

THE SURGE: WHAT COMES NEXT?

THE FUND FOR PEACE



REPORT #8
2003-2008

PAULINE H. BAKER

PHOTOS

TOP LEFT: Iraqi police officers march past a review booth during the Qadisiyah provincial Iraqi control ceremony in Diwaniyah, Iraq, July 16, 2008. (U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Matthew Plew/Released/available at <http://www.defenselink.mil/multimedia/>)

BOTTOM CENTER: Members of the radical Shiite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr's Mahdi Army march in a protest, July 21, 2006. (Karim Kadim/Associated Press)

TOP RIGHT: Iraqi soldiers from the 2nd Iraqi Army Division pose for a photo after their graduation ceremony from the crime scene investigation course on Combat Operating Post Al Kindi in Mosul, Iraq, July 3, 2008. (U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Sarah De Boise/Released/available at <http://www.defenselink.mil/multimedia/>)

CENTER: Children look on as Iraqi workers repair sewers in Basra, Iraq, October 10, 2008. (U.S. Army photo by Spec. Karah Cohen/Released/available at <http://www.defenselink.mil/multimedia/>)

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**Report #8
March 2003 to July 2008**

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Preface

Although there have been many reports on Iraq, The Fund for Peace (FfP) is contributing to the debate by providing a systematic evaluation of Iraqi progress, or lack thereof, using specific metrics for measuring social, economic, and political stabilization since the invasion in April 2003. Applying CAST (the Conflict Analysis System Tool), the analytical framework developed by the FfP to assess societies at risk of internal conflict and state collapse, this series of reports evaluates Iraq's progress toward sustainable security – the state at which the country is largely peaceful and capable of governing itself without external military or administrative oversight.¹

The methodology employed is detailed in the Methodological Note at the end of this report. Briefly, it is based on independent ratings of twelve top conflict indicators enumerated in the attached charts and assessment of five core political institutions (military, police, civil service, system of justice and leadership) and “stings” (unanticipated events and factors). The purpose of the ratings is to trace patterns and trends over time. Ratings are reviewed carefully, based on information gleaned from open-source English and Arabic language sources, government reports, diverse organizations and groups that have conducted site visits in Iraq, and various scholars and journalists.

While research assistants and staff at the FfP have contributed to the report, the conclusions are entirely the responsibility of the author. She has been ably assisted in these reports by outstanding students who have brought creative skills, thoughtful insights, and critical minds to a topic that is highly complex and controversial. For this report, special thanks go to Kathleen Gillen, Ariana Sarar, Sumani Dash, W. Bradley Pope, Jenesil Benito, Arpine Hovasapyan, Lauren Crain, Jennifer Oie, and Samantha DiFilippo for their excellent research assistance.

Pauline H. Baker
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¹ For another application of the CAST methodology, see the “Failed States Index” in *Foreign Policy*, July/August 2008. Additional details on the methodology, as well as prior reports on Iraq, can be obtained on The Fund for Peace Web site at www.fundforpeace.org.

Executive Summary and Recommendations

The “Surge”: Summing up the impact of the U.S. military “surge” in Iraq, three prominent authors wrote in the September 2008 issue of *Foreign Affairs* that “the prognosis is now much more promising than it has been in years....With a degree of patience, the United States can build on a pattern of positive change in Iraq that offers it a chance to draw down troops soon without giving up hope for sustained security.”² Similar views have been expressed in news reports and government briefings, many concluding, as Senator John McCain has argued, that the “surge” was a “strategic success” that put the war “on a path to victory.” This has led to the public perception in the U.S. that Iraq has reached a turning point which will not only allow American troop withdrawal over the next year or two, if not sooner, but will leave behind a situation of self-sustaining peace and stability. The passage of Iraqi legislation authorizing provincial elections, due to be held in early 2009, contributes to the expectation that Iraqi reconciliation and recovery -- the central objectives of the “surge” -- are not only possible, but likely. Indeed, while the *Foreign Affairs* article warned that “considerable violence” could still erupt, the authors concluded that “recent changes in Iraq’s underlying military and political dynamics have at least broken the pattern of dysfunctional politics that has paralyzed Iraq in recent years.”³

This upbeat assessment was not echoed in the assessment of General David Petraeus, who is credited with achieving the military progress on the ground. Instead, he and other military officials have warned that the situation is still “fragile” and “reversible.” This study concurs with the general’s more measured assessment and suggests that, while significant gains have occurred, a false sense of security is emerging.

As a military tactic, the “surge” was largely successful. However, as part of a wider political strategy designed to give Iraqis the breathing space to attain larger objectives, it was far less successful. Shortfalls continue to exist in sectarian reconciliation, delivery of public services, a strengthened economy, public safety and the rule of law. Even the security sector is far from stable. While 13 of the 18 provinces in the country have been turned over to Iraqi forces as of this writing, numerous militias exist, unacceptable levels of violence continue with impunity, and minorities continue to be “cleansed,” with Christians being the latest victims.

As David Ignatius recently commented, “Iraq has been regarded as such a success story in recent months that many have forgotten that all the old cleavages still exist – Sunni vs. Shiite, Kurd vs. Arab, regional autonomy vs. central government,”⁴ in addition to the continuing intra-sectarian strife, minority scapegoating, and unresolved disputes over wealth and power.

Part of the reason for the divergence in views is the tendency to use body counts as the prime measure of internal progress. Statistics on violent deaths can be misleading if not

² Stephen Biddle, Michael E. O’Hanlon, and Kenneth Pollack, “How to Leave a Stable Iraq,” *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2008, p. 40.

³ *Ibid.* p. 52.

⁴ David Ignatius, “A Critical Stage in Iraq,” *The Washington Post*, October 22, 2008, p. A19.

seen in a wider perspective. The U.S. government estimates a dramatic 80 percent drop in politically motivated civilian deaths between early 2007 and mid-2008, the period covering the “surge.” Yet at the end of this period, there were still roughly 800 violent deaths a month in Iraq.⁵ Putting this into a comparative context, this means that nearly as many people were dying violently in four to five months in post-surge Iraq as had died in three decades of civil conflict in Northern Ireland.⁶

One reporter concluded that:

Iraq is on a knife’s edge between war and peace, with violence down dramatically since last year but still a potent force. In addition to deadly sectarian attacks, the country’s Shiite-led government faces unresolved political problems that could flare into renewed bloodshed, from how to absorb U.S.-paid Sunni armed groups to how to distribute the country’s oil revenue.⁷

Public confidence in the situation remains shaky as well. In a poll taken in August 2008, 74 percent of Iraqis stated that they felt safe in their own neighborhoods. This is a reflection of the after-effects of ethnic cleansing and the growth of sectarian neighborhood militias, notably the Sons of Iraq, or Sunni Awakening, a force of roughly 100,000 clan and tribal-based fighters that began to turn against Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) in 2005 before the “surge.” They were subsequently incorporated into the U.S. counter-insurgency campaign in 2006, when they became a U.S.-backed militia fighting AQI, rewarded not only with cash but with a promise of being integrated into the Iraqi security forces or provided alternative employment. That promise has yet to be fulfilled.

NEARLY AS MANY PEOPLE WERE DYING VIOLENTLY IN FOUR TO FIVE WEEKS IN POST-SURGE IRAQ AS HAD DIED IN ALL THREE DECADES OF CIVIL CONFLICT IN NORTHERN IRELAND.

In contrast to confidence expressed in the local militias, only 37 percent of the people polled stated that they felt safe outside their own neighborhoods and even less – 31 percent -- said that the level of peace and security in Iraq today was “stable.” The dichotomy between the public’s sense of security in their local areas and their fears outside their own neighborhoods is striking. The Iraqi Security Forces may be getting better, but only 41 percent of the public felt that the Government of Iraq was effective in protecting them.⁸

⁵ According to figures supplied by the Iraqi Interior and Health ministries, 860 people were killed in war-related incidents in September, down from 2,431 in the same period a year earlier. The U.S. government estimates the number of violent deaths at approximately 700 per month.

⁶ Malcolm Sutton, “An Index of Deaths from the Conflict in Ireland,” Belfast: Beyond the Pale Publications. Updated October 2002. From 1969-2001, over 3,500 people died from political violence in Northern Ireland.

⁷ Mary Beth Sheridan, “Attacks Belie Steps on Reconciliation,” *The Washington Post*, October 3, 2008, p. A17.

⁸ “Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq,” Report to Congress in Accordance with the Department of Defense Appropriations Act of 2008, September 2008.

Countervailing Trends: This study has been tracking trends since the 2003 invasion, documenting improvement or deterioration in monthly assessments of twelve social, economic and political indicators of conflict risk. In this eighth segment of the study, Graph 1 shows the Five-Year Trend line thus far, from pre-war March 2003 to July 2008, with significant events highlighted. Security improvements began in September 2007 and continued steadily until June 2008.

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However, there were also countervailing pressures and persistent risks. Based on all twelve indicators, Iraq remained in the “alert” or “critical” zone of conflict risk by October 2008, when additional outbreaks of violence, particularly new attacks against Christians, erupted. Out of a potential high score of 120 points (worst rating on the scale), Iraq dipped slightly from a peak of 117 (February - October 2007) to 112 (March-July 2008). A movement of five points

in one year is meaningful, but not substantial enough to conclude that the country is solidly on a path toward sustainable security.⁹ This deficiency is also shown in Graph 2, the one-year trend line, and in Graph 3, which shows the scores, indicator by indicator in three-month intervals, over the five years since the invasion.

What explains the decline in violence over the past year? It was the result of several factors in addition to the 30,000 troop “surge” by U.S. troops. They include: new U.S. counter-insurgency tactics which put soldiers closer to the people; ethnic cleansing of Baghdad’s neighborhoods, creating segregated zones that were hardened by high concrete barriers and blast walls built along sectarian fault lines, in effect, partitioning Baghdad;¹⁰ and the recruitment of Sunni proxy forces to fight AQI. The surge was also helped by the decision of the Shiite leader, Moqtada al-Sadr, to declare a cease fire after the al-Malaki government mounted an assault on its forces, reinforced by the U.S.¹¹ A final factor was Iranian pressure on the Sadrists to restructure the undisciplined Mahdi army into a Hezbollah-like political force that could both compete in elections and maintain a smaller but more disciplined militia.¹²

⁹ For more detailed information on the meaning of these scores, see the “Failed States Index” in *Foreign Policy*, July/August, 2008, or at www.fundforpeace.org. For more information on the Conflict Assessment System Tool, or CAST, the methodology underlying the study, go to www.fundforpeace.org/cast/.

¹⁰ Once a predominantly Sunni city, Baghdad is now mainly a Shiite city, with just a few neighborhoods retaining mixed populations. For a fuller study underscoring the importance of this factor, see the report produced by the University of California, Los Angeles, “Baghdad nights: evaluating the US military ‘surge’ using nighttime light signatures” available at <http://www.envplan.com/abstract.cgi?id=a41200>, accessed November 18, 2008. Based on satellite imagery from the Department of Defense, researchers tracked electricity use before, during and after the surge took place. Electricity use fell in neighborhoods where incidents of ethnic violence were documented, often occurring before U.S. troops arrived. For an alternative view that attributes the downturn of violence entirely to the “surge,” see Matthew Kaminski, “Why the Surge Worked,” *The Wall Street Journal*, September 20, 2008, available at <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB122186492076758643.html>, accessed November 18, 2008.

¹¹ “Since Sadr announced a cease-fire last year, his force has gone underground. Many of his fighters...have joined the police forces and are monitoring the Sunni returnees.” Quote from a senior Mahdi Army commander, Kareem Abdullah, in Sudarsan Raghavan, “For Sunnis, An Uneasy Return Home,” *The Washington Post*, October 8, 2008, p. A14.

¹² Iran appears to be playing multiple roles, advising Moqtada al-Sadr to avoid military confrontation at this time, training Shiite militias to launch attacks, and counseling al-Sadr to convert his supporters into a Lebanese-type Hezbollah operation. See Mark Mazzetti, “Documents Say Iran Aids Militias From Iraq,”

How much weight each of these factors played in the reduction of violence is uncertain. Historians will determine whether the absence of new U.S. troops under the “surge” would have resulted in the same outcome. What is clear is that these factors were all interlinked, enhancing the chances that the “surge” would have a positive impact.

Political reconciliation, unfortunately, has not matched the progress seen on the battlefield. Hope for improved governance has not been fulfilled and government performance is still marred by a “dysfunctional politics that has paralyzed Iraq” since the American invasion. Contrary to the *Foreign Affairs* piece, this pattern has not yet been “broken.”

One manifestation of this situation is the reluctance of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) to return home. Both might have been expected to come home quickly, and in large numbers, with significant improvements in security, especially in light of the inadequacy of their living conditions. Yet despite economic incentives offered by the Government of Iraq, only a fraction of the five million people driven from their homes have returned to their original residences.¹³ Many remain fearful, as their homes have been occupied by squatters, some of whom were responsible for the atrocities which drove them to flee in the first place. And despite assurances to the contrary, Baghdad is also closing IDP camps and forcibly moving the inhabitants, a decision that could lead to more friction. Recent attacks on Christians in Mosul, now down to half of their original population, further undermine confidence in the ability of the government to protect its citizens.

Another related indicator – Iraq’s ‘brain drain’ – also has not improved. Many of the refugees who fled the violence are members of the professional class and civil servants. Their skills will continue to be lost until the refugee problem is resolved. Roughly 40 percent of Iraq’s professionals have fled the country since 2003, including 75 percent of the country’s doctors, pharmacists and nurses.

The economy improved slightly during the year covered in this latest report, due to high oil prices and some increased production, but oil income may not be sustained if the price continues to drop. Increased revenue – estimated to have amounted to US\$ 73.5 to 86.2 billion in foreign currency reserves – has not significantly improved public services or diminished corruption, said to be endemic in government ministries.¹⁴ More than US\$ 13

The New York Times, October 18, 2008, available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/19/world/middleeast/19intel.html?hp>, accessed November 18, 2008. Iraq’s future will be shaped considerably by outside powers, particularly Iran, Turkey, Syria and Saudi Arabia. Managing these relationships will be an additional challenge to the Iraqi state if sustainable security is to be achieved.

¹³ In addition to offering compensation for building homes and paying for refugee repatriation in some instances, the Iraqi government has also offered payment of US\$ 1,500 to each family that is illegally occupying homes in order to vacate them for returning exiles and IDPs. Refugees and IDPs report that they are still afraid to return home, especially those who lived in mixed neighborhoods. We are not aware of any prosecutions of those responsible for ethnic cleansing or of those who have seized or occupied property illegally.

¹⁴ United States Government Accountability Office, “Stabilizing and Rebuilding Iraq: Iraqi Revenues, Expenditures, and Surplus,” August 2008.

billion in American-supplied reconstruction money was wasted or stolen by Iraqi officials, including oil stolen for sale on the black market by government employees who worked with Al-Qaeda in Iraq terrorists. Other U.S. funds sent to the Ministry of Defense were diverted to AQI, according to Iraqi investigators, through banks in Jordan and elsewhere.¹⁵ Monies not diverted to illicit destinations are bottled up in red-tape. Iraq is spending most of its operating budget on keeping the government going – through payment of rent, pensions and salaries to government workers – but in 2007 it spent less than a third of its US\$ 12 billion investment budget on infrastructure and machinery. The Iraqi people were the last to receive any benefits. Five years after Saddam Hussein was overthrown, 43 percent of the population lives in absolute poverty, there has been a 60 percent increase in nonviolent deaths due to poor public health, and only 40 percent of the nation’s children have access to safe drinking water.

Iraq’s inability to manage its own reconstruction reveals the incompleteness of state-building. Security forces have been emphasized far more than civilian agencies, leaving Iraq in a position where it will likely rely on its military more than its civilian agencies to hold the country together. Yet, if sustainable security is to be achieved, the executive and legislative branches of government, the judiciary, and the civil service will all need to be strengthened. The U.S. Government Accountability Office reported that “Iraq’s bureaucracy remains hollow, mired in the stacks of paper and rubber stamps of years past, with many of the best technocrats having fled the country.”¹⁶

FIVE YEARS AFTER SADDAM HUSSEIN WAS OVERTHROWN, 43% OF THE POPULATION LIVES IN ABSOLUTE POVERTY, THERE HAS BEEN A 60% INCREASE IN NONVIOLENT DEATHS DUE TO POOR PUBLIC HEALTH, AND ONLY 40% OF THE NATION’S CHILDREN HAVE ACCESS TO SAFE DRINKING WATER.

On the political front, each step forward seems to contain several steps backward. For example, the law authorizing provincial elections enacted in September 2008 bypassed the contentious issue of Kirkurk, a continuing flashpoint.¹⁷ The law also left out three provinces in the Kurdish region, and Tamim province, of which Kirkurk is the capital, designating them the responsibility of the Kurdish government which is supposed to organize elections on its own timetable. This underscores the autonomous status of the Kurdish region, free from the jurisdictional control of the central government. Protection of minority rights was likewise deleted from the provincial election law. Soon afterward, the Christian community was attacked, triggering another exodus by a group that had suffered earlier persecution. These exceptions in the legislation were meant to appease political interests in the country. If they did so, it was at the cost of weakening Iraqi unity and undermining Iraqi state-building.

¹⁵ Dana Hedgpeth, “\$13 Billion in Iraq Aid Wasted or Stolen, Ex-Investigator Says,” *The Washington Post*, September 23, 2008, p. A19.

¹⁶ Mary Beth Sheridan, “As Iraq’s Oil Flows Freely, Profits are Stuck in Bureaucracy,” *The Washington Post*, October 17, 2008, p. A20.

¹⁷ On November 3rd, 2008, the Iraqi parliament passed a modification of the provincial elections law initially passed September 24. The modifications add special representation for certain specified ethno-religious minorities in certain areas. However, minority representation is still very small and, in the case of the Christians, it provides them with only one seat in Basra, Baghdad, and Mosul, with similarly reduced representation for other minorities. The changes are not likely to affect political representation or allay the fears of minorities.

Provincial elections, set to take place by January 31, 2009, are widely regarded as a positive step. They are expected to help rebalance the political structure that had previously excluded Sunnis, increase the legitimacy of the state, and contribute to democratization. Historical precedents suggest, however, that elections do not always resolve deep social divisions in war-torn societies, especially if they are held before armed groups are demobilized, the rule of law is established, and there is widespread agreement on how power and wealth are to be shared. In Iraq, provincial elections could fuel violence as they create new winners and losers, open up new attempts to settle old scores, and trigger the arrest of “enemies” of the central and local governments. Continued sectarian rivalry, weak state institutions, and the proliferation of armed groups do not auger well for elections. As one commentator put it, Iraq is now “up for grabs.”¹⁸

What Comes Next? What is not readily admitted is that, despite the downturn in violence, the civil war that has raged in Iraq for the last five years, culminating in a

AMERICAN TROOPS CANNOT DO FOR IRAQIS WHAT THEY MUST DO FOR THEMSELVES: AGREE ON “AN OVERALL POLITICAL DEAL, ACCEPTABLE TO ALL SIDES, THAT DISTRIBUTES POWER AMONG IRAQ’S COMPETING INTERESTS.”

spasm of sectarian violence in 2007, is not over. It is being fought in the streets, through assassinations and bombings, in parliament through blocked legislation and now, potentially, in the voting booths. All battlefields seem to be fair game for competition.

To many Iraqis, elections are a continuation of war by other means. Militias are being held in reserve. While the blanket of security imposed by the “surge” has dealt a severe, and possibly fatal, blow to AQI, sectarian passions, once stirred, are not easy to extinguish. If the embers of sectarian distrust persist, then the independent militias could turn their guns on the government or each other in the future.

This is not to say that American forces must remain in Iraq until such problems are resolved.¹⁹ To the contrary, the responsibility for addressing these problems lies firmly in the hands of the Iraqis, more so now than ever before. The presence of a foreign occupying force irritates all parties, provides a foil for potential spoilers, and offers an excuse for Iraqis to avoid necessary political compromise. American troops cannot do for Iraqis what they must do for themselves: agree on “an overall political deal, acceptable to all sides, that distributes power among Iraq’s competing interests.”²⁰

In this period of uncertainty, what comes next might be better understood by looking at how other recent civil wars have ended. In most cases, they were concluded in one of three ways: partition, military victory, or reconciliation resulting in a negotiated peace settlement. In negotiated settlements, sustainable peace is usually based on a broad-based agreement detailing how power will be shared by all major parties. That pact must be accepted by the majority of the population as a legitimate settlement, and external parties

¹⁸ Alissa J. Rubin, “In Iraq, Progress Itself Brings Risks, as Clashing Sides Have Scores to Settle,” *The New York Times*, October 2, 2008, p. A5.

¹⁹ The 30,000 troops in the “surge” have been removed, but as of this writing, there are about 150,000 U.S. troops still in the country.

²⁰ Rubin, op. cit.

can play a constructive role in ensuring compliance, using economic incentives, providing neutral peacekeeping forces, offering third-party mediation, and supporting civil society.

Reconciliation is also facilitated by the demobilization of private armies, political reforms, and through tension-reducing mechanisms, such as Truth and Reconciliation Commissions. Elections usually follow reconciliation and demobilization of private armies, but in Iraq, the processes are reversed. Hopefully, Iraq will prove the exception to the rule, with elections offering an opportunity for the country to move forward. Based on historical precedent, however, the odds are against that happening.²¹

Seen in this context, the “surge” was a successful military tactic that gave Iraqis a window of opportunity to reach a solution; it was not, in itself, a solution. Those who have prematurely declared “Victory” mistakenly assume that security is a necessary and sufficient condition for establishing political legitimacy, national unity, and social development. But improved security does not, in itself, provide good governance, attract investment capital, ensure public safety, promote social justice, and cultivate the human capital for sustained recovery. Where oil is concerned, investment might pour in. However, a key test of economic recovery will lie in whether the Iraqi people reap the benefits of such oil revenues.

The challenge is whether, as American troops begin to draw down, the Iraqis can reconcile the country’s religious, ethnic, and linguistic groups and create an agreement on how to share power and wealth. If reconciliation continues to be elusive, then, based on historical precedents, alternative paths to end the civil war, including partition or military victory, may come next.

Some form of internal, if not formal, partition could evolve, even if Iraqis are loathe to call it by that name. In this scenario, Iraq would become a very loose confederation, with tribal or clan militias, tied to political patrons, guarding sectarian enclaves alongside a weak central government. Neighboring states, including Syria, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey, would likely fill the political vacuum, increasing their already considerable influence in the country. This would constitute, in essence, the Lebanization of Iraqi politics, an outcome foreshadowed in a previous report in this series.²² Outside actors in the neighborhood would view Iraq as a buffer zone that they could use against their respective regional rivals. Iraq would continue to be a weak state, whose territorial integrity would be upheld by parties that seek access to Iraq’s rich oil supplies. However, the country would be prone to considerable internal instability, including military coups, assassinations, bombings, and periodic purges against minorities and rival sectarian groups. “What I worry about most,” said Gen. Ray Odierno, the commander of U.S. forces in Iraq, “is the assassination of candidates [in upcoming elections] as people try to

²¹ It should be noted that previous elections in Iraq reinforced sectarian differences. This time, there are intra-sectarian rivalries complicating the picture, more external influence from neighboring states, and widespread expectations that U.S. forces are on the way out.

²² Pauline H. Baker, *From Failed State to Civil War: The Lebanization of Iraq 2003-2006*, (Washington, DC: The Fund for Peace), April 24, 2006, available at http://www.fundforpeace.org/web/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=76&Itemid=113, accessed November 18, 2008.

gain influence...I characterize [the political landscape] as a communal struggle for power. It's evolutionary. You have a struggle at the local level, the provincial level and the national level about who's going to control Iraq."²³

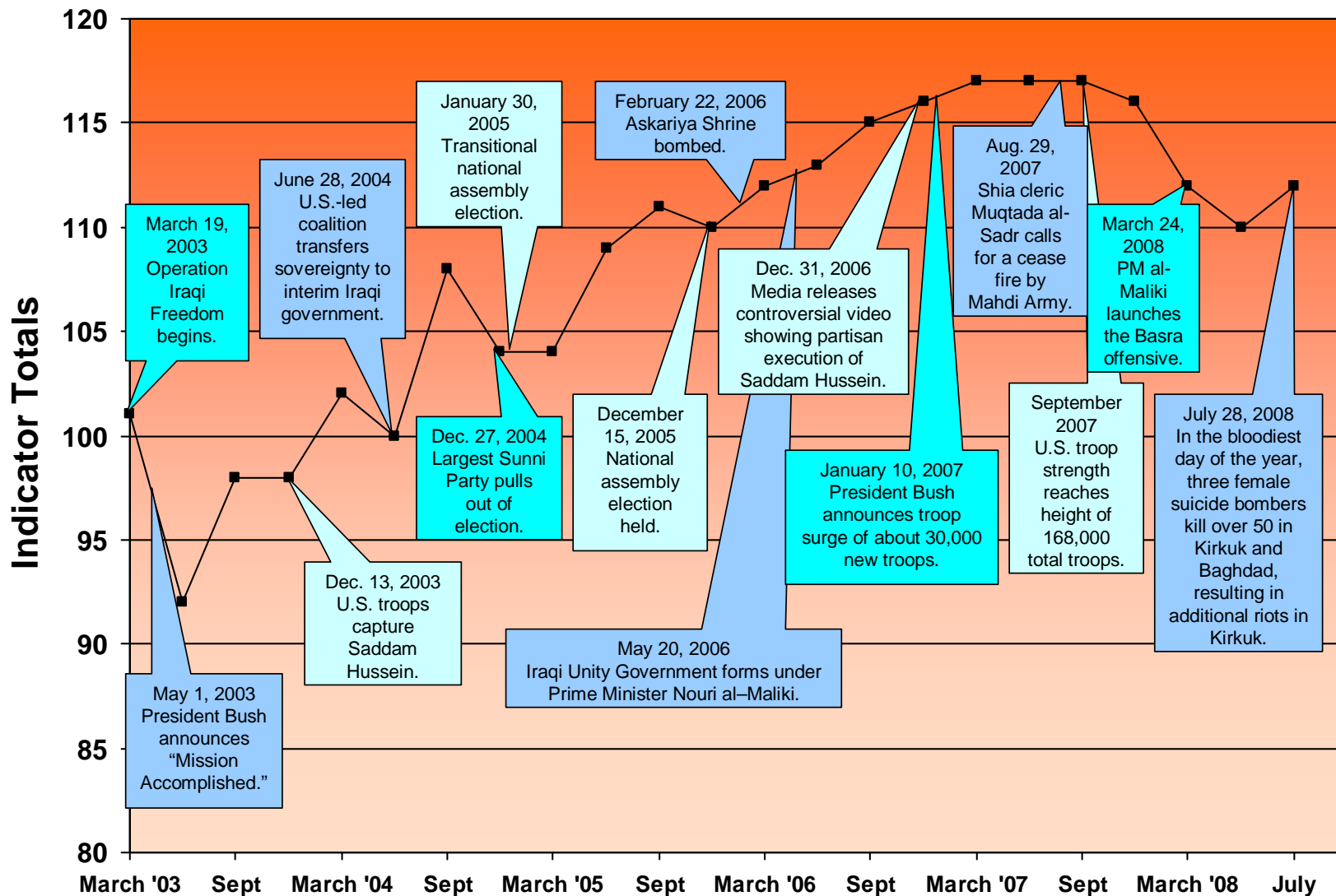
In the worse case scenario, Iraq would backslide into full-scale civil war. As a draft high-level U.S. National Intelligence Estimate predicted, "unresolved ethnic and sectarian tensions in Iraq could unleash a new wave of violence, potentially reversing the gains of the past year."²⁴

The U.S. and the Iraqi governments have tentatively concluded a Status of Forces Agreement that calls for the withdrawal of U.S. combat troops by 2011. The incoming Obama Administration could conceivably quicken the pace of that withdrawal. The scenarios facing Iraq – military victory, partition, or political negotiations toward reconciliation – depend less on the timing of the U.S. military withdrawal than on how strongly Iraqis work for internal cohesion.

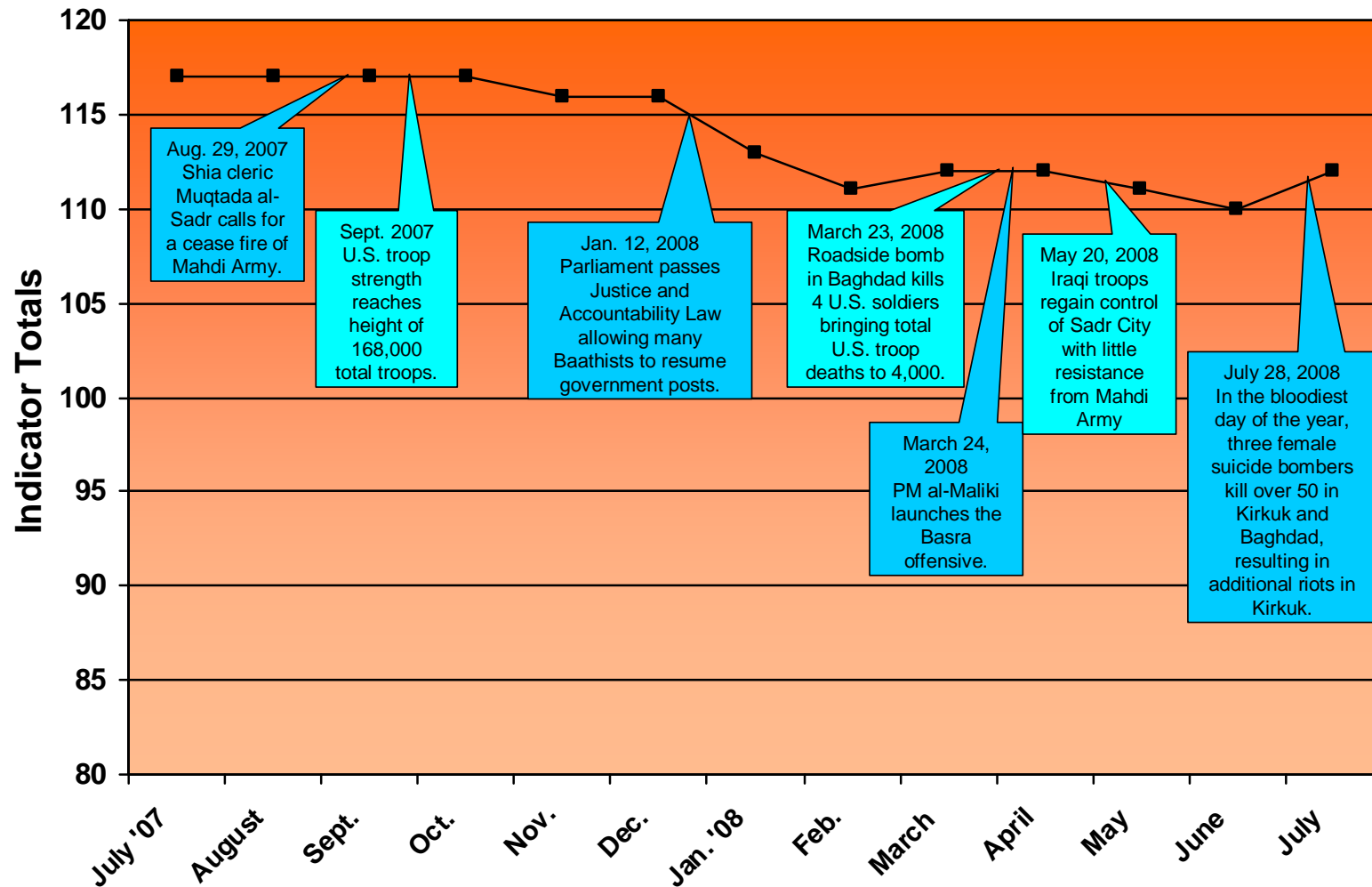
²³ Ernesto Londono, "Iran Interfering in U.S.-Iraq Security Pact, General Says," *The Washington Post*, October 13, 2008, p. A14.

²⁴ Jonathan S. Landay, Warren P. Strobel and Nancy A. Youssef, "New U.S. Intelligence report warns 'victory' not certain in Iraq," *McClatchy Newspapers*, October 7, 2008, available at <http://www.mcclatchydc.com/251/story/53605.html>, accessed November 18, 2008.

GRAPH 1: Iraq Five-Year Trend Line
March 2003 – July 2008



**GRAPH 2: Iraq One-Year Trend Line
July 2007 – July 2008**



**GRAPH 3: Iraq Five-Year Indicator Totals
March 2003- July 2008**

| | March '03 | June | Sept | Dec | March '04 | June | Sept | Dec | March '05 | June | Sept | Dec | March '06 | June | Sept | Dec | March '07 | June | Sept | Dec | March '08 | June | July | |
|--------------------------------------------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| 1. Demographic Pressures | 8 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 |
| 2. Movement of Refugees or IDPs | 8 | 6 | 9 | 7 | 9 | 8 | 9 | 9 | 8 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 |
| 3. Legacy of Vengeance | 9 | 8 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 10 | 9 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 9 |
| 4. Human Flight | 7 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 9 | 9 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 |
| 5. Uneven Economic Development | 7 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 |
| 6. Economic Decline | 9 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 9 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 7 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 |
| 7. Criminalization of the State | 10 | 10 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 7 | 9 | 9 | 10 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 |
| 8. Deterioration of Public Services | 7 | 8 | 8 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 9 | 8 | 8 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 |
| 9. Suspension of Human Rights | 10 | 6 | 6 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 9 | 10 |
| 10. "State Within a State" | 10 | 6 | 9 | 10 | 10 | 9 | 10 | 9 | 9 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 9 | 9 |
| 11. Factionalized Elites | 8 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 7 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 9 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 |
| 12. Intervention of External Actors | 8 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 |
| Total | 101 | 92 | 98 | 98 | 102 | 100 | 108 | 104 | 104 | 109 | 111 | 110 | 112 | 113 | 115 | 116 | 117 | 117 | 117 | 116 | 112 | 110 | 112 | 112 |

July 2007
12 Indicators

1. *Mounting Demographic Pressures*
Rating: 10

According to a report released by Oxfam, eight million Iraqis, that is, one in three people need immediate emergency aid.¹ The report further says that 15 percent of the total Iraqi population regularly cannot buy enough to eat, 70 percent are without adequate water supplies, 28 percent of children are malnourished, and 92 percent of Iraqi children suffer from learning problems, mostly because of fear instilled as a result of mounting violence.² Infrastructure and basic services in Iraq have thus come under massive strain because of the continuing violence and instability.

The effects of the violence and displacement are particularly severe on vulnerable groups, including the elderly, disabled, orphans and female-headed households.³ Displacement is, however, not being caused by violence alone, but also by increasing lawlessness all over the country, which is creating an atmosphere of fear while giving insurgents, militants and criminals the space to operate freely.⁴ The instability is worst in Anbar, Diyala, Salah al-Din, Baghdad, Nineveh, Basra, and Kirkuk.⁵

There has been further displacement of people both within the country and into neighboring states, creating a huge humanitarian crisis with fast unraveling regional impacts. The demographic pressures are also beginning to take a toll on host countries, especially Syria and Jordan who have taken in thousands of refugees.⁶ The educational infrastructure in Syria is under severe strain. As a result, of the hundreds of thousands of Iraqi refugee children in the country, only 32,000 are enrolled in school.⁷ According to the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR), “a whole generation of Iraqi children is in danger of missing out on an education.”⁸

2. *Massive Movement of Refugees and IDPs*
Rating: 10

The violence and instability in Iraq has had a particularly devastating impact in terms of the number of people who have been rendered internally displaced or refugees. In the report cited earlier, Oxfam says that currently there are two million Iraqi refugees in other

¹ “Rising to the humanitarian challenge in Iraq”, *Oxfam Briefing Paper*, 07/2007 available online at http://www.oxfam.org/en/files/bp105_humanitarian_challenge_in_iraq_0707.pdf/download

² *Ibid.*

³ “ICRC steps up humanitarian response” *The International Committee of the Red Cross*, 05/07/2007.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ “Iraq displacement 2007 mid-year review” *The International Organization for Migration*.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

countries, mainly Syria and Jordan, while two million are internally displaced.⁹ Syria hosts around 1.5 million Iraqi refugees,¹⁰ and is receiving 2,000 Iraqis a day.¹¹

The UNHCR has criticized donor countries for turning a blind eye to the condition of refugees in Syria and Jordan.¹² A spokesperson for the UNHCR said in a statement, “It is unconscionable that generous host countries be left on their own to deal with such a huge crisis”.¹³ Although western nations have promised financial aid for refugees fleeing Iraq, currently donations to UNHCR amount to US\$ 70 million, with an extra US\$ 10 million promised.¹⁴ The UNHCR’s program for Iraqi refugees and displaced will soon be raised to US\$ 123 million,¹⁵ but this is described as “just a drop in the ocean.”¹⁶

In addition, Iraqi refugees in Jordan and Syria are facing harsh living conditions, since under Jordanian and Syrian law, Iraqi refugees are considered guests and are not entitled to the same benefits and privileges available to other refugees.¹⁷ Amnesty International has further cautioned that refugee flow from Iraq is “threatening a humanitarian crisis that could engulf the region unless concerted international action is taken now.”¹⁸

July saw some absorption of Iraqi refugees into countries outside the region, for example, 100 Palestinians from Iraq are being resettled in Brazil.¹⁹ In a similar gesture, Israel has agreed to allow some Palestinians fleeing Iraq to settle in the West Bank.²⁰ The move extends to only some Palestinians who qualify under the rubric of ‘family reunification.’²¹ Sweden, which has taken in more than 18,000 Iraqi refugees since 2006, has announced that the procedure for Iraqis seeking asylum would be made tougher and those whose applications are denied will be deported by force.²²

The condition of internally displaced people within Iraq too is deteriorating. The southern provinces, which had initially welcomed fleeing IDPs, are now facing problems of increasingly inadequate supplies and services.²³ Unless the central government agrees to fund the IDP camps in the south of Iraq, there is likely to be a ban on taking in any more

⁹ “Rising to the humanitarian challenge in Iraq”, *Oxfam Briefing Paper*, 07/2007 available online at http://www.oxfam.org/en/files/bp105_humanitarian_challenge_in_iraq_0707.pdf/download

¹⁰ “Iraq: International support urgently needed to address spiralling refugee crisis” *Amnesty International* 07/26/2007.

¹¹ “Iraq displacement: generous host countries left in the lurch” *UNHCR* 07/06/2007.

¹² “U.N. decries neglect of Iraqi refugees” *The Washington Post*, 07/07/2007.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ “UNHCR doubles budget for Iraq operations to US \$123 million” *UNHCR*, 07/12/2007.

¹⁶ “Iraq displacement: generous host countries left in the lurch” *UNHCR* 07/06/2007.

¹⁷ “Meeting on aiding 2 million Iraqi refugees highlights divisions” *The New York Times*, 07/27/2007.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ “Palestinian refugees from Iraq heading to Brazil” *Irin News Service*, 07/04/2007.

²⁰ “Israel to let some Palestinians from Iraq live in West Bank” *The New York Times*, 07/31/2007.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² “U.N. decries neglect of Iraqi refugees” *The Washington Post*, 07/07/2007.

²³ “Concern for newly arriving IDPs in south” *IRIN News Service*, 07/12/2007.

displaced people into the already saturated camps.²⁴ As of July 2007, the number of people fleeing to the three northern governorates in Iraq has increased to 150,000.²⁵ The newly displaced in the northern areas are settling in camps or similar settlements.²⁶

Regional and international rifts over the refugee crisis became particularly evident during a meeting on the refugee crisis held in Jordan, which was attended by diplomats and officials from Iraq, Syria, Egypt, the Arab League and United Nations relief organizations.²⁷ Representatives of the United States, the European Union, Turkey, Iran, Russia and Japan attended as observers.²⁸ During the meeting, Jordan cited increased security concerns as a result of the massive influx of Iraqi refugees and also because of the possible spill over of sectarian tensions in Iraq into Jordan.²⁹ The Iraqi government is also under pressure from Syria and Jordan to deliver aid for covering the cost of taking in Iraqi refugees.³⁰ Jordan estimates the security and infrastructure costs at US\$ 1 billion, while Syria pegs it at US\$ 250 million.³¹

3. *Legacy of Vengeance Seeking Group Grievance or Group Paranoia* **Rating: 10**

Even with the American troop surge and new counter insurgency tactics³² yielding some results in areas such as Anbar province, Iraq continues to witness widespread violence. In Diyala province, a suicide bomber detonated an explosives laden car at a funeral in the Shiite Kurdish village of Zargosh, killing 22,³³ while there were two more car bombings in the Shiite Karrada district.³⁴ The attacks broke a relative lull in violence in Baghdad, demonstrating the potency of the insurgents' tactics.

A suicide bomber struck in Armili, a Shiite farmtown north of Baghdad, killing more than 100 people and destroying several buildings.³⁵ Tensions have been high in Armirli, which comprises of mainly Shiites from Iraq's Turkoman ethnic minority while other neighborhoods are dominated by Sunni Arabs.³⁶ As U.S. operations continue around Baghdad, relatively unprotected areas such as Armili are increasingly coming under attack.³⁷

²⁴ "Concern for newly arriving IDPs in south" *IRIN News Service*, 07/12/2007.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ "Meeting on aiding 2 million Iraqi refugees highlights divisions" *The New York Times*, 07/27/2007.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² See Indicator No.11 for details.

³³ "Suicide bomber hits Shiite funeral tent in village northeast of Baghdad, killing 22" *Associated Press*, 07/07/2007.

³⁴ "Bombings in Baghdad, Shiite town take heavy toll" *National Public Radio*, 07/08/2007.

³⁵ "Bombing takes high toll in Shiite farm town" *National Public Radio*, 07/07/2007.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*

In an apparent sectarian massacre in a Shiite village in the Diyala province, men dressed in Iraqi Army uniforms and driving civilian pickup trucks killed 29 men, women and children.³⁸ As the U.S. has built new alliances³⁹ in Diyala to fend off Sunni extremists, the militants are moving their attacks into outlying areas of the province.⁴⁰

There was also a mortar attack on the Green Zone in July which killed three people.⁴¹ The Green Zone, even though the most heavily fortified and secure area in Iraq, is clearly not invulnerable from attacks by insurgents and militants.⁴²

At the same time, the Iraqi soccer team's victory in the Asian Cup competition became occasion for unusual unity⁴³. The soccer team, resident abroad, draws players from across sectarian lines and soccer is a hugely popular sport in Iraq. However, the celebrations were punctuated with several suicide bomb attacks, car bombings and other attacks.⁴⁴

4. *Chronic and Sustained Human Flight* **Rating: 10**

The professional class in Iraq continues to be victimized by militiamen and insurgents, with doctors, academics, journalists and other professionals experiencing the brunt of attacks, threats, kidnappings, and blackmail.

Journalism remains a dangerous profession in Iraq. Thirty-two journalists have been killed in 2007 so far, making it the deadliest year yet.⁴⁵ Journalists who remain alive generally end up leaving the country.⁴⁶ Some Iraqi journalists who fled to Jordan have set up their own television station, titled *Exile TV*.⁴⁷

The exodus of professionals out of Iraq is having adverse affects on the education system since lecturers are leaving the country in big numbers.⁴⁸ In a bid to induce academics into staying in the country, the Ministry of Finance is now offering them life insurance and security protection.⁴⁹

Doctors, too, continue to face persecution at the hands of extremists. On July 23, 150 doctors in Iraq's second largest city, Basra, began a three-day strike, demanding that the

³⁸ "Attackers kill 39 in Iraq; massacre details emerge" *The New York Times*, 07/18/2007.

³⁹ See Indicator No.10 for a detailed account of the new alliances forged by the US in the bid to increase security.

⁴⁰ "Attackers kill 39 in Iraq; massacre details emerge" *The New York Times*, 07/18/2007.

⁴¹ "Insurgents fire shells into Baghdad's green zone killing 3" *The New York Times*, 07/11/2007.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ "Soccer victory lifts Iraqis; bombs kill 50 in Baghdad" *The New York Times*, 07/26/2007.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ "Insurgents fire shells into Baghdad's green zone,killing 3" *The New York Times*, 07/11/2007.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ "Exiled Iraqi journalists form TV station", *National Public Radio*, 07/06/2007.

⁴⁸ "Ministry to insure and protect professors" *National Public Radio*, 07/08/2007.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

government provide greater security for them and their families.⁵⁰ According to the head of the Basra Doctors' Association, since 2003, 12 doctors have been killed by unidentified gunmen in the city.⁵¹ Doctors face daily assassinations, kidnappings, threats and blackmail by militants and insurgents. Most doctors have had to hire personal bodyguards to ensure their security.⁵²

5. Uneven Economic Development Along Group Lines **Rating: 9**

Even as violence rages in most of Iraq, clear regional differences in stability and development are emerging. Northern Iraq, under the control of the semi-autonomous Kurdish government, has greater political stability and less violence as compared to the rest of the country, perhaps due to fewer political and ethnic cleavages and a history of autonomy.⁵³ The stability has also attracted foreign investment, contributing to economic growth in the region.⁵⁴

The Kurdish government is now pushing to increase oil and natural gas exploration in the north, with the aim of increasing daily output to one million barrels over the next five years.⁵⁵ Although the plan has been drawn up in consultation with Baghdad, the Kurdish government has, since 2003, followed an independent energy policy and has awarded DNO, a Norwegian oil company, a drilling and exploration contract.⁵⁶

Distribution of oil resources has remained a major cause of concern in Iraq since the Sunni minority is located in areas with few proven reserves while most of the known reserves are located in the Kurdish areas in northern Iraq or the Shiite dominated southern parts.⁵⁷ The Kurdish government currently can negotiate agreements on oil exploration and drilling contracts in its region and is hence opposed to the federal measures on the same.⁵⁸ The new federal energy bill approved in July, envisages the creation of a council, which will have the authority to review contracts, although there are limits on its power in terms of rejecting contracts.⁵⁹ The bill has met with resistance from several blocs.⁶⁰

The scramble for control over oil fields remains an additional challenge. After a bomb attack in Kirkuk, Kurdish officials moved to send fighters from Kurdistan to secure oil pipelines in the province and help with local security.⁶¹ The decision is, however,

⁵⁰ "Basra doctors on strike, demand protection" *IRIN News Network* 07/25/2007.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ "Kurds advance plan to increase oil and gas production" *International Herald Tribune*, 07/31/2007.

⁵⁴ "Iraq: enterprising neighbors find common ground" *The Financial Times*, 07/18/2007.

⁵⁵ "Kurds advance plan to increase oil and gas production" *International Herald Tribune*, 07/31/2007.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ "Iraqi cabinet approves bill on sharing oil wealth" *International Herald Tribune*, 07/03/2007.

⁵⁸ "Iraqi cabinet moves forward on oil measure" *The New York Times*, 07/04/2007.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ "Attackers kill 39 in Iraq; massacre details emerge" *The New York Times*, 07/18/2007.

controversial as oil-rich Kirkuk remains politically volatile.⁶² While the Kurdish government would like to incorporate the city into Kurdistan, there is resistance from Turkmen and Arabs living in the area who fear displacement.⁶³

6. *Sharp and/or Severe Economic Decline*
Rating: 9

Iraq's economy remains under siege because of the widespread violence in the country. The Iraqi middle class has for the most part borne the brunt of the economic depression.⁶⁴ In wealthier districts, consumer goods and electricity at black market rates are readily available for those that can afford it. For millions of others, however, these have become ill-affordable 'luxuries'.⁶⁵

7. *Criminalization and/or Delegitimization of the State*
Rating: 10

Even as Washington is pushing Prime Minister al-Maliki to take steps towards national reconciliation between Shiites and Sunnis through political efforts, sectarian divides continues to plague the society. Thus, in areas where sectarian tensions are high, IDPs report discrimination by the bureaucracy in transferring Public Distribution System (PDS) rations.⁶⁶ IDPs also face problems from local distributors who refuse to provide them with food because of sectarian reasons.⁶⁷

Significant questions also remain with regard to the functionality of the government and Parliament. The Parliament remains heavily divided on sectarian lines as lawmakers continue to boycott the institution for different reasons. Forty-four Sunni legislators who had boycotted Parliament because of the removal of the Sunni Arab speaker of the house, Mr. Mashhadani, following criminal allegations against him have returned to Parliament.⁶⁸ The boycott was called off as a consequence of a deal with Shiite lawmakers that will allow any Parliament member who resigns, "to receive monthly retirement payments equal to 80 percent of their current monthly salary and benefits."⁶⁹ The return of the Sunni legislators follows the end of the boycott called by Shiite lawmakers loyal to Moqtada al-Sadr.⁷⁰

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ "Strife and ice, staples of life, overlap in Iraq" *The New York Times*, 07/28/2007.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ "Iraq displacement 2007 mid-year review" *The International Organization for Migration*.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ "Sunni legislators return to work in Iraq after reaching deal on speaker" *The New York Times*, 07/20/2007.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

On the other hand, six cabinet ministers from the main Sunni Arab political bloc, the Iraqi Consensus Front, who had called off their five-week boycott of the cabinet, are now threatening to pull out of the cabinet altogether, unless the al-Maliki-led government agrees to several demands.⁷¹ The demands include the release of Sunni detainees who have not been charged with crimes and the immediate disarmament of militias.⁷² In addition, six other Shiite ministers affiliated with al-Sadr have left the cabinet.⁷³

Iraq's Parliament is headed into a month long summer break, despite calls from the US and the Prime Minister to shorten the recess in order to work on ratifying important legislation, notably the legislation on dividing Iraq's oil wealth and on allowing some former Baath party members back into senior positions.⁷⁴ Members of Parliament, however, defend the recess by contending that they had already cut their two-month summer break by half and had extended their work week from three to six days.⁷⁵

8. *Progressive Deterioration of Public Services* **Rating: 9**

According to the Oxfam report cited under the Indicator No.1, of the four million Iraqis who are dependent on food assistance, "only 60 percent currently have access to rations through the government-run Public Distribution System (PDS), down from 96 percent in 2004."⁷⁶ Reportedly, the most common obstacle in accessing PDS rations is massive insecurity along food transportation routes.⁷⁷

The *BBC* further reports that clean water is available to fewer Iraqis today than under Saddam Hussein, while about 80 percent of people do not have access to 'effective sanitation', which is comparable to conditions in sub-Saharan Africa.⁷⁸ According to the report, while funding for long-term development projects went up by almost 1000 percent in the two years following the war, immediate humanitarian aid fell by about half.⁷⁹

Many parts of Iraq also face shortages in essential supplies. The government of Kurdistan, in northern Iraq, issued a plea for more medical supplies in the region, blaming violence in Iraq as the major reason for shortages in the north.⁸⁰ A senior official with the Health Ministry says that the road networks are unsafe since militants have

⁷¹ "Soccer victory lifts Iraqis; bombs kill 50 in Baghdad" *The New York Times*, 07/26/2007.

⁷² "Sunni legislators return to work in Iraq after reaching deal on speaker" *The New York Times*, 07/20/2007

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ "Iraqi legislators take break, despite appeals to stay on" *The New York Times*, 07/31/2007.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ "Rising to the humanitarian challenge in Iraq", *Oxfam Briefing Paper*, 07/2007. Available online at http://www.oxfam.org/en/files/bp105_humanitarian_challenge_in_iraq_0707.pdf/download

⁷⁷ "Iraq displacement 2007 mid-year review" *The International Organization for Migration*.

⁷⁸ "Iraq faces alarming humanitarian crisis" *BBC Online* 07/29/2007. Available online at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/6921623.stm

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ "Iraq: Kurdistan government appeals for medical supplies" *Irin News Service*, 07/01/2007.

almost complete control over the routes.⁸¹ According to the Health Minister for the region, in addition to the shortage in medical supplies, specialists are unable to travel to the region to provide essential training to medical staff there.⁸²

Discrimination along sectarian lines also pervades the Health Ministry since people loyal to the Shiite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr control the ministry.⁸³ Since sectarian minded Shiites dictate access to hospitals in Baghdad,⁸⁴ this puts the Sunnis in a particularly disadvantaged position.

Public access to health care is all the more crucial since, in July, Iraq's Health Ministry issued a warning of the possibility of an increase in waterborne diseases among children.⁸⁵ Water remains a scare resource in Iraq, and since the country's sewage and water networks have not been repaired because of the unstable security situation, there is a possibility of the outbreak of diseases.⁸⁶ Cases of viral hepatitis, diarrhea, typhoid and bacterial infections have been reported in Baghdad, while five cases of cholera have been registered in southern Iraq.⁸⁷

The ability of the current government to take over public services in a meaningful manner also remains doubtful. The conclusion of a report by an American oversight agency, the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction (SIGIR), indicates that the government of Iraq is refusing to take over thousands of completed American-financed reconstruction projects.⁸⁸ This is forcing the U.S. either to hand such projects over to local Iraqis, who often do not have the requisite training and resources, or keep running the projects themselves.⁸⁹ According to the report, of the 2797 completed projects costing US\$ 5.8 billion, Iraq's national government had, by spring 2007, accepted only 435 projects valued at US\$ 501 million.⁹⁰

The report found that many completed rebuilding projects, like power plants and hospitals are now in different ways, non-functional.⁹¹ Thus, infrastructure and public services are in an extreme state of neglect in Iraq as the government is yet to embrace all its governance functions.

9. *Suspension or Arbitrary Application of the Rule of Law and Widespread Violation of Human Rights*

Rating: 10

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² "Iraq: Kurdistan government appeals for medical supplies" *Irin News Service*, 07/01/2007.

⁸³ "Mahdi army, not Al-Qaeda, is enemy No. 1 in western Baghdad" *The Washington Post*, 07/16/2007.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ "Iraq: Health Ministry issues warning on water borne diseases" *Irin News Network*, 07/03/2007.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ "As U.S. rebuilds, Iraqi minister won't take over finished work" *The New York Times*, 07/28/2007.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

Independent organizations continue to report widespread human rights violations. In a July report, Human Rights Watch reported human rights abuses being committed by Kurdistan security forces (*Asayish*) against detainees held in custody in northern Iraq.⁹² According to the report, “Detainees reported a wide range of abuse, including beatings using implements such as cables, hosepipes, wooden sticks, and metal rods. Detainees also described how *Asayish* agents put them in stress positions for prolonged periods, and kept them blindfolded and handcuffed continuously for several days at a stretch.”⁹³ The Kurdish security forces are affiliated with the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) and are outside the control of the Iraqi Ministry of Interior.⁹⁴

Also, the *BBC* reports that in a period of two years, 500 mutilated bodies dumped into the Tigris river have been washed up to the shore of the town of Suweira, south of Baghdad.⁹⁵ According to an eyewitness describing the condition of one such dead body, “He'd been handcuffed and blindfolded and shot three times in the head. There were clear signs of torture on his body.”⁹⁶

In Wasit province, the Iraqi police have found five bodies floating in the Tigris River.⁹⁷ According to a police official, the victims are civilians, and had been shot multiple times and bore signs of torture.⁹⁸

10. Security Apparatus Operates as a “State Within a State” **Rating: 10**

In West Rasheed district, the primarily Shiite Mahdi Army led by Moqtada al-Sadr continues its campaign of killing and driving out Sunnis while ensuring that basic services do not reach those who remain.⁹⁹ According to *The Washington Post*, “the militia has a structure familiar to U.S. soldiers: brigade and battalion commanders leading legions of foot soldiers. Its fighters are willing and able to attack Americans with armor-piercing bombs, mortars, machine guns and grenades.”¹⁰⁰ The security situation in this once relatively peaceful region in eastern Baghdad is deteriorating because of the

⁹² “Caught in the whirlwind: torture and denial of due process by the Kurdistan security forces” *Human Rights Watch* report, 07/03/2007.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ “Iraqi river carries grotesque cargo” *BBC Online*, 07/17/2007. Available online at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/6902024.stm

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ “Attackers kill 39 in Iraq; massacre details emerge” *The New York Times*, 07/18/2007.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ “Mahdi army, not Al-Qaeda, is enemy no. 1 in western Baghdad” *The Washington Post*, 07/16/2007.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

increasing number of attacks against U.S. forces.¹⁰¹ Militias loyal to al-Sadr are believed to be behind the violence.¹⁰²

In Baghdad, the southern neighborhood of Saydiya continues to be racked by violence.¹⁰³ The neighborhood has become the scene of intense fighting over the past several months with Sunni Arab militants in control of many streets. The militants kill those who do not cooperate.¹⁰⁴

As a new counter-insurgency tactic, U.S. forces are negotiating agreements with Iraqi insurgents and militia members to fight against hard-line militants such as the Al-Qaeda in Iraq.¹⁰⁵ Although many militants who formerly attacked American forces have been set free under these agreements, the move is seen as “forgiveness” necessary to the current counter-insurgency campaign.¹⁰⁶ In certain districts, the alliance has proved to be fruitful, such as in the violent Amiriya neighborhood where Sunni extremists have been fighting in cooperation with American and Iraqi forces against Al-Qaeda.¹⁰⁷ The alliance with Sunni tribal sheikhs and American forces has also helped clear militants affiliated to the Al-Qaeda in Iraq from the city of Ramadi.¹⁰⁸ The success of the alliance in the Anbar province is, however, largely attributed to the demographic dominance of the Sunnis.¹⁰⁹

According to the International Organization for Migration, the military alliance between the Multi-National Forces in Iraq/Iraqi Forces and local tribes has ‘shifted displacement dynamics’, such that while some areas have been stabilized, others have become unstable.¹¹⁰ At the same time, there are efforts to replicate the success of the Anbar alliance in other parts of Iraq.¹¹¹

Marking a departure from formal recruitment through the Iraqi police and army, American forces are also actively recruiting and funding armed Sunnis as ‘local protection forces’ to improve security and also to foster reconciliation at the local level.¹¹² Colonel Ricky Gibbs said in an interview, “I am looking for a group of loyal Iraqis who will carry weapons and go after the same people we want...We will teach them. U.S. rules of engagement and tell them to capture them, not kill them.”¹¹³ The

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² “Unit’s mission: survive 4 miles to remember fallen comrade” *The Washington Post*, 07/09/2007.

¹⁰³ “2 Iraqi journalists killed as U.S. forces clash with militias” *The New York Times*, 07/13/2007.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ “Deals in Iraq make friends of enemies” *The Washington Post*, 07/20/2007.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ “Sunni militants in Baghdad shift loyalties” *National Public Radio*, 07/31/2007.

¹⁰⁸ “Showcase and chimera in the desert” *The New York Times*, 07/08/2007.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ “Iraq displacement 2007 mid-year review” *The International Organization for Migration*.

¹¹¹ “In Iraqi city, G.I.’s forge Sunni tie in bid to squeeze militants” *The New York Times*, 07/06/2007.

¹¹² “U.S. widens push to use armed Iraqi residents” *The Washington Post*, 07/28/2007.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

move is also seen as a way to ‘jump-start’ local forces.¹¹⁴ The new recruits are required to take an oath of loyalty to the government.¹¹⁵

The introduction of local forces is, however, a risky option, especially in areas like Rasheed, where tensions between the Shiite police, Shiite militias and Sunni residents remain high.¹¹⁶ On the other hand, the U.S. is also attempting to build ties with Sunni leaders such as Abu Azzam who leads Sunni groups like the 1920s Revolutionary Brigade and the Mujahedeen Army in fighting against extremists.¹¹⁷ This alliance is, however, different from the American-Sunni alliance in Anbar, since this group patrols close to Shiite areas and is seen as an experiment in Sunni-Shiite cooperation.¹¹⁸ The gulf between the Sunni groups and the largely Shiite dominated police force, however, remains formidable.¹¹⁹

In an incident that indicates the infiltration of insurgents within the police ranks, there was a battle between American and Iraqi forces in uniform, in which six Iraqi policemen and seven gunmen were killed.¹²⁰ In the raid, a high ranking police lieutenant suspected of having ties with the Quds Force, part of Iran's Revolutionary Guards, was also arrested.¹²¹

At the same time, the Iraqi government and the U.S. military report a notable decline in the number of Iraqi civilian deaths from, 1900 in May to, 1200 in June 2007.¹²² However, U.S. casualties remain high, and are pegged at 123 in May and 101 in June.¹²³ Estimating exact civilian casualties in Iraq remains an extremely difficult task especially since the current Iraqi government no longer reports data on civilian death counts and has refused to provide such information to the United Nations.¹²⁴

11. Rise of Factionalized Elites

Rating: 10

The sectarian strife and violence in Iraq is also manifest in the political realm, as the Parliament and Cabinet remain divided along sectarian lines. One of the main conclusions prescribed by the American mandated ‘benchmarks’ for progress in Iraq is

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ “Mistrust as Iraqi troops encounter new U.S. allies” *The New York Times*, 07/16/2007.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ “U.S. troops battle Iraqi police in east Baghdad; rogue lieutenant captured, military says” *The New York Times*, 07/14/2007.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² “Steep fall in Iraqi civilian death toll” *The Financial Times* 07/02/2007.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ “Iraqi civilian casualties declined in June, officials say” *The New York Times*, 07/02/2007.

the need for national political reconciliation spearheaded by the Iraqi government.¹²⁵ However, this continues to be impeded by divisions and fractures at various levels.

The complex and volatile inter-sectarian relations are further exacerbated by competing claims to power in Iraq's new political landscape. According to Hachim al-Hassani, former speaker of Parliament and lawmaker, the groups that benefited from Saddam Hussein's overthrow, especially the Shiites and Kurds, "do not want to give up those gains, they don't want to share power...that's where the problem is...we can't make any political progress unless we reach some kind of equalization of power between different groups, at least in the transition period we are going through."¹²⁶

In Parliament, the main Sunni Arab coalition, the Tawafuq, has been boycotting sessions as a reaction against the way the government has handled the murder accusation charge against the Culture Minister who is a Sunni Arab.¹²⁷

Further, the federal energy bill, mentioned under Indicator No.5, which was approved by the Iraqi Cabinet, was voted on by only 24 of the 37 Cabinet members.¹²⁸ Boycotts were called by ministers from the Sunni Iraqi Accordance Front and the Shiite bloc loyal to Moqtada al-Sadr.¹²⁹ The boycotts indicate the continuing factionalization of the Cabinet along sectarian lines fuelled by various factors such as resource allocation.

The Shiite camp, too, remains fractured. The failing health of Abdul Aziz al-Hakim, head of the Supreme Islamic Iraqi Council (SICI), the largest Shiite group in Iraq's Parliament is accompanied by the rise of his son, Amar al-Hakim as his potential successor.¹³⁰ According to an Iraqi diplomat, "The Hakims run events inside the tent, and Sadr runs them outside the tent," suggesting keen divisions within the Shiite bloc, as well as the growing influence of Moqtada Al-Sadr.¹³¹

While the Hakims stand firm on creating a Shiite province in oil-rich Southern Iraq, al-Sadr and other Shiite parties disagree since such a move has the potential to split Iraq into three separate entities.¹³² The Hakims are also insistent on the need to keep former Baath party members out of the government.¹³³ The two issues have proved to be a further dividing factor impeding reconciliation efforts even within Shiites. At the same time, the rise of Abdul Azi al-Hakim's son, who many Iraqis liken with Saddam Hussein's son,

¹²⁵ "President unbowed as benchmarks are unmet" *The Washington Post*, 07/13/2007.

¹²⁶ "Deadlocked Sunni, Shiite factions block political progress, Iraqis say" *The Washington Post*, 07/13/2007.

¹²⁷ "Iraqi civilian casualties declined in June, officials say" *The New York Times*, 07/02/2007.

¹²⁸ "Iraqi cabinet approves bill on sharing oil wealth" *International Herald Tribune*, 07/03/2007.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ "Son of ailing Shiite leader steps forward" *The Washington Post*, 07/01/2007.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ *Ibid.*

Uday Hussein,¹³⁴ indicates the possibility of dynastic leadership based upon personality, religion and family ties having prominence among the Shiite population.¹³⁵

12. *Intervention of Other States or External Political Actors*
Rating: 10

The American army has stated that militias affiliated with Iran operating in Iraq may be contributing to the current violence in the country.¹³⁶ The U.S. has accused Iran of using its Lebanese ally, Hezbollah to arm Shiite insurgents in Iraq.¹³⁷ In this context, the U.S. has expressed its desire for another face-to-face meeting with Iranian officials over concerns that the state has an increasing role in the worsening security situation in Iraq.¹³⁸ Similarly, Saudi Arabia is reported to be financing Sunni opposition groups in Iraq while allowing Saudi sympathizers to cross the border to fight alongside Sunni insurgents against the Shiite dominated government.¹³⁹ Washington estimates that of the 60 to 80 foreign fighters entering Iraq each month, nearly half come from Saudi Arabia.¹⁴⁰ According to American officials, most of the suicide bombers in Iraq are from Saudi Arabia and approximately 40 percent of all foreign fighters are Saudi.¹⁴¹ While foreign fighters come to Iraq primarily to become suicide bombers, others arrive as bomb makers, snipers, logisticians and financiers.¹⁴²

The stakes are high for Saudi Arabia, especially in the context of the increasing influence of Iran in Iraq, which is financing and training Shiite militia groups, and potentially drawing close to the Shiite-dominated Iraqi government as well.¹⁴³ Another principle concern for Saudi Arabia is the condition of the Iraqi Sunnis under a divided Shiite dominated government.¹⁴⁴ These two factors guarantee Saudi Arabia's continued role in Iraq, further complicating an already messy conflict.

Turkey's relationship with Iraq has also come under strain as the former has deployed some 140,000 soldiers on its south eastern border adjoining the semi-autonomous Kurdish region in Iraq.¹⁴⁵ Turkey is particularly concerned with activities of the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK), which, according to officials, may be operating with the

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ "Mahdi Army, Not Al-Qaeda, is Enemy No. 1 in Western Baghdad" *The Washington Post*, 07/16/2007.

¹³⁷ "U.S. Officials Charge Hezbollah Involvement in Iraq" *National Public Radio*, 07/02/2007.

¹³⁸ "US wants fresh Iran talks on Iraq" *BBC Online*, 07/17/2007. Available online at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/6903164.stm

¹³⁹ "Saudis going south on Iraq" *The New York Times*, 07/29/2007.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴¹ "U.S. officials voice frustrations with Saudis, citing role in Iraq" *The New York Times*, 07/27/2007.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

¹⁴³ "Saudis going south on Iraq" *The New York Times*, 07/29/2007.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵ "Kurdistan showdown" *The Wall Street Journal*, 07/10/2007.

knowledge and perhaps the backing of the Iraqi Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG).¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

July 2007
Core 5

1. *Police*
Rating: Poor

The Iraqi police continue to be plagued by the problem of infiltration within its ranks.¹⁴⁷ Shiite militia groups, including members of the Mahdi Army, as well as Sunni insurgent groups, are believed to have infiltrated the police force and are accused of carrying out sectarian killings from their positions.¹⁴⁸ In July, there was a gun battle between American forces and uniformed Iraqi forces in which a police lieutenant accused of having links with Iran's Quds force was arrested.¹⁴⁹

A White House report evaluating progress in Iraq also expressed dissatisfaction with the Iraqi security forces. According to Lt. Gen. James M. Dubik, the new American general responsible for training and equipping Iraq's security forces, the biggest challenge is to find leaders willing to rise above sectarian loyalties.¹⁵⁰ Indicating the enormity of the challenge, he said in an interview, "You can't grow a force this fast and have the right number of qualified leaders...you can't do it. This is a problem now, and it will be a problem for a good number of years."¹⁵¹

2. *Leadership*
Rating: Poor

Sectarian divisions continue to divide the Iraqi leadership as well. The Iraqi government under Prime Minister al-Maliki has not been able to make much headway in terms of bringing about national reconciliation between the Shiites and Sunnis, one of the main benchmarks sought by the U.S. in gauging progress in Iraq.¹⁵² There are frequent boycotts by different blocs in the Parliament and Cabinet, which have hindered progress on key legislation. Currently, the main Sunni Arab political bloc, the Iraqi Consensus Front, is threatening to withdraw from the Cabinet altogether if the government does not meet its demands.¹⁵³

By the end of July, Iraq's Parliament decided to take a month-long recess in August, which will halt all work, even as there is little progress on key legislation such as on Iraq's oil wealth and on political reconciliation with the Sunnis.¹⁵⁴

¹⁴⁷ "U.S. troops battle Iraqi police in east Baghdad; rogue lieutenant captured, military says" *The New York Times*, 07/14/2007.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ "General training Iraqis cites problem of sectarian loyalty" *The New York Times*, 07/29/2007.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵² "President unbowed as benchmarks are unmet" *The Washington Post*, 07/13/2007.

¹⁵³ "Soccer victory lifts Iraqis; bombs kill 50 in Baghdad" *The New York Times*, 07/26/2007.

¹⁵⁴ "Iraqi legislators take break, despite appeals to stay on" *The New York Times*, 07/31/2007.

3. *Civil Service*
Rating: Poor

The U.S. agency overseeing reconstruction in Iraq has referred to the endemic corruption in the country as a ‘second insurgency’.¹⁵⁵ According to the U.S. Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, there has been significant mismanagement of funds by the Iraqi Ministries.¹⁵⁶ The transfer of public works projects to Iraqis has further met with serious obstacles in the form of lack of training and management expertise among Iraqis. At the same time, the Iraqi government has refused to take over completed reconstruction projects, while rebuilding projects under the control of Iraqi Ministries have often fallen into disrepair.¹⁵⁷

Sectarian interests also remain embedded in the operation of certain ministries, for example the Health Ministry is still controlled by people loyal to the Shiite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr.¹⁵⁸

4. *Judiciary*
Rating: Poor

The task of dispensing justice remains perilous for judges and lawyers. In order to bring about the rule of law, the Americans and the Iraqi government have erected a legal Green Zone in Baghdad, a heavily fortified compound to provide refuge to judges and their families and also ensure the trials of some of the most dangerous suspects.¹⁵⁹ Beyond security concerns, there remain doubts about the Ministry of Interior’s ability to rise above sectarian agendas and dispense justice equally to all Iraqis.¹⁶⁰

According to *The New York Times*, the legal system in Iraq remains heavily reliant on “confessions rather than forensic investigations at the crime scene.”¹⁶¹ Consequently, there is a greater possibility of the use of torture to coerce confessions from suspects.¹⁶²

5. *Military*
Rating: Weak

According to a report released by the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), between March 2007 and July 2007, there has been a decline in the number of Iraqi army

¹⁵⁵ “Corruption mars Iraq rebuilding” *BBC Online*, 07/30/2007.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁷ “As U.S. rebuilds, Iraqi minister won’t take over finished work” *The New York Times*, 07/28/2007.

¹⁵⁸ “Mahdi army, not Al-Qaeda, is enemy No. 1 in western Baghdad” *The Washington Post*, 07/16/2007.

¹⁵⁹ “Justice From behind the barricades in Baghdad” *The New York Times*, 07/30/2007.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶² *Ibid.*

units capable of independent operations.¹⁶³ The report further states, “Tribal and ethno-sectarian loyalties remain strong within many Iraqi military units, hindering efforts to take actions against militias.”¹⁶⁴ In one indicative incident, as mentioned earlier under Indicator No.3, men dressed in Iraqi Army uniforms and driving civilian pickup trucks killed 29 men, women and children in a Shiite village in Diyala province.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶³ “Securing, stabilizing and rebuilding Iraq: Iraqi government has not met most legislative, security, and economic benchmarks” *Government Accountability Office*, 09/2007. Available online at <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d071195.pdf>

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁵ “Attackers kill 39 in Iraq; massacre details emerge” *The New York Times*, 07/18/2007.

August 2007
12 Indicators

1. Demographic Pressures
Rating: 10

August bombings in northern Iraq (discussed in detail under Indicator #3), which claimed more lives than any attack since the invasion in 2003,¹⁶⁶ may reflect more than just group grievance. Demographic pressures exist which may be contributing to violence in northern Iraq. A referendum scheduled for November regarding the delineation of the borders of Kirkuk province (manipulated by Saddam Hussein for political control of the north) suggest that the issue of land ownership and disputes regarding borders could offer a demographic dimension to this violence. Geopolitical motivations, as well as pressures from skewed population distributions and group resettlement patterns, are exacerbating border disputes and struggles for the ownership of land and housing. This is particularly relevant, as sectarian segregation of the country (one way or another) looks more and more likely.

2. Movement of Refugees or IDPs
Rating: 10

August estimates by the UNHCR conclude that the number of Iraqis fleeing their homes has increased to roughly 60,000 per month (up from a previous estimate of 50,000 per month).¹⁶⁷ The UN also estimates that the total number of Iraqis who been displaced since the 2003 invasion is now roughly 4.2 million – 2 million these fleeing abroad¹⁶⁸ – in part due to a continuing lack of access to social services within the country.¹⁶⁹ The February 2006 bombing of the al-Askari mosque unleashed a wave of sectarian bloodshed. This has led to many Iraqis “choosing to leave ethnically mixed areas before they are forced to do so”,¹⁷⁰ resulting in increased displacement both within the country and beyond its borders. The UNHCR has reported registering more than 170,000 refugees who have fled Iraq, and has referred 13,200 for resettlement in third countries – although only “several hundred” have actually been admitted to-date.¹⁷¹

Of Iraq’s neighbors, the majority of Iraqi refugees continue to move into Jordan and Syria, which have both made efforts to accommodate the influx of displaced Iraqis.¹⁷² The Jordanian government announced in August it had decided to allow Iraqi children to

¹⁶⁶ “Toll exceeds 500 in blasts near northwest Iraqi town.” *The New York Times*, 8/22/2007

¹⁶⁷ “Sharp rise in Iraqis fleeing home.” *BBC News Online*, 8/29/2007

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁰ “Sharp rise in Iraqis fleeing home.” *BBC News Online*, 8/29/2007

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷² “Jordan yields poverty and pain for the well-off fleeing Iraq.” *The New York Times*, 8/10/2007

attend Jordanian public schools - regardless of their residency status - but there are questions about how overcrowded schools will be able to accommodate an influx of Iraqi students – both logistically and financially.¹⁷³

The pressures put on neighboring states by Iraqis flooding across the borders is becoming increasingly burdensome,¹⁷⁴ and even states which have displayed great leniency toward the alien Iraqi population in the past, such as Jordan, have “sharply reduced” the number of Iraqis allowed to cross the border in response to the pressures these refugees create for the state.¹⁷⁵ Similarly, Syria has had a difficult time absorbing the influx of Iraqi refugees. Both states have sought international assistance in accommodating the Iraqi refugees. School overcrowding, prostitution, inflation and the effects of insufficient health care resources and shelter have all been issues accompanying the Iraqi refugees in Syria.¹⁷⁶

Iraq’s health, interior and defense ministries have calculated that 1,773 civilians were killed in Iraq in August.¹⁷⁷ This is an increase of 546 from the July figure, of 1,227 civilians, as calculated by the same Iraqi ministries.¹⁷⁸ The accuracy of any civilian death toll is highly questionable as the security environment in Iraq does not lend itself to the collection of accurate data, nor are numbers coming from the Iraq government necessarily an accurate representation of the facts on the ground. Iraq Body Count calculated 2,575 civilian deaths in August¹⁷⁹ – a significantly higher figure than that generated by the Iraqi ministries – highlighting the difficulty in calculating accurate and universally accepted numbers.

Oxfam reported in August that as many as 8 million Iraqis are in need of emergency aid.¹⁸⁰ Violence, disease and malnutrition are continuing to perpetuate complex humanitarian emergencies within Iraq. Oxfam claims that only 60 percent of the four million Iraqis registered to receive food assistance receive it.¹⁸¹ Eighty percent of Iraqis have “no access to effective sanitation,”¹⁸² and, as discussed in Indicator # 8 below, water shortages are contributing to cholera outbreaks across Iraq.

3. Vengeance-Seeking Group Grievance

Rating: 10

¹⁷³ “Jordan yields poverty and pain for the well-off fleeing Iraq.” *The New York Times*, 8/10/2007

¹⁷⁴ “Iraqi refugees, in desperation, turn to the sex trade in Syria.” *The New York Times*, 5/29/2007

¹⁷⁵ “Jordan yields poverty and pain for the well-off fleeing Iraq.” *The New York Times*, 8/10/2007

¹⁷⁶ “Iraqi refugees, in desperation, turn to the sex trade in Syria.” *The New York Times*, 5/29/2007

¹⁷⁷ “Iraqi civilian casualties drop by 50 percent.” *Financial Times Online*, October 1st, 2007

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁰ “Iraq faces alarming humanitarian crisis.” *BBC News Online*, 7/29/2007

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸² *Ibid.*

Although there has been some progress in improving the security situation in Iraq in August, there has not been significant improvement across the country.¹⁸³ Seemingly in response to the increased presence of U.S. troops, the violence has spread to other areas of the country where there is less of a U.S. presence.^{184/185} However, even in the Baghdad area, where the majority of the additional U.S. troops are stationed, more than 371 unidentified bodies were recovered in August – “most thought to be victims of sectarian violence.”¹⁸⁶ Although increased numbers of U.S. military has improved the security situation to some degree, Iraq’s sectarian conflict has not abated, and is expected to continue without a meaningful political reconciliation among the country’s feuding elites.

On August 14, four or five tanker trucks laden with explosives detonated in villages outside Mosul killing at least five hundred and wounding as many as fifteen hundred people.¹⁸⁷ This marks the “bloodiest coordinated attack since the American-led invasion in 2003”.¹⁸⁸ The attacks may have been motivated by conflict between Sunnis and Yazidis stemming from conflicting religious views and the recent “honor killing” of a Yazidi woman who married a Sunni and converted to Sunni Islam.¹⁸⁹ There is also some evidence that the US surge may have had some influence on the attack, which occurred in a previously peaceful region; insurgents may be “finding it harder to strike in the capital [and therefore] may be seeking softer targets elsewhere, for example in the north.”¹⁹⁰

It is also possible, as noted under Indicator #1, that demographic pressures may have contributed to the attacks, as different factions jostle for control of territory while ethnic/sectarian separation continues. As discussed under Indicator #1, the Saddam Hussein era borders of Kirkuk province were redrawn to “shift the demographic balance against the Kurds”¹⁹¹ by excluding the city of Kirkuk and other Kurdish populated areas such as Chamchamal, Kalar, Tuz Kermatu and Kifri.¹⁹² There is speculation that the scheduled November referendum on the delineation of the borders has raised tensions between Sunnis and Kurds in northern Iraq, and may have, at least in part, been a factor in the August 14 attacks.¹⁹³

A rare glimmer of hope broke through the dark clouds of sectarian conflict last month when the Iraqi national soccer team won the Asia Cup finals. Unfortunately, when the team arrived in Baghdad on August 4, security concerns kept them confined to the airport and Green Zone - isolated from vast majority their compatriots.¹⁹⁴ The Iraqi team captain,

¹⁸³ “Iraq faces alarming humanitarian crisis.” *BBC News Online*, 7/29/2007

¹⁸⁴ “Cruel and deadly.” *The Economist*, 8/15/2007

¹⁸⁵ “Truck bombs kill 175 in Iraq’s north.” *Washington Post*, 8/15/2007

¹⁸⁶ “Execution, body dumping site found south of Baghdad.” *CNN.com*, 8/25/2007

¹⁸⁷ “Toll rises above 500 in Iraq bombings.” *The New York Times*, 8/22/2007

¹⁸⁸ “Toll exceeds 500 in Blasts near northwest Iraqi town.” *The New York Times*, 8/22/2007

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁰ “Cruel and deadly.” *The Economist*, 8/15/2007

¹⁹¹ “Toll exceeds 500 in blasts near northwest Iraqi town.” *The New York Times*, 8/22/2007

¹⁹² “Cruel and deadly.” *The Economist*, 8/15/2007

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁴ “Iraq welcomes home soccer heroes.” *CNN.com*, 8/4/2007

Younes Mahmoud, did not join the team in Baghdad due to personal security concerns.¹⁹⁵ Many observers felt that the “multi-ethnic team, which includes members of different religious sects” offered “proof [that] the country [can] overcome the divisions that have led to bloodshed.”¹⁹⁶ However, attacks on Iraqis watching and celebrating their team’s victories in the run up to the finals¹⁹⁷, as well as the continuing political deadlock in August, have extinguished the hope many saw in the Iraqi Asia Cup victory.

4. Chronic and/or Sustained Human Flight

Rating: 10

Iraq is experiencing significant and severe brain drain and a loss of the economically productive segments of its population. Former Iraqi Prime Minister Ayad Allawi said this month that, “the middle class has left Iraq.”¹⁹⁸ The fleeing Iraqi professional class has sought refuge in Jordan where an estimated 350,000 to 750,000 currently reside – both legally and illegally.¹⁹⁹ The lower cost of living in Syria has attracted the bulk of the middle class Iraqi expatriate population,²⁰⁰ and as many as 1.2 million Iraqis are living in Syria (though Syria has claimed the number is greater).²⁰¹ The “educated, secular center” is fleeing Iraq²⁰², which has very serious ramifications for the state, as this important segment of the population will be a necessary ingredient in rebuilding and stabilizing the country.

5. Uneven Economic Development Along Group Lines

Rating: 9

As of August, the supply of weapons, ammunition, and the payment of wages for the Falluja police force still depends largely upon the United States.²⁰³ Fallujan officials charge that the Shiite-dominated central government is deliberately failing to meet the financial and logistical requests of the [Sunni] Fallujan government²⁰⁴ - a charge Iraqi central government officials deny.²⁰⁵ Such sectarian-driven power struggles have created pockets of autonomy in Iraq that are detrimental to the recovery of a national Iraqi economy. These divisions continue to facilitate uneven economic development along group lines.

¹⁹⁵ “In Iraq, a ho-hum homecoming.” *Washington Post*, 8/4/2007

¹⁹⁶ “Iraq welcomes home soccer heroes.” *CNN.com*, 8/4/2007

¹⁹⁷ “Violence dampens football victory.” *CNN.com*, 7/30/2007

¹⁹⁸ “Jordan yields poverty and pain for the well-off fleeing Iraq.” *The New York Times*, 8/10/2007

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁰¹ “Iraqi refugees, in desperation, turn to the sex trade in Syria.” *The New York Times*, 5/29/2007

²⁰² *Ibid.*

²⁰³ “Falluja's calm is seen at risk if U.S. leaves.” *The New York Times*, 8/19/2007

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁵ “Falluja's calm is seen at risk if U.S. leaves.” *The New York Times*, 8/19/2007

6. Sharp and/or Severe Economic Decline

Rating: 9

According to the August update to the U.S. National Intelligence Estimate, “there have been modest improvements in economic output, budget execution, and government finances but fundamental structural problems continue to prevent sustained progress in economic growth and living conditions.”²⁰⁶

As discussed under Indicator #4, a large proportion of the economically productive segment of the Iraqi population has fled the country, which is detrimental to the recovery of a viable national economy. Indicator #8 addresses the hijacking of the national electrical grid, which leads to inequitable distribution of power - this in turn negatively effects the development of the *national* Iraqi economy.

Continued fractionalization and a weak central government enable different factions to expand their own wealth and power bases. The increasing incidence of intra-Shiite conflict in the south, including the assassination of two southern provincial governors (discussed further under Indicator #11), highlights the competition between Shiite groups fighting to control the Iraqi oil wealth in the south.²⁰⁷ Similarly, militias in other parts of the country are co-opting the local economy to support their organization and its agenda. The Mahdi Army’s business interests in eastern Baghdad are vast; they are involved in ventures ranging from “real estate and ice to guns and gas”, and the group probably control as many as 70 percent of Baghdad’s gas stations.²⁰⁸

The black market in Iraq is well established – to the extent that even official organs of the Iraqi state do business through it. The government of Falluja currently receives “most of the fuel, ammunition and vehicle maintenance” for its police force from the U.S. Marine Corps, but is still forced to buy black market gasoline from street vendors.²⁰⁹

The issue of blackmarket oil remains a persistent problem in Iraq, and one that fuels destabilization; militias and criminal organizations are financed through Iraqi oil wealth diverted from the state’s legitimate oil industry and smuggled out of the country.²¹⁰ The problematic security environment in Iraq has kept the Iraqi oil industry from getting on its feet, which has had “devastating effects on Iraq’s economy”.²¹¹ As noted above, this is particularly true in the south of Iraq in and around the city of Basra, which provides access to Iraq’s only port for exporting oil and holds roughly “two-thirds of Iraq’s oil resources”.²¹²

²⁰⁶ Update to the US National Intelligence Estimate, *Prospects for Iraq’s Stability*, August 2007.

²⁰⁷ “Iraqi factions’ self-interest blocks political progress.” *The New York Times*, 8/25/2007

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁹ “Falluja’s calm is seen at risk if U.S. leaves.” *The New York Times*, 8/19/2007

²¹⁰ “As British leave, Basra deteriorates.” *The Washington Post*, 8/7/2007

²¹¹ *Ibid.*

²¹² *Ibid.*

7. Criminalization and/or Delegitimization of the State

Rating: 10

Armed militias and criminal groups, many linked to the various powerful factions in Iraq, continue to contribute to the delegitimization of the state. Although this phenomenon is occurring throughout Iraq, events in recent months in the oil-rich south of the country have highlighted the damage done to the viability of the state by warring militias. The International Crisis Group reported in June that Basra has been experiencing "the systematic misuse of official institutions, political assassinations, tribal vendettas, neighborhood vigilantism and enforcement of social mores, together with the rise of criminal mafias that increasingly intermingle with political actors".²¹³ This does not seem to have changed for the better in August.

The remaining British force in Basra – numbering 500 – is expected to pull out of the city by the end of August.²¹⁴ With the security situation deteriorating, and British control of Basra collapsing in the wake of the “pull back” of British troops to a peripheral base at the airport outside the city, Shiite militia violence in Basra has increased.²¹⁵ The corruption in the Basra police force has led to some officers being co-opted by Shiite militias. These officers have assisted the militias in carrying out violence, and are involved in financial corruption, kidnapping and murder.²¹⁶ This problem is common amongst the various branches of the Iraqi security services.²¹⁷ Efforts to remove corrupt elements from the police force, including the Basra Director of Police’s “anti-militia drive”, have not been able to solve the problem.²¹⁸ This suggests entrenched corruption leading to widespread and continuing loss of popular confidence in state institutions.

8. Deterioration of Public Services

Rating: 9

August has witnessed significant and progressive deterioration of public services in Iraq. The ability of the state to provide essential services such as electricity, sanitation and health has continued to erode. Similarly, high profile terrorist attacks in August – such as those in northern Iraq – have negated improvements in security in other parts of the country. The government of Iraq has continued to demonstrate its inability to protect citizens from terrorism and violence.

“Serious problems with water quality and sewage treatment, worsened by crumbling local infrastructure,”²¹⁹ have led to cholera outbreaks in the two northern Iraqi provinces of

²¹³ “Where is Iraq heading? Lessons from Basra.” *International Crisis Group Report*, 6/25/2007

²¹⁴ “Troops pay price for special relationship.” *The Sunday Telegraph*, 8/26/2007

²¹⁵ “As British leave, Basra deteriorates.” *The Washington Post*, 8/7/2007

²¹⁶ “Basra police ‘work for militias’.” *BBC News Online*, 8/21/2007

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*

²¹⁹ “Deadly cholera outbreak in Iraq.” *BBC News Online*, 8/30/2007

Sulaimaniya and Tamim in late August.²²⁰ One of the hardest hit areas, Sulaimaniya, is only able to provide 30 percent of its citizens an adequate supply of water.²²¹ The NGO Coordination in Iraq (NCCI) and Oxfam documented the progressive deterioration of the public services in Iraq in a joint July 2007 report which found that “70 percent of Iraq’s population did not have adequate water supplies and that only 20 percent had access to effective sanitation”.²²² The lack of clean water has continued to result in the consumption of contaminated water by the local populations and contributed to the spread of the disease. There have so far been a total of eight deaths, though officials report that as many as 4,250 possible cases are currently being treated.²²³ According to an Iraqi health official, cases of cholera have also been reported in Baghdad and Salahuddin province.²²⁴

The UN Assistance Mission in Iraq and UNICEF have also recently called attention to the worsening infrastructure problems in Iraq.²²⁵ The continuing deterioration of public services in the country, as mentioned under Indicator #2, has contributed to the creation of refugees and IDPs.

The ability of the Iraqi central government to establish viable state functions that serve the people is not only being hurt by the continuing sectarian strife in Iraq, but also by attacks on vital industries. This has a profound effect on Indicator #6, as it stymies the establishment of a viable national economy. As mentioned under Indicator #7, corruption and the delegitimization of the state handicaps Iraq’s ability to improve public services. Similarly, continuing attacks on Iraq’s oil industry, including such incidents as the August kidnapping of Iraq’s deputy oil minister by “at least 100 gunmen in Iraqi Army uniforms”²²⁶, highlights additional challenges to establishing conditions that can facilitate improvement of public services in Iraq.

The ability of the central government to control the distribution of power from the Iraqi national electrical grid was shattered following the fall of the Hussein regime²²⁷, and the prospects of regaining control don’t seem to be improving as “armed groups increasing control the antiquated switching stations that channel electricity around Iraq.”²²⁸ These create “fiefs” for local leaders – particularly in Mosul, Baquba and Basra - which control various stations in the grid.²²⁹

By rerouting power to serve their own interests and constituencies, these local power brokers cause serious damage to generating plants and undermine the national grid.²³⁰

²²⁰ *Ibid.*

²²¹ “8 die, over 4,000 contract cholera in northern Iraq.” *Xinhuanet*, 8/30/2007

²²² *Ibid.*

²²³ “Deadly cholera outbreak in Iraq.” *BBC News Online*, 8/30/2007

²²⁴ *Ibid.*

²²⁵ “8 die, over 4,000 contract cholera in northern Iraq.” *Xinhuanet*, 8/30/2007

²²⁶ “Iraq toll reaches 250 in the deadliest attack of the war.” *The New York Times*, 8/16/2007

²²⁷ “Militias seizing control of Iraqi electricity grid.” *The New York Times*, 8/23/2007

²²⁸ *Ibid.*

²²⁹ *Ibid.*

²³⁰ *Ibid.*

This has profound implications for Indicator #6 as well as for the establishment of a viable national economy; electricity – *a vital public service necessary for commerce and economic development* - is being hijacked and distributed inequitably in Iraq. Similarly, vital commodities such as fuel and housing are increasingly falling into the hands of armed militias operating outside the control of the central government. As mentioned under Indicator #11, this is increasingly the case in parts of Baghdad, where the Mahdi Army controls many public services and vital commodities.²³¹

9. Application of Rule of Law and Human Rights

Rating: 10

The lack of effective central government control in Iraq and continuing sectarian conflict have not created an environment conducive to the rule of law, or which respects human rights in Iraq. However, the issue of the proper detention of Iraqi prisoners was significant in bringing about the last minute political compromise that led to a “joint statement of broad political unity” announced at the close of the month.²³² This suggests that efforts are being made to improve the rule of law and encourage respect for human rights – if only at the most basic levels. The issue of sect factored heavily into the prisoner agreement mentioned above,²³³ and will continue to be a major challenge in improving the rule of law and respect for human rights in Iraq.

10. Security Apparatus as a “State Within a State”

Rating: 10

The pattern of competing local centers of power is continuing to intensify across Iraq, and is having a profound effect on the state’s security forces. The various militias operating outside the purview of the Iraqi central government clearly represents the emergence of “states within a state”. Various militia members have infiltrated the ranks of national security forces in Iraq and have been using these positions of power to carry out sectarian violence.²³⁴

The co-opting of Iraqi security forces by various factions with selfish motivations has resulted in the establishment of ineffective Iraqi security forces unable to provide security consistently throughout the country. The United States military has continued to recruit “civilian volunteers” to provide security in areas where the national security forces are either non-existent or ineffective. As of August, this strategy has led to the recruitment of roughly 20,000 such “civilian volunteers”– three quarters of which are Sunni.²³⁵ Although most of these “civilian volunteers” are not currently armed by the U.S.²³⁶ (they

²³¹ “Major U.S. raid in Sadr City targets Shiite militia faction.” *The Washington Post*, 8/9/2007

²³² “Iraqi prime minister assails democratic critics.” *The New York Times*, 8/26/2007

²³³ *Ibid.*

²³⁴ “Basra police ‘work for militias.’” *BBC News Online*, 8/21/2007

²³⁵ “US recruits volunteer Iraqi police.” *BBC News Online*, 8/22/2007

²³⁶ *Ibid.*

are not armed by the U.S. until they have been integrated into “mainstream Iraqi security forces”²³⁷), there is still concern among many that this program may be counterproductive in the long-term; it may increase sectarian tension and could potentially encourage the entrenchment of Sunni militias that may one day resist the central government or coalition forces.²³⁸

As the number of autonomous security forces operating outside of the control of the central government increases, it speeds further fractionalization of the state - in essence entrenching “states within a state.” This may be undermining prospects for national reconciliation and the establishment of a cohesive national government. The creation of autonomous security forces split along sectarian lines could be seen as the start of a de facto partition of Iraq, or as a volatile ingredient in what could become an even wider Iraqi civil war.

11. Rise of Factionalized Elites

Rating: 10

August has witnessed continued conflict among, and within, the three major sects in Iraq. This is reinforcing the image of Iraq as a “cellular nation, dividing and redividing into competing constituencies that have a greater stake in continued chaos than in compromise.”²³⁹ Even established factions within sects are devolving into increasingly fractionalized entities. The Mahdi Army’s disintegration into “rival factions with widely varying priorities”²⁴⁰ accelerated in August. As discussed under Indicator #12, some of these rival Madhi Army factions are trained and armed by Iran, and operate outside the control of Madhi Army leader Moqtada al-Sadr.²⁴¹

Intra-Shiite fighting, particularly between the Mahdi Army and the Badr Organization, has intensified in August across the country.²⁴² On August 11 the governor of Qadisiyah province was assassinated when a roadside bomb struck his vehicle,²⁴³ followed less than a week later on August 20 by the assassination of the governor of Muthanna province.²⁴⁴ Both governors were members of the Shiite Supreme Islamic Iraqi Council (SIIC) – a political party whose armed wing, the Badr Organization, is in conflict with Moqtada al-Sadr’s Shiite Mahdi Army for control of Iraq’s oil-rich south and influence amongst the country’s majority Shiite population.²⁴⁵ Both gubernatorial assassinations are “part of a larger pattern of increasing violence between rival Shiite factions.”²⁴⁶

²³⁷ *Ibid.*

²³⁸ *Ibid.*

²³⁹ “Iraqi factions’ self-interest blocks political progress.” *The New York Times*, 8/25/2007

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁴¹ “Sadr ‘freezes’ militia activities.” *BBC News Online*, 8/29/2007

²⁴² “Iraq says 72 gunmen arrested after Karbala chaos.” *Reuters.com*, 8/30/2007

²⁴³ “Iraqi governor killed by roadside bomb.” *CBS News Online*, 8/11/2007

²⁴⁴ “Governor assassinated in Iraq’s oil-rich south.” *The Washington Post*, 8/21/2007

²⁴⁵ “Bomb kills governor; Iraq official kidnapped.” *The Los Angeles Times*, 8/21/2007

²⁴⁶ “Governor assassinated in Iraq’s oil-rich south.” *The Washington Post*, 8/21/2007

Intra-Shiite conflict is also raging in central Iraq. A gun battle in Karbala erupted on August 28 during an important Shiite religious festival between elements of the Mahdi Army and the Iraqi government security forces (which around the Karbala area are dominated by members of the Badr Organization).²⁴⁷ The gun battle led to at least 52 deaths and 205 injuries²⁴⁸ and forced “hundreds of thousands to flee”.²⁴⁹ The broader implication of this event, however, is that it highlights the lack of control al-Sadr has over the expanding and fractionalizing Mahdi Army. Following the firefight in Karbala, Moqtada al-Sadr declared a moratorium on all “armed activities” of the Mahdi Army for up to six months.²⁵⁰ Al-Sadr aides openly described this move as an opportunity for al-Sadr to “remove rogue elements from the militia.”²⁵¹ The Iraqi government’s inability to prevent this militia violence from occurring does not speak well of its power and authority. But at the same time, the ability of the government to seal off the city and impose a curfew,²⁵² as well as to make 72 arrests²⁵³, does offer some evidence of the government’s power (however, it remains unclear how objective these arrests were).

The Iraqi government has experienced significant turbulence in August. On August 1, the Sunni Iraqi Islamic Party withdrew from the Iraqi government.²⁵⁴ Within a week, the secular multi-sect Iraqi National List headed by former Prime Minister Ayad Allawi suspended participation in the Iraqi government citing, “Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki’s divisive leadership style”.²⁵⁵ These political defections early in August add to the political instability of the Iraqi government, already destabilized by the refusal of Moqtada al-Sadr’s party to participate fully in the government.²⁵⁶ This has led to serious questions about Prime Minister al-Maliki’s ability to overcome the political divisions he faces – a question raised not just in Iraq, but, as discussed under Indicator #12, internationally as well.

There was talk throughout August of how to overcome the political deadlock in Iraq. Iraqi politicians continued discussions this month about building an alliance “among the four leading Shiite and Kurdish parties, with the hope that marginalized Sunni factions would join the coalition”.²⁵⁷ However, issues of how to equitably share oil revenue, how (and if) to re-integrate former Baath Party officials into the government, and a prevailing sense of “disaffection” amongst Sunnis have all kept this hope from being fully realized.²⁵⁸

²⁴⁷ “50 die in fight between Shiite groups in Karbala.” *The New York Times*, 8/29/2007

²⁴⁸ “Iraqi city cleared after clashes.” *BBC News Online*, 8/28/2007

²⁴⁹ “Iraq says 72 gunmen arrested after Karbala chaos.” *Reuters.com*, 8/30/2007

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*

²⁵² “Iraqi city cleared after clashes.” *BBC News Online*, 8/28/2007

²⁵³ “Iraq says 72 gunmen arrested after Karbala chaos.” *Reuters.com*, 8/30/2007

²⁵⁴ “Iraq to allow ex-Baathists to regain jobs.” *The New York Times*, 8/28/2007

²⁵⁵ “3 secular Iraqis in cabinet to formally resign.” *The Washington Post*, 8/25/2007

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁷ “Iraqi Shiites, Kurds announce new political alliance.” *The Washington Post*, 8/17/2007

²⁵⁸ “Iraqi prime minister assails democratic critics.” *The New York Times*, 8/26/2007

On August 26, Prime Minister al-Maliki issued a “joint statement of broad political unity” forged after a compromise on the rules surrounding the detention of Iraqi prisoners in the country, and the return of Baathists to the government.²⁵⁹ Although the statement was issued by a Sunni bloc, two Kurdish groups and two Shiite political parties, it nonetheless leaves the Iraqi political process “all but completely stalled”.²⁶⁰ The agreement that contributed to the joint statement did not address the most contentious issues dividing Iraq,²⁶¹ and it is uncertain that these will be solved when the Iraqi parliament meets in September to work on implementing the agreement.²⁶² The situation is further complicated by the fact that the Iraqi Consensus Front has pledged not to rejoin the government until “other key demands [are] met.”²⁶³

Former Prime Minister Ayad Allawi announced in late August that his political allies had hired the Washington, DC lobbying firm, Barbour Griffith & Rogers to “advocate the views of the nationalistic Iraqis, the non-sectarian Iraqis.”²⁶⁴

12. Intervention of Outside Political Actors

Rating: 10

August witnessed the first trip to Iraq by a French Foreign Minister since the 2003 invasion.²⁶⁵ Bernard Kouchner announced that France intended to “play a role in the fight against the violence” in Iraq by working to facilitate greater UN involvement in bringing about a workable political solution to the turmoil in the country.²⁶⁶ The French offered to hold a “conference outside Iraq to try to reconcile the country's rival factions”,²⁶⁷ but President Talabani turned the proposal down. He stated that although French investment and reconstruction aid would be welcome in Iraq, the fact that Iraq’s political groups were in constant contact with one another made the proposed French conference unnecessary.²⁶⁸

The French interest in addressing the conflict in Iraq is in part fueled by a desire to enable French companies to become involved with Iraq’s oil industry. There were reports in August that the French oil company Total is seeking to “jointly explore Iraq’s fourth-largest oil field” with Chevron.²⁶⁹

Continued internal political wrangling, which has been paralyzing the Iraqi government, spurred increasing criticism from the West in August. French Foreign Minister Bernard

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁶¹ “Iraqi leaders reach accord on prisoners, ex-Baathists.” *The Washington Post*, 8/27/2007

²⁶² “Bush hails Iraq’s political deal.” *BBC News Online*, 8/27/2007

²⁶³ “Iraq to allow ex-Baathists to regain jobs.” *The New York Times*, 8/28/2007

²⁶⁴ “Lobbyists hired to press Maliki, former premier says.” *The Washington Post*, 8/27/2007

²⁶⁵ “France ‘ready’ for role in Iraq.” *BBC News Online*, 8/20/2007

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁷ “Iraq rejects France’s forum offer.” *BBC News Online*, 8/22/2007

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁹ “France shifts its stance on the conflict in Iraq.” *The International Herald Tribune*, 8/21/2007

Kouchner suggested publicly that al-Maliki resign²⁷⁰ because he was unable to effectively lead the country to political reconciliation. Kouchner later apologized after an angry response from al-Maliki, but several American senators also called for al-Maliki's resignation.²⁷¹ The revised U.S. National Intelligence Estimate (NIE), which was released in August, also expressed a lack of confidence in Prime Minister al-Maliki's ability to address the political crisis facing the Iraqi government. Additionally, there were brief periods of lackluster support for al-Maliki from the Bush Administration in August as well.²⁷² Al-Maliki feels that the U.S. presidential campaign is responsible for the criticism he and his government have faced from the U.S.²⁷³

The pressure put on al-Maliki from the West to address the political malaise gripping his country undoubtedly contributed toward the issuance of the joint statement by the three major Iraqi sects at the close of the month discussed under Indicator #11 above. Although Western pressure may have induced some level of cooperation within the Iraqi political scene, continued calls by high-ranking Western government figures against al-Maliki weaken him politically.

