



SPECIAL REPORT

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ABOUT THE REPORT

This report concludes a two-year study on Iraq's new political leaders and their visions for the future, based on extensive background data and personal interviews with over seventy top leaders since 2003. This portion of the study focuses on leaders brought to power by the election of December 2005 and the formation of a permanent government in 2006. The study finds that rapid and continuous change in political leaders is making it difficult for them to acquire experience and achieve effective government. Also, tensions between outsiders (exiles) who were opponents of Saddam, and insiders, mainly those who served in the previous regime, are generating distrust and making compromise difficult. However, although ethnic and sectarian polarization persists, elections have produced a new political constellation of parties—and militias—with a greater variety of views and constituencies. This development may provide some opportunity for new alignments across the ethnic and sectarian divides.

The report suggests that these new political groups need to focus more on issues and interests where they have some common ground, rather than on communal identity. Among these shared issues are economic development, oil legislation, management of water resources and the environment, and the role of religion in the state. Failure to achieve some compromise in these areas could lead to ethnic and sectarian fragmentation or a continued breakdown of government.

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Phebe Marr

Iraq's New Political Map

Summary

- In 2006, a new group of Iraqi leaders came to power through elections. In the absence of strong bureaucratic and military institutions, the qualities and skills they bring to bear and their capacity and willingness to cooperate, especially across ethnic and sectarian lines, will determine whether Iraq collapses into chaos or moves forward toward stability.
- Three characteristics of these leaders are striking. First is how new and inexperienced most of them are. Rapid political mobility and change in ministers was prevalent in previous cabinets, but it has intensified in this government. This degree of change has made it difficult for leaders to acquire experience in national governance, create institutions, establish networks across ministries, and cultivate constituencies outside the central government.
- Second, the current leadership is still dominated by “outsiders”—exiles who have spent much of their adult life outside Iraq, or by Kurds who have lived in the north, cut off from the rest of Iraq. Most of these exiles have spent time in Middle Eastern, not Western, societies. “Insiders” who lived in Saddam's Iraq and endured its hardships are still a minority. This fault line between insiders and outsiders helps explain some of the lack of cohesion in the government.
- Third, and most important, many of the current leaders have spent the best part of their adult life engaged in opposition to the Saddam regime, often in underground or militant activities. Those who had any affiliation with, or simply worked under, the old regime have still found it very difficult to gain entry. The result has been a profound distrust between the new leadership and those with some association with the old regime. The continuation of the insurgency has helped this political struggle metamorphose into an ethnic and sectarian war.
- A fourth parameter is emerging as significant: the development of political parties and groups, often accompanied by militias. While ethnic and sectarian divisions in Iraq have grabbed most of the headlines, it is these parties and their constituencies that are shaping the political agenda and are likely to be determinative in the future.
- The most important of these parties now occupy seats, not only in the assembly but in the government. They include the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), Da'wah, and the Sadrist movement in the dominant Sh'ah United Iraqi Alliance (UIA), the Kurdistan Democratic party (KDP) and Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) in the Kurdistan Alliance, Tawafuq (Iraqi National Accord) among the Sunnis, and the

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weaker Iraqiyyah (Iraqi) ticket among the secularists. Each of these parties has different positions on issues and different constituencies to satisfy; in a number of cases these cross ethnic and sectarian divides.

- Among the most important of these common interests are (a) economic development, (b) oil legislation, (c) management of water resources and the environment, and (d) the role of religion and the state. Even more divisive issues, such as federalism and a timetable for withdrawal of multinational forces, find allies on one or another side of these issues among different ethnic and sectarian groups.
- This suggests that despite ethnic and sectarian strife, a new political dynamic could be built in Iraq by focusing on one problem at a time and dealing with it by encouraging party, not communal, negotiations. Although such agreements will take time, they may provide a means of gradually building much-needed trust and a network of people and institutions that can work across ethnic and sectarian boundaries. Such a process will have a far better outcome over the long term—an intact, more durable Iraqi state, than the ethnic and sectarian divisions now being pushed by events on the ground and by some outside policy analysts.

Introduction

Since 2003, Iraq has undergone a revolutionary change in leadership. Understanding that change and the background and orientation of the new leaders that have emerged is critical to understanding where the country may go in the future. The quality and skills that these leaders bring to bear and their capacity and willingness to cooperate, especially across ethnic and sectarian lines, are especially critical because they are operating in an environment without firm institutions (such as a strong bureaucracy or a national army), with weak and fractured constituencies to support them, and with differing views on where Iraq can—and should—go.

Finding legitimate and effective political leaders in Iraq to replace the defeated regime has proved to be one of the most difficult tasks confronting the United States and its allies. Since 2003 there have been four distinct changes in government, each producing a different set of leaders. The first, known as the Iraq Governing Council, was appointed along with its associated Council of Ministers, by the Coalition Provisional Authority in 2003. It made a clean sweep of the former Ba'th leaders and brought together representatives of all of Iraq's ethnic and sectarian communities, but many of these leaders were exiled opponents of Saddam's regime, who had been living outside the country and had few institutional roots inside, through which to govern. This government was replaced in 2004, partly under UN auspices, when Iraq was given official sovereignty. Although this government, still appointed, included many exiles, it had a strong technocratic base. But opposition to appointed governments mounted, especially from those who had been living inside Iraq, and in 2005 a series of elections was held to determine a new constitution for Iraq and then to produce a new, permanent government. These elections produced even more change in leadership as political parties and alliances took shape and leaders increasingly appealed to ethnic and sectarian identity for votes. The first of these elections, held in January, produced a provisional Council of Representatives (assembly) and a new cabinet, whose main task was to draft a constitution. To a large extent, the Arab Sunni community, in which the deposed Ba'th administration had its strongest representation, boycotted the elections and, as a result, was largely left out of the constitutional deliberations. To rectify this situation and ensure Sunni participation in the next election, Sunnis were promised—by both the Iraqi government and the coalition authorities—that they would have a voice in amending the constitution once a permanent government was established. In December 2005 elections were held for a permanent Council of Representatives, and this time Sunnis did participate. Eventually, in May 2006, a prime minister was selected from this assembly, and Iraq's fourth government was formed.

This report is part of a two-year study of the changes these events have produced in Iraq's political leadership. The study has examined such factors as the ethnic and sectarian composition of the leadership; the leaders' gender, education, and professional activities; and their political affiliations. It has also probed their views through over seventy interviews in the course of two years. An earlier USIP Special Report, "Who Are Iraq's Leaders? What Do They Want?" analyzed Iraq's leadership between the fall of Saddam in 2003 and the elections of December 2005. As that report made clear, the changes since Saddam's era have been profound. The ethnic and sectarian composition of the leadership has changed (Arab Shi'ah and Kurds are now dominant; Sunnis are a minority), women are now better represented than they were before, and the post-Saddam leaders are better educated than their predecessors. But the elections of December 2005, conducted in a climate of growing ethnic and sectarian strife and amid an ongoing insurgency, have produced even more changes, revealing sharp ethnic, communal, and political cleavages in the electorate and among those elected. These new leaders and the parties with which they are affiliated now provide us with a new and more decisive political map for the future of Iraq. The data in this report incorporates leadership changes up to the end of 2006 and reflects the results of the elections of December 2005 and the establishment of a permanent government in May 2006. Although the government announced in November 2006 that it intends to make further cabinet changes, the timing and extent of change are not yet clear; moreover, such changes are unlikely to affect the outcome of the December 2005 election unless there is a fundamental change in the political process, or the formation of a new governing coalition. Indeed, a cabinet reshuffle coming so soon after its formation reinforces the pattern of change and discontinuity discussed in the report. The group under study here includes forty-six leaders, including the president, vice presidents, prime minister, deputy prime ministers, speaker and deputy speakers of the Council of Representatives, and the rest of the cabinet. These are the men and women who must deal with a brutal insurgency and virulent ethnic and sectarian strife, revise and refine a new constitution, and develop the institutions of state. What qualities do they bring to the task? What factors are most influential in shaping their outlook? Can they find enough in common to keep Iraq together? To stabilize the situation? Or will an inability to cooperate fracture the state and result in chaos?

Characteristics of the New Leadership

Three characteristics of the current leaders are striking in their capacity to enable the making and carrying out of policy. First is their inexperience. Rapid political mobility and replacement of ministers was the standard in previous cabinets, but in this government it has intensified. Of the forty-six members included in this group, only eleven, or 24 percent, have held a position in the cabinet or the presidency before; the other 76 percent are newcomers. Carryovers are few and continue to be concentrated among the Kurds, who are the most experienced politicians. Two Kurds, Foreign Minister Hushyar Zibari and Minister of Water Resources Abd al-Latif Rashid, have held their positions through four changes of government. President of the Republic Jalal Talabani, Deputy Prime Minister Barham Salih, and Minister of Environment Narmin Uthman (who is a woman) have been in three governments. Only two Shi'ah representatives, both from SCIRI—Adil Abd al-Mahdi, a vice president, and Bayan Jabr, the minister of finance—match that record. Four other ministers—an Arab Sunni, an Arab Shi'ah, a Turkman, and a secularist—have served once before.

