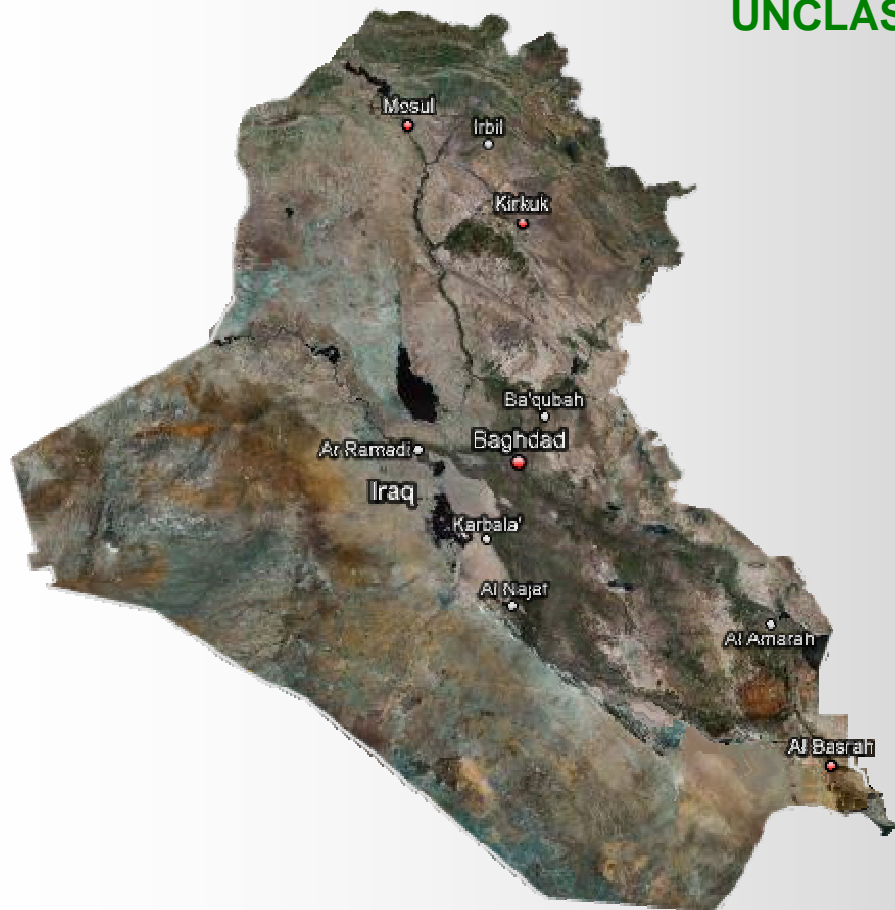


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Iraq

Status Report

February 25, 2009



Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs
U.S. Department of State



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HIGHLIGHTS



- **Final Provincial Election Results Released (*POLITICAL*, page 4).**
- **Iraqi and South Korean Presidents Agree to Non-Binding Oil Contract (*ECONOMIC*, page 11).**
- **Secretary General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, visits Baghdad (*DIPLOMATIC*, page 20).**
- **Violence Levels in Iraq at Six-Year Low (*SECURITY*, page 22).**

POLITICAL - Governance & Legislation



As final provincial election results are released, Iraq deals with ongoing political and legal issues

Final Provincial Election Results Released:

- Iraq's Independent High Electoral Commission announced February 19 the seat allocations and names of the candidates to be seated on the new provincial councils in the 14 provinces where elections were held January 31. While there was little deviation from the preliminary results released February 5, there were some differences. For example, in Anbar, Sunni tribal chiefs won the most seats (8 of 29); the preliminary results had indicated that they placed second. The election results will be certified following a complaint and appeal period.

New Minister of Justice Confirmed:

- The Council of Representatives confirmed Judge Dara Nur al-Din as Minister of Justice on February 19. The position had been filled by an acting minister since April 2007. Judge Dara is a graduate of Baghdad University College of Law, and a veteran of Kirkuk and Baghdad courts. He was a member of the former Governing Council, then the interim National Council, and finally the National Assembly. Judge Dara is ethnically Kurdish.