Although al-Maliki rejected French offers to host a forum to address the sectarian violence in Iraq, it emerged at the end of August that talks would soon be hosted by the Finnish organization Crisis Management Initiative and the Finnish government for "party representatives and parliamentarians" from the Iraqi Sunni and Shiite factions.²⁷⁴ Although the talks were organized by Finland, it is "not an official party to the talks", according to the Finnish Foreign Ministry.²⁷⁵ Such events show an increased interest by European states to engage in the problem Iraq represents to the region and the world.

The British military is completing its pullback from Basra city as August comes to a close. On August 26, British forces withdrew from a base they were sharing with Iraqi police in the city to a more remote base at the airport.²⁷⁶ By early September, all British military personnel will be consolidated at the airport base.²⁷⁷ Despite the pullback, the British government has stated that it will not announce an official schedule for the total withdrawal of British forces from Iraq.²⁷⁸ As alluded to above, the British withdrawal from Basra, and the security vacuum it has created, coincided with increased intra-Shiite violence in and around Basra.²⁷⁹

As discussed under Indicator #11, the decision by the U.S. to encourage the formation of "volunteer security forces" in "sensitive areas of the country" – particularly in Sunni-

²⁷⁰ "France ready to apologize to Iraq." *BBC News Online*, 8/27/2007

²⁷¹ "Iraqi PM hits back at US, French critics." *Forbes.com*, 8/26/2007

²⁷² "Iraqi PM lashes out at U.S. critics." *The Washington Post*, 8/22/2007

²⁷³ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁴ "Report: talks on ending Iraqi violence to begin in Finland." *Xinhuanet.com*, 8/30/2007

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁶ "Timeline: UK troops in Basra." *BBC News Online*, 9/10/2007

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁸ "PM rules out Iraq exit timetable." *BBC News Online*, 8/28/2007

²⁷⁹ "As British leave, Basra deteriorates." *The Washington Post*, 8/7/2007

dominated areas²⁸⁰ – may have repercussions further down the road if these forces resist the rule of the Iraqi central government. U.S. interests in combating al-Qaeda may be overriding prospects long-term Iraq national unity.²⁸¹

The U.S. military cannot account for 190,000 AK-47 assault rifles and pistols given to the Iraqi security forces.²⁸² These missing weapons may well contribute to sectarian violence, a problem potentially caused and perpetuated by endemic corruption and infiltration of the security forces by militias as discussed above.

The U.S. surge seems to have made a noticeable improvement in the security situation in the parts of Iraq where troops concentration were higher.²⁸³ However, attacks in recent months, particularly the catastrophic bombing in northern Iraq discussed under Indicators #1 and #3, suggest that insurgents are moving into areas outside Baghdad to avoid the presence of the U.S. military.²⁸⁴ The surge, while somewhat effective, does not seem to be sufficient to improve security conditions throughout the country.

On August 21, al-Maliki made his first trip to Syria and met with Syrian President Assad.²⁸⁵ Al-Maliki claimed while in Syria that “bilateral diplomatic and economic ties [are] growing” between Iraq and Syria, and that the two states are working together to “stabilize Iraq.”²⁸⁶ The Shiite minority Alawite regime in Syria reestablished relations with Iraq in 2006 after a quarter century of no official relations and hostility toward Iraq’s [Sunni] Hussein regime.²⁸⁷ This period of estrangement was also undoubtedly a result of competition between the two Baathist rivals. Al-Maliki, while in Syria, also issued what many interpreted as a threat to the U.S. to reduce pressure on his government, by saying that Iraq “can find friends elsewhere”.²⁸⁸ This comment seemed to come as a response to critical comments from Washington regarding his ability to bring about a political reconciliation in Iraq.²⁸⁹

Syria’s role in enabling foreign fighters to gain entry to Iraq seems to have continued to decline in August. General Petraeus stated that the incidence of foreign fighters crossing the border between Iraq and Syria, which has averaged 80 or 90 such crossings per month in recent months, decreased to “half or two-thirds of that over the last two or three months.”²⁹⁰ However, at the same time, Syria seems to be moving closer to Sunni groups in Iraq in an effort to increase its influence in the country, independent from Iran.²⁹¹

²⁸⁰ “A U.S.-backed plan for Sunni neighborhood guards is tested.” *The New York Times*, 8/18/2007

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*

²⁸² “US ‘loses track’ of Iraq weapons.” *BBC News Online*, 8/6/2007

²⁸³ “Cruel and deadly.” *The Economist*, 8/15/2007

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁵ “Maliki received warmly in Syria.” *BBC News Online*, 8/22/2007

²⁸⁶ “Iraqi PM hails Syria co-operation.” *BBC News Online*, 8/21/2007

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁸ “US criticism draws a blunt Iraqi retort.” *The Los Angeles Times*, 8/23/2007

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁰ “Fewer foreigners crossing into Iraq from Syria to fight.” *The Washington Post*, 9/16/2007

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*

As mentioned under indicator #11 above, Iran has influence on various Shiite militias in Iraq, including “rogue elements” of al-Sadr’s Mahdi Army.^{292/293} According to a Washington Post report, a “source close to Sadr” confirmed that “some groups...have infiltrated the Mahdi Army and are now working for the benefit of the foreign agenda.”²⁹⁴

There have also been allegations that Moqtada al-Sadr has himself has been spending significant time in Iran in August,²⁹⁵ raising questions as to his relationship with Iran. Iran has used its influence to manipulate events occurring in Iraq, and to facilitate proxy attacks on US interests and forces within the country. A meeting on August 6th between American and Iranian delegates of a security sub-committee²⁹⁶ did not yield any noticeable positive results, and the antagonistic rhetoric of both sides grew in the weeks following the meeting. It is becoming increasingly clear that Iraq is the battlefield of a proxy war between the United States and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

On August 19 a senior American Army general and U.S. military spokesman, Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch, reported that roughly 50 members of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) are currently training Iraqi Shiite militias in Iraq.²⁹⁷ This is “the first time the U.S. military has officially alleged that Iranians are aiding insurgents from *inside* Iraq”.²⁹⁸ Despite repeated denials by the Iranian government of involvement in aiding the insurgency in Iraq, Iranian weapons are being used by both Shiite *and* Sunni insurgents.²⁹⁹ Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corp actions in Iraq, in addition to other alleged activities of the IRGC, contributed to the decision by the U.S. government to pursue “designating” it as a terrorist organization. This prompted a statement in a Tehran newspaper by the commanding general of the IRGC, which promised America a “heavier punch” from the IRGC in the future.³⁰⁰ It alluded, without clarification, to the IRGC’s “leverage” over the United States.³⁰¹

The U.S. has made clear its intention to counter Iranian elements destabilizing the security situation in Iraq. In an August 28 speech, President Bush said, “I have authorized our military commanders in Iraq to confront Tehran's murderous activities.”³⁰² The danger of increasingly blatant Iranian-American proxy battles in Iraq at a time of heightened tension between Tehran and the West over the Iranian nuclear program, and the U.S. military’s proximity to Iranian territory, raises the risk of direct conflict between Iran and the U.S..

²⁹² “Sadr orders freeze on militia actions.” *The Washington Post*, 8/30/2007

²⁹³ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁵ “Car bomb hits Kikirk market.” *The Washington Post*, 8/11/2007

²⁹⁶ “Timeline: post-war Iraq.” *Financial Times Online*, 10/1/07

²⁹⁷ “Iran trains militiamen inside Iraq, U.S. says.” *The Washington Post*, 8/20/2007

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁹ “Iran trains militiamen inside Iraq, U.S. says.” *The Washington Post*, 8/20/2007

³⁰⁰ “Iranian guards vow to ‘punch’ US.” *CNN.com*, 8/18/2007

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*

³⁰² “Bush warns Iran over insurgents.” *BBC News Online*, 8/28/2007

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad publicly stated that he sees American influence in Iraq as “collapsing rapidly”, and that he intends to see that Iran fill the power vacuum.³⁰³ Although his statement was carefully worded – he said Iran planned to fill the vacuum, “with the help of neighbors and regional friends like Saudi Arabia, and with the help of the Iraqi nation” – the possibility of continuing violence is almost certain as Tehran and other outside political actors will certainly have different priorities in influencing events inside Iraq.

Although Al-Qaeda in Iraq is understood to be a largely indigenous movement at the rank-and-file level, the leadership is thought to be foreign. Therefore, Al-Qaeda in Iraq will be discussed under indicator #12. August has seen a continuing split between Al-Qaeda in Iraq and many Sunni tribes in central Iraq who object to the violence the group brings to the country and their interpretation of Islam.³⁰⁴ These divisions are most pronounced in al-Anbar and Diyala provinces, as well as in some parts of Baghdad.³⁰⁵ On August 24 Al-Qaeda operatives assassinated a prominent Sunni Sheik, Younis al-Shimari, who had been leading the Sunni “awakening” against Al-Qaeda in Iraq.³⁰⁶ The assassination of Sheik Younis al-Shimari led to “street battles between his followers backed by Iraqi forces against Al-Qaeda in Iraq.”³⁰⁷

In another high-profile August assassination, a suicide bomber attacked a mosque in Falluja killing an imam who was an “outspoken opponent of Al-Qaeda”.³⁰⁸ The more Al-Qaeda and Sunni tribes battle, the more Al-Qaeda marginalizes itself within the Iraqi Sunni community. As mentioned above under Indicators #10 and #11, this a tactical opportunity the U.S. has seized upon as means for combating Al-Qaeda by assisting Sunni communities (and to a lesser extent Shiite) in forming volunteer neighborhood watch groups to battle Al-Qaeda.

As reported in July, nearly half of the roughly 60-80 foreign fighters entering Iraq are Saudi.³⁰⁹ Saudi interference in Iraq, whether official or unofficial, hampers Iraq’s recovery (but is of course largely a response to the actions of other foreign powers in Iraq). It has been speculated that the proposed US\$ 20 billion sale of sophisticated U.S. military hardware to Saudi Arabia and other Gulf States could be part of an effort by the U.S. to induce neighboring Arab countries to be more supportive of the struggling Iraqi government.³¹⁰

Tensions between Turkey and Iraq in August remained strained over the issue of PKK attacks staged from the “safe-haven” of northern Iraq. Iraqi Kurds may be reluctant to crack down on PKK elements operating in their territory not only for domestic political

³⁰³ “U.S. troops release detained Iranians.” *The Washington Post*, 8/29/2007

³⁰⁴ “Gunmen kill 17 in attacks on Shiite and Sunni villages.” *AP Online*, 8/23/2007

³⁰⁵ “Iraqi sheikh 'killed by al-Qaeda'.” *CNN.com*, 8/27/2007

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁷ “Villagers battle insurgents after attack on sheik near Baqubah.” *The Washington Post*, 8/24/2007

³⁰⁸ “Iraq mosque bombing kills nine.” *BBC News Online*, 8/27/2007

³⁰⁹ “Saudis going south on Iraq.” *The New York Times*, 7/29/2007

³¹⁰ “Interview: US trying to soften Saudi hard line toward Maliki government.” *The New York Times*, 8/6/2007

reasons, but potentially because they may want to use a crack-down on the PKK as leverage for negotiations for Kirkuk, which Turkey does not want to see join the Kurdish provinces in the north.³¹¹ This is an issue, which, as mentioned above, will become increasingly contentious as the November referendum approaches, and if PKK attacks against Turkey continue.

The U.S. does not want to see any large-scale Turkish military action in northern Iraq because it could destabilize the country further. In addition to diverting U.S. forces from their duties in other parts of Iraq, a large-scale Turkish intervention could lead to “defections by Kurdish forces from the Iraqi Army”, as well as “expose American forces to retaliation by PKK forces in northern Iraq”.³¹² Any Turkish incursion would almost certainly lead to a deterioration of the already volatile conditions of Iraq.

Reports of potential joint U.S.-Turkish Special Forces operations in northern Iraq to engage elements of the PKK were one option discussed to prevent a large-scale Turkish incursion. However, this did not materialize in August (at least to public knowledge), and the possibility of a large-scale Turkish incursion remains real.³¹³

³¹¹ “Turkey to warn Iraq on rebel sanctuaries.” *The Washington Post*, 8/6/2007

³¹² *Ibid.*

³¹³ *Ibid.*

August 2007
Core 5

1. Police
Rating: Poor

There has been little change in this institution's status since the July report. Corruption, infiltration and the primacy of sectarian loyalties continue to undermine the efficacy and legitimacy of the Iraqi police forces. This issue has been highlighted in Basra in August. The corruption in the Basra police force has led to some officers being co-opted by Shiite militias. They engage in carrying out violence, financial corruption, kidnapping and murder on behalf of various militias struggling for control in the south.³¹⁴ Efforts to remove corrupt elements from the police force, including the Basra Director of Police's "anti-militia drive", have not been able to adequately address the burgeoning problem³¹⁵ - made worse by the withdrawal of British forces from the city to the Basra airport. This suggests entrenched corruption leading to widespread and continuing loss of popular confidence in the police force.

2. Leadership
Rating: Poor

The turmoil and factionalism of Iraqi politics at the start of August cast a shadow on the political leadership of Iraq throughout the month. On August 1, the Sunni Iraqi Islamic Party withdrew from the Iraqi government.³¹⁶ Within a week, the secular and multi-sect Iraqi National List headed by former Prime Minister Ayad Allawi suspended participation in the Iraqi government citing, "Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's divisive leadership style".³¹⁷ These political defections early in August add to the political instability of the Iraqi government, already destabilized by the refusal of Moqtada al-Sadr's party to participate fully in the government.³¹⁸ This has led to serious questions about Prime Minister al-Maliki's ability to overcome the political divisions he faces.

Despite these set backs, Iraqi politicians continued discussions in August about building an alliance "among the four leading Shiite and Kurdish parties, with the hope that marginalized Sunni factions would join the coalition".³¹⁹ However, issues of how to equitably share oil revenue, how (and if) to re-integrate former Baath Party officials into

314 "Basra police 'work for militias'." *BBC News Online*, 8/21/2007

315 *Ibid.*

316 "Iraq to allow ex-Baathists to regain jobs." *The New York Times*, 8/28/2007

317 "3 secular Iraqis in cabinet to formally resign." *The Washington Post*, 8/25/2007

318 *Ibid.*

319 "Iraqi Shiites, Kurds announce new political alliance." *The Washington Post*, 8/17/2007

the government, and a prevailing sense of “disaffection” amongst Sunnis have all kept this hope from being fully realized.³²⁰

As August draws to a close, there do appear to be at least superficial attempts to try to address the political issues threatening to speed Iraq’s disintegration. On August 26, Prime Minister al-Maliki issued a “joint statement of broad political unity” forged after a compromise on the rules surrounding the detention of Iraqi prisoners in the country and the return of Baathists to the government.³²¹ Although the statement was issued by a Sunni bloc, two Kurdish groups and two Shiite political parties, this joint statement nonetheless leaves the Iraqi political process “all but completely stalled”.³²²

3. Civil Service

Rating: Poor

Armed militias and criminal groups linked to various powerful factions in Iraq have continued to undermine and delegitimize the state, thereby hampering the Iraqi civil service in their mission to provide important public services. Essential services, such as electricity, sanitation and health, continued to erode in August. This has led to water shortages, inadequate sanitation and the outbreak of cholera in several provinces across Iraq.³²³ Additionally, the Iraqi national electrical grid is being hijacked by local powerbrokers – particularly in Mosul, Baquba and Basra - which control various stations on the grid.³²⁴ This has damaged the national grid, and is undermining the Iraqi central government and civil service.

4. Judiciary

Rating: Poor

There has been little change in the status of the Iraqi judiciary since the July report. Disparate “sectarian agendas”³²⁵ continue to call into question the availability of equal justice in Iraq. However, the issue of the proper detention of Iraqi prisoners (as related to sectarian affiliation) was significant in bringing about the last minute political compromise that led to a “joint statement of broad political unity” announced at the close of the month.³²⁶ This suggests that efforts are being made to improve the rule of law and encourage respect for human rights. The issue of sect factored heavily into the prisoner agreement mentioned above,³²⁷ and will continue to be a major challenge in improving the status of the Iraqi judiciary.

320 “Iraqi prime minister assails democratic critics.” *The New York Times*, 8/26/2007

321 “Iraqi prime minister assails democratic critics.” *The New York Times*, 8/26/2007

322 *Ibid.*

323 “Deadly cholera outbreak in Iraq.” *BBC News Online*, 8/30/2007

324 *Ibid.*

325 “Justice from behind the barricades in Baghdad.” *The New York Times*, 07/30/2007

326 “Iraqi prime minister assails democratic critics.” *The New York Times*, 8/26/2007

327 *Ibid.*

5. Military

Rating: Weak

In early August, the U.S. Lt. General in command of the Multinational Security Transition Command announced that he was seeing “positive developments” in the re-establishment and strengthening of the Iraqi Army.³²⁸ However, persistent problems continue, such a shortage of experienced officers.³²⁹ The lack of an experienced and competent officer corps accounts, in part, for the findings of the GAO report³³⁰ issued in September, which characterized Iraqi units as incapable of independent operations. In an effort to speed the process of improving the military, an “aggressive recruiting campaign” has been launched that seeks to re-enlist former Iraqi army officers.³³¹

328 “General assesses quality of Iraqi army, police.” *American Forces Press Service*, 08/09/2007

329 *Ibid.*

330 “Securing, stabilizing, and rebuilding Iraq: Iraqi government has not met most legislative, security, and economic benchmarks.” *Government Accountability Office*, 09/2007.

331 “General assesses quality of Iraqi army, police.” *American Forces Press Service*, 08/09/2007

September 2007
12 Indicators

1. *Mounting Demographic Pressures*
Rating: 10

The breakdown of basic services and infrastructure as a direct result of continuing violence and government incapacity, is now posing challenges in the realm of health in Iraq. An outbreak of cholera, which began in northern Iraq, has spread to Baghdad.³³² According to the World Health Organization (WHO), there are 1,500 confirmed cases of cholera and 24,000 suspected cases in the northern Kurdish region.³³³ So far, 2,116 people have contracted the disease, and 11 people have died of it.³³⁴ The organization also says that the outbreak has spread to 25 districts of northern Iraq, four districts in the south and across the center of the country.³³⁵ The disease was first reported in Kirkuk and then spread to Sulaymaniyah and Arbil provinces.³³⁶ Isolated cases are also reported in other parts of the country, including Tikrit, Mosul, Basra, Baghdad and Dahuk.³³⁷

The outbreak has been exacerbated by a shortage of chlorine, which has limited people's access to potable water, thus putting thousands at risk.³³⁸ At the same time, officials contend that the widespread displacement of people within the country has contributed to the quick spread of the disease.³³⁹ The Iraqi government is considering imposition of travel restrictions if more cases are reported, even though the WHO does not recommend such restrictions on travel or trade to and from affected areas.³⁴⁰

2. *Massive Movement of Refugees and IDPs*
Rating: 10

According to migration data collected by the Iraqi Red Crescent Organization, the numbers of internally displaced Iraqis has increased since the U.S. troop surge began.³⁴¹ The data indicates that in Baghdad alone, almost 170,000 families, that is, approximately a million people have fled their homes, "in search of security, shelter, water, electricity, functioning schools or jobs to support their families."³⁴² Since the 2006 bombing of the Shiite shrine in Samarra precipitated a new wave of violence, generally, Sunnis have

³³² "Cholera spreads from Northern Iraq to Baghdad" *The Washington Post*, 09/22/2007.

³³³ *Ibid.*

³³⁴ "Iraq: travel restrictions considered as cholera spreads" *Irin News Network*, 09/26/2007.

³³⁵ *Ibid.*

³³⁶ *Ibid.*

³³⁷ *Ibid.*

³³⁸ "Cholera spreads from Northern Iraq to Baghdad" *The Washington Post*, 09/22/2007.

³³⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁰ "Cholera in Iraq" *World Health Organization*, 09/10/2007. Available at http://www.who.int/csr/don/2007_09_10a/en/index.html

³⁴¹ "Migration complicates the future look of Iraq" *The New York Times*, 09/19/2007.

³⁴² *Ibid.*

been moving to the north and west, Shiites to the south, while Christians have been moving to the far north.³⁴³

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), about 2,000 Iraqis leave their homes daily to “escape violence, persecution and economic uncertainty.”³⁴⁴ Iraqis trying to find safe haven in other countries are, however, increasingly encountering new obstacles. Neighboring Syria, which has so far taken in 1.4 million Iraqi refugees, has imposed new visa laws that make it much more difficult for Iraqi refugees from crossing the border into the country.³⁴⁵ While previous laws allowed all Iraqis to stay in Syria for six months without a visa, the new rules limit this provision only to business people and academics.³⁴⁶ Syria’s actions mirror similar steps taken by the Jordanian government two years ago.³⁴⁷ According to an Amnesty International report, Iraqi refugees now constitute seven percent of the population in Syria and about 10 percent of the Jordanian population.³⁴⁸ The report further says that Syrian officials have expressed concern that many Iraqis refugees in Syria are becoming involved in the sex trade, while child prostitution and trafficking in children may also be increasing.³⁴⁹

In a sign of improving security in parts of Iraq, the International Organization on Migration (IOM) states that there has been a reduction in the number of internally displaced in Anbar province and parts of Baghdad.³⁵⁰ Many people are thus returning to Ramadi, the capital of Anbar.³⁵¹ However, displacement continued in other areas such as Diyala, Qadissiyah, and Salah al-Din. In many provinces, such as Dahuk, Sulaymaniyah, Erbil, Kerbala, Najaf, Qadissiya, Babylon, Thi-Qar, Basrah, and Muthanna, authorities are still restricting IDP entry and registration.³⁵²

3. *Legacy of Vengeance Seeking Group Grievance or Group Paranoia* **Rating: 10**

Even though there has been some improvement in the overall security situation in Iraq in the month of September, the persistence of sectarian tensions is evidenced by several bomb attacks and targeted assassinations of key political figures and police officials.

³⁴³ “Migration complicates the future look of Iraq” *The New York Times*, 09/19/2007.

³⁴⁴ “Syria visas ‘halt fleeing Iraqis’” *BBC Online*, 09/11/2007. Available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/6989789.stm

³⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁸ “Millions in flight: the Iraqi refugee crisis” *Amnesty International* report, 09/28/2007.

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁰ “Improved security in two governorates sees reduction in displacement” *International Organization on Migration*, 09/18/2007.

³⁵¹ *Ibid.*

³⁵² *Ibid.*

The last week of September saw a peak in violence with 10 attacks in a 48-hour period, in which Sunni Arab extremists assassinated police chiefs, police officers, Interior Ministry officials and tribal leaders across Iraq.³⁵³ A suicide bomber struck during a reconciliation gathering of Shiite and Sunni sheikhs and officials in Baqubah, killing at least 21, including the city's police chief.³⁵⁴ The dead include other police officials, senior commanders and tribal sheikhs, while the governor of the province was injured. Another attack near a police and military checkpoint in Tall Afar killed 17.³⁵⁵ Attacks occurred in Kut, Mosul, Samarra, Basra, Fallujah, Diyala and Kirkuk. A new assassination campaign had been announced by militants in mid-September, and had promised to focus efforts on tribal chiefs cooperating with the U.S. military.³⁵⁶

In particular, a key Sunni tribal chief from Anbar, Al-Rishawi, who had been cooperating with the US forces in bringing together Sunni tribes against the Al-Qaeda in Iraq was killed in a bomb explosion outside his house.³⁵⁷ Twenty-five suspects have been arrested in connection to al-Rishawi's murder, including the head of his security detail.³⁵⁸

At the same time, there is concern that the local alliances being built by the U.S. military with Sunnis in provinces such as Anbar is only a short-term counter-insurgency tactic, which might lead to long-term fractures in Iraq. This will be addressed in greater detail under Indicator No.10. According to Lt.Col Miska, deputy commander of a brigade of the First Infantry Division, "I think we have essentially stalled the sectarian conflict without addressing the underlying grievances."³⁵⁹

A spike in sectarian tensions and violence has forced many Arab residents to flee from the predominantly Kurdish city of Kirkuk.³⁶⁰ The status of Kirkuk remains contentious, as the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) would like to incorporate the oil rich region into official Kurdish territory. The exodus of Arabs from the city is likely to have an impact on the results of the referendum on the status of Kirkuk, which is likely to be held in 2008.³⁶¹

The large-scale displacement of Iraqis from Baghdad has also created deep sectarian rifts within neighborhoods and institutions.³⁶² Schools are becoming increasingly mono-sectarian, there has been a steep decline in mixed marriages since the war, and

³⁵³ "Sunni insurgents in new campaign to kill officials" *The New York Times*, 09/26/2007.

³⁵⁴ "Suicide attack kills 21 at gathering intended to reconcile Iraqi factions" *The Washington Post*, 09/25/2007.

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁶ "Sunni insurgents in new campaign to kill officials" *The New York Times*, 09/26/2007.

³⁵⁷ "Bomb kills a key Sunni ally of U.S.", *The Washington Post*, 09/14/2007.

³⁵⁸ "25 held in slaying of Iraqi Sunni chief" *The Washington Post*, 09/23/2007.

³⁵⁹ "At street level, unmet goals in Baghdad" *The Washington Post*, 09/20/2007.

³⁶⁰ "Ethnic violence forces more Arabs to flee Kirkuk" *Irin News Network*, 09/16/2007.

³⁶¹ *Ibid.*

³⁶² "Sectarian toll includes scars to Iraq psyche: trust dies in Baghdad, grieved by all" *The New York Times*, 09/17/2007.

neighborhoods are rapidly becoming segregated along sectarian lines.³⁶³ Many of the recently displaced families come from tense mixed sectarian areas.³⁶⁴

4. *Chronic and Sustained Human Flight*
Rating: 10

There was little indication of any change in the human flight crisis in Iraq in the month of September.

5. *Uneven Economic Development Along Group Lines*
Rating: 9

Even as the draft law on distribution of oil resources remains stalled at the national level, the Kurdish government concluded another production-sharing agreement with Texas based Hunt Oil Company in September.³⁶⁵ Draft versions of the national oil law state that the central government will have a say in the legality of individual oil contracts.³⁶⁶ If the national law is passed, it might render contracts negotiated by the Kurdish government in contravention of the former.³⁶⁷

The draft national law agreed to in February after intense talks may, however, be on the brink of collapse, in large part because of disagreements between the Iraqi oil Minister, Hussein al-Shahristani and officials of the Kurdish Regional Government.³⁶⁸ Disagreements have centered on the Kurds' insistence on using a Constitutional provision, which gives regional governments control over resources.³⁶⁹ Mr. Shahristani, on the other hand, sees the regional oil law enacted by the Kurds as akin to a declaration of independence, an allegation refuted by the Kurdish government.³⁷⁰ At the same time, the Sunnis want exclusive federal control over the oil fields, and following the conclusion of the oil contracts by the Kurdish government, have withdrawn their support from the national oil law as well.³⁷¹ Fissures along regional and sectarian lines are likely to have a continuing impact on economic development in Iraq.

6. *Sharp and/or Severe Economic Decline*
Rating: 9

³⁶³ "Sectarian toll includes scars to Iraq psyche: trust dies in Baghdad, grieved by all" *The New York Times*, 09/17/2007.

³⁶⁴ "Baghdad residents fleeing home despite security drive" *The Washington Post*, 09/05/2007.

³⁶⁵ "U.S official calls Kurd oil deal at odds with Baghdad" *The New York Times*, 09/28/2007.

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁸ "Iraq compromise on oil law seems to be collapsing" *The New York Times*, 09/13/2007.

³⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁷¹ *Ibid.*

Revenues from oil exports account for more than half of Iraq's GDP and more than 90 percent of government revenues.³⁷² However, crude oil production has fallen from 2.5 million barrels per day in the 2003 pre-war period under international sanctions, to 2.12 million barrels per day in 2007.³⁷³

At the same time, systemic factors continue to thwart economic progress. Although reconstruction funds provided by the U.S. swelled to US\$ 44.54bn in June 2007, the U.S. Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction (SIGIR) says that corruption, mismanagement of funds and continuing violence remain major obstacles to progress.³⁷⁴ While international aid went up somewhat from US\$ 15.21 billion in December 2006 to US\$ 18.22 billion in June 2007, Iraqi reconstruction funds have declined significantly from US\$ 50.58bn to US\$ 36.88bn.³⁷⁵ The shortfall is explained in the shrinkage of the Development Fund for Iraq (DFI), from US\$ 23.04bn to US\$ 9.34bn.³⁷⁶ The DFI represents Iraqi oil export revenues and repatriated assets. The shrinkage is likely the direct consequence of the continuing setback to the Iraqi oil industry.³⁷⁷

Actions taken by neighboring states are also having a negative impact on the Iraqi economy. The Iranian government has closed five borders crossings in northeastern Iraq to protest the detention of an Iranian official by U.S. authorities.³⁷⁸ The move is likely to disrupt the Kurdish economy, which relies heavily on cross-border trading with Iran.³⁷⁹ Thousands are unable to get to work while cargos and supplies are stranded at the borders.³⁸⁰ Areas such as Sulaymaniyah are particularly affected since “60 percent of consumer items come from Iran, and there are over 80 Iranian trading companies operating in the region”³⁸¹ Since the border closure, the prices of imported goods such as vegetables, fruit, dairy products, potatoes and construction and industrial materials increased sharply in the Kurdish region.³⁸²

7. Criminalization and/or Delegitimization of the State **Rating: 10**

The divisions within the Iraqi national government continue to be evidenced at various levels. In addition to working with Sunnis under the current counter-insurgency strategy, the U.S. efforts are now also shifting focus to empowering them through economic and

³⁷² “Little progress on halting Iraq’s delay” *BBC Online*, 09/06/2007. Available at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/6977728.stm>

³⁷³ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁸ “Suicide attack kills 21 at gathering intended to reconcile Iraqi factions” *The Washington Post*, 09/25/2007.

³⁷⁹ “Iraq: closure of Iranian border affects Kurdistan region’s economy” *IRIN News Network*, 09/30/2007.

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁸¹ *Ibid.*

³⁸² *Ibid.*

political incentives. According to a senior U.S. official, “this is all about finding ways to circumvent al-Maliki.”³⁸³ The statement illustrates the declining faith in the national political machinery and increasing powers of regional governments and local officials—the latter at times the result of U.S. efforts.³⁸⁴ Members of the Iraqi government loyal to the Shiite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr, meanwhile, signaled frustration with the government and noted that they were being excluded by other Shiite parties, including Prime Minister al-Maliki’s Daawa Party in working out political compromises on legislation.³⁸⁵ At the same time, the Iraqi government remains largely ineffective, as currently 17 ministries do not have ministers, while those who remain, have to perform the duties of the missing.³⁸⁶

Also, there appears to be movement within the Parliament to pass a vote of no-confidence against al-Maliki to remove him from power.³⁸⁷ The new coalition of parties backing al-Maliki, which includes the Supreme Islamic Iraqi Council (SICI), led by Shiite cleric Abdul Aziz al-Hakim, al-Maliki’s party, Dawa and two Kurdish parties do not even have a majority of votes in the Parliament.³⁸⁸

8. *Progressive Deterioration of Public Services* **Rating: 9**

Continuing violence, coupled with mismanagement, lack of skilled personnel and a dependence on U.S. forces has led to the worsening of public services and infrastructure in Iraq.³⁸⁹ The Iraqi government is still failing to take over reconstruction projects from the U.S., and “for many Iraqis, the United States remains the only source of basic services, protection and infrastructure—functions the new government was supposed to perform.”³⁹⁰ This has bred a degree of dependence on the U.S. presence, which is, undermining the Iraqi government administration’s capacity for decision-making, and for execution of programs and projects.³⁹¹

Meanwhile, the Iraqi government is yet to spend US\$ 10 billion of its own revenue towards basic services and infrastructure.³⁹² Significant disparities in reconstruction efforts stemming from sectarian issues are also becoming evident. In regions such as Jiff Jaffa, the U.S. has been concentrating its reconstruction efforts in the Sunni areas which are ignored by the Shiite dominated government, (whether this is because of U.S. involvement or as a consequence of it, remains debatable).³⁹³ In Iraq’s Southern belt,

³⁸³ “Bush is said to approve more aid to Iraqi Sunnis battling extremist groups” *The New York Times*, 09/02/2007.

³⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁵ “Iraqi cleric’s forces say they will quit Shiite bloc” *The New York Times*, 09/15/2007.

³⁸⁶ “Maliki gains a little time but faces a daunting task” *The New York Times*, 09/24/2007.

³⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁹ “U.S efforts may work against Iraqi self-sufficiency” *The Washington Post*, 09/05/2007.

³⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁹¹ *Ibid.*

³⁹² “No relief from fear” *The Washington Post*, 09/05/2007.

³⁹³ “U.S efforts may work against Iraqi self-sufficiency” *The Washington Post*, 09/05/2007.

while Shiite areas have plenty of water, neighboring Sunni areas such as Diyarah face major shortages, which the U.S. military has helped mitigate.³⁹⁴

As mentioned under Indicator No.5, by mid-2007, reconstruction funds provided by Washington to help rebuild Iraq's infrastructure stood at approximately US\$ 44.54bn.³⁹⁵ However, the increasing cash is making little difference to the lives of ordinary Iraqis. The national power grid is on the brink of collapse, while water supplies are extremely unreliable.³⁹⁶

Areas such as Diyala province, which have seen some of the worst violence in recent months, are suffering from defunct public services.³⁹⁷ Since aid agencies cannot get to those in need, little humanitarian assistance is coming into the province.³⁹⁸ The education and health system, water, sanitation, etc. services have all suffered as a direct result of the violence.³⁹⁹

9. *Suspension or Arbitrary Application of the Rule of Law and Widespread Violation of Human Rights*

Rating: 10

Lawyers representing families of Iraqi detainees claim that the government is concealing information about hundreds of detained people.⁴⁰⁰ According to a representative of the Iraqi Lawyers Association (ILA), "The latest figure from Iraqi lawyers in our organization is that there are over 1,500 Iraqi detainees held without access to lawyers and unable to communicate with their families."⁴⁰¹ While the U.S. military in a statement said it would release 50-80 Iraqi prisoners a day as a sign of goodwill during the month of Ramadan, the move has not been echoed by the Iraqi police or by the army.⁴⁰² The Baghdad-based Prisoners' Association for Justice claims that many returned detainees show signs of torture or abuse.⁴⁰³

10. *Security Apparatus Operates as a "State Within a State"*

Rating: 10

³⁹⁴ "U.S efforts may work against Iraqi self-sufficiency" *The Washington Post*, 09/05/2007.

³⁹⁵ "Little progress on halting Iraq's decay" *BBC Online*, 09/06/2007. Available at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/6977728.stm>

³⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁷ "Diyala the worst province for basic services" *Irin News Network*, 09/16/2007.

³⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁰ "Lawyers accuse government of concealing information about detainees" *Irin News Network*, 09/19/2007.

⁴⁰¹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰² *Ibid.*

⁴⁰³ *Ibid.*

The security situation in various parts of Iraq has continued to improve through the month of September. The Iraqi government, U.S. military and independent sources report a substantive drop in violent civilian deaths in Iraq. According to an Iraqi Interior Ministry official, in September, there was a 29 percent drop in the number of civilian deaths, with 1654 people killed, as against 2318 civilians killed in August.⁴⁰⁴ Conflicting numbers are, however, cited by other sources such as Iraqi Body Count and Reuters, although both report a decline in civilian death toll as well.⁴⁰⁵ U.S. military deaths also declined from 84 in August to 63 in September.⁴⁰⁶ Also, 78 Iraqi soldiers and police personnel were killed in September, as against 87 killed in August, which also suggest a drop in death toll by 38 percent as compared to last year's Ramadan period.⁴⁰⁷

On the basis of media reports, the UK-based NGO, Iraqi Body Count suggests that by September 2007, civilian death toll in Iraq since the invasion began stands at 71,000-78,000.⁴⁰⁸ The organization cautions that the actual number might be much higher since a large number of deaths go unreported.⁴⁰⁹

The drop in violence came despite threats by militants that the onset of Ramadan in September would bring an escalation in violence in Iraq. As mentioned under Indicator No.3, on the first day of Ramadan, a Sunni tribal leader instrumental in the newly formed alliance with U.S. forces in Anbar, was killed in a bomb attack.⁴¹⁰ Meanwhile, security remains fragile in Diyala province where gunmen killed 14 people in two towns.⁴¹¹ The province is seen as a successful example of the "Sunni awakening" that began in Anbar. The Diyala attack occurred amid a flurry of violence in mid-September, as Samarra, Babel, Qadasiya, Diwaniya, and Baghdad were hit by bomb attacks, gunfire, mortar attacks and car bombs.⁴¹²

In Southern Iraq, the overall U.S. and British military strategy appears to entail allowing fighting between three Shiite groups such as to enable the emergence of a 'victor'.⁴¹³ It is suspected that the British withdrawal from the southern city of Basra came about as a result of an arrangement "not to be attacked in exchange for not interfering in the factional fighting for control over the city."⁴¹⁴

⁴⁰⁴ "Iraqi violence ebbed in September, reports say" *The New York Times*, 10/01/2007.

⁴⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁷ "Iraq violent death rates plunge" *BBC Online*, 10/01/2007. Available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7021692.stm

⁴⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁰ "U.S. says it captured suspect in killing of sheikh; 50 Iraqis die in several attacks" *The New York Times*, 09/17/2007.

⁴¹¹ *Ibid.*

⁴¹² *Ibid.*

⁴¹³ "U.S., Britain differ on Southern Iraq mission, officials say" *The Washington Post*, 09/19/2007.

⁴¹⁴ *Ibid.*

Additionally, in Baghdad, the war has helped foment criminal activities under the guise of sectarianism.⁴¹⁵ According to *The New York Times*, “Gangs mouth sectarian slogans but kill for property and power.”⁴¹⁶

The drop in violence is attributable to a number of factors including new counter-insurgency tactics entailing cooperation with local Sunnis against Al-Qaeda in Iraq, the U.S. troop surge⁴¹⁷ and the ‘freeze’ called by Moqtada al-Sadr on militia activities of the Mahdi Army.⁴¹⁸ The new alliances being forged by the U.S. military with Sunni ‘concerned citizens’ under the leadership of tribal sheikhs and local leaders has, although helped improve security in provinces such as Anbar and in areas in and around Baghdad, it is also helping create localized pockets of power, which in turn have the potential to operate as “a state within a state.” These efforts hence have the inherent capacity to undermine the Iraqi state, especially within the security sphere.

Such local deals while serving short-term goals will “over time...break Iraq apart rather than pull it together.”⁴¹⁹ In other words, such measures may in fact, be counter-productive to state building. Ethnic tensions continue to fester, and there is little sign of any reconciliation between the different ethnic groups—either politically, or socially. This is the main reason why no change is reflected in the rating accorded to Indicator No.10.

11. *Rise of Factionalized Elites*

Rating: 10

As mentioned under Indicator No. 7, loyalists of the Shiite cleric, Moqtada al-Sadr have said that they would withdraw from the coalition of Shiite parties that currently constitutes the biggest political bloc in Prime Minister al-Maliki’s government.⁴²⁰ The Sadrists have long complained of being marginalized within the Shiite bloc, the United Iraqi Alliance.⁴²¹ They have not been included in talks between mainstream Shiite parties, some Kurds and Sunni Arabs, with regard to key legislation such as allowing certain former Baathists to return to power—a proposal the Sadrists strongly oppose.⁴²² While it is not clear whether the withdrawal of the Sadrists would destabilize al-Maliki’s government, it does indicate the growing factionalization within and between the various political parties, which does not bode well for efforts at reconciliation.

On the other hand, the Supreme Islamic Council of Iraq (SIIC), and its armed wing, the Badr Brigade, which is battling with Al-Sadr’s Mahdi Army for dominance in Iraq’s

⁴¹⁵ “Sectarian toll includes scars to Iraq psyche: trust dies in Baghdad, grieved by all” *The New York Times*, 09/17/2007.

⁴¹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁷ “Civilian deaths in Iraq halve in Sept: government” *Reuters*, 10/01/2007.

⁴¹⁸ “Sadr ‘freezes’ militia activity” *BBC Online*, 08/29/2007. Available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/6968720.stm

⁴¹⁹ “At street level, unmet goals in Baghdad” *The Washington Post*, 09/20/2007.

⁴²⁰ “Iraqi cleric’s forces say they will quit Shiite bloc” *The New York Times*, 09/15/2007.

⁴²¹ *Ibid.*

⁴²² *Ibid.*

southern provinces, has not been able to counter the latter's influence.⁴²³ According to *The New York Times*, "The Sadrists...represent too many Iraqis, their militia is too active, their social service organizations deliver necessities to the poor, and unlike other Shiite groups, they have adopted a truly nationalist platform, which reaches out to Sunni Arabs."⁴²⁴ Other factions fighting for prominence in the south include al-Maliki's Daawa Party and the Fadhila Party which holds some power in Basra.⁴²⁵ The battle over power and resources being played out in Iraq's Shiite South is in a sense, symptomatic of elite machinations and the overall political crisis in Iraq. Seen in conjunction with new U.S. military's efforts to forge local alliances at the grass-root level, the growing power of local elites does not bode well for Iraqi national unity.

12. *Intervention of Other States or External Political Actors* **Rating: 10**

The influence of foreign forces, both regional and international, continued in Iraq in the month of September. In their testimony before two Senate Committees in Washington, the top general in Iraq, David Petraeus and the U.S. Ambassador to Iraq, Ryan Crocker indicated that the United States would need a major troop presence in Iraq for years to come.⁴²⁶ At the same time, General Petraeus recommended limited troop withdrawal in the coming months.⁴²⁷ The U.S. President, George Bush subsequently stated that by the summer of 2008, the additional 21,700 troops sent to Iraq in June would be brought back.⁴²⁸

According to U.S. military and intelligence officials, there has been a noticeable decrease in the number of foreign fighters entering Iraq from Syria.⁴²⁹ U.S. operations inside Iraq, cooperation with terrorist 'source' countries such as Saudi Arabia, as well as a Syrian crackdown on terrorists are believed to be the major reasons behind the decrease.⁴³⁰ The terrorist group, Al-Qaeda in Iraq, largely consists of Sunni Muslims, who primarily cross into Iraq through Syria.⁴³¹ U.S. officials also believe that foreign militants moving out of Iraq to return to their home countries in Arab states, Europe and North Africa mainly travel through Syria.⁴³²

There was heavy shelling by Iran along Iraq's eastern and far northeastern regions in September.⁴³³ Towards the end of the month, Iranian artillery shells struck the villages of

⁴²³ "Maliki gains a little time but faces a daunting task" *The New York Times*, 09/24/2007.

⁴²⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴²⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴²⁶ "Officials cite long-term need for U.S. in Iraq" *The New York Times*, 09/12/2007.

⁴²⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴²⁸ "Bush tells nation he will begin to roll back 'surge'" *The Washington Post*, 09/14/2007.

⁴²⁹ "Fewer foreigners crossing into Iraq from Syria to fight" *The Washington Post*, 09/16/2007.

⁴³⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴³¹ *Ibid.*

⁴³² *Ibid.*

⁴³³ "U.S. official calls Kurd oil deal at odds with Baghdad" *The New York Times*, 09/28/2007.

Rayan, and also the Qandil Mountains close to the border.⁴³⁴ The shelling is targeted against Kurdish separatist rebels “who are using the region as a redoubt from which to launch attacks on Iran and Turkey.”⁴³⁵ The shelling thus closely patterns Turkey’s efforts to drive out Kurdish separatist guerillas belonging to the PKK who live in the northern Kurdistan region of Iraq.⁴³⁶

In this context, Turkey and Iraq reached a deal to curb the activities of Kurdish rebels belonging to the PKK.⁴³⁷ The agreement calls for a commitment to “prevent finance, logistical support and propaganda for the PKK.”⁴³⁸ The deal, however, fell short of Turkey’s key proposal of allowing Turkish forces to cross into Iraq in pursuit of Kurdish rebels.⁴³⁹ The proposal had, however, been strongly opposed by the Kurdish Regional Government.⁴⁴⁰ The rifts between the stands of the central Iraqi government and the Kurdish government with regard to the standoff with the PKK indicate the clear lack of consensus at the national level, while underscoring the incapacity of the central government in reigning in the KRG.

A violent shooting incident, which killed 10 Iraqi civilians, and in which Blackwater, an American security contractor is allegedly involved, has led to controversy over the role of foreign security contractors operating in Iraq.⁴⁴¹ The incident has focused attention on the question of the government’s jurisdiction over the various actors in Iraq, given the presence of foreign security contractors operating with immunity in the state. For the time being, however, the Iraqi government is compelled to allow Blackwater’s operations in Iraq since removing the company’s 10,000 guards could create a significant “security vacuum” in the capital.⁴⁴² Meanwhile federal prosecutors in the U.S. are investigating whether employees of Blackwater smuggled illegal arms into Iraq that may have ended up with militant organizations wreaking havoc in the country.⁴⁴³

Meanwhile, the UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-Moon has pledged to increase the size of the UN mission in Baghdad from 65 to 95 people.⁴⁴⁴ Mr. Moon also indicated the possibility of expanding a small UN office in Arbil and re-opening an office in Basra.⁴⁴⁵ The office in Basra was closed after the British forces withdrew troops from the region earlier this year.⁴⁴⁶

⁴³⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴³⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴³⁶ “Shelling near Iranian border is forcing Iraqi Kurds to flee” *The Washington Post*, 09/13/2007.

⁴³⁷ “Turkey-Iraq agree security pact” *BBC Online*, 09/28/2007.

⁴³⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴¹ “Iraq probe of security contractor expanded” *The Washington Post*, 09/22/2007.

⁴⁴² “Iraq premier says Blackwater shootings challenge his nation’s sovereignty” *The New York Times*, 09/24/2007.

⁴⁴³ “Security firm is in smuggling probe” *The Washington Post*, 09/22/2007.

⁴⁴⁴ “Iraq neighbors urged to help” *The Washington Post*, 09/23/2007.

⁴⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

September 2007
Core 5

1. *Police*
Rating: Poor

In Khadra, a Sunni dominated neighborhood in Western Baghdad, the local police force has been disbanded as it was unable to stop militia and criminal activity, even as road side bombs were often found yards from police checkpoints.⁴⁴⁷ In the same vein, an independent commission of retired military officers created by the U.S. Congress has recommended revamping the national police forces to rid it of Shiite militia members and corrupt officers.⁴⁴⁸ The report thus says, “the Iraqi police force is incapable today of providing security at a level sufficient to protect Iraqi neighborhoods from insurgents and sectarian violence.”⁴⁴⁹

According to the Independent Commission on the Security Forces in Iraq, the dysfunction, sectarianism and corruption within the Ministry of Interior has significantly hampered the effectiveness of the Iraqi police forces.⁴⁵⁰

2. *Leadership*
Rating: Poor

The political leadership in Iraq remains heavily divided on sectarian grounds as each party and leader seeks to shore up support at the expense of national reconciliation. The continued deadlock on important legislation testifies to such continuing divisions. According to the report released by the U.S. Government Accountability Office, while the draft law on hydrocarbons has been framed, it is yet to be enacted.⁴⁵¹ The draft law includes mechanisms for revenue sharing and a proposal for restructuring the Ministry of Oil. The draft law on softening De-Baathification is also pending ratification.⁴⁵² The delay in the enactment and ratification of such key legislation is undermining the rule of law in the state, while hindering economic progress and political reconciliation across sectarian lines.

Prime Minister al-Maliki’s government remains weak and is facing growing threats from within its own ranks as well as from coalition partners.⁴⁵³

⁴⁴⁷ “Civilian death toll falls in Baghdad but rises across Iraq” *The New York Times*, 09/02/2007.

⁴⁴⁸ “The report of the Independent Commission on the Security Forces in Iraq” available at <http://forums.csis.org/isf.pdf>

⁴⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵¹ “Securing, stabilizing and rebuilding Iraq”, *United States Government Accountability Office*. Available online at www.gao.gov/new.items/d07308sp.pdf

⁴⁵² *Ibid.*

⁴⁵³ “Maliki gains a little time but faces a daunting task” *The New York Times*, 09/24/2007.

3. Civil Service
Rating: Poor

Iraq's highest anti-graft official, Judge Radhi, who had initiated hundreds of corruption enquiries since 2004, including some against former and current cabinet ministers, submitted his resignation to Prime Minister al-Maliki.⁴⁵⁴ He has alleged that the Prime Minister's office had tried to limit the scope of his commission's powers and had attempted to close several cases involving government officials, saying that they did not fall within his purview.⁴⁵⁵ The embattled official stated, "I cannot just sit in my place and see corruption eating the Iraqi state, so I asked for retirement."⁴⁵⁶ The commission's work is currently under investigation by a Parliamentary Committee. The case points to the difficulties in investigating rampant corruption in Iraq, as well as the political wrangling at play, when corruption within the Iraqi government is under investigation.

An inept bureaucracy and continuing violence are the main reasons why there has been little progress in reconstruction and rebuilding projects in Iraq.⁴⁵⁷ Federal ministries have failed to spend billions of dollars in reconstruction aid, which should have been used to build schools, roads, power plants and hospitals.⁴⁵⁸

There are, however, signs that local governments have started bypassing the national bureaucratic machinery by using the reconstruction money received from the central government to pay for regional projects. While provinces like Babil, Diwaniya, Wasit, Kirkuk and Anbar have seen substantial progress as a result of such spending, there are fears that such power in the hands of provincial authorities could lead to more corruption, while also encouraging "centrifugal tendencies."⁴⁵⁹ According to Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister, Barham Salih, "this central bureaucracy is broken...the national ministries have proven incapable of spending their budgets."⁴⁶⁰ The bypassing of the Iraqi national machinery by provincial government points to the continuing development of regional pockets of power unfettered by any central control. Such factors only serve to undermine the legitimacy of the Iraqi national government and bureaucracy.

4. Judiciary
Rating: Poor

The shooting incident involving U.S. security contractor Blackwater, mentioned under Indicator No.12, has raised questions regarding the scope and strength of the Iraqi judicial system. In 2004, a law was enacted and enshrined into the Iraqi legal system, which gives security companies working for the United States in Iraq immunity for

⁴⁵⁴ Blaming politics, Iraqi antigraft official vows to quit" *The New York Times*, 09/07/2007.

⁴⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵⁷ "Provinces use rebuilding money in Iraq" *The New York Times*, 10/01/2007.

⁴⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

prosecution.⁴⁶¹ Such provisions have further helped undermine rule of law in Iraq, since the judiciary is unable to try such entities, even when they commit crimes on Iraqi soil. This has only contributed to weakening the judicial system.

5. Military
Rating: Weak

The Independent Commission on the Security Forces in Iraq reports that although there has been much progress in improving the Iraqi army, it will “not be ready to independently fulfill its security role within the next 12-18 months.”⁴⁶² The report cites problems in leadership, disciplinary standards and logistical shortcomings as some of the main challenges before the Iraqi army.⁴⁶³

According to Joseph Christoff, the head of International Affairs and Trade at the US General Accounting Office, “Since 2003, the United States has provided US\$ 19.2 billion to train and equip 360,000 Iraqi soldiers and police officers. But as of September 2007...only about 10 of the 140 army, national police and special operation units are operating independently.”⁴⁶⁴ Christoff cites high rates of absenteeism, divided loyalties and limited logistical capabilities as the main problems that are inflicting the Iraqi security forces.⁴⁶⁵

⁴⁶¹ “Security firm faces criminal charges in Iraq” *The New York Times*, 09/23/2007.

⁴⁶² “The report of the Independent Commission on the Security Forces in Iraq” available at <http://forums.csis.org/isf.pdf>

⁴⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶⁴ US oversight o report Iraq reconstruction falls short” *Voice of America*, 11/01/2007.

⁴⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

October 2007
12 Indicators

1. Demographic Pressures
Rating: 10

A controversial oil deal signed in September between Hunt Oil Company and the Kurdistan Regional Government⁴⁶⁶ has appeared to hold in October, potentially setting the stage for increased demographic pressures in northern Iraq. The KRG actively sought – and signed – four other oil deals in October, detailed under Indicator #3. The Hunt Oil deal covers exploration in an area called Jebel Semroot, which is not part of the Kurdistan Autonomous Region.⁴⁶⁷ Jebel Semroot is located in Nineveh province – in an area also inhabited by Sunni Arabs.⁴⁶⁸ The issue of who owns the land (and the resources below it) has the potential to aggravate demographic pressures in northern Iraq, which could also potentially fuel group grievance conflicts. The four KRG oil deals signed in October have also raised tensions within Iraq over who has the authority to negotiate extraction of this resource.

2. Movement of Refugees or IDPs
Rating: 10

October has witnessed both modest improvements and set-backs concerning Iraqi refugees and IDPs. The improving security situation in Iraq is, to some extent, positively affecting the movement of Iraqi refugees and IDPs. The overall level of random and targeted violence in the country is decreasing, and according to the U.S. military, the number of rocket and mortar attacks across the country has drastically dropped to 369 for the month of October, with only 53 in Baghdad⁴⁶⁹ - noteworthy, as these are the lowest figures in almost two years.⁴⁷⁰ According to the Iraq Interior Ministry, the level of violence in Baghdad has dropped precipitously in the last few months, with a 67 percent decrease in car bombings, a 40 percent decrease in roadside bombs, and a 28 percent drop in the number of bodies found dumped in and around the capital.⁴⁷¹ The improving security situation – and increasingly homogenized neighborhoods of Baghdad – may in part account for the return of 46,030 refugees from abroad in October.⁴⁷²

Although an improving security environment in Baghdad may in part be responsible for the return of refugees to Iraq from abroad, the violence certainly continues. Iraq's Health,

⁴⁶⁶ "Fears of Iraq oil loss because of Turkish invasion misguided." *Iraqoilreport.com*, 10/22/2007

⁴⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶⁹ "Iraq Rocket fire 'falls sharply'" *BBC News Online*, 11/12/2007

⁴⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷¹ "Violence in Iraq drops sharply: Ministry" *Reuters*, 10/22/2007

⁴⁷² "Declining violence leads 46,000refugees back to Iraq, government says." *The Dallas Morning News*, 11/08/2007

Interior and Defense Ministries have calculated that, despite the improving security situation, 887 Iraqi civilians were still killed in October.⁴⁷³ In the northern province of Nineveh, there has been a 129 percent increase in car bombing and a 114 percent increase in “violent deaths.”⁴⁷⁴ This increased violence in regions north of Baghdad is presumably an insurgent response to the U.S. surge in and around the capital.

Although on the surface, the return of 46,030 refugees may seem a positive development, this must be tempered with the realization that Iraq’s neighbors are increasingly restricting access to their territory for Iraqi refugees, and in some cases are deporting them. According to the UNHCR, the October estimate stands at 2.25 million Iraqi refugees who have fled the state. The UNHCR has estimated that of the 2.25 million Iraqis who have fled Iraq, 1.4 million are in Syria; 750,000 are in Jordan; 200,000 are in the Gulf States; 100,000 have fled to Egypt; 54,000 to Iran; 40,000 have taken refuge in Lebanon; and 10,000 have fled to Turkey.⁴⁷⁵

The UNHCR has reported that neighboring states are “more or less clos[ing] their borders to refugees” in response to the number of people streaming across the borders.⁴⁷⁶ The Syrian government announced in October that they would re-impose limitations on the number of Iraqi refugees allowed to enter Syria.⁴⁷⁷ The restrictions in Syria will require Iraqis to obtain a visa – which will be “limited to business people, scientists and academics.”⁴⁷⁸ In the absence of refugee camps in Syria, Iraqi refugees have mixed into the local population – which is estimated to have increased by as much as 10 percent since the exodus of Iraqis began.⁴⁷⁹ This has created a significant burden on the Syrian government,⁴⁸⁰ and is the impetus for the restrictions on Iraqi refugees.

Similarly, Iraqi provinces are increasingly resistant to allowing IDPs into their territory – despite orders from the central government to accommodate them.⁴⁸¹ 11 of Iraq’s 18 provinces have begun to fetter entry of IDPs, and those IDPs already residing in these provinces are increasingly isolated from food and public services.⁴⁸² A UNHCR report released in October found that 100,000 IDPs are being added every month to the total already displaced within the country.⁴⁸³

The Iraqi Red Crescent reported in October that the majority of Iraqi IDPs are suffering from poverty, malnutrition and disease.⁴⁸⁴ In Najaf, the number of Iraqi IDPs is estimated to be between 60,000 and 400,000 – with the Iraqi Red Crescent estimating that the

⁴⁷³ “Iraq rocket fire ‘falls sharply’.” *BBC News Online*, 11/12/2007

⁴⁷⁴ “Violence in Iraq drops sharply: Ministry” *Reuters*, 10/22/2007

⁴⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷⁶ “Doors closing on Iraqi displaced.” *BBC News Online*, 10/10/2007

⁴⁷⁷ “Syria restores Iraqi visa limits.” *BBC News Online*, 10/02/2007

⁴⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸¹ “Iraq’s displaced people nightmare.” *BBC News Online*, 10/10/2007

⁴⁸² “Doors closing on Iraqi displaced.” *BBC News Online*, 10/10/2007

⁴⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸⁴ “Iraqi Red Crescent says nearly 2.3 million Iraqis displaced in Iraq.” *VOA News*, 11/05/2007

number is closer to 400,000.⁴⁸⁵ Most are largely isolated from the local economy and society.⁴⁸⁶ The Najaf government has also made efforts to restrict the flow of Iraqi IDPs by establishing a requirement that people coming to the city need “at least two members of the Najaf government vouch for them.”⁴⁸⁷ These conditions are not conducive to facilitating national reconciliation. A large population of frustrated and disenfranchised IDPs increases the risk of entrenching and exasperating group-grievances, and areas inhabited by Iraqi IDPs are often virulent sources of militiamen and insurgents.⁴⁸⁸

3. *Vengeance-Seeking Group Grievance*

Rating: 10

Iraq’s underlying sectarian tension has remained volatile in October despite decreasing levels of violence in recent months.⁴⁸⁹ As mentioned above, numbers tabulated by the Iraqi Health, Interior and Defense Ministries showed that there were less than 900 “violent deaths” in Iraq in October; the number coming from 554 Iraqi deaths and the discovery of 333 bodies – some of which may have actually have been killed in previous months.⁴⁹⁰ The drop in violence has been credited to three factors; the U.S. military surge, the continuing marginalization of Al-Qaeda in Iraq and, more important in the context of group-grievance, the suspension of operations by al-Sadr’s Mahdi Army.⁴⁹¹ There has been at least some progress in stemming the violence between sects, and in forging agreements on reconciliation. Sunni and Shiite leaders in Baghdad signed the “Reconciliation Document Between Muslims”⁴⁹² in early October. The agreement has been characterized as a “statement of good faith by rival factions...[to] contribute to improved security in the coming months.”⁴⁹³ The agreement calls for a ban on violence in public places, respect for the property of IDPs, and calls for the release of “all innocent people” held by the Iraqi government and U.S. military.⁴⁹⁴

Concerns about inciting sectarian violence have complicated efforts to carry out the court ordered execution of Ali Hassan al-Majid, Hussein Rashid al-Tikrit and general Sultan Hashim – all three sentenced to death in June 2007.⁴⁹⁵ Iraq's main Sunni political bloc, National Concord Front (NCF), has advocated for the release of General Hashim who was an Iraqi general in the Iran-Iraq war. The NCF said the execution of General Hashim would be “revenge on patriots on behalf of [Iran].”⁴⁹⁶ President Talabani has refused to

⁴⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸⁷ “Najaf’s guests (slideshow).” *The New York Times*, 10/18/2007

⁴⁸⁸ “Iraq’s displaced people nightmare.” *BBC News Online*, 10/10/2007

⁴⁸⁹ “Is Iraq getting better?” *BBC News Online*, 11/11/2007

⁴⁹⁰ “Deaths in Iraq ‘continue to fall’.” *BBC News Online*, 11/1/2007

⁴⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹² “Local foes commit to peace in Baghdad.” *The Washington Post*, 10/19/2007

⁴⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹⁵ “Iraqi Sunnis urge release of ‘patriot’ death row general.” *AFP Online*, 10/19/2007

⁴⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

sign the execution order, and the executions have continuously been delayed throughout October amidst political infighting⁴⁹⁷, detailed below under Indicator #9.

4. Chronic and/or Sustained Human Flight

Rating: 10

The movement of Iraqi IDPs, as discussed under Indicator #2 above, is in large part spurred by voluntary flight of Iraqis from neighborhoods – particularly in Baghdad – that have been ethnically homogenizing through the threat of, or acts of, violence in recent months.⁴⁹⁸ The inability of many IDPs – particularly those now in Najaf - to integrate with the economy and society of their new “homes” (and their inability to return to their original towns neighborhoods) could perpetuate chronic human flight – both within and outside Iraq’s borders – as Iraqi IDPs struggle to restart a stable life elsewhere.⁴⁹⁹

5. Uneven Economic Development Along Group Lines

Rating: 9

The Kurdistan Regional Government is aggressively seeking foreign investment in its oil sector in the face of legislative deadlock over the creation of a national Iraqi oil law. The oil deal the KRG signed with Texas-based Hunt Oil Co. in September has been declared illegal by the central government.⁵⁰⁰ However, this has not stopped the KRG from signing four additional deals in October.^{501/502} Although the Iraqi constitution states that a federal system of managing Iraq’s oil reserves should be implemented, this has yet to be supported statutorily. Baghdad’s seemingly unending delay in addressing the issue has been the KRG’s rationale for signing several new oil deals in recent weeks.⁵⁰³

As the majority of Iraq’s oil wealth is located in Shiite dominated areas, many major oil companies have so far resisted the temptation to sign deals with the KRG in order to stay in the good graces of the Iraqi central government.⁵⁰⁴ The issue of with whom to sign oil deals - and the distribution of this oil revenue within Iraq - is inherently tied with group identities, and judging by past distribution of funds from the central government, also tied to uneven economic development along these group lines.

The central government’s ability to control Iraq’s oil wealth is questionable, even if new legislation is drafted. Oil has proved to be a valuable asset for those who seek to exploit Iraq’s sectarian cleavages. Former Iraqi anti-corruption official Radhi Hamza al-Radhi

⁴⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹⁸ “Najaf’s guests (slideshow).” *The New York Times*, 10/18/2007

⁴⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰⁰ “Analysis: Iraqi Kurds make oil sales pitch.” *United Press International*, 10/11/2007

⁵⁰¹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰² “Iraqi Kurds sign four oil deals.” *BBC News Online*, 10/04/2007

⁵⁰³ “Analysis: Iraqi Kurds make oil sales pitch.” *United Press International*, 10/11/2007

⁵⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

highlighted this issue when he reported in October that it was “not possible for [his Iraqi] government commission to investigate oil corruption adequately...because Sunni and Shiite militias had control of the distribution of Iraqi oil.”⁵⁰⁵

Accusations of inequitable distribution of financial resources along group lines have persisted in October, with Sunni officials in Anbar province continuing to claim that they are not being given an appropriate proportion of national funds to advance reconstruction efforts.⁵⁰⁶ A bill currently in the U.S. Congress is seeking to double financial assets controlled by the U.S. military, which could be used to support reconstruction projects that are not being funded by the Iraqi central government.⁵⁰⁷

6. Sharp and/or Severe Economic Decline

Rating: 9

A report by the Office of the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction in October found that the provinces south of Baghdad are “economically stagnant”⁵⁰⁸ – with conditions particularly bad in Basra, where businesses are being choked out.⁵⁰⁹

The deputy head of the Basra Agriculture Department reported in early October that the number of fruitful date palms in Basra has decreased by 10 million trees.⁵¹⁰ Iraqi date exports have been a substantial revenue generator for the country in the past, and the drastic reduction in the number of fruitful trees will have a significant negative effect on the economy of the Basra region. According to the official, agricultural diseases, infrastructural problems, disruption of the market, and challenges in “rehabilitating” public companies are all contributing to the atrophy of the date industry.⁵¹¹ Although there are efforts underway to repair the damage caused by these phenomenon, the official warned that the continued degradation of the industry could have serious implications for the continued viability of some of Iraq’s 629 varieties of date palms, and that failing to address these serious issues could lead to the destruction of the industry.⁵¹²

⁵⁰⁵ “Iraqi judges says Maliki’s government shields officials accused of corruption.” *The New York Times*, 10/05/2007

⁵⁰⁶ “Iraqis need a year to control Baghdad, US general says.” *The New York Times*, 10/03/2007

⁵⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰⁸ “Head of reconstruction teams in Iraq reports little progress throughout the country.” *The New York Times*, 10/19/2007

⁵⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵¹⁰ “Number of palm trees decreased in Basra from 13 million to 3 million.” www.aswataliraq.info, 10/03/2007

⁵¹¹ *Ibid.*

⁵¹² “Number of palm trees decreased in Basra from 13 million to 3 million.” www.aswataliraq.info, 10/03/2007

Similar economic atrophy is occurring in Anbar province where the unequal distribution of resources – including fuel and electricity (as discussed above under Indicator #5) – are preventing economic recovery and development.⁵¹³

7. Criminalization and/or Delegitimization of the State

Rating: 10

The state continues to be unable to effectively exercise power in Iraq. Local and provincial governments are ignoring directives from the central government (such as with the issue of accommodating Iraqi IDPs as mentioned above under Indicator #2), and are taking greater initiative in exercising independent power.⁵¹⁴ This can be seen in independent fiscal policies and in spending on reconstruction projects by several of Iraq's provinces – particularly Babil, Wasit, and Anbar.⁵¹⁵ Increasingly, Iraqi's provinces are "spend[ing] the direct allocations [from the central government] largely as they see fit, rather than being forced to accept projects approved by the ministries in Baghdad."⁵¹⁶

While this allows more to be accomplished (by bypassing Baghdad and its bureaucracy), it has raised fears in the central government about increased corruption and the intensification of "centrifugal forces in a country already on the verge of breaking into semiautonomous regions."⁵¹⁷ It is clear that the state is continuing to lose legitimacy and remains unable to rule all of Iraq.

The endemic corruption hindering Iraq's recovery does not seem to be improving. The former top Iraqi anti-corruption official, Radhi Hamza al-Radhi, reported in October that he had discovered and collected evidence on 3,000 cases of corruption after beginning his work in June of 2004 – amounting US\$ 18 billion in missing funds.⁵¹⁸ Radhi also said that his commission was unable to investigate corruption in the oil industry effectively, due to Sunni and Shiite militias which control of the distribution of oil in Iraq.⁵¹⁹ Radhi also raised allegations in his October testimony that the Iraqi government had sought to fetter his investigations.⁵²⁰ Radhi's allegations included charges that Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki had "protected some of his relatives that were involved in corruption."⁵²¹ Radhi stated that 31 employees of his agency had been killed, as had 12 of their relatives, during the course of his investigations into Iraqi corruption.⁵²² In response to Radhi's

⁵¹³ "Head of reconstruction teams in Iraq reports little progress throughout the country." *The New York Times*, 10/19/2007

⁵¹⁴ "Iraq's displaced people nightmare." *BBC News Online*, 10/10/2007

⁵¹⁵ "Provinces use rebuilding money in Iraq." *The New York Times*, 09/30/2007

⁵¹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵¹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵¹⁸ "Exile condemns Iraqi 'corruption'." *BBC News Online*, 10/13/2007

⁵¹⁹ "Iraqi judges says Maliki's government shields officials accused of corruption." *The New York Times*, 10/05/2007

⁵²⁰ "Exile condemns Iraqi 'corruption'." *BBC News Online*, 10/13/2007

⁵²¹ "Iraqi judges says Maliki's government shields officials accused of corruption." *The New York Times*, 10/05/2007

⁵²² *Ibid.*

accusations, the Iraqi government announced they would be filing corruption charges against Radhi – charges he denies.⁵²³ The danger posed to those investigating corruption in Iraq was also highlighted in mid-October, when Mohammad Abdul Aziz al-Jubury, a member of Ta'mim province's Anti-Corruption Commission, was kidnapped by unidentified gunmen and beheaded.⁵²⁴

Following Rahdi's allegations about corruption in Iraq and testimony by the U.S. Special Inspector General for Iraqi Reconstruction that there is, "a rising tide of corruption in Iraq,"⁵²⁵ the U.S. House oversight panel formally questioned the U.S. Department of State on the issue.⁵²⁶ Larry Butler, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern affairs, declined to answer specific questions publicly regarding corruption in al-Maliki's government. Butler informed the oversight panel that he would only respond to the committee's questions in a closed session.⁵²⁷ The Department of State justified this stance by stating that in order to protect the rights of those suspected of being involved in corruption, it is best to handle investigations privately at first.⁵²⁸

In order to make clear that the State Department was not condoning Iraqi corruption, the U.S. Secretary of State later noted that it would be unacceptable to the U.S. to, "make immune from investigation or prosecution any member of the Iraqi government, no matter how high."⁵²⁹ Henry Waxman, the chairman of the oversight committee, was publicly critical of the U.S. Department of State following these events, and questioned whether State Department policy may have contributed to the intractable political deadlock in Iraqi politics and/or possible attacks on U.S. forces in Iraq by ignoring serious corruption.⁵³⁰

8. Deterioration of Public Services

Rating: 9

According to the Iraqi Red Crescent, disease, poverty and malnutrition continue to negatively effect Iraq's sizable IDP population.⁵³¹ Deteriorating infrastructure, such as an inconsistent supply of electricity and lack of clean water has continued to contribute much to this dilemma.⁵³²

⁵²³ "Exile condemns Iraqi 'corruption'." *BBC News Online*, 10/13/2007

⁵²⁴ "Combat brigade to leave Iraq." *The Washington Post*, 10/18/2007

⁵²⁵ "Iraqi judges says Maliki's government shields officials accused of corruption." *The New York Times*, 10/05/2007

⁵²⁶ "Rice pressed on Iraq 'corruption'." *BBC News Online*, 10/25/2007

⁵²⁷ "Iraqi judges says Maliki's government shields officials accused of corruption." *The New York Times*, 10/05/2007

⁵²⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵²⁹ "Rice pressed on Iraq 'corruption'." *BBC News Online*, 10/25/2007

⁵³⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵³¹ "Rice pressed on Iraq 'corruption'." *BBC News Online*, 10/25/2007

⁵³² Iraqi Red Crescent says nearly 2.3 million Iraqis displaced in Iraq." *VOA News*, 11/05/2007

Lack of clean water contributed to continued outbreaks of cholera across Iraq in October – especially in the north; Tamim province reported 2,096 cases of the disease; Sulaimaniya province reported 655 cases; and Erbil reported 106 cases.⁵³³ Outbreaks also occurred in Basra, Tikrit, Baghdad and Mosul, but there were far fewer cases in these locations.⁵³⁴ Security concerns made it impossible to collect accurate data on the number of cases in some other locations in Iraq – including Diyala and parts of Anbar.⁵³⁵

Attacks on key public services continued in October. At the start of the month, a car bomb was used to attack a Mosul university. The attack led to the death of an agriculture professor and five others.⁵³⁶ A car bomb attack was also carried out near Baghdad University’s technology department that led to the death of 5 people and injured 15.⁵³⁷

On October 29, a suicide bomber attacked a police station in Baquba killing at least 28 and wounding 17 policemen and three civilians.⁵³⁸ The violent attack on this core public institution, blamed on Al-Qaeda in Iraq, erodes the capacity of this institution to provide security by deterring Iraqis to join the police force.

Reports circulated in late October that the largest dam in Iraq is in danger of imminent collapse because of its construction above a deposit Gypsum (which is water soluble).⁵³⁹ If the Mosul Dam were to collapse, hundreds of thousands of people would be at risk of dying in “a trillion gallon wave of water” that would probably flood both Mosul and Baghdad.⁵⁴⁰ In the words of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, “the Mosul dam is judged to have an unacceptable annual failure probability...it is the most dangerous dam in the world.”⁵⁴¹ Despite the fact that a 24-hour-a-day effort is necessary to continually replace eroding gypsum beneath the dam; the Iraqi government has repeatedly asserted that the dam is safe.⁵⁴² Discussions are under way on how best to mitigate the risk posed by the Mosul Dam.⁵⁴³

Humam Hamoudi, a Shiite leader of the Iraqi Parliament said he expected changes in the coming months within the Iraqi central government that would facilitate the replacement “inexperienced political appointees” with experienced technocrats in the hope of improving the central government’s ability to provide essential services.⁵⁴⁴ Under the proposed changes, some public service ministries, including Health, Agriculture, Justice

⁵³³ “In Iraq, repeated support for a unified state.” *The New York Times*, 10/01/2007

⁵³⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵³⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵³⁶ “Iraqi violence ebbed in September, reports say.” *The New York Times*, 10/02/2007

⁵³⁷ “Car bombs kill 24 in Iraq.” *The Washington Post*, 10/08/2007

⁵³⁸ “Suicide bomber on bike kills 28 Iraqi policemen.” *The Washington Post*, 10/30/2007

⁵³⁹ “Iraqi dam seen in danger of deadly collapse.” *The Washington Post*, 10/30/2007

⁵⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴² *Ibid.*

⁵⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴⁴ “Top Iraqis pull back from key US goal.” *The Washington Post*, 10/08/2007

and Transportation would theoretically become less politicized and “independent from political parties.”⁵⁴⁵

9. Application of Rule of Law and Human Rights

Rating: 10

As mentioned under Indicator #3, there has been substantial debate and hesitation in carrying out the court-ordered execution of Ali Hassan al-Majid, Hussein Rashid al-Tikrit and general Sultan Hashim. The role of Iraq’s Presidency Council (comprised of President Talabani, Vice-President Abdel Abdul-Madhi and Vice President Tareq al-Hashemi) in determining whether executions can go ahead has become more contentious in recent weeks as Prime Minister al-Maliki has called for the executions to be carried out.⁵⁴⁶ The ambiguity of the Presidency Council’s role in approving executions has again been brought to the forefront of the debate, as it was surrounding the execution of Saddam Hussein late last year.⁵⁴⁷

Prime Minister al-Maliki’s government has established a committee comprised of seven people (including legal experts and advisors to Maliki and Talabani) to help resolve the difficulties in determining how to proceed with the high-profile executions.⁵⁴⁸

The U.S. State Department, calling official corruption in Iraq “real, endemic and pernicious”, admitted that it threatens the prospects for reconciliation and reconstruction.⁵⁴⁹ The U.S. State Department Iraq Policy Coordinator also stated that Iraqis “at every level” have allowed religious, ethnic and tribal identities supersede their identity as “Iraqi” - to the detriment of their country.⁵⁵⁰ The comments from the State Department come after significant tension between the U.S. Congress and State, which began in September regarding corruption in Iraq. As discussed under Indicator #7, the Department of State has so far been unwilling to publicly address charges of official Iraqi corruption, which if true would represent troubling evidence against the strength of the rule of law in Iraq.

10. Security Apparatus as a “State Within a State”

Rating: 10

Sectarianism continues to play heavily in the Iraqi security sector. On October 2 the United Iraqi Alliance, the largest Shiite bloc in Iraqi politics, spoke out officially for the

⁵⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴⁶ “Legal row delays hanging of Iraq’s “Chemical Ali.” *Reuters*, 10/17/2007

⁵⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴⁹ “Corruption in Iraq ‘pernicious’.” *The Washington Post*, 10/16/2007

⁵⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

first time against the American policy of establishing Sunni “police” groups in and around Baghdad, calling on the U.S. to “hasten in stopping this adventure.”⁵⁵¹

The U.S. policy of allying with Sunni tribes to create “neighborhood watch” programs, which has seen significant progress in reducing attacks by Al-Qaeda in Iraq in Anbar province and parts of Baghdad, has become increasingly common. At least 300 new Sunni applicants for the police force in the Amiriya neighborhood of the capital were approved in October.⁵⁵² This number adds to 744 Sunnis approved in the final days of September for a police force in the Abu Ghraib neighborhood of Baghdad.⁵⁵³ Additionally, it was reported in October that as many as 14,000 “concerned citizens” had been recruited by the U.S. military in a farming region south of Baghdad.⁵⁵⁴

These developments highlight the growing number of “empowered Sunnis” in the Baghdad area; a phenomenon many Shiite leaders find disconcerting. The United Iraqi Alliance is concerned that Sunnis, some of whom may be extremists who were involved in sectarian bloodletting in the past, may again resort to violence in an effort to reclaim territory lost to Shiite militias in Baghdad in recent months.⁵⁵⁵ There are additionally concerns that Al-Qaeda in Iraq may be infiltrating these “neighborhood watch” groups unbeknownst to the U.S. military.⁵⁵⁶

The underlying sectarian tension in Iraq is still strong and permeates all levels of Iraqi society. This was highlighted in October when Iraqi Accordance Front MP, Abdul Nasser al-Jenabi, was removed from the Iraqi Parliament for “joining the armed resistance”,⁵⁵⁷ as well as with the detention of Sunni Iraqi Accordance Front MP Naif Mohammed Jasim, who was apprehended after a raid on what was a suspected al-Qaeda meeting.⁵⁵⁸ At a press conference in Washington in October, U.S. Lt. Gen. Raymond Odierno said that Iraqi security forces are still roughly a year away from being able to independently provide security for Baghdad.⁵⁵⁹ Odierno admitted that there was “still some sectarianism” in the Iraqi military, which was inhibiting its development and efficiency.⁵⁶⁰

11. Rise of Factionalized Elites

Rating: 10

⁵⁵¹ “Iraqi Shiites criticize US-Sunni cooperation.” *The International Herald Tribune*, 10/02/2007

⁵⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵⁴ “I want to kill you, but not today.” *The Economist*, 10/04/2007

⁵⁵⁵ “Iraqi Shiites criticize US-Sunni cooperation.” *The International Herald Tribune*, 10/02/2007

⁵⁵⁶ “I want to kill you, but not today.” *The Economist*, 10/04/2007

⁵⁵⁷ “Parliament sacks MP for joining armed resistance.” *Aswataliraq.info*, 10/04/2007

⁵⁵⁸ “Bombs kill Iraqi mayor, wound tribal leader.” *Reuters.com*, 10/04/2007

⁵⁵⁹ “Iraqis need a year to control Baghdad, US general says.” *The New York Times*, 10/02/2007

⁵⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

Amidst the continued disintegration of the Iraqi central government, several top Iraqi political leaders announced in October that they do not believe national reconciliation is possible.⁵⁶¹

The statements of apathy seem to stem from a feeling that the current structure of the Iraqi government keeps the country hostage to sectarian divisions – as the political blocs are narrowly defined by sect.⁵⁶² Humam Hamoudi, a Shiite leader of parliament stated that reconciliation was not possible in the short-term, and would only be brought about by “fair government.”⁵⁶³ Hamoudi stated reconciliation was an end, not a means, and that only an “atmosphere for correct relationships” would lead to reconciliation.⁵⁶⁴ Kurdish Deputy Prime Minister Barham Salih said that reconciliation is not possible so long as there is a struggle for power.⁵⁶⁵ The Sunni deputy prime minister responsible for “the portfolio of security and services” claims to have never once been consulted on security operations being carried out by the Iraqi government - echoing a familiar Sunni complaint that they have been continually marginalized in the Iraqi government.⁵⁶⁶

The struggle for power in Iraq has yet to yield the appropriate atmosphere to address contentious issues still dividing and paralyzing the government – including the reinstatement of former Baath Party officials in the government and how to manage Iraq’s oil industry.⁵⁶⁷ Iraq’s political elite is significantly fractionalized, and this month’s public statements expressing apathy toward reconciliation are not encouraging.

Shiite-on-Shiite violence continued in early October, with the Basra chief of police surviving an assassination attempt,⁵⁶⁸ and with the bombing of a police convoy, which killed seven Iraqi policemen near Diwaniya.⁵⁶⁹ Eleven Sunni and Shiite tribal leaders from Diyala province allied with the U.S. military were kidnapped on October 28. The kidnapped sheiks were members of the al-Salam Support Council and were predominately Shiite.⁵⁷⁰ A spokesman for the council blamed the attacks on the Mahdi Army, an indictment later echoed by U.S. officials who named a former Mahdi Army figure, Arkan Hasnawi, as the individual responsible for the kidnappings.⁵⁷¹ All but one of the 11 sheiks were later released unharmed, but one was killed.⁵⁷²

Later in October, however, there seemed to be a significant improvement in intra-Shiite relations. Two of Iraq's most influential Shiite clerics, Moqtada al-Sadr and Abdul Aziz al-Hakim, established a pact which may reduce violence and has been billed as an effort

⁵⁶¹ “Top Iraqis pull back from key US goal.” *The Washington Post*, 10/08/2007

⁵⁶² *Ibid.*

⁵⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶⁸ “Iraq violence ebbed in September, reports say.” *The New York Times*, 10/02/2007

⁵⁶⁹ “Roadside bomb kills Iraqi police.” *BBC News Online*, 10/17/2007

⁵⁷⁰ “Suicide bomber on bike kills 28 Iraqi policemen.” *The Washington Post*, 10/30/2007

⁵⁷¹ “Suicide bomber on bike kills 28 Iraqi policemen.” *The Washington Post*, 10/30/2007

⁵⁷² *Ibid.*

to maintain Iraq's "Islamic and national interest."⁵⁷³ The pact calls for more congenial relations between the factions, and could significantly strengthen the power of Prime Minister al-Maliki's government.⁵⁷⁴

The agreement contains political incentives for each faction, as well as for the Shiite sect in general. The Sadr bloc stands to gain from the agreement by distancing itself from its image as an "unruly, violent organization,"⁵⁷⁵ whereas the Supreme Islamic Iraqi Council stands to gain by reducing the Sadr bloc's popularity amongst Iraq's Shiites.⁵⁷⁶ Shiites in general, stand to gain from the pact as the existence of Shiite in-fighting weakens Shiites vis-à-vis Iraq's Sunnis, who have become far more unified in recent months⁵⁷⁷ - perhaps seeking to strengthen their own position in Iraq ahead of an eventual draw-down of U.S. forces.⁵⁷⁸

There is the possibility that the pact could force further fractionalization of Iraq's Shiite community if some Sadrites reject al-Sadr's moves toward the SIIC.⁵⁷⁹ U.S. General Odierno re-emphasized the division of Shiite militias in Iraq when he observed, "We are starting to see at low levels a split between those [Shiite militias] who have some relationship with Iran . . . and those who do not."⁵⁸⁰ Odierno explained he was unsure how important those divisions might be in the future.⁵⁸¹

There was a very public call for the preservation of the national unity of Iraq (in one form or another) at the start of the month. Six Iraqi political parties voiced opposition in October to internal and external calls for the partition of the country.⁵⁸² An October statement by the ad-hoc grouping of parties stated that their vision for the country is that of a "united, democratic, federal Iraq that can govern, defend and sustain itself", and that "attempts to partition or divide Iraq by intimidation, force or other means into three separate states would produce extraordinary suffering and bloodshed."⁵⁸³ Although there was demonstrable opposition to partition by the six parties issuing this month's statement, some political blocs do continue to advocate the devolution of Iraqi's power to regional governments.⁵⁸⁴ These political blocs include the Kurdish parties and the Supreme Islamic Iraqi Council.⁵⁸⁵

12. Intervention of Outside Political Actors

⁵⁷³ "The Hakim-Sadr pact: a new era in Shiite politics?" *Jamestown Terrorism Monitor*, 10/25/2007

⁵⁷⁴ "Two Shiite leaders in Iraq reach peace agreement." *The New York Times*, 10/07/2007

⁵⁷⁵ "The Hakim-Sadr pact: a new era in Shiite politics?" *Jamestown Terrorism Monitor*, 10/25/2007

⁵⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸⁰ "Iraqis to pay China \$100 million for weapons for police." *The Washington Post*, 10/03/2007

⁵⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸² "In Iraq, repeated support for a unified state." *The New York Times*, 10/01/2007

⁵⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸⁴ "In Iraq, repeated support for a unified state." *The New York Times*, 10/01/2007

⁵⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

Rating: 10

Members of the PKK and PJAK continued attacks against both Turkey and Iran in October.⁵⁸⁶ The September security agreement Turkey signed with the Iraqi central government, which is largely powerless in northern Iraq, has had no effect in stemming attacks from the PKK in October – in fact, PKK violence against Turkey has increased since the agreement was signed.⁵⁸⁷

These attacks have spurred Turkish artillery strikes⁵⁸⁸, as well as sporadic Iranian shelling across the Iraqi border.⁵⁸⁹ Close to 50 Turkish soldiers were killed by elements of the PKK in October.⁵⁹⁰

The attacks have led to Turkey's decision to seek, and receive, parliamentary authorization for cross border raids targeting the PKK.⁵⁹¹ A 507 to 19 vote on October 17 gave the Turkish Prime Minister parliamentary permission for either "strategic strikes" or "large-scale invasions" of Iraqi territory in order to counter the PKK for a period of one year.⁵⁹²

Frustrations ran high on both sides of the Turkish-Iraqi border throughout October. Significant protests occurred in Turkey at the end of the month⁵⁹³ against the PKK attacks and against the United States. There is considerable anger and frustration at the U.S. over both a perceived apathy regarding the actions of the PKK, as well as anger over the decision by the U.S. House Foreign Affairs Committee to consider, and later approve, a bill that seeks to declare the Ottoman-era killing of Armenians "genocide".⁵⁹⁴

This decision also provoked angry reactions from Ankara, and further strained relations between the U.S. and Turkey.⁵⁹⁵ In response, Turkey has threatened to prevent the United States from using the Turkish Incirlik Air Base, which is a critical air-hub in the routing of as much as 70 percent of U.S. air cargo heading to Iraq,⁵⁹⁶ if the bill is advanced to floor.⁵⁹⁷

The Turkish authorization for strikes led to demonstrations on the opposite side of the border in Arbil, Iraq by thousands of Kurdish Iraqis who protested the authorization for strikes, and called for diplomacy to address the problem.⁵⁹⁸ Although there were calls for

⁵⁸⁶ "In Iraq, conflict simmers on second Kurdish front." *The New York Times*, 10/23/2007

⁵⁸⁷ "Kurds protest Turkish vote on Iraq raids." *The New York Times*, 10/19/2007

⁵⁸⁸ "Turkey shells Iraq border amid incursion talk." *AFP*, 10/14/2007

⁵⁸⁹ "Iranian shelling uproots Iraqi Kurds." *Reuters.com*, 11/08/2007

⁵⁹⁰ "Us declares PKK 'a common enemy.'" *BBC News Online*, 11/02/2007

⁵⁹¹ "Turkey authorizes Iraq incursion." *The Washington Post*, 10/18/2007

⁵⁹² *Ibid.*

⁵⁹³ "Sunni violence in Baghdad called disrupted." *The Washington Post*, 10/28/2007

⁵⁹⁴ "House panel votes to condemn Armenian killings as genocide." *The New York Times*, 10/10/2007

⁵⁹⁵ "Turkey resolves to give go-ahead for raids in Iraq." *The New York Times*, 10/18/2007

⁵⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹⁷ "Turkey open to diplomacy in Kurd crisis with Iraq." *AFP Online*, 10/18/2007

⁵⁹⁸ "Kurds protest Turkish vote on Iraq raids." *The New York Times*, 10/19/2007

diplomacy, the protestors also made it clear that Kurdish resistance would meet any Turkish invasion.⁵⁹⁹

The prospect of a Turkish attack seems to have galvanized Kurds – even those who do not necessarily support the PKK. KRG President Massoud Barzani promised that the Kurdish Regional Government would defend itself if Turkish military operations threatened the “Kurdish homeland”,⁶⁰⁰ and Iraqi President Talibani warned that a unilateral attack against sovereign Iraqi territory could set a terrible precedent leading to unilateral attacks from Iraq’s other neighbors.⁶⁰¹

Iraq, the U.S. and other international actors, including NATO, continued to insist that Turkey use diplomacy as opposed to military force in dealing with the PKK throughout October, which Turkey has accepted in principle.⁶⁰² However, Ankara has refused to rule out the possibility of employing military force or to accept a ceasefire with the PKK.⁶⁰³ Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan made clear that although Turkish military operations inside Iraq are not imminent, “terrorism cannot be presented as excusable in any way and Turkey will obviously take any measure to stop these heinous attacks.”⁶⁰⁴

Turkey is a vital investor in many of northern Iraq’s industries, and is the most important investor in northern Iraq’s oil sector;⁶⁰⁵ any Turkish incursion would have a multitude of complications. In addition to other international repercussions for launching a military operation into northern Iraq, Turkey could potentially jeopardize its economic interests in the region. Just the same, geographic realities make the Kurds heavily reliant on Iran and Turkey for links with the outside world, and for commodities such as “gasoline and other critical supplies.”⁶⁰⁶ This gives these states considerable leverage on the KRG in order to garner favorable results vis-à-vis the PKK and PJAK.⁶⁰⁷ The KRG must walk the fine line between preserving relations with Iran and Turkey and not offending their constituency’s inherent sympathy for the Kurdish rebels.⁶⁰⁸

Turkey formally requested in October that the U.S. military apprehend PKK fighters in northern Iraq and extradite them to Turkey to face justice, calling on the U.S. to “treat the PKK as they treat Al-Qaeda.”⁶⁰⁹ In an effort to forestall Turkish military operations in northern Iraq, Washington promised Turkey “unspecified assistance in rooting out PKK guerillas”.⁶¹⁰

⁵⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰⁰ “Analysis: a possible new Iraq war.” *United Press International* 10/22/2007

⁶⁰¹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰² “Turkey’s rebel Kurds still elusive.” *The Wall Street Journal*, 10/23/2007

⁶⁰³ “Iraq says it will cooperate with Turkey on Kurds.” *The New York Times*, 10/24/2007

⁶⁰⁴ “Turkey authorizes Iraq incursion.” *The Washington Post*, 10/18/2007

⁶⁰⁵ “Analysis: Turkey-Iraq fight won’t harm oil.” *United Press International* 10/22/2007

⁶⁰⁶ “In Iraq, conflict simmers on second Kurdish front.” *The New York Times*, 10/23/2007

⁶⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰⁹ “Hangings may incite more Iraq violence.” *Free Press News Services (Freep.com)*, 10/19/2007

⁶¹⁰ “Turkey’s rebel Kurds still elusive.” *The Wall Street Journal*, 10/23/2007

In late October, there were reports of the Turkish military engaging elements of the PKK in southern Turkey, as well as limited – and sometimes contradictory – reports of attacks against PKK elements inside Iraq. The Turkish Deputy Prime Minister was quoted saying, in a later-refuted Turkish newspaper story, that Turkish F-16s had penetrated Iraqi airspace and attacked elements of the PKK in northern Iraq.⁶¹¹ The threat of a Turkish incursion into northern Iraq remains a real possibility as October ends.

A British private security contractor (PSC), Erinys, which works in Iraq for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, was involved in a shooting in Kirkuk in October that wounded Iraqi civilians.⁶¹² An Australian PSC was also involved in a shooting in October, which led to the deaths of two civilians.⁶¹³ The timing of these incidents is problematic following the September shooting incident involving Blackwater, which led to significant negative attention and publicity.⁶¹⁴ The fall-out from this event led to U.S. Secretary of Defense Gates in October characterizing the actions of PSCs in Iraq as “in conflict” with U.S. military objectives in the country.⁶¹⁵ The fact the U.S. relies so heavily on PSCs in Iraq (there are as many as 10,000 armed contractors working on behalf of the U.S. government in Iraq⁶¹⁶) makes removing them all from the country impossible. However, the U.S. military has suggested that they should be more centrally controlled and regulated to ensure they are acting within accordance with U.S. goals in Iraq.⁶¹⁷ The State Department, which is dependent on roughly 2,500 PSC employees for protection and security in Iraq, has expressed resistance to the idea that the U.S. military would have control of their security providers.⁶¹⁸

On October 9, the Iraqi government ordered the United States to end all its dealings with Blackwater within six months, and ordered the company to pay US\$ 8 million to the family of each victim of the September shooting incident.⁶¹⁹ Iraq’s minister for human rights also suggested that those responsible for the September shootings should stand trial in Iraq.⁶²⁰ At the end of the month, the Iraqi central government approved a draft law that would change the existing immunity law covering PSC employees operating in Iraq so that they would now be under the jurisdiction of Iraqi law, and passed it on to the Iraqi Parliament for consideration.⁶²¹

The UN official in charge of human rights in Iraq, Ivana Vuco, also became involved in the debate about how to address the issue of PSC killings in Iraq. Vuco said in October that despite CPA Order 17, PSC employees were still subject to international law,

⁶¹¹ *Ibid.*

⁶¹² “Security contractors shoot at taxi, wounding 3 Iraqis.” *The New York Times*, 10/19/2007

⁶¹³ “Australian security firm involved in shooting, Iraq official says.” *CNN News Online*, 10/09/2007

⁶¹⁴ “U.S. launches probe into latest convoy shooting in Iraq.” *AFP Online*, 10/19/2007

⁶¹⁵ “Guards ‘undermine’ U.S. Iraq aims.” *BBC News Online*, 10/19/2007

⁶¹⁶ “Pentagon sees one authority over contractors.” *The New York Times*, 10/17/2007

⁶¹⁷ “Guards ‘undermine’ U.S. Iraq aims.” *BBC News Online*, 10/19/2007

⁶¹⁸ “Pentagon sees one authority over contractors.” *The New York Times*, 10/17/2007

⁶¹⁹ “Iraq tells U.S. to ditch Blackwater.” *BBC News Online*, 10/09/2007

⁶²⁰ “Minster seeks Blackwater trials.” *BBC News Online*, 10/16/2007

⁶²¹ “Iraq to end contractor immunity.” *BBC News Online*, 10/30/2007

including laws relating to crimes against humanity and war crimes.⁶²² Vuco said that investigations into such crimes might be carried out.⁶²³ Also in October, it came to light that some of the injured survivors and victims' family members from last month's Blackwater shootings would be taking legal action against the company, represented by The Center for Constitutional Rights.⁶²⁴

Although the majority of Al-Qaeda in Iraq is comprised of Iraqi fighters, the foreign make-up of the group's leadership predicates that its influence on Iraqi affairs be discussed under Indicator #12. A U.S. military raid on a desert camp on the Syrian border in September yielded demographic information on roughly 700 foreign fighters entering the country to carry out attacks since August of 2006.⁶²⁵ About 41 percent of foreign fighters infiltrating Iraq are thought to be Saudi; 18 percent thought to be Libyan; 9 percent from Yemen; 8.6 percent from Algeria; 8 percent from Syria; 6.7 percent from Morocco; 5 percent from Tunisia; 1.8 percent from Jordan; and about 1 percent from Turkey and Egypt.⁶²⁶

The number of foreign fighters passing into Iraq through this conduit along the Syrian border – responsible for facilitating the entry of perhaps as many as 90 percent of all foreign fighters⁶²⁷ – has dropped from 80-110 infiltrations per month in the winter and spring of 2007, to roughly 60 per month over the summer, and is thought to be as low as 40 infiltrations for the month of October.⁶²⁸ Correspondingly, there were only 16 suicide bombings in October – “half the number seen during the summer months and down sharply from a peak of 59 in March.”⁶²⁹ The U.S. military has shared intelligence garnered as a result of the raid with other countries in the hopes that the flow of foreign fighters can be further stemmed.⁶³⁰

Foreign influence on the direction and leadership of Al-Qaeda in Iraq was observed in October when a tape, supposedly released by Al-Qaeda figurehead Osama Bin Laden, criticized Iraqi insurgents for allowing themselves to be distracted and hampered by tribal loyalties in the fight against the U.S..⁶³¹ The tape called on them to unite in their common cause.⁶³²

Members of Al-Qaeda in Iraq continued their attacks against tribal sheikhs aligned with U.S. forces in October. Sheikh Muawiya Jebara, the leader of the Salahuddin Awakening Council, was assassinated on October 4.⁶³³ Al-Qaeda in Iraq was also responsible for the

⁶²² “U.S. rights group sues Blackwater.” BBC News Online, 10/11/2007

⁶²³ *Ibid.*

⁶²⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶²⁵ “Foreign fighters in Iraq are tied to allies of U.S.” *The New York Times*, 11/22/2007

⁶²⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶²⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶²⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶²⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶³⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶³¹ “U.S. air strikes kill 11 IN Iraq.” *BBC News Online*, 10/23/2007

⁶³² *Ibid.*

⁶³³ “Iraqi Sunni tribal leader killed.” *BBC News Online*, 10/04/2007

October assassinations of Imam Abu Bilal, an influential Sunni cleric opposed to AQI's presence in Iraq,⁶³⁴ as well as Iskandariya district council leader Abbas Hamza al-Khafaji and police chief Ihsan Abdul-Kareem al-Taie in Babil province.⁶³⁵

October 8th car bomb attacks in Beiji also targeted Sunni leaders fighting against AQI.⁶³⁶ The Beiji police chief and leader of the local Awakening Council were both targeted in the attacks,⁶³⁷ though both survived the attempted killings.⁶³⁸ On October 9, the deputy police chief of Mosul was assassinated in a drive-by shooting,⁶³⁹ and the head of police intelligence in Kirkuk was wounded in a separate drive-by shooting.⁶⁴⁰ An Iraqi Accordance Front member of parliament, Naif Jassim Mohammed, was detained in October after attending what has been described as an Al-Qaeda meeting.⁶⁴¹

Despite the continuing violence perpetrated by Al-Qaeda in some parts of Iraq, the group has become significantly marginalized in others, and the substantial drop in the number of attacks and activities attributed to the group in the past few months has led to some U.S. military officers advancing the opinion that Al-Qaeda in Iraq may be largely "defeated".⁶⁴² While the success against Al-Qaeda in Iraq is certainly noteworthy in some parts of the country – namely Anbar province and Baghdad – it is uncertain how permanent the apparent victory against Al-Qaeda in Iraq really is. U.S. General Odierno stated in October that he feels AQI's ability to carry out its operations has been cut back, and that the group's safe havens have been reduced by 60 - 70 percent.⁶⁴³ Nonetheless, there is still some concern amongst senior U.S. officers that AQI may be able to regenerate and still constitutes a threat despite the current lull in activity.⁶⁴⁴

The U.S. military has apprehended a militant they say is responsible for financing and facilitating attacks on behalf of Al-Qaeda in Iraq.⁶⁴⁵ The detainee used a front-company to bring weapons and bomb components into Iraq for use in attacks.⁶⁴⁶ Additionally, he acquired as much as US\$ 100 million from international supporters of terror from Italy, Syria and Egypt, and is thought to have been making monthly payments of over US\$ 50,000 to "extremist groups" every month.⁶⁴⁷ Between 40 and 50 individuals worked for him in Iraq earning as much as US\$ 3,000 per attack to carry out roadside bombings of U.S. and Iraqi forces.⁶⁴⁸

⁶³⁴ "U.S. kills 13 in Al-Qaeda in Iraq strikes – military." *Reuters Online*, 10/11/2007

⁶³⁵ "Iraqi allies of US forces are killed in three attacks." *The New York Times*, 10/05/2007

⁶³⁶ "At least 18 killed in twin suicide bombings in Iraq." *The People's Daily Online*, 10/09/2007

⁶³⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶³⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶³⁹ "FACTBOX – Security developments in Iraq, Oct 9". *Reuters.com*, 10/09/2007

⁶⁴⁰ Car Bomb Kills 22 in Northern Iraq, Reuters October 9th, 2007

⁶⁴¹ "Iraqi Sunni tribal leader killed." *BBC News Online*, 10/04/2007

⁶⁴² "Al-Qaeda in Iraq reported crippled." *The Washington Post*, 10/15/2007

⁶⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴⁵ "Iraqi allies of U.S. forces are killed in three attacks." *The New York Times*, 10/05/2007

⁶⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴⁸ "Bombs kill Iraqi mayor, wound tribal leader." *Reuters.com*, 10/04/2007

The first reduction of U.S. combat brigades serving in Iraq will occur by the end of the year, bringing the total number to 19 brigades.⁶⁴⁹ General Petraeus plans to further reduce the number of combat brigades to 15 by the summer of 2008.⁶⁵⁰ However, as active-duty U.S. combat brigades are to return from Iraq, as many as 7 U.S. National Guard units will deploy to Iraq (and Afghanistan) in 2008 and 2009 to relieve a current deployment of National Guard troops headed to the two theaters in the coming months.⁶⁵¹ The U.S. designated the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps' Quds Force as a "supporter of terrorism" in October. The decision to designate the group has been made over several months, and is a response not only to the group's activities in general, but particularly in response to their activities in Iraq.⁶⁵²

The Office of the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction reported in October that the 32 U.S. PRTs currently operating in Iraq have not shown much progress in furthering key U.S. goals of economic development, political reconciliation and capacity building across the country.⁶⁵³ The report was met with skepticism from the U.S. State Department, which questioned the methodology used in developing the assessment of the PRTs' progress.⁶⁵⁴ Karbala province, the 8 of 18 Iraqi provinces to revert from U.S. to Iraqi control, was passed off to local officials at the end of October.⁶⁵⁵

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad publicly endorsed Turkey's decision to authorize military operations targeting the PKK in northern Iraq in October – making Syria the only country to openly support a Turkish incursion.⁶⁵⁶

Reports continued to surface in early October that Syria has been engaged in supporting Iraqi Sunni insurgent groups and former Saddam Hussein-era Baathists opposed to the Iraqi government by facilitating opportunities for them to meet and organize within Syrian territory.⁶⁵⁷ Although Syria has claimed not to have any role in supporting these groups, the nature of Syria's internal security mechanisms makes it unlikely that such meetings could occur within Syria without the government's approval.⁶⁵⁸ This activity has been characterized as Syria's attempt to gain influence in Iraq independent from their quasi-ally Iran⁶⁵⁹ (a supporter of the Shiite-dominated Iraqi central government). This has led to increasing pressure from Iran on Syria to stop providing this support.⁶⁶⁰

⁶⁴⁹ "Combat brigade to leave Iraq." *The Washington Post*, 10/18/2007

⁶⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵¹ "National guard faces call-ups for 2008, '09." *The Washington Post*, 10/18/2007

⁶⁵² "U.S. turns up heat on Iran." *BBC News Online*, 10/25/2007

⁶⁵³ "Head of reconstruction teams in Iraq reports little progress throughout country." *The New York Times*, 10/19/2007

⁶⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵⁵ "U.S. hands over Karbala to Iraqis." *BBC News Online*, 10/29/2007

⁶⁵⁶ "Turkey resolves to give go-ahead for raids in Iraq." *The New York Times*, 10/18/2007

⁶⁵⁷ "Syria is said to be strengthening ties to opponents of Iraq's government" *The New York Times*, 10/07/2007

⁶⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

Syria has had a role in the past in allowing the flow of insurgents into Iraq; the former Syrian Minister of Information publicly stated that, “Syria looks to the resistance as freedom fighters, like George Washington fighting the British.”⁶⁶¹ There has been some recent effort by Syria, however, to reduce the activities of militants along the Syria-Iraq border and to crackdown on smuggling networks that take advantage of the long porous border between the two countries.⁶⁶² Nonetheless, Syria’s apparent intentions, and actions, vis-à-vis Iraqi insurgent groups are troubling; particularly given Syria’s demonstrated penchant for developing and supporting militant groups beyond its borders, and the ideological connection between Syrian and Iraqi Baathists.⁶⁶³

The announcement in October that Iraq had awarded a US\$ 160 million contract to an Iranian company to construct a power plant in a Shiite neighborhood of Baghdad is potentially troubling.⁶⁶⁴ Although the construction of the power plant could help in reconstruction efforts, the U.S. military has said that the Quds Force (recently designated as a “supporter of terrorism”) “routinely uses the cover of a business” when actually involved in more nefarious activities.⁶⁶⁵ The construction of the Iranian-built power plant in a Shiite neighborhood raises questions about how the power will be distributed (in light of hijacking of the national power grid by local power brokers, as discussed in the August 2007 report), and what effects this might have on equitable distribution of resources and economic development between Iraq’s various factions.

