**Iraqi Politics DA**

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A. Maliki will lose the Iraqi election unless he can appease Sadrists

[Kenneth M. Pollack](http://www.brookings.edu/experts/pollackk.aspx), Director, [Saban Center for Middle East Policy](http://www.brookings.edu/saban.aspx), 7/30/10, The Brookings Institution, “The Political Battle in Iraq” <http://www.brookings.edu/reports/2010/0630_iraq_trip_pollack.aspx>

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 f

or 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 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 teir 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. 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. 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.

B. INSERT SPECIFIC LINK HERE

C. Sadr in power causes Iraq civil war, Iranian power in Iraq, and Sunni genocide.

Greg Reeson, staff writer 10/9/06 “Iraq: The Consequences Of Withdrawl” The American Chronicle http://www.americanchronicle.com/articles/view/14476

Muqtada al-Sadr has been a thorn in the side of the United States since the invasion of Iraq in March 2003. His Mehdi Army has confronted U.S. and coalition troops in battle and his followers are largely responsible for the Shiite death squads attacking the Sunni minority and pushing Iraq closer to all-out civil war. Al-Sadr is closely aligned with the Shiite leadership in Iran and he has consistently called for the withdrawal of all U.S. forces from Iraq. The absence of U.S. troops would allow Al-Sadr’s militia to conduct a genocide campaign against the Sunnis while providing Iran with additional leverage over the government in Baghdad.

D. Iraq instability causes global nuclear war

Jerome Corsi, Ph.D. in Political Science from Harvard & Staff Reporter for World Net Daily, 1-8-7 ("War with Iran is Imminent, http://www.worldnetdaily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE\_ID=53669)

If a broader war breaks out in Iraq, Olmert will certainly face pressure to send the Israel military into the Gaza after Hamas and into Lebanon after Hezbollah. If that happens, it will only be a matter of time before Israel and the U.S. have no choice but to invade Syria. The Iraq war could quickly spin into a regional war, with Israel waiting on the sidelines ready to launch an air and missile strike on Iran that could include tactical nuclear weapons. With Russia ready to deliver the $1 billion TOR M-1 surface-to-air missile defense system to Iran, military leaders are unwilling to wait too long to attack Iran. Now that Russia and China have invited Iran to join their Shanghai Cooperation Pact, will Russia and China sit by idly should the U.S. look like we are winning a wider regional war in the Middle East? If we get more deeply involved in Iraq, China may have their moment to go after Taiwan once and for all. A broader regional war could easily lead into a third world war, much as World Wars I and II began.

2NC Uniqueness- Maliki lose now

Maliki is isolated in the status quo and viewed negatively because he is seen as contributing to gridlock

Elias Harfoush, Arab Washingtonion Columnist, 7-24-10 “Maliki’s Isolation: an Opportunity for Iraq?” <http://www.daralhayat.com/portalarticlendah/166114>, IA

The state of isolation of Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri Al-Maliki is increasing day after day, after his insistence on clinging to his post, despite four months having gone by since the elections in which his State of Law coalition did not obtain a clear majority that would have allowed him to form the government alone as he had hoped. Such isolation has recently been reinforced by the stances of prominent Shiite coalitions towards Maliki, most prominently the Sadrist coalition and the Islamic Supreme Council. Indeed, despite the fact that Muqtada Al-Sadr, whose strong ties to Iran are well known, was able to find common grounds with Ayad Allawi, former Prime Minister and head of the Iraqiya electoral list, he avoided, in the recent contacts he made during his visit to Iraq, meeting Maliki. Meanwhile, Ammar Al-Hakim, the leader of the Islamic Supreme Council, has called on the Prime Minister to step aside and allow for other figures to come forward, considering that it was his insistence on remaining Prime Minister that has obstructed the formation of the government throughout the last period. Hakim also spoke of “the intransigence, obstinacy and clinging to one’s position shown by some parties”, and adding: “why does the one man not resign and give others the opportunity when we find all of these broad reservations as to his person?”

Maliki behind now

[Marina Ottaway](http://www.carnegieendowment.org/experts/index.cfm?fa=expert_view&expert_id=24), director of the Middle East Program at the Washington-based Carnegie, Danial Kaysi, 7-14, 2010 “The Chess Game Continues”, <http://www.carnegieendowment.org/publications/index.cfm?fa=view&id=41210>, IA

Two recent developments may have weakened Maliki’s determination and convinced him that he may not be the next prime minister. The first is the increasing vocal and united opposition from all the INA members. While there is nothing new about this opposition, there is now a greater degree of openness about it; INA members have made repeated references recently to a letter they sent to Maliki explaining why he could not be the National Coalition candidate.    The second sign of change, clearly related to the first, is that after weeks of procrastination, Maliki and Allawi have held several meetings. Maliki in particular had been reluctant to enter into a direct dialogue with his adversary, arguing that he was not interested in an encounter that would merely be a photo opportunity. The recent meetings between Maliki and Allawi—and even more importantly between the negotiating committees of the State of Law and Iraqiya—are open to conflicting interpretations

Maliki is losing power now

Middle East Online 7-13-10 “Dear Iraq, Welcome to The Iron Law of Oligarchy” , <http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=40024>

In the midst of the U.S. Green Zone, which actually reflects, and was built, by Republican and Democratic oligarchies, including their war machine, Biden met with Iraq’s Prime Minsiter Nouri al-Maliki, a Shiite who is struggling to keep his position after his party lost the last election, and the Sunni-backed Ayad Allawi, al-Maliki’s challenger. Absent from the discussions and democratic process were dozens of other political and religious parties, like the Sadrists, Islamic Labour Movement in Iraq, Communist Party of Iraq, Green Party , Iraq, Peoples Union of Iraq, and the neo-Baathists. Ironically, Biden made clear that a government that is not represented by all sides-no matter who leads it-will fall short of a thriving democracy, something which has not yet occurred in the United States.

2NC Uniqueness- Maliki lose now

There’s a political deadlock in the status quo

AP 7-4 “Biden visits Iraq and Political impasse” <http://www.seacoastonline.com/articles/20100704-NEWS-7040329>, IA

Parliament has only about a month to end the impasse before the start of Ramadan in August, when little official business gets done in the Arab world. Adding to the urgency, all but 50,000 U.S. troops are scheduled to leave Iraq by the end of August in a test of whether the fledgling democracy's security forces are ready to protect its people from insurgents and other terror threats. Persistent violence has raised fears that al-Qaida in Iraq and other militants are trying to exploit the political deadlock to foment unrest and derail security gains as the American military prepares to withdraw all of its troops by the end of next year. Analysts and some Iraqi lawmakers have warned the end to the political gridlock could still be months away.

2NC Uniqueness- Military presence Now

1) American military is staying in Iraq

The Daily Republic, 7-22-10 “’We’re winning’ Rounds says in Iraq” <http://www.mitchellrepublic.com/event/article/id/44827/>

“So far, we’ve been able to respond,” he said. “It’d be nice to get them all home.”

But he said the odds are there will be an American military presence in Iraq for years. Rounds noted there are still American troops in South Korea more than 50 years after the Korean War ended.

2) Even if we drawdown August troops, we will maintain substantial troops in Iraq

Kevin **Baron, 7-21**-10 “Odierno: 50,000 troops to stay in Iraq through summer 2011” <http://www.stripes.com/news/odierno-50-000-troops-to-stay-in-iraq-through-summer-2011-1.111804>, IA

WASHINGTON — The U.S. is on track to drawdown its force level in Iraq to 50,000 by August 31, as scheduled, but will maintain that robust level through summer 2011, Gen. Ray Odierno, the commander of U.S. forces in Iraq, said Wednesday.

3) We don’t have to win that troop presence is inevitable, just that they’ll remain in Iraq during our scenario.

2NC Rapid Withdrawal Link Wall

1) The only chance for Maliki win is to ally with Sadrists and the ISCI – both of whom demand withdrawal as a precondition for supporting him

Juan R.I. Cole, History Professor at U Michigan and author of 17 books on the Middle East,2010.  (“Will Muqtada and Ammar force the Next Prime Minister to Demand a US Withdrawal? Turnout Heavy with two Dozen Dead in early Election Violence”, March 7, <http://www.juancole.com/2010/03/will-muqtada-and-ammar-force-next-prime.html>)

So if ISCI has decided that it is now in its interest to push the US out on a shorter timetable, and is allied with Sadrists who think the same way, then **they could make that acceleration of the withdrawal a precondition for joining al-Maliki’s coalition**. Al-Maliki would not have many alternatives. He is unlikely to pair himself with Allawi, whom he sees as a dusted-off Baathist (al-Maliki campaigned against what he warned was resurgent Baathist influence in Iraq, though by that he seems to have meant simple Arab nationalism that threatened the dominance of the Shiite religious parties, including his Islamic Mission (Da`wa) Party). That stance will make it hard for him to get cooperation from the National Iraqi List. Al-Maliki is also too much of an Iraqi nationalist to have really warm and close relations with the Kurdistan Alliance, which wants to add Kirkuk to its holdings, a step that al-Maliki has generally opposed.**Moreover, al-Maliki may not need much pressure to call for a quicker US departure**. He has for some time insisted that the Iraqi military is perfectly capable of keeping order in the country, and he clearly chafed when Vice President Joe Biden attempted to intervene to reverse the disqualification of over 500 allegedly Baath-linked candidates.

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2NC Rapid Withdrawal Link Wall

3) Immediate US military withdrawal will swing the Sadrists to support Maliki in Iraq – breaking the election stalemate and allowing them to name the PM

Recknagel, RFE correspondent, 2010. (Charles, “With Iraqi Votes Tallied, Deal-Making Begins”, Radio Free Europe/Radio Free Iraq, March 26, http://www.rferl.org/content/Iraq\_Awaits\_Full\_Vote\_Results\_Today\_Amid\_Growing\_Tensions/1994580.html)

The release of the election results marks the formal start of what may be an even more difficult process: forming a governing coalition.  By failing to produce a decisive winner, the national parliamentary election leaves the field open for not one, but two, major parties to try to seize the initiative in coalition building.  And, by producing at least two potential "kingmaker" groups in the background, the election has opened the way for even some of the losers in the election to exert huge influence in the deal-making. The result is almost certain to be a months-long period of negotiations over forming a new government -- a process that could severely test the country's recently won stability.  Nabil Ahmed, a correspondent for RFE/RL’s Radio Free Iraq, says there are no parties immediately strong enough to form a ruling coalition on their own.  Even though former Allawi's Iraqiya took the most votes, his list and the other frontrunner, Maliki's State of Law bloc, emerged essentially neck-and-neck.  Ahmed says that means tough fights ahead. "The winning lists are strong enough to try to make alliances with smaller parties,” he says. “But they also are strong enough to try to break each other apart by wooing away wavering loyalists. So there will be many battles and efforts to create new alliances in the days ahead."  **Religious Parties Lose Ground** He notes that this is a much more complicated situation than the last parliamentary election in 2005, when Shi'ite religious parties swept the poll and later allied with the Kurdish bloc to dominate the new parliament. Even so, it took a full six months of tough negotiating to create a coalition stable enough to rule.  This time, the front runners are not Shi'ite religious parties, but secularists or nationalists. Allawi is a Shi'ite secularist. Maliki heads a Shi'ite religious party but has used his years in power to rebrand as a nationalist.  A dream team, from Washington's point of view, might be a coalition uniting Allawi and Maliki. That would marginalize the Shi'ite religious parties, which are actively supported by Iran.  But Ahmed says this is highly unlikely. "There is quite a lot of personal animosity and that will play its part, too, in any deal-making,” he says. “One of the strongest feuds is between Allawi and Maliki. Neither wants to share power with the other, so they are both almost certain to try to outmaneuver each other by reaching out to the third- and fourth-place finishers instead." **Coalition-Building** The prospect of such maneuvering puts both the third- and the fourth-place finishers in potential kingmaker roles.  The third-place finisher is the Shi'ite religious parties' Iraqi National Alliance and, strongest among them, the loyalists of radical cleric Muqtada al-Sadr.  But the Sadrists themselves have deep-seated animosities toward both Allawi and Maliki, dating back to the efforts by both men to crack down on the Sadrists "Mahdi Army." Sadr opposes the U.S. military presence in the country and demands its immediate withdrawal.  Since the election, both Allawi and Maliki have said they are open to alliances with Sadr. But it is not clear at what price. The Sadrists have suggested they could make a deal with Maliki's State of Law Coalition but that they would propose their own candidate for prime minister in Maliki's place.

4) Withdrawal swings Sadrists to support Maliki

 Juan R.I. Cole, History Professor at U Michigan and author of 17 books on the Middle East,2010.  (“Will Muqtada and Ammar force the Next Prime Minister to Demand a US Withdrawal? Turnout Heavy with two Dozen Dead in early Election Violence”, March 7, <http://www.juancole.com/2010/03/will-muqtada-and-ammar-force-next-prime.html>)

Al-Maliki, however, may well have to pay a price for remaining prime minister, if he can manage to do so, since that outcome wouldcertainly require that he make a post-election coalition with the Shiite religious parties of the National Iraqi Alliance. The latter include the Sadr Movement and the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq. Muqtada al-Sadr, leader of the Sadr movement, said Saturday on the Iran-based al-Alam satellite channel that **he would only support a prime ministerial candidate who agreed to accelerate the departure of the US from Iraq**. Based on its performance in last year’s provincial elections, the Sadr Movement could well get half of the seats gained by the National Iraqi Alliance; if Sadrists did that well, they could be essential to putting together the 51 percent al-Maliki (or any other prime minister) would need to govern. Scroll down to see a translation of Sadr’s remarks, which are the first entry for Sunday below.