POLITICAL - Governance & Legislation



As final provincial election results are released, Iraq deals with ongoing political and legal issues

Lawmaker Accused of Involvement in Violence:

- **Former bodyguards of Council of Representatives member Mohammed al-Dayni implicated him in a series of violent attacks, including a 2007 suicide bombing in the Council of Representatives building. Al-Dayni denied involvement.**

KRG Resignations:

- **Deputy Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) Omar Fattah resigned February 24. This follows the resignations of several members of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) earlier in the month, some of whom returned to the party after an agreement on reforms to be undertaken, including increased transparency. Media have reported that PUK co-founder Noshervan Mustafa had planned to establish a new candidate list to compete with the established parties in the KRG's parliamentary elections, and that Imad Ahmed, who is currently the KRG's reconstruction minister, may become the new deputy prime minister.**

POLITICAL - Governance & Legislation



As final provincial election results are released, Iraq deals with ongoing political and legal issues

Iraqi Shoe Thrower Begins Trial:

- The trial of Muntader al-Zaidi, the Iraqi journalist who threw his shoes at then U.S. President George W. Bush, began February 19. Zaidi is charged with assaulting a visiting foreign leader, the penalty for which is up to 15 years in prison. His lawyers hope to reduce the charges, arguing that the act was not premeditated and that the visit was not an official visit because it was not announced in advance. The judge postponed the proceedings until March 12 when he expects to receive a statement from Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki's office on the exact classification of the visit.

Iraqi National Museum Reopens:

- Iraq's National Museum reopened February 23 after being closed for six years. Tourism and Antiquities Minister of State Qahtan Abbas announced in a red carpet VIP media event that 6,000 of 15,000 artifacts looted in 2003 have been recovered. Abbas has rejected criticism for opening the museum prematurely -- before adequate security had been put in place and without properly cataloguing returned items -- noting that Iraq's security situation had improved. Prime Minister Maliki attended the opening ceremony and thanked all the countries that provided support to rebuild the museum and returned lost artifacts.



POLITICAL – Government of Iraq

Coalition Affiliation (at time of appointment)
United Iraq Alliance
Kurdistani Alliance
Iraqi Accord Front
Iraqi National List
Other / Independent

(F) = Female

***Formerly Iraqiya

Prime Minister
Nuri Kamil al-Maliki

Deputy Prime Minister
Rafi Hiad Jiad al-Issawi

Deputy Prime Minister
Dr. Barham Ahmed Salih

President
Jalal Talabani
Deputy President
Tariq al-Hashimi
Deputy President
Adil Abd al-Mahdi

Minister of Agriculture
Ali Husayn Kadhum al-Bahadili

Minister of Communications
Faruq Abd al-Qadir Abd al-Rahman

Minister of Culture
Mahir Dilli Ibrahim al-Hadithi

Minister of Defense
Abd al-Qadir Muhammad Jasim al-Aubaidi

Minister of Displacement & Migration
Dr. Abd al-Samad Rahman Sultan

Minister of Electricity
Dr. Karim Wahid al-Hasan

Minister of Education
Dr. Khudayr Mousa Jaffar al-Khuzai

Minister of Environment
Dr. Nermin Othman Hassan (F)

Minister of Finance
Bayan Jabr

Minister of Foreign Affairs
Hoshyar Mahmud Zebari

Minister of Health
Dr. Salih Mahdi Mutlab al-Hasnawi

Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research
Abid Dhiyab al-Ujayli

Minister of Human Rights
Eng. Wijdan Mikhail Salim (F)

Minister of Industry & Minerals
Fawzi Fransu Hariri

Minister of Interior
Jawad Kadhum Eidan al-Bulani

Minister of Justice
Dara Nur al-Din

Minister of Housing & Construction
Bayan Dizayee (F)

Minister of Labor & Social Affairs
Eng. Mahmud Muhammad Jawad al-Radi

Minister of Oil
Dr. Husayn Ibrahim al-Shahristani

Minister of Planning
Ali Ghalib Baban

Minister of Trade
Dr. Abd al-Falah Hassan Hummadi al-Sudani

Minister of Science & Technology
Dr. Raid Jahid Fahmi

Minister of Municipalities & Public Works
Riyadh Abd al-Hamza Gharib

Minister of Transportation
Amir Abd al-Jabar Ismail

Minister of Water Resources
Dr. Abd al-Latif Jamal Rashid

Minister of Youth & Sports
Eng. Jasim Muhammad Jaffar

Minister of State for Civil Society Affairs
Dr. Thamir Jafar al-Zubaidi

Minister of State for National Dialogue
Dr. Akram Mousa Hadi al-Hakim

Minister of State for National Security
Eng. Shirwan Kamil al-Waili

Minister of State for Foreign Affairs
Dr. Muhammad Munajid Aifan al-Dulaymi

Minister of State for Provinces Affairs
Dr. Khulud Sami Izzara al-Majