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Iraq's Insurgency and Civil Violence

Developments through Late August 2007

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Working Draft: Updated August 22, 2007

Executive Summary

Changes in the American military posture in Iraq has mixed the aggressive forward deployment of US and Iraqi forces in Baghdad, its surrounding areas, and key conflict zones like Diyala with a build up of US troops to 160,000 military personnel in June 2007. The impact on the insurgency, however, has so far been mixed. While violence in Anbar Province decreased, large-scale bombings with mass-casualties remained constant in other areas. Operation Phantom Thunder drove many insurgents out of highly patrolled areas, to increase activity in areas that were previously relatively quiet, particularly in the north. Civilian and military casualties decreased slightly during the month of June, compared to May figures. However, civilian casualties rose again in July.

As of late-August, no progress had been made in achieving the key objective of the "surge" – to provide a safe space for political progress at the national level. No progress was made on the other key legislative benchmarks of de-Ba'athification reform, provincial elections, militia disarmament, or reconciliation. The Iraqi Cabinet passed legislation that would establish a framework for an oil law. However, that legislation did not address the particularly sensitive issues of revenue sharing, or the status of the Kurdish region.

The performance of Iraqi Security Forces also lagged behind US hopes and plans. They did perform well in some areas, and the Iraqi Army did show a steadily increasing capability to operate with reduced US support. However, the ISF continued to have serious performance problems, and some had clear ties to Shi'ite factions and sectarian cleansing. The National Police presented serious problems in spite of efforts at reform and the regular police failed to provide security at local levels. The security forces in most areas were undermanned, under-prepared, and still rife with sectarian allegiances. In July, Marine Gen. Peter Pace, Joint Chiefs chairman, reported that the number of Iraqi army battalions able to operate independently, without US control, decreased from 10 to six.

Much of the progress in the fighting came from a rising Sunni tribal resentment and anger against al-Qa'ida and the most extreme elements of the Sunni Islamic extremist movements that had nothing to do with US plans and strategy or the actions of the Iraqi central government. US American military officials were able to pursue local alliances with tribal and sectarian groups to fight against al-Qa'ida in Iraq. There were also signs that such alliances could be expanded from Anbar to cover other parts of Northern and Central Iraq and Shi'ite, as well as Sunni tribes. In Taji, the first Shi'ite-Sunni tribal alliance was formed between the 25 local tribes in the area of Anbar.

At the same time, however, some aspects of the Shi'ite extremist threat continued to increase. Many Shi'ite militia elements did "stand down" as a result of the "surge," and did not clash with US troops. Less violent forms of Shi'ite sectarian cleansing continued, however, and Sunnis continued to be pushed out of mixed areas, including Baghdad. According to one calculation by U.S. military officials, 52 % of violence in Iraq was caused by al-Qa'ida and other Sunni insurgent groups, while 48% was due to Shi'ite militias.

Coalition encounters with the Mahdi Army in northeast Baghdad increased, raising tensions between Coalition forces, Muqtada al-Sadr, and the Maliki government. Prime Minister Maliki has publicly condemned American-led actions such as the blockade of Husseniyah and raids into Sadr City, which did not receive the official sanction of the Iraqi government. Maliki feared that

such US-led offensives without Iraqi sanctioning worked to undermine the credibility of the government.

The continued implosion of the British presence in southeastern Iraq reduced British forces to three token enclaves in the Basra area. The end result was to turn the four provinces in southeastern Iraq over to feuding Shi'ite factions whose actions were mixed with corruption, extortion, and links to criminal activity. Other Shi'ite provinces in the southwest increasingly distanced themselves from central government control. The result was to create Shi'ite zones in the south, Sunni zones in the west, and Kurdish zones in the north, with tension, violence, and insurgency in mixed areas in central and northern Iraq.

US commanders have cited the growing activity of Iran in Iraq as reason to root out Iranian-backed Shi'ite militias. The flow of Iranian arms and more sophisticated weapons like explosively formed projectiles increased. More Iranian personnel infiltrated into Iraq, and Iran stepped up its training of the various Shi'ite militias in Iran. These actions were confirmed by both the interception of weapons and the interrogation of Lebanese Hizbollah operative Ali Musa Daqduq, who was arrested in March. Brig. Gen. Kevin J Bergner said that the al-Quds unit of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards were using veterans of Hizbollah to train Shi'ite militias, smuggle arms, plan attacks, and take groups to Iran for training.

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I. Introduction: The Current Status of the "War after the War"

Since its inception in the spring of 2003, the nature of the fighting in Iraq has evolved from a struggle between Coalition forces and former regime loyalists to a much more diffuse mix of conflicts, involving a number of Sunni groups, Shi'ite militias, and foreign jihadists. The insurgency is now dominated by Neo-Salafi Sunni extremists, seeking religious and ideological goals that extend far beyond Iraq.

In the process, the insurgency has created complex patterns of civil conflict that dominate the overall struggle for power in Iraq, and have become a nationwide series of struggles for sectarian and ethnic control of political and economic space. Open violence has become steadily more serious, but other forms of violence and intimidation now dominate. Sectarian and ethnic "cleansing" are dividing the country at every level, creating major refugee problems, and leading to the forced relocation of a significant amount of the population.

Secretary of Defense Robert Gates described the war as having four key conflicts: The Neo-Salafi Islamic extremist insurgency; Iraqi Sunni Arab versus Shi'ite Arab, Arab-Shi'ite versus Shi'ite, and Arab versus Kurd. A fifth, Sunni versus Sunni conflict has become progressively more important. Moreover, the drift towards escalating sectarian and ethnic conflicts has been compounded by the de facto exclusion of many ex-Ba'ath members and professionals that form the secular and nationalist core of the country, and the slow purging of others Iraqis from Ministries and professions that do not take a sectarian and ethnic side.

In an effort to stop such civil violence and bring some degree of security and stability to the country, President Bush announced a new US strategy on January 10, 2007. This strategy called for rapid progress in Iraqi political conciliation, new economic aid and reconstruction efforts, and a more aggressive use of US and Iraqi forces in forward areas and Baghdad to directly defeat Al Qai'ida and other hardline Sunni and Shi'ite forces and bring some degree of security to Baghdad.

The Baghdad security portion of the strategy called sending some 21,000 additional US troops to Iraq - most of which would go to the capital - and about 7,000 support troops. This "surge" forces would be fully in place by June 2007 and would be paired with a similar number of Iraq forces. It also, however, called for major new efforts at political conciliation, for improved US aid efforts, and far more effective Iraqi governance and economic development programs.

As of the end mid-August 2007, meaningful progress had only begun at the military level, and even that portion of the President's strategy had largely been overtaken by the impact of Iraqi Sunni tribal fighting with Al Qa'ida in Anbar that showed security operations might succeed through growing reliance on local forces even if the development of central government military and police forces lagged badly behind the minimum level of effectiveness necessary to establish security.

The success of US and Iraqi security efforts in Baghdad remains uncertain, and the initial Baghdad-centric surge strategy has failed in the rest of the country. Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki and President Bush officially launched the start of the Baghdad security plan on February 13, 2007. US and Iraqi forces set up 19 Joint Security Stations throughout Baghdad – a total of 40 were planned – as the basis of the new counterinsurgency strategy. While the capital

saw a reduction of the sectarian violence that had characterized the "war after the war" in 2006, Sunni insurgent attacks continued to push Shi'ites toward civil war.

Equally important, the security effort in Baghdad largely succeeded in pushing the hard-line Sunni Islamist insurgents into changing their tactics. They maintained the ability to conduct high profile bombs in Baghdad and elsewhere designed to show they could continue to inflict casualties on US forces and to try to provoke Sunni versus Shi'ite and Kurdish conflicts. At the same time, many Insurgent forces avoided the "surge" forces in the capital, and left for the surrounding urban belt and other governorates. Security deteriorated further in Diyala, Salah Ad Din, and eastern Anbar provinces. Further, the British failure to secure the Shi'ite dominated governorates in the Southeast left much of southern Iraq controlled by rival, feuding Shi'ite factions.

Iraqi army forces could only perform part of the mission required even in the Baghdad urban area, and the Iraqi police fell badly behind the level of effectiveness required. Movements like Al Qa'ida continued to conduct high profile bombings and attacks designed to show that security was not improving in Baghdad, as well as outside Baghdad.

The new Baghdad security strategy would almost certainly have failed to bring more than limited security to part of Baghdad at the cost of a serious deterioration in security in other parts of the country dimension if Sunni tribal groups had not begun active armed resistance to Al Qa'ida's efforts to dominate Sunni areas, and had not reached out to the US for support.

Moreover, the end result was scarcely the creation of a strong and effective central government, political conciliation, and a united country. Iraq was dividing by sect and ethnicity and real power continued to devolve down to the local and regional level. The continued implosion of the British presence in southeastern Iraq reduced British forces to three token enclaves in the Basra area. The end result was to turn the four provinces in southeastern Iraq over to feuding Shi'ite factions whose actions were mixed with corruption, extortion, and links to criminal activity. Other Shi'ite provinces in the southwest increasingly distanced themselves from central government control. The result was to create Shi'ite zones in the south, Sunni zones in the west, and Kurdish zones in the north, with tension, violence, and insurgency in mixed areas in central and northern Iraq.

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If success comes, it will not be because the new strategy President Bush announced in January succeeded, or through the development of Iraqi security forces at the planned rate. It will come because of the new, spontaneous rise of local forces willing to attack and resist Al Qa'ida, and because new levels of political conciliation and economic stability occur at a pace dictated more by Iraqi political dynamics than the result of US pressure. The key element for success remains political conciliation and so far the pace of Iraqi action lags far behind the minimal levels necessary to meet either Iraqi or US expectations.

It will not be possible to determine whether the elements of success or failure for such an option by the fall of 2007. It may well take until the spring of 2008. Even then, the prospects for lasting success in achieving security and stability in Iraq will almost certainly take several more years of determine US effort and support to the Iraqi government and Iraqi security forces. Success is possible, but remains a high-risk operation.

II. Continued Failures in Conciliation

US domestic political considerations have become a steadily larger factor in both US political towards Iraq, and in shaping the actions of the various power blocs in Iraq. The Sunni insurgency, and hardline Shi'ite militias. They have also created a growing gap between US demands for political conciliation and Iraqi government actions.

Achieving Political Benchmarks

On May 25, 2007, President George W. Bush signed a bill allotting $108 billion to war funds in Iraq and Afghanistan that would pay for military operations in Iraq through September 2007. According the requirements set by Congress, the disbursement of these funds, and the further support for troop deployment to Iraq would be contingent on conditions set for the U.S. military command in Iraq and the President himself.[1]

The Benchmarks

These conditions demand that the President report to congress on the extent to which the Iraqi government is meeting the following benchmarks:

• "Forming a Constitutional Review Committee and then completing the constitutional review;

• "Enacting and implementing legislation on de-Ba'athification;

• "Enacting and implementing legislation to ensure the equitable distribution of hydrocarbon resources of the people of Iraq without regard to the sect or ethnicity of recipients, and enacting and implementing legislation to ensure that the energy resources of Iraq benefit Sunni Arabs, Shia Arabs, Kurds, and other Iraqi citizens in an equitable manner;

• "Enacting and implementing legislation on procedures to form semi-autonomous regions;

• "Enacting and implementing legislation establishing an Independent High Electoral Commission, provincial elections law, provincial council authorities, and a date for provincial elections;

• "Enacting and implementing legislation addressing amnesty;

• "Enacting and implementing legislation establishing a strong militia disarmament program to ensure that such security forces are accountable only to the central government and loyal to the Constitution of Iraq;

• "Establishing supporting political, media, economic, and services committees in support of the Baghdad Security Plan;

• "Providing three trained and ready Iraqi brigades to support Baghdad operations;

• "Providing Iraqi commanders with all authorities to execute this plan and to make tactical and operational decisions, in consultation with U.S commanders, without political intervention, to include the authority to pursue all extremists, including Sunni insurgents and Shiite militias;

• "Ensuring that the Iraqi Security Forces are providing even handed enforcement of the law;

• "Ensuring that, according to President Bush, Prime Minister Maliki said 'the Baghdad security plan will not provide a safe haven for any outlaws, regardless of [their] sectarian or political affiliation';

• "Reducing the level of sectarian violence in Iraq and eliminating militia control of local security;

• "Establishing all of the planned joint security stations in neighborhoods across Baghdad;

• "Increasing the number of Iraqi security forces units capable of operating independently;

• "Ensuring that the rights of minority political parties in the Iraqi legislature are protected;

- "Allocating and spending $10 billion in Iraqi revenues for reconstruction projects, including delivery of essential services, on an equitable basis; and

- "Ensuring that Iraq's political authorities are not undermining or making false accusations against members of the Iraqi Security Forces." [2]

The Bush View of Success as of July 15, 2007

The first report was issued on July 15, 2007. The second report of is due September 15, 2007.[3] Independent assessments regarding the preparedness of Iraqi Security Forces and the implantation of the 18 benchmarks were required from Gen. Petraeus and the Department of Defense to be submitted by September 1, 2007. The bill also required that the US Ambassador to Iraq and the Commander of Multinational Forces in Iraq testify before the relevant congressional committees before September 15, 2007.[4]

The Bush Administration put continued pressure on the Iraqi government for action. President Bush warned in repeated phone calls to President al-Maliki that Washington expects to see "tangible results quickly" on the oil bill and other legislation, in exchange for the continued American support.[5]

The Administration could only report very limited success in its mid-July report to Congress, however, and even that reporting was sometimes too positive. In a background briefing, the White House reported the following level of progress in 18 different areas:

1. "SATISFACTORY" progress toward 8 benchmarks;

2. "NOT SATISFACTORY" progress toward 8 benchmarks; and

3. MIXED on two others.

The White House explained these figures as follows:

1. Forming a Constitutional Review Committee and then completing the constitutional review. SATISFACTORY

2. Enacting and implementing legislation on de-Ba'athification. NOT SATISFACTORY

3. Enacting and implementing legislation to ensure the equitable distribution of hydrocarbon resources of the people of Iraq without regard to the sect or ethnicity of recipients, and enacting and implementing legislation to ensure that the energy resources of Iraq benefit Sunni Arabs, Shi'a Arabs, Kurds, and other Iraqi citizens in an equitable manner. NOT SATISFACTORY

4. Enacting and implementing legislation on procedures to form semi-autonomous regions. SATISFACTORY

5. Enacting and implementing legislation establishing an Independent High Electoral Commission, provincial elections law, provincial council authorities, and a date for provincial elections. NOT SATISFACTORY

6. Enacting and implementing legislation addressing amnesty. MIXED

7. Enacting and implementing legislation establishing a strong militia disarmament program to ensure that such security forces are accountable only to the central government and loyal to the Constitution of Iraq. NOT SATISFACTORY

8. Establishing supporting political, media, economic, and services committees in support of the Baghdad Security Plan. SATISFACTORY

9. Providing three trained and ready Iraqi brigades to support Baghdad operations. SATISFACTORY

10. Providing Iraqi commanders with all authorities to execute this plan and to make tactical and operational decisions, in consultation with U.S commanders, without political intervention, to include the authority to pursue all extremists, including Sunni insurgents and Shiite militias.   SATISFACTORY

11. Ensuring that the Iraqi Security Forces are providing even handed enforcement of the law. NOT SATISFACTORY

12. Ensuring that, according to President Bush, Prime Minister Maliki said ``the Baghdad security plan will not provide a safe haven for any outlaws, regardless of [their] sectarian or political affiliation''. SATISFACTORY

13. Reducing the level of sectarian violence in Iraq and eliminating militia control of local security. SATISFACTORY

14. Establishing all of the planned joint security stations in neighborhoods across Baghdad. SATISFACTORY

15. Increasing the number of Iraqi security forces units capable of operating independently. NOT SATISFACTORY

16. Ensuring that the rights of minority political parties in the Iraqi legislature are protected. SATISFACTORY

17. Allocating and spending $10 billion in Iraqi revenues for reconstruction projects, including delivery of essential services, on an equitable basis. NOT SATISFACTORY

18. Ensuring that Iraq's political authorities are not undermining or making false accusations against members of the Iraqi Security Forces. NOT SATISFACTORY

The White House assessment emphasized that it was "necessary for Coalition Forces to temporarily play a greater role," so that the government could, in conjunction with Coalition and Iraqi security forces, intensify its efforts against al-Qa'ida and some elements of the Jaysh al-Mahdi (JAM). The briefing stated that the White House planned to continue its commitment through a combination of joining Coalition and Iraqi security forces and embedding transition team personnel within most ISF units.

No Real Success as of July 15, 2007 and Probably as Of September 15, 2007 As Well

It is clear, however, that the Iraqi government did not meet the benchmarks in any major area, and has little prospect of doing so by mid-September. Seen from a more nuanced perspective, actual progress as of mid-July was far more limited and often had tenuous meaning unless it could eventually be shown that a faltering legislative start would be put into practice over the months and years to come in ways that Iraq's major factions would accept:

1. Form a Constitutional Review Committee and complete the constitutional review:

A committee was formed and "working," but the Sunnis had withdrawn from the parliament, and there was little real progress in completing the review of more than 50 areas needing clarification. In any case, until the legislature approved the changes, and it was clear that the result was either approved in a referendum or accepted by the various factions of the Israel people, progress would not be a meaningful benchmark.

2. Enacting and implementing legislation on de-Ba'athification

Discussed and drafts existed. The details were not clear. No action by parliament. The main Sunni party was not participating in the government, and Sunnis continued to be pushed out of posts in the government and security forces, given positions without real power, or set aside.

3. Enacting and implementing legislation to ensure the equitable distribution of hydrocarbon resources of the people of Iraq without regard to the sect or ethnicity of recipients, and enacting and implementing

legislation to ensure that the energy resources of Iraq benefit Sunni Arabs, Shi'a Arabs, Kurds, and other Iraqi citizens in an equitable manner

A partial draft existed, but not the full text or annexes that could give the law meaning. No action by the parliament to date and a parliamentary vote might well prove meaningless until the full law and annexes are issued, and the factions in Iraq see that the law is actually enforced. Once again, such an effort also involved a legal benchmark that seemed likely to have limited impact until the various key factions in Iraq actually saw that the practice met their demands, and the government demonstrated it could act effectively, without massive corruption, and in ways that helped rebuild and expand Iraqi oil production in ways that could actually support some form of conciliation or coexistence.

4. Enacting and implementing legislation on procedures to form semi-autonomous regions.

No clear progress. A referendum on Kirkuk was supposed to take place by the end of the year, but was in limbo and a vote could trigger a new major round of fighting. Much of the displacement and fighting in Iraq increasingly did not occur in ways that supported the creation of such areas using the provincial boundaries in the constitution. Not only was government action lagging, it was unclear that such action could produce results that reflected Iraq's real world internal sectarian and ethnic divisions or deal with the problem that something approaching 10% of Iraq's population – including many of its professionals and the most secular members of its middle class were now refugees outside Iraq, and had no prospects of returning to their previous homes and jobs.

5. Enacting and implementing legislation establishing an Independent High Electoral Commission, provincial elections law, provincial council authorities, and a date for provincial elections.

Drafts were supposed to exist, and there were vague promises of bringing a bill to the Parliament. No parliamentary action to date, and it was increasingly unclear such action would be meaningful if it did occur. Power had already devolved to unelected or quasi-elected authority in major provincial areas and major cities, often supported by local forces or militias, and with a clear sectarian or ethnic character.

6. Enacting and implementing legislation addressing amnesty.

Drafts were supposed to exist, and there were promises of bringing a bill to the Parliament. No parliamentary action to date, and broad distrust among Sunnis that any such legislation would actually be enforced on anything like an equitable basis

7. Enacting and implementing legislation establishing a strong militia disarmament program to ensure that such security forces are accountable only to the central government and loyal to the Constitution of Iraq.

No meaningful drafts seemed to exist, and no parliamentary action to date. The growing US reliance on local security forces in areas like Anbar, steady growth of the role of local Shi'ite security forces in the south and southeast, and ethnic character of security forces in the Kurdish areas also meant the growing sectarian and ethnic polarization of police and security activity throughout the country regardless of whether some of these forces took a formal oath or loyalty to the government or were formally enrolled in the police.

8. Establishing supporting political, media, economic and services committees in support of the Baghdad Security Plan.

Some progress, but so far largely at the token level. Sectarian displacement and "cleansing" continued in spite of the security effort. Central government improvements in aid and services have been token to non-existent. Creating committees will not become a meaningful benchmark unless they can play a role in halting and reversing sectarian and ethnic polarization on the ground in Baghdad, to ring and belt cities, other major cities, and the divided and conflict areas on a national level.

9. Provide three trained and ready Iraqi brigades to support operations in Baghdad.

The main elements of such Iraqi forces arrived more or less on schedule, but at manning levels were variously reported to be 50-75%. Some battalion elements had performed well but they seemed to total only one brigade equivalent and some have done little. Much of existing force was to rotate out.

10. Providing Iraqi commanders with all authorities to execute this plan and to make tactical and operational decisions, in consultation with U.S commanders, without political intervention, to include the authority to pursue all extremists, including Sunni insurgents and Shiite militias.

Progress largely cosmetic. The Iraqi government can and had exercised a veto, of some operations but most planning and command activity was still performed by the US. The Shi'ite militias had largely stood aside or dispersed, and action had only been taken against the most extreme elements of the Mahdi militia. In practice, US forces had turned to local security forces and tribal groups with only tenuous loyalty to the central government in areas like Anbar and Diyala, Kurdish leaders controlled operations in Kurdish areas, and local Shi'ite political factions controlled security in most of the areas in the south where responsibility had supposedly been transferred to Iraqi forces.

11. Ensuring that the Iraqi Security Forces are providing even handed enforcement of the law.

A failure in Baghdad and nationally. Some police posts were active, but most areas are under police or local security forces with strong sectarian, ethnic, and tribal ties. Police corruption and inactivity were common, and the US and government increasingly had to rely on local tribal forces. The so-called "year of the police in 2006 had given way to the "year of local forces" in 2007 in much of Iraq.

12. Ensuring that, according to President Bush, Prime Minister Maliki said ``the Baghdad security plan will not provide a safe haven for any outlaws, regardless of [their] sectarian or political affiliation."

Major progress did occur in fighting the most extreme Sunni insurgent movements like Al Qa'ida and against some extreme elements of the Mahdi militia. In general, however, most of the Shi'ite militias simply stood down and remained a threat. Sectarian polarization continues, and there were no reports of broad success in dealing with extortion, intimidation and corruption, and organized crime.

13. Reducing the level of sectarian violence in Iraq and eliminating militia control of local security.

Violence had grown steadily worse at the national level, and the US and Iraqi government had become more and more dependent on local security forces like the tribes in Anbar, although some local forces did take an oath to the government and joined the police.

14. Establish joint security stations in neighborhoods across Baghdad.

Had been done with some success in roughly half of Baghdad, but many such stations did not have effective Iraqi forces. Many effectively tied down US forces in a relatively static role while making them more vulnerable. The creation of such stations had yet to demonstrate that they had lasting tactical value or brought security and stability to the areas where they were established.

15. Increase the number of Iraqi security forces units capable of operating independently.

Some increases in ISF capability, but "independently" did not yet mean they could conduct offensive operations on own, had the needed logistic capabilities, or could counter a major insurgent force without US reinforcements, artillery, armor, and air power.

16. Insure that the rights of minority political parties in the Iraqi legislature are protected.

No progress. Feuding between Shi'ite parties had increased. The key Sunni party had left government, Tensions remained high, as did the risk to members.

17. Allocate and spend $10 billion in Iraqi revenues for reconstruction projects, including delivery of essential services on an equitable basis.

Money was beginning to be spent, but it was unclear what it would buy and for whom. No improvement in essential services on a national basis.

18. Ensure that Iraq's political authorities are not "undermining or making false accusations against members of the Iraqi Security Forces."

Scarcely a productive benchmark. More of a danger in creating a strong man or coup. In any case, many Iraqi political figures were quite frank about the limits of the ISF.

The Iraqi central government remained too weak and divided to make the agreements and compromises required. Despite pressure by the Bush administration and US Congress, Iraqi lawmakers were reluctant to succumb to the Bush administration's timetable for crucial issues. "We have two clocks – the Baghdad clock and the Washington clock," said Mahmoud Othman, representative for the Kurdish region of northern Iraq. "This has always been the case. Washington has been pushing the Iraqis to do things to fit their agenda."[6]

The Lack of Central Government Progress

Despite increased pressure from Washington, the Iraqi political leaders avoided the key political issues at best. The daily agendas of the Iraqi parliament and cabinet did not work to assess the major benchmarks set forth by Washington. Instead, progress was stalled by a notable lack of a sense of urgency, spotty attendance and two major Sunni and Shi'ite boycotts for most of the month of July. The "modesty" of issues addressed by parliament sessions reflected the desire among lawmakers to avoid major issues.[7]

Impasses in critical decisions regarding legislations continued into the month of August, and were exacerbated by the boycott and eventual withdrawal of Sunni leadership. None of the major political benchmarks were met in the Iraqi parliament. Legislation on the national oil industry and revenue sharing was halted due to the boycott of two major political blocs, the 44 members of the Sunni bloc, the Iraqi Consensus Front, and the 30 members of the Sadrist party. De-Ba'athification reform legislation was also stalled. A date was not set for provincial elections, neither were revisions to the Constitution.[8]

Top leaders in the Iraqi government met at the end of July regarding the current political impasse. The summit was planned to convene President Jalal Talabani, Prime Minister Maliki, Vice President al-Hashemi, and Kurdistan Regional Government president Masoud Barzani. Former Prime Minister Ayad Allawi also planned to attend, as well as other political figures.[9] This meeting and a later meeting in August, however, did nothing to make progress in bringing Sunni support for the government or moving forward in any key area. The most that such meetings accomplished was to announce a largely cosmetic effort to create an alliance between the main Kurdish and Shi'ite parties and this excluded two key Shi'ite parties, including the Sadr faction.

Iraqi Consensus Front Boycott

In June, the Sunni bloc -- the Iraqi Consensus Front (aka Tawafiq or Iraqi Accordance Front) -- suspended its involvement in the Cabinet to protest the firing of the Parliament Speaker, Mahmoud al-Mashhadani for his alleged abuse of another parliamentarian. The group further distanced itself from the government when the Sunni culture minister was accused of an assassination attempt on another Sunni legislator. According to the Sunni political bloc, these actions were unfairly spurned by sectarian interests on behalf of the Shi'ite majority.

Spokesman for Maliki's government, Ali al-Dabbagh, released a four-page statement on July 28, disregarding each of the eleven demands that the Sunni bloc made on the Maliki government. Dabbagh wrote, "The threatening, pressuring and blackmail is useless, and delaying the work of the government, the council of representatives and the political process will not bring Iraq back to the time of dictatorship and slavery," referring to the former Sunni Ba'athis regime. The Sunni bloc was patient in its response to Dabbagh's message.[10]

Throughout the month of July the Iraqi Consensus Front threatened to withdraw its members permanently from parliament if its list of eleven demands were not met. Some of the demands included releasing Sunni detainees being held without charges; removing Shi'ite militia members from the Iraqi Security Forces; allowing displaced Sunnis to return to their homes; publishing the findings of investigations into mass killings, sectarian murders, and the Samarra shrine bombing; enhancing relations with Arab countries; and immediately disarming militias. The group also demanded more intense investigations of hate crimes against Sunnis.[11]

The Sunni bloc Tawafiq withdrew five of its six seats from the Shi'ite-led national unity government Cabinet on August 1st. The 44 members of Tawafiq belonging to the Parliament, as well as Vice President Tariq al-Hashimi retained their positions.[12] Vice President al-Hashimi told McClatchy Newspapers that he informed US Ambassador Crocker on the day that the Iraqi Accordance Front withdrew, that Iraqi leaders "need these major political moves to tell everybody that what is happening is in now way tolerable." Mr. Hashimi complained that the government needed a "political shock" in order to call attention to its marginalization of Sunnis.[13]

On August 6, five more Sunni members of the cabinet boycotted the government. The five were members of the Iraqi National List coalition, a Sunni bloc and the fourth-largest group in the parliament. Maliki's spokesperson, Basam Ridha, announced that the Prime Minister was considering replacing the leaders through a process of reelections, but that he would not negotiate with those who left the Cabinet.[14]

The boycott caused major problems as the US pressed the Iraqi parliament to reach political benchmarks. Although the Shi'ite and Kurdish blocs could have reached a consensus on issues such as the distribution of oil revenue, the Sunni boycott would null any consensus reached. [15] The withdrawals drew a reaction from US leadership, who resoundingly admitted they had underestimated the extent of Iraqi resistance to reconciliation, and the deep-seated tensions involved.

Scaling down previous accusations against the Sunni bloc of "political blackmail," Prime Minister Maliki responded more conciliatorily. He acknowledged that the government would "rectify the policies that we can rectify," but stated that not all of the Sunni's demands could be met. [16] Remaining members of the national unity government promised to make efforts to bring back the dissenting bloc.

A summit meeting held at the beginning of August between President Jalal Talabani, Prime Minister Maliki, Vice President al-Hashemi, and Kurdistan Regional Government president Masoud Barzani as well as other top leaders, resulted in the forming of a coalition between the main Shi'ite and Kurdish political groups. The union was cosmetic and excluded Sunni parties and two primary Shi'ite groups, including the Sadrist movement.

Changes in the Shi'ite Parties

The boycott by the 30 Sadrists parliamentarians ended on July 17, after the parliament agreed to rebuild the damaged parts of the Samarra shrine. Moqtada al-Sadr continued to publicly reach out to Sunni politicians and insurgents while purging some of the more rogue and extremist members of his Mahdi Army militia who targeted Sunnis. At the same time, elements of his forces continued to attack Sunnis and take reprisals for bombings against Shi'ite mosques and targets. At least in some cases, these attacks occurred under conditions where Sadr at least

tolerated them, if he did not privately encourage them in spite of his public calls for Sunni-Shi'ite unity.

The son of Abdul Aziz al-Hakim, Amar al-Hakim, began assuming some of the leadership duties of his father, who is the ailing leader of Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq, formerly SCIRI. Hakim advocated the creation of a Shi'ite province in the south and disapproved of political moves toward de-Ba'athification reform, which would allow former Ba'athists to reassume high to mid-level government positions.[17]

No Meaningful Progress in De-Ba'athification Reform

No progress was made on de-Ba'athification reform throughout the months of July and August. Reforming Iraq's de-Ba'athification laws continued to divide Iraq's politicians, and remained a key issue in reaching any future level of conciliation between the Sunni and Shi'ite Arabs.

The original de-Ba'athification law – put in place by L. Paul Bremer III and the Coalition Provisional Authority in 2003 - prevented the top 4% of former Ba'athists from holding a position in the former government. The administration of this decision, however, purged large number of teachers, scientists, and doctors, from their jobs, as well as many government officials and military officers who had only joined the Ba'ath at a time where they had little other choice. Virtually all Sunnis feel that most elements of the de-Ba'athification process now need to be reversed.[18]

The last visible progress on de-Ba'athification reform occurred in March 2007, when Prime Minister Maliki and President Talibani said that they sent a draft of a new de-Ba'athification law – called an Accountability and Reconciliation Law – to the Iraqi cabinet and Parliament for approval. If accepted, the bill would offer ex-Ba'athists immunity from persecution, the opportunity to return to government jobs, and the availability of pensions after a six-month period during which any Iraqi could file a lawsuit against the individual.[19]

However, the draft law immediately met opposition from Shi'ite and Kurdish lawmakers. Furthermore, on April 2, 2007, the head of the de-Ba'athification committee, Ahmed Chalabi, said Shi'ite Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani opposed the draft law, making it unlikely that the Shi'ite- dominated cabinet would accept the proposal. Iraqi government spokesman, Ali Dabbagh, however, argued that Sistani had made no such statement and that the cleric "goes with the decisions of people's representative in parliament." He added that Chalabi's statement was doubtful because Sistani had been distancing himself from politics over the past year, and was unlikely to get involved in such a heated dispute.[20]

Sunnis and Sadrists, who agree on some aspects of reconciliation, disagree over allowing former Ba'ath Party members to return the government. "If national reconciliation is at the expense of the return of the assassin Ba'athists, then we will reject such reconciliation," said Falah Hassan Shanshal, a Sadr legislator and chairman of the parliament's de-Ba'athification committee.[21] Proposed de-Ba'athification reform focused on rehiring low to mid-level Ba'athists, in attempt to bring in Sunnis that have been alienated and to drain support for Sunni insurgent groups.[22]

Despite these developments, the US continued to push the Iraqi parliament to accept the revised de-Ba'athification law. Defense Secretary Robert Gates urged the parliament to accept the law before taking summer recess. A senior US official said, "It's an extremely difficult issue. If you push it too fast in an environment like we have right now just to meet a benchmark, you can risk a very extreme reaction" from Shi'ites who opposed the reform process.

Hydrocarbon Law

The Iraqi government did not successfully pass any of the four necessary pieces of overdue hydrocarbon legislation. This was particularly critical because sharing oil export income and the nation's petroleum resources is the most important single element in achieving political compromise after halting the cleansing and tension along Iraq's various sectarian and ethnic fault lines. It is also an action that will only be successful when Iraq's factions see real world results and not merely the assignment of law and legislation.

The government is now seeking to have four separate yet interrelated legislative parts of such a law approved to create a structure for the control and regulation of the oil sector in Iraq. These parts include: 1) the hydrocarbon framework legislation, determining the sector's structure, management and oversight, 2) the revenue-sharing legislation, 3) legislation reconfiguring the Ministry of Oil, and 4) legislation establishing a national oil company (INOC).

On July 7 the Cabinet approved the hydrocarbon framework legislation and sent it to the Parliament, but the law has not been enacted. On July 4, the Association of Muslim Scholars, an influential group of Sunni Muslim clerics, issued a religious *fatwa*, forbidding legislators to vote on the draft oil legislation.[23] The bill has yet to be debated and approved by the Parliament.

The revenue-sharing law was supposed to pass in Iraqi Parliament on May 31, 2007, but an agreement could not be reached by that date. As of July 1st, Iraqi legislators had agreed to the text of a revenue-sharing law, however the draft had not yet been submitted for approval by the Cabinet. Some members of the Iraqi parliament objected to the proposed Iraqi oil law, claiming that it was "sloppy" and rushed, in order to satisfy the May deadline proposed by the US government. The law fails to address key issues such as the prospective task of dividing oil revenues among the Sunni, Shi'ite, and Kurdish regions, and the question of how much foreign investment to allow. Revenue sharing is a contentious issue because the Sunni Arab and Kurdish distrust of the Shiite-led government, who would, under the proposed law, control the distribution of oil proceeds through a central government bank account.[24]

The restructuring of the Ministry of Oil and the establishment of a National Oil Company had not yet been addressed to date.[25] The Kurdish Regional Government has opposed the placement of 93% of Iraqi oil fields under the administration of the prospective state-run Iraq National Oil Company according to the measure drawn up in May by the Iraqi central government. The Kurdistan Regional Government website claims that some of these fields are at least partially in Kurdish territory and Kurdish officials who represent about one-fifth of the parliament say they will not support the bill if the measures are not redrawn.[26]

The issue of foreign investment is also debated. While energy experts say that Iraq cannot increase its oil production without foreign investment, Iraqis believe that allowing foreign investors to profit from Iraqi oil will compromise the sovereignty of Iraq. The leader of the Federation of Oil Unions, said workers want oil production to remain under Iraqi control and threatened to strike to protest legislation that would result in increased foreign investment.[27]

Constitutional Review and Provincial Elections

The Iraqi constitution defined how federalism could be established in broad terms, but left many aspects undecided, as well as some 50 other sensitive areas that divided Iraqi's along sectarian, ethnic, and regional lines. The Iraqi government's Constitutional Review Committee began to work on this element of the constitution on November 15, 2006, but failed to meet the deadline

for submitting its recommendations to parliament on May 15, 2007. No further progress on constitutional review was made to date.

Local elections were another critical problem, as was the relative power of the central and local governments and the formation of new federal areas. Provincial and local governments are steadily gaining de facto power that the central government is unlikely to regain, and many have a strong sectarian or ethnic character. In far too many cases, the perceived legitimacy of current authorities is also uncertain, or clearly represents a narrow faction. The US focus on the central government has led to broad neglect of many of these realities and a system where the central government does a consistently poor job of reacting to local needs, sharing money, and eliminating a Shi'ite bias in many of its ministries. This has fueled both the insurgency and civil conflict in many parts of Iraq.

An Independent High Electoral Commission was established on April 28, 2007. However, no date for provincial and local elections could be agreed upon during this time period. This issue had growing importance for many reasons: the ineffectiveness of the central government, the lack of legitimacy of many local governments, the de facto devolution of authority in to the local level, and the growing ethnic and sectarian division of the country without practical representation or authority.

III. Developments in the Counterinsurgency Campaign

The months of July and August saw a combination of US-Iraqi military operations throughout Diyala and the "Baghdad Belt" supplemented by local tribal alliances built throughout the country. Throughout July and August, small, joint Iraqi-US operations built on the territorial and intelligence gains made throughout Iraq during the larger operations executed in June. Several reports of weapons caches, small-scale strikes against insurgents and arrests occurred throughout July until mid-August. [28]

US forces increasingly initiated informal agreements with tribal leaders in Baghdad, Anbar and Diyala provinces, as well as the towns of Taji, Iskandariyah and Arab Jabour in the south of the country. The deals were coined "handshake agreements," because they were made on the word of the local allies, without the national government's approval or recognition. [29]

US-Iraqi Operations

Lt. Gen. Ordierno said on June 22, 2007, "We are beyond a surge of forces, and we are now into a surge of operations." The open-ended operation named Operation Phantom Thunder incorporated the current security operations underway throughout Iraq. As of June 27, Operation Phantom Thunder consisted of Operation Arrowhead Ripper, focused on clearing Baqubah and other parts of southwestern Diyala; Operation Marne Torch, aiming to clear al-Qa'ida bases southeast of Baghdad; a few sub-operations in Fallujah and the area south of Lake Tharthar in Anbar; a continued effort by Iraqi security forces to combat Shi'ite militias in southern Iraq, particularly in Diwaniyah and Nasiriyah; a continued effort by Iraqi security forces to maintain order in Mosul and throughout Ninewah; U.S. and Iraqi Special Forces, targeting high-value al-Qa'ida operatives; and continued efforts by U.S. and Iraqi forces to clear and hold areas of Baghdad in the Baghdad Security Plan, or Operation Fardh al-Qanoon. [30]

Operations during the months of July and August were assisted by various sources of human intelligence. Brig. Gen. Bergner described an influx of intelligence over the last eight weeks, emphasizing that it "sets different conditions and sets different opportunities for coalition and Iraqi forces now. We have new sources of information, a cumulative base of intelligence, and that gives you the opportunity to focus your strike operations in a different way." [31]

Military operations in early August featured air campaigns targeting access routes to Baghdad, an increased security effort surrounding large gatherings, and strikes on suspected arms caches. Beginning in August, air operations targeted vehicles attempting to carry weapons and explosives into Baghdad. Planes were used to disable roads frequented by smugglers, and targeted buildings and vehicles of suspected militant leaders. Iraqi security forces increased their presence around markets, gas stations, and sites of gathering. Forces also targeted Shi'ite militia strongholds for suspected Iranian-supported fighters. [32]

A few large-scale operations began to occur in mid-July followed by more in mid-August. Operation Marne Avalanche was launched on July 16 aiming at preventing the movement of weapons, munitions and insurgents into Baghdad from the south. On August 13 "Operation Lighting Hammer" began in the Diyala province, using over 300 artillery munitions, rockets and bombs intended to "set the stage for subsequent nighttime air and ground assaults into the Diyala River Valley by U.S. aviation units." Forces in Diyala and Salah al-Din totaled 10,000 US and 6,000 Iraqi troops during this operation. [33]

Operation Marne Huskey began on August 15 in areas south of Baghdad. The operation was designed to interdict insurgents moving from the areas of Salman Pak and Arab Jabour, fleeing the earlier Operation Arrowhead Ripper. The operation consisted of successive and simultaneous air-assaults taking place in numerous areas. Lt. Col. Robert Wilson, executive officer of 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, described, "The combination of aviation and ground forces will allow Task Force Marne the ability to target areas that the enemy deems as safe." Helicopters were used to attack as well as carry ground infantry to their destinations "within 30 minutes of identifying a target" on the ground. Kiowa and Apache assault helicopters were used in conjunction with UAVs. [34]

Increased Coalition Air Operations

The Air Force played a greater role in Iraq during the summer of 2007. Multiple squadrons of attack planes were brought into the country, and the air reconnaissance efforts were "doubled" in comparison to 2006. The army recalled the use of the B1-B bomber in Iraq. The greater use of airpower concerned many about an increase in collateral damage. [35]

The Air Force and Navy delivered 437 bombs and missiles in the first half of 2007. This number was five times greater than the number of missiles and bombs used in the first six months of 2006, and threefold the number used in the last half of 2006. In the month of June, bombs were dropped at an average rate of over five times a day. [36]

In early 2007, the Air Force deployed a squadron of A-10 "Warthog" attack planes to the al-Asad Air Base and a squadron of F-16C Fighting Falcons to the Balad Air Base. These additions doubled the number of in-country workhorse fighter-bomber jets to more than 50. F-16Cs are equipped with a cockpit helmet that allows the pilot to aim and shoot by turning his head and looking at his target. [37]

When the Navy deployed a second aircraft carrier to the Persian Gulf, B1-B bombers were reintroduced into the theater, because the closer platform made available. Air Force daily summaries recount that more pilots are being cleared for missions involving "bombing runs" with 500 lb. bombs. Targets of such missions included makeshift bomb factories, weapons caches, and on one occasion, "several houses insurgents were using as fire positions." [38]

The Air Force increased its intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) missions as well. Deputy air operations chief for the Central Command, Col. Gary Crowder, reported, "We have probably come close to increasing our ISR platforms the past 12 months." Crowder anticipated that an increased use of ISR air missions meant that by October, all squadrons would possess "ROVER" capability, meaning that real-time aerial video could be relayed to ground forces during operations, so that they could anticipate oncoming out-of-sight threats. Reconnaissance platforms included Predator drones, high-flying U2s and AWACS.[39]

The increased use of airpower accounted for an increase in civilian casualties, as reported by the Iraq Body Count research group. The IBC counted a rise to an average of 50 civilian casualties killed in Coalition airstrikes per month. [40]

Tribal Alliances

US forces increasingly initiated informal agreements with tribal leaders in Baghdad, Anbar and Diyala provinces, as well as the towns of Taji, Iskandariyah and Arab Jabour in the south of the country. [41] US command in Iraq estimated that tribal alliances had recruited as many as 25,000

former insurgents throughout Iraq to fight against al-Qa'ida in Iraq and other extremists. The Iraqi central government approved of the system of alliances, as long as it does not interfere with Iraqi force operations, and the local forces are eventually absorbed into the state security institutions. [42]

Gen. Petraeus noted on August 13, that the trend in local alliances was promising, as an indicator that the civilian population was turning against al-Qa'ida. "It's all about the local people," said Petraeus. "When all the sudden the local people are on the side of the new Iraq instead of on the side of the insurgents or al Qaeda, that's a very significant change." [43]

Yet many remained skeptical of the durability of the tribal alliances. As Andrew Krepinevich of the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments pointed out, the allegiance of local tribes may not endure. "This is an alliance of convenience," said Krepinevich, "It's not necessarily an alliance of convictions."[44] There are roughly 150 tribes in Iraq.[45]

According to Lt. Gen. Odierno, local tribal alliances made with the US military follow three general rules of practice: 1) tribal leader agrees to stop attacking US and Iraqi troops, 2) leader pledges to fight al-Qa'ida in Iraq, 3) an attempt is made to induct the tribe officially into the security forces, usually the police. [46]

Often the tribes demand the release of its members from detention centers in exchange for their collaboration. These requests were granted on a small scale and on a "case-by-case" basis. According to a US military intelligence official, the US will "release people to tribal or other key leaders – including former insurgent leaders who are now working to fight AQI – as long as they are legitimate leaders in their areas." In essence, detainees could be used as "bargaining chips" rather than going through due process.[47] This practice drew criticism from those who feared it further eroded attempts to establish the rule of law.

Taji And The Emergence Of Shi'ite Alliances

The attempt to form tribal alliances was initially aimed at Sunnis, but more recently the US aligned with local Shi'ite leaders. The Washington Examiner reported on July 5, that just as Lt. Gen. Ray Odierno had authorized commanders to appeal to Sunni tribal leaders to join the fight against al-Qa'ida, Odierno began to explore the same tactic with Shi'ite tribes against Mahdi militia cells.

While tribal alliances such as this emerged throughout Iraq, they were particularly difficult to carry out in the Shi'ite-dominated South, because the Iraqi government was concerned about U.S. efforts to rally Sunnis, rather than working exclusively with the Shi'ite-led ISF. Capt. Richards in fact rejected a group of Shi'ite recruits from Baghdad for the local police force, believing they carried sectarian bias. [48] However, retired Air Force Lt. Gen. Thomas McIrney, was briefed in early July at the Pentagon, that U.S. commanders were beginning to get an indication of "Shi'ite tribes turning against Sadr."[49]

On July 22, an agreement was brokered by the First Calvary Division in Taji in Anbar province, between about 25 local Shi'ite and Sunni tribes, to join the fight against al-Qa'ida. The agreement was the first of its kind, bringing in both Sunni and Shi'ite groups. The Shi'ite group's leader Nadeem al-Tamimi intended to make the arrangement formal by meeting with Prime Minister al-Maliki and two other Shi'ite politicians, including Bahaa al-Araji of the Sadrist bloc. [50]

Following the meeting of the tribal groups in Taji, al-Tamimi discovered that a relative of his was killed, apparently as a warning from the Mahdi militia against his involvement in supporting US troops. [51] That day a suicide bomber killed three volunteer soldiers in Taji, at a checkpoint manned by volunteers from the Taji tribal alliance.[52]

Baquba

Lt. Col. Morris Goins in Baquba began to initiate alliances with local tribal leaders, emulating the successful tactic used in Anbar. However, since the tribes themselves vary in sect and ethnicity (including Sunni, Shi'ites and Kurds), the efforts were more difficult than those carried out in Anbar, where the population is overwhelmingly Sunni. Goins explained that he met with tribal leaders, sitting down with them for tea, and discussing the prospects of joining forces to fight against insurgents in the area. Goins described the interactions as difficult, because he knew the sheikhs had in the past fought against and killed his own soldiers. "What's hard for me is irrelevant, though," explained Goins. "What's personal and professional are two different things. Nobody gives a damn what your feelings are. You have to go where the information and intelligence drive you."[53]

In Diyala, a meeting on April 7 between Abu Ali, a local tribal leader, and Capt. Ben Richards, established an alliance between a group of Iraqis and the Bronco Troop, First Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regiment in Buhritz. The local Iraqi group called themselves the Local Committee, while Capt. Richards dubbed them the "Kit Carson Scouts." The police in Buhritz number 170, while the unpaid scouts amount to 150. [54]

Baghdad

In the Sunni district of Amariya in Baghdad, former insurgents were given arms and ammunition to fight groups linked to al-Qa'ida. Other areas in Diyala, the Triangle of Death in Babil province, and in parts of Salahuddin and Nineveh, this tactic has been used. Gen. Petraeus announced that Sunnis in each of the five provinces were eager to fight against Sunni extremists.

"Local security is helped incalculably by local support and local involvement, and that's what's happening," said Petraeus. Emphasizing American compliance with the demands of the Shi'ite-led Iraqi government, that these Sunni groups be aligned with the national government, Petraeus went on to say, "What the Iraqi government and we are trying to do is to ensure that they are linked into the government structures, that they're on the payroll of the Iraqi government, that they've sworn allegiance to the Iraqi government, that they've been vetted by the Iraqi government and coalition forces, and that they've given us their biometric data and been run against our databases."[55]

Tensions between the Iraqi security forces and Sunni tribes allied to US forces became apparent in the area west of Baghdad, between Baghdad and Falluja. The tribal alliance, led by Abu Azzam, consists of 2,300 fighters including former 1920s Revolutionary Brigades and Mujahedeen Army fighters, operating in the predominately Sunni area, Nasr wa Salam. The Iraqi Army force led by Gen. Nassir al-Hiti, called the Muthanna Brigade, formerly operated in Nasr wa Salam. However they were recently moved to a different sector, because of notable sectarian tensions between the Sunni population of the area, and the predominately Shi'ite makeup of the force.[56]

Col. Pinkerton, who leads the 2nd Battalion 5th Calvary regiment in the area, noted a general trend among al-Hiti's troops, displaying unwarranted aggression and indiscriminately arresting Sunni

men in the area, including Abu Azzam's men. Al-Hiti said in mid-July that they had "strict orders" to arrest armed men and not to support "unofficial" groups, but denied that his troops were acting out of order. [57]

In one incident reported by Col. Pinkerton, US troops blocked off ISF access to Nasr wa Salam, having to ward off the Muthanna Brigade by warning them with circling helicopter gunships. Col. Pinkerton also noted an incident in which a Sunni detainee had been beaten to death under the custody of the Muthanna Brigade. In another incident, Iraqi Army troops invaded a schoolhouse being used as Abu Azzam's headquarters, indiscriminately arresting Sunnis and threatening to shoot at the crowd that had gathered. [58]

Since Pinkerton's troops allied with Abu Azzam's tribal groups, residents in Nasr wa Salam "have morefaith and belief in us than in the Iraq Army," said Pinkerton. However he added, "But they don't trust us. And they don't feel comfortable with us." The tribes were not being armed by the US Army, according to Americans. However, they were being paid approximately $300 a month for assisting with guarding checkpoints and buildings. While Pinkerton admitted that he felt more comfortable standing alongside members of Abu Azzam's tribal group than among ISF soldiers, he noted that he and his US troops also distrusted Abu Azzam's men. [59]

Enlisting Al-Qa'ida Defectors

In the Sunni neighborhood of Doura in southern Baghdad, Col. Ricky Gibbs, commander of the 4th Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, reported that former al-Qa'ida fighters were aligning themselves with US troops. Gibbs reported, "They are turning. We are talking to people who we believe have worked for al Qaeda in Iraq and want to reconcile and have peace." Commanders identified the enclave of Doura as "al Qaeda's last stronghold in the city." Lt. James Danly, a military intelligence official in Doura, confirmed this assertion. "It is only after al Qaeda has become truly barbaric and done things like, to teach lessons to people, cut their face off with piano wire in front of their family and then murdered everybody except one childe who told the take afterwards… that people realize how much of a mess they are in," said Danly.[60]

US Green Berets and soldiers enlisted a group which included former al-Qa'ida-alligned fighters in Dalli Abbas, in Diyala Province, to help fight against al-Qa'ida in Iraq. The group was named "Legitimate Resistance Force," and was largely Sunni. Although the LRF was inspired by the successful tribal alliances built in Anbar and to a lesser extent Diyala, the new alliance is more risky, according to critics. The group was not approved by the Iraqi government, who feared that the US army was creating more sectarian militias. Prime Minister Maliki did approve a tribal alliance initiative in Diyala, called "the Support Council," but it did not have much impact because Diyala had a more diverse sectarian, ethnic and tribal composition than Anbar.[61]

IV. Changes in the Sunni Insurgency

On July 5, Ayman al-Zawahiri, deputy to Osama Bin Laden, released a video discussing the need for Iraqis to unify around the group, al-Qa'ida in Iraq. Some analysts have observed that Sunni insurgent groups were increasingly divided over the issue of unifying under the regime of the Islamic State of Iraq. Zawahiri encouraged Sunni Iraqis, "The first thing which our beloved brothers in Iraq must realize is the critical nature of unity, and that it is the gateway to victory and a matter which is not open to delaying or procrastination." Zawahira also announced that new groups recently united with the Islamic State of Iraq, noting that "some of the groups prefer that their uniting not be announced right now, while we will soon announce the joining of the others."[62]

Later in July, Brig. Gen. Kevin J. Bergner said that "the principal threat" to Iraqis was al-Qa'ida in Iraq, saying that the group was responsible for "80 to 90 percent" of suicide bombings. "They are clearly the main accelerant in sectarian violence and the greatest source of these spectacular attacks that are killing innocent Iraqis in such large numbers," said Bergner. Bergner went on to emphasize the role of al-Qa'ida's senior leadership with the localized organization, saying "Al-Qaeda senor leadership does provide direction to al-Qaeda in Iraq. They do establish and provide resources and support the network." [63]

Bergner maintained that foreign "facilitators" were being used as links between al-Qai'da in Iraq and the global network led by Bin Laden. The foreigners recruited and smuggled in equipment and fighters into Iraq from neighboring countries, according to Bergner. [64]

Bruce Riedel, senior fellow at the Brookings institute, emphasized that al-Qa'ida is a small but perfidious group. "They are very important as the cutting edge of the Sunni insurgency but are only a small minority within it," Riedel explained. "And much violence today comes from Shi'ite militias which Al Qaeda opposes. Al Qaeda in Iraq is responsible for many large attacks but not the many roadside bombs or murders that kill everyday." [65]

On July 4, al-Qa'ida leader Khalid al-Mashhadani was captured by US forces. His interrogation revealed information about the linkage between al-Qa'ida and al-Qa'ida in Iraq. Brig. Gen. Kevin Bergner, US military spokesman in Baghdad, defined the linkage as "a flow of strategic direction, of prioritization, of messaging and other guidance that comes from al-Qaeda senior leadership to the al-Qaeda in Iraq leadership. Bergner said that the intelligence was gained from Mashhadani as well as other operatives. [66]

Bergner stated that Mashhadani was a leading Iraqi in AQI, which, according to military officials, is run primarily by foreigners. Bergner noted that AQI's leader, Abu Hamza al-Muhajer, also known as Abu Ayyub al-Masri, is Egyptian. He explained that the Islamic State in Iraq leader, Abu Omar al-Baghdadi, was in fact fabricated by Mashhadani, in order to appeal to Iraqi supporters. Bergner said, "The rank-and-file Iraqis in AQI believe they are following the Iraqi al-Baghdadi. But all the while they have been following the orders of the Egyptian Abu Ayyub al-Masri." According to Bergner, declarations made by Baghdadi were actually the audiotaped voice of a man named Abu Abdullah al-Naima. [67]

Evolving Tactics

The Sunni insurgents continued to exploit previous tactics, varying them according to need. There were, however, a number of changes.

Increased Accuracy, Mass-Casualty and Complex Attacks

Lt. Gen. Odierno cited an increase in the accuracy of mortars and rockets aimed at the Green Zone in the past three months, and accused Iran of supplying the Shi'ite militias who were responsible for the attacks. US Ambassador Crocker and other Iraqi politicians affirmed Odierno in statements to the same effect.[68] "In the last three months we have seen a significant improvement in the capability of mortarmen and racketeers to provide accurate fire into the Green Zone and other places," said Odierno. "We think this is directly related to training conducted inside Iran."[69] Odierno went on to say, "so we continue to go after these networks with the Iraqi security forces. This is not done independently by U.S. or coalition forces. This is done in conjunction with Iraqi security forces. And we will continue to do so" until Iran has ceased its involvement.[70]

Complex ambushes using synchronized tactics also increased. Such attacks use a combination of IEDs, hand grenades and gunfire, and often result in a combination of dead, wounded and kidnapped victims. [71]

Mass-casualty attacks became more frequent in the areas to the north of Iraq, where US troop presence was less. Insurgents fled areas of Diyala and Baghdad, following June's Operation Phantom Thunder, increasing pressure on quieter and more remote areas of the north, such as Erbil, Dahuk, Sulaymaniyah and Ninevah. Two of the most deadly attacks occurred in this area in the past month, killing 141 on July 7 in Amerli, a Kurdish village north of Kirkuk, and over 250 on August 14 in the villages of Qahtaniyah and Jazeera, outside the city of Dahuk.[72]

HBIEDs and Suicide Bombs

House-rigged IEDs, initially used in Diyala by insurgents operating against US forces during Operation Arrowhead Ripper in June, became more prominent in July and August, spreading to the northeast of Baghdad. Because the US military documents these cases as IED attacks, it is difficult to account for the number of HBIEDs that have been discovered or detonated. [73]

From 2003 to 2006 only 300 suicide bombings took place in Iraq. According to a DoD analyst, during the year ending in June, the total for that period alone was at least 540. In the first six months of 2007 over 4,000 Iraqis were killed or injured by suicide bombs. In the month of July, 1,652 civilians were killed alone, according to a Newsweek report. Author Mohammed Hafez estimated that "Iraq has superseded all the other suicide-bomb campaigns [in modern history] combined." [74]

The Role of Foreign Fighters

Foreign volunteers continued to make up only a fraction of the insurgency, but they composed the vast majority of suicide bombers. The number of suicide bombings in Iraq in 2007, roughly 42 a month, made it clear that foreign fighters were still entering the country in large numbers. Iraqi border guards arrested some 15-20 suspected insurgents a month, but estimated that dozens more entered Iraqi undetected through the Syrian border.

Approximately 45% of all foreign militants are from Saudi Arabia; 15% are from Syria and Lebanon; and 10% are from North Africa, according to U.S. military figures. U.S. detention facilities in Iraq house 135 foreign fighters, almost half of whom are Saudi. 50% of Saudi militants in Iraq come as suicide bombers.[75]

US and Iraqi security officials agree that the majority of suicide bombers are Saudi, while Iraqi-nationals make up a much smaller percentage. US intelligence estimates claim that "about half the Saudis crossing into Iraq come as suicide bombers." The Saudi government estimated that 850 Saudi nationals entered Iraq in the past four years. 50 percent of that figure were killed in Iraq. Saudi Arabia spent approximately $1 billion every year patrolling the border with Iraq. They also drive a domestic campaign, targeting and reigning in radical clerics who promote travel to Iraq for martyrdom. In June, Prince Nayef bin Abdulaziz, addressed a group of Imams regarding the danger of promoting martyrdom. The Saudi Interior Minister said, "Do you know that your sons who go to Iraq are used only for blowing themselves up?... Are you happy for your children to become instruments of murder?"[76]

V. Regional Developments and Shi'ite Pressures

While the US has focused heavily on defeating Al Qa'ida in Iraq and associated Neo-Salafi extremist movements, Iraq's violence and instability have been driven by a mix wider mix of civil conflicts, most of which play out at a regional level or along Iraq's various sectarian and ethnic fault lines. According to one calculation by U.S. military officials, 52 % of violence in Iraq was caused by al-Qa'ida and other Sunni insurgent groups, while 48% was due to Shi'ite militias.[77]

Baghdad

Progress in Baghdad was mixed. Large scale bombings in the capital dropped throughout the months of July and August as violence moved outside the capital. However, the Shi'ite threat became more serious an issue and several neighborhoods in Baghdad were the subject of sectarian fighting and cleansing and others remained under the direct control of the Mahdi Army. Increasing attacks on the Green Zone were also a problem.

Sadrist Strongholds

The Shi'ite groups affiliated with the Muqtada al-Sadr began implementing a much more intensive civil aid and development effort in the areas of Baghdad and southern Iraq and the Mahdi army expanded its control of Shi'ite neighborhoods and grassroots presence while continued to push Sunnis out of Baghdad and its environs. The Sadrist groups consist of a loose network of elements that are publicly loyal to Sadr, but some are not under his direct control and others are motivated largely by their own local or ideological concerns. Sadr seemed ready to manipulate this situation. He often did not resist attacks on extremist or dissident elements of his organization. His tactic of publicly denouncing sectarian violence allowed him to gain some support among Sunnis and Christians. At the same time, he reaches out to his followers with a grassroots political and economic effort based out of "storefront" offices somewhat similar to that adopted by Hamas or Hezbollah. [78]

During the period between January and late August, the Jaysh al-Mahdi (JAM), or Mahdi Army," consolidated and expanded its control over large areas of Baghdad, while fighting Iraqi and US troops in southern provinces. The organization had offices in nine offices in Baghdad and at least one in most of the provinces. The militiamen in these areas often collect a small fee from local residents, offering protection in return. In some places the group also controls the supply of fuel as well as the real estate market. [79]

Targeted sectarian killings by the Shi'ite militiamen affiliated with the Mahdi Army have driven out Sunnis from previously mixed areas in the capital. In Washash, an area that was previously mixed, killings have increased in pace and frequency, driving Sunni residents to move elsewhere. According to a statement made by Sunni politician, Adnan al-Dulaimi, the Mahdi Army compelled 200 Sunni Arab families to leave the neighborhood within an 18 month period, and killed 100 people and kidnapped 50. [80]

The Jaysh al-Mahdi (JAM), continued to infiltrate elements of the Iraqi police and Army and sway the leadership of ISF commanders to operate against Sunni enclaves. This process has encouraged the displacement of Sunnis in western Baghdad in particular, in the neighborhoods of Ghazaliya and Hurriya. [81]

Capt. Sean Lyons, operating in the southwestern Baghdad neighborhood of al-Amil, reported that the district of West Rashid, a 10-square-mile area, was controlled by JAM. West Rashid encompasses the al-Amil, Bayaa and al-Jihad neighborhoods, with a total population of approximately 700,000. The dominance of JAM in West Rashid is an anomaly among the Sunni-dominated neighborhoods in the rest of western Baghdad, west of the Tigris River and south of the Baghdad airport. In the previous year, the US military estimated that western Baghdad was 80% Sunni and 20% Shi'ite, however those numbers have been reverse in the case of West Rashid, due to ethnic cleansing and sectarian violence.[82]

JAM controlled the power grid in the electricity grid in the area, gas distribution and the housing market, while holding a monopoly of the loyalty of the area's local residents. In the most densely Shi'ite populated neighborhoods JAM controlled the local governance. Shi'ite militiamen financed their operations through money procured through illicit activity such as car theft, arms trafficking and extorting local businesses. The area's Sunni residents were barred from hospitals, which are run by the Ministry of Health, headed by Sadrists. They were also obstructed from receiving gas from gas stations. US operations were planned to distribute fuel to Sunnis living in Mahdi-controlled sector. There were also plans to build a local hospital to cater to Sunni residents.[83]

US forces did check many of the JAM efforts, with mixed support from the Prime Minister's office and Iraqi Army. On June 30th, US troops led an offensive into the Shiite district of Sadr City, killing 26 militants and detaining 17. The raid was directed against a militant cell smuggling weapons, EFPs and money from Iran to Iraq. Several residents and local police also accused forces of killing civilians. Lt. Col. Christopher Garver, who led the raid said that, "Everyone who got shot was shooting at U.S. troops at the time." However, local witnesses said they saw the bodies of women and children among the dead. A spokesman of Sadr's Mahdi army said that the Shi'ite militia was not present during the fighting.[84]

President Maliki criticized the US use of force in Sadr City, saying that the government refused to permit American troops to "carry out any military operation in any Iraqi province or city without first acquiring permission from the leadership of the Iraqi forces." The Maliki government had approved raids in Sadr City on a case-by-case basis, but had not granted approval for this particular case. However, since the initiation of the troop surge in February, the US military claimed it was granted a general sanction to pursue Sadrists if they were considered "rogue" elements affiliated with Iran.[85]

On July 20, US forces attacked a building in Husseiniyah, a Mahdi Army stronghold, retaliating against reports of small arms fire coming from within. While the US military reported no civilian casualties, reports from local residents accounted for the deaths of several civilian bystanders. Iraqi news agencies and AP photographs revealed the bodies of at least 11 civilians having been killed or wounded in the airstrike, some of them being women and children.[86] Husseiniyah is located on the northeastern outskirts of Baghdad, on the way to Baqubah.

Following the incident, residents of Husseiniyah demonstrated in the streets against the seemingly indiscriminate fire of the US forces. For at least the three days following, the Mahdi army engaged US forces in a standoff, as US forces laid siege to the city. The blockade disallowed delivery trucks for three days, until the third day when commercial vendors were allowed to visit the city.[87]

Shi'ite members of the parliament implored Prime Minister Maliki to intervene and call on US forces to end the siege. [88] Demonstrators in other areas of the city, such as the norther Shaab district, rallied against the US-Iraqi blockade of Husseiniyah. Protestors demanded that government rescue teams have access to the area, and that compensation be issued to families in Husseiniyah who were harmed in the initial attack and ongoing struggle.[89]

The Green Zone

On July 10, three people were killed in the Green Zone and 18 people were wounded, when a round of as many as 31 mortar shells hit the area. Typically, according to reports, no more than six mortar explosions come at one time.[90] A U.N. report on the Green Zone reported that in the month preceding the first week of June, attacks on the Green Zone were becoming "increasingly concentrated and accurate."[91]

The American embassy in the Green Zone was being constructed at a cost of $592 million dollars. The building would accommodate 1,000 people. Critics of the construction project complained that the building could not withstand the daily barrage of mortars and rockets against it, and that it symbolically usurped the resources of Iraqis who continue to suffer from a lack of adequate water, electricity and other basic needs. The embassy came under fire over 85 times since February 2007, killing a total of 16 people. One Iraqi civilian, Raid Kadhim Kareem, was quoted in the Los Angeles Times, as saying, regarding the embassy: "It's all for them, all of Iraq's resources, water, electricity, security… It's as if it's their country and we are the guests staying here."[92]

Southern Iraq

Virtually all of the developments in Southern Iraq were negative. The British were reduced to three largely impotent enclaves in Basra. Most the Southern Iraq came under the control of local and often feuding Shi'ite factions, with limited ties to the Shi'ite parties and leaders in the central government. Iranian influence continued to expand in the southeast, as did the level of crime and the influence of organized crime.

