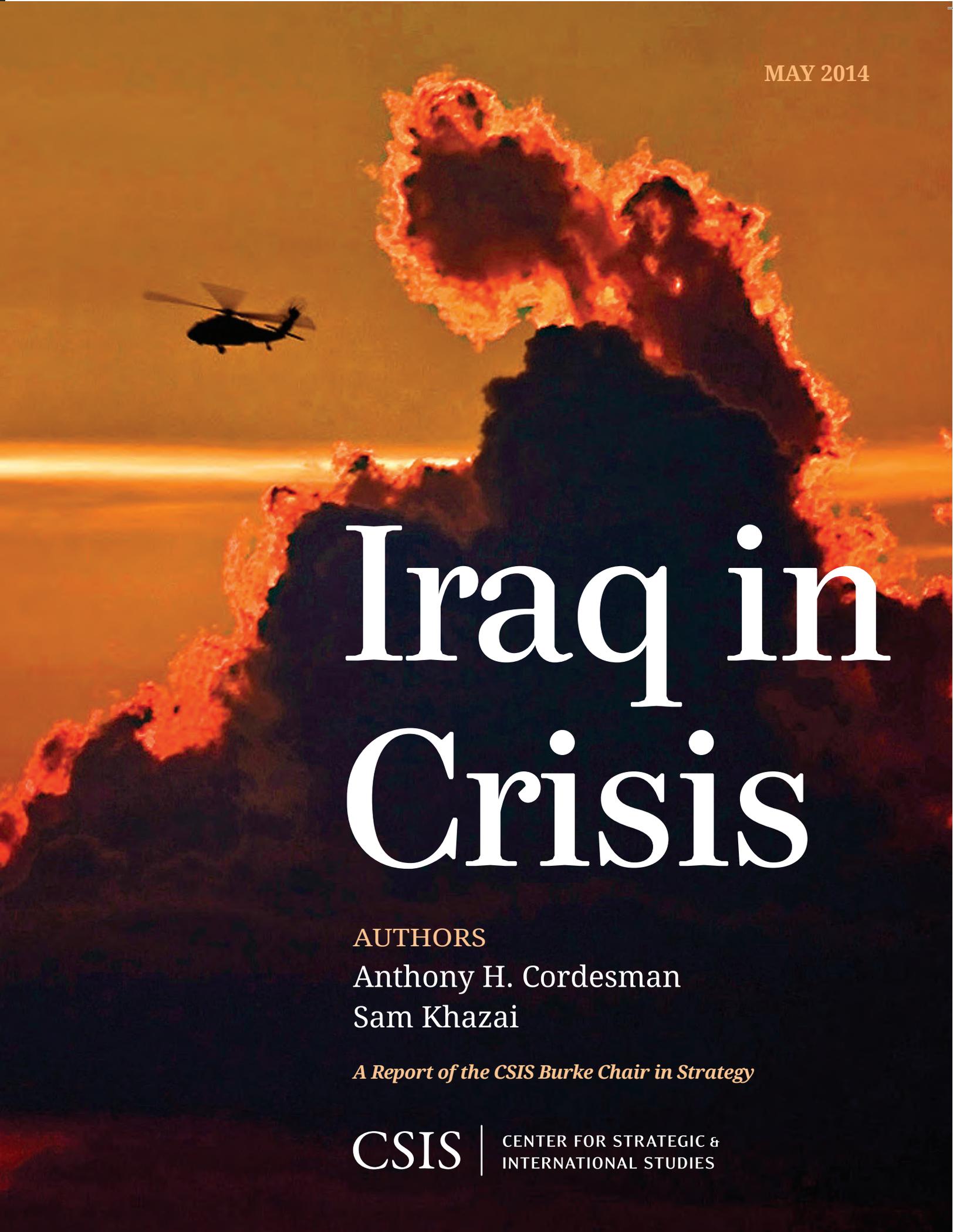


MAY 2014

A dramatic scene of a large fire or explosion, with a helicopter flying in the sky. The fire is a large, dark, billowing mass of smoke and flames, rising from the ground. The helicopter is a silhouette against the bright, orange and yellow sky. The overall atmosphere is one of crisis and conflict.

Iraq in Crisis

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A Report of the CSIS Burke Chair in Strategy

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May 2014

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Executive Summary

As events in late December 2013 and early 2014 have made brutally clear, Iraq is a nation in crisis bordering on civil war. It is burdened by a long history of war, internal power struggles, and failed governance. Iraq also a nation whose failed leadership has created a steady increase in the sectarian divisions between Shi'ite and Sunni, and in the ethnic divisions between Arab and Kurd.

Iraq suffers badly from the legacy of mistakes the US made during and after its invasion in 2003. It suffers from threat posed by the reemergence of violent Sunni extremist movements like Al Qaeda and equally violent Shi'ite militias. It suffers from pressure from Iran and near isolation by several key Arab states. It has increasingly become the victim of the forces unleashed by the Syrian civil war.

Iraq's political, economic, and military history has helped lead to Iraq's current problems and the trends. Even a brief summary of key trends do illustrate the scale of Iraq's challenges:

- The World Bank ranks Iraq as having extremely low quality of governance. Iraq ranks 178th in the world in accountability, 201st in political stability and violence, 182nd in government effectiveness, 205th in the quality of rule of law, 189th in the quality of government regulation, and 193rd in the control of corruption.¹
- Iraq ranks only 171st in the Transparency International's "Corruptions Perception Index".²
- The World Bank *Ease of Doing Business Index* Iraq ranks 151st.³ They cite major problems in starting a business, registering property, getting credit, protecting investors, trading across borders, enforcing contracts, and resolving insolvency.⁴
- Iraq ranks 131st on the UN Human development Index. In comparison, the UAE ranks 41st and Saudi Arabia ranks 57th.⁵
- In spite of Iraq's high oil revenues, its per capita income (\$1,000) only ranks 141st in the world, by far the lowest of any Gulf state.⁶
- Although Iraq's birthrate has dropped, it is still under acute demographic pressure. The US Census Bureau estimates that it had a population has grown from 5.2 million in 1950, to 13.2 million in 1980, 22.7 million in 2000, and 31.9 million in 2013. It estimates that Iraq's population will spike to 40.4 million in 2025 and 56.3 million in 2050.⁷

The country's main threats, however, result from self-inflicted wounds caused by its political leaders. Its election in 2010 divided the nation rather than create any form of stable democracy, and drove Iraq's Prime Minister Nouri al Maliki to focus on preserving his power and steadily becoming a more authoritarian leader. Other Shi'ite leaders contributed to Iraq's increasing sectarian and ethnic polarization, as well, as did key Sunni and Kurdish leaders.

Since that time, a brutal power struggle has taken place between Maliki and senior Sunni leaders, and ethnic tensions have grown between the Arab dominated central government and senior Kurdish leaders in the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG). The actions of Iraq's top political leaders have led to a rise in Sunni and Shi'ite violence accelerated by the spillover effects and extremism of the Syrian civil war. This has led to a level of Shi'ite and Sunni violence unprecedented in recent years. This violence now threatens to explode into a civil conflict equal to – or worse than – the sectarian civil war that broke out during the US occupation.

This struggle has been fueled by actions of the Iraqi government, including broad abuses of human rights and misuse of the Iraqi security forces that has repressed and marginalized large segments of the Iraqi population and has been capitalized upon by Al Qaeda and other extremist groups. As a result, the very forces that should help bring Iraq security and stability have added to its instability, exacerbated violence, and have become part of the threat to many Iraqis.

This analysis also shows, however, that destabilizing factors in Iraq extend much further than its current political leadership and even beyond threats like Al Qaeda and other militant movements that plague the country. Chapter I, the introduction of this analysis, sets forth that Iraq suffers intense demographic pressure resulting from population growth, and from an economy that has failed to translate oil wealth into economic growth, or meaningful levels of employment, and adequate per capita incomes.

Iraq is a nation burdened by the disruption and mistakes of a US-led invasion in 2003, and by the failure to create a viable political system and effective governance in the years that followed. It is a nation that is deeply divided along sectarian and ethnic lines and whose internal divisions have become steadily deeper and more violent since US and other outside forces left at the end of 2011.

Chapters II through Chapter IV trace the patterns and trends of growing violence in Iraq. At the end of 2013, Iraq was again on the on edge of a serious civil war. The analysis of the trends in Iraqi violence in this report explores the rising rate of violence, and underscores the fact that its seriousness cannot be measured simply in terms of deaths, but the increasing number of wounded and refugees and sectarian and ethnic polarization.

The analysis also shows that current measures of violence focus far too much on the role of violent non-state actors, ranging from Al Qaeda to Shi'a militias, and grossly understate the role state actors like the Maliki government, the Iraqi security forces, and competing Sunni and Kurdish political factions have played in bring Iraq back to the edge of a major civil conflict.

Chapters V through Chapter IX analyze the actors that are now leading Iraq down the path to civil war. They show that the primary and empowering cause of Iraq's current violence is not extremist movements, or sectarian and ethnic divisions, but its failed politics and system of governance. These failures are led by the current Maliki government, but only because it – and Iraq's Shi'ites – are now the dominant force in Iraq's government and security services. Iraq's other political leaders, and Sunni and Kurdish factions – as well as other Shi'ite factions – share responsibility for Iraq's instability. The US is also at fault for making many of the mistakes that led to Iraq's current predicament and its long history of failed governance.

Additionally, these chapters show the dangers created by Iraq's sectarian and ethnic factions, the role Iran has played in dividing Iraq and seeking its own goals, and the reemergence of the threat from Al Qaeda and other militias. Moreover, they analyze the dangers of the growing interaction between violence in Iraq and the Syrian civil war.

All are warnings that a dominant Shi'ite leader may be able to repress opposing factions for a time – as Iraqi dictators and authoritarian leaders have done in the past – but that the only hope Iraq has for real stability is a national government that both unifies Iraq's warring factions and gives each faction a fair share of wealth and power. Such reforms are also the only basis for effective security forces, economic development, and the full exploitation of Iraq's oil wealth.

Chapter X analyzes the current strengths and weaknesses of Iraq's security forces. It shows that they are making progress but face massive problems in terms of effectiveness, corruption, ties to

the office of the Prime Minister and Shi'ite factions, and their use in repression of legitimate political opposition. Today, they are both a path to stability and security and a threat to that same stability and security. They will remain so until Iraq has a more unified and truly national government. Moreover, unless outside actors take full account of the degree to which they are both a potential solution to Iraq's violence, and its cause, increased involvement may push Iraq deeper into civil conflict.

Chapter XI examines Iraq's options for economic development. It shows Iraq has economic potential, but has made little progress towards achieving stable economic growth. Concepts and rhetoric fall short of actual economic development, infrastructure building, and effective government reform and practice. Over-dependence on petroleum earnings, weak and grossly overstaffed state-owned enterprises, and an agricultural sector in crisis add to these strains. So do major problems in education and health, water, and the development of adequate infrastructure.

Trying to impose economic development on an increasing violent and divided society will fail, particularly in the face of factional greed, poor governance, and gross corruption; concepts which are explored fully in Chapter XI. Iraq needs more unity and equity and effective execution for economic growth, not endless plans and concepts.

Chapter XII concludes the study by examining the problems created by overdependence on petroleum earnings in more detail, and the challengers in Iraq's petroleum development and potential. It again finds that Iraq is making progress, but that this progress is not tied to practical and realistic goals and plans. Moreover, increases in petroleum wealth will only move Iraq forward and help curb its violence, if tied to more effective use, more equitable wealth distribution, combating Iraq's factionalism and growing violence, and more effective political leadership and governance.

This study does not end with a chapter attempting to propose simple solutions or impractical calls for sudden change and unity. It shows all too clearly just how complex and real Iraq's problems are. It also shows that Iraq cannot succeed without major internal political reform that comes from within. No outside power can change the situation. Given Iraq's current political divisions and leadership, the most the US and other outside states can do is choose between bad alternatives and pursue the least bad options.

It is hard to think of US actions that could be more disastrous than provoking Iraqi resistance by attempting to reintroduce US troops, but it is equally difficult to imagine measures that could do more damage than backing Maliki without regard to his relentless consolidation of power, marginalization of opposition groups, repression and misuse of the Iraqi security forces, and exploitation of Iraq's volatile sectarian divisions.

This is not an argument against counterterrorism support linked to serious and real efforts by Maliki or a successor to move towards national conciliation and the creation of a real unity government. It is not an argument against such arms transfers to Iraq, a strong Office of Security Cooperation in Iraq (OSC-I), or aid in legitimate counterterrorism and counterinsurgency efforts. As Prime Minister Maliki's November 2013 visit to Washington made all too clear, US support of Iraq's security efforts is one of the few areas where the US retains major leverage in dealing with Iraq and countering Iranian influence.

The fact remains, however, that Al Qaeda affiliated groups in Iraq are not its only major threat. Iraq has suffered – and still suffers – from outside mistakes and interference. The resurgence of Al

Qaeda and other extremist movements, and the growing depth of its sectarian and ethnic divisions is the fault of its political leaders, not outside states or a lack of Iraqi nationalism and inherent forces within Iraqi society.

Like so much of the Arab world, Iraq cannot succeed through denial of its real world challenges or export the blame even when that blame is valid. It also cannot be “fixed” by US aid to its military or counterterrorism forces that does not address Iraq’s political failures and mistakes. Iraq’s progress depends on the willingness of its political leaders to turn away from a narrow focus on their own position sect, ethnicity, and faction. If they do not move forward – and persist in seeking personal and factional power – Iraq will either move towards all out civil war or towards far more serious repression. In both cases, it will become a failed state.

I. INTRODUCTION

Iraq's military and political leaders face major security challenges as they seek to deal with a deeply divided government, ethnic and sectarian divisions, and confront an assortment of related challenges. Iraq faces a resurgence of Islamist violence, sectarian tensions, local militias, growing public insecurity, and violence spilling over from the Syrian civil war. The Iraqi government has failed to unite Sunni and Shi'ite or Arab and Kurd. Efforts to create an Iraqi national government politics have failed. The Sunnis are steadily more alienated, and the Kurds increasingly pursue their own way. The economy is supported by high oil revenues but has made little overall progress, and broader Iraqi problems in governance and development have continued to grow.

Iraq's security situation has unraveled to crisis levels. The failure to maintain any residual US force in the country to train and support Iraqi counterterrorism operations after December 2011 placed heavy constraints on the capabilities of the Iraqi security forces and on US policy options for confronting terrorism spilling into Iraq as a result of the deepening crisis in Syria. As a result, the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and police units remain overstretched and ill equipped to confront transnational terrorist operations, relentless low-level insurgency, violent skirmishes between local militias, and other threats currently operating inside Iraq.

Over the course of 2013, Iraq experienced its worst levels of violence since 2006 and 2007, when the country nearly descended into all-out civil war. According to the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), the total number of civilian casualties (including police) killed in 2013 was the highest since 2008, with 7,818 killed and 17,981 injured in 2013, compared to 2008 when 6,787 Iraqis were killed and 20,178 injured. May was the most violent month in 2013, with a total of 3,154 civilian casualties (including police), of whom 963 were killed and 2,191 wounded. The total number of civilian casualties (killed and injured, including police) was consistently above 1,500 after April 2013, and a total of 759 Iraqis were killed and another 1,345 were wounded in acts of terrorism.⁸

The trends continue into 2014, but UNAMI was not able to estimate total casualties after December 2013 because of AQI/ISIS attacks in Anbar that sharply intensified the fighting and made it impossible for UNAMI to estimate the total numbers killed and injured. Iraqi Body Count reported the number of civilian deaths in January 2014 at 1076 (357 in 2013), 930 in February 2014 (360 in 2013), 1009 in March 2014 (403 in 2013), and 1013 in 2014 (545 in 2013).⁹

The totals the UN could estimate for January 2014, included 618 civilians killed and 1,052 injured. A more detailed estimate of the casualties for February 2014 included 564 civilians killed (including 152 civilian police), while the number of civilians injured was 1,179 (including 262 civilian police). A further 139 members of the Iraqi Security Forces were killed and 202 were injured (not including casualties from Anbar operation). It must be stressed that these totals excluded the casualties in Anbar, the most intense scene of the fighting.¹⁰

Iraqi Body Count estimated the number of deaths in Iraq at approximately 9,500 in 2013, 4,500 in 2012; 4,100 in 2011; 4,100 in 2010; 5,100 in 2009, and 10,000 in 2008.¹¹ The number of total security incidents in Iraq also surged, from approximately 300 security incidents a month in 2011, to over 1,200 per month throughout 2013.¹²

The spike in violence in 2013 can be attributed to a number of causes, none of which bode well for Iraq's future stability and security. When US troops withdrew at the end of 2011, Iraq faced a protracted, low-grade domestic insurgency. In the two years since, Iraq now faces the added challenge of Syria's civil war spilling over its western border, and the related resurgence of violent Islamist terror groups.

Iraq is experiencing a crisis in leadership that is largely self-inflicted. Two years since the last US troops pulled out, Iraq's leaders – both inside and outside of government – can no longer blame all of the nation's woes on America's invasion and occupation. In 2014, Iraq will continue to face foreign and domestic challenges, but regional actors such as Iran, Syria, and transnational Islamist movements will present a greater threat to Iraq's stability than US troops.

In order to succeed, Iraq's leadership cannot ignore the growing levels of violence, nor can it rely solely on the use of force to resolve the current crisis. Iraq must address the growing divide between its Sunni and Shia communities, and it must return a degree of safety and stability to its neighborhoods, so that citizens do not have to turn to local militias for protection. Addressing these issues may bring Iraq one step closer to establishing a new national identity: one that can bridge the deep sectarian divisions between its Shi'ites and Sunnis as well as the ethnic divisions between its Arabs and its Kurds and other minorities.

Improving the quality and focus of Iraqi efforts at counterterrorism and internal security is a key priority, but Iraq cannot end its violence through force or repression. Iraq's leaders must build a new structure of political consensus. They must build an effective structure of governance, and social order that sharply reduces the problems caused by the mix of dictatorship, war, sanctions, occupation, and civil conflict that began in the 1970s and create the kind of national government that can give democracy real meaning and serve the needs of all the Iraqi people.

Iraq must also deal with deep underlying problems. It must cope with a steadily growing population, and diversify an economy that is so dependent on petroleum exports that they provide some 95% of its government revenues. It not only must forge a new degree of unity, but also deal with outside threats like the Syrian civil war and pressure from Iran.

Iraq's petroleum-driven economy did grow during 2011- 2013, and its political leaders are not hopelessly divided from each other.¹³ Iraq is a nation with great potential and its political divisions and ongoing low-level violence do not mean it cannot succeed in establishing stability, security, and a better life for its people.

It is important to point out, however, that almost all of Iraq's recent economic growth is attributable to the expansion of its oil production and high world oil prices. Overdependence on oil revenues and a lack of economic diversification remain a problem for Iraq's economy. Increased violence and attacks on oil pipelines damage infrastructure, frighten investors, and increase the security and operating costs for doing business inside Iraq.¹⁴ Iraq also is failing to move forward in the other aspects of its economy, particularly in the state and agricultural sectors.

If Iraq's leaders fail, if they try to deal with this complex mix of political divisions and structural problems by force and they continue their present factional struggles; the end result will be to delay Iraq's progress by every year their search for self-advantage continues. What is far worse is that their failures may well turn Iraq's growing levels of internal violence into civil war.

Historical Background

There is nothing new about Iraq being in crisis, and Iraq's problems have posed a strategic challenge to the US ever since the bloody coup that deposed the Iraqi monarchy in 1958. From roughly 1958 to 1979, the US backed Iran against Iraq, and saw Iran as a key strategic partner or "twin pillar" in its security structure in the Gulf. Iran and Iraq remained rivals as long as the Shah remained in power, but avoided large-scale conflict.

Iraq's problems through 1968 were a series of coups, poor governance, limited economic development, and a low-level civil war between Baghdad and the Kurds that lasted from 1960 to 1970. After that time, they were the legacy of increasing authoritarian leadership by the Ba'ath Party, continued economic mismanagement and poor governance, and an arms race with Iran that led Iran to back a new Kurdish uprising in 1974-1975. The Shah support for revolts by Iraqi Kurds in the early to mid-1970s helped force Iraq to accept a border settlement favorable to Iran in return for the Shah ending aid to the Kurds, but the tensions between the states were limited to minor clashes.

The Iran-Iraq War

This situation changed radically in 1979, when a revolution in Iran toppled Shah. That same year, Saddam Hussein formally assumed power. These events brought to power two regimes that were hostile to both each other and the United States. In 1979, the new Iranian leadership took Americans hostage at the US embassy, and President Jimmy Carter placed Iran on a list of states sponsoring terrorism.¹⁵

The new revolutionary regime in Iran was hostile to Iraq both on religious grounds and because of the Iraqi government's treatment of Khomeini after he had fled to Iraq due to his opposition to the Shah. Although Saddam Hussein initially supported the Iranian revolution, it soon became clear that Iran's new leader sought to export his religious revolution to Iraq, and sent "guides" to Iraq in an effort to persuade Iraq's Shi'ites to overthrow the Ba'ath regime. At the same time, Iran seemed divided and vulnerable, with uncertain loyalties among its military forces.

The end result was that Saddam Hussein prepared an invasion of Iran that he launched in 1980, initially claiming that this was to liberate the Arab population of southwestern Iran – the area that has most of Iran's energy resources. This began the Iran-Iraq War, which lasted until the summer of 1988, and became one of the bloodiest wars in modern history.

The US opposed Iraq's invasion of Iran and did not support its ambitions to acquire territory and influence in Iran in spite of its growing tension with Iran and the Iranian hostage crisis. This policy began to change in 1982; once Iran was able to push Iraqi forces out of Iran and go on the offensive in Iraq. Iraq was forced to turn to the West and the Southern Gulf states for aid, while the US feared an Iranian conquest of Iraq that could destabilize the Gulf.

President Reagan began tilting towards Saddam in an effort to check Iran's efforts to invade Iraq.¹⁶ The Reagan Administration removed Iraq from its list of sponsors of terrorism and began providing money, weaponry, and intelligence to help Iraq in its war. This included "dual use"

technology,¹⁷ and industrial goods for missile, chemical, biological and nuclear weapons programs and weapons.^{18, 19} A National Security Directive stated that the U.S would do “whatever was necessary and legal” to prevent Iraq from losing its war with Iran.

The US also, however, became embroiled in the Iran-Contra scandal, which involved transferring arms to Iran in an effort to buy the freedom of hostages being held in Lebanon by Iranian-backed Hezbollah, even as it steadily became more active in supporting Iraq. In 1987 the US began reflagging Kuwaiti tankers to prevent Iranian attacks on tankers and other targets in the Gulf that supported Iraq. The US role in the “Tanker War” was an important factor in Iraq’s ability to keep fighting and eventually force Iran into a ceasefire.

The 1991 Gulf War

The Iran-Iraq War ended in a 1988 ceasefire, leaving Iraq the largest military power in the region, but crippled economically and with massive debt to Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Saddam first sought payment from the Southern Gulf states for Iraq’s “defense” against Iran, and then invaded Kuwait in August 1990, seeking to annex Kuwait, seize its assets, and pressure the other Arab Gulf states into debt forgiveness and aid. He acted to avoid the repayment of Iraq’s war debt, end disputes over Kuwaiti oil production and gain control of its oil resources, and at least demonstrate to Saudi Arabia that Iraq had the potential to invade it as well.

Saddam’s invasion of Kuwait presented a major threat to US strategic interests. The US responded with Operation Desert Shield, an American mission to deter attacks against Saudi Arabia. It then launched Operation Desert Storm, a US and Saudi-led and UN-approved military campaign to drive Iraq out of Kuwait.²⁰

In spite of a massive Coalition military victory that liberated Kuwait, Saddam Hussein’s regime survived – largely due to the US decision to limit the war to the liberation of Kuwait, to not intervene in the uprising in Iraq following Iraq’s defeat, and the fear of what would happen if Iraq ceased to be a counterweight to Iran.

When Saddam moved from a defensive posture to one that tried to preserve Iraq’s missile and weapons of mass destruction and that again threatened Kuwait, the US worked with its Gulf, British, and French allies to create and maintain “no-fly zones” to protect Iraq’s northern Kurds and southern Shi’ites. The UN Security Council also imposed sanctions on Iraq to try force it to destroy its remaining missiles and weapons of mass destruction that virtually halted Iraq’s military modernization and had a major economic impact on the Iraqi people.

The no-fly zones created a separate Kurdish enclave or security zone in northern Iraq, while the combination of the no-fly zones and UN sanctions helped secure Iran from Iraq. There was little Iran could do in Iraq, however, except sponsor weak exile movements until another US-led coalition destroyed Saddam’s regime and Iraq’s remaining military power in the March 2003.

The 2003 Invasion of Iraq

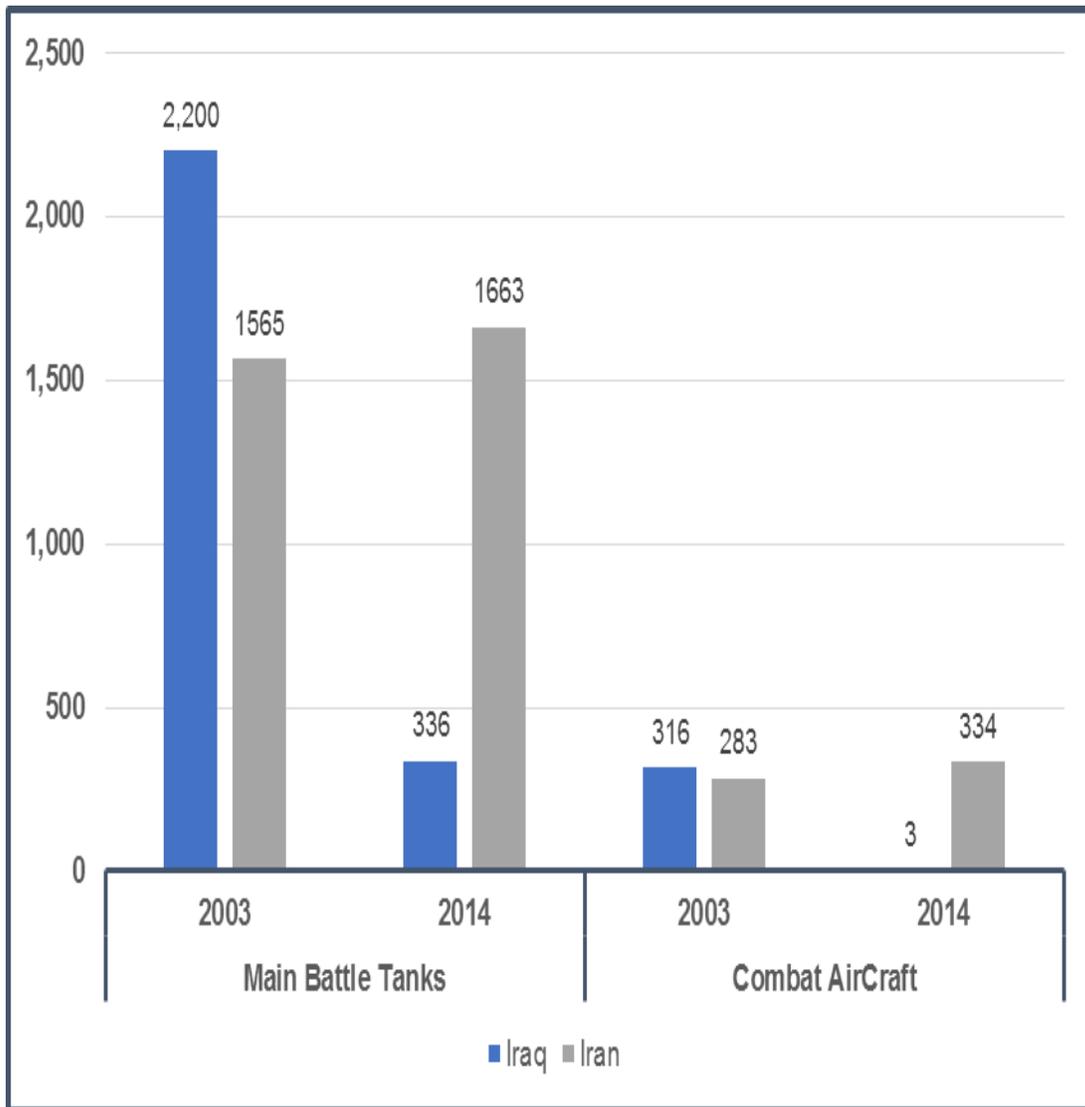
The US invasion brought down a remarkably unpleasant dictatorship, but the failure to plan for stability operations -- and to create an effective and unified Iraqi government – came the cost of some eight years of turmoil and conflict inside Iraq. The US invasion of Iraq soon proved to have unleashed forces the US had not predicted, was almost totally unprepared for, and could not control or contain.

The US found it had gone to war for the wrong reasons – focusing on threats from weapons of mass destruction and Iraqi-government sponsored terrorism that did not exist. It had no meaningful plan for either stability operations or nation building. Iraq slid into a state civil war, and failed to build an effective democracy and base for Iraq's economic development. Iraqi attacks on Coalition forces cost some 5,000 US and allied killed and 35,000 wounded, and the civil fighting that cost well over 100,000 Iraqi lives. The Congressional Research Service estimates that the dollar cost of the war to the US alone is over \$823 billion through FY2012, and SIGIR estimates that the US and its allies spent some \$75 billion on aid –with little lasting benefit to Iraq.²¹

These failures also gradually empowered in Iran. Iran initially took a wait-and-see approach to Iraq after the US-led invasion, and made sure that it avoided confrontations with the Coalition.²² At the same time, the Coalition Provisional Authority sought to persuade Iran to play a constructive role vis-à-vis Iraqi Shi'ites, who make up between 60-65% of Iraqis.²³²⁴ Whether it was sincere or not, Iran initially offered to cooperate with the United States in Iraq, as it had in the invasion of Afghanistan.

When the US rebuffed the offer, Iran began to call for the withdrawal of US troops, challenge the legitimacy of the Coalition Provisional Authority, push actively for Iraqi self-governance, and call for elections that it knew would bring Iraqi Shi'ites into power.²⁵ Iran pursued a strategy of backing pro-Iranian or sympathetic Iraqi Shi'ites, and to a lesser extent Iraqi Kurds, in order to promote a weak federal state susceptible to Iranian influence. This strategy had significant successes, although the risk of a popular nationalist backlash against Iran remained present.

Figure 1: Iran and Iraq Military Balance in 2003 & 2014



	Main Battle Tanks		Combat AirCRAFT	
	2003	2014	2003	2014
Iraq	2,200	336	316	3
Iran	1565	1663	283	334

Source: The Military Balance – 2014, International Institute for Strategic Studies, February 5, 2014.

The Aftermath of the Invasion

The US made significant mistakes during its de facto occupation of Iraq from 2003 to 2011. For example, the head of the Coalition Provisional Authority, L. Paul Bremer, issued Order Number 2 on May 23, 2003 that formally dissolved the Iraqi army, leaving a Sunni-dominated officer corps and 400,000 soldiers unemployed.²⁶ More broadly, however, the US was unprepared to carry out armed nation building in the critical period immediately after the fall of Saddam's regime, which contributed to the release of deep divisions between Shi'ites and Sunnis as well as between Arabs and Kurds.

By late 2004, this mix of mistakes helped trigger a Sunni-dominated insurgency and a civil conflict where Sunni Islamists gradually replaced the supporters of Saddam Hussein, and the leading insurgent movements became tied to Al Qaeda. It also led to the creation of rival Shi'ite factions, and growing tensions between Iraq's Arab, Kurds, and other minorities.

Iran, in turn, supported the Shi'ites and saw the developing conflict as an opportunity to limit US influence and power. Iran took advantage of the porous border, newfound freedom of communication and transportation between the two countries, and post-war chaos to develop unprecedented and broad-based influence in Iraq. Iran also sought to extend its influence across a wider spectrum of liberal secularists, the Kurds, and Shi'ite Islamists.²⁷ Reports by coalition forces show that Iran used money, weapons, training, and other forms of support to bolster both Shi'ite and non-Shi'ite allies inside Iraq, in order to disrupt US forces and ensure Iraq was too weak to pose a challenge to Iranian security and interests.

According to a State Department memo obtained by WikiLeaks, Iran provided \$100-200 million a year to its clients in Iraq.²⁸ It also sought to prevent and discourage an American attack on Iran, create a buffer zone against invasions from its west, cultivate an Arab partner, and counteract Sunni religious extremism.²⁹ According to some analysts, Iran also exploited the crisis in Iraq to help counter against criticisms of its nuclear program, offset international sanctions in response to its nuclear programs, weaken the American military by keeping it preoccupied in Iraq, and help suppress Iraqi-based Iranian dissidents like the Mujahedin-e Khalq Organization.³⁰

2007-2011: A Shift to More Realistic Goals

By 2007, the US had changed its approach toward Iraq from one of trying to transform the politics, governance, rule of law, and economy of Iraq to one of helping Iraqis build as unified a state as possible and security forces capable of defeating extremists and insurgents, as well as eventually becoming capable of deterring and defending against external threats. The US also sought to create an Iraq that was not reliant on Iranian aid or vulnerable to Iranian influence, and which is tied to a strategic partnership with the US.

On November 13, 2009, the US embassy in Baghdad laid out a much more modest approach in a memo that was among the US diplomatic cables made public by WikiLeaks:³¹

“Our objective in Iraq should be less about countering all-things Iranian, and more about developing viable alternatives and approaches that gradually alter the GOI's political, economic, and social worldview. Development of viable international alternatives in Iraq is one of the most effective measures of countering Iranian ambitions and, ultimately, integrating Iraq as a constructive member of the international community. Specifically, our ongoing efforts to bolster the GOI through capacity building and assistance within the Strategic Framework Agreement (SFA) and to remove Iraq from Chapter VII remain our most valuable tools in this regard. Given the value placed on the SFA by the GOI and the Iraqi public, our ability to recognize,

enhance, and exploit the value of the partnership will constitute an essential element of any effort to counter “malign” Iranian influence.”

The US, however, had limited success in meeting these far more modest goals. By the time US troops left Iraq in December 2011, few Iraqis felt that the US occupation of Iraq had provided them with the benefits they hoped for. Violence stemming from Iraq’s deep ethnic divisions and insurgent groups continued to hinder progress towards a stable government, economy, and society. Sunni tensions with the central government were rising in Anbar and Diyala Provinces, and Arab-Kurdish tension remained a serious threat in Mosul and Kirkuk.

Iraq’s economy remained weak, and its per capita income was so low that it ranked 161st in the world. Provincial and local governance was poor, and corruption was rampant. The US not only faced the challenge of Iran’s presence in Iraq, but the fact that Iraq remained a fragile state with uncertain security and political and economic stability.³²

The Strategic Framework Agreement (SFA) and the US-Iraq Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA)

The failure to create effective US and Iraqi strategic agreements that led to the full withdrawal of US combat troops at the end of 2011 further compounded Iraq’s problems. In 2008, the United States and Iraq signed two agreements related to the rights, responsibilities, scope, and duration of US troops in Iraq: the Strategic Framework Agreement (SFA) and the US-Iraq Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA), otherwise referred to as the Strategic Agreement (SA).

The Strategic Agreement (SA) was a three-year status of forces agreement between the host country of Iraq and the US. The SA governed the US security relationship with Iraq, specifically the US presence, activities, and eventual withdrawal from Iraq.³³ The SA was agreed to for a period of three years, and expired at the end of 2011, when Iraqi and US officials failed to agree to terms negotiating its extension. The primary disagreement was over the legal status of remaining US troops, with Iraqi officials rejecting US demands of immunity.

US concerns over the expiration of the SA included worries that existing political disputes would worsen to the point that Iraq could still become a failed state, to those who believed that US troops were required to secure that “Kurd-Arab tensions in northern Iraq did not escalate into an all-out conflict”.

US officials made several high-profile visits to Iraq during 2011 aimed at convincing Iraqi leaders to accept some continued troop presence in their country. In July and April 2011, then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Mike Mullen; Speaker of the US House John Boehner; and US Defense Secretary Leon Panetta made separate visits to Iraq to encourage Iraqi political leaders that US troops would be required for the continuation of US logistical and operational requirements.³⁴

Iraqi officials refused to extend legal immunity for remaining US troops in the face of opposition from the Sadrists, a lack of popular support for any continued foreign troop presence, and deep internal divisions within the Iraq government. This was a condition the US could not accept and the failure of US and Iraqi officials to agree on immunity and other issues led President Obama to announce on October 11, 2011, that US troops would fully withdraw from Iraq by the end of 2011.

US officials provided information on revised plans for a US presence in Iraq. In November 2011 Defense Secretary Panetta and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Martin Dempsey testified to the Senate Armed Forces Committee that:³⁵

- An Office of Security Cooperation—Iraq (OSC-I), under the authority of the U.S. Ambassador to Iraq, would continue to train and mentor the Iraq Security Forces (ISF). OSC-I has nearly 1,000 total personnel, of which about 147 are U.S. military personnel and the remainder are mostly contractors. The office, working out of the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad and 10 locations around Iraq, helps train and mentor the Iraqis, and manages nearly 370 Foreign Military Sales (FMS) cases totaling over \$9 billion worth of pending arms sales to Iraq. The largest FMS case is the sale of 36 U.S.-made F-16 combat aircraft to Iraq, notified to Congress in two equal tranches, the latest of which was made on December 12, 2011 (Transmittal No. 11-46). The total value of the sale of 36 F-16s is up to \$6.5 billion when all parts, training, and weaponry are included.
- The United States continues to cooperate with Iraq on counter-terrorism, naval and air defense, and cooperation through joint exercises.
- U.S. personnel (mostly contractors) continue to be “embedded” with Iraqi forces as trainers not only tactically, but also at the institutional level (by advising Iraqi security ministries and its command structure). Ongoing discussions with the Iraqis will determine whether these personnel would accompany Iraqi forces on counter-terrorism missions.

The debate over the Strategic Agreement (SA) was partly decoupled from the Strategic Framework Agreement (SFA). The SFA is a broadly defined document that committed both sides to “a relationship of friendship and cooperation...based on mutual respect, recognized principles and norms of international law and fulfillment of international obligations”. Unlike the SOFA that expired at the end of 2011, the SFA did not have a set expiration date and still remained the “primary document governing political, economic, and security relations between the United States and the Government of Iraq (GOI)” at the end of 2013.³⁶

A February 2012 CRS report, “Iraq: Politics, Governance, and Human Rights”, outlined the main provisions of the SFA as follows:³⁷

- U.S.-Iraq cooperation “based on mutual respect,” and that the United States will not use Iraqi facilities to launch any attacks against third countries, and will not seek permanent bases.
- U.S support for Iraqi democracy and support for Iraq in regional and international organizations.
- U.S.-Iraqi dialogue to increase Iraq’s economic development, including through the Dialogue on Economic Cooperation and a Trade and Investment Framework Agreement.
- Promotion of Iraq’s development of its electricity, oil, and gas sector.
- U.S.-Iraq dialogue on agricultural issues and promotion of Iraqi participation in agricultural programs run by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and USAID.
- Cultural cooperation through several exchange programs, such as the Youth Exchange and Study Program and the International Visitor Leadership Program

The Steadily More Dominant Impact of Iraq’s Internal Political Divisions

During this period, a political crisis that unfolded after the Iraqi election on March 7, 2010 helped trigger a broad crisis in Iraqi political stability that grew steadily worse after the US pullout. Growing cleavages between divergent Sunni and Shi’ite and Arab and Kurd exacerbated existing tensions as groups struggled to assert their own interests.

An opposition party that mixed Shi’ites and Sunnis called the Iraqi National Movement (INM) -- led by Ayad Allawi -- became the largest faction in the government as a result of the 2010 election,

but only by a slim margin. The INM had 2,849,613 votes or 24.72% of the total and won 91 seats. Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's State of Law Coalition came very close with 2,792,083 votes or 24.22% and won 89 seats. A third largely Shi'ite party which included the Sadr faction – the National Iraqi Alliance led by Ibrahim al-Jaafari -- won 2,092,0006 votes, 18.2% of the total, and 58 seats.

This close outcome led to a power struggle between Allawi and Maliki over which party could create the largest coalition. It was one that took months to resolve at precisely the time an immunity agreement between the US and Iraq required a strong government, and transition was most dependent on Sunni-Shi'ite and Arab-Kurdish unity.³⁸ While the INM may have had the technical right to try to form an agreement, the voting gave Shi'ite factions a decisive lead in the total vote, and gravely weakened the more pro-American Hakim faction while sharply strengthening the anti-US Sadrists.

In addition, Iraq had to deal with tensions between Iran and the US and growing Iranian influence once US combat forces left Iraq. Iran skillfully exploited the situation. Pro-Iranian forces pursued a multi-pronged approach aimed at minimizing America's presence and influence in Iraq, while strengthening their own economic, political, religious, and military ties to their Iraqi neighbor.

Iran supported a Maliki-led Shi'ite government as a means of maintaining a Shi'a-led government in neighboring Iraq, projecting influence throughout the region, subverting Western interests, and benefiting commercially through trade. Additionally, Iran pursued "divide and weaken" tactics inside Iraq. While Iran sought to avoid instability on its western border, it had little interest in creating a strong Iraqi neighbor a military, culturally, or economically robust neighbor that could contest it for regional power in the future.

II. VIOLENCE IN IRAQ: THE GROWING RISK OF SERIOUS CIVIL CONFLICT

The end result of Iraq's internal political struggles and failed US transition during 2010-2011 is that Iraq's military and political leaders now face major security challenges as they seek to confront a resurgence of Islamist violence, growing sectarian tensions, the reemergence of local militias, growing public insecurity, and violence spilling over from Syria.

The failure to maintain a residual US force in the country to train and support Iraqi counterterrorism operations has placed heavy constraints on the capabilities of the Iraqi security forces and on US policy options for confronting Iraq's many security challenges. As a result, the Iraqi Security Forces and police units remain overstretched and ill equipped to confront the reemergence of Al Qaeda in Iraq, a separate but related domestic insurgency, violent skirmishes between local sectarian militias, and other threats currently contesting Iraq's security.

Fighting between the increasingly marginalized and hostile Sunni opposition groups and the besieged and repressive Shia-led security forces drove the death toll in Iraq upward, towards levels not experienced since the sectarian bloodletting of 2006 and 2007. As noted earlier, UNAMI estimated that the total number of civilian casualties (including police) in 2013 was the highest since 2008, with 7,818 killed (6,787 in 2008) and 17,981 (20,178 in 2008) injured. Over the course of 2013, however, Iraq experienced its worst levels of violence since 2006 and 2007, when the country was on the verge of civil war.³⁹

Violence beget more violence, as Iraq's sidelined Sunni community came to fear the Shia dominated government more, and turned to Sunni militants for protection and retaliation. In turn, PM Maliki's government turned to harsher tactics against opposition groups and perceived terrorists, at times collectively punishing entire Sunni communities, and causing greater casualties. Increased government brutality engendered greater insurgent activity, shattering public trust and the possibility of reconciliation.

From January through November of 2013, approximately 7,150 civilians were killed in fighting. A major new confrontation between Shi'ite and Sunni that began in December 2012 that led to major fighting in Anbar, and a total of 759 Iraqis were killed and another 1,345 were wounded in acts of terrorism and violence in December. The number of civilians killed was 661 (including 175 civilian police), while the number of civilians injured was 1201 (including 258 civilian police). A further 98 members of the Iraqi Security Forces were killed and 144 were injured.⁴⁰

This spike in violence in 2013 can be attributed to a number of causes – causes examined in depth later in this analysis. When US troops withdrew at the end of 2011, Iraq still faced a protracted, low-grade domestic insurgency. Since then, Sunni Arab groups that were increasingly been shut out of the political process increased their violence against the government and its Shia power base.⁴¹ Tensions also increased between the Arab controlled central government in Baghdad and the Kurds in the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG). In addition, corruption, politicization of independent institutions, marginalization of opposition groups, weak civil society, and the inability of government's willingness and capacity to curb these issues and provide basic social services have further worsened the political and security crisis in Iraq.

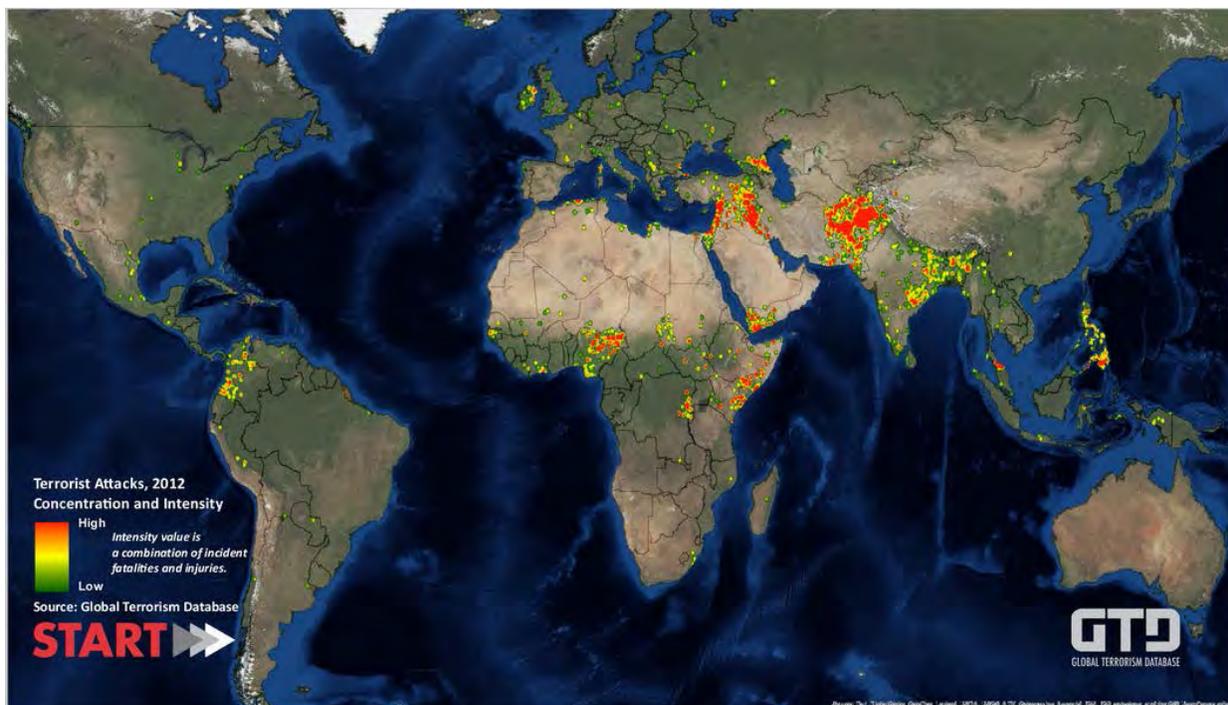
The situation also did not improve in 2014, although UNAMI could no longer make estimates for

all of Iraq after December 2013 because of AQI/ISIS attacks in Anbar that sharply intensified the fighting but made it impossible for UNAMI to estimate the total numbers killed and injured. The totals for January 2014 that the UN could estimate included 618 civilians killed and 1,052 injured. A more detailed estimate of the casualties for February 2014 included 564 civilians killed (including 152 civilian police), while the number of civilians injured was 1,179 (including 262 civilian police). A further 139 members of the Iraqi Security Forces were killed and 202 were injured (not including casualties from Anbar operation). It must be stressed that these totals excluded the casualties in Anbar, the most intense scene of the fighting.⁴²

Iraq's security continues to be tested from all directions. External violence from Syria's ongoing civil war spills over the border, as militants supporting both the Assad regime and the opposition expand the fighting into Iraq. Iran, Saudi Arabia, and other Gulf states see Iraq as a battleground where regional dynamics play out at the expense of Iraqi stability. US policymakers monitor the spiraling violence with concern, limited in their ability to shape events inside Iraq since the departure of American troops. Internally, Iraq's domestic political crisis has turned ever more violent. Globally, a December 2013 study tracking worldwide terrorism found that the majority of worldwide terror incidents in 2012 were concentrated in only three countries; Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, as illustrated by **Figure 2** below.

The increase in violence in 2013 and into 2014 not only has contributed to Iraq's ongoing instability but threatens to become national crisis as the country braces for general elections in April 2014. These 2014 elections will be the first national elections held in Iraq since the 2010 elections and the crisis in Anbar that began in December 2013 – and led to at least an initial Al Qaeda takeover of Fallujah and Ramadi -- could hardly come at a more troubled time.

Figure 2: Concentration and Intensity of Terrorist Activity 2012



Source: National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) Global Terrorism Database (GTD), at the University of Maryland, <http://start.umd.edu/start/announcements/announcement.asp?id=633>.

The Challenges that Shape Iraq's Violence

All of Iraq's major political factions share responsibility for what happened once US forces withdrew. Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki continued to consolidate his grip on power, arresting and otherwise intimidating political adversaries. On another level, Sunni political factions have actively sought to undermine him and sometimes posed violent threats. Their actions and political conflicts have helped lead to a major spike in sectarian violence across Iraq, bringing about political instability, and significant security challenges.

Tensions between Arab and Kurd, and the central government and KRG, have not yet led to serious violence but still pose a serious threat that they may do so. They also help limit the ability of both governments to reach key compromises and decisions on the patterns of governance and development that can reduce violence and bring stability.

Iraq's domestic divisions also increasingly interact with the broader patterns of instability in the region. Iraq is caught up in the political struggles between the US, Arab states, and Iran. Iraq is a key area of focus of the competition between the US and Iran, but also between Iran and the Southern Gulf states. It is caught up in the civil conflict in Syria, and the broader struggles between Sunni and Shi'ite that now affect much of the Islamic world.

At the same time, many other factors play a critical role in the unfolding of events in modern Iraq. No assessment of Iraq in 2013 can ignore the impact of the other factors that drive modern day Iraq. These include the a long history of sectarian and ethnic discrimination and violence that took place between the US invasion, a history of violent political struggles for periods of authoritarianism, government abuse of power to the point of state terrorism, failures in governance and development, and the rising pressure of population growth and other demographic factors.

The end result is that today's challenges in politics and violence interact with a wide range of lasting and structural challenges that far too many Iraqi politicians and technocrats still try to ignore:

- *Iraq is a nation under deep structural demographic and financial pressures.* Iraq face more than ethnic and sectarian challenges. It must also deal with massive, ongoing acute population growth and its government and economy remain grossly over-dependent on the petroleum sector. Iraq's population was only 6.8 million in 1960, and is 31.9 million in 2013. Its rate of growth has dropped sharply, but the US Census Bureau estimates it will still grow to 56.3 million by 2050.⁴³

There are no reliable figures on Iraq's economy because of the lack of reliable data and difficulties in estimating the value of its non-market sectors, but the CIA estimates that -- in spite of record oil revenues -- Iraq remains poor in terms of per capita income -- the most reliable single indicator of wealth. In late-2013, Iraq only ranked 140th in the world in a region where the wealthier, smaller Gulf states ranked near the top, Saudi Arabia ranked 44th, and even a heavily sanctioned Iran ranked 100 out of 229 possible countries. The CIA estimated a poverty level of 25% in 2008 -- the last year for which it has data.⁴⁴

- *Direct and disguised unemployment present major problems although no accurate figures are available.* Industries outside the oil sector economy remain weak and undeveloped. In 2012, the CIA estimated the unemployment rate at 16%. According to the UN, at the end of 2013, that figure climbed to 20% of Iraqis unemployed, with 23% of Iraqis living in "absolute poverty".⁴⁵ Direct and disguised unemployment almost certainly exceed 25% -- heavily weighted toward youth unemployment in a nation experiencing massive demographic pressure and with nearly 40% of its population 14 years of age or younger.⁴⁶ The CIA estimates that at least 332,000 males and 322,000 females reached the age where they should enter the labor force in 2012. This was 7% of a labor force of an existing labor force of some 8.9 million in a single year.⁴⁷

- *Corruption is an endemic problem and wealth is poorly distributed*—a small percentage of Iraqis get most of the nation’s oil wealth. The CIA estimates that, “Iraq’s largely state-run economy is dominated by the oil sector, which provides more than 90% of government revenue and 80% of foreign exchange earnings.” At the end of 2013, Transparency International’s Corruption Perception Index ranks Iraq 171 out of 177 countries surveyed. Only Libya, South Sudan, Sudan, Afghanistan, North Korea, and Somalia rank worse than Iraq in terms of corruption.⁴⁸ TI also reported that, “corruption at the highest levels of the state...is the most worrying sign of the country’s corruption trends.”⁴⁹ An overview of corruption in Iraq released by Transparency International’s Anti-Corruption Resource Centre (ACRC) in April 2013 revealed that “Massive embezzlement, procurement scams, money laundering, oil smuggling and widespread bureaucratic bribery have led the country to the bottom of international corruption rankings, fuelled political violence and hampered effective state building and service delivery.”⁵⁰
- *Iraqi violence has many causes but is still a permeating problem that affects attitude throughout the country.* Violence is more a symptom than a cause of Iraq’s problems, and Iraq’s inherent structural imbalances and political fragmentation lies at the heart of its security crisis. Additionally, the reduction in violence achieved during 2007-2009 never meant that Iraq eliminated the threat from violent Sunni and Shi’ite movements, and fighting between sects and ethnic groups.

Even after the troop surge, casualty levels in 2009, 2010, 2011, and 2012 hovered in the 4,000-6,000 range; lower than during the serious fighting in the mid-2000s, but still significant. Violence persisted throughout 2013, compounded by Syria’s ongoing civil war, Iraq’s own protracted insurgency, the rise of militant Islamist groups, and is climbing towards the highest levels since 2008, without any signs of abating short of addressing Iraq’s underlying issues.

- *The fault lines in Iraqi politics have long been divided along ethnic and sectarian lines.* Many Iraqis live in a state of near denial regarding the obvious. They ignore the fact there is nothing new about fighting between Arab and Kurd and that this has been a source of continuing recent violence a repression since the elder Barzani led a Kurdish uprising against the Arab central government that had funding and support from the Shah of Iran during the late 1960s to the mid-1970s.

This fighting, repression following the Algiers Accord and the Shah’s abandonment of the Kurds during 1976-1981, the use of force and poison gas from 1981-1988, and Kurdish near autonomy following the creation of the Kurdish security zone from 1992 to the present sand a period of nearly half a century.

- *Divisions between Arab Sunni and Arab Shi’ite, and divisions within each sect, remain a key source of tension and violence.* No one who visited Iraq from 1971 onwards could ignore the reality that it remained a nation dominated by its Sunni minority until the US invasion in 2003. In spite of formal declarations of equality, the ruling Sunni elite exploited the nation’s oil wealth, dominated the armed forces and particularly their best and most elite units, discriminated against Shi’ites at the political level and within government service, and favored development of Sunni areas in terms of housing, education, services, the building of mosques, and many other areas.

The revolution in Iran and Ba’athist repression during the Iran-Iraq War created a low-level civil war between Sunni and Shi’ite in parts of the largely Shi’ite Southern Iraq during the Iran-Iraq war and rove leading Shi’ite into exile. The uprising against Saddam Hussein after his defeat in the first Gulf War in 1991 was partly a sectarian uprising, and Saddam continued his repression of Shi’ite dissidents until 2003. Today’s ruling Shi’ite elite has not forgotten these abuses, any more than the Sunnis have forgotten their period in power.

Tensions have built up steadily since the 2010 national elections. Iraq’s Shia community, led by PM Maliki, proved able to take control of the country’s oil and gas resources, its security and police forces, and the other key instruments of state authority. Sunnis reacted with protests and violence rose steadily, and Shi’ites reacted accordingly. From May 2013 onwards, high profile, mass-casualty attacks targeting Sunni or Shia neighborhoods occurred with alarming frequency. In December 2013, Sunni-Shi’ite violence reached the point where AQI/ISIS forces took control of Fallujah and Ramadi.

- *Regionalism, tribalism, and the struggle for the future of Islam further divide Iraq.* These broad divisions within Iraq are only part of the challenges Iraq faces. There are deep divisions within each major faction. Some are local or driven by tribal tensions. Some are regional like the interest the oil rich provinces in the south have in some form of autonomy or power struggles for control over key Sunni areas like Mosul. Some

are caught up in the struggle over the role of religion in politics and governance within both the Shi'ite and Sunni communities and conflicts between moderates and religious hardliners. The Kurds are divided between two corrupt major political factions that have fought in the past but now coexist in exploiting the gains from Kurdish autonomy.

Fragmentation might be a force for coalition building across sectarian and ethnic lines in a less violent nation, and public opinion polls show many Iraqi – particularly Arab Iraqis -- think of themselves primarily Iraqis and not as members of a sect ethnic group. Violence has both reinforced the sectarian divide; however, and pushed given factions towards the use of force and extremism.

- *Years of internal power struggles and sectarian and ethnic conflict have left a history of segregation by sect and ethnicity, serious problems with internally and externally displaced persons, and tensions along ethnic and sectarian fault lines.* The previous tensions and conflicts have often redrawn and polarized the Iraqi population at both the provincial and local levels. The UNHCR estimated that Iraq has 1.13 million internally displaced persons in 2013, and a total population of concern of 2.2 million.⁵¹ Refugees International put the number at 2.8 million.⁵²
- *The ethnic divisions between Arab and Kurd, and disputes over petroleum resources, threaten to divide the country.* The “Kurdish issue” is scarcely a new one in Iraq or the region. Iraq’s Kurds sought independence during the aftermath to World War I and there have been active tensions over the creation of some form of Kurdish state ever since – tensions with links to similar Kurdish desires for autonomy or independence in Turkey, Iran, and Syria. The creation of a Kurdish security zone after the Gulf War has led to the creation of a Kurdistan Regional Government (the KRG) that has practical autonomy and whose leaders – like its president Massoud Barzani -- occasionally threaten to seek full independence.

The KRG not only controls clearly Kurdish areas but is disputing control of a large amount of territory from Kirkuk to Mosul along what some call Iraq’s ethnic “fracture zone.” The KRG is involved in a continuing struggle over control of Iraq petroleum resources in northern Iraq, its right to exploit the resources in the Kurdish zone, and its right to export directly through Turkey.

This led to a crisis in early January 2014 when the KRG opened a pipeline through Turkey to Ceyan. Prime Minister Maliki gave a press conference on January 13, 2014, stating that the Iraqi Cabinet had passed a 2014 budget on threatened to cut off all federal revenue sharing to the KRG if it did not export crude through Baghdad’s sales network, leading to a boycott from Kurdish ministers.⁵³ There are additional power struggles over the structure and funding of Kurdish (Pesh Merga) versus Iraqi forces, efforts by the Central government to create new provinces in the disputed territory between the KRG and the rest of Iraq that would favor minorities over the Kurds.

All of these tensions have occurred a time when the KRG faced a future where it was receiving far less foreign aid, and faced broader ethnic challenges in dealing with the Iraqi central government over how to deal with the plight of the Syrian Kurds caught up in the Syrian civil war.

- *Iraq faces a growing mix of related challenges in defining its “Arab” identity; in the de facto segregation of its Arab Shi’ite and Arab Sunni population, and in defining the role of Islam in its society and state.* In today’s heavily urbanized Iraq, cities and towns are increasingly divided into Sunni and Shi’ite areas, the southeast is largely Shi’ite and has much of the nation’s currently producing petroleum wealth, and Iraq’s west is largely Sunni and more tribal. The upswing in ethnic- and sectarian-motivated violence has led to a commensurate growth in the popularity – or at least tolerance – of local militias, and other forms of security and retaliation in lieu of a strong, capable, or willing state security apparatus.

The emergence of a Shia-dominated central government since 2006 – and especially since the failed implementation of the 2010 Erbil power sharing agreement – has alienated many Arab Sunnis and pushed them to support or tolerate extremist elements such as al-Qaeda. Iraq’s “Arab” identity is not only affected by the Kurdish issue, but by the increased hostilities between Sunnis and Shia coupled with growing polarization relating to more fundamentalist interpretations of Sunni Salafist and Twelver Shia practices.

- *A deeply flawed constitution, electoral system, weak legislature, and the reemergence of a strong leader have created further problems.* US, other outside, and exile efforts created a constitution that does not define a functioning executive or parliamentary system. The election system also attempted to avoid sectarian and

ethnic divisions by creating national lists where no area has clear representation. Key aspects of the new legal system have never been clarified.

The failure of the 2010 election to produce a clear victor -- and any kind of functional national coalition rather than give power to feuding Shi'ite factions -- divided the structure of the central government along sectarian lines while leaving divisions between Arab and Kurd unresolved. Maliki has reemerged -- and perhaps been forced to emerge -- an increasingly authoritarian leader, using his office to control the armed forces and security services

At the end of 2013, Iraq's Federal Supreme Court -- the country's highest court -- vetoed a parliamentary term limit law that would have prevented Maliki from running for a third consecutive term in the 2014 elections. The court based its ruling on constitutional grounds, maintaining that all laws voted on in parliament must be first passed through the President's or Prime Minister's office. Opposition groups criticized the move as further evidence of Maliki's undue influence over independent institutions.^{54 55}

- *Weak Iraqi governance exists at every level, including the rule of law.* The US-led invasion was followed by the looting and collapse of many functional aspects of Iraqi governance and often disruptive US and other outside efforts to reform Iraqi governance on the basis of difference values and standards. The looting and near destruction of many ministries and government offices during the US-led advance, *poorly planned and constantly changing advisory missions and efforts at reform, and the lack of effective transparency and accountability from 2003 onwards seriously weakened Iraqi central governance in a state that had had grossly over-centralized authoritarian control since at least 1979.*

Weak governance, corruption, and the absence of rule of law in Iraq manifested in the form of bureaucratic corruption, nepotism, clientelism, political corruption, and corruption in the public finance management and especially the oil and gas sector. Transparency International's.⁵⁶ In April 2013, Transparency International wrote that, "it seems that this systematic looting of state resources is directly connected with sectarian and political power struggles."⁵⁷

- *Lack of basic social services.* These failures have interacted with the failure to create elected local governments, focus on popular needs and services, create police forces that meet Iraqi needs and expectations, and create a functional local rule of law during most of the US-led occupation. A flood of oil and aid money that was often allocated by power brokers to strengthen their positions or simply stolen in a grossing pattern of permeating corruption -- coupled to sectarian, ethnic and tribal divisions and nepotism remains a legacy of the occupation now fueled by Iraqi infighting.

These trends led the UN and Transparency International to report in April 2013 that, "10 years after the end of the war and despite massive investments, Iraq still fails to deliver basic services efficiently and 23% of Iraqis still live in absolute poverty."⁵⁸

- *Iraqi military forces continue to make progress but remain weak, divided, and corrupt, and their leadership is increasingly tied to the Prime Minister.* Iraq military and key paramilitary forces continue to improve in effectiveness in counterinsurgency missions, but are making very slow progress in conventional war fighting capability. Corruption and power brokering is common, within the MoD and MoI. Promotions and positions are routinely sold. TI's Anti-Corruption Resource Centre reported that defense contracts and procurement were also compromised due to corruption, and that new recruits often pay bribes to be hired into security position, and then collect bribes once they are in position of power.⁵⁹ Efforts to create a modern NCO system, and give junior officers more initiative, have faltered. The Prime Minister has increasingly taken control by using interim appointments to select officers that are personally loyal, and by the way he allocates resources, bypassing the Iraqi parliament in the process. Efforts to include the Kurds in the regular Iraqi forces have encountered major problems, and a few elements have shifted their loyalty to the Kurdish Pesh Merga.

In October 2013, Michael Knights wrote in the BBC that "Iraq's overworked counter-terrorism forces lack manpower, their funding and command relationships are snarled by bureaucracy and political infighting, and they cannot match the vast intelligence and aviation resources that the United States brought to the successful fight against al-Qaeda in Iraq from 2006 to 2010."⁶⁰

- *Efforts at police and legal reform largely failed and could not deal with either the need for security or the need to replace an over-centralized state-driven system with a rule of law that could support an effect price sector.* Efforts at police reform failed to avoid gross corruption and ties to power brokers before the collapse

of the US-led advisory and training mission after 2011 and have not been replaced with an effective system. The same is true of efforts to reform the Iraqi legal system to go from a confessions-based to an evidence-based system and avoid abuses of detention and forced confessions.

SIGIR reported that Iraq's police faced significant challenges including waste, corruption, downsizing, poor training, and increased violence. Iraqi police and security forces have "almost entirely abandoned the successful formula of population-focused counter-insurgency developed by the US-led coalition, instead falling back on counter-productive traditional tactics such as mass arrests and collective punishment."⁶¹

- *The civil and commercial rule of law is equally uncertain, as is the legal basis for managing and auditing the financial sector, for tax and property law, and for controlling investment.* Reform of the banking and financial system are still related and critical priorities. The legal system and its enforcement often lack the ability to get prompt and lasting decisions. Corruption remains a major problem. Efforts to extend the role of the police with state-controlled security forces protecting given sectors like the petroleum sector has have limited effectiveness and involve serious corruption and interference by power brokers and sometime criminal elements.

Transparency International reported that, "Iraq is one of the worst performers in the Open Budget Survey, with a score of 4 out of 100 in 2012, indicating that close to no budgetary information is made available to the public. While Iraq produces a number of budget documents for internal government use...most of them are not publicly released. This means that the government cannot be held accountable by the public neither for its decisions on the allocation of public resources nor for its actual spending, leaving significant space for arbitrary decision making."⁶²

- *The government needs to improve its planning, programming and budgeting capabilities and focus on key sectors like education, health, and infrastructure.* Investment in these areas, along with development spending is sharply constrained by weak internal institutions and a pattern of spending that focusing on employment and maintaining a large state sector that often has little real output other than employment. The long-standing failure to modernize and rebuild the education and medical sectors is a particularly serious problem – sometimes dealt largely through denial of the scale of the problem.
- *Progress in the petroleum sector, while very real, is still inhibited by the lack of a clear legal structure, security, realistic development plans and goals, and effective commercial incentives and arrangements for outside and internal development.* Petroleum, investment, and related services dominate the market portion of the economy. The need for water, electricity, and the use of gas remain serious issues.
- *The allocation of oil export revenues is a major challenge and growing source of regional and ethnic divisions.* As is the case with all Iraq statistics, there are no reliable numbers. The US Energy Information Agency estimates, however, that Iraq's export revenues reached \$83 billion in current dollars (\$71 billion in 2005 dollars in 2012, and would be roughly the same or slightly higher in 2013. It also estimates that Iraq's oil revenues per capita were worth \$2,675 in 2012.⁶³ This compares with \$54,071 in the case of Qatar and \$10,315 for Saudi Arabia, and is a key part of Iraq's total economy and the potential wealth of individual Iraqi. Distributing it equitably, and make intelligence choice between current disbursements and investments in development, is both a critical challenge and a further source of political, sectarian and ethnic tensions. Moreover, Iraq Estimates of oil revenues reflected a different trend. The oil ministry reported in January 2014 that Iraq's oil revenues had actually dropped from \$94.02 billion in 2012 to \$89.22 billion in 2014.⁶⁴

Transparency International emphasized this "resource curse" by stating, "Ensuring that Iraq's oil and gas income is used for the benefit of all Iraqis is probably one of the biggest anti-corruption challenges of the coming years," adding, "oil and gas...are deemed to carry inherent high corruption risks due the high volumes of revenue they provide and the high volumes for rent seeking they provide."⁶⁵

During 2013 and early 2014, new tensions arose as the central government sought to limit the oil and gas revenues going to the oil producing provinces. It did not make good on promises to increase their share of oil revenues, and it has denied that gas revenues have been high enough to compensate for a "bonus" distribution. The oil producing provinces threatened law suits and to stop oil production after the Iraqi Cabinet approved a draft 2014 budget which limited the extra payment for producing or refining oil and natural gas to \$1 per barrel instead of the \$5 approved the Council of the Republic had approved in 2013.⁶⁶

- *Far too much of the industrial and service sectors remain under state control without being competitive or properly productive, barriers exist to private investment and operation, and modernization of the financial sector is a serious issue.* US efforts to reform the state sector and state industries had only limited impact. There are no accurate current data, but the CIA has estimated that some 60% of the Iraqi labor force was in the service sector in 2008, 19% was in industry, and 22% in agriculture. Much of the labor in both service and industrial sectors was state-subsidized and had limited productivity gain and amounted to disguised unemployment.
- *Agriculture and water present growing problems.* Steady population gains have increased the pressure on the land to the point where many Iraqis have been forced to move to urban slums, and the agricultural sector is over-employed and sharply undercapitalized – reducing productivity. Climate change may be presenting a problem in both areas dependent on rainfall and in terms of water flow, and Turkish and Syrian upstream water use has had a significant impact in reducing the flow into Iraq. Population pressure on water use creates another set of problems as does on sharp over-reliance on conventional irrigation canals and use of water.
- The need for major agricultural reform has a clear, but has only limited practical government support. Iraq's agricultural sector is rife with challenges. The agricultural sector, which accounts for some 22% of its labor force, only accounts for 9.7% of its GDP even when it is measured in PPP terms, and Iraq's farmers are so under-capitalized, limited by transport and food processing facilities and costs, and by growing problems in water that they cannot compete with Turkish and Iranian food imports.
- *Subsidies present problems and compound the demand for electricity, water, and refined petroleum product.* The US failed to reform Iraqi prices during the occupation and Iraq is left with a wide range of expensive and wasteful subsidies that distort its demand for petroleum products, electric power, water, and other goods and is steadily reducing the amount of its petroleum it can export. At the same time, Iraq still lacks the refinery capability to avoid importing product, and has water and power problems in both supporting the growth of its petroleum sector and its overall mix of industry and services. Iraq lacks the wealth to sustain these distortions of its economy.

Iraq's electricity sector was particularly flawed, with generation capacity at a dismal 1,000 Megawatts, even after \$27 billion of investment from the US government. In comparison, Kurdistan achieved 2,000 Megawatts of electrical generation output with only \$1 billion of US aid.⁶⁷

- *The Resurgence of Al Qaeda in Iraq.* Despite considerable gains US and Iraqi forces made towards the defeat of Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) from 2006 to 2009, the militant Islamist group has demonstrated signs of reemergence in the last few years, and particularly since the end of 2012. AQI signature car bombs, suicide attacks, and coordinated, mass-casualty attacks against Shia neighborhoods, Shia mosques, pilgrims, and government-affiliated security forces became a regular – if not daily – occurrence in Iraq in 2012 and 2013.

Indications of AQI's return include the rising numbers of car bombs, which increased from about 10 a month in 2010, to almost 70 car bombs a month over 2013.⁶⁸ Additionally, multiple-location, mass-casualty attacks increased four-fold from an average of 300 incidents a month over 2011, to approximately 1,200 incidents a month in 2013.⁶⁹

- Spillover from Syria's ongoing civil war is one driver of AQI's resurgence in Iraq, with fighters recruited in Iraq and elsewhere being trained and sent across the border in support of both the Assad regime and the opposition. But AQI revival cannot be solely attributed to the Syrian civil war. Indeed, AQI exploits the ineffectiveness of Iraq's security forces, the absence of a powerful US military or diplomatic presence, growing intolerance and dissent among Sunnis, and general lawlessness and instability that facilitates the rise of violent, non-state groups such as AQI.⁷⁰

As the following chapters show, all of these issues affect Iraq's efforts to redefine its national identity and regional alignments. Iraq is struggling to find a balance between Iran, the other Arab states, and the US. It faces challenges in shaping its relations with Turkey and its level of involvement in the Syrian civil war. There are no good or easy challenges. Outside states and non-state actors will continue to seek to influence or control Iraq. Iraqi actors will take sides or attempt to exploit outside influence to their own benefit. Iraq exists in a region where everyone is forced

to try to use everyone else, and where history warns the end result tends to be violence and failure for all of the actors involved.

Analyzing Iraq's Growing Levels of Internal Violence

Violence is now the most visible indication of a nation in crisis. Iraq is faced with the resurgence of potent, deadly, and increasingly popular Islamist militant groups that were thought to have been largely incapacitated when US troops withdrew at the end of 2011. Iraq has experienced a destabilizing increase in the frequency and intensity of violent attacks by Sunni extremist groups and reprisals by Shi'ite militias and Iraq's security forces. Most of this rise in violence has been driven by Iraq's growing sectarian tensions, but it has also been affected by the spillover of the Syrian civil and the resurgence of extreme Sunni groups like Al Qaeda. Michael Knights has described this two "separate but interwoven" security crises; the continuation of its "normal insurgency," and the return of "Al Qaeda stream of mass casualty attacks."⁷¹

These are problems that some senior US officers anticipated as the US left the country. In late-November, 2011, then US Commander in Iraq, General Lloyd Austin, accurately predicted some of Iraq's imminent challenges:

"As we leave, we can expect to see some turbulence in security initially, and that's because you'll see various elements try to increase their freedom of movement and freedom of action," despite better conditions than at any other point, "there will probably be unfinished business for many, many years to come...Al Qaeda will continue to do what it's done in the past, and we expect that it's possible they could even increase their capability...If the Iraqi security forces and the government of Iraq are able to counter that, it will be a good thing. If they can't, they'll continue to grow in capacity."

In addition, General Austin warned that militias, such as Asaib Ahl al-Haq and the Promised Day Brigade, posed a threat to US and Iraqi interests alike,

"These are elements that are really focused on creating a Lebanese Hezbollah kind of organization in this country...As we leave, if those elements are left unchecked, they will eventually turn on the government, and they should be concerned about that." He did conclude that "there's likely to be setbacks, some tough times in the days ahead...But I'm very hopeful we'll stay on course...This is clearly not an endpoint...We really intend to remain engaged with Iraq, and we look forward to having Iraq as a great strategic partner in the future."⁷²

Speaking before the House Armed Services Committee on the Posture of U.S. Central Command in March, 2014, General Austin described the dangerous situation in Iraq in many of his dire predictions had been realized.

"Iraq, positioned between Iran and Saudi Arabia, remains at the geo-strategic center of the Middle East and the historically preeminent Shia-Sunni fault-line. Over the past year, the country's security situation has deteriorated significantly with violence reaching levels last seen at the height of the sectarian conflict (2006-2008). The principal cause of the growing instability has been the Shia-led government's lack of meaningful reform and inclusiveness of minority Sunnis and Kurds. The situation is further exacerbated by the active presence of Al Qaeda (through the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant) and the steady influx of jihadists coming into Iraq from Syria. This has come to a head most recently in key areas of Anbar Province."⁷³

The Pressures Underling the Statistics on Rising Violence

In practice, the levels of violence that have occurred since the US withdrawal have been far more serious than US officials and officers like General Austin hoped. The economic and demographic pressures on Iraq, ongoing sectarian and ethnic tensions that divide the country have been more severe than many experts anticipated. The political crisis at the top of the Iraqi government has been more violent and polarizing, Outside forced like the civil war in Syria have had an

unanticipated impact, and cut backs in the US and other military assistance efforts have been much steeper than were planned at the time of US withdrawal and the Iraqi Security Forces have become far more of a tool of the Maliki regime.⁷⁴

This creates a fundamental problem in understanding the patterns of violence in Iraq. Reporting on these patterns largely reflects the acts of violent and extreme non-state actors, or acts are described as such even if the Iraqi Security Forces had initiated such attacks. There is no way to quantify the political acts that helped lead to this violence, and there have not been credible pools to show the patterns and depth of Sunni alienation, popular support for resisting the regime, and shifts in support from the government to popular protests or violent resistance.

Later chapters do trace the causes and chronologies of some of the factors that have alienated Iraq's Sunnis, divided its central government, and caused rising tension between it and the Kurdish regional government. They help tell the other half of the story: The degree to which the Iraqi government created the rise in violence and the extent to which an increasing degree of repression help generate violent resistance and aid extremist movements.

As a result, this chapter and the following chapter are only an introduction to the forces that have made Iraq a nation in crisis and led to Shi'ite protests as well as tensions between the central government and the Sunnis and Kurds. These chapters serve as an important perspective on how this violence has evolved and how critical it has become, but all of the analysis of the patterns in violence that follows should be kept in the perspective that they only tell half the story. If there is any "iron law" to the rise of successful terrorism and insurgency, it is that the government enables its enemies and is almost always equally to blame.

No amount of success in counterterrorism and counterinsurgency can bring Iraq lasting stability or eliminate its violence. No mix of military and security actions against today's extremists can do more than suppress sectarian and ethnic conflict through repression – a goal that may well be beyond what even the most ruthless Shi'ite dominated government can accomplish. No amount of force can unify Iraq on a lasting basis, and no regime can "win" stability and security without fundamental changes in Iraq's politics and governance and major improvement in its economy and the way Iraq shares the nation's wealth.

Moreover, even if the data on the causes of violence were clear, they would still present serious problems in interpreting their meaning. History is often event driven, and key acts of violence or attacks can catalyze major uprisings or conflicts. This has been the case in Iraq where an attack on a key mosque, or major bombing in an urban area, has sometimes have more practical impact than a steady pattern of attacks.

Many of the maps and charts in the figures that follow illustrate the extent to which such high profile attacks can have an impact that pattern analysis does not reveal. Similarly, the history of political events like an arrests or the tensions between Maliki and senior Sunni politicians shows that a non-violent can suddenly have more impact than a long series of killings that lack high public or political visibility. Similarly, pattern analysis did little to predict the sudden speed with which AQI/ISIS suddenly was able to take control of Fallujah and Ramadi in December 2013, and become a major factor in Anbar.

Divided Sunni Voices

One thing is all too clear. The growing division of Iraq and the re-emergence of hostile Sunni movements and voices was a key factor shaping the rise in violence. As the next chapter shows,

this violence intensified sharply after early 2011. It rose sharply in Anbar in December 2013 and January 2014, after government authorities moved to shut down a Sunni protest that had been operating for approximately a year.⁷⁵ Marginalized Sunni lawmakers threatened to resign from government, and militants increased violence against the government and Shia targets. The government responded with a major crackdown against Sunni militants, including the operation “Revenge for Martyr Farouk” targeting ISIS/ISIL militants still active in and around Anbar.⁷⁶ The ensuing fighting left hundreds of Iraqis dead and many more driven from their homes or trapped between militants and government forces.

Mazhar al-Jenabi, a member of the Iraqi parliament’s Security and Defense Committee, announced that:

“The security forces do not possess the military capabilities to wage wars on multiple fronts, as they are not well-prepared in terms of military training and arming, among other qualifications. The emergence of terrorist groups in Anbar is further proof of the weakness of the security forces, especially Iraq’s border guards. The government has failed to manage the security issue. What is happening in Anbar, which involves the bombing and killing of civilians, will pave the way for the emergence of popular fronts fighting against the governmental forces. The affected citizens will be the first to [join in on this fight]”.⁷⁷

Some Iraqis argued that the worsening tensions in Anbar between Sunni militants and government forces threatened the parliamentary elections scheduled for April 30, 2014. Iraqi Representative Jenabi expressed his desire that “the situation would change in the coming days, so that it would be ready for the elections.”⁷⁸

More broadly, Iraq’s tribal leaders remained divided in their approach to the conflict, differing on whether to engage with the government to alleviate tensions, or to exploit the standoff and exacerbate hostility. Some tribal leaders continued to their role as central to the stability – or instability – of the region. Sheik Rafie Abdul Kareem -- of the Abu Fahad clan in western Iraq – took this position, stating, “Any military assault on the city without the help and coordination with the local tribes will worsen the situation even more.”⁷⁹

In December of 2013 and January, some Iraqi tribal chiefs attempted to end the confrontation between government forces and Sunni militants in Anbar by urging both sides to lay down arms and negotiate. At a meeting with Sunni militant groups in Fallujah in January of 2014, Sunni tribal leaders tried to achieve a “face saving exit both for the ISIS militants and for the soldiers fighting for Mr. Maliki”.⁸⁰ Local sheikhs tried to convince ISIS fighters to hand over control to local Sunni police forces, while attempting to keep Maliki’s Shia-led forces outside the city.⁸¹

Other Sunni tribal leaders became increasingly radicalized. They saw the fight for Fallujah in divisive terms, as part of a “revolution in their own country” and an opportunity to weaken PM Maliki and decrease Iranian influence.⁸² In March 2014, the *Washington Post* reported that government security forces, local tribesmen, and AQI-affiliated insurgents are “engulfed in a complicated clash” in which tribal leaders have “launched a new battle to topple Iraq’s Shiite prime minister, Nouri al-Maliki, and to roll back Iranian influence in the region.”⁸³

Harith al-Dari and the Association of Muslim Scholars (AMS)

While the growing Shi’ite-Sunni split at the top of the Iraqi government, and throughout the country played a critical role, so did the growing struggles between an increasingly sectarian mix of Shi’ite-led Iraq security forces and violent Sunni factions. Hardline Sunni tribal and social organizations, such as the influential Association of Muslim Scholars (AMS), consolidated ties with Islamist fighters and “acknowledged a temporary alliance with al-Qaeda” and denounced the

Shia led government in Baghdad.⁸⁴ The head of the Association of Muslim Scholars, Harith al-Dari, stated, “We consider the Iraqi government illegitimate because it is a result of [the U.S.] occupation...Maliki has attacked the people, so the people defended themselves, rose up and revolted. So it has now been transformed into a revolution.”⁸⁵

Harith al-Dari is accused by the United States of links to terrorist groups, but his AMS is headquartered out of the massive Sunni Umm al-Qura mosque in Baghdad, known for its Scud missile shaped minarets.⁸⁶

AMS’s main strategy to counter its Sunni competitors has been to establish itself as a “Sunni counterpart to the Shi’i *marja’iyya* (religious authority) in Najaf, led by Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani. As the *marja’iyya* does for the Shia of Iraq, the Association aspires to act as a power broker behind the scenes in the Sunni community of Iraq, laying down the main political guidelines and strategy for the whole community.”⁸⁷

In the early months of 2014, the Association of Muslim Scholars was associated with the General Military Council for Iraqi Revolutionaries, a coalition of regional military councils coordinated against Iraq’s security forces, although it claimed not be a wing of the military council. In March 2014, the *Washington Post* reported that the military council is “headed by former senior army officers — among the thousands of Sunni generals cast aside when the United States disbanded the Iraqi army after the toppling of Saddam Hussein in 2003”.⁸⁸

While the Iraqi government tried to downplay the military council’s effectiveness in Anbar and the challenge it posed there, one Iraqi official admitted, “They have improved 100%”.⁸⁹ Armed with “rocket launchers, machine guns, and explosives,” the insurgency in Anbar targets government installations and security forces, airports and the Green Zone, and is “militarily more proficient than the insurgency that gripped Iraq during the U.S.-led war”.⁹⁰ A central figure in the Association for Muslim Scholars stated, “Today we are in the midst of an armed rebellion with a central command. Because of this, the whole thing has become much more organized and less random.”⁹¹

As a result of their actions in Anbar, the Association for Muslim Scholars and the General Military Council for Iraqi Revolutionaries was targeted by the Iraqi government, with U.S. support by way of intelligence and military equipment. Over 1,000 American troops died fighting AQI in Anbar, and the U.S. is reluctant to see AQI resurface there without a fight. “The Americans are helping more,” Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari said. “They are haunted by Fallujah.” PM Maliki’s adviser, Ali al-Mussawi, stated, “Anyone who engages in any military actions is showing solidarity. They are considered one and the same.”

The Role of Jordan

Outside powers had an impact. Jordan, on Iraq’s western border, has played an important part in both pro-and anti-Iraqi government factions. Jordan has long been a safe haven for Sunni anti-government rebels and tribal leaders opposed to Maliki’s rule in Baghdad, although the Kingdom of Jordan does not officially back these groups.⁹² The *Washington Post* reported that Jordan has refused the Iraqi government’s request to extradite Harith al-Dari, head of the Association for Muslim Scholars, opting instead to keep him under their watch. Jordan has had its troubles with Sunni insurgents, and “[t]here is a view among the Jordanian intelligence services that they prefer to have these people where they can keep an eye on them”.⁹³

In March 2014, U.S. Special Forces were also sent to Jordan as part of a larger U.S. and Western campaign against the rise of Islamist militants in Iraq and Syria. In March 2014, Reuters reported that approximately 100 elite soldiers from three countries were sent to Jordan to train Iraqi and Jordanian forces on “counterterrorism and special operations tactics, techniques, and maneuvers”.⁹⁴ The training was in conjunction with increased U.S. weapon sales to Iraq, a reluctant move by U.S. officials wary of Maliki’s growing intransigence but concerned with the AQI’s rise in Iraq –particularly in Anbar –since the departure of American troops. US cooperation with Jordan in training Iraqi soldiers provide to be a way the U.S. could get around the absence of having a Status of Forces Agreement with Iraq, which expired at the end of 2011.

The Mixed Impact of the Syrian Civil War

As is discussed in other portions of this report, the Syrian civil war had a mixed impact. It further polarized the region as the competing factions in the civil war increasing polarized around the Assad forces in the Western Syria and Sunni forces in the East. The pro-Assad forces were largely Alewite-led and has the support of the key Shi’ite elements like the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) in Iran and the Hezbollah in Lebanon. The pro-Sunni forces in Eastern Syria had a common border with Jordan and the large Sunni tribal groups in Western Iraq. As time went on, they became increasingly dependent on violent Islamist extremist groups and outside volunteers and funding – helping to polarize Sunnis in Western Iraq and creating a new power base for the resurgence of Sunni-Islamist extremist elements in Iraq like Al Qaeda/ISIS.

This polarization initially favored Sunni hardliners in Iraq, and—as is discussed later – helped lead to Al Qaeda/ISIS’s invasion and takeover of Fallujah and Ramadi in December 2013. As time went on, however, Assad’s forces gained in power while the poorly led and supplied Syrian rebel forces divided and began to fight each other.

By March 2014 – the third year of the Syrian Civil War – Assad’s forces seemed to have control of most of Western Syrian and almost all of the cities in the more populated areas in central Syria. Iran and the Hezbollah gain in influence, while key Sunni Islamist rebel elements continued to fight each other. Their internal struggles became so serious that Al Qaeda “central” in Pakistan first ordered Al Qaeda/ISIS to cede power to the rival Jabhat Al Nusra Front in Syria and then formally expelled Al Qaeda/ISIS from Al Qaeda “central” in February 2014.

Reports by the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights estimated that this fighting had killed some 3,000 rebels on both sides by March 2014, and that a key Sunni group of fighters like Liwa Al-Tawheed in Aleppo had lost some 500 men in fighting ISIS between January to early March 2014 versus losses of 1,300 men to the pro-Assad forces during the entire course of the civil war.⁹⁵

No one could predict the course of the Syrian civil war in the spring of 2014, but it seemed more likely than not to give Assad control of virtually every major population center in Syria by the summer of 2014, and potentially to largely defeat the rebels in Eastern Syria – who continued to lack cohesion, leadership, money, and advanced arms. Coupled to their infighting, it seemed possible that this would weaken the Sunni dissidents and rebels in Western Syria and favor both the Malik government and expanded Iranian influence in both Syria and Iraq – but much still depended on whether the rebels continue to fight each other and whether they eventually got more money and more advanced arms.

The Interaction Between Sectarian and Ethnic Violence

As the following chapters also show, Iraq faces critical problems in measuring and predicting of the level of tension between Arab and Kurd, and between the Arab-dominated central government and the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG), ever since the fall of Saddam Hussein in 2003. The trends in Arab-Kurdish violence have been limited since the creation of the Kurdish security zone following the first Gulf War. Ever since 2004, however, it has been clear that disputes over control of territory, the level of autonomy for the KRG, control of security forces, and allocation of Iraq's oil export revenues and petroleum resources could explode into civil war.

Iraq's ethnic differences have not exploded into the same violence as its sectarian difference, but there have been a series of serious potential clashes since 2010 that show that Arab-Kurdish violence could suddenly change the entire pattern of violence in Iraq. It is all too clear that this could happen without warning, and the situation is not improving in terms of either Iraq's internal politics or the impact of outside Kurdish issues affecting Turkey and Syria.

As is addressed in depth in the follow sections that examine the actual patterns in violence, the statistics involved also have the fundamental flaw that the real world impact of violence is shaped by the overall impact of the violence on society and not simply by those killed and injured. In cases like Iraq, the number of people whose lives are least temporarily shattered by being driven out of their homes and businesses and whose families have been put at risk is usually at least an order of magnitude higher than the number of deaths and wounded.

Many forms of violence like threats, extortion, intimidation, kidnappings, and "disappearances" cannot be counted with accuracy. The number of killings is easiest to count, and some analysts seem obsessed with them. The number of wounded is almost always far higher, however, is probably a better measure of the overall impact of violence. Moreover, every case where both sets of numbers have been collected shows there is no direct correlation between the trends in killing and the trends in wounded. Casualty analysis is important – even if it only deals with deaths – but it is only the tip of the iceberg in understanding the level of violence and instability taking place.

Measuring Current Trends as "Vectors," Rather than Absolute Numbers

The data on the current trends in Iraqi violence still present the problem that uncertainties in the collection process, definition of events or casualties, and differences in methods of analysis mean the absolute numbers are extremely uncertain and are almost never comparable from one source to another. That said, the broad trends or vectors in the violence are relatively consistent in the reporting from sources like the US government, Iraqi government, UNAMI, and Iraq Body Count. They seem broadly to seem valid in showing that the trends in violence dropped sharply from the peak it reached in the mid-2000s, remained relatively moderate through 2011. That violence began a rise in 2012, and has risen sharply enough in 2013 to be a subject of major concern.

Over 2012 and 2013, Iraq experienced a sharp increase in violence, driven primarily by ethno-sectarian tensions, and discontent among Iraq's Sunni Arab community. Sunni sentiments of being shut out of government, unprotected by police, and unfairly targeted by Iraq's security forces have eased the recruitment of Sunni militant groups. Moreover, widespread resentment and distrust among the Sunni population has led to decreased cooperation with government security forces, and even passive tolerance of Sunni militant activity.⁹⁶

Unfortunately, these data deliberately avoid identifying both the cause and target by sect and ethnicity, but it is obvious that the majority of attacks through were by Sunni extremist groups reacting to a Shi'ite dominated government, and were conducted against on Shi'ites. Intelligence experts also indicate that most were designed to given Sunni extremist movements visibility, uses for fundraising, and design the increase Sunni and Shi'ite tensions – if not push the country back toward civil conflict.

The Other Limits to the Data On rising Violence

Additional caution is needed interpreting the data on the more traditional measures of violence: numbers and locations of incidents, numbers of killed and wounded, and similar statistics. There are no fully reliable ways to summarize the current trends in Iraqi violence and analyze the patterns involved. As Joseph Brownstein commented in October 2013, “The number of deaths caused by the Iraq war has been a source of intense controversy, as politics, inexact science and a clamor for public awareness have intersected in a heated debate of conflicting interests”.⁹⁷

The data available often do not distinguish between Sunni vs. Shi'ite violence and intra-Sunni and intra-Shi'ite violence, and intra-Sunni violence was a key factor in the rise of the sons of Iraq and efforts to reduce the overall level of violence from 2007-2009. Much of the reporting on Iraqi violence that existed during the time US forces were in Iraq has been cancelled since there no longer is any way for the US to collect it. It is also important to state – as is the case with virtually every set of numbers relating to Iraq – that the data are very uncertain and useful largely force the trends within a given source rather than as a basis for accurate numbers.

As a result, the history of efforts to quantify Iraq's violence since 2003 has been one of consistent problems in collection, definition, interpretation and a constant failure to estimate uncertainty and perform parametric analysis.

There is nothing new about these problems. US and allied command efforts and Iraqi government efforts from 2004-2011 had consistent problems in collecting and defining data, often changed methods, and almost always failed to estimate the margin of uncertainty. Some NGOs like Iraq Body Count made competent and consistent efforts to collect and interpret unclassified data and address uncertainty. Many other efforts were highly politicized, or like the Lancet study, tried to introduce new methodologies without an adequate understanding of their limits and the problems in getting honest data collection in a war zone. Still other efforts were politicized from the start.⁹⁸

A new study released in October of 2013 sought to update and correct some of the shortcomings of previous efforts but ended in having to qualify virtually all of the data. The US-Canadian collaborative report, *Mortality in Iraq Associated with the 2003–2011 War and Occupation*, found that “most mortality increases in Iraq can be attributed to direct violence, but about a third are attributable to indirect causes (such as from failures of health, sanitation, transportation, communication, and other systems),” and that “Approximately a half million deaths in Iraq could be attributable to the war.”⁹⁹

Michael Spagat, head of the department of economics at Royal Holloway University of London, said of the 2013 study,

“This one is very much better than the last one because they've actually eliminated quite a bit of the methodological shortcomings.”¹⁰⁰ Al Jazeera America also reported that, “Spagat said the public should be largely aware of the death toll from the Iraq war by now, but it's not clear that that is the case. While even the most conservative estimates of mortality in Iraq — including the Iraq Body Count — have reached six

figures, polling in the U.S. and U.K. have shown public perception to be that the civilian death toll from the war is in the neighborhood of 10,000.”¹⁰¹

Most unclassified reporting has never tried to systematically identify the cause of violence by organization, sect, or ethnicity; did not attempt to identify the purpose of attacks, and did not break out the target or casualty by sect or ethnicity. Much of it has been nation-wide, or simply located major incidents without any tie to the level of sectarian and ethnic tension in the area, or level of activity by Iraqi security forces.¹⁰²

The degree to which the US government, Iraqi government, international organizations, and NGOs failed to meet the most basic criteria to validate the integrity of their unclassified reporting on Iraqi violence and casualties is striking. Only a few efforts publically defined their terms, defined their collection methods, assessed their level of uncertainty and conducted parametric analysis – criteria that should define competence, integrity, and transparency in every aspect of such reporting.

Much of the US Department of Defense reporting suffered from such problems. Analysts from the Iraqi government and responsible NGOs like the Iraqi Body Count alleged for years that US forces regularly underreported casualty rates during the time US forces largely controlled Iraq, and US forces only corrected the situation in 2010 – when USF-I admitted it had undercounted civilian casualties but then had no better data than the uncertain Iraqi government estimates. Since that time, the Iraqi government has tended to undercount the levels of violence, as evidenced by the discrepancies between GoI numbers, and those of Iraqi Body Count, UNAMI, and other non-government bodies.

These problems in reporting on violence were also more than were matched by the fact that the US State Department and USAID consistently set abysmal standards for quantifying the uncertainty in their public statistical and quantitative reporting on progress in governance and economic development, and explaining their sources and methods. The US government as a whole politicized the use of polling data to the point to point where native results were often not published and much of what was published was treated in ways that made it little more than self-serving propaganda. As the following chapters show, these problems have – if anything – grown worse since 2011.

An Iraqi-American political analyst -- Raed Jarrar -- was asked in December 2013, why it had been so hard to count the number of Iraqis injured or killed since the start of the war in 2003. Jarrar answered, “Because it’s a war zone, not a survey asking people their opinion on elected officials. It’s a war zone and people are being killed right and left.”^{103 104}

The Rise in Violence in 2012-2013: How Much is Too Much?

That said, the broad patterns in the numbers are still all too clear. By some standards, Iraq’s situation was not “good” even in 2010-2011. GOI data showed that 2,645 Iraqis were killed in 2011 alone, including 1,578 civilians, 609 police personnel, and 458 soldiers.¹⁰⁵ Over 4,400 Iraqis were wounded in violence. And while December 2011 marked one of lowest monthly death tolls (155 killed) in Iraq since 2003, December 22, 2011 was the bloodiest day in Iraq in since 2009. At least 31 incidents took place that one day, including 21 IED attacks killing over 60 Iraqis, and a suicide attack against a government building in Baghdad that left 32 people dead.¹⁰⁶

Some experts did feel Iraq showed signs of progress in reducing its level of violence during the period following 2008. The CFR reported on August 20, 2012 that, “violence has fallen to its lowest level since 2003.”¹⁰⁷ Others, however, saw a negative trend even in early 2011. Michael

Knights of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy's wrote in the *National Interest* on February 16, 2011, that, "There has been a rapid and widespread deterioration of security in Iraq since the mid-December end of the U.S. military mission there".¹⁰⁸ According to Knights, Iraq had also suffered 36 confirmed attempted mass-casualty attacks just in January 2012 alone. Officially reported deaths in Iraq also continued to rise, with 340 civilian deaths in Iraq in January 2012, compared to 155 in December 2011.

Other sources like the Special Inspector General for Iraqi Reconstruction (SIGIR) warned the data were uncertain. Reporting by the SIGIR for the first quarter of 2012 made it clear that in spite of claims that the violence is ending, there was still a significant level of violence inside Iraq, and it is clear from later parts of this analysis that extremist groups will continue to threaten Iraq in the future.¹⁰⁹

In an interview published March 5, Prime Minister al-Maliki commented on the state of Iraq's ethnosectarian divide in the period since Saddam Hussein was deposed, saying that Iraq had "reached and entered into a civil war... the ugliest and most dangerous of wars to the stability of countries." But, in effect he declared that war "finished:

We have adopted the principle of national reconciliation... Today we do not fear civil war. Yes, we may have disagreements: the central government may disagree with the provinces or at times the central government with KRG, but naturally we refer to the Constitution.

The GOI reported that violence in March reached its lowest level since 2003. To safeguard the Arab League summit, held at the end of the month, the GOI took extraordinary measures: nearly 100,000 Iraqi Army (IA) and police personnel were deployed to Baghdad to provide security, and the MOI ordered government employees not to report to work during March 20–29

Yet mass-casualty events continue, as do assassination attempts directed at government security forces, state officials, and unsuspecting citizens whose ethnosectarian profile appears to motivate violence. At the same time, tensions arising in the course of governance have spilled over into arrest warrants being issued for senior government officials who, in turn, have fled the jurisdiction of the national courts. Large-scale arrests and recent increases in court-sanctioned executions have raised human rights concerns.

Notwithstanding the challenges that persist, the MOI announced that Iraq's armed forces would relinquish their role in internal security and shift to protecting the borders of the country by July 2012. The GOI reported that 413 Iraqis were killed in terrorist attacks this quarter—a 15% decrease from the number of fatalities reported by United States Forces-Iraq for the same period in 2011. The casualty total in March 2012 reportedly fell to 112, the lowest monthly level since the 2003 Coalition invasion.³³⁶

According to data compiled by the UN, however, 1,048 Iraqis died this quarter, more than 150% higher than the total attributed to the MOH.³³⁷ The Washington Institute for Near East Policy also has reported higher casualty numbers, emphasizing the "rapid and widespread deterioration of security in Iraq since the mid-December end of the U.S. military mission there."³³⁸ Analysis by the International Institute for Strategic Studies notes that violence in specific areas is on the rise:

The latest bombings—in Kirkuk, Karbala, Samarra, Baghdad and other cities—are part of an upsurge in violence following the withdrawal of U.S. troops.... In the first three months since troops left... there were 204 bombings—a 70% increase on the same period last year. With no more real U.S. military targets in the country, the spike necessarily means that Iraqi-on-Iraqi violence has increased, and illustrates the need for a strengthened local security force.

Although violence around the Arab League summit was low, the ISF faced a wave of co-ordinated mass-casualty attacks earlier in the quarter. On January 19, a suicide car bombing at the Baghdad Police College killed 15 people. On February 23, more than 21 bombings around Iraq killed at least 42 Iraqis and wounded approximately 285. Other mass-casualty and coordinated attacks this quarter included:

- January 24—A car bomb killed 11 people in Sadr City; multiple vehicle-borne improvised explosive device (VBIED) and improvised explosive device (IED) attacks killed 12 and wounded 80 in predominately Shia areas of Baghdad.
- January 27—A suicide car bomb killed 12 in Baghdad.
- February 19—A suicide car bomb killed at least 14 police and recruits in Baghdad.
- February 29—A VBIED killed 3 and wounded 11 in Baghdad.
- March 5—Coordinated attacks targeting ISF members killed 26 officers and wounded 3 in and around Haditha.

Attacks continue against members of the Sons of Iraq (SOI) and their families, but reports indicate that they sustained lower total casualties this quarter than last. The largest MOI force, the Iraqi Police, and the largest Ministry of Defense (MOD) force, the IA, sustained higher wounded totals this quarter, but the number killed in action reportedly dropped.

Apparent targeted political violence against civilian and military officials continued this quarter. During January 11–April 10, 2012, at least 73 government officials (including some SOI commanders and their families) were assassinated...As a result of assassinations and attempted assassinations over the past year, the CoR budgeted for the purchase of armored sedans and sport-utility vehicles for senior government officials, drawing sharp criticism from cleric Moqtada al-Sadr.

Statistical Trends Versus Human Impacts

As the Figures in the following two chapters show, the statistical trends in violence did not show a clear upward trend in 2011 or even in early 2012. However, United Nations Mission in Iraq (UNAMI) warned that individual aspects of the levels of violence had become disturbing in the annual report on human rights it circulated in May 2012. This analysis provides one of the best – if little read – assessments of the trends in Iraqi security at that time. UNAMI reported that,¹¹⁰

Levels of violence in Iraq (outside of the Kurdistan Region) remain high, and the number of civilians killed or injured in conflict-related incidents has only slightly decreased compared with figures for 2010. UNAMI figures show that during 2011 some 2,771 civilians were killed and some 7,961 civilians were wounded. Most of the violence was concentrated in and around Baghdad, Ninewa and Kirkuk. Violent incidents also occurred in Anbar and Diyala, while the south around Basra saw very few such incidents. Despite a decline in the overall number of incidents compared with 2010, those that did occur were often more deadly, with a few such attacks claiming scores of victims. As in 2010, attacks specifically targeting political leaders, government officials and security personnel, as well as of community and religious leaders, and legal, medical and education professionals continued. A destabilizing factor in relation to security was the steady withdrawal of remaining United States forces (USF-I) – a process completed by 18 December 2011.³ Shifting relationships between various political blocs, parties and factions, compounded by tribal, ethnic, and religious differences also contributed to a deterioration in the human rights environment.

Civilians continued to suffer from attacks based on their ethnic, religious and other affiliations. There were several large-scale attacks on Shi'a pilgrims and on places of worship. Members of the Christian community were also targeted – as were members of the Turkoman community (particularly around Kirkuk) and members of other religious and ethnic minorities, such as Yezidi, Shabaks, Sabian Mandaeans, and Manichaeans. Members of sexual minorities also suffered from killings and widespread social and State sanctioned discrimination – with Iraqi security forces and other State institutions failing to protect them.

The administration of justice and the rule of law remained weak. Iraqi citizens continued to suffer from

arbitrary arrest and detention. A large number of arrests took place from the end of November and continued until the end of 2011 involving persons accused of being former members of the Ba'ath Party and allegedly linked to terrorist activities. UNAMI received credible reports that many of these detainees have been held without access to lawyers or family members. It is alleged that many have been detained because of political, ethnic or sectarian affiliations, and that some have been subjected to threats, abuse and mistreatment in order to force them into signing confessions

Conditions in some prisons and detention facilities remain of serious concern, with many falling below accepted international standards in terms of overcrowding, lack of hygiene and lack of prisoner rehabilitation programs. In many detention centers convicted prisoners were not adequately separated from those awaiting trial – and alternatives to detention for prisoners on remand remained under utilized. UNAMI continued to receive reports from detainees and their relatives that many face abuse and mistreatment, and on occasion, torture. State prosecutors were often under resourced, contributing to a lack of due diligence in investigation of accused persons and in bringing such persons to trial in a timely manner. While in some instances trials were conducted professionally, the judicial system continued to be plagued by under-resourcing – and there continued to be an over-reliance on confessions to found convictions, even when there is information or evidence suggesting that such confessions were obtained through coercion. There is on-going deep concern at implementation of the death penalty in Iraq.

... UNAMI documented indiscriminate attacks against civilians and civilian objects, attacks targeting Iraqi security forces that resulted in civilian deaths and injuries - including the deliberate targeting of public officials, judges, religious figures, education professionals and members of diverse ethnic groups and minorities.

Ascertaining precise numbers of civilians killed and wounded as a result of violent conflict is difficult in Iraq. Figures from UNAMI's direct monitoring indicate that a minimum of 2,771 Iraqi civilians were killed and 7,961 were injured in armed conflict and violence during 2011.⁶ This represents a slight decrease compared to 2010, when UNAMI recorded 2,953 civilian deaths. According to the Ministry of Human Rights (MoHR) during 2011 around 2,781 civilians were killed in conflict related circumstances, including 184 women and 96 children. A further 10,386 civilians were injured, including 833 women and 382 children. Iraq Body Count (IBC) recorded 4,087 civilian deaths from violence in Iraq during the year under review, slightly higher than the 4,045 civilian deaths recorded in 2010.

Irrespective of the precise figures, Iraq has one of the highest number of conflict-related civilian casualties per capita. Identifying trends is extremely challenging, although most sources are in agreement that the rate of decline in civilian casualties has considerably slowed since 2009, compared with the significant reduction in civilian casualties seen from the height of the violence in 2007, when almost 18,000 people were reportedly killed, and in 2008, when under 7,000 died.

The frequency of violent incidents, particularly the use of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) and Vehicle-Borne Improvised Explosive Devices (VBIEDs) by insurgent and terrorist groups, suggests a pattern of sustained, *ad hoc* violence that has the potential to continue for the foreseeable future. On an average day during 2011, UNAMI data shows that there were some 21 violent incidents in Iraq, the most common being IEDs and small arms fire resulting in 7.5 civilian deaths.... UNAMI data indicates that violence continued to be concentrated in Baghdad and the surrounding regions, and in the Disputed Internal Boundaries (DIBs) areas, notably Mosul and Kirkuk. There were also attacks, but of lesser frequency, in Anbar Governorate. The south of the country, around Basra, saw the fewest numbers of violent attacks and resulting civilian casualties. Baghdad and the North-central region suffered 865 and 739 recorded civilian deaths and 3,024 and 2,002 injuries respectively. South-central region recorded 433 civilian deaths and 1,165 injuries; the north region had 293 deaths and 692 injuries; the Western region had 212 deaths and 400 injuries; while the south region had 111 civilian deaths and 293 injuries. January witnessed a peak of violence, with 307 civilians reportedly killed, although in December the number of civilians killed rose significantly – being the highest for that month recorded since 2008. The second half of 2011 was more violent than the first half: 1,515 civilians were reportedly killed from July to December, compared with 1,256 from January to June 2011.

Examples of attacks carried out by armed insurgents that resulted in the death and injuries to civilians, include the suicide bomber in Tikrit on 18 January, consequently 64 people were killed and at least 150 injured as they queued in a line at a police recruitment center. On 27 January, between 48 and 64 people were killed in what may have been a sectarian motivated attack when a car bomb exploded, destroying a funeral tent in the

Shula area of Baghdad On 24 February, up to 14 people were killed and 15 were reportedly wounded when a suicide bomber attacked a cultural center in Ramadi. On 6 March up to 12 people were killed – including women and children – when a roadside bomb struck a passing bus in the Al-Maqil area of central Basra, although the intended target may have been a USF-I convoy. On 29 March, up to 71 people, mainly members of the Iraqi police force were killed and over 100 were wounded in a complex attack of suicide bombers and hand grenades outside the city council building in Tikrit. The Islamic State of Iraq (ISI) claimed responsibility for this attack.

On 11 April, 10 members of a Shi'ite farming family were killed by bombs in their fields. On 3 May, up to 16 civilians were killed when a car bomb exploded outside a cafe in Abu Dsheer, Baghdad. On 3 June, in Tikrit, up to 18 worshippers were killed and more than 20 were injured (including children) in a mosque when attacked by a suicide bomber. On 11 June, at least fifteen people were killed and fifty-two others were injured in two VBIED attacks targeting an army patrol in Al-Dwoasa in Mosul. On 20 June in Mosul, two boys were killed and three other civilians injured in a roadside bomb explosion. On 23 June, at least 34 people were killed in the Al-Shurta Al-Rabaa area of Baghdad, when three bombs went off in quick succession - one targeted a Shi'ite mosque, while two targeted a market where people were shopping. On 26 June, 27 people, mostly civilians, were killed in Diwania when a suicide car bomb exploded outside the house of the governor.

On 28 July, at least 12 people were killed and 28 injured in a twin bombing in Tikrit: the first bomb exploded outside a State-run bank, followed by a suicide bomber seemingly timed in order to target emergency workers who had arrived at the scene. On 15 August, one of the most violent days of the year, more than 70 people were killed and hundreds injured in a wave of attacks in cities across Iraq. In the day's worst incident, 37 people were killed when two bombs exploded in a busy market in the city center of Kut. In total, some 40 attacks were reported for which the Government blamed the Islamic State of Iraq.¹¹ On 13 October at least 16 people were killed in the Sadr City area of Baghdad when two roadside bombs were detonated - although some sources indicated to UNAMI that up to 61 people were killed by the twin blasts. On 27 October, in Baghdad's Ur district 18 civilians were killed in two explosions: the first bomb was detonated outside a music store, and then a second was detonated as people rushed to assist the victims.

In another series of attacks, on 22 December, at least 69 people were killed and around 200 injured in a coordinated series of nine car bombs and six roadside bombs targeting civilian infrastructure including markets, grocery stores, cafes and government buildings in a dozen mostly Shiite neighborhoods in Baghdad. According to media reports, the Al-Qaeda affiliated group, the Islamic State of Iraq, claimed responsibility.

As noted, armed opposition groups continued to deliberately target civilians. Many attacks targeting Iraqi security forces also employed asymmetric and indiscriminate tactics, such as the use of IEDs or VBIEDs on roadsides or near police checkpoints, government buildings and installations. Such attacks were often carried out in crowded public areas such as markets, cafes or mosques and churches, revealing an intent to kill and injure a maximum number of civilians, or with indifference to the number and type of casualties.

The motives for such attacks were diverse. Some appear to have been sectarian, targeting members of particular religious communities, their residential areas, and places of worship, including mosques and churches. A large number of such attacks were perpetrated against the Shi'a community, but there were also a sustained level of attacks against Christians and other minority religious groups, including Yezidis, Manicheans, and Sabian Mandaean. Many attacks were directed at particular ethnic groups, such as members of the Turkoman community in Kirkuk. Reported tensions between members of ethnic groups may have led to violence, particularly between Christians and Yezidis in Ninewa. Attacks on Iraqi security forces, in particular on the police, frequently had political motives, aimed at undermining public confidence in the capacity of the Government and its institutions to maintain security. However, many such attacks also might have had underlying sectarian or other motivations. In the DIBs areas, violence appears to have been largely sectarian or ethnic in nature. There were a number of incidents, including killings and kidnappings, which although superficially motivated by criminal gain, may also have had sectarian, political or other motivations.

All such attacks constitute serious violations of Iraqi criminal law and of applicable international humanitarian law and international human rights law. While UNAMI recognizes the enormous difficulties facing the Iraqi government in its efforts to restore and maintain law and order, the Government of Iraq is required to do all it can, within the limits of the law and in compliance with its international legal obligations, to bring the perpetrators of such crimes to justice and take all legal and appropriate measures to curb the violence and to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure from the effects of conflict.

... The Kurdistan Region continued to be relatively free of armed conflict and violence. UNAMI recorded 12 civilian deaths and injuries there during the year. This figure is lower than in 2010 when 22 deaths were recorded. In relation to this, there were concerns about the impact on civilians of military operations conducted along the Kurdistan Region's borders with Turkey and Iran by foreign military forces, which resulted in the deaths of at least ten civilians and injuries to at least 20 others, and the displacement of families.

...The frequency of targeted killings remains of concern, constituting serious violations of IHL and international human rights law. Many such attacks were carried out with IEDs placed on roadsides or in vehicles, or shootings by small firearms equipped with silencers. According to UNAMI during 2011 there were 296 such killings and attempted killings, resulting in 73 deaths and injuring 41, significantly higher than in 2010.

Those most frequently targeted were members of the Iraqi Police, including retired officers and family members of serving police personnel. Other victims included government officials, members of governorate councils, civil servants, journalists, education and medical professionals, judges, traditional leaders, members of ethnic and religious minorities and persons engaged in religious events and activities.

In some incidents, bombs detonated in public areas often killed and injured civilians, then, as police arrived at the scene, further bombs were detonated, with the intention of killing members of the security forces. Bombs detonated outside police stations or government buildings often harmed civilian bystanders. Incidents of such killings frequently left family members of the intended victim dead or injured.

Across Iraq, incidents of killings targeting Government officials increased compared to 2010. Based on UNAMI figures, the most affected cities were Baghdad, Kirkuk, Mosul and Tikrit. Among such incidents 16 on 20 March in Baghdad, an official from the Oil Ministry was killed in a drive by shooting. On 19 April, an employee of the Education Ministry was killed by a magnetic car bomb in Doura, Baghdad. On 30 April, an employee of the Ministry of Industry and his daughter were killed in their home in a targeted shooting. On 26 May, the Chair of the Accountability and Justice Commission, Ali Faisal Al-Lami, was killed in a drive-by shooting in Baghdad. On 30 May, the Deputy Governor of Ninewa Province survived an assassination attempt when his convoy was targeted by an IED whilst en route to Tampa, west of Sharqat in Mosul. On 1 June in Baghdad, there was an attempted assassination of the Deputy Minister for Human Rights, Abdul-Karim Abdullah. On 3 June, following an earlier attack on a mosque, a suicide bomber blew himself up inside Salahadin Teaching Hospital killing two Iraqi Police personnel and leaving four injured, including a physician. The suicide bomber was targeting Al Iraqiya Parliament Member, Mr. Mutashar Husain Elewy, who was visiting people injured during the earlier attack. On 7 June, the son of a Defence Ministry official was shot dead in a drive by shooting in Jamiaa, Baghdad. On 25 September gunmen using silenced weapons killed a Foreign Ministry employee in Jamiaa, west Baghdad. On 25 September, a sticky bomb attached to the car of Mr. Saad Fetehalah, the head of the international relations department within the Ministry of Human Rights killed Mr. Fetehalah's driver. In a rare attack inside Baghdad's "Green Zone", on 28 November a bomb exploded outside of the parliament building. Reports indicated that the bomb may have targeted the Speaker of Parliament, or the Iraqi Prime Minister himself. The Islamic State in Iraq claimed responsibility for this attack. The Islamic State in Iraq¹⁷ also claimed it was responsible for the December 26 attack on the Interior Ministry, in which 7 people were killed. Also on 28 November, the house of a member of Kirkuk Provincial Council, a Turkman Shi'a was targeted by four bombs, which killed two civilians and injured.

...In further violence aimed at disrupting the functioning of government institutions and undermining the rule of law, attacks on judicial and legal professionals continued. Among the cases recorded by UNAMI¹⁹ on 2 January, the nephew of a judge in Al-Rufei'at was killed by a bomb inside the judge's residence. On the same day a lawyer working for an association defending Iraqi prisoners was shot dead in eastern Baghdad. On 4 January, a female lawyer was killed in a drive-by shooting on the airport road in Baghdad. On 18 March, a prominent lawyer in Kirkuk was shot dead near his home. On 19 April, a teacher, a lawyer and one other were killed by gunmen in their family home in Kirkuk. On 30 April, a judge was shot and killed by gunmen in his residence in Baghdad. A number of other people also reportedly died in the attack. On 9 June, a judge was shot and killed in a drive-by shooting in Baghdad. On October 19, a judge and his driver were shot dead in a western area of Mosul. On 13 December, gunmen attacked a vehicle carrying judges in Fallujah. Three people were killed, and five others wounded, including three judges. On 21 December, a judge and his guard were killed when a bomb attached to his vehicle exploded in Kirkuk. The judge's daughter and two

pedestrians were reportedly injured. A second bomb was later detonated under a vehicle belonging to one of the judge's guards, which had been used to transport the injured to hospital, injuring a further five civilians.

...UNAMI recorded at least 35 attacks targeting educational and medical professionals during the reporting period.²⁰ Motives for such attacks were not uniform and were often unclear. It is possible that some could have been targeted for personal or criminal motives, but in some cases there might have been political, ethnic or sectarian motivations.²¹ On 17 February, a university professor was shot dead in his home in Al-Khadhra, west Baghdad. On 26 February, a teacher at a technical university was shot dead in Saydiya, Baghdad. On 8 March, a faculty member of the Department of Basic Education, University of Mosul was shot dead by unidentified armed men in Barid, east Mosul. On 26 March, a professor specializing in cancer research was assassinated in al-Nisour Square, Baghdad. On 29 March, in Mansour, Baghdad, the Dean of Dentistry at Mustansiriya University was killed by a magnetic bomb attached to his car. On 4 April, up to six people were killed in an attack on the family home of a college professor. On 5 April, a teacher was reportedly shot dead in his home in Tarmiyah. On 9 April, a teacher was killed by a "sticky bomb" attached to his car in Fallujah. On 1 May, a teacher was reportedly killed by a "sticky bomb" attached to his car in west Baquba. On 11 June, in Al-Dour a teacher and four members of his family were shot dead in their home.

On 21 June unidentified armed men kidnapped a doctor while he was heading out from his clinic in Kirkuk. The kidnappers contacted the doctor's family demanding USD\$300,000 to release the victim. A ransom was later paid and the doctor released. On 25 June, unknown armed men kidnapped the nine-year-old son of a dentist in Kirkuk city. He was released on 28 June. It is unknown whether a ransom was paid to secure his release. On 22 of July a doctor was shot dead in Kirkuk when he resisted a kidnap attempt. On 24 July a nurse was shot dead in a clinic in the village near the town of Garma north west of Baghdad. On 26 July gunmen broke into a medical clinic in al Tahrir neighborhood, east Mosul and shot dead Dr. Haifa Jum'aa. On 23 August, a professor from Baghdad University was shot dead outside his home in the Adil district of Baghdad. The professor's son was injured in the attack. On 5 September neurologist Yeldrim Abbass was reportedly killed along with his brother by gunmen in Kirkuk. Also in Kirkuk, on 11 September, armed men in two vehicles kidnapped a Turkoman nurse. On 22 October a teacher and his daughter were reportedly killed in a drive by shooting in Tikrit. On 5 November, unidentified armed men dressed in uniform kidnapped the head of Kirkuk University and another professor, both Turkmen Shi'a. The two professors were released one month later on payment of a ransom. On 15 November a doctor was killed when gunmen opened fire in his clinic in a village near Qaiyara, north of Baghdad. On 27 December, the head of the Red Crescent in Kirkuk was targeted by a magnetic bomb on his vehicle, severely injuring him.

...Sectarian violence, in particular large scale attacks targeting religious events, continued to claim large numbers of civilian casualties. For instance, presumed Sunni militias attacked the Shi'a religious festival at Karbala in January. Such attacks on crowded areas routinely resulted in massive casualties. On 20 January, up to 56 Shi'a pilgrims were killed when two car bombs were detonated on roads used by thousands of pilgrims converging on Karbala for the Arba'een commemorations. Four days later, more than 33 pilgrims were killed by two car bombs that were detonated a few hours apart, the first targeted a bus terminal, while the second targeted the Da'oum area in the center of the city, where pilgrims were organizing processions. In possibly retaliatory attacks, Sunni imams were reportedly targeted in Fallujah. According to Iraq Body Count, two Imams were killed in drive-by shootings on 24 January and 31 January. In February, at least 46 Shi'a pilgrims were killed by two suicide bomb attacks targeting a religious ceremony in Samarra. In the first attack on 8 February, eight people were killed and around 30 wounded when a suicide car bomber attacked a group of Shi'a pilgrims heading to the city, where a religious commemoration for the death of an Imam was taking place. On 12 February, another suicide bomber blew himself up near a crowd of Shi'a pilgrims at a bus depot. According to media reports, 38 people were killed and 74 wounded in this second attack...

On July 15 and 16, four car bombs in Karbala, targeting Shi'ite pilgrims during a religious festival, killed 15 and injured 84. On 28 August, a suicide bomber blew himself up in the main area of the Umm al-Qura mosque during prayers in the western Baghdad neighborhood of al-Jamiaah: Iraqi police and hospital officials reported that 29 worshippers were killed and at least a further 30 injured. On 12 September, 22 Shi'ite pilgrims were shot dead when unidentified gunmen boarded the bus and killed all those on board as they were travelling through al-Anbar governorate on their way to a holy shrine in Syria. On 30 September, 25 people were killed and 27 wounded when a car bomb was detonated among mourners at a Shi'ite funeral in the city of Hilla. At least 32 people were killed during different sectarian attacks during the Shi'ite Ashura

festival. On 5 December, 15 people including women and children were killed by a car bomb targeting a religious procession in Hilla.

A second attack, also in Hilla on the same day, killed at least six more people. A number of other attacks targeting individual clerics were recorded by UNAMI.²⁴ On 17 February, a leading Sadr cleric was shot dead in a drive by shooting in west Karbala. On 18 February, a religious leader, Sheikh Ali Fakhri was reportedly shot dead by unidentified armed men in front of his home in Al Rashidiya, north Mosul. On 19 April, three members of the family of a Sunni imam were shot in their home in Baquba. On 19 May, a Shi'a cleric was killed by a "sticky bomb" attached to his car in the Bab al-Miy'adham area of Baghdad. On 31 May, unknown armed men kidnapped a prominent Imam, a member of Iraqi Scholars Council – Kirkuk Branch. The imam was also an active member of Iraqi Islamic Party in Kirkuk. On 13 August, Adil Jaijan, an imam, was killed in a drive by shooting in eastern Baghdad. On 9 September, an imam was shot dead near his mosque in Baghdad's Zaafaraniya district. On 25 October, near the town of Hilla a bomb was detonated at the house of Sheikh Safa Jasim, killing his wife and son, and injuring him and three other sons.

There were also attacks perpetrated against members of other religious minorities, including Christians, Shabaks and Yezidi.

Attacks against members of the ISF were frequent in 2011. According to UNAMI figures, some 1,052 members of the ISF were killed and 2,596 injured. Such attacks were carried out by various insurgent groups, apparently aimed at undermining public confidence in the Government's ability to maintain security.

Large-scale assaults on Iraqi police and police stations often result in the arbitrary loss of life and injury of civilians. Attacks targeted against individual police officers frequently led to loss of life of family members and innocent bystanders.

The majority of such attacks took place in the cities of Mosul, Kirkuk and Baghdad. In Mosul alone, UNAMI recorded 118 attacks against the Iraqi police during the first six months of the year. At least 82 security personnel were killed along with 78 civilians in these attacks.

UNAMI received reports of civilian deaths resulting from criminal acts, such as robberies of banks and jewelry stores. While such acts are criminal in nature, there are reports that armed groups carried out such robberies in order to obtain financing and to purchase weapons.

In Kirkuk, UNAMI received over twelve reports of kidnappings for ransom. For example, kidnappers demanded a ransom for the release of three Turkish citizens seized on 15 February. The three businessmen were released following an operation led by USF-I on 25 April. No details were available on whether a ransom was paid. On 18 July, a prominent businessman was kidnapped in Kirkuk. The man was released after five days following the payment of a ransom.

During the first six months of 2011, the drawdown of remaining USF-I forces continued, pursuant to the agreement between Iraq and the United States. The process was completed by 18 December 2011.

Nonetheless, there were a total of three incidents alleging civilian casualties caused by military operations of USF-I reported by the media, but only one was confirmed by UNAMI.²⁵ On 15 June one Iraqi civilian was killed and three injured in a rare USF-I raid, reportedly including air support. USF-I claimed that the victims were insurgents and that equipment for firing rockets was found at the scene of the raid. The raid was in response to an indirect fire attack on the US military base in Basra earlier the same day.

On 25 April one civilian was killed and five injured during clashes between Iraqi army soldiers and Kurdish *Asayesh* in a street in central Kirkuk.

...From mid-June, there were occasional aerial bombardments and mortar attacks on border areas in the Kurdistan Region by foreign forces, aimed at dislodging PKK and PJAK rebel groups allegedly active there. By mid-July, 176 families were displaced from the villages of Aliarash, Suney, Sarkhan, Pirdabardin and Barquislan to the town of Gojar. On 21 August, UNAMI confirmed that aerial bombardments killed seven civilians in the Pishdar area of Sulaymaniyah governorate. The victims were members of the same family travelling in a vehicle that was hit during the raid. Among the victims were four children aged 6 months, 4 years, 10 years and 11 years.

According to UN agencies, an additional 120 families were displaced from the villages of Zargali, Bokriskan and Prdashal as a result of the attacks. In early October, shelling reportedly caused damage to villages in

border areas of eastern Erbil and northeastern Sulaymaniyah provinces, although no civilian casualties were reported. Shelling continued to affect border areas around Sidakan and Zap during the week of 16 October. Kurdistan Region security sources stated that one civilian was slightly injured on 19 October in the Zap area as a result of the shelling. On 21 November, one civilian was reportedly killed near Sidakan as a result of aerial bombings.

III. VIOLENCE AND CASUALTY TREND ESTIMATES THROUGH 2012

The data in this chapter focus on the trends or “vectors” in violence and casualties from 2003 through 2012. As is explained in this chapter and the following chapter, the data on casualties such from defects as serious as the data on violence, but they serve as an important control in showing that the patterns in violent incidents do not always reflect even a relatively crude measure of the impact of that violence like the number of killed and wounded.

While the exact patterns in total casualties remained uncertain, and different sources provide different numbers, there are sources that are consistent enough in definition, and rigorous enough in their collection methods to produce useful trend data from period to period. Moreover, sources as diverse as UNAMI, Iraq Body Count and the Iraqi government provide data that generally agree on the key trends and vectors even when the absolute numbers can be trusted and the trends do not agree in detail.

Quantifying the Trends in Iraq

The following figures portray a range of sources that attempt quantify Iraq’s level of violence between 2003 and 2012, and that focus on the trends since 2008 – the year in which US, allied, and Iraqi Security Forces suppressed insurgent violence to what appeared to be acceptable levels:

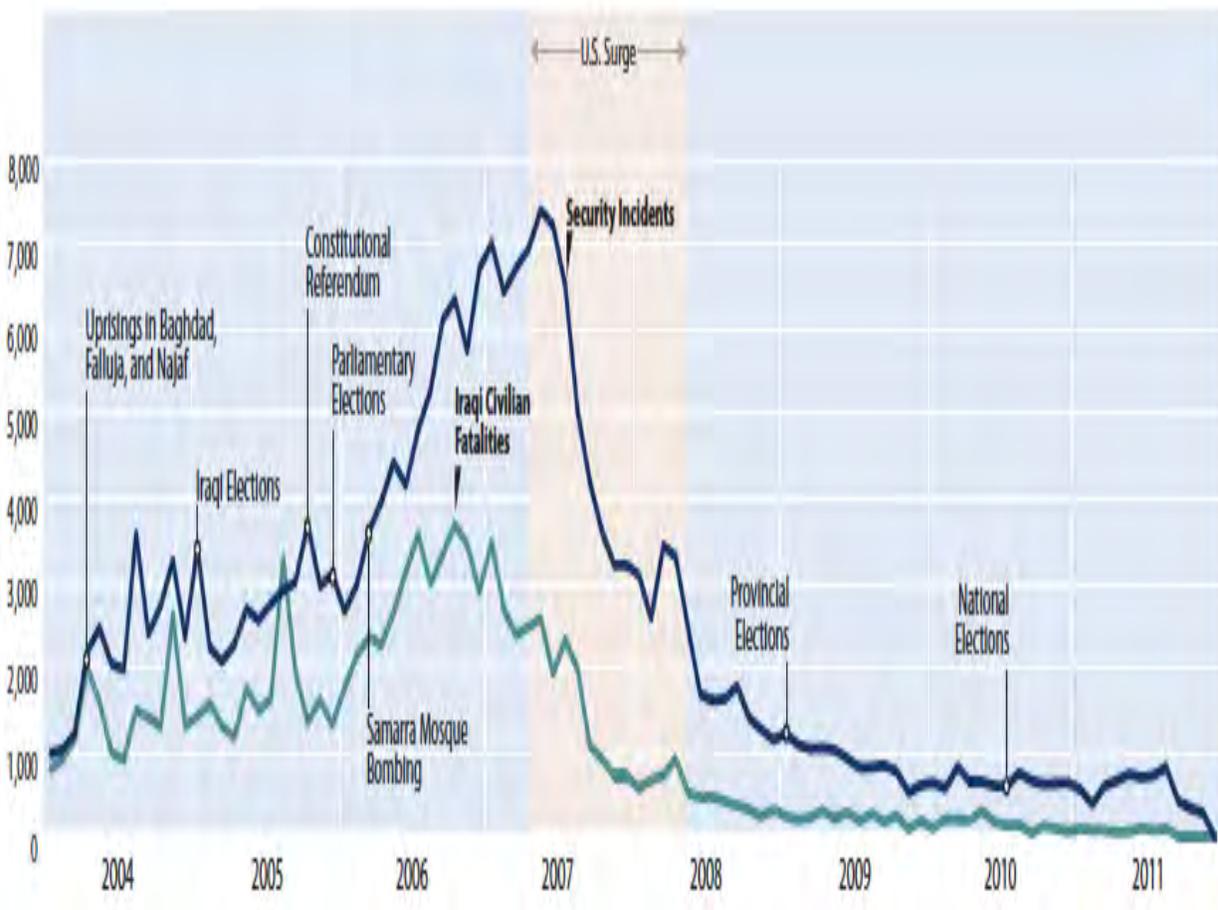
- **Figure 3** shows an estimate by the Special Inspector General for Iraqi Reconstruction of the rise and fall of the number of attacks and casualties in Iraq from 2003 through 2011. It is the last estimate that could be drawn largely from data provided by the US forces in Iraq, although such data proved on some occasions to be less accurate than Iraqi and UN data, and US collection capabilities deteriorated sharply after the spring of 2011.
- **Figure 4** also shows how civilian casualties in Iraq dropped from the peak periods of civil war to much lower levels after 2008, using statistics from DoD/GOI/ Brookings’s Iraq Index/UNAMI.
- **Figure 5** compares a count by Iraqi ministries with the counts by Iraqi Body Count – one of the most credible estimates. The Iraqi Body count data are far higher than the Iraqi Ministry Data – which in the past were higher than US command estimates.
- **Figure 6** shows that bombings and shootings remained the key killing mechanisms through 2012.
- **Figure 7** and **Figure 8** provide only limited snapshots in terms of time span, but highlight the focus on attacking Iraqi army and police targets.
- **Figure 9** shows the effects of violence on Iraqi minority sects of Islam and Iraq’s remaining Christian minorities. Nearly half of Iraq’s minorities were driven out of Iraq between 2003 and 2011.

All of these figures show that a low level civil war did continue after the surge. The emphasis, however, must on the term “low level” from at least 2009 through 2011. Moreover, all of the available reporting shows that many areas were relatively safe. At least through the end of 2012 the net casualty rate was no higher than the total mix of casualties from crime and accidents in some peaceful states. Even in mid-2012, the slow rise and erratic rise in levels of violence was important and disturbing, but not critical.

As the next chapter describes, a steady increase of violence over 2012 and 2013 reversed the trend, however, and Iraq faced a near critical level of insurgency and ethno-sectarian conflict heading into 2014. The figures below demonstrate the precipitous spike in violence from 2003

invasion until the US-Iraqi troop surge in 2007 and 2008, and gradual –and disturbing – rise in violence since 2012.

Figure 3: SIGIR Estimates of Patterns in Violence: 2003-2011



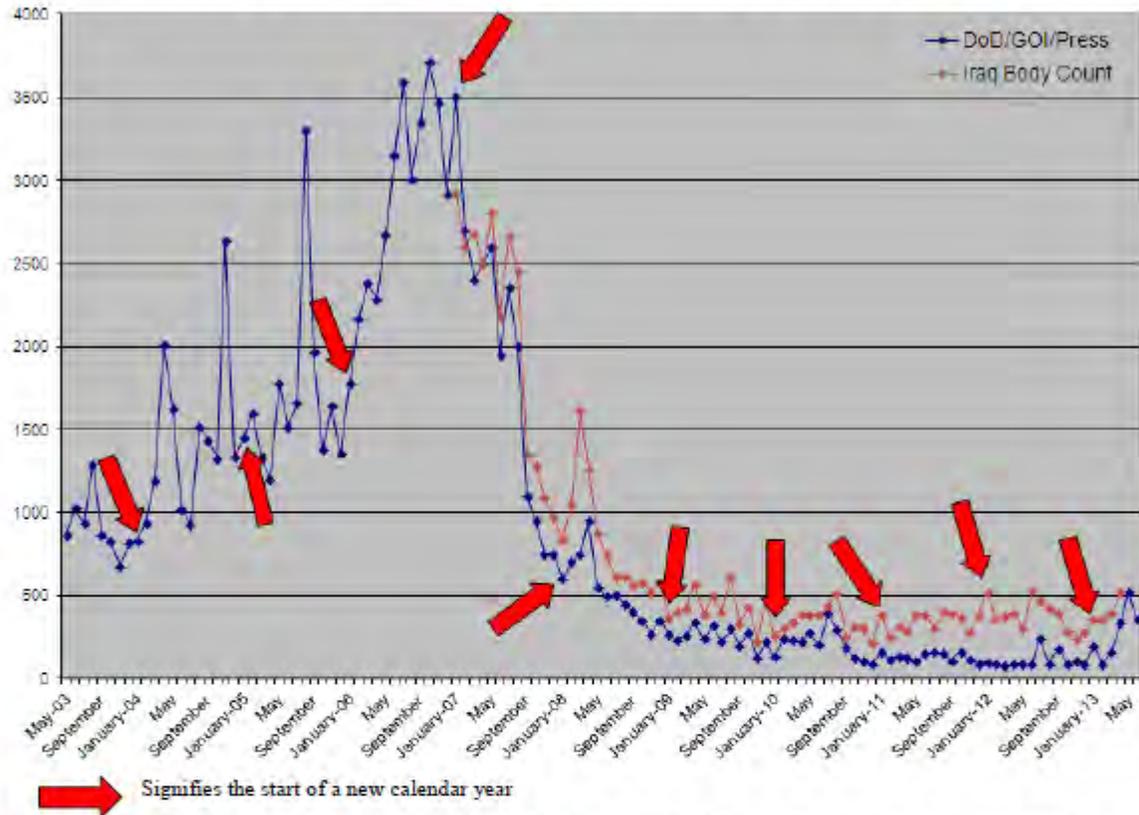
Note: Data not audited. Totals for December 2011 include data through December 6. "U.S. Surge" denotes period when at least 150,000 U.S. troops were in Iraq.

Sources: USF-I, responses to SIGIR data calls, 1/4/2011, 4/12/2011, 7/1/2011, 10/5/2011, and 1/3/2012; Brookings Institution, *Iraq Index*, 6/30/2010, pp. 3–4.

Source: SIGIR, Quarterly Report, January 30, 2011, p. 67.

Figure 4: Comparisons of Estimated Number of Iraqi Civilian Fatalities by Month, May 2003 – May 2013

ESTIMATED NUMBER OF IRAQI CIVILIAN FATALITIES BY MONTH, MAY 2003-PRESENT¹



NOTE ON THIS GRAPH: See subset graphs on following page for exact monthly figures and explanations regarding sources and methodologies for various time periods.

Total Estimated Iraqi Civilian Fatalities, by Year (DoD/GOI/Press)

2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013*
7,300	16,800	20,200	34,500	23,600	6,400	3,000	2,500	1,578	1,317	1,666

Total Estimated Iraqi Civilian Fatalities, by Year (Iraq Body Count)

2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013**
12,093	11,608	16,180	19,114	25,501	9,839	5,132	4,109	4,147	4,573	1,629

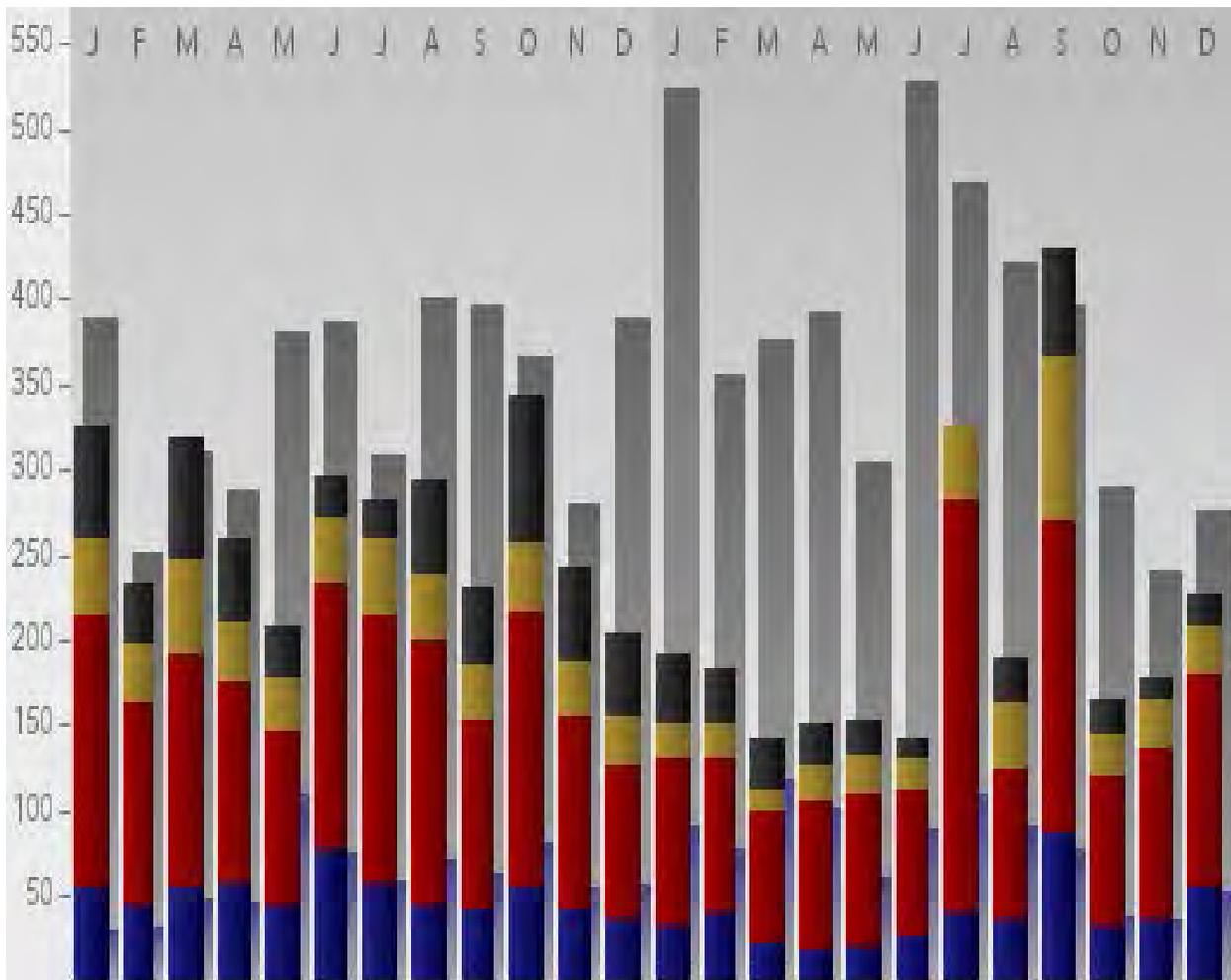
*2013 totals are through June. Beginning May 2010, we have compiled information regarding civilian fatalities from Iraqi government figures and/or media confirmation of those figures. In July 2010, the U.S. military released figures much lower than the Iraqi government, but in many months over the 18 months prior, numbers were similar using both reporting methods.

**2013 totals are through May.

NOTE ON CHART: Intermittent United Nations public reporting has indicated higher totals at times since 2010. For instance, in May 2013, the UN reported² over 1,000 total deaths (civilian and security forces) compared to Iraqi government and *Agence France Presse* reports between 600 and 700. Additionally, in 2012, Iraq Body Count recorded 4,471 deaths³, or roughly three times our total for that year. We have added in Iraq Body Count totals as a comparative as it seems likely that official Government of Iraq and press reports are too low in recent years.

Source: As cited by Brookings Institution, Iraq Index, July 2013.

**Figure 5: Discrepancies in Estimates between GoI & Independent Organizations: Iraqi Ministries (color) vs. Iraq Body Count (grey)
Trends in Casualties: January 1, 2011 – December 30, 2012**

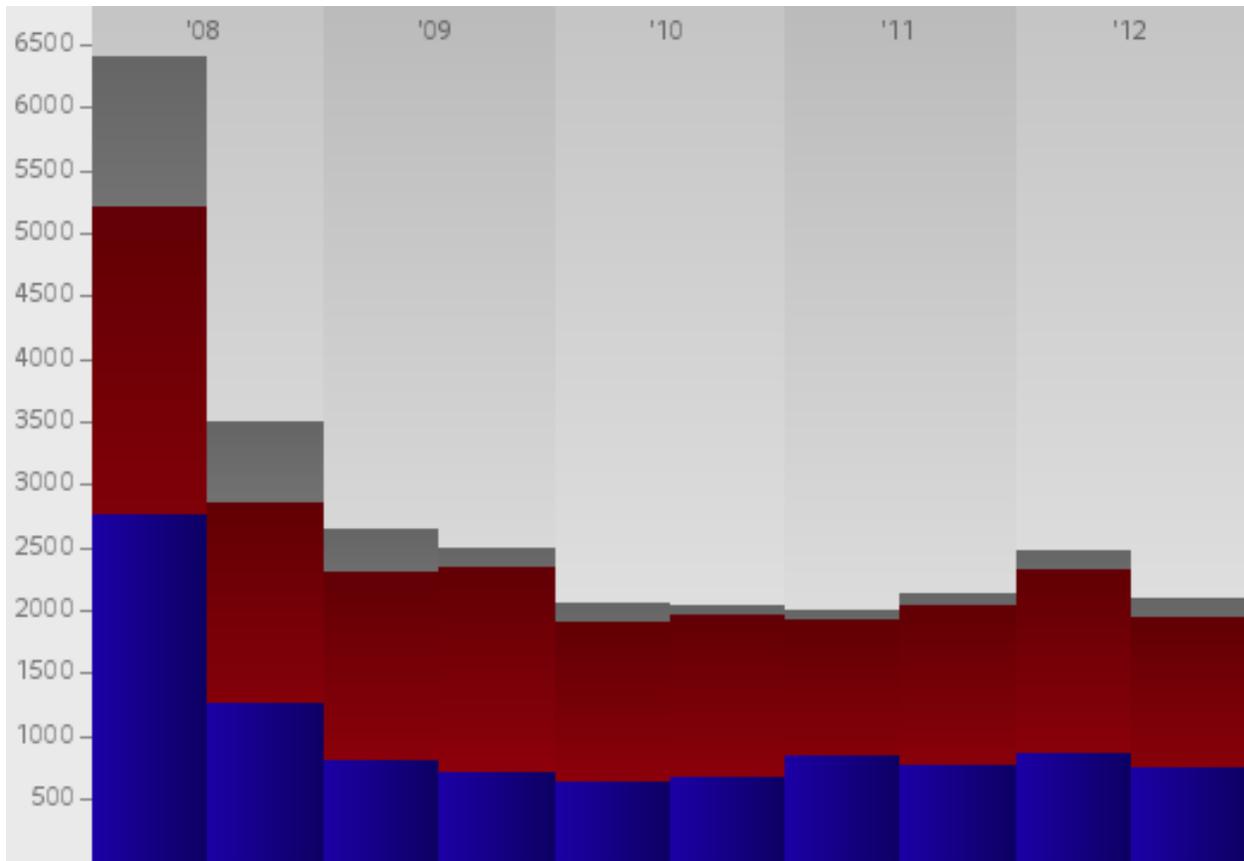


Note: Iraqi body Count notes that, “As in previous years, monthly figures released by Iraqi ministries are significantly lower than the publicly-sourced data used by IBC, a discrepancy we have been drawing attention to since these official figures became available.⁸ For instance IBC’s total for civilian (not including police) deaths between Jan-November 2012 is 3,412, against the ministries figure of 1,233. This year the discrepancy appears to have grown wider than ever (see graph), and others have also drawn attention to the low official 2012 figures, including news agencies who compile their own data and could compare it to the government’s.”