In early October, Iran re-opened five border crossings with the Kurdish Federal Region following their closure in late September.⁶⁶⁶

On October 8, commanding U.S. General Petraeus accused the Iranian Ambassador to Iraq of being a member of the Quds force, and of taking advantage of his status as a diplomat to fuel the insurgency in Iraq.⁶⁶⁷ Petraeus said he had “absolute assurance” of this fact, and said, “the Quds Force controls [Iranian] policy for Iraq.”⁶⁶⁸

The quantity of advanced weapons coming from Iran is reported to have dropped since the spring and summer – though, according to U.S. General Odierno, the level of Iranian assistance to Iraqi groups nonetheless remains a significant concern.⁶⁶⁹

U.S. Ambassador Crocker said in October that it is uncertain how much of a role Iran has played in reducing violence from Shiite militias in Iraq in October; however, he did allow the possibility that the Islamic Republic has played a positive role in this regard.⁶⁷⁰ There has been speculation that Iran may have had a hand in encouraging this month’s Hakim-

⁶⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶⁴ “Iraqi contracts with Iran and China concern U.S.” *The New York Times*, 10/18/2007

⁶⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶⁶ “5 border crossings between Iraq, Iran reopened.” *CNN News Online*, 10/08/2007

⁶⁶⁷ “U.S. blames Tehran for escalating Iraq violence.” *The Guardian*, 10/08/2007

⁶⁶⁸ “U.S. calls Iranian official part of elite force.” *The New York Times*, 10/07/2007

⁶⁶⁹ “Iraqis need a year to control Baghdad, US general says.” *The New York Times*, 10/03/2007

⁶⁷⁰ “U.S. move on Iran alienating for Europe.” *The Los Angeles Times*, 10/26/2007

Sadr pact in an effort to create a more effective counter to U.S. influence in Iraq and to establish a “united Shiite stance against a potential U.S. attack on Iran”.⁶⁷¹

Reining-in Shiite militias, and stemming their violence, would certainly further such an Iranian aim. However, a Shiite militia leader and his two associates captured in Diyala province in late October have been described by the U.S. military as being renegade Mahdi Army forces affiliated with an Iranian intelligence cell.⁶⁷²

Iraq, already awash in arms, has ordered “light military equipment” from Chinese suppliers totaling US\$ 100 million in October. This follows a US\$ 1.6 billion dollar deal in September to purchase US weapons. Iraqi officials have justified the deal by stating that the U.S. has not been able supply the weapons to the Iraqi government as quickly as they are needed. The order has raised concerns about a repeat of the misallocation of as many as 190,000 U.S. weapons earlier this year – many of which may have been appropriated by various militias and groups outside the direct control of the central government. However, with only one in five police officers in Iraq properly armed, there is a need by the central government for more weapons.⁶⁷³

A US\$ 940 million contract was awarded to Chinese owned Shanghai Heavy Industry to build a 1,300-megawatt power plant in Wasit, Iraq.⁶⁷⁴ The completion of the 1,300-megawatt station would represent a significant addition to Iraq’s energy capabilities, as the current national power grid only produces about 5,000 megawatts.⁶⁷⁵

The United Kingdom announced that approximately half of all British soldiers currently in Iraq would be withdrawn by early next spring,⁶⁷⁶ reducing the number of UK troops in Iraq to roughly 2,500.⁶⁷⁷

The former Soviet republic of Georgia now has 2,000 soldiers in Iraq.⁶⁷⁸ 2,000 soldiers represent the third highest contribution to the multi-national force.⁶⁷⁹ Georgia’s interest in contributing soldiers in Iraq so enthusiastically is directly linked to their expectation of U.S. reciprocity on Georgia’s bid to enter NATO and support against Russia.⁶⁸⁰

The Polish ambassador to Iraq was wounded in an attack on his convoy, which Poland has described as a “deliberate assassination bid”.⁶⁸¹ The injuries suffered by the ambassador were not serious.⁶⁸² Immediately following the bombing, the Polish Prime

⁶⁷¹ “The Hakim-Sadr pact: a new era in Shiite politics?” *Jamestown Terrorism Monitor*, 10/25/2007

⁶⁷² “U.S. seizes ‘Senior Iraq militant’.” *BBC News Online*, 10/27/2007

⁶⁷³ “Iraqis to pay China \$100 million for weapons for police.” *The Washington Post*, 10/03/2007

⁶⁷⁴ “Iraqi contracts with Iran and China concern U.S.” *The New York Times*, 10/18/2007

⁶⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷⁶ “UK Iraq troops to be cut to 2,500.” *BBC News Online*, 10/08/2007

⁶⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷⁸ “Russia on its mind, Georgia flexes its muscle in Iraq.” *The New York Times*, 10/08/2007

⁶⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸¹ “Polish envoy hurt in Iraq blast.” *BBC News Online*, 10/03/2007

⁶⁸² *Ibid.*

Minister stated that the attack would not lead to the withdrawal of any Polish forces from Iraq.⁶⁸³ Five days after the assassination attempt on the Polish Ambassador to Iraq, a car bomb was detonated near the Polish Embassy in Baghdad killing and wounding Iraqis.⁶⁸⁴ It remains unclear if these attacks will have any long-term impact on the Polish government's role in operations in Iraq.

⁶⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸⁴ "Car bomb kills two near Polish embassy in Baghdad." *Reuters.com*, 10/08/2007

October 2007
Core 5

1. Police

Rating: Poor

Sectarianism in Iraq continues to undermine this core institution. On October 2 the United Iraqi Alliance, the largest Shiite bloc in Iraqi politics, spoke out officially for the first time against the U.S. policy of establishing Sunni “police” groups in and around Baghdad, calling on the U.S. to “hasten in stopping this adventure.”⁶⁸⁵ The United Iraqi Alliance is concerned that Sunnis, some of whom may be extremists who have been involved in sectarian bloodletting in the past, may again resort to violence in an effort to reclaim territory lost to Shiite militias in Baghdad in recent months.⁶⁸⁶

The U.S. policy of establishing “neighborhood watch” programs nonetheless has become increasingly common throughout Iraq. At least 300 new Sunni applicants for the police force in the Amiriya neighborhood of Baghdad were approved in October.⁶⁸⁷ This number adds to 744 Sunnis approved in the final days of September for a police force in Baghdad’s Abu Ghraib neighborhood.⁶⁸⁸ Additionally, it was reported in October that as many as 14,000 “concerned citizens” had been recruited by the U.S. military in a farming region south of Baghdad.⁶⁸⁹

2. Leadership

Rating: Poor

The announcement in October by several top Iraqi political leaders that political reconciliation may not be possible⁶⁹⁰ worsens an already dismal assessment of Iraq’s central leadership. The struggle for power in Iraq has yet to yield the appropriate atmosphere to address contentious issues still dividing and paralyzing the government – including the possibility of reinstating former Baath Party officials in the government and questions regarding how to manage Iraq’s oil industry.⁶⁹¹ Iraq’s elite is significantly fractionalized, and this month’s public statements expressing apathy toward reconciliation are not encouraging.

October’s announcement by six Iraqi political parties that they stand united against internal and external calls for the partition of Iraq,⁶⁹² is an encouraging sign that reconciliation may yet be possible. However, some groups continue to advocate the

⁶⁸⁵ “Iraqi Shiites criticize US-Sunni cooperation.” *The International Herald Tribune*, 10/02/2007

⁶⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸⁹ “I want to kill you, but not today.” *The Economist*, 10/04/2007

⁶⁹⁰ “Top Iraqis pull back from key US goal.” *The Washington Post*, 10/08/2007

⁶⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹² “In Iraq, repeated support for a unified state.” *The New York Times*, 10/01/2007

devolution of Iraqi's power to regional governments,⁶⁹³ and despite the united call against partition it is unclear that these factions will be able to agree on how that "united Iraq" would be run. The apparent support for a united Iraq has yet to manifest itself in the form of political reconciliation.

3. Civil Service

Rating: Poor

The state continues to be unable to effectively exercise power in Iraq. Local and provincial governments are ignoring directives from the central government, and are taking greater initiative in exercising independent power.⁶⁹⁴

The endemic corruption hindering Iraq's recovery does not seem to be improving. The former top Iraqi anti-corruption official, Radhi Hamza al-Radhi, reported in October that he had discovered and collected evidence of 3,000 cases of corruption upon beginning his work in June of 2004 – amounting US\$ 18 billion in missing funds.⁶⁹⁵ The "rising tide of corruption in Iraq",⁶⁹⁶ continues to undermine the Iraqi civil service. According to the Iraqi Red Crescent, disease, poverty and malnutrition continue to plague the roughly 2.3 million Iraqi IDPs.⁶⁹⁷ Deteriorating infrastructure, such as an inconsistent supply of electricity and lack of clean water has continued to contribute much to this dilemma.⁶⁹⁸

Humam Hamoudi, a Shiite leader of the Iraqi parliament said he expected changes in the coming months within the central government, which would lead to "inexperienced political appointees" being replaced with experienced technocrats.⁶⁹⁹ The goal of these changes would be to improve the civil service's ability to provide essential services.⁷⁰⁰ Under the proposed changes, some public service ministries, including Health, Agriculture, Justice and Transportation would theoretically become less politicized and "independent from political parties".⁷⁰¹ However, it is yet to be seen if these changes will be implemented, and if so, how effective they will be.

4. Judiciary

Rating: Poor

The delay in carrying out the court-ordered execution of Ali Hassan al-Majid, Hussein Rashid al-Tikrit and General Sultan Hashim highlights problems within the Iraqi judiciary, yet at the same time it also offers some encouragement. The role of Iraq's

⁶⁹³ "In Iraq, repeated support for a unified state." *The New York Times*, 10/01/2007

⁶⁹⁴ "Iraq's displaced people nightmare." *BBC News Online*, 10/10/2007

⁶⁹⁵ "Exile condemns Iraqi 'corruption'." *BBC News Online*, 10/13/2007

⁶⁹⁶ "Iraqi judges says Maliki's government shields officials accused of corruption." *The New York Times*, 10/05/2007

⁶⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹⁸ Iraqi Red Crescent says nearly 2.3 million Iraqis displaced in Iraq." *VOA News*, 11/05/2007

⁶⁹⁹ "Top Iraqis pull back from key US goal." *The Washington Post*, 10/08/2007

⁷⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰¹ *Ibid.*

Presidency Council (comprised of President Talabani, Vice-President Abdel Abdul-Madhi and Vice President Tareq al-Hashemi) in determining whether executions can go ahead has become more contentious in recent weeks. The ambiguity of the Presidency Council's role in approving executions has again been brought to the forefront of the debate, as it was surrounding the execution of Saddam Hussein late last year.

Prime Minister al-Maliki has called for the executions to be carried out immediately, however, the delay and deliberation seem to indicate that there is an inclination by the Iraqi judiciary to ensure the verdict and sentence are appropriate, within the law, and not influenced by sectarian agendas. The establishment by Prime Minister al-Maliki's government of a committee comprised of seven people (including legal experts and advisors to al-Maliki and Talabani) to work out an agreement on how to handle the high-profile executions⁷⁰² is encouraging.

5. Military

Rating: Weak

The issue of sectarianism within the military has remained a significant challenge to improving the capability of this institution to properly fulfill its role. At a press conference in Washington in October, U.S. Lt. Gen. Raymond Odierno said that Iraqi security forces are still roughly a year away from being able to independently provide security for Baghdad.⁷⁰³ Odierno admitted that there was "still some sectarianism" in the Iraqi military, which was inhibiting its development and efficiency.⁷⁰⁴ There did seem, however, to be at least some indication that improvements are being made; Karbala province became the eighth of 18 Iraqi provinces to revert from U.S. to Iraqi control at the end of October.⁷⁰⁵ Just the same, sectarianism continues to be a major hurdle and concern for the institution of the military and the state as a whole.

⁷⁰² "Legal row delays hanging of Iraq's "Chemical Ali." *Reuters*, 10/17/2007

⁷⁰³ "Iraqis need a year to control Baghdad, US general says." *The New York Times*, 10/02/2007

⁷⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰⁵ "U.S. hands over Karbala to Iraqis." *BBC News Online*, 10/29/2007

November 2007

12 Indicators

1. *Mounting Demographic Pressures*

Rating: 10

With improving security in several parts of Iraq, although violent incidents have notably declined over the past few months, the demographic challenges faced by the country remain monumental.

While the cholera outbreak first reported in October has now subsided, humanitarian aid agencies have warned that there could be a reversal in the recovery trend as a result of a lack of potable water and functioning sanitation systems.⁷⁰⁶ Seventy percent of Iraqis still do not have access to clean water.⁷⁰⁷

The war is, in particular, taking a toll on the children of Iraq. Reports by several Iraqi NGOs indicate that many children suffering from psychological disorders and serious diseases have been abandoned by their families.⁷⁰⁸ An Iraqi NGO, Keeping Children Alive (KCA) estimates that in Baghdad, over 700 children have been abandoned by their families since January 2006.⁷⁰⁹ There is the possibility of long-term psychological effects among such abandoned children.⁷¹⁰ The Iraqi Red Crescent Society attributes the rise in the number of abandoned children to sectarian violence and worsening socio-economic conditions.⁷¹¹

According to Iraq's Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, of the 2.5 million internally displaced Iraqis, over 1.6 million, or 70 percent are children under the age of 12.⁷¹² The high level of displacement amongst children, who are, essentially, Iraq's future generation, is a significant cause of concern. For example, according to a local NGO representative in Basra, "At least 60 percent of displaced children taking refuge in the province [Basra] don't attend school, more than 70 percent are suffering from acute or chronic malnutrition and the health service lacks essential medicines, including painkillers and anti-fever drugs."⁷¹³

Acute poverty among the displaced further means that children are often exposed to child labor or other forms of exploitation, while many children become separated from their families during the displacement process.⁷¹⁴ Millions of Iraqi children, both within the

⁷⁰⁶ "Iraq turns eye to rebuilding" *The Wall Street Journal*, 11/15/2007.

⁷⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰⁸ "Children with serious illnesses abandoned" *Irin News Network*, 11/21/2007.

⁷⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷¹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹¹ *Ibid.*

⁷¹² *Ibid.*

⁷¹³ "Basra closes doors to displaced" *Irin News Network*, 11/12/2007.

⁷¹⁴ Aid agencies struggle to support over two million displaced Iraqis", *Irin News Network*, 11/11/2007.

country, and those who have been rendered refugees are thus being exposed to dangers at various levels.

2. *Massive Movement of Refugees and IDPs* **Rating: 9**

The recent trend of refugees and IDPs returning to their homes in Iraq continued through the month of November. According to UNHCR reports, for the first time since 2003, more people are leaving Syria from Iraq than are entering it.⁷¹⁵ The organization says that around 1500 Iraqi refugees are returning home from Syria each day, while only 500 refugees are arriving in Syria from Iraq.⁷¹⁶

Most refugees are returning from Syria, as against from Jordan, where the more well-off Iraqi refugees fled.⁷¹⁷ The Iraqi government is providing added incentives for refugees to return, such as free bus rides from Syria.⁷¹⁸ The government has also announced that it will pay one million Iraqi denars, (approx. US\$ 812), to every internally displaced family which returns to its home.⁷¹⁹

However, contrary to the assessment of the Iraqi government that heightened security is the main reason why refugees are returning home, UNHCR reports indicate that for refugees returning from Syria, more than the perception of better security, the twin driving factors are lack of funds and the Syria's refusal to renew visas.⁷²⁰

Iraq's Prime Minister Mr. Maliki has said that as a result of increased security in Baghdad, some 7000 families have returned home.⁷²¹ The Iraqi displacement specialist for the International Organization for Migration, Dana Graber Ladek, however says that most of the capital's residents are yet to return, and the number of people fleeing continues to outnumber those returning home.⁷²² She further said that about one-third of the people who returned home found someone else living in their houses, and that most people are returning to ethnically homogeneous neighborhoods.⁷²³

As per UNHCR estimates, violence continues to force about 60,000 Iraqis every month to flee their homes.⁷²⁴ According to Iraq's Minister of Displacement and Migration, more

⁷¹⁵ "More Iraqi refugees leaving Syria than entering" *Irin News Network*, 11/28/2007.

⁷¹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷¹⁷ "Iraqis return home in thousands" *BBC Online*, 11/21/2007. Available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7105216.stm.

⁷¹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷¹⁹ "Iraq credits Iran for helping to curb attacks by militias" *The New York Times*, 11/18/2007.

⁷²⁰ "Lack of money, visa problems prompting Iraqi refugees to return home" *Irin News Network*, 11/22/2007.

⁷²¹ "Iraq Premier sees families returning to safer capital" *The New York Times*, 11/12/2007.

⁷²² *Ibid.*

⁷²³ *Ibid.*

⁷²⁴ "Aid agencies struggle to support over two million displaced Iraqis", *Irin News Network*, 11/11/2007.

than 150,000 families, that is, about 900,000 Iraqis are internally displaced as a result of the recent violence, with about 95,000 displaced in Baghdad.⁷²⁵

Emphasizing the mounting pressures on fleeing Iraqis, Bill Frelick, the Refugee Policy Director for Human Rights Watch, has said that external escape routes for fleeing Iraqis are being shut because of new regulations imposed by Jordan and Syria.⁷²⁶ He also reiterated that even internally, Iraqis are finding escape routes closed off, since 10 of the 18 governorates (Babylon, Basra, Dahuk, Erbil, Kerbala, Muthanna, Najaf, Qadisiya, Sulaymaniyah, and Thi Qar) are restricting IDP entry. Baghdad, Anbar and Diyala, which do not have such restrictions, are areas from which people are fleeing.⁷²⁷ Thus, the displaced are being concentrated in central Iraq, which is cut off from humanitarian assistance because of the fragile security situation therein.⁷²⁸ As put by Frelick “the worst of the humanitarian emergency affects people whom we don’t see and cannot reach.”⁷²⁹ Since aid agencies do not have access to a large number of internally displaced people, there are concerns that with winter approaching, the living conditions of the displaced will only worsen.⁷³⁰

Adding complexity to the issue is the concern being expressed by some that the return of refugees and IDPs could become a “major flashpoint” in the coming months.⁷³¹ Most of the over 2 million refugees who fled their homes are Iraqi Sunnis, and whose houses have, in many cases, been occupied by Shiites.⁷³² When these refugees return, there is likely to be conflict over houses and property, and the role of the mainly Shiite army and police will likely become important in this context.⁷³³ Many neighborhoods in places like Baghdad have witnessed deliberate ethnic cleansing over the last several months, as Shiites have occupied Sunni homes and vice versa, thus rendering many mixed neighborhoods homogeneous.⁷³⁴ So far, the Iraqi government has not developed a plan to help facilitate the absorption of the thousands of refugees returning home, such as a mechanism to settle property disputes.⁷³⁵ There is also no plan in place detailing provisions for aid, shelter and other amenities for returning refugees and IDPs.⁷³⁶

Thus, while the trend of refugees returning back into Iraq has witnessed an upswing, meriting a change in the rating for this Indicator, the development needs to be looked at with caution for the reasons outlined above.

⁷²⁵ “Iraq credits Iran for helping to curb attacks by militias” *The New York Times*, 11/18/2007.

⁷²⁶ “The human cost of war: the Iraqi refugee crisis”, testimony of Bill Frelick before the Congressional Human Rights Caucus. Available at <http://hrw.org/english/docs/2007/11/15/iraq17340.htm>

⁷²⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷²⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷²⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷³⁰ “Aid agencies struggle to support over two million displaced Iraqis”, *Irin News Network*, 11/26/2007.

⁷³¹ “Iraqis wasting an opportunity, U.S. officers say” *The Washington Post*, 11/15/2007.

⁷³² *Ibid.*

⁷³³ *Ibid.*

⁷³⁴ “Iraq unprepared as war refugees return, U.S says” *The New York Times*, 11/30/2007.

⁷³⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷³⁶ *Ibid.*

3. *Legacy of Vengeance Seeking Group Grievance or Group Paranoia*
Rating: 10

Although security has continued to improve in parts of Iraq as a result of the U.S. troop surge, and new counter insurgency tactics which include cooperation with local Sunnis in fighting against Al-Qaeda in Iraq, overall sectarian grievances have by no means been resolved. Shiites and Sunnis continue to battle in some neighborhoods in Baghdad while elements in the Mahdi army are disobeying Moqtada al-Sadr's order to freeze violent activity.⁷³⁷

While U.S. forces contend that the Al-Qaeda in Iraq has been cleared from most parts of Baghdad, they admit that the biggest threat to the capital city's security comes from Shiite militias who hold positions of power such as control over gas, and government ministries.⁷³⁸ Moreover, about 13 percent of Baghdad is yet to be cleared, including Sadr City, which is still under the control of Shiite militias.⁷³⁹

Minorities in Iraq have often borne the brunt of grievances grounded on religion and sectarian differences. Iraq's Christian population, which fared well under Saddam Hussein's regime, are being primarily targeted by Sunni Arab extremists, "who brand them apostates and in some areas have bombed their churches and burned their homes."⁷⁴⁰ Additionally, since Christians tend to be well-off, which often makes them targets of kidnappings.⁷⁴¹ Many who lived in and around Baghdad are now moving to northern Iraq, [primarily Mosul and Kirkuk] where most Christians traditionally lived.⁷⁴² Others have fled to Syria, Jordan, Lebanon or to countries in Western Europe.⁷⁴³ The Christian Peace Association estimates that while the number of Iraqi Christians was 800,000 in 2003, it has since then dwindled to 450,000.⁷⁴⁴

4. *Chronic and Sustained Human Flight*
Rating: 10

Although substantial numbers of refugees are returning home in November, there is no indication whether Iraq's professional class, which fled to various countries in the Middle East and Europe, is choosing to come back. For this reason, although Indicator No.2 reflects improvement as compared to previous months, Indicator No.4 does not. In addition, the fact that Syria and Jordan, which have taken in the most number of refugees

⁷³⁷ "Iraq turns eye to rebuilding" *The Wall Street Journal*, 11/15/2007.

⁷³⁸ "Militant group is out of Baghdad, U.S. General says" *The New York Times*, 11/8/2007.

⁷³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴⁰ "2,000-year-old Christian community in Iraq gains a spiritual first in Baghdad" *The New York Times*, 11/5/2007.

⁷⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴² *Ibid.*

⁷⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴⁴ "Christians seek new life in Europe" *Irin News Network*, 11/05/2007.

are renewing and issuing visas for academics, business people etc⁷⁴⁵ may have future ramifications in terms of promoting an Iraqi ‘brain drain.’

In Diyala province, hospitals are facing an acute shortage of doctors—so much so, that nurses have had to taken on responsibilities they are not qualified for.⁷⁴⁶ The health department in Diyala says that at least 80 percent of the doctors who used to work in the province have fled because of violence, while those who remain only work when they feel safe.⁷⁴⁷ In August and September, Diyala was the scene of intense fighting between insurgents and U.S. troops, and during this period many doctors fled and have not returned since, even though violence has subsided.⁷⁴⁸

The exodus of doctors from certain parts of Iraq is also linked with the increase in the number of attacks against doctors between August and November, which compelled many to flee to safer areas such as the Kurdish North.⁷⁴⁹ As a result of the shortage of doctors, overall health services in Iraq are worsening. According to Iraqi Medical Association (IMA) estimates, about 75 percent of doctors, pharmacists and nurses have left their jobs at universities, clinics and hospitals.⁷⁵⁰ Of these, at least 55 percent have fled abroad.⁷⁵¹

Iraqi male gynecologists are being particularly targeted by Islamic extremists, who claim that such doctors invade the privacy of women.⁷⁵² Many doctors have received threats against their life, and since there are a fewer number of female gynecologists in Iraq, it is creating a major shortage of doctors in this field of specialization.⁷⁵³

5. *Uneven Economic Development Along Group Lines* **Rating: 9**

The Kurdish government in Northern Iraq has pledged to sign more oil contracts with international firms, even as the policy faces stiff opposition from Baghdad.⁷⁵⁴ The spat has the potential of leading to a major showdown, as the Kurdish government flexes its ability to develop its oil resources independent of the opinions expressed by the central government. The continuing stalemate over the national oil law has thus resulted in divergent regional policies with regard to Iraq’s resources, which is, in turn, leading to lopsided development. Since it passed its own oil law in August, the Kurdish government has concluded 15 exploration and export contracts with 20 international companies.⁷⁵⁵

⁷⁴⁵ “Confusion over Syrian visa requirements for Iraqi refugees” 09/03/2007.

⁷⁴⁶ “Diyala desperately needs doctors” *Irin News Network*, 11/18/2007.

⁷⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴⁹ “Diyala desperately needs doctors” *Irin News Network*, 11/18/2007.

⁷⁵⁰ “Male gynecologists attacked by extremists” *Irin News Network*, 11/13/2007.

⁷⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵² *Ibid.*

⁷⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵⁴ “Iraq Kurds defy Baghdad on oil deals” *Agence France-Presse*, 11/26/2007.

⁷⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

6. *Sharp and/or Severe Economic Decline*
Rating: 9

Although Iraq has one of the world's biggest oil reserves, it has failed to capitalize on the recent high in oil prices.⁷⁵⁶ According to recent figures, average oil exports have fallen from the brief spike of 2.4 million barrels a day in late October to about two million barrels a day now.⁷⁵⁷ This is a far cry from the 2.5 million barrels a day being produced before the U.S. invasion.⁷⁵⁸

According to U.S. officials, more than ideology, it is the lure of making money as an insurgent that motivates Iraqi men to join militant outfits.⁷⁵⁹ The U.S. military is hence seeking to dismantle insurgent financial networks, while attempting to boost the Iraqi economy to reduce unemployment among the youth.⁷⁶⁰ Economic decline and unemployment thus remain major factors contributing to the ongoing violence and strife in the country.

7. *Criminalization and/or Delegitimization of the State*
Rating: 10

The improving security in various parts of Iraq over the past few months has put renewed pressure on the government to make efforts in order to foster national political reconciliation by reaching out across sectarian divides. The Iraqi government has, thus far however, failed to build upon these gains and remains heavily factionalized.⁷⁶¹

The division at the highest level was evidenced in November when Shiite Prime Minister Maliki accused Sunni Vice President, Tariq al-Hashemi of imposing obstacles in the ratification of legislation cleared by Parliament in his capacity as a member of the three-man Presidential Council.⁷⁶² Maliki further stated that al-Hashemi's Iraq Accordance Front, which is the largest Sunni group in Parliament, is not representative of the country's Sunni Arab community.⁷⁶³ The public spat indicates that the rifts between the Shiite and Sunni leaders at the top of the Iraqi political order may be widening—it certainly does not bode well for Iraqi 'reconciliation.'

There are also signs of rifts between the Prime Minister and his main Shiite supporter, the Supreme Islamic Iraqi Council (SIIC) over the issue of dividing Iraq into three self-ruling regions.⁷⁶⁴ The proposal is backed by the SIIC, which wants the creation of a federal

⁷⁵⁶ "Iraq turns eye to rebuilding" *Wall Street Journal*, 11/15/2007.

⁷⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵⁹ "Iraqis joining insurgency less for cause than cash" *The Washington Post*, 11/20/2007.

⁷⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶¹ "Iraqis wasting an opportunity, U.S. officers say" *The Washington Post*, 11/15/2007.

⁷⁶² "Al-Maliki lashes out; coalition chopper crashes" *USA Today*, 11/21/2007.

⁷⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

region in the Shiite South, encompassing half of Iraq's 18 provinces. Maliki however strongly opposes any such division.⁷⁶⁵ Disagreements also persist between Prime Minister Maliki and the main Sunni bloc in Parliament, Iraqi Consensus Front, as well with Shiite ministers affiliated with Moqtada Al-Sadr.⁷⁶⁶

In an effort to foster sectarian reconciliation, the Iraqi Cabinet has sent legislation to the Parliament, which would soften de-Ba'athification laws and allow 10,000 people to take up government positions, including many Sunni Arabs.⁷⁶⁷ The new proposal, which has the approval of the Sunni Arab bloc as well as Kurdish and Shiite leaders, also guarantees that all former government employees would be allowed to collect their pensions.⁷⁶⁸ The draft bill has, however, met with intense resistance from the Shiite bloc, the first day it was presented in the Iraqi Parliament.⁷⁶⁹ Objections against the bill were raised by Shiite Parliamentarians loyal to Moqtada al-Sadr, who compared the move to allow former Baathists to take up government jobs as akin to granting them 'amnesty.'⁷⁷⁰ At the same time however, there are indications that the Shiite government has quietly been re-integrating Sunnis back into the government for some time now, and the legislation is now simply 'symbolic.'⁷⁷¹ At the same time, the rifts over the de-Baathification law, focus attention on Iraq's turbulent history, and the changed political dynamic of the country—factors that are combining to exacerbate Shiite-Sunni grievances. At the same time, the continuing deadlock over a range of issues in Parliament and the inability of the institution to pass crucial legislation is also undermining the rule of law in Iraq.

The U.S. is also attempting to minimize Sunni fears of Shiite dominance by urging neighboring Sunni states to enhance their official presence in Iraq.⁷⁷² So far, there is not a single Arab embassy in Baghdad.⁷⁷³

Sectarian divisions are further being played out in the sphere of local governance. Despite the significant headway in the security sector in regions such as Anbar where local Sunnis have joined American efforts to root out insurgents, the leaders of the provincial government complain of little support forthcoming from the Shiite government in Baghdad.⁷⁷⁴ The lack of support include insufficient funds received from the central government, and limited efforts to expand the provincial police forces.⁷⁷⁵ While the provincial authorities want to expand the size of the police force from 21,000 to 9,000, the Iraqi government appears unenthusiastic about training and equipping such a large

⁷⁶⁵ "Al-Maliki lashes out; coalition chopper crashes" *USA Today*, 11/21/2007.

⁷⁶⁶ "Bombs found near home of politician in Baghdad" *The New York Times*, 11/30/2007.

⁷⁶⁷ "Iraq credits Iran for helping to curb attacks by militias" *The New York Times*, 11/18/2007.

⁷⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶⁹ "Baath reconciliation bill draws anger of Shiite bloc" *The Washington Post*, 11/26/2007.

⁷⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷¹ "U.S. scales back political goals for Iraqi unity" *The New York Times*, 11/25/2007.

⁷⁷² "Iraqis wasting an opportunity, U.S. officers say" *The Washington Post*, 11/15/2007.

⁷⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷⁴ "Sunnis say Baghdad hampers Anbar gains" *The New York Times*, 11/3/2007.

⁷⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

number of Sunnis, and wants to limit the expansion at 4,000.⁷⁷⁶ The police force has also not been provided with enough weapons, vehicles or communication equipment.⁷⁷⁷

The Iraqi government is also under pressure to capitalize on the recent security gains to boost the economy and aid reconstruction efforts. In the past the government has blamed the lack of security to explain the lack of efforts to provide basic services.⁷⁷⁸ Even with a huge budget of US\$ 48 billion forseen for 2008, Deputy Prime Minister Barham Salih admitted at a press conference that the main obstacles to spending the money is the bureaucracy and rampant corruption.⁷⁷⁹

8. *Progressive Deterioration of Public Services* **Rating: 9**

Reconstruction efforts and provision of basic services have not kept pace with the improving security situation in Iraq. In Baghdad, schools are in a deplorable state and the electricity supply remains erratic.⁷⁸⁰ The upcoming winter is likely to present greater challenges, especially given the lack of basic services, such as electricity, paved roads and hospitals.⁷⁸¹

The Iraqi government has announced that it will spend US\$ 19 billion on capital projects across Iraq in 2008, which includes US\$ 900 million in Baghdad.⁷⁸² There remain doubts however, about the capacity of the Iraqi government to actually spend these funds. According to American development experts, in 2007, at the most, only 60-65 percent of the allocated US\$ 450 million in capital funds has actually been spent.⁷⁸³ Security concerns, inadequate expertise in contracting projects and in the delegation of responsibilities are some of the reasons for the slow spending pattern.⁷⁸⁴

Sectarian divisions also continue to plague access of people to public services. Much of government services remain under Shiite control, and as a result there is a lot of “institutional discrimination against Sunni communities.”⁷⁸⁵ In areas such as Ghazaliya, residents complain that they receive only about half as much electricity daily as neighboring Shiite areas.⁷⁸⁶

The Commander of U.S. forces in Baghdad, Maj. Gen. Joseph F. Fil Jr. has said that apart from the threat of Shiite militias, the other obstacles to security in Baghdad remain

⁷⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷⁸ “Iraq turns eye to rebuilding” *Wall Street Journal*, 11/15/2007.

⁷⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸² “‘08 budget is Baghdad's biggest, if only it can spend it” *The New York Times*, 11/15/2007.

⁷⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸⁵ “Inside the surge” *The New Yorker*, 11/19/2007.

⁷⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

infrastructure weaknesses and unemployment.⁷⁸⁷ He however admits that these are national-level issues unlikely to be solved by U.S. efforts at the local community level.⁷⁸⁸ The continuing deep fractures at the political level thus do not bode well for reconstruction efforts, and for getting the Iraqi infrastructure and economy back on track.

9. *Suspension or Arbitrary Application of the Rule of Law and Widespread Violation of Human Rights*
Rating: 10

Multiple mass graves and decayed dead bodies were found in several rural locations in Iraq in the month of November, underscoring previously unreported mass violations of human rights.

Thirty skeletons were found in Hor Jab, a rural Sunni Arab area on Baghdad's southern edge, which was, until early October, under the control of Al-Qaeda in Iraq.⁷⁸⁹ In a similar incident, the badly decomposed bodies of 30 Iraqis were discovered in the mainly Sunni district of Doura in southern Baghdad.⁷⁹⁰ The district was, until recently, controlled by a militant group affiliated to Al-Qaeda.⁷⁹¹

A mass grave with 22 bodies was found in a rural area north of Falluja during a joint American-Iraqi operation in the Lake Tharthar area, where another grave with 25 bodies had been found in October.⁷⁹² Another mass grave holding 17 blindfolded, handcuffed and decayed bodies was found south of Baquba as well.⁷⁹³ Four beheaded bodies were also found closeby.⁷⁹⁴ Iraqi police also uncovered a mass grave with 40 bodies, which included children, in Muwaili, an area near Ramadi, which was also, until recently, under the control of Al-Qaeda in Iraq.⁷⁹⁵

In Basra, a trend of increasing violence against women is being fuelled by extreme versions of religion imposed by Shiite and Sunni extremists.⁷⁹⁶ According to the city's police chief, Maj. Gen. Abdel Jalil Khalaf, "Basra is facing a new type of terror which leaves at least 10 women killed monthly, some of them are later found in garbage dumps with bullet holes while others are found decapitated or mutilated."⁷⁹⁷ A new culture of repression has thus come about in this once religiously mixed city.⁷⁹⁸

⁷⁸⁷ "Militant group is out of Baghdad, U.S. General says" *The New York Times*, 11/8/2007.

⁷⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸⁹ "Iraq credits Iran for helping to curb attacks by militias" *The New York Times*, 11/18/2007.

⁷⁹⁰ "Bodies found in Iraq mass killing" *BBC Online*, 11/17/2007. Available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7099954.stm

⁷⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹² "2007 is deadliest year in Iraq for U.S. military" *International Herald Tribune*, 11/6/2007.

⁷⁹³ "Militant group is out of Baghdad, U.S. General says" *The New York Times*, 11/8/2007.

⁷⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹⁵ "Iraqis discover mass grave in city struggling to improve" *The New York Times*, November 22, 2007.

⁷⁹⁶ "Extremists fuel anti-women violence in Basra" *Irin News Network*, 11/20/2007.

⁷⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

**10. Security Apparatus Operates as a “State Within a State”
Rating: 10**

2007 has emerged as the deadliest year yet for United States troops stationed in Iraq.⁷⁹⁹ By the beginning of November, the total number of American deaths for the year stood at 852, surpassing 2004 when 849 troops died.⁸⁰⁰ While the deaths in 2004 were because of large battles such as the one for Fallujah, the higher death tally in 2007 is attributed to troop surge earlier this year and consequent increase in the presence of troops in dangerous areas and larger bases.⁸⁰¹

At the same time, the trend of declining death toll seen over the past few months continued in the month of November.⁸⁰² Data released by the American military noted that by the second week of November, the weekly number of attacks in Iraq had fallen to the lowest level since the 2006 bombing of the Shiite shrine in Samarra, which precipitated a wave of violence across Iraq.⁸⁰³ The data released cover attacks which use car bombs, roadside bombs, mines, mortars, rockets, surface-to-air missiles and small arms.⁸⁰⁴ According to American officials, civilian deaths have fallen to 60 percent across Iraq,⁸⁰⁵ while in Baghdad the number stands at 75 percent.⁸⁰⁶ Overall attacks in Iraq have reduced by 55 percent since the troop surge began in June 2007.⁸⁰⁷

The main reasons for the declining violence include a substantial weakening of the Al-Qaeda in Iraq as a result of American military attacks; cooption of Sunni civilians into neighborhood watch and similar programs aimed against the Al-Qaeda in Iraq; Moqtada al-Sadr’s call to his militiamen to halt violence; and apparent cooperation by Iran in reducing the flow of roadside bombs [particularly the lethal Explosively Formed Penetrators] and other weapons into Iraq.⁸⁰⁸

The question of Iran’s cooperation however remains unclear. In October, the 2nd Brigade Combat Team of the 82nd Airborne Division experienced the highest number of EFP [Explosively Formed Penetrator] attacks since February.⁸⁰⁹ According to the top U.S. commander in northeastern Iraq, the groups carrying out such attacks “operate from within the heart of Sadr City.”⁸¹⁰ EFPs, which are linked to Iran,⁸¹¹ can pierce armor, and are hence considered particularly lethal. The statement is telling, since Shiite slums of

⁷⁹⁹ “Six soldiers are killed as year becomes deadliest for U.S. in Iraq” *The New York Times*, 11/07/2007.

⁸⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰¹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰² “U.S. says attacks in Iraq fell to the level of early last year” *The New York Times*, 11/19/2007.

⁸⁰³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰⁶ “Washington debates Iran’s role in easing of Iraq violence” *International Herald Tribune*, 11/18/2007.

⁸⁰⁷ “General says N. Iraq most violent region” *Associated Press*, 11/20/2007.

⁸⁰⁸ “U.S. says attacks in Iraq fell to the level of early last year” *The New York Times*, 11/19/2007.

⁸⁰⁹ “Bush, Maliki sign pact on Iraq’s future” *The Washington Post*, 11/27/2007.

⁸¹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹¹ *Ibid.*

Baghdad, such as Sadr City and Shulla have not benefitted from the U.S. troop surge, and thus continue to be largely dominated by Shiite militiamen affiliated with the Mahdi Army.⁸¹²

There have been major improvements in security in neighborhoods which were once considered very dangerous, such as Ghazaliya and Amiriya.⁸¹³ On the other hand, areas such as Diyala province and Kirkuk are witnessing intense violence.⁸¹⁴ Kirkuk has emerged as a “flashpoint” because of Kurdish claims to the city and the presence of oil resources.⁸¹⁵ As a result of the new counter-insurgency tactics and troop surge in and around Baghdad, the Al-Qaeda in Iraq appears to be moving to other regions, such as Kirkuk. The Iraqi army and police forces have conducted major major raids across the city in November targeting militants belonging to Al-Qaeda in Iraq.⁸¹⁶

Northern Iraq is now emerging as a very violent region as the Al-Qaeda and other militant outfits move here to avoid American led counter insurgency operations in Anbar province, Baghdad and surrounding areas.⁸¹⁷ At the same time, the declining violence in and around Baghdad and other areas has meant that attacks have moved into rural areas and towns, as against cities.⁸¹⁸ This trend is evidenced by the discovery of mass graves in rural areas of Iraq mentioned under Indicator No.9.

Although Baghdad has been relatively calm over the past few weeks, the lull in violence was punctured by two bomb attacks in a spate of three days in November. The U.S. military has said that a bomb attack in a pet market in Baghdad that killed 13 people was perpetrated by an Iranian-backed Shiite militia group.⁸¹⁹ The militia group is believed to have splintered off from the Mahdi Army led by Moqtada al-Sadr.⁸²⁰ Confessions of four captured militants indicate that the intent of the bombing was to place blame on Al-Qaeda in Iraq, which would help rally public support for Shiite militias to provide ‘protection’ to people.⁸²¹ Another bomb attack two days later in Baghdad’s medical district killed nine people.⁸²²

In Basra, on the other hand, violence levels have reduced by 90 percent since British troops withdrew from the main city in September.⁸²³ The majority of attacks in Basra are

⁸¹² “Inside the surge”, *The New Yorker*, 11/19/2007.

⁸¹³ *Ibid.*

⁸¹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸¹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸¹⁶ “Raids target militants in Kirkuk” *BBC Online*, 11/24/2007. Available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7111194.stm

⁸¹⁷ “General says N. Iraq most violent region” *Associated Press*, 11/20/2007.

⁸¹⁸ “Foreigners held for Iraq shooting” *BBC Online*, 11/19/2007. Available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7102643.stm

⁸¹⁹ “‘Shiite militia’ behind Iraq blast” *BBC Online*, 11/24/2007. Available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7110988.stm

⁸²⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸²¹ “U.S. blames Shiite militiamen in deadly Baghdad bombing” *The Washington Post*, 11/25/2007.

⁸²² “Car bomb kills 9 civilians in Baghdad” *The New York Times*, 11/26/2007.

⁸²³ “General: Basra violence down 90 percent” *The Guardian Unlimited*, 11/16/2007.

now aimed against the Iraqi forces, although current levels of violence are about a tenth of what they were in May and June 2007.⁸²⁴

In November, there were also reports of shootings, car bombs, roadside bombs, and rocket attacks in places like Karrada, Mutthana, Mosul, Tikrit, Diyala, Adwaniyah⁸²⁵ and eastern Baghdad.⁸²⁶

Auditors have meanwhile discovered that a faulty supply-chain management system is the main reason why the American military in 2004 and 2005, lost track of some 190,000 pistols and automatic rifles which were intended for Iraq's security forces.⁸²⁷ Such weapons then made their way into the illegal arms black market and into the hands of Iraqi militias, security contractors etc.⁸²⁸

Also, the threat posed by improvised explosive devises (IEDs) or roadside bombs remains a significant challenge for U.S. forces.⁸²⁹ According to Gen. Montgomery Meigs, Director of the Pentagon's counter-IED organization, although the overall number of IED attacks has reduced in the past few months, the rate of U.S. casualties that result from such attacks has declined more slowly, which suggests that insurgents have become more proficient.⁸³⁰

11. *Rise of Factionalized Elites*

Rating: 10

A report released by the International Crisis Group in November makes clear that within the Shiite bloc, the escalating rivalry between the faction led by cleric Moqtada al-Sadr and his Mahdi Army, and the Supreme Islamic Iraqi Council (SIIC) and its Badr Brigade is likely to shape political and security outcomes in Iraq.⁸³¹ While the U.S. is supporting the SIIC, the report cautions that this might be a risky move: “unleashing ISCI/Badr against the Sadrists is a dangerous policy that will further deepen intra-Shiite divisions; it also is a short-sighted one, given the Sadrists’ stronger mass base.”⁸³²

12. *Intervention of Other States or External Political Actors*

Rating: 10

⁸²⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸²⁵ “U.S.-backed fighters attacked outside Baghdad” *The Washington Post*, 11/14/2007.

⁸²⁶ “Sunnis say Baghdad hampers Anbar gains” *The New York Times*, 11/3/2007.

⁸²⁷ “Broken supply channel sent arms for Iraq astray” *The New York Times*, 11/11/2007.

⁸²⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸²⁹ “General says N. Iraq most violent region” *Associated Press*, 11/20/2007.

⁸³⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸³¹ “Shiite politics in Iraq: the role of the Supreme Council” *International Crisis Group report*, 11/15/2007.

Available at <http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=5158&l=1>

⁸³² *Ibid.*

The legal and extra-legal involvement of various other states in Iraq continued through the month of November.

Iran's role in fomenting violence in Iraq has been under the scanner for some time now, even though Iran has consistently denied having any role in providing weapons or training to Shiite militias operating in Iraq. In November, the Iraqi government credited Iran with stemming the flow of weapons into Iraq and by reigning in Shiite militias—Iran's cooperation may be one of the contributing factors to the recent trend of declining violence across Iraq.⁸³³ While there are reports that the number of violent incidents caused as a result of EFP attacks has reduced,⁸³⁴ other reports, as mentioned under Indicator No.10, suggest that the number of such attacks may actually have increased since February.⁸³⁵ In Samarra as well, American officials reported that the discovery of Iranian-made weapons is increasing.⁸³⁶ It however remains unclear whether this is because the inflow of weapons into Iraq has spiked, or rather because there has been increase in the discovery of such caches.⁸³⁷ U.S. General David Petraeus has cautioned that it might be too soon to tell whether and how much Iranian pledge to “stop the funding, training, arming and directing of militia extremists in Iraq” is responsible for the drop in EFP attacks.⁸³⁸

The improving security situation is also attributed to the measures taken by Syria to curb the movement of foreign fighters who enter into Iraq from Syria to carry out suicide bombings.⁸³⁹ U.S. General David Petraeus estimates that the number of foreign fighters coming into Iraq through Syria has reduced by at least one-third.⁸⁴⁰ Senior U.S. military officials say that in the past year, about 60 percent of foreign fighters coming into Iraq as suicide bombers or to help in such attacks were from Saudi Arabia and Libya.

Iraq's increasingly troubled relationship with private security contractors continued in the month of November. The Iraqi interior minister has said that Western security firms may be raided by Iraqi security forces in order to ensure compliance with laws related to licensing of guns and similar weapons.⁸⁴¹ This has brought into focus the gaps in the law and legal jurisdiction, since private security personnell protecting American officials and diplomats are wary of ‘fake’ Interior Ministry checkpoints, which are, at times, used as a cover by militias.⁸⁴² The situation therefore has the bearings of a potential showdown with the U.S.

⁸³³ “Iraq credits Iran for helping to curb attacks by militias” *The New York Times*, 11/18/2007.

⁸³⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸³⁵ “Bush, Maliki sign pact on Iraq's future” *The Washington Post*, 11/27/2007.

⁸³⁶ “Iraq Premier sees families returning to safer capital” *The New York Times*, 11/12/2007.

⁸³⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸³⁸ “For Petraeus, a balancing act” *The Wall Street Journal*, 11/21/2007.

⁸³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴¹ “Iraq plans to confront security firms on guns” *The New York Times*, 11/8/2007.

⁸⁴² *Ibid.*

Also, 33 people, mostly foreigners, have been detained over a shooting incident in which a woman was injured.⁸⁴³ The detained include guards working for an Italian security company.⁸⁴⁴ The incident is reminiscent of the September incident involving the U.S. security contractor, Blackwater, which left 10 Iraqi civilians dead.

On November 26, the U.S. President George Bush and Iraq's Prime Minister al-Maliki signed a 'declaration of principles' for long term political, military and economic ties between the two countries. The pact is expected to fill the void when the UN mandate governing foreign troops in Iraq expires on July 31, 2008, and allow long term U.S. troop presence in Iraq. However, deep reservations are being expressed by Shiite and Sunni politicians, who say that the pact would undermine Iraqi sovereignty and allow "U.S. interference for years to come."⁸⁴⁵

In a sign of escalating tensions between the Iraqi Kurdish region and Turkey, Turkish military aircrafts attacked some abandoned villages in northern Iraq.⁸⁴⁶ The episode is the first confirmed cross-border operation launched by Turkey targeting Kurdish rebels affiliated with the PKK, who the Turks say operate with impunity out of Northern Iraq. Although U.S. officials declined to comment on the incident, there appears little doubt that the operation was launched with at least implicit approval of the Americans; as a Kurdish official put it: "The sky is in the hands of the Americans, so they knew about this attack and they know Turkish planes entered Iraqi territory."⁸⁴⁷

The cancellation by the Iraqi government, of an oil development contract awarded to Russian company Lukoil, reveals the geo-political interests at play in the context of Iraqi oil resources.⁸⁴⁸ The contract frees up for future investment a vast oil field, West Qurna, in Iraq's southern desert, which has estimated reserves of 11 billion barrels. The contract with Lukoil was signed under very favorable terms for the Russians by the Saddam Hussein government, which later cancelled the same.⁸⁴⁹ The dispute has resulted in a spat with Russia, which is now threatening to revoke a 2004 commitment to forgive US\$ 1.3 billion in Iraqi debt.⁸⁵⁰

⁸⁴³ "Foreigners held for Iraq shooting" *BBC Online*, 11/19/2007. Available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7102643.stm

⁸⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴⁵ "Iraq politicians oppose pact" *BBC Online*, 11/27/2007. Available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7115131.stm

⁸⁴⁶ "Turkish aircraft attack abandoned Iraqi villages" *New York Times*, 11/14/2007.

⁸⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴⁸ "Iraq, with U.S. support, voids a Russian oil contract" *New York Times*, 11/4/2007.

⁸⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

November 2007
Core 5

1. Police
Rating: Poor

In the city of Karbala, which is largely Shiite, the Iraqi government fired 340 police officers which, it said were linked with Shiite militias.⁸⁵¹ The move is a consequence of violent intra-Shiite fighting that broke out in the city in the summer, which killed about 49 people.⁸⁵² According to the Karbala police commander, Brig. Gen. Raid Shakir Jawdat, “this campaign came after investigations conducted to cleanse the police system of all bad people that are loyal to the militias instead of their country.”⁸⁵³ The firings were reportedly ordered by the Interior Ministry in Baghdad.⁸⁵⁴

2. Leadership
Rating: Poor

While the U.S. troop surge seems to be serving its purpose of improving security in different parts of Iraq, Iraqi politicians have not been able to foster national unity, or cut across sectarian divides to bring about political reconciliation.

These divisions have been explained in detail under Indicator No.7 and are underscored by the public spat between Prime Minister al-Maliki and Vice President al-Hashemi; rifts with the largest Sunni bloc in Parliament, the Iraqi Consensus Front; divisions within the Shiite bloc over the question of dividing Iraq into self governing regions; and the continuing defiance of Shiite Ministers loyal to Moqtada al-Sadr.

The deep divisions within the Iraqi Parliament on sectarian issues has been further highlighted by the intense opposition of several Shiite politicians against a proposed law that seeks to soften former De-Baathification laws. There has thus been little progress on dialogue and reconciliation across group lines, which would enable the formation of consensus on such key issues.⁸⁵⁵

3. Civil Service
Rating: Poor

⁸⁵¹ “Maliki intends to lift curfew in Baghdad” *The Washington Post*, 11/13/2007.

⁸⁵² *Ibid.*

⁸⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵⁵ See Indicator No.7, ‘Criminalization and/or Delegitimization of the State’ for a detailed description of the divisions within the Iraqi leadership.

The Iraqi civil service continues to be plagued with sectarian divisions and corruption. Although the Iraqi government has a huge reconstruction budget, there has been little progress in providing adequate basic services and aid to the Iraqi people. As mentioned under Indicator No.8, according to Deputy Prime Minister Barham Salih, the main obstacles to spending the reconstruction money is an inefficient bureaucracy and rampant corruption.⁸⁵⁶ Sectarian agendas have pervaded Iraqi ministries, which are mostly under the control of Shiites. Consequently, there is a lot of “institutional discrimination against Sunni communities.”⁸⁵⁷ These factors run counter to the ideal of creating an impartial and professional Iraqi civil service.

4. *Judiciary* **Rating: Poor**

The upcoming trial of two Shiite government officials, who are accused of killing and kidnapping hundreds of Sunnis is emerging as a major litmus test for the Iraqi judicial system in prosecuting high ranking Shiites in the context of a Shiite dominated government. The accused were senior officials at the Iraqi Health Ministry, and according to the Iraqi investigation, “about 150 members of the ministry's protection service were used to carry out the sectarian attacks, using ministry identity badges and ambulances.”⁸⁵⁸

The Iraqi Health Ministry has long been accused of being over-run by Mahdi Army loyalists, and the two accused ministers were also appointed with the support of Shiite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr.⁸⁵⁹ The withdrawal of Sadr Ministers from the government since spring has, however, given Prime Minister al-Maliki to distance himself from al-Sadr’s loyalists and in effect, move against them.⁸⁶⁰

The case is especially important because this is the first time a magistrate has recommended that such senior Shiite officials be tried for crimes committed against Sunnis.⁸⁶¹ According to a U.S. Justice Department official, “there is a perception among the Sunni population that the court is nothing more than an instrument for the tyranny of the majority...this would demonstrate that the court can be a balancing factor.”⁸⁶²

5. *Military* **Rating: Weak**

There was little indication of any change in the strength of the Iraqi military in November.

⁸⁵⁶ “Iraq turns eye to rebuilding” *TheWall Street Journal*, 11/15/2007.

⁸⁵⁷ “Inside the surge” *The New Yorker*, 11/19/2007.

⁸⁵⁸ “Iraqi premier wants trial of 2 Shiites in killings” *The New York Times*, 11/16/2007.

⁸⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶¹ “Shiite ex-officials face trial In hundreds of Sunni deaths” *The New York Times*, 11/5/2007.

⁸⁶² *Ibid.*

December 2007
12 Indicators

1. Mounting Demographic Pressures
Rating: 10

The lull in violence largely attributed to the surge is reflected in the alleviation of the cholera outbreak first reported in September of 2007. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the cholera outbreak first confirmed in August of 2007 may have stopped. Indeed, even though there have been signs of an increase in the five most disadvantaged districts in Baghdad (Sadder City, Me'dain, Baladiat, Al-Rasafa, and Al Karakh),⁸⁶³ no new cases have materialized at the end of December.⁸⁶⁴

Although not exclusively, the security improvements in Iraq have also been connected with an influx of returning refugees and IDPs (discussed in Indicator #2). The returnees, however, are exacerbating Iraq's already existing problem of an access to housing. In December, Iraq has continued to endure the homogenization of its neighborhoods. With Sunnis being forced out and having to move to "Baghdad Belts" (suburbs that surround the city⁸⁶⁵), many formally mixed neighborhoods are now purely Shiite. In Baghdad alone, more than 300,000 people have left one neighborhood for another - Sunnis fleeing west and Shiites to the east. The movement has caused many to occupy homes evacuated by Iraqi refugees and IDPs, a problem for returnees.⁸⁶⁶ While the Office of Displacement and Migration is overwhelmed with property disputes that date back to Saddam Hussein's time,⁸⁶⁷ and while the government committee that decides property disputes is charged with hearing only cases that predate the invasion of 2003,⁸⁶⁸ mechanisms to solve the housing crisis are largely non-existent. Such conditions may place returnees in the unfortunate position of secondary displacement – in fact, according to the UN, although displacement has slowed and refugees return, a net decrease in the size of the IDP population has not resulted.⁸⁶⁹

Children, however, have been the ultimate victims of displacement and violence during 2007. An average of 25,000 children per month are displaced by violence, many of whom end up being cut off from health outreach services and living in camps or temporary shelters.⁸⁷⁰ As many as 1,350 children have been detained for alleged security violations,⁸⁷¹ and hundreds more have been injured or killed by Iraqi violence. In the same year, UNICEF, the European Commission, Japan, and other NGOs and UN

⁸⁶³ WHO Health Action in Crises Highlights No 187 [www.who.int/hac/], 12/10/2007 – 12/16/2007.

⁸⁶⁴ "Iraq Humanitarian Update" <https://www.uniraq.org/> 12/2007.

⁸⁶⁵ Dr. Stephen Biddle to the Committee on Armed Services and Investigations Subcommittee, 110th Cong., 2nd sess., 1/23/2008.

⁸⁶⁶ "Refugees Risk Coming Home to an Unready Iraq" *The New York Times*, 12/20/2007.

⁸⁶⁷ "Iraq Humanitarian Update" <https://www.uniraq.org/> 12/2007.

⁸⁶⁸ "Refugees Risk Coming Home to an Unready Iraq" *The New York Times*, 12/20/2007.

⁸⁶⁹ "Iraq Humanitarian Update" <http://www.uniraq.org/>, 12/2007.

⁸⁷⁰ "Little Respite for Iraq's Children in 2007" *United Nations Children Fund*, 12/21/2007.

⁸⁷¹ *Ibid.*

Agencies invested US\$ 40 million in order to deliver critical health care, clean water, sanitation, and education to millions of children and their families.⁸⁷² Support is still urgently needed to meet the immediate needs of the most vulnerable groups.

2. Movement of Refugees or IDPs

Rating: 9

In the month of December, Iraq's refugee population has experienced a double movement: while some continue to leave Iraq, others are starting to return.

Iraq's unstable political situation has added to its refugee problem. According to the Iraqi Red Crescent, the number of Iraqis displaced quadrupled during the surge.⁸⁷³ More recently, ongoing shelling by the Turkish military (discussed in Indicator #12) is starting to push Iraqis out of their homes in northern Iraq. According to the UNHCR, approximately 1,800 individuals have been displaced in Sulamanuyah and Arbil, and many more villages suffer from displacement as a result of the conflict.⁸⁷⁴

Many refugees travel to surrounding countries, particularly Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon. Indeed, while Syria hosts the majority of Iraqi refugees – 1.5 million⁸⁷⁵ – Jordan and Lebanon host an estimated 700,000⁸⁷⁶ and 50,000⁸⁷⁷ respectively. These countries, however, are becoming stricter in terms of admitting refugees. In September 2007, Syria and Jordan halted their open-door policy and began requiring that Iraqi refugees acquire visas for entry.⁸⁷⁸ Moreover, in Jordan, officials have been known to amass Iraqis and force them back across the border.⁸⁷⁹ In Lebanon, although no visa restrictions – or for that matter, a refugee law - exist, refugees traveling to Lebanon are treated as illegal immigrants.⁸⁸⁰ As the country refuses to recognize them as refugees, they are likely to face arrest. Those arrested are held in the same cells as criminals and they are only released when they “choose” to return to Iraq.⁸⁸¹ The current total of detained Iraqi refugees is about 600.⁸⁸²

At high risk of attack, Iraqi citizens working for Western companies are especially in search for a new life outside Iraq, whether in the surrounding countries or anywhere they will be admitted. While some 2,000 have settled in Syria where they go hungry by paying for heat instead of food,⁸⁸³ others wait in the long lines of the UNHCR office and

⁸⁷² *Ibid.*

⁸⁷³ “Challenges 2007-2008: Iraq Progresses to Some of Its Worst” *Inter Press Service*, 12/29/2007.

⁸⁷⁴ “Iraq Humanitarian Update” <http://www.uniraq.org/>, 12/2007.

⁸⁷⁵ Red Crescent Says 25,000 Iraqi Refugees Have Returned” *The New York Times*, 12/3/2007.

⁸⁷⁶ “Iraq-Jordan: Government Introduces Entry Visas for Iraqis” *Reliefweb*, 12/13/2007.

⁸⁷⁷ “Lebanon: Refugees Coerced to Return to Iraq” *Human Rights Watch*, 12/4/2007.

⁸⁷⁸ “Iraq Humanitarian Update” <http://www.uniraq.org/>, 12/2007.

⁸⁷⁹ “Lebanon: Refugees Coerced to Return to Iraq” *Human Rights Watch*, 12/4/2007.

⁸⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸⁸³ *Ibid.*

endure a complicated process to potentially enter the U.S. Resettling in the U.S., however, is an elusive goal even though the U.S. Congress has recently passed the DoD (Department of Defense) Authorization Bill, which provides for, among other things, 5,000 Special Immigrant Visas to Iraqis who have worked directly with the U.S. government and are in positions of danger and direct access to the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program.⁸⁸⁴ To be sure, the U.S. has only accepted 1,608 Iraqi refugees.⁸⁸⁵ Some point out that Washington's low refugee admittance rate is due in part to Washington's fear that recognizing the Iraqi refugee crisis may be a concession that the war was a "failure."⁸⁸⁶

For those who manage to gain entry into host countries, life is far from satisfactory. In Syria for example, restrictions on work and movement have substantially limited Iraqi refugees' access to food.⁸⁸⁷ In a recent UN survey conducted in Syria by the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC), one-third of respondents stated that they forego eating one meal a day in order to feed their children. In addition, 60 percent buy less expensive – and oftentimes, less nutritious – foods to accommodate the significant increase in food prices.⁸⁸⁸

As Iraqis continue to leave Iraq, some have begun to trickle back. According to the UN, in November 2007, approximately 30,000 refugee *families* returned to Iraq.⁸⁸⁹ Contrary to popular opinion that claims refugees are returning because of security improvements, the UN has noted that most refugees are returning to Iraq because of expired visas and depleted savings.⁸⁹⁰ In terms of IDPs, an estimated 10,000 have returned home in the last three-and-a-half months of 2007.⁸⁹¹

Some efforts have been made to help Iraqi refugees, IDPs, and returnees. While the Iraqi government has acknowledged its inability to adequately accommodate returnees, it has allocated US\$ 100 million to returning families and an additional US\$ 10 million to provide food for them.⁸⁹² The Iraqi government has unfortunately instituted little to no aid programs for its IDP population. There is a food program in place for IDPs, but since it requires citizens and their families to *un*-register with the local council, many Sunnis have opted not to take advantage of it; to do so would risk punishment from the Shiite-dominated government.

Outside of Iraq, the UN has launched an aid program, and in terms of the new wave of displacement incited by the Turkish military's bombing of northern Iraq, the UNHCR has

⁸⁸⁴ "Final Defense Bill Commits U.S. to Helping More Iraqi Refugees" *Reliefweb*, 12/11/2007.

⁸⁸⁵ "Lebanon Criticized for Treatment of Iraqis" *National Public Radio*, 12/4/2007.

⁸⁸⁶ "US-Bound Iraqi Refugees Cleared to Leave Syria" *National Public Radio*, 12/20/2007.

⁸⁸⁷ "INTERVIEW – More Iraqi Refugees in Syria Need Food Aid – WFP" *Reuters*, 12/1/2007.

⁸⁸⁸ "WFP Urges More Support for Vulnerable Iraqis in Syria" *Reliefweb*, 12/3/2007.

⁸⁸⁹ "Iraq Humanitarian Update" <http://www.uniraq.org/>, 12/2007.

⁸⁹⁰ "Refugees Risk Coming Home to an Unready Iraq" *The New York Times*, 12/20/2007.

⁸⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹² "Iraq Urges Refugees to Stay Put," *The Washington Post*, 12/05/2007.

quickly dispatched supplies.⁸⁹³ In addition, to respond to abrasive winter conditions, the UNHCR is distributing non-food items including blankets, mattresses, stoves and lanterns to the families most in need in Sulaimaniyah and Arbil, but there is still a vital need for kerosene. Despite these efforts, conditions from November are not improving, and Iraqi refugees are finding themselves in fatally compromising situations with no place to call home.

3. Legacy of Vengeance-Seeking Group Grievance **Rating: 10**

Despite the fact that incidents of ethno-sectarian violence have decreased from nearly 1,100 in December 2006 to slightly over 100 in November 2007,⁸⁹⁴ the continued absence of reconciliation measures in Iraq may inhibit the sustainability of such improvements.⁸⁹⁵ In the month of December, Iraq's Shiite population has continued to attack its Sunni population. While Shiite militias have been accused of threatening and carrying out attacks against Sunni hospitals and doctors in Baghdad (discussed in Indicator #4),⁸⁹⁶ Sunni-dominated Awakening Councils have been exposed to the brunt of the Shiites' vengeance. In addition to attacks, the Shiite-led government is dragging its feet in providing jobs to Awakening Council members, part of a new agreement with the U.S. (discussed in Indicator #10). In perhaps a representative view of Shiites' opinions of the Sunni-dominated Awakening Councils, Prime Minister al-Maliki's political advisor Sadiq al-Rikabi begrudgingly points out that the Sunnis desire to "dominate everything in the state."⁸⁹⁷

As mentioned, some of the ethnic-oriented destabilization has been chipping away in December. For example, Kirkuk's Kurds and its Sunni Arabs have established an agreement for expanded power-sharing in the governorate.⁸⁹⁸ Prior to the agreement, Sunni Arabs were holding an extensive boycott because of alleged marginalization and discrimination.⁸⁹⁹ Under the agreement, one-third of government and police positions will be allocated the Sunni Arabs, and an Arab deputy governor will be appointed to the Kirkuk provincial council.⁹⁰⁰ Under the regime of Saddam Hussein, the Kurdish population in Kirkuk suffered from forced relocation while Sunni Arabs replaced them in the infamous process known as 'Arabization.'

However, the Iraqi government's abandonment of the December 31 referendum to decide the fate of Kirkuk has kept ethnic-oriented destabilization on the radar. In late December, the Iraqi government, persuaded by the U.S. and the UN (discussed in Indicator #12),

⁸⁹³ "Newly Displaced in North Considering Alternative" *IRIN News Network*, 12/26/2007.

⁸⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹⁵ Dr. Stephen Biddle to the Committee on Armed Services and Investigations Subcommittee, 110th Cong., 2nd sess., 1/23/ 2008.

⁸⁹⁶ "Iraq Humanitarian Update" <http://www.uniraq.org/>, 12/2007.

⁸⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹⁸ "Kurdish-Sunni Accord Gives Kirkuk a Chance at Reconciliation" *Terrorism Focus*, 12/11/2007.

⁸⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

agreed to delay the referendum by six months, which has angered Iraq's Kurdish population. Reminiscent of the hardships imposed by Arabization, the Kurdish population viewed the referendum as a means to compensate for the genocidal treatment under Saddam Hussein, restore Kurdish dignity, and normalize relationships with Iraq's Arabs.⁹⁰¹ Even before learning of the delay, Kurds have been taking their own action to regain Kirkuk. In order to fill Kirkuk with Kurdish votes, some Kurds have reported that the KRG had been coercing them to move to Kirkuk through, for example, withholding food supplies and/or salaries.⁹⁰² Furthermore, Arabs living in Kirkuk have reported a streak of intimidation and unwarranted round-ups by the peshmerga and Kurdish intelligence forces, which has caused them to leave Kirkuk.⁹⁰³ Incentives for Arabs to leave were also incited. A compensation deal included in Iraq's constitution has provided US\$ 16,000 and land to Arabs on the condition that they abandon their lives in Kirkuk.⁹⁰⁴

Unlike ethnic and sectarian tensions, intra-sect rivalries – particularly that between the Sadr Movement and the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI) – have been steadily fickle. Moqtada al-Sadr, the leader of the Sadr Movement, and Abdul Aziz al-Hakim, the leader of ISCI, have continued to struggle for power on a multidimensional level of personality, class, and ideology. Although al-Sadr issued a six-month ceasefire agreement back in July 2007, both groups are widely believed to have been active in operating death squads targeting each other as well as Sunnis.⁹⁰⁵ Moreover, according to Joost Hiltermann, an Iraq analyst at the International Crisis Group, although “[t]he Sadrists have not been in an aggressive posture since early this year...[t]hey have taken the position, ‘We will only fight if we are attacked...[T]hat doesn’t mean they are gone.’”⁹⁰⁶

4. Chronic and Sustained Human Flight

Rating: 10

Whether threats to physical security or threats to livelihoods, intellectuals are still finding many incentives to leave Iraq. In mid-December, Babil Province's Police Chief, General Qais al-Mamori, became the most recent provincial leader to succumb to the campaign against intellectuals in Babil.⁹⁰⁷ In addition to Babil's leaders and Sunni doctors, death is a consistent threat to journalists as well. Journalists are considered one of the most targeted professional groups in Iraq.⁹⁰⁸ According to the Committee to Protect Journalists, out of 64 journalists that have died *world-wide* in 2007, almost half of those deaths (31) took place in Iraq.⁹⁰⁹ Because of such insecurity, a high number of middle class Iraqis are fleeing Iraq (discussed in Indicator #2).

⁹⁰¹ “As Iraqis Vie for Kirkuk’s Oil, Kurds Are Pawns” *The New York Times*, 12/9/2007.

⁹⁰² *Ibid.*

⁹⁰³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰⁵ “Shiite Contest Sharpens in Iraq” *The Washington Post*, 12/26/2007.

⁹⁰⁶ “A Calmer Iraq: Fragile, and Possibly Fleeting” *The New York Times*, 12/5/2007.

⁹⁰⁷ “Bomb Kills an Iraqi Police Chief” *The New York Times*, 12/10/2007.

⁹⁰⁸ “Iraq Humanitarian Update” <http://www.uniraq.org/>, 12/2007.

⁹⁰⁹ “64 Journalists Killed Worldwide in 2007, the Most Since ‘94” *The New York Times*, 12/18/2007.

Death alone is not the only reason stimulating a “brain-drain” in Iraq. Finding employment in Iraq is getting more and more difficult (discussed in Indicator #6), forcing many University graduates to leave Iraq for countries where they can pursue their careers. For example, several computer and electronic science graduates are traveling to Syria, Jordan, and the Gulf States where they are in high demand.⁹¹⁰ In these countries, Iraqi technicians run Internet cafes, work for companies joining the World Wide Web, or set up their own intranets.⁹¹¹ Threats to physical security and the lack of opportunity in Iraq have left Iraq with a dwindling professional class.

5. Uneven Economic Development Along Group Lines

Rating: 9

Even though the Iraqi central government and the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) have engaged in a series of meetings, disputes over who controls Iraq’s oil production and distribution continue in December. In recent months, the Kurds have signed a more than 20 oil deals, and have passed a regional as well as national oil law. Iraq’s Oil Minister, Hussain al-Shahristani, has denounced this as illegal activity and has additionally threatened to blacklist companies signing on with the KRG. But words alone do not constitute the action of the Iraqi central government – it has actually stopped oil from flowing and being refined through state-owned pipelines as well as in Iraqi refineries in order to prevent oil companies signing contracts with the KRG from accessing the oil.⁹¹² Even with these repercussions, the KRG is following through with selling oil from the Tawke field of Northern Iraq, which is estimated to produce 90,000 bpd.⁹¹³ Moreover, despite the Iraqi central government’s threats to Seoul to choose between moving forward on an oil project with the KRG and purchasing oil in Iraq, Korea National Oil Corporation has chosen not to abandon its exploration project of Bazian field in Iraqi Kurdistan. Bazian field holds approximately 500 million barrels of crude oil.⁹¹⁴

Kurds are not the only group economically benefiting asymmetrically. In the southern Shiite area, the development of Najaf can be seen in its economic growth and production. In its desire to become more self-sufficient from Baghdad, Najaf is building an airport, an electrical plant to increase the city’s power, hospitals, and small refineries to provide the city with fuel for cars and cooking.⁹¹⁵ The city has begun a project this month on a US\$ 75 million power plant that will take two years to complete. According to Iraq’s Minister of Electricity, a significant source of finance for the project is the Iranian government.⁹¹⁶ Moreover, with the help of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Health Ministry in Baghdad, another project already completed is the Sadr Hospital. With 300 doctors and

⁹¹⁰ “12 Universities to be Established” *Azzaman*, 12/18/2007.

⁹¹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹¹² James Durso, “Iraq Oil Report- Archive for December 2007,” [http://iraqoilreport.com/2007/12/]

⁹¹³ *Ibid.*

⁹¹⁴ “SKorea Group to Continue Kurdistan Project Despite Iraqi Threat” *AFP*, 12/25/2007.

⁹¹⁵ “Iraqi City Poised to Become Hub of Shiite Power” *The New York Times*, 12/16/2007.

⁹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

448 beds, the 5-story hospital has advanced technology and offers more services than any hospital in Baghdad.⁹¹⁷

Even more than these development plans is the major plan for Najaf's shrine expansion, which would make it the third most visited site in the Muslim world, behind Mecca and Medina. Once again, money from Iran is supporting this highly-profitable expansion, which will draw more tourism and revenue to a city that is historically famous for pilgrimage and Shiite learning.⁹¹⁸ The Iraqi government has also allocated US\$ 25 million to compensate property owners who will be displaced by expanding the holy space.⁹¹⁹ Najaf officials claim they have refused most offers of help from the Iranians, but they did say they agreed with Iran to organize tours that would bring millions more pilgrims to the city each year.⁹²⁰ No comparable development has occurred in the Sunni areas.

6. Sharp and/or Severe Economic Decline

Rating: 9

Despite a couple bumps in November, analysts credit Iraq's oil sector for ending on a relatively upbeat note in 2007. Production is at levels not seen since the beginning of the year - November saw production at 2.4 million bpd and oil exports around 1.9 million bpd.⁹²¹ The increase in the price of oil to US\$ 97.79 has, in a parallel manner, increased government revenues.⁹²² To further capitalize on Iraq's oil, al-Shahristani, Iraq's Oil Minister, has opened up deals for the country's largest oil fields.⁹²³

The oil sector, however, has not progressed without a hitch. There is still a desperate need for investment in the current and potential oil-producing fields. In addition, the absence of a comprehensive metering mechanism at oil fields, storage facilities, and refineries has been conducive to smuggling. The unstable political situation in Iraq has not helped Iraq tap into its full oil potential. The delay in settling Article 140 (discussed in Indicator #12) has inhibited the use of oil fields in Kirkuk, which hold an estimated 11 billion to 15 billion bpd. Moreover, even though prices for oil have increased, Turkey's raids on the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) (discussed in Indicator #12) has increased the risk premium on prices. Attacks on elements of the oil sector further restrain the momentum of the oil sector. According to United Press International (UPI), from March 2003 to November 2003, oil refineries have endured 69 attacks, while Iraq's oil pipelines have experienced 576 attacks.⁹²⁴ Despite the dismal picture, some point out that Iraq's

⁹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹²⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹²¹ "Analysis: Iraq oil up end-'07, sketchy '08" *United Press International* 12/28/2007.

⁹²² "Pentagon Says Services in Iraq Are Stagnant" *The New York Times*, 12/19/2007.

⁹²³ "Analysis: Big Oil to Sign Iraq Deals Soon" *UPI*, 12/6/2007.

⁹²⁴ "Iraq Oil, Power, Worker Attacks Continue" *UPI*, 12/6/2007.

conditions are much better than last year,⁹²⁵ spurring hope for increased foreign investment.

Although the Oil Ministry and the Electricity Ministry have not cooperated very well in 2007 thereby deteriorating the population's access to fuel and electricity, the electricity sector has seen a similar upturn. Electricity production is up 14 percent from last year,⁹²⁶ and to further increase electricity production, the Ministry of Electricity has not only signed a US\$ 940 million contract with China's Shanghai Heavy Industry to build a power plant in Wasit Province,⁹²⁷ but has also opened a bidding process for current projects.⁹²⁸

While Iraq's oil and electricity sector have experienced progress, other signs of a healing economy is Iraq's inflation rates. Last year, inflation soared to 52.8 percent, but this year, inflation was significantly reduced to 4.2 percent.⁹²⁹ Similarly, Iraq was able to repay its loan of roughly US\$ 467 million *early* to the IMF. If Iraq continues to make timely payments to the IMF, it will receive the final 20 percent of the total 80 percent debt-reduction package by the end of 2008.⁹³⁰ Notwithstanding, unemployment in Iraq remains particularly high. According to the Iraqi government, unemployment was at an estimated 60-70 percent during 2007.⁹³¹

7. High Criminalization and/or Delegitimization of the State

Rating: 10

The absence of reconciliation between Iraq's sectarian groups has contributed to the delegitimization of the Iraqi state. The permeation of sectarianism in the political decision-making process has led to the polarization of the government and ultimately, a self-reinforcing cycle of mistrust and unapproved legislation. These inefficiencies have directly prevented the Iraqi government from responding to its peoples' needs, causing many to lose confidence in the government. In recognition of what he calls "sectarian polarization"⁹³² and the ineffectiveness of the government, Iraq's own Vice President, Tariq al-Hashemi, has stated, "We have to revise the political process to ensure genuine power-sharing in decision-making."⁹³³

Adding to delegitimization of the Iraqi state is a shared resentment among Iraq's political blocs towards Prime Minister al-Maliki. In December, the anti-Maliki movement gained new momentum when Prime Minister al-Maliki signed a "declaration of principles" with the United States, in which the Iraqi government must disarm all militias, and purge all

⁹²⁵ "Analysis: Iraq Oil up End-'07, Sketchy '08" *UPI*, 12/18/2007.

⁹²⁶ "Rebuilding Iraq" *Council on Foreign Relations*, 1/17/2008.

⁹²⁷ "China Firm Bags \$940mn Iraq Power Deal" *ArabianBusiness.com*, 12/6/2007.

⁹²⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹²⁹ "Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq" www.defenselink.mil, 12/14/2007.

⁹³⁰ "Iraq Weekly Status Report" US Department of State, 12/19/2007.

⁹³¹ "Looking to Security from Paper Police" *Inter Press Service*, 12/19/2007.

⁹³² "INTERVIEW-Iraq Sunni VP Says Weak Govt Hampers Reconciliation" *Reuters*, 12/8/2007.

⁹³³ "Bomber Kills 11 at Police Station in Northern Iraq," *The New York Times*, 12/9/2007.

militiamen from the Iraqi police and security forces.⁹³⁴ Moreover, the ‘declaration’ guaranteed the preservation of the Sunni-contested Iraqi constitution, the prevention of illegal seizures of power (i.e., military coup), security guarantees by the U.S., and the cancellation of Iraq’s total foreign debt.⁹³⁵ After some semblance of renewed cooperation between the Sadrist and Prime Minister al-Maliki in the past months, after agreeing to the ‘declaration,’ the anti-American Sadrists discontinued a possible rapprochement with al-Maliki, noting that the ‘declaration’ “sets the ground for long-term occupation.”⁹³⁶ Equally furious, the Iraqi Accordance Front, the largest Sunni political bloc, condemned the ‘declaration;’ according to Adnan al-Duleimi, head of the Iraqi Accordance Front, “The Iraqi government, represented by the prime minister, acts arbitrarily and unilaterally and seeks to exclude all political components...[al-Maliki] is in charge of everything in a dictatorial, strict manner.”⁹³⁷ Echoing the sectarian division between Shiites and Sunnis, al-Duleimi added, “I am absolutely certain that Prime Minister al-Maliki wants to exclude the Front and marginalize the Sunnis.”⁹³⁸ Not only has the anti-Maliki movement garnered a newfound strength at the beginning of December, but Prime Minister al-Maliki’s recent actions have elicited a backlash of delegitimization.

The release of Adnan al-Duleimi, head of the Iraqi Accordance Front, at the start of the month seems to have eased some of the political tension as it has mobilized the end of the Iraqi Accordance Front’s boycott of Parliament.⁹³⁹ The Iraqi government has been holding al-Duleimi under house arrest after the Iraqi military discovered that one of al-Duleimi’s employees was in possession of keys accessing a car filled with explosives.⁹⁴⁰ Although the end of the boycott has resolved the latest confrontation between Sunni and Shiite parties in parliament, the cooperation by no means points to reconciliation or a renewed confidence in the government. Indeed, this is simply one of several boycotts held by the Iraqi Accordance Front.

According to Transparency International, Iraq is one of the third most corrupt countries in the world. Indeed, the government accepts bribes from Iraqi citizens wanting to join the Iraqi police forces, and nearly everything the government buys or sells can now be found on the black market.⁹⁴¹ Moreover, as some estimates place employment at a staggering 40 percent,⁹⁴² theft and corruption have become survival tools. Prime Minister al-Maliki may not be helping the situation - investigators are required to obtain his permission before pursuing ministers or former ministers on corruption charges, and he has yet to pass a law that allows ministers to exempt their employees from investigation.⁹⁴³

⁹³⁴ “US ‘Declaration’ a Setback for Maliki” *Asia Times*, 12/1/2007.

⁹³⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹³⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹³⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹³⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹³⁹ “Sunni Bloc Ends Boycott of Iraqi Parliament” *The Washington Post*, 12/03/2007.

⁹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴¹ “Nonstop Theft and Bribery Stagger Iraq” *The New York Times*, 12/02/2007.

⁹⁴² *Ibid.*

⁹⁴³ *Ibid.*

8. Progressive Deterioration of Public Services

Rating: 9

The Iraqi government has been slow to take advantage of the lull in violence, especially in the realm of boosting its ability to provide public services to the Iraqi people. Moreover, although violence in Iraq has decreased, it has not disappeared. As such, access to public services such as education, food, water, healthcare, housing, and security continues to be limited in the month of December.

Access to quality education is compromised not only because of continued violence in Iraq, but because of continued government neglect. Not only are children forced to attend school in a state of extreme panic and fear,⁹⁴⁴ but targeted teachers are continuing to be presented with incentives to abandon their jobs,⁹⁴⁵ school buildings are largely destroyed,⁹⁴⁶ and a shortage in textbooks and basic educational supplies has prompted the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to create “online textbooks.”⁹⁴⁷ With nearly six million children returning to school in October, the lack of the Iraqi government’s responsiveness in terms of addressing these problems prevents children from being properly educated. It should be noted, however, that the Iraqi government is, to an extent, responding to higher education needs. For example, the Iraqi Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research has pledged to open twelve new universities in Iraq’s major cities by the start of the 2008-2009 academic year.⁹⁴⁸ The ministry’s target goal is to have at least one university in each of Iraq’s provinces.⁹⁴⁹

In addition to failing to provide a proper education to Iraqi students, the Iraqi government is also failing to manage Iraq’s dismal food *insecurity*. To date, four million people, or 15 percent of Iraq’s population, do not have regular access to food.⁹⁵⁰ The situation is sure to worsen as the amount of food rations distributed to Iraqi families via the Public Distribution System (PDS) will be reduced from ten items to five in 2008 precisely because of a deficiency in financial support from the Iraqi government, as well as corruption and manpower shortages in Iraq’s Ministry of Trade.⁹⁵¹ Further unsettling is the fact that because of such a poor governmental response to the food problem, Iraq remains the country with the highest infant, under-five mortality rate, a measure used by the UN to indicate the state of child malnutrition.⁹⁵²

Clean water is equally difficult to come by in Iraq. While many do not have access to clean water, whenever access exists, Iraqis risk contracting water-borne diseases.⁹⁵³ Perhaps the worse-case scenario of this predicament is the situation in Basra. According

⁹⁴⁴ “Iraq Humanitarian Update” <http://www.uniraq.org/>, 12/2007.

⁹⁴⁵ “Iraqi oil, Health, Teacher Demands Unmet” *United Press International*, 12/21/2007.

⁹⁴⁶ “Iraq Humanitarian Update” <http://www.uniraq.org/>, 12/2007.

⁹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴⁸ “12 Universities to be Established” *Azzaman*, 12/18/2007.

⁹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵¹ “IRAQ: Government to Cut Items from Its Free Food Handouts” *Irin News Network*, 12/4/2007.

⁹⁵² “Iraq Humanitarian Update” <http://www.uniraq.org/>, 12/2007.

⁹⁵³ *Ibid.*

to environmental radiation specialists, thousands of citizens in Basra are in “imminent danger” of toxic poisoning due to high radiation levels in Basra’s rivers.⁹⁵⁴ Iraq’s historical hostilities with Iran and the U.S.-led invasion are accountable for the destruction of Basra’s waterways, which were once considered comparable to the waterways of Venice, Italy. Despite a pledge from Ghali Nejim Mutar, head of the Agriculture Committee in Basra’s Provincial Council, to clean up the waterways,⁹⁵⁵ there has been no action taken.

In terms of healthcare, although the Iraqi government is the central provider of health services, per capita spending on these services is exceptionally low.⁹⁵⁶ As such, health of Iraqis has suffered. For example, immunization of infants with DPT3 (diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus), OPV3 (Oral Polio Vaccine), and measles is below 80 percent and 47 percent of children in Baghdad suffer from mental disorders. Although 85 primary health care centers (PHCs) have been built in Iraq (by the U.S. and not the Iraqi government),⁹⁵⁷ many of these PHCs have not opened because of a scarcity of trained medical staff. Sectarianism has further denied Iraqis full access to these health care centers as the Ministry of Health, headed by al-Sadr, has largely discriminated against Sunni areas.

While access to housing continues to burden Iraqis, especially with the return of many refugees and IDPs (discussed in Indicator #1, #2), because of the government’s irresponsibility in addressing the problem,⁹⁵⁸ the Iraqi government is also failing to provide a safe Iraq. While Iraq’s Defense Minister and the general Ministry of the Interior has declared that the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) are ready to take over the responsibility of securing Iraq,⁹⁵⁹ it has largely been the U.S. who has contributed to the decrease in Iraq’s violence. Moreover, in spite of this decrease, violence is still glaringly existent. While Diyala is scourged with violence,⁹⁶⁰ as U.S. military forces and Awakening Councils attempt to stabilize Anbar Province and Baghdad, insurgents and Al-Qaeda in Iraq have moved north to Mosul, thus escaping eradication.⁹⁶¹ Indeed, some experts point out that the surge has not severely impaired Al-Qaeda.⁹⁶² In addition, between November and December, Iraq saw only a slight *decrease*, if any, in IEDs (73 to 71), mortars (48 to 46) and suicide bombs (0-0),⁹⁶³ and has seen a slight *increase* in other forms of violence: Katyusha rockets increased from 0 to 9, assassinations from 12 to 16, bicycle bombs from 0 to 1 and car bombs from 15 to 16.⁹⁶⁴

⁹⁵⁴ “Rivers of Basra...Pollution and Unfulfilled Promises” *Voices of Iraq*, 12/17/2007.

⁹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵⁶ “Request from Expression of Interest to Develop a Health Service Package at PHC Level – Iraq” *World Health Organization Country Office*, 12/2/2007.

⁹⁵⁷ “Pentagon Says Services in Iraq are Stagnant” *The New York Times*, 12/19/2007.

⁹⁵⁸ “Refugees Risk Coming Home to an Unready Iraq” *The New York Times*, 12/20/2007.

⁹⁵⁹ “Defense, Interior Ministers Confirm Forces Readiness” *Voices of Iraq*, 12/11/2007.

⁹⁶⁰ “Attacks in Iraq Kill 25 People” *The New York Times*, 12/8/2007.

⁹⁶¹ “Pushed Out of Baghdad, Insurgents Move North” *The New York Times*, 12/5/2007.

⁹⁶² Dr. Stephen Biddle to the Committee on Armed Services and Investigations Subcommittee, 110th Cong., 2nd sess., 1/23/2008.

⁹⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

9. Suspension or Arbitrary Application of the Rule of Law and Widespread Violation of Human Rights

Rating: 10

Human rights continue to be trampled in Iraq for the month of December. The proliferation of extremism in Iraq has especially meant terror for Iraq's female population. For example, rejecting "tabarruj" or, "the willful display of oneself in public,"⁹⁶⁵ a Shiite group by the name of "Commanding the Good and Forbidding What is Prohibited," killed 50 women in Basra in late December⁹⁶⁶ due to 'violations' such as wearing make-up. Since July 2007, 40 women have been killed in Basra as a result of similar circumstances.⁹⁶⁷ According to residents, the women are abducted, raped, tortured, and thrown in garbage dumps. Sometimes, notes declaring the woman as "bad" are even left on the body. The killings resemble conditions in Baghdad where Islamic militiamen constantly harass female university students according to religious restrictions. Because of the harassment, many families have stopped sending their daughters to schools and colleges, which may help to explain the findings of the Iraqi Ministry of Education that more than 70 percent of young women no longer attend schools.⁹⁶⁸ Iraqi liberals point out that in terms of women's rights, the situation has actually worsened from that under Saddam Hussein's regime. In this vein, America's promise for Iraq to become a symbol of "liberty and prosperity" has been crushed.⁹⁶⁹

Another problem obstructing human rights in Iraq is the staggering amount of arrests that may be made without sufficient charges. Human rights observers note that the surge has resulted in a substantial increase in the overall detainee population, and such observers remain "concerned at the effectiveness of judicial oversight mechanisms" for arrested suspects.⁹⁷⁰ Indeed, many detainees have not been convicted of any crime or have had a trial. Moreover, detainees are often subject to torture and psychological abuse while in prison.⁹⁷¹ The Iraqi government has announced that it would introduce an amnesty proposal for final approval by the Parliament to free thousands of prisoners who have not yet been formally charged with crimes or who are being held beyond their completed sentences. Currently, the Iraqi government holds at least 24k prisoners.⁹⁷²

10. Security Apparatus Operates as a "State Within a State"

Rating: 10

⁹⁶⁵ *Informed Comment*, 12/27/2007.

⁹⁶⁶ James Durso, "Iraq Oil Report- Archive for December 2007," [http://iraqoilreport.com/2007/12/]

⁹⁶⁷ "IRAQ: "Bad" Women Raped and Killed" *IPS*, 12/18/2007.

⁹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷⁰ "Human Rights Report" *UNAMI*, 4/1/2007-6/30/2007.

⁹⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷² U.S. Troops Kill 11 Shiite Militiamen" *The New York Times*, 12/28/2007.

Since the surge, November and December have seen some of the lowest numbers in casualties.⁹⁷³ According to the Iraqi Interior Ministry, 538 Iraqi civilians were killed in November, the lowest monthly civilian death toll since the February 2006 Samarra bombing.⁹⁷⁴ Moreover, while 38 American soldiers were killed in October, 37 U.S. soldiers were killed in November, the smallest number of U.S. casualties in a two-month stretch since 2004.⁹⁷⁵ Despite the improvement in casualties, 80 percent of attacks during the July 2007 to November 2007 period occurred in Baghdad, Salah ad Din, Ninewa, and Diyala where 42 percent of Iraq's population resides.⁹⁷⁶

Many officials attribute Iraq's recent decline in violence to the increase in the number of Awakening Councils, Sunnis who have chosen to cooperate with U.S. forces. However, there is a looming fear among both Iraqis and the U.S. that Awakening Councils may turn into independent forces. For one, there is a worrisome lack of genuine loyalty in the missions among Awakening Council members. For example, with rampant unemployment in Iraq (discussed in Indicator #6) some members and potential members tend to view cooperation with the U.S. as a survival tool since the U.S. pays members U.S. \$10 for their contributions.⁹⁷⁷ With this mindset, this U.S. counterinsurgency tactic may develop into the dynamic found in Afghanistan in which allegiance and compliance is based upon monetary provisions. Indeed, tribal leaders in Afghanistan are known to rise up in order to demand more money for their loyalty.⁹⁷⁸ In a related scenario, recognizing the possibility of the growth of a 'state within a state' situation, the U.S. has been developing a jobs program through which some Awakening Council members would either be integrated into the ISF or be placed in civilian jobs with the government or private industry.⁹⁷⁹ Although the Iraqi government has accepted responsibility for carrying out the new jobs program, only 5 percent of the 77,000 Awakening Council members have been given jobs.⁹⁸⁰ While the jobs program has been instituted with the intention of undermining the development of the Awakening Councils into an independent militia in competition with the ISF, it has stimulated a degree of expectations among Awakening Council members which, if not met, may end up in a 'state within a state' dynamic, as Iraqi Vice President Tariq al-Hashemi states: "I am really afraid what will happen if these local troops are frustrated and are not paid by the government and brought into the security forces...I am really afraid. They might change their attitude. You should expect anything."⁹⁸¹ Both these situations are conducive to spiraling out of control, and until the Iraqi government begins to integrate these forces, the government's monopoly over the legitimate use of force is in jeopardy.

⁹⁷³ Anthony H. Cordesman, Arleigh A. Burke, *CSIS, The Patterns in Violence and Casualties Iraq 2007* (Washington, D.C., January 2008).

⁹⁷⁴ "Numbers Drop for Civilian Deaths, Foreign Fighters in Iraq" *CNN*, 12/2/2007.

⁹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷⁹ "4 Sunni Allies of U.S. Killed in Iraq" *The New York Times*, 12/27/2007.

⁹⁸⁰ "A Calmer Iraq: Fragile, and Possibly Fleeting" *The New York Times* 12/5/2007.

⁹⁸¹ *Ibid.*

Interestingly, Iraq's Shiite population has built its own "awakening councils." These forces, mainly found in Najaf, Karbala, and Basra, have been set up to fight militias and to quell the growing Iranian influence. An additional reason for the build-up is the Shiite community's grievances that the Iraqi government, although Shiite-led, is not taking adequate measures to bolster their security. According to one resident in Najaf, "[W]e insist on forming awakening councils to support security in the region,"⁹⁸² and in corroboration, Hussain Mahus, a Shiite tribal figure noted, "[T]he government is unable to control Iraq's borders with Iran or stop the infiltration of armed men and weapons...The Prime Minister should admit his government is unable to control the security situation without the help of Shiite awakening forces."⁹⁸³

11. Rise of Factionalized Elites

Rating: 10

The resolve of the KRG to continue on with its oil contracts (discussed in Indicator #5) – a move that the Sadr Movement has adamantly declared illegal⁹⁸⁴ – and the Sadr Movement and Iraqi Accordance Front's backlash against Prime Minister al-Maliki's decision to sign a 'declaration of principles' with the U.S., reveals the continuation of stark factionalization in the Iraqi government.

To further entrench political factionalization, in response to the renewed anti-Maliki movement, Prime Minister al-Maliki has made an alliance between his own Dawa Party, ISCI, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, and the Kurdistan Democratic Party.⁹⁸⁵ The alliance may be short-lived, however, given the direction of the oil feud as well as the delayed settlement on the question of Kirkuk.

The already deep divide between Shiites and Sunnis who continue to feel shut out of the political decision-making process,⁹⁸⁶ may grow deeper. First, Najaf is fast becoming a "new hub of Shiite political and economic power," for all of the Middle East⁹⁸⁷ (discussed in Indicator #5). Najaf's development may potentially turn the city into a semi-autonomous Shiite region. Predictably, however, the province has had major difficulties in pushing the central government to deliver services and money for the local projects contributing to the development.⁹⁸⁸

In addition to the power struggles within the government impeding the growth of Shiite power, another obstacle exists: the delegitimization of key Shiite leaders. The Shiite population is beginning to strip their support away from Iraq's paramount Shiite clerics and the new influential leaders like al-Hakim because of their inability to pass critical

⁹⁸² "Shiite Awakening Councils Set Up to Fight Militias" *GulfNews.com*, 12/18/2007.

⁹⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸⁴ "Iraq Shiites Turn on Kurdish Allies Over Oil Spat" *AFP*, 12/5/2007.

⁹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸⁶ "Bomber Kills 11 at Police Station in Northern Iraq" *The New York Times*, 12/9/2007.

⁹⁸⁷ "Iraqi City Poised to Become a Hub of Shiite Power" *The New York Times*, 12/16/2007.

⁹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

legislation, improve basic services or bolster the economy.⁹⁸⁹ Iraqi Shiites who voted for the country's ruling Shiite alliance feel "tricked" as they feel the marjaiya has not fulfilled its promise of progress.⁹⁹⁰

12. Intervention of Other States or External Political Powers

Rating: 10

Despite the growing opinion among Iraqis that external influences are perpetuating the violence in Iraq,⁹⁹¹ the international community continues to authoritatively intervene in Iraq's affairs.

By the end of December, Turkey had incurred up to four cross-border attacks upon Iraqi Kurdistan – the first, which occurred on December 16, was the largest known cross-border attack since 2003⁹⁹² - in order to eradicate the U.S.-dubbed terrorist group, the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), a militant Kurdish organization that has been trying to establish an independent Kurdish state for several years now. While the U.S. embassy in Baghdad sternly objects attacks on civilians and the destabilization of northern Iraq,⁹⁹³ it supports Turkey, a NATO ally, in its responses to the PKK. In fact, according to General Yasar Buyukanit of the Turkish Army, the U.S. helped the operation along by providing intelligence and allowing Turkey to enter into Iraqi airspace.⁹⁹⁴ Mamoud Barzani, President of the KRG, has declared his desire to find a peaceful solution to the conflict,⁹⁹⁵ but according to Recip Tayyip Erdogan, Prime Minister of Turkey, the Turkish government is "determined to use all political, geopolitical and military vehicles against the separatist terror organization in the most effective way."⁹⁹⁶ Prime Minister al-Maliki has denounced the raids, calling them violations of Iraq's sovereignty.⁹⁹⁷

Iran is continuing to play a participatory role in Iraq's destabilization. For example, not only have the Mahdi Army and the Badr militia been caught with Iranian weapons,⁹⁹⁸ but links to Iran have been found in roadside bombings and among explosively formed penetrators (EFP).⁹⁹⁹ Although there are some indications of a decline in EFPs, it is not clear whether this is due to the U.S.'s role in either stopping the inflow from Iran or finding them and their networks. In addition, Iraqi intelligence officials have captured Iranians with hit lists targeting Awakening Council members, a situation that may spark retaliatory violence on the part of Awakening Council members.¹⁰⁰⁰

⁹⁸⁹ "Disaffected Iraqis Spurn Dominant Shiite Clerics" *The Washington Post*, 12/21/2007.

