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Mandatory Review 2016-0187-M

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Memo - 7/19 /10a
NSC

ACTION

MEMORANDUM FOR STEVE HADLEY and J. D. CROUCH II

FROM: MEGHAN O'SULLIVAN and @Iraq

SUBJECT: Adjusting Our Security Strategy to the New Realities in Iraq

REQUESTED ACTION: That Wednesday's NSC be used to evaluate our security strategy in light of the current situation in Iraq.

7-19-06

Key Point: Ten days before Prime Minister Maliki's first visit to Washington, it is unclear whether his good intentions and leadership can overcome much larger trends outside the Green Zone. Maliki has made announcements and plans to tackle all the right challenges: Baghdad, Basra, reconciliation, MOI reform, and militias. Yet two months into the "critical six months" of his government, tangible signs of progress have been elusive as Maliki has struggled with limited tools at his disposal and a deteriorating security situation.

The next few weeks are a strategically important period leading into the UNSCR renewal this fall and the beginning of discussions with the GOI on a longer-term defense relationship. Now is an opportune moment to explore:

1. Whether our security strategy has been sufficiently adjusted to account for new realities (especially sectarian strife);
2. Whether external constraints on available U.S. military resources through the end of 2007 limit our ability to respond adequately to these new realities; and
3. Whether we have strategic options for filling any gaps between available U.S. resources and what may be required to ensure long-term success in Iraq.

Security Strategy It is not clear that our security strategy is in accordance with the current realities in Iraq. With attack trends at an all-time high and the Baghdad Security Plan acknowledged by all parties to have had little impact thus far, General Casey is working to convince a nervous and reluctant Maliki to support the withdrawal of an additional 7,000 Coalition troops from Iraq. Casey is also asking Maliki to support a "Joint Commission on Coalition Withdrawal" - at the same time Maliki is suggesting he needs more Coalition forces to secure Baghdad and support the new government.

The current focus on drawing down Coalition troops is one of several factors suggesting that we are executing a plan based on

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assumptions that are no longer valid. Last year at this time, for example, the primary security challenge was the Sunni insurgency, which we assumed was fueled in part by the presence of Coalition forces and Sunni isolation from the political process. Since then, many new realities have emerged. **Before withdrawing any further troops, our security strategy should be re-evaluated to consider the following new challenges and lessons:**

New Demands and Challenges

- The extensive *sectarian* violence and the related need to tackle the problem of Shi'a militias;
- The possibility that Iran may challenge us and our partners in Iraq more directly;
- The need to reform the MOI and the Iraqi police before they can be reliable institutions of the government and keepers of a sustainable peace.

New Lessons and Assumptions

- Iraqi communities once against the U.S. presence now increasingly see the United States as a necessary buffer and unbiased facilitator;
- Transitions to Iraqi lead for security in numerous parts of Iraq have produced mixed results, with security worsening in many places as ISF and Iraqi civilian institutions seek to maintain order;
- While the ISF has become more effective and capable, it is taking longer than expected to stand with little or no Coalition support and the presence of MOI forces in Sunni areas may actually fuel sectarian violence.

To further draw-down forces before the re-evaluating the strategy in light of these new challenges and assumptions could have strategic implications for what we can achieve in the future. It would also be hard to characterize a decision to bring troops home at this point as a consequence of success or the result of an improvement in conditions. As such, an announcement before conditions improve might undermine the support of the remaining Americans who believe in what we are seeking to achieve - and in the President when he says that decisions will be based on conditions in Iraq.

External Constraints on our Military Forces One possibility behind the push to bring down our forces is that doing so is essential to ease stress on the Army and the Marines. This is a real consideration. We may find ourselves, however, in an uncomfortable position where maintaining the presence necessary for success (both in terms of strength and duration) will be

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difficult or impossible for our armed forces to sustain. If this is the case, we need to identify as soon as possible the gaps between available resources and end-state objectives, so as to leave time to think of creative alternatives for filling them.¹ Otherwise, force sustainment requirements will determine what we can ultimately achieve in Iraq (*i.e.*, we may be forced to revise our desired ends to suit our means). In short, we need to discuss Iraq in terms of available military resources, our end state vision, and how if at all the two can remain aligned to secure lasting success.

Questions to be Asked For all of these reasons, we recommend a security review where the President considers asking the following series of questions:

- *How has our security strategy changed to reflect the now-dominant sectarian dimension of violence in Iraq?*
 - What are we doing differently now as opposed to one year ago, given the broad agreement that the nature of the conflict has dramatically changed?
 - Is it part of our security mission to stem spiraling levels of sectarian-fueled violence? ✓
 - What will it take to bring down violence levels in Baghdad and when might this be achieved?
 - Our current plans focus on "transition" even in core strategic areas such as Baghdad. Is this still the right approach in light of new realities? ✓
 - What are the consequences for us and Iraq if Iraqis cannot meet their responsibilities in Baghdad and elsewhere?
 - Should we consider an "additive" strategy (stand up / stand with them) in these areas as opposed to a "replace" strategy (stand up / stand down)? ✓
 - How have we adapted to the reality that MOI is seen as a threat to Sunnis? Does it make sense, for example, to place MOI in charge of the Baghdad Security Plan?

- *What are the requirements to execute a more effective security strategy suited to the current realities?*
 - Have we considered the requirements of a sustained, neutral presence that has proven necessary for resolving past sectarian-driven conflicts?
 - If the strain on our forces would be too great, do we have alternative ways of resourcing such a strategy?
 - If we lack the resources for a sustained presence in numbers large enough to dampen sectarian violence, should we consider adjusting our end state objectives?
 - What alternatives might we explore before having to do so?

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RECOMMENDATION: That Wednesday's NSC be used as a forum to discuss these issues.

DECISION:

_____ Approve.
_____ Disapprove.

COPY: John Hannah, Peter Feaver

ATTACHMENTS: N/A

¹ We might, for example, at some point reconsider some sort of UN-hatted stabilization force while Iraqi forces continue to mature. Most ethnically divided, post-conflict countries have required a sustained international presence to keep the peace long after active hostilities ended. Such a stabilization force would be distinct from U.S. troops that may stay long-term to provide quick reaction forces for significant breaches of security and conduct counterterrorism operations. In contrast, a UN-hatted stabilization force would be more a deterrent for reignition of sectarian violence after a fragile reconciliation was achieved. While such ideas have been floated and rejected in the past, we might reconsider them in light of new assumptions, and consider how successful experiences in Afghanistan and elsewhere - with a more terrorism focused Coalition and a more international-minded stabilization force - might be applied to Iraq.

TASKINGS FROM SEPTEMBER 30 MEETING WITH
SECRETARY OF DEFENSE, MILITARY COMMANDERS,
AND U.S. AMBASSADOR TO IRAQ
(APPENDIX A) ~~(S)~~

- **Context:** The number and capability of Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) have grown, as the number of Coalition troops have largely stayed stable. Yet, the number of incidents and casualties continue to rise. What does this tell us about the nature of the enemy or the conflict? ~~(S)~~

- **Viewpoint:** General Casey presented his views on the nature of the enemy. The enemy - and the security situation - is much more complex than ever before. The enemy is no longer primarily the insurgency, but includes a range of actors. At the national level, there are four major groups that are contributing negatively to the security situation: Sunni extremists, Shi'a extremists, resistance attacking the Coalition, and Iran (in its support to extremists). The presence and activity of these four concentrations of forces vary by geographic regions in Iraq, with Sunni extremists a problem in the northwest, both extremists a problem in Baghdad, and Shi'a extremism a problem in the south. ~~(S)~~

- **Questions for further exploration:**
 - What is the current nature of the enemy and how has the enemy evolved in the past six months? ~~(S)~~
 - How dominant are former regime members and senior Ba'athists in the insurgency? ~~(S)~~
 - Is there a logical sequence to combating all security threats/enemies or are they all interwoven? ~~(S)~~
 - Would the threat from Shi'a extremists diminish if Sunni extremists/insurgency were further quelled - or has a dynamic developed that is self-sustaining? ~~(S)~~
 - Is the geographic focus on different security threats simply a reflection of demographic breakdown or is it something further? ~~(S)~~
 - To what extent is Iran providing support to Sunni extremists, in addition to Shi'a ones? ~~(S)~~

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TASKINGS FROM SEPTEMBER 30 MEETING WITH
SECRETARY OF DEFENSE, MILITARY COMMANDERS,
AND U.S. AMBASSADOR TO IRAQ ~~(S)~~

