdar Brahimi to select a government,[21] which he did and which began work
on June 1, 2004. The handover ceremony occurred on June 28, 2004. Dominated by the
major factions, this government had a president (Sunni tribal figure Ghazi al-Yawar),
and Prime Minister (Iyad al-Allawi, see above) 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.

As of the handover, the state of occupation ceased, and a U.S. Ambassador
(John Negroponte) established U.S.-Iraq diplomatic relations for the first time since
January 1991. A U.S. embassy formally opened on June 30, 2004; it is staffed with
about 1,100 U.S. personnel.[22] The Ambassador is Ryan Crocker, who took over from
Zalmay Khalilzad (July 2005 - April 2007). In April 2008, the State Department
formally took possession from the construction firm, First Kuwaiti General Trading
and Construction Co., of the new embassy complex, with 21 buildings on 104
acres.[23] It was formally "opened" in early August 2008. In conjunction with the
handover:

- Reconstruction management and advising of Iraq's ministries were
  taken over by a State Department component called the "Iraq
  Reconstruction and Management Office" (IRMO). With the
  expiration of that unit's authority in April 2007, it was renamed the "Iraq
  Transition Assistance Office," ITAO, headed since June 2007 by Mark
  Tokola. ITAO's current focus is promoting efficiency in Iraq's ministries
  and Iraq's management of the projects built with U.S. reconstruction

funds, although Iraq has been unable or unwilling to take control of a large percentage of completed projects. The authority has also expired for a separate DOD "Project Contracting Office (PCO)," under the Persian Gulf Division of the Army Corps of Engineers, although it is still operating to complete projects that were in progress. It funded large infrastructure projects such as roads, power plants, and school renovations.

U.N. Involvement/Coalition Military Mandate/Status of U.S. Forces (SOFA)/Permanent Basing

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

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

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

- *Coalition/U.S. Mandate.* Resolution 1546 stipulated that the coalition's mandate would be reviewed "at the request of the government of Iraq or twelve months from the date of this resolution" (or June 8, 2005); that the mandate would expire when a permanent government is sworn in at the end of 2005; and that the mandate would be terminated "if the Iraqi government so requests." Resolution 1637 (November 11, 2005), Resolution 1723 (November 28, 2006), and Resolution 1790 (December 18, 2007) each extended these provisions for an additional year, "unless earlier "requested by the Iraqi government," and required interim reviews of the mandate on June 15 of the years of expiration, respectively. In June 2007, Iraq's parliament passed with 144 votes (in the 275 seat parliament) a

"non-binding" motion, led by the Sadr faction, to require the Iraqi government to seek parliamentary approval before asking that the coalition military mandate be extended. Maliki argued that there was no such requirement.

- *Strategic Framework Agreement.* On November 26, 2007, President Bush and Prime Minister Maliki signed a "Declaration of Principles" by video conference under which the U.N. mandate would be renewed for only one more year (until December 31, 2008) and that, by July 2008, Iraq and the U.S. would complete a bilateral agreement that would replace the Security Council mandate. The "strategic framework agreement" would outline the political and economic relationship between the two countries but, according to U.S. officials, would not contain an explicit U.S. commitment to defend Iraq's government. The status of these negotiations is discussed below. (Section 1314 of P.L. 110-28, the FY2007 supplemental, says that the President shall redeploy U.S. forces if asked to officially by Iraq's government.) [24]

- *Status of Forces Agreement.* Because of the U.N. mandate in effect, there currently is no Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) with Iraq. Such agreements typically stipulate which courts and authorities would deal with infractions by employees of the sending country. P.L. 109-289 (FY2007 DOD appropriations) contains a provision that the Defense Department not agree to allow U.S. forces in Iraq to be subject to Iraqi law. A similar provision involving prohibition on use of U.S. funds to enter into such an agreement is in the FY2008 Consolidated Appropriation (P.L. 110-161).

- *Permanent Basing.* The facilities used by U.S. forces in Iraq do not formally constitute "permanent bases," although these facilities conceivably could be made permanent U.S. bases if there were a U.S.-Iraqi agreement. President Bush said on March 27, 2008 that the strategic framework agreement would not establish permanent U.S. bases in Iraq. The Defense Appropriation for FY2007 (P.L. 109-289); the FY2007 Defense Authorization Act (P.L. 109-364); a FY2007 supplemental (P.L. 110-28); the FY2008 Defense Appropriation (P.L. 110-116); and the FY2008 Consolidated Appropriation (P.L. 110-161) contain provisions prohibiting the establishment or the use of U.S. funds to establish permanent military installations or bases in Iraq. The P.L. 110-28 law — as well as P.L. 110-116 FY2008 Defense Appropriation — also say that the United States shall not control Iraq's oil resources, a statement urged by Recommendation 23 of the Iraq Study Group report. The FY2008 defense authorization bill (P.L. 110-181) forbids the use of appropriated funds

to establish permanent bases in Iraq or control Iraq's oil, and similar provisions are in a FY2008/2009 supplemental (P.L. 110-252) and the FY2009 defense authorization (H.R. 5658).

- *Oil Revenues.* Resolution 1546 gave Iraq gained control over its oil revenues (the CPA had handled the DFI during the occupation period[25]) and the Development Fund for Iraq (DFI), subject to monitoring (until at least June 2005) by the U.N.-mandated International Advisory and Monitoring Board (IAMB). Iraq's oil revenues continue to be deposited in the DFI. Resolution 1790 (December 18, 2007) extends IAMB monitoring until December 31, 2008, subject to review by June 15, 2008. Resolution 1546 gave the Iraqi government responsibility for closing out the U.N.-run "oil-for-food program" under which all oil revenues were handled by a U.N. escrow account; Security Council Resolution 1483 had ended the "oil for food program" as of November 21, 2003.

Current Status of U.S.-Iraq Strategic and SOFA Negotiations

Negotiations on a strategic framework agreement and a SOFA began in early March 2008 and made halting progress through the spring of 2008. Because of the complexities of the negotiations, there was a decision to combine a U.S.-Iraq strategic framework and a SOFA into one document, and to make it a "bridge" agreement that is limited in time and scope. An overall agreement is now said to be close to completion, although the target date for agreement (July 31, 2008) was not met. An agreement, if ratified by the Iraqi parliament, would allow U.S. operations to continue in Iraq beyond the December 31, 2008, expiration of the U.N. mandate. A more permanent SOFA agreement would be left to negotiators from the next U.S. Administration, if the next Administration chooses to pursue this bilateral framework. The next Administration could elect to revive the U.N. mandate.

The SOFA portion of the agreement will reportedly include immunities from Iraqi law for U.S. troops, civilian employees of U.S. forces, and foreign partner forces, but not for security contractors. It will also delineate the relative freedom of action for U.S. (and partner) military forces in Iraq — an area of continuing U.S.-Iraq differences. Another contentious issue has been the degree of coalition control of Iraqi air space, and facilities from which the coalition can operate. One difference was resolved in July 2008 after Maliki, possibly bowing to Sadrist and other opposition, said the agreement should include a timetable for a U.S. withdrawal. The Bush Administration had repeatedly rejected firm timetables for withdrawal, maintaining that any withdrawals be "conditions-based," although President Bush

reportedly agreed with Maliki on July 17, 2008, to an "aspirational" timetable — a notional goal for when Iraq could secure itself. The two sides have reportedly agreed to set the end of 2011 as a goal for a U.S. combat troop withdrawal, although subject to conditions as assessed at that time. U.S. combat forces will cease patrols in Iraqi cities as of June 2009, according to the reported agreement.

Iraqi views are significant because Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari, in a press conference with visiting Secretary of State Rice on December 18, 2007, said the Iraqi government would submit an agreement for parliamentary approval. However, the decision to negotiate a bridge agreement has introduced apparent Iraqi government reluctance to submit the agreement to the Iraqi parliament formally. Several Members of Congress have expressed concern that the Declaration indicates that a final agreement might commit the United States to defend the Iraqi government from both internal and external threats, and might therefore constitute a treaty requiring Senate ratification.

U.N. Involvement in Governance Issues

Several U.N. resolutions assign a role for the United Nations in post-Saddam reconstruction and governance. Resolution 1483 (cited above) provided for a U.N. special representative to Iraq, and "called on" governments to contribute forces for stabilization. Resolution 1500 (August 14, 2003) established U.N. Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI).[26] The size of UNAMI in Iraq, headed by Swedish diplomat Staffan de Mistura, exceeds 120 in Iraq (80 in Baghdad, 40 in Irbil, and others in Basra), with equal numbers "offshore" in Jordan. UNAMI focuses on promoting political reconciliation, election assistance, and monitoring human rights practices and humanitarian affairs, and is extensively involved in assisting with the constitution review process discussed further below. U.N. Security Council Resolution, 1770, adopted August 10, 2007, renewed UNAMI's mandate for another year, and enhanced its responsibility to be lead promoter of political reconciliation in Iraq and to plan a national census. UNAMI also is expected to play a major role in helping organize provincial elections, 2008, as discussed further below, as well as in efforts to resolve the Kurdish claim to Kirkuk and other cities in the north. (*In Recommendations 7 and 26 and several others the Iraq Study Group calls for increased U.N. participation in promoting reconciliation in Iraq.*)

Elections in 2005[27]

After the handover of sovereignty, the focus was on three votes held in 2005:

- On January 30, 2005, elections were held for a transitional National Assembly, 18 provincial councils (four-year term), and the Kurdish regional assembly. The Sunni Arabs, still resentful of the U.S. invasion, mostly boycotted, and no major "Sunni slates" were offered, enabling the Shiite United Iraqi Alliance (UIA) to win a slim majority (140 of the 275 seats) and to ally with the Kurds (75 seats) to dominate the national government formed subsequently as well as the provincial councils.

- Subsequently, a constitution drafted by a committee appointed by the elected government was approved on October 15, 2005. Sunni opponents achieved a two-thirds "no" vote in two provinces, but not in the three needed to defeat the constitution. The crux of Sunni opposition was the provision for a weak central government ("federalism"): it allows groups of provinces to band together to form autonomous "regions" with their own regional governments, internal security forces, and a large role in controlling revenues from any new energy discoveries. Sunnis oppose this concept because their region has thus far lacked significant proven oil reserves and they depend on the central government for revenues. The constitution also contained an article (137) that promised a (yet-to-be-completed) special constitutional amendment process, within a set six-month post-adoption deadline, intended to mollify Sunnis.

- In the December 15, 2005 election for a full four year term government, some Sunnis, seeking to strengthen their position to amend the constitution, fielded electoral slates — the "Consensus Front" and the National Dialogue Front. With the UIA alone well short of the two-thirds majority needed to unilaterally form a government, Sunnis, the Sadr faction, secular groupings, and the Kurds demanded Jafari be replaced and accepted Nuri al-Maliki as Prime Minister (April 22, 2006). Maliki won approval of a cabinet on May 20, 2006 (see table on the cabinet composition).

Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki

Born in 1950 in Karbala, has belonged to Da'wa Party since 1968. An expert in Arab poetry, fled Iraq in 1980 after Saddam banned the party, initially to Iran, but then to Syria when he refused Iran's orders that he join Shiite militia groups fighting Iraq during the Iran-Iraq war. Headed Da'wa offices in Syria and Lebanon and edited Da'wa Party newspaper. Advocated aggressive purge of ex-Baathists as member of the Higher National De-Baathification Commission after Saddam' s fall and continues to seek rapid execution of convicted Saddam-era figures, earning him criticism among Sunnis for sectarian bias. Elected to National Assembly (UIA list) in January 2005 and chaired its "security committee." Publicly supported Hezbollah (which shares a background with Da'wa Party) during July-August 2006 Israel-Hezbollah conflict, prompting congressional criticism during July 2006 visit to Washington DC. Has tense relations with IS CI, whose activists accuse him of surrounding himself with Da' wa members. Prior to 2007, repeatedly shielded Sadr' s Mahdi Army militia from U.S. military sweeps, but has now fallen out with Sadr. His confronting Sadr in 2008 has bolstered Maliki's support among Sunnis and Kurds and increased his political strength.

Political Reconciliation, Provincial Elections, and Other "Benchmarks"

Many observers are measuring the effectiveness of U.S. policy by whether or not it facilitates political reconciliation[28] — considered key to the U.S. ability to create durable stability that would outlast a U.S. drawdown. U.S. officials have cited legislative achievements in Iraq in 2008 as key indicators of political progress, while at the same time calling for further steps such as increasing focus on provision of public services. A GAO study, released in June 2008 (GAO-08-837), noted problems in Iraqi leaders' implementation of agreed laws and policies, with the net effect that reconciliation has been limited to date. That view is supported by the failure of the COR to pass a needed provincial elections law before August 1, 2008, adjournment, likely delaying the provincial elections into 2009.

Although many Iraqi factions are moving more into politics and away from use of violence, there continue to be significant splits in the power structure that

could undermine further gains. These splits are between the dominant Shiites and the Sunni Arabs, within the Shiite and Sunni communities, and increasingly between the Arabs and Kurds. In 2007, several major political blocs, including the Sadrist faction and the leading Sunni "Consensus Front" pulled their members out of the cabinet, leaving Maliki, at one point, with 13 out of the 37 total positions vacant held by acting ministers, or their ministers boycotting the cabinet. The pullout from the UIA bloc in the COR by the Shiite *Fadilah* Party and the Sadr faction in April 2007 and September 2007, respectively, left Maliki able to count on only about 142 votes in the 275 seat COR.

The intra-Shiite split remains volatile and susceptible to further violence, but signs indicate that this rift is evolving into political competition and away from consistent armed conflict. This trend is a consequence of the late March 2008 move by Maliki to try to crush the Sadr and Fadilah militias by sending ISF units to Basra to eliminate Sadr/Mahdi control of major districts. Prior to 2007, Maliki had the support of the Sadr faction, but that alliance disintegrated in 2007 when the United States insisted that Maliki allow U.S. forces to pursue Mahdi Army militiamen as part of the "troop surge." After initial ISF failures, the city has now largely come under ISF control, with some normal life and even rebuilding occurring, as well as more transparent operations of Basra port. The Maliki crackdown was viewed as a move by Maliki and ISCI to weaken Sadr' s faction politically. Sadr says his movement will back independents in the elections, and on August 8, 2008, he called on his armed followers to instead join the charity arm of his movement as "mumahidoun" — lit. "those who pave the way" — and that he might fully join the political process if the U.S. were to set a timetable to withdraw from Iraq. Mahdi and other militias did not surrender or disarm, and there are fears that violence could return in advance of the planned provincial elections.

Additional political progress grew out of the Basra crackdown. Sunni and Kurdish leaders rallied to Maliki' s side because the operation showed his willingness to act against fellow Shiites. Partly as a result of the confrontation, the leading Sunni "Consensus Front" bloc agreed to rejoin the cabinet; an agreement for six of the blocs members to return was reached on July 19, 2008 — the bloc now holds one deputy prime ministership, as well as the ministries of Culture, Women's Affairs, Higher Education, Communications, and the State ministry of Foreign Affairs. Simultaneously, the COR voted in four new UIA members to fill vacancies left by the pullout of the Sadrist faction from the cabinet in 2007. These cabinet changes added to the October 2007 replacement of two resigned Sadrist ministers (Health and Agriculture) with independent Shiites, meaning that the cabinet is, as of July 2008, now lacks only one permanent minister (Justice).

