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# **Iraq's Troubled Future: The Uncertain Way Ahead**

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The prospects in Iraq are not good, and the level of violence and civil conflict is significantly higher than most Iraqi and US government sources like to publicly admit. Two sets of recent public opinion polls are used in this analysis, along with data taken from the most recent Department of Defense Quarterly Report, to show the level of conflict, and highlight Iraqi concerns and fears.

At the same time, the same Iraqi public opinion polls show that the majority of Iraqis, other than Kurds, still want some form of national unity, not federalism or separation. They also show that many Iraqis have not given up on the future. The real question now is whether the US has the patience to at least play out its current strategy, and accept the fact that any hope of success must be measured in years of US action, not months.

**Figure One**  
**Continuing Iraqi Hope and Desire For Unity**  
(in percent)

<b>Desired Political System*</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Sunni</b>	<b>Shi'ite</b>	<b>Arab</b>	<b>Kurd</b>
Single country, Unified government	64	57	69	73	15
New federal system With independent Regional governments Such as Kurdish North Sunni West, Shiite South	21	28	16	11	72
Neither	6	8	4	7	6
Don't know/refused/ No answer	9	6	10	9	8
<b>Will Life Get Better? Worse?***</b>	<b>11/22/05</b>	<b>3/5/07</b>	<b>Sunni</b>	<b>Shi'ite</b>	<b>Kurd</b>
Much Better	41	14	1	23	14
Somewhat Better	28	26	4	38	39
Same	11	26	27	22	33
Somewhat Worse	6	21	37	13	10
Much Worse	5	13	30	3	3
No Opinion	9	-	-	1	9

\* ORB, Public attitudes in Iraq – Four Years On, March 2007, p. 14.

\*\* ABC, USA Today. BBC, ARD Poll, "Iraq, Where Things Stand, March 19, 2007, p. 17.

### **The Reasons to Buck the Odds**

The United State faces extremely uncertain prospects in Iraq. It is more than possible that a failed President and a failed administration will preside over a failed war for the second time since Vietnam. Security is only one part of the story and even security in Baghdad is uncertain.

If the US is to succeed even in the greater Baghdad area, the Congress and American people must accept the fact that the US build-up will not be complete until June, that it will take months to get the Iraqi Army fully in place and ready for the mission, that the Iraqi police at best will be largely passive, that the US aid team and flow of aid will

probable only be fully ready in August or September, and that the Iraqi government is not ready to provide services and a meaningful presence in the city and “ring areas.”

It is not going to be possible to see just how well the resulting mix of capabilities will counter the insurgency until the late spring of 2008 at the earliest. The various insurgents and hostile groups may be weakened or suppressed early on, but will do their best to react. The US strategy is also tacitly dependent on limited resistance at most from the Shi'ite militias, and not triggering any popular resistance from either Shi'ite or Sunni in reaction to some incident or perceived bias. A tightrope walk at best.

As General Petraeus and other US commanders have repeatedly said, securing Baghdad and its surroundings is also meaningful unless the Iraqi government and Iraq's factions can work out arrangements for political conciliation or some form of peaceful coexistence. Local security at best buys time and opportunity to find a viable set of political compromises, and Iraq's complex mix of conflicts are national, not local.

Whether one calls the approach “ink spots” or “oil stains,” we already have four examples of attempting military action without a viable political solution. We have seen the light at the end of the tunnel in Dien Bein Phu, Saigon, Beirut, and Mogadishu; and it turned out to be on oncoming train. A security first strategy is unworkable, particularly one that is local rather than national. The ideological, political, and economic battles do not have to all be won at the same time, but they must be fought simultaneously, and winning the political battle to the point where some form of stable conciliation and coexistence are possible is the strategic center of gravity. The battle for Baghdad is only a tactic.

Like it or not, the US not only has an enduring strategic interest in Iraq and the Gulf, it has a moral and ethical obligation to some 27 million Iraqis. The US invaded Iraq for all the wrong reasons, and then proceeded to “transform” it in ways that have done immense damage to the Iraqi people. As has been all too clear from the start, anger at Saddam Hussein's regime does not translate into support for a US-led invasion and the US has won little Arab Shi'ite or Arab Sunni admiration for its actions since the war.

This is all too clear in how virtually everyone outside the US now judges the war. Even if the US succeeds in its current “surge” in Iraq -- and then in helping to create some degree of lasting national stability and unity -- most Iraqis, citizens of the Middle East, and Europeans will still perceive the US as having “lost” the war. The Gallup, PEW, Oxford Analytic, CFR, and virtually every other poll that has addressed the issue shows the world perceives the US as having ignored the UN, failed to find Iraqi weapons of mass destruction, being unready for stability operations and nation building, and as having caused massive amounts of unnecessary suffering.

The US can only counter this image if it shows the world that it is willing to stay as long as there is any credible chance of helping the Iraqis through what is likely to be at least a half decade more of difficult transition. This means taking the time to build truly capable Iraqi governance, military forces, police forces, and an effective rule of law. It means phasing down the US military presence at a measured pace. It means accepting the fact that progress must move largely at an Iraqi pace, not according to rigid, US-dictated, benchmarks. It means years of economic aid.

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The US can, and may well, lose quickly and be forced to leave in defeat. If it does, it must then still live with deep involvement in Iraq and the Gulf, with several more decades of global economic dependence on Gulf energy exports, with an Iran that will do its best to capitalize on the situation, and with what Islamist extremists all over the world will see as a major victory. It will also have to live with the reality of having been the major cause of the suffering of millions of Iraqis. The odds are not good, but preemptive acceptance of defeat is almost certainly a worse course of action.

### **The American Civil-Military Threat to Iraq**

These are not pleasant realities, and it is still possible that the US can reverse some aspects of the situation in Iraq. There is no point, however, in trying to ignore them. In fact, if the US is to have any degree of success in Iraq and in any similar struggles in failed or broken states, it must take a hard look at how its efforts in civil-military affairs have interacted with Iraqi civil-military developments:

- The US invaded Iraq without a valid understanding of the Iraqi government, economy, and sectarian and ethnic differences. It did not have plans, staff, or aid money to deal with the situation; and did not have the force strength to provide security.
  - When the US rushed to try to correct this situation, it did so with deep ideological prejudices and lacked the core competence to do so. It focused on US goals in political and economic reform. It focused on national elections and paper constitutions, rather than effective governance, and on rushed efforts to define a massive long-term aid program to “reconstruct” Iraq in American terms. It failed to recruit, deploy, and retain competent civilians, and plunged into a badly coordinated interagency nightmare.
  - It took the US until early 2004 to realize that creating effective Iraqi security forces was a critical element of stability, until late 2004 for major resources to flow, until 2005 to realize that the army needed massive numbers of embeds and partner units and that the State Department could not staff the necessary kind of police training effort. It could not actually implement its “year of the police” in 2006, and had to rush half-formed Iraqi Army units into combat and local security missions they were often not ready to perform.
  - The US military has had to transform its transformation to focus on counterinsurgency, stability operations, and nation building. Its military have been pushed into a wide range of new training and civil military roles. It still is badly short of experts and fully qualified translators (where it may still have less than 25% of its needs). At the same time, the military has been forced to use its personnel to make up for the grave shortfalls in US government civilian experts and the lack of cooperation from some civilian agencies.
  - The US has just appointed an “aid coordinator” in Iraq that may have the strength to bring order to a chaotic mess. Its PRT effort is understaffed and underqualified, it still has poor security arrangements for its aid personnel, and only now is beginning to understand the full limits of Iraq’s oil “wealth,” the depth of the structural problems in Iraq’s economy, and the need to “reconstruct” in ways that take account of the need for money to flow to Iraqis, rather than foreign contractors; focus on Iraq’s state industries, and examine the deep structural problems in Iraq’s oil and agricultural sectors.
  - As General Abizaid, General Casey, and General Petraeus have all pointed out at different times, tactical victories and military efforts are pointless without political success. The US supported a form of deBaathification almost designed to alienate the Sunnis, and remove much of the nation’s secular core from power. The US insistence on national elections in a country without political parties, however, has left a legacy of government divided along sectarian and ethnic lines. The US pressure for a new constitution helped make “federalism” a key issue, and leave more than 50 fault lines in Iraq’s government to still be clarified. Political conciliation has been far more cosmetic
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- than real, adding Arab Sunni versus Arab Shi'ite, Shi'ite on Shi'ite, and Arab on Kurd tension and violence to the threat posed by hard core Sunni Neo-Salafi led insurgency.
- The “surge” strategy in Baghdad is the third version in 18 months of what is really a tactical effort to bring local security to the capital city. If it succeeds, it will probably be because the Shi'ite militias stand down, and the US effectively helps a Shi'ite dominated government “win.” If it fails, it will probably be because US military friction with the Shi'ite militias becomes violent. It is not clear what the US strategy is if the US does win in Baghdad, or how this will deal with the broader Iraqi civil-military struggle involving Arab Sunni versus Arab Shi'ite, Shi'ite on Shi'ite, and Arab on Kurd. Capitalizing an US success almost certainly would require at least five more years of major US civil-military advisory and aid efforts in Iraq and it is far from clear that the US Congress will give either the current or next President the necessary time and resources.
  - As was the case in Vietnam, the US has crippled its own efforts with poorly planned and executed programs that attempt to rush success and which lack adequate regard for local values. It has created reporting systems design to report success, not real progress or the lack of it, for its Iraqi force development and political and economic aid efforts. This reporting has slowly improved in some areas under the pressure of events, but much of the US reporting on Iraqi force development and economic aid efforts still lacks meaning and credibility. This includes basic data like Iraqi force manpower, unit readiness, aid efforts relative to requirements, and reporting on aid based on meaningful measures of effectiveness.