Basra

Basra and other areas in southeastern Iraq have been the scene of ongoing intra-Shi'ite power struggles since early 2004. The elections in December 2005 triggered more open inter-Shi'ite power struggles and violence in Dhi Qar, Maysan, and Basra with tribal factions, and rival SCIRI and Sadrist police adding to the equation. Even moderate and more secular Shi'ites came under steadily growing threat, while crime and corruption affecting almost every aspect of Iraq's oil industry and exports in the south added mixtures of Mafia-like groups, criminal police officers, and corrupt Shi'ite Islamist elements to the equation. British claims to have transferred responsibility to the ISF in 2006 were little more than a recognition of "defeat with honor" or at least crude political cover.

Since the election in 2005, the province has been dominated by warring Shi'ite political factions, vying for political power and resources. The al-Fadhila party, the SIIC (formerly SCIRI), and Tha'r Allah, a local party, have used political leveraging, violence, local alliances, and economic ploys to gain influence in the region.[93]

The power struggle among political parties that emerged in the aftermath of the Samarra mosque bombing in February 2006, has significantly worsened, in spite of British efforts to strengthen the capacity of the local government and security forces.

American pressure on the Iraqi prime minister in December 2006 to disarm militias had the net impact of increasing the efforts of militias to infiltrate the security forces in Basra. Since 2006, murders and assassinations carried out by uniformed members of the Iraqi Security Forces increased significantly.[94] Political parties have played a role in oil smuggling, as well. Fadhila, which controls the Oil Protection Force, has been accused of embezzling the oil it is supposed to monitor. The IGC reports, "Trafficking in Basra has given rise to a gigantic and highly sophisticated mafia, comprising smugglers, middlemen, accomplices within the oil ministry and so forth."[95]

A report by the International Crisis Group, released on June 25, 2007, stated that the primary difficulty in establishing order in Basra came from the "inability to establish a legitimate and functioning provincial apparatus capable of redistributing resources, imposing respect for the rule of law and ensuring a peaceful transition at the local level."[96]

The ICG report stated that Basra's residents have historically distrusted the central Iraqi government, since the reign of Saddam Hussein. Basra's resources have been exploited for the benefit of the country, while the province has been denied an equal share of political representation and funding. Basra has twelve seats in the Iraqi national assembly, whereas much smaller and less populated provinces possess more representatives. However, the region produces around 80% of the country's economic wealth, according to a Basra parliamentarian.[97]

The Iraqi police in areas like Basra were now largely part of the problem, rather than the solution, and often supported cleansing operations against Sunnis. British efforts to deal with this led to steadily rising local Shi'ite attacks on British forces, putting an effective end to the British "soft" approach, since British forces could only operate in many areas as armored patrols. To all intensive purposes, the British - which had lost at the political level in early 2005 - were defeated at the military level and confronted with "no go" zones in many areas from the fall of 2005 onwards.

The ICG report acknowledges that any order that exists in Basra is limited to "a balance of power between militias." Local alliances, or "marriages of convenience," have defined that balance of power, where the rule of law is not respected or enforced by security forces. One local alliance was formed among tribal leaders, for example, ensuring that crimes committed on behalf of political parties would not be tolerated. These types of informal agreements simultaneously reduce violence and "render it tolerable," working to undercut government authority while legitimizing the circumstances that perpetuate intra-militia fighting.[98]

The ICG report also cites suspicion among Basra residents, security officials, and British forces, that Iran has played a large role in the province. One Iraqi university professor said in an interview, "Iranian intelligence has established a presence in the Iranian consulate, humanitarian associations, businesses and pro-Iranian political parties."[99]

During the first eight months of 2007, British security efforts devolved to little more than attempts to reform the police in Basra and bring some order to the city. The most British efforts accomplished, however, was to restore a higher degree of control over the Basra police by the

Shi'ite parties in the Shi'ite dominated central government. They did nothing to either quell attacks on British forces or bring security to areas outside Basra.

The British troops in southern Iraq continued to hand over control to Iraq in the spring of 2007. On April 18, 2007 they officially handed over control of Maysan province, bordering Iran. It was the third British province to be transferred. British officers maintained that reducing their troop presence would reduce the tensions in the south. One officer said, "Ninety percent of the violence down here is all against us. You put more people on the ground, you are creating more targets."[100]

A law was passed in October 2006, allowing regional government to be formed beginning in August 2008. Under the law, regional governments would be allowed to adopt their own constitution, maintain legislative, executive and judicial jurisdiction over its constituents, manage internal security forces and represent their region abroad, independent from the central government. [101]

The law was opposed by Sunnis and Shi'ite opponents of the Supreme Islamic Iraqi Council (formerly SCIRI), including Fadhila and the Sadrist movement. Yet in late July 2007, the Supreme Islamic Iraqi Council (SIIC), under the leadership of Ammar al-Hakim, son of Abdul-Aziz al-Hakim, was the leading political party pushing for an autonomous "South of Baghdad Region." Provinces aside from Najaf included in this proposed regional government included Babil, Basra, Dhi Qar, Diwaniyah, Karbala, Maysan, Muthana and Wasit. [102]

The acquiescence of leadership in Basra remained the critical decisive factor in whether or not the regional plan would go forth. Basra's governor, Muhammad al-Waeli, opposed the regional campaign. The Fadhila Party accused SIIC of "orchestrating a campaign" to unseat the province's governor in order to implement the regional campaign. [103]

Najaf

Regional Shi'ite separatism increased in other parts of southern Iraq. In early August, 45 tribal leaders in Najaf signed a pact for the creation of "the self-rule government of the Iraqi south." Other provinces included in this network were Basra, Dhi Qar, Diwaniyah, Maysan and Muthana. The group elected a president and planned to form a legislative body of 130 tribal leaders and experts. Sheikhs who headed this initiative sought to form an alternative to the South of Baghdad Region plan, headed by formal political groups such as SIIC. [104]

According to Thamer al-Ameri, former advisor to the Iraqi parliament and current independent politician, "A federation of regions is one of the more practical solutions to Iraq's problem, but there is real fear that this will only be a prelude to partition… Iraqis have yet to prove they are capable of power-sharing. We are just not ready to be in a federative union. So far it has been all about each group getting more for itself." [105]

Najaf provincial leaders decided to disengage the province's electrical grid from the national grid in early August, both to protest the unequal distribution of electricity throughout the country, and to show a decisive move toward provincial self-rule. Provincial spokesman Ahmed Duaibel spoke about the decision to remove Najaf from the national electrical grid, saying, "We were being cheated out of our allotted quota for electricity and we felt this did not benefit Najaf's stature as a pilgrimage center and seat of the marjayia [Shi'ite religious authority]." The province would agree to reconnect with the central Baghdad distributor when the government addresses its grievances. [106]

Northern Iraq

Ethnic tensions remained a serious problem in northern Iraq and the ongoing tension between Iraqi Kurds and Turkey over issues like the PKK presence in Iraqi Kurdish areas increased. Tensions were further complicated by the exodus of insurgents from Diyala and Baghdad, and major attacks targeting small remote communities and cities in the North became a persistent trend.

- On July 6, A VBIED killed 26 people in a remote Kurdish village, Ahmad Maref, near the Iranian border.[107]

- On July 6, a VBIED detonated at a funeral in Zargosh, a remote Shi'ite Kurdish and Turkmen village near the Iranian border, killing 23 and wounding 18.[108]

- On July 7, suicide attacks killed at least 144 people across Iraqi in an 18-hour period. In the village of Amerli, 50 mile south of Kirkuk, a suicide bomber detonated in a market, killing at least 115, including 25 children and 40 women, and wounding 250. [109] Later estimates claimed 150 were killed. Residents said over 50 houses and 55 shops were destroyed in the blast.[110]

- On July 16, a VBIED and two small bombs in Kirkuk killed over 80 people and wounded over 185. The bombs exploded outside a complex that included an office belonging to the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan. The attack was the deadliest explosion in Kirkuk since the start of the war in March 2003.[111]

- On August 14, some 400 people were killed in the villages of Qatiniyah and Jazeera, the deadliest attack in the war.

Kurdistan

Turkey threatened to bombard Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) bases near in the beginning of July. Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari asserted in mid-July that Turkey had amassed 140,000 soldiers on its border with Iraq. However the US government disputed this claim. Kurdish residents in northern towns feared that Turkey's intentions may be more than to eradicate the PKK. Turkey does not approve of the forthcoming referendum of Kurdistan, fearing that it would spark nationalist Kurdish aspirations within its own country and beyond. [112]

On July 18, PKK operatives launched an attack against a Turkish military vehicle, killing two soldiers and wounding six others, according to the state-run Turkish news company, Anatolia. Iraqi government spokesman Ali al-Dabbagh, announced that Turkish artillery and warplanes shelled northern border towns. Col. Hussein Kamal in the Iraqi army, said that about 250 shells were delivered from Turkey into Iraq during the incident.

That day, Al-Dabbagh reported, "We have received reports that the Turkish government and the Turkish army have bombed border villages. The Iraqi government regrets the Turkish military operations off artillery and warplanes bombing against border cities and towns." Al-Dabbagh appealed to the Turkish government on behalf of the Iraqi government to halt the military operation and resort to dialogue, reaffirming that Iraq wants "good relations with Turkey." [113]

In late July, Prime Minister Maliki accepted an invitation from Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan to discuss joint efforts to crack down on the PKK. The meeting was announced to take place before September. [114] Turkey's military operations in the past failed against the PKK, because of difficult terrain. According to a Kurdish security official, describing the border with Turkey, "These are very harsh, very high mountains, and they cannot be controlled by the Kurdish

government, nor could they be controlled by Saddam, and they couldn't be controlled by Turkey." [115]

Iraqi Kurds have fought the PKK alongside Turkish forces three times over the past decade and a half. However the group has persisted. Recently Turkey has accused Iraqi Kurds of complacently allowing the PKK to operate against its forces, however Kurdish representative said that they had not spoken to the group since 2000. The mayor of Qaladiza, the last town along the Iraqi border with Turkey, said, "We have nothing to do with them. They do not have our permission to be there. They don't come here, and we don't go there." However much Kurdish Iraqis disdain the PKK, ethnic ties remain between the two. The mayor of Qaladiza said, "The PKK represents a nation without rights just as we used to be in the past." [116]

A PKK-affiliated Iranian group along the Iranian border also provoked deterrent attacks from Iranian forces. Iran occasionally shelled Kurdish villages along the border to deter such attacks. The Iranians reinforced their position in the area with an additional 2,000 more troops, according to Col. Ahmed Hamid, who mans a checkpoint at the border. Fear of an attack by Turkish forces on Iraqi Kurdistan, drove Iran to bolster its forces on the border, to prevent an influx of Kurdish refugees. "They [the Iranians] don't want Kurds escaping into Iran if Turkey attacks the border," said Hamid. [117]

Belying the political tensions between Kurdistan and Turkey, Turkish-Kurdish economic ties in northern Iraq were flourishing. Turkish trade with Iraq reached $3 billion in 2006, and, according to Turkey's trade minister, "could top $5 billion this year." There are approximately 15,000 Turkish citizens, mostly Kurds, working in Iraqi Kurdistan.[118]

Kirkuk

Kirkuk remained tense and a potential source of far more serious ethnic conflict. The 2004 Transitional Administration Law, Article 140 of the Constitution detailed a three step process on the Kirkuk issue: normalization, census, and reformation. Despite the fact that Kurds continued to push for the referendum of Kirkuk since June 2006, the deadline set for the necessary census, July 31, 2007, was passed without a move by the national government to implement the reform. The census would have provided a list to the central government of people eligible to vote in the referendum, scheduled for December 31, 2007. The referendum would have meant the chance for Kurds to include the city of Kirkuk under the jurisdiction of the KRG.

The failure of the central government to enact Article 140 represented what Falah Mustafa Bakir, head of the Kurdistan Regional Government's (KRG) foreign relations department called, "a lack of seriousness from all parties to implement… articles that were in the constitution that people had agreed and voted upon." However, Article 140 was not the only sensitive issue avoided by the central government, and perhaps reflected a general avoidance of politically charged issues on behalf of the Iraqi government. Yet it also may reflect the specific objections among Shi'ite and Sunni Arabs to relinquishing jurisdiction over Kirkuk.[119]

Kurdish Regional Government leader, Massoud Barzani, warned on July 31 that the Kurdish Regional Government was becoming impatient with the lack of action on behalf of the central government, regarding the planned referendum for Kirkuk. Barzani explained that "if clause 140 is not implemented, then there will be a real civil war." "Frankly I am not comfortable with the behavior and the policy of the federal government on Kirkuk," Barazani said. "There is a

procrastination (by the government) and if this issue is not resolved, as I said before, all options are open."[120]

Following the attack on July 16, Kurdish officials proposed sending peshmerga fighters from Kurdistan to provide security in Kirkuk. "An agreement was reached with the central government," said a deputy minister from the Kurdistan Regional Government, Koors Rasul, "to send 6,000 soldiers of Kurdistan to guard the outskirts of Kirkuk, to protect oil pipeline and power transmission lines." At that time, the central government did not confirm the agreement.[121]

Truck traffic was banned from the city, following the July 16 attack. American and Iraqi leaders devised a working plan to dig a trench surrounding the city, similar to that being dug around Fallujah.[122]

Western Iraq

Attacks in Anbar declined from 1,300 in October 2006 to 225 in June 2007. [123] Local government structures were revived by American forces during this time, launching a $30 million program as part of the $300 program launched throughout the Anbar province. [124] Throughout Anbar, the number of policemen jumped from 3,500 in October 2006 to 21,500 in June 2007. In Ramadi alone, where there used to be 100 policemen, the force amounted to 3,500. [125]

Civilian involvement and information sharing also increased during this time. Tips on the location of insurgents or weapons caches assisted MNF and Iraqi forces in maintaining security. **Figure 5.1** shows the civilian tips reported by MNF-West over the year from January 2006 to June 2007.

Figure 5.1: Trends in Civilian Tips in Anbar Province: January 2006 – June 2007
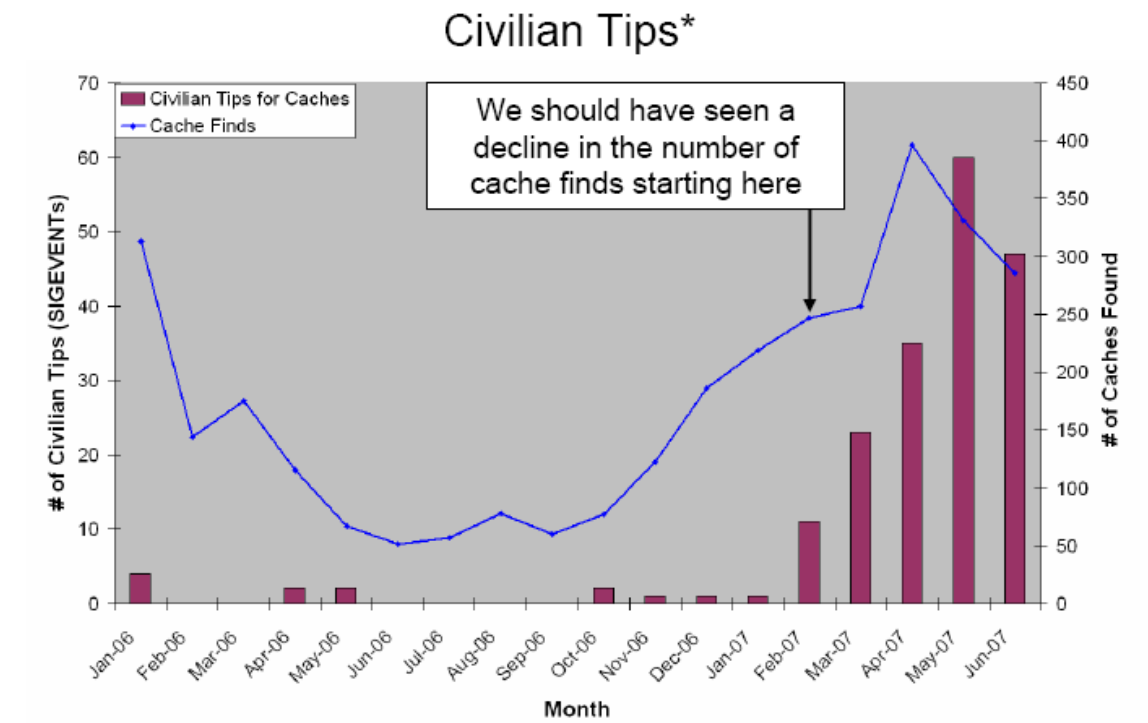
Civilian Tips*

Accurate numbers for civilian tips are difficult to obtain due to inconsistent reporting, but the data we do have indicate a dramatic rise in the number of caches being found due to civilian tips in recent months. This has helped keep the number of cache finds high, during a period of historic decline.

*Number of tips shown are derived from SIGEVENTs and represent an understimation of the actual total. Lack of bias in the data indicates the overall trent is still valid (trent is also consistent with MSC reporting).

Source: Unclassified intelligence briefing, MNF-I West.

VI. The Uncertain Role of Iraqi Security Forces

In March 2007, the Iraqi Army counted 150,777 personnel, Special Operations Forces counted 1,673, Air Force counted 1020, and the Navy numbered 1,148 troops.[126] The March 2007 Department of Defense Quarterly update reported that Coalition troops had trained and armed about 136,400 Iraqi MOD troops.

Prime Minister Maliki announced that MOD combat units would be manned 110% by May 2007, approximately bringing that number up to 154,126 MOD personnel. Despite the number of enlisted personnel that have gone through training, the DOD June 2007 9010 Report documented that "only 65 percent of authorized personnel are present for duty in fielded units at any time." Gen. Dempsey explained in June to the House Committee on Armed Services Subcommittee on Oversight & Investigations, that Maliki's plan was initiated only to make up for the regular rate of attrition within the ISF, and the number of trained personnel that are regularly on leave or absent. [127]

Claimed versus Real World Operational Effectivenesss

In terms of operation effectiveness, the MNF-I reported 101 of the 139 Iraqi Army combat battalions were reported in June 2007 to be operating "at some level of capability" while the rest were in formative stages. While the Defense Department reported that 95 battalions were conducting operations "in the lead" in their areas of responsibility, it was apparent to the House Subcommittee on Oversight & Investigations that the DOD's metric for measuring this capability was imprecise, and therefore the ability of the Iraqi battalions was overstated. Instead the Subcommittee found that the Iraqi military had a "limited capability to plan and execute logistical tasks; lack an effective command structure; and, in cases where ISF are located in relatively peaceful areas, lack combat experience." [128] The number of Iraqi army brigades able to operate independently fell from 10 to six in July, according to Gen. Pace. Pace said this was due to destroyed equipment and depleted manpower.[129]

Brig. Gen. Dana Pittard, head of the Iraq Assistance Group, said that because the priority of the US military shifted at the beginning of the year from training and supporting Iraqi forces, to launching major offensives and protecting the population, the process of training Iraqi security forces slowed during this time. The positive side to the shift in policy is that Iraqi security forces have direct combat experience, which they can learn from. Pittard concluded that the ISF will require US support for the next two years.[130]

The Ministry of Interior was reported by the Department of Defense to be corrupt and constrained by sectarian influence and illegal activity. The infiltration of Shi'ite militia members and sympathizers was an ongoing problem within the Ministry, affecting "every component of the MOI, particularly in Baghdad and several key cities," according to the DOD. Both Shi'ite militia and Sunni fomer-Ba'athist infiltration was a concern. In March 2007, the DOD reported that the Government of Iraq screened 280,000 MOI personnel for "Saddam-era criminal" and Ba'ath Party involvement, and found 8,000 matches. Of those 8,000 personnel only 3,400 were penalized. [131]

The Iraqi police remained subject to "extensive and often overt militia infiltration, as well as blatant sectarianism in terms of members of specific sects who are targeted by police personnel of other sects," according to the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Oversight & Investigation. For example, a previously undisclosed Army investigation found that Iraqi police

working with US troops helped insurgents kill five G.I.'s in January in Karbala.[132] On July 13, Iraqi security forces and US troops killed six Iraqi policemen in a raid to capture a rogue police lieutenant. The lieutenant was suspected of having high ranking connections to the al-Quds Brigade of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards.[133]

The Subcommittee also reported a lack of proper identification within the Iraqi police and low literacy rates. The DOD reported in March 2007 that "more than 58,000 police candidates have been screened for literacy, 73% of whom passed and were allowed to enter basic training." [134]

The House Armed Services Subcommittee on Oversight & Investigation reported a lack of Transition Teams within the Iraqi police, noting that thought there are transition teams embedded "within most battalions and brigade and division headquarters" of the Iraqi Army, only 14% of Iraqi police stations have Police Transition Teams (PTT). The Iraqi Police Service is either as large or larger than the Iraqi Army. The lack of PTTs also limits the coverage and assessment of Police units in 13 of Iraq's 18 provinces. [135]

ISF Underarmed?

Iraqi forces operating in Operation Arrowhead Ripper in Diyala, led by Col. Ali Mahmoud, were reportedly under-armed. On July 9 it was reported that eight of the unit's 12 Humvees had been destroyed over the past year and were not replaced. The base was constantly hit with mortars, yet the Iraqi forces were unable to respond to the attacks because they lacked ammunition themselves. According to one report, Iraqi soldiers had to share helmets and body armor. Some US officers blamed the Ministry of Defense, for mismanaging funds and being corrupt.[136]

Iraqi ambassador to the United States, Samir Sumaida'ie, reported in late July that a main problem impeding the progress of Iraqi security forces was that the US government was irresponsive and slow in meeting its requests for arms and equipment. Under the Foreign Military Sales program, Iraq became eligible to purchase its own equipment in 2006. Since then, the Iraqi government has requested approximately $208 billion in military-related hardware, $502 million worth of ammunition and explosives and either 276 light armored vehicles or 522 Humvees. US officials did not comment on the amount of equipment successfully sold and delivered to Iraq, noting that the process for procurement can be long. However, a report by members of the House Armed Services Committee cited only 10 out of 46 occasions in which requests for equipment were met. [137]

Sumaida'ie complained, "The Iraqi government requested equipment for its forces from the Americans and was ready to pay with its own money for them. We have been waiting and waiting and waiting… Americans are fully protected with the latest equipment and we are just cannon fodder." [138]

The Government Accountability Office reported in early August that an estimated 110,000 AK-47 rifles and 80,000 pistols given to the ISF in 2004 and 2005 were now unaccounted for. The number was reached by comparing the property records that MNSTC-I kept against those that Petraeus kept, tracking the arms ordered to Iraq. The gaps between the figures kept were consistently large. For example, Petraeus ordered 185,000 AK-47 rifles, 170,000 pistols, 215,000 pieces of body armor and 140,000 helmets issued to ISF from June 2004 to September 2005. However, property records maintained by MNSTC-I recorded only 75,000 AK-47s, 90,000 pistols, 80,000 pieces of body armor and 25,000 helmets.[139]

VII. The Role of Outside States

Other states continued to express their concerns about the deteriorating security situation in Iraq. Jordan and Syria were concerned about the flow of refugees across their borders, and both states tightened border security in 2007. The US increasingly accused Iran of instigating sectarian violence by funding and supplying Shi'ite militias.

Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice and Defense Secretary Robert Gates met with Arab leaders at a regional conference in early August to request help in Iraq, among other issues. The governments included Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates. The meeting concluded with a joint resolution to work toward "peace and security" in the region. Secretary Rice also noted there was "a recognition" among the countries "that some of the obligation undertaken at the Sharm el Sheik neighbor's conference needed to be carried out."[140] The US leaders convened the meeting in part to alleviate Arab government concerns that the Shi'ite-led Iraqi government is a threat to Sunni Arab states.

The fact remained, however, that outside states played only a limited positive role, and one where good intentions (or statements thereof) were far more common than good actions.

Iran: Growing Tensions with the US and UK, Growing Ties to the Iraqi Government

There were few ambiguities or uncertainties regarding growing Iranian ties to Shi'ite militias and hostile elements in Iraq. New intelligence led the US to connect Iran with Shi'ite militia groups, including the Mahdi Army. The US continued to accuse Iran of propagating violence in Iraq by supplying materials necessary to make explosively formed penetrators (EFPs). Iran denied all charges, and some experts agreed that the evidence was not sufficient to link Iran to the weapons. Iranian involvement in Iraq, however, was clearly on the rise at the political, economic and military levels.

In an interview with *US News*, General Petraeus said of Iranian involvement in Iraq, "It's a fact that Iran has been fueling some of the very, very lethal activities on the Shi'a side through the provision of money, advanced weapons, and training." Petraeus also said that US and Iraqi forces had captured to rogue Mahdi Army militiamen, Laith and Qais Khazali, who led a group of 3,000 fighters that had received training in Iran. Petraeus said, "We learned an enormous amount about [Iranian activities] during the interrogation of the Khazali brothers and the materials that were captured with them…"[141]

Iranian Arms Transfers to Iraqi Militias and Extremists

U.S. intelligence found that Iran shipped 107mm mortars, rocket-propelled grenades, C-4 explosives and small arms to Iraqi insurgent groups in March, and that the country increased arms shipments to Iraq's Shiite insurgent groups at the end of May.

Sunni insurgents were upset about the continued support of Iran for Shi'ite militias. Abu Omar al-Baghdadi, alleged leader of the Islamic State in Iraq, released a statement on July 9, that the al-Qa'ida-linked group would "wage war" against Iran, if it did not stop aiding Shi'ite militias within the next two months. "We are giving the Persians, and especially the rulers of Iran, a two month period to end all kinds of support for the Iraqi Shiite government, and to stop direct and

indirect intervention… otherwise a severe war is waiting for you," said Baghdadi, on a 50-minute audio recording. The recording also gave Sunnis and Arab countries the same deadline, to stop dealing with Iran.[142]According to intelligence reports, Iranian paramilitaries began to assist Sunni insurgent groups in order to step up confrontations with U.S. troops as well. [143]

On Juy 2, Brig. Gen. Kevin J. Bergner, a military spokesman in Baghdad, charged the al-Quds brigades, an elite unite of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards, with using Hezbollah in Iraq to train, arm and assist Shi'ite militias. In March 2007, U.S. forces arrested three men, including veteran Lebanese Hezbollah operative, Ali Musa Daqduq, in Basra, for their involvement in the Karbala attack in January that killed 5 U.S. soldiers.[144]

An Iraqi Shi'ite, Qais Khazali, was arrested in the same March raid in Basra. According to Bergner, Khazali's interrogation revealed that Iran was deploying Hezbollah operatives to Iraq. According to his interrogation, Daqduq was sent by Hezbollah to Iran in 2005 to work with the Quds force. Daqduq said in 2006 and 2007 he made four trips to Iraq to report back to Iran about the training and operations of Shi'ite militias, and to organize them according to Hezbollah's structure. Daqduq also said he took 20 to 60 Iraqis at a time to three camps around Tehran, where Iraqis were taught how to use shaped charges, mortars, rockets and techniques in intelligence, sniping and kidnapping. Khazali was responsible for overseeing the operations carried out by Daqduq's Iranian-supported cells. A 22-page document outlining the Karbala attack was discovered in the arrest. [145]

Bergner stated that Iran was funding the Hezbollah led groups with up to $3 million a month. He also said that the "senior leadership in Iran is aware of this activity."[146] While fighters from the Mahdi Army were included in the ranks of these Iranian-funded cells, Bergner distanced Muqtada al-Sadr from this discovery, saying, "We believe that these are operating outside his control and that he shares the concern and the seriousness that they represent and is trying to find ways to bring an end to it." The US military said that it killed or captured 27 alleged members of these Iranian-backed groups from February 9 to July 2, 2007. [147]

VIII. The Impact of the US Debate Over Force Cuts and Withdrawals

The growing US domestic political debate had a growing impact on Iraqi politics and perceptions and the actions of various insurgents and extremists. It was increasingly clear that the US might depart or make major force cuts long before Iraqi forces were capable of replacing US forces, and before some compromise or conciliation took place between Iraq's major factions. It was also clear that insurgent and militia attacks could play a role in influencing Congressional action and US public opinion.

Ambassador Crocker stated, "In the States, it's like we're in the last half of the third reel of a three-reel movie, and all we have to do is decide we're done here, and the credits come up, and the lights come on, and we leave the theater and go on to something else," he said. "Whereas out here, you're just getting into the first reel of five reels," he added, "and as ugly as the first reel has been, the other four and a half are going to be way, way worse."[148]

The new Joint Campaign Plan, developed by Gen. Petraeus and Amb. Crocker was put out at the end of July. It was developed with the help of the Joint Strategic Assessment Team, including officers like Col. H. R. McMaster, commander of the successful Tal Afar "clear, hold and build" operation, Col. John R. Martin, and David Kilcullen. State Department officials, British officers, and external experts were also involved in developing the pan. It was briefed to Defense Secretary Gates and Adm. Fallon, head of the Central Command. The plan sets the initial goal of achieving local security by the summer of 2008, but it did not set quotas for troop reductions or anticipate the length of stay for the five extra "surge" brigades.[149]

The classified plan elaborated on the "surge" plan that President Bush announced in January. The revised plan proposed that the current level of troops will be needed until the summer of 2008. It asserted that "sustainable security" would be established throughout the country by the summer of 2009. The plan was laid out in two phases spanning a two year period. The first phase, which was to ensure "localized security," was planned to be achieved no later than June 2008. The "intermediate goal," was to tie together the localized arrangements, creating a national security arrangement. That goal was planned to be achieved by June 2009.[150]

Military officials insisted on remaining conservative in their estimates of how long it would take to reach these goals. "The idea behind the surge was to bring stability and security to the Iraqi people, primarily in Baghdad because it is the political heart of the country, and by so doing give the Iraqis the time and space needed to come to grips with the tough issues they face and enable reconciliation to take place," said Col. Peter Mansoor, the executive officer to Gen. Petraeus. Col. Mansoor added, "If eventually the Iraqi government and the various sects and groups do not come to some sort of agreement on how to share power, on how to divide resources and on how to reconcile and stop the violence, then the assumption on which the surge strategy was based is invalid, and we would have to re-look the strategy." [151]

The previous plan, developed by Gen. Casey, Jr., centered using the ISF to hold areas cleared by joint ISF-MNF operations. However, that approach failed as the ISF proved they were incapable of securing those areas, coinciding with a growth in sectarian killings. The new plan incorporated the counterinsurgency strategy of protecting the population in order to isolate insurgents, encourage political conciliation and gain intelligence. The plan followed the sentiment that

military force can be used to create conditions of security in order to encourage political reconciliation. [152]

The goal of the new plan was to encourage political progress and avoid undermining the authority of the central government. The plan defined the conflict in Iraq as a "communal struggle for power," according to one of the experts involved. While acknowledging that broad political conciliation would be more difficult to achieve, the command established a team to oversee the process of granting amnesty to former insurgents and establishing local political agreements. [153]

Describing the anticipated length of the surge operations, Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch, commander of the Army's 3rd Infantry Division, south of Baghdad, said "Everything takes time, and everything takes longer than you think it's going to take… I see these aggressive offensive operations… taking us through July, August and into September." Commanders in Iraq unanimously agreed that the offensive was not fulfilling its intended purpose, to create space for reconciliation to take place. [154]

IX. Looking at the Numbers: Attack Patterns and Levels of Violence

Attempts to quantify and characterize Iraqi violence, numbers and types of attacks and casualty numbers continue to have severe limits. No Iraqi data are reliable and US and Coalition data focus far too much on major bombings, major incidents, killed to the exclusion of wounded, and violent acts to the exclusion of most acts affecting sectarian and ethnic cleansing. No data can be fully trusted in terms of accuracy. More importantly, many current metrics are useful largely as measures for counterinsurgency in a nation filled with diverse civil conflicts and where the most violent insurgent acts are only an uncertain indicator of the trends in security and stability.

Even so, the data on attack numbers and patterns still have some value, as do those on casualties. **Figures 9.1 and 9.2** provide a more detailed analysis of patterns of violence in the Spring of 2007, while **Figure 9.3** provides a picture of the overall attack patterns in Anbar Province over the past year.

- **Figure 9.1** shows the cumulative attacks by province from February 13, 2007 – May 4, 2007. Over 50 attacks per day occurred in Baghdad, whiled less than 30 a day occurred in Salah ad Din, Anbar and Diyala, and less than 20 a day in Ninewa. Less than ten attacks per day occurred in the rest of the country, and no attacks were reported during the period for Maysan, Karbala, Sulaymaniyah, Muthanna, Najaf and Dahuk. This graph does not display the attack rates beyond May, which would have shown an increase in attacks in the north.
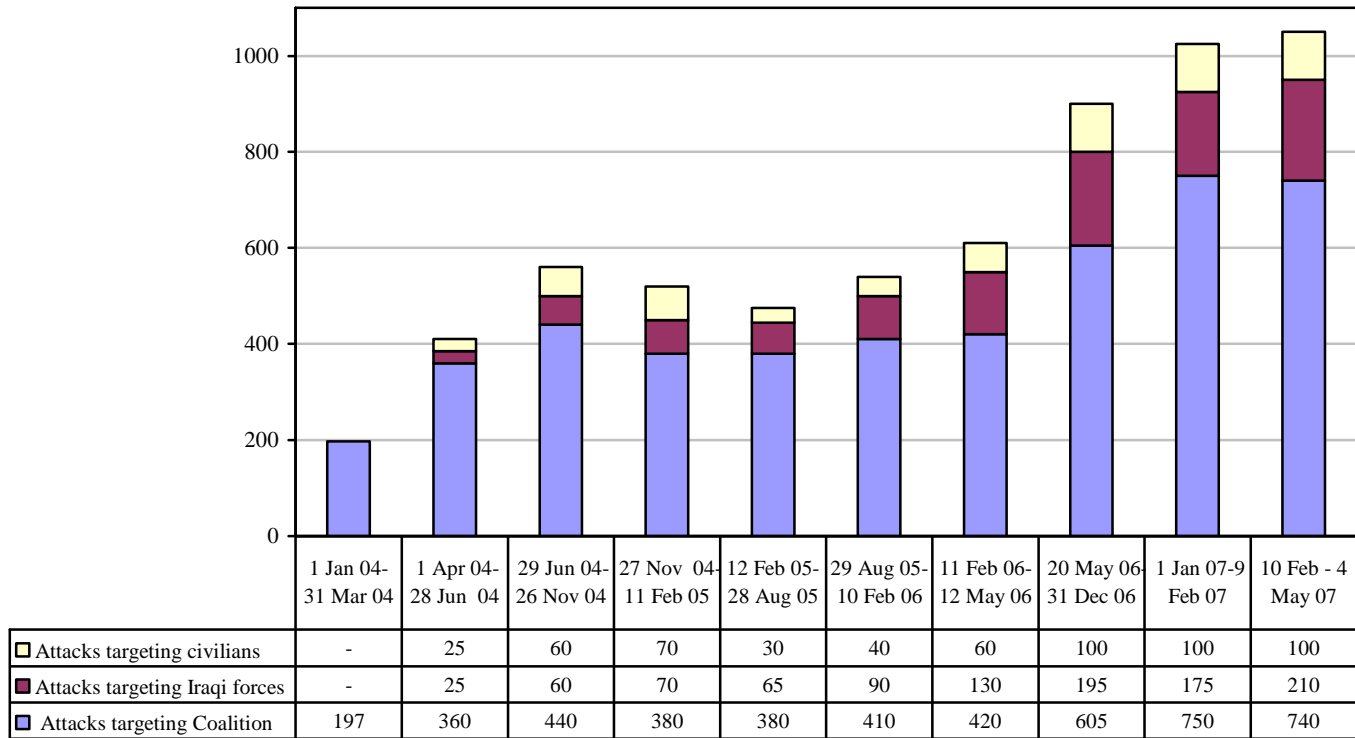
- **Figure 9.2** shows the average weekly attacks from April 1, 2004 – May 4, 2007. The number of attacks reported during this period was only slightly higher per week than those reported during the period of Jan 1, 2007- February 9, 2007. Attacks targeting Iraqi security forces were more frequent than those during the last reporting period, and attacks against civilians were slightly higher, while attacks against Coalition forces appeared to have been the same.

- **Figure 9.3** shows the average weekly attack rate in Anbar Province over the course of one year, from July 2006 to July 2007. The sharp decrease in attacks beginning in April is apparent. This was due largely to local tribal alliances and greater civilian cooperation and information sharing.

Figure 9.1 Total Attacks by Province
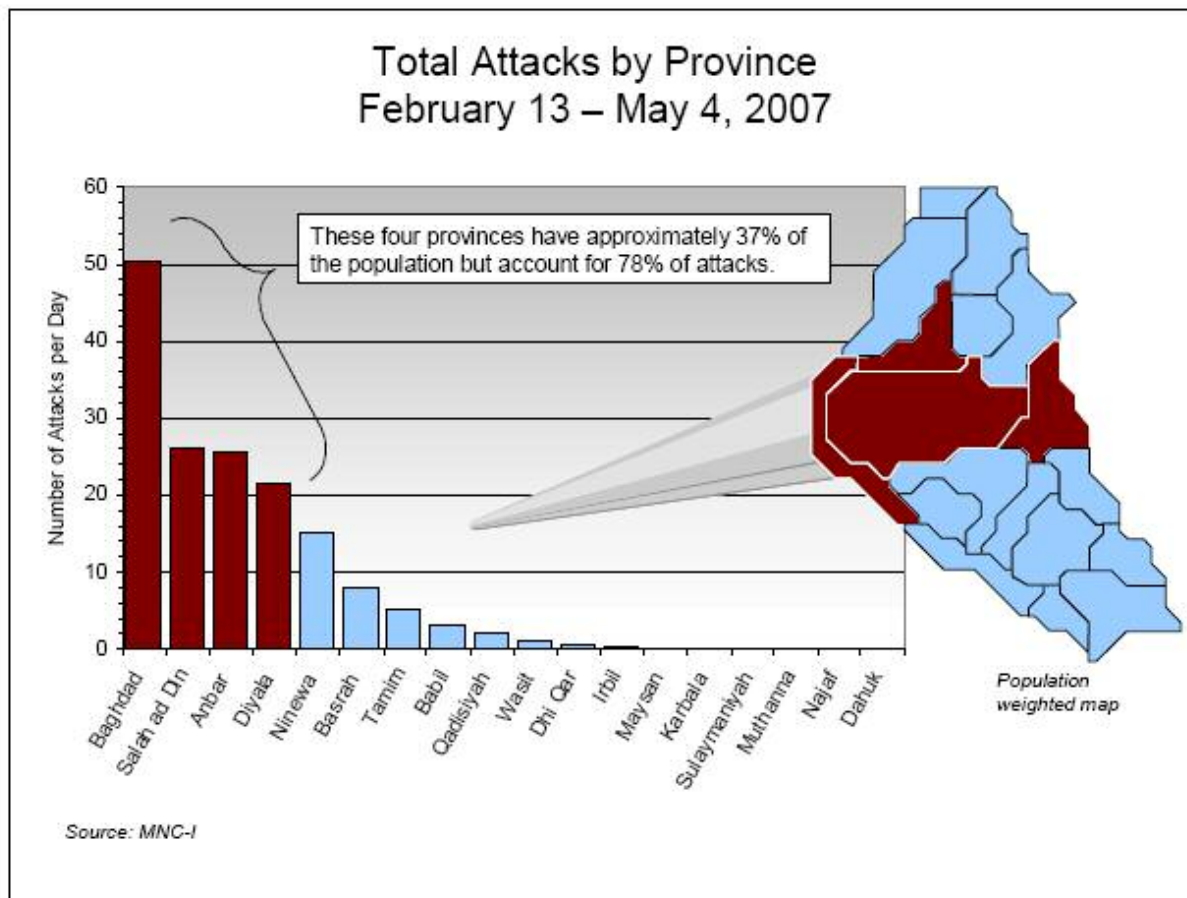
Source: "Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq," Department of Defense Quarterly Report to Congress, May 2007.

Figure 9.2 Trends in Average Weekly Attacks: April 2004-May 2007

	1 Jan 04-31 Mar 04	1 Apr 04-28 Jun 04	29 Jun 04-26 Nov 04	27 Nov 04-11 Feb 05	12 Feb 05-28 Aug 05	29 Aug 05-10 Feb 06	11 Feb 06-12 May 06	20 May 06-31 Dec 06	1 Jan 07-9 Feb 07	10 Feb - 4 May 07
☐ Attacks targeting civilians	-	25	60	70	30	40	60	100	100	100
■ Attacks targeting Iraqi forces	-	25	60	70	65	90	130	195	175	210
☐ Attacks targeting Coalition	197	360	440	380	380	410	420	605	750	740

Source: Material adapted from "Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq," Quarterly Report to Congress, Department of Defense, May 2007, pp. 23, available at: www.defenselink.mil

*note: Data points are estimates from a graph provide in the DoD report

Figure 9.3: Weekly Attacks in Anbar Province, July 2006 – July 2007
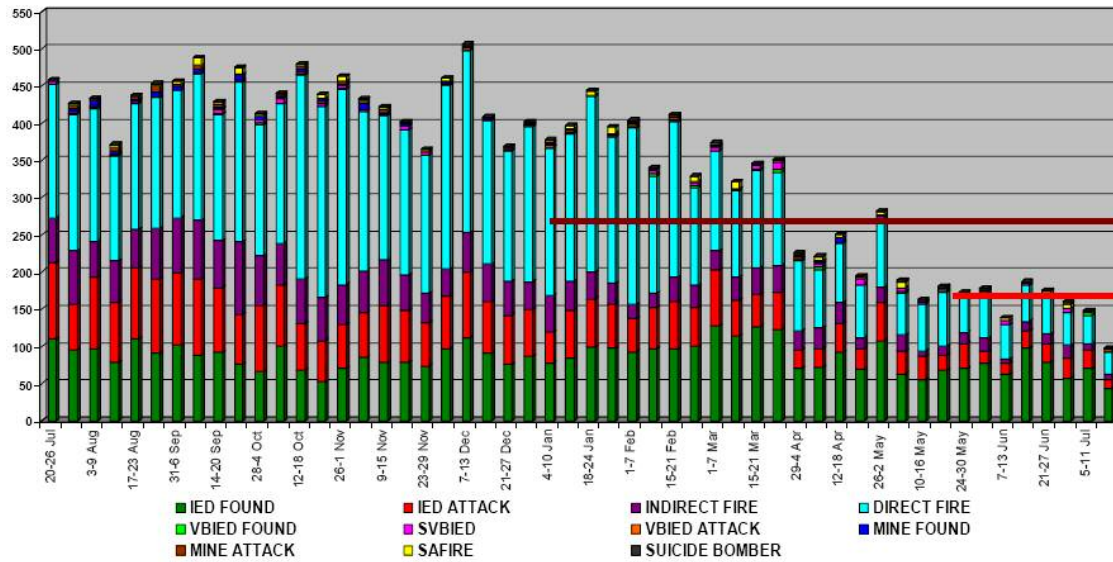
Source: Unclassified intelligence briefing, MNF-I West.