2NC Rapid Withdrawal Link Wall

5) Sadr’s support dependent on acceleration of US troop withdrawal

Juan R. I. Cole, author of *Engaging the Muslim World* 3-25-10, “Sadr Emerging as Kingmaker in Iraqi Election; Will Muqtada demand Quicker US Withdrawal” Informed Comment, http://www.juancole.com/2010/03/sadr-emerging-as-kingmaker-in-iraqi.html

The London pan-Arab daily al-Hayat [Life] reports in Arabic that that the Shiite State of Law coalition and the Shiite Iraqi National Alliance say they are prepared to make an alliance before they enter the new parliament. This move reduces the chance that current prime minister Nuri al-Maliki will get a second term. The State of Law said it had negotiated without preconditions, considering that who fills the post of prime minister is less important that for the two parties to arrive at a common plan. The fundamentalist Iraqi National Alliance groups Muqtada al-Sadr’s Free Independents with Ammar al-Hakim’s Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq and other religious Shiite parties. The paper’s contacts in that movement likewise affirmed that the National Iraqi Alliance is eager to form some sort of united front with the State of Law coalition, in accordance with ‘countless political calculations.’ Sadiq al-Rikabi of the Islamic Mission Party, the core component of the State of Law List, told al-Hayat that it was important for his party to reach a common vision with the National Iraqi Alliance. He said that the two had a common notion of confronting challenges. He said it is not important at this point to name a prime minister, and that other details can be worked out first. The Sadrists, the leading bloc within the National Iraqi Alliance, deeply dislike al-Maliki because he sent the army in after their paramilitary, the Mahdi Army, in both Basra and Sadr City in spring-summer of 2008. The State of Law may well have to sacrifice him to get an alliance with the more religious Shiite parties. Abdul Hadi al-Hassani of the State of Law also announced talks toward merging the two blocs. He said that the two ‘agree on most issues,’ aside from the question of who should be prime minister and how to distribute cabinet posts by party, as well as how to run the executive branch. He said he expected the two to merge, given that they were most compatible in their platforms. He downplayed Sadrist dislike of al-Maliki and said what was important is that the two have a similar governing structure and could settle issues by a vote. He envisaged a further partnership, with the Kurdistan Alliance and with the Accord Front (Sunni fundamentalists). It sounds as though the State of Law leadership is entirely prepared to throw al-Maliki under the bus to get the votes required to form a government. The State of Law could end up with over 90 seats, and the National Iraqi Alliance may well get over 70. An alliance would take them very close to the 163 seats needed to govern Iraq. State of Law says it is also working on an partnership with the Kurdistan Alliance, which would be needed to elect a president on the first ballot. A Shiite alliance plus the Kurds recalls the governing coalition of 2005 and after, which cannot be good news for the US. Al-Sadr may well make his joining the coalition conditional on al-Maliki stepping down and an acceleration of the timetable for US troop withdrawal. Al-Sadr, whose movement may get as many as 40 seats, will be pivotal to forming a government. He is a supporter of Iran, Hizbullah and Hamas, and once called himself the right hand of Hamas. If he becomes a kingmaker, the Middle East will lurch to the Right.

2NC SOFA Link Wall

1) SOFA fulfillment causes Sadrist theocracy

David Dayen, Staff Writer, 6/28/10 “Guess Who’s Back? Muqtada al-Sadr” Fire Dog Lake http://news.firedoglake.com/2010/06/28/guess-whos-back-muqtada-al-sadr/

We have had this debate spark up over Afghanistan this past week as if it’s the only war in which we are still engaged. However, America remains entwined in Iraq, and a familiar face has [returned to the stage](http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-mahdi-army-20100628,0,2030541.story)there. For backstory, the Iraqi elections, which still have yet to be decided, featured a victory for the Sunni-backed Allawi list, but really made the Sadrists the crucial swing vote, because their bloc could seal the election. They appear to have sided with the Shiites, and as a result, the next ruling government will look a lot like the old one: a sectarian group closely allied with Iran. It’s therefore no surprise that Mahdi Army militia has taken back to the streets:

“The return of the Mahdi Army poses a dilemma for the Obama administration. Fornow, at least, Washington’s goals coincide with those of the militia: Both want to hasten the departure of U.S. troops, and the group’s leader, cleric Muqtada Sadr, has publicly urged supporters to avoid taking up arms.

But with its ideological fervor intact and bolstered by a powerful 40-member parliamentary bloc, the shadowy organization could take advantage of the country’s instability as a political crisis festers and U.S. troops withdraw.

“The Mahdi Army has a wish to come back to the arena again,” said Emad Hossein, a representative of an older, moderate Shiite cleric, Ayatollah Hossein Sadr, who is related to Muqtada Sadr but politically his opposite.

“They had this golden time when they controlled the streets, neighborhoods and gas stations,” Hossein said. “Now they are just waiting for something to happen, or to receive an order. They are waiting to use the moment to climb on the shoulders of others to get what they want: power, at the expense of the people.”

We’re in the middle of the jockeying for power stage in Iraq with the US sidelined, and with the return of the militias that jockeying could easily grow violent. That’s not necessarily a pre-ordained outcome: the militia is seeking to reinvent itself as a social movement, committed to providing help for the poorest citizens in the country. Their rhetoric sounds more like an NGO than a militia. However, with security fragile in Iraq, offshoots of the Sadr movement do look more like armed combatants: “Adding to the confusion and the potential for violence, observers say there are at least two major outgrowths of the Mahdi Army’s militia: the Promised Day Brigades sanctioned by Sadr and a splinter group called the League of the Righteous. Some describe the latter as an Iranian-controlled militia linked to Shiite militant organizations, which the U.S. called Special Groups, that were once accused of using sophisticated roadside bombs against troops.

Iraqi and U.S. forces have already had some run-ins with Promised Day. On May 28, Iraqi security forces arrested a member of the group “allegedly involved in sniper, indirect fire and improvised explosive device attacks” against American and Iraqi forces, according to a U.S. military news release.”

Sadr has always promoted a nationalist movement with the goal of driving out the US occupiers. That has the backing of most of the citizens of Iraq. **Should the US fulfill the status of forces agreement and actually leave Iraq by the end of 2011**, Promised Day and the other **Sadrist brigades would wield power and influence, and our result for eight years of invasion and occupation will be an Iranian-linked Shiite theocracy**. But that has been evident for quite a while now.

2NC SOFA Link Wall

2) Troop withdrawal- both immediate and SOFA key to Sadr’s support

Wilayah Network 3/11/07 “Al Sadr calls U.S., Britain and Israel a Triad of Evil” http://www.wilayahnetwork.com/news/?id=12056

"Wha's important is that the occupiers leave because they're behind what is happening in Iraq" Iraq’s Shia cleric Muqtada Al Sadr described the United States, Israel and Britain as a "Triad of Evil". Al Sadr, who was speaking on state-run Iraqiya television last night, said that February 22 barbaric attack which damaged a holy Shia shrine in the central Iraqi city of Samarra was carried "in collusion with the occupiers and the Zionist Entity of Israel," referring for the U.S. and Israel. The Shia cleric was obviously playing on word the U.S President G Bush previously used in one of his State of the Union addresses, in which he labeled Iraq, Iran and North Korea and "axis of evil." Hundreds of Iraqis died in recent weeks as a result of reprisals following the attack on the Shia holy Shrine, and numerous Muslim leaders in and outside Iraq blamed the occupation for the attack, as it will benefit the invaders by breaking the Iraqi nation, turning it into warring communities fighting against each other instead of fighting the occupation forces. Moving to the political turmoil that plagued Iraq following the Shia parliamentary bloc's nomination of Prime Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari to form a new government, Al Sadr said "I don't intervene in such small matters." However, he stated that "The candidate for prime minister must demand the withdrawal of the occupiers, or put a timetable for their pullout. I don't support any person who does not say that". "What is important is that the occupiers leave because they are behind what is happening in Iraq." "Putting a timetable on foreign troop withdrawal represents a victory for Iraqis not for 'terrorists'," he said

3) Sadrists opposed to US presence and will demand speedier withdrawal

Michael Christie and Suadad al-Salhy, staff writers, 7/19/10, “Scenarios- What is going on in Iraqi politics?” http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/LDE66I0N6.htm

Vice President Joe Biden said on a visit to Baghdad that Washington did had no preferred candidate. But U.S. officials say the next government should include all political groups so that all communities feel they have stake in the future as U.S. troops withdraw over the next 18 months, and stop fighting.

Privately, though, many U.S. officials would like to see a solution that excludes the Sadrists from government.

The Sadrists are fiercely opposed to the U.S. presence, and might demand either a speedier pullout or guarantees U.S. forces are not allowed to remain beyond their end-2011 withdrawal date.

They are also viewed as unpredictable and disruptive as legislators and administrators. Oil majors investing in Iraq's oilfields may also prefer this solution -- the Sadrists are the main critics of contracts the companies signed with the outgoing government. (Editing by Angus MacSwan)

2NC SOFA Link Wall

4) US troop withdraw gives Maliki the support from the Sadrists to form new government

Rebecca Santana, AP newsperson, 7-12-10, “Iraqi parliament session postponed as country stumbles into month 5 with no new government”, Politics News, http://blog.taragana.com/politics/2010/07/12/iraqi-parliament-session-postponed-as-country-stumbles-into-month-5-with-no-new-government-48155/

BAGHDAD — Hopes that Iraq’s parliament could convene this week fell apart Monday as the country stumbled into month five with no new government and the prime minister hitting a brick wall with his nominal Shiite allies, some of whom deeply oppose him staying in his post. The heads of the main political blocs met Monday in the latest attempt to find common ground, but with no resolution on filling top posts in sight, they decided to delay the next session for two weeks, acting parliament speaker Fouad Massoum said. That means more backroom negotiations as Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki tries to cobble together a coalition that will back him for a new term, while his rivals press for him to step down, all against a backdrop of the U.S. military preparing to withdraw all combat troops by September and all forces by the end of next year. Shiite parties appeared to have made a breakthrough in early May when al-Maliki’s State of Law and the Iraqi National Alliance, a Shiite bloc backed by Iran, announced a coalition that seemed to give them a sure hand to form the government. But they have since been deadlocked over al-Maliki, as some INA members staunchly reject a new term. “They seem to be totally stalemated, and they’re totally stalemated because nobody wants Maliki to be prime Minster,” said Marina Ottoway, from the Washington-based Carnegie Endowment for Peace. The deadlock is so tough, the prime minister is now flirting with his archrival, Ayad Allawi, a secular Shiite who leads the mainly Sunni coalition, Iraqiya. But that political combination has its own challenges. To be sure, no one thought seating a new government would be easy. The election results set up a contentious fight: Iraqiya narrowly edged out the State of Law coalition, 91 seats to 89, in a March 7 election shocker that was celebrated by Iraq’s Sunni community. But it was far short of the necessary 163-seat majority. The parliament held its inaugural session on June 14, but it was largely symbolic and ended after less than 20 minutes. Under Iraq’s constitution, the legislature should have chosen a parliament speaker and a president, but these appointments had to be put off because they are part of the negotiations between major political blocs over the rest of the new leadership — including a prime minister and top Cabinet officials. Members of the Iraqi National Alliance, which includes followers of anti-American cleric Muqtada al-Sadr, have vehemently opposed al-Maliki continuing as prime minister. Al-Maliki jailed thousands of al-Sadr’s supporters during U.S.-Iraqi offensives in their strongholds of Basra and Baghdad’s Sadr City. The Shiite alliance was more about keeping Allawi from power rather than any desire to work together, said Mahmoud Othman, an independent Kurdish politician. “Frankly speaking, things are not clear, and nobody knows if they (the blocs) can reach an agreement or not,” Othman said Monday. Officials from both parties in the alliance said other objections to al-Maliki included poor relations with the Arab world and a tendency to act without consulting others outside his inner circle, pushing members of his Dawa Party into government posts and appointing members of the armed forces loyal to him. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the ongoing negotiations. “There are a lot of grudges against him,” said Ottoway. But these complaints against al-Maliki also indicate a bit of sour grapes by political leaders who likely also want the opportunity to put their own people in power. And the prime minister has been lauded for the Basra and Sadr City offensives as an indication he’s willing to go after Shiite militias just as much as Sunni militias. Prominent Dawa party member, Abdul-Hadi al-Hassani, acknowledged opposition to al-Maliki’s nomination but said the prime minister was working “according to the constitution and the law.” The political drama has led to speculation al-Maliki is turning instead to Allawi to form a coalition. The two met June 29 — their second meeting since the election — in what was viewed as a hint by al-Maliki to his Shiite allies. “It is possible that an Iraqiya-State of Law alliance could emerge if talks continue as positively as they are now,” Iraqiya spokesman Abdul Rahman al-Bayder said. But any agreement between Iraqiya and State of Law would require that either Allawi or al-Maliki — or both — give up their bid to be prime minister. Neither seems eager to do that, although political analyst Kazim al-Muqdadi, from Baghdad University, said al-Maliki may be willing to give Iraqiya key ministries as long as he gets the top job.