As was the case in Vietnam, Lebanon, Haiti, Somalia, Bosnia, Kosovo, and Afghanistan; the US was not capable of accurately evaluating the scale of the civil-military challenge in failed or broken states, lacked the core competence to plan and execute the necessary program, lacked the military and especially the civilian experts it needs, and let ideology and ethnocentricity compound the problems in face in terms of religion and culture, sectarian and ethnic differences, economic development, and dealing with politics and the need for effective governance.

### **Iraqi Attitudes Toward the US Effort in Iraq**

There is no question that events in Iraq have been driven as much by internal civil-military weaknesses and reasons for internal tension and conflict as American mistakes.

The Iraqi government may have been centralized and ruthless, but it was never efficient. Iraq bankrupted itself in the early 1980s in the Iran-Iraq War, invaded Kuwait, and first refused the oil for food program and then turned it into a corrupt morass. The economy was a command kleptocracy. Sectarian and ethnic problems are scarcely new, Arab has fought Kurd since Iraq was formed, and Sunni-Shi'ite frictions during the Iran-Iraq War became a low-level civil war in the south during 1991-2003. The political leadership is inexperienced and self-seeking. Most ministries and officials lack the competence to govern, religion is often decoupled from reality, and corruption and the unwillingness to take responsibility are legion.

The fact remains, however, that the US effectively sent a bull into liberate a china shop, and broke an already failed state in the process. US civil-military failures have interacted with Iraqi civil-military failures ever since the liberation, and continue to do so. While the US government is slowly changing and improving its capabilities, domestic politics now presents as many barriers as Neo-conservative surrealism, and the US is doing a much better job of changing doctrine, reporting, budget submissions than actually creating facts on the ground.

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The US now faces the legacy of its own actions. It is dealing with a sovereign Iraqi government it needs at least as much as that government needs the US. It cannot undo the past or recover lost opportunities. It also faces massive problems in terms of Iraqi public opinion. Like other aspects of reporting on Iraq, this has sometimes been disguised by polls more designed to tell the US what it wants to here than what Iraqis think or say.

A recent ABC News poll, however, provides what seems to be an all-too-valid picture of the current state of affairs. The overall results of this poll are summarized in the Figures attached as an appendix to this analysis. The key points, however, are that enough Iraqis see the country as being in a civil war for it to be a civil war: It scarcely takes a majority to vote on a conflict; any serious minority is enough.

The same poll found that 53% percent of all Iraqis saw security as the more serious single issue facing the country (55% Sunni, 52% Shi'ite, and 45% Kurd), up from 18 percent in 2005. (In some locales that soared -- 80 percent in the divided Sunni Arab/Kurdish city of Kirkuk; nearly as high in Anbar, the center of Sunni Arab discontent, and in Shiite-dominated Basra, Iraq's second-largest city.) Political and military issues made up a close second (26% of all Iraqis, 26% Sunni, 27% Shi'ite, and 18% Kurd.) Only the relatively secure Kurds revealed a significant percentage that saw Iraq's growing economic problems as a dominant factor. (9% of all Iraqis, 9% Sunni, 7% Shi'ite, and 18% Kurd.)<sup>1</sup>

### **The Civil-Military Nature of Violence and Instability in Iraq**

US and MNF-I reports that focus on the numbers of Iraqis killed or the number of sectarian incidents sharply underestimated the civil-military challenge. MNF-I, US and Iraqi government statistics on violence in Iraq fail to make a serious effort to estimate threats, kidnappings, woundings, intimidation, or sectarian and ethnic crimes. These 'lower' forms of violence became far more common in Iraq than killings, and represent the bulk of the real-world challenge to the ISF.

The ABC News poll conducted in February and March 2007 found that,<sup>2</sup>

Widespread violence, torn lives, displaced families, emotional damage, collapsing services, an ever-starker sectarian chasm -- and a draining away of the underlying optimism that once prevailed. Violence is the cause, its reach vast. Eighty percent of Iraqis report attacks nearby -- car bombs, snipers, kidnappings, and armed forces fighting each other or abusing civilians. It's worst by far in the capital, Baghdad, but by no means confined there. The personal toll is enormous. More than half of Iraqis, 53 percent, have a close friend or relative who's been hurt or killed in the current violence. One in six says someone in their own household has been harmed. Eighty-six percent worry about a loved one being hurt; two-thirds worry deeply. Huge numbers limit their daily activities to minimize risk. Seven in 10 report multiple signs of traumatic stress.

The poll found that while In 2005, 63 percent of Iraqis said they felt very safe in their neighborhoods in 2005, only 26 percent had said this in early 2007. One in three did not feel safe at all. In Baghdad, home to a fifth of the country's population, eighty-four percent feel entirely unsafe. Even outside of Baghdad, just 32 percent of Iraqis felt "very safe" where they lived compared with 60 percent a year and a half ago.<sup>3</sup>

Nationally, 12 percent of all Iraqis surveyed reported that ethnic cleansing -- the forced

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<sup>1</sup> ABC News/USA Today/BBC/ARD poll, released March 19, 2007, p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> ABC News/USA Today/BBC/ARD poll, released March 19, 2007, pp. 2-3.

<sup>3</sup> ABC News/USA Today/BBC/ARD poll, released March 19, 2007, pp. 2-3.

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separation of Sunnis and Shiites -- has occurred in their neighborhoods. In mixed-population Baghdad, it's 31 percent. This is not desired: In rare agreement, 97 percent of Sunni Arabs and Shiites alike oppose the separation of Iraqis on sectarian lines. Nonetheless, one in seven Iraqis overall -- rising to a quarter of Sunni Arabs, and more than a third of Baghdad residents -- said they themselves have moved homes in the last year to avoid violence or religious persecution.

As security conditions have worsened, so have expectations for future improvement in the conditions of life -- an especially troubling result, since hopes for a better future can be the glue that holds a struggling society together. In 2004 and 2005 alike, for example, three-quarters of Iraqis expected improvements in the coming year in their security, schools, availability of jobs, medical care, crime protection, clean water and power supply. Today only about 30 to 45 percent still expect any of these to get any better.

The ABC poll asked about nine kinds of violence that broke the security problems Iraqis and ISF forces faced into far more detail than the Coalition and US have ever publicly reported (car bombs, snipers or crossfire, kidnappings, fighting among opposing groups or abuse of civilians by various armed forces). These results are reflected in **Figure Two:**  
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Most Iraqis in Baghdad said at least one of these had occurred nearby; half reported four or more of them. Some 53 percent of Iraqis said a close friend or immediate family member had been hurt in the current violence. That ranged from three in 10 in the Kurdish provinces to nearly eight in 10 in Baghdad. Even outside Baghdad, 74 percent reported at least one form of violence, and 25 percent reported four or more (34 percent excluding the Kurdish area, which was far more peaceful than the country overall).

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<sup>4</sup> ABC News/USA Today/BBC/ARD poll, released March 19, 2007, pp. 5-6.

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## Figure Two

### Kinds of Violence Iraqis Reported as Occurring Nearby and the Civil-Military Reaction in Early 2007 (In percent)

	All	Baghdad	Kurdistan	Rest of Iraq
<b>Type of Violence Encountered</b> (Percent reporting)				
Kidnappings for ransom	40%	58%	4%	41%
Gov't/anti-gov't fighting	34	57	1	33
Car bombs, suicide attacks	32	52	3	31
Snipers, crossfire	30	56	*	27
Sectarian fighting	25	49	1	22
<b>Perceive Unnecessary Violence by:</b> (Percent reporting)				
U.S./coalition forces	44	59	9	47
Local militia	31	44	2	32
Iraqi police	24	44	1	22
Iraqi Army	24	44	0	22
Any of these	80	100	12	86
Four or more of these	37	70	1	34
Friend/family member harmed	53	77	29	49
<b>Focus of Efforts to Avoid Violence:</b> (Percent who try to avoid)				
	All	Sunni	Shiite	Kurdish
U.S./coalition forces	81%	95	85	40
Passing through checkpoints	66	92	64	17
Passing by police stations/ public buildings	55	91	45	10
Markets/crowds	54	74	53	17
Travel	53	71	54	18
Leaving home	51	77	48	5
Going to/applying for work	43	63	40	7
Sending children to school	39	66	32	3

Source: ABC News/USA Today/BBC/ARD poll, released March 19, 2007, pp. 5-6.