X. Effects of Ongoing Violence

There are critical problems in relying on unclassified US data to provide anything approaching a useful picture of the ongoing violence in Iraq. These data are so focused on Al Qa'ida and the most violent Shi'ite groups that they virtually ignore the patterns in sectarian and ethnic cleansing, who controls local and regional governments, fighting within major sectarian and ethnic groups, the impact of crime in any form, and the local and regional differences in Iraqi perceptions of violence.

If the US is to ever to understands what is happening in Iraq, and in any similar conflicts, it must develop far better and more comprehensive ways of measuring the nature of civil violence, progress towards conciliation, and level of local security, governance, rule of law, and economic conditions. So far, the US continues to treat Iraq as an insurgency rather than a series of civil conflict, and the battle as a narrow counterinsurgency effort rather than a b road exercise in armed nation building.

There are, however, some broader indications of the trends in violence, and many anecdotal reports, that do shed some light on the war that is actually being fought, as distinguish from the war the US chooses to report on.

Sectarian Displacement

Military officials near the end of May cited a decrease in sectarian displacement. Rear Adm. Mark I. Fox, chief U.S. spokesman for the Baghdad security plan, said the joint Iraqi-American operations had nearly halted the process of sectarian displacement.[155]

However, other organizations had a very different view of events. The United States Committee for Refugees and Immigrants found that the number of refugees worldwide increased to almost 14 million in 2006, a two million increase from last year. Almost a third of the increase were Iraqi refugees. According to Oxfam International, there were an estimated 2 million Iraqi refugees and an additional 2 million internally displaced persons (IDP) in Iraq in July 2007. The group estimated that an average of 40,000 to 50,000 Iraqis were leaving their homes every month. 70% of IDPs were women and children. Citing a UNHCR report, over 820,000 people were displaced following the Samarra shrine bombing in February 2006. [156]

The United States Committee for Refugees and Immigrants found that 790,000 refugees left Iraq in 2006 -- 449,000 going to Syria, 250,000 going to Jordan, 80,000 to Egypt, and 202 to the United States. [157]

U.N. refugee officials accused countries of neglecting the plight of the Iraqi refugees by denying them adequate aide. The two accepting the largest number of refugees, Jordan and Syria, "have still received next to nothing in bilateral help from the world community," stated Ron Redmond, a spokesman for the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees. According to estimates by the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, Syria and Jordan has so far accepted 2 million refugees from Iraq, Syria received about 30,000 refugees a month in the past year. Syria provided free schooling for Iraqi refugee children, however, not enough funding is available to accommodate the influx of families.

Donations by donor countries have amounted to $70 million with an additional $10 million in pledges, as of July 6, 2007. Sweden absorbed more than 18,000 Iraqi refugees from 2006 to July

2007, while the US accepted less than 800 Iraqis into its borders from 2003 to July 2007. Approximately 4 million Iraqis were displaced within the country from 2003 to July 2007.[158]

Minorities have been particular victims of sectarian violence, causing them to flee their homes at greater rates than the rest of the population. These minorities include Christians, who are about 8 to 12% of the Iraqi population, Assyrians, Yazidis, Turkmen and Kurds. Assyrians in Iraq before 2003 numbered about 1.5 million. By 2007 half of Iraq's Assyrian population had fled to other countries, while the remaining 750,000 were primarily IDPs. [159]

On July 25, the U.S. Commission on International and Religious Freedom convened a hearing at Capitol Hill, in which members of the religious minority in Baghdad and the rest of Iraq, explained the problems they faced as a result of sectarian violence. Canon Andrew White, vicar of St. George's Anglican Church, testified on behalf of his Christian community, saying, "In the past month, 36 members of my own congregation have been kidnapped. To date, only one has been returned." In Baghdad especially, Christians are targeted for hate crimes. They are either forcibly converted to Islam, required to pay a tax for non-Muslims, kidnapped or assassinated. [160]

The Humanitarian Crisis

Sectarian displacement, lack of security, and shortage of basic services had all contributed to a growing humanitarian crisis in Iraq. UNAMI estimated that up to 8 million people could be classified as "vulnerable" and in need of immediate assistance; 2 million people were actively seeking asylum or refugee status outside of Iraq; 1.9 million were internally displaced; and 4 million lacked sufficient food.

According to the July 30 report released by Oxfam International and the NGO Coordination Committee in Iraq (NCCI), the humanitarian conditions worsened significantly from 2003 to 2007, sharply declining over the period of 2006 to 2007. Despite the increased need for aid and assistance, the report also found that INGOs and countries committed less foreign aid in 2007 than the preceding 4 years. While development aid from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) increased by 922% between 2003 and 2005, funding for humanitarian assistance fell by 47% during the same period. This number has fallen significantly from 2006 to 2007.[161]

The Oxfam/NCCI report found that: [162]

- 43% of Iraqis live in a state of 'absolute poverty.'

- Over 50% of Iraqis are unemployed.

- Four million Iraqis are 'food-insecure and in dire need of different types of humanitarian assistance.'
    - o Of these four million people, only 60% have access to food and aid through government-run Public Distribution Systems, a 36% decrease from 2004.

- 28% of children in Iraq are malnourished, compared to 19% before the US-led invasion.

- 70% of Iraqis do not have access to adequate water supplies, up from 50% in 2003.

- 80% of Iraqis suffer from a lack of proper sanitation.

There are 180 hospitals throughout Iraq, however 90% lack necessary resources such as basic medical and surgical supplies. Health NGOs reported that general hospitals in Iraq had adopted to perform complex emergency surgery, despite the lack of tools, drugs, and trained doctors. [163]

92% of children in Iraq had learning disabilities due to the atmosphere of fear and tension throughout the country. An estimated 800,000 children were not in school as of June 2007, up from the estimated 600,000 children in 2004. [164]

The Detainee Problem

Detainees rose from around 18,000 in May to 23,000 in August. They are projected to rise to 35,000 by December 2007 and 50,000 by December 2008. The Iraqi government has so far made little progress in properly screening them, holding proper trials, and eliminating a strong anti-Sunni bias and Shi'ite political pressures that often lead to the release of Shi'ite extremists who should stay detained.

The National Police Detention Center in northwest Baghdad held almost 900 inmates, when it was originally built to house 300. The influx was caused by the increased security efforts since the beginning of 2007, and was similar to detainee influxes in facilities throughout the country. The rule of law is much more difficult to enforce because of the influx in prisoners. According to Iraqi law, a detainee's case ought to be presented before a judge within 72 hours of his detention. However, often prisoners stayed for two months without being brought to trial. Poor health conditions, lacking essential infrastructure and poor treatment was rampant in the Iraqi-run facility.[165]

US-run detention centers were also burdened by an influx in detainees over the past five months, however their systems coped better than the Iraqi-run facilities. Jasim Bahali of an Iraqi government committee inspection team, estimated that 60% of the detainees being held in Iraqi-run facilities were innocent. This number was estimated at 40% prior to the security crackdown. 86% of detainees held by Coalition forces are Sunni.[166] However Bahadeli was denied access to prisoners by the guards at the prisons, and that guards attempted to hide detainees who were innocent, female, or juvenile – all of whom belonged in separate facilities. [167]

The most serious problem with the detainee process from a war fighting perspective, however, is that it may still be creating more enemies than it finds and detains. Detainment centers inevitably become training and indoctrination centers for insurgents. They breed resistance and do almost nothing to convert those detained. They breed anger in the families and friends of those detained, particularly if those detained are mistreated, killed, or held without cause. Even limited abuses become propaganda weapons for insurgents, and fuel conspiracy theories.

At least to date, efforts to deal with the pattern of abuses in various detainment efforts has largely overshadowed public analysis of the overall effectiveness of the ways in which detainees are selected, how they are held, efforts to win their support, and treatment of their families. This has occurred even though it has been clear since the Boer War that carelessness and/or excessive patterns of detainment can be a way to lose a war rather than win one. It is impossible to judge this aspect of detainments in Iraq, since the US and Coalition have never provided any unclassified reporting to date on the overall effectiveness and impact of the various detainment efforts.

In a positive development, Maj. Gen. Douglas Stone of the Marines, who oversees Camp Cropper and Camp Bucca detention centers, enforced a greater degree of education and rehabilitation among detainees. Gen. Douglas also changed the review process for detainees to do more to reinforce the rule of law. The review board of the two camps were required to review the detainee in question in person, rather than in the past, in which cases were reviewed on paper

in Baghdad.[168] Gen. Douglas also created education schemes, requiring detainees to read the Koran for themselves, and initiated a labor program in which detainees can remit their pay to their families.

Coalition/US Casualties

The broad patterns in US and Coalition casualties have declined relative to those in Iraqi civilians and Iraqi security forces. They do, however, show the cumulative cost to the US and its allies in human terms and provide another metric of the seriousness of the fighting. They are also a key indication of the domestic political reaction to the war in the US and other countries that provide Coalition troops.

This first quarter of 2007 marked the first time that more than 80 US troops were killed in each of three consecutive months.[169] The increase in U.S. fatalities in May was due to three factors: 1) new tactics that demand a higher profile for U.S. troops in an attempt to secure Baghdad's neighborhoods and prevent civilian deaths; 2) a greater number of explosives attacks with greater degrees of lethality; and 3) a rise in direct attacks on U.S. troops, involving tactics with greater degrees of strategic complexity.
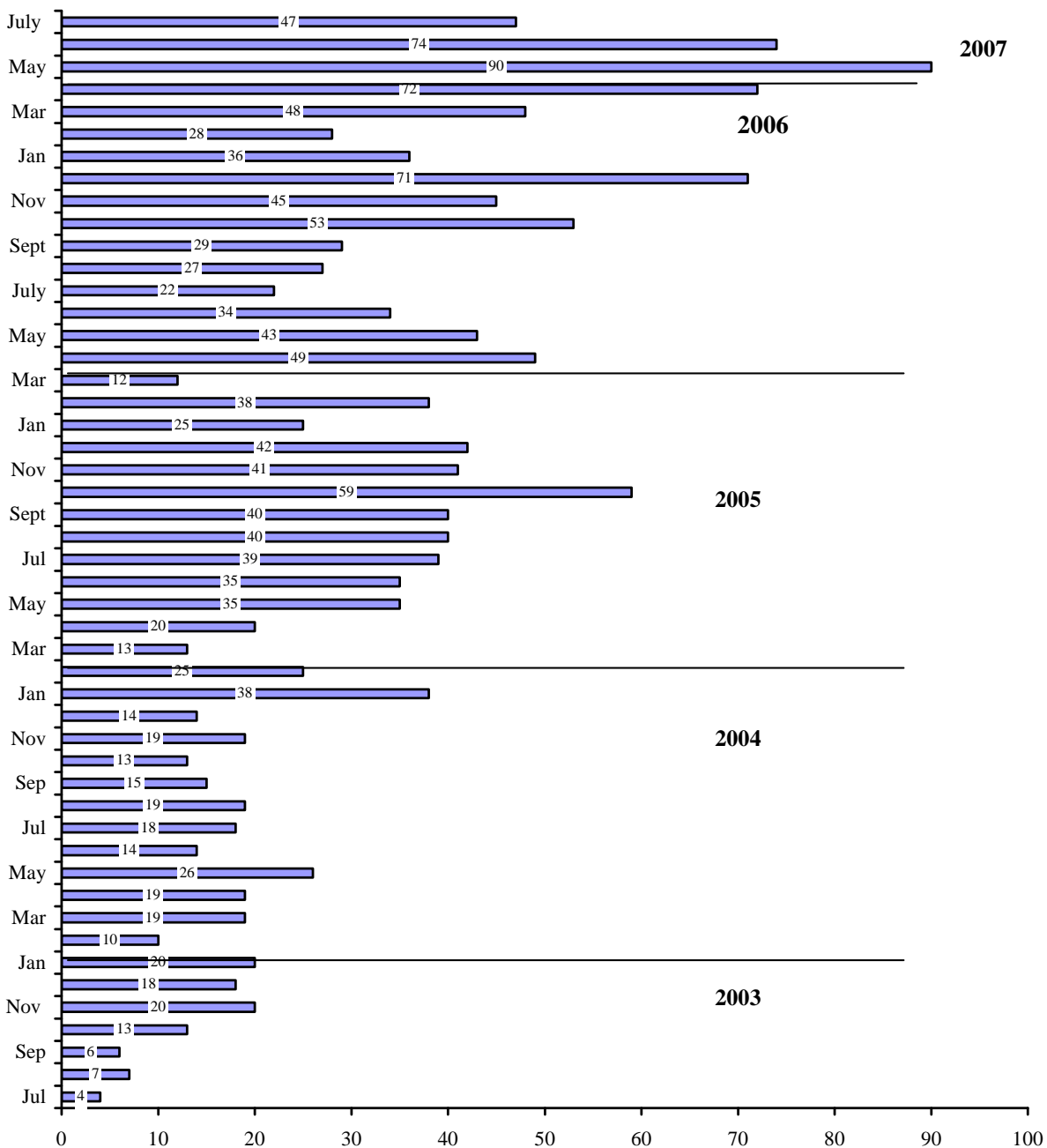
Troop casualties were exceptionally low in July, in comparison to the proceeding three months, which averaged 110 deaths per month. Military officials and analysts offered several possible explanations for the decrease in combat and non-combat deaths. Some believed the drop in casualties signified a more secure Iraq, due to the success of the surge strategy during the spring. Lt. Gen. Odierno said, "This is what we thought would happen once we took control of the safe havens" of insurgents and militias. Odierno cautioned, however, that the drop was "an initial positive sign, and that he would "need a bit more time to see if it's a true trend or not."[170]

One explanation was that insurgent and militia groups were intentionally standing down in the face of greater troop levels. Retired Army Special Forces Maj. Andy Messing, who is also the director of the National Defence Council Foundation, warned that the insurgent and militia groups may return when they have sensed that our forces have "worn down." [171] Andrew Krepinevich, president of the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, said he believed the militant groups were tactically retreating. "The Shia may be giving us a 'pass' on attacking U.S. forces, deciding to wait out the surge and letting domestic U.S. opinion do the job of getting American forces out of Iraq for them."[172]

The decline may be caused by an increase in cooperation from Iraqi civilians, who began informing US troops of militant activity at a more regular rate. [173] One other explanation is the increased cooperation between local tribes and US-Iraqi forces. [174] Non-combat troop casualties fell for the past three years, according to a USA Today study released on July 24.

Non-combat related deaths were lower in the year ending in June, compared to the rest of the war. While information from the Pentagon showed only 105 non-combat troop deaths out of 939 total for the year ending June 30 (accounting for 11% of deaths), the year ending in March 2004 numbered 194 non-combat deaths out of 387 total. This decrease was due in part to a restriction put in place that limits the travel of troops to mission-related requirements. American troops are generally confined to their bases unless they are on a specific mission. The leading causes of non-combat deaths are vehicle accidents, air crashes and gunshot wounds, but self-inflicted and accidental.[175]

- **Figure 10.4** shows the deaths caused by IEDs from July 2003 to July 2007. Deaths caused by IEDs peaked at 90 in May and fell steadily to 74 in June, and then 47 in April.

- **Figure 10.5** shows the Coalition deaths by month and nationality from March 2003 to July 2007. The months of April, May and June averaged over 100 casualties per month, comprising the deadliest three-month span in the war. US troop casualties fell in July to 79.

- **Figures 10.6** shows the Coalition casualties by province from March 2003 to July 2007. More casualties have occurred in Anbar than any other province, primarily a result of the first three years of the war. Baghdad remained the second most deadly province for Coalition forces.

- **Figure 10.7** shows US Casualties in Iraq: Total Killed vs. Wounded, March 2003 to mid-August 2007, as reported by the Department of Defense. The total number of wounded as of August 15, 2007 was, 27,279 while the total number killed was 3,678.

- **Figure 10.8** shows US Casualties in the Iraq War: Total Killed vs. Wounded, March 2003 -- July 2007. April and May showed a higher ratio of killed to wounded US troops.

Figure 10.4: US IED Deaths July 2003- July 2007

Month	Value
July	47
	74
May	90
	72
Mar	48
	28
Jan	36
	71
Nov	45
	53
Sept	29
	27
July	22
	34
May	43
	49
Mar	12
	38
Jan	25
	42
Nov	41
	59
Sept	40
	40
Jul	39
	35
May	35
	20
Mar	13
	25
Jan	38
	14
Nov	19
	13
Sep	15
	19
Jul	18
	14
May	26
	19
Mar	19
	10
Jan	20
	18
Nov	20
	13
Sep	6
	7
Jul	4

2007, 2006, 2005, 2004, 2003

Source: Adapted from material provided by Iraq Coalition Casualties, data as of August 15, 2007, available at: http://icasualties.org/oif/IED.aspx.

Figure 10.5: Coalition Deaths By Month and Nationality: March 2003 to July 2007
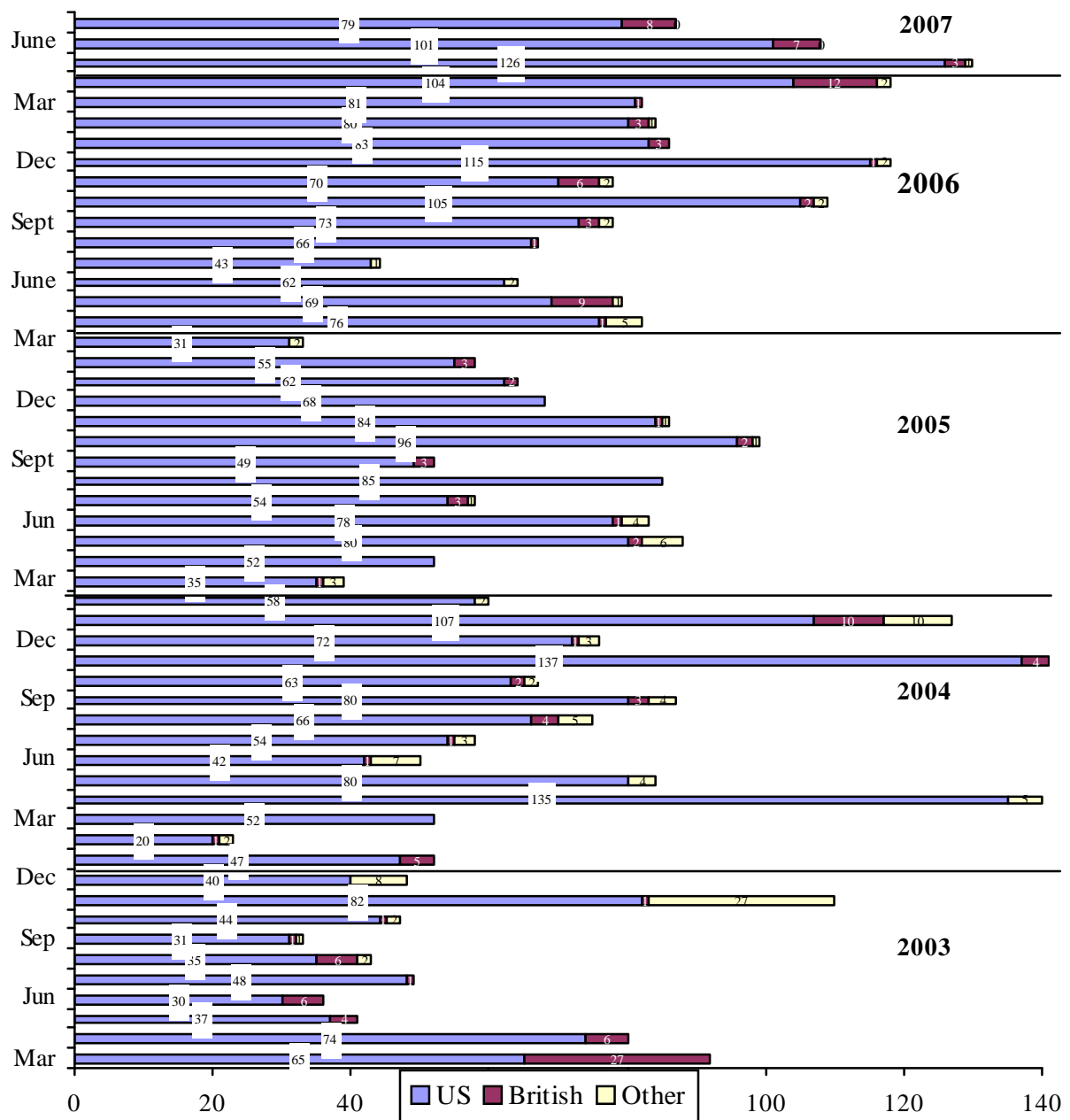
Source: Adapted from material provided by Iraq Coalition Casualty Count, data as of August 15, 2007, available at: http://icasualties.org/oif/