2NC PMC Link Wall

1) Maliki has declared to aggressively prosecute PMCs

AP, 1-5-10, “Maliki to press Blackwater case” <http://www.boston.com/news/world/asia/articles/2010/01/05/maliki_to_press_blackwater_case/>, IA

BAGHDAD - The prime minister vowed yesterday to seek punishment for the Blackwater guards accused of killing 17 people at a busy Baghdad intersection after US courts dropped the case in a decision that outraged many Iraqis.

Nouri al-Maliki’s comments were his first public reaction since a US judge threw out the case against the five Blackwater guards last week.

The guards were accused of an unprovoked attack that left 17 dead. The killings in 2007 inflamed anti-American sentiment and solidified many Iraqis’ image of US security contractors as above the law.

“We have done what is necessary to protect our citizens and to punish those who committed the crime and we have formed committees and filed a lawsuit against Blackwater security firm either in America or Iraq. We won’t abandon our right to punish this firm,’’ Maliki said.

2) Maliki has maintained a hardline stance against PMCs

CNN, 11-20-8 “Iraq raid kills suspect in kidnap-slaying of GI” <http://www.cnn.com/2008/WORLD/meast/11/20/iraq.main/index.html>, IA

Currently, U.S. contractors are exempt from Iraqi law. But a section of the Status of Forces Agreement pertaining to Pentagon contractors says "primary jurisdiction falls to the government of Iraq," the senior Defense department official said.

The Pentagon employs about 163 contractors in Iraq, plus several thousand more "private security detail" contractors who protect U.S. diplomats and Iraqi officials. The State Department employs about 5,500 contractors in the country.

The status of contractors became an explosive issue after a deadly shooting involving guards from the military contractor Blackwater. Iraqi authorities accused the guards of killing 17 people and wounding nearly 30. But Blackwater has repeatedly said its guards were acting "in response to a hostile threat."

Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki's government has approved the pact and sent it to the Council of Representatives for ratification. Lawmakers hoped to debate the bill after the second reading and then vote on the measure Monday, before a scheduled two-week recess.

**3) al-Sadr opposes PMCs as part the US military strategy**

P.W. **Singer**, Senior Fellow and Director of the 21st Century Defense Initiative at the Brookings Institution., 10-2-**2007,** Salon**,** <http://www.salon.com/news/feature/2007/10/02/blackwater/print.html>

For example, the same week that the Blackwater shooting incident occurred, radical Shia leader Muqtada al-Sadr was planning the withdrawal of his coalition from the government. Instead of having to justify the act, which potentially could collapse the government and plunge the nation into civil war, he was able instead to focus his propaganda and recruiting efforts on the Blackwater episode, describing it as "a cowardly attack committed by the so-called security company against our people without any justification." As with others, he was clear to blame not merely the firm, but the wider American policy, describing how the firm had been allowed to recruit "criminals and those who have left American jails." That this part is not truthful misses the point; the episode gave the other side a factual point on which to leverage their wider propaganda operations.

2NC PMC Link Wall

4) Sadr Opposes US presence

Mohamad Bazzi, adjunct senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, NY Daily News, 7-22-10 “Iran wins a round in Iraq: Moqtada al-Sadr's rise could stoke sectarian tensions, help Tehran” http://www.nydailynews.com/opinions/2010/07/22/2010-07-22\_iran\_wins\_a\_round\_in\_iraq\_moqtada\_alsadrs\_rise\_could\_stoke\_sectarian\_tensions\_he.html

On Monday, the anti-American Shiite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr met with Iyad Allawi, who is vying to become Iraq's next prime minister after his coalition narrowly won parliamentary elections in March. It might seem like a minor development in the endless political jockeying over forming a stable government in Iraq. But, in fact, this meeting was a victory for Iran and another setback for the United States. As the Iranian regime suppressed internal dissent over the tainted reelection of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, it also worked to maintain its influence over Iraq's Shiite factions. By surviving an internal challenge, the so-called Green Revolution, the Iranian regime has become stronger and more emboldened to engage in adventurism abroad. Sadr, who is most popular among young, impoverished Shiites, has helped Iran extend its influence over Iraq. He is positioning himself as the kingmaker who may well determine the political fates of Allawi and the current prime minister, Nouri al-Maliki, who is fighting to keep his job. Sadr's meeting with Allawi took place in Damascus and was arranged by Syrian President Bashar Assad, another ally of Iran. Since 2007, Sadr has lived in self-imposed exile in the Iranian holy city of Qom. After the recent parliamentary elections, he began receiving emissaries from Iraqi political factions seeking his support. He has since gravitated toward a new Shiite political alliance that is now four seats shy of a majority in the parliament - and the power to select a prime minister and form a cabinet. But Sadr's political ascendance threatens to stoke sectarian tensions in Iraq: His followers were responsible for some of the worst atrocities against Sunnis during the country's recent civil war. Sadr's militia, the Mahdi Army, unleashed death squads that assassinated Sunnis and drove them out of Shiite neighborhoods. Already, militants loyal to Al Qaeda are seeking to exploit the political maelstrom to yet again destabilize Iraq. On Sunday, more than 50 people were killed in attacks near Baghdad, including a double suicide bombing that targeted former Sunni insurgents who had switched sides to fight alongside U.S. forces. As the political stalemate drags on, the U.S. military continues to draw down its forces to meet President Obama's promise to reduce troop levels to 50,000 by the end of August. Secretary of State Clinton recently asked Iraqi leaders to assume a "sense of urgency" in forming a new government, but U.S. officials have little sway over Iraqi groups that are now more concerned about currying favor with Iran. Sadr's influence has grown because no single faction was able to dominate the new parliament. Allawi's Iraqiya list won the largest share with 91 seats, followed by Maliki's State of Law coalition with 89, and the Shiite-led Iraqi National Alliance (INA) with 70 seats. (Sadr's movement won 39 seats, the largest share within the INA.) In early June, Maliki formalized his postelection merger with the INA, giving the two groups 159 seats in the 325-seat legislature. With Iran's backing, this new alliance has claimed the right to form a government despite the fact that it was created after the election and is therefore in blatant disregard of the wishes of Iraqi voters. By joining the Shiite alliance, Maliki is trying to outmaneuver Allawi, whose secular coalition attracted strong support among Iraq's Sunni minority. Such backdoor tactics threaten to once again unleash the sectarian warfare that recently shattered Iraq. So far, Sadr and his followers are reluctant to support Maliki's reappointment as prime minister. They blame Maliki for launching a 2008 crackdown by the Iraqi Army that devastated Sadr's militia. In reaching out to Allawi, Sadr was sending a message to Maliki: that he needs to make concessions or else risk breaking up the new Shiite coalition. "I have a red line against the Americans," Sadr said in Damascus. That does not bode well for the United States. Whatever deal Sadr eventually strikes, he is sure to demand a large role for his followers in the new government. That will make it more difficult for Washington to make it more difficult for Washington to maintain a strong relationship with the Iraqi government after the withdrawal of U.S. troops.

AT: Kurd L/T

1) The Kurds are not critical to the formation of the political factions

The Middle East Media Research Institute, 7-7-10 “Vice President Joseph Biden Concludes a Three-day Visit to Baghdad” <http://www.memri.org/report/en/0/0/0/0/0/0/4433.htm>, IA

One thing is certain: if the second idea should be adopted, the posts of prime minister and revamped post of the president will most likely go to al-Maliki and Allawi, not necessarily in this order, leaving the current Kurdish president, Jalal Talabani out in the cold. This may not please the Kurds but they will have to settle for the post of speaker of parliament, and perhaps be guaranteed some concessions in Kirkuk through the activation of Article 140 of the Iraqi Constitution, which calls for holding a referendum in the city to determine its future. In fact, many Kurdish leaders, including Mas'oud Barazani, the president of Kurdistan Regional Government and perhaps the most powerful Kurdish leader, are on record that the Kurds would not be an impediment to any possible political arrangement that would bring together the two leading political factions. In fact, they would rather not take sides between Allawi and al-Maliki. The Kurds don't trust al-Maliki, but nor are they comfortable with the large nationalist Sunni elements in Allawi's faction, who are suspicious and even resentful of Kurdish aspirations.  Our own judgment is that the presidency is significant for the Kurds for its prestige, but issues relating to Kurdish autonomy, Kirkuk, and their share of oil revenues, as well as their entitlements from new oil explorations in their region, are far more significant and vital to their interests than having a Kurd as president.

2) Kurds support Allawi now, despite Maliki’s diplomatic efforts

AK News, Kurdistan News Agency, 5-31-10, “VP: Maliki's visit to Kurdistan fear of Kurdish alliance with Iraqiya”http://www.aknews.com/en/aknews/4/150845/

Baghdad, May 31 (AKnews) - An expected visit by the outgoing Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki to Kurdistan Region today is motivated by fear of the Kurdish position that confirms the entitlement of al-Iraqiya list to form the next government, the spokesman of Tajdid list - an Arab Sunni lists part of Iraqiya bloc - led by the Vice President Tareq al-Hashemi said Monday. "The Kurdish position towards al-Iraqiya that it has the right to form the next government urged the outgoing PM Nuri al-Maliki to visit Kurdistan Region today," Shaker Kattab said. Al-Maliki's visit to Kurdistan to discuss with Kurdish leaders the issue of forming the new government "will not change the position of Iraqi Kurds" since they believe that al-Iraqiya is the biggest bloc that has the constitutional right to form the government, according to Kattab. '"The leader of al-Iraqiya Ayad Allawi didn't visit Kurdistan region because he knew the constant Kurdish position that supports Iraqiya in the formation of the next Iraqi government." he added. Maliki's visit today to Kurdistan region comes just days before the region sends a delegation that includes the most prominent Kurdish leaders to enter serious negotiations with all winning lists to form the next government. The debate now is over who is authorized to form the new cabinet: Al-Iraqiya bloc confirms its right, based on Article 76 of the Constitution, while the two Shiite alliances insist on this right based on the interpretation of the Federal Court. The Iraqi parliamentary elections were held on March 7 and the results of the elections were announced on March 26 which showed the progress of Iraqiya list led by former Prime Minister Ayad Allawi, by gaining 91 seats, trailed by the State of Law Coalition led by outgoing Prime Minister Nuri Al-Maliki with 89 seats, while the Iraqi National Alliance (INA) won 70 seats and Kurdistan Alliance in fourth place with 43 seats. The Federal Court has interpreted article 76 of the Iraqi constitution which stipulates that the "the largest bloc" can form the government as: either the bloc that was a stand-alone list in the elections and gained the largest number of seats or the bloc that was formed by merging more than one electoral list after the elections to put together a majority. Under the Federal Court's interpretation, the alliance between the State of Law and the INA has a better opportunity to form the government, thought it is still four seats short of a majority bloc which is 163 out of the 325-seat parliament. The State of Law and INA announced their coalition on May 4 in a step to put together a majority bloc to form the new Iraqi government after the Sunni-backed Iraqiya challenger led by former Iraqi interim Prime Minister Allawi garnered the most votes in the March 7 polls beating Maliki by 91 seats to 89. However, the Shiite coalition between INA and Maliki's lists is still four seats short to the majority bloc of 163 out of the 325-seat parliament of Iraq.

AT: Kurd L/T

3) Kurds don’t have the political power to build coalition

The Middle East Media Research Institute, 7-7-10 “Vice President Joseph Biden Concludes a Three-day Visit to Baghdad” <http://www.memri.org/report/en/0/0/0/0/0/0/4433.htm>, IA

One thing is certain: if the second idea should be adopted, the posts of prime minister and revamped post of the president will most likely go to al-Maliki and Allawi, not necessarily in this order, leaving the current Kurdish president, Jalal Talabani out in the cold. This may not please the Kurds but they will have to settle for the post of speaker of parliament, and perhaps be guaranteed some concessions in Kirkuk through the activation of Article 140 of the Iraqi Constitution, which calls for holding a referendum in the city to determine its future. In fact, many Kurdish leaders, including Mas'oud Barazani, the president of Kurdistan Regional Government and perhaps the most powerful Kurdish leader, are on record that the Kurds would not be an impediment to any possible political arrangement that would bring together the two leading political factions. In fact, they would rather not take sides between Allawi and al-Maliki. The Kurds don't trust al-Maliki, but nor are they comfortable with the large nationalist Sunni elements in Allawi's faction, who are suspicious and even resentful of Kurdish aspirations.  Our own judgment is that the presidency is significant for the Kurds for its prestige, but issues relating to Kurdish autonomy, Kirkuk, and their share of oil revenues, as well as their entitlements from new oil explorations in their region, are far more significant and vital to their interests than having a Kurd as president.

4) The Sadrist coalition is the third most powerful political bloc, the Kurdsih political bloc is fourth and splintered at best.

AT: Sadrists Care About Other Issues

**Other issues have been resolved**

Memri Staff, 7-21, 2010,” After a Lull in Activity Yesterday, Al-Maliki and Allawi Meet Again Today” <http://www.thememriblog.org/blog_personal/en/28752.htm>, IA

According to leaks to the press, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's meetings with Muqtada al-Sadr and with Ayad Allawi were aimed at reaching an agreement on power-sharing between al-Iraqiya and the Iraqi National Alliance at the expense of al-Maliki, who was to be kept out of any coalition configuration. At the same time, al-Maliki's State of Law maintains that it is about to reach an agreement with the Sadrists,whose demands are excessive: the release of all Sadrist followers from prisons, including more than a hundred murders from the notorious militia Jaysh al-Mahdi sentenced to death for major crimes, getting the critical Ministry of Oil, and appointing a Sadrist as a deputy minister in the key security ministries.