### **Iraqi Civil-Military Views of the United States**

The results in **Figure One** are bad enough, but the detailed results focusing on popular perceptions of the US civil-military effort to date are even more disturbing. The number of Iraqis who call it “acceptable” to attack U.S. and coalition forces, 17 percent in early 2004, has tripled to 51 percent now, led by near-unanimity among Sunni Arabs. And 78 percent of Iraqis now oppose the presence of U.S. forces on their soil, though far fewer favor an immediate pullout.

The main source of this antipathy was disaffected Sunni Arabs, the group that lost power with the overthrow of Saddam. Ninety-four percent of Sunni Arabs called attacks on U.S. forces acceptable. That compares with 35 percent of newly empowered Shiites (still a large number to endorse violence), vs. seven percent of Kurds, who're far more favorably inclined toward the United States. These figures compare with polls taken in 2004 that found attacks on Coalition forces were approved by roughly 63% percent of Sunni Arabs and 11 percent of Shiites

Even among Shiites, eight in 10 disapprove of the way the United States and other coalition forces have carried out their responsibilities in Iraq. More than eight in 10 Shiites (as well as 97 percent of Sunni Arabs) oppose the presence of U.S. and other forces in their country. (Kurds, again, differ powerfully; 75 percent support the U.S. presence.) More than seven in 10 Shiites – and nearly all Sunni Arabs – thought the presence of U.S. forces in Iraq was making security worse.

Some four in ten Iraqis polled blamed either US and coalition forces (31 percent), or George W. Bush personally (nine percent) for the current violence in Iraq. Al Qaeda and foreign jihadi fighters were cited by 18 percent (far more by Shiites and Kurds than by Sunnis). Indeed, the top mention of local violence measured in the poll was “unnecessary violence against Iraqi citizens by U.S. or coalition forces.” Forty-four percent of Iraqis -- including 60 percent of Sunni Arabs -- reported this as having occurred nearby.

Some 59 percent of the Iraqis polled said they thought the United States controls things in Iraq. Fewer than half as many said so in 2005, 24 percent. Worsening views of US and other forces in Iraq tracks with the rise of violence and deterioration of conditions in key parts of the country. In the first ABC News poll in Iraq, in February 2004, 51 percent of Iraqis opposed the presence of U.S. forces on their soil. By November 2005 that jumped to 65percent. In February/March 2007, it was 78 percent.

At the same time, Iraqis are equivocal about the timing of a US and Coalition departure and fear a sudden withdrawal. Just over a third (35 percent) favored immediate US withdrawal, peaking at 55 percent of Sunni Arabs -- fewer than might be expected. About four in 10 Iraqis polled -- Sunni and Shiite alike -- said US forces should remain until security is restored. “Leave now” sentiment was up, but not vastly, from 2005 – 26 percent in 2005, vs. 35 percent in February/March 2007.

Fewer than three in 10 Iraqis polled thought sending additional US troops to Baghdad and Anbar -- the Bush “surge” -- will improve security in these areas. Among Baghdad residents themselves, 36 percent think the surge will help things. In Anbar, where the Sunni Arab opposition is rooted, essentially everyone thought it would make security worse.

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There is a sharp overall lack of confidence in US forces: Eighty-two percent of Iraqis say they're not confident in US and UK forces -- 88 percent of Shiites as well as 97 percent of Sunni Arabs. (That falls to one-third of generally pro-US Kurds.)

In spite of allocating \$38 billion in development funds (some \$33 billion of which were US funds) Reconstruction is another complaint: Nationwide, 67 percent of Iraqis say post-war reconstruction efforts in their area have been ineffective or nonexistent. Sixty percent of Shiites say so; among Sunnis, it's 94 percent. (Again, attitudes are different in the Kurdish area, where 73 percent call reconstruction effective.)

Iraqis still divide, by 48-52 percent, over whether the United States was right or wrong to invade in spring 2003. Once again, however, there are sharp sectarian and ethnic splits. Seventy percent of Shiites and 83 percent of Kurds polled endorsed the invasion. But 98 percent of Sunni Arabs said it was wrong.

### **The Uncertain Way Ahead: Four (Five?) Struggles for the Price of One**

It is too late to reinvent the wheel in this war. The US cannot recover the years it has wasted, build-up all the civil-military capabilities required, does not have the time and opportunity in Iraq to make major changes in strategy. It must deal with a sovereign Iraqi government and an angry Iraqi people. It lacks the Congressional and public support for the necessary time, troop levels, and amounts of money. The US must do what it can with what it has already begun, and has only 1-2 years in which to reverse current trends -- if that.

If there is any solution -- and reality may be that the US now cannot do more than watch Iraqis play out events while exercising limited influence -- it lies in honestly admitting the limits to US civil-military efforts, focusing on short-term gains that can help political conciliation if this becomes possible, and avoiding actions that further alienate the average Iraqi while concentrating on the worst insurgents and militias.

This essentially means making the best of the present efforts, doing as much as possible to avoid past mistakes, and hoping for new windows of opportunity. It is at best the "least bad" approach, and can probably only ameliorate Iraqi, Arab, and world reactions to the way the US has conducted the war rather than "win."

At the same time, the US must accept the fact that the civil struggle for political and economic space is now more important than the insurgency, and that the US must prepare to do what it can even if its largely forced to withdraw its forces from Iraq. The US and Iraqi governments and forces now face what US Secretary of Defense Robert Gates described as four wars, all of which were interconnected. Secretary Gates said at a March 7, 2007 media roundtable with Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, General Peter Pace:

"I think that the words "civil war" oversimplify a very complex situation in Iraq. I believe that there are essentially four wars going on in Iraq. One is Shi'a on Shi'a, principally in the south; the second is sectarian conflict, principally in Baghdad, but not solely; third is the insurgency; and fourth is al Qaeda, and al Qaeda is attacking, at times, all of those targets. So I think I just -- you know, I -- it's not, I think, just a matter of politics or semantics. I think it oversimplifies it. It's a bumper sticker answer to what's going on in Iraq.

It would seem that Sunni versus Sunni struggles may have to be added to this list. Good news to the extent they are Sunni "nationalist" vs. Sunni Islamist extremist. Uncertain news because the Islamist may win and even if the Sunni "nationalists" win, this does not

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mean the winner will support the government or US on any basis other than short term expediency.

### **Conciliation and Coexistence and Realistic Timelines are the Key**

Each of these conflicts involves political, ethnic, religious, and economic struggles for control of space and resources, as well as sheer political power. Each struggle will continue in some form almost indefinitely into the future and the ability to influence the level to which they can be brought under control will depend at least as much on improved US civil military progress as any success at arms.

In practice, the US needs to take the following measures in dealing with civil-military affairs:

- Use US pressure and influence in civil-military areas, but don't export the burden or the blame to Iraqis. It won't pressure them in ways that are not destructive.
  - Develop honest metrics of security tied to each struggle, covering the entire country, and linked to the local economic situation and quality of governance. Create net assessments that do not focus on threats, but the overall situation and progress, with summary reporting at the level of major cities and governorates. Tie US programs and priorities to such efforts, provide the level of credibility and transparency necessary to build broader Congressional and US public support if this is still possible.
  - Continue to make political conciliation and compromise a key priority, but accept the message that Iraq cannot easily be unified as a secular national entity. Accept the practical need to create safe and viable Arab Sunni, Arab Shi'ite, and Kurdish areas within Iraq; find ways of sharing revenues and power on sectarian and ethnic terms. At this point. Divided Kurdish and Arab areas, and Sunni and Shi'ite areas with limited numbers of mixed cities seem almost certain to emerge.
  - Success means actually implementing the best achievable mix of:
    - An oil law and technical annexes that assure all major Iraqi factions of an equitable share of today's oil revenues and the future development of Iraq's oil and gas resources.
    - Giving the Sunnis real participation in the national government at every level, and creating ministries and government structures that fairly mix Arab Shi'ite, Arab Sunni, Kurd, and other minorities.
    - ReBa'athification and giving a clean slate or amnesty to all who served under the Ba'ath not guilty of violent crimes.
    - Amending the constitution to create a structure that protects the rights of all Iraqis, and which creates viable compromises, or clearly defers or omits, areas of critical sectarian and ethnic division.
      - As part of this, working out an approach to federation that will avoid civil conflict.
    - Creating and implementing local election laws, particularly at the provincial level.
    - Disbanding or assimilating militias, or creating retraining centers and funding programs to deal with members.
  - Focus on day-today government services, not politics and further to rush democracy and Western standards into Iraq.
  - Measure progress and problems in terms of Iraqi perceptions, not US plans, projects, or spending. Analyze US success in terms of the impact of USA actions on the Iraqis most affected by each of the four struggles outlined by Secretary Gates.
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- Recast the Iraqi force development effort to focus on what can actually be done at the rate it can be done. Accept the limits to how fast the army can be effective, real world hopes for the National and regular police, and real-world ability to eliminate local dependence on militias and local security forces.
- Develop honest and meaningful metrics of progress in Iraqi force development, not spin-oriented nonsense like “trained and equipped” manpower and forces “in the lead.” Create force development plans based on realistic time scales and with adequate levels of resources. Tie force development far more firmly to aid efforts to build up the legal system, governance, and legitimate local authority. “Win” is pointless without “hold” and “build.”
- Focus aid on immediate efforts at use aid funds to support stability and to ease Iraq’s diverse conflicts. Eliminate USAID and USACE managers in Washington, and US contractors in both the US and Iraq, as much as possible. Concentrate on CERP and PRT driven aid as critical tool in “hold” and “build” and to make up for lack of Iraqi government presence, competence, and integrity. Focus national efforts on showing Iraqis that the US will aid them do it the Iraqi way in critical areas like revitalizing state industry.
- Accept the fact no meaningful victory is possible within the life of this Administration. Make bipartisan efforts to both create an understanding of the long-term efforts needed if the current security plan succeeds, and to recast the US role in Iraq and Gulf on an enduring basis if it does not.

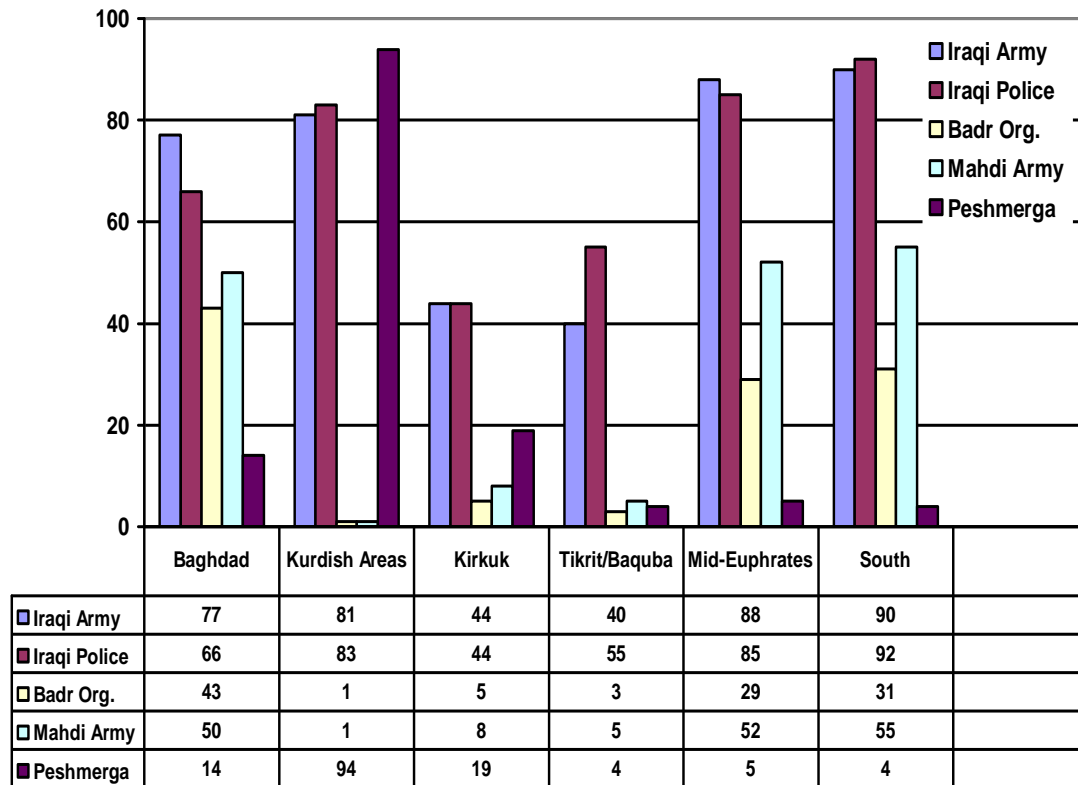
Iraqi decisions -- good or bad -- already dominate events, and US ability to succeed using these options. It is Iraqi plans “I,” not a US plans “A” or “B” that count. Moreover, every step outlined above is going to take time, persistence, and resources to make effective. It is not enough for the Iraqi government to pass laws, or factions to reach apparent agreement. Iraq will need time and continuing help to actually implement conciliation. Making an oil law work, for example, could easily begin with a very troubled 12-18 months. Actually resolving the federation issue could easily slip into 2009. Only losing is quick.

If the US is to influence the situation as effectively as possible, it must reinforce its existing policies with a new degree of realism and with the understanding that Iraqi civil conflicts, and anger against the US and its allies, must be dealt with far more honesty and integrity than the US government has shown to date. It also must prepare for years of continued effort, not a quick withdrawal. The civil-military elements of the long war are going to play out in 10-15 year periods, not according to the classic American plan: “simple, quick, and wrong.”

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## Appendix One: The Iraqi View of Civil Military Affairs

### Iraqi Views of Life in Iraq: November 2005 versus February-March 2007 (Percent Replying Yes to Question)



Source: ABC News/USA Today/BBC/ARD poll, released March 19, 2007. This is the third such poll and is based on experienced local pollsters going from location to location in a statistically relevant number of points throughout the country. **The survey** was conducted for ABC News, USA Today, the BBC and ARD German TV by D3 Systems of Vienna, Va., and KA Research Ltd. of Istanbul. Interviews were conducted in person, in Arabic or Kurdish, among a random national sample of 2,212 Iraqis aged 18 and up from Feb. 25 to March 5, 2007.

Four-hundred-fifty-eight sampling points were distributed proportionate to population size in each of Iraq's 18 provinces, then in each of the 102 districts within the provinces, then by simple random sampling among Iraq's nearly 11,000 villages or neighborhoods, with urban/rural stratification at each stage.

Maps or grids were used to select random starting points within each sampling point, with household selection by random interval and within-household selection by the "next-birthday" method. An average of five interviews were conducted per sampling point. Three of the 458 sampling points were inaccessible for security reasons and were substituted with randomly selected replacements.

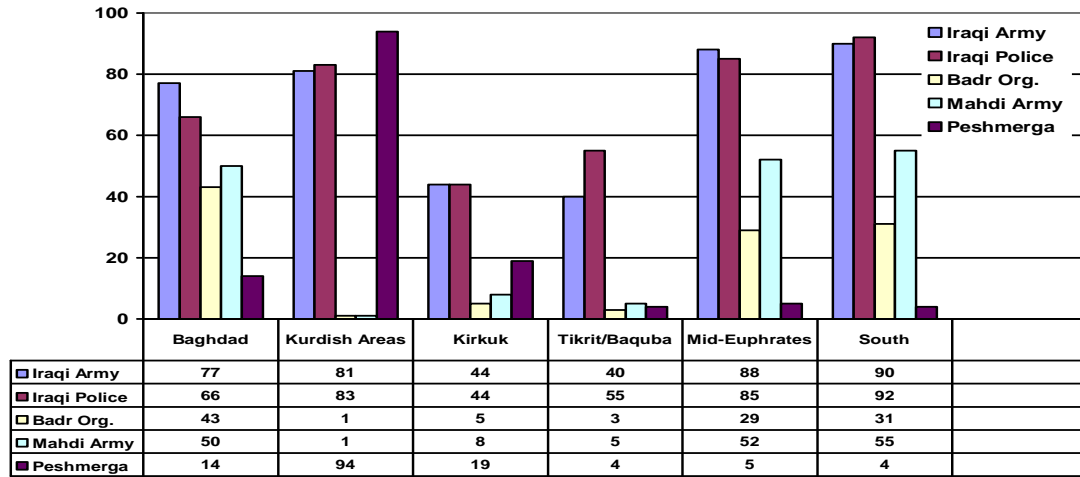
Interviews were conducted by 103 trained Iraqi interviewers with 27 supervisors. Just over half of interviews were back-checked by supervisors – 28 percent by direct observation, 14 percent by revisits and 10 percent by phone.

In addition to the national sample, oversamples were drawn in Anbar province, Sadr City, Basra city and Kirkuk city to allow for more reliable analysis in those areas. Population data came from 2005 estimates by the Iraq Ministry of Planning. The sample was weighted by sex, age, education, urban/rural status and population of province. The survey had a contact rate of 90 percent and a cooperation rate of 62 percent for a net response rate of 56 percent. Including an estimated design effect of 1.51, the results have a margin of sampling error of 2.5 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level.

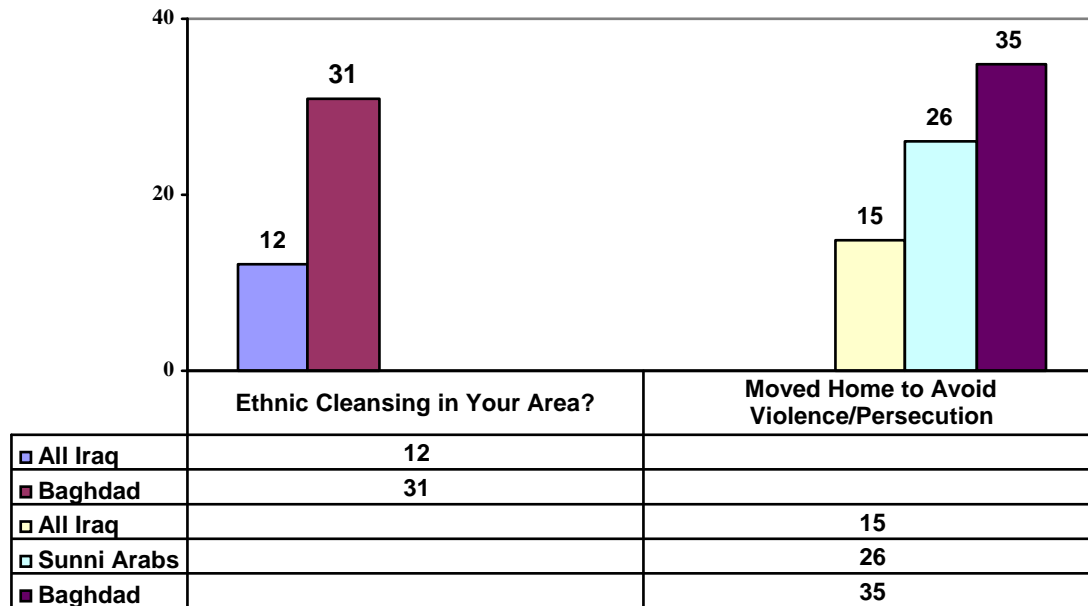
### Iraqi Views of Life in Iraq: Detailed Attitudes Towards Security and Civil War in March 2007 – Part One

(ABC News/USA Today/BBC/ARD Poll)

#### Is Iraq in a Civil War (Percent Saying Yes)



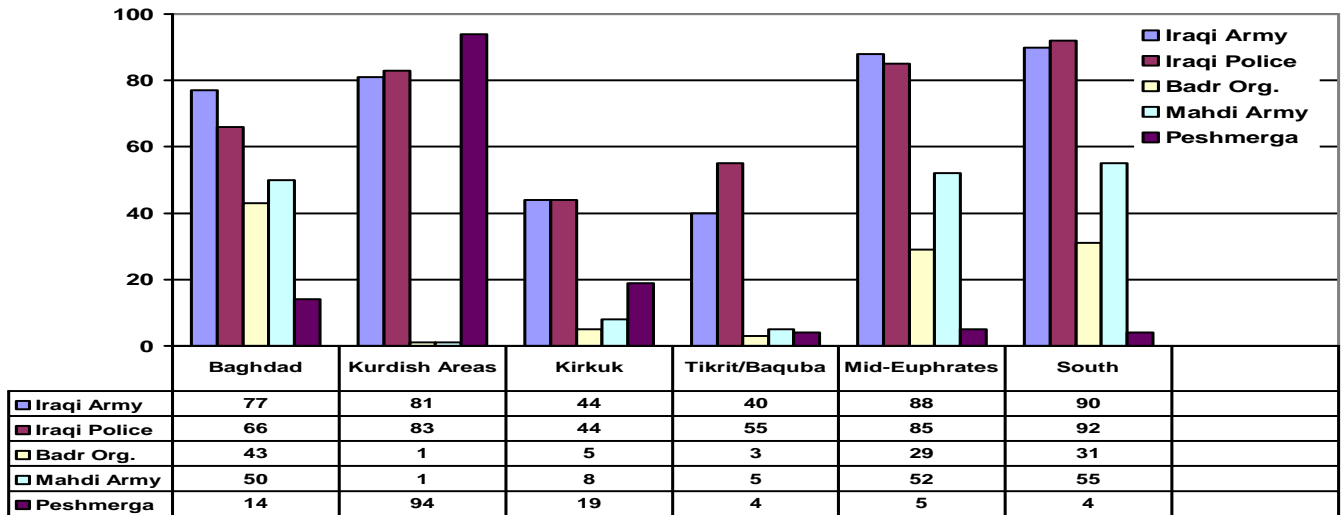
#### Ethnic Cleansing and Displacement (Percent)



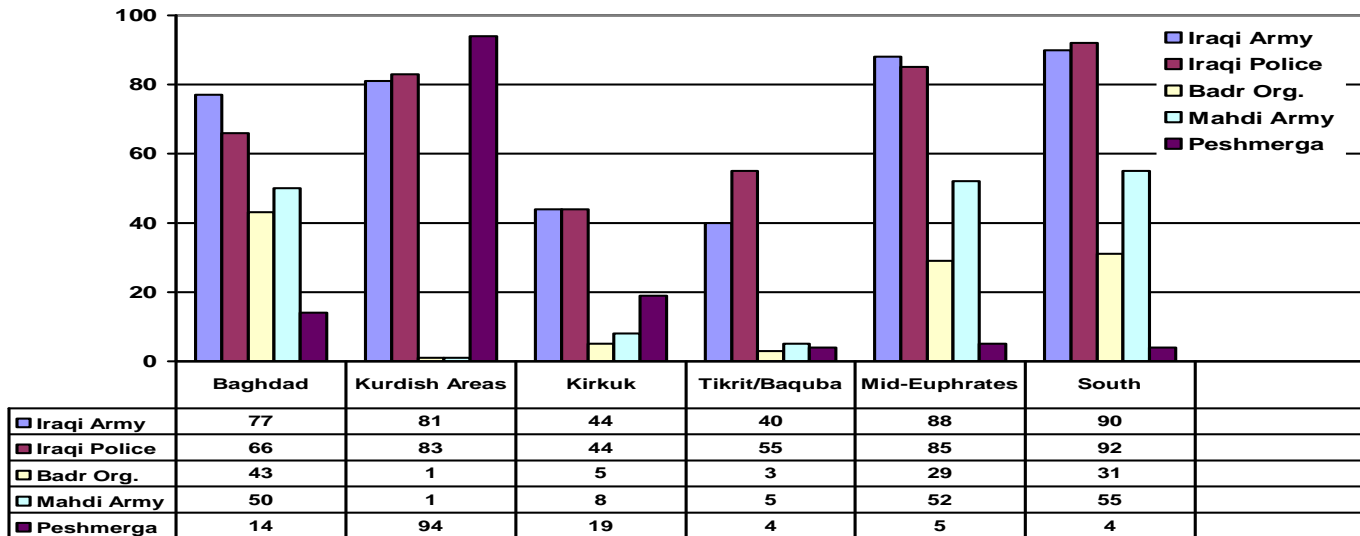
### Iraqi Views of Life in Iraq: Detailed Attitudes Towards Security and Civil War in March 2007 – Part Two

(ABC News/USA Today/BBC/ARD Poll)