Figure 10.6: Coalition Casualties by Iraqi Governorate or Province
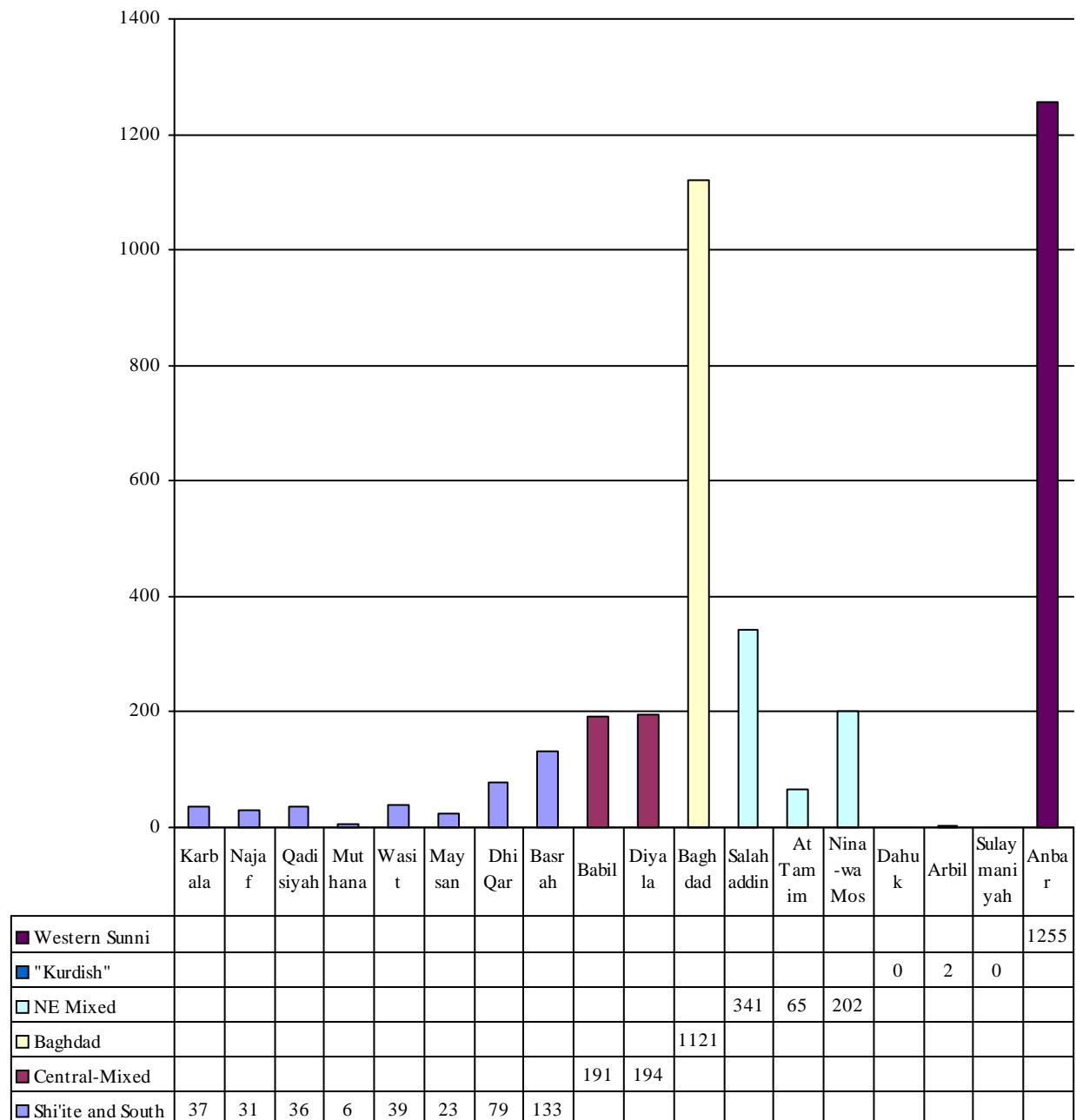
	Karbala	Najaf	Qadisiyah	Muthana	Wasit	Maysan	Dhi Qar	Basrah	Babil	Diyala	Baghdad	Salahaddin	At Tamim	Nina-wa Mos	Dahuk	Arbil	Sulaymaniyah	Anbar
■ Western Sunni																		1255
■ "Kurdish"															0	2	0	
□ NE Mixed												341	65	202				
□ Baghdad											1121							
■ Central-Mixed									191	194								
■ Shi'ite and South	37	31	36	6	39	23	79	133										

Source: Adapted from material provided by Iraq Coalition Casualty Count, data as of August 15, 2007, available at: http:/icasualites.org/oif/Province.aspx

Figure 10.7: US Casualties in the Iraq War: Total Killed vs. Wounded, March 2003 – mid-August 2007

	Total Deaths	Killed in Action	Non-Hostile	Total Wounded	Wounded in Action: RTD	Wounded in Action Non-RTD
DoD US Civilians	7	6	1	-	-	-
Post Saddam Fall 1 May 03-Present	3,532	2,915	617	26,737	14,896	11,841
Invasion 19 Mar-30 Apr 03	139	109	30	542	116	426
Totals	3,678	3,030	648	27,279	15,012	12,267

Source: Adapted from material provided by Department of Defense, August 15, 2007, available at: http://www.defenselink.mil/news/casualty.pdf

* Note: Totals do not include casualties in enforcing no fly zones before March 19, 2003. Wounded-RTD = equals lighter wounded where personnel were returned to duty within 72 hours. Wounded-Non-RTD= more serious wounds where solider could not be returned to duty within 72 hours.

Figure 10.8: US Casualties in the Iraq War: Killed vs. Wounded, March 2003 – July 2007

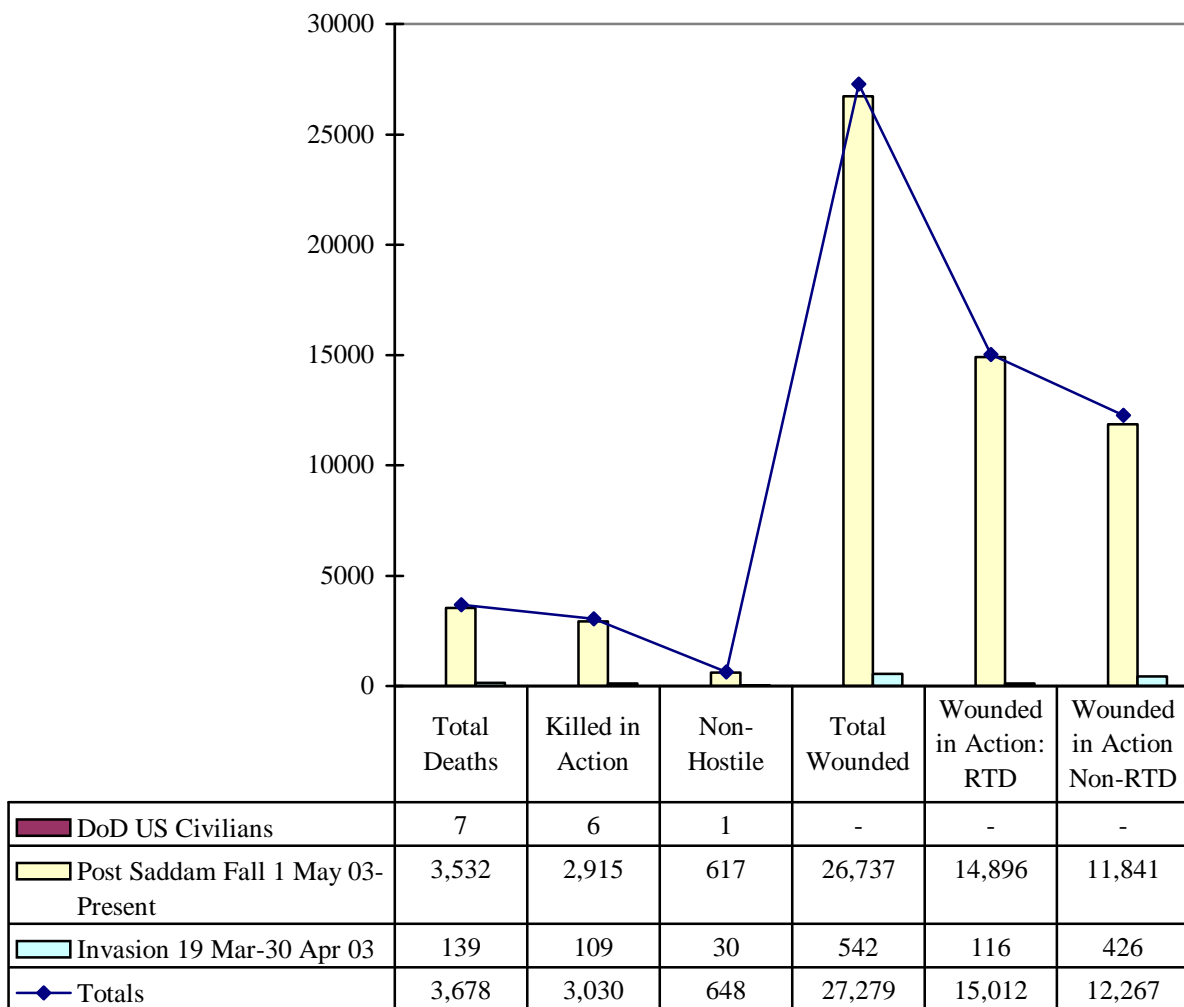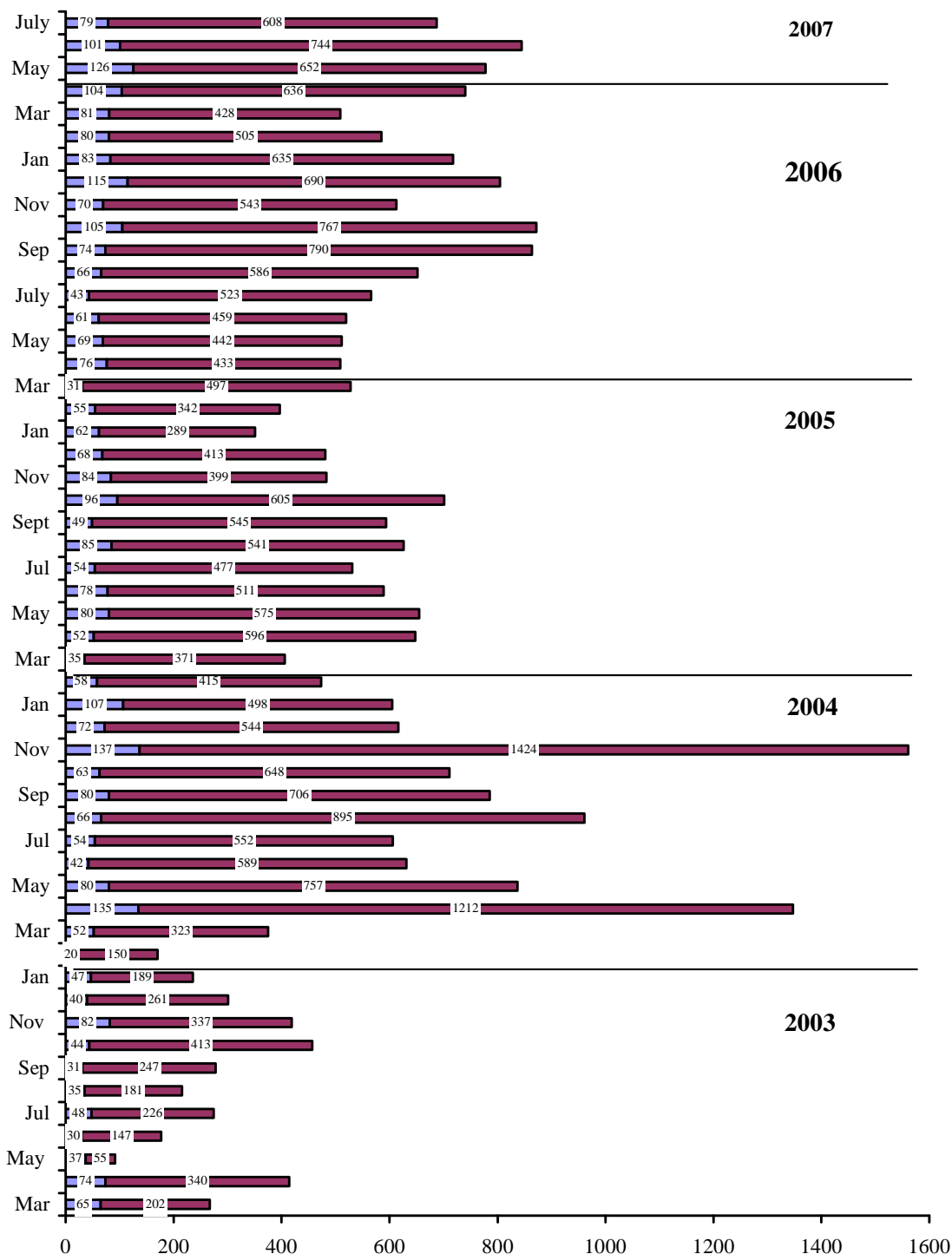Source: Adapted from material provided by Iraq Coalition Casualty Count, data as of August 15, 2007, available at: http://icasualties.org/oif/US_Chart.aspx and http://icasualties.org/oif/woundedindex.aspx

Iraqi Casualties

Civilian casualty counts in Iraq remained cannot be accurately gauged because of several complicating factors. As one *New York Times* article stated, "Some bombing victims' bodies are never recovered, families often collect their dead before they can be counted by officials, and the dead bodies found around Baghdad, while generally taken to the city morgue, are sometimes taken to hospitals where they may not be counted."

Civilian Casualties: Rising or Dropping?

Despite these problems, Iraqi and American official and unofficial sources noted a marked decrease in civilian casualties for the month of June, followed by an increase in July. Unofficial figures by McClatchy newspapers accounted for a decrease in civilian casualties in June. According to the news service, 189 Iraqis, including police and government security forces, were killed in Baghdad in June. That figure represents a decrease of nearly two thirds compared to that in February, which saw 520 Iraqi casualties. The average Iraqi monthly death toll in Baghdad, according to McClatchy, was 410 from December to May.[176]

Iraqi casualties incurred by VBIEDs fell below 500 in June, compared to 1,100 in February. VBIED attacks numbered 40 in June, down from 115 in March. Suicide bomb attacks fell from 48 to 30 in the same time period. Suicide vest attacks were 18 in June, slightly down from 20 in March.[177]

According to Los Angeles Times report, the number of Iraqi civilians who died violently in July rose to 1,753 up from 1,227 in June. The number of bodies found throughout the capital, according to the same report, rose from 540 in June to 619 in July.[178]

Civilians were sometimes killed by Coalition and Iraqi forces. According to a report by McClatchy news service, American troops killed or injured 429 civilians at checkpoints or near patrols and convoys from July 2006 to July 2007. These statistics did not include casualties incurred during operations. The military calls these escalation-of-force incidents. The number of incidents spiked since February, when more troops were deployed to the field. The report covered 3,200 incidents in which troops fired warning shots at civilians since July 2006. Statistics showed that these incidents resulted in death or injury of civilians more than once a day, averaging 36 per month. 26 Iraqi civilians were killed or injured in August 2006, during such incidents, while 41 such casualties occurred in September 2006. In February, 46 such casualties occurred, making it the highest monthly rate for such incidents. The lowest monthly rate for such incidents occurred in July 2006, number 21 casualties.[179]

US/MNF-Iraq

Lt. Col. Christopher Garver said there was a "slight decrease [in civilian casualties] in the month of June." Garver noted that there was an ongoing "potential downward trend," yet, added, "We can't tell yet the effect we're having. But reducing deaths in the civilian population is why we're doing what we're doing." [180]

"High profile attacks" decreased, according to Gen. Petraeus, who observed, "[High profile attacks] had gone down for three months in a row, April, May and June, fairly substantially. We will have to see if that is sustained this month or not, because there have been a number as you know at the beginning of this month." [181] Multi-National Force-Iraq claimed in August that the number of truck bombs and high-profile attacks had declined from 130 in March 2007 to 70 in

July 2007. High profile or mass-casualty attacks were defined in this case as having death tolls higher than 20.[182] The impact of the decrease in mass-casualty attacks may have been offset by the fact that they were increasingly occurring in towns that were previously less affected by violence.

Iraqi Government Sources

Iraqi officials estimated that the national civilian death rate dropped 36 percent in June, down from May. Baghdad civilian casualties in May were 1,900, while in June they were counted at 1,200. The website, icasualties.org claimed the number of civilian deaths in June were about 1,342, and in May, approximately 1,980. [183]

An Iraqi Interior Ministry Official reported that 730 civilians were reported killed by assassination, bombing or small-arms fire in June, while that number was 1,070 in May. However, the number of bodies found in June as a result of sectarian killings was lower than that in May, but higher than that of April. In April, 411 bodies were found murdered in Baghdad; 726 in May; and 540 in June. [184]

ISF casualties increased from January to July, with the onset of the Baghdad security initiative and Operation Phantom Thunder. From February 1st to August 7, 1,312 ISF members were killed, including 174 in May, 221 in June and 224 in July. As US casualties decreased in July, Iraqi civilian and military casualties increased. Insurgents more regularly targeted police and police recruits. [185]

NGO Estimates

By late June, Iraq Body Count estimated that between 70,139 and 76,632 Iraqis civilians had been killed since the US-led invasion in 2003. The U.N. mission in Iraq said that 34,452 civilians were killed and more than 36,000 were wounded in 2006.[186]

Iraq Coalition Casualties also reported dip in civilian deaths for the month of June. While in February and March 2007, civilian deaths averaged over 2,800, the count gradually decreased over the months of April and May, dropping to 1,148 in June. However, the ICC reported that civilian deaths showed a slight upturn in July, counting 1,458 civilian deaths, slightly below the number in April. ICC also reported an upturn in ISF deaths in July, counting 232 deaths, up from 197 in June. The peak for ISF deaths this year occurred in April, with 300 deaths.

> **Figure 10.9** shows Average Daily Casualties, as recorded by the Multi-National Coalition in Iraq. The period of February 10, 2007 through May 4, 2007 showed a higher number of civilian casualties than any other reporting period, while casualties incurred by the Iraqi security forces remained slightly higher than those reported during January 1, 2007 through February 9, 2007. Coalition casualties remained approximately the same throughout the reporting periods from May 2006 to May 2007. However, all groups incurred a much greater number of casualties over the year from May 2006 to May 2007, compared to the first 2 years of MNC-I reporting.

> **Figure 10.10** shows the Total Iraqi Security Force and Civilian Casualties by Month: January 2005-July 2007. May 2007 showed a higher rate of civilian casualties than any month since September 2006. Civilian casualties dipped in June to 1148 and rose again in July to 1458. April had the highest number of casualties incurred by the Iraqi security forces since June 2005. In May and June ISF deaths were 198 and 197 respectively. In July, ISF casualties rose to 232.

Figure 10.9 Trends in Daily Casualties: April 2004 – May 2007
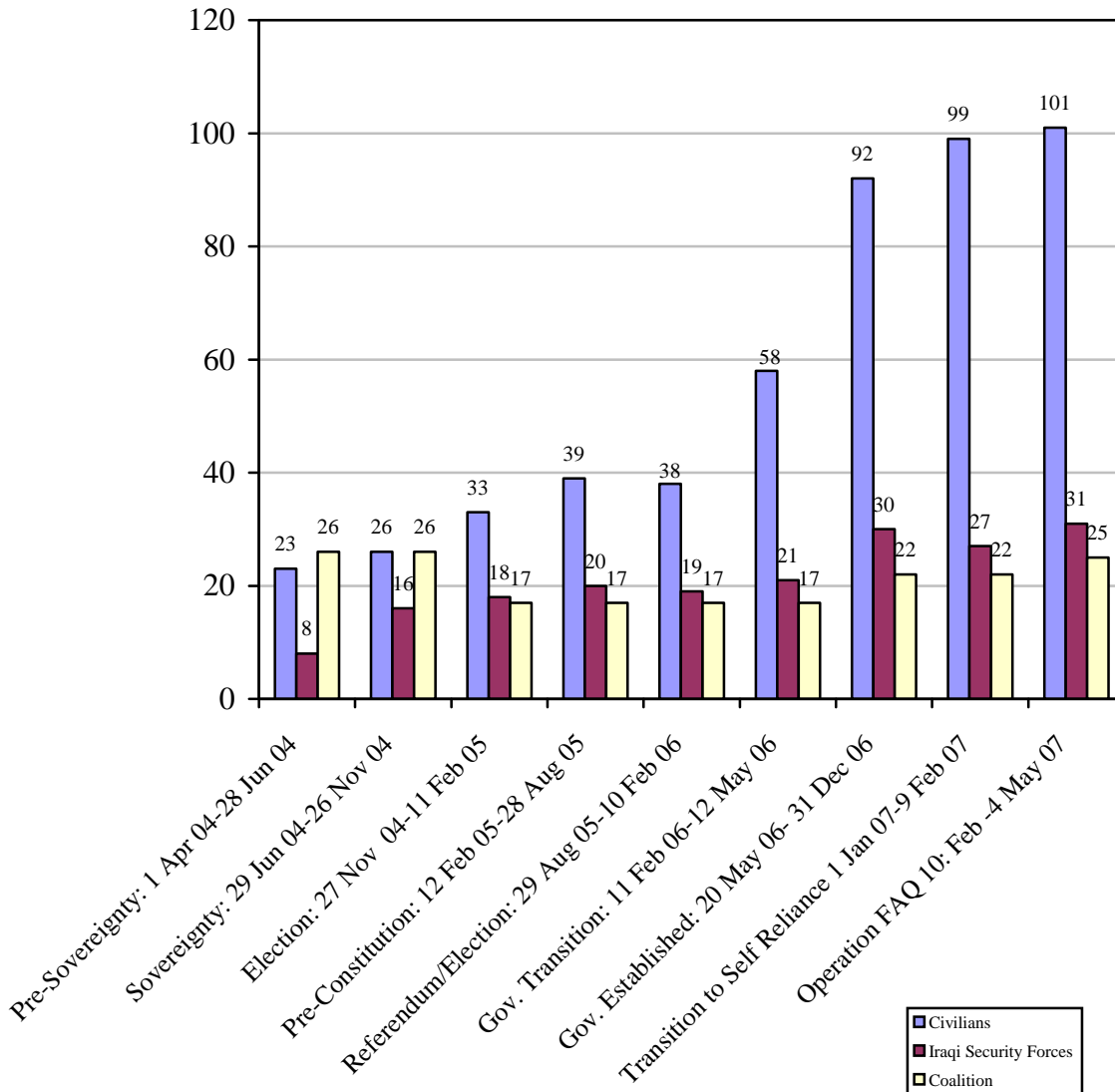
*Casualty data reflect updated data for each period and are derived from unverified initial reports submitted by coalition elements responding to an incident; the inconclusively of these numbers constrains them to be used only for comparative purposes.