- Benchmarks will be developed to establish target goals for the Government of Iraq in the security, political, and economic realms. These benchmarks should include (but not be limited to): the way ahead and progress in the overall development of the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and the transition of responsibility for security to them; anticipated progress with national reconciliation and other issues associated with the National Compact; progress for the passage of certain key pieces of legislation by the Council of Representatives; advances in reconstruction; and anticipated renewal of the MNF-I mandate by the United Nations. The benchmarks, and the timelines anticipated for reaching them, will be agreed between the Coalition and the Iraqi Government. The benchmarks will be rolled out to the Iraqi and United States public in a coordinated fashion. **(DOD/MNF-I and State/Embassy Baghdad to provide draft by October 18)** ~~(S)~~
- A short synopsis of the SVTS discussion regarding objectives, strategies, and plans of action for the ISF will be developed. It will delineate the three phases of development of the ISF (Train / Equip; Professionalize - help them get better; Self-Reliance - help them become independent) and how they relate to our strategy for transitioning responsibility for security to Iraqi forces. **(DOD by October 18)** ~~(S)~~
- An intelligence assessment will be conducted on the nature of the enemy. The intelligence community will be sent a short synopsis of the discussion of the nature of the enemy in the SVTS and asked to comment upon it. **(Attached at Appendix A.) (DNI by October 18)** ~~(S)~~
- The desired political, economic, and security effects in Baghdad will be specified (i.e. murder rates, employment generated, etc). The primary security, economic, and political impediments to further progress in Baghdad will then be identified. For each impediment, the relevant agency will also identify the most important steps for overcoming the impediment, who is the primary actor in

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taking such steps (which USG agency, Iraqi Government, other), and how such efforts might be better supported from Washington or accelerated. This discussion should include (but not be limited to):

- What is being done to increase Iraqi Government capacity to let contracts, spend money, and run projects. How will we know when we achieve the necessary levels of effort?;
- What is being done to promote reconciliation;
- Whether the Iraqi army is fully engaged (to address the issue of no-shows and refusals to deploy to Baghdad);
- Whether there are adequate police to leave behind to stabilize cleared areas and whether we can only maximize prospects for success by increasing our contribution;
- Whether the scope and pace of economic follow-on projects are sufficient; and
- Whether there is sufficient job creation occurring or whether another program for this purpose is required.

~~(S)~~

(DOD/MNF-I and State/Embassy Baghdad by next such SVTS (October 21 TBC)) ~~←(S)~~

- A presentation will be developed to further explain Prime Minister Maliki's efforts to expand the number and capabilities of the ISF. The presentation will include:
 - What were our original projections for the Iraqi army and police?
 - Upon what assumptions were these projections formulated?
 - Are these assumptions still valid? If not, what new assumptions are needed?
 - Given any possible new assumptions, is there reason to re-evaluate the original projections beyond the recent plans discussed with PM Maliki?

(DOD by next SVTS October 21 TBC) ~~←(S)~~

- A country-by-country action plan will be developed, laying out what the Iraqis and the United States Government should be seeking from each Gulf and Arab country vis-à-vis Iraq. The plan will include which Principals will be deployed to engage with these countries and the frequency with which they will travel to the region. **(State by October 18)** ~~←(S)~~

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FORMALIZING THE ONGOING IRAQ REVIEW

Mandate. The President authorizes an Iraq Review to draw upon work already under way in order to:

- Describe the current situation and the new phase of Iraq's transition into which it is now entering;
- Outline the strategic assumptions upon which the effort in Iraq should now rest, taking into account lessons from the past 3 years;
- Define America's core objectives and interests in its involvement in this phase of Iraq's transition;
- Weigh various assessments of:
 - The relationship between security and political progress;
 - The intentions and capabilities of the current Iraqi Government;
 - The prospects for a national compact, including intentions of Sunni and Shi'a;
 - The sectarian orientation of Iraqi actors and the ability to overcome sectarian agendas;
 - The utility of the various current diplomatic and security efforts and impediments that may inhibit success;
 - The lessons from earlier successes in Iraq (e.g., Mosul) and their applicability to the current situation;
 - The capabilities of various elements of the Iraqi Security Forces, particularly with respect to handling the Jaysh al-Mahdi and Al-Qaida, and the appropriateness of the current scope, pace, and manner of transitioning security responsibility to them;
 - The relationship between Coalition forces and the security situation;
 - The relationship between economic resources and security;
 - The climate in the region and international community; and
 - Our leverage over the Iraqi Government and over individual actors. (S)
- Propose prescriptions for advancing core U.S. interests and identifying the resources necessary to support them, to include:
 - Coalition forces, of various types;

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- Civilian assets;
 - Diplomatic engagement, regionally and internationally; and
 - Other forms of engagement. ~~(S)~~
- Explore whether and how such resources may be made available. ~~(S)~~
 - Game out different scenarios that are likely to emerge in Iraq and how we would be positioned to respond to them. ~~(S)~~
 - Offer alternative recommendations for course corrections to our current approach in Iraq. ~~(S)~~

Structure

- The Iraq Review will be coordinated by an Iraq Senior Committee comprised of the Vice President, Secretary of State, Secretary of the Treasury, Secretary of Defense, National Security Advisor, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, and the Director of National Intelligence. ~~(S)~~
- Each such member of the Iraq Senior Committee will appoint one or two trusted representatives to an NSC-chaired Iraq Task Force which will meet intensively and draw upon the ongoing effort throughout the government to prepare the work as outlined above for the consideration of the Iraq Senior Committee. The members of this task force will be expected to make this review their highest priority; they should expect it to consume most of their time for the review period. ~~(S)~~
- The task force shall meet daily or as required. ~~(S)~~
- All agencies of the United States Government must give the Iraq Review and the Iraq Task Force full and complete support. ~~(S)~~
- The Iraq Senior Committee shall meet, in full or in part, according to a calendar to be distributed by the NSC. ~~(S)~~
- The National Security Advisor will provide the President regular briefs on the progress of the Iraq Review. ~~(S)~~
- The outcome and recommendations of the Baker-Hamilton Iraq Study Group shall be duly considered in the Iraq Review and incorporated as appropriate into its findings. ~~(S)~~

- The work should be completed on a schedule that will allow for the submission of recommendations to the President in mid-December. ~~(S)~~

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TR of
my interviews

Ongoing Iraq Strategic Review

Draft Non-Decisional Report

24 November, 2006

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By DAK NARA, Date 10/15/2019

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11/24/2006 9:00PM

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Ongoing Iraq Strategic Review

Draft Non-Decisional Report

24 November, 2006

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11/24/2006 9:00PM

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Guiding Principles

- **Success in Iraq remains critical to our national security and to success in the war on terror.**
 - **What we can reasonably achieve in the next 24 months is changing. We need to frame what success means for the next two years and beyond.**
- **Failure in Iraq would have disastrous consequences for the United States.**
- **There is no more pressing national security challenge facing the United States.**
- **There is no silver bullet solution in Iraq. Every option involves trade-offs across various risks.**

Relationship to the GWOT

- Iraq remains a central front in the global war on terror.
- Al Qaeda in Iraq has declared and shown its intentions to establish a caliphate in Iraq and then to expand the caliphate widely.
 - Sowing sectarian violence in Iraq has been and remains part of Al Qaeda's strategy to reach the goal of creating a caliphate.
- Iraq is the lead element in Al Qaeda's information operations campaign.
 - Attacking Al Qaeda for its killing of Muslims and stoking chaos and division is an important prong of the war of ideas.
- The freedom agenda is advanced by the survival and eventual strengthening of Iraq's nascent democratic institutions. Such progress is an important element in the broader struggle against violent extremism.
 - Winning in Iraq would not end the war on terror, but it would make success in the GWOT much easier.
 - Failing in Iraq would make succeeding in the GWOT vastly more difficult.

The Regional Picture

- **Key Arab states are deeply fearful of Iran's growing influence and suspicious that the Iraqi government is under Iranian sway.**
 - These states have responded negatively to Shi'a attacks on Sunnis and seen the Government of Iraq as complicit in them.
 - Arab states increasingly view terrorism as a problem fueled by the Shi'a.
 - As a result, these states have been slow to commit enough political and economic support to make a strategic impact, despite understanding the risks to themselves of a failed state in Iraq.
- **Iran has been cultivating influence in Iraq through all means at its disposal and increasingly playing the role of power broker.**
 - Arab states – and the Coalition – have not effectively opposed Iranian efforts.
 - Iran's threat is both lethal and the "burrowing" of Iranian actors into Iraqi institutions.
- **Syrian actions, while posing less of a strategic threat to Iraq than Iranian ones, exacerbate a largely domestic security problem.**
- **Iraq is central to our efforts in the region – and the developments in the region have direct bearing on the situation in Iraq. We must:**
 - Develop careful approaches to the sets of regional challenges, including Turkey, Iran and Syria, and the Gulf states.
 - Confront meddling, threats, and lethal interventions of Iran and Syria; [REDACTED]

1.4d

Present Situation

- **We have achieved many of our initial objectives in Iraq:**
 - Saddam Hussein is no longer a threat to Iraq, its neighbors, or the United States.
 - Iraq is governed by a freely elected government under a permanent constitution.
 - Democratic institutions have been established and are enabling Iraqis to shape their own state.
 - Per capita incomes have doubled (\$743 to \$1593 according to the WB) and Iraq has performed under its IMF agreement.
- **But the situation in Iraq has grown increasingly complex over the past 12 months.**
 - Growing AQI terrorism and a robust insurgency are now combined with sectarian violence.
 - The national government is eager to take lead responsibility, but is hampered by a lack of governmental capability and widening sectarian divisions.
 - Power centers are devolving, making “Green Zone” activity less relevant to events nationwide.
- **The political process has shown signs of maturation, but the prospects for meaningful reconciliation remain low.**
 - Judged by their actions, relatively few Iraqi leaders appear ready to accept a single vision for a united Iraq.
- **Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) have grown in effectiveness, but the levels of violence they must cope with continue to increase.**
 - Professionalism and effectiveness are improving but are not yet consistent across the force.
 - Some members of the ISF, notably the police, are contributing to sectarian violence.
 - With more than 300,000 trained and equipped members of the ISF assigned to units, substantially fewer numbers are present for duty on a given day.
 - Combat losses, desertion, attrition, and leave account for the majority of those absent.