2NC Internal Link- Maliki Gets Credit for the Plan

1) Maliki supports US withdrawal—plan will be associated with him

Sarah Wheaten, New York Times Reporter, 7/19/08 “Maliki Backs Obama’s Troop Withdrawal Plan” <http://thecaucus.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/07/19/maliki-backs-obamas-troop-withdrawal-plan/>, IA

The policies and whims of American leaders have played a major role in politics in Iraq and elsewhere. And now, Iraq’s prime minister, Nuri Kamal al-OMaliki, dipped his toes in the United States’ race for the White House.

Mr. Maliki essentially endorsed Senator Barack Obama’s plan for withdrawing troops from Iraq in an interview with the German magazine [Der Spiegel](http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/0,1518,566841,00.html).

“U.S. presidential candidate Barack Obama talks about 16 months,” Mr. Maliki said, according to the magazine’s online English edition. “That, we think, would be the right timeframe for a withdrawal, with the possibility of slight changes.”

2) Maliki supports US withdrawl, White House confirms

Jake Tapper, ABC News Senior White House Correspondent, 2008, <http://blogs.abcnews.com/politicalpunch/2008/07/white-house-acc.html>

The White House this afternoon accidentally sent to its extensive distribution list a Reuters story headlined "Iraqi PM backs Obama troop exit plan - magazine."The story relayed how**Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki told the German magazine Der Spiegel**that "he supported prospective U.S. Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama's proposal that U.S. troops should leave Iraq within 16 months … ‘U.S. presidential candidate Barack Obama talks about 16 months. That, we think, would be the right timeframe for a withdrawal, with the possibility of slight changes,'" the prime minister

2NC Internal Links – Sadrists = Swing Vote

1) Sadrists are a key constituency that does not currently support Maliki

AP 4-2-10 “Shiite Sadrists play key role after election” <http://www.etaiwannews.com/etn/news_content.php?id=1217842&lang=eng_news>, IA

Anti-American cleric Muqtada al-Sadr, whose power once seemed all but crushed, has made a remarkable political resurgence in Iraq's parliamentary elections. The Iran-based Shiite leader is now poised to play a key role in choosing Iraq's next prime minister.

He may use his newfound clout to push his archenemy, Nouri al-Maliki, from power.

Sadrist support is crucial for al-Maliki as he tries to assemble enough Shiite backing to remain prime minister. But the young cleric is holding a referendum among his supporters Friday and Saturday to decide whom to support for the post. The move is widely viewed as a way to give himself the opportunity to back someone other than al-Maliki, under the guise of following the people's will.

2) Immediate US military withdrawal will swing the Sadrists to support Maliki in Iraq – breaking the election stalemate and allowing them to name the PM

Recknagel, RFE correspondent, 2010. (Charles, “With Iraqi Votes Tallied, Deal-Making Begins”, Radio Free Europe/Radio Free Iraq, March 26, http://www.rferl.org/content/Iraq\_Awaits\_Full\_Vote\_Results\_Today\_Amid\_Growing\_Tensions/1994580.html)

The release of the election results marks the formal start of what may be an even more difficult process: forming a governing coalition.  By failing to produce a decisive winner, the national parliamentary election leaves the field open for not one, but two, major parties to try to seize the initiative in coalition building.  And, by producing at least two potential "kingmaker" groups in the background, the election has opened the way for even some of the losers in the election to exert huge influence in the deal-making. The result is almost certain to be a months-long period of negotiations over forming a new government -- a process that could severely test the country's recently won stability.  Nabil Ahmed, a correspondent for RFE/RL’s Radio Free Iraq, says there are no parties immediately strong enough to form a ruling coalition on their own.  Even though former Allawi's Iraqiya took the most votes, his list and the other frontrunner, Maliki's State of Law bloc, emerged essentially neck-and-neck.  Ahmed says that means tough fights ahead. "The winning lists are strong enough to try to make alliances with smaller parties,” he says. “But they also are strong enough to try to break each other apart by wooing away wavering loyalists. So there will be many battles and efforts to create new alliances in the days ahead."  **Religious Parties Lose Ground** He notes that this is a much more complicated situation than the last parliamentary election in 2005, when Shi'ite religious parties swept the poll and later allied with the Kurdish bloc to dominate the new parliament. Even so, it took a full six months of tough negotiating to create a coalition stable enough to rule.  This time, the front runners are not Shi'ite religious parties, but secularists or nationalists. Allawi is a Shi'ite secularist. Maliki heads a Shi'ite religious party but has used his years in power to rebrand as a nationalist.  A dream team, from Washington's point of view, might be a coalition uniting Allawi and Maliki. That would marginalize the Shi'ite religious parties, which are actively supported by Iran.  But Ahmed says this is highly unlikely. "There is quite a lot of personal animosity and that will play its part, too, in any deal-making,” he says. “One of the strongest feuds is between Allawi and Maliki. Neither wants to share power with the other, so they are both almost certain to try to outmaneuver each other by reaching out to the third- and fourth-place finishers instead." **Coalition-Building** The prospect of such maneuvering puts both the third- and the fourth-place finishers in potential kingmaker roles.  The third-place finisher is the Shi'ite religious parties' Iraqi National Alliance and, strongest among them, the loyalists of radical cleric Muqtada al-Sadr.  But the Sadrists themselves have deep-seated animosities toward both Allawi and Maliki, dating back to the efforts by both men to crack down on the Sadrists "Mahdi Army." Sadr opposes the U.S. military presence in the country and demands its immediate withdrawal.  Since the election, both Allawi and Maliki have said they are open to alliances with Sadr. But it is not clear at what price. The Sadrists have suggested they could make a deal with Maliki's State of Law Coalition but that they would propose their own candidate for prime minister in Maliki's place.

2NC Add On- Oil Prices Impact

Sadr’s rise to power sparks civil war and instability

Mohamad Bazzi, staff writer for the New York Daily News, 2010, <http://www.nydailynews.com/opinions/2010/07/22/2010-07-22_iran_wins_a_round_in_iraq_moqtada_alsadrs_rise_could_stoke_sectarian_tensions_he.html>

Since 2007, Sadr has lived in self-imposed exile in the Iranian holy city of Qom. After the recent parliamentary elections, he began receiving emissaries from Iraqi political factions seeking his support. He has since gravitated toward a new Shiite political alliance that is now four seats shy of a majority in the parliament - and the power to select a prime minister and form a cabinet. But Sadr's political ascendance threatens to stoke sectarian tensions in Iraq: His followers were responsible for some of the worst atrocities against Sunnis during the country's recent civil war. Sadr's militia, the Mahdi Army, unleashed death squads that assassinated Sunnis and drove them out of Shiite neighborhoods.

Iraqi civil war would kill the global economy due to oil prices

James **Phillips**, Research Fellow in Middle Eastern Studies, Douglas and Sarah Allison Center for Foreign Policy Studies, 5/23/**05**, http://www.heritage.org/Research/MiddleEast/wm770.cfm accessed 5/20/2006. (DRGNS/E276)

Even if Kurdish and Shiite forces were able to maintain control of the oil reserves in the north and south, an Iraq plunged into chaos would not be able to freely export its oil. The loss of Iraq’s 2 million barrels of daily oil production would push world oil prices higher. This would impose a heavy long-term cost on the economies of the U.S. and other oil importers and possibly trigger a world economic recession that could destabilize many of our allies in the war against terrorism, including Pakistan.

Econ collapse means nuclear war

Walter Russell Mead, NPQ’s Board of Advisors, 1992, New Perspectives Quarterly, Summer, p.30

What if the global economy stagnates-or even shrinks? In the case, we will face a new period of international conflict: South against North, rich against poor, Russia, China, India-these countries with their billions of people and their nuclear weapons will pose a much greater danger to world order than Germany and Japan did in the ‘30s.

2NC Add-On-- Iran Impact

Sadrist victory will give Iran more influence in Iraq

Greg Reeson, staff writer, 10-9-06, American Chronicle **“**Iraq: The Consequences of Withdrawal” http://www.americanchronicle.com/articles/printFriendly/14476

Iran’s supreme leader, the Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, recently told Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki that the best way for him to end the ongoing violence and ensure stability and security was to begin the withdrawal of U.S. military forces from Iraq. Khamenei was explicit in his desire to see the rapid departure of American soldiers, but the consequences of a premature U.S. withdrawal would prove to be nothing short of catastrophic. There are three basic parties, excluding American Democrats, which are actively pushing for the removal of U.S. and coalition troops from Iraq: Iran, the Shiite faction led by radical Iraqi cleric Muqtada al-Sadr, and the foreign jihadists who have flocked to Iraq to confront the United States in the Global War on Terror. Iran has been making a concerted effort to establish itself as the leading state in the Middle East. In pursuit of this strategic goal, Khamenei and Iranian President Ahmadinejad have been actively antagonizing the United States over their nuclear program in order to portray Iran as a nation that must be reckoned with. Simultaneously, the Iranians have used Hezbollah to wage a proxy war against Israel, and the Shiites in southern Iraq to foment unrest that threatens the fragile government in Baghdad. The conflict in Lebanon and the increasing Shiite-Sunni violence are meant to further demonstrate to the west that Iran has the ability, and the will, to destabilize the entire region for political gain. With the United States out of Iraq, there would be little to stop the Iranians from turning Iraq into a satellite state that could help cement Iran’s hegemony in the Middle East. Muqtada al-Sadr has been a thorn in the side of the United States since the invasion of Iraq in March 2003. His Mehdi Army has confronted U.S. and coalition troops in battle and his followers are largely responsible for the Shiite death squads attacking the Sunni minority and pushing Iraq closer to all-out civil war. Al-Sadr is closely aligned with the Shiite leadership in Iran and he has consistently called for the withdrawal of all U.S. forces from Iraq. The absence of U.S. troops would allow Al-Sadr’s militia to conduct a genocide campaign against the Sunnis while providing Iran with additional leverage over the government in Baghdad. Finally, Islamic extremists from all over the world have traveled to Iraq to join the battle against the United States and the west. Al-Qaeda in Iraq and various other fundamentalist groups, while constituting a minority of the Iraqi insurgency, are determined to take advantage of the current chaos to wage war on anyone, Iraqis included, who opposes the formation of an Islamic state. The withdrawal of American troops from Iraq would embolden the jihadists, who would then take advantage of the power vacuum to promote Islamic rule similar to that of the Taliban in Afghanistan.

Strengthening Iraqi-Iranian alliances will draw in the United States again—turns case

PBS 3-2-07 “Iran’s Relationship with Iraq causes US Concern” <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/updates/middle_east/jan-june07/iran-iraq_03-02.html>

While the new Iraqi government owes its existence to the United States, it remains religiously and politically tied to Iran, whose refusal to stop its nuclear program has made it an enemy of the Bush administration.

Iran is Iraq's main ally in the region and both nations now have Shia leadership: Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and Iraq's Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki. The two governments have displayed cooperation over the past year, even meeting to discuss stabilization of Iraq.

But the Bush administration announced in February that Iran is arming Iraqi Shia militias that are attacking and killing U.S. troops and destabilizing the country.

In a Feb. 14 speech, President Bush accused the Quds Force, an Iranian paramilitary unit, of providing the weapons.

"What we don't know is whether or not the head leaders of Iran ordered the Quds Force to do what they did," the president said.

Mohammed Ali Hosseini, Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman, rejected the accusations of militant support and accused the United States of continuing a "long history in fabricating evidence."

Iraqi leaders, for their part, have tried to stay out of the dispute, highlighting the uncomfortable position of the government.

"We have told the Iranians and the Americans, 'We know that you have a problem with each other, but we are asking you, please solve your problems outside Iraq,'" al-Maliki told CNN in early February.

The U.S. administration has consistently warned Iran to pull back involvement of any kind in Iraq, including Iranian offers of military and economic assistance, but in late February Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice opened a door for diplomatic relations between the three countries.

Iran Impact Ext.

Iraq on the brink now; Iranian alliance ends in catastrophe

Tariq Alhomayed, Editor-in-Chief of Asharq Al-Awsat, 06/05/10 Asharq Al-Awsat “Iraq…It's an Iranian Alliance”, http://www.aawsat.com/english/news.asp?section=2&id=20848

There is no other way to describe the electoral alliance that was announced on Tuesday between the State of Law Coalition and the Iraqi National Alliance except as an Iranian one. What’s considered a purely sectarian alliance made sectarianism prevail over the nation, with the aim of excluding half of the Iraqi society, and of course the consequences will be detrimental. In amazement, a Western official told me “how America handed over Iraq to Iran.” The truth is that the first person to say this openly and in America was the Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud al Faisal when, in the presence of the then US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, he said that America had handed Iraq to Iran on a golden platter. A well-informed Saudi told me that the Americans, Rice in particular, were very angry that day, however today Prince Saud al Faisal’s words have been confirmed decisively. It is not important to understand the reasons that prompted this Shia alliance and the coup over half of the Iraqi nation; it is more important to understand the harmful consequences that will result from the alliance. The alliance suggests that there is a long road ahead for Iraq and that the common denominator between the two coalitions is the sectarian dimension. This is what will result in instability in Iraq and a lack of trust between Iraq and its Arab surroundings. It is by no means an easy matter, and the Iraqis will remember that only when it is too late as some triumphs look like defeats and even stronger is the bitterness of defeat. Democracy is not based on the dominance of sectarianism and serving foreign agendas and that of Iran in particular. If every component of the Arab countries went in search of its sectarian depth then disaster would have struck in the region. Therefore, the national umbrella is the most effective and the safest; in fact it is the only request and the place of rational-minded people. But what has happened in Iraq is contrary to that. Those being targeted here are not only the Sunnis, despite the fact that one week doesn’t pass without news of killings and assassinations (the most recent being the assassination of the deputy head of the Sunni Waqaf authority in west Baghdad yesterday) but there is also the targeting of the Christians in a systematic manner in order to intimidate them and force them out of Iraq in such a blatant manner whilst the Arab and international silence continues! Now, after the announcement of the alliance between the two Shia coalitions in Iraq we should not be surprised at [what happens in] the upcoming days even if we do feel sad about the where the Iraqi situation is going. But what’s important is that the Iraqiya List, with its Sunnis and Shia, remains solid and rational and the same thing applies to the Kurds. This is for the simple reason that history is documented and time passes and the best example of that is the former regime of Saddam Hussein. Who would have thought that it would end in the way it did? Therefore, it is not important who becomes Prime Minister in Iraq whether it is al Maliki or anyone else; what’s important is that it is clear to us today that Iraq is on the brink of unknown consequences; if it falls into the cycle of violence then it will harm us all and if it throws itself into the arms of Iran, then the catastrophe is even bigger, as Tehran will be looking over the Arabian Gulf from several points and though it will be up to its neck in oil fields, it will also be the carrier of firewood! Has the picture become clear? I believe it is as clear as the sun!

