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The Political Battle in Iraq

Iraq, Middle East, Governance, National Security

Kenneth M. Pollack, Director, Saban Center for Middle East Policy

The Brookings Institution



JUNE 30, 2010 — *In late June 2010, I traveled to Iraq for a bit less than one week with another well-known Middle East expert. This was my tenth trip to Iraq since the fall of Saddam, but my first in about eight months. The trip was organized and partially-funded by the U.S. military command in Iraq—now known as United States Forces-Iraq (USF-I). However, our U.S. military liaisons were extremely generous and flexible in allowing us to set our own agenda. We had superb access to U.S. military and civilian personnel at all levels of the chain of command, as well as the leadership of the U.S. Embassy and civilian intelligence personnel. We met with senior UN officials in Iraq and had numerous private meetings with many of the most senior Iraqi officials and party leaders from all of the most powerful parties. Indeed, with the exception of the two Kurdish parties, our access to senior Iraqi leaders could not have been better. We spent brief periods in Tikrit, Kirkuk and Mahmour (near Mosul), but the overwhelming majority of our time was spent in Baghdad. The following presents my impressions, conclusions, and analysis from that trip.*

The Political Battle Over Government Formation

Iraqi politics are dead-locked. The results of the March 7 elections were a resounding victory for Iraq, and for America's interests in Iraq in that Iraqis largely voted for the two parties considered most secular, least connected with formal militias, least tied to the vicious sectarianism of the civil war, and most desirous of meeting popular demands for political, economic and social stability and progress.^[1] Unfortunately, in large part because of Iraq's reliance on a proportional representation system, the election did not hand either party a clear-cut majority. Instead, 'Ayad Allawi's Iraqiyya took 91 seats in the 325-seat Council of Representatives and Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki's State of Law (SoL) coalition garnered 89. This has left them as two Gullivers surrounded by a dozen or more liliputians. It also left them well short of the 163 votes needed to secure a majority. Moreover, the first vote will have to be cast for president, who will then invite one of the two leading parties to form a government, and it requires a two-thirds majority to elect the president. Since the presidency itself is hotly contested and is likely to be part of the overall "package" of the new government, it is likely that either party will have to secure an even larger coalition to take power.

As things stand, most of the smaller parties remain on the fence, waiting to see which of the contenders will offer them the best deal. They are also waiting to try to gauge which is most likely to secure the votes necessary to form the government because once it becomes clear that one of the parties can do so, all of the smaller parties will likely scramble to try to join that side in hope of being rewarded with plum cabinet and governmental

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posts (and avoid being shut out of the same).

The problem is that neither of the two major parties has been able to convince enough of the smaller parties to declare for them. Prime Minister Maliki has arguably done better, striking a tentative deal with the Iraqi National Accord, itself a shotgun marriage of the Sadrists and the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI). However, this deal lacks one critical final piece: a decision over who will be the grouping's prime ministerial candidate. Both ISCI and the Sadrists have so far refused to accept Maliki as their prime ministerial candidate (with ISCI preferring 'Adel 'Abd al-Mahdi, and the Sadrists preferring Ibrahim Jaafari). But SoL is built around the person of Nuri al-Maliki, who will not accept that anyone will be prime minister but him.

Maliki's negotiating strategy has been to hammer out an agreement with INA in which he would be their prime ministerial candidate, and then turn to Allawi's Iraqiyya and start bargaining with them to see if SoL and Iraqiyya could form an alternative coalition. In these negotiations Maliki would have the advantage because he would be able to use his commitment from the INA as leverage to extract concessions from Iraqiyya—in effect saying to Allawi, “If I go with the INA I get to remain prime minister, so if you want me to go with you, Iraqiyya, you are going to need to do even better than that.” Thus, a firm deal with the INA would put Maliki in the driver's seat for all of the negotiations.

But because Maliki cannot yet secure the INA's agreement for him to be the prime minister, he cannot yet begin negotiations with Iraqiyya in earnest. Thus, a key question is whether Maliki can find a way to bribe, persuade or coerce the Sadrists (the dominant force in the INA) to agree to name him their joint prime ministerial candidate. For now, however, the Sadrists and their candidate, former prime minister Ibrahim Jaafari, seem more than content to wait and force Maliki to accept that he won't be prime minister again. It is not clear what it will take, if anything at all, to get them to change their position on this. Indeed, Maliki has actually begun tentative contacts with Iraqiyya recently in part because the US and UN have been pressing him to do so. However, of greater importance, Maliki hopes that this will frighten the Sadrists that he is about to cut a deal with Allawi that would leave the INA out in the cold, and so convince them to accept him as the prime minister in a SoL-INA government.