Present Situation (continued)

- **The situation in Baghdad has not meaningfully improved despite tactical adjustments.**
 - The situation in Baghdad determines nationwide trends; its stabilization has been seen as key to a unified Iraq.
 - The Government of Iraq has been slow in delivering promised reconstruction despite having the funds.
 - Iraqi police in Baghdad are largely ineffective or worse – some are complicit in violence.
 - Iraqi army is better prepared, but is still fragile.
 - Force levels overall in Baghdad are inadequate to stabilize a city of its size.
- **Iraqi support for the Coalition has declined substantially, in part due to failure of security over the past year.**
 - The Shi'a increasingly accuse the Coalition of being responsible for security breaches.
 - In the absence of security, all communities are turning to "self-help."
- **In his public and private statements, Prime Minister Maliki articulates a positive vision where all Iraqis are protected by the rule of law.**
 - Yet he has been unable or unwilling to translate this vision into policies and realities on the ground.
 - All parties in the present environment are hedging, weighing the wisdom of making decisions for Iraq as a whole against the need to protect more narrow interests.
- **We are on the strategic defensive and the enemy has the initiative. Our posture is fixed.**
- **We are at a point of strategic choice. Our center of gravity – U.S. public support – is in jeopardy because of doubts that our Iraq efforts are on a trajectory leading to success.**

Key Assumptions

Previous

- Primary challenge is a Sunni-based insurgency.
- Political progress will help defuse the insurgency and dampen levels of violence.
- A National Compact is within the grasp of Iraqi leaders and will have meaningful impact on security.
- Shi'a will support Coalition and efforts to build a democratic state.
- Region has a strategic interest in the stabilization of Iraq; we can therefore count on Sunni Arab support.
- Majority of Iraqis and Iraqi leaders see their interests as best advanced by a united Iraq.
- Dialogue with insurgent groups will help reduce violence.
- Iraqi Security Forces are gaining in strength and ability to handle Iraq's security challenges.
- The American people will continue to support our efforts in Iraq.

Now

- Primary challenge is extremists from all communities; the center is eroding and sectarianism is spiking.
- While political progress and security improvements are intertwined, political progress difficult absent security.
- A National Compact, even if reached soon, may be in name only; our ability to force such an agreement appears limited.
- Sistani increasingly marginalized for many reasons; Shi'a center disillusioned with Coalition and U.S. efforts.
- Arab Gulf states are wary of Shi'a Iraq; ██████████ support Iraq in the context of a regional strategy that includes Iran and other regional initiatives.
- Iraqi leaders are advancing sectarian agendas – as hedging strategies, pursuit of narrow interests, and due to history.
- Dialogue with insurgents unlikely to produce strategic gains in current context and has costs with Shi'a.
- Parts of Iraq's police are complicit in stoking violence; most ISF are not yet ready to handle Iraqi security challenges independently.
- The tolerance of the American people for efforts in Iraq is waning and could have adverse implications for our ability to persevere there.

1.4d

Strategic Goals and Objectives

- Our strategic goal in Iraq remains the same: **A unified democratic Iraq that can govern itself, secure itself, and sustain itself, and is an ally in the war on terror.**
- **But we are at a new phase in the effort and must sharpen the objectives we believe are achievable in the next 12-18 months.**
- The identification of each objective surfaces some difficult but important issues.

1. Ensure that no terrorist safe haven exists in Iraq.

- What broad political and security environment do our special forces need in order to conduct effective operations?

2. Either:

(Broad) Strengthen Iraq's democratic institutions to help provide space for new political alignments and isolate extremist movements.

(Narrow) Preserve, and strengthen whenever possible, the foundation and opportunity for continued development of an independent and democratic Iraq.

- If political progress is necessary for security gains and vice versa, can or should we rely on these institutions to provide the level of political progress necessary to sustain our military presence in Iraq?
- Could the minimal level of political progress/reconciliation come through other institutions?

Strategic Goals and Objectives (continued)

3. Either:

(Broad) Stop or mitigate major humanitarian suffering, mass killings or displacements.

(Narrow) Prevent, to the limits of our capabilities, mass killings or mass expulsions.

- Are we able to curb sectarian violence beyond a very high threshold?
- How much sectarian violence can we tolerate?
- How important is dampening sectarian violence to achieving our other objectives and maintaining the moral and political support of our troops and the public?

4. Counter and limit Iranian activity in Iraq aimed at establishing Iranian hegemony in the region.

- Can we harness regional concerns about Iran into broader support for Iraq?

5. Help Iraq maintain its export of oil, for its own needs and to ensure a reliable supply of oil to global markets.

6. Regain the American strategic initiative and restore American credibility.

- How would refocusing our strategy more squarely on American interests in Iraq be perceived and would it help us regain our strategic initiative and credibility?

Emerging Consensus – Shift in Approach

- ***Increase our efforts to foster local political accommodations:***
 - Place less emphasis on brokering a National Compact; and
 - Build a basis for meaningful national reconciliation in the long run by better empowering moderates in each community – through working with local power centers – so that they can take on extremists.

- ***Address sectarian violence through:***
 - Transition of responsibility for security to Iraqi forces;
 - Possible expansion of Iraqi Army; and
 - Empowerment of moderates, especially Shi'a ones, to take on own extremists.

- ***Consolidate gains – politically and militarily – by focusing on:***
 - Sustaining security gains;
 - Preserving foundation of democratic governance;
 - Building ISF, and protect it from prematurely taking on security situations in which force could collapse; and
 - Deepening ties with moderates.

Emerging Consensus – Key Elements

- ***Build a strategic partnership with the Shi'a, which (with the Kurds) are our center of gravity in Iraq:***
 - Mitigate the insecurity of the Shi'a about the longevity of their democratic gains;
 - Do not micromanage central government, but focus on vital tasks;
 - Strengthen moderates, such as Ayatollah Sistani, by working with PM Maliki and others; and
 - Make clear our expectation that Shi'a moderates will take on Shi'a extremists, distance themselves from Iran, support efforts to counter Iranian aggression, and support human rights of all Iraqis.
- ***Accelerate the transfer of security responsibility to Iraqis:***
 - Hasten the transfer of the lead for counterinsurgency and day-to-day security (dampening sectarian violence) efforts;
 - Declare the completion of MNF-I mission a policy goal in 2007 and prepare to transition mandate;
 - Selectively expand and deepen embedding of transition teams;
 - Assign battlespace to Iraqi divisions and partner them with U.S. brigades;
 - Continue Coalition high-end SOF, counter-terrorism operations; and
 - Consider significant surge in U.S. forces to mitigate risk of transition or for other military missions necessary to execute strategy; internal or external; for military or non-military tasks.
- ***Change Sunni strategy:***
 - Execute a vigorous, integrated, fully resourced COIN strategy in Sunni areas – devote civilian and military resources as necessary;
 - Suspend negotiations with insurgents, unless have GOI support and are assessed as promising; and
 - Keep door open to all Sunnis willing to accept the terms of the new Iraq.
- ***Embed Iraq strategy in regional approach:***
 - Confront aggression of Iran and Syria in concert with other regional initiatives. Engage only from position of strength.
 - Continue efforts to manage tensions between Turkey, Iraq (and the Kurds);
 - Seek support of Gulf states by demonstrating how posture in Iraq helps counter Iranian hegemony; and
 - Continue to urge region's full support in international compact and global war on terror.

Key Shifts

Previous

- Coalition forces in the lead on security.
- Focus efforts on brokering National Compact among elites.
- Outreach to Sunnis; pressure Shi'a to keep Sunnis in.
- Help build government capacity across the board.
- Allow perception that we tolerate lethal Iranian and Syrian interference in Iraq.
- High U.S. diplomatic profile in Baghdad.
- Rely on UN mandate for legitimization of MNF-I presence.
- Build ISF to 325,000 end-strength.
- Action in areas of Sunni insurgency/AQI primarily kinetic, not focused on population security.
- Neutral posture toward all political entities.
- Modest embedding with Iraqi units.
- U.S. forces tied to territory.
- Gradual transfer of security responsibility to ISF.
- Continue relationship with pre-2003 political entities.

Now

- ISF moving to the lead on security with Coalition support.
- Focus efforts on small number of core issues (hydrocarbon law); spur local political accommodations; lay groundwork for national reconciliation later.
- Bolster the Shi'a center; arrest outreach to insurgents absent GOI buy in; keep door open to Sunni moderates.
- Target assistance to government to vital functions only; build capacity outside green zone.
- Push back aggressively on Iranian and Syrian behavior toward Iraq; engage from position of strength only.
- Lower U.S. diplomatic profile in favor of GOI.
- Negotiate long-term defense relationship for beyond 2007.
- Review size of Iraqi Army and possibly expand it; conduct fundamental review of Iraqi police.
- Execute an intensified, integrated COIN strategy in areas of Sunni insurgency (more force, PRTs, CERP, etc.)
- Find ways to bolster moderate individuals and movements.
- Selective and significant increase in embedding program.
- Free up U.S. brigades for independent missions over time.
- Accelerate transfer of battlespace and PIC to Iraqis.
- Review relations with political entities; focus on Shi'a.

Areas for Discussion

- **Reconciliation:** What are the prospects for a meaningful national reconciliation in the near term? What is our ability to improve those prospects through our efforts? Is it realistic to think Shi'a moderates – if bolstered – will take on Shi'a extremists?
- **Sectarian Violence/Baghdad Security:** What is our responsibility for dampening sectarian violence? What would be the consequences of handing this mission over to the Iraqis now? How important is curbing sectarian violence in Baghdad to our overall objectives?
- **Risk:** What level of risk are we willing to assume in transitioning security responsibility to ISF? What measures could we take to mitigate that risk and increase the chances of success?
- **Possible Civilian and/or Military Surge:** Do we have the ability to surge our civilian and/or military assets into Iraq? What would be the advantages and disadvantages of a surge? What would be the specific mission of those surging? Could we “surge” from within?
- **Timing/Window for Flexibility:** Do we have the political capital, regional influence, and stamina to try an intensified approach? Or does that only complicate efforts for a more modest, hedging strategy that may need to be adopted later?
- **Perceptions:** To what extent can we reframe our strategy and expectations of how we identify and pursue American interests? How would any shift – especially one considered to be a narrowing of our mission – be perceived by:
 - The American public;
 - U.S. troops;
 - The region;
 - The enemy;
 - Those in Iraq we are looking to boost?

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The Way Forward: 4 Organizing Constructs

- The following organizing constructs are potential frameworks for best organizing our efforts to achieve our objectives in light of the present situation, revised strategic assumptions, and strategic impediments.
- These constructs are non-mutually exclusive and/or can be sequenced to achieve desired results. They are:

Construct I: Adjust at the Margins

Construct II: Target Our Efforts

Construct III: Double Down

Construct IV: Bet on Maliki

- Descriptions of the constructs, including advantages and risks, follow ...

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Construct I: Adjust at the Margins

Concept: Make tactical refinements to our current approach that do not require a large influx of new resources or a dramatic change in force posture. Focus coalition forces on transitioning security responsibilities to the ISF as quickly as possible; focus political and economic efforts at helping the Maliki government implement existing plans designed to achieve a National Compact.

Assumptions Which Must Hold True:

- The current strategy is sound and sufficiently resourced. Switching courses now risks jettisoning the gains of the past, with no solid prospects of greater gains from an alternative approach.
- The new Iraqi government is merely six months old. This is not nearly enough time to reach conclusions about its permanent direction or ability over time to meet Iraq's many challenges. Saddam's legacy of mistrust and fear will take years to fully overcome.
- The introduction of Sunni Arabs into the political process has created the best opportunity since the fall of Saddam to forge a lasting political settlement and common vision for Iraq. Their participation signifies an enormous shift in attitudes and world view on the part of the Sunnis.
 - After a difficult year marred by the Samarra attack and the six month delay in government formation, we are now seeing the outlines of consolidation and a way forward on political, economic, and security fronts.
 - The steps taken recently on a way forward – the agreed upon benchmarked political timeline, the International Compact for Iraq, and the JCAISSR work on security benchmarks – may have come later than we had hoped, but have come soon enough to offer the best hope of consolidating political, economic, and security gains.
- Maliki is the right person to lead Iraq at this time. We have no viable alternative to Maliki and must therefore support him fully.
 - There is adequate evidence that Maliki is moving to address the militia problem on a political track, thereby seeking to resolve this challenge in the most sustainable, least violent and disruptive way possible.
 - In order to make difficult decisions in favor of Iraq, Maliki must be fully confident of our support. Greater conditionality in our relationship with Maliki will undermine this confidence.
- We can continue to adjust our tactics to meet the evolving challenges to our strategy.
- Departure from the current course would signal weakness to our enemies and to the region.
- We do not need dramatic changes in policy to rebuild the necessary domestic coalition in support of the Iraq war. Whatever public and political support that we need to reclaim can be won through a relaunched communications effort and demonstrated progress in Iraq.

Key Features:

1. Maintain our Military Approach

- Maintain the following missions:
 - Defeat the terrorists and neutralize the insurgency.
 - Train and equip the ISF, seeking to transfer security responsibility as quickly as possible.
 - Dampen sectarian violence so Iraq's institutions have time to consolidate.
- Continue to resource our military mission with current level of resources, until conditions allow for an adjustment of our forces.
- Establish our own internal security benchmarks to make clear what we expect to accomplish over the next 12 months including securing the key cities of Baghdad, Ramadi, and Basra.
- Continue to press Maliki to address the militia problem, but ultimately defer to his approach and sense of timing. Continue to lay the groundwork for a militia DDR program by year end.

2. Establish and Follow Through on Iraqi Security Benchmarks

- Complete the JCAISSR process and publicly announce a set of benchmarks to chart a security path ahead for the Iraqi government and the Iraqi people (to get them moving) and for the U.S. public (to reassure them that progress can be and is being made).
- As soon as the UNSCR process is completed, immediately begin bilateral negotiations for a long-term security partnership with the Iraqi government. Put the Iraqis in the lead.

3. Pursue the National Compact

- Focus our political efforts on the benchmarked political timeline approved by the Political Council for National Security last month – with the next initiatives being the oil law and de-Ba'athification legislation.
- Use this process to continually build confidence among the different communities and gradually nurture cross-cutting issues-based alliances (as happened with the regions law, where we saw the Shi'a Alliance split for the first time).
- Set a date for local elections and mobilize Sunni Arabs to vote and establish local institutions, addressing Sunni disenchantment with the political process through local governments empowered to deliver services to the Sunni heartland.
- Take the constitutional review process seriously together with the United Nations and other international partners and build momentum for a national referendum.
- Continue to implement our current Shi'a strategy, seeking better relationships with individual Shi'a entities and closer connections with Sistani and the Hawza.

4. Focus on the International Compact

- Direct international outreach efforts through the international compact forum – and press the international community to live up to its commitments.
- Deploy civilian experts to help the Iraqi government meet the many benchmarks established in the compact regarding the most critical and difficult economic reforms.

Advantages:

- Directs our energy and limited resources towards specific and tangible goals upon which the Iraqis (for the most part) have already agreed.
- Gives the new Iraqi government a fair chance to resolve its own problems through its own nascent constitutional institutions. This sets a significant example for Iraq and the region.
- Signals strength to our enemies by maintaining our strategy and our commitment to Iraq.
- Minimizes a backlash among Iraq's 14 million Shi'a who want us to work through existing institutions and arrangements. Many Shi'a have begun to question U.S. commitment to democracy and Shi'a majority rule and see the American search for a change as a betrayal.

Cons/Risks:

- Progress may not be sufficiently swift or visible to shore up collapsing public support in U.S.
- While there are many signs that Maliki shares our vision for Iraq there are also many signs that he shares – or is tolerant of – a narrow and extreme sectarian agenda which we cannot support.
- The present course may be unable to withstand another catastrophic attack (such as Samarra). If a different course could achieve a major political breakthrough that influences levels of violence, it might be better able to withstand such contingencies.
- Signs of progress do not outweigh signs of substantial deterioration as measured by 1) levels of violence, 2) civilian casualties, and 3) the hardening of sectarian positions among Iraq's elite.
- The Sadrist movement and many elements of the Sunni coalition may simply be unable to reconcile, thus remaining immune to political incentives or pressures.
- Current levels of military resources may be insufficient to achieve success across multiple missions, given the current pace of ISF development.
- Absent significant MOI reform, ISF may be hobbled and unable to assume security responsibility for longer than we are able to maintain our forces at current levels.
- The current pace of transferring security responsibility to Iraqis may shoulder them with burdens they cannot handle – and could worsen trends in sectarian violence.

Construct II: Target Our Efforts

Concept: Remove coalition forces from the line of fire, focus on Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), and let Iraqis deal with the sectarian violence. The lower profile will lower our costs and make the mission more sustainable. Support but do not pursue prescriptions through Iraqi institutions. Allow Iraqi leaders to find their own political equilibrium.

Assumptions Which Must Hold True:

- The primary threat to our national security is AQI, not the Shi'a. Our core mission should be fighting the terrorists with global reach, not trying to dampen sectarian violence that is inwardly directed.
 - We do, however, have a moral and humanitarian interest in limiting mass violence or expulsions. We can prevent mass civilian killings even with a limited military footprint.
- The time is not yet ripe for the formation of a national compact. Ripeness will come when:
 - Sunnis realize that they no longer have any prospect of seizing power through violence and accept their minority status in the political system.
 - Shi'a are comfortable enough in their political dominance that they are no longer in fear that their gains will be reversed by Sunni inclusion.
- The way to maximize leverage with the Shi'a is to accede to their requests to focus on AQI and give them freer reign in other matters of security.
- Maliki has the ability and the necessary tools to address the problem of Shi'a militias, particularly the Jays al-Mahdi (JAM).