While rapid change from Saddam's time is to be expected, the persistence and magnitude of change in every government since 2003 is significant. It means, in essence, that the revolutionary process has probably not yet settled down despite recent elections. Equally important is what these changes portend for the acquisition of the necessary skills of governance by those in the leadership cadre. This accelerated pace of change has

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made it difficult for new leaders to acquire experience in national government: running a bureaucracy, creating institutions, establishing networks across ministries, and cultivating constituencies outside the central government. Experience and linkages acquired by a minister in one cabinet are thrown away in the next and not passed on. Not only individual skills but also institutional ties are lost. One current problem in government will illustrate this point. Iraq has not yet created a real cabinet, one that works as a unit. Instead, it has a collection of separate ministries, run mostly as individual fiefs with little sense of belonging to a national government, whose ministers have not developed the habit of collaboration with fellow ministers on national issues—and these skills and attitudes of cooperation are the very ones necessary to make a national government function. This discontinuity at the top, along with the lack of governing experience it has spawned, has played a major role in the failure of the new central government to institutionalize itself or deliver the services the population needs.

Second, the current leadership is still dominated by “outsiders,” that is, by Iraqi exiles who have spent much of their adult life, especially the last decade or two of Saddam’s regime, outside Iraq, and Kurds, who have lived in the north, free of Saddam’s control. Insiders, who lived in Saddam’s Iraq and endured its hardships, are still a minority. A third of the current leadership is outsiders, with another 20 percent who lived in the northern Kurdish region. Only about 28 percent are insiders. (Some 20 percent are unknown.) Among this exile group, however, there has now been a shift in the locus of their exile. Western-educated leaders, who have lived for years in London, the United States, or Continental Europe and are relatively familiar with Western culture—for example, Adnan Pachachi and Ayyad Allawi—have now disappeared from government or been reduced to a distinct minority.

| <i>Insiders and Outsiders in the Iraqi Government, 2006</i> (percentages rounded) | | |
|---|----|-----|
| Insiders | 13 | 28% |
| Insiders in North | 9 | 20% |
| Outsiders | 15 | 33% |
| Outsiders in West | 4 | 9% |
| Outsiders in Middle East | 11 | 24% |
| Iran | 5 | 11% |
| Gulf | 5 | 11% |
| Levant | 1 | 2% |
| Unknown | 9 | 20% |

Most of the outsiders in this new government have spent their exile in various Middle Eastern countries and are unfamiliar—and sometimes uncomfortable—with Western society and Western ways. A number have lived in Iran, where they fled during Saddam’s crackdown on religious opposition movements in the 1980s, while others have lived and worked in Syria and Lebanon—all political environments relatively isolated from, and antagonistic to, the West, but where the exiles could engage in opposition activities. This has produced leaders more familiar with Middle Eastern than Western models of government and society, some of whom may be inherently alienated from many Western ideas and values. This contingent includes the current prime minister, Nuri al-Maliki, and the minister of finance, Bayan Jabr. Others have spent time working in Arab Gulf countries such as the United Arab Emirates (UAE), in a more open, commercial environment where different ideas may have had freer rein. (Abd Dhiyab al-Ajili, the minister of higher education and scientific research, is one such example.) Among the current leaders, those who have spent the most time in the West are the Kurdish representatives, such as Foreign Minister Hushyar Zibari, Minister of Water Resources Abd al-Latif Rashid, and Deputy

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Prime Minister Barham Salih, which helps explain their more pro-Western stance and their ability to maneuver in a Western environment. As a whole, however, this cabinet has been bred more in the atmosphere of Middle Eastern than Western politics, a factor increasingly likely to affect its ability to communicate with and align with the West.

Insiders who stayed in Iraq through the 1990s have not yet come into their own, although a few (e.g., the ministers of defense and interior) have recently reached important positions. Among Arab Sunnis who previously worked under the Saddam regime, only those who broke with it at some point or were aligned in some way with opposition movements have been accepted into the new leadership cadre. Chief among these is Vice President Tariq al-Hashimi, a former army officer, who retired and worked in the private sector but whose main affiliation was with the opposition Iraqi Islamic party (IIP). Others include Minister of Defense Abd al-Qadir Ubaidi, an Arab Sunni former army officer who opposed the 1990 invasion of Kuwait and was jailed by Saddam, and Chairman of the Council of Representatives Mahmud Mishhadani, an Arab Sunni doctor who was involved in opposition politics and was jailed by Saddam. Several Sadrist cabinet members are also insiders, but in general they are young, with little professional experience, and have been “drafted” to represent the movement. One or two have already resigned.

The division between “insiders” and “outsiders” is one of the main fault lines in the current political leadership that need to be bridged, and helps explain some of the lack of cohesion in the government. Outsiders have often lost touch with those living inside Iraq and lack networks, organization, and constituencies there. They also bring different experiences to bear. Leaders of the Da’wah party, for example, were generally scattered in Iran, Syria and Lebanon, and the UK; the party must now reforge the links between members and add links to the population inside Iraq. SCIRI politicians have overwhelmingly had ties with Iran, however much they may disavow it, and must overcome a local prejudice against Iranian influence. The Kurdish parties have strong constituent links in Kurdistan, but their autonomy in the north during the 1990s has cut them off from the rest of Iraq.

Insiders who lived through the history of Iraq under Saddam (Sadrist are the most notable example) are now beginning to enter the political process, but their collective memory and experience is different from that of outsiders, and they have not yet been able to develop organization and leadership to compete with the outsiders. In particular, insiders, who had to endure sanctions and wars as well as Saddam’s persecution, resent outsiders, who, they feel, lived a more comfortable life, have not shared this pain, and cannot understand it. Most important of all, insiders and outsiders together do not have a shared experience of the past to draw on, but instead have very different narratives and even goals. This has made a collective vision and coherent administration difficult.

The third and by far the most important characteristic of the current leadership is that at least half have spent the greater part of their adult life actively engaged in opposition to the Saddam regime in one or another political party. It is this experience that has done the most to shape their lives and attitudes. About half the leadership belonged to such opposition groups; only 28 percent had no such affiliation. At least nine leaders (almost 20 percent) spent time in Saddam’s prisons. Virtually all the top figures in the current leadership fit this opposition profile, including the president (PUK); two vice presidents (one SCIRI, one IIP); the prime minister (Da’wah); one deputy prime minister (PUK);

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Opposition and Non-Opposition to Saddam Regime as Reflected in the Iraqi Government, 2006

| | | |
|----------------|----|-----|
| Opposition | 23 | 50% |
| Non-Opposition | 13 | 28% |
| Unknown | 10 | 22% |

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the ministers of finance (SCIRI), foreign affairs (KDP), oil (independent UIA), and water resources (PUK); and the speaker of the Council of Representatives (Tawafuq).

Although opposition affiliation is the decisive characteristic of the current leadership, it is also closely related to the fact that many leaders are outsiders, since no opposition could be practiced inside Iraq under Saddam. Moreover, it helps explain their inexperience in governance, since some of these leaders have spent their formative years in underground activities, in military battle with the regime during the Iran-Iraq war, or in publishing anti-Saddam tracts outside the country. The Kurdish leaders tend to be an exception, since many acquired considerable experience while governing themselves in the northern provinces during the 1990s.

It is also important to understand what being in the opposition in these years meant, in terms of both skills and attitudes acquired, particularly for those in Da'wah and SCIRI. A number of today's leaders spent some of their early years in secret movements and were constantly hunted, as evidenced by their changed names (Nuri al-Maliki and Bayan Jabr, for example). Many were persecuted, a number imprisoned, and many saw family members killed. (In 1983 Saddam executed eighteen members of the Hakim family, including five brothers of Abd al-Aziz; another brother was killed in 1988.) Their sacrifice was great, particularly during the late 1970s and 1980s as Saddam cracked down on religious movements and virtually emasculated Da'wah inside Iraq. The Kurdish parties have an even longer association with the opposition and were also part of the "outside" opposition movement in the 1980s. The Kurdish parties fought in the Iran-Iraq war, on the Iranian side; their peshmerga (the Kurdish armed militias) participated in the 1991 uprising, and then they gradually took over control of the north, ousting tribal groups that had previously been connected to the regime and had defended it. After a decade of self-rule, they have a vested interest in preserving their power both locally and in the central government.

Those who were not in opposition to the Saddam regime are a minority. Those who had any affiliation with it or even simply worked under it have had a most difficult time gaining entry to the new leadership cadre, although a few are making their way in. One is Salam al-Zawba'i, the deputy prime minister appointed to represent Arab Sunnis, who was a professor of agriculture at Anbar University and has strong tribal connections; another is Wijdan Mikha'il, the minister of human rights, a woman who worked as an urban planner for most of her life and was apolitical. But inclusion of Sunnis and even Shi'ah who worked for the Saddam regime has been slow, and disaffection among this group, especially among Arab Sunni professionals who want to participate but feel they are being excluded on a sectarian basis, is strong. It is significant that almost all the Sunnis in the current government were in opposition parties, such as the IIP, or broke openly with the Ba'th regime in some way. The result has been a profound distrust between the new leadership, composed mainly of Shi'ah and Kurdish opposition parties, and those associated with the old regime. This latter group is now concentrated in the Sunni community, much of which is either engaged in or supporting the insurgency. The continuation of the insurgency, interpreted by Shi'ah as a failure of Sunnis to accept the new order and Shi'ah dominance within it, has helped this political struggle metamorphose into an ethnic and sectarian war, in which the touchstone for political trust has increasingly become affiliation with one or another ethnic or sectarian group. Hence, Shi'ah who may have worked previously for the Ba'th (and there are many) are admitted to leadership positions because it is presumed that their Shi'ah affiliation supersedes any loyalty to the previous regime. Sunnis in the same category, however, even those who wish to participate in the political process, have been excluded because leading Shi'ah do not trust them. This provides additional fuel for Sunni insurgent recruitment. It is this profound distrust between outsiders and insiders, between those who spent long years in opposition and those who worked under Saddam, that hampers reconciliation in the new "national unity" government and is now exacerbated by the ethnic and sectarian overlay. In this light, the backgrounds of the

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leaders can be seen as a continuing struggle for power by both—or more—sides, with differing narratives, who are not yet finished with the struggle.