Moqtada Al Sadr

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

Although Moqtada Al Sadr was initially viewed as a young firebrand lacking religious and political weight, he is now viewed as a threat by the mainstream Shiite factions. Increasingly perceived as clever and capable — simultaneously participating in the political process to avoid confrontation with the United States while denouncing the "U.S. occupation" and occasionally sending his militia into combat against the United States and rival Iraqi factions. He has a large following among poor Shiites who identify with other "oppressed Muslims" and who oppose virtually any U.S. presence in the Middle East. Sadr formed the "Mahdi Army" militia in 2003. Sadr supporters won 28 seats in parliament under UIA bloc but pulled out of the bloc in September 2007; the faction also has two supporters under the separate "Messengers" list. Prior to its April 2007 pullout from the cabinet, the Sadr faction held ministries of health, transportation, and agriculture and two ministry of state posts. In June 2008, his office announced it would not run a separate electoral list in upcoming provincial elections and that most of the Mahdi Army would transform into a political movement, leaving several hundred fighters in "special companies" authorized to fight U.S. and partner forces in Iraq. In August 2008, stated intention to convert part of Mahdi Army to nationwide charity arm to compensate for government ineffectiveness, but leaving his level of commitment to purely political as opposed to violent action still uncertain. His faction opposes the Shiite "region" in the south, opposes the draft oil law as a "sellout," and opposes the defense pact with the U.S. Sadr's reputation remains clouded by allegations of involvement in the April 10, 2003, killing in Iraq of Abd al-Majid Khoi (the son of the late Grand Ayatollah Khoi and head of his London-based Khoi Foundation). There is discussion throughout this report about tensions between Sadr's faction and other Shiite groups and with the U.S. military.

The January 12, 2008, adoption of a De-Baathification reform law, after many months of deadlock, was considered a key milestone. It was followed on February 13, 2008, by the passage by the COR of an amnesty law for detainees and a law stipulating the power of provincial councils (and setting an October 1, 2008, date for these elections, although that date is expected to slip until early 2009 because an election law has not yet been passed), as well as the 2008 national budget. These steps, although dependent on implementation, reflected movement on an August 26, 2007, "Unity Accord" signed by the figures on the presidency council (Talibani and his two Sunni and Shiite deputies, Adel Abd al-Mahdi of ISCI and Tariq Al Hashimi of the Concord Front), the Prime Minister, and KRG president Masoud Barzani.

Although many Sunnis are coming into the political process, this trend is creating growing differences within the Sunni Arab political structure. The established, urban-based Sunni parties that participated in the December 2005 elections are now facing challenges from tribally-based Sunnis who are part of the "Awakening (As Sahwa) Movement," founded in late 2005 in Ramadi by Shaykh Abd al-S attar al-Rishawi, to counter Al Qaeda in Iraq. The Awakening Movement is credited with helping stabilize Anbar in partnership with U.S. forces. The tribal groups are expected to vigorously contest the planned provincial elections. The Awakening leaders are working with the United States and its forces, but they blame Maliki for refusing to allow their insurgent-turned security forces ("Sons of Iraq") to join the Iraqi security forces, a sign of Maliki's continued distrust. Maliki has agreed to begin paying about half of the roughly 103,000 Sons of Iraq as of October 1, 2008, taking that responsibility over from the United States, but some in Maliki's circle have talked openly about disbanding the Sons out of distrust that they could return to insurgency. Recently, reflecting this distrust, forces under government control have arrested key Awakening or Sons of Iraq leaders. The Awakening movement is headed by Shaykh Rishawi's brother, Ahmad, following Rishawi's assassination in September 2007. Another key figure in their coalition is Anbar province Governor Mamoun Rashid al-Alwani. This power struggle contributed to a delay in the handover of Anbar Province to Iraqi control, but that handover did take place on September 1, 2008.

The Kurds are fully engaged in the political structure in Baghdad and have been partners of Maliki and IS CI, but they are are increasingly at odds with Maliki and other Arab Iraqi leaders over Kirkuk, over the push of the Iraqi Security Forces into *peshmerga*-patrolled Kurdish parts of the mixed province of Diyala, as well as over the KRG's decision to move forward on oil and gas development deals with the Kurdish region in advance of a national oil law. Iraq's Oil Minister has called the deals — and a separate KRG oil law — illegal. The Kurds insist on implementation

of Article 140 of the constitution that mandated a referendum on whether Tamim (Kirkuk) Province will affiliate formally with the Kurdistan Regional Government, by December 31, 2007. The Kurds had insisted — to the point of threatening to pull out of the central government entirely — that the referendum proceed but UNAMI, backed by the United States, succeeded in December 2007 in persuading the Kurds to accept a delay (until June 30, 2008) in the referendum. No new date is set, and U.S. officials express hope that the Kirkuk issue might be resolved without the referendum ever being held. UNAMI is instead focusing on territorial compromises on disputed cities such as Makhmour, Sinjar, and Khanaqin. In December 2007, UNAMI also succeeded in persuading Sunni Arabs to return to the fractured Kirkuk provincial council. However, the Kirkuk dispute caused a presidential veto of the July 22, 2008, COR vote (held on July 15 despite a Kurdish walkout) on the needed election law. The draft law provided for equal division of power in Kirkuk (between Kurds, Arabs, and Turkomans) until its status is finally resolved and for the ISF to replace the *peshmerga* as the main security force in the province, prompting Kurdish opposition and subsequent communal strife in Kirkuk city. Efforts to resolve the issue delayed the COR's summer recess until August 6, 2008, but without success. The holy month of Ramadan is September 2008 and will likely slow any progress that month.

The legislation passed in 2008 adds to the 112 laws passed by the COR from 2006-2007, of which 34 were vetoed. Among other laws enacted was a measure regulating Iraq's oil refineries (July 2007) and a law on pensions for Saddam-era government employees (November 2007). The cabinet approved a draft law on October 30, 2007 ending a provision that protects private security contractors — part of the fallout from the September 2007 incident involving Blackwater security company's killing of 17 Iraqi civilians at Nisoor Square in Baghdad. (*This type of high level contact is suggested by Recommendation 19 of the Iraq Study Group report.*)

Iraqi Pledges and Status of Accomplishment

The Bush Administration asserts that the enactment of most of the "benchmarks" of progress will further reconciliation, although the lasting effects will largely depend on implementation. The benchmarks were outlined in a FY2007 Supplemental Appropriation Act (P.L. 110-28) , which conditioned the release of some funds for Iraq operations upon progress on these benchmarks, and required the Administration to report on progress by July 15 and September 15, 2007. A presidential waiver provision to permit the flow of funds was exercised.[29] As discussed below, and outlined in a U.S. Embassy assessment circulated in May 2008 in response to congressional questions at the

Petraeus/Crocker hearings in April, the Administration asserts that there has been substantial additional progress since the September 15, 2007, report. (P.L. 110-28) also mandated a GAO report released September 4, 2007,[30] which assessed Iraq's completion of the benchmarks and was critical of Iraqi performance. P.L. 110-28 further mandated a separate assessment of the Iraqi security forces (ISF) by an outside commission (headed by retired Gen. James Jones) discussed later.

The information below is intended to analyze Iraqi performance on the benchmarks, as compared to what Iraqi leaders pledged *in August 2006.* This does not strictly correspond to the 18 benchmarks of P.L. 110-28. *A chart on the those 18 benchmarks, along with subsequent developments, is in CRS Report RS21968.*

(1) *By September 2006, formation of a committee to review the constitution under the special amendment process (Article 137); approval of a law to implement formation of regions; approval of an investment law; and approval of a law establishing the Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC).* The investment law was adopted in October 2006. The regions law was adopted October 12, 2006, although, to mollify Sunni opposition who fear formation of a large Shiite region in as many as nine provinces of southern Iraq, major factions agreed to delay the formation of new regions until at least April 2008. Iraqi leaders are increasingly fearful of a push on forming a large Shiite region, although only a petition among some political activists in Basra, to form a region out of that province, has materialized since the April 2008 moratorium expired. The IHEC law — one requirement to implement the planned provincial elections — was passed on January 23, 2007, and the nine election commissioners have been appointed, although they are considered mostly representatives of the major blocs and not necessarily neutral or fully representative. In addition, the process of choosing IHEC representatives in each province was slow — several provinces lack election commissioners — and UNAMI believes some commissioners are not necessarily trustworthy.

The constitution review committee (CRC), chaired by Humam al-Hammoudi, a senior ISCI leader, delivered "semi-final" recommendations for constitutional amendments in late May 2007, but left many sensitive issues to be decided by senior faction leaders. Among them are the powers of regions versus central government, the status of Kirkuk, and presidential powers (Sunnis want the presidency to have more power to have increased powers). With deadlock remaining on 50 amendments covering these fundamental questions, but making some progress on the role of the judiciary and some human rights, the CRC has repeatedly extended the deadline (beyond May 2008, but not further specified) for submitting its final recommendations. Sunni representatives reportedly seek to alter the constitution so

as to require or facilitate the appointment of a Sunni Arab as president or reduce the powers of the prime minister (who is likely to be Shiite).

(2) *By October 2006, approval of a provincial powers law and approval of a new oil law.* The provincial authorities law was passed on February 13, 2008. It was initially blocked when deputy President Adel Abd al-Mahdi insisted it not include a provision for the Baghdad government to dismiss provincial governors. However, even though his ISCI faction wants to reduce the powers of the central government and may fear a victory in those elections by the faction of Moqtada al-S adr, Abd al-Mahdi, reportedly under some U.S. pressure, dropped his objection on March 19, 2008 and the new law is in effect. As noted above, the election law required to implement elections was not adopted before the COR's summer 2008 recess; some Sunnis, Sadrists, and others say that established parties deliberately blocked agreement on the election law because they fear electoral defeat. Agreement apparently was reached to use an "open list" (vote for candidates) voting system, which is favored by Sadrists, to bar religious symbols from the balloting, and to retain a 25% quota for females in the provincial councils. The COR reconvenes on September 9, 2008, but there does not appear to be agreement that would allow passage quickly. The failure to pass the election law ensures the election will not be held October 1, 2008, and not likely until some time in 2009. When they occur, the elections will likely feature competition in the Sunni areas between established Sunni parties and the emerging Awakening movement. On the Shiite side, competition is expected to be stiff between the established parties such as ISCI and Da'wa, on the one hand, and the Sadr faction, on the other, although Sadr said in June 2008 he would not offer a distinct "Sadrist" list, but rather would back Sadrists who run on other lists.

The oil laws have not been passed, to date. Beginning in mid-2006, a three member Oil and Energy Committee working under the auspices of the Iraqi cabinet prepared draft hydrocarbon framework legislation to regulate Iraq's oil and gas sector. Following approval by the negotiating committee, Iraq's cabinet approved a draft version of the framework law in February 2007. However, the Kurds opposed a revised version agreed by the cabinet and forwarded to the COR in July 2007, and the draft has stalled in the COR. The issue became acrimonious as the Kurds went forward with separate energy development deals and passed their own oil law. A related draft revenue law, on which the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad says it expects progress in the remainder of 2008, would empower the federal government to collect oil and gas revenue, and reserve 17% of oil revenues for distribution to the Kurdish regional government. Two other implementing laws dealing with the structure of the oil industry and how foreign firms' investments will be treated have not yet been approved by the cabinet. In July 2008, new talks between the Kurds and the central

government began, brokered by a joint "commission" set up to resolve the differences.

(3) By November 2006, approval of a new de-Baathification law and approval of a flag and national anthem law. The January 12, 2008, COR adoption of the De-Baathification law, called the Accountability and Justice Law, was considered a major development because of the emotions and sensitivity among the dominant factions to allowing Baathists back into government. The effect of the law on reconciliation, adopted unanimously by 143 in the COR who were present (opponents walked out before the vote), depends on implementation. It allows about 30,000 lower ranking ex-Baathists to regain their jobs; 3,500 Baathists (top three party ranks) would not, but would receive pensions instead. But, the law could allow for judicial prosecution of all ex-Baathists and to firing of about 7,000 ex-Baathists in post-Saddam security services, and bars ex-Saddam security personnel from regaining jobs.

On January 22, 2008, the COR voted 110 (out of 165 present) to pass a law adopting a new national flag that drops the previous Saddam-era symbols on the flag. However, some facilities dominated by Sunnis, who oppose the new design, have not flown the new flag to date and accuse the COR of adopting it because of pressure from the Kurds, who wanted a new flag in advance of a regional Arab parliamentarians meeting in the Kurdish area in March 2008. There has been no further progress on the national anthem issue.

(4) By December 2006, approval of laws to curb militias and to offer amnesty to insurgent supporters. As noted, the law to grant amnesty to detainees (mostly Sunnis and Sadrists) held by Iraq was passed on February 13, 2008, and went into effect on March 2, 2008. Releases thus far have been slow (1,700 out of 17,000 detainees whose release petitions have been approved) because of slow judicial processes. The law does not affect 25,000 detainees held by the United States.

No formal laws to curb militias has been passed, but a previous (June 2007) "Measuring Stability" report said Maliki had verbally committed to a militia demobilization program, and an executive director of the program was named on May 12, 2007, but committee members have not been appointed and a demobilization work plan not drafted. The government's Basra operation in March 2008 was seen as a government effort against militias, particularly that of Moqtada Al Sadr and, on April 9, 2008, Maliki stated that no party that continues to field an illegal militia would be permitted to participate in the planned provincial elections.

(5) By January 2007, completion of the constitutional review process. As noted above, the constitution review committee has not completed its work.

(6) By February 2007, the formation of independent commissions to oversee governance. No progress has been reported to date. (This is not one of the formal benchmarks stipulated by P.L. 110-28.)

(7) By March 2007, holding of a referendum on the constitutional amendments. See no. 5.

(8) By April 2007, Iraqi assumption of control of its military. Six of the ten Iraqi Army divisions are now under Iraqi control. (This is not one of the P.L. 110-28 benchmarks.)

(9) By September 2007, Iraqi security control of all 18 provinces. Iraq Security Forces now have security control for 11 provinces: Muthanna, Dhi Qar, Najaf, Maysan, Karbala, Irbil, Sulaymaniyah, Dohuk (the latter three are Kurdish provinces turned over May 30, 2007), Basra, Qadisiyah, and Anbar (September 1, 2008). (The provincial handovers are not among the P.L. 110-28 benchmarks.)

(10) By December 2007, Iraqi security self-reliance. Estimates by Iraqi and U.S. commanders on when Iraqi security forces would be able to secure Iraq by themselves are discussed in the sections on the ISF later in this paper. (This is not one of the P.L. 110-28 benchmarks.) The other security related benchmarks of the eighteen mentioned in P.L. 110-28 — such as applying law even-handedly among all sects, reducing sectarian violence, and increasing the number of Iraqi security forces able to operate independently — are security-related and are discussed later.

Regional and International Diplomatic Efforts to Promote Iraq Stability

The Iraqi government is receiving growing diplomatic support, even though most of its neighbors, except Iran, resent the Shiite and Kurdish domination of the regime. Ambassador Crocker testified during April 8-9, 2008, that the U.S. lamented that, at that time, there were no Arab ambassadors serving in Iraq, depriving the Arab states of countervailing influence to Iran's ties to Iraqi factions. Saudi Arabia, which considers the Shiite dominated government in Baghdad an affront to what it sees as rightful Sunni pre-eminence, told visiting Secretary of State Rice in August 2007 that the Kingdom will consider opening an embassy in Iraq, but it has implemented only preliminary steps on that issue thus far. In March 2008, Bahrain's King Hamad pledged to President Bush to open a full Embassy in Baghdad, and an ambassador was named in late August 2008. In June 2008, the UAE Foreign Minister became the first Arab Foreign Minister to visit, and he announced the naming of a UAE ambassador. Turkey's Foreign Minister Tayyip Recep Erdogan visited in July 2008, and later that month, Kuwait named an Ambassador. Jordan swore in an ambassador on July 1, 2008 (Nayif Zaidan), and Jordan's King

Abdullah visited Iraq on August 11, 2008, making Abdullah the first Arab leader to visit Iraq. Lebanese Prime Minister Fuad Siniora visited in August 2008.