Iran Impact Ext.

Alliance exacerbates sectarian tensions

Reidar Visser, staff writer 5/11/10 Iraq and Gulf Analysis “Good and Bad Arguments about the Shiite Alliance” http://gulfanalysis.wordpress.com/2010/05/11/good-and-bad-arguments-about-the-shiite-alliance/

However, the problem with the legal approach to the issue does not rest so much in the theoretical domain. Rather, it has to do with Iraqiyya’s own approach to the eventuality of post-election coalition-forming in the autumn of 2009 and the first part of 2010. And in particular, it relates to Iraqiyya’s various (and ideologically contradictive) manoeuvres vis-à-vis INA in that period, which continued almost until the election date. The bottom line is that it is exceedingly difficult to understand these moves unless one accepts that there was an underlying intention of doing precisely what Iraqiyya is protesting today: To form a post-election bloc with the aim of trumping or blocking the list that came out with the highest numbers of votes. All too often, we tend to forget that the idea that Iraqiyya would emerge with a plurality in the elections was not entertained with any degree of seriousness even among the party faithful until after the elections, and that most of the pre-election coalition posturing was aimed at weakening Maliki and his SLA. The examples of this approach by Iraqiyya are numerous. For example, just after the final line-up of Iraqiyya had emerged in late October (i.e. in the shape it was submitted to IHEC), Hussam al-Azzawi told media that Iraqiyya “intends to form a broad front with the other coalitions, and those who are closest to us in this respect are the Iraqi National Alliance and the Kurdistani Alliance”. Even more remarkable is the fact that something similar was repeated well into February 2010. At that point, Adnan al-Danbusi of Iraqiyya told Al-Hayat that his coalition was in touch with several forces including INA and the Kurds in order to “form a wide national front”. What plausible motive could there be behind that front in February 2010, just weeks before the elections, other than a post-election plan to challenge Maliki who at the time looked likely to emerge with the biggest bloc? But if the legal argument may look like a contradiction when the pre-electoral behaviour of Iraqiyya is taken into consideration, there is another, and more compelling, criticism of the new Shiite alliance: It takes Iraq back to the primitive political atmosphere of 2005. Thankfully, at a time when most Iraqi politicians are careful to wrap their statements in a mist of nationalist rhetoric about “unity” and “coexistence”, some still speak a kind of language that is easier to understand. Back in December 2009, Jalal al-Din al-Saghir of ISCI, a long-time advocate of a merger between INA and SLA, called for “the brothers in State of Law and the Iraqi National Alliance to put the interests of the people and the public above their own interests, and to merge… The unity of these two coalitions [is] the coalition of the majority.” It is in this kind of frank references to majorities and minorities in ethno-sectarian terms that the true character of the merger project is revealed: It has been conceived to perpetuate Shiite dominance of Iraq in ethno-sectarian terms, pretty much like the old United Iraqi Alliance that was formed in 2004. What, then, are the viable options for Iraqiyya today? How can they protest against the sectarian repolarisation of Iraqi politics without proceeding down the blind alley of a legal argument that they are unlikely to win? It seems pretty obvious what some in the new Shiite alliance want them to do. For example, Bahaa al-Aaraji, a Sadrist, says Iraqiyya should be invited into a coalition government, not as a list but as one of the “components” (mukawwinat) of the Iraqi people. In plain Arabic, he means Iraqiyya should represent the Sunnis in an ethno-sectarian power-sharing arrangement. Some may think that sounds sweet and tolerant, but they should remember that last autumn the same Aaraji was very happy to ram through changes to the electoral law with support from the Kurds and in disregard of what many Sunni representatives wanted. In other words, if Sunnis and secularists accept the ethno-sectarian power-sharing logic and opt to enshrine it in Iraqi politics, they also ensure that they will forever remain in a minority position in Iraq. The alternative for Iraqiyya is to abandon the ethno-sectarian logic altogether and find back to its secular nature. Secular parties seek partners on the basis of ideology and not ethnicity. Instead of opting for an oversized government, they could make a last-ditch attempt to appeal to those in the Shiite alliances that are more interested in a shared vision of a strong, centralised Iraqi state. They talk about problems of Maliki getting “too strong”, but which is really the greater threat against Iraq’s survival right now: A strong premier (whose power can be balanced in a more effective government) or those who talk about an Iraq divided into regions based on sect and ethnicity? The oversized power-sharing government may create some temporary satisfaction among external players in Iraq, including Iran, Saudi Arabia and the United States. But it is also the solution that gives something to all Iraqi politicians and nothing to Iraqi citizens. All they will get is a big government that can accomplish absolutely nothing.

DA Turns Withdrawal (heg)

Sadrist political control makes US troop withdrawal impossible

Lionel Beehner, senior writer, 10/21/06, Council on Foreign Relations “Maliki and Sadr: An Alliance of Convenience” <http://www.cfr.org/publication/11787/maliki_and_sadr.html>

Introduction Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki has come under fire from U.S. officials for his refusal, or at least inability, to disband the militia of Muqtada al-Sadr. Sadr’s militia, known as the Mahdi Army, is accused of carrying out a number of attacks against Sunni insurgents, coalition forces, and rival militias like the Badr Brigade. Maliki relies on Sadr, who controls a large bloc of parliamentary seats, for political support and can ill afford to alienate his religious and conservative base. Experts say the alliance between the two poses a serious threat to American efforts to hand over security duties to the four-month-old government and begin scaling back U.S. forces. What is Maliki’s relationship to Muqtada al-Sadr? Maliki, a top member of the conservative Dawa Party, enjoys the political support of Sadr, a popular anti-U.S. Shiite cleric. “Behind Dawa is really Sadr,” says CFR Adjunct Senior Fellow Vali R. Nasr. “His party was a tiebreaker party. Sadr himself did not have another prime minister [as a candidate earlier this year] that either the United States or SCIRI (Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq) would have accepted.” SCIRI is a top Shiite party whose leader, Abdul Aziz al-Hakim, has frequently clashed with Sadr. “The problem is that ultimately [Maliki] is completely dependent on Muqtada al-Sadr and Hakim and a variety of other groups out there who, quite frankly, have no interest in doing the right thing,” says Kenneth M. Pollack, a Middle East expert at the Brookings Institution, in an interview with CFR.org. As he grows increasingly isolated from his American benefactors, says Kenneth Katzman of the Congressional Research Service, Maliki is reaching out more to clerics like Sadr and the Supreme Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani to seek support in curbing the violence. Does Maliki share Sadr’s goals in Iraq? Their views overlap more than they contradict one another, experts say, but their alliance is primarily one of political convenience. “Sadr has some vested interest in seeing Maliki succeed because the alternative could be more problematic,” Nasr says. Both harbor suspicions of SCIRI, whose Badr Brigade militia has repeatedly clashed with Sadr’s forces in southern Iraq and is closely alligned with Iran. Further, neither Sadr nor Maliki supports full-blown civil war in Iraq, nor does either want the country to split up into semiautonomous zones. The problem, says Pollack, is that Sadr, unlike Maliki, is “not going to make any concessions either to the Sunnis or to the other Shiite militias. And that is pushing both the Sunnis and the other Shiite militias to dig in their heels.” Also, Sadr has called for the immediate pullout of U.S. forces, which Maliki does not endorse. Why has the prime minister proven unable to rid Iraq of militias? Maliki relies too heavily on Sadr’s bloc, which controls thirty seats in parliament, for domestic political support. Further, large segments of Iraq’s majority Shiite population actually do not favor disbanding these militias, experts say. “Even if Maliki wanted to go against the militias, he has public opinion to worry about,” says Abbas Kadhim, assistant professor of Islamic studies at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California. Many Iraqis view these Shiite groups much like some Lebanese view Hezbollah: as protectors who fill in a security vacuum and provide basic services. “It’s a myth to say the militias are bad for Iraq,” Kadhim says. “They are the only ones providing anything meaningful for Iraqis. The problem [for Iraqis] is choosing between anarchy and a militia that protects you for a price.”

2NC Impact Overview (Colonialism Aff)

Iranian expansion in Iraq causes sectarian violence and domination

Kenneth Katzman, Specialist in Middle East Affairs for the Congressional Research Service, 2008**,** “Surging Out of Iraq”, Page 169, <http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=cwtAyr8dwaoC&oi=fnd&pg=PA169&dq=iran+trying+to+expand+into+Iraq&ots=HSmIzLcsuX&sig=uQX5WO-eCm_3Wse5AS-jRdZgrMc#v=onepage&q&f=false>

Iran’s influence in Iraq is a significant issue not only because of the U.S. needs to stabilize Iraq but also because of tensions between the United States and Iran **over** Iran’s nuclear and regional ambitions. With the conventional military and weapons of mass destruction (WMD) threat from Saddam Hussein removed, the thrust of Iran’s strategy in Iraq has been to perpetuate domination of Iraq’s government by pro-Iranian Shiite Islamist leaders, as well as to obtain leverage against the United States to forestall a potential confrontation. Iran sees control of Iraq by friendly Shiite parties as providing Iran with “strategic depth,” ensuring that Iraq remains pliable and attentive to Iran’s interests. At the same time, Iran’s aid to Iraqi Shiite parties and their militias is contributing to sectarianviolence that has threatened the US stabilization efforts as well.

Both internal and external genocide are colonial

Irving Louis Horowitz, an American sociologist, author and college professor who has written and lectured extensively in his field, 1976, <http://books.google.com/books?id=GSCmoOAwtTIC&pg=PA19&dq=Genocide+and+colonialism+are+linked&hl=en&ei=IH9MTM3BKMT58Aaz9cgx&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=3&ved=0CC4Q6AEwAg#v=onepage&q=Genocide%20and%20colonialism%20are%20linked&f=false>, Page 19-20

A special type of genocidal practice is employed against overseas rather than native populations. One of the fundamental characteristics of the nineteenth century European imperialism was its systematic destruction of communities outside the “mother country.” Decimation of Zulu tribesmen by British troops, the Dutch-run slave trade, and the virtual depopulation of the Congo by Belgians, typify this form of colonial genocide. It would be simple to say that such events are merely a consequence of international strife and the division of spoils, and that they do not qualify as genocidal practice. Those engaging in genocide nearly always define the people to be purged and liquidated as alien or enemy populations. Whether they are aliens from within or without is an ideological caveat that disguises the fact of the systematic mass extermination by on state power against a relatively powerless group of sector. The conduct of classic colonialism was invariable linked with genocide. It is the awful heritage of European nations that they proclaimed concepts of democracy and liberty for their own populations while systematically destroying others**.** This was the bequeathal of nineteenth-century “civilized” existence. This bequest of the past became the norm of the twentieth century.

Impact- Iraq loses control of own government

The Sadrists will take over when Maliki steps down

History News Network 5/23/07 “Juan Cole: where things stand in Iraq now” <http://hnn.us/roundup/entries/39259.html>, IA

H[amza Hendawi and Qassim Abdul Zahra of AP report](http://www.chron.com/disp/story.mpl/ap/world/4826085.html) that the Sadr Movement is positioning itself to take over Iraq if the al-Maliki government falls. The Sadrists would have to put together a pan-Islamic Sunni-Shiite alliance to form a government. They have 32, and might be able to get the 24 Da'wa delegates to join with them. The Sunni Arabs have 58, which would make 114 if the Sadrists could pull it off. They would have to be joined by 24 other Shiites, whether independents or Supreme Islamic Iraqi Council. Since the Mahdi Army harbors a lot of death squad murderers of Sunnis, the notion seems a bit far-fetched to me. But Sadrists and fundamentalist Sunnis do agree on a lot: 1) US troops out now, 2) Islamic canon law (shariah) as the law of the land, 3) strong central government rather than regional confederacies. And, I'm told that the Sunni delegates in parliament are mostly on good terms with Muqtada al-Sadr. The Sadrists demand a US withdrawal from Iraq on a short timetable.

\*\*Aff Answers\*\*

Non U – Maliki Winning Now

Unique internal link—Maliki/the State of Law Coalition is winning by forming coalitions with the Kurdish parties

[Marina Ottaway](http://www.carnegieendowment.org/experts/index.cfm?fa=expert_view&expert_id=24), director of the Middle East Program at the Washington-based Carnegie, Danial Kaysi, 7-14, 2010 “The Chess Game Continues”, <http://www.carnegieendowment.org/publications/index.cfm?fa=view&id=41210>, IA

Maliki has shown so far that he is determined to continue as prime minister. His insistence prevented the formation of a single Shi’i coalition before the election, leading to the emergence of Maliki’s own State of Law (SoL), which he dominates, and the Iraqi National Alliance (INA), which groups the other important Shi’i parties and personalities, including the Iraqi Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI), the Sadrists, the Badr organization, and former Prime Minister Ibrahim Jafari. Maliki’s insistence that he must remain prime minister has kept the new parliamentary Shi’i bloc, the National Coalition—which includes State of Law and the INA—from speaking with one voice. Instead, the parties in the INA are negotiating separately with Iraqiya and the Kurdish parties, and have even established their own diplomatic contacts with other countries in the region.

Maliki ahead now – Recent candidate purging

Hannah Allam, Staff writer for The Christian Science Monitor, 3-29-10, The Christitan Science Monitor “Iraq election: Victorious candidates may be purged, boosting Maliki”, http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Middle-East/2010/0329/Iraq-election-Victorious-candidates-may-be-purged-boosting-Maliki

Baghdad — Six winning candidates in Iraq elections will be stripped of their votes and lose their seats – which would cost secular politician Iyad Allawi's bloc its narrow victory – if a federal court upholds a broad purge of candidates who are suspected of past involvement with the late dictator Saddam Hussein's outlawed Baath Party, Iraqi officials said Monday. The six winners are among 52 candidates who were disqualified just before the March 7 elections by Iraq's Accountability and Justice Commission, the controversial government body charged with "de-Baathification" efforts. Iraq's election commission allowed them to run, choosing to shelve the divisive matter rather than delay the elections. An Iraqi court will have at least two weeks to rule on the challenge. If it succeeds, the effort to deny Allawi his bloc's slim victory could threaten hopes that the elections would pave the way to a new unity government, ease secular and ethnic tensions, and open the way for the Obama administration to speed the withdrawal of US combat troops from Iraq as it sends more to Afghanistan. The latest push to disqualify the candidates comes after Allawi's Iraqiya bloc won a narrow victory over incumbent Prime Minister Nouri al Maliki's State of Law coalition. At least three of the winning candidates are on Allawi's slate, so Iraqiya would lose its two-seat lead over Maliki's bloc if a federal court sided with the Accountability and Justice Commission to strike the votes rather than removing the candidates and allowing substitutes from the same bloc to take the seats. "The votes will be completely canceled, and it's unfair to the voters," said Muhannad al Kinani, the head of Ayn-al-Iraq, an independent Iraqi election-monitoring group. "It's partly the fault of the candidates and the political entity to which they belong – which should've known the requirements and refrained from nominating ineligible candidates – and partly the fault of the lawmakers who have failed to enact a law to regulate the formation of political parties." The 52 in question were replacement candidates for politicians who were banned from running in an earlier purge of more than 400 people, a move that received intense US and international criticism because it occurred largely without due process and was overseen by politicians who were also running in the election. The US military and American Embassy officials were among the critics; Iraqis in charge of de-Baathification accused the Americans of meddling in the affairs of a sovereign nation. De-Baathification is overseen by Ahmad Chalabi, the Shiite Muslim former Iraqi exile leader and US favorite who's now friendlier with Iran and won 20,436 votes and a seat in parliament, and Ali Faisal al Lami, who got 989 votes and didn't win a seat, according to the official results. Lami spent a year in a US-run prison before he was released without charges in August 2009. Last month, Army Gen. Raymond Odierno, the top US military commander in Iraq, said that both men are "clearly influenced by Iran" and have been in close contact with the top Iraqi adviser to the commander of the Quds Force, the special forces arm of Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps. "As a constitutional commission, we are charged with making sure that no one who is a Baathist, carries Baathist ideology or is a propagandist for Baathist ideology will ever rise to power, either by becoming a member of the Council of Representatives or by holding public office," Lami said Monday. "We will stop them \_ even if they are under the dome of the parliament." Also Monday, two car bombs exploded in the southern Shiite holy city of Karbala, killing five people and wounding more than 50, Iraqi authorities said. One of the blasts occurred near a busy shopping center; the other bomb targeted a popular restaurant near a government building.

Maliki Winning Now

Maliki’s Kurd and Shia coalition puts him ahead of Allawi

Struan Stevenson, president of the European parliament's delegation for relations with Iraq, 7-12-10, “Looming deadline threatens to unhinge fragile Iraq peace” http://news.scotsman.com/opinion/Struan-Stevenson-Looming-deadline-threatens.6413458.jp

WITH the West's focus now firmly on the continuing carnage in Afghanistan, you could be forgiven for thinking that Iraq these days was a haven of peace and prosperity. Nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, the recent election result is still being fought over by rival factions who risk missing a constitutional deadline tomorrow for choosing a new president, 30 days after the factious parliament first sat. If it is breached, there is a real danger that the green shoots of democracy in Iraq will be trampled underfoot and all of the suffering, deaths, devastation and economic collapse will have been in vain. It is now four months since the Al Iraqiya bloc led by former prime minister Ayad Allawi narrowly won the elections with a majority of only two seats over the incumbent prime minister, Nouri al Maliki. But Mr Maliki has clung to power like a limpet, determined to use every means to stay in office. There have been trumped-up legal charges brought against a number of Ayad Allawi's newly elected MPs, alleging they supported Saddam Hussein's Ba'athist Party. Mr Maliki even demanded a recount of votes cast in Baghdad, claiming that there had been widespread fraud. It changed nothing, ending with exactly the same result. Meanwhile, three members of Mr Allawi's Al Iraqiya Party have been murdered in the past two months in politically-motivated shootings. Mr Maliki has cast around for possible partners, at one point announcing that he had brokered a grand coalition with minor Shia and Kurdish parties in the Iraqi parliament. But some of the Shia factions, particularly the small group led by the hardline insurgent-turned-kingmaker Muqtada al Sadr, will not countenance Mr Maliki's return to power as prime minister. So the deadlock continues. Democracy is the only reason the beleaguered Iraqi people have endured all of this misery. If it is allowed to die with the breaching of the constitution, then civil war and a return to violence and mayhem seem the only possible outcome. The international community must prevent this. If no president has been elected by then, this should automatically trigger the international community's invoking of Chapter 7 of the UN Security Council Resolution on Iraq - whereby the international community will have to assume responsibility to prevent a return to violence and civil war. This is of crucial importance, as any vacuum created by a breach of the constitution will be readily filled by neighbouring Iran, already meddling extensively in Iraqi internal affairs and keen to extend its malign brand of fascist Islam across the whole Middle East. US Vice-President Joe Biden visited Iraq on US Independence Day - 4th July - to re-affirm his commitment to a complete military withdrawal by the end of next year, with 50,000 US military personnel leaving by next month. Biden didn't seem to care who forms the next government in Iraq, apparently determined to shake the dust of Iraq from his shoes and to wash his hands of the whole mess the US will leave behind. This simply will not do. With escalating violence, almost daily suicide bombings and even the re-emergence of Muqtada al Sadr's Mahdi Army on the streets of Baghdad, the signs are ominous. The sectarian divisions which the election was supposed to heal have re-opened. The faith of the Iraqi people in the democratic process is being sorely tested. Iraq needs a stable, non-sectarian, government in the national interest. The task of setting up such a government must surely fall to the victor of the election, Ayad Allawi. If he cannot do so by tomorrow, then the West must intervene once more to avert catastrophe.

Maliki/the State of Law Coalition is winning by forming coalitions with the Kurdish parties

[Marina Ottaway](http://www.carnegieendowment.org/experts/index.cfm?fa=expert_view&expert_id=24), director of the Middle East Program at the Washington-based Carnegie, Danial Kaysi, 7-14, 2010 “The Chess Game Continues”, <http://www.carnegieendowment.org/publications/index.cfm?fa=view&id=41210>, IA

Maliki has shown so far that he is determined to continue as prime minister. His insistence prevented the formation of a single Shi’i coalition before the election, leading to the emergence of Maliki’s own State of Law (SoL), which he dominates, and the Iraqi National Alliance (INA), which groups the other important Shi’i parties and personalities, including the Iraqi Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI), the Sadrists, the Badr organization, and former Prime Minister Ibrahim Jafari. Maliki’s insistence that he must remain prime minister has kept the new parliamentary Shi’i bloc, the National Coalition—which includes State of Law and the INA—from speaking with one voice. Instead, the parties in the INA are negotiating separately with Iraqiya and the Kurdish parties, and have even established their own diplomatic contacts with other countries in the region.

Maliki Winning Now

Maliki pulling ahead- INA and Kurdish alliance

Salah Hemeid, Staff Writer for Al-Ahram Weekly, 7-22-10, Al-Ahram Weekly “No government, but troop withdrawals” http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2010/1008/re6.htm

As Iraq remains gripped by a profound political crisis and worsening violence, the United States reiterated its intention this week to start drawing down its combat troops in the country by September. On Sunday, US Vice-President Joe Biden said that lengthy negotiations with the Iraqi government on power-sharing would not be affected by the scheduled withdrawal of US troops. "There is a transition government. There is a government in place that's working. Iraqi security is being provided by the Iraqis, with our assistance. We're going to have, still have, 50,000 troops there," Biden told the US channel ABC News in an interview. Meanwhile, the Obama administration has stepped up pressure on Iraqi leaders to overcome a five-month political impasse that has prevented the formation of a new government. US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said that Washington was increasingly concerned about the deadlock as the withdrawal of US forces looms. Iraqi politicians needed to put national interests ahead of personal ones and assemble a government quickly, she said. There was a "critical need for Iraq's political leaders to continue the hard work necessary to form a proportionate and inclusive government that represents the voices of Iraq's diverse communities and can deliver on the promise of democracy," Clinton told reporters at the US State Department after meeting with Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari. Iraq's political parties have been deadlocked since inconclusive parliamentary elections in March over who should form the new government and serve as prime minister and president. The elections gave no party a majority in the 325-member parliament. Last week, Iraqi legislators extended an inaugural parliamentary session by two weeks to give political leaders a chance to form a government. Many politicians now expect that the parliament will not meet any time soon, as the rival groups remain deadlocked over naming a new prime minister. The war-torn country reached a political impasse after the Iraqiya Alliance, led by former prime minister Iyad Allawi, narrowly won the March elections by securing 91 seats, though this was only two seats more than the present Prime Minister Nuri Al-Maliki's State of Law Coalition. A ruling coalition has yet to be formed, as no bloc managed to achieve the outright majority needed to form a functioning government on its own. Meanwhile, violence escalated in Iraqi this week as insurgents stepped up their attacks and exploited the political stalemate in efforts to further destabilise the country ahead of the American withdrawal. On Sunday, suicide bombers killed some 50 people in two separate attacks against US- backed Sunni militias. Dozens of members of the Sunni Awakening Councils militia were killed by a suicide bomb as they queued for pay outside an army base in Baghdad. Hours later, a second suicide attacker targeted other militia members in the western border town of Al-Qaim. The attacker first opened fire with a rifle before detonating a bomb, killing seven people and wounding a further 11. On Saturday, an Awakening Council leader and two of his sons were killed by a roadside bomb in the southern Baghdad suburb of Dora, while a second regional leader was wounded by an explosion in Baquba, 65 kilometres north of the capital. The Councils, about 80,000 strong, are Sunni militias raised by the US military to fight Al-Qaeda in Iraq. Most of their members are themselves former insurgents, and it is widely believed that Al-Qaeda is targeting the Sunni militias in order to lure them back into the insurgency. As yet, there have been no signs that the soaring violence, the political deadlock, or the impending American withdrawal are pushing Iraqi leaders into serious deal-making. Instead, their wrangling has set off rumours about different scenarios to resolve the crisis, none of them very palatable. On Monday, the Saudi-owned Asharq Al-Awsat newspaper reported that the Iraqiya bloc had suggested that a new leadership should be elected, under which Allawi would be prime minister, Kurdish leader Jalal Talabani remain president, and Humam Hamoudi of the Iraqi Supreme Islamic Council (ISIC) be named speaker of the parliament. Another press report suggested that Iran was putting pressure on Shia leader Muqtada Al-Sadr to join Al-Maliki and the Kurdish alliance in order to form a new government. Followers of Al-Sadr have 40 seats in the parliament, and together with Al-Maliki's State of Law Coalition and the Kurdish parties, they would have a comfortable majority to form a new cabinet. Yet a third rumour has suggested that the Syrians are trying to convince the Sadrists to join Allawi, the ISIC and the Kurds in setting up a government in an attempt to ostracise Al-Maliki. Al-Maliki has been shunned by the Syrians after he accused Damascus of hosting former followers of Saddam Hussein, who are blamed for the attacks in Iraq. Those who favour this scenario point to the visits made by Al-Sadr and Allawi to Damascus this week and their discussions with Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad. On Saturday, speaking in a meeting with Al-Sadr, Al-Assad expressed his concern about the consequences of the failure to form a new government in Iraq.