⁹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹¹ "All Iraqi Groups Blame U.S. Invasion for Discord, Study Shows" *The Washington Post*, 12/19/2007.

⁹⁹² "Iraq Leaders Denounce Bombings by Turkey" *The New York Times*, 12/18/2007.

⁹⁹³ "Turkey Bombs Kurdish Militants in Northern Iraq" *The New York Times*, 12/17/2007.

⁹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹⁵ "Iraq Leaders Denounce Bombings by Turkey" *The New York Times*, 12/18/2007.

⁹⁹⁶ "Turkey bombs Kurdish militants in Northern Iraq" *The New York Times*, 12/17/2007.

⁹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹⁸ "Attacks Imperil US-Backed Militias in Iraq" *The New York Times*, 01/24/2008.

⁹⁹⁹ "Iran's Actions in Iraq Scrutinized" *The Wall Street Journal*, 12/18/2007.

¹⁰⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

Britain's withdrawal from Basra marks the last of Britain's four provinces to be turned over to the Iraqi government.¹⁰⁰¹ The withdrawal draws UK forces down from about 4,500 to 2,500.¹⁰⁰² Britain pledges to continue training and mentoring Iraqi forces, and may even bring in 1,200 troops if necessary, although this is not expected to occur. Though there have not been reports of increased violence since the withdrawal, Basra continues to struggle through high levels of violence

In an attempt to bring Private Security Contractors under tighter control, Ryan Crocker, U.S. Ambassador to Iraq, and Gen. David H. Petraeus, established an agreement requiring all State Department convoys in Iraq to coordinate their movements with the military's main operations center in Baghdad. This sets minimum standards for the use of force by contractors.¹⁰⁰³ The agreement has been made in response to the Blackwater scandal in which American security contractors working for Blackwater killed eight Iraqi civilians in Baghdad.¹⁰⁰⁴ Remarking on the agreement, Pentagon press secretary Geoff Morrell said, "It will help ensure that all personal security contractors there are operating in a manner that is consistent with our mission to secure Iraq by winning the trust and confidence of its people."¹⁰⁰⁵

From security to legal matters to reconstruction, the U.S.'s involvement in Iraq is very extensive and has not yet tapered off in December.

In light of Turkey's cross-border raids of Northern Iraq, a move supported by the U.S., the U.S. is ironically attempting to curb the development of a major conflict between Turkey and the Kurdish region. In late December, the U.S., in conjunction with the UN, effectively persuaded Iraq to place a 6-month delay for the Kirkuk referendum, which was originally set for December 31.¹⁰⁰⁶ The delay allowed the situation in Iraq, in Gen. Petraeus's words, to go from "bad to less bad" since it defused Turkey's threat of a full-scale army invasion if the Kurds took control of Kirkuk and its huge oil reserves.¹⁰⁰⁷

On another note, U.S. involvement in reconstruction has been far from beneficial to Iraq. For example, a Pentagon audit of a US\$ 5.2 billion fund used to train and equip ISF found that U.S. commanders has found that the U.S. has used sloppy accounting and could not always show that equipment, services and construction had been properly delivered.¹⁰⁰⁸ In a related vein, the U.S.-created Office of the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction (SIGIR), has been suspected of corruption, poor management, and wastefulness,¹⁰⁰⁹ which have led to 13 arrests and over US\$ 17 million in fines.¹⁰¹⁰

¹⁰⁰¹ "UK Troops Return Basra to Iraqis" *BBC News*, 12/17/2007.

¹⁰⁰² "UK Hands Over Basra to Iraqi Forces" *The Financial Times*, 12/16/2007.

¹⁰⁰³ "Accord Tightens Control of Security Contractors in Iraq" *The New York Times*, 12/4/2007.

¹⁰⁰⁴ "Iraq Battle was Self-Defense, Security Firm Says" *CNN.com*, 9/18/2007.

¹⁰⁰⁵ "Accord Tightens Control of Security Contractors in Iraq" *The New York Times*, 12/4/2007.

¹⁰⁰⁶ "Skirting the Abyss in Iraq" *The Washington Post*, 12/19/2007.

¹⁰⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰⁸ "Pentagon Cites Poor Controls for Iraq Fund" *The New York Times*, 12/7/2007.

¹⁰⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹⁰ *Ibid.*

SIGIR was created to act as the chief watchdog for stabilizing Iraq through building hospitals, schools, training security forces and increasing electricity production,¹⁰¹¹ but these troubles have pushed the realization of a reconstructed Iraq further and further away.

Legally speaking, U.S. arrests and transfers to the Iraqi government have been partly sanctioned by the Supreme Court. In a decision by the U.S. Supreme Court, U.S. citizens suspected of breaking the law in Iraq may be subject to criminal prosecution and/or punishment by the Iraqi legal system. Correspondingly, the U.S. Federal District Court as well as the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit cannot intervene to stop the process.¹⁰¹² The decision was reached when the Supreme Court accepted two cases filing habeas corpus petitions against the U.S. military's transfer of suspects to the Iraqi government. In the case of Mohammad Munaf, a naturalized U.S. citizen living in Iraq was charged with kidnapping and convicted and sentenced to death by the Central Criminal Court of Iraq, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the sentence, citing Iraq as a sovereign nation entitled to prosecute those who violate its laws.¹⁰¹³ The other plaintiff, Shawqi Ahmad Omar, also a naturalized U.S. citizen living in Iraq, had been arrested by the U.S. military on the belief that he was an "enemy combatant."¹⁰¹⁴ In Omar's case, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of Omar, pointing out that he had not been convicted of a crime.¹⁰¹⁵

In terms of security, "the surge," has definitely contributed to the fall in violence in Iraq, but it is not exclusively responsible for it. According to Gen. Petraeus, there are a number of factors – in addition to the surge - that may have contributed to the improved security conditions in Iraq, such as Iraq's own "surge" of more than 100k soldiers and police officers, the presence of the U.S.-created Awakening councils, the ceasefire between al-Sadr and al-Hakim, and external factors like the decision by some countries to curtail the flow of foreign fighters into Iraq.¹⁰¹⁶

On December 18, the U.S. Government Accountability Office released an updated report on loans and grants pledged by each donor country and the status of those pledges for reconstruction efforts in Iraq (U.S. and Iraqi funding not included). The majority of pledges were in the form of multilateral or bilateral grants. Japan (US\$ 3.4 billion) the World Bank (US\$ 3 billion); the International Monetary Fund (up to US\$ 2.55 billion) and Iran (US\$ 1 billion) were the largest contributors of the US\$ 16.4 billion pledged as of October 2007.¹⁰¹⁷ Iraq entered into agreements of nearly US\$ 1.8 billion in available loans from Japan and World Bank and the IMF has provided US\$ 436 million in

¹⁰¹¹ "Inspector General for Iraq Under Investigation" *The Washington Post*, 12/14/2007.

¹⁰¹² "Americans Held in Iraq Draw Justices' Attention" *The New York Times*, 12/8/2007.

¹⁰¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹⁶ "Iraq Attacks Fall 60 Percent, Petraeus Says" *The New York Times*, 12/30/2007.

¹⁰¹⁷ Honorable Nita M. Lowey and Frank R. Wolf, "Rebuilding Iraq: International Donor Pledges for Reconstruction Efforts in Iraq," Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives, 12/18/2007.

emergency post-conflict relief, which has yet to be drawn on for assistants. Total grants have provided US\$ 1.7 billion multilaterally through two trust funds, the UN Development Group and World Bank, and over US\$ 3.1 in bilateral grants.¹⁰¹⁸

¹⁰¹⁸ *Ibid.*

December 2007
Core 5

1. Police
Rating: Poor

The British withdrawal of troops has revealed the weakness of the Iraqi police forces. Since British troops withdrew from Basra, the southern city where most of Iraq's oil exports originate is in a battle for power as militia rivals compete with provincial police and central government authorities. Militias have carved out their own "fiefdoms" with gunmen interpreting the law and order in their own way.¹⁰¹⁹ Police forces are "powerless" to stop these militias from taking hold of the security crisis in Basra due to lack of coordination and the police-militia ratio.¹⁰²⁰ "The work of the Basra police is haphazard," said Mohammed Saadoun, the provincial council's chairman,¹⁰²¹ further demonstrating the incompetence of the police forces in dealing with Iraq's militias. Yet, "haphazard" hardly describes the 40 some women who have been killed in Basra in the past five months¹⁰²² because of their failure to don the hijab. The existence of such honor killings suggests that the police forces are not fulfilling their roles as protectors of the law.

In addition to the withdrawal of British troops, one reason for the slack may be attributed to a lack of incentive to do quality work. For one, registered police are receiving salaries that "exist" only on paper.¹⁰²³ Additionally, the tremendous amount of police officers – one for every 27 people versus the standard of one for every 300 people¹⁰²⁴ – might elucidate the penetration of corruption among the Iraqi police forces.

2. Leadership
Rating: Poor

Iraqi leadership continues to be at a standstill in December. First, Prime Minister al-Maliki has made no movement to provide services to the public or integrate Sunni members sufficiently in the government. Second, national unity has not occurred in the month of December, thereby inhibiting efficient leadership. Tensions between the Iraqi government and the Kurdish population have been especially high in December, causing the absence and neglect of crucial legislation. Not only has the referendum on Kirkuk – article 140 of the Iraqi constitution – been delayed,¹⁰²⁵ but a national oil law has failed to materialize as well. Third, the newfound momentum in the anti-Maliki movement not

¹⁰¹⁹ "Basra in turmoil" *Azzaman*, 12/23/2007.

¹⁰²⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰²¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰²² "'Bad' Women Raped and Killed" *Inter Press Service*, 12/18/2007.

¹⁰²³ See Indicator #6.

¹⁰²⁴ "Looking to Security from Paper Police" *Inter Press Service*, 12/19/2007.

¹⁰²⁵ See Indicator #7 for a detailed description of the divisions in Iraqi leadership.

only demonstrates the factionalization and therefore inefficiency of the Iraqi government, but its delegitimized status.

3. Civil Service

Rating: Poor

Despite the increase in government revenues due to the improved performance of the oil sector, the Iraqi government has still failed to distribute basic public services to the Iraqi population. For example, the Ministry of Health has not opened some of its public health centers due to a sectarian agenda, the Ministry of Education, although pledging to build new schools in the 2008 year, has not provided a proper education for its primary school students, and food insecurity, already affecting 15 percent of Iraq's population, may worsen due to a lack of funds and a shortage of employees in the Ministry of Trade. Perhaps the most glaring example of an inefficient civil service in the month of December is the inadequate ability to accommodate returning refugees. Numbers of Iraqis refugees and IDPs are return to occupied homes, but the Iraqi government has declared, according to one returnee, that it is "not their business."¹⁰²⁶ The fact that the resources – increased revenues and increased security - for improvements in these areas are present, yet nothing has changed, demonstrates the inefficiency and ineffectiveness of the Iraqi civil service.

4. Judiciary

Rating: Poor

The Iraqi legal system has not fully garnered legitimacy or effectiveness in December. In one sense, the death sentence has challenged the attempts to build any type of 'culture of justice' in Iraq. For example, special courts set up by U.S. authorities have been issuing death sentences that many Iraqis perceive are made on a political basis. Moreover, some Iraqi law students believe that executions themselves are a source of delegitimization for the Iraqi legal system as this form of punishment has actually created more hatred and division among sects.¹⁰²⁷

Another factor contributing to the lack of confidence in the judiciary is the increased detentions made in the month of December. Many of these detentions have been made without proper charges, and detainees are often deprived of proper trials. Many detainees have been arrested by U.S. military forces, and have been turned over to the Iraqi government for legal action.

5. Military

Rating: Weak

¹⁰²⁶ "Refugees Risk Coming Home to an Unready Iraq" *The New York Times*, 12/20/2007.

¹⁰²⁷ "Executions Not Leading to Reconciliation" *Inter Press Service*, 11/22/2007.

The military is being pulled in two different directions, trying to negotiate with local political elites while following the rules of the U.S. to get ahead. Resentment of these external demands grows which is creating military politics that is contemptuous of civilian politics and ruthless in its methods¹⁰²⁸. U.S. military has paid more than US\$ 17 million to the Concerned Local Citizens and Awakening Forces¹⁰²⁹. These new forces have strength of more than 76,000, 82 percent are Sunni. Members of these groups have been accused of extortion, corruption and brutal tactics, which U.S. forces have not been able to monitor or control.

The Shiite-led government opposes the creation of such groups who might rival its own security forces and wary of them becoming a potential third military organization. Awakening leaders are not being offered jobs in parliament and feel rejected by Islamic Party leaders and the government. Even some Sunnis reject the Awakening forces. One resident in Fallujah sees this as America's plan to create a Sunni-Sunni and Shiite-Shiite fight to ensure control over the country. Suspicions are growing, not shrinking in what seems to be a development of a parallel military challenging the one trying to develop for the whole of Iraq.

¹⁰²⁸ "All Iraqi Groups Blame U.S. Invasion for Discord, Study Shows" *The Washington Post*, 12/19/2007.

¹⁰²⁹ "'Awakening' Forces Arouse New Conflicts" *Inter Press Service*, 12/26/2007.

January 2008
12 Indicators

1. Mounting Demographic Pressures

Rating: 10

Ignoring the UN's repeated pleas for displaced Iraqis *not* to return home¹⁰³⁰ as well as the Iraqi Ministry of Displacement and Migration's early January declaration that it could not adequately accommodate returnees,¹⁰³¹ Iraqi refugees are continuing to re-enter Iraq. As displaced Iraqis return, they contribute to and must confront the devastating - yet continuing - demographic challenges within Iraq. According to the UN, the lack of drinking water, food, shelter, health services, education, access to land, and employment continue to plague Iraq.¹⁰³²

One of the largest demographic challenges Iraqis faced this month was housing. As in previous months, returnees have had to cope with poor living conditions, particularly decreased access to shelter. Although the lack of funds counts among the primary reasons refugees are returning, refugees' already meager savings are being further depleted on steep rents.¹⁰³³ In worse cases, some Iraqis are forced into taking shelter by assuming ownership of houses abandoned by other refugees or internally displaced persons (IDPs), in illegally constructed houses, or in make-shift homes on state-owned lands.^{1034/1035} As a consequence, returnees - and even Iraqis already living in Iraq - are becoming IDPs.

Humanitarian aid is attempting to lessen the impact of some demographic challenges. On January 3, 2008, the United Nations World Food Programme (UN WFP) announced the start of a one-year emergency operation to supply food aid to 750,000 of "the most vulnerable" IDPs¹⁰³⁶. Those who cannot obtain entitled food rations via Iraq's Public Distribution System (PDS) will receive complementary food packages of wheat, flour, white beans, and vegetable oil. In addition, the UN refugee agency has recently appealed for US\$ 261 million to further improve the plight of IDPs.¹⁰³⁷

To do its part, the Iraqi government allocated US\$ 290,000 to the Ministry of Displacement and Migration, acknowledging criticisms by Abdul Samad Rahman, the

¹⁰³⁰ "Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction Quarterly Report and Semi-Annual Report to the United States Congress," *Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction*, 1/30/2008.

¹⁰³¹ "46,000 Refugees Have Left Syria" *The Washington Post*, 1/5/2008.

¹⁰³² "Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction Quarterly Report and Semi-Annual Report to the United States Congress," *Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction*, 1/30/2008.

¹⁰³³ "Informal Housing Sweeps Baghdad" *Voices of Iraq*, 1/2/2008.

¹⁰³⁴ "Minute Percentage of Iraq Refugees Coming Home" *Reliefweb*, 1/10/2008.

¹⁰³⁵ "Internal Exile in Iraq" *Reliefweb*, 1/2/2008.

¹⁰³⁶ "Iraq-Syria: WFP Food Aid for Iraqi IDPs, Refugees in Syria" *Irin News Network*, 1/8/2008.

¹⁰³⁷ "UN Seeks US \$261 Million to Help Hundreds of Thousands of Displaced Iraqis" *UN News Service*, 1/8/2008.

Minister of Displacement and Migration, who underscored the ministry's ineffectiveness due to its lack of funding.¹⁰³⁸

2. Massive Movement of Refugees and IDPs

Rating: 10

Because of factors such as depleted savings and expired visas, between 20,000 and 60,000 displaced Iraqis have returned to Iraq in the preceding months.¹⁰³⁹ Unfortunately, returnees are coming home only to become IDPs (discussed in Indicator #1). Although many provinces in Iraq have implemented migration restrictions, IDPs already residing in Iraq are continuing to move north to escape sectarian violence.¹⁰⁴⁰ Ironically, with Iraq's northern regions experiencing a recent rise in violence (discussed in Indicator #8), another move among IDPs may ensue. The Iraqi Defense Ministry's late-January calls to evacuate a former military base may further promote internal displacement. Wanting to re-use the military base-turned-shelter for its original purposes, the Iraqi Defense Ministry provided the 300 IDPs being housed there one week to evacuate.¹⁰⁴¹ These new patterns of movement may reverse the reported slowing of internal displacement in 2007.

Despite the return of some refugees, many Iraqis remain in – and continue to travel to – neighboring countries with conditions deteriorating. While Syria and Jordan still hold the largest populations of Iraqi refugees – Syria hosts 1.5 million Iraqi refugees while Jordan hosts 500,000 to 750,000¹⁰⁴² – there has been an increase in the number of Iraqi refugees in Iran and Lebanon. In Iran, 2008 has seen an increase from 57,000 Iraqi refugees to 99,000 Iraqi refugees, and in Lebanon, the Iraqi refugee Diaspora has increased from 40,000 to 50,000.¹⁰⁴³ Thus, the returnees are being off-set by new refugees, keeping the total number roughly the same.

In Syria, conditions for Iraqi refugees are worsening. The Syrian Government has recently announced that Iraqi refugees are now costing Syria US\$ 1 billion a year; Syrian officials have projected that in 2008, Syria will spend a total of US\$ 7 billion, or 19 percent of its GDP, on Iraqi refugees alone.¹⁰⁴⁴ Moreover, since Iraqi refugees began entering Syria, Damascus has a sharp increase in the demand for basic necessities. The demand for bread has increased by 35 percent, electricity by 27 percent, water by 20 percent, and kerosene by 17 percent.¹⁰⁴⁵ Increased competition for living space has increased housing rents by as much as 300 percent.¹⁰⁴⁶

¹⁰³⁸ “46,000 Iraqis Have Left Syria” *The Washington Post*, 1/5/2008.

¹⁰³⁹ Refugees International, www.refugeesinternational.org/

¹⁰⁴⁰ “Internal Exile in Iraq” *Reliefweb*, 1/2/2008.

¹⁰⁴¹ “Iraq: Defence Ministry Asks IDPs to Evacuate Former Military Base” *Irin News Network*, 1/27/2008.

¹⁰⁴² “Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction Quarterly Report and Semi-Annual Report to the United States Congress,” *Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction*, 1/30/2008.

¹⁰⁴³ “Iraqi Christians Opt for Lebanon” *Financial Times*, 1/17/2008.

¹⁰⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

In addition to the governmental strain, because the Syrian government does not allow Iraqis to work, many Iraqi refugees are forced into harmful survival practices such as prostitution, fasting, child labor, early marriages, or even pleasure marriages.¹⁰⁴⁷ As much as 10 percent of Iraqi children in Syria are forced to work for less than US\$ 1 a day; as such, an estimated 80 percent of Iraqi refugee children in Syria do not attend school.¹⁰⁴⁸ Iraqi refugees' access to resources in Syria is appallingly limited.

In Lebanon, authorities continue to randomly detain Iraqi refugees attempting to enter the country. Once detained Iraqi refugees are held for indefinite amounts of time unless they agree to be sent back or are Christian. In general, the Lebanese government does not recognize entering Iraqis' refugee status; the government instead considers Iraq refugees illegal immigrants. Despite this risk, Iraqi refugees continue to migrate into Lebanon because it is easier to find work there than in other neighboring countries.¹⁰⁴⁹

In Egypt, the government has not lifted its tenet requiring a work permit for employment in the country. As a consequence, Iraqi refugees seeking work continue to be limited to the informal sector. In addition to the fact that the Egyptian government cannot provide for its own population let alone the Iraqi refugee Diaspora, the tenuous employment situation facing Iraqi refugees has extremely limited access to basic services. According to one Iraqi refugee currently living in Egypt, "we know people who have returned to Iraq [from Egypt]... [t]hey said we'd rather die there than die of starvation here – at least we know people to bury us."¹⁰⁵⁰

Despite the fact that the United States receives more refugees than any other nation, as of January 2, 2008, only 1,057 Iraqi refugees have been processed for fiscal year 2008. This is a discouraging rate, considering the State Department's pledge to accept 12,000 Iraqi refugees for fiscal year 2008.¹⁰⁵¹

Iraqi refugees in Jordan, as has been the experience for Iraqi refugees in other countries, are suffering from an increased rate of depletion regarding their savings. The winter season has forced Iraqi refugees to divert their savings towards heating.¹⁰⁵²

Currently, the UN WFP, UNHCR, and Syrian Arab Red Crescent are distributing free food to 51,000 refugees in Syria – every ten weeks, 17,000 new refugees are being added.¹⁰⁵³ In addition, the UN WFP will provide monthly food rations to 155,000 Iraqi refugees in Syria with the aim of ultimately reaching 360,000 Iraqi refugees by the end of 2008.¹⁰⁵⁴ To further cope with the governmental strain in Syria, the UNHCR has signed

¹⁰⁴⁷ "Iraq-Syria: Starving to Survive: Iraqi Refugees Resort to Desperate Measures" *Irin News Network*, 1/2/2008.

¹⁰⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴⁹ "Iraqi Christians Opt for Lebanon" *Financial Times*, 1/17/2008.

¹⁰⁵⁰ "Egypt: Iraqi Refugees Return Driven by Lack of Money" *Reliefweb*, 1/13/2008.

¹⁰⁵¹ "Some Iraqi Refugees Yearn to Return" *The Christian Science Monitor*, 1/11/2008.

¹⁰⁵² "Jordan's Cold Wave Eats Away at Iraq's Savings" *Voices of Iraq*, 1/21/2008.

¹⁰⁵³ "Iraq-Syria: Starving to Survive: Iraqi Refugees Resort to Desperate Measures" *Irin News Network*, 1/2/2008.

¹⁰⁵⁴ "WFP to Help Feed One Million Displaced Iraqis" *World Programme News*, 1/3/2008.

agreements for US\$ 38 million for generalized assistance, and US \$129 million for a regional education appeal.¹⁰⁵⁵

Many other attempts have been made in January to expand efforts to improve the plight of Iraqi refugees. On January 11, 2008, the League of Arab States in partnership with the UN refugee agency and various other international organizations, launched a substantial 90-day fundraising and public awareness campaign called ‘Arabs Hand-in-Hand with Iraqis.’^{1056/1057} In addition, the UNHCR has appealed for US\$ 261 million, a portion of which will go towards supporting the two million Iraqi refugees that have been displaced since the beginning of the U.S.-led Operation in 2003 (also mentioned in indicator #1). For all these reasons, the indicator for refugees has worsened. Despite some returnees, the numbers of Iraqis leaving the country are going up, and living conditions are growing more desperate.

3. Legacy of Vengeance Seeking Group Grievance or Group Paranoia **Rating: 9**

Although violence in Iraq – including sectarian violence - has declined, reconciliation has not occurred. On January 12, 2007, Iraq’s parliament passed the “Justice and Accountability Act,” which redresses “de-Baathification,” the first order enacted by the now defunct Coalitional Provisional Authority (CPA). Specifically, the new legislation will allow 13,000 former “Firqa” members – those in the fourth rank of the Baath Party – to return to government jobs, and 3,500 former “Shubah” members – those in the third rank of the Baath Party – to apply for pensions. Former Shubah members will not be eligible to return to their jobs. Also prohibited from returning to government jobs are those Baath Party members who worked in Hussein’s security services. Moreover, important agencies such as the Interior of Ministry, Defense Ministry, and Foreign Ministry are off-limits to former Baath Party members altogether.¹⁰⁵⁸

In light of concerns that Sunni exclusion may very well be the obstacle to stabilization in Iraq, the new legislation is a step towards Iraq’s much-needed reconciliation to some. As the legislation has fulfilled one of the 18 benchmarks U.S. President George W. Bush outlined in his goals for Iraqi reconstruction back in 2003, Washington seems to be a proponent for the new legislation’s reconciliation potential. According to U.S. President George W. Bush, “It’s an important step toward reconciliation, it’s an important sign that the leaders of the country understand that they must work together to meet the aspirations of the Iraqi people.”¹⁰⁵⁹ Similarly, U.S. Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice has declared the legislation to be a significant step in the path of reconciliation: “It is clearly a step

¹⁰⁵⁵“Iraq-Syria: Starving to Survive: Iraqi Refugees Resort to Desperate Measures” *Irin News Network*, 1/2/2008.

¹⁰⁵⁶ “Arab League Launches Iraqi Refugee Fundraising and Awareness Campaign” *Reliefweb*, 1/10/2008.

¹⁰⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵⁸ “Iraq Passes Bill on Baathists” *The Washington Post*, 1/13/2008.

¹⁰⁵⁹ “Bush Praises Iraqi Baathist Law” *BBC News*, 1/13/2008.

forward for the process of healing the wounds of the past.”¹⁰⁶⁰ In spite of optimistic perceptions by the U.S. government, whether the new legislation is certainly progress towards reconciliation of the Shiite-Sunni divide is still unclear. Indeed, some Sunnis and Shiites interpret the legislation as everything but reconciliation. According to Izzat Shabender, a member of the de-Baathification committee in parliament and a Shiite, “the new leaders have gone in the direction of revenge and vengeance, rather than going into healing those wounds...[e]ven if the law is passed, it cannot achieve the goal – which is opening a new chapter with the Baathists...It’s got nothing to do with reconciliation. The culture of reconciliation does not exist in the heads of the Iraqi leaders.”¹⁰⁶¹ In accordance with this theme, some Sunnis highlight the potential use of the new legislation to create yet another purge; the 7,000 officers already working in the Ministry of the Interior may be forced to leave their jobs.¹⁰⁶² The next step for the de-Baathification legislation is the final ratification by the three Council members.

Another important occurrence in the month of January is parliament’s approval to change the Iraqi flag. Like the Baathist legislation, the change may or may not encourage reconciliation between Iraq’s groups. Prompted by the potential embarrassment at an upcoming regional meeting in Iraq, the Iraqi government has chosen to remove the three stars adorning the Iraqi flag, and to change the font of the flag’s inscription as well. Because these elements are reminiscent of the Kurdish population’s suffering under Saddam Hussein’s regime – the three stars symbolize the Baathist Party ideology, and the inscription is rumored to be in the handwriting of Saddam Hussein – the KRG has long refused to fly the Iraqi national flag, opting instead to fly its own flag. Many Shiites have also objected to flying the Iraqi flag in its original form, citing recollections of severe repression as well. While some have dubbed the change another significant step towards reconciliation, others are of the view that the change is yet another ploy for the Kurdish population to exert its independence from Iraq. Mimicking the “National Project” on the oil question (discussed in Indicator #5), Shiites and Sunnis have yet again politically expressed their dissatisfaction with the KRG: Two Sunni political blocs - Iraq National List Party and the Tawafiq Party - as well as two Shiite political blocs – the Sadr Movement and the Fadhila Party – all opposed changes to the Iraqi flag.¹⁰⁶³ One Sunni parliamentary member even went so far as to declare that “[i]t was an organized conspiracy to change the flag.”^{1064/1065}

Contrary to general perceptions, alongside sectarian and ethnic group differences, intra-sect strife is increasing as well. The violent rift between Moqtada al-Sadr and Shiite cleric Abdul Aziz al-Hakim is a case in point. Al-Sadr’s February 2007 freeze on the Mahdi Army’s activities helped relieve the violence between the two groups – in fact, al-Sadr’s freeze is one reason repeatedly cited as contributing to Iraq’s security improvements. In mid-January, however, Saleh al-Obaidi, al-Sadr’s spokesman, indicated

¹⁰⁶⁰ “U.S. Hails New Iraqi Law on Baathists in Government Jobs” *International Herald Tribune*, 1/15/2008.

¹⁰⁶¹ “Iraq Passes Bill on Baathists” *The Washington Post*, 1/13/2008.

¹⁰⁶² “Iraq’s New Law on Ex-Baathists Could Bring Another Purge” *The Washington Post*, 1/23/2008.

¹⁰⁶³ “Iraq Parliament Purges Hussein Vestiges on Flag” *The New York Times*, 1/23/2008.

¹⁰⁶⁴ “Iraq Parliament Approves New Flag” *BBC News*, 1/23/2008.

¹⁰⁶⁵ “Iraqi Flag Changes, But Not Sectarian Distrust” *The Washington Post*, 1/23/2008.

that the freeze may be lifted at the end of February. Al-Sadr's reconsideration derives from the unjust treatment of Mahdi Army military members and their families. According to al-Obaidi, the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) in several provinces have targeted and detained members for no legal reason, an allegation which may hold weight as the members of the militant wing of the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq - al-Hakim's political bloc – are now official members of the Iraqi police. Al-Obaidi also pointed out that al-Sadr's legitimacy is dependent upon him representing and defending his followers the instant they become targets.¹⁰⁶⁶

Attacks on Awakening Councils, former Sunni insurgents who have chosen to cooperate with the United States in its counter-insurgency operations, continued throughout the month of January. Due to, but certainly not limited to, such forms of violence as suicide bombings, car-bombings, and drive-by shootings, this month, many Awakening Council members have been killed. According to Interior Minister Jawwad al-Bolani, at least 100 have been killed in the month of January, six of whom were senior Awakening leaders.¹⁰⁶⁷ Indeed, in early January, two key leaders, Riyadh al-Samarrai, a founder of the Awakening Council in Adhamiya, and Ismael Abbas, a founder of the Awakening Council in Shaab, were assassinated.¹⁰⁶⁸

Remaining firmly skeptical about Awakening Council members, the Shiite-dominated Iraqi government has long suspected that Awakening Councils are penetrated by Baathist and Al-Qaeda elements. The Iraqi government has yet to make good on its promise to integrate 20 percent of Awakening Council members into the Ministry of Interior, and to provide non-security jobs to the remaining 80 percent.¹⁰⁶⁹

At the end of January, the Iraqi parliament held the first reading of a draft law that offers amnesty to thousands of detainees suspected of backing an anti-US insurgency.¹⁰⁷⁰ Since the majority of the detainees are Sunni Arabs, the law has the potential for moderating the Sunni-Shiite divide.

4. Chronic and Sustained Human Flight

Rating: 9

Iraq continues to be a dangerous place for Iraqi professionals. In the month of January, several high-profile assassinations occurred. Among them were:

Amir Jawdat al-Naeeb, Appellate Court Judge

Saleh Mohammed Hassan, Iraqi Police Chief

Munthir Mirhij Radhi, Dean of Dental College of Baghdad University

Aziz Suleiman al-Nuaimie, Mathematics Professor at Baghdad University

¹⁰⁶⁶ More Than 40 Die in Clashes Between Iraqi Troops and Militia” *The New York Times*, 1/19/2008.

¹⁰⁶⁷ “Attacks Imperil US-Backed Militias in Iraq” *The New York Times*, 1/24/2008.

¹⁰⁶⁸ “Suicide Bomber Kills Key Sunni Leader” *The New York Times*, 1/8/2008.

¹⁰⁶⁹ “Attacks Imperil US-Backed Militias in Iraq” *The New York Times*, 1/24/2008.

¹⁰⁷⁰ “Iraq Parliament Considers Amnesty for Detainees” *Kaleej Times*, 1/21/2008.

Ahmed Jawad Hashim, Former Baghdad city official
Aala Abdul-Kareemsan, Iraqi journalist
Khalil Ibrahim Ahmed, Expert in Shariah Law

Although Al Furat, the television station that employed Abdul-Kareemsan, believed that Abdul-Kareemsan was *not* the intended target of the drive-by shooting,¹⁰⁷¹ in his most recent UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) report, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon underlines the persistent general trend that “[p]rofessionals, including journalists, lawyers, medical and educational staff and public administrators...[continue] to be targeted by various criminal groups.”¹⁰⁷² Indeed, according to Reporters Without Borders, Iraq is the most dangerous area in the world for journalists.¹⁰⁷³ The total number of journalists killed since 2003 is 125;¹⁰⁷⁴ 85 percent of these journalists are Iraqis. Abdul-Kareemsan was the first journalist to be killed this year in Iraq.¹⁰⁷⁵ Moreover, in the case of judges, 34 have been assassinated since 2003.¹⁰⁷⁶

As such menacing conditions reinforce Iraq’s “brain-drain,” the Iraqi government has been prompted to act. For example, the U.S. Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) has created the Judicial Protection Service (JPS) to foster development of Iraq’s judiciary system. JPS may prove to be largely futile, however, as the Interior Ministry has prohibited issuing weapons permits to JPS staff, and JPS personnel are underpaid, under-trained, and transitory.¹⁰⁷⁷

With improved security in the area, Baghdad University has seen a promising ‘return’ of students and professors in mid-January. According to Riyadh Aziz, the Assistant Principal of Baghdad University, attendance among students is reported to be 80 percent. Despite the return, however, a sentiment of fear still looms large among the student population.¹⁰⁷⁸

All Iraqi translators formerly employed by Denmark have either obtained refuge in the country or are currently waiting to do so. The Danish Asylum Program for Iraqi translators has granted refuge to a total of 228 Iraqi translators out of 364; the remainder are expected to be approved this month. The U.S. on the other hand, is permitting only 500 Iraqi refugees to enter the United States over 2007 and 2008, but an amendment proposed by Sen. Edward Kennedy raises the cap to 5,000 over the next five years. Iraqi

¹⁰⁷¹ “Iraqi Troops Mass for Operation in Mosul” *The New York Times*, 1/31/2008.

¹⁰⁷² “Attacks in Iraq Decrease but Insufficient Progress on Political Front, UN Reports” *UN News Service*, 1/16/2008.

¹⁰⁷³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷⁴ “Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction Quarterly Report and Semi-Annual Report to the United States Congress,” *Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction*, 1/30/2008.

¹⁰⁷⁵ “Iraqi Troops Mass for Operation in Mosul” *The New York Times*, 1/31/2008.

¹⁰⁷⁶ “Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction Quarterly Report and Semi-Annual Report to the United States Congress,” *Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction*, 1/30/2008.

¹⁰⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷⁸ “A Cautious Comeback” *The Washington Post*, 1/15/2008.

translators face dangerous conditions in Iraq; many are threatened and killed because of their cooperation with foreign governments.¹⁰⁷⁹

5. Uneven Economic Development Along Group Lines

Rating: 10

In a mark of resoluteness regarding control over Iraq's oil industry, the KRG entered into negotiations in mid-January with two Canadian firms. The negotiations were the initial phases in the KRG's plans to construct an oil refinery and to improve upon another.¹⁰⁸⁰

In its own act of resolve, the Iraqi government made good on its declarations of non-cooperation with international oil companies holding oil contracts with the KRG by black-listing those companies and rendering them ineligible to purchase or bid upon Iraqi oil and related projects (discussed in Indicator #6) in Iraq.

Although the much-awaited oil law has yet to materialize, immediately following Parliament's approval of the "Justice and Accountability Act," a number of political blocs – all Sunni Arab parties, the Iraqi National List, the Sadr Movement, the Fadhila Party, and a faction of the Dawa Party - signed a pact to support giving the Iraqi government full control over Iraq's oil industry.^{1081/1082} The KRG continues to insist that it should control oil in its own region.

6. Sharp and/or Severe Economic Decline

Rating: 8

Notwithstanding some blows, Iraq's economy has witnessed an upturn in the month of January. The improvement is largely due to the strides gained in Iraq's oil industry. The Iraqi government has begun a pre-qualification process for companies wishing to participate in upcoming bids on oil fields and relevant projects. The bidding process is attracting much-needed foreign investment, as Sharistani points out: "All the majors and the minor oil companies have shown a great interest..[t]hey are all very keen to come and work in Iraq."¹⁰⁸³ Not up for bid, however, are contracts for Iraq's largest oil fields. These contracts will be determined by negotiations between the Iraqi government and select major oil companies.¹⁰⁸⁴ Moreover, dutifully following plans to sign technical support contracts in the first quarter of 2008,¹⁰⁸⁵ an Iraqi Oil Ministry delegation has met

¹⁰⁷⁹ "Asylum Program Falls Short for Iraqis Aiding U.S. Forces" *The Washington Post*, 1/22/2008.

¹⁰⁸⁰ "Kurds Negotiate With Two Canadian Firms to construct Two Oil Refineries" *The Associated Press*, 1/13/2008.

¹⁰⁸¹ "A Hint of Political Compromise at Last" *The Economist*, 1/17/2008.

¹⁰⁸² "An Iraqi "National Project," Without Kurds!" *The Kurdish Globe*, 1/17/2008.

¹⁰⁸³ "More on...AP Interview: Iraqi Oil Minister Says Best Bid Will Prevail in Race for Unexplored Fields" *The Associated Press*, 1/25/2008.

¹⁰⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸⁵ "UPDATE 2 – Iraq Sees Higher Oil Output in 2008" *Reuters*, 1/25/2008.

in Amman for a second round of talks with five major oil companies.¹⁰⁸⁶ These technical support agreements involve the development of five Iraqi oil fields including Rumelia, Missan, Kirkuk, and Baghdad. The Oil Ministry has also begun talks with Shell and Total to develop Akkas field.¹⁰⁸⁷ Rumelia, Missan, Kirkuk, Baghdad, and Akkas oil fields are all considered to be some of Iraq's largest oil reserves. In addition to the above-mentioned advancements, with Baghdad now producing 2.38 million bpd,¹⁰⁸⁸ an amount the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction regard as "a post-war quarterly record,"¹⁰⁸⁹ Iraq's oil industry may finally take-off. Indeed, Shahrstani has optimistically predicted that Iraq's oil output will increase by an estimated maximum amount of 400,000 bpd in 2008.¹⁰⁹⁰ Progress in the oil industry has improved Iraq's economy and may provide the momentum for further improvement.

In addition to important gains in the oil sector, levels of unemployment have been cut. For example, USAID has disbursed numerous microfinance loans to Iraqi entrepreneurs, an arrangement which has created numerous venues of employment. Indeed, not only have these loans aided in setting up businesses for Iraqi entrepreneurs, but these small businesses have in turn helped to set up job openings for others. Providing insight on the aims of these microfinance loans, Denise Herbol, deputy director of USAID, stated, "it is our hope that USAID's development and assistance programs will continue to assist in building the foundation vital to Iraq's stability and long-term prosperity and growth."¹⁰⁹¹ To date, USAID has paid 139 loans totaling US\$ 334,000 to al-Qaim; 18 loans totaling approximately US\$ 47,000 to Ramadi; and 72 loans totaling about US\$ 148,000 to Fallujah.¹⁰⁹² The opening of many small businesses via microfinance loans is but the tip of the iceberg in the story of newly created jobs. Indeed, a major market in Yusafiyah¹⁰⁹³ as well as several liquor stores in Baghdad have re-opened.¹⁰⁹⁴ Moreover, in Fira Shira, the construction of a bridge has provided access to Sheha market which has, according to Rear Adm. Gregory Smith, has "facilitated this important local market's economic growth."¹⁰⁹⁵ To further provide jobs to Iraqis, the U.S. government is testing a new program modeled after Awakening Councils, called "Civil Affairs Teams." The program recruits local villagers to provide sanitation, building and construction, and security support across Iraq (discussed in Indicator #8). As with Awakening Councils, participants receive a salary of US\$ 300 per month.¹⁰⁹⁶ With the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs

¹⁰⁸⁶ "Oil Majors to Meet Iraqis Thursday to Discuss Tech Pacts – Official" *Dow Jones*, 1/22/2008.

¹⁰⁸⁷ "Hurdles Remain in Iraq's Akkas Gas Future" *UPI*, 1/11/2008.

¹⁰⁸⁸ "Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction Quarterly Report," *Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction*, 1/30/2008.

¹⁰⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹⁰ "UPDATE 2 – Iraq Sees Higher Oil Output in 2008" *Reuters*, 1/25/2008.

¹⁰⁹¹ "Iraq's Economy, Infrastructure Rebuilt as Security Improves," *ReliefWeb*, 1/14/2008,

¹⁰⁹² "USAID Loan Program Pushed Forward Economy in Iraq – Report" *Voices of Iraq*, 1/17/2008.

¹⁰⁹³ "Economic Assistance Update: Rear Adm. Smith, Denise Herbol, Jan. 13" *Operation Iraqi Freedom: Official Website of Multi-National Force – Iraq*, 1/12/2008.

¹⁰⁹⁴ "Baghdad Liquor Stores Re-open" *IWPR*, 1/21/2008.

¹⁰⁹⁵ "Economic assistance Update: Rear Adm. Smith, Denise Herbol, Jan. 13" *Operation Iraqi Freedom: Official Website of Multi-National Force – Iraq*, 1/12/2008.

¹⁰⁹⁶ "US Offers Iraqis Service Jobs" *The Associated Press*, 1/2/2008.

approximating the number of unemployed at 1.2 million,¹⁰⁹⁷ newly created jobs will undeniably help with the future of Iraq's economy.

Amidst the progress, some setbacks have also transpired. Before announcing the pre-qualification process, the Iraqi Oil Ministry black-listed South Korea's top refiner, SK Energy, for signing an oil contract with the Kurdish Region (discussed in Indicator #5). As such, the company will not be permitted to participate in the upcoming bidding rounds, an unfortunate situation for the Iraqi oil industry since SK Energy accounts for approximately 125,000 bpd in imports. In addition to black-listing some foreign oil companies, the Iraqi Oil Ministry has also terminated one-year memorandums of understanding, which provided Iraq with free technical support for specific oil and gas fields as well as training for Oil Ministry staff in exchange for data on select oil fields. Furthermore, the massive proliferation of land mines (discussed in Indicator #10) may prevent Iraq from fulfilling the oil industry's full potential. According to David Shearer, UN deputy special representative for humanitarian, reconstruction and development in Iraq, 518 kilometers of land in Basra, an area largely responsible for providing the oil exports sustaining Iraq's economy, is unusable because of the presence of land mines.¹⁰⁹⁸

Probably most important, however, is the impediment on growth created by the electricity sector. The power outages across Iraq underscore the humbling fact that the oil sector's performance is inherently interconnected with the performance of the electricity sector. Attempting to account for the profuse power outages in Iraq this month, aside from meddling terrorists and Turkey's consumption rates, Iraq's Electricity Ministry has blamed its Oil Ministry for not diverting an adequate amount of fuel to power stations. The Oil Ministry, in response, has blamed the Electricity Ministry for delaying oil output. Whether January's power outages were caused by the Electricity Ministry or the Oil Ministry, power outages have a significant effect upon the economy: According to an Iraqi government spokesman, power outages are responsible for Iraq's high inflation rate and its low currency value.¹⁰⁹⁹ Despite these setbacks, great progress in Iraq's oil industry and employment figures has undoubtedly pushed Iraq's economy forward.

7. Criminalization and/or Delegitimization of the State

Rating: 10

Although Prime Minister al-Maliki declared in his New Year's message that 2008 would be the year of "economic development and fighting corruption,"¹¹⁰⁰ overall confidence in the Iraqi government continues to decline. For one, the anti-Maliki movement has persisted through the month of January. Initially as the KRG's response to Prime Minister al-Maliki's failure to provide an oil law, a regional powers law, and a

¹⁰⁹⁷ "Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction Quarterly Report," *Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction*, 1/30/2008.

¹⁰⁹⁸ "Land Mines Threaten Iraqis, Hamper Development – Govt" *Reuters*, 1/23/2008.

¹⁰⁹⁹ "Power Shortage Main Reason for Iraq's High Inflation" *MENAFN*, 1/15/2008.

¹¹⁰⁰ "Iraq Deputy PM Blames Corruption on UN" *AFP*, 1/3/2008.

referendum on the issue of Kirkuk,¹¹⁰¹ the movement now has garnered strength from prominent Shiite and Sunni political blocs, as Ryan Crocker, U.S. ambassador in Baghdad notes: “Clearly there is a sense among the Kurds, Sunnis and Shiites that the government isn’t doing what it’s supposed to do...It needs to get better quick.”¹¹⁰² The “National Project” (discussed in Indicator #5) should not be confused as legitimizing Prime Minister al-Maliki; aside from issues of oil, the Shiite and Sunni parties constituting the “National Project” (discussed in Indicator #5) are strictly opposed to the Prime Minister.¹¹⁰³ In fact, these parties are in the process of forming a new political bloc to consolidate these sentiments.¹¹⁰⁴ The anti-Maliki movement is far from a simple expression of frustrations. To be sure, the movement already has a replacement in mind. That replacement is Adel Abdul Mahdi, one of Iraq’s vice presidents and a leader of the Supreme Islamic Iraqi Council.¹¹⁰⁵ Perhaps the only major obstacle preventing anti-Maliki forces from making good on their claims is the fact that Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani has yet to bless a change of government.¹¹⁰⁶

In addition to an emblazoned anti-Maliki movement, boycotters’ half-hearted attempts to return to the national unity government further reveal delegitimization of the Iraqi state. The Iraqi Accordance Front – a traditional ally of al-Maliki¹¹⁰⁷ - left the government due to the belief that the government was not sufficiently tending to Sunni needs.¹¹⁰⁸ Similarly, the Fadhila Party abandoned support for the national unity government, accusing the government for emphasizing sectarian lines.¹¹⁰⁹ In mid-January, both political blocs agreed to rejoin the national unity government on the condition that their respective demands were met. While the Iraqi Accordance Front ordered the release of Sunni detainees as well as improved government benefits,¹¹¹⁰ the Fadhila Party insisted upon a cabinet reshuffle, citing that the quota system allows incompetence and corruption to penetrate the administration.¹¹¹¹ Loud demands for structural reform of Iraq’s current government exhibit a deep loss of confidence in the Iraqi state.

Continued boycotts are but a window into Iraqi politicians’ disheartened sentiments regarding their government. Two clear signs that echo the Iraqi Accordance Front’s and the Fadhila Party’s positions are the statements issued by Mowaffak Rubiae, Iraq’s National Security Adviser, and Abdul Qadir, Iraq’s current Defense Minister. In an op-ed article in *The Washington Post* calling for a restructuring of the Iraqi government, Rubiae points out the ineffectiveness of the Iraqi government in sufficiently

¹¹⁰¹ “A Surge Against Maliki” *The Washington Post*, 1/9/2008.

¹¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰³ “Anti-Maliki Bloc Against Kurd oil Deals” *UPI*, 1/7/2008.

¹¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰⁵ “A Surge Against Maliki” *The Washington Post*, 1/9/2008.

¹¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰⁷ “Iraq’s Sunnis Reclaim Lost Ground” *Asia Times*, 1/15/2008.

¹¹⁰⁸ “Violence Rages in Iraq as Sunni Bloc Leaves Cabinet” *The New York Times*, 8/1/2007.

¹¹⁰⁹ “Fadhila Party Says Structural Change Condition for Participation in Government” *Voices of Iraq*, 1/25/2008.

¹¹¹⁰ “U.S.: 60 Insurgents Killed in Offensive” *The Washington Post*, 1/15/2008.

¹¹¹¹ “Fadhila Party Says Structural Change Condition for Participation in Government” *Voices of Iraq*, 1/25/2008.

accommodating its various communities: “The political objectives of Iraq's three main communities are unrealizable within the framework of a unitary, centralized state...Pluralistic democracy will not take root unless the national political compact recognizes and accommodates the fears and aspirations of Iraq's communities.”¹¹¹² Like Rubiae, Qadir, too, points out the fundamental inadequacies of the Iraqi government. In a mid-January announcement, Qadir declared that Iraq would not be able to independently provide internal security until 2012, and that it also would not be able to defend its borders until at least 2018.¹¹¹³

Still, Iraqi politicians alone do not account for the widespread loss of confidence in the government – an ineffective and inefficient government also disillusioned Iraq's communities. Sunni-dominated Awakening Councils continue steadfastly in their resistance to an unrepresentative and thus illegitimate government. Highlighting frustrations over what he perceives to be Sunni marginalization, one member points out, “We rely on ourselves to protect our community...this is the best we Sunnis can hope for under this government.”¹¹¹⁴ Similarly, citing acts of genocide, desperate Iraqi Turkmen have called upon an, up until now, idle government for increased protection (discussed in Indicator #10). The minority group has threatened to bear its own arms if its repeated appeals are not answered.¹¹¹⁵ Political marginalization and unresponsiveness are breeding such an extreme delegitimization of the government that some of Iraq's communities are beginning to take matters into their own hands.

In addition to Sunnis' unexpected skepticism of the new Baathist Legislation (discussed in Indicator #3) and widespread frustrations over the government's persistent inability to provide public services (discussed in Indicator #8), the loss of confidence among the government's own officials and its own people reveal an Iraqi government caught in a downward spiral of delegitimization.

8. Progressive Deterioration of Public Services

Rating: 9

As mentioned in Indicator #7, the chronic inefficiency of the Iraqi government is glaringly manifest in the continued deterioration of public services. First, as sharp escalations in violence demonstrate, the Iraqi government has yet to decisively and independently provide security to its people. In the southern provinces of Diyala, Basra, Nasirya, Dhi Qar, and Diwaniya,¹¹¹⁶ violence is raging. On January 10, 2008, a booby-trapped house in Diyala killed six U.S. soldiers. The occurrence marked the deadliest day since November 2007.¹¹¹⁷ Increased violence in Diyala may be attributed to recent

¹¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹¹³ “Minister Sees Need for US Help in Iraq Until 2018” *The New York Times*, 1/26/2008.

¹¹¹⁴ “New Leaders of Sunnis Make Gains in Influence” *The Washington Post*, 1/8/2008.

¹¹¹⁵ “Iraqi Troops Mass for Operation in Mosul” *The New York Times*, 1/31/2008.

¹¹¹⁶ “Security Worsens in Three Southern Provinces” *Azzaman*, 1/21/2008.

¹¹¹⁷ “Blast Kills 6 as Troops Hunt Iraqi Insurgents” *The Washington Post*, 1/10/2008.

U.S. operations in Anbar and Baghdad, which forced insurgents to flee to the south.¹¹¹⁸ Also in Diyala, the U.S. launched “Operation Iron Harvest,” an offensive included in “Operation Phantom Phoenix,” a nation-wide attempt to eradicate Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) forces.¹¹¹⁹ In Basra and Dhi Qar, Soldiers of Heaven activities continue to move full-force. The group has engaged in extensive clashes with Iraqi Security Forces (ISF).¹¹²⁰ With the U.S. taking the lead in expelling insurgent forces, the Iraqi government’s ability to provide security unfortunately proves to be poor.

In mid-January, violence rose sharply in the northern areas of Iraq, particularly in the city of Mosul located in Nineveh Province.¹¹²¹ In addition to the proliferation of Awakening Councils in Anbar, operations in Baghdad and Diyala have prompted insurgent groups to move north. As such, the recent rise in violence in northern Iraq has been attributed to insurgents, particularly AQI. According to some, Nineveh may even be AQI’s last major urban stronghold.¹¹²² Indeed, Brig. Gen. Sayeed Ahmed Abdulla, a spokesman for the police in the Nineveh Province, stated that “[t]he problem is that all the fighters escaped here because they have nowhere else to go.”¹¹²³ U.S. Maj. Gary Dangerfield, however, cautions against this claim. According to him, to dub Mosul a breeding ground for insurgents would be “a major misnomer.”¹¹²⁴

Although the Iraqi government has made some efforts to independently improve the security situation, the ISF’s lack of development as well as inefficiency in the Iraqi government has reinforced dependence upon the U.S. For example, the devastating events in Mosul – the bombing of an entire neighborhood, and the murder of an Iraqi police chief due to a subsequent suicide bombing (discussed in Indicator #4) – impelled Prime Minister al-Maliki to issue a “decisive”¹¹²⁵ offensive in the city. Yet, in spite of Prime Minister al-Maliki’s fervor, Brig. Karim Khalaf al-Jabouri, a commander of police operations in Mosul, portrayed the image of a government still following its old habits: “Until this moment, no military trucks have entered Mosul and not even a single policeman or soldier from outside the province...We are fighting with our own forces and we didn’t get any kind of support at all. Nothing has changed.”¹¹²⁶ In a further blow to the Iraqi government’s attempt at solely providing security for its own people, U.S. commanders have signaled increased involvement and oversight of the Mosul offensive after initially planning *not* to get involved.¹¹²⁷ In addition to the Defense Ministry’s own admission that it cannot provide security to the country (discussed in Indicator #7), the stubborn perpetuation of violence and the Iraqi government’s inability to mitigate it crystallizes the Iraqi government’s inability to provide security to its citizens.

¹¹¹⁸ “Suicide Bomber Strikes at Shiite Mosque” *The Washington Post*, 1/18/2008.

¹¹¹⁹ “Battling in the Bread Basket” *Newsweek*, 1/9/2008.

¹¹²⁰ “At Least 9 Killed in Attacks in Northern Iraq on Shiite Holy Day” *The Washington Post*, 1/20/2008.

¹¹²¹ “Suicide Attack at Funeral in Northern Iraq Kills 17” *The Washington Post*, 1/2/2008.

¹¹²² “US Teams Seek Progress in Iraq Provinces” *The Washington Post*, 1/30/2008.

¹¹²³ “US to Expand Outposts Across Baghdad by 30 percent” *The Washington Post*, 1/30/2008.

¹¹²⁴ “At Least 15 Iraqis Die as Building Explodes” *The Washington Post*, 1/24/2008.

¹¹²⁵ “Maliki Sending Troops to Mosul” *The Washington Post*, 1/26/2008.

¹¹²⁶ “Mosul Bombing Prompt Promise of New Offensive” *The New York Times*, 1/26/2008.

¹¹²⁷ “Commanders See Long Operation in Mosul” *The Washington Post*, 1/29/2008.

Aside from security, some public services have been provided to the Iraqi people in the month of January. The relative stabilization provided by the surge has accelerated reconstruction. For example, in northwest Fallujah, the repair of a water treatment facility has provided clean water for approximately 6,000 Iraqis,¹¹²⁸ and in Maderiyah, a medical clinic opened for a public that has been deprived of medical care since the US-led invasion in 2003.¹¹²⁹ In addition, with the advent of Civil Affairs Teams (discussed in Indicator #6), improvements in sanitation have also accrued. Access to education is slowly but steadily ensuing as well. In Abu Ghraib, several primary and secondary schools were re-opened;¹¹³⁰ the Memorial School, Baghdad's largest elementary school and a symbol commemorating the Iraqi children killed by an Iranian missile in 1987, was renovated and also re-opened;¹¹³¹ and in the past year, seven universities and two colleges were opened throughout Iraq.¹¹³² It is difficult to say, however, whether the Iraqi government has assumed a direct role in the provision of the above-mentioned public services. To be sure, Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), Civil Affairs Teams, and other foreign organizations have undoubtedly played a large part in these efforts. Moreover, according to the Government Accountability Office (GAO), only 4.4 percent of Iraq's reconstruction budget - as opposed to the U.S. State Department's initial estimates of 24 percent - was spent by August 2007.¹¹³³ Although the Iraqi people have begun to enjoy some public services, security issues and an inefficient government inhibits the provision of a greater breadth and scope of public services.

9. Suspension or Arbitrary Application of the Rule of Law and Widespread Violation of Human Rights

Rating: 10

Flagrant violations of human rights persist through the month of January. The proliferation of landmines in Iraq reveals an unremitting human rights violation. Approximately 25 million landmines from the Iran-Iraq War, the first Gulf War, and the U.S.-led invasion are still scattered throughout Iraq. In demonstrating the potential impact of these weapons on the Iraqi people, Ali al-Dabbagh, the Iraqi government spokesman noted, "For every Iraqi citizen there is a mine that could kill him at any moment."¹¹³⁴ Moreover, the proliferation of landmines has also rendered thousands of hectares of farmlands inoperative. To help alleviate this problem, the Iraqi government has appointed Nermeen Othman, Iraq's Environment Minister, to take the lead in clearing Iraq's land mines.

¹¹²⁸ "Iraq's Economy, Infrastructure Rebuilt as Security Improves" *Reliefweb*, 1/14/2008.

¹¹²⁹ "Health Clinic Opens in Former Insurgent Stronghold" *Reliefweb*, 1/7/2008.

¹¹³⁰ "Many Schools in Abu Ghreib Reopened" *Voices of Iraq*, 1/14/2008.

¹¹³¹ "Economic Assistance Update: Rear Adm. Smith, Denise Herbol, Jan.13" *Operation Iraqi Freedom: Official Website of Multi-National Force - Iraq*, 1/12/2008.

¹¹³² "Ministry raised rate of students' acceptance" *Voices of Iraq*, 1/16/2008.

¹¹³³ "State Department Official Disputes Iraq Report" *The Washington Post*, 1/17/2008.

¹¹³⁴ "Landmines Threaten Iraqis and Hamper Development" *Reuters*, 1/23/2008.

The discovery of unknown bodies remains a daily part of Iraqi life, as well. In fact, ten heads and nine intact bodies were found in Muqdadiah, a town in Diyala Province. It is speculated, however, that at least four of the bodies were members of AQI.¹¹³⁵

Similarly, women's rights have also continued on a constant path of deterioration due to terrorist activities. "Honor killings" and death threats against women are prevalent in Iraq. By the end of 2007, for example, 133 women were killed in Basra presumably because they had violated Islamic teachings.¹¹³⁶ 'Violations of Islamic teachings,' according to perpetrators, include wearing make-up and/or not donning a headscarf. Even Christian women are forced to wear headscarves to preserve their safety. Under such strict regulations, women in several parts of Iraq constantly live in fear and oppression.

But terrorists alone are not the only ones to be blamed for glaring human rights violations. A possible sign of fears turning into reality, Awakening Councils have continued practices of illegally detaining and executing Iraqis.¹¹³⁷ Moreover, the focus on terrorism's role in violating human rights has overshadowed the plight of Iraq's orphaned children, which has exacerbated due to the Iraqi government's unresponsiveness. According to the Iraqi Ministry of Planning and Development Coordination, there are 4.5 million orphans in Iraq.¹¹³⁸ Approximately 500,000 of these children are homeless.¹¹³⁹ Although these children's situations have created a breeding ground for mental anguish whether it is from experiencing extreme violence to resorting to begging or child labor, the Iraqi government has yet to issue legislation to protect their rights.¹¹⁴⁰

10. Security Apparatus Operates as a "State Within a State"

Rating: 10

Although American deaths have declined in Baghdad and Anbar Province, as of January 30, 2008, 36 U.S. soldiers have been killed.¹¹⁴¹ This number is higher than the total American deaths counted for December - the toll then had been the lowest since February 2004.¹¹⁴² As of January 28, 2008, a total of 3,940 American soldiers have died since the war started.¹¹⁴³ On the Iraqi side, between 4,900 and 6,375 soldiers have died. Among civilians, the total is much higher: According to Reuters, between 80,690 and 88,117 Iraqi civilians have died since 2003.¹¹⁴⁴ The majority of deaths have resulted from US-insurgent clashes.

¹¹³⁵ "US to Expand Outposts Across Baghdad by 30 percent" *The Washington Post*, 1/30/2008.

¹¹³⁶ "Iraq: "Islamic Extremists Violate Women in Basra" *Irin News Network*, 1/2/2008.

¹¹³⁷ "Iraq: Awoken to a New Danger" *IPS*, 1/14/2008.

¹¹³⁸ "Orphans in Iraq, a Tragic Situation" *Voices of Iraq*, 1/17/2008.

¹¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴¹ "Bomb Explodes Near U.S. Patrol in Iraq" *The New York Times*, 1/30/2008.

¹¹⁴² "Iraqi Troops Posed to Strike al-Qaida" *The Washington Post*, 1/27/2008.

¹¹⁴³ "Factbox - Military and Civilian Deaths in Iraq, 28 Jan 2008" *Reuters Foundation*, 1/28/2008.

¹¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

Recent actions of some Awakening Councils may provide more evidence for the drift of Iraqis toward autonomy and the development of these groups into a “state within a state.” In addition to legal and human rights violations (discussed in Indicator #9), some Awakening Council members are starting to buy arms with U.S. reward money obtained through discovering enemy ammunition dumps.¹¹⁴⁵ Moreover, Awakening Council sentiments remain colored by feelings of empowerment and resentment towards the Iraqi government (discussed in Indicator #7), a state of affairs that may perpetuate and further consolidate the perception of Awakening Councils as an irrevocable expression of Sunni representation. The fact that the Iraqi government has yet to co-opt Awakening Council members (discussed in Indicator #3), buttresses this point. Indeed, Saad al-Oreibi, a leader of Fursan al-Rafideen Awakening Council, points out: “The government’s failure to integrate council members into its security and military institutions will prompt us to keep our agreements with the U.S. forces.”¹¹⁴⁶ Currently, Awakening Councils boast a membership of 80,000, but the U.S. plans to cap the influx of members at 85,000.¹¹⁴⁷ While they have helped reduce violence significantly in Sunni area, they remain a private militia or set of militias operating independently of the government that are armed and paid by the U.S. government. Thus, the decrease in violence, while welcome news, has not significantly altered the reality of a fractured security apparatus, whose status, discipline, and loyalties will be open to question, especially after the U.S. draws down its forces.

In a similar vein, one of Iraq’s minority groups – Iraqi Turkmen – may provide another obstacle in consolidating the Iraqi government’s monopoly over the use of force. At the end of the month, the Iraqi Turkmen Front called for “establishing a Turkmen force to be part of the Iraqi Army that would undertake protection of the Turkmen areas.”¹¹⁴⁸ Based upon claims of genocide, Iraqi Turkmen’s repeated appeals to the Iraqi government have come in the form of an ultimatum. Either the Iraqi government fulfill the Iraqi Turkmen’s demands, or the Iraqi Turkmen will provide security independently.¹¹⁴⁹ Al-Qaeda in Iraq’s increased activity in Iraq’s northern region, as well as the ethnically mixed make-up of the region has contributed to Iraqi Turkmen’s insecurity. Once again, the Iraqi government’s ineffectiveness and unresponsiveness has ironically forged a path for its own weakness as independent security arrangements proliferate.

11. Rise of Factionalized Elites

Rating: 10

Prime Minister al-Maliki’s unfulfilled guarantees to the KRG (discussed in Indicator #7) have fostered rumors that the Kurdistan Coalition (KC) was planning to quit the national unity government. In early January, Iraqi President Jalal Talabani squashed the rumors,

¹¹⁴⁵ “New Leaders of Sunnis Make Gains in Influence” *The Washington Post*, 1/8/2008.

¹¹⁴⁶ “Awakening Council Leaders say PM’s statements on infiltration odd” *Voices of Iraq*, 1/10/2008.

¹¹⁴⁷ “IRAQ: Awoken to a New Danger” *IPS*, 1/14/2008.

¹¹⁴⁸ “Iraqi Troops Mass for Operation in Mosul” *The New York Times*, 1/31/2008.

¹¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

noting, “We advocate dialogue and negotiation with Prime Minister al-Maliki in order to reach a solution for all issues. There are no plans by the KC to quit the national unity government.”¹¹⁵⁰ The KC’s continued cooperation – albeit at a minimal level – may not mitigate fears of KRG secession. The KC is the second largest political bloc in the Iraqi parliament; the KC holds 55 of 275 seats.¹¹⁵¹

Regardless of the Kurds’ continued cooperation in the national unity government, other political factions are loath to return the pleasantries. New vigor to the already pronounced fear and resentment of the KRG’s growing power and independence has emerged with the recent changes to the Iraqi flag (discussed in Indicator #3). In particular, members of a leading Sunni bloc and the Sadr Movement strongly opposed the changes. Khalaf al-Alayan, a Sunni member of parliament, even went so far as to call the changes a “conspiracy.”¹¹⁵² Such reactions demonstrate the continued factionalization and sectarianism persistently brewing in the Iraqi government.

Although the “National Project” (discussed in Indicator #5, #7) has produced a form of support for the Iraqi government, it inherently promotes factionalization within the government as well. While the “National Project” links Shiites and Sunnis in a cooperative pact, the National Project strictly excludes Kurdish political blocs. In fact, as the pact sides with the Iraqi government on oil issues, and as the pact also resists a settlement on article 140 that is favorable to the Kurdish region, a basic premise of the National Project is to counter and balance Kurdish power. To be sure, the 140-member strong pact has the overwhelming ability to recall legislation in parliament.¹¹⁵³ Notwithstanding attempts by the U.S. to defuse it, factionalization is thriving within Iraq’s government.

12. Intervention of Other States or External Political Actors

Rating: 10

Although the U.S. announced a new ‘hands-off’ strategy to wean Iraqis off U.S. support and to encourage Iraqis to take further control over domestic issues,¹¹⁵⁴ U.S. military involvement in Iraq has remained strikingly similar, if not enlarged. For example, in an effort to consolidate security gains by destroying Al-Qaeda in Iraq, the United States has participated in several offensives in Diyala, Baghdad, Salahuddin, and the most recent, Nineveh.

U.S. military involvement in Iraq may not decline, despite the beginning of withdrawals in December 2007. Earlier in the month, President Bush deferred decisions on troop withdrawals to U.S. Gen. David Petraeus.¹¹⁵⁵ In early January, Gen. Petraeus remarked

¹¹⁵⁰ “Talabani Denies KC Plans to Quit Maliki Government” *Voices of Iraq*, 1/5/2008.

¹¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵² “Iraqi Flag Changes, but Not Sectarian Distrust” *The Washington Post*, 1/23/2008.

¹¹⁵³ “An Iraqi “National Project” Without the Kurds!” *The Kurdish Globe*, 1/17/2008.

¹¹⁵⁴ “For U.S., the Goal is Now ‘Iraqi Solutions’” *The Washington Post*, 1/10/2008.

¹¹⁵⁵ “A Rift Over U.S. Troops Cuts in Iraq” *The Christian Science Monitor*, 1/17/2008.

that a continued drawdown of troops was “[c]ertainly... a possibility,” but it depends on timing and “conditions on the ground.”¹¹⁵⁶ At the end of the month, however, U.S. commanders in Iraq ultimately declared their desire to freeze troop reductions¹¹⁵⁷ - the duration of the proposed freeze is still unknown. As with Gen. Petraeus’s statement, ongoing assessment of the security condition in Iraq seems to be the rule of thumb in making a final decision on continuing troop withdrawals, as Odierno notes: “I am not saying that we must stay here at current levels, but I believe we must remain for some time in the future, assessing conditions to determine the appropriate force levels.”¹¹⁵⁸ Moreover, U.S. military plans to increase the number of neighborhood outposts in Baghdad from 75 to 99 by June 2008 in order to institutionalize the security gains made against Al-Qaeda in Iraq.¹¹⁵⁹ Currently, there are an estimated 155,000 U.S. troops in Iraq, with a batch of 5,000 leaving every month.¹¹⁶⁰

Bush’s appeal to remain in Iraq beyond the December 2008 expiration of the U.S.’s international mandate in Iraq further demonstrates Washington’s long-term commitment to Iraq. President Bush has asked the Iraqi government to bestow the United States with the authority to manage combat operations in Iraq. The request has sparked questions about the construction of military bases in Iraq. Robert M. Gates, U.S. Defense Secretary, mollifies these questions, “We have no interest in permanent bases. I think the way to think about the framework agreement is an approach to normalizing the relationship between the United States and Iraq.”

Iraq’s Parliament has yet to approve a measure that would end the 2004 CPA decree for immunity for foreign private security contractors in Iraq. Iraq’s cabinet passed the measure in October 2007.¹¹⁶¹

Bush’s recent petition to the Iraqi government to allow U.S. involvement in Iraq after the expiration of the international mandate also includes a plea to guarantee private security contractors some protections from Iraqi law.¹¹⁶²

Despite the U.S. Treasury Department’s recent imposition of harsh economic penalties on two Iranian figures – Ahmed Foruzandeh, the commander of the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, and Abu Mustafa al-Sheibani, leader of a network of Shiite extremists sponsored by Iran - accused of aiding the insurgency in Iraq,¹¹⁶³ in early January, U.S. Colonel Boylan, a military spokesman, confirmed that Iran had been abiding by its commitment to cease supporting insurgency forces in Iraq.¹¹⁶⁴

¹¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵⁷ “US Commanders in Iraq Favor Pause in Troop Cuts” *The Washington Post*, 1/31/2008.

¹¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶¹ “Iraq: Pass New Law Ending Immunity for Private Security Contractors” *Human Rights Watch*, 1/9/2008.

¹¹⁶² “US Asking for Wide Rights on War” *The New York Times*, 1/25/2008.

¹¹⁶³ “New Penalties Set as Bush Calls Iran a Threat to Peace” *The New York Times*, 1/10/2008.

¹¹⁶⁴ “Iran No Longer Aids Iraq Militants” *The Washington Times*, 1/3/2008.

To primarily address security issues between Iran and Iraq, Adnan al-Dalimi, an influential Sunni politician, intended to meet with Hassan Kazemi Qomi, Iranian ambassador to Iraq late in the month. Due to miscommunication however, the Iraqi Security Forces prevented the Iranian ambassador from arriving to the talks.¹¹⁶⁵

Turkey's continued bombing of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK)¹¹⁶⁶ illustrates the tense state of relations between Turkey and Iraq in January. The cross-border raids have displaced several Kurdish families, prompting Prime Minister al-Maliki to demand redress in the form of one million Iraqi dinars (approximately US\$ 815).¹¹⁶⁷ Moreover, according to Falah Mustafa Bakir, the Minister of Foreign Affairs for the KRG, not only have the bombings violated Iraq's sovereignty, but "Turkey's actions will only hinder efforts toward stability and national reconciliation in Iraq."¹¹⁶⁸ In spite of these appeals to Turkey, it is possible that the conflict may not let up soon. During a mid-January visit to Washington, Turkish President Abdullah Gull announced that Turkey would continue its hard-lined approach with the PKK.¹¹⁶⁹

Besides Turkey's national security concerns, the intransigent conflict may have been a result of Turkey's strategic interests in Kirkuk. For example, in the same message, President Gull declared that Turkey's acts of aggression were meant to ensure that the Kurds would not possess control over Kirkuk, an area that is not only rich in oil, but inhabits Turkomen, an ethnic group related to the Turks.

¹¹⁶⁵ "Car Bomb Kills 5 in Baghdad Shiite Area" *The Washington Post*, 1/31/2008.

¹¹⁶⁶ "New Penalties Set as Bush Calls Iran a Threat to Peace" *The New York Times*, 1/10/2008.

¹¹⁶⁷ "Kurdish Minister Says Turkey's Attacks Are Self-Defeating" *WashingtonPost.com*, 1/7/2008.

¹¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶⁹ "Analysis: Turkey Pits US against Kurds" *UPI*, 1/10/2008.

January 2008
Core 5

1. Police
Rating: Poor

Iraqi government officials have acknowledged fundamental problems among the National Police (NP), confirming that the NP remains a symbol of ineptness. Sectarianism, allegiances to various militias, and corruption continue to plague Iraq's National Police (NP).¹¹⁷⁰ In addition, due to the current shortage in leaders, the NP also suffers from a self-reinforcing lack of improvement.

In order to purge criminal elements and to develop skills, the Iraqi government, acting in conjunction with Coalition forces, has embarked upon a program to retrain and/or replace corrupt commanders and other personnel.¹¹⁷¹ As a result of the program, the NP has experienced – and continues to experience – extensive purges. Although some Iraqis doubt that actual reforms are taking place, U.S. Lieut. Gen. James Dubik confirms that Jawad al-Bolani, Iraq's Interior Minister, is, in fact, carrying out the necessary purges. According to Dubik, as of January 6, 2008, Bolani has fired close to 200 policemen, and has replaced nine out of ten brigade commanders.¹¹⁷² Similarly, in Basra, police commander Abedjalil Khalaf has reassigned 1,000 police officers to police stations outside the city in order to sever political and sectarian influence. This purge has been the largest since the creation of the National Police.¹¹⁷³

2. Leadership
Ranking: Poor

The enduring factionalization between the Kurds, Sunnis, and Shiites has produced an unprofessional and self-interested leadership that is based on the sum of its mistrustful parts. Some legislation has been passed, but only as a package deal to prevent double-crossing and after considerable international pressure.

Group identities and legacies have unquestionably permeated the political sphere. The pervasive sectarianism has produced a deep-seated power struggle, as evidenced not only by the ever-changing alliances, such as the unlikely emergence of the National Project, but by the sectarian framing of political issues, such as that which occurred with the passing of the Baathist legislation as well as the changes to the Iraqi flag, and the boycotting – or rumored boycotting - of the national unity government by the Iraqi Accordance Front, the Fadhila Party, and the Kurdish Coalition. The extensive divisiveness within the government continues to slow and sometimes even stall the

¹¹⁷⁰ “Progress of Iraq's Army, Police Inspires Optimism” *NPR*, 1/10/2008.

¹¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷² “Police Chief Purges Force in Basra” *Azzaman*, 1/6/2008.

¹¹⁷³ *Ibid.*

decision-making process. Indeed, the government has yet to pass a comprehensive oil law, a regional-powers law, and a settlement on the question of Kirkuk. The Iraqi government's inability to provide basic public services and representation to its people further emphasizes the impact of political blockages.

3. Civil Service

Rating: Poor

The Iraqi civil service has yet to provide, effectively and independently, a basic level of much-needed basic services to the Iraqi people. The continued lack of access to water, food, shelter, sanitation and education in addition to the domination of these responsibilities by outside groups and foreign governments underscore the lack of progress in Iraq's civil service. Moreover, the GAO's finding that Iraq spent only 4.4 percent - not 24 percent - of its own capital budget through July 15, 2007, demonstrates the civil service's inadequacy in providing basic resources and advancing reconstruction.

4. Judiciary

Rating: Poor

Despite the fact that the Iraqi government has recently appointed 160 new judges and graduated 170 judges from the Judicial Training Institute,¹¹⁷⁴ there is still a shortage in investigative judges and judicial investigators.¹¹⁷⁵ Although the INL is working with the Iraqi government to provide quality training to judges as well as potential judges, the persistent campaign against professionals reinforces the slow influx of much-needed judges. Such factors have contributed to the continued backlog of hearings.¹¹⁷⁶

5. Military

Rating: Weak

The ISF is growing in numbers – the Iraqi army now boasts a membership of 152,000¹¹⁷⁷ - but several obstacles inhibit the ISF from becoming operational actors in providing security to the Iraqi state. For one, improvements in training have been countered by the recent escalation of violence in Iraq's southern and northern areas; according to Brig. Gen. Ali Furaiji, commanding officer of the Iraqi army's 4th Brigade, 6th Division, "The thing is, our soldiers do not get much training because they're always out on the streets."¹¹⁷⁸ Neither are they as fully equipped as American soldiers. Ultimately, the realities and demands of a war situation have prevented a thorough and proper training

¹¹⁷⁴“Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction Quarterly Report,” *Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction*, 1/30/2008.

¹¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

process. Moreover, citing the ISF's lack of key personnel, equipment, weaponry, and logistical capabilities, Abdul Qadir, the Iraqi Defense Minister, discouragingly declared in mid-January that Iraq could neither assume full responsibility for internal security until 2012, nor defend its borders until 2018.¹¹⁷⁹ The U.S. corroborated this point when it decided to participate in Prime Minister al-Maliki's planned offensive against terrorists in Mosul, after initially subscribing to a hands-off policy.

In spite of these setbacks, according to Brig. Gen. Robin Swan, the commander of the Military Assistance Training Team, the Iraqi army "has come a long way since September."¹¹⁸⁰

¹¹⁷⁹ "Minister Sees Need for U.S. Help in Iraq Until 2018" *The New York Times*, 1/15/2008.

¹¹⁸⁰ "Progress of Iraq's Army, Police Inspires Optimism" *NPR*, 1/10/2008.

February 2008
12 Indicators

1. Mounting Demographic Pressures

Rating: 9

Iraqis continue to suffer from a lack of access to basic life sustaining resources such as food and water. Four million Iraqis – approximately 15 percent of the Iraqi population – are struggling to feed themselves.¹¹⁸¹ If the Public Distribution System (PDS), which is responsible for providing Iraqis with basic food items (and essential non-food household items such as detergent), does not effectively distribute food rations, the United Nations World Food Program (WFP) predicts that another 4.3 million Iraqis, or a total of 8.3 million Iraqis (approximately 31 percent), would be facing food insecurity.¹¹⁸² Such a prediction carries some weight as, currently, the PDS is not functioning up to par (discussed in Indicator #8). Water scarcity is widespread, and an estimated 11 million Iraqis – approximately 40 percent of the Iraqi population – do not have access to safe water.¹¹⁸³ In some instances, the inaccessibility has contributed to the spread of diseases. Such is the case in Qadisiyah province where limited access to clean water has resulted in 275 registered cases of Leishmaniasis disease. The Leishmaniasis disease can develop into either Cutaneous Leishmaniasis (“Baghdad Boil Disease”) or Visceral Leishmaniasis (“Black Fever”).¹¹⁸⁴ Cutaneous Leishmaniasis does not cause death, but it does, however, give victims potentially severe skin sores. Visceral Leishmaniasis, on the other hand, attacks the body’s internal organs and can therefore be fatal. Out of the 275 registered incidences of Leishmaniasis in the Qadisiyah province 212 were diagnosed with Cutaneous Leishmaniasis and the remaining 63 had the potentially fatal Visceral Leishmaniasis.

The previous report focused on how the continuing return of Iraqi refugees and IDPs has created housing pressures. A recent study conducted by the Ministry of Displacement and Migration of Iraq and the International Organization for Migration, however, is reporting that in January, 89 percent of returnees have been able to reclaim their original houses,¹¹⁸⁵ albeit 43 percent of all returnees, however, said that they were living in damaged houses.

While refuting housing leads to a mounting demographic pressure, the same report does note that returning refugees and IDPs are lacking access to other key life-sustaining resources. According to the same source, the top five immediate needs of refugee

¹¹⁸¹ “Iraq: International Federation Launches Appeal to Assist Nearly One Million Socially Vulnerable and Handicapped People” *Reliefweb*, 2/12/2008.

¹¹⁸² “Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis in Iraq” *United Nations World Food Program, Iraq Country Office*, 2/13/2008.

¹¹⁸³ “Iraq: International Federation Launches Appeal to Assist Nearly One Million Socially Vulnerable and Handicapped People” *Reliefweb*, 2/12/2008.

¹¹⁸⁴ “Iraq: Leishmaniasis Continues to Spread in Southern Province” *IRIN*, 2/18/2008.

¹¹⁸⁵ “Returnee Monitoring and Needs Assessments” *Ministry of Displacement and Migration of Iraq & International Organization for Migration*, 1/2008

families are: Health (84 percent), sanitation (83 percent), hygiene (63 percent), fuel (47 percent), food and non-food items (43 percent).¹¹⁸⁶

2. Massive Movement of Refugees or IDPs

Rating: 9

Iraq's IDPs and refugees are continuing to return home in February. According to a study conducted by the Ministry of Displacement and Migration of Iraq & the International Organization for Migration, contrary to general belief, improvements in security is a major reason why Iraqi refugees and IDPs return home: 45 percent of returnees surveyed cited improved security in their home areas as a reason for their return, 44 percent cited improved security as well as severe displacement conditions as reasons.¹¹⁸⁷

Small batches of returnees are returning to Iraq involuntarily. Sweden, a country that has taken in more Iraqi refugees than any other country in the European Union,¹¹⁸⁸ has recently signed a deal with Iraq to embark upon the forced deportation of approximately 400 rejected Iraqi asylum-seekers.¹¹⁸⁹

Some of the harsh restrictions Iraqi refugees have had to face in host countries have been eased up on in the month of February. The Lebanese government has decided to legally recognize Iraqis' refugee status, allowing Iraqi refugees to hold residency and work permits. In addition, the Lebanese government has also chosen to release several Iraqis held in detention on account of their 'illegal immigrant' status.¹¹⁹⁰ Likewise, Jordan has waived visa fines for those considering returning to Iraq, and for those desiring to stay in Jordan, the kingdom has reduced visa fines by 50 percent. The waiver has been instituted with the intention of encouraging Iraqis to either return home or to obtain legal residency.¹¹⁹¹ The amnesty, however, has only been granted for the period of February 17 to March 17.¹¹⁹²

For Jordan, relaxing some restrictions seems ironic as Iraqi refugees place a huge burden to the country. According to Taysir Nueimi, Jordan's Minister of Education, Iraqi children have caused "massive" financial pressure on the government-funded Jordanian schools. Due to international pressure, Jordan is allowing all Iraqi refugee children to attend the public school system.¹¹⁹³ Overall, Iraqi refugees have cost Jordan more than US\$ 2 billion, forcing Jordan to appeal, once again, for international assistance.¹¹⁹⁴

¹¹⁸⁶ "Returnee Monitoring and Needs Assessments" *Ministry of Displacement and Migration of Iraq & International Organization for Migration*, 1/2008

¹¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸⁸ "Sweden, Iraq Sign Deal on Returning Refugees" *Reuters*, 2/18/2008.

¹¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹⁰ "Lebanon: UNHCR Welcomes Move to Ease Plight of Iraqi Asylum-Seekers" *IRIN*, 2/21/2008.

¹¹⁹¹ "JORDAN: Iraqi government calls for refugee visa fine waiver" *IRIN*, 2/7/2008.

¹¹⁹² "Iraq: Minister Wants Much More Funding for Power Sector" *IRIN*, 2/21/2008.

¹¹⁹³ "Jordan: Schools Creaking Under Burden of 24,000 Iraqi Students" *IRIN*, 2/13/2008.

¹¹⁹⁴ "UN Says Syria, Jordan Need More Help With Iraqi Influx" *AFP*, 2/18/2008.

The conditions of Iraqi refugees in Jordan are nowhere near perfect. Many illegal Iraqis have chosen *not* to take advantage of the Jordanian offer of Amnesty¹¹⁹⁵ - in effect opting to endure the dismal status quo. Moreover, regardless of Jordan's choice to increase access to its schools, only 24,000 Iraqis have enrolled, a figure considered "extremely low" by UN officials who were expecting close to 50,000 new enrollees.¹¹⁹⁶ This can be explained by the fact that Jordan upholds a statute that any student missing more than three years of school is forbidden from enrolling in Jordan's public schools.¹¹⁹⁷

The problems confronting Iraqi refugees are not limited to education and residency; difficulties regarding health and access to food also make up the harsh conditions in host countries. In Egypt, stress has caused several Iraqi refugees to suffer from heart disease and diabetes. Mental disorders such as post-traumatic stress syndrome are also widespread. According to Abeer Etefa, a UNHCR spokesperson, Iraqi refugees have a higher rate of medical problems than any other refugee population.¹¹⁹⁸ Indeed, some ailments such as congenital diseases, which are very rare among other refugee populations, are burgeoning more frequently in the Iraqi refugee population.¹¹⁹⁹ Presently, the food-relief on which a great number of refugees are dependent is endangered. The WFP, which has provided essential food and non-food items to 145,000 refugees to date, has recently conceded that it cannot carry out the next round of food distribution to vulnerable Iraqi refugees unless it receives new funds immediately,¹²⁰⁰ This is a serious blow to those refugees who are already living at subsistence levels.

Currently, there has been a push to induce the Iraqi government to increase efforts in dealing with Iraq's refugee crisis. Abdul-Khaliq Zankana, the chairman of Iraq's Displacement and Migration Committee, has called for the Iraqi government to divert three to five percent of Iraq's oil proceeds to alleviating refugee matters.¹²⁰¹ Iraq's government, however, has yet to heed the call.

3. Legacy of Vengeance-Seeking Group Grievance or Group Paranoia **Rating: 8**

Iraq's parliament approved three new laws this February: the Provincial Powers Law, the Amnesty Law and the 2008 Budget. The Provincial Powers law establishes local elections to be held before October 1 of this year and will define the relationship between Iraq's provinces and the central government. This law is predicted to enlarge the sphere of public participation in the political process, especially from Sunni Arabs.¹²⁰² The

¹¹⁹⁵ "Jordan: Visa Fine Waiver Not Enough to Lure Iraqis Home" *IRIN*, 2/21/2008.

¹¹⁹⁶ "Education Week: Jordan Opens Schools to Iraqis, but Not All Come" *Reliefweb*, 2/5/2008.

¹¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹⁸ "Egypt: High Rates of Trauma, Sickness Among Iraqi Refugees" *Reliefweb*, 2/27/2008.

¹¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰⁰ "WFP, UNHCR Boost Assistance to Iraqi Refugees in Syria Amid Lack of Funds" *Reliefweb*, 2/10/2008.

¹²⁰¹ "MP Wants Oil Funds for Refugee Crisis" *UPI*, 2/11/2008.

¹²⁰² "Iraq Provincial Power Law" *Reuters*, 2/27/2008.

Amnesty law will determine amnesty eligibility for Iraqis held in detention, regardless of whether they have been brought to trial or not.¹²⁰³ Lastly, the 2008 budget will increase Iraq's current spending patterns. Specifically, it proposes a 17 percent increase in spending relative to last year's budget, a 23 percent increase in security expenditures, and a 50 percent increase in funds allocated to 15 Iraqi provinces.¹²⁰⁴

Even though each of the laws were fashioned so as to accommodate each of Iraq's three major groups (Shiites, Sunnis, Kurds)¹²⁰⁵ - the provincial law satisfied the Shiites who had been persistently pushing for provincial elections; the amnesty law satisfied Sunnis, as Iraq's detainees are largely Sunni; and the 2008 budget satisfied the Kurds, as the budget allocated 17 percent of the nation's budget to the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG)¹²⁰⁶ - there were still difficulties in getting parliament to pass the three legislations. Indeed, during the process, the Kurds actually declared their intent withdrawal from the National Unity Government if the national budget was not approved.¹²⁰⁷ Citing a rejection of a measure that would give power over the provincial governors to the prime minister with parliamentary approval,¹²⁰⁸ several Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI) members and their Kurdish allies walked out of parliament during the drafting of the Provincial Powers law. The walkout left only 194 members of Iraq's 275-seat parliament to vote on the draft law,¹²⁰⁹ prompting many to question the claims that the passage of the Provincial Powers law exhibited real reconciliation. Ultimately, the tactic of accommodating each group through different laws actually hardened Iraq's already coagulated sectarianism. To be sure, speaking on the tactic of 'packaging' the three laws, Mahmoud Othman, an independent Kurdish legislator, observed: "There's no negotiating with faith and trust between the blocs... They are afraid to pass one law before the other. They fear each other."¹²¹⁰ The legislations are now awaiting approval from the Presidency Council in order to be enacted as official laws.

Despite Sunni Iraqi Vice President Tariq al-Hashimi's appeals to prevent the final approval of the Baathist legislation,¹²¹¹ it passed by Iraq's Parliament in January, and has officially turned into law. The mixed sentiment attached to the law, particularly the fear that another Sunni purge will once again transpire, still affects the perceptions of the law.

Another legislative issue affected by sectarian legacies is Article 140 of the Iraqi Constitution, or, the Referendum on Kirkuk. Four months after the proposed referendum was to take place, the decision on Kirkuk has yet to be settled. In fact, in February, several Kurds have started to demand a return of their properties, properties that were

¹²⁰³ "One Year Later: Major Gains in Iraq Since February 2007" *GOP.com*, 2/22/2008.

¹²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰⁵ "Iraqi Pass 3 Key Bills, Pleasing All Parties" *The Washington Post*, 2/14/2008.

¹²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰⁷ "Kurds Say to Leave Government if Demands not Met" *Azzaman*, 2/6/2008.

¹²⁰⁸ "Iraqi Legislators Walk Out of Parliament Session Over US-backed Provincial Powers Law" *The Associated Press*, 2/7/2008.

¹²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²¹⁰ "Iraqis Pass 3 Key Bills, Pleasing All Parties" *The Washington Post*, 2/14/2008.

¹²¹¹ "Sunnis Say Law Opening Jobs to Ex-Baathist Would Do More Harm Than Good" *The New York Times*, 2/3/2008.

plundered during Saddam Hussein's Arabization program.¹²¹² The Kurdish region has cited the Arabization program as justification for their claim to Kirkuk.

Kurdish leaders are standing determinedly in their demands for a referendum, deciding who has the right to Kirkuk once and for all. Iraq's Turkomen who originally supported a referendum now stand united in their rejection of one.¹²¹³ Arabs, the other vested interest, desire a negotiated settlement.¹²¹⁴

On a positive note, according to the U.S. military, ethno-sectarian violence has significantly decreased. This month, ethno-sectarian deaths number less than 40, a 95 percent decrease from numbers a year ago. In February 2007, ethno-sectarian deaths amounted to a staggering 800.¹²¹⁵

4. Chronic and Sustained Human Flight **Rating: 9**

Threats and attacks against Iraq's professional class continue to influence their movement patterns. Many Iraqi law enforcement workers under the supervision of the Major Crimes Task Force (discussed in Indicator #9) are sacrificing their own and their families' lives to develop and enforce the rule of law since several of their cases deal with militias or powerful governmental figures.¹²¹⁶ Qualified technocrats¹²¹⁷ and medical professionals also fled Iraq, and in some areas, students and professors have once again stopped attending classes.¹²¹⁸ Furthermore, two CBS journalists have been kidnapped in Basra and are yet to be found.¹²¹⁹ This confirms the area's title as one of the most dangerous areas in the world for journalists,

The absence of important professionals – and therefore expertise –has affected the development of Iraqi society. For one, the lack of qualified technocrats has made it difficult for Iraq not only to improve its oil production, but to spend oil profits.¹²²⁰ In a similar vein, the lack of medical professionals has severely challenged the development of an effective and much-needed health care system in Iraq (discussed in Indicator #8).

5. Uneven Economic Development Along Group Lines **Rating: 9**

¹²¹² "Time for Kurdish Realism" *The Washington Post*, 2/9/2008.

¹²¹³ "Turkish Planes Strike Iraqi Kurdistan" *The New York Times*, 2/5/2008.

¹²¹⁴ "Top Kurd: A Kirkuk Cote for Automatic KRG" *UPI*, 2/6/2008.

¹²¹⁵ "One Year Later: Major Gains in Iraq Since February 2007" *GOP.com*, 2/22/2008.

¹²¹⁶ "U.S. Struggles to Tutor Iraqis in Rule of Law" *The New York Times*, 2/16/2008.

¹²¹⁷ "Analysis: Iraq Oil Deals Drawing Near" *UPI*, 2/1/2008.

¹²¹⁸ "IRAQ: Road to Learning Can Be Dangerous" *IPS*, 2/11/2008.

¹²¹⁹ "CBS Workers Seized; Car Bombers Target US-Backed Sunnis" *The Washington Post*, 2/12/2008.

¹²²⁰ "Analysis: Iraq Oil Deals Drawing Near" *UPI*, 2/1/2008.

Uneven development, especially in the relative opulence of the Shiites and the Kurds saturate the image of Iraq on the ground. Although the KRG has declared that it will continue to sign contracts with oil companies,¹²²¹ the Iraqi Oil Ministry is increasing its reprimands against the Kurds, thereby increasingly thwarting Kurdish oil advantages. The Iraqi government has blacklisted several more oil companies for possessing oil deals with the KRG, and it has also halted oil exports to others (discussed in Indicator #6).

Aside from the oil sector, the Kurds have been developing their own economy in several other critical ways. Noting that “While the development of our oil and gas sector will be critical for our sustained development... the Kurdistan region's economy is not solely dependent on oil and gas,” Qubad Talabani, the KRG's representative to the United States, has announced that the KRG is taking steps to attract foreign investment in their economy. Intended to develop the KRG's own private sector, a stimulus to eliminate poverty and ensure sustainable economic growth,¹²²² the move will undoubtedly carve out a gap between the development of the KRG and the rest of Iraq. In another move exacerbating the uneven development between the Kurdish region and Iraq proper, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) is reporting that the Kurds have been accumulating millions of dollars in duties on goods entering Iraq.¹²²³ The Kurds have not sent this money to Baghdad, nor do they share accounts for the income.¹²²⁴ As such, the benefits are being directly and solely reaped by the KRG.

While electricity shortages plague cities across the country of Iraq, Najaf and Karbala will soon see improvement. Iran has broken ground on its project to build a power station that will provide 320 megawatts to the two cities. In addition to the problem of electricity, the cities have complained that the shortages have posed a challenge to religious tourism.¹²²⁵ Thus, alleviating the electricity shortages would place these southern Shiite cities on an economic upturn.

6. Sharp and/or Severe Economic Decline **Rating: 8**

Largely due to increased interest by foreign investors, Iraq's oil sector remains on an upward path for the month of February. The ongoing talks between the Iraqi Oil Ministry and oil majors including Shell, ExxonMobil, BP, Chevron, and Total who are interested in developing Iraq's oil and gas fields are proceeding this month. Although the actual signing of Technical Service Agreements (TSAs) – agreements that will, in exchange for developing the capacity and the production of Iraq's major oil fields,¹²²⁶ award companies with two-year contracts and a favored status in bidding rounds for longer-term

¹²²¹ “Kurdistan Gov't Defies Baghdad Over Oil Deals” *Arabbusiness.com*, 2/6/2008.

¹²²² “Iraqi Kurds Court Investors, Not Just Oil” *UPI*, 2/11/2008.

¹²²³ “Kurds' Power Wanes as Arab Anger Rises” *The New York Times*, 2/1/2008.

¹²²⁴ *Ibid.*

¹²²⁵ “Iran Grant to Provide Najaf Electricity” *UPI*, 2/11/2008.

¹²²⁶ “Analysis: Iraq Oil Deals Drawing Near” *UPI*, 2/1/2008.

contracts for some of Iraq's largest producing fields¹²²⁷ - have been postponed due to the "political turmoil" in Baghdad (discussed in Indicator #10),¹²²⁸ Hussein al-Shahristani, Iraq's Oil Minister, has confidently remarked that the TSAs will indeed be signed in March.¹²²⁹ If signed, the TSAs would add 500,000 bpd to Iraq's yearly oil output.¹²³⁰ These contracts would be the first major deals signed in the oil and gas sector since the U.S.-led invasion.¹²³¹

Several other foreign companies are participating – or seeking to participate – in Iraq's oil sector. As of this month, more than 70 companies have registered to compete for oil extraction and service contracts to develop Iraq's oil reserves.¹²³² Second, Ireland's Petrel Resources, an oil company that signed a 2005 agreement with Iraq to provide training and technology for the Marjan oil field to Iraq's Oil Ministry, has been granted a one-year extension. In addition to this project, the company has not only begun developing the Subba and Luhais fields in Southern Iraq, but has also registered for future deals in Iraq.¹²³³ Thirdly, largely seen as a return favor for forgiving US\$ 12 billion of the US\$ 12.9 billion Iraq owed to Russia, Iraq has issued a new memorandum with Russia's LUKOIL. The memorandum may potentially pave the way for Russia to develop Iraq's West Qurna oil field.¹²³⁴

Even though the Iraqi government has consistently recounted its desperate needs for foreign investment, it has placed some restrictions on companies wishing to access Iraq's lucrative oil industry. Indeed, since blacklisting South Korea's SK Energy in January, the Iraqi government has moved to blacklist even more companies that have signed oil deals with the KRG. Because of their two production-sharing contracts with the Kurds, the Iraqi government has halted oil exports to OMV, an Austrian oil company and the leading oil and gas group in central Europe.¹²³⁵ The United Arab Emirates' Crescent, Canada's Western Oil Sands and Heritage Oil, and India's Reliance Industries – companies also possessing oil contracts with the KRG – have also been informed of their exclusion from any future deals with Iraq's Oil Ministry proper.¹²³⁶

Generally speaking, there is progress in foreign investment. But this progress has a flipside. Fearing an increased share of oil profits moving from Iraq into the hands of foreign companies, together with the absence of the Iraqi National Oil Company which ensures that the oil sector is being nationally controlled,¹²³⁷ workers in the oil sector may evolve as a significant challenge to the oil sector's progress.

¹²²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²²⁸ Iraq Oil Report, 2/29/2008.

¹²²⁹ "Iraq Says Close to Signing Technical Oil Support Deals" *Reuters*, 2/29/2008.

¹²³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²³¹ "Iraq Readying 'Special' Oil Deals" *UPI*, 2/4/2008.

¹²³² "FACTBOX: Over 70 Firms Register for Iraq Oil Contracts" *Reuters*, 2/28/2008.

¹²³³ "Petrel Gets Iraq Extension, Ready for Deal" *UPI*, 2/21/2008.

¹²³⁴ LUKOIL Hopes to Tap Iraqi West Qurna in 3-5 Yrs" *Reuters*, 2/11/2008.

¹²³⁵ "Iraq Ends Cooperation with Austria OMV Over its Kurdish Oil Deals" *International Herald Tribune*, 2/2/2008.

¹²³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²³⁷ "Analysis: Iraq Oil Deals Drawing Near" *UPI*, 2/1/2008.

Because of the clear interdependence of the two, occurrences in the oil sector cannot be talked about without touching upon the electricity sector. In the month of February, Iraq has experienced widespread blackouts. Currently, the country as a whole is producing less than half – approximately 4,000 megawatts per day - of the 9,500-megawatt minimum Iraqis need.¹²³⁸ Only 1,000 megawatts is being attained in Baghdad, a far cry from the 2,500 megawatts it needs. Similarly, in Diyala, Iraq has been forced to import 150 megawatts per day from Iran to cover the province's needs. In addition to regular attacks, one large factor contributing to the power shortages is Turkey's January decision to stop exporting electricity to Iraq.¹²³⁹ While some say that Turkey's move reflected an essential electricity embargo against the Iraqi Kurds, Turkey rejects this claim, pointing out that the stop in the flow of electricity is a result of energy shortages caused by Iran's refusal to export natural gas to Turkey.¹²⁴⁰

To alleviate these shortages, the Electricity Ministry has requested an allocation of US\$ 4 billion to repair and build new power stations¹²⁴¹ - that is, US\$ 1.5 billion would be allocated to repairing power stations and US\$ 2.5 billion would be allocated to buying new ones.¹²⁴² Furthermore, parallel to the negotiations with oil majors, a major occurrence in the electricity sector this month is the surfacing of talks between Iraqi officials and European Union (EU) commissioners. The EU is seeking to establish a possible energy cooperation agreement with Iraq. As part of the agreement, Iraq would become Europe's primary exporter of gas – currently, Russia is Europe's main electricity provider, but Russia's allocation is criticized for being volatile and politicized¹²⁴³ - and the EU would aid Iraq in developing its electricity sector primarily through re-writing the electricity law and establishing a new electricity framework modeled after Jordan's.¹²⁴⁴

7. Criminalization and/or Delegitimization of the State

Rating: 10

Reactions to difficulties passing the Provincial Powers Law, the Amnesty Law, and the 2008 Budget (discussed in Indicator #3) serves as a window to the relentless delegitimization of the Iraqi government. In the process of passing the legislation, the persistent undercurrent of factionalization influenced Parliament's bumpy passage of the Provincial Powers Law, the Amnesty law, and the 2008 National Budget has illuminated the persistent undercurrent of severe factionalization has instigated skepticism about the actual benefits of any system of governance at all. In this light, Mahmoud al-Mashhadani, Speaker of the Iraqi Parliament, noted, "If the Parliament goes on in this manner, then its usefulness will be doubted...this might lead to the whole collapse of the

¹²³⁸ "Iraq: Minister Wants Much More Funding for Power Sector" *IRIN*, 2/21/2008.

¹²³⁹ "Analysis: Iraqis Without Fuel, Power" *UPI*, 1/22/2008.

¹²⁴⁰ "No Turkish Electricity Embargo on North Iraq" *The New Anatolian*, 2/3/2008.