When comparing differing published figures for Iraq it is important to note that on its public database IBC transparently lists the violent incidents from which it derives its data, along with the original publishing sources for each entry.¹⁰ Progress in understanding differences between IBC and others requires looking beyond such “competing totals” and examining what lies beneath them: that is, identifying which specific incidents are included in each total. Until Iraqi ministries also publish the underlying data for their totals in a similarly disaggregated, incident-by-incident fashion, it will remain impossible for third parties to meaningfully investigate and understand these differences (which is one reason why we have also been calling for such open publication by official sources).”

Source: Iraq Body Count. Accessed August 12, 2013, <http://www.iraqbodycount.org/database/>.

Figure 6: Bombings and Shootings Remained the Key Killing Mechanisms through 2012



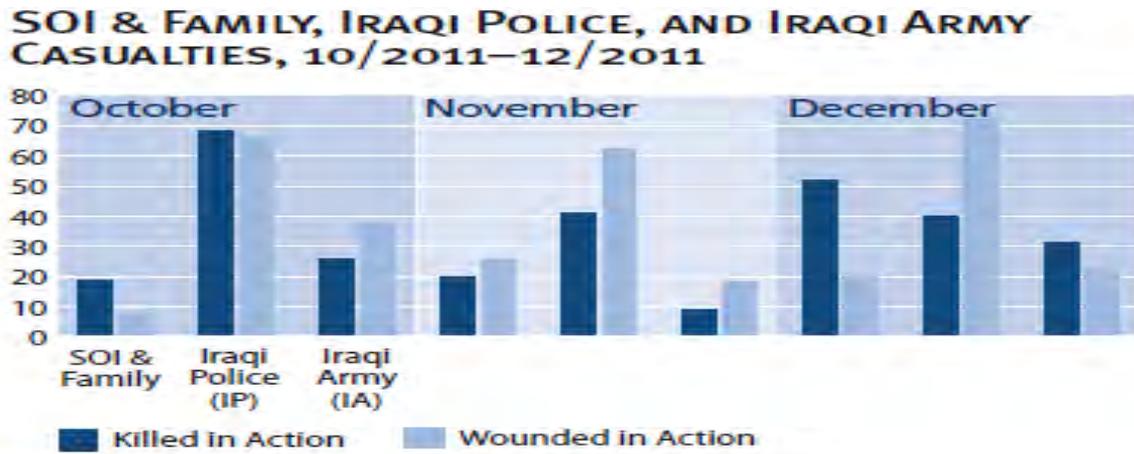
During the height of sectarian violence in the years from 2006-2007, most deaths were from small arms fire, often in targeted killings. Such killings continue: in 2012 there were 964 reported incidents involving deadly shootings, or cases of bodies found shot dead, with a death toll of 1,616. Of these deaths, 667 were of a single individual (and many of the others family members, bodyguards or other bystanders in the vicinity of the target).

Since mid-2008 the majority of deaths have been caused by explosives that generally result in a higher death toll per incident and, on average, leave 3 wounded for every person killed. In 2012 961 bombings in Iraq killed 2,813 civilians and left another 7,544 wounded. This equates to around 18 bombings claiming 54 civilian lives and wounding 145 others every week. The dozen largest-scale bombings killed over 400 and wounded more than 1,000.

In 2012 43% of deaths occurred in just two provinces: Baghdad and Ninewa (capital city: Mosul)... people in Diyala, Salah al-Din and Anbar were 2-21/2 times more likely to suffer a violent death than in Baghdad.

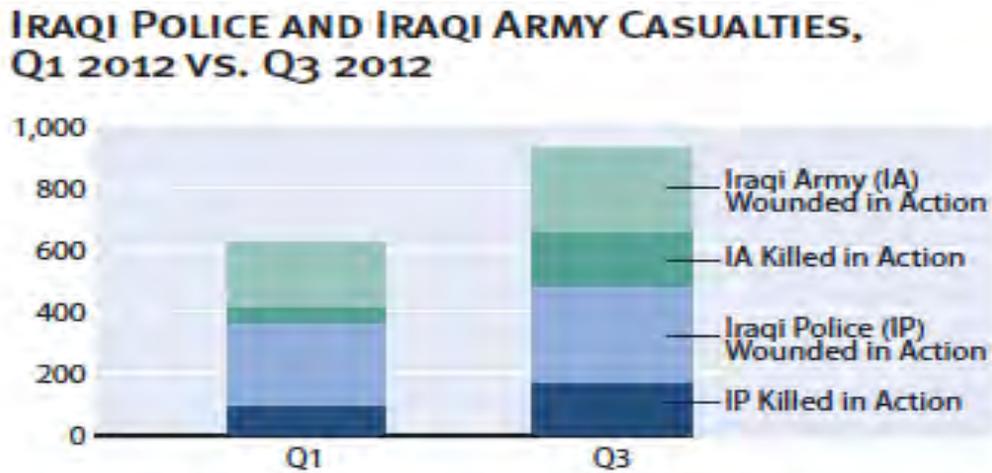
Source: Iraq Body Count. Accessed August 12, 2013, <http://www.iraqbodycount.org/database/>.

Figure 7: Consistent Trend Data Do Not Exist, But SIGIR data Indicate that the Iraqi Army and Police Became Key Targets during 2011-2012



Source: GOI, MOI, information provided to SIGIR, 1/22/2012.

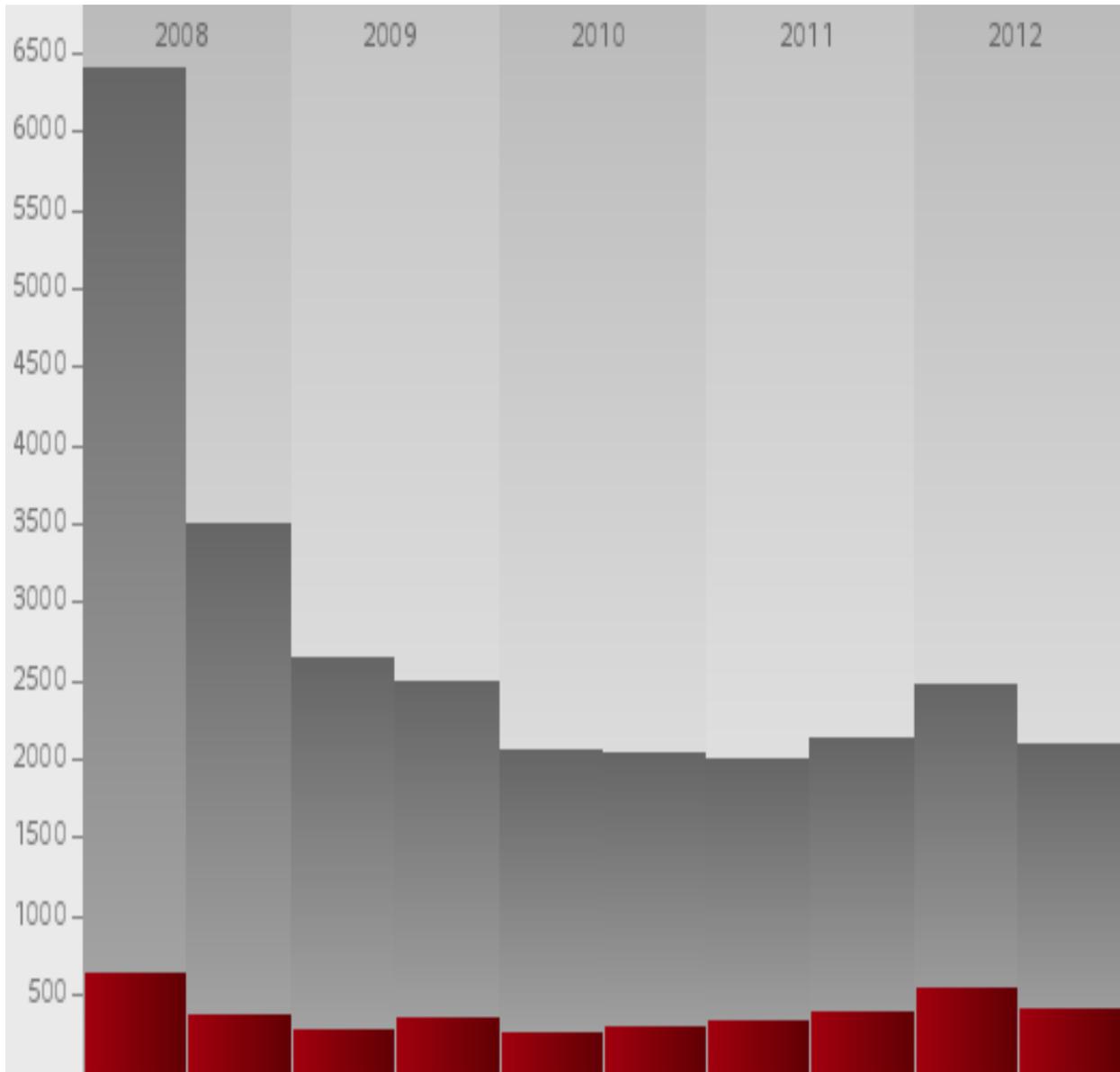
Sources: SIGIR, Quarterly Report, January 30, 2012, p. 68.



Sources: MOI, information provided to SIGIR, 1/22/2012 and 10/20/2012.

Sources: SIGIR, Quarterly Report, October, 2012, p. 74.

Figure 8: Iraqi Body Count Data Show Similar Targeting of Police
(Police Casualties Are Shown in Red Relative to Total Casualties in Gray)



While Iraqi police have consistently been targeted by armed opposition groups (and represent the single largest professional demographic recorded in the IBC database), a particularly notable feature of recent years has been the increasing proportion that they represent of all deaths, especially in relation to 2008 and earlier. 2012 saw both an increase in the absolute number of police killed in comparison to 2011 (724 vs. 939 in 2012), and an increase in their proportion of all deaths (17.5% of deaths in 2011 vs. 20.5% in 2012).

Source: Iraq Body Count, accessed August 12, 2013, <http://www.iraqbodycount.org/database/>.

Figure 9: The Impact of Internal Conflict on Smaller Minority Groups 2003-2011

POPULATION ESTIMATES AND DESCRIPTIONS OF MINORITY COMMUNITIES IN IRAQ, 2003 AND 2011

		2003	2011
Christians	Predominantly Assyrian, Chaldean, Armenian, and Syriac; most live in or around the Kurdistan Region; a small number of Armenians live in Basrah.	1.4 million	400,000 to 600,000
Turkmen	Descendants of Ottoman Empire-era soldiers and traders, about 60% of Turkmen are Sunni Muslim and the rest are Shia.	800,000	200,000
Sabaeans	Gnostics who follow John the Baptist, Sabaeans do not accept converts and must live near a river to observe religious rites; concentrated in southern Iraq.	60,000 to 70,000	5,000 to 10,000
Yazidis	Ancient group with religious traditions drawn from Zoroastrianism, Manicheism, Islam, Christianity, and Judaism; Yazidis do not accept converts or marry outside the faith; concentrated around Sinjar Mountain west of Mosul.	600,000 to 700,000	Less than 500,000
Shabaks	Most identify as Shia and the rest as Sunni, but do not observe all pillars of Islam and draw religious traditions from Yazidis and Sufism. Shabaks have lived along the Ninewa Plains since 1502.	400,000 to 500,000	200,000 to 500,000
Feyli Kurds	Ethnically Kurdish Shia, the Feyli live mainly in Diyala province along the Iranian border, in Baghdad, and in Iran. Under Saddam Hussein's regime, they were stripped of Iraqi citizenship.	1 million to 1.5 million	100,000 to 120,000
Kaka'is	Kurds who speak their own dialect, Kaka'is draw religious traditions from Yazidis, Zoroastrianism, and Shia Islam. They live primarily in Kirkuk and Mosul.	200,000	60,000 to 70,000

Note: Some population estimates were obtained from community leaders who met with the Minority Rights Group International; others were taken from SIGIR interviews with community leaders and U.S. government reports.

Sources: DRL, *International Religious Freedom Reports, 2006 and 2010*, www.state.gov/g/drl/irf/2010/148821.htm, accessed 6/5/2011; SIGIR interviews with members of Sabaeen community, 6/29/2011; Minority Rights Group International Report, "Still Targeted: Continued Persecution of Iraq's Minorities," 2010; Minority Rights Group International, information provided to SIGIR, 10/18/2011.

Source: SIGIR, Quarterly Report, October 30, 2011.

Regional Patterns in Violence

As reporting on both the Iraq and Afghan Wars has shown, data on national trends presents the problem that it sharply understates insurgent and terrorist success until and when it reaches a national wide level, or effectively divides the country. It does not show where insurgent movements are strong and focus their efforts during the years it takes to achieve a major national impact, and it does not show enough about the patterns in terrorism to indicate where and why they have the most impact. As such national trend data can be falsely reassuring, and particularly when the insurgent or terrorist effort is concentrating on winning influence and control, or seeking to divide the country.

At the same time, there are serious problems in assessing the regional patterns in violence. It is always possible for an extremist group to find vulnerable target areas in any open, functioning society, and Iraq's Sunni and Shi'ite extremists have done this – often focusing a high profile attacks that gain national and media attention rather than consistent patterns of attack or efforts to control territory or gain influence through violence. Moreover, many experts warn that Sunni extremist groups, and Al Qaeda in particular, increasingly seek to broaden their range of high visibility attacks in Shi'ite and Kurdish areas to show no Shi'ite or Kurdish area is safe

As noted earlier, there is an even more serious problem in assessing both the regional and total statistics on violence. The Iraqi government and KRG do not report their own acts of repression, violence, and political arrests as part of the statistics they issue and such data is almost impossible to collect – although the US State Department report on Human rights, UNAMI, and virtually every NGO that examine the conduct of the central government and KRG warn such problem are endemic. As a result, both the regional and total patterns of violence sharply understate the impact of state-driven repression and terrorism and its rise as tensions have grown between the Maliki government and its Sunni opposition.

There also have been fewer reliable reports on the regional patterns of violence since US official sources in Iraq stopped reporting in late 2011 and early 2012. Moreover, the sources that are available do show that violence has tended to focus on the same provinces and cities – largely because of their political or religious importance -- but it is clear that there is no consistency over time.

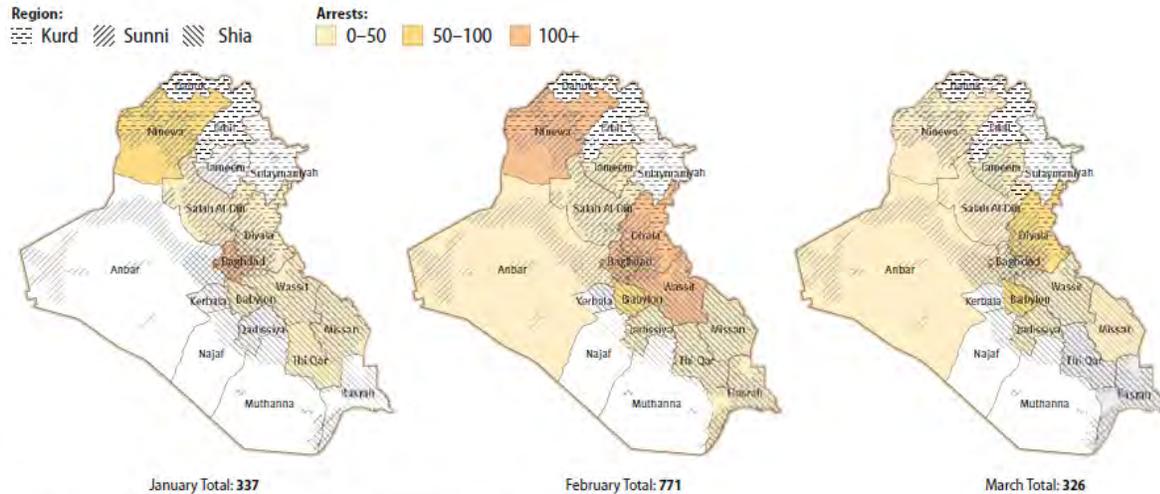
The following figures are more illustrations of past trends and methodology than clear pictures of current trends, but they still provide some insight into what is happening in Iraq.

- **Figure 10** shows patterns in arrests by region. While they are concentrated in populated areas, it is clear that patterns can vary sharply in relatively short amounts of time. It also clear from other data that this indicator of violence does not correlate well in time to either acts of violence or casualties, and illustrates the difficulties in assessing the overall patterns in violence.
- **Figure 11** shows patterns in targeted acts of violence by key event and province. These data emphasize major attacks and significant events – indicators that may often have more individual impact on politics and popular perceptions than the total level of violence and casualties, but whose individual impact is often hard to assess or quantify.
- **Figure 12** shows the locality of key acts of terrorism by quarter. These indicators again show a focus on key populated areas or targets with religious or political significance. The data do, however, lack background on the attacker and target.

- **Figure 13** shows the pattern of violence by week in early 2012. These data are useful largely as warning about relying on stable local patterns if cases where the attackers have high mobility and deliberately strike outside their base areas.
- **Figure 14** shows the patterns in total violence by province for all of 2012. Once again, they illustrate a relatively consistent emphasis on more populated areas. Areas with high levels of ethnic and sectarian tension, and areas with high political and media visibility. They also reflect the relatively high mobility extremists have in attacking diverse targets. Many other cases are much more localized.

Figure 10: Arrests on Terrorism Charges (1/14/2012-4/10/2012)

SELECTED ARRESTS ON TERRORISM CHARGES,
1/14/2012-4/10/2012



Note: This table provides examples of arrests this quarter. It does not purport to be all-inclusive, nor presume to imply the guilt or innocence of those arrested. Analysis of incidents based on best available information, as of 4/10/2012.

Source: SIGIR analysis of open-source documents in Arabic and English, 1/2012-4/2012.

Source: SIGIR Quarterly Report, April 2012, p. 81.

Figure 11: Selected Acts of Apparent Targeted Violence, 1/11/2012–4/10/2012

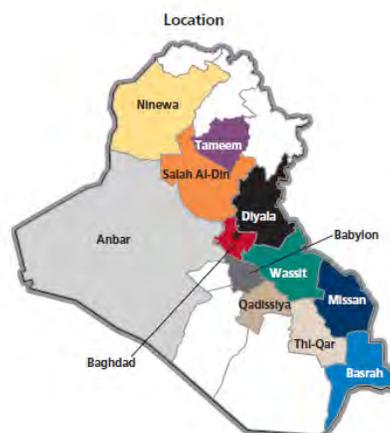
TABLE 4.2
SELECTED ACTS OF APPARENT TARGETED VIOLENCE, 1/11/2012–4/10/2012
Non-security Officials and Other Prominent Civilians

TARGETS/VICTIMS	LOCATION	DATE	CIRCUMSTANCES	RESULT
MOF official	●	1/29	Gunman attack	Killed
Deputy of al-Bayda' party	●	1/31	IED and VBIED attack on home	Unharmred; many others injured
Correctional deputy	●	2/7	Gunman attack	Killed
Baghdad Investment Commission Chairman	●	2/11	Gunman attack (silencers used)	Unharmred; guard injured
Tribal sheik	●	2/11	Gunman attack on family	Killed; wife, child, and brother killed
Tribal sheik	●	2/18	Gunman attack on home	Killed; son wounded
Criminal judge	●	2/18	Gunman attack on home	Killed
College professor	●	2/25	Gunman attack on home	Unharmred; 2 sons injured
Criminal judge	●	2/25	IED attack on home	Unharmred
Deputies to Ayatollah al-Sistani	●	2/27	Hand grenade attack on home	3 unharmred
Tribal sheik	●	2/28	Gunman attack on convoy	Killed; wife and 2 children injured
Lawyer	●	3/2	Gunman attack	Killed
Deputy to Ayatollah al-Sistani	●	3/3	IED	Unharmred
Assistant director of Civilian Affairs	●	3/4	SVBIED attack on car	Unharmred; daughter unharmred
Investigative judge	●	3/6	IED attack on office	IED disarmed
Doctor	●	3/7	Gunman attack on home	Unharmred; 2 family members injured
Al-Iraqiya deputy/MP	●	3/11	IED attack on convoy	Unharmred

Security Officials

TARGETS/VICTIMS	LOCATION	DATE	CIRCUMSTANCES	RESULT
SOI commander	●	1/18	Gunman attack on home	Killed; 4 children killed
SOI member	●	1/19	Gunman attack on home	Killed; wife and mother killed
MOI intelligence officer	●	1/24	IED attack on home	Killed; 10 family members killed
Iraqi Police officer	●	1/24	Gunman attack on home	Killed; 4 family members wounded
Police officials	●	1/25	Gunman attack on home	2 killed
Iraqi Army officer	●	1/29	SVBIED attack	Injured; 2 students injured
Iraqi Army officer	●	1/31	SVBIED attack	Injured
SOI commander	●	1/31	IED attack on home	Injured
SOI member	●	2/1	Gunman attack	Killed
Iraqi Army officer	●	2/7	Gunman attack on home	Unharmred; wife killed; child injured
MOI official	●	2/11	Gunman attack on car	Killed
Iraqi Army officer	●	2/13	Gunman attack	Killed; 2 assistants killed
Iraqi Police officers	●	2/13	Gunman/grenade attack on home	Killed; wife and sons killed
Iraqi Army brigadier general	●	2/14	Gunman attack (silencers used)	Killed
Iraqi Army brigadier general	●	2/18	Gunman attack on car	Injured
MOD brigadier general	●	2/18	Gunman attack on car (silencers used)	Several injured

Continued in next column



TARGETS/VICTIMS	LOCATION	DATE	CIRCUMSTANCES	RESULT
Police officials	●	2/19	Gunman attack on SOI Checkpoint	2 SOI killed; 1 Iraqi Police officer killed
Police colonel	●	2/20	SVBIED attack	Killed
Iraqi Army officer	●	2/26	Gunman attack on checkpoint	Killed
SOI commander	●	2/26	IED attack on SOI convoy	Killed; 1 soldier injured
Witness protection official	●	2/27	Gunman attack on Criminal Court	Killed
Iraqi Army officers	●	2/27	IED attack on convoy	2 injured
Correctional security officer	●	2/29	Explosives attack on convoy	Killed; 3 others injured
MOI officer	●	3/1	Gunman attack on home/car	Killed
MOD officer	●	3/4	IED attack	Injured
Iraqi Police officers	●	3/5	Gunman attack on checkpoint	3 killed; 3 injured
Iraqi Police officers	●	3/6	Suicide bomb	4 injured
Iraqi Police officers	●	3/7	IED attack on convoy	1 killed; 2 injured
Iraqi Police investigator	●	3/8	SVBIED attack on car	Killed
Iraqi Police officer	●	3/10	IED attack on home	Unharmred; 1 other killed, 4 injured
SOI member	●	3/10	Gunman attack	Killed
Iraqi Police officers	●	3/12	Gunman attack	5 killed; 2 wounded
Iraqi Police officers	●	3/14	Gunman attack	2 killed; 3 wounded
SOI member	●	3/15	IED attack on home	Killed
SOI member	●	3/18	IED attack	3 killed
SOI member	●	3/19	Gunman attack on home	Killed; 4 family members killed
Iraqi Police officers	●	3/20	Explosives attack on convoy	1 killed; 2 wounded
Iraqi Army officer	●	3/27	IED attack on Army patrol	1 killed; 1 injured
Iraqi Army colonel	●	3/28	IED attack on home	Unharmred
SOI member	●	3/31	Gunman attack on home	Killed; wife and son killed

Note: This table provides examples of assassinations, attempted assassinations, and other small-scale acts of violence that appear to have been aimed at specific persons or groups this quarter. It does not purport to be all-inclusive, nor presume to imply the attackers' respective motives.

Source: SIGIR Quarterly Report, April 2012, p. 78.

Figure 12 – Part One: SIGIR Estimates of Patterns of Violence By Quarter

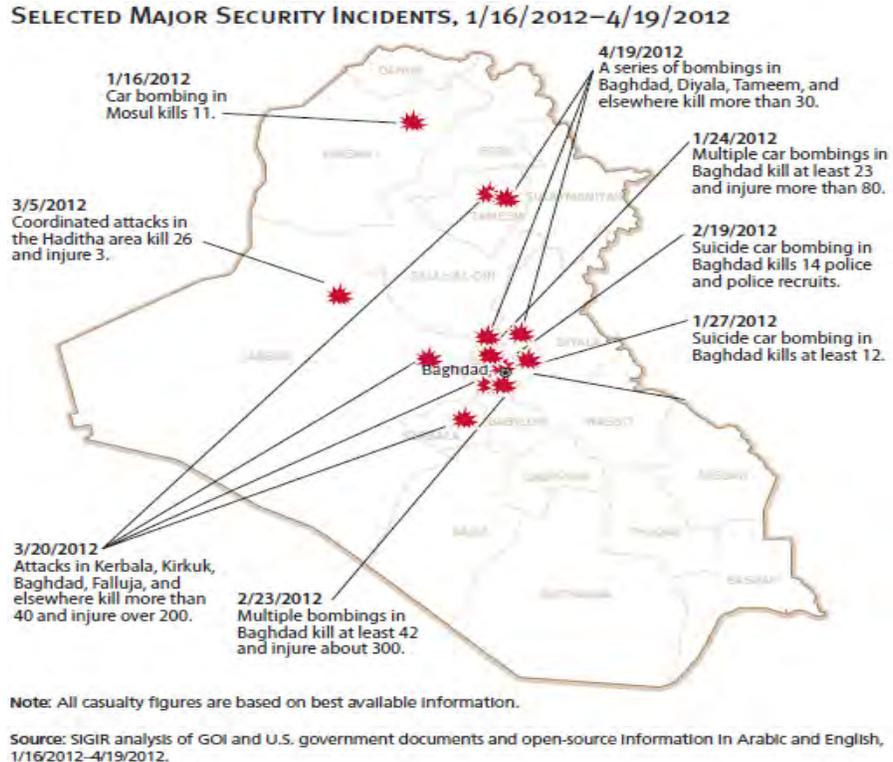
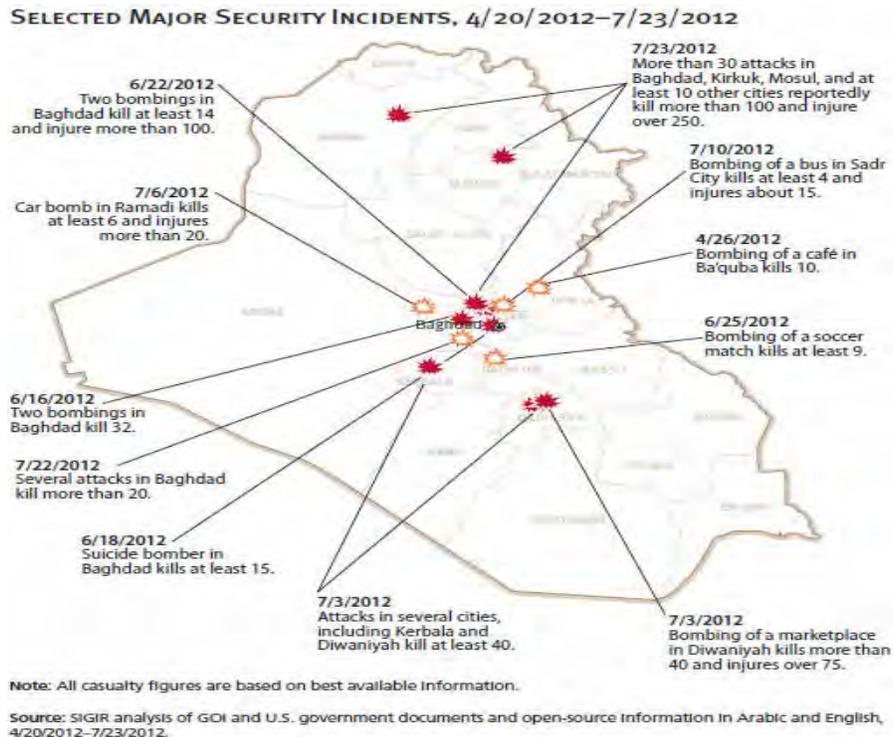
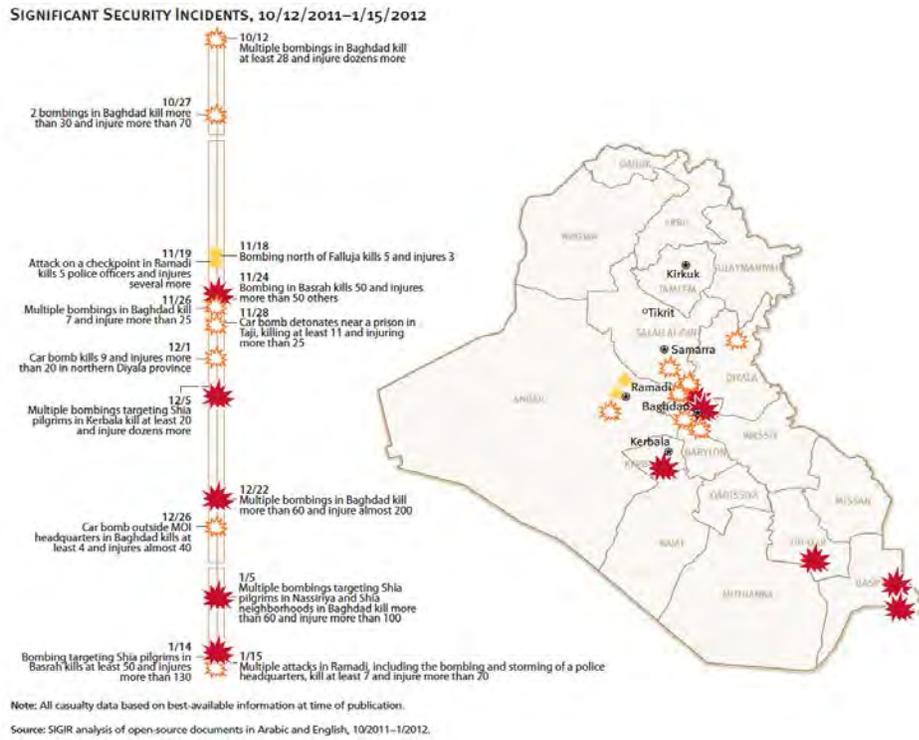


Figure 12 – Part Two: SIGIR Estimates of Patterns of Violence By Quarter



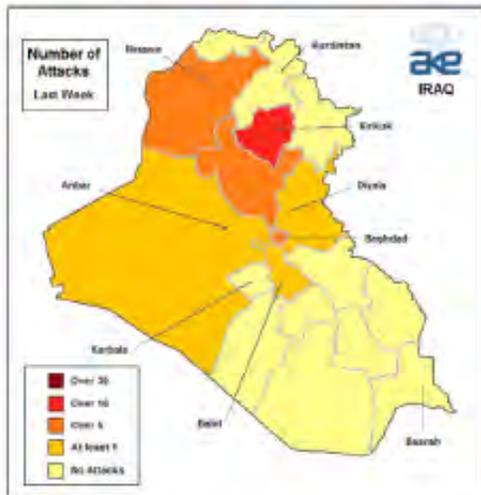
Source: SIGIR Quarterly Report, January 2012, p. 8.

Figure 13 – Part One: AKE Estimates of Patterns of Violence By Quarter

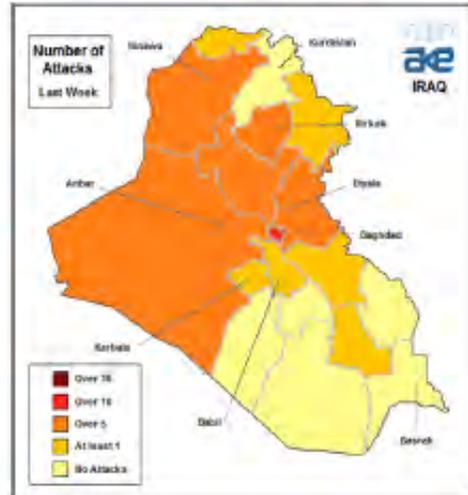
Incidents during January 2012

Below is a weekly reporting by [AKE](#) of attacks occurring within Iraq. The map is organized by province. An attack constitutes a bombing, shooting, rocket/mortar attack, kidnap or stabbing.

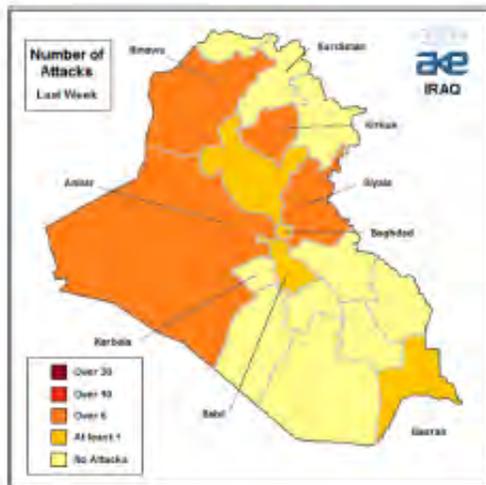
Weekly Security Update 04 January



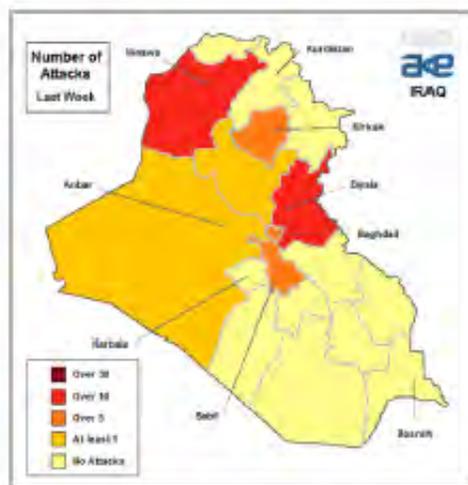
Weekly Security Update 13 January



Weekly Security Update 18 January



Weekly Security Update 26 January



Source: [Iraq Business News](#)

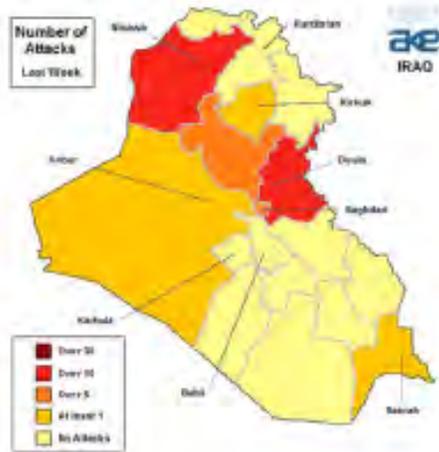
Source: Civil-Military Fusion Center, Iraq: A Month in Review, May 2012, p. 1; More up to date AKE weekly security estimates can be found at <http://www.iraq-businessnews.com/?s=security+update&x=0&y=0>.

Figure 13 – Part Two: AKE Estimates of Patterns of Violence By Quarter

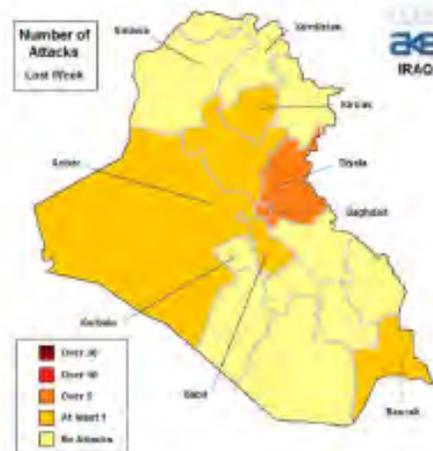
Incidents during February 2012

Below is a weekly reporting by *AKE* of attacks occurring within Iraq by province. *AKE* considers an attack a bombing, shooting, rocket/mortar attack, kidnap or stabbing.

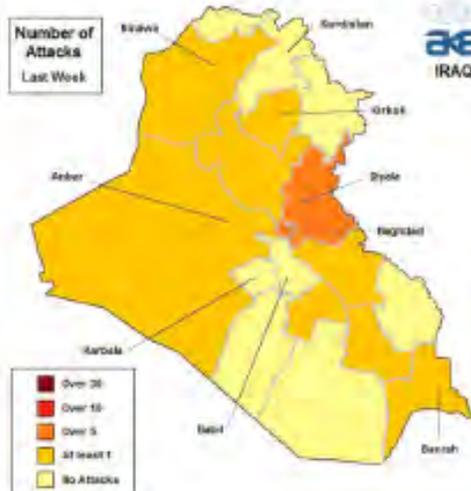
Weekly Security Update 09 Feb



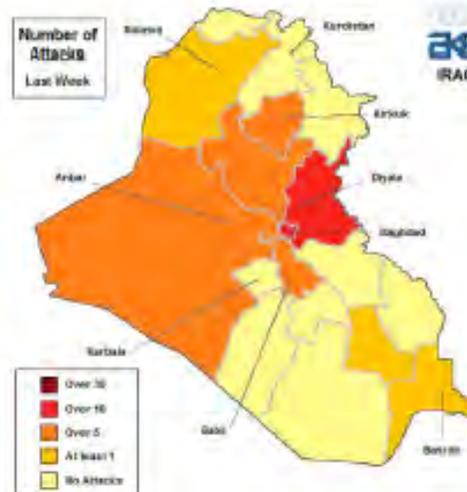
Weekly Security Update 15 Feb



Weekly Security Update 22 Feb



Weekly Security Update 01 Mar

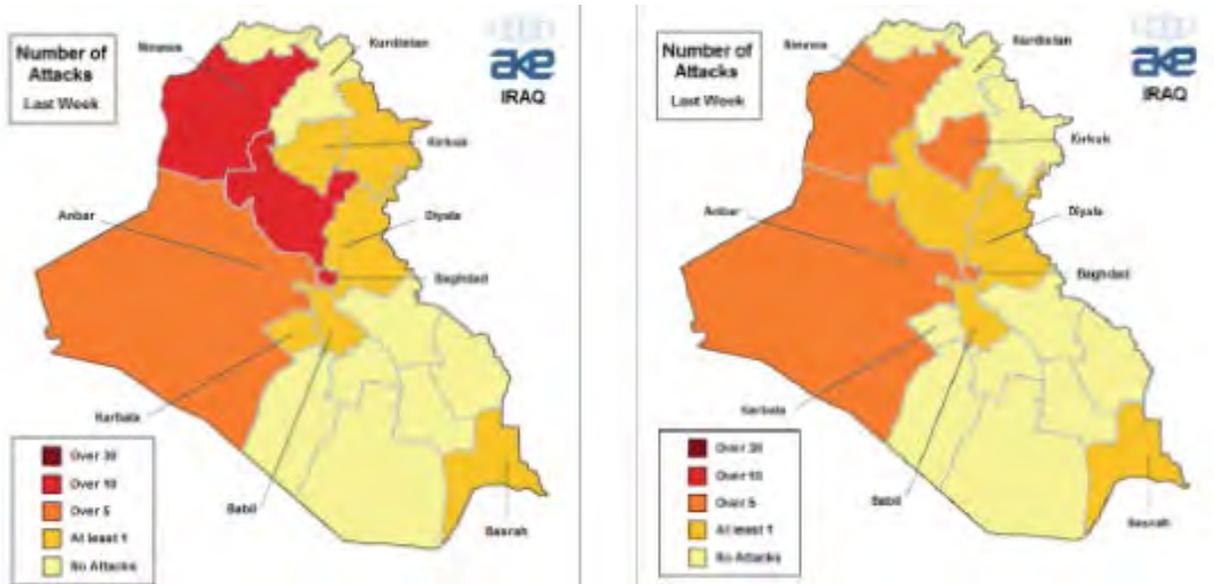


Source: Civil-Military Fusion Center, Iraq: A Month in Review, May 2012, p. 1; More up to date AKE weekly security estimates can be found at <http://www.iraq-businessnews.com/?s=security+update&x=0&y=0>.

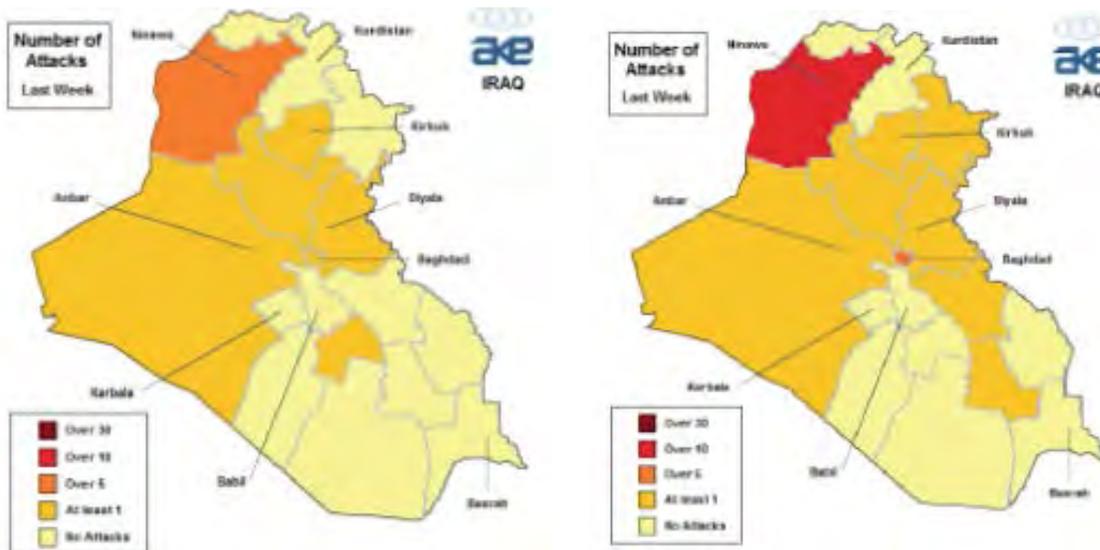
Figure 13 – Part Three: AKE Estimates of Patterns of Violence By Quarter

Incidents during March 2012

Weekly Security Incidents 8 March Weekly Security Incidents 15 March



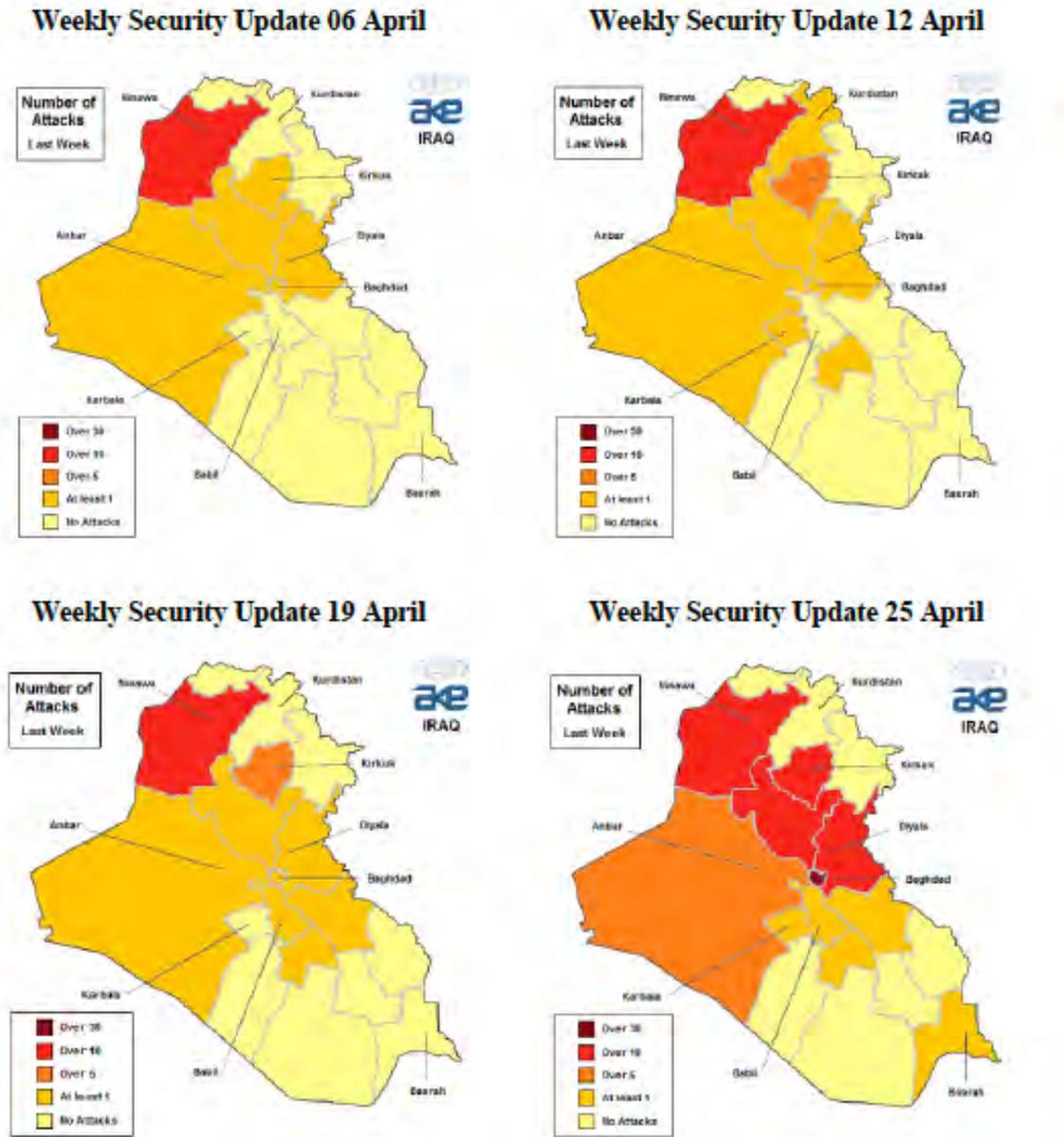
Weekly Security Incidents 21 March Weekly Security Incidents 30 March



Source: Civil-Military Fusion Center, Iraq: A Month in Review, May 2012, p. 1; More up to date AKE weekly security estimates can be found at <http://www.iraq-businessnews.com/?s=security+update&x=0&y=0>,

Figure 13 – Part Four: AKE Estimates of Patterns of Violence By Quarter

Incidents during April 2012



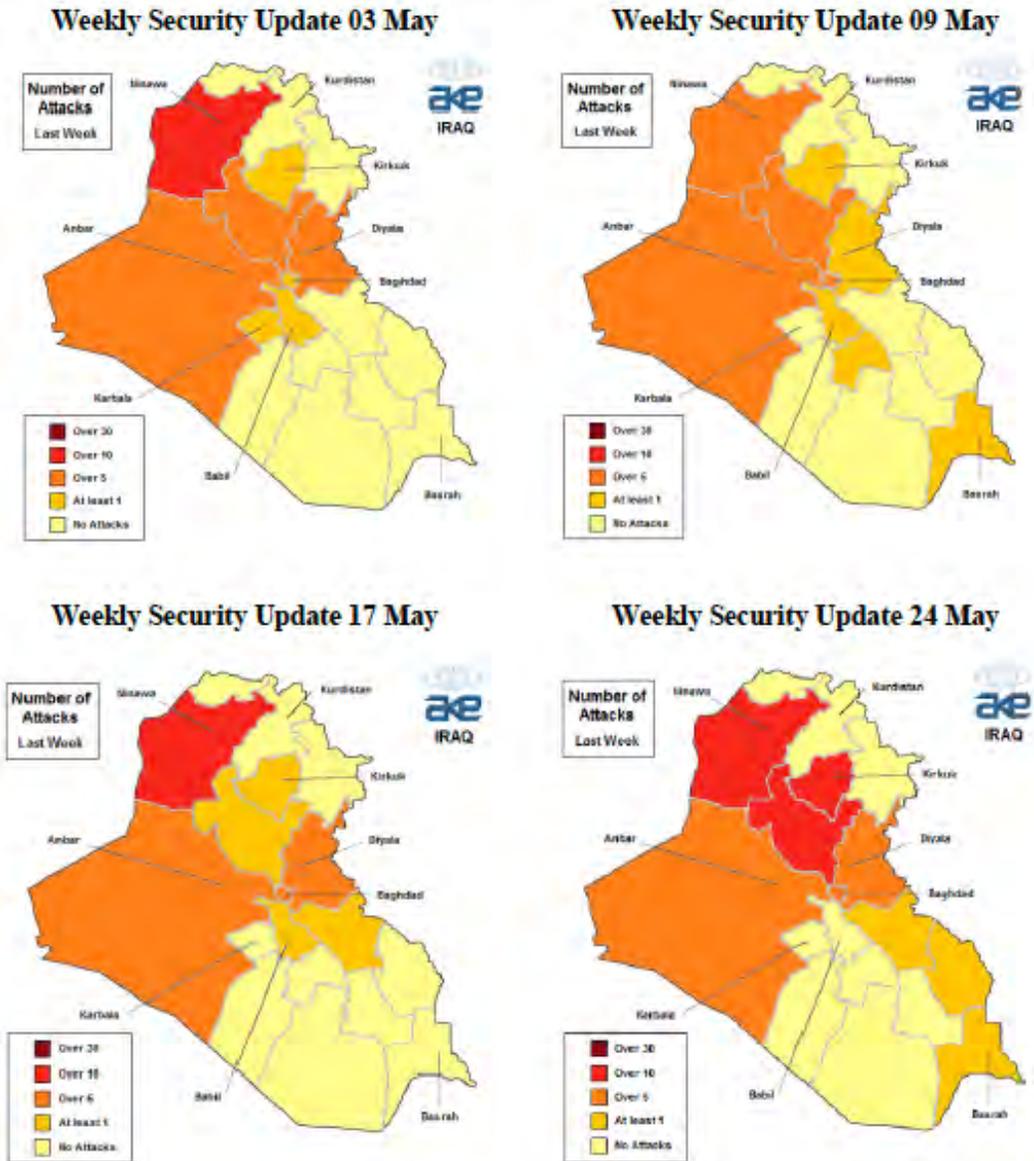
Source: [Iraq Business News](#)

The above, is a weekly reporting by [AKE](#) of attacks occurring within Iraq. The map is organized by province. An attack constitutes a bombing, shooting, rocket/mortar attack, kidnap or stabbing.

Source: Civil-Military Fusion Center, Iraq: A Month in Review, May 2012, p. 1; More up to date AKE weekly security estimates can be found at <http://www.iraq-businessnews.com/?s=security+update&x=0&y=0>,

Figure 13 – Part Five: AKE Estimates of Patterns of Violence By Quarter

Incidents during May 2012



Source: [Iraq Business News](http://www.iraq-businessnews.com)

*The above, is a weekly reporting by **AKE** of attacks occurring within Iraq. The map is organized by province. An attack constitutes a bombing, shooting, rocket/mortar attack, kidnap or stabbing.*

Source: Civil-Military Fusion Center, Iraq: A Month in Review, May 2012, p. 1; More up to date AKE weekly security estimates can be found at <http://www.iraq-businessnews.com/?s=security+update&x=0&y=0>.

Figure 14: Iraqi Body Count Estimates of Patterns of Violence By Province in 2012

Province Deaths in 2012 per 100,000 Population Capital of Province

Diyala	561	38.87	1,443,173	Baqubah
Salah al-Din	518	36.79	1,408,174	Tikrit
Anbar	505	32.34	1,561,407	Ramadi
Ninewa	859	26.27	3,270,422	Mosul
Tameem	296	21.21	1,395,614	Kirkuk
Babylon	337	18.51	1,820,673	Hillah
Baghdad	1,099	15.58	7,055,196	Baghdad
Wassit	63	5.20	1,210,591	Kut
Qadissiya	52	4.58	1,134,313	Diwaniyah
Basrah	102	4.03	2,531,997	Basra
Thi-Qar	65	3.54	1,836,181	Nasiriyah
Karbala	33	3.09	1,066,567	Karbala
Missan	20-22.	2.06	971,448	Amarah
Sulaymaniyah	37	1.97	1,878,764	Sulaymaniyah
Erbil	10	0.62	1,612,692	Erbil
Dahuk	6	0.53	1,128,745	Dahuk
Najaf	6	0.47	1,285,484	Najaf
Muthanna	1	0.14	719,069	Samawah

Source: adapted from Iraqi Body Count, <http://www.iraqbodycount.org/analysis/numbers/2012/>.

The Impact of Al Qaeda and Iraq's Militias

All of these sets of data do show provide broad measures of the extent to which Al Qaeda and other extremist movements and militias have become a growing threat to the Iraqi people. The following chapters do show that the causes of Iraq's violence are much broader than the actions of the violent movements that commit most of the actual bombings and killings.

Marginalized communities, like Iraq's Sunnis, have lost confidence in the government's ability or willingness to protect their neighborhoods. As a result, they have once again turned to armed militant groups and "cleric militias" for protection, retaliation, and defense of their neighborhoods. The tit-for-tat cycle of violence between the Shia-led government security forces, and the primarily Sunni-affiliated militant groups has led to increased sectarian violence, and threatens to descend Iraq towards all out civil conflict if left unaddressed.¹¹¹

Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI)/Islamic State of Iran and Syria (ISIS)

Nevertheless, this does not excuse or justify the patterns of violence shown in the previous Figures or those to follow. It is movements like Al Qaeda that commit the worst acts of violence and do most of the killing in these Figures.

The exact numbers for which Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) – also known as the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI) and now the Islamic State of Iran and Syria (ISIS) – have responsibility are impossible to determine. AQI/ISIS does not always take credit for its violent acts. There is also a tendency for governments, analysts, and media to attribute any act that does not have a clear other source to AQI/ISIS. In most cases where Shiites are targets, however, and in many where that attack is a terrorist act designed to polarize Iraq by attacking both Shi'ites and Sunnis, virtually all experts agree that AQI/ISIS is the most common cause

AQI/ISIS has targeted Iraq's Kurds, as well. In September 2013 ISIS took credit for a deadly pair of suicide car bombs in the semi-autonomous, and relatively stable Kurdish region.¹¹² The attacks targeted the Kurdish regional Interior Ministry and security agencies in downtown Erbil killing six troops and injuring 30, and were the deadliest attacks in the KRG since 2007.¹¹³ In October 2013, ISW reported that "masked gunmen carrying weapons and displaying the black flag of AQI appeared at a protest in Ramadi, and they seemed to act with impunity. AQI's appearance at this site in the middle of October reflects its desire to augment its military successes with political gains."¹¹⁴ General David Petraeus, who led the coalition during the 2007-08 military surge, commented on AQI's disturbing reemergence in October of 2013.

The aftermath of the 2003 US-led invasion and overthrow of Saddam Hussein's regime, and the mistakes that followed, left many openings for AQI/ISIS to recover. In December 2013, Michael Knights enumerated several of the factors that contributed to AQI's resurgence, including "the release of large numbers of experienced militants from U.S. detention facilities, changes in the balance of foreign and Iraqi fighters within the movement, the withdrawal of U.S. forces, and determined attempts by Al-Qaeda in Iraq to learn from its mistakes."¹¹⁵

General Petraeus stated in an article in Foreign Policy's October 29, 2013n edition called "How We Won Iraq" that:¹¹⁶

"The news out of Iraq is, once again, exceedingly grim. The resurrection of Al Qaeda in Iraq -- which was on the ropes at the end of the surge in 2008 -- has led to a substantial increase in ethno-sectarian terrorism in the Land of the Two Rivers. The civil war next door in Syria has complicated matters greatly, aiding the jihadists on both sides of the border and bringing greater Iranian involvement in Mesopotamia.... In many

respects, Iraq today looks tragically similar to the Iraq of 2006, complete with increasing numbers of horrific, indiscriminate attacks by Iraq's Al Qaeda affiliate and its network of extremists. Add to that the ongoing sectarian civil war in Syria -- which is, in many aspects, a regional conflict being fought there -- and the situation in Iraq looks even more complicated than it was in 2006 and thus even more worrisome -- especially given the absence American combat forces."

Once again, the data on violence since the US began to lose access to reliable reporting in mid-2011 have all of the limits described in the previous chapter, and highlight the problems in assessing patterns in violence largely in terms of casualties inflicted by extremists and insurgent without regard to the actions of states, politics, security forces, and the underlying causes of violence. UN and other reporting does, however, provide a grim picture of several key trends. The death toll rose steadily during 2012 and 2013, car bombs, suicide operations as and multiple-location, mass-casualty attack increased.

As is described in Chapter VIII, AQI attacks expanded in scope, frequency, and intensity throughout Iraq in 2013 as the organization sought to regain territory. AQI and its subsidiaries (ISIS and ISIL) stepped up attacks across Iraq to exploit the situation and extend their area of influence at a time when Iraq's military and political leaders also had to deal with their own internal power struggles, maneuvering for the upcoming 2014 general elections, dealing with the spillover of the ongoing Syrian war, Shi'ite militia and extremism, and Arab-Kurdish tensions..

Additionally, as the flow of foreign money, weapons and fighters spilled into Iraq on the way to Syria, AQI increasingly benefited in terms of volunteers, money, Sunni anger, and links to Sunni Jihadist movements in Syria that helped in step up its attacks and killings. As Kenneth Pollack pointed out in December 2013, "The wider impact of the Syrian civil war has exacerbated the Sunni-Shi'a rift in Iraq by conjuring the possibility that in a new Iraqi civil war, the Sunnis could expect greater help from the Sunni Arab states than they did the first time around".¹¹⁷

Other Violent Movements and Militias

At the same time, the previous data also reflect the impact of a reemergence of the militias that were largely disbanded after the 2006-2007 -- trends discussed in Chapter IX. In September 2013, shortly after deadly explosions rocked Sadr City, killing almost 100 people, the NYT reports that "traces of the government vanished" and "security forces withdrew" as "men in black outfits that identity them as militiamen" emerged in a visible display of force and presence.¹¹⁸

Sadr's Mahdi Army militiamen are not the only ones on the scene. Asaib al-Haq, another Shia militia that splintered off of the Sadrist Movement and now rivals Moqtada Sadr's Mahdi Army, has also increased its activity in light of ongoing violence. NYT reports that the political wing of the Iranian-backed militia has made inroads with Maliki's government, in what some see as an attempt by the embattled Prime Minister to "maintain control over the country's restive Shia population and, ultimately, retain power after the next national elections..."¹¹⁹ Members of Asaib al-Haq and other Shia militias are at times given government identification and weapons.

Sunni militias are another threat this is returning to the scene. Since the withdrawal of US forces, Al Qaeda's affiliate in Iraq, which had moderated its position in order to gain influence with Iraqis, has redoubled its efforts against Shia and Kurdish communities, as well as Maliki's government. In July 2012 the leader of the Islamic State of Iraq, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, announced the renewed campaign. "We are starting a new phase in our struggle with a plan we named 'Breaking the walls,' and we remind you of your priority to free the Muslim prisoners," al-Baghdadi added, "At the top

of your priorities regarding targets is to chase and liquidate the judges, the investigators and the guards.”¹²⁰

Prime Minister Maliki has called for an end to all militia activity, despite his association with some Shia militant groups. In May 2013 Maliki stated, “We will chase down all the illegal militias and armed gangs that want to instigate a wave of societal fighting,” adding, “As far as we are concerned this constitutes a red line.”¹²¹

If this trend continues, the increased role of militias in Iraq has the potential of destabilizing an already volatile political and security environment. If the state apparatus retreats from the scene as violence continues and militias reemerge and expand their presence across Iraq’s communities, the country risks a descent back to the spiraling levels of sectarian fighting and civil war it suffered in 2006 and 2007, before the US-led surge.

As disaffected Sunni militant groups increase their attacks on Shia and Kurdish communities, and what they see as fair targets of an illegitimate Iranian-backed Shia government, and Shia militias reemerge to protect areas state security forces cannot or will not defend, tit-for-tat reprisal killings threaten to descend the country into sectarian turmoil and risks tipping into civil war. As Jane Arraf of the Christian Science Monitor reported, Iraqis are “further at odds with each other. There is a real lack of faith on part of Iraqis that their politicians represent them, and in many places, a lack of faith that their security forces can protect them. Almost everything is in play and almost everything feels unsettled.”¹²²

It is important to note, however, that Prime Minister Maliki’s government has not backed away from playing a direct role in Iraq’s security environment, and power brokers such as Moqtada Sadr have continued to urge restraint. How these trends continue going forward is impossible to predict, in particular with Sadr’s February 2014 announcement that he is withdrawing from politics, but will depend largely on the government’s ability to effectively suppress, sideline, or incorporate its political opponents.

IV. THE 2013 SURGE IN VIOLENCE AND NASCENT CIVIL WAR

All of these issues and uncertainties are important in considering a surge of violence that has taken place in 2013 and continued not 2014. This violence is still limited compared to late 2004 through mid-2009, but has delivered the bloodiest fighting in over half a decade. This rise in violence has not yet led to a broad popular response among the Shi'ite portion of Iraq's population, or anything like the rise in violence that took place between 2004-2006, but it is a warning that a combination of internal tensions in Iraq and the impact of outside forces like the Syrian civil war are now reemerging as a major threat. It also has led to an increasing focus by the Iraqi central government and security forces on Sunni areas and factions, further polarizing already polarized political conflicts within the Iraqi government and national politics.

Rising Numbers of Dead and Wounded

There is no easy way to judge the seriousness of the trends through the end of 2013. The data show that Iraq did not come close to reaching the peak levels of violence and civil war in 2013 that it experienced between 2005 and 2007. They also show, however, that it did experience a drastic rise in Sunni-driven extremist violence against Shi'ites, and in the impact of the spillover of sectarian conflict and Al Qaeda operations in Syria. Virtually all sources agree that the trends in violence and casualties in 2013 had the potential to grow much worse and consistently affect the perceptions of all Iraqis and Iraqi factions. There clearly is a serious risk of a return to either Iraq's past history of violent state-driven repression, or to the more recent pattern of civil war in the mid-2000s.

This trend had become clear by May 2013. Over 1,000 people were killed in May. The UN envoy in Iraq, Martin Kobler warned that, "This is a sad record," and as the following data show, his warning proved to be all too accurate in the months that followed. In July 2013 the *Economist* wrote that the "nightmare" has returned.¹²³ The Brookings Institution's Kenneth Pollack offered that the "Iraq has been rekindled...the fire is burning again".¹²⁴

There was equal agreement among most experts that that the rise in violence in 2013 resulted from a mix of factors, from disdain over Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's centralization of power, to spillover from the Syrian conflict that has contributed to the rise in violence, to ongoing tensions with the Kurds over hydrocarbons, and "crude for blood" battles over Iraq's energy resources.¹²⁵ Together, this confluence of factors led to political tension and conflict at the top, the government's inability to deliver services, growing public agitation, and a rise in ethnic strife that has spilled over into bloodshed and sectarian war.¹²⁶

While the broad trends are consistent, much depends on what is counted and when:

- **Figure 15** shows reporting on the global patterns in terrorism by the State Department that helps put these trends in perspective by showing that the level of Iraqi violence caused by terrorism was already high enough in 2012 to rank second in the world. While such State Department reporting does have serious problems in terms of definition and absolute numbers, it is consistent enough to provide a warning of the seriousness of what is taking place.
- **Figure 16** displays the UNAMI estimates from 2008 to the end of 2013. The data in the notes extend to the end of 2013, with the exception that the UN warns it cannot provide accurate counts for the rising violence in Anbar. It is perhaps the most accurate estimate now available, although it suffers from all of the problems discussed earlier, and provides a grim picture of the risk Iraq could revert to civil war.

- **Figure 17** shows similar Iraqi Body Count Data. The Data on monthly totals highlight the seriousness of the rise in 2013, and also show that violence in Iraq does not have the same regular cyclical patterns that show up in Afghanistan – largely because the seasons have far less impact in Iraq.
- **Figure 18** shows a close correlation between the UNAMI and Iraqi Body Count data during much of 2013.
- **Figure 19** shows more serious differences between sources, highlighting the uncertainties in focusing on any one-month or period.
- **Figure 20** shows UNAMI data comparing killed and wounded by month. Like the refugee data discussed later, it highlights the fact that focusing on killed can be a deeply misleading index of the levels of violence and their human costs that drastically understates the real world situation. It is also clear that there is no direct correlation between the numbers of killed and wounded.
- **Figure 21** uses Iraqi Body Count estimate to illustrate the patterns of violence by province in late 2012 through January 2014. It shows that violence rose steadily along the ethnic and sectarian fault lines, but remained more limited in the south and low in the KRG.

The full range of patterns in **Figure 21** is not apparent from the data because the sources do not show who committed the acts of violence, the nature of the targets, and the context in which violence occurred. As the following chapters make clear, however, most incidents were caused by fighting between the Iraqi security forces and Sunnis, or by Sunni attacks by extremist groups like Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) targeted against Iraqi officials and security personnel or designed to create violent divisions between Sunni and Shi'ite. Some incidents do reflect Shi'ite attacks on Sunnis and other violent infighting between political and tribal factions. Some also reflect Arab, Kurd, and minority violence.

There is no reliable way to quantify these trends. It is clear from other reporting however, that the number of AQI/ISIS attacks on Shi'a targets stepped up in late December 2013, and continued in to early 2014, after AQI/ISIS forces took Ramadi and Fallujah.

Figure 15: Second Among the Top Ten Centers of Terrorist Activity in 2012

*Ten countries with the most terrorist attacks, 2012*¹²⁷

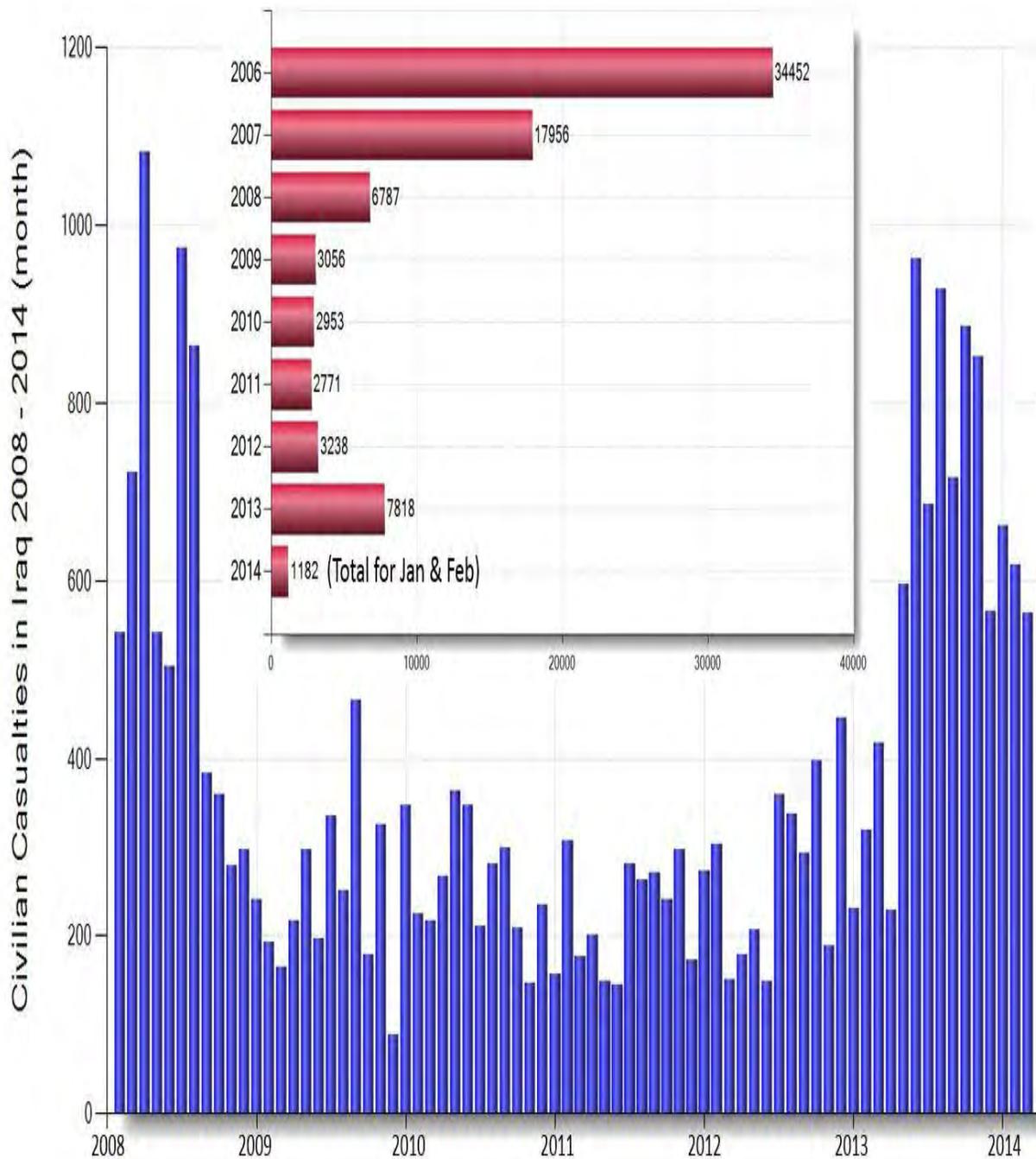
Country	Total Attacks	Total Killed	Total Wounded	Average Number Killed per Attack	Average Number Wounded per Attack
Pakistan	1404	1848	3643	1.32	2.59
Iraq	1271	2436	6641	1.92	5.23
Afghanistan	1023	2632	3715	2.57	3.63
India	557	231	559	0.41	1.00
Nigeria	546	1386	1019	2.54	1.87
Thailand	222	174	897	0.78	4.04
Yemen	203	365	427	1.80	2.10
Somalia	185	323	397	1.75	2.15
Philippines	141	109	270	0.77	1.91
Syria	133	657	1787	4.94	13.44

Ten perpetrator groups with the most attacks worldwide, 2012

Perpetrator Group Name	Total Attacks	Total Killed	Average Number Killed per Attack
Taliban	525	1842	3.51
Boko Haram	364	1132	3.11
Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI)/Islamic State of Iraq (ISI)	249	892	3.58
Maoists (India)/ Communist Party of India-Maoist	204	131	0.64
Al-Shabaab	121	278	2.30
Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)	108	282	2.61
Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP)	103	510	4.95
Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)	80	83	1.04
Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC)	71	122	1.72
Corsican National Liberation Front (FLNC)	58	0	0.00

Source: U.S. Department of State, "National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism: Annex of Statistical Information," Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, May 30, 2012, and US State Department, National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism: Annex of Statistical Information, Country Reports on Terrorism 2012.

Figure 16: Civilian Deaths in Iraq – Part One: Monthly Totals, 2008 – February (UNAMI)



Source: Dr. Abdullah Toukan, drawing on UNAMI data and a graphic model developed by the BBC, March 15, 2014.

Figure 16: Civilian Deaths in Iraq – Part Two: Monthly Totals of Killed and Injured November 2012-February 2014

Month	Civilian Casualties	Injured
February 2014**	564	1179
January 2014*	618	1052
December 2013	661	1201
November 2013	565	1186
October 2013	852	1793
September 2013	887	1957
August 2013	716	1936
July 2013	928	2109
June 2013	685	1610
May 2013	963	2191
April 2013	595	1481
March 2013	229	853
February 2013	418	704
January 2013	319	960
December 2012	230	655
November 2012	445	1306

Please note that all figures remain estimates until full investigation and analysis has been carried out.

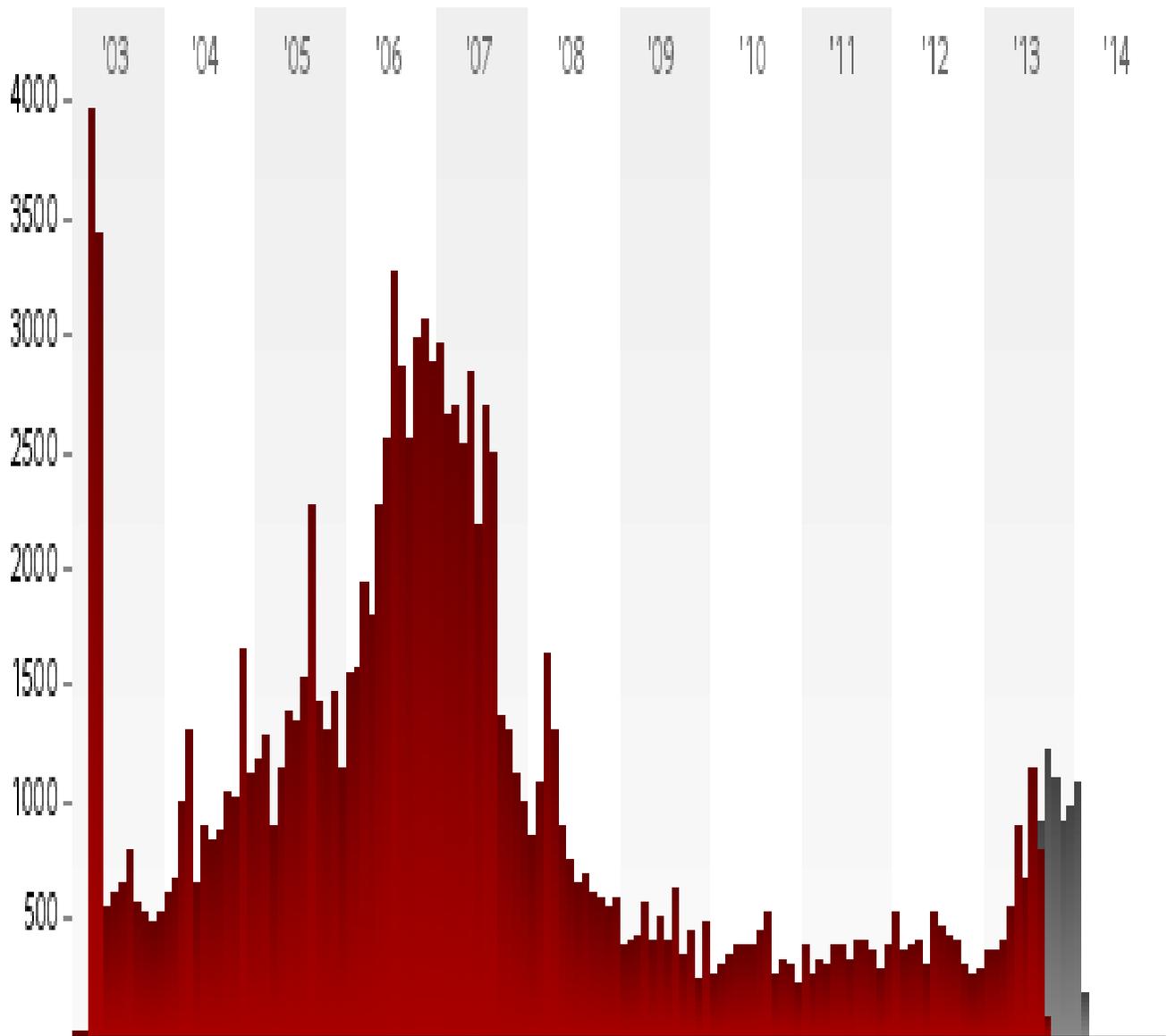
Note: At least 759 people killed were killed in December, 661 of them civilians. The total for 2013 was the highest in five years, but significantly below 2006 and 2007. In contrast, the Iraqi government reported that 7,154 people were killed in 2013, including security forces personnel and militants. Iraq Body Count said it had recorded 9,475 civilian deaths.

*UNAMI could not estimate total casualties after December 2014 because the fighting in Anbar had reach the point where it could not estimate the casualties in the area with the most intense fighting. According to releases by UNAMI, a total of 733 Iraqis were killed and another 1,229 were wounded in acts of terrorism and violence outside Anbar in January 2014. The number of civilians killed was 618 (including 178 civilian police), while the number of civilians injured was 1,052 (including 237 civilian police). A further 115 members of the Iraqi Security Forces were killed and 177 were injured not including casualties from Anbar operations.

**A total of 703 Iraqis were killed and another 1,381 were injured in acts of terrorism and violence outside Anbar in February 2014. The number of civilians killed was 564 (including 152 civilian police), while the number of civilians injured was 1,179 (including 262 civilian police). A further 139 members of the Iraqi Security Forces were killed and 202 were injured (not including casualties from Anbar operation).

Source: UNAMI, "UN Casualty Figures for February 2014, Anbar province excluded," Saturday, 01 March 2014 00:00, http://www.uniraq.org/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=1677:un-casualty-figures-for-february-2014-anbar-province-excluded&Itemid=633&lang=en; "Iraq's annual death toll highest in five years – UN," 1 January 2014 Last updated at 12:29 ET, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-25568687> and <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-26045127>; and Liz Sly, "In Iraq, a Sunni revolt raises specter of new War," *Washington Post*, January 6, 2014, http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/in-iraq-a-sunni-revolt-raises-specter-of-new-war/2014/01/06/280f9216-7714-11e3-b1c5-739e63e9c9a7_story.html.

Figure 17: Iraqi Body Count Estimate of Casualty Trends – Part One



IBC reports that these data are, “based on 35,074 database entries from the beginning of the war to 1 Sep 2013, and on monthly preliminary data from that date onwards. Preliminary data is shown in grey when applicable, and is based on approximate daily totals in the Recent Events section prior to full analysis. The full analysis extracts details such as the names or demographic details of individuals killed, the weapons that killed them and location amongst other details. The current range contains 12,365–12,867 deaths (10%–9.6%, a portion which may rise or fall over time) based on single-sourced reports. Graphs are based on the higher number in our totals. Gaps in recording and reporting suggest that even our highest totals to date may be missing many civilian deaths from violence.”

Source: Iraq Body Count, accessed February 5, 2014, <http://www.iraqbodycount.org/database/>.

Figure 17: Iraqi Body Count Estimate of Casualty Trends – Part Two

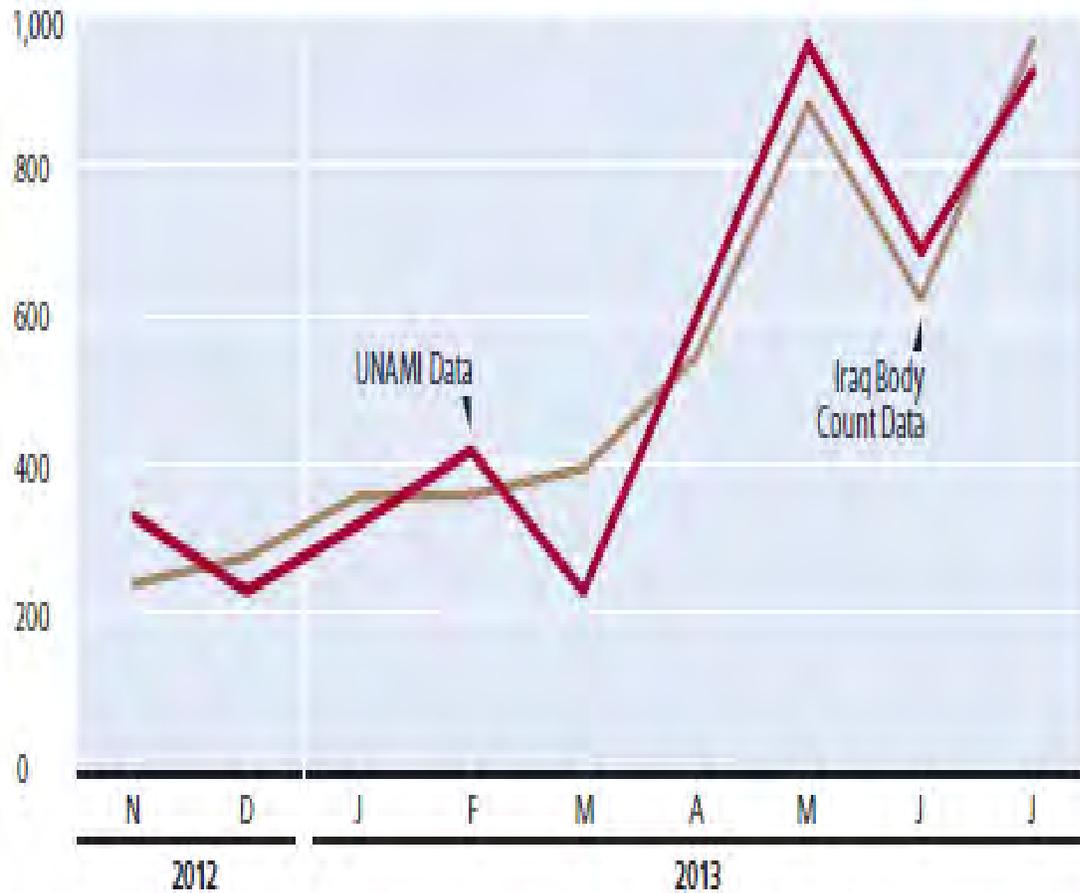
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	
2003	3	2	3977	3435	546	597	647	794	565	517	486	526	12,095
2004	610	663	1004	1303	654	901	825	874	1033	1016	1652	1112	11,647
2005	1188	1283	884	1139	1392	1342	1530	2275	1422	1298	1467	1133	16,353
2006	1544	1570	1940	1794	2271	2559	3279	2851	2559	2977	3064	2886	29,294
2007	2969	2652	2699	2538	2834	2192	2690	2481	1366	1295	1110	987	25,813
2008	847	1072	1637	1299	890	747	643	682	606	590	535	582	10,130
2009	372	403	426	567	390	501	407	618	333	435	226	475	5,153
2010	263	304	336	385	387	385	443	516	254	312	307	218	4,110
2011	389	252	311	289	381	386	308	401	397	366	279	388	4,147
2012	524	356	377	392	304	529	469	422	396	290	250	275	4,584
2013	357	360	403	545	888	659	1145	916	1221	1095	903	983	9,475
2014	1076	169											1,245

Iraq Body Count estimated a total of 116,541-128,026 documented civilian deaths from violence through August 18, 2013 – before the crisis in Anbar -- and stated that further analysis of the WikiLeaks' Iraq War Logs may add 11,000 civilian deaths. Its data are based on 32,864 database entries from the beginning of the war to 3 Jun 2013. It reports that, "The current range contains 12,305–12,803 deaths (11%–10.0%, a portion which may rise or fall over time) based on single-sourced reports. Graphs are based on the higher number in our totals. Gaps in recording and reporting suggest that even our highest totals to date may be missing many civilian deaths from violence.

Source: Iraq Body Count. Table accessed February 5, 2014, Text on totals before crisis in Anbar Accessed December 31, 2013, <http://www.iraqbodycount.org/database/>.

Figure 18: 2013 Civilian Deaths Increase Over End of 2012, UNAMI & Iraqi Body Count Data

Reported Civilian Deaths From Violence, by Month, 11/2012–7/2013

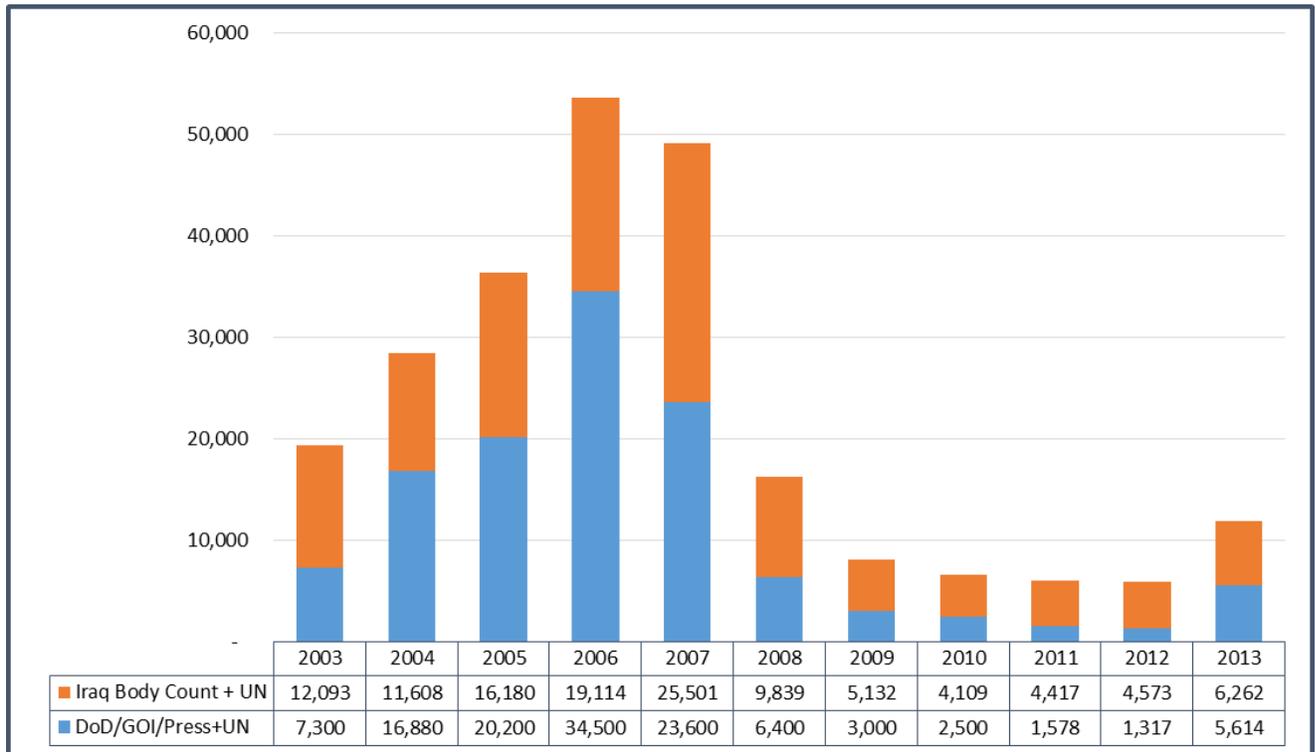


Note: Non-ISF civilian police are included among casualties; Iraq Body Count figures for June and July are provisional.

Sources: UNAMI, press releases, various dates, unami.unmissions.org; Iraq Body Count, Database, www.iraqbodycount.org, accessed 8/31/2013.

Source: As referenced in SIGIR, “Final Report to Congress,” September 9, 2013.

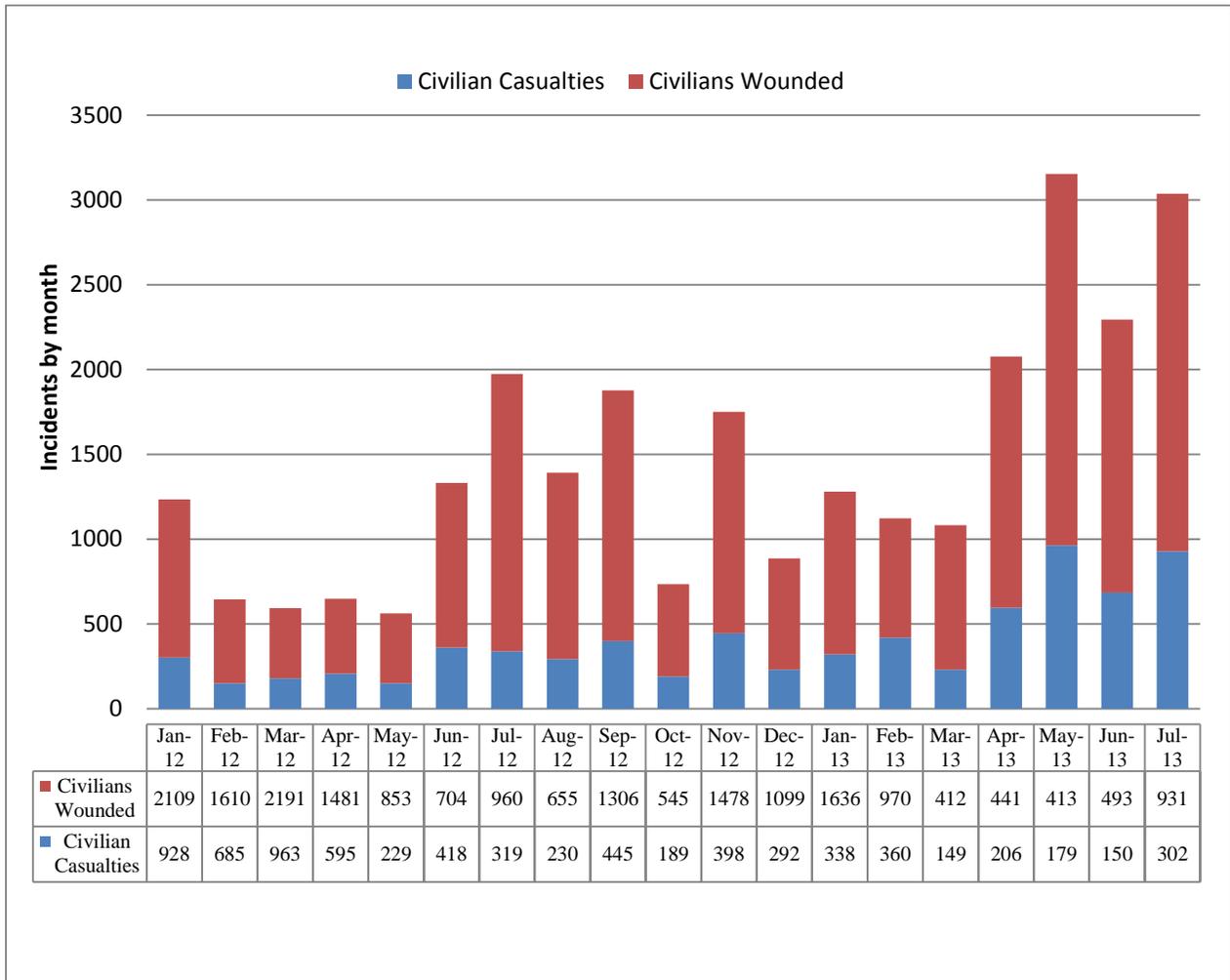
Figure 19: Iraqi Body Count and DoD/GoI/UN Comparisons of Civilian Casualties in Iraq, 2003 – November 2013



Source: Iraqi Body Count, UNAMI, DoD, and the Brookings Institution.

Figure 20: UNAMI Estimate of Iraqi Killed and Injured – Part One

Rising Trend in Iraqi Killed and Injured November 2012-July 2013



Source: UNAMI Civilian Casualty Figures, accessed August 8, 2013, <http://unami.unmissions.org/Default.aspx?tabid=5397&language=en-US>, and data provided directly by UNAMI.

Figure 20: UNAMI Estimate of Iraqi Killed and Injured – Part Two

Rising Trend in Iraqi Killed and Injured November 2012-December 2013

Month	Civilian Casualties	Injured
December 2013	661	1201
November 2013	565	1186
October 2013	852	1793
September 2013	887	1957
August 2013	716	1936
July 2013	928	2109
June 2013	685	1610
May 2013	963	2191
April 2013	595	1481
March 2013	229	853
February 2013	418	704
January 2013	319	960
December 2012	230	655
November 2012	445	1306

Notes: The number of civilians killed was 661 (including 175 civilian police), while the number of civilians injured was 1201 (including 258 civilian police). A further 98 members of the Iraqi Security Forces were killed and 144 were injured.

The total number of civilian casualties (including police) in 2013 was the highest since 2008, with 7,818 killed (6,787 in 2008) and 17,981 (20,178 in 2008) injured.

The most violent month of 2013 was May, with a total of 3,154 civilian casualties (including police), of whom 963 were killed and 2,191 wounded. Since April 2013, the total number of civilian casualties (killed and injured, including police) has been consistently above 1,500.

Baghdad was the worst affected Governorate with 809 civilian casualties (254 killed, 555 injured), followed by Salahadin (102 killed 160 injured), Diyala (99 killed 161 injured), Ninewa (105 killed 147 injured), and Anbar (62 killed 79 injured). The data do not take into account casualties of the IA operation in Anbar in December, for which UNAMI did not have sufficient information.

Kirkuk and Babil also reported casualties (double digit figures).

Source: UNAMI, "UN Casualty Figures for December, 2013 deadliest since 2008 in Iraq," January 2, 2014, http://www.uniraq.org/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=1499:un-casualty-figures-for-december-2013-deadliest-since-2008-in-iraq&Itemid=633&lang=en.

Figure 21: Iraqi Body Count Reporting on Major Acts of Violence by Province in December and November 2013

Wednesday 5 February: 57 killed

Baghdad: 37 killed by bombs.
Mosul: 7 by car bombs.
Basra: 3 bodies.
Tikrit: 4 policemen by suicide car bomber.
Tal al-Rumman: 4 construction workers by bomb.
Shirqat: 1 by gunfire.
Buhriz: 1 Sahwa member by gunfire.
Tuesday 4 February: 29 killed
Baghdad: 15 by bombs and gunfire, 2 bodies.
Tarmiya: 2 bodies.
Taji: 1 policeman by IED.
Mosul: 3 by gunfire.
Shirqat: 3 cleaners by gunfire.
Dohuk: 1 body.
Tuz Khurmato: 2 bodies.

Monday 3 February: 34 killed

Baghdad: 15 by car bombs, IEDs and gunfire, 4 bodies.
Shirqat: 2 by gunfire.
Mahmudiya: 8 by car bombs.
Qayyara: 3 by IED.
Mosul: 1 by gunfire.
Muqdadiya: 1 by gunfire.

Sunday 2 February: 25 killed

Baiji: 9 by suicide car bomber.
Balad: 3 by gunfire.
Baghdad: 3 by gunfire, 1 body.
Saadiya: 5 by gunfire.
Qayyara: 2 by gunfire, IED.
Kirkuk: 1 by IED.
Mosul: 1 by gunfire.

Saturday 1 February: 24 killed

Baghdad: 9 by car bombs, IEDs.
Falluja: 7 by shelling.
Tuz: 3 by bombs in market.
Mosul: 3 by gunfire, IED.
Hamam al-Alil: 1 by gunfire.
Samarra: 1 body.

JANUARY TOTAL: 1,076 CIVILIANS KILLED.

Friday 31 January: 14 killed

Baquba: 3 bodies.
Baghdad: 5 by gunfire, IEDs.
Badush: 2 by gunfire.
Hilla: 3 policemen by IED.
Tuz: 1 by bomb in shop.

Thursday 30 January: 25 killed

Baghdad: 21 killed by car bombs, suicide bombers.
Ramadi: 3 in shelling.
Tikrit: 1 by gunfire.

Wednesday 29 January: 39 killed

Baghdad: 23 killed by bombs, gunfire.
Mosul: 4 by gunfire.
Tikrit: 2 policemen by IED.
Hawija: 3 Sahwa members by gunfire.
Karma: 2 Sahwa members by gunfire.
Falluja: 2 in shelling.
Muqdadiya: 1 by gunfire.
Arab Jabour: 1 Sahwa member by gunfire.
Mahaweel: 1 by gunfire.

Tuesday 28 January: 11 killed

Baghdad: 3 by IEDs.
Wajihya: 2 by gunfire.
Tikrit: 2 by IED.
Kirkuk: 1 body.
Baquba: 1 Sahwa member by gunfire.
Falluja: 2 policemen by gunfire.

Monday 27 January: 32 killed

Samarra: 4 security forces, abducted and beheaded.
Anbar: 9 security forces, abducted and executed.
Baghdad: 4 by gunfire, IED.
Muqdadiya: 1 by mortar fire.
Falluja: 8 by mortar fire.
Mosul: 5 by gunfire.
Latifiya: 1 by IED.

Sunday 26 January: 45 killed

Kirkuk: 5 by IEDs.
Wajihyah: 3 councillors by gunfire.
Baghdad: 6 by gunfire, AED, 3 bodies.
Falluja: 7 by artillery fire, 3 Sahwa members by gunfire.
Mosul: 1 tribal leader by gunfire.
Abu Ghraib: 2 by IED.
Saadiya: 2 by gunfire.
Mishahda: 3 by IED.
Tikrit: 2 by gunfire.
Qayyarah: 2 policemen by IED.
Samarra: 1 Sahwa member by gunfire.
Baquba: 5 Sahwa members by gunfire.

Saturday 25 January: 45 killed

Falluja: 13 in shelling
Ramadi: 2 in shelling.
Jaizan: 6 family members in mortar attack.
Baghdad: 6 by car bombs, IEDs.
Tuz Khurmato: 9 by car bombs.
Balad: 2 policemen by IED.
Mosul: 6 by gunfire.
Shirqat: 1 by IED.

Friday 24 January: 24 killed

Falluja: 7 in shelling.
Baghdad: 3 by gunfire, AED.
Baquba: 2 bodies.
Ramadi: 2 in shelling.
Basra: 2 by gunfire.
Tikrit: 3 by IED.
Hamam al-alil: 2 bodies.
Gelaalh: 2 by gunfire.
Khazar: 1 body.

Thursday 23 January: 30 killed

Baghdad: 6 by gunfire, IED.
Falluja: 4 by shelling.
Ramadi: 1 in clashes.
Tarmiya: 1 by IED, 1 body.
Hit: 1 policeman by IED.
Zubair: 1 body.
Mosul: 5 by gunfire.
Al-Jaafari: 1 Sahwa member by gunfire.
Jurf al-Sakhar: 3 by IED.
Tikrit: 2 policemen by gunfire.
Abu Ghraib: 2 by IED.
Riyadh: 2 by mortars.

Wednesday 22 January: 20 killed

Mosul: 6 by gunfire, IEDs.
Baghdad: 7 by gunfire, mortars.
Falluja: 1 by mortars.
Kirkuk: 1 body.
Al-Warshan: 2 policemen by gunfire.
Tuz: 1 by IED.
Tikrit: 1 by gunfire.
Baiji: 1 by IED.

Tuesday 21 January: 15 killed

Baghdad: 3 by car bomb, gunfire.
Kazak: 3 policemen by gunfire.
Wajhiya: 1 by gunfire.
Dujail: 1 Sahwa member by IED.
Alaghar: 2 policemen by gunfire.
Mosul: 2 by gunfire.
Qasim Khayat: 1 policeman by gunfire.
Alshaji: 1 policeman by gunfire.
Tikrit: 1 by AED.

Monday 20 January: 47 killed

Baghdad: 29 killed by bombs, gunfire.
Ramadi: 3 by IED, 4 bodies.
Mosul: 2 by gunfire, 2 bodies.
Baiji-Tikrit: 3 border guards by gunfire.
Samawah: 1 body.
Sulaimaniya: 1 body.
Khanaqin: 1 by IED.
Shirqat: 1 by gunfire.

Sunday 19 January: 31 killed

Baquba: 6 Sahwa members by gunfire.
Ramadi: 8 in clashes.
Tikrit: 2 policemen by bombs.
Tuz Khurmato: 2 by car bomb.
Kirkuk: 2 by car bomb.

Baiji: 2 Sahwa members by IEDs.
Shirqat: 1 by gunfire.
Mosul: 2 by gunfire.
Baghdad: 6 by gunfire, AED.

Saturday 18 January: 38 killed

Baghdad: 28 by bombs, gunfire.
Kirkuk: 3 by IEDs.
Garma: 3 by mortars.
Mosul: 1 body.
Baquba: 1 body.
Falluja: 1 in clashes.
Taji: 1 policeman by IED.

Friday 17 January: 20 killed

Ramadi: 4 Sahwa members by suicide bomber.
Falluja: 7 more killed in shelling, clashes.
Jbala: 2 children by IEDs.
Tikrit: 1 Sahwa member by gunfire.
Baquba: 1 body.
Basra: 1 stabbed.
Ain Beida: 1 by gunfire.
Shirqat: 2 policemen by gunfire.
Albu Ajil: 1 body.

Thursday 16 January: 36 killed

Mashahda: 14 bodies.
Baghdad: 8 by car bombs, IEDs.
Hamra: 2 Sahwa members by gunfire.
Mosul: 1 by gunfire.
Falluja: 2 in shelling.
Shirqat: 1 body.
Joabh: 3 Sahwa members by IED.
Muqdadiya: 1 by gunfire.
Baquba: 2 by IEDs.
Tikrit: 1 by gunfire.
Tash: 1 lorry driver by gunfire.

Wednesday 15 January: 94 killed

Baghdad: 42 killed by bombs, gunfire.
Buhriz: 18 by suicide bomber at funeral.
Alham: 7 lorry drivers by gunfire.
Mosul: 3 by gunfire.
Dujail: 4 by car bomb.
Tarmiya: 3 bodies.
Sinjar: 1 body.
Tikrit: 1 policeman by AED.
Alhamrah: 3 policemen by IED.
Anbar: 12 by gunfire.

Tuesday 14 January: 52 killed

Baghdad: 28 killed by bombs, gunfire.
Algraj: 9 construction workers by gunfire.
Garma: 4 by mortars.
Ramadi: 2 policemen in clashes.
Qayyara: 1 by gunfire.
Mosul: 1 by gunfire.
Kirkuk: 1 by car bomb.
Tarmiya: 3 policemen by gunfire.
Khalis: 2 by gunfire.

Buhriz: 1 body.

Monday 13 January: 38 killed

Baghdad: 23 killed by car bombs.
Falluja: 3 during shelling by army.
Anbar: 4 bodies.
Khalidiya: 4 policemen by IED.
Buhriz: 1 policeman by gunfire.
Tikrit: 1 policeman by gunfire.
Mosul: 1 by gunfire.
Alkhozalih: 1 engineer by gunfire.

Sunday 12 January: 45 killed

Abu Ghraib: 8 killed by helicopter fire.
Tuz Khurmato: 10 by car bomb.
Baghdad: 14 by car bombs.
Mosul: 4 by gunfire, AED.
Ramadi: 4 policemen by IED.
Diyala: 1 killed.
Hamam Al-Alil: 1 by car bomb.
Tikrit: 1 by gunfire.
Siniya: 2 by gunfire.

Saturday 11 January: 27 killed

Baghdad: 7 by gunfire, IED.
Tarmiya: 3 by IED.
Samarra: 2 Sahwa members by gunfire.
Kut: 1 by IED.
Falluja: 1 in aerial bombardment.
Ramadi: 3 in aerial bombardment.
Aneh: 1 intelligence officer by gunfire.
Nasiriya: 1 by gunfire.
Garma: 2 by mortars.
Shirqat: 2 by gunfire.
Mosul: 3 by gunfire.
Hamam al-Alil: 1 policeman by car bomb.

Friday 10 January: 12 killed

Baghdad: 2 by gunfire.
Haditha: 4 guardsmen by IED.
Ramadi: 3 by gunfire, mortars.
Kut: 1 by AED.
Falluja: 1 by mortars.
Mosul: 1 by gunfire.

Thursday 9 January: 51 killed

Baghdad: 23 by suicide bomber, 1 body.
Shirqat: 3 children, teacher, by gunfire.
Tikrit: 6 by car bombs, gunfire.
Mosul: 5 by IED, gunfire.
Ramadi: 1 by car bomb.
Samarra: 6 by IED, gunfire.
Qayyara: 1 by gunfire.
Dujail: 4 Sahwa members by gunfire.
Falluja: 1 by mortars.

Wednesday 8 January: 34 killed

Shirqat: 10 children shot dead, 3 policemen killed by IED.

Taji: 1 policeman by IED.
Ramadi: 1 by suicide car bomber.
Yathrib: 1 policeman by AED.
Ishaqi: 1 by gunfire.
Talafar: 3 policemen by car bomb.
Mosul: 2 by gunfire.
Baquba: 2 by gunfire, IED.
Mansouriya: 1 farmer by gunfire.
Muqdadiya: 2 bodies.
Samarra: 3 policemen by IED.
Siniya: 4 Sahwa members by IED.

Tuesday 7 January: 50 killed

Baghdad: 21 by gunfire, IED.
Ramadi: 4 in clashes.
Kirkuk: 7 by suicide bomber, gunfire.
Mosul: 2 by gunfire, IED.
Imam Weiss: 3 policemen.
Baquba: 5 by gunfire.
Kilo: 2 by gunfire.
Jurf al-Sakhar: 4 by IED.
Tuz: 1 by IED.
Falluja: 1 by mortars.

Monday 6 January: 16 killed

Tuz Khurmato: 5 by car bombs, IED.
Mosul: 3 by gunfire.
Saidiya: 4 women by gunfire
Baghdad: 1 by IED.
Samarra: 2 by IED.
Hamam al-Alil: 1 by gunfire.
January casualties so far: 201 civilians killed.

Sunday 5 January: 58 killed

Ramadi: 12 in clashes.
Baghdad: 26 by bombs, gunfire.
Baquba: 6 lorry drivers by gunfire.
Qayyara: 2 policemen in clashes.
Anbar: 8 policemen in clashes.
Mosul: 3 by gunfire, IED.
Arbil: 1 body.

Saturday 4 January: 12 killed

Baghdad: 6 by gunfire, IED.
Mosul: 4 by gunfire.
Ramadi: 1 by mortars.
Zubair: 1 by gunfire.

Friday 3 January: 45 killed

Falluja: 32 killed in clashes.
Mosul: 2 by IEDs.
Tarmiya: 1 policeman by gunfire.
Ramadi: 2 policemen in clashes.
Jurf al-Sakhar: 1 policeman by IED.
Baghdad: 4 by IEDs, 2 bodies found in the river.
Abu Ghraib: 1 Sahwa member by gunfire.

Thursday 2 January: 62 killed**Anbar:** 31 reported dead in 4-day clashes.**Balad Ruz:** 19 by suicide car bomber.**Baghdad:** 9 by gunfire, IEDs.**Mosul:** 1 by IED, 1 body.**Falluja:** 1 by mortars.**Wednesday 1 January: 8 killed****Mosul:** 6 by car bomb, gunfire.**Falluja:** 1 policeman in clashes.**Rutbah:** 1 policeman by suicide car bomber.**DECEMBER TOTAL: 983 civilians killed.
9,475 KILLED in 2013****Tuesday 31 December: 22 killed****Baghdad:** 15 by bombs, gunfire.**Mosul:** 2 by gunfire.**Ramadi:** 5 by gunfire.**Monday 30 December: 31 killed****Baghdad:** 8 by IEDs, gunfire.**Ramadi:** 3 in clashes.**Mosul:** 9 by gunfire, IEDs.**Abu Ghraib:** 3 bodies.**Beiji:** 3 bodies.**Tikrit:** 1 policeman by IED.**Shirqat:** 1 policeman by suicide car bomber.**Muqdadiya:** 1 imam by gunfire.**Tuz Khurmato:** 2 policemen by IED.**Sunday 29 December: 20 killed****Baghdad:** 7 by gunfire.**Abu Ghraib:** 4 Sahwa members by gunfire.**Mosul:** 3 by gunfire.**Baquba:** 1 by IED.**Beiji:** 1 policeman by gunfire.**Muqdadiya:** 2 by gunfire.**Iskandariya:** 1 by IED.**Hajaj:** 1 Sahwa member by suicide car bomber.**Saturday 28 December: 25 killed****Ramadi:** 6 by gunfire.**Mosul:** 6 policemen in separate attacks, 1 professor by gunfire.**Tikrit:** 4 policemen by gunfire.**Ramadi:** 1 body.**Fallujah:** 3 policemen by gunfire.**Shirqat:** 3 family members by gunfire.**Sowaidan Balherquat:** 1 policeman by gunfire.**Friday 27 December: 16 killed****Baghdad:** 4 by gunfire.**Mosul:** 4 by gunfire.**Shora:** 3 family members by IED.**Riyadh:** 3 Sahwa members by gunfire.**Tarmiya:** 1 policeman by gunfire.**Fallujah:** 1 by AED.**Thursday 26 December: 31 killed****Camp Liberty:** 3 Iranians in rocket fire.**Wasit:** 1 by IED.**Baquba:** 4 by gunfire.**Muqdadiya:** 1 body.**Kut:** 1 by IED.**Tuz Khurmato:** 1 by car bomb.**Ishaqi:** 2 policemen by bomb.**Mandali:** 4 by gunfire.**Mosul:** 3 by gunfire.**Fallujah:** 1 by IED.**Babil:** 2 prisoners by gunfire.**Yathrib:** 4 Sahwa members by gunfire.**Baghdad:** 2 by gunfire, IED.**Abu Ghraib:** 1 Sahwa member by AED.**Katoun:** 1 teenage boy by gunfire.**Wednesday 25 December: 56 killed****Baghdad:** 38 by car bombs, IED.**Balad:** 4 by IED.**Tikrit:** 3 policemen by gunfire.**Kirkuk-Tikrit road:** 2 by IED.**Mandily:** 4 family members by gunfire.**Salman Bek:** 1 by IED.**Katoun:** 1 by gunfire.**Babil:** 1 policeman by gunfire.**Qayyara:** 1 by AED.**Ramadi:** 1 policeman by gunfire.**Tuesday 24 December: 16 killed****Mosul:** 5 by gunfire, IEDs.**Tuz Khurmato:** 2 policemen by IED.**Ramadi:** 1 policeman by gunfire.**Qayyara:** 2 by gunfire.**Fallujah:** 1 policeman by gunfire.**Khuwaishiq:** 1 policeman by gunfire.**Baghdad:** 3 by gunfire, IED.**Salamn Bek:** 1 child by IED.**Monday 23 December: 28 killed****Tikrit:** 9 by suicide bombers, gunfire.**Baghdad:** 9 by gunfire, IED.**Mosul:** 3 by gunfire.**Baquba:** 3 by gunfire.**Fallujah:** 1 barber by gunfire.**Hibhib:** 1 by gunfire.**Sinjar:** 2 bodies.**Sunday 22 December: 17 killed****Mosul:** 5 by gunfire, IED.**Baghdad:** 6 by IEDs.**Kirkuk:** 1 body.**Abu Ghraib:** 1 by IED.**Himreen:** 1 Sahwa member by gunfire.**Dour:** 1 Sahwa member by gunfire.**Mafraq:** 1 policeman trying to dismantle car bomb.**Tikrit:** 1 policeman by gunfire.**Saturday 21 December: 28 killed****Shirqat:** 3 policemen by IED.**Latifiya:** 2 pilgrims by mortars.**Baghdad:** 6 by gunfire, IED.**Fallujah:** 4 policemen by gunfire.

Abo Takiya: 2 policemen by gunfire.
Tikrit: 2 by IEDs.
Al Abasi: 5 family members by gunfire.
Baquba: 1 by gunfire.
Ramadi: 1 council member by gunfire.
Mosul: 1 by gunfire.
Haqlaniya: 1 body.

Friday 20 December: 33 killed

Tuz Khurmato: 11 by IEDs.
Kirkuk: 2 by IED.
Mosul: 1 policeman by IED.
Hawija: 5 family members by gunfire.
Anbar: 1 by AED.
Shirqat: 1 policeman in clashes.
Rayyash: 4 policemen by gunfire.
Muqdadiya: 1 by gunfire.
Fallujah: 1 by gunfire.
Qayyara: 3 by gunfire.
Tal Afar: 2 in clashes.
Baghdad: 1 by gunfire.

Thursday 19 December: 65 killed

Baghdad: 44 by suicide bombers, gunfire, IEDs.
Abu Ghraib: 5 family members by gunfire.
Mosul: 4 by gunfire.
Shora: 1 policeman by gunfire.
Shirqat: 1 policeman by gunfire.
Tikrit: 2 policemen by gunfire.
Dour: 3 policemen by IED.
Yathrib: 1 by IED.
Baaj: 1 by IED.
Zaidan: 1 by gunfire.
Qayyara: 1 Sahwa member by gunfire.
Hilla: 1 mokhtar by gunfire.

Wednesday 18 December: 15 killed

Khalis: 4 by suicide bomber.
Ramadi: 2 policemen by suicide car bomber.
Mosul: 3 by gunfire.
Baquba: 1 by gunfire.
Samarra: 1 child by gunfire.
Dowr: 2 government employees by gunfire.
Baghdad: 2 by gunfire.

Tuesday 17 December: 23 killed

Baghdad: 14 by suicide bomber, IEDs, hand grenades.
Fallujah: 1 policeman by gunfire.
Mosul: 2 by gunfire.
Baiji: 3 by gunfire, AED.
Riyadh: 2 Sahwa members by bomb.
Sulaimaniya: 1 body.

Monday 16 December: 82 killed

Baghdad: 43 killed in bomb attacks.
Mosul: 13 by gunfire.
Baiji: 8 by car bombs.
Tikrit: 5 in clashes.
Fallujah: 3 by IED, suicide car bomber.
Kirkuk: 4 by gunfire, IED.
Haditha: 4 bodies.
Aana: 2 bodies.

Sunday 15 December: 27 killed

Baghdad: 10 in bomb explosions.
Saadiya: 5 family members by IEDs, gunfire.
Mosul: 3 by IED, gunfire.
Kirkuk: 2 by gunfire.
Tuz Khurmato: 2 by IEDs.
Haditha: 2 bodies.
Diyala: 1 Sahwa member by gunfire.
Baiji: 1 by gunfire.
Mussayab: 1 by AED.

Saturday 14 December: 29 killed

Baghdad: 22 in bomb explosions, gunfire.
Mosul: 1 by gunfire.
Mussayab: 1 by AED.
Rutba: 1 body.
Baiji: 1 Sahwa member by gunfire.
Ramadi: 1 policeman by gunfire.
Abu Saida: 1 by gunfire.
Jalawla: 1 by gunfire.

Friday 13 December: 49 killed

Al-Nida: 19 engineers by gunfire.
Baghdad: 21 by bombs, gunfire.
Ramadi: 3 policemen by car bomb.
Tikrit: 4 bodies.
Fallujah: 1 policeman by gunfire.
Beiji: 1 policeman by gunfire.

Thursday 12 December: 9 killed

Baghdad: 2 by AED, IED.
Tuz: 3 by IED.
Mosul: 1 policeman by gunfire.
Siniya: 1 policeman by gunfire.
Baquba: 1 by gunfire.
Ramadi: 1 Sahwa member by gunfire.

Wednesday 11 December: 17 killed

Ramadi: 3 by gunfire.
Mosul: 4 by gunfire.
Baghdad: 4 by gunfire, IED.
Siniya: 2 heads found.
Muqdadiya: 2 policemen by IED.
Kut: 1 lawyer by gunfire.
Tikrit: 1 by gunfire.

Tuesday 10 December: 30 killed

Abara: 7 by gunfire.
Baquba: 15 by suicide bomber, IEDs.
Baaj: 3 policemen by IED.
Baghdad: 2 by IEDs.
Ramadi: 1 policeman by gunfire.
Heet: 1 by AED.
Mosul: 1 lawyer by gunfire.

Monday 9 December: 30 killed

Buhriz: 13 by car bomb.
Baghdad: 9 by IEDs.
Mosul: 3 by gunfire, AED.
Sulaimaniya: 2 by gunfire.
Baquba: 1 policeman by mortars.

Tikrit: 1 by hand grenades.
Tuz Khurmato: 1 by IED.

Sunday 8 December: 58 killed

Baghdad: 45 by bombs.
Baquba: 4 by IED, gunfire.
Mosul: 2 by gunfire, AED.
Khalis: 2 by gunfire, IED.
Tikrit: 2 by gunfire.
Karmeh: 1 policeman by gunfire.
Kirkuk: 1 child by IED.
Yengejeh: 1 by gunfire.

Saturday 7 December: 24 killed

Baghdad: 12 by gunfire, IEDs.
Mosul: 5 by IEDs.
Ramadi: 4 by gunfire.
Baquba: 2 by gunfire.
Hawija: 1 body.

Friday 6 December: 11 killed

Baghdad: 6 by IEDs, gunfire.
Tikrit: 2 by gunfire, IED.
Imam: 1 policeman by AED.
Kalar: 1 journalist by gunfire.
Latifiya: 1 body.

Thursday 5 December: 23 killed

Baghdad: 9 by gunfire, IEDs.
Mosul: 9 by gunfire, IEDs.
Kirkuk: 4 more killed in attack on intelligence building.
Qara-Tepah: 1 by IED.

Wednesday 4 December: 22 killed

Kirkuk: 7 by suicide bombers, gunfire.
Baghdad: 2 by gunfire.
Fallujah: 2 policemen by gunfire, IED.
Yathrib: 1 by AED.
Ramadi: 2 by gunfire.
Mosul: 4 by gunfire, IED.
Hamhidiyah: 3 policemen by gunfire.
Shirqat: 1 by gunfire.

Tuesday 3 December: 76 killed

Tikrit: 34 killed by suicide bombers, IED, gunfire.
Tarmiya: 9 by IEDs, suicide bombers.
Baghdad: 10 by car bomb, gunfire.
Wadi Horan: 7 on camping trip, by gunfire.
Abu Ghraib: 2 by IED.
Baladruz: 2 by car bomb, AED.
Samarra: 2 policemen by car bomb.
Mosul: 3 by gunfire.
Tuz Khurmato: 1 by IED.
Haswa: 1 policeman by IED.
Qaim: 1 by IED.
Muqdadia: 1 mayor by gunfire.
Baquba: 1 by IED.
Ramadi: 1 body.
Yathrib: 1 by IED.

Monday 2 December: 26 killed

Nibai: 7 family members by gunfire.
Muqdadia: 1 body.
Abu Ghraib: 3 by IEDs.
Mosul: 3 by gunfire, IED.
Qusiyat: 2 policemen by IED.
Kut: 1 child's body.
Kirkuk: 3 bodies.
Tikrit: 1 policeman by gunfire.
Amara: 1 by gunfire.
Tuz: 1 by IED.
Tal Afar: 2 policemen by IED.
Baquba: 1 by IED.

Sunday 1 December: 44 killed

Wajihijah: 12 mourners by IEDs.
Baghdad: 13 by gunfire, IEDs, AED.
Saadiya: 6 by IEDs.
Fallujah: 2 by gunfire.
Kirkuk: 4 by gunfire, IEDs.
Ojah: 1 policeman by gunfire.
Abu Ghraib: 2 policemen by IED.
Ramadi: 1 by AED.
Hawija: 1 body.
Tikrit: 1 body.
Hamam Al-Alil: 1 teacher by gunfire.

Saturday 30 November: 30 killed

Mahmudiya: 4 by car bomb.
Baghdad: 4 women and children by gunfire.
Abu Ghraib: 2 by AED, gunfire.
Mosul: 4 by gunfire, IED.
Balad: 3 brothers by AED.
Hawija: 2 policemen by gunfire.
Bajji: 2 by gunfire.
Tikrit: 1 body in car.
Ramadi: 1 policeman by gunfire.
Jbala: 1 by gunfire.
Tikrit: 2 by IEDs.
Tuz Khurmato: 1 by IED.
Qayyara: 1 by gunfire.
Madaen: 1 by IED.
Shirqat: 1 policeman by gunfire.

Friday 29 November: 55 killed

Baghdad: 37 by gunfire, IEDs, AEDs, hanging.
Tikrit: 8 bodies, beheaded.
Mosul: 3 by gunfire.
Sinjar: 2 by gunfire.
Abu Ghraib: 1 by IED.
Saadiya: 2 by gunfire.
Siding: 1 farmer by gunfire.
Salahuddin: 1 by gunfire.

Thursday 28 November: 38 killed

Hilla: 4 by car bombs.
Najaf: 4 by car bomb.
Suwayra: 5 by car bomb.
Yathrib: 6 by gunfire.
Tuz Khurmato: 3 by IED.
Baghdad: 6 by IEDs.
Mosul: 4 by gunfire.
Samarra: 1 child by IED.

Tikrit: 3 by IED.
Baiji: 1 by car bomb.
Kut: 1 by car bomb.

Wednesday 27 November: 75 killed

Baghdad: 13 by gunfire, IEDs, mortars; 23 bodies found.
Ramadi: 7 policemen by gunfire, suicide bombers.
Abu Ghraib: 12 by bomb in funeral tent.
Tikrit: 2 by gunfire, AED.
Hadhar: 4 by gunfire, AED.
Habbaniya: 5 policemen by suicide bomber.
Mosul: 4 by gunfire, IED.
Jbara: 2 by gunfire.
Bani Saad: 1 by gunfire.
Kirkuk: 1 body.
Basra: 1 journalist by gunfire.

Tuesday 26 November: 20 killed

Mosul: 3 by gunfire.
Taji: 5 policemen by suicide bomber.
Basra: 2 bodies.
Garma: 2 policemen by IED and AED.
Baghdad: 2 by gunfire.
Khalis: 1 by gunfire.
Kirkuk: 1 killed.
Tikrit: 2 brothers by gunfire.
Samarra: 2 Sahwa members by gunfire.

Monday 25 November: 38 killed

Baghdad: 23 killed by car bombs, IEDs and gunfire.
Mosul: 6 by IEDs.
Salahuddin: 2 by IEDs.
Tikrit: 1 body.
Nasiriya: 1 former MP by gunfire.
Baquba: 1 by AED.
Baiji: 2 policemen by IED.
Ishaqi: 1 by gunfire.
Ramadi: 1 policeman by gunfire.

Sunday 24 November: 14 killed

Baghdad: 3 by IEDs, gunfire.
Mosul: 5 by gunfire.
Ramadi: 1 policeman by gunfire.
Sulaimaniya: 1 body.
Shura: 1 by AED.
Balad: 1 engineer by gunfire.
Baiji: 1 by IED.
Shirqat: 1 by gunfire.

Saturday 23 November: 48 killed

Tuz Khurmato: 32 by IEDs and car bomb.
Tal Afar: 4 by suicide car bomber.
Mosul: 4 by gunfire.
Baghdad: 3 by gunfire.
Shirqat: 4 policemen in clashes.
Baquba: 1 by gunfire.

Friday 22 November: 24 killed

Baghdad: 19 killed in bombings and shootings.
Mosul: 3 by gunfire, IED.
Khalis: 2 by gunfire.

Thursday 21 November: 58 killed

Saadiya: 32 by suicide car bomber.
Baghdad: 13 by gunfire, IEDs, AED.
Baquba: 3 by IEDs.
Mosul: 7 by gunfire, IEDs.
Shirqat: 1 child by gunfire.
Had Miksar: 1 by IED.
Nasiriya: 1 body.

Wednesday 20 November: 82 killed

Baghdad: 60 killed by car bombs, IEDs, gunfire.
Baquba: 15 bodies.
Najaf: 2 by AED.
Mosul: 2 by gunfire.
Sulaimaniya: 1 bodyguard by gunfire.
Buhriz: 1 by AED.
Fallujah: 1 policeman by IED.

Tuesday 19 November: 9 killed.

Mosul: 3 by gunfire, IEDs.
Baghdad: 2 by gunfire.
Abu Ghraib: 2 policemen by gunfire.
Baladruz: 1 by AED.
Edheim: 1 Sahwa member by gunfire.

Monday 18 November: 11 killed

Mosul: 3 by gunfire.
Baghdad: 1 by IED.
Abu Ghraib: 2 by IED, AED.
Shirqat: 1 policeman by gunfire.
Adhaim: 2 (father and son) by gunfire.
Muqdadhiya: 1 lawyer by gunfire.
Hilla: 1 by gunfire.

Sunday 17 November: 48 killed

Tuz Khurmato: 18 by IEDs.
Baghdad: 22 by IEDs.
Mosul: 4 by IEDs, gunfire.
Baquba: 3 by IED in market.
Jbela: 1 by IED.

Saturday 16 November: 8 killed

Baghdad: 3 by IEDs.
Madaen: 1 by gunfire.
Mosul: 1 policeman by gunfire.
Ramadi: 1 by gunfire.
Shirqat: 1 policeman by gunfire.
Dohuk: 1 stabbed.

Friday 15 November: 11 killed

Baghdad: 2 by gunfire, IED.
Mosul: 3 by gunfire, IEDs.
Baquba: 1 university professor, gunfire.
Kirkuk: 1 by gunfire.
Tarmiya: 2 Sahwa members by gunfire.
Tuz: 2 bodies.

Thursday 14 November: 54 killed

Saadiya: 35 by suicide bomber.
Hafriya: 9 by IEDs.
Kirkuk: 2 by IED.
Baghdad: 2 by gunfire, IED.
Mosul: 1 by IED.

Tarmiya: 3 Sahwa members by gunfire.

Wadi Hajar: 1 by IED.

Baquba: 1 imam by gunfire.

Wednesday 13 November: 39 killed

Baquba: 9 by IEDs.

Tikrit: 10 by suicide car bomber.

Ramadi: 4 by IEDs.

Mosul: 6 by IEDs, gunfire.

Yusufiya: 2 brothers by gunfire.

Garma: 4 by IEDs.

Abu Ghraib: 3 policemen by IED.

Anbar: 1 mayor by gunfire.

Tuesday 12 November: 12 killed.

Baghdad: 4 by gunfire, AED.

Mosul: 5 by IEDs, gunfire.

Samarra: 1 policeman by IED.

Ruttbah: 1 contractor by AED.

Sheikh Hamad: 1 policeman by gunfire.

Monday 11 November: 11 killed

Mosul: 4 killed in separate incidents.

Salahuddin: 1 body.

Sadiya: 1 local official by gunfire.

Baghdad: 2 by gunfire, IED.

Ramadi: 2 policemen in clashes.

Basra: 1 by gunfire.

Sunday 10 November: 20 killed

Mosul: 6 by gunfire, bombs.

Baghdad: 3 by gunfire, AED.

Samawa: 3 by car bombs.

Fallujah: 2 by gunfire, AED.

Balad: 3 women by gunfire.

Tikrit: 1 by gunfire.

Latifiya: 1 by gunfire.

Mahmudiya: 1 by IED.

Saturday 9 November: 8 killed

Baghdad: 5 by gunfire, IEDs.

Khalis: 1 by gunfire.

Nassiriya: 1 stabbed.

Baquba: 1 farmer by gunfire.

Friday 8 November: 25 killed

Mosul: 11 killed by bomb in restaurant.

Baghdad: 8 by bombs, gunfire.

Fallujah: 2 policemen by gunfire.

Shiftah: 1 by gunfire.

Karma: 1 Sahwa member by IED.

Busev: 1 policeman by gunfire.

Sulaimaniya: 1 student by gunfire.

Thursday 7 November: 33 killed

Yathrib: 6 family members, gunfire.

Balad: 2 by IED.

Mosul: 6 by gunfire, IED.

Baghdad: 9 by gunfire, IEDs.

Karbala: 4 by IED in tent for pilgrims.

Tikrit: 2 policemen by gunfire, 1 body.

Madaen: 2 by IED.

Tarmiya: 1 woman by gunfire.

Wednesday 6 November: 23 killed

Al-Salam: 7 policemen by suicide truck bomber.

Baghdad: 5 by IEDs, gunfire.

Abu Ghraib: 2 Sahwa members by IED.

Baiji: 1 policeman by IED.

Salahuddin: 1 policeman by gunfire.

Mosul: 2 by gunfire.

Qayyara: 1 policeman by IED.

Dujail: 2 (husband and wife) by IED.

Ameriya: 2 policemen by suicide car bomber.

Tuesday 5 November: 20 killed.

Fallujah: 2 policemen by suicide car bomber.

Baghdad: 4 by gunfire, IED.

Mosul: 2 policemen by gunfire.

Udhaim: 2 by gunfire.

Kirkuk: 2 by gunfire, IED.

Samarra: 4 Sahwa members by gunfire.

Shmesat: 1 local official by gunfire.

Awja: 1 policeman by gunfire.

Baiji: 2 by gunfire.

Monday 4 November: 50 killed

Shirqat: 16 by bomb in market.

Taji: 2 by car bomb.

Mosul: 9 by gunfire, IED.

Hawija: 3 policemen by suicide bomber.

Baquba: 3 by IEDs.

Tikrit: 9 by suicide car bomber.

Hit: 1 by IED.

Kirkuk: 2 Sahwa members by IED.

Salahuddin: 1 by AED.

Baghdad: 2 by gunfire, AED.

Samarra: 2 Sahwa members by gunfire.

Sunday 3 November: 14 killed

Baghdad: 6 by gunfire, IED.

Tal Afar: 2 policemen by suicide car bomber.

Baquba: 3 policemen by suicide car bomber.

Mosul: 1 by gunfire.

Baiji: 1 Sahwa member by AED.

Abu Gersh: 1 by gunfire.

Saturday 2 November: 17 killed

Samarra: 2 Sahwa members by gunfire.

Baaj: 2 policemen by gunfire.

Balad: 2 by IED.

Dujail: 3 women by IEDs.

Shirqat: 5 by car bomb.

Mosul: 2 by gunfire.

Seniya: 1 Sahwa by AED.

Friday 1 November: 8 killed

Mosul: 4 by gunfire, IED.

Fadhiliya: 2 Sahwa members by IED.

Fallujah: 1 policeman by gunfire.

Samarra: 1 policeman by IED.

Thursday 31 October: 39 killed

Tuz Khurmato: 7 by car bombs.

Baghdad: 4 by gunfire, IED.

Mosul: 9 by gunfire, IED.

Muthanna: 1 muezzin by gunfire.

Baquba: 8 by car bombs.

Muqdadiya: 4 by car bomb.

Baiji: 1 Sahwa member by gunfire.

Balad: 1 policeman by gunfire.

Yathrib: 1 policeman by IED.

Abu Saida: 1 farmer by gunfire.

Fallujah: 1 by gunfire.

Kirkuk: 1 businessman.

Wednesday 30 October: 39 killed

Tarmiya: 10 by suicide bombers.

Al-Mowali: 8 by suicide car bomber.

Abu Ghraib: 3 by IED.

Baghdad: 8 by gunfire, IEDs, mortars.

Tikrit: 1 by IED.

Mosul: 4 by gunfire.

Albu Ajeel: 1 policeman by IED.

Fallujah: 3 by gunfire.

Arab Jubour: 1 Sahwa member by mortars.

Tuesday 29 October: 10 killed

Mosul: 9 by gunfire, suicide bomber.

Siniya: 1 Sahwa member by gunfire.

Monday 28 October: 29 killed

Baghdad: 16 by IEDs, gunfire.

Fallujah: 2 policemen by gunfire, 1 by AED.

Balad: 2 policemen by AED.

Basra: 1 by gunfire.

Madaen: 1 Sahwa member by gunfire.

Hamra: 1 farmer by gunfire.

Himreen: 1 Sahwa member by AED.

Abou al-Khanajer: 2 tribesmen in clashes.

Mosul: 1 policeman by IED.

Khalidiya: 1 by AED.

Source: Adapted from Iraq Body Count data base, <http://www.iraqbodycount.org/database/recent/>.

UN Interpretations of the Data

By the summer of 2013, it was all too clear to UN and other observers that Iraq was in crisis. While the Secretary General of the UN was able to report some positive developments in Iraq, his report to the UN Security Council on July 11, 2013, he too focused on the growing sectarian and ethnic divisions in Iraqi politics and on the rise in violence in the first half of 2013:¹²⁸

Rising inter-sectarian tensions are posing a major threat to stability and security in Iraq. During the reporting period, two main issues dominated internal political developments in the country: the continuing political crisis exacerbated by the widespread demonstrations in the predominantly Sunni governorates; and the governorate council elections, which were held on 20 April in 12 governorates and on 20 June in Anbar and Ninewa governorates.

...The human rights situation in Iraq has been marked by an upsurge in violence and terrorist acts that have targeted mainly civilians and civilian infrastructure, resulting in high civilian casualties at levels not seen since 2008.

... 35. Minorities in Iraq also continued to be targeted in acts of violence, including murder and kidnapping for ransom. In a particularly vicious attack on 16 May, a group of 10 Yezidi shopkeepers in Baghdad were gathered, collectively shot and their liquor stores burned. On 28 April, the leader of the black Iraqi community, Jalal Thiyab, was assassinated in Basra. He had worked tirelessly to promote and protect the rights of his community, which remains one of the poorest in Iraq. The repeated attacks on Turkmens and Christians are of particular concern.

...the security environment in Iraq remained volatile. In April, 712 Iraqis were killed and 1,633 wounded, while 1,045 were killed and 2,397 wounded in May, the highest casualty figures since March 2008.

The risk of increased sectarian violence is high, exacerbated by the presence of so many armed opposition groups. Some have been operating in Iraq for a long time, such as Al-Qaeda in Iraq and the Islamic State of Iraq. There are, however, also newly created or reactivated groups, including militias in the Sunni-dominated governorates and groups such as Asaib Ahl al-Haq and Kata'ib Hizbullah on the Shia side. Sunni armed opposition groups have demonstrated their capability to adapt their tactics and techniques to sustain a constant stream of attacks at a high operational tempo, maintaining constant pressure on the Iraqi security forces, testing their capabilities and rendering difficult the conduct of counter-insurgency operations.

In this context, the United Nations offices in Iraq remain exposed to intermittent indirect fire attacks. On 26 April and 27 May, two attacks affected a Guard Unit accommodation block and support facilities of the United Nations compound in, Kirkuk.

...56. The scale of renewed violence in Iraq during the reporting period is alarming. I again urge political leaders from all sides to intensify their efforts to resolve the continuing political stalemate in accordance with the Constitution, through serious dialogue and with a spirit of compromise, so that no space is left to those who seek to exploit the situation through violence and terror.

...It is becoming increasingly clear that the events in the region cannot be separated. I continue to note with much concern the impact of the tragic conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic on neighboring countries, including Iraq. The sectarian aspects of the Syrian conflict are now affecting the region adversely. The Syrian conflict has affected Iraq not only in terms of the number of refugees that the country has welcomed, but also in terms of its security and political stability.

UNAMI warned in its update of its estimate of monthly casualty trends at the end of August 2013 that,¹²⁹

Despite the decrease in casualty figures in August, compared to July, the impact of violence on civilians remains disturbingly high, with almost 5,000 civilians killed and 12,000 injured since the beginning of 2013," the Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Jacqueline Badcock, warned. ...Baghdad was the worst affected governorate in August with 1,272 civilian casualties (317 killed and 955 injured), followed by Salahuddin, Ninewa, Diyala, and Anbar (triple digit figures). Kirkuk, Babil, Wasit and Basra also reported casualties (double-digit figures).

By October 2013, UNAMI summarized the trends as of the end of July 2013 as follows:¹³⁰

“Indiscriminate violence is constant. Every day, every week, every month dozens, if not hundreds of innocent Iraqis are killed or deeply wounded. This is senseless”, the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq (SRSG), Mr. Nickolay Mladenov, said. “It is urgent that the Iraqi leaders take together the necessary bold steps to bring an end to the current mayhem, and to foil attempts by terrorists to destroy the social fabric of the Iraqi society.”

These increases in violence were serious enough to lead US Secretary of State John Kerry to state during a mid-August visit by Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari that, “Sunni and Shia extremists on both sides of the sectarian divide throughout the region have an ability to be able to threaten Iraq’s stability if they’re not checked.”¹³¹ He warned that, “Al Qaeda, as we have seen, has launched a horrific series of assaults on innocent Iraqis,” He was referring to an attack on Sunday that killed more than 60 people during the holiday that marked the end of Ramadan, but that same day, a series of car bombs were detonated in Baghdad killing more than 30 people and wounding more than 60.¹³²

By October, UNAMI was issuing press releases that described this situation these trends as follows:¹³³

“Indiscriminate violence is constant. Every day, every week, every month dozens, if not hundreds of innocent Iraqis are killed or deeply wounded. This is senseless”, the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq (SRSG), Mr. Nickolay Mladenov, said. “It is urgent that the Iraqi leaders take together the necessary bold steps to bring an end to the current mayhem, and to foil attempts by terrorists to destroy the social fabric of the Iraqi society.”

These trends did not change at the end of 2013, although the level of violence did drop as part of a seasonal cycle common to most past years. A short list of some key incidents in December 2013 illustrates how violent one Iraq had become by the end of the year:

- December 1, 2013: Blast kills mourners of “Sunni Awakening” leader who fought with government against Al Qaeda.¹³⁴
- December 8, 2013: At least 45 Shia killed in bombings in Shia neighborhoods.¹³⁵
- December 9, 2013: Car bomb in Sunni neighborhood kills 11.¹³⁶
- December 10, 2013: 13 Sunnis killed, then 12 Shia among 25 killed in one day.¹³⁷
- December 21, 2013: Top-ranking Iraqi officers killed in ambush by Al Qaeda.¹³⁸
- December 23, 2013: Coordinated attacks across Iraq kill at least 26 people.¹³⁹

These incidents all preceded the crisis in Anbar that occurred at the very end of 2013. On December 30, 2013, Nickolay Mladenov, the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq (SRSG), warned that the situation in Anbar threatened to make Shi’ite-Sunni violence much worse and called for restraint and political engagement.¹⁴⁰

I am concerned about the current developments in Anbar and call on all to remain calm and to abide by the agreements reached in in the course of the last two days. Political disputes must be resolved through dialogue and through an inclusive political process that allows all components to feel engaged in building the democratic future of the country...The government has a Constitutional responsibility to protect all citizens from terrorism, while observing the rights of ordinary Iraqi citizens, providing for their humanitarian needs, and showing maximum restraint in the use of force”.

“I call on all political leaders to abide by their commitments, including the ‘The National Honor Code’ and to immediately come together to discuss the serious challenges facing the country. As Iraq prepares for elections next year, all parties and coalitions should put forward their platforms for the future and remain fully engaged in the democratic political process”.

It was the right call, but whether Iraq still had anything approaching an honor code or could move towards some form of reconciliation and national consensus was far from clear. UNAMI reported in mid-march 2014 – the cutoff date for this analysis – that the situation in Anbar alone had reached the point where 64,298 families have been displaced – 50,992 within Anbar and 13,376 outside it – and that the situation in other areas was creating growing problems: “The security situation has significantly deteriorated in Salah Al-Din, which currently hosts 8,000 IDP families in Sulayman Bek and Tuz Khurmatu.”

UNAMI summarized the situation in Anbar as follows,¹⁴¹

Neither the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) nor the Islamic State in Iraq and Levant (ISIL) has full control over Fallujah and several other parts of Anbar. The Iraqi security forces and allied tribal groups are attempting to retake control of the province leading to armed clashes in the South, North and East of Fallujah. This is impacting areas hosting IDPs, including the villages of Al-Falahat, Al-Nassaf, Al-Azragiyah and Al-Saqlawiyah. As a result, IDPs are forced to seek refuge further to the west.

In Ramadi, the situation remains unpredictable as shelling and clashes continued during the past few days in the city and rural neighborhoods, causing people to flee to Heet District, which is already hosting approximately 11,250 IDP families. The Local Council in Heet continues to welcome IDPs, despite the significant additional burden on the local infrastructure, accommodation and basic services.

Despite the existing restriction of movement inside Fallujah and Ramadi cities and the fact that roads linking the districts with other areas of Anbar are becoming increasingly unsafe due to the ongoing military operations, Anbar local authorities continue to encourage the return of IDPs. Incentives such as a cash grant of 500,000 IQD (\$427) for each returning family are being provided. Compensation for lost or damaged property will also be made available for those who return. No large scale return movement however has been reported so far.

...Multiple displacements, difficulties in accessing areas and constraints in registration, constrain accurate quantification of those displaced. The UN continues to observe secondary displacement in various locations, as escalation of the security situation continues to force IDP families to move again and further from the conflict zone. One example is Al-Khaldiya an area previously hosting 11,700 families from Ramadi and Fallujah, now only hosts 4,000 families. The remainder fled to Heet, Anaah and Rawa. Additionally, following fierce clashes in Al-Falahat, Al-Nassaf, Al-Azragiyah and Al-Saqlawiyah, IDPs were forced to relocate further west.

Refugees: The Other Casualties

As this summary of the situation in Anbar shows, **Figure 15** to **Figure 21** tell only a limited part of the story. UN data provided important insights into key aspects of the rise in violence that are even harder to track and quantify. As is the case in Syria and all too many other countries, the fighting created large numbers of refugees who often lost their homes, jobs and business, all their savings, and the opportunity to educate their children. Sickness injured and killed significant numbers, particularly those who could not find homes or some other source of support.

There are no precise estimates of the numbers of such refugees and the many other Iraqis that were forced to relocate – sometimes being forced out of a Shi’ite or Sunni home and businesses in the same city where they had to flee or relocate to a relative, friend, or shelter. Many were robbed or injured in the process. In many cases, no report was ever made of such violence or losses and even in fatal cases, many may not have been reported as casualties.

Broad Estimates of Refugees

According to the UN Human Rights Commission (UNHCR), Iraq still had some 98,822 Iraqis registered as refugees, 4,914 asylum seekers, 82,270 returned refugees, 1,131,810 returned refugees, 1,131,810, returned refugees, 218,800 internally displaced persons, 120,000 stateless persons inside Iraq at the beginning of 2013 – creating a total population of concern of 1,656,616.¹⁴²

The data on registered Iraqi refugees outside the country added another 746,440, and there were 23,920 asylum seekers outside the country. This created a total population of concern of 2,302,240 – a number that does not include wealthier persons who do not seek UN assistance or those who simply are not counted in the chaos of events in Iraq and outside the region.¹⁴³ Moreover, UNHCR reported that as of the end of August, it was still supporting 280 refugee camps and settlement for the internally displaced in Iraq, support 33,390 persons, and providing 5,650 shelters.¹⁴⁴

The US projected at the start of 2013 that that this population of concern would still be as high as 1,444,880 inside Iraq at the end of 2013, but this was before the rise in violence began to peak in 2013, and before the impact of the Syrian civil war and economic problems, and other tensions in nations like Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, and Turkey because to pressure Iraqis to return while internal violence pressured them to leave or give up their homes and businesses and more to more secure regions in Iraq.

It is important to note that these figures have a false precision. No source or method allows them to be more than a rough estimate based on uncertain and constantly changing data. The estimates of Iraqi refugees also fell far below the peak totals during the worst of the violence during 2005-2008.

Rising Trends at the End of 2013/Early 2014

The UNHCR estimates at the end of 2013 did make it clear that the situation had gotten even worse than the US had previously estimated:

- **Figure 22** provides an estimate of the seriousness of the Iraqi refugee problem in 2013 by the UNHCR. It is clear that the end 2013 totals were even more serious than the US estimated.
- **Figure 23** shows the impact of the Syrian civil war on the refugee problem – pushing some Iraqis back into hardship in Iraq while pushing Syrian refugees into Iraq, often creating a serious local burden in terms of cost, housing, services, and education as well as problems in employment. It also shows the estimated trend in total refugees and displaced persons from all sources from 2013-2015.

The fighting in Anbar and other causes made this situation much worse as a result of the fighting that began in Anbar in late December 2013. By late January 2014. The UNHCR reported that,¹⁴⁵

- Internal sectarian tensions and divisions are still polarizing Iraq, while the crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic (Syria) continues to feed instability in the region.
- Iraq is not only receiving large numbers of Syrian refugees, but is also seeing the return of many Iraqi refugees, particularly from Syria. Often these returnees cannot go back to their places of origin, leading to new secondary displacement inside Iraq.
- With the growing number of Syrian refugees putting additional strains on local infrastructure and essential services, which were already significantly weakened by the years of war and instability, access to basic services for the Iraqi population itself remains problematic. Stagnant socio-economic development further affects daily life in Iraq, while institutional capacity remains limited. These conditions hamper the ability of internally displaced people to return home. With this context, UNHCR

and its partners deliver assistance and protection to vulnerable groups that are often located in remote areas.

- In 2014, the main populations of concern in Iraq will include: refugees and asylum-seekers from the Islamic Republic of Iran and Turkey who are mostly of Kurdish origin, and fled over a decade ago; Palestinians who were granted asylum by the previous regime, most of whom live in camps, settlements and urban areas across Iraq, mainly in the Kurdistan Region, but also in Baghdad and other central governorates; Syrians, the majority of whom currently reside in the Kurdistan Region or in Anbar Governorate; and growing numbers of Iraqi refugees returning to Iraq from neighboring countries. There are approximately 1 million IDPs and 110,000 stateless people in Iraq who will be eligible for assistance from UNHCR.
- Since fighting broke out at the end of last year, more than 140,000 people have been made homeless by fighting according to Iraq's Ministry of Displacement and Migration. This is the largest displacement Iraq has witnessed since the sectarian violence of 2006-2008. This number is on top of the 1.13 million people already internally displaced in Iraq and who are mostly residing in Baghdad, Diyala and Ninewa provinces....According to reports from people in Anbar, including UNHCR staff, many civilians are unable to leave conflict-affected areas where food and fuel are now in short supply....Most of the ...displaced remain outside Fallujah city, accommodated by relatives or staying in schools, mosques and hospitals where resources are running low. Host families are having difficulties sustaining the burden of caring for the displaced.