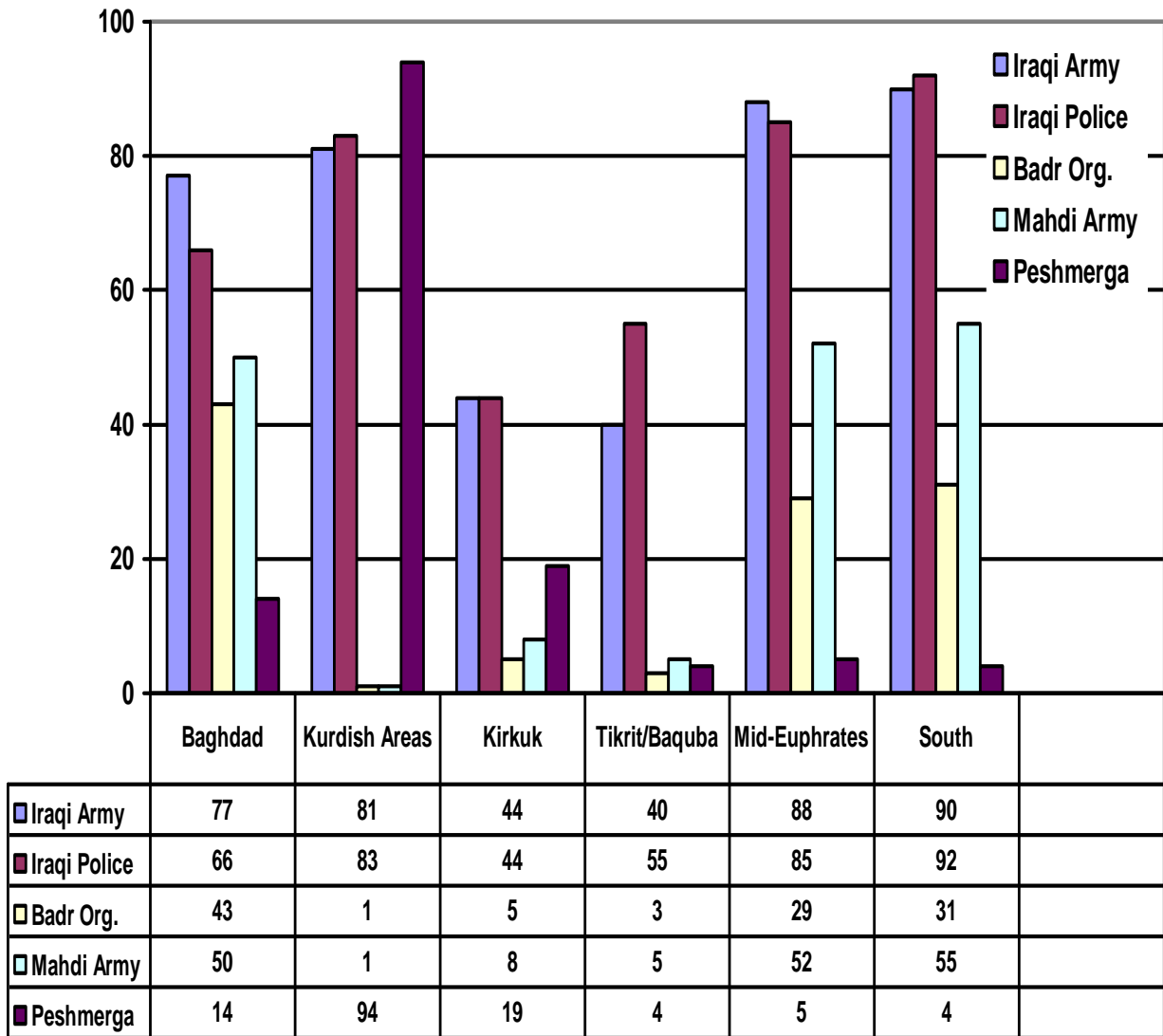
#### Sectarian Divisions Over Future (Percent)



#### Preference for Future Structure of Iraqi State (Percent)



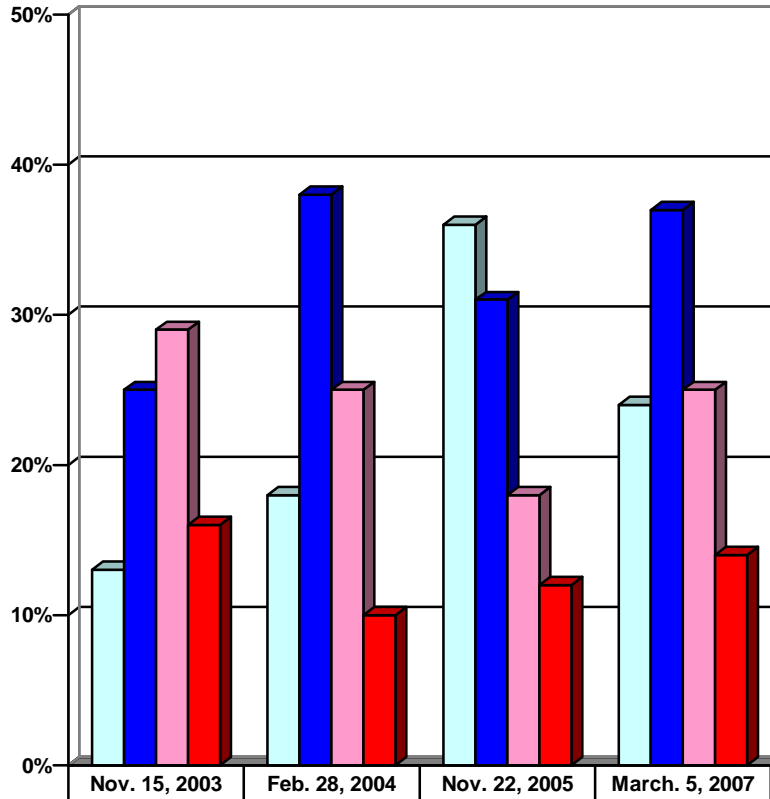
**Iraqi Views of  
Civil War in March 2007 – ORB Poll**



Source: Opinion Research Business (ORB) “Public Attitudes in Iraq: Four Year Anniversary of Invasion,” March 2007, pp. 11-13



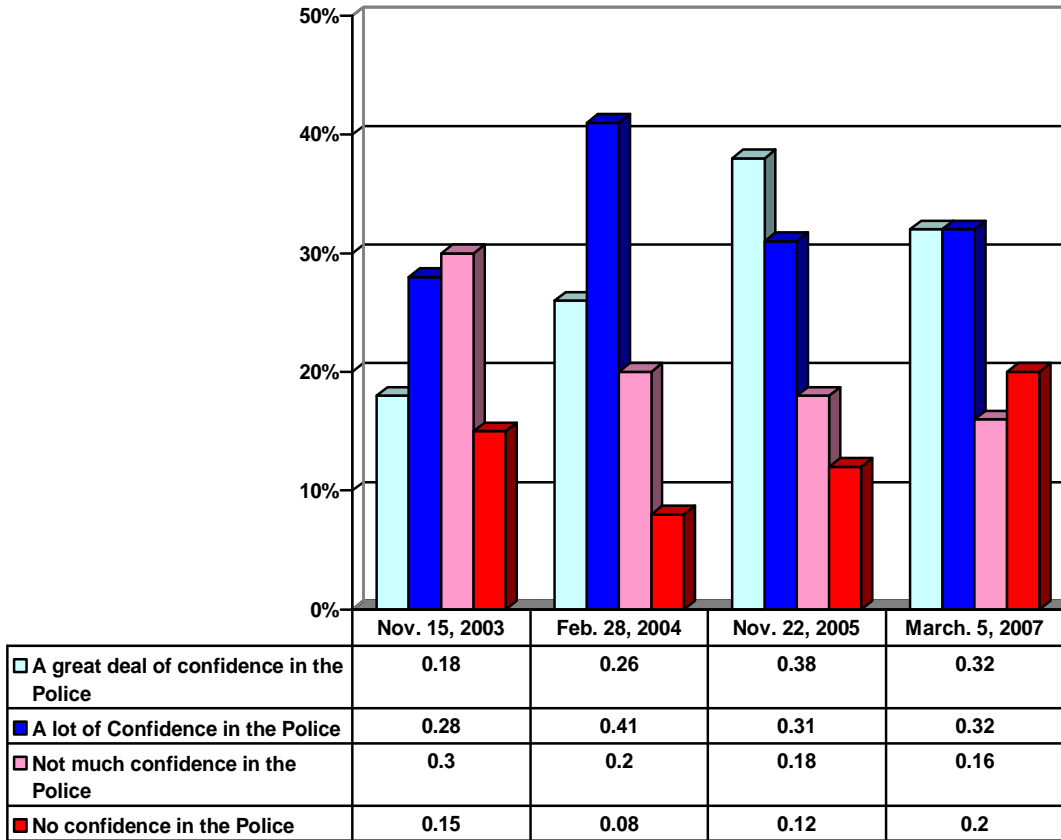
**Confidence in the Iraqi Army Over Time: 2003-2007**



	Nov. 15, 2003	Feb. 28, 2004	Nov. 22, 2005	March 5, 2007
□ A great deal of confidence in the Army	0.13	0.18	0.36	0.24
■ A lot of Confidence in the Army	0.25	0.38	0.31	0.37
■ Not much confidence in the Army	0.29	0.25	0.18	0.25
■ No confidence in the Army	0.16	0.1	0.12	0.14