The United States has tried to build regional support for Iraq through an ongoing "Expanded Ministerial Conference of Iraq's Neighbors" process, consisting of Iraq's neighbors, the United States, all the Gulf monarchy states, Egypt, and the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council). The first meeting was in Baghdad on March 10, 2007. Iran and Syria attended, as did the United States. A follow-on meeting in Egypt was held May 3 and 4, 2007, in concert with additional pledges of aid for Iraq under an "International Compact for Iraq (ICI)" and agreement to establish regional working groups on Iraq's security, fuel supplies, and Iraqi refugees. Those groups have each had several meetings. A ministerial meeting held in Istanbul on November 2, 2007, but that meeting was reportedly dominated by the crisis between Turkey and Iraq over safe haven for the Turkish Kurdish opposition PKK (Kurdistan Workers Party), discussed further below. The November 2007 meeting did agree to create an institutional support mechanism for the process, possibly run by UNAMI. The third full "Expanded Neighbors" meeting was held in Kuwait on April 22, 2008, although without any significant announcements from major Arab states on opening embassies in Iraq, remitting pledged reconstruction funds, or writing off Saddam-era debt. No progress on debt relief or related issues were made at a meeting of the Iraq Compact countries in Sweden on May 30, 2008. Bilateral U.S.-Iran meetings on Iraq are discussed below.

Human Rights and Rule of Law

The State Department's report on human rights for 2007, released March 11, 2008, much as the previous year's report, blamed much of the human suffering in Iraq on the overall security environment, the wide scale presence of militias, and partisans in the government, rather than on the Iraqi government writ large. It said that Iraq's has the legal framework "for the free exercise of human rights." 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 details how the FY2004 supplemental appropriation (P.L. 108-106) "Iraq Relief and Reconstruction Fund" (IRRF) has been spent for programs on this issue ("2207 Report"). These programs are run by the State Department Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (State/INL), USAID, and State Department Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL):

- About \$1.0 14 billion from the IRRF was for "Democracy Building," including programs to empower women and promote their involvement in Iraqi politics, as well as programs to promote independent media. An FY2006 regular foreign aid appropriations (P.L. 109-102) provided \$28 million each to the International Republican Institute and the National Democratic Institute for Iraq democracy promotion. An 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). An FY2007 supplemental appropriation (P.L. 110-28) provided \$250 million in additional "democracy funding;" The FY2008 and FY2009 supplemental appropriation (P.L. 110-252) provides \$75 million to promote democracy in Iraq.
- About \$71 million for related "Rule of Law" programs. About \$15 million is to promote human rights and human rights education.
- About \$159 million to build and secure courts and train legal personnel, including several projects that attempt to increase the transparency of the justice system, computerize Iraqi legal documents, train judges and lawyers, develop various aspects of law, such as commercial law, promote legal reform. There are currently 1,200 judges working, up 100 since September 2007, reporting to the Higher Juridical Council.
- About \$128 million is for "Investigations of Crimes Against Humanity," primarily former regime abuses;
- \$10 million is for the Commission for the Resolution of Real Property Disputes (formerly the Iraqi Property Claims Commission) which is evaluating Kurdish claims to property taken from Kurds, mainly in Kirkuk, during Saddam' s regime.

Other ESF funds have been used for activities to empower local governments, including the "Community Action Program" (CAP) through which local reconstruction projects are voted on by village and town representatives; related Provincial Reconstruction Development Committees (PRDCs); and projects funded by Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), local enclaves to provide secure conditions for reconstruction. The CAP program has been funded in recent years at about \$50 million per year (ESF account).

Economic Reconstruction and U.S. Assistance

The Administration has asserted that economic reconstruction will contribute to stability.[31] The testimony by General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker during April 8-9, 2008, indicated that the Administration concurs with the substantial bipartisan sentiment that Iraq, flush with oil revenues, should begin assuming the financial burden for its own reconstruction and security costs. A total of about $48 billion has been appropriated for reconstruction funding (including security forces), and of that, about $42 billion has been obligated as of June 2008 (according to a GAO report of August 2008, GAO-08-1031). Included in this total is about $2.8 billion in Commanders Emergency Response Program (CERP) funds, which are DOD funds that are distributed locally by U.S. military officers to build good will toward U.S. troops, although assessments show that some funds have been used for relatively ambitious development projects usually handled by USAID. For more detailed breakdowns of U.S. aid to Iraq, see CRS Report RL3 1833, *Iraq: Recent Developments in Reconstruction Assistance*, by Curt Tarnoff.

A major source of reconstruction funds was the Iraq Relief and Reconstruction Fund. About $20.9 billion was appropriated for the IRRF in two supplemental appropriations: FY2003 supplemental, P.L. 108-11, which appropriated about $2.5 billion; and the FY2004 supplemental appropriations, P.L. 108-106, which provided about $18.42 billion. According to State Department reports, the IRRF sector allocations are as follows:

- $5.03 billion for Security and Law Enforcement;
- $1.31 5 billion for Justice, Public Safety, Infrastructure, and Civil Society (some funds from this category discussed above);
- $1.0 14 billion for Democracy (as discussed above);
- $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.

Oil Revenues

Before the war, it was widely asserted by Administration officials that Iraq's vast oil reserves, believed second only to those of Saudi Arabia and the driver of Iraq's economy, would fund 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 been targeted by insurgents and smugglers. Protecting and rebuilding this industry (Iraq's total pipeline system is over 4,300 miles long) has received substantial U.S. and Iraqi attention; that focus is beginning to show some success as production, as of May 2008, reached nearly pre-war levels.

Corruption and mismanagement are key issues. The U.S. military reports in recent "Measuring Stability" reports that elements of the protection forces for the oil sector (Strategic Infrastructure Battalions and Facilities Protection Service for the Oil Ministry) are suspected of complicity for smuggling as much as 70% of the output of the Baiji refinery, cost Iraq as much as $2 billion in revenue per year. Other accounts attribute the smuggling to tribes based around the Baiji refinery who have set up numerous gas stations to implement the smuggling scheme there. The Iraqi government needs to import refined gasoline because it lacks sufficient refining capacity. A GAO report released August 2, 2007 said that inadequate metering, reinjection, corruption, theft, and sabotage, likely renders Iraq's oil production 100,000 - 300,000 barrels per day lower than the figures shown below, taken from State Department report. (*Steps to correct some of these deficiencies in the oil sector are suggested in Recommendations 62 of the Iraq Study Group report.*)

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. International investment has been assumed to depend on the passage of the hydrocarbons laws, and some are concerned that the draft oil laws, if implemented, will favor U.S. firms. However, Iraq has begun pre-qualifying large oil companies to bid on major oil and gas fields, including Rumaila, West Qurna, and Zubair, and Iraq reportedly is set to award contracts to several major U.S. companies to service existing fields. Some in Congress opposed this action on the grounds that there would be no competitive bidding.

In April 2008, the European Union claimed to be close to an energy cooperation deal with Iraq. A Russian development deal with Saddam' s government (the very large West Qurna field, with an estimated 11 billion barrels of oil) was voided by the current government in December 2007. However, in September 2008, the Iraqi government approved the Saddam-era (1997) deal with Chinese firms to develop the Ahdab field, with an estimated value of $3 billion. Poland reportedly is

negotiating with Iraq for possible investments. South Korea and Iraq signed a preliminary agreement on April 12, 2007, to invest in Iraq's industrial reconstruction and, potentially, its energy sector as well, although Baghdad threatened in December 2007 to cut off sales of oil to South Korea because its firms also signed an energy development deal with the KRG. Other investors in the KRG region include Norway's DNO, Turkey's Genel; Canada's Western Zagros; Turkish-American PetPrime; Turkey/U.S.' s A and T Energy; Hunt Oil, and Dana Gas (UAE). However, the Kurds are constrained in their export routes, dependent on the Iraqi national pipeline network and on cooperation from Turkey, which is declining because of the heightened tensions between Turkey and Iraq's Kurds over the safehaven for the PKK. The produced oil from some of these projects will, at least initially, be trucked out. (*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 2. Selected Key Indicators

Oil						
Oil Production (weekly avg.)	Oil Production (pre-war)	Oil Exports	Oil Exports (pre- war)	Oil Revenue (2006)	Oil Revenue (2007)	Oil Revenue (2008 to date)
2.5 million barrels per day (mbd)	2.5 mbd	1.7 mbd	2.2 mbd	$31.3 billion	$41 billion	$49.1 billion
Electricity						
Pre-War Load Served (MWh)	Current Load Served	Baghdad (hrs. per day)	National Average (hrs. per day)			
102,000	120,000	9.4 (6.6 year ago)	9.7 (10.7 year ago)			

Note: Figures in the table are provided by the State Department "Iraq Weekly Status Report" dated September 3, 2008. 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 nearly all U.S. sanctions on Iraq, beginning with Presidential Determinations issued under authorities provided by P.L. 108-7 (FY2003 appropriations) and P.L. 108-11 (FY2003 supplemental).

- On May 22, 2003, President Bush issued Executive Order 13303, protecting assets of post-Saddam Iraq from attachment or judgments. This remains in effect.
- On July 29, 2004, President Bush issued Executive Order 13350 ending a trade and investment ban imposed on Iraq by Executive Order 12722 (August 2, 1990) and 12724 (August 9, 1990), and reinforced by the Iraq Sanctions Act of 1990 (Section 586 of P.L. 101-513, November 5, 1990 (following the August 2, 1990 invasion of Kuwait).
- On September 8, 2004, the President designated Iraq a beneficiary of the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP), enabling Iraqi products to be imported to the United States duty-free.
- On September 24, 2004, Iraq was removed from the U.S. list of state sponsors of terrorism under Section 6(j) of the Export Administration Act (P.L. 96-72). Iraq is thus no longer barred from receiving U.S. foreign assistance, U.S. votes in favor of international loans, and sales of arms and related equipment and services. Exports of dual use items (items that can have military applications) are no longer subject to strict licensing procedures.[32]
- The FY2005 supplemental (P.L. 109-13) removed Iraq from a named list of countries for which the United States is required to withhold a proportionate share of its voluntary contributions to international organizations for programs in those countries.

Debt Relief/WTO Membership/IMF

The Administration is attempting to persuade other countries to forgive Iraq's debt, built up during Saddam's regime, with mixed success. The debt is estimated to total about $116 billion (not including the U.N.-administered reparations process from the 1991 Persian Gulf war). In 2004, the "Paris Club" of 19 industrialized nations agreed to cancel about 80% of the $39 billion Iraq owes them. Most recently, at the May 30, 2008, Iraq Compact meeting in Sweden, the Persian Gulf states that supported Iraq during the Iran-Iraq war have resisted writing off Iraq's approximately $55 billion in debt to those countries (mainly Saudi Arabia and Kuwait with about $25 billion each).

However, the UAE agreed on July 6, 2008 to write off all $7 billion (including interest) of Iraqi debt. These states are also far behind on remitting aid pledges to Iraq, according to the GAO.[33] On December 17, 2004, the United States signed an agreement with Iraq writing off 100% of Iraq's $4.1 billion debt to the United States; that debt consisted of principal and interest from about $2 billion in defaults on Iraqi agricultural credits from the 1980s.[34] On December 15, 2007, Iraq cleared its debts to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) by repaying $470 million earlier than required and has a Stand- By Arrangement with the Fund. On December 13, 2004, the World Trade Organization (WTO) began accession talks with Iraq.

SECURITY CHALLENGES AND RESPONSES

Since the fall of Saddam Hussein, the United States has employed a multi-faceted approach to stabilizing Iraq. In late 2006, the effort was determined by the Administration to be faltering due to continuing sectarian violence — superimposed on a tenacious Sunni-led insurgency. In announcing a strategy revision on January 10, 2007, President Bush said, "The situation in Iraq is unacceptable to the American people and it is unacceptable to me."

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 Gen. David Petraeus, who previously led U.S. troops in the Mosul area and the training and equipping program for the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF). As of September 2008, he will command U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) and his former deputy, General Raymond Odierno, will take over in Iraq. The current head of Multinational Corps-Iraq (number two commander) is Lt. Gen. Lloyd Austin.

Sunni Arab-Led Insurgency and Al Qaeda in Iraq

Until 2008, the duration and intensity of a Sunni Arab-led insurgency defied many expectations, probably because, in the view of many experts, it was supported by much of the Iraqi Sunni population that feels humiliated at being ruled by the Shiites and their Kurdish partners. Some Sunni insurgents have sought to return the Baath Party to power, while others want to restore Sunni control more generally. The insurgent groups are believed to be loosely coordinated within cities and provinces, and some continue to cooperate with Al Qaeda in Iraq, Sunni

fighters from around the Arab and Islamic world who have come to Iraq to fight U.S. forces and Shiite domination of Iraq. The most senior Baathist still at large is longtime Saddam confident Izzat Ibrahim al-Duri.

The Sunni insurgency did not derail the political transition,[35] but it caused rates of U.S. casualties sufficient to stimulate debate in the United States over the U.S. commitment in Iraq. Using rocket-propelled grenades, IEDs (improvised explosive devices), mortars, direct weapons fire, suicide attacks, and occasional mass kidnappings, Sunni insurgents have targeted U.S. and partner foreign forces; Iraqi officials and security forces; Iraqi civilians of rival sects; Iraqis working for U.S. authorities; foreign contractors and aid workers; oil export and gasoline distribution facilities; and water, power, and other facilities. In 2007, insurgent groups exploded chlorine trucks to cause widespread civilian injury or panic on about ten occasions; another chlorine attack occurred in January 2008. Another 2007 trend was attacks on bridges, particularly those connecting differing sects. Some insurgents have been able to choke off power supplies to rival communities, for example in northern Diyala Province. An April 12, 2007, bombing of the Iraqi parliament, coming amid increasing mortar attacks on the heavily fortified International Zone, demonstrate the ability of the insurgency to operate in Baghdad. At the height of the insurgency, Sunni-dominated neighborhoods of Baghdad, including Amiriya, Adhamiya, Fadhil, Jihad, Amal, and Dora (once a mostly Christian neighborhood) were serving as Sunni insurgent bases. Sunni insurgents also made substantial inroads into the mixed province of Diyala, pushing out Shiite inhabitants, and in Nineveh province as well.

Sunni "Awakening" in 2007

U.S. officials say that the major turning point emerged in August 2006 when Iraqi Sunnis in then highly restive Anbar Province sought U.S. military assistance in turning against the mostly foreign- composed Al Qaeda Iraq (AQ-I) because of its commission of abuses such as killings of those who want to cooperate with the Iraqi government, forced marriages, and attempts to impose strict Islamic law. AQ-I, founded by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi (killed in a June 7, 2006, U.S. airstrike), has been a key component of the insurgency because it is responsible for an estimated 90% of the suicide bombings against both combatant and civilian targets, including such high profile attacks as the August 2003 bombing of U.N. headquarters in Baghdad. However, AQ-I has always been considered by Iraqis as a separate component of the insurgency because it is led by non-Iraqis with different traditions and whose goals are more worldwide *jihadist* than Iraq-specific.[36] The Sunni Iraqi turn against AQ-I was begun by tribal figures calling themselves the "Awakening" (As Sahwa) or "Salvation Council" movement. Some, including many in the Shiite

dominated Iraqi government, believe the movement seeks not necessarily stability and economic renaissance but rather to use U.S. support for a later fight against the Shiites. The Anbar Salvation Council was not materially affected by the September 13, 2007, assassination of Shaykh Abd al-Sattar al-Rishawi.

"Sons of Iraq" Fighters

In concert with the "troop surge," U.S. commanders have taken advantage of this Awakening trend by turning over informal security responsibility to 103,000 (current figure) former militants now called "Sons of Iraq," in exchange for an end to their anti-U.S. operations. (About 80% are Sunni and 20% are anti-extremist Shiites, according to the U.S. military.) These fighters were first recruited in Anbar by the various tribal Awakening and Salvation Council members. Other urban, non-tribal insurgents from such groups as the 1920 Revolution Brigades later joined the trend and decided to cooperate with the United States. U.S. commanders are giving funds to and sharing information with the Sons of Iraq — a strategy that is controversial because of the potential of the Sunni Iraqis to potentially resume fighting U.S. forces and Iraqi Shiites. U.S. officials say no new weapons have been given to these groups, although some reports say U.S. officers allow these fighters to keep captured weaponry. These fighters are increasingly targeted by AQ-I and some Iraqi Sunni insurgents as collaborators.

The Sons of Iraq program has led to some tensions between Maliki and U.S. officials. The entire UIA bloc publicly demanded an end to this U.S. strategy on October 2, 2007, claiming the United States is "embracing ... terrorist elements." Fearing empowering Sunnis particularly in the security services, Maliki and his Shiite allies have resisted U.S. plans to integrate all the CLC fighters into the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF). To date, the government has allowed only about 5,000 such Sunni volunteers, mostly from Anbar, to join the ISF. Another 15,000 have been given civilian jobs. The government has agreed to take over from the United States the payments (about $350 per month) to 54,000 of the Sons of Iraq as of October 1, 2008. However, some in Maliki's circle say the Sons program should be disbanded entirely; some of the Sons have been recently arrested by ISF officers. This perception that they are distrusted has led some Sons fighters to abandon their posts, and possibly to rejoin insurgent activities.

Current Status of the Insurgency

Although Ambassador Crocker said on May 25, 2008, following U.S. and Iraqi offensives against it in the Mosul area, that AQ-I "has never been closer to defeat," the true continued strength of AQ-I might be difficult to discern.

Ambassador Crocker said on July 25, 2008, that the Sunni insurgency, writ large, is "not much of a challenge any more" to Iraq's future. General Petraeus said in July 2008 that some AQ-I fighters may be going to Afghanistan, where they perceive greater opportunities for success. One press report on July 30, 2008 (*Washington Post*), said that AQ-I leader Abu Hamza al-Muhajer (aka Abu Ayyub al-Masri) and several of his top aides might have gone to Afghanistan, designating someone calling himself Abu Khalil al-Suri as leader of AQ-I. However, U.S. commanders and Defense Department assessments say that AQ-I remains capable of lethal attacks, and insurgent attacks by AQ-I and other groups are continuing, although at reduced levels compared with 2006 and 2007. Suspected AQ-I attacks continue in Diyala, Mosul, Ramadi, Fallujah, and elsewhere since that testimony. U.S. commanders in Iraq have said that if they are able to expel AQ-I from Mosul, which is the major city along its corridor from the Syrian border into Iraq's heartland, AQ-I would be almost completely defeated in Iraq. A major suicide bombing in August 2007 killed over 500 members of the Yazidi (Kurdish speaking, pre-Islamic) sect in northern Iraq — the most lethal attack of the war to date.

Outside Support for Sunni Insurgents

Numerous accounts have said that Sunni insurgents are receiving help from neighboring states (money and weapons),[37] although others believe that outside support for the insurgency is not decisive. The June 2008 Defense Department "Measuring Stability" report said that Syria "continues to take some steps, albeit ineffective ones, to reduce cross-border travel by some extremist fighters." A previous Measuring Stability report also noted that Syria hosted the inaugural meeting (August 2007) of the Border Security working group formed by the "Expanded Neighbors" process discussed above, and a follow up in November 2007, and that Syria has made recent efforts to stem the flow of extremists into Iraq. Other assessments say the Sunni insurgents, both Iraqi and non-Iraqi, receive funding from wealthy donors in neighboring countries such as Saudi Arabia,[38] where a number of clerics have publicly called on Saudis to support the Iraqi insurgency. *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.*

Table 3. Key Security/Violence Indicators

Indicator	Current Level
Number of U.S. forces in Iraq	"Surge" declared ended on July 31, 2008. U.S. total is about 145,000 (15 combat brigades); 165,000 was "surge" peak. Drawdown followed by at least 45-day period to decide on any further reductions; press reports about Petraeus recommendations in August 2008 say further drawdowns may be on hold until early 2009.
U.S./Other Casualties	4,155 U.S. forces; 3,375 by hostile action. 4,005 since end to"major combat operations" (May 1, 2003). About 260 coalition (including 170 British). 1,000+ civilian contractors. About 35 U.S. killed per month during October 2007- March 2008; increased to 50 in April 2008 but declined to 19 in May 2008 and only 6 combat deaths in July 2008. 100+ per month killed early-mid 2007.
Partner forces in Iraq	7,330 from 24 other countries. Down from 28,000 in 2005
AQ-I fighters	1,300 - 3,500 commonly estimated, precise figures not known
Number of Iranian Qods Forces in Iraq	150+. Shiite militias have killed about 210 U.S. soldiers with Qods-supplied Explosively Formed Projectiles (EFP's).
Iraq Civilian Deaths	Less than 10/day, down from down from 100/day in December 2006, including sectarian murders per day (down from 33 pre- surge).
Number of all Attacks/day	Reduced to 45/day as of May 2008, lowest since 2004. Down more than 75% from 200/day in June 2007. Major car and other large suicide bombings down 75% from pre-surge, and attacks in Anbar down 90%. Debate exists over what incidents are counted in DOD figures; DOD does not count Shiite-Shiite violence in its enemy-initiated figures.
Shiite militiamen	60,000 (40,000 Mahdi, 15,000 Badr, 5,000 Da'wa, Fadhila, other), although Sadr has announced Mahdi will convert to social work
Sons of Iraq Fighters	103,000, of which about 5,000 entered ISF. To date, each paid $350/month by DOD (CERP funds). $100 paid per IED revealed. DOD has spent $216 million on this program as of June 2008
Iraqis Leaving Iraq or Displaced since 2003	2 million left, incl. 700,000 to Jordan, 1 million to Syria; another 2 million internally displaced or relocated. Some families returning due to reduced violence levels and pressure from host countries.
Iraqis in Detention	About 25,000 by U.S.; about 10,000 in Iraqi custody
Iraqi Army and Police Battalions in operations/In the Lead	180+ in operations; up from 104 in November 2006. Four are special operations battalions. About 100 Iraqi Army battalions can operate with "minimal or no assistance from Coalition forces."

Table 3. (Continued)

Indicator	Current Level
Total ISF	580,970 "assigned" (on payrolls, not necessarily present on duty). Exceeds authorized total of: 541,833. Planned to exceed 600,000 total ISF by 2010.
Number of Provinces Under ISF Control	11: Muthanna, Dhi Qar, Najaf, Maysan, Irbil, Dahuk, and Sulaymaniyah (latter three in May 2007), Karbala (October 29), and Basra (December 16), Qadisiyah (July 16, 2008); and Anbar (September 1, 2008).

Sources: Information provided by a variety of sources, including U.S. government reports on Iraq, Iraqi statements, the Iraq Study Group report, DOD Measuring Stability report, Petraeus September 2007 testimony, and press reports, including Reuters Alertnet. See tables 5 and 6 for additional figures on total numbers of Iraqi security forces, by force component.

Sectarian Violence and Shiite Militias/Civil War

Contributing to the deteriorating security environment in 2006 and early 2007 was the increase in Sunni-Shiite sectarian violence that many observers were characterizing as "civil war." The severe phase of sectarian violence was set off by the February 22, 2006, AQ-I bombing of the Askariya Shiite mosque in Samarra, which set off a wave of purported Shiite militia attacks on Sunni mosques and civilians in the first days after the mosque bombing. Top U.S. officials said in late 2006 that sectarian-motivated violence — manifestations of an all-out struggle for political and economic power in Iraq — had displaced the Sunni-led insurgency as the primary security challenge. Since November 2007, U.S. and Iraqi officials have presented statistics showing a dramatic drop in Sunni-Shiite violence — attributing the progress to the U.S. troop surge and the "ceasefire" of the Mahdi Army, called by Sadr in August 2007 and later formally extended until at least August 2008, although still uncertain over the longer term.

The sectarian warfare wrenched Iraqi society by driving Sunnis and Shiites out of mixed neighborhoods. Some observers say Sunnis largely "lost" the "battle for Baghdad," with some accounts saying that Baghdad was about 35% Sunni Arab during Saddam's rule but was reduced by the violence to about 20%. Many victims of sectarian violence turn up bound and gagged, dumped in about nine reported sites around Baghdad, including in strainer devices in the Tigris River. The Samarra mosque was bombed again on June 13, 2007 and their were reprisal attacks on Sunni

mosques in Basra and elsewhere, although the attack did not spark the large wave of reprisals that the original attack did, possibly because the political elite appealed for calm after this second attack. The shrine is being reconstructed, with the help of UNESCO.

Iraqi Christians (mostly Chaldean Catholics and Assyrian Christians) and their churches and church leaders remain targets of Shiite and Sunni armed factions, viewing them as allies of the United States. Since the fall of Saddam Hussein, more than 100,000 Christians might have left Iraq. Christian priests have been kidnapped and killed; most recently, the body of Chaldean Catholic archbishop Faraj Rahho was discovered in Mosul on March 13, 2008, two weeks after his reported kidnapping. However, some Christians in Baghdad felt safe enough to celebrate Christmas (2007) at churches in Baghdad. The attack on the Yazidis in August 2007, noted above, also appeared to reflect the precarious situation for Iraqi minorities. U.S. military forces do not specifically protect Christian sites at all times, partly because Christian leaders do not want to appear closely allied with the United States. Some human rights groups have alleged Kurdish abuses against Christians and other minorities in the Nineveh Plain, close to the KRG-controlled region. Kurdish leaders deny the allegations. The FY2008 Consolidated Appropriation earmarks $10 million in ESF from previous appropriations to assist the Nineveh plain Christians. The supplemental appropriation for 2008 and 2009 (P.L. 110-252) earmarks another $10 million for this purpose.

Discussed below are the two major Shiite militias in Iraq: ISCI's Badr Brigades and the Mahdi Army, although some believe that the Sons of Iraq constitutes an additional militia:

- *Badr Brigades.* Many Badr militiamen have now folded into the ISF, particularly the National Police and other police commando units. The Badr Brigades were originally recruited, trained, and equipped by Iran's hardline force, the Revolutionary Guard, during the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war, in which Badr guerrillas conducted forays from Iran into southern Iraq to attack Saddam regime targets. Badr fighters were recruited from the ranks of Iraqi prisoners of war held in Iran. However, many Iraqi Shiites viewed ISCI as an Iranian puppet and Badr operations in southern Iraq during the 1980s and 1990s did not shake Saddam's grip on power. This militia is led by Hadi al-Amiri (a member of parliament from the "Badr Organization" grouping of the UIA).

- *Mahdi Army (Jaysh al-Mahdi, JAM).* The March 2007 "Measuring Stability" reports said this militia had "replaced AQ-I as the most dangerous accelerant of potentially self-sustaining sectarian violence in Iraq." U.S. assessments of

the JAM subsequently softened as the JAM largely abided by Sadr' s "ceasefire" of JAM activities in August 2007. That directive might have represented an effort not to directly confront the U.S. "troop surge." The JAM later reemerged as perhaps the primary adversary of the United States and of Maliki during the spring 2008 Basra fighting. General Petraeus and other officials appear to be blurring their previous distinction between the JAM and Sadr, and the so-called "Special Groups," backed by Iran, who are responsible for most of the atrocities against Sunnis and for attacks on U.S. forces. Sadr's formation in June 2008 of "special companies" of Mahdi fighters authorized to fight virtually confirms U.S. allegations of the existence of the Special Groups.

Shiite-on-Shiite Violence/March 2008 Basra Battles

Shiite-againstShiite violence increased in 2007 and accelerated in early 2008, perhaps because Maliki and ISCI fear that the Sadr faction is trying to achieve political influence commensurate with what it believes is its popularity. Pro-Sadr candidates did not compete vigorously in the January 2005 provincial elections, leaving the faction under-represented in most southern provinces, including Basra. Since early 2007, these tensions had led to consistent but varying levels of internecine fighting among Shiite groups in southern Iraq — primarily between the Badr-dominated ISF police and army units on the one side, and Sadr's JAM on the other — in a competition for power, influence, and financial resources. The most violent single incident took place on August 28, 2007, when fighting between the JAM and the ISF (purportedly mostly Badr fighters within the ISF) in the holy city of Karbala caused the death of more than 50 persons, mostly ISF and JAM fighters. The intra-Shiite skirmishing increased as international forces, particularly those of Britain, reduced their presence in southern Iraq; Britain redeployed its forces from the city to Basra airport in September 2007, and it handed over control of the province to the Iraqis on December 16, 2007. There had been no major concentrations of U.S. troops there, leaving the security of the city entirely the responsibility of the ISF.

On March 26, 2008, Maliki ordered the launch of an ISF offensive against the JAM and other militias in Basra, in an effort to reestablish "rule of law." Sadr read the move as an effort to weaken his movement in advance of planned provincial elections. In the fighting, the Badr-dominated ISF units initially performed poorly; many surrendered their vehicles, weapons, and positions to JAM militiamen, forcing the U.S. and British military to support the ISF with airstrikes, mentors, and advisers. The fighting on March 30, 2008 with an Iran-brokered

proposal by Sadr and welcomed by the Maliki government, that did not require the JAM to surrender its weapons. As a result of a settlement that appeared to be on Sadr's terms, the offensive was at first considered a setback to the U.S. assertions that the ISF was gaining confidence and capability. Subsequent to the offensive, 1,300 ISF members were dismissed for refusing to fight, and the Iraqi police and army commander in Basra were recalled to Baghdad. General Petraeus, in his April 2008 testimony, called the offensive "poorly planned," and some reports suggest the Maliki move preempted a more deliberate move against the Shiite militias in Basra planned by MNFI. However, as a result of subsequent U.S. and Britain-backed operations by the ISF, JAM activities in Basra have been reduced and JAM, Fadhila, Tharallah, and other militia fighters have left the streets and relatively normal life has largely returned, although residents remain wary that militias might re-emerge at some point.

Simultaneous with the Basra combat and since, JAM fighters in the Sadr City district of Baghdad fired volleys of 107 mm Iranian-supplied rockets on the International Zone, killing several U.S. soldiers and civilians. U.S. and ISF forces subsequently pushed into the southern districts of Sadr City to take the rockets out of range. The fighting caused many Sadr City residents to flee, and fighting continued against U.S. forces, some of which were trying to erect a wall to separate part of Sadr City and increase U.S. ability to control it. Since mid-May 2008, Sadr City has quieted considerably, particularly following a May 10, 2008 agreement for the JAM to permit ISF forces (but not American forces) to patrol northern Sadr City.

The intra-Shiite fighting was more than just a linear battle between the Badr-dominated ISF and the JAM. In Basra, the *Fadilah* (Islamic Virtue) Party is part of the power struggle, using its strength among oil workers and the Facilities Protection Force for the oil infrastructure. A smaller militia that is a factor there is *Tharallah* (Vengeance of God). At the national level, and in the March 2008 fighting in Basra, Fadilah and the Sadr trend were aligned because both Sadr and Fadilah represent lower class constituents. Both have pulled out of the UIA. However, prior to the March 2008 fighting, the two parties were competitors in Basra because of the vast assets up for grabs there (Basra is Iraq's main oil producing region and the point of export for about 90% of Iraq's total oil exports). Fadilah has 12 of the 41 Basra province seats; ISCI controls 21 seats, leaving Sadr with very little representation on that council. In April 2007, the Sadrists conducted protests in Basra to try to persuade the provincial governor, Mohammad Waili, who is a Fadilah member, to resign, a campaign that is continuing. Fadilah also has thus far successfully resisted Maliki's efforts to replace Waili, but, prior to the March 2008 offensive, Maliki threatened Waili with removal if he failed to curb militia

(Fadilah) control of the docks in Umm Qasr, which is preventing efficient use of the port.

Iranian Support

U.S. officials, most specifically in a February 11, 2007, U.S. defense briefing in Baghdad — and highlighted in the Petraeus and Crocker testimonies of April 8-9, 2008, have repeatedly accused the Qods (Jerusalem) Force of Iran's Revolutionary Guard of aiding extremist Shiite militiamen with explosives and weapons, including the highly lethal "explosively forced projectiles" (EFPs). In the April 2008 testimony, General Petraeus largely repeated his September 2007 testimony's assertions that Iran was also using its protege, Lebanese Hezbollah, to train and arm the "Special Groups" of Iraqi Shiite militias to form a Hezbollah-like Iranian proxy force in southern Iraq. From December 2006 to September 2007, U.S. forces arrested 20 alleged Iranian Revolutionary Guard Qods Forces and other agents. It released nine of them in November 2007, and another in December, but still holds those of highest "value." On August 12, 2008, the U.S.-led coalition arrested another nine Hezbollah operatives in Baghdad; they were allegedly involved in smuggling Iranian weaponry to Shiite militias in Iraq.