¹²⁴¹ "Iraq Electric Ministry Wants More Funds" *UPI*, 2/21/2008.

¹²⁴² "Iraq: Minister Wants Much More Funding for Power Sector" *IRIN*, 2/21/2008.

¹²⁴³ "Iraq and Europe Look at Gas Ties" *UPI*, 2/12/2008.

¹²⁴⁴ "Analysis: EU Hungry for Iraq Gas and Oil" *UPI*, 2/8/2008.

state.”¹²⁴⁵ In a similar tone of frustration, expressing the essential ineffectiveness of the Iraqi parliament, Mahmoud Othman, a Kurdish politician, remarked, “Why are we not voting? This is a Parliament. We are supposed to vote on laws. If we don’t, what is the point of being here?”¹²⁴⁶ The factionalization made clear in the process of passing the three new laws has fostered a continued frustration and loss of confidence in the effectiveness and utility of the Iraqi government.

Another factor adding to a loss of confidence in the Iraqi government is the continued presence of challenges to security (discussed in Indicator #8). The two pet market bombings occurring at the beginning of the month have left Iraqis pessimistic in their government’s ability to maintain the decrease in violence achieved by the surge once U.S. troops withdraw.¹²⁴⁷ Indeed, one bystander remarked, “I thought everything was starting to get better but then this happened. I think things are going to get worse. It’s chaos.”¹²⁴⁸

Ironically, these accounts of a loss of confidence in the Iraqi government exist side by side with a relative *increase* in government support. The backlash of Arab solidarity stimulated by the growth of Kurdish power has emerged as a tool for the Iraqi government to build support. So long as the government stands resolutely against the Kurdish ‘threat,’ the newfound wave of Arab solidarity may invoke improved perceptions. Indeed, according to Jaber Habeeb, an independent Shiite Parliament member, “The government got a lot of support when they stood against the exaggerated demands of the Kurds.”¹²⁴⁹

8. Progressive Deterioration of Public Services

Rating: 9

Public services have not been effectively distributed to the Iraqi people as of February. Iraqis still suffer from a lack of access to water, food – due in part to the dysfunctional PDS¹²⁵⁰ - and electricity (discussed in Indicator #1, #6). Generally speaking, Although improved security situation in Iraq continues to be cited in the month of February, U.S. military operations aimed at curbing the activities of Sunni insurgents in Diyala, Kirkuk, and Mosul,¹²⁵¹ and Washington’s admittance that the situation in Northern Iraq has become one of the biggest challenges to the American military demonstrate that violence in Iraq still stubbornly exists.¹²⁵² Further corroborating this viewpoint is Al-Qaeda in Iraq’s (AQI) Ghazil market and Dove market bombings in early February, which have

¹²⁴⁵ “Two CBS News Journalists Abducted in Basra” *The Washington Post*, 2/12/2008.

¹²⁴⁶ “Sunnis Say Law Opening Jobs to Ex-Baathist Would Do More Harm Than Good” *The New York Times*, 2/3/2008.

¹²⁴⁷ “Two Bombings Wreak Carnage in Iraqi Capital” *The New York Times*, 2/2/2008.

¹²⁴⁸ “Pet Bazaar Bombings Kill Dozens in Baghdad” *Online NewsHour*, 2/1/2008.

¹²⁴⁹ “Kurds’ Power Wanes as Arab Anger Rises” *The New York Times*, 2/1/2008.

¹²⁵⁰ “Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis in Iraq: *United Nations World Food Programme, Iraq Country Office*, 2/13/2008.

¹²⁵¹ “Iraqi Insurgent Attacks ‘Kill 14’” *BBC News*, 2/20/2008.

¹²⁵² “N. Iraq Blasts Kill Dozens; Gates Arrived in Baghdad” *The Washington Post*, 2/11/2008.

been designated the deadliest attacks in Baghdad in more than six months.¹²⁵³ Even more telling, attacks on the Green Zone, allegedly by “special groups” (discussed in Indicator #10) have arisen.¹²⁵⁴ These two situations reveal both the persistent violence in Iraq, as well as the indefatigable existence of Sunni insurgents and AQI. Although the Iraqi government – the Iraqi Ministry of the Interior, to be specific - has taken preventive steps for a repeat of the deadly Ghazil and Dove market bombings via detaining street dwellers as they might be vulnerable to exploitation by militant groups as was believed to be the case with the two women carrying out the bombings.¹²⁵⁵ Despite this unconventional means of providing security, the persistent violence and the U.S.’s continued predominance in military offensives against insurgents and terrorists reveals that the Iraqi government has failed, once again, to make constructive strides in improving the security situation in Iraq.

Another public service the Iraqi government is failing to provide is medical care. The medical situation in Iraq is so dire that some have gone so far as to declare that there in fact is no medical system in Iraq at all.¹²⁵⁶ The campaign against Iraqi professionals has driven several Iraqi doctors and other medical specialists out of the country (discussed in Indicator #4). The lack of seasoned medical expertise has paved the way for younger, inexperienced, and badly trained physicians to fill the gap. In addition to the shortage of trained and qualified medical personnel, there is also a shortage in basic supplies needed to operate a hospital including bandages, intravenous saline, medicines, electricity, basic infrastructure, and mechanisms for sanitation.^{1257/1258} Because of the shortages, some are importing expired or counterfeit medicines and circumventing official testing procedures.¹²⁵⁹ Because of these deficiencies, according to Doctors Without Borders, sometimes even going to the hospital may *cause* health concerns. Patients entering Iraqi hospitals, have a 90 percent chance of developing a severe infection. To make matters worse, the chronic perpetuation of sectarian violence is greatly diminishing access to medical assistance. In some areas, gunmen guard hospitals in order to prevent patients from rival sectarian backgrounds from seeking medical aid. The Iraqi government is not addressing the dismal state of Iraq’s medical care system. While not making progress in terms of autonomously decreasing violence as mentioned above, the recently passed 2008 Budget has allocated only US\$ 1.92 billion to the health ministry, which entails only US\$ 22 per citizen.¹²⁶⁰

In Baghdad, an inoperable and inefficient sewerage system, the lack of clean water and power shortages account for the biggest problems.¹²⁶¹ Using imagery to illustrate the appalling state of Baghdad’s sewerage system, a pipe blockage in Baghdad has created a

¹²⁵³ “After Months of Relative Calm, 2 Deadly Blasts Rock Baghdad” *The Washington Post*, 2/2/2008.

¹²⁵⁴ “5 Iraqis Killed as Rockets Hit U.S. Base in Baghdad” *The New York Times*, 2/19/2008.

¹²⁵⁵ “Sunnis Say Law Opening Jobs to Ex-Baathists Would Do More Harm Than Good” *The New York Times*, 2/3/2008.

¹²⁵⁶ “For Broken Iraqis, A Haven of Healing” *The Washington Post*, 2/9/2008.

¹²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵⁸ “Iraq: Iraq’s Health Sector Under Pressure” *IRIN*, 2/26/2008.

¹²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶¹ “Baghdad Drowning in Sewage: Iraqi Official” *AFP*, 2/3/2008.

'lake' of sewage so large that is visible on Google Earth.¹²⁶² As per access to water and electricity in Baghdad – two public services plaguing the rest of the country equally - supply far from meets demand (discussed in Indicator #6, #1, respectively). In terms of electricity, Baghdad lays claim to a 3,000-megawatt deficit.¹²⁶³ In terms of water, power failures and the lack of maintenance has tapered off water supplies to almost half of the six million Iraqis that live in the country's capital.¹²⁶⁴

Reconstruction efforts are trudging along. As oil production remains consistently high, the Iraqi government has received a US\$ 15 billion windfall, which will be diverted towards assisting in the country's reconstruction.¹²⁶⁵ Moreover, the recently passed 2008 National Budget has allocated large shares of funds to improving the provision of some of the deteriorating public services touched upon in this section. In addition to the US\$ 1.92 billion allocated to the health ministry as mentioned above, US\$ 8.85 billion has been granted to the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF); US\$ 1.37 billion has been given to the electricity sector. The influx and allocation of the nation's budget, may not transform into anything beyond mere hope. That is, with the fleeing of technocrats (discussed in Indicator #4); Iraqi ministries have developed yet another self-reinforcing trend of not being able to spend its capital budgets.¹²⁶⁶

Protests have occurred in 18 of Iraq's provinces because of the government's failure to follow through on promises of pension payments for Iraqi widows. Some pension payments, however, have been made, albeit very small. Some worry that the government's failure to accommodate these widows may force these women to cooperate with the insurgency in order to provide money for their children.¹²⁶⁷

9. Suspension or Arbitrary Application of the Rule of Law and Widespread Violation of Human Rights

Rating: 10

Although a properly functioning legal system has yet to take root in Iraq, increased efforts to develop one are proceeding. Currently, coerced confessions, prisoner abuse, corruption, compromised investigations due to security problems, and judges living in fear make up Iraq's beleaguered legal system¹²⁶⁸ In order to reverse these downsides, Iraqis have been provided with extensive training in basic law enforcement procedures. The establishment of the Major Crimes Task Force in Iraq is a case in point. The Major Crimes Task Force is a partnership between the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), investigators from the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, and the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration on the one hand and Iraqi investigators

¹²⁶² *Ibid.*

¹²⁶³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶⁵ "Iraq's Revival Boosted as Oil Production Rises to 2.4m Barrels a day" *The Times*, 2/1/2008.

¹²⁶⁶ "Iraq Ready to 'Special' Oil Deals" *UPI*, 2/4/2008.

¹²⁶⁷ "Little Aid for Iraqi Widows" *The Los Angeles Times*, 2/19/2008.

¹²⁶⁸ "U.S. Struggles to Tutor Iraqis in Rule of Law" *The New York Times*, 2/16/2008.

on the other.¹²⁶⁹ According to James H. Davis, former legal attaché for the FBI in Baghdad, the Major Crimes Task Force has been so effective in their training that the task force is starting to be perceived as “a group you can turn to and know that the investigative work is going to be done properly and fairly, free of sectarian influences.”¹²⁷⁰ Perhaps the one downside to this training is that it is limited to the Green Zone.¹²⁷¹

Despite the perceived optimism created by the Major Crimes Task Force, an examination of the justice system reveals that the legal system has a long way to go before it can truly be dubbed legitimate and effective. Almost half of the 26,000 prisoners currently imprisoned in Iraq are awaiting trial – some have been waiting for years.¹²⁷² Plainly, there are not enough investigative judges, lawyers, and qualified law enforcement officials to accommodate these numbers.¹²⁷³ Moreover, the inefficiencies may also be attributed to the familiar factors of corruption and sectarianism.

Another glaring example of the inadequacies of Iraq’s legal system is the trial of Hakim al-Zamili, a former Deputy Minister of Health, and Brig. Gen. Hamid Hamza Alwan Abbas al-Shamari, a former head of the ministerial security force, was postponed until March 2 as a number of witnesses failed to turn up.¹²⁷⁴ Several occurrences surrounding the trial have further pointed to a dysfunctional legal system rife with sectarianism and partisanship. Indeed, while witnesses and their families have been the victims of intimidation and threats, a judge scheduled to hear the case had reportedly agreed to find the men not guilty before the trial had even commenced. The biased judge, however, was removed from the trial as this information was brought to the attention of the higher-ups. In 2005 and 2006, Al-Zamili and al-Shamari were both accused of permitting Shiite militias to use hospitals and ambulances to kill and kidnap Sunnis. The trial has been touted as a test of the Iraqi judicial system’s impartiality.

10. Security Apparatus Operates as a “State Within a State” **Rating: 10**

Militias continue to wreak havoc in Iraq. In February, numerous militias have been fighting amongst each other for control of the spoils in southern Iraq, including the oil sector, seaport profits, and smuggling operations across the Iranian border. Militia activity in Basra is not limited to this geopolitical struggle however. Militias are also engaging in precluding the growth of a legitimate, efficient, and effective government as they endeavor to murder judicial investigators, politicians, and tribal sheikhs.¹²⁷⁵ In

¹²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷¹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷² “Thousands of New Prisoners Overwhelm Iraqi System” *The New York Times*, 2/14/2008.

¹²⁷³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷⁵ “Ominous Signs Remain in City Run by Iraqis” *The New York Times*, 2/23/2008.

addition, militias are also finding themselves responsible for perpetuating a culture of fear in southern Iraq as at least 100 women in Basra are at the hands of these militias.¹²⁷⁶

One prominent militia to maintain track of this month is Moqtada al-Sadr's Mahdi Army. In spite of the fact that al-Sadr has chosen to extend the cease-fire against ISCI's militant wing the Badr organization, the Mahdi Army remains prepared for action. Indeed, Qais al-Karbalai, a Mahdi Army commander in Karbala, explains that the cease-fire does not in any way detract from the Mahdi Army's active maintenance of power: "It's not like building a holy shrine. It's just a decision.... [if] there's harassment by the Americans and the government...Moqtada can retreat from his pledge and use his army."¹²⁷⁷ In fact, the Mahdi army actually possesses Iranian-backed rogue elements called "special groups," which carry out rocket and mortar attacks against U.S. and Iraqi forces.¹²⁷⁸

In addition to demonstrating the continued vitality of the Mahdi Army, the cease-fire may even bolster the legitimacy of the militia. The cease-fire has provided al-Sadr with the opportunity to purge the 100,000-man militia¹²⁷⁹ - by way of assassination, imprisonment, and excommunication - of those followers responsible for adverse acts such as killing and looting Iraqi civilians.¹²⁸⁰ These acts account for a notable loss of support for the Mahdi Army, its parent faction the Sadr Movement, and al-Sadr himself.¹²⁸¹ In a more positive manner, the Mahdi Army is equally strengthening its legitimacy through advocating for government jobs for Sadr followers.¹²⁸² Al-Sadr's support has been waning due to the Mahdi Army's violence against Iraqi civilians. Interestingly, these efforts to build support fostered by the cease-fire may be simultaneously counteracted by the ceasefire. That is, some Iraqi civilians actually want the cease-fire to end soon because it has, they claim, contributed to a spike in crimes, such as victimization by rival forces, robberies, and car thefts.¹²⁸³

The Sunnis' own essential militia is making its way further down the road of autonomy from their U.S. sponsors to become a clear cut "state within a state." Events in the month of February reveal that while the U.S. is beginning to lose control over the Awakening Councils, the Awakening Councils are tightening and exerting their hold on their newfound power. Indeed, their demands for political accommodation - in Diyala, members are demanding the resignation of the chief, Maj. General Ghanem al-Qureishi, for allegedly operating death squads and torturing Sunnis,¹²⁸⁴ and in Anbar, members are striving to eliminate the Iraqi Islamic Party's hold on the provincial council¹²⁸⁵ - and their demands for basic respect and power - speaking on the jobs program, Khalid Jiyad Abed,

¹²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷⁷ "Sadr Extends Truce in Iraq" *The Washington Post*, 2/23/2008.

¹²⁷⁸ "Iraqi Shiite Cleric Extends Cease-Fire by His Militia" *The New York Times*, 2/23/2008.

¹²⁷⁹ "Sadr's Militia Enforces Cease-Fire With a Deadly Purge" *The Washington Post*, 2/21/2008.

¹²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸¹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸² "Ominous Signs remain in City Run by Iraqis" *The Washington Post*, 2/23/2008.

¹²⁸³ "Sadr's Militia Enforces Cease-Fire With a Deadly Purge" *The Washington Post*, 2/21/2008.

¹²⁸⁴ "Conflicts Deepen Between Local Iraqi Governments and U.S.-Backed Sunni Groups" *The New York Times*, 2/10/2008.

¹²⁸⁵ "In Seized Video, Boys Train to Fight in Iraq, U.S. Says" *The New York Times*, 2/7/2008.

an Awakening Leader in Latfiyah begrudgingly points out: “The Sunnis were always the leaders of the country. Is it reasonable that they are turned into service workers and garbage collectors? Of course we will not accept that”¹²⁸⁶ – all demonstrate the increased autonomy and participation of the Awakening Councils.

U.S. soldiers’ roles in the deaths of several members of the Awakening Council and Sunni civilians throughout the month are one component contributing to this striking backlash. To name a few, in Iskandariya, U.S. soldiers erroneously bombed an undisclosed number of Awakening Council members;¹²⁸⁷ in Jurf al-Sakr, U.S. soldiers killed three members in what they called an act of self-defense;¹²⁸⁸ and in Zaab, U.S. soldiers have been suspected of killing a woman and child.¹²⁸⁹ Consequentially, in Jurf al-Sakr, more than 1,000 Awakening Council members abandoned their posts¹²⁹⁰ and in Zaab, massive protests ensued.¹²⁹¹

Other factors driving the backlash are founded upon increased attacks and problems with receiving salaries. On the first point, attacks against Awakening Council members have increased from 26 in October 2007 to 100 in January 2007.¹²⁹² Because of these attacks, some members have quit and others have gone so far as to disband their units. In one drastic case, Sheik al-Hathem al Suleiman al-Duleimy who was injured in an attack, publicly declared that his militia, many of whom are paid by Washington, would no longer cooperate with the U.S.¹²⁹³ In terms of the second point, in Diyala, the delay in payments to Awakening Council members have compelled many of them to pursue a prolonged strike.¹²⁹⁴ The frustrations facing Awakening Council Members have come to a head in February, paving the way for a greatly empowered Sunni “state within a state.”

11. Rise of Factionalized Elites

Rating: 10

In February, there has been a pronounced lack of confidence in Iraq’s ability to overcome its factionalization. For example, in reference to the still nonexistent oil law, Hussein Shahrastani, Iraq’s Oil Minister, pointed out, “There are differences between the parliamentary blocs and we don’t expect them to be resolved very shortly.”¹²⁹⁵ Similarly, parliament’s rocky passage of the three new laws (discussed in Indicator #3) corroborates the extent of factionalization plaguing Iraq.

¹²⁸⁶ “Sunni Forces Losing Patience with US” *The Washington Post*, 2/28/2008.

¹²⁸⁷ “U.S. Says It Accidentally Killed 9 Iraqi Civilians” *The New York Times*, 2/4/2008.

¹²⁸⁸ “Sunni Forces Losing Patience with US” *The Washington Post*, 2/28/2008.

¹²⁸⁹ “U.S. Forces Accused of Killing Relatives of Iraqi Ally” *The Washington Post*, 2/16/2008.

¹²⁹⁰ “Sunni Forces Losing Patience with US” *The Washington Post*, 2/28/2008.

¹²⁹¹ “U.S. Forces Accused of Killing Relatives of Iraqi Ally” *The Washington Post*, 2/16/2008.

¹²⁹² “Sunni Forces Losing Patience with US” *The Washington Post*, 2/28/2008.

¹²⁹³ “Is Violence on the Rise Again in Iraq?” *McClatchy Washington Bureau*, 2/12/2008

¹²⁹⁴ “Local Police Units Stop Work in Key Iraqi Province” *Reliefweb*, 2/29/2008.

¹²⁹⁵ “Top Iraqi in U.S.: Oil Law Progress a Must” *UPI*, 2/5/2008.

The dilemma of a seemingly institutionalized factionalization in Iraq is further illustrated in the continued creation of new political blocs. In February, a new political bloc called “Arab Bloc for National Dialogue” was established. The bloc was the result of a merger between the Iraqi National Dialogue (INDF) and the Independents bloc. The bloc was created with the intention of opposing sectarianism.¹²⁹⁶

The Kurdish population has accented this factionalization. Turkey’s incursion into Northern Iraq has elucidated the Kurdish region’s image of itself as a de facto *state*. According to *The Washington Post*, Kurdish officials remarked that Turkey’s offensive was a violation of the Kurds’ “sovereignty.”^{1297/1298} Perhaps in a moment of corroboration, responding to the question of whether he respected the Iraqi central government, one Kurdish man remarked, “No...We have a relationship with our prime minister here. Barzani’s our leader now; we don’t have anything to do with Baghdad.”¹²⁹⁹ The Kurds’ salient endeavors to establish a solid and independent power base has, however, served to unite Iraq’s Arab – Sunni and Shiite - population (discussed in Indicator #7).¹³⁰⁰

Despite the pervasiveness of factionalization found in the Iraqi government, some bouts of reconciliation have occurred in the month of February. For example, even though Turkey has been urging the Kurdish government to deal accordingly with the Kurdish Workers’ Party (PKK), the KRG has decided not to confront the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) in order to avoid an intra-Kurdish conflict.¹³⁰¹ Moreover, in a move that Prime Minister al-Maliki has designated as promoting national reconciliation, al-Maliki has proposed the dismissal of nearly all of Iraq’s ministers. Additionally, al-Maliki has also been advocating the idea of restricting the selection of ministers affiliated with political parties and instead placing the appointment of ministers solely in the hands of the Prime Minister.¹³⁰²

12. Intervention of Other States or External Political Actors

Rating: 10

After months of bombing Northern Iraq, Turkey has led an incursion of about 500 to 1,000 soldiers¹³⁰³ across its border with Iraq. According to some Peshmerga soldiers, Turkey has targeted Kurdish civilians,¹³⁰⁴ an objective far from the original purposes of eliminating the PKK.

¹²⁹⁶ “Secular Leader Announced New Bloc in Iraq’s Parliament” *Xinhua*, 2/4/2008.

¹²⁹⁷ “Turkey Send Soldiers into N. Iraq” *The Washington Post*, 2/23/2008.

¹²⁹⁸ “Kurdish Soldiers in Iraq Caught Between Competing Allegiances” *The Washington Post*, 2/24/2008.

¹²⁹⁹ “Kurdistan: A State in the Making?” *BBC News*, 2/12/2008.

¹³⁰⁰ “Kurds’ Power Wanes as Arab Anger Rises” *The New York Times*, 2/1/2008.

¹³⁰¹ “Turkey Send Soldiers into N. Iraq” *The Washington Post*, 2/23/2008.

¹³⁰² “Despite Problems, Iraqi Leader Boasts of Success:” *The Washington Post*, 2/29/2008.

¹³⁰³ “Turkey Send Soldiers into N. Iraq” *The Washington Post*, 2/23/2008.

¹³⁰⁴ “Kurdish Soldiers in Iraq Caught Between Competing Allegiances” *The Washington Post*, 2/23/2008.

As per Turkey's future role in Iraq, Vecdi Gonul, Turkey's Defense Minister, noted: "Turkey will remain in northern Iraq as long as necessary...There is no need for us to stay there after we finish the terrorist infrastructure...We have no intention to interfere in [Iraq's] domestic politics, no intention to occupy any area."¹³⁰⁵

The KRG has vowed to defend their people in the face of a Turkish advancement.¹³⁰⁶

Exacerbating the conflict between Turkey and Iraq, Washington has supported Turkey's invasion of northern Iraq. Ironically, however, the U.S. has simultaneously pointed out that any resulting destabilization in Iraq would be unacceptable. Yet words have not been the only form of support that the U.S. has provided Turkey in its assault against northern Iraq. In particular, the U.S. military has been sharing intelligence with Turkey,¹³⁰⁷ information that has facilitated and encouraged Turkey's aggression. In late February, however, Robert Gates, U.S. Secretary of Defense, urged Turkish leaders to leave northern Iraq by mid-March.

In addition to supporting the Turkish invasion, the U.S. has also been involved in Iraq's three most prominent and substantial "wars." First, the U.S. is still battling against the resurgent Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) forces, a battle that has been dubbed by Washington as "going well."¹³⁰⁸ Second, even though many have joined and continue to join Awakening Councils, U.S. forces are also engaged in operations against Iraq's Sunni insurgency.¹³⁰⁹ Lastly, in what has been deemed the "most vexing" of the three wars, the U.S. has also been battling with extremist Shiite militias, some of which are believed to have Iranian support. These Shiite militias have been responsible for more than two-thirds of U.S. casualties.¹³¹⁰ The U.S. military is confident that they can reduce these numbers – if "U.S. troops [are] living and patrolling" in respective neighborhoods.¹³¹¹

The U.S.'s comprehensive involvement in Iraq raises the important question of withdrawal. Although concrete plans have yet to be made regarding U.S. troop withdrawals, Robert Gates, U.S. Secretary of Defense, has publicly favored the idea of the number of troops to be reduced to approximately 130,000 soldiers. U.S. commanders on the other hand, however, are reluctant to withdraw troops as they perceive such withdrawals to be a catalyst for a "wholesale" withdrawal of American troops.¹³¹²

Whether troop withdrawals occur or not, the U.S.'s UN mandate is ending soon. Aware of this fact, the U.S. has attempted to reach a bilateral agreement with Iraq, the only means beyond the mandate by which the U.S. can maintain its presence in Iraq. If the U.S. and Iraq cannot secure a bilateral agreement by the end of 2008, Iraqi Ambassador

¹³⁰⁵ "Will an Extended Turkish Offensive Further Destabilize Iraq?" *The Christian Science Monitor*, 2/29/2008.

¹³⁰⁶ "Kurdish Soldiers in Iraq Caught Between Competing Allegiances" *The Washington Post*, 2/23/2008.

¹³⁰⁷ "Turkey Send Soldiers into N. Iraq" *The Washington Post*, 2/23/2008.

¹³⁰⁸ "In Iraq, Three Wars Engage U.S." *The Washington Post*, 2/3/2008.

¹³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹³¹² "Iraq 'Reverse Surge' Plays on US Minds" *BBC News*, 2/20/2008.

to the United States, Samir Sumaida'ie, noted that Iraq would have to appeal, once again, to the UN Security Council (UNSC)¹³¹³ - the first appeal for an extension of the UN mandate occurred in December 2007, in which the U.S. presence was authorized to stay for one more year.¹³¹⁴ Despite the desire to maintain influence in Iraq, according to Robert Gates, U.S. Secretary of Defense, the U.S. will not commit itself to defending Iraq, and it will not seek permanent bases in the country.¹³¹⁵

The U.S. military has paid US\$ 38 million to the families of Iraqi civilians they have killed since 2004. Most of the money has been distributed in Sunni areas, while some Shiite areas have yet to receive their share of the “condolence payments.”¹³¹⁶

¹³¹³ “Iraq Would Seek Extended UN Mandate if Necessary” *Reuters*, 2/5/2008.

¹³¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³¹⁵ “Gates: US Won’t Promise to Defend Iraq in Accord” *Reuters*, 2/6/2008.

¹³¹⁶ “U.S. Has Paid \$38M to Iraqis it Killed” *UPI*, 2/13/2008.

February 2008
Core Five

1. Police

Rating: Weak

The Iraqi National Police is seriously limited in its organization and effectiveness. The police struggle with corruption, internal divisions and a chronic lack of leadership and discipline. In order to reverse these downsides, Iraqis have been provided with extensive training in basic law enforcement procedures. The establishment of the Major Crimes Task Force in Iraq is a case in point. The Major Crimes Task Force is a partnership between the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), investigators from the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), and the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), on the one hand, and Iraqi investigators on the other.¹³¹⁷ According to James H. Davis, former legal attaché for the FBI in Baghdad, the Major Crimes Task Force has been so effective in their training that the task force is starting to be perceived as “a group you can turn to and know that the investigative work is going to be done properly and fairly, free of sectarian influences.”¹³¹⁸ Perhaps the one downside to this training is that it is limited to the Green Zone.¹³¹⁹

2. Leadership

Rating: Weak

Ethnic-based factions still dominate Iraqi politics. The Kurds, the Sunnis and the Shiites have produced an unprofessional leadership. According to an inside observer, there is no trust and faith between the blocs, as they fear each other.¹³²⁰ Laws pass in packages that cater to all three communities at once to ensure that there is equity in the compromises. In February, three laws were passed in this fashion: Provincial Powers Law, the Amnesty Law and the 2008 Budget. The provincial law establishes local elections to be held before October 1 of this year and will define the relationship between Iraq’s provinces and the central government. This law is predicted to enlarge the sphere of public participation in the political process, especially from Sunni Arabs.¹³²¹ The Amnesty Law will determine amnesty eligibility for Iraqis held in detention, regardless of whether they have been brought to trial or not.¹³²² Lastly, the 2008 budget will increase Iraq’s current spending patterns. Specifically, it proposes a 17 percent increase in spending relative to last year’s budget, a 23 percent increase in security expenditures, and a 50 percent increase in funds allocated to 15 Iraqi provinces.¹³²³

¹³¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹³¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³²⁰ “Iraqis Pass 3 Key Bills, Pleasing All Parties” *The Washington Post*, 2/14/2008.

¹³²¹ “Iraq Provincial Power Law” *Reuters*, 2/27/2008.

¹³²² “One Year Later: Major Gains in Iraq Since February 2007” *GOP.com*, 2/22/2008.

¹³²³ *Ibid.*

The Baathist legislation passed through the Iraqi Parliament in January, and is now officially approved as law. There are mixed feelings in the country about the laws, as some think it might provoke a new Sunni purge.

3. Civil Service

Rating: Poor

There is a continued lack of basic services for the Iraqi People, such as access to clean water, food, shelter, sanitation and education. Water scarcity is especially wide-spread and an estimated 11 million Iraqis – approximately 40 percent of the Iraqi population – do not have access to safe water.¹³²⁴ In some instances, the inaccessibility has contributed to the spread of diseases. In addition, the medical situation in Iraq is so dire that some have gone so far as to declare that there in fact is no medical system in Iraq at all.¹³²⁵ Water and electricity are two public services plaguing the rest of the country equally. In terms of electricity, Baghdad lays claim to a 3,000-megawatt deficit.¹³²⁶ In terms of water, power failures and the lack of maintenance has tapered off water supplies to almost half of the six million Iraqis that live in the country's capital.¹³²⁷

4. Judiciary

Rating: Poor

About half of Iraq's 26,000 prisoners are still awaiting trial, and have been waiting for years.¹³²⁸ Currently, there are simply not enough investigative judges, lawyers, and qualified law enforcement officials to accommodate these numbers.¹³²⁹ The trial of prominent Iraqis from the military and government showed that there is still a lot to be done to strengthen the Iraqi judiciary. This trial demonstrated that sectarianism and partisanship are still major factors in the legal system. Particularly unsettling were the reports of witnesses and their families being the victims of intimidation and threats prior to the trial. It was reported that the judge scheduled to hear the case had agreed to find the men not guilty before the trial had even commenced. The biased judge, however, was removed from the trial as this information was brought to the attention of the higher-ups. The trial has been touted as a test of the Iraqi judicial system's impartiality.

5. Military

Rating: Weak

¹³²⁴ "Iraq: International Federation Launches Appeal to Assist Nearly One Million Socially Vulnerable and Handicapped People" *Reliefweb*, 2/12/2008.

¹³²⁵ "For Broken Iraqis, A Haven of Healing" *The Washington Post*, 2/9/2008.

¹³²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³²⁸ "Thousands of New Prisoners Overwhelm Iraqi System" *The New York Times*, 2/14/2008.

¹³²⁹ *Ibid.*

February represented a new test for the Iraqi military. It continued to grow in size – 180,000 by the end of February¹³³⁰ -- but saw renewed degrees of responsibility as the U.S. troop surge began to draw down. Violence flared up in the northern part of the country and joint operations are now increasingly the responsibility of the ISF¹³³¹. Iraqi forces are now taking the lead on many operations but their ability to coordinate with Kurdish forces remains severely weakened by language barriers and general mistrust¹³³². The pressure will only increase as the ISF begins to take greater responsibility for the Baghdad region.

¹³³⁰ Pentagon Briefing 03/04/2008

¹³³¹ Iraq: Troubled northern regions flare up as Shiites gather in the south' *International Herald Tribune* 2/26/08

¹³³² 'In Mosul a Hopeful Partnership' *Washington Post* 2/24/08

March 2008
12 Indicators

1. Mounting Demographic Pressures

Rating: 10

Demographic pressures continue to mount, though there had been some progress in February due to improvements in security. These proved to be temporary, however. Iraqis are still denied access to basic needs such as food, water, sanitation, health services, and housing. As a result of the government's offensive against the militias in Basra at the end of March, demographic pressures have increased this month. The damage done to the provision of public services and to the general infrastructure in Iraq's second largest city will have a significant impact on the daily lives of Basra's residents for some time.

According to the UN Children's Fund, only 40 percent of children nationwide have access to safe drinking water.¹³³³ Despite the recent success of U.S.-funded projects in providing eight million Iraqis with potable water, access to such resources is, unfortunately, still a luxury for many Iraqis.¹³³⁴ The scarcity of potable water is attributed to many factors, including an outdated system of water pipes that fails to adequately protect water from contaminants, as well as an inconsistent supply of the necessary chemicals for treating and disinfecting water. In particular, the distribution of chlorine, which is essential for the sterilization of drinking water, is often restricted because of its utility in creating bombs and other weapons.¹³³⁵ When the necessary chemicals are available, water-treatment plants still struggle to provide clean water because of old or ill-maintained equipment and an inconsistent electricity supply (see Indicator #8).¹³³⁶ As an alternative, many people, particularly in parts of Baghdad, Salaheddine, Diyala and Nineveh, are pumping untreated water directly from rivers or wells.¹³³⁷ Exacerbating this crisis is the fact that only 17 percent of Iraq's sewage is treated before being discharged into the same rivers and waterways from which residents are drinking. Untreated wastewater from Baghdad alone would fill 370 Olympic swimming pools every day.¹³³⁸ According to UNICEF, only 20 percent of people outside Baghdad have a working sewerage service.¹³³⁹

Waterborne diseases and related malnutrition are affecting many children. During the sanctions (1991-2003), 19 percent of children were suffering from malnutrition; in 2007

¹³³³ "IRAQ: Childhood is Dying" *Inter Press Service*, 03/10/08.

¹³³⁴ "Securing, Stabilizing, and Rebuilding Iraq; Progress Report: Some Gains Made, Updated Strategy Needed" *United States Government Accountability Office*, 06/2008.

¹³³⁵ "Iraq: No Let-Up in the Humanitarian Crisis" *International Committee of the Red Cross*, 03/2008.

¹³³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³³⁸ "Sanitation Becoming a Luxury in Iraq - Restoring Iraq's Essential Social Services Would Improve Daily Life for Millions" *UNICEF*, 03/20/08.

¹³³⁹ "IRAQ: Childhood is Dying" *Inter Press Service*, 03/10/08.

that figure rose to 28 percent.¹³⁴⁰ These are burdens the fledgling Iraqi health system can ill afford to bear.¹³⁴¹ Hospitals are lacking everything from doctors, medicines, supplies and beds. Patients wanting to check their blood pressure must bring their own equipment, and vaccinations for children have become difficult to obtain as preventative medicine falls further down the national list of priorities, laying the groundwork for future crises.¹³⁴²

In the wake of the recent Iraqi military offensive in Basra, a food crisis has arisen, and the 24 hour curfew that is imposed on area residents severely limits NGOs in the region from helping local residents. “Supermarkets have run out of all tinned food, dried food and bottled water while hospitals, especially those in areas where the clashes are intense - like al-Menaa, al-Shafaa and al-Ashaar - are in dire need of blood, medicines and other medical materials,” Mahdi al-Tamimi, head of the city’s human rights office, told IRIN.¹³⁴³ The little food and supplies that are remaining have dramatically increased in price. Basra resident Abdul-Hussein told IRIN in a telephone interview that “food prices have at least doubled while those of other things have increased more than three times, with no bakeries and no fuel stations opened.”¹³⁴⁴

Such instability often encourages resettlement by local populations which further contributes to the housing shortage. Most displaced families have relocated into struggling communities that are also badly affected by violence and insecurity. Approximately 45 percent cannot afford their own homes, and have no choice but to move in with extended families or even occupy public buildings, adding to the strain on local resources.¹³⁴⁵ About 75,000 children are among families living in temporary shelters.¹³⁴⁶

2. Massive Movement of Refugees or IDPs

Rating: 9

The future of Iraqis displaced within and outside Iraq remains uncertain. The fierce fighting that erupted in Basra this month created a temporary increase in the number of Iraqis that are considered internally displaced people (IDP). However, such an increase was not significant enough to increase the indicator rating from February, as many of these displaced persons were able to return to Basra shortly after the cessation of hostilities. The Internally Displaced Persons Working Group reported that while the number of IDPs throughout Iraq remained very high, new displacement was occurring at a lower rate. The working group attributed the lower rate of displacement to, among

¹³⁴⁰ “Carnage and Despair: Iraq Five Year On” *Amnesty International*, 03/17/08

¹³⁴¹ “Sanitation Becoming a Luxury in Iraq - Restoring Iraq’s Essential Social Services Would Improve Daily Life for Millions” *UNICEF*, 03/20/08.

¹³⁴² “A Shortage of Staff, Equipment, and Medical Supplies is Crippling the Local Health-Care System” *Institute for War and Peace Reporting*, 03/10/08.

¹³⁴³ “Iraq: Curfews and Clashes Cripple Baghdad, Basra” *IRIN*, 03/30/08.

¹³⁴⁴ “Iraq: Basra Residents Hit by Surging Food, Fuel Prices” *IRIN*, 03/31/08.

¹³⁴⁵ “UNICEF Humanitarian Action Report 2008” *UNICEF*, 02/12/08.

¹³⁴⁶ “Iraq: Childhood is Dying” *Inter Press Service*, 03/10/08.

other things, the increasing ethnic homogenization within Iraq; the decrease in security incidents in some areas of Baghdad; and restrictions on freedom of movement in many Iraqi provinces.¹³⁴⁷

While internal displacement of Iraqis is slowing down, this is not the case for asylum seekers. According to the United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR), the number of asylum seekers in 2007 rose to 338,000, a 10 percent increase from 2006. The main reason for the increase is attributed to about 45,000 Iraqis who applied for asylum last year, doubling the number of applicants from 2006. Iraqis are the biggest single national group of applicants.¹³⁴⁸

As more Iraqis apply for asylum, some countries that had previously been welcoming large numbers of Iraqi refugees are now accepting fewer. Last year, Sweden received 18,599 asylum applications, but a new court process for screening refugees has led to a significant drop in the number of accepted asylum cases. In 2007, 72 percent of Iraqi asylum applicants were accepted compared with only 27 percent in the early months of 2008.¹³⁴⁹

Not only are Iraqis being denied asylum at an increasing rate, but there is a growing trend of returning failed asylum seekers. The Swedish government, over the severe objections of the UNHCR, plans to work with the Iraqi government to return some 3,000 failed asylum seekers.¹³⁵⁰ Similarly, the British government forcibly returned 50 failed asylum seekers to Iraq, deporting them to Irbil in northern Iraq.¹³⁵¹ Although the British government considers the region to be safe, human rights groups warn that this is not true. Solyman Rashid, who was returned to Iraq after failing to receive asylum in Britain, was killed by a car bomb in Kirkuk in late 2007.¹³⁵²

While some countries are accepting fewer asylum applications, Canada announced that it will accept up to 2,000 refugees from Iraq this year, more than doubling its 2007 total.¹³⁵³ The German Interior Ministry in Berlin reported that although the number of Iraqi asylum seekers continues to rise, they are receiving fewer in comparison to heights reached in recent months. When 1,818 people applied for asylum in Germany in February 2008, it represented almost a 40 percent increase in comparison with February 2007, but also a 24 percent decrease from January 2008.¹³⁵⁴

¹³⁴⁷ "Securing, Stabilizing, and Rebuilding Iraq; Progress Report: Some Gains Made, Updated Strategy Needed" *United States Government Accountability Office*, 06/2008.

¹³⁴⁸ "Iraqis Drive Increase in Asylum Seekers" *International Herald Tribune*, 03/19/08.

¹³⁴⁹ "Sweden Closing its Doors as Refugee Debate Rages: After Years of Welcoming Asylum Seekers With Open Arms, Swedes Have Begun to Question the Changing Nature of Their Society. Now, as the Country Moves to the Right, Iraqis and Somalis are Increasingly Facing Repatriation" *The Observer*, 03/30/08.

¹³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵¹ "Anger as 50 Iraqi Refugees are Sent Back" *The Observer*, 03/30/08.

¹³⁵² *Ibid.*

¹³⁵³ "Canada to Take More Iraqis" *The Globe and Mail*, 03/20/08.

¹³⁵⁴ "Influx of Iraqi Asylum Seekers in Germany Slows Down" *BBC Monitoring Europe*, 03/26/08.

The situation for Iraqi refugees in Lebanon is improving slightly as the Lebanese authorities released 13 Iraqis who had been detained for staying in the country illegally. It is believed that there are still hundreds of Iraqis imprisoned for similar crimes. Catholic Relief Services issued a statement saying that the Catholic charity, Caritas, has negotiated with Lebanese authorities "to release up to 300 Iraqi refugees currently detained because of their illegal immigration status."¹³⁵⁵

There is good news for Iraqi Christians as France plans to take in 500 of them in the coming weeks and months. Although Christians represent less than five percent of the Iraqi population, they represent up to one-third of refugees leaving Iraq.¹³⁵⁶ French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner said he hopes the Iraqis, particularly from the Chaldean Catholic church, will be in France within weeks.¹³⁵⁷ Germany is reportedly considering a similar arrangement.¹³⁵⁸

Although Chile, Brazil and Sudan have offered to accept some of the Palestinian refugees, the UN refugee agency renewed its call for urgent humanitarian assistance for Palestinians living in "inhumane conditions" in two camps on Iraq's border with Syria.¹³⁵⁹ The UNHCR is particularly worried about the health situation of the Palestinians, as 12 refugees have died in the camps in the last 14 months.¹³⁶⁰

The situation for Iraqi refugees in Syria and Jordan remains difficult. As of early this month, approximately 170,000 Iraqi refugees in Syria had registered with UNHCR. Women and girls represent 45 percent of those registered. The number of refugees registering with UNHCR has almost doubled since mid-June 2007 when 90,000 Iraqis were registered.¹³⁶¹ UNHCR has registered 52,758 Iraqi refugees in Jordan and 10,020 in Lebanon as of the end of March.¹³⁶² According to a recent survey by the United Nations Refugee Agency in Syria, 33 percent of Iraqi refugees in Syria said their financial resources will last no more than three months.¹³⁶³ In another survey conducted among an undisclosed number of Iraqi patients in health clinics run by NGOs in Amman, only four percent of respondents said they could afford medical assistance.¹³⁶⁴

A report conducted by the International Organization for Migration on roughly 800 Iraqi refugees in Jordan and Lebanon, based on research conducted between November 2007 and January 2008, found that more than half of those interviewed experienced panic

¹³⁵⁵ "Iraqi Detainees Released in Lebanon" *Associated Press Online*, 03/01/08.

¹³⁵⁶ "Iraq's Christians are Being Martyred" *National Post*, 03/14/08.

¹³⁵⁷ "Minister: France to Take in Nearly 500 Iraqi Christian Refugees" *Associated Press Worldstream*, 03/19/08.

¹³⁵⁸ "Germany May Accept 30,000 Christians Who Fled Iraq" *Reliefweb*, 03/29/08.

¹³⁵⁹ "UNHCR Concerned About Situation of Palestinians on Iraq Border" *States News Service*, 03/18/08.

¹³⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶¹ "Iraq Suffering in Silence: Iraqi Refugees in Syria" *Amnesty International*, 06/15/08.

¹³⁶² Failed Responsibility: Iraqi Refugees in Syria, Jordan and Lebanon *International Crisis Group*, 07/10/08.

¹³⁶³ "Iraqi Refugees in Syria Forced to Extreme Measures to Survive; Barred From Jobs, They Earn Money by Fasting for Others" *The San Francisco Chronicle*, 03/21/08.

¹³⁶⁴ "Jordan: Cost of Health Care a Major Hurdle for Iraqi Refugees" *Reliefweb*, 03/27/08.

attacks, trouble sleeping and other signs of distress.¹³⁶⁵ Of particular concern are the stress, fear and anxiety experienced by children, as few receive the necessary care and support needed for coping with the realities of war.¹³⁶⁶ Such difficulties are compounded by a lack of access to education, presently only 46,642 Iraqis are enrolled in primary and secondary education in Syria.¹³⁶⁷

The UN says more Iraqis continue to leave Iraq than are returning. Immigration officials at al-Tanf on the border of Syria report the daily average of Iraqis entering Syria in late January was more than 1,200, while the daily average crossing back was less than 700.¹³⁶⁸ It is reported that many of the Iraqis who did return ended up leaving again because they did not feel secure.¹³⁶⁹ Still others suggest that many of those returning have no intention of remaining in Iraq and were returning to cash pensions or to check up on property in Iraq.¹³⁷⁰ The International Organization for Migration (IOM) reported that just over 13,000 families have returned to their original homes throughout Iraq (an estimated 78,000 individuals). Of these, 17 percent were returning refugees; and the rest were returning IDPs.¹³⁷¹ Of these 13,000 families, 59 percent returned to homes in Baghdad. The IOM found, however, that for many “return has not brought ... relief from the humanitarian crisis they experienced in displacement. Many have returned to find their houses destroyed and their livelihoods gone. The majority report food, fuel, and non-food items as priority humanitarian needs”.¹³⁷²

The governments of Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt and Saudi Arabia held a second round of discussions, called the “Refugee Working Group,” on the Iraqi refugee crisis. At the meeting, the Iraqi delegation pledged to continue its efforts to encourage the refugees to return home.¹³⁷³ However, in an interview with Al-Jazeera, the UN High Commissioner on Refugees said, “Before we urge people to return, we have to make sure that security prevails and they can return in security and dignity. Based on these criteria, we believe it is too early to encourage people to return to Iraq.”¹³⁷⁴

Trips organized by the Iraqi Government to return refugees from Syria have been stopped. Iraqi diplomats in Syria cite families’ desires to wait until Syrian schools break for summer as the reason for the stoppage. Adnan al-Shourifi, an Iraqi diplomat in Damascus, would not confirm the trip enrollment since they started on November 27,

¹³⁶⁵ “Iraqi Refugees Traumatized, Report Says” *UPI*, 03/04/08.

¹³⁶⁶ “UNICEF Humanitarian Action Report 2008” *UNICEF*, 02/12/08.

¹³⁶⁷ “Iraq Suffering in Silence: Iraqi Refugees in Syria” *Amnesty International*, 06/15/08.

¹³⁶⁸ “Syria: Violence in Iraq Deters Refugees From Returning Home” *Inter Press Service*, 03/03/08.

¹³⁶⁹ “Mission Still Not Accomplished” *The International Herald Tribune*, 03/20/08.

¹³⁷⁰ “Syria: Violence in Iraq Deters Refugees From Returning Home” *Inter Press Service*, 03/03/08.

¹³⁷¹ “Assessment of Iraqi Return”, *International Organization for Migration*, March 2008.

¹³⁷² *Ibid.*

¹³⁷³ “States Hosting Iraqi Nationals Ready to Help with Repatriation” *BBC Monitoring Middle East*, 03/19/08.

¹³⁷⁴ “UN Refugee Chief Says Return of Iraqi Refugees Should be Voluntary” *BBC Monitoring Middle East*, 03/22/08.

although he did say that "the trips will resume when the school year ends later this year."¹³⁷⁵

A UN report on returning Iraqis wrote "46 percent were leaving Syria because they could not afford to stay, 25 percent said they fell victim to a stricter Syrian visa policy, and only 14 percent said they were returning because they had heard about improved security."¹³⁷⁶ As Mohammed Tariq loaded his car for the long drive back to Baghdad he explained, "There is no work for us and we are out of money. We have to go back."¹³⁷⁷

3. Legacy of Vengeance-Seeking Group Grievance or Group Paranoia Rating: 8

Despite improvements in security over the last several months, due in large part to the "surge" strategy, the Sunni Awakening and the cease fire by Al-Sadr, group grievances remain high, and political efforts aimed at reconciliation remain largely stalled. One legislative achievement on this front was the passage of the general amnesty law in February, the implementation of which began on March 2, 2008. While tens of thousands of prisoners have been approved for release, only a limited number have actually been set free as of the end of March.¹³⁷⁸

Group grievances continue to hinder the integration of the Iraqi Security Forces, including divisions within as well as between the main sectarian groups. With the Iraqi government's launch of an offensive in Basra, violence erupted elsewhere in Iraq, particularly in Shiite districts of Baghdad. This sudden upswing in violence raises fears that the security gains made as a result of the "surge" could be lost. Further, the continuation of the cease-fire called by Moqtada al-Sadr is essential to maintaining a lowered level of sectarian violence.¹³⁷⁹ In an effort to stem the violence, a round-the-clock curfew was imposed on Baghdad for several days.¹³⁸⁰ The curfew was lifted throughout most of Baghdad the morning of March 30, but remained in effect in Sadr city and two other Shiite neighborhoods.¹³⁸¹

The increase in violence was a result of the widespread perception that Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki was conducting the offensive in an effort to target a rival Shiite party for political gain prior to provincial elections in the fall. Members of the Badr Brigades, the armed wing of the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI), and the Sadrists have little

¹³⁷⁵ "Flow of Refugees Back Home to Iraq Slows Despite Improvements in Security" *Associated Press Worldstream*, 03/23/08.

¹³⁷⁶ "Syria: Violence in Iraq Deters Refugees From Returning Home" *Inter Press Service*, 03/03/08.

¹³⁷⁷ "Iraqi Refugees in Syria Forced to Extreme Measures to Survive; Barred From Jobs, They Earn Money by Fasting for Others" *The San Francisco Chronicle*, 03/21/08.

¹³⁷⁸ "Securing, Stabilizing, and Rebuilding Iraq; Progress Report: Some Gains Made, Updated Strategy Needed" *United States Government Accountability Office*, 06/2008.

¹³⁷⁹ "Shiite Militias Cling to Basra and Stage Raids" *The New York Times*, 03/30/08.

¹³⁸⁰ "Shiite Leader Al-Sadr Defies Iraq Gov't" *Associated Press Online*, 03/30/08.

¹³⁸¹ "Al-Sadr Truce Calms Iraq's Violence But Weakens US-Backed Premier" *The Associated Press*, 03/31/08.

trust for each other and the animosity between the two sides runs deep. Sadr loyalists curse members of the rival group's armed wing, the Badr Organization, with a play on words, calling them "Ghadr," Arabic for treachery. Mahdi Army fighters accuse the Badr Organization of killing Sunnis in Baghdad and then blaming it on the Sadrists.¹³⁸² Sheik Jalaluddin Saghir, a senior ISCI leader, says of Sadr and his Army that, "They have an overt plan to control the provinces; this is what is happening. They want to take over certain provinces. There is no hiding this." He went on to say, "They will deal with the devil, they will deal with criminal elements if it helps them reach their goals." Speaking about Sadr, another senior official from ISCI coolly said: "You know what they say, once a problem, always a problem."¹³⁸³ As is frequently the case, the real victims of such hostilities are ordinary citizens. "Unfortunately we were expecting one thing but we saw something else," said Ali Hussam, 48, a teacher, who said that, after Saddam Hussein, the people of Basra had hoped for peace. "But unfortunately with the presence of this new government and this democracy that was brought to us by the invader, it made us kill each other." He continued, "And the war is now between us."¹³⁸⁴

Sectarian grudges are also clearly visible as a result of the growing role of the Sons of Iraq, as the Sunnis of the "Awakening" who turned against Al-Qaeda and allied with the U.S. are called. The main point of Sunni-Shiite contention now is the integration of the Sons of Iraq into the Iraqi Security Forces (see Indicator #10). At a recent visit to a Sunni mosque, al-Maliki publicly committed to undertaking such a task, promising that he would "open the doors" for the Sons of Iraq, according to Voices of Iraq.¹³⁸⁵ Al-Maliki went on to say, "I am proud of the efforts of the sons of this neighborhood. We will welcome our sons who are challenging terrorism and injustice. They will have suitable jobs. What they have done is amazing."¹³⁸⁶ In spite of such assurances, real progress has been slow. According to Brig. Gen. Jim Huggins, of the 3,000 Awakening Council recruits he sent to a Shiite leader's office to apply for integration, only 400 names were received. All of those approved were Shiite.¹³⁸⁷

U.S. officials cite the Shiite government as the main obstruction to the integration program and, despite recent efforts, al-Maliki cannot be held above such criticism. Justifying the delay in integration, al-Maliki said in a January interview, "We, as a government, have intelligence information: the Baath party has ordered its members to join the Awakening Councils, and Al-Qaeda has ordered its members to infiltrate the Awakening Councils."¹³⁸⁸ He is not alone in hesitating to embrace the Sons of Iraq, according to Shaykh Harith al-Dari, head of the Sunni Association of Muslim Scholars, "Many of those who have joined the Sahwa Councils have been members of Al-Qaeda. They joined Al-Qaeda in the first place for the sake of money, and when more money

¹³⁸² "The Conflict In Iraq: A Shiite Schism; U.S. is Entangled in Shiite Rivalry; As Baghdad Cracks Down on Sadr's Militia, America's Uneasy Detente With His Loyalists is at Risk." *Los Angeles Times*, 03/30/08.

¹³⁸³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸⁴ "Shiite Militias Cling to Basra and Stage Raids" *The New York Times*, 03/30/08.

¹³⁸⁵ "Maliki 'Opens the Door' for Sons of Iraq" *UPI Energy*, 03/20/08.

¹³⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸⁷ "Uncertainty Facing Iraq's Awakening (Sahwa) Movement" *Turkish Daily News*, 03/31/08.

¹³⁸⁸ "Al-Maliki: I Do Not Object to the Awakening Councils, But I Want to Protect Them from Infiltration" *BBC Monitoring Middle East*, 01/05/08.

became available in a different direction, they rushed to it."¹³⁸⁹ However, it is not just Shiite groups that have concerns about the increasing presence of the Awakening Councils. Sunni Arab politicians working with the government are worried that the Awakening Councils are gaining political power at their expense.¹³⁹⁰ The Awakening Councils, aware of their growing power, recently held a conference to discuss the platform for their newly established political bloc, called the Iraqi Awakening Conference.¹³⁹¹

Because of their political ascent, members of the Awakening Councils are targets for insurgent groups. Sheikh Thaer Ghadhban, a prominent Sunni tribal chief who led an Awakening Council group, was killed by a female suicide bomber at the gate of his home in Iraq's Diyala province.¹³⁹²

In another act of sectarian violence, an attack on a group of Shiite worshippers in the southern Iraqi city of Karbala has left 52 people dead and 75 injured.¹³⁹³ The worshippers had gathered at a sacred historical site about half a mile from the golden domed shrine of Imam Hussein. While an Iraqi police officer and a witness claim the bombing was carried out by a female suicide bomber, Karbala's police chief, Brigadier-General Raed Shakir Jawdat, said that what took place was a bomb explosion, not a suicide blast.¹³⁹⁴

A mass grave containing about 100 bodies has been discovered in a Diyala province. The grave is located in an orchard near al-Bu Tuma, a Sunni village outside Khalis. Khalis is a Shiite town surrounded by Sunni communities and has been the scene of repeated sectarian attacks. The grave is still being investigated, but the U.S. military said the skeletal remains appear to have been there for a long time.¹³⁹⁵

Group grievances regarding the disputed territory of Kirkuk also continue unabated. Recent statements from Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) officials, however, indicate a softening of their hard-line stance in favor of a referendum to decide whether Kirkuk should be integrated into the semi-autonomous region of Kurdistan, or remain part of Iraq.¹³⁹⁶ The policies of Saddam Hussein created the present crisis in Kirkuk because he sought to turn the historically ethnically mixed city into an Arab city. He expelled Kurds from Kirkuk and brought in Arabs from Iraq's south to replace them.¹³⁹⁷ His policy aimed to secure control of the oil fields around the city, which are estimated to have reserves of between 11 billion and 15 billion barrels.¹³⁹⁸ Such historic injustices are

¹³⁸⁹ "Uncertainty Facing Iraq's Awakening (Sahwa) Movement" *Turkish Daily News*, 03/31/08.

¹³⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³⁹¹ "Iraq Awakening Councils Form 'New Political Bloc'" *BBC Monitoring Middle East*, 03/07/08.

¹³⁹² "Bomber Kills Iraqi Tribal Sheikh" *AlJazeera.net*, 03/10/08.

¹³⁹³ "Death Toll from Iraq Shiite Shrine Attack Rises to 52" *Agence France Presse*, 03/18/08.

¹³⁹⁴ "Many Dead in Iraq Shrine City Blast" *AlJazeera.net*, 03/17/08.

¹³⁹⁵ "Mass Grave With About 100 Bodies Discovered in Iraqi Region of Intense Sectarian Fighting" *Associated Press Worldstream*, 03/09/08.

¹³⁹⁶ "Kurds 'Ready for Solution to Issue of Kirkuk' in Iraq" *Agence France Presse*, 03/28/08.

¹³⁹⁷ "Kurds Focused on Claiming Kirkuk" *The Monitor*, 03/07/08.

¹³⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

at the root of Kurdish claims to the region, and its oil wealth. "If Kirkuk is important for others, it is for petrol. But for Kurds, it is for justice. Kirkuk is deep in the heart of the Kurds -- nobody among the Kurds is ready to make a concession on this issue," said Falah Mustafa Bakir, KRG's Head of Foreign Relations.¹³⁹⁹

According to recent statements by Bakir, the KRG is ready to accept a political solution other than a referendum for Kirkuk. "If there is any other solution (than the referendum), the government of Kurdistan is committed to be part of this solution, that could be an option."¹⁴⁰⁰ Bakir went on to say that, "The government of Kurdistan would be ready to accept a political agreement that would satisfy all the parties."¹⁴⁰¹ Some feel that a referendum would not be fair to the Turkoman and Arab minority populations of Kirkuk because, as Kurdish settlers continue to repopulate Kirkuk, the minority communities will have less say in a referendum over the future of the city. According to a politician from the Turkoman community, Iraq's main Kurdish parties are encouraging about 500,000 Kurds to settle in the disputed city ahead of the upcoming elections.¹⁴⁰²

Though such statements are encouraging, the KRG has not ruled out violence. After stating that the KRG wishes to resolve the conflict through legal means, Bakir was asked if violence could erupt should the question of Kirkuk remain unresolved, to which he replied "If it continues like that, unsolved, yes."¹⁴⁰³ Staffan de Mistura, a special representative appointed by the UN to help resolve the Kirkuk dispute, said recently that, "The issue is concrete and urgent because, if the clock ticks too long, it could be a ticking bomb."¹⁴⁰⁴

In addition to its disputes with the government in Baghdad over Kirkuk, the KRG and the central government continue to clash over KRG's negotiated agreements with oil companies and its signing of contracts with at least 30 international investors. Further, the KRG has been working on a new Kurdish constitution that, if approved, would conflict with Iraq's.¹⁴⁰⁵

4. Chronic and Sustained Human Flight

Rating: 9

The Iraqi Health Ministry claims that 628 medical personnel have been killed since 2003, but many believe this to be an underestimate.¹⁴⁰⁶ Estimates within the Iraqi medical community say that 70 percent of Iraq's most qualified doctors have left since 2003, and

¹³⁹⁹ "Kurds 'Ready for Solution to Issue of Kirkuk' in Iraq" *Agence France Presse*, 03/28/08.

¹⁴⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁰² "Iraq's Turkomans Fear Kurdish Takeover of Kirkuk" *Deutsche Presse Agentur*, 03/16/08.

¹⁴⁰³ "Kurds 'Ready for Solution to Issue of Kirkuk' in Iraq"

¹⁴⁰⁴ "Kurds Focused on Claiming Kirkuk" *The Monitor*, 03/07/08.

¹⁴⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁰⁶ "Fleeing Doctors Threaten Iraq's Health; Like South Africa in the '70s, the Best, and Most Needed, Keep Departing" *The Toronto Star*, 03/16/08.

the figure for the highest qualified "consultant" doctors reaches up to 80 percent.¹⁴⁰⁷ Of particular concern is the targeting of male gynecologists, who extremists claim are violating women's privacy.¹⁴⁰⁸ These figures say nothing of the many health professionals who have also been tortured, kidnapped for ransom or blackmailed by their own patients.¹⁴⁰⁹ Despite rising levels of government expenditure on the health system, the brain drain continues unabated.¹⁴¹⁰

The medical community, though hardest hit, is not the only industry suffering from thinning resources. Electricity Minister Karim Waheed told reporters that nearly 1,200 electricity employees have been kidnapped or killed or have fled the country since 2003.¹⁴¹¹

Although Ibrahim al-Srage of the Iraqi Journalists Association says the situation has improved for journalists in recent months, the murder of Iraqi media executive Qassem Abdul Hussein al-Eqabi this month puts the total number of Iraqi journalists killed since the U.S.-led invasion to 272, according to the Iraqi Union of Journalists.¹⁴¹²

A report by Reporters Without Borders found that Iraqi journalists "face the unique danger of being targeted by multiple groups: Sunni and Shiite militias, Al-Qaeda in Iraq, the police and other authorities and U.S.-led forces."¹⁴¹³ In response to the continued risk posed to journalists, Iraq's Ministry of Interior is drawing up a plan to allow journalists to carry guns for self-protection, and the Governor of Najaf has decided to set aside plots of land in the world's largest Shiite cemetery, located in Najaf, where journalists can be buried free of charge.^{1414 1415}

5. Uneven Economic Development Along Group Lines

Rating: 9

The semi-autonomous region of Kurdistan continues to be regarded as the most stable region in Iraq.¹⁴¹⁶ There is generally much greater security in the Kurdish provinces, and

¹⁴⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁰⁸ "Iraq; Country Reports on Humans Rights Practices - 2007" *United States Department of State*, 03/11/08.

¹⁴⁰⁹ "Academic Killed in Northern Iraq" *Deutsche Presse-Agentur*, 03/05/08; "A Shortage of Staff, Equipment, and Medical Supplies is Crippling the Local Health-Care System" *Institute for War and Peace Reporting*, 03/10/08.

¹⁴¹⁰ "Hundreds of Journalists Forced into Exile in Five Years Since Launch of US-Led Invasion of Iraq" *Reporters Without Borders*, 03/20/08

¹⁴¹¹ "A Different Kind of Power Struggle in Iraq" *Los Angeles Times*, 03/24/08.

¹⁴¹² "Hundreds of Journalists Forced into Exile in Five Years Since Launch of US-Led Invasion of Iraq" *Reporters Without Borders*, 03/20/08; "Iraq: Press Watchdog Condemns Killing of Media Executive" *International Federation of Journalists*, 03/14/08.

¹⁴¹³ "Iraqi Journalists Forced Into Exile" *Associated Press Online*, 03/19/08.

¹⁴¹⁴ "Iraq Plans Gun License for Press, Launches Crackdown in South" *Deutsche Presse Agentur*, 03/06/08.

¹⁴¹⁵ "Honouring Journalists!!" *BBC Monitoring Middle East*, 03/08/08.

¹⁴¹⁶ "Stronger Women, Stronger Nations: 2008 Iraq Report; Amplifying the Voices of Women in Iraq" *Women for Women International*, 03/03/08.

the Iraqi Journalists Association says Iraqi Kurdistan offers a safer work environment for journalists in comparison to other areas of Iraq.¹⁴¹⁷ Despite the relative stability and prosperity, Kurdistan remains vulnerable to pressure and even military intervention from neighboring countries, particularly Turkey.¹⁴¹⁸ Although Kurdistan is protected by as many as 150,000 Peshmerga fighters, it has experienced a number of terrorist attacks as outside groups try to prevent the Kurds from further exercising their independence from the central government.¹⁴¹⁹

In response to the autonomous Kurdish regional government's (KRG) approval of seven more oil contracts, Iraq's Oil Minister Hussein Chahristani said at a joint press conference with the Turkish Energy minister, "No contracts signed by any regions in Iraq will be recognized by the government of Iraq. Companies will not be allowed to work on Iraqi territory unless their contract is approved by the central government in Baghdad."¹⁴²⁰ Kurdish Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzan refuted those statements, saying "nobody can cancel contracts signed by Kurdistan."¹⁴²¹ Since passing its own hydrocarbon law in August, the KRG has signed 15 exploration and export contracts with 20 international companies. Such maneuvering frustrates the Baghdad government, as it has yet to pass such legislation and therefore will have difficulty signing exploration and export contacts with foreign oil companies.¹⁴²²

Most of the country's vast petroleum wealth is located in the Kurdish north and the Shiite south, but recently the Oil Ministry opened up bidding to develop a natural gas field in Western Iraq. Development of the Akkas field, located in the former Sunni insurgent stronghold of Anbar province, could boost the economy in Sunni areas and potentially bolster support for the government the region.¹⁴²³

There is no significant change in the Shiite-Sunni disparities, with Shiites being the primary beneficiaries of government services.

6. Sharp and/or Severe Economic Decline

Rating: 8

Hoping to provide a boost to the Iraqi economy, the Iraqi Cabinet recently granted the Oil Ministry permission to sign agreements with foreign oil companies.¹⁴²⁴ Two Russian oil companies, Sroytransgaz and Lukoil, have reached tentative agreements to develop parts of Iraq's oil industry. While Sroytransgaz plans to help rehabilitate an old oil pipe line,

¹⁴¹⁷ "Hundreds of Journalists Forced into Exile in Five Years Since Launch of US-Led Invasion of Iraq" *Reporters Without Borders*, 03/20/08

¹⁴¹⁸ "Carnage and Despair; Iraq Five Years On" *Amnesty International*, 03/17/08.

¹⁴¹⁹ "Stronger Women, Stronger Nations: 2008 Iraq Report; Amplifying the Voices of Women in Iraq" *Women for Women International*, 03/03/08.

¹⁴²⁰ "Iraq Vows to Block Oil Contracts Signed by Kurds" *Agence France Presse*, 03/08/08.

¹⁴²¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴²² *Ibid.*

¹⁴²³ "Iraq Plans Oil, Gas Development Projects" *Associated Press Online*, 03/23/08.

¹⁴²⁴ "Iraqi Local Leaders Get Rare Chance to Air Issues" *Associated Press*, 03/05/08.

Lukoil will develop the West Qurna 2 oil field, believed to contain six billion barrels of reserves.¹⁴²⁵ According to an Oil Ministry official, the Iraqi government is also in negotiations with American and European oil companies to oversee development of five new oil fields in southern and northern Iraq.¹⁴²⁶ Even though Iraq is known to have enormous oil reserves, international oil companies have been hesitant to invest without the legislature's passage of a hydrocarbons law, which would clarify how Iraq plans to develop its oil industry and how profits from that industry will be distributed among the provinces.¹⁴²⁷

Security, although improving, still remains an issue for the Iraqi oil industry. There were two successful attacks on Iraq's oil infrastructure in March. The first attack targeted the pipeline linking Meisan and Basra provinces, and the second blew up part of one of Iraq's two main oil export pipelines near Basra.¹⁴²⁸ Security concerns also surround Basra City, which is Iraq's only port and the avenue through which much of Iraq's oil wealth is exported. Militias taking up residence in the region compete for control of oil exports, siphoning off and selling approximately 300,000 barrels of oil each month.¹⁴²⁹

During Iranian President Ahmadinejad's historic trip to Iraq (see Indicators #8 and #12), he announced that Iran would be offering Iraq a US\$ 1 billion loan. The projects resulting from the loan are to be handled by Iranian companies, using Iranian goods and equipment.¹⁴³⁰ The two nations also signed seven economic and cultural deals, although the details of those arrangements were not revealed.¹⁴³¹

In a further effort to stimulate economic growth, the Iraqi government announced that it was creating 800,000 new jobs in a bid to curb the high unemployment rate which some feel is at least in part fueling the violence.¹⁴³²

7. Criminalization and/or Delegitimization of the State

Rating: 10

In an encouraging sign of civic responsibility, residents of southern Baghdad went to the polls to elect local representatives to liaise with the central government on behalf of the community. According to U.S. officials, establishing links between the central government and the local population is an important part of developing active political

¹⁴²⁵ "Russia's Stroytransgaz in Agreement to Help Rebuild Oil Pipeline Linking Iraq, Syria" *Platts Oilgram News*, 03/27/08.

¹⁴²⁶ "Iraq Paving Way for 5 New Oil Fields" *International Herald Tribune*, 03/06/08.

¹⁴²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁴²⁸ "Oil Export Pipeline Blown Up in Southern Iraq" *Agence France Presse*, 03/27/08; "Gunmen blow up another oil pipeline in southern Iraq" *Associated Press Worldstream*, 03/27/08.

¹⁴²⁹ "Worldview: Basra Blunder; a Move by Iraq's Prime Minister Inflamed Violence in the Port City, was Ill-Timed, and Threatens Surge Gains" *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 03/30/08.

¹⁴³⁰ "Iran Offers \$1 Billion Loan for Iraq Projects" *New York Times*, 03/01/08.

¹⁴³¹ "Iran, Iraq Enhance Energy Ties in Visit" *UPI News*, 03/04/08.

¹⁴³² "Government to Create 800,000 New Jobs" *IraqOilReports.com*, 03/14/08.

processes.¹⁴³³ Such civic engagement is also crucial in establishing a more representative government, which would help to build Iraq's confidence in their government. Such progress is sorely needed in Sunni districts because many Sunnis did not vote in the 2005 provincial elections, which resulted in underrepresentation of Sunnis in some provincial councils. In Baghdad, for example, the population is about 40 percent Sunni, but the council has only one Sunni representative out of 51.¹⁴³⁴

In a less encouraging sign of the times, the Iraqi government recently signed a controversial arms deal that was secretly negotiated with Serbia, side-stepping many advisory committees and anti-corruption safeguards in the process (discussed in Indicator #12).¹⁴³⁵ The US\$ 236 million deal, which was originally worth more than US\$ 800 million before American advisors stepped in, was negotiated by a delegation of 22 high-ranking Iraqi officials led by Defense Minister Abdul Qadir and the Planning Minister, Ali Glahil Baban, without the knowledge of American commanders or many senior Iraqi leaders.¹⁴³⁶

Although no one disputes Iraq's need for military equipment, critics say the deal was not handled in a transparent manner. Such suspicions were fueled when the national contracts committee, a mandatory review agency for all government purchases topping US\$ 50 million, was abolished by al-Maliki at the urging of Mr. Qadir.¹⁴³⁷ In a similar move, al-Maliki chose to override Iraq's Supreme Economic Committee after it expressed concerns that the Serbian deal lacked guarantees of service from the Serbian government.¹⁴³⁸ Many people are uneasy about such maneuvering by Iraqi officials, fearing that opportunities for fraud are emerging. "It struck me as bizarre," said a Western official with knowledge of the security ministries, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he did not want to be seen as criticizing people he was advising. "You can only explain it in two ways: a desire to avoid oversight and a desire to offer opportunities for graft and corruption."¹⁴³⁹ A high-ranking Iraqi government official who spoke on condition of anonymity, for fear of reprisals against him and others in his office, said, "We have no confidence in the Iraqi contracting process."¹⁴⁴⁰

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) was scheduled to draw down the number of inspectors currently monitoring the distribution of billions of dollars in American aid, but has reversed its decision after receiving pressure from Congress. The State Department agreed to retain nine inspectors in Iraq to oversee reconstruction, health and other assistance programs, out of concern for endemic corruption that appears to pervade the Iraqi government ministries.¹⁴⁴¹

¹⁴³³ "Baghdad Suburb Chooses Local Council" *UPI Energy*, 03/10/08.

¹⁴³⁴ "Securing, Stabilizing, and Rebuilding Iraq; Progress Report: Some Gains Made, Updated Strategy Needed" *United States Government Accountability Office*, 06/2008.

¹⁴³⁵ "Secret Iraqi Deal Shows Problems in Arms Orders" *New York Times*, 04/13/08.

¹⁴³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁴³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁴³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁴³⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴¹ "US Inspectors to Remain in Iraq" *Associated Press Online*, 03/04/08.

In another controversial decision, Prime Minister al-Maliki launched a military offensive in late March, called Operation Knights' Charge, which aimed to re-establish the rule of law in Basra, a stronghold of Moqtada al-Sadr and his Mahdi army. To the surprise of the Iraqi forces, the Mahdi army repelled the Iraqi army in several key areas, forcing them to call on the U.S. and British forces for help. "We were surprised by a very strong resistance that made us change our plans," said the Defense Minister.

Despite al-Maliki's active role in the Basra offensive, including flying to Basra to launch the campaign, he had little if anything to do with the key factor that ended the fighting, the cease-fire that was ordered by al-Sadr.¹⁴⁴² Behind al-Sadr's call for peace was a secret meeting between al-Sadr and Iraqi Shiite parliamentarians in the Iranian holy city of Qom. Brig. Gen. Qassem Suleimani, commander of the Quds (Jerusalem) brigades of Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps, was also present at the meeting.¹⁴⁴³ Haider al-Abadi, an Iraqi parliamentarian from the Dawa party, noted that the Iraqi delegation was comprised of members of al-Maliki's own party and that al-Maliki was "only informed" of the meeting. "We asked Iranian officials to help us convince [Sadr] that we were not cracking down on the Sadr group," said an anonymous Iraqi official.¹⁴⁴⁴ In response to al-Sadr's cease-fire renewal one government spokesman said, "A large number of people will listen to Moqtada al-Sadr's call. Life will return to all of Iraq as before."¹⁴⁴⁵

Further undermining al-Maliki's legitimacy is the fact that all of his demands issued prior to the offensive have been ignored. He insisted that the Mahdi army surrender all its weapons in Basra in exchange for cash.¹⁴⁴⁶ He said that there would be no negotiations and that all individuals found to be not in compliance with these orders would be considered outlaws. However, as the smoke clears it appears that all of al-Sadr's men have been allowed to walk away and keep their guns.¹⁴⁴⁷ Further, it appears that al-Sadr even extracted a concession from the government in the form of a guarantee to end "random arrests" of his followers.¹⁴⁴⁸

Al-Sadr's influence, though widespread, is not universal and despite his cease-fire order, some militants on the ground vowed to continue fighting in self-defense. "We will stay in our positions because the government didn't stop the raids and the attacks against the Mahdi Army and their areas," Abu Muamal said. "We are waiting for clear orders from our command and we will not withdraw until the situation is clarified."¹⁴⁴⁹

¹⁴⁴² "Iraqi Leader Humiliated by the Mahdi Army" *The Daily Telegraph*, 03/12/08.

¹⁴⁴³ "After Iranian Mediation, Firebrand Iraqi Cleric Orders Halt to Attacks" *Knight Ridder Washington Bureau*, 03/14/08.

¹⁴⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴⁵ "Iraqi Leader Humiliated by the Mahdi Army" *The Daily Telegraph*, 03/12/08.

¹⁴⁴⁶ "The Conflict in Iraq: Government Offensive in Basra; Surrender Deadline is Extended; With No Responses to an Ultimatum, Maliki Extends a Cash-For-Guns Offer. Curfews Help Keep Violence Down." *The Los Angeles Times*, 03/28/08.

¹⁴⁴⁷ "Iraqi Leader Humiliated by the Mahdi Army" *The Daily Telegraph*, 03/12/08.

¹⁴⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴⁹ "After Iranian Mediation, Firebrand Iraqi Cleric Orders Halt to Attacks" *Knight Ridder Washington Bureau*, 03/14/08.

As disruptive as al-Sadr and his Mahdi Army can be to the regular and routine functioning of the Iraqi state, al-Sadr's biggest bargaining tool is his political clout. He can use his influence to shut down day-to-day life in Iraq, including the closure of government ministries and other essential civil services, like hospitals and schools, bringing Iraq's economy to a halt.¹⁴⁵⁰ According to Baghdad University professor Hashem Hassan, Sadr loyalists "can stop all the daily affairs of government."¹⁴⁵¹

Al-Sadr chose to do just that by calling for a nation-wide strike to protest the government's attacks on his followers. The Health Ministry, which al-Sadr and his army control, took particular heed of al-Sadr's call, as the ministry's hallways were "nearly empty."¹⁴⁵² Many ministries reported low attendance, including the Ministry of Displacement Migration, whose spokesman Haydar al-Mussawi said that 40 percent of his employees did not show up for work.¹⁴⁵³ He noted that while some employees observed the strike out of loyalty to al-Sadr, others feared violence, arguing that the strike "is forcing people to choose between their loyalty to al-Sadr and their loyalty to their country."¹⁴⁵⁴

Observers were particularly concerned about the impact of the strike on the health industry, as al-Sadr and his supporters control approximately 3,000 hospitals and clinics in addition to Kimadia, the state-run company that distributes drugs to hospitals. "They can create chaos whenever they want," says Agron Ferati, country director for the non-profit group International Medical Corps.¹⁴⁵⁵

8. Progressive Deterioration of Public Services

Rating: 9

In response to American criticism of Iraqi government spending, particularly on reconstruction, Iraqi government spokesman Ali al-Dabbagh countered that, "The Iraqi government has achieved clear success in implementing its investment budget in 2007 as part of its efforts in developing public services and expediting reconstruction."¹⁴⁵⁶ Some argue however, that Iraq's lack of spending continues unabated and that it is "due primarily to Baghdad's inability to determine where its money is needed most and how to allocate it efficiently."¹⁴⁵⁷

¹⁴⁵⁰ "Al-Sadr Orders Workers to Strike; Shiite Cleric Hobbles Iraqis' Basic Services" *USA Today*, 03/27/08.

¹⁴⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵² *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵⁶ "Iraqi Government Defends its Expenditure Policy, Claims Success in Offering Services" *Associated Press Worldstream*, 03/12/08.

¹⁴⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) says, "The humanitarian situation in most of the country is among the most critical in the world."¹⁴⁵⁸ The absence of essential public services is one of the key factors contributing to this crisis. Of particular concern is the chronic electricity shortages suffered by all Iraqi citizens. While at a U.S. Military news conference, the civilian spokesmen for the Baghdad security plan, Dr. Tahseen Sheikhly, acknowledged that "electricity in Baghdad is a huge problem." He argued that the government's plan to improve Iraq's weak power structure "needs time."¹⁴⁵⁹

According to an article in the International Herald Tribune, the energy industry does not need more time, but more cooperation, citing a power struggle between the Iraqi Electricity Ministry and the Iraqi Oil Ministry as a major reason for the electricity shortage. Beyond their political struggles, the two ministries are also working towards different ends. In addition to purchasing oil from places like Kuwait, the Electricity Ministry must ask the Oil Ministry for spare oil to run its generating plants.¹⁴⁶⁰ The Oil Ministry, whose profits account for up to 95 percent of the Iraqi Government's income, see any oil not exported as wasted profits and is therefore often reluctant to give the Electricity Industry a sufficient amount of oil.¹⁴⁶¹ According to an American diplomat in Baghdad, "The Oil Ministry has done zero projects to benefit electricity... They couldn't care less."¹⁴⁶² The State Department estimates that on a typical day about 1,500 megawatts of power, or one-third of the country's peak output, are unavailable because the Electricity Ministry cannot get enough fuel.¹⁴⁶³

Further stunting Iraqi's electricity productions is the government's neglect of its own natural gas resources. Natural gas comes out of the ground along with oil, and is usually just burned off, or "flared," to prevent it from exploding.¹⁴⁶⁴ Several studies have determined that if natural gas was harvested just from the southern oil fields and used to generate electricity, it could nearly double Iraq's total electricity capacity.¹⁴⁶⁵ Despite this evidence, the Oil Ministry has balked at every proposal made by the Electricity Ministry in the last five years that endeavored to capture natural gas to be used at the generating plants. However, a glimmer of hope for Iraq's natural gas potential has emerged in the form of an agreement by the government regarding the sharing of its oil resources among the regions, which also calls for the government to start capturing and using natural gas instead of flaring it.¹⁴⁶⁶

In an effort to find a solution to Iraq's electricity crisis, Iraqi Electricity Minister Karim Waheed Hasan is said to be negotiating deals to buy electricity from Iran and Turkey.¹⁴⁶⁷

¹⁴⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵⁹ "Iran to Provide Power to Iraq" *CNN.com* 03/03/08.

¹⁴⁶⁰ "Oil and Electricity Ministries Won't Mix; Iraq's Energy Problem" *International Herald Tribune*, 03/11/08.

¹⁴⁶¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶² *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶⁷ "A Different Kind of Power Struggle in Iraq" *Los Angeles Times*, 03/24/08.

According to Iran's state-run news agency, Iraq will not merely buy electricity from Iran, but also share it. Iranian Deputy Energy Minister Mohammad Ahmadian announced that the two countries will link their power networks through nine border points "in order to supply Iraq with its needed electricity," in what President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad referred to during his historic trip to Iraq as another "extended area of cooperation" between the neighbor states (discussed in Indicators #6 and #12).¹⁴⁶⁸

As evidence that some of Iraq's fuel production is slowly improving, it was announced that a refinery in Najaf has doubled its capacity.¹⁴⁶⁹ This brings the refinery's output to 20,000 barrels per day and should help Iraqi's facing huge fuel shortages. The refinery plans to triple capacity, which would bring output to 30,000 bpd and would allow the refinery to provide fuel to Najaf and neighboring provinces.¹⁴⁷⁰

Such plans provide no immediate relief for Iraqis who are still in desperate need of basic services. Among the most pressing needs of many Iraqis are potable water, food and sanitation services. The little water that is available to Iraqis is frequently contaminated, and garbage piles up in neighborhoods for days or weeks, emitting toxic fumes.¹⁴⁷¹ In some poor areas of Baghdad, militias or Iranian-backed charities have become the main source of propane tanks, food staples, garbage collection and other services that the government should be providing its people. When a reporter asked the official spokesman of the Iraqi government, Ali al-Dabbagh, how the Iraqi government could restore faith in its leaders' promises of services, he hung up the phone, offended at the question.¹⁴⁷² According to Sadiq al-Rikabi, a political adviser to Prime Minister al-Maliki, Iraqis will see any significant improvement in their public services any time soon. He says that, "Anyone who says that solving the services issue will take two or three years is exaggerating. Iraqi cities need years of work and billions of dollars."¹⁴⁷³

9. Suspension or Arbitrary Application of the Rule of Law and Widespread Violation of Human Rights

Rating: 10

Several international organizations, including Amnesty International and the ICRC, released reports detailing the dismal state of human rights in Iraq. "Saddam Hussein's administration was a byword for human rights abuse," said Amnesty's director for Middle East and North Africa, Malcolm Smart. "But its replacement has brought no respite at all for its people."¹⁴⁷⁴

¹⁴⁶⁸ "Iran to Provide Power to Iraq" *CNN.com* 03/03/08.

¹⁴⁶⁹ "Najaf Refinery Gets 2nd Unit; 3rd Planned" *UPI News*, 03/17/08.

¹⁴⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷¹ "5 Years After Iraq's 'Liberation,' there are Worms in the Water" *Knight Ridder*, 03/13/08.

¹⁴⁷² *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷⁴ "Red Cross, Amnesty Paint Grim Picture of Post-Invasion Iraq" *Agence France Presse*, 03/17/08.

The U.S. State Department also released its annual human rights report, detailing several major abuses suffered by Iraqi women, including: "widespread" honor killings, female genital mutilation and "increased" prostitution.¹⁴⁷⁵ The same report also notes that Iraq has become "a source for trafficking of women and girls to other Arab countries ... [there are] also reports of girls, women, and boys trafficked within the country for sexual and other exploitation."¹⁴⁷⁶ These statistics are of particular concern because 82 percent of the 2.4 million people displaced inside Iraq are women and young children under the age of 12.¹⁴⁷⁷

Presently there are nine Iraqi girls under the age of 16 being held in a juvenile detention facility in Damascus. Most have been charged with prostitution. One such girl, who is nine years-old, was brought to Syria by her husband, whom her parents forced for her to marry in Iraq, and he then forced her to work as a prostitute. According to Amnesty International, she was arrested in a flat used as a brothel.¹⁴⁷⁸

In addition to suffering such abuses, young girls are routinely being denied access to education. Of women interviewed throughout Iraq for Women for Women International's (WWI) report, "Stronger Women Stronger Nations 2008 Iraq," over 76 percent said that "girls in their families are not allowed to attend school", and 56.7 percent said that "girls' ability to attend school has gotten worse since the U.S. invasion."¹⁴⁷⁹

Throughout the month, Iraqi women held marches and rallies in Iraq to commemorate Women's History Month, simultaneously protesting the increasingly systematic denial of their basic human rights. Such violations include a constant threat of violence and their restricted movement, because, throughout much of Iraq, women are not permitted to be in public without a male escort. All armed groups, including those with ties to the government, regularly rape women.¹⁴⁸⁰ According to the WWI survey, 63.9 percent of respondents said violence against women in general was increasing. In central Iraq and Baghdad, this number jumps to 91.8 percent and 72.0 percent, respectively.¹⁴⁸¹

Much of this intimidation of women is done under conservative religious auspices. The State Department report noted that, "During the year there were a number of reports indicating that employees and managers within ministries expressly or indirectly pressured women to wear veils as a requirement for work, regardless of the individual's religious affiliation."¹⁴⁸² According to the same report, "Women were targeted for undertaking normal activities, such as driving a car, and wearing trousers, in an effort to force them to remain at home, wear veils and adhere to a conservative interpretation of

¹⁴⁷⁵ "Analysis: Iraq Progress Missing Women" *UPI Energy*, 03/14/08.

¹⁴⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷⁷ "Heroines - the Daily Life of Iraq's War Widows" *Iraqi Women's Organizations*, 03/07/08.

¹⁴⁷⁸ "Iraq Suffering in Silence: Iraqi Refugees in Syria" *Amnesty International*, 06/15/08.

¹⁴⁷⁹ "Analysis: Iraq Progress Missing Women" *UPI Energy*, 03/14/08.

¹⁴⁸⁰ "Stronger Women, Stronger Nations: 2008 Iraq Report; Amplifying the Voices of Women in Iraq" *Women for Women International*, 03/03/08.

¹⁴⁸¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁸² "Iraq; Country Reports on Humans Rights Practices - 2007" *United States Department of State*, 03/11/08.

Islam."¹⁴⁸³ In 2007, religious groups killed 40 women in Basra for alleged violations of Islamic dress code. Notes warning against "violating Islamic teachings" were found with their mutilated bodies.¹⁴⁸⁴ According to the Basrah Security Committee's end-of-year report, 133 women were killed in Basra by religious vigilantes or in honor killings.¹⁴⁸⁵

"Honor Crimes" were also found to be prevalent in the Kurdish region. According to official statistics, there were 255 honor killings in the first six months of the year, including 195 cases of deaths by burning. The United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq said that a senior police official in Arbil confirmed that most unnatural deaths among women in Arbil were "honor" killings and that at least one or two deaths were reported daily.¹⁴⁸⁶ These official figures do not reflect the many women killed in the name of honor whose deaths were never reported or were passed off as accidents. The Iraqi parliament is resisting legislation which would allow those who commit crimes of so-called honor to be charged with murder.¹⁴⁸⁷ Currently, Article 111 of the Iraqi penal code allows men who have killed women to receive reduced punishments if the killer is found to have had "honorable motives."¹⁴⁸⁸

Victims of such abuses have little recourse, as law enforcement and the judiciary remain largely ineffective and corrupt. Judges remain vulnerable to intimidation and violence and some have refused to hear cases against insurgents and terrorists out of fear of retribution.¹⁴⁸⁹ There were also reports that criminal cases at the trial level or on appeal to the Court of Cassation were decided by corruption or intimidation.¹⁴⁹⁰ Further, Malcolm Smart, Amnesty International's director for Middle East and North Africa, says the failure to investigate alleged human rights abuses "is one of the most worrying aspects for the future." He added, "Even when faced with overwhelming evidence of torture under their watch, the Iraqi authorities have failed to hold the perpetrators to account -- and the U.S. and its allies have failed to demand that they do so."¹⁴⁹¹

Evidence of such ineffectiveness and corruption can be seen in the dropped prosecution and the subsequent release of two former high-ranking Shiite government officials who had been charged with kidnapping and killing scores of Sunnis. American and Iraqi officials were shocked to see the trial, which they thought was supported by a wide array of evidence, end so abruptly.¹⁴⁹² They had been gathering evidence for months and

¹⁴⁸³ "Analysis: Iraq Progress Missing Women" *UPI Energy*, 03/14/08.

¹⁴⁸⁴ "Stronger Women, Stronger Nations: 2008 Iraq Report; Amplifying the Voices of Women in Iraq" *Women for Women International*, 03/03/08.

¹⁴⁸⁵ "Iraq; Country Reports on Humans Rights Practices - 2007" *United States Department of State*, 03/11/08.

¹⁴⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁸⁷ "Politicians Resist Honour Crimes Reform" *Institute for War and Peace Reporting*, 03/28/08.

¹⁴⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁸⁹ "Iraq; Country Reports on Humans Rights Practices - 2007" *United States Department of State*, 03/11/08.

¹⁴⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁹¹ "Red Cross, Amnesty Paint Grim Picture of Post-Invasion Iraq" *Agence France Presse*, 03/17/08.

¹⁴⁹² "Case is Dropped Against Shiites in Sunni Deaths; Ex-Officials' Trial Seen as Test of System" *The Washington Post*, 03/04/08.

putting the case together for more than a year.¹⁴⁹³ Some saw the decisions as a minor victory, as it showed Baghdad's Shiite government was willing to hold their own accountable before the law: "The very fact that the charges were heard and investigated does show modest progress toward the rule of law," said Mirembe Nantongo, a spokeswoman for the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad.¹⁴⁹⁴ Still others were utterly dismayed by what they saw as a big setback in Iraq's attempt to build an independent judiciary and emerge from sectarian loyalties. "This shows that the judicial system in Iraq is horribly broken," said a U.S. legal adviser who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to discuss the case publicly.¹⁴⁹⁵ "And it sends a terrible signal: If you are Shiite, then no worries; you can do whatever you want and nothing is going to happen to you."¹⁴⁹⁶ Of further concern were the serial reports of witness intimidation and the evidence that one of the trial judges, who was later removed, had agreed in advance to find the defendants not guilty.¹⁴⁹⁷

10. Security Apparatus Operates as a "State Within a State"

Rating: 10

Despite the recent downward trend of violence in Iraq in the last several months, violence increased in March. The average number of attacks in March was 70, an increase of almost 40 percent from February 2008, when the average daily number of attacks was about 50 per day.¹⁴⁹⁸ The heavily fortified International Zone in Baghdad was particularly hard hit in the last week of this month, having received "47 separate indirect fire barrages consisting of 149 rounds of 122-millimeter and 107-millimeter rockets and at least three larger 240-millimeter rockets, one of which hit the UN compound," according to the Government Accountability Office's latest report.¹⁴⁹⁹ From October 2007 through mid-March 2008, the indirect fire attacks aimed at the International Zone were less than a dozen.¹⁵⁰⁰

The Iraqi security forces achieved little military success in Basra against the Mahdi Army, as the militants were able to fend off most of the government's attacks against their strongholds (see Indicators #1, #3, #7, #11 and #12).¹⁵⁰¹ Witnesses in Basra said there was little evidence that security forces had moved the Mahdi Army out of

¹⁴⁹³ "Charges are Dropped Against 2 Shiite Ex-Officials Accused in Sectarian Killings" *The New York Times*, 03/04/08; "Case is Dropped Against Shiites in Sunni Deaths; Ex-Officials' Trial Seen as Test of System" *The Washington Post*, 03/04/08.

¹⁴⁹⁴ "Iraqi Court Clears Former Health Ministry Officials of Charges" *Deutsche Presse Agentur*, 03/04/08.

¹⁴⁹⁵ "Iraq Drops Sunni Death Case for Shiites" *UPI*, 03/04/08.

¹⁴⁹⁶ "Case is Dropped Against Shiites in Sunni Deaths; Ex-Officials' Trial Seen as Test of System" *The Washington Post*, 03/04/08.

¹⁴⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁹⁸ "Securing, Stabilizing, and Rebuilding Iraq; Progress Report: Some Gains Made, Updated Strategy Needed" *United States Government Accountability Office*, 06/2008.

¹⁴⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰¹ "After Iranian Mediation, Firebrand Iraqi Cleric Orders Halt to Attacks" *Knight Ridder Washington Bureau*, 03/14/08.

neighborhoods they had long controlled, and the Mahdi army had established checkpoints guarded by many heavily-armed soldiers.¹⁵⁰² Prime Minister al-Maliki launched the offensive in an attempt to oust the militias that have effectively ruled Basra for nearly three years.¹⁵⁰³ After the Iraqi security forces were beaten back in several locations, the U.S. and British militaries were called in to provide air strikes against the militias.¹⁵⁰⁴

Such assistance contradicts repeated assurances issued by the U.S. and Iraqi officials that the Iraqis' fighting capabilities have vastly improved: it suggests instead that the Iraqi military is unable to convincingly take on the militias on their own.¹⁵⁰⁵ However, Major Tom Holloway, a spokesman for the British Army in Basra, says that coalition forces only took part because Iraqi forces did not have aircraft that could conduct such strikes, although it was also reported that British ground troops were, in fact, firing artillery in support of Iraqi forces.¹⁵⁰⁶ Maj. Holloway continued, "I think the point here is actually that Iraq's army is capable, they are strong and they have been engaging successfully."¹⁵⁰⁷ Maj. Holloway has reason to portray the situation optimistically, as failure in Basra would be an embarrassment for al-Maliki, his Army, and American forces who would like the Iraqi Army to be seen as well-trained effective fighters.¹⁵⁰⁸

A recent U.S. Government Accountability Office report stated that 65 percent of the Iraqi army units were "in the lead"—that is, leading counterinsurgency operations with or without coalition support—in counterinsurgency operations as of March 2008.¹⁵⁰⁹ This represents an increase of 19 battalions from January 2007, when only 93 battalions were in the lead. The number of Iraqi national police battalions in the lead increased from 27 in January 2007 to 36 in March 2008.¹⁵¹⁰ While none of these national police units achieved the highest level of readiness, about 11 units were at the second level of readiness. The number of Iraqi army battalions rated at the highest readiness level accounts for less than 10 percent of the total number of Iraqi army battalions.¹⁵¹¹

The failed offensive in Basra seems to also have been a result of poor leadership, as it is said that al-Maliki planned this operation without prior consultation with the Americans. Retired Gen. Jack Keane, who is considered an architect of the "surge" strategy and is

¹⁵⁰² "Shiite Militias Cling to Basra and Stage Raids" *The New York Times*, 03/30/08.

¹⁵⁰³ "Al-Sadr Truce Calms Iraq's Violence But Weakens US-Backed Premier" *The Associated Press*, 03/31/08.

¹⁵⁰⁴ "After Iranian Mediation, Firebrand Iraqi Cleric Orders Halt to Attacks" *Knight Ridder Washington Bureau*, 03/14/08.

¹⁵⁰⁵ "U.S. Military Joins Basra Battle; Airstrikes Aimed at Aiding Iraqi Army Against Shiite Militias" *The International Herald Tribune*, 03/29/08.

¹⁵⁰⁶ *Ibid.*; "Shiite Leader Al-Sadr Defies Iraq Gov't" *Associated Press Online*, 03/30/08.

¹⁵⁰⁷ "U.S. Military Joins Basra Battle; Airstrikes Aimed at Aiding Iraqi Army Against Shiite Militias" *The International Herald Tribune*, 03/29/08.

¹⁵⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰⁹ "Securing, Stabilizing, and Rebuilding Iraq; Progress Report: Some Gains Made, Updated Strategy Needed" *United States Government Accountability Office*, 06/2008.

¹⁵¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹¹ *Ibid.*

currently an advisor to Senator John McCain, says "He is way out in front of realities," in describing al-Maliki's operation.¹⁵¹²

The Iraqi Security Forces struggles' are not limited to strategic blunders but also include large-scale defections, as 40 men who said they were Iraqi police officers abandoned their posts and surrendered their weapons and ammunition to Sadr officials in Sadr city during the operations. The Sadr officials symbolically gave the officers olive branches and Korans.¹⁵¹³ "We can't fight our brothers in the Mahdi Army, so we came here to submit our weapons," one policeman said on condition of anonymity for security reasons.¹⁵¹⁴ He said about 40 policemen had defected to the Mahdi Army. The figure could not be confirmed, but AP Television News footage showed about a dozen uniformed police, their faces covered with masks to shield their identity, being met by Sheik Salman al-Feraiji, Sadr's chief representative in Sadr City.¹⁵¹⁵ Their weapons were returned to the officers after they pledged not to use them against Mahdi Army members. "These weapons are for defending the country but not for fighting your brothers," said al-Feraiji.¹⁵¹⁶

In a similar event, 16 members of an Iraqi special police unit, upon being ordered to move against Mahdi Army fighters in Basra, took off their uniforms, kept their government-issued rifles and went over to the other side.¹⁵¹⁷ Major-General Abdelaziz Mohammed Jassim, the director of operations at the Ministry of Defense, played down reports of defections in the Basra police force, saying "The problem of one policeman doesn't make up for the whole of the force."¹⁵¹⁸

While hailed as a key factor in helping the U.S. "surge" strategy, the creator of the Sons of Iraq, or the Sunni Awakening, has also had the effect of proliferating militias, this time based on sectarian and tribal loyalties, and neighborhood affiliation, with funding and equipment provided by the U.S., not the Iraqi government. The Sons of Iraq also continue to gain influence and power in Iraqi politics (discussed in Indicator #3).¹⁵¹⁹ One particular incident in Diyala where two Sunni women were kidnapped and killed led the Sons of Iraq there to cease all cooperation with the U.S. and Iraqi government forces until their demands for redress were met.¹⁵²⁰ After some delay, the provincial government seems to have agreed to many of their demands, chief among them the resignation of the police chief of Diyala province, who is accused of allowing Shiite militiamen to operate freely against Sunnis in the province. Other demands included the nomination of four Sunni assistants to be available to the new police chief, employment of 5,000 members of

¹⁵¹² "Worldview: Basra Blunder; A Move by Iraq's Prime Minister Inflamed Violence in the Port City, was Ill-Timed, and Threatens Surge Gains" *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 03/30/08.

¹⁵¹³ "Shiite Militias Cling to Basra and Stage Raids" *The New York Times*, 03/30/08.

¹⁵¹⁴ "Shiite Leader Al-Sadr Defies Iraq Gov't" *Associated Press Online*, 03/30/08.

¹⁵¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹⁶ "Shiite Militias Cling to Basra and Stage Raids" *The New York Times*, 03/30/08.

¹⁵¹⁷ "They Shed Their Uniforms, Kept Their Rifles and Promptly Switched Sides" *The Times*, 03/28/08.

¹⁵¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹⁹ "Sahwa Forces Have More Power After conflict with Iraqi Government in Diyala; Iraq: Sahwa Forces Challenge Govt, and Win" *IPS*, 03/05/08.

¹⁵²⁰ *Ibid.*

the Sons of Iraq as government security personnel, and for the government police to stay out of predominantly Sunni districts.¹⁵²¹

With the well-publicized success of the Sons of Iraq, a new volunteer security force has also been formed called the Sisters of Fallujah. This all-female group began working with U.S. forces and Iraqi police at checkpoints in the area.¹⁵²² They were formed in response to Al-Qaeda's recent recruitment of women as suicide bombers who, due to Islamic mores, are not usually subjected to physical searches by male security personnel.¹⁵²³ "Before, no one could search the woman [*sic*]. Now with the Sisters of Fallujah, we are able to prevent insurgents from smuggling anything harmful with the women and children," a local Iraqi police chief said.¹⁵²⁴ However, as the proliferation of private, semi-official and official security forces in the country continue to increase, the society is becoming militarized, the central government is failing to assert a monopoly on the use of force, and the U.S. is increasingly drawn into financing a large number of the militias, whose loyalties continue to be uncertain, especially if the U.S. draws down its military support.

11. Rise of Factionalized Elites

Rating: 10

Despite the government's stated aim of achieving "security, reconstruction and complete sovereignty" for Iraq, at the reconciliation conference held in Cairo on March 25th, several major political groups did not participate.¹⁵²⁵ Tawafuq, the largest Sunni parliamentary coalition, refused to attend the conference, citing complaints against the Shiite-led government. Moqtada al-Sadr's bloc walked out of the conference, stating that it did not want a mere ceremonial presence at the conference. Sheikh Ali Hatem Sulaiman, a representative of Sunni tribes who turned on Al-Qaeda in Iraq, also walked out of the conference.¹⁵²⁶ The National Iraqi List, a political bloc that also boycotted the conference, announced that it was making preparations for an April reconciliation conference because of the "apparent failure" of the Iraqi government to reach a political consensus.¹⁵²⁷

In a seemingly more productive dialogue, Japanese Foreign Minister Masahiko Komura was host to 11 Iraqi leaders for discussions on the major issues currently facing Iraq.¹⁵²⁸ According to Japanese officials, the delegation, comprised of 5 Shiite, 4 Sunni and 2 Kurdish representatives, said they are "working to include other groups into the Iraqi

¹⁵²¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵²² "Iraqi Women Guard Fallujah Checkpoints" *UPI Energy*, 03/03/08.

¹⁵²³ "Carnage and Despair; Iraq Five Years On" *Amnesty International*, 03/17/08.