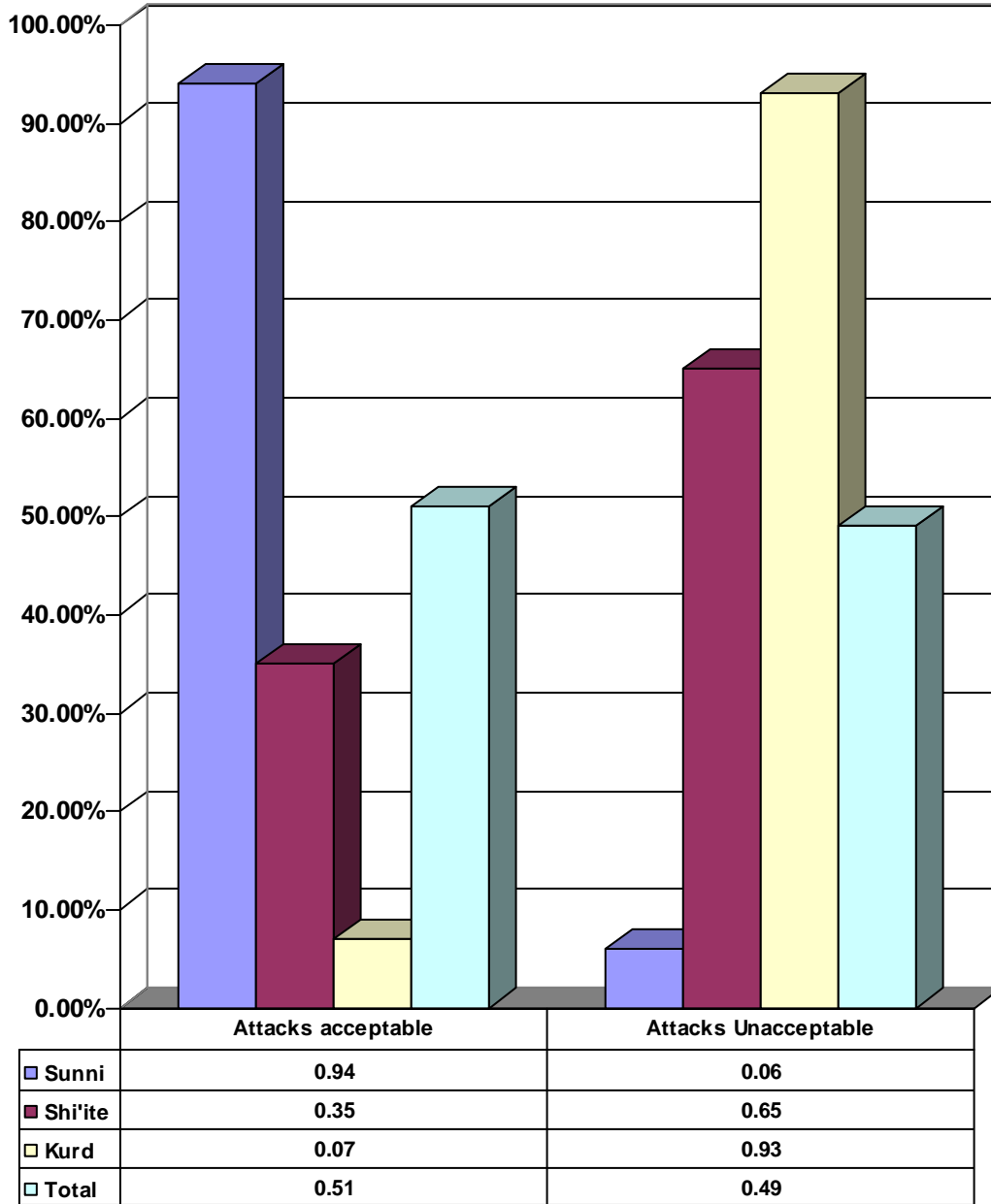
Source: "Ebbing Hope in a Landscape of Loss Marks a National Survey of Iraq" ABC News/USA Today/BBC/ARD Poll. March 19, 2007. Pg. 25

**Confidence in the Iraqi Police over time: 2003-2007**



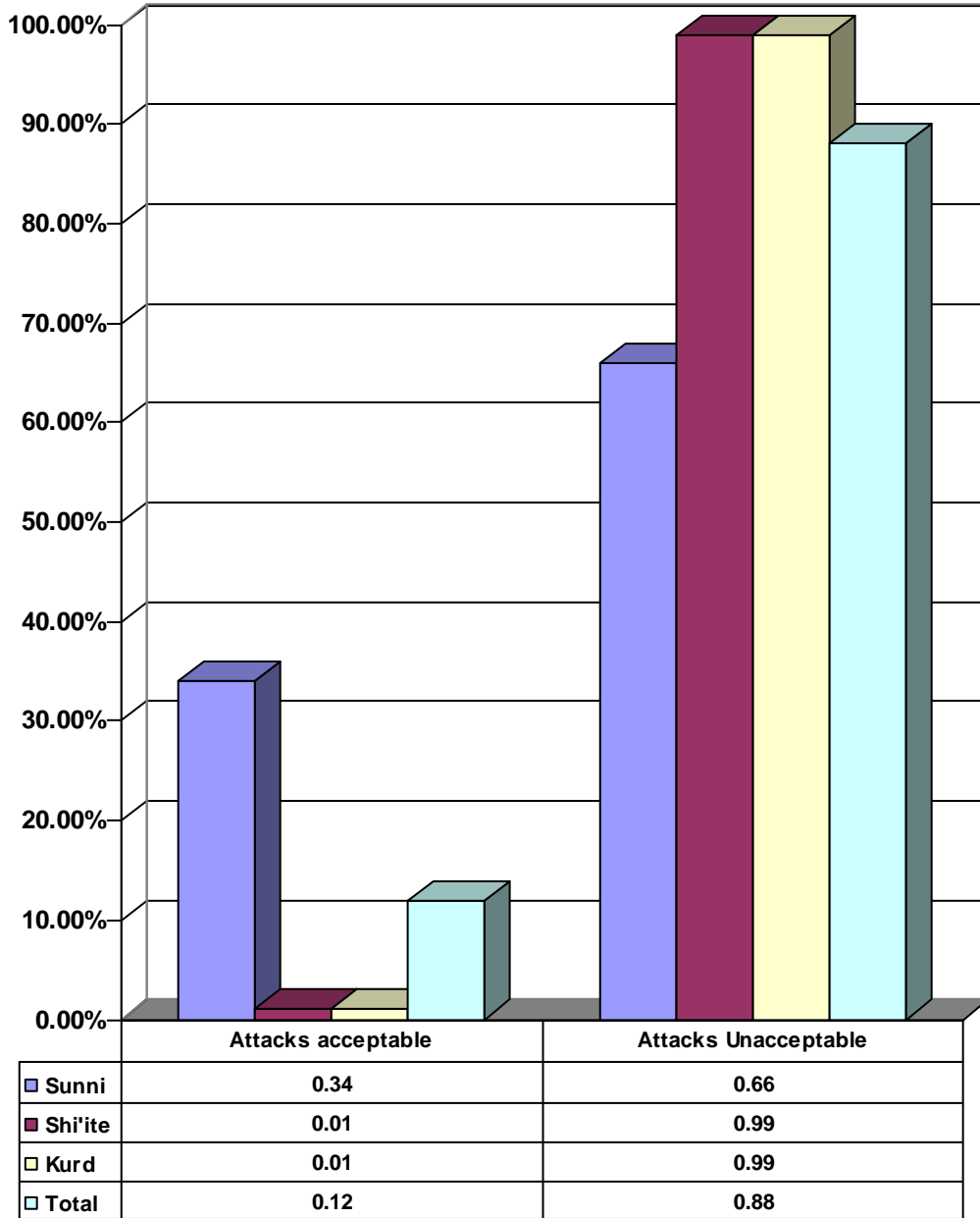
Source: "Ebbing Hope in a Landscape of Loss Marks a National Survey of Iraq" ABC News/USA Today/BBC/ARD Poll. March 19, 2007. Pg. 25