Political Parties and Their Constituents

While differences between outsiders and insiders, opponents and supporters of the former regime, are the most important characteristics defining the new leaders, they are by no means the only ones. A fourth parameter is emerging as significant, especially since the elections of 2005: the development of political parties and groups, often accompanied by their respective militias. While the militias have received attention, the parties have not—yet.

The elections of 2005 have been decisive in putting current leaders and their parties in power and in focusing them on issues and messages by which to mobilize constituencies. (See Appendix: “Permanent Government, 2006: Parliament Seat Distribution.”) In order to gain power in a political vacuum, among an electorate with few institutions and little experience, leaders appealed to ethnic and sectarian identity with great success, mobilizing these sentiments and organizing coalitions on this basis, and thus furthering the division of Iraq largely along ethnic and sectarian lines. It is this ethnic and sectarian division—and the vicious fighting that has accompanied it—that has grabbed most of the headlines and become the main vehicle for analysis and policy formation in Iraq. And indeed, communal identity has been a real driver behind some of the fighting and in the organization of large political alliances for the election. But beneath these large voting blocs and alliances, a more complex political map emerges. The winning political alliances are composed of several important political parties (and their militias), which undercut and fragment the seeming cohesion of the emerging ethnic and sectarian alliances. It is these parties and their constituencies that are shaping the political agenda and are likely to determine it in the future. To understand where Iraq is headed and the compromises that may be possible, it is necessary to understand not just the leaders but the parties they head and the constituencies they draw on.

Essentially, the December 2005 election produced two main winners, one newcomer, and one major loser, with a few fringe parties that can act as a balancing force on the margins. These groups, rather than the large ethnic and sectarian communities, will be the major players in the coming struggle for power.

The United Iraqi Alliance

Chief among the winners was the United Iraqi Alliance (UIA), essentially a group of Shi’ah parties designed to represent Iraq’s Shi’ah majority of 60–65 percent. Although a ticket headed by a secular Shi’ah challenged the UIA, UIA had the encouragement of the chief Shi’ah religious authority, Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, who was anxious to keep the Shi’ah community unified and assure its dominance in the polity. The result was a fairly solid vote for the UIA on a sectarian basis, giving the UIA 47 percent of the seats in the Council of Representatives and 46 percent in the cabinet. The unity of the vote, however, belies the diversity of the alliance. While there are some independent figures in this bloc, the backbone of the UIA is composed of three parties or groups: SCIRI, including the Badr Organization, its military arm; Da’wah Islamiyyah (Islamic “Call”), including both Da’wah and Da’wah Tandhim al-Iraq (Iraqi Organization) branches; and the Sadrist current.

Among these three, SCIRI is the best organized and best funded and may command about a quarter of the Shi’ah vote. The most important members of SCIRI in the government are Vice President Adil Abd al-Mahdi and Minister of Finance (and former minister of interior) Bayan Jabr. Other ministers include Riyadh Gharib (municipalities and public works), Mahmud Muhammad Shaikh al-Radi (labor and social affairs)—two ministries rich

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in potential patronage benefits for constituents—and Akram Hakim (national dialogue). The key figure in the party, however, is a cleric, Abd al-Aziz Hakim, who is head of SCIRI and a deputy in the assembly but not in the cabinet.

SCIRI, formed in Iran in 1982 by Iraqi exiles there, is almost wholly Arab Shi'ah in composition, although it has added some Shi'ah Turkmen and Shi'ah Kurds to the mix. As its unwieldy title indicates, SCIRI was designed to gather several Shi'ah groups, including Da'wah and Islamic Action (Amal Islamiyyah) parties, under one umbrella. Although it was headed by an executive committee consisting of representatives of these parties, power soon gravitated into the hands of Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim, son of the former grand ayatollah, Muhsin al-Hakim, and an original participant in the Da'wah movement in Iraq, who became its driving force. In time the participation of the other Shi'ah parties diminished or evaporated, and SCIRI became essentially Hakim's vehicle.

In the crucible of the Iran-Iraq war and under Iranian tutelage, SCIRI developed an elaborate organizational structure, with numerous administrative bureaus to manage everything from finance to public relations, together with a broader-based congress to function as a sort of parliament. It also developed a military arm, the Badr Brigade, trained and, to some extent, officered by Iranians, which grew to about ten thousand members by the end of that war. SCIRI also took in a number of the Iraqi POWs in Iran who reportedly "repented" and joined the new Islamic movement; these were known as Tawwabin (Repenters). SCIRI was well funded by Iran, as was its Badr Brigade, which took part in the war against Iraq, on the Iranian side.

SCIRI, although well organized at the executive level, is essentially under the authority of the Hakim family and strongly under the influence of clerical leadership. After the death of Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim in the August 2003 explosion at the grand mosque in Najaf, leadership of the party fell to his younger brother, Abd al-Aziz, also a cleric, though not of the highest rank. Abd al-Aziz's uncle, Muhammad Sa'id al-Hakim, is currently one of the four grand ayatollahs in Najaf, with the network and rich charity resources that all such religious authorities command. Ammar al-Hakim, Abd al-Aziz's son, represents his father and heads an institute designed to pursue Hakim's objectives in southern Iraq. In addition, SCIRI relies for leadership on other clerics, such as Humam al-Hamudi, who headed the Constitutional Committee in 2005 and the Constitutional Review Committee in 2007.

The role of the clergy in politics is controversial. For the many years when SCIRI was under the patronage of Iran, it had to accept the Iranian system of clerical governance (*wilayat al-faqih*), at least officially, no matter what individual members may have thought. Although SCIRI is silent today on this issue, which is unpopular in Iraq, and although different SCIRI leaders express differing views, the prominent role of the clergy within the party hierarchy, and its influence in shaping the future Iraq, is clear.

But it is also clear that the party is attracting Shi'ah intellectuals with a more secular orientation, who are interested in a political career. Adil Abd al-Mahdi is a prime example. Born to a well-known political family (his father, Sayyid Abd al-Mahdi, was a member of parliament and a minister under the monarchy), Abd al-Mahdi has migrated in his political career from membership in the Ba'th party in his youth to espousal of leftist (even Maoist) principles while he was in France, to finally joining the party of the Islamic revolution (SCIRI), which he saw as the wave of the future in the 1980s. He sees no contradiction between his political and religious convictions. One relatively secular Shi'ah middle-class professional explained his staunch support for SCIRI on the grounds that he felt "culturally Shi'ah." In this way, SCIRI may be emerging as the "establishment" party, attracting Shi'ah from the moderate middle, who can bond as Shi'ah but are looking for a vehicle by which they can gain power and achieve some broader goals.

SCIRI leadership has also been shaped by the Iranian tie, forged during the Iran-Iraq war. Many SCIRI members fought in that war, essentially against the Saddam regime, on the Iranian side and against Iraqis, both Shi'ah and Sunni, who fought, if not for Saddam, at least under his leadership. A good example is Bayan Jabr, a former leader in the Badr Brigade and closely connected with the Badr Organization. When Jabr was minister

SCIRI was well funded by Iran, as was its Badr Brigade, which took part in the war against Iraq, on the Iranian side.

Although SCIRI is silent today on this issue, which is unpopular in Iraq, the prominent role of the clergy within the party hierarchy, and its influence in shaping the future Iraq, is clear.

of interior in 2005, interior security forces were accused of being penetrated, especially in the interior's notorious Wolf Brigade, by Badr operatives, some of whom reportedly attacked Sunnis. It may well be that this bitter war, and the long SCIRI association with Iran and Shi'ah leaders there, reinforced the Shi'ah, rather than the Arab, tie. In the end, the war and the struggle against the Saddam regime have left an indelible imprint on the party and its leaders, while strengthening the suspicion and distrust of those who were on the other side, particularly among Arab Sunnis, nationalists, and now secularists. At the same time, the organization, funding, and training provided from Iran for many years have given SCIRI an institutional backbone that has stood it in good stead in the highly competitive electoral process. Nonetheless, the Iranian tie is a mixed blessing, and one that SCIRI leaders are anxious to downplay in Iraq.