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- If we do not have true partners in Iraq, it is better to determine this from the outset; we cannot cultivate partners, or encourage them to grow over time.
- Refocusing on AQI will not worsen sectarian violence beyond a level that is tolerable. AQI and sectarian violence are sufficiently disconnected to focus on one without the other. Reducing our footprint may help curb violence by reducing irritants among ordinary Iraqis.
- Coalition cannot curb sectarian violence – at least not for long – through kinetic action or sustainability operations absent a massive infusion of new military resources.
- There is not sufficient domestic support for a mission that puts coalition forces in between warring sectarian militias. This is an Iraqi problem that Iraqis will have to solve.
- We need a force that can stay in Iraq for the long haul to fight AQI. Such a force must be less burdensome on us, both in op-tempo and casualties, or it will be unsustainable.

- If sectarian violence does persist or significantly worsen, we will not face irresistible pressure – from the Iraqis, the American public, or the international community – to intervene to stop it.

Key Features:

1. Lower Coalition Exposure to Sectarian Conflict

- Reduce Coalition vulnerabilities by dramatically limiting patrols and withdrawing most forces from cities.
- Continue to embed and mentor Iraqi units inside the capital but make clear that security in those areas is an Iraqi responsibility.
- Conduct an accelerated drawdown of U.S. bases presently in Iraq – with an aim to having no more than 15 bases by April and 5 by July 2007.

2. Focus Coalition Military Activity Against AQI

- Shift Coalition forces to focus on the counterterrorism fight in Anbar and western Iraq.
- Retain and enhance high-end SOF capability to target AQI – and other targets where necessary in cooperation with Iraqi Security Forces.
- Compensate for security operations in Al Anbar with greatly expanded economic aid for the province, particularly a massive program for unemployed youth.

3. Do Not Seek to Compel a National Compact: Use Leverage But Deal with the Power Centers in Iraq for What They Are

- Use our focus on AQI and our withdrawal from urban areas to extract agreements from Maliki and other Shi'a groups: they will have freer reign in confronting the security situation, we will further invigorate our efforts with AQI, but they must ensure that our humanitarian redlines are not crossed – mass killings and expulsions of Sunnis or other minorities.
 - If they do not prevent such actions, we will leave Iraq.
- Seek a bilateral agreement with the Kurds based on our willingness to protect their interests even if the central government collapses and Iraq fractures. Agree to a U.S. military base in the north.
- Make clear to Sunni leaders that we want to help them rid AQI from Sunni areas, and will see that their localities are rewarded if they help us establish calm and defeat AQI. Perhaps work with Saudi Arabia to construct a guarantor relationship between it and Sunni areas.
- Condition further economic assistance and even Iraqi Security Force assistance on the government's commitment to providing neutral application of the law to all communities.

4. Compensate for Apparent Retreat with Regional Diplomacy and Other Steps

- Leverage public anti-AQI statements by all regional actors into a common front against terrorists.

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- Deploy and base forces near key border points to deter interference.

Advantages:

- Would have the most bipartisan support, at least initially.
- Would shift our efforts from working to combat more sectarian/ethnic agendas to trying to align our efforts alongside their most benevolent forms, even if they are not fully consistent with a united Iraq.
- Provides a means of protecting our two most basic strategic interests in Iraq: the battle for the global war on terror and the prevention of mass humanitarian hardship.
- Is the "long-term solution" that all other options would get to eventually.

Risks:

- Maliki and other Shi'a may not have the ability to rein in the JAM and prevent the crossing of our redlines; we may therefore need to make good on a threat that we do not see as fully in our interests (leaving Iraq if redlines are crossed).
- Taking pressure off the JAM and shrinking our footprint may unleash ethnic cleansing in Sunni areas, particularly in Baghdad, causing large population movements, refugee flows, and images of Sunni civilians being killed under our noses.
 - Americans may not tolerate Coalition inaction in the face of what could look like genocide.
 - The effects of these images on the region while we are doing nothing to intervene would further damage our reputation and create a new perception of weakness.
- Rising sectarian violence could destroy Iraqi national institutions, including the government and Iraqi security forces, causing anarchic conditions in all but the most homogenous areas of Iraq.
- Unrestrained Shi'a extremism and JAM activity will worsen the AQI problem by radicalizing ordinary Sunnis against both the Coalition and the Iraqi government.
- Iran could emerge even more emboldened, causing moderate Sunni regional actors to hedge even more by increasing support for Sunni extremists, thus further radicalizing the Sunni-Shi'a divide throughout the region and creating new breeding grounds and pretexts for terrorists.

Construct III: Double Down

Concept: Significantly increase Coalition political and military efforts in Iraq to win the "battle for Baghdad" and put the unity government on a sure footing. Use the ramp-up in effort to strengthen moderates in the collapsing center and win new commitments by Iraqi leaders to make the necessary compromises to forge a national compact.

Assumptions Which Must Hold True:

- The present trajectory in Iraq is more likely to lead to failure than success and we have a narrowing window to influence the situation.
- The broad contours of our strategy are sound, but the strategy has been insufficiently resourced.
 - A lack of reliable forces has prevented us and the Iraqis from stabilizing key parts of the country, as evidenced by the continuing need to "re-clear" areas in the Euphrates Valley and in Baghdad. Iraqi forces have fallen short, but we have not sufficiently supplemented existing forces to cover the shortfall.
 - Neutral forces have the best prospects of success for dampening sectarian violence. Iraqi police have proven unable to hold Coalition gains in key Baghdad neighborhoods, and there are not enough Iraqi Army units to play this role. The failure of the Baghdad Security Plan is not due to the intrinsic limitations of Coalition forces (e.g., unfamiliarity with sectarian identities) but due to the inadequate numbers of reliable forces, including Coalition forces.
 - Our civilian effort could more effectively help the Iraqis build government capacity if more civilians would deploy and if better security were provided to the areas in which they would perform their missions.
- A robust additional push from the United States will help increase confidence in the region and allow us to cajole Arab partners, like Saudi Arabia, to step up and support Iraq in ways they have thus far refused to do.
- A national compact is still possible among Iraqis, but requires that we play the role of guarantor.
 - We can overcome hedging behaviors – and a Shi'a consolidation agenda – if we convince Iraqis that we will not abandon Iraq or pursue a "Plan B."
 - There is no political solution without a security solution. The present environment is locking in a zero sum mentality and extreme hedging behaviors on all sides.
 - Shi'a leaders will never heed our calls to disband Shi'a militias (including the JAM) until the Sunni insurgency is better under control. Sunnis will not bargain for a real political solution until Shi'a militias are brought under control.
- An infusion of resources is sufficiently likely to yield positive results to warrant the costs and risks associated with doing so. The strain of surging additional U.S. forces can be managed.

- We can elicit specific upfront concessions and conditions from Iraqi leaders to give confidence that the infusion of resources is reinforcing a unity government and a positive vision for Iraq.
- The Iraqis can be persuaded to accept the infusion of new Coalition troops. We can overcome wariness of some actors of greater U.S. involvement in Iraq, perhaps by coupling it with other measures to enhance Iraqi capabilities or by limiting it with an explicit timeline.
- The American public will support one last push for victory in Iraq.
- We can make necessary adjustments in our overall effort to surge U.S. forces long enough to achieve a lasting strategic effect. With the additional security, Iraqis can consolidate gains before we are obliged to drawdown to sustainable levels.

Key Features:

1. Secure Baghdad / Destroy AQI

- Expedite an enhanced Iraqi capability.
 - o Revalidate recent assessments about the necessary increase in Iraqi Army forces. Have Maliki announce major increases in this force.
 - o Provide Maliki with enhanced strike force and other such capability.
- Prepare to deploy additional U.S. forces to Iraq (perhaps up to 30,000). Use these forces to:
 - o Ensure a reliable force in the capital of at least 100,000 (Coalition and ISF) to match historical norms.
 - o Enhance targeting of AQI and death squad leaders, in Baghdad and outside. If necessary, transfer additional SOF teams currently deployed in other theaters.
 - o Establish, with Iraqi forces, secure zones akin to the International Zone and centered around key ministries. Gradually expand outward (oil-spot style).
 - o Provide more reliable forces on the borders with Syria and Iran to diminish infiltration and to make a positive regional statement.
 - o Clear and hold Sunni neighborhoods with the help of reliable Iraqi forces in the first instance – both to prevent violence within them and to protect them from attacks from the JAM and Shi'a militias.
 - o Leave behind sufficient Coalition forces in all cleared neighborhoods of Baghdad and / or Iraqi forces with a visible Coalition embed presence.
 - o Significantly increase the embedding effort in the ISF, particularly in the MOI forces. Use this infusion to allow for purging of corrupt and complicit forces from the MOI.

- Redeploy surged forces out of Iraq as soon as enhanced embed program is operational (probably July 2007).
- In secured zones in Baghdad and peaceful parts of Iraq, reward peace and stability with a significant infusion of economic resources.
 - Help Iraqis implement large scale employment programs through the military
 - Increase the tempo of reconstruction programs in secure areas

2. Get the National Compact

- Present Maliki with our assessment of what needs to be done – by him personally and by his government. Explain we are willing to help take these steps, through infusion of greater resources and the use of our political capital to help him construct a new political base.
 - Explore, as necessary, substantive and presentational arrangements to address Maliki’s likely concern that an uptempo in American resources will diminish his authority. Present and craft the infusion of resources in a way which bolsters Maliki, as long as he becomes the leader of the moderate movement for a united Iraq.
- Be the guarantor of the new Iraq. Secure commitment from Iraq’s other political leaders to take specific steps necessary to transcend centrifugal forces.