¹⁵²⁴ "Iraqi Women Guard Fallujah Checkpoints" *UPI Energy*, 03/03/08.

¹⁵²⁵ "Iraqi Politicians in New Reconciliation Meeting in Baghdad" *Xinhua General News Service*, 03/18/08.

¹⁵²⁶ "Shiite, Sunni Blocs Boycott Meeting" *Newsday*, 03/19/08.

¹⁵²⁷ "Iraqi Reconciliation Talks Slated" *UPI Energy*, 03/25/08.

¹⁵²⁸ "Iraqi Leaders Vow Reconciliation Efforts, Wrap up Dialogue in Japan" *BBC Monitoring Asia-Pacific*, 03/27/08.

political process to eliminate biases, while stressing the importance that neighboring nations not intervene in Iraq's internal matters.”¹⁵²⁹

Attempts at reconciliation were being made on a more local level at a meeting between the governors from Iraq's seven northern provinces, Cabinet ministers and U.S. and Iraqi forces. The meeting's goal was to build trust among the parties and allow for the airing of grievances as the country tries to work to restore its infrastructure.¹⁵³⁰ Concerns included increasing electricity capacity, digging irrigation canals, fuel delivery and corruption, all of which the Cabinet ministers pledged to address.¹⁵³¹ The seven districts represented at the meeting are among some of the most diverse in Iraq, home to Sunni and Shiite Arabs as well as Kurds.

Iraq's presidential council approved legislation setting a timeframe for provincial elections. The legislation had been held up by Iraqi Vice President Adel Abdul-Mahdi, who claimed that many of the law's provisions allowing for a certain amount of central control over the governorates were unconstitutional.¹⁵³² The ISCI, Abdul-Mahdi's party, favors a more federal structure.¹⁵³³ Nassar al-Rubaei, the head of the al-Sadr bloc in the Iraqi parliament, celebrated the decision, which he said was the result of political and popular pressure. He went on to say that Abdul-Mahdi's objection to the law was a “big mistake” because the ISCI was the only Shiite party that opposed the legislation.¹⁵³⁴ Other Iraqi lawmakers noted that this represented an important step in reconciling rival factions within the divided government.¹⁵³⁵

As noted above, tensions are flaring not just among different sectarian groups, but also within them. Of particular concern are the hostilities between the ISCI members, the dominant party in the government, and the Sadrist Movement. Sadrists claim ISCI is using its influence over the top army and police commanders to target them in view of the upcoming elections.¹⁵³⁶ Such accusations are not implausible, as some of al-Maliki's security advisors are affiliated with the Badr Brigades. In the wake of al-Maliki's recent military offensive in Basra (discussed in Indicators, #1, #3, #7, #10 and #12), the accusations have intensified. Gen. Mohan Freiji, the head of the Basra security command, is also considered loosely affiliated with ISCI.¹⁵³⁷ While al-Maliki claims the offensive was aimed at ending the lawless nature of the city, the attacks were conducted primarily against Sadrist neighborhoods. It was reported that little fighting took place in neighborhoods controlled by Al-Fadila al-Islamiya, a group known to participate in oil smuggling and Basra's governor's party, or the Badr Organization, which is involved in

¹⁵²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵³⁰ “Iraqi Local Leaders Get Rare Chance to Air Issues” *Associated Press*, 03/05/08.

¹⁵³¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵³² “Debating Devolution in Iraq” *Middle East Report Online*, 03/10/08.

¹⁵³³ *Ibid.*

¹⁵³⁴ “Sadrists Hail Provincial Election Decision” *UPI Energy*, 03/20/08.

¹⁵³⁵ “Iraqi Council Clears Key Legislation on Provincial Elections; Law Aims to Address Sunni Concerns” *The Washington Post*, 03/20/08.

¹⁵³⁶ “The Conflict In Iraq: A Shiite Schism; U.S. is Entangled in Shiite Rivalry; As Baghdad Cracks Down on Sadr's Militia, America's Uneasy Detente With His Loyalists is at Risk.” *Los Angeles Times*, 03/30/08.

¹⁵³⁷ *Ibid.*

racketeering at ports and controls the city's police intelligence service.¹⁵³⁸ In response to such arguments, Sheik Jalaluddin Saghri, a senior leader in the ISIC, says al-Sadr loyalists are trying to cover up their criminal activities with the allegations of politically motivated attacks.¹⁵³⁹

12. Intervention of Other States or External Political Actors

Rating: 10

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad received a warm welcome on his historic visit to Iraq this month (discussed in Indicators #6 and #8). "There are no limits to the cooperation that we are going to open up with our neighbor Iran," al-Maliki told reporters after meeting with Ahmadinejad.¹⁵⁴⁰ "The two people, Iraqi and Iranian, will work together to bring Iraq out of its current crisis," Ahmadinejad pledged. The Iranian President went on to insist that, "a capable, developed, and united Iraq is to the benefit of all the region."¹⁵⁴¹ The tone among Ahmadinejad and his Iraqi hosts was "friendly and brotherly" and the two countries signed several cultural and economic deals during the visit.¹⁵⁴²

American officials expressed a hope that the Iraqis would press Ahmadinejad on his country's training and financing of Shiite militias. Iraqi officials did not say the issue was discussed. When an Iraqi reporter asked Ahmadinejad a question on the subject, al-Maliki shrugged his shoulders and said "That's what they say," as if to distance himself from the allegations.¹⁵⁴³

In addition to strengthening its relationship with Iran, Iraqi politicians were also reaffirming ties with Turkey this month. Jalal Talabani, Iraq's President, was accompanied by Iraq's ministers of finance, oil, water resources, national security and industry on his state visit to Ankara. Talabani said that his talks with Turkish leaders, including Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the Prime Minister, would focus on enlarging a security co-operation agreement. He is also scheduled to attend a Turkey-Iraq business council meeting.¹⁵⁴⁴ The trip comes on the heels of Turkey's eight day incursion into Iraq's northern province to fight the PKK rebels in the area that Turkey says are launching attacks into Turkey.¹⁵⁴⁵ Talabani pledged his government's support for Turkey in its fight against the Kurdish fighters at a joint news conference with Abdullah Gul, his Turkish counterpart, saying "Iraq wants strategic and solid relations with Turkey."¹⁵⁴⁶

¹⁵³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁵³⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁴⁰ "Iran's Ahmadinejad Warmly Received in Baghdad" *Chicago Tribune*, 03/02/08.

¹⁵⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁴² "Ahmadinejad: Symbolic Visit Focuses on Ties With Iraq, Challenge to US" *Associated Press Worldstream*, 03/03/08; "Iran, Iraq Enhance Energy Ties in Visit" *UPI News*, 03/04/08.

¹⁵⁴³ "Iran's Ahmadinejad Warmly Received in Baghdad" *Chicago Tribune*, 03/02/08.

¹⁵⁴⁴ "Talabani Calls PKK 'Common Problem'" *AlJazeera.net*, 03/07/08.

¹⁵⁴⁵ "Iraqi President to Visit Turkey a Week After Turkish Incursion" *Associated Press Worldstream*, 03/07/08.

¹⁵⁴⁶ "Talabani Calls PKK 'Common Problem'" *AlJazeera.net*, 03/07/08.

Also visiting Iraq this month was American Vice President Dick Cheney who met with several Kurdish leaders, including Kurdistan regional president Massoud Barzani. Barzani pledged Kurds would be part of the "solution, not the problem" in the troubled nation's relations with its neighbors.¹⁵⁴⁷ Cheney also urged the Kurdish politicians to help in establishing a long-term U.S.-Iraq security agreement and pass laws seen as key to national reconciliation.¹⁵⁴⁸ "We are certainly counting on President Barzani's leadership to help us conclude a new strategic relationship between the United States and Iraq as well as advance crucial pieces of national legislation in the months ahead," Cheney said. Some Iraqi legislators said the American vice president's visit had an effect. "Cheney came over and his message was to pass laws," said Mahmoud Othman, an independent Kurdish legislator.¹⁵⁴⁹

A major goal of Cheney's visit was to press the Iraqi government in negotiations regarding deals to normalize relations between the two countries and enable Iraq to function with full sovereignty. The goal is to come to terms on such arrangements prior to the expiration of the UN mandate in December. Such normalization would take the form of two agreements: the first is known as a strategic framework agreement; it would detail the political, economic and security relations between the two countries. The second is called a status of forces agreement; it defines the legal basis for the presence of U.S. troops on Iraqi territory and establishes the legal rights and obligations of the American troops.¹⁵⁵⁰ Defense Secretary Robert Gates said he expects the Iraqi government to agree to a longer-term U.S. troop presence, although the Americans would be focused less on combat than they are now. "I would anticipate that there would be some modest level of U.S. troops in Iraq at the invitation of a sovereign Iraqi government for some considerable period of time," Gates said. "But it would be a fraction of what we have there now, and they would be there to participate in training and equipping of the Iraqi forces, helping them protect their borders, going after Al-Qaeda and that sort of thing."¹⁵⁵¹ The U.S., as of this date, maintains over 160,000 troops in Iraq.

The American military's influence was also felt during the Iraqi government's recent controversial offensive in Basra. Many saw such a move as antagonistic towards Moqtada al-Sadr and his followers. "How could the Sadrists interpret U.S. air support of the Basra operation other than as the manifestation of a U.S.-ISCI alliance?" asked Joost Hiltermann, a Middle East expert with the International Crisis Group.¹⁵⁵² Still others argue that in supporting the ISCI/Dawa alliance, the U.S. is encouraging al-Maliki to maintain an ethnically and religiously segregated administration, thereby limiting the potential for national reconciliation. Additionally, ISCI has close ties to the Iranians, and

¹⁵⁴⁷ "Cheney Presses Iraqi Kurds on Reconciliation" *Agence France Presse*, 03/18/08.

¹⁵⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁴⁹ "Iraqi Council Clears Key Legislation on Provincial Elections; Law Aims to Address Sunni Concerns" *The Washington Post*, 03/20/08.

¹⁵⁵⁰ "US, Iraq to Begin Negotiations in Baghdad Saturday on Long-Term Relationship" *Associated Press Worldstream*, 03/08/08.

¹⁵⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁵² "The Conflict In Iraq: A Shiite Schism; U.S. is Entangled in Shiite Rivalry; As Baghdad Cracks Down on Sadr's Militia, America's Uneasy Detente With His Loyalists is at Risk." *Los Angeles Times*, 03/30/08.

the U.S., in supporting ISCI in the upcoming elections, is promoting the prospect of increased Iranian influence in Iraq.¹⁵⁵³

The Iraqi government exercised some independence from their American advisors this month by signing a secret arms deal with Serbia. Although many criticized the deal, some American advisers noted that the deal was an essential part of the Iraqi military's learning curve and a test of the American military's capacity to balance guidance and restraint. "We can be very overbearing as a nation, and part of this task is a feel for this task," said Lt. Gen. James M. Dubik, the commander of the Multinational Security Transition Command and the head of America's security advisory mission in Iraq. "How do I impose myself enough to keep things going but back off enough to let development occur? There is an art to this."¹⁵⁵⁴

¹⁵⁵³ "Crackdown Reflects Policy of Sectarianism" *The Irish Times*, 03/27/08.

¹⁵⁵⁴ "Secret Iraqi Deal Shows Problems in Arms Orders" *New York Times*, 04/13/08.

March 2008
Core 5

1. Police

Rating: Weak

Despite improvements and their active role in the recent offensive in Basra, the Iraqi National Police continue to struggle. Militia infiltration continues to plague the Iraqi National Police and there have been several highly publicized reports of defection in March. Although Major-General Abdul Jalil Khalaf, Basra's police chief, tried in recent months to drive out militia infiltrators from his forces, its rumored that he will be dismissed from his position by Prime Minister al-Maliki due to the deteriorating security conditions in Basra.^{1555 1556} The top army commander in Basra, Lt. Gen. Mohan al-Fireji is also said to be on his way out, according to two government officials.¹⁵⁵⁷ The Government took further action against instability in the National Police by announcing that thousands of Iraqi police officers who allegedly refused to fight against Shiite militias have been relieved of duty.¹⁵⁵⁸ Some argue that while the police may have received effective training, such efforts failed to instill a sense of unwavering loyalty to the state.¹⁵⁵⁹

There also continues to be issues regarding prisoner treatment. Some police officers freely admit to having beaten and tortured suspects to force confessions and exact revenge. In some cases inmates are not given meals and are forced to rely on relatives or bribed corrections officers for food.¹⁵⁶⁰ In an effort to improve the situation, the U.S. military recently began providing meals to feed most of the prisoners in both Fallujah and Ramadi city jails. Similar measures are being taken in 27 smaller facilities in Anbar province.¹⁵⁶¹

2. Leadership

Ranking: Weak

Iraq's leadership remains sharply divided along sectarian and ethnic lines, as evidenced by the boycott of several large political blocs from the National Reconciliation Conference.¹⁵⁶² Although Vice President Adel Abdul-Mahdi lifted his objection to the provincial election law, a move seen as representing much-needed progress, several U.S.

¹⁵⁵⁵ "They Shed Their Uniforms, Kept Their Rifles and Promptly Switched Sides" *The Times*, 03/28/08.

¹⁵⁵⁶ "Iraqi PM Removes Top Commanders in Basra Amid Deteriorating Security" *Associated Press*

¹⁵⁵⁷ "Iraqi PM Removes Top Commanders in Basra Amid Deteriorating Security" *Associated Press Worldstream*, 03/24/08.

¹⁵⁵⁸ "Iraqi Police Fired for Failing to Fight" *UPI*, 03/31/08.

¹⁵⁵⁹ "They Shed Their Uniforms, Kept Their Rifles and Promptly Switched Sides" *The Times*, 03/28/08.

¹⁵⁶⁰ "In Fallujah, Peace Through Brute Strength; Iraqi City's Fragile Security Flows From Hussein-Era Tactics" *The Washington Post*, 03/24/08.

¹⁵⁶¹ "U.S. Feeding Prisoners in Iraqi Jails" *UPI Energy*, 03/24/08.

¹⁵⁶² "Shiite, Sunni Blocs Boycott Meeting" *Newsday*. 03/19/08.

commanders, including Gen. David H. Petraeus, have voiced concern that Iraq's politicians are not taking advantage of the recent lull in violence to make significant political gains.¹⁵⁶³

At this time, Prime Minister al-Maliki's offensive in Basra, in addition to being seen as militarily weak, was also regarded as politically motivated.¹⁵⁶⁴ Although the stated aim of the offensive was to reign in rogue militia elements and restore order to Iraq's second largest city, there was very little military activity reported outside of neighborhoods controlled by the Mahdi Army.¹⁵⁶⁵ The conflict ended when Shiite politicians traveled to Iran and asked for its assistance in persuading Moqtada al-Sadr to call for an end to hostilities.¹⁵⁶⁶ In time, however, the military offensive in Basra proved to be effective for, in combination with Iranian pressure on the Mahdi Army to declare a cease fire, it brought more order to Basra.

3. Civil Service

Rating: Poor

Iraq's civil service remains in poor condition. Lack of sanitation and polluted water supplies are reaching crisis levels in Iraq, causing illness in children and increased hardship, according to UNICEF and the World Health Organization.¹⁵⁶⁷ Exacerbating the problem is the continuation of the brain drain in Iraq. Trained professionals, who are essential to the restoration and maintenance of these basic services, are increasingly targeted by insurgents and are fleeing the country in record numbers.

With the government's offensive in Basra, public services in the port city, and also in Sadr City, deteriorated even further. "There is no water or electricity. Food supplies in Sadr City have dried up," said Riyadh Rubaie, a resident of Sadr City, "Hospitals are overflowing with the wounded," he added. "The American army is preventing ambulances from entering the area. Shops are closed. There is no food inside the city."¹⁵⁶⁸ In Basra, a similar picture emerges as one resident describes his experiences during the five day government offensive; "There was no electricity, no water and as a result of the clashes garbage piled up in the street."¹⁵⁶⁹

4. Judiciary

Rating: Poor

¹⁵⁶³ "Iraqi Council Clears Key Legislation on Provincial Elections; Law Aims to Address Sunni Concerns" *The Washington Post*, 03/20/08.

¹⁵⁶⁴ "The Conflict In Iraq: A Shiite Schism; U.S. is Entangled in Shiite Rivalry; As Baghdad Cracks Down on Sadr's Militia, America's Uneasy Detente With His Loyalists is at Risk." *Los Angeles Times*, 03/30/08.

¹⁵⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁶⁶ "After Iranian Mediation, Firebrand Iraqi Cleric Orders Halt to Attacks" *Knight Ridder*, 03/14/08.

¹⁵⁶⁷ "Sanitation Becoming a Luxury in Iraq: Restoring Iraq's Essential Social Services Would Improve Daily Life for Millions" *States News Service*, 03/20/08.

¹⁵⁶⁸ "Iraqi Shiites Short of Food and Water as Fighting Rages" *Agence France Presse*, 03/29/08.

¹⁵⁶⁹ "Iraq: Basra Residents Hit by Surging Food, Fuel Prices" *IRIN*, 03/31/08.

The Iraqi judiciary continues to be plagued by inefficiency, corruption and witness intimidation. The President of the Iraqi Higher Judicial Council, Judge Medhat Al Mahmoud, cited security as one of the main challenges facing the Iraqi judicial sector.¹⁵⁷⁰ Judges have frequently been the target of insurgent activities, although some are returning in the wake of recent security improvements. Several judges who fled Iraq because of death threats returned recently and toured the construction of a new government center in Salman Pak, a city 15 miles southeast of Baghdad.¹⁵⁷¹

The most high profile event in the judiciary during March was the dropping of all charges against two men accused of running Shiite death squads out of government hospitals. Witness intimidation was a big problem during the trial. According to U.S. officials, witnesses had agreed to testify for the prosecution after receiving assurances that their names would be kept secret, but their names were leaked and supporters of the former Health Ministry officials threatened to kill them or their families if they didn't recant their testimony. Many witnesses did not show up at all. In a further scandal, one judge was removed from the proceedings after a senior judge was informed that the judge had agreed ahead of time to find the defendants innocent.

The Iraqi judiciary was also criticized by Amnesty International, for extensive use of the death penalty.¹⁵⁷²

5. Military

Rating: Weak

Iraq's military has shown signs of improvement in the last month. Although the Iraqi Security Forces required support from the Multi-National Forces during the Basra offensive, there were some instances where the ISF did successfully challenge the Sadrists¹⁵⁷³.

Despite some success, it does not appear that the Iraqi Security forces will be prepared to stand alone in battle in the near future. In a recent teleconference, U.S. Air Force Col. Dean Clemons, who is the military advisor to Iraqi Defense Minister Adul Kader, said that the Iraqi government does not expect to be prepared to be able to fight internal threats without coalition assistance before 2012. Kader also said he believes Iraq won't be ready to independently defend against external threats until sometime between 2018 and 2020.¹⁵⁷⁴

¹⁵⁷⁰ "Al Mahmoud: Security One of the Main Challenges Facing Iraq's Judiciary" *Jordanian News Agency*, 03/05/08.

¹⁵⁷¹ "Iraqi Judges Set to Return to Duty" *UPI*, 03/14/08.

¹⁵⁷² "Red Cross, Amnesty Paint Grim Picture of Post-Invasion Iraq" *Agence France Presse*, 03/17/08.

¹⁵⁷³ "After Iranian Mediation, Firebrand Iraqi Cleric Orders Halt to Attacks" *Knight Ridder*, 03/14/08.

¹⁵⁷⁴ "Capabilities Must Mature for Iraq Self-sufficiency, Official Says" *American Forces Press Service*, 03/06/08.

STINGS

The Iraqi government launched a military offensive in Basra, Iraq's export hub and second largest city, in an effort to restore the rule of law to the city, which has been under the control of various warring militias. The fierce battle between the Iraqi security forces, assisted by the Multi-National forces, and the militants only ended after Moqtada al-Sadr ordered a cease-fire. He was convinced to do so only after Iranian mediators were brought in.

April 2008
12 Indicators

1. Mounting Demographic Pressures

Rating: 10

According to John Holmes, the UN Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs, Iraq's humanitarian crisis continues to worsen as "four million Iraqis do not have enough food, only 40 percent have reliable access to safe drinking water and about one-third of the population is cut off from basic health care."¹⁵⁷⁵ These conditions are exacerbated due to the government's inefficacies in sustaining and promoting political reconciliation. As reiterated by Holmes, "the effects of violence and tension, combined with the deterioration of basic services, have further contributed to the impoverishment of Iraqis who have suffered from decades of conflict, sanctions and oppression."¹⁵⁷⁶

Property disputes are also emerging, especially amongst the internally displaced who are coming back to find their houses occupied by others. According to Refugees International, these disputes are being handled in an ad hoc manner by the Iraqi Army, the Iraqi police, or the militia in control of the neighborhoods.¹⁵⁷⁷ These actors are the determinants of where displaced individuals can live. One individual, whose family was displaced from Abu Ghraib, now lives in a rent free home provided to him by the Sadrist movement with three other families.¹⁵⁷⁸

Children tend to be the silent victims of these short comings. During a trip to Iraq, Radhika Coomaraswamy, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, noted that "only 50 percent of primary school children are attending school, down from 80 percent in 2005. Only 40 percent have access to clean drinking water and there is a continuing possibility of outbreaks of cholera. Since 2004, an increasing number of children have been recruited into various militias and insurgent groups, including as suicide bombers, and approximately 1,500 are known to be held in detention facilities."¹⁵⁷⁹ In conjunction, Holmes also reports that there are growing signs of "acute malnutrition among four to nine percent of children under the age of five."¹⁵⁸⁰ Until the level of violence subdues and international organizations, such as UNICEF, UNHCR, OCHA, are granted the full capability to travel freely without worrying for their safety, these situations will not ameliorate.

¹⁵⁷⁵ "Interview-Iraq's Humanitarian Crisis Worsens--U.N. Official" *Reuters*, 4/7/08.

¹⁵⁷⁶ "UN Calls for Improved Security, Access to Reach Millions of Iraqis in Need" *Emirates News Agency*, 4/5/08.

¹⁵⁷⁷ "Uprooted and Unstable: Meeting Urgent Humanitarian Needs in Iraq" *Refugees International*, 4/15/08.

¹⁵⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁷⁹ "Iraq: An Intolerable Situation for Iraqi Children" *Qatar News Agency*, 4/26/08.

¹⁵⁸⁰ "Interview-Iraq's Humanitarian Crisis Worsens--U.N. Official" *Reuters*, 4/7/08.

The recent outbreak of violence and terror in Sadr City only serves to intensify these delicate matters. Residing in this city are 2-3 million civilians whose accessibility to food and water has been cut off due to the consistent weeks of fighting.¹⁵⁸¹ As mentioned in Indicator #8, there is currently a shortage of food as a result of the extensive fire damage to the main market, Al Jamila; this is leading to increases in food prices, especially in vegetables, according to the World Health Organization.¹⁵⁸²

In the areas of Al Gaiara, al-Jewader, al-Dakel, al-Falah, and al-Quyeria, there is scarcity of drinkable water as “armored vehicles have torn up roads exposing drinking water pipes to raw sewage. Repair of damaged water networks is stalled until there is an improvement in the security situation,” according to the WHO and UNAMI.¹⁵⁸³ The Red Cross also notes that several hospitals, most notably those in the Shiite neighborhood, are experiencing a shortage in basic medical supplies, such as dressings and anesthesia.¹⁵⁸⁴ The two main hospitals in Sadr City, Imam Ali Hospital and Sadr Hospital, are also undergoing acute shortages in some medical items, thereby facing operational difficulties.¹⁵⁸⁵ The condition of primary and secondary schools has also come under attack as more than 20 schools have been damaged, and a few vacated schools are serving as shelters for displaced families while others are used by military forces.¹⁵⁸⁶

Although Fallujah has not attracted much media attention since the fighting in Sadr City, this region remains paralyzed in terms of employment, access to medical care and potable water. Besides the lack of infrastructure, this city has also witnessed an upsurge in medical cases. As reported by the resident hospital administration, the Conservation Centre of Environment and Reserves in Fallujah, and the Monitoring Net of Human Rights in Iraq, “in 2006 they found ‘5,928 new illness cases that were unknown before in Fallujah,’ over 70 percent of which were cancers and abnormalities in children below 12 years of age. In the first six months of 2007 there were 2,447 cases; more than 50 percent of these cases were children.”¹⁵⁸⁷ Coinciding with this phenomenon is the spreading of Blackwater fever, a “severe form of malarial infection caused by the parasite plasmodium falciparum, which is considered the worst type of malarial infection.”¹⁵⁸⁸ These cases cannot be properly treated, though they are spreading across the country, due to the lack of drugs, oxygen, electricity, medicine, clean water, and doctors.

2. Massive Movement of Refugees or IDPs

Rating: 9

¹⁵⁸¹ “Food, Drugs Run Short in Sadr City, Red Cross Says” *CNN.COM*, 4/23/08.

¹⁵⁸² “Iraq: Humanitarian Situation Report - Sadr City” *Reliefweb*, 4/15/08.

¹⁵⁸³ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁸⁴ “Food, Drugs Run Short in Sadr City, Red Cross Says” *CNN.COM*, 4/23/08.

¹⁵⁸⁵ “Iraq: Sadr City Relief Operation” *Reliefweb*, 4/22/08.

¹⁵⁸⁶ “Violence in Iraq Disrupts Lives and Education” *UNICEF*, 4/21/08.

¹⁵⁸⁷ “Iraq: Five Years on, Fallujah in Tatters” *Inter Press Service*, 4/14/08.

¹⁵⁸⁸ “Corrected Repeat*/IRAQ: Blackwater Fever Comes in New Ways” *Inter Press Service*, 3/31/08.

The situation for Iraqi refugees and internally displaced persons remains dire and unresolved. According to a recent report produced by IDP Working Group, there are currently 2,778,305 IDPs in Iraq.¹⁵⁸⁹ Until recently, this number was calculated to be 2.2 million. Despite measures taken by the government to make the environment conducive to IDPs, there has been no large scale return to their original homes. This may be because “the improvement in the country’s security situation is only on the surface; the root problems still exist and any improvements could be reversed at any moment. The displaced fear returning to their homes and neighborhoods without guarantees of protection from the government,” said Saad al-Hadithi, a political science lecturer at the University of Baghdad.¹⁵⁹⁰

Concerns have also risen in funding. On April 29, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees reported that it had “received just under half of the US\$ 261 million it had requested in January to be able to assist Iraqi IDPs and refugees abroad” which is “not enough to sustain its programmes in the second half of 2008.”¹⁵⁹¹ This is a critical issue, because in contrast to September 2007, when 33,000 Iraqi refugees and IDPs needed food aid, now the number has risen to 110,000.¹⁵⁹²

Refugees International recently chronicled the inaccessibility of food rations and other essential services, the high rates of unemployment, and the squalid conditions of the IDPs.¹⁵⁹³ Because of the deficient international and governmental aid, many individuals are turning to local militias for basic assistance in social services and other avenues (discussed in Indicator #8). Until the government can adequately provide the basic services and is capable of mitigating the property disputes emerging from squatters living in homes that IDPs are returning to, the government of Iraq should not encourage returns, said Refugees International.¹⁵⁹⁴

Iraqi refugees are also facing critical conditions in their host countries. Sweden, which last year welcomed more than 18,000 refugees, is now enforcing stricter codes in allowing entry. Even though it granted asylum to 76 percent of Iraqis who applied for that status last year, this year the rate fell to 25 percent. “While Iraqis were routinely granted asylum because of general violence and turmoil in their home country, applicants are now asked to prove that they would face a specific threat if they returned.”¹⁵⁹⁵

These new provisions may have been implemented to create a deliberate hindrance for Iraqi refugees, who are often lured to Sweden due to its generous social welfare system. Settling mostly in Sodertalje, these refugees frequently are unable to find jobs or appropriate housing; up to 20 refugees live in a one bedroom apartment. As a result, they

¹⁵⁸⁹ “Iraq: New Report Highlights Growing Number of IDPs” *IRIN*, 4/3/08.

¹⁵⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁹¹ “Iraq: UNHCR Concerned About Funding for Refugees, IDPs” *IRIN*, 4/30/08.

¹⁵⁹² *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁹³ “Uprooted And Unstable: Meeting Urgent Humanitarian Needs in Iraq” *Refugees International*, 4/15/08.

¹⁵⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁹⁵ “Iraqi Refugees Find Sweden's Doors Closing” *Washington Post Foreign Service*, 4/10/08.

have to be placed on welfare. This strains the town's budget, and as Sodertalje Mayor Anders Lago said in regards to the overcrowding of classrooms, "we simply can't hire teachers or build schools fast enough to give all these young people the good start they deserve."¹⁵⁹⁶

Because of the public outcry against Sweden's previous policy, the government is now beginning to forcibly deport many Iraqis, including to the violence-prone regions of south and central Iraq. Although this policy has come under attack from humanitarian groups, the Migration Minister justified it as necessary to "keep the asylum system from breaking down."¹⁵⁹⁷

Germany is another European country that has faced criticism for its suggested preferential treatment of Christian Iraqi refugees. German Interior Minister Wolfgang Schäuble recently asked the EU to offer Christian minorities "help and a home in European countries until they can return."¹⁵⁹⁸ This, however, was opposed by Dragutin Mate, Interior Minister of Slovenia and the current President of the EU, who claimed that "international standards are such that they do not permit differentiation on the basis of religion or race" in the treatment of refugees.¹⁵⁹⁹ The same sentiment against discrimination was shared by Ruth Jüttner, Amnesty International's Middle East expert, who advised Germany to make "the level of danger" the only criteria for accepting Iraqi refugees.¹⁶⁰⁰

The situation for 1.5 million Iraqi refugees residing in Syria and Jordan is also bleak and desperate. According to the New York Times, many of them live in "overcrowded urban neighborhoods, crammed into dark, squalid apartments. Many have been traumatized by extreme violence. Their savings are dwindling; many cannot afford to pay for rent, heat and food; few have proper medical care."¹⁶⁰¹ Because these are poor countries, they are unable to provide adequate health services and education. Those taking residence in Jordan have had their subsidies cancelled, leaving them incapable of covering their living expenses.

Due to U.S. sanctions, Syria's economy is struggling, thereby pushing refugees to work in the black market, which usually brings in no more than US\$ 100 per month.¹⁶⁰² The fact that the Syrian government does not allow Iraqis to work legally is also leading a great number of women to turn to prostitution for work.¹⁶⁰³ Child labor is also on the rise, according to the World Press Reports, which found that "around 10 percent are pushed into the work force for an income of US\$ 1 a day and around 80 percent cannot attend school."¹⁶⁰⁴

¹⁵⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁹⁷ "Iraqi Refugees Find Sweden's Doors Closing" *Washington Post Foreign Service*, 4/10/08.

¹⁵⁹⁸ "EU Wary of Favoritism for Iraq's Christian Refugees" *The Irish Times*, 4/19/08.

¹⁵⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁰¹ "A 'Surge' for Refugees" *New York Times*, 4/28/08.

¹⁶⁰² "Iraq: Poverty Gets the Survivors" *Inter Press Services*, 4/26/08.

¹⁶⁰³ "The Drama of Iraqi Refugee Women and Children in Syria" *Turkish Daily News*, 4/1/08.

¹⁶⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

Circumstances have also continued to deteriorate due to soaring global fuel and food prices, making tens of thousands of refugees dependent on help from the UN Refugee Agency and the World Food Programme (WFP). As reported by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, food lines have been growing since last year as thousands of refugees have begun to run out of savings.¹⁶⁰⁵ Compared to the 33,000 Iraqis who were helped by the UNHCR and WFP last September, the recent assistance aided 150,000 people.¹⁶⁰⁶ For the first time, the agency noted the presence of doctors, engineers and teachers, who had come to receive rations of rice, oil, sugar and other essentials.

In contrast, Chile stepped forward with a more open policy. It recently welcomed 39 Palestinian refugees from Iraq. In agreement with the Catholic Church and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Chilean government has agreed to receive 117 Palestinians who will reside in La Calera, a strong Arabic Community.¹⁶⁰⁷

The Chilean government has agreed to allocate a monthly stipend of US\$ 500 per family along with free housing, health care and education for the children, until the families are completely settled in.¹⁶⁰⁸ The program also entails learning Spanish, receiving physicals and obtaining residency documents. The government has promised to assist the refugees in finding jobs for the refugees, amongst whom are drivers, plumbers and tailors.

3. Legacy of Vengeance-Seeking Group Grievance or Group Paranoia **Rating: 8**

The reluctance of the Iraqi government to incorporate the Sons of Iraq into the security force perpetuates the sectarian rift already existing among the Sunni and Shiite factions. On April 1, al-Maliki incorporated approximately 10,000 Shiite fighters aligned with the Al-Da'wah Party and the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI) into Iraq's security force as a reward for fighting against al-Sadr's militia, while excluding the Sons of Iraq. Even though these forces have been largely responsible for expelling Al-Qaeda from several governorates, they have not been rewarded and are still not trusted. Such discriminatory treatment does not "assuage Sunni fears that they have no place in the new Iraq," according to Radio Free Europe.¹⁶⁰⁹

Although the U.S. has pressured al-Maliki to incorporate these troops into the Iraqi security force or other governmental positions, it has not occurred. According to Lt. Col. Gian P. Gentile, a history professor at the U.S. Military Academy, the Awakening Council may not even want to reconcile or share power. "The Sunnis want to resume their place where they hold the preponderance of power and to do that they have to fight

¹⁶⁰⁵ "Iraqi Refugees in Syria Hit by Increased Food and Fuel Prices" *States News Services*, 4/25/08.

¹⁶⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁰⁷ "Palestinian Refugees Who Fled Iraq Violence Warmly Welcomed to New Life in Chile" *Associated Press*, 4/6/08.

¹⁶⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁰⁹ "Iraq: Future of Awakening Councils in Limbo" *Radio Free Europe*, 4/4/08.

to get it. The Shiites, conversely, want to crush them.”¹⁶¹⁰ Concurring with this view is Council on Foreign Relations Senior Fellow Steven Simon “For many Sunnis, Shiite rule remains unacceptable,” he writes in *Foreign Affairs*.¹⁶¹¹

This fear of Shiite supremacy is leading to the growth of more Awakening Councils (see Indicator #10). Khaled Jamal al-Qaisi, a Sunni leader in the Fadhil neighborhood said, “right now, the Sahwa [Awakening] is trying to spread and take control over more areas, because they are afraid of the Shiite militias, especially after the events in Basra and Baghdad, when many of the security forces handed over their weapons to the Mahdi Army.”¹⁶¹²

A report published by Refugees International also chronicles the systemic prejudices present in the bureaucracy of the government. There have been reported incidences by Shiite groups and Iraqi security forces who are loyal to the Mahdi Army or the Badr Militia opening fire on Sunni neighborhoods, “protecting death squads or kidnapping or executing Sunni civilians.”¹⁶¹³ While visiting the Iraqi ministries and government offices in January and February of 2008, Refugees International also noted the predominance of Shiite traditional symbols, such as flags and banners, or religious prayers or songs. According to the report, “this lack of separation between the state and the Shiite denomination intimidates Sunnis and creates the impression of Shiite ownership of government institutions.”¹⁶¹⁴

The Ministry of Migration is also characterized as a Sadrist sympathizer; it provides services favoring the Shiites. Many displaced families in the Sunni regions of Mosul, Fallujah, and Kirkuk stated their belief that displaced Shiites received more attention from the government than they do. “The Government only helps those who have contacts with Shiite political parties,” reported one woman.¹⁶¹⁵ Within Baghdad, there is a sectarian bias when it comes to electricity distribution. Shiite areas receive more hours of electricity while some Sunni areas have not received any for months, or for over a month, such as in Dora and Amirya.¹⁶¹⁶ The Ministry of Trade is also seen as favoring the Shiites when it comes to the Public Distribution System (see Indicator #8).

However, the opposite is also true as some aid groups have noted that in Sunni provinces, such as Salahedin governorates, Shiites also “face a sectarian bias against them from local officials and receive an inferior quality of help.”¹⁶¹⁷ Refugees International, for example, expressed concern that as the number of American troops is reduced, an open space will be created for Sunni and Shiite militias to “resume fighting for control over Baghdad and its environs,” and that the government “is not interested in pursuing

¹⁶¹⁰ “The Role of the 'Sons of Iraq' in Improving Security” *Washington Post*, 4/28/08.

¹⁶¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶¹² “Sunnis Organize Militias to Offset Those of Shiites” *USA Today*, 4/11/08.

¹⁶¹³ “Uprooted And Unstable: Meeting Urgent Humanitarian Needs in Iraq” *Refugees International*, 4/15/08.

¹⁶¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁶¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁶¹⁷ *Ibid.*

political dialogue with Sunni groups or even rival Shiite groups.”¹⁶¹⁸ This could lead to more sectarian violence and undermine political reconciliation amongst the various factions.

4. Chronic and Sustained Human Flight

Rating: 9

Circumstances for professionals, scientists and academics in Iraq have not improved greatly. Even though the Iraqi government has made attempts to lure its professional class back to the country, thousands continue to emigrate because of continuous threats and attacks.¹⁶¹⁹ Since the invasion of Iraq, hundreds of professors and scientists have been killed, abducted or fired from their jobs during operations in which coalition forces were searching for weapons of mass destruction and by rival parties in revenge against those who were previously affiliated with the Baath Party.¹⁶²⁰ The brain drain “has reached a level where it is now endangering the scientific and academic future of this country...the killings of scientifically and academically qualified personal may shed light on the fragile security situation,” according to a report by Al-Jazeera.¹⁶²¹

The status of young, university educated personnel is not promising either, especially for women. According to the Institute for War and Peace Reporting, these women become lost and desperate after graduating college due to the unavailability of work, and thus contemplate leaving Iraq. “I will try to find another job in any other country...My country has turned its back on me. It is a pity,” said an Iraqi woman who is an English specialist.¹⁶²²

With two-thirds of Iraqi’s medical specialists having fled the country, and “with the health care system shredded by war and sapped bare by corruption,” it was a breathtaking feat to have more than 100 doctors attend the assembly of Iraqi heart specialists at Ibn al-Bitar Hospital for Cardiac Surgery.¹⁶²³ This was the first time that the conference was held since 2003 because the hospital has been bombed and looted continuously since the invasion.

The lives of Iraqi interpreters who aided the U.S. war effort have also been threatened after being branded traitors. Since the invasion in 2003, an estimated 250 Iraqi translators have been killed by insurgents.¹⁶²⁴ Because of this, hundreds have fled the country, yet they have not always been welcomed into their host countries. The U.S. is accused of doing little to aid as many as 7,000 interpreters and their families in finding suitable

¹⁶¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁶¹⁹ “Brain Drain Poses Threat to Iraq's Scientific, Academic Future” *BBC Monitoring Middle East*, 4/7/08.

¹⁶²⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁶²¹ “Brain Drain Poses Threat to Iraq's Scientific, Academic Future” *BBC Monitoring Middle East*, 4/7/08.

¹⁶²² *Ibid.*

¹⁶²³ “For 100 Iraqi Doctors, A Return to Normal” *New York Times*, 4/30/08.

¹⁶²⁴ “Safe Haven for Iraqis Who Helped Troops” *Sidney Morning Herald*, 4/9/08.

employment, housing, and assimilating into a new culture.¹⁶²⁵ "I was risking my life for this country. I don't know why the government doesn't help us," said a recent immigrant who is finding it difficult to provide for his family.¹⁶²⁶

Australia recently announced that it could allow the emigration of 600 Iraqi translators and interpreters who have assisted Australian troops.¹⁶²⁷ According to Chris Evans, the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, Iraqis "would be granted permanent humanitarian visas after undergoing health, character and security checks. Those with relatives already in Australia will be settled in the same state."¹⁶²⁸ After its initial reluctance to assist its own Iraqi translators, the British government began flying them out. They have agreed to take 2,000 in all.¹⁶²⁹

The safety of journalists remains uncertain. While CBS journalist Richard Butler was freed after being kidnapped in Basra two months ago, an Iraqi journalist, Jassim al-Bata, was killed by gunmen in a speeding car as he left his house in Qurna, a town 55 miles north of Basra. Al-Bata, 38, worked for a station run by a Shiite political party.¹⁶³⁰ With the death of al-Bata, 211 media assistants and journalists have been killed in Iraq since the invasion, reported Reporters without Borders. According to the organization, "the impunity reigning in Iraq for the past five years encourages armed groups to keep attacking journalists, who have become easy targets."¹⁶³¹ Because of this threatening situation, many have been forced into exile and have fled to either Jordan or Syria.

5. Uneven Economic Development Along Group Lines **Rating: 9**

Despite several reports confirming an agreement between the Kurdish Regional Government and the central government in regards to the region's oil deals and the draft oil law, Iraq's Oil Minister Hussein al-Shahristani stated that the 25 production-sharing contracts signed between the KRG and several small and mid-sized oil companies remain invalid.¹⁶³² He insists that the contracts do not "meet the conditions of the hydrocarbon laws of February 2007," and threatened the future business relations of these companies with the Iraqi government if they remain in these contracts.¹⁶³³

In spite of these disputes, the Kurdistan Regional PM Nechiryman Barzani announced on April 30 that the KRG will soon export 100,000 barrels of oil per day to the world market

¹⁶²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶²⁶ "Safe from War, but Barely Surviving: In US, Former Iraq, Afghan Translators Struggle to Make Ends Meet" *The Boston Globe*, 4/14/08.

¹⁶²⁷ "Safe Haven for Iraqis Who Helped Troops" *Sidney Morning Herald*, 4/9/08.

¹⁶²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁶²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶³⁰ "Iraqi Journalist Killed Near Basra, Radio Station Says" *The Associated Press*, 4/25/08.

¹⁶³¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶³² "Iraqi Oil Minister Says Country Doesn't Recognize Contracts Signed With Kurds" *Associated Press Worldstream*, 4/21/08.

¹⁶³³ "Iraq in Talks With Kurds Over Oil Contracts" *Suna News Agency*, 4/21/08.

through the Ceyhan Port in Turkey working with a Turkish and Norwegian oil production companies.¹⁶³⁴ This is the first time that the KRG has been able to formally produce oil in Taqtaq and Duhok.

According to Minister of Natural Resources, Dr. Ashti Hawrami, the Iraqi Finance Ministry will collect the money from these exports, which will be allocated between the Iraqi government and the Kurdish region. “We are part of Iraq and use this income to support the peoples of Iraq and Kurdistan. Also it is our constitutional right to produce oil. We work with transparency and any income made [from oil production in the region] will be shared by all Iraq.”¹⁶³⁵ However, oil experts remain cautious and advice that the Kurds do not “produce more than the rate of production allocated to Iraq as a whole.”¹⁶³⁶ There was little indication of any change in other sectors of the economy-education, housing, health, along group lines, in the month of April. As noted in indicator #3, the Shiite – dominated government is widely seen as discriminating against the Sunni, and Sunni – dominated provinces are accused of doing the same to the Shiite.

6. Sharp and/or Severe Economic Decline

Rating: 8

Heightened efforts to revive the economy are underway though the results are still uncertain. Mark Mobius, an emerging markets fund manager at the Templeton Asset Management arm of Franklin Resources Inc., recently announced that he is looking at private equity in Iraq. Smaller companies in manufacturing, the services and food industries are seen to be keen on investment because the “liquidity in the country's stock market remained too poor for listed equity investments.”¹⁶³⁷ If a deal is brokered, then this will be “among the first private-equity investors in the country since the U.S. invasion in 2003,” according to Jennifer Choi, director of research for the U.S.-based Emerging Markets Private Equity Association.¹⁶³⁸

Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) also approved its third loan, amounting to US\$ 19 million, to the Iraq Middle Market Development Foundation (IMMDF), a nonprofit based in Texas that was created to “encourage the expansion of the private sector in Iraq, promote business knowledge and practices, and demonstrate to other potential financiers the viability of private-sector lending in Iraq.”¹⁶³⁹ This particular loan is meant to aid middle-market and small and medium sized enterprises in Iraq, which the company claims has shown success in rebuilding the country’s private sector. The outcome of this loan remains to be seen.

¹⁶³⁴ “Iraq Kurdistan Region Said Ready to Export 100,000 Barrels of Oil Per Day” *BBC Monitoring International Reports*, 4/30/08.

¹⁶³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁶³⁷ “Mobius in Talks for Iraq Private Equity Investment” *Reuters*, 4/18/08.

¹⁶³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁶³⁹ “OPIC Board Approved \$19 Million for Lending to Business in Iraq” *States News Services*, 4/21/08.

Prime Minister al-Maliki is hoping to achieve an outline of an expanded energy agreement with the European Union during a visit to Brussels. He is optimistic that the “meeting will result in new steps of cooperation between Iraq and EU countries, especially regarding contributing to developing our oil and gas sectors.”¹⁶⁴⁰ EU officials, wanting to diversify their gas supply away from Russia, are interested in importing Iraqi gas via its planned Nabucco gas pipeline across Turkey.¹⁶⁴¹ In favoring Iraqis, “this law is expected to help reconcile the interests of Iraq’s Kurdish region- which commands vast reserves of oil and gas and sits atop the expert route to Turkey and Europe- with the Shiite and Sunni communities,” as well.¹⁶⁴²

The EU and Iraq are also in the midst of negotiating a treaty for political and economic cooperation, dubbed the Trade and Cooperation Agreement. Yet, the signing of this treaty remains ambiguous as some EU officials, such as Marios Matsakis, a liberal Cypriot deputy, have concerns about Iraq’s security situation. He sees in Iraq “violence, aggression, corruption, insecurity, terrorist activity, all continuing unabated. Your country is, in fact, in what I would consider to be a real mess.”¹⁶⁴³

In conjunction with wanting to increase oil and gas production, Iraq’s Oil Ministry approved 35 companies to bid for soon-to-be developed oil and gas fields. Among the contenders are Exxon Mobil, Shell, BP, Chevron, Conoco Phillips, and others.

Although biddings have occurred, Inspector General Abdul Karim Elaibi published an annual report which states that “around 65 percent of the oil pipeline network remained idle due to sabotage and lack of repairs last year.”¹⁶⁴⁴ Recently, eight oil guards were wounded when a bomb struck a pipeline in southern Iraq. The report also notes that the persistence and prominence of corruption in the bureaucracy is impeding the development of Iraq’s oil industry. According to the International Herald Tribune, “it is widely believed that gas stations and distribution centers, especially in eastern Baghdad and some Iraqi southern provinces, are covertly controlled by Shiite militiamen dominated by radical cleric Muqtada al-Sadr’s Mahdi Army...who make large sums of money by selling smuggled gas and kerosene on the black market.”¹⁶⁴⁵

7. Criminalization and/or Delegitimization of the State

Rating: 10

In what may be the only positive note concerning the legitimacy of the state, Iraq’s neighbors and leading Western nations recently praised the efforts of the government in broadening “participation in the political process and building dialogue across the

¹⁶⁴⁰ “Iraq Says Wants Expanded EU Energy Cooperation” *Reuters*, 4/16/08.

¹⁶⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁴² “Iraq: EU Eyes Energy Deal During Al-Maliki Visit” *Radio Free Europe*, 4/17/08.

¹⁶⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁴⁴ “Iraq’s Oil Industry not Attracting Foreign Companies” *International Herald Tribune*, 4/29/08

¹⁶⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

country's political and sectarian divides," during a meeting in Kuwait.¹⁶⁴⁶ In return, al-Maliki asked his neighbors to assist in controlling the militias, to cancel all debt in order for the economy to sustain and flourish, and to re-establish full diplomatic relations with Baghdad. At this time, no Sunni Arab state has a full-time ambassador in Iraq.¹⁶⁴⁷ French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner concurred by stating that "we must be all of us, all the European Union present, opening or reopening embassies and helping the people. One of these days the Americans will leave, they would leave, so we have to prepare to be close to our friends, the Iraqis."¹⁶⁴⁸

Since its inception, al-Maliki's government has been viewed as inefficient, corrupt and sectarian and while the recent Basra offensive was praised by the U.S., it validates all these claims. Al-Maliki's advisors claim that this was an attempt by the Prime Minister to demonstrate that not only could "Iraq's central government exert order over a lawless, strategic port city ruled by extremist militias," but that it could do so without the assistance of the U.S.¹⁶⁴⁹ In fact, however, the U.S. did come to the aid of the Iraqi forces with air power and supplies.

However, the offensive, launched without any debate in parliament or with his political allies, is seen as ill-advised and ill-timed because the fighting did not stop until Moqtada al-Sadr issued a statement advising his followers to "unite with all Iraqis and focus their firepower on driving out the occupation forces,"¹⁶⁵⁰ in effect, declaring a cease fire. This statement, negotiated in Iran, "showed that the majority of Moqtada's followers obeyed his orders," because the next day attacks decreased.¹⁶⁵¹ Basem Sharif, the Shiite lawmaker from the Fadhila Party stated that "maybe it's a message to the Iraqi government and the Americans that Sadr is able to control Iraq and turn it from a bad state to a good state" overnight.¹⁶⁵² This discredits the administration for it did not have enough authority or military capacity to curtail the violence on its own and fighting subsided only after a militia leader ordered his men to observe a cease fire.

Though praised by the U.S. for taking the initiative, many ordinary citizens view the offensive and al-Maliki's response to al-Sadr's statement in a dim light. Hussain Mohamed Hassan, an engineering student, stated that, "I think the Iraqi government will not calm down; they will escalate their operations. The government doesn't care about the Iraqi people."¹⁶⁵³ Some are even taking a harsher tone when describing al-Maliki: "Al-Maliki is a dictator who must be removed by all means, He is a worse dictator than

¹⁶⁴⁶ "Iraq's Neighbors Praise Maliki's Government, Maliki Asks Them to Do More" *Thai Press Reports*, 4/24/08.

¹⁶⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁴⁹ "Basra Assault Exposed U.S., Iraqi Limits; Anti-Sadr Gambit Seen Aiding Cleric" *Washington Post*, 4/4/08.

¹⁶⁵⁰ "Shiite Cleric Tells Followers to End Fighting and Unite Iraqis" *New York Times*, 4/26/08.

¹⁶⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁵² *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁵³ *Ibid.*

Saddam; he has killed in less than two years more than Saddam killed in 10 years." said Abdul-Riza Hussein, a Mahdi Army member from Sadr City.¹⁶⁵⁴

U.S. has spent more than US\$ 22 billion in building up the Iraqi security forces. Tripling the number of U.S. forces in Iraq, there are currently 445,000 members in the Iraqi security forces.¹⁶⁵⁵ However, almost 30 percent of the Iraqi troops refused to fight before the cease-fire was reached.¹⁶⁵⁶ According to a senior official in Iraq's Defense Ministry, "soldiers had been hindered by ammunition and food shortages and some Iraqi police troops, who were supposed to be backing the Iraqi army, had actually supported the militias."¹⁶⁵⁷ Problems in "training, equipping, and vetting them" also contributed to the collapse of those forces.¹⁶⁵⁸

Because of this, the government dismissed 1,300 soldiers and policemen. According to General Khalaf, "some of them were sympathetic with these lawbreakers, some refused to battle for political or national or sectarian or religious reasons."¹⁶⁵⁹ This underscores the sectarian divisions that persist in the armed forces and the lack of respect that most soldiers have for their government and leaders.

Sadr City, a large and overwhelmingly Shiite urban center, has been a major security problem for the Americans and Iraqis as half of the city remains under the control of the Mahdi Army. The Basra spilled over offensive into this region. Several members of Parliament from various parties were protesting in Sadr City. According to Mustafa al-Heeti, a Sunni Member of Parliament, "the goal of the protest was to demand an end to the fighting and the withdrawal of military forces."¹⁶⁶⁰ The residents of Sadr City "are Iraqis," he said, "they are very poor people with very few services, and the military action has caused so much loss of life."¹⁶⁶¹

A spokesman for the government, Qassim Atta, said that US\$ 100 million has been allocated to aid Sadr city, but little has arrived because of lack of security in the region and because "government officials remained ambivalent about helping a neighborhood where their enemies lived."¹⁶⁶² Juxtaposed to this is the view from Hazim al-Araji, a Member of Parliament from al-Sadr's bloc, who announced that families would be compensated due to the fighting. According to reports, families who had lost relatives

¹⁶⁵⁴ "Iraq: From One Dictator to the Next" *Inter Press Service*, 4/12/08.

¹⁶⁵⁵ "Securing, Stabilizing, and Rebuilding Iraq: Progress Report: Some Gains Made, Updated Strategy Needed" *Government Accountability Office*, 6/2008.

¹⁶⁵⁶ "Basra Assault Exposed U.S., Iraqi Limits; Anti-Sadr Gambit Seen Aiding Cleric" *Washington Post*, 4/4/08.

¹⁶⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁵⁸ "Securing, Stabilizing, and Rebuilding Iraq: Progress Report: Some Gains Made, Updated Strategy Needed" *Government Accountability Office*, 6/2008.

¹⁶⁵⁹ "Iraq Dismisses 1,300 After Basra Offensive" *New York Times*, 4/14/08.

¹⁶⁶⁰ "Iraq Struggle Unfolds in Peaceful Protest and Violent Attacks in Sadr City" *New York Times*, 4/28/08.

¹⁶⁶¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁶² "Iraq Struggle Unfolds in Peaceful Protest and Violent Attacks in Sadr City" *New York Times*, 4/28/08.

received about US\$ 425 while the seriously wounded received about US\$ 200 and those with minor injuries were compensated about US\$ 110, all from the offices of al-Sadr.¹⁶⁶³ Corruption continues to be widespread in all the ministries.

8. Progressive Deterioration of Public Services

Rating: 9

Sadr City, with a population of apparently 2.5 million civilians, has become emblematic of the deterioration of public services in Iraq. The fighting has eroded the already poor provision of basic services, such as garbage collection, water, electricity and hospital care. The streets are continually filled with trash and “bubbling pools of sewage.”¹⁶⁶⁴ Some neighborhoods don’t have electricity, those fearful of the fighting don’t go to work, and others are too scared to seek medical help.¹⁶⁶⁵

Protests by members of Parliament, (discussed in Indicator #7) increased the pressure on Maliki to address the humanitarian needs of this district, and resulted in an effort to collect trash. Yet a little more than an hour after the cleaning began, clashes occurred between the Iraqi soldiers and the Mahdi army, sidelining the effort. “You can imagine how a city like Sadr City looks with its huge population after that long period without cleaning,” said the district’s mayor, Hassan Kareem.¹⁶⁶⁶

By not providing the residents basic services, the government is also undermining its legitimacy in the eyes of the residents and pushing its constituents into the hands of the militias. Sgt. Alex J. Plitsas of the 312th Psychological Operations Company made this observation after speaking with Sadr’s representatives: “People tell me time and time again that they see their basic needs as being more than food, clothing and shelter. They include electricity, water and sewage. And until the Iraqi government provides them with such basic services, they won’t trust them.”¹⁶⁶⁷ Indeed, a recent report by Refugees International notes that “through a Hezbollah-like scheme, the Shiite Sadrist movement has established itself as the main service provider in the country. As a result of the importance of non-state actors in the delivery of assistance and security, civilians are joining militias.”¹⁶⁶⁸ (See Indicator #7)

Lack of security remains a key reason for the failure to cater to the public’s needs. Aid workers and civil workers are hesitant to enter areas such as Sadr City and Basra due to the recent waves of violence. According to data collected by Iraq’s interior, health and defense ministries, 966 civilians, 69 policemen and 38 soldiers (totaling 1,073) have been

¹⁶⁶³ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁶⁴ “In Sadr City, Basic Services are Faltering” *New York Times*, 4/22/08.

¹⁶⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁶⁶ “Fighting in Sadr City Cuts Short Effort to Collect Trash” *New York Times*, 4/27/08.

¹⁶⁶⁷ “In Sadr City, Basic Services are Faltering” *New York Times*, 4/22/08.

¹⁶⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

killed in April mainly due to the fighting between security forces and the Shiite militants.¹⁶⁶⁹ Almost doubling these numbers are the cases of wounded: 1,745 civilians, 159 policemen and 104 soldiers.¹⁶⁷⁰

Access to medical care is also an issue of concern. (discussed in Indicators #1 and #2) The current offensive has made it difficult for medical personnel to move around, and “hospitals are still in dire need of blood, medicines, syringes, bandages, and other medical stuff,” according to Abbas Owaid, director-general of Fatima al-Zahra hospital, one of four hospitals in Sadr City.¹⁶⁷¹ The director of Iman Ali Hospital in eastern Baghdad, Qassmi al-Midalal expressed the same frustrations: “We need fuel for our generators and cars, cooking gas and food for patients. We also face another problem - the difficulty our staff face getting to the hospital due to the curfew and clashes.”¹⁶⁷²

To complicate matters, many ambulances were not only targeted in Basra, but several were not allowed to reach injured persons in need of medical care. In an effort to ameliorate the situation, Juan-Pedro Schaerer, head of the ICRC delegation asks it be “the duty of the parties to the conflict to provide safe passage for ambulances and to spare the wounded and those taking care of them.”¹⁶⁷³

Food prices also soared due to the fire at the Al-Jamila market, which served as the main source of food for Baghdad. This will not only increase food prices for the Sadr City residents, but also for all residents within Baghdad. “More than 50 percent of Baghdad’s food items, such as rice, flour, cooking oil, frozen imported meat, vegetables, fruit and dozens of other items are bought from this market. The fire at the market will add more to our tragedy as food prices have already doubled since 25 March, and we believe tough days lie ahead,” said Hamid Hassan Taqi, a 62-year-old resident of Sadr City.¹⁶⁷⁴

Members of Parliament also concur that Sadr City is in the midst of a humanitarian crisis. Amer Thamir, an MP from Baghdad’s eastern constituency of Mashtal, claims that “just as we demand that everyone respect Iraq’s constitution and laws and the government’s authority to impose law and order, so we also demand that the government respect human rights and not neglect the humanitarian side.”¹⁶⁷⁵

Because of the lack of government response to citizens’ needs, local militias are becoming major players in providing assistance to vulnerable Iraqis. Social services are being provided by Sunni and Shiite groups who are gaining support by giving people food, oil, electricity, clothes and money.¹⁶⁷⁶ Al-Sadr’s political movement is the most prominent. (discussed in Indicator #7). Not only does the Mahdi Army resettle “displaced

¹⁶⁶⁹ “Iraq Bloodshed in April Kills 1,073” *Agence France Presse*, 4/30/08.

¹⁶⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁷¹ “Iraq: Doctors Still Unable to Work Normally in Baghdad Suburb” *IRIN*, 4/7/08.

¹⁶⁷² “Iraq: Hospitals in Baghdad, Basra Lack Supplies” *IRIN*, 4/1/08.

¹⁶⁷³ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁷⁴ “Iraq: Doctors Still Unable to Work Normally in Baghdad Suburb” *IRIN*, 4/7/08

¹⁶⁷⁵ “Iraq: “Acute Shortages” in Clash-Hit Baghdad Suburbs” *IRIN*, 4/10/08.

¹⁶⁷⁶ “Iraqi Militias Use Food as Recruiting Tool, Report Says” *CNN.COM*, 4/18/08.

Iraqis free of charge in homes that belong to Sunnis,” but also “it provides stipends, food, heating oil, cooking oil and other non-food items to supplement the Public Distribution System rations which are still virtually impossible to transfer after displaced Iraqis have moved to a new neighborhood, though it is easier for Shiites to do so.”¹⁶⁷⁷

As Nir Rosen, a journalist and co-author of a recent Refugees International report, solemnly states, “effectively there really isn't even a state in Iraq. People often talk about the Iraqi government as if it actually functions -- and it doesn't provide very many services. To the extent that it does, it provides them on sectarian grounds. So we saw services being provided to a much larger extent in Shiite areas.”¹⁶⁷⁸

For example, the Ministry of Trade which is in charge of the Public Distribution System (PDS), responsible for providing Iraqis with basic food items, is perceived as favoring Shiites over Sunnis because “of those who were able to [transfer their cards], the overwhelming majority are Shiites,” according to Refugees International.¹⁶⁷⁹ The Refugees International report also notes that the presence of security problems, corruption, and efficiency are a detriment for distribution of the PDS. “In the best cases, Iraqis only received 50 percent of the PDS contents and the quality of the contents has gone down.”¹⁶⁸⁰

9. Suspension or Arbitrary Application of the Rule of Law and Widespread Violation of Human Rights

Rating: 10

In a letter addressed to the UN Security Council, Human Rights Watch advises the Security Council to address the detention practices of the U.S.-led Multi-National Force-Iraq (MNF), which as of 2007, was holding 24,514 detainees.¹⁶⁸¹ The organization accuses the United States of not charging detainees for a specific crime, thereby holding them for an infinite period. Even though Security Council Resolutions 1546, 1637, and 1723 allow for the detention of Iraqis “for imperative reasons of security,” the United States unfairly invokes them to hold detainees without judicial review, hence eroding international law.¹⁶⁸²

Joe Stork, Middle East deputy director at Human Rights Watch, reasoned that “the Bush administration pushed the Security Council to declare that the U.S.-led occupation of Iraq had ended in June 2004, and the end of occupation means that international human rights standards apply -- judicial review, access to legal counsel and family members, and a fair

¹⁶⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁷⁸ “Iraq: Chaos Hardening Sectarian Fiefdoms” *Inter Press Services*, 4/17/08.

¹⁶⁷⁹ “Uprooted and Unstable: Meeting Urgent Humanitarian Needs in Iraq” *Refugees International*, 4/15/08

¹⁶⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁸¹ “UN: Tell US to End Illegal Detention Practices in Iraq” *Human Rights Watch*, 4/28/08.

¹⁶⁸² *Ibid.*

trial."¹⁶⁸³ In regards to the treatment of Iraqi detainees by Iraqi authorities, "where there is a fear of torture, the U.S. should retain physical custody over individuals formally transferred to the Iraqi justice system for prosecution," recommended Human Rights Watch.¹⁶⁸⁴

Camp Constitution is an Iraqi prison which houses criminals and suspected criminals, many of whom are thought to be innocent civilians. According to interviews with detainees and American military personnel, the innocent people "were caught in roundups after violent incidents or arrested by the largely Shiite-run Iraqi security forces because they're Sunnis." Thamer Hamed is one of these individuals, who after 45 days has still not been charged with a crime because he hasn't seen a judge.¹⁶⁸⁵ Angry about his current situation, he said "I think I have something bad in me now that makes me hate everyone here."¹⁶⁸⁶

Stories such as these are not novel. More than 170 tortured and underfed Iraqi detainees were discovered in late 2005 in a secret jail that was run by Iraqi Interior Ministry in a southeast Baghdad neighborhood.¹⁶⁸⁷ Army Lt. Col. John Knox Mills, visiting Camp Constitution as part of a routine inspection, acknowledges concerns about detainee abuses, but hasn't witnessed any. He states "you don't know if someone is guilty of a crime or not. You have less confidence because of stories of corruption, ill-training, those sorts of things. You have less confidence in an arrest made by the Iraqis than one made by a trained law officer back home."¹⁶⁸⁸

Amnesty International also has raised issues with Iraq's legal system, especially its death penalty after the execution of 28 individuals whose trials appear to have been "hasty and unfair."¹⁶⁸⁹ Amnesty is demanding Iraqi officials "disclose all relevant information about these trials, including whether those executed had access to legal representation or not," in order to evaluate the validity and constitutionality of the trials.¹⁶⁹⁰ The organization also argues for the need to suspend the death penalty, which was reinstated in 2004 "to curb the widespread violence in the country. The reality, however, is that violence has continued unabated and the death penalty has not been a deterrent."¹⁶⁹¹

10. Security Apparatus Operates as a "State Within a State"

Rating: 10

¹⁶⁸³ "UN: Tell US to End Illegal Detention Practices in Iraq" *Human Rights Watch*, 4/28/08.

¹⁶⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁸⁵ "Iraqi Detainees Languish Uncharged in Crowded Jails" *Mcclatchy-Tribune News Service*, 4/9/08.

¹⁶⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁸⁹ "Iraq: 28 People Executed After What Seems to be Hasty and Unfair Trials" *Amnesty International*, 4/18/08.

¹⁶⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁹¹ *Ibid.*

The fighting in Sadr City underscores the growing importance of the militias, particularly al-Sadr's Madhi Army which has substantial control in Baghdad, Basra, and other heavily concentrated Shiite areas in southern Iraq. Al-Maliki's offensive has garnered support from some local residents, such as Aziz Mussawi from Hillah, who claims that "those who shout loud against al-Maliki and his legally elected government are all thieves and murderers and must be executed. These militias will destroy Iraq if left unleashed."¹⁶⁹² However, there are still those who feel otherwise. The Mahdi Army has come to the aid of not only IDPs, but other civilians whose services are denied due to sectarian prejudices (see Indicators #2, #7, and #8).

Many Iraqis have come to view the offensive not as an attempt to drive out criminals and outlaws, but as a power struggle among the Shiite factions. According to Mohammad Alwan, a lawyer in Baghdad, "over a thousand Iraqis got killed and more than that number wounded just for a game of chess between warlords. All of them call for dissolving militias while they keep militias of their own. Most of those in power in the government are militia leaders."¹⁶⁹³

To quell the violence, American forces have begun to build a massive concrete wall to partition Sadr City. The purpose of the wall is to make the southern part of the city into a "protected enclave, secured by Iraqi and American forces, where the Iraqi government can undertake reconstruction efforts."¹⁶⁹⁴ According to Lt. Col. Dan Barnett, commander of the First Squadron, Second Stryker Cavalry Regiment, "you can't really repair anything that is broken until you establish security. A wall that isolates those who would continue to attack the Iraqi Army and coalition forces can create security conditions [that will allow them to]...go in and rebuild."¹⁶⁹⁵

Due to fears that another wave of sectarian violence will occur in response to the tensions in mixed neighborhoods, nearly a dozen Sunni Awakening Councils have been formed in the past two weeks.¹⁶⁹⁶ Unlike previous Awakening Councils, these recruits are not being paid. Yet, this does not seem to matter because "many Sunnis have lost faith in the Iraqi security forces after last month's offensive against Shiite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr's Mahdi Army militia in the southern city of Basra and parts of Baghdad," especially after many of the security forces refused to fight, according to Khaled Jamal al-Qaisi, a Sunni leader in the Fadhil neighborhood.¹⁶⁹⁷

These trepidations were only heightened when Ahmed Sattar Jamil, a commander of a Sunni watch group, was killed in a Baghdad Shiite neighborhood after being hit with 24 bullets. "The Mahdi Army killed him because they know he is Sunni, and he is taking

¹⁶⁹² "Iraq: From One Dictator to the Next," *Inter Press Service*, 4/12/08.

¹⁶⁹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁹⁴ "U.S. Begins Erecting Wall in Sadr City," *New York Times*, 4/18/08.

¹⁶⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁹⁶ "Sunnis Organize Militias to Offset Those of Shiites" *USA Today*, 4/11/08.

¹⁶⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

control of the neighborhood," said Abu Mohammad, an Awakening leader.¹⁶⁹⁸ Even ordinary citizens, such as Mazen Odeh al-Mayahi, a supermarket owner, fear more sectarian violence. "First the Sunnis and Shiites were killing each other, now the Shiites are killing Shiites. But tomorrow it's going to be the Sahwa and the Mahdi Army," he said.¹⁶⁹⁹

This rise in the number of Awakening Councils is not a new phenomenon. Functioning without a national hierarchy, and "organized along sectarian lines based on the neighborhoods in which they operate," there are currently 105,000 members in these various Sons of Iraq groups;¹⁷⁰⁰ Roughly 91,000 are under contract with the coalition forces and are paid US\$ 300 per month for their services.¹⁷⁰¹ Although the United States often praises the work of these groups in reducing sectarian violence, others such as Council on Foreign Relations Senior Fellow, Steven Simon, fear that in the long term, this will lead to "tribalism, warlordism, and sectarianism."¹⁷⁰² This is due to the government's hesitancy in accepting and integrating these groups into its own security forces.

Col. Marin N. Stanton acknowledged "there's a lot of distrust in the government for the Sunnis. One could almost use the word 'paranoia.'"¹⁷⁰³ In March 2008, the Pentagon reported to Congress on the ongoing impediments to security in Iraq with respect to the Awakening: "the potential for infiltration by insurgents; the possibility of distortions in the local economy if salaries are not carefully managed; and the need for a comprehensive plan to transition Sons of Iraq to sustainable forms of employment in the [Iraqi Security Forces] or in the private sector."¹⁷⁰⁴

The Awakening Councils also have their own frustrations. It was reported in the pan-Arabic newspaper, "Al-Hayat," that Colonel Sa'ad Aziz Sulayman, the leader of the Awakening Council in Al-Taji, threatened to end his activities because his group had not been paid for nearly two months.¹⁷⁰⁵ Similar reports have been published of fighters abandoning their duties or going on strikes.¹⁷⁰⁶ Abd al-Aziz, the head of the council in Abu Ghurayb, said nearly 500 of his fighters have quit, and blamed the U.S. "The Americans got what they wanted. We purged Al-Qaeda for them and now people are saying why should we have any more deaths for the Americans. They have given us nothing."¹⁷⁰⁷

¹⁶⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁰⁰ "Securing, Stabilizing, and Rebuilding Iraq: Progress Report: Some Gains Made, Updated Strategy Needed" *Government Accountability Office*, 6/2008.

¹⁷⁰¹ "The Role of the 'Sons of Iraq' in Improving Security" *Washington Post*, 4/28/08.

¹⁷⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁰⁵ "Iraq: Future of Awakening Councils in Limbo" *Radio Free Europe*, 4/4/08.

¹⁷⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

The lives of the members of the Awakening Councils are often jeopardized due to attacks by militants who see them as traitors for aiding the U.S. During a funeral for two council members in a village near Kirkuk, at least sixty people were killed when suicide bombers triggered explosive vests.¹⁷⁰⁸ Prior to this event, gunshots killed two council members in the Sunni district of Azamiyah and five council members along with a civilian were killed by a roadside bomb.

Recently, al-Maliki praised the work of the United Iraqi Alliance, Dawa and the Supreme Islamic Iraqi Council, but did not mention the Awakening Councils (see Indicator #3).¹⁷⁰⁹ This follows Maliki's prior decision to only incorporate 25 percent of the fighters into the security force, leaving the remaining 75 percent unemployed. Many warn against this dangerous scenario because these fighters can potentially turn against the government or the U.S. Steven Simon commented that "when former Sunni insurgents no longer believe that Washington will restore them to dominance, their current U.S. paymasters will once again be their targets."¹⁷¹⁰

11. Rise of Factionalized Elites

Rating: 10

The situation for political elites remains volatile. While there have been attempts at reconciliation, marginalization has occurred as well. The crackdown on the Mahdi Army militia has pitted the government against a former ally, Moqtada al-Sadr. The military operations in Basra and Sadr City have brought al-Maliki in alliance with Sunni, Kurdish, and some Shiite political leaders, giving him the opportunity to pass laws and broker deals. "My view is that what happened could well be a turning point in the political alignments of Iraq," said Barham Salih, a Kurdish Iraqi deputy prime minister.¹⁷¹¹ "What he did in taking on his own constituents can give him the credentials to be a national leader rather than the leader of a Shiite sect."¹⁷¹²

However, ordinary Iraqis are seeing things differently. Although a large segment fears al-Sadr's militia, they also perceive him the "legitimate champion of their interests."¹⁷¹³ They have seen the power he holds in terms of influencing the public and the failure of the government to curtail the movement of the militias until assistance came from the coalition forces.¹⁷¹⁴ This reinforces the perceived prejudices of al-Maliki's reputation as a tool of the Americans.

¹⁷⁰⁸ "Suicide Bomber Strikes Funeral of Anti-Al-Qaida Sunni Tribesmen North of Baghdad, Killing 50" *Associated Press Worldstream*, 4/18/08.

¹⁷⁰⁹ "Awakening Movement Growing Disenfranchised" *UPI Energy*, 4/07/08.

¹⁷¹⁰ "The Role of the 'Sons of Iraq' in Improving Security" *Washington Post*, 4/28/08.

¹⁷¹¹ "Crackdown on Militias Raises Stability Concerns" *New York Times*, 4/8/08.

¹⁷¹² *Ibid.*

¹⁷¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁷¹⁴ *Ibid.*

Intra-Shiite rivalry continued when al-Maliki announced that al-Sadr's political movement would be banned from the upcoming elections unless it disbanded its militia. This reaffirmed al-Sadr's previous claims that the offensive was concentrated on his movement, and not against all outlaws and criminals. Because al-Sadr's movement has gained popularity throughout the year, it not only stands to win the local and provincial elections, but also the national elections in 2009, thereby outpolling al-Maliki and al-Hakim, leader of the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI).¹⁷¹⁵ Some news outlets are reporting that mostly all experts agree that al-Sadr has the mass support needed to win in Baghdad and the south in any future elections. Therefore, as some commentators note, the Basra offensive is nothing more than an "intra-Shiite conflict to decide the destiny of Iraq's rulers in the post-occupation era."¹⁷¹⁶

Although the ban which prohibited al-Sadr's from political participation unless it dissolved its militia was viewed by some as a stern warning, others have come to question its legitimacy and enforcement. "It is not al-Maliki's job to decide this: it is Parliament's job," said Mahmoud Othman, an independent Kurdish member of Parliament.¹⁷¹⁷ "When you make elections, you have to include al-Sadr. If you don't, the Mahdi Army will cause violence. The principles of disarming his militia are good, but how to implement it? That is not an easy job."¹⁷¹⁸

The deeply entrenched animosity among the various Shiite factions has escalated to the point where civilians like Abu Abdullah see that "now, our fight is with Badr and Dawa, along with the Americans. They are bigger enemies than the extremist Sunnis."¹⁷¹⁹ Abu Hussein who voted for the Shiite coalition, now declares that this power struggle has engulfed his life. "We are sorry we voted for this government. I will never vote for anyone. No one can fool me again."¹⁷²⁰ Politically, this infighting poses a "potential political nightmare" and creates an environment where "the survival of the current Iraqi government hangs in the balance," noted Juan Cole, a Middle East expert.¹⁷²¹

Although no dates have been established yet, the upcoming elections have not only stirred up emotions in the al-Sadr movement, but also among other elites and former leaders who want to be placed on the ballot. Adnan Pachachi, a secular politician, recently announced that he and former Prime Minister Ayad Allawi are working on creating a secular political front yet again, in an attempt to bring together secular Sunnis and Shiites.¹⁷²² The Awakening Councils also recently held a conference to discuss the prospects of having their own political party.¹⁷²³

¹⁷¹⁵ "War on Militias or an Intra-Shiite Conflict" *Gulf News*, 4/25/08.

¹⁷¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷¹⁷ "Crackdown on Militias Raises Stability Concerns" *New York Times*, 4/8/08.

¹⁷¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁷¹⁹ "Between Iraqi Shiites, a Deepening Animosity" *Washington Post*, 4/7/08.

¹⁷²⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁷²¹ "Basra Sign of Political Showdown" *UPI Energy*, 4/1/08.

¹⁷²² "Shiite Cleric Tells Followers to End Fighting and Unite Iraqis" *New York Times*, 4/26/08.

¹⁷²³ *Ibid.*

One positive outcome of this infighting was the return of Iraq's largest Sunni bloc to the cabinet. "Our conditions were very clear, and the government achieved some of them," said Adnan al-Dulaimi, the head of the Tawafuq, the largest Sunni bloc in the government.¹⁷²⁴ The achievements included "the general amnesty, chasing down the militias and disbanding them and curbing the outlaws."¹⁷²⁵ Even though officials are working out the intricacies of the return of Tawafuq to the cabinet, including what ministries would be given to which Sunni politicians, the return marks a momentous occasion for the al-Maliki government. According to Khalaf al-Iliyan, a senior member of the National Dialogue Council, part of the Tawafuq bloc, "I agree to end the boycott and come back to the government because it needs the support of all the political parties right now."¹⁷²⁶

Further attempts were made at reconciliation at a conference held in Helsinki. Organized by Patrick O'Malley, a University of Massachusetts-Boston professor, the Institute of Global Leadership at Tufts, and the Crisis Management Initiative, a Finnish nongovernmental organization, various tribal leaders and party officials attended the conference. They included Hadi al-Amiri, head of the Badr Organization, as well as Fouad Massom, a Kurdish member of the Iraqi Parliament's constitutional review committee, and Usama al-Tikrit, the leader of the Sunni-led Iraqi Islamic party. Four tribal sheiks - two Sunni and two Shiite - also attended. However, al-Sadr was absent from the conference.

"An exercise in unconventional diplomacy," the delegates agreed to meet again in three months in Baghdad for a further round of talks on how to promote national reconciliation and how to employ dialogue to solve political disputes.¹⁷²⁷ According to O'Malley, participants concentrated on solving a set of core goals, such as "disarming militias associated with political parties, protecting the rights of minorities, and reducing corruption in government."¹⁷²⁸

Although seen as an important step in attempting to broker peace by some, others remain skeptical. "I don't think this group has a monopoly on any formula that will lead to a solution that no one else has found yet. There are underlying rifts in the society that no amount of meetings in Europe or elsewhere is going to resolve," said Kenneth Katzman, a Middle East specialist at the Congressional Research Service, an arm of Congress.¹⁷²⁹ P.J. Crowley, a senior fellow at the Center for American Progress, concurs, adding that the "success of the effort in Helsinki will depend on whether parties who did not participate torpedo any progress, and whether those who attended are powerful enough to persuade the communities they represent to accept the decisions made at the

¹⁷²⁴ "Top Sunni Bloc is Set to Rejoin Cabinet in Iraq" *New York Times*, 4/25/08.

¹⁷²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁷²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷²⁷ "Warring Factions to Gather in Iraq: U-Mass Scholar Sets New Round of Talks" *The Boston Globe*, 4/28/08.

¹⁷²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁷²⁹ *Ibid.*

meetings.”¹⁷³⁰ Yet O’Malley remains hopeful and delighted to see that “the Iraqis themselves have taken ownership of this process by inviting us to Baghdad for the next meeting.”¹⁷³¹

12. Intervention of Other States or External Political Actors

Rating: 10

Iran continues to dominate the headlines in terms of its assistance to Iraq, especially with the operations in Basra and Sadr City. By recently taking credit for brokering the ceasefire agreement which dramatically decreased violence in Basra, Iran has "cast significant doubt on the effectiveness of the U.S. counter-measures" against the Iranian efforts.¹⁷³²

Although U.S. officials declined to discuss the extent to which Iran is supporting fighters in Iraq, they did say that its support was in terms of “training, equipping, and financing Shiite militias.”¹⁷³³ Even though the U.S. administration has received criticism for overstating the threat of Iran, officials claim that during the operation in Basra and Sadr City, a significant amount of weapons were captured which had serial numbers or packaging materials demonstrating that they were made in Iran in 2008. Although the number of shipped arms has not increased, the continued exportation validates claims of assistance.¹⁷³⁴

Iran is now training Shiite fighters in its own country, then exporting them to Iraq in order for them to train others. Iran's Quds Force is in charge of developing these programs which include “five courses on tactics, leadership, training, commando operations and weapons and explosives,” according to U.S. officials.¹⁷³⁵ General David Petraeus, the Commanding General of the Multi-National Force-Iraq (MNF-I), has characterized these Iranian backed Iraqi militias as potentially “the greatest long-term threat to the viability of a democratic Iraq.”¹⁷³⁶

Iran has rejected these accusations, claiming that it is instead supporting Iraq’s reconstruction and aiding the country as it attempts to achieve peace and national unity. This was evident when the Iranian Foreign Minister met with the Iraqi Premier, along with the Turkish and Saudi Foreign Ministers. Instead of accusing Iran of aiding the militias, Maliki praised and thanked Iran for its continuous resolve in assisting Iraq.¹⁷³⁷ Invariably, Iran and Turkey both called for a “further active role in Iraq’s reconstruction which will lead to peace and stability in the country.”

¹⁷³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁷³¹ “Iraqi Factions Meet for Northern Ireland-Inspired Peace Talks,” *Deutsche Presse-Agentur*, 4/28/08.

¹⁷³² “Questions Linger Over Scope of Iran’s Role in Iraq Fighting” *New York Times*, 4/26/08.

¹⁷³³ *Ibid.*

¹⁷³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁷³⁵ “Questions Linger Over Scope of Iran’s Role in Iraq Fighting” *New York Times*, 4/26/08.

¹⁷³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷³⁷ “Iran Foreign Minister Confers with Iraqi Premier, Turkish, Saudi Counteparts,” *BBC Monitoring International Reports*, 4/23/08.

U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice asked Arab nations to improve their relations with Iraq by offering debt relief along with diplomatic, economic and cultural ties as a reward for its “efforts improving security and political reconciliation.”¹⁷³⁸ One of the features of these improved relations is the reopening of embassies and exchanging ambassadors, which some of Iraq’s Sunni neighbors are hesitant to do. According to Rice, Iraq should be “fully incorporated” into the Arab world by its neighbors.¹⁷³⁹ This “in and of itself will begin to shield (Iraq) from influences of Iran that are nefarious influences,” according to Rice.¹⁷⁴⁰

During a congressional hearing, General David Petraeus categorized Iraq’s progress as “fragile and reversible,” and therefore recommended “that once the last of the 30,000 extra troops pumped into Iraq last year are withdrawn in July, ‘we undertake a 45-day period of consolidation and evaluation.’”¹⁷⁴¹ U.S. ambassador to Baghdad, Ryan Crocker, also testifying before the Senate Armed Services and Foreign Relations committees, warning of the complex and challenging situation in Iraq and of Iran’s potential to encourage violence in Iraq. He conceded that, “with scenes of increasing violence, and masked gunmen in the streets, it is hard to see how this situation supports a narrative of progress in Iraq.”¹⁷⁴² He dismissed the idea that Washington was negotiating with Baghdad to establish a permanent base in Iraq, one that would violate the UN mandate set to expire in 2008.

¹⁷³⁸ “Rice Asks Neighbors to Offer Iraq Debt Relief, Ties” *BBC*, 4/19/08.

¹⁷³⁹ “Rice Says Arabs Must Shield Iraq from Iran’s Sway” *BBC*, 4/17/08.

¹⁷⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁴¹ “Top US General Calls for Pause in Iraq Troop Withdrawal,” *Agence France Presse*, 4/8/08.

¹⁷⁴² *Ibid.*

April 2008
Core Five

1. Police
Rating: Weak

Although Major General Michael Jones noted that the number of Iraqi police have increased by 400 percent since the U.S.-led invasion and praised the forces' ability to overcome corruption and sectarianism to fight in the Basra offensive, the units still "had significant problems."¹⁷⁴³ One was the desertion of several units from their posts as they were unwilling to fight in an area to which they were communally attached.

According to a Western security official, who estimated post-abandonment at more than 50 percent in parts of Basra and Sadr City, "police work where they live and are inherently influenced by the politics of their community."¹⁷⁴⁴ This was more prevalent among the local police than the National Police, who Jones applauded for fighting hard and "being cohesive through some very tough fighting."¹⁷⁴⁵ As a result, 1,300 army and police personnel were fired.¹⁷⁴⁶ Consequentially, General Mohan al-Fraiji and Police Chief Major General Abdul Jalil Khalaf were replaced by two other commanders, Major General Mahmud Jaw and Major General Adel Dahaam. They are transferring to senior staff positions in Baghdad, according to Major General Qassim Atta.¹⁷⁴⁷

2. Leadership
Rating: Weak

Despite flaws in execution and the need for help from coalition forces, the Basra offensive has unexpectedly increased Prime Minister al-Maliki's popularity across the population, especially among the Kurds, the Sunni Arabs and secular Shiites who oppose Sadr's militias.¹⁷⁴⁸ The successful return of a top Sunni bloc to cabinet is an outgrowth of al-Maliki's credibility. However, the political struggle between the dominant Shiite parties, resulting in armed conflict in Basra and Sadr City, counteract attempts at political reconciliation amongst the various affiliates.

The conflict, described by the International Herald Tribune as a "power grab" has greatly exacerbated existing hostilities between the two parties.¹⁷⁴⁹ This power struggle is due to the upcoming elections and al-Maliki's need to curb Sadr's popularity because, according

¹⁷⁴³ "U.S. General Praises Iraqi National Police" *UPI Energy*, 4/4/08.

¹⁷⁴⁴ "The World; Can They Fight?; The Recent Battle Between Iraqi Soldiers and Militiamen Provides a Sort of Progress Report on the Nation's Army" *Los Angeles Times*, 4/3/07.

¹⁷⁴⁵ "U.S. General Praises Iraqi National Police" *UPI Energy*, 4/4/08.

¹⁷⁴⁶ "Iraq Removes Iraqi Army, Police Chiefs of Basra" *Agence France Presse*, 4/16/08.

¹⁷⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁴⁸ "Nuri al-Maliki, a Dogged Survivor" *The Economist*, 4/26/08.

¹⁷⁴⁹ "A civil war Iraq can't win; Shiite on Shiite" *The International Herald Tribune*, 4/3/08.

to American military and civilian officials, “if open local and provincial elections were held, Dawa and the Islamic Supreme Council were likely to be routed because they were seen as having failed to bring development and government services.”¹⁷⁵⁰ The fighting served as a “warning that the Islamic Supreme Council and Dawa will not permit fair elections and the creation of legitimate local and provincial governments”.¹⁷⁵¹

3. Civil Service

Rating: Poor

The condition and progress of Iraq’s civil services remains poor. According to IRIN, the Iraqi Parliament recently urged the government to reallocate US\$ 5 billion for “investment in infrastructure and services to social welfare programmes, a food rationing system and to meet the needs of internally displaced persons (IDPs),” but not for development and reconstruction projects for fear of corruption.¹⁷⁵²

Radhika Coomaraswamy, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, concurred with this view and added that the government should allocate more funds to education and clean water. According to her findings, 60 percent of children do not have access to safe drinking water and cholera remains a concern in these areas, while the percentage of children attending school has decreased from 80 percent in 2005 to 53 percent in 2008.¹⁷⁵³

Continual fighting in Sadr City has placed the city in a “tragic humanitarian situation as residents are suffering acute shortages of food and medicines,” according to Iraq’s Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights.¹⁷⁵⁴ There is a significant lack of fuel and food in Baghdad and in southern Iraq, leading food prices to increase anywhere between 50 to 600 percent, according to the International Organization of Migration (IOM).¹⁷⁵⁵ According to the International Committee of the Red Cross, hospitals in Baghdad and Basra remain in critical conditions because they have “used up stocks of vital medical items and require further supplies to cope with the influx of wounded patients.”¹⁷⁵⁶

Qassim al-Midalal, the director of Imam Ali Hospital in eastern Baghdad, also noted the necessity of fuel for “generations and cars, cooking gas and food for patient,” and added that staff has a difficulty getting to work because of the clashes and curfew.¹⁷⁵⁷

4. Judiciary

¹⁷⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁵² “Iraq: Parliament Urges Government to Reallocate Development Money to Those in Need” *IRIN*, 4/13/08.

¹⁷⁵³ “UN Officials Urge Iraq to do More for Children” *Reuters*, 4/30/08.

¹⁷⁵⁴ “Iraq: “Acute Shortages” in Clash-Hit Baghdad Suburbs” *IRIN*, 4/10/08.

¹⁷⁵⁵ “Iraq: IOM to Distribute Aid Once Movement Restriction Lifted” *IRIN*, 4/2/08.

¹⁷⁵⁶ “Iraq: Hospitals in Baghdad, Basra Lack Supplies-ICRC” *IRIN*, 4/1/08.

¹⁷⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

Rating: Poor

The criminal case against Tariq Aziz, a former lieutenant during Saddam Hussein's reign, and seven other defendants was postponed until May because one of the co-defendants, Ali Hassan al-Majid, nicknamed "Chemical Ali" was too ill to attend. The trial was initially delayed for seven hours due to "organizational and procedural measures" because the defendants weren't brought to court on time according to Abdul-Rahman, a judge.¹⁷⁵⁸ In his defense, the judge stated that "we are not a government office that has fixed work hours."¹⁷⁵⁹

Charged for the execution of 42 merchants who were accused of increasing food prices during the 1992 UN sanctions against Iraq, the defendants may also be charged with crimes against humanity, war crimes, and genocide; if convicted, they could face a sentence of death by hanging, according to a judge with the Iraqi High Tribunal.¹⁷⁶⁰ Human Rights Watch urged the Iraqi High Tribunal of its obligation "to act fairly, independently, and credibly" when attempting "to achieve justice for the immense crimes by Saddam Hussein."¹⁷⁶¹

To ease the overcrowding, hundreds of detainees were recently released from prisons in Kirkuk and Sulaimaniya province. They were mostly Sunnis who had been charged with lesser crimes, or were rank and file military officers and former members of the Baath Party.¹⁷⁶²

This was part of the larger operation that has come under the wing of the amnesty law. Since the passage of this law, more than 40,000 detainees have been released.¹⁷⁶³ To ease them back into society in a productive manner, the government plans to offer vocational training to these individuals.¹⁷⁶⁴

Yet, this does not negate the shortcomings of the judiciary system. As many as 20,000 Iraqis still are estimated to be held in Iraqi prisons where they are underfed and not charged for a crime.¹⁷⁶⁵ Amnesty International also condemned the ethical bounds of the death penalty as they claimed that 28 individuals were sentenced to be hanged after an unfair trial.¹⁷⁶⁶

¹⁷⁵⁸ "Iraqi Court Begins Hearing Case Against Tariq Aziz Over Allegedly Executing Merchants" *Associated Press Worldstream*, 4/29/08.

¹⁷⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁶¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁶² "Iraq Government Frees Some Detainees" *UPI*, 4/22/08.

¹⁷⁶³ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁶⁵ "Iraqi Detainees Languish Uncharged in Crowded Jails" *Mcclatchy-Tribune News Service*, 4/9/08.

¹⁷⁶⁶ "Iraq: 28 People Executed After What Seems to be Hasty and Unfair Trials" *Amnesty International*, 4/18/08.

5. *Military*

Rating: Weak

The Basra offensive has been characterized as a defining moment for the Iraqis because it was the first time that the Iraqi government asserted itself in establishing security within its own region by taking on the militias. According to The International Herald Tribune, the operation indicated that the Iraqi military could “quickly organize and deploy forces over considerable distances. Two Iraqi C-130s and several Iraqi helicopters were involved in the operation, an important step for a military struggling to develop air combat capability.”¹⁷⁶⁷

However, despite these short term successes, Iraq’s military and police forces still need “years of improvement before they have enough recruits, officers, and support systems to secure the country,” according to a report published by Stuart Bowen, Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction.¹⁷⁶⁸

STINGS

The spillover of the Basra offensive into Sadr City, which lead to degradation of the city’s public services and increased violence.

The reluctance of the al-Maliki government to incorporate the Sons of Iraq into the Iraqi Security Forces and the fear of Shiite supremacy is not only increasing the number of Awakening Groups, but it is also perpetuating the sectarian rift between the two factions.

¹⁷⁶⁷ “As Iraq’s ‘Defining Moment’ Unravels, U.S. Cites Poor Planning” *The International Herald Tribune*, 4/4/08.

¹⁷⁶⁸ “Report: Iraqi Forces Lacking; Readiness is Years Away, Watchdog says” *USA Today*, 4/25/08.

May 2008
12 Indicators

1. Mounting Demographic Pressures
Rating: 10

The humanitarian crisis persists as ordinary Iraqis are denied sufficient access to basic life sustaining resources, such as health care, water and food. At least 30 percent of the Iraqi population does not have access to proper health care while 40 percent does not have access to clean drinking water. At least four million civilians do not have enough food.¹⁷⁶⁹ This was particularly evident during the heavy fighting in Sadr City, which ended with a cease-fire on May 11. According to Claire Hajaj, a UNICEF spokeswoman, the fighting caused shortages of water, medicine and food, along with the shutting down of medical centers, such as the Habibiya Maternity Hospital and the Hakim Hospital.¹⁷⁷⁰

Kurdistan may face another possible cholera outbreak. The government has “allocated US\$ 20 million to fight any cholera outbreak in Kurdistan after concerns rose last month when at least 500 patients with diarrhea and vomiting were admitted to hospitals,” according to Mohammed Sadiq, the regional Health Ministry.¹⁷⁷¹ To ensure that all necessary precautions are taken, the Kurdistan regional government has launched a “media campaign to raise awareness about the risks of cholera, how to keep food clean, and how to boil water.”¹⁷⁷²

A cholera outbreak hit Kurdistan last year, infecting 2,000 residents and killing 24.¹⁷⁷³ Although no cases have so far been reported, the region remains cautious due to lack of potable water, rising temperatures and poor sanitation.¹⁷⁷⁴ The resilience of the illness due to the poor infrastructure, mainly the contaminated water supplies, frustrates health professionals, such as Muhammad Omer Muhammad, director of a teaching hospital in Sulaimaniyah, who states that “we cannot continue treating people and have them leave hospital and get sick again.”¹⁷⁷⁵ It also upsets local residents who argue that “if someone is infected with the disease, the government will be responsible.”¹⁷⁷⁶

Shortage of water, electricity, and fuel has proven to be detrimental for Fallujah’s residents. Once a blooming agricultural production region, Fallujah’s farmers are now struggling to make ends meet. This is due to the sharp increase in food prices which, for

¹⁷⁶⁹ “Iraq: Soaring Food Prices Brew Resentment in Fallujah” *Inter Press Service*, 5/12/08.

¹⁷⁷⁰ “Iraq: Humanitarian Situation in Baghdad’s Sadr City Bad, Though Some Improvements Seen” *Associated Press Worldstream*, 5/7/08.

¹⁷⁷¹ “Iraq: Kurdistan Bracing for Possible Cholera Outbreak” *IRIN*, 5/7/08.

¹⁷⁷² *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁷³ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁷⁴ “Fears of Cholera Epidemic in Kurdistan” *Institute for War and Peace Reporting*, 5/5/08.

¹⁷⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

many, exceeds their income. A local grocer complained that “the average price for 1 kilogram of tomatoes is approximately US\$ 1. This price is when there is no crisis such as Americans blocking the entrance into the city.”¹⁷⁷⁷

Increased food prices coupled with the high unemployment rate is leading to social disruptions. Ahmed Munqith, a city official, affirmed “... that people are carrying out illegitimate acts in order to obtain their daily life necessities. The food crisis has led to vast corruption and raised crime rates to peak point.”¹⁷⁷⁸ Consequently, Fallujah residents are blaming the Americans for the crisis. For Sheikh Ala'in, a cleric in Fallujah, “occupation planners designed this poverty in order to make Iraqis work for them as policemen and spies. Iraq is floating on a lake of oil, but there is no gas to run water pumps. What an irony.”¹⁷⁷⁹

Already facing unemployment and impoverishment, Iraqis have to endure the further reduction of their monthly food rations, which has been in a dire condition because of corruption and poor management.¹⁷⁸⁰ In April 2007, “of the four million Iraqis who could not regularly buy enough to eat, only 60 percent had access to Public Distribution System rations,” and the situation has not improved since then, according to the United Nations Refugee Agency.¹⁷⁸¹ Reducing the number of items from ten to five since the beginning of the year has led to resentment towards the Iraqi government. Ordinary citizens voicing their dissatisfactions argue that “the food ration that was once enough for our survival is now close to nothing, and the market prices are incredibly high. It is impossible for 80 percent of Iraqis now to buy the same items they used to get from the previous regime's food rations.”¹⁷⁸² Others state that instead of receiving basic items such as milk, beans, and milk, they are now receiving “bullets and missiles and polluted food and medicines.”¹⁷⁸³

Fadhil Jawad of the Dawa Party admitted that the government is failing to provide the services that were once available under Saddam Hussein's rule.¹⁷⁸⁴ Haj Chiad, a Public Distribution System distribution agent in Fallujah, concurs by adding that “during the past four years that the food given to us by the Ministry of Trade was either rotten or actually poisoned. We distributed rice and sugar from sacks that had been stored a long time in damp places, and tomato paste that was long past its expiry date before we received it.”¹⁷⁸⁵ The government has repeatedly rejected the demands of the Iraqi Parliament's Committee for Integrity to interrogate the Minister of Trade, Abdul Falah al-Sudany, for the “vast corruption in his ministry.”¹⁷⁸⁶

¹⁷⁷⁷ “Iraq: Soaring Food Prices Brew Resentment in Fallujah” *Inter Press Service*, 5/12/08.

¹⁷⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁸⁰ “Iraq: Dwindling Food Rations are Increasingly Old, Polluted” *Inter Press Services*, 5/6/08.

¹⁷⁸¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁸² *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁸³ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

In addition to the desolate and critical conditions on the ground, the Iraqi Water Resources Ministry released a statement warning the Iraqi citizens of an impending drought as a result of a dry winter and the water policies of Iraq's neighboring countries. Iraqi government officials, such as Peshtivan Ahmed, a member of the parliamentary committee on water resources, have blamed Iran, Syria, and Turkey for "building dams on Tigris and Euphrates or changing the course of tributaries leading to Iraq."¹⁷⁸⁷ The continuation of these policies along with another dry winter will cause Iraq not only to "lose nearly half of its water resources," but it will also "deprive at least one million hectares of Iraqi agricultural land of water, and threaten livelihoods in the marshlands," according to Hassan Ni'ma Alwan, an expert at the Water Resources Ministry.¹⁷⁸⁸ In an attempt to ameliorate the situation, Water Resources Minister, Latif Rashid, is heading to Turkey and then to Syria to ask the respective governments to increase the amount of water released into the Euphrates and Tigris rivers and end severe water shortages.¹⁷⁸⁹

2. Massive Movement of Refugees or IDPs

Rating: 9

The refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) crisis is serious. Abdul-Khaliq Zankana, head of Parliament's Displacement and Migration Committee, spoke about the precarious nature of this problem and cautioned that without a comprehensive policy, this issue "could lead to serious regional and international problems... The absence of support and appropriate solutions will leave them easy prey to militias and armed gangs inside Iraq and [make them into] possible recruits to intelligence services outside Iraq."¹⁷⁹⁰ Less than one percent of the 5.1 million uprooted Iraqis have returned home since the end of March.¹⁷⁹¹

Many Iraqis may now be tempted to return due to the significant drop in the levels of violence in the past few months. However, UN and other aid agencies worry that the return of thousands of Iraqis may reignite sectarian tensions as they find their old homes occupied by other families who are refusing to leave.¹⁷⁹² Rafiq Tschannen, the IOM's Chief of Mission for Iraq, observed that "the situation for those returning is grim and isn't necessarily an improvement from when they were displaced."¹⁷⁹³ The returnees may endure "chronic shortage of facilities," such as potable water, health care, and education along with insufficient food rations, according to a report published by Iraq's Ministry of Displacement and Migration and the International Organization of Migration.¹⁷⁹⁴

¹⁷⁸⁷ "Iraq: Ministry Issues Drought Warning" *IRIN*, 5/22/08.

¹⁷⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁸⁹ "Iraq in Water Talks with Turkey, Syria as Rivers Run Dry" *Agence France Presse*, 5/27/08.

¹⁷⁹⁰ "Iraq: Government Negligent in Tackling Human Displacement-MP" *IRIN*, 5/13/08.

¹⁷⁹¹ "Feeling Safer, Iraqis Come Home but Only a Few" *Associated Press Online*, 5/26/08.

¹⁷⁹² *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁹⁴ "Iraq: Returns Erratic as Authorities Clamp Down on Illegal IDP Settlements" *International Organization of Migration*, 5/20/08.

The same report assessed that internally displaced persons, under increased pressure from central and local authorities, now risk being evicted from their temporary, yet illegal homes.¹⁷⁹⁵ In areas such as the southern governorate of Muthanna, local authorities have announced that they will remove all “illegal collective settlement.... regardless of whether the squatting families are internally displaced or host community.”¹⁷⁹⁶ Security concerns in the Salah al-Din governorate have also forced local authorities to expel families who previously lived in the provinces of Diyala and Anbar.¹⁷⁹⁷ Although there are displaced residents, such as those residing in Basra, who have successfully demonstrated against the eviction orders, this overall pattern of expulsion and human rights violations will continue unabated if the Iraqi government does not create a long term policy and budget to tackle this crisis.