Iraqiyya's Approach

For its part, Iraqiyya appears to be trying a dual-track strategy to win the game. First, they are showing enormous patience in the expectation that the intra-Shi'ah divisions will prove too great and eventually one or more of the Shi'ah parties will turn to them as an easier coalition partner. There is certainly evidence to support this gambit. They are sitting on the largest cohesive bloc of seats in the CoR, and their secular, technocratic ideology makes them amenable partners for many Iraqi parties. At least some of Iraqiyya's senior leaders seem to feel that, at some point, the personal and ideological rivalries among the Shi'ah will drive things in this direction.

However, it would be wrong to assume that Iraqiyya's strategy is entirely passive and patient. Many of its key leaders are pushing down a very different, much more active path. Iraqiyya won the largest number of seats in the parliament and its partisans are arguing vociferously that the constitution gives them the right to try first to form a government. This argument has been directed principally at the United States, UNAMI and other foreign states (particularly Iraq's neighbors) all of whom carry considerable weight among Iraqi groups. Iraqiyya has mustered evidence to discredit the statement by Iraqi chief justice Medhat al-Muhammad in which he suggested that either the party with the largest number of seats, or the post-election coalition with the largest number of seats could be asked first to try to form a government. Iraqiyya's position is that this was merely an “opinion” and a politically-pressured, unconstitutional opinion at that. They have also deployed the potentially compelling argument that Iraqis voted overwhelmingly for change, for secularism, and for technocracy—all of which Iraqiyya represents—and that a government led by Maliki as prime minister in coalition with the Kurds, ISCI and the Sadrists (the same coalition as ruled Iraq from 2005 till today) would be a betrayal of the votes of the Iraqi people. They point to recent protests in Basra against the failure of the

government to provide greater electricity as evidence of what will happen if the people believe that the election was “stolen,” Iraqi democracy subverted and the will of the people ignored.

Consequently, many Iraqiyya leaders would like to see the logjam broken by the United States (and the UN, and various other external actors) weighing in on Allawi’s behalf. Although American influence in Iraq is declining, it is still very significant, and because of the political deadlock, that influence is rising again with many Iraqis looking to the United States as a mediator to help them out of this situation.

If the United States were to do so, there is a very real likelihood that Allawi *would* be able to form a new government. First, Iraqis would see this as further proof that the United States wanted him to be prime minister (not necessarily true, but compelling for many Iraqis nonetheless) and that therefore benefits would accrue from the U.S. for those who joined him. Second, Allawi would then be in a position to give out cabinet ministries which could create a self-fulfilling prophecy: many Iraqi parties would reason that others would agree to join Allawi’s government if only so as not to be left out, and that whoever signed on first would be likely to get the best cabinet positions. The result could easily be a chain reaction with parties signing on simply to avoid being left without anything, thereby creating a powerful incentive for more and more parties to sign on for the same reason.

Muddling Along

At present, the Sadrists show no signs of agreeing to take Maliki as their prime ministerial candidate and the United States shows no sign of pressing for Allawi to get the right to form a government first. Consequently, the focus is now shifting to a UN-led, American-backed procedural process by which the UN Special Representative will convene a gathering of experts from all of the major political parties who will attempt to redefine the positions and authorities of the Iraqi executive branch in the hope that doing so will unlock the bargaining positions of the different sides and allow for the formation of coalitions that are currently impossible.

For instance, many Iraqi parties have discussed the idea of limiting/diminishing the powers of the prime minister and vesting some of them in the president, some in a variety of new deputy prime ministers (one for security issues, one for energy and one for economic issues is the most commonly discussed scheme), and some going to restored vice presidents. Other ideas include eliminating the various joint military operations centers, which operate outside the constitutionally-mandated chain of command, and restoring to the president the ability to veto legislation. The basic idea is that if there are more positions with real power, the position of prime minister will not be all-powerful, and therefore the parties will find it easier to strike bargains since every party will no longer feel that the only position that matters is the prime ministership.

The U.S. Embassy in Baghdad has already circulated its own proposal for a redrawing of Iraq’s political wire diagram meant to force the Iraqi parties to react to it and get them to start formulating their own positions. This is a helpful and probably necessary step to make the UNAMI process work. It may be that, in the end, the U.S. proposal is exactly what the Iraqis end up adopting as part of the UNAMI process.