SCIRI leaders, especially the Hakims, have come to be strong supporters of federalism and the establishment of a nine-province region in the center and south of Iraq, which they clearly hope to control. This is a new development in Iraq, since it would tend to solidify Shi'ah identity and associate it with a territorial unit. A Shi'ah central and southern region may be one way to outflank SCIRI's more radical competitors, the Sadrists, who are stronger in the poorer neighborhoods of Baghdad, such as Sadr City, and in southern provinces such as Maysan and Thi Qar, than is SCIRI, which has its stronghold in the middle class of Baghdad and in central provinces such as Babil, Najaf, and Karbala. A Shi'ah southern and central polity would also assure SCIRI control over oil in the province of Basra, where power is fragmented and local interests are stronger.

SCIRI also has the strongest ties of any party with Iran, which continues to fund and provide support to the party in numerous ways. But despite its long association with Iran and its history of separation from the West, SCIRI has been remarkably pragmatic in its dealings with the United States. The party recognizes its debt to the coalition forces, not only in getting rid of the Saddam regime but in providing the opportunity for it to come to power as a key player in a new Shi'ah coalition. But SCIRI is unequivocal in not wanting the United States to stay in Iraq any longer than is necessary for the party to secure power.

A second group within this Shi'ah coalition is the Da'wah party, which has provided two elected prime ministers: Ibrahim al-Ja'fari (2005) and Nuri al-Maliki (2006). Although Da'wah has considerable popularity as the founder of the Islamic Shi'ah movement in Iraq, it does not have the organization or the militia possessed by SCIRI. In the absence of these attributes, it is not clear how many votes Da'wah would gain on its own, though it would surely get fewer than either SCIRI or the Sadrists. On occasion, Da'wah has had to rely on Sadrists for support.

Da'wah is still more a movement than a political party. Its origins go back to the late 1950s, when its spiritual founder, Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr, a young cleric, galvanized a younger generation of Iraqi Shi'ah around a set of intellectual concepts for modernizing Islam. Despite Sadr's influence, however, the party leadership had strong lay components among the founders, and laypeople continue to play an important role in the party. Today its key figures, such as Prime Ministers Ibrahim al-Ja'fari and Nuri al-Maliki, are laymen, in contrast to SCIRI and the Sadrists, whose leaders (Abd al-Aziz al-Hakim and Muqtada al-Sadr) are clerics. In its struggle against the former regime, which came to a head in the 1970s and culminated in the execution of Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr and his sister in 1980, the movement attempted (without success) to appeal to a broader Iraqi community. Although the party is religious and Shi'ah in orientation, its core has always had a strong Iraqi identity. Indeed, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, there were disputes in the party between those who agreed with the Iranian concept of *wilayat al-faqih* ("rule of the Islamic jurist") and those who rejected clerical rule. One such group, which included an educated younger generation, favored Iraqi nationalism and democracy.

The party has undergone considerable upheaval since its heyday in the 1970s. The Saddam regime hunted down and imprisoned or executed so many members that by the beginning of the 1980s, the party had virtually disappeared in Iraq. Most of today's

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Da'wah leaders, including Maliki and Ja'fari, fled Iraq in the early 1980s. Some remained in Iran, others went to London, and others went to Syria and Lebanon, where they joined the Shi'ah opposition there. In these years there was little or no Da'wah party activity in Iraq, and the party became internationalized. It also endured factionalism and schisms, some over leadership and organization. One of these created an offshoot, Da'wah Tandhim al-Iraq, about which members are remarkably reticent, though this may reflect continued tensions between those with loyalties to the concept of the *wilayat al-faqih* and those without.

The result of these tribulations has been a party greatly weakened organizationally, compared with its competitors. Today Da'wah leadership is a composite, not only of its two wings (Da'wah and Da'wah Tandhim) but essentially of three exile groups: those who have been living in Iran, those from Syria and Lebanon, and those from England. While there has been some communication and interaction among these groups during exile, all have had somewhat different experiences and have been living apart. They have now had to come together to develop a new organization, both at the top and at the grassroots level, to compete in elections and gain and maintain power. Lacking an organized militia, they are at a disadvantage with their two Shi'ah rivals, SCIRI and the Sadrists, both backed by armed units. Da'wah still has the feel of a religio-political movement, as the name "Da'wah," or "call," in the sense of a mission, implies. This was not traditionally a party focused on political organization and mobilization of mass support, and whether it can successfully transform itself into one remains to be seen.

Much of the party's history was spent as a clandestine, underground movement that had little contact with the West and rejected many of its principles. However, the party does support elections and the parliamentary system, from which many of its key leaders have benefited. Nor has it been separatist; indeed, one of the key reasons cited for Ja'fari's failure to win support for a new term as prime minister was his lack of support for Kurdish aims, particularly in Kirkuk. While some Da'wah leaders have had ties with Iran and have lived there (e.g., Ibrahim al-Ja'fari, Ali al-Adeeb), these ties are not as strong as SCIRI's. Da'wah's main strength in the government lies in its current control of the prime ministry, the key political post. It has few other posts, and these are controlled by Da'wah Tandhim: the ministries of trade (Abd al-Fatah Hasan al-Sudani), education (Khudayyir al-Khuza'i), and state for national security (Sharwan Wa'ili). Da'wah appears to have little grassroots political organization, but it has a place in the popular mind because of its long history of opposition to, and persecution by, the Ba'thist regime. Whether this will add up to real power in an Iraq driven by incipient civil war and local militia control is in doubt.

The third force in the Shi'ah spectrum is the most recent to emerge: the Sadrist movement. Although identified with Muqtada al-Sadr and the rapid growth of his militias in 2003 and 2004, the movement actually has origins in the ideas and networks of his father, Ayatollah Muhammad Sadiq al-Sadr, who was the leading Shi'ah opponent of the regime inside Iraq in the 1990s. In terms of sheer power and ability to mobilize support, it certainly outweighs Da'wah and has successfully challenged SCIRI. While its leaders are not in the top rank of decision makers, it is now a force to be reckoned with on the street, in the UIA, and in the country. Sadrists demonstrated their clout in the run-up to the December 2005 election, when they were able to bargain for thirty seats, equaling the leading contender, SCIRI. SCIRI thus implicitly recognized the party's power to get votes. Equally important, in accordance with the complex formula for translating votes into seats in government, Sadrists were awarded four seats in the cabinet, thus giving them entry into the national political leadership.

The four seats held by Sadrists—health, agriculture, transportation, and tourism and antiquities—are not top decision-making ministries but rather occupy the bottom rungs, but they are designed to help Sadrists build a base in the community and among the poor by providing services and welfare to their constituents. Transportation is key in strengthening the movement's hold on strategic facilities, especially oil ports in the south, which come under the ministry. But filling these seats also illustrates the Sadrists' weakness in

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competing with other parties. The movement is relatively new, and its leader young, dangerously aggressive, and untried. Although Sadr can draw on some of his father's network for support, his movement has not yet developed an organization and cadre comparable to SCIRI's or even Da'wah's. It has had difficulty finding competent people with a reputable professional background to fill the seats, and those now in office have little experience even within a cabinet short on experience. Among the most important Sadrists are Minister of Health Ali Husain al-Shammari, a doctor, Minister of Agriculture Ya'rub Nazim al-Ubadi, a biologist, and Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Liwa al-Sumaysin, a dentist, whose wife is related to Muqtada al-Sadr. The degree to which these Sadrists will be able to integrate into a national unity cabinet is very much in question. In an act of protest against Maliki's meeting with President Bush in Amman in December 2006, Sadrists withdrew from the cabinet, and have not returned as of this writing.

Sadr's strength lies in his mobilization of local Shi'ah communities, particularly among the poor or unemployed, youth, and the lower-middle-class and rural elements, who have not benefited from the changes since 2003 and do not see themselves entering the middle class. Sadr City, a poor Baghdad satellite of 2.5 million people, is his stronghold, but he also has a strong following in Thi Qar as well as in Maysan and Basra, and even among Arabs in Kirkuk. Following the model of Hezbollah in Lebanon, Muqtada al-Sadr and his followers seek to control these communities by providing services—health, education, rudimentary justice, and above all, security—through his militia, the Mahdi Army, which now numbers in the tens of thousands. With this popular base and a growing and active militia, Sadr is becoming a real challenge to other leaders in the UIA.

Leadership of Sadr's movement is still opaque and probably informal, drawing on younger members among his father's followers. He has a number of junior imams who preach in mosques and deliver his message. More importantly, he draws on his father's prestige as a grand ayatollah (1992–99), and possibly on some of the religious taxes (khums) that formerly went to his father. He has also attracted into the party some educated Shi'ah, such as Baha al-Aaraji and Abd al-Hadi al-Daraji, both members of the Council of Representatives, who act as spokesmen for the movement, but this educated element is still weak. More important is the populist base, especially street elements who have joined the militia—effectively an army of the unemployed. However, many of these local militia groups operate with relative autonomy, and it is not clear how much, if any, centralized control Sadr has over these militias. Nonetheless, he is the key figure and a growing icon to the alienated, and his power is not to be dismissed.