Maliki Winning Now

Maliki previously underestimated. Projected to win nomination

Steve Kirby, AFP staff writer, 6-29-10, AFP News “Iraq rivals meet to bring premiership row to head” http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5gN3agNIH7F1IkFKszCppc\_UQe2xQ

BAGHDAD — Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki and his arch rival for the premiership Iyad Allawi met on Tuesday, aides said, in a bid to thrash out a row that has stalled coalition talks for months. The meeting was only their second head-to-head since an inconclusive March 7 general election that has created a prolonged power vacuum and fears insurgents intent on derailing constitutional politics might exploit the uncertainty. "It was an exchange of points of view," said Hassan Sneid, a member of parliament from Maliki's State of Law alliance, who was present at the meeting. Sneid said there "was no political deal" behind the meeting and its importance had been exaggerated. But he added both Maliki and Allawi "expressed their wish to speed up the formation of a government before July 14," the deadline for parliament to hold its first session since MPs were sworn in earlier this month. US ambassador Christopher Hill said the hard bargaining between the two declared rivals remained at a "preliminary stage," but that he was encouraged both sides were talking to each other constructively. "Obviously there is going to be a lot of bargaining and discussion about ministries," Hill told reporters. "There are questions whether we have a presidency position which is changed," he added, referring to suggestions that the deadlock be resolved by giving more power to the presidency to take the sting out of the dispute over the currently far more powerful premiership. "The important thing from our point of view is that discussions are still ongoing," the US ambassador added. Hill welcomed the fact that both sides were agreed that all factions should have a stake in the new government, not just Maliki's Shiite-led State of Law and Allawi's Iraqiya faction which swept Sunni Arab provinces, but also the Kurds and the Iraqi National Alliance, a Shiite religious grouping. "The Kurdish alliance have some of their own desiderata," the US envoy said in allusion to the longstanding ambitions of Kurdish leaders to incorporate the oil province of Kirkuk and other districts into their autonomous region in northern Iraq, aims that are strongly opposed by many Iraqi Arabs. Hill described the coalition talks as like a "four-dimensional game of chess." The pro-Maliki MP insisted that the head-to-head with Allawi was not an attempt to sideline either the Kurds or the INA, with which the prime minister's list formed an uneasy parliamentary alliance in May. "The meeting was not against our presence in the National Alliance (Shiite mega party) or our relations with the Kurds," Sneid said. A pro-Allawi MP said that the two rivals for the premiership had not gone into the nitty-gritty of sharing out political positions. "The meeting did not discuss details about presidency or ministerial posts," Iraqiya MP Mayssun Damaluji said. A Western diplomat expressed concern that Allawi's faction and its Sunni supporters might have overestimated their real strength after narrowly topping Maliki's faction in the share of seats to become the largest single faction in parliament. "The problem is that you have some Sunnis who say that he (Maliki) is weak as he is coming to us, let's wait until he's weaker," the diplomat said. "Our hope is that Iraqiya won't overplay their hand," he added, suggesting that the list should content itself with two important ministries and perhaps the speakership of parliament. The diplomat said that Maliki's chances of hanging on to the premiership have been underestimated by rival politicians, despite his inability to win the endorsement of even his own Shiite allies. "The problem with saying that Maliki doesn't have a shot is that there is no one else," the diplomat said. "Nobody likes Maliki but nobody has a red line against him." The diplomat contrasted the incumbent's position with that of one mooted compromise candidate, Vice President Adel Abdul Mahdi of the INA. "Adel Abdul Mahdi, everyone likes him but... I still don't think he represents a real political power right now," the diplomat said, alluding to the INA's poor showing in the election compared with Maliki's list.

Kurds Link Turn

Kurds support Maliki now

Asia Times Times, 12/22/09 “Maliki Makes his Move on the Kirkuk Issue” <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Middle_East/KL22Ak03.html>, IA

Maliki cuddled up to the Kurds in 2007, after losing some of his principal Sunni and Shi'ite allies, promising to uphold Article 140, to remain on the good side of Iraqi Kurds. He also indirectly sponsored the transfer of Arabs from within Kirkuk (there are 12,000 Arab families in the city) to other parts of Iraq ahead of the proposed referendum, claiming that they had been brought there illegally by Saddam Hussein to outnumber Kurds in the city.

Kurds strongly support US presence – would blame Maliki for withdrawal

Sam Dagher, New York Times staff writer, 7-14-10, “Prospects Abound Among the Kurds”

http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/15/world/middleeast/15erbil.html?\_r=1&src=me&pagewanted=print

ERBIL, Iraq — Shortly after leaving his job last year as the United States ambassador to the United Nations, Zalmay Khalilzad started negotiations with Iraqi Kurdish leaders to become a paid adviser. His stint as adviser to the semiautonomous Kurdistan region’s board of investment lasted about seven months. In May Mr. Khalilzad, who also served as ambassador to Iraq, became a board member of RAK Petroleum, an oil and gas investment company based in the Persian Gulf Arab emirate of Ras al-Khaimah. RAK is a significant shareholder in Norway’s DNO, a major oil producer in the Kurdish region that has been mired in controversy for its involvement in a deal that granted an interest in its oil field to the former American diplomat Peter W. Galbraith for help in negotiating the contract with the Kurds. Last month DNO nominated Mr. Khalilzad to its board. As America winds down its war effort in Iraq, Mr. Khalilzad is among a growing list of former American diplomats and military officials now chasing business opportunities in the oil-rich Kurdish region or acting as advisers to its government. Some visit regularly, while others call the region and its booming capital, Erbil, home. Kurds treat them like dignitaries. The Kurdish region may be the only place in Iraq where Americans are still embraced as liberators. The authorities boast that no Americans have ever been attacked in a place that has enjoyed relative security. Critics say these former officials are cashing in on a costly and contentious war they played a role in. The way they see it, though, they have every right to fulfill the American dream after having left their government posts. At any rate, business and politics are inseparable in a region dominated by two governing parties and families, who have been accused of autocratic rule and corruption. Many of the former American officials turned businessmen have also become staunch advocates of the Kurdish cause, including the right of statehood, which clashes with America’s stated policy of preserving Iraq’s unity and being at equal distance from all groups. The Kurds in turn have leveraged their American connections, which in some cases go back decades, into an impressive lobbying and public relations machine in Washington. The Kurdish region ranks among the top 10 buyers of lobbying services in the United States, according to the Foreign Lobbyist Influence Tracker, a joint project of ProPublica and the Sunlight Foundation. “They love these consultants here,” said Denise Natali, an American academic and author based in the region’s other main city of Sulaimaniya. “It brings them attention, recognition and credibility.” Ms. Natali herself has advised corporations like America’s Hunt Oil, which was among dozens of foreign oil companies awarded concessions in the Kurdish region in defiance of the central government in Baghdad. Mr. Khalilzad’s firm, Khalilzad Associates, describes itself as serving “clients at the nexus of commerce and public policies,” and is advising businesses seeking opportunities in Afghanistan and Iraq. He said he ended his advisory contract with the Kurdish government after his company started advising “multinational corporations” investing in the Kurdish region and Iraq. “We felt it created a possible conflict of interest to represent both sides,” he said. He said he was trying to find a way to pay rent on an apartment in Erbil provided to him free by the Kurdish authorities as part of his contract. The region’s Oil Ministry owns the apartment. Mr. Khalilzad made several high-profile appearances last year while on contract for the Kurds. They included an election rally for the region’s powerful president. Massoud Barzani. Mr. Khalilzad, along with most of the region’s top leaders, sits on the board of regents of the American University of Iraq in Sulaimaniya. John Agresto, who served as a senior adviser for higher education under America’s post-invasion Coalition Provisional Authority, helped found the university with the strong backing of Barham Salih, the region’s current prime minister. Mr. Agresto said he had accomplished in the Kurdish region what he had failed to do in the rest of Iraq, namely introduce American-style liberal arts education. “The American brand is much more welcome here,” Mr. Agresto said. “This is probably the last place in the whole world where George Bush could still win an election.” The majority of Kurds are grateful for the American-led invasion to topple Saddam Hussein’s government and America’s support of the no-flight zone in the 1990s that helped them establish their present autonomy. Thousands of foreigners, including many Americans, now live and work in the Kurdish region, enjoying comforts that are rare in the rest of the country. “We love them,” Haro Ahmed gushes about Americans. His family owns a real estate conglomerate, whose assets include a sprawling mall in Erbil that would not be out of place anywhere in suburban America. Mr. Ahmed has reserved space in the mall for several American fast-food chains and says he is in talks with Marriott to build a hotel and golf course nearby. Jay Garner, the retired lieutenant general who briefly headed the reconstruction effort in Iraq after the invasion, says that it is precisely this pro-American attitude, coupled with the region’s oil wealth and strategic location between Iran, Syria and Turkey, that makes Kurds the perfect partner in Iraq. “Why we do not wrap our arms around them, I do not understand,” General Garner said. He said he did free consulting for the Kurds. But he also sits on the advisory board of Vast Exploration, a Calgary-based company prospecting for oil in an area of the region known as Qara Dagh, where drilling started in May. On the seventh anniversary of Mr. Hussein’s fall, in April, General Garner flew to the Kurdish region on a chartered plane accompanied by oil analysts and executives. The visit included meetings with Kurdish leaders and a camping trip to Qara Dagh.

Kurds Link Turn

And they’re key to government

Bashdar Pusho **Ismaeel, 7/10**/10, Balancing the ethno-social political triangle , The Kurdish Globe http://www.kurdishglobe.net/displayArticle.jsp?id=25B3B41CBB5F352F78EB5662BF57B771

Government shaping has been further complicated with the lack of a clear winner at the polls. Although Ayad Allawi's al-Iraqiya group won the most seats, it was marginally ahead of incumbent Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's State of Law coalition, and debate continues to rage on the party that has the legal jurisdiction to attempt to form government. Although Maliki did not win, he strengthened his claim to form government with an alliance with the religious-based Shiite Iraqi National Alliance, meaning that his party was only seats away from attaining the majority needed to form a new government. The Kurds, who continue to hold a key card in the formation of the new government, have taken their time over the selection of any alliance this time and aim to seek written guarantees on nationalistic issues before committing to bring another power in Baghdad. The natural and preferred alliance of the Kurds will be to work once more with their Shiite counterparts. However, persistent foot dragging on key Kurdish interests by Maliki put doubt in the minds of many a Kurd, especially as Maliki's dominance and political standing solidified. However, the predominantly Sunni umbrella of Allawi is hardly the tonic that weary Kurds seek either. Al-Iraqiya was direct in competition to the Kurds in the tense, oil-rich province of Kirkuk, and has often voiced its intent against Kurdish attempts to annex disputed territories.

Kurd Link Turn Ext.

Kurds support US presence—the plan will turn Kurds against Maliki

Robert M. Cutler, Ph. D. in political science, 7-29-03 “**Turks, Kurds and the US-Turkish relationship”** <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Middle_East/EG29Ak03.html>**, IA**

KADEK has stated that if the Turkish state does not reciprocate its own policy of compromise (in effect since the late 1990s at Ocalan's suggestion and insistence), then it will resume armed combat. With the Kurdish ethnos spread across the map from Syria into Iran, and with a political and territorial foothold in northern Iraq - where the main Iraqi Kurdish parties wholly support US policy and seek to establish a degree of relative autonomy from Baghdad within a federal state - the stage would be set for further "unintended consequences" of the US invasion: just what Washington doesn't need.

Maliki will keep Kurd support, but it’s currently shaky

Juan Cole, Prof of History at U Michigan with expertise on the Iraq War, 2010

<http://www.juancole.com/2010/03/secular-national-iraqi-list-of-allawi.html>

If, on the other hand, Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki manages to hold on to power, Iraq will remain firmly in Shiite hands, and will likely have warm relations with Tehran. Certainly, Baghdad would have no interest in helping contain Iran. Relations with Saudi Arabia will continue to be bad. As the US withdraws, Iranian influence could ramp up and fill the vacuum. Al-Maliki also has his tensions with the Kurds, but his relatively bad relations with the Sunni Arabs of Mosul mean that he could deal with the Kurds without incurring much more enmity from the Sunni Arabs than he already does.