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- Recognize moderates have no patron, and quietly throw the weight of U.S. resources behind moderates of all stripes. Do not try to pick winners by limiting support to the favored few.
- Increase outreach to Sunni insurgents and make clear (1) their opportunity to join in Iraq now and our willingness to be their guarantor (perhaps with Saudi Arabia or other Arab states) but (2) if they continue to resist, they will be crushed.
- Agree to have outstanding political issues resolved on a benchmarked 8 week timeline – with a nationwide referendum next summer to seal the deal and demonstrate national unity.

3. Put America on a War Footing

- Immediately begin to work with the new Congress to increase the size of the U.S. Army and Marines with a focus on combat brigade teams and special forces.
- Consider adapting present peacetime rotation schedule for critical combat units until Army expansion kicks in, recognizing that success in Iraq and other theaters requires a longer term presence and local familiarity.
- Establish a parallel civil service by which volunteers agree to deploy wherever their government needs them to advance and win the Global War on Terror.
 - Use directed assignments to Baghdad until the parallel service is constituted.

4. Dramatically Change the Regional Picture

- Use a ramped-up U.S. commitment to leverage greater cooperation from Sunni neighbors, with Saudi Arabia taking the lead in a multilateral setting.
- Convene quarterly neighbors conferences within a common strategic framework – working to secure regional buy-in for an Iraqi compact.
- Treat enhanced U.S. posture and demonstrated staying power in Iraq as a position of strength from which to engage Iran on Iraq – though the multilateral forum.
 - Diplomatic engagement would be part of a common strategic setting focused entirely on Iraq. Talking is part of a strategy – it is not the strategy.

Advantages:

- Highest likelihood of securing success, as we have defined it.
- Provides us with maximum leverage to influence Iraqi and regional behavior.
- Matches resources to rhetoric.
- Positions the United States for both success in Iraq and flexibility in the broader war on terror over the long term.

Cons/Risks:

- Few in Iraq are asking for a ramp-up and they may resist. If they refuse, we may not be able to compel them and may instead be compelled ourselves to a “Plan B.”
- Need to be confident that Maliki is a reliable partner and shares our vision of Iraq before major commitments are irreversible.
- Could exacerbate the problem of Iraqi dependency in the short term.
- American casualties may rise – at least in the short term.
- Securing bipartisan support would be very difficult and would likely not endure without quick and visible progress. Higher cost could sap public support without enduring visible progress.
- Even with public support, higher commitment is not sustainable for long without drastic steps that might break the all-volunteer force before expanded force structure is in place.
- Cycle of violence might return after U.S. forces ramp down leaving no lasting gains.
- If this strategy fails to produce tangible progress, there would be little support for a long-term U.S. commitment even at lower levels.

Construct IV: Bet on Maliki

Concept: Enhance the political and security resources available to Iraqi leaders so they can dampen violence and build toward stable political agreements and reconciliation over the next 6-12 months. Provide more resources for Iraq, but for the specific purpose of enhancing the political and military capabilities of Maliki (whereas Double Down invests greater resources across the board – government capacity, moderates, other political parties, etc. – Bet on Maliki invests almost exclusively in Maliki.)

Assumptions Which Must Hold True:

- Iraqi solutions reached through Iraqi institutions offer the best chance for long-term success.
- PM Maliki shares our vision for a non-sectarian, united, and federal Iraq. He can be a bold leader and take dramatic steps if we help him overcome capacity and political limitations.
- Maliki has the ability to bring together moderates across the political spectrum and form the basis for a truly national effort. He is willing to risk splitting the Shi'a Coalition in doing so and could gain Sistani's acquiescence for actions carrying that risk.
- U.S. engagement can help facilitate the emergence of a moderate coalition and a national compact without bringing additional resources or leverage to the table – apart from what is provided to Maliki.

Key Features:

1. Augment Iraqi Security Capabilities

- Continue Coalition activities in support of the Baghdad Security Plan, but focus on “holding” key Sunni and mixed neighborhoods to provide a stabilizing presence.
- Accelerate development of the ISF and the expansion of the Iraqi Army. Let Maliki announce this program.
- Dramatically, but quietly, increase in quantity and reach of our embedding/training program:
 - Significantly increase U.S. trainers and embeds (prepare for up to 25,000 centered primarily in and around Baghdad)
 - Initiate a reverse embeds program, like the Korean Katusas, by putting one or more Iraqi soldiers with every U.S. squad – to both improve our language capabilities and cultural awareness and to give Iraqis the experience and training with professional U.S. troops
- Begin immediately to negotiate a bilateral and long-term security partnership with the Iraqi government focusing on shared goals and benchmarks for success.

2. Construct a New Cross-Sectarian Coalition for Maliki's Political Base

- Help Maliki reform his cabinet, expand a moderate political base, and staff his office with technocrats. (Under the constitution Maliki lacks authority to hire and fire cabinet ministers.)

- Continue to build our relationship with Sistani and the Marjayiya to (among other things) permit new political arrangements, to include if necessary splits in the Shi'a Alliance.
- Continue to press Sunnis to join the political process and buy into a national compact in which their interests are protected as a minority community.
- Accelerate our Shi'a strategy and build strong and enduring linkages with parties who commit to sharing our fundamental vision for democratic and pluralistic Iraq.
 - Leverage Shi'a request for a "strategic partnership with Iraq *and* with the Shi'a into support for a cross-sectarian coalition.

3. Build a National Compact Around Moderate Vision for Iraq

- Leverage and link regional engagement with the national reconciliation process to adjust incentives among all communities – and to help overcome hedging behaviors.
- Support and keep timelines for the constitutional review process and the national compact timeline with U.N. engagement and support.
- Cap the national compact process with a unifying event such as a national referendum. Set this as a goal for Maliki to demonstrate national leadership qualities.

4. Put Iraqis in the Lead in Regional Dialogues

- Use the official forum for quarterly neighbors conferences to build Maliki's stature as a strong Iraqi leader who is not beholden to Iran or any other outside party.
- Encourage Maliki to lead on a world stage and bridge the widening Shi'a-Sunni divide.

Advantages:

- Puts the Iraqis in front as much as possible. Works to build the long-term partnerships that may be necessary to ensure long-term success.
- Can be calibrated to involve a modest level of additional military resources.
- Is likely to be more palatable to the Iraqis than "double down" because this strategy is clearly designed to empower them. Yet this approach will also hold the Iraqis accountable for failures.

Cons/Risks:

- Maliki may not share our vision for Iraq and be directing or acquiescing to a vigorous plan to consolidate Shi'a power and drive Sunnis from Baghdad.
- The present government may simply be too dysfunctional to overcome its divisions. Reshaping Maliki's political base could alienate Sadrists and provoke a violent Shi'a split.

- We may have insufficient leverage with other parties to compel them to support Maliki, absence the addition of more resources or other forms of leverage.
- It may be difficult to get bipartisan support for any significant increases in resources and/or U.S. commitments to Iraq.
- Increasing embeds while keeping coalition troops at current levels will strain PERSTEMPO and can be sustained only for a short period.
- We have a limited window to affect change. Other resource-intensive options, like "double-down," will probably not be available if we try this one and find that it has failed.

Iraq, The United States, and Sectarian Violence

The on-going Iraq review has surfaced an important debate: what is the appropriate role of the United States vis-à-vis Iraq's sectarian violence. This paper: 1) puts forward different assumptions and options associated with them and 2) offers a framework for making decisions.

Key facts/assumptions:

- AQI and death squads (both Shi'a and Sunni, but particularly JAM) are the main accelerators of sectarian violence; crippling them would not eliminate, but could lessen violence – perhaps significantly – to the point where the political process and other positive drivers might more readily have effect.
- 80% of sectarian violence happens in a 35 mile radius of Baghdad.
- The Iraqi Security Forces do not yet have the capability to handle the mission of quelling Iraq's sectarian violence. If the mission is immediately turned over to the ISF – even with an enhanced coalition embed program – the level of sectarian violence is likely to rise.
- Where Coalition forces have been present, they have been able to dampen but not eliminate sectarian violence.
- In many cases, handovers to ISF to hold cleared neighborhoods, or take the lead in critical mixed provinces (such as Diyala), have been unsuccessful, due to lack of capability, political will, or their actual complicity in violence.

Areas of Interagency Agreement

- Iraqis need to be responsible for addressing the problem of sectarian violence in their country. This must be clear to the Iraqi people and to the American people.
- Iraqis must take the lead in identifying and acting upon both the political and military/security steps needed to bring down sectarian violence.
- The Iraqi government and the Coalition must develop and adopt a policy that succeeds. We cannot simply hand the responsibility over to Iraqis. Therefore:
 - The Iraqi government and the Coalition need to determine what (political, economic, and military) steps the Iraqis must take.
 - The United States needs to determine what (political, economic, and military) steps are necessary on our part to help ensure that the Iraqis are able to take the lead in acting against sectarian violence.
 - These steps may be resource intensive, at least in the short and medium run.

Turning Areas of Agreement into Strategy

Broad agreement about the need to have Iraqis in the lead vis-à-vis sectarian violence is consistent with different strategies on the ground.