Amid increasing discussion among experts about a possible U.S. military move to stop the Iranian aid — and increasingly strong statements by U.S. military leaders about Iran's "malign" influence in Iraq, General Petraeus had announced a U.S. briefing on new information on Iranian aid to the JAM in early May 2008, but the briefing reportedly has been postponed to provide time for Iraqi negotiators to confront Iran with the information on its involvement. An Iraqi parliamentary group visited Iran in late April 2008 but to no obvious major result on this issue. Maliki raised the issue with Iranian leaders when he visited Iran in June 2008; his second visit there in one year. Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad conducted a visit Iraq on March 2-3, 2008 - it marked the first such visit since the Iranian revolution of 1979. During the visit, at least seven economic and other cooperation agreements were signed between Iran and Iraq, and Iran announced a further $1 billion line of credit for Iranian exports to Iraq. (For more information, see CRS Report RS22323, *Iran's Influence in Iraq*, by Kenneth Katzman.)

Iran's support for Shiite militias contributed to a U.S. decision to conduct direct talks with Iran on the issue of stabilizing Iraq, a key recommendation of the December 2006 Iraq Study Group (*Recommendations 9, 10, and 11*). The Administration initially rejected that recommendation; the President's January 10, 2007, Baghdad security initiative included announcement of an additional aircraft carrier group and additional Patriot anti-missile systems to the Gulf, moves clearly directed against Iran.

As part of the shift, the Administration supported and participated in the March 10, 2007, regional conference in Baghdad and the follow-up regional conference held in Egypt on May 3 and 4, 2007. Subsequently, the two sides announced and then held high profile direct talks, at the Ambassador level, on May 28, 2007. Another meetings was held on July 24, 2007, with little agreement apparent at the meeting but with a decision to form a U.S.-Iran working group to develop proposals for both sides to help ease Iraq's security difficulties. The working group met for the first time on August 6. In his September 10 and 11, 2007 testimony, Ambassador Crocker said the talks with Iran were worth continuing because Iran might, at some point, alter its stance. Following U.S. assessments of reduced Iranian weapons shipments into Iraq, the United States agreed to another meeting with Iran in Baghdad, but the planned December 18, 2007 meeting was postponed over continuing U.S.-Iran disagreements over the agenda for another round of talks, as well as over Iran's insistence that the talks be between Ambassador Crocker and Iranian Ambassador Hassan Kazemi- Qomi. On May 5, 2008, Iran said it would not participate in any further meetings in this channel because of the U.S. combat in Sadr City, which Iran says is resulting in civilian deaths. Secretary of State Rice did not hold any substantive meeting with Iran's Foreign Minister at the "Expanded Neighbors" meeting in Kuwait on April 22, 2008, or at the Iraq Compact meeting in Sweden on May 30.

Iraq's Northern Border

At the same time, security on Iraq's northern border appears to be increasingly fragile, and U.S. officials fear that the most stable region of Iraq could become an arena for heightened conflict if Turkey - Iraqi Kurdish disputes are not resolved peacefully. Turkey's government alleges that Iraq's Kurds (primarily the KDP, whose power base abuts the Turkish border) are harboring the anti-Turkey PKK guerrilla group in northern Iraq that has killed about 40 Turkish soldiers since September 2007. Turkey's parliament in October 2007 approved a move into northern Iraq against the PKK and mobilized a reported 100,000 troops to the border area. The Turkish military has used that authority sparingly to date, possibly because U.S. officials are putting pressure on Kurdish leaders not to harbor the PKK, and because U.S. officials are reportedly sharing information on the PKK with Turkey. KRG President Barzani cancelled a meeting with visiting Secretary of State Rice on December 18, 2007, because of the U.S.-Turkey cooperation against the PKK. The Iraqi Arabs generally favor cooperating with Turkey — and in September 2007 signed an agreement with Turkey to pledge such cooperation. The issue dominated the expanded neighbors meeting in Istanbul on November 2, 2007, as well as Turkish

Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan' s and President Abdullah Gul' s meetings with President Bush (November 5, 2007, and January 7, 2008, respectively). As evidence of some calming of the issue, Turkish prime minister Tayyip Recep Erdogan visited Baghdad in July 2008.

Tensions began escalating in July 2007 when Barzani indicated that the Iraqi Kurds were capable of stirring unrest among Turkish Kurds if Turkey interferes in northern Iraq. Previously, less direct threats by Turkey had prompted the U.S. naming of an envoy to Turkey on this issue in August 2006 (Gen. Joseph Ralston (ret.), former Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff). On February 8, 2007, Turkish Foreign Minister warned against proceeding with the referendum on Kirkuk, reflecting broader concerns that it could pave the way for Kurdish independence.

Another emerging dispute is Iran's shelling of border towns in northern Iraq that Iran says are the sites where the Party for a Free Life in Kurdistan (PJAK), an Iranian Kurdish separatist group, is staging incursions into Iran. Iran has threatened a ground incursion against PJAK and Iraq said on September 9, 2007, in remarks directed at Iran and Turkey, that its neighbors should stop interfering in Iraq's affairs.

U.S. Stabilization Strategy and "Troop Surge"

Acknowledging the difficulty of the mission, the Administration has tried to refine its stabilization strategy.[39] In prior years, a major focus of U.S. counter-insurgent ("search and destroy") combat was Anbar Province, which includes the cities of Fallujah and Ramadi (provincial capital), the latter of which was the most restive of all Iraqi cities and in which the provincial governor's office was shelled or attacked nearly daily until early 2007. In the run-up to the December 15, 2005, elections, U.S. (and Iraqi) forces conducted several major operations ("Matador," "Dagger," "Spear," "Lightning," "Sword," "Hunter," "Steel Curtain," and "Ram") to clear contingents of insurgents from Sunni cities in Anbar, along the Euphrates River. None of these operations produced lasting reductions in violence.

"Clear, Hold, and Build" Strategy/Provincial Reconstruction Teams
Realizing the weakness of its strategy, 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 envisioned that cleared and rebuilt areas

would serve as a model that could expand throughout Iraq. The strategy formed the basis of Operation Together Forward (I and II) of August - October 2006.

In conjunction with the U.S. strategy, the Administration began forming Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), a concept used extensively in Afghanistan. Each PRT in Iraq is civilian led, composed of about 100 personnel from State Department, USAID, and other agencies, including contract personnel. The PRTs assist local Iraqi governing institutions, such as the provincial councils, representatives of the Iraqi provincial governors, and local ministry representatives. Initially, ten PRTs were inaugurated, of which 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 "troop surge," others were formed, bringing the total to 30 as of June 2008. Of the additional PRTs, six were formed in Baghdad and three more in Anbar. Of the total number of PRTs, 13 are embedded with U.S. military concentrations (Brigade Combat Teams.) There are another seven smaller Provincial Support Teams. Observers who have visited Iraq say that some of the PRTs are increasingly well staffed and effective in generating employment and establishing priorities. In December 2007, the PRT in Kirkuk helped broker a return of Sunni Arabs to the provincial council there; they had been boycotting because of the Kurdish push to control the city.

A FY2006 supplemental appropriation, P.L. 109-234, provided $229 million for the PRT operations. Another $675 million for development grants to be distributed by the PRTs is funded through the ESF appropriation for Iraq in this law. A FY2007 supplemental (P.L. 110-28) provided about $700 million (ESF) for PRT security, operations, and PRT-funded reconstruction projects. A FY2008 and FY2009 supplemental (P.L. 110-252) makes PRT funding contingent on a report by the Administration on a "strategy for the eventual winding down and close out of the PRTs" in Iraq" and related cost estimates for doing so.

"Troop Surge"/Baghdad Security Plan/"Fardh Qanoon"

Acknowledging that the initiatives did not bring security or stability, the President's January 10, 2007, "New Way Forward" — Baghdad security initiative (referred to in Iraq as *Fardh Al Qanoon*, Arabic for "Imposing Law") was articulated as intended to bring security to Baghdad and create conditions under which Iraq's communities and political leaders 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,"[40] formally began in February 2007, and included the following components:

- The deployment of an additional 28,500 U.S. forces to Iraq — 17,500 combat troops (five brigades) to Baghdad; 4,000 Marines to Anbar Province; and the remainder support troops and military police. The plan envisioned that these forces, along with additional Iraqi forces, would hold neighborhoods cleared of insurgents and thereby cause the population to reject militants. The forces have been based, along with Iraqi soldiers, in 100 fixed locations (both smaller Combat Outposts and the larger "Joint Security Stations").
- Cooperation from the Iraqi government, such as progress on the reconciliation steps discussed earlier, the provision of $10 billion in new capital spending on reconstruction (benchmark 17), and the commitment of the Iraqi forces discussed previously 3 brigades (about 6,000 soldiers), plus about 4,000 police commandos and regular police (benchmark 9). Contributing to previous failures in Baghdad were Iraq's deployment of only two out of the six Iraqi battalions committed.
- Provision of at least $1.2 billion in new U.S. aid, including funds for job creation and to revive long-dormant state-owned factories.
- Maliki's cooperation in not standing in the way of U.S. operations against the JAM. U.S. commanders blamed Maliki for the failure of "Operation Together Forward I and II" in 2006 because Maliki insisted they release suspected JAM commanders and dismantle U.S. checkpoints in Sadr City.

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

Surge Assessments and Way Forward

The first major assessment of the surge was testimony of General Petraeus on September 10 and 11, 2007, in which he cited numerous statistics and said "As a bottom line up front, the military objectives of the surge are, in large measure, being met." In testimony on April 8-9, 2008, updating the September analysis, General Petraeus said "there has been significant but uneven progress in Iraq." On that basis, Gen. Petraeus, in his testimony, said he recommended a reduction of U.S. forces by July 2008 to about 145,000 (15 combat brigades), slightly higher than pre-surge levels, and that any further reductions be subject to a

45-day assessment of security conditions. The "surge" was declared ended on July 31, 2008. In late August 2008, according to press reports, Gen. Petraeus recommended a drawdown of an additional 8,000 forces by March 2009 — a more cautious drawdown than anticipated — because of concerns (1) that violence could flare again as provincial elections approach; (2) about the explosive situation in Kirkuk; (3) about uncertainty about Sadr' s intentions; and (4) about the reaction of the Sons of Iraq fighters to their failure to be integrated into the ISF. This cautious view is reflected in a June 2008 Government Accountability Office assessment ("Securing, Stabilizing, and Rebuilding Iraq: Progress Report: Some Gains Made, Updated Strategy Needed," GAO-08-837); insurgents could re-infiltrate stable areas once U.S. troops thin out, and the newly empowered cooperating Sunni armed groups could begin battling in earnest with Shiite-dominated ISF forces. Another factor going forward is the call by U.S. commanders in Afghanistan for about 10,000 more forces to combat the insurgency there, forces that could be drawn primarily from a force reduction in Iraq.

According to the June 2008 Measuring Stability report, and press reports — and excluding the spike in violence due to the combat against the JAM — the surge has:

- Reduced all major violence indicators (numbers of attacks, Iraqi civilian deaths, and other indicators) by 40% - 80%, to the levels of early 2004. Violence in Baghdad has been reduced to the point where 75% of Baghdad's 474 "districts" are now considered at least relatively secure.
- Reduced attacks in Anbar about 90%, and many of its cities are now seeing a return of normal daily life. U.S. forces are in the process of closing many of their operating bases there in preparation for transition to provincial Iraqi control later in 2008.
- Enabled many families to return to Baghdad, and some districts formerly written off as AQ-I strongholds, such as Amiriyah, the former Baathist stronghold of Adhamiyah, and the formerly highly violent Doura district, are starting to bustle. Numerous observers say they now see large numbers of sporting events take place in Baghdad, and other observers say formerly closed restaurants and commercial areas have reopened and are operating normally.

Building Iraqi Security Forces (ISF)[41]

A key to whether or not the progress will continue as U.S. forces thin out is the quality of the Iraqi security forces (ISF). The Administration has said that its intent is to gradually transition U.S. forces to an "overwatch" posture, relying more on supporting Iraqi forces rather than leading the combat. This strategy was first articulated by President Bush in a June 28, 2005, speech, when he said, "Our strategy can be summed up this way: As the Iraqis stand up, we will stand down."[42] Responsibility for building the ISF lies with the commander of the U.S.-led ISF training mission, the Multinational Transition Security Command-Iraq (MNSTC-I). That is now Lt. Gen. Frank Helmick. The troop surge in some ways hindered the development of the ISF because U.S. forces conducted most of the heavy fighting; a former senior leader of training the ISF, Brig. Gen. Dana Pittard, said in July 2007 that training the ISF had slowed since the surge began.

On the other hand, General Petraeus testified in April 2008 that "The Iraqi security forces have continued to develop since September...." As evidence of ISF maturation and growth, General Petraeus and others point to the increase in the number of units capable of operating with minimal coalition support, and to their performance in ongoing combat operations against AQ-I in northern Iraq.

Still, then-MNSTC-I commander Gen. Dubik and the Iraqi Defense Minister both separately stated in January 2008 that the ISF would not be ready to secure Iraq from internal threats until 2012, and from external threats until 20 18-2020, despite the expanding size of the ISF. In testimony before the House Armed Services Committee on July 9, 2008, Gen. Dubik (rotating out) shortened that time frame somewhat, saying that the ISF could assume the lead internal security role between 2009 and 2012. The Measuring Stability reports discuss and depict the degrees to which the Iraqi government has assumed operational ISF control, and of ISF security control over territory. (*Recommendations 42, 43 and 44 of the Iraq Study Group report advised an increase in training the ISF, and completion of the training by early 2008.*)

The Jones Commission report had some praise for the Iraqi Army, while recommending that the Shiite-dominated National Police commando force be scrapped entirely and reorganized. Some observers go so far as to say that the ISF is part of the security problem in Iraq, not the solution, because of incidents of ISF member involvement in sectarian involvement or possible anti-U.S. activity. In addition, the Jones Commission report, recent DOD "Measuring Stability" reports, and the June 2008 GAO report referenced above reiterate previously reported criticisms of the ISF, including

- That the ISF continue to lack an effective command structure or independent initiative, and that there continues to be a culture of corruption throughout the ISF structure.
- As much as one-third of ISF members are absent-without-leave or might have deserted at any given time.
- The ISF, particularly the police, are unbalanced ethnically and by sect, penetrated by militias or even insurgents, and involved in sectarian violence, particularly among the police forces. Most of the ISF, particularly the police, are Shiites, with Kurdish units mainly deployed in the north, and many Sunnis distrust the ISF as instruments of repression and responsible for sectarian killings. Many ISF members view themselves as loyal to their former militias or party leaders, and not to a national force. In late 2005, U.S. forces uncovered militia-run detention facilities ("Site 4") and arrested those (Badr Brigade and related Iraqi police) running them.
- According to observers, appointments to senior commands continue to be steered toward Shiite figures, primarily Da' wa Party members, by Maliki' s "Office of the Commander-in-Chief" run by his Da' wa subordinate, Dr. Bassima al-Jaidri. She reportedly has also removed several qualified commanders who are Sunni Arabs, causing Sunni distrust of the Iraqi military, and she reportedly has routinely refused to follow U.S. military recommendations to place more Sunnis in security positions.
- The 144,000 members of the "Facilities Protection Force," (FPS), which are security guards attached to individual ministries, are involved in sectarian violence. The United States 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.*)

On the other hand, while reports continue to point to sectarianism in the Interior Ministry, U.S. officials have praised Interior Minister Jawad Bolani for trying to remove militiamen and death squad participants from the ISF. Numerous other ISF commanders are said by U.S. officials to be weeding out sectarian or non-performing elements from ISF and support ministry ranks. U.S. officials say the Interior Ministry headquarters has been almost completely transformed and is no longer factionalized as it was one year ago (mid-2007) or populated with different guard forces.

ISF Weaponry

Most observers say the ISF are severely underequipped, dependent primarily on donations of surplus equipment by coalition members. The Iraqi Army is using mostly East bloc equipment, including 77 T-72 tanks donated by Poland, but is in the process of taking delivery of 4,200 Humvees from the United States. In early 2008, Iraq went forward with a Foreign Military Sales (FMS) buy of least $2.3 billion worth of U.S. munitions, including upgrades to UH-1 helicopters, and various military vehicles, some of which is for the Iraqi police. The potential sale was notified to Congress by the Defense Security Assistance Agency (DSCA) on September 25, 2007. Iraq had previously ordered about $1 billion worth of U.S. arms. In late July 2008, DSCA notified about $11 billion worth of potential sales to Iraq of such equipment as C-130 transport aircraft, M1AI (Abrams) tanks, helicopters, light armored vehicles, and armored security vehicles. It was reported on September 5, 2008, that Iraq has asked to purchase 36 F-16 aircraft and that the request is under review under the Foreign Military Sales process. U.S. officials have previously refused to provide the Iraqi Air Force with combat aircraft, because of the potential for misuse in sectarian or political conflict.

In October 2007, it was reported that Iraq also is ordering $100 million in light equipment from China to equip the ISF police forces. Iraqi President Talabani said part of the rationale for the China buy was the slow delivery of U.S. weapons. (In Recommendation 45, the Iraq Study Group said the United States should encourage the Iraqi government to accelerate its FMS requests and that departing U.S. combat units should leave behind some of their equipment for use by the ISF.)

There are fears that some of these weapons are falling into the hands of insurgents, militias, or even terrorist groups. In August 2007, the GAO reported that the Defense Department cannot fully account for the total of $19.2 billion worth of equipment provided to the ISF by the United States and partner forces. A New York Times report in August 2007 said some of the ISF weapons might have ended up in the hands of anti-Turkish PKK guerrillas (PKK is a named terrorist group by the United States).

Table 4. ISF Fundin

FY2003 and FY2004	$5.036 billion allocated from $20+ billion "Iraq Relief and Reconstruction Fund," see above.
FY2005	$5.7 billion in DOD funds from FY2005 supplemental appropriation (P.L. 109-13).
FY2006	$3 billion appropriated by FY2006 supplemental (P.L. 109-234).
FY2007	Total of $5.54 billion appropriated from: FY2007 defense appropriation (P.L. 109-289) - $1.7 billion; and from FY2007 supplemental (P.L. 110-28) — $3.84 billion (the requested amount).
FY2008	$3 billion (revised) request. FY2008 regular appropriations (Consolidated, P.L. 110-161) provide $1.5 billion. Second supplemental (P.L. 110-252) provides another $1.5 billion, bringing the FY2008 total to the Administration request.
FY2009	$2.8 billion request. FY2009 supplemental (P.L. 110-252) provides $1 billion.
Total	$23.276 billion provided or appropriated

Table 5. Ministry of Defense Forces
(Figures contained in Iraq Weekly Status Report. Numbers might not correspond to those actually on duty.)

Force	Size/Strength "Assigned"
Iraqi Army	174,268 assigned. Authorized size is 169,024. Trained for eight weeks, paid $60/month. Commanders receive higher salaries.
Special Operations Forces	3,782 assigned. Authorized size is 4,733. Technically a separate "Counter-terrorism" bureau not under MOD. Trained for 12 weeks, mostly in Jordan.
Support Forces	18,336 assigned. Authorized level is 15,583
Air Force	1,886. Authorized level is 3,228. Has 9 helicopters, 3 C-130s; 14 observation aircraft. Trained for six months. UAE and Jordan to provide other aircraft and helos.
Navy	1,872. Authorized level is 1,893. Has a Patrol Boat Squadron and a Coastal Defense Regiment. Fields about 35 patrol boats for anti- smuggling and anti-infiltration. Controls naval base at Umm Qasr, Basra port, and Khor al-Amaya oil terminals. Some training by Australian Navy.
Totals	200,144 assigned. 194,461 authorized.

Table 5. (Continued).

Force	Size/Strength "Assigned"
U.S./Other Trainers	U.S. training, including embedding with Iraqi units (10 per battalion), involves about 4,000 U.S. forces, run by Multinational Security Transition Command - Iraq (MNSTC-I). Training at Taji, north of Baghdad; Kirkush, near Iranian border; and Numaniya, south of Baghdad. All 26 NATO nations at NATO Training Mission - Iraq (NTM-I) at Rustamiyah (300 trainers). Others trained at NATO bases in Norway and Italy. Jordan, Germany, and Egypt also have done training.
Recent U.S. Funding	FY2007: $3.558 billion as follows: $780 million infrastructure; $1.51 billion for equipment and transportation; $58 million for training; and $1.21 billion for sustainment. FY2008 supplemental request: $1 .487 billion as follows: $298 million infrastructure; $917 million equipment and transportation; $116 million for training; $154 million sustainment

Table 6. Ministry of Interior Forces

Force/Entity	Size/Strength Assigned
Iraqi Police Service (IPS)	299,757 assigned. Authorized level is 292,001. Gets eight weeks of training, paid $60 per month. Not organized as battalions; deployed in police stations nationwide.
National Police	39,544 assigned. Authorized level is 33,670. Comprises "Police Commandos," "Public Order Police," and "Mechanized Police." Overwhelmingly Shiite. Gets four weeks of counter-insurgency training. Iraq Study Group (Recommendation 50) proposes transfer to MOD control and Jones Commission recommends disbandment due to sectarian activity.
Border Enforcement Department	41,525 assigned. Authorized level is 38,205. Controls over 250 border positions built or under construction. Has Riverine Police component to secure water crossings. Iraq Study Group (Recommendation 51) proposes transfer to MOD control.
Totals (all forces)	380,826 assigned. 363,876 authorized.
Training	Training by 3,000 U.S. and coalition personnel (DOD-lead) as embeds and partners (247 Police Transition Teams of 10- 15 personnel each). Pre-operational training mostly at Jordan International Police Training Center; Baghdad Police College and seven academies around Iraq; and in UAE. Iraq Study Group (Recommendation 57) proposes U.S. training at local police station level. Countries doing training aside from U.S.: Canada, Britain, Australia, Sweden, Poland, UAE, Denmark, Austria, Finland, Czech Republic, Germany (now suspended), Hungary, Slovenia, Slovakia, Singapore, Belgium, and Egypt.

Table 6. Ministry of Interior Forces

Force/Entity	Size/Strength Assigned
Facilities Protection Service (FPS)	Accounted for separately, they number about 144,000, attached to individual ministries.
Recent U.S. Funding	FY2007 total is $1 .573 billion as follows: $311 million infrastructure; $583 million equipment and transportation; $552 million training; $127 million sustainment. FY2008 total requested is $1 .206 billion as follows: $84.7 million infrastructure; $392 million equipment and transportation; $623.3 million training; $106 million sustainment.

Coalition-Building and Maintenance

Some believe that, partly because of the lack of U.N. approval for the invasion of Iraq, the Bush Administration was unable to enlist large scale international participation in peacekeeping and that the U.S. mission in Iraq is now being complicated by diminishing foreign military contributions. Some remaining force contributions are small and appear to be mostly symbolic — such as Kazakhstan' s contribution of 29 soldiers — or intended to improve relations with the United States. The Administration view is that partner drawdowns reflect a stabilizing security environment in the areas those forces are serving. A list of contributing countries, but not force levels, is in the Department of State's "Iraq Weekly Status Report." A listing of force and financial contributions to Iraq is in CRS Report RL32 105: *Iraq: Foreign Contributions to Stabilization and Reconstruction*, by Christopher Blanchard and Catherine Dale.

Substantial partner force drawdowns began with Spain's May 2004 withdrawal of its 1,300 troops. Spain made that decision following the March 11, 2004, Madrid bombings and subsequent defeat of the former Spanish government that had supported the war effort. Honduras, the Dominican Republic, and Nicaragua followed Spain's withdrawal (900 total personnel), and the Philippines withdrew in July 2004 after one of its citizens was taken hostage. On the other hand, many nations are replacing their contingents with trainers for the ISF or financial contributions or other assistance to Iraq, or with increased force contributions in Afghanistan. Among other recent major drawdowns are:

- Ukraine, which lost eight soldiers in a January 2005 insurgent attack, withdrew most of its 1,500 forces after the December 2005 Iraqi elections.

Bulgaria pulled out its 360-member unit at that time, but in March 2006 it sent in a 150-person force to take over guard duties of Camp Ashraf, a base in eastern Iraq where Iranian oppositionists are held by the coalition. (That contingent was shifted to Baghdad in July 2008.)

- South Korea began reducing its 3,600 troop contribution to Irbil in northern Iraq in June 2005, falling to 1,200 by late 2007. The deployment has been extended by the South Korean government until the end of 2008, although at a reduced level of 600.

- Japan completed its withdrawal of its 600-person military reconstruction contingent in Samawah on July 12, 2006, but it continues to provide air transport (and in June 2007 its parliament voted to continue that for another two years). That air mission will end at the end of 2008 when the U.N. mandate for the U.S.-led coalition expires, according to Japanese officials.

- Italy completed its withdrawal (3,200 troops at the peak) in December 2006 after handing Dhi Qar Province to ISF control.

- Romanian leaders are debating whether to withdraw or reduce their 890 forces which operate in southern Iraq.

- In line with a February 21, 2007 announcement, Denmark withdrew its 460 troops from the Basra area.

- In August 2007, Lithuania withdrew its 53 troops.

- In 2007, Georgia increased its Iraq force to 2,000 (from 850) to assist the policing the Iran-Iraq border at Al Kut, a move that Georgian officials said was linked to its efforts to obtain NATO membership. However, in August 2008, the United States airlifted the Georgian troops back home to deal with the Russian incursion into Georgia; it is doubtful these forces will ever return to Iraq.

- Britain, despite its redeployments discussed above, continues to constitute the largest non-U.S. foreign force in Iraq. In line with plans announced in 2007, British forces have been reduced from 7,100 to about 4,000, adopting an "overwatch" mission in southern Iraq. The force was expected to be reduced to about 2,500 by July 2008, but Britain suspended the planned reduction because of the March 2008 Basra combat. Still, reports quoting British officials say that the majority of the force might be out of Iraq by mid-2009, with some possibly going to Afghanistan.

- Poland's 900 troops (down from a high of 2,600 in 2005) still lead the multinational force based near Diwaniyah and includes forces from the following foreign countries: Armenia, Slovakia, Denmark, El Salvador, Ukraine, Romania, Lithuania, Latvia, Mongolia, and Kazakhstan.

Following its October 2007 election, the government of Prime Minister Donald Tusk, considered less pro-U.S. than his predecessor, plans to withdraw by October 2008.

- On June 1, 2008, in line with announcements by Australia's Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, Australia's 550 person contingent left Iraq. The contingent had already been reduced from 1,500 troops. In part to compensate, Australia will provide $160 million in aid to Iraqi farmers, and will keep naval and other forces in the region, and Australian civilians involved in training the ISF and advising the Iraqi government will remain.

- El Salvador said on December 11, 2007 that it would continue its 290 soldier contribution into 2008. It rotated in another contingent of that size in August 2008.

NATO/EU/Other 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. In talks with visiting Prime Minister Maliki in April 2008, NATO said it would expand the equip and train mission for the ISF. 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.

IRAQ STUDY GROUP REPORT, LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS, AND OTHER OPTIONS

In formulating the "troop surge" strategy announced on January 10, 2007, President Bush said he weighed the December 6, 2006, report of the Iraq Study Group, as well as input from several other reviews, including one directed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff and another by the National Security Council. For a comparison of various legislative proposals on Iraq, see CRS Report RL34 172 *Operation Iraqi Freedom and Detainee Issues: Major Votes from the 110th Congress*, by Kim Klarman, Lisa Mages, and Pat Towell.

Iraq Study Group Report

The President's "New Way Forward" plan appeared to deviate from many aspects of the Iraq Study Group report, although differences later narrowed. Among the most significant of the 79 recommendations, some of which were discussed previously, are the following:[43]

- Foremost, transition from U.S.-led combat to Iraqi security self-reliance by early 2008 (Recommendations 40-45), with continued U.S. combat against AQ-I and force protection, in addition to training and equipping the ISF. The transition to ISF-led combat was largely reversed by the "troop surge" strategy. The Administration has noted that the Iraq Study Group said it might support a temporary troop surge along the lines implemented.[44]
- Heightened regional and international diplomacy, including with Iran and Syria, and including the holding of a major international conference in Baghdad (Recommendations 1-12). After appearing to reject this recommendation, the Administration later backed the regional diplomatic process discussed above.
- 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 implemented stepped up U.S. diplomacy led by Secretary of State Rice on the issue.
- Additional economic, political, and military support for the stabilization of Afghanistan (Recommendation 18). This was not specified in the President's January 10 plan, although, separately, there have been increases in U.S. troops and aid for Afghanistan. (*See CRS Report RL30588: Afghanistan: Post-War Governance, Security, and U.S. Policy*.)
- Setting benchmarks for the Iraqi government to achieve political reconciliation, security, and governance, including possibly withholding some U.S. support if the Iraqi government refuses or fails to do so (Recommendations 19-37). The President opposed reducing support for the Iraqi government if it fails to uphold commitments, but he signed P.L. 110-28 which linked U.S. economic aid to progress on the benchmarks.
- Giving greater control over police and police commando units to the Iraqi Ministry of Defense, which is considered less sectarian than the Ministry of Interior that controls these forces, and reforming the Ministry of Interior (Recommendations 50-61). Assigning the lead role in advising and training

the anti-crime portions of the police forces to the U.S. Department of Justice. These recommendations have not been implemented.

- Securing and expanding Iraq's oil sector (Recommendations 62-63). The Administration is prodding Iraq to pass the pending oil laws, which would encourage foreign investment in Iraq's energy sector.

- Increasing economic aid to Iraq and enlisting more international donations of assistance (Recommendations 64-67). The President's plan increased aid, as discussed above, although U.S. aid is now being reduced because of large projected Iraqi surpluses.

In the 1 10th Congress, an amendment to H.R. 2764, the FY2008 foreign aid bill, would have revived the Iraq Study Group (providing $1 million for its operations) to help assess future policy after the "troop surge." The provision was not incorporated into the Consolidated appropriation (P.L. 110-161). In the Senate, some Senators from both parties in June 2007 proposed legislation (S. 1545) to adopt the recommendations of the Group as U.S. policy.

Further Options: Altering Troop Levels or Mission

The sections below discuss options that have been under discussion even before the report of the Iraq Study Group or the troop surge. Some of these options remain under active debate. The debate over the U.S. troop presence, present and future, has become part of the U.S. presidential election campaigns as well. In the Petraeus-Crocker hearings in April 8-9, 2008, some Members criticized the Administration for lack of a clear definition of the conditions that would permit further U.S. troop reductions. The June 2008 GAO study, referenced earlier, said the Administration lacks a strategy for securing Iraq and accomplishing U.S. goals beyond July 2008.

Further Troop Increase
Some argued that the "surge" was too limited — concentrated mainly in Baghdad and Anbar — and that the United States should have increased troops levels in Iraq even further to prevent Sunni insurgents from re- infiltrating cleared areas. This option appears to have faded because of security progress produced by the surge, and it is U.S. policy to reduce forces if security conditions permit.

Immediate and Complete Withdrawal
The Administration strongly opposes this option, arguing that the ISF are not ready to secure Iraq alone and that doing so would result in full-scale civil

war, possible collapse of the elected Iraqi government, revival of AQ-I activities, emboldening of Al Qaeda more generally, and increased involvement of regional powers in the fighting in Iraq. Supporters of the Administration position say that Al Qaeda terrorists might "follow us home" — conduct attacks in the United States — if there were a rapid withdrawal.

