4.F 76/2:S.PRT.108-31

108th Congress
1st Session

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S. PRT.
108–31

IRAQ: MEETING THE CHALLENGE, SHARING THE BURDEN, STAYING THE COURSE

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ESTABLISH SECURITY AND LAW AND ORDER

Establishing security and law and order are the most pressing priorities for the transition in Iraq.

American and coalition forces have so far done a heroic job, and at great risk, to root out the remnants of Saddam's regime, guerrillas, and terrorists who have no place in the new Iraq. But the United States cannot continue to shoulder most of this burden alone. America must reach out for military support from our allies, preferably our NATO allies, to grant greater legitimacy to our security role in Iraq.

The Baghdad Police Academy.

Re-establishing a police force in Iraq is a separate and equally urgent priority. Coalition forces are not trained to police Iraq, although they have done precisely that during the transition. Policing must be done by Iraqis, but rebuilding Iraq's police force is a big job, and here, too, we cannot do it alone. The absence of law and order for Iraqis must be immediately addressed. Baghdad has experienced an unprecedented crime wave since Iraq's liberation—reports of carjackings, armed robberies, murders, and rape are rampant. The problem has been exacerbated by the widespread availability of arms and the mass release of prisoners—including many hardened criminals—by Saddam Hussein in the run up to the war.

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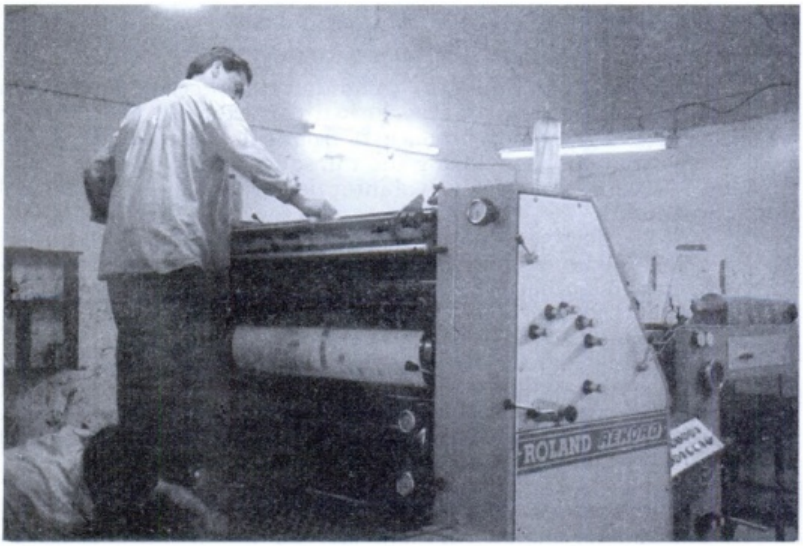
programming and grassroots political activity, including the town and neighborhood council meetings under USAID's Iraq Local Government Project, can be transmitted throughout Iraq to develop and encourage civic awareness, responsibility, and activism.

(3) Support indigenous, independent Iraqi media—through regulatory reform, journalism training, and perhaps making available subsidized equipment and financing facilities. The growth of a strong, independent media will improve the prospects for the eventual development of democracy in Iraq.

(4) Consider the establishment of public information centers in Baghdad and throughout the country where Iraqis can more readily access CPA officials, gather information on CPA efforts, and identify opportunities for participating in the reconstruction of their country.



The Az-Zaman newspaper printing press in Baghdad.

THE POLITICAL TRANSITION

A Vacuum in Authority

The CPA began its work facing a daunting and unexpected reality: there was no functioning national government in Iraq. The destruction and looting of most government ministries and office buildings in Baghdad, the dissolution of the Iraqi armed forces and most of the Iraqi police force, the breakdown in security throughout the capital after the liberation, as well as the effect of over three decades of dictatorship and over a decade of sanctions on Iraqi society, provided a sobering starting point for the coalition's efforts to facilitate a political transition.

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An Iraqi woman stands for election as representative of Ath-Thawra district to the Baghdad City Council.