However, because it is Iraq, we need to keep in mind that the UNAMI process too will have its downsides. This is not a reason to refrain from supporting it—quite the contrary—it is simply to acknowledge that in the complexity of Iraqi politics, every silver cloud has a dark lining. While this approach could well produce a resolution to the current deadlock, it has two potential drawbacks. One is that this process could itself become entangled in the political mess that it is designed to untangle. The parties will first have to agree to a new governmental structure, and only then (in theory) would they get down to bargaining over who would get which position in various scenarios. This would take some time even if it plays out as its designers hope, but it is highly likely that the Iraqis will start scheming over

government formation during the process of defining the revised governmental structure, which would probably have the effect of stretching out both processes. Second, it would likely result in a new governmental structure in which power is more diffuse, and in a delicate, coalition government, that will make it far harder for the prime minister to actually get anything accomplished. Thus it may ease government formation, but hinder governance.

It is possible that we could have a new government by as early as July 14, but that is unlikely and government formation could well drag on into the fall. All of the Iraqi parties have now accepted the UNAMI view that on June 14 the constitutionally-mandated 30 day clock to name a government began. However, Iraqis have missed and even ignored many constitutionally-mandated deadlines before and senior UN officials strongly argued that it would be a mistake to try to force the Iraqis to adhere to that timeline.

Security

In most important respects, security in Iraq continues to improve apace. Attacks on U.S. and Iraqi forces, and even attacks on civilians are down even from the already low-levels achieved last year. The terrorist “spectaculars” that al-Qa’ida in Iraq (AQI) and other groups attempt to pull off every few months have become less and less spectacular, with fewer and fewer people dying in each attack. According to U.S. and Iraqi intelligence information, al-Qa’ida in Iraq itself is having very significant problems now because few foreign fighters are coming to Iraq and the organization can’t raise money—which is the life blood of its operations. Without the money to “buy” Iraqis to conduct operations, AQI is being forced to ruthlessly prioritize its own efforts and effectively concede defeat in important areas of the country where it previously wrought havoc.

Of greater importance still, the political problems among Iraq’s feuding parties have not yet spilled over into significant violence. There was (and still is) a very real risk that parties will use violence to intimidate or eliminate rivals, or otherwise manipulate the political bargaining to their advantage. No doubt there are many former militia leaders who believe that still another way to break the deadlock beyond those listed above would be to simply assassinate or bully key leaders in rival groups. The fact that, so far, there have been relatively few such acts—and all of these seem to be related to settling local scores, not influencing the national political struggle—is an extremely positive development. However, by Iraqi standards it is still early and there is plenty of time for the frustration to build to the point where the political leaders may turn to violence to secure what their bargaining so far has not.

Meanwhile, the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) continue to mature and improve. The extent to which Iraqi forces, particularly the army and the federal police, are operating independently is striking. The majority of operations conducted in Iraq these days are initiated, planned and conducted entirely by the Iraqis. Numerous American military personnel report that they often hear about them only after the fact (and sometimes, not at all—a potentially worrisome development). Increasingly, the Iraqis are able to handle even some forms of reconnaissance, surveillance and air support on their own. Local police forces are a more mixed bag, and it is unlikely that the Iraqis will achieve their goal of full “police primacy” for several more years.

Lingering Security Problems

All that said, Iraq still has a number of residual security problems that need to be kept in mind as we consider its future and our future policy toward Iraq.

First off, it is always important to recognize that states like Iraq that have undergone a major intercommunal civil war have a very high rate of recidivism. Extensive academic work on intercommunal civil wars akin to what Iraq experienced in 2005-2007 demonstrates that roughly fifty percent of the time the country falls back into civil war

within five years of a ceasefire. Moreover, when the country in question possesses valuable natural resources like diamonds, gold or oil, the likelihood rises even higher.^[2] Thus, Iraq remains highly vulnerable to a resurgence of civil war, and the forces that could drag it back down are easily and frequently encountered, floating just below the surface of Iraqi politics. The militias and insurgents have been suppressed (very effectively suppressed), but they have not yet withered away altogether. The fear and anger remains pervasive. It is also important to keep in mind that the war-weariness of the population is irrelevant to the resurgence of civil wars; the history of such wars has demonstrated repeatedly and definitively that it is the circumstances and the leadership, not the sentiments of the masses, that spark and then re-ignite intercommunal civil wars. The conditions for a resurgence remain present, and a small but alarming number of Iraqi leaders still seem to believe that they would be better off with a return to violence than a continuation of peace.