Also significant are the ideas the Sadrists will bring to government. These are not yet clearly formed, and they have shifted somewhat over time as Sadr has gained more experience and moved further into the mainstream. He represents the radical, populist strain in the Shi'ah movement. Though strongly opposed to the occupation, since the election of December 2005 he has been wary of taking on U.S. forces directly, avoiding a repetition of his bruising military confrontations of April and August 2004. Sadr has also taken a strong position on Iraqi unity, opposing any decentralization and federalism that would divide Iraq, and has been a supporter of Arabs in the Kirkuk region. If his opponent, Abd al-Aziz al-Hakim, leads the move for a federal region in the south, Sadr may well lead the forces for a more unified Iraq, especially in Baghdad, where his main strength lies. For this, however, he will have to have allies across the spectrum, including Sunnis (now alienated after his reported attacks on their mosques) and secularists, who are alarmed by his religious conservatism. But Sadr may also take lessons from the actions of Hezbollah in Lebanon, by strengthening his base among the poor, the relatively uneducated, the less upwardly mobile, and youth, who are alienated by the system and its failure to deliver services.

The struggle with SCIRI for control over the UIA and the Shi'ah is already clear. Several armed clashes have already occurred, the most recent in October, in Amarah. Both the Hakim and the Sadr families have a long history of competition for power and influence in the clerical establishment, but this time the two groups they represent, SCIRI and

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the Sadrists, have different constituencies and a somewhat different orientation. One is appealing to the clerical establishment and more middle-class professional elements, the other to radical populism and the dispossessed. The struggle for the heart and soul, the center of gravity, of the Shi'ah movement in Iraq is already engaged.

Several other groups within the Shi'ah alliance may also shape leadership decisions. One such group is the independents, several of whom are said to be close to Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani. Chief among these is Husain Shahristani, a respected scientist who refused to participate in Saddam's nuclear program and paid for it with years in prison. A moderate, Western-educated Shi'ah, Shahristani is now in a key post, as minister of oil.

Sistani himself is a crucial element in the political process, though he acts from behind the scenes and in a rather episodic manner. His insistence on elections forced a change of U.S. policy in 2003, and his support for the UIA in both 2005 assembly elections was influential in fostering a communal vote among the Shi'ah. But the increase in violence, the role of militias, and a political system that is increasingly spinning out of control have reportedly caused Sistani to reduce his political role, at least temporarily. It is no longer clear how decisive his views will be in shaping politics, and he appears to be husbanding his influence. Whether Sistani will hold the Shi'ah coalition together is a question.

The Kurdish Alliance

The Kurdish Alliance (KA) is composed mainly of the Kurdistan Democratic party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), along with some individuals and parties representing the Turkman and Christian populations. The KA managed to get almost 20 percent of the seats in the assembly, roughly equal to the Kurdish share of the population, but because of the need for national unity, and the KA's previous agreement with the Shi'ah alliance, it has leveraged its position to achieve key posts in the government. These include president of the republic, a vice prime minister, a deputy speaker of the Council of Representatives, and five ministers, among them the key posts of foreign affairs and water resources. Many of these positions are in the hands of veteran politicians. The presidency, supposedly a symbolic post, is occupied by Jalal Talabani, head of the PUK, who has more than five decades of political, military, and diplomatic experience in the Kurdish movement; he is currently expanding and strengthening the de facto powers of that office. Barham Salih, also PUK, who spent years representing his party in the United States and was formerly a prime minister in Sulaimaniyyah, now has a critical position as deputy to the prime minister. Hushyar Zibari, a long-standing KDP Politburo member and the party's former representative in London, has been Iraq's foreign minister since 2003.

On Iraqi issues, the Kurdish Alliance has far more cohesion than the UIA. It has coalesced behind a Kurdish nationalist agenda designed to create a semi-independent state in the Kurdish north, under the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG), and to promote the expansion of this government to Kurdish majority regions, such as Kirkuk. By fostering Kurdish identity as a conscious policy, the Kurdish Alliance has set the KRG, which it controls, apart from the rest of Iraq. Since the early 1990s the concept of Kurdistan has been propounded in textbooks in the north; a younger generation has been taught in Kurdish rather than Arabic, and the Kurdish flag has replaced that of Iraq in the KRG. This has raised the contentious issue of whether the Kurds are loyal to Iraq, to Kurdistan, or to both.

Unanimity on other important issues also adds to the Kurdish Alliance's cohesion, setting it apart from the rest of Iraq. One such issue is secularism, which is particularly strong within the PUK but is also espoused by the KDP. Both parties desire a separation of mosque and state and are resistant to the expansion of fundamentalism, whether in its Shi'ah or Sunni version. They are likewise resistant to the application of shari'ah as the law of the land and take a more Western view on the status of women—views that run counter to trends elsewhere in Iraq and the rest of the Middle East. On the constitution, the Kurds have focused almost entirely on the issue of federalism, defined to give them equal status

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with other federal units, and sufficient legal powers to make the KRG virtually independent under the umbrella of the Iraqi state. Other constitutional issues—elections, the rule of law, and even human rights—are secondary, since the Kurdish parties are developing their own constitution in the north. Kurdish parties also rely openly on U.S. support and backing and are pro-American and pro-Western to a degree unthinkable for most other Iraqi parties. Some of this attitude springs from long and continuous contact between party leaders—both the older and the younger generation—and the West, as well as from the sense that the Kurds are beholden to the West, and especially the United States, for protection. In the economic arena, too, the Kurds are willing and able to move ahead, and have recently put more emphasis on investment and economic development. They are also banking on developing the oil in Kirkuk, which they hope to add to their region. However, Kurdish leaders recognize that they face real difficulties in moving toward independence openly; hence, they have incentives to cooperate with and participate in the central government. Among other obstacles, lack of clear legal status as an independent state would make major direct foreign investment difficult, especially in needed oil infrastructure, thus putting limits on economic development. While this is recognized by most senior Kurdish Alliance leaders, it has not yet been grasped by all the junior members.

Despite the unifying factors in the Kurdish Alliance, the two leaders, KDP's Mas'ud Barzani and PUK's Jalal Talabani, have their differences, many of them papered over in the interest of success in Baghdad. These differences, partly personal and partly ideological, run deep. Although they have been reduced in recent years, ambitions smolder beneath the surface and could flare up again under certain circumstances. The KDP is the "mother" Kurdish organization, devoted to Kurdish nationalism and greater autonomy from the central government since soon after World War II. It was led for years by the legendary warrior Mustapha Barzani, but as a tribal leader Barzani was always faced with opposition from younger, left-leaning intellectuals within the party. In 1975, after a disastrous defeat in a struggle with the central government, this element, led by Jalal Talabani, broke away from the KDP to form a new party, the PUK. The PUK leaders were more middle class, better educated, and ideologically oriented, even Marxist, in their outlook. They wanted a party that was not only Kurdish but also modern, secular, and leftist, and they broke with traditional tribal organization and values. But more important than these leanings was the rivalry to dominate and control a newly emerging Kurdish entity, particularly after the 1979 death of Mustapha Barzani and the succession of his son, Mas'ud, to the KDP leadership. In the mid-1990s the two parties fought a minor civil war in the north, in which some thousand Kurds were killed and seventy thousand displaced. The Kurdish area in the north was divided, with a PUK government and *peshmerga* (armed militia) in Sulaimaniyyah, and the KDP in Irbil and Dohuk. Although the parties have since reconciled and have a unified parliament and a functioning regional government, there are limits to this integration. Two separate spheres of influence still exist, one for the PUK and one for the KDP, with key ministries, such as those dealing with the *peshmerga*, still under separate party control.

The two parties also have differing perspectives on Kurdish relations with Baghdad. The PUK appears to be more comfortable remaining part of Iraq. Jalal Talabani's position as president of Iraq requires him to represent all Iraqis, not just the Kurds, and provides him with a platform, interests, and constituencies broader than Kurdistan. As a result, many in the PUK take the view that Kurdistan can gain greater benefits by remaining part of the country than by seceding. The KDP, by contrast, appears to be moving toward de facto independence. Mas'ud Barzani has come close to recognizing this officially, speaking of the Kurds' natural right to self-determination and to establish their own state. Barzani is more entrenched in the north. He travels little, and his nephew, the KDP prime minister, is part of a younger generation that does not know Arabic. Indeed, the KDP appears to be laying the groundwork for future separation. Some KDP officials may see relations with Baghdad as a liability, acting as a drag on Kurdish development. Disagreements exist on government within the Kurdish region as well. The KDP wants a centralized regional

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government, mainly under its control. The PUK favors a more decentralized model, mainly because it would favor more PUK control in its own region, Sulaimaniyyah.

There are disagreements on socioeconomic policy as well. Competition for scarce resources has always been a bone of contention between the two parties, and helped fuel the civil war of the 1990s. The southern and eastern area, dominated by the PUK, is poorer, although it includes Kurdistan's intellectual capital, Sulaimaniyyah. Because it borders Iran, Sulaimaniyyah suffered much from the fighting in the Iran-Iraq war. Even worse, it was hit hard by Saddam's ethnic cleansing of mountain towns and villages on the Iranian border and by the notorious Anfal campaign, which struck many of the villages and towns in this area. The KDP area is more rural, although it includes the KRG capital, Erbil. In the 1990s, under sanctions, the Barzanis benefited from the Turkish truck traffic, mainly in diesel fuel, which came across its border, and from the resulting "customs duties" that flowed into party coffers. This traffic also sparked a boom in housing, roads, schools, and businesses. Many of the area's farms have also revived, especially in lowland areas. The KDP borders on Turkey, with which the prospects for trade are more promising. Competition over, or sharing of, resources—especially if oil development takes place—is likely to be a critical factor, either keeping this alliance together or driving it apart. In any such competition, Baghdad could provide a balancing force.