Guessing at the Full Human Impact

At the same time, the estimates shown in **Figures 22** and **Figure 23** only begin to reflect the full human impact of the refugee problem. Some of the refugees and displaced involved had suffered for well over half a decade, had no clear hope of a stable future, and had been unable to educate, their children. A large number almost certainly faced the prospect of further years as displaced persons or refugees – representing a major future source of sectarian and ethnic tension and violence.

While some refugees returned to Iraq in 2010-2012 because they felt it was now safe, many had to return because they had run out of money, the lack of support from other governments, the inability find work or educate their children, and hostility from the local population. The UNHCR noted in September 2013, months before the before the crisis in Anbar in December 2013, that, ¹⁴⁶

Due to the unrest in the Syrian Arab Republic (Syria), Iraqi refugees in that country are increasingly opting to return home in large numbers, with some 32,000 arriving in July and August 2012 alone. This movement is in addition to the flight of thousands of Syrian nationals escaping the violence, who are either being accommodated by host communities or residing in camps. Another challenge facing the Iraqi Government and the international community is to provide humanitarian assistance and sustainable solutions for some 1.2 million Iraqi internally displaced persons (IDPs), in addition to offering protection and emergency support to tens of thousands of refugees in the country.

The influx of Syrian refugees and returning Iraqis has led to a significant increase in UNHCR's operational needs in Iraq. Refugees, both in camps and urban settlements, remain dependent on UNHCR's protection and assistance services.

Of special concern to the Office are the most destitute IDPs, who have no option but to live in illegal, substandard settlements where they are at constant risk of eviction. Security risks, depletion of personal resources, high living costs and a dearth of self-reliance opportunities make it extremely difficult for them to find durable solutions. Some refugee returnees also find themselves internally displaced. Returnees, whether refugees or IDPs, also face problems related to the lack of basic services and documentation. The population of stateless people in the country faces similar problems.

These **Figures** and trends further highlight a key limitation to the way almost all governments, media, and analysts treat the impact of serious civil violence and war. Refugees and internally

displaced persons are never counted as casualties, but many are enduring casualties to all intents and purposes. They lose their homes, savings, jobs, and businesses and face years in which they remain displaced and impoverished. Their children achieve erratic education. Staying abroad means losing many rights. Returning often means living in a different areas with limited or no employment prospects and sometimes with poor security – particularly if return means return to an area largely “cleansed” of the same sect or ethnic group.

Figure 22: UNHCR Estimate of Iraqi Refugees

Statistical Snapshot as of January 2014

Residing in Iraq

Refugees	188,555
Asylum Seekers	5,374
Returned Refugees	35,151
Internally Displaced Persons (IDPS)	993,188
Returned IDPs	24,100
Stateless Persons	120,000
Various	0
Total Population of Concern	1,366,368

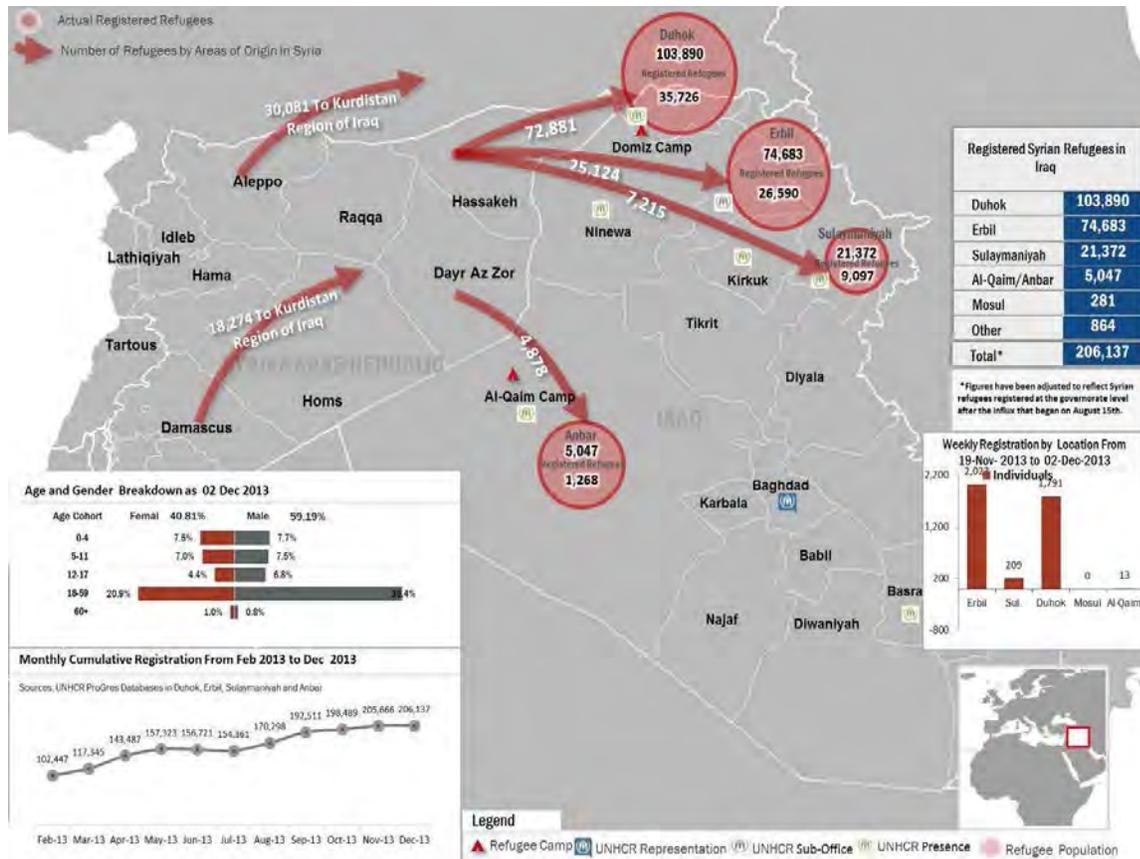
Originating from Iraq

Refugees	409,181
Asylum Seekers	20,998
Returned Refugees	35,151
Internally Displaced Persons (IDPS)	993,188
Returned IDPs [24,100
Various	1
Total Population of Concern	1,482,619

TYPE OF POPULATION	ORIGIN	JAN 2013		DEC 2013	
		TOTAL IN COUNTRY	OF WHOM ASSISTED BY UNHCR	TOTAL IN COUNTRY	OF WHOM ASSISTED BY UNHCR
Refugees	Islamic Rep. of Iran	8,600	8,600	8,990	8,990
	Palestinians	11,740	11,740	11,930	11,930
	Syrian Arab Rep.	60,000	60,000	120,000	120,000
	Turkey	15,390	15,390	15,690	15,690
	Various	580	580	840	840
Asylum-seekers	Islamic Rep. of Iran	5,900	5,900	5,050	5,050
	Syrian Arab Rep.	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500
	Turkey	750	750	800	800
Returnees (refugees)	Various	60	60	80	80
	Iraq	80,000	40,000	60,000	30,000
IDPs	Iraq	1,200,000	500,000	1,000,000	500,000
Returnees (IDPs)	Iraq	200,000	40,000	150,000	40,000
Stateless people	Stateless	100,000	100	70,000	80
Total		1,684,520	684,620	1,444,880	734,960

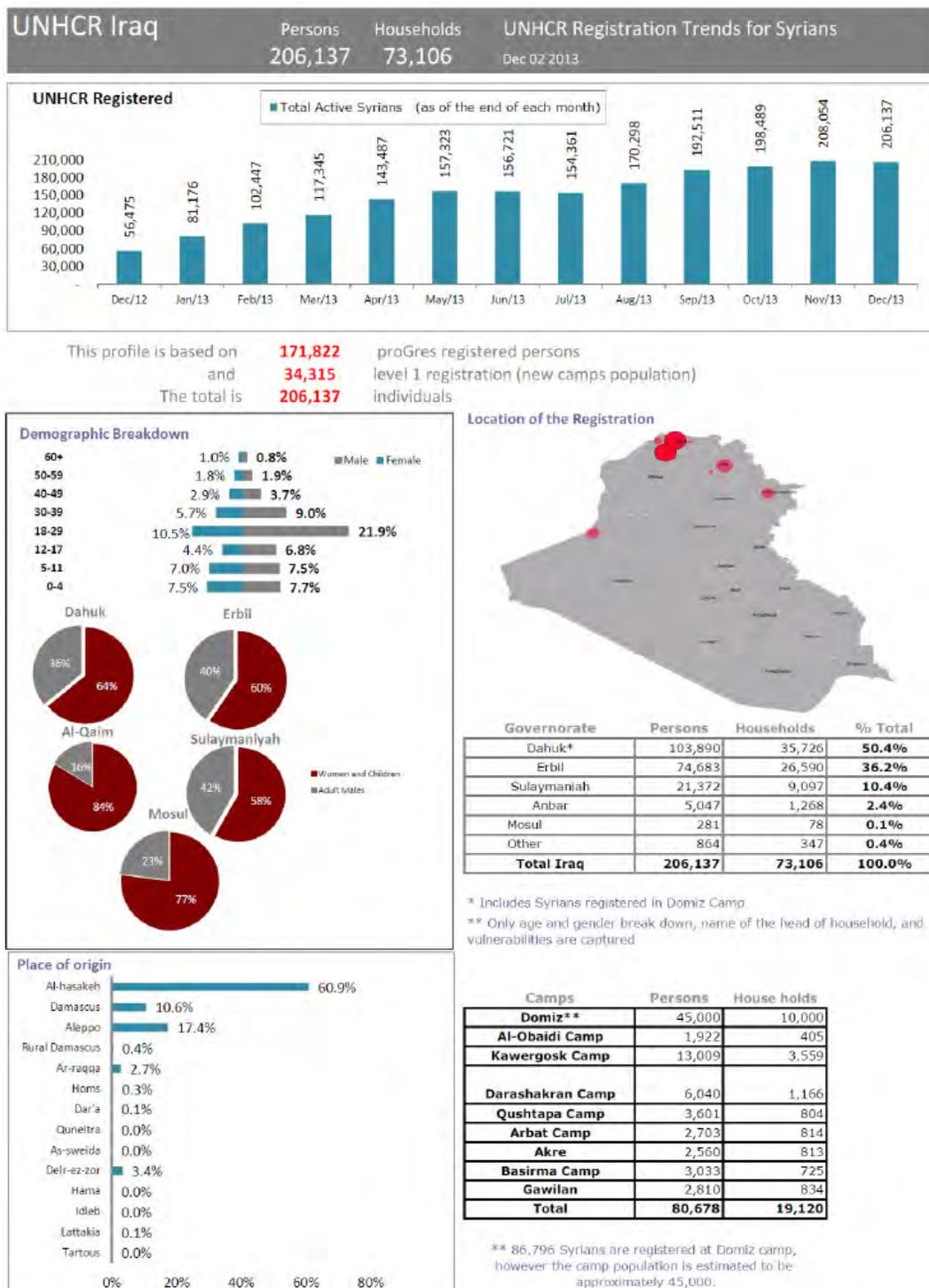
Source: UNHCR, “Iraq: 2013 UNHCR Country Operations Profile, <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49e486426.html>, accessed December 29, 2013.

Figure 23: Impact of the Syrian Civil War on Iraqi Refugee Population- Early December 2013 – Part One



Source: UNHCR, "Syria Situation in IRAQ Inter-agency Update no. 54, 19 November – 2 December 2013, <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49e486426.html>, accessed December 29, 2013.

Figure 23: Impact of the Syrian Civil War on Iraqi Refugee Population -- Early December 2013 – Part Two



Prepared by Erbil Data Management Associate

Source: UNHCR, "Syria Situation in IRAQ Inter-agency Update no. 54, 19 November – 2 December 2013.

Figure 23: Impact of the Syrian Civil War on Iraqi Refugee Population- Latye January 2014– Part Three

TYPE OF POPULATION	ORIGIN	Dec 2013		Dec 2014		Dec 2015	
		Total in country	of whom assisted by UNHCR	Total in country	of whom assisted by UNHCR	Total in country	of whom assisted by UNHCR
Total		1,591,690	991,690	1,623,890	1,033,890	1,336,010	756,010
Refugees	Palestinian	12,000	12,000	12,200	12,200	12,400	12,400
	Syrian Arab Rep.	350,000	350,000	500,000	500,000	350,000	350,000
	Turkey	15,500	15,500	15,650	15,650	15,850	15,850
	Various	8,450	8,450	9,780	9,780	11,110	11,110
	Islamic Rep. of Iran	3,260	3,260	3,460	3,460	3,650	3,650
Asylum-seekers	Syrian Arab Rep.	1,200	1,200	1,300	1,300	1,400	1,400
	Turkey	1,200	1,200	1,400	1,400	1,500	1,500
	Various	80	80	100	100	100	100
Returnee arrivals during year (ex-refugees)	Iraq	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000	20,000	20,000
Internally displaced	Iraq	1,000,000	500,000	900,000	400,000	800,000	300,000
Returnee arrivals during year (ex-IDPs)	Iraq	50,000	50,000	40,000	40,000	30,000	30,000
Stateless people	Stateless	110,000	10,000	100,000	10,000	90,000	10,000

Source: UNHCR, Iraq 2014 UNHCR country operations profile – Iraq, <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49e486426.html>, accessed January 24, 2014.

Responsibility: State Abuses of Power versus the Continuing Role of Violent Extremist Groups

Another aspect of the previous data needs to be kept firmly in mind as this analysis shifts to the fully mix of the causes of violence in Iraq. None of the preceding Figures show the killed, wounded, and detained that result because of the actions in the Iraqi military, security forces, and police forces, and no attempt is made to provide totals of what are sometimes arbitrary or punitive arrests and detentions.

As noted throughout the previous analysis, it is often difficult or impossible to assign responsibility for given aspects of the rise in violence to given actors. The sources that are available rarely provide a clear picture of the cause of violent incidents or casualties by group, sect, or ethnicity. They often do not identify victims by group, sect, or ethnicity. In most cases, there no way to distinguish what elements of the Iraqi security forces was involved, or even whether the non-state actor is a Sunni extremist group or a Shi'ite militia. As a result, the previous data do not reflect the political realities shaping Iraq that are described in the following chapters. By default, they put virtually all of the blame for Iraq's violence on non-state actors, and by implication, largely on Iraq Sunnis.

The tendency to attribute most violence to Sunnis – and Al Qaeda and the Islamic State in Iraq and Levant in particular – often ignores or understates significant Shi'ite inspired violence. This is clear from both day-to-day media reporting from Iraq, and studies like the work of Jessica Lewis, Ahmed Ali, and Kimberly Kagan of the Institute for the Study of War, which addressed the threat from Sunni extremist groups, but also warned in May 2013 that,¹⁴⁷

... reports from Baghdad and Diyala also indicate that Shi'a militant groups, including the Iranian-backed Sadrist splinter group Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq, have begun to mobilize in Iraq to establish checkpoints in Baghdad and to conduct extra-judicial killings (EJKs) against Sunnis. Extra-judicial killings reportedly carried out by militias also occurred in the city of Hilla in central Iraq. AAH, along with Lebanese Hezbollah and Kata'ib Hezbollah, publically acknowledged its military involvement in Syria in April 2013.... Lebanese Hezbollah has mobilized in Syria throughout May. This regional military activation, as well as the elevated threat to the Iraqi Shi'a population posed by AQL, lends greater credibility to the reports that Iraqi Shi'a militant groups have mobilized to conduct intimidation and violence against Sunni in the name of defending Shi'a population.

As the following chapters show, Iraq's violence is the result of combination of Iraqi political power struggles, an increasing drift toward authoritarianism and the equivalent of state terrorism combined with rising violence by both Sunni and Shi'ite extremist groups at the margin of Iraqi politics.

This is clear from both unclassified US State Department report and reporting by UNAMI, as well as studies of the detailed patterns in such violence by the Institute for the Study of War, the Crisis Group, WINEP, and the *Long War Journal*.¹⁴⁸ They all show the complexity of the situation on the ground, and that responsibility has a broad range of causes, and such source continue to warn that a failure to focus on Iraqi central government and Kurdish tensions in terms of incident counts presents another problem.

Moreover, the risk of broader civil war is driven by a range of political crises at the national to the local level, and by the broad range of interacting sectarian and ethnic divisions that affect much of the country. As the following chapters show, these include Arab and Kurdish tensions as well as Sunni Shi'ite tensions.¹⁴⁹ They include regional issues like Sunni discussion of form of "federalism" or more independent status even in mixed provinces like Diyala, and Shi'ite

discussion in the oil rich provinces in the south of a different kind of federalism that would separate them from even the other largely Shi'ite provinces. They also interact with the broad impact of Islamist and Sunni versus Shi'ite violence in regional countries ranging from Yemen, and Syria and now affect much of the Islamic world, and involve all of Iraq's minorities.

V. IRAQ'S CRISIS IN LEADERSHIP AND POLITICS

The primary and empowering cause of Iraq's current violence is not extremist movements, or even its sectarian and ethnic divisions, but rather its failed politics and system of governance. These failures are led by the current Maliki government, but only because it – and Iraq's Shi'ites – are no the dominant force in Iraq's government and security services. Its other political leaders, and Sunni and Kurdish factions – as well as other Shi'ite factions – must take equal blame. So must the US for making many of the mistakes that have led to Iraq's current history and its previous leaders and their long history of failed governance.

These following chapters do show the dangers created by Iraq's sectarian and ethnic factions, the role Iran has played in dividing Iraq and seeking its own goals, and the serious of the reemergence of the threat from Al Qaeda, militias, and other violent groups. It also shows the dangers of the growing interaction between violence in Iraq and the Syrian civil war.

All are warnings that a dominant Shi'ite leader may be able to repress opposing factions for a time – as Iraqi dictators and authoritarian leaders have in the past – but that the only hope Iraq has for real stability is a national government that both unifies Iraq's factions and gives each faction a fair share of wealth and power. Such reforms are also the only basis for effective security forces, economic development, and the full exploitation of Iraq's oil wealth.

The Politics of Violence or the Violence of Politics?

The key issue is what can be done to end Iraq's escalating level of violence. Violence is now far more Iraq's symptom than its disease. Iraq's ongoing sectarian and ethnic conflicts cannot be separated from the country's political instability and crisis in leadership. As violence has spread across the country, Iraqi government officials, clerics, and politicians have become increasingly implicated in the fighting, at times inciting the violence that contributes to Iraq's soaring death toll.

The 2010 election was largely honest and democratic, but its close and ambiguous outcome led to an ongoing sectarian struggle between Iraq's Shias and Sunnis, while slowly increasing tensions between Arabs and Kurds. The Kurdish region in northern Iraq, with its capital at Erbil, continued to operate semi-autonomously from the Shi'ite led government in Baghdad, and was largely spared the crippling political, security, and economic conditions which stifle much of the rest of Iraq.¹⁵⁰

Iraq's ethnic and sectarian tensions have since continued to be reinforced by a mix of corruption, nepotism, and clientelism that plagued its public sector with unqualified employees, and contribute to overall problems with governance.¹⁵¹ Government corruption, politicization of independent institutions, marginalization of opposition groups, weak civil society, and the government's unwillingness and capacity to deal with these issues and provide adequate basic social services worsened the political and security crisis in Iraq.

Much of the violence stemmed from tensions between government-run security forces and opposition militia groups that supported the major contestants for control over the government and throughout the country. The main impact of the political struggles, however, was create an new opening for violent Sunni Islamist extremists and Al Qaeda, and as well as to allow some of the Shi'ite militias and Iraqi Security Forces to start a new cycle of reprisals.

As is analyzed in more depth in later chapters, this led to steady rises in terrorist and extremist attacks many of which came to target government institutions and officials, as well as lead to indiscriminate attacks against civilians, including bombings at schools and mosques.¹⁵² In November 2013, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon denounced both a recent spate of insurgent attacks, as well as the government's exclusion of Sunni and other minority groups. "It is important to accelerate equitable political participation at the national and local levels, consolidate democratic processes and institutions, as well as civil society and foster economic development," Mr. Ban said, adding, "political leaders on all sides have a clear responsibility for leading and facilitating decisive and inclusive action."¹⁵³

The end result is all too clear from the patterns in violence in the previous chapters. Since 2010, Iraq's failed attempts at political reconciliation -- coupled to the Maliki government's growing attempts to crack down on its political opponents -- have exacerbated public discontent and agitation. Segments of the Iraqi population that are shut out of the current political system, particularly Sunnis and former Ba'ath Party members banned from participating in government, increasingly view the current regime as illegitimate, and have redirected violence once aimed at American occupiers towards the Maliki-led government.

Serious power struggles began immediately after the March 2010 election. In the months after the US Serious withdrawal, increased tensions divided a fragile coalition government, and underscored Iraq's significant political, military, and economic challenges. Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta anticipated these problems, warning, "Let me be clear: Iraq will be tested in the days ahead; by terrorism, by those who seek to divide it, economic and social issues, by the demands of democracy itself."¹⁵⁴

Figure 24 shows a political timeline from late 2011 to 2012 that helps explain why that civilian deaths in Iraq increased to nearly the levels reached in 2008.¹⁵⁵ By December 2011, it was all too clear that that the presence of US troops in Iraq had suppressed the severity of Iraq's internal political, military, and economic challenges. As the *New York Times* reported shortly after the last US combat troops left Iraq, "finally confronting the social, economic, and religious divisions that were papered over by the presence of American troops" posed a greater challenge to Iraqi leaders than previously anticipated."¹⁵⁶

During 2012 and early 2013, rival political and sectarian factions increasingly fought for power, territory, and control throughout Iraq. In May 2013, The Institute for the Study of War reported that "Maliki has abandoned the non-sectarian nationalist platform that he adopted in 2008 and has systematically marginalized the senior cadre of Sunni national politicians," adding, "this began in earnest with the withdrawal of U.S. forces in December 2011 when Maliki targeted Sunni Vice President Tariq al Hashimi, who is now in exile."¹⁵⁷

Violence in Iraq continued to rise throughout the rest of 2013 as the result of what Michael Knights called, "two separate but interwoven security crises...Experts differentiate between the "al-Qaeda stream" of mass-casualty attacks, and what might be called a "normal insurgency" undertaken by local-level Sunni and Shia militant cells".¹⁵⁸

As the previous chapters have shown, the number of total security incidents in Iraq also surged, from approximately 300 security incidents a month in 2011, to over 1,200 per month throughout 2013.¹⁵⁹ The UN estimated that approximately 5,740 civilians in Iraq were killed through September of 2013, almost twice the number of civilian deaths reported for all of 2010.

By the end of the year, UNAMI estimated that the total number of civilian casualties (including police) killed in 2013 was the highest since 2008. Casualty tolls reached 7,818 killed (6,787 killed in 2008) and 17,981 injured (20,178 injured in 2008). The total number of monthly casualties (killed and injured, including police) was consistently above 1,500 after April 2013, and a total of 759 Iraqis were killed and another 1,345 were wounded in acts of terrorism.¹⁶⁰ The most violent month of 2013 was May, with a total of 3,154 civilian casualties (including police), of whom 963 were killed and 2,191 wounded.

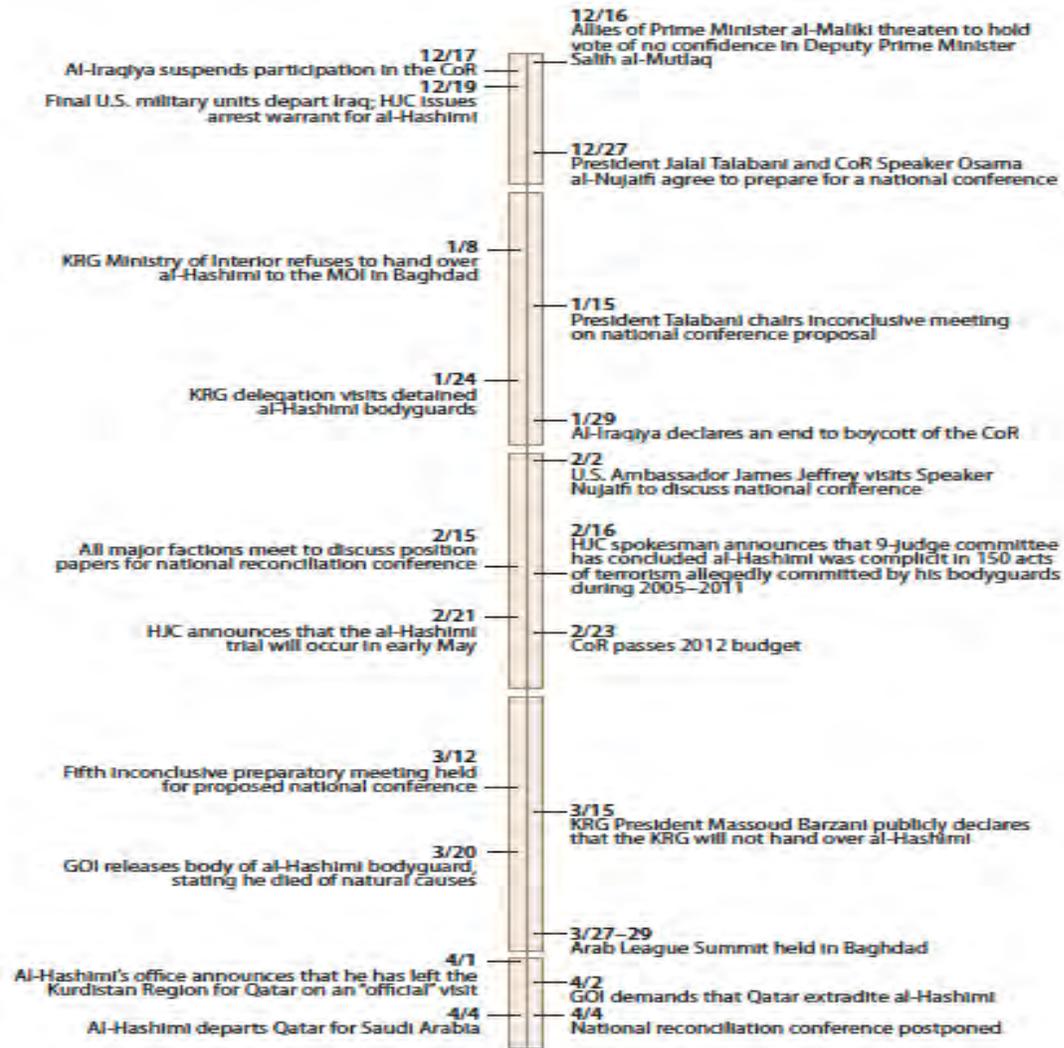
Iraqi Body Count estimated the number of deaths in Iraq at approximately 9,500 in 2013, 4,500 in 2012; 4,100 in 2011; 4,100 in 2010; 5,100 in 2009, and 10,000 in 2008.¹⁶¹ The number of total security incidents in Iraq also surged, from approximately 300 security incidents a month in 2011, to over 1,200 per month throughout 2013.¹⁶²

The only good news – to the extent there was any – was that there 2013 figures were still considerably lower than 2006-2007 levels, when Iraq was on the verge of civil war. In January of 2007, the UN reported over 34,000 civilian deaths in Iraq during the previous year, many attributed to rampant abductions and execution-style killings that characterized Iraq's near civil-war atmosphere.¹⁶³ Nevertheless, the increase in attacks and overall violence by insurgents, local militias, and security forces undermined Iraq's security situation throughout much of 2013.

Some still saw these trends as a renewal of the past fight against Sunni Islamist extremist and Al Qaeda. In September 2013 Tim Arango of the *New York Times* reported that, "The Shiite-dominated central government, led by Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki, is battling an increasingly deadly Sunni insurgency that is morphing into a bloody sectarian fight reminiscent of the country's civil war of several years ago. The violence is relentless and daily."¹⁶⁴

Many Iraqis blamed, however, this spike in violence on Iraq's political leaders. So did outside reports. Jane Arraf, Iraq correspondent for the *Christian Science Monitor* reported as much in May 2013. "What we're seeing now is a different kind of insurgency... [t]he people fighting see it as an insurgency. But instead of fighting against American soldiers, they're fighting against an Iraqi government that they see as illegitimate."¹⁶⁵ Arraf went on to say that the current level of violence is "more unsettling than it's ever been... now what we're seeing isn't just the rampant violence...it's a different kind of violence, and it has coincided with a de-facto partitioning of the country."¹⁶⁶

Figure 24: Timeline of Dispute between Prime Minister al-Maliki and Members of al-Iraqiya, 12/15/2011–4/4/2012



Source: SIGIR analysis of open-source documents in English and Arabic, 12/2011–4/2012.

Source: SIGIR, Quarterly Report to Congress, April 30, 2012, p. 67.

The First Round of Iraqi Governments and Elections

To put these developments in context, it is important to describe the extent to which they were shaped by Iraq's internal politics and relations with outside states and players -- particularly by the US and Iran -- as well as the actions of AQI/ISIS and other extremists. Iraq political leaders made many mistakes, but American efforts to create a new political structure in Iraq did much to both help create sectarian and ethnic tensions and serve the Iranian goal of creating a Shia-dominated government. So did Iran as backed given candidates and parties, supported Shi'ite militias and violence, and brokered post-election political agreements.

One major step in this process occurred in June 2004, when the US Coalition Provisional Authority transitioned control to a sovereign Iraqi Interim Government with Ayad Allawi as its prime minister. The creation of Allawi's government was intended to provide another half year for the US to continue to shape Iraq's governance before elections created a new and more lasting body. In practice, however, the lack of Iraqi Sunni participation in the elections on January 30, 2005, was a boon to Iran and a blow to the American goal of creating an inclusive political process that would bring stability to Iraq.

The January 2005 elections were supposed to form a broadly based 275-member National Assembly that would write Iraq's new constitution. However, the Sunni boycott shaped the results in ways that created a sectarian nightmare: 240 of the 275 seats were won by three parties: the Shia United Iraqi Alliance (UIA) won 140 seats, the Kurdistan Alliance won 75 seats, and the Iraqiyya List, led by Ayad Allawi, which won 40 seats.¹⁶⁷

Iran played an important role in bringing together the UIA coalition, which included most of Iraq's Shia political groups. The most prominent were the Abdul Aziz al Hakim-led Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI; formerly SCIRI) and Nouri al Maliki's Dawa Party.¹⁶⁸ The two major parties in the Kurdistan Alliance were the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK). The PUK's leader Jalal Talibani became President of Iraq and Massoud Barzani became President of the Kurdistan Regional Government. Ibrahim al Jaafari of the Dawa Party became Prime Minister.

A second round of elections on December 15, 2005, was more balanced. It created a new 275-member Council of Representatives with a five-year term. The Shia-dominated United Iraqi Alliance was again the largest bloc, winning 128 seats. This time, Moqtada al Sadr's followers joined the bloc, and the end result put Islamic parties, with many leaders who had been exiled in Iran, in leading positions. The Kurds won 53 seats. The Sunni-Arab Tawafuq party, also known as the Iraq Accord Front, won the third most seats with 44. Allawi's former coalition Iraqiyya List joined others to form the Iraqiyya National List, which won only 25 seats.

This time Iran was instrumental in assembling the United Iraqi Alliance, whose formation of the government that followed saw Nouri al Maliki of the Shia Dawa Party replace Jaafari as Prime Minister, ISCI gain several important ministerial posts, and five Sadrists take ministerial posts.¹⁶⁹

The January 2009 Governorate Elections

Largely as a result of US efforts, Iraqi elections required voters to choose from national lists that continued to divide Iraq in ways that created national blocs of Shias, Sunnis, and Kurds and those who were elected had limited incentives to directly represent those who elected them. The result was parties that focused on sectarian and ethnic advantage. These national lists complicated the

electoral and governance process due to their own power and tendency to favor the creation of wealth and privileges for their members over progress in governance. Additionally, Shia dominance of the political arena made it difficult for Iraq and the US to move forward in reaching viable plans to implement their Strategic Framework Agreement.

The January 2009 provincial elections resulted in the fragmentation of the Iranian-backed coalition that had formed the United Iraqi Alliance. Maliki's Dawa Party separated from ISCI (formerly SCIRI) and formed a new list called State of Law. The three major Iraqi Shia parties competed with each other, reducing Iran's influence.¹⁷⁰ State of Law came in first in most Shia governorates, while ISCI's best performance in the South was in Najaf, where it tied with State of Law for seven seats each out of 28 in the governorate council. Sadr's list performed even worse, failing to win any governorate outright.¹⁷¹ Although Iran's attempt to revive the United Iraqi Alliance failed, post-election complications gave Iran a major role in forming the next Iraqi government.

The March 2010 Parliamentary Elections

As has already been mentioned, the March 7, 2010 parliamentary elections resulted in a very different outcome than previous elections, and one that virtually paralyzed many aspects of Iraq's political, economic, and security development. Ayad Allawi's Iraqiyya list won the most seats with 91, while Maliki and his allies – who split from the United Iraqi Alliance to form the State of Law list – won 89. The successor to the UIA, the Iraqi National Alliance, won 70 seats and the Kurds 57.¹⁷² One key reason for these splits was that the divisions among Shia factions, failed governance, gross corruption, and public infighting created a situation where many Iraqi voters chose to vote incumbents out of office.

This was not clear in the period immediately after the election. The results initially seemed encouraging to the US, since the two candidates who were seen as more secular and less connected to militias scored the most votes, making a national unity government seem more of a possibility. Another positive sign was that Iran's influence over developments across the border seemed more uncertain because many felt a cross-sectarian national alliance was taking shape in Iraq.

Iran, however, pushed for Shia dominance through a Shia alliance. Allawi had often warned in Iraq and foreign cities of such dangers from Iranian influence. Although Allawi was Shia, he was secular, and reached out to Iraq's Sunni, urging the Sunni electorate to take part in elections, and Sunni leaders to participate in forming broad-based government.¹⁷³ In one poll, 56% of Iraqis said they would not see the government as fully legitimate if Allawi was not part of it, while 31% said they would see it as "legitimate" or "somewhat legitimate."¹⁷⁴

Allawi, however, could not create a larger bloc by gained Shia votes from outside his coalition as easily as Maliki. Maliki both challenged the integrity of the vote, and acted quickly to create a coalition that gave him more votes in Parliament than Allawi. He remained in office and effectively excluded Iraqiyya list members and his main rivals from power. At the same time, Maliki's dependence on Shia votes gave more power to the Sadrist – the largest victor on the Shia side.

Despite US hopes, the March 2010 election came to produce near legislative paralysis as the two conflicting coalitions struggled for power and showed little ability to compromise. Ramzy Mardini of the Institute for the Study of War, wrote later that: "Iraqiyya...defeated Maliki's State of Law coalition. But Iraq's judiciary, under political pressure from the prime minister, re-interpreted the constitutional rules...This allowed Maliki to merge with another Shia bloc post elections, giving him the first opportunity to form government."¹⁷⁵

The end result was that stalemate in competing efforts to form a majority coalition to appoint a new prime minister lasted eight months, setting an international record for the longest period of time between elections and the seating of a government. Moreover, Maliki was able to use this time to exploit his position as prime minister, govern with considerable direct authority in the face of a divided and ineffective legislature, control much of the budget and gradually strengthen his control over Iraq's security forces – by placing loyalists in many key command positions by making “temporary” appointments, and tolerating the sale of other positions and profiteering with the security structure by those he considered loyalists.

Non-Government by Paralysis

By mid-2011, Iraq had effectively split along sectarian lines. With Iranian encouragement, Shia – including Sadr – unified and supported Maliki continuing as Prime Minister. Iran, with the strong support of Iranian Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani,¹⁷⁶ worked hard to establish a Shia led government. Iran played a role in the Independent High Electoral Commission's decision to ban Sunni and secular candidates from the vote.¹⁷⁷

Iran's efforts to include the supporters of both Maliki and Sadr in the new government built on a strategy Iran had pursued since 2004. Iran supported diverse Shia factions in order to serve its interests. Iran was able to overcome the tensions between Maliki and Sadr to create an Iraqi government beholden to Iranian influence. Iran may also have provided \$8 million a month to Moqtada al Sadr's party for the 2010 election.¹⁷⁸ Without Iranian backing, Sadr would have been left with a far less durable foundation, while Iran would have been far less influential in Iraq without Sadr.¹⁷⁹

At the same time, the bureaucratic machinery in the Iraqi government was forced to run much of the country while Iraq's politicians struggled to form a new government. The judiciary was also partially empowered, although it could scarcely force unity or effectiveness on a divided political structure. It first declared it was unconstitutional for the Council of Representatives to not meet, therefore pushing the parties to come to a deal, and second, declared the powers of the presidency set out in bylaws to be unconstitutional in an effort to give more potential power to the Majlis.¹⁸⁰

The Erbil Agreement (or Lack Thereof)

The result was an agreement that created the illusion of a national government, but gave Maliki and his Shi'ite supporters a practical victory. After nearly half a year in which Iraqi factions jockeyed for power, an awkward combination of US and Iranian political pressures and Allawi's and Iraqiyya's inability to compete directly with Maliki, led Allawi's Iraqiyya bloc and the Kurds to agree to participate in what was supposed to be a national government.

In November 2010, the outlines of such a new government took shape in what came to be called the Erbil Agreement. Maliki remained as Prime Minister, Jalal Talibani remained as President, and the speakership of the Council of Representatives went to Osama al Nujeifi – a member of Iraqiyya with a tense relationship with the Kurds, especially regarding Kirkuk's future.¹⁸¹ This agreement came with both US and Iranian support, although the Iranians almost certainly saw it as more of a road to Shia control than one to national unity. It produced a nineteen-point agreement that was supposed to create a unified government and give the Sunnis and Allawi's faction an important role.¹⁸²

The agreement had the following terms:¹⁸³

- 1- Commitment to the Iraqi Constitution, with all of its articles without exception, and protection of Iraq's federal, democratic system.
- 2- A coalition government in which all major Iraqi components participate.
- 3- Commitment to the principle of partnership and participation in decision-making through:
 - a. Establishment of a Council on National Security, to be created through the passing of a special law at the same time as the government is formed.
 - b. Drafting of bylaws for the Council of Ministers that would give it added legitimacy and institutionalization. Through joint decision-making, the Council would ensure that administrative and financial powers are shared between the Prime Minister and his deputies.
 - c. Adherence to the principle of consensus.
- 4- Formation of a Federal Council within the first year of this Parliament. The President and his deputies have the right to veto legislation until this Council is formed.
- 5- Amendment of the current electoral law to guarantee that all Iraqis are represented fairly.
- 6- The census should be conducted on time in October 2010.
- 7- Review of the structures of the security and military forces to reflect a fair representation of all Iraqis in these forces.
- 8- Introduction of checks and balances in all Ministries and state Institutions.
- 9- Implementation of Article 140 of Iraq's Constitution and allocation of the necessary budget within a period that does not exceed two years following the formation of the government.
- 10- Passage of a law for water resources within the first year of the government formation on the basis of the latest agreed-upon draft.
- 11- Passage of a law for oil and gas within the first year of the government formation on the basis of the latest agreed-upon draft.
- 12- Supplying the Peshmerga forces with arms, equipment, and funds as part of the Iraqi national defense system.
13. Support for the Kurdistan Region's candidate for the post of President of the Republic.
- 14- Compensation for the victims of the former regime, including the victims of the Anfal campaign and chemical bombings of Halabja and other places.
- 15- The Kurdistan Region's blocs should have a fair representation within the sovereign ministries and other institutions based on national gains in the elections.
- 16- The Kurdistan Region should have the right to cross-examine candidates for the posts of minister of any sovereign ministries and those ministries that are relevant to the Region.
- 17- The Kurdistan Region's negotiating team should elect a candidate for the post of the Secretary of the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers.
- 18- In the event that the Kurdistan Region's blocs withdraw from the government due to a clear breach of the Constitution, the Iraqi government would then be considered dissolved.
- 19- The Prime Minister's bloc in both the Parliament and the Council of Ministers must make a commitment to the implementation of the above terms.

US officials applauded the 2010 Erbil agreement, and said they were hopeful that such cooperative arrangement would provide a political breakthrough among Iraq's leadership, and allow them to address the country's problems. They pointed to the influence the US had in pushing for the outcome, including the adoption of an American suggestion that Allawi head a new, "National Council for Security Policy".

However, the US Maliki's ability to manipulate his position, the divisions with Allawi's faction, underestimated Iran's influence, and the extent to which Iraqi politics remained a "blood sport." Maliki and Allawi could never agree on a functional role for the Council, serious Sunni and Shia differences remain, and key sources of tension between Arabs and Kurds have not been resolved. For example, the Kurds won Maliki's tentative acceptance of the international oil deals it was making outside of the federal government's authority, but it is still far from clear the extent of what this means in practice.

Moreover, the National Council for Security Policy powers were poorly defined and some critics argued that the power-sharing arrangement would sharply reduce the quality of governance. It was never clear how the National Council for Security Policy could fit into the legal framework of Iraq, since it was not mentioned in the constitution.

As a result, the creation of a new "unity" government led to Shia leadership that benefitted Prime Minister Maliki, who has continuously sought to increase and consolidate his hold over Iraqi politics. Ayad Allawi, the Shia leader of Iraqiyya's coalition, failed to achieve any lasting political gains, and the agreement only served to further strengthen the Prime Minister's hold on power.

Prime Minister Maliki's Steadily More Repressive Efforts to Consolidate Power

Increased tensions over the failure to implement any of the Erbil agreement's substantive provisions, led to growing struggles between Maliki and his political rivals. These struggles began in October 2011, and which reached the crisis point when Maliki had the Ministry of Interior issue an arrest warrant for Iraq's Sunni Arab Vice-President, Tariq Hashimi on December 19, 2011. Tensions reached the point where Massoud Barzani, the president of Iraq's autonomous Kurdish region, called for crisis talks to prevent the "collapse" of the government, warning that "the situation is headed towards deep crisis."¹⁸⁴

They also led to security crackdowns that had uncertain justification from the start. Earlier in 2011, Iraqi officials who supported Maliki started giving background briefings indicating that they had received intelligence provided by Libya which uncovered a planned Ba'athist coup- with the backing of Muammar Qaddafi-to be carried out after US troops withdrew from Iraq. Such claims are highly unlikely given the fact that the Libyan leader was in the process of being captured and killed during this timeframe. Nevertheless, it was one of the rationales for why Maliki arrested what some reports indicate were over 600 alleged Ba'athist conspirators in October 2011¹⁸⁵

An unidentified source within the Iraqi government later stated the intelligence tip had never occurred. Though the scale of these arrests is unprecedented, similar actions had occurred before. In September 2011, for example, 145 university employees in Tikrit were arrested for being Ba'athists.¹⁸⁶ As recently as December 2011, Maliki sought to expel and arrest Sunni politicians, such as Deputy Prime Minister Saleh al Mutlaq and Vice-President Tariq al Hashimi.

These developments held lead Transparency International to report in 2013 that, "Shia Prime Minister Al-Maliki, who has been serving since 2006, has been accused of concentrating powers in his hands, including by bringing under the executive's control constitutionally independent state institutions, silencing dissents and sidelining its Sunni allies in early 2012, as the last US troops were leaving the country."¹⁸⁷

The most visible origins of this growing political crisis -- and Maliki's shift towards authoritarianism and misuse of the Iraqi Security forces and the Iraq's legal system -- began in October-December of 2011, when Maliki's opponents claimed the prime minister began a crackdown on some 600 rivals who he accused of being former Ba'ath Party members.

This led to a public confrontation between Maliki and key Iraqi political leaders, including Vice President al-Hashimi, and other key Sunni leaders such as Finance Minister Rafa al-Issawi and Deputy Prime Minister Saleh al-Mutlaq who headed the prominent Sunni parliamentary bloc, the Iraqi National Dialogue Front. Three of Maliki's most powerful political opponents -- Mutlaq, Issawi, and Hashimi were eventually accused of supporting terrorist bombing and attacks and some of running a death squad to assassinate political rivals.¹⁸⁸

Maliki's treatment of each of these leaders, along with the case of Usama Abdu'l Aziz al-Nujayfi, the speaker of the COR, illustrates the way in which Maliki systematically undermined the efforts to create a national unity government, and helped create the Sunni versus Shi'ite divisions that exploded in Anbar in December 23013.

The Mutlaq Case

Deputy Prime Minister Saleh al-Mutlaq was a Sunni who had been expelled from the Ba'ath in 1977 for demand that a group of Shi'ite be given a fair trial. He was head of the largely Sunni head of Iraqi Front for National Dialogue, and was a strong spokesman for a national unity government. He became one of Iraq's three deputy prime ministers after the December 21, 2010 election. He had been attacked several times before 2010, evidently by radical Sunnis on at least one of occasions, and his wife and son moved to live in Jordan.

Tensions between Maliki and Deputy Prime Minister Mutlaq came to a head during an October 2011 cabinet meeting in which the former Ba'ath party member, Mutlaq, threatened to stir public dissent against Maliki if he continued his de-Ba'athification campaign. After Maliki's December 2011 visit to Washington, Mutlaq told CNN that he was "shocked" that President Obama greeted him as "the elected leader of a sovereign, self-reliant and democratic Iraq," adding that Washington left Iraq in shambles, its infrastructure tattered, and a "political process that is going toward a dictatorship."¹⁸⁹

In response, Maliki enacted constitutional powers to remove cabinet ministers with the consent of Parliament, dismissed his deputy, and presented three options to parliament in resolving the Mutlaq issue; (1) Mutlaq must resign his post; (2) Iraqiyya must fire Mutlaq and replace him with another politician from their ranks; or (3) Mutlaq must apologize to Maliki. To date, Mutlaq has not offered an apology.¹⁹⁰

Tension between Maliki and his critics then steadily escalated and became more repressive and violent. Maliki did not, however, succeed in silencing Mutlaq. CNN quote him as saying- he was "shocked" that President Obama would greet Maliki at the White in December 2011, as "the elected leader of a sovereign, self-reliant and democratic Iraq." Mutlaq said the US was leaving Iraq "with a dictator" who ignored a power-sharing agreement, was controlling and misusing the security forces and had arrested hundreds of people in the weeks before Maliki's visit to Washington,¹⁹¹

America left Iraq with almost no infrastructure. The political process is going in a very wrong direction, going toward a dictatorship," he said. "People are not going to accept that, and most likely they are going to ask for the division of the country. And this is going to be a disaster. Dividing the country isn't going to be

smooth, because dividing the country is going to be a war before that and a war after that... There will be a day whereby the Americans will realize that they were deceived by al-Maliki ... and they will regret that...

Mutlaq was a powerful voice in June 2012, when a group of Iraqi MP's requested a no-confidence vote against the Prime Minister, however they fell short of reaching the number of signatures required to force the vote.¹⁹² Maliki's allies appealed for a parliamentary debate on the performance of parliament speaker, Osama al-Nujeifi. Reider Visser reported that "the Maliki-Nujayfi struggle has the characteristics of a tit for tat escalation between Maliki's Shia Islamist State of Law bloc and Nujayfi's secular and Sunni-backed Iraqiyya."¹⁹³

On June 25, the *Washington Post* reported that Iraqi free press organizations condemned actions by the Maliki government to close independent media outlets.¹⁹⁴ While the government claimed it was only going after unlicensed operators, human rights groups alleged Maliki was seeking to silence political opponents by threatening to shut down those outlets critical of the PM.

Prime Minister Maliki also threatened to hold early elections in response to increased criticism and calls for his resignation at time when his support among Iraqi Shi'ites is strong.¹⁹⁵ While the PM's office has stated publicly that they would like to resolve the current impasse through negotiations, a decisive electoral win threatens to further sideline his political opponents while increasing the PM's hold on power.

The political climate between PM Maliki's State of Law party and its political rivals became steadily tenser, and the continuing efforts of each side to challenge, contest, and out-manuever the other. Sunni Deputy Prime Minister Mutlaq did not resign, but was banned from the cabinet by Maliki after calling the Iraqi leader "dictator" in December, 2011,

In mid-2012, however, Mutlaq and Maliki apparently reconciled their differences when Maliki began to realize how threatening Sunni protests and violence were become Mutlaq returned to the Iraqi cabinet. Maliki brought the then politically isolated Mutlaq back to government with the offer of one of twenty vacant ministerial seats. Iraq expert Joel Wing called the move "another sign that Maliki continues to outplay his opponents, especially Mutlaq's Iraqi National Movement (INM) that is beset by internal divisions."¹⁹⁶

By offering Mutlaq the position of defense minister, a position with restricted power given Maliki's control of the Iraq's security apparatus and military, Maliki is seen as reaching out to a Sunni political rival while simultaneously filling a much-needed cabinet vacancy. As a result, Al-Mutlaq stayed pro-government enough to be attacked when made a sudden appearance at a protest rally in Ramadi in late December 2012.¹⁹⁷

The end result did not halt Mutlaq's criticism, although some other leading Sunni politicians attacked Mutlaq for staying in the government, In May 2013, Maliki named him as the head of committee to investigate the steadily more violent clashes and protests in Iraq in May 2013, after a particularly violent clash took place in Hawija -- about 150 miles north of Baghdad on April 23, 2013 -- and initial reports stated that 23 people were killed, including three ISF officers. By that time, Maliki was mixing repression with calls for conciliation, but Al Mutlaq found that 46 civilians had been killed and not 23 and gave an interview to the AP saying that, "We have found that extra and extensive force was used, and it was not needed... In any military, someone has to be responsible... To lose one soldier, or one officer, that does not mean that you kill such a huge amount of people."¹⁹⁸

The Hashimi Case

The Hashimi case quickly escalated into a major political crisis in December 2011, only days after the US occupation ended. Vice President Hashimi was leader of the largest Sunni coalition, the Iraqi Accord Front, whose most powerful faction was the Iraqi Islamic Party (IIP). He had supported a unified Iraq, but was one of the Sunnis who had withdrawn from the 2005 election, had called for oil revenues to be distributed based on population, had opposed de-Ba'athification as often arbitrary and unjust, and want stronger Sunni representation in the Iraqi Security Forces. He had argued that Sunni and other provinces could individually take the decision whether or not to form federal regions, and some reports indicated that he had tried in 2006 to form a multiparty coalition to replace Maliki.

Hashimi had become a symbol of Sunni opposition to Maliki during 2011, and it was far from clear that this opposition did not involve some form of conspiracy against Maliki. A wide range of open sources show, however, that Maliki acted first.¹⁹⁹ While the full range of fact in the case is unclear, and media sources are contradictory, it does seem clear that Maliki sent Iraqi security forces to arrest him and they surrounded his house in the Green Zone on December 15, 2011. At least two of his bodyguards were attacked and beaten and five more were arrested and interrogated under conditions that were suspect at best.

Hashimi was ordered not to travel abroad and – in what became something of a model of the kind of charges Maliki was to use in the future – Iraq's Judicial Council issued an arrest warrant for him on December 19, 2011. The warrant came only a day after the last US combat forces officially left Iraq, and the charges were very broad. They accused Hashimi of organizing bombing attacks, as participating in terrorist activities, controlling an assassination squad, and killing senior Shi'ite officials. They were based on confessions obtained from his bodyguards, and five more of them were arrested on the day the warrant was issued.

Hashimi denied all the charge the next day, having fled to Irbil in the Kurdish Regional Government the day before the warrant was issued, leading some sources to believe Maliki had given him warning in an effort to drive him out of the country, rather than hold an embarrassing show trial that would lead to his actual imprisonment and make him more of a Sunni martyr. The risks involved are illustrated by the fact that the Sunni Iraqiyya party had 91 seats in the Majlis and began a boycott of the Majlis that virtually froze its operation. This boycott ended in late January 2012, but only after the US Embassy made intense efforts to end it without publically taking a stand on the charges.

The Iraqi Ministry of Interior called for the Interior Ministry of the KRG to extradite Hashimi to Baghdad on January 8th 2012. By that time, Hashimi had said that 53 of his bodyguards and employees had been arrested. Hashimi responded by demanding to be tried in Kirkuk, but a court in Baghdad rejected his demand on January 15, 2012. In February 2012, a panel of Iraqi judges accused him of directing paramilitary teams to conduct more than 150 attacks during 2006-2012 against political opponents, Iraqi security officials – including a Shi'ite brigadier general -- and Shi'ite pilgrims.

Massoud Barzani, president of the KRG, formally rejected Baghdad's demand for extradition in March 2012. The fact Kurdish leaders protected Hashimi – in addition to conflicts between the KRG and central government over oil concessions and finances – raised tensions to the point where Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) leader Massoud Barzani threatened to separate the KRG from Iraq during his visit to Washington in April 2012.

Hashimi continued to deny all charges and claimed constitutional immunity. He then left Iraq to visit Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Turkey, and did so in his official capacity as vice president of Iraq. Hashimi claimed in an interview in Al-Jazeera on April 4, 2012 that accusations that he ran a death squad “have a sectarian dimension.” He claimed that he was the “fifth Sunni figure to be targeted” by the Shia-led government, and that, “More than 90 percent of the detainees in Iraq are Sunnis.” al-Hashimi said he would return to Iraq to carry out his vice presidential duties, despite Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki’s demands that he face trial.²⁰⁰

He also claimed – with considerable accuracy -- that, “Corruption in the country is widespread,” that the prime minister’s policies were undermining “the unity of Iraq,” that al-Maliki’s government was giving “military assistance” to Syrian President Bashar al-Assad’s regime. “There is information about Iraqi militias fighting alongside the Syrian regime,” al-Hashimi told Al-Jazeera. He also stated that there were “unconfirmed reports that Iraq’s airspace was being used to help [Assad’s] regime,” and hinted at Iranian involvement.²⁰¹

The KRG allowed Hashimi to travel to Qatar to meet with Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, on what the Qatari administration described as an official diplomatic visit on April 1, 2012. Hussain al-Shahristani, Iraq’s Deputy Prime Minister, then attacked the visit and called for Hashimi to be handed over to the Iraqi central government. Qatar refused the request and Hashimi then travelled to Saudi Arabia and met with Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al Faisal. Several days later, he went to Turkey with his family. Iraq Interpol issue a red notice for his arrest on May 8, 2012. The Turkish government rejected a request for extradition and granted him residence permit

A show trial then followed in May 2012, in which Hashimi and his son-in-law -- Ahmed Qahtan, his secretary -- were tried in absentia. The charges now included murder and well over 100 charges of involvement in terrorist attacks after 2003. A number of Hashimi’s bodyguards “confessed” that he had personally ordered them to perform the attacks.

Hashimi and Ahmed Qahtan were sentenced to death in absentia on September plotting to assassinate Interior Ministry official, and again sentenced in absentia to death. He was then sentenced in absentia to death three more times in December 2012. While Iraqi politics had remained a blood sport throughout the US occupation, the sheer volume of the charges and the way the confessions were obtained scarcely gave the trials great credibility. As for Hashimi he remained in exile, now the Sunni martyr that Maliki initially seemed to have tried to avoid.

The Usama Abdu’l Aziz al-Nujayfi Case

Usama Abdu’l Aziz al-Nujayfi is another senior an Iraqi politician from the Iraqi National List. He served as Minister of Industry in the Iraqi Transitional Government and became Speaker of Council of Representatives of Iraq in 2010. He was born in Mosul and has a degree in electrical engineering His brother, Atheel al-Nujaifi, has served as governor of Ninewa.

As noted above, he played a role in the effort to call a vote of censure in 2011, but also sued his position to support Iraqiyya and limit the ability of other Sunni politicians to return to the government after resigning.²⁰²

He is one of the few examples of a Sunni politician who survived a direct clash with Maliki, but still seems to have been the target of at least one assassination attempt. His convoy was targeted on October 9, 2013 in a bomb attack that wounded six of his bodyguards. Al-Nujayfi was not in his official state car during the attack, but the official convoy was traveling from Mosul to Baghdad

when a bomb-laden vehicle blew up near it, wrecking three cars. The attackers probably could not have known whether or not al-Nujayfi was in the vehicle.²⁰³

The Rafi al-Issawi Case

The case of Rafi Hiyad al-Issawi illustrates the continuing level of tension between senior Sunni politicians and the Maliki government through 2013. Al-Issawi was a former finance minister and deputy prime minister and was the fourth most senior politician from the Sunni Arab minority from the election in 2010 to the spring of 2013.

Al-Issawi had been an orthopedic surgeon in Baghdad and Basra, and head of the Fallujah hospital during the Second Battle of Fallujah in November 2004.²⁰⁴ He was a severe critic of the way the US fought that battle, but became part of a government of national unity after the December 2005 election and six months of negotiations.

This government included Iraq's four main coalitions, and was headed by Prime Minister -Maliki. Issawi was then member of the Iraqi Islamic Party -- part of the n Sunni Arab Iraqi Accordance Front – and became minister of state for foreign affairs in May 2006. He withdrew from the government with four other ministers in August 2007, however, demanding that the government of Nouri al-Maliki take stronger action against Shi'ite militias. He and the Front only rejoined the government in July 2008 when Maliki seemed to be moving towards the position of a more national leader. Issawi then became a deputy prime minister.

Issawi formed his own party, the National Future Gathering before the 2010 elections, which joined the Iraqiyya coalition. He then became the Finance Minister in the government formed in December 2010 n. In December 2011, however, he joined boycott the cabinet with all but four other Iraqiyya ministers. An adviser to Maliki then charged he had been linked to Al Qaeda in Iraq, although a prior US investigation had found such charges were groundless. Issawi was one of the Sunni leaders who called for the resignation of Prime Minister Maliki, following the issuance of the arrest warrant for Hashimi and said that Maliki was seeking to “build a dictatorship”.

The events that followed again illustrated the degree to which Iraqi politics were now a blood sport. Issawi's car was attacked by an improvised explosive device on January 1, 2012, in an attack later described as an assassination attempt. The Iraqi security forces attacked his compound on December 19, 2012. Al-Issawi stated that that nearly 150 of his guards and staff members had been arrested. He attacked again on 13 January 2013 when he was traveling to Fallujah to meet with tribal leaders. A bomb was detonated near his vehicles. Only one of the incidents can clearly be tied to Maliki, but this again illustrates the broader dangers of the lack of sectarian and ethnic unity and a national government.

Issawi condemned the arrest of his bodyguards at the hands of Maliki's security forces, sparking demonstrations in Iraqi cities of Ramadi and Fallujah that blocked traffic and trade routes to Syria and Jordan.²⁰⁵ Speaking at protests in Ramadi, Issawi condemned Maliki's actions, accusing the prime minister of intentionally sparking tensions through politically motivated actions. “These practices are aimed at drawing the country into a sectarian conflict again by creating crisis and targeting prominent national figures,” Issawi said.²⁰⁶ Notably, Shia cleric Moqtada al Sadr supported the Anbar protestors, and joined their calls against “corruption and dictatorship”.²⁰⁷

In April 2013, Issawi resigned from the Iraqi cabinet, stepping down as Minister of Finance.²⁰⁸ He acted at a time when Sunni protests and the actions of the ISF both became steadily more violent.

He gave an interview that warned of much of what happened in Sunni areas like Anbar later in 2013,²⁰⁹

I suspect that all who know me and my positions in the Council of Ministers and in the government were not surprised when I tendered my resignation.

In more than one session of the Council of Ministers, I had expressed my disapproval of the accumulating crises, which include: unfair representation of Iraq's diverse groups in ministries, government institutions and state security, the issue of security, detention policies, issues surrounding the status of Erbil, the failure to implement laws, the failure to appoint ministers of defense and of the interior, the fact that the most sensitive state institutions are today administered by proxy, the monopolization of all state security agencies (which are becoming more and more sectarian in nature), and the blatant persecution of the Sunni Arab community in the security sectors and elsewhere, such as in higher education.

Recent sessions of the Council of Ministers have witnessed several altercations because of these issues, but the minutes of these sessions do not convey to the public the true contentiousness of these meetings. The true records are confined to the archives. Then came the most recent crisis [the raiding of Mr. Issawi's offices while he was finance minister and accusations that his security detail was involved in terrorist acts]. From my point of view it was just another government-created crisis conjured up in an attempt to duck taking responsibility for its failures regarding the security situation, the absence of state-provided services, and the rampant financial and administrative corruption.

Provincial elections are approaching and then the legislative elections will be held soon after. The government is not going to solve any crises, it can only create them. The accumulation of all of these issues and grievances has forced the western and northern provinces, parts of Baghdad, and Diyala to resort to demonstrating and holding sit-ins in staggering numbers. Then came the incident involving the assault on the guards of the ministry of finance, in which had I previously served. This was just one of many violations which have coincided with the demonstrations. By staying in touch with those demonstrating in the streets of Iraq, I found that government functions and the representatives in government, including the Sunni Arabs, were defunct.

Issawi went on to attack Al Mutlaq for not resigning and state that,

A new notion started to gain momentum amongst the protesters that if the government was unable to meet their legitimate demands, then the ministers who were carried to parliament by the votes of Sunni Arabs, should at the very least air their disapproval of the status quo... Ever since Iraqiya won 91 seats in the Council of Ministers and became the biggest bloc in the Iraqi parliament, we have been discussing our right to form a government. This has been met with a torrent of bribery attempts and threats, which has included arrest warrants and politicizing the judiciary. Such methods are effective all over the world, and I think you would have difficulty finding any cohesive coalitions today in Iraq.

...it has been said before and was written in the Erbil Agreement that this government is a national partnership government that would include others when critical decisions were being made. Not only has this been ignored, many actions undertaken by the government have directly contradicted it: A decree from the prime minister postponed elections; power has not been handed over peacefully; the judiciary has been politicized; former chief justice of the Supreme Judicial Council Medhat Al-Mahmoud was acquitted by the Accountability and Justice Commission 48 hours after having been deposed; de-Ba'athification is being carried out with double standards; the military has been politicized and has become subservient to a particular party; and army personnel have fired on demonstrators.

All of these factors indicate that a coup is in the works or has already taken place against democracy. There was no democratic process in the first place; instead a dictatorship was quietly built behind the cover of attempting to establish a democratic process. When the truth finally emerged the people were blindsided...

If the crises continue unresolved, the government will not make it to the upcoming elections. The government could offer some solutions and sit with its partners to discuss the issues and in doing so bridge the lack of trust between them. I do not think anyone will believe the government unless it first undertakes swift actions to resolve the issues. The government promotes proposals and red herring solutions and meanwhile the country is being run by proxy. He [Maliki] failed to appoint a Division Commander, everything is being done on an ad-hoc basis. He has also failed to appoint defense and interior ministers at a time when security is at

its most dire and terrorist attacks claim the lives of the Iraqi people.

He (Maliki) has not even considered stepping down as commander in chief of the Armed Forces, but instead takes shelter behind sectarian theatrics, insisting that any kind of inquiry into his actions as commander in chief would be conducted in a sectarian manner. This is an attempt to deceive the public. Sectarianism has nothing to do with it; when Sunnis complain that he has wronged them they are not trying to drag the country into sectarian conflict, they are just calling a spade a spade. When the Kurds or Shiites are wronged and they make this known and we agree; nothing about that is sectarian. We must ask Maliki what he calls detaining Sunni Arabs, the anonymous informant law, excluding Sunni Arabs from security posts: Are these not these sectarian practices?

... Maliki wants to steep himself in sectarianism so that he can rally the Shiite street behind him. The Sunni Arabs have not suffered these abuses at the hands of the Shiite community, but at the hands of the authorities, which have also wronged the Shiites. Every injustice differs somewhat from the last, and this caused Mr. Moqtada Al-Sadr and Mr. Ammar Al-Hakim to let their objections to government practices be known.

The “Death” of the Erbil Agreement

Some Iraqi politicians did continue to press for national unity. In April 2012, four of Iraq’s top political leaders sent a letter to Prime Minister Maliki urging him to accept the terms of the 2010 Erbil power-sharing agreement. In that letter Moqtada al-Sadr, Ayad Allawi, Kurdish Regional President Massoud Barzani, and Speaker of Iraq’s Council of Representatives Usama al-Najayfi threatened a vote of no confidence against Maliki, undermining his mandate to rule.²¹⁰

It should be noted, however, that Maliki’s ramifications for ignoring the letter remain unclear since there are no constitutional provisions requiring he implement any such reforms. Additionally, Sadr’s spokesperson later stated that the powerful Shiite cleric had “called for supporting the current government and not overthrowing it, on the condition that all Iraqis should participate in it”.²¹¹

This led to an even more open split between Iraq’s key political factions. As **Figure 24** has shown, Ayad Allawi’s Sunni Iraqiyya party boycotted meetings of parliament and cabinet, threatening to turn a dysfunctional government into a non-functioning one. In response, Prime Minister Maliki then stripped the boycotting Ministers of their posts, which drew accusations of authoritarianism. Iraqiyya was forced to end its boycotts without securing any political rewards.²¹² In this vein, Maliki continued to centralize power in Baghdad under the pretext of bolstering weak local institutions, in direct opposition to provincial leaders who are pressing for greater autonomy and have explicitly sought regional status.²¹³

Iraq analysts such as Reidar Visser highlighted the fact that Iraqi political leaders faced severe limits in how far they could push for reforms:²¹⁴

“The problems are however about more than the sheer timing of the no confidence initiative. A second set of issues relates to the modalities for getting rid of Maliki envisaged in the proposal. In the leaked letter the Shia alliance is given the job of finding a suitable replacement, because “it is considered the framework for choosing the prime minister”...The constitutional problems here are perhaps best understood through a little bit of prospective history writing. If indeed the Shia alliance votes to change Maliki, it will likely break apart. Now, if all or nearly all of Maliki’s alliance defects in solidarity with him, the rump National Alliance is no longer the biggest bloc in parliament, and hence has no right to appoint the next PM. Nor has Iraqiyya, which has already dwindled in size to 85 deputies with indications it would be further reduced to at least 75 if an attempt were made to force out Maliki. To avoid Maliki’s bloc getting hold of the nomination of the next PM, Iraqiyya would need to first form a bloc with the Kurds or the Shiite Islamists, agree on a bloc leader and so on. Incidentally, this would imply a negation of their own interpretation of article 76 of the Iraqi constitution on the prime ministerial nomination procedure....”

As for the Kurds, their past history of discrimination and suffering – and their search to broaden their area of control and develop their petroleum resources – helped lead to another set of tensions with the central government. An excerpt from the April 2012 ICG report, *“Iraq and the Kurds: The High-Stakes Hydrocarbons Gambit”* illustrates the tension between Erbil and the central government in Baghdad: ²¹⁵

“They (the Kurds) know that when Baghdad is weak, they can take steps to bring their dreams of statehood closer to reality, but that when the center is strong it will use its superior resources to push them back into their place-or worse. This is why the Kurds are so alarmed at attempts by Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki to amass power at the expense of his rivals, and build a strong state, armed with US weaponry, under his unchallenged control....Yet, in many ways, this approach contains elements of a self-fulfilling prophecy: by pressing their advantage, Kurds inevitably aggravate matters, convincing the federal government that they are aiming for secession –and aiming to take with them a good chunk of disputed territory that Kurds claim as historically part of a notional Kurdistan but that also appears to be immensely rich in oil and gas.”

Sect, Ethnicity, and the Challenge of Federalism

These growing tensions at the top were matched by a complex mix of regional tensions, including a revival of a long-standing Iraqi debate over federalism – driven both sectarian and ethnic tensions, but also by the desired of the richer oil producing provinces to have a much larger share of export revenues.

Even before the 2010 election, the issue of federalism had reemerged as a form of Sunni-Shia problem. The Iraqi Constitution has an Article 119, which establishes the process of forming federal regions, and allows provinces to obtain increased autonomy from the government in Baghdad. As provincial demands for increased autonomy and official “regional” status grew and threatened Maliki’s centralization concentration of power, Maliki moved to expand his grip on Iraqi politics.

SIGIR described the situation at the end of 2011 as follows, ²¹⁶

Iraq’s Region Formation Law (Regions Law) provides that any province or group of provinces may choose to form a semi-autonomous federal region via popular referendum. But, before such a vote may occur, one-third of the Provincial Council members (or one-tenth of the voters) in the relevant provinces must submit a request to hold a referendum. If a simple majority of voters approves the measure in the referendum, a region is formed. This quarter, several provinces revived the issue of region formation, potentially further complicating their relations with Baghdad:

- **Salah Al-Din.** In late October, the Provincial Council issued a statement purporting to declare the overwhelmingly Sunni province to be an administrative and economic region. This move toward regionalism came as the GOI ordered the arrest of hundreds of prominent Sunnis in the province, accusing them of ties to the outlawed Ba’ath Party.
- **Anbar.** In late November, a Provincial Council member announced that about half of the members had agreed to move toward transforming the province into a region.
- **Diyala.** In December, the Provincial Council voted to declare the province a region unilaterally setting off demonstrations opposing such a step in many of the ethnically diverse province’s Shia areas.

Prime Minister al-Maliki believes that Iraq’s national structure is not ready for additional semiautonomous federal regions. Instead, he has been exploring various options to devolve some powers to the provincial governments. Previous regionalism movements arose in the Shia south. For example, in 2008, officials in the oil-rich province of Basrah made a serious push toward establishing a region. Their efforts failed, and subsequent attempts to transform Basrah into a region have also foundered. By the end of the quarter, efforts toward forming regions in other provinces appeared to have stalled, at least for the moment.¹⁷ Thus, as of mid-January, the Kurdistan Region (comprising Dahuk, Sulaymaniyah, and Erbil provinces) remains Iraq’s only federal region.

The issue of federalism also took on new, destabilizing forms in 2013. First, the central government sought to limit the oil and gas revenues going to the oil producing provinces. It did not make good on promises to increase their share of oil revenues, and it has denied that gas revenues have been high enough to compensate for a “bonus” distribution. The oil producing provinces threatened law suits and to stop oil production after the Iraqi Cabinet approved a draft 2014 budget which limited the extra payment for producing or refining oil and natural gas to \$1 per barrel instead of the \$5 approved the Council of the Republic had approved in 2013.²¹⁷

Second, friction grew between the largely Shi’ite oil rich provinces in the southeast and the sharing of oil revenues, and oil workers in the area attempted to organize and gain larger wages. These tensions interacted with tension between some of the foreign oil concessions and Shi’ite in the area, when the oil companies attempt to prevent Shi’ites from holding ceremonies and displaying religious banners on company property.²¹⁸ This reached the point in early 2014 that Majid al-Nasrawi, the governor of Basra, publically called for control over oil development in the province.²¹⁹

The situation became worse during the course of 2013 when tensions between the central government and KRG led the Kurds to stop providing their oil revenues to the government in Baghdad, and total oil revenues fell well below the level needed to sustain the budget. They became even worse in 2014 when the national government faced a major budget deficit and Iraqi officials in areas like Basra attempted to control petroleum development on a provincial level and control a share of the provinces oil revenues.

Third, disputes between the Maliki government and the KRG over control of oil reserves and the KRG’s ability to manage its own oil concessions and export through a new pipeline from the KRG through Turkey to Ceyhan reached the crisis point after the KRG opened the pipeline through on January 2, 2014. Prime Minister Maliki gave a press conference on January 13, 2014, stating that the Iraqi Cabinet had passed a 2014 budget on threatened to cut off all federal revenue sharing to the KRG if it did not export crude through Baghdad’s sales network, leading to a boycott of the cabinet by Kurdish ministers.²²⁰ This kind of tension threatened to create a major confrontation over the Federal status of the KRG.

Moreover, Maliki announced on January 21, 2014 that the Cabinet had decided in principle to create three new provinces in the most troubled areas of the parts of the country in what the government claimed were efforts to address Sunni grievances and a protect minorities. One new province was to be in the west, with Fallujah at its center. Fallujah was one of the cities taken over by AQI/ISIS in late December 2013 after the Iraqi army suppressed a protest camp at Ramadi and attacked the home of a leading Sunni politicians.

No Sunni faction had pressed for division of what already was a largely Sunni province in Anbar, but the central government claimed that creating a new province would give the Sunnis more federal funding. In practice, it looked more like an effort to create administrative and governmental structure to control the Sunni populations in the West.

The other two provinces were centered around Tuz Khormato and the Ninevah Plain, and border on the KRG. Tuz Khormato was a mixed city containing Arabs, Kurds, and ethnic Turkomans. The Ninevah Plain had a large Christian population. A statement by the Maliki government indicated that the Cabinet had “agreed in principle to turn the areas of Tuz, Fallujah and the Ninevah Plain into provinces and the Cabinet will decide after the fulfillment of the necessary requirements.” It did not explain the decision.

Some elements of the Turkomen and Christian minorities strongly resisted incorporation into the Kurdistan Regional Government, and had called for separate province status for Tuz Khormato and Ninevah Plain. Other elements of the same minorities fear coming under tighter central government as well. In practice, Maliki seems to be at least as concerned with restricting the territory under KRG control, and pressuring the KRG over the control of oil resources, as any concern over the fate of Iraq's minorities. He was following a long Iraqi tradition of using minorities as political tools.²²¹

A Constantly Evolving Political Crisis at the Top

While many hoped that 2012 might Iraqi leaders to address the numerous problems their country faced, any such aspirations were quickly dashed by an almost immediate political crisis that assured continued political instability and increased violence. The extent of the US challenge in Iraq and the severity of Iraq's deep political divisions became apparent just days after President Obama's December 2011 White House press conference with Prime Minister Maliki. With the withdrawal of US troops, it became clear that US-Iranian competition in Iraq was to play out in an increasingly uncertain and unstable environment.

Shi'ite versus Sunni Divisions in 2012

In practice, the political crisis between Prime Minister Maliki and his political rivals continued through 2012 and 2013. In April, four of Iraq's top political leaders sent a letter to PM Maliki urging him to accept the terms of the 2010 Erbil power-sharing agreement. In that letter Moqtada al-Sadr, Ayad Allawi, Kurdish Regional President Massoud Barzani, and Speaker of Iraq's Council of Representatives Osama al-Nujeifi threatened a vote of no confidence against PM Maliki, undermining the PM's mandate to rule.²²²

It should be noted, however, that Maliki could largely ignore the letter since there were no constitutional provisions requiring he implement any such reforms. Additionally, Sadr's spokesperson stated that Sadr had, "called for supporting the current government and not overthrowing it, on the condition that all Iraqis should participate in it".²²³

Other developments followed. In April 2012, Prime Minister Maliki also ordered the arrest of Faraj al-Haidari, the head of Iraq's Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC).²²⁴ This latest episode may stem from differences between Haidari and PM Maliki over Iraq's contested 2010 elections, in which Maliki's bloc barely lost to Ayad Allawi's Iraqiyya party.

Some Iraqi leaders charged that Haidari found himself in the Salhayah police station for refusing to acquiesce to the Prime Minister's petition to throw out thousands of votes for Iraqiyya. Kurdish Member of Parliament and spokesman, Muaid al-Tayab, called the move "undemocratic and illegal". In a written statement, Shia leader Moqtada al-Sadr stated, "This arrest should be done under the law, not under dictatorship".²²⁵ Still, Sadr recognized the need for a unifying government amidst Iraq's political turmoil, and has stated publicly that he is against the fall of the Iraqi government.²²⁶

Sadr did announce that he was withdrawing from politics in February 2014, but it was unclear what this really meant. Some Iraq leaders and analysts felt he was seeking to become a religious authority at a time when Iraq's traditional and gaining religious leadership was weakening. Others thought he was separating himself from the Maliki regime and might try to remerge as political leader and exploit the Sunni-Shi'ite divisions in Anbar and the rest of Iraq that seemed to be

weakening Maliki – either as a more national and unifying figure or one who could capitalize on Maliki’s failures. Like much of Sadr’s history, however, the personal motives behind his sudden shift in position were far easier to speculate about than convincingly understand.

Steadily Growing Tensions in 2013

Things did not ease in 2013. The provincial elections that took place on April 20, 2013, did little to help stabilize the country. In fact, elections in Anbar and Nineveh had to be delayed till June 20 because of the instability in those provinces.²²⁷ A total of 243 political entities, including sixteen independent candidates ran – creating a morass of different factions that helped ensure that many Iraqis voted along sectarian and ethnic lines.

This strongly favored dominance by the Shi’ite major in Shi’ite provinces, Sunnis in Sunni areas, and Kurds in Kurdish areas in the north. It also favor Maliki who had expanded his State of Law Coalition has expanded from its traditional supporters, with former opponents such as the Badr Organization, the National Reform Trend, the Islamic Virtue Party, and the secular Shiite White Iraqiyya Bloc, It won 115 seats, while a resurgent Hakim faction or ISCI won 80 seats and Sadr won 50. Allawi’s collation was marginalized to the point of ineffectiveness, with significant votes in only four provinces and only 4.5 to 6.5% of the vote even in these provinces.²²⁸ As might be expected Anbar and Nineveh voted on sectarian lines. The KRG and Kirkuk, with the deepest ethnic divisions never held elections.

More broadly, there were continuing political demonstrations and clashes between Prime Minister Maliki and his political rivals. Over the course of the year, Maliki encountered opposition from various fronts, including Sunni, Shia, and Kurdish opponents. As anti-Maliki protests swept Iraq over the course of the year, coinciding with an increase in violence and hostilities, Maliki’s rivals accused the leader of consolidating power at the expense of national unity. The powerful Shia cleric, Moqtada al-Sadr, blamed Maliki for turning Iraq into a “farce”, and called on the leader to resign before he is swept away by the “Iraqi Spring” protests.²²⁹

In August 2013, Maliki began a political counter-offensive led by Iraq’s top court overturning a parliamentary measure that would have barred the Prime Minister from seeking a third term in the 2014 general elections. This struggle had been ongoing since January 2013 when rival Sunni and Kurdish MP’s voted to adopt a measure limiting the president, prime minister, and speaker of parliament to two terms.²³⁰ The vote passed Iraq’s 325-seat Council of Representatives by receiving 170 votes, seven more than the 163-vote threshold needed to pass the amendment.

At the end of August, 2013, Iraq’s Supreme Federal Court removed a controversial term-limit law on senior posts by declaring it unconstitutional, clearing the way for the Prime Minister to seek a third term in 2014.²³¹ At the time, Maliki’s spokesperson, Ali al-Moussawi, declared that the amendment “contradicts the constitution and all the constitutions in the parliamentary systems which do not limit the term for the prime minister.”²³² An opponent of Maliki, MP Mohammad al-Khalidi objected, warning that “[r]esisting the law is a danger to democracy in Iraq.”²³³ This is only one episode in long pattern of action and counter-action between Maliki and his political rivals inside Iraq.

Sadr responded by calling for restraint and cooperation with the government in Baghdad. The *New York Times* reports that when Shia militiamen arrested a number of suspects in September 2013 for their part in terror attacks in Sadr City, Moqtada Sadr refused to allow the suspects to be publicly executed, and handed them over to the Iraqi officials.²³⁴

It was tensions between the Maliki government and Sunnis that created the worst problems in 2013. They led to growing protests, empower Al Qaeda, and other extremists, and led to new violent armed attacks on leading Sunni politicians at the end of the year. The full details are far from clear because so much of the reporting on the resulting tension came from sources with an obvious pro-Maliki or pro-Sunni bias, and there was far more reporting on real Sunni extremist attacks than on the attacks and abuses of the Maliki controlled security services. It is clear, however, that there were many Sunni protests in areas like Anbar after having been shut out of Iraqi politics. It is also clear that because of the security service's many abuses, Sunnis had increasingly turned against the government, and instead turned back towards extremist movements.

Amnesty International issued a report in March 2013 called *Iraq: A Decade of Abuses* that highlighted the growing history of both regime and non-state actor actions that increasingly separate Shi'ite and Sunni as well as isolated the Kurds.²³⁵ Amnesty International's annual country on Iraq for 2013 was issued in May 2013, but still provided a long list of actions by the central government that were directed primarily against Sunnis – although some involved Kurds. Key portions of the report noted that there were many abuses by Sunni and other extremist groups, but also that,²³⁶

The political stalemate in parliament continued to stifle the legislative progress, preventing, among other things, the adoption of an amnesty law. Political tensions were exacerbated by the arrest of scores of people associated with Vice-President Tareq al-Hashimi, who fled from Baghdad after he was accused of organizing death squads. In December 2011 Iraqi television broadcast "confessions" by detainees reported to have worked for him as bodyguards, who said they had been paid by the Vice-President to commit killings. The Vice-President evaded capture but was charged, tried and sentenced to death in his absence in September, together with his son-in-law, Ahmad Qahtan, in connection with the murder of a woman lawyer and government official. They received further death sentences in their absence in November and December following further trials.

Relations between the Baghdad authorities and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) remained fraught due to differences over the distribution of oil revenues and the continuing dispute over internal boundaries.

Young people, particularly those seen locally as nonconformists, were subject to a campaign of intimidation after flyers and signs targeting them appeared in the Baghdad neighborhoods of Sadr City, al-Hababiya and Hay al-'Amal in February. Those targeted included youths suspected of homosexual conduct and those seen as pursuing an alternative lifestyle because of their distinctive hairstyles, clothes or musical tastes.

In March, the League of Arab States held its summit meeting in Baghdad for the first time since the overthrow of Saddam Hussein in 2003. Prior to the meeting, the security forces carried out mass arrests in Baghdad, apparently as a "preventive" measure.

...In December, tens of thousands of mostly Sunni Iraqis began holding peaceful daily anti-government protests against the abuse of detainees. The unrest was triggered by the detention of several bodyguards of Finance Minister Rafi'e al-Issawi, a senior Sunni political leader, and by allegations of sexual and other abuse of women detainees. Parliamentary committees delegated to examine these allegations reached conflicting conclusions.

... Torture and other ill-treatment were common and widespread in prisons and detention centers, particularly those controlled by the Ministries of the Interior and Defence, and were committed with impunity. Methods included suspension by the limbs for long periods, beatings with cables and hosepipes, the infliction of electric shocks, breaking of limbs, partial asphyxiation with plastic bags, and sexual abuse including threats of rape. Torture was used to extract information from detainees.

... The authorities arrested and detained hundreds of people on terrorism charges for their alleged participation in bomb and other attacks on security forces and civilians. Many alleged that they were tortured or otherwise ill-treated in pre-trial detention and were convicted and sentenced after unfair trials. In some

cases, the authorities allowed Iraqi television stations to broadcast footage of detainees making self-incriminating statements before they were brought to trial, gravely prejudicing their right to a fair trial. Some were subsequently sentenced to death. The Ministry of Interior paraded detainees before press conferences at which they “confessed”. The Ministry also regularly uploaded detainees’ “confessions” on its YouTube channel.

... As in previous years, many, possibly hundreds, of people were sentenced to death, swelling the number of prisoners on death row. Most were convicted on terrorism-related charges. Ramadi’s Tasfirat Prison held 33 prisoners sentenced to death during the first half of the year, 27 of whom had been convicted on terrorism charges. Trials consistently failed to meet international standards of fairness; many defendants alleged that they were tortured during interrogation in pre-trial detention and forced to “confess”.

At least 129 prisoners were executed, more than in any year since executions resumed in 2005. The authorities sometimes carried out multiple executions; 34 prisoners were executed in one day in January and 21 prisoners, including three women, were executed in one day in August. In September at least 18 women were reported to be on death row in a prison in the al-Kadhemiya district of Baghdad.

The Crisis Group updated its reporting on Iraq in August 2013, with a report called *Make or Break: Iraq’s Sunnis and the State*. This report updated a long series of Crisis group reports on the tensions between Sunni and Shi’ite and their impact on violence in Iraq, and key portions of its conclusions described the situation in 2013 as follows:

The question of Sunni Arab participation in Iraq’s political order that has plagued the transition since its inception is as acute and explosive as ever. Quickly marginalized by an ethno-sectarian apportionment that confined them to minority status in a system dominated by Shiites and Kurds, most community members first shunned the new dispensation then fought it. Having gradually turned from insurgency to tentative political involvement, their wager produced only nominal representation, while reinforcing feelings of injustice and discrimination. Today, with frustration at a boil, unprecedented Sunni-Shiite polarization in the region and deadly car bombings surging across the country since the start of Ramadan in July, a revived sectarian civil war is a serious risk. To avoid it, the government should negotiate local ceasefires with Sunni officials, find ways to more fairly integrate Sunni Arabs in the political process and cooperate with local actors to build an effective security regime along the Syrian border.

The origins of the crisis run deep. Throughout his seven-year tenure, Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki has implemented a divide-and-conquer strategy that has neutered any credible Sunni Arab leadership. The authorities also have taken steps that reinforce perceptions of a sectarian agenda. Prominent officials – predominantly Sunni – have been cast aside pursuant to the Justice and Accountability Law on the basis of alleged senior-level affiliation to the former Baath party. Federal security forces have disproportionately deployed in Baghdad’s Sunni neighborhoods as well as Sunni-populated governorates (Anbar, Salah al-Din, Ninewa, Kirkuk and Diyala). Al-Iraqiya, the political movement to which Sunni Arabs most readily related, slowly came apart due to internal rivalries even as Maliki resorted to both legal and extrajudicial means to consolidate power.

This past year has proved particularly damaging. As events in Syria nurtured their hopes for a political comeback, Sunni Arabs launched an unprecedented, peaceful protest movement in late 2012 in response to the arrest of bodyguards of Rafea al-Issawi, a prominent Iraqiya member. It too failed to provide answers to accumulated grievances. Instead, the demonstrations and the repression to which they gave rise further exacerbated the sense of exclusion and persecution among Sunnis.

The government initially chose a lackluster, technical response, forming committees to unilaterally address protesters’ demands, shunning direct negotiations and tightening security measures in Sunni-populated areas. Half-hearted, belated concessions exacerbated distrust and empowered more radical factions. After a four-month stalemate, the crisis escalated. On 23 April, government forces raided a protest camp in the city of Hawija, in Kirkuk province, killing over 50 and injuring 110. This sparked a wave of violence exceeding anything witnessed for five years. Attacks against security forces and, more ominously, civilians have revived fears of a return to all-out civil strife. The Islamic State of Iraq, al-Qaeda’s local expression, is resurgent. Shiite militias have responded against Sunnis. The government’s seeming intent to address a chiefly political

issue – Sunni Arab representation in Baghdad – through tougher security measures has every chance of worsening the situation.

Belittled, demonized and increasingly subject to a central government crackdown, the popular movement is slowly mutating into an armed struggle. In this respect, the absence of a unified Sunni leadership – to which Baghdad’s policies contributed and which Maliki might have perceived as an asset – has turned out to be a serious liability. In a showdown that is acquiring increasing sectarian undertones, the movement’s proponents look westward to Syria as the arena in which the fight against the Iraqi government and its Shiite allies will play out and eastward toward Iran as the source of all their ills.

Under intensifying pressure from government forces and with dwindling faith in a political solution, many Sunni Arabs have concluded their only realistic option is a violent conflict increasingly framed in confessional terms. In turn, the government conveniently dismisses all opposition as a sectarian insurgency that warrants ever more stringent security measures. In the absence of a dramatic shift in approach, Iraq’s fragile polity risks breaking down, a victim of the combustible mix of its longstanding flaws and growing regional tensions.

The conclusions to the report noted that Maliki had weakened his position with Shi’ites like the Sadr faction as well, but warned that Sunni protests and politics were “On the Brink,”²³⁷

Early on, the ministerial committee led by Maliki’s ally, Deputy Prime Minister Hussain al-Shahristani, visited northern provinces and announced good-will measures: the release of thousands of prisoners; streamlining of judicial procedures for those detained without sentence; a ban on the practice of “secret informants”; and the transfer of female detainees to serve sentences in their home provinces. But it was hard to verify that these concessions were actually implemented...Moreover, the committee left the legal framework for arrests and imprisonment essentially untouched.... In April, the cabinet pledged to amend the Justice and Accountability Law to allow mid-ranking Baathists to re-integrate into the civil service and members of a paramilitary formation loyal to Saddam Hussein, the Fedayin Saddam, to claim pension rights. Here again, the sincerity of the overture was in question, as the measure failed in parliament...

The government saw, or at least publicly characterized the protests as serving a foreign agenda, aimed at fuelling sectarian strife and led by a group of individuals moved by parochial interests. Ali al-Moussawi, the prime minister’s media adviser, blamed Turkey, saying: “Some protesters want the division of Iraq and the establishment of an autonomous Sunni region. Others support the protests only because they have personal grievances against the government. In order to solve this crisis, Turkey should change its policies toward Iraq; it should stop cooperating with our communities, stop fuelling extremism, sectarianism and terrorism in Iraq and Syria. It should establish friendly ties with the Iraqi state....”

In an attempt to attract protesters back to its side, Baghdad offered a series of concessions. It aimed these particularly at tribal chiefs, raising the salaries of *sahwa* members willing to cooperate with the government. In doing so, it backed the emergence of “new awakening” (al-sahwa al-jadida), whose leadership distanced itself from the protests, declaring its intention “to oppose all those threatening the country’s unity... Maliki and his allies also were at pains to depict their opposition to the protests as an endeavor to prevent the country’s division. This further exacerbated tension between the protest movement and Sunni officials in Baghdad. Pro-government Sunni groups denounced the demonstrations as politicized and contrary to the national interest. Mahdi al-Sumaydaye, a Sunni cleric with close ties to the government, said, “before, imams only were responsible for mosques. The new generation of clerics is politicized. There is a Muslim Brotherhood project that aims at breaking up Iraq”... The newly elected *sahwa* head, Wissam al-Hardan, echoed the sentiment with regard to tribal figures who partook in sit-ins: The *sahwa* should be an exclusively security body. By contrast, those [other *sahwa* leaders] who participate in the demonstrations are deeply involved in politics. They want the division of Iraq and instigate sectarian tensions. We do not agree with that and are ready to fight to keep Iraq united in line with such conspiracy theories, pro-government factions increasingly characterized protesters as a threat to the country’s security, accusing them of being deeply sectarian; enjoying ties to extremist organizations; and seeking to take up weapons in order to spread chaos across the country. In the combustible atmosphere gripping Iraq, the government seized on mere anecdotal evidence to justify its approach. In March, local television channels showed footage of Ramadi protesters brandishing a flag associated with al-Qaeda; the incident led security forces to immediately tighten their measures to “fight terrorism and impose the rule of law”, as the interior minister put it.

... Many Iraqis from all walks of life discern in the uptick of violence signs of a dreaded return to sectarian strife.... The government, however, has adopted a largely one-sided posture: the greater the level of insecurity, the more stringent measures to tighten its grip on Sunni-populated areas. Army divisions, federal police and various special units have come out in force, mainly in areas witnessing protests, limiting access to those areas to residents only, discouraging protesters from joining Friday prayers and enhancing overall security checks.

...Over time, divisions between government and protesters became starker. The former remained unmoved by popular mobilization, irresponsible to street demands and determined to strengthen security. The latter increasingly grew frustrated, persuaded that peaceful action would not produce desired results. Predictably, the impasse simultaneously bolstered the position of more extreme voices among demonstrators and marginalized those calling for or engaging in negotiations, who quickly were labeled collaborators. Qosey al-Zein, a young cleric from Ramadi, put it as follows: “The government is not willing to give us anything. If you were in our position, what would you do? Is there any solution other than fighting?”

In turn, divisions within the movement coupled with its increased radicalization were seized upon by the authorities to justify their own inflexibility....The four-month stalemate ended on 23 April, when government forces raided the Hawija sit-in, killing over 50 and injuring 110; this came days after gunmen had attacked a nearby checkpoint manned by security forces, killing one soldier and injuring three. The government characterized the raid as a security operation; protesters viewed it as a premeditated and deadly crackdown.

...The impact of events at Hawija was profound. They empowered more extreme elements among demonstrators, while giving a green light to former resistance groups to stage a series of armed retaliations. Over the ensuing days, gunmen believed to be affiliated with the Naqshbandi and Islamic Army insurgent groups organized a series of operations across the country against government forces; these included attacks against army convoys and federal police stations....Protesters in Anbar immediately announced their intention to organize militarily in order to prevent similar government operations against other sit-ins. They called for the formation of a “Tribes’ army” (Jaysh al-Ashaa’ir) that several days later took the shape of the “Pride and Dignity Army” (Jaysh al ‘Azza wa al-Karama); it reportedly comprises tribal members, each division led by former army officers.... The Sunni spiritual leader Abdul Malik al-Saadi momentarily reduced tensions through a negotiations initiative, but it soon collapsed amid protester divisions and government prevarication....

The violent crackdown in Hawija inaugurated a phase of radicalization on both sides. In ensuing weeks, attacks on security forces and, above all, civilian targets grew in intensity and frequency, making May 2013 the most violent month in almost five years. Bombings focused in particular on Sunni or Shiite religious sites and ceremonies and more specifically on confessionally mixed areas, exacerbating fears of a return to communal strife. The Islamic State of Iraq reportedly increased the scope of its activities, in both Iraq and Syria. The government responded by imposing strict security measures in the capital... and deploying additional troops in an offensive against al-Qaeda that it launched in Anbar, Ninewa and Salah al-Din provinces.

None of these moves appear to have produced tangible results other than increasing Sunni resentment. One manifest impact has been the shift toward a more confrontational posture on the protesters’ part. Sunni armed groups that for the most part had been relatively quiescent over the past several years are slowly but steadily reappearing, finding evermore recruits among young protesters disillusioned with peaceful dissent. So far, the government has dismissed the risk of a renewed insurgency, displaying little urgency or interest in genuine negotiations.

Clashes between security forces and armed groups for now tend to be localized and disconnected from each other. Still, with mounting pressure on Sunni Arab constituencies and lack of progress toward a political settlement, a gradual build-up of armed groups that may ultimately coordinate and deepen ties to Syria’s own armed opposition cannot be ruled out. Indeed, facing paralysis at home, many protesters look to Syria as an arena in which to wage a struggle against the Iraqi government and its allies.

...Unfortunately, with 2014 parliamentary elections on the horizon, the prime minister and the political class as a whole seem inclined to invest in identity politics as a way of shoring up their rank and file, suggesting a continuation of the same toxic dynamics in the months to come...Iraq is on the verge of a relapse into a generalized sectarian conflict, so it is urgent to remember a critical lesson from the not-so-distant past: that

cooperation with local tribes and officials, and above all support from the local population, is the best way to reduce the appeal of armed insurgents. The converse is equally true: that deploying additional troops and special forces, arresting more people and attempting to subdue through intimidation whole swathes of society produces the opposite effect, consolidating the split between Sunni Arabs and Baghdad's central authorities. Maliki, who partly owes his power to the U.S., ought to know this best, insofar as Washington pursued both approaches before concluding that the former alone could succeed.

The Crisis in the West at the End of 2013

The situation grew steadily worse through the fall and early winter of 2013 and reached a major crisis at the end of the year. As in the introduction to this analysis shows, violence continued to rise, and push Prime Minister Maliki into visiting Washington in November 2013 to ask for arms to deal with a Sunni opposition he effectively described as tools of Al Qaeda.²³⁸

The inactions between the civil war in Syria and Iraq's rising violence create more problems, and the regime reacted by steadily increasing its pressure on peaceful Sunni protests until this reached the crisis point at the end of the year.

Protest leaders like Abdul-Malik al-Saadi, A Sunni sheikh, had become influential new Sunni leaders in Iraq's politics during. Al-Saadi was scarcely a source of violence. He was deeply popular in Anbar province where he had his roots, because he had a history of challenging Iraqi leaders, dating back to criticism of Saddam Hussein in the mid-1980's that led to reprisals from the Ba'ath regime and his arrest in 1998.²³⁹

Despite Saadi's opposition to the current regime, he also called for peaceful protests and coexistence between Iraq's different sects. In fact, some sources indicate that Maliki reached out to him through mediators to request he attempt to calm the sectarian tension.²⁴⁰ At the same time, the government put steadily more pressure on any form of Sunni protest. Prime Minister Maliki warned Sunni protesters to leave encampments in the western desert of Anbar, and claimed they sheltered Qaeda militants.

Although the facts involved remain unclear, this situation seems to have come to a head in late December when an attack on the command center of the Iraqi 7th Division killed much of command. Maliki responded by sending in the security forces to dismantle a protest camp in Ramadi that Maliki claimed had elements of AQI/ISIS on December 28th. The Iraqi security forces also attacked the home of Ahmed al-Alwani -- a leading Sunni member of the Majlis, a key critic of Maliki, and a member of the Sunni-dominated Iraqiya bloc.²⁴¹ Ramadi was a key city in the Sunni-dominated province of Anbar and the result was what the *New York Times* reported was a,²⁴²

“two-hour gun battle that left the lawmaker's brother and five guards dead, along with a soldier... Hours later, angry protests erupted over what Sunnis viewed as another crackdown by the Shiite-led government that alienates them from the political process by equating all expressions of Sunni grievance as terrorism.”

Ahmed al-Alwani was arrested and imprisoned. The Iraqi Ministry of Defense claimed that al-Alwani; his brother, Ali al-Alwani; and his guards had fired on the soldiers without warning when they entered his home, and that the action was, “part of a plan to restore security, stability and target the organization of Al Qaeda.” Maliki made it clear that the government was seeking Al Alwani on terrorism charges, and stated that, “I call upon politicians to adopt wise stances and not emotional ones away from any move that could help al-Qaeda, terrorists and sectarian partisans.”²⁴³

Most sources agreed, however, that al-Alwani was a legitimate political leader who had been a

public critic of PM Maliki, and supported peaceful protests. Like those in the protest camp, he had been a source of charges against government corruption and the marginalization and persecution of Sunnis at the hands of the Shia-led government.²⁴⁴

The Sunni reaction was made worse by the fact Alwani's wife and a 12 year old boy were wounded. This led to demonstrations Ramadi during his brother's funeral and in other Sunni cities like Fallujah. Al-Alwani's bloc in parliament, Iraqiya, demanded his release and denounced the arrest as politically motivated, and claimed Maliki was attacking the party and peaceful Sunnis to help his position in the 2014 national elections.

Osama al-Nujaifi, the Sunni speaker of Parliament, went on to call al-Alwani's arrest unlawful and demanded an investigation.²⁴⁵ Other Sunnis were more extreme. The *New York Times* quoted Sheikh Ahmed al-Tamimi, another previously peaceful Sunni protest leader as saying, "The war has begun." I call on young people to carry their weapons and prepare. We will no longer allow any army presence in Fallujah."²⁴⁶ Al Qaeda, in turn, stated its support for the Sunni cause.²⁴⁷

This new round of attacks came after Maliki's efforts to arrest the Sunni vice president, Tariq al-Hashimi, on charges of terrorism in 2011, and his attacks on the Sunni finance minister, Rafe al-Essawi and arrest of 10 of his bodyguards in 2011. It was scarcely an indication Maliki was seeking some form of conciliation or that the use of the Iraqi Security Forces was limited to violent extremists. The situation was also made worse when Maliki imposed a curfew and the security forces attempted to disperse or arrest any Sunni protestors.

In late December 2013, dozens of Sunni MP's resigned in protest over violence between government security forces and Sunni politicians. Sunni politician Saleh al-Mutlaq called for all MPs from the Sunni Iraqiyya bloc to resign following a raid on a Sunni protest camp in Ramadi in which a prominent Sunni lawmaker, Ahmed al-Alwani, was arrested, and his brother and several others were killed.²⁴⁸ In December 2013, CRS reported that rising violence in Iraq threatened to derail the parliamentary elections scheduled for April 2014.

The end result was a military crisis described in detail in Chapters VIII and X. Maliki's actions triggered massive Sunni resistance. He then attempted to ease the situation by removing the army and relying on a corrupt and ineffective police forces. This allowed relatively small elements of the AQI/ISIS to take over parts of Fallujah and Ramadi, and led to active Sunni resistance in other parts of Anbar, in the Mosul area, in Sunni towns nearer to Baghdad, and Dyala/Salahaddin. By early January 2014, Maliki ordered the army to prepare to retake Fallujah and Ramadi and threatened threaten the population with artillery, air attacks, and urban warfare if they did not drive AQI/ISIS out— making the broader Shi'ite-Sunni crisis steadily worse.²⁴⁹

As noted earlier, Maliki also reacted by trying to gerrymander Anbar. On January 21, 2014, he announced that the Cabinet had decided in principle to create three new provinces in the most troubled areas of the parts of the country in what the government claimed were efforts to address Sunni grievances and a protect minorities. One new province was to be in the west, with Fallujah at its center. Fallujah was one of the cities taken over by AQI/ISIS in late December 2013 after the Iraqi army suppressed a protest camp at Ramadi and attacked the home of a leading Sunni politicians.

No Sunni faction had pressed for division of what already was a largely Sunni province in Anbar, but the central government claimed that creating a new province would give the Sunnis more

federal funding. In practice, it looked more like an effort to create a stronger administrative and governmental structure to control the Sunni populations in the West.

Moreover, the growing opposition to the Maliki government was scarcely limited to Iraq's Sunni and Kurdish minority groups. While Maliki's government struggled with the country's Sunnis, segments of the Shia majority pose a separate threat. While many members of Moqtada Sadr's Mahdi Army had laid down their arms and "put their faith in the political process," the Shia community faces regular attacks and has lost trust in the government's ability to keep them safe.²⁵⁰ "We are all waiting for an order from Moqtada," said a Shia resident of Sadr City who lost his mother, two brothers, and young child; victims of Iraq's rising violence.²⁵¹

Hope for the Future? The 2014 General Elections

It is too early to know if Iraq's 2014 parliamentary elections will be any less disastrous than its 2010 elections. Vice President Biden's office released a statement on Iraq's progress towards its 2014 elections on November 4, 2013 that stated that:²⁵²

The United States welcomes the passage of legislation today by the Council of Representatives (COR) to govern Iraq's parliamentary elections. These elections have now been set for April 30, 2014, and the law that passed today was the result of many weeks of negotiation and compromise by all of Iraq's major political blocs. I applaud the leadership of Prime Minister Maliki, Iraqi Kurdistan Region President Barzani, and COR Speaker Nujaifi in achieving this result.

Upcoming elections give the Iraqi people an opportunity to choose the direction of their country, and the compromises reached today demonstrate the strength of Iraq's democratic institutions, even in the face of terrorism that seeks to heighten sectarian tension and provoke broader conflict.

As noted in the Joint Statement concluded last week following the visit of Prime Minister Maliki to Washington, the United States is prepared to work as appropriate with the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) and the Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) to help ensure that the elections are well prepared and produce a result that reflects the will of the Iraqi people.

The United States remains committed to enhancing bilateral relations across all areas covered by the Strategic Framework Agreement, including efforts to "support and strengthen Iraq's democracy and its democratic institutions as defined and established in the Iraqi Constitution." It was in this spirit that we welcomed Prime Minister Maliki's commitment last week to holding these important elections on time.

Iraq today reminded the world that its leaders are determined to find areas of compromise and move their country forward. We congratulate them on this important step, and look forward to further cooperation in the months ahead.

Some aspects of these comments seem to be a triumph of hope over experience. Iraq faces critical ongoing problems with violence, governance, sectarian and ethnic divisions, and deep conflicts between its political leaders as it heads into the 2014 general elections. These elections are currently set for April 2014. A total of 142 disparate political entities had registered for the election by the deadline of November 2013 – a near certain formula for forming sectarian, ethnic, and regional coalitions and divided votes along sectarian and ethnic lines.

The Sunni Role and Movement Towards a National Government

The most critical single question shaping the outcome of the 2014 election is whether the Sunnis will fully participate, whether viable Sunni parties emerge, and whether the new government builds a truly national coalition rather than repeats the mistakes of 2010. No election can succeed without these developments.

As this and the following chapters make clear, the odds are not good but are not hopeless. The tensions between the Shi'ite dominated Maliki government and Iraq's Sunnis rose steadily throughout 2013, as did the tension between the central government and the Kurds. They reached the crisis point in Anbar at the end of December 2013, and the situation was no better in Mosul and Diyala.

Maliki continued to deal with his Sunni opposition by using the security forces to attack them, charging them with terrorism, and marginalizing peaceful protests and any form of opposition. His efforts at conciliation were largely tactical and usually brief and quickly followed by more repression. In the process, the Maliki government became at least as much a source of Sunni extremism and violence as his steadily weaker and disenfranchised Sunni opposition.

Maliki was forced to reverse his position in late December 2013, when Sunni anger reached the crisis point in Anbar, Maliki withdrew Iraqi army forces after triggering a major set of new protests by sending them in to suppress Sunni protests in Ramadi, and AQI/ISIS was able to send fighters into take control of Fallujah and Ramadi. Partly at US urging, Maliki held back on using the Army to retake the cities and reached out to Sunni tribal leaders and elements of the Sons of Iraq.

It was far from clear, however, that this effort came in time to create a bridge between the government in Baghdad and Sunnis in the West and in the rest of the country. As one sign of Sunni attitudes, Usama al-Nujayfi, the Sunni Speaker of the Council of the Republic gave a speech at Brookings on January 24, 2014 in which he made it clear that fundamental changes were needed to bring Sunnis and Shi'ites together and threatened a possible boycott of the 2014 election. He warned that,²⁵³

Al Qaeda then was defeated. It was defeated because the people decided to assist the Iraqi government and the government forces at that time.

But after the battle ended, the promises made to those people were not kept. And the government dealt with them as if they were opponents and enemies. They were not allowed to join the armed forces. And this was based on weird standards. As if they did not want to have military units from these provinces. They were mistreated. And this led to frustration and mistrust. People became convinced that they should not deal with Baghdad because...their representative in the government and the parliament are not able to get them their rights back, or to move their legitimate demands forward. And they saw that the government was trying to marginalize some Iraqis and not giving them the role they were elected to play.

So at a psychological level, there was a lot of [distrust] and lots of frustration and this allowed al Qaeda to come back. Because when the people do not trust the army and see al Qaeda, they are confused. If they [do not] fight al Qaeda they believe the situation will go back to what it was before 2006. If they fight al Qaeda they will be a target afterwards. If they do nothing, they will be caught between the fire of the army and the fire of al Qaeda. Because they know that al Qaeda will be bringing a worse kind of repression back.

But the psychological situation at this point makes it easier for al Qaeda to come back... So we need to win the population back in these provinces," he said. "We need to give those people their rights to support them at the political, economic, and security levels. And then al Qaeda will be defeated within days."

The situation was no better in March 2014, the cutoff date for this analysis. Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki and parliament Speaker Osama al-Nujayfi, and Maliki and Massoud Barzani, the President of the Iraqi Kurdistan Region, remained as bad as ever, and seemed to threaten Iraq's parliamentary system.

Maliki stated in his weekly address on March 5, 2014, that he considered the parliament to be "finished" and to lack legitimacy. According to press reports, he attacked Nujayfi for "the legal and constitutional violations" that made the parliament an institution that "disrupts the

government's work." He called upon members of parliament to boycott parliamentary sessions as long as Nujaifi insisted on not putting the budget to a vote. Maliki also threatened for the first time that that he would make disbursements from the budget without waiting for parliament and stated that he was challenging the parliament's delays and refusal to support his budget Iraq's federal court.²⁵⁴

Maliki acted although Articles 62 and 57 of the Constitution stated that, "The cabinet shall submit the draft general budget bill and the closing account to the parliament for approval," and "The parliamentary session in which the general budget is being presented shall not end until approval of the budget." The fact that Maliki's speech was followed by his supporters call to dissolve the parliament and/or declare a state of emergency, led some to state that this, "proves concerns that he might be seeking to remain in power, regardless of the results of the elections."²⁵⁵

The next day, Nujaifi held a news conference and press reported indicated that he,²⁵⁶

"accused Maliki of leading a coup against constitutional legitimacy and of running away from popular accountability that is represented by the parliament. Nujaifi added that Maliki's disbursement from the budget without the parliament's approval is considered "embezzlement of public funds." Moreover, he pointed out that Maliki and the acting ministers of defense and interior rejected the parliament's invitation to attend the session and discuss the security issues in the country."

Things were little better in terms of Maliki's relations with the KRG. Maliki and Barzani could not agree on the aspects of the budget law that affected the Kurds, and Barzani again threatened some form of separatism, "because the Kurds cannot live under threats."²⁵⁷

In spite of Iraq's fratricidal power struggles at the top, however, many Shi'ite and Sunnis still saw the need for a shift to a more national government. Iraq had not reached to point of serious civil war at the end of 2013, and there were still many voices calling for compromise and conciliation.

Kurdish Issues

At a different level, the tensions between the Kurdish Regional government and the central government in Baghdad had also grown steadily since 2011. As is discussed in Chapters VII and XII, these tensions were driven by disputes over the development of petroleum resources in the KRG, the allocation of export revenues by both the KRG and central government, funding and control over the Kurdish security forces or Peshmerga, and territorial disputes over KRG control of disputed areas and cities like Kirkuk – which also contained oil reserves.

In January 2014, these disputes reached the point where the Maliki government threatened to cut off paying the KRG its 17% share of all oil revenues and sought to carve out new provinces that would favor Turkmen and Christian minorities over Kurds. The Kurdish government, in turn, threatened to seek independence. A threat that polls showed had majority support among Kurds – a very different situation from polls of Sunni and Shi'ite Arabs.

Shi'ite Unity

Another key question is whether Maliki's State of Law coalition can hold together – and if not, what elements will take the lead. Reidar Visser notes that,²⁵⁸

Starting with the Shiite Islamists, all the big parties are in there, and there is also evidence of the persistence of some of the internal subdivisions within the State of Law alliance that came to the fore in the local elections this year. Thus, firstly there are Ahrar (Sadrist), Risaliyun (Shahmani), Fadila, Badr, Hizbollah in Iraq (Sari),

Muwatin (ISCI), Iraq National Congress (Chalabi), Muwafaq al-Rubayie, Daawa (Tanzim al-Dakhil), Daawa (Maliki), Daawa (Tanzim al-Iraq), Daawa (Haraka).

Independents (Shahristani), as well as State of Law somewhat incongruously registered as an “entity” in the name of Haydar al-Abbadi (the same thing happened before the local elections and it is a little unclear why they are registering the coalition as a party). Independent Sabah al- Saadi, formerly of Fadila and with notoriety for his battle with PM Maliki has his own party; the Shaykhi subset of Basra is also running an entity of their own (Amir al-Fayiz). And then there are small parties of people with ties to State of Law: Ali al-Dabbagh, Shirwan al-Waeli and Haytham al-Jibburi.

Some of these managed to win seats in the local elections in April. By continuing to exist as recognizable entities, they also signify potential centers of gravity catering for the same electorate that Maliki has appealed to in the past. Finally, two ministers considered close to Maliki that are running separate parties may perhaps be considered in a different light since they appeal to voters outside the Shiite Islamist base of Maliki. They are Sadun al-Dulaymi (Sunni Arab) and Turhan al-Mufti (Turkmen).

Turning to the secular-Sunni circles that in the past have been associated with Iraqiyya, an even greater degree of formal fragmentation can be seen. There is no entity called Iraqiyya as such.

What was formerly Wifaq of Ayyad Allawi is now registered under the name of Nationalism (Al-Wataniya). Then there is the Mutahiddun list of parliament speaker Nujayfi, the Future party of Dhafir al-Ani, the small party of Hussein al-Shaalan, as well as a flurry of small lists associated with the defections from Iraqiyya in parliament that happened mainly in 2012 before and after the targeting of Vice President Tareq alHashimi. These include already known entities like White, Hall, Free Iraqiyya and Wataniyun, but there are also separate entities associated with figures like Ahmad al-Masari, Mustafa al-Hiti and Talal al-Zubayie. Saleh al-Mutlak does not appear to have registered a separate list, whereas it is noteworthy that the Iraqi Islamic Party (Sunni Islamist) has reappeared after it lost greatly to Iraqiyya in 2010 and was of little significance in the local elections in April this year.

Two significant omissions must be mentioned. For some reason, the Kurdish KDP party is not listed. Unless this is intended as grandstanding by Masud Barzani (who has hinted at the possibility of boycotting the elections), this presumably relates to a technicality. Also it is unclear whether a list loyal to Asaeb Ahl al-Haq group, the Sadrist splinter group that has more recently flirted with Maliki, is included

Some analysts have suggested that Maliki and Sadr are increasingly competing for Tehran’s support and resources. Historically, both have had ties with Iran’s government, and Maliki traveled to Tehran in December 2013 to meet with Iranian President Hassan Rouhani.²⁵⁹ For their part, Iranian officials refused to back either over the other in the upcoming elections through the beginning of 2014. In December 2013, Al Monitor reported that “Iranians seem to be more confident about their position in Iraq today, and the stakes go beyond the personal ambitions of Iraqi leaders.”²⁶⁰

While any such predictions are speculative, the 2014 election could feature an intra-sectarian showdown between the competing camps of Prime Minister Maliki and the influential Shia cleric Moqtada al-Sadr as well as more tensions between Sunni and Shi’ite and Arab and Kurd. Sadr has stepped up his criticism on Maliki. In March 2013, Sadr charged that Maliki’s “staying in the government is a sin and a fatal error.”²⁶¹ Responding to a question regarding who will follow PM Maliki in the April 2014 elections, Sadr assured that the Shia political coalition “Iraqi National Alliance (INA) will nominate the candidate for the Premier post after the Premier, Nouri al-Maliki. All sides agreed upon nominating the candidate who will replace Maliki by INA.”²⁶²

The possibility of such falling out between the Shia leaders is a reminder as to just how unstable Iraq’s Shi’ite political structure has been since 2006, when Sadr and his followers supported Maliki’s first campaign for prime minister, effectively securing Maliki’s ascension to the top of Iraq’s government.²⁶³ Since then, Sadr and Maliki have had a tense relationship. In 2007 Sadr and his supporters pulled out of Maliki’s government, undermining the Prime Minister’s credibility.²⁶⁴

During the 2008 troop surge, Maliki's Iraqi Security Forces (ISF), along with US and coalition troops, launched attacks against Sadr militants, devastating their forces, but reinforcing Sadr's standing among Shia and Sunnis alike.²⁶⁵

Maliki now has far more control over the state's political system, the security services, and the nation's revenues than in 2010, and can run again for a third term. Nevertheless, the April 2014 general election might still pit the Shia rivals against each in a battle for legitimacy, resources, and the state levers of power in Iraq.

In December 2013, Harith Hasan described such a possible contest for the 2014 general elections in *Al Monitor*, detailing the tit-for-tat escalation between the two leaders.²⁶⁶ Hasan pointed out that Sadr criticized Maliki's highly publicized October 2013 trip to Washington, which opponents saw as an attempt to win US backing for a third term in office. In response, Maliki blamed Sadr for Iraq's increased sectarian violence, and Maliki's security forces arrested several associates of Sadr's Mahdi Army. He also suggested, however, that Maliki may consolidate power elsewhere, among the Shia middle class and Iraq's military and state officials -- who have a vested interest in keeping Maliki in office.

As has been touched upon earlier, however, Sadr maneuvered as well as Maliki. On February 16, 2014, Sadr announced that he was withdrawing from Iraqi politics. "I announce that I will not intervene in politics. No party represents us from now on in Parliament or in any position inside or outside the government."²⁶⁷ Sadr has previously reversed similar decisions to leave politics, which led to uncertainty to whether this decision would stick. One Shia shopkeeper said, "I hope that Moktada sticks to this decision. Usually he changes his mind really soon. I wish that we could get rid of those Islamic politicians, both Sunnis and Shiites, and have a civil state instead." Others fear Sadr's departure from politics at this time, and feel abandoned. One Shiite from the impoverished Sadr City warned, "Moktada's leaving now is for the benefit of Maliki, who is running for a third term. I gave my voice to the Sadrists before, and now they leave and let us down".²⁶⁸

Two days after announcing his decision to withdraw from politics, Sadr gave a speech in which he spoke of the failures of Iraq's political system, criticized Prime Minister Maliki, who he called a tyrant and dictator, questioned the credibility of Iraq's parliament, and expressed outrage at Maliki's support from capitals in the "East and West", a reference to Iran and America.²⁶⁹ His actions have prompted some experts to question if Sadr is "repositioning" rather than "retiring" and believe that Sadr is deliberately distancing himself from Iranian pressure of Shia politicians to back Maliki for a controversial third term. Others have taken issue with his decision to retire out of deference of the Sadr family's religious legacy, and argued that prominent members of the Sadr family have long engaged in Iraqi politics, not shied away.²⁷⁰

If Iraq's history serves as any example, Iraqis from of all sects, ethnicities, and even political parties will fight to stay in power to avoid the fate of the Sunni Baathists after the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime. Their rivalry will play out in 2014 as each faction attempts to secure as many parliamentary seats as possible in the general elections. The end result may well be a repetition of 2014 -- with the important exception that anything approaching Shi'ite unity will now allow Maliki to exploit far greater control over every aspect of the security forces and central government, while both Sunnis and Kurds will be far less likely to be accept any result that does not given them more equity in power, governance, and control of both the Iraqi security forces and national revenues.

VI. THE IMPACT OF FAILED GOVERNANCE

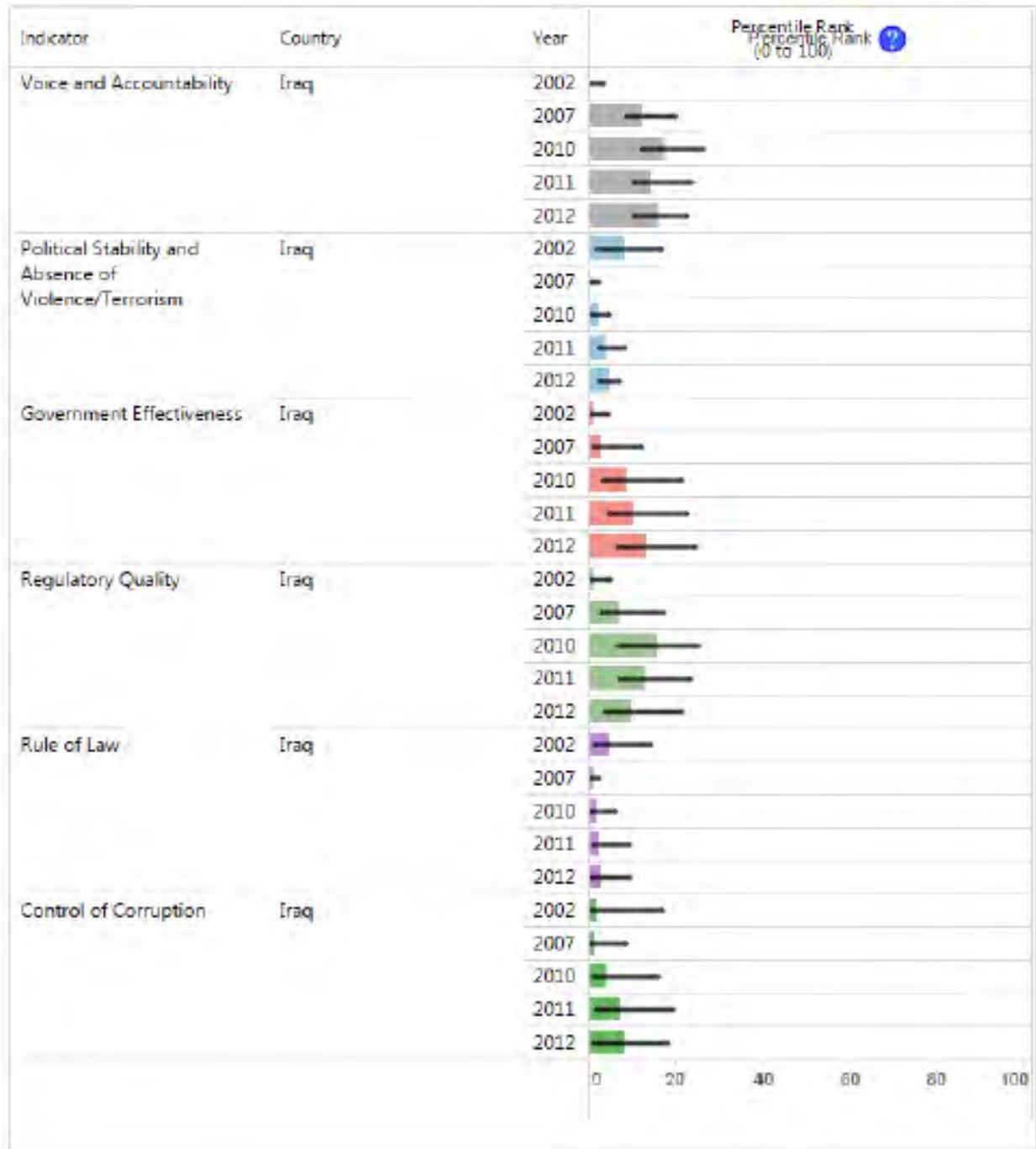
This history shows all too clearly that the terrorism, extremism, and insurgency documented in earlier chapters did not emerge a one-sided vacuum. All were empowered by the failures of politics, leaders, governments, and their opposition. They were shaped by failures in governance and by the depth of the inequities and division within the state. Iraq's political leaders not only faced the challenges imposed by Iraq's past, they failed the Iraqi people by creating a polarized struggle for power. The end result is a government with deep divisions and by a current power structure centered on Shi'ite factions, a Prime Minister who has concentrated power in the face of constant challenges, and the way the government and security forces operate.

World Bank Governance Ranking

Chapter X, XI, and XII analyze the failures in governance that affect the Iraqi security forces, the Iraqi economy, and the problems create by Iraq's over-dependence on petroleum revenues. Iraq's most serious immediate problems in governance, however, grow out of its sectarian divisions and the government's misuse of the justice system, corruption, and the use of power to serve sectarian and ethnic interests.

The World Bank provides a comparative ranking of the quality of governance using a wide range of different international sources, and six major categories of governance. **Figure 25** shows that Iraq had improved in all categories in 2012 since the days of Saddam Hussein, but still ranked dismally low on a scale of 100, and that some areas were in decline since the 2012 election. Moreover, the violence and stability ranking preceded the major increase in violence that took place in 2013 and continued into 2014.

Figure 25: World Bank Ranking of Quality of Iraqi Governance



Source: World Bank Governance Indicators, 2013, info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/index.aspx?fileName=c107.pdf#reports.

State Department Iraq Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2013 (issued February 2014)

The US State Department Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2013, which was issued in February of 2014, highlights the impact of terrorist attacks carried out by groups such as Al-Qaeda in Iraq, but it also shows the US government recognizes the extent to which Iraqi violence is driven by the problems created by Iraqi politics and their impact on the conduct of the government and security services.²⁷¹

The report makes it clear that the divisions between key Iraq political factions – driven by the ethnic and sectarian tensions within the leadership of the Iraqi central government and KRG – have had a broad impact on failures in governance and Iraqi violence,²⁷²

Iraq is a constitutional parliamentary republic. Prime Minister Nouri Kamal al-Maliki secured a second term following free and fair elections in March 2010. While all major political parties participated in the government, significant unresolved problems continued to hamper its operation. Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) reported to civilian authorities, but continuing violence, corruption, and organizational dysfunction undermined effective protection of human rights.

Severe human rights problems persisted. The three most important were: politically motivated sectarian and ethnic killings, including by the resurgent terrorist network led by al-Qaeda and its affiliate, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), formerly known as al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI); torture and abuses by government actors and illegal armed groups; and a lack of governmental transparency, exacerbated by widespread corruption at all levels of government and society. During the year the following other significant human rights problems were also reported: disappearances; harsh and life-threatening conditions in detention and prison facilities; arbitrary arrest and lengthy pretrial detention, sometimes incommunicado; continued impunity for security forces; denial of fair public trials; insufficient judicial institutional capacity; ineffective implementation of civil judicial procedures and remedies; delays in resolving property restitution claims; arbitrary interference with privacy and home; limits on freedoms of speech, press, and assembly; violence against and harassment of journalists; limits on religious freedom due to extremist threats and violence; restrictions on freedom of movement; large numbers of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees; discrimination against and societal abuses of women and ethnic, religious, and racial minorities; trafficking in persons; societal discrimination and violence against individuals based on perceived sexual orientation and gender identity; and limited exercise of labor rights. A culture of impunity largely protected members of the security services, as well as those elsewhere in the government, from investigation and successful prosecution for human rights violations. Corruption among officials across government agencies was widespread and contributed to significant human rights abuses...

...There were multiple reports that government officials conducted extrajudicial killings, but confirmation was rare. Members of the security forces tortured detainees to death, according to reports from multiple government officials; one government official told the press that families sometimes received the bodies of their relatives who died in government custody only days after their arrest. Official investigations were infrequent, and the outcomes of investigations were often unpublished, unknown, or incomplete, and rarely credible in high-profile cases.

Vice President Tariq al-Hashimi's bodyguard, Amir Sarbut Zaidan al-Batawi, died in custody three months after being arrested in December 2011 on terrorism charges. After receiving his body on March 20, Batawi's family reported that the body displayed signs of torture, including burn marks and various wounds. Hashimi and many of his supporters claimed that Batawi and others were tortured to force confessions implicating Hashimi and to coerce statements linking other political figures to the Hashimi case (see section 1.e.). Authorities denied allegations of torture and stated that Batawi died of kidney failure and other complications after refusing treatment while in detention.

...The constitution expressly prohibits torture in all its forms under all circumstances, as well as cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment. Nonetheless, government officials as well as local and international human rights organizations documented instances of torture and other abuses by government agents and similar

abuses by illegal armed groups. Police throughout the country continued to use abusive and coerced confessions as methods of investigation.

...Five separate entities--the Ministries of Justice, Interior, Defense, Labor, and Social Affairs, plus the Prime Minister's Counterterrorism Service--operated prisons, detention centers, and temporary holding facilities. Conditions at some facilities were harsh and life threatening, and there were unexplained deaths, riots, hunger strikes, and escapes...There were also documented cases of abuse and torture in some facilities. Government officials and local and international human rights organizations alleged that both the government and the KRG operated secret prisons and detention facilities.

...In Erbil, Sulaymaniyah, and Dahuk, the three Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) provinces referred to as the Iraqi Kurdistan Region (IKR), there were press reports and credible accounts that KRG security forces committed arbitrary or unlawful killings. On February 16, an Arab resident of Kirkuk was kidnapped, and his body was found the following day. Arab residents of Kirkuk and local media claimed that elements of the Kurdish internal security organization, the Asayish, were responsible for the kidnapping and killing. Kurdish authorities denied the accusations.

...The ISF consists of internal security forces administratively organized within the MOI and external security forces under the control of the MOD. The MOI's responsibilities include domestic law enforcement and maintenance of order. Conventional military forces in the MOD are responsible for external defense but cooperate regularly in internal security missions with the MOI.

Human rights violations committed by ISF personnel were rarely investigated, and perpetrators were seldom punished. For example, on October 21, the ISF injured four protesters demonstrating against poor government services and delayed reconstruction projects in al-Salam in Maysan Province. The protesters, who had closed a key highway between Dhi Qar and Maysan, became violent when security forces attempted to disperse the crowd, inciting Iraqi Army (IA) soldiers to fire above the crowd, wounding four protesters in the process. On October 22, the Maysan Provincial Council questioned the governor and his deputies regarding the protest and accompanying IA response. The provincial council formed an investigative committee to examine the IA shootings, but there were no results at year's end.

There were continued accounts of torture and abuse throughout the country in many MOI police stations and MOD facilities, reportedly primarily during interrogation. The MOI did not release the number of officers punished during the year, and there were no known court convictions for abuse. The government did not take widespread action to reform security forces to improve human rights protection.

Problems persisted with the police regarding sectarian divisions, corruption, ties to tribes, and unwillingness to serve outside the areas from which they were recruited. The army and federal police recruited nationwide and deployed soldiers and police to various areas, reducing the likelihood of corruption related to personal ties to tribes or militants.

In some instances security forces failed to prevent or respond to societal violence. For example, security forces did not take sufficient measures to respond to threats of violence, some of which were carried out, against perceived lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals despite the public posting of targeted individuals' names (see section 6).

The two main Kurdish political parties, the KDP and PUK, maintained their own security apparatuses organized along military lines and dating from the struggle against the regime of Saddam Hussein and earlier. There were approximately 22 Peshmerga (Kurdish militia) brigades, all originally under the control of the two main Kurdish political parties. Under the constitution the KRG has the right to maintain regional guard brigades, supported financially by the central government but under KRG control. Accordingly, the KRG established a Ministry of Peshmerga Affairs. Four additional regional guard brigades were formed during the year, bringing the number of regional guard brigades under the authority of the Ministry of Peshmerga Affairs to 12, although most units maintained allegiance to either the KDP or the PUK. The central government did not financially support to Peshmerga units not a part of the regional guard brigades.

KRG security forces and intelligence services detained suspects in KRG-controlled areas. The poorly defined administrative boundaries between the IKR and the rest of the country resulted in continuing confusion about the jurisdiction of the security forces and the courts. The KDP maintained its own internal security unit, the Asayish, and its own intelligence service, the Parastin. The PUK maintained its own internal security unit,

also known as the Asayish, and its own intelligence service, the Zanyari. The PUK and the KDP took some steps during the year toward unifying their internal and external security organizations, but these organizations remained separate in practice and effectively controlled by political leaders through political party channels.

***State Department Human Rights Report on Freedom of Press and Media:*²⁷³**

As is the case in most Middle Eastern states, freedom of expression and the media is also a critical issue,

Throughout the year military officials, sometimes claiming safety considerations, prevented journalists from entering public protest spaces. On March 3, Lieutenant General Mardhi al-Mahlawi al-Dulaime, chief of Anbar Operations Command, released a statement asserting, “We have received instructions from higher authorities not to allow any non-Iraqi journalists to enter Anbar Province.” In April authorities prevented journalists from traveling near the city of Hawija, the site of security forces’ violent suppression of large demonstrations.

The government used its authority to suppress potentially unfavorable media coverage. On several occasions, security officials prevented reporters from covering stories by denying journalists access to venues, particularly sites of ongoing protests or demonstrations. There were also reports that local governments selected journalists to receive tracts of land for their personal use in exchange for favorable media coverage. In addition, according to the local NGO Journalistic Freedom Observatory, in some instances security forces threatened detention of correspondents if they did not sign a pledge to stop practicing their profession. For example, on November 22, security forces detained al-Baghdadiya Television correspondent Rasha al-Abadi while she interviewed residents of Najaf on their reaction to a flood. According to the Journalistic Freedom Observatory,

security vehicles cordoned a residential property in which she was conducting an interview, requested that al-Abadi sign a pledge that she would no longer practice journalism, and, after she refused to sign, detained her for several hours until local political figures secured her release.

All books published in the country as well as imported books required the Ministry of Culture’s approval and were therefore subject to censorship. According to the ministry, the purpose of the vetting was to suppress literature that promotes sectarianism.

The UN Analysis

Reporting by the Secretary General to the UN Security Council raises many of the same concerns about abuses of human rights and the causes of violence and risk in Iraq. In his July 2013 report, the Secretary General described a long series of failures and divisions within the structure of Iraqi politics and governance that contribute to Iraq’s rising violence,²⁷⁴

Rising inter-sectarian tensions are posing a major threat to stability and security in Iraq. During the reporting period, two main issues dominated internal political developments in the country: the continuing political crisis exacerbated by the widespread demonstrations in the predominantly Sunni governorates; and the governorate council elections, which were held on 20 April in 12 governorates and on 20 June in Anbar and Ninewa governorates.

...The demonstrations have entered their seventh month without an immediate solution in sight. The demonstrators and their demands have been highly politicized by some Sunni political leaders and parties. Central to many of these demands are calls for the amendment of the Anti-Terrorism Law (No. 13 of 2005), the release of detainees held without charge or trial, the release of female detainees or their transfer to detention facilities in their home governorates, the amendment of the Accountability and Justice Law (No. 10 of 2008) and the enactment of a general amnesty law.

...During the reporting period, UNAMI sought to create space for political dialogue in order to ease sectarian tensions and expedite the legislative processes relating to the demonstrators’ demands. In this regard, my Special Representative held regular meetings with key State officials, including the Prime Minister, the Vice-President, the Deputy Prime Ministers and the Speaker, to discuss the political crisis, including the

demonstrations, the postponement of elections in Anbar and Ninewa governorates and the dramatic increase in sectarian tensions and violence. He expressed concern that the country would be heading down a precarious path should decisive and effective measures not be taken immediately.

He has encouraged all Iraqi political, religious and tribal leaders to take bold initiatives and engage constructively in a broad-based national dialogue, in addition to stressing the importance of respecting human rights and the rule of law. In this regard, UNAMI continued to liaise with the focal point in the Office of Deputy Prime Minister al-Shahristani to assist in resolving human rights cases directly submitted to the Mission. UNAMI also interacted with a committee established by the Ministry of the Interior to obtain information on the detainees released.

Other UN reporting shows how the impact of such problems in Iraqi politics and government have been reinforced by the government's corruption and lack of integrity in dealing with its people. These problems are documented at length in a United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNDOC) report entitled *Corruption and Integrity Challenges in the Public sector of Iraq: An Evidence Based Study* that was issued in September 2012.²⁷⁵ The summary to the study notes that bribery alone was so common that the UNDOC found some 11.6% of the population had bribed civil servants in 2011, and the rate of bribery was over 29% in urban areas like Baghdad.²⁷⁶

A July 2013 report by the Crisis Group is equally more critical of the role of Iraq's politics and misgovernment in driving Iraq back towards violence, and provides an important additional perspective as to the role of Iraq's politics play in moving it back towards civil conflict:²⁷⁷

The origins of the crisis run deep. Throughout his seven-year tenure, Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki has implemented a divide-and-conquer strategy that has neutered any credible Sunni Arab leadership. The authorities also have taken steps that reinforce perceptions of a sectarian agenda. Prominent officials – predominantly Sunni – have been cast aside pursuant to the Justice and Accountability Law on the basis of alleged senior-level affiliation to the former Baath party. Federal security forces have disproportionately deployed in Baghdad's Sunni neighborhoods as well as Sunni-populated governorates (Anbar, Salah al-Din, Ninewa, Kirkuk and Diyala). Al-Iraqiya, the political movement to which Sunni Arabs most readily related, slowly came apart due to internal rivalries even as Maliki resorted to both legal and extrajudicial means to consolidate power.

This past year has proved particularly damaging. As events in Syria nurtured their hopes for a political comeback, Sunni Arabs launched an unprecedented, peaceful protest movement in late 2012 in response to the arrest of bodyguards of Rafea al-Issawi, a prominent Iraqiya member. It too failed to provide answers to accumulated grievances. Instead, the demonstrations and the repression to which they gave rise further exacerbated the sense of exclusion and persecution among Sunnis.

... Belittled, demonized and increasingly subject to a central government crackdown, the popular movement is slowly mutating into an armed struggle. In this respect, the absence of a unified Sunni leadership – to which Baghdad's policies contributed and which Maliki might have perceived as an asset – has turned out to be a serious liability. In a showdown that is acquiring increasing sectarian undertones, the movement's proponents look westward to Syria as the arena in which the fight against the Iraqi government and its Shiite allies will play out and eastward toward Iran as the source of all their ills.

Under intensifying pressure from government forces and with dwindling faith in a political solution, many Sunni Arabs have concluded their only realistic option is a violent conflict increasingly framed in confessional terms. In turn, the government conveniently dismisses all opposition as a sectarian insurgency that warrants ever more stringent security measures. In the absence of a dramatic shift in approach, Iraq's fragile polity risks breaking down, a victim of the combustible mix of its longstanding flaws and growing regional tensions.

Growing Popular Fears and Dissatisfaction

It is difficult to assess the views of the Iraqi people regarding the rise in violence, and the roles of given actors – real or imagined. Reliable polling data does not seem to be available for 2013

onwards on issues like Sunni-Shi'ite splits, Arab-Kurdish tensions, attitudes towards the government, corruption, and other key factors that affect Iraq's present crisis. Even before the rise in violence in 2013, however, it was clear that much lower levels of violence had affected the cohesion of the state at the popular level.

The January 2012 Quarterly report of the Special Inspector General for Iraqi Reconstruction – which used polling data obtained before the sharp rise in violence and sectarian and ethnic violence from 2012 onwards – noted Iraqi popular attitudes already presented serious problems,²⁷⁸

The results of two surveys, both taken in 2011 before the final drawdown of U.S. troops, portray a relatively high level of discontent among the people of Iraq. One survey found that 25% of the 1,000 Iraqis interviewed in September considered themselves to be “suffering” (as opposed to “thriving” or “struggling”), up from 14% less than a year earlier. According to Gallup, the percentage of Iraqis who rate their lives this poorly is among the highest in the Middle East and North Africa region. The percentage that said they were “thriving”—just 7%—is among the lowest in the region. The number of Iraqis who reported experiencing stress during much of the day preceding their survey doubled between June 2008 and September 2011, rising from 34% to 70%. The percentage experiencing anger increased from 38% to 60% over the same period.²

Earlier in the year, a more comprehensive survey of the 28,875 Iraqi households provided additional details on specific areas of concern. The Iraq Knowledge Network (IKN) survey is part of a socioeconomic monitoring system being developed by the Iraqi Ministry of Planning and Development Cooperation (MoPDC). Its aim is to provide reliable data for planning and improving government services. Partial results of the survey were released in December and included the following:

Almost 8 out of 10 households rated electricity service as “bad” or “very bad,” and 6 out of 10 rated their sanitation facilities in one of those categories.

57% of adults (age 15 and older) said they were neither working nor looking for work.

More than half felt that corruption had become more prevalent in the previous two years. A different type of survey, this one conducted in 2011 by New York-based consulting firm Mercer, rated the quality of living and personal safety in 221 cities around the world. Baghdad ranked last in both categories. The survey weighed the political, social, and economic environment along with housing, schools, public services, health care, and climate in determining its calculation, describing the Iraqi capital as “the world’s least safe city.”

A later Gallup Poll, issued in March 2013 -- and at a point where the rise in violence had still not had a major impact, particularly in the South -- was no more reassuring, and reflected serious problems in terms of both Sunni and Kurdish popular attitudes.²⁷⁹

A little more than one year after the last U.S. military vehicles exited their country, more Iraqis report security to be better (42%) than worse (19%) as a result of the U.S. withdrawal, according to a Gallup poll conducted in Iraq last October. While some military analysts feared that Iraqi security forces would fail to fill the security vacuum left in the absence of U.S. forces, which numbered 170,000 at their height, many Iraqis now perceive security to have been positively impacted by the U.S. departure. Still, Iraqis view the effects of the U.S. pullout on other issues more unevenly, with many saying the country's economic and political climate is worse as a result of the withdrawal.

Do you think each of the following is better, about the same, or worse as a result of American military forces withdrawing at the end of 2011?

	% Better	% About the same	% Worse
Security	42%	38%	19%
Freedom from foreign influence	30%	38%	30%
Political stability	20%	41%	37%
Corruption	11%	41%	46%
Jobs and unemployment	9%	34%	55%

Based on surveys conducted Oct. 8-22, 2012

GALLUP®

The 10-year anniversary of the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq passes this month, with violence still down significantly from the darkest periods of Iraq's civil war in 2006 and 2007. Nonetheless, sectarian tension remains just under the surface, as al-Qaeda continues its bombing campaigns in Iraqi cities and tensions mount between Baghdad and the country's autonomous Kurdish region.

Sunnis More Likely to See Country as Worse Off after U.S. Pullout

Since the U.S. withdrawal, Iraq's Sunni and Shia communities have taken somewhat different views of the country's trajectory, with Sunnis seeing the situation in the country more negatively after the pullout.

In particular, Sunnis are significantly more likely than Shias to see corruption as worsening after the U.S. pullout -- 69% vs. 39%. And, 73% of Sunnis say the country's jobs and unemployment situation has worsened since the U.S. withdrawal, compared with 60% of Shias.

Sunni discontent with Iraq's direction may be a reflection of frustration with the country's Shia-dominated government, which major Sunni political parties have accused of engaging in sectarian politics following the departure of U.S. forces.

Sunnis View Post-U.S. Iraq More Negatively

	Sunni % Worse (n=127)	Shia % Worse (n=334)	Difference (pct. pts.)
Corruption	69%	39%	-30
Jobs and unemployment	73%	60%	-13
Freedom from foreign influence	39%	27%	-12
Security	25%	15%	-10
Political stability	43%	40%	-3

Based on surveys conducted Oct. 8-22, 2012

Excluding Kurdish administered provinces of Arbil, Dohuk, and Suleimaniya.

GALLUP®

Most in Kurdistan Prefer Regional Autonomy

Another key area where U.S. forces may be missed is along Iraq's Kurdish-Arab fault line. Unresolved territorial issues between Baghdad and Iraq's Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) over "disputed territories" and the oil-rich city of Kirkuk intensified in 2012 without U.S. forces present to mediate differences.

Oppressed by successive governments in Baghdad prior to the U.S. invasion in 2003, there remains a wellspring of support in Kurdistan (87%) for a regional system of government with the power to override national policies.

Do you prefer a centralized government that sets the policies for the state, or a system of regions within that have autonomy to override national policies?

	% Regional autonomy	% Centralized government
Kurdistan Region	87%	12%
Rest of Iraq	22%	76%

Based on surveys conducted Oct. 8-22, 2012

GALLUP

Protests, Popular Dissatisfaction, and the Role of Politics

The lack of any meaningful move towards political unity and government abuses helped ensure that the overall situation had not improved as of the end of 2013. High profile violent attacks continued and it was far from clear that the Iraqi government was capable of dealing with them. While reporting often did not state the identity of the bomber or the sect and ethnicity of the target, most attacks still seemed to be Sunni attacks linked to Al Qaeda and targeted against Iraqi officials and security forces, Shi'ite civilians, and elements of the Sunni Sons of Iraq or Sahwa (Awakening) that still supported the central government.

Some may well have been the result of Shi'ite actions or reprisal, but none were tied in unclassified reporting to specific Shi'ite militias and groups like the Asai'b Ahl Al-Haq (AAH) and new groups like the Army of the Chosen (Jaysh al-Mokhtar), some of whose actions may have been linked to Iran. Similarly, some other attacks may have been by former elements of the Sahwa that had turned against the government, but none were reported as such.²⁸⁰

Far too many government actions and attacks followed the pattern of the December 28th attack on Ahmed al-Alwani discussed earlier. Iraqi security forces (ISF) often seemed to respond by conducting broad sweeps and arrests of as many as 300 Sunnis with little evidence they had adequate intelligence to make such sweeps or were able to attack key figures and key targets.

The extensive grid of checkpoints in Baghdad seems to have limited some aspects of bombings, but not targeted attacks. Similar security networks did not exist in many other Iraqi cities and security in most towns was limited. Some reporting indicates that the regular Iraqi police had become more cautious and reactive and that military and elite security units had to bear most of the burden while other units increasingly suffered from the fact positions and promotions were

political or sold, and became passive or were unwilling to take the risk of confronting either violence or dissident.

Reporting on such activities indicated that the better armed and more capable elements of the security forces focused on Sunni targets, but there was little public reporting on what the Iraqi security forces were doing in Sunni areas in the West, and little reporting describing actions against Sunnis by the Iraqi government. Accordingly, a report in mid-August 2013 by the Crisis Group may have put too much of the blame on Prime Minister and the government -- and too little blame on his opponents -- but was almost certainly correct in providing the following warnings,²⁸¹

Throughout his seven-year tenure, Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki has implemented a divide-and-conquer strategy that has neutered any credible Sunni Arab leadership. The authorities also have taken steps that reinforce perceptions of a sectarian agenda. Prominent officials – predominantly Sunni – have been cast aside pursuant to the Justice and Accountability Law on the basis of alleged senior-level affiliation to the former Baath party. Federal security forces have disproportionately deployed in Baghdad’s Sunni neighborhoods as well as Sunni-populated governorates (Anbar, Salah al-Din, Ninewa, Kirkuk and Diyala). Al-Iraqiya, the political movement to which Sunni Arabs most readily related, slowly came apart due to internal rivalries even as Maliki resorted to both legal and extrajudicial means to consolidate power.

This past year has proved particularly damaging. As events in Syria nurtured their hopes for a political comeback, Sunni Arabs launched an unprecedented, peaceful protest movement in late 2012 in response to the arrest of bodyguards of Rafea al-Issawi, a prominent Iraqiya member. It too failed to provide answers to accumulated grievances. Instead, the demonstrations and the repression to which they gave rise further exacerbated the sense of exclusion and persecution among Sunnis.