For its part, the insurgency is more than down, it is flat on its back, but it is not out yet. In particular, one of the more interesting developments of the past 12-18 months has been the shift in insurgent strength from AQI and other Salafist groups to extreme nationalist groups like the *Jaysh Rijal al-Tariqa al-Naqshbandia* (The Men of the Army of al-Naqshbandia Order, or JRTN). The Naqshbandis stem from a Sufi Muslim movement, but key elements are former members of Saddam's security apparatus, and the group has largely focused on a more nationalistic theme of resistance to the American occupiers. Although they remain small, the Naqshbandis seem to be eclipsing AQI in numbers, funding and capability. This almost certainly reflects the fact that opposition to the government at this point is largely being driven by economic issues (the Naqshbandis are supported by various wealthy Sunnis inside and outside Iraq and so have money to pay unemployed or underemployed Iraqis to plant IEDs, launch rockets and conduct other kinds of attacks) and by the persistent Sunni fear that the Shi'ah who control the government intend to deprive them of power and wealth. Indeed, if the Sunni community ultimately concludes that the election was "stolen" from them by Shi'ah chauvinists, as many are already murmuring, it is likely to be the Naqshbandis rather than AQI who will benefit with new recruits, funds and freedom to conduct attacks as the Sunnis push back on the government.

Finally, it is worth noting that while Iraq has become vastly safer than it was even a few years ago, it is still not a "normal" country even by the standards of security in the Arab world. There are still scores of people killed every month by intercommunal violence. Iraqis are a tough lot and they seem to have accepted this as a "natural" rate for now, but it still creates risks and costs for outsiders hoping to do business in Iraq. Moreover, Iraqis continue to pay a high price even for this level of security. Iraq's governmental budget is still dominated by security costs and likely will for several years more. Its major cities remain riddled with concrete t-walls, check points, traffic bypasses and other security barriers. Getting around can be difficult and time-consuming in ways that would not be "normal" for other Arab cities. Corruption and organized crime continue to flourish. Iraq's infrastructure is still decrepit and dysfunctional as a result of twenty years of damage and neglect. In short, while Iraq has improved enormously from what it once was, it is still very far from where Iraqis and the U.S. government would like it to be. It is not a normal society yet, and this will continue to affect the political demands of the Iraqi people (who want to see greater strides toward normality) as well the country's economic prospects.

The U.S. Military Drawdown

The steady drawdown of American military forces in Iraq has shifted into high gear with vast amounts of materiel coming out of Iraq on a daily basis to ensure that U.S. forces are down to the 50,000-man total by the end of August 2010 set by President Obama. This drawdown is being accomplished so skillfully that it is largely invisible to the Iraqis. Indeed, USF-I has successfully taken on new, critical missions even as it has dramatically stepped back from most of its accustomed roles. There are far, far fewer U.S. military personnel partnered with Iraqi formations, advising small Iraqi units, or training the Iraqis themselves. U.S. military personnel are increasingly

stepping further into the background, and focusing their engagement with higher and higher levels of the Iraqi military structure. Meanwhile, the cooperative security measures inaugurated over the past six months to defuse tensions with the Kurds have worked remarkably well so far. Large swathes of the de-facto border between the Kurdish lands and those under central government control—the so-called “trigger line”—are now patrolled by joint formations of Iraqi army, Iraqi police, Kurdish peshmerga, and American military forces and the number of incidents has correspondingly plummeted.

At this point, the U.S. military forces in Iraq are increasingly focusing on just five missions, although these five remain vital to the stability and tranquility of Iraq:

Peacekeeping . American military officers rarely use this term to describe their activities, but over the past two years, it has emerged as perhaps their most important function. The establishment of the joint patrols and checkpoints along the Kurdish trigger line is the most obvious example of this, but there are plenty of others as well. As noted above, in virtually every instance of a civil war that was prevented from recurring by an external great power, the peacekeeping role was the most important. Indeed, across the board, even those Iraqis who ostensibly want the U.S. military gone will acknowledge that the American presence is a critical source of reassurance to them that groups will not be able to use violence to pursue their political agendas and so push the country back into civil war.

Security for PRTs and other civilians . Although the missions of the provincial reconstruction teams, embassy personnel, and other U.S. civilians in Iraq have changed dramatically over the years, their need to get out and interact with the population and the Iraqi government has not. The U.S. military remains their key security provider, and as the force shrinks, the proportion of those remaining that will be assigned to provide such security will only increase.