Some Members have argued for immediate withdrawal by saying that the decision to invade Iraq was a mistake, that the large U.S. presence in Iraq inflames the insurgency, and that U.S. forces are policing a civil war. Those who support an immediate withdrawal include most of the approximately 70 Members of the "Out of Iraq Congressional Caucus," formed in June 2005. In the 1 10th Congress, some legislation (H.R. 508 and H.R. 413)would repeal the original war authorization.

In the 109th Congress, Representative John Murtha, ranking member (now chairman) of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, introduced a resolution (H.J.Res. 73) calling for a U.S. withdrawal "at the earliest practicable date" and the maintenance of an "over the horizon" U.S. presence, mostly in Kuwait, from which U.S. forces could continue to battle AQ-I. A related resolution, H.Res. 571 (written by Representative Duncan Hunter, then 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 introduced a similar bill in the 1 10th 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.

Withdrawal Timetable

The Administration had long opposed mandating a withdrawal timetable on the grounds that doing so would allow insurgents to "wait out" a U.S. withdrawal. The Iraq Study Group suggested winding down of the U.S. combat mission by early 2008 but did not recommend a firm timetable. Some forms of this option continue to exhibit some support in Congress. Iraqi leaders also long opposed a timetable, but their growing confidence caused Maliki to express agreement with Iraqi factions that want to see a withdrawal timetable. In July 2008, the Administration said it will be part of a U.S.-Iraq strategic agreement to include an "aspirational" (not binding) timetable for the ISF to secure Iraq (now agreed to be the end of 2011), although subject to numerous security conditions.

The House leadership inserted a binding provision of FY2007 supplemental appropriations legislation (H.R. 1591) that would require the president, as a condition of maintaining U.S. forces in Iraq, to certify (by July 1, 2007) that Iraq had made progress toward several political reconciliation benchmarks, and

by October 1, 2007 that the benchmarks have been met. Even if the requirements were met, the amendment would require the start of a redeployment from Iraq by March 1, 2008, to be completed by September 1, 2008. The whole bill passed the House on March 23, 2007. In the Senate-passed version of H.R. 1591, a provision would set a nonbinding goal for U.S. withdrawal of March 1, 2008, in line with S.J.Res. 9 cited above. The conference report adopted elements of both bills, retaining the benchmark certification requirement and the same dates for the start of a withdrawal but making the completion of any withdrawal (by March 31, 2008, not September 1, 2008) a goal rather than a firm deadline. President Bush vetoed the conference report on May 1, 2007, and the veto was sustained. The revised provision in the FY2007 supplemental (P.L. 110-28) was discussed previously.

A House bill, (H.R. 2956), which mandates a beginning of withdrawal within 120 days and completion by April 1, 2008, was adopted on July 12, 2007 by a vote of 223-201. A proposed amendment (S .Amdt. 2087) to H.R. 1585 contained a similar provision. A Senate bill (S. 433), would set a deadline for withdrawing combat troops by March 31, 2008.

On November 13, 2007, some in Congress revived the idea, in an FY2008 supplemental request for military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan (H.R. 4156), of setting a target date (December 15, 2008) for a U.S. withdrawal, except for force protection and "counter-terrorism" operations. The bill would require the withdrawal to start within 30 days of enactment. The bill passed the House but cloture was not invoked in the Senate. The debate over a timetable for withdrawal continued in consideration of a FY2008 supplemental appropriation, but was not included in the enacted version (H.R. 2642, P.L. 110-252).

In the 1 09th Congress, the timetable issue was debated extensively. In November 2005, Senator Levin introduced an amendment to S. 1042 (FY2006 defense authorization bill) to compel the Administration to work on a timetable for withdrawal during 2006. Then-Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee John Warner subsequently submitted a related amendment that stopped short of setting a timetable for withdrawal but required an Administration report on a "schedule for meeting conditions" that could permit a U.S. withdrawal. That measure, which also states in its preamble that "2006 should be a period of significant transition to full Iraqi sovereignty," achieved bi-partisan support, passing 79-19. It was incorporated, with only slight modifications by House conferees, in the conference report on the bill (H.Rept. 109-360, P.L. 109-163). On June 22, 2006, the Senate debated two Iraq-related amendments to an FY2007 defense authorization bill (S. 2766). One, offered by Senator Kerry, setting a July 1, 2007, deadline for U.S. redeployment from Iraq, was defeated 86-13. Another, sponsored by Senator Levin, called on the Administration to begin redeployment out

of Iraq by the end of 2006, but with no deadline for full withdrawal. It was defeated 60-3 9.

Troop Mission Change

Some argue that the United States should not be policing Iraqi cities and should instead scale back its mission to: (1) operations against AQ-I; (2) an end to active patrolling of Iraqi streets; (3) force protection; and (4) training the ISF. The rationale for changing the U.S. mission would be to maintain a U.S. presence, possibly long term, to assist the Iraqi government and protect core U.S. interests but without incurring large U.S. casualties. A press report in June 2007 (*Washington Post*, June 10, 2007) said that, if this were the new mission of U.S. forces, fulfilling the mission might require retaining about 50,000 - 60,000 U.S. forces. Of these forces, about 20,000 would be assigned to guarantee the security of the Iraqi government or assist the ISF if it is having difficulty in battle. A change of mission was proposed by several Senators for consideration of the FY2008 defense authorization (H.R. 1585), but was not in the conference report on the bill.

The Administration argues that improving security conditions are already permitting the U.S. mission to evolve. U.S. forces, according to the Administration, are moving to an "overwatch" role focused on supporting and training Iraqi forces rather than taking the lead on combat operations. Reports on the U.S.-Iraq security agreement being negotiated say that the agreement will stipulate that U.S. forces will cease patrolling Iraqi cities by June 2009.

Planning for Withdrawal

Administration officials say they will not publicly discuss whether or not there is planning for a withdrawal because doing so would undermine current policy. However, Secretary Gates toured facilities in Kuwait in August 2007 in what was reported as an effort to become familiar with the capabilities of the U.S. military to carry out a redeployment, if ordered. Some Members want the Administration to plan for a substantial U.S. redeployment from Iraq and to inform Congress accordingly. A bill, introduced in July 2007 by Representative Tanner (H.R. 3087), would require the Administration to give Congress a plan for redeployment from Iraq. That bill was passed by the House on October 2, 2007 by a vote of 377-46. Senator Hillary Clinton reportedly was briefed on August 2, 2007 by Defense Department officials on the status of planning for a withdrawal, if one is decided, and she and several others introduced legislation on August 2, 2007 (S. 1950), to require contingency planning for withdrawal.

Requiring More Time between Deployments

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

Stepped up International and Regional Diplomacy

As noted above, many of the Iraq Study Group recommendations propose increased regional, multi-lateral, and international diplomacy. 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. The Administration has taken significant steps in this direction, including a bilateral meeting with Syria at the May 3-4, 2007 meeting on Iraq in Egypt, and the bilateral meetings with Iran in Baghdad discussed above. In the 1 10th Congress, a few bills (H.R. 744, H.Con.Res. 43, and H.Con.Res. 45) support the Iraq Study Group recommendation for an international conference on Iraq. In the 109th Congress, these ideas were included in several resolutions, including S.J.Res. 36, S.Res. 470, S.J.Res. 33, and S. 1993, although several of these bills also include provisions for timetables for a U.S. withdrawal.

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.

Reorganizing the Political Structure, and "Federalism"

Some experts say that Iraq's passing proposed legislation will not achieve reconciliation and that a dramatic overhaul of the political structure is needed. Some proposals along these lines would alter Iraq's power structure so that no major community feels excluded or has incentive or capabilities to back violence.

Reorganize the Existing Power Structure

Some believe that more sweeping political restructuring is needed beyond the reconciliation efforts that are advanced by the political "benchmarks," discussed above. However, there is little agreement on what additional or alternative incentives, if any, would persuade Sunnis leaders and their constituents to support the Shiite-dominated government. Some believe that Sunnis might be satisfied by a wholesale cabinet/governmental reshuffle that gives several leading positions, such as that of President, to a Sunni Arab, although many Kurds might resent such a move because a Kurd now holds that post. Some maintain these Sunni grievances can be addressed in the Constitutional Review process under way, and discussed above. Others oppose major governmental change because doing so might necessitate the voiding of the 2005 elections, a move that would appear un-democratic.

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

Support the Dominant Factions

Another view expressed by some is that the United States should place all its political, military, and economic support behind the mainstream Shiite and Kurdish factions that have all along been the most supportive of the U.S.-led political transition process and now dominate Iraq's government. According to this view, which some refer to as the "80% solution" (Shiites and Kurds are about 80% of the population),[45] most Sunni Arabs will never fully accept the new order in Iraq and the United States should cease trying to pressure the Shiites and Arabs to try to take additional steps to satisfy them. Others say that the recent U.S. cooperation with Sunni former insurgents has angered the Shiites and Kurds, and further risks all-out civil war if the United States were to draw down its forces.

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

"Federalism"/Decentralization/Break-up Options

Some maintain that Iraq cannot be stabilized as one country and should be broken up, or "hard partitioned," into three separate countries: one Kurdish, one Sunni Arab, and one Shiite Arab.[46] This option is widely opposed by a broad range of Iraqi parties as likely to produce substantial violence as Iraq's major communities separate physically, and that the resulting three countries would be unstable and too small to survive without domination by Iraq's neighbors. Others view this as a U.S. attempt not only to usurp Iraq's sovereignty but to divide the Arab world and thereby enhance U.S. regional domination. Still others view any version of this idea, including the less dramatic derivations discussed below, as unworkable because of the high percentage of mixed Sunni-Shiite Arab families in Iraq that some say would require "dividing bedrooms." This recommendation was rejected by the Iraq Study Group as potentially too violent.

A derivation of the partition idea, propounded by Senator Biden and Council on Foreign Relations expert Leslie Gelb (May 1, 2006, *New York Times* op-ed), as well as others, is form — or to not prevent Iraqis from forming — three autonomous regions, dominated by each of the major communities. A former U.S. Ambassador and adviser to the Kurds, Peter Galbraith, as well as others,[47] advocates this option, which some refer to as a "soft partition," but which supporters of the plan say is implementation of the federalism already enshrined in Iraq's constitution. According to this view, decentralizing Iraq into autonomous zones would ensure that Iraq's territorial integrity is preserved while ensuring that these communities do not enter all-out civil war with each other. Others say that decentralization is already de-facto U.S. policy as exhibited by the increasing transfer of authority to Sunni tribes in the Sunni areas and the relative lack of U.S. troops in the Shiite south, and that formalizing the policy would merely confirm the existing direction of U.S. policy and of events on the ground in Iraq. Others say that the Sunni Arabs, who initially

opposed federalism in the constitution, now are reconsidering that view and might even want to form their own autonomous Sunni region.

The idea will be tested in April 2008 when the voluntarily moratorium ends on forming new regions, agreed in October 2006 by the major factions when the regions law was adopted. However, some believe that popular Shiite support for IS CI's drive to form a major Shiite region in southern Iraq, spanning as many as nine provinces, has faded since the regions law was passed, in part because of the Iranian influence in the south which is increasingly resented.

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

Opponents of the idea say it is being proposed for expediency — to allow the United States to withdraw from Iraq without establishing a unified and strong central government that can defend itself. Still others say the idea does not take sufficient account of Iraq's sense of Iraq national identity, which, despite all difficulties, is still expressed to a wide range of observers and visitors. Others maintain that any soft partition of Iraq would inevitably evolve into drives by the major communities for outright independence. Observers in the Balkans say that the international community had initially planned to preserve a central government of what was Yugoslavia, but that this became untenable and Yugoslavia was broken up into several countries.[48] Others say, drawing some support from recent events between Turkey and the Iraqi Kurds, that the autonomous regions of a decentralized Iraq would inevitably fall under the sway of Iraq's neighbors. Still others say that, no matter how the concept is implemented, there will be substantial bloodshed as populations move into areas where their sect or group predominates.

The federalism, or decentralization, plan gained strength with the passage of on September 26, 2007, of an amendment to the Senate version of H.R. 4986 (P.L. 110-18 1), an FY2008 defense authorization bill. The amendment passed 75-23 (to H.R. 1585, the original version that was vetoed over other issues), showing substantial bipartisan support. It is a "sense of Congress" that states that:

- The United States should actively support a political settlement, based on the "final provisions" of the Iraqi constitution (reflecting the possibility of major amendments, to the constitution, as discussed above), that creates a federal Iraq and allows for federal regions.

- A conference of Iraqis should be convened to reach a comprehensive political settlement based on the federalism law approved by the COR in October 2006.
- The amendment does not specify how many regions should be formed or that regions would correspond to geographic areas controlled by major Iraqi ethnicities or sects.

Subsequently, with the exception of the Kurds and some other Iraqi Arab officials, many of the main blocs in Iraq, jointly and separately, came out in opposition to the amendment on some of the grounds discussed above, although many of the Iraqi statements appeared to refer to the amendment as a "partition" plan, an interpretation that proponents of the amendment say is inaccurate. A U.S. Embassy Iraq statement on the amendment also appeared to mischaracterize the legislation, saying "As we have said in the past, attempts to partition or divide Iraq by intimidation, force, or other means into three separate states would produce extraordinary suffering and bloodshed. The United States has made clear our strong opposition to such attempts."

"Coup" or "Strongman" Option

Another option that received substantial discussion in 2007, a time of significant U.S. criticism of Maliki's failure to achieve substantial reconciliation. Some Iraqis believe the United States might try to use its influence among Iraqis to force Maliki to resign — or to force a vote of no- confidence against him in the COR — and replace him with a military strongman or some other figure who would crack down on militias, or someone who is more inclined to reach compromise with the restive Sunni Arabs. Some say former Prime Minister Allawi still is trying to position himself as such an alternative figure. However, experts in the United States see no concrete signs that such an option might be under consideration by the Administration, and other accounts say that Iraqi leaders are divided over who would replace Maliki, thus ensuring deadlock and his continuation in office. Some accounts say that this option is adamantly opposed by Grand Ayatollah Sistani, who seeks, above all, to preserve Shiite unity. Using U.S. influence to force out Maliki would, in the view of many, conflict with the U.S. goal of promoting democracy and rule of law in Iraq.

Economic Measures

Some believe that the key to calming Iraq is to accelerate economic reconstruction, and they see the draft oil law as drawing in the foreign investment to Iraq's key energy sector that is needed to drive economic development. Accelerated reconstruction will drain support for insurgents by creating employment, improving public services, and creating confidence in the government. This idea, propounded by DOD reconstruction official Paul Brinkley (Deputy Undersecretary of Defense for Business Transformation in Iraq), was incorporated into the President's January 10 initiative, in part by attempting to revive state-owned factories that can employ substantial numbers of Iraqis. Prior to that, the concept of using economic reconstruction to drive political accommodation was reflected 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.

Some Members believe that Iraq, now flush with oil revenues and unspent assets, should now begin assuming more of the financial burden for Iraq and that the United States should sharply cut back reconstruction and security funding for Iraq. In April 2008, following the Petraeus and Crocker testimony, some Members began advocating that any or all U.S. reconstruction funding for Iraq be provided as loan, not grant. A similar provision to make about half of the $18 billion in U.S. reconstruction funds in the FY2004 supplemental (P.L. 106-108), discussed above, was narrowly defeated on the floor (October 16, 2003, amendment defeated 226- 200).

The Administration argues, based on the Iraqi budget figures provided above and discussed in the Petraeus-Crocker April 2008 testimony, that Iraq is already assuming more of the burden. Gen. Petraeus testified that, as one example, Iraqi increases in its own security funds had allowed the Administration to reduce its FY2009 request for ISF funding to $2.8 billion, from an otherwise $5 billion.