The government initially chose a lackluster, technical response, forming committees to unilaterally address protesters’ demands, shunning direct negotiations and tightening security measures in Sunni-populated areas. Half-hearted, belated concessions exacerbated distrust and empowered more radical factions. After a four-month stalemate, the crisis escalated. On 23 April, government forces raided a protest camp in the city of Hawija, in Kirkuk province, killing over 50 and injuring 110. This sparked a wave of violence exceeding anything witnessed for five years. Attacks against security forces and, more ominously, civilians have revived fears of a return to all-out civil strife. The Islamic State of Iraq, al-Qaeda’s local expression, is resurgent. Shiite militias have responded against Sunnis. The government’s seeming intent to address a chiefly political issue – Sunni Arab representation in Baghdad – through tougher security measures has every chance of worsening the situation.

Belittled, demonized and increasingly subject to a central government crackdown, the popular movement is slowly mutating into an armed struggle. In this respect, the absence of a unified Sunni leadership – to which Baghdad’s policies contributed and which Maliki might have perceived as an asset – has turned out to be a serious liability. In a showdown that is acquiring increasing sectarian undertones, the movement’s proponents look westward to Syria as the arena in which the fight against the Iraqi government and its Shiite allies will play out and eastward toward Iran as the source of all their ills.

Under intensifying pressure from government forces and with dwindling faith in a political solution, many Sunni Arabs have concluded their only realistic option is a violent conflict increasingly framed in confessional terms. In turn, the government conveniently dismisses all opposition as a sectarian insurgency that warrants ever more stringent security measures. In the absence of a dramatic shift in approach, Iraq’s fragile polity risks breaking down, a victim of the combustible mix of its longstanding flaws and growing regional tensions.

Iraq’s top-level political divisions made it increasingly harder to distinguish the overall actions of the government and security forces from Iraq’s political struggles between Prime Minister Maliki and his rivals. The broader role of the government in encouraging Sunni-Shi’ite violence was shaped by incidents like Maliki’s actions that drove Iraq’s Sunni Vice President Tareq al-Hashimi out of the country in December 2011 and then sentencing him to death. The same was true of using

the security forces to storm the home of Rafea al-Issawi, Iraq's Finance Minister and arrest part of his security detachment on December 20, 2012.

As the Crisis Group reports, this latter incident led to serious popular protests among Sunnis that were directed towards the security forces as well as Iraq's Shi'ite leaders,²⁸²

Protests swiftly broke out in Issawi's hometown of Fallujah, in Anbar province...Within days, they had spread to Ramadi, where thousands reportedly poured into the streets, blocking the highway linking Baghdad to Syria and Jordan, then to adjacent, predominantly Sunni provinces of Ninewa, Salah al-Din, Kirkuk and Diyala, as well as Baghdad's Sunni's neighborhoods...Demonstrations remained mostly confined to Sunni areas; in the Shiite-populated central and southern provinces, small gatherings were organized in support of the prime minister....As protests grew in size, the government dispatched security forces in an attempt to cut off Anbar province and ensure Baghdad remained immune.

Such protests took place in various parts of Iraq on in 2011 on 16-18 February, 23-25 February, which included a "Day of Rage," 16-17 March, sporadically from 9 April to 26 May, June 10, August 12, and December 10.²⁸³ Another series of riots – closely tied to Sunni anger at the treatment of senior Sunni politicians – began on December 12, 2012 and continued on at various time through August of 2013.²⁸⁴

Significant protests – some of which involved significant casualties inflicted by the Iraqi security services -- took place in various parts of Iraq on December 21-29, 2012; January 4, 2013; January 5-12, January 25, They led to popular protests where the security forces killed five and injured dozens in Sulaimaniya, and protests in Basra, Muqdadia, Kirkuk, and Kut on February 12, 2011, and further protests on February 22nd.²⁸⁵ While some of the protest were Shi'ite and others were mixed and essentially Iraqi character, many were largely Sunni and the Iraqi security forces seem to have use more force and made more arrests in such cases.

Further clashes took place between elements of the ISF and Sunni protestors in Fallujah, Mosul, and Baghdad in March on March 8-10. More clashes took place on April 19, April 23-24, and April 27-29, including a major ISF raid on a Sunni sit in at Hawija, New demonstrations took place on May 1, May 17, and continued through June, July, and August.²⁸⁶ A major series of demonstrations against the fact Iraq's generally corrupt legislators had provided themselves large pensions regardless of how long they served took place at the end of August 2013.²⁸⁷

As a result, more incidents occurred in Anbar, and more elements of Sunni tribes turned against the government. The ISF continued to prevent or suppress Sunni protests, and that Sunni clerics began to support such protests. Moreover, Iraq had carried out 67 executions by August, of which 17 took place on 19 August alone, most of which executed Sunnis and were tied to terrorism and which independent observers felt lacked proper trials and legal procedures.²⁸⁸

The Iraqi Security forces – and its political direction – continued to overreact and tie counterterrorism to Iraq's political feuds – sometimes aiding Sunni extremist efforts to push Iraq back towards a high level of civil conflict in the process. As the December 28, 2013 attack showed, these actions pushed Sunnis who did not support Al Qaeda to support Sunni ethnic factions in Iraq's politics like the Iraqi Islamic Party -- as well as well as drive at least some other Sunnis to support AQI/ISIS.

At the same time, Al Qaeda's attacks became more sophisticated in both exploiting the government's weaknesses and attacking Iraqi security forces and a broad range of government officials. This sophistication is illustrated by the fact the Interpol sent out a 19 country notice on July 30th warning about mass prison breaks from Al Qaeda attacks in three counties: Iraq, Pakistan,

and Libya. In the case of Iraq, Interpol noted that Al Qaeda had claimed it had carried out two prison breaks in Iraq including a night attack on Abu Ghraib prison on of July 22nd, where some 500 convicts escaped including several senior Al Qaeda leaders. A smaller operation took place at the Taji prison, near Baghdad.

According to Reuters, the attacks were sophisticated and involved substantial forces,²⁸⁹

They used mortars to pin down Iraqi forces and suicide bombers to punch holes in their defenses followed by an assault force to free the inmates. Some of the fighters were disguised as policemen and used a megaphone as they broke open cells to call out the names of specific prisoners and shouted “God is great” and “Long live the Taliban”, according to security officials.... The attacks were allegedly carried out after months of preparations on behalf of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, which is a merger between Al-Qaeda’s affiliates in Syria and Iraq.

...Between 500 to 1,000 prisoners have escaped as a result of the attack, “*most of them were convicted senior members of Al-Qaeda and had received death sentences,*” said Hakim Zamili, a senior member of the security and defense committee in parliament. Suicide bombers drove cars with explosives into the gates of the prison on the outskirts of Baghdad on Sunday night, while gunmen attacked guards with mortar fire as well as rocket propelled grenades. ...Other militants held the main road, fighting off security reinforcements sent from Baghdad, as several insurgents wearing suicide vests entered Abu Ghraib on foot to help free the inmates...Ten policemen and four militants were killed in the fighting, which continued until early Monday, when military helicopters arrived to help regain control. ...By that time, hundreds of inmates had succeeded in fleeing Abu Ghraib. The security forces arrested some of them, the rest are still free, Zamili commented.

Anti-government protests increased in frequency and scope across Iraq. As **Figure 26** shows that coordinated anti-government protests dubbed the “No Retreat” protests, or the “Friday of No Return,” occurred in the provinces of Anbar, Salah ad-Din, Diyala, and Ninewa in January 2013. The demonstrations turned violent, with protestors throwing objects at the Iraqi security forces, who used the provocation to escalate and fire into the crowds. In Fallujah in the Anbar province, at least seven protestors and two soldiers were killed, and dozens of civilians wounded.²⁹⁰

A further increase in anti-government demonstrations during the spring and summer of 2013. They also took place at time the divisions between Alewite and Sunni in Syria continued to grow, as well as between Syrian rebel moderates and Sunni extremist groups. Iraqi Kurds also made it clear that they might support Syrian Kurds against the Syrian government.

More Iraqi Shi’ites volunteered to fight with Assad forces in Syria while more Sunni supported the rebels. In addition, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) refugee organization reported that Syria refugees, largely Kurds and Sunni Arabs, continued to flow into Iraq creating new pressures in both Sunni Arab areas and the KRG. The counts were uncertain, particularly in the Arab Sunni areas in Iraq, but UNHCR estimated in August that around 1,295,000 Syrians had fled to the KRG, and were coming at levels as high as 5,700 to 7,700 per day.²⁹¹

At the same time, it is important to note that most protests were peaceful, the central government still had Sunni members and the rising level of violence in Iraq was still limited compared to the mid-2000s. There were no reports of major popular Shi’ite reprisals against Sunnis, or popular fighting between Sunni and Shi’ite -- although this may have been because the security services focused on Sunni targets and because of the increased de facto segregation of Arab Sunnis from Arab Shi’ites.

There also were no new reports of potential clashes between Arab and Kurdish although exchanges of visits by Prime Minister Maliki to President Massoud Barzani of the KRG in July 2013 were at

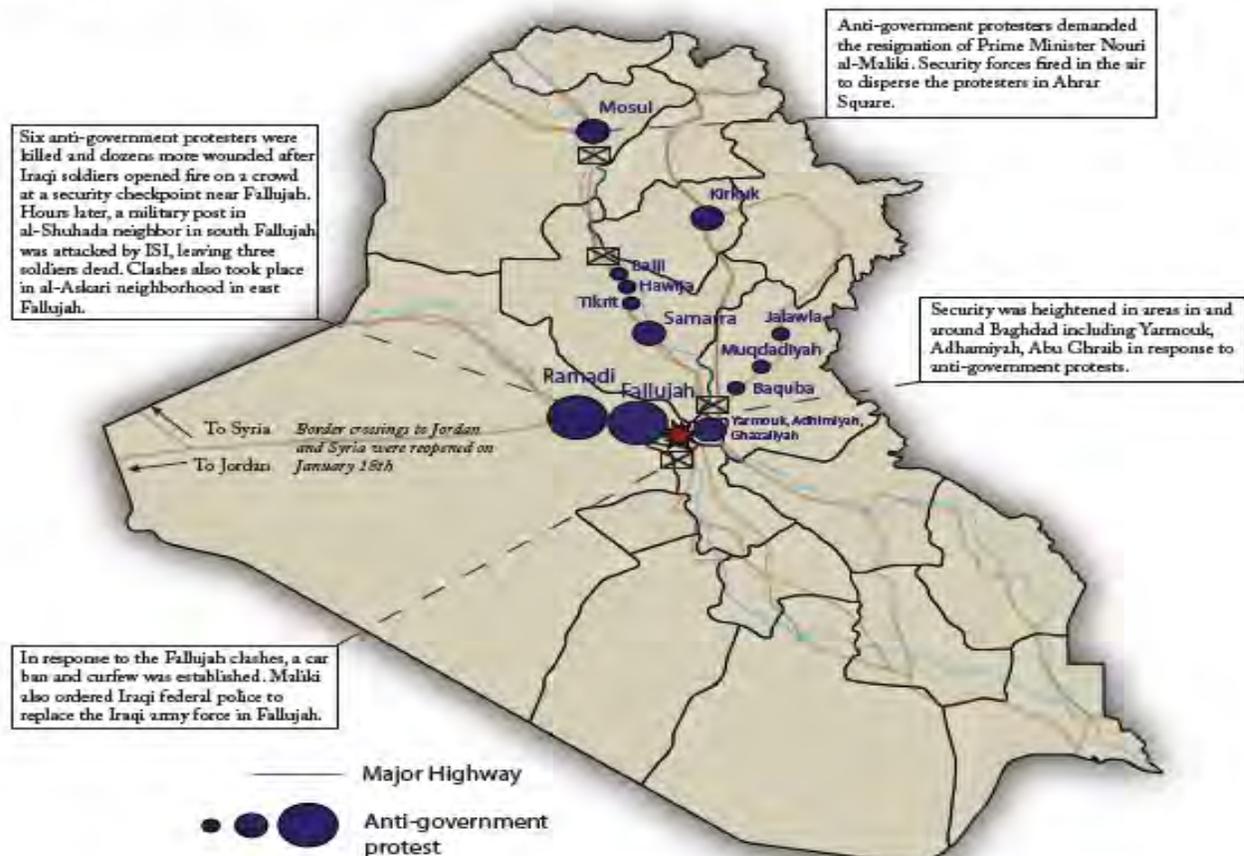
best a potential start in reconciling the different goals and demands of the central government and KRG. The Oil and Gas Law, the level of independence of the Pesh Merga, and the level of autonomy and control of dispute cities, areas, and petroleum resources remained key sources of tension.

Bad as things had become there was still at least some hope for compromise, and for a national election 2014 that could bring national unity if Iraqi chose that course of action versus division and violence. Iraq's high levels of oil wealth also gave it a unique opportunity to transform such a move towards national unity into the ability to meet its deeper structural challenges.

Figure 26: Coordinated Anti-Government Protests, January 2013

Protests in Iraq
January 25, 2013: "Friday of No Return"

Overview: In what was dubbed the "Friday of No Return," anti-government protests spread throughout the provinces of Anbar, Salah ad-Din, Diyala, and Ninewa. In eastern Fallujah, soldiers opened fire after demonstrators attempted to join the nearby anti-government protest. At least six demonstrators were killed and dozens more wounded. Hours later, gunmen with suspected links to the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI) attacked military posts in eastern and southern Fallujah.



Source: Institute for the Study of War, "2013 Iraq Weekly Update #4b: Fallujah Protests Turn Violent," January 25, 2013.

“A Pox on all their Houses”: Corruption in Iraq

That said, it is important to understand the degree to which the failures in governance growing out of Iraq’s political struggles were compounded by Iraq’s permeating pattern of corruption. Corruption had been a key characteristic of Iraqi politics and governance from the very moment Iraq was created after World War I. It grew far worse, however, after the fall of Saddam Hussein.

This rise in corruption was driven by the rise in oil prices and Iraq’s export income, the flood of poorly managed and audited US and other aid, and the greed and power struggles of the Iraqi parties that emerged once the rigid selfishness and authoritarian control of power and resource by Saddam and the Ba’ath was gone. No party, faction, or leader seem free of accusations of either abusing their power to serve their own ends or simply to grab as much money and other assets as possible.

Corruption also exists in many provincial, town, and urban governments, as well as in the Kurdistan Regional Government, or KRG. Both major parties in the KRG (Barzani/KDP and Talibani/PUK) are seen as highly corrupt and as having profited extensively off of the misuse of aid and outside investment since the KRG was created in 1992, and the fixed share of Iraq’s petroleum export revenues it received after 2003.

The Corruption Crisis in Iraq

Corruption took many forms, including bureaucratic corruption, nepotism, clientelism, political corruption, and corruption in the public finance management and especially the oil and gas sector. Transparency International’s Global Corruption Barometer of 2011 found that the bureaucratic institutions where corruption and bribes were most commonplace were the Police, Customs, and Judiciary.²⁹²

The Iraqi Knowledge Network, jointly established with the UN and Iraqi officials, found significant discrepancies by region over bribes paid to tax and land registry offices, with 29.3 percent of Baghdad citizens having reported paying bribes, versus only 3.7 percent in Kurdistan.²⁹³ Nepotism is a commonly reported practice, and the hiring of individuals based on sectarian, political, tribal, and family ties accounts for the thousands of unqualified employees throughout Iraq’s government.²⁹⁴

Political corruption at the state level plagued Iraq’s leadership and ability to govern effectively. Transparency International called state-sponsored corruption “massive and widespread,” and finds that “this systematic looting of state resources is directly connected with sectarian and political power struggles.”²⁹⁵

Corruption was also tied directly to civil violence. In 2006, Stuart Bowen, the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, stated that insurgent attacks on Iraq’s oil pipeline were a significant challenge for Iraq. “There is a huge smuggling problem. It is the number one issue,” Bowen stated to the Guardian. Because oil pipeline have been destroyed, Iraqi oil cargoes transiting over insecure roads are subject to smuggling by thieves who then sell the oil on the black market.²⁹⁶

Public perceptions of the government became more negative, with 77 percent of Iraqis polled for the Global Corruption Barometer saying that they perceived corruption as having increased from 2008-2011, while only four percent believe corruption has decreased.²⁹⁷ Corruption continues to

be a problem for private industry, as well. The World Bank's Enterprise survey found that 62 percent of companies indicated that corruption is a "major obstacle to doing business", and that a bribe is requested for one-third (33.8 percent) of business transactions.

Corruption and Popular Protests

Corruption became another key factor in popular protests and riots against the government, along with poor living conditions. Corruption grew steadily worse as the past impact of the US role advising the Iraq government faded. According to IMF and World Bank reporting issued at the end of 2012, "an estimated \$65 billion in illicit funds had left Iraq (about twice its 2005 GDP, or 56% of its 2011 GDP) between 2001 and 2010, suggesting massive fraud, corruption, tax evasion and money laundering."

In 2013 SIGIR reported that an internal assessment by Iraq's Board of Supreme Audit estimates "up to US \$40 billion the flows of funds that could be leaving the country annually – through money laundering schemes that use the Central Bank's activities - because of corruption".²⁹⁸ *Iraq Business News* reported that "one-sixth of the Iraq's GDP creamed off", ranking it as the 11th worst country in the world in terms of "money flowing out via crime, corruption and tax evasion over the past ten years, according to Global Financial Integrity (GFI)."²⁹⁹

Transparency International's Anti-Corruption Resource Center reported in May 2013 that the influx of spending related to aid and reconstruction money, and state building resources, coupled with the easing of international sanctions, weak oversight, poor management, and disorganized government created an environment ripe for corruption.

Even Prime Minister Maliki identified corruption and oil smuggling as the "the nation's second insurgency", a plight that costs Iraq upwards of \$4 billion annually.³⁰⁰ In early 2014, transparency International's web page rated Iraq as ranking 171st in the world in its corruption perceptions index: One of the worst nations in the world.³⁰¹ It summarized Iraq's status as follows:³⁰²

After a difficult beginning marked by institutional instability, Iraq's new regime has in recent years become increasingly aware of the enormous corruption challenges it faces. Massive embezzlement, procurement scams, money laundering, oil smuggling and widespread bureaucratic bribery have led the country to the bottom of international corruption rankings, fuelled political violence and hampered effective state building and service delivery.

Although the country's anti-corruption initiatives and framework have expanded since 2005, they still fail to provide a strong and comprehensive integrity system. Political interference in anti-corruption bodies and politicization of corruption issues, weak civil society, insecurity, lack of resources and incomplete legal provisions severely limit the government's capacity to efficiently curb soaring corruption. Ensuring the integrity of the management of Iraq's massive and growing oil revenue will therefore be one of the country's greatest challenges in the coming years.

The September 2013 SIGIR Report

The September 2013 SIGIR report explored the GOI's Commission of Integrity (COI) study on corruption and integrity in the Iraqi public sector. That study, "*Corruption and Integrity Challenges in the Public Sector of Iraq: An Evidence-based Study*," found:³⁰³

- Slightly more than half the people surveyed believed corruption was on the rise, while one third perceived it to be decreasing.
- Almost 12% of Iraqis who had contact with a public official during the preceding year said that they paid a bribe.

- On average, citizens who paid bribes did so almost four times during the year.
- The prevalence of reported bribery was highest amongst citizens dealing with police, land registry, and tax and revenue officers.
- In absolute terms, bribes reportedly were most frequently paid to nurses in public health facilities, public utilities officers, and police officers.
- Citizens reported that almost two-thirds of bribes paid are requested by the civil servant involved either by an explicit request (41%) or in an indirect and implicit way (23%), 14% of the bribes are requested by a third party, and 19% are initiated by the citizen.
- Almost 60% of civil servants said they had been offered bribes.
- 35% of civil servants were hired without undergoing a formal selection process.
- More than 66% of the civil servants reportedly did not feel comfortable reporting instances of corruption.
- Less than 7% of civil servants said that they had ever attended integrity and anticorruption training.

The Kurdish news outlet, AKnews, reported on March 7, 2011, that, “The Parliamentary Integrity Commission revealed on Sunday the most corrupt government ministries, indicating that they are currently investigating the cases and that more details will follow. Bahaa al-Aaraji, the chairman of the committee told AKNews that the most corrupt ministries are those of health, trade, defense, sports and youth, as well as the Secretariat of Baghdad. ‘All legal proceedings will be taken against the ministers and director generals and others who are implicated in corruption in these ministries, even if the officials are currently abroad.’”³⁰⁴

Rahim Hassan al-Uqailee (Judge Rahim al-Akili; al-Ugeily), the head of Iraq’s Integrity Commission was forced to leave office in September 2011, and did so while openly criticizing official interference in his inquiries, and saying he no political support for his anti-corruption efforts.³⁰⁵

Growing Corruption in the Security Services

US and other outside military observers noted by mid-2011 that the ongoing US withdrawal had triggered a process of corruption throughout much of the Iraq military and police with appointments and promotions being openly sold, or awarded on the basis of nepotism, ethnic and sectarian ties, and political influence. The affected all ranks, and helped lead to a sharp decline in the quality and role of NCOs and junior officers. They also noted an almost immediate growth in the level of corruption and influence peddling in contract awards by the Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior. The head of Iraq’s national SWAT team, Brigadier General Numan Dakhil was “caught during a sting operation in which he was filmed taking a \$50,000 bribe from a contractor.”³⁰⁶

These problems were made worse by the political clashes that led the Prime Minister to appoint many commanders on a temporary basis to bypass parliamentary review and confirmation, and the entire command chain by having members of the Prime Minister’s office issue direct orders by cell phone. They also report that the Prime Minister’s office made use of use of “loyal” units in the National Police, intelligence services, counter-terrorism forces, and Army to bypass the overall command chain and help secure the Prime Minister’s position.

While there were still islands of integrity and competence within the Iraq security structure, the problems in the security services grew even worse after the withdrawal of the last US combat

forces at the end of 2011. In some cases, bases and facilities transferred to Iraqi forces have been partially looted, and in other cases the money that should have gone to operations and maintenance has never come or been stolen. This has compounded serious transition problems that come out of a past Iraq military culture that paid far too little attention to maintenance, repair, and sustainability.

Corruption and the Iraqi Economy

Political turmoil and failure to incorporate politically marginalized segments of Iraq's population into its political and economic structure continued to contribute to Iraq's dismal global corruption ranking. Transparency International's 2013 Corruption Perception Index ranked Iraq 171st out of 177 countries surveyed. Only Libya, South Sudan, Sudan, Afghanistan, North Korea, and Somalia rank worse than Iraq in terms of corruption.³⁰⁷

This affects the entire economy as well as Iraqi governance. Acute problems with corruption, "grey" and "black" economies, and crony capitalism are made worse by the lack of progress in governance and effective business laws and regulation and criminal justice. Many Iraqis are forced to use any opportunity they can to profiteer off of the "system" to survive or because they have no reason to be confident that their jobs or positions will continue or that a merit-based career is even possible.

Iraq faces bureaucratic corruption in many areas of its public sector, including food distribution and delivery of social services. 56% of Iraqi citizens reported having had paid a bribe to the Police, Customs, Judiciary, or another government institution.³⁰⁸ In April 2013, Transparency International wrote that, "Corruption at the highest levels of the state...is the most worrying sign of the country's corruption trends," adding, "it seems that this systematic looting of state resources is directly connected with sectarian and political power struggles."³⁰⁹

Much of this corruption can be attributed to the massive influx of development money and reconstruction aid that poured into the country after the 2003 invasions; however the problems have persisted long after US troops withdrew at the end of 2011. Due to the massive amounts of resources at stake, corruption in the oil and gas sectors has been the most damaging to Iraq's political stability, and contributes to hostilities and violence between competing factions.

An overview of corruption in Iraq released by Transparency International's Anti-Corruption Resource Centre (ACRC) in April 2013 revealed that, "Massive embezzlement, procurement scams, money laundering, oil smuggling and widespread bureaucratic bribery have led the country to the bottom of international corruption rankings, fuelled political violence and hampered effective state building and service delivery."³¹⁰

Although Iraq has purportedly expanded its anti-corruption measures over the past several years, corruption and mismanagement continued to plague Iraqi society. TI attributes Iraq's crippling corruption to "[p]olitical interference in anti-corruption bodies and politicization of corruption issues, weak civil society, insecurity, lack of resources and incomplete legal provisions."

According to the UN, 20% of Iraqis remain unemployed, and 23% of Iraqis live in "absolute poverty".³¹¹ The inability of government to provide even basic services for all of its citizens over a year after US troops left Iraq, has left Iraq without an occupying power to blame, destroyed public confidence in the government, and contributed to overall instability.

Corruption also interacts with Iraq's overdependence on petroleum revenues. Iraq revised its estimate of proven oil reserves from 115 billion barrels in 2011 to 141 billion barrels as of January 1, 2013, according to the *Oil and Gas Journal*.³¹² The US Energy Information Agency estimates that Iraq has the fifth largest oil reserves in the world, and is the eight largest producer.³¹³ This gave the Iraqi government some \$94.02 billion in oil export revenues in 2012 and an estimated \$89.22 billion in 2013.³¹⁴

These revenues are a key source of money for both corruption and political influence. The CIA reported in January 2014, that,³¹⁵

Iraq's largely state-run economy is dominated by the oil sector, which provides more than 90% of government revenue and 80% of foreign exchange earnings. Iraq in 2012 boosted oil exports to a 30-year high of 2.6 million barrels per day, a significant increase from Iraq's average of 2.2 million in 2011. Government revenues increased as global oil prices remained persistently high for much of 2012. Iraq's contracts with major oil companies have the potential to further expand oil exports and revenues, but Iraq will need to make significant upgrades to its oil processing, pipeline, and export infrastructure to enable these deals to reach their economic potential.

The Iraqi Kurdistan Region's (IKR) autonomous Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) passed its own oil law in 2007, and has directly signed about 50 contracts to develop IKR energy reserves. The federal government has disputed the legal authority of the KRG to conclude most of these contracts, some of which are also in areas with unresolved administrative boundaries in dispute between the federal and regional government.

Iraq is making slow progress enacting laws and developing the institutions needed to implement economic policy, and political reforms are still needed to assuage investors' concerns regarding the uncertain business climate, which may have been harmed by the November 2012 standoff between Baghdad and Erbil and the removal of the Central Bank Governor in October 2012. The government of Iraq is eager to attract additional foreign direct investment, but it faces a number of obstacles including a tenuous political system and concerns about security and societal stability. Rampant corruption, outdated infrastructure, insufficient essential services, skilled labor shortages, and antiquated commercial laws stifle investment

Transparency International warns that the "persistent dominance of extractive industries in the economy, the concentration of power in the executive's hand and worrying signs of oil income mismanagement have raised fears that Iraq might be affected by the 'resource curse',"³¹⁶

Overall Impact on Governance, Justice, Corruption, and the Security Services

The cumulative result of the political, electoral, and sectarian crisis in Iraq's leadership has been to undermine governance and rule of law. By polarizing the Iraqi military, police, and security forces along patronage networks and ethnic and sectarian lines, militant leaders, clerics, and other sub- and supra-state power brokers have gained disproportionate influence over Iraq's instability. It also has continued the kind of "crisis government" that has existed in Iraq since Saddam Hussein seized full control of power in 1979, to keep the state a dominant and large corrupt and incompetent force in many aspects of the economy, and create a situation where many of the reforms the US and its allies attempted to make in the Iraqi security forces have quickly faded back into past methods of operations coupled to new levels of favoritism and corruption.

Other commentators see the courts as a major problem. One former diplomat that served in Iraq notes that,³¹⁷

Part of the failure of governance in Iraq is attributable to the weak judiciary and the Chief Judge's slavish obedience to Maliki (as he once obeyed Saddam and then the Americans). A series of decisions of the Federal Supreme Court after 2009 effectively stripped legislative power from the Council of Representatives and put

the independent authorities under the control of the PM's office. These decisions have not only prevented oversight of Maliki, but also stopped a more efficient devolution of government functions to the provincial governments and destroyed the independence of the Electoral Commission and Commission on Integrity

These problems exist at the top, but Iraq's deeply flawed and over-centralized constitution and lack of meaningful representative government has made them worse. Strong provincial and local government is not possible, and serious ethnic and sectarian splits exist throughout mixed areas in much of the country.

Reliance on petroleum export dominated revenues coming from the central government, and past flows of outside aid that involved minimal planning and fiscal controls compound the problem by feeding dependence on the central government and outside for jobs, investment, and operational funds that are often allocated without regard to economic need or priority for economic development.

In August, 2013, Iraq's Federal Supreme Court was again ensnared in the country's ongoing political crisis, as the nation's highest court voted to invalidate a parliamentary measure aimed at preventing Prime Minister Maliki from running for a third term in the 2014 general elections. The Federal Supreme Court based its rejection of the parliamentary law on an interpretation of the Iraqi constitution necessitating all draft laws be referred to the office of President or Prime Minister before coming to a vote. The court held that since the term-limit law passed parliament without prior consultation, it was unconstitutional, and therefore, invalid.³¹⁸

US experts, GAO, and media reporting continue to note serious problems in efforts to stem corruption and enforce rule-of-law that are necessary to give the Iraqi government legitimacy while building the foundation for security. The US continued efforts to improve this situation and USAID requested \$263 million for governance and anti-corruption programs in FY2012.³¹⁹ However, fraud, nepotism, intimidation, and corruption remain rampant in Baghdad. Iraqi oversight bodies, like the Commission of Integrity, remain incapable of doing their job, while senior officials lack the incentives to correct their actions.

The US State Department Iraq Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2013 (issued February 2014) also raise critical issues regarding with corruption in the judiciary:³²⁰

The law provides for an independent judiciary, although certain articles restricted judicial independence. In addition, the country's security situation and political history left the judiciary weak and dependent on other parts of the government. In October the Supreme Court overturned a court order mandating the separation of the Federal Supreme Court and the Higher Judicial Council, thus allowing one individual to run both. Local and international press claimed the decision was politically motivated and undermined judicial independence. There were reports during the year that corruption influenced authorities' willingness to respect court orders, except those concerning national security. For example, the Council of Representatives' Integrity Committee reported that government ministries did not consistently enforce court-issued detainee-release orders, and that Interior Ministry and Justice Ministry employees demanded payment from detainees in order to be released.

Threats and killings by sectarian, tribal, extremist, and criminal elements impaired judicial independence. Judges and their family members frequently faced death threats and attacks. For example, on August 4, a VBIED explosion killed Sajir al-Azzawi, the Salah ad-Din judge responsible for reviewing all criminal and terrorism cases in the province, and severely injured his wife. Observers suspected AQI/ISIL of having carried out the attack and of responsibility for a wider campaign of "revenge killings" of judges following the July 21 Abu Ghraib prison break.

Judges were generally vulnerable to intimidation and violence. Corruption or intimidation reportedly influenced some judges presiding over criminal cases at the trial level and on appeal to the Court of Cassation.

The report also highlights problems with corruption and lack of transparency in government which are addressed in more detail in many of the chapters that follow:³²¹

The law provides criminal penalties for official corruption, but the government did not implement the law effectively. Officials in all parts of the government often engaged in corrupt practices with impunity, and investigation of corruption was not free of political influence. Family, tribal, and religious considerations significantly influenced government decisions at all levels. Bribery, money laundering, nepotism, and misappropriation of public funds were common.

According to Commission of Integrity (COI) and UN reports released in January, 35 percent of civil servants that the government hired since 2009 did not undergo formal interviews or written examinations prior to their selection. A June 20 UN Development Program study reported that 60 percent of state employees in the country received bribes and that members of the general public were compelled to pay a bribe an average of four times a year. According to the COI, 1,138 government officials were found guilty of misappropriating public funds during the first 10 months of the year, and 2,541 suspects in 1,778 corruption cases totaling 131 billion dinars (\$112 million) were referred to the judiciary for further investigation and prosecution during the first 10 months of the year.

Corruption: On July 22, the Council of Representatives Public Integrity Committee reported that the level of bribery had dropped with respect to junior government employees but had risen for senior employees. The report alleged that senior officials involved in bribery schemes held illicit funds in overseas accounts, making bribery more difficult to detect. The committee noted that bribery and corruption were most widespread in the Ministry of Interior, followed by the Ministries of Defense, Oil, and Electricity.

In January the deputy director of the Interior Ministry's Prisons Rehabilitation Directorate fled the country, having allegedly embezzled nine billion dinars (eight million dollars), and remained out of the country at year's end.

Lack of agreement about institutional roles, insufficient political will, political influence, poor transparency, and unclear governing legislation and regulatory processes exacerbated a lack of organizational accountability among anticorruption institutions and hampered joint efforts to combat corruption. Anticorruption institutions rarely collaborated with civil society groups. The media and NGOs continued to attempt to expose corruption, although their capacity to do so was limited. Anticorruption, law enforcement, and judicial officials, as well as members of civil society and the media, faced threats and intimidation in their efforts to combat corrupt practices (see section 2.a.).

Government officials and IGs frequently contended that corruption investigations were highly politicized. Human rights NGOs alleged that government officials sought to influence the outcome of corruption investigations or stifled anticorruption efforts altogether. Ministers ordered major corruption investigations dropped. As in previous years, ministries effectively stalled investigations by failing to comply with requests for information or for officials to appear in court. IGs claimed that some ministers stifled their oversight efforts or openly threatened IG staff with dismissal for performing basic oversight functions. Some government officials stated that politically motivated corruption investigations hindered public administration because they reportedly feared corruption allegations from political opponents.

The law requires the prime minister's approval before a corruption case can proceed against members of the presidency or the Council of Ministers; there was no information available regarding specific instances of the prime minister or ministers withholding approval during the year. The constitution provides members of the Council of Representatives immunity from prosecution, which the council may lift by a majority vote. IGs and other anticorruption officials lacked sufficient resources, especially adequate personal security.

The Challenge of Effective Governance

There is no simple way to assess just how serious Iraq's problems in governance are. It is clear, however, that a nation caught up in an almost constant political crisis at the top, increasing sectarian violence, and divided between Arab and Kurd, has massive problems in effective governance. It is also clear from a wide variety of human rights reports that Iraq fails to provide

an effective rule of law and protection of human rights. Reporting on its corruption is another warning that far too many government expenditures do not reach their intended targets.

The final two chapters of this analysis that cover the Iraqi economy and petroleum sector reinforce these points. They make it clear that Iraq faces basic problems in governance in dealing with virtually every aspect of government that affects normal government services, and that the Iraqi government grossly inflates and mismanages the state sector and places serious barrier to effective growth and economic development. These problems are particularly serious in that they are virtually the same problems that were recognized after the fall of Saddam Hussein in 2003, and that US and other international aid have attempted to remedy ever since.

This does not mean that there are not honest or highly competent Iraqi officials, but islands of competence cannot compensate for a sea of incompetence, power struggles, waste and corruption. Similarly, the fact Iraq often has well-structured and ambitious plans for improved governance, and government action, usually has little real-world meaning. Iraq often had good plans under the monarchy and under all of the leaders that followed.

Moreover one criteria that USAID and other have used for measuring improvement in Iraq's governance borders on the absurd. The ability to draft budget documents and actually spend money is not a measure of effective governance. It is simply an indication that waste and corruption have the proper paperwork. The ability to throw money at a problem without solving, or indeed hitting the target with the intended funding, is scarcely a measure of progress.

Unfortunately, real progress almost certainly require far more political stability, security, and national unity. It requires an Iraqi Council of Representatives that actually functions as a meaningful body and represents clear constituent groups. It requires full transparency as a government. Moreover, these improvements in governance must reach down to the provincial, local, and urban levels. The concentration of power in the Prime Minister's office make such goals steadily more difficult, as does the creation of power brokers as a substitute for effective local officials.

VII. SECT, ETHNICITY, DEMOGRAPHICS AND POLITICAL COMPETITION BY KEY FACTION

Extremist violence, the crisis at the top of Iraq's government, and Iraq's problems in governance are only part of the challenges to national development and a stable and secure future. Every major element of Iraq's population and power structure is divided along sectarian and ethnic lines, and this is exacerbated by the role Iran has played in dealing with Iraq's Shia population.

Demographics and Political Competition

There are no precise estimates of Iraq's total population or how Iraq's population is divided by sect and ethnicity. The CIA estimates are uncertain, but as good as any. The Agency estimates the population was 31,858,000 in July 2013, and that it was 97% Muslim, with 60%-65% Shia, (Shia 60%-65%, 32%-37% Sunni, 7% Christian and 3% other. It estimated that its ethnic composition was 75%-80% Arab, 15%-20% Kurdish, and 3% Turkoman, Assyrian, or other.³²² Other estimates shift these figures significantly, but not in ways that radically alter the sectarian and ethnic balance.

It is important to note, however, that estimates of percentages for sect and ethnicity figures are based on models that are decades old and which were never based on a census or any meaningful effort at a statistical survey. In practice, large parts of the population have been under constant political pressure or threat and their location and the sectarian and ethnic mix in given areas is highly uncertain. Particularly along key ethnic and sectarian dividing or "fault" lines. These affect any attempt to map of the ethnic and sectarian distribution of Iraq's population of the kind shown in **Figure 27** -- maps which have not really been changed since 2003.

While Iraqis often claim that sectarian struggles are new, Sunni and Shi'ite tension has been an enduring problem. No one who visited Iraq from the early 1970s on could be unaware of the fact that the ruling Sunni minority elite discriminated against the Shi'ite majority. This situation became far worse after the beginning of the Iran-Iraq War, when the Saddam Hussein regime systematically suppressed any Shi'ite resistance, purged any Shi'ite figures that became suspect, drove part of the Shi'ite resistance into the marshes in the southern border area with Iran and others out of the country. The end result was a set of continuing low-level clashes between the regime and Shi'ites that went on until Saddam's fall in 2003, and help lay the groundwork for Shi'ite revenge and efforts to suppress Sunni political power.

No such claims of unity have ever been made about the split between Kurd and Arab. The Kurds sought independence at the time Iraq was founded following World War I, and there were repeated Kurdish risings in the years that followed. Mustafa Barzani, the father of the KRG's current president Massoud Barzani led efforts to force Kurdish independence on the government in Baghdad in the late 1960s through the mid-1970s.

A new Kurdish resistance movement arose early in the Iran-Iraq War -- led in part by Iraq's current President Jalal Talibani -- and presented a constant challenge to regime through 2003. This resulted in some of Saddam's bloodiest attacks on his own population and a massive effort to introduce Arab populations into Kurdish areas in the north. At the same time, this history of atrocities also helped trigger US intervention. While the Shi'ite uprisings following Saddam's defeat in 1991 in the first Gulf War were suppressed relatively quickly, the US intervened in 1992 to create a

Kurdish security zone that became the current KRG – effectively giving the Kurds semi-autonomy more than a decade before Saddam’s overthrow in 2003 gave the Shi’ites political dominance.

Moreover, the violence since 2003 has had a major new impact, particularly on minorities. The CIA notes that, “while there has been voluntary relocation of many Christian families to northern Iraq, recent reporting indicates that the overall Christian population may have dropped by as much as 50 percent since the fall of the Saddam Hussein regime in 2003, with many fleeing to Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon.”³²³ Other sources warn that the same problems have affected population in smaller Islamic sects.

These sectarian and ethnic differences have been reinforced by other factors. Iraq’s political divisions have been driven in part by the failure of every post-World War II regime to create effective plans for economic development and reform. While Iraq’s national fiscal problems were eased by the rise in oil prices after 1973, no regime has ever found a way to properly use Iraq’s oil wealth to put it on the path towards broader economic growth, properly finance agricultural reform, create an efficient state sector, provide the proper incentives for private and foreign investment, and distributed equitably and without massive waste and corruption. This has exacerbated national political tensions at every level, and created tensions between the regions with major oil reserves and other areas as well – a problem that has led some of Iraq’s more wealthy Shi’ite oil provinces in the south to call for federalism.

At the same time, Iraq has experienced explosive population growth in spite of war, civil conflict, and repression. Once again, there are no reliable estimates of the numbers involved but the broad vectors in population growth are unchallenged. The US Census Bureau Estimate, which is close to the UN normative estimate, is shown in **Figure 28**. These figures indicate that Iraq’s population had more than doubled between 1950 and the start of the Iran-Iraq War in 1979, was closed to four times large at the start of the first Gulf war in 1991, and was some six times larger in 2013. Moreover, they indicate that Iraq is still on a growth vector where its total population will be some 10 times larger in 2050 than it was in 1950.³²⁴

This growth has pushed much of a formerly agricultural population off of Iraq’s limited arable land – pressures made worse by climate change and the upstream damming of Iraq’s rivers in Syria and Turkey. It has broken up traditional sectarian, ethnic, and tribal areas and created a level of hyperurbanization that is illustrated in the now-dated map in **Figure 29**. The CIA currently estimates that some 66.5% to 72% of the population is urbanized – much of it in the equivalent of slums. It also created a remarkably young population that the CIA estimates is over 37% of 14 years of age or younger, and 19.6% between the ages of 15-24 years.³²⁵

The forces help create the potentially explosive pressures in Iraqi politics, and have been made worse by instability and conflict ever since the start of the Iran-Iraq War in 1979 – more than three decades ago. Iraq’s educational system has never fully function or been properly funded since the beginning of Iraq’s financial and military crisis in the Iran-Iraq war in 1983 – this is a recipe for instability that fuels every element of sectarian and ethnic tension and creates a large population of young men with limited education and few real employment opportunities. The CIA estimates direct unemployment at 16% in 2012, but direct and disguised unemployment (dead end unproductive state and other jobs) probably raised youth unemployment to between 30% and 40% in 2013.³²⁶

Moreover, the CIA estimates that well over 332,000 males and 322,000 females reach the age where they should enter the labor force each year.³²⁷ These numbers greatly exceed the various

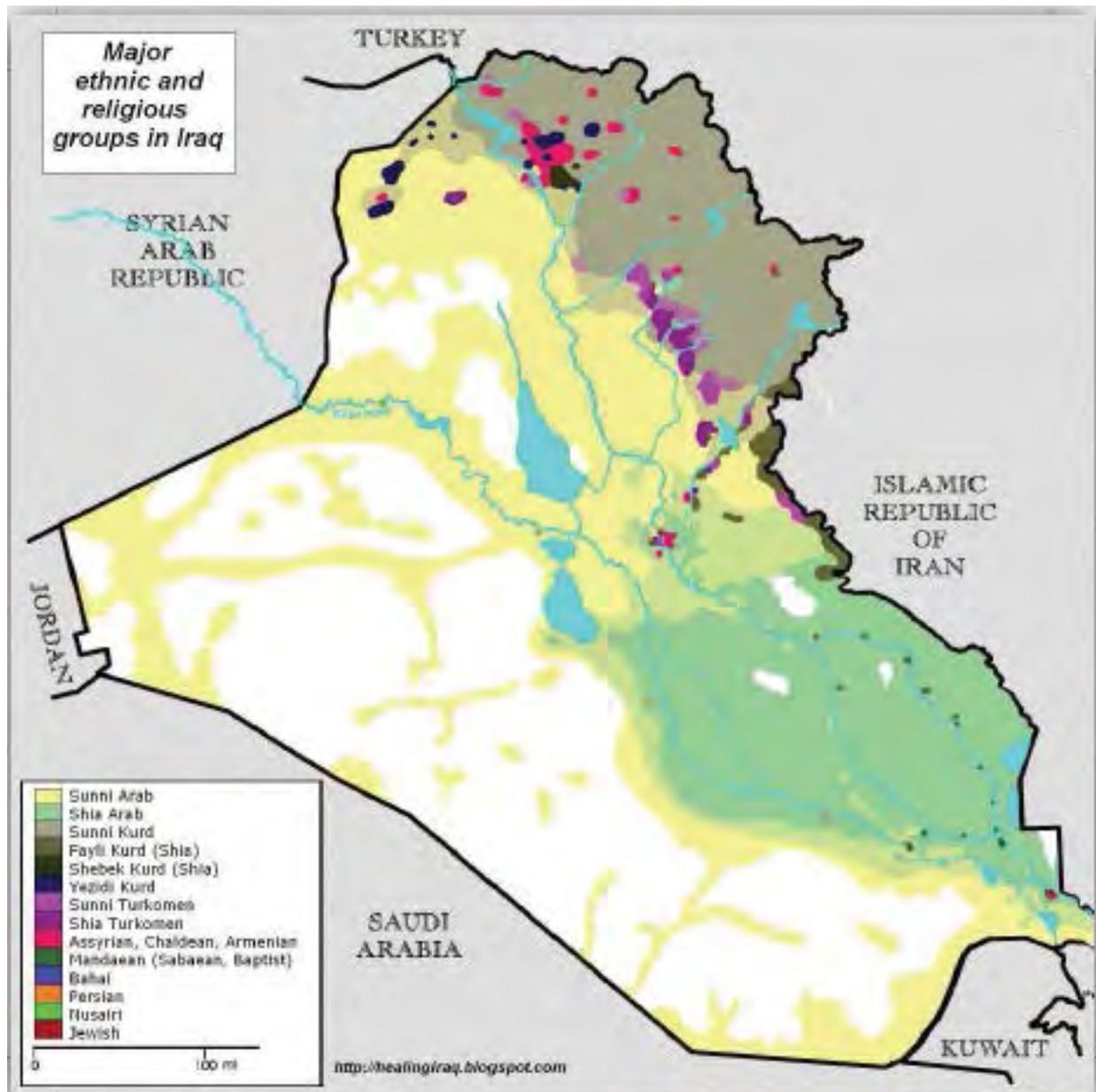
estimates of real job creation in a labor force of around nine million -- even if jobs that are non-productive and the result of disguised unemployment are included.

The fact the CIA estimates that some 22% of the labor force is still in agriculture is a warning that many such jobs are not providing productivity gain since this makes up only 3.4% of the GDP. The same is even truer in “industry” – particularly in the state sector. This accounts for 64.9% of the estimated GDP, but is driven by a petroleum sector with minimal real employment. The 18.7% of the labor estimated to be in the industrial sector is often in jobs with no productivity gain.

The largest form of disguised unemployment almost certainly, however, exists in the service sector – 37.1% of the GDP and nearly 60% of employment. This combination of a very young population and real unemployment also helps explain Iraq’s extremely high dependency ratio – the percentage of its population primarily dependent on others for their income. The CIA estimates that this is 70.6% for youth and 76.2% nationally.³²⁸

This mix of demographic forces provides an essential perspective as to the forces that helped shape the political crisis described in the previous chapters and which have led to the reemergence of factional infighting and sectarian violence. They help explain why extremist movement like Al Qaeda and in Shiite counterparts conduct high profile “mass-casualty” attacks against Shia communities, mosques, and neighborhoods. As Michael Knights noted in a report in October 2013, “[n]early two years of intensified al-Qaeda mass-casualty attacks and sectarian massacres are beginning to severely test Shia patience, resulting in growing evidence of revenge attacks on Sunni mosques, preachers and civilians.”³²⁹ As violence rips Iraq’s opposing Shia, Sunni, and Kurdish communities apart, maintaining the country’s geopolitical integrity will become increasingly challenging, and yet critical to Iraq’s stability.

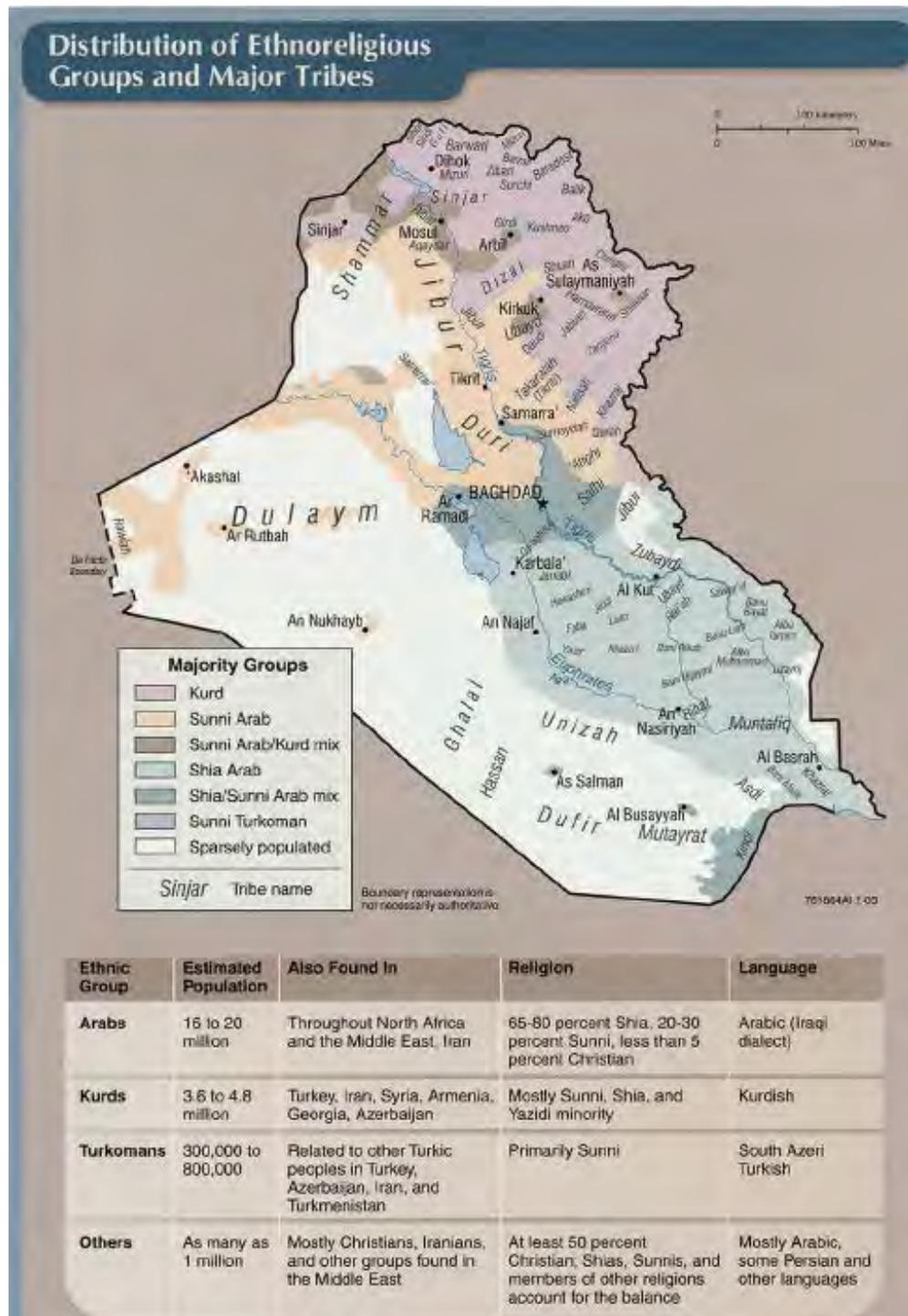
Figure 27: Rough Estimate of the Distribution of the Iraq's Population by Sect and Ethnicity – Part One



Note: Map is undated but does not seem to fully reflect population shifts in the fighting after 2003.

Source: Map Data: Google, "Major Ethnic and Religious Groups in Iraq,"
<https://www.google.com/search?q=Iraq+ethnic+maps&client=safari&rl...012%252F08%252Fturkish-kurdistan-ground-war-in.html%3B1362%3B1358>.

Figure 27: Rough Estimate of the Distribution of the Iraq’s Population by Sect and Ethnicity – Part Two



Note: Map is dated 2003.

Source: Map Data: Google, "Distribution of Ethnoreligious Groups and Major Tribes," <https://www.google.com/search?q=Iraq+ethnic+maps&client=safari&rl...012%252F08%252Fturkish-kurdistan-ground-war-in.html%3B1362%3B1358>.

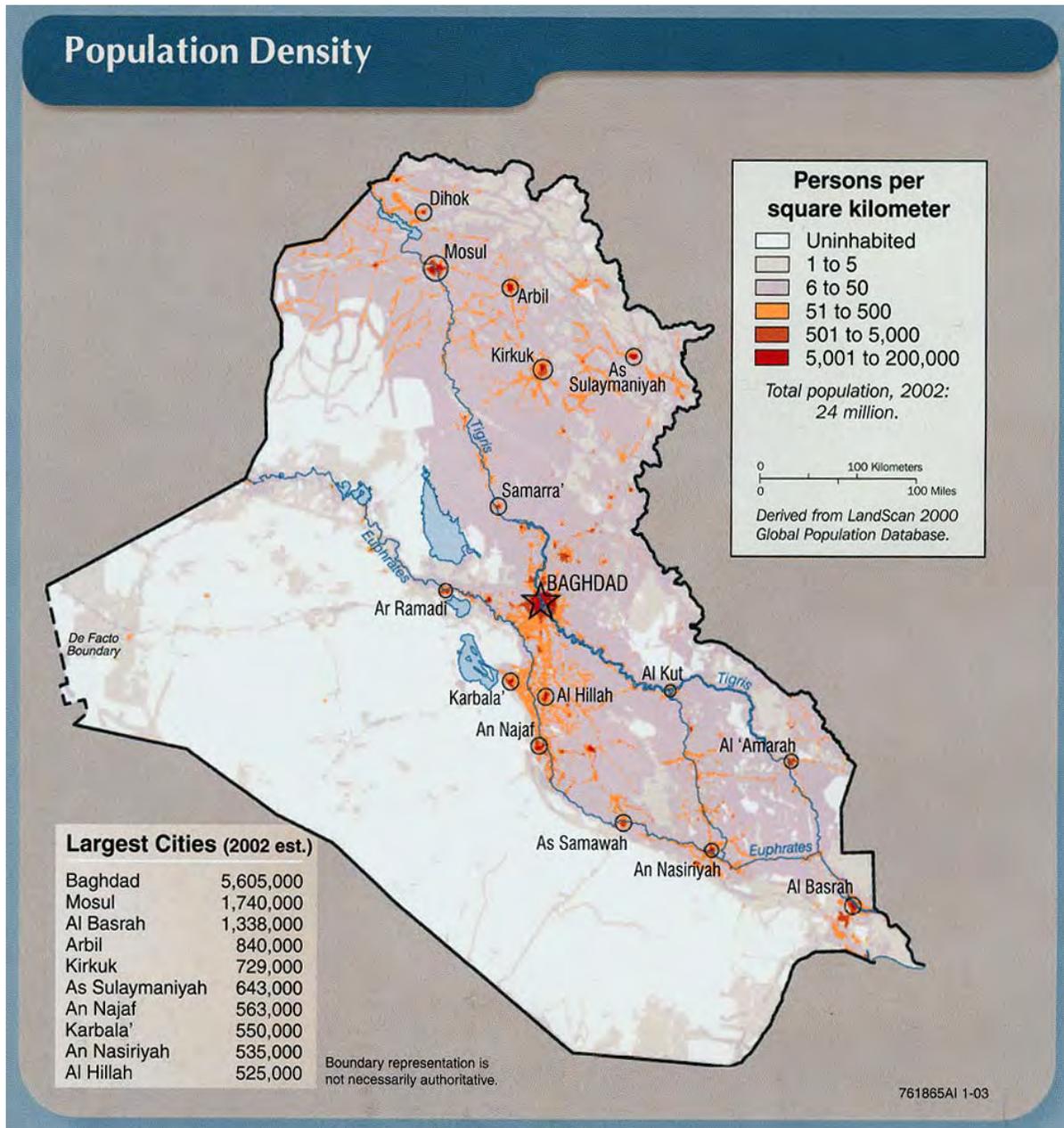
Figure 28: Iraqi Population Trends: 1950-2050**Demographic Overview - Custom Region - Iraq**

Demographic Indicators	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2013	2015	2020	2025	2030	2040	2050
Population																
<u>Midyear population</u> (in thousands)	5,163	6,822	9,414	13,233	18,140	19,564	22,679	26,076	29,672	31,858	33,310	36,889	40,387	43,831	50,459	56,316
<u>Growth rate</u> (percent)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	-2.7	3.1	2.9	2.7	2.4	2.3	2.2	1.9	1.7	1.6	1.3	0.9
Fertility																
<u>Total fertility rate</u> (births per woman)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	6.1	5.5	4.9	4.3	3.8	3.5	3.3	3.0	2.7	2.5	2.2	2.1
<u>Crude birth rate</u> (per 1,000 population)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	38	37	35	32	29	28	26	23	21	20	17	15
<u>Births</u> (in thousands)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	697	716	794	847	873	876	872	862	862	872	880	861
Mortality																
<u>Life expectancy at birth</u> (years)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	67	67	67	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	77	79
<u>Infant mortality rate</u> (per 1,000 births)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	67	63	63	51	43	39	36	30	25	21	15	11
<u>Under 5 mortality rate</u> (per 1,000 births)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	83	79	79	64	53	48	44	37	31	25	18	13
<u>Crude death rate</u> (per 1,000 population)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	7	6	6	6	5	5	5	4	4	4	5	6
<u>Deaths</u> (in thousands)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	127	127	146	143	146	148	150	157	170	190	247	329
Migration																
<u>Net migration rate</u> (per 1,000 population)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	-59	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<u>Net number of migrants</u> (in thousands)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	-1,067	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

US Census Bureau, International Data Base, Iraq,

<http://www.census.gov/population/international/data/idb/region.php?N=%20Results%20&T=13&A=separate&RT=0&Y=1950,1960,1970,1980,1990,2000,2010,2013,2020,2030,2040,2050&R=1&C=IZ>, 27.12.13.

Figure 29: Estimate of Iraq's Population Density (2003)



Source: Map Data: Google, "Iraq Population Density Map,"
http://www.google.com/imgres?imgrefurl=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.kokhavivpublications.com%2Fhelp%2Fmaps%2Fmap.php%3Fid%253DIraq_pop&tbnid=zDCH7fxWyJl-EM:&docid=xe1DWvz7-HiDNM&h=871&w=852

Iraq's Shiites

Iraq's Arab Shi'ites are now the dominant force in Iraqi politics, the Iraqi economy, and the Iraqi security services. This has reversed the Arab Sunni dominance that shaped the political patterns Iraq from its creation as a modern state to 2003, and has had a major impact on both outside competition for influence in Iraq and the Iraqi political developments discussed earlier, as well as the actions of Shi'ite militias described in the following chapter.

The US Opens Iraq to Iran

The US and Iran have been competing for influence over Iraq's Shiites ever since the US invasion in 2003. The US has formed ties to Iraqis who are more "national" and "secular," but Iran has exploited both Iraq's sectarian and ethnic divisions and divisions among Iraq's Shia. Najaf and Karbala, two of the holiest Shia cities, are located in Iraq, and Iran has been able to exploit ties between Shia in both countries. While there exist some limitations in Iran's ability to exert influence over Iraq, Iran continues to provide both overt and covert support to some Iraqi Shia groups, and many Iraqi Shia are grateful for their powerful Shia patron in Iraq's unstable atmosphere.

In the initial period after the US invasion, Shia in the Governing Council praised Iran's role in Iraq, particularly for harboring the opposition prior to 2003.³³⁰ Sayyid Abd el-Aziz al-Hakim of SCIRI even suggested Iraq pay reparations to Iran for the Iran-Iraq War.³³¹ As sectarian violence, political infighting, and economic hardship have ebbed and flowed, Iran has maintain its influence through close ties to Iraqi Shia.

The US sought to limit Iranian influence by focusing Shia parties on security and governance, while persuading Iraq's Shia to move toward conciliation with its Sunnis and Kurds through a national and independent government.³³² The US had some success in meeting these goals, but the 2003 invasion led to Iraqi Shi'ite links to Iran that Iraqi Shia have relied on at critical junctions. Ba'athist rule had previously suppressed open cultural connections to Iran from at least 1980 onwards.³³³ Iraqi Shia lost contact with relatives in Iran, and some Iraqis even received financial incentives to divorce their spouses if they were suspected of having Persian ancestry.³³⁴ Some urban Iraqi Arab Shia stopped celebrating Nowruz, the Iranian New Year, though Kurds continued to celebrate it.³³⁵

This situation changed quickly in Iraq's Shi'ite-dominated areas following the US-led invasion, and movement across the Iran-Iraq border became easier. Iranian religious books in Arabic began to replace those from Lebanon and Egypt, and the Iranian government sponsored popular book fairs at Baghdad universities.³³⁶ At the same time, even independent Iraqi clerics like Grand Ayatollah Sistani benefitted from Iranian knowledge of media and the Internet, which expanded the distribution of their work.³³⁷ Moreover, Iranian and Iraqi ties built upon the fact that some senior commanders in the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps, members of the Iranian judiciary, and other Iranian leaders were born in Iraq, in addition to some Iraqi expatriate businessmen being based in Iran.³³⁸

Iran was now able to extend broad support to Shi'ite Islamic groups. In 2005, the London Times identified eight significant Islamic groups with Iranian ties: the Badr Brigades, the Dawa Party, the Mahdi Army, the Mujahedin for Islamic Revolution in Iraq, Thar Allah (Vengeance of God), the Jamaat al Fudalah (Group of the Virtuous), al Fadilah (Morality), and al Quawaid al Islamiya (Islamic Bases).³³⁹ One estimate placed the amount of Iranian aid per month to Shi'ite militias like

the Mahdi Army at \$3 million in 2009.³⁴⁰ In 2006, Iranian and Iraqi Shi'ite interests aligned to an even greater degree against Sunni resumption of power in Iraq. Clerics were mainly silent about Iran's role in Iraq, while Iranians continued to visit Shi'ite holy sites in Najaf and Karbala, and trade boomed between the two countries.

Continuing Iranian and Iraqi Competition for Religious Influence

Iran's ability to compete with the US has, however, been limited by the fact that tensions between Iranians and Iraqi Shia continue to exist. Iraqis – including Iraqi Shia – have not forgotten that the two countries fought an eight-year war that involved trench warfare, human wave attacks, mustard gas, over a million deaths, and millions more wounded and displaced.³⁴¹ Relations between Iraqi exile groups in Iran and the Iranian regime before the US invasion were fraught with tensions and resentments.

Iraq's Shi'ite religious leaders have ties to their counterparts in Iran, but most remain their own masters. Sistani has always pursued his own agenda, sometimes to the benefit of US interests in Iraq and sometimes not. It was Sistani's nod of approval that allowed the US to delay Iraq's first elections with minimal unrest.³⁴² According to a leaked State Department memo, Sistani's "domineering authority and religious credibility" is Iran's "greatest political roadblock."³⁴³

Ayatollah Ali al Sistani, Iraq's Grand Ayatollah and spiritual leader of Iraq's Shia community, has resisted Iran's political influence in Iraq.³⁴⁴ Like many other Iraqi clerics, Sistani belongs to the "quietest" trend of Shia Islam, tending to separate religion from the political arena. While Sistani remains "first among equals" of the Najaf-based Shia leadership, he faces competition from religious leaders seeking to replace him as he ages. Shia clerics, such as Kazim al Haeri, seek closer integration between religion and politics, along the lines of Iran's Shia-led Islamic Republic.³⁴⁵

Sistani and most Iraqi Shia do not accept the Iranian Ayatollah Khamenei as the Supreme Leader of the world's Shia. Sistani's quietist attitude rejects the concept of velayat-e faqih, or rule of the Islamic jurist, which Tehran's clerics practice in Iran and seek to export elsewhere.³⁴⁶ One Shia cleric, Sayyid Iyad Jamaluddin, who later joined Allawi's list in the December 2005 elections, argued "The leadership of the jurist as in Iran is unique in the history of the Shi'a sect...Ayatollah Khomeini did not rely on specific religious texts to implement the doctrine of the rule of the jurist."³⁴⁷

Most Iraqi Shi'ite parties have never seriously supported the idea of a theocratic state, although there was some support from Shi'ite quarters for an Islamic state when Iraq's leaders initially drafted its constitution.³⁴⁸ Iraq's top Shia cleric has also been a voice for moderation and progress rather than theocracy. In 2004, the Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani criticized Iran's strategy of what some call "managed chaos."³⁴⁹

"Iran's policy in Iraq is 100 percent wrong. In trying to keep the Americans busy they have furthered the suffering of ordinary Iraqis... We are not asking them to help the Americans, but what they are doing is not in the interests of the Iraqi people; it is making things worse. We [Iranians] have lost the trust of the Iraqi people [Mardom-e Aragh az dast dadeem]."³⁵⁰

Sistani has also often used his moral authority to denounce violence in Iraq and bridge Sunni-Shi'ite and Arab-Kurd tensions that Iran has at times sought to exploit against the US. In the past, he has served as intermediary in negotiations between warring factions, including the deal he struck to end the bloody three-week siege of Najaf's Imam Ali shrine between Moqtada al Sadr

and the Ayad Allawi government in 2004.³⁵¹ In October 2012, Iraq's Minister of Interior again praised Grand Ayatollah Sistani's stand against terrorism and violence.³⁵²

These differences must be kept in perspective. The relationships between Iranian and Iraqi Shia clerics have not led to open splits as some proponents of the Iraq War suggested they would.³⁵³ Iran has made headway with at least some Iraqi Shia clerics that are not Sadrists. A State Department source claimed that Sistani prevents Iranian students from enrolling in the religious seminary, or the *howzeh*, to curb Iranian infiltration. However, according to State Department cables, other imams are “in the pocket of the Iranians’, despite their proclaimed loyalties to Sistani.”³⁵⁴

Furthermore, Sistani has long supported Shia unity and has opposed blocs that would cut across sectarian lines. Sistani allegedly opposed the United Iraqi Alliance's plans to ally with Kurds and Sunnis in 2006.³⁵⁵ In February 2012, amidst the post-US withdrawal political crisis, Ahmed Safi, who often speaks for Grand Ayatollah Sistani, said that the cleric believed that Iraq's leaders were taking the country “into the unknown,” and “politicians must work fast and make concessions to solve the crisis.”³⁵⁶

Speaking in Najaf on November 15, 2013 during a meeting with Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu, Grand Ayatollah Sistani called on both Syrian President Assad and Iraqi Prime Minister Maliki to step down from office.³⁵⁷ Davutoglu was the most senior Turkish official to visit Iraq since the two countries had a falling out over Turkey's decision to allow the Tariq al Hashimi to remain in Turkey, effectively granting refuge to the former Iraqi vice president who fled from Maliki's security forces after being accused of running a sectarian death squad. Davutoglu called Sistani the “safety valve” of Iraq, adding the Grand Ayatollah is a “global peace man” for Iraq and the region.³⁵⁸ In a rare break from his political quietism, Sistani voiced objection to the embattled leaders of both Syria and Iraq remaining in power. Doing so, he argued, would further deteriorate regional stability and exacerbate already inflamed Sunni-Shia tensions.

Most Iraqi Shia also still think of themselves primarily as Iraqis and Arabs rather than Shiites. Polls since 2003 have repeatedly shown that most Iraqi Arabs – Sunni and Shia alike – see themselves as Iraqi and Arab, although the situation with Shia extremists is very different. In a poll conducted in 2008 by the Iraq Center for Research and Strategic Studies of Iraqis, 69.8% of respondents identified themselves as Iraqi before any other identity.³⁵⁹

Moreover, key Shia religious figures like Sistani have continued to call for national unity. In December 2011, following a series of major explosions throughout Baghdad that killed 60 and injured over 200 people, Sistani blamed Iraq's top politicians for the ongoing crisis. Speaking through his representative, Ahmed al Safi, Iraq's top Shia cleric said, “The prestige of the government must be preserved ... part of its prestige is punishing abusers. People can be patient with lack of electricity, or lack of services, but not blood. They cannot be patient over their blood. Why don't you exert your efforts to preserve the blood of these people?”³⁶⁰ In February 2012, after reports that Turkey would host a conference to promote confidence and dialogue between Iraq's leaders, Grand Ayatollah Sistani agreed to send a representative to Turkey to head the Shia delegation.³⁶¹

Maliki's Role in Dealing with Iran and the US

At the political level, Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's personal and political relationship with Iran has a long and complicated history, and one that illustrates the complex relationship between

Iraq's Shi'ite leaders and those of Iran. Maliki fled to Iran in 1979, where he and the Dawa Party were granted space for a rebel training camp.³⁶² However, tensions between Dawa and the Iranian government culminated in Iran's initiative in 1982 to organize the Shi'ite resistance in the form of the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), peeling away members from Dawa and turning over Dawa's training camp to SCIRI.

Maliki cooperated with Iran As a senior member of Dawa in exile in Iran, and coordinated Dawa missions against Saddam Hussein's regime. However, it is clear from those around Maliki that he had problems with his Iranian handlers and never fully trusted them. According to some sources, these memories still rouse Maliki. On one occasion, he was told he needed to travel twelve hours to reach the one Iranian official who could grant him a travel permit he needed, only to have the official reject his request.³⁶³ On another occasion, Maliki's recalls his wife giving birth in Ahwaz as the city was under threat from a Saddam bombing, and no Iranians would help him evacuate his wife.³⁶⁴

Iran did play an important role in bringing together the United Iraqi Alliance, which chose Maliki as their compromise candidate for Prime Minister in May 2006 following five months of negotiations. Iran thought, as Jeffrey White, a former Defense Intelligence Agency Middle East analyst, put it, "he was weak and pliable."³⁶⁵ ³⁶⁶ At the same time, Maliki initially faced other critics who saw him as America's lackey and reportedly once told then-Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad, "I'm a friend to the United States, but not America's man in Iraq."³⁶⁷

Maliki resisted early American requests to outlaw Shi'ite militias because he depended on their political support.³⁶⁸ Maliki distanced himself from the US by criticizing a US raid on Sadr City, condemning US forces and security contractors for civilian deaths,³⁶⁹ and by proposing amnesty and eventual political reconciliation for insurgents, even those who had killed Americans.³⁷⁰

US displeasure with the amnesty proposal led to the sacking of the official in Maliki's government who had leaked the proposal.³⁷¹ Rumors began to circulate in late 2006 that the US was looking to replace the Maliki government for being weak on Shia militias compared to efforts against Sunni insurgents, and its inability to rein in Shia death squads within the Iraqi security forces that were feeding the sectarian civil war.³⁷²³⁷³

More broadly, Maliki demonstrated that Iraqi political leaders would steadily assert their own identity. He gradually emerged as a much stronger politician than his critics (and supporters) initially assumed. He maintained ties with both Iran and the US, and often successfully played them off against each other. . He worked with ISCI and the US to combat Shi'ite militias. He battled the Sunni insurgency, convinced disenfranchised Sunnis to participate in the government, integrated militia groups into the government's security forces through the Sons of Iraq program, and won important battles against Sadr's Mahdi Army.

Maliki carefully balanced Iraq's relationships with the United States and Iran. He depended on American forces to bring stability to Iraq, but needed to maintain an image of independence from the US. Only close cooperation could create enough stability for American forces to leave. According to some sources, Maliki was frustrated by his impression that the US was not committing enough equipment and training to Iraqi security forces, while the US was frustrated that US weapons would fall into the hands of rogue Shia soldiers because Maliki had not done enough to break ties with Shia militias.³⁷⁴

Maliki maintained his relationship with Tehran while he fought against Iranian weapons smuggled into Iraq and increasingly committed forces to fight the Sadrists militias who were funded by Tehran.³⁷⁵ Appearing with Ahmadinejad in Tehran in August 2007, he called Iran's role in Iraq's security "positive and constructive."³⁷⁶ In early 2008, however, he almost unilaterally shaped a major offensive against Sadr's militias and other Iranian-backed Shi'ite militias in Basra. While the success of the offensive depended on the US rapidly deploying forces and aid, it played a critical role in expanding the central government's control in Shi'ite areas and limiting Iranian influence.

By late 2008, this campaign and overall patterns in the fighting already had a major impact on the pattern of US and Iranian competition. It produced increased stability that served both Iraqi and American interests and began to create the conditions that made it possible for US forces to draw down. This success impeded Iran's strategy of supporting unrest in Iraq, but it did not necessarily reduce Iran's political power. Iran continued to build up both its political and economic ties to a more stable Shi'ite south and its political leaders. Iran was strong enough to play a major role in shaping the creation of a compromise Iraqi government following the 2010 election, and it also played a major – if not fully understood – role in getting Sadr to throw his support behind Maliki after the 2010 elections.

The end result has been an almost complete reversal of the more critical initial judgments of Maliki. Where Maliki was once seen as weak, his critics are now concerned with Maliki's consolidation of power and authority. Since late 2010, Maliki has served as both de facto Minister of Defense and Minister of Interior. Protesters, rival politicians, and journalist who speak out against corruption, lack of services, or criticize the government, have been intimidated, beaten, and detained. When tens of thousands protested in February in solidarity with the Arab uprisings elsewhere, 19 were killed and thousands more arrested. Ayad Allawi remains outside of the political system and his party has referred to Maliki as "authoritarian and despotic."³⁷⁷

As noted earlier, Maliki's increased aggressiveness and determination to marginalize political rivals have becoming steadily more evident since 2011. Maliki's arrests of some 600 Sunnis and Ba'athists in October-December 2011 have reinforced this position, as did his calls for Sunni Deputy Prime Minister Mutlaq to be expelled from the Council of the Republic over a spat during an October 2011 cabinet meeting in Baghdad. Increasingly bold and belligerent, Maliki stormed out of that meeting threatening Mutlaq, "We're coming for you and all of your people".³⁷⁸

Maliki's growing authoritarianism has been illustrated by the way he dealt with Vice President al Hashimi. As has been described earlier, Maliki issued an arrest warrant for Hashimi on charges of terrorism. This caused al Hashimi to flee to the Kurdish region, and he remains in de-facto political exile. Experts disagree on how much this was a power grab and how much it reflected Maliki's feelings of insecurity, but it is clear that Maliki's unilateral actions both gave him added power alienated his political opponents, increased tensions with the US, and alienated other Arab leaders. This situation has benefited Iran, which can operate more freely without US and other Arab interference, and is hardly a formula for a more unified and stable Iraq.

The Sadrists

The Sadrist faction has played a major role in Iraq's political crises, its Shi'ite politics, and the US and Iranian political competition for influence over Iraq's Shia. The Sadr's have long been a prominent family in Iraq, both for religious scholarship and their resistance against Saddam. Mohammad Baqr Sadr, the founder of the Dawa Party in the late 1950's was hanged by Saddam

Hussein in 1980. Baqr al Sadr was an ally of Ayatollah Khomeini during his years in exile in Najaf from 1964-1978.³⁷⁹ Saddam Hussein also ordered the execution of Moqtada al-Sadr's father, Mohammed Sadiq al-Sadr, in 1999.³⁸⁰

Baqr al-Sadr's cousin, Moqtada al-Sadr, emerged as a key voice of Shi'ite opposition to the US after the fall of Saddam Hussein, and whose followers began attacking coalition forces in Iraq. Moqtada al-Sadr's base of support is in Sadr City, a Shi'ite neighborhood in Baghdad, and encompasses mainly lower-class Iraqi Shia.³⁸¹ His Mahdi Army, 60,000-strong in 2003,³⁸² relied on Iranian funding and arms through Iran's Qods Force. Sadr used the Mahdi Army to challenge the US occupation and attack Sunnis between 2004 and 2008.

The Mahdi Army attacks on US troops were serious enough by 2004 to threaten postponement of the 2005 elections.³⁸³ This could have produced a level of instability and division between Shi'ite factions that did not serve either Iranian or US interests. Iran pressured Sadr into a ceasefire, and the elections proceeded in 2005 as scheduled, bringing to power an Iran-friendly coalition of the United Iraqi Alliance, the PUK, and the KDP.³⁸⁴ The end result helped both Iran and Sadr. The Sadrist Trend won 30 seats in the December 2005 elections, the largest group in the United Iraqi Alliance, which was the largest bloc with 128 seats.³⁸⁵

Sadr, in turn, maintained links to Iran, and Iran to Sadr and Iraq. In 2006, Sadr pledged to support Iran if it were attacked.³⁸⁶ At the same time, Sadr had problems in maintaining his political position, personal security, and controlling his militia and followers. The Mahdi Army's killings of Sunnis increased, especially after the February 2006 bombing of the Al Askari Mosque,³⁸⁷ a Shi'ite mosque in Samarra built in 944 C.E. where Shia believe the 12th Imam hid, marking the first time a religious site was targeted in Iraq after the invasion.³⁸⁸ Although Sadr was the formal leader of the Mahdi Army, he was not completely in control of violence committed by his loyalists. On October 27, 2006, his deputy denounced the dissidents as "people who violated and stood against the wise and honorable leadership."³⁸⁹

In early 2007, Sadr fled to Iran,³⁹⁰ fearing arrest by the Iraqi government or Coalition forces, as well as various assassination threats. In Iran, he purportedly split his time between living in Tehran and studying at an Islamic seminary in Qom, where he would boost his clerical standing.³⁹¹

Shifts did take place in 2007 that limited Sadr and Iran's influence. Maliki had initially prevented the US from forcefully attacking Sadr's Mahdi Army in order to maintain the Shia political alliance that Iran had played a role in creating.³⁹² In 2007, that alliance broke down and the US launched a "surge" that targeted both Sunni and Shia extremist groups.³⁹³ This was a major factor in Sadr's declaration of a ceasefire in August 2007 and helped lower the level of violence in Iraq.³⁹⁴ Maliki, SCIRI, and government forces cooperated with the US to combat Sadr's Mahdi Army, which was suffering backlash from Iraqi Shia, especially after it took over Karbala's religious sites.³⁹⁵

Another major turning point in the power struggle between Sadr and Maliki occurred in 2008, when Maliki retook Basra from the Sadrists using government forces, Badr fighters, and SCIRI loyalists in "Operation Charge of the Knights".³⁹⁶ During the Battle of Basra, Iraqi security forces recovered weapons from Sadrists marked "Made in Iran."³⁹⁷ Iran played an integral role in the ceasefire reached between Sadr and government forces.³⁹⁸ Sadr's defeat in the Battle of Basra helped bring stability, while it shifted the power balance among Iran's allies. Iran took advantage of the subsequent fracturing of Moqtada al-Sadr's Mahdi Army into Special Groups to increase its influence across these more independent Shia groups.

Sadr's faction failed to win outright control of any province in the 2009 provincial elections. However, it gained several key appointments in southern Iraq through post-election deal making. Sadr did, however, come to benefit from the broad perception on the part of Iraq's Shia and others that SCIRI and other more moderate Shi'ite parties failed to govern effectively, were often corrupt, and served their own interests.

The 2010 parliamentary elections took a striking anti-incumbent course, greatly diminishing the strength of other Shia parties. The Sadrist Movement, as part of the Iraqi National Alliance, won 70 seats, compared to Iraqiyya's 91 and State of the Law's 89. After eight months of deadlock following the elections, Iran likely brokered the deal that brought Sadr and Maliki together to represent a majority bloc. However, the "Irbil Agreement" reached in November 2010, which preceded the formation of the Iraqi government, was pushed by US diplomats and did not give any concessions to Sadr.³⁹⁹

The Sadrist faction gained control over several ministries, although this may ultimately lead Iraqi voters to hold them responsible for some of Iraq's ongoing problems. This included appointments to several service-related ministries, including Housing and Construction, Labor and Social Affairs, and Water Resources, making it difficult for Sadr to indiscriminately blame outside actors for Iraq's problems.⁴⁰⁰ As of November 2011, Sadrist also chaired the Integrity Committee, Public Works, and the key post of Minister of Planning and Development Coordination.

Sadr returned to Iraq in January 2011, after almost four years of self-imposed exile in Iran. Many hailed his return as a sign of strength and a new era in Iraqi politics. However, threats to his safety again cropped up in 2011, this time from a Mahdi Army splinter group known as Asaib al Haq. Sadr returned to Iran just two weeks after his initial return to Iraq.⁴⁰¹ In July 2011, the US accused Sadr's militias for the elevated level of US troop deaths in June 2011. The officials also accused Iran of arming the militias with upgraded rocket-propelled munitions, possibly in an effort to ensure a full US withdrawal and to claim credit for forcing that withdrawal.⁴⁰²

Sadr remained adamant that US troops should withdraw by the December 2011 deadline and threatened to reinstate his Mahdi Army if this deadline was not met.⁴⁰³ In May of 2011, Maliki called on Sadr to accept an extension of US troops in the country if it was backed by a solid majority of Iraqi political parties, the possible result of several high-level US visits with Iraqi leaders in 2011 urging Iraq to make such a request.⁴⁰⁴ Maliki stated a request might be made if there were a "consensus" among political blocs, which could be achieved without Sadr's support.⁴⁰⁵

In a May 13, 2011 sermon, Sadr hinted that he might retract the withdrawal demand if a consensus was formed among Iraqi people that US troops should stay. Sadr stated, "The matter of the lifting of the freezing of the Mahdi Army is connected to the public and political agreement among Iraqis."⁴⁰⁶ However, two weeks after this sermon, Sadr supporters held a massive march to demand US troops leave on schedule,⁴⁰⁷ and on August 9, 2011, Sadr again threatened direct retaliation against any US troops remaining past the deadline,⁴⁰⁸ including those used to train Iraqi forces.⁴⁰⁹

Since that time, Sadr has continued to be a major barrier to any meaningful implementation of the Strategic Framework Agreement (SFA) as well as a major divisive force in Iraq's internal politics and one with obvious – if sometimes faltering – links to Iran. In February 2012, Sadr commented that the US had not sufficiently left Iraq following two episodes, one involving four armed Americans in Baghdad believed to be CIA operatives and another involving a US helicopter that made an emergency landing just outside of Baghdad. Sadr stated that the US has failed to

“disarm.” He also posted a statement saying, “I ask the competent authorities in Iraq to open an embassy in Washington, equivalent to the size of the U.S. Embassy in Iraq, in order to maintain the prestige of Iraq.”⁴¹⁰

Sadr remains a pivotal player in Iraqi politics, especially since his return to Iraq. Sadr’s relevance was demonstrated as recently as January 2012, when visiting Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmed Davutoglu met with him amidst accusations by Maliki of Turkish meddling and support of Sunni factions.⁴¹¹ As a supporter of Iraqi unity, Sadr is a critical component of Maliki’s legitimacy and further distancing between the two would undermine Maliki’s authority. Still, in December 2011, pro-Sadrist politicians supported dissolving the Parliament and holding new elections, and Sadr’s officially disbanded Mahdi Army occasionally threatens to rearm and remobilize.

Moqtada al-Sadr has also called Maliki a dictator, suggesting that he now intended to distance himself from the Prime Minister, or at least oppose Maliki’s centralization of power. In February 2012, Sadr stated that, “The dictator of the government is trying to make all the accomplishments as if they were his accomplishments...”⁴¹² Sadr’s influence also reaches beyond his own supporters. Members of Iraq’s al Ahrar bloc revealed in February 2012 that members of the Financial Committee in Parliament promised to include the demands of the Sadrists in the 2012 budget law draft.⁴¹³

Al-Monitor reported in May 2012:⁴¹⁴

The events of April 28 are a big win for Sadr and his patron, Iran. Sadr as power broker reminds Maliki and the prime minister’s rivals that all such negotiations go through Sadr and Tehran. Sadr probably also enjoys some payback with Maliki, especially after US-backed Iraqi forces, under Maliki’s direction, crushed Sadr’s forces in Basra in 2007. Sadr does not want Maliki to run for a third term in 2014, the ninth point in the ultimatum.

In perhaps a sign of Maliki’s effort to appease Sadr, an Iraqi court this week ordered the release of senior Hezbollah operative Ali Musa Daqduq, who directed the training of Iranian al Quds (the armed wing of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad) operatives in Iraq and had admitted his role in kidnapping and killing five American soldiers in Najaf in 2007. The release is a finger in the eye of the United States, which had transferred custody of Daqduq to Iraq in December, when US forces left Iraq. President Obama raised Daqduq’s case with Prime Minister Maliki when they met in Washington that month.

Sadr also retain important options. He could attempt a Sadrist break with Maliki that attempted to bring Maliki’s government down; launch an attempt by the Sadr faction to position itself as a peacemaker and power broker; launch an attempt at increasing the Sadr factions power using its splinter organization, AAH; join the broader political sphere; or simply exploit populist opinion to build up his power while his rivals are tied down in power struggles over control of the government.

Writing for the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace on May 29, 2012, Reidar Visser stated that:⁴¹⁵

Given the heavy influence that Iran wields over the Sadrists, their new position can shed much light on Iran’s current strategy in Iraq. While Sadr’s movement was once considered a native Iraqi movement with considerable autonomy from regional patrons, its followers were pushed into Iran’s arms after the U.S. army began to target them—at times with lethal force—after 2007. Their leader, Moqtada al-Sadr, resides in Iran for long periods—further adding to Tehran’s influence and leverage over him—and it seems unlikely that Iran would allow him to travel freely between the two countries if his activities were seen as subversive to Iranian interests. Thus, if Iran truly feared a move to unseat al-Maliki, it would have plenty of economic and security-related leverage to employ against the Sadrists.

Here again, it is important to note Sadr’s latest political maneuvers. On February 16, 2014, Sadr announced that he was withdrawing from Iraqi politics. “I announce that I will not intervene in

politics. No party represents us from now on in Parliament or in any position inside or outside the government.”⁴¹⁶

Two days after announcing his decision to withdraw from politics, Sadr gave a speech in which he spoke of the failures of Iraq’s political system, criticized Prime Minister Maliki, who he called a tyrant and dictator, questioned the credibility of Iraq’s parliament, and expressed outrage at Maliki’s support from capitals in the “East and West”, a reference to Iran and America.⁴¹⁷ His actions have prompted some experts to question if Sadr is “repositioning” rather than “retiring” and believe that Sadr is deliberately distancing himself from Iranian pressure of Shia politicians to back Maliki for a controversial third term. Others have taken issue with his decision to retire out of deference of the Sadr family’s religious legacy, and argued that prominent members of the Sadr family have long engaged in Iraqi politics, not shied away.⁴¹⁸

Sadr has previously reversed similar decisions to resign from government, which led to uncertainty to whether this decision would stick. One Shia shopkeeper said, “I hope that Moktada sticks to this decision. Usually he changes his mind really soon. I wish that we could get rid of those Islamic politicians, both Sunnis and Shiites, and have a civil state instead.” Others fear Sadr’s departure from politics at this time, and feel abandoned. One Shiite from the impoverished Sadr City warned, “Moktada’s leaving now is for the benefit of Maliki, who is running for a third term. I gave my voice to the Sadrist before, and now they leave and let us down”.⁴¹⁹

SCIRI/ISCI

The Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI), formerly known as the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), has strong ties to Iran that began with SCIRI’s refuge in Iran during the Saddam Hussein era. ISCI’s originally followed the *vela yet-e faqih* and the Iranian Ayatollah, while the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps trained and staffed its 15,000-member militia, now called the Badr Organization, during the Iran-Iraq War.⁴²⁰ US intelligence officials claim that members of SCIRI were closely tied to Iranian intelligence during the period immediately after the invasion and that the group was heavily funded by Iran.⁴²¹ ISCI also served to bolster Iran’s influence in Iraq through ISCI member Bayan Jabr’s tenure as Minister of Interior, when he inserted the Badr Brigade into the Iraqi Security Forces.⁴²²

The leadership of ISCI has, however, undergone many changes over the years and has been more independent of Iran than these initial US assessments indicate. Mohsen Hakim was the foremost Shi’ite leader in the world from 1955 to 1970⁴²³ and his sons Ayatollah Sayed Mohammed Baqir al-Hakim and Ayatollah Sayed Mohammed Baqir al-Sadr were among the founders of SCIRI.⁴²⁴ Sayed Baqir al-Hakim was his father’s representative and eventually worked with Sayed Baqir al-Sadr to establish the Islamic Movement, a political group opposed to the Ba’athists.⁴²⁵ Baqir al-Hakim was arrested and tortured in 1972, and re-arrested in 1977.⁴²⁶ He was eventually released in 1979, but in 1980 fled to Iran, shortly after his brother Baqir al-Sadr was assassinated by Saddam’s regime.

Sayed Baqir al-Hakim played an important role in forming SCIRI in 1982 while in Iran during the Iran-Iraq War.⁴²⁷ The next year, Saddam’s regime arrested 125 members of his family;⁴²⁸ his brother Mahdi al-Hakim was assassinated in Sudan in 1988.⁴²⁹ In 1991, SCIRI led a failed Shi’ite uprising against Saddam Hussein.⁴³⁰ Over the years, the Hakim family claims over 60 members of the family were killed by the Saddam regime.⁴³¹ Sayed Baqir al-Hakim rose in the ranks of Iraqi Shi’ite leadership, and in 2003, he became a grand ayatollah and the leading Shi’ite cleric.⁴³² In his speech after his return to post-invasion Iraq, he thanked Iran for its help and condemned the

American occupation.⁴³³ However, he later participated in the new Coalition-supported Iraqi government and claimed to support separation of church and state.⁴³⁴

In August 2003, Sayed Baqir al-Hakim and about 75 others died in a car bomb attack on the Imam Ali Mosque, Shi'ite Islam's holiest mosque.⁴³⁵ Baqir Hakim's brother, Abdel Aziz al-Hakim, took over the leadership of SCIRI. Despite Abdel Aziz Hakim's connections to Iran, he reformed the organization and even built a relationship with President George W. Bush.⁴³⁶ He also changed the movement's name from SCIRI to the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI), removing the word "Revolution," which ISCI officials said was in reference to the Saddam Hussein regime.⁴³⁷ That same year, ISCI distanced itself from Iran by stating that it would place more importance on the leadership of Iraq's Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani.

Under Aziz al-Hakim's leadership, ISCI pushed for greater decentralization and for a period advocated the creation of an autonomous region of nine Shi'ite-majority provinces, much like the Kurdistan Region.⁴³⁸ In 2008, al-Hakim collaborated with Maliki in getting the Iraqi Army and ISCI's Badr Organization to cooperate in fighting against Moqtada al-Sadr's Mahdi Army in Basra. The resulting victory strengthened Maliki's hand in security and was a turning point in the civil war.⁴³⁹

Since that time, however, the Hakim faction and ISCI have lost a significant amount of their influence and power. In 2007, Abdel Aziz al-Hakim, formerly a heavy smoker, was diagnosed with lung cancer in Houston and went to Iran for treatment.⁴⁴⁰ He died in August 2009.⁴⁴¹ Ammar al-Hakim followed in his father's footsteps to take over the formal leadership of ISCI.

This was followed by sharply diminished support for ISCI in the elections that followed. The provincial power law of 2008 enacted prior to the 2009 provincial elections favored the ISCI's desire to decentralize power. However, splits among Shi'ite factions contributed to major losses for ISCI in the 2009 elections, including in Baghdad, Najaf, and Basra.⁴⁴² ISCI joined with the Sadrists, the Iraqi National Congress, and other groups in the Iraqi National Alliance, to win 70 seats in the March 2010 elections. However, ISCI placed a disappointing third after Iraqiyya and State of Law.

This may explain why Ammar al-Hakim traveled to Iran in April of 2010. ISCI agreed to accept Iraqiyya's inclusion in the government. Iran simultaneously echoed this public support, which was considered as a possible calculation by Iran that its interests were best served through stability.⁴⁴³ The ISCI's continued reluctance to support Maliki as prime minister contributed to the long impasse that followed. However, Ammar al-Hakim was among Iraq's leaders that supported the Irbil Agreement that brokered the impasse with the help of US diplomats.⁴⁴⁴

In spite of its losses in the 2010 election, the provincial elections in 2013 show that ISCI remains a powerful Shia group in Iraq. It is also one that still seems to have strong ties to Iran, although such information is dated. According to a State Department memo released by Wikileaks in November 2009, Iran provides an estimated \$70 million to ISCI each year.⁴⁴⁵ Ammar al-Hakim consistently rejected the idea of extending the US troop presence past the December 2011 deadline. In addition, ISCI has staunchly opposed the dissolution of parliament that has broader support following the post-withdrawal political tension.

Sistani, the Senior Clerics and the "Quietists"

These forces are also affected by the posture of Iraq's Shi'ite clerics. So far, many have been a progressive force, one that has sought national unity, and one that has opposed any split with

Sunnis on sectarian grounds. The Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani has played a key role in encouraging his fellow clerics to pursue this path through Iraq's political evolution since the overthrow of Saddam Hussein in 2003. Although he is of Iranian birth, he has kept his distance from Iran, has not endorsed the concept of Supreme religious leader or Khamenei's leadership in that role, and has consistently called for Iraqi unity.⁴⁴⁶

Sistani, however, is old and reported to be ill. There are also press reports of growing opposition by Iraqi Shi'ite clerics that feel they want leadership that does not follow the "Quietist" tradition of not taking political side or playing an active political role. Figures like Sheikh Mohammed al-Yacoubi, the religious leader of the Al-Fadilah (Virtue) Party, which is part of the Maliki government, began to sharply criticize Sistani during February 2014 as a "pharaoh" who did not serve Shi'ite interests, called for the same narrow focus on an extreme version of "Shariah" and a Jaafair Islamic status law that would enforce many of Iran's social and religious restrictions – a position that Sadr did support.⁴⁴⁷

There is a significant risk that Sistani's influence will drop steadily as sectarian violence rises, and that once he dies, more Shi'ite clerics will become politically active, support the same kind of conservatism as Iran, support Shi'ite sectarian interests, and support closer relations with Iran. It is far from clear that Sadr could replace Sistani, but part of the reason he may have distanced himself from politics is his ambition to at least play a far more significant religious role.⁴⁴⁸

The Alienation of Iraq's Sunnis

As is discussed in many other chapters of this analysis, there is no way Iraq can become stable and secure unless Iraq's Sunnis are given a fair share of political power and control over the nation's wealth. Replacing the incentives for Sunni separatism and violence with the willing political participation of Iraq's Arab Sunni minority is critical to the country's stability.

The Impact of the US-Led Invasion

Here, it is useful to add some historical perspective to the summary of current events in Chapter V. The Sunni community, which dominated Iraq's government and economy for much of the 20th century, including the 1979-2003 rule of Saddam Hussein's Ba'ath regime, became politically disenfranchised after the 2003 overthrow of Saddam. The subsequent disbanding of the Iraqi military and the barring of Ba'ath party members from government further alienated Iraq's Sunnis.

Many Sunni leaders were shut out of Iraqi politics by the Justice and Accountability Law, a measure intended to keep senior level Ba'ath party officials out of government. Iraq's Sunni Arabs, powerful under Saddam Hussein's rule, found themselves politically disenfranchised after the U.S. occupation when the Iraqi army was disbanded and former Ba'ath officials were barred from taking party in Iraq's new government. Additionally, Sunni support of anti-American insurgent groups resulted in severe reprisals from U.S. and coalition forces, and provided Maliki public justification to consolidate power and further marginalize his Sunni opponents.⁴⁴⁹

As experts like Judith Yaphe of National Defense University make clear, Iraq's Sunni Arab's were "frightened by their sudden, dramatic loss of political power, social status, and economic well-being," and had reason to resist the power shift to the Shia majority.⁴⁵⁰ The primarily Sunni Iraqiyya political coalition has unraveled as a result of internal splits within its own ranks, as well as continued political targeting and exclusion from the central government.

An August 2013 International Crisis Group report stated that Iraqi security forces have “disproportionately deployed in Baghdad’s Sunni neighborhoods as well as Sunni-populated governorates (Anbar, Salah al-Din, Ninewa, Kirkuk and Diyala),” adding that Maliki has “resorted to both legal and extrajudicial means to consolidate power.”⁴⁵¹

“National” versus Shi’ite Leadership

Iraq Sunni now have to find a new balance of power that recognizes the gains of the Shia majority but gives them better and fair representation. As described earlier, this requires a more national form of government, and one where Sunnis and Shi’ite share power in ways that more fairly represent Sunnis’ interest and Iraq’s nation, rather than Shia priorities.

Something approaching such a government existed during 2004-2005. During that time, an interim Prime Minister -- Ayad Allawi-- had strong ties with Sunnis even though he was a Shi’ite, and often criticized Iran for interfering in Iraq. When he rose to power in post-invasion Iraq, he was supported by Jordan, Egypt, the UAE, Qatar, and Rafik Hariri in Lebanon.⁴⁵²

Allawi, who served in various capacities, including as Prime Minister of Iraq’s interim government after the fall of Saddam Hussein until the 2005 legislative elections. In his book, *The Occupation of Iraq*, Allawi argued that the underlying objective of the interim government was to limit Iran’s influence in Iraq prior to the 2005 election, which would likely see increased Iranian influence and domination by Iraqi Shia.⁴⁵³

With Allawi at the head of the interim government, the Iraq’s Sunnis, the US and regional Arab states had an ally in place who attempted to limit Iranian influence and religious Shi’ite power in the government.⁴⁵⁴ The UAE and Qatar supported the interim government and voiced support for Allawi again when he ran in January 2005.⁴⁵⁵ As the 2005 elections approached, Allawi’s Minister of Defense, Hazem Sha’alan, denounced Iran by calling it “Iraq’s number one enemy” and accused Iran of seizing border posts, sending spies into Iraq, and infiltrating the Iraqi government.⁴⁵⁶ Iran’s support for Shia militia groups who targeted Sunnis further deepened Sunni mistrust of Iran.

By this time, however, the rise of broader tensions between Sunnis and the US-led occupation forces had already created a serious insurgency, and many Sunni parties felt that the government was dominated by Shi’ite at their expense. Many Sunni political leaders choose to boycott the 2005 elections. The low turnout of Sunnis gave Shi’ite parties unquestioned dominance, pushed Allawi out of office, marginalized his Iraqi National List party, brought the legitimacy of the January 2005 elections into question and sharply undercut the viability of American efforts in Iraq by giving Iran more influence in the government.

This situation eased, as the December 2005 elections approached, which saw a rise in Sunni voter participation. Sunni leaders again criticized Iranian influence in the election, such as Interim President Ghazi al Yawer, and the possibility of a religious state working in Iraq.⁴⁵⁷ However, in both sets of 2005 elections Sunnis failed to organize effectively, and remained a marginal force.

The Critical role of Sunnis in Iraqi Security and Stability

A key turning point occurred in 2007 when Sunnis turned on Al Qaeda and other insurgents and cooperated with coalition forces in what became known as the Sunni Awakening. Many Sunnis were alienated by de-Ba’athification laws, the disbanding of the Iraqi military, and exclusion from the 2003 Governing Council -- where Shia and Kurds close to Iran gained power.⁴⁵⁸ As foreign fighters poured across Iraq’s western border, many Sunnis in Anbar province were enticed into

insurgency by Qaeda, who offered post-invasion security and a rationale that insurgency was their religious duty.⁴⁵⁹

However, Sunni attitudes towards Al Qaeda began to shift as they became familiar with Al Qaeda's methods. Al Qaeda's harsh intimidation tactics, including using suicide bombers, were largely unacceptable to Iraq's Sunnis. Sunni tribes increasingly saw Al Qaeda as a foreign entity that posed a greater threat to their livelihood than Iranian or Shi'ite dominance.⁴⁶⁰

US attitudes towards Iraq's Sunnis also began to change around this time. The US began to openly acknowledge the importance of Sunni tribes in post-Saddam Iraq and quickly took advantage of growing anti-Al Qaeda sentiments. The 2007 US troop surge subsequently supported the Sons of Iraq program – a US initiative to transfer the success of the indigenous Sunni Awakening to other Sunni areas in Iraq. The Sunni Awakening had a considerable impact on the scale of Al Qaeda in Iraq from the end of 2006 through the fall of 2008.⁴⁶¹

The relative absence of Al Qaeda intimidation contributed to Sunnis participating in large numbers in the January 2009 provincial elections and the March 2010 parliamentary elections. Allawi's Iraqiyya slate presented an appealing option for many Sunnis, though likely undercut the success of other Sunni parties, namely the Iraqi Accordance.⁴⁶² Members of the Awakening also did not fare well as candidates.⁴⁶³ However, Allawi's inability to form a majority coalition, and Sadr's acceptance of Maliki as prime minister under Iranian influence, was a setback for Sunnis hoping to see Allawi as prime minister.⁴⁶⁴ The long-term acceptance of Allawi's Iraqiyya bloc and Maliki's willingness to ease his grasp on power and lead with an even hand, could dictate the level of acceptance Sunnis have for Iraqi government institutions.

The Cost of Limiting the Sunni Role and Political Influence

The disqualification of nearly 500 Sunni candidates by the Justice and Accountability Commission (JAC) prior to the 2010 elections was a major setback in what became a steady stream of problems for Iraq's Sunnis. The JAC was headed by Ali al Lami, a Shi'ite under US custody in 2005-2006 for assisting Iranian agents in Iraq.⁴⁶⁵ General Odierno described al Lami, and his predecessor Ahmed Chalabi, as "influenced by Iran" and working to undermine Iraqi elections.⁴⁶⁶ Chalabi was also a main contributor of faulty pre-war intelligence and has been accused of giving US secrets to Iran.⁴⁶⁷⁴⁶⁸

Many Sunnis who fought under the Awakening and Sons of Iraq program anticipated integration into the ISF, appointment to government posts, and payment for their sacrifice. All of these entitlements were slow to occur, but the US reported more than half, or 50,000, had been integrated into the ISF or given civilian government jobs as of August 2011.⁴⁶⁹

This progress virtually halted by late 2011. The October 2011 SIGIR report to Congress acknowledged the job placement of Sunnis promised under the Sons of Iraq program was stalled. It said the GOI was considering reforming the program to ensure that the SOI in heavily dominated Sunni provinces like Anbar received equal compensation to their counterparts in Baghdad.

As of November 2011, the Sons of Iraq continued to operate in nine provinces and numbered approximately 48,000.⁴⁷⁰ However, within two weeks of the complete US withdrawal in December, reports suggested these units would remain outside the Iraqi police force and army, and the GoI required the dismantling of SOI independent units by the end of 2011.⁴⁷¹ After that time, significant numbers of members of the Awakening and Sons of Iraq and other Sunnis lost jobs in

the government and security forces. Moreover, investment and other government spending dropped in Sunni areas – particularly in the West.

For all the reasons described earlier, Sunnis became increasingly frustrated with the Shia-led government. By mid to late 2012, there were wide spread protests in many Sunni areas, and Awakening fighters increasingly reported being harassed by both sides – by a reemerging Al Qaeda threat and by Shia who questioned their allegiance. Sunnis were increasingly harassed and arrested by various elements of the Iraqi police and security forces – particularly in Western Iraq. By mid-2012, these frustrations began to lead Sunni fighters to rejoin Al Qaeda or join peaceful protests.⁴⁷²

Prime Minister Maliki's continued consolidation of power, and repression of various Sunni elements, had an increasingly dangerous impact. From late 2011 onwards, criticism of the central government could be equated with the support of terrorism, protesting or active political opposition could be treated as support of Al Qaeda, arrests became increasingly arbitrary, detention became equally arbitrary, and the rule of law was at least partially suspend in suspect areas.

By the beginning of 2013, the actions of the Maliki government had reached the point where they alienated many Sunnis, particularly in Anbar and Mosul provinces. These actions also interacted with the flow of Iraqi and foreign volunteer fighters into Syria – some of which came back into Iraq. As a report in the Los Angeles Times noted, "U.S. intelligence officials described the growth of "migrant brigades," consisting of foreign fighters who did not meet the vetting requirements of Islamic State or Al Nusra Front. The largest of these groups is Jaish al-Muhajireen wal-Ansar, or Army of Emigrants and Victors, consisting of fighters from Central Asia and Europe. The group recently separated from Islamic State."⁴⁷³

It is unclear how many Sunnis ever developed any real loyalty to Al Qaeda or supported its ideology and political goals as a result, but it that hundreds of Iraqi Sunnis joined hardline Islamist groups fighting Assad in Syria after 2011, and that far large numbers joined peaceful protests in Iraq.⁴⁷⁴ The situation grew worse as the government failed to provide Sunnis with meaningful political and financial incentives and Maliki government and security forces, increased their level of repression and arbitrary action.

Reports are uncertain, but most Sunnis who protested against the government during 2012 and 2013 seem to have stayed independent of Al Qaeda in Iraq and other extremist groups. However, Sunnis in the West – and significant numbers of Sunnis in Baghdad, Mosul, and Diyala – did increasingly react through a mix of peaceful political protests, by creating protest camps, by forming armed self-protection groups.

It is not clear that large numbers of the former members of the Awakening, other former insurgents and Ba'ath Party members who fought in the Sunni uprising early in the war came to actively support AQI/ISIS during this time. A number of such groups did, however, remain armed, stayed outside of the Iraqi police force and army, and established new autonomous identities at the local level.

It is also clear that hundreds of other Sunnis did join AQI/ISIS during this time, that some of the Sunni protest camps had armed fighters, and that some tribal elements – particularly in the West – were willing to work with AQI/ISIS and supported it when AQI/ISIS fighters moved into Fallujah and Ramadi at the end of December 2013.

Intra-Sunni Divisions: Al Qaeda in Iraq vs. Sunni Anti-Government Movement

The rising levels of Sunni resistance were a key reason why Maliki visited Washington in October 2013, although Maliki stated his focus was on terrorism. Sunni protesters had increasingly demonstrated against what they perceived to be his government's authoritarian rule, and many of Maliki's actions had been directed against legitimate political opposition. At the same time, there was little doubt that Maliki's power struggles with senior Sunni elected officials and his the repression of the Sunnis had led to the reemergence of Al Qaeda as a major force and made Maliki's claims of a rising threat at least partially legitimate.

Ahmed Ali of ISW reported in October 2013 that Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) had attempted to influence the Iraqi anti-government protest movement by co-opting its leaders in order to control the direction of the movement, or targeting them for assassination if they resist pressure to join AQI.⁴⁷⁵ He also stated that, "it is imperative for the Obama Administration to advise Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki during his visit this week that addressing protest demands serves the security interests of both Iraq and the United States."⁴⁷⁶

The protest movement is attempting to better organize politically, The Iraqi government, for its part, has begun to form committees to address protestor demands. Nevertheless, the anti-government movement is plagued by internal differences and lacks a unified stance, increasing the cracks for AQI and other groups to open, divide, and exploit. "The protests have acted as a vehicle for Iraqi Sunnis to express frustrations and address grievances in a non-violent manner. If AQI is successful in changing the course of the protests, it will signal a move towards violence and increased instability in Iraq."

It is too early to predict how these factors will affect the final outcome of the crisis that began in Anbar in late December 2013. Hopefully, continuing repression and/or lingering civil war can still be avoided, and US and other outside pressure on the Maliki regime to be give Sunnis a larger role, and restrain the conduct of the Iraqi security Forces will have a positive effect. The alternative is far greater repression of the Sunnis, an Iraq tilt towards Iran, and one of two outcomes: Either successful repression or a state of constant civil war that can only aid AQI/ISIS and extremism.

Much will depend on whether the 2014 election produces a more balanced and national government. Iraq desperately needs a Prime Minister who seeks national unity rather than personal power, and a government that focuses on nation-wide progress rather than Shi'ite Arab factionalism. It needs efforts to develop effective governance for all Iraqis rather than use the security forces to repress legitimate protests, and a form of democracy that was more directly representative at every level are not radical or drastic steps forward. It may not be possible to achieve any of these goals under Prime Minister Maliki, and they certainly will not be possible if the regime continues to deal with Iraq's Sunnis through repression and by using excessive force.

Iraq's Kurds and the Uncertain Search for Autonomy versus Independence

The tensions between Arab and Kurd, and the KRG and the Iraqi central government have so far been less explosive, but largely because Iraq has increasingly become a divided state. The Kurds have actively sought to create a de facto federal Kurdish entity, to expand their area of control in mixed areas outside the current boundaries of the KRG, and to obtain independence in dealing with their petroleum resources. Iraqi Kurds have a long history of tension and warfare with the

Iraqi central government, including particularly harsh treatment under Saddam's regime, and have reason to fear its growing strength and the impact of potential Shia Arab domination of the regime. Under the Shah of Iran, Tehran supported Iraqi Kurds fighting against Saddam as a way of putting pressure on Saddam concerning Iran-Iraq border issues and control of the Shatt al-Arab. The Khomeini government, however, ruthlessly suppressed Kurdish independence movements during the Iran-Iraq War. Iran has maintained offices in Irbil and Sulaimaniya since the Kurdish security zone was established in 1992.⁴⁷⁷

The end result was that Kurds were sometimes killed and sometimes displaced from their areas in the north in 1980-1991, and Arabs were relocated into Kurdish areas or given major incentives to move. Smaller minority groups – many of which were in the north – were sometimes used to buy loyalty for the Saddam Hussein regime and sometimes displaced or repressed.

The Uncertain Impact of Creating the KRG

This situation was partially reversed when the US created a Kurdish security zone following Saddam's attempt to regain control of the north following his defeat in the first Gulf War. The US created a secure zone where Kurds and other Iraqis could function under a US security umbrella, but it did not create an entity that had legal recognition by the Iraqi central government, did not address the issue of Kurdish independence or some special status within Iraq, and left Kurds, Arabs, and minority groups with conflicting claims to certain areas – including key Iraqi cities like Kirkuk and the surroundings of Mosul.

As **Figure 30** shows, the security zone left the control of key oilfields undecided. This situation was made still worse after the US invasion in 2003 when the Iraqis and outside advisors addressing the problem attempted to resolve it by calling for a referendum to decide on the boundaries. These were so blurred by 2003 that – as has been the case with so many previous calls for referendums under similar conditions – holding a referendum became a political nightmare and recipe for civil conflict. The proposed solution became the future problem.

The US-led invasion allowed the Kurds to create a Kurdish Regional Government that was formally recognized by the central government, and given formal status in a new constitution that was ratified in 2005 and recognized the right of given provinces and areas to federal status. The constitution did not, however, clearly define key issues such as rights to petroleum and mineral concessions and exports. It also did not define the status of the KRG control over all of the territory the Kurds occupied and the level of Kurdish control over Mosul and Kirkuk, which had large Kurdish population but also Arabs, Assyrians, and Turkmens.

The new Iraqi constitution left the final boundaries of the Kurdish autonomous region were supposed to be decided through a number of referendums scheduled to be held before the end of 2007 as stipulated in. However, the preparations needed for such a referendum to take place could never be agreed upon with the not been made by the Iraqi central government, and the referendums were repeatedly postponed.

Divisions and Unity Between the PUK and KDP

Iraq's Kurds had their own divisions. They have long been divided between the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) led by Jalal Talibani, and the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) led by Massoud Barzani. This led to sporadic confrontations and clashes during the 1990s, but in 2004 they two parties created coalition with a unified voting list or coalition called the Democratic Patriotic

Alliance of Kurdistan, which included several smaller parties, and Barzani then agreed on a power sharing arrangement in 2007.

Since that time, Talibani has held national office as President of Iraq – a role with limited direct power but where he exerts considerable personal influence, and Barzani has held office in the KRG. Massoud Barzani, directly elected as president of the KRG in July 2009. The KRG does, however, have an active elected legislature (Kurdistan National Assembly (KNA) or Kurdistan Parliament of Iraq, or KPI). It also has an appointed Prime Minister -- Nechirvan Barzani – who is Massoud’s nephew. He became PM again in January 2012, after three years when the post was held by a leader in the PUK named Barham Salih. Massoud Barzani’s son, Suroor, heads the KRG “national security council.”⁴⁷⁸

This process has entrenched the PUK and KDP to the point where its corruption and cronyism are serious issues. This has led to the rise of reform movements like the Movement for Change, but they have faced serious problems in competing politically because the PUK and KDP have used their power to suppress any internal opposition. As Kenneth Katzman notes, however, this political situation is changing,⁴⁷⁹

The KNA elections went forward on September 21, 2013 as planned, and further complicated the political landscape in the KRG. About 1,130 candidates registered to run for the 111 available seats, 11 of which are reserved for minority communities that live in the north, such as Yazidis, Shabaks, Assyrians, and others. The 2013 KNA elections continued a trend begun in the previous KNA elections of March 2010 in which a breakaway faction of President Talabani’s PUK, called “Change” (“Gorran”), emerged as a major player. Headed by Neshirvan Mustafa, Gorran won an unexpectedly high 25 KNA seats in March 2010 and won 24 seats in the September 21, 2013, KNA election. The 2013 result was particularly significant because in the 2013 election, the KDP and the PUK ran separately, not combined as the Kurdistan Alliance. As a consequence of the vote, Gorran won 24 seats—coming in second to the KDP’s 38 (up from 30 in 2010). The PUK was humbled by coming in third with only 18 seats, down from 29 in the 2010 election. The results likely mean that Gorran will hold one of the leading positions in the new KRG government, most likely KNA speaker.

Many experts on the Kurdish region attribute the PUK’s showing in the 2013 KNA elections to the infirmity of Iraq’s President and PUK leader Jalal Talibani and the attendant turmoil in the PUK leadership. Talibani remains in Germany to recuperate from his stroke, but PUK officials say he is improving and might return at the beginning of 2014. Barham Salih...is said to be pressing to replace Talibani as president, in part because the Kurds do not want someone of another ethnicity to become president. Another PUK stalwart, Kosrat Rasoul, who serves as KRG Vice President, is said to be seeking support to succeed Talibani as PUK leader. Talabani’s son, Qubad, who headed the KRG representative office in Washington, DC, until returning to the KRG in July 2012, has become more involved in Kurdish and PUK politics as his father’s health fades. Talabani’s wife, Hero Ibrahim Ahmad Talibani, is also a major figure in PUK politics and is said to be an opponent of Kosrat Rasoul.

The Uncertain Status of the Peshmerga

Control of Kurdish security forces has been another ongoing issue an issue. The new constitution formally allowed the Iraqi Kurds to keep fielding their military force called the *peshmerga* (Kurdish militiamen), which includes police and paramilitary forces and some estimates credit with up to numbering perhaps 75,000 fighters. These forces are generally lightly armed, but Kurdish elements within the new Iraqi Army formed other, better armed, units with a Kurdish ethnic identity and heavier weapons, and fought well during 2004-2008.

Massoud Barzani, the president of the KRG, is also the commander-in-chief of the Peshmerga Armed Force – the military and security force in the KRG.⁴⁸⁰ The Peshmerga forces actually in the KRG are under the control of the KRG’s Ministry of Peshmerga Affairs.

There have been plans to create up to two Kurdish divisions in the Iraqi Army, provide full central government funding, and scale back the manning of the Peshmerga to a more affordable levels. These plans have never been implemented, and Kurdish leaders claim the Maliki government is only paying about half of the cost of total Peshmerga force out of the Iraqi national budget. The other half is still funded out of the KRG budget.

The KRG has increasingly tried to make the Peshmerga a smaller but more heavily armed, better-trained, more affordable, and full-time active force. It has had some success in these efforts, but significant elements of the Peshmerga are still more a form of political employment than an effective force.

The Peshmerga now present the problem that they act as an independent force along the uncertain border between the KRG and the areas controlled by the central government. Even during the time US forces were present, there was several times when the Peshmerga and Iraqi Security forces had limited clashes and confrontations that could have led to much wider fighting. The US persuade both sides to set up joint control points that US force present and these still function to some degree even though US forces are gone.

There have, however, been rising tensions between Baghdad and Irbil in dealing with the Kurdish security forces or Peshmerga. Some 30 men Peshmerga units in the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) effectively mutinied and defected to the KRG in February 2012 when they were asked to participate in military action near the KRG.

Over half of an Army brigade More than half of an Iraqi Army brigade stationed in the heart of Iraq's disputed territories defected to KRG security forces in June 2013. Beginning in early May, the 16th Brigade, which was based in Tuz Khurmatu, began defying direct orders to leave that volatile town, and also refused to accept an Iraqi Army decision to replace its Kurdish commander with a Shiite Arab. In the first week of June, the Kurds left the bridge for the Peshmerga.⁴⁸¹

The defection came after fighting started between Iraqi Army forces and Kurdish soldiers, in November 2012, and created a major confrontation on the Arab-Kurdish ethnic fault line where the Army and the Peshmerga deployed thousands of troops to the de facto "line of control" between the KRG and the rest of Iraq.

The two forces remained in these positions until the situation began to change in late April 2013, when the Sunni protest movement in Anbar and the rest of Iraq created the cycle of a violent demonstrations ISF repression and Sunni revenge attacks described in earlier chapters. The *Washington Post* reported that, "Hundreds have died in the ensuing clashes, causing the Iraqi army to shift forces away from the Kurdish front. In some areas just south of Kirkuk, the army abandoned checkpoints and strategic positions at the entrance to the city, which the Kurds immediately occupied."⁴⁸²

The end result is that Baghdad government has not integrated the Peshmerga into the ISF or made good on commitments to pay them, and the Kurds have steadily entrenched their control over disputed territory and the independence of the Peshmerga. It is unclear that either side is in the right, but the Kurds feel that some of the grievances experienced under the Saddam Hussein regime have continued since his fall.

An article in the *Guardian* cited independent journalist Hiwa Osman in saying that the "row over the unpaid revenues is grimly familiar. For the KRG, it feels as if it's still dealing with the same Baghdad. Its economic sanctions are straight from Saddam's playbook."⁴⁸³ At the same time, these

security issues have been affected by the fact that the Kurds have continued to develop their own energy sector and seek independent pipelines and routes through Turkey, taking advantage of the rising violence in the south and the desire of some oil companies to find more secure operating areas than the south of Iraq.

There are other uncertainties over the current and future status of the *Asaish*. The *Asaish* is the most well-known term for the KRG security intelligence service, and is the product of a somewhat uncertain merger between the PUK and KDP. The service seems to cover internal security and politics as well as cover the Iraq central government and outside states, but the role to which it remains involved in party politics is unclear.

The State Department Iraq Country Reports on Human Rights Practices issued in February 2014 stated,

“In Erbil, Sulaymaniyah, and Dahuk, the three Kurdistan regional government provinces referred to as the Iraqi Kurdistan Region (IKR), there were press reports that Kurdistan regional government security forces committed arbitrary or unlawful killings. There were significantly fewer reports of killings or other sectarian violence in the majority Sunni IKR, although minority groups reported threats and attacks targeting their communities in areas where the Kurdistan regional government had effective control. On September 13, members of AQI/ISIL attacked a funeral attended primarily by ethnic Shabaks in Baashiqa, a Kurdistan regional government-controlled area, killing at least 30.”⁴⁸⁴

Kurdish-Arab Tensions Since 2011

US officials saw Arab-Kurd tensions in northern Iraq as the greatest single risk Iraq faced after US departure during their planning during 2010-2011. While Sunni-Shi'ite tensions became the key problem in practice, the risk of Arab-Kurdish fighting over the control of disputed territory remains a major concern. Also of concern were tensions over Kurdish Regional Government oil deals negotiated independent of Baghdad, including the construction of pipelines from the semiautonomous Kurdish region across Turkey to the port of Ceyhan on the Mediterranean Sea. These export lines bypass dangerous Iraqi oil pipelines prone to sabotage, attack, and smuggling, but also bypass Iraq's central government coffers.

The Kurdish region's Peshmerga oil protection forces closely guard the vital transit roads to Mosul, Kirkuk, and elsewhere, where Sunni insurgent attacks have been concentrated. This relative security has been a draw for foreign investors who view the Kurdish region as relatively more stable than the rest of Iraq.⁴⁸⁵ Challenges with security, poor infrastructure, and undesirable business contract terms have already driven major international oil companies to explore opportunities in the Kurdish region where relative stability, better contract terms, and less bureaucratic interference make the KRG a more attractive business partner.⁴⁸⁶

At the same time, tensions between Kurdish fighters and the Iraqi Army have grown and the impact of the US-led programs to encourage collaboration in securing the line between Iraqi central government and KRG control have steadily weakened. Some of these tensions flared up even before US forces finally withdrew at the end of 2011. In November 2011, a standoff occurred between the two sides as the Iraqi Army attempted to assume control over a US base in Kirkuk due to be transferred in the coming weeks. A compromise was negotiated, though details of the incident highlight the mistrust Kurds have for Baghdad and the measures Maliki may consider simply to showcase his control.⁴⁸⁷

As has been discussed earlier, Kurdish support for Vice President al Hashimi created new tensions between the KRG and Baghdad when al Hashimi fled to the Kurdish region to escape accusations by Maliki of running a sectarian death squad. Maliki threatened to withhold funds from the Kurdistan Regional Government, and to fire Babakir Zebari, the Kurdish chief of staff of the Iraqi Army, in response to Kurdish sheltering of al Hashimi.⁴⁸⁸ This has led to new Kurdish threats to seek independence, and growing Kurdish efforts to win US support for the Kurdish position – efforts which link the Kurds more closely to the US than an Iran which often been ruthless in repressing its own Kurdish population.⁴⁸⁹

Kenneth Katzman summarized the level of Arab-Kurdish tensions as follows in a Congressional Research Service report issued in December 2013,⁴⁹⁰

KRG-Baghdad tensions have at times verged on boiling over. Following a visit to Washington, DC, in April 2012 and since, Barzani has threatened to hold a vote on Kurdish independence unless Maliki holds to his pledges of power-sharing and resolves major issues with the KRG....As noted, Kurds in the COR joined the failed 2012 effort to vote no confidence against Maliki. The animosity continued in 2013, but the Kurdish leadership and Maliki have continued to engage and exchange views and visits, calming tensions to some extent. Maliki made his first visit to Irbil in two years on June 10, 2013 and Barzani visited Baghdad on July 7, 2013, Barzani's first since late 2010. The two sides subsequently established seven joint committees to try to resolve the major disputes between them...Some reports suggest that the Kurdish leaders might accept Maliki's selection to a third term as Prime Minister.

As do political tensions, disputes between the forces of the two political entities sometimes comes close to major conflict. In November 2012, a commercial dispute between an Arab and Kurd in Tuz Khurmatu, a town in Salahuddin Province straddling the Baghdad-KRG territorial border, caused a clash and a buildup of ISF and Kurdish troops facing off. Several weeks of U.S. and intra-Iraq mediation resulted in a tentative agreement on December 6, 2012, for both sides to pull back their forces and for local ethnic groups to form units to replace ISF and Peshmerga units along the Baghdad-KRG frontier. The agreement was only partially implemented. In May 2013, Peshmerga forces advanced their positions in Kirkuk province, taking advantage of the ISF drawdown there as the ISF dealt with Sunni violence elsewhere in Iraq. In June 2013, a mixed Arab-Kurdish unit of the ISF—"Brigade 16"—split and the KRG assumed de-facto control of the territory controlled by the Kurds of the brigade.

The continued clashes and frontier tensions could be attributed, in part, to the end of the "combined security mechanism" (CSM) set up by the United States when its troops were in Iraq. The CSM began in January 2010, consisting of joint (ISF-U.S-Kurdish) patrols, maintenance of 22 checkpoints, and U.S. training of participating ISF and *peshmerga* forces. The mechanism was administered through provincial level Combined Coordination Centers, and disagreements were referred to a Senior Working Group and a High Level Ministerial Committee...

...The KRG-Baghdad clashes have been spurred in part by the lack of any progress in recent years in resolving the various territorial disputes between the Kurds and Iraq's Arabs. The most emotional of these is the Kurdish insistence that Tamim Province (which includes oil-rich Kirkuk) is "Kurdish land" and must be formally affiliated to the KRG. There was to be a census and referendum on the affiliation of the province by December 31, 2007, under Article 140 of the Constitution, but the Kurds have agreed to repeated delays in order to avoid jeopardizing overall progress in Iraq. Nor has the national census that is pivotal to any such referendum been conducted; it was scheduled for October 24, 2010, but then repeatedly postponed by the broader political crisis and differences over how to account for movements of populations into or out of the Kurdish-controlled provinces.

On the other hand, some KRG-Baghdad disputes have moved forward. The Property Claims Commission that is adjudicating claims from the Saddam regime's forced resettlement of Arabs into the KRG region is functioning. Of the 178,000 claims received, nearly 26,000 were approved and 90,000 rejected or ruled invalid by the end of 2011, according to the State Department. Since 2003, more than 28,000 Iraqi Arabs settled in the KRG area by Saddam have relocated from Kirkuk back to their original provinces.

The growing tensions between the KRG and Iraqi central government tensions over petroleum rights, concessions, export earnings, and export routes are described in detail in Chapter XI, and have become as critical as the tensions over control of territory, key cities, and security forces. They were compounded in January 2014 when the KRG opened its new pipeline to Ceyan through Turkey. Maliki announced on January 13, 2014, that the Iraqi Cabinet had passed a 2014 budget on threatened to cut off all federal revenue sharing to the KRG if it did not export crude through Baghdad's sales network, leading to a boycott of the cabinet by Kurdish ministers.⁴⁹¹

Maliki also announced on January 21, 2014, that the Cabinet had decided in principle to create three new provinces in the most troubled areas of the parts of the country in what the government claimed were efforts to address Sunni grievances and a protect minorities. Two of them were centered around Tuz Khormato and the Ninevah Plain, and bordered on the KRG. Tuz Khormato was a mixed city containing Arabs, Kurds, and ethnic Turkomens. The Ninevah Plain had a large Christian population. Some elements of the Turkoman and Christian minorities did strongly resist incorporation into the Kurdistan Regional Government, and had called for separate province status for Tuz Khormato and Ninevah Plain. But, other elements of the same minorities fear coming under tighter central government as well. Maliki seems to have been be primarily concerned with restricting the territory under KRG control, and pressuring the KRG over the control of oil resources.⁴⁹²

At the same time, Jalal Talabani's health has become an issue in Arab-Kurdish affairs. Talibani has played a key role in moderating ethnic and sectarian tension as the President of Iraq, but he is in his 80s, has had growing health problems, and suffered a stroke in mid-December 2012. Massoud Barzani – the President of the KRG -- has repeatedly threaten to seek independence and been far less accommodating in his dealing with Maliki and other senior Iraqi politicians. There is something of a “good cop, bad cop” aspect to their dealings with the central government, but Barzani seems to be more willing to confront the central government and differences over Maliki's treatment of the Syrian civil war and Barzani's support for Syria's Kurds have raised additional issues.

Figure 30: A KRG Green Line with No Clear Ethnicity and No Clear Control of Oil Resources – Part One



Figure 30: A KRG Green Line with No Clear Ethnicity and No Clear Control of Oil Resources – Part Two

Sources of tension:

- **Disputed territories**
 - **In Ninewa, Salah Al-Din, Diyala, and Tameem**
- **Hydrocarbons law**
 - **Disagreements on contracts and management**
- **Constitution reform**
 - **KRG wants decentralization**
 - **GOI wants stronger center**
- **Security**
 - **Joint patrols of Iraqi and Kurdish forces**
- **Foreign policy**
 - **“KRG has been developing independent economic and political ties with foreign countries, signing separate oil deals, and meeting separately with foreign heads of state**
 -

Legislative issues in the Constitution

- **Article 23: covers property rights and prohibits owning property for demographic change**
- **Article 140: calls for census and referendum to end territory dispute, but none has taken place**
- **Article 141: recognizes Kurdish legislation, as long as it does not contradict the Iraqi Constitution. Dispute over draft constitution claiming Tameem province.**

Source: adapted from SIGIR, *Quarterly Report, January 30, 2010*, p. 67.

Iran and the KRG

At the beginning of the Iraq War in 2003, Iran maintained relatively good relations with the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) and Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP).⁴⁹³ However, Iran's internal Kurdish problem has continued to complicate its relationship with Iraqi Kurds. Like Syria and Turkey, Iran does not want to see Kurdish independence and wants to limit Iraqi Kurdish influence. Meanwhile, President Jalal Talibani, a Kurd, has spoken out against Iran's regional influence.⁴⁹⁴

A leaked State Department cable suggests that Iran may have tried to give indirect financial assistance to Gorran, a small Kurdish group that ran in the March 2010 elections, by funding the Jaff tribe, the largest Kurdish tribe in Iraq, some of whom are members of Gorran.⁴⁹⁵ Stephen Zunes, who chairs the Middle Eastern studies program at the University of San Francisco, suggests that this may be because Iran saw Talibani as inching too close to the US.⁴⁹⁶

As with Azeris and Baluchis, the United States has worked with Kurds to limit Iranian influence and help them resist Iranian pressure. Tensions exist between Iran and the Kurds namely because Iraqi Kurdistan gives sanctuary to the Kurdish resistance group Party for a Free Life in Kurdistan (PEJAK), which has carried out successful attacks on Iran.⁴⁹⁷

Iran also accused the United States of funding PEJAK.⁴⁹⁸ In retaliation, Iran has carried out limited operations against Kurdish opposition groups inside the Iraqi border.⁴⁹⁹ After a bombing in Iran killed 10 civilians in late 2010, Iran publicly announced that it had carried out an anti-terrorist operation in Iraq that Kurdish leaders denied took place.⁵⁰⁰ In August 2011, Iran again shelled PEJAK targets in northern Iraq, spawning Kurdish President Talabani's request in front of the UN General Assembly in September that both Turkey and Iran stop bombing Iraqi territories in the Kurdistan region, saying it caused innocent civilian deaths.⁵⁰¹

VIII. THE REBIRTH OF AL QAEDA

Maliki's increasing repression and centralization of power over the course of 2010-2013 fueled the growth of Al Qaeda and other Sunni extremist movements in spite of what appeared to be Al Qaeda's defeat in fighting from 2005 to 2008. The US military reported in July 2010 there were only approximately 200 "hard core" fighters left.⁵⁰²

The extent to which such sectarian divisions could polarize Sunnis to a point that would aid Al Qaeda and other violent movements did, however, become apparent even before US troops left Iraq in December 2011. By June 2011, the Sunni Speaker of Parliament, Usama Nujeifi, was warning that Sunnis in Iraq might seek separation from the Shi'ite-run government, or demand more autonomy by pressing for the establishment of more independent regional status.⁵⁰³ Several predominantly Sunni provinces considered seeking regional status. In October 2011, Salahuddin Province declared itself an "administrative and economic region in a united Iraq".⁵⁰⁴ While this move was unconstitutional (provinces can request regional status but cannot unilaterally declare themselves as such), and Salahuddin council eventually backed off, the move nonetheless demonstrates the growing discomfort of Sunnis to Maliki's centralization of power.

In November 2011, General Buchanan stated there were 800 to 1,000 members of Al Qaeda in Iraq. These numbers grew steadily in the months that followed, and AQI was further strengthened by the flow of Sunni fighters and money into the region caused by the civil war in Syria. In February 2012, US Intelligence officials told Congress that Al Qaeda in Iraq was likely behind a series of bombings in Syria.⁵⁰⁵

By mid-2013 Al Qaeda in Iraq had remerged as a major force. It was weaker than at the height of the Sunni insurgency, but it had succeeded in shifting its tactics and strategies to exploit Maliki's growing sectarian repression and the gaps left by the withdrawal of US troops to rekindle sectarian conflict. By the end of 2013, it was all too clear that Al Qaeda was the most violent, lethal and divisive force in Iraq.

US Official Views of the Al Qaeda Threat

US government assessments of Al Qaeda in Iraq have increasingly reflected its growing strength. The Special Inspector General for Iraqi Reconstruction (SIGIR) has ceased to function, but summarized the status of Al Qaeda in Iraq as follows in 2011 reports.⁵⁰⁶

Since 2010, terrorist attacks have primarily targeted Iraqi security forces and government officials, but they have also been aimed at stirring ethnic tensions. AQI has been operating primarily in regions with majority Sunni Arab populations, particularly focusing its efforts in and around Baghdad and Ninewa, but appears unable to command territory or population centers. The degradation of AQI's capacities is expected to continue under the pressure of an ISF now more capable of targeting, capturing, and detaining terrorists and disrupting their networks. However, according to DoS, AQI has adapted to the changing security conditions and remains capable of coordinated mass-casualty attacks and assassinations. AQI will likely attempt to exploit widening political rifts that occur along sectarian lines.

More current assessments of Al Qaeda have also reported its growing strength. The US State Department Iraq Country Reports on Human Rights Practices issued in 2014 described Al Qaeda as follows:⁵⁰⁷

Illegally armed sectarian and ethnic groups, including terrorist groups such as the AQI, committed deadly, politically motivated acts of violence, utilizing suicide bombings, attacks with improvised explosive devices,

drive-by shootings, killings, kidnappings, and other forms of violence. Militants and terrorists targeted fellow citizens--Shia, Sunni, as well as members of other religious groups or ethnicities--security forces, places of worship, religious pilgrims, schools, public spaces, economic infrastructure, and government officials. Certain militant organizations, such as those supported by Iran, also committed terrorist attacks, primarily against foreign embassies, foreign personnel, and foreign military forces.

...On July 21, the AQI announced a new offensive to recover previous strongholds. Two days later, a wave of 28 coordinated attacks across 18 cities killed 113 persons and injured more than 250. The deadliest attack occurred in Taji in Baghdad Province, where a series of roadside bombs, a car bomb, and a suicide bombing targeting emergency personnel killed 42 persons.

... There were also regular incidents of the AQI's targeting Sunni tribal leaders and Sunnis cooperating with the government, including against the Sons of Iraq, also known as the Sahwa (Awakening) movement. On November 28 in Tarmiyah, in Baghdad Province, gunmen broke into the house of a Sahwa member and killed him and six members of his family, including three young children, while they were sleeping. According to AFP, at least 25 members of the Sahwa movement were killed throughout the country between July and the end of December, and at least another 13 were injured

The US State Department Iraq Country Report on Human Rights Practices also noted that.⁵⁰⁸

Terrorist activity throughout the country increased significantly in July, with AQI/ISIL launching attacks nearly every day that month, killing 928 civilians and wounding more than 2,000, according to UNAMI statistics. Subsequently, an average of 68 attacks per month targeted playgrounds, mosques, government sites, and markets, as well as members of the security forces, journalists, and local leaders opposed to AQI/ISIL. On average, 33 attacks a month were suicide attacks. The majority of AQI/ISIL attacks, often involving VBIEDs, occurred in Baghdad's Shia-majority neighborhoods. For example, on July 29, AQI/ISIL detonated a series of 20 coordinated VBIEDs in Shia-majority areas of Baghdad, killing more than 60 civilians.

Persons believed to have falsely presented themselves as Iraqi Security Force personnel also committed abuses. In May armed militias conducted killings and kidnappings around the country at fake Iraqi Security Force checkpoints. On July 23, militants killed 14 Shia truck drivers after checking their identity papers at a makeshift roadblock near Suleyman Bek, 100 miles north of Baghdad. Unverified amateur videos posted online showed AQI/ISIL members taking responsibility for the attack.

Throughout the year and increasingly toward the end of the year, AQI/ISIL targeted Sunni tribal leaders and Sunnis who cooperated with the government, including the Sons of Iraq, also known as the Sahwa (Awakening) movement. On November 29, authorities discovered the corpses of 18 men with gunshot wounds near the Sunni town of Mishahda, 20 miles north of Baghdad. According to eyewitnesses, an armed group "dressed in military uniforms" kidnapped the men the night before. According to press, AQI/ISIL claimed responsibility for the attack, stating that it targeted a meeting at the home of a Sunni tribal chief focused on reinigorating the Sahwa forces.

From November 26 to November 29, authorities found at least 41 corpses with gunshot wounds to the head and body in Baghdad, Ninewa, and Diyala provinces, according to media reports. Seven of the victims were children.

UNAMI noted that the rise in "execution-style" killings brought back fears of death squads during the worst days of the sectarian war in 2007-08.

The US State Department Annual Report on Terrorism and the annual calendar of the US National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) provide additional official reporting on Al Qaeda. The US State Department Country Report on Terrorism for 2012 described Al Qaeda's status as follows:⁵⁰⁹

Iraqi security forces made progress combating al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) and other Sunni insurgent organizations in 2012. While there has been clear and measurable success against AQI over the years, the group still remains a dangerous threat to the Iraqi people. In 2012, there were no significant attacks on U.S. interests or U.S. fatalities. The Iraqi government succeeded in securing multiple large public religious

gatherings and government events – most notably the Arab League Summit in late March and P5+1 talks in May in Baghdad – but terrorist bombings and other attacks continued to occur.

The Government of Iraq concentrated its counterterrorism efforts against AQI and other Sunni-affiliated terrorist organizations. AQI remained capable of large-scale coordinated attacks and conducted numerous high-profile suicide and car bombings on government and civilian targets, aiming to increase tensions among Iraqi sectarian groups and ethnic minorities, and undercut public perceptions of the government's capacity to provide security....

Terrorist tactics and weapons remained largely unchanged from 2011, as AQI and other terrorists relied predominantly on suicide bombings and car and roadside bombs and to a lesser extent on gunmen using assault rifles or silenced weapons to assassinate government and security officials.

The State Department and US National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) provided the following additional description of Al Qaeda.⁵¹⁰

aka al-Qaeda Group of Jihad in Iraq; al-Qaeda Group of Jihad in the Land of the Two Rivers; al-Qaeda in Mesopotamia; al-Qaeda in the Land of the Two Rivers; al-Qaeda of Jihad in Iraq; al-Qaeda of Jihad Organization in the Land of The Two Rivers; al-Qaeda of the Jihad in the Land of the Two Rivers; al-Tawhid; Jam'at al-Tawhid Wa'al-Jihad; Tanzeem Qaedat al Jihad/Bilad al Raafidaini; Tanzim Qaedat al-Jihad fi Bilad al-Rafidayn; The Monotheism and Jihad Group; The Organization Base of Jihad/Country of the Two Rivers; The Organization Base of Jihad/Mesopotamia; The Organization of al-Jihad's Base in Iraq; The Organization of al-Jihad's Base in the Land of the Two Rivers; The Organization of al-Jihad's Base of Operations in Iraq; The Organization of al-Jihad's Base of Operations in the Land of the Two Rivers; The Organization of Jihad's Base in the Country of the Two Rivers; al-Zarqawi Network; Islamic State of Iraq; al-Nusrah Front; Jabhat al-Nusrah; Jabhet al-Nusrah; The Victory Front; al-Nusrah Front for the People of the Levant

Description: Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) was designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on December 17, 2004. In the 1990s, Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi, a Jordanian-born militant, organized a terrorist group called al-Tawhid wal-Jihad to oppose the presence of U.S. and Western military forces in the Islamic world and the West's support for and the existence of Israel. In late 2004, he joined al-Qaeda (AQ) and pledged allegiance to Usama bin Laden. After this, al-Tawhid wal-Jihad became known as AQI. Zarqawi traveled to Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom and led his group against U.S. and Coalition Forces until his death in June 2006. In October 2006, AQI publicly re-named itself the Islamic State of Iraq and has since used that name in its public statements. In 2012, AQI was led by Ibrahim Awwad Ibrahim Ali al-Badri, aka Abu Du'a, who was designated by the Department of State under Executive Order 13224 on October 4.

Since late 2011, AQI has also participated in the Syrian conflict through its alias, al-Nusrah Front, which has sought to portray itself as part of the legitimate Syrian opposition. A number of al-Nusrah Front's leaders have been members of AQI and its facilitation network that operated in Syria and Iraq from 2004-2011. [In mid-April 2013, al-Nusrah leader Muhammad al-Jawlani publicly pledged al-Nusrah's fealty to AQ and its leader, Ayman al-Zawahiri.] Al-Nusrah works with other U.S. designated terrorist organizations, such as Lebanon based Fatah al-Islam. Al-Nusrah Front's base of operations is probably Damascus, but the group mirrors the organizational structure of AQI in Iraq, with regional military, administrative, and local media efforts. On December 11, the Department of State amended AQI's designation to include al-Nusrah Front as an alias.

Activities: Since its founding, AQI has conducted high profile attacks, including improvised explosive device (IED) attacks against U.S. military personnel and Iraqi infrastructure; videotaped beheadings of Americans Nicholas Berg (May 11, 2004), Jack Armstrong (September 22, 2004), and Jack Hensley (September 21, 2004); suicide bomber attacks against both military and civilian targets; and rocket attacks. AQI perpetrates the majority of suicide and mass casualty bombings in Iraq using foreign and Iraqi operatives.

Since November 2011, al-Nusrah Front has claimed nearly 600 attacks, ranging from more than 40 suicide attacks to small arms and IED operations in major city centers including Damascus, Aleppo, Hamah, Dara, Homs, Idlib, and Dayr al-Zawr. For example, on September 28, 2012, al-Nusrah Front claimed responsibility for two suicide car bombs at a military complex in Damascus that killed four and wounded 14, including civilians. On October 3, 2012, the group claimed responsibility for four bombings in Aleppo, including two

suicide attacks that killed more than 50 people. Al-Nusrah Front followed up those attacks with an October 9 suicide bomb attack on a Syrian Air Force Intelligence compound in a Damascus suburb that killed and wounded at least 100, including civilians.

AQI was also active in Iraq in 2012. In a series of coordinated attacks in March, AQI struck Shia pilgrims in the city of Karbala, set cars on fire near a police headquarters in Kirkuk, and targeted security forces and government officials in Baghdad. In all, AQI struck eight cities in just under six hours, killing 46 people and wounding 200. July was the bloodiest month of AQI attacks in two years, with 325 people killed over the span of multiple bombings and attacks. In August, the Islamic State of Iraq, AQI's political front, released a video detailing a sophisticated attack in March on five locations in Haditha and neighboring Barwana that included dozens of fighters dressed as police commandos. During the raid, AQI fighters killed 27 Iraqi policemen, including two police commanders. In November, at least 166 Iraqi civilians, police, and soldiers were killed in violence across the country, according to the Government of Iraq.

Strength: In Iraq, membership is estimated between 1,000 and 2,000, making it the largest Sunni extremist group in Iraq. Membership in Syria is unknown, though it is likely a small force within the larger Syrian armed opposition.

Location/Area of Operation: AQI's operations are predominately Iraq-based, but it has perpetrated attacks in Jordan. In Syria, al-Nusrah Front has claimed attacks in several major city centers. The group maintains a logistical network throughout the Middle East, North Africa, Iran, South Asia, and Europe.

Funding and External Aid: AQI receives most of its funding from a variety of businesses and criminal activities within Iraq.

NCTC

Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI)—also known as the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI)—was established in April 2004 by long-time Sunni extremist Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi, who the same year pledged his group's allegiance to Usama Bin Laden. Targeting Coalition forces and civilians by such tactics as vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices (VBIEDs), suicide bombers, and executions of hostages by beheading and other means, AQI attempted to pressure countries and foreign companies to leave Iraq, push Iraqis to stop supporting the United States and the Iraqi Government, and attract additional cadre to its ranks.

AQI expanded its targeting outside of Iraq in August 2005 by attempting a rocket attack on a US Navy ship in the Port of Aqaba, Jordan, and in November 2005 with the bombing of three hotels in Amman that left 67 dead and more than 150 injured. Al-Zarqawi was killed in a US airstrike on 7 June 2006. The new leader of AQI, Abu Ayyub al-Masri, announced in October 2006 the formation of the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI), led by Iraqi national Abu Umar al-Baghdadi, in an attempt to politicize AQI's terrorist activities and place an "Iraqi face" on their efforts.

In 2007 AQI's continued targeting and repression of Sunni civilians caused a widespread backlash—known as the Sunni Awakening—against the group. The development of the Awakening Councils—composed primarily of Sunni tribal and local community leaders—coincided with a surge in Coalition forces and Iraqi Government operations that denied AQI its safehavens, restricting the organization's freedom of movement and resulting in a decreased attack tempo beginning in mid-2007.

High-profile attacks in 2009 and 2010 demonstrated the group's relevance in the wake of the Coalition withdrawal from Iraqi cities in 2009 and efforts to posture itself to take advantage of the changing security environment, although Abu Ayyub al-Masri and Abu Umar al-Baghdadi were killed in April 2010, marking a significant loss for the organization.

Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi became AQI's next leader, and the group has continued conducting high-profile attacks in Iraq and participating in global violent extremism. The most violent day of attacks claimed by AQI in more than a year occurred on 5 January 2012, when terrorists employing suicide bombers and car bombs killed at least 72 people and wounded at least 147. The group's official spokesperson in January 2012 made vague threats against Americans everywhere.

AQI reaffirmed its support for al-Qaeda and Ayman al-Zawahiri following Usama Bin Laden's death in May 2011. The arrests the same month of two AQI-affiliated Iraqi refugees in Kentucky highlight the potential threat inside the United States from people associated with AQI.