Note: The DoD has named the time periods used in the graph as follows: Pre-sovereignty:1 Jan-31 Mar 04, Pre-sovereignty: 01 April 2004 – 28 June 2004, Sovereignty: 29 Jun-26 Nov 04, Election: 27 Nov 04-11 Feb 05, Pre-Constitution: 12 Feb-28 Aug 05, Referendum/Election: 29 Aug 05-10 Feb 06, Gov. Transition: 11 Feb-19 May 06, Government Established: 20 May-11 Aug 06, Government Established: 12 Aug 06 - 10 Nov 06, Pre-Operation FAQ: 1 Jan. - 9 Feb. 2007, Operation FAQ: 10 Feb-4 May 2007.

Source: "Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq," Department of Defense Quarterly Report to Congress, May 2007.
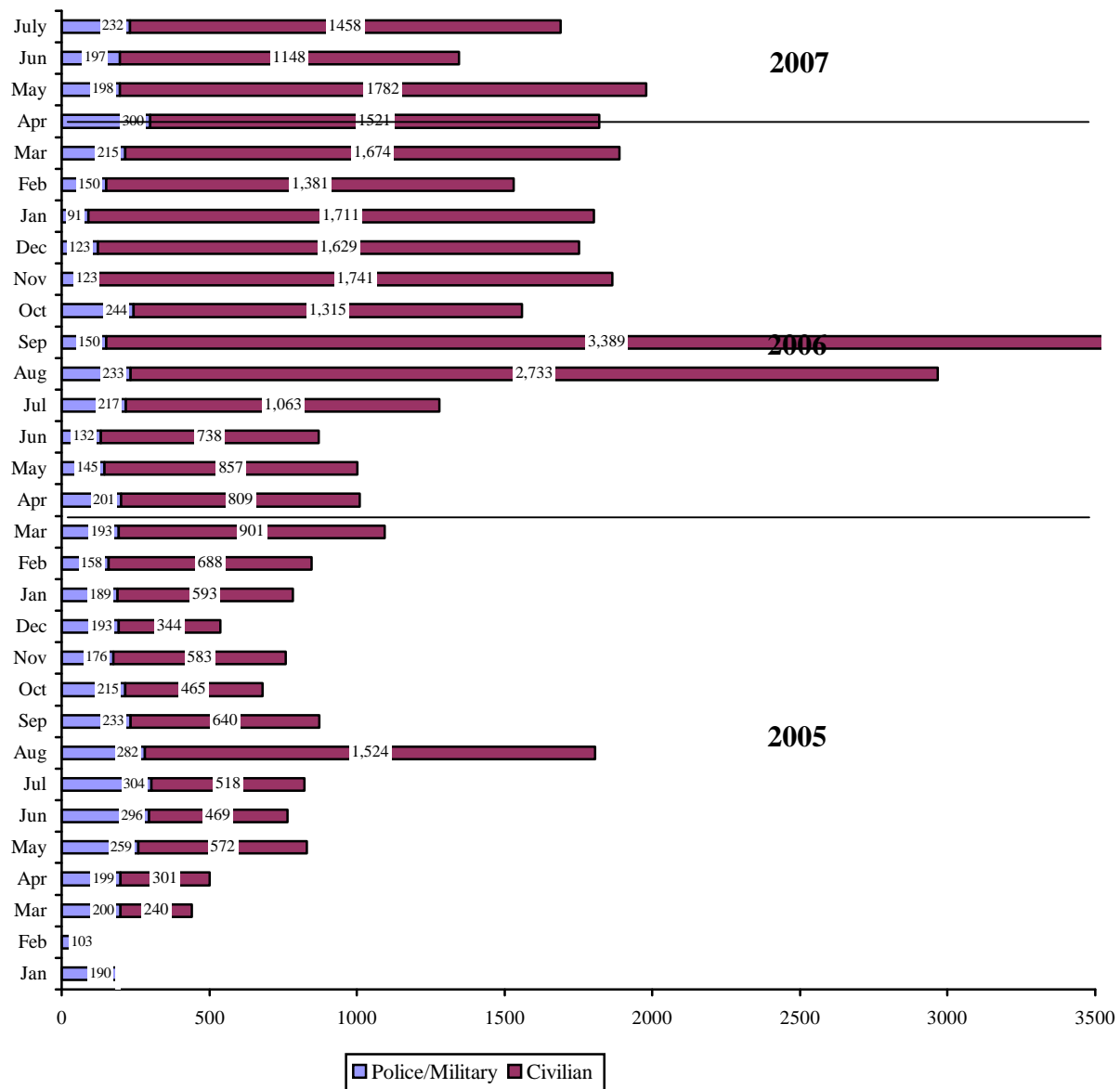
*Casualty data reflect updated data for each period and are derived from unverified initial reports submitted by coalition elements responding to an incident; the inconclusively of these numbers constrains them to be used only for comparative purposes.

Figure 10.10: Total Iraqi Security Force and Civilian Casualties by Month: January 2005-July 2007

Source: Adapted from material provided by Iraq Coalition Casualty Count, August 15, 2007, available at: http://icasualties.org/oif/IraqiDeaths.aspx

XI. The Impact of Reconstruction, Development, and Aid Efforts

Economic development remained a weak and uncertain element of the new strategy, and unemployment and poor economic conditions remained another major reason for Iraq's conflicts and tensions. Numerous small-scale reconstruction projects were completed or near completion in early spring 2007. These projects, however, had not previously been tied to a strategic goal and their effectiveness in winning the support of the Iraqi population amid an insecure environment was limited. As a result, the U.S. and Iraqi governments made aid a key tool in trying to deal with these problems.

In practice, however, "progress" largely affected secure areas, many major aid projects failed or were being completed in forms that could not be successfully transferred to and sustained by Iraqis. US and Iraqi expenditures were traded as measures of merit without regard to end result, initial effectiveness, sustained impact, corruption, waste, failed planning, and impact on local tensions and in conflict areas.

Provincial Reconstruction Teams and Embedded Provincial Reconstruction Teams

U.S. plans for the "surge" did call for the rapid doubling of the number of Provincial Reconstruction Teams. Efforts were begun to create new public sector jobs for Iraqis, although the results could not been seen for some time. The International Monetary Fund anticipated that the economy of Iraq would grow by over 10% and the non-oil sectors would grow by 7% in 2007.

The good news was that number of Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) in Iraq was reported to have doubled from 10 to 20, several of which were embedded into Brigade Combat teams to help "build" after areas were made secure. PRTs were sent to help build the capacity of Iraq's local, municipal, and provincial governments, and to provide essential goods and services temporarily to the Iraqi people.

The bad news was that there was no clear prioritization of the PRT or any other aspect of the aid effort to deal with the realities of a country at war. Much of the PRT and CERP activity focused on targets of opportunity with limited potential impact and coverage, and the PRT and EPRT effort remained to small to begin to deal with the scope of provincial and local problems in most areas.

Reconstruction Oversight

The Iraqi government has tens of billions of oil revenue dollars to spend on reconstruction, and has made major progress in increasing its rate of spending. However, this is scarcely a measure of merit. The government lacks an effective lack of systems for negotiating large construction contracts, overseeing work, or making payments to foreign contractors has led to the hiring of inexperienced and incapable foreign contractors.[187]

The Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction found that Bechtel National, one of the top American contractors in the country, only met less than half of its budgeted goals on projects that amounted to $1.8 billion in US tax dollars. The report by the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction found that this problem was due in large to a lack of oversight on behalf fo

USAID, who allocated two individuals to review budget requests for Bechtel National's entire contract, amounting to 24 major projects and 150 subcontractors. The Inspector General was due to release findings on other companies, but the information on Bechtel National was released first. [188]

Risks to Contractors

There are an estimated 126,000 Defense Department civilian contractors in Iraq, not including the thousands more under contract to other U.S. government agencies.[189] In 2007, 20 to 30 supply convoys traveled across Iraq daily. The private security companies that protect the convoys were allowed to defend themselves, but were not allowed to initiate offensive operations. From August 2004 to the beginning of June 2007, 138 private security workers were killed and 451 were wounded.[190]

The U.S. military used 20,000 to 30,000 contracted security personnel to supplement armed forces. Contractors protected convoys carrying reconstruction material, as well as vehicles, weapons and ammunition for the Iraqi army and police. Contract workers said that as the military has increased its operations, attacks against contractors have become more frequent. Company officials said insurgents did not frequently distinguish between the military and private forces. [191]

According to U.S. Labor Department statistics, the first three months of 2007 brought the highest number of contract worker deaths for any quarter since the beginning of the Iraq war. At least 146 contract workers were killed, topping previous quarterly record of 112 killed at the end of 2004, during the American offensive in Fallujah.[192] A top security industry official stated that he was told recently by American military and contracting officials that 50 to 60 percent of all truck convoys in Iraq were being attacked. He said the previous rate had only been about 10 percent. The official who spoke anonymously stated, "There is a definite spike in convoy attacks."[193]

The Department of Labor counted 917 contractor deaths since March 2003, including 146 during the first quarter of 2007. Another 12,000 have been wounded. [194] Attacks against supply convoys went up from 5.4 percent in 2005 to 9.1 percent in 2006, and then again to 14.7 percent through May 10. [195]

Private security companies endured an increasing number of attacks resulting in hundreds of casualties. These numbers were often underreported or concealed, according to U.S. and Iraqi officials. The U.S. military only released incomplete statistics on contractor casualties or the number of attacks on guarded convoys.

According to data compiled by the Army Corps of Engineers' Logistics Movement Control Center, attacks on supply convoys protected by private security companies rose in the past year. From June 2006 to the end of May 2007, 869 attacks on supply convoys protected by private security companies were reported. During the preceeding year, only 281 of such attacks occurred. 206 casualties occurred as a result of such attacks from 2006-2007, while only 157 casualties occurred during the previous year. Civilian convoys were attacked at a rate of 9.3% from August 2004 to June 2007. The rate of attack reached 19.9% at its peak in January 2007, and dropped to 10.5% in May 2007. [196]

The increase in attacks reflected the fact that more convoys were being used to carry equipment for Iraqis, and a greater effort was being made by the US military to track movements of supply convoys.[197]

According to Victoria Wayne, the former deputy director for logistics, the military censored statistics from reports issued by the Reconstruction Logistics Directorate of the Corps of Engineers. One in seven convoys protected by private forces came under attack in 2007. On security company reported almost 300 "hostile actions" between January and April of this year.[198]   The logistics directorate reported the deaths of 132 privately contracted security personnel and truck drivers, and 416 wounded since fall 2004. Four security contractors and one truck driver remained missing as of June 17, and 208 vehicles were destroyed.[199]

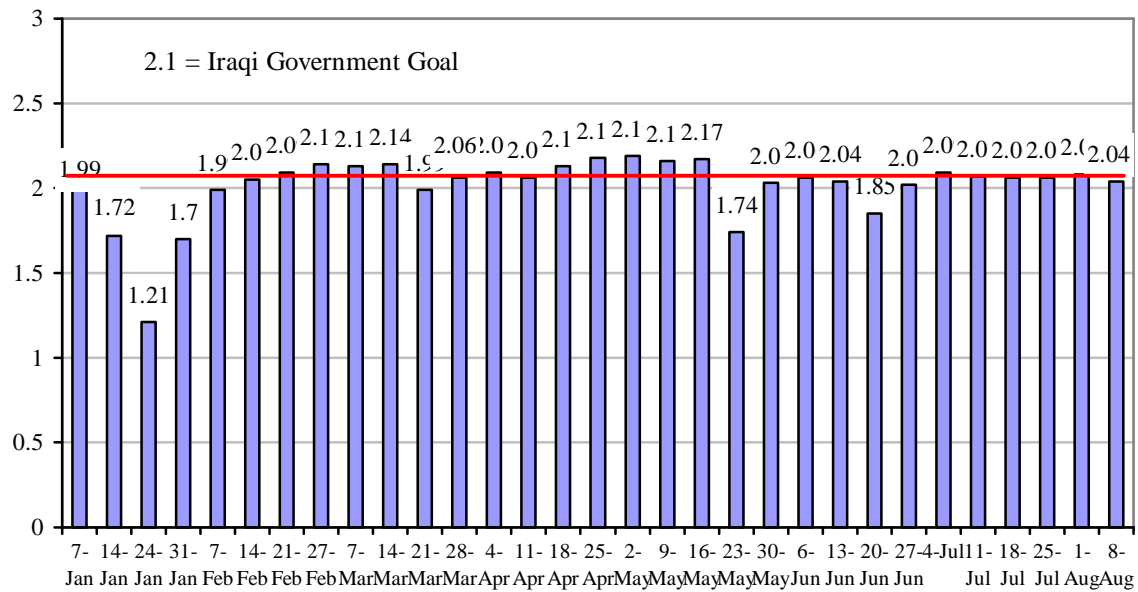## *Oil, Insurgency, and Civil Conflict*

Oil was both a target of violence and a cause of it. All of Iraq's main factions recognized that oil revenues were the main source of revenue they could count on in the future, and the importance of controlling Iraqi's oil reserves and development. The insurgents saw petroleum facilities as a key target and way of denying the Iraqi government and Coalition resources and public support.

The lack of development in the oil sector impaired the production capability of Iraq. Because the oil sector lacked the facilities to store crude oil, the crude oil that cannot be processed or exported is reinjected into the ground. The GAO reported that the $2.8 billion that the US spent on developing the Iraqi oil sector through the end of 2005 was primarily allotted to purchasing petroleum products to meet immediate needs, because Iraq did was not capable of refining its crude oil for domestic use. [200]

A July 18 report released by the US Government Accountability Office found that the State Department's data on Iraqi oil production shows a 100,000-300,000 barrel per day discrepancy with the US Department of Energy data. The discrepancy, which is due to inadequate metering, corruption, theft and sabotage, accounted for a loss of $1.8 to $5.5 billion per year in crude oil revenue.[201]

Attacks on oil production facilities and smuggling also impaired development progress and decreased output. The number of daily attacks in June 2007 was as frequent as the average rate of attacks in October 2006 – about 180, the highest to date. The daily attack rate on petroleum facilities in June 2007 was 50% higher than the same period in 2006. [202] According to the State Department, approximately 10 to 30% of refined petroleum products are smuggled out of Iraq or routed to the black market. Insurgent groups are partially funded by these activities, and the Iraqi government may have profited from them as well. [203]

Ministry allocation was also slow, impeding the progress of oil sector development. Political impasses surrounding the hydrocarbon legislation were largely responsible for the delay in improving production capabilities. US officials have noted that "Iraq lacks the clearly defined and consistently applied budget and procurement rules needed to effectively implement capital projects." As an example, the Ministry of Oil's total budget in 2006 ($3.6 billion) was budgeted almost entirely to developing and implementing capital projects in the oil sector, however, only 3% of that amount was spent for the fiscal year. Failure to execute budgets for oil sector development also works to discourage foreign investment. [204]

Figure 11.1: Oil Production, Million of Barrels per day: January 2007- July 2007

Source: "Iraq Weekly Status Report", US Department of State, available at: http://www.state.gov/p/nea/rls/rpt/iraqstatus/
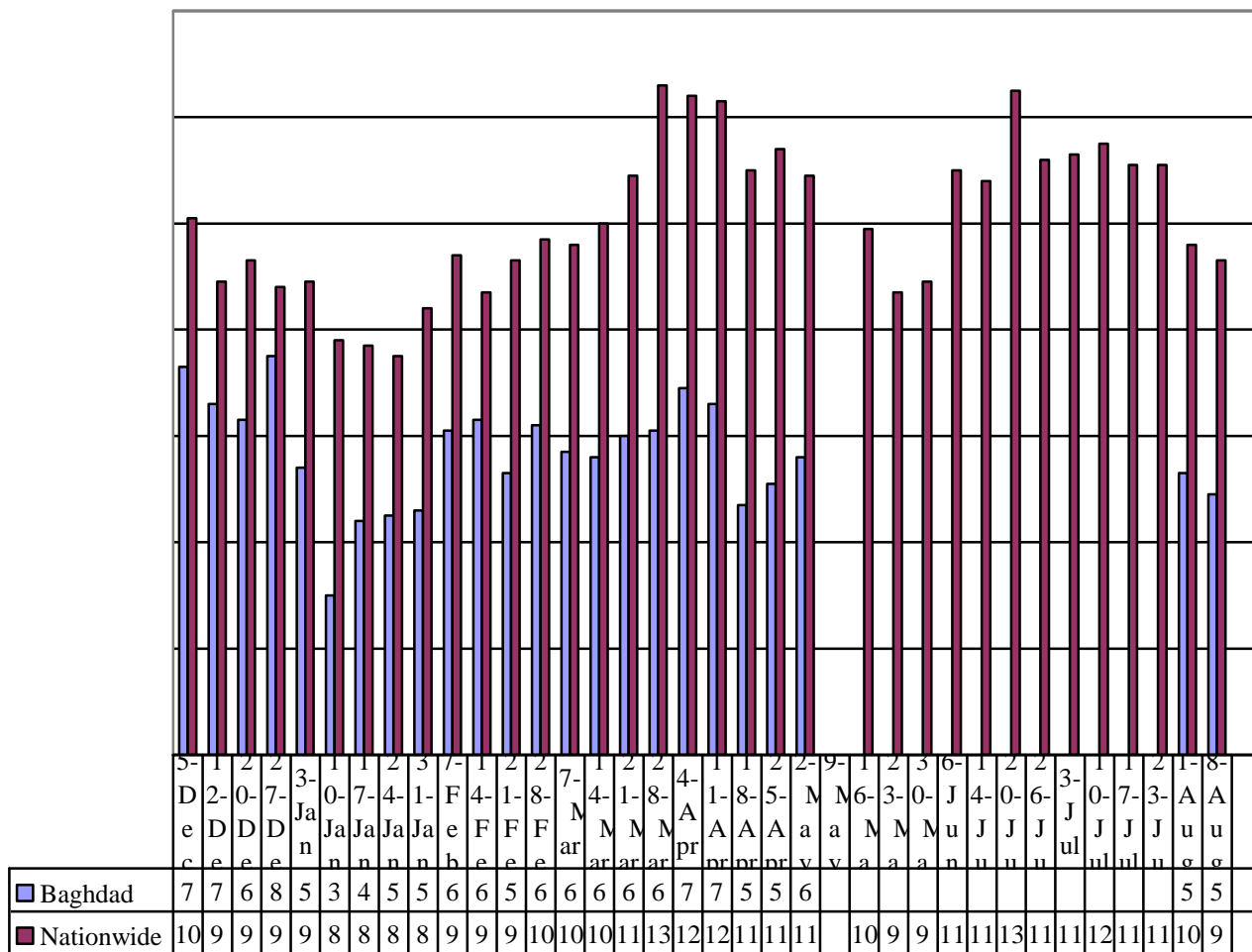
The Problem of Electricity

Throughout the summer of 2007, daily production levels of electricity remained at prewar levels of about 4,000 megawatts a day. The demand remains at about 8,500 and 9,000 a day. [205]

The Iraqi government carried out an experimental program throughout May, June and July to more evenly disperse electricity in parts of Baghdad, and sections of Hillah, Najaf, Karbala and Diwaniya. The program limits the amount of electricity that reaches each home, depending on the estimated needs of the home. Reactions to the plan were positive. The amount of power is usually around 10 amperes, which is enough to run a refrigerator, a television and an air cooling devise. However, the power is generally insufficient to run an air conditioner, water heater or major appliances simultaneously with standard household items such as lamps and refrigerators. Households with such needs still demand the use of a generator.[206]

In early August there were severe shortages of electricity, affecting the pumping and filtration of water. In Karbala in particular, the province went three days without power, drying up the main water supply in the provincial capital. Electricity Ministry spokesman Aziz al-Shimari said that nationwide power generation was only meeting 50% of the demand for power, and that from August 3rd to August 5th there were at least four nationwide blackouts. [207]

To protest these short-comings, several provinces disconnected their power plants from the national system. These provinces included Basra, Diwaniyah, Nassiriyah, Babil, and the northern Kurdistan region. This process decreased the amount of power available through the national generator.

Figure 11.4: Iraq Average Hours Electricity Received, January 10 – August 8, 2007

	5-Dec	12-Dec	20-Dec	27-Dec	3-Jan	10-Jan	17-Jan	24-Jan	31-Jan	7-Feb	14-Feb	21-Feb	28-Feb	7-Mar	14-Mar	21-Mar	28-Mar	4-Apr	11-Apr	18-Apr	25-Apr	2-May	9-May	16-May	23-May	30-May	6-Jun	14-Jun	20-Jun	26-Jun	3-Jul	10-Jul	17-Jul	23-Jul	1-Aug	8-Aug
Baghdad	7	7	6	8	5	3	4	5	5	6	6	6	5	6	6	6	6	6	7	7	5	5	6												5	5
Nationwide	10	9	9	9	9	8	8	8	8	9	9	9	10	10	10	11	13	12	12	11	11	11		10	9	9	11	11	13	11	11	12	11	11	10	9

Source: "Iraq Weekly Status Report," US Department of State, available at:
http://www.state.gov/p/nea/rls/rpt/iraqstatus/

*Beginning in April, the average power production, demand and equivalent hours of power were reported. From May 9 to July 23, the State Department did not report on average hours for Baghdad.

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