Drafting a New Constitution

The development of an Iraqi Constitution will contribute to the cohesion and legitimacy of a new Iraqi government. It will establish the governing principles of Iraq, formalize key political compromises among major constituencies, and create institutional arrangements that hopefully will govern Iraq for years to come. Critical issues will be settled by the Constitution—Will the country be a federation? If so, with how many constituent parts? What powers will be held by the central government? What, if any, checks and balances will be put in place between the executive, legislative, and judicial functions of government? Will religion play any formal role in public life? Will the fundamental rights of all Iraqis be protected?

The Constitutional process should be seen as legitimate by Iraqis. Some may seek to question, hinder or obstruct this process. The mode of selection for the Constitutional Council has already become a point of contention, with Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani—a powerful voice in the Shi'a community—issuing a *Fatwa* calling for Council members to be elected. During the Constitutional process the Iraqi Governing Council and the CPA must communicate clearly to the Iraqi people the link between the development of a Constitution and the process of building political institutions and democracy for all Iraqis. [10]

[10] See L. Paul Bremer III, "The Road Ahead in Iraq—and How to Navigate it," *The New York Times,* July 13, 2003.

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are not the only ones available. Iraqis must feel that their form of democracy is authentic and consistent with their traditions.

THE IRAQI SHI'A

The Shi'a of Iraq comprise approximately 60% of the population, but have long been denied a commensurate role in the political leadership of their country. It would be a mistake, however, to see the Shi'a as a monolithic political block. Opinions among Iraq's Shi'a population span the breadth of the political spectrum.

The Imam Ali Mosque in Najaf.

Shi'ite religious communities are among the best organized in Iraq. Iraq is the home to two of the holiest cities in Shi'ism—Najaf and Karbala—and there is a great deal of political and social activism associated with Iraqi Shi'a religious institutions.

Within the Shi'a community, there is an intense competition underway involving groups such as the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI) which was based in Tehran for many years, the Da'wa Party—which appears to have a strong grassroots presence, and the followers of Muqtada Sadr—the son of a well-known Shi'a figure assassinated by the regime of Saddam Hussein. The first two have representation on the Governing Council, while the latter has announced plans to create a rival council and an "Islamic Army." Attempting to stay above the fray, but still highly influential, are senior religious figures such as Grand Ayatollahs Ali Sistani and Syed al-Hakim.

The clerics we met in Najaf emphasized to us that their allegiance is to Iraq, not Iran. At the same time, Najafi clerics appear to support involving religion in public life in some way. The parameters of Shi'a politics in Iraq are still evolving and it is not clear

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Prison records burned by former officials of Saddam Hussein's regime from Iraq's Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs.

Generating Employment

Unemployment in Iraq is estimated to be over 60 percent. Business leaders and independent economists assert that the employment situation has deteriorated considerably in the aftermath of the war. The unwieldy public sector, including state-owned enterprises, provided some social stability through employment, but contributed little to the overall productivity of the economy.

The decision by the CPA to abolish the Iraqi army added to an already acute unemployment situation. Many Iraqis we interviewed expressed bitterness and confusion over what they perceived as the singling out of the Iraqi Army, noting that for the most part the Army did not fight advancing American forces. An additional disenfranchised, unemployed 300,000 former soldiers may not only contribute to the country's political, economic, and social difficulties, but also pose a security risk for U.S. troops. The CPA should be commended for deciding to pay stipends to nearly all former members of the Iraqi military, but this has not addressed the issue of their employment.

Many Iraqis, including a field commander with the United States military, spoke to us of the critical need for employment generation through a massive program of public works akin to the efforts of the U.S. government during the Great Depression.

The CPA should invest in labor intensive construction projects that would have the dual benefit of creating jobs and boosting the private sector. As a related matter, commanders in the field should be provided with additional resources to use at their discretion for short-term projects that increase employment in specific locations.