In an assessment by Kenneth Katzman of the Congressional Research Service issued in December 2013, he described Al Qaeda as follows:⁵¹¹

The primary Sunni militant group is Al Qaeda in Iraq, which currently operates under the name of the Islamic State of Iraq and Sham (Syria, ISIS). The leader of AQ-I/ISIS is Abu Bakr Al Baghdadi. U.S. officials estimated in November 2011 that there might be 800-1,000 AQ-I/ISIS members, of which some are involved in media or operations finance.... An antecedent of AQI/ ISIS was named by the United States as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) in March 2004 and the designation applies to AQ-I/ISIS. AQ-I/ISIS appears primarily focused on influencing the future of Iraq and increasingly also Syria, although some past attacks in Jordan have been attributed to the group. In October 2012, Jordanian authorities disrupted an alleged plot by AQI/ ISIS to bomb multiple targets in Amman, Jordan, possibly including the U.S. Embassy there. AQ-I/ISIS is extensively involved in the Syria conflict, as discussed later, and Baghdadi reportedly has relocated to Syria full time. However, the group does not appear to have close links to remaining senior Al Qaeda leaders believed mostly still in Pakistan or to Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) in Yemen.

Attacks in Iraq attributed to AQ-I/ISIS have escalated significantly since the Hawija incident of April 23, 2013. According to some experts, AQ-I/ISIS is now able to carry out about 40 mass casualty attacks per month, much more than the 10 per month of 2010, and many AQ-I/ISIS attacks now span multiple cities.¹⁸ As of late 2013, experts say that AQ-I/ISIS also has been asserting control of territory, particularly in restive and overwhelmingly Sunni Anbar province.... Press reports and Iraqi officials say the group maintains some training camps in the province, particularly in areas close to the Syria border. A stark indication of AQ-I/ISIS's increased freedom of action came on July 21, 2013, when the group attacked prisons at Abu Ghraib and Taji; the Taji attack failed but the attacks on Abu Ghraib freed about 800 prisoners, including several hundred purported AQ-I/ISIS members. Iraq recaptured or killed about 20% of those who escaped, but the attack on the heavily fortified Abu Ghraib—involving the use of suicide attackers and conventional tactics—shook confidence in the ISF. The head of the National Counterterrorism Center, Matt Olsen, told Congress on November 14, 2013, that AQ-I/ISIS is the strongest it has been since its peak in 2006.²⁰

It is not known the extent to which Sunni oppositionists who have taken up arms against the government in April 2013 are working with AQ-I/ISIS, if at all. Doing so could tarnish the image of the demonstrators. Some experts say that AQ-I/ISIS is increasingly building alliances with Sunni tribal leaders and has adjusted its message in 2013 to try to win more Sunni political support. Other experts say that many Iraqi Sunni tribal leaders continue to shun AQ-I/ISIS and senior Sunni Iraqi political leaders, even those most opposed to Maliki, tend to forcefully denounce AQ-I/ISIS attacks. During his visit to Washington, DC, during October 29-November 1, 2013, Maliki attributed virtually all the ongoing violence in Iraq to “terrorists” affiliated with AQI/ ISIS, and downplayed the broader political perceptions of Sunnis as a source of unrest....

Syrian Spillover & Al Qaeda's Iraqi-Syrian Merger

It is clear from virtually every source that that Al Qaeda in Iraq now plays the main role in the stream of non-state actor attacks on Shi'ite and Kurdish targets in Iraq and that the Islamic State of Iraq” – now sometimes referred to as the Islamic State of Iraq and al Sham (ISIS) -- has grown stronger both because of the marginalization Sunnis in Iraqi politics and the impact of the Syrian civil war. The flow of Sunni money and volunteers into Syria has interacted with Iraq's domestic politics to move money and volunteers into Iraq as well as into Syria.^{512 513},

There is an equal consensus that the civil war in Syria has contributed to contributing to the rise in violence in Iraq because of both the flow of Iraqi and foreign Shi'ite volunteers to Assad's side and the flow of Iraqi Sunni volunteers to the Sunni side in Syria plus the flow Sunni foreign volunteers that enter Syria through Iraq.

It has also led to a somewhat tentative merger of Al Qaeda's Syrian and Iraqi branches. Al Qaeda in Iraq announced a merger with Syria's Al Nusra Front, an offshoot of Al Qaeda's Islamic State of Iraq (ISI) in April 2013.^{514 515} These ties to the Al Nusra Front were important because the

Front had carried out several high-profile bombings against Assad forces in Damascus and Aleppo relatively early in the Syrian uprising, gaining it prominence, and with it the ability to recruit more easily as it spearheads the rebellion against Assad.⁵¹⁶

The merger, however, has proved to be uncertain and unstable. It was initiated by the head of Al Qaeda in Iraq, Abu Bakr al Baghdadi (also known as Abu Dua), but it was rejected by some elements of the Nusra Front like its leader, Abu Mohammed al Julani. Al Julani viewed the merger as an attempt to dilute his forces and subordinate his command.⁵¹⁷

This led the leader of Al Qaeda central, Ayman al-Zawahri, to intervene by calling on both parties to “stop arguing in this dispute” and restore the Nusra Front’s independence.⁵¹⁸ Zawahri is reported to have said that, “*The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant* is canceled, and work continues under the name the *Islamic State of Iraq*,” adding, “The Nusra Front for the People of the Levant is an independent branch.”⁵¹⁹

Nevertheless, sources like the *Long War Journal* reported that militants from Al Qaeda’s Iraqi and Syrian wings were still fighting together against Assad’s Alewite troops in Syria in July 2013.⁵²⁰ The Islamic State of Iraq also continued to operate under this expanded banner.⁵²¹ Moreover, *The New York Times* reported on August 15, 2013 that, “The leader of Al Qaeda’s Iraq affiliate, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, and other senior members of the group are operating from Syria, according to the State Department.”⁵²²

An example of Al Qaeda’s success in coordinating its efforts in Syria occurred in early August 2013 when anti-Assad rebels “dominated” by Al Qaeda seized a critical military airport in northern Syria, effectively cutting off one of Assad’s main supply lines. The Syrian Opposition Coalition announced the airport was “liberated” by a coalition of rebel groups, including the Al Qaeda-affiliated Islamic State of Iraq and the Al Nusra Front.⁵²³

By December 2013, however, the tensions between the Al Nusra Front and Al Qaeda in Iraq, and AQIs effort to create a merger with Syrian fighters called the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIS), reached a new level of violence. Elements of the Al Nusra front and other Sunni Islamic extremist groups attack the AQI/ISIS bases in western Syria at the same time AQI/ISIS launched attacks on Fallujah and Ramadi in Anbar in Iraq. They initially scored significant gains, but AQI/ISIS fought back and regained most of its positions.

The State Department’s Human Rights report released in February of 2014, stated:⁵²⁴

Spillover from the conflict in Syria affected the country. For example, on March 5, AQI/ISIL gunmen ambushed and killed 48 Syrian Army soldiers and nine Iraqi guards near the Syrian border in Anbar Province. The Syrian soldiers allegedly had sought temporary refuge and medical treatment in Iraq, according to local and international press. On September 29, AQI/ISIL attacked the Asayish (the Kurdistan regional government’s internal security force) headquarters in Erbil using VBIEDs and small arms. The attack killed at least six persons and wounded more than 60 others. AQI/ISIL stated that the attack was revenge for alleged Kurdistan regional government support for Syrian Kurds fighting the AQI-affiliated al-Nusra Front in Syria.

The only thing clear in March 2014 was that the fighting between the Al Nusra Front and AQI/ISIS so serious that it was weakening an already weak rebel position in fighting Assad, and made it harder for AQI/ISIS to have an impact on Iraq and the situation in Anbar. This seem to favor both Maliki and the rise of Iranian influence in Iraq, Syria, and the region – but such an outcome was still far too uncertain to predict..

Al Qaeda's Growing Strength in 2013

In contrast, the previous analysis of the patterns of violence in Iraq has shown that AQI/ISIS's strength in Iraq grew steadily during the course of 2012 and 2013. There is no way to determine how strong AQI/ISIS became because the Maliki government took every opportunity to blame AQI for every major incident or case of violence. It labeled legitimate and peaceful Sunni protests and opposition as the acts of "terrorists" that it directly or indirectly linked to Al Qaeda.

In contrast, the UN and NGO organizations that attempted to analyze Iraqi violence normally did not attempt to label the source by sect, ethnicity, or organization. Moreover, many media sources used Al Qaeda as a generic term for terrorist violence – sometimes without careful consideration as to the location and target of an act of violence that occurred under conditions where it seemed more likely that it was a Shi'ite attack or the product of local power struggles and violence.

It is still clear from the sheer volume of reporting, however, that Al Qaeda did grow steadily in power, size, and influence. Many acts of violence were followed by credible AQI public claims of responsibility, and there was also enough reliable reporting and analysis to show that AQI was having growing success.

A short summary of even few such reports illustrates the trends involved:

- July 23, 2013: NBC News reports that, "Iraq returns to civil war? Al Qaeda group claims Abu Ghraib prison attack, "when Al Qaeda-linked militants claim responsibility for an attack on Iraq's Abu Ghraib jail that frees key AQI leaders up to 500 militants following the deaths of 250 Iraqis in 10 days of violence."⁵²⁵
- September 22, 2013, Al Arabiya and AFP report that Abu-Abdallah al-Libi, a top commander the AQI front group, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), has been killed on Sunday in Idlib in Northwestern Syria, and that AQI has had new volunteers and funds as a result of its role in the Syria civil war.⁵²⁶
- November 14, 2013: Associated Press reports that Matt Olsen, the head of the US National Counterterrorism Center has testified that al-Qaeda in Iraq has increased the pace of attacks this year and is the strongest it's been since a peak in 2006.⁵²⁷
- January 2, 2014: ABC News reports following Iraqi Security Force attacks on Sunni protest leaders in Anbar that the Iraqi Interior Ministry in Baghdad had said half of the Anbar city of Fallujah was now controlled by Al Qaeda linked groups, the other by armed tribesman.⁵²⁸

Jonathan Masters and Zachary Laub of the Council on foreign Relations summarized the reemergence and rise of al Qaeda as follows in late October 2013:⁵²⁹

Many analysts say heavy-handed actions taken by the Maliki government to consolidate power in the wake of the U.S. withdrawal have alienated much of the Sunni minority and provided AQI with potent propaganda. In 2012 and 2013, violence attributed to AQI intensified, highlighting the group's attempts to exploit widening sectarian cleavages. According to a report by the Congressional Research Service [PDF], there were roughly a dozen days in 2012 on which the group executed multi-city attacks that killed at least twenty-five Iraqis. On at least four of those days, coordinated attacks left more than a hundred Iraqis dead.

Since Sunni protests in Anbar and other provinces began in December 2012, car bombings and suicide attacks intensified, with coordinated attacks regularly targeting Shiite markets, cafes, and mosques. Over six thousand civilians were killed between November 2012 and September 2013, the United Nations estimates, with Baghdad bearing the brunt of violence. Meanwhile, most Sunnis have denounced the bloodshed.

In July, ISIS fighters orchestrated bold attacks on two prisons outside Baghdad (Abu Ghraib and Taji) that freed more than five hundred inmates, including top al-Qaeda militants. Interpol described the incidents as "a major threat to global security." In August, the International Crisis Group warned that the country verged on civil war.

Meanwhile, the civil war in neighboring Syria is drawing Sunni jihadist fighters to join the rebellion against the regime of Bashar al-Assad, which is dominated by the Alewite sect, a minority Shiite group. ISIS has been active in Syria's northern and eastern provinces, where it has taken administrative control of some towns, providing services while imposing its ultraconservative brand of Islamic law. While al-Qaeda-linked groups in Syria have feuded among themselves and with the secular

Experts note that it's difficult to assess AQI's size, and approximations have fluctuated greatly over the years. Terrorism analysts estimated some 15,000 fighters before numbers dropped off precipitously with the onset of the Sunni tribal backlash in 2006 and the U.S. troop surge of 2007. According to CSIS, more than 11,000 AQI fighters were killed or captured by early 2008. As the Pentagon prepared to withdraw its final contingent of troops in late 2011, defense officials estimated AQI had some 800 to 1,000 fighters remaining. However, less than a year later, Iraqi officials said AQI ranks doubled to some 2,500, noting that counterterrorism operations "had been negatively affected by the U.S. pullout."

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... Experts say supporters in the region, including those based in Jordan, Syria, and Saudi Arabia, provided the bulk of past funding. Prior to his death, a great deal of operational funding was provided by Zarqawi's support network. AQI has also received financing from Tehran (despite the fact that al-Qaeda is a Sunni organization), according to documents confiscated in 2006 from Iranian Revolutionary Guards operatives in northern Iraq.

...But the bulk of al-Qaeda's financing, experts say, comes from internal sources like smuggling, extortion, and other crime. AQI has relied in recent years on funding and manpower from internal recruits [PDF]. In Mosul, an important AQI stronghold, the group extorts taxes from businesses small and large, netting upwards of \$8 million a month, according to some estimates.

An innovative study by Jessica Lewis of the Institute of the Study of War (ISW) – *Al Qaeda in Iraq Resurgent* -- went further and attempted to outline both Al Qaeda's evolving strategy and estimates its number of attacks. Ms. Lewis was a former US army Intelligence officer serving in Iraq, and a study she wrote -- and that the ISW issued in September 2013 -- described AQI as becoming steadily more capable, resilient, and vigorous. Her study focused on the patterns in AQI/ISIS attacks, and saw its goal as one of steadily expanding its control of Iraqi territory with four major phases.⁵³⁰

This part of AQI/ISIS activity during 2013 was called the "Breaking the Walls Campaign." AQI/ISIS's main method of attack involved conducting waves of coordinated VBIED attacks and it lasted from July 21, 2012 to July 23, 2013. According to Ms. Lewis, it had four phases:

- July 2012- September 2012 when AQI's demonstrated the capability to execute repeated large-scale VBIED waves across Iraq. The waves from July 23, 2012 and September 9, 2012, involved 30 and 21 VBIED s spread over a wide geographic area from Basra to Mosul, and showed AQI's ability to attack on broad and intense level. They initially involved large teams of fighters but came to focus more on VBIED bombings without sacrificing fighters or requiring long preparation times.
- November 2012 –February 2013. This phase started with an operational pause in VBIED and prison activity as AQI absorbed the fugitives of its attack on the Tikrit Tasfirat prison, followed by a significant increase in VBIED activity that may have been made possible by growing strength and better organization.
- February 2013 – May -2013, as AQI moved from a nation-wide VBIED campaign to one focuses on Baghdad and other population clusters, with waves of VBIED waves coming every 30 days.

- A VBIED campaign after May 15, 2013, when the number of bombings quadrupled but were still focused on Shi'a targets in Baghdad.

Ms. Lewis's analysis indicates that the campaign shifted back from a focus on Syria to one focuses on Iraq in April 23, 2013 when the ISF began to actively attack Sunni protestors, after rebels conquered Al-Raqqa -- a provincial capital in Syria -- and after AQI established the Islamic State of Iraq and al Sham (ISIS) that attempted to combined its operations in Iraq and Syria on April 8, 2013.

This timing tracks with the rising violence in Anbar and other Sunni-dominated areas. It is much harder, however, to establish the exact nature of AQI's links to Syria, and its interactions with All of these events have interacted to some degree with Al Qaeda "central" in Pakistan, Al Qaeda's networks in Yemen and Saudi Arabia, its networks in the Maghreb, and its ties to Sunni violent extremism in Central Asia, the Horn, and Sub-Saharan Africa.

Ms. Lewis updated some of her work in November 2013 --, and estimated with considerable foresight that, "At this time, it is likely that the Za'ab Triangle, northern Diyala, and northern Babel province are among the zones in Iraq where AQI is exercising control. We may therefore next see attacks project upon ISF positions in Baiji at the southern tip of the Za'ab Triangle and Samarra in southern Salah ad-Din province, as a western expansion of the Diyala corridor. The plan of attack to counter AQI should orient around the three aforementioned centers of gravity once effective provisions for security in Iraq's major cities have been established. It is important to recognize that Baghdad, Mosul, and Kirkuk are still attack zones, and AQI will achieve success if militant groups of any persuasion seize control of neighborhoods in these cities."⁵³¹

- **Figure 31** shows open-source estimates by Jessica Lewis of the Institute of War, provided in a report issues in November 2013, that highlight the range of lethal AQI initiated attacks across Iraq.⁵³² The patterns in this Figure, as well as Figure 15, show a striking resemblance to similar estimates USF-I made during the fighting in the mid-2000s, as well as to the "rat lines" of support that AQI had coming from Syria.
- **Figure 32** shows a related ISW estimate of the geographic spread of AQI attacks in just one month, January 2013, and ability to control and "hold" territory through zones of "attack", "support", and "control".⁵³³
- **Figure 33** shows SIGIR open-source estimates for late 2013, although many of the attacks shown cannot be specifically attributed to AQI.

At the same time, AQI broadened the range of other efforts in the summer of 2013. It put more effort into winning influence in Anbar in the West, Mosul in the Northwest and dispute provinces like Diyala. This included a strategy of creating networks that remained in given areas, gave AQI growing control over elements of the local population, sometimes gave AQI serious influence over the actions of some elements of the Iraqi security forces – particularly the local police.

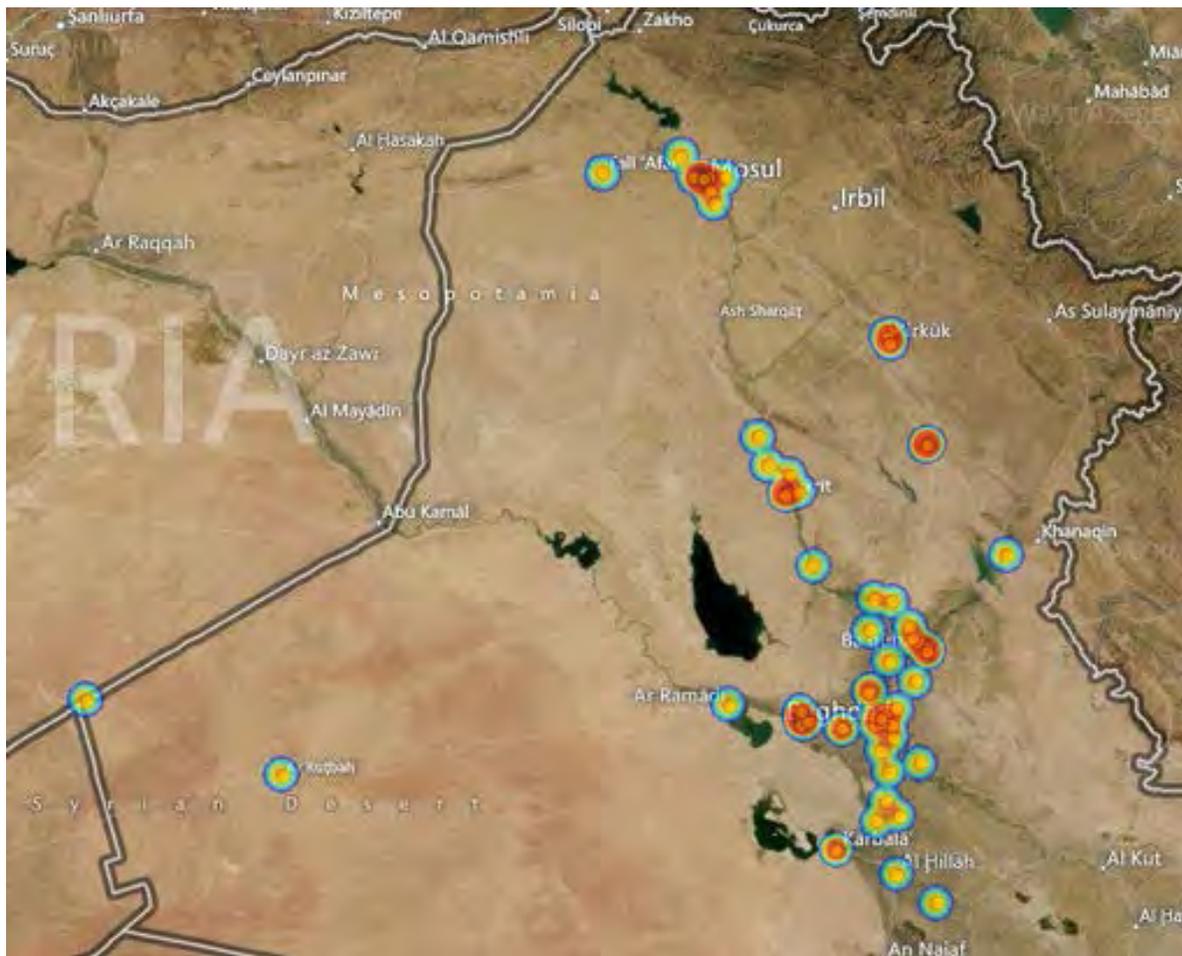
AQI built up new financing networks in areas like Mosul Province, tried to rebuild relations with Sunni tribal grouping in Anbar and elsewhere and infiltration or establish direct contacts with peaceful Sunni protest groups. These efforts were aid by the excesses and repression of ISF under the control of the Maliki government. As Ms. Lewis and other sources note, they involved a new series of campaigns that reached into areas near Baghdad like Baquba, to Salah ad-Din in the northeast, and in Babil to the south of Baghdad.⁵³⁴ They also involved a growing focus on killings, extortion and intimidation in addition to IEDs, and brought in more fighters who had served with extremist Sunni Salafist forces in Syria.

At the same time, AQI/ISIS increased its presence in Anbar in Western Iraq, and made use of its new facilities in Syria. It evidently did reach out to Sunni tribal leaders in the West, and fighters

in the Sons of Iraq. It also formed cadres of trained fighters that had trucks with heavy machine guns and mortars, gaining a level of armed mobility it not demonstrated in combat even during the peak fighting in 2005-2008.

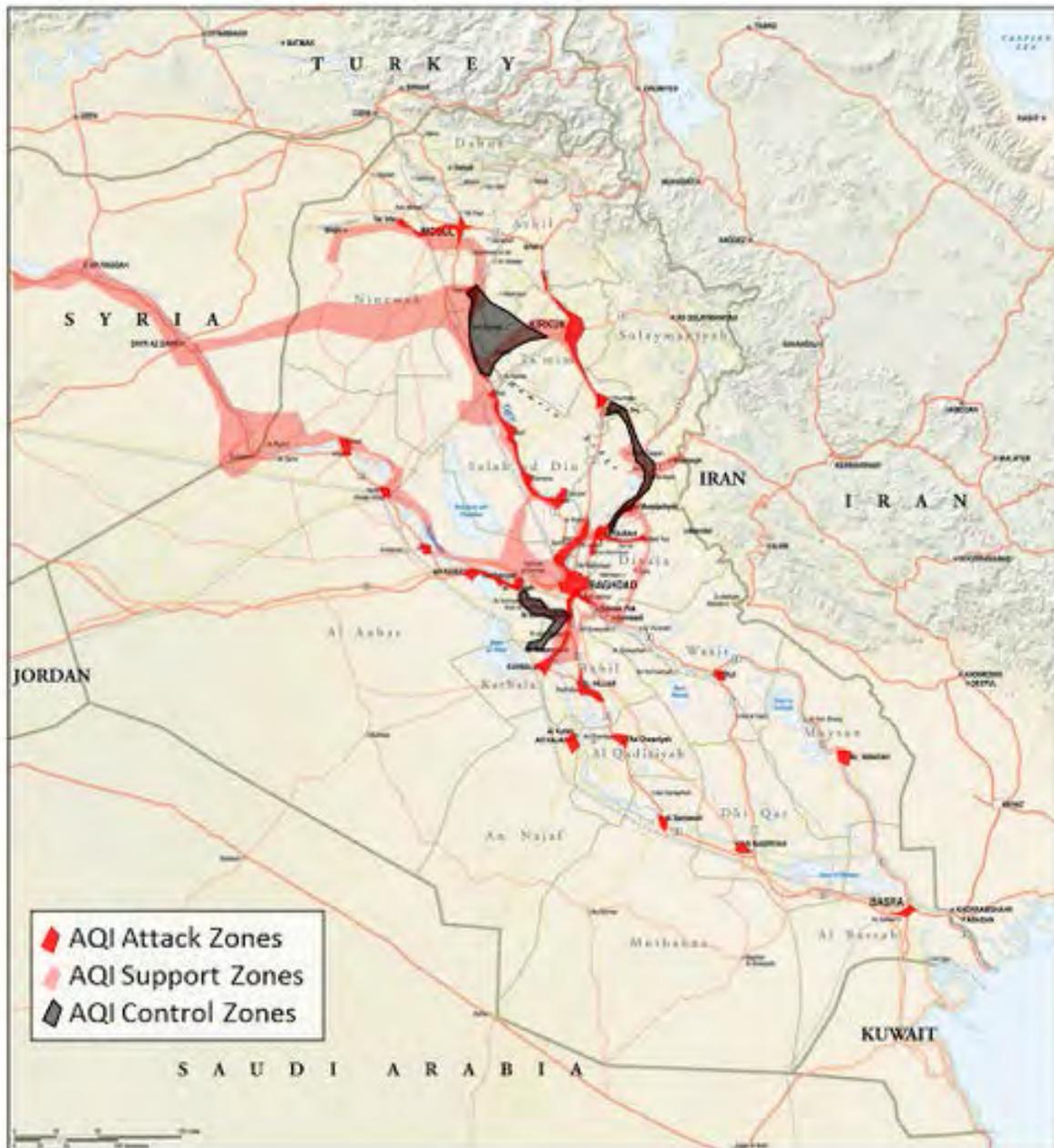
It was these shifts that allowed it to invade Fallujah and Ramadi in late December 2013, and exploit the power vacuum Maliki left when he removed the army as a result of popular anger against its use against Sunni protest camps. Maliki effectively empowered AQI/ISIS by arresting Ahmed al-Alwani and killing his brother on December 28, 2013, and by using a large-scale military operation to shut down the large anti-government protest camp near Ramadi two days later. Many of the Sunni tribes then mobilized their fighters, and the resulting fighting that persuaded Maliki to withdraw the army from Anbar's cities and to try to rely on a weak and corrupt Iraqi police force. As a result, Al Qaeda was able to occupy key parts of Fallujah and Ramadi a force of some 75 to 100 armed trucks and less than 1,000 fighters.

Figure 31: AQI Assassinations, High-Profile, and Targeted Attacks across Iraq, January 2013



Source: Institute for the Study of War, “2013 Iraq Weekly Update #4: The Islamic State of Iraq Increases Spectacular Attacks” January 24, 2013.

Figure 32: AQI Assassinations, High-Profile, and Targeted Attacks across Iraq, January 2013

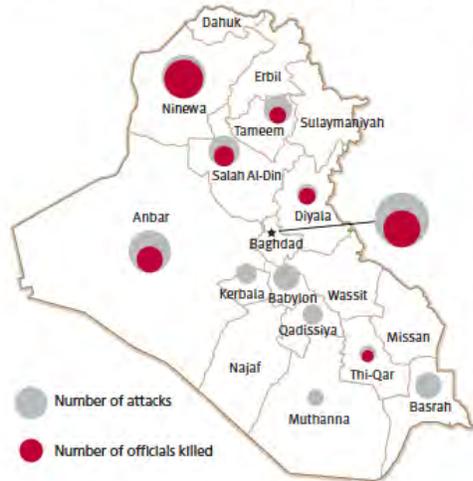


Source: Institute for the Study of War, "Further Indications of al-Qaeda's Advance in Iraq: Iraq Update #39," November 15, 2013.

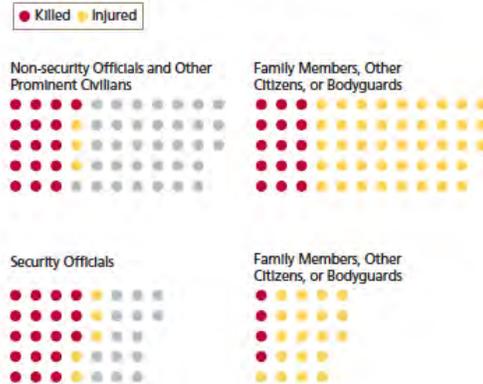
Figure 33: SIGIR Estimate of AQI-Dominated Assassinations, High-Profile, and Targeted Attacks across Iraq in 2012 – Part One

SELECTED ACTS OF APPARENT TARGETED VIOLENCE AGAINST SENIOR OFFICIALS, 4/1/2012–6/30/2012

Number of Attacks and Officials Killed, by Province



Officials Targeted, Killed, and Injured, and Related Casualties

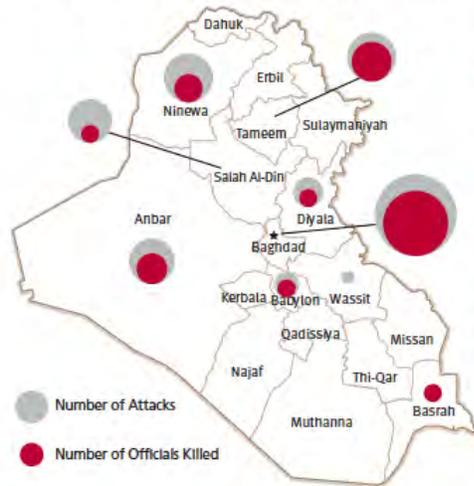


Note: This table provides examples of assassinations, attempted assassinations, and other small-scale acts of violence that appear to have been aimed at specific persons or groups this quarter. It does not purport to be all-inclusive, nor presume to imply the attackers' respective motives.

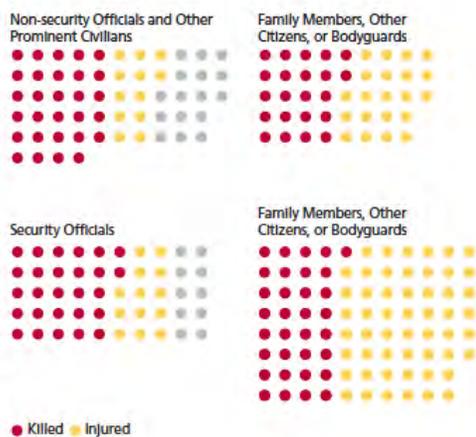
Source: SIGIR analysis of open-source documents in Arabic and English, 4/1/2012–6/30/2012.

SELECTED ACTS OF APPARENT TARGETED VIOLENCE AGAINST SENIOR OFFICIALS, 7/1/2012–9/30/2012

Number of Attacks and Officials Killed, by Province



Officials Targeted, Killed, or Injured and Related Casualties

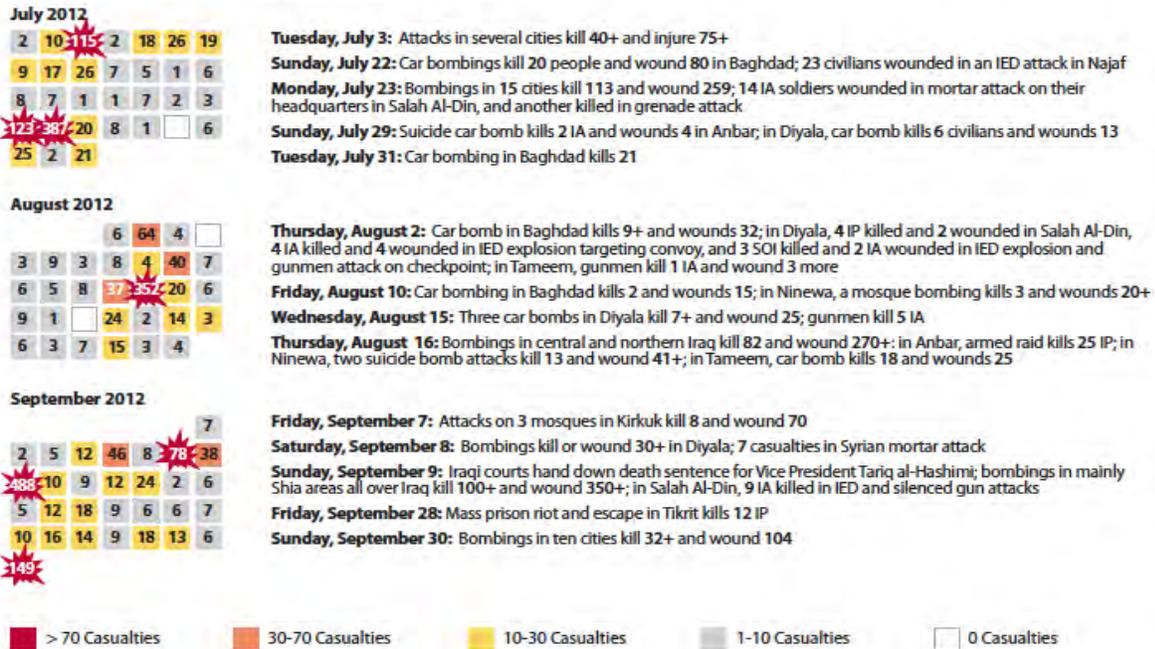


Note: This table provides examples of assassinations, attempted assassinations, and other small-scale acts of violence that appear to have been aimed at specific persons or groups this quarter. It does not purport to be all-inclusive, nor presume to imply the attackers' respective motives.

Source: SIGIR analysis of open-source documents in Arabic and English, 7/1/2012–9/30/2012.

Figure 33: SIGIR Estimate of AQI-Dominated Assassinations, High-Profile, and Targeted Attacks across Iraq in 2012 – Part Two

PATTERNS OF VIOLENCE, 7/1/2012–9/30/2012



Source: Special Inspector for Iraqi Reconstruction (SIGIR), Quarterly Report, July 2012, p. 68; and Special Inspector for Iraqi Reconstruction (SIGIR), Quarterly Report, October 2012, pp. 72-73.

Al Qaeda/ISIS, Its Power Grab in Syria, and the January 2014 Crisis in Iraq

It is too soon to determine how serious a threat the reemergence of AQI/ISIS will prove to be. It is clear, however, that Maliki's failure to give Sunnis a proper share of power and the country's wealth, authoritarianism, and repression produced a massive popular reaction that greatly aided AQI/ISIS.

The problem lies in distinguishing the role of some 3,000-5,000 AQI fighters from the far broader level of Sunni resistance – much of it armed -- to years of pressure from the Maliki regime. At least as of early January 2014, it was clear that some Sunnis in Fallujah, Ramadi, and the rest of Anbar remained loyal to the central government, and that most others wanted moderate and effective government, were not religious extremists, and saw AQI/ISIS as a threat along with the Maliki government.

It was also clear that the AQI abuses that had led many Sunni tribes and leaders in Anbar and other parts of Iraq to rise up against Al Qaeda and form the Sons of Iraq had not ended, and that many - - if not the majority – of Iraqi Sunnis rejected AQI's religious extremism and political and social goals.

AQI's broader ambitions to control the Jihadist movement in Syria have created related problems. By late 2012, AQI's efforts in Syria led to clashes between the forces of what AQI was now calling ISIS and Syrian elements linked to Al Qaeda like the Al Nusra Front. Al Qaeda central became deeply disturbed over this fighting and AQI's effort to take over the Jihadist movement in Syria and merge it into the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS or Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) by the spring of 2013.

The rivalry and clashes between the Iraqi and Syrian groups linked to Al Qaeda reached the point in June 2013, where Ayman al-Zawahri -- the heir to Bin Laden and leader of Al Qaeda "central" in Pakistan -- directed AQI/ISIS affiliates in Syria to withdraw to Iraq and leave operations in Syria to Syrian fighters.⁵³⁵ Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the leader of AQI broke openly with Zawahri, and stated that declared AQI fighters would stay in Syria "as long as we have a vein that pumps and an eye that blinks."⁵³⁶

A new major round of fighting broke out between the Iraqi and Syrian elements of Al Qaeda in Iraq and Syria in late December 2013. At the same time, AQI/ISIS was gaining in Anbar -- and the *New York Times* and Al Jazeera were reporting that it or its affiliate (now sometimes called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) controlled Fallujah -- AQI already faced serious resistance from Sunnis in Ramadi and significant resistance even in Fallujah.

Reporting by Liz Sly in the *Washington Post* noted,⁵³⁷

The fighting began Friday and spread Saturday after ISIS released the body, bearing marks of torture, of a popular commander from the Ahrar al-Sham brigade, an Islamist group that is not allied with al-Qaeda. But opposition has been growing more broadly to the brutal tactics and authoritarian behavior of the extremists, who have alienated citizens with their harsh interpretation of Islamic justice, including beheadings, lashings and bans on smoking and music...A wide range of rebel units participated in the fighting across the provinces of Idlib and Aleppo, which were the first to eject government forces after Syrians rose up against the Assad regime in 2011. Units of the newly formed Islamic Front as well as more moderate brigades loosely affiliated with the umbrella Free Syrian Army have joined the fighting.

... The rebels killed three top ISIS commanders, from Chechnya, Tunisia and Saudi Arabia, and detained more than 170 fighters, according to Abdulrahman al- Jalloud, an activist in Bab al- Hawa....The rebels also freed scores of Syrians who had been detained by ISIS, he added...Much of the fighting against ISIS was carried out by the Syrian Revolutionary Front, another newly formed alliance that includes secular brigades seeking to present themselves as a bulwark against al-Qaeda....The ISIS extremists "have lost the support of the people because they treated them badly. They were cutting off people's heads all of the time to scare them in the name of religion," said Col. Qassim Saadeddine, a spokesman for the Revolutionary Front.

The fighting between AQI/ISIS and other Jihadist elements in Syria reached the point in late January 2014, where Zawahiri asked the two factions -- which included the Al Nusra Front and other groups like Ahrar al-Sham -- "to stop the fighting between the brothers of jihad and Islam immediately," to form a commission to resolve their differences and to establish "a mechanism to compel everyone to abide" by the commission's decisions.

In a message that might have applied just as equally to the divisions between the more moderate Sunni factions in Syria, Zawahiri said, "your unity, association and gathering is more important to us than any organizational link...(act) in one row-like, solid structure in confronting your sectarian, secularist enemy (the Syrian government which is supported by) "Iran, Russia and China. What made our hearts bleed . . . is the hostile sedition, which has intensified among the ranks of the Mujahideen of Islam...Therefore, we call all our brothers in in all the jihadi groups . . . to seek to stop this sedition, which no one knows but Allah with what it will end."⁵³⁸

The fighting between AQI/ISIS and other pro-AQI central faction continued, however, and Zawahiri went even further. In January of 2014, members of AQI battling government forces in Fallujah reached out to local Iraqis to join in their fight for control of the city.⁵³⁹ Government forces and AQI-linked fighters battled for control of the primarily Sunni region west of Baghdad since government authorities dismantled an anti-government protest camp at the end of 2013. Residents in Fallujah reported that AQI militants distributed pamphlets urging residents to “join the fight, give money or open their homes as shelters” in the battle against Iraqi forces.⁵⁴⁰

On February 2, 2014, Ayman al-Zawahiri officially cut the ties between AQI central in Pakistan and ISIS – at least to the extent that ISIs operated in Syria. He issued a written statement accusing the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria of not working with other groups, naming its own leaders and trying to impose its own authority, and he called upon all groups in Syria to work together to spare the blood of Muslims and to remain loyal to the teachings of Osama bin Laden.⁵⁴¹

At the same time, Zawahiri effectively made Jabhat al-Nusra, which many Syrians saw as more moderate than ISIS, AQI’s the sole representative of al-Qaeda in Syria. It also created serious questions as to whether AQI central now had any ties to a movement in Iraq. AQI/ISIS seemed to have gone from “franchise” to independent splinter group, and one that seem to have more power – at least at the time – than AQI central.⁵⁴²

This feuding undermined AQI/ISIS’s ability to take firm control of areas in Anbar. At the same time, many of the comments about Al Qaeda’s actions from local Sunnis made it apparent that AQI might not have not learned enough – or moderated enough – to gain mass support or a chance at lasting power. These problems and tensions indicated that AQI/ISIS could only make major gains in occupying or controlling Sunni territory where the government made enough mistakes to empower it, and that even then, it faced serious resistance from Sunni fighters in both Syria and Iraq that did not support its extremism.⁵⁴³

At the same time, one of ironies of the fighting in January 2014 was that Maliki was forced to try to bring back the same fighters in the sons of Iraq that he had effectively excluded from the Iraqi security forces and that now had only small arms to deal with AQI/ISIS’s heavy machine guns and mortars. This had mixed results. A *Washington Post* interview quoted a senior Iraqi security official, speaking on background, as saying that,⁵⁴⁴

“If the government was serious about wanting to support the tribes, they could clean up in three days...All [the tribes] need is fuel, ammunition and medium-sized weapons...But the alliance between the government and the tribes is a shaky one. Some of the Sunni tribal members had spearheaded a protest movement against the government that resulted in demonstrations and sit-ins in Anbar last year...The government is worried that if they give the tribes weapons in the day, the same weapons will be used to shoot them at night.”

The official only spoke a day after Iraqi Sunni forces, Iraqi special forces, and the Iraqi air force had failed in an attempt retake Fallujah and Ramadi. This makes it particularly striking that the official stated that only 120 ISIS fighters took Ramadi, while about 200 secured Fallujah, although he did say they had been joined by fighters from loosely affiliated “sleeper cells.”

Making Counterterrorism an Aid to Terrorism?

As has been discussed in detail in Chapter III, it is difficult to put the trends in AQI in broader historical perspective because so much of the unclassified reporting available focused on violent acts of terrorism and casualties, and ignored the actions of the Iraqi government and security forces

and relative level of political control and influence of the Iraqi government, violent opposition movements, and other elements.

Unfortunately, this approach to analyzing counterterrorism and counterinsurgency repeats the gross mistakes in intelligence assessment and analysis that made some key US and British experts focus only on terrorist threats and not their causes and the views of the people where they operated continued throughout the period between 2003 and 2011, and were repeated in Afghanistan. Terrorism and insurgency are both forms of largely political warfare whose success is not based on levels of violence, but relative progress in political influence and control.

Focusing on tactics and violence has its uses, but failing to focus on the political impact and result and to provide sophisticated net assessments of the combined mix of political and military actions on each side, and their resulting impact on the population, has led the US intelligence community and US military into mistake after mistake in both counterterrorism and counterinsurgency and left US field manuals half-written focuses on tactics that are recipe for losing a war.

These problems are compounded by focusing on the outcome of minor tactical clashes, and on terrorists instead of their impact and the political and economic mistakes of their opposition. The end result is to demonize terrorist movements like Al Qaeda, while exaggerating the value of largely meaningless trend data on tactical encounters. Vietnam showed a government can win virtually every military clash and still lose a war decisively at the tactical level, and both ISAF forces in Afghanistan the Maliki government and ISF forces in Iraq both still seem to need to learn this lesson.

Fortunately, US official views became more balanced even as the major crisis emerged over the AQI take-over in Anbar. Key US official like Secretary Kerry and Anthony Blinken publically stressed the need for basic reforms by the Maliki government within the limits imposed by *realpolitik*. Key Senators pushed for limits on US aid to Iraq and changes in the behavior of the Maliki government.

When Deputy Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern Affairs Brett McGurk visited Iraq in early January 2014, he met with national and local leaders from across the political spectrum to discuss the security situation in western Iraq. A press release from the US Embassy in Baghdad noted that.⁵⁴⁵

McGurk's itinerary included meetings with Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, Speaker Osama Nujaifi, Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari, Deputy Prime Minister Saleh Mutlaq, Deputy Prime Minister Husayn Shahrastani, head of the Supreme Iraqi Islamic Council, Ammar al-Hakim, and members of the Council of Representatives from the Iraqiyya and State of Law blocs. He also conferred with prominent leaders from Anbar province, including Governor Ahmed Khalaf, Sheikh Ahmed Abu Risha, and former Minister of Finance Rafa al-Issawi.

In all of these meetings, DAS McGurk confirmed the enduring U.S. commitment to the Government and people of Iraq in their efforts to isolate and defeat the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). He noted the encouraging trend in Ramadi where local leaders, working with tribes and supported with resources from Baghdad, have pushed ISIL to the outskirts of the city. He further noted the planning to separate ISIL and other militant groups from the population in Fallujah using a similar strategy while also accounting for the unique circumstances there. The United States, he emphasized, will provide all necessary and appropriate assistance to the Government of Iraq (GOI) under the Strategic Framework Agreement to help ensure that these efforts succeed.

In addition, McGurk stressed with all of these leaders that long-term stability requires a close fusion of security and political measures, as well as guarantees from the GOI that courageous and patriotic Iraqi citizens who stand to fight ISIL and other extremist groups be recognized and ultimately incorporated into

the formal security structures of the state. He further emphasized to all parties the importance of pursuing political initiatives and addressing the legitimate grievances of all communities within the framework of the Iraqi constitution.

The President of the UN Security Council showed a similar realism. He issued a statement on January 10, 2014 that addressed the need for changes in the behavior of the Maliki government and Iraqi security forces as much as it stressed the need to deal with AQI/ISIS.⁵⁴⁶

The Security Council deplores in the strongest terms the recent events in the cities of Ramadi and Fallujah in Anbar province in Iraq. The Security Council condemns the attacks that are being perpetrated by Al-Qaeda affiliate, the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), against the people of Iraq in an attempt to destabilize the country and region. The Security Council recognizes that Iraqi security forces, local police and tribes in Anbar province are showing great courage as they fight to defeat ISIL in their cities.

The Security Council urges the people of Iraq, including Iraqi tribes, local leaders, and Iraqi security forces in Anbar province, to continue, expand and strengthen their cooperation against violence and terror and it stresses the critical importance of continued national dialogue and unity. The Security Council welcomes comments from Grand Ayatollah Sistani welcoming internally displaced residents of Anbar to Najaf and Karbala, as well as the commitment of a number of communities - Sunni, Shia and Kurd - to meet the needs of the displaced.

The Security Council expresses its strong support for the continued efforts of the Iraqi Government to help meet the security needs of the entire population of Iraq. In this regard, the Security Council acknowledges the efforts of the Iraqi security forces and Iraqi local police, whose members are also being targeted and killed in ongoing attacks by terrorists.

The Security Council welcomes the commitment of the Government of Iraq in the protection of the civilian population in Fallujah and elsewhere and to the provision of humanitarian relief, and encourages the Government of Iraq to continue working with the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) and humanitarian agencies to ensure the delivery of humanitarian relief. The Security Council expresses concern about the impact of the violence on civilians, and encourages the safe passage of civilians trapped in conflict areas, as well as the safe return of internally displaced persons as conditions allow.

The Security Council stresses the critical importance of continued national dialogue and unity, an inclusive political process, the holding of free and fair elections in April 2014, and the right to peaceful protest as guaranteed under the Iraqi Constitution. The Security Council believes that this is vital to underpin a unified national stance against terrorism, and to ensure Iraq's long-term security.

The Security Council reaffirms the need to bring perpetrators, organizers, financiers and sponsors of these reprehensible acts of terrorism to justice, and urges all States, in accordance with their obligations under international law and relevant Security Council resolutions, to cooperate actively with Iraq authorities in this regard.

The Security Council reaffirms that ISIL (QE.J.115.04) is subject to the arms embargo and assets freeze imposed by Security Council resolutions 1267 (1999) and 2083 (2012), and underlines the importance of prompt and effective implementation of these measures.

The Security Council reaffirms the need to combat by all means, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts, and that any acts of terrorism are criminal and unjustifiable, regardless of their motivation, wherever, whenever and by whomsoever committed. The Security Council reminds States that they must ensure that measures taken to combat terrorism comply with all their obligations under international law, in particular international human rights, refugee and humanitarian law.

The Security Council reaffirms its support for the independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Iraq. The Security Council reiterates that no terrorist act can reverse the path towards peace, democracy and reconstruction in Iraq, which is supported by the people and the Government of Iraq and the international community.

The best statement of the situation at the end of January 2014, however, came directly from Brent McGurk, the Deputy Assistant for Iran and Iraq, Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, in testimony to the House Foreign Affairs Committee on February 5, 2014. DASD McGurk provided the first detailed official US view of what happened, and AQI/ISIS's actions in perspective relative to both the Maliki government and other violent factions.⁵⁴⁷

In both years, 2011 and 2012, Iraq remained a very violent country. By our counts, 4,400 Iraqis were killed each year, most in attacks by extremist groups led by al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI). While this violence was persistent and targeted, it did not threaten the stability of the state, or a rekindled civil war. Indeed, based on studies of historical parallels – civil wars and insurgencies – Iraq by 2012 had entered what is called a “low boil” stage of insurgency. A low boil insurgency reflects a level of violence that may not present a serious risk of state collapse, or rekindled broad scale reprisals, but rather a persistent tempo of attacks carried out by the hardened core of an insurgency – which, by historical examples, can take a decade to fizzle out.

These two years, 2011 and 2012, also witnessed the escalating civil war in Syria, inflamed sectarianism throughout the region – led by the Assad regime on one side, and prominent Sunni clerics on the other side – and the collapse of state authority in eastern Syria, leading to the rise of terrorist groups near the Iraq border.

The most organized and lethal of these groups – the al-Nusrah front and ISIL – were offshoots of AQI. They had different objectives: al-Nusrah was focused on the fight in Syria, whereas ISIL was focused on a more regional agenda, with an aim to carve out an Islamic caliphate stretching from Baghdad to Lebanon. These dueling objectives have at times required direct mediation by Osama Bin Laden's former deputy, and now global head of al-Qaeda, Ayman al Zawahiri. The debate has been a central focus among global jihadist networks, and has given ISIL, in particular, a global platform to propagate its agenda and recruit adherents.

Flush with resources, recruits, weapons, and training, ISIL slowly began to execute its strategy across the Syrian border in Iraq. Violence in Iraq ticked up towards the end of 2012, but did not accelerate until early 2013, with a marked rise in suicide bombers. All of these suicide bombers, we believe, are foreign fighters, recruited through extreme propaganda on the promise of paradise for killing other Muslims. Suicide bombers are a key data point we track, as they have a pernicious effect on the stability of Iraq, and demonstrate a sophisticated global network that is able to recruit, train, and deploy, human beings to commit suicide and mass murder. The suicide bombers are, in a twisted turn of logic, ISIL's most precious resource.

It was significant, therefore, that by early 2013, we began to see signs of ISIL shifting these resources from Syria to Iraq. In 2012, Iraq witnessed an average of 5-10 suicide attacks per month. By the summer of 2013, it was averaging 30-40 suicide attacks per month, and increasingly coordinated and effective attacks. On March 14, 2013, for example, five suicide bombers from ISIL took over the Iraqi Ministry of Justice in downtown Baghdad. This was the first in a series of highly sophisticated military-style operations throughout 2013, with suicide bombers used to clear a path, followed by well-trained fighters to take and hold an objective.

By the summer of 2013, ISIL suicide bombers struck regularly, focused primarily on Shia civilian targets (playgrounds, funerals, markets), but also Sunni areas (to contest territory) and Kurdish areas (to spark ethnic conflict). In November 2013, Iraq witnessed 50 suicide attacks, compared with only three in November 2012. These attacks had a devastating effect on political discourse in the country, further fueling mistrust from political leaders to ordinary citizens, and making the tangible reforms that Iraq needs to reconcile its society even harder to reach.

Indeed, the violence may appear indiscriminate – but it is not. From what we are now seeing, ISIL attacks are calculated, coordinated, and part of a strategic campaign led by its Syria-based leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. This campaign has the stated objective to cause the collapse of the Iraqi state and carve out a zone of governing control in the western regions of Iraq and eastern Syria (an area known as the “Jazeera”). To do this, they are now operating along three target areas:

First, attacking Shia civilians repeatedly and consistently, hoping to re-ignite a civil war and cause ordinary people to look to militias, not the state, for their protection. Adherents to ISIL's extreme ideology believe Shia should be killed based on their sect alone, and the suicide bombers seek populated areas to murder as many innocent people as possible. These are the vast majority of ISIL attacks.

Second, contesting territory in Sunni areas to assert dominance over local Sunni officials and tribes. Targeted assassinations and attacks increased in these areas as ISIL focused its resources inside Iraq. In one 30-day period between September and October of last year, for example, more than a dozen suicide bombers were used in assaults on three towns in Anbar province (Rawa, Rutbah, and Haditha).

Third, attacking the Iraqi Kurdistan Region (IKR) and disputed boundary areas in northern Iraq to stoke ethnic tensions and conflict. These attacks have proven that all parts of Iraq – and all Iraqis – face a common threat from ISIL. The thriving capital city of the IKR, Erbil, faced an attack in September similar to attacks seen in Baghdad earlier in the year: multiple suicide bombers followed by an infantry assault to hold hostages and temporarily control a government building.

By the end of 2013, suicide and vehicle-borne attacks initiated by ISIL returned to levels not seen since the height of AQI (its earlier incarnation) in 2007. Overall levels of violence, however, remain far below 2007 levels, demonstrating that to date reprisal attacks from Shia militias have been restrained, though the risks of such reprisals continue to rise as ISIL continues to attack Shia civilian areas.

At bottom, ISIL's strategy is sophisticated, patient, and focused. It will take a similar combination of sophistication, patience, and focus to combat it, and I will explain shortly what this strategy should look like, and how we intend to help the Iraqis increase the chances that 2014 can begin to arrest these 2013 trends.

While many aspects of the situation were still uncertain and then in flux, DASD McGurk provided the following description of the situation in Ramadi, Fallujah, and Western Iraq at the end of January 2014:⁵⁴⁸

On January 1, 2014, convoys of approximately 70-100 trucks with mounted heavy weapons and anti-aircraft guns, flying the black flag of al-Qaeda, entered the central cities of Fallujah and Ramadi. They deployed to key objectives, destroyed most police stations, and secured vital crossways. The police in both cities nearly disintegrated. The Iraqi army, deployed in camps outside the cities, engaged some armed vehicles but generally chose not to get drawn into urban fighting.

The domination of these central cities was a culmination of ISIL's 2013 strategy to govern territory and establish 7th-century Islamic rule. Across the border in Syria, ISIL has governed the city of Raqqa (with a population of 220,000) for most of the past year. In Iraq, ISIL sees Ramadi and Fallujah as their new Raqqa. In Fallujah, days after seizing central areas, ISIL declared the city part of an Islamic caliphate. This message, however, is not popular in Anbar – and has bred fierce resistance.

In Ramadi, in the hours after ISIL arrived in force, tribal leaders organized and asked for funding and arms from the central government to retake their streets and protect their population. The GOI responded with \$17 million to support urgent humanitarian assistance and reconstruction of areas damaged in fighting. It also began sending small and medium weapons to tribal fighters, with assurance that these fighters would be given full benefits of the state, as if they were soldiers.

I was in Iraq in early January as this effort got underway. In meetings with Maliki and other key leaders, I pressed the urgent message that without a broad base of support from the population in Ramadi it would be impossible to root out the hundreds of ISIL fighters who had taken up positions in strategic areas. I also discussed the situation with former leaders of the Anbar awakening, such as Sheikh Abu Risha, and local officials in Ramadi, including Governor Ahmed Khalaf, who were focused on organizing tribal fighters to oust ISIL from populated areas.

Over the first two weeks of January, these local and tribal leaders made requests to the central government for additional resources, weapons, and a common strategy to reclaim the streets from ISIL and other militant groups. The GOI dispatched the acting Defense Minister, Sadoun Dulaimi, to fulfill these requests and finalize a military and political plan. (Dulaimi is from Anbar and a member of one of its largest tribes. He has been in Ramadi nearly full-time since this crisis began.)

These coordinated efforts have begun to produce results. Fighting continues in the outskirts of Ramadi, but the central city is increasingly secure with a critical mass of tribes having pledged to fight ISIL to ensure that they cannot return. This quick turnaround in Ramadi, with serious and regular coordination between local

and national leaders, may provide a model for how we can best ensure that 2014 is a year in which the tide begins to turn once again against ISIL inside Iraq.

The Fallujah situation is far more serious, as hundreds of ISIL fighters have joined ranks with former insurgent groups to consolidate control of the inner city, and contest areas in small towns nearby. The Iraqi army is now working to establish a cordon from the outskirts of the city, in coordination with local tribes, but they face well-trained snipers armed with 50-caliber rifles. On January 26, approximately a dozen Iraqi soldiers were captured near Fallujah. Some were later paraded around the city in the back of a pickup truck flying the al-Qaeda flag. The next day, ISIL posted a video showing their gruesome execution, daring the army to enter the city.

The army, thus far, has not taken the bait. It remains on the city's outskirts, working to execute a strategy similar to what proved effective in Ramadi. There had been reports of army units randomly shelling Fallujah's neighborhoods, but Iraqi commanders have denied this (blaming ISIL), and tribal figures have since confirmed that military operations are being coordinated with local actors.

At this moment, Fallujah is the scene of a tense standoff. Some tribes are ready and preparing to fight ISIL, others are working with ISIL (and forming "tribal councils" with declared intention to fight the army), and more are on the fence, waiting to see which side is likely to prevail in the end. Local leaders in Anbar, in coordination with the GOI, are working to recruit more tribes to enter, clear, and hold Fallujah, while ensuring civilians and families can leave the city.

This standoff will not last forever. The GOI has the responsibility to help local leaders secure the city and oust the militants now in control. Under the plan that is being developed by the GOI and tribal forces, the army will seek to control outlining areas and cordon the city; tribal fighters will take the lead in securing outlining areas, with military support when needed. From there, tribal fighters will lead a mission to secure the city one neighborhood at a time. We know from experience how difficult this will be, and U.S. military officers from the Office of Security Cooperation are in regular touch with Iraqi counterparts to share lessons and offer recommendations and advice.

ISIL has also made its intentions clear: move from a new base of operations in Fallujah to Baghdad – a distance of under 30 miles. Its leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, had this to say in a rare audio statement issued on January 21:

"As for ISIS in Iraq: Be in the frontlines against the Shia, and march toward Baghdad and the South, keep the Shia busy in their own areas. Know that the entire Sunni population and the brothers in Syria are watching you."

Were there any doubt, moreover, of the threat Baghdadi and his network – now with approximately 2,000 fighters in Iraq – presents to the United States and our interests in the region, his statement said this in its concluding paragraph:

"Our last message is to the Americans. Soon we will be in direct confrontation, and the sons of Islam have prepared for such a day. So watch, for we are with you, watching."

DASD McGurk made it clear that Iraqi politics and Maliki's actions had played a major role allowing AQI/ISIS to reemerge as a major cause of Iraqi violence, and that other Iraqi factions were involved,⁵⁴⁹

...The above picture would not be complete without discussing the political situation in Iraq, and how it does – and does not – impact these violence trends. Over the course of 2013, the security situation deteriorated against a backdrop of political instability and protests in Sunni areas of the country. These protests began after Iraqi forces detained a number of bodyguards to then-Minister of Finance Rafa al-Issawi in late December 2012. Issawi later resigned from his post. [1]

The guilt or innocence of the bodyguards and their detention soon became a side issue, as the protest demands grew to encompass a full catalog of decade-long grievances among Iraq's minority Sunni community. These grievances included appeals to end the process of de-Ba'athification, which began in 2003, reform of the criminal procedure code to ensure due process rights to detainees, and greater power sharing in national governance decision-making and institutions. [2]

From the very beginning, participants in these protests varied: some had legitimate political demands, such as those listed above; others rejected the entire post-2003 political order and questioned the legitimacy of the state; while a small minority were openly militant and advocated violence against the central government. The latter two groups were often the most visible and vocal, which made it increasingly difficult (due to constituent pressure in some cases, excuses in others) to convince prominent Shia and Kurdish leaders to address demands from the first group.

The toxic combination of unaddressed grievances and rising terrorist attacks created a pressure cooker with no safety valve, and ISIL took advantage. Its black flags began to appear at protest squares, particularly in Fallujah, further alienating the Shia population and fueling the charged sectarian environment. In April, Iraqi forces moved to clear one of the most militant protest squares, in the north-central town of Hawija. The operation appears to have begun peacefully, but shots were later exchanged, followed by a barrage, leaving nearly 50 people dead.

After that incident, a former insurgent group, the Jaysh al-Tariq al-Naqshbandia (JRTN), reasserted itself and declared an armed insurgency against the state. The JRTN is a militant offshoot of the Baath party, and together with AQI is designated under U.S. law as a Foreign Terrorist Organization. Its resurgence added to the instability in Sunni areas, fueled mistrust in Shia areas, and facilitated the rise and entrenchment of ISIL, particularly in border regions of Ninewa province. Today, ISIL and JRTN appear to be working together in some areas; with vastly different agendas, however, this partnership is likely to be short-lived.

The danger at this moment is that these hardened cores of militancy, which must be isolated from the broader population and defeated, become fused with a sense of despondency and grievance in Sunni areas of the country. It is therefore critical and incumbent upon the Government of Iraq (GOI) to help mobilize the people in Sunni areas against ISIL and JRTN through a combination of aggressive political outreach and targeted intelligence-driven security operations.

This responsibility for political outreach and inclusion rests on all Iraqi leaders, but most prominently on Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki. He is under tremendous political pressure from the Shia population, which faces a near daily threat of car and suicide bombs; but it is incumbent upon the head of state to act in a manner that advances stability in all parts of Iraq. In all of our engagements with Maliki, accordingly, including a November meeting with the President, and regular calls from the Vice President, we have continued to press the urgency of working with local Sunni leaders to draw the population into the fight against ISIL.

Furthermore, he provided a clear indication that US aid to the Iraqi government was tied to its effort to heal the divisions between Sunni and Shi'ite:⁵⁵⁰

Drawing on our own lessons learned, we are also encouraging the GOI to develop and execute a holistic strategy to isolate and defeat ISIL over the long-term. This strategy fuses political, security, and economic components with an immediate focus on incorporating tribal fighters to protect the population in towns and villages throughout the provinces of Anbar, Ninewa, and Sal ah Din. These tribal fighters would work in coordination with local officials, local police, and the army when needed, to deny space and sanctuary for an organized ISIL presence.

Such a strategy is extremely difficult to develop and execute in a dynamic tribal environment like Anbar province. But in recent weeks, we have seen a new level of commitment from the GOI to mobilize the local population against ISIL. Its cabinet over the course of January has allocated resources to ensure local people taking up arms against extremist groups enjoy full state benefits in the event they are killed or wounded. After the fighting, importantly, the GOI has committed to incorporating these fighters into the security structures of the state.⁸

Regarding economic support, in January alone, the GOI allocated \$18 million for rebuilding projects in Fallujah and Ramadi; \$17 million for direct humanitarian assistance; and \$3.4 million for direct payments to tribal fighters. As noted above, Sadoun Dulaimi has remained in Ramadi to oversee allocation of these resources. Our team in Baghdad is in direct and regular contact with all relevant actors, and urging them to ensure resources reach intended recipients as soon as possible.

In my own visits to Baghdad last month, including one just last week, I found the national leadership to increasingly appreciate the necessity of enlisting popular support as a necessary condition for defeating ISIL. I also detected, for the first time, acknowledgement that GOI missteps over the course of 2013 may have

made the problem worse, and that this coming year must be different in terms of strategy and execution. As the GOI spokesman told the Washington Post last week:

“We are supplying [the tribes] with more weapons and whatever they need. They will be treated like any troop in the Iraqi army. They will have salaries and pensions and any right a troop in the Iraqi army has.”

This statement articulates precisely what must be done, and fairly reflects my own hard conversations with local and national leaders over this past month.

Finally, at the national political level, we are focused on ensuring that the political process remains on track, most importantly with national elections on April 30th. More than forty coalitions have registered to compete in these elections, which will choose a parliament to form a new government to serve through 2018.

One cannot overstate the importance of these elections, and we have made clear to all Iraqi leaders that they must happen on time, with independent oversight by the Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) and the United Nations Mission in Iraq (UNAMI). The work by IHEC and UNAMI, thus far, has been heroic, and we will continue to support their missions between now and Election Day.

The key question for Iraq, for the US, and for all the countries in the region is how the struggle with Al Qaeda will play out over time, how it will affect the broader struggles and tensions between Sunni and Shi'ite, and how it will affect the region. As the chapters in this book show, the answers are primarily for Iraqis to decide. If the Maliki government can reestablish good relations with Sunnis, a movement like AQI/ISIS – which US exports estimate as a core strength of around 2,000 fighters should be relatively easy to defeat.

A stable rapprochement may, however, be difficult.⁵⁵¹ The levels of sectarian violence climbed against in January and February 2014, and the threat to senior Sunni politicians scarcely ended. A convoy carrying the Iraqi speaker of the House, Osama al-Nujaifi, was hit by roadside bomb in Mosul on February 10, 2014. The attack was particularly strike because al-Nujaifi was a Sunni, who had been a leading advocate of such a rapprochement,⁵⁵²

The security solution and the political resolution should go hand-in-hand. A security solution alone would not suffice, to finding a political resolution is part of the overall solution to the crisis; and eradicate the incubators that allow al-Qaeda to rise. In doing so, we would win over the people of al-Anbar and they won't be suspicious of the Iraqi government... don't deny that there is foreign interference and meddling in Iraq, but this is happening only because there was an environment that gives rise to for such intervention. That's because there are parties that lack confidence and are not able to blend, since those in power are perceived to be working against their interests, identity and future.

That's why some divisions may accept foreign intervention, which may be an additional factor for further turmoil. But this can also be addressed if we manage to strengthen and clarify the internal front and find Iraqi solutions. Hence, such foreign interference or meddling will be limited to a great extent... Obviously people have certain interests but we are against interference, and want an Iraqi solution to the Iraqi problem

The US, Iran, the Syrian conflict and a host of outside factors will be important in determining the outcome, and the US needs to use its influence constructively in the ways it seemed to be pursuing in nearly 2014. To quote what is definitely not an old Arab saying, Iraq's political leadership and structure has made far too many classic mistakes: “The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, But in ourselves, that we are underlings. It is not Fate that makes Cassius or Brutus an underling, that is, a subordinate, a person of lesser rank or authority, but rather their own weakness.”

IX. OTHER EXTREMIST NON-STATE ACTORS, SYRIA, AND IRAN

Other extremist actors and Iran play a role in threatening Iraq's future and in increasing the risk of a return to a serious state of civil war. Since October 2011, the Maliki government may have focused on Al Qaeda – know the political support the use of that name can bring – but it has also acted on the basis that there are other major Sunni threats, as well as threats from Shi'ite militias and other extremists the government must control or defeat. It is also obvious that the Iraqi government tries to balance pressure from Iran by using the US as a counterweight, and that it sees the threat caused by the Syrian civil war as broader than the threat from AQI/ISIS.

The Role of Other Violent Non-State Actors

The US State Department Human Rights report for 2013 described Iraq's mix of violent extremist groups as follows: ⁵⁵³

Illegally armed sectarian and ethnic groups, including terrorist groups such as the AQI, committed deadly, politically motivated acts of violence, utilizing suicide bombings, attacks with improvised explosive devices, drive-by shootings, killings, kidnappings, and other forms of violence. Militants and terrorists targeted fellow citizens--Shia, Sunni, as well as members of other religious groups or ethnicities--security forces, places of worship, religious pilgrims, schools, public spaces, economic infrastructure, and government officials. Certain militant organizations, such as those supported by Iran, also committed terrorist attacks, primarily against foreign embassies, foreign personnel, and foreign military forces.

Violence by illegal armed groups against the general population, security forces, government officials, and civilian infrastructure remained a significant problem during the year, and bombings, executions, and killings were regular occurrences throughout the country. On July 21, the AQI announced a new offensive to recover previous strongholds. Two days later, a wave of 28 coordinated attacks across 18 cities killed 113 persons and injured more than 250. The deadliest attack occurred in Taji in Baghdad Province, where a series of roadside bombs, a car bomb, and a suicide bombing targeting emergency personnel killed 42 persons.

Overall casualty estimates of violence during the year varied. For example, Agence France-Presse (AFP) reported that according to the Iraqi government 1,358 civilians, 440 police officers, and 376 soldiers were killed during the year, compared with 1,578 civilians, 609 police officers, and 458 soldiers in 2011. Direct monitoring by the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) indicated that at least 3,238 civilians were killed during the year. In 2011 UNAMI reported 2,771 civilian deaths.

... There were also regular incidents of the AQI's targeting Sunni tribal leaders and Sunnis cooperating with the government, including against the Sons of Iraq, also known as the Sahwa (Awakening) movement. On November 28 in Tarmiyah, in Baghdad Province, gunmen broke into the house of a Sahwa member and killed him and six members of his family, including three young children, while they were sleeping. According to AFP, at least 25 members of the Sahwa movement were killed throughout the country between July and the end of December, and at least another 13 were injured

The final reports of the Special Inspector General for Iraqi Reconstruction (SIGIR) provide a useful summary of Iraq's extremist groups and how they divide between Sunni and Shi'ite. The following description of rival ethnic and sectarian factions dates back to late 2011, but these groups still that account for most of Iraq's non-state actor-driven violence. ⁵⁵⁴

- Other Sunni terrorist groups remain active as well. **Ansar al-Islam**, with both Kurd and Arab membership, operates in northern Iraq. The group has claimed responsibility for the second-largest number of Sunni terrorist attacks in Iraq (behind only AQI). Another group operating in northern and central Iraq, the Jayish **Rijal al Tariq al-Naqshabandi**, emphasizes what it claims to be the religious justifications for its attacks. Shi'a extremist groups – backed by Iranian funding, training, and weapons – also present a threat to Iraqi and

US military forces. DoS reported that attacks by these groups have decreased this year, but their Iranian-supported networks continued to operate throughout Iraq's southern provinces.

- Shi'a militias in Iraq **Jayish al-Mahdi (JAM)** and its successor, the **Promised Day Brigade**, are the militant arm of the Sadrist movement led by cleric Moqtada al-Sadr. Since the militia's inception in 2003, JAM has engaged in countless attacks on US forces, Iraqi forces, and Sunni civilians. The group was responsible for some of the most gruesome sectarian violence in Iraq. Early in 2007, at the beginning of the US military surge, al-Sadr ordered his followers to stand down, and shortly thereafter, he left for Iran. Following the military campaign in Basra, Sadr City, and al Amarah in the spring of 2008, al-Sadr disbanded his militia. Several months later, he announced the transition of his movement into a non-violent organization called the Munahidoon, but he maintained a small group of Iranian-supported militants called the Promised Day Brigade.
- **Assaib Ahl al Haq (AAH, or League of the Righteous)**: Having emerged in 2006, AAH is led by Qais Khazali, who broke with al-Sadr and was officially named the leader of the Iranian backed AAH. Khazali's fighters traveled to Iran for special training by the Revolutionary Guards and members of the Lebanese Hezbollah. They received four to six weeks of training in the camps in the use of mortars, rockets, sniper tactics, intelligence gathering, kidnapping operations, and explosively formed penetrators. AAH conducted attacks on Coalition forces from as early as the summer of 2006 and continues intermittently, also engaging in kidnappings and sectarian attacks. In early 2012, Maliki allowed AAH into the political arena, stating they had renounced violence and were therefore welcome. AAH also serves as a potential counter weight to a loss in confidence of Maliki across the political spectrum.
- **Kata'ib Hezbollah (KH, or the Hezbollah Brigades)** Active in Iraq since 2007, KH operates mainly in Shi'a areas of Baghdad, such as Sadr City, and throughout southern Iraq. Like AAH and the Promise Day Brigade, it is supported by Iran. KH is independent from Moqtada al-Sadr and has operated separately since its inception, albeit with some cooperation and operational overlap. Since 2007, KH members have conducted multiple attacks against US forces using rocket-propelled grenades and improvised rocket-assisted mortars. Since the beginning of 2011, the majority of Iranian-backed attacks have occurred in southern Iraq, with sporadic incidents taking place in northern provinces and in Baghdad. Toward the end of the quarter, Iran-sponsored attacks in northern provinces appeared to be subsiding, although USF-I officials reported that these networks still possess the capacity to conduct operations
- **The Islamic State of Iraq (ISI)** is an umbrella organization of a number Iraqi insurgency groups established on October 15 2006. The group is composed of and supported by a variety of insurgency groups, including its predecessor, the Mujahideen Shura Council, Al-Qaeda, Jeish al-Fatiheen, Jund al-Sahaba, Katbiyan Ansar Al-Tawhid wal Sunnah, Jeish al-Taiifa al-Mansoura, and other Sunni groups. It aims to establish a caliphate in the Sunni dominated regions of Iraq. It claims a presence in the governorates of Baghdad, Al Anbar, Diyala, Kirkuk, Salah ad Din, Ninewa, and parts of Babil and Wasit, etc. It initially claimed Baqubah as its capita.⁵⁵⁵

US State Department Annual Report on Terrorism

The US State Department Annual Report on Terrorism and the annual calendar of the US National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) provide more current reporting on key groups like Al Qaeda. The US State Department Country Report on Terrorism for 2012 summarized the overall role of non-state actors and the Iraqi government response as follows:⁵⁵⁶

The Government of Iraq concentrated its counterterrorism efforts against AQI and other Sunni-affiliated terrorist organizations. AQI remained capable of large-scale coordinated attacks and conducted numerous high-profile suicide and car bombings on government and civilian targets, aiming to increase tensions among Iraqi sectarian groups and ethnic minorities, and undercut public perceptions of the government's capacity to provide security. Jaysh Rijal al-Tariqah al-Naqshabandiyah (JRTN), a Sunni nationalist insurgent group with links to the former Baath Party, also continued attacks during the year. JRTN largely targeted Iraqi and U.S. interests in northern Iraq. Shia militant groups Kata'ib Hizballah, Asa'ib Ahl Haqq, and the Sadrist Promised Day Brigades adhered to the cease-fire they declared in the latter half of 2011 and early 2012. Some former Shia militant leaders began engaging in the political process and competing for political influence.

Terrorist tactics and weapons remained largely unchanged from 2011, as AQI and other terrorists relied predominantly on suicide bombings and car and roadside bombs and to a lesser extent on gunmen using assault rifles or silenced weapons to assassinate government and security officials.

Iraq-U.S. counterterrorism cooperation remained strong, particularly in training, advisory, and intelligence-sharing programs.

The Iraqi Security Forces proved capable of working together to find, arrest, and charge terrorism suspects. In November, the Iraqi Police, Federal Police, and Iraqi Army – at times working together – arrested over 350 people on terrorism charges and seized several weapon and rocket caches, as part of a major counterterrorism operation. Iraq's Counterterrorism Services (CTS) also conducted approximately 1,600 terrorism related arrests in 2012.

2012 Terrorist Incidents: Terrorist groups conducted numerous attacks throughout the country. The deadliest attacks involved suicide bombings that targeted security forces, government buildings, and religious gatherings...

...Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: The Government of Iraq took several steps to improve border security. Iraq, with U.S. support, continued to install, repair, and improve inspection equipment at ports of entry. The government also expanded the number of ports of entry with biometric data capture, but continued to face challenges linking border security systems together. Iraq is also incorporating non-intrusive inspection equipment at its land border crossings to scan for contraband, is improving roads along the borders, and received three littoral patrol ships in March.

Iraq's major counterterrorism organizations made progress in investigating cases and arresting terrorists, but continued to suffer from a lack of interagency coordination and inadequate cooperation between investigators, prosecutors, and the judiciary. While the Federal Intelligence and Investigations Agency (FIIA) arrested a significant number of terrorist suspects in 2012, Iraqi federal law enforcement and intelligence entities continued to struggle with intelligence analysis and targeting efforts relating to terrorist organizations and often resorted to rounding up locals to elicit intelligence information. The Major Crimes Task Force (MCTF), a collaborative task force involving U.S. federal law enforcement officers and FIIA investigators, targeted counterterrorism, organized crime, and government corruption cases from 2005 through late 2011. In 2012, the MCTF functioned as an Iraqi-only investigative element focusing on terrorist groups. However, like many other law enforcement entities, the MCTF operated independent of other Iraqi agencies working terrorism matters to include the Counterterrorism Organized Crime General Directorate.

Iraq continued to face significant challenges investigating and moving criminal cases from arrest to trial due to resource limitations, inadequate training, poor interagency coordination, and at times, limited political will. Prosecution of sectarian crimes carries a significant political risk. Separately, many among Iraq's Sunni community believed that the government used terrorism laws to unfairly target the Sunni population. Iraqi law enforcement officials, with U.S. training support, continued to improve investigative skills such as forensic evidence collection.

In 2011, the Central Criminal Court of Iraq (CCCI) convicted a former Iraqi Army sergeant and suspected AQI member of the murder of two U.S. soldiers in 2007 and sentenced him to life in prison. In the spring of 2012, however, the Federal Court of Cassation (FCC) overturned this decision on appeal and dismissed the charges. Even though substantial evidence was presented, the FCC determined that critical forensic evidence was of limited reliability and probative value. The U.S. government requested that the FCC correct and reverse this decision, but this request was formally denied on October 8. Subsequent to the spring 2012 FCC decision dismissing the charges in the above case, a companion case against the same defendant before the CCCI for other soldiers wounded in the attack resulted in the dismissal of similar terrorism charges on similar evidentiary grounds. On October 21, the CCCI convicted a suspected Shia Jaysh al-Mahdi member on terrorism charges stemming from an attack that killed one U.S. soldier and wounded three others, and sentenced him to 15 years in prison. It is anticipated that this case will be subject to review on appeal by the FCC.

On November 16, citing a lack of a legal basis to continue holding him, Iraq also released Lebanese Hizballah member Ali Musa Daqduq, who was accused of involvement in a 2007 attack that killed five U.S. soldiers. The CCCI had dismissed the charges against Daqduq in May citing insufficient reliable evidence, a decision that was upheld on appeal in June by the FCC.

Judicial security continued to be a challenge. Judges investigating and adjudicating terrorism cases continued to face threats to their personal safety and that of their families:

- In April, terrorists targeted the Chief Judge of Karkh Appellate Court (Najim Abdallah Ahamd al-Mashhadani) with a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device at an intersection about 50 meters from the judge's vehicle.
- In June, terrorists again targeted Judge Najim, this time by a suicide bomber on a bicycle. The explosion killed one bystander.
- In October, terrorists assassinated Dr. Talib Al Shraa' of the Iraqi Ministry of Justice (MOJ). Dr. Talib was MOJ's liaison to the National Center for State Courts, a U.S.-partner assisting the MOJ in its strategic planning and budgeting.

At year's end, the Security and Defense Committee of the Council of Representatives was still working on draft legislation to codify the mission and authorities of the CTS. This effort has remained stalled since 2009.

Iraq remained an important partner nation in the Department of State's Antiterrorism Assistance program, which focused on helping the Government of Iraq build capacity in law enforcement investigations, critical incident management, and border security.

Countering Terrorist Finance: In 2012, the Iraqi government underwent its first-ever mutual evaluation to review compliance with international anti money laundering/combating the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT) standards by the Middle East and North Africa Financial Action Task Force (MENAFATF), a Financial Action Task Force-style regional body. This important step affirmed Iraq's commitment to interrupt terrorist finance domestically. Although Iraq's Mutual Evaluation Report found the country to be non-compliant in most areas, the engagement of the Iraqi government, including at the MENAFATF plenary in November, served as an indicator of Iraq's commitment to address the AML/CFT challenges it faces. The United States provided subject matter expertise to assist Iraq in preparing for the mutual evaluation, post-evaluation follow-up, and in drafting a new AML/CFT statute.

The Prime Minister has approved the formation of a committee, or task force, to coordinate cases involving asset recovery, including the recovery of assets illegally taken outside of Iraq by members of the former regime, and tracing funds used to support terrorism. The committee will include representatives from the Ministry of Interior Economic Crimes Section, the Federal Investigation Information, and the Commission of Integrity. The Prime Minister's legal advisor announced the formation of the task force the week of October 21.

The Acting Governor of the Central Bank has agreed to move the Iraqi Financial Intelligence Unit (formerly the Money Laundering Reporting Office, now referred to as the Anti-Money Laundering Unit, or AMLU) into a secure space with dependable utilities, to facilitate the work of the unit.

...**Regional and International Cooperation:** Iraq is increasingly engaging with its neighbors through the Arab League. Iraq hosted the Arab League Summit in March of this year. Iraq, Turkey, and the United States continued a trilateral security dialogue as part of ongoing efforts to counter the Kurdistan Workers' Party.

The U.S.-supported NATO Transition Cell in Iraq assisted over 70 Iraqi officials in receiving NATO training abroad on various topics, including counterterrorism. CTS also partnered with Jordan, sending nearly 40 of its soldiers to the Jordanian Counterterrorism Academy for training. In April, CTS sent observers to a U.S.-Jordanian joint counterterrorism exercise.

Countering Radicalization and Violent Extremism: Iraqi leaders routinely denounced terrorism and countered terrorist propaganda in public statements. The Iraqi government took steps to bring certain violent extremist groups into the political process, and made limited attempts to foster broader reconciliation between sectarian groups.

Reporting in the Annual Calendar of the US National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC)

The State Department and US National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) provided more focused data on key extremist threats. These data covered the various extremist and terrorist groups in and

around Iraq, and provided the descriptions of individual extremist groups and their activities in shown in **Figure 34**.⁵⁵⁷

Figure 34: US State Department and NCTC reports on Terrorist Threats and State Sponsors of Terrorism in or Near Iraq in 2013:

ABDALLAH AZZAM BRIGADES

State Department

Aka: Abdullah Azzam Brigades; Ziyad al-Jarrah Battalions of the Abdallah Azzam Brigades; Yusuf al-'Uyayri Battalions of the Abdallah Azzam Brigades

Description: The Abdallah Azzam Brigades (AAB) was designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on May 30, 2012. AAB formally announced its establishment in a July 2009 video statement claiming responsibility for a February 2009 rocket attack against Israel. The group is divided into two branches: the Arabian Peninsula-based Yusuf al-'Uyayri Battalions of the Abdallah Azzam Brigades, named after the now-deceased founder of al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula; and the Lebanon-based Ziyad al-Jarrah Battalions of the Abdallah Azzam Brigades, named after Ziad al Jarrah, a Lebanese citizen who was one of the masterminds of the September 11 attacks on the United States. In a June 2012 video statement, the group named its leader as Majid bin Muhammad al Majid, a Saudi citizen who is on the Saudi government's list of 85 Most Wanted Terrorists for his links to al-Qaeda.

Activities: AAB has relied primarily on rocket attacks against Israeli civilians, and is responsible for numerous rocket attacks fired into Israeli territory from Lebanon. These attacks have targeted population centers in Israel and have included incidents such as the September 11, 2009 double rocket attack on Nahariya and an April 2011 rocket attack on Ashkelon. In addition to rocket attacks, AAB carried out a July 2010 suicide bombing attack against the Japanese-owned oil tanker M/V M. Star in the Strait of Hormuz. According to a statement released online, AAB claimed that the attack was carried out by its Arabian Peninsula Branch. AAB has repeatedly articulated its intent to carry out attacks against Western interests in the Middle East. In 2010, for example, the group expressed an interest in kidnapping U.S. and British tourists in the Arabian Peninsula.

Strength: Unknown

Location/Area of Operation: AAB is based in both Lebanon and the Arabian Peninsula.

Funding and External Aid: Unknown

ANSAR AL-ISLAM

State Department

Aka: Ansar al-Sunna; Ansar al-Sunna Army; Devotees of Islam; Followers of Islam in Kurdistan; Helpers of Islam; Jaish Ansar al-Sunna; Jund al-Islam; Kurdish Taliban; Kurdistan Supporters of Islam; Partisans of Islam; Soldiers of God; Soldiers of Islam; Supporters of Islam in Kurdistan

Description: Designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on March 22, 2004, Ansar al-Islam's (AI's) goals include expelling western interests from Iraq and establishing an independent Iraqi state based on Sharia law. AI was established in 2001 in Iraqi Kurdistan with the merger of two Kurdish extremist factions that traced their roots to the Islamic Movement of Kurdistan. On May 4, 2010, Abu Abdullah al-Shafi'i, Ansar al-Islam's leader, was captured by U.S. forces in Baghdad and remains in prison. On December 15, 2011 AI announced a new leader, Abu Hashim Muhammad bin Abdul Rahman al Ibrahim.

Mullah Krekar (aka Najmuddin Faraj Ahmad), an Iraqi citizen and the founder of Ansar al-Islam, continued to reside in Norway on a long-term residence permit. In March 2012, a trial court convicted Krekar of issuing threats and inciting terrorism, and sentenced him to six years in prison. Krekar appealed, and in December an appeals court affirmed his convictions for issuing threats and intimidating witnesses, but reversed his conviction for "inciting terrorism." The appeals court reduced his sentence to two years and 10 months in prison.

Activities: AI has conducted attacks against a wide range of targets including Iraqi government and security forces, and U.S. and Coalition Forces. AI has conducted numerous kidnappings, executions, and assassinations of Iraqi citizens and politicians. The group has either claimed responsibility or is believed to be responsible for attacks in 2011 that killed 24 and wounded 147.

Strength: Though precise numbers are unknown, AI is considered one of the largest Sunni terrorist groups in Iraq.

Location/Area of Operation: Primarily northern Iraq, but also maintains a presence in western and central Iraq.

Funding and External Aid: AI receives assistance from a loose network of associates in Europe and the Middle East.

KATA'IB HIZBALLAH

State Department

aka Hizballah Brigades; Hizballah Brigades in Iraq; Hizballah Brigades-Iraq; Kata'ib Hezbollah; Khata'ib Hezbollah; Khata'ib Hizballah; Khattab Hezbollah; Hizballah Brigades-Iraq of the Islamic Resistance in Iraq; Islamic Resistance in Iraq; Kata'ib Hizballah Fi al-Iraq; Katibat Abu Fathel al-A'abas; Katibat Zayd Ebin Ali; Katibut Karbalah

Description: Designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on July 2, 2009, Kata'ib Hizballah (KH) was formed in 2006 and is a radical Shia Islamist group with an anti-Western outlook and extremist ideology that has conducted attacks against Iraqi, U.S., and Coalition targets in Iraq. KH has threatened the lives of Iraqi politicians and civilians that support the legitimate political process in Iraq. The group is notable for its extensive use of media operations and propaganda by filming and releasing videos of attacks. KH has ideological ties to Lebanese Hizballah and receives support from that group and its sponsor, Iran.

Activities: KH has been responsible for numerous terrorist attacks since 2007, including improvised explosive device bombings, rocket propelled grenade attacks, and sniper operations. In 2007, KH gained notoriety with attacks on U.S. and Coalition Forces in Iraq. KH was particularly active in summer 2008, recording and distributing video footage of its attacks.

In June 2011, five U.S. soldiers were killed in a rocket attack in Baghdad, Iraq, when KH assailants fired between three and five rockets at U.S. military base Camp Victory. The group remained active in 2012, but has not conducted an attack on U.S. interests since July 2011.

Strength: Membership is estimated at 400 individuals.

Location/Area of Operation: KH's operations are predominately Iraq-based. In 2011, KH conducted the majority of its operations in Baghdad but was active in other areas of Iraq, including Kurdish areas such as Mosul. KH militants were reportedly in Syria, protecting Shia shrines and fighting alongside Syrian President Assad's troops against Syrian opposition forces.

Funding and External Aid: KH is almost entirely dependent on support from Iran and Lebanese Hizballah.

KURDISTAN WORKERS' PARTY

State Department

aka the Kurdistan Freedom and Democracy Congress; the Freedom and Democracy Congress of Kurdistan; KADEK; Partiya Karkeran Kurdistan; the People's Defense Force; Halu Mesru Savunma Kuvveti; Kurdistan People's Congress; People's Congress of Kurdistan; KONGRA-GEL

Description: Founded by Abdullah Ocalan in 1978 as a Marxist-Leninist separatist organization, the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) was designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on October 8, 1997. The group, composed primarily of Turkish Kurds, launched a campaign of violence in 1984. The PKK's original goal was to establish an independent Kurdish state in southeastern Turkey, but in recent years it has spoken more often about autonomy within a Turkish state that guarantees Kurdish cultural and linguistic rights.

Activities: In the early 1990s, the PKK moved beyond rural-based insurgent activities to include urban terrorism. In the 1990s, southeastern Anatolia was the scene of significant violence; some estimates placed casualties at some 30,000 persons. Following his capture in 1999, Ocalan announced a “peace initiative,” ordering members to refrain from violence and requesting dialogue with Ankara on Kurdish issues. Ocalan’s death sentence was commuted to life imprisonment; he remains the symbolic leader of the group. The group foreswore violence until June 2004, when the group’s hard-line militant wing took control and renounced the self-imposed cease-fire of the previous five years. Striking over the border from bases within Iraq, the PKK has engaged in terrorist attacks in eastern and western Turkey. In 2009 the Turkish government and the PKK resumed peace negotiations. However, talks broke down after a PKK initiated attack on July 14, 2011, that left 13 Turkish soldiers dead. Violence in 2011 and 2012 has marked one of the most deadly time periods in the almost 30 year conflict. Widely publicized peace talks between Ocalan and the Turkish government to resolve the conflict began at the end of 2012.

Primary targets have been Turkish government security forces, local Turkish officials, and villagers who oppose the organization in Turkey. The PKK remained active in 2012: on August 20, a car bomb in the southeastern Turkish city of Gaziantep killed nine people, including four children, and wounded in excess of 70. Similar car bombings occurred in both Hakkari province in January, killing one and injuring 28, and Kayseri province in May, injuring 18.

Strength: Approximately 4,000 to 5,000 members; 3,000 to 3,500 are located in northern Iraq.

Location/Area of Operation: The PKK operate primarily in Turkey, Iraq, and Europe.

Funding and External Aid: The PKK receives financial support from the large Kurdish diaspora in Europe and from criminal activity.

KONGRA-GEL (KGK) - formerly the Kurdistan Worker’s Party, PKK

NCTC

The Kurdistan People’s Congress (KGK, formerly the Kurdistan Worker’s Party, PKK) is a Kurdish separatist group primarily active in part of northern Iraq and southeastern Turkey. Composed mostly of Turkish Kurds, the group in 1984 began a campaign of armed violence, including terrorism, which has resulted in over 45,000 deaths. Historically, KGK directed operatives to target Turkish security forces, government offices, and villagers who opposed the group. KGK’s imprisoned leader, Abdullah Ocalan, in 2006 publicly called for a KGK “unilateral cease-fire,” which in practice meant stopping terrorist attacks and limiting violence to “defensive” attacks against Turkish soldiers and security forces patrolling areas that the KGK considered theirs.

The KGK wages a seasonal insurgency, and has declared cease-fires that coincide with the group’s typical drawdown during the winter months, during which time KGK members regroup and train. The KGK urban terrorism wing, the Kurdistan Freedom Hawks (TAK), in 2005 began using terrorist tactics—including suicide bombings—to target Turkish tourist destinations in order to damage the Turkish economy and provide the KGK with plausible deniability for the attacks.

In November 2009, the Turkish Government announced its plan to grant social and economic rights to Turkey’s Kurdish population, largely to undercut support for the KGK. This initiative faltered, however, due to public and political opposition. The KGK since 2010 has continued to take an active defense posture against Turkish military operations in southeastern Turkey and northern Iraq, while TAK claimed responsibility for a 2010 attack on a military bus, killing five, and a suicide bombing the same year that wounded 32 in Istanbul. The US Treasury Department in April 2011 designated five KGK leaders under the Kingpin Act, freezing any assets they may have under US jurisdiction and prohibiting US persons from conducting financial or commercial transactions with them.

In July 2011, a clash between Turkish forces and the KGK in Diyarbakir Province resulted in the deaths of thirteen Turkish soldiers, and TAK in September 2011 killed three people in a car bombing in Ankara. A KGK attack in October 2011 killed 24 Turkish troops and was the deadliest incident since 1993. Attacks persisted in 2012, with KGK’s armed wing, the People’s Defense Force (HPG), killing eight Turkish soldiers and wounding 16 in coordinated attacks in June. KGK also stepped up its kidnapping campaign against Turkish state employees and soldiers, which included the unprecedented abduction of a Turkish parliamentary deputy in August. In addition to its stronghold in northern Iraq, the KGK’s Syrian affiliate, the

Democratic Union Party (PYD), has increased its presence in northern Syria along the border with Turkey by establishing control in Kurdish areas, resulting in concerns of a heightened threat to Turkey and increased tensions along the border.

Source: State Department reporting is excerpted from US State Department, “*Chapter 2, Country reports, Country Reports on Terrorism 2012*, May 30, 2013, <http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2012/>. NCTC data are excerpted from “Counterterrorism Calendar 2013,” US National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC), <http://www.nctc.gov/site/groups/aqap.html>, and <http://www.nctc.gov/site/other/fto.html>, accessed August 8, 2013.

A View from the Congressional Research Service

Kenneth Katzman of the Congressional Research Service (CRS) issued a report in December 2013, which described the status of the other major surviving Sunni and Shi’ite violent extremist groups follows:⁵⁵⁸

Naqshabandi Order (JRTN) (Sunni)

Some groups that were prominent during the insurgency against U.S. forces remain allied with AQ-I/ISIS or active independently as part of the Sunni unrest. One such Sunni group, linked to ex-Baathists, is the Naqshabandi Order, known by its Arabic acronym “JRTN.”... It is based primarily in Nineveh province. Prior to the escalation of Sunni violence in 2013, the JRTN was responsible primarily for attacks on U.S. facilities in northern Iraq, which might have contributed to the State Department decision in mid-2012 to close the Kirkuk consulate. The faction has supported the Sunni demonstrations, and in February 2013 Sunnis linked to the JRTN circulated praise for the protests from the highest-ranking Saddam regime figure still at large, Izzat Ibrahim al Duri. Other rebels are said to be linked to long-standing insurgent groups such as the **1920 Revolution Brigades** or the **Islamic Army of Iraq**.

Other Armed Sunni Groups: Sons of Iraq Fighters (Sunni)

One Sunni grievance aside from those discussed above has been the slow pace with which the Maliki government implemented its pledge to fully integrate the approximately 100,000 “Sons of Iraq” fighters. Also known as “Awakening” fighters, these are former insurgents who in 2006 began cooperating with U.S. forces against AQ-I/ISIS. The Iraqi government later promised them integration into the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) or government jobs. To date, about 70,000 have been integrated into the ISF or given civilian government jobs, while 30,000-40,000 continue to man checkpoints in Sunni areas and are paid about \$300 per month by the government. In part to preserve the loyalty of the Sons of Iraq as an opponent—rather than supporter—of AQ-I/ISIS, in early 2013 the government increased their salaries by about 66% to \$500 per month. The effort appears to have succeeded somewhat, in that few Sons of Iraq fighters have joined AQ-I/ISIS or other Sunni insurgent groups since Sunni anti-government activities escalated.

Sadr (Shi’ite)

Sadr’s shifts against Maliki represent a continuation of a high level of activity he has exhibited since he returned to Iraq, from his studies in Iran, in January 2011. After his return, he gave numerous speeches that, among other themes, insisted on full implementation of a planned U.S. withdrawal by the end of 2011. Sadr’s position on the U.S. withdrawal appeared so firm that, in an April 9, 2011, statement, he threatened to reactivate his Mahdi Army militia if U.S. forces remained in Iraq beyond the December 31, 2011, deadline. In 2009, the Mahdi Army announced it would integrate into the political process as a charity and employment network called *Mumahidoon*, or “those who pave the way.” Sadr’s followers conducted a large march in Baghdad on May 26, 2011, demanding a full U.S. military exit. The threats were pivotal to the Iraqi decision not to retain U.S. troops in Iraq beyond 2011. With the announcement of Moktada al-Sadr’s withdrawal from politics in February of 2014, his Ahrar voting bloc may be diluted in the upcoming April 2014 elections, or may be adopted by his cousin, Jaafar al-Sadr, in an arrangement coordinated by Moktada.⁵⁵⁹

Sadrist Offshoots and Other Shiite Militias (Shi’ite): Asa’ib Ahl al-Haq (AAH, League of the Righteous), Khata’ib Hezbollah (Hezbollah Battalions), and Promised Day Brigade

Although Sadr formed what was the largest Shiite militia in post-Saddam Iraq, his efforts unleashed separate Shiite militant forces. They operate under names including Asa’ib Ahl al-Haq (AAH, League of the

Righteous), Khata'ib Hezbollah (Hezbollah Battalions), and Promised Day Brigade. In June 2009, Khata'ib Hezbollah was named by the United States as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO). On November 8, 2012, the Treasury Department designated several Khata'ib Hezbollah operatives, and their Iranian Revolutionary Guard—Qods Force mentors as terrorism supporting entities under Executive Order 13224.

The Shiite militias were part of an effort by Iran to ensure that the United States completely withdrew from Iraq. U.S. officials accused Shiite militias of causing an elevated level of U.S. troop deaths in June 2011 (14 killed, the highest in any month in over one year). During 2011, U.S. officials accused Iran of arming these militias with upgraded rocket-propelled munitions, such as Improvised Rocket Assisted Munitions (IRAMs). U.S. officials reportedly requested that the Iraqi government prevail on Iran to stop aiding the militias, actions that temporarily quieted the Shiite attacks on U.S. forces in Iraq. Until the U.S. withdrawal in December 2011, some rocket attacks continued against the U.S. consulate in Basra, which has nearly 1,000 U.S. personnel (including contractors).

The U.S. exit in 2011 removed other militias' justification for armed activity and they too moved into the political process. AAH's leaders returned from Iran and opened political offices, trying to recruit loyalists, and setting up social service programs. The group, reportedly supported by Iran, did not compete in the April 20, 2013, provincial elections but does plan to run candidates in the 2014 national elections.... AAH's leader, Qais al-Khazali, took refuge in Iran in 2010 after three years in U.S. custody for his alleged role in a 2005 raid that killed five American soldiers.

The State Department report on terrorism for 2012, referenced above, said that Shiite militias have been adhering to a ceasefire that went into effect upon the U.S. withdrawal in December 2011. Experts had maintained that the militias were not becoming embroiled in sectarian conflict with Iraq's Sunnis despite the escalation of AQ-I/ISIS and other attacks on Iraqi Shiites. However, as of the summer of 2013, this restraint apparently has weakened and some militias are conducting retaliatory attacks on Sunnis. In doing so, some experts see the militias as receiving the tacit cooperation of the Shiite-dominated ISF, particularly in Baghdad....Iraqi Shiite militiamen are reportedly increasingly involved in Syria fighting and protecting Shiite shrines in support of the government of Bashar Al Assad....

The Future Role of Iraq's Other Violent Non-State Actors

None of these summaries of Iraq's other violent non-state actors are the same, and none provide a clear picture of their current strength, their ties to other movement like AQI/ISIS, or the extent to which they can operate on their own. Recent reporting on Sunni violent activity focuses almost exclusively on AQI/ISIS, although other movements and hardline Sunni elements certainly exist and could reemerge as major forces unless the Maliki regime changes its approach to the Sunnis and legitimate Sunni political opposition.

The strength of Shi'ite militias is equally unclear, although most reporting on violence in Iraq does indicate that a growing number of attacks are reprisals by Shi'ite factions or efforts to push Sunnis out of mixed areas. One key uncertainty is the degree to which the past Shi'ite militias – or new ones – will emerge as far more active groups if the fighting in Anbar spreads to more serious Sunni and Shi'ite sectarian conflict in mixed areas. It is far from clear that the Iraqi Security forces described in the next chapter could prevent a revival of serious sectarian fighting, or these now largely Shi'ite-controlled forces would avoid taking the Shi'ite side or prevent Shi'ite militias from acting. Iraq still seems to be a long way from a renewal of efforts at sectarian cleansing, but the possibility of a return to this kind of fighting and forced segregation is all too real if Iraq does not make the necessary political reforms.⁵⁶⁰

One Shi'ite force, the Asaib Ahl al-Haq – which had had Iranian backing in the past – has been directly linked to attacks on Sunnis in Salaheddin Province. It also is said to participate in Iraq security force operations that have been targeted against Sunnis. Reporting in the *Washington Post*, and by AFP, has described such operational, and the *Post* quotes Abu Sajad, the political name of its commander as saying, “Those who are trying to incite sectarianism, we have to deal with them

(drawing his hand over his throat like a knife)... “You have this computer system (ISIS), and this whole system was infected with a virus... You have to import something to deal with that. That’s what we are for... We realize this is a trap and [ISIS] wants us to make a sectarian war... When we go targeting, we target specific people.” A colleague, Abu Aya, is quoted as saying, “The fight will not be public... The army isn’t well-versed in street fights, so we go, we help them clean it up.”⁵⁶¹

It is unclear what the strength of Asaib Ahl al-Haq really is, how much of a role it has played, and what other elements of Shi’ite militias may be involved. The same *Post* article also quoted Ali al-Moussawi, an official spokesman, as saying that, “There is no place for Asaib Ahl al-Haq militants within the security forces or armed forces.”⁵⁶² A number of US experts believe, however, that Sunni militias have been involved in reprisals and limited ethnic offenses. Unfortunately, as noted earlier in this analysis, there is no credible way to estimate their level of activity, the trends in such activity, and to be certain what side or groups is involved in most acts of violence.

The Kurdish elements are largely tied to fighting in Turkey and Syria, but the situation could change quickly if the confrontation between the central government and KRG became violent along Iraq’s ethnic fault line in the north, or if the spillover of the fighting in Syria began to polarize Iraq’s Kurds towards more actively supporting Syria’s Kurds. The same is possible if Turkey should return to major fighting against its Kurds, but this seems unlikely and the KRG has much to lose if it angers Turkey and shuts off its line of communication and pipelines through Turkey. As for Iran, it is unclear that Iran’s Kurds have the strength to become a major factor on their own. They do face some discrimination, but it became clear at the start of the Iran-Iraq War that Iran had the capacity to quickly suppress the limited resistance that its Kurds could put up when they attempted to exploit the conflict.

Outside State Actors: Iran

As the previous chapters have shown, Iran plays an active role in Iraq. It uses its intelligence service, its diplomats and attaches, “private” citizens, business covers, and foreign nationals to support its efforts at asymmetric and political warfare and to study American capabilities and vulnerabilities. What is more uncertain is whether Iran has supported violent extremism as part of its efforts to influence or control Iraq.

Iran’s Possible Role in Supporting Violent Extremism

In February 2012, the US Department of the Treasury announced sanctions against the Iranian Ministry of Intelligence and Security (MOIS) stating, among other things, the ministry had helped Al Qaeda agents in Iran and provided them with identity cards and passports and had given money and weapons to Al Qaeda in Iraq.⁵⁶³ Iraq’s Sunni coalition, which was powerful and coordinated enough to win the majority of seats in the 2010 parliamentary elections, has since splintered due in part to internal divisions and external pressure.

Unclassified State Department and US National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) reports on state acts of terrorism do not list any Iranian or Syrian activity directly involving the support of terrorism or extremist groups in Iraq. They do, however, note that both states have supported such movement. These country reports on sponsors of terrorism issued in the spring of 2013 described Iran’s role as follows:⁵⁶⁴

Designated as a State Sponsor of Terrorism in 1984, Iran increased its terrorist-related activity, including attacks or attempted attacks in India, Thailand, Georgia, and Kenya. Iran provided financial, material, and logistical support for terrorist and militant groups in the Middle East and Central Asia. Iran used the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-Qods Force (IRGC-QF) and militant groups to implement foreign policy goals, provide cover for intelligence operations, and stir up instability in the Middle East. The IRGC-QF is the regime's primary mechanism for cultivating and supporting terrorists abroad.

In 2012, Iran was implicated in planned attacks in India, Thailand, Georgia, and Kenya. On February 13, in New Delhi, India, a magnetic bomb placed under the vehicle of an Israeli diplomat's wife exploded, seriously injuring her and three Indian nationals. On February 14, a similar device was discovered under a vehicle belonging to the Israeli embassy in Tbilisi, Georgia, and safely defused. Also on February 14, Thai police arrested three Iranian nationals in connection with explosions in a Bangkok private residence that revealed bomb-making materials and makeshift grenades intended for use in attacks against Israeli targets. On June 19, Kenyan authorities arrested two Iranian nationals in connection with explosives stockpiled for a suspected terrorist attack. According to press reports, the individuals were members of the IRGC-QF.

On October 17, Iranian-born U.S. dual-national Mansour Arbabsiar was arrested by U.S. authorities and pled guilty in a New York court to participating in a 2011 plot to murder the Saudi ambassador to the United States. Arbabsiar held several meetings with an associate whom Iranian officials believed was a narcotics cartel member. This associate, in fact, was a confidential source for U.S. law enforcement. Arbabsiar admitted to working on behalf of the IRGC-QF to carry out the plot. An IRGC-QF officer who remains at large was also indicted. The thwarted plot demonstrated Iran's interest in using international terrorism – including in the United States – to further its foreign policy goals.

In 2012, the IRGC-QF trained Taliban elements on small unit tactics, small arms, explosives, and indirect fire weapons, such as mortars, artillery, and rockets. Since 2006, Iran has arranged arms shipments to select Taliban members, including small arms and associated ammunition, rocket propelled grenades, mortar rounds, 107mm rockets, and plastic explosives. Iran has shipped a large number of weapons to Kandahar, Afghanistan, aiming to increase its influence in this key province.

Despite its pledge to support Iraq's stabilization, Iran trained, funded, and provided guidance to Iraqi Shia militant groups. The IRGC-QF, in concert with Lebanese Hizballah, provided training outside of Iraq as well as advisors inside Iraq for Shia militants in the construction and use of sophisticated improvised explosive device technology and other advanced weaponry.

Regarding Syria, Iran provided extensive support, including weapons, funds, and training to assist the Assad regime in its brutal crackdown that has resulted in the death of more than 70,000 civilians. Iran provided weapons, training, and funding to Hamas and other Palestinian terrorist groups, including the Palestine Islamic Jihad and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command. Since the end of the 2006 Israeli-Hizballah conflict, Iran has assisted in rearming Hizballah, in direct violation of UNSCR 1701. Iran has provided hundreds of millions of dollars in support of Hizballah in Lebanon and has trained thousands of Hizballah fighters at camps in Iran.

Iran actively supported members of the Houthi tribe in northern Yemen, including activities intended to build military capabilities, which could pose a greater threat to security and stability in Yemen and the surrounding region. In July 2012, the Yemeni Interior Ministry arrested members of an alleged Iranian spy ring, headed by a former member of the IRGC.

Iran remained unwilling to bring to justice senior al-Qaeda (AQ) members it continued to detain, and refused to publicly identify those senior members in its custody. Iran allowed AQ facilitators Muhsin al-Fadhli and Adel Radi Saqr al-Wahabi al-Harbi to operate a core facilitation pipeline through Iran, enabling AQ to move funds and fighters to South Asia and to Syria. Al-Fadhli is a veteran AQ operative who has been active for years. Al-Fadhli began working with the Iran-based AQ facilitation network in 2009 and was later arrested by Iranian authorities. He was released in 2011 and assumed leadership of the Iran-based AQ facilitation network.

Since 2009, the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) has called for its members and the international community to institute countermeasures to protect their respective financial sectors and the global financial system from the risks – in particular the terrorist financing threat – posed by Iran. In October 2012, the FATF strengthened its language and again called for countermeasures against Iran. Iran has had some limited

engagement regarding anti-money laundering/combating the financing of terrorism and has responded to overtures by multilateral entities such as the UN's Global Program against Money Laundering, but it has failed to criminalize terrorist financing and require that financial institutions and other obliged entities file suspicious transaction reports. Iran has not engaged with FATF and was not a member of a FATF-style regional body.

Iran remains a state of proliferation concern. Despite multiple UNSCRs requiring Iran to suspend its sensitive nuclear proliferation activities, Iran continues to violate its international obligations regarding its nuclear program. For further information, see the Report to Congress on Iran-related Multilateral Sanctions Regime Efforts (February 2013), and the Report on the Status of Bilateral and Multilateral Efforts Aimed at Curtailing the Pursuit of Iran of Nuclear Weapons Technology (September 2012).

In March 2014, *The Guardian's* Martin Chulov reported from Najaf that Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq "has quietly emerged as one of the most powerful players" in Iraq since the withdrawal of U.S. troops at the end of 2011.⁵⁶⁵ Chulov reported that Iranian general Qassem Suleimani now directs the Shia Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq's activities in Iraq, as well as Syria "through a mix of strategic diplomacy, aggressive military operations and intimidation".⁵⁶⁶ As of March 2014, Chulov reported that Shia fighters in Syria numbered between 8,000 to 15,000 Shia fighters, and along with the IRGC, were "helping turn the tide in favor of the Assad regime".⁵⁶⁷ In Iraq, the Asa'ib al-Haq is increasing its activity in advance of the April 30, 2014 elections.

Chulov added that a senior Iraqi official with links to the intelligence community stated, "The government has given them cover for their political and security life. [The Iraqi prime minister Nouri] al-Maliki is wary of them, but what can he do? His nature is that if he cannot deal with the issue he will turn his head away. He tried to set up a cell to monitor them in late 2010, but they found out and he was embarrassed. He paid them money and said sorry. They don't respect him now." Iraqi intelligence officials believe Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq is receiving \$1.5m-\$2m a month from Iran.

In February 2014, the *Washington Post's* Liz reported that "the group's chief officers have returned from exile in Iran, and they have set about opening a string of political offices, establishing a social services program to aid widows and orphans, and launching a network of religious schools, echoing the methods and structures of one of its close allies, the Lebanese Shiite movement Hezbollah."⁵⁶⁸

Iranian Political and Security Influence in Iraq

What is far less uncertain is the role that Iran has played in seeking influence over Iraq and to make a zone of influence. Ever since the fall of Saddam Hussein in 2003, Iraq had attempted to increase its political, security, and economic influence at the level of the national government, in working with local Shi'ite dominated provincial and urban governments, and in dealing with Shi'ite factions.

Iran did play a major role in brokering the political aftermath to the 2010 election that allowed Maliki to retain power, and in influencing Shi'ite political leaders not to vote against Maliki in the political crisis and vote of confidence efforts that followed. Iraq officials and officers play an ongoing role in advising the Maliki government and other Shi'ite factions and politician – including what remains of the SCIRI and Hakim factions, the Sadr movement, and several Shi'ite militias.

Kenneth Katzman of the Congressional Research Service provided the following assessment of such trends in a report issued in December 2013,⁵⁶⁹

The United States has sought to limit Iran's influence over Iraq, even though many assert that it was U.S. policy that indirectly brought to power Iraqi Shiites long linked to Iran. Some argue that the withdrawal of all U.S. troops from Iraq represented a success for Iranian strategy, and that evidence of Iranian influence is Iraq's refusal to join U.S. and allied efforts to achieve a transition from the rule of President Bashar Al Assad in Syria. There are no indications that U.S. efforts to limit Iran's influence in Iraq have diminished because of the accession of the relatively moderate Iranian president Hassan Rouhani in August 2013. Rouhani and President Obama talked by phone on September 27, 2013—the first leadership level contact between the two countries since the 1979 Islamic revolution—capping a weak of diplomatic overtures between the two mainly over the issue of Iran's nuclear program.

Prime Minister Maliki has tried to calm fears that Iran exercises undue influence over Iraq, stressing that Iraqi nationalism resists Iranian influence. On Syria, Iraqi leaders stress that Iraq is neutral in the Syrian conflict and has not adopted Iran's position of openly supporting the Assad regime. Experts also note lingering distrust of Iran from the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war, in which an estimated 300,000 Iraqi military personnel (Shiite and Sunni) died. And Iraq's Shiite clerics also resist Iranian interference and take pride in Najaf as a more prominent center of Shiite theology and history than is the Iranian holy city of Qom.

In a December 5, 2011, op-ed in the *Washington Post*, entitled "Building a Stable Iraq," Maliki wrote: Iraq is a sovereign country. Our foreign policy is rooted in the fact that we do not interfere in the affairs of other countries; accordingly, we oppose foreign interference in Iraqi affairs.

On the other hand, Maliki's frequent visits to Tehran have increased U.S. concerns about his alignment with Iran. His most recent visit was on December 4, 2013, about ten days after Iran and the international community agreed to an interim deal on Iran's nuclear program. Most experts assessed the visit as an effort by Maliki to judge the potential for Iran's rebuilding of its relations with the international community. However, some observers speculated the visit might have been an effort by Maliki to arrange Tehran's support for a third term as Prime Minister.

There are indications the Shiite-led government of Iraq has sought to shield pro-Iranian militants who committed past acts of violence against U.S. forces. In May 2012, Iraqi courts acquitted and Iraq released from prison a purported Hezbollah commander, Ali Musa Daqduq, although he subsequently remained under house arrest. He had been in U.S. custody for alleged activities against U.S. forces but, under the U.S.-Iraq Security Agreement (discussed below) he was transferred to Iraqi custody in December 2011. In July 2012, U.S. officials asked Iraqi leaders to review the Daqduq case or extradite him to the United States, but Iraq released him in November 2012 and he returned to Lebanon, despite U.S. efforts to persuade Iraq to keep him there.

Still others see Iranian influence as less political than economic, raising questions about whether Iran is using Iraq to try to avoid the effects of international sanctions. Some reports say Iraq is enabling Iran's efforts by allowing it to interact with Iraq's energy sector and its banking system.

In July 2012, the Treasury Department imposed sanctions on the Elaf Islamic Bank of Iraq for allegedly conducting financial transactions with the Iranian banking system that violated the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2010 (CISADA, P.L. 111-195). Those sanctions were lifted in May 2013 when Elaf reduced its involvement in Iran's financial sector. Iraq also is at least indirectly assisting U.S. policy toward Iran by supplying oil customers who, in cooperation with U.S. sanctions against Iran, are cutting back buys of oil from Iran.

Iran's exports to Iraq reached about \$10 billion from March 2012 to March 2013, a large increase from the \$7 billion in exports in the prior one year. The Iraqi government treatment of the population of Camp Ashraf and Camp Hurriya, camps in which over 3,500 Iranian oppositionists (People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran, PMOI) have resided, is another indicator of the government's close ties to Iran. The residents of the camps accuse the Iraqi government of recent attacks on residents...Iran has periodically acted against other Iranian opposition groups based in Iraq. The Free Life Party (PJAK) consists of Iranian Kurds, and it is allied with the Kurdistan Workers' Party that opposes the government of Turkey. Iran has shelled purported camps

of the group on several occasions. Iran is also reportedly attempting to pressure the bases and offices in Iraq of such Iranian Kurdish parties as the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran (KDP-I) and Komaleh.

The Al Quds Force in Iraq

It is clear that elements of the Iranian security forces has continued to play an active role in Iraq. Iran has built up a specialized force to work with outside state and non-state actors called the Al Quds Force. The Al Quds Force is a branch of the IRGC that is assigned to special operations and unconventional warfare, which gives it priority in terms of funding, training, and equipment. It plays a major role in giving Iran the ability to conduct unconventional warfare overseas using various foreign movements as proxies and is thought to be composed of 5-15,000 men.

In January 2007, Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) decided to place all Iranian operations in Iraq under the command of the Al Quds Force. At the same time, the SNSC decided to increase the personnel strength of the Al Quds Force to 15,000.⁵⁷⁰ Exact force details are unknown, but reports indicate that hundreds of Al Quds Force personnel took part in Iranian operations in Iraq between 2003 and 2011.⁵⁷¹

The Al Quds Force is under the command of Brigadier General Qassem Suleimani and has supported non-state actors in many foreign countries. These include Hezbollah in Lebanon, Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad in the Gaza Strip and West Bank, Shi'ite militias in Iraq, and Shi'ites in Afghanistan. Links to Sunni extremist groups like Al Qaeda have been reported, but never convincingly confirmed.

On January 11, 2007, the director of the Defense Intelligence Agency stated in testimony before the US Senate Select Committee on Intelligence that Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps-Qods Force had the lead for Iranian transnational terrorist activities, in conjunction with Lebanese Hezbollah and Iran's intelligence agencies.⁵⁷² Other sources believe that the primary mission of the Al Quds Force has been to support Shi'ite movements and militias; such aid and weapons transfers seem to have increased significantly since the spring of 2007.

The US Secretary of Defense summarized the role of the Al Quds Force as follows in the annual report on Iranian forces to Congress that he issued on June 29, 2012,⁵⁷³

Iran established the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps-Qods Force in 1990 to provide arms, funding, and paramilitary training to extremist groups. We assess with high confidence that during the past three decades Iran has methodically cultivated a network of sponsored terrorist surrogates capable of targeting US and Israeli interests; we suspect this activity continues. Iran's unconventional forces are trained according to its asymmetric warfare doctrine and would present a formidable force while defending Iranian territory.

...through the IRGC-QF, Iran provides material support to terrorist or militant groups such as Hamas, Lebanese Hezbollah, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, the Taliban, and Iraqi Shia groups.

- In close cooperation with Syria, Iran has provided Lebanese Hezbollah with increasingly sophisticated weapons, including a wide array of missiles and rockets that allow Hezbollah to launch weapons from deeper in Lebanon or to strike Israel. We judge that the Iranian military trains Hezbollah and Palestinian extremist groups throughout the region.
- Iran provides funding and possibly weapons to Hamas and other Palestinian terrorists in the Gaza strip.

The 2013 version of the same report, entitled, "Annual Report on Military Power of Iran," has been released to news organizations, but not the public. News reports do quote a section regarding the Al Quds force,⁵⁷⁴

We assess with high confidence that during the past three decades, Iran has methodically cultivated a network of terrorist and militant groups capable of targeting regional and extra-regional targets...IRGC-QF is Iran's principal interlocutor to Hezbollah.

Other sources indicate that the budget for the Al Quds Force is classified, directly controlled by the office of Supreme Leader Khamenei, and is not reflected in Iran's general budget. The active elements of the Al Quds Force operate outside Iran's borders, although it has bases both inside and outside of Iran. The Al Quds Force's troops are divided into specific groups or "corps" for each country or area in which they operate. There are Directorates for Iraq; Lebanon, Palestine, and Jordan; Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India; Turkey and the Arabian Peninsula; Asian countries of the former Soviet Union; Western nations (Europe and North America); and North Africa (Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, Sudan, and Morocco).

These sources indicate that Department 1000, also known as the Ramadan Corps, is responsible for Qods Force operations in Iraq, including Kurdistan. Given the extent of fighting along Iran's Western border during the Iran-Iraq War, the Ramadan Corps relies on a well-established and extensive series of bases, garrisons, and training centers. It remains one of the most important Qods Force units, heavily involved in arming, training, and guiding Iraqi Shia groups loyal to Iran. Department 1000 benefits from the existence of heavy military infrastructure that dates back to the Iran-Iraq War, from training centers to garrisons and bases. The Ramadan Corps will continue to be critical as Iran seeks to build a resilient power base of Shia influence throughout the country. It has already proven highly useful as a staging ground for Iran and Hezbollah-led support to Syria.

The operations of Department 1000 cannot be separated from Department 2000 or the Lebanon Corps handles Qods Force operations in the Levant, whose impact spills over into Syria and the impact the Syrian civil war has on Iraq. Department 2000 is arguably the most important Qods Force unit given the importance of Iran's relationship with Lebanese Hezbollah. Through this unit, the Qods Force provides financial assistance to Hezbollah-run programs in Lebanon (e.g., development and reconstruction committees, pro-Iran cultural and religious organizations, schools and other community infrastructure in Shia-controlled areas, etc.).

Department 2000 officers also oversee much of Iran's ongoing involvement in Syria in support of the Assad regime, including military advisors and even direct military support alongside Hezbollah-led units. Department 2000 also plays a leading role in directing Iran's support to Palestinian resistance groups such as PFLP-GC and Hamas. Department 2000 works closely with Iranian-sponsored entities that operate throughout the Levant, in addition to Hezbollah-run front companies and organizations that provide support to Hezbollah operatives, which some experts believe are affiliated with Hezbollah's External Security Organization.

There are also functional departments such as Department 400, or Special External Operations. Department 400 is responsible for carrying out lethal activities such as assassinations and providing support to violent armed groups such as those aligned with the Assad regime in Syria. Department 12000 is also involved in special operations, which includes organizing, financing, and training armed groups. Both are suspected of working closely with Iran's closest non-state allies, most notably Hezbollah.

The Al Quds Force has offices or "sections" in many Iranian embassies, which are closed to most embassy staff. It is not clear whether these are integrated with Iranian intelligence operations or if the ambassador in each embassy has control of, or detailed knowledge of, operations by the Al Quds staff. However, there are indications that most operations are coordinated between the IRGC and offices within the Iranian Foreign Ministry and MOIS. There are separate operational

organizations in Lebanon, Turkey, Pakistan, and several North African countries. There are also indications that such elements may have participated in the bombing of the Israeli Embassy in Argentina in 1992 and the Jewish Community Center in Buenos Aires in 1994 – although Iran has strongly denied any involvement in either.⁵⁷⁵

The Al Quds Force also seems to control many of Iran's training camps for extremists and guerilla warriors in Iran and countries like Iraq, the Sudan and Lebanon. The civil war in Syria, and Iran's support of Assad, has led to the creation of at least three Alewite militia training centers in Syria that reports indicate are operated by the Al Quds force. In the Sudan, the Al Quds Force is believed to run a training camp of unspecified nature, while in Lebanon its operations have ranged in size, from 2-3 camps during the Lebanese Civil War to smaller groups of "councilors" today. It also has at least four major training facilities in Iran. The Al Quds Force has a main training center at Imam Ali University at the Sa'dabad Palace in northern Tehran where troops study advanced asymmetric warfare techniques and terrorist operations.

There are other training camps in the Qom, Tabriz, and Mashhad governorates and in Lebanon and the Sudan. These include the Al Nasr camp for training Iraqi Shi'ites and Iraqi and Turkish Kurds in northwest Iran, and a camp near Mashhad for training Afghan and Tajik revolutionaries. The Al Quds Force seems to help operate the Manzariyah training center near Qom, which recruits foreign students in the religious seminary and which seems to have trained some Bahraini extremists. Some foreigners are reported to have received training in demolition and sabotage at an IRGC facility near Isfahan, in airport infiltration at a facility near Mashhad and Shiraz, and in underwater warfare at an IRGC facility at Bandar-e Abbas.⁵⁷⁶

US experts report that these camps and other facilities provide specialized training in bomb making, use of IEDs, use of computers, sabotage, and use of ATGMs and MANPADs. This training has been extensive for Iraqi Shi'ite militias. Most training of Hezbollah operatives is now believed to occur in Lebanon. The level of paramilitary and military training for Bahrainis, Kuwaitis, Saudis, Yemenis, and other Arab Shi'ites is unclear.

Iranian Operations in Iraq

The growing tension between Sunni and Shi'ite that has intensified since the Arab uprisings began in 2011 has both threatened Iran, and gives Iran a potential opportunity to use the Shi'ite population in Arab states with significant Shi'ite minorities or majorities. Iran has exploited such tensions to increase its influence in Iraq and Syria, and its arms transfers and aid efforts have had an important impact on the source of the Syrian civil war.

The Al Quds Force and other elements of the IRGC, as well as possibly some elements of the Iranian intelligence services -- the Ministry of Intelligence and National Services (MISIRI or MOIS) have provided significant transfers of weapons to Shi'ite and possibly some Sunni elements in Iraq.

During the fighting in 2005-2008, these transfers included the shaped charge components used in some IEDs and the more advanced components used in explosively formed projectiles (EFP), including the weapon assembly, copper slugs, radio links used to activate such devices, and the infrared triggering mechanisms. These devices are very similar to those used in Lebanon, and some seem to operate on the same radio frequencies. Shaped charge weapons first began to appear in Iraq in August 2003, but became a serious threat in 2005.⁵⁷⁷ US experts believe there is definitive

evidence that key components were made in Iran and that Iran played a major role in expanding the IED threat in Iraq.

On January 11, 2007, the US military in Iraq detained five men accused of providing funds and equipment to Iraqi insurgents. According to US military sources, these men had connections to the Al Quds Force.⁵⁷⁸ On January 20, 2007, gunmen dressed as US soldiers entered the Provincial Joint Coordination Center in Karbala and killed and wounded several US servicemen. According to some sources, including US military intelligence, the gunmen were members of the Al Quds Force, possibly seeking to gain hostages for bargaining with America's recent detainment of several Al Quds Force officers.⁵⁷⁹ The sophisticated planning and execution of this attack made it unlikely that any Iraqi group was involved in it.⁵⁸⁰

This led some analysis to take a much stronger view of Iran's role in Iraq. General David H. Petraeus, the commander of US forces in Iraq at the time, stressed the growing role of the Al Quds Force and the IRGC in testimony to Congress in April 2007. He noted that the US had found Al Quds operatives in Iraq and seized computers with hard drives that included a 22-page document that had details on the planning, approval process, and conduct of an attack that killed five US soldiers in Karbala. Petraeus noted,⁵⁸¹

“They were provided substantial funding, training on Iranian soil, advanced explosive munitions and technologies as well as run-of-the-mill arms and ammunition... in some cases advice and in some cases even a degree of direction... Our sense is that these records were kept so that they could be handed in to whoever it was that is financing them... And again, there's no question... that Iranian financing is taking place through the Al-Quds force of the Iranian Republican Guards Corps.”⁵⁸²

Wikileaks has released classified US cables that suggest that Soleimani provided funding and weapons for various Iraqi Shiite insurgent groups, creating a mosaic of militias to bleed US forces on the ground. This role gave the Al Quds Force major political influence as well as combat power because it was often called in by the militias to mediate when disputes between them broke into open warfare.⁵⁸³

Others suggest that the Al Quds Force played a less direct role in training and arming Shi'ite extremist militias after US Special Forces quietly put increasing pressure on Al Quds officers supporting the IED campaign in Iraq after 2006 and after Prime Minister Maliki launched the Charge of the Knights offensive against Sadrist and other Shi'ite militias in Baghdad and the South of Iraq in March 2008.⁵⁸⁴

The Al Quds Force has, however, clearly remained a key part of the Iranian effort in Iraq, working with other elements of the IRGC, Iranian diplomats, and Iranian intelligence services like the MOIS. They remain linked to Sadrist and other militias, as well as elements of the Iranian security services, and have some ties to officials in both the Prime Minister's office and Shi'ite parties, as well as to the security elements of Iranian sponsored companies and religious facilities. Their role is currently more advisory and passive, but much depends on Iraq's future political evolution and the complex interactions between Iran, Iraq, and Syria.⁵⁸⁵

Some aspects of an article by Martin Chulov in the *Guardian* published in 2011, tracked closely with the views of US, British and German experts at the time in stressing the continued role the IRC played in Iraq – although some experts cautioned that Maliki was actually pursuing his own interests and playing Iran off against the US.

Chulov stated that Qassem Suleimani the head of the al-Quds Force, had told David Petraeus: “General Petraeus, you should know that I, Qassem Suleimani, control the policy for Iran with

respect to Iraq, Lebanon, Gaza, and Afghanistan. And indeed, the ambassador in Baghdad is a Quds Force member. The individual who's going to replace him is a Quds Force member." The article also quoted Iraq's former national security minister, Mowaffak al-Rubaie, as telling *al-Sharq al-Awsat* in July 2010 that Qassem Suleimani, "is the most powerful man in Iraq without question...Nothing gets done without him."⁵⁸⁶

It was also clear during 2012-2013 that Iran had become a major issue in the growing tension between Maliki and Iraq's Sunnis that led to the crisis in Anbar in late 2013. In a report whose content was supported by several US experts, David Ignatius of the *Washington Post* reported in January, 2014 that,⁵⁸⁷

Many Sunnis, fearing that Maliki's Shiite government was simply a tool of Iran, began turning back toward sectarian warfare. The covert campaign in Iraq was directed by Qassem Suleimani, the head of the Quds Force of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), and it included a range of different Shiite figures around Maliki. This ability to ride many horses at once is a mark of Suleimani's operating style. The Iranians also benefit from intelligence relationships that in some cases date back 40 years.

Iran has drawn its cards from a full deck of Iraqi militias. Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, who allegedly helped plan the 1983 attack on the U.S. Embassy in Kuwait, now directs the IRGC-backed insurgent group known as Kataib Hezbollah. Qais al-Khazali, charged with kidnapping and killing U.S. Marines in Karbala in 2007, runs an IRGC-allied insurgent group known as Asaib al-Haq, or the League of the Righteous. A third Iraqi Shiite militia is known as the Promised Day Brigades. At Iran's covert direction, fighters from all three militias have been sent to Syria to battle Sunni rebels there.

Iran allegedly has been able to use Iraq as a staging ground for operations to support Syrian President Bashar al-Assad thanks partly to Hadi al-Ameri, the Iraqi minister of transportation. He headed the Badr Brigade, a pro-Iranian militia.

Outside State Actors: Syria

Preserving an allied Assad regime in Syria is a key priority for Iran. Iran has provided trainers, volunteers, arms, and money to the Assad regime in Syria since the uprisings there began to become a civil war in 2011.

As noted earlier, unclassified State Department and US National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) reports on state acts of terrorism do not list Syrian activity that currently directly supports terrorism or extremist groups in Iraq. Past reports did, however, note that the Assad regime actively supported Ba'athist and extremist support of terrorism and extremist movement during the fighting in 2004-2008. They also note that the Assad regime continues to support extremist movements on a broad level:⁵⁸⁸

Designated in 1979 as a State Sponsor of Terrorism, Syria continued its political support to a variety of terrorist groups affecting the stability of the region and beyond, even amid significant internal unrest. Syria provided political and weapons support to Lebanese Hezbollah and continued to allow Iran to re-arm the terrorist organization. The Syrian regime's relationship with Hezbollah and Iran appears to have gotten stronger over the course of the conflict in Syria. President Bashar al-Assad continued to be a staunch defender of Iran's policies while Iran exhibited equally energetic support for Syrian regime efforts to put down the growing protest movement within Syria. Statements supporting terrorist groups, particularly Hezbollah, were often in Syrian government speeches and press statements.

President Assad continued to express public support for Palestinian terrorist groups as elements of the resistance against Israel. Damascus provided safe haven in Syria for exiled individuals, although the Palestinian groups were subject to the same level of insecurity as the rest of the Syrian population and fighting has fractured their alliances with the Syrian regime. As part of a broader strategy during the year, the regime has attempted to portray Syria itself as a victim of terrorism, characterizing all its armed opponents as "terrorists."

Syria continued to generate significant concern regarding the role it plays in terrorist financing.

Industry experts reported that 60 percent of all business transactions were conducted in cash and that nearly 80 percent of all Syrians did not use formal banking services. Despite Syrian legislation that required money-changers to be licensed by the end of 2007, many money-changers continued to operate illegally in Syria's vast black market, estimated to be as large as Syria's formal economy. Regional *hawala* networks remained intertwined with smuggling and trade-based money laundering and were facilitated by notoriously corrupt customs and immigration officials. This raised significant concerns that some members of the Syrian government and the business elite were complicit in terrorist finance schemes conducted through these institutions.

Syria is a member of the Middle East and North Africa Financial Action Task Force (MENAFATF), a Financial Action Task Force (FATF)-style regional body. Since February 2010, Syria has been publicly identified by the FATF as a jurisdiction with strategic anti-money laundering/combatting the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT) deficiencies for which it has developed an action plan with the FATF to address these weaknesses. Since then, Syria has made limited progress on its AML/CFT regime. In February 2012, Syria was named in the FATF Public Statement for its lack of progress in implementing its action plan, including its need to address the deficiencies by providing sufficient legal basis for implementing its S/RES/1373 obligations and implementing adequate procedures for identifying and freezing terrorist assets, and ensuring that appropriate laws and procedures are in place to provide mutual legal assistance.

In 2012, we continued to closely monitor Syria's proliferation-sensitive materials and facilities, including Syria's significant stockpile of chemical weapons, which we assess remains under the Assad regime's control. There is significant concern, given the instability in Syria, that these materials could find their way to terrorist organizations. We are coordinating closely with a number of like-minded nations and partners to prevent Syria's stockpiles of chemical and advanced conventional weapons from falling into the hands of violent extremists.

Iran has confirmed that it has forces active in Syria assisting the Al-Assad regime in "maintaining order." It is widely assumed that Al Quds units composed the heart of this force. According to the website Iranian Diplomacy, in its monograph on IRGC Commander Mohammad Ali Jafari,

Recently, in response to the question about his assessment of the IRGC's presence in Syria, Mohammad Ali Jafari said: "In the past, the Revolutionary Guards had a unit called Islamic Movement which helped the deprived people. But, at the present time, the Qods forces with the objective of supporting the oppressed people, implements this task. This is while in the past, some of the members of this force were present in Lebanon and Syria, but this presence did not and does not mean we have a military presence in these countries.... Of course, we will render our intellectual aid to Syria as long as we can and we are proud to be able to support Syria and share with them our experiences, but as I stated before, our presence does not mean a military presence."

These statements made by the IRGC Commander, which were followed by numerous reactions, were considered to confirm IRGC military intervention in Syria. This is while Commander Jafari has said, "The presence of IRGC personnel in Syria is only to give consultations to them". Associated Press interpreted his statements as the following: The IRGC Commander, while confessing to the presence of "Qods Forces" members in Syria said that Iran helps Syria in economic issues and renders its consultative services. He has also said that Iran's intervention in case of attack against Syria "depends on the conditions".⁵⁸⁹

It is not clear, however, that such support has involved a major Iranian or Al Quds presence beyond the creation of training camps for the pro-Assad Alewite militia, Iranian support of Hezbollah volunteers from Lebanon, and a series of selective Iranian aid efforts responding to specific requests from the Syrian regime in areas where it has urgent needs or Iran can act as an effective cover.

Recent reports -- and past actions like the killing of a senior IRGC commander in an Israeli air strike in February 2013 -- underscore the aid that Iran is providing Syria. It is apparent that the IRGC is not only involved in training Syrian regime forces, but advising and supplying those

forces as well. According to a report by Reuters, Iran has been using civilian airliners flying through Iraqi airspace.⁵⁹⁰ General Mattis, former CENTCOM commander, noted in an interview that, “Absent Iran’s help, I don’t believe Assad would have been in power the last six months.”⁵⁹¹ While the depth of that aid is not known it is assumed to be substantial, as Iran has a major vested interest in keeping Assad in power and supplying Hezbollah.

Outside State Actors: Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the UAE, and Qatar

The Maliki government and a number of outside experts on terrorism have charged that Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and the UAE have actively support AQI/ISIS in Iraq, and supported and funded the AQI/ISIS takeover in Fallujah and Ramadi in later December 2013. These charges had had growing emphasis since that time, creating yet another conspiracy theory explanation for Sunni anger and resentment against the Maliki government. Iraqi officials have also increasingly singled out the Saudi government in background briefing, although they have not made country-specific charges in public.

On January 18, 2014, for example, Maliki called for all-out offensive against al-Qaeda-linked militants in Fallujah, Ramadi and the rest Anbar. He also stated that, “Iraq is the target for some countries that are backing terrorism, and backing evil...The world has united with us,” he continued. “The U.N. Security Council, the European Union, and most Arab countries, except some diabolical treacherous countries.” He accused such “diabolical” and “treacherous” Arab states of supporting Al Qaeda and other violent extremists in an effort to divide the country. Maliki did say that al-Maliki said suicide bombers were coming to Iraq from as far as Morocco, Libya and Yemen, but did not mention Saudi Arabia or any government by name.⁵⁹²

There is no consensus among intelligence experts over these issues, and some US State Department officers have charge that the Saudi government has supported AQI on background. Discussions with US and other intelligence and counterterrorism experts do, however, raise serious doubts about such charges. They can only speak on background and cannot discuss sources, methods, or key indicators. In general, however, they feel that the Saudi government has not provided arms, funds, or advisors to AQI/ISIS in any form. They feel the Saudi government has increasingly supported other Islamist fighters in Syria – but ones that are rivals of AQI/ISIS and in ways that help them defeat AQI/ISIS in at least the initial fighting between Sunni Islamist factions in Syria that began on December 2013.

They also feel that AQI/ISIS had been funded largely though local threats and extortion, and to some degree by private donors in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the UAE, and Qatar. Some warn that Saudi are often used to describe all of the various sources of such private funding. They note that a number of senior Qataris – including one member of the royal family – have funded such movements as well as one leading family in Kuwait. They also warn against the tendency to make exaggerated estimates of the cost of AQI/ISIS operations, how well funded and armed they are, and the size of outside funding. One put it this way: “Consumers demand data we really don’t have and we round up the figures to the maximum. They usually get boosted again when people go public. The fact is there are no reliable underlying data for most such public annual totals; just guesstimates.

The broader problem, however, is that the Southern Arab Gulf states have had no coherent policy towards Iraq. Kuwait, having learned its lesson in 1990, has reached out to Iraq and the Maliki regime in spite of its ties to Iran and Shi’ite character. Saudi Arabia has seen Iraq as losing its Arab identity and the Maliki regime as too Shi’ite and too tied to Iran. Rather than reaching out and

actively competing with Iran for influence, it has kept the Maliki regime at arm's length and is building a security fence along its entire border with Iraq. The other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states have mixed but uncertain relations.

It is scarcely a surprise to anyone who has studied the history of the southern Gulf states, and the GCC in particular, to find they are incapable of efficient coherent action except in terms of vacuous Ministerial rhetoric. The end result, however, has been to help Iran in gaining influence and exacerbate the growing gap between Sunnis and other Islamic sects.

The Inactive Non-State Actor: Mujahedin-e Khalq Organization (MEK)

One potentially violent movement has become an “odd man out” in this cycle of violence, and is now more the subject of violence than violent. The Mujahedin-e Khalq Organization (MEK), or the People's Mujahedin of Iran (PMOI), is a 5,000-10,000-member organization located in Camp Ashraf, Iraq claimed to be dedicated to toppling the Iranian regime.⁵⁹³

The MEK stated out as a terrorist group in Iran that attacked and killed US officials and officers while the Shah was in power, and became a radically violent rival of Khomeini in the first years following the Shah's fall. It then became a tool of Saddam Hussein after it lost its struggle with Khomeini. It was forced to move into Iraq and became a paramilitary force with Saddam's support, but was soundly defeated during its one major confrontation with Iranian forces in 1988. It has since gradually evolved into a strange mix of a radical cult centered around its leaders – the Rajavis, and opposition to the Iranian regime from 1988 onwards.

The MEK has also maintained a major front in the US, and lobby effort in the US Congress, to obtain money and political support since the early 1980s – carefully ignoring its past role in killing officers and officials, including the murder of Colonel Lewis Hawkins in front of his family.⁵⁹⁴ It also rarely mentions the fact in the US that the MEK conducted and lost a “war of assassinations” against the Khomeini regime, was largely forced out of Iran and its leaders relocated to Paris in 1981 – where they begin to get funding from Saddam Hussein who sought to use them to his advantage in the Iran-Iraq War. By 1986, the MEK had openly relocated to Iraq with the support of the Iraqi government.

After the US invasion in 2003, 3,400 members of the MEK were disarmed, isolated in Camp Ashraf, Iraq, and given protected status under the Geneva Convention.⁵⁹⁵ Iran has since pressured Iraqi leaders to eliminate the MEK. The State Department designated the MEK as a terrorist organization, but this move and the decision to disarm and protect the MEK did not satisfy Iran.⁵⁹⁶ Although the MEK has been weakened in recent years, its revelations of Iranian nuclear facilities in Natanz and Isfahan in 2002 did increase international concern over Iran's nuclear program and altered their significance.⁵⁹⁷ The group has made similar disclosures since, such as a statement in September 2010 that Iran had another nuclear site near Qazvin, 70 miles west of Tehran.⁵⁹⁸

Since 2003, MEK supporters have lobbied Washington to end the group's isolation at Camp Ashraf and to remove its name from the list of foreign terrorist organizations. Among its supporters, the MEK enlisted several current and former high-level US diplomats, politician, and military leaders – often paying them large speaker fees.⁵⁹⁹ The MEK tightly safeguards its funding, but has long devoted large amounts of money to lobbying Congress and attracting powerful figures to their cause.⁶⁰⁰ In 2007, the State Department stated that the MEK still had the “capacity and will” to

commit terrorist acts and also rejected any notion that the group was a viable opposition movement in Iran.⁶⁰¹ Several US think tanks, including RAND, have categorized the MEK as a cult.⁶⁰²

In May of 2012 it was reported that the US Treasury Department had issued subpoenas to 11 high-ranking US officials, including recent Pennsylvania governor Ed Rendell, former Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff, Hugh Shelton, and former director of Homeland Security, Tom Ridge. These individuals are charged with accepting money from an outfit associated with the MEK in exchange for publically supporting the group, which the State Department then designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO).⁶⁰³

In late-December 2011, a deal was announced where MEK members would leave Camp Ashraf and move to a former American military base near Baghdad's international airport, with the UN eventually relocating the residents to other countries. However, the group has not yet agreed to the deal. Maliki gave the group a six-month extension in late December to come up with a solution.⁶⁰⁴

The MEK succeeded in removing its designation as a terrorist group in the fall of 2012, largely because it had ceased to function as an effective organization and because it fought a legal battle in U.S and European courts. As a Secretary of State Hillary Clinton had removed the designation in late September, just days before an October 1, 2012 deadline set by a U.S. appeals court that would have forced the state Department to give the full range of data it had on the MEK.

The State Department did not address the group's past, but simply stated that, "The secretary of state has decided, consistent with the law, to revoke the designation of the Mujahedeen-e-Khalq (MEK) and its aliases as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) under the Immigration and Nationality Act and to delist the MEK as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist under Executive Order 13224."

These shifts did have an impact on Iran. Iran put increasing pressure on the Iraqi government to suppress the MEK while condemning the US for allowing its continued existence. In May of 2011, Iranian state media reported that the US was actively training the MEK at Tajil military base in Iraq. The report states that the US is training the MEK in bombing and other terrorist operations, and characterized the MEK as wishing to "break away" the oil-rich Iranian province of Khuzestan.⁶⁰⁵

The US withdrawal also seems to have led to targeted violence against the MEK, although Iran is scarcely the only source of such violence. Both Shi'a and Kurdish groups believe the MEK was used by Saddam to quell uprisings in 1991, and Iran pushed both Iraq Shi'ite parties and the Iraqi government to expel the MEK.⁶⁰⁶ In September 2011, for example, ISCI leader Ammar al-Hakim stated that the MEK must leave Iraq for past terrorist acts and for betraying the Islamic Republic of Iran.⁶⁰⁷

The most serious attack up to mid-2013 occurred on September 1, 2013. While Iraqi government reports downplay the role of Iraqi security forces, Reuters reported that a least 47 people were killed at the MEK and the UN asked the Iraqi government to investigate the "tragic events." Reuters reported that a direct attack occurred hours after a mortar bomb attack on the camp that the MEK blamed on the Iraqi army. It said that, "Two Iraqi security sources said that army and special forces had opened fire on residents who had stormed a post at the entrance to Camp Ashraf, a site that Iraq's government wants closed down. They said at least 19 were killed, 52 wounded and 38 arrested and that they believed residents were not armed." The UN had a different set of figures: 52 killed out of roughly 100 at the camp.⁶⁰⁸

The US cannot simply dismiss MEK cannot be dismissed out of humanitarian concerns and they are a mild irritant to Iran, if otherwise little more than a fundraising front and Rajavi cult. The fact remains, however, they are now little more than the ineffective remnants of a cult whose history has strong anti-American elements, and has committed terrorist acts that involved killing US personnel. It is now little more than a pointless sideshow in US and Iranian competition.

At the same time, this does not mean tolerating violence or repression. In December 2013, US intelligence officials implicated Iran in a September 2013 attack on the MEK at Camp Ashraf that left dozens dead.⁶⁰⁹ MEK officials, backed by various former US officials, blamed Iraqi security forces for the attack. Iraq denied involvement in the September attack on the camp.

In December, US officials determined that Iran's Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) planned the attack, which was allegedly carried out by two Iranian-backed militant groups; Kitab Hezbollah and Asaib Ahl al-Haq. In addition to the attack, US reports alleged that the Iranian-backed commandos also kidnapped seven MEK members from the camp in Ashraf, and smuggled them back to Iran.⁶¹⁰

X. SHAPING IRAQ'S SECURITY FORCES

Security forces, counterterrorism, counterinsurgency, and repression cannot compensate for Iraq's need for political change and for a more national government that has been stressed in earlier chapters. Iran cannot deal with the internal threats it faces without better politics and better governance. Iraq also, however, does need to make major improvements in its approach to security and stability. Iraq must create far more effective and less sectarian and repressive security forces.

Some elements of Iraq's security forces are making progress but most still face massive problems in terms of their effectiveness, they suffer badly from corruption, their ties to the office of the Prime Minister and Shi'ite factions, and the way they are used to repress legitimate political opposition. The end result is that their operations are often ineffective and have become a key source of Sunni violence and support for Al Qaeda and other extremist movements.

As a result, the Iraq's security forces have become both part of the path to stability and security and a threat to that same stability and security. They will remain so until Iraq has a more unified and truly national government. Moreover, unless outside aid take full account of the degree to which they are both a potential solution to Iraq's violence, and its cause, increased effectiveness may push Iraqi towards deeper civil conflict.

The US and other outside powers must do what they can to improve this situation in spite of the past failure to create a meaningful strategic partnership that survived the departure of its combat forces. As has been discussed earlier, the US and many other states retain critical national security interests in Iraq. These interests center on giving Iraq a successful political and economic structure and making it a securer source of petroleum exports, eliminating civil violence and the risk of a return to a serious civil war, reducing or eliminating the threat of Sunni and Shi'ite terrorist elements, limiting Iranian influence over Iraq's Shi'ite factions. They can best be served by supporting Iraqi governance and security forces by providing such support presents critical challenges.

The Impact of A Destabilizing Early US Departure

The last active US combat forces left Iraq in August 2010, marking the end of Operation Iraqi Freedom and the beginning of Operation New Dawn.⁶¹¹ Some 49,000 advisory troops, four advisor assistance brigades, and a limited number of special operations forces (SOF) remained to train, advise, and assist Iraq's security forces after that date, including the military, intelligence, and police.⁶¹² Until the end, these US troops continued to serve a number of other important security functions: carrying out kinetic operations against Iranian-backed and other militant groups; providing training to the ISF; taking part in joint patrols along the borders of the Kurdish provinces and helping integrate ISF and Kurdish forces; and acting as a deterrent to Iraq's neighbors – in particular Iran.⁶¹³

The US and Iraqi forces never planned for this departure of most US advisors and enablers at the end of 2011. Many elements in the American and Iraqi leadership wanted the US troops to remain in Iraq, leading up to the withdrawal deadline.⁶¹⁴ The US command in Iraq and many senior Iraqi officers and officials felt that US forces should continue to play such role after December 2011 as part of the Security Framework Agreement. Moreover, several US allies in the region, including

Saudi Arabia and Israel, voiced concerns that withdrawing all US troops would leave Iraq open to Iranian influence.⁶¹⁵

Nevertheless, implementing a meaningful Strategic Framework Agreement and extending a US troop presence after December 2011 proved to present major problems for both sides. On the Iraqi side, many Iraqis saw the US as an invading and occupying power that had failed to bring security, functioning democracy, effective governance, and effective economic aid. Public opinion influenced all Iraqi politicians. A majority of Iraqis supported withdrawing US troops by the end of 2011. According to a 2009 ABC News poll, 46% of Iraqis felt that US troops should leave sooner than the end of 2011, with only 16% wanting them to stay longer, and 35% feeling that the withdrawal timetable was right. Sunnis were particularly opposed, with 61% in favor of a faster timetable and only 4% wanting troops to stay longer.⁶¹⁶

The power struggles between Maliki and Allawi -- that divided Shiite, Sunni, and Kurd and became the key source of Iraq's rising level of violence -- made it difficult to achieve unity on any divisive issue, and Iran opposed a lasting US presence. Iraqi politics had created a deeply divided and semi-paralyzed government. Prime Minister Maliki had to deal with Sadr, Iranian pressure, and accusations that he was an American stooge, and at the same time he had to fend off accusations of being too close to Iran, and many around Maliki did not trust the US. Whatever his private views may have been, he ruled out extending the US troop presence, stating, "The last American soldier will leave Iraq...this agreement is not subject to extension, not subject to alteration. It is sealed."⁶¹⁷ Any plan to extend the US troop presence would also have to be approved by the Iraqi Parliament, which would prove difficult.

On the US side, support for maintaining troops in Iraq was uncertain. Budgetary concerns and public weariness over the Iraq war incentivized the withdrawal of all US troops. Indeed, even the most modest plans that called for civilian control of the US effort through the State Department and USAID faced growing budget pressures. Additionally, the cost of leaving even a fairly small number of US troops in Iraq created a significant financial burden.

A slight rise in American combat deaths in Iraq in 2011 did not help matters. Neither did the perception that Iraqi security forces were not doing enough to go after the Shi'ite groups attacking Americans.⁶¹⁸ Publically, neither President Obama nor President Maliki were backing plans to keep US troops in Iraq after 2011.

While the full details of Iran's actions and role remain unclear, it is still all too clear that the US underestimated Iran's influence. Iranian Quds Force leader Major General Qassem Suleimani was able to exert considerable pressure on Iraqi Shi'ite leaders to bar any US presence in Iraq after 2011, according to a September, 2013 profile of the Iranian general by *New York Times* correspondent Dexter Filkins.⁶¹⁹

A number of senior US experts in the US national security community indicate that Major General Suleimani's personal influence was critical to the formation of a viable coalition government under Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki in 2010, and that a firm refusal to allow for a long-term American presence on the order of 10,000-15,000 troops was required in order to prevent an increase in Iranian sponsored attacks in Iraq.

All these issues became steadily more critical to politicians and policymakers in both the US and Iraq as the deadline for removing US forces approached. In May 2001, Maliki had stated that a request for US troops might be considered if a 70% concurrence among Iraq's political blocs were

reached.⁶²⁰ On August 3, 2011, the major factions, excluding the Sadrists, gave Maliki their backing to negotiate,⁶²¹ and in September, the US publically acknowledged negotiations were taking place.⁶²²

As a result, both sides continued to examine options for extending the presence of US troops. The senior US commander in Iraq, Gen. Lloyd J. Austin III, originally recommended some 14,000-18,000 troops, while other reports speculated leaving 10,000 troops. In September 2011, Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta endorsed keeping a smaller force of 3,000-4,000 as what one senior official called, “a small, temporary military presence,” as part of a plan to create a major American Embassy presence in five different parts of Iraq that would support security contractors in a police advisory effort. This plan also included a strong Office of Security Cooperation staffed by civilians and military personnel to support training and equipping Iraqi Security Forces.⁶²³

NATO also agreed to keep a small force in Iraq for training purposes; as of September 2011, there were 160 NATO staff conducting training operations in Iraq, 12 of which were American.⁶²⁴ Military and intelligence officials also pushed for greater CIA involvement following the withdrawal US troops to counter Iranian influence and thwart arms smuggling.⁶²⁵ In February 2012, reports again suggested that the CIA would maintain a large clandestine presence in Iraq long after the withdrawal of US troops in order to monitor the activity of the Iraqi government, suppress al-Qaeda’s affiliates, and counter the influence of Iran.⁶²⁶

By September, however, the total force the US and NATO continued to seek had become far smaller than the force desired by top US military officials, and the failure to plan for a larger force drew growing criticism from many US experts and several US politicians. Iraqis across the sectarian spectrum also voiced their discomfort with such a small US force, while others still remained adamantly opposed to any presence at all. Many Iraqis remained conflicted over a desire for the US to withdrawal and feelings of mistrust and fear towards Iraqi institutions.⁶²⁷

The situation reached the crisis point in early October 2011. Iraq’s political leaders finally agreed to keep US military trainers in Iraq past the December deadline, but the agreement came too late for effective planning and they failed to agree that US troops could operate with immunity from Iraqi law. The US could not deploy forces without such immunity in a country where charges against US forces offered hostile factions so many political opportunity, and had previously made it clear that any such restriction would prevent it from keeping US forces in Iraq. As a result, the Obama administration decided to withdraw all forces aside from a small office linked to the US Embassy.⁶²⁸

This did not mean that the US lost the ability to aid Iraq in an emergency. The US did keep significant forces in the Gulf that could aid Iraq if it faced a threat from Iran. The US announced that it would work with Kuwait to keep US forces stationed at Kuwaiti bases that could react to crisis scenarios in Iraq. The US had 23,000 military personnel in Kuwait as of January 2012. While these forces were later cut around half that level, the US maintained a major air presence and rapid deployment cap-ability in the Gulf, and continued to deploy at least a combat battalion in Kuwait – sometimes reaching a full combat brigade.⁶²⁹

The US also propositioned supplies for a larger force if one had to be deployed to the region.⁶³⁰ As of late-December 2011, there was reportedly a Brigade Combat Team from the US Army’s 1st Cavalry Division in Kuwait, in addition to a Marine Expeditionary Unit likely headed to Kuwait for the foreseeable future.⁶³¹ In addition, there are approximately 7,500 US troops in Qatar, 5,000

in Bahrain, and 3,000 in the UAE, with very small numbers in Saudi Arabia and Oman. There are also forces deployed at least one and often two aircraft carrier task forces in or near the Gulf.⁶³²

The Uncertain Post-2011 Development of Iraq's Security Forces

There are no reliable data on the current operational strength of Iraq's forces and even the totals for authorized manning are suspect. The 2013 edition of the *IISS Military Balance* indicates, however, that Iraq had 271,400 active military personnel in the spring of 2013, with 193,400 in the Army, 3,600 in a small coastal navy, and Navy, and 5,050 in a still developing air force. The Ministry of Interior had another 531,000 personnel, although most were in regular police units.

Iraqi Forces at the Time of Transition

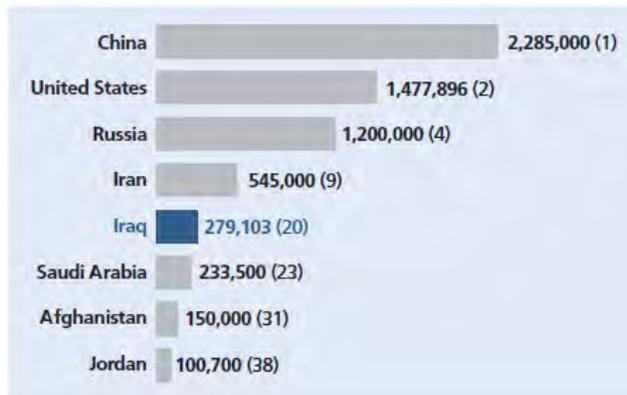
US forces left behind a mix of Iraqi security forces (ISF) with many strengths and many weaknesses. As **Figure 35** shows, the Iraqi security forces had considerable manpower at the time US forces left, but they included an awkward mix of real military forces and police forces, were structured around internal security operations with very limited ability to defend against foreign threats, and were still very much in transition to a largely US-designed force structure that different and conflicted with Iraq's part military structure and culture.

The various elements of the ISF had some combat units with considerable capability, but also many units that were not yet ready for independent operations. The army lacked many of the support and command structures it needed, effective IS&R assets, effective mobility and artillery capability, and was not supported by an effective Ministry of Defense. The police forces has some strong paramilitary elements but were an awkward mix of regular police and security forces and units with counterinsurgency and counterterrorism elements, none of which were supported by effective courts, a fully functioning criminal justice system and effective detention facilities. The Ministry of the Interior was also substantially less ready than the Ministry of Defense and far more politicized.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the ISF could not prevent violence from rising steadily through 2013, particularly given the fact the ISF was limited by Iraq's deep sectarian and ethnic divisions, its political power struggles at the top, the civil war in neighboring Syria and an ensuing spillover of Sunni extremist groups into Iraq, and an increase in Iranian military influence due to the large presence of Iranian military advisors supporting the Syrian regime of Bashar al-Assad.

Figure 35: Iraqi Security Forces as of October 10, 2011**Total Security Forces**

SERVICE		ASSIGNED PERSONNEL
Ministry of Defense	Iraqi Army	200,000
	Training and Support	68,000
	Air Force	5,053
	Navy	3,650
	Army Air Corps	2,400
	Total MOD	279,103
Ministry of Interior	Iraqi Police	325,000
	Facilities Protection Service	95,000
	Training and Support	89,800
	Department of Border Enforcement	60,000
	Iraqi Federal Police	45,000
	Oil Police	35,000
	Total MOI	649,800
Counter-Terrorism Force		4,200
Total		933,103

Comparative size of Active Military Forces:

Note: Numbers affected by rounding. Assigned numbers illustrate payroll data; they do not reflect present-for-duty totals.

Sources: GOI, MOI IG, information provided to SIGIR, 1/12/2012; SIGIR, Quarterly Report, January 30r 30, 2011, p 68; GlobalFirepower.com, "Active Military Manpower by Country", www.globalfirepower.com/active-military-manpower.asp, accessed, 12/12/2011; GOI, MOI IG, information provided to SIGIR, 10/10/2011.

Iraqi Forces in 2013

The formal command structure of Iraq forces does seem to have stayed close to the structure that existed when the US left in 2011. Jane's reports that,⁶³³

The Prime Minister of Iraq, currently Nuri al-Maliki, is the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces. In 2007, al-Maliki set up a 24-member body, the Office of the Commander-in-Chief, to advise him on military matters. The chain of command runs from the prime minister, through the minister of defence, to the chief of staff (CoS) of the armed forces. The CoS, who heads up the Joint Headquarters, is supported by a Vice-CoS and a number of deputy chiefs of staff. In recent years the Joint Staff had a number of departments or directorates including Personnel, Intelligence, Operations, Logistics, Plans, Communications, Training and Comptroller.

From an operational point of view, there is an Iraqi National Command (INC) at the National Operations Centre (NOC) in Baghdad, which is under the control of the prime minister as commander-in-chief. The NOC oversees the Iraqi Joint Forces Command (JFC) which in turn commands the single service commands, the Ground Forces Command (which commands the divisions and brigades etc.), the Air Force Command and the Navy Command, as well as the Support Command, the Corps of Engineers and the Training and Doctrine Command. The latter controls the National Defence University, which comprises the military academy and other institutions, and the Tactical Training Command (TDC) that controls the training bases and other training centers. Also under the INC is the Iraq Counter-Terrorism Service, which commands the Special Operations Forces.

In practice, however, Prime Minister Maliki and his office steadily consolidated the Prime Minister's control over Iraq force and security services and made them as much a force the Prime Minister used for political control and repression as a force that helped create security and stability on a national level. Maliki became the de facto Minister of Defense and Minister of the Interior and his office regularly bypasses the form chain of command, and make interim senior appointments without confirmation by the Majlis or full consultation with senior officials and commanders. The Prime Minister's office now controls key military and paramilitary forces directly, Iraqi intelligence, and national elements of the police and some elements of Iraq's judiciary.

The Iraqi military now has a powerful intelligence branch that includes internal security operations. Military Intelligence (M2) is part of the Joint Headquarters of the Iraqi armed forces, and the army, the air force and the counter-terrorism command have their own intelligence gathering elements. There also are the equivalent of political commissars to ensure the loyalty of Iraqi forces.

The IISS reported in its Military Balance for 2013 that the Maliki government had introduced the equivalent of untrained political commissars called dimaj into the force structure, and that, "a broad set of problems continue to plague the Iraqi Army...The first involves weaknesses in management, logistics and strategic planning. The unwillingness, of senior military officials to delegate responsibility down, the chain of command also stifles innovation and independent decision-making at a junior level."⁶³⁴

Military Spending

Iraq's oil revenues allow it finance a major set of security forces without dependence on US or other outside aid. The IISS reports that Iraq's military spending – which may include the spending of Ministry of Interior forces, rose from 14.1 trillion dinars (\$12 US billion) in 2011 to 17.2 trillion dinars (\$14.7 US billion) in 2012, and 19.9 trillion dinars (\$17.1 US billion) in 2013. Jane's has a much lower estimate. It puts Iraqi spending at \$5.5 US billion in 2011, \$6.1 US billion in 2012,

and \$8.2 US billion – but the Jane’s figures seem to exclude significant amounts of Iraqi arms orders and capital spending.⁶³⁵ Furthermore, the Jane’s figure is still high for a largely counterinsurgency force that has not yet imported anything like the numbers of major weapons imported by some neighboring regional powers.

Force Strength

Figure 36 summarizes the IISS estimates of Iraq’s forces strength in 2013 and shows that Iraqi security forces remained relatively large in numbers, and had acquired a growing strength of conventional land weapons, but still fell far short of Iran’s holding, had no meaningful air combat capabilities, and no surface-to-air missiles or real land-based air defense capabilities. The bulk of the manpower also remained in police units with little or no serious combat, counter-insurgency, or counter-terrorism capabilities or in even lower grade units that were largely poorly trained and equipped local security guards.

Iraq was actively seeking more advanced arms from the US as well as Russia, China and other sources, but the US was slow in deliveries and Iraqi orders often seemed more political and an effort to rush into increasing weapons strength than part of a well structure effort at force development.

As events since 2011 have made all too clear, however, Iraq still lacks the security forces it needs for both internal security and external security. Moreover, the sudden departure of most US advisors, trainers, and partners has seen Iraqi security forces become increasingly politicized and placed under the control of Prime Minister Maliki and Shi’ite factions, and helped lead to a growing level of corruption, politicization, and deterioration in some elements of these forces and within the Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior described earlier in this report

Figure 36: Key Elements of Iraqi Security Forces in 2013

Army

Manpower: 193,400 actives

Combat Units: 1 armored division, 8 motorized rifle divisions, 3 infantry divisions, 2 special forces brigades, 2 presidential motorized brigades, 1 Baghdad brigade

Main Battle Tanks: 336: 140 M1A1 *Abrams*; 120+ T-72; 76 T-55

Other Armored Fighting Vehicles: 193: 18 BRDM 2; 35 EE-9 *Cascavel*; 20 *Fuchs* NBC, 100 BMP-1; 20 BTR-4

Armored Personnel Carriers: 2,799+: 100 FV 103 *Spartan*; 400+ M113A2; 61

MT-LB; 44 *Talha*; 570 *Akrep/Scorpion*; 60 AT-105 *Saxon*; 100 BTR-80; 10 *Cobra*; 50 M3 Panhard; 60 *Mohafiz*; 10 VCRTT, 12 *Barracuda*; 600 *Dzik-3*; 607 ILAV *Cougar*; 115 *Mamba*

Artillery 1,386+

- 48 self-propelled tube+: 152mm 18+ Type-83; 155mm 30: 6 M109A1; 24M109A5
- 138+ towed tube: 130mm 18+ M-46; 155mm 120 M198
- Multiple rocket launchers: some 122mm BM-21
- 1,200 mortars: : 81mm 650 M252; 120mm 550 M120

Helicopters:

- *Armed:* 26 Mi-17 *Hip H*; 4+ SA342 *Gazelle*
- *ISR:* 10 OH-58C *Kiowa*
- *Transport & Utility:* **Medium** 8 Mi-171Sh; **Light** 29: 16 Bell 205 (UH-1H *Huey II*); 10 Bell 206B3 *Jet Ranger*; 3 Bell T407

Navy

Manpower: 3,600 actives

29 Patrol and Coastal Combatants:

- Ocean-Patrol 2 *RiverHawk*
- Coastal Patrol 4 *Fateh* (ITA *Diciotti*)
- Patrol Boats 17: 9 *Swiftships* 35 (6 additional vessels under construction); 5 *Predator* (PRC-27m); 3 *Al Faw*
- 6 Riverine Patrol Boats 6: 2 Type-200; 4 Type-2010

Air Force

Manpower: 5,050 actives

Combat Aircraft: 3 armed Cessna AC-208B *Combat Caravan** plus 2 SB7L-360 *Seeker*

Transport Aircraft: 10: 3 C-130E *Hercules*; 1 C-130J-30 *Hercules*; 6 An-32B *Cline* 6 Beech 350 *King Air*; 8 Cessna 208B *Grand Caravan*; 8 Cessna 172

Training Aircraft 33+: 8 CH-2000 *Sama*; 10+ *Lasta-95*; 15 T-6A

Ministry of Interior Forces

- *Iraqi Police Service:* 302,000
- *Iraqi Federal Police:* 44,000
- *Facilities Protection Service:* 95,000
- *Border Enforcement:* 60,000
- *Oil Police:* 30,000

Source: Adapted from the data in the *IISS Military Balance, 2013*, pp. 381-382.

The Failure to Provide Iraq With Effective Forces for External Defense

While the ISF now suffers from the self-inflicted wounds Iraq's politicians have forced upon their country, some major wounds were also inflicted by the US-led invasion and the occupation that followed. Iraq must also cope with the fact that Iran has skillfully managed to establish its influence over Iraqi Forces at key political levels, and -- as **Figure 37 Parts 1 through 5** demonstrate all too clearly -- Iran is still by far the more dominant military power.

Iraq's current lack of conventional warfare capability is the result of the fact that the US effort to build up the Iraqi Security forces during 2003-2011 focused largely on creating forces that could effectively confront terrorism, extremism, and civil conflict under the assumption that a continuing US presence would act as a substitute. As a result, did little to bring Iraqi security forces to the point where they could defend the country against Iraq's neighbors.

As a result, Iraq is probably a decade away from creating the kind of conventional forces that can stand on their own against Iran, and it must buy and absorb large numbers of conventional weapons to create such forces in spite of its present problems in dealing with AQI/ISIS and the serious economic problems described in the next chapter.

It is also important to note that Iranian influence is far from Iranian control, and that Iraq continues to try to balance Iran off against the US. Even though the Maliki government has ties to Iran, it now is seeking to create far stronger conventional forces at the same time it faces a steadily growing level of internal violence. This explains its search for modern fighter like the F-16, for M-1 tanks, and a wide variety of other major conventional weapons. It explains why Maliki keeps his ties to the US open, but also why Iraq has turned to Russia and other states for such weapons.

At the same time this situation presents the problem that the US now must make hard choices as to whether to provide such weapons to a state with which it does not have a meaningful security agreement, which has links to Iran, and is caught up in serious internal political violence. So far, the US has continued plans to provide such weapons -- although scarcely at the rate the Maliki government has pressed for. The rise in AQI/ISIS activity has also led the Maliki government to revive its interest in the Strategic Framework Agreement that went into force on January 2009.

The Strategic Framework Agreement contained the following key statements regarding cooperation in security: ⁶³⁶

Section I: Principles of Cooperation

This Agreement is based on a number of general principles to establish the course of the future relationship between the two countries as follows:

1. A relationship of friendship and cooperation is based on mutual respect; recognized principles and norms of international law and fulfillment of international obligations; the principle of non-interference in internal affairs; and rejection of the use of violence to settle disputes.
2. A strong Iraq capable of self - defense is essential for achieving stability in the region.
3. The temporary presence of U.S. forces in Iraq is at the request and invitation of the sovereign Government of Iraq and with full respect for the sovereignty of Iraq.
4. The United States shall not use Iraqi land, sea, and air as a launching or transit point for attacks against other countries; nor seek or request permanent bases or a permanent military presence in Iraq

Section III: Defense and Security Cooperation

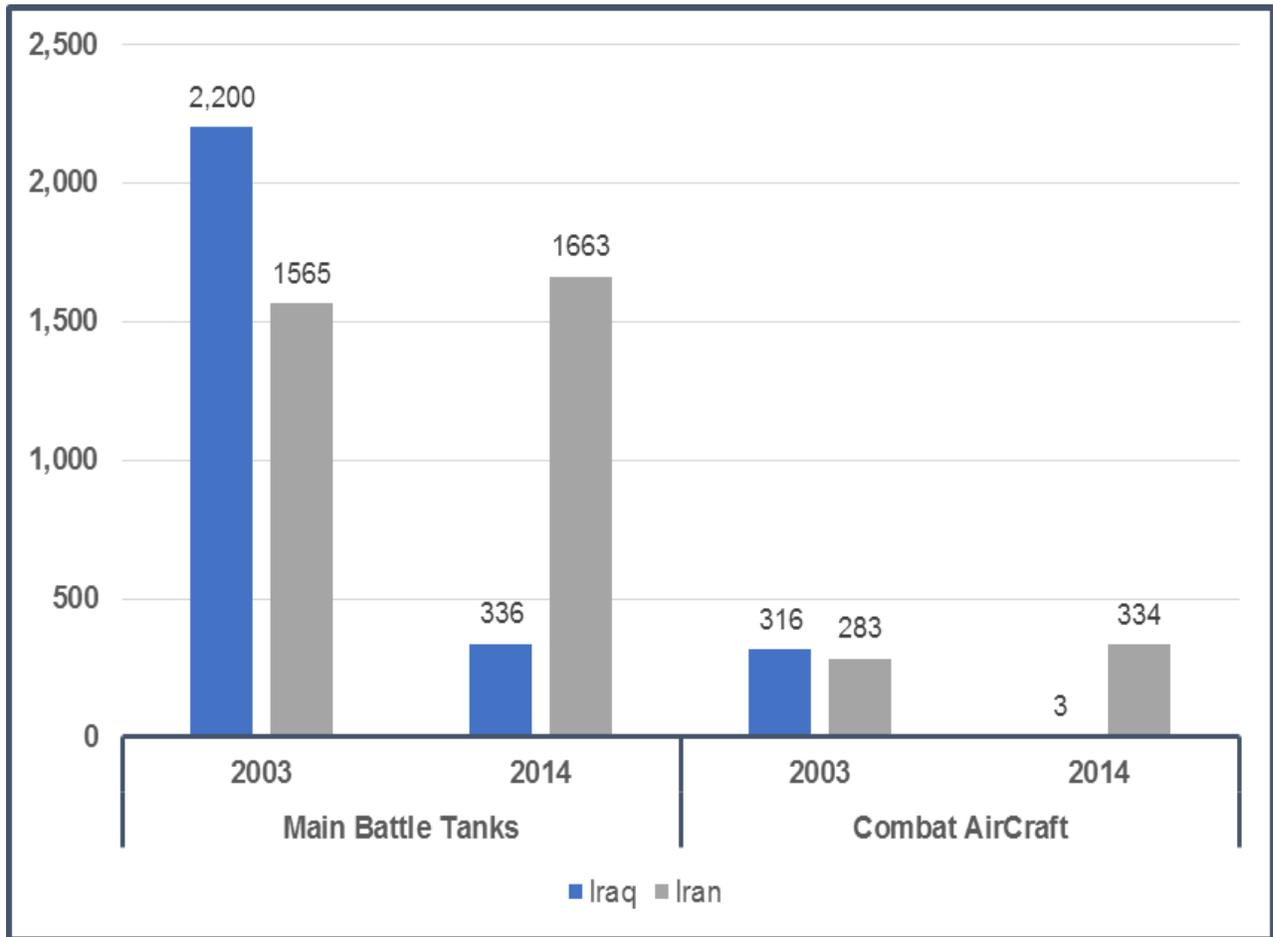
In order to strengthen security and stability in Iraq, and thereby contribute to international peace and stability, and to enhance the ability of the Republic of Iraq to deter all threats against its sovereignty, security, and territorial integrity, the Parties shall continue to foster close cooperation concerning defense and security arrangements without prejudice to Iraqi sovereignty over its land, sea, and air territory.

Such security and defense cooperation shall be undertaken pursuant to the Agreement between the United States of America and the Republic of Iraq on the Withdrawal of United States Forces from Iraq and the Organization of Their Activities during Their Temporary Presence in Iraq

The agreement also makes provisions for revisions by mutual agreement and set up a Higher Coordinating Committee (HCC) to “monitor the overall implementation of the Agreement and develop the agreed upon objectives that “shall meet periodically and may include representatives from relevant departments and ministries.” It states that, “The Parties shall seek to establish additional Joint Coordination Committees (JCCs), as necessary, responsible for executing and overseeing this Agreement.”

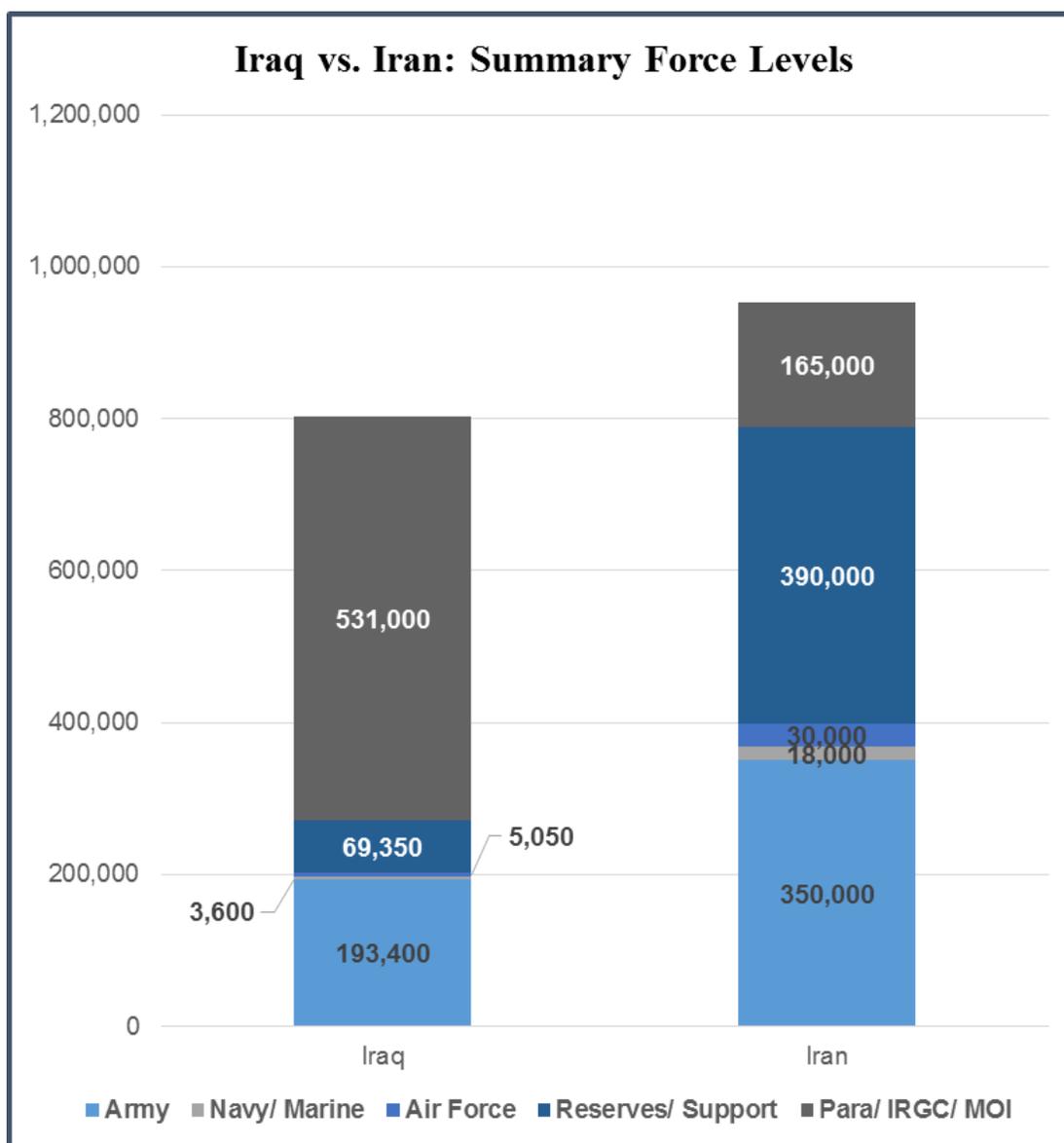
This provide a basis for greatly enhanced security cooperation between Iraq and the US, but there is no status of force agreement that would allow the US to securely deploy forces, the US would have to have guarantees that such cooperation would simply empower the Maliki regime to repress the Sunnis and other dissidents, and the US would have to act in an environment where it is caught between Maliki’s ability to exploit his links to Iran, and his ability to use Iraq’s oil revenues to buy arms from other states.

Figure 37-Part 1: Iraq vs. Iran Main Battle Tank and Combat Aircraft Balance



	Main Battle Tanks		Combat Aircraft	
	2003	2014	2003	2014
Iraq	2,200	336	316	3
Iran	1,565	1,663	283	334

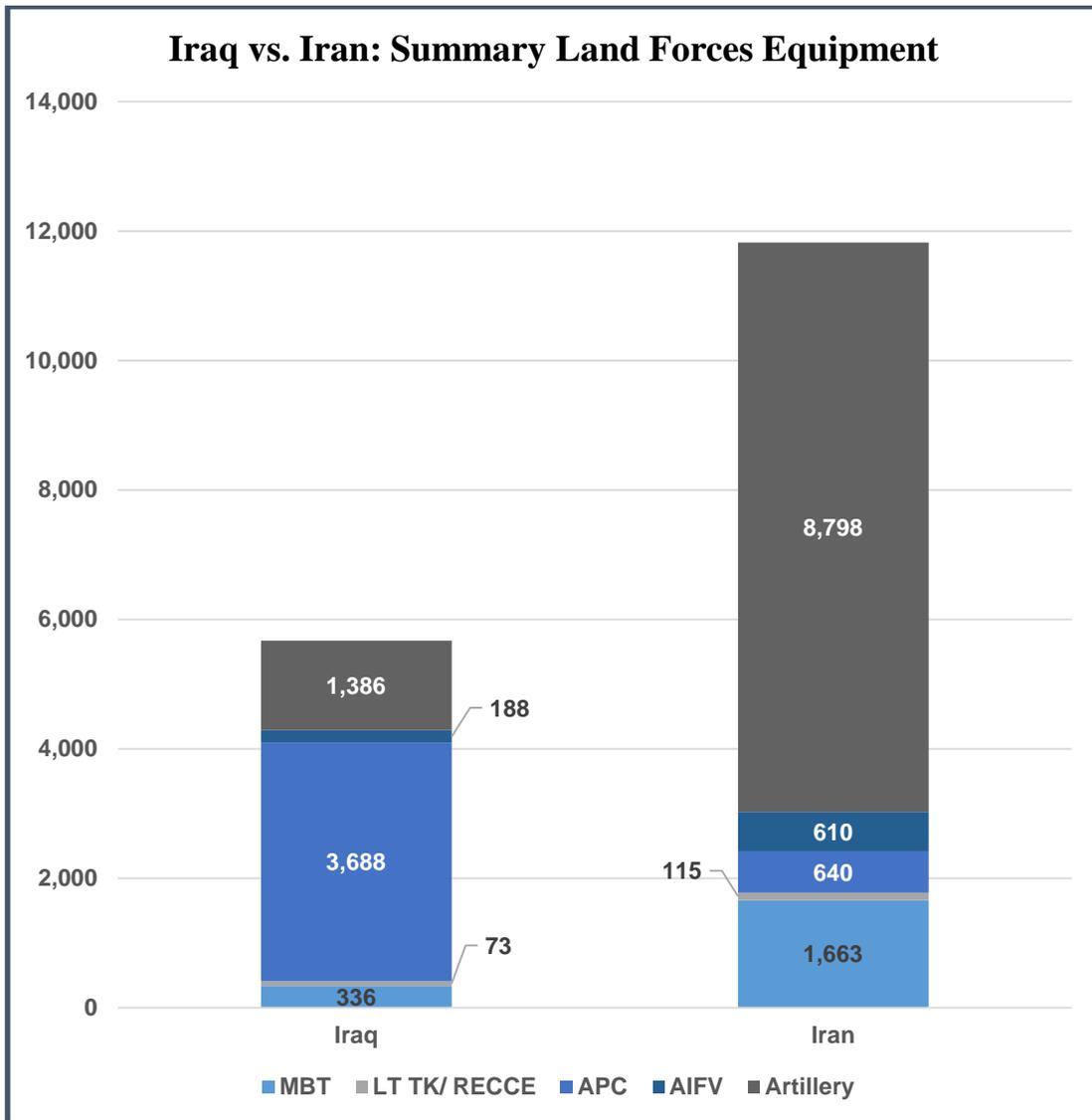
Source: The Military Balance – 2014, International Institute for Strategic Studies, February 5, 2014.

Figure 37-Part 2: Iraq vs. Iran Summary Force Levels

		Iraq	Iran
Number of Troops	Army	193,400	350,000
	Navy/ Marine	3,600	18,000
	Air Force	5,050	30,000
	Reserves/ Support	69,350	390,000
	Para/ IRGC/ MOI	531,000	165,000
	Total Troops:	802,400	953,000

Source: The Military Balance – 2014, International Institute for Strategic Studies, February 5, 2014.

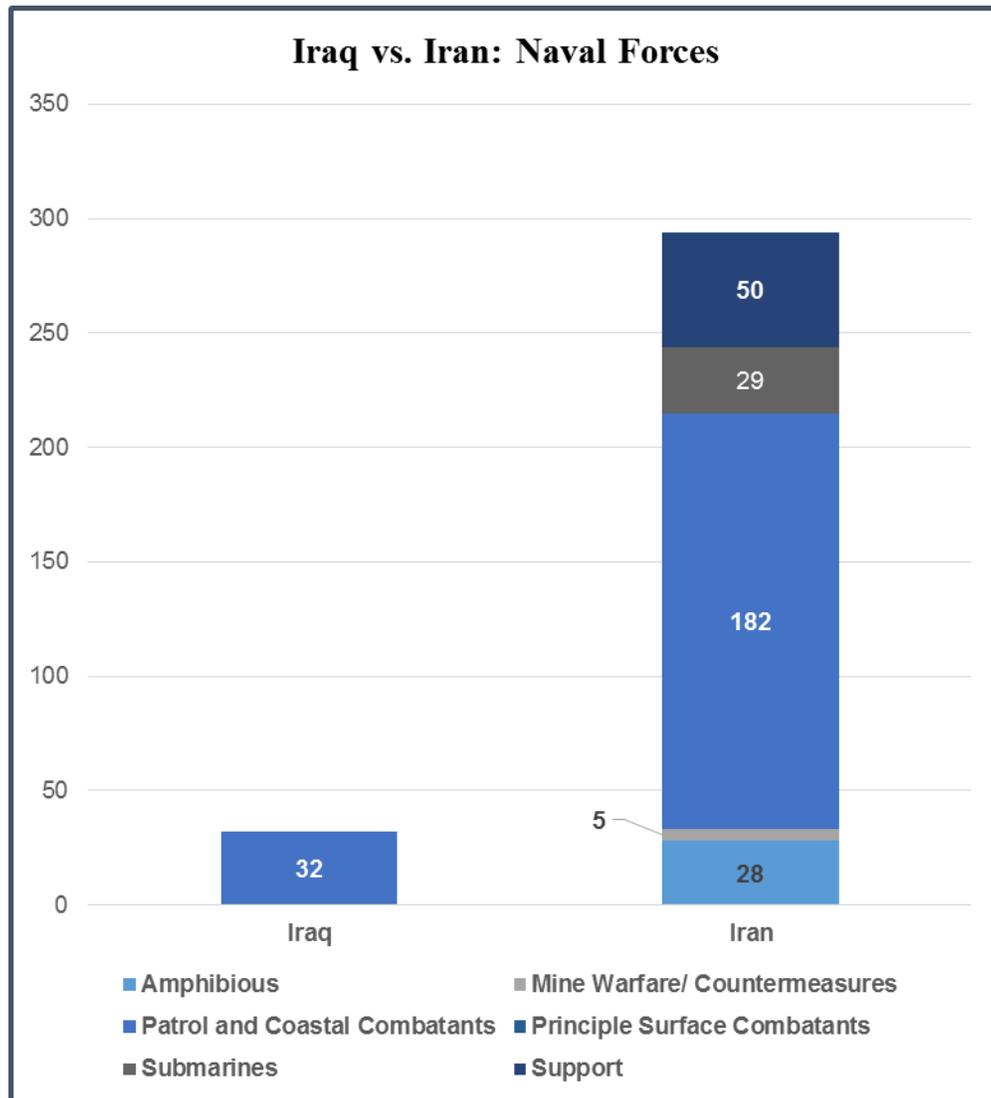
Figure 37-Part 3: Iraq vs. Iran Summary Land Forces Equipment



		Iraq	Iran
Army	MBT	336	1,663
	LT TK/ RECCE	73	115
	APC	3,688	640
	AIFV	188	610
	Artillery	1,386	8,798
	Total Land Forces:	5,671	11,826

Source: The Military Balance – 2014, International Institute for Strategic Studies, February 5, 2014.

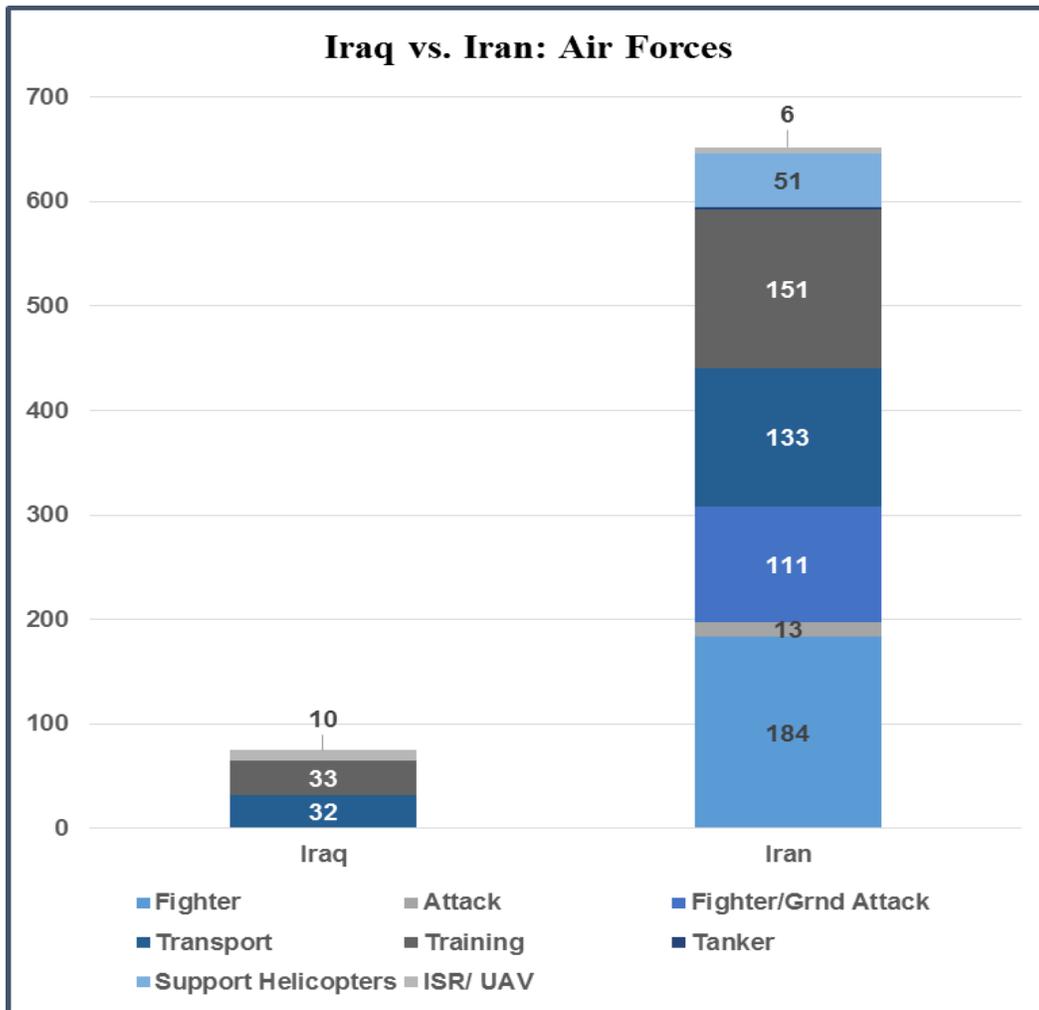
Figure 37-Part 4: Iraq vs. Iran Naval Forces



		Iraq	Iran
Navy & Coast Guard	Amphibious		28
	Mine Warfare/ Countermeasures		5
	Patrol and Coastal Combatants	32	182
	Principle Surface Combatants		
	Submarines		29
	Support		50
	Total Naval Forces	32	294

Source: The Military Balance – 2014, International Institute for Strategic Studies, February 5, 2014.

Figure 37-Part 5: Iraq vs. Iran Summary Air Forces



		Iraq	Iran
Air Force, Navy & Army Aviation	Fighter		184
	Attack		13
	Fighter/Grnd Attack		111
	Transport	32	133
	Training	33	151
	Tanker		3
	Support Helicopters		51
	ISR/ UAV	10	6
	Total Air Forces:	75	652

Source: The Military Balance – 2014, International Institute for Strategic Studies, February 5, 2014.

Iraqi Dependence and the Role of the US after 2011

The Iraqi political decisions that forced an early departure of US forces and advisors have left a legacy of serious problems. Iraq has not been able to find effective ways to replace its past dependence on US advice, enablers, and help in planning and managing its security funds. The US had taken the lead in the development of the Iraqi security forces and creating a new Iraqi Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior after 2003 – although it benefit from British other allied and NATO support. From 2003-2011, it trained, armed and equipped Iraqi forces, and increasingly fought beside them. The US provided a significant portion of the funding for the war effort in Iraq through 2011, and a large portion of the security forces during Iraq’s civil struggles between 2005 and 2011.

This US role in creating post-invasion Iraqi security forces from 2004-2011 gave the US influence over the shape of Iraqi security forces, and developed important relationships between the US and the leaders of Iraqi forces at the time. In addition, Western intelligence agencies developed close ties to the Interim Government’s Defense Minister, Hazem Sha’alan; Interior Minister, Falah al-Naqib; and the head of Iraq’s intelligence services, General Muhammed Shahwani, each of who warned of the influence of Iran.⁶³⁷

The Impact of Early US Departure

By the end of December 2011, however, the US military was reduced to a steadily more token--sized advisory role for the Iraqi military forces. Support to the Iraqi police was largely eliminated, and the small Office of Military Cooperation that remained in the US Embassy team was limited to supporting arms sales and transfers, and providing intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (IS&R) aid to the Iraqi forces.

The decisions of a Shi’ite and Maliki-dominated Iraqi government after 2011 then increasingly limited Iraq’s support of a meaningful strategic partnership with the US. As early as December 2011, General Frank Helmick, Deputy Commander of US forces in Iraq, stated that Iraqi security forces were unable to maintain their capabilities and equipment, let alone meet new challenges. He also highlighted the fact that US training missions are exclusively for Iraqi police, and there are no training agreements for the Iraqi military post-withdrawal.⁶³⁸

Even before the US left, Maliki used temporary command appointments to put loyalists in key top positions ranging from combat unit commands to intelligence. Since 2011, he has taken de facto control of the Iraqi Federal Police, Special Forces elements, and counterinsurgency forces. Once the US left, Maliki’s political power struggles, and the deep sectarian and ethnic divisions inside the Iraq government, changed Iraq’s military leadership in ways that steadily increased the number of officers loyal to the Prime Ministers and that had limited ties to US advisors and introduced the political commissar system described earlier.

Iraqi forces also developed growing problems at lower levels the moment that were no longer under US advisors. Even before all the US advisory forces left Iraqi units, American advisors found military commissions and positions were for sale in many units. Their loyalties divided along sectarian and ethnic lines, and US efforts to build up a strong mix of junior officers and non-commissioned officers often reverted to the past Iraqi military culture where junior officers and NCOs were allowed little initiative and authority.

Corruption became a growing problem at every level, but corruption in the police, and police ties to power brokers, and ties to local political leaders became a growing problem. These problems were compounded by the fact that of the outside advisory effort and Iraqi government had failed to create effective links between the police, judiciary, and the courts and the abuses of detention and confession based justice. Iraqi units also showed limited willingness to maintain the facilities transferred by the US.

The Uncertain Legacy of Trying to Impose a US Military Culture on Iraq

In fairness, part of the problems the ISF faced after US withdrawal were the result of the fact that the US had tried to impose too many of its own approaches to military development on an Iraqi structure, and Iraq lacked the internal incentives -- and checks and balances -- necessary to make them function once US advisors were gone. As in Vietnam and Afghanistan, the US accomplished a great deal, but it tried to do far too much too quickly with more emphasis on numbers than quality, and grossly exaggerated unit quality in many cases.

Many elements of Iraqi forces did become effective while US forces were present and some stayed effective after they left. However, successful force building takes far longer than the US military was generally willing to admit and US efforts to transform -- rather than improve -- existing military cultures and systems have often proved to be counterproductive and a waste of effort.

Tactical proficiency, while a critical core competency for any military unit, is often also the easiest to instill. Indeed, training at the platoon and company level by American Military Transition Teams during the war were often highly effective at training their partnered Iraqi units the fundamentals of small-unit tactics and urban operations. Creating a US-shaped process of logistics and upper-echelon planning capabilities, and a command culture that supported initiative and decision-making at junior levels proved far more difficult and many aspects could not survive the departure of US advisors and the loss of US influence.

More broadly, Iraq had developed its own military culture and systems and refined them through eight bloody years of the Iran-Iraq War and two wars with US-led coalitions. The ISF often found it easier revert to the past than accept US military models, particularly when Iraq's political leadership insisted on repeating Saddam Hussein's efforts to micromanage every aspect of security operations, enforce political control, bypass the formal chain of command, and limit initiative at every level of command.

This reversion, however, was often partial and ineffective in an environment where the Maliki government lacked anything approaching Saddam's level of violent ruthlessness. Iraqi forces became caught half way between the US system and their own system at a time they were increasingly politicized and lacked effective military leadership.

Even in units with a uniform sectarian makeup, divided tribal and familial loyalties regularly trumped loyalty to the State and to the military chain of command.⁶³⁹ Additionally, Iraqi command culture is not conducive to independent operations. Military leadership positions are opportunities for senior personnel to solidify power bases and dispense patronage in the form of military supplies, including ammunition, food, water, and vehicle repair parts.⁶⁴⁰ As a result, senior commanders hoard supplies in order to maintain their power and influence, and military sustainment is held hostage to bureaucratic infighting.⁶⁴¹

Like the US experience in Vietnam and Afghanistan. Iraq came to illustrate that the US needed to be much less ambitious in trying to change Iraq, and far more willing to do things the Iraqi way. It needed to be far more sensitive to the fact that military force building efforts are inevitably tied to the political struggles in a country. It needed to make a much clearer separation between military and police forces and recognize that efforts to build a Western-style police force can only succeed if the police are made part of a functioning mix of a justice system and government that have the loyalty of its people.

Reliance on a Limited US Effort and a Small Office of Security Cooperation - Iraq (OSC-I)

Overambitious US plans and their cost presented additional problems. Some aspects of the US FY2012 budget request – such as the police development program – quickly proved to be far too ambitious in terms of US aid capability and Iraqi desire for the program. They also ignored both the corruption and politicization of the police.

The GAO reported in February 2012 that,⁶⁴²

Iraqi government data indicate that security spending under the Ministries of Defense and Interior increased from \$2.0 billion in 2005 to an estimated \$8.6 billion in 2009. In addition, these ministries set aside about \$5.5 billion over this period for the purchase of equipment, training, and services under the U.S. Foreign Military Sales (FMS) program. In certain instances, the United States has provided an incentive for these ministries to increase their security spending by leveraging U.S. funds to supplement Iraq's FMS purchases. The Iraqi government also funded the Iraq-Commander's Emergency Response Program and assumed responsibility for the salaries of almost 90,000 Sons of Iraq—nongovernmental security contractors hired by U.S. and Coalition forces to help maintain security in their local communities. While security spending has increased, GAO's analysis of data for the Iraqi government, the Department of Defense (DOD), and the Trade Bank of Iraq showed that the ministries did not spend or set aside between \$2.5 billion and \$5.2 billion of their 2005 through 2009 budgeted funds—funds that could have been used to address security needs.⁴ Department of State (State) and DOD officials cited overly centralized decision making and weak procurement capacity as reasons for the ministries' inability to spend these funds. In April 2010, Ministry of Defense officials received Ministry of Finance approval to use \$143 million of their unspent 2009 funds for FMS purchases. Ministry of Interior officials planned to use more than \$300 million of their unspent 2009 funds for similar purposes.

In its fiscal year 2012 budget request, the administration requested more than \$2.4 billion in U.S. funding to support the training and equipping of forces under Iraq's security ministries. Specifically,

- State requested \$1 billion for Foreign Military Financing to purchase training and equipment for Iraqi security forces. According to State, this request for Iraq is a replacement for DOD's Iraq Security Forces Funding and is in addition to the \$25.5 billion that has already been provided since 2003. In the 2012 Consolidated Appropriations Act, Congress appropriated \$1.102 billion for Foreign Military Financing for Overseas Contingency Operations/Global War on Terrorism. The Conference Agreement accompanying the act explains that the amount is for the extraordinary costs of contingency operations, including in Iraq, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Yemen.
- State also requested \$886 million to fund its new Police Development Program in Iraq, of which 15.5 percent (\$137 million) will be used to deploy approximately 190 police advisors and 82 percent (\$723 million) will be used for security and support costs. These funds are in addition to the \$757 million that was available in fiscal years 2010 and 2011, for the Police Development Program's start-up and initial operating costs. Congress appropriated \$983,605,000 for International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement for Overseas Contingency Operations/Global War on Terrorism. The conference Agreement accompanying the act explained that the amount is for the extraordinary costs of contingency operations, including in Iraq, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Yemen, Somalia, and for African counterterrorism partnerships.

- DOD requested \$524 million to establish its Office of Security Cooperation-Iraq, which will be responsible for administering Iraq's FMS and Foreign Military Financing program, among other responsibilities. Congress authorized that from the funds made available to DOD for Operation and Maintenance, Air Force, up to \$524 million could be used to fund the operations and activities of the Office of Security Cooperation-Iraq and security assistance teams, including life support, transportation and personal security, and facilities renovation and construction.

Iraq generated an estimated cumulative budget surplus of \$52.1 billion through December 2009. Adjusting for outstanding advances, at least \$11.8 billion of this surplus was available for future spending. In light of these resources, Iraq has the potential to further contribute toward its security needs, even as it addresses other competing priorities. GAO recommended in September 2010 that Congress should:

- Consider Iraq's available financial resources when it reviews future budget requests for additional funds to train and equip Iraqi security forces.

Additional clarity is needed on Iraq's outstanding advances to determine the financial resources Iraq has available for future spending. To this end, GAO recommended in September 2010 that the Secretaries of State and the Treasury should

- Work with the Iraqi government to identify these resources by assisting Iraq in completing International Monetary Fund-required review of outstanding advances.

The President's request for the FY2013 budget was for \$4,019 million – which compared with \$4,802 million in FY2012. The request for the Department of Defense for FY2013 was for \$2,855 million versus \$9,604 million in FY2012 and \$45,044 million in FY2011. It was clear at the time this request was submitted that both the State Department and Defense Department requests for FY2013 faced major further cuts as Congress acts on the request.⁶⁴³ These funding drops are partially offset by a major increase in Foreign Military Sales dollars from \$14.6 million in FY12 to \$39.3 million in FY13, bringing the total expenditure on military engagement to \$40 million.⁶⁴⁴

As for the limited US military presence that remained part of the US the Embassy after all US combat forces left Iraq at the end of December 2001, the US effort came to depend on a relatively small the Office of Security Cooperation - Iraq (OSC-I) as the main channel for all military ties between the US and Iraq in the coming years. The OSC-I was given the responsibility of managing military sales, training the ISF on weapons systems, conducting joint military exercises, and leads additional trainings and exchange programs.⁶⁴⁵

The US failed, however, to initially given the OSC-I the proper priority, The July 2011 SIGIR Quarterly Report stated that plans for OSC-I were “significantly behind schedule.”⁶⁴⁶ By January 2012, the OSC-I was expected to support no more than 763 Security Assistance Team (SAT) members at 10 sites in Iraq, and administer nearly 600 Foreign Military Sales cases valued at approximately \$9.9 billion.

The April 2012 SIGIR Quarterly report to Congress echoed the July 2011 report, expressing that in regards to OSC-I managed program funding, “the commitment of available funding to projects and programs in Iraq slowed considerably over the past year”.⁶⁴⁷ This is in large part due to uncertainty over future budgets and funding, and the significant reduction in US presence

Reporting in August 2013 showed that OSC-I had approximately 175 American military personnel, supported by some 3,500 contractors, who provide security cooperation and assistance for approximately who have managed some 231 US-funded FMS cases totaling \$2.5 billion, and a further 201 Iraqi funded cases totaling \$7.9 billion.⁶⁴⁸

This was a token level of US personnel to support the numbers of Iraqi security forces shown in **Figure 35** – particularly since the US now only played an extremely limited role in supporting the

various element in the Ministry of the Interior. The US did, however, still provide intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, logistics, and air support to the ISF. This was critical because -- according to USF-I -- the ability of the ISF to integrate the effects of artillery, armor, and attack aviation with infantry against a conventional force was “really at the beginning stage, and will take some years to develop.”⁶⁴⁹

Cuts in US Security Assistance to Iraq in FY2014

US security assistance funding for Iraq continued to decline in Fiscal Year 2014. The DoD budget request for Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) funding for OSC-I requested \$200 million, down 60% from the \$500 million that was enacted for FY13.⁶⁵⁰ The DoD OCO request specified that OSC-I, the primary vehicle for bilateral security cooperation, would use this funding for “joint exercise planning, combined arms training, conflict resolution, multilateral peace operations, senior level visits, and other forms of bilateral engagement.”⁶⁵¹ It did not specify how this military-to-military engagement should take place given the lack of a SOFA between the US and Iraq which would allow for joint training between US and Iraqi troops.

As shown in **Figure 38**, an additional \$525 million was requested for intelligence sharing, equipment support, and other “in theater activities,” bringing the total DoD expenditure in Iraq to \$770 million, down 59% from \$1.9 billion in FY2013.⁶⁵² This declining trend in aid to Iraq also affected the State Department’s FY2014 Foreign Operations budget request, which declined from \$1.2 billion in FY2012 to approximately \$570 million in FY2014.⁶⁵³ This resulted in Iraq dropping from the fifth largest aid recipient to the seventh, behind Nigeria and Jordan, as shown in **Figure 39**.

The Congressional Research Service reported that initial plans for US assistance to Iraq were 1 over-ambitious, and that Iraq had sought to demonstrate independence from the US, which resulted in decreased expenditures in US aid even as violence in Iraq increased along with spillover of Islamist violence from the civil war in Syria.⁶⁵⁴

These cuts did precede the US transfers of new weapons in December 2013, but took place in spite of the fact that Iraqi leaders expressed major concerns about the increase in violence in Western Iraq, and reportedly requested additional weapon system purchases, as well as the possible return of counterterrorism advisors and intelligence professionals to Iraq.⁶⁵⁵ These requests may still provide an opening for improved counterterrorism cooperation between US and Iraqi security forces, but the current budgetary realities in the US and reluctance of some members of Congress to trust the Maliki regime’s restraint in using force against its legitimate political opponents make this uncertain.

Figure 38: OCO Expenditures by Function/Category Breakout by Operation

\$ in Thousands OCO Budget	FY 2013 Enacted ^{1f}			FY 2014 Request ^{2f}			Delta FY13 - FY14	Percent Change FY13 - FY14
	OEF	Iraq Activities	Total	OEF	Iraq Activities	Total		
Operations/Force Protection	27,647,591	0	27,647,591	25,899,242	0	25,899,242	-1,748,349	-6%
In-Theater Support	22,817,619	145,724	22,963,343	21,659,206	120,089	21,779,295	-1,184,048	-5%
Joint IED Defeat	1,622,614	0	1,622,614	1,000,000	0	1,000,000	-622,614	-38%
Military Intelligence Program	4,433,838	1,000	4,434,838	3,770,310	19,000	3,789,310	-645,528	-15%
Afghan Security Forces Fund	5,124,167	0	5,124,167	7,726,720	0	7,726,720	2,602,553	51%
Afghan Infrastructure Fund	325,000	0	325,000	279,000	0	279,000	-46,000	-14%
CERP	200,000	0	200,000	60,000	0	60,000	-140,000	-70%
Coalition Support	2,030,000	70,000	2,100,000	1,950,000	0	1,950,000	-150,000	-7%
Task Force for Business Stability Operations	179,000	0	179,000	121,300	0	121,300	-57,700	-32%
Office of Security Cooperation - Iraq	0	508,000	508,000	0	209,000	209,000	-299,000	-59%
Investment/Equipment Reset	9,906,208	1,243,539	11,149,747	8,456,240	422,786	8,879,026	-2,270,721	-20%
Amy Temporary End Strength	4,844,890	0	4,844,890	4,318,276	0	4,318,276	-526,614	-11%
Marine Corps End Strength	1,004,739	0	1,004,739	757,164	0	757,164	-247,575	-25%
Military Construction	150,768	0	150,768	0	0	0	-150,768	-100%
Other ^{3f}	-	-	6,982,634	-	-	3,953,854	-3,028,780	-43%
Total	80,286,434	1,968,263	89,237,331	75,997,458	770,875	80,722,187	-8,515,144	-10%
Prior-Year Cancellations	-2,010,820	0	-2,010,820	-1,279,252	0	-1,279,252	731,568	-36%
Total including Prior-Year Cancellations	78,275,614	1,968,263	87,226,511	74,718,206	770,875	79,442,935	-7,783,576	-9%

^{1f} FY 2013 Enacted includes prior-year cancellations totaling \$2,010,820,000 and excludes sequestration reductions

^{2f} FY 2014 Request includes prior-year cancellations totaling \$1,279,252,000

^{3f} Includes non-war amounts provided by Congress and certain classified activities

Source: Department of Defense, "FY 2014 Defense Budget Overview Addendum A: Overseas Contingency Operations," May 2013, 13.

Figure 39: Top Ten Recipients of State Department Foreign Operations Funds

(Dollar Amount in Millions)

FY2012 Actual		FY2014 Req. Est.	
1. Israel	\$3,075	1. Israel	\$3,100
2. Afghanistan	\$2,286	2. Afghanistan	\$2,200
3. Pakistan	\$1,821	3. Egypt	\$1,600
4. Egypt	\$1,597	4. Pakistan	\$1,200
5. Iraq	\$1,270	5. Nigeria	\$693
6. Jordan	\$776	6. Jordan	\$671
7. Ethiopia	\$707	7. Iraq	\$573
8. Nigeria	\$647	8. Kenya	\$564
9. South Sudan	\$620	9. Tanzania	\$553
10. South Africa	\$542	10. Uganda	\$456

Source: FY2014 data from the Executive Summary, International Affairs Budget, FY2014. FY2012 data is calculated from data provided in FY2014 budget materials provided by the State Department as well as www.foreignassistance.gov.

Note: FY2013 estimates are not included because country-level funding data is not yet available.

Source: Susan B. Epstein, "The FY2014 State and Foreign Operations Budget Request," Congressional Research Service, May 2, 2013.

The Role of US Arms Sales

US arms transfers have remained a key area of military cooperation in spite of the problems in US-Iraqi military relations, and Iraqi forces are still highly dependent on US arms imports. By 2012, Iraq had placed \$1.1 billion worth of arms orders during 2004-2007 and \$4.8 billion during 2008-2011, as well as received major transfers of US surplus equipment during the US withdrawal.⁶⁵⁶ At the same time, they present serious problems because of risk the Maliki government will use them to suppress legitimate opposition, and because of potential Iranian access to US technology.

As **Figure 40** shows, Iraq has placed major new orders since that time. Moreover, **Figure 40** shows that Iraq plans to increase that dependence in the future -- although the Maliki government has turned to Russia and other states for other arms and has found it can sometimes get delivery more quickly and with far fewer political problems.

The US remains the major supplier of key systems like combat aircraft and land-based air defense systems although such transfer have scarcely been without problems. A SIGIR report to Congress on the future of US-funded Defense programs in Iraq issued in April 2012 stated that, "Two things remain clear: New FMS (Foreign Military Sales) have slowed" in relation to previous periods, and the "ISFF (Iraqi Security Forces Fund) program execution is behind schedule", with almost 86% yet to be obligated. SIGIR also stated that:⁶⁵⁷

OSC-I also has execution authority over Foreign Military Financing (FMF), which in FY 2012 was made available to Iraq for the first time. Of the \$1.1 billion that the Congress appropriated to the FMF in the

Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2012 (P.L. 112-74), DoS allocated approximately \$850 million for operations in Iraq. The Administration requested an additional \$911 million in FMF for Iraq in FY 2013.

The SIGIR report did not address the political problems in supporting the Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior and the various elements of the Iraqi security forces, or the problem posed by corruption, politicization, and sectarian and ethnic divisions within every element of these forces. Congress had already begun cutting US funding requests and has shown increasing resistance to large amounts of future aid. In April 2011, Congress appropriated just \$3.7 billion for FY2011 to Iraq, as opposed to a requested amount of \$5.05 billion.

Nevertheless, the summer of 2013 saw a heavy increase in US arms sales to Iraq, reflecting Iraq's precarious political situation and the growing tensions in the Gulf and Levant over the Syrian civil war. In July 2013 it was reported that Iraq was seeking \$1.9 billion worth of military equipment, specifically helicopters, light armored reconnaissance vehicles, and chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear weapons response equipment.⁶⁵⁸

The following month it was reported that the US was preparing to sell \$4.3 billion worth of equipment to Iraq, including a major air defense package on top of the previously agreed-upon reconnaissance and CBRN equipment.⁶⁵⁹ As **Figure 40** shows in more detail, the weapons and equipment items requested for sale to Iraq 2011 included:

- 36 F-16I fighter aircraft.⁶⁶⁰
- 53,936 155mm howitzer shells for Iraqi artillery, including a mix of high explosive and illumination rounds.⁶⁶¹
- An ASR-11 Air Traffic Control Radar.⁶⁶²
- 75 Very Small Aperture Terminal (VSAT) satellite data communications systems.⁶⁶³
- 200 mobile backscatter scanning systems.⁶⁶⁴
- 50 M1135 Stryker CBRN Reconnaissance Vehicles.⁶⁶⁵
- 12 Bell 412 Helicopters.⁶⁶⁶
- 19 Troposcatter Radio Systems.⁶⁶⁷
- An integrated air defense system comprising 40 AVENGER missile firing units, 681 Stinger missiles, 13 Sentinel radars, 7 Forward Area Air Defense command, control, and intelligence systems, 3 Hawk missile batteries, 6 High Powered Illumination radars, 2 Mobile Battalion Operation Centers, 10 medium range radars, long range radars, and an Omnyx-10 Air Command and Control system.⁶⁶⁸

Deliveries from the US and other foreign sources from the third quarter of 2011 included: 8 Russian Helicopters, 36 Abram Tanks, 41 Howitzers, 31 Heavy Equipment trucks/trailers, and 16 Armored Security Vehicles.⁶⁶⁹

Newspaper articles in late December 2013 also made it clear that the US was providing direct aid in Iraqi attacks on threats like Al Qaeda. The *New York Times* reported that the US was providing Hellfire air-to-ground missiles for Iraq's Cessna turboprop aircraft, and 10 low technology Scan Eagle drones to help the Iraqi forces deal with Al Qaeda.⁶⁷⁰

The US responded to the realities on the ground in spite of public US statements by figures like Anthony J. Blinken in 2012 that, "Iraq today is less violent than at any time in recent history."⁶⁷¹ The article noted that the US was sending 75 more Hellfire missiles after delivering an unstated number of systems earlier, that it planned to send 48 Raven reconnaissance drones before the end of 2014, and that the Iraqi Foreign Minister had discussed asking for armed Predator and Reaper

drones. The US also made it clear that Iraq's F-16s were still on track and that it planned to deliver the first in the fall of 2014.

The US acted in part because Al Qaeda had expanded its presence in the area around Mosul and in Diyala to the point where it was able to drive the ISF out of some areas and gain local control. Iraq did, however, turn to Russia for Mi-35 attack helicopters after members of the US Senate held up a request for the lease of six US AH-64 Apache attack helicopters over concerns that might be used against Maliki's opposition rather than violent extremists. For similar reasons, the US agreed to sell Iraq 500 additional AGM-114K/R Hellfire missiles when the fighting in Anbar reached the crisis point in late January 2014.⁶⁷²

The US agreement to sell Iraq air traffic control systems in February had potential importance in a different area because it gave Iraq the ability to monitor flights like Iranian aircraft delivering arms to Syria on its own for the first time, and to control its own air space once it took delivery on its F-16s and put them into service.

Figure 40: Iraq Arms Sales Requests and Deliveries from the US: 2003-2014

- **February 4, 2014** – The Defense Security Cooperation Agency notified Congress today of a possible Foreign Military Sale to Iraq for Air Traffic Control and Landing Systems and associated equipment, parts, training and logistical support for an estimated cost of \$700 million.

The Government of Iraq has requested commercially available FAA Air Traffic Control (ATC) Equipment Suite and Airfield Navigational Aids Suites to be installed at four bases (Tikrit, Al Basra, Al Kut, and Taji). The ATC Equipment Suite includes 4 ASR-11 Airport Surveillance Radars, 10 ATC Automation system with 10 controller consoles, 4 AutoTrac II Airfield Support and Navigation Suites, 2 Primary Search Radars and 2 Mono-pulse secondary surveillance radars. The Airfield Navigation Aids Suite includes 2 Very High Frequency Omni-directional Range (VORTAC) and 3 Instrument Landing Systems with Distance Measuring Equipment, 2 Airfield Lighting Systems with Flush Mounted Lights for the runway and taxiways, Air Traffic Control Tower Equipment Suite. Also provided are site surveys, system integration, installation, testing, repair and return, facilities, warranties, spare and repair parts, support equipment, personnel training and training equipment, publications and technical documentation, U.S. Government and contractor engineering and logistics support services, and other related elements of logistics and program support. The estimated cost is \$700 million.

- **January 27, 2014** – The Defense Security Cooperation Agency notified Congress today of a possible Foreign Military Sale to Iraq for support for APACHE lease and associated equipment, parts, training and logistical support for an estimated cost of \$1.37 billion.

The Government of Iraq has requested of 8 AN/AAR-57 Common Missile Warning System, 3 T-700-GE-701D engines, 3 AN/ASQ-170 Modernized Target Acquisition and Designation Sight (MTADS), 3 AN/AAQ-11 Modernized Pilot Night Vision Sensors (PNVS), 152 AGM-114 K-A HELLFIRE Missiles, 14 HELLFIRE M299 Launchers, 6 AN/APR-39A(V)4 Radar Warning Systems with training Universal Data Modems (UDM), 2 Embedded Global Positioning System Inertial Navigation System (EGI), 6 AN/AVR-2A/B Laser Warning Detectors, 12 M261 2.75 inch Rocket Launchers, M206 Infrared Countermeasure flares, M211 and M212 Advanced Infrared Countermeasure Munitions (AIRCM) flares, Internal Auxiliary Fuel Systems (IAFS), Aviator's Night Vision Goggles, Aviation Mission Planning System, training ammunition, helmets, transportation, spare and repair parts, support equipment, publications and technical data, personnel training and training equipment, site surveys, U.S. Government and contractor technical assistance, and other related elements of program and logistics support. The estimated cost is \$1.37 billion.

- **January 27, 2014** - The Defense Security Cooperation Agency notified Congress today of a possible Foreign Military Sale to Iraq for AH-64E APACHE LONGBOW Attack Helicopters and associated equipment, parts, training and logistical support for an estimated cost of \$4.8 billion. The Government of

Iraq has requested 24 AH-64E APACHE LONGBOW Attack Helicopters, 56 T700-GE-701D Engines, 27 AN/ASQ-170 Modernized Target Acquisition and Designation Sight, 27 AN/AAR-11 Modernized Pilot Night Vision Sensors, 12 AN/APG-78 Fire Control Radars with Radar Electronics Unit (LONGBOW component), 28 AN/AAR-57(V)7 Common Missile Warning Systems, 28 AN/AVR-2B Laser Detecting Sets, 28 AN/APR-39A(V)4 or APR-39C(V)2 Radar Signal Detecting Sets, 28 AN/ALQ-136A(V)5 Radar Jammers, 52 AN/AVS-6, 90 Apache Aviator Integrated Helmets, 60 HELLFIRE Missile Launchers, and 480 AGM-114R HELLFIRE Missiles. Also included are AN/APR-48 Modernized Radar Frequency Interferometers, AN/APX-117 Identification Friend-or-Foe Transponders, Embedded Global Positioning Systems with Inertial Navigation with Multi Mode Receiver, MXF-4027 UHF/VHF Radios, 30mm Automatic Chain Guns, Aircraft Ground Power Units, 2.75 in Hydra Rockets, 30mm rounds, M211 and M212 Advanced Infrared Countermeasure Munitions flares, spare and repair parts, support equipment, publications and technical data, personnel training and training equipment, site surveys, U.S. government and contractor engineering, technical, and logistics support services, design and construction, and other related elements of logistics support. The estimated cost is \$4.8 billion.

- **January 23, 2014** -- The Defense Security Cooperation Agency notified Congress today of a possible Foreign Military Sale to Iraq for AGM-114K/R Hellfire Missiles and associated equipment, parts, training and logistical support for an estimated cost of \$82 million. The Government of Iraq has requested a possible sale of 500 AGM-114K/R Hellfire missiles, Hellfire missile conversion, blast fragmentation sleeves, and installation kits, containers, transportation, spare and repair parts, support equipment, personnel training and training equipment, publications and technical documentation, U.S. Government and contractor technical, engineering, and logistics support services, and other related elements of logistics and program support. The estimated cost is \$82 million.
- **August 5, 2013** -- The Defense Security Cooperation Agency notified Congress today of a possible Foreign Military Sale to Iraq of Mobile Troposcatter Radio Systems and associated equipment, parts, training and logistical support for an estimated cost of \$339 million.

The Government of Iraq has requested a possible sale of 19 Mobile Troposcatter Radio Systems, 10 Mobile Microwave Radio Systems, spare and repair parts, support equipment, publications and technical data, personnel training and training equipment, site surveys, U.S. Government and contractor technical assistance, and other related elements of program and logistics support. The estimated cost is \$339 million.

- **August 5, 2013** – The Defense Security Cooperation Agency notified Congress today of a possible Foreign Military Sale to Iraq of an Integrated Air Defense System and associated equipment, parts, training and logistical support for an estimated cost of \$2.403 billion.

The Government of Iraq has requested a possible sale of 40 AVENGER Fire Units, 681 STINGER Reprogrammable Micro-Processor (RMP) Block I 92H Missiles, 13 AN/MPQ-64F1 SENTINEL Radars, 7 AN/YSQ-184D Forward Area Air Defense Command, Control, and Intelligence (FAAD C2I) Systems, 75 AN/VRC-92E SINCGARS Radios, 3 HAWK XXI Batteries (6 Fire Units) which include 6 Battery Fire Direction Centers, 6 High Powered Illuminator Radars, 216 MIM-23P HAWK Tactical Missiles, 2 Mobile Battalion Operation Centers (BOC), 3 HAWK XXI BOC Air Defense Consoles (ADCs), 1DS/GS Shop 20, 1 DS/GS Shop 21, 1 Mini-Certified Round Assembly Facility (MCRAF), Air Command and Control (C2) systems and surveillance radars for the Integrated Air Defense Systems that includes TPS-77 Long-Range Radars (LRR) and Omnyx-10 Air Command and Control System, and 10 Medium Range Radars. Also included: Ground Air Transmit Receive Ultra High Frequency/Very High Frequency radio capability, facilities and construction for one (1) underground Air Defense Operations Center and two (2) Air Defense Sector Operations Centers, spare and repair parts, repair and return, software support, systems integration, long haul communication technical integration, communications equipment, support equipment and sustainment, tools and test equipment, publications and technical documentation, personnel training and training equipment, U.S. Government and contractor representative engineering, technical, and logistics support services, and other related elements of logistics support. The estimated cost is \$2.403 billion.

- **July 25, 2013** – The Defense Security Cooperation Agency notified Congress today of a possible Foreign Military Sale to Iraq of Multi-Platform Maintenance and associated equipment, parts, training and logistical support for an estimated cost of \$750 million.

The Government of Iraq has requested a possible sale to provide for a five year follow-on maintenance support for the M88A1 Recovery Vehicle, M88A2 Hercules, M113 Family of Vehicles, M109A5 Howitzers, M198 Howitzers, M1070 Heavy Equipment Trailer and Truck (HETT), M977 Heavy Expanded Mobility Tactical Truck (HEMTT), High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle (HMMWV), and the Tactical Floating River Bridge System (TFRBS) Including, spare and repair parts, support equipment, publications and technical data, personnel training and training equipment, site surveys, Quality Assurance Teams, U.S. Government and contractor technical assistance, and other related elements of program and logistics support. The estimated cost is \$750 million.

- **July 25, 2013** – The Defense Security Cooperation Agency notified Congress today of a possible Foreign Military Sale to Iraq of 12 Bell 412 EP helicopters and associated equipment, parts, training and logistical support for an estimated cost of \$300 million.

The Government of Iraq has requested a possible sale of 12 Bell 412 EP helicopters equipped with Star SAFIRE III EO/IR systems, PT6T-3DF engines, KDM-706 Distance Measuring Equipment, KNR 634 VOR/LOC with MB/HSI, MST67A Transponder, Artex C406-1HM Emergency Locator Transmitter, Wulfsberg FlexComm II C5000 System with Synthesized Guard, KTR-908 Very High Frequency Radios, NAT AA-95 Audio System, 660 Weather Radar, AAI Radome, Night Vision Imaging System (NVIS) Compatible Cockpit Lighting, SX-16 Nightsun, spare and repair parts, support equipment, publications and technical data, personnel training and training equipment, site surveys, U.S. Government and contractor technical assistance, and other related elements of program and logistics support. The estimated cost is \$300 million.

- **July 25, 2013** – The Defense Security Cooperation Agency notified Congress today of a possible Foreign Military Sale to Iraq of 50 M1135 Stryker Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Reconnaissance Vehicles and associated equipment, parts, training and logistical support for an estimated cost of \$900 million.

The Government of Iraq has requested a possible sale of 50 M1135 Stryker Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Reconnaissance Vehicles, DECON 3000 Decontamination Systems, M26 Commercial Joint Service Transportable Decontamination Systems (JSTDS), AN/VRC-89 Single Channel Ground and Airborne Radio Systems (SINCGARS) with Global Positioning System (GPS), AN/VRC-90 SINCGARS with GPS, M40A1 Protective Masks, Lightweight Personal Chemical Detectors LCD-3, Portable Chemical Warfare Agent Detectors GID-3, MultiRAE PLUS Gas Detectors, AN/VDR-2 Radiac Sets, M256 Chemical Agent Detector Kits, Decontamination Kits, Chemical Biological Mask Canisters, M8 Chemical Paper Agent Detector Kits, water canteens, individual clothing and equipment, spare and repair parts, support equipment, communication equipment, publications and technical data, personnel training and training equipment, site surveys, a Quality Assurance Team, U.S. Government and contractor technical assistance, and other related elements of program and logistics support. The estimated cost is \$900 million.

- **Feb. 28, 2013** – The Defense Security Cooperation Agency notified Congress Feb. 27 of a possible Foreign Military Sale to the Government of Iraq for 200 RAPISCAN cargo inspection systems and associated equipment, parts, training and logistical support for an estimated cost of \$600 million.

The Government of Iraq has requested the possible sale of 90 M45 RAPISCAN Mobile Eagle High Energy Mobile System Vehicles, 40 M60 RAPISCAN Mobile Eagle High Energy Mobile System Vehicles, 70 American Science and Engineering brand Z Backscatter Vans.

The Z Backscatter vans will be used to scan vehicle interiors and will provide the Government of Iraq a tool to restrict the ability of insurgent and terrorist groups to operate by detecting contraband movement through borders and checkpoints.

- **Dec. 24, 2012** – The Defense Security Cooperation Agency notified Congress Dec. 21 of a possible Foreign Military Sale to the Government of Iraq for Very Small Aperture Terminal (VSAT) operations and maintenance services and associated equipment, parts, training and logistical support for an estimated cost of \$125 million.

The Government of Iraq has requested a possible sale of Very Small Aperture Terminal (VSAT) operations

and maintenance services, equipment installation services, upgrade VSAT managed and leased bandwidth, video teleconferencing equipment, 75 VSAT Equipment Suites (consisting of 1.8m VSAT terminals, block up converters (BUCs), low-noise down converters (LNBS), required cables and components, iDirect e8350 modem, network operation and dynamic bandwidth equipment, and iMonitor software), spares and repair parts, tools, personnel training and training equipment, publications and technical documentation, U.S. Government and contractor representative technical support services, and other related elements of logistics and program support.

- **Aug. 15, 2012** – The Defense Security Cooperation Agency notified Congress today of a possible Foreign Military Sale to the Government of Iraq for commercially available Federal Aviation Administration Air Traffic Control and Landing System/Navigational Aids and associated equipment, parts, training and logistical support at an estimated cost of \$60 million.

The Government of Iraq has requested a proposed sale of commercially available Federal Aviation Administration Air Traffic Control and Landing System/Navigational Aids. The system will include an ASR-11 Radar, Autotrac II simulator, Instrument Landing System, and Airfield Lighting System, spare and repair parts, support equipment, personnel training and training equipment, publications and technical documentation, site survey, installation, US Government and contractor engineering and logistics support services, and other related elements of logistics and program support.

- **July 20, 2012** – The Defense Security Cooperation Agency notified Congress today of a possible Foreign Military Sale to the Government of Iraq for 12 FIREFINDER Radars and associated equipment, parts, training and logistical support for an estimated cost of \$428 million.

The Government of Iraq has requested a possible sale of 6 AN/TPQ-36(V)11 FIREFINDER Radar Systems, 6 AN/TPQ-37(V)9 FIREFINDER Radars, 3 Meteorological Measuring Sets, 86 AN/VRC-92 export variant Single Channel Ground and Airborne Radio Systems, 12 Advanced Field Artillery Tactical Data Systems, 3 Improved Position and Azimuth Determining Systems, 63 M1152A1 and 3 M1151A1 High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicles, 12 M1083A1 Family of Medium Tactical Utility Vehicles, government furnished equipment, common hardware and software, communication support equipment, tools and test equipment, spare and repair parts, support equipment, publications and technical data, personnel training and training equipment, US Government and contractor engineering, logistics, and technical support services, and other related elements of logistics support.

- **Dec. 12, 2011** – The Defense Security Cooperation Agency notified Congress today of a possible Foreign Military Sale to the Government of Iraq for 18 F-16IQ aircraft and associated equipment, parts, weapons, training and logistical support for an estimated cost of \$2.3 billion.

The Government of Iraq has requested a possible sale of 18 F-16IQ aircraft, 24 F100PW-229 or F110-GE-129 Increased Performance Engines, 120 LAU-129/A Common Rail Launchers, 24 APG-68(V)9 radar sets, 19 M61 20mm Vulcan Cannons, 100 AIM-9L/M-8/9 SIDEWINDER Missiles, 150 AIM-7M-F1/H SPARROW Missiles, 50 AGM-65D/G/H/K MAVERICK Air to Ground Missiles, 200 GBU-12 PAVEWAY II Laser Guided Bomb Units (500 pound), 50 GBU-10 PAVEWAY II Laser Guided Bomb Units (2000 pound), 50 GBU-24 PAVEWAY III Laser Guided Bomb Units (2000 pound), 22 ALQ-211 Advanced Integrated Defensive Electronic Warfare Suites (AIDEWS), or Advanced Countermeasures Electronic System (ACES) (ACES includes the ALQ-187 Electronic Warfare System and AN/ALR-93 Radar Warning Receiver), 20 AN/APX-113 Advanced Identification Friend or Foe (AIFF) Systems (without Mode IV), 20 Global Positioning Systems (GPS) and Embedded GPS/ Inertial Navigation Systems (INS), (Standard Positioning Service (SPS) commercial code only), 20 AN/AAQ-33 SNIPER or AN/AAQ-28 LITENING Targeting Pods, 4 F-9120 Advanced Airborne Reconnaissance Systems (AARS) or DB-110 Reconnaissance Pods (RECCE), 22 AN/ALE-47 Countermeasures Dispensing Systems (CMDS), 20 Conformal Fuel Tanks (pairs), 120 Joint Helmet Mounted Cueing Systems (JHMCS), 20 AN/ARC-238 Single Channel Ground and Airborne Radio Systems, 10,000 PGU-27A/B Ammunition, 30,000 PGU-28 Ammunition, 230 MK-84 2000 lb. General Purpose Bombs, and 800 MK-82 500lb General Purpose Bombs. Also included: LAU-117 Maverick Launchers, site survey support equipment, Joint Mission Planning System, Ground Based Flight Simulator, tanker support, ferry services, Cartridge Actuated Devices/Propellant Actuated Devices (CAD/PAD), repair and return, modification kits, spares and repair parts, construction, publications and technical documentation, personnel training and training equipment, US Government and contractor technical, engineering, and logistics support services, ground based flight simulator, and other related

elements of logistics support.

- **June 29, 2011** – The Defense Security Cooperation Agency notified Congress today of a possible Foreign Military Sale to the Government of Iraq for follow-on support and maintenance of multiple aircraft systems and associated equipment, parts, training and logistical support for an estimated cost of \$675 million.

The Government of Iraq has requested a possible sale of follow-on support and maintenance of multiple aircraft systems that include TC-208s, Cessna 172s, AC-208s, T-6As, and King Air 350s. Included are ground stations, repair and return, spare and repair parts, support equipment, publications and technical data, personnel training and training equipment, US Government and contractor engineering, logistics, and technical support services, and other related elements of logistics support.

- **Oct. 14, 2011** – The Defense Security Cooperation Agency notified Congress Oct 5 of a possible Foreign Military Sale to the Government of Iraq for various explosive projectiles and charges, as well as associated equipment, parts, training and logistical support for an estimated cost of \$82 million.

The Government of Iraq has requested a possible sale of 44,608 M107 155mm High Explosive Projectiles and 9,328 M485A2 155mm Illumination projectiles; also included are, M231 Propelling charges, M232A1 155mm Modular Artillery Charge System Propelling charges, M739 Fuzes, M762A1 Electronic Time Fuzes, M82 Percussion primers, M767A1 Electronic Time Fuzes, 20-foot Intermodal Containers for transporting ammunition, publications and technical data, personnel training and training equipment, US Government and contractor engineering, logistics, and technical support services, and other related elements of logistics support.

- **May 3, 2011** – The Defense Security Cooperation Agency notified Congress today of a possible Foreign Military Sale to the Government of Iraq of various radios and communication equipment, as well as associated equipment, parts, training and logistical support for an estimated cost of \$67 million.

The Government of Iraq has requested a possible sale of (750) 50-Watt Vehicular Multiband Handheld Radio Systems, (900) 5-watt Multiband Handheld Radio Systems, (50) 50-watt Multiband Handheld Base Station Radio Systems, (50) 20-watt High Frequency (HF) Base Station Radio Systems, (100) 5-watt Secure Personal Role Handheld Radio Systems, accessories, installation, spare and repair parts, support equipment, publications and technical data, personnel training and training equipment, US Government and contractor engineering and technical support services, and other related elements of logistics support.

- **March 30, 2011** – The Defense Security Cooperation Agency notified Congress today of a possible Foreign Military Sale to the Government of Iraq of six AN/TPQ-36(V)10 FIREFINDER Radar Systems, 18 AN/TPQ-48 Light Weight Counter-Mortar Radars and associated equipment, parts, training and logistical support for an estimated cost of \$299 million.

The Government of Iraq has requested a possible sale of 6 AN/TPQ-36(V)10 FIREFINDER Radar Systems, 18 AN/TPQ-48 Light Weight Counter-Mortar Radars, 3 Meteorological Measuring Sets, 36 export variant Single Channel Ground and Airborne Radio Systems, 6 Advanced Field Artillery Tactical Data Systems, 3 Position and Azimuth Determining Systems, government furnished equipment, common hardware and software, communication support equipment, tools and test equipment, spare and repair parts, support equipment, publications and technical data, personnel training and training equipment, US Government and contractor engineering, logistics, and technical support services, and other related elements of logistics support.

- **Nov. 30, 2010** – The Defense Security Cooperation Agency notified Congress November 29 of a possible Foreign Military Sale to Iraq of Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (C⁴ISR) Systems and associated parts and equipment for a complete package worth approximately \$68 million.

The Government of Iraq has requested a possible sale for Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (C⁴ISR) Systems which includes, High Frequency, Ultra High Frequency, and Very High Frequency radios, Automatic Identification System, Surface Scan Radar System, Forward Looking Infrared System, Situational Display System, Mobile and Fixed Towers, Electro-Optical Cameras, Voice Over Internet Protocol, K Under Band Very Small Aperture Terminal upgrades, generators, spare and repair parts, support equipment, publications and technical data, personnel training and training

equipment, US Government and contractor engineering and technical support services, and other related logistical support.

- **Nov. 30, 2010** – The Defense Security Cooperation Agency notified Congress November 29 of a possible Foreign Military Sale to Iraq of M1A1 Abrams Tank Ammunition for an estimated cost of \$36 million.

The Government of Iraq has requested a possible sale of 14,010 TP-T M831A1 120mm Cartridges, 16,110 TPCSDS-T M865 120mm Cartridges, and 3,510 HEAT-MP-T M830A1 120mm Cartridges.

- **Sept. 24, 2010** – The Defense Security Cooperation Agency notified Congress today of a possible Foreign Military Sale to Iraq of contractor technical support of the Iraqi Defense Network and associated parts and equipment for a complete package worth approximately \$98 million.
- **Sept. 24, 2010** – The Defense Security Cooperation Agency notified Congress today of a possible Foreign Military Sale to Iraq of contractor logistics support for Mobile Communications Centers and associated parts and equipment for a complete package worth approximately \$57 million.
- **Sept. 15, 2010** – The Defense Security Cooperation Agency notified Congress on September 14, of a possible Foreign Military Sale to Iraq for the refurbishment of 440 M113A2 Armored Personnel Carriers as well as associated equipment and services. The total value, if all options are exercised, could be as high as \$131 million.
- **Sept. 15, 2010** – The Defense Security Cooperation Agency notified Congress on September 13 of a possible Foreign Military Sale to Iraq of 18 F-16IQ Aircraft as well as associated equipment and services. The total value, if all options are exercised, could be as high as \$4.2 billion.

The Government of Iraq has requested a possible sale of (18) F-16IQ aircraft, (24) F100-PW-229 or F110-GE-129 Increased Performance Engines, (36) LAU-129/A Common Rail Launchers, (24) APG- 68(V)9 radar sets, (19) M61 20mm Vulcan Cannons, (200) AIM-9L/M-8/9 SIDEWINDER Missiles, (150) AIM-7M-F1/H SPARROW Missiles, (50) AGM-65D/G/H/K MAVERICK Air to Ground Missiles, (200) GBU-12 PAVEWAY II Laser Guided Bomb Units (500 pound), (50) GBU-10 PAVEWAY II Laser Guided Bomb Units (2000 pound), (50) GBU-24 PAVEWAY III Laser Guided Bomb Units (2000 pound), (22) Advanced Countermeasures Electronic Systems (ACES) (ACES includes the ALQ-187 Electronic Warfare System and AN/ALR-93 Radar Warning Receiver), (20) AN/APX-113 Advanced Identification Friend or Foe (AIFF) Systems (without Mode IV), (20) Global Positioning Systems (GPS) and Embedded GPS/Inertial Navigation Systems (INS), (Standard Positioning Service (SPS) commercial code only), (20) AN/AAQ-33 SNIPER or AN/AAQ-28 LITENING Targeting Pods, (4) F-9120 Advanced Airborne Reconnaissance Systems (AARS) or DB- 110 Reconnaissance Pods (RECCE), (22) AN/ALE-47 Countermeasures Dispensing Systems (CMDS); (20) Conformal Fuel Tanks (pairs). Also included: site survey, support equipment, tanker support, ferry services, Cartridge Actuated Devices/Propellant Actuated Devices (CAD/PAD), repair and return, modification kits, spares and repair parts, construction, publications and technical documentation, personnel training and training equipment, US Government and contractor technical, engineering, and logistics support services, ground based flight simulator, and other related elements of logistics support.

- **Aug. 5, 2010** – The Defense Security Cooperation Agency notified Congress today of a possible Foreign Military Sale to Iraq of contractor logistics support for various helicopters for an estimated cost of \$152 million.

The Government of Iraq has requested a possible sale of two years of contractor logistics support for Mi-17 Helicopters and two years of logistics support for US-origin rotary wing aircraft not in DoD's inventory.

- **March 5, 2010** – The Defense Security Cooperation Agency notified Congress March 4 of a possible Foreign Military Sale to Iraq of various communication equipment, associated parts and logistical support for a complete package worth approximately \$142 million.

The Government of Iraq has requested a possible sale of (300) 50-watt Very High Frequency (VHF) Base Station radios, (230) 50-Watt VHF Vehicular Stations, (150) 20-watt High Frequency/Very High Frequency (HF/VHF) Base Station Systems, (50) 20-watt HF/VHF Vehicular Radios, (50) 50-watt Ultra High Frequency/Very High Frequency (UHF/VHF) Base Stations, (10) 150-watt HF/VHF Vehicular Radio Systems, (10) 150-watt HF Base Station Radio Systems, (30) 20-watt HF Vehicular Mobile Radio Stations, (250) 20-watt HF/VHF Handheld Radio Systems, (300) 50-watt UHF/VHF Vehicular Stations, (10) 150-watt

HF/VHF Fixed Base Station Radio Systems, (590) Mobile Communications, Command and Control Center Switches, (4) Mobile Work Shops, High Capacity Line of Sight Communication Systems with Relay Link, generators, accessories, installation, spare and repair parts, support equipment, publications and technical data, personnel training and training equipment, contractor engineering and technical support services, and other related elements of logistics support.

- **Nov. 19, 2009** – The Defense Security Cooperation Agency notified Congress Nov. 18 of a possible Foreign Military Sale to Iraq of 15 helicopters with associated parts, equipment, training and logistical support for a complete package worth approximately \$1.2 billion.

The Government of Iraq has requested a possible sale of up to 15 Agusta Westland AW109 Light Utility Observation helicopters, or alternatively, 15 Bell Model 429 Medical Evacuation and Aerial Observation helicopters, or 15 EADS North America UH-72A Lakota Light Utility helicopters; and, up to 12 Agusta Westland AW139 Medium Utility helicopters, or alternatively, 12 Bell Model 412 Medium Utility helicopters, or 12 Sikorsky UH-60M BLACK HAWK helicopters equipped with 24 T700-GE-701D engines. Also included: spare and repair parts, publications and technical data, support equipment, personnel training and training equipment, ground support, communications equipment, US Government and contractor provided technical and logistics support services, tools and test equipment, and other related elements of logistics support.

- **Dec. 10, 2008** – The Defense Security Cooperation Agency notified Congress of a possible Foreign Military Sale to Iraq of (64) Deployable Rapid Assembly Shelters (DRASH), (1,500) 50 watt Very High Frequency (VHF) Base Station Radios, (6,000) VHF Tactical Handheld Radios, (100) VHF Fixed Retransmitters, (200) VHF Vehicular Radios, (30) VHF Maritime 50 watt Base Stations, (150) 150 watt High Frequency (HF) Base Station Radio Systems, (150) 20 watt HF Vehicular Radios, (30) 20 watt HF Manpack Radios, (50) 50 watt Very High Frequency/Ultra High Frequency (VHF/UHF) Ground to Air Radio Systems, (50) 150 watt VHF/UHF Ground to Air Radio Systems, (50) 5 watt Multiband Handheld Radio Systems as well as associated equipment and services. The total value, if all options are exercised, could be as high as \$485 Million.
- **Dec. 10, 2008** – On Dec. 9, the Defense Security Cooperation Agency notified Congress of a possible Foreign Military Sale to Iraq of (80,000) M16A4 5.56MM Rifles, (25,000) M4 5.56MM Carbines, (2,550) M203 40MM Grenade Launchers as well as associated equipment and services. The total value, if all options are exercised, could be as high as \$148 million.
- **Dec. 10, 2008** – On Dec. 9, the Defense Security Cooperation Agency notified Congress of a possible Foreign Military Sale to Iraq of 26 Bell Armed 407 Helicopters, 26 Rolls Royce 250-C-30 Engines, 26 M280 2.75-inch Launchers, 26 XM296 .50 Cal. Machine Guns with 500 Round Ammunition Box, 26 M299 HELLFIRE Guided Missile Launchers as well as associated equipment and services. The total value, if all options are exercised, could be as high as \$366 million.
- **Dec. 10, 2008** – On Dec. 9, the Defense Security Cooperation Agency notified Congress of a possible Foreign Military Sale to Iraq of 140 M1A1 Abrams tanks modified and upgraded to the M1A1M Abrams configuration, 8 M88A2 Tank Recovery Vehicles, 64 M1151A1B1 Armored High Mobility Multi-Purpose Wheeled Vehicles (HMMWV), 92 M1152 Shelter Carriers, 12 M577A2 Command Post Carriers, 16 M548A1 Tracked Logistics Vehicles, 8 M113A2 Armored Ambulances, and 420 AN/VRC-92 Vehicular Receiver Transmitters as well as associated equipment and services. The total value, if all options are exercised, could be as high as \$2.160 billion.
- **Dec. 10, 2008** – On Dec. 9, the Defense Security Cooperation Agency notified Congress of a possible Foreign Military Sale to Iraq of (20) 30-35meter Coastal Patrol Boats and (3) 55- 60 meter Offshore Support Vessels as well as associated equipment and services. The total value, if all options are exercised, could be as high as \$1.010 billion.
- The Government of Iraq has requested a possible sale of (20) 30-35meter Coastal Patrol Boats and (3) 55-60 meter Offshore Support Vessels, each outfitted with the Seahawk MS1-DS30MA2 mount using a 30 x 173mm CHAIN gun and short range Browning M2-HB .50 cal machine gun, spare and repair parts, weapon system software, support equipment, publications and technical data, personnel training and training equipment, US Government and contractor engineering and logistics support services, and other related

elements of logistics support.

- **Dec. 10, 2008** – On Dec. 9, the Defense Security Cooperation Agency notified Congress of a possible Foreign Military Sale to Iraq of 20 T-6A Texan aircraft, 20 Global Positioning Systems (GPS) as well as associated equipment and services. The total value, if all options are exercised, could be as high as \$210 million.

The Government of Iraq has requested a possible sale of 20 T-6A Texan aircraft, 20 Global Positioning Systems (GPS) with CMA-4124 GNSSA card and Embedded GPS/Inertial Navigation System (INS) spares, ferry maintenance, tanker support, aircraft ferry services, site survey, unit level trainer, spare and repair parts, support and test equipment, publications and technical documentation, personnel training and training equipment, contractor technical and logistics personnel services, and other related elements of logistics support.

- **Dec. 10, 2008** – On Dec. 9, the Defense Security Cooperation Agency notified Congress of a possible Foreign Military Sale to Iraq of 400 M1126 STRYKER Infantry Carrier Vehicles as well as associated equipment. The total value, if all options are exercised, could be as high as \$1.11 billion.

The Government of Iraq has requested a possible sale of 400 M1126 STRYKER Infantry Carrier Vehicles (ICVs), 400 M2 HB 50 cal Browning Machine Guns, 400 M1117 Armored Security Vehicles (ASVs), 8 Heavy Duty Recovery Trucks, spare and repair parts, support equipment, publications and technical data, personnel training and training equipment, contractor engineering and technical support services, and other related elements of logistics support.

- **Dec. 10, 2008** – On Dec. 9, the Defense Security Cooperation Agency notified Congress of a possible Foreign Military Sale to Iraq of 36 AT-6B Texan II Aircraft as well as associated support. The total value, if all options are exercised, could be as high as \$520 million.

The Government of Iraq has requested a possible sale of 36 AT-6B Texan II Aircraft, 6 spare PT-6 engines, 10 spare ALE-47 Counter-Measure Dispensing Systems and/or 10 spare AAR-60 Missile Launch Detection Systems, global positioning systems with CMA-4124, spare and repair parts, maintenance, support equipment, publications and technical documentation, tanker support, ferry services, personnel training and training equipment, US Government and contractor engineering and logistics support services, and other related elements of logistics support.

- **July 31, 2008** – The Defense Security Cooperation Agency notified Congress of a possible Foreign Military Sale to Iraq of M1A1 and Upgrade to M1A1M Abrams Tanks as well as associated equipment and services. The total value, if all options are exercised, could be as high as \$2.16 billion.

The Government of Iraq has requested a possible sale of 140 M1A1 Abrams tanks modified and upgraded to the M1A1M Abrams configuration, 8 M88A2 Tank Recovery Vehicles, 64 M1151A1B1 Armored High Mobility Multi-Purpose Wheeled Vehicles (HMMWV), 92 M1152 Shelter Carriers, 12 M577A2 Command Post Carriers, 16 M548A1 Tracked Logistics Vehicles, 8 M113A2 Armored Ambulances, and 420 AN/VRC-92 Vehicular Receiver Transmitters. Also included are: 35 M1070 Heavy Equipment Transporter (HET) Truck Tractors, 40 M978A2 Heavy Expanded Mobility Tactical Truck (HEMTT) Tankers, 36 M985A2 HEMTT Cargo Trucks, 4 M984A2 HEMTT Wrecker Trucks, 140 M1085A1 5-ton Cargo Trucks, 8 HMMWV Ambulances w/ Shelter, 8 Contact Maintenance Trucks, 32 500 gal Water Tank Trailers, 16 2500 gal Water Tank Trucks, 16 Motorcycles, 80 8 ton Heavy/Medium Trailers, 16 Sedans, 92 M1102 Light Tactical trailers, 92 635NL Semi-Trailers, 4 5,500 lb. Rough Terrain Forklifts, 20 M1A1 engines, 20 M1A1 Full Up Power Packs, 3 spare M88A2 engines, 10 M1070 engines, 20 HEMTT engines, 4 M577A2 spare engines, 2 5-ton truck engines, 20 spare HMMWV engines, ammunition, spare and repair parts, maintenance, support equipment, publications and documentation, personnel training and equipment, US Government and contractor engineering and logistics support services, and other related elements of logistics support.

- **July 30, 2008** – The Defense Security Cooperation Agency notified Congress of a possible Foreign Military Sale to Iraq of Helicopters and related munitions as well as associated equipment and services. The total value, if all options are exercised, could be as high as \$2.4 billion.

The Government of Iraq has requested a possible sale of 24 Bell Armed 407 Helicopters or 24 Boeing AH-6 Helicopters, 24 Rolls Royce 250-C-30 Engines, 565 M120 120mm Mortars, 665 M252 81mm Mortars, 200 AGM-114M HELLFIRE missiles, 24 M299 HELLFIRE Guided Missile Launchers, 16 M36 HELLFIRE

Training Missiles, 15,000 2.75-inch Rockets, 24 M280 2.75-inch Launchers, 24 XM296 .50 Cal. Machine Guns with 500 Round Ammunition Box, 24 M134 7.62mm Mini-Guns, 81mm ammunition, 120mm ammunition, test measurement and diagnostics equipment, spare and repair parts, support equipment, publications and technical data, personnel training and training equipment, US Government and contractor engineering and logistics personnel services, and other related elements of logistics support.

- **July 30, 2008** – The Defense Security Cooperation Agency notified Congress of a possible Foreign Military Sale to Iraq of technical assistance for construction of facilities and infrastructure as well as associated equipment and services. The total value, if all options are exercised, could be as high as \$1.6 billion.

The Government of Iraq has requested a possible sale of technical assistance to ensure provision of adequate facilities and infrastructure in support of the recruitment, garrison, training, and operational facilities and infrastructure for the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF). The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) will provide engineering, planning, design, acquisition, contract administration, construction management, and other technical services for construction of facilities and infrastructure (repair, rehabilitation, and new construction) in support of the training, garrison, and operational requirements of the ISF. The scope of the program includes provision of technical assistance for Light Armored Vehicles, Range Facilities, Training Facilities, Tank Range Complex Facilities, and Armed Reconnaissance Helicopter Facilities in support of Government of Iraq (GoI) construction projects throughout the country of Iraq. The facilities and infrastructure planned include mission essential facilities, maintenance and supply buildings, company and regimental headquarters, and utilities systems (including heating, water, sewer, electricity, and communication lines). Services include support, personnel training and training equipment, acquisition of engineer construction equipment, technical assistance to Iraqi military engineers, other technical assistance, contractor engineering services, and other related elements of logistic support.

- **July 30, 2008** – The Defense Security Cooperation Agency notified Congress of a possible Foreign Military Sale to Iraq of Light Armored Vehicles as well as associated equipment and services. The total value, if all options are exercised, could be as high as \$3 billion.

The Government of Iraq has requested a possible sale of 392 Light Armored Vehicles (LAVs) which include 352 LAV-25, 24 LAV-CC, and 16 LAV-A (Ambulances); 368 AN/VRC-90E Single Channel Ground and Airborne Radio Systems (SINGARS); 24 AN/VRC-92E SINGARS; and 26 M72 Light Anti-Tank Weapons. The following are considered replacements to vehicles/weapons requested in the Military Table of Equipment (MTOE): 5 LAV-R (Recovery), 4 LAV-L (Logistics), 2 Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) Vehicles, 41 Medium Tactical Vehicle Replacement (MTVR), 2 MK19 40mm Grenade Machine Guns, 773 9mm Pistols, 93 M240G Machine Guns, and 10 AR-12 rifles. Non-MDE includes ammunition, construction, site survey, spare and repair parts, support equipment, publications and technical data, personnel training and training equipment, contractor engineering and technical support services and other related elements of logistics support.

- **July 28, 2008** – On July 24th, the Defense Security Cooperation Agency notified Congress of a possible Foreign Military Sale to Iraq of Armored Security Vehicles as well as associated equipment and services. The total value, if all options are exercised, could be as high as \$206 million.

The Government of Iraq has requested a possible sale of 160 M2 .50 caliber Machine Guns, 160 M1117 Armored Security Vehicles (ASVs), 4 Heavy Duty Recovery Trucks, 160 Harris Vehicular Radio Systems, 144 MK19 MOD3 40mm Grenade Machine Guns with Bracket, spare and repair parts, support equipment, publications and technical data, personnel training and training equipment, contractor engineering and technical support services, and other related elements of logistics support.

- **July 25, 2008** – The Defense Security Cooperation Agency notified Congress of a possible Foreign Military Sale to Iraq of C-130J-30 Aircraft as well as associated equipment and services. The total value, if all options are exercised, could be as high as \$1.5 billion.

The Government of Iraq has requested a possible sale of 6 C-130J-30 United States Air Force baseline aircraft and equipment, 24 Rolls Royce AE 2100D3 engines, 4 Rolls Royce AE 2100D3 spare engines, 6 AAR-47 Missile Warning Systems, 2 spare AAR-47 Missile Warning Systems, 6 AN/ALE-47 Countermeasures Dispensing Systems, 2 spare AN/ALE-47 Countermeasures Dispensing Systems. Also included are spare and repair parts, configuration updates, integration studies, support equipment, publications and technical

documentation, technical services, personnel training and training equipment, foreign liaison office support, US Government and contractor engineering and logistics personnel services, construction, and other related elements of logistics support.

- **May 7, 2008** – The Defense Security Cooperation Agency notified Congress of a possible Foreign Military Sale to Iraq of technical assistance for construction of facilities and infrastructure as well as associated equipment and services. The total value, if all options are exercised, could be as high as \$450 million.
- **March 21, 2008** – On March 12, 2008, the Defense Security Cooperation Agency notified Congress of a possible Foreign Military Sale to Iraq of various vehicles, small arms and ammunition, communication equipment, medical equipment, and clothing and individual equipment as well as associated equipment and services. The total value, if all options are exercised, could be as high as \$1,389 million.

The Government of Iraq has requested a possible sale of (700) M1151 High Mobility Multi-Purpose Wheeled Vehicles (HMMWV) Armored Gun Trucks, (4,000) AN/PVS-7D Night Vision Devices, and (100,000) M16A4 Assault Rifles. Also included are: (200) Commercial Ambulances, (16) Bulldozers, (300) Light Gun Trucks, (150) Motorcycles, (90) Recovery Trucks, (30) 20 ton Heavy Trailer, (1,400) 8 ton Medium Trailers, (3,000) 4X4 Utility Trucks, (120) 12K Fuel Tank Trucks, (80) Heavy Tractor Trucks, (120) 10K Water Tank Trucks, (208) 8 ton Heavy Trucks, (800) Light Utility Trailers, (8) Cranes, (60) Heavy Recovery Vehicles, (16) Loaders, (300) Sedans, (200) 500 gal Water Tank Trailers, (1,500) 1 ton Light Utility Trailers, (50) 40 ton Low Bed Trailers, (40) Heavy Fuel Tanker Trucks, (20) 2000 gal Water Tanker Trucks, (2,000) 5 ton Medium Trucks, (120) Armored IEDD Response Vehicles, (1,200) 8 ton Medium Cargo Trucks, (1,100) 40mm Grenade Launchers, (3,300) 9mm Pistols with Holsters, (400) Aiming Posts, (140,000) M16A4 Magazines, (100,000) M4 Weapons, (65) 5K Generators, (5,400) hand-held VHF radio sets, (3,500) vehicular VHF radio sets, (32) Air Conditioner Charger kits, (32) Air Conditioner Testers, (4,000) binoculars, (20) electrician tool kits, (600) large general purpose tents, (700) small command general purpose tents, medical equipment, organizational clothing and individual equipment, standard and non-standard vehicle spare and repair parts, maintenance, support equipment, publications and documentation, US Government and contractor engineering and logistics support services, and other related elements of logistics support.

- **Sept. 25, 2007** – The Defense Security Cooperation Agency notified Congress of a possible Foreign Military Sale to Iraq of various vehicles, small arms ammunition, explosives, and communications equipment as well as associated equipment and services. The total value, if all options are exercised, could be as high as \$2.257 billion.

The Government of Iraq has requested a possible sale of the following: MDE includes: (980) M1151 High Mobility Multi-Purpose Wheeled Vehicles (HMMWV) and (123,544) M16A4 Rifles.

Also included are: Upgrade and refurbishment of 32 additional UH-1 configuration; Armored Land Cruisers (189); Armored Mercedes (10); Light utility trucks (1,815); Fire trucks (70); Fuel trucks (40); Septic truck (20); Water truck (45); Motorcycles (112); Sedans (1,425); 5 Ton Trucks (600); Medium Trucks (600); BTR 3E1 (336); 8 Ton Trucks (400); 12 Ton Trucks (400); 16- 35 Ton Trucks (100); 35 Ton Trucks (20); Ambulances (122); Bulldozers (33); Excavators (10); Wheeled Loader (20); Variable Reach Forklifts (10); 5Kw generators (447); ILAV Route Clearing Vehicle (55); Wrecker w/Boom (19); Fuel Pumps (34); 11 Passenger Bus (127); 24 Passenger Bus (207); 44 Passenger Bus (80); Contact Maintenance Trucks (105); communication towers, troposcatter and Microwave radios, IDN, DPN, VSAT Operations and Maintenance, (1,518) VHF Wheeled Tactical and Base Station Radios, (4,800) VHF hand-held radios, (6,490) VHF man pack radios, clothing and individual equipment, standard and non-standard vehicle spare and repair parts, maintenance, support equipment, publications and documentation; personnel training and training equipment; Quality Assurance Team support services, US Government and contractor engineering and logistics support services, preparation of aircraft for shipment, and other related elements of logistics support.

- **Sept. 21, 2007** – On September 21, 2007, the Defense Security Cooperation Agency notified Congress of a possible Foreign Military Sale to Iraq of logistics support for three C-130E aircraft as well as associated equipment and services. The total value, if all options are exercised, could be as high as \$172 million.

The Government of Iraq has requested a possible sale of logistics support for three C-130E aircraft to include supply and maintenance support, flares, electronic warfare support, software upgrades, pyrotechnics, spare and repair parts, support equipment, publications and documentation, personnel training and training

equipment, fuel and fueling services, US Government and contractor engineering and logistics support services, and other related elements of logistics support.

- **Aug. 17, 2007** – The Defense Security Cooperation Agency notified Congress of a possible Foreign Military Sale to Iraq of UH-I HUEY repair parts as well as associated equipment and services. The total value, if all options are exercised, could be as high as \$150 million.
- **May 24, 2007** – The Defense Security Cooperation Agency notified Congress of a possible Foreign Military Sale to Iraq of medical supplies, equipment, and training as well as associated support equipment and services. The total value, if all options are exercised, will be less than \$1.05 billion.
- **May 18, 2007** – The Defense Security Cooperation Agency notified Congress of a possible Foreign Military Sale to Iraq of Technical Assistance for Construction of Facilities and Infrastructure as well as associated equipment and services. The total value, if all options are exercised, could be as high as \$350 million.
- **May 4, 2007** – The Defense Security Cooperation Agency notified Congress of a possible Foreign Military Sale to Iraq of various small arms ammunition, explosives, and other consumables as well as associated equipment and services. The total value, if all options are exercised, could be as high as \$508 million.
- **Dec. 07, 2006** – The Defense Security Cooperation Agency notified Congress of a possible Foreign Military Sale to Iraq to provide funds for Trucks, Vehicles, Trailers, as well as associated equipment and services. The total value, if all options are exercised, could be as high as \$463 million.

Major Defense Equipment (MDE): 522 High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicles (HMMWVs) or 276 Infantry Light Armored Vehicles (I-LA Vs), eight Heavy Tracked Recovery Vehicles – either Brem Tracked Recovery and Repair or M578 Recovery Vehicles, six 40-Ton Trailer Lowboy – either M871 or Commercial, 66 8-Ton Cargo Heavy Trucks – either M900 series or M35 series or MK23 Medium Tactical Vehicles or Commercial Medium Trucks.

Also included: logistics support services/equipment for vehicles (Armored Gun Trucks; Light, Medium, and Heavy Vehicles; trailers; recovery vehicles; and ambulances) supply and maintenance support, measuring and hand tools for ground systems, technical support, software upgrades, spare and repair parts, support equipment, publications and documentation, personnel training and training equipment, US Government and contractor engineering and logistics support services, and other related elements of logistics support.

- **Sept. 27, 2006** – The Defense Security Cooperation Agency notified Congress of a possible Foreign Military Sale to Iraq of King Air 350ER and potentially other aircraft, as well as associated equipment and services. The total value, if all options are exercised, could be as high as \$900 million.

The Government of Iraq has requested a possible sale of:

- 24 King Air 350ER for Intelligence/Surveillance/Reconnaissance role with L-3 Wescam
- MX-15 Electro Optics/Infrared (EO/IR) system, plus 1 of the following Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR/ISAR)/Inverse Synthetic: APS-134 Sea Vue or APS-143 Ocean Eye or RDR-1700 or Lynx II (APY-8) or APS144 or APY-12 Phoenix
- 24 Data Link Systems (T-Series Model-U or T-Series Model-N or ADL850 or TCDL or BMT-85)
- 24 King Air 350ER or PZL M-18 Skytruck Aircraft for light transport role
- 48 AAR-47 Missile Warning Systems
- 48 ALE-47 Countermeasures Dispensing Systems
- 6,000 M-206 Flare Cartridges
- 50 Global Positioning System (GPS) and Embedded GPS/Inertial Navigation Systems (INS)

Also included: support equipment, management support, spare and repair parts, supply support, training, personnel training and training equipment, publications and technical data, US Government and contractor technical assistance and other related elements of logistics support.

- **Sept. 27, 2006** – The Defense Security Cooperation Agency notified Congress of a possible Foreign Military

Sale to Iraq of one AN/FPS-117 or TPS-77 Long Range Air Traffic Control Radar, as well as associated equipment and services. The total value, if all options are exercised, could be as high as \$142 million.

- The Government of Iraq has requested a possible sale of one AN/FPS-117 or TPS-77 Long Range Air Traffic Control Radar, support equipment, management support, spare and repair parts, supply support, training, publications and technical data, US Government and contractor technical assistance and other related elements of logistics support.
- **Sept. 19, 2006** – The Defense Security Cooperation Agency notified Congress of a possible Foreign Military Sale to Iraq of helicopters, vehicles, weapons and support as well as associated equipment and services. The total value, if all options are exercised, could be as high as \$500 million.

Also included: logistics support services/equipment for helicopters (Jet Ranger, Huey II and Mi-17) and vehicles (Standard/Non-Standard Wheeled Vehicles, Tracked Vehicles, Infantry Light Armored Vehicles Armored Personnel Carriers) and small/medium weapons and weapon systems, on-job-training, laser pointers, supply and maintenance support, measuring and hand tools for ground systems, technical support, software upgrades, spare and repair parts, support equipment, publications and documentation, personnel training and training equipment, US Government and contractor engineering and logistics support services, and other related elements of logistics support.

- **Sept. 19, 2006** – The Defense Security Cooperation Agency notified Congress of a possible Foreign Military Sale to Iraq of logistics support for Helicopters, Vehicles, Weapons as well as associated equipment and services. The total value, if all options are exercised, could be as high as \$250 million.

The Government of Iraq has requested a possible sale of logistics support services/equipment for helicopters (Jet Ranger, Huey II and Mi-17) and vehicles (Standard/Non-Standard Wheeled Vehicles, Tracked Vehicles, Infantry Light Armored Vehicles Armored Personnel Carriers) and small/medium weapons and weapon systems including on-job-training, supply and maintenance support, measuring and hand tools for ground systems, software upgrades, spare and repair parts, support equipment, publications and documentation, personnel training and training equipment, US Government and contractor engineering and logistics support services, and other related elements of logistics support.

- **March 10, 2005** – On 10 March 2005, the Defense Security Cooperation Agency notified Congress of a possible Foreign Military Sale to Iraq of six T-56A-7 engines and logistics support for C-130 aircraft as well as associated equipment and services. The total value, if all options are exercised, could be as high as \$132 million.

The Government of Iraq has requested a possible sale of six T-56A-7 engines and logistics support for C-130 aircraft to include supply and maintenance support, flares, software upgrades, pyrotechnics, spare and repair parts, support equipment, publications and documentation, personnel training and training equipment, fuel and fueling services, US Government and contractor engineering and logistics support services, and other related elements of logistics.

Source: adapted from reporting by the Defense Security Cooperation Agency, <http://www.dsca.mil/major-arms-sales>, last access February 6, 2014.

The Ongoing US Role in Shaping the Iraqi Armed Forces

The US role in shaping the Iraqi Security Forces is now limited by both the lack of aid funds and the limited size of the US presence in Iraq. Nevertheless the US military does maintain an important presence in Iraq, can use arms sales to build more informal forms of strategic relations and partnerships, and -- as Kenneth Katzman of the Congressional Research Service reports -- has corrected many of the initial problems in the OSC-I:⁶⁷³

An Office of Security Cooperation—Iraq (OSC-I), under the authority of the U.S. Ambassador to Iraq, would continue to train and mentor the Iraq Security Forces (ISF). OSC-I has grown substantially in strength up from 1,000 personnel reported in 2012 to 3,500 total personnel, of which about 175 are U.S. military personnel and the remainder are mostly contractors. The office, working out of the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad and 10 locations around Iraq, helps train and mentor the Iraqis, and manages some 441 Foreign Military Sales

(FMS) cases totaling over \$9 billion worth of pending arms sales to Iraq. The largest FMS case is the sale of 36 U.S.-made F-16 combat aircraft to Iraq, notified to Congress in two equal tranches, the latest of which was made on December 12, 2011 (Transmittal No. 11-46). The total value of the sale of 36 F-16s is up to \$6.5 billion when all parts, training, and weaponry are included.

- The United States continues to cooperate with Iraq on counter-terrorism, naval and air defense, and cooperation through joint exercises.
- U.S. personnel (mostly contractors) continue to be “embedded” with Iraqi forces as trainers not only tactically, but at the institutional level (by advising Iraqi security ministries and its command structure). Ongoing discussions with the Iraqis will determine whether these personnel would accompany Iraqi forces on counter-terrorism missions.

Iraqi Military Modernization and the US Role in Shaping the Iraqi Army

The Iraqi Army continues to lack adequate logistical and intelligence capabilities – areas that OSC-I will focus on improving.⁶⁷⁴ It suffers from political interference in command positions, the sale of other positions at every level and other forms of corruption, a failure to maintain the facilities and systems transferred by the US, and a host of other issues.

Nevertheless, the Iraqi Army (IA) has made some progress in its ability to defend Iraq’s borders, due in part to a concerted effort in 2011 by US military advisors towards more traditional defensive operations.⁶⁷⁵ It is now a force of 13 motorized infantry divisions, one armored division with two independent Special Forces Brigades. It has a growing aviation command and artillery and fire support capability. It is slowly making progress in creating the logistic and support capabilities it needs, as well as effective intelligence, communications, training and other key enablers.

Much will depend on the success of the OSC-I and the nature and scale of future US arms transfers. Earlier plans for the US sale of some \$4.2 billion in arms to Iraq included land force weapons, naval systems, reconnaissance equipment, and several air force weapons systems, but these plans are increasingly uncertain.⁶⁷⁶

The Iraqi Army is beginning to build up units with modern heavy weapons. In the third quarter of 2010, Iraq’s 9th Armored Division received 11 US M1A1SA tanks specially configured for desert warfare.⁶⁷⁷ Another 129 more arrived by December 2011, but this still only produced a total strength of less than one armored division’s worth of modern main battle tanks – or 35 per regiment,⁶⁷⁸ Iraq also trained its instructors under an FMS package where their instruction came for General dynamics contractors rather than US military personnel.

According to Jane’s, Iraq also has bought some 1,026 US M113A2 armored personnel carriers (APCs) as well as 420 BTR-4s, including 350 amphibious versions with Parus remote turrets and 80 command vehicles fitted with US communications gear from the Ukraine to equip 10 of its mechanized battalions as well as 26 BTR-4 8 infantry fighting vehicles (IFVs) with Parus turrets, and seems to have ordered more.⁶⁷⁹

Jane’s reports Iraq has also bought 487 mine-resistant ILVA 4X4 vehicles for its light forces, and may order over 1,000. It is also considering the purchase of 353 LAV-25 AIFVs with a two-man turret armed with a 25 mm M242 cannon; 24 LAV-Command and Control (LAV-CC); and 17 LAV-Ambulances (LAV-A). It seems to be buying other light armored vehicles like 500 MTLBs from Bulgaria. This is a good mix of armored systems for counterinsurgency and light combat, but not for a serious conventional conflict with Iran.⁶⁸⁰

Iraq also remains light in artillery. As of early 2013, its holdings of modern US weapons consisted of 24 ex-US forces 155 mm M109 self-propelled howitzers, and 120 ex-US forces 155 mm M198 towed howitzers plus orders of six AN/TPQ-36(V)10 Firefinder Radar Systems, 18 AN/TPQ-48 Light Weight Counter-Mortar radars.⁶⁸¹

Iraq is acquiring combat helicopters. Again according to Jane's, Iraq's present total helicopter strength and orders include 24 Bell 407 armed reconnaissance helicopters with a goal of acquiring 50. They are armed with .50 cal (12.7 mm) machine guns, 2.75-inch (70 mm) air-to-surface rockets, and AGM-114 Hellfire air-to-surface missiles, and equipped with fitted with the L-3 Wescam MX-15Di forward-looking infrared sensor and laser designator. Its most advanced attack helicopters seem to consist of an order of 30 Russian Mi-28NE 'Havoc' attack helicopters equipped with modern anti-tank weapons.

Iraq also has 24 Eurocopter EC 635 light utility/training helicopters some of which may have 12.7mm machine guns and 20mm cannon. It has 22 modernized Mil Mi-17 'Hip' transport helicopters, and has ordered 16 more, for a total of 38. It is upgrading 4 to 16 Bell UH-1H Iroquois utility helicopters and has some Bell 206B Jet Ranger helicopters it received from the UAE and US. It may have 10 US OH-58A Kiowas in delivery.⁶⁸²

The Army will evidently also operate Iraq's Hawk surface-to-air missiles if these are delivered. DSCA has announced the Iraq has requested an integrated air defense network using HAWK medium-range surface-to-air (SAM) systems and very-short-range Avenger SAMs. Jane's reports that this system would include three batteries of HAWK XXI SAMs, each with two fire units; 216 MIM-23P HAWK missiles; 40 Avenger fire units, which are Humvees with a roof-mounted launcher for eight Stinger missiles; and 681 FIM-92H Stingers. It would also include Lockheed AN/TPS-77 transportable long-range surveillance radars.⁶⁸³

Nations like Russia and China are becoming important suppliers – although they are no more immune to the uncertainties of Iraqi politics than the US. Jane's reports that Iraq government signed a contract with Russia worthy some \$.2 billion for various items of military equipment in October 2012. Russia made a document public following a meeting between Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev and Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki that reported Russia would supply Iraq with 30 Mi-28NE 'attack helicopters and 42 Pantsir-S1 self-propelled short-range surface-to-air missile systems.

In November 2012, however, Maliki's office announced the deal had been cancelled because of "suspicions of corruption". This announcement was then contradicted by Iraq's acting Defense Minister Sadun al-Dulaymi, who said the deal would require renegotiation. Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari then announced in March 2012 that the deal would proceed, with some deliveries that year.⁶⁸⁴ Iraq has previously gone through a major scandal over potential corruption in a \$236 million arms deal with Serbia in 2007.

Iraqi Military Modernization and the US Role in Shaping the Iraqi Air Force

Iraq's still limited air force means that it will need to continue to depend on outside power for air power and air defenses for some years into the future in any serious emergency. The US had laid out plans to help Iraq acquire its own modern air forces in 2009-2011, but as is the case with many other Iraqi national security issues, the political infighting and late formation of Iraq's government after the March 2010 elections made it difficult to clearly define the US role in

improving the Iraqi Air Force once US combat forces withdrew at the end of the 2011 US transition. As a result, progress developing Iraqi air capabilities has been slow.

In June 2011, the US Army Corps of Engineers completed also completed construction of the \$5.38 million Ali Air Base in southern Iraq, which could help Iraq's Air Force to secure its borders against air attack.⁶⁸⁵

In July 2011, Maliki expressed interest in purchasing 36 F16s, double the original number.⁶⁸⁶ Iraq has indicated that it wants 96 of the F-16s, along with Sidewinder missiles to arm them.⁶⁸⁷

This is also an area where Maliki still seems to feel he needs US support. He called for a "deeper security relationship" with the United States and the acceleration of weapons deliveries to help his country curb its escalating insurgent violence during a visit in October 2013, and stressed the need to speed up delivery of the F-16, land-based air defenses, and other systems given the rising level of violence in Iraq and the impact of the Syrian civil war.

As a result, the core of Iraqi air force modernization remains the \$4.2 billion security package mentioned earlier. It includes reconnaissance equipment, and 36 Lockheed Martin F-16C/D Block 52 strike fighters, along with 120 LAU-129/A common rail launchers; 24 AN/APG-68(V)9 radar sets; 19 M61 20 mm Vulcan cannons (plus 40,000 rounds of ammunition); 100 AIM-9L/M-8/9 Sidewinder air-to-air missiles; 150 AIM-7M-F1/H Sparrow medium-range missiles; 50 AGM-65D/G/H/K Maverick air-to-surface missiles (plus LAU-117 launchers); 200 500 lb. (226.8 kg) GBU-12 Paveway II laser-guided bombs; 50 2,000 pound GBU-10 Paveway II laser-guided bombs; 50 2,000 lb. GBU-24 Paveway III laser-guided bombs; 230 Mk 84 2000 pound and 800 Mk 82 500 pound general-purpose bombs. I

The package also includes 20 AN/AAQ-33 Sniper or AN/AAQ-28 Lightning targeting pods, four F-9120 Advanced Airborne Reconnaissance Systems (AARS) or DB-110 reconnaissance pods; 22 AN/ALQ-211 Advanced Integrated Defensive Electronic Warfare Suites or Advanced Countermeasures Electronic Systems (ACES), and 22 AN/ALE-47 countermeasures dispensing systems.⁶⁸⁸

The F-16 is not, however, Iraq's only option. Russia has offered Iraq the MiG-29 and would probably sell it more advanced fighters. Jane's also reports that there is some question about past orders of armed trainers. DSCA) notified Congress in December 2008 of a possible sale of 36 AT-6Bs as well as 20 T-6A. So far, Iraq has only bought 15 aircraft of the 20 T-6As.⁶⁸⁹

Jane's and other sources indicate that other key aspects of Iraqi Air Force modernization include:⁶⁹⁰

- Three US Air Force donated C-130E Hercules transport aircraft and six C-130J-30 Super Hercules with AN/AAR-47 missile approach warning systems and AN/ALE-47 countermeasures dispensing systems.
- Up to 24 Hawker Beechcraft King Air 350ER or PZL M-18 Skytruck aircraft. Orders have been placed and delivered one King Air 350ER transport and five King Air 350ER ISR aircraft.
- Iraq also placed an order for six Antonov An-32B 'Cline' twin-turboprop medium transports.
- Iraq is seeking 12 Bell 412EP helicopters for uses as search-and-rescue (SAR) platforms, equipped with Star SAFIRE III electro-optic infrared (EO/IR) systems night vision imaging system-compatible cockpit lighting, search lights, as well as communications and navigation gear.
- A new command-and-control system that began operating in August 2010, and connects Iraq's air bases and to the Iraqi defense and intelligence network called the Iraqi Information Infrastructure Program (I3P). It is intended to serve as a foundation for the development of nationwide command-and-control and

communications among security forces and allow them to perform air traffic management and strategic reconnaissance through direct communication with aircraft and the Iraqi Operations Center

- Two Seeker SB7L-360 light reconnaissance aircraft.
- SAMA CH2000 surveillance aircraft. And 24 modified Beech King Air 350ER special mission platforms fitted with the General Atomics Aeronautical Systems Inc Lynx II synthetic aperture radar/ground moving target indicator (SAR/GMTI) system, which operates in conjunction with Control of Lynx and Analysis (CLAW) software and an L-3 Communications West high-bandwidth datalink.
- 20 new Serbian Utva Lasta 95 piston-engined primary trainers now deployed at the Al Sahra training base.
- Possible orders for up to 24 Czech-built Aero Vodochody L-159 advanced trainer/light-attack aircraft,

If the Iraqi Air Force does continue to seek support from the US, much will depend on US willingness to help Iraq train personnel, develop logistics, and strategize on the use of the Air Force.⁶⁹¹ The July 2011 SGR report suggested that one of the main objectives of a continued US presence in Iraq should be to provide an air-defense umbrella for Iraq while the Iraqi Air Force develops its capacity to conduct independent operations.⁶⁹²

The US Iraqi pilot training program has trained more than 60 Iraqi pilots and 30 instructor pilots since its inception in 2008. Currently, 10 Iraqi pilots are being trained in the US to fly the first set of F-16s due to arrive by 2014.⁶⁹³ As of September 30, 2011, the Iraq Training and Advisory Mission-Air (ITAM-Air) had nearly 1,200 personnel directly engaged with Iraq's air force personnel. Iraqi General Zibari emphasized that, "an army without an air force is exposed" and stated that Iraq will not be able to defend its own air space until 2020, at the earliest.⁶⁹⁴

On December 12, 2011, the Defense Security Cooperation Agency notified Congress of a possible Foreign Military Sale to Iraq for 18 F-16IQ aircraft and associated equipment, parts, weapons, training and logistical support for an estimated cost of \$2.3 billion, increasing the total number of F-16s being purchased by Iraq to 36. The sale also includes requests for Sidewinder missile, various air-to-ground missiles, laser guided bomb units, and a variety of other equipment.⁶⁹⁵ The sale is widely seen as part of a US focus on increasing the capabilities of the Iraqi air force.

Additionally, the 2013 sale request by the Defense Security Cooperation Agency to deliver Iraq's integrated air defense system, will, in conjunction with the delivery of Iraq's F-16I fighter aircraft, provide the Iraqi Air Force an anti-air capability on par with those of other states in the region. These weapons complement the systems being sold by other Gulf States, which include an AN/TPY-2 radar from the UAE, and a THAAD missile defense system from Qatar. This combination of air defense systems suggests that a major US motivation remains its desire to provide Iraq the capacity to interdict Iranian flights overflying its soil bring weapons to Syria. As of October 2013, Iraq is still not able to prevent these flights, and Iran has been able to cross Iraqi airspace en route to Syria at will.

Iraqi Military Modernization and the US Role in Shaping the Iraqi Navy

The US role in shaping the Iraqi navy affects both Iraq's security and Iranian and US military competition. US support is critical to securing the flow of Iraqi commerce and deterring against external threats. The Iranian threat to Gulf energy exports is a key reason the US often deploys two US aircraft carrier groups in the Gulf region.⁶⁹⁶ According to the Department of Defense, Iraq's oil infrastructure is vulnerable to the Iranian Republican Guard Corps Navy (IRGCN)⁶⁹⁷ and Iraq's offshore oil loading points are vulnerable to attack.

An ongoing series of naval incidents serves as a reminder that Iranian and Western relations in the Gulf remain tense. The IRGC captured 15 British soldiers in Iraqi waters in March 2007. On January 6, 2008, five armed Iranian speedboats maneuvered aggressively towards and issued radio threats against three American Navy warships in international waters while entering the Strait of Hormuz.⁶⁹⁸ According to Pentagon officials, the American commander was close to issuing an order to fire on one of the speedboats which came within 200 yards of the warship – and within range of one of the machine guns aimed at it – before it suddenly veered away.⁶⁹⁹

In 2007, Iraq had a 1200-man navy, two afloat squadrons, and four marine companies. It was also adding offshore support vessels, patrol ships and boats, and smaller vessels.⁷⁰⁰ In October 2010, the Iraqi navy inaugurated the first of 15 \$20 million US-built Swift Class patrol boats.⁷⁰¹ It bought two more in August 2011, to bring the total to 5 of 12 ordered.⁷⁰² Iraq also received two \$70 million US-built offshore support vessels in 2011.⁷⁰³ In July 2011, SIGIR reported Iraq's navy had grown to over 3,600 assigned personnel.⁷⁰⁴ One of OSC-I planned ten locations will be in Umm Qasr, the primary location of Iraq's Navy.

As part of the transition to State Department lead in Iraq, the US Coast Guard Maritime Security Advisory Team (MSAT) began oversight of maritime training and reports to the US Embassy. In partnership with the Department of Homeland Security, OSC-I Basra, and INL, MSAT will develop Iraq's capacity to secure, regulate, and manage its coastal water and rivers. This includes developing legislative and regulatory authorities and instructing courses on small-boat operations.⁷⁰⁵

In July 2013, Jane's reported that the Iraqi Navy still had a strength of 3,600 personnel, including some 1,500 marines and had increased its equipment to 56 patrol craft of various sizes, 24 fast assault craft, and 3 offshore support vessels. These vessels began actively patrolling the al-Basra and Khawr al Amaya oil terminals as well as offshore oil platforms.⁷⁰⁶ The Navy is also pursuing a 26-15-4-2 acquisition program – the will give it a total of 26 Defender-class craft, 15 30-35 m craft, four 390-ton Fateh-class patrol ships and two 55-60 m offshore support vessels⁷⁰⁷

The exact holdings and order book of the Iraqi Navy are unclear. Jane's reported the following progress in Iraqi Naval modernization activities in its 2013 Sentinel report on Iraq:⁷⁰⁸

- Procurement of 26 patrol boats as part of a '26-15-4-2' acquisition program.
- Transfer of two Type 200 15 m inshore patrol craft, built in 1977-1981. The UAE also provided 24 fast assault boats.
- Plans for procurement of 15 30-35 meter craft and offshore support vessels through US Foreign Military Sales.
- Provision by the UAE of 24 Fast Assault Boats to patrol the rivers of southern Iraq and counter smuggling.
- Acquire two new Fast Sea Frames offshore support vessels (OSVs) from US-based RiverHawk in 2012: Al Basrah (OSV 401) and Al Fayhaa (OSV 402).
- Other new assets comprise 26 Defender 2710 fast response boats, 15 Swiftships-built
- 35 meter coastal patrol boats, and four Fincantieri-built Fateh-class 53 m patrol boats.
- Offshore support ship *Al-Shams* was reported in service in 2011.
- Delivery of the first of four new Fateh-class Saettia Mk 4 patrol ships from Italian shipbuilder Fincantieri in May 2009. The 53 meter, 390-ton *Fateh* is intended to become the flagship of the resurgent navy. The second – *Nasir* -- was delivered to the navy in October 2009. The final two vessels, *Majed* and *Shimookh*, were delivered in December 2009. The Fateh-class is based on the Italian Coast Guard's Diciotti-class, but instead

of a helicopter deck, the Iraqi ships have an open stern ramp for the launch and recovery of a 10 m high-speed interceptor. Each is equipped with an Oto Melara 30 mm turret gun and 30 mm automatic cannon.

- In October 2009, Swiftships Shipbuilders secured a contract for design and construction of nine patrol craft. In March 2011, the contract was amended to cover an additional three boats, with an option three more. The first vessel, P-301, carried out its first patrol in January 2011. The second and third ships were delivered in January 2011, and deliveries were completed in July 2013 with the activation and arrival of a seventh ship.
- Fifteen 34 meter P340 patrol craft are being acquired from Malaysian marine consultancy ISD and Associates. Each will have a 20 mm gun forward, a 12.5 mm machine gun and two GPMGs behind the bridge.
- Delivery of three Al-Uboor (Al Faw)-class patrol boats.
- Delivery of 10 7.7 meter Defender fast patrol boats by in mid- 2009 - providing the navy with 26 boats, completing the first phase of the 26-15-4-2 procurement plan.
- Possible order of two support ships, to be used for troop transport, interdiction tasks and patrol boat replenishment, with a ship's company of 26, plus accommodation for 14 fast attack boat (FAB) crew members and six divers, and seating for 40 troops.

Much is still undetermined regarding the future of US-Iraq maritime security ties. Like its air force, Iraq's navy remains underdeveloped and critically deficient compared to its neighbors. Budgetary issues are concerns for both the US and Iraq; however, the US willingness to deter Iran and secure the Gulf is constant. Furthermore, the fact that the maritime domain has seen far less militant activity than the land domain means that Iraqi naval capability will likely remain a low priority compared to ground force units for the foreseeable future.

As is the case with airpower, however, the US can provide significant naval aid to Iraq. The US Navy's ability to deploy out of installations in Bahrain. Ideally, Kuwait will allow Navy personnel to conduct joint training with their Iraqi counterparts despite the lack of a SOFA. Possible avenues for expanded naval cooperation and training include deployments of US Navy coastal patrol, riverine, and special warfare craft under the cognizance of the US Navy Maritime Civil Affairs and Security Training Command, which provides training and advisory packages for small-boat combat operations, port operations and security, and anti-terrorism and force-protection operations.⁷⁰⁹

US Navy Pacific Command's Cooperative Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT) exercises offer another model for maritime security cooperation with Iraq. These exercises focus on training in maritime security, visit board search and seizure operations (VBSS), and combined naval operations at sea.⁷¹⁰

The US Navy Special Warfare Command has created its own dedicated detachment for security force assistance with its Special Warfare Anchor Detachments, which provide regionally focused teams to partner with host-nation military units in a manner similar to US Army Special Forces teams.⁷¹¹ These units will be ideal for developing an Iraqi maritime and riverine special operations capability.

Military Training and Education

Military training and education are additional tools the US can use in exercising influence and improving Iraq's ability to achieve security and political stability. The 2013 report of the Congressional Research Service on engagement with Iraq notes that US efforts to provide effective training for Iraqi security forces along the Foreign Internal Defense model that was utilized until December, 2011, is hindered by the lack of a Status of Forces Agreement which is necessary for

the return of even small numbers of US advisors on a rotational basis.⁷¹² This places a heavy constraint on the level of tactical and operational military engagement that the US can pursue with Iraq.

The current Memorandum of Understanding between the two nations -- signed in December 2012 -- focused primarily on high-level exchanges and professional military education.⁷¹³ Indeed, the State Department reported that while just over \$40 million was spent on military engagement with Iraq in FY13, it was spent primarily on Foreign Military Sales, and International Military Education and Training programs that trained only 77 students.⁷¹⁴ While these activities are no doubt highly beneficial for the strategic relationship, they engage only small numbers of Iraqi personnel, and then only in educational rather than active training environments.

Much now depends on the Joint-Combined Education and Training missions designed to bring together key Iraqi units with specialized American trainers who can provide customized training packages required to improve Iraqi capabilities on a broad scale. This would also allow for US-Iraqi military engagement with a far greater number of Iraqi military personnel, allowing the US to extend training and influence over junior officers and senior enlisted personnel, and not just small numbers of mid-rank officers hand-picked to attend US military schools.

A possible solution to allow this -- without broaching the issue of a long term SOFA with Iraq - would be to engage in regular Joint Combined Education and Training missions at the King Abdullah II Special Operations Training Center (KASOTC) in Jordan, with Marine units operating from the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean, and as attached units in joint training with other Persian Gulf states.

Cooperation in Counter Terrorism

Iraq's problems in cooperating with the US remain serious, but the increasing levels of Sunni-extremist violence in Iraq in 2012 and early 2013 did lead the GoI to rethink some of its policies towards US military support. In March 2013, the *Wall Street Journal* reported that the CIA was taking over the leading role in training and supporting the Iraqi Counterterrorism Service, which will allow the US to get around the issue of the SOFA as it will be conducted under the CIA's covert action authorities rather than by the military.⁷¹⁵

In August 2013, Iraqi leadership began actively discussing the possibility of inviting the US military to support Iraqi counterterrorism efforts with advisors and even with targeted strikes from remotely piloted aircraft.⁷¹⁶ *Foreign Policy* magazine quoted Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari saying that Iraq would be interested in hosting US drones for kinetic strikes so to "target al-Qaeda and their bases" so long as they could do so "without collateral damage."⁷¹⁷ Iraqi Ambassador to the United States Lukman Faily was also quoted saying that "The reason we're now considering drone support is because we need to get better control of the sky so we can track and destroy al-Qaeda camps in the country."⁷¹⁸

As is described later, Maliki also visited the United States in November to seek weapons Iraq could use in dealing with Al Qaeda and other armed extremists. These included Hellfire missile and drones, and a request for attack helicopters.

This Iraqi need for US military assistance has increase sharply as a result of the AQ/ISIS gains in Anbar in late 2013, and may lead to a might lead to a significant increase in American military advisers to Iraq to help it in counterterrorism and counterinsurgency, as well as increased US support for training Iraqi forces in countries like Jordan. This would enable broader support to

more Iraqi units than is possible through the use of a small OSC-I and through CIA covert assistance. Former Ambassador to Iraq Ryan Crocker noted in an interview with *Defense One* that effective counterterrorism operations in Iraq,⁷¹⁹

Don't require Apache helicopters or lots of troops. But it does require good Special Forces and intelligence support. As David Petraeus and I discovered when we were in Baghdad, you can't achieve progress on the political front until you improve security. So priority number one should be working with the Iraqis to figure how Al Qaeda is moving men and material, what rat lines they are using, where their safe houses are and how we can penetrate its ranks. And then you have to go after them.

It was still unclear in early 2014, however, that PM Maliki wanted a larger US presence for counterterrorism support or would accept some form of SOFA. His focus remained on obtaining weapons he could use for to both suppress terrorism and control Iraqi Sunnis and other opposition, as well as the acquisition of high-end US weapon systems such as F-16s, AH-64 Apaches, and air defense systems.

As a result, his focus on new systems for “counterterrorism” owed as much to his search for power – and for Shi'ite dominance over Iraq's Sunnis and Kurds – as to any serious concern with real counterterrorism. As the Iraqi security operations in December 2013 discussed in earlier chapters made all too clear, any rise in his cooperation with the US was as much the result of his efforts to control the state as to deal with the growing threat from Al Qaeda and extremism.⁷²⁰

The Iraqi Police and Security Forces

The Ministry of the Interior, Iraqi paramilitary forces, and the Iraqi police forces continue to be a critical part of Iraq's counterterrorism and internal security forces, but are also the most corrupt and repressive element of Iraq's security forces. There is far less official reporting on such forces since 2011, but the 2013 edition of the *IISS Military Balance* reported that the Ministry of Interior Forces had a total authorized strength of 531,000 in early 2013, with 302,000 in the Iraqi Police Service), 44,000 in the paramilitary Iraqi Federal Police 44,000, 60,000 in Border Enforcement, and 95,000 in the Facilities Protection Service and 60,000 in the Oil Police – two sets of forces which were little more than security guards.

