

Iraq in the News

Sadr City Security:

The Story: The Press is reporting that “Iraq’s Prime Minister ... ordered the removal of military road blocks and checkpoints around the flashpoint Sadr City district of Baghdad.” “Maliki’s decision marked a major victory for Shiite militants.” (AFP, 10/31/06)

On the Ground:

- Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki met with U.S. Ambassador Khalilzad, and General Casey, on October 31. At that meeting, Prime Minister Maliki, Gen. Casey, and Amb. Khalilzad agreed to make adjustments to checkpoints and crossing points in an area of northeast Baghdad, including Sadr City, to address problems with traffic flow and the disruptions to essential daily activity for Baghdad citizens.
- Following this joint decision, Gen. Casey ordered the Coalition Force to open selected crossing points and checkpoints.
- The Multi-National Force Iraq, the U.S. Embassy, and the Government of Iraq agreed to continue to address vigorously the threat to security posed by terrorists and armed groups that operate outside the authority of the state. (Source: MNF-I)

Additional Iraqi Security Forces:

The Story: Prime Minister Maliki announced two initiatives to enhance the strength of the Iraqi Security Force. The first initiative will add extra personnel to existing ISF units to offset absences caused by attrition and normal leave. The second initiative will add an additional 18,700 troops to the Iraqi Military.

On the Ground:

- The additional 18,700 Iraqi troops will be paid for by the Govt. of Iraq.
- The additional forces will give Prime Minister Maliki additional combat power in the most heavily contested areas in Iraq and establish a deployable tactical reserve. The forces will provide enough manpower so that Iraqi Army Divisions can be removed from operations periodically to rearm, refit and retrain.

Bringing Saddam to Justice

On November 5th, the Iraqi High Tribunal is expected to render a verdict on charges against Saddam Hussein.

Charges Against Saddam: Saddam and seven others are accused of arresting 550 men, women, and children in Ad-Dujayl without warrants, and their subsequent torture and extra-judicial killing.

Background: On July 8, 1982, 10 individuals from the town of Ad-Dujayl tried to assassinate Saddam Hussein. In response to the assassination attempt; Saddam is charged with arresting over 500 people from Dujayl and deporting them to a desert prison camp for over three years. Saddam’s Revolutionary Command Council Court (RCCC) later condemned 148 individuals from Dujayl. Forty six of those condemned had already died under torture. Children as young as 11 and 12 years old were included in the execution order.

Torture: Witnesses testified about torture by electric shocks, hanging, forced enemas, beatings, and bodily mutilation.

- One of these witnesses in this case described being taken from his home as a 15-year old boy, and placed in a torture facility with his parents, seven brothers, and four sisters. When he peeked through a blindfold he saw a machine, which he said “looked like a grinder” with hair and blood on it.
- The witness saw his own relatives tortured with acid, rubber hoses and electrically charged whips. “If I had to describe all the torture,” he testified, “I would need 10 days.” Seven of Mohammed’s relatives died in captivity, and he was banished to a desert prison camp.

General Points:

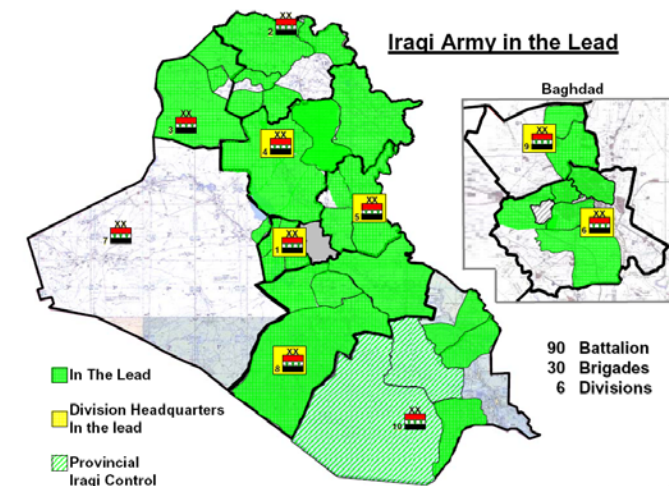
- Ad-Dujayl is not the most heinous charge against Saddam, nor does it rise to the level of other crimes committed by the former Iraqi regime, but all Iraqis know someone who has experienced the brutality of Saddam’s regime.
- This is an Iraqi court and an Iraqi process. Iraqis are pursuing justice through the Rule of Law.

Iraq in Transition

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“As I said earlier, last week we talked about ways this transition would become apparent. We saw three good examples this past week.”

(Major General William Caldwell, 11/02/06)

1. “Prime Minister Maliki’s announcement of the Government of Iraq’s Iraqi Security Forces expansion plan, which will add new boots on the ground and provide him greater flexibility to respond to situations around the country.”
2. “We saw it in greater cooperation on security measures in Baghdad when the prime minister, Ambassador Khalilzad and General Casey coordinated adjustments to the checkpoints and crossing points to address the disruptions to essential daily life activity for the citizens of Baghdad.”
3. “We see it in increased coordination on achieving our common goals, that of accelerating the pace of training the Iraqi Security Force, the assumption of complete command and control over the Iraqi security force, and acceleration of the transfer responsibility for the security to the Government of Iraq.”