Which strategy is preferable depends on divergent assumptions about the feasibility and benefits of reducing sectarian violence:

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Bullish assumptions:

- Some reduction in sectarian violence is likely to be essential to political reconciliation, which in turn will make security gains more sustainable.
- Some combination of Iraqi and U.S. forces may be able to produce the requisite reduction in sectarian violence, at least for the short term, and long enough for political accommodations to be made.

Bearish assumptions:

- Coalition and Iraqi forces are unlikely to be able to bring down sectarian violence to any meaningful degree.
- Even if sectarian violence were to diminish, in the short and medium run, we may not be able to expect any political accommodation to occur that would have a sustainable impact on sectarian violence.
- But Coalition and Iraqi forces may be able to prevent mass killings by threatening Iraqi leaders and local actors that we would strike directly at those conducting such campaigns.

Which assumption set one supports determines the preferred strategy.

Bullish assumptions support Proposition 1: The United States needs to help the Iraqis deal with sectarian violence in the short and medium term so that they can build institutions and seek political accommodations necessary to squash sectarian violence in the long term.

This proposition stems from the following analysis:

- Sectarian violence has political and historical roots and is fueled by contests for power and revenge. It can only be resolved by Iraqis over time.
- Ultimately, Iraqis will have three main tools for addressing sectarian violence:
 - National reconciliation and/or local political accommodations;
 - Non-sectarian security forces of a higher caliber and reliability; and
 - The rule of law.
- We have an interest – and a role – in seeing these tools developed.
 - National reconciliation, local political accommodation, and the rule of law will be stymied at current or greater levels of sectarian violence.
 - We therefore have an interest in helping to dampen (recognizing we cannot eliminate) sectarian violence to empower moderates and help set the conditions for local and national political progress to take root.
 - The ISF is growing in capability, but cannot yet take full responsibility for sectarian violence. In the meantime, it is essential to the success of our overall mission in Iraq that ISF (particularly the Army) do not fracture under stress.
 - To ensure that the Army has the breathing space to grow in number and capacity, the presence of Coalition forces in critical areas and the subsequent dampening of sectarian violence may be necessary in the short to medium term (6-12 months).
 - We can support GOI efforts to define those instigating sectarian violence as anyone (regardless of sectarian or political affiliation) who acts outside the law.

Strategic Guidance: This proposition will require implementations plans that:

- Will create a non-sectarian, reliable ISF in the medium and long run.
- Safeguards the ISF against fracturing under the stress of sectarian violence in the short and medium run.
- Further supports – through civilian and other means – the creation of a criminal justice system to support the rule of law.
- Helps ISF and the GOI quell sectarian violence in strategic mixed neighborhoods and provinces in the short run, so that:
 - sectarian violence does not accelerate to the point where the ISF and Iraqi institutions are threatened with collapse, and
 - national reconciliation and/or political accommodations can begin to create a more positive and lasting dynamic.

The risks associated with this approach are that:

- Additional U.S. might have no meaningful impact on the security situation and could therefore result in wasted lives, money, and effort.
- Short-term improvements in the security situation might not be followed by national or local political accommodations needed to make improvements sustainable; violence could thus become almost impervious to U.S. and Iraqi efforts.
- U.S. efforts to support Iraqi institutions might postpone Iraqis taking responsibility for Iraqi problems.
- Efforts to build Iraqi capabilities might fail, squandering last bit of American tolerance for U.S. involvement in Iraq.

Bearish assumptions support Proposition 2: The United States should limit its interventions to stop sectarian violence only when the violence threatens to reach Srebrenica-type proportions or greater.

This proposition stems from the following analysis:

- Iraqis must make their choices about the character of their society and be accountable for those choices.
- Our ability to influence the contests for power and resources among Iraqis is minimal.
- Given our marginal ability to influence the course of events, we should distance ourselves from the mission of quelling sectarian violence.
- But we nonetheless have a moral and international responsibility to intervene when sectarian violence threatens to be cataclysmic.
- Our forces can continue to execute the core missions of fighting AQI and Iranian aggression even in an atmosphere of heightened sectarian violence.

Strategic Guidance: This proposition will require implementations plans that:

- Positions our forces in a way that we can intervene when major acts of sectarian violence seem imminent or get underway.
- Offers significant assistance to specific Iraqi leaders, institutions, and units that will impartially combat such violence.

- Selectively embeds Coalition advisors with effective Iraqi units while withholding the funding and training for units deemed complicit in acts of sectarian violence.
- Publicly and prominently puts the burden of addressing sectarian violence on the Iraqis in Baghdad and surrounding areas.
 - The GOI would assume security responsibility inside Baghdad outside of the IZ.
 - The GOI and relevant provincial and local authorities would be fully responsible for public order and the administration of justice.
- If necessary to prevent mass killings, prepare to facilitate population separation between east and west Baghdad and within mixed communities around Baghdad.

The risks associated with this approach are that:

- GOI and ISF might be unable or unwilling to handle sectarian violence without extensive support and violence spikes dramatically.
- Rise in sectarian violence could lead to one or more of the following:
 - Fracture of ISF and collapse of GOI
 - Invigoration of extremists (AQI, JAM) at expense of moderates
 - Collapse in Iraqi consent for Coalition presence
 - Disillusionment of our military with Iraq mission
 - Exacerbation of regional fault lines; Sunni vs Shi'a on Iraqi soil
- Deals cut with Iraqi leaders may not prevent sectarian violence; we may be put in a position to make good on threats to withdraw forces.

Deciding Among Options – or Sequencing Them

The Intelligence Community judges that they cannot assess with confidence which assumptions are true. We face three possible choices.

Choice 1: Make your best bet on which assumptions will prove true, and select either Proposition 1 or 2 with very limited information. Strategic guidance and risks would be as above.

Choice 2: Choose Proposition 1 as an initial position but prepare to fallback onto Proposition 2 if, after an interval of effort, it has failed. (Note: We judge it is not possible to do the reverse – to move from Proposition 2 to Proposition 1). Strategic guidance would be a modified version of Proposition 1, as you would need to build in some additional actions to lay the groundwork for a potential, later move to Proposition 2.

Strategic Guidance for Choice 2: This proposition will require implementations plans that:

- Will create a non-sectarian, reliable ISF in the medium and long run.
- Safeguards the ISF against fracturing under the stress of sectarian violence in the short and medium run.
- Further supports – through civilian and other means – the creation of a criminal justice system to support the rule of law.
- Helps ISF and the GOI quell sectarian violence in strategic mixed neighborhoods and provinces in the short run, so that:

- sectarian violence does not accelerate to the point where the ISF and Iraqi institutions are threatened with collapse,
- moderates are bolstered and have the confidence to begin isolating the extremists in their own communities and
- national reconciliation and/or political accommodations can begin to create a more positive and lasting dynamic.

And...

- Build relationships with a broad set of political actors, in case subsequent efforts to control sectarian violence relies on deals struck with them.
- Plans for and maintains Coalition presence in areas needed to provide sufficient deterrent to mass killings or expulsions.
- Embeds selectively with Iraqi forces, to reinforce capability of Iraqi forces to handle sectarian violence without much Coalition support over the medium and long run.

Choice 3: Decide that because hitherto we have promised (or at least publicly aimed for) results we have not been able to achieve, this time the United States must opt for the approach in which we have the highest confidence that we can produce the promised results. Choose Proposition 2. Strategic guidance and risks would be as above (Proposition 2).

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Ongoing Iraq Strategic Review

Draft Non-Decisional Report

7 December 2006

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Key Assumptions

Previous

- Primary challenge is a Sunni-based insurgency.
- Political progress will help defuse the insurgency and dampen levels of violence.
- A National Compact is within the grasp of Iraqi leaders and will have meaningful impact on security.
- Shi'a will support Coalition and efforts to build a democratic state.
- Region has a strategic interest in the stabilization of Iraq; we can therefore count on Sunni Arab support.
- Majority of Iraqis and Iraqi leaders see their interests as best advanced by a united Iraq.
- Dialogue with insurgent groups will help reduce violence.
- Iraqi Security Forces are gaining in strength and ability to handle Iraq's security challenges.
- The American people will continue to support our efforts in Iraq.

Now

- Primary challenge is extremists from all communities; the center is eroding and sectarianism is spiking.
- While political progress and security improvements are intertwined, political progress difficult absent security.
- A National Compact, even if reached soon, may be in name only; our ability to force such an agreement appears limited.
- Sistani increasingly marginalized for many reasons; Shi'a center disillusioned with Coalition and U.S. efforts.
- Arab Gulf states are wary of Shi'a Iraq; ██████████ support Iraq in the context of a regional strategy that includes Iran and other regional initiatives.
- Iraqi leaders are advancing sectarian agendas – as hedging strategies, pursuit of narrow interests, and due to history.
- Dialogue with insurgents unlikely to produce strategic gains in current context and has costs with Shi'a.
- Parts of Iraq's police are complicit in stoking violence; most ISF are not yet ready to handle Iraqi security challenges independently.
- The tolerance of the American people for efforts in Iraq is waning and could have adverse implications for our ability to persevere there.