Within the Kurdish area, the Alliance faces other challenges, including those from outside political parties and movements. Among these are the Kurdish Islamic Union (a Kurdish version of the Muslim Brotherhood), the leading exponent of the growing Islamic trend in the north, and political parties representing ethnic and sectarian minorities—notably the Turkmen and the Christians (Assyrian and Chaldean Churches). The KA also faces less-organized resistance from youth, who resent the parties' tight control and the lack of employment. Of all these challenges testing the cohesion of the Alliance, the key issue may well be whether to stay in Iraq, and how much effort to devote to stabilizing the Iraqi state and government.

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Tawafuq and the Sunnis

Tawafuq (Iraqi Accord Front), the alliance that came in third in the election, is the weakest. Formed only in 2005 to represent the Arab Sunni community in the December 2005 election, it has a leadership new to political office, with little governing experience. Not surprisingly, it has little cohesion thus far.

Nonetheless, Tawafuq captured most of the Arab Sunni vote. In the December 2005 election, it won 16 percent of the seats in the Council of Representatives and got almost 20 percent of the positions in government. Because Tawafuq was mandated to represent Sunnis in the National Unity Cabinet, it was given several key posts, including those of vice president (Tariq al-Hashimi), the speaker of the Council of Representatives (Mahmud Mishhadani), and a deputy prime minister (Salam al-Zawba'i). Tawafuq also has six ministries, including two relatively important ones—planning (Ali Baban) and higher education and scientific research (Abd Dhiyab al-Ajili)—as well as the ministries of women's affairs, culture, and provincial affairs and a ministry of state for foreign affairs. (The last was added to the cabinet to balance the ministry of foreign affairs, which has been in the hands of a Kurd since 2003.) In addition, Arab Sunnis have an important nonparty representative in the cabinet, the minister of defense (Abd al-Qadir al-Ubaidi), a former army officer from Ramadi who was expelled from the Ba'th party and jailed for criticizing the Kuwait invasion of 1990. He joined the new Iraqi army during the occupation.

Tawafuq was formed as an outgrowth of the Sunni boycott of the January 2005 election, and the realization that Sunnis would be left out of the government, and the constitutional process, unless they participated in the next election. Not long after the boycott, Arab Sunnis of various political persuasions began to take action. The septuagenarian noted Islamic scholar Adnan Dulaimi, then head of the Sunni Waqf, called together a group made up of professionals, religious leaders, Sunnis with tribal connections, and

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some non-Sunnis with nationalist leanings, to address Sunni grievances. Among this group were representatives of the Iraqi Islamic party and even some lower-level members of the more radical Muslim Scholars' Association (MSA). They called themselves Ahl al-Sunna (People of the Sunna). A smaller inner circle continued to meet, discuss ideas, and organize. In May 2005 a second, much larger meeting was held in Baghdad to protest ill-treatment of Sunnis. This time the organization changed its name to Ahl al-Iraq (People of Iraq), to indicate its nonsectarian thrust.

At the same time, a National Dialogue Council was formed to nominate Sunni representatives to the Constitutional Committee, which was composed almost wholly of elected Kurdish and Shi'ah parties. Although some seventeen Sunni representatives were added, they came too late to effect much more than cosmetic changes, adding to Sunni frustrations. By October, however, the new Sunni groups were sufficiently organized to participate in the referendum on the draft constitution, and they did, in large numbers. But a further split developed in the movement when the IIP agreed to vote yes on the constitution, in response to a last-minute promise from the Iraqi government (engineered by the U.S. ambassador) to allow the soon-to-be-elected national assembly to open the door to constitutional amendments. Most Sunnis voted no. These splits indicate the fragile nature of the new Sunni coalition. In fact, when it came time to register for the national election in December, the movement fragmented further into two coalitions, one constituting Tawafuq, the other a splinter alliance known as the Iraqi Front for National Dialogue, led by the ex-Ba'thist Salih Mutlaq.

Tawafuq is essentially composed of three separate political groups: the IIP, Ahl al-Iraq (People of Iraq), and the National Dialogue Council. While Tawafuq has a few known figures, such as Dulaimi, who heads both Tawafuq and the separate Ahl al-Iraq, the remaining members are a mix of individuals with varied views, not yet bound together by a clear agenda beyond that of opposing Arab Sunni exclusion from the political process.

The backbone of Tawafuq, and its strongest component, is the IIP, the only real political party in the group. Essentially an offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood, which spread to Iraq in the late 1950s, the IIP was officially established in 1960 when then prime minister Abd al-Karim Qasim permitted political parties to be established. IIP's ideology was similar to the Muslim Brotherhood, but in multiethnic, multisectarian Iraq, the IIP in its early years cooperated with the Shi'ah Da'wah party, established around the same time as an Islamic opposition front. During this period the IIP worked more as a movement than as a party, quietly recruiting people. In the 1980s, when Saddam Hussein cracked down on religion and religious parties, the IIP went underground, and a number of its members, including its leader, Muhsin Abd al-Hamid, were arrested and imprisoned. Others, such as Ayyad al-Samarra'i, an engineer and now second in the party's structure, went abroad. In 1991, when opposition to Saddam's regime came into the open abroad, the IIP went public, but it refused to work with the United States or Iran, instead cooperating with underground groups. In 2003 the IIP returned to Iraq and participated in the Iraqi Governing Council set up under the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA). The party also joined the second temporary government, set up under Ayyad Allawi in 2004, until the decision to attack Fallujah in November 2004, when it left the government. Fallujah was a turning point for many Sunnis, making them feel both more "Sunni" and more marginalized by the new government.

Meanwhile, the IIP changed leaders. Muhsin Abd al-Hamid, a Kurd and an older, less dynamic figure, was replaced by Tariq al-Hashimi, an Arab Sunni, a strong nationalist, and an articulate spokesman for Sunni views. With the backing of other groups, the IIP supported participation in the 2005 referendum on the constitution. It even went so far as to urge a yes vote on the constitution, a view not shared by its partners in Tawafuq, on the premise that a constitutional revision would take place in the future. Before its inclusion in Tawafuq, the IIP had taken a range of positions on numerous issues. For example, it was in favor of a unified Iraqi state, but one that was Islamic in identity. It was opposed to foreign occupation but willing to cooperate with the multinational pres-

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ence in the short term. After the formation of Tawafuq and under the impetus of growing Sunni extremism, it became more Sunni in orientation.

The other two groups in Tawafuq are new and largely unformed, with little depth yet in candidates or ideological cohesion, beyond protecting the political relevance of the Sunni community. Ahl al-Iraq is the more important of these two groups. Three different strands can be identified in its membership: religious leaders with stature, tribal leaders or leaders with tribal ties, and intellectuals and professionals who are secular and generally nationalist. Adnan Dulaimi, who heads both Tawafuq and Ahl al-Iraq, is a good example of a religious leader and scholar who has strong ties with Dulaimi tribal members. However, he has been outmaneuvered politically by IIP leader Tariq al-Hashimi (now vice president), and hence remains outside the cabinet. Salam al-Zawba'i, deputy prime minister, is a technocrat (a soil science specialist who taught at Anbar University and headed the agricultural engineering society for a time under the old regime) but also someone with strong tribal ties among the Zawba', famous for their nationalist leanings. Another important member of Ahl al-Iraq is the head of the Council of Representatives, Mahmud Mishhadani, a Sunni with a strong religious bent and a member of a salafist group, who was arrested under Saddam's rule and also, briefly, by the Americans during the occupation. Originally strongly anti-American, he reportedly modified his views somewhat after contact with Americans in prison. Ahl al-Iraq also has a number of more secular founders, including Hasan al-Bazzaz, a professor of political science at Baghdad University and head of the party's political bureau. He is a strong Arab nationalist. Ahl al-Iraq is developing some political organization and hierarchy, but the party is still too new to have any substantial roots.

The third group within Tawafuq, the National Dialogue Council (Hiwar), led by Khalaf al-Ulayan, evolved from the group that had formed to take part in constitutional deliberations. Ulayan is a tribal leader from Anbar who worked against Saddam's regime in the 1990s. Hiwar is even less known and less well organized than Ahl al-Iraq, and there is already talk of further splits within it.

Given the diverse backgrounds of Tawafuq's members, the issue that will give it the most trouble is that of identity. The alliance has strong nationalist tendencies, favoring a unified, even a highly centralized, Iraq, but the idea of citizenship in a diverse, nonsectarian Iraq is probably a minority view, confined to secularists. Many also want Iraq to have an Arab identity, a view that runs into problems with the Kurds. Others, particularly those in the IIP, see an Islamic identity as paramount. An Arab-Islamic Iraq could be meshed with nationalist sentiments, thereby promoting a unified state. But this concept runs into conflict with Kurdish ideas of separatism and certainly with any Shi'ah plan for a federal state in the center and south. Moreover, Tawafuq faces a disadvantage in elections organized on a communal basis, since Arab Sunnis are a minority. On the issue of religion and the role of shari'ah in the state, the alliance has mixed views, with its secular contingent in favor of removing religion from the equation, but the more religious contingent desires a strong role for religion in shaping society, and even legislation that mandates some behavior. The one issue that does unite Tawafuq is foreign occupation, which it opposes. But even here, there has been a shift in emphasis. Many within Tawafuq are calling for a timetable rather than immediate withdrawal, because the new and more imminent threat is Iran and local Shi'ah dominance. At the moment, in their view, only the United States can protect Iraq from this potential threat and, in many cases now, from sectarian strife, which is taking a high toll on the Sunni community.