Table 7. Major Factions in Iraq

Major Shiite and Kurdish Factions	
Iraq National Accord (INA)/Iyad al-Allawi	The INA is now a secular bloc (Iraqis List) in parliament. Allawi, about 62 years old (born 1946 in Baghdad), a former Baathist who helped Saddam silence Iraqi dissidents in Europe in the mid-1970s. Subsequently fell out with Saddam, became a neurologist, and presided over the Iraqi Student Union in Europe. Survived an alleged regime assassination attempt in London in 1978. He is a secular Shiite, but many INA members are Sunni ex-Baathists and ex- military officers. Allawi was interim Prime Minister (June 2004-April 2005). Won 40 seats in January 2005 election but only 25 in December 2005. Spends most of his time outside Iraq and reportedly trying to organize a non-sectarian parliamentary governing coalition to replace Maliki. Now boycotting the cabinet.
Iraqi National Congress (INC)/Ahmad Chalabi	Chalabi, who is about 67 years old, educated in the United States (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) as a mathematician. His father was president of the Senate in the monarchy that was overthrown in the 1958 military coup, and the family fled to Jordan. Taught math at the American University of Beirut in 1977 and, in 1978, he founded the Petra Bank in Jordan. He later ran afoul of Jordanian authorities on charges of embezzlement and he left Jordan, possibly with some help from members of Jordan's royal family, in 1989. In April 1992, was convicted in absentia of embezzling $70 million from the bank and sentenced to 22 years in prison. One of the rotating presidents of the Iraq Governing Council (IGC). U.S.-backed Iraqi police raided INC headquarters in Baghdad on May 20, 2004, seizing documents as part of an investigation of various allegations, including provision of U.S. intelligence to Iran. Case later dropped. Since 2004, has allied with and fallen out with Shiite Islamist factions; was one of three deputy prime ministers in the 2005 transition government. No INC seats in parliament, but has chaired Higher National DeBaathification Commission prior to passage of law to reform that process and resisted de-Baathification reform efforts. Now serves as liaison between Baghdad neighborhood committees and the government in attempting to improve public services, giving him entree to senior U.S. military and diplomatic officials, leading to assessments that he is rebuilding his influence. Survived assassination attempt on convoy on September 6, 2008.

Table 7. (Continued).

Major Shiite and Kurdish Factions	
Kurds/KDP and PUK	Together, the main factions run Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) with its own executive headed by "president" Masud Barzani, Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani, and a 111 seat legislature (elected in January 30, 2005 national elections). PUK leader Talabani remains president, despite March 2007 health problems that required treatment in Jordan and the United States. Barzani has tried to secure his clan's base in the Kurdish north and has distanced himself from national politics. Many Kurds are more supportive of outright Kurdish independence than are these leaders. Kurds field up to 100,000 *peshmerga* militia. Their joint slate won 75 seats in January 2005 national election but only 53 in December 2005. Grudgingly supported framework draft oil law sent to parliament, but strongly oppose related draft implementing law that would place 93% of Iraq's oil fields under control of a revived Iraqi National Oil Company (INOC). Both factions intent on securing control of Kirkuk.
Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani	Undisputed leading Shiite theologian in Iraq. About 87 years old, he was born in Iran and studied in Qom, Iran, before relocating to Najaf at the age of 21. No formal position in government but has used his broad Shiite popularity to become instrumental in major political questions. Helped forge UIA and brokered compromise over the selection of a Prime Minister nominee in April 2006. Criticized Israel's July 2006 offensive against Lebanese Hezbollah. However, acknowledges that his influence is waning and that calls for Shiite restraint are unheeded as Shiites look to militias, such as Sadr's, for defense in sectarian warfare. Does not meet with U.S. officials but does meet with U.N. Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI). Has network of agents (*wakils*) throughout Iraq and among Shiites outside Iraq. Treated for heart trouble in Britain in August 2004 and reportedly has reduced his schedule in early 2008. Advocates traditional Islamic practices such as modest dress for women, abstention from alcohol, and curbs on Western music and entertainment.

Major Shiite and Kurdish Factions	
Supreme Islamic Council of (ISCI)	Best-organized and most pro-Iranian Shiite Islamist party and generally allied with Da'wa Party in UIA. It was established in 1982 by Tehran to centralize Shiite Islamist movements in Iraq. First leader, Mohammad Baqr Al Hakim, killed by bomb in Najaf in August 2003. 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. Hakim currently undergoing lung cancer treatment, instilling uncertainty in ISCI leadership. 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. Son, Ammar al-Hakim, is a key ISCI figure as well and is said to be favored to take over ISCI should his father's condition become fatal. As part of UIA, ISCI has 29 members in parliament. Supports formation of Shiite "region" composed of nine southern provinces and dominates provincial councils on seven of those provinces. Supports draft oil law to develop the oil sector, and broad defense pact with the United States. Party reportedly more popular in the wake of Sadr faction defeat in Basra in spring 2008.
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 ISCI. Has no organized militia and a lower proportion of clerics than does ISCI. Within UIA, its two factions (one loyal to Maliki and one loyal to another figure, parliamentarian Abd al-Karim al-Anizi, control 25 seats in parliament. Da'wa generally supports draft oil law and defense pact with U.S. The Kuwaiti branch of the Da'wa allegedly committed a May 1985 attempted assassination of the Amir of Kuwait and the December 1983 attacks on the U.S. and French embassies in Kuwait. (It was reported in February 2007 that a UIA/Da'wa parliamentarian, Jamal al-Ibrahimi, was convicted by Kuwait for the 1983 attacks.) Lebanese Hezbollah, founded by Lebanese Da'wa activists, attempted to link release of the Americans they held hostage in Lebanon in the 1980s to the release of 17 Da'wa prisoners held by Kuwait for those attacks in the 1980s.

Table 7. (Continued).

Major Shiite and Kurdish Factions	
Moqtada Al- Sadr Faction	See text box above.
Fadilah Party	Loyal to Ayatollah Mohammad Yacoubi, who was a leader of the Sadr movement after the death of Moqtada's father in 1999 but was later removed by Moqtada and subsequently broke with the Sadr faction. *Fadilah* (Virtue) won 15 seats parliament as part of the UIA but publicly left that bloc on March 6, 2007 to protest lack of a Fadilah cabinet seat. Holds seats on several provincial councils in the Shiite provinces and dominates Basra provincial council, whose governor is a party member. Also controls protection force for oil installations in Basra, and is popular among oil workers and unions in Basra. Opposes draft oil law as too favorable to foreign firms. Considers itself opposed to Iranian influence in Iraq and wants a small (one - three provinces) Shiite region in the south.
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. Has some militiamen. Supports a less formal version of Shiite region in the south than does ISCI.
Tharallah	Led by Sayyid Yusuf al-Musawi. Small Shiite faction in southern Iraq formed from former marsh guerrillas against Saddam. Purportedly pro-Iranian.
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. One member in the cabinet (Minister of Civil Society Affairs).
Ayatollah Hassani Faction	Another Karbala-based faction, loyal to Ayatollah Mahmoud al-Hassani, who also was a Sadrist leader later removed by Moqtada. His armed followers clashed with local Iraqi security forces in Karbala in mid-August 2006.

Major Sunni Factions	
Iraqi Consensus Front (Tariq al-Hashimi and Adnan al- Dulaymi)	Often referred to by Arabic name "Tawafuq," Front is led by Iraqi Islamic Party (IIP), headed by Tariq al-Hashimi, now a deputy president. COR Speaker Mahmoud Mashadani, a hardliner, is a senior member; in July 2006, he called the U.S. invasion "the work of butchers." IIP withdrew from the January 2005 election but led the Sunni "Consensus Front" coalition in December 2005 elections, winning 44 seats in COR. Front, critical but accepting of U.S. presence, also includes Iraqi General People's Council of the hardline Adnan al-Dulaymi, and the National Dialogue Council (Mashhadani's party). Opposes draft oil law as sellout to foreign companies and distrusts Shiite pledges to equitably share oil revenues. Several factions want to limit U.S. latitude in any defense pact with U.S. Pulled five cabinet ministers out of government on August 1, but Hashimi still deputy president. Adnan Dulaymi widely accused by Shiite Iraqi leaders of hiding weapons for Sunni insurgents, using properties owned by himself and his son.
Iraqi Front for National Dialogue	Head is Saleh al-Mutlak, an ex-Baathist, was chief negotiator for Sunnis on the new constitution, but was dissatisfied with the outcome and now advocates major revisions. Bloc holds 11 seats, generally aligned with Consensus Front. Opposes draft oil law on same grounds as Consensus Front, and generally opposes broad defense pact with U.S.
Muslim Scholars Association (MSA)	Hardline Sunni Islamist group led by clerics Harith al-Dhari and Abd al-Salam al-Qubaysi, has boycotted all post-Saddam elections. Believed to have ties to/influence over insurgent factions. Wants timetable for U.S. withdrawal from Iraq. Iraqi government issued a warrant for Dhari' s arrest in November 2006 for suspected ties to the Sunni insurgency, causing Dhari to remain outside Iraq (in Jordan). Headquarters raided at behest of pro-government Sunni Endowment organization in November 2007. Opposes draft oil law and U.S. defense pact.
Sunni Tribes/ "Awakening Movement"/ "Sons of Iraq"	Not an organized faction per se, but begun in Anbar by about 20 tribes, the National Salvation Council formed by Shaykh Abd al-Sattar al-Rishawi (assassinated on September 13) credited by U.S. commanders as a source of anti-Al Qaeda support that is helping calm Anbar Province. Some large tribal confederations include Dulaym (Ramadi-based), Jabburi (mixed Sunni-Shiite tribe), Zobi (near Abu Ghraib), and Shammar (Salahuddin and Diyala regions). Trend has spread to include former Sunni insurgents now serving as local anti- Al Qaeda protection forces in Baghdad, parts of Diyala province, Salahuddin province, and elsewhere. Somewhat supportive of U.S. defense pact.

Table 7. (Continued).

Major Shiite and Kurdish Factions	
Iraqi Insurgents	Numerous factions and no unified leadership. Some groups led by ex-Saddam regime leaders, others by Islamic extremists. Major Iraqi factions include Islamic Army of Iraq, New Baath Party, Muhammad's Army, and the 1920 Revolution Brigades. Perceived as increasingly opposed to AQ-I.
Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQ-I) / Foreign Fighters	AQ-I was led by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, a Jordanian national, until his death in U.S. airstrike June 7, 2006. Succeeded by Abu Hamza al-Muhajir (Abu Ayyub al-Masri), an Egyptian. Estimated 3,000 in Iraq (about 10-15% of total insurgents) from many nations, including Egypt and Saudi Arabia, but increasingly subordinate to Iraqi Sunni insurgents under the banner of the "Islamic State of Iraq." See CRS Report RL32217, *Iraq and Al Qaeda*.

Table 8. Iraq's Government

Position	Name	Ethnicity/Bloc/Party Status
President	Jalal Talabani	Kurd/PUK
Deputy President	Tariq al-Hashimi	Sunni/Consensus Front
Deputy President	Adel Abd-al-Mahdi	Shiite/UIA/ISCI
Prime Minister	Nuri Kamal al- Maliki	Shiite/UIA/Da'wa
Deputy P.M.	Barham Salih	Kurdistan Alliance/PUK
Deputy P.M.	Rafi al-Issawi	Sunni/Consensus Front
Min. Agriculture	Ali al-Bahadili	independent Shiite named in October 2007, replaced resigned Sadrist
Min. Communications	to be named	Consensus Front take post
Min. Culture	vacant	Consensus Front will retake post
Min. Defense	Abdul Qadir al- Ubaydi	Sunni independent
Min. Displacement and Migration	Abd al-Samad Sultan	Shiite Kurd/UIA
Min. Electricity	Karim Wahid	Shiite/UIA/independent
Min. Education	Khudayiir al-Khuzai	Shiite/UIA/Da'wa (Anizi faction)
Min Environment	Mrs. Narmin Uthman	Kurdistan Alliance/PUK

Position	Name	Ethnicity/Bloc/Party Status
Min. Finance	Bayan Jabr	Shiite/UIA/ISCI
Min. Foreign Affairs	Hoshyar Zebari	Kurdistan Alliance/KDP
Min. Health	Saleh al-Hasnawi	Independent Shiite named October 2007; was held by UIA/Sadr bloc.
Min. Higher Education	to be named	Sunni/Consensus Front/IIP
Min. Human Rights	Mrs. Wijdan Mikhail	Christian/Allawi bloc/boycotting
Min. Industry and Minerals	Fawzi al-Hariri	Christian Kurd/Kurdistan Alliance/KDP
Min. Interior	Jawad al-Bulani	Shiite independent
Min. Justice	Safa al-Safi	UIA/independent/acting. Was held by Hashim al-Shibli (Consensus Front.) Replacement not confirmed.
Min. Housing and Construction	Mrs. Bayan Daza'i	Kurdistan Alliance/KDP
Min. Labor and Social Affairs	Mahmud al-Radi	Shiite/UIA/Independent
Min. Oil	Husayn al- Shahristani	Shiite/UIA/Independent/close to Ayatollah Sistani
Min. Planning	Ali Baban	Sunni/formerly Consensus Front/IIP
Min. Trade	Abd al-Falah al- Sudani	Shiite/UIA/Da'wa (Anizi faction)
Min. Science and Technology	Ra'id Jahid	Sunni/Allawi bloc/Communist/boycotting
Min. Municipalities and Public Works	Riyad Ghurayyib	Shiite/UIA/ISCI (Badr)
Min. Transportation	vacant	was held by UIA/Sadr
Min. Water Resources	Latif Rashid	Kurdistan Alliance/PUK
Min. Youth and Sports	Jasim al-Jafar	Shiite Turkomen/UIA
Min. State for Civil Society	Mrs. Wijdan Mikhail	Christian/Allawi bloc/boycotting
Min. State National Dialogue Affairs	Akram al-Hakim	Shiite/UIA/ISCI (Hakim family)

Table 8. (Continued).

Position	Name	Ethnicity/Bloc/Party Status
Min. State National Security	Shirwan al-Waili	Shiite/UIA/Da'wa
Min. State Foreign Affairs	to be named	Sunni/Consensus Front
Min. State Provincial Affairs	vacant	was held by Allawi bloc
Min. State Tourism and Antiquities	vacant	was held by UIA/Sadr
Min. State for Women's Affairs	official to be named	Sunni/Consensus Front/
Min. State for COR Affairs	Safa al-Safi	Shiite/UIA/independent/acting

Table 9. U.S. Aid (ESF) to Iraq's Saddam-Era Opposition (Amounts in millions of U.S. $)

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

	INC	War crimes	Broadcasting	Unspecified opposition activities	Total
FY2004 (request)	—	—	—	0	0

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

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

Figure 1. Map of Iraq.

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       groups to about $40 million for FY1993, from previous levels of $15

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

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

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

[16] 9/11 Commission Report, p. 66.

[17] The Administration also began training about 5,000 oppositionists to assist U.S. forces, although reportedly only about 70 completed training at Taszar air base in Hungary, eventually serving as translators during the

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

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

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

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[22] See CRS Report RS2 1867, *U.S. Embassy in Iraq*, by Susan B. Epstein.

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[24] For further information, see CRS Report RL34362, Congressional Oversight and Related Issues Concerning the Prospective Security Agreement Between the United States and Iraq, by Michael John Garcia, R. Chuck Mason, and Jennifer K. Elsea.

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

[27] For results of the elections and the formation of the government, see CRS Report RS21968, *Iraq: Reconciliation and Benchmarks*, by Kenneth Katzman. This report also contains a table with the Administration and GAO assessments of the Iraqi government's performance on 18 stipulated "benchmarks" contained in P.L. 110-28.

[28] On January 10, President Bush stated that the surge would give the Iraqi government "the breathing space it needs to make progress in other critical areas, adding that"most of Iraq's Sunni and Shia want to live together in peace — and reducing the violence in Baghdad will help make reconciliation possible." Available at [http://www.whitehouse. gov/news /releases/2007/0 1/200701 10-7.html]

[29] Presidential Determination No. 2007-27 of July 12, 2007, and Presidential Determination No. 2007-35 of September 28, 2007.

[30] Securing, Stabilizing, and Rebuilding Iraq. GAO-07-1220T

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

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

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

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

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

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

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