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Strategic Goals and Objectives

- Our strategic goal in Iraq remains the same: **A unified democratic Iraq that can govern itself, secure itself, and sustain itself, and is an ally in the war on terror.**
- **But we are at a new phase in the effort and must sharpen the objectives we believe are achievable in the next 12-18 months.**
- The objectives in this new phase are:

1. Fight Al Qaeda and its supporters and ensure that no terrorist safe haven exists in Iraq.
2. Ensure the territorial integrity of Iraq and counter/limit destructive Iranian activity in Iraq.
3. Help safeguard democracy in Iraq by strengthening its democratic institutions and preventing the return of the forces of tyranny.
4. Help create the conditions for Iraqi national reconciliation but with the Iraqi government clearly in the lead.
5. Continue to strengthen Iraqi Security Forces and accelerate the transition of security responsibility to the Iraqi government.
6. Help Iraq maintain its export of oil, for its own needs and to ensure a reliable supply of oil to global markets.

Emerging Consensus – Key Elements

- **Accelerate the transfer of security responsibility to Iraqis:**

- Hasten the transfer of the lead for counterinsurgency and day-to-day security (dampening sectarian violence) efforts;
- Declare the completion of MNF-I mission a policy goal in 2007 and negotiate long term defense relationship;
- Appropriately expand and deepen embedding of transition teams;
- Assign battlespace to Iraqi divisions and partner them with U.S. brigades;
- Continue Coalition high-end SOF, counter-terrorism operations against AQI, its supporters, and death squads; and
- Consider significant surge in U.S. forces to mitigate risk of transition or for other military missions necessary to execute strategy; internal or external; consider both a surge of forces already in Iraq and addition of new forces from outside Iraq.

- **Bolster the moderates and encourage the growth of a moderate center:**

- Build a strategic partnership with the Shi'a to strengthen moderates, including Sistani;
- Make clear our expectation that moderates will take on extremists, distance themselves from Iran, support efforts to counter negative Iranian activity in Iraq, and support human rights of all Iraqis;
- Do not micromanage central government, but focus on vital tasks;
- Execute a vigorous, integrated, fully resourced COIN strategy; devote civilian and military resources as necessary to support Sunnis willing to fight AQI and separate the Sunni population from AQI and its supporters;
- Cut back negotiations with insurgents, pursuing where we have GOI support and negotiations are assessed as promising; and
- Continue efforts to see that moderate, violence-eschewing Sunnis are given appropriate place in politics; and
- Maintain and strengthen relations with the Kurds.

- **Help the Iraqi government address their responsibility for quelling sectarian violence through:**

- Accelerating the transition of responsibility for security to Iraqi forces;
- Possible expansion of Iraqi Army;
- Empowering moderates, especially Shi'a moderates, to take on own extremists; and,
- Acting with the ISF as appropriate to enforce the rule of law against those who use violence against innocent civilians.

- **Embed Iraq strategy in regional approach:**

- Confront destructive activity of Iran and Syria, in concert with other regional initiatives. Engage only from position of strength;
- Continue efforts to manage tensions between Turkey, Iraq (and the Kurds);
- Seek support of Gulf states by demonstrating how posture in Iraq helps counter Iranian hegemony; and
- Continue to urge region's full support in international compact and global war on terror.

Key Shifts

Previous

- Coalition forces in the lead on security.
- Focus efforts on brokering National Compact among elites.
- Outreach to Sunnis; pressure Shi'a to keep Sunnis in.
- Help build government capacity across the board.
- Allow perception that we tolerate lethal Iranian and Syrian interference in Iraq.
- High U.S. diplomatic profile in Baghdad.
- Rely on UN mandate for legitimization of MNF-I presence.
- Build ISF to 325,000 end-strength.
- Action in areas of Sunni insurgency/AQI primarily kinetic, not focused on population security.
- Neutral posture toward all political entities.
- Modest embedding with Iraqi units.
- U.S. forces tied to territory.
- Gradual transfer of security responsibility to ISF.
- Continue relationship with pre-2003 political entities.

Now

- ISF moving to the lead on security with Coalition support.
- Let GOI take more of the lead in brokering National Compact as we focus efforts on few core issues that are key to unity (hydrocarbon law); spur local political accommodations; lay groundwork for more meaningful national reconciliation later.
- Bolster Shi'a center; cut back insurgent outreach absent GOI buy in; keep door open to all Sunnis willing to accept new Iraq.
- Target assistance to vital functions only; build capacity outside IZ.
- Push back aggressively on destructive Iranian and Syrian behavior toward Iraq.
- Lower U.S. diplomatic profile in favor of GOI.
- Negotiate long-term defense relationship for beyond 2007.
- Review size of Iraqi Army and possibly expand it; conduct fundamental review of Iraqi police.
- Execute an intensified, integrated COIN strategy to support Sunnis willing to fight AQI and to separate Sunni population from AQI (more force, PRTs, CERP, etc.)
- Find ways to bolster moderate individuals and movements.
- Significant increase in embedding program.
- Free up U.S. brigades for independent missions over time.
- Accelerate transfer of battlespace and Provincial Control to Iraqis.
- Review relations with political entities.

Comparing Strategic Goal and Objectives

Baker-Hamilton

"An Iraq that can govern itself, sustain itself, and defend itself."

...denies terrorism a sanctuary

...maintains its territorial integrity, is at peace with its neighbors

..broadly representative government... doesn't brutalize its own people

National reconciliation is essential to reduce further violence and maintain the unity of Iraq. U.S. forces can help provide stability for a time to enable Iraqi leaders to negotiate political solutions...

The Iraqi government should accelerate assuming responsibility for Iraqi security...the primary mission of U.S. forces should evolve to one of supporting the Iraqi army...

Since the success of the oil sector is critical to the success of the Iraqi economy, the United States must do what it can to help Iraq maximize its capability.

Bush Administration

A unified democratic Iraq that can govern itself, sustain itself, and secure itself, and is an ally in the war on terror.

Fight Al Qaeda and its supporters and ensure that no terrorist safe haven exists in Iraq.

Ensure the territorial integrity of Iraq and counter/limit destructive Iranian activity in Iraq.

Help safeguard democracy in Iraq by strengthening its democratic institutions and preventing the return of the forces of tyranny.

Help create the conditions for Iraqi national reconciliation.

Continue to strengthen Iraqi Security Forces and accelerate the transition of security responsibility to the Iraqi government.

Help Iraq maintain its export of oil, for its own needs and to ensure a reliable supply of oil to global markets.

Comparing Key Strategy Elements

Baker-Hamilton

Our Strategy

INTERNAL APPROACH - SECURITY

- Gradually change the primary mission of U.S. forces in Iraq from combat to training and support of Iraqi army, QRF. Anticipate all combat forces out by 2008.
 - Could support surge of combat forces to secure Baghdad or speed up training/equipping mission
- Accelerate the transition of security responsibility to Iraqis; increase size of Iraqi army and number of U.S. embeds
- Cease open-ended commitment to keep a large number of troops in Iraq.
- Restore U.S. military to full combat capability by focus on retraining and restoration of equipment.

INTERNAL APPROACH - POLITICAL

- Support and press Iraqi leaders to take steps vital to reconciliation of Iraqis.
- Make continued high levels of U.S. political, economic, and military support conditional upon Iraqi progress toward publicized benchmarks.
- Major increase U.S. assistance to increase Iraqi capacity (\$5bn a year).

INTERNAL APPROACH - SECURITY

- Gradually change the primary mission of U.S. forces in Iraq from combat to training and support of Iraqi army, QRF. No timeline.
- Accelerate the transition of security responsibility to Iraqis; increase size of Iraqi army and number of U.S. embeds
- Fully-resourced COIN effort to separate AQI from moderate Sunnis
- Restore U.S. military to full combat capability, possibly by an increase in U.S. army end strength.

INTERNAL APPROACH - POLITICAL

- Support reconciliation efforts, but shift emphasis from National Compact to setting conditions for it by supporting moderates, building strategic relationship with Shi'a, and separate Sunnis from AQI.
- Encourage Iraqi leaders to identify economic, political, and security benchmarks and work toward them; ease up on micromanagement of politics.
- Refocus existing levels of resources for Iraqi capacity building; narrow efforts at national level; expand at provincial level.

Comparing Key Strategy Elements

Baker-Hamilton

Our Strategy

EXTERNAL APPROACH

- Launch a diplomatic offensive to build and int'l consensus for stability in Iraq and the region.
- Form a regional contact group to reinforce security and national reconciliation within Iraq.
- Try to engage Iran and Syria constructively.
- Embed efforts in Iraq in a regional strategy that accelerates efforts to resolve Arab-Israeli conflict.
- Increase support for Afghanistan.

INTEGRATE ALL ELEMENTS OF U.S. NATIONAL POWER

- Adopt normal budget procedures
- Enhance Expeditionary Capacity of Civilian Sector
- Reform Authorities

EXTERNAL APPROACH

- Continue and intensify efforts to win international support for Iraq, especially through Int'l Compact
- Maliki to form regional forum; USG support.
- Confront Iran and Syrian meddling in Iraq.
- Intensify efforts on Arab-Israeli conflict.
- Increase support for Afghanistan.

INTEGRATE ALL ELEMENTS OF U.S. NATIONAL POWER

- Adopt normal budget procedures
- Enhance Expeditionary Capacity of Civilian Sector
- Reform Authorities