Tawafuq is the moderate wing of the Sunni community, the sector that is willing to participate in government. The question is how much of the Sunni community it actually represents. Tawafuq's more extreme competition, the MSA, still rejects the political process. Formed almost immediately after the fall of Saddam's regime in 2003, the MSA, an umbrella group of Sunni imams and clerics that claims to speak for the insurgency, represents the hard-line Sunni rejectionists, who refuse any collaboration with the government while it is under occupation. Recently the MSA has indicated that it would consider

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entering the reconciliation process extended by Prime Minister Maliki in return for four concessions: (a) a scheduled withdrawal of the multinational forces, (b) reconsideration of de-Ba'athification, (c) recognition of the Sunni resistance as legitimate, and (d) cessation of work under the current constitution—that is, a full-blown amendment process that produces a new constitution. These may be the real aims and goals of the Sunni opposition currently engaged in insurgency; if so, they indicate a continued failure to recognize—or accept—the shift in power to Shi'ah and Kurdish political forces that has taken place since 2005. Meanwhile, the MSA has now been outflanked by even more radical components within the Sunni insurgency, led by offshoots of al-Qaeda, such as the Mujahidin Shura Council, organized in January 2006. These more radical jihadist elements reject not only occupation and the new political order but the legitimacy of the Shi'ah sect itself, and have been at the forefront of the effort to stir up a sectarian civil war. While these extreme ideas are rejected by the MSA and the majority of the Sunni insurgents, it is still not clear whether Tawafuq can prevail on the insurgents to forsake violence for the ballot box, or whether it can get concessions from the winning Shi'ah and Kurdish tickets on the issues that lie at the heart of the insurgency. Thus far, it has not succeeded.

Iraqiyyah

The fourth main group in the political spectrum, the Iraqi National List (Iraqiyyah), headed by former prime minister Ayyad Allawi, may be better regarded as the losers in this election process. This group, representing a collection of individuals and parties once considered the moderate middle, is secular, nonsectarian, liberal, and Iraqi in terms of identity and orientation. Although its ticket had some of Iraq's best-known, most experienced figures—a former prime minister (Ayyad Allawi), a former parliamentary speaker (Hajim al-Hasani), and an Arab former statesman (Adnan Pachachi)—it only gained 9 percent of the seats in parliament. Thus, the ticket, and the secular liberal trend in general, is not in a position to exert much influence unless it aligns with others. It does participate in the government, however, and holds six posts, though none are in the top tier. Among the most important are the minister of communications (Muhammad Tawfiq Allawi, a cousin of Ayyad, a trained engineer who had been living in England), the minister of justice (Hisham al-Shibli, a lawyer in his seventies and a member of the liberal National Democratic party, or NDP), the minister of science and technology (Ra'd Fahmi Jahid, a member of the Iraq Communist party), and the minister of human rights (Wijdan Mikhail, a Christian woman who was an urban planner). The poor showing of this centrist alliance may sound the death knell for a number of well-established Iraqi parties, some going back to the monarchy. Most important is Ayyad Allawi's own party, Wifaq (Iraq National Accord, or INA), a long-standing member of the outside opposition, which had worked with the United States and the West to overthrow the Saddam regime. An ex-member of Ba'th, Allawi left the party in the 1970s, but his views are close to Ba'th's in its early period: a desire for a strong central government, secularism, and an emphasis on competence in government. These were best represented in the interim government he headed in 2004, which was strongly staffed with Western-educated technocrats and projected an image of strength. This was the government that agreed to the military recapture of Fallujah to root out the insurgents, but it was also tarnished by accusations of corruption (especially in the Ministry of Defense, headed by Hazim Sha'lan). Although the party reached out to Arab Sunnis, the Sunnis generally turned against Allawi and his government after the attack on Fallujah. While the Iraqiyyah attracted some secular Shi'ah, most of this community was influenced by Ali al-Sistani and voted on the basis of Shi'ah identity.

Also joining the alliance was the Iraqi Communist party (ICP), founded in the 1930s, which had played a role in Iraq until it was finally driven underground by the Ba'th in the early 1970s. But the ICP's appeal, both to intellectuals and to the working class, and its

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The Iraqiyyah's loss in the election means that the professional middle class will probably have to find a new home if it wants political power.

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ability to attract supporters across ethnic and sectarian lines could not stand up to the onslaught of sectarian politics. The NDP, a liberal left-wing reformist group dating back to the early postwar period, had even less to show at election time. Although Iraqiyyah was unprepared for the election in terms of mobilization and organization, they have a place in the national unity government. They favor Iraqi unity and a moderate, nonsectarian secular state. They have cooperated with the West in the past—indeed, many are members of the exile community with a base in London—and could do so again. Their loss in the election means that the professional middle class will probably have to find a new home if it wants political power. But the Iraqiyyah contingent can act as a modest bridge in cooperating with other alliances and groups on various issues, across ethnic and sectarian lines, helping to shift political dynamics in a more centrist direction.

Other Parties

Several other groups, though not included in the cabinet, won seats in the Council of Representatives and will play a minor role in the balance of power and the political maneuvering that will take place. One is the Iraqi Front for National Dialogue, led by Salah Mutlaq. An ex-Ba'athist who remained inside Iraq during the 1980s and 1990s but opposed Saddam, Mutlaq participated in the earlier National Dialogue Council, which took part in the constitutional deliberations, but split from that group to form his own ticket. He is determinedly nonsectarian and nationalist. His ticket got eleven seats in the assembly and came in fifth among alliances, attracting a number of Sunni votes that might have gone to Tawafuq, especially among Ba'athists. Another party with a potential role in the future is Fadhilah (“Virtue”), which is currently relegated to the margins of the Shi'ah alliance. An offshoot of the Sadrist movement, Fadhilah is a newcomer. It has the support of a genuine cleric, Ayatollah Muhammad al-Ya'qubi, who studied under Muqtada al-Sadr's father and follows his conservative religious outlook, including support for the *wilayat al-faqih* (“rule of the Islamic jurist”). Fadhilah has attracted a more educated and middle-class clientele than the Sadrists and has an interest in participating in government. Its stronghold is Basra, where the party controlled the provincial council in 2006. Although it ran on the UIA ticket, Fadhilah tried, unsuccessfully, to withdraw just before the election and run independently. Not surprisingly, it was not included in the cabinet, and its failure to get the ministry of oil, which it had temporarily held in 2005–06, prompted it to foment a strike in the port of Basra in 2006, which slowed down oil exports and tied up the economy for weeks.

Finally, the Kurdish Islamic Union (KIU) ran as an independent party, separate from the Kurdish Alliance, and got five seats in the Council of Representatives. While it supports the Kurds on constitutional issues that are fundamental to the Kurdish Alliance, it does represent a challenge to the alliance on the home front. Its identity, while Kurdish, is strongly Islamic (Sunni) and represents the growing religious sentiment among Kurds, including the youth, which could challenge the secularism of the two main Kurdish parties as well as their overwhelming monopoly on power. Its willingness to make alliances across ethnic lines, especially with Arabs, caused a real conflict with the KDP in the run-up to the elections. The KIU office in Dahuk was attacked and burned down on December 6, 2005, reportedly by KDP supporters, and in the melee four people were killed.

Conclusion: Is There a Way Forward?

Given this array of leaders, parties, and differing visions and orientations, what are the possibilities that Iraq, and its government, can come together? And if they can, on what basis? Is some minimal agreement possible, and on what grounds?

This study shows that despite strong voting on the basis of ethnic and sectarian blocs, there is far more fragmentation and diversity of views within these alignments than is

generally realized; each bloc has different groups of leaders, networks, organizations, and constituencies. These may now play a greater role in political dynamics than they did in elections, and this complexity should be viewed as an opportunity, not a problem.

The major political parties that won the election, together with a few smaller parties, now provide a rich tapestry to work with in Baghdad in sorting through the multiple problems facing the new regime. While ethnic and sectarian violence has taken a toll on comity, leaders of these parties all indicate that they still have some common interests—and that these could be cultivated. Where are these common interests?

Economic Development

While leaders of all communities and political parties give lip service to economic development, the desire for prosperity and the need for jobs have received relatively low priority in their actions—and even in their announced programs. Rather, they have been focused on other issues: getting and keeping themselves in power, communal identity, security, and even personal wealth. Recently, the Kurds have put more emphasis on economic development and securing foreign investment, mostly from neighboring Turkey, mainly because they have had sufficient security to concentrate on it. But elsewhere this is not the case. In fact, a concentration on economic development and the delivery of services, which all polls show that constituents want regardless of their communal background, would do more than anything else to dampen communal tensions and make possible a shift toward normality. However, in order to be accomplished, these objectives must rise in the priorities of leaders.