Enforcing good civil-military relations . This is another area that U.S. military officers rarely ever address directly. Indirectly they point to their continuing efforts to promote professionalism, develop an apolitical officer corps, inculcate the right values in Iraq’s military culture, and prevent the Iraqi Security Forces from sliding into their old, highly politicized ways. Indeed, many American personnel are concerned about the potential for a coup in theory, but uniformly assert (probably correctly) that such an event is highly unlikely as long as American combat troops remain in Iraq. Nevertheless, a problem that is already present is the effort by successive Iraqi governments to politicize the military, both to make it more subservient to the political leadership and to preclude the possibility of a coup. Here as well, American military officers have played a crucial role in limiting the extent to which the government can do so.^[3]

Counter-terrorism . Although the ISF is unquestionably conducting the lion’s share of CT and COIN operations on their own, American special forces continue to conduct CT operations both independently and in conjunction with Iraqi forces.

Backstopping the Iraqis with combat enablers, quick reaction forces, and the like . Again, this is happening less and less, but Iraqi forces still need help from U.S. forces in various circumstances. At times they need air support, reconnaissance and surveillance, fire support, and communications.

It is impossible to know how long it will be necessary for the United States to continue to play these roles. Certainly the reduction to 50,000 troops seems perfectly reasonable, and will remain so as long as significant, politically-driven violence does not recur. A good indicator for this will be whether Iraq begins to experience an increase in assassinations, bombings, intimidation and other forms of violent coercion if the political deadlock

drags on into the late summer or the fall. If it does, U.S. forces in Iraq will have to demonstrate that they can still intervene quickly and in sufficient numbers to prevent an escalatory spiral. The U.S. may also need to think creatively about other ways to reassure Iraqis that the United States remains willing and able to act to head off a resurgence of civil war—possibly by temporarily reinforcing some assets in Iraq or changing the deployment and operations of those troops still in country.

At this point in time, it is equally impossible to know whether Iraq will need a continued, large American military presence after the current Security Agreement ends in December 2011, but it would be taking a huge risk with Iraqi security and stability to assume that it will not. Again, the scholarly work on civil wars shows a very high propensity for recidivism that would be catastrophic for U.S. interests in the Persian Gulf region. While the Iraqis may well be able to do without U.S. forces for counterterrorism operations and combat enablers, and the State Department successors to the PRTs may not need the protection of U.S. military forces, the need for American forces to continue to play peacekeeping and civil-military roles will likely persist, albeit at reduced levels. As an example, NATO forces maintained a peace-keeping presence in Bosnia for a decade, although troop levels declined quickly from 54,000 troops in 1996, to 12,000 in 2002 and just 7,000 in 2004. Consequently, it may be that U.S. troop levels could be responsibly further reduced after 2011, but the evidence suggests that they will be needed at some level for several years after 2011. This underlines the need for a follow-on agreement to the current Security Agreement between Iraq and the United States after 2011.

Dark Clouds on the Economic Front

Although additional foreign investment is beginning to reach Iraq, particularly in the oil sector, the country's economy continues to languish. Unemployment and underemployment remain problems. Water and agriculture face both internal structural problems and external problems from Iraq's neighbors. Iraqi factories produce little and are consistently undercut by Iranian rivals. The demand for electricity continues to outstrip increases in production, which are further hindered by inadequate transmission and distribution capacity. Moreover, Iraqis are slowly becoming less willing to live with these deprivations as the civil war recedes into memory and people begin to ask why the government cannot address these problems now that security issues have diminished so considerably.

Senior Iraqi government officials almost unanimously expect to have all of these problems solved for them in the very near future by massive increase in oil revenues. However, these expectations may be premature to say the least, and Iraq may have to endure a number of years of serious financial difficulties before the oil money can wash away all of the problems. First, the expansion of Iraqi oil production is likely to start slowly. One senior Iraqi official suggested that Iraq would add 200,000 bpd of production in 2011, another 200,000 in 2012, and possibly another 400,000 bpd on top of that in 2013, before much larger increases in 2014-17. Unless oil prices rise unexpectedly high, such modest increases will not result in major cash windfalls. Second, the structure of the oil contracts that Iraq has signed with the various major oil companies create incentives for the companies to take their share of revenue up front, leaving little for Iraq in the next few years. The contracts should result in large increases in revenues farther down the line, but in the near term, Iraq might very well face serious budget deficits based on current levels of expenditure. And, of course, this does not take into account the massive increases in spending on electricity, infrastructure, water, transportation, education and other sectors that Iraqi politicians hope to undertake to mollify their frustrated constituents. Given Iraq's poor credit rating and difficulty securing foreign investment, this situation could create very severe political problems—or very hard political choices—in the years to come.