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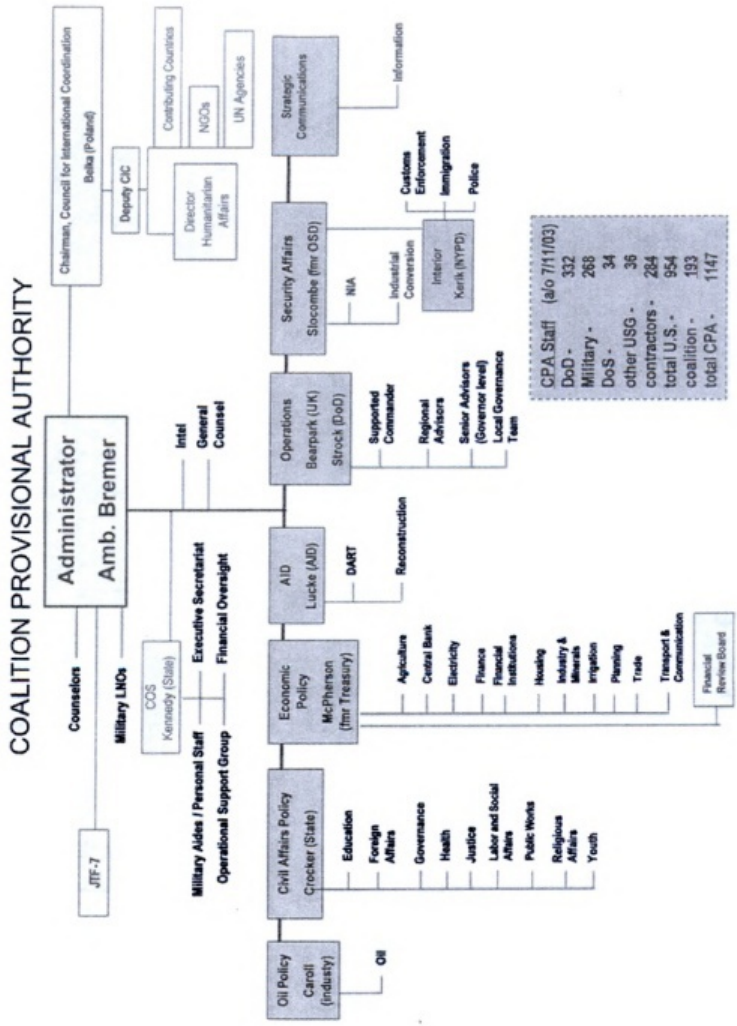

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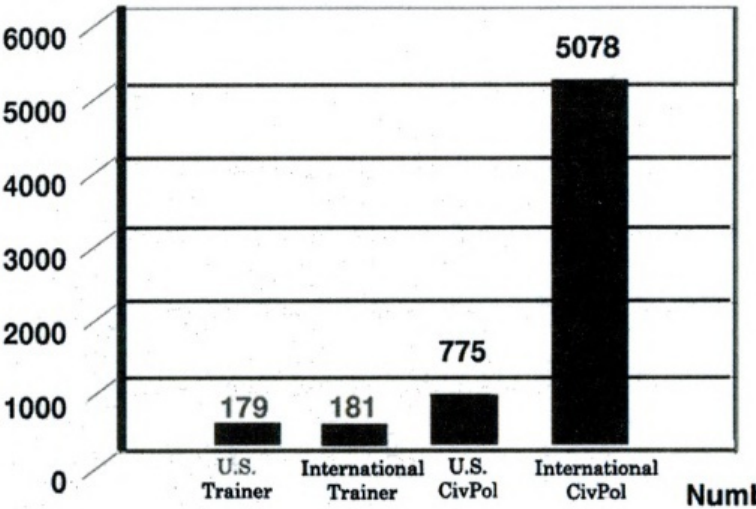
IPTF Composition (Proposed)



One Year Budget: 725,023,847

IPTF – International Police Task Force
Source: "Police Development Plan, Iraq Police Assessment and Recommendations," Iraq Police Assessment Team, Coalition Provisional Authority (Power Point Presentation)

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