These forces are general far less effective than the regular Iraqi military in dealing with the threat of terrorism and extremist groups. They lack the proper leadership, training, and equipment and many tend to remain passive and stay in safe facilities or areas unless pushed hard to act, while others retreat or leave when they come under pressure. This has been a particular problem in the Mosul area, some areas near Baghdad, and particularly in Anbar.

When serious Sunni uprisings began in late December 2013, Prime Minister Maliki attempted to correct for his past repression in Ramadi, Fallujah, and other areas by withdrawing the army and leaving the police. The end result was that the security forces quickly collapsed, empowering Al Qaeda and other extremists and armed groups in the process, and Maliki quickly had to respond by trying to bring back the Army.⁷²¹

Even before the fighting in Anbar that began in December 2013, attacks on police stations in Fallujah, Ramadi, and in Rawa in West Anbar; attacks in the Al Malahima area of Anbar; another attack in the largely Sunni town of Tarmiya, north of Baghdad; and the deployment of ISIS fighters into the Abu Gharib area 22 kilometers south of Baghdad; all showed that the police and regular MoI security forces could not cope with trucks filled with armed Sunni fighters. The fact Maliki had also offered some concessions to Sunni protesters, and possible reforms to reforms to the anti-

terrorism laws also came too late to have an impact. Reuters reported that, “The governor of Anbar Ahmed Khalaf appealed to the Prime Minister to keep the army in Anbar because Al Qaeda fighters managed to enter on Wednesday and controlled some parts of the province.”⁷²²

US Role in Supporting the Iraqi Police Force and Ministry of Interior

Since 2003, the United States has spent approximately \$8 billion to train, staff, and equip Iraq’s police forces.⁷²³ However, the US now faces serious problems in supporting the Iraqi police force and Iraq’s Ministry of the Interior – where the analysis of Iraqi security and politics earlier in this report indicate that political divisions and corruption are now more the rule than the exception, the force is reverting to a passive, confessions-based force, and key supporting institution in the courts, legal, and detention systems present major problems. The Ministry of the Interior has also become steadily more political after the 2010 election and never eliminated serious problems with corruption, and the Prime Minister’s office and provincial power brokers also continued to bypass the formal command chain.

Until the collapse of the SFA negotiations, the US planned for the transfer of support to the MOI and various elements of the Iraq police from the Department of Defense to the Department of State once US combat operations halted in Iraq although this present major political problems in terms of Congressional funding, State was not staffed for the task, and virtually all of the personnel involved had to be contractors.

The Department of State launched a Police Development Program (PDP) on October 1, 2011, with over 100 senior trainers and advisors from various government and civilian agencies with the goal of supporting the scale of effort shown in **Figure 41**. The program included working directly with senior Iraqi Interior Ministry and police officials to increase a variety of capabilities, ranging from forensics to explosive ordinance disposal. The program was designed on a “hub and spoke” model, with 350 advisors located at major training hubs in Baghdad, Basra, and Erbil, overseeing satellite centers in each of their respective regions.

According to the July, 2012 SIGIR report on the PDP,⁷²⁴

The advisors would travel to approximately 50 spoke sites across the provinces, conducting programs at Iraqi training academies and other key police facilities. DoS-provided secure ground transportation would enable travel to approximately half of the sites, while dedicated air transportation would support the remaining sites. However, establishing credible oversight, management, and transparency continues to be the broad, primary objective. These US advisors conducted baseline assessments of Iraqi capabilities as of December 2011.⁷²⁵

The State effort soon had to be downsized to a total of 115 rather than 350 personnel. Moreover, SIGIR reported in October 2011 that State lacked a viable assessment of Iraqi police force capabilities, has not drafted a detailed plan providing specifics on what is to be accomplished, or outlined costs and performance outcomes. In addition, it stated that only 12% of current spending plans would directly assist the Iraqi police and State had yet to secure commitments from Iraq regarding its planned financial commitments to police programs.⁷²⁶

The State Department has continued to try to create the bilateral relationships outlined under the Strategic Framework Agreement, but GAO and other reporting quoted indicates that it still lacks clear parameters, personnel requirements, or funding to be affective on its own. State’s mission will rely on consulates in Basra and Irbil, though embassy branch offices in Mosul and Kirkuk

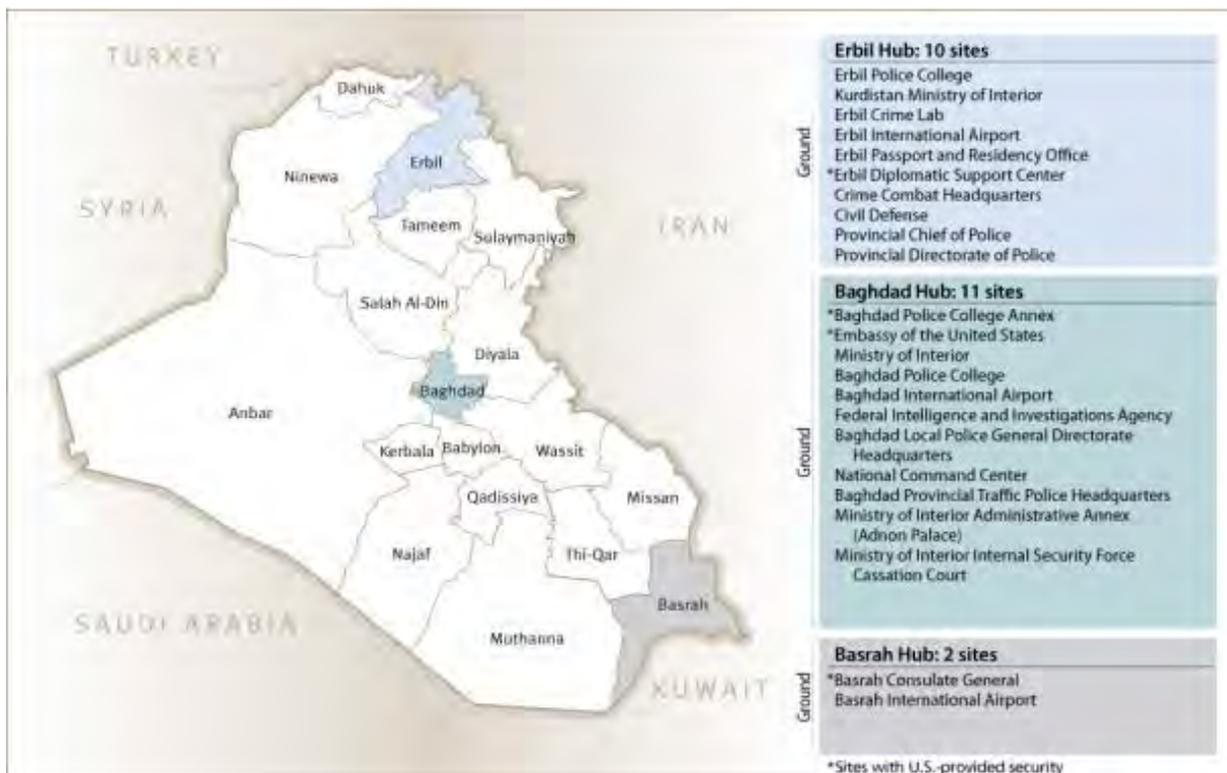
were cut due to budget constraints. In addition, the ten OSC-I sites will be responsible for most military-to-military cooperation.

State's heavy reliance on private security contractors has also created another set of issues and their use has been a sensitive issue among Iraqis that has led to a steady down scaling of the State effort. The July 2011 SIGIR Report noted that a system for monitoring serious incidents involving private security contractors was still absent. SIGIR reported that this will likely remain unchanged through 2011 and the State Department would not provide SIGIR any information on how they would likely govern PSCs.⁷²⁷

SIGIR's follow-on report of July 2012 noted that the PDP was still plagued by a lack of Iraqi buy-in, and that without more extensive support it is unlikely to succeed.⁷²⁸ It also noted that these issues had resulted in some \$200 million being wasted on PDP infrastructure that went unused due to the lack of an Iraqi commitment and to the failure by both sides to properly assess the roles and capabilities of Iraqi police forces before beginning the program. Continuing violence in Iraq, as well as budgetary concerns about continued US funding of the program, led DoS to slow implementation of the PDP by adopting a phased approach, and only beginning training at some 23 of the 50 planned spoke sites.⁷²⁹

The Congressional Research Service also reported in its analysis of the State Department FY2014 Foreign Operations request that the PDP has been terminated completely, which largely accounts for the significant drop in funding to Iraq from \$1.2 billion in FY2012 to \$500 million in FY2014.⁷³⁰ The last advisors were withdrawn from Iraq in March 2013.⁷³¹

Figure 41: Police Development Program Sites as of May 2012



Source: SIGIR: Lack of Iraqi Support and Security Problems Raise Questions about the Continued Viability of the Program, July 30, 2012, 4, <http://www.sigir.mil/files/audits/12-020.pdf>.

Iraqi Federal Police Service (IFP)

The success of future US efforts, and of Iraqi efforts to create effective paramilitary forces, will be critical to bring stability and security to Iraq. The Iraqi Federal Police Service (IFP) is the key paramilitary element of Iraq's security services and is composed of specialized elements for counter-insurgency operations. It was formerly known as the Iraqi National Police (INP). The name was changed in August 2009 because of major sectarian abuses by a largely Shi'ite force, and the force became far more national while US forces stayed in country. It has since reverted in part to being a Shi'ite dominated force under the control of the Prime Minister.

Its forces are equipped with body armor, small-arms, medium machine guns and rocket-propelled grenades. There are motorized units with some light armor, as well as pick-up trucks and sports utility vehicles (SUVs). It has teams specializing in disposing of explosive devices.

Jane's reports that recent times the IFP was organized into four divisions and 17 brigades, including a mechanized brigade, and other elements, including a sustainment brigade. Both Jane's and others sources indicate that the 1st and 2nd Motorized Division, were headquartered in Baghdad were created out of the former Commando Division and the Public Order Division. The IFP's 3rd Motorized Division had its headquarters in Mosul and the 4th Motorized Division was is headquartered in Basra.

A Baghdad-based 1st IFP Mechanized Brigade was under the IFP command headquarters. It had begun operating in early 2005 and had a special troop's battalion and four mechanized battalions. Its equipment included M117 armored security vehicles; armored personnel carriers derived from the BTR-80 and South African-manufactured Reva APCs.

One key problem, however, is that a number of reports indicate that the IFP has become a steadily more Shi'ite dominated force and one that Maliki has used against Sunnis that are not tied to AQI/ISIS. As is the case with this and all the other elements of the police and security forces, efforts to strengthen it have to betide to a less repressive treatment of the Sunnis and more respect for human rights and the rule of law.

The State Department Iraq Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2013, (issued February 2014), made the following comments about the Iraqi police:⁷³²

Police throughout the country continued to use abusive and coerced confessions as methods of investigation. The IKR antiterrorist law allows abusive interrogation under certain conditions, and such practices reportedly occurred in some detention facilities of the Asayish and of the Kurdistan regional government intelligence services, the Kurdistan Democratic Party's (KDP) Parastin, and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan's (PUK) Zanyari.

Local and international human rights organizations as well as government officials documented credible cases of torture and abuse in Ministry of Interior and to a lesser extent in Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Defense, and Kurdistan regional government detention facilities, including Interior and Justice Ministry facilities that held women.

As in previous years, credible accounts of abuse and torture during arrest and investigation, in pretrial detention, and after conviction, particularly by police and army, were common. According to former prisoners, detainees, and human rights groups, methods of torture and abuse included putting victims in stress positions, beatings, broken fingers, suffocation, burning, removing fingernails, suspending victims from the ceiling, overextending victims' spines, beatings on the soles of the feet with plastic and metal rods, forcing victims to drink large quantities of water while preventing urination, sexual assault, denial of medical treatment, and death threats. There were also reports during the year of detainees dying of "electric shock"

torture while under interrogation, and local human rights organizations posted unconfirmed videos of electric shock torture in detention centers in Muthanna Province.

There were indications that government authorities initiated some investigations of security forces accused of committing human rights abuses, although authorities did not make public any investigation reports. The Human Rights Ministry reported that it received and investigated numerous complaints of torture inside prisons and detention centers throughout the country during the year and forwarded the complaints to its “prisons team” to follow up. The ministry noted in its May report that in some cases investigations by the prisons team confirmed severe human rights abuses and a “systematic use of torture.”

Federal Intelligence and Investigative Agency (FIIA)

Jane’s reports that the Federal Intelligence and Investigative Agency (FIIA) is, “the leading intelligence/investigative agency of the Ministry of the Interior and has been described as an Iraqi version of the FBI.” It is a largely Shi’ite force operating under the direction of the Prime Minister and was formerly known as the National Intelligence and Investigative Agency (NIIA). It was renamed in November 2011.

It has a national role in criminal intelligence analysis and investigations and providing national intelligence support to the police, as well as in counter-insurgency role and in dealing with crimes like the kidnapping and assassination attempts on senior Iraqi officials.

It had more than 9,000 personnel in 2007 but its current manning is unclear, Jane’s reports that it seemed to have an organization comprising 15 provincial bureaus, 56 district offices and 13 Point of Entry (PoE) offices in 2013, and has a large new national headquarters and a National Training Centre opened in Baghdad. It also has a Cyber Crimes Unit, and the agency’s Technical Affairs General Directorate has branches for wire-tapping and intercepting cell phone calls. Jane’s reports its head is Major General Hussein Ali Kamal who had taken courses at the FBI Academy in Quantico, Virginia in Counter-Terrorism, Organized Crime and Money Laundering.

Iraqi Police Service

Jane’s reported in August 2013 that the regular Iraqi Police Service had a total of 303,000 personnel. The force was organized largely into provincial police forces and included patrol police, traffic police, police station staff, and several special units. The IPS role is to enforce the rule of law, provide local security. There was a central Criminal Evidence Directorate, and the General Directorate of Crime Affairs. A national Iraqi Highway Patrol was established in 2004 to provide law enforcement and security for Iraq’s highways and major roadways, but was later merged with the provincial police departments. The police also had some 30 Company Special Weapons and Tactics (CSWAT) units in the provinces.

These forces became increasingly politicized at the provincial and local levels after the departure of US combat forces at the end of 2011. Positions and promotions were often based on local, national, and sectarian alignments rather than competence and increase sold. Some elements were highly corrupt, and others were relatively passive – effectively staying in station and collecting their pay. The regular police had a nominal eight weeks of training, but large elements still lacked effective real world training for their role. Moreover, police activity often favor local power brokers or those who could pay for investigations and police activity.

The State Department Iraq Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2013 (issued February 2014) made the following comments about mass detentions by the Iraqi police and security forces:⁷³³

According to HRW, prior to the Shia holiday of Ashura on November 14, the government detained and held thousands of Sunni males in “precautionary detention” aimed at curbing violent attacks during the holiday, previous years’ commemorations of which had been targeted by AQI. HRW stated that dozens of witnesses reported that security forces, including special weapons and tactics (SWAT) and Counterterrorism Service (CTS) agents, raided homes and arrested individuals en masse in Baghdad’s Dora and Adhamiyya neighborhoods in the week prior to Ashura. A resident of Dora told HRW that, on November 7, “a huge number” of SWAT forces dressed in black surrounded the neighborhood at 10 a.m., raided “every single house,” and arrested at least 50 men in an operation that lasted until 5 p.m. CTS officials denied raiding every house and maintained that the operation targeted specific operatives who intended to attack events commemorating Ashura.

Iraqi Correctional Service

The Iraqi Correctional Service has the role of ensuring prison security and the welfare of prisoners. Its reputation is poor and its effectiveness is limited.

Border Guards

James’s estimates that Iraq’s Department of Border Enforcement (DBE) and border guards had a total authorized strength of 39,330 in 2013. It is charged with monitoring and controlling the movement of persons and goods to, from and across the borders of Iraq, and this includes some counterterrorism roles. It has 12 brigades and 42 battalions, covering five regions.

- Border Region 1: Turkey/Iran border
- Border Region 2: Jordan, Syria, western Saudi border
- Border Region 3: Iranian border
- Border Region 4: Kuwait, Iran border
- Border Region 5: Saudi border

It mans over 270 border posts and forts and controls 17-21 land points of entry into Iraq. These points of entry are equipped maintain Z Backscatter Van (ZBV) X-ray equipment. The force has been steadily strengthened along the Syria border since the Syrian civil war began, but has does far more to try to control the flow of Sunnis than Shi’ites.

The are some high quality elements of the DBE, but it has been increasingly politicized and brought under the de facto control of the Prime Minister’s office. Corruption, political influence and the sale of positions and promotions is a problem. It also lacks the mobility, intelligence support, and firepower to adequate secure Iraq’s borders – particularly its border with Syria.

Iraqi Coast Guard

The Iraqi Coast Guard, with an authorized strength of somewhere around 500, It is subordinate to the Ministry of the Interior, and Jane’s report in August 23013 that it was commanded by Brigadier General Hakim Jassam. Its main role is to patrol the Shatt al Arab waterway and waterways running to Basra. One of its roles is to combat smuggling, but its effectiveness remains unclear. Efforts have been made in the past to merge it with the Iraqi Navy.

General Commission for Customs

The General Commission for Customs (GCC) is controlled by the Ministry of Finance, and Jane’s estimate it has some 41,000 personnel. It is supposed to assist in collecting customs revenue and preventing smuggling, importation of illegal drugs and obscene material, and controlling the import/export of currency.

The service is organized on the basis of three territorial areas -middle area around Baghdad; north area, around Mosul; and south area around Basra. Its effectiveness and professional integrity seem to be limited. Customs present major problems in both efficiency and corruption, and many source report bribes are necessary to get timely action.

Facilities Protection Service

The Facilities Protection Service (FPS) is a relatively low grade force charged with providing armed, trained and uniformed security guards to ministry and governorate offices, government infrastructure, and fixed sites. Most units are subordinate to the individual ministries whose facilities they protect on a day to day basis, but are under the formal control of the interior ministry. Their normal strength is around 100,000 personnel.

The FPS has moderate effectiveness, but security guards have obvious limits in country with Iraq's problem with terrorism and violent sectarian and ethnic divisions.

Oil Police

The oil police is charged with protecting Iraq's oil infrastructure, and guarding oil fields, refineries, pipelines and convoys. It originally was under the oil ministry but was placed under the direct control of the interior ministry in 2008. It had some 28,700 at the time US forces left Iraq.

This force is more effective than the FPS and has an Intelligence Department and three regional commands – Central (Baghdad); Northern (Kirkuk); Mid-Euphrates (Amara) and Southern (Basra). Its effectiveness varies by area, but it does seem to work relatively effectively with the military and other MOI forces in at least some areas.

Electrical Installation Police

This force had the role of guarding Iraq's electrical supply system and infrastructure. Its current status is unclear.

Railway Police

This force is a dedicated force to guard the Iraqi railway system. Its status is also unclear.

Iraqi Intelligence Services

The US does still provide active – if quiet – support to the several different elements of Iraqi intelligence. US experts report that some had an Iranian presence or are under Iranian influence but there is no way to validate such reports or put them into perspective. It is clear that such service now report largely to the Prime minister and have been used to spy on or repress peaceful opposition as well as violent security threats.

The Iraqi National Intelligence Service (INIS)

The Iraqi National Intelligence Service (INIS) was formally established in April 2004. Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) administrator nominally operates under the Interior Ministry of the Iraqi, but is effectively controlled by the office of the Prime Minister. It was established with the help of the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and Jane's reports that it had roughly 1,000 members by 2007 and was looking to expand to around 3,000. Junior and mid-level officers from Saddam's disbanded security apparatus were recruited to the service. By 2009, it had t 6,000 personnel. Its current strength is unclear.

Its initial leader was Mohammed Abdullah Shahwani - a Turkoman – who had a strained relationship with certain Shia members of the Iraqi government and who left after clashes with Maliki in 2009. He was succeeded by General Zuheir Fadel, a Maliki loyalist. .

Ministry of National Security (MoNS)

The MoNS, was created in 2006 at a time when the CIA still had close ties to Iraqi Intelligence. It since became a Shi'ite controlled service. The first director was Sheerwan al-Waeli, who held the position of Minister of State for National Security. Jane's indicates received training in Iran. Estimates of the strength of the agency varied in 2007 from 1,200 to 5,500.

By late 2008, it carried out liaison functions with the Iraqi intelligence and security services on behalf of the Prime Minister, and Jane's reported that intelligence cells had been set up with the participation of the MoNS, the INIS, and the intelligence services of the interior ministry

Jane's also notes that al-Waeli said in an in an interview in September 2011, that the liaison between the different Iraqi security services had resulted in the apprehension of dozens of Al Qaeda activists and the foiling of several, and claimed that the MoNS was the only branch of Iraqi intelligence that did not receive support from the US or other countries.

Office of Information and Security and Directorate General for Intelligence and Security (DGIS)

Maliki has further strengthened his control over Iraqi intelligence by establishing the Office of Information and Security that reports to the prime minister, and the Directorate General for Intelligence and Security (DGIS), which is part of the Ministry of Defense. The DGIS effectively reports to Maliki in his de facto position as Iraq's real Minister of Defense. It has its own headquarters at a new headquarters in Baghdad and Jane's reports that its missions include the gathering and dissemination of intelligence, the development of imagery and mapping capabilities, and supporting the security forces with Arabic-language maps and imagery products.

In addition, as indicated above, the Oil Police has an intelligence department. The Ministry of Health has an intelligence section, and there is an intelligence department attached to universities. There is a police intelligence unit specializing in tourism and antiquities.

Peshmerga Forces and Intelligence services of Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG)

It is important to note that Iraq also has a separate set of forces called the Peshmerga under the control of Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). The various military and paramilitary elements of this force are overseen by the KRG's Ministry of Peshmerga Affairs, which acts as the KRG's ministry of defense. They combine the past militias of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) -- located in the provinces of Arbil and Dahuk - and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) located in As Sulaymaniyah province. The KDP and PUK have feuded in the past but now seem to cooperate.

These Peshmerga forces have elements that participated in operations with the central government forces in the past, but have not merged with them as planned. They now operate independently in the provinces of Sulaymaniyah, Arbil and Dahuk.

The prospects for any future merger also became far more doubtful in June 2013, when some 1,000 career ethnic Kurdish soldiers defected from the 16th Armored Brigade of the regular Iraqi Army,

and refused orders to support a military operation against Sunnis in Sulaiman Bek and requested to join the KRG's forces. Sulaiman Bek is part of the area where the Iraqi central government and the KRG have disputed claims. At the same time, the Iraqi Federal Government has resisted KRG efforts to have Peshmerga forces funded out of central government funds.

The current strength of Peshmerga forces is unclear. As past reporting by SIGIR and Jane's has shown, estimates of the strength of Peshmerga forces have varied widely. US estimates that the fighting strength of the Peshmerga at around 70,000 to 80,000 in 2011, but if all security and police forces are counted, some other estimates go as high 190,000.

Jane's reports that the PUK created a 1,000 man Counter Terrorism Group (CTG) based in As Sulaymaniyah-based with US that led by Lahur Talibani, nephew of the Iraqi president. There also are a KDP's intelligence service called the Parastin, and a PUK intelligence agency, known as Zanyari. Efforts to merge the two under the title of the Kurdistan Security Service do not seem to have succeeded, but they do seem to cooperate.

Sunni Awakening Councils (Sons of Iraq - SOI)

Iraq has already come to regret Prime Minister Maliki's failure to integrate the Son of Iraq and members of the Awakening into Iraq's security forces – as well as his discrimination against other Sunni elements in the security forces. The Sunni Awakening Councils militias, or Sons of Iraq (SOI), were once a major paramilitary force that could have done much to stabilize Iraq and defeat Al Qaeda and other extremist groups if they had not been put aside or marginalized by the Maliki government.

By late 2013, many elements had aligned themselves with Al Qaeda while others became Sunni militias with few ties or loyalty to the Shi'ite dominated central government. Iraqi Sunnis report that many have since been pushed out of their positions, marginalized or not been paid.

Counterterrorism experts warned that this was becoming a major and growing Iraqi security problem by mid-2012, and Maliki may have come to understand just how destructive his actions were.⁷³⁴ Kenneth Katzman of the Congressional Research Service issued a report in December 2013, which indicated that Maliki might have at least tried to correct the situation as it became clear he was creating a crisis in dealing with Iraq's Sunnis:⁷³⁵

One Sunni grievance aside from those discussed above has been the slow pace with which the Maliki government implemented its pledge to fully integrate the approximately 100,000 "Sons of Iraq" fighters. Also known as "Awakening" fighters, these are former insurgents who in 2006 began cooperating with U.S. forces against AQ-I/ISIS. The Iraqi government later promised them integration into the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) or government jobs. To date, about 70,000 have been integrated into the ISF or given civilian government jobs, while 30,000-40,000 continue to man checkpoints in Sunni areas and are paid about \$300 per month by the government. In part to preserve the loyalty of the Sons of Iraq as an opponent—rather than supporter—of AQ-I/ISIS, in early 2013 the government increased their salaries by about 66% to \$500 per month. The effort appears to have succeeded somewhat, in that few Sons of Iraq fighters have joined AQ-I/ISIS or other Sunni insurgent groups since Sunni anti-government activities escalated.

Any such actions by Maliki came far too late to be effective, however, and became almost meaningless when his efforts to use Iraqi Army forces to suppress Sunni protests, close a protest camp near Ramadi, and attack a senior Iraqi Sunni politician triggered the crisis in Anbar at the end of December and open the way for an AQI/ISIS takeover of Fallujah and Ramadi.

Once that happened, Maliki was forced to try to win the loyalty of the use Sunni tribal and other Sunni local forces he had largely alienated and weakened to the point where less than 1,000 AQI/ISIS fighters could take two cities and become a major problem in the West.

The Iraqi Army was not able to retake Fallujah and Ramadi after AQI/ISIS took control of major parts of both cities in late December 2013 without the kind of fight that would have caused major civilian casualties and collateral damage and risked an open split with Iraq's Sunnis. It was clear that a straight up fight between the Army and AQI/ISIS would do major damage to both cities and kill or displace large numbers of civilians.

Maliki did threaten to use the Army and Air Force in this way if local Sunni forces did not drive AQI/ISIS out of both cities. Partly at US urging, however, Maliki soon went shifted his position. He made major payments to the tribes and fighters that still opposed AQI/ISIS, and used Iraqi Special Forces and the Iraqi Air Force to work with Sunni tribal forces in joint operations. By the 19th of January, a mix of Sunni fighters and Iraqi military forces attempted to drive AQI/ISIS and its supporters out of both cities. The initial attempts failed, and the Sunni fighters stated that AQI/ISIS had a major advantage in heavy machine guns and mortars while they were largely limited to small arms.

The willingness of the Maliki government to use Sunni fighters was, however, a major step forward and one that might mean better future treatment of the Sunnis if the government could free the cities and defeat AQI/ISIS forces in Sunni areas. Media reporting indicated that a mix of helicopter gunships, pro-government tribesmen, Iraqi Special Forces and police had made some initial gains in Ramadi, although they could not hold onto their gains.

Other reporting indicated that Maliki had agreed elements of Sunni forces could get better arms and training in Jordan.⁷³⁶ Maliki still denied that his government was responsible for the growing sectarian divisions in Iraq, and said that Sunni violence had been exported to Iraq by another Arab country, and that, ““Al-Qaeda is the one using sectarian issues... The purpose is to drag Sunnis and Shiites into fighting with each other.” He also said, however, that he was cooperating with Sunni leaders in Anbar and that, ““We are going to use the sons of these provinces to take care of security in their provinces. To do that, trust definitely needs to be rebuilt.”⁷³⁷

According to reports in the *New York Times*, Maliki promised tribal fighters permanent jobs, as well as pensions and death benefits for their families if they die on the battlefield. He has hinted at amnesty for any tribal fighters with a history of armed resistance against the government. The times reported that Maliki had begun to reach out to the Sunni tribes in the summer of 2013 and had rapidly increased his support after AQI/ISIS seized the city of Fallujah and parts of Ramadi, the provincial capital at the end of December 2013.⁷³⁸

The key issued remained as to how far Maliki would go and if his actions came too late. The *Times* also quoted Osama al-Nujaifi, the speaker of Parliament and one of the most important Sunni politicians in Iraq, as saying, “From 2006 to 2008, tribesmen were able to beat Al Qaeda with the cooperation of American forces and the support of the Iraqi government... After gaining victory over Al Qaeda, those tribesmen were rewarded with the cutting of their salaries, with assassination and displacement. (Sunni fighters) were left alone in the street facing revenge from Al Qaeda and neglect by the government. Paying and arming Sunnis to secure their own homes and territory may not be a road to any lasting form of progress.”⁷³⁹

An article in the *Washington Post* by Loveday Morris noted just how alienated some Sunnis had become.⁷⁴⁰ Morris reported that Maliki had said in January that said there was no limit on arming and equipping tribal fighters, and a government spokesman --Ali al-Moussawi -- had said the Iraqi cabinet has approved \$3.4 million for payments to tribesmen and more than \$17 million for infrastructure projects in Anbar: “We are supplying them with more weapons and whatever they need...They will be treated like any troop in the Iraqi army. They will have salaries and pensions and any right a troop in the Iraqi army has.” He noted that the combination of Sunni and central government fighters had made gains in /Ramadi in the third week of January and that the Sunni fighters had been given some 3,000 Russian machine guns and more than 2,000 Kalashnikovs.⁷⁴¹

Morris also, however, quoted Dhafer al-Ani -- a spokesman for the Sunni Mutahidun political party -- as saying that, “No one can face the terrorists without the help of the Sunnis. The Americans couldn’t eliminate them without the Sunnis, and nor can the government,” and as saying the government had broken such promises before and left the Sawa or Sons, “stuck in the middle between al-Qaeda’s hammer and Maliki’s neglect...We reject our sons being rentals. They are used like a disposal tissue, to wipe up the problems and then thrown away...”Maliki has pushed the Sunnis so hard he’s lost them.”⁷⁴²

He reported that Ahmed Abu Risha, a former Sahwa leader, was again fighting on the central governments side, but had said that he had only gotten arms, not money, for his support. He also quoted Risah as saying that, ““We still obviously have our issues with the government...But at the moment, al-Qaeda is the biggest problem.”⁷⁴³

In a telling warning of what might happen, Morris quote an unnamed army officer as saying that, “We are not fighting shoulder to shoulder...They don’t attack us, we don’t attack them and they just provide security in their areas.” He also quoted a former Iraqi official involved in Iraq’s reconciliation efforts as saying that, “It’s too late; the Sahwa is dead... pouring money and weapons at the problem is not enough to build trust.”⁷⁴⁴

It was also clear that the Sunni tribes in the West remained divided. Morris quoted Sheikh Rafai Mishhin al-Jumaili, a leader of the Jumaili tribe, as saying his said his men with fighting government forces near Fallujah and part of the an alliance of tribesmen and AQI/ISIS. Jumaili’s father had been a leader of the Sahwa in the Garma area of Fallujah, and had fought along with US troops. In the interview, however, he accused the Maliki government of being anti-Sunni and treating all rebel tribesmen as al-Qaeda to justify attacks on them, “If the army moves forward to kill you, are you going to receive him with flowers?” No. We are going to defend ourselves.” As for the Sunnis who supported the government, they were turncoats: “They are serving personal interests.”⁷⁴⁵

The Iraqi Security Forces as the Threat Rather than the Solution

As the discussion of the Maliki government’s abuses of human rights, the rule of law, and the security services in Chapter V has shown, the US cannot decouple aid to the Iraqi Security forces from the fact that they have often contributed to Iraq’s rising violence. Since US forces left, there have been many cases where Iraqi forces have used extreme and unnecessary violence and repression, and where policing reverted to the passive, confessions-based system that existed before the invasion.

There are reports that Shi’ite militias have been involved in anti-Sunni operations by the regular Iraqi security forces. As cited earlier, there are extensive reports of violence against civilians –

including human rights reporting by the US State Department and UN. In addition, Human Rights Watch issued a detailed report in February 2014 – *No One is Safe: Abuses of Women in Iraq's Criminal Justice System*. This report provides a grim description of broad problems in terms of arbitrary arrests, torture, and misuse of the justice system.⁷⁴⁶

Additional problems are caused by the conduct of Iraqi courts, by a lack of clear laws and regulations, and by the lack of competence in the various protection forces in the Ministry of Interior that are supposed to provide day-to-day security for commercial operations. The end result is a failed justice system tied to major human rights abuses.

Like reporting by the UN, Amnesty International, and the Crisis Group; The US State Department annual human rights report for 2013, issued in February 2014, painted a grim picture of the role of both the Iraqi Security Forces and every element of the Iraqi justice system in dealing with legitimate opposition and ordinary Iraqi citizens. It noted that,⁷⁴⁷

The Iraqi Security Force consists of internal security forces administratively organized within the Interior Ministry, external security forces under the control of the Defense Ministry, and the CTS. Interior Ministry responsibilities include domestic law enforcement and maintenance of order relying on the Federal Police, Provincial Police, Facilities Protection Service, and Department of Border Enforcement. Conventional military forces under the Defense Ministry are responsible for external defense; however, they often work with elements of the Interior Ministry to carry out counterterrorism operations and internal security. The CTS reports directly to the prime minister and oversees the Counterterrorism Command, an organization that includes the three Special Operations Forces brigades.

The government rarely investigated reported human rights violations committed by Iraqi Security Force personnel and rarely punished perpetrators. There were continued accounts of torture and abuse throughout the country in Interior Ministry police stations and Defense Ministry facilities, reportedly primarily during detainee interrogations. The Interior Ministry did not release the number of officers punished during the year, and there were no known court convictions for abuse. The government did not take widespread action to reform security forces to improve human rights protection.

Problems persisted with the police regarding sectarian divisions, corruption, ties to tribes, and unwillingness to serve outside the areas from which they were recruited. The army and federal police recruited nationwide and deployed soldiers and police to various areas, reducing the likelihood of corruption related to personal ties to tribes or militants.

In some instances security forces failed to prevent or respond to societal violence. For example, security forces did not take sufficient measures to respond to threats of violence, some of which were carried out, against perceived lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals despite the public posting of targeted individuals' names.

The two main Kurdish political parties, the KDP and PUK, maintained their own security apparatuses organized along military lines and dating from the struggle against the regime of Saddam Hussein and earlier. There were approximately 22 Peshmerga (Kurdish militia) brigades, all originally under the control of the two main Kurdish political parties. Under the constitution the KRG has the right to maintain regional guard brigades, supported financially by the central government but under KRG control. Accordingly, the KRG established a Ministry of Peshmerga Affairs. Four additional regional guard brigades were formed during the year, bringing the number of regional guard brigades under the authority of the Ministry of Peshmerga Affairs to 12, although most units maintained allegiance to either the KDP or the PUK. The central government did not financially support to Peshmerga units not a part of the regional guard brigades.

KRG security forces and intelligence services detained suspects in KRG-controlled areas. The poorly defined administrative boundaries between the IKR and the rest of the country resulted in continuing confusion about the jurisdiction of the security forces and the courts. The KDP maintained its own internal security unit, the Asayish, and its own intelligence service, the Parastin. The PUK maintained its own internal security unit, also known as the Asayish, and its own intelligence service, the Zanyari. The PUK and the KDP took some steps during the year toward unifying their internal and external security organizations, but these

organizations remained separate in practice and effectively controlled by political leaders through political party channels.

Article 136(b) of the criminal procedure code, which previously gave ministers the opportunity to review and prevent the execution of arrest warrants issued by judges presiding over criminal investigations of employees in their ministries, was repealed in June 2011. While this repeal was viewed as a dramatic improvement in fighting corruption when it was enacted, at year's end the repeal had not led to significant changes in the number and pattern of arrests.

...The constitution prohibits "unlawful detention" and mandates that authorities submit preliminary documents to a competent judge within 24 hours of arrest, a period that can be extended by one day. In practice this period was often extended to 72 hours. For offenses punishable by death, authorities can legally detain the defendant for as long as necessary to complete the judicial process.

The government arbitrarily detained individuals and often did not inform detainees promptly of charges against them. The government periodically released detainees, usually after concluding that it had insufficient evidence for the courts to convict them. The law allows release on bond for criminal (but not security) detainees; however, detainees were rarely considered for release on bail. The KRG internal security units held some suspects incommunicado without an arrest warrant and transported detainees to undisclosed detention facilities.

The law provides for judges to appoint paid counsel for the indigent, and they did so in practice. However, attorneys appointed to represent detainees frequently complained that poor access to their clients after their appointment hampered adequate attorney-client consultation.

Arbitrary Arrest: Police and army personnel frequently arrested and detained individuals without judicial approval, although there were no reliable statistics available regarding the number of such acts. Authorities often failed to notify family members of the arrest or location of detention, resulting in incommunicado detention. For example, the Ninewa Bar Association reported that in December 2011, army personnel detained three lawyers without judicial approval for attempting to represent individuals charged with terrorism; the association staged a sit-in to protest the arbitrary arrest. Two of the lawyers were released the same day. The Supreme Criminal Court ordered that the third lawyer be released three months after his arrest. All three lawyers reported being tortured while in custody.

Pretrial Detention: Pretrial detainees represented one-half of the total population of those incarcerated in Justice Ministry ICS facilities, according to ICS data. By law other ministries, including the Defense Ministry, Interior Ministry, and Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, may hold pretrial detainees. In October the government reported that 13,247 pretrial detainees were in ICS custody, the Defense Ministry held 296 pretrial detainees, and the Labor and Social Affairs Ministry held 487. The Interior Ministry held 11,600 pretrial detainees, according to the Ministry of Human Rights. Lengthy detentions without due process and without judicial action were a systemic problem. The lack of judicial review resulted from a number of factors that included large numbers of detainees, undocumented detentions, slow processing of criminal investigations, an insufficient number of judges and trained judicial personnel, authorities' inability or reluctance to utilize bail or other conditions of release, lack of information sharing, bribery, and corruption. Overcrowding of pretrial detainees remained a problem in many detention facilities. There were allegations of detention beyond judicial release dates as well as unlawful releases.

Many detainees were held for months or years after arrest and detention, sometimes incommunicado, without access to defense counsel or without being formally charged or brought before a judge within the legally mandated period. For example, in March, during a routine visit to a detention center in Kirkuk, a detainee told representatives of an international organization that he had been detained for 4½ years under terrorism charges and had not yet been brought to trial.

...The law provides for an independent judiciary; however, certain articles restricted independence. Although the judicial system was credited with efforts to maintain independence, the security situation in the country, as well as the political history of the country, left the judiciary weak and dependent on other parts of the government. Court orders, with the exception of those concerning national security, were sometimes not respected due to widespread corruption. For example, the COR's Integrity Committee reported that court-issued detainee-release orders were not consistently enforced, and that MOI and MOJ employees demanded payment from detainees in order to be released.

Threats and killings by sectarian, tribal, extremist, and criminal elements impaired judicial independence in many places. Judges and their family members frequently faced death threats and attacks. For example, on June 30, unidentified gunmen using machine guns shot and killed Judge Abdul Lattif Mohammed, chief of the Ninewa Criminal Court, while he was driving near Mosul; his driver was also injured in the attack. On July 22, the AQI announced a new operation specifically targeting judges and judicial investigators. During the year eight judges were killed, and there were 10 other unsuccessful attempts.

Judges were generally vulnerable to intimidation and violence. Some judges presiding over criminal cases at the trial level or on appeal to the Court of Cassation reportedly were influenced by corruption or intimidation.

...There were multiple reports that government officials conducted extrajudicial killings, but confirmation was rare. Members of the security forces tortured detainees to death, according to reports from multiple government officials; one government official told the press that families sometimes received the bodies of their relatives who died in government custody only days after their arrest. Official investigations were infrequent, and the outcomes of investigations were often unpublished, unknown, or incomplete, and rarely credible in high-profile cases.

.... A December 2011 arrest warrant was issued for Vice President Tariq al-Hashimi on terrorism charges. Local television stations broadcast alleged confessions of Hashimi's bodyguards who were arrested and detained. Hashimi insisted that the charges were politically motivated and that the evidence was fabricated. Human rights groups noted that broadcasting the confessions violated the principle of a fair trial for Hashimi and his guards; some of the bodyguards stated that they were tortured (see section 1.a.).

On September 9, a criminal court found Hashimi guilty on two of the three counts of murder and sentenced him to death by hanging, along with his son-in-law and chief of staff Ahmed al-Ubaidi. Hashimi was found guilty on additional charges and given multiple death sentences on November 1, November 4, and December 13. Before the trial began, Hashimi first fled to the IKR and then to Turkey. Hashimi and his supporters claimed that the trial and the verdicts were politically motivated and the judicial process flawed. At year's end Hashimi told the press he planned to appeal his case to the UN or to another international human rights body. Neither Hashimi nor his supporters planned to launch an appeals process through the Iraqi courts, claiming a lack of confidence in the judicial system's independence.

Similar factors operated in the IKR to obscure a reliable assessment concerning possible political prisoners and detainees. For example, on May 8, hundreds of Kurdish demonstrators massed in front of the parliament building and the Zagros TV station in Erbil to protest an article they deemed offensive to the Muslim faith, which was written by Norwegian Kurdish expatriate writer Halmat Goran and published on May 2 in a local magazine, *Chrpa*. Authorities arrested a number of demonstrators as well as several religious leaders affiliated with the Kurdistan Islamic Group and detained them for four weeks without charges before release.

... Vice President Tariq al-Hashimi's bodyguard, Amir Sarbut Zaidan al-Batawi, died in custody three months after being arrested in December 2011 on terrorism charges. After receiving his body on March 20, Batawi's family reported that the body displayed signs of torture, including burn marks and various wounds. Hashimi and many of his supporters claimed that Batawi and others were tortured to force confessions implicating Hashimi and to coerce statements linking other political figures to the Hashimi case (see section 1.e.). Authorities denied allegations of torture and stated that Batawi died of kidney failure and other complications after refusing treatment while in detention.

Violence by illegal armed groups against the general population, security forces, government officials, and civilian infrastructure remained a significant problem during the year, and bombings, executions, and killings were regular occurrences throughout the country. On July 21, the AQI announced a new offensive to recover previous strongholds. Two days later, a wave of 28 coordinated attacks across 18 cities killed 113 persons and injured more than 250. The deadliest attack occurred in Taji in Baghdad Province, where a series of roadside bombs, a car bomb, and a suicide bombing targeting emergency personnel killed 42 persons.

Overall casualty estimates of violence during the year varied. For example, Agence France-Presse (AFP) reported that according to the Iraqi government 1,358 civilians, 440 police officers, and 376 soldiers were killed during the year, compared with 1,578 civilians, 609 police officers, and 458 soldiers in 2011. Direct monitoring by the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) indicated that at least 3,238 civilians were killed during the year. In 2011 UNAMI reported 2,771 civilian deaths.

At year's end the government had not made public the results of an investigation into the military's deadly April 2011 incursion into Camp Ashraf in Diyala Province, despite assurances that it would do so.

There were accounts of attacks by persons believed to have falsely presented themselves as ISF personnel. For example, on March 5, dozens of gunmen wearing military uniforms, carrying forged arrest warrants, and riding in vehicles similar to ones used by security officials, killed 26 police officers in a series of targeted killings and attacks on police checkpoints in Haditha, approximately 150 miles northwest of Baghdad.

There were also regular incidents of the AQI's targeting Sunni tribal leaders and Sunnis cooperating with the government, including against the Sons of Iraq, also known as the Sahwa (Awakening) movement. On November 28 in Tarmiyah, in Baghdad Province, gunmen broke into the house of a Sahwa member and killed him and six members of his family, including three young children, while they were sleeping. According to AFP, at least 25 members of the Sahwa movement were killed throughout the country between July and the end of December, and at least another 13 were injured.

In Erbil, Sulaymaniyah, and Dahuk, the three Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) provinces referred to as the Iraqi Kurdistan Region (IKR), there were press reports and credible accounts that KRG security forces committed arbitrary or unlawful killings. On February 16, an Arab resident of Kirkuk was kidnapped, and his body was found the following day. Arab residents of Kirkuk and local media claimed that elements of the Kurdish internal security organization, the Asayish, were responsible for the kidnapping and killing. Kurdish authorities denied the accusations.

There were significantly fewer reports of sectarian violence in the IKR than elsewhere in the country, although some members of religious minority groups reported sectarian discrimination and harassment by the KRG, including threats of physical harm.

On several occasions throughout the year, the Turkish government used military aircraft to attack areas where the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), a terrorist organization, was active in the north; at times these attacks caused civilian casualties. For example, on November 7, local officials claimed that a missile fired from a Turkish warplane killed two Iraqis and injured another two near the village of Qala-Dizza in Sulaymaniyah. Turkey denied responsibility for the deaths.

Iranian forces regularly bombarded Kurdish areas along the Iranian-Iraqi border, targeting the Free Life Party of Kurdistan, the Iranian affiliate of the PKK. Iranian shelling resulted in civilian casualties. For example, on September 1, Iranian shelling near the town of Sidakan killed one woman and injured two others.

Spillover from the conflict in Syria affected Iraq. For example, on September 8, four rockets fired from Syria landed in a residential area in the town of al-Qaim near the border and killed a five-year-old girl.

... Local and international human rights organizations and government officials continued to document credible cases of torture and abuse in Ministry of Interior (MOI), Ministry of Justice (MOJ), and Ministry of Defense (MOD) detention facilities, including MOI and MOJ facilities where women were held, as well as in some KRG security forces' detention facilities. For example, the COR Human Rights Committee documented cases of torture, as well as poor prison conditions and a lack of due process, during a June 25 inspection of the MOJ's Taji Prison in Baghdad Province. The international NGO Human Rights Watch (HRW) also contended that widespread torture continued, including in detention facilities under the control of the prime minister's counterterrorism service and the army's 54th and 56th brigades. Local NGOs also made similar accusations about these units.

As in previous years, credible accounts of abuse and torture during arrest and investigation, in pretrial detention, and after conviction, particularly by police and army, were common. According to former prisoners, detainees, and human rights groups, methods of torture and abuse included stress positions, beatings, broken fingers, electric shocks, suffocation, burning, removal of fingernails, suspension from the ceiling, overextending the spine, beatings on the soles of the feet with plastic and metal rods, forcing victims to drink large quantities of water then preventing urination, sexual assault, denial of medical treatment, and death threats.

... In 2010 the local and international media reported the discovery of a secret detention facility in the International Zone operated by security forces under control of the Prime Minister's Office containing more than 400 Sunni detainees, of whom more than 100 were reportedly tortured. Although the government announced the closure of the detention facility in March 2011, HRW on May 18 reported that the facility had

remained in use as late as March 2012. Government officials reported that the facility was used to hold detainees alleged to be Baath Party and Saddam Hussein loyalists in late October 2011, and then during another round of arrests before the March 29 Arab League Summit in Baghdad, as well as pretrial detainees during the year (see section 1.d.). The government contended that the facility remained closed at the end of the year, although there were reports that the facility remained available for use.

There were some indications that authorities began some administrative disciplinary action against security forces accused of having committed human rights abuses as well as judicial action in some torture cases. Specifically, the MOHR received and investigated 500 complaints of torture inside prisons and detention centers throughout the country during the year and had transferred all of the cases to the judiciary by year's end. The MOHR reported that arrest warrants were issued for perpetrators in some cases, but there were no known judicial developments in the cases at year's end.

Apart from the creation and transfer of some dossiers for possible action by the judiciary, there were no known developments in cases of torture and related incidents of abusive treatment or punishment reported in 2011.

Five separate entities--the Ministries of Justice, Interior, Defense, Labor, and Social Affairs, plus the Prime Minister's Counterterrorism Service--operated prisons, detention centers, and temporary holding facilities. Conditions at some facilities were harsh and life threatening, and there were unexplained deaths, riots, hunger strikes, and escapes. The AQI claimed responsibility for a September 27 prison break from the MOI-operated Tasfirat Prison in Tikrit, in Salah ad-Din Province, in which 102 prisoners, of 303 total inmates, escaped and 16 police officers and seven inmates were killed. Of the escaped prisoners, 47 were affiliated with the AQI and had been sentenced to death. According to government officials, the escape resulted from collusion between prison officials and inmates. At year's end 68 former inmates remained at large. After an initial investigation, the Salah ad-Din police chief was fired.

There were also documented cases of abuse and torture in some facilities. Government officials and local and international human rights organizations alleged that both the government and the KRG operated secret prisons and detention facilities.

It is unclear that these problems in the ISF can be reversed unless a truly functional national government can be created, and it is all too clear that they cannot be quickly reversed. Far too many elements suffer from control by the Prime Minister's office that ties them to Shi'ite factions, and has made them instruments of political repression that violate the basic elements of the rule of law and breed Sunni extremism and terrorism

Many – especially in the police – suffer from limited effectiveness, waste, and corruption. A July 2012 study by the Office of the Special Investigator for Iraq Reconstruction on problems with the Department of State's Iraq Police Development Program (PDP) revealed many existing challenges. Massive waste continued to plague Iraqi police. SIGIR reports that upwards of \$206 million were wasted on construction of PDP facilities where the MOI “decided to terminate training.”⁷⁴⁸

State Department Iraq Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2013 (issued February 2014)

The State Department Country Report on Human Rights Practices issued in 2104 outlined many of the challenges Iraq faced, including human rights abuses carried out by its state security forces.⁷⁴⁹

On the Iraqi Security Forces:

Authorities maintained effective control over the security forces. Security forces and armed militias committed serious human rights abuses as rising levels of terrorist violence, corruption, and organizational dysfunction undermined effective protection of human rights.

Severe human rights problems persisted. The three most important were: politically motivated sectarian and

ethnic killings, including by the resurgent terrorist network led by al-Qaeda and its affiliate, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), formerly known as al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI); torture and abuses by government actors and illegal armed groups; and a lack of governmental transparency, exacerbated by widespread corruption at all levels of government and society.

During the year the following other significant human rights problems were also reported: disappearances; harsh and life-threatening conditions in detention and prison facilities; arbitrary arrest and lengthy pretrial detention, sometimes incommunicado; continued impunity for security forces; denial of fair public trials; insufficient judicial institutional capacity; ineffective implementation of civil judicial procedures and remedies; delays in resolving property restitution claims; arbitrary interference with privacy and home; limits on freedoms of speech, press, and assembly; violence against and harassment of journalists; limits on religious freedom due to extremist threats and violence; restrictions on freedom of movement; large numbers of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees; discrimination against and societal abuses of women and ethnic, religious, and racial minorities; trafficking in persons; societal discrimination and violence against individuals based on perceived sexual orientation and gender identity; and limited exercise of labor rights.

A culture of impunity largely protected members of the security services, as well as those elsewhere in the government, from investigation and successful prosecution for human rights violations. Corruption among officials across government agencies was widespread and contributed to significant human rights abuses...

On Casualty Levels:

Estimates varied regarding the number of fatalities resulting from arbitrary and unlawful government action and from terrorist, sectarian, and ethnic violence. Civilian fatalities more than doubled from 2012 totals; police and security forces were also increasingly targeted by terrorist groups. Agence France-Presse, relying on government data, reported that 5,137 civilians, 754 police officers, 447 soldiers, and 226 militants were killed during the year, compared with 1,358 civilians, 440 police officers, and 376 soldiers in 2012. Monitoring by the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), which included nonofficial sources, indicated at least 7,818 civilian fatalities during the year, compared with 3,238 in 2012.

Security forces reportedly fired on and killed protesters. The outcomes of infrequent official investigations were often unpublished, unknown, or incomplete and rarely approached credibility in high-profile cases.

For example, early in the morning on April 23, the country's Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) teams, elements of the 12th Division of the Iraqi Army, and the Federal Police stormed a sit-in camp of Sunni antigovernment protesters in the northern city of Hawija, reportedly in response to an attack on a nearby police checkpoint. Press reports and UN officials estimated that 44 civilians and three soldiers died in ensuing clashes between the security forces and demonstrators...

On Reporting from International Human Rights Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs):

The international human rights nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) Amnesty International (AI) and Human Rights Watch (HRW) concluded that security officials used excessive and lethal force. The government convened investigatory panels to assess the violence in Hawija, as it did in prior Iraqi Security Forces killings of protesters in Fallujah and Mosul in January and March. The government did not make public the results of any investigations, and the judiciary had brought no charges by year's end. The country's independent High Commission for Human Rights (HCHR) investigated the events and condemned the loss of life. Prime Minister Maliki said the dead were "martyrs" and ordered the establishment of a special commission to provide compensation to the families of the victims, but there was no information available to confirm that the families had received compensation by year's end.

On May 3, according to HRW, the Federal Police's "Belt of Ninewa" Brigade, a unit of the Third Division, arrested 60 individuals, including at least four minors, without warrants south of Mosul as part of a crackdown on Sunni protesters. On May 11, the bodies of five of the arrested individuals, including that of a 15-year-old boy, were found in a field less than two miles from East Mustantiq village. According to HRW, witnesses said the bodies had multiple gunshot wounds...

Options for Policy

It is not yet clear what role the problems in Iraq's mix of security services played in uprisings in Anbar, and AQI/ISIS's gains in Fallujah and Ramadi in late December 2012. Maliki's systematic marginalization of legitimate Sunni political opposition, and mix of repression followed by efforts at conciliation in dealing with Sunni protests during 2012-2013, were policies that challenged any security force. So was his decision to withdraw the army and rely on the police when protests exploded into a violent crisis late December that created a power vacuum at the worst possible moment.

What is clear is that the US, other Western states, and Arab states face severe limits to their ability to influence the future direction and capability of Iraq's complex mix of security forces.

The failure of the Obama Administration and the Maliki government to agree on keeping adequate levels of US troops in Iraq after December 31, 2011 dealt a major blow to both the prospects for effective Iraqi force development and to America's interests in the region that Iraq will now have great difficulty in overcoming. It left Iraqi police and military without the level of training and support they needed, and allowed subversive elements to resume destabilizing sectarian violence that has risen to levels not seen since the height of the insurgency.⁷⁵⁰

The situation has since been then made far worse by actions by the Maliki government that included steadily increasing levels of political interference, discrimination against Sunnis, role of local power brokers interfering in ISF operations, internal corruption, sale of positions and promotions, reversion to a confessions-based approach to policing, lack of effective courts and adequate detention facilities, long- tensions between the police and the courts, and ethnic issues between Arab and Kurd.

The US and outside powers cannot help Iraq deal with any of these issues unless that Iraqi government both seeks such aid and acts upon it, and it remains questionable whether the Maliki government or any successor will seek to make serious changes in this situation.

The Maliki Visit to Washington in October 2013

These problems were all too clear by the fall of 2013. As has been discussed earlier, Prime Minister Maliki visited Washington in late October and early November for discussions with the Obama Administration on the future of the US-Iraqi relationship. The overt focus of these discussions was an increase in military aid and weapons sales to Iraq to help counter the rise in violence in Iraq spilling over from the Syrian civil war.

A somewhat Panglossian statement issued by a Senior Administration Official in the Office of the Spokesperson in the Department of State via Teleconference on October 30, 2013 put Maliki's visit in the following terms – summarizing US official goals in dealing with Iraq in the process:⁷⁵¹

We're focused on five core areas in Iraq, and these are areas that are tied to our own core U.S. interests. And first is to promote a unified and federal Iraq, and that is really focused on making sure that Iraq's territorial integrity remains intact, that the three principal communities are generally working together. And a lot of that effort is focused on Arab-Kurd tensions that tend to rise up every now and then. So number one, a unified and federal Iraq.

And number two is promoting the further increase in production and export of Iraq's oil resources. And that is critical both for Iraq's ability to withstand the many pressures that it is under, and it is also essential to global economic stability as well as our own U.S. vital interests both in the region and globally.

Third is to counter the reemergence of al-Qaeda in Iraq. And al-Qaeda in Iraq is no longer known as al-Qaeda in Iraq. They're now the Islamic State of Iraq in the Levant. They have the same leader they've had since about 2006. That's Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, who we believe is now based in Syria. And this is now really a transnational threat network.

Fourth is to facilitate Iraq's regional integration, and there's been a great deal of effort there over the last six months, which I'll discuss briefly.

And then finally is to support Iraq's overall democratic development and with a key focus there on elections. They just had provincial elections over the last few months, and then they're going to – they're scheduled to have national elections in April of 2014. And I can talk about that.

...The number one – there was really agreement in terms of the overall vision for the visit in terms of strengthening the overall strategic partnership. This is something we talk about all the time. But that means developing ties in a number of areas, of not only security but also economics, diplomacy, culture, trade, education. So there was a great deal of discussion on how we can enhance those areas that we're deeply focused on.

Second was really this emerging threat of the Islamic State of Iraq in the Levant and how we can combat that network and help the Iraqis against it and working together. And to do that it's not only a security focus, and the Iraqis are actually quite – they went into some detail about the fact that we've done this in the past and that this requires a multipronged effort – meaning security, political, and economic lines of operation – and the Iraqis have discussed that in some detail. So I'll leave it to them throughout the visit to kind of discuss what they intend to do and how within that our mutual efforts with them. And obviously, weapons sales is one piece of this, but it's only a minor piece.

So that was kind of the overall focus. We have this al-Qaeda reemergence. How do we go about it? How do we go about it in terms of security cooperation? And how do the Iraqis go about it in terms of political reconciliation initiatives and also economic outreach?

If I can just give an update on the five areas of which I kind of briefly said our policy's focused on, because I just think it's useful to kind of put this whole situation into a broader lens...

First, in terms of a unified and federal Iraq, if you go back to six months when the Secretary was in Iraq, the Kurds were boycotting the central government, the Peshmerga forces were lined up against the Iraqi army on an area known as the green line of disputed territories, and at one point actually exchanged fire with one another.

If you look at the situation now over the last six months, Prime Minister Maliki has visited Erbil and President Barzani of the Iraqi Kurdistan Region visited Baghdad for the first time really in two and half years. The relationship between Baghdad and Erbil has really made a great deal of progress over the last six months, and in particular, we're seeing increased security cooperation in some of the disputed areas, which is really critical to isolating the al-Qaeda networks which cooperate there. We're also, of course, engaged in detailed discussions with them about revenue sharing and other issues which remain the focus of both the Prime Minister but also the Kurdish leadership in the North.

On the oil question, despite terrorist hits to pipelines, despite weather problems, and despite a number of platforms coming off due to maintenance and other things, Iraqi production remains around 3 million barrels a day. We expect that to increase over the next couple months, but most importantly we're focused with the Iraqis on a longer term vision for their strategic infrastructure. And the problems that plague Iraq are not problems that developed over the last year or 10 years, there are problems that really go back hundreds of years. And it's not only in Iraq, but regionally. And the Iraqis are focused on how they can use their strategic infrastructure to align these many disparate interests into a stable, unified, and federal Iraq. And that has to do with utilizing their strategic infrastructure in a way that takes oil not only, for example, from Basra in the south through the Gulf, but also with a pipeline from Basra to Haditha, which is in Anbar province where there is a refinery, and then from Haditha through Jordan to the Red Sea.

So we've been in detailed discussions with the Jordanians and the Iraqis on that, and then also extending that pipeline network up through Turkey to the Mediterranean and having the Kurdish pipelines plug into that system in an overall, coherent way. That's a long-term focus, but we've also made some progress on that over the last six months.

In terms of regional integration, if you look at the relationship between Baghdad and Ankara six months ago 'til now, you'll see for the first time really in some time we've had an exchange of high-level visits between Baghdad and Ankara, and Iraq's Foreign Minister just visited Ankara last week, I believe. And I'm happy to talk about that relationship.

Kuwait. Iraq this summer finally settled issues with Kuwait that have been outstanding since the first Gulf War, and that really was quite a breakthrough and required a lot of political risk both from the Iraqi leadership and also the Kuwaiti leadership. But that was really significant. And then last week, the Iraqi cabinet approved for the first time a – Kuwaiti consulates in Basra and Erbil, and anyone who has followed the Iraq-Kuwait relationship really all the way back to 1991, I think, can recognize the significance of that.

The relationship with Jordan, as I said, has increasingly strengthened, and the Iraqis are also reaching out to UAE and some other Gulf states, which I'm happy to talk about.

Democratic trajectory, Iraq did have provincial elections over the last six months. The elections were delayed in Anbar and Nineveh provinces. We were very vocal about that. We did not think the delay was a good idea. The elections then did happen. You have new provincial councils formed in Anbar and Nineveh provinces. And in fact, Prime Minister Maliki just recently met with the Governor of Anbar province to discuss some efforts in terms of counterterrorism and trying to isolate the increasingly strengthening al-Qaeda networks in Anbar province.

In terms of democratic trajectory, as I said, the Iraqis are heading towards national elections by – they've set a date – no later than the end of April 2014. I just got back from Baghdad; I was there this weekend. They're now negotiating the kind of final clauses on the election law to govern those elections, but the date has been set, the money has been transferred to the Iraqi Independent Electoral Commission, and we are working as appropriate, as we do, with that commission, also the United Nations to make sure those elections are technically prepared and that they happen on time and lead to a genuine and credible result.

So that leads really to the final point, which is countering the reemergence of al-Qaeda and the reemergence of the Islamic State of Iraq in the Levant. This is really a major and increasing threat to Iraq's stability, its increasing threat to our regional partners, and it's an increasing threat to us. As I said, the leader of the Islamic State of Iraq in the Levant is a globally designated terrorist under our laws; there's a \$10 million bounty for anyone who leads – gives information leading to his arrest or capture. So this is something we're focused on really quite directly with the Iraqis and will really be a focus of the conversation over the course of the week.

I don't have to go through the violence statistics, but just last month alone we had 40 – actually, 38 suicide bombers. Nearly all these suicide bombers – actually, all of them – we think come from the Islamic State of the Iraq in the Levant network. They're mostly targeting Shia civilians. They're targeting playgrounds, weddings, funerals, and this is having a devastating psychological impact, as you can imagine, on the country.

So the Prime Minister and his delegation are intensely focused on this problem. We in turn are intensely focused on how to encourage and then to combat it in an effective way with an overall strategic approach, which we found at the breakfast they were very much prepared to discuss. So with that, I think I'll turn it over to [Moderator] and for questions.

In reality, Iraq's internal security was the key focus of Maliki's visit, and PM Maliki was said to be particularly concerned by the fact that Anbar Province had become a haven for the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Shams, where they have camps, training facilities, and staging areas that the Iraqi Army is unable to target.⁷⁵² He reportedly requested AH-64 Apache helicopters in order to enable air-mobile assaults into ISIS strongholds, as well as support from US military advisers and intelligence officers to help train and coordinate Iraqi counterterrorism forces.⁷⁵³

By the time Maliki arrived in late October, it was all too clear that his actions were a serious a threat to Iraqi stability that greatly aided Al Qaeda and other violent extremists. He had repeatedly used Iraqi Security forces to repress legitimate opposition as well as terrorists. In fact, the same senior Obama Administration official noted later that much of the discussions between US and Iraqi leaders centered on developing a strategic approach to counterterrorism which would draw

moderate Sunni tribes closer to the national government and “making sure that they have the mass of the population on their side.”⁷⁵⁴

Other US officials commented on background that the Sunni Sahwa militias that drove the “Anbar Awakening” in 2006-2007 had come under heavy attack from ISIS throughout 2013.⁷⁵⁵ It was clear that if the Maliki Government would exacerbate sectarian tensions and strengthen Sunni extremist groups if it failed to reach out to the Sahwa and other moderate Sunnis.

Members of the US Congress expressed their concerns as well. A number of leading US policymakers expressed concern that PM Maliki’s sectarian feuding was a key source of Iraq’s internal violence, and that the US should be cautious about extending further military aid. These concerns were based on the perception that the Maliki government is exclusively favoring Shi’ite groups and marginalizing Sunni moderates. They are also based on the reality that US support for the Iraqi security forces can only be effective—in dealing with the rising level of internal violence in Iraq, if Iraq’s leaders address its far deeper internal problems.

In an open letter to President Obama published the week of PM Maliki’s visit, Senators John McCain, Carl Levin, James Inhofe, Robert Menendez, Bob Corker, and Lindsey Graham, stated that “Prime Minister Maliki’s mismanagement of Iraqi politics is contributing to the recent surge in violence.”⁷⁵⁶ These Senators further stated that they expected to see “more evidence from Prime Minister Maliki that U.S. security assistance and arms sales are part of a comprehensive Iraqi strategy that addresses the political sources of current violence” if they were to support increased arms sales and counterterrorism assistance to the Maliki government.⁷⁵⁷

The December 2013 Crisis

As has been explained throughout this analysis, the December 2013 crisis in Iraq showed that such concerns were all too valid. The actions of the Iraq government following Maliki’s visit to Washington often did much to create terrorism as to defeat it.⁷⁵⁸ It also was apparent by late December 2013 that the US arms transfers the Maliki had asked for during his November visits to Washington could be used in Iraq’s ethnic and sectarian power struggles.

The US delivered 75 Hellfire missiles at precisely the time Iraqi Security Forces had committed abuses that had led to massive protests in Anbar and led the Sunni ministers and member of the Majlis to consider resigning.⁷⁵⁹ These deliveries were scarcely a sign that US arms sales could produce a more stable Iraq, particularly after new reports emerged during the fighting in early January 2014 that Iraq was conducting air attacks in Ramadi and Fallujah that seemed to have uncertain targeting and that the Iraqi Army was shelling civilian areas.⁷⁶⁰ The also announced that Iraq had carried out air attacks in Sunni cities that killed some 25 AQI fighters in one such attack – claimed that would have been far more credible if the Iraqi Air force had had anything approaching a credible targeting capability.⁷⁶¹

The end result left the US with unpleasant choices, and ones where it emphasized dealing with the immediate threat posed by AQI. Secretary of State John Kerry initially reacted to AQI’s seizure of much of Fallujah and growing ability to exploit Sunni anger against the Maliki regime by stating on January 5, 2013 that,⁷⁶²

We are very, very concerned about the efforts of al-Qaeda and the Islamic State of Iraq in the Levant, which is affiliated with al-Qaeda, who are trying to assert their authority not just in Iraq, but in Syria... These are the most dangerous players in that region. Their barbarism against the civilians in Ramadi and Fallujah and against Iraqi security forces is on display for everyone in the world to see.”

We will stand with the government of Iraq and with others who will push back against their efforts to destabilize... We are going to do everything that is possible. I will not go into the details. We are not contemplating putting boots on the ground... This is a fight that belongs to the Iraqis. That is exactly what the president and the world decided some time ago when we left Iraq, so we are not obviously contemplating returning. We are not contemplating putting boots on the ground. This is their fight. ... We will help them in their fight, but this fight, in the end, they will have to win and I am confident they can."⁷⁶³

Kerry confronted the reality that the US had to deal with Iraq on the basis of choosing the least bad alternatives. There was no near-term prospect for a more effective government or for national reconciliation. The best of the bad options at a moment of crisis may well have been to offer limited aid. It is hard to think of US actions that could have been more of disaster than provoking Sunni and other Iraqi resistance by attempting to reintroduce US troops.

The same motives led the US to notify Congress in January that it wanted to sell Iraq a total of 500 more AGM-114K/R Hellfire missiles, to work with Jordan to step up the training of Iraq forces, and to quite add a number of US Special Forces advisors. Iraqi forces had not been able to drive al-Qaeda-linked militants out of Ramadi and Fallujah, and Baghdad was dealing with attacks like a night prison break, car bombings and mortar fire.⁷⁶⁴

It is equally hard to think of US action that could do more damage than backing Maliki without regard to his search for power, repression and misuse of the Iraqi security forces, and exploitation of Iraq's sectarian divisions between Shi'ite and Sunni. It is clear that any longer-term success must be linked to serious efforts to make Maliki and his successor to move towards national conciliation and the creation of a real unity government. It is not an argument against such arms transfers to Iraq, a strong OSC-I, or aid in legitimate counterterrorism (and now, possibly counterinsurgency). The Obama Administration did seem to recognize this point as it dealt with the ongoing crisis. A readout of a phone call between Deputy National Security Advisor Blinken's and Iraqi National Security Advisor Faleh al-Fayyad stated that,⁷⁶⁵

Deputy National Security Advisor Blinken spoke with Iraqi National Security Advisor Faleh al-Fayyad today. Blinken expressed the United States' support for ongoing operations by the Iraqi Security Forces in coordination with local and tribal movements in Anbar province to combat the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). Fayyad affirmed the Iraqi government's commitment to work cooperatively with local leaders and communities in Anbar province, as well as national leaders from all political blocs, to isolate ISIL from the population and respond to the urgent needs of the Iraqi people in areas affected by terrorism. Both confirmed the strong U.S.-Iraq security partnership under the Strategic Framework Agreement, and the need for greater cooperation among Iraq's neighboring countries to combat the regional terrorist threat. Senior officials from the White House, the State Department, and the United States Embassy in Baghdad remain in regular communication with a wide range of Iraqi officials to support ongoing efforts against ISIL, and to encourage coordination between Iraqi Security Forces and the people they serve.

Choosing the Least Bad Option

The obvious problem with the least bad option is that it is still a bad option. However, there are severe limits to what the US can do. Maliki will not compromise his own power or survival willingly, and Shi'ite and Sunni factions seem unwilling to compromise at a level that can produce an effective national government. Baghdad does not need -- or get -- serious US aid money, and can always play Iran off against the US. Iraq has many other sources of army and the US does not have major leverage in using arms transfers and advisory/intelligence aid in counterinsurgency and building up Iraq's regular forces.

As Prime Minister Maliki's October 2013 visit to Washington made clear, US support of Iraq's security efforts is one of the only areas where the US retains major leverage in dealing with Iraq

and countering both AQI and Iranian influence. As **Figures 35** and **Figure 36** have shown, Iraq does need major deliveries of advanced combat equipment some country if it is to have any serious defense capabilities against Iran, and it is far from clear that Iraqi Arab Shi'ites want an accommodation with Iran that leaves Iraq as weak as it is today.

The new Iraqi orders of US arms announced in November, and the further sales and deliveries it announced in January 2014, show some elements of a meaningful Iraqi-US strategic partnership may still be possible. A major IMET effort could supplement these sales, and possibly a US military or contract support effort in country -- although the problems in security and immunity would have to find some quiet solution.

Nevertheless, arms and stronger Iraqi security forces are no substitute for Iraqi political unity, reconciliation, and proper restraint in the use of force. As is the case throughout the region, the US may have to choose arms sales and military aid as the least bad alternative in dealing with Iraq's present government, but the US should stop endorsing Maliki and praising a level of Iraqi progress and democracy that simply does not exist. It needs to be far more careful to ensure that US arms transfers and aid are tied to Iraq's use of force against real threat and not its people, that they are used to try to influence Iraq's leaders to deal with its deeper problems and that Iran does not gain access to advanced US equipment -- a problem that has already led to Iranian inspection of US sales to Iraq.

At a minimum, the US and its Western and Arab allies must do what they can to ensure that the Maliki government does not use US and other sources of weapons against its legitimate Sunni and Shi'ite opposition, the Kurds, and above all against peaceful Sunni demonstrators. This can be a major challenge given the current size of the US military advisory group in Iraq, and the pressures on Maliki or any future Shi'ite leader that does not create a true national government. It also means actively competing with Russia and China on relatively unfavorable terms unless the US can reduce the long delays in the approval of US sales -- a failure in US national security efforts that has resisted more than 30 years of effort at reform and change.

The US seemed to clearly recognize these issues in reacting to events in Iraq in early 2014. As has been described in Chapter VIII, Brent McGurk, the Deputy Assistant for Iran and Iraq, Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, testified on the situation in Iraq to the House Foreign Affairs Committee on February 5, 2014. He not only provided the provided the first detailed official US view of what had happened, and of AQI/ISIS's actions in perspective relative to both the Maliki government and other violent factions, but made the US view on aiding Iraq's counter insurgency efforts clear and tied them directly to Iraqi government efforts to reduce Sunni grievances and restore national unity.⁷⁶⁶

Political and economic initiatives are necessary for defeating a network like ISIL. But they are not sufficient. From our own experience, we know that while success is impossible without mobilizing the population, such popular mobilization will not last absent focused and persistent security operations. The tribes will fight, but they must be confident that they are going to win and be rewarded when the fighting is over -- not left to the mercy of ISIL reprisals. For this to happen, ISIL networks must be constantly pressured, and their safe havens destroyed.

Consistent with ISIL's rise last summer, a series of armed camps -- staging areas, and training grounds -- were spotted in western Iraq. The existence of these camps demonstrated a shortfall in the capacity of the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF). Even where camps could be located, through persistent ISF reconnaissance platforms, such as manned King Air platforms, they lacked the ability to target effectively, thereby providing ISIL safe haven just miles from populated areas.

Iraq's lack of armored helicopters was a glaring example. Iraqi pilots, over the course of 2013, often flew thin-skinned helicopters towards ISIL camps defended by PKC machine guns and anti-aircraft platforms. The result was helicopters shot up and crews (many of whom we had trained) suffering grievous wounds. This situation was not sustainable, and the GOI requested our urgent assistance.

I want to thank this Committee, in particular, for working so closely with us over the past six months to approve the Apache helicopter lease and sale through our Foreign Military Sales program. While this is not an immediate remedy to the current problem, they will provide the ISF with the most effective platform possible for denying ISIL a safe haven in the remote western deserts of Iraq. They will also ensure that we can provide effective oversight on the end use of attack helicopter systems, as well as influencing planning and operations.

Similarly, the Iraqis have recently proven effective at deploying Hellfire missiles against remote ISIL targets from a Caravan aircraft. The ISF have three Caravans equipped to launch Hellfire strikes, but overall supply of Hellfire missiles was not adequate to the threat and number of targets they had located and surveyed. Again, thanks to close coordination with this Committee in recent months, this situation has begun to change. We delivered 75 Hellfire missiles in December, and have notified Congress of a potential sale of up to 500 more. Our objective is to ensure that ISIL can never again gain safe haven in western Iraq to train, stage, and plan.

Consistent with this strategy, we will deliver 10 Scan Eagle surveillance UAVs this spring, and 48 Raven UAVs later this year, all of which, when used in combination with other platforms, can provide regular surveillance of the Jazeera region and the Iraq-Syria border. As Director of National Intelligence Clapper noted in recent testimony before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, the "greater two way flow of Sunni extremists between Syria and Iraq" has a direct bearing on ISIL's ability to conduct high-profile attacks in Iraq. To be successful, thus, a long-term strategy must focus on security and surveillance in these

Finally, we have increased bilateral and regional training opportunities for Iraqi counterterrorism (CT) units, and expedited deliveries of key CT-related equipment for Iraq's highest-end and most disciplined units. U.S. trainers with the Embassy's Office of Security Cooperation are also conducting non-operational training with these high-end Iraqi operators, and Iraq and Jordan have discussed the possibility of advanced training for Iraqi forces in Jordan. We fully support this initiative.

All of this assistance comes in the context of the holistic strategy discussed above, short of which, long-term stability will not be possible. This was a point General Austin pressed home with Prime Minister Maliki and other key leaders in a visit to Baghdad last week. Security, economics, and politics, must be fused together.

Vital U.S. interests are at stake in Iraq. While my testimony today has focused on the threat from ISIL, the issues of oil, regional stability, and Iranian influence, are also central to our policy during this pivotal new year. I look forward to working closely with this Committee to ensure that we are doing all we can to protect and advance U.S. interests month-to-month.

At the same time, outside analysts and media need to be more realistic and objective in evaluating the fact there is only so much the Administration and Congress can do. Sending in US forces would mean taking sides in what threatens to become a far more intense Sunni vs. Shi'ite civil conflict. Providing counterterrorism aid without tight controls on the weapons involved would enable the Maliki government to use them against the Iraqi people.

These risks were so serious that Iraq's Sunni Deputy Prime Minister Saleh Mutlaq asked the US administration to halt weapons sales to the government in Baghdad in the midst of the January 2014 crisis with AQI, ISIS, and hired an influential lobbyist to try to stop the delivery of the US weapons to Baghdad. The president of the KRG, Massoud Barzani, also expressed his fears about the sale of the US weapons to Iraq, and both Kurds and Sunni political figures accuse Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of potentially using them to enforce an increasingly authoritarian rule.⁷⁶⁷

The Administration clearly realized these risks in making its initial response to the crisis that began in December 2013. Sending in a few precision-guided Hellfire missiles with limited lethality and

value only against point targets -- plus some limited-performance reconnaissance drones that left the Maliki government dependent on broader and quieter US intelligence aid – was such an approach. So was trying to find ways a US advisory team could control later transfers of systems like the AH-64 – weapons that could only be delivered and operated months after the December/January crisis peaked, as well as sending in small advisory teams whose mission was focused as much on the causes of terrorism as on counterterrorism.

The US government faced – and faces -- the dilemma that cannot stand by and let AQI/ISIS gain more power, and has to provide some aid in counterterrorism. It also has to deal with the reality that Iraq can buy from Europe, Russia, China and other state, and that Iran is another arms supplier. This latter risk became all too clear in January 2014, when the Iranian ambassador to Iraq -- Muhammad Majid al-Sheikh -- announced that, “Iraq has signed an agreement with Iran to purchase weapons and military equipment because Iraq’s defense ministry trusts the effectiveness of the Iranian weapons...It’s crucial for the Iraqi army to receive a part of its weapons from arms produced in Iran.” The US could scarcely ignore that fact that Iraqi Defense Minister Saadoun al-Dulaimi had signed a memorandum of understanding to strengthen defense and security agreements with Iran on September 2013, and that the previous Iranian government also offered a comprehensive military and security package in 2012, without concluding an agreement.⁷⁶⁸

At the same time, US government efforts need to do everything this is practically possible to push the Maliki government towards reform and equity in dealing with Sunnis and Kurds, and to laying the ground work for demanding an honest outcome from Iraq’s coming election and an outcome that moved back toward the level of national unity called for in the Erbil agreement.

This requires the US to take the risk of making aid far more conditional on Maliki making major efforts to correct the mistakes that have brought Iraq to the edge of a new round serious sectarian conflict, restoring a proper degree of sectarian and ethnic balance to the Iraqi security forces, to stop using these forces his personal and Shi’ite ends, and to give the Sawa and other Sunni fighters in the West and Sunni-dominated areas, the political incentives, money, and arms to actively support and defend the central government. Every arms delivery and form of aid should be conditional on real-world Iraqi efforts, and the US should make it clear that it support a national Iraqi government and will not support a sectarian government not only now, but after the coming election.

These also are actions that require the best possible reporting in the media, and equal depth of analysis from outside analysts and NGOs. During 2010 to the end of 2013, far too much of the output from both had a narrow focus on counterterrorism and the threat from AQI/ISIS as time when the Maliki “threat” was becoming at least – if not more – important.

XI. IRAQ'S ECONOMY AND THE SEARCH FOR STABILITY

The third element of any solution to Iraq's present level of crisis is to address Iraq's economic problems and create the economic conditions for security and stability. Iraq is still struggling to overcome the heritage of war, crisis, sanctions, invasion, and years of state interference with its economic development. Iraq has great potential but has made little progress towards achieving. Concepts and rhetoric are not development and effective reform, and actions. Trying to impose economic development on an increasingly violent and divided society will fail, particularly in the face of factional greed, poor governance, and gross corruption. Iraq again needs more unity and equity and effective execution rather than endless plans and concepts.

Iraq suffered an 80% reduction in GDP from 1990 to 1991, and its petroleum output was approximately 1 million barrels per day lower than its peak in July 1990.⁷⁶⁹ According to the US Special Inspector General for Iraqi Reconstruction's (SIGIR) Final Report on Iraq Reconstruction, "International efforts to correct these issues after the war were hindered by "a long standing command economy, driven entirely by a state-owned oil and gas sector."⁷⁷⁰

Iraq's problems were compounded by the US-led invasion in 2003. The March SIGIR report for 2013 stated,⁷⁷¹

The events of March and April 2003 aggravated these conditions. When post-invasion looting ended, just two of the 170 Rafidan Bank branches remained open for business, the Central Bank vault had been largely cleaned out, and most of Iraq's 190-odd state-owned enterprises, the heart of the country's non-oil industrial sector that provided employment and income for 12% of Iraq's workforce, had shut down. Iraq's economy was on its knees.

Iraq is now making some economic progress. However, as earlier chapters have shown, this progress is still very mixed. Much of Iraq's economy is heavily dependent on subsidies and state employment, and is affected by Iraq's political crisis, endemic violence, corruption, and major problems in its distribution of income.

The World Bank's first Iraqi Investment Climate Assessment, released in 2012, noted that:⁷⁷²

Iraq's abundant natural resources, strategic geographic location and cultural history endow Iraq with tremendous potential for growth and diverse economic development. Driven by windfall oil revenues in recent years, the Government of Iraq has invested heavily in rebuilding the infrastructure of the country, and its abundant oil reserves ensure that progress can continue steadily.

Decades of socialist economic policy, however, have tightly bound Iraq's economy to the state. Consequently, the private sector today has limited role or presence, and incentives for its expansion are nearly absent. Because of the state's long-term dominance, credit systems and access to finance are severely limited. In addition to the general insecurity they have caused, Iraq's conflicts have further generated other problems, such as a marked exodus of educated, skilled Iraqis, a sustained isolation from global networks of information and trade and significant destruction of infrastructure. As a result, Iraq suffers from unsteady electricity and water supplies, the transport system remains under-developed, and its agricultural and industrial capacities severely reduced. In addition to securing and stabilizing the country, these key challenges must be addressed in order for Iraq to truly fulfill its economic potential.

A Petroleum Economy Limping Towards Progress

Iraq's petroleum resources -- and a geographic location that could make it a major trade route between the Gulf and the West -- give it considerable potential. However, Iraq faces major problems in terms of population growth, water demand, and grossly inefficient agricultural, industrial, and financial sectors.⁷⁷³ As is highlighted in the next chapter, Iraq also suffers badly from the "resource curse" caused by excessive dependence on petroleum export income and the structural misuses of that income to subsidize the state sector.

A CIA summary of Iraq's economy issued in mid-January 2014 had not been fully updated to reflect the sharply increasing level of violence in late 2013, but noted that Iraq's progress was both limited and affected by dispute between the central government and KRG,⁷⁷⁴

An improving security environment and foreign investment are helping to spur economic activity, particularly in the energy, construction, and retail sectors. Broader economic development, long-term fiscal health, and sustained improvements in the overall standard of living still depend on the central government passing major policy reforms. Iraq's largely state-run economy is dominated by the oil sector, which provides more than 90% of government revenue and 80% of foreign exchange earnings. Iraq in 2012 boosted oil exports to a 30-year high of 2.6 million barrels per day, a significant increase from Iraq's average of 2.2 million in 2011.

Government revenues increased as global oil prices remained persistently high for much of 2012. Iraq's contracts with major oil companies have the potential to further expand oil exports and revenues, but Iraq will need to make significant upgrades to its oil processing, pipeline, and export infrastructure to enable these deals to reach their economic potential. The Iraqi Kurdistan Region's (IKR) autonomous Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) passed its own oil law in 2007, and has directly signed about 50 contracts to develop IKR energy reserves.

The federal government has disputed the legal authority of the KRG to conclude most of these contracts, some of which are also in areas with unresolved administrative boundaries in dispute between the federal and regional government. Iraq is making slow progress enacting laws and developing the institutions needed to implement economic policy, and political reforms are still needed to assuage investors' concerns regarding the uncertain business climate, which may have been harmed by the November 2012 standoff between Baghdad and Erbil and the removal of the Central Bank Governor in October 2012.

The government of Iraq is eager to attract additional foreign direct investment, but it faces a number of obstacles including a tenuous political system and concerns about security and societal stability. Rampant corruption, outdated infrastructure, insufficient essential services, skilled labor shortages, and antiquated commercial laws stifle investment and continue to constrain growth of private, nonoil sectors. Iraq is considering a package of laws to establish a modern legal framework for the oil sector and a mechanism to equitably divide oil revenues within the nation, although these reforms are still under contentious and sporadic negotiation.

Under the Iraqi Constitution, some competencies relevant to the overall investment climate are either shared by the federal government and the regions or are devolved entirely to the regions. Investment in the IKR operates within the framework of the Kurdistan Region Investment Law (Law 4 of 2006) and the Kurdistan Board of Investment, which is designed to provide incentives to help economic development in areas under the authority of the KRG. Inflation has remained under control since 2006 as security improved.

However, Iraqi leaders remain hard pressed to translate macroeconomic gains into an improved standard of living for the Iraqi populace. Unemployment remains a problem throughout the country despite a bloated public sector. Encouraging private enterprise through deregulation would make it easier for Iraqi citizens and foreign investors to start new businesses. Rooting out corruption and implementing reforms - such as restructuring banks and developing the private sector - would be important steps in this direction.

Similarly, the IMF reported in April 2013 that,⁷⁷⁵

Iraq is estimated to have the world's second-largest oil reserves, with reserves of 143 billion barrels. By the 1970s, Iraq's oil resources had enabled the country to reach middle-income status, with a modern infrastructure, and good education and healthcare systems. Since then, however, the country has suffered through three devastating wars, a long period of economic and financial mismanagement, and international sanctions imposed during the 1990s. These events severely damaged political and economic institutions and undid earlier economic and social gains. By 2004, per capita GDP had fallen to about US\$900 from US\$3400 in 1980, and the country suffered from a crippling debt burden.

The task of rebuilding the country after 2003 remains immense and is made harder by sectarian politics and prolonged violence. Iraq's reconstruction requires not only the rebuilding of its infrastructure, but also of its economic and social institutions and the creation of a business environment that attracts capital and brings with it new technology and skills to modernize the economy. Iraq's huge oil reserves could, in principle, provide the revenues needed to finance the reconstruction, but strong institutions and favorable business environment are needed to use these resources effectively. The longer-term outlook is strong as domestic and foreign investment in the hydrocarbon sector is bearing fruit. According to the Ministry of Oil, oil production averaged 3.1 million barrels per day (mbpd) in 2012, of which 2.3 mbpd are exported, and extraction and exports are projected to increase considerably in the years ahead. Nevertheless, Iraq's economic prospects continue to be subject to significant risks, deriving mainly from institutional and capacity constraints, oil prices volatility, delays in the development of oil infrastructure, and an extremely fragile political and security situation.

The World Bank on-line country brief warned at the end of December 2013 that,⁷⁷⁶

The country faces substantial development challenges. Chief among these is the need to rebuild the infrastructure and institutions, a task made difficult by the prospect of political instability and the excessive dependence on one commodity, crude oil, for its revenues. Wars, sanctions, and weak governance have all contributed to a marked deterioration in Iraq's living standards in recent years. For example, the infant mortality rate is close to that of Djibouti and Yemen, the two poorest countries in the Middle East and North Africa region (MENA). Furthermore, school enrollment has declined over the past decades as a result of the low quality of and low returns to education.

Although limited data impedes knowledge of the full picture, poverty and human conditions in Iraq have worsened in the 1990s and have not improved considerably in recent years. Using newly available data, a detailed poverty and inclusion assessment covering the period between 2007 and 2012 is underway. Iraq has a very low employment rate (only 38 percent of adult Iraqis were employed in 2007) and women face particular challenges in terms of economic opportunities. The public sector employs 32 percent of all working Iraqi adults and the job creating capacity of the hydrocarbons sector is very limited (2007). Service delivery continues to be unreliable, only 12.5 percent of people whose dwelling is connected to the public network report that their supply of water is stable (2007). For electricity, only 22.4 percent can rely solely on the public network for their housing units (2007). Overall,

Iraq's poverty headcount index stands at 18.8 percent in 2012, a 4 percentage point decline since 2007. In rural areas, the poverty rate is 30.6 percent, more than twice the 13.4 percent rate in urban areas. Since 2007, the bulk of poverty reduction has come from rural areas, which had the highest rates of headcount poverty. During the same period, consumption among the bottom 40 percent grew by 1.07 percent annually, lower than the rate of consumption growth of the population as a whole, which was 1.75 percent per annum.

Social assistance in Iraq has been mainly confined to the public distribution system (PDS) and cash-based safety nets which have not been well-targeted in their ability to reach the poorest. In light of this, the Government of Iraq has recognized the critical need for strengthening its social security programs in order to become more effective in reaching the poor and better mitigating future risks associated with price increases. The World Bank has been supporting the design and implementation of efficient and effective social security programs. The expected reforms include expanding such programs, increasing the coverage rate, improving targeting mechanisms, enhancing program administration, and establishing a long-term vision for poverty reduction and risk mitigation.

Despite obstacles, Iraq's macroeconomic performance over the past few years has been sound. Iraq enjoyed strong economic performance in 2012 because of its prospering oil sector. The country's GDP grew by 8.4 percent due to increased oil production and high oil prices. However, high economic growth based on

increasing oil prices is not sufficient to ensure continued prosperity. The lack of economic diversification makes Iraq's economic growth vulnerable to oil price and volume shocks and undermines its ability to conduct fiscal policy with a medium-term orientation. Therefore, economic diversification is a challenge for the Iraqi government both to create jobs and to promote income-creating opportunities for the majority of the Iraqi population. The World Bank has been supporting the Iraqi government's medium-term economic reform program, thereby helping the country improve fiscal sustainability and reducing its vulnerability to sudden drops in oil revenues.

A United Nations Development Program (UNDP) study called the *Post-2105 Development Agenda National Consultations in Iraq* drew on Iraqi views of the economy. It found a wide range of Iraqi complaints about the failures of the government to provide economic incentives, effective services, security and incentives for investment and development, and highlighted their key feedback as follows,⁷⁷⁷

The strongest message that emerged from these groups is the need for increased accountability and transparency. These needs affect all parts of Iraqi society. As one academic phrased it, "What we need after 2015 is good governance and human security." Without country-wide awareness or predictable enforcement of laws and regulations, citizens are without a minimum level of expectation by which to hold systems and leaders accountable. In the absence of a broadly shared understanding of minimal standards, trust in institutions continues to erode, further discouraging investment and meaningful social and political participation.

Iraq's education sector serves as a microcosm for this overarching challenge. While minimum standards for education exist, their enforcement remains ineffective. Parents who have children attending inadequate do not have a mechanism by which to complain about the situation and take steps to demand improvement. As negative factors compound, such as outdated teaching methods, inadequate and unsafe infrastructure, lack of capacity to serve special needs, or lack of servers to provide nutritious meals to children in need, the family becomes increasingly disempowered. This negative cycle deteriorates into hopelessness and compounding vulnerability, offering little incentive to prioritize education over dropping out and pursuing avenues that provide some short-term relief on financial pressures for families, such as begging or early marriage. These paths further perpetuate the cycle of poverty, illiteracy, and disengagement.

Developing laws, standards, and codes for all systems, including medicine, education, and environmental protection that are accepted and trusted by Iraqis, will give citizens a starting point for expectations in terms of quality and practice. Requiring transparency from organizations means citizens have access to the information necessary to assess how or if institutions are meeting standards and engaging in appropriate practices....

Increased Iraqi Funding of Development and Employment

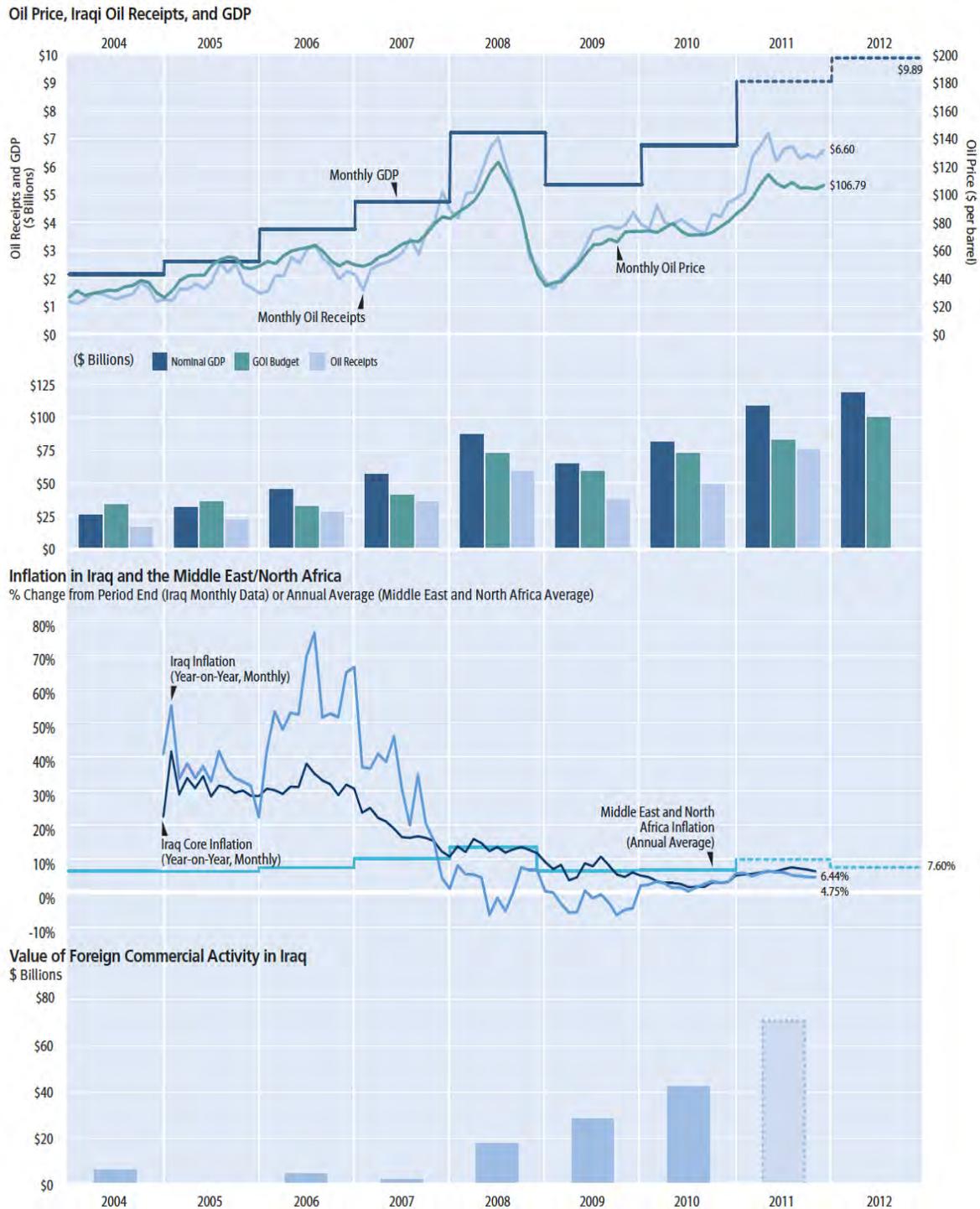
Iraq's oil revenues did drop from an estimated total of \$94.02 billion in 2013 to \$89.22 billion in 2013, but they had steadily over the previous half decade.⁷⁷⁸ This helped Iraq partially overcome some of its challenges, but created others. **Figure 42** shows the close correlation between the growth of the Iraqi economy and oil revenues, and how increased oil revenues have reduced Iraqi dependence on both Iran and the US. **Figure 43** shows, Iraq's oil revenues are now capable of funding larger budgets – a factor that makes Iraq less dependent on both Iran and the US, but also has helped create the deep structural problems in the Iraqi economy outlined in the next chapter.

Figure 44 shows the Government of Iraq (GoI) became progressively less dependent on outside aid since the late 2000s.⁷⁷⁹ In April 2012, SIGIR reported that from 2003 through 2012, Iraq had provided \$139.3 billion towards its own relief and reconstruction efforts through Iraqi funds and budget appropriations. Iraq steadily reduced its dependence on US aid before US forces withdrew at the end of 2011, and also put more money into development. SIGIR's April 2012 report supported these trends.⁷⁸⁰

The Council of Representatives (CoR) approved \$31.88 billion for capital investment projects and \$68.56 billion in operational spending. The change in capital investment represents a 24% increase over the 2011 budget. Between 2005 and 2012, the capital investment portion of the Iraqi budget has increased from 14% to 32%. The \$11.18 billion (20%) increase in operational spending, when compared with the 2011 budget, is driven mainly by a \$4.86 billion (40%) increase in the amount allocated to the Ministry of Finance as well as a \$1.87 billion (30%) increase in the amount allocated to the Ministry of Interior.

Since that time, Iraq has largely eliminated its post 2003 dependence on outside aid. At the same time, Iraq is critically dependent on high oil revenues and it is clear that Iraq requires more effective level of governance and a level of political unity that does not yet exist and may not exist for years to come.

Figure 42: Oil Revenues and Progress in the Iraqi Economy: 2004-2011



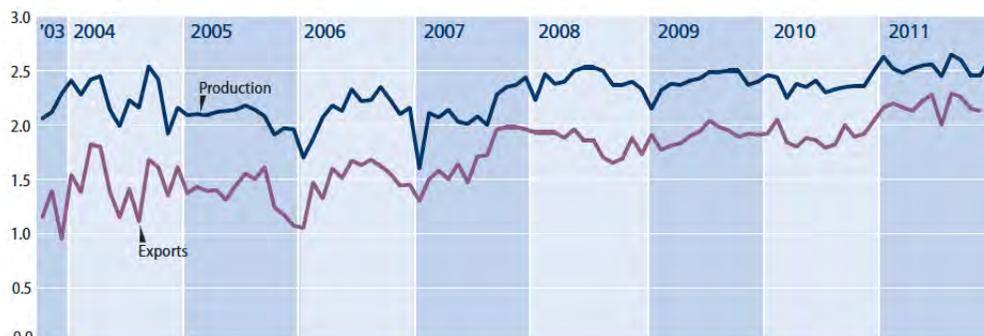
Note: Data not audited. Numbers affected by rounding. All dollar values are in current prices. GDP figures for 2011 and 2012 are estimates. Value of foreign commercial activity in Iraq for 2011 is an estimate. GOI budget for 2012 is CoM draft.

Source: SIGIR, Quarterly Report, January 30, 2012, p. 83.

Figure 43: Impact of Oil Revenues On the Iraqi Budget: 2004-2011

CRUDE OIL PRODUCTION AND EXPORTS, BY MONTH, 10/2003–12/2011

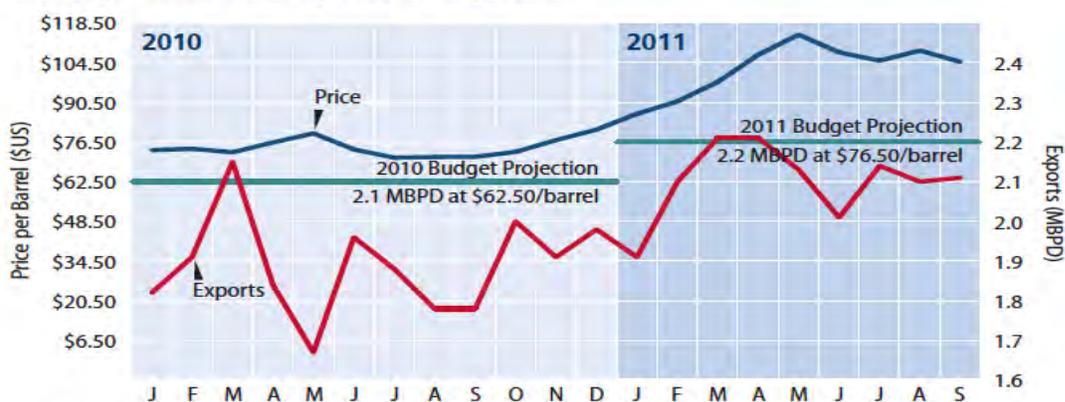
Million Barrels per Day



Note: Exports include crude oil from the Kurdistan Region; production figures do not.

Sources: NEA-I, responses to SIGIR data calls, 6/4/2010, 7/6/2010, 1/11/2011, 4/5/2011, 7/7/2011, 10/17/2011, and 1/6/2012.

Monthly Oil Price and Exports vs. Projections



Monthly Oil Revenues and Receipts vs. Projections

\$ Billions

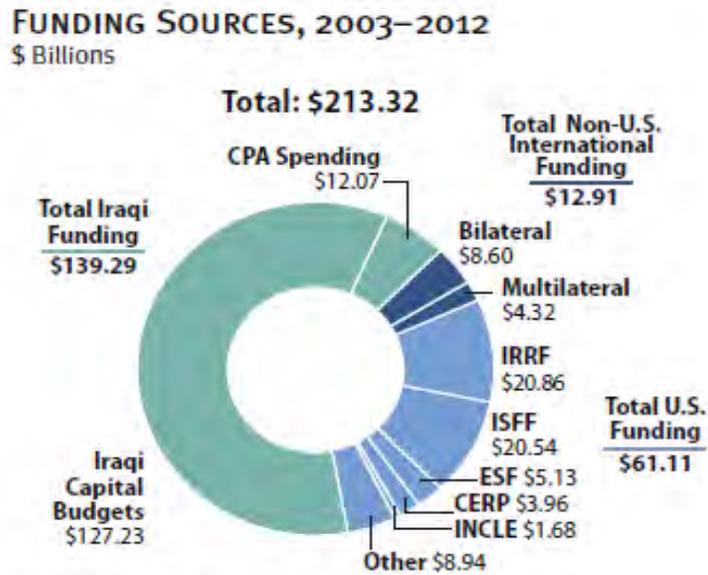


Note: Data not audited. Numbers affected by rounding. Not all oil export revenue accrues to the GOI; 5% is paid in war reparations to Kuwait, which accounts for the difference between the Receipts and Revenue lines in this chart. Monthly price per barrel is derived by dividing the monthly revenue by monthly exports.

Sources: U.S. Treasury, response to SIGIR data call, 10/11/2011; GOI, CoR, "Federal Public Budget Law for the Fiscal Year 2010," 1/27/2010; GOI, CoR, "Federal Public Budget Law for the Fiscal Year 2011," 2/23/2011.

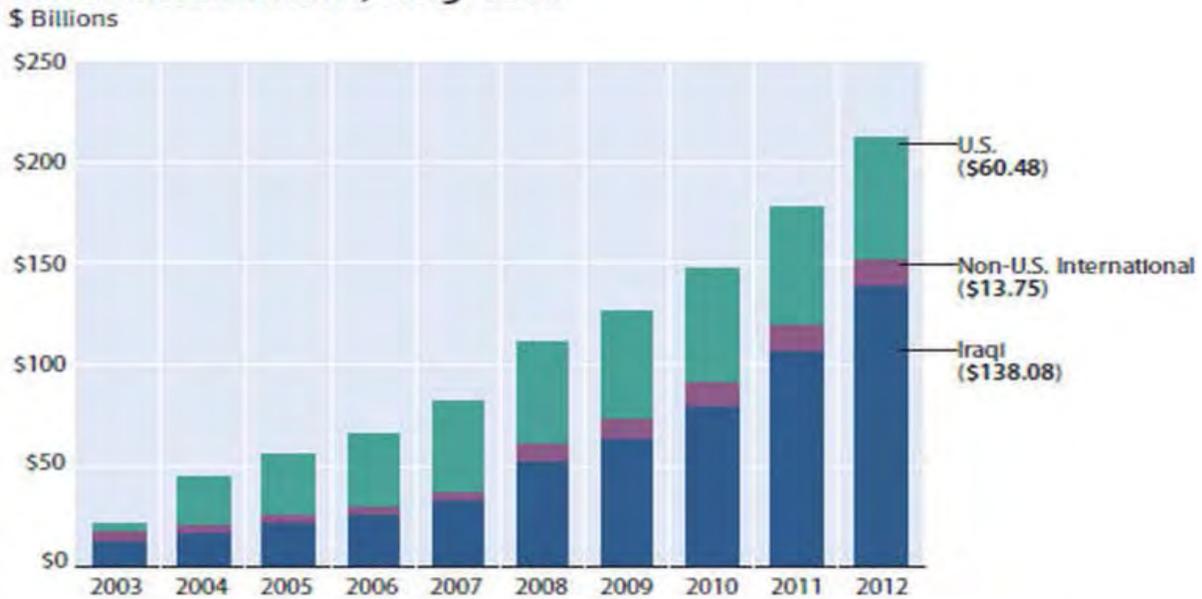
Source: SIGIR, Quarterly Report, October 30, 2011, p. 28, and January 30, 2012, p. 87.

Figure 44: Iraqi Development Funding: 2003-2012: Status of All Aid Funds as of 4/30/2012



Note: Data not audited. Numbers affected by rounding.

CUMULATIVE U.S., IRAQI, AND NON-U.S. INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT FOR RECONSTRUCTION, 2003–2012



Note: Data not audited. Numbers affected by rounding. U.S. contributions are represented by U.S. fiscal year. Iraqi and non-U.S. International contributions are represented by calendar year. Iraqi funding reflects capital budgets for 2003–2005 and 2011–2012, as well as actual capital expenditures for 2006–2010.

Source: SIGIR Quarterly Report to Congress, October 2012, p. 14.

Iraq's Plans and Budgets

It is difficult to relate Iraq's budget to reality since there is limited transparency as to where money actually goes, there is so much corruption, and Iraqi plans and spending are often badly executed. Prime Minister Maliki did, however, announce a National Development Plan in July 2010. It was estimated to cost \$186 billion between 2010 and 2014, with over half of the funding from the government and the rest coming from the private sector. In February 2010, the IMF approved a two-year, \$3.7 billion loan package for Iraq for the purpose of budget support, structural reforms, and macroeconomic stability.⁷⁸¹

Iraq's 2011 budget estimated that 89% of annual revenue would come from oil exports...So far this year, price levels and export volumes are both higher than what they were in 2010. In February 2011, the GoI approved a budget of \$82.62 billion, while projecting \$69.18 billion in revenues – creating a deficit of \$13.44 billion.

The budget figures were dependent on oil production and prices. An estimated 89% of the budget was dependent on oil revenues. The GoI took in \$20.11 billion in oil-export receipts the 3rd quarter of 2011, setting a post-2003 record.⁷⁸² As of November 2011, Baghdad received \$56.07 billion in oil revenues for the year, more than all of 2010 combined.⁷⁸³ As of November 2011, the GoI was debating a preliminary 2012 budget of more than \$100 billion.⁷⁸⁴

As of September 30, 2011, Iraq had received an average of \$102.83 per barrel of oil exported – well above the average of \$74.56 per barrel received in 2010. Oil export volumes averaged 2.1 million barrels per day (MBPD) during the first nine months of the year — 4% less than the projected rate of 2.2 MBPD, but more than the previous year's average of 1.9 MBPD. Iraq had record-high annual oil receipts of \$58.79 billion in 2008; at the current pace, the GOI will surpass that amount by mid-October.

The GOI had received \$56.07 billion in oil receipts for its fiscal year, which ended on September 30, 2011. This exceeded the amount received in all of 2010. Annual oil receipts were 57% higher than the \$35.60 billion received during the first nine months of last 200 year and 22% more than the \$45.95 billion projected through September 30, 2011 Iraq's real GDP grew at a rate of 8.5% in 2011, up from less than 1% in 2010.⁷⁸⁵

In late 2011, SIGIR reported that the Council of Ministers approved a draft budget of \$100.1 billion, with a projected \$14.7 billion deficit for 2012:⁷⁸⁶

The budget was predicated on crude oil not falling below \$85 per barrel and the country's ability to export an average of 2.625 MBPD during the year. As shown in Table 4.4, the draft represents a 21% rise in projected spending over the 2011 budget, and it follows substantial increases both last year and in 2010. In 2009, the budget was set at \$58.61 billion.

The CoM's 2012 draft budget, which requires CoR approval to become law, calls for \$31.8 billion of new capital spending—a 24% jump over 2011—which is likely to be put toward further rebuilding of the country's obsolete and rundown infrastructure. Proposed operational spending of \$68.3 billion for such recurrent items as government salaries, support for state-owned enterprises, and food subsidies is 20% higher than in 2011. The Ministries of Oil and Electricity have the largest capital budgets.

In April 2012, SIGIR reported that Iraq had provided \$139.3 billion towards its own relief and reconstruction efforts from 2003 through 2012, through Iraqi funds and budget appropriations:⁷⁸⁷

The Council of Representatives (CoR) approved \$31.88 billion for capital investment projects and \$68.56 billion in operational spending. The change in capital investment represents a 24% increase over the 2011 budget. Between 2005 and 2012, the capital investment portion of the Iraqi budget has increased from 14% to 32%. The \$11.18 billion (20%) increase in operational spending, when compared with the 2011 budget, is driven mainly by a \$4.86 billion (40%) increase in the amount allocated to the Ministry of Finance as well as a \$1.87 billion (30%) increase in the amount allocated to the Ministry of Interior.

The CIA reports that in 2012 – the most recent year for which it reports - the Iraqi Government budgeted for \$88 billion, but initially estimated that it had received \$103 billion in revenues, creating a budget surplus of 7% of GDP.⁷⁸⁸ In practice, it later revised the estimate to \$94.02 billion, but still had a budget surplus is driven by high oil prices that remained near \$100/barrel for the entire year.⁷⁸⁹ According to the World Bank’s Investment Climate Assessment of 2012, “the Government of Iraq has invested heavily in rebuilding the infrastructure of the country, and its abundant oil reserves ensure that progress can continue steadily.”⁷⁹⁰ Like far too much such reporting, however, there were no metrics or data to justify such statements

Iraq passed its 2013 budget in March 2013, but only after serious internal political debates and a Kurdish boycott.⁷⁹¹ The budget statement indicated that Iraq had spent some \$37 billion on its budgets between 2003 and 2012. Its 2013 budget allocated some \$14 billion to try to reduce Iraq’s electricity – the country had 11,000 megawatts to meet demands of 13,000 megawatts and talk about a goal of 20,000 megawatts by 2014. The debate also warned that Iraq risked a serious deficit in spite of high oil revenues.⁷⁹²

A detailed report by the UN’s Joint Analysis Policy Unit (JAPU) of UNAMI provided the data shown in **Figure 45**. It described an oil and defense-centric budget for 2013 that failed to fund overall development and meet public needs, and provided the following summary of its strengths and weaknesses:⁷⁹³

The Government of Iraq is in the process of approving the draft budget for 2013; the largest ever for Iraq1. Government expenditure totaling IQD 138.4 Trillion (\$ 118.3 Billion), exceeds 70% of GDP2. The present budget is an increase of 18%, equivalent to IQD 21.3 Trillion, over 2012 total budgeted expenditure of IQD 117.1 Trillion. Since 2009 Iraq budgeted expenditure has consistently grew by an average of 17% annually.

Investment expenditure of IQD 55.1 Trillion, or 40% of government expenditure, is at record high for Iraq.

Investment expenditure has increased by 48% over 2012 levels, accounting for 85% of the increase in 2013 total budgeted expenditure.

Accounting for the development needs of Iraq - suffering from daily power cuts, high under five mortality and malnutrition, and high youth and women unemployment - an increase in total and mainly investment expenditure is a positive development. But the present budget may not fully meet those expectations.

- The Government expenditure for 2013 totals IQD 138.4 Trillion (\$ 118.3 Billion), with an increase of 18% over 2012 and exceeding 70% of GDP. The budget has three main headings: Energy, Security / Defense and Social Services, accounting for 21%, 14%, and 13% respectively of total budget.
- Investment Expenditure represents 40% (IQD 55.1 Trillion) of government budgeted expenditure, the largest ever for Iraq. Investment in Oil and Electricity amounts to over 43% of the investment expenditure.
- Government budgeted revenues amount to IQD 119.3 Trillion, with revenues from oil making 93%. The increase in oil revenues, made it possible for the government to cover its operating expenditure and allocate more to investment, yet heavy reliance on oil resulted in a budget fragile to oil shocks, and government going through complementary budgeting, and excessive delays in investment projects implementation.

- Notwithstanding the increase in oil production and revenues, oil alone is not enough to cover budget deficit and contribute to a financial resilient Iraq; financial reserves in Iraq can cover government operating expenditure for less than a year. In order to improve Iraq financial resilience and reserves in the short run, Iraq needs, in addition to its plan to increase oil revenues, to increase non-oil revenues (which are stable, around IQD 7 Trillion, since 2008), and to rationalize operating expenditure (Iraq has one of the largest public sectors relative to population). While in the long run, revenues diversification goes hand by hand with diversification of the economy and expansion of the private sector.
- About 60% of Iraqi households are suffering from the lack of at least one of the following: access to improved drinking water source, access to improved sanitation facility, a minimum of 12 hours of electricity from the public network a day, or food security.
- Two factors undermine government's budget contribution to Iraqi development needs on the ground: first, funds allocated to the key development sectors are insufficient vis-a-vis Iraq's development needs. For example, in 2013 the total investment budget allocated to Education, Health and Environment, Culture and Youth, and Water and Sanitation, is only IQD 6.5 Trillion, which is equivalent to 50% of the Energy sector investment budget. Second, low execution of investment budget remains a concern, specifically for the aforementioned sectors, having been slightly above 50% in 2011. Not only are the development sectors receiving too little, they are also suffering from inadequate operationalization of pertinent approved funds.
- Iraq is making progress in decentralizing planning at the local level, with governorates identifying their plans through a participatory and evidence-based approach. This progress is not matched with governorates/KRG participation in budgeting and this lack of participation has led to a longer period needed to approve and amend the budget, and to some extent to the low investment execution rate for the Regional Development Plan.
- ...Budgeted government revenues totaling IQD 119.3 Trillion, have more than doubled since 2009, and are at record high. Oil revenues amount to IQD 111.1 Trillion equivalent to 93% of total revenues, while other revenues now reduced to IQD 8.2 Trillion; mainly composed of income, corporate, and other taxes. The government used an oil price of \$90 per barrel and estimated 2.9 Million barrels per day (bpd) in exports for budgeting purposes³.

The heavy reliance on oil revenues is more pronounced when looking at end of year balances; oil revenues made 99% of actual 2011 total revenues...The increase in oil revenues made it possible for the government to progressively expand expenditure and allocate more for investment. This in turn justifies oil being Government's investment priority, accounting therefore for one third of 2013 investment expenditure, and this is expected to increase through the next several years with the government planning to increase its oil exports to more than 3.75 Million bpd. The negative consequence to this plan is a budget fragile to oil shocks, which resulted in the government's complementing the budgets and to the excessive delays in executing investment projects in previous years.

To avoid the fragility of an oil dependent economy, the Iraqi government should take action to diversify revenues away from oil; one immediate place to start is passing the customs law, which had been postponed for two years and could arguably lead to IQD 1.5 Trillion in increased revenues.

Given that Oil constitutes 60% of GDP, offers only 1% of total employment (small tax base from a revenue point of view), and impacts on Iraq exports with a strong Dinar; revenue diversification in the medium-long run must go hand in hand with diversification of the economy. This will allow for expansion of the private sector, and consequent contribution to growth and revenues.

Government budgeted expenditure of IQD 138.4 Trillion has Energy, Security and Defense, and Social Services as the main headings, constituting of 48% of total expenditure (21%, 14%, and 13% respectively), and accounting for 64% of budget increase over that of 2012.

...The continued increase in oil revenues over operating expenditure, since 2011, made it possible for the government to expand investment expenditure, moving away from a situation where budget deficit has by large been equated by investment expenditure. 2013 budgeted investment expenditure of IQD 55.1 Trillion depicts an increase in all sectors of investment budget to varying extent. Investment in Oil totaling IQD 18 Trillion, 33% of budgeted investment expenditure, presents Government's first priority. Oil investment plan

aims at enlarging production, storage, transportation, and export capacity⁵, this all to accommodate the expected increase of oil production to reach 13 million bpd over the next seven years, as the present government contracts with foreign oil companies suggest. Investment in electricity of IQD 6.1 Trillion has the second largest share of budgeted investment targeted at infrastructure reparations and increasing production.

Investment in Security and Defense of IQD 4.3 Trillion increased by more than 9 folds over 2012 levels. The security and defense investment plan aims at improving the security of citizens, access to services, and oil production. The main component to this is a newly introduced government program to build the capacity and armaments of Iraq Armed Forces accounting for 3% of 2013 total budget (IQD 4.2 Trillions).

Iraq investment budget allocates less than IQD 6 Trillion to the sectors of Industry, Health and ...Environment, Water and Sanitation, Culture and Youth. Another sector of critical importance for Iraq is Housing and Construction with investment budget of only IQD 1.6 Trillion, notwithstanding the urgent need for 2 Million housing units for which the ministry of Construction and Housing cannot finance⁶.

Investment in Oil is key to economic prosperity in Iraq, this being also the Government's vision, but this should be balanced with investment in infrastructure and services in order for growth gains to be extended to the population in the form of improved services and employment opportunities.

Another way for allocating more funds to development is to rationalize operating expenditure of the government IQD 83.3 Trillion of which 60% are salaries and social benefits of employees.

Budgeted deficit totaling IQD 19.1 Trillion has fallen to less than 14% of total expenditure. The deficit will be financed by funds retained from 2012 budget (estimated between IQD 5-7 Trillion), borrowing from IMF and WB (close to IQD 6 Trillion), and the remaining will be covered from the Development Fund for Iraq, domestic borrowing, and unexpected rise in oil revenues.

By looking at budget execution for the years 2009-2011⁷, Government end-of-year balance ended with a surplus. Budget surplus was driven primarily from low-spending-budget execution, mainly the investment share of the budget; the second factor being an unexpected rise in oil prices (or it can be seen as a result of Government cautious budgeting assumption on oil price).

... Government has consistently executed its operating budget at 80%-90%, financing primarily public servant's salaries and social benefits, as well as day-to-day government operating expenses. Execution of investment expenditure is lower, reduced to 75% in 2011. The execution rate falls to less than 60% in key development sectors including culture and youth 49%, Water and Sanitation 52%, Education 57%, and Health and Environment 58%. This is alarming, since not only these development sectors receive little of the total investment budget, but also inadequacies operationalizing these funds into the projects for which they were approved. On the other extreme we have execution rate of 93% for the Energy sector, 94% Industry, and 100% for KRG investment budget.

Budget execution rate indicates the effectiveness or lack thereof of the financial management system and government agencies in delivering the projects for which funds are approved; in Iraq this is hampered by delays in approving the budget generally taking place in February-March, delays in approving projects and transferring the funds, and lack of accountability.

In order to improve transparency and accountability over budget execution, the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Planning, for fiscal 2013, requested government agencies to report execution rate for each project approved in the budget, and for projects with less than 25% execution rate to be questioned by the CoM and CoR.

Iraq Knowledge Network Household Survey 2011 shows that in Iraq about 60% of Iraqi households are suffering from the lack of at least one of the following: access to improved drinking water source, access to improved sanitation facility, minimum 12 hours of electricity from the public network a day, or food security⁸. 15% of youth (15-29) are illiterate and this reaches 20% among female. Youth are faced with high unemployment rate of 18% (over 30% for female). These figures are matched by population outcry and dissatisfaction with the services provided.

...Two factors may undermine government budget contribution to development:

- Firstly, the allocated funds to key development sectors are insufficient against Iraq development

needs. In 2013 a total of only IQD 6.5 Trillion is the total investment budget allocated to Education, Health and Environment, Culture and Youth, and Water and Sanitation; equivalent to barely 50% of the Energy sector investment budget.

- Secondly, low execution of investment budget - slightly above 50% in 2011 for the aforementioned sectors. Not only development sectors receive little, inadequate steps are taken to translate these funds into projects for which they were approved. This development challenge is exacerbated by foreign aid drying up as a result of the increase in oil revenues, Iraq being given a lower priority by donor countries. (UNDG Trust fund will end by 2013).

Sovereign expenditure totaling IQD 40.3 Trillion, or about 30% of total government budgeted expenditure, has doubled since 2011, contributing least to development at the provincial level. In addition this growing part is deducted from the budget before funds are allocated to the Regional Development Program and KRG.

Progress to decentralize planning at the provincial level is being made, with UNDP Local Areas Development Program aiding governorates in setting their annual plans, through a participatory and evidence-based approach. From that experience, the progress in planning was however not matched by improvement in financial management: funds are insufficient, there are delays in budget approval, as well as bureaucracy between governorates and concerned ministries, lack of accountability, and restrictions on commitment of funds for long run infrastructure projects. All these factors resulted in an execution rate of 56% in 2011 for the regional development plan.

Budgets beyond 2013 will continue to be oil-centric; given Iraq's current economic strategy, commitment to foreign companies' investment, and increased demand for hydrocarbons from the east (China and India). With regards to other sectors of the economy, the process should be clarified further. The trend today tells us that

Iraq is focused on expanding oil and possibly gas production and exports to improve its financial resilience and foreign currency reserves. This has resulted over the years in growing government expenditure, smaller budget deficit, more investment in Oil, as well as in sporadic increase in other sectors' budgets. Iraq needs to adopt a more evidence-based approach to identify development priorities and set investment budget priorities accordingly; so economic growth (primarily oil) can be intertwined with human development (Education, Health, Basic Services, and Employment). Otherwise, Iraq's human development rate will continue to have a slower pace in catching up with economic development, and citizens will continue to endure difficulties in food security, poverty, and access to basic services.

Security and Defense are prominent in 2013 budget. Investment in these two sectors has increased immensely as compared to 2012. Part of this trend is to secure oil production and exports, as well as enhancing the state power. This sector will continue through 2014, as per the Government's plan to build the capacity and equip its armed forces.

Currently, Iraq allocates 40% of its budget to investment projects. Given the size of the public sector, and Government's ability to execute the budget, this share will remain relatively stable over the years to come.

In addition, Iraq saves little of its oil revenues; whereas reserves of oil revenues can cover Iraq operating expenses for less than a year. Iraq is putting a large effort in increasing its Oil revenues, but in order to improve financial resilience and reserves, it also needs to increase non-oil revenues (which are stable, around IQD 7 Trillion, since 2008), and to rationalize its operating expenditure (Iraq has one of the largest public sectors relative to population).

Selected recommendations for 2013

- Firstly, GoI should revisit its budget implementation process and work to eliminate all bottlenecks resulting in low execution rates for some provinces, ministries and sectors. This should include areas such as disclosing performance by implementing bodies and reducing bureaucracy in transferring funds.
- Secondly, GoI should request ministries to provide feasibility studies on their projects and generate the capacity to examine and verify those studies (this function is not prominently visible in the central and/ or KRG governments).

- Thirdly, for the next budget cycle, GoI should start the budgeting process earlier and make it further participatory (including KRG). In Iraq, the process starts in June, while in most countries it starts around March-April.

Iraq's budget for 2014 is ambitious – and as the next chapter discusses, the lack of oil export revenues from the KRG threatens to cause a major deficit -- but it still only puts limited resources into serious development activity and it is far from clear how well it can actually be financed and executed. Preliminary reporting indicated that The Financial Parliamentary Committee had announced that the 2014 national budget would total IQD 174.6 trillion and its major funding would go to the energy and security sectors.⁷⁹⁴

A spokesman stated that the 174.6 trillion Iraqi dinars (150.1 billion dollars) was allocated on the basis of calculating an oil price of 90 dollars per barrel, and the volume of oil exports at 3.4 million barrels daily in 2014. He explained that the 2014 budget would be about 36 trillion dinars (30 billion dollars) higher than its predecessor in 2013. (The U.S. dollar was then equal to 1160 dinars.)⁷⁹⁵

These projections involved significant risks because Iraq did not experience the rise in petroleum revenues in 2013 that it had experienced in recent years. Total petroleum revenues dropped from \$94.02 billion in 2012 to \$89.22 billion in 2013 because exports totaled 872.3 million barrels, or 2.39 million bpd in 2013 versus 2.42 million bpd in 2012.⁷⁹⁶ It also assumed that Iraq did not need to adapt its budget in the light of the struggles between the central government and KRG described in the next chapter, use more realistic figures for total exports and actual dinar versus dollar conversions, and there would be no sabotage or meaningful protests that affected exports in 2014 as they had in earlier years.

The Ministry of Defense budget reached 6.376 trillion dinars, the Ministry of the Interior reached 10.323 billion dinars, and the National Security Council reached 302 billion dinars. As a result, the total the security sector and armament assignments reached the amount of about \$14 billion.⁷⁹⁷

One report indicated that the budget allocated 64 trillion dinars (\$60 billion) to what were called development projects. The budget focused on the allocations the energy sector both in oil and electricity, in addition to the security sectors of defense and interior ministries due to instability. The draft budget allocated 38 trillion and 901 billion dinars for the energy sector, 11 trillion dinars to the Ministry of Electricity, and 27.901 trillion dinars for the oil ministry. The Ministry of Commerce got 7.960 trillion dinars, including 5 trillion and 416 billion dinars the Ministry of allocated for the ration card.⁷⁹⁸

It is important to note, however, that in addition to massive payments for ration cards, the report indicated that the centrally funded workforce of the ministries and departments numbered 3,000,063 employees out of a total labor force of less than nine million, and the budget allocated 3 trillion dinars to increasing salaries. In contrast, reports indicated that gave 3.248 trillion to the agricultural sector and 2.405 trillion to the industrial sector, and 1.975 trillion dinars to construction and reconstruction.⁷⁹⁹

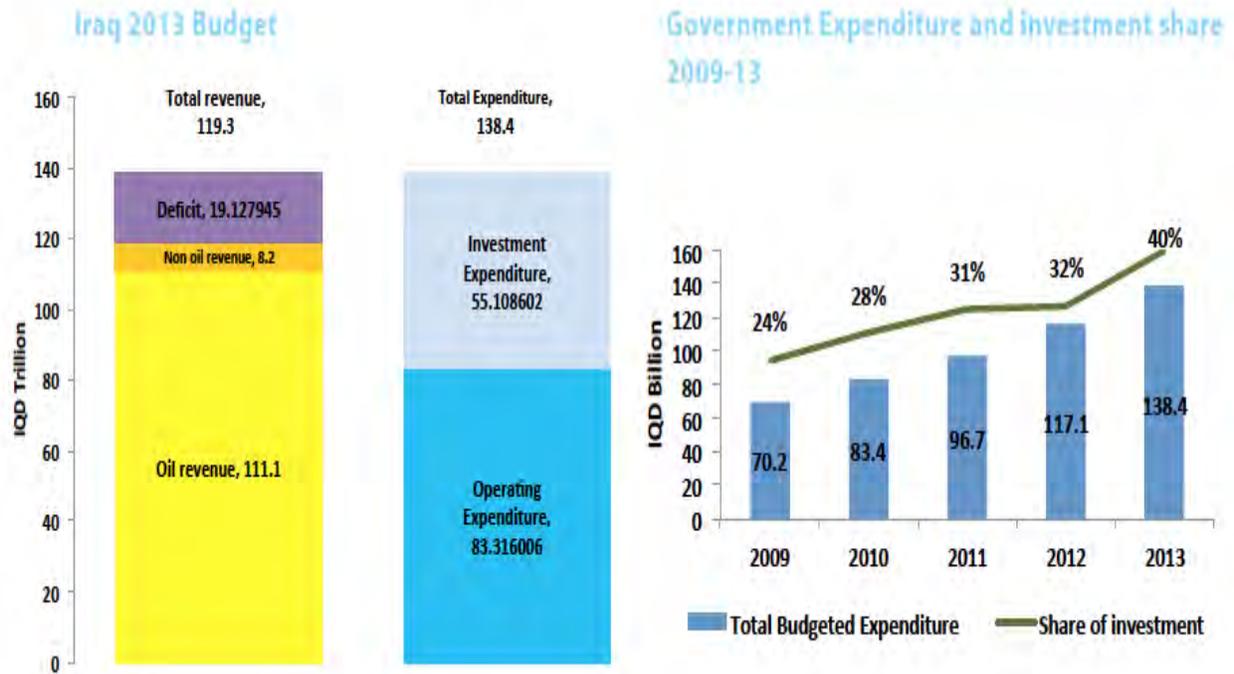
Majda al-Tamimi, a member of the of the Financial Parliamentary Committee stated that the,

The 2014 State Budget reaches IQD 174.6 trillion distributed as 22 trillion for security and defense, 38.9 trillion for energy, including 11 trillion allocated for electricity sector, seven trillions for trade field, including five trillions allocated for ration card.”...The budget allocated IQD 1.9 trillion for construction, four trillions for the Council of Ministers, 99 billion for agriculture and two trillions for industry sector. The budget

allocated three trillions for the new salaries table.” She added that, “The rate of the investment allocations within 2014 State reached 36% while in the 2013 State budget reached 40%.⁸⁰⁰

In late 2013, Iraq was considering reevaluation of the Dinar and it was already clear there would be major problems in implementing the 2014 budget, as well as serious political problems in reallocating money in ways not called for in the budget.⁸⁰¹ At the same time, a new crisis was emerging over control of the nation’s oil revenues. The central government did not make good on promises to increase their share of oil revenues, and it has denied that gas revenues have been high enough to compensate for a “bonus” distribution. The oil producing provinces threatened law suits and to stop oil production after the Iraqi Cabinet approved a draft 2014 budget which limited the extra payment for producing or refining oil and natural gas to \$1 per barrel instead of the \$5 approved the Council of the Republic had approved in 2013.⁸⁰²

Figure 45: UN’s Joint Analysis Policy Unit (JAPU) of UNAMI Assessment of Iraq’s 2013 Budget, Economy, and Plans – Part One



Total revenues 2009-2013

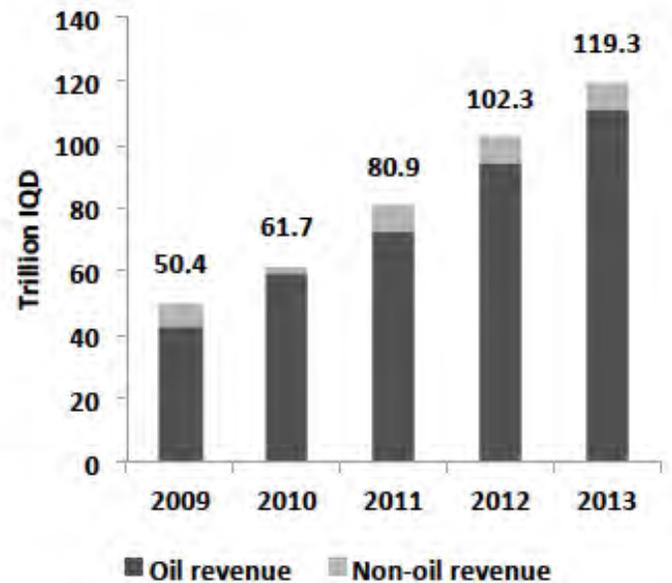
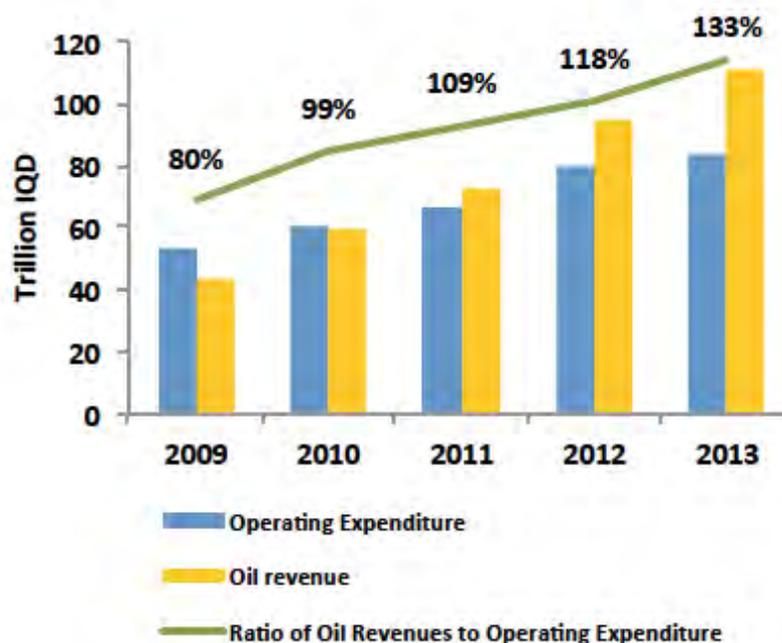


Figure 45: UN's Joint Analysis Policy Unit (JAPU) of UNAMI Assessment of Iraq's 2013 Budget, Economy, and Plans – Part Two

Oil revenues vs. Operating Expenditure



2013 Budget by Sector

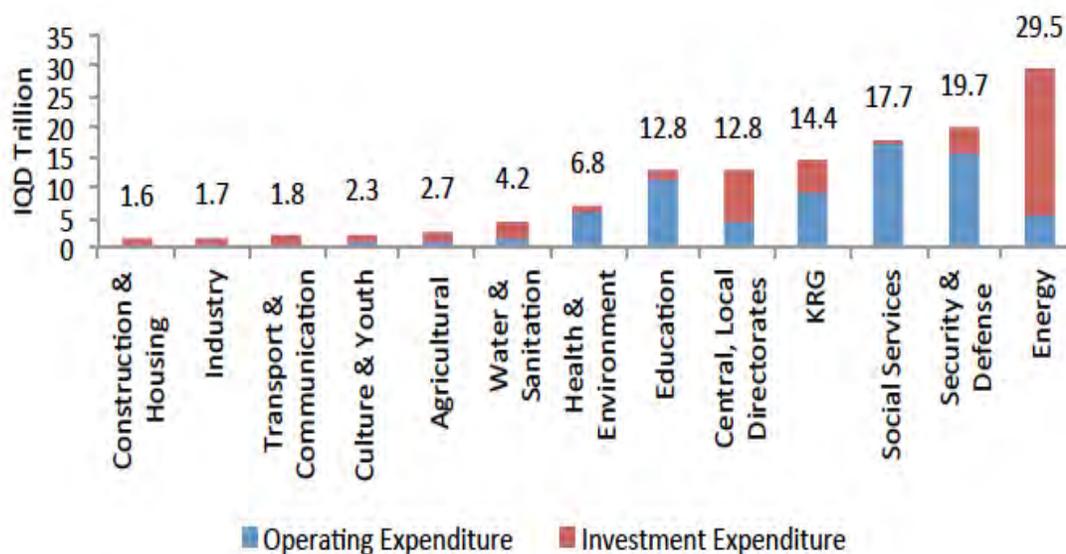
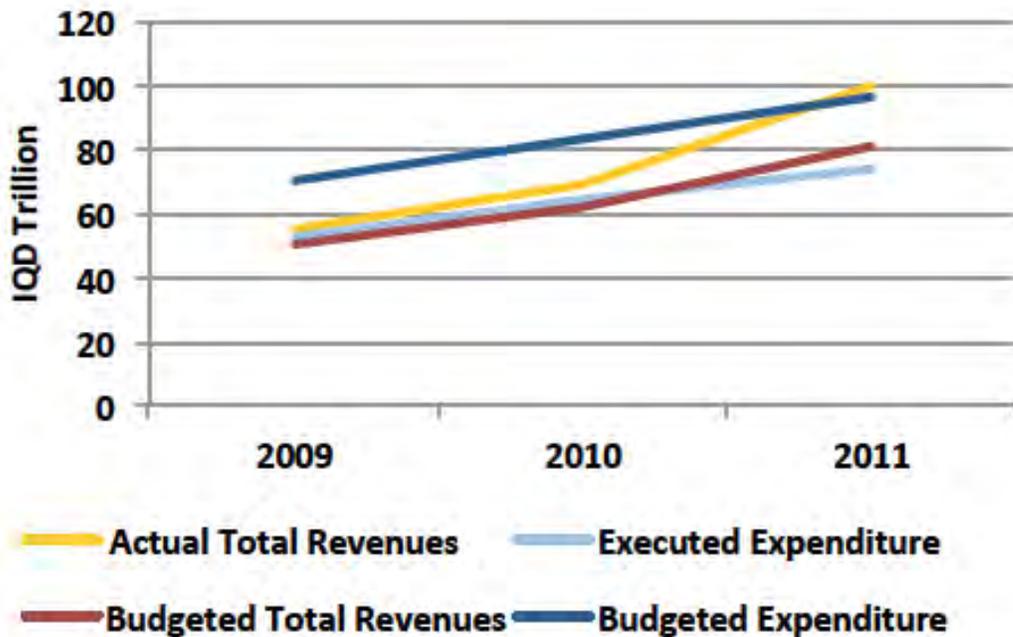


Figure 45: UN’s Joint Analysis Policy Unit (JAPU) of UNAMI Assessment of Iraq’s 2013 Budget, Economy, and Plans – Part Three



Budgeted Investment and Execution Rate - 2011

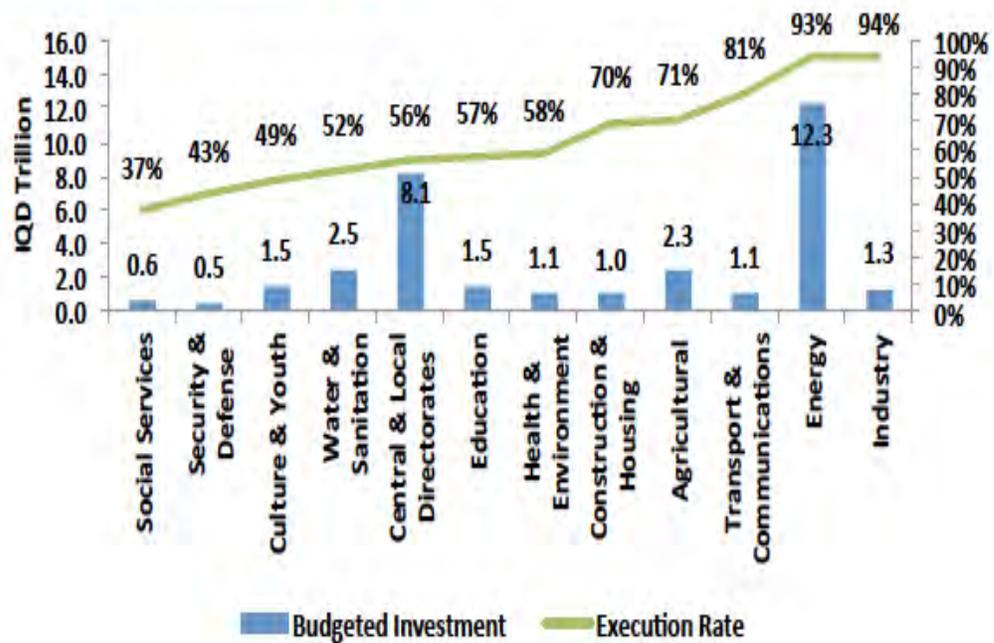


Figure 45: UN's Joint Analysis Policy Unit (JAPU) of UNAMI Assessment of Iraq's 2013 Budget, Economy, and Plans – Part Four

Iraq MDGs situation 2011	
Proportion of population below \$2.5 (PPP) per day	12%
Prevalence of underweight children under-five years of age	8%
Prevalence of Food Insecurity	6%
Under-5 Mortality rate (per 1000)	37
Net enrollment ratio in Primary Education	90%
Net enrollment ratio in Secondary Education	49%
Illiteracy	23%
Proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water	32%
Proportion of population without access to improved sanitation	10%
Percentage not living in a sustainable housing unit	9%
Percentage of households receiving less than 12 hours of electricity from the public network	25%

Source: Adapted from Joint Analysis Policy Unit (JAPU) of UNAMI, Iraq's Budget 2013: Background Paper, <http://www.iraq-businessnews.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/UNAMI-primer-on-Iraq-Budget-2013.pdf>.

The Uncertain Impact of Growth

While the increases in Iraq's oil revenues and total GDP are impressive in macroeconomic terms, virtually every outside source agrees that this is not true of the trends in employment, per capita income, and income distribution—much less in providing the kind of development that can meet popular expectations.

As previous chapters have shown, Iraq is a nation facing acute population pressure in a land uncertain rainfall and dropping water resources as nations like Turkey took an increasing share of the Tigris and Euphrates. The US Census Bureau estimates that Iraq's population rose from only 5.2 million in 1950 to 22.7 million in 2003 and 31.9 million in 2013, and that its population will rise to 40.4 million in 2025 and 56.3 million in 2050.

Even if one ignores critical issues in income distribution, it is far from clear that Iraq's growth reflected a meaningful increase in the GDP per capita—particularly if adjustments are made for income distribution, growth in demand for jobs, and the real growth of the GDP in PPP terms. The CIA reported in 2013 that Iraq had a per capita income of \$7,200, and ranked 141st in the world in per capita income. This was a rise from some \$6,500 in 2010, and the civil war years when Iraq only ranked 160th, but even if one ignored the fact that virtually all growth had come from poorly distributed oil revenues, it still left Iraq one of the poorest countries in the world.⁸⁰³

To put these figures in perspective, the comparable CIA estimates of per capita income for other Gulf states as of October 2013 were: Qatar = \$103,900, rank 1, UAE = \$49,800, rank 15; Kuwait = \$47,500, rank 27; Saudi Arabia \$31,500, rank 46; Bahrain = \$29,500, rank 52; Oman = \$29,600, rank 51; Iran = \$13,300, rank 100. The only country in the region with a lower per capita income was Yemen: \$2,300, rank 188.⁸⁰⁴ Iraq's oil wealth was similarly limited. As **Figure 46** shows, the EIA estimated that Iraq's per capita oil export income in 2012 was only \$2,675.

Furthermore, the CIA estimated that Iraq had a direct unemployment rate of 16%. In practice, its combined unemployment and underemployment rates almost certainly exceeded 20% for the population and 35% for younger males. The CIA also estimated that as much as quarter of the population lived below a poverty line set far too low to meet popular expectations.⁸⁰⁵ These numbers suggest that if anything by way of a meaningful GINI index was available, it would probably show that a narrow elite has had major benefits from aid, petroleum income, and state support since 2003, but that many ordinary Iraqis have had little or no benefit at all.

Figure 46: Gulf Oil Wealth in Terms of Total and Per Capita Net Oil Export Revenues

Country	Total Revenues (\$US Billions)		Per Capita Revenues (\$US)					
	2012	2013	2012	2013	Current Constant 2004	Current Constant 2004	Current Constant 2004	Current Constant 2004
Algeria	62	52	29	24	1,740	1,480	816	684
Iran	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Iraq	83	71	43	36	2,675	2,275	1,349	1,131
Kuwait	88	71	43	36	29,440	25,037	14,362	12,037
Libya	51	43	24	20	7,591	6,456	3,572	2,994
Qatar	55	46	26	22	54,071	45,984	25,412	21,298
Saudi Arabia	311	265	142	119	10,315	8,773	4,662	3,907
UAE	100	85	48	40	18,754	15,949	8,744	7,328

Note: Available OPEC net oil export revenues do not include Iran's revenues, due to the difficulties associated with estimating Iran's earnings, including its inability to receive payments and possible price discounts Iran offers its existing customers. EIA does not include revenues from domestic sales and its figures differ in detail from national figures. The Iraq oil ministry estimated that total oil revenues in current were \$94.02 billion in 2012, and \$89.22 billion in 2013.⁸⁰⁶

Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration, derived from data in the *STEO*. See "OPEC Revenues Fact Sheet," <http://www.eia.gov/countries/regions-topics.cfm?fips=OPEC>, update July 12, 2013.

Iraq as its Own Economic Enemy

Iraq's current efforts can only fund the first steps toward recovery and development, and much depends on providing far more on security and political stability, more effective planning and management of funds, and efforts to reduce the massive level of corruption that now permeates the Iraqi economy. Moreover, Iraq's macroeconomic data are only impressive when no one questions how honestly and effectively the money is spent, or deals with the massive levels of corruption, influence peddling, and crony capitalism, all of which mean that much of the money does little to help the Iraqi people or produce any progress towards development.

Corruption and the Economy

The impact of corruption on governance has already been described in Chapter VI, but it has massive impacts on Iraq's economy as well. The U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre, a Norwegian corruption research institute, notes "a broad consensus that corruption is widespread in Iraq and that it constitutes a threat to state building efforts."⁸⁰⁷

The report goes on to note that Transparency International gave Iraq a score of 18 out of a possible 100, and ranked it 169th out of 175 total countries in terms of the prevalence of corruption. Such high levels of corruption place a major burden on the economy and will generally prevent growth in the petroleum sector and elsewhere from having a positive impact upon the country's overall development.