The living environment for refugees in their countries continues to deteriorate as these countries find their resources insufficient to provide adequate economic and social services to the Iraqi refugees. Host countries therefore resort to adopting tougher refugee policies to ease the burden that falls upon its own population. In the past, Iraqis depended on international organizations to assist them, but this aid may soon be reduced or halted due to shortage of funding. According to the UNHCR, \$127 million is needed for assistance programs.¹⁷⁹⁸

Jordan, with a refugee population between 500,000 and 750,000, has incurred at least US\$ 2 billion dollars worth refugee costs over the past three years.¹⁷⁹⁹ In order to stem the huge influx of refugees and alleviate the heavy economic burdens, a law requiring Iraqis to have a visa before entering Jordan came into effect on May 1st.¹⁸⁰⁰ Nearly 3,000 Iraqis applied to obtain visas for Jordan, according to a government official, who reported “many of them were given visas.”¹⁸⁰¹

Aside from the visa requirements, Iraqis fleeing to Jordan will face impediments in receiving aid from humanitarian organizations because the recent increase in fuel and food prices has cut into the funds of humanitarian aid organizations.¹⁸⁰² UNHCR, which aids more than 150,000 Iraqi’s in Jordan, received “less than half of the US\$ 44 million it seeks from donors for operations in Jordan this year.”¹⁸⁰³ According to Imran Riza, UNHCR's representative in Jordan, “the devastating effect is simple; on one hand the funds available buy dramatically less when compared to a few months ago. On the other hand, we are being faced with larger numbers of vulnerable people as their impoverishment is accelerated due to these rising costs.”¹⁸⁰⁴

¹⁷⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁹⁶ “Iraq: Returns Erratic as Authorities Clamp Down on Illegal IDP Settlements” *International Organization of Migration*, 5/20/08.

¹⁷⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁹⁸ “UNHCR Faces Funding Shortfall for Iraq Operation” UNHCR, 5/9/08.

¹⁷⁹⁹ “Jordan Pledges to UN Continued Help to Iraqi Refugees” Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 5/7/08.

¹⁸⁰⁰ “Jordan Imposes Visa Requirements on Iraqis” Agence France Presse, 5/1/08.

¹⁸⁰¹ “Nearly 3,000 Iraqis Apply for Visas for Jordan in 10 Days” Agence France Presse, 5/12/08.

¹⁸⁰² “UNHCR Faces Difficulty Helping Neediest Iraqis In Jordan” UNHCR, 5/27/08.

¹⁸⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

Because of the rising food prices, the agency has had to cut the size of the food packages it sends to 20,000 Iraqis each month. The calorie content in the packages has decreased from 1,300 kilo calories per day to 1,000 kilo calories per day.¹⁸⁰⁵ The daily international standard is actually 2,100 kilo calories. Due to inflation, Iraqis in Jordan will lose their purchasing power as the financial aid that UNHCR provide to 2,2000 families, which is between US\$ 100-\$200 per month, will be insufficient to buy basic needs.¹⁸⁰⁶

Syria is home to 1.5 million Iraqis, yet many remain impoverished because it is illegal for refugees to work there. Even those who are able to work illegally do so for very low wages, which is an inadequate income to support a family. Yet, many refuse to return to Iraq and only consider moving to Europe. According to a recent poll released by the UNHCR, “only four percent of Iraq refugees plan to return home” while “90 percent of the 1,000 Iraqis questioned in the Syrian capital have no plans to cross the border to their homeland.”¹⁸⁰⁷

Those contemplating immigrating to Sweden may be reluctant to do so now. Home to 80,000 Iraqis, Sweden adopted stricter measures to curtail the number of entering Iraqi refugees. Tobias Billström, the migration minister, recently urged the European Union to adopt a “common interpretation of asylum rules to avoid burdening countries such as Sweden with more than their fair share of immigrants.”¹⁸⁰⁸ This urging comes on the heels of growing anti-immigrant feelings in Swedish towns. In Södertälje, almost 40 percent of the population is a first or second generation immigrant, and in a few years, they will become the majority.¹⁸⁰⁹ Extreme right wing parties have taken advantage of the anti-immigrant sentiments and have increased their popularity not only in Södertälje, but also in southern Sweden.¹⁸¹⁰ Based on several opinion polls, “the anti- immigrant Sweden Democrats could pass the four percent threshold to enter parliament at the 2010 election.”¹⁸¹¹

In an effort to admit more refugees, the U.S. has “streamlined the admissions process by the Departments of State and Homeland Security,” and has introduced changes such as “improved access to refuges in Syria and the start of processing in Iraq itself.”¹⁸¹² This has resulted in allowing 1,000 Iraqi refugees to enter in May.

3. Legacy of Vengeance-Seeking Group Grievance or Group Paranoia **Rating: 8**

¹⁸⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁰⁶ “UNHCR Faces Difficulty Helping Neediest Iraqis In Jordan” *UNHCR*, 5/27/08.

¹⁸⁰⁷ “Syria: Unable to Find Work, Iraqi Refugees Seek Entry to Europe” *Inter Press Service*, 5/6/08.

¹⁸⁰⁸ “Sweden Beginning to Feel the Strain of Welcoming Policy Towards Refugees” *The Irish Times*, 5/3/08.

¹⁸⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁸¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸¹² “US Admissions of Iraqi Refuges Surpasses 1,000 in May, Set Monthly Record” *Associated Press Worldstream*, 6/2/08.

Although fighting continues throughout Iraq, the overall level of violence has persistently dropped, as evidenced by the decrease in the number of attacks from about 180 per day in June 2007 to about 45 attacks per day in May 2008.¹⁸¹³ Many see this as a clear indication of wounds between and within ethno-sectarian groups being healed. Yet, as the number of high profile assassinations increases and tensions mount between the Kurdistan Regional Government and the central government over Kirkuk, it is obvious that sectarian rifts still exist.

Sunni Awakening group members were critical to quelling the high level of violence in Iraq that plagued the population last year. However, their decision to assist the United States in fighting al-Qaeda has resulted in their becoming the new targets for the terrorist organization. A suicide bomber, under the leadership of AQI, recently killed 23 people at a family funeral of Col. Faisal Ismail al-Zobaie, a U.S.-backed police chief in Fallujah and former insurgent.¹⁸¹⁴ In a separate attack, a motorbike detonated near the headquarters of the leader of al-Tarimiya Awakening force in northern Baghdad, killing four Awakening tribal fighters, and two policemen, and wounding eighteen others.¹⁸¹⁵ In Diyala, a predominant Sunni province, a suicide bomber killed one and wounded 23 others near an Awakening Council office.¹⁸¹⁶ Ordinary citizens are open to similar attacks, as when a wedding convoy, passing through a busy market in Diyala, was attacked, killing at least 35 and wounding 65.¹⁸¹⁷

Tensions in Kurdistan, chiefly in the Kirkuk region, remain extremely high amongst the different resident communities. The point of contention stems from the much delayed referendum required by Article 140, which the Kurds favor but the Turkomen and Arabs are against.¹⁸¹⁸

These deep entrenched group grievances were visible at a recent conference held in the U.S. and sponsored by the Washington Kurdish Institute, the Kurdistan National Congress of North America and the University of Pennsylvania.¹⁸¹⁹ The Kurdish participants at the conference, rejecting the advice of adopting a “power-sharing agreement” for Kirkuk, warned that the failure to hold the referendum would be “disastrous.”¹⁸²⁰ Kamal Kirkuki, deputy speaker of the Kurdistan parliament, stated that Kurds “will resort to mass civil disobedience if we find out there is a conspiracy against the implementation of Article 140.”¹⁸²¹ However, Jason Gluck, a rule of law adviser with

¹⁸¹³ “Securing, Stabilizing, and Rebuilding Iraq: Progress Report: Some Gains Made, Updated Strategy Needed” *GAO*, 7/23/08.

¹⁸¹⁴ “Child Bomber Kills 23 In Iraq; Suicide Attack Targets Family Members of Fallujah Police Chief” *The Washington Post*, 5/14/08.

¹⁸¹⁵ “Suicide attack leaves 24 casualties in Baghdad” *Voices of Iraq*, 5/26/08.

¹⁸¹⁶ “Truce Holds in Sadr City Amid Patrols by Iraqi Army” *New York Times*, 5/16/08.

¹⁸¹⁷ “At Least 35 Die as Bombers Hit Wedding Convoy; Woman Involved in Iraq Attack” *Washington Post*, 5/2/08.

¹⁸¹⁸ “Experts Urge Power-Sharing for Kirkuk” *Institute for War and Peace Reporting*, 5/13/08.

¹⁸¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸²⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁸²¹ *Ibid.*

the United States Institute of Peace, and David Bollack, a visiting fellow at Washington Institute for Near East Policy, argued that a referendum would not be feasible because of the “current instability and ethnic rivalry” that pervades in Kirkuk.¹⁸²²

The implementation of key legislation, such as the Amnesty Law and the de-Baathification law, deemed imperative for national reconciliation, has stalled. Although 16,000 detainees have been approved for release under the Amnesty Law, only 2,000 have been set free.¹⁸²³

4. Chronic and Sustained Human Flight

Rating: 9

Iraq’s middle class population and professionals continue to be threatened and harmed, especially aiding the U.S. With the a majority of scientists, professors, lawyers, and doctors either killed or living abroad, Iraq’s social, cultural, and educational future is disadvantaged by loss of talent.

At an alarming rate, journalists in Iraq are targeted and murdered. Aidan White, the General Secretary of International Federation of Journalists, cautioned that “these brutal killings illustrate that talk of an easing security crisis in Iraq is misplaced optimism.”¹⁸²⁴ Since the beginning of the war, more than 270 journalists and media staff have been killed and White says that this number will not decrease “as long as political divisions and lawlessness persist.”¹⁸²⁵

The extent of these brutalities was recently witnessed through the assassination of Sarwa Abdul-Wahab, a lawyer and a reporter for a Kurdistan News Agency. She was killed in Mosul when a gunman pulled her out of a car and shot her in the head.¹⁸²⁶ The body of another journalist, Haider Hisham al-Hasseni, who worked for al- Sharq, an independent newspaper based in Diyala, was found bullet-riddled in Buhriz, an area in Diyala.¹⁸²⁷ These incidences underscore the violence against journalists, which according to Journalistic Freedoms Observatory (JFO), has increased by 60 percent this year compared to 2007.¹⁸²⁸ According to the same report, “the greatest threat to journalists’ lives is assassinations..., reaching 37 during the survey process (May 2007 to May 2008).”¹⁸²⁹

With the poor state of Iraq’s education system due to the unpredictable levels of violence, “educators fear that the collapse in schooling will have some of the deepest repercussions

¹⁸²² *Ibid.*

¹⁸²³ “Iraqi Paper Slams Delay on General Amnesty Law” *Voices of Iraq*, 5/1/08.

¹⁸²⁴ “Iraq Media Killings Show Journalisms as ‘Perilous as Ever’-IFJ” *BBC Monitoring International Reports*, 5/5/08.

¹⁸²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁸²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁸²⁷ “2 More Iraqi Journalists Slain” *Knight Ridder Washington Bureau*, 5/22/08.

¹⁸²⁸ “Anti-Journalists Violations up by 60 percent Compared to 2007-JFO” *Voices of Iraq*, 5/2/08.

¹⁸²⁹ *Ibid.*

for the country, leaving a generation with little education and little hope.”¹⁸³⁰ A local high school senior noted that due to the violence, four of his teachers had left school and were replaced by inexperienced college students. It remains to be seen whether Iraq’s education system will ever fully recover from last year’s killing of more than 300 teachers and Ministry of Education employees, and wounding of 1,158 others which “paralyzed the government’s plan to build 1,000 new schools this year and even forced it to close existing schools across the country,” according to Waleed Hussein, the spokesman for the Education Ministry.¹⁸³¹

5. Uneven Economic Development Along Group Lines

Rating: 9

While most of Iraq is declining with the consequences of the drought, Kurdistan continues to flourish. Its economy is saturated with foreign investment. Promotional ads state: "Have you seen the other Iraq? It's spectacular. It's peaceful. It's joyful. Fewer than 200 US troops are stationed here."

Shakir Wajid, an Iraqi Kurd and executive with United Arab Emirates-based Dana Gas, recently unveiled his company’s US\$ 20 billion project, “Kurdistan Gas City,” a “futurist residential, commercial and industrial city that will run entirely on natural gas.”¹⁸³² As much as US\$ 650 million has already been invested into Kurdistan “to extract gas, build a liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) plant, and transport the fuel to new power plants in the region.”¹⁸³³ There is also Empire World, a “US\$ 365 million housing and commercial development” project.¹⁸³⁴ Built by Kurdish businessmen profiteering from U.S. contracts, villas with the projected price of US\$ 250,000 are being sold at a fast rate, to wealthy Iraqis or government officials escaping the desolate conditions that plague the rest of the country.¹⁸³⁵ Further investment is being poured into Kurdistan with the construction of New Hawler, a district in Arbil that will house hotels, office towers, and gated communities. Though not benefiting the majority of the population, Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani justified these investments as an effort to “rebuild our region as part of Iraq.”¹⁸³⁶

Kurdistan’s oil fields and relatively stable environment continue to lure foreign investment, despite warnings from Iraq’s central Minister of Oil Hussein al-Shahrestani that such oil contracts will be revoked and participating companies will be blacklisted.¹⁸³⁷ Kurdistan Regional Government recently signed a contract with the Australian Oil Search Limited, because according to company’s managing director, Peter Botten, "Kurdistan is

¹⁸³⁰ “Iraq School Crisis: ‘Future is at Risk’” *Associated Press Online*, 5/14/08.

¹⁸³¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸³² “As Baghdad Grapples with Sadr City, Iraqi Kurdistan Busily Builds ‘Dream City’” *Christian Science Monitor*, 5/7/08.

¹⁸³³ *Ibid.*

¹⁸³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁸³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁸³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁸³⁷ “Kurdish Parliament Speaker says KRG Oil Contracts Legal” *Voices of Iraq*, 5/13/08.

one of the few places left in the world where independent oil companies can capture material exploration positions with large reserve potential and on satisfactory commercial terms."¹⁸³⁸ The contract grants the Oil Search Limited "a seven-year exploration period and a 20-year extendable production period" in the Shakal village in the district of Kalar, which is predicted to have 250 million barrels of oil.¹⁸³⁹ As stipulated by the contract, KRG will receive 20 percent of profit from production.¹⁸⁴⁰

6. Sharp and/or Severe Economic Decline

Rating: 8

Iraq's economy continues to be subject to whims of external factors, and ordinary Iraqi citizens are the victims. The increase in prices of food, energy and other commodities has detrimentally affected Iraq's economy, chiefly its inflation rate, which rose to 16 percent in April, compared to 11 percent at the beginning of the year.¹⁸⁴¹ According to the monthly report published by the Iraqi Planning Ministry, food prices rose 13.6 percent, while medical services increased by 1.3 percent.¹⁸⁴²

The drought has had devastating effects in Iraq's eastern Diyala province, a region whose residents' primary source of revenue stems from agriculture. According to a local farmer, "The majority of our village farmers have quit, and the rest will follow... because of obstacles like security, displacement, water shortage, lack of seeds, and lack of backing on the part of the ministry."¹⁸⁴³ As the government fails to address this issue, many farmers expend their own resources to buy private pumps to pump water from the Diyala River.¹⁸⁴⁴ A provincial director noted that "the shortage of water is the biggest threat that Iraqi agriculture has ever faced."¹⁸⁴⁵ In a surprising but constructive move, Subhi al-Jameeli, the senior under-secretary at the Ministry of Agriculture announced that those "who suffered damage as a result of the shortage of water this year will be compensated."¹⁸⁴⁶ This entails establishing a committee that is responsible for forming "lists of the farmers' names to determine the compensation that will be paid to each of them."¹⁸⁴⁷

In an effort to revive the economy, the USAID Agribusiness Program, Inma, announced the revitalization of the Balad Canning Factory with a US\$ 5 million grant.¹⁸⁴⁸ Built in

¹⁸³⁸ "Oil Search Signs Production-Sharing Contract with Kurdistan" *Asia Pulse*, 5/12/08.

¹⁸³⁹ "Iraqi Kurdish Government Signs Oil Contract with Australian Company" *BBC Monitoring Middle East-Political*, 5/16/08.

¹⁸⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁴¹ "Iraq's Inflation Rate Soars to 16 Percent in April, Blamed on Rising Worldwide Prices" *Associated Press Worldstream*, 5/25/08.

¹⁸⁴² *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁴³ "Iraqi Farmers Wary of Drought Conditions" *UPI*, 5/15/08.

¹⁸⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁴⁶ "Aggrieved Farmers Compensated for Drought Damage," *Voices of Iraq*, 5/27/08.

¹⁸⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁴⁸ "Economic Opportunity Replaces Conflict in Iraq" *PR Newswire*, 5/10/08.

1974 and located in Balad, BCF was one of Iraq's largest food processors until October 2006 when sectarian violence forced the factory to shut down. Inma is "part of a larger regional project that will restore agricultural and agribusiness operations throughout this formerly strife-torn area."¹⁸⁴⁹ The grant will restore steam, power, water, and waste treatment to the plant, and when renovations are complete, it will employ an estimated 1,200 workers.¹⁸⁵⁰ The plant is projected to "process close to 20,000 tons worth of dates, tomatoes, sesame, wheat and corn produced from over 1,000 small farms."¹⁸⁵¹

While agribusiness continues to falter, Iraq's oil sector is making gains as British Petroleum and Exxon Mobil recently submitted their proposal "on technical service" to the Iraqi oil ministry after Iraq's Oil Minister, Hussein al-Shahristani, warned that the contracts would be canceled if they were not signed by June.¹⁸⁵² The technical service contracts, designed to increase Iraq's crude oil production, will grant BP the license to do work in the North and South Rumaila fields which are producing 1m barrels a day, but "output is declining steadily."¹⁸⁵³ Exxon, on the other hand, will utilize the Zubair oil fields, where output is increasing, with 200,000 barrels of oil produced a day.¹⁸⁵⁴

Iraq also made economic gains at the recent second Iraq Business and Investment conference in Cairo. Held from May 15-17, the conference hosted "200 Egyptian businessmen and investors in addition to 630 participants from Iraq and other countries."¹⁸⁵⁵ Though not providing specific details, Iraq's Vice President Abdul Mahdi stated that "I think we have come up with substantial and significant results as a number of contracts were signed with Arab and foreign companies and businessmen."¹⁸⁵⁶

The same sentiments were present at the Third International Iraq Fair, which aimed to bolster the "economic and trade exchange between Iraq and other countries." Held from May 22-25 in Gaziantep, the fair was "attended by more than 600 companies from 30 countries."¹⁸⁵⁷ At the fair, Iraqi Minister of Trade, Abdul Fallah al-Sudani, encouraged investment from "international and Turkish firms and Iraqi businessmen" and called for "trade and economic exchange (between Iraq and Turkey) to exceed 5 billion U.S. dollars"¹⁸⁵⁸

7. Criminalization and/or Delegitimization of the State

Rating: 10

¹⁸⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁵² "BP, Exxon Submit Iraq Deal Plans" *Market Watch*, 5/27/08.

¹⁸⁵³ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁵⁵ "2nd Iraq Business and Investment Conference Concludes in Cairo" *Voices of Iraq*, 5/17/08

¹⁸⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁵⁷ "Turkish Firms Secure Fresh Deals in Gaziantep" *Turkey Daily News*, 5/26/08.

¹⁸⁵⁸ "Turkey's Gaziantep Exhibition Concludes Today" *Voices of Iraq*, 5/25/08.

Military offenses in Basra and Sadr City have, for the time being, curtailed the power of the militias and decreased the level of violence to an all time low since April 2004, thereby winning al-Maliki praises from abroad. As a result, the government has established more control over the region and is moving towards “political rehabilitation.”¹⁸⁵⁹

Al-Maliki confidently portrayed his newfound confidence at the first annual review of the International Compact with Iraq, where more than 500 officials from several countries and international organizations met to assess the economic and political progresses of Iraq. During the meeting, al-Maliki noted Iraq’s “major success in the battle against terrorism...” but also pleaded for debt relief and the rescinding of the war reparations that have created “an impediment against reconstruction and development.”¹⁸⁶⁰ UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon stated that there was, “new hope for the Iraqi people ‘to rebuild their country after years of war, dictatorship and neglect.’”¹⁸⁶¹

However, these gains remain fragile and could unravel if the militias resume their fighting or political reconciliation does not emerge. Credibility of the Iraqi administration continues to waver because of corruption. A wary public is also waiting impatiently for the government to carry out its promises of rebuilding the dilapidated infrastructure and job sector.

On May 12th, during his speech to Parliament, al-Maliki described the actions in Sadr City, and the Basra offensive as having “proven that we are neutral, not biased, that we did not take the side of this party or this sect against another.”¹⁸⁶² However, many see it differently. Al-Sadr’s followers are still insisting that the Knights’ Onslaught, as the Basra offensive was dubbed, was launched to weaken al-Sadr’s power in the region prior to the upcoming provincial elections, where al-Sadr’s movement was predicated to win.¹⁸⁶³ The dissidents argue that now that al-Sadr has been weakened, ISCI and al-Maliki are in a position to win the elections.¹⁸⁶⁴ Although ISCI and al-Maliki have staunchly denied such statements, offensives have not been launched against the Badr Brigades, or any other Shiite militia, lending credibility to al-Sadr’s claims.

The cease-fire that ended violence in Sadr City was brokered by Iran, in a meeting that brought together members of the Sadrist movement and the United Iraqi Alliance. The agreement included the transfer of control of Sadr City to the al-Maliki government, and militia fighters putting down their weapons and halting their violence.¹⁸⁶⁵ According to Iraqi government spokesman, Ali al-Dabbagh, “the agreement represents the government’s vision to end armed displays and purge al-Sadr City from roadside bombs

¹⁸⁵⁹ “Analysis: Iraq PM rides high on successes” *Associated Press*, 5/24/08.

¹⁸⁶⁰ “Iraq prime minister calls for debt relief at UN conference” *Al-Aswat*, 5/29/08.

¹⁸⁶¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁶² “Iraq’s Foggy War” *The Washington Post*, 5/19/08.

¹⁸⁶³ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁶⁴ “Basra Breathes a Little Easier but Can’t Relax; Some Wonder Whether the Gains from the Iraqi Crackdown Will Last” *Los Angeles Times*, 5/31/08

¹⁸⁶⁵ “Cease-Fire Reported with Iraqi Militants in Sadr City” *Associated Press*, 5/10/08.

and mines and impose the law in the city."¹⁸⁶⁶ The agreement did not call for the disbanding of the militia, which the al-Maliki government had wanted.

Although the cease-fire improved security in the region, residents of Sadr City have qualms about its sustainability and effectiveness, and claim that "the only loser in this battle has been the people. The politicians live on the government, not with us here. They do not feel the suffering of the neighborhood."¹⁸⁶⁷ Even though the government has allocated money to cater to the needs of the public, the implementation of the projects has been slow. Therefore, a majority of the Sadr City population continues to live in shattered neighborhood with miniscule access to humanitarian aid.¹⁸⁶⁸

The Iraqi government's corrupt activities continue to breed instability and political animosity. Recent developments regarding the firing of the heads of the South Oil company, the South Gas Company, and the Iraqi Oil Tankers Company have local Basra officials accusing the government of attempting to extort control of Basra's oil industry from Fadhila, which yields significant power in Southern Iraq.¹⁸⁶⁹ According to a senior provincial official aligned with Fadhila, by replacing the outgoing directors with individuals tied to al-Maliki's Dawa Party, the government is devising a "clear plan to have control over this vital sector before the provincial elections."¹⁸⁷⁰ Although the Oil Ministry defended the move as part of its "right man in the right place policy," analysts are quick to offer an alternative explanation.¹⁸⁷¹ "The move should be recognized as a major development in the intra-sectarian conflict," that may potentially lead to fresh waves of violence, stated Babak Rahimi, a professor at the University of California in San Diego.

Allegations of corruption and partiality have permeated into the debate between the government and Iraq's National Olympic Committee, as the government dissolved the previous NOC and installed a temporary one. The government argued that the NOC was illegitimate because it couldn't "reach quorum and ... was in financial wrongdoing."¹⁸⁷² Denying corruption, and turning the tables against the government Bashar Mustafa, the former head of the committee, claimed that the government was interfering in the affairs of an autonomous entity by "seeking to bring people affiliated to powerful parties into the committee," so that they benefit from the "lucrative and prestigious positions" which includes travel and opportunity to meet other international officials.¹⁸⁷³ Such vociferous accusations only heighten the politicized and fractionalized temperament of the government.

¹⁸⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁶⁷ "Sadrists and Iraqi Government Reach Truce Deal" *New York Times*, 5/11/08.

¹⁸⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁶⁹ "Iraq Replaces Southern Oil Chiefs in Major Shake-up" *Reuters*, 5/26/08.

¹⁸⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁷¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁷² "Iraqi Government Will Not Reconsider its Decision, Official Says" *Associated Press Worldstream*, 5/27/08.

¹⁸⁷³ *Ibid.*

However, other officials are asserting that the decision was brought about due to sectarian tensions, since “the Youth and Sports Ministry is dominated by Shiites, while the NOC includes several holdovers from the Saddam Hussein-era Olympic Committee.”¹⁸⁷⁴ Whatever the reasoning, Iraq may now be baned from participating in the World Cup and the Olympics, an act that will have “negative affect on the Iraqi people, who patiently look forward to such events to forget their sufferings,” according to Mustafa.¹⁸⁷⁵

8. Progressive Deterioration of Public Services

Rating: 9

As the Iraqi government continues its strides against the rogue militants in the country, proclaiming success at each venture, it fails to adequately fund and provide the necessary public services needed for the already desolate and desperate Iraqi population. Therefore, many of Iraqis’s public service sectors, such as hospitals, electricity, and water systems are struggling to meet the demands of the impatient population.

The health sector continues to falter, although there is a great demand for its services. The lack of medical supplies and “irregular staff attendance at health facilities, including Alkindy hospital in Rusafa and the Imam Ali hospital” is hindering the medical capabilities of the hospitals. Immunizations at public health service centers have also stopped because of fuel shortages and electricity outages. The demand for health care will continue as the percentage of individuals accessing potable drinking decreases. In Missan, “available water supply provides for only 60 percent of the needs of city of Al Amarah and other main towns.”¹⁸⁷⁶ Those without access to a safe drinking facility resort to taking water from the marshes, which is a serious health risk because the water is “highly saline, untreated, and often contaminated because of the lack of sanitation systems.”¹⁸⁷⁷

Living conditions in Sadr City, one of Baghdad’s poorest slums, deteriorated following the month-long battle between the Iraqi Security Forces and the Mahdi Army. Not only have more than 100 houses been destroyed, but the city lacks an adequate water supply and the conditions of the sewage system and medical provisions have also depreciated.¹⁸⁷⁸ Trash continues to accumulate in the streets and around houses as trash collection has halted.¹⁸⁷⁹ Medical services were also halted as several small public and private clinics were closed alongside six hospitals during the fighting.¹⁸⁸⁰ This included the closing of the Hakim and Habibiya hospitals as well as the shutting down of several pharmacies. The firing of three missiles by the U.S. Forces at a small building next door to the Sadr

¹⁸⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁷⁶ “Building a Brighter Future: Rehabilitating Iraqi Schools and Public Works” *Reliefweb*, 5/16/08.

¹⁸⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁷⁸ “Sadr City Condition Worsen” *Institute for War and Peace Reporting*, 5/14/08.

¹⁸⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

General Hospital caused a load public outcry, destroyed the parking lot of the hospital's ambulances and damaged three of its ambulances.¹⁸⁸¹

However, the Iraqi government is stating that conditions are improving with the recent launching of a reconstruction campaign that is meant to repair the water and sewage systems, the power systems, and medical care.¹⁸⁸² The Iraqi government has allocated US\$ 150 million for the Sadr City humanitarian effort. Al-Sheikhli noted the work of the Ministry of Electricity's staff in replacing "damaged power transformers to restore electricity to the city's neighborhood," the current work of Baghdad's Mayoralty in "removing garbage from the city's streets," and Ministry of Health's launching of "a campaign for children's ammuniton against diseases that may generate from garbage."¹⁸⁸³ The success of these campaigns remains difficult to assess due to the tentative nature of the cease-fire and the extensive damage that was incurred during the fighting.

The Iraqi army is also contributing to the reconstruction effort. As of May 16th, it has managed to "dismantle 50 mines and roadside bombs," according to Maj. Gen. Qassim al-Mousawi, an Iraqi army spokesman.¹⁸⁸⁴ It has handed out 114,000 liters of water and 46,000 meals to Sadr City residents.¹⁸⁸⁵ The 11th Iraqi Army Division has completed "at least one medical engagement a week, treating the local people" by traveling to various parts of the city and setting up a "mobile medical office to treat people right there on the streets," according to Lt. Col. Gerry Messmer.¹⁸⁸⁶ He estimates that the 11th IA Division has seen more than 2,500 people.¹⁸⁸⁷ Although such efforts shed a much needed light on a morose situation, cumulatively the public services will irreversibly deteriorate if funding for these projects is not sustained at a high level.

Accessibility to electricity has always been coveted, yet supplies have been inconsistent. This may soon change, at least in southwest Baghdad, where the al-Rasheed 400kV substation was energized on 400kV electrical grid.¹⁸⁸⁸ According to Navy Lt. Cmdr. Andrew Johnson, this new commodity "is a much more reliable, much more stable source of power" than what the population has been used to.¹⁸⁸⁹ He adds instead of having electricity for 10-20 percent of their day, these individuals will now have electricity for 40-50 percent of their days.¹⁸⁹⁰

¹⁸⁸¹ "Missiles Strike Sadr City, Damaging Hospital" *New York Times*, 5/4/08.

¹⁸⁸² "Exceptional Campaign to Provide Services to Sadr City - Baghdad Operations" *Voices of Iraq*, 5/19/08.

¹⁸⁸³ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁸⁴ "Iraq: Normalcy Returns to Beleaguered Baghdad Suburb" *IRIN*, 5/14/08.

¹⁸⁸⁵ "Iraqis Take Lead in Sadr City Aid Effort" *States News Service*, 5/15/08.

¹⁸⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁸⁸ "Southwest Baghdad Electricity Substation Adds Stability" *PR Newswire*, 5/28/08.

¹⁸⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

9. Suspension or Arbitrary Application of the Rule of Law and Widespread Violation of Human Rights

Rating: 10

Systematic and egregious violations of human rights continue. The Kurdistan region which has come under heavy criticism due to the strict limitations it contemplates imposing on journalistic integrity and freedom, and the surge in the levels of violence against women.

According to the Chairman of the KRG parliament's legal committee Kareem Bahri, the committee is proposing to change its existing policies concerning journalists by making it illegal to imprison them, yet the committee is attempting to "make it illegal for them to write articles that insult religious beliefs and public customs or threaten national security.... 'unless the article is in the public interest,'" according to Bahri.¹⁸⁹¹ While journalists, such as Aland Mahwi, a reporter with Rozhnama newspaper in Sulaimaniyah, praise the efforts of the KRG in changing imprisonment clause, she also warns that the subsequent prohibitions "might be used by the authorities to silence journalists."¹⁸⁹² Historically, journalists have been harassed and jailed due to their fierce criticism of lawmakers, "with most forceful attacks targeting those who have reported critically on Barzani, [Iraqi president Jalal] Talabani, and other high-level officials," according to a report published by the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists.¹⁸⁹³ In response to the report, KRG spokesman Jamal Abdullah assures that authorities "will take the report seriously."¹⁸⁹⁴ The outcome of the debate and the final draft of the legislation have yet to be agreed upon.

Kurdistan continues to struggle with women's right issues, especially in pertinence to suicides and "honour" killings. According to a doctor in region's second largest city of Sulaimaniyah, "at least 14 women died in the first 10 days of May alone [seven committed suicides while another seven were victims of honour killings]... Over the same period, we recorded 11 attempted self-immolations."¹⁸⁹⁵ In this particular province, in the first four months of the year, more than 50 women attempted suicide through self-immolation while another eight tried to hang themselves.¹⁸⁹⁶ Despite the best efforts of human rights activists and women members of the parliament and regional government, "honour" killings continue. The United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq has noted this insidious act to be "among the country's most severe human rights abuses."¹⁸⁹⁷

Now that the usage of cell phones is pervasive, "honour" killings may continue to rise as naïve girls put their lives on jeopardy by allowing others to capture them on camera breaking social codes. Najiba Mahmood, a women's activist and head of Civilization

¹⁸⁹¹ "KRG Press Law Proposal Cause Concern" *Institute for War and Peace Reporting*, 5/23/08.

¹⁸⁹² *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁹⁵ "Surge in Violence Against Women in Iraqi Kurdistan" *Agence France Presse*, 5/24/08.

¹⁸⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

Development Organization, a Sulaimaniyah-based non-governmental organization, warned that the “audio, video and photos of women being distributed via mobile phones is the worst problem for women and girls,” and if left without a resolution, these crimes will continue.¹⁸⁹⁸ To stem the level of abuse against women, MPs are drafting legislation to “fine or imprison individuals who distribute video, audio or photos that are deemed to damage the honour of women.”¹⁸⁹⁹ While Twana Ali, spokesman for the Centre to Counter Violence Against Women, views the law as a deterrent for future abuses, others such as Banaz Hussein, the deputy director of Asuda, a women’s rights NGO, argue that it will not end abuse because people still adhere to “the old customs and traditions....[with] women [as] the primary victims.”¹⁹⁰⁰

Tradition, coupled with a deteriorating security situation, fear of terrorist attacks, and poverty, has permitted families to deny education to their daughters. A survey published by Women for Women International found that “three-quarters of the 1,510 women surveyed said girls in their families were being denied an education.”¹⁹⁰¹ In Kirkuk alone, almost 30 percent of the female population has left school over the past five years.¹⁹⁰² Nadwa Mahmood, head of the Al-Intisar girls’ school in Kirkuk, warns that if this disparaging policy is not curtailed, the alarming number of uneducated women will only hinder the growth of Iraq’s educated class.¹⁹⁰³

Iraq continues to illegally detain its citizens. The 18,000 prisoners in Bucca Prison in Al-Arabiya have been detained for almost a year without an official arrest warrant. Dr Muwaffaq al-Rubay’i, Iraqi National security adviser, agrees that “the majority of those people are innocent,” yet justifies it through the invocation of a “security precaution.”¹⁹⁰⁴

The U.S. received heavy criticism for its detention policies after admitting to holding more than 500 children in its Iraqi prisons.¹⁹⁰⁵ Since 2003, the U.S. has detained more than 2,500 children, all believed to be under the age of 18.¹⁹⁰⁶ Most of the children are held at U.S. Camp Cropper in Baghdad, but some are also at the main U.S. military detention facility, Camp Bucca. The U.S. has defended the policy, saying that the detainees were “captured engaging in anti-coalition activity, such as planting improvised explosive devices, operating as lookouts for insurgents or actively engaged in fighting against U.S. and coalition forces.”¹⁹⁰⁷

However, Ali al-Qaysi, head of the Association of Victims of U.S. Prisons in Iraq, found that no direct charges have been brought against these children. These children are

¹⁸⁹⁸ “Kurdish Women Tortured by “Mobile Phone Abuse” *Institute for War and Peace Reporting*, 5/2/08.

¹⁸⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁰¹ “Girls Denied Education” *Institute for War and Peace Reporting*, 5/30/08.

¹⁹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁰⁴ “Iraq’s Bucca Prison Detainees Held Without Arrest Warrant-Al-Arabiya TV” *BBC Monitoring International Reports*, 5/4/08.

¹⁹⁰⁵ “U.S. Says it is Holding 500 Youths in Iraq” *The Associated Press*, 5/20/08.

¹⁹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁰⁷ “U.S. Defends Detaining Children in Iraq” *Agence France Presse*, 5/21/08.

“subjected to the ugliest kinds of abuse” and are sometimes “used as hostages to pressure their families [to confess].”¹⁹⁰⁸ Due process laws are violated through the refusal of the U.S. to provide them lawyers, he mentioned.¹⁹⁰⁹

10. Security Apparatus Operates as a “State Within a State”

Rating: 9

The security situation in Iraq is improving but remains volatile despite the recent signing of a cease-fire which ended the Sadr City fighting. Almost 1,000 civilians and militants were killed, and 2,000 were wounded during the fighting.¹⁹¹⁰ Although violence has markedly decreased since the cease-fire and the Iraqi government is carrying out humanitarian efforts, engrained levels of distrust and sectarian rivalry exist.

The cease-fire, which “impose(s) the state’s authority and security...in Sadr City,” has permitted the Iraqi government to enter the region, thus allowing aid to flow in and for reconstruction to commence.¹⁹¹¹ Through Operation Peace, the Iraqi government has drawn up measures to restore order to Sadr City. Iraqi security forces have created checkpoints at the entrances of the city, and have permission to “search homes for banned weapons and detain wanted militiamen.”¹⁹¹²

According to Capt. Charles Calio, a U.S. military spokesman, “this operation is Iraqi led, planned and executed ... and is another example of the Iraqis' growing confidence and ability to independently carry out complex combat, police and humanitarian operations.”¹⁹¹³ Many Sadr City civilians, such as Kadhun al-Muqdad, a Baghdad University professor are pleased with the cease-fire and argue that the government’s offensive was legitimate because “it is a positive operation to get rid of the gunmen. Any militia should be disbanded. We can’t have militias beside the state military army.”¹⁹¹⁴

Despite these short gains, the Iraqi government failed to disband the Mahdi Army. As stated by Sheik Salah al-Obeidi, an aide to al-Sadr, “we have agreed on cease-fire and to end displaying arms in public. But we did not agree on disbanding the Mahdi Army.”¹⁹¹⁵ Although Falih Radhi, a local, agrees that the security situation has improved, he did “...have a feeling that this positive situation won’t last long and that violence may come back again.”¹⁹¹⁶ “Today it is obviously the Iraqi Army which is in control...But what happens in the coming days if there are clashes? If they kill anyone from the Mahdi Army

¹⁹⁰⁸ “Rights Activist Comments on Detention of Iraqi Children in US Jails” *BBC Monitoring International Reports*, 5/22/08.

¹⁹⁰⁹ “US: Respect Rights of Child Detainees In Iraq” *Human Rights Watch*, 5/21/08.

¹⁹¹⁰ “Cease-fire Reached in Baghdad’s Sadr City” *CNN*, 5/10/08.

¹⁹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹¹² “Iraq Sends Troops Into Sadr City” *The Washington Post*, 5/21/08.

¹⁹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁹¹⁴ “Iraqi Forces Enter Sadr’s Bastion” *Suna News Agency*, 5/20/08.

¹⁹¹⁵ “Cease-fire in Sadr City Aims to Stop Weeks of Fighting in Iraqi Capital” *Associated Press Worldstream*, 5/12/08.

¹⁹¹⁶ “Iraq deaths down sharply but will the trend last?” *Associated Press Worldstream*, 5/31/08.

and there is fighting, then it will be clear who is in control,” notes Mazen Abdul Ritha, a pharmacist.¹⁹¹⁷

A rift has formed within the Mahdi Army as there are now those who favor a militant approach, not the cease fire. This rift was widened after “Iraqi troops in Basra fired over the heads of al-Sadr followers who were trying to gather in a square for Friday prayers.”¹⁹¹⁸ Sadr’s followers are claiming to have been “duped and deceived by the truce and are tempted by the notion of rescinding it.”¹⁹¹⁹

Imbued with confidence, Maliki recently launched Operation Lion’s Roar in Mosul. Hailed as a success, Lt. Gen. Riyadh Jalal Tawfiq, the Iraqi army commander in Nineveh province, praised the Iraqi Security Forces’ capturing over a thousand militants and noted that “the attacks of the militant groups have gone down.”¹⁹²⁰ Of the large number of suspects, 100 are “critical targets,” such as AQI commanders, military cell leaders, and cell leaders, said Major General Mark Hertling.¹⁹²¹ Al-Maliki also granted insurgents who had not killed anyone a “10 day amnesty period to turn in their weapons for cash payout.”¹⁹²² According to Defense Ministry spokesman Major-General Mohammed al-Askari, many militants have taken advantage of the offer, and he added that “we are committed to the amnesty and have reassured them there will be no judicial pursuit against them.”¹⁹²³

Regardless of these military and security achievements, AQI retains a presence in Mosul and Anbar. Abu Obaida al-Janabi, an al-Qaeda spokesman in Anbar province, stated that the group's top leaders, including Abu Ayu al-Masri and Abu Omar al-Baghdadi, have fled Mosul and are now in “quiet areas, not hot zones,” because most fighters were aware of an operation before its launching.¹⁹²⁴ Delivering a blow to the Iraqi government’s efforts, he added that “so far only eight of our men have been captured.”¹⁹²⁵ To make matters worse, their heavy weapons, along with their “explosives experts” and “engineers of our missile attacks,” have relocated to other regions.¹⁹²⁶ Therefore, they have the effective tools to carry out deadly attacks throughout Iraq. In Fallujah an insurgent attack killed a 2 month-old girl and wounded five policeman and seven civilians. Fallujah’s residents, such as Huda Jassim, expressed apprehension about the security gains and fear of AQI returning.¹⁹²⁷ Others, such as Saed Khalid, think that “...Al-Qaeda is trying to open a new front in Fallujah to ease the pressure on its men in Mosul.”¹⁹²⁸

¹⁹¹⁷ “Iraqi Troops Take Charge of Sadr City in Swift Push” *New York Times*, 5/21/08.

¹⁹¹⁸ Al-Sadr Lawmakers Denounce Iraqi Govt, Warn of “Black Clouds” Hanging Over Militia Truce” Associated Press Worldstream, 5/24/08.

¹⁹¹⁹ “Sadr City Truce Strains as Militia Leaders Grumble” *Associated Press Online*, 5/28/08.

¹⁹²⁰ “Hundreds Held in Iraqi Sweep” *Washington Post*, 5/18/08.

¹⁹²¹ “Al Qaeda Crackdown Yields 100 “Critical” Militants” *Reuters*, 5/19/08.

¹⁹²² “Mosul Insurgents Are Offered Cash for Arms” *Washington Post*, 5/17/08.

¹⁹²³ “Iraqi Forces Detain 1,000 in al Qaeda Push” *Reuters*, 5/17/08.

¹⁹²⁴ “Hundreds Held in Iraqi Sweep” *Washington Post*, 5/18/08.

¹⁹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁹²⁷ “Mosul Insurgents Are Offered Cash for Arms” *Washington Post*, 5/17/08.

¹⁹²⁸ *Ibid.*

11. Rise of Factionalized Elites

Rating: 10

At the first annual review of the International Compact with Iraq, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon encouraged the “Iraqi communities to work together in a sprit of national unity to resolve fundamental issues that continue to divide them. These include the federal structure of Iraq and the sharing of the country's wealth and natural resources.”¹⁹²⁹ Yet, the high hopes for creating the measures needed to guide Iraq into a prosperous and stable future, are constrained by tensions between and within the ethno-sectarian political elites.

The suspension of talks between the Iraqi government and the Sunni Accordance Front over the return of the Sunni party to the cabinet highlights this political gridlock. Late last month, the bloc announced that was possible return to the cabinet. Yet, this month, talks stalled when the al-Maliki government did not concede to the Sunni party the type and number of ministries it wanted.¹⁹³⁰ According to Adnan Dulaimi, the head of the bloc, the ministry positions that were offered did not reflect “what Tawafuq (Iraq Accordance Front) deserves or the positive steps it has taken to create a successful political process.”¹⁹³¹ This delivers a blow to hopes of political reconciliation between the politically marginalized Sunni Arabs and the Shiites and Kurds who dominate the cabinet.

However, the greatest obstacle to political reconciliation is the provincial elections law, which will decide how Iraqis choose council members for 18 provinces. The elections are important for the Sunni Arabs, who boycotted the January 2005 elections, culminating in its rival groups winning a “disproportionate share of power at their expense even in areas with substantial Sunni populations.”¹⁹³² More importantly, the large Sunni population in some provinces will now have the opportunity to elect candidates from the Sunni Awakening Councils, “going to enter the next elections as an independent entity. We feel we can serve Anbar province like nobody else,” said to Rashid Jubeir, a leader of the Awakening Council in Ramadi.¹⁹³³ They will compete against the traditional Sunni party, the Iraqi Islamic Party, which has lost popularity among the Sunni citizens due to its inability to cater to the populations’.¹⁹³⁴

Dissonance over the elections law also dominates the Shiite factions. Since the law is seen as a political mechanism to curb al-Sadr’s power and influence in various regions, Maliki recently proposed the inclusion of a clause banning political parties with militias from running for office. However, al-Maliki may be unsuccessful, as al-Sadr’s spokesman Salah al-Obeidi recently announced that candidates endorsed by the Sadr

¹⁹²⁹ Iraq prime minister calls for debt relief at UN conference” *Al-Aswat*, 5/29/08.

¹⁹³⁰ “A Sunni Bloc Pulls Back on Rejoining Iraqi Cabinet” *New York Times*, 5/28/08.

¹⁹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹³² “Iraqi Politicians Squabble Over Election Law” *The Associated Press*, 5/26/08.

¹⁹³³ “Key Provincial Elections Split Sunni Arabs in Iraq” *Associated Press Online*, 5/31/08.

¹⁹³⁴ *Ibid.*

Movement would run under “other, smaller lists,” and not under the Sadr Movement name.¹⁹³⁵

Tensions reached an all time high during discussions on the law between the Kurds, the Turkomen and the Sunni Arabs over Kirkuk’s Tamim province. The Kurds, wishing to wield more power in Kirkuk, demanded that the province be counted as a “single voting district group,” which was opposed by the other two groups.¹⁹³⁶ In a defiant move, Kurdish lawmakers “... warned the faction heads, the presidency and the parliament that we will not vote on the law unless these conditions are met,” according to Kurdish lawmaker Mahmoud Osman.¹⁹³⁷

With no compromise in sight, it is highly unlikely that the law will be passed by June 1, thereby pushing back the October 1 elections temporary to an ambiguous date.

12. Intervention of Other States or External Political Actors **Rating: 10**

A major point of contention between the U.S. and Iraq is the status of forces agreement. With the United Nations resolution expiring the end of the year, and the U.S. pushing to have a new security pact signed by the end of July, central issues of “long-term American military presence,” U.S. military operations, and the controversial legal immunities sought for U.S. military personnel and security contractor, dominate the debate amongst Iraqi political leaders in their reluctance to sign an agreement.¹⁹³⁸ Sunni leaders, like Adnan al-Dulaimi of the Tawafuq (Accordance Front), support a continuous U.S. military presence due to his fear that U.S. troop withdrawal will lead to “a state of chaos and civil war.”¹⁹³⁹ However, Ali Adeeb, a senior member of the Shiite Dawa Party and a close ally of Maliki’s, argues that the current proposal sought by the United States, which includes a “free hand to arrest Iraqis and carry out military operations and...authority for more than 50 long term military bases,” will not be passed in the Iraqi Parliament.¹⁹⁴⁰ He, along with Mahmoud Othman, an independent Kurdish lawmaker maintains that a security pact should not be signed until a new American president is elected because the pact may change depending on the future American administration.¹⁹⁴¹

The same sentiment is shared by the Iraqi population. Even as the U.S. argues that it will not establish permanent basis in Iraq and with Iraqi Political Council for National Security maintaining that negotiations are “in pursuit of results that would satisfy the Iraqi people and not harm their interests,”¹⁹⁴² thousands of Iraqi civilian protestors,

¹⁹³⁵ “Iraqi Politicians Squabble Over Election Law” *The Associated Press*, 5//26/08.

¹⁹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁹³⁸ “Growing Opposition to Iraq Security Pact” *New York Times*, 5/31/08.

¹⁹³⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁴² “Iraqi Security Council Considers Security Agreement with US-Al-Arabiya TV” *BBC Monitoring International Reports*, 5/28/08.

predominantly Shiites in Baghdad and southern Iraq, denounced the negotiations as benefiting the U.S. and accused Maliki of conceding Iraqi sovereignty to the U.S.¹⁹⁴³ Because of this political ferment surrounding the security pact, the signing of the agreement by the end of this summer remains highly unlikely.

With such ambiguity surrounding negotiations on the security pact, it is no surprise that Iran is increasing its influence to ensure that U.S. presence in Iraq is as minimal as possible. According to anonymous resources at the United Iraqi Alliance, Iran's highest leadership has issued firm orders "to parties and political forces in Iraq to impede the strategic agreement....it is obliging its allies in Iraq to reject signing any long-term pledges regarding the presence of military and security troops."¹⁹⁴⁴ Such aggressive lobbying on the part of Iran only agitates its strained relationship with the U.S., which was further eroded at the beginning of May after Iran suspended Iraqi security talks with the United States due to the fighting in Sadr City.¹⁹⁴⁵

Iran's disapproval of Iraq's relationship with the U.S. is not new. When Iraqi delegates traveled to Iran to discuss its suspected support and funding of Shiite militias, "they accused us of being ungrateful to what Iran has done for the Shiites during Saddam's rule and of siding with the Americans against Iran," according to one delegate who wished to remain anonymous. Such scolding escalated to the point where Brig. Gen. Ghassem Soleimani, commander of the elite Quds Force unit of the Guards, accused Iraq's government of "being a tool of Washington," and of grating the U.S. "a permanent home on our doorsteps."¹⁹⁴⁶

"Any insecure situation and instability in Iraq will affect the region as a whole," said Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki.¹⁹⁴⁷ Therefore, "restoration of security and stability as well as promotion of national solidarity, and also prevention of actions which might incite hostilities and conflicts in Iraq is of utmost importance to the Iraqi government and people."¹⁹⁴⁸ This new found attitude is what may have propelled Iran to help broker the cease-fire in Sadr City that took effect on May 11.

Iranian influence increased after a fruitful meeting in April between Iraqi President Jalal Talabani and the commander of Iran's Quds Force, Brig. Gen. Qassem Soleimani, where Soleimani expressed concern and acknowledged that "Sadrist have gotten outside anyone's control" which is a "dangerous development for Iraq, for Iran and for all Shiites."¹⁹⁴⁹ Therefore, he insisted upon coalescing the efforts of Iraq, Iran and the U.S. to

¹⁹⁴³ "Growing Opposition to Iraq Security Pact" *New York Times*, 5/31/08.

¹⁹⁴⁴ "Iran Said Seeking to Impede Iraq-Us Deal; Iraqi Political Front to be Formed" *BBC Monitoring Middle East-Political*, 5/28/08.

¹⁹⁴⁵ "Iran Halts Talks With U.S. on Iraq" *New York Times*, 5/6/08.

¹⁹⁴⁶ "Cooler Winds Blowing Over Bonds Between Iran and Baghdad's Shiite Leaders" *Associated Press Worldstream*, 5/15/08.

¹⁹⁴⁷ "Iran Calls for National Reconciliation in Iraq" *Xinhua General News Service*, 5/29/08.

¹⁹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁴⁹ "Iran's Role Rises as Iraq Peace Broker" *Christian Science Monitor*, 5/14/08.

bring security to the situation. Although the U.S. remains wary of Soleiman's words and charges Iran's effort to "to become an 'indispensable power broker' in Iraq as part of a 'brilliant tactical game' meant to keep the US and Iraqi governments 'off balance' and to spread Iran's influence in Iraq," Iraq maintains its relations with the Iran and continues grow closer to its neighbor.¹⁹⁵⁰

¹⁹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

May 2008
Core 5

1. Police
Rating: Weak

The Iraqi National Police Force continues to be targeted by sectarian violence. On May 19, Sunni insurgents attacked a vehicle carrying Iraqi police recruits near the Syrian border, killing all eleven passengers.¹⁹⁵¹ It was the deadliest attack against the police in Iraq in months. The timing of the attack is in conjunction with the offensive against Al-Qaeda fighters in the region, which includes Mosul, the capital of Nineveh province.¹⁹⁵² Later in the month, a suicide bomber attacked outside of a police station in the town of Sinjar, Nineveh province, killing fourteen recruits and two policemen.¹⁹⁵³

Plans for auxiliary training programs in Australia were announced this month. Although Australia is withdrawing its troops from Iraq, its government is giving US\$ 13.7 million over three years to train about 240 Iraqi police within the country.¹⁹⁵⁴ The money will primarily go toward leadership training and forensic science training.¹⁹⁵⁵

The Iraqi Interior Minister reinstated 150 former Baathist police officers, who were dismissed due to de-baathification policies.¹⁹⁵⁶ These officers re-enter the force with training and experience, adding to the efficacy of the ISF.

On May 9, Iraqi police announced that they had captured Abu Hamza al-Muhajer, the leader of Al-Qaeda in Iraq.¹⁹⁵⁷ Although the Mosul police celebrated the capture and were even honored by the Iraqi Interior Minister, the U.S. could not verify the arrest.¹⁹⁵⁸ The event gave the Iraqi Government and police forces increased confidence and would have led to international praise, but on May 18, Iraq's National Security Adviser, Muwaffaq al-Rubay'i, confirmed that the man captured was not al-Muhajer but Abu-Hamzah al-Ta'i.¹⁹⁵⁹

2. Leadership
Rating: Weak

¹⁹⁵¹ "11 Iraqi police recruits killed" *Newsday*, 5/20/2008.

¹⁹⁵² *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁵³ "Attack kills 16 in region disputed by Kurds, Arabs" *Los Angeles Times*, 5/30/2008.

¹⁹⁵⁴ "Troops home and a refuge for some" *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5/14/2008.

¹⁹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁵⁶ "Iraqi minister reinstates 150 Ba'thist officers in Kirkuk" *BBC Monitoring Middle East*, 5/13/2008

¹⁹⁵⁷ "Al-Qaeda in Iraq Leader Arrested in Mosul, Iraqi Police Announce" *The Washington Post*, 5/9/2008.

¹⁹⁵⁸ "Iraq's Mosul police honoured for arresting Al-Qa'idah leader" *BBC Monitoring Middle East*, 5/8/2008.

¹⁹⁵⁹ "Iraqi security official comments on Iran-US talks, "terrorists" from Syria" *BBC Monitoring Middle East*, 5/18/2008.

The military operations in Basra, Mosul, and Sadr City have garnered al-Maliki international praise. Domestically, Sadrist accuse al-Maliki's government of launching the Basra offensive to decrease al-Sadr's power in the region before the upcoming provincial elections.¹⁹⁶⁰ (Indicator 7) Also, corruption charges by local Basra officials against the Iraqi government's firing practices add to domestic distrust of the government.¹⁹⁶¹

The continuous disagreement over Article 140, which calls for a referendum on Kirkuk's status, fractures the collective leadership of Iraq. Iraqi MP Mahmud Uthman criticizes the Kurdish leadership regarding the issue. "The Kurdish leadership should have determined [the function] of this article from the beginning...The Kurdish leadership should have acted with the people of the areas that had not been incorporated in Kurdistan Region and attracted support of the population to join Kurdistan Region. They should have spent money and carried out projects so that they could persuade the people that they would be better off as part of Kurdistan."¹⁹⁶² He goes on to say that the Kurdish leadership needs to unite and work together, both internally and externally, so that Article 140 is seen as a national issue, not just that of party politics.

Al-Sadr's leadership has continued to be tested. Since his declaration of a cease-fire, he has had to quell the wishes of the younger members of his organization who want him to end the cease-fire and target government troops, seen as loyal to competing Shiite groups.¹⁹⁶³ The majority of the senior members of the group want him to continue the cease-fire.¹⁹⁶⁴

3. Civil Service

Rating: Poor

The civil service in Iraq continues to suffer from lack of funds and mismanagement. However, this month there is promise of an increase in funds from future oil profits. According to an Iraqi envoy, funding is not the only barrier to restoring basic health, sanitation, and utility services.¹⁹⁶⁵ To rebuild the civil service that has been destroyed by war and the deBaathification campaign, a large portion of Iraq's US\$ 14 billion federal budget will pay the salaries of government employees.¹⁹⁶⁶

¹⁹⁶⁰ "Analysis: Iraq PM rides high on success" *Associated Press*, 5/24/2008.

¹⁹⁶¹ "Iraq Replaces Southern Oil Chiefs in Major Shake-up" *Reuters*, 5/26/2008.

¹⁹⁶² "Iraqi Kurdish MP says purpose of Mosul operations is to weaken Kurds" *BBC Monitoring Middle East*, 5/30/2008.

¹⁹⁶³ "Sadr Pursues Image to Match His Power; Unexpected Heir Studies, Strategizes to Become an Icon Like His Father" *The Washington Post*, 5/27/2008.

¹⁹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁶⁵ "Rebuilding will take more time, envoy says; Hill Democrats eye \$70 billion from oil" *The Washington Times*, 5/7/2008.

¹⁹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

Despite the promised increase in salaries, other factors block the development of the civil service. In Sadr City, two handbag salesmen were gunned down in their white car, a model which is owned by many government employees.¹⁹⁶⁷ Their family believes they were killed because the assassins believed they were civil servants, due to their car.

4. Judiciary **Rating: Poor**

The Iraqi Government is using its power to trump the role of the judiciary. Official sources reveal that 11 percent of prisoners will be released due to a new Amnesty Law. Those indicted for violent acts, despite being found innocent by the judiciary, will not be released.¹⁹⁶⁸ This law means that in some cases, government agencies will decide the appropriate sentence for prisoners, not the courts.

Approximately 18,000 prisoners in Bucca Prison in al –Arabiya have been detained for almost a year without an official arrest warrant.¹⁹⁶⁹ (Indicator 9)

Lack of transparency and corruption remain problems in every sector of government. Muhammad Salih, editor-in-chief of a Duhok newspaper was arrested, spent three days in custody, and fined 100,000 Iraqi dinars for “contempt of court.”¹⁹⁷⁰ The public prosecutor filed a law suit against Salih for publishing an article based on information given to him by a court official about the dates and legality of judges’ leave in regard to the postponement of a trial.¹⁹⁷¹

5. Military **Rating: Weak**

The military experienced success in the Sadr City Operation. On May 20, Iraqi forces, without the help of U.S. ground troops or advisors, took over Sadr City with no significant resistance from any Shiite groups.¹⁹⁷² In a major diplomatic victory, negotiations between the Sadr movement and Shiite politicians led to a cease-fire accord that made a violent offensive unnecessary.¹⁹⁷³ Due to the operations in Basra and Mosul, additional Iraqi forces were brought in from Anbar Province.¹⁹⁷⁴ If an actual offensive

¹⁹⁶⁷ “Frontline Iraqis dream of life without fear” *The Irish Times*, 5/21/2008.

¹⁹⁶⁸ “Iraqi interior, justice ministries come under attack; other update 14 May” *BBC Monitoring Middle East*, 5/14/2008.

¹⁹⁶⁹ “Iraq’s Bucca Prison Detainees Held Without Arrest Warrant- Al- Arabiya TV” *BBC Monitoring International Reports*, 5/4/2008.

¹⁹⁷⁰ “Iraqi Kurdish journalist said imprisoned for three days, fined” *BBC Monitoring Middle East*, 5/17/2008.

¹⁹⁷¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁷² “Iraqi forces advance in Sadr City; Offensive in militia territory involves no U.S. involves no U.S. ground troops” *The International Herald Tribune*, 5/21/08.

¹⁹⁷³ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁷⁴ “A victory for Maliki: Iraqi military stages a comeback” *The International Herald Tribune*, 5/22/2008.

had occurred, joint Iraqi U.S. forces would have probably prevailed, resulting in casualties on both sides. Shiite civilians would have been caught in the cross-fire. However, Shiite militias would have been further depleted.¹⁹⁷⁵

It was announced this month that the Polish Armed Forces will transfer control of al-Diwaniyah province to the Iraqis in June. They plan to remove all troops by the end of October 2008.¹⁹⁷⁶

For the first time, U.S. forces are contracting out to private firms the small military teams that train and live with Iraqi military units.¹⁹⁷⁷ This change in strategy comes on the heels of the beginning of the transition of the U.S. military to noncombat roles. The expanding Iraqi military needs additional training.¹⁹⁷⁸

¹⁹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁷⁶ "Polish troops to hand control of al-Diwaniyah province to Iraqis in June" *BBC Monitoring Europe*, 5/17/2008.

¹⁹⁷⁷ "U.S. Seeks Contractors to Train Iraqi Military" *The Washington Post*, 5/4/2008.

¹⁹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

June 2008
12 Indicators

1. Mounting Demographic Pressures

Rating: 10

Iraqis continue to struggle, facing a range of demographic pressures, including but not limited to drought, disease, soaring food prices, and lack of access to potable water.

Like elsewhere across the globe, the price of basic foodstuffs continues to rise in Iraq. Poor harvests, low grain stocks and rising demand have all contributed to the increase. Iraq, though more arable than many of its desert neighbors, imports most of its food, as the continuing instability has decimated Iraqi agricultural production (see Indicator #5).¹⁹⁷⁹ Najat al-Azzawi, a Baghdadi housewife, on a recent grocery trip commented that in the last week the price of half a kilo of chicken rose from 2,250 dinars (US\$ 1.80) to 2,750. Similarly, a jar of jam used to be 1,250 dinars, now it is 1,500.¹⁹⁸⁰

Iraqis, however, fare somewhat better in this area than do many citizens of developing nations, due in part to their food rationing system. Currently, every Iraqi family gets a food ration card that entitles them to basic foodstuffs such as flour, rice and sugar. Iraq's Trade Ministry says this system feeds nearly two thirds of Iraq's estimated population of 27 million.¹⁹⁸¹ Recently, however the Iraqi Ministry of Trade drafted legislation to make Iraqi citizens with higher incomes ineligible for food rations.¹⁹⁸² This development follows the Trade Ministry's December 2007 warning that the Public Distribution System (PDS) program was going to be cut back due to lack of government support and rising food prices.¹⁹⁸³ Economists have doubted the long-term sustainability of food handouts, and the International Monetary Fund has repeatedly warned countries against what it sees as wasting money on non-discretionary subsidies and handouts.¹⁹⁸⁴ Budget estimates suggest the program has enough funding, US\$ 7.4 billion, to continue to feed Iraqis for the remainder of 2008.¹⁹⁸⁵ The food rations system had cost the Iraqi government US\$ 4 billion in 2007.¹⁹⁸⁶

Although Iraq now imports much of its food, the little that is grown domestically is of poor quality. Despite acknowledgments from both the government and local scientists that the Hashka Ru rivulet, which passes through the Kurdish province of Duhuk, is heavily polluted and unfit for irrigation, both sides of its banks are lined with lettuce and

¹⁹⁷⁹ "Feature: Iraqis Fret About Food Prices as Violence Falls" *Reuters Foundation*, 06/25/08.

¹⁹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁸¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁸² "Iraqi Food Distribution Faces Cutbacks" *UPI*, 06/11/08

¹⁹⁸³ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁸⁶ "Feature: Iraqis Fret About Food Prices as Violence Falls" *Reuters Foundation*, 06/25/08.

onion plantations.¹⁹⁸⁷ In an effort to limit any potential health hazards posed by these plantations, Duhuk health authorities have banned their produce from local restaurants since the beginning of the summer, but the produce is still sold at local markets.¹⁹⁸⁸ Ecologist Dr. Hussein Amin, the vice president of Duhuk University says that studies have shown that the water used to irrigate these plantations contains cadmium, lead and nickel in unsafe concentrations. Cadmium, like zinc and lead, is a heavy poisonous element. "This water should not be used before treatment. Plantations relying on this water must stop until a solution is reached," he demanded. Amin blamed the nearby industrial workshops for disposing of their wastes into the river course.¹⁹⁸⁹ The Duhuk environment director, Dilshad Abdul-Rahman, confirmed the reports of contamination, and said that his department is certain that the water from the Hashka Ru rivulet is unfit for irrigation.¹⁹⁹⁰

Contaminated water is also affecting Iraq's livestock population. The President of the Chubayish Local Council, Ahmed Kadhm, recently announced that a "new disease" has spread in the marshes, killing large numbers of water buffalo. In the Chubayish marshes alone, which are located between Iraq's Basrah, Dhi Qar, and Maysan provinces, over 12,000 buffalo have died from this disease. Kadhm continued, saying that, "[...] due to the lack of health care and services in the marsh region... not just (a lack of health care and services) for animals, but for people as well... the (Marsh animals') mortality rate has now reached 40 percent... East of Amara (Maysan) Province, Iraq's marshes are connected to Iran's marshes; so, it is likely that this disease spread into Iraq from Iran."¹⁹⁹¹ Dr. Khalil Amin Wajid, the director of Chubayish's veterinary hospital confirmed this report, saying that recently septicemia, which is a septic infection of the blood, has spread through livestock in the marsh areas.¹⁹⁹² Septicemia is a highly fatal disease that afflicts mainly cattle and water buffalo. Stresses such as a poor food supply are thought to increase susceptibility to such an infection. Mortality is nearly 100 percent if the animal is not treated very early in the disease.¹⁹⁹³

Chubayish's marshes are not the only Iraqi region struggling to maintain healthy livestock, as an unknown disease has killed an estimated 200 cattle and buffalo since April in Dhi Qar province.¹⁹⁹⁴ Mohammed Arif Mohamed, a veterinarian in Dhi Qar province, says the symptoms are similar to hoof-and-mouth disease and a local strain of fever known to infect cattle. He called on the Iraqi government and the Ministry of Agriculture to declare a state of emergency in the marshlands.¹⁹⁹⁵ Many believe contaminated water supplies to be responsible, at least in part, for the wave of diseases that have befallen Iraqi livestock.¹⁹⁹⁶ A Khalid Ali Moussa with the environment

¹⁹⁸⁷ "Poisoned Vegetables Planted, Sold in Duhuk" *Voices of Iraq*, 06/27/08.

¹⁹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁹¹ "It has Killed Many Buffalo, a New Threat to the People of the Marshes" *Asharq al-Awsat*, 07/01/08.

¹⁹⁹² *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁹³ http://www.cfsph.iastate.edu/Factsheets/pdfs/Hemorrhagic_Septicemia.pdf

¹⁹⁹⁴ "Unknown Disease Killing Iraqi Cattle" *UPI*, 06/23/08.

¹⁹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

ministry in Missan province said there is a lack of oversight from Baghdad regarding water contamination. "We can't send our employees all over the marshlands to check on contamination levels for security reasons. Environmental awareness is low, meaning there is reckless dumping of waste material in the marshlands."¹⁹⁹⁷

In addition to contaminated water supplies, Iraq is also suffering from an acute drought, which has slashed agricultural production and threatens to further decimate livestock.¹⁹⁹⁸ Agriculture is Iraq's largest employer, accounting for the livelihoods of 25 percent to 40 percent of the workforce.¹⁹⁹⁹ "90 percent of the people in Hawija live off farms," said Mohammed Hussein, a mayor in the area. "If the farmer can't work his land, he will have no choice but to be a terrorist to support his family."²⁰⁰⁰

In light of the current water crisis in Iraq, the Water Ministry announced that an Iranian delegation will be visiting Iraq to discuss Iraq's water needs. Neighboring countries are worsening drought conditions in Iraq by taking a disproportionate amount of water from the rivers, according to water and agriculture experts.²⁰⁰¹ In addition to low rainfall, the crisis is exacerbated by construction in Iran of dams on the Wan and Sirwan rivers, which flow into Iraq's Diyala province, and similar dam construction on the Tigris and Euphrates rivers by Turkey and Syria.²⁰⁰² Iraq's water resources minister recently visited Turkey to meet with the Turkish prime minister and Irrigation Minister to discuss the severe water shortage in Iraq. The Turkish government has promised to increase Iraq's share of water.²⁰⁰³ The Iraqi minister is also said to have visited with his Syrian counterpart and the Syrian Prime Minister, in addition to accompanying Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki on his recent trip to Iran (discussed in Indicator #12), in an attempt to resolve the crisis.²⁰⁰⁴ Nuri Kazim, director general at the Water Resources Ministry, said that the deficit in the water of joint rivers that enters Iraq from Turkey, Syria and Iraq, may reach more than 33 billion cubic meters in 2015 if steps are not taken to ensure a more equitable distribution. Presently, Iraq's water needs total 50 billion cubic meters for the purposes of drinking, agriculture, and household and industrial consumption.²⁰⁰⁵

¹⁹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁹⁸ "Drought Takes Toll on Iraqi Farmers; Areas in the North Have Become a Dust Bowl. Desperation Could Lead Some to Join Insurgents for Cash" *Los Angeles Times*, 06/27/08.

¹⁹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁰¹ "Blast in Falluja Damages Sunni Party's Main Office" *New York Times*, 06/13/08.

²⁰⁰² "Iraqi Water Minister Visits Turkey; Sharp Drop in Water Resources" *BBC Monitoring Middle East*, 06/07/08.

²⁰⁰³ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁰⁴ "Iraqi Water Minister Visits Turkey; Sharp Drop in Water Resources" *BBC Monitoring Middle East*, 06/07/08; "Iraqi Pm's Visit to Tehran of "High Importance" for Both Countries Official" *BBC Monitoring Middle East*, 06/07/08.

²⁰⁰⁵ "Iraqi Farmers, Fish-Breeders Complain About Water 'Scarcity'" *BCC Monitoring International*, 06/29/08.

As Iraqis struggle to find access to potable water, seemingly less urgent issues such as preventive care continue to be neglected, and Iraq's children are bearing the brunt of this neglect. Under-five mortality rates in Iraq, currently 46 out of every 1,000 live births, are two to three times higher than in Syria, which has a rate of 14 out of every 1,000 live births, and Jordan whose rate is 25 out of every 1,000 live births.²⁰⁰⁶ Also, immunization rates in are currently under 50 percent in some of Iraq's districts, spurring a measles outbreak this year.²⁰⁰⁷

The first measles outbreaks were reported from Anbar and Salah al Din provinces which were followed by outbreaks in districts plagued by a lack of security, namely the provinces of Nineveh and Kirkuk.²⁰⁰⁸ Routine measles vaccination coverage in these areas was generally far below the average for the country.²⁰⁰⁹ During the first 26 weeks of 2008, 1,912 confirmed measles cases were reported in Iraq, nearly 40 percent of which, or 736 cases, were reported from Anbar province.²⁰¹⁰ Prior to December 26, 2007 when the first recorded case of measles was documented in Anbar province, there had not been any reported measles cases in Anbar for almost three years.²⁰¹¹ The World Health Organization has since launched a "Mop Up" campaign, which involves going to every house in the hardest hit provinces, districts and sub-districts and vaccinating all children between the ages of 1 and 5. The campaigns have succeeded in controlling the outbreak; however, as of early April, smaller outbreaks had started in some areas where similar campaigns were not conducted, such as Baghdad, Diwanyia, Babil and Diyala.²⁰¹²

Al-Anbar has also been particularly hard hit by another more serious health concern as babies born in Fallujah are being born with illnesses and deformities on a scale never seen before, according to local doctors and residents²⁰¹³. There has been a marked increase in the number of such cases following the use of "special weaponry" by coalition forces in two large bombing campaigns in Fallujah in 2004.²⁰¹⁴ After denying such claims at first, the Pentagon has since admitted that it used white phosphorous, a restricted incendiary weapon, in Fallujah in 2004.²⁰¹⁵ In addition, depleted uranium (DU) munitions, which contain low-level radioactive waste, were used heavily in Fallujah. The Pentagon admits to having used 1,200 tones of DU in Iraq thus far.²⁰¹⁶ The International Criminal Court has said that it has considered launching a war crimes investigation into NATO's use of such munitions in the former Yugoslavia, and many doctors believe DU

²⁰⁰⁶ "Conflict Has Defined Life for an Entire Generation of Iraqi Children" *States News Service*, 06/17/08.

²⁰⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁰⁸ "Weekly Feedback for Measles in Iraq" *World Health Organization*, 06/29/08.

²⁰⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰¹⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁰¹¹ *Ibid.*

²⁰¹² *Ibid.*

²⁰¹³ "Babies Born in Fallujah are Showing Illnesses and Deformities; Iraq: 'Special Weapons' Have a Fallout on Babies" *IPS*, 06/13/08.

²⁰¹⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁰¹⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁰¹⁶ *Ibid.*

to be the cause of a severe increase in the incidence of cancer in Iraq, as well as among U.S. veterans who served in the 1991 Gulf War and through the current occupation.²⁰¹⁷

Pregnant mothers are also adversely affected by the use of such munitions. “Many babies were born with major congenital malformations,” said one pediatric doctor, speaking on condition of anonymity. “These infants include many with heart defects, cleft lip or palate, Down's syndrome, and limb defects.’ The doctor added, ‘I can say all kinds of problems related to toxic pollution took place in Fallujah after the November 2004 massacre.’²⁰¹⁸ Many doctors speak of similar cases and a similar pattern, though all evidence remains anecdotal in the absence of a study or any available official records. The Fallujah General Hospital administration was unwilling to give any statistics on deformed babies.²⁰¹⁹

2. Massive Movement of Refugees or IDPs

Rating: 9

The refugee and IDP crises continue unabated. While the Iraqi government has promised to do more to aide displaced families, the refugees have felt little or no relief. Additionally, the international community’s paltry financial commitment has severely limited the capabilities of international relief organizations, which are currently the only actors making a significant difference in the lives of those who have been forced to flee Iraq’s chronic instability.

Denmark has followed the recommendations set forth by the UN and has increased the number of Iraqi asylum seekers they are willing to accept. The Danish Immigration Service has approved 46 percent of the 694 applications by Iraqi asylum seekers in 2007.²⁰²⁰ In addition, another 308 Iraqi translators and their families were granted asylum because they worked with the Danish military in Iraq.²⁰²¹ In 2006, only two percent of Iraqi asylum seekers' applications were approved, but based on early statistics for 2008, it seems the positive trend from 2007 has continued.²⁰²² While the increased numbers are good news, Denmark ranked 17 last year among the 21 European countries that accept Iraqi refugees in terms of approval percentage, and ranked 9 in its total number of approved cases.²⁰²³

Although Denmark is accepting more asylum seekers than in previous years, it is making controversial decisions with regards to refugees who are no longer permitted to stay in Denmark. Despite its being a party to a number of treaties that expressly prohibit the return of any person to a country where they would be in danger of human rights abuses

²⁰¹⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁰¹⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁰¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰²⁰ “More Iraqis Granted Asylum in Denmark” *Xinhua General News Service*, 06/26/08.

²⁰²¹ *Ibid.*

²⁰²² *Ibid.*

²⁰²³ *Ibid.*

including torture or death, Danish authorities have forcibly returned eight Iraqis to Baghdad since May, and are preparing to forcibly return four more.²⁰²⁴ All of the forcibly returned men were legally resident in Denmark and some had been granted refugee status, but all have also been convicted of criminal offenses while in Denmark. Many prominent international organizations remain fiercely opposed to the forcible return of any Iraqi refugee or asylum-seeker to any part of Iraq because of the very real risks that they may be tortured or otherwise ill-treated, detained arbitrarily by the security forces or even killed.²⁰²⁵ Despite these objections, the Danish Refugee Board has now decided that the men can safely be returned to Baghdad.²⁰²⁶

The U.S. government has opened its first permanent office in Baghdad for Iraqi refugees seeking to settle in the U.S.²⁰²⁷ The establishment of such an office will make it possible for Iraqis who cannot travel outside the country to apply for resettlement. The office began interviewing applicants May 10 and has so far processed 80 embassy employees for departure, two of which have already arrived in the United States as of early June.²⁰²⁸ Ambassador James B. Foley, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's senior coordinator for Iraqi refugees said in an interview that 1,141 refugees were settled in the U.S. in May and that he believes the Bush administration will reach its goal of 12,000 for this fiscal year, which ends September 30.²⁰²⁹

Despite its acceptance of more Iraqi asylum seekers, the U.S. still faces heavy criticism for not doing more to help Iraqi refugees financially. As a result of such thriftiness by the U.S. and its allies, the UN's refugee agency has recently warned that unless its shortfall in funding is met, vital assistance programs could be slashed.²⁰³⁰ Rabih Torbay of the International Medical Corps told U.S. lawmakers that refugees are not waiting for their aid to be cut back, and are instead turning to non-state actors for support. Humanitarian groups like Refugee International warn that the trend of displaced persons relying on nongovernmental entities for services, including the Mahdi Army and other militias, could become the costliest price tag of Iraq's IDP and refugee problem.²⁰³¹ Abdul-Khaliq Zankana, the head of Iraq's Migration and Displacement Committee echoed this sentiment, saying, "Most of them are unemployed and deprived of health care and education, even though their country is oil-rich. This situation will lead them to lose faith in their country; they could become easy prey to organized criminal gangs in their host countries or terrorist groups," Zankana said the issue could destabilize the entire region, and predicted that, given the security situation, the Iraqi refugee problem could take 8-10 years to resolve.²⁰³²

²⁰²⁴ "Denmark: Forcible Return/Torture and Other Ill-Treatment" *Amnesty International*, 06/10/08.

²⁰²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁰²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁰²⁷ "U.S. Opens Site For Processing Iraqi Refugees; Baghdad Office to Aid Those Seeking to Settle in America" *The Washington Post*, 06/04/08.

²⁰²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁰²⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰³⁰ Iraq: Refugees Could Fuel Regional Instability, Experts Say" *IRIN*, 06/20/08.

²⁰³¹ "A Long Road for Iraq's Refugees" *Council on Foreign Relations*, 05/22/08.

²⁰³² Iraq: Refugees Could Fuel Regional Instability, Experts Say" *IRIN*, 06/20/08.

Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki has also been pressed by the international community to provide more assistance to Iraqis living outside the country. Thus far, the Iraqi government has provided only US\$ 25 million in support of them.²⁰³³ Iraq is, however, willing to give support to Iraqis abroad who wish to return to Iraq. Al-Maliki told a donors group in Sweden that his government would provide US\$ 195 million to resettle refugees who return to Iraq.²⁰³⁴ Sources say that 94 percent of the Iraqi refugees stated that they would only want to return to Iraq if the security situation had improved and job opportunities were available.²⁰³⁵ So far, the ministry has registered the return of some 10,000 Iraqi refugees, with 6,000 residing in Baghdad. The ministry will cover all expenses of the refugees' return, exempt them from customs and provide them with financial aid as compensation for their having had to flee the country.²⁰³⁶

In many cases, however, return is a much more complicated matter, as returning Iraqis are not always able to settle in their original homes or in their original neighborhoods due to the sectarian tensions that remain. In an attempt to address one aspect of this problem, a military spokesman says that the Iraqi security forces will announce a deadline next month for squatters occupying other peoples' homes to leave.²⁰³⁷ "Next month, God willing, we will announce a final deadline to clear out the occupants (in Baghdad), otherwise the security forces will raid those occupied houses and evacuate them at once," Military spokesman Brig. Gen. Qassim al-Moussawi told a news conference in Baghdad.²⁰³⁸ UNHCR said this month that as many as 70 percent of would-be returnees to Iraq had been unable to resettle in their own homes for various reasons, including a lack of services. Some homes have been occupied, while others were destroyed, aid workers say.²⁰³⁹

Such efforts have not satisfied all Iraqis; however, as almost 500 IDPs took to the streets of central Baghdad in protest of the Iraqi government's handling of their returns.²⁰⁴⁰ They demanded the government secure their return to their homes and pay compensation to those with damaged properties.²⁰⁴¹ "We have been displaced for nearly two years now and we don't see any serious action being taken by the government to end our suffering," said Emad Taha Ali, a 39-year-old father of two who took part in the demonstration in Baghdad's Jadiriya area.²⁰⁴²

3. Legacy of Vengeance-Seeking Group Grievance or Group Paranoia

Rating: 8

²⁰³³ "U.S. Opens Site For Processing Iraqi Refugees; Baghdad Office to Aid Those Seeking to Settle in America" *The Washington Post*, 06/04/08.

²⁰³⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁰³⁵ "Iraqi Government Earmarks 195 million Dollars for Refugees" *Deutsche Presse Agentur*, 06/02/08.

²⁰³⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁰³⁷ "Baghdad Squatters Told to Leave Occupied Homes" *Reuters Foundation*, 06/22/08

²⁰³⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁰³⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁴⁰ "Iraq: IDPs Demand Government Return Them Home" *IRIN*, 06/15/08.

²⁰⁴¹ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁴² "Iraq: IDPs Demand Government Return Them Home" *IRIN*, 06/15/08.

Overall violence indicators show that violence is trending downwards throughout most of Iraq, as evidenced by the number of attacks against Iraqi civilians which, as of mid-June, has dropped by 86 percent compared to the same time last year, according to U.S. military figures.²⁰⁴³ However, these statistics do not tell the whole story, as there were several high-profile attacks in June that, based on their targets, appear to have been aimed at reigniting tensions not only between, but also within, different ethno-sectarian groups vying for power ahead of upcoming provincial elections.

The headquarters of the Iraqi Islamic Party in Falluja, a leading Sunni political party in western Iraq, was blown up in June.²⁰⁴⁴ There is a competition for power among Sunni factions in Anbar Province, where for months, there has been conflict between the Iraqi Islamic Party and the Awakening Councils. The Awakening Councils, which did not exist during the last election, believe that, despite their powerful presence in Anbar, they have been left out of the political equation in Anbar. They have begun organizing to compete in the upcoming elections.²⁰⁴⁵

In addition to competing with local political groups, the Awakening Councils also raise the ire of the terrorist organizations they turned against, frequently becoming targets of their former allies. In one such instance, a suicide bomber on a motorcycle targeted a checkpoint manned by Awakening Council members in Saba Abkar, north of Baghdad, killing four Awakening members and injuring two civilians.²⁰⁴⁶ Violence in Baquba, the capital of the restive Diyala province, which has a mixed Sunni-Shiite population, has not abated despite an ongoing offensive jointly mounted by U.S. and Iraqi troops.

The Sunni community, however, is not unique in its infighting. In southern Iraq, where Shiite factions are involved in a bitter struggle for control, a powerful improvised explosive device was found on the road to a popular Shiite shrine.²⁰⁴⁷ According to Maj. Nasser al-Majedi, the spokesman of the Dhi Qar Province Police Department, “The road is used continuously by the Iraqi police and the multinational forces.” It was unclear which group set the explosive device, but factions loyal to the cleric Moqtada al-Sadr have been fighting with the Iraqi police and the army, whose members are often tied to a rival Shiite party, the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq.²⁰⁴⁸

Civilians were similarly targeted as a minibus packed with explosives decimated part of a popular marketplace and set ablaze a crowded apartment building in the heavily Shiite Huriya district of northwest Baghdad, leaving more than 63 people dead and 80

²⁰⁴³ “U.S. Says Baghdad Bombing was Meant to Reignite Sectarian Violence” *Christian Science Monitor*, 06/18/08.

²⁰⁴⁴ “Blast in Falluja Damages Sunni Party’s Main Office” *New York Times*, 06/13/08.

²⁰⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁴⁶ “Biggest Blast in Months Leaves at Least 50 Dead” *Deutsche Presse Agentur*, 06/17/08.

²⁰⁴⁷ “Blast in Falluja Damages Sunni Party’s Main Office” *New York Times*, 06/13/08.

²⁰⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

wounded.²⁰⁴⁹ The blast occurred in the heart of a neighborhood where Sunnis had been brutally driven out, and some of the current residents blamed the displaced Sunnis for the attack and called for revenge.²⁰⁵⁰ Not all residents, however, see the Sunnis as the problem, "I want the Sunnis to come back, so we won't be an easy target for the terrorists," said Jassim Abbas, a Huriya resident.²⁰⁵¹ The U.S. military said Haidar Mehdi Kadhim al-Fawadi, a wanted leader on the so-called Special Group was responsible for the bombing.²⁰⁵² A military spokesman said the bombing was intended to reignite Sunni-Shiite violence in a section of the city that saw some of the worst episodes of sectarian-motivated murders, bombings, and mass evictions of Sunni Arabs from 2005 to 2007. "His intent was to disrupt Sunni resettlement in Hurriyah in order to maintain extortion of real estate rental income to support his nefarious activities," said Lt. Col. Steve Stover, a U.S. military spokesman in Baghdad.²⁰⁵³

Group grievances remain particularly volatile in the disputed territories surrounding Kirkuk. In early June, Stephan de Mistura, a special representative appointed by the UN to help resolve the dispute, presented to the Iraqi government a number of recommendations on four disputed districts. He recommended that Akra and Makhmour districts be administered by the Kurds, and al-Hamdaniya and Mandali districts by the central government.²⁰⁵⁴ Most Iraqi political forces categorically rejected all of de Mistura's recommendations. De Mistura is expected to submit two more sets of recommendations: the first of which deals with disputed areas such as Tal Afar, Sinjar, Shikhan and Khaneqeen, and the second to be devoted to the oil-rich city of Kirkuk. Last month, the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) warned in statements by its official spokesman, Jamal Abdullah, of the repercussions of not implementing Article 140, which calls for a referendum to be held on the status of Kirkuk. The spokesman indicated that any decision on the controversial article should first be referred to the regional government and political blocs, noting that the passing of time is not a great healer in this regard.²⁰⁵⁵

Some political progress has been made regarding the Amnesty Law, which was approved by the Iraqi government in February 2008, and has resulted in the release of more than 100,000 detainees so far.²⁰⁵⁶ The passage of the legislation was seen as a key step in achieving reconciliation between Iraq's Shiite and Sunni populations, although many have been dissatisfied with what they see as the slow implementation of the law.²⁰⁵⁷

²⁰⁴⁹ "U.S. Says Baghdad Bombing was Meant to Reignite Sectarian Violence" *Christian Science Monitor*, 06/18/08.

²⁰⁵⁰ "Baghdad Blast Leaves 51 Dead, and the Shiites Call for Revenge" *New York Times*, 06/18/08.

²⁰⁵¹ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁵² "U.S. Says Baghdad Bombing was Meant to Reignite Sectarian Violence" *Christian Science Monitor*, 06/18/08.

²⁰⁵³ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁵⁴ "Article 140...Between Reality and Constitution" *Voices of Iraq*, 06/30/08.

²⁰⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁵⁶ "100,000 Detainees Included in Amnesty Law so Far- Judicial Council" *Voices of Iraq*, 06/29/08.

²⁰⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

4. Chronic and Sustained Human Flight

Rating: 9

While the Iraqi government is making efforts to address the issue of human flight from Iraq, there has been little progress on attracting the professional classes back home. Although violence levels have decreased significantly across much of Iraq, judges, academics, journalists and those in the medical community are still regularly targeted by extremists.

A reporter with the Institute for War and Peace Reporting, Sahar Hussein al-Haideri, was recently targeted by extremists in Mosul. She is the latest victim in a series of attacks against Muslim female reporters in Iraq. Haideri, who had long been concerned about her security, recently moved with her family to Syria and was contributing to IWPR under a pseudonym.²⁰⁵⁸ She was confronted and shot by several individuals while briefly visiting her home in Mosul. Zakia Zaki, a prominent Afghan female journalist, and Sanga Amach, a female television news presenter, were killed in separate incidents in Kabul in June.²⁰⁵⁹

Journalists are subject to intimidation not only by extremists but also by groups formally associated with the government. Journalist Rezgar Raza Chouchani was released without charge after being held for six days at the headquarters of the Zeravani Intelligence Agency, which is part of the Peshmerga. According to his colleagues, he had written about corruption in the agency, and it is believed that Chouchani was released on the condition that he stops work as a journalist for the Berzan newspaper and the Horakurd website.²⁰⁶⁰

The Iraqi judiciary has been particularly hard hit by assassinations. In June, Judge Kamil Abdul-Majid al-Shuweili, the President of the Rasafa Court of Appeals, was assassinated by unidentified gunmen while on his way home.²⁰⁶¹ Five other Rasafa judges from the Rasafa Court of Appeals' Head Committee survived separate assassination attempts by roadside bombs on June 30th.²⁰⁶² Police believe these attacks may be part of a Shiite extremist campaign to force the judges to free jailed militants or reduce their sentences.²⁰⁶³ In an effort to curb the violence and ensure the safety of Iraqi judges, the Iraq's Ministry of Justice has decided to create judiciary residential villages, to be located in close proximity to the judiciary directorates.²⁰⁶⁴

To fight the effects of the academic brain drain plaguing Iraq, the Iraqi government has proposed using oil revenues to send 10,000 high school graduates a year to study abroad

²⁰⁵⁸ "Iraqi Reporter Latest Victim of Violence Against Women Journalists" *Institute for War and Peace Reporting*, 06/07/08

²⁰⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁶⁰ "Further Information on Enforced Disappearance / Fear of Torture or Other Ill-Treatment" *Amnesty International*, 06/12/08.

²⁰⁶¹ "5 Judges Attacked in Baghdad" *Voices of Iraq*, 06/30/08.

²⁰⁶² "5 Judges Attacked in Baghdad" *Voices of Iraq*, 06/30/08.

²⁰⁶³ "Iraq: At a Glance" *Forth Worth Star Telegram*, 07/01/08.

²⁰⁶⁴ "Residential Compounds for Judges to Protect Them- Judiciary Source" *Voices of Iraq*, 06/30/08.

for the next five years.²⁰⁶⁵ The students would study in the U.S., Canada, Britain and Australia, after which they would be required to return to Iraq. Some reports indicate that presently the number of faculty with doctorates at Iraqi universities is only 35 percent. The Iraqi Education Initiative, which is a long term program that aims to reverse the hemorrhaging, also includes upgrades for Iraqi schools and curriculum. The program would pay all expenses for the students, not just for bachelor's or doctoral degrees but also for two-year technical degrees in such careers as lab assistants or administrators.²⁰⁶⁶

The Iraqi government is also actively trying to entice Iraqi doctors to return to Iraq, Rasheed al-Nassiri, head of the Iraqi government's "Committee to Protect Doctors," says more than 400 Iraqi doctors have come back this year, encouraged by a drop in violence and better wages.²⁰⁶⁷ "Migration has stopped and now we are working hard to encourage migration in the opposite direction," Nassiri. The official Iraqi Doctors' Syndicate said last December that 60 to 70 percent of 2,327 registered medical specialists with 15 to 20 years' experience had left Iraq.²⁰⁶⁸ At a recent conference held in Baghdad to discuss what could be done to encourage medical professionals to return, attendees called for protected residential compounds to be built for doctors at hospitals, laws against assaults on doctors to be enforced, and allowing doctors to carry weapons.²⁰⁶⁹

In addition to concerns about security, Iraqi doctors have economic reasons for not returning. Although Iraqi doctors' salaries were raised last year and would be increased further this year, their pay remains low by international standards.²⁰⁷⁰ According to one practitioner, while a recently qualified doctor in Iraq makes about US\$ 650 a month and an Iraqi specialist can earn more than US\$ 2,000 a month depending on experience and expertise, this pales in comparison to the US\$ 17,000 a month that the average family doctor in Britain earns.²⁰⁷¹

5. Uneven Economic Development Along Group Lines

Rating: 9

The autonomous Kurdish region of Iraq continues to attract foreign investment and is, in comparison to every other region of Iraq, thriving economically.

Negotiations remain stalled between the Kurdish regional government (KRG) and the Iraqi central government over oil contracts the KRG has signed independently with foreign oil companies to develop oil fields in the Kurdish north. Iraqi Minister of Oil Hussain al-Shahristani has said that only oil deals signed before February 2007, when a draft of the hydrocarbons law was passed, will be considered legitimate by the

²⁰⁶⁵ "An Iraq Plan we can all Endorse" *Philadelphia Enquirer*, 06/05/08.

²⁰⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁶⁷ "Iraq Tries to Entice Back Doctors who Fled Violence" *Reuters Foundation*, 06/27/08.

²⁰⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁷¹ *Ibid.*

government in Baghdad.²⁰⁷² Even deals signed prior to that date will be subject to review and amendment before being signed off on.²⁰⁷³ If oil begins to flow at any fields, the contracts for which were signed prior to February 2007, al-Shahristani warns that “That oil will be confiscated; they have no right to work in that part of the country.” He continued, “We’ll use a number of measures to stop any violation of Iraqi Law. Those contracts have no standing with us, we don’t recognize them and they have no right to do that.”²⁰⁷⁴ The KRG is also accused of signing oil deals for the disputed territories in and around the oil-rich city of Kirkuk, most notably with Hunt Oil. Of these developments al-Shahristani says, “They have no right to be there.”²⁰⁷⁵ Despite the stiff rhetoric from both sides, many of the oil companies operating in the region remain optimistic about their prospects in Kurdistan. “The majority of the issues we are dealing with are above ground. We are optimistic that the issues between KRG and the central government will be resolved, as both parties are actively involved in seeking a resolution.”²⁰⁷⁶

Kurdistan is also drawing attention from luxury housing developers this month. One such development called Naz City and located on the edge of Arbil, will bring 700 “Western-style” apartments to Kurdistan’s capital.²⁰⁷⁷ Apart from hoping to “bring something beautiful to Kurdistan,” the developer hopes such housing may lure back the professional classes who fled to the West due to violence and instability and are now used to European and American living standards.²⁰⁷⁸ The developer’s cozy relations with the KDP, one of two main political parties in the region, have helped him along. The Prime Minister, Nechirvan Barzani, a member of the KDP, has arranged for several of his leading officials to take apartments in the new development there.²⁰⁷⁹

Also in June, DAMAC, a leading luxury development corporation announced its \$4.5 billion plan for a combination residential, retail, commercial, hospitality, entertainment, health and sports complex to be built in Arbil.²⁰⁸⁰ The homes will be built on an 18-hole golf course and will boast wireless high-speed internet and satellite television amongst other luxuries. In addition to being a gated community with around-the-clock security patrols, the private community will also have its own schools.²⁰⁸¹ Such developments align nicely with the KRG’s efforts to launch Kurdistan as a popular tourist destination, describing it as “the Other Iraq.”²⁰⁸²

²⁰⁷² “Wildcatters in Controversial Northern Iraq Oil Deals Optimistic” *UPI*, 06/25/08

²⁰⁷³ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁷⁷ “Music and Mountains; Iraqi Kurdistan” *The Economist*, 06/21/07.

²⁰⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁸⁰ “DAMAC to Develop 170 Million Sq feet Master Development in Kurdistan, Iraq” *McClatchy-Tribune Regional News*, 06/03/08.

²⁰⁸¹ “DAMAC to Develop 170 Million Sq feet Master Development in Kurdistan, Iraq” *McClatchy-Tribune Regional News*, 06/03/08.

²⁰⁸² “Music and Mountains; Iraqi Kurdistan” *The Economist*, 06/21/07.

6. Sharp and/or Severe Economic Decline

Rating: 8

Iraq's economy remained largely stalled in June. With the improving security situation and the liberation of Basra from the militias, a trickle of independent stores are unshuttering their gates across Iraq, but the current drought threatens to further decimate the already war-ravaged agricultural sector. Iraq's Ministry of Water Resources recently announced that the country is suffering from water shortages that could lead to widespread drought.²⁰⁸³ Noting that Iraq only received 30 percent of its average rainfall last winter, the Ministry announced that Iraq's total water store in reservoirs and lakes is currently 22.07 billion cubic meters, down 9.19 billion cubic meters from the previous year.²⁰⁸⁴ In spite of this bad news, Iraq's inflation rate dropped to 12.4 percent in June, compared to 14.7 percent in May 2008.²⁰⁸⁵ At the peak of violence in January 2007, Iraq's annual inflation rate was 66 percent.²⁰⁸⁶

The drought, in addition to lowered water levels in the Tigris, Euphrates and other key waterways (discussed in Indicator #1) has caused serious problems for many sectors of the agricultural industry. The Institute for the Protection and Security of the Citizen recently released its report on crop monitoring in central Asia in which it expressed that it expects, "extremely low wheat yield in 2008 in Iraq," citing insufficient precipitation as a key reason for the shortfall.²⁰⁸⁷ Similarly affected are the many fish-breeding farms that line the banks of the Tigris and Euphrates and produce thousands of tons of fish each year. One such farmer recently confessed that he had been mixing water from drainage canals with river water to make-up for the water shortfall. He stopped such practices after noticing its negative effect on his fish farms.²⁰⁸⁸ Ammar Muhammad al-Dallawi, a farmer in northern Baghdad says the drought has started to adversely affect his daily life. He currently cultivates only 25,000 of his 200,000 cubic meters of property due to a shortage of irrigation water.²⁰⁸⁹ The governor of Muthanna, where 90 percent of the population lives by farming, recently said that although his province was prepared to plant over 20 million cubic meters of land, the Iraqi Ministry of Water Resources had only allocated enough water to the province to provide for the irrigation of 12.5 million cubic meters.²⁰⁹⁰

Iraq's livestock, an important commodity in many of Iraq's industries, are also feeling the effects of the water shortage. Dr. Sammy Hashim, a veterinarian in west Baghdad says animals' basic needs are not being met: "Good drinking water, good feed, vet care and medicines are all unavailable in Iraq since the U.S. occupation of the country began in

²⁰⁸³ "Iraq: Ongoing War Takes Deadly Toll on Farm Animals" *IPS*, 06/05/08.

²⁰⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁸⁵ "Inflation Rate Down in June" *IraqUpdates.com*, 07/21/08.

²⁰⁸⁶ "Feature: Iraqis Fret About Food Prices as Violence Falls" *Reuters Foundation*, 06/25/08.

²⁰⁸⁷ "Crop Monitoring in Central Asia April – May 2008" *Institute for the Protection and Security of the Citizen*, 06/10/08.

²⁰⁸⁸ "Iraqi Farmers, Fish-Breeders Complain About Water 'Scarcity'" *BBC Monitoring International*, 06/29/08.

²⁰⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁹⁰ "Muthanna Governor Warns of Water 'Catastrophe'" *Voices Of Iraq*, 06/12/08.

2003.”²⁰⁹¹ “Killing agriculture and animal breeding is a great loss to the economy of Iraq,” says Youssif Hussein, a lecturer in economics at al-Anbar University in Ramadi. Hussein goes on to say that “Considering the fact that Iraqi oil will go into the pockets of American corporations, Iraqis should think seriously of depending on farming and animal breeding for a long time to come.”²⁰⁹² Dr. Hashim sums up the main problem, saying, “Naturally, no one cares for the poor animals when nobody seems to care even for human beings under the occupation.”²⁰⁹³

Iraq’s oil fields remain a bright spot for the struggling economy, as oil revenues are higher now than at any time since the overthrow of Saddam Hussein in 2003. Exports have reached a high point of 2.11 million barrels of oil per day and daily production hit 2.5 million barrels a day last month, according to Oil Ministry figures.²⁰⁹⁴ Iraq’s oil ministry also announced in June that it was opening up eight enormous oil and gas fields to international bidding. It is hoped that these contracts will raise Iraq’s production by 1.5 million barrels per day.²⁰⁹⁵ Iraq has said it hopes to be producing 4.5 million barrels per day by 2013, although many experts are less optimistic about this goal. “I’m pretty skeptical of that figure,” says Jim Ritterbusch, president of the energy consultancy Ritterbusch and Associates. “Amount is one thing, timing is another. They still need to upgrade their infrastructure and while things have stabilized, I think you’re assuming a best-case scenario on security and other issues.”²⁰⁹⁶

7. Criminalization and/or Delegitimization of the State

Rating: 10

The Iraqi government continues to be plagued by corruption and scandal. Although al-Maliki’s government has gained some credibility in the wake of his recent successful military offensives against the militias, the Iraqi state still struggles to provide basic essential services to the Iraqi people and continues to be plagued by sectarian divides. These factors combine to seriously undermine the peoples’ confidence in the Iraqi government.

The International Advisory and Monitoring Board (IAMB), an audit oversight body for the Development Fund for Iraq (DFI), reported to the Security Council in June its evaluation of the management of the DFI, into which several billions of dollars of Iraqi money, previously held by the United Nations, has been deposited. UN Comptroller Warren Sach said the IAMB aims to ensure that the DFI is used in a transparent manner for the benefit of the Iraqi people, and that export sales of petroleum were consistent with the international market’s best practices.²⁰⁹⁷ He said that audit reports on DFI have

²⁰⁹¹ “Iraq: Ongoing War Takes Deadly Toll on Farm Animals” *IPS*, 06/05/08.

²⁰⁹² *Ibid.*

²⁰⁹³ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁹⁴ “Iraq: Refugees Could Fuel Regional Instability, Experts Say” *IRIN*, 06/20/08.

²⁰⁹⁵ “Iraq Opens Bidding on Oil and Gas Field” *Associated Press* 06/30/08.