Kurds support US presence

Robert M. Cutler, Ph. D. in political science, 7-29-03 “**Turks, Kurds and the US-Turkish relationship”** <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Middle_East/EG29Ak03.html>**,**

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No Iranian Control of Iraq

Alternate causalities prevent Iranian takeover of Iraq

Washington Post 7/17/ 2005 “Iran, Iraq Herald 'New Chapter' in Shiite-Led Alliance” Andy Mosher and Robin Wright, staff writers Washington Post Foreign Service <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wpyn/content/article/2005/07/16/AR2005071601165_pf.html>

Iran contends the relationship is good for the region. "It's something no one should be worried about," Iran's ambassador to the United Nations, Mohammed Javad Zarif, said in an interview. "It's good for the region and not bad for anybody else, especially given past tension in the area." "We can compensate for the coldness of past relations and become a role model for the region," Aref said after meeting with Jafari on Saturday, the Associated Press reported. Though the United States has not had diplomatic relations with Iran since 1979 and accuses the Islamic republic of sponsoring terrorism and trying to develop nuclear weapons, administration officials said they are trying to stand back and let Iraq craft its own foreign policy. "It's not the U.S. policy to advocate or promote a hostile relationship between Iraq and Iran," the new U.S. ambassador to Iraq, Zalmay Khalilzad, said Wednesday. "They are neighbors. We want to see these two countries have good relations." Yet the United States remains wary of Iran. U.S. intelligence officials said Iran's government poured tens of millions of dollars into the campaigns of its Shiite religious allies in Iraq before the elections in January put Jafari's coalition in power. Iran's intelligence services and its Revolutionary Guard maintain a major presence in Iraq, particularly in the Shiite-populated south, the sources said. During a visit to Iraq on Tuesday, Deputy Secretary of State Robert B. Zoellick said he reminded Jafari and other Iraqi officials "that they live in a tough neighborhood." Regarding better relations with Iran, Zoellick said, "some aspects may be constructive, but be aware of what the other side wants." U.S. officials and regional analysts said they believed Iran shared the immediate U.S. goal of stabilizing Iraq and preserving its territorial integrity. Like Iraq, Iran has its own ethnic Kurdish and Sunni Muslim religious minorities, in addition to an Arab ethnic minority, and also fears a spillover of tensions across the border, they said. Iraqi Defense Minister Sadoun Dulaimi, after returning from a visit to Tehran this month in which a framework for military cooperation was hammered out, made the same argument. "We are all working in harmony with the aim of building a secure and stable Iraq," he said. "We want to open the door of peace and love to neighboring countries." The issue is Iran's long-term goals, Bush administration officials said. U.S. policy-makers, who have sought to steer Iraq toward a secular democracy, are stridently opposed to any interaction between Iran and Iraq that would encourage Iraqis to emulate the system of governance that their neighbor adopted in 1979, when it became a theocracy. "Is it their intention by supporting certain Iraqi political parties to have 'friendlies' in power, or is it to go beyond that, to have a commonality of governments?" said a senior State Department official involved in making policy toward Iraq. But regional experts and many U.S. and Iraqi officials point out the stark differences between the two countries that suggest an Iranian theocracy might not be suited to Iraq. Iran is populated predominantly by Shiites who are Persian, an Indo-European ethnic group, while Iraq is predominantly Arab and its Shiite majority has long been repressed. Iraq's most powerful cleric, Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani, an Iranian-born Shiite, has rejected the active political role for clerics integral to the system Khomeini built in Iran. "Good relations with regard to all neighbors means not to seek to dominate particular Iraqi institutions or Iraqi areas," Khalilzad, the new ambassador, told reporters in Washington. The key, he added, is for Iraq's neighbors "not to take advantage of difficulties inherent in any transition."

Gridlock Inev

Even with Sadrs support, gridlock remains

Reidar Visser, staff writer, 7/23/10, Iraq and Gulf Analysis, “The Anatomy of the Government-Formation Talks So Far”, http://gulfanalysis.wordpress.com/2010/07/

A certain degree of momentum has been building throughout the week in Iraq with an unprecedented degree of “optimistic” statements by several key leaders and with an anticipated meeting this weekend in Arbil of political leaders including Muqtada al-Sadr making the headlines; however as of yet there are zero objective signs of an imminent breakthrough as far as the information available in the public domain is concerned. One interesting aspect of the negotiations so far has been the relative prominence of the triangle of State of Law (SLA), Iraqiyya (INM) and the Iraqi National Alliance (INA), with the fourth big winner, the Kurdish Alliance (KA) so far taking more of a backseat position. Some of this obviously stems from the fact that the prime minister is likely to come from one of the three biggest lists. Another interesting feature, though, is the apparent focus on writing political programmes prior to deciding on the prime minister. Thus, all three main blocs are ostensibly engaged in various sort of committees working on government-programme issues, though it is slightly unclear for example whether the recently-proposed Sadrist-Iraqiyya one is in fact a bilateral affair between the two or part of a more wide-ranging INA-INM effort. In itself, a focus on issues is of course promising, in theory at least. Since these programmes are likely to eschew the issues of real importance, it is not altogether inconceivable that within some weeks they could be able to paper over many of the real differences with vague language, primarily related to the difference between federalists (ISCI within INA) and centralisers (the rest). There could be some problems regarding the limitation of the powers of the prime minister (SLA versus the rest); this however could get mitigated by the fact that both the others hope to obtain the next premiership in which case such limitations would clearly lose some of their relevance to them. However, it still remains unlikely that the three could agree on a common premier candidate in the end, which raises the question of whether this is all a waste of time. Another problem is that the anticipated Kurdish drama – which is going to be the real knot – has been postponed due to the trilateral quarrel about who should be PM. So far, rather than serving as the kingmaker many had predicted, the Kurds have been content to wait for a PM candidate to emerge and have also been comparatively subdued with respect to their own desiderata (it is however noteworthy that both INM and INA appear to think that enlisting Kurdish support is the way to marginalise Maliki). In the unlikely event that the three others can agree on a common candidate, this is where the real problem will begin: The Kurds will present demands relating to autonomy in the oil sector and control of Kirkuk and other disputed territories that will be quite impossible for the other parties to accede to – even the Shiite Islamist parties, at the height of their domination in 2007, were unable to give the Kurds what they wanted on this. In a repeat of the debate on the election law in 2009, we can perhaps expect the dramatic arrival in Baghdad of the speaker of the Kurdish parliament Kamal Kerkuki; when that does not work even Masud Barzani at one point may choose to descend from Arbil to announce that any other solution than a Kurdish annexation of Kirkuk is unacceptable. There will be great consternation and more delays. Absent any miraculous pact between Iraqiyya and State of Law (which would have the potential to circumvent many of these problems and create a government within a reasonable time frame), everything therefore suggests that a solution could still be a long way off. Some found the earlier prediction on this blog in March that the process could last almost into Ramadan (starting in early August) or even until the US troop drawdown (31 August) to be overly pessimistic. We are now moving towards a phase where the next psychological deadlines are likely to be the November midterm elections on the American side, and, as far as the Iraqis themselves are concerned, past records of government formation: 6 months for Iraq in 2006 (which would mean around September 2010), and around 7 months as the world record (at least the European one: the case of the 208 days in Netherlands in 1977; even optimists would probably stop talking about the beauty of consociational democracy if that point is reached in October 2010).

No Agreement – Parliament Not Meeting

Nothing will pass – parliament is not meeting

Tim Arango, staff writer, 7/12/10 “Amid Violence and Instability, Iraqi Government Lies Idle” NYThttp://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/13/world/middleeast/13iraq.html

BAGHDAD — [Iraq](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/international/countriesandterritories/iraq/index.html?inline=nyt-geo)’s Parliament has met once, for 18 minutes on June 14, since the close outcome of national elections more than four months ago created a political stalemate. On Monday — another day of staggering heat here — parliamentary leaders delayed a session scheduled for this week, raising questions about whether their inaction is now breaking the law.

Internal Forces Define Iraqi Election

Internal forces will define the government.

Judith Bello, staff writer, 6/27/10 “Can Iraq Form a Government?” Counter Punch http://www.counterpunch.org/bello06252010.html

While we are worrying about whether Iran will have excessive influence over the post-election formation of a Government in Iraq, and our government is most assuredly making some attempt to support their favored players in this process, internal forces are at work that will likely define the form that a future government will take. I have discussed at some length, the interests of two relatively powerful second level coalitions. The Kurds and the Sadrists appear at opposite polarities in the Iraqi political spectrum, but both have specific goals and are willing to compromise to have them met. Both have problems with the presumptive Prime Ministers. Both are looking at ways to address their concerns within the democratic system. In a process where little streams trickle into larger ones and coalitions are formed like great rivers from hundreds of little streams flowing from the mountains, the voice of the people will coalesce in a very different way than in a rigidly defined 2 party system like our own. We should be very careful about making assumptions about who will prevail and what the end result will look like. We should also hope that our government will leave the Iraqi process enough room so that the Government will be formed through a meaningful consensus, which is the only way it can possibly be empowered to handle the challenges of an independent nation. Without a measure of unity and internal integrity, the new government will not be able to ensure the ultimate withdrawal of the occupying forces.

The disadvantage oversimplifies politics in Iraq—there are many plausible scenarios

[Marina Ottaway](http://www.carnegieendowment.org/experts/index.cfm?fa=expert_view&expert_id=24), director of the Middle East Program at the Washington-based Carnegie, Danial Kaysi, 7-14, 2010 “The Chess Game Continues”, <http://www.carnegieendowment.org/publications/index.cfm?fa=view&id=41210>, IA

In the absence of any clear indication about the outcome of the complex interactions among parties, plausible and implausible rumors abound. The pan-Arab newspaper Al Hayat, for example, has reported that Iraqiya has conveyed to State of Law its willingness to give up the prime minister’s position as long as State of Law admits that Iraqiya has a right to form the government, thus to participate in the selection of the prime minister.  However, Iraqiya would extract a high price for renouncing the premiership: it would demand the post of speaker of the parliament and three of the four important ministries—defense, interior, foreign relations, and finance. This is an implausible rumor, because Maliki would be giving up too much, not only the premiership but also the most important ministries. More plausible are the rumors, of which various versions exist, that as part of a compromise the position of prime minister would be made less powerful, either by creating one or more deputy prime minister positions or by strengthening the presidency.

Allawi Bad

Allawi’s election will anger Iran because Iran feels that he will curb their influence in the Middle East

Sami Moubayed, political analyst and editor-in-chief of Forward Magazine 5-20-10, “Allawi ahead but falls behind” <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Middle_East/LE20Ak01.html>, IA

The Sunnis will not veto Allawi, nor will the seculars, but conservative Shi'ites whose fortunes are linked to those of Maliki will refuse to take part in a cabinet headed by Allawi. Iran will also not accept an Allawi-led government, since he has never missed a chance to remind the world that he will work at curbing Iranian influence in Iraq.

Allawi in power sparks Iraq Civil War

Juan Cole, Prof of History at U Michigan with expertise on the Iraq War, 2010

<http://www.juancole.com/2010/03/secular-national-iraqi-list-of-allawi.html>

If the Iraqi National List of former interim prime minister Iyad Allawi did well enough to come to power, that would reorient Iraq radically, taking it back in some ways to 2002. Allawi’s coalition is largely made up of Arab nationalists who would see Iran as a threat and would ally with Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Egypt. Baghdad would go back to helping contain Iran. Sunni Arab radicalism would likely be tamped down. For Washington, it would be the best of all possible worlds– a pro-American Iraqi government headed by a former CIA asset that is willing to help pressure Iran for the West. Internally, an Allawi government that depends heavily on Sunni Arab constituencies would find it difficult to compromise with the Kurds on the disputed province of Kirkuk or on Kurdistan’s interests in Ninevah and Diyala, setting the stage for a potential civil war.

Allawi – Maliki Coalition now

**Allawi – Maliki headed towards coalition now**

Washington Post, 7-6-10 “Amid Biden visit, Iraq inches closer to forming a government” http://voices.washingtonpost.com/postpartisan/2010/07/amid\_biden\_visit\_iraq\_inches\_c.html

The formation of a new Iraqi government is proving as complicated as solving a Rubik’s cube, but at least Vice President Biden has a better sense now of how all the pieces might fit together. Biden spent the July 4 three-day weekend in Iraq, meeting with nearly all that country’s major power brokers. It was the most active U.S. involvement in Iraqi politics since the Obama administration took office, and although it didn’t produce any breakthroughs, it gave a useful nudge to the Iraqis -- and a reminder to all factions that the United States has continuing interests there. Biden brought two messages to all the Iraqi factions, a source said. First, “We have a long-term commitment. We are not disengaging. The nature of this commitment is changing from military involvement, but we’re not going away.” This was “well received by everyone,” the aide said. Second, Biden told the Iraqis, “We’re not meddling in government formation, and we think you should resist meddling by anyone else,” such as the Iranians and other neighbors. “But if you want us to be helpful, we’re all ears.” Biden came away hopeful that the long-delayed haggling over forming a new government may be accelerated by the July 14 constitutional deadline for naming a new speaker of the Iraqi parliament, which will then have been sitting for thirty days. Like everything else in Iraq, that rule can be fiddled -- but it does seem to have concentrated the minds of the Iraqi leaders. And they are not likely to name a speaker until the other key positions have been assigned, too. Another factor accelerating the process is that the holdover incumbent Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki seems to have decided that the waiting game he has been playing may not work in his favor any longer. Maliki and his Shiite “State of Law” party finished second in the balloting to former Prime Minister Ayad Allawi’s Iraqiya coalition, a secular group that was strongly backed by Iraqi Sunnis. Maliki’s problem as incumbent is that he gets blamed for Iraq’s everyday problems -- including electricity shortages this summer that produced strikes and protests that were organized by some of the Shiite factions that Maliki needs to form a governing coalition. This Shiite unhappiness with Maliki is a new factor -- and is said to be pushing him toward a possible deal with Allawi. The two factions have held intensive meetings over the past week. It’s still not clear who would be prime minister if such a deal could be hatched. But the U.S., which has worked reasonably well with both of them, would be pleased with that outcome. The alliance of Kurds, who hold the swing vote, are said to be insisting that they hold onto the presidency, with a new term for incumbent President Jalal Talabani. Other key figures are Adel Abdul Mahdi, the head of the Shiite party known as ISCI, who is mentioned as a possible compromise prime minister, and Rafa al-Essawi of Iraqiya, a Sunni who is mentioned as a possible speaker of the parliament. The Iranians are fighting to keep in power some version of the Shiite coalition that currently rules the country, in the expectation that it would be pliable to Iranian demands. But many of the Shiite politicians have shown increasing willingness to buck Tehran’s tutelage -- at least during this long period of political jockeying and horse trading since the March election. The Saudis and the Turks favor Allawi. The Saudis in particular are resistant to the idea of another term for Maliki -- and would probably prefer almost anyone else.