Other Barriers to Business and Growth

Figure 47 shows that the World Bank ranked Iraq as 151st in the world in 2014 in terms of the ease of doing business in a survey of 189 countries. This compared with a ranking of 23rd for the UAE, 26th for Saudi Arabia, 47th for Oman, an average of 107th for the MENA region, 119th for Jordan and 128th for Egypt. Iran was the only country in the region that presented more barriers and it ranked 152nd – only one country worse than Iraq.⁸⁰⁸

Figure 48 shows a different World Bank ranking system found that a wide range of barriers – as well as the corruption, violence and instability described in earlier chapters – were serious impediments to business development and economic growth, with more than 65% of firms examined identifying these as “severe” constraints to business activity. This assessment dated back to an analysis issued in 2011, but the Bank’s estimate of doing business for 2014 showed that there had been only very limited progress since that date.⁸⁰⁹

Iraq’s problems in violence, corruption and misgovernment also play out in many ways that are not immediately apparent. For example, **Figure 49** shows the cost that Iraq’s continuing corruption and political instability, and weak infrastructure have imposed upon its import/export sector, which as noted above has strong potential due to the country’s highly advantageous position at the center of the Middle East region, bordering five countries as well as the Persian Gulf. The World Bank ICA notes that,⁸¹⁰

Key transportation nodes—including Iraq’s airports and three seaports—are state-owned, run-down, and inefficiently operated. This is clearly seen in the average cost of moving a standard shipping container through each of the Gulf’s main seaports. Iraq suffers from the highest shipping costs—more than double the average cost for Iran, three times the cost for next-door Kuwait, and more than five times the cost for UAE or Saudi Arabia.

Problems in Education and Health

There are only limited meaningful data available on the effectiveness of Iraq’s education and health system, and the net impact of some thirty years of underinvestment and disruption in these sectors. It is equally hard to determine how much of the funds the state does spend on the people consist of state-driven employment with little productive output – if any.

A USAID study warns, however, that,⁸¹¹

Public investment in health has grown dramatically with the proposed 2012 budget reaching \$4.85 billion (\$630 million in capital expenditures and \$4.22 billion in operating expenses), constituting close to 5 percent of projected GDP. Nevertheless, this appears to still be inadequate to meet the targets set in the NDP. On a per capita basis, Iraq spent \$179 in FY 2011, which is well below the MENA average of \$539 (2009).

The means for achieving these objectives are quite vague which makes measuring progress infeasible. One set of activities is to strengthen integration between public and private sector health care provision. There appears to be little progress on this. The rapid growth of the private sector has exacerbated existing staff shortages at public clinics and hospitals, which are often underutilized as a result. In the absence of clear policies, a hybrid public/private system is growing with few boundaries in place to govern this relationship and with little oversight over private health care services.

Another set of activities is directed toward increasing the quantity and quality of medical workers, both through education and through attracting medical workers who have migrated to return. GoI does appear to be expanding the number of medical schools but much more is needed to meet the projected deficits (see Annex A.6). As to attracting medical workers back to Iraq, only a small fraction of emigrants have returned. Another line of initiatives in the NDP is directed toward improved management and finance of the health

sector. MoH does appear to be moving forward on advancing quality management but this is an activity that requires much more attention as a decentralized primary health care approach is expanded.

While the education budget has expanded dramatically over the past 10 years from historic lows, the proposed budget for 2012 is \$808 million, which at 2.5 percent of the capital budget is short of the NDP goal of 5 percent. Sector costing undertaken by MoE and the UN calls for a significant increase in spending, more in line with regional comparators.

Inadequate expenditures as well as the lack of strong planning processes will likely prevent the GoI from achieving the NDP objectives. There is a shortage of some 12,000 buildings needed to reduce average classroom size to 30 students. Urban classroom sizes are often double that total, while rural classrooms are even larger. With a rapidly growing population, and an increasing enrollment rate, the annual capital budget is barely sufficient to keep up with current demand, especially at the primary school level. Secondary school enrollments remain among the lowest in the MENA region but are increasing. Achieving secondary school enrollment targets will also put tremendous demand on available school space. Many primary and secondary schools operate on at least two shifts per day, with some schools operating on 3 shifts due to paucity of space.

The GoI has not succeeded in correcting the key deficiencies in educational performance. The Ministry of Education (MoE) is a highly centralized bureaucracy. Policy initiatives originate from headquarters with little or no input from the governorates or districts. Schools have little autonomy over budget or daily operations, including teacher hiring. Curricula are outdated and although a consensus on a new national curriculum has been reached, the MoE has yet to begin actual development of the curriculum.

Education, especially primary and secondary education, has received increasing budgets in accordance with NDP objectives. However, the failure to implement institutional reform and market reform in terms of bringing in private investment for operation and maintenance of school infrastructure will likely lead to GoI falling short of NDP objectives. The recruitment (doubling of teachers between 2006 and 2011), yet with Grade 12 deemed sufficient qualifications for a primary school teacher, outlines the need for significant in-service training.

The Problem of State-Owned Enterprises

There is no clear way to estimate the black and grey economy in Iraq. It is clear that massive problems exist in the integrity of the financial sector and state banking. Water, population pressure, and decades of mismanaged state interference since the fall of the monarchy have created serious problems for Iraqi agriculture – a sector the World Bank currently estimates produces approximately 3% of the GDP but has 21.6% of the nation's labor force.⁸¹²

It is also clear that various Iraqi governments have mismanaged many aspects of state-owned enterprises (SOE's) since at least the 1970s. A USAID study notes that,⁸¹³

The latest Ease of Doing Business survey (2011) places Iraq 164 out of 183 countries. Its relative position has actually worsened in the last few years as other countries have initiated reforms needed to facilitate private business formation, while Iraq has been extremely reluctant to enact real and meaningful legal, regulatory, or bureaucratic reform. Such a difficult business environment greatly inhibits both foreign and domestic investment, which the NDP conceives as constituting roughly half of the investment needed to achieve its goals.

As a result of the poor investment environment, diversification of the economy and the strengthening of the private sector are not proceeding satisfactorily. Economic interventions by GoI have had the effect of further eroding the private sector in favor of public sector:

- The Cabinet has mandated state sector enterprises to deal in the first instance only with other state sector enterprises. Seventy-five percent of contracts in the oil industry are channeled through state enterprises.
- A large volume of funds have been channeled through state banks to provide concessionary loans to farmers and state sector employees.
- Private banks continue to be excluded from providing any banking services to the public sector.

- State Owned Enterprises are supported through grants to cover the cost of some, or all, of their payroll and through receiving performance bids underwritten by state banks.
- State Owned Enterprises are further supported through zero cost or subsidized inputs (no rent, subsidized energy costs such as oil at \$2 per barrel) and discriminatory administrative procedures.¹²
- Licensing and permit requirements for private sector firms are discriminatory and discourage entry into the formal sector.

This failure to liberalize SOEs perpetuates unfair competitive advantages and thus discourages private sector growth, and it leads to an increasing fiscal burden as SOE losses are covered by budgetary transfers. Whilst there are arguments to be made to carefully sequence the restructuring of SOEs to create space for the private sector, current government policy of re-capitalizing SOEs risks being counter-productive in the medium to longer term, with the overall economic viability of many entities still to be assessed.

In 2012, the World Bank outlined a “road map” for reform of SOE’s that called for the following measures:⁸¹⁴

Restructuring should be a holistic overhaul of present and future operations of the SOE in order to optimize strategy, design, and implementation of its business. Throughout the process, the Government should seek to:

- Support a climate conducive to innovation and knowledge-based activity necessary for sustainable growth;
- Formulate and implement sector development strategies and policies to enhance overall competitiveness, taking into account links and integration with other sectors;
- Ensure a smooth and effective implementation of the planned institutional process and in particular ensure rapid formulation and adoption of the necessary legislative and regulatory frameworks;
- Implement all other support measures for the creation of a business environment conducive to the integration of the SOEs into the private sector, and of these conditions for development of sustainable markets;
- Introduce other measures aimed at promoting Iraqi-made products and brands in a context also of sound economic diversification and import substitution strategies.

Debt and Reparations

Finally debt and reparations remain a problem. While estimates differ, SIGIR reports that,⁸¹⁵

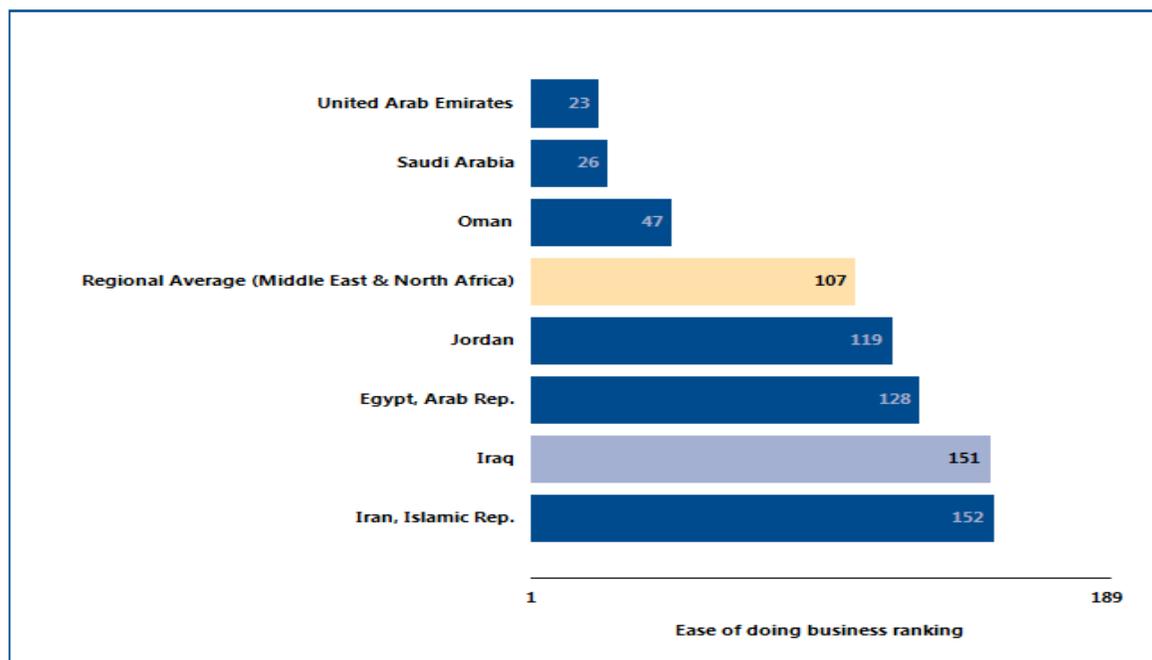
The GOI established a committee this quarter to deal with Iraq’s public debt, most of which stems from the Saddam era. Estimated at between \$130 billion and \$140 billion in 2003, the government debt had fallen to \$92 billion in 2010 according to the CBI. About \$45 billion of this amount is eligible for debt-reduction negotiation under the same terms of the 2004 Paris Club agreement under which 19 nations, including the United States, wrote off 80% of outstanding debt. Among the remaining sovereign creditors, Arab neighbors—including Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates—are collectively still owed about \$40 billion. Iraq owes Poland \$850 million.

In addition to this debt, Iraq also owes war reparations stemming from Saddam’s invasion of Kuwait in 1990. At the end of 2011, Iraq owed just over \$18 billion in reparations—mainly to Kuwait. Iraq uses 5% of its crude oil income to pay these reparations.

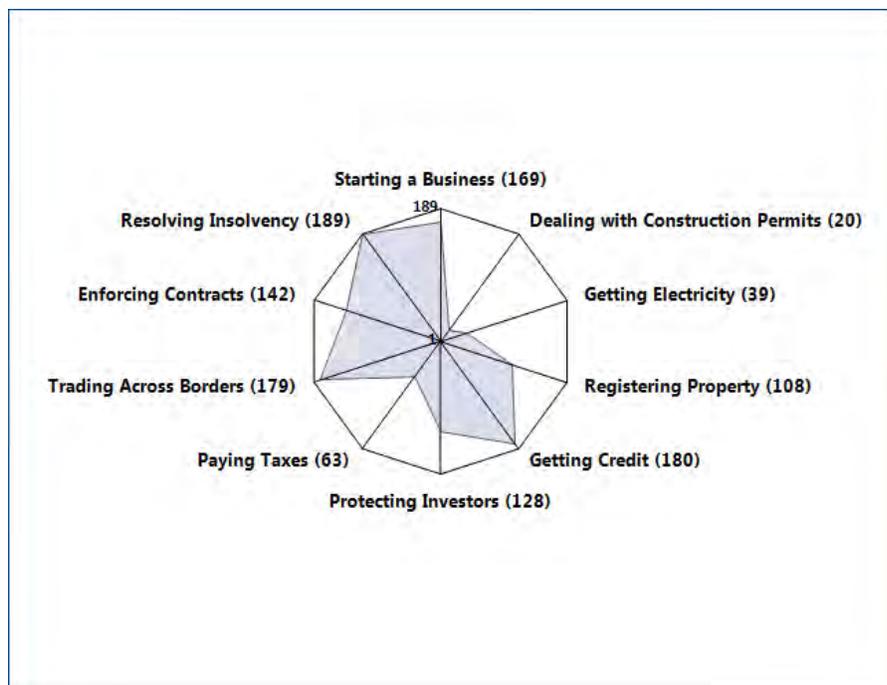
The Central Bank of Iraq, estimated as of October 2013, that Iraq still owed approximately \$87.7 billion, of which \$45 billion may be “subject to debt reduction by non-Paris Club official creditors, comparable to the Paris Club agreement.”⁸¹⁶ The Central Bank notes that these negotiations, primarily with other Persian Gulf state are still ongoing. US diplomatic engagement with Gulf States may be able to push for forgiveness of these debts in order to develop stronger ties between Iraq and Arab states in opposition to Iranian influence.

Figure 47: Constraints on Enterprise in Iraq

Ranking Relative to Other Gulf and Regional States



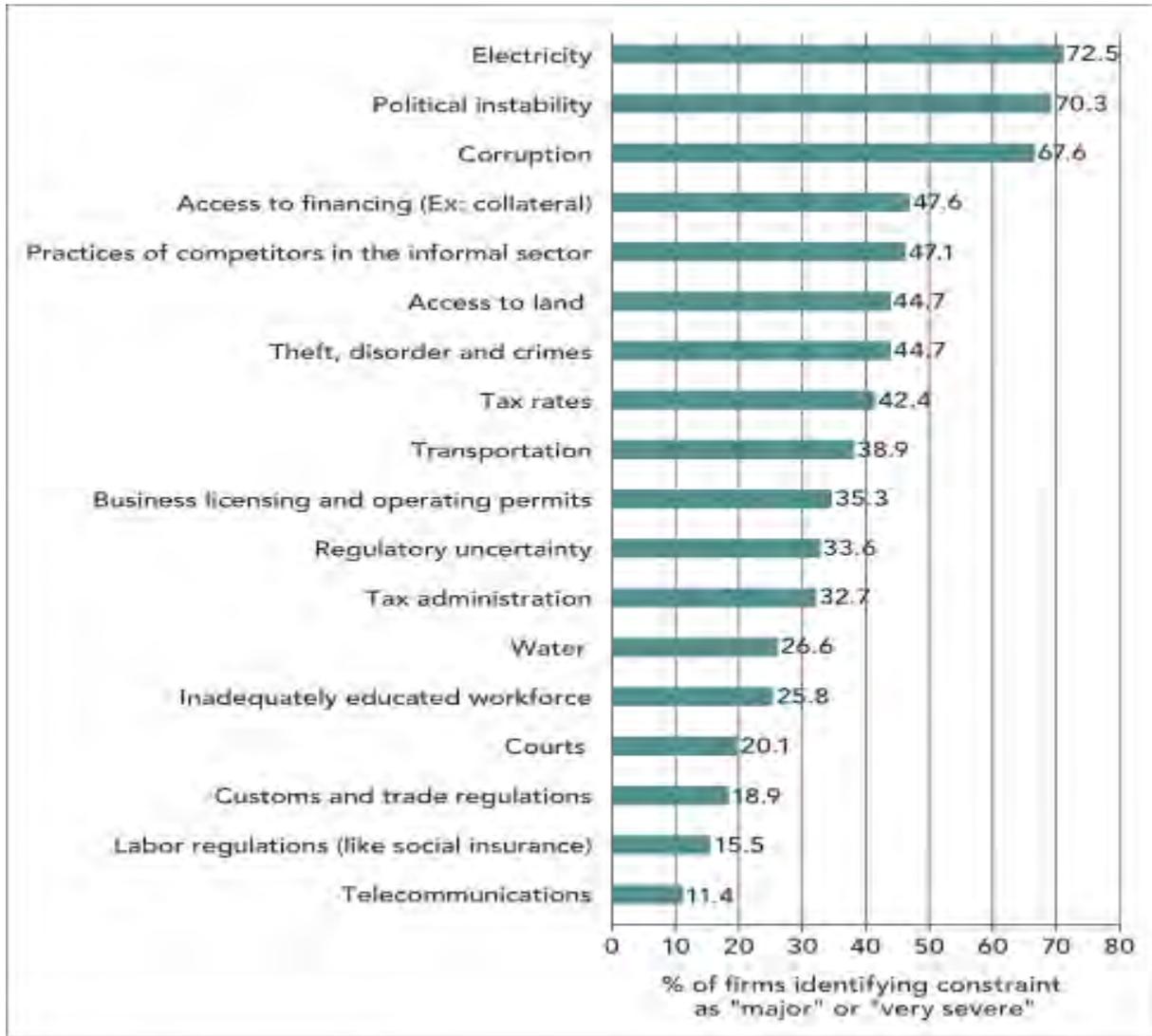
Ranking by Category Relative to 189 countries in the World (Higher Number = Worst Performance)



Source: World Bank, Iraq Economic Profile, 2014, pp. 7, 17,

<http://www.doingbusiness.org/data/exploreeconomies/iraq/~/-/media/giawb/doing%20business/documents/profiles/country/IRQ.pdf?ver=2>.

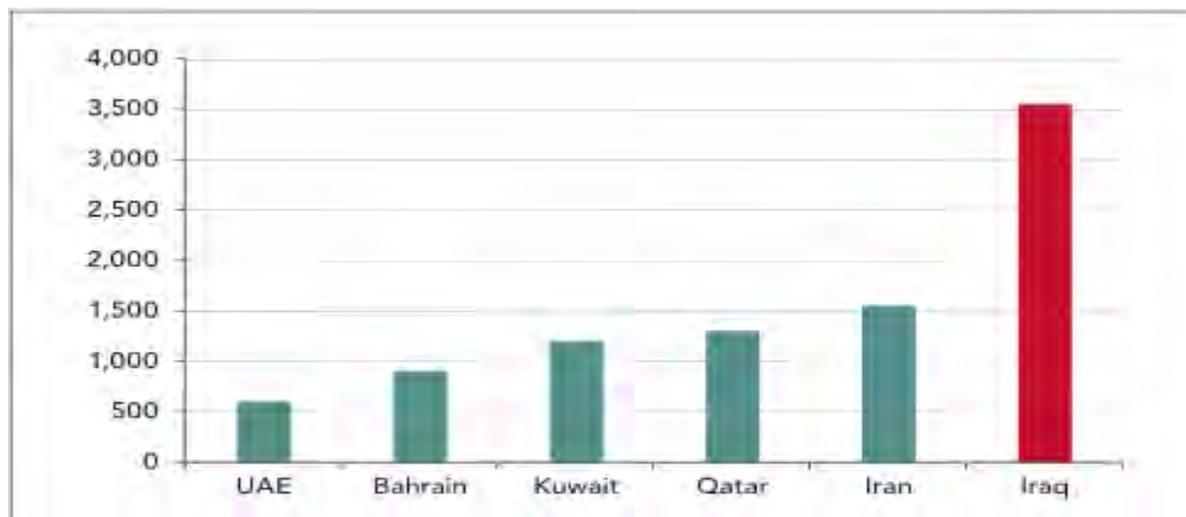
Figure 48: Constraints on Enterprise in Iraq



Source: World Bank Enterprise Survey, 2011.

Source: World Bank: Iraq Investment Climate Assessment 2012, p. 9.

Figure 49: Average Import/Export Costs, Per Container (US\$)



Source: World Bank: Doing Business, 2012.

Source: World Bank: Iraq Investment Climate Assessment, 2012.

Agriculture and Water

The problems created by Iraq's over dependence on petroleum export revenues and state sector, and barriers to investment and growth in the private sector, manufacturing, finances, and services are compounded by longstanding problems in its agriculture sector. While the estimates involved are somewhat dated and uncertain, The CIA, for example, estimates that the Iraqi agricultural sector employs approximately 20% of the population, but produces less than 4% of GDP.⁸¹⁷ As other sources confirm, makes it far more important in human terms than its economic impact would indicate.

Iraq had serious problems in agricultural development even during the time of the monarchy. The bloody coup that overthrew the monarchy came in part because of power struggles over Iraq's development in which the monarchy was seen as favoring agriculture because of its support for the King over the focus those running the coup wanted to put on industrial development. In the decades that have followed, Iraq has lurched from one failed approach to modernizing its agricultural sector to another while its population growth has put increased pressure on the land and forced migration to urban areas.

A UN FAO study called *Iraq: Agriculture Sector Note*, and that was issued in 2012, warns that Iraq has serious problems with malnutrition and states that,⁸¹⁸

After years of war and social unrest, Iraq is facing a number of challenges that are common to all sectors of the economy, amongst which the most important are the deteriorated state of the social and economic infrastructure, the disruption of the social fabric of the society and the increased dependence on oil incomes—representing two thirds of the GDP and almost all exports and fiscal revenues.

The contribution of agriculture to GDP has been declining in the last decade from 9 percent in 2002 to 3.6 percent in 2009, following the problems caused by the war, the social unrest and institutional and economic issues. The security situation and rural poverty have contributed to this decline with an outflow of people from the countryside to the urban areas seeking employment and economic opportunities for displaced families.

Agriculture is mostly practiced on small farming units and it is a low input–low output system. Crop yields are low by any comparative standards as farmers tend to minimize costs concerned with land preparation, planting, weeding and harvesting.

Crop production is the major source of income for the majority (75 percent) of farmers in Iraq, while the rest depend on livestock or mixed crop and livestock enterprises. Grains, primarily wheat and barley, are Iraq's main crops in the north and central rain fed areas. In central and southern Iraq, where agriculture depends mainly on irrigation from the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, mixed farming systems are predominant. Dates are a major cash and food crop with fruit trees interplanted in date palm orchards. Vegetables, mainly tomatoes and potatoes, are important irrigated crops. Livestock raising is extensively practiced and inland fisheries and backyard poultry raising are valuable as a source of protein and income for the rural population.

Irrigation is extensively practiced in the central and southern regions. The total managed water area is estimated at around 3.5 million ha all of it equipped for full or partial control irrigation. The agriculture sector is the main consumer of water with 85 percent of the total.

...The National Development Plan (NDP, 2010–2014) aims at developing a stable, competitive and sustainable agriculture to enhance food security and rural incomes, generate rural employment, diversify economic growth and protect the natural environment. It emphasizes development of social and economic infrastructure, research and genetic improvements of plants and livestock and support to the private sector by developing adequate financial markets and credit policies; it draws attention to the problems of international water rights and water allocation between competing uses, to the integrated and efficient management of water resources, to the need for increasing agricultural productivity through the introduction of improved technologies and modern extension methods, to the need for considering a rural development approach to raise the economic and social level of the rural population and to the priority for legal reforms concerning land management and tenure. The sector's low productivity and growth rates are attributable to a variety of issues and to past policies when the government maintained artificially low food prices through price and production controls and marketing restrictions. In addition, years of insufficient maintenance and funding have degraded agricultural services and physical infrastructure, particularly the irrigation network. During the recent conflicts, extensive looting damaged a range of government and private agricultural production and service facilities in central and southern Iraq, including research facilities, animal health and artificial insemination centers, poultry production industries, and plant quarantine units at the borders.

The highly subsidized “food basket” provided by the PDS has been an essential policy measure to ensure food security and avoid possible famine but subsidized food rationing on a national scale with imported food has had a negative impact on the local grain market with consequent depressing effects on producer prices and on agricultural sector investments.

Government policies in the agricultural sector have been characterized by the state determination to control and subsidize farm inputs (fertilizers, seeds, insecticides, farm equipment and machinery) and prices of strategic crops. The most important crop, wheat, has been the most controlled and the most affected by the lack of open markets.

Problems in irrigation are severe: they range from widespread deterioration of irrigation infrastructure to poor operation and maintenance of the systems, inefficient water use, soil salinity, weak institutional support and lack of regulatory framework for efficient use and pricing of irrigation water. Iraq will witness more shortages in water resources after Turkey and Syria develop their irrigation projects. No international water use agreement has been signed so far by the three countries.

Access to credit is difficult outside government ad hoc subsidized credit programs: private capital investment resources are lacking, as are credit initiatives available to farmers. The near absence of institutional credit has made the cost of capital prohibitive for agricultural producers and discouraged private investment.

The capacity of institutions like the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) and the Ministry of Water Resources (MoWR), to provide services to the sector has remarkably deteriorated over the past two decades. There is little institutional coordination and cooperation in agricultural planning and project implementation. The weak institutional support has translated into a drastic reduction of the performance and coverage of the research and extension services, animal health and artificial insemination centers, plant quarantine and disease control mainly due to lack of staff incentives and physical infrastructure. The non-involvement of the beneficiaries in the setting of both the research and extension agenda is highly counterproductive for both.

Organizations at producer level exist but they are weak and ineffective. Years of conflict and social disruption have disintegrated the social fabric of the Iraqi rural society and the traditional customs of social rural life.

Because of the relative isolation of Iraq in recent decades, agribusiness and food and agricultural enterprises have not been able to benefit from international markets, modern production techniques and global trading standards. There are no incentives to invest in agricultural processing industries or value chains because of the complicated and outdated administrative and regulatory system, the considerable shortcomings of the public agencies that are in charge of the advisory and technical services, erratic price policies, inefficient marketing networks, very little market information and complicated and time consuming export/import procedures.

The land management and tenure legislation is inadequate. The land tenure regime is a major constraint and contributes to land degradation and to the low productivity and slow growth of the agricultural sector.

Excessive focus on urban and economic development and low awareness of the importance of the functions provided by aquatic ecosystems has progressively led to severe degradation of the natural resources and loss of biodiversity. The wars have contributed to further degradation of the environment and in the alluvial plains soil quality has been damaged by the deposits of large amounts of salt borne by irrigation overflows and wind and poor soil drainage. Desertification and soil erosion have reduced arable lands. The problem of the Mesopotamian marshlands that have contracted significantly due to the lack of a sustainable water source are well known. The agricultural information system needs restructuring and modernization to support GoI and the private sector for business planning, investment and development. There are significant sector specific “gaps” in statistical information, which hinder GoI from effectively developing agricultural policies and implementing agricultural interventions. There is no functional agricultural statistical system for producing accurate, relevant and timely statistics on crop, livestock and agro–industry production on a regular basis with standard statistical methodology.

Iraq will be dependent on imports for meeting domestic food demand for many years to come and it is not possible at present to predict which subsectors of the Iraqi agricultural economy will develop such characteristics as to enjoy comparative advantages on the international markets: however based on historical trends it may be possible to infer that promising sub–sectors for short–term expansion mainly include those with good export potential or which offer efficiency gains from import substitution. Fruits and vegetables imported from neighboring countries are an obvious target and following production development and the introduction of quality controls, vegetable and fruits exports could also be envisaged, once local demand is satisfied. For dates, which have always been a traditional export, there should be no problems to increase exports provided work on improved varieties is continued and strengthened. Food grains and feedstuffs, meat and dairy products could become competitive both in terms of import parity prices (as imports substitution) or eventually, as in the case of meat and meat products, find a ready market in the neighboring countries. For dairy and dairy products more specifically, there should be good potential for growth.

Comparative advantages will not emerge by isolated efforts but they will have to be assessed on the basis of regional and provincial characteristics. Any development programs will have to be accompanied by social, economic and institutional reforms that would provide—at central and local level—the basic ingredients for sustainable growth. Thus the emphasis should be on defining comparative advantages on the basis of territorial characteristics and not on the basis of a narrow assessment of technical potential and financial or economic comparative and competitive analysis for individual crops or subsectors. The rehabilitation and development of the Iraqi agriculture is a medium/long term aim which can only be achieved through a coherent, coordinated effort based on two main pillars: Policy Improvements and Investment Projects including inter alia, rehabilitation of support services and capacity building.

The NDP goals for agriculture in Iraq are well defined but there are areas where policies designed to achieve these goals need to be translated into a clear regulatory framework with operational strategies responding to the priorities of the farmers and of the business community: i) changing the top down centralized planning approach to a bottom up decentralized identification of programs and projects with farmers and the private sector in the driving seat; ii) improving inter-institutional cooperation in planning and implementing integrated rural development projects; iii) setting up legislation for promoting private investment in agriculture, iv) introducing a reform of the PDS and of government intervention in agricultural inputs distribution and price policy, v) setting clear guidelines for land management and tenure reforms, vi) developing new mechanisms for financing small and medium size farmers and agribusiness development,

and vii) development of an adequate legislative and institutional framework which adapts the principles of the integrated water resources management concept to Iraq's specific context including water resources management, water pricing and charges and water users' associations

John Schnittker, a US expert on Iraqi agriculture with extensive field experience in Iraq, describes the sector as follows:⁸¹⁹

Approximately 30% of the population resides in rural areas, yet agricultural related jobs are declining sharply, and opportunities for meaningful employment are few. The sector is whipsawed by huge annual swings in production and income as rainfall across northern Iraq has become less reliable and access to modern seed, and other inputs remains largely in the hands of the Ministry of Agriculture.

The sector is underperforming, largely due to the legacy and current involvement of state involvement. While the Ministry of Agriculture has grandiose plans for increased production and ultimately food self-sufficiency, these plans are unrealistic and regrettably do little for the existing base of small agricultural producers, instead focusing on larger scale irrigation projects. The current plan will likely aggravate already high tensions in rural areas.

Agriculture's contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and employment has declined precipitously over the last decade. This has occurred because growth in the agriculture sector has been relatively stagnant compared to oil fueled growth in the rest of the Iraqi economy. This trend will continue. Agriculture's contribution to real GDP dropped from 12.1 percent in 1997 to approximately 8.1 percent in for 2010, and declined further to 7.6 percent in 2011. The outlook for 2012 is for further decline, as crop and livestock production are negatively impacted by domestic drought conditions and high world prices drive up costs of imported feed products. Government of Iraq policies that restrict development of an agribusiness sector to supply inputs and a value-added food processing sector ensure that growth and job creation in the agricultural sector will remain flat.

The agriculture sector employed 27.4% of the workforce in 2006. The agricultural share of employment dropped to 21.6% in 2008 and plunged to 12.1% in 2011, and this figure can be expected to continue declining. Iraqi data showing much higher employment is out of date and needs to be revised to reflect fewer farm workers and a significantly larger population. The rural population has remained relatively stable in recent years at around 29 percent, which reflects the lack of job opportunities in urban areas.

It is unrealistic to expect that the agricultural sector will have direct and positive impact on economic growth and employment, especially in the near term. The opposite is likely, since access to modern seed, fertilizer, and new production technology would lead to fewer and larger farms across Iraq, effectively reducing the need for labor in the sector. This is already occurring, and these individuals have little incentive to relocate to urban areas in search of job opportunities except for government security forces. Job creation in the agricultural sector will only take place in response to broad-based sector income growth and the emergence of functioning agribusiness and food processing sectors. With the Government of Iraq (GoI) maintaining tight control over the agricultural sector and agribusiness, this is unlikely to happen.

Iraq's agricultural sector remains depressed and underperforming relative to its potential, facing a range of challenges, including poor irrigation water management and limited access to modern seed and adequate supplies of fertilizer, fuel, and modern equipment. Irrigation water availability has also decreased, due to upstream diversions in neighboring countries, and recurring drought. This situation is made worse by a canal delivery system that is in extremely poor condition and inefficient irrigation practices by producers.

The Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) continues to play a pervasive and generally negative role in Iraqi agriculture. While it promises to supply many of the required inputs through various state companies at subsidized prices, the quality is poor and quantities actually supplied are less than one-third of market requirements for items like wheat and barley seed and fertilizer. The effect of providing low-quality and subsidized inputs is to severely limit private sector development by effectively crowding out companies that might supply inputs and new technologies more reliably at market prices.

Poor water use planning by the GoI-Ministry of Water Resources and the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) and trans-regional disputes over water that originates or flows through Kurdistan exacerbates an already tenuous irrigation water supply situation. Producers are unlikely to invest in new irrigation technology in the face of uncertain irrigation supplies. A long-delayed major irrigation initiative by the

Ministry of Agriculture seems to be moving forward where they will purchase hundreds of center pivot systems for resale at subsidized prices primarily to wheat producers. Again, this may help at the margins but will only serve to crowd out the development of private sector irrigation equipment companies that would serve the sector better.

Iraq's system of land tenure and inefficient government implementation of land reform has contributed to low productivity and the slow growth in the agricultural sector. The GoI appropriated almost all agricultural land following the 1958 revolution. The goal was to redistribute large holdings and empower poor tenant farmers. Regrettably, redistribution has not taken place, and most producers lease their land from the GoI. Land expropriation and redistribution is a deeply-rooted, underlying issue, with the potential to lead to civil violence, particularly in northern Iraq. Leases by the government may be granted preferentially and producers lacking clear title to the land they farm do not have the land available to serve as collateral to underpin a market-oriented farm credit system.

Iraqi agricultural policy planning documents generally focus on the goal of improving Iraq's food security situation. However, food security is usually confused with self-sufficiency, which is an unrealistic goal given the agricultural production base. Iraq is highly dependent upon imported commodities (wheat, rice, vegetable oil, fruits, and vegetables) and processed foods to meet its food requirements.

In terms of policy, Iraq needs to reduce the pervasive role on the central government in agriculture and adopt more market-oriented policies. This would mean reducing the role of state-owned enterprises in the agricultural sector and allowing more private sector involvement in supplying inputs and equipment. Access to credit is also essential to any hope of growth. However, the trend is in the opposite direction, especially at the Ministry of Agriculture, where they are focused on increasing rather than reducing the reach and control of the state owned enterprises.

Key weaknesses in agricultural policies are the government promises to farmers of extensive input subsidies, including fuel, seeds, agricultural chemicals, equipment from state-owned enterprises, and zero interest rate loans for working capital. As previously noted, little is actually delivered. High domestic procurement prices are provided for so-called strategic crops, including wheat, barley, corn, and rice, and are set at levels considerably above world market prices. These high prices for strategic crops distort production patterns and limit production of feed grains necessary for the animal sector, including dairy, poultry, and goat and sheep production.

The current Ministry of Agriculture five-year plan addresses legislative and regulatory reform, although and it is widely recognized that revamping the policy, legal and regulatory system is critical for improving the support framework for agriculture. However, we are unaware of formal proposals and initiatives underway that will achieve the stated objectives of the strategic plan. Current cooperative law, seed law, import and export regulation, animal and plant health systems, water rights and enforcement, irrigation water management and soil fertility management would all benefit from streamlined, modern regulations and enforcement. Furthermore, the Ministry of Trade runs a large, expensive, and poorly-targeted subsidized food-basket program (Public Distribution System) for which every Iraqi is eligible. This has the effect of disconnecting Iraqi agriculture and consumers from markets and crowds out private sector development of agricultural processing, wholesale distribution, and retail marketing.

Iraq also needs to deal with growing problems in handling water resources that have steadily dropped in per capita terms and been affected by damns in Turkey and Syria. The FAO describes the situation as follows:⁸²⁰

...The agriculture sector is the main sector in consumption of water in Iraq. It is estimated that 85 percent of the water resources are used in agriculture and about 8 percent are used for other purposes, while the rest is lost, especially through evaporation.

Water losses in irrigation schemes, all over Iraq, are substantial. By and large, water is conveyed to farmers' fields through very poorly maintained distribution systems made of earth canals and ditches which suffer significant water losses because of infiltration, seepage or leakage. On-farm field application efficiency using the traditional surface gravity systems is assumed to be between 30–40 percent but is probably near 20 percent or less.

Geographic factors affect Iraq's water resources availability and use. Like all rivers, the Tigris and the Euphrates carry large amounts of silt downstream. This silt is deposited in river channels, in canals and on flood plains. Drainage is complicated by the flat nature of the terrain.

Most important, Iraq lies downstream from both Syria and Turkey on the Euphrates River and downstream from Turkey on the Tigris River. In the early 1970s, both Syria and Turkey completed large dams on the Euphrates and filled vast reservoirs causing a decrease in the river's flow and of irrigated areas along the Euphrates from 136,000 hectares to 10,000 hectares from 1974 to 1975. No agreements between Iraq, Turkey and Syria on Euphrates and Tigris international water use have yet been signed.

...For the above reasons, prospects for increasing irrigated areas should mainly be based on increases in efficiency and reduction of waste. Furthermore, "... Iraq will witness more shortages in water resources and low quality after Turkey and Syria develop their irrigation projects. Turkey and Syria are aiming at planting more than 2.4 million hectares that will be irrigated from the Euphrates basin, and approximately one million hectares that will be irrigated from the Tigris. This will cause a deficiency in revenues (water availability) from the Tigris and Euphrates of more than 43 percent in 2015...

The water level of both the Tigris and the Euphrates rivers has fallen by more than 60 percent over the last 20 years partially as a result of upstream water use and damming. Water deficiency may lead to a shortage of hydropower, desertification, dust storms, loss of biodiversity and the spread of waterborne diseases — all of which have an impact on households and farming communities, with particular harm to the poor and other socially vulnerable groups (women, children, elderly, disabled).

The Uncertain Quality of US Aid and the Need to Focus on Advice and US Private Investment

In 2011 the US began phasing out aid projects in conjunction with the withdrawal of combat troops, and focused remaining efforts on small programs to help Iraq build capacity in key areas. These efforts are likely to have limited visibility and impact on Iraqis and US and Iranian competition. SIGIR reported in 2011 that the remaining projects include:⁸²¹

The Iraq National and Provincial Administrative Reform Project (called *Tarabot*, or "linkages" in Arabic), with \$151 million from the ESF. The new initiative follows the long-running National Capacity Development Program (called *Tatweer*, or "development," in Arabic), which was concluded on July 31, 2011. Like *Tatweer*, *Tarabot* aims to support the GOI by strengthening federal, provincial, and sub-provincial government entities while working to increase provincial control over public-policy decision-making and government resources. The project is scheduled to conclude in 2015.

The Governance Strengthening Project (GSP), a \$131million ESF-funded effort that aims to continue the work of the Local Governance Program (LGP), which ended in September. The project will aim to develop Iraq's provincial governments amid concerns raised in evaluations of the LGP about the ability of the central government to devolve power to the provinces.

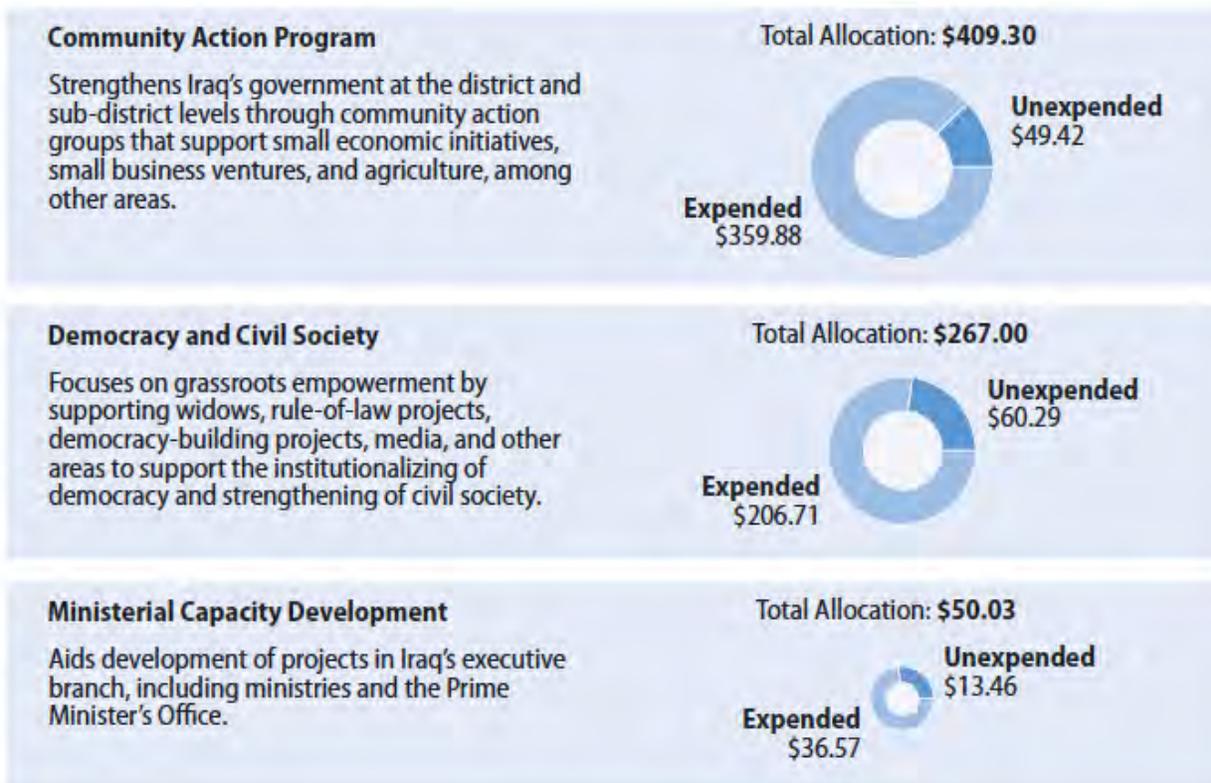
These US projects are shown in **Figure 50**, and it is clear that they were relatively small and narrowly focused. Major new funding will be needed to sustain these efforts – and US competition with Iran – in FY2014 and beyond.

While the US may be able to partially compensate for cuts in aid by focusing on the technical advice and expertise Iraq needs to use its own resources effectively, the US aid levels involved and their visibility are very low.

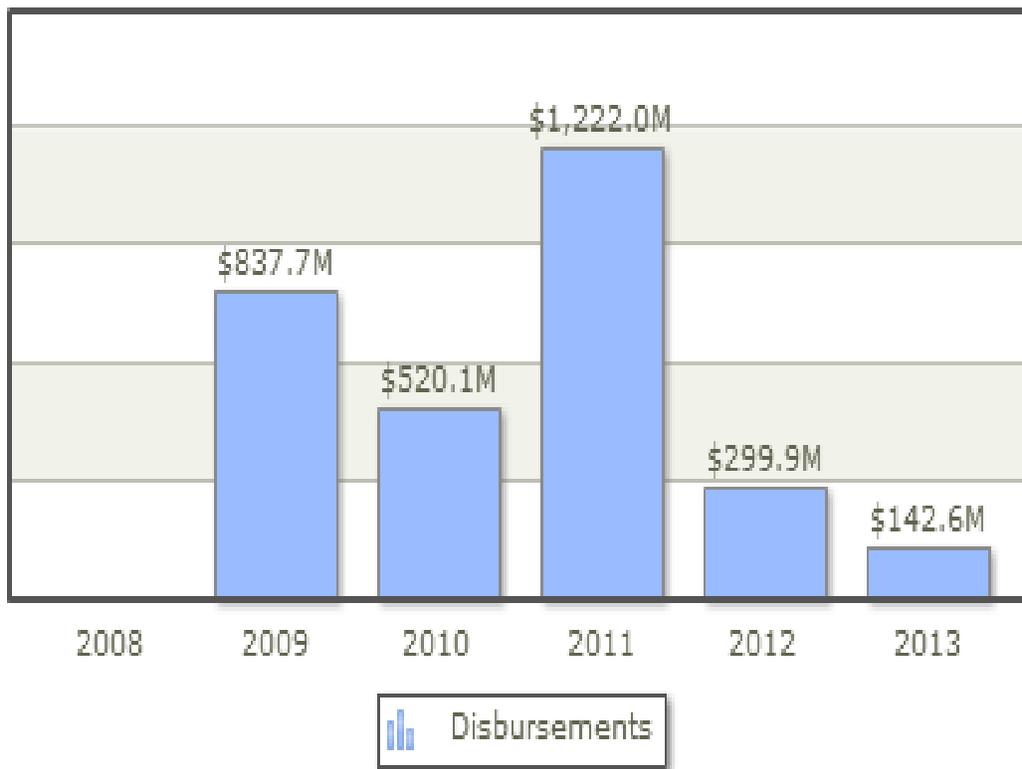
According to the Congressional Research Service, the FY2012 aid request for Iraq was \$1.27 billion.⁸²² Actual expenditures of US aid money by the State Department in 2012 was only \$299 million, as shown in **Figure 51**.⁸²³ This trend in decreasing aid money continued throughout FY2013, as the overall request was cut \$590 million, of which only \$142 million had been spent during the fiscal year.⁸²⁴

CRS reports that the official FY2014 budget request – as yet unapproved by the US Congress - is for \$573 million, bringing Iraq out of the top five recipients of US aid money.⁸²⁵ American leadership will need to reassess this commitment if the US is to meaningfully compete with Iran for influence in the Iraqi economy.

Figure 50: New US Aid Projects in 2011



Source: SIGIR, Quarterly Report, October 30, 2011, p. 45.

Figure 51: US Foreign Aid to Iraq Disbursement by Fiscal Year

Source: Foreign Assistance Dashboard, www.foreignassistance.gov, accessed October 3, 2013.

The UN analysis of Iraq's budget problems in 2013 has been cited earlier. The US Government Accountability Office noted in February 2012 that,⁸²⁶

GAO analysis of Iraqi revenue and expenditure data through the end of 2009 showed that Iraq generated an estimated cumulative budget surplus of \$52.1 billion. This estimate is consistent with the method that Iraq uses to calculate its fiscal position. Adjusting for \$40.3 billion in estimated outstanding advances reduces the amount of available surplus funds to \$11.8 billion. For 2010, Iraqi Ministry of Finance and Central Bank of Iraq data show that the Iraqi government generated a \$600 million cash deficit (rather than the \$19.6 billion deficit budgeted) due to higher-than-predicted revenue and less-than-planned expenditures. In addition, during the first 6 months of 2011, the government of Iraq collected \$7.9 billion more in oil revenue than it originally budgeted. GAO does not have more recent data on outstanding advances that would allow for an update to the amount of available surplus. The International Monetary Fund, however, has determined that the Ministry of Finance should review the outstanding advances as a benchmark the government of Iraq needs to achieve under its current stand-by arrangement.

While the Department of Defense warned that this surplus did not take account of the barriers to Iraqi spending and its future needs, it is clear that US fiscal problems make it increasingly unlikely that the US will provide major amounts of aid in the future. This makes the lag in American private sector energy investment and commercial ties even more important. It is also unlikely that near to mid-term US private investment will be able to replace American aid or compete with Iraq's trade relationship with Iran. US Ambassador Jim Jeffrey has actively encouraged American investment, and while American businesses have been increasing investment in Iraq, most been risk-averse

and slow to jump into the Iraqi business environment, which ranks 168th out of 185 countries in the World Bank's rankings on the ease of doing business.⁸²⁷

The Obama Administration submitted its FY2014 funding request to Congress in April 2013. CRS reported that the \$51.97 billion request for State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs totaled almost 3 percent less than the actual funding level for FY2012 (\$53.43 billion), and is 5.3 percent less than the amount requested in FY2013, and 12.9 percent lower than the FY2012 request. The total requested for State Department Operations and related agencies (\$16.87 billion) decreased by 6.3 percent from FY2012 funding, and the amount requested for Foreign Operations (\$35.1 billion) declined by 0.9 percent over compared to FY2012 levels.⁸²⁸

The CRS report on The FY2014 State and Foreign Operations Budget Request reported reduced funding for all of the "Frontline States" of Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan.⁸²⁹ The CRS report stated that:⁸³⁰

In Iraq, the Department of State became the lead agency for all U.S. programs after the departure of U.S. military forces in late 2011. An initially ambitious presence has been dramatically curtailed in the last year, due to a number of factors including resource constraints and what some observers suggest were overly ambitious initial plans and Iraq's intent to assert its independence from U.S. tutelage. It also reduces further the department's footprint by closing the Erbil Diplomatic Support Center (to be replaced by a new consulate) and handing over other sites to the Iraqi government, thereby reducing sustainment and security contract costs. Including foreign assistance, the Administration requests \$1.18 billion for its activities in Iraq, including \$0.65 billion in Ongoing Operations OCO funding. The request is \$2.4 billion lower than the FY2012 actual level.

Iran's Growing Economic Role in Iraq

Iran's efforts make a sharp contrast. There is little doubt that Iran seeks to leverage its cultural, political, and religious ties with Iraq for economic gain; some of the most recent data on foreign commercial activity in Iraq suggests that Iranian economic activity in Iraq has been notable, but limited. This trend can be attributed to international pressure to curb Iraq's business transactions with Iran, as well as Iran's own internal problems stemming from international economic sanctions on its nuclear program.

Iran-Iraq economic ties are strong, and have been encouraged to some degree by the impact of international sanctions on Iran in other markets. In August 2010, Iran's ambassador said Iran would double its trade volume with Iraq.⁸³¹ A leaked State Department memo from November 2009 noted that Iran's geographic proximity and willingness to take business risks in the insecure environment help make it an important trading partner for Iraq:⁸³²

With annual bilateral trade estimated at USD 4 billion (up 30 percent since 2008) and comprised mostly of Iranian imports (approximately 48 percent of Iraq's imports are Iranian goods), the IRIG [Islamic Republic of Iran Government] continues to jockey for economic domination in Iraq through targeted development assistance, focused largely on refurbishment of Shi'a religious shrines, and trade deals and bilateral agreements aimed at fostering greater Iraqi economic dependency on Iran. This measure has been successful, largely because of Iran's geographic proximity and access to Iraqi markets that are otherwise financially or politically less appealing to other states, notably the United States, Europe, and other industrialized nations. Turkey, on the other hand, remains Iran's biggest economic competitor, particularly in the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG).

Mohsen Milani has different numbers for this trade, but they reflect the same trends and note the importance of Iran in providing electricity to Iraq:⁸³³

Iraq is Iran's second-largest importer of non-oil goods. In 2003, Iraq's non-oil imports from Iran totaled \$184 million; by 2008, this figure was \$7 billion and is expected to top \$10 billion by 2012. Iraq is also largely

dependent on energy imports from Iran. In 2009, it imported \$1 billion in energy -- 40 percent of which was electricity and 30 percent refined petroleum products. Iran has also been involved in rebuilding Iraq's energy infrastructure. In 2007, for example, Tehran signed a \$150 million contract to build a 300-megawatt power plant in Baghdad, and in 2008 it agreed to build a 400-megawatt electricity line between Abadan, a port city in southwestern Iran, and Alharasa in southern Iraq. Iran is also heavily invested in Basra, a strategically important port and Iraq's second-largest city: Iran plans to develop a free-trade zone there and build crude oil and oil-product pipelines between the city and Abadan. Its commercial relations with Kurdistan have expanded as well; there are more than 100 Iranian companies operating there, and Kurdistan has been exporting its surplus oil to Iran in exchange for the import of Iranian electricity.

According to a June 2013, report by Omar Shaher, a journalist writing for *Al Monitor*, Iraq currently receives 72% of Iranian exports, an increase of 15% over the previous year.⁸³⁴ This clearly indicates a massive economic relationship that dominates the import/export sectors of both countries, and also elicits concerns about Iran's ability to use its economic ties to evade international sanctions imposed due to its nuclear program. Indeed, the report quotes Iraqi political analyst Ihsan al-Shammari as saying that "Iran see's Iraq as its only economic lung."⁸³⁵

As Iraq struggles to build its electricity infrastructure, Iranian influence in this sector will continue to be vital to Iraq's growth. Overall Iran provides about 5% of Iraq's electricity, although in some border areas this figure is much higher.⁸³⁶ As power shortages persist across most of Iraq, still affecting about 80% of the population in late 2011, Iran might be relied on to a greater extent.⁸³⁷

A report on foreign commercial activity in Iraq by *Dunia Frontier Consultants* states that Iran, among other regional and international countries, "made significant entries into the Iraqi marketplace in 2011 with numerous multimillion-dollar deals".⁸³⁸ Iran ranked seventh on the list of countries that had conducted deals under \$1 billion in Iraq over 2011.⁸³⁹ Iran has also implemented electricity deals with Iraq that were negotiated after the CPA era.⁸⁴⁰ According to the Iranian ambassador to Iraq, Iran supplied 750 megawatts of electricity to Iraq daily in mid-2010.⁸⁴¹ Two Iranian banks, Parsian and Karafarin, have been approved to open up branches in Iraq.⁸⁴²

Some Iraqis, as well as neighboring Arab states, are concerned about Iraq's post-invasion shift towards trade with Iran.⁸⁴³ Iran's economic ties to Iraq have come at a price to many Iraqis. Many Iraqi business owners complain that Tehran is dumping cheap, subsidized Iranian good and foodstuffs on the Iraqi market. This has retarded growth in Iraq's light manufacturing and agriculture sectors.⁸⁴⁴ At the same time, Iran might be leveraging its resources to effectively bolster Iraqi Ministers who align with Iran.

Iran and Iraq compete industrially and commercially, and especially in terms of agricultural products. This creates tension because Iran is often able to export more cheaply due to Iraq's weakness in developing its agricultural output and distribution in a sector that employs 21% of the population but only accounts for 3% of GDP.⁸⁴⁵ Moreover, Iranian investments in real estate and businesses in Basra, Karbala, and Najaf have been seen as exploitative rather than winning gratitude from Iraqis.

In late 2011, when reports emerged that Iranian-linked Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashimi Shahroudi was moving to Najaf, potentially as a successor to Sistani, a number of residents were outraged. They voiced anger over Iranian attempts at manipulation and reverberated a common sentiment that Iranian Shi'ites are Iranian first and believe they are superior to Arabs.⁸⁴⁶ Similarly, while Iraqis in Basra take advantage of Iranian money, they ultimately identify as Arab Shi'ites, and possess little support for either Iran or the US.

At the same time, Iran has growing economic influence in some local communities. In 2005, for example, there were reports that finding a job in Basra required the sponsorship of an Iranian-backed group, and only those with leanings towards Iran filled teaching posts. Traders in parts of southern Iraq increasingly speak Farsi, and many accept Iranian currency.⁸⁴⁷ Many Iraqis also receive medical care in Iran. Iranian exports include electricity, refined oil products, and cars.

Other Iraqis also resent the Iraqi government more than Tehran. Basra is an example. Many Basrawis are reported to feel have been unfairly treated by Baghdad, Washington, and their Kuwaiti neighbors, and so have turned to Iran for their development needs. Basra is a potential economic hub and contains the majority of Iraq's oil. Revenue sharing is at the core of Basra's complaints about Baghdad. Basra sends \$50 billion each year to Baghdad from oil and gas sales, or 75% of the Iraqi government's total revenue, yet sees only \$1 billion in return.⁸⁴⁸ They blame Kuwait for developing ports and using drilling methods that infringe on Basra's economic livelihood. Washington has ignored Basra's complaints, which has opened up an opportunity for Tehran.

Nevertheless, Iran's influence does not necessarily go beyond the pragmatic self-interest of given groups of Iraqis. Najaf, the spiritual capital of Shi'a Islam, is an example of the limits to Iranian influence. Najaf is home of the leader of Iraq's Shi'a community and quietist school of Shi'ism, Ayatollah Ali Sistani.

Options for Policy

US policymakers have limited options for supporting Iraq's economic development, and encouraging Iraq to do a far better job of using its revenues to meet its broader development goals and most urgent public needs – failures which help explain the level of public demonstrations and dissatisfaction with their government cited in previous chapters. SIGIR, GAO, UNDP, World Bank, and IMF studies all show that massive amounts of US aid during 2004-2011 did little to develop Iraq's economy, and the token amounts now available can only play a negligible role in developing Iraq's economy and give the US little leverage.

The US cannot credibly allocate large aid resources in the future and the US, other foreign, and Iraq private sectors have every reason to remain cautious. As noted at the outset of this report, Iraq's economic development is hindered not only by continued political instability and accelerating violence, but also by widespread corruption and long-standing structural inefficiencies born of a state-owned command economy and long neglected infrastructure. Efforts to reform state-owned enterprises, improve infrastructure, and equitably distribute and reinvest petroleum revenues can only be realized by the Iraqi government itself.

At best, the US and other outside state can do is to highlight areas for improvement and recommend courses of action to Iraqi leaders. These recommendations will be most constructive if they take full account of the problems highlighted by international agencies and by Iraqis in the work done by UNDP. Work the World Bank has done in developing country partnership strategies for Iraq also provide a solid starting point -- *if Iraq moves towards political unity, can limit its violence, limit its corruption, and show improvements in governance and the ability to effectively manage investment policies and economic reforms*. These at present, however, are criteria Iraq cannot meet in any one area, much less the mix of success necessary for rapid development.⁸⁴⁹

US leadership may also be able to exercise some degree of diplomatic leverage with the KRG – as well as Iran now that the two governments are taking very early steps towards détente – in order

to support efforts towards hydrocarbon legislation within Iraq and also to prevent Iranian meddling with the Iraqi economy. Even in this case, however, the brunt of the work must be done by the Iraqi government taking difficult steps towards reform of state-owned enterprises, reinvesting petroleum revenues towards improved infrastructure and a more diverse economy, and initiating diplomatic negotiations with the KRG and Iran in order to finalize long term oil extraction and export agreements.

XII. IRAQ'S PETROLEUM CHALLENGES

Iraq's oil resources present both an opportunity and a challenge in shaping Iraq's future. Iraq can only fund the necessary improvements to its security and the rest of its economy if its officials can properly plan, fund, and manage its petroleum sector, and if its politicians can establish some unity of effort that unites energy development in the KRG and the rest of Iraq, establishes security and stability in its unexplored Sunni and mixed Shi'ite and Sunni areas, and both persuades its oil rich south to avoid divisive federalism and establishes a higher level of security and stability.

While Iraq is making progress, this progress is not yet tied to practical and realistic goals and plans or to laws and policies that offer the proper incentives for investment. Moreover, increases in petroleum wealth will only move Iraq forward, and help put an end to Iraq's violence, if they are tied to better use and distribution of that wealth, an end to Iraq factionalism and growing violence, and more effective political leadership and governance.

The Challenge Posed by the "Resource Curse"

As the previous chapter has shown, the development of Iraq's petroleum sector is also only part of the problem. Iraq faces far broader economic challenges and if its limited oil wealth is not used wisely, it can seriously limit and distort its future growth. It is also critical to keep Iraq's oil wealth in perspective. The EIA estimates that Iraq earned some \$83 billion from oil exports in 2012, and was on a path that would give it \$86 billion in 2013. This, however, only amounted to \$2,675 in export revenues per capita in 2012, and Iraq was on a track that would have produced \$2,700 in per capita annual earnings during the first six months of 2013.⁸⁵⁰ This scarcely was wealth in per capita terms, although it made up a very significant part (39%) of a total GDP per capita that the CIA estimated was only \$7,000 in 2012.⁸⁵¹

Economists and planners argue over the best way to diversify and limit the negative impact of oil "wealth," but few would argue with the warnings in a study for USAID prepared in 2012,⁸⁵²

Avoiding the so-called 'resource-curse' or 'paradox of plenty' must remain a primary concern for the Government of Iraq if it is to learn from the successes and failures of other countries experiencing a major boom in non-renewable resource exports. So far however, despite controlling recurrent spending in 2011, Iraq's growth path is on a dangerous trajectory that has political, economic and societal risks.

Iraq is a resource-rich country. With oil reserves estimated at 143 billion barrels; Iraq is third on the list of countries with the largest reserves after Saudi Arabia and Canada. Paradoxically, whilst oil remains the major economic comparative advantage of Iraq, that resource wealth is also a threat to its democracy. Iraq's oil income, which is the key driver of long-term development, therefore, also stands as an impediment to sustainable growth. Iraq is at a crossroads.

Democracies place pressure on national leaders to create an economy that will deliver improvements in livelihoods, through the equitable redistribution of national resources. Inclusive or broad-based growth demands such transparency. In post-conflict settings, normal economic processes are generally incoherent. Markets are dysfunctional and often combat and coping economies dominate activity. With a small and undeveloped private-sector, citizens necessarily look to the government for relief. Public-sector jobs provide that. But public payrolls consume government revenues that ought to be devoted to public investments in highways, communications, electricity supply, water and sanitation, schools, and public health. Economic dysfunction short-circuits necessary investment.

- Iraq's economic, poverty and conflict future will be largely determined by the GoI's ability to govern the economy in the transparent and better use of oil revenues and establishment of wealth redistribution mechanisms;

- GDP growth has been volatile (fluctuating from 6.2% in 2006, to 0.8 % in 2010 and up to 12% in 2012) but has increased from US\$ 45.1 billion in 2006 to an estimated US\$108.6 billion in 2011;
- Burgeoning public sector staffing (now at over 3.4 million employees) alongside pay increases has undermined growth-inducing capital spending, with non-oil sectors declining in relative terms;
- While the National Development Plan (NDP) outlines planning objectives, it is policy-blind and lacks vision on modernizing core economic institutions essential for creation of a market-based economy;
- The slow pace of restructuring State Owned Enterprises, including direct government financial support totaling US\$2.4 billion in 2011, continues Iraq's state-centric economic ideology;
- NDP targets for employment creation (3 to 4.5 million between 2010-2014) are unlikely to be met and will be heavily determined by public and not private sector employment;
- NDP projected private sector investments equaling 86% of public investment are unlikely to take place.

...Poorly managed oil growth can further crowd out the private sector: Abundant resource wealth is dangerous because once it is devoted to job creation in the public sector it becomes difficult for governments to re-direct those funds to investments that require political patience until the benefits begin to appear. Short-run political expedience feeds on long-run economic coherence. Furthermore, with the civil service law making it difficult to downsize the public sector, putting a freeze on salary increases and considerations for a retrenchment program of some sort become the only possible way to increase non-recurrent spending. Currently, with every new public sector employee appointed, the long term recurrent costs and pension liabilities undermine growth futures, which must be heavily driven by capital investment and diversification policies.

Some groups' capture of oil wealth further accentuates fractures: A second danger in large infusions of oil income is that it drives a wedge between political leaders and the citizenry. Effective democracies require a functioning "tax bargain." Citizens agree to pay taxes in exchange for certain benefits—highways, schools, national defense, reliable and safe water. When governments do not meet the expectations of their citizens, the tax bargain is violated. Those who pay taxes have a credible means to challenge government incompetence and indifference. When citizens are not expected to pay for government services they value, it cannot be a surprise that governments find it easy to disregard the demands of the citizenry. Democracy is not just about voting—it is about an implicit contract between those who govern, and those who are governed. There is no tax bargain in Iraq.

Oil wealth can create significant economic and market distortions: Finally, enormous oil wealth produces yet a third problem. Iraq has the highest rates of energy subsidies in the world, approaching 30 percent of GDP in 2012. Large infusions of foreign exchange distort economic relations so that prices, wages, interest rates, and savings become distorted. These distortions are more pronounced when the private sector is comprehensively dysfunctional. Economic incoherence compounds the manifold dangers of the resource curse.

Iraq therefore represents the perfect trap: (1) a former planned economy with scant cultural and practical experience with a market economy; (2) a nascent and dysfunctional market struggling against comprehensive incoherence; and (3) annual flows of income from oil sales that approached \$80 billion in 2011. This is an exquisite recipe for political and economic chaos.

The current struggles in Iraq have nothing to do with the standard narrative of the region. If there were no oil income on offer, various groups would get on with life. But with the prospect of annual oil revenues approaching \$300 billion in another 10 years, the political stakes are unprecedented. The future is suddenly worth fighting for. Struggles for control of the machinery of state pay large rewards because mobilizing the monopoly on capital accumulation is central to state control.

...Iraq is a mono-dimensional economy dependent on the export of crude oil to finance almost its entire government budget. Decades of statist policies have stifled the development of a diverse and thriving private sector. Government policies continue to militate against the formation and viability of firms across all sectors. Credit markets are undeveloped, and labor and energy markets distorted.

Exacerbating the problem is that despite the large influx of oil revenues, the GOI has made little progress in rebuilding and maintaining the critical infrastructure needed to support a competitive private sector. Electricity is supplied at a level that meets only 50 percent of consumer demand, transportation networks are in a state of disrepair, water supply and sanitation infrastructure are dilapidated, and other critical public services such as the provision of education and health services are inadequate to meet the needs of a growing population and modern economy.

For Iraq to succeed in building a vibrant and modern economy that is more broadly-based and that over time will be led by a competitive private sector, the GOI will have to institute major reforms, and invest in physical infrastructure and human capital.

The elevated level of oil prices and the potential to significantly increase output means that Iraq will have a window of opportunity to invest in rebuilding its economy. Yet it will be faced with difficult choices on how best to allocate its newfound riches without further distorting the economy. It will need to determine how to best avoid the worst effects of the “resource curse”, reform economic governance, and target its efforts on revitalizing critical sectors that would not only generate economic growth and employment but would serve to diversify the economic base. The Economic Assessment conducted a series of diagnostics to identify targets of opportunity for donor assistance as well as reforms that need to be undertaken by the GOI to ensure that technical assistance will achieve its objectives. The following provides recommendations for policy options and for Targeted Assistance on an activity by activity basis.

Iraq’s Petroleum Development goals

Iraq faces major challenges in developing its petroleum sector as well. **Figure 52 and Figure 53** summarize the trends in Iraqi oil production and exports, and show the increases between 1980 and 2012. In 2013, Iraq became the world’s second largest oil-producing nation, having surpassed Iran at the end of 2012.⁸⁵³

The key questions for Iraq are what level of future oil production and exports Iraq can actually achieve, how the resulting revenues will compare with its needs, and whether it can use its revenues more wisely to meet its broader development and public needs and to encourage national unity. The first two issues are analyzed in this chapter. The previous chapter on Iraqi economics has shown that Iraq as yet has failed to use its oil revenues to achieve anything like its broader development needs or the most urgent needs of its population.

If Iraq can meet most of its goals for increased oil and gas production and exports, the resulting revenues could serve as the economic foundation necessary to fund its development in other sectors, invest in Iraq’s infrastructure, and develop areas such as social welfare, health care, housing, and education. The International Energy Agency’s recent *Iraq Energy Outlook* states that Iraq’s energy sector “holds the key to the country’s future prosperity and can make a major contribution to the stability and security of global energy markets.”

In its April 2013 country report on Iraq, the Energy Information Agency (EIA) of the US Department of Energy summarized these goals as follows:⁸⁵⁴

Iraq has begun an ambitious program to develop its oil fields and to increase its oil... they would increase total Iraqi production capacity to almost 12 million bbl/d, or about 9 million bbl/d above 2012 production levels.

Iraq does, however, face many obstacles in making so great a level of progress. It is unlikely to meet these goals even if it can bring its violence and internal tension under control. Increased

levels of sectarian violence and disputes between Baghdad and the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) may impede Iraq's stability and ability to produce and export oil. Waste, corruption, mismanagement, and fraud all threaten to impede Iraq's oil production.

The violence in the Shi'ite-dominated south has been limited, but discussions with oil company experts reveal a growing concern with localized Shi'ite violence and Sunni ability to carry out sporadic attacks – problems documented in detail in various editions of the Iraqi Oil Report during late 2012 and 2013. Iraqi Sunnis have repeatedly attacked Iraq's northern pipelines, especially in Ninewa.

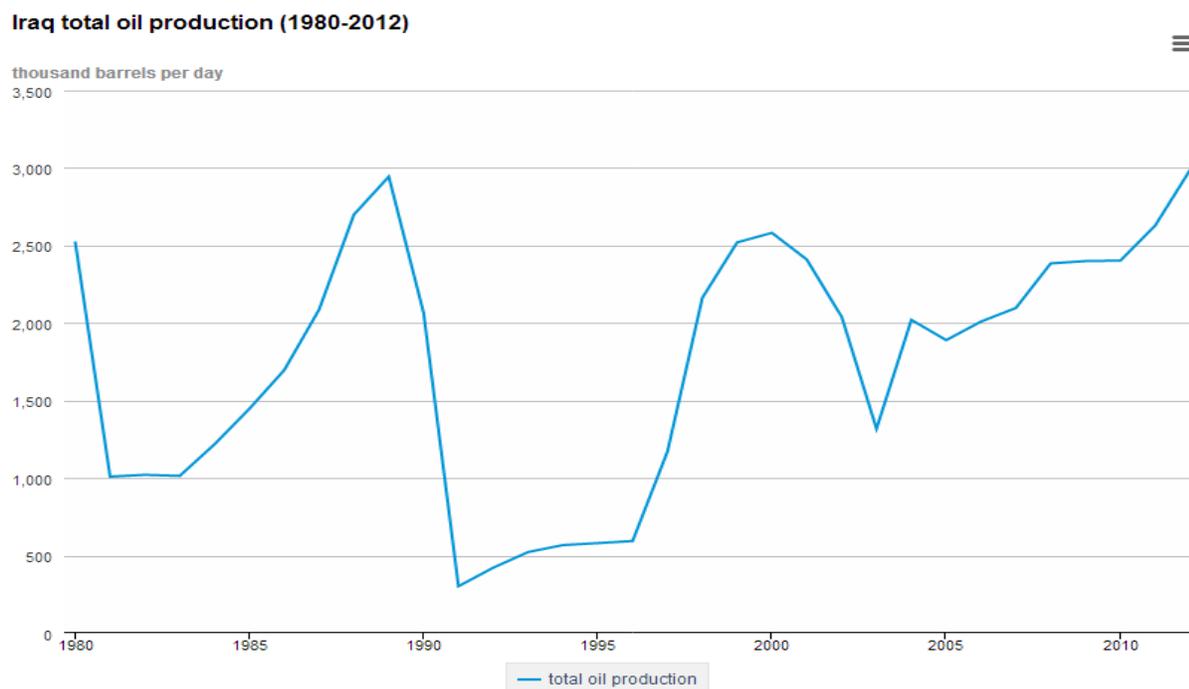
An article in Canada's Financial Post quoted Abu Ammar, a Sunni tribal leader in southern Ninewa province as stating that, "It is government crude for Sunni blood... The Baghdad government should understand this message: stop spilling our blood and we'll stop attacking the oil pipeline... The Shi'ite government is killing and persecuting Sunnis in all parts of Iraq. As revenge we have to make the government suffer, and the best way is to keep blowing up the oil pipeline."⁸⁵⁵ A wide range of other media reporting provided warning that the situation was becoming more serious even with Shi'ite workers in previously secure areas like Basra and the Rumailia oilfield in the south.⁸⁵⁶

As 2013 drew to a close, the US Energy Information Agency (EIA) reported that troubles with security and maintenance were having a growing impact Iraq's oil production levels, and news reports described a growing series of attacks and incidents in the south.⁸⁵⁷ In November 2013, the EIA reported that, "planned maintenance and ongoing unplanned security-related outages have taken 740,000 barrels per day of crude oil production offline in Iraq since September. The security situation in Iraq continues to affect production."⁸⁵⁸

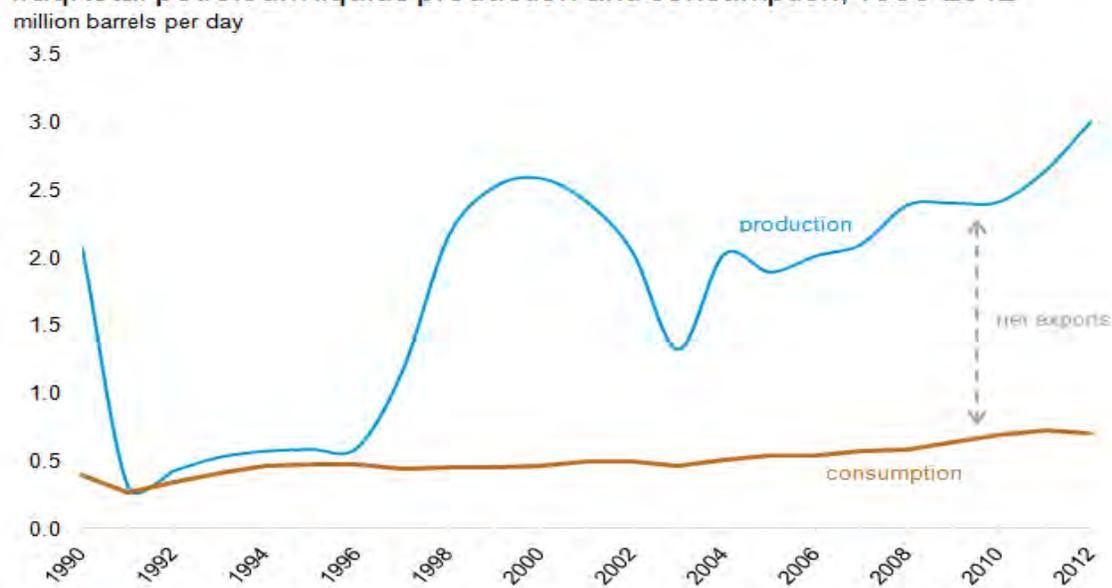
Moreover, the Iraqi oil ministry reported in late January 2014 that Iraq oil revenues had actually dropped in 2013 to \$89.22 billion in comparison to \$94.02 billion in 2012.⁸⁵⁹ Exports dropped to an average of 2.39 million bpd in 2013 compared to 2.42 million bpd in 2012. The ministry reported that the causes were various periods of bad weather, sabotage against the main northern pipelines, and maintenance work at the main oil export terminal in the south. (It also stated that exports had risen back to 3.07 bpd in December 2013, and claimed further rises would take place in 2014, but this assumed that further violence and instability would not affect future production and exports.⁸⁶⁰

At the same time, the ethnic divisions between the Arab dominated central government and the Kurds in the KRG presented growing problems. The KRG's independent efforts to develop the petroleum resources in the territory it controlled had allow it to make deals with ExxonMobil, Chevron, Total and others, and to work with the Turkish government to set up the Turkish Energy Company (TEC), a state-backed entity which has struck partnership deals with Exxon and will be Turkey's counterparty in dealings with Kurdistan. By the beginning of January, 2014, the KRG was making its first exports of some 300,000 barrels per day (bp/d) through a new 400,000 bp/d pipeline to Ceyan in Turkey -- although the Turkish Energy Minister Taner Yildiz stated on January 2, 2014 that the oil would not be shipped to world markets without the consent of the Iraqi central government.⁸⁶¹

Figure 52: Total Iraqi Oil Production: 1980-2012



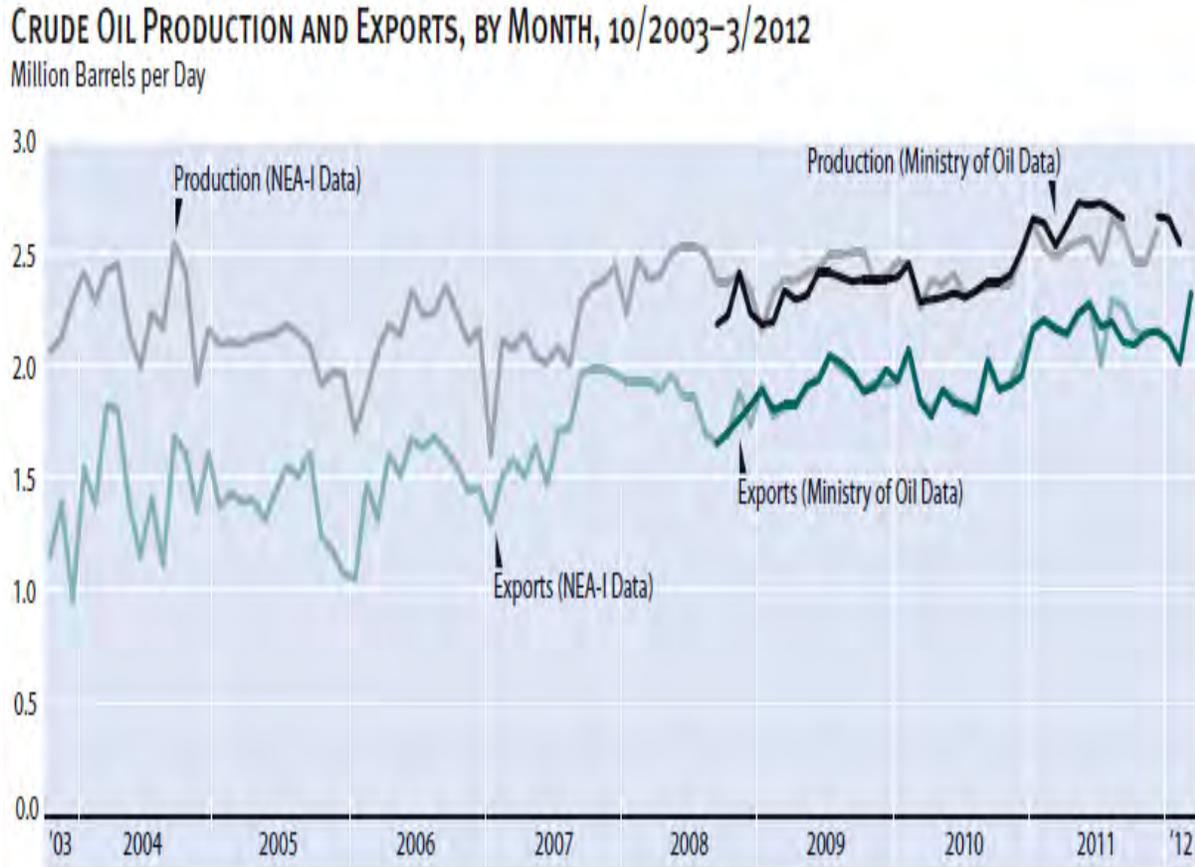
Iraqi total petroleum liquids production and consumption, 1990-2012



Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration

Source: Energy Information Administration, Iraq Country Report, April 2, 2013, p. 5.

**Figure 53: Iraq Crude Production versus Exports October 2003-
March 2012**



Note: In previous Quarterly Reports, the data that SIGIR reported on crude oil production and exports was obtained from NEA-I. Because NEA-I is no longer able to provide that data, SIGIR is now using data reported by the Ministry of Oil. Both sets of available data are shown in this figure. Exports include crude oil from the Kurdistan Region; production figures do not.

Sources: NEA-I, responses to SIGIR data calls, 6/4/2010, 7/6/2010, 1/11/2011, 4/5/2011, 7/7/2011, 10/17/2011, and 1/6/2012; GOI, Ministry of Oil, "Domestic Consumption" and "Crude Oil Exports," www.oil.gov.iq, accessed 4/23/2012.

Source: SIGIR Quarterly Report to Congress, April 2012, p. 87.

Iraq's Current Energy Production and Potential

The sheer scale of Iraq's untapped petroleum resources, investment from international oil companies, and the world's growing need for oil are likely to make major increases in Iraq's oil production in spite of all its problems. The question is how fast these increases will take place, whether Iraq can create the incentives and security to both create and sustain them, and whether they can meet anything approaching Iraq's goals.

Estimates of Iraq's reserves differ, and Iraq has sometimes politicized and exaggerated some of its claims regarding its total reserves, although there has been no systematic survey of Iraqi's proven and potential reserves since the late 1970s. Iraq revised its estimate of proven oil reserves from

115 billion barrels in 2011 to 141 billion barrels as of January 1, 2013, according to the *Oil and Gas Journal*.⁸⁶² Nevertheless, the EIA estimated in May 2013 that Iraq had 143.1 billion barrels of proven reserves, the fifth largest reserves in the world.⁸⁶³ BP provides a higher estimate: 150 billion barrels.⁸⁶⁴

As a result, the key issue for Iraq is not whether it has the reserves to increase production, but whether it has the proper mix of governance, security, and energy investment resources. A report the IEA issued called *Iraq Energy Outlook* in 2012 suggested that Iraq could significantly increase its capacity but provided equally significant warnings:⁸⁶⁵

In our Central Scenario, Iraq's oil production more than doubles [from current levels of 2.9 mb/d] to 6.1 mb/d by 2020 and reaches 8.3 mb/d in 2035. The largest increase in production comes from the concentration of super-giant fields in the south around Basrah. A resolution of differences over governance of the hydrocarbon sector would open up the possibility for substantial growth also from the north of Iraq, where contracts awarded by the Kurdistan Regional Government, though contested by the federal authorities, have made this one of the most actively explored hydrocarbon regions in the world. Iraq stands to gain almost \$5 trillion in revenues from oil export over the period to 2035, an annual average of \$200 billion and an opportunity to transform the country's future prospects.

Similarly, the US Energy Information Agency reported in July 2013 that,⁸⁶⁶

Iraq has established an official oil production target of 12.0 million barrels per day in 2017 [37], a huge increase compared with its 2012 production level of 3.0 million barrels per day. It is unlikely to come close to reaching that target, which would exceed the amount of global incremental liquids production needed to meet projected global demand growth to 2017 in the *IEO2013* Reference case. Political disputes and infrastructure limitations are likely to continue hampering output growth in the short run. In addition, terrorism, the poor investment climate, and other problems could limit Iraq's production over the projection period. However, if those problems can be overcome, major improvements in production and export infrastructure could enable Iraq to sustain high production growth rates through 2040.

Iraq's engineering challenges are serious. The necessary oil rigs must be equipped and ready to move product, millions of barrels of water must be brought inland from the Gulf to Iraqi oilfields to support production, and oil storage and transportation capacity must be developed to accommodate export.⁸⁶⁷

Iraqi export capacity is also being limited by Iraqi domestic demand and by subsidies that sharply increase this demand. UNDP estimates that petroleum subsidies already reduce the price by more than 50% and cost Iraq some \$11.3 billion a year, and the end result is that Iraqis consume over 750 million barrels a day of Iraq's oil production.⁸⁶⁸ The Iraqi Oil Ministry reported in June 2012 that the country's crude exports dropped 2.2 percent from April to May, 2012 due to increased demand.⁸⁶⁹ Even if these subsidies were removed, and Iraq built enough refineries to meet growing domestic demand, future development and population increases and would still steadily increase Iraq's domestic use of its petroleum output.

Violence is a continuing problem both in attracting investment and in securing petroleum facilities. Other internal disputes between the central government and Iraq's oil rich regions, as well as poor infrastructure, political uncertainty, sabotage, and internal demand limit Iraq's ability to produce and export oil.

As has been analyzed throughout this report, the politics of Iraqi oil development presents ethnic, sectarian, and regional problems. Proven reserves and existing fields are almost all in Shi'ite south or disputed Kurdish-Arab areas in the North. Political unrest in Syria and Lebanon prevent the revival of pipeline systems to the Mediterranean, the pipeline north to Turkey crosses disputed areas, pipelines through Kuwait and through Saudi Arabia to the red Sea are now used by Saudi

Arabia for its own oil, and pipelines to the Gulf end in a small offshore area with limited depth and high vulnerability.

If Iraq is to approach its current goals, it is going to have to both fully renovate its existing fields and develop new ones throughout the country. The EIA country report for April 2013 noted that,⁸⁷⁰

Iraq revised its estimate of proven oil reserves from 115 billion barrels in 2011 to 141 billion barrels as of January 1, 2013, according to the *Oil and Gas Journal*. Iraq's resources are not evenly divided across sectarian-demographic lines. Most known hydrocarbon resources are concentrated in the Shiite areas of the south and the ethnically Kurdish region in the north, with few resources in control of the Sunni minority in central Iraq.

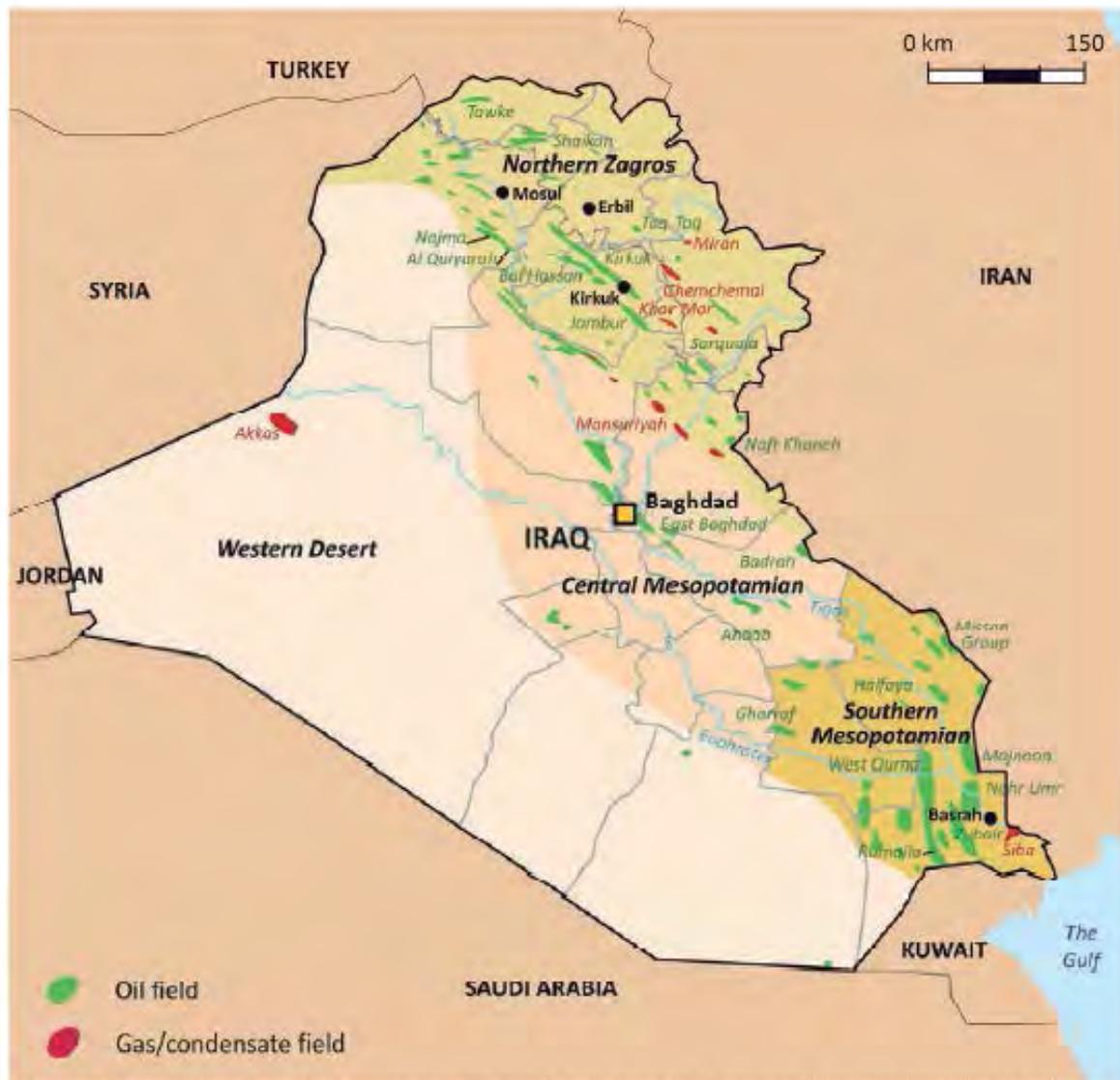
The majority of the known oil and gas reserves in Iraq form a belt that runs along the eastern edge of the country. Iraq has five super-giant fields (over 5 billion barrels) in the south that account for 60 percent of the country's proven oil reserves. An estimated 17 percent of oil reserves are in the north of Iraq, near Kirkuk, Mosul, and Khanaqin. Control over rights to reserves is a source of controversy between the ethnic Kurds and area.

The International Energy Agency (IEA) estimated that the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) area contained 4 billion barrels of proven reserves. However, this region is now being actively explored, and the KRG stated that this region could contain 45 billion barrels of unproven oil resources.

Iraq's three main hydrocarbon basins are the Zagros foldbelt, to the west of the Zagros Mountains situated near northern Iraqi cities of Mosul, Erbil, and Kirkuk; the Mesopotamian Foredeep Basin in central and southeastern Iraq, where the majority of Iraq's super-giant oilfields are located and primarily situated around Basrah; and the Widyan Basin-Interior Platform in western Iraq alongside the border with Saudi Arabia.⁸⁷¹ **Figure 54** provides a map of these and Iraq's other proven Iraqi oil fields.

It is challenges like these that lead experts like Herman Franssen of the Center for Strategic and International Studies, and a former chief economist at the International Energy Agency, to warn that, "There's hardly anybody who believes that target. What people do believe in is that they could reach half of it by 2017. That would still be very ambitious, but at least more realistic".⁸⁷² Production levels as low as 6 million barrels may be more likely.⁸⁷³

Figure 54: Iraq's Main Hydrocarbon Basins and Fields



This map is without prejudice to the status of or sovereignty over any territory, to the delimitation of international frontiers and boundaries and to the name of any territory, city or area.

Source: International Energy Agency, "Iraq Energy Outlook: World Energy Outlook Special Report," October 2012.

IEA and EIA Scenarios for Iraqi Petroleum Development

These uncertainties have led the key organization providing public estimates of world energy development to treat Iraq's future production capabilities in terms of different scenarios driven both Iraq's uncertainties and those of its neighbors.

The IEA Scenarios

The International Energy Association's *2012 Iraq Energy Outlook* described three potential levels of Iraqi oil production: a Central Scenario, a High Case, and a Delayed Case. In the Central Scenario, Iraqi oil production more than doubles from current levels to 6.1 mb/d by 2020 and reaches upwards of 8.3 mb/d by 2035.⁸⁷⁴ In the IAE's High Case, rapid oil production engenders increased economic growth, government spending, international investment, and increased public and private consumption, in turn resulting in even higher energy demand. The High Case implies 17 percent greater oil and gas production than the Central Scenario. In the Delayed Case, slower oil production results in more sluggish overall economic growth, reduced energy demand, and decreased construction of power generation and processing facilities.⁸⁷⁵

The EIA Scenarios

The EIA *International Energy Outlook for 2013* noted that much depends on Iraqi and regional internal stability and provided the following assessment of how Iraqi production could interact with production in other Gulf states:⁸⁷⁶

Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Iraq combined have a large share of the world's oil reserves and resources that are relatively easy to produce. Saudi Arabia, for many decades the only holder of substantial spare oil production capacity, has played a critical role as the major swing supplier in response to disruptions in other supply sources and to economic fluctuations affecting oil demand. Both Iraq and Iran have the reserves and other resources needed to raise their capacity and production well above current levels if they can successfully address some of the internal and external "above-ground" challenges that have kept their respective oil sectors from realizing their potential for more than 30 years.... The difficulty in determining the extent to which each of the countries will be able to overcome the particular hurdles that impede supply growth adds to the challenge of projecting country-specific production levels in the OPEC Middle East region.

In addition to the usual uncertainties surrounding oil supply projections, producers in the OPEC Middle East region are likely to continue playing a key role in the balancing of global demand and supply. For this reason, their output levels may be negatively correlated, as higher realizations of capacity and production in one country will lower the amounts of capacity and production in other countries that are needed to balance global markets. Future developments, including the development of tight oil resources, which is a widely discussed topic in the international oil community, have significant potential to affect the reliance on OPEC liquids supplies and the behavior of key Middle East OPEC producers over the next several decades.

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia's oil revenues traditionally have exceeded the amounts required to fund its government expenditures, enabling it to vary production levels in response to global supply or demand developments over the past 25 years without significant concern about the revenue implications of such actions. More recently, social and economic programs funded by the Saudi government have expanded substantially. While Saudi Arabia maintains large financial reserves, revenue needs may become a more important consideration as the government considers its future responses to a situation of persistent, high growth in supply from other key OPEC or non-OPEC producers, or a sustained downturn in demand.

Iraq

Iraq has established an official oil production target of 12.0 million barrels per day in 2017 [37], a huge increase compared with its 2012 production level of 3.0 million barrels per day. It is unlikely to come close to reaching that target, which would exceed the amount of global incremental liquids production needed to

meet projected global demand growth to 2017 in the *IEO2013* Reference case. Political disputes and infrastructure limitations are likely to continue hampering output growth in the short run. In addition, terrorism, the poor investment climate, and other problems could limit Iraq's production over the projection period. However, if those problems can be overcome, major improvements in production and export infrastructure could enable Iraq to sustain high production growth rates through 2040.

Iran

Iran's liquids production, which reached a peak of 6.1 million barrels per day in 1974, has been well below that level since 1979 [38]. After averaging an estimated 4.0 million barrels per day from 2001 to 2010, Iran's production has declined further. A series of international sanctions targeting Iran's oil sector have led foreign companies to cancel a number of new projects and upgrades at existing projects.

Iran faces continued depletion of its production capacity, as its fields have relatively high natural decline rates (between 8 and 13 percent per year). Additional factors hampering investment include unfavorable foreign investment requirements, underinvestment, and gaps in professional expertise and technology for certain projects. U.S. sanctions on financial institutions that handle payments made for oil exports from Iran, coupled with actions by the European Union to cease imports from Iran and prevent it from accessing insurance from European Union companies for its oil shipments, caused a further reduction in Iran's oil exports in 2012. Without some agreement between Iran and the international community to end the sanctions, it will be increasingly difficult for Iran to maintain its production, let alone increase it, notwithstanding its endowment of readily accessible resources.

Kuwait

Other producers make smaller, but important, contributions to supply. For example, nearly all of Kuwait's current reserves and production are in mature fields, but prospects could improve with the success of Project Kuwait, a plan proposed in 1998 to attract foreign participation and increase oil production capacity from four northern oil fields: Raudhatain, Sabriya, al-Ratqa, and Abdali. The four fields contain a mix of heavy and light oil resources. Additionally, it may be possible to boost oil production in Kuwait from the partitioned neutral zone (PNZ) that the country shares with Saudi Arabia, which could hold as much as 5 billion barrels of oil [39]. Qatar's liquids production is poised to increase over the projection period through the application of GTL technology, which produces liquid fuels such as low-sulfur diesel and naphtha from natural gas.

The EIA also provided four different scenarios for both Iraqi and regional production, and whose impacts are summarized in **Figure 55**:⁸⁷⁷

There is a great deal of uncertainty attached to long-term projections of global petroleum and other liquids supply. It is clear, however, that the countries with most of the world's largest and most flexible liquids resources are located within Middle East OPEC. In particular, Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Iraq have large domestic petroleum resources that can be produced at relatively low cost. Assuming that key OPEC producers persist in efforts to manage world oil prices through supply adjustments, one or more of the three major producers will function as OPEC's swing supply. There is considerably more uncertainty in projecting country specific levels of production, as there are many possible scenarios for future liquids production in Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Iraq.

In this discussion, four alternative scenarios for their liquid fuels production, consistent with their combined production in the Reference case, are considered.

In the *IEO2013* Reference case, total OPEC Middle East liquids production increase from 25.4 million barrels per day in 2011 to 35.8 million barrels per day in 2040. Using the Reference case assumptions, the implied combined production of Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Iraq rises from 17.9 million barrels per day in 2011 to 25.1 million barrels per day in 2040 (Figure 39). The following scenarios are used to demonstrate how widely Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Iraq liquids production could vary, underscoring the uncertainty associated with the outlook for long-term liquids production in any single country.

Scenario 1: Past as prologue

In this scenario, Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Iraq are assumed to continue to provide the share of their combined petroleum production that they held in 2011 throughout the projection period. That is, Saudi Arabia supplied 62 percent of the petroleum produced from the three countries in 2011 and it

is assumed to provide 62 percent of the supply from these three countries through 2040. The result is that Saudi Arabia production rises from 11.1 million barrels per day in 2011 to 15.5 million barrels per day in 2040. Iran's share of production from the three countries was 24 percent in 2011 and, in this scenario, its liquids production in 2040 would reach 5.9 million barrels per day. The remaining 15 percent is ascribed to Iraq, and results in 3.7 million barrels per day of liquids production in 2040. In this business-as-usual scenario Saudi Arabia continues to dominate OPEC Middle East production, and Iraq makes only minimal advances.

Scenario 2: Iraq success

In scenario 2, Iraq is assumed to be able to restore its petroleum production infrastructure and resolve the many above-ground issues that have negatively impacted the industry for more than two decades. In this case, Iraq's production rises to 8.0 million barrels per day by 2030 and then to 11.0 million barrels per day in 2040, from 2011 production of 2.6 million barrels per day.

The remainder is prorated to Iran and Saudi Arabia based upon each country's share of combined 2011 production. That is, Iran accounted for 28 percent of combined Iran and Saudi Arabian liquids production in 2011; Saudi Arabia 72 percent. In this case, production in Saudi Arabia is lower than that of Iraq in 2040 at 10.2 million barrels per day.

Scenario 3: Iran success

This scenario is similar to scenario 2, but substituting Iran as the growth story. In this case, Iran is assumed to have resolved its above-ground issues, including resolution of international sanctions and it attracts the investment necessary to restore and expand the oil production industry. Here, Iran is able to restore production to its 1974 annual peak of 6.1 million barrels per day in 2030 and then production increases to 8.1 million barrels per day by 2040. The remaining production is allotted according to the Iraq and Saudi Arabia shares of their combined 2011 production. In this case, Saudi Arabia's share of the 2011 Iraq-Saudi Arabian combined production is 81 percent; Iraq's share 19 percent. As a result, Saudi production would increase to 13.8 million barrels per day. Iraq's 2040 production rises to only 3.3 million barrels per day, only slightly higher than its 2011 production and far from its stated ambitions.

Scenario 4: Iraq success, Iran success, and Saudi Arabia takes the rest

This final scenario envisions production increasing strongly in both Iraq and Iran, with Saudi Arabia willing to reduce its own liquids output to hold the level of OPEC production at the level projected in the *IEO2013* Reference case. Here, Iraq's production profile is the same as in scenario 2, increasing to 8.0 million barrels per day in 2030 and then to 11.0 million barrels per day in 2040. Iran's production profile is the same as in scenario 3, increasing production to 6.1 million barrels per day in 2030 and then further to 8.1 million barrels per day by 2040. Saudi Arabia produces the remaining part of the Reference case production for the three countries. In this case, Saudi Arabian liquids production in 2040 is 6.0 million barrels per day, slightly more than half its 2011 liquids output.

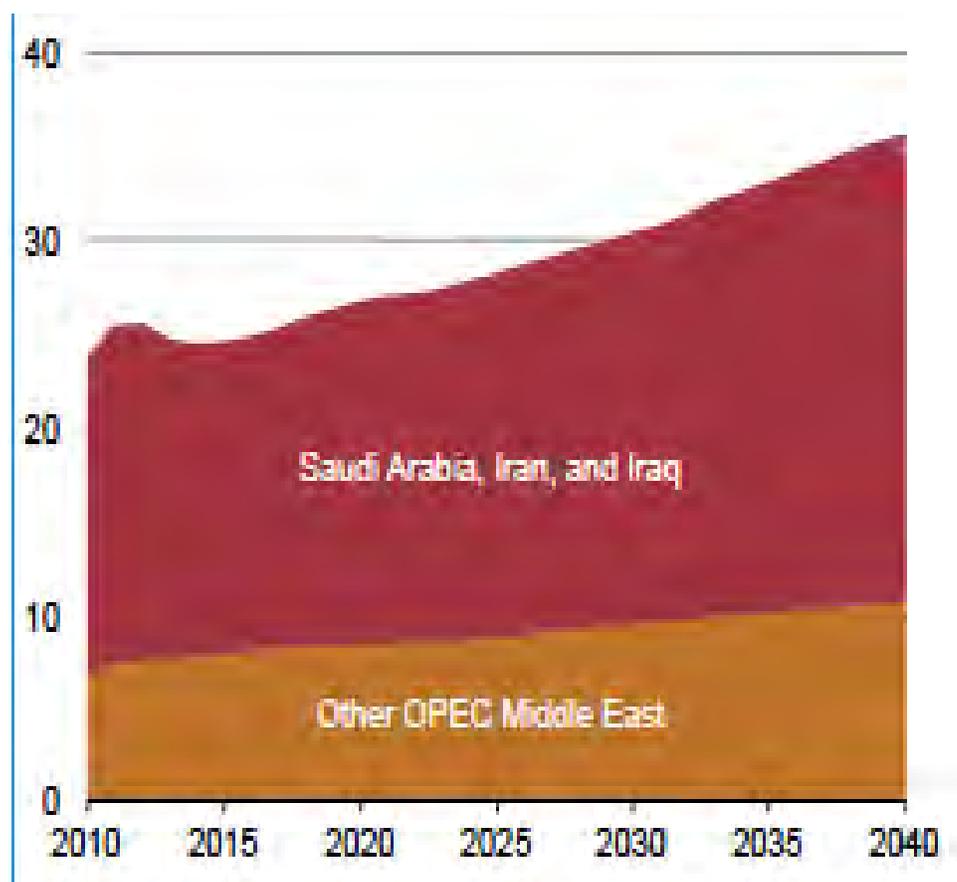
A summary of the results of the four scenarios for 2040 appears in **Figure 5**. These scenarios illustrate the considerable variation in future production that is possible within the three most petroleum-rich countries in the Middle East consistent with the combined total of production from these countries indicated for the *IEO2013* Reference case. Moreover, it demonstrates how difficult it is to estimate production for these large resource holders, given the variety of above-ground issues that can affect the ability or desire to increase a nation's output. In 2040, Saudi Arabia alone has production that ranges between 6.0 million barrels per day (in scenario 4) and 15.5 million barrels per day (in scenario 1), a range of 9.5 million barrels per day. Although the range of supply outlooks for Iraq and Iran is smaller than that of Saudi Arabia, there is still a fairly wide range of possible production for the two countries.

...there is substantial flexibility in future liquids supply from Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Iraq, but the uncertainty associated with any long-term outlook of production remains high. The scenarios do not assess the likelihood of any one of the futures outlined could be realized. There are considerable above-ground issues that could alter production from any one of the three countries. For instance,

given the cost of Saudi Arabia's substantial social programs and subsidies, it is highly unlikely that the government would allow a decrease in production to the 6.0 million barrels per day outlined in scenario 4. It is equally difficult to envision Iraq production barely rising from its 2011 level as posited in scenario 3. Still, the wide range of production possibilities illustrates the number of different possible futures in production from these three countries.

Figure 55: EIA Estimate of Iraqi Future Oil Production in Different Scenarios

OPEC Middle East liquids production by country grouping in the IEO2013 Reference case, 2010-2040 (million barrels per day)



Liquid fuels production in Middle East OPEC in four Reference case scenarios, 2011 and 2040(million barrels per day)

Country	2011	Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3	Scenario 4	2040 production range
Saudi Arabia	11.1	15.5	10.2	13.8	6.0	9.5
Iran	4.2	5.9	3.9	8.1	8.1	4.2
Iraq	2.8	3.7	11.0	3.3	11.0	7.7
Other Middle East OPEC	7.5	10.7	10.7	10.7	10.7	–
Total Middle East OPEC	25.4	35.8	35.8	35.8	35.8	–

Source: EIA, *International Energy Outlook 2031*. Department of Energy, July, 2013, pp. 30-33.

The EIA Assessment of Key Risks

The EIA summarized the risks driving Iraq's future production in more detail in its April 2013 country report on Iraq:⁸⁷⁸

Iraq has begun an ambitious program to develop its oil fields and to increase its oil production. Passage of the proposed Hydrocarbon Law, which would provide a legal framework for investment in the hydrocarbon sector, remains a main policy objective. Despite the absence of the Hydrocarbons Law, the Iraqi Ministry of Oil signed long-term contracts between November 2008 and May 2010 with international oil companies.

Under the first phase, companies bid to further develop giant oil fields that were already producing. Phase two contracts were signed to develop oil fields that were already explored but not fully developed or producing commercially. Together, contracts for both phases cover oil fields with proven reserves of over 60 billion barrels. If these fields were developed as initially planned, they would increase total Iraqi production capacity to almost 12 million bbl/d, or about 9 million bbl/d above 2012 production levels.

The contracts call for Iraq to reach this production target by 2017. However, these contracts are being re-negotiated to more modest levels, and Iraq is revising its production targets to 9.5 million bbl/d by 2017. However, even these revised targets may be overly optimistic, given delays in developing its energy infrastructure. Iraq has since held a third bidding round for natural gas fields, and a fourth round (with few bids submitted) for fields that contain predominantly crude oil. A fifth round has been scheduled in 2013 for the development of the 4-billion-barrel Nasiriya oil field in Thi-Qar province, together with the construction and operation of a new 300,000-bbl/d refinery.

Iraq faces many challenges in meeting the planned timetable for oil production. One of the major obstacles is the lack of an outlet for significant increases in crude oil production. Both Iraqi refining and export infrastructure are severely constrained, with bottlenecks preventing more crude oil processing. Iraqi oil exports are currently running at near full capacity in the south, while export capacity in the north has been restricted by sabotage, deteriorating pipelines, and the inability to receive more oil from the south of Iraq via a deteriorated Strategic Pipeline. Pipeline capacity would need to be expanded in any case to export significantly higher volumes. Progress has been slow because of political disputes between factions within Iraq, especially those between the central government in Baghdad and the Kurdistan Regional Government. Iraq also has disagreements regarding shared oil fields with Kuwait and Iran.

Production increases of the scale planned will also require substantial increases in natural gas and/or water injection to maintain oil reservoir pressure and boost oil production. Iraq has associated gas that could be used, but it is currently being flared. According to a report issued by the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Iraq was the fourth largest natural gas flaring country in 2010.

Another option is to use water for re-injection, and while locally available water is currently being used in the south of Iraq, fresh water is a scarce commodity in the Middle East. Large amounts of seawater will likely have to be pumped in via pipelines that have yet to be built for the Common Seawater Supply Facility. It was estimated that 10 to 15 million bbl/d of seawater could be necessary for Iraq's original production expansion plans, at a cost of over \$10 billion. ExxonMobil, which was originally assigned to lead the project, dropped out in 2012, putting these plans behind schedule. The engineering company CH2MHill was subsequently awarded management of the project in December 2012, but the final scope of the project won't be known until Iraq decides what its re-negotiated production targets will be. The IEA estimates that the project will not come online before 2017 at the earliest.

Furthermore, Iraq's oil and gas industry is the largest industrial customer of electricity in Iraq. Large-scale increases in oil production would also require large increases in electric power generation. However, Iraq has struggled to keep up with the demand for electricity, with shortages common across the country. Significant upgrades to the electricity sector would be needed to supply additional power. Although over 20 gigawatts (GW) of new generating capacity are planned by 2015, delays in meeting projected targets would mean insufficient supply to meet the projected demands of the oil sector.

Investment Barriers to Iraqi Petroleum Development

There are many other reasons why energy experts project that Iraq is unlikely to meet its current goals. Iraq has been slow in establishing the laws necessary to secure investment, political support for outside investment, a solution to Arab-Kurdish power struggles over its reserves (that may soon be followed by Sunni-Shi'ite struggles), an effective oil police and security structure, and electricity and water capacity required for petroleum extraction and production. Iraq's success in obtaining outside investment and technology, while significant, has done little as of yet to show that Iraq can move towards its current goals without major improvements in bidding terms, taxation, security, other legal barriers, and levels of corruption.

Additionally, Iraq's ongoing sectarian violence continues to impede energy development and overall economic progress even in the relatively secure southern parts of Iraq – problems compounded in the south by calls for federalism to try to retain more of the revenues from the region's oil exports, tribal and local feuding and violence, growing sporadic attacks by Sunni extremist groups, and weak and ineffective security forces. While China has so far indicated it will pursue future development in spite of such risks – it has limited its short term exposure and US firms like ExxonMobil have come to focus more on the relatively secure KRG.⁸⁷⁹

The previous chapters have shown that Iraq is currently experiencing its worst levels of violence in over half a decade and this affects many aspects of Iraq's oil operations outside the KRG.⁸⁸⁰ As an example of the economic impact of this violence, SIGIR's September, 2013 report noted that the northern Kirkuk-Ceyhan pipeline sustained numerous attacks, the impact of which was compounded by slow repairs due to poor security. This resulted in oil exports for June 2013, decreasing 65% from the output achieved during the same month in 2011 when the Iraqi security forces still enjoyed US military support.

Figure 56 and **Figure 57** show that non-US firms have dominated the bidding for Iraq's efforts to rehabilitate and expand its oil and petroleum-related sector. Progress in the petroleum sector has been aided, however, by several American companies working in Basra, namely Halliburton, Baker Hughes, Schlumberger, and Weatherford,⁸⁸¹ while Exxon circumvented Baghdad and signed deals with the Kurds in late 2011.⁸⁸² Halliburton is working with Shell to develop the Majnoon oil field 37 miles from Basra.⁸⁸³ Majnoon is one of the world's largest oil fields, named after the Arabic word for "crazy" because of the size of its oil reserve estimates of up to 25 billion barrels.⁸⁸⁴

Figure 56: Oil and Gas Fields Awarded Through April 2012

Results of Oil Field Bidding Rounds					
First Bidding Round (brownfields)	Operators	2009 Prod. 1,000 bbl/d	Target Prod. 1,000 bbl/d	Target Incr. 1,000 bbl/d	Reserves (billion bbl)
Rumaila	BP, CNPC, SOMO	1,000	2,850	1,850	17.8
West Qurna, Phase I	ExxonMobil, Shell, NOC	270	2,325	2,055	8.6
Zubair	Eni, Occidental, Kogas, Misan Oil	205	1,200	995	4.0
First Round Total (billion barrels)		1,475	6,375	4,900	30
Second Bidding Round (greenfields)					
West Qurna, Phase II	LUKOil, Statoil, Oil Exploration CO.	0	1,800	1,800	12.9
Majnoon	Shell, Petronas, Misan Oil	55	1,800	1,745	12.6
Halfaya	CNPC, Petronas, Total, South Oil	3	535	532	4.1
Gharaff	Petronas, JAPEX, North Oil	0	230	230	0.8
Badra	Gazprom, KOGAS, Petronas, TPAO, Midlands	0	170	170	0.1
Gayarah	Sonangol, Nineveh	2	120	118	0.9
Najmah	Sonangol, Nineveh	0	110	110	0.9
Second Round Total (billion barrels)		60	4,765	4,705	32
Totals - Rounds 1 & 2		1,535	11,140	9605.0	62.7

Source: SIGIR Quarterly Report to Congress, April 2012, p. 88.

Figure 57: Results of the First Two Rounds of Bidding for Oil Development in Iraq

Results of Oil Field Bidding Rounds					
First Bidding Round (brownfields)	Operators	2009 Prod. 1,000 bbl/d	Target Prod. 1,000 bbl/d	Target Incr. 1,000 bbl/d	Reserves (billion bbl)
Rumaila	BP, CNPC, SOMO	1,000	2,850	1,850	17.8
West Qurna, Phase I	ExxonMobil, Shell, NOC	270	2,325	2,055	8.6
Zubair	Eni, Occidental, Kogas, Misan Oil	205	1,200	995	4.0
First Round Total (billion barrels)		1,475	6,375	4,900	30
Second Bidding Round (greenfields)					
West Qurna, Phase II	LUKOil, Statoil, Oil Exploration CO.	0	1,800	1,800	12.9
Majnoon	Shell, Petronas, Misan Oil	55	1,800	1,745	12.6
Halfaya	CNPC, Petronas, Total, South Oil	3	535	532	4.1
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Qayarah	Sonangol, Nineveh	2	120	118	0.9
Najmah	Sonangol, Nineveh	0	110	110	0.9
Second Round Total (billion barrels)		60	4,765	4,705	32
Totals - Rounds 1 & 2		1,535	11,140	9605.0	62.7

Source: EIA, Iraq, A Country Study, September 2010, <http://www.eia.gov/countries/cab.cfm?fips=IZ>.

The Lack of Adequate Export Facilities

The impact of these external disputes is compounded by both Iraq's history of tensions with neighboring states, and external conflicts that have sharply limited Iraq's export options. The EIA summarizes the current limits to Iraq's export capabilities as follows"⁸⁸⁵

North:

- Iraq has one major crude oil export pipeline, the Kirkuk-Ceyhan (Iraq-Turkey) pipeline, which transports oil from the north of Iraq to Turkey's Mediterranean port of Ceyhan. This pipeline route consists of two parallel pipelines with a combined nameplate capacity of 1.65 million bbl/d. The Iraq-Turkey pipeline has been subject to repeated disruptions, limiting exports from the northern fields. Furthermore, the parallel pipelines of the Iraq-Turkey route have deteriorated to the point where flows need to be routed back and forth between the two pipelines to bypass deteriorated sections. Only one of the twin pipelines is fully operational, with a maximum available capacity of 600,000 bbl/d, according to the IEA. Finally, in order for this pipeline to reach its design capacity, Iraq would need to receive oil from the south via the Strategic Pipeline. However, flows from the Strategic Pipeline have been severely limited, as it is also in need of repairs. Iraq and Turkey have held discussions on increasing pipeline capacity along this route.
- Proposals have also been made to build a 1-million-bbl/d pipeline to transport heavy oil via Turkey.
- The Kurdistan Iraq Crude Export (KICE) pipeline has been proposed to transport 420,000 bbl/d of crude oil from fields in the KRG to the border with Turkey.

West:

- The Kirkuk-Banias Pipeline, with a design capacity of 700,000 bbl/d, has been closed and the Iraqi portion has been unusable since the 2003 war in Iraq. Discussions were held between Iraqi and Syrian government officials about re-opening the pipeline. The Russian company Stroytransgaz expressed interest in repairing the pipeline, but this plan has not moved forward.
- Iraq has discussed building several new pipelines to reduce its over-reliance on exports from its southern ports. The first phase consists of building a 2.25-million bbl/d pipeline from Basrah in the south of Iraq northward to Haditha in Iraq's Anbar province. From there, Iraq has proposed building a 1-million bbl/d crude oil pipeline from Haditha to Jordan's port of Aqaba on the Red Sea, with Syria as another potential destination.

To the South:

- The 1.65-million bbl/d Iraq Pipeline to Saudi Arabia (IPSA) has been closed since 1991 following the Persian Gulf War. There are no plans to reopen this line, and Saudi Arabia has reportedly since converted it to a natural gas line.

Ports, the Gulf, and the South

The Basrah Oil Terminal (formerly Mina al-Bakr) on the Persian Gulf exported a little over 1.5 million bbl/d of oil in 2012. There are five smaller ports on the Persian Gulf, all functioning at less than full capacity, including the Khor al-Amaya terminal.

Iraq is seeking to address these problems. The EIA notes that Iraqi oil production has been limited by the lack of sufficient export capacity. To address this problem, Iraq initiated the Phase 1 Crude Oil Export Expansion Project (ICOEEP), which envisions expanding Iraqi export capability to 4.5 million bbl/d by building three single-point mooring systems (SPM) with a capacity of 850,000 bbl/d each. The first two mooring systems were completed in 2012. However, exports have increased far less than anticipated because pumping to the SPMs is not coming from the refurbished Fao terminal as planned, but rather from a stop-gap diversionary pipeline. In addition,

inadequate storage tank capacity has limited pumping from storage. Another SPM has since been planned to further increase export capacity.

A Simmering Oil Crisis Between Baghdad and the Kurds

As has been touched upon earlier, ethnic divisions present serious problems. Disputes between the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and central government over territory and oil resources, exacerbated by the absence of an existing hydrocarbon law, also affect Iraq's ability to develop a limited part of its potential petroleum resources. This dispute has become a critical issue that divides the country, while a number of Iraq's Shi'ite provinces also want a larger share of oil export revenues.

The broad north-south split in Iraqi oil production and exports is shown in **Figure 58**. These metrics also show the marked and continuing increase in oil production, but also a heavy gap between production and export due to the previously noted rapidly rising trend in domestic demand and high transportation costs associated with moving oil out of the country.

The key issue affecting ethnic and sectarian tensions, however, is the continuing tension between the central government – which seeks control over all exports and export revenues, and the Kurds in the KRG. In April 2012, the KRG suspended its supply of oil through the national Iraqi pipeline, over complaints that Baghdad had not paid operating costs to companies operating in the Kurdish region. Kurdish officials, angered by Baghdad's nonpayment of some \$1.5 billion it owes to the KRG, reduced their oil exports by half to 50,000 barrels day, and threatened to stop contributing entirely. In response, Iraqi Oil Minister Hussain Al-Shahristani threatened to punish the Kurds by deducting the lost revenue caused by the KRG's oil suspension from the annual budget sent to Kurdistan from Baghdad.

It is far from clear that the two sides cannot eventually reach a compromise, but their tensions have already delayed foreign investment and increases in production. The EIA summarized the impact of such tensions as follows in its April 2013 report.⁸⁸⁶

The Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), the official ruling body of a federated region in northern Iraq that is predominantly Kurdish, has been involved in disputes with national authorities related to sovereignty issues. The plan by Iraq's North Oil Company to boost production at the Kirkuk field in North Iraq at the edge of the KRG region has been met with objections by the KRG, which insists that development plans at this field require KRG cooperation and approval.

More generally, the Iraqi Oil Ministry insists that all hydrocarbon contracts must be signed with the national government, and that all oil produced in the KRG region be shipped via SOMO, Iraq's oil exporting arm. However, the KRG passed its own hydrocarbons law in 2007 in the absence of a national Iraqi law governing investment in hydrocarbons. In late 2011, the KRG challenged the authority of the national government when it signed oil production sharing agreements with ExxonMobil to develop 6 blocks in northern Iraq, some of which are in disputed border areas. The KRG has since signed additional contracts with majors such as Chevron, Gazprom, and Total. ExxonMobil withdrew from some of its projects in Iraq, notably the Common Seawater Supply Facility, and the company had been asked by the Iraqi government to choose between its involvement in the West Qurna 1 oilfield and its projects in the KRG. TPAO of Turkey has also been asked to withdraw from its involvement in the Block 9 concession that was awarded during the fourth bidding round because of disputes regarding Turkey's involvement in KRG energy projects.

Another KRG oil dispute has revolved around exports of crude oil produced in the KRG region from earlier contracts. The KRG had agreed to send 175,000 bbl/d of crude oil into the Iraqi northern oil export pipeline.

However, the KRG began reducing their contribution in late 2011, charging that the central government failed to make agreed payments to cover foreign oil company development. The KRG contributions were halted altogether in April 2012, but they were later re-started in August.

Oil exports directly from the KRG are another unresolved issue. The KRG began exporting 15,000 bbl/d of condensate and 20,000 bbl/d of crude oil to Turkey by truck. The KRG is looking at building its own pipelines to export crude oil directly via Turkey, bypassing the national export pipeline system, although Turkey has not officially agreed to this plan. Genel Energy plans to build the 420,000 bbl/d Kurdistan Iraq Crude Export (KICE) pipeline that will connect its fields in the Kurdish regions in northern Iraq to the border with Turkey. In addition, the KRG has explored supplying natural gas to Turkey.

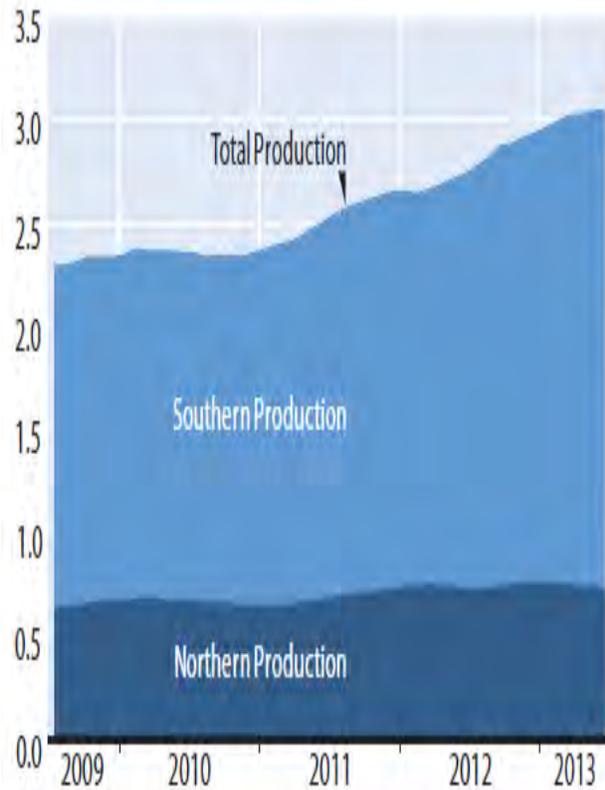
The KRG has ambitious plans for its crude oil exports. KRG Prime Minister Mr. Barzani suggested that crude oil exports from the KRG could average 250,000 bbl/d in 2013 and then rise to 1 million bbl/d by 2015 and to 2 million bbl/d by 2019.

Figure 58: Iraq Crude Production & Exports 2009-2012

FIGURE 3.4

CRUDE OIL PRODUCTION, 7/2009-6/2013

MBPD, 12-month Rolling Average



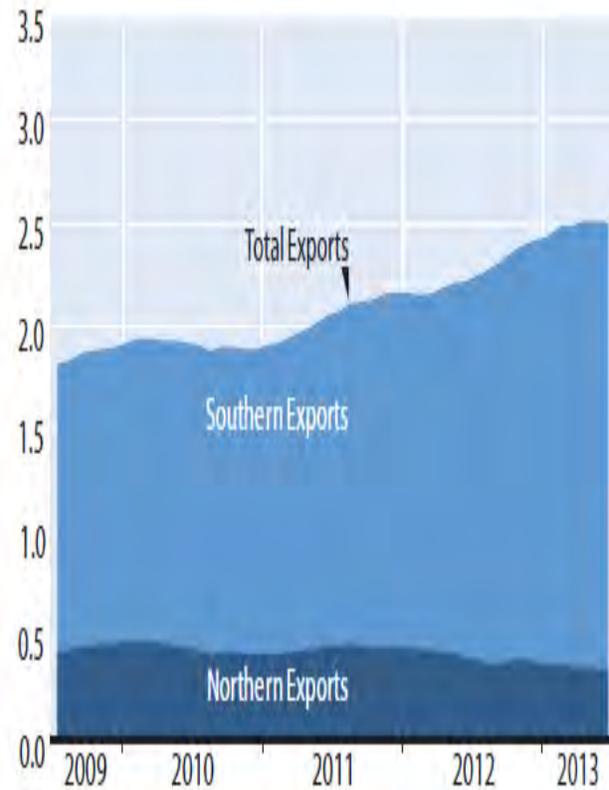
Note: Does not include oil produced in the Kurdistan Region.

Source: GOI, Ministry of Oil, "Domestic Consumption," www.oil.gov.iq.

FIGURE 3.5

CRUDE OIL EXPORTS, 7/2009-6/2013

MBPD, 12-month Rolling Average



Source: GOI, Ministry of Oil, "Domestic Consumption," www.oil.gov.iq.

Pipeline Issues

Some aspects of this situation grew worse in early 2014. The KRG opened a pipeline through Turkey to the port of Ceyan on the Mediterranean in early January 2014. The pipeline had an initial capacity of 300,000 barrels per day (bpd) rising to 400,000 – a substantially larger capacity than the KRG’s current export capacity of 255,000 bbl/d. Turkey has also signed a multi-billion-dollar energy package late in 2013 with Iraqi Kurdistan (KRG) under which the semi-autonomous region plans independent energy exports via Turkey. If this plan was fully executed, Kurdistan might eventually be able to export some two million bpd of oil to world markets and least 10 billion cubic meters per year of gas to Turkey.⁸⁸⁷

Although Turkey has stated that exports require the permission of the central government, this pipeline has sharply increased the tension between Turkey and the Maliki government in Baghdad. The Iraqi Oil Ministry issued a statement on January 9, 2014 that Kurdish exports were a “flagrant violation of the Iraqi constitution.” Iraq’s constitution requires all Iraqi oil revenues to go through the central government in Baghdad. The Kurds receive 17 percent of these total revenues, although they frequently complain that they received less.

The ministry said that such oil exports breached a December 25, 2013 agreement between the Iraqi government and the KRG that stated that experts from both sides would discuss how crude from Kurdistan could be exported under the auspices of Iraq’s State Organization for the Marketing of Oil (SOMO). The Ministry also criticized the Turkish government for allowing the Iraqi-Turkish pipeline system to be used to pump and store crude oil produced in Kurdistan without Iraqi approval. It threatened to sue any companies that traded in “smuggled” oil or gas from Kurdistan without going through SOMO.⁸⁸⁸

Control of Key Reserve Areas and Tracts

The control of oil resources also cannot be separated from the control of territory, and the relative ability to attract outside investment. The KRG signed a deal in October 2011 allowing ExxonMobil to explore several tracts of land, three of which are located in territories claimed by both Kurdistan and Baghdad, and still pending final settlement. The move incensed the government in Baghdad, and placed ExxonMobil “at the heart of the conflict, potentially accelerating the centrifugal forces that are tearing at the Iraqi fabric”.⁸⁸⁹ ExxonMobil insists it has involved itself in an effort to bring Baghdad and Erbil together on a hydrocarbons law.

In June 2012, the White House confirmed that it received a formal letter from Prime Minister Maliki requesting that the Administration intervene and block Exxon Mobil from exploring in the Kurdish region. According to initial reports, Maliki has argued that Exxon Mobil’s activities with the KRG would further destabilize the country politically. Such moves have been seen to play to the Administration’s policy of maintaining stability in Iraq, which it has recently pursued by issuing executive orders to that effect.⁸⁹⁰

There is also some concern that the government in the KRG may be exploiting Iraq’s political instability in order to advance their own goals of statehood and total independence. While Arabs and Kurds have lived together for nearly a century, their coexistence has always been uncertain and unhappy. Having been born out of the aftermath of colonial rule and forced to cohabitate to varying degrees of repression and discrimination, the Kurds look forward to the day they no longer need Baghdad’s consent to pursue their regional interests.

The ICG's April 2012 report titled *Iraq and the Kurds: The High-Stakes Hydrocarbons Gambit*, provides the following description of the intentions behinds the Kurds' decision to act now:⁸⁹¹

They know that when Baghdad is weak, they can take steps to bring their dream of statehood closer to reality, but that when the center is strong it will use its superior resources to push them back into their place – or worse. They seek to reverse a legacy of discrimination and economic neglect but also to create an escape route should relations with Baghdad sour beyond repair. Yet, in many ways, this approach contains elements of a self-fulfilling prophecy: by pressing their advantage, Kurds inevitably aggravate matters, convincing the federal government that they are aiming for secession – and aiming to take with them a good chunk of disputed territory that Kurds claim as historically part of a notional Kurdistan but that also appears to be immensely rich in oil and gas.

Independent KRG Ties to Foreign Oil Companies

The government in Baghdad is also troubled by the independent actions taken by the KRG inviting international companies, such as ExxonMobil, to “explore and exploit the region’s hydrocarbon wealth,” leaving Baghdad outside of the territory – and the incredible potential revenues – of these contracts. The April 2013 report of the International Energy Agency notes that the GoI has responded by asking ExxonMobil to choose between its projects in the KRG and its contract to develop the West Qurna I oil field, but the parties involved have yet to reach a final resolution to this issue.⁸⁹²

The Kurds face their own problems: they are land-locked, and therefore do not have the means to export their oil without Baghdad’s assistance. The government in Baghdad has taken advantage of the Kurds’ predicament by maximizing its control of the national pipeline, as well as the revenues generated from oil sales in efforts to keep the Kurds in line.

The Turkish government in Ankara exploits this situation since Iraqi Kurds see Turkey as an eager market to which they can export oil. Kurdish officials hope that Turkey’s growing desire for oil and gas can play into their own desire for statehood. According to SIGIR’s September 2013 report, the KRG is pursuing this avenue by trucking between 30,000 and 65,000 barrels of oil per day to the Turkish border, while also constructing their own pipeline to connect oil fields in Erbil and Fishkabur to Turkey while circumventing the federally controlled Kirkuk-Ceyhan pipeline.⁸⁹³ This geography is shown in **Figure 59**.

Figure 59: Kurdish-Turkish Pipeline, completed January 2014



Source: Ian Black, “Golden oil of Iraqi Kurdistan raises tensions with Baghdad,” *The Guardian*, June 10, 2013, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jun/10/oil-iraqi-kurdistan-baghdad>.

This has heightened tensions with the federal government in Baghdad, which insists that the KRG is not authorized to export oil on its own without the consent of the Ministry of Oil. The KRG justifies this as a revenue-seeking measure to offset losses that resulted from the federal government’s “default” on payments to the KRG.⁸⁹⁴

For Kurdish leaders, economic dependency on a democratic neighbor with an attractive window on to the West is far preferable to a continued chokehold by a regime displaying authoritarian tendencies – all of which raises the question of what Ankara would do if the Kurds ask it to take their oil without Baghdad’s approval.

The Kurdish-Turkish pipeline reached 300,000 bp/d or its planned 400,000 bp/d of capacity in early January 2014, and crude oil from Iraq’s Kurdish region began flowing to the Turkish export port of Ceyhan. As noted earlier, the Turkish Oil Minister Taner Yildiz insisted it would not be sold without the approval of the Iraqi government in Baghdad.⁸⁹⁵ Despite those assurances, however, Turkey had already set up a state-backed Turkish Energy Company (TEC) to serve as Ankara’s entity responsible for managing the Kurdish oil portfolio.⁸⁹⁶

The KRG, with its estimated 45 billion barrels of oil reserves, has sought increased independence and autonomy over its region’s governance, security, and economy. The Kurdish region has become an exploratory hub, with major international companies like Exxon Mobil, Chevron, and Total already seeking to develop the region’s oil resources.⁸⁹⁷ “Kurdistan is on the cusp of an oil boom, with international companies lining up to get a stake in the world’s newest petrostate which since the 1990-91 Gulf War has enjoyed an unprecedented level of political and economic stability

in a region where turmoil has long been the norm. Exxon Mobil, Chevron and Total of France have all turned their backs on Baghdad, despite its vast energy riches, to develop Kurdistan's oil industry."⁸⁹⁸

With increased sectarian violence throughout much of Iraq, and continued problems with governance and politics in Baghdad and elsewhere, the relatively stable Kurdish region is poised to reap the rewards of energy exports. While landlocked until present – and dependent on Iraq's central government for the export and revenues from the sale of its crude oil – the opening of the pipeline with Turkey represents an unprecedented opportunity for the KRG. Experts estimated that the KRG-owned pipeline could begin to export 400,000 barrels of oil a year, and that “output will jump to 1 million barrels a year by 2015, and 2 million barrels by 2019”, according to Ashti Hawrami, Kurdistan's minister of natural resources.⁸⁹⁹

Bloomberg Global Economics cited VSA Capital analyst Dougie Youngson: “We're looking at multibillion barrels. The operators are sitting on huge resources that they want to start commercializing.” Bloomberg also cited Executive Director of the International Energy Agency, Maria van der Hoeven, who stated, “Iraq is the only country in the world where you can put a pipe in the ground and the oil starts flowing. It's the last easy oil.”⁹⁰⁰

As has been discussed earlier, the development of the Kurdish-Turkish pipeline has increased tensions between Baghdad and Erbil, and may continue to complicate matters in Iraq, Turkey, and the broader region. Beyond the complications associated with wealth-sharing, Baghdad is concerned that Kurdistan's newfound autonomy will enable its decades-long quest for independence, and encourage other federal regions to do the same.⁹⁰¹ Coupled with Iraq's troubling spike in ethno-sectarian violence, any trend towards Iraq's semi-autonomous regions to push for independence would further strain the central government, and undermine Iraq's territorial and national unity.

Kenneth Katzman of the Congressional Research Service put the overall mix of tensions between the Kurdish KRG and the Maliki government in Baghdad in the following perspective in a December 2013 report,⁹⁰²

The KRG and Baghdad are still at odds over the Kurds' insistence that it export oil that is discovered and extracted in the KRG region. Baghdad reportedly fears that Kurdish oil exports can potentially enable the Kurds to set up an economically viable independent state and has called the KRG's separate energy development deals with international firms “illegal.” Baghdad has supported KRG oil exports through the national oil export pipeline grid in which revenues from the KRG exports go into central government accounts, proceeds (17% agreed proportion) go to the KRG, and Baghdad pays the international oil companies working in the KRG.

However, KRG oil exports through the national grid have been repeatedly suspended over central government withholding of payments to the international energy firms. In September 2012, the KRG and Baghdad agreed that Baghdad would pay about \$900 million in arrears due the international firms. However, that pact held only until late December 2012. The national budget adopted by the COR on March 7, 2013, allocated only \$650 million to the companies exporting KRG oil; the Kurds had sought \$3.5 billion for that purpose. Because of this provision, Kurdish members reportedly boycotted the budget vote.

As a consequence, the KRG is exporting well below its potential—it sends about 200,000 barrels per day by truck and a small pipeline to Turkey. The KRG currently has the potential to export 500,000 barrels per day and it is expected to be able to increase exports to 1 million barrels per day by 2019, if export routes are available.

Related to the disputes over KRG oil exports is a broader disagreement over foreign firm involvement in the KRG energy sector. The October 2011 KRG signing of an energy development deal with U.S. energy giant

Exxon-Mobil represents a further dimension of the energy row with Baghdad. The central government denounced the deal as illegal, in part because the oil fields involved are in or very close to disputed territories. The KRG has sought to defuse this consideration by saying that if the territory of the oil fields is subsequently judged to be part of central government-administered territory, then the revenues would be reallocated accordingly.

The central government threatened to cancel the firm's existing contract to develop the WestQurna oil field near Basra, but decided instead on February 13, 2012, to prevent Exxon Mobil from bidding for new work in Baghdad-controlled Iraq. On March 17, 2012, Baghdad claimed that Exxon-Mobil had frozen the KRG contract, but the KRG denies the company has stopped work in the KRG region, and Exxon began production in the KRG in late 2012...Further disputes occurred over a July 2012 KRG deal with Total SA of France; in August 2012 the central government told Total SA to either terminate its arrangement with the KRG or give up work on the central government Halfaya field.

...The growing energy relationship between Turkey and the KRG energy sector adds tension to the KRG-Baghdad relationship, and causes strains between Turkey and Baghdad. In March 2013, the KRG and Turkey discussing a broad energy deal that would include Turkish investment in drilling for oil and gas in the KRG-controlled territory, and the construction of a second oil pipeline linking KRG-controlled fields to a pumping station on the Turkish side of the border.

...That latter pipeline is said by energy experts to be near completion, and Baghdad reportedly questions Turkey's assertions that any proceeds from oil exports through that route would go to the central government for distribution. In response to the "second pipeline" project, the Iraqi government has blacklisted Turkey's state energy pipeline firm (TPAO) from some work in southern Iraq. The broader KRG-Turkey energy deal reportedly also envisions a natural gas pipeline under which the KRG would export 10 billion cubic meters of natural gas to Turkey per year, enough to meet more than 20% of Turkey's current consumption....The Obama Administration has generally sided with Baghdad on the dispute, asserting that major international energy projects involving Iraq should be negotiated and implemented through a unified central government in Baghdad.

The situation grew even tenser in early 2014. Prime Minister Maliki gave a press conference on January 2, 2014, stating that the Iraqi Cabinet had passed a 2014 budget on threatened to cut off all federal revenue sharing to the KRG if it did not export crude through Baghdad's sales network, leading to a boycott of the cabinet by Kurdish ministers.⁹⁰³

The tensions involved had risen because the KRG had held up its payments from export revenues during 2013 over its dispute with the central government at a time Iraq's total petroleum exports and other revenues had dropped in value from \$94.02 billion in 2012 to \$89.22 billion in 2013, and had blocked final action on some aspects of Iraq's 2014 budget by the Council of the Republic.

The KRG was also claiming that it only got some 10% of Iraq's oil export revenues while because the central government was claiming the KRG was allocated 17% of Iraq's revenues, but not delivering the 250,000 barrels a day of exports it had set as an export target, and was trucking smaller quantities of crude to Turkey and collecting the revenues. Maliki also claimed that the KRG was delaying Iraq's ability to agree on a final budget figure of \$150.12 billion, and that the KRG's missed export targets and revenue payments to the central government has cost Iraq \$9 billion in recent years.⁹⁰⁴ He stated that the central government would now deduct any shortfalls in KRG payments relative to their export goals from the 17% share of state revenues being allocated to the KRG.⁹⁰⁵

Haider al-Abadi, head of the Council of the Republic's treasury committee, gave an interview to Reuters on January 19th, reinforcing these themes. He stated that the draft budget projected a deficit of about 21 trillion Iraqi dinars (\$18 billion), unless the Kurds paid the treasury the revenue from budgeted oil exports of 400,000 barrels per day - a target that far exceeded the KRG's current export capacity of around 255,000 bpd. He stated that the 17 or 18 trillion dinars Baghdad would

get if the Kurds paid export revenues based on 400,000 bdp would just allow it to bridge its 2014 budget gap, and that the Iraqi budget would “collapse” if the state kept paying the KRG a 17 percent share when the Kurds withheld oil export revenues. A week earlier, the oil minister had threatened legal action and trade reprisals against Turkey and foreign companies involved in what he called the “smuggling” of Iraqi oil.⁹⁰⁶

Barzani in turn claimed that the central government refused to negotiate in good faith, was not delivering anything close to 17% of its total oil revenues, and was seeking to use the oil issue to gain added leverage and control over the KRG and put pressure on Turkey not to deal directly with the KRG.⁹⁰⁷

Iran and Iraqi Petroleum Development

Some experts feel oil cooperation between Iraq and Iran could strengthen Iraq’s ties to Iran and increase Iranian ability to skirt economic sanctions. However, the evidence to date is negative. Construction of a proposed pipeline between Basra, Iraq and Abadan, Iran is still stalled at the doorstep of the Iraqi Government seven years after both countries signed a Memorandum of Understanding.⁹⁰⁸ The pipeline would transport up to 150,000 barrels of crude a day from Iraq to Iran, and Iranian refined products would ship back to Basra.⁹⁰⁹ Iraq’s Kurdish region also exports oil through Iran, incentivizes Iraqi cooperation with Iran, and allows Iran to soften the impact of American-backed sanctions.⁹¹⁰

The key problem this presents for Iran is that both Iran and Iraq have long competed to be the more important “oil power” – a competition that has scarcely ended. Energy competition led both states to suddenly raise their claims for oil reserves during the Iran-Iraq War, an experience they have recently repeated. When Iranian troops crossed the Iraqi border and took control of Well 4 of the Fauqa Field in 2009, crude oil futures increased by 2.2%.⁹¹¹ In 2010, weeks after Iraq announced crude oil reserve estimates of 143.1 billion barrels, Iran announced a new estimate of 150.31 billion barrels.⁹¹²

These increases had limited substantive evidence to support them: Iraq’s estimate was 25% higher than its previous estimate, while Iran’s was 9% higher.⁹¹³ The timing of the announcements could indicate the intensity of oil competition between the two countries and Iran’s intention not to be outdone by its neighbor. A former oil minister who served under Saddam Hussein, however, said both estimates are politically motivated and unreliable.⁹¹⁴ Iraq still has yet to rejoin OPEC’s production quota system.⁹¹⁵

Options for Policy

The US and other outside states have a clear strategic interest in any effort that increases the world supply of petroleum on market terms, helps stabilize the global economy and security of energy exports, and reduces world petroleum prices. The scale of the US portion of strategic interest is, however, a subject of increasing debate as the US become less dependent on energy imports.

The US Department of Energy *Annual Energy Outlook for 2014* reports that US reliance on foreign liquid fuel imports decreased to 40% from a high of 60% in 2005, but these estimates do not include indirect petroleum imports in the form of major imports of manufactured goods from regions like Asia, which are becoming far more dependent on petroleum imports from the Gulf. It also states that the US will not eliminate import dependence and it will begin to grow again by 2040,⁹¹⁶

In the *AEO2014* Reference case, U.S. domestic energy production increases from 79.1 quadrillion Btu in 2012 to 102.1 quadrillion Btu in 2040, and net use of imported energy sources, which was 30% in 2005, falls from 16% of total consumption in 2012 to 4% in 2040. In the *AEO2013* Reference case, domestic energy production reached a total of 98.5 quadrillion Btu, and energy imports is projected to decline as a percentage of consumption to 9% in 2040. The larger increase in domestic energy production in *AEO2014* is primarily a result of higher projections of production of natural gas and biomass/other renewables. Crude oil production (including lease condensate) increases from 13.9 quadrillion Btu in 2012 to a peak of 20.5 quadrillion Btu in 2019 before dropping to 16.0 quadrillion Btu in 2040.

With domestic crude oil production rising to 9.5 MMbbl/d in 2016, the import share of U.S. petroleum and other liquids supply falls to about 25%. Domestic production begins to decline after 2019, and the import share of total petroleum and other liquids supply grows to 32% in 2040, still lower than the 2040 level of 37% in the *AEO2013* Reference case. The alternative cases in the full *AEO2014* will illustrate how different assumptions about resources, markets, and policies can dramatically impact projections of import dependence.

The EIA projections of US important dependence in both the *Annual Energy Outlook* for 2014 and the *International Energy Outlook* for 2013 project a continuing drop in US imports, and the possibility the US could become a net energy export at some point after 2025. They do not, however, project that the US is likely to be able to eliminate imports of liquids for its transportation sector. Furthermore, the US will still pay increase international oil prices in a crisis, be dependent on indirect imports of petroleum in the form of manufactured goods, and be strategically dependent on the secure flow of global petroleum exports for a steadily more globalized US economy.⁹¹⁷

Accordingly, the US government has the same reason as other importing states reason to encourage outside investment in Iraq's petroleum sector and to do what it can to encourage the Iraqi reforms and political compromises that will increase Iraqi oil exports, as well as help fund Iraqi development and stability. For the same reasons, it has every reason to assist American companies in investing in Iraq's petroleum sector and every aspect of Iraqi economic development.

The fact remains, however, that only countries like China can push their state companies into investing in Iraq or taking risks that may serve US national – rather than corporate – interests, and China is often much more careful to avoid over-exposure to risk after it signs contracts that its willingness to contract would indicate. As is the case with so many problems in Iraq, full-scale petroleum development requires a far greater effort at national unity and consensus than Prime Minister Maliki and Iraq's other political leaders have been willing to make.

This is an essential precondition to the security and stability necessary to get the needed investment and production and export security, but Iraq also needs far better legal, contracting, and incentive systems; more realistic planning and better management within its Ministry of Oil; and an approach to allocating oil revenues that can support a stable compromise between Sunni and Shi'ite and Arab and Kurd.

As is the case with the rest of Iraq's economy, the main current barriers to progress are self-inflicted wounds caused by its political leaders. Unless their policies change, Iraq will make progress in its petroleum sector – there are too many incentives for misgovernment and violence to block this. It will not, however, make the progress it needs.

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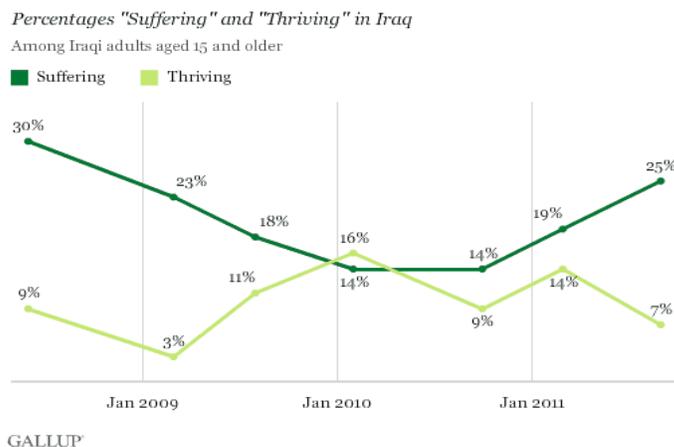
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