In fact, many areas of the economy cannot be developed unless there is intercommunal and interregional cooperation. Iraq's power grid is, to a large extent, national in scope. Both Baghdad and Sulaimaniyyah, for example, depend on power generation from the Derbendikhan Dam, near Halabja, in the KRG, making cooperation between the Kurds and the central government essential for both. The same is true for the export of Iraq's oil through pipelines, whether the oil is located in the north or the south. Development of communications through wireless technology is another illustration. Much of Iraq is dependent on cell phones, and different companies have carved out separate domains in Iraq. One example of the current system's dysfunctional state is the difficulty of calling Irbil from Sulaimaniyyah, both within the Kurdish region but with different (and seemingly incompatible) local phone companies. Safe road transport is another area requiring intercommunal cooperation. Transport by land from Baghdad to Jordan, Syria, and the Mediterranean must traverse the central Sunni province of Anbar, now in rebellion. It has been increasingly difficult to transport goods and people from the center and south of Iraq to Kurdistan because of restrictions placed on this traffic by the Kurds. These restraints to free transportation and communications are huge impediments to commerce and a major explanation for the rise in smuggling, corruption, and waste of Iraq's resources. In the legislative realm, Iraq's politicians must pass—and enforce—commercial laws that tie the country together and encourage investment, both foreign and domestic, in business activity. This fact is increasingly recognized by some of the current leaders, who put through a new investment law in October 2006, facilitating investment throughout the country. Development of Iraq's economy can provide incentives for intercommunal links between businesspeople, greater opportunities for workers, and a general opening of Iraq to the outside world, but only if the political leaders recognize the need for cooperation and encourage it.

Management of Oil Resources

Oil legislation provides another avenue for cross-communal links, as well as a spur to development, but common resources need to be exploited and used for the benefit of all. Legislation that helps revive the oil industry and makes sharing its revenues a fundamental right, with some clear, enforceable guarantees, will go a long way toward easing

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communal tensions, especially in the Sunni community. And as the various parties struggle with the details of the legislation, hopefully more trust and confidence will result. The oil sector also provides an ideal arena for the development of shared national institutions that cut across ethnic and sectarian lines and get people working together for common interests. Oil is the best example of the principle that all communities have more to gain over the long term by cooperation than by splitting up into regions and taking the oil with them. This will be true for the Kurds in particular. Even if they incorporate Kirkuk into their region, oil resources in the northern fields are in decline, and Kurds will gain more from sharing an equitable portion of all Iraq's oil revenues. It is certainly true for the Sunnis, who have few such resources developed in their territory, and even for the Shi'ah, with the largest share of the oil in the south but with facilities in such a state of decline that they need long-term investment to revive them. For all Iraq's communities, outside investment is more likely to come if a single commercial framework can be devised for the country.

Water Resources and the Environment

What holds true for oil is doubly so for management of water resources, critical for the entire country, and for repair and maintenance of the environment as well. The pollution of Iraq's rivers from wars and misuse, and the need to revive its irrigation systems, is a case in point. Iraq's agricultural prosperity, especially in the south, depends on a network of dams and barrages and on extensive desalination, which cannot be managed locally and require central coordination. The same kind of coordination is needed to harness water resources for power, including that generated by the dams and barrages in the Kurdish region. Also, the extreme degradation of the environment over several decades of war, sanctions, and misgovernment can best be remedied by collective management of these resources from a central, federal government and by cooperation among regions, rather than simply a division of Iraq's patrimony into three or even more parts. Promoting economic development and managing resources are issues that the elected political parties are best positioned to deal with. Doing so could be a beginning step in intercommunal dialogue and the realistic practice of democracy.

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The Role of Religion in the State

Although it may at first glance seem counterintuitive, another issue that can cut across the communal divide is the role of religion in the state. The question of how great a role religion should play in society, and how much separation should exist between the religious establishment and government, is divisive, but the divide does not run on a communal basis. Some parties among all communities—Kurds, Shi'ah, and Sunnis—want more religion, certainly in society and possibly in government as well (e.g., KIU, IIP, SCIRI, Da'wah). But there are others who want greater separation of mosque and state (KDP, PUK, Iraqiyyah, National Dialogue), and there are strong strands of secularism among all communities. While the boundaries of these issues will need to be determined—and on a continuing basis—this issue transcends communal identity. All parties need to maintain some room for choice.

Divisive Issues

Legislation on the creation of new federal regions, put before the assembly in the fall of 2006, provides a good example of how cross-communal voting by different parties could operate.

While many issues involving Iraq's government structure are divisive, even these often cut across communal identities. Federalism is a prime example. Although the Kurdish alliance has made this the touchstone of its platform, it is not certain that minority parties or nonparty groups, such as the Turkmen and Christians, agree. Even between the two main Kurdish parties there is some difference on the desired degree of cooperation with a central government in Baghdad. Should the Kurds move forward on acquiring Kirkuk, these issues would come to the fore immediately. On federalism, there are certainly pronounced differences among Shi'ah parties; for example, SCIRI favors a nine-province Shi'ah region

in the center and south, and the Sadrists do not. Legislation on the creation of new federal regions, put before the assembly in the fall of 2006, provides a good example of how cross-communal voting by different parties could operate. On September 26 a bill, stipulating the process by which new federal regions could be formed, was proposed and backed by SCIRI and the Kurdish Alliance, but the legislation was opposed by a coalition of parties, including Sadrists and some Da'wah, who opposed the SCIRI project for various reasons, including a fear of dividing Iraq. This opposition forced some changes in the bill, including a delay of eighteen months before it could be applied. The revised bill was then passed by a thin margin. Both votes split the Shi'ah coalition and created fluid and shifting alignments in the assembly on an issue—creation of new regions—rather than on simple communal identity. The rule of law, a reduction of corruption, and an increase in professionalism in government are all issues around which differing parties could agree across communal boundaries—if they can focus on the issues rather than identity.

Even the occupation may serve to unite various factions in agreeing on some sort of timetable for withdrawing the U.S. presence. This issue, too, cuts across the ethnic and sectarian divide. While the Kurdish Alliance is most supportive of the U.S. presence, that support depends on U.S. acquiescence on Kurdish aims. Should the United States fail to support these aims (for example, in Kirkuk), the KA could turn against the United States or at least distance itself. Various parties in the UIA take different positions on the occupation. While Sadrists are strongly opposed to it and want an early withdrawal, the dominant parties in the UIA—SCIRI and Da'wah—have a much more nuanced position. Tawafuq is also now more ambivalent, fearing Iran and its influence in Iraq more than it fears the United States.

The breakdown of party views and differences now emerging in Iraq is worth examining more closely. It suggests that a new political dynamic could be slowly built in Iraq, issue by issue, by focusing on one problem at a time and dealing with it by encouraging party, not communal, negotiations. As compromises are achieved on specific issues, the process will require a gradual building of confidence—or at least a mitigation of suspicion and distrust—and a network and possibly a framework of institutions to protect and uphold those agreements that are reached. Issues that are truly divisive (e.g., Kirkuk, or the formation of new federal regions) may be postponed until a less contentious situation prevails. Indeed, this process may already be under way. As the constitutional issues and the legislative agenda take shape, party deals across the communal divide appear to be forming. It is this process of practical party compromise that should be encouraged, even though it will not yield spectacular breakthroughs and will take considerable time. Should such a process succeed, it would help keep the state intact and foster a more democratic system, rather than encouraging Iraq's slide into sharp ethnic and sectarian divisions that threaten to fracture the state and produce even more intercommunal violence and bloodshed.

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Permanent Government, 2006: Parliament Seat Distribution

(percentages rounded)

| Party | Total Seats | Percentage |
|---|-------------|------------|
| Shi'ah Parties | | |
| United Iraqi Alliance | 128 | 46.6% |
| Progressives | 2 | 0.7% |
| Total | 130 | 47.3% |
| Sunni Parties | | |
| Tawafuq | 44 | 16.0% |
| Iraqi Dialogue Front | 11 | 4.0% |
| Liberation and Reconciliation Bloc | 3 | 1.1% |
| Total | 58 | 21.1% |
| Kurdish Parties | | |
| Kurdistan Alliance | 53 | 19.3% |
| Islamic Union of Kurdistan | 5 | 1.8% |
| Total | 58 | 21.1% |
| Secular Nationalist Parties | | |
| Iraqiyyah | 25 | 9.1% |
| Mithal al-Alusi List for the Iraqi Nation | 1 | 0.35% |
| Total | 26 | 9.45% |
| Minority Parties | | |
| Two Rivers List (Assyrian) | 1 | 0.35% |
| Yazidi Movement | 1 | 0.35% |
| Iraqi Turkman Front | 1 | 0.35% |
| Total | 3 | 1.05% |

Permanent Government, 2006: Ministries and Leadership Positions, by Party
(percentages rounded)

| Party | Ministries and Leadership Positions | Percentage |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------|
| UIA | 21 | 46% |
| SCIRI | 5 | |
| Da'wah | 1 | |
| Da'wah Tandhim | 3 | |
| Sadrists | 4 | |
| Islamic Action | 1 | |
| Hezbollah | 1 | |
| Independent | 6 | |
| Kurdistan Alliance | 8 | 17% |
| PUK | 4 | |
| KDP | 4 | |
| Tawafuq | 9 | 20% |
| Iraqiyyah | 6 | 13% |
| Independent | 2 | 4% |

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