Source: MNF-I 10/26/06

Security

“Recently, American and Iraqi forces have launched some of the most aggressive operations on enemy forces in Baghdad since the war began. They have cleared neighborhoods of terrorist and death squads, and uncovered large caches of weapons...”

(President Bush, 10/25/06)

- Between October 24-30, 21 missions were conducted that resulted in four death squad cell leaders captured and 70 death squad cell members detained.
- Throughout October, 181 assaults were conducted on terrorist sites that resulted in 85 terrorists killed and 427 alleged terrorists detained.
- Last week, casualties decreased nationwide by 23%.
- Last week, there was a 41% drop in sectarian killings in Baghdad.
- Last week, improvised explosive device (IED) activity was at its lowest level in seven months. However, IEDs still produced the most casualties.
- In October, “more than 300 Iraqi Security Force personnel have given their lives in battle.” (President Bush, 10/25/06)
- As of October 23rd, there were 312,500 trained and equipped Iraq Security Force personnel. 131,700 of those fall under the Iraqi Ministry of Defense and 180,800 report to the Iraqi Ministry of Interior.
- Six Iraqi Army Division Headquarters are in the lead, meaning they can plan, coordinate and lead security operations with limited Coalition support. Thirty one battalions and nine brigades are also in the lead.
- Two Iraqi Army Divisions now fall under the new Iraqi Ground Forces Command. These units are “commanded and controlled directly from the Prime Minister down through the Minister of Defense, to the Joint Headquarters to the Iraqi Ground Forces Command structure, down to the individual Iraqi soldier on the ground.” (Major General William Caldwell, MNF-I Press Briefing, 9/6/06)

Democracy

“Because Iraq is an inherently diverse country we need a balance that protects diversity and encourages a voluntary, democratic, federal national unity. This will benefit the entire region. For most of its existence as a modern state, Iraq was profoundly unbalanced politically. Power was concentrated in the hands of the few, the benefits of the state denied to the many. The liberation of Iraq in 2003 temporarily created a new, if fundamentally democratic, imbalance... We must defend diversity.”

(Barham Salih, Deputy Prime Minister of Iraq, 9/17/06)

“We’re helping Iraqi leaders to complete work on a national compact to resolve the most difficult issues dividing their country. The new Iraqi government has condemned violence from all quarters and agreed to a schedule for resolving issues such as disarming illegal militias and death squads, sharing oil revenues, amending the Iraqi constitution and reforming the de-Ba’athification process.”

(President Bush, 10/25/06)

Revising the Constitution: In October, the Iraqi Parliament established a 27 member constitutional review committee that is formed across party lines. The promise of constitutional review was a key element in gaining Sunni participation in the 2005 Constitutional Referendum.

Considering Federalism: The “Executive Procedures to Form Regions Law” establishes the procedures required for provinces to join or form regions. It does not divide Iraq into three parts as has been widely reported.

Distributing Oil Wealth: (Hydrocarbon Law) The proposed Hydrocarbon Law will establish formulas for sharing hydrocarbon revenues across Iraq based on population.

De-Ba’athification Reform: is designed to reform the practices and procedures of the Iraqi De-Ba’athification Commission. This proposal will focus on individual accountability and allow low-level technical experts to return to government service. (Legislative Goal for November, 2006)

Economy

“The international community is also supporting the International Compact that outlines the support that will be provided to Iraq as it moves forward with its own program of reform.”

(President Bush, 10/25/06)

Encouraging Foreign Investment: (Investment Law) The investment law is a centerpiece of the Iraqi Economic Revitalization Plan. It establishes a legal and regulatory framework for foreign companies to invest in Iraq.

Easing the Fuel Supply: (Fuel Import Liberalization Law) This law allows private companies to import petroleum products. By increasing supply, it helps eliminate the fuel black market.

Creating an International Compact: As described by Deputy Secretary of the Treasury Robert Kimmitt, the International Compact for Iraq is “an Iraqi government-led initiative to transform Iraq’s economy and achieve economic and financial independence within five years. If the Iraqis map out a credible and promising plan, the international community will support it, investing in Iraq’s future. Additional assistance will be expressly conditional on Iraq achieving the benchmarks it has set out.” (Robert Kimmitt, 9/18/06)

- The International Compact for Iraq is an initiative of the Government of Iraq and the United Nations for a new partnership with the international community.
- The International Compact was formally launched by Iraq and the World Bank / UN on July 27. The Compact is co-chaired by the Government of Iraq and the UN, with the support of the World Bank.
- On September 10th, the Compact Preparatory Group (made up of Gulf Region and European countries) validated the concept that Iraq would undertake real and specific economic reforms in exchange for greater international support.