Longer-Term Political Considerations

The 2010 Iraqi elections have the potential to be the most important that the country has ever had and will ever have. Neither the people nor the politicians face the overwhelming pressures of civil war any longer. The political system is not mature, but neither is it newborn. The people have made clear that they want change, and they expected these elections to produce that change. Consequently, the precedents set in this election will endure for a long time to come. Moreover, Iraq's political system remains fairly fluid, but it could harden very quickly—and especially if the wrong principles prevail in its wake. For all of these reasons, it seems likely that this election will define the Iraqi political system for decades to come.

It is for this reason that the United States, and all other countries whose vital interests are on the line in Iraq, must pay particular attention to the final outcome of this election. Whatever else they want, the Iraqi public has made clear that they want representative, transparent government; they want political leaders responsive to the needs of their constituents; they want effective, technocratic governance; they want greater secularism and less sectarianism; they want the rule of law. Consequently, there is a great danger in allowing the perception to take hold that the election was “stolen” in the politicking that followed it. Many Iraqis will become disillusioned, others will get angry. Whole communities might seek to distance themselves from the central government, or to support violence against the government again. Indeed, it continues to remain the case that the most likely alternative to continued progress toward democratization in Iraq (no matter how slow and fitful) is an eventual return to civil war.

In a similar vein, the outcome of this election will likely have a profound impact on American interests in Iraq. The extent to which Iraq remains on a democratizing path is likely to be a key consideration in the extent to which the United States remains supportive of Iraq. It is difficult to imagine a scenario in which Iraq is veering toward greater authoritarianism and sectarianism and the United States remains wholly supportive. Similarly, the extent to which the outcome of the election, the post-election maneuvering, and then the new government's ability to govern will determine whether Iraq avoids sliding back into civil war. This, in turn, creates another critical interest for the United States. Finally, the extent to which the United States can remain an active participant in Iraq's political development, helping to keep it on the right path toward stability, prosperity and pluralism is also likely to be shaped, if not determined, by the outcome of these events. Again, the more democratic, representative and secular the new government, the more willing the United States will be to help it, and the more amenable to American advice and assistance the Iraqi government is likely to be. Conversely, the more authoritarian and sectarian the new government is, the less it will be open to American influence and the more it will attempt to block the United States and keep it out of Iraqi affairs.

Consequently, it is critically important that in the weeks and months ahead, while Iraqi politics remain fluid and susceptible to American influence, that the United States continue to play an active role in helping to shape the outcome. We should keep in mind that while there are a number of possible outcomes of the current politicking that would suit our interests, there are many others that would not. In attempting to guide this process, the United States (and our allies and the UN) ought to keep a number of key principles in mind, but three stand out above the rest:

1. No party can be allowed to subvert Iraqi democracy. None can be allowed to use unconstitutional or violent means to advance its political agenda. Everyone has to “play by the rules.”
2. The final government must reflect the outcome of the election in both letter and spirit. The people voted for change, they voted against sectarianism, and they voted for responsible governance. Ideally, both Iraqiyya and SoL would be major components of the new government, reflecting the fact that Iraqis voted

heavily for *both* of them, and in roughly equal numbers.

3. Long-term interests should be put ahead of short-term interests. In particular, democratic principles should be respected even at the expense of political expediency because of the precedents that this election and government-formation process will set.

[1] Moreover, it is an exaggeration to claim, as some have, that only Sunnis voted for Iraqiyya and only Shi'ah voted for State of Law. For instance, about one-quarter of Iraqiyya's parliamentary seats were won by Shi'ah candidates in largely Shi'ah districts.

[2] Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, "Greed and Grievance in Civil War." The World Bank, DECRG, 2001; T. David Mason, "Sustaining the Peace After Civil War," The Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle, PA, December 2007; Barbara Walter and Jack Snyder, eds., *Civil Wars, Insecurity, and Intervention* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999); Barbara Walter, "Does Conflict Beget Conflict? Explaining Recurring Civil War," *Journal of Peace Research* 41, no. 3 (May 2004): 371—388.

[3] On the proclivity of developing-world militaries that the U.S. has taught to conduct effective counterinsurgency operations to mount coups, especially after American combat forces have departed, see Kenneth M. Pollack and Irena L. Sargsyan, "The Other Side of the COIN: The Perils of Premature Evacuation from Iraq," *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 33, No. 2 (April 2010), pp. 17-32.