**Percentage of Iraqis Finding attacks against Coalition Forces Acceptable by Sect and Ethnicity: Early 2007**



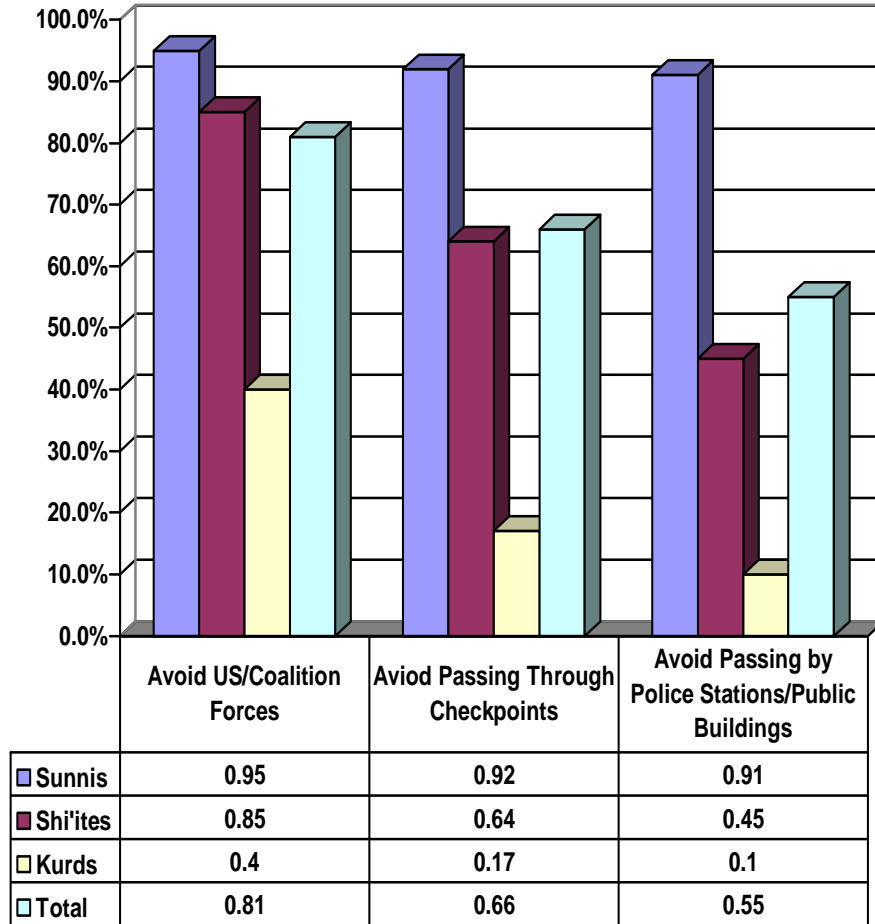
Source: "Ebbing Hope in a Landscape of Loss Marks a National Survey of Iraq." ABC News/BBC/USA Today/ARD March 19,2007. Pg 29.

**Percentage of Iraqis Finding attacks against Iraqi Government Forces Acceptable by Sect and Ethnicity: Early 2007**



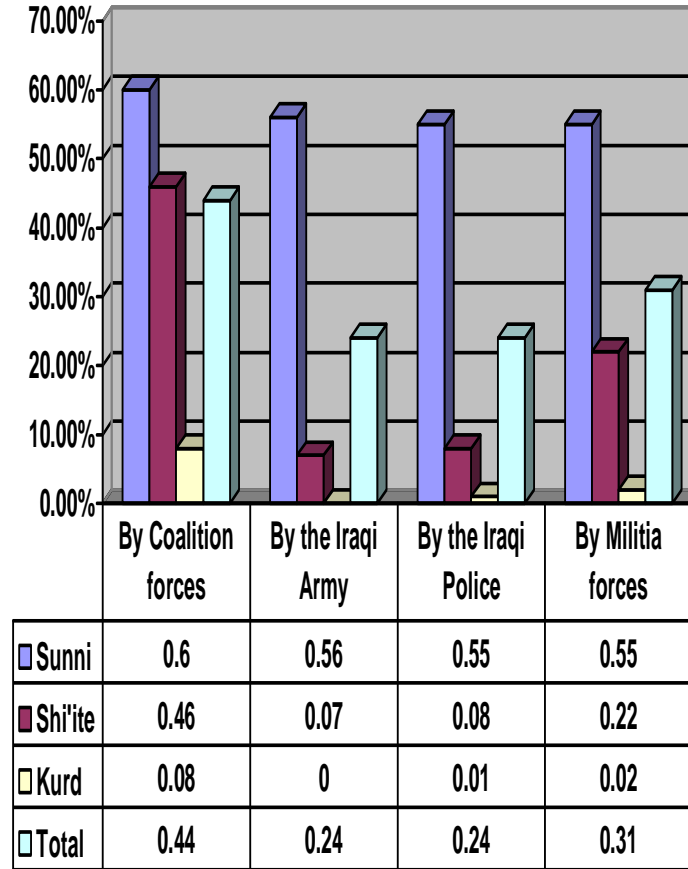
Source: "Ebbing Hope in a Landscape of Loss Marks a National Survey of Iraq." ABC News/BBC/USA Today/ARD March 19,2007. Pg 29.

**Percentage Of Iraqis Avoiding US/Coalition Forces, Checkpoints, Or Passing By Police Stations by Sect and Ethnicity: Early 2007**



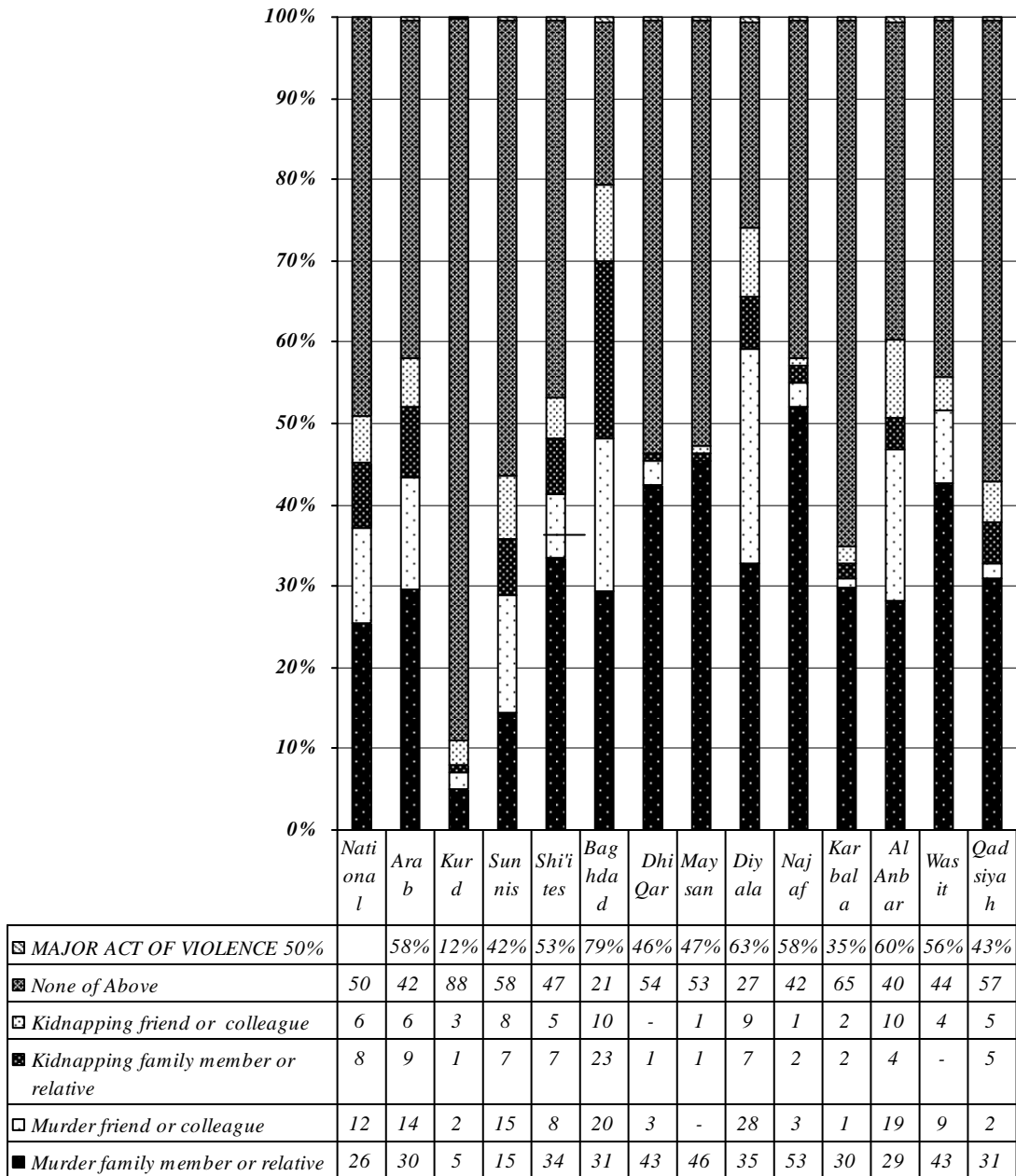
Source: "Ebbing Hope in a Landscape of Loss Marks a National Survey of Iraq" ABC/D/USA Today Poll, 03/19/2007. Pg 5.

**Violence Against Iraqi Citizens**  
**Percentage of Iraqis Reporting Violence Against Citizens Nearby Being Perpetrated**  
**by Coalition forces/ the Iraqi Army/ the Iraqi Police/ Militias**



Source: "Ebbing Hope in a Landscape of Loss Marks a National Survey of Iraq" ABC/D/USA Today Poll, 03/19/2007. Pg 10.

**Iraqi Personal Experience with Violence in Last Three Years: The Nationwide Impact – ORB Poll (March 2007)**



Source: Opinion Research Business (ORB) “Public Attitudes in Iraq: Four Year Anniversary of Invasion,” March 2007, pp. 7-9.