²⁰⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁹⁷ “UN Official Says Financial Controls on Iraqi Oil Proceeds ‘Deficient’” *States News Service*, 06/13/08.

highlighted weaknesses in internal financial controls, including incomplete record keeping at the Iraqi Ministry of Finance, lack of a comprehensive oil metering system, sale of oil and oil products outside of the DFI, incomplete contract information associated with U.S. agencies' contracts and bartering.²⁰⁹⁸ The IAMB noted some progress but reiterated its concern at the continuing slow progress in implementing the earlier recommendations and in strengthening the system of internal controls.²⁰⁹⁹ Mr. Sachs noted that fewer than 15 percent of previous recommendations to Iraqi spending ministries had been implemented.²¹⁰⁰

Evidence of the chronic mismanagement alleged in the IAMB report was on display in the former Sunni insurgent stronghold of Kut, in Anbar province, where U.S.-funded reconstruction efforts were recently suspended because of a corruption probe, including allegations that the mayor and police chief were involved in a multimillion-dollar oil smuggling ring.²¹⁰¹ The mayor, Hikmat Jubair al-Gaoud, is under investigation, though his current whereabouts are unknown and it is unclear whether he has fled the country.²¹⁰² Among the reconstruction projects that have been suspended are repairs to the town's dilapidated infrastructure, including street repairs, sewerage upgrade and school construction. "Since there is nobody to lead the city, it doesn't make a whole lot of sense to continue these projects," said Mike Isho, the Arabic public affairs officer for Multi-National Forces-West.²¹⁰³ The position of police chief has been a notoriously corrupt position in Kut. In April, police chief Col. Salah Rasheed al-Gaoud was forced out of his job for allegedly smuggling oil. Al-Gaoud's predecessor in the post, Col. Hamid Ibrahim al-Jazaa, was arrested by U.S. forces last year for allegedly freeing prisoners from the local jail in return for money. Most recently, provincial police chief Maj. Gen. Tariq Youssef Mohammed, who had ordered al-Gaoud to resign, was dismissed by the Anbar provincial council for alleged misconduct. Mohammed has refused to give up his post because he was appointed by the Ministry of Interior in Baghdad, arguing that the council had no right to replace him.²¹⁰⁴

8. Progressive Deterioration of Public Services

Rating: 9

The Iraqi government is still struggling to provide basic services: potable water is scarce; sanitation is considered a luxury, electricity supplies are inconsistent and insufficient, and even the most basic health care services are beyond the reach of most Iraqis. Although the Iraqi government and coalition forces have undertaken numerous projects to improve

²⁰⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁹⁹ "Statement by the International Advisory and Monitoring Board on the Development Fund for Iraq" *International Advisory and Monitoring Board*, 06/02/08.

²¹⁰⁰ "UN Official Says Financial Controls on Iraqi Oil Proceeds 'Deficient'" *States News Service*, 06/13/08.

²¹⁰¹ "Probe Halts Rebuilding of Iraqi city" *Associated Press Online*, 06/20/08.

²¹⁰² *Ibid.*

²¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

²¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

conditions, these successes are merely a drop in the bucket when compared to the enormous needs most Iraqis have.

Although oil exports have reached an all time high in Iraq, Baghdad residents say the distribution of power and water is still poor, and such underperformance is damaging their impression of the Iraqi government.²¹⁰⁵ "It's the most secure it's been, but at some point the newness and novelty of that wears off, and people start expecting something else," said Maj. Brian Tuson of the Army's 1st Battalion, 87th Infantry Regiment. "If they perceive the government to be unresponsive to what they see as reasonable demands, that could backslide."²¹⁰⁶ Mustafa Mahdi Hussein, the dean of Basra University's college of administration and economics reiterated this point, noting that unemployment posed a security risk because idle young men are vulnerable to militia recruitment. "We need to give them work to do. You can't just keep expanding the military operations."²¹⁰⁷ "The fear is unrealistic expectations," said an American defense official, who would speak candidly about the issue only if he was granted anonymity, "Services do take time." "They said they will repair schools and roads — but when and where?" said Ali Alwan a resident of Hayaniya, one of Basra's most deprived areas and a Sadrist stronghold.²¹⁰⁸

Iraq's health care system is in particularly dire straits. No new hospitals have been built since 1986, and the ones that remain are often understaffed, under stocked and are severely hampered by bureaucratic corruption and inefficiency.²¹⁰⁹ The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) expressed its concern earlier in the year about the lack of medical supplies in hospitals in Baghdad and Basra. "Hospitals have used up stocks of vital medical items, and require further supplies to cope with the influx of wounded patients," the ICRC said in a statement.²¹¹⁰

A senior Iraqi health ministry official speaking anonymously recently said that the health sector is under "great pressure." He continued, saying, "We are experiencing a big shortage of everything. We don't have enough specialist doctors and medicines, and most of the medical equipment is outdated. We used to get many spinal and head injuries, but were unable to do anything as we didn't have enough specialists and medicines." He added, "Intravenous fluid, which is a simple thing, is not available all the time."²¹¹¹ Shortages at Kirkuk hospital's neurosurgery unit are such that surgeons ask the families of patients to go out and buy the basic equipment required for operations on the black market.²¹¹² At the same hospital, surgeons had asked the Ministry of Health for a consignment of sponges six months ago. They recently received several packets – but

²¹⁰⁵ "Iraqis Lack Basic Services Despite Gains" *UPI*, 06/17/08.

²¹⁰⁶ "Drought Takes Toll on Iraqi Farmers; Areas in the North Have Become a Dust Bowl. Desperation Could Lead Some to Join Insurgents for Cash" *Los Angeles Times*, 06/27/08.

²¹⁰⁷ "Freed of militias, Basra residents now focus their frustrations at Iraqi government" *Associated Press Worldstream*, 06/24/08.

²¹⁰⁸ "Big Gains for Iraq Security, but Questions Linger" *New York Times*, 06/21/08.

²¹⁰⁹ "Babies Born in Fallujah are Showing Illnesses and Deformities; Iraq: 'Special Weapons' Have a Fallout on Babies" *IPS*, 06/13/08.

²¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

²¹¹² "Medical Shortages Fatal for Kirkuk Patients" *Institute For War And Peace Reporting*, 07/01/08.

they had expired a year prior. Similarly, when staff complained to the Ministry of Health about mice infestation at the hospital, the ministry sent rat poison a month later.²¹¹³

Iraqi Health Minister Salih al-Hassnawi said the 2008 health budget allocated an average of US\$ 22 per citizen to cover all medical expenditures, including medicines, medical equipment and ambulances.²¹¹⁴

Electricity remains an inconsistent commodity for most Iraqis. A recent State Department report shows that from June 3 to 9, the daily supply of electricity met only 52 percent of demand, and on average, Baghdad had 7.8 hours of power while the rest of the country had 10.2 hours.²¹¹⁵ The U.S. government aimed to provide 12 hours of daily electricity by 2006, while the Iraqi Ministry of Electricity's planned to reach 24 hours of electricity for Iraqis in the same timeframe.²¹¹⁶ Despite such shortcomings, the Iraqi Minister of Electricity, Waheed Kareem, recently said that he expects Iraq will have a reliable supply of electricity in three years' time, attributing recent outages to disruptions caused by military offenses and revealing ministerial plans to set up more power generating stations in the country.²¹¹⁷

Iraqi electricity and military officials are also blaming Iran for a large part of the electricity shortages, alleging that Tehran has cut electricity supplies to Iraq by more than half since al-Maliki launched the recent military offensive in Basra on March 25. A senior electricity official in Basra, who spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of relations with Iran, said Iran claimed the reduction was a result of technical problems, but Brig. Gen. Sabah Fadhil Motor, a commander in the Iraqi army, agreed with other Iraqi officials in accusing Iran of limiting electricity supplies in response to Baghdad's crackdown on the Iranian-backed Mahdi Army.²¹¹⁸

In an effort to side-step concerns about electricity supplies, an Iraqi company affiliated with the Iraqi Ministry of Industry and Minerals said that they are preparing to launch a project to light up eastern Baghdad's streets with solar power.²¹¹⁹ Similar efforts are also being undertaken as part of reconstruction efforts in Baghdad's Sadr city.²¹²⁰

Electricity shortages are also affecting the supply of potable water in several areas of Baghdad. These interruptions in the water supply have coincided with a sharp spike in temperatures as well as the deterioration in electrical power, which the Electricity Ministry has been unable to explain. Most of the citizens have started buying bottled water from the market to make up for the current shortage in piped water, but the price of

²¹¹³ *Ibid.*

²¹¹⁴ "Babies Born in Fallujah are Showing Illnesses and Deformities; Iraq: 'Special Weapons' Have a Fallout on Babies" *IPS*, 06/13/08.

²¹¹⁵ "Securing, Stabilizing and Rebuilding. Iraq" *Government Accountability Office*, 06/08/08.

²¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

²¹¹⁷ "Electricity 'Almost Stable' in 3 Years- Minister" *Voices of Iraq*, 06/02/08.

²¹¹⁸ "Freed of militias, Basra residents now focus their frustrations at Iraqi government" *Associated Press Worldstream*, 06/24/08.

²¹¹⁹ "Lighting up Baghdad Streets with Solar Power" *Voices of Iraq*, 06/24/08.

²¹²⁰ "Improved Iraqi Security Leads to Reconstruction, Jobs" *Regulatory Intelligence Data*, 06/12/08.

such imported luxuries proves too big an obstacle for many Iraqis.²¹²¹ Many low-income Iraqis have been using electric pumps run by private power generators to draw drinking water. Although a source at the municipality said that piped water delivered to homes in Baghdad is laboratory-tested and is not contaminated, the use of such pumps creates cracks in the pipes and can lead to water contamination in residential areas.²¹²²

There is, however, good news regarding the water that Iraqis do have access to, as the U.S. provincial reconstruction teams in Anbar province have installed seven solar-powered purification units to provide potable water to local residents.²¹²³ Many residents of Anbar province have been getting the majority of their water from the Euphrates River, which the Iraqi Minister of Health has said is tainted with cholera and other contaminants.²¹²⁴ There are plans to install five more units by the end of June.²¹²⁵ Similarly, an official from Basra's reconstruction unit announced that two water purification stations have been set up in Basra's southern districts of al-Faw and Abi al-Khaseeb at a total cost of nearly US\$ 1.4 million. The new stations will meet local residents' needs for a regular supply of drinkable water.²¹²⁶

The Iraqi government is also working to improve basic services in Karbala, as it was recently announced that work has begun on the biggest sewage project in Karbala, costing US\$ 4 million. The project is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2008 and is considered one of the most important projects in the province.²¹²⁷

As Iraqi security forces continue to risk life and limb to drive out the militias, their government has failed to respond to the needs of the injured soldiers. Many soldiers dealing with severe injuries are forced to pay for private doctors or turn to Iraq's abysmal public health care system.²¹²⁸ As recently as one year ago, such hospitals were dominated by militias that kidnapped and killed patients, particularly security personnel from rival units. Iraqi government officials say a law providing for veterans' care is being drafted, and that in the meantime the wounded veterans received adequate care.²¹²⁹ Despite assertions by the government that, wounded soldiers receive their full salaries from the Ministry of Defense, many veterans dispute these claims, saying they were only paid a small fraction of their salaries, if anything at all.²¹³⁰ In one example, Hussein Ali Hassan, a sergeant in Saddam Hussein's army who was injured during the U.S. invasion, has had to borrow heavily in order to have his wounds treated at a private hospital in Baghdad. He has spent about US\$ 13,000 on such treatment. Though he had instructions from his doctors to avoid standing for long periods, the army quickly returned him to checkpoint

²¹²¹ "Residents of Iraqi Capital Complain of "Severe Shortage" of Drinking Water" *BBC Monitoring Middle East*, 06/30/08.

²¹²² *Ibid.*

²¹²³ *Ibid.*

²¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

²¹²⁵ "Fallujah Gets Solar-Powered Water Units" *UPI*, 06/17/08.

²¹²⁶ "2 Water Facilities Established in Iraq" *Middle East and North Africa Financial Network*, 06/10/08.

²¹²⁷ "Mega Sewage Project in Karbala" *Voice of Iraq*, 06/19/08.

²¹²⁸ "Wounded Iraqi Forces Say They've Been Abandoned" *New York Times*, 07/01/08.

²¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

²¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

duty, where he is on his feet all day long in temperatures up to 120 degrees. "I demanded that my superiors give me a desk job," Mr. Muhammad said. "They told me if I keep complaining, they'll kick me out of the army."²¹³¹

9. Suspension or Arbitrary Application of the Rule of Law and Widespread Violation of Human Rights

Rating: 10

Human rights abuses continue to be one of the greatest problems facing Iraq, as there appears to be a gross disregard for human dignity across all communities. Such abuses are perpetrated by all sectors of the population, from the Iraqi government to armed militias and individual actors. There is little to no justice for the victims of these atrocities.

Despite its successes in luring foreign investment, Kurdistan is far from a stabilized region based on human rights and the rule of law. A recent biannual report released by the International Organization for Migration cast an unflattering light on the conditions for Iraq's female IDP population in the region, saying, "It is estimated that hundreds of IDP women in the Kurdistan region are subject to sexual abuse and domestic violence."²¹³² It continued, "Many of these are forced into prostitution, sometimes by their own loved ones."²¹³³ Women and children also face very difficult conditions in the northern provinces such as Tamim, Nineveh and Salahuddin, where levels of violence have been slower to decline than elsewhere in the country.²¹³⁴ According to the same report, many displaced women in the volatile city of Kirkuk have been forced into prostitution, often by their own relatives, and still others were forced to marry significantly older men from their host communities. The report also notes that, "One IDP family was arrested in Kirkuk after local police discovered that they were aiding a prostitution ring in Kurdistan. Many of the girls were very young, and numerous dead, often violated, bodies of young girls were found on the outskirts of the city prior to the arrest."²¹³⁵ UNICEF has received similar reports and recently announced its concern that girls are increasingly subject to murder, kidnapping and rape, or are being abducted and trafficked within or outside Iraq for sexual exploitation.²¹³⁶

The Iraqi Constitutional Rights and Freedoms Observatory, a Baghdad-based non-governmental organization, released a report in June that further highlights the plight of women in Iraq. The report says that the marginalization of women, poor living conditions and high levels of unemployment in Iraq are some of the primary factors

²¹³¹ *Ibid.*

²¹³² "Report: Women and Children Refugees among Hardest Hit in Iraq" *Associated Press*, 06/20/08.

²¹³³ *Ibid.*

²¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

²¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

²¹³⁶ "UNICEF Statement on the Continued Abduction, Torture and Rape of Children around the World" *UNICEF*, 06/20/08.

causing an increase in suicide bombings across the country.²¹³⁷ There are almost one million women who have lost their husbands since the occupation began and are without a way to support themselves and their families.²¹³⁸ Many rural Iraqi women are illiterate, and their lack of skill, in combination with their desperation leaves them extremely vulnerable to the influence of extremist groups. Women travel through Iraqi checkpoints with relative ease, making them attractive mules for terrorist organizations.

The report also noted, "Terrorism has targeted all sectors of Iraqi society and used all means to undermine the country's security and stability," citing incidents in which children were used to carry out suicide bombings, an account on which UNICEF has also recently announced its concern.²¹³⁹ The report argues that such children are often threatened by insurgent groups, and this, in combination with their neglect by the Iraqi government, has made them easy targets for armed groups.²¹⁴⁰

International rights organizations have recently expressed concern over the excessive number of death sentences being handed out by Iraqi courts. The Federal Cassation Court in Baghdad ratified the death sentences of 18 people one day in June.²¹⁴¹ These sentences can be appealed to the president for clemency, but such sentences can also be carried out at any time. Seven of the 18 were sentenced to death by Central Criminal Courts of Iraq for kidnapping, and five were sentenced by ordinary criminal courts for various crimes.²¹⁴² According to Amnesty International, at least 33 people have been sentenced to death and 30 have been executed so far in 2008, but such figures could be much higher as reporting on death sentences is inconsistent at best.²¹⁴³ Amnesty International issued a press release about the situation and noted its "serious concerns about proceedings before the CCCI, which consistently fall short of international standards." It continued, noting that, "Defendants often complain that 'confessions' have been extracted from them under torture and that they could not chose their own legal counsel."²¹⁴⁴

The head of the Iraqi parliament's human rights committee, Hareth al-Ubeidi, has recently described the conditions in Iraq's jails as tragic. He is demanding that the government put a stop to what he described as human rights violations against the detainees. He said detainees are beaten and tortured, and highlighted Basra, Karbala and al-Askandariya prisons as being among worst offenders.²¹⁴⁵ Al-Ubeidi is a member of the Iraqi Accordance Front, the biggest Sunni bloc in Parliament, which has been agitating

²¹³⁷ "Women's Marginalization, Poverty, Unemployment behind Suicide Bombings-Report" *Voices of Iraq*, 06/23/08.

²¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

²¹³⁹ "UNICEF Statement on the Continued Abduction, Torture and Rape of Children around the World" *UNICEF*, 06/20/08.

²¹⁴⁰ "Women's Marginalization, Poverty, Unemployment behind Suicide Bombings-Report" *Voices of Iraq*, 06/23/08.

²¹⁴¹ "Iraq: Death Penalty/fear of Imminent Execution" *Amnesty International*, 06/19/08.

²¹⁴² *Ibid.*

²¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

²¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

²¹⁴⁵ "Parliamentary Committee Describes Jails' Conditions as 'Tragic'" *Voices Of Iraq*, 06/26/08.

for better treatment of the Sunni population in Iraq. Sunni citizens often allege they are targeted by the predominately Shiite security forces.

10. Security Apparatus Operates as a “State Within a State”

Rating: 9

Although the Iraqi security forces have made impressive gains over the last several months, the Iraqi government continues to fail in its attempts to possess a monopoly on the use of force, as militias like the Mahdi Army continue to exert their will in certain areas of Iraq. The Mahdi Army, though still a powerful organization, suffered significant losses during their clashes with the ISF and coalition forces this spring, according to an Iraq intelligence report.²¹⁴⁶ According to the same report, having suffered such substantial losses to his militia, Moqtada al-Sadr has now been forced to change his tactics and has called for the disbanding of his Mahdi Army in order to create a smaller, more focused fighting force to compliment a larger more social service-oriented wing of his party.²¹⁴⁷ The report claims that, while many Mahdi Army fighters escaped to safe houses in Iran, thousands more were killed, wounded or captured by coalition and ISF forces. According to a Mahdi Army commander in Baghdad, Mahdi Army fatalities topped 1,000 in Sadr City alone. The Iraqi report stated, "The number of members doesn't exceed 150-200, hugely down from the total estimated number of 50,000 in the past two years."²¹⁴⁸

Just as the ISF and coalition forces have begun, however temporarily, to rein in the Mahdi Army, it seems they have set about to create another armed, independent militia. In an attempt to build on the Sons of Iraq program, a new strategy has been launched to recruit former Shiite militiamen to American-armed and financed neighborhood security groups.²¹⁴⁹ The officials hope the initiative will lead some militia supporters away from violence by paying them to protect an area riddled by chronic insecurity and unemployment. While some embrace the development, "We need to tread lightly," says Maj. Byron Sarchet, information operations officer for the brigade responsible for Sadr City. However, not everyone agrees with the program. Lt. Col. Yehiye Rasul Abdullah, commander of the Iraqi army battalion in Jamila, is not prepared to embrace the same Mahdi Army fighters who took up arms against his soldiers. "Those who have contributed to the spilling of Iraqi blood, we will never accept them," he said after coming to check on the guards.²¹⁵⁰

In the perpetually unruly city of Mosul, which American and Iraqi officials have called the last urban bastion of Al-Qaeda in Iraq and other Sunni jihadist groups, weekly figures on attacks are down by half since May 10, when the Iraqi military, assisted by the U.S.

²¹⁴⁶ "Mahdi Army Decimated During Recent Fighting" *Long War Journal*, 06/26/08.

²¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

²¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

²¹⁴⁹ "U.S. Enlists and Arms Patrols in Sadr City 'Neighborhood Guards' Modeled on Program In Sunni Areas of Iraq" *The Washington Post*, 06/12/08.

²¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

military, began its most recent offensive.²¹⁵¹ More than 1,000 people suspected of insurgent activity have been arrested during the offensive.²¹⁵² “They have learned the right lessons,” said Brig. Gen. Raymond A. Thomas III, the commander of American forces in Mosul, of the Iraqi soldiers.²¹⁵³

Many factors contributed to the success of the Mosul offensive. One important factor seems to be that both the insurgent groups and the ISF would prefer not to fight. As was the case in Basra and Sadr City, the Iraqi military appears to have allowed many insurgents to flee Mosul, after many rounds of negotiation with militia leaders.²¹⁵⁴ The strong presence of the Iraqi security forces in these operations has also helped in brokering peace, as more than two-dozen insurgent leaders – who might not have surrendered to U.S. forces – turned themselves in to the Iraqis.²¹⁵⁵ Not everyone, however, thinks negotiated cease-fires hold the answer to lasting peace. “We may have wasted an opportunity in Basra to kill those that needed to be killed,” said one American defense official, who would speak candidly about the issue only if he was granted anonymity.²¹⁵⁶

In Mosul, though the ISF figured prominently in the ultimate offensive, American military assistance had laid the groundwork for success.²¹⁵⁷ U.S. Army Rangers and other American special operations forces eliminated many of the city’s toughest guerrillas in unpublicized operations prior to the ISF offensive. These efforts made it substantially easier for Iraqi troops to operate in the city, although it does remain dangerous.²¹⁵⁸ “It’s underreported how much the secret guys did to set the conditions for the Iraqi Army to go in and do what they did,” said the same anonymous American defense official.²¹⁵⁹

The southern city of Amara is the latest stop in Prime Minister al-Maliki's campaign to impose order and crackdown on militias. Amara is the only Iraqi provincial capital run by a Sadrist administration and many saw the move as largely political. The Iraqi Security Forces faced little resistance during the Amara offensive, called Promise of Peace, as residents said they did not hear a single gunshot.²¹⁶⁰ In addition to being considered a Mahdi Army stronghold, Amara is also said to be a haven for arms smugglers between Iraq and Iran.²¹⁶¹ The peaceful nature of this military offensive was largely the result of Moqtada al-Sadr’s offer of support to the Iraqi forces in Amara, which benefited both sides, who wish to avoid an upsurge in violence. “We have expressed to the committee of

²¹⁵¹ “Iraqi Military Extends Control in Northern City” *New York Times*, 06/01/08

²¹⁵² *Ibid.*

²¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

²¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

²¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

²¹⁵⁶ “Big Gains for Iraq Security, but Questions Linger” *New York Times*, 06/21/08.

²¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

²¹⁵⁸ “Suicide Bombers Kill 35 Iraqi Recruits” *New York Times*, 07/16/08.

²¹⁵⁹ “Big Gains for Iraq Security, but Questions Linger” *New York Times*, 06/21/08.

²¹⁶⁰ “Iraq Launches Crackdown in Southern City” *Reuters*, 06/19/08.

²¹⁶¹ “Iraq Troops Take Control in Amara Iraqi Security Forces Have Been Fanning Out in the Southern City of Amara, as Part of a Crackdown on Shiite Militias and Criminal Gangs.” *BBC News*, 06/08.

the Shiite coalition that we work with, that we are able to cooperate with them in order to make the operation succeed," said al-Sadr's spokesman Salah al-Obeidi.²¹⁶² Some al-Sadr aides say that despite their cooperation with the government, members of their political movement were being unfairly targeted, confirming concerns the group had announced prior to the launch of the offensive.²¹⁶³ Among those detained were Amara's mayor, Rafea Abdul-Jabbar, and a member of the municipal council, both al-Sadr supporters. Sadrists said they were innocent. "Some arrests are unfairly targeting the wrong people. They seem to be randomly arresting officials in a violation of the prime minister's promises that they would not," said a Shiite cleric and al-Sadr aide, who declined to be named.²¹⁶⁴ "We stand with the government on imposing the law but [...] the law must be imposed on everybody," Bahaa al-Araji, a member of al-Sadr's parliamentary bloc.²¹⁶⁵

During the offensive, al-Maliki spoke to reporters and vowed to continue to use force against Iraqis who defy the "will of the nation," saying that he will send the ISF anywhere local security officials are "weak."²¹⁶⁶ He singled out the restive province of Diyala northeast of Baghdad as another possible target.²¹⁶⁷ Many people credit al-Maliki's new swagger to the fact that he has more ISF forces at his disposal, now that they are not bogged down fighting a significant Sunni insurgency, and that those troops are increasingly better-trained and gaining in confidence and professionalism.²¹⁶⁸

Despite the growing confidence and capabilities of the ISF, Iraqi government officials continue to reiterate their strong need and desire for American military assistance in Iraq to continue. During the lengthy and controversial negotiations over the status of forces agreement between the U.S. and Iraq, Iraq has been negotiating for an American promise to defend the Iraqi government against foreign or domestic aggression. Ali Adeeb, one of al-Maliki's top advisers, said officials want the U.S. to defend the Iraqi government against any threats the Iraqi government identifies, not just the threats the U.S. recognizes. "Our political system is weak, the terrorists and former regime members are sparing no effort to overthrow the system, and neighboring countries have their own ambitions," Adeeb continued, "Our army is not qualified to defend Iraq yet."²¹⁶⁹ On a similar note, Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshiyar Zebari said in a recent interview that Iraq still needs American troops to help solidify the progress achieved as a result of what he called a successful U.S. surge strategy. "We need this continued support of the U.S. forces, of the multinational forces, because the gains we have gained, both security, military economic [sic] are still vulnerable."²¹⁷⁰

Iraqis' continued benefit from the increased security created as a result of the Iraqi Security forces driving powerful militias from their cities, but Iraqis remain skeptical

²¹⁶² "Iraq Forces Poised for Assault in Southern Shiite City" *Agence France Presse*, 06/14/08.

²¹⁶³ "Big Gains for Iraq Security, but Questions Linger" *New York Times*, 06/21/08.

²¹⁶⁴ "Iraq Launches Crackdown in Southern City" *Reuters*, 06/19/08.

²¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

²¹⁶⁶ "Iraq PM Vows Force against Iraqis Working Against 'Will of Nation' USA Today, 06/23/08.

²¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

²¹⁶⁸ "Big Gains for Iraq Security, but Questions Linger" *New York Times*, 06/21/08.

²¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

²¹⁷⁰ "Iraq Says it Still Needs US Troops to Secure Gains" *Reuters Foundation*, 06/15/08.

about the degree of impartiality and independence al-Maliki exercised in these offensives. In addition to the Mahdi Army, which al-Maliki's offensives have mostly targeted, many Sunnis in Iraq still fear the Badr organization, the armed wing of the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq, and a close ally of al-Maliki's Dawa Party.²¹⁷¹ "Maliki's war was a selective one," says Falah Muhammad Abdullah, a Falluja resident. "Why does Maliki's government hunt down the Mahdi militia while it neglects Badr?" There is also less enthusiasm for the recent operation in western Mosul, which is largely Sunni.²¹⁷² Eman al-Hayali, a teacher in Amiriya, praised al-Maliki for weakening al-Sadr's Mahdi Army but said she feared the Mosul operation was intended to satisfy the al-Maliki government's patrons in Iran and telegraph a message to Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad: "Do not worry, your excellency, we are also killing Sunnis."²¹⁷³

11. Rise of Factionalized Elites

Rating: 10

Despite the political opportunities that were created by improved security conditions, there has been little progress in June towards political reconciliation. Ahead of the upcoming provincial elections, most major parties are extremely wary of being seen compromising or making deals. However, this is not to suggest that Iraqi politics are static. The UN Special Adviser on Iraq, Ibrahim Gambari, said in a recent briefing to the UN Security Council that there have been indications of progress on political dialogue in the country, citing advances in talks to get Tawafuq, the leading Sunni bloc, to return to the Government, and Turkoman representatives ending their 18-month boycott of the Kirkuk Provincial Council.²¹⁷⁴ While these are positive developments, in other instances, what at one point appeared to be promising political progress has since been halted. Despite the Iraqi Parliament's passage in February of a law reforming the heavy-handed purge of former Baath Party members from government, there have been no members yet named to the commission created to carry out the law.²¹⁷⁵

Moqtada al-Sadr's group recently announced that it will not be fielding an official slate of Sadrists candidates in the upcoming provincial elections. The Sadrists are not, however, launching a full boycott of the polls, later clarifying that al-Sadr's party would support individual Sadrists running for office.²¹⁷⁶ "The Sadr group will not take part in the (provincial) elections as we did in the parliamentary election," said Sheikh Salah al-Obeidi, a spokesman for al-Sadr in the holy city of Najaf.²¹⁷⁷ "This is the decision as of

²¹⁷¹ "Big Gains for Iraq Security, but Questions Linger" *New York Times*, 06/21/08.

²¹⁷² *Ibid.*

²¹⁷³ *Ibid.*

²¹⁷⁴ "UN Official Says Financial Controls on Iraqi Oil Proceeds 'Deficient'" *States News Service*, 06/13/08.

²¹⁷⁵ "Government Study Criticizes Bush Administration's Measures of Progress in Iraq" *The New York*, 06/24/08.

²¹⁷⁶ "Aides to Sadr Refine Stance on Elections" *The Washington Post*, 06/16/08.

²¹⁷⁷ "Sadr Group to Boycott Iraq Local Elections" *Agence France Presse*, 06/15/08.

now by Moqtada and the Sadrists. We want to avoid making the same mistakes of being part of the sectarian divisions."²¹⁷⁸ But the Sadr group said its anti-American stance was behind the decision. "The [U.S.] occupation is one of the reasons for not participating in the elections," said Liwa Sumaysim, head of the al-Sadr movement's political bureau. "We believe that the occupiers are interfering in the work of the councils when it comes to reconstruction of projects and their funding." The group will, however, support independent candidates. "By backing independents we believe we can serve the citizens better," said Sumaysim.²¹⁷⁹

Many argue that the real reason behind such maneuvering is the proposed ban, currently floating around the Iraqi parliament, which would prevent parties or movements with armed wings from participating in the election of provincial council members. Saad al-Hadithy, a political science professor at Baghdad University, says that the proposed ban is clearly aimed at al-Sadr's movement and its affiliation with the Mahdi Army.²¹⁸⁰ Al-Maliki's government is widely seen as eager to crush at least al-Sadr's militia, if not his entire movement. Both parties appeared to be maneuvering for political advantage in view of the upcoming provincial elections.²¹⁸¹

Al-Maliki's Dawa party is experiencing strained relations with the Islamic Supreme Council in Iraq (ISCI), as ISCI vehemently opposes legislation, favored by al-Maliki, which would ban the use of religious symbols in election campaigns.²¹⁸² The fact that these parties could be so deeply divided over a core election issue, despite their joint efforts to pursue common enemies, suggests that while al-Maliki's personal reputation may be improving as a result of the recent military offensives, his parliamentary base remains divided.²¹⁸³

The Dawa party experienced further controversy in June when it expelled former Prime Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari. Dr. Jaafari had fallen out with al-Maliki last year, when the party elected al-Maliki secretary general.²¹⁸⁴ This spring, he formed his own movement, the National Reform Movement. "He cannot be in Dawa and another organization at the same time," Mr. Abadi said.²¹⁸⁵ He said the party was considering expelling three other members affiliated with Dr. Jaafari, but played down that possibility. Still, the shakeup may resonate more widely in Iraqi politics, as it comes at a delicate political moment. Tension among Shiite political leaders — most notably as a result of the military operations that al-Maliki has ordered against al-Sadr — may offer Dr. Jaafari the chance

²¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

²¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

²¹⁸⁰ "In Iraq's South, a Mission has Dual Aims" *New York Times*, 06/16/08.

²¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*

²¹⁸² "PM Emerges Stronger from Basra; Al-Maliki Refused to Back Down in Struggle against Shiite Militias" *USA Today*, 06/11/08.

²¹⁸³ "Iraq's Provincial Elections: Another D-Day Approaching" *Historiae.org*, 06/16/08.

²¹⁸⁴ "Ex-Premier is Expelled from Governing Party in Iraq" *New York Times*, 06/08/08.\

²¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

to lure support away from al-Maliki.²¹⁸⁶ At the same time, al-Maliki is negotiating a long-term security agreement with the U.S. that is unpopular. Furthermore, in a sign he may be staking out a more nationalist position, supporters of al-Sadr said they had opened talks with the new National Reform Movement.²¹⁸⁷

Tensions also remain high between the Iraqi central government and the Kurdish regional government. Kurdish oil minister Ashti Hawrami said recently that no progress was made in recent talks between federal and Kurdish negotiators on reconciling the parties' major differences over the form the country's hydrocarbons law should take. "There was no progress made at all," he said, adding that talks will continue but that no firm timetable had been set.²¹⁸⁸

Tensions were stoked further during a recent 24-hour stand-off between Iraqi and Kurdish security forces over an oil field in Kirkuk called Khurmala Dome. This oil field has the potential to produce 70,000 barrels more per day, but a dispute between Iraq's central and Kurdish regional governments has made any production increases impossible.²¹⁸⁹ "Some people came and stopped our production," said Iraqi Oil Minister Hussain al-Shahristani.²¹⁹⁰ According to several sources, the Peshmerga forced an Iraq Drilling Co. team off the Khurmala Dome site.²¹⁹¹ They did so because the Kurdistan Regional Government is claiming sovereignty over the site. In response to the Peshmerga aggression, the government in Baghdad issued an ultimatum, "Within 24 hours if that obstacle is not removed, we'll take drastic action, and within 24 hours it was removed and production was resumed." Shahristani continued, "nobody has the right to stop the Ministry of Oil from producing."²¹⁹² Shahristani vowed to call in the Iraqi security forces should such an incident happen again. In response, Ashti Hawrami, KRG's Minister of Natural Resources, said, "Khurmala Dome is not in a disputed area. It's in Kurdistan, period: People say KRG are not allowing them to work in Khurmala. What that really says is it's under KRG control and we'd like to go get it back from them."²¹⁹³

12. Intervention of Other States or External Political Actors

Rating: 10

The Iraqi government continues to have great difficulty exercising an independent prerogative and is still largely beholden to the whims and wills of its two biggest benefactors – the U.S. and Iran.

²¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

²¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

²¹⁸⁸ "Oil Congress: Kurd Oil Deal Better For Iraq than Baghdad Plan" *Dow Jones Newswires*, 06/30/08.

²¹⁸⁹ "Iraq's Khurmala Oil Field Sees National Struggle Again" *UPI*, 06/17/08.

²¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*

²¹⁹² *Ibid.*

²¹⁹³ *Ibid.*

U.S. officials continue to have a wide-ranging influence in Iraqi politics. It has been reported recently that a small U.S. State Department team is helping to draft contracts between the Iraqi Oil Ministry and the five major western oil companies.²¹⁹⁴ The reported no-bid contacts are for technical assistance only and aim to help Iraq increase its oil output. Exploration and drilling contacts have yet to be signed as the legislature has repeatedly failed to make progress in passing a national hydrocarbons law. State Department spokesman Tom Casey confirmed a small number of U.S. advisers were providing "technical support" to the Iraqi Oil Ministry. However, he added, "they are not there to try and give the Iraqis any kind of specific requests or to make decisions or to even push in an individual direction."²¹⁹⁵

Despite such influence, the U.S. has faced an increasingly confrontational Iraqi government with regards to the controversial status of force agreements. Emboldened by its recent military successes against the militias, Iraqi officials have argued for the confinement of U.S. troops to their military bases unless the Iraqis specifically ask for their assistance.²¹⁹⁶ Some have gone so far as to argue that Iraq could be better off without a continued U.S. troop presence. "The Americans are making demands that would lead to the colonization of Iraq," said Sami al-Askari, a senior Shiite politician on parliament's foreign relations committee who is close to al-Maliki. "If we can't reach a fair agreement, many people think we should say, 'Goodbye, U.S. troops. We don't need you here anymore.'"²¹⁹⁷ In Iraq, the willingness to consider calling for the departure of American troops represents a major shift for members of the U.S.-backed government. "What the U.S. wants is to take the current status quo and try to regulate it in a new agreement. And what we want is greater respect for Iraqi sovereignty," said Haider al-Abadi, a member of parliament from al-Maliki's Dawa party.²¹⁹⁸ "Signing the agreement would mean that the Iraqi government had given up its sovereignty by its own consent. And that will never happen."²¹⁹⁹ Iraq's senior Shiite cleric, Grand Ayatollah Mohamed al-Modaresy described the long-term treaty with the U.S. as a "sword directed over the Iraqis necks," and said that the treaty, "is humiliating to the Iraqi people, and might cause an uprising...."²²⁰⁰

Another contentious issue in the security pact negotiations is Iraq's desire to have the UN lift its Chapter Seven designation of Iraq as a threat to international security, a status that was first imposed on Iraq when Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait in 1990. U.S. negotiators say the price of Iraq escaping Chapter Seven is to sign up for a new "strategic alliance" with the U.S., a bargaining tactic the Iraqis say is inappropriate.²²⁰¹ Further

²¹⁹⁴ "Iraq Opens Bidding on Oil and Gas Field" *Associated Press*, 06/30/08.

²¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

²¹⁹⁶ "Iraqis Condemn American Demands; Sides Negotiating U.S. Military Role," *The Washington Post*, 06/11/08.

²¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

²¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

²¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

²²⁰⁰ "Iraq's Grand Ayatollah Warns from Uprising Against US Security Pact" *Deutsche Presse-Agentur*, 06/08/08

²²⁰¹ "Iraqis Condemn American Demands; Sides Negotiating U.S. Military Role," *The Washington Post*, 06/11/08.

complicating an already complex issue is the fact that Iraq's Chapter Seven status has allowed the Iraqi government to avoid payment of \$20 billion in outstanding court judgments against the country. According to U.S. negotiators, the only way Iraq can be freed of its Chapter Seven status and not remain liable for these judgments is to sign a security pact with the U.S., because if the UN resolution which simultaneously authorizes the presence of U.S. troops in Iraq and grants Iraq immunity from such financial claims expires prior to the signing of a security pact, Iraq will lose its immunity.²²⁰²

Iraqi officials also complain of self-interested domineering of Iraq's finances by the U.S. In particular, last year Iraqi officials wanted to diversify their foreign reserve holdings, which are currently held in the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, replacing weakening dollars with other assets, such as the Euro, that more likely to hold their value. The U.S. Treasury Department vetoed the proposal because American officials feared it would show lack of confidence in the dollar.²²⁰³

Prime Minister al-Maliki visited Iran in June for talks with Iranian leaders that are expected to focus on the U.S.-Iraqi security agreement negotiations. Iran fears that such an agreement would keep the U.S. military in Iraq for years.²²⁰⁴ During his visit al-Maliki met with Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the supreme leader of Iran, who urged him to reject any long-term security arrangements with the United States.²²⁰⁵ Iran's attitude, which is critical to the fate of the security pact negotiations, continues to be openly hostile towards the signing of any security agreement.²²⁰⁶ Hard-liners in Iran have warned that "the U.S.-cooked agreement turns Iraq into a full-fledged colony."²²⁰⁷

Iran and Iraq continued to grow closer this month as it was announced the two governments signed a Memorandum of Understanding to boost bilateral defense cooperation. Brigadier General Mostafa Mohammad-Najjar, Iran's Defense Minister, said that increasing their defense relationship would "play a significant role in safeguarding peace, stability as well as ensuring durable security in the region."²²⁰⁸

²²⁰² "US Issues Threat to Iraq's \$50bn Foreign Reserves in Military Deal, *The Independent*, 06/06/08.

²²⁰³ *Ibid.*

²²⁰⁴ "Iraq's Prime Minister in Tehran for Talks with Iranian Leaders" *Associated Press Worldstream*, 06/07/08.

²²⁰⁵ "Iraqis Condemn American Demands; Sides Negotiating U.S. Military Role, *The Washington Post*, 06/11/08.

²²⁰⁶ "Three US Soldiers Killed as Violence in Iraq Escalates" *The Independent*, 06/26/08.

²²⁰⁷ "Iraq's Prime Minister in Tehran for Talks with Iranian Leaders" *Associated Press Worldstream*, 06/07/08.

²²⁰⁸ "Iran, Iraq Sign MoU on Defense Co-Op" *Xinhua News Agency*, 06/09/08.

June 2008

Core 5

1. *Police*

Rating: Weak

Many international organizations remain opposed to the return of Iraqi refugees or asylum-seekers because of the risk of intimidation, violence, or arbitrary detainment by the Iraqi police.²²⁰⁹ Fighting between factions loyal to Moqtada al-Sadr and the Iraqi police and security forces continues, as members of the police are often tied to a rival Shiite party, the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq.²²¹⁰

Iraqi and national police have added 59,000 men to their forces in the past year.²²¹¹ U.S. sources say that only 10 percent of Iraq's 500,000 police and army servicemen are capable of operating independently because the rebuilding of security forces in Iraq began from point zero.²²¹²

Overall, the Iraqi police are strengthening their forces, but they continue to be plagued by corruption and factional fighting, weakening their legitimacy and continuing their dependence on foreign troops.

2. *Leadership*

Ranking: Weak

Al-Maliki's government has gained some credibility after successful military offensives against the militias. However, basic services to the Iraqi people are still lacking and sectarian divides are overwhelmingly present, leading to an undermining of Iraqis' confidence in their government.²²¹³ Further undermining of the government's legitimacy is the fact that Prime Minister al-Maliki signed a security agreement between the Iraqi government and the U.S.—a move that many groups in Iraq feel undermines the country's sovereignty. One such group, the Political Council of the Iraqi Resistance—a group formed by multiple Iraqi Islamic resistance factions, including the Jihad and Reform Front, the Islamic Front for the Iraqi Resistance, and Hamas-Iraq—disagreed

²²⁰⁹ “Denmark: Forcible Return/Torture and Other Ill-Treatment” *Amnesty International*, 06/10/2008.

²²¹⁰ “Blast in Falluja Damages Sunni Party's Main Office” *New York Times*, 06/13/2008.

²²¹¹ “Big gains for Iraq Security, but Questions Linger” *The New York Times*, 06/21/2008.

²²¹² “Al-Jazeera Interviews Iraqi Foreign Minister on Security Situation” *BBC Monitoring Middle East*, 06/27/2008.

²²¹³ “Probe halts Rebuilding of Iraqi City” *Associated Press Online*, 06/20/2008.

with the security agreement, calling al-Maliki's decision "an illegitimate move made by an illegitimate government."²²¹⁴

The issue of Kirkuk remains unresolved, as Article 140, calling for a referendum to be held on Kirkuk's status, has not yet been implemented, thereby contributing to group grievances and sectarian violence in the Kurdish region.²²¹⁵ Some political progress was made regarding the Amnesty Law, as it was approved by the Iraqi government in February 2008 and has since resulted in the release of over 100,000 detainees.²²¹⁶ The Amnesty Law signifies a step forward in the reconciliation process between Sunnis and Shiites, although implementation of the law has, like Article 140, been slow in coming.

3. *Civil Service*

Rating: Poor

Iraqis continue to struggle with drought, disease, high food prices, and a lack of clean water. Every Iraqi family currently gets a food ration card, providing them with basics including flour, rice, and sugar; however, the Iraqi Ministry of Trade has recently drafted legislation that will bar families with higher incomes from receiving rations.²²¹⁷ This new legislation is due to the December 2007 decision that the Public Distribution System program had to be reduced because of a lack of government support and rising food prices.²²¹⁸ High food prices are due to the fact that most of Iraq's food is imported, since domestically-produced foods are of poor quality due to drought and water contamination.²²¹⁹

Little progress has been made on attracting the professional classes back to Iraq. Judges, academics, journalists, and the medical community remain targets for extremists.²²²⁰ With the medical community seriously depleted, there have been increased measles outbreaks as preventive medicine is neglected, leaving under 50 percent of Iraqi children vaccinated.²²²¹ There is also a lack of health care and services for animals, significantly cutting back the cattle and water buffalo populations.²²²² Employment issues have been rising, since agriculture is Iraq's largest employer and the combination of drought and contaminated water have left many farmers unemployed. Therefore, there is fear that

²²¹⁴ "Iraqi Resistance says Security Agreement with USA Illegitimate" *BBC Monitoring Middle East*, 06/02/2008.

²²¹⁵ "Article 140...Between Reality and Constitution" *Voices of Iraq*, 06/30/2008.

²²¹⁶ "100,000 Detainees Included in Amnesty Law so Far—Judicial Council" *Voices of Iraq*, 06/29/2008.

²²¹⁷ "Feature: Iraqis Fret About Food Prices as Violence Falls" *Reuters Foundation*, 06/25/2008.

²²¹⁸ "Iraqi Food Distribution Faces Cutbacks" *UPI*, 06/11/2008.

²²¹⁹ "Poisoned Vegetables Planted, Sold in Duhuk" *Voices of Iraq*, 06/11/2008.

²²²⁰ "Iraqi Reporter Latest Victim of Violence Against Women Journalists" *Institute for War and Peace Reporting*, 06/07/2008.

²²²¹ "Conflict has Defined Life for an Entire Generation of Iraqi Children" *States News Service*, 06/17/2008.

²²²² "Unknown Disease Killing Iraqi Cattle" *UPI*, 06/23/2008.

terrorism is expected to be on the rise as more unemployed farmers may turn to terrorist organizations in order to support their families.²²²³

Unemployment is a major issue and poses a security risk as idle young men are vulnerable to militia recruitment.²²²⁴

4. Judiciary **Rating: Poor**

The judiciary in Iraq is being hard hit by assassinations. Judge Kamil Abdul-Majid al-Shuweili, the President of the Rasafa Court of Appeals, was assassinated in June. Five other Rasafa judges suffered assassination attempts. These attacks are believed to be part of a Shiite extremist campaign to force the judges to free jailed militants or to reduce their sentences.²²²⁵

Excessive numbers of death sentences have been given out in Iraqi courts. While the sentences may be appealed to the president for clemency, they can also be carried out at any time. Defendants' chief complaints have been that their confessions are often taken from them under torture, and they are not given the right to choose their own legal counsel.²²²⁶

5. Military **Rating: Weak**

With recent Iraqi military successes, the Iraqi government has said that the U.S. should confine American troops to military bases unless the Iraqis ask for their assistance.²²²⁷ Meanwhile, members of the Awakening Councils continue to be targeted by terrorist organizations.²²²⁸ The Iraqi Army has added 52,000 soldiers in the past year, although only ten percent of Iraqi troops and police are capable of operating without foreign assistance.²²²⁹

There are currently 30,000 Iraqi troops in Basra, which is now, for the most part, considered stable and secure. According to the Washington Post, "the evolution of Basra suggests that Iraqi troops, when deployed in large numbers in areas without deep

²²²³ "Drought Takes Toll on Iraqi Farmers: Areas in the North Have Become a Dust Bowl. Desperation Could Lead Some to Join Insurgents for Cash" *Los Angeles Times*, 06/27/2008.

²²²⁴ "Freed of Militias, Basra Residents Now Focus their Frustrations at Iraqi Government" *Associated Press Worldstream*, 06/24/2008.

²²²⁵ "5 Judges attacked in Baghdad" *Voices of Iraq*, 06/30/2008.

²²²⁶ "Iraq: Death Penalty/Fear of Imminent Execution" *Amnesty International*, 06/19/2008.

²²²⁷ "Iraqis Condemn American Demands; Sides Negotiating U.S. Military Role" *The Washington Post*, 06/11/2008.

²²²⁸ "Biggest Blast in Months Leaves at Least 50 Dead" *Deutsche Presse Agentur*, 06/17/2008.

²²²⁹ "Big Gains for Iraq Security, but Questions Linger" *The New York Times*, 06/21/2008.

sectarian divisions, can provide security largely on their own.”²²³⁰ Neither the Americans nor the British are confident in the Iraqi Army’s capabilities, as Iraqi troops have not yet faced prolonged fighting, given that the Mahdi Army has disappeared and reappeared in various areas of Iraq. The major concern now is that the Mahdi Army may make another appearance in Basra after the U.S. leaves and the Iraqi Army may be unprepared.²²³¹

²²³⁰ “Calm in Basra May Offer a Guide for Iraqi Security: Rebuilt Army Controls City Militas Once Held”
The Washington Post, 06/21/2008.

²²³¹ *Ibid.*

July 2008
12 Indicators

1. Mounting Demographic Pressures
Rating: 10

Iraqis continue to suffer from a water shortage and inadequate aid

Like elsewhere in the region, Iraq is experiencing water scarcity due to recent, as well as long term, below average rainfall. Last winter, rainfall was thirty percent less than the historical average.²²³² These conditions, along with the construction of dams in Turkey, Syria and Iran, have decreased the total amount of stored water in dams and lakes in Iraq, which is now 22.01 billion cubic meters.²²³³ The Water Resource Ministry reported that Iraq's total stored water has dropped by 9.19 billion cubic meters from the 2007 rates.²²³⁴

The "districtization" of Baghdad, as well as the creation of ethnic boundaries between provinces and cities, has caused demographic pressures for Iraqi citizens. As a result of the capital city's long history of sectarian violence, it is split into ethnic districts.²²³⁵ In addition, in the Nineveh province, there is an ongoing dispute over sectarian control between Sunni Arab militants and Kurdish security forces. Khalaf Mahmood, a professor in Mosul, describes the polarizing conditions that led to the death of his nephew: "Innocent people are being killed because of false accusations and feuds among young people and some families."²²³⁶

The internal displacement of Iraqi citizens has led to difficulties in providing much needed supplies. Nongovernmental organizations have not been able to adapt to the changing location and needs of IDPs.²²³⁷ "There was very little food supplies, and they didn't reach the village," Saad Brisam al- Azzaq, a tribal support organization liaison, complained. "We asked the Red Crescent and they said they would help with tents and food, but I think they ran out."²²³⁸

²²³² "Iraqi paper reports severe water shortage" *BBC Monitoring Middle East*, 07/08/2008.

²²³³ *Ibid.*

²²³⁴ *Ibid.*

²²³⁵ "Between war and peace, an uneasy calm; Iraq is safer, even livable in parts, after the U.S. troop buildup. But it is still perilous, its future precarious" *Los Angeles Times*, 07/28/2008.

²²³⁶ *Ibid.*

²²³⁷ "Iraqi Shiites Reclaim a Village Razed by Sunnis" *The New York Times*, 07/12/2008.

²²³⁸ *Ibid.*

2. Massive Movement of Refugees or IDPs

Rating: 9

The refugee and IDP crises remain substantially unchanged. Fear of persecution and squatters in former residences of IDPs prevent families from returning home. The Iraqi government has promised compensation to families, but payments have yet to be seen. In Diyala province, the government's promises of food, money, and shelter for those wishing to rebuild have not fully materialized.²²³⁹ In addition, aid from NGOs is inadequate, with supplies running out before more rural areas can be helped.

According to Sheik Dulaimi, a senior tribal Sunni leader who is working to encourage Shiites to return, reconciliation would be easier if the government gave families enough money to rebuild. Dulaimi claims "it costs about 20 million Iraqi dinars to build a simple home for ten people. When they come back they are starting from zero."²²⁴⁰ Residents and government officials report that the largest amount of compensation a family may receive from the Iraqi government is seven million Iraqi dinars, or US\$ 5,000, which "is enough to rent machines to drag away the rubble, but not enough to rebuild," according to Sheik Mohammed Suadan al-Khafaji, a farmer in Diyala.²²⁴¹

Many of the IDP families wishing to return home are hindered by the danger of gunmen who are still active in their neighborhoods. According to Ibrahim Bajilan, head of the Diyala provincial council, "gunmen are still active in some areas, especially in the suburbs where Sunni extremists are preventing Shiite families from returning to their homes and farms."²²⁴² To date, 25,000 families have been displaced in Diyala province since 2003, but only 600 have returned home, and all of them went to Baqouba, Diyala's provincial capital, which has been secured by Iraqi forces.²²⁴³ The Iraqi Red Crescent Society's IDP update on June 30 reports that the number of IDPs increased by 3,234 people by the end of May, bringing the total to 2,169,920 total IDPs, 82 percent of whom are women and children.²²⁴⁴

Other families feel that they cannot return to their homes, as they are currently occupied by squatters living in their places of residence. The Iraqi government, in addition to offering compensation for rebuilding homes, has offered payment of 1.8 million Iraqi dinars (or US\$ 1,500) to families who are illegally occupying homes of displaced persons who wish to return home.²²⁴⁵ Another measure proposed by the Iraqi government includes a payment of one million Iraqi dinars to families that return home, in addition to a monthly payment of 150,000 Iraqi dinars for three months while the family is still displaced.²²⁴⁶ The Iraqi government additionally offers payment of airline tickets to

²²³⁹ "Iraqi Shiites Reclaim a Village Razed by Sunnis" *The New York Times*, 07/12/08.

²²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

²²⁴¹ *Ibid.*

²²⁴² "Iraq: IDPs Fear Returning to their Homes in Diyala Province" *IRIN*, 07/14/08.

²²⁴³ *Ibid.*

²²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

²²⁴⁵ "Iraq: Incentive Announced to Encourage Return of IDPs, Refugees" *IRIN*, 07/20/08.

²²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

refugees who wish to return to their homes in Iraq, along with free shipment of belongings and compensation for damaged property. Adil Muhsin al-Baghdadi, a Baghdad-based analyst, believes that the Iraqi government's move is a positive one, aimed at ending the displacement problem, "but, of course, this will not end the displacement problem as its roots lie in political infighting, but at least it will be a positive factor," al-Baghdadi added.²²⁴⁷

More than 200 displaced families' profiles are being investigated by the provincial committee in Najaf to determine whom among them are truly displaced and whom are not, an official reported on July 26.²²⁴⁸ Mashkour al-Mousawi, the director of the Ministry of Displacement and Migration's Najaf province branch, adds that the camp will expel those families who are falsely claiming to be displaced and encourage actual IDPs to return home if the area is now declared safe.²²⁴⁹ Al-Mousawi claims, "We have reports that there are some families from remote areas pretending to be displaced who have joined other displaced families in al-Manthira camp to benefit from financial, food and non-food assistance".²²⁵⁰ On July 25, families began to protest upon hearing the news of the provincial governmental committee, out of fear of the authorities closing the camp. Construction worker Mahdi al-Aridhi, who has lived at the camp since 2006 claims, "I can't return even though al-Habbaniyah is relatively safe now and it is the government's responsibility to protect me and my family. We resisted these gunmen when they attacked us and they will never let us back."²²⁵¹ However, al-Mousawi reports that the government will not force the IDPs out of the camp against their will.²²⁵² In October, the government started to close camps for displaced Sunnis from Anbar Province or Sunni neighborhoods in Baghdad, stating that they planned to close all camps for IDPs in Iraq.²²⁵³

3: Legacy of Vengeance-Seeking Group Grievance or Group Paranoia **Rating: 9**

The closing of the month brought one of the bloodiest days in a year of significantly reduced violence when four women suicide bombers lunched attacks in Baghdad and Kirkuk on July 28. A combined total of at least 61 fatalities and 238 wounded stress how differences and anger rooted in deep ethnic, regional, and sectarian divides still can flare into violence.²²⁵⁴

Three women blew themselves up in Baghdad on July 28, killing 32 and wounding at least 102 at a Shiite religious pilgrimage.²²⁵⁵ Just before 8 a.m., the bomb attacks began

²²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

²²⁴⁸ "Iraq: Najaf Authorities to Weed Out Bogus IDPs, Official Says" *IRIN*, 07/27/08.

²²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

²²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

²²⁵¹ *Ibid.*

²²⁵² *Ibid.*

²²⁵³ "Displaced Iraqis, now told to go home, fear for their lives" <http://www.mcclachydc.csm/world/v-print/story/53483.html>, 10/5/2008.

²²⁵⁴ "Ethnic Bombers and Clashes Kill 61 in Iraq" *The New York Times*, 07/29/08.

²²⁵⁵ "Suicide Bombers Kill 57 in Iraq" *Chinadaily.com.cn*, 07/29/08.

when two women in suicide vests and one with a bomb in a bag killed 32 Shiite pilgrims at a festival in Baghdad to commemorate the death of Shiite saint Imam Kadhim. One bomber blew herself up near the National Theater, killing 10 and wounding 15, while the second attack took place inside a tent that provided a resting spot for women taking part in the march. The bomber sat down, read the Koran with the women present, and exited the tent, leaving behind a bag containing a bomb that killed one person and wounded four others, according to police official Abu Ali.²²⁵⁶ The third bombing took place between traffic police checkpoints, killing at least 13 and wounding 15.²²⁵⁷

In Kirkuk, a fourth suicide bomber struck during a political protest over legislation in Baghdad that would weaken the Kurds' political dominance in the city. The bomber struck after 11 a.m., killing at least 17 and wounding 47 more.²²⁵⁸ As yet, no one has claimed responsibility for the bombing. Although it suggests Sunni Arab extremism, Turkmen extremists were blamed, which incited a riot in Kirkuk.²²⁵⁹ The ensuing riot and violence by Kurds against Turkmen was one of the most severe ethnic skirmishes in Kirkuk since the American invasion of Iraq in 2003. Brig. Burhan Taha of the Kirkuk police states "they [Kurds] burned Turkmen buildings and they burned many cars."²²⁶⁰ After the blast, Kurdish protesters attacked the offices of a Turkmen political party, starting off the deadly skirmish, which resulted in finger-pointing as to who started it.²²⁶¹

Although no group has come forward to claim credit for the attacks, it is known that al-Qaeda has increasingly relied on women to carry out suicide attacks as they can evade the stringent security checks better than men.²²⁶² Police officer Atheer Allawi complains, "we can't search women. They are wearing abayas, and God knows what they can hide under them."²²⁶³ Women have carried out more than 20 attacks in Iraq this year.²²⁶⁴

The bomb attacks have been a blow to al-Maliki's government, especially the attacks in Baghdad, where thousands of Iraqi troops were deployed around the city, setting up checkpoints and closing down roads in order to protect the Shiite pilgrims. This recent attack demonstrates how bitter and unresolved feelings amongst the rival ethnic groups remain close to the surface, and are the basis of the legislative battle in Baghdad over an election law that may block Iraq from holding its first provincial elections in over three years.²²⁶⁵ "The Government has taken security into its own hands," says Abu Haidar al-Darajii, a karate coach from Karada, handing out juice and water to the marchers. "Iraqi

²²⁵⁶ "Ethnic Bombers and Clashes Kill 61 in Iraq" *The New York Times*, 07/29/08.

²²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

²²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

²²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

²²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

²²⁶¹ "Four Women Kill Dozens in Suicide Blasts in Iraq; Kurdish Protest Hit in Kirkuk; Shiites Targeted in Baghdad" *The Washington Post*, 07/29/08.

²²⁶² *Ibid.*

²²⁶³ "Ethnic Bombers and Clashes Kill 61 in Iraq" *The New York Times*, 07/29/08.

²²⁶⁴ "Suicide Bombers Kill 57 in Iraq" *Chinadaily.com.cn*, 07/29/08.

²²⁶⁵ "Ethnic Bombers and Clashes Kill 61 in Iraq" *The New York Times*, 07/29/08.

people have realized that these things will not end unless they help the government. That's the beginning of the end of war."²²⁶⁶

4. Chronic and Sustained Human Flight

Rating: 9

The flight of the Iraqi professional and middle class continues. The professionals that remain also continue to suffer from threats and attacks.

Seven Kurdish journalists received death threats for their critiques of the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG.)²²⁶⁷ Souran 'Omar and Kusrat 'Abd al-Rahman received anonymous threats by telephone. Men wearing civilian clothes went to Nehad Jami's house to threaten him. On July 21, 2008, Souran Mama Hama was shot dead in a drive by shooting in Kirkuk.²²⁶⁸

These threats coincide with the circulation of a list, which includes Souran 'Omar, in the Kurdistan region around mid- July.²²⁶⁹ The list includes sixteen writers and journalists, all known to have been critical of the PUK and KDP, which form the KRG, and threatens them with death.²²⁷⁰ Two of the men listed have already been killed.²²⁷¹

While journalists face direct threats for continuing their work, the flight of medical professionals adds to the depletion of life sustaining and saving public services. According to the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee's July Iraq Accountability Project Report, 40 percent of Iraq's professional class has left the country since late 2003.²²⁷² Specifically, up to 75 percent of doctors (including about 8,000 physicians), pharmacists, and nurses have left their jobs since 2003.²²⁷³ Doctors who stayed were given permission to carry arms to protect themselves and the government ordered the Health Ministry to begin building high-security residential compounds around hospitals for the doctors to live in.²²⁷⁴

5. Uneven Economic Development Along Group Lines

Rating: 9

There are no notable changes in Iraq's economic development this month, as oil contracts signed in Iraq's Kurdish province continue to be unrecognized by the Iraqi government and an oil law that would grant more control to the Kurdish region remains up in the air.

²²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

²²⁶⁷ "Death Threats/ Fear of Extrajudicial Executions" *Amnesty International*, 07/29/2008.

²²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

²²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

²²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

²²⁷¹ *Ibid.*

²²⁷² "Iraq Accountability Project" Senate Armed Service Committee, 7/14/2008.

²²⁷³ *Ibid.*

²²⁷⁴ *The New York Times*, 9/30/2008.

Rahim Qorbani, the governor-general of the Iranian province of West Azarbayjan said, “171 companies attended an exhibition in Iraq’s Arbil and 70 percent of them signed major contracts there.”²²⁷⁵ Qorbani also mentioned his meetings with Kurdish region leader Mas’ud Barzani, who is happy that Iran plans to build a road from Tehran to the Iraqi border.²²⁷⁶

An oil law has still not been passed which would allow for investment and enable the Kurds to have some amount of control over management and exploration contracts in their area.²²⁷⁷

6. Sharp and/or Severe Economic Decline

Rating: 8

The Iraqi oil industry continues to experience growth. Iraq has announced they will open six of its oil fields to foreign investors. However, some of this growth will benefit foreign investors rather than Iraqi industry. The contracts offered to foreign companies will result in 75 percent revenue percentage going to international investors while only 25 percent goes to the Iraq National Oil Company, which will be a partner in these agreements.²²⁷⁸ Naomi Klein of *The Guardian* believes that the logic used to create this accord is based on Iraq’s lack of new technology due to years of sanctions and war and the recent contracts awarded to western firms that have failed to rebuild it.²²⁷⁹

Along with the 25 percent partnership, foreign investors who want to bid must open an office in Baghdad.²²⁸⁰ These contracts will break with the status quo of Middle Eastern states, such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates, whose national oil firms control foreign investment. Oil Minister Hussain al-Shahristani projected that contracts will be signed in June 2009 to raise daily output by 1.5 million barrels in those six fields.²²⁸¹ He hopes Iraq’s output will increase from 2.5 barrels per day (bpd) to 4.5 bpd by 2013. This new policy also includes short term service deals worth about \$500 million that will help raise output by 500,000 bpd.²²⁸²

Iraq’s improved relations with its Arab neighbors have opened the door to economic development. Iraqi Prime Minister al-Maliki met with Turkish PM Recep Tayyip

²²⁷⁵ “Provincial Governor Notes Northern Iraq’s Economic Importance to Iran” *BBC Worldwide Monitoring*. 07/12/2008.

²²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

²²⁷⁷ “Iraq Improves; its Politics Still Suck” *The Economist*, 07/31/2008.

²²⁷⁸ “Comment & Debate: Big Oil’s Iraq deals are the greatest stick-up in history: The country’s invaders should be paying billions in reparations not using the war as a reason to pillage its richest resource” *The Guardian*. 07/04/2008.

²²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

²²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

²²⁸¹ *Ibid.*

²²⁸² “Iraq Opens Door to Foreign Oil Firms” *Chinadaily.com.cn*, 07/01/2008.

Erdogan to discuss and pursue cooperation between the two countries.²²⁸³ These talks were not limited to, but included, an invitation from al-Maliki to Turkey to participate in the development of Iraq. Erdogan announced establishing a Higher Council for Strategic Cooperation.²²⁸⁴

Overall improved relations have also led to the cancellation of foreign debts. Following al-Maliki's visit to the United Arab Emirates (UAE), that country cancelled Iraq's debt of US\$ 7 billion.²²⁸⁵ While western nations agreed to cancel Iraq's debt, UAE is the first Arab country to do so. Although Iraq was not in the process of repaying its debt before it was cancelled, according to correspondent Aminah al-Dhahabi, "Economic experts believe that the writing off of Iraq's debts will strengthen the Iraqi economy and help the government to implement reconstruction plans and projects and rehabilitate institutions and various Iraqi facilities."²²⁸⁶

This change in policy suggests that other Arab nations might follow UAE's lead. Saudi Arabia has promised to cancel 80 percent of the debt Iraq owes it and Kuwait's Parliament has been asked to reconsider its previous decision not to write off Iraq's debt.²²⁸⁷

7. Criminalization and/or Delegitimization of the State

Rating: 10

The delegitimization of the Iraqi state continues to be present in the postponement of elections in Kirkuk, the undecided status of the election law, from divisions in the Iraqi assembly regarding the status of Kirkuk, widespread corruption within the Iraqi government, and continuing, if significantly reduced, violence.

Staffan De Mistura, representative of the U.N. Secretary General, said that Iraqi provincial elections will not be held on October 1 because the elections law has not been ratified, and even if it were to pass, Kirkuk will not have elections due to security issues.²²⁸⁸ (Iraqi security forces are in control in only nine out of Iraq's 18 provinces.)²²⁸⁹ Further complicating the issues is the fact that Kurdish parties are accused of bringing in over 600,000 Kurds to change the demographics of the region to their favor.²²⁹⁰

²²⁸³ "Iraqi PM highlights Turkish investment, construction role after talks; update" BBC Monitoring Middle East, 07/11/2008.

²²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

²²⁸⁵ "Al-Arabiya TV discusses UAE writing off Iraq debt, Basra investment projects, stock market" BBC Monitoring Middle East, 07/12/2008.

²²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

²²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

²²⁸⁸ "UN Envoy in Iraq Doubts Provincial Elections to be Held as Scheduled" BBC Monitoring Middle East, 07/03/2008.

²²⁸⁹ "The Iraq Accountability Project" Senate Armed Services Committee, 07/14/2008.

²²⁹⁰ "UN Envoy in Iraq Doubts Provincial Elections to be Held as Scheduled" BBC Monitoring Middle East, 07/03/2008.

On July 15, 54 Kurdish lawmakers in the 275-member assembly walked out to protest the proposal for a power-sharing formula in the disputed Tamim province, where Kurds, Arabs, and Turkomen are vying for control of the capital city, Kirkuk.²²⁹¹ The Kurds wish to delay the vote until a census or a referendum is held to decide whether the province should remain under Baghdad's rule or join the Kurdish autonomous region.²²⁹² The referendum was supposed to take place last year, but had been postponed due to opposition by Arabs and Turkomen, who constitute two-thirds of Kirkuk's population and surrounding area. Over 100 Arab and Turkomen deputies introduced an amendment providing for the creation of a provincial council in Kirkuk of 10 Kurds, 10 Turkomen, 10 Arabs, and two Christians; which the Kurds object to, believing that this distribution under-represents their numbers.²²⁹³

Doctor Salim Abdallah, a Kurdish member of the Iraqi Council of Representatives, claims that the government has banned citizens and ministries from dealing with former support councils of the Al-Tawafuq Front, the Unified Iraqi Coalition, and the Kurdistan Alliance²²⁹⁴. Abdallah further urges the government to "resolve insecurity and ethnic and sectarian tensions in some districts of the governorate as quickly as possible and to end breaking into homes and indiscriminate arrests—practices which are exploited by terrorist groups and criminal gangs."²²⁹⁵

Finally, Abdallah claims that the Iraqi government has neither fulfilled its promises of incorporating Awakening Councils into the army and police (Indicator 10), nor the promises of fighting unemployment.²²⁹⁶ Furthermore, a U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) report found that Iraqi ministries spent less than a quarter of their 2007 budgets, partly explaining insufficient services being provided to Iraqis by their government.²²⁹⁷

According to the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee's July Iraq Accountability Project Report, corruption in the provision and distribution of Iraqi and U.S. funds and arms remains rampant. The Pentagon is unable to account for 190,000 weapons provided to the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) between 2004 and 2005.²²⁹⁸ US\$ 1.1 billion in military equipment and services remains unaccounted for according to a Pentagon Inspector General audit.²²⁹⁹ Since 2004, US\$ 18 billion is the estimated amount of Iraqi government money lost to corruption and stealing schemes since 2004.²³⁰⁰

²²⁹¹ "Parliament Seeks to Resolve Iraqi Electoral Law Dispute" *The Irish Times*, 07/17/2008.

²²⁹² "The Iraq Accountability Project" *Senate Armed Services Committee*, 07/14/2008.

²²⁹³ *Ibid.*

²²⁹⁴ "TV Talk Show Discusses Security Situation in Iraq's Diyala Governorate" *BBC Worldwide Monitoring*, 07/04/2008.

²²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

²²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

²²⁹⁷ "Military Success in Iraq Masks Failures on Other Goals" *USA Today*, 07/01/2008.

²²⁹⁸ "Iraq Accountability Project" *Senate Armed Service Committee*, 07/14/2008.

²²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

²³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

A recent survey shows that only 33 percent of Iraqis believe the government is effective at maintaining security.²³⁰¹ In yet another blow to public trust in Iraq's government, on July 4, Chief Abdul-Jabbar Wahid, security committee vice chairman and the health committee chairman was arrested. A Sadrist member of parliament accused "political powers" of being behind the "politically motivated" arrest of the provincial council chief.²³⁰² The arrest is believed to have the purpose of provoking Sadrists to drag them into military confrontations against security forces conducting Operation Bashaer al-Salam, a wide-scale security operation aimed to eliminate gunmen and enforce law and order in the province.²³⁰³ The Iraqi vice president Adel Abdul-Mahdi claims that torture is still being practiced inside some detention centers and units.²³⁰⁴

8. Progressive Deterioration of Public Services

Rating: 9

The Iraqi government shows negligence and incompetence in supporting its large refugee population that now resides in neighboring countries, primarily Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon. The Iraqi Commission for Civil Society Enterprises, a coalition of Iraqi NGOs, published a report citing Iraq's lack of support. "Like other international reports, ours has shown clear negligence by the Iraqi government which doesn't support these refugees properly – either directly by giving them money and/or help in receiving food rations, or indirectly by helping their host countries," said Basil Al-Azawi, head of the Commission.²³⁰⁵ A similar report published by the International Crisis Group placed the responsibility of funding on Iraq, not the host countries. It calls for Iraq to provide services and protection for its citizens living in other countries, and also financial assistance to their host countries.²³⁰⁶ The report also contains a cautionary statement regarding the possible dangerous implications of disgruntled refugees, specifically in regards to radicalization, a problem in the region.²³⁰⁷

The lack of services provided by the Iraqi government is also causing a security problem within Iraq. Dr. Salim Abdallah, member of the Iraqi council of Representatives, recommends that the government "improve the services and create job opportunities to ease sectarian and ethnic tensions in the governorate."²³⁰⁸

Startling statistics from the U.S. Senate Armed Service Committee's July Iraq Accountability Project Report show the continuing disastrous state of public services and its effect on the population in Iraq. According to the report, 43 percent of the population

²³⁰¹ "The Iraq Accountability Project" *Senate Armed Services Committee*. 07/14/2008.

²³⁰² "Sadrist MP says Missan Official Arrest 'Politically Motivated'" *Voices of Iraq*, 07/04/2008.

²³⁰³ *Ibid.*

²³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

²³⁰⁵ "Iraq: Call for more help for Iraqi refugees" IRIN, 07/16/2008.

²³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

²³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

²³⁰⁸ "TV talk show discusses security situation in Iraq's Diyala Governorate" BBC Monitoring Middle East, 07/04/2008.

lives in ‘absolute poverty.’²³⁰⁹ There has been a 60 percent increase in nonviolent deaths, due to cases such as childhood infections and kidney failures, since 2003.²³¹⁰ The infant mortality rate is 102 deaths for every 1,000 live births. The average for the Middle East is only 37.²³¹¹ As much as 28 percent of children are malnourished.²³¹² Only 40 percent of children have access to safe drinking water.²³¹³ Only 70 percent of Iraqis have regular access to clean water and 80 percent lack effective sanitation.²³¹⁴

Basic public services, in addition to the necessities, are not sufficiently provided by the government. The electricity crisis continued in the month of July. The government is only able to meet 51 percent of the electricity demand.²³¹⁵ In a recent poll, 88 percent of Iraqis surveyed rated the supply of electricity as “quite bad” or “very bad.”²³¹⁶ The daily peak for electricity is approximately 5,500 MW while the estimated total demand is approximately 8,500 MW daily, with U.S. efforts having added approximately 2,200 MW to electrical output since 2003.²³¹⁷ Iraq’s drought has reduced hydroelectric plants’ output by 30 percent. However, Iraq’s Electricity Ministry plans to install solar-powered streetlights; light at night is considered a major security concern.²³¹⁸ The ministry plans to install 5,000 solar-powered streetlights in Baghdad, costing a total of US\$ 1,800 to US\$ 2,000 each. Plans are also being made to install approximately 1,000 lights in each of Iraq’s 18 provinces.²³¹⁹ More than 1,000 bulletproof streetlights have already been purchased and installed by the U.S. military, costing an average of US\$ 6,200 each.²³²⁰ Although the extreme heat makes the batteries wear down faster, and the large amounts of dust and grime make the lights less effective, the general consensus is that some light is better than none.

There have been improvements in some public services, through the coalition forces. Major General Douglas Stone undertook massive reforms of Multinational Forces – Iraq (MNF-I) detainment. To counter insurgency recruitment within the facility, an “Enduring Threat Board” has been established to review detainee cases to separate those who pose threats to the rest of the population.²³²¹ Along with separating the inmates, the program includes a number of development programs. These include career programs and religious and social seminars to replace the insurgents’ radicalization agenda.²³²² To facilitate this, literacy is a primary goal of the program. Rampant illiteracy makes inmates

²³⁰⁹ “Iraq Accountability Project” Senate Armed Service Committee, 07/14/2008.

²³¹⁰ *Ibid.*

²³¹¹ *Ibid.*

²³¹² *Ibid.*

²³¹³ *Ibid.*

²³¹⁴ *Ibid.*

²³¹⁵ *Ibid.*

²³¹⁶ *Ibid.*

²³¹⁷ “Iraq’s Electricity-Starved Capital Turns to Solar” *LA Times*, 07/14/2008.

²³¹⁸ *Ibid.*

²³¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²³²⁰ *Ibid.*

²³²¹ “Iraq: Positive Change in the Detention System” *United States Institute of Peace*, July 2008.

²³²² *Ibid.*

prime targets for insurgents to present Islamic teachings to serve their ends, since the illiterates cannot interpret them independently.²³²³

9. Suspension or Arbitrary Application of the Rule of Law and Widespread Violation of Human Rights

Rating: 10

Although much of the violence has decreased in Iraq, on July 28, multiple bombs were set off in Baghdad and Kirkuk, killing nearly 50.²³²⁴ In the Karrada neighborhood in the capital city, female suicide bombers attacked three times during a Shiite religious procession, killing at least two dozen. In Kirkuk, a suicide bomber targeted Kurds protesting the recently vetoed provincial elections law.²³²⁵ Kurds responded by attacking the headquarters of the Turkoman parties. These attacks are a result of Arab – Kurd tension due to delays over the election law and Kirkuk’s political status. Brian Katulis and Peter Juul conclude, “What the Kirkuk dispute serves to illustrate is that Iraq’s problems are fundamentally political in nature. The challenge is not security, which has improved dramatically over the last year, but political accommodation and power-sharing between Iraqi factions.”²³²⁶

The use of female suicide bombers is not a new trend in Iraq. However, it is not the pattern elsewhere. Other Al-Qaeda branches in Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, and Arab Maghreb do not generally use female recruits for terrorist operations. Al-Arabiya Television reports that the highest rate of female suicide bombers, 11 out of 20, occurs in the Diyala Governorate.²³²⁷

Women, in general, continue to experience prejudice. According to the U.S. State Department’s report on human rights in Iraq, “Throughout the country, women reported increasing pressure to wear veils, including within government ministries.”²³²⁸ The report also states that “Women are targeted for undertaking normal activities, such as driving a car, and wearing trousers, in an effort to force them to remain at home, wear veils and adhere to a conservative interpretation of Islam.”²³²⁹

The 2005 Iraqi constitution prohibits laws that contradict Islam, which sometimes leads to very strict interpretations of Islamic law, as has occurred in Iran and the former Taliban ruled Afghanistan.²³³⁰ These restrictions are sometimes translated into lowered standards of living for women. According to a Women for Women International poll, a

²³²³ *Ibid.*

²³²⁴ “The Kirkuk Impasse” Center for American Progress, 07/28/2008.

²³²⁵ *Ibid.*

²³²⁶ *Ibid.*

²³²⁷ “Al- Arabiya TV reports on phenomenon of female suicide bombers in Iraq” *BBC Monitoring Middle East*, 07/07/2008.

²³²⁸ “Winning (and losing) in Iraq; Rise of Islamic Extremism Erodes Women’s Rights” *The Washington Times*, 07/06/2008.

²³²⁹ *Ibid.*

²³³⁰ *Ibid.*

majority of Iraqi women say their lives have declined since 2004. The poll found that “slightly more than 76 percent said that girls in their families are not allowed to attend school, and 56.7 percent said that girls’ ability to attend school has gotten worse since the U.S. invasion.”²³³¹

Human rights violations continued to occur on a much more personal level, including political opponents of government policies. For example, eight members of the Iraq Federation of Oil Unions have been forcibly transferred from Basra to Baghdad.²³³² Their sources claim that the activists’ lives are possibly in danger for opposing the law that gives control over oil exploration and production to foreign companies. The Iraqi oil minister, who is rumored to be responsible for the transfer, says that the men were involved with militias and criminal activities although he offered no evidence.²³³³ British officials are investigating the situation and the foreign minister, Kim Howells, said the country wants to repeal the pre- invasion “restrictive” union laws.²³³⁴

Iraq’s Ministry of Human Rights released a report on July 1 specifying the number of deaths in minority ethnic communities caused by direct or indirect attacks in Iraq between 2003 and the end of 2007, as well as the number of IDPs for each minority in those years. The Shabak minority in Nineveh, at 529 deaths and 3,078 families displaced tops the list.²³³⁵ Second is the Yazidi community in Nineveh with 335 fatalities, but no recorded number of IDPs. Third on the list is the Iraq Christian community, with 172 fatalities, including 107 Chaldeans, 33 Orthodox, 24 Catholics, and four Assyrians-including three Anglicans and one Armenian, in addition to 1,752 families displaced. Finally, the Sabis community came in fourth place, with 127 fatalities and 62 families internally displaced, along with 3,500 families who went to Jordan and 10,000 families who went to Syria.²³³⁶

On a positive note, al-Maliki announced that his cabinet approved a plan to form an institution to address the issues of women, widows, divorced, and elderly women.²³³⁷ Despite evidence to the contrary, al-Maliki said, “Women are progressing, and I call on them to play a big role, and to have a wide presence in the coming electoral process.”²³³⁸

10. Security Apparatus Operates as a “State Within a State”

Rating: 9

Certain provinces are working towards decreasing the effect of ethnically based terrorist groups. Tariq Jawhar, information adviser for the Iraqi Kurdistan Province, says that the

²³³¹ *Ibid.*

²³³² “Iraq: Alarm at forced transfer of Basra union activists” *The Guardian*, 07/25/2008.

²³³³ *Ibid.*

²³³⁴ “Iraq: Alarm at forced transfer of Basra union activists” *The Guardian*, 07/25/2008.

²³³⁵ “Iraq: Ministry Report Details Impact of Violence on Minorities” *IRIN*, 07/03/08.

²³³⁶ *Ibid.*

²³³⁷ “PM calls on Iraqi women to play an active role in provincial elections” *Voices of Iraq*, 07/02/2008.

²³³⁸ *Ibid.*

Iraqi Kurdistan Province made efforts to halt the actions of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). He also states, "The Government of the Iraqi Kurdistan Province took measures against the parties that were sympathetic towards the PKK and intensified measures at inspection points leading to these rough mountainous areas to prevent the dispatch of aid and supplies to the PKK elements."²³³⁹ He hopes that Turkey will interpret these actions as a message that problems can be solved through peaceful dialogue.²³⁴⁰

The Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) have also made strides in controlling ethnic based militias. The decrease in street violence can be attributed in part to a ceasefire agreement by the Shiite Mahdi Army.²³⁴¹ The militia's large and active participants, about 40,000, pose a major threat if the truce is not sustained.²³⁴²

The decline in violence also can be attributed in part to the rise of Sunni militias and neighborhood watch groups, specifically the "Sons of Iraq" movement, with a membership of 105,000. The danger, however, is that the groups, which are armed and paid by the United States, could operate as a renegade militia.²³⁴³ The ISF has been slow to hire many of the "Sons of Iraq" into its own ranks. As of May 31, 2008, 17,000, or only about 15 percent, had joined the ISF.²³⁴⁴ Many believe this is due to sectarian reasons. Lt. Col. Pete Pierce, team leader of a human Terrain Team in Baghdad, said, "The national government is ... a Shiite-dominated government. There are people within the government who are reluctant to incorporate what is seen as a majority Sunni armed force into the police or into the Army, but I don't think they have any choice."²³⁴⁵

The Port of Basra, once dominated by hostile militias, is now controlled by the Shiite-dominated government. The Sadr City section of Baghdad is also once again controlled by the regional government.²³⁴⁶

11. Rise of Factionalized Elites

Rating: 10

Despite allegations that the government of Prime Minister al-Maliki is influenced by sectarian pressures, the largest Sunni political bloc, the Iraqi Accordance Front, rejoined the government after almost ten years.²³⁴⁷ Adan al-Dulaimi, leader of the Front commented on the event. "It means the success of the political process and the success of

²³³⁹ "Iraqi Kurdish official comments on UN report, Turkish PM's visit, elections" *BBC Monitoring Middle East*, 07/13/2008.

²³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

²³⁴¹ "Military success in Iraq masks failures on other goals" *USA Today*, 07/01/2008.

²³⁴² *Ibid.*

²³⁴³ *Ibid.*

²³⁴⁴ "Sons of Iraq made Iraq safer. What's their mission now?" *Christian Science Monitor*, 07/30/2008.

²³⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

²³⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

²³⁴⁷ "Sunni Bloc Rejoins Iraqi Government, Amid Reconciliation Hopes" *The Washington Post*, 07/20/2008.

the security situation and of reconciliation.”²³⁴⁸ The inclusion consists of Front appointments in five ministries and a position of deputy prime minister. Many, such as Mutashar al-Samarrae, a tribal leader in Samarra, believe that this move will help the security situation. “In five years, Iraq bled huge amounts of blood, and now the bleeding should stop. The game is over, and development has to start.”²³⁴⁹ The Iraqi government’s political strategy led to this positive step. The Front admitted that their decision was made partly in response to al-Maliki’s offensive against the Shiite militias in Basra in March and the recently passed Amnesty Law that has led to the release of many Sunni detainees.²³⁵⁰

However, many sectors of the Iraqi government still reflect the fragmentation of ruling elites. According to some, favoritism is given to the Iraqi Islamic Party. Four cabinet positions, including deputy prime minister, were given to members of the party, which is led by Vice President Tariq al-Hashimi.²³⁵¹ Khalaf Elayan, president of the National Dialogue Council says, “The Islamic Party wants to control all the main points of government and all the committees. They want to minimize the activities of others. The tension is still running, but we are trying to cool them down.”²³⁵² The spokesman for the Iraqi Accordance Front, Salim Abdullah al-Jubori, responded to the accusations by saying that the only position the Islamic Party selected was deputy prime minister. The others were selected by Adnan al-Dulaimi Dulaimi, who leads the Front as well as the People of Iraq Conference.²³⁵³

Further notable trends in July include the new political movement in Sunni enclaves across Iraq, as seen in the Awakening Councils. Awakening leaders are planning to present themselves as a political force in the provincial elections, which poses a challenge to established Sunni groups.²³⁵⁴ If the Awakening leaders prevail, the main concern is that they will instill nationalist, clan-based and secular values into a sectarian political system dominated by Shiite religious parties. Conversely, the secular tribal chiefs are wary of the religious leanings of the Iraqi Islamic Party, which is pushing for conservative Islamic values and legislation.²³⁵⁵

Other known complications involving the Iraqi Islamic Party include a lack of trust and credibility of the party. According to police chief Tariq Yousef al-Asaal, “the Iraqi Islamic Party’s credibility on the streets is zero. Nobody supports them. They want their own police chief so they can fake the results.”²³⁵⁶ In Anbar, the Iraqi Islamic Party participated in the polls and gained control of key positions, including the governor’s office, the governing council, and other important administrative posts. However, the

²³⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

²³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

²³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

²³⁵¹ *Ibid.*

²³⁵² *Ibid.*

²³⁵³ *Ibid.*

²³⁵⁴ “Rise of Awakening Groups Sets Off a Struggle for Power Among Sunnis” *The Washington Post*, 07/04/2008.

²³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

²³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

extremely low voter turnout of two percent of eligible voters calls into question the legitimacy of the Iraqi Islamic Party.²³⁵⁷ Furthermore, the Iraqi Islamic Party has deep financial resources and many electoral commission members on their side, raising suspicions that the party is influencing the electoral commission to push elections back to 2009.²³⁵⁸

12. Intervention of Other States or External Political Actors **Rating: 10**

Talk of pulling troops out of Iraq continues this month; however, details remain unclear, with no definite time table set for either Britain or the U.S. Neighboring countries favor a pullout of western troops; however, they would generally prefer it to be after Iraq is stable to avoid larger problems in the region. USIP published a news release on July 30, stating the general role of Iraq's neighbors in determining the success or failure of post-war Iraq. According to USIP, "America must attend to the views of Iraq's neighbors, who might use this interim period to press their advantages or protect their interests by fermenting discord among Iraq's diverse groups or by lending support to one or another faction."²³⁵⁹ The surrounding states of Turkey, Syria, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait claim that they would be more comfortable engaging with an interim Iraqi administration over a Coalition Provision Authority.²³⁶⁰

Turning back to the present state of Iraq, Diyala province is still plagued by recent terrorist operations in both Diyala city and the outskirts. According to Taha Dar, a member of the Iraqi Council of Representatives, "the Diyala city is like a mini Iraq and includes all the specters of the Iraqi society" and "this reality has always been a factor of stability and cooperation in the governorate."²³⁶¹ In fact, Dar states that "whenever a military operation is launched in an Iraqi Governorate, Al-Qaeda's terrorist elements flee and take refuge in the Diyala Governorate due to its special geographic location and demographic diversity."²³⁶² Dar goes on to claim that the July 2007 operation in the province came too late as it was carried out in accordance with a U.S. vision and plan. Additionally, Dar states that "the Americans besieged two strongholds of Al-Qaeda Organization in the city of Ba'qubah and closed the roads except one road, allowing terrorist leaders to flee the two strongholds."²³⁶³

U.S. forces delayed striking Al-Qaeda in the province because "The governorate is paying a high price because of its geographic location, demographic diversity, and closeness to the capital, Baghdad, and the Iranian border," which prompts "the

²³⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

²³⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

²³⁵⁹ "Iraq's Neighbors: Help or Hindrance? The Missing Dimension of Iraqi Reconstruction" *USIP*, 07/30/08.

²³⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

²³⁶¹ "T.V. Talk Show Discusses Security Situation in Iraq's Diyala Governorate" *BBC Monitoring Middle East*, 07/04/08.

²³⁶² *Ibid.*

²³⁶³ *Ibid.*

Americans to treat the governorate in a special way and put off the Iraqi Government's plans to interfere."²³⁶⁴ Eventually, the Iraqi Council of Representatives announced terrorist operations through the media, causing the citizens to commence a 15-day sit-in and the government to launch a military operation to improve the security situation.²³⁶⁵

Multinational forces have as yet been unable to defeat Al-Qaeda in the province as "several operations took place between the tribes, the residents, and the popular committees on one hand and Al-Qaeda on the other" claims Abdallah, who said that "the multinational forces made many mistakes by striking stable and secure areas in the governorate," which was a warning sign of "the lack of confidence between the security apparatuses and the residents."²³⁶⁶

Dar claims that "if the Iraqi forces benefit from previous mistakes, they can carry out operations in the governorate with little support from the multinational forces."²³⁶⁷ British Prime Minister Gordon Brown declared on July 19 that Britain will reduce troop levels in Iraq but refused to give a timeframe as to when that will occur.²³⁶⁸ Brown's remarks reflect those of the Bush Administration, who announced on July 18 that the U.S. and Iraq had settled on a "time horizon" for U.S. troop withdrawal from Iraq. Britain has 4,000 troops in Iraq presently, which is significantly decreased from 45,000 in 2003 at the time of the U.S.-led invasion.²³⁶⁹ Most troops are based at an airport in Basra, with their primary role being to train Iraqi soldiers.

Troops are not the only problem in Iraq, but many of the U.S. agencies involved overlap, duplicating efforts and wasting money, according to the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO).²³⁷⁰ The report concludes that although there has been overwhelmingly good news in the past year on the declining number of casualties, the actual goals for Iraq are still more distant than what the U.S. and Iraq would like, pushing the possibility for troop withdrawal to a point further in the future.²³⁷¹

U.S. military officials believe that less than 1,200 Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) fighters remain in Iraq.²³⁷² Farook Ahmen, research analyst at the Institute for the Study of War, says that the AQI network is degraded and doubts they would come back to Iraq unless there is a "horrible mismanagement by the Iraqi government."²³⁷³ He also attests to the financial problems of the organization. "Foreign fighters used to provide the financing but there are fewer and fewer recruits who are willing to pay all of the money necessary to come to

²³⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

²³⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

²³⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

²³⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

²³⁶⁸ "Sunni Bloc Rejoins Iraqi Government, Amid Reconciliation Hopes" *The Washington Post*, 07/19/08.

²³⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

²³⁷⁰ "Military Success in Iraq Masks Failures on Other Goals" *USA Today*, 07/01/08.

²³⁷¹ *Ibid.*

²³⁷² "Al-Qaeda in Iraq Down- But Not Out" *Institute for War and Peace Reporting*, 07/25/2008.

²³⁷³ *Ibid.*

Iraq when there are so many significant setbacks.”²³⁷⁴ However, analysts believe that this progress could be reversible if a rapid U.S. departure leads to continued disarray.²³⁷⁵

²³⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

²³⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

July 2008

Core 5

1. Police

Rating: Weak

A Shiite force was sent from Baghdad to protect the mostly Sunni community in Baqubah, in an effort by the Iraqi government to wrest control of Diyala province from the fighting Sunni and Shiite militants.²³⁷⁶ These national police are feared because the province was once heavily infiltrated by Shiite militiamen who used their uniforms to cover extrajudicial killings. Colonel Ali in the Shiite force claims that some neighborhood guards were wanted for extortion as well as other crimes and were to be arrested. In addition, the government wants to give jobs to guards who are not suspected of serious crimes.²³⁷⁷

The graduation of the first Daughters of Iraq group in al-Abara occurred on July 13.²³⁷⁸ The group of 130 women was formed to stop female suicide bombers in Diyala province, whom Al-Qaeda has been increasingly relying on as women evade security checkpoints much more easily than men. The Daughters of Iraq do not carry any weapons, and graduate after a five-day training course.²³⁷⁹ The women involved in this group will search other women at checkpoints, schools, and hospitals.

Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi promised al-Maliki that Italy will dispatch more Italian troops to strengthen the group training Iraqi security forces.²³⁸⁰ Currently, there are 70 Italian instructors in Iraq. The January 31 Italian decree on the funding of missions abroad, 8.157 million euros is assigned for 2008 "for the extension of the participation of military personnel employed in activities of consultancy, formation, and training of the armed forces and police in Iraq."²³⁸¹ The Iraqi government is hoping to build upon previous offensives in Basra, Amarah, and Mosul, believing that those offensives demonstrate that Iraqi security force can handle security responsibilities on their own.²³⁸²

2. Leadership

Rating: Weak

Overall, the Iraqi government has experienced political success in July, but sectarian violence continues to expose the inability of the government and its leaders to unite the country.

²³⁷⁶ "Some Wary as Police Blanket Baqubah; So Far, the Shiite Force is All Business in the Mostly Sunni City." *Los Angeles Times*, 07/31/2008.

²³⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

²³⁷⁸ "War Update." *Newsday*, 07/14/2008.

²³⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

²³⁸⁰ "Italian Premier Promises More Troops to Train Iraqi Police." *BBC Monitoring Europe*, 07/26/2008.

²³⁸¹ *Ibid.*

²³⁸² *Ibid.*

The forgiving of some debt and the opening of embassies by many Arab countries restored some international confidence in al-Maliki. (Indicator 6) An unidentified TV correspondent says that many believe that, "by cracking down on al-Sadr's militias, al-Maliki wanted to persuade Iraqis and neighboring countries that he was leading a government that is not biased towards a certain sect."²³⁸³ However, much of the Iraqi public still needs convincing. She also says that, "the Arab move towards Iraq implies a willingness to give legitimacy to the al-Maliki government, which is viewed by some Iraqis as an illegitimate son of occupied Iraq."²³⁸⁴

The reentrance of the Sunni Iraqi Accordance Front into the government after almost ten years was seen as a "success of the political process."²³⁸⁵ These recent political and security successes have apparently raised the confidence level of the Prime Minister. When then Presidential candidate Barack Obama met with al-Maliki to discuss his plan for withdrawal, "the prime minister, demonstrated the shifting balance of power towards an increasingly confident Iraqi leadership."²³⁸⁶

Despite these positive moves toward government legitimacy, a series of attacks by suicide bombers on July 28, one of the most severe ethnic clashes since 2003, hindered the reputation of the government.²³⁸⁷ The attacks, which targeted Shiite pilgrims, came in the wake of al-Maliki's efforts to protect them by deploying Iraqi troops around Baghdad, setting up checkpoints, and closing roads.²³⁸⁸ (Indicators 3 and 9)

3. Civil Service **Rating: Poor**

The brain drain continues to affect the ability of Iraq's civil service while many that remain are plagued by corruption. High ranking Iraqi civil servants continue to receive luxury accommodations, including first class travel, hotels, and meals.²³⁸⁹ The amount of defense spending for 2005 to 2006 was UK\$ 730 million on "hotel, restaurants and transportation," for civil servants, and UK\$ 330 million on "motor vehicles and parts," for security necessities.²³⁹⁰

²³⁸³ "Al-Jazeera TV Talkshow Discusses Decision to Name Arab Ambassadors to Iraq" *BBC Monitoring*, 7/10/2008.

²³⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

²³⁸⁵ "Sunni Bloc Rejoins Iraqi Government, Amid Reconciliation Hopes" *The Washington Post*, 07/20/2008.

²³⁸⁶ "Obama meets US commanders over Iraq withdrawal" *The Daily Telegraph*, 7/22/08

²³⁸⁷ "Ethnic Clashes and Bombers Kill 61 in Iraq" *The New York Times*, 7/29/2008.

²³⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

²³⁸⁹ "Defense Chiefs Spend Pounds 730M on High Living; Exclusive that's Pounds 400M More than they Spent on Troop Vehicles" *The Mirror*, 7/30/2008.

²³⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

At the end of June, a nation wide increase in public-sector salaries took effect, including all servants on the pay scale.²³⁹¹ This increase means the Iraqi government will spend an additional US\$ 18 billion annually on salaries, which comes directly from the country's oil revenues.²³⁹² However, many doubt the increase will lure expatriates back who left due to security concerns.

4. Judiciary

Rating: Poor

There are some signs that increase the likelihood of a functional, independent Iraqi judiciary. Muhammad al-Askari, Iraqi Defense Ministry media adviser, claimed that arrests are made in accordance with the Ba'qubah operation, capital of Diyala Province, were issued only with arrest warrants and that investigation committees chaired by Iraqi judges will handle their cases.²³⁹³ He claims that security services sole responsibility was handing over the accused, not interfering in the judiciary system.²³⁹⁴

However, the judiciary system still remains incapable of handling the judicial duties of the country. Regarding the eventual transition of security from U.S. to Iraqi forces, the Iraqi judiciary is far from being able to adjudicate detainee cases.²³⁹⁵ Not only is the security situation still too unstable, but employees of the Iraqi judicial system are under constant threat, which limits their capacity to hold fair trials.²³⁹⁶ (Indicator 8)

5. Military

Rating: Weak

The Iraqi military tightened security around Baqubah and imposed an indefinite vehicle curfew.²³⁹⁷ Police and soldiers searched houses with no resistance in Diyala province.²³⁹⁸ U.S. commanders welcome the deployment of additional Iraqi troops, who outnumber U.S. troops in Diyala province by about five to one.²³⁹⁹

Evidence suggests that although the Iraqi military made progress, it is still dependent on small teams of American advisers who can reign in over-aggressive Iraqi commanders,

²³⁹¹ "Iraq is paging its expatriate doctors; recent pay raises for public employees are aimed at luring back physicians and other professionals who fled" *Los Angeles Times*, 7/12/2008.

²³⁹² *Ibid.*

²³⁹³ "Al-Jazeera TV interviews Iraqi Defense ministry official on Diyala operation" *BBC Monitoring Middle East*, 7/30/2008.

²³⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

²³⁹⁵ "Iraq: Positive Change in the Detention System" *United States Institute of Peace*, July 2008.

²³⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

²³⁹⁷ "Sunni Insurgents Targeted in Diyala Province; Iraqi-Led Offensive in Volatile Region Near Baghdad Also Takes Aim at Smugglers, Shiite Militias" *The Washington Post*, 07/29/2008.

²³⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

²³⁹⁹ "Iraqi Military Launches Crackdown" *Los Angeles Times*, 07/30/2008.

call in U.S. air strikes, and help coordinate basic supplies.²⁴⁰⁰ Al-Maliki wants U.S. troops to depart from Iraq, but would like advisers to stay indefinitely, leaving U.S. soldiers as a “supporting role” in Iraq. If the U.S. served in an advisory role in Iraq, over 100,000 troops could be sent back to the U.S. Conversely, a June report by the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) said that only 10 percent of Iraqi units are capable of fighting without U.S. assistance.²⁴⁰¹ Case-in-point, the lone Iraqi division in Basra with no U.S. advisers crumbled when the battle started; and an entire brigade of the 14th Division dissolved after 1,500 soldiers turned over weapons, vehicles, and uniforms to militias.²⁴⁰²

²⁴⁰⁰ “U.S. Advisers Could Stay Long After Troops Leave” *USA Today*, 07/21/2008.

²⁴⁰¹ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁰² *Ibid.*

Methodological Note

This report is the eighth in a series of progress reports on the war in Iraq launched in March 2003. These reports are based on an analytical methodology, CAST (the Conflict Assessment System Tool), that has been developed and tested since 1996. The objectives of this particular project are to:

- Assess the extent to which Iraq is moving toward sustainable security, a situation in which it can solve its own problems peacefully without an outside military or administrative presence.
- Analyze trend lines in Iraq along 12 top social, economic and political/military indicators of internal instability.
- Evaluate five core institutions, (political leadership, civil service, system of justice, police and military) which are necessary for the state to function.
- Review “stings” – the surprises, triggers, idiosyncrasies, national temperament, and other frequently overlooked factors.
- Present a “before” and “after” portrait, with trend lines, showing progress and regression in specific indicators as well as the aggregate at several intervals over time.
- Make concrete policy recommendations and conclusions.

This study is an objective, nonpartisan assessment, tracking the post-war reconstruction effort in systematic fashion, with updates at approximately six- twelve month intervals. It is important that both the U.S. presence in, and exit from, Iraq be neither premature nor longer than necessary. Only a comprehensive tracking and assessment study can make reasonably reliable judgments of this kind.

This report offers a balanced combination of quantitative data grounded in rigorous qualitative research. This even blend of statistical and descriptive analysis accurately portrays the internal situation in Iraq according to trends across 12 distinct variables, or indicators. Ratings are assigned to each indicator according to a comprehensive assessment of daily news coverage of Iraq. The research team referenced over 150 domestic and international news sources, including Arabic language sources. The data collected is information available to the public through accessible media sources. At the end of each month, a rating (on a scale of 1-10, with 1 being the best and 10 being the worst) is assigned based on the developments of that particular month by indicator. Each month’s rating is assigned relative to the previous month’s ratings.

This report is a comprehensive analysis that examines trends since the start of the U.S.-led invasion in March 2003. It is important to note that these summaries provide a condensed representation of the most significant developments on the ground, as reported by the media, expert, and independent organizations, some of which were on site. Any specific developments omitted are done so because they are judged by the research team to be redundant, outliers, or relatively unimportant with respect to the highlighted events. From this methodology, the internal stability of Iraq is assessed by following trends, both by indicator and aggregate ratings.

This research team was lead by Dr. Pauline H. Baker, president of the FfP and the original author of the methodology. We recognize that the rating system of 1-10 is somewhat subjective. However, in light of the logistical barriers to conducting field research in any conflict environment and/or collapsing state, the potential for bias is reduced by internal checks, extensive citation, the collection of vast amounts of data, and comprehensive discussion. Moreover, the research team maintained consistency in research patterns and sources, accompanied by cross-referencing of any observed inconsistencies. Furthermore, over time, as these reports continue, the numerical ratings define themselves in specific tangible conditions, relative to previous ratings, so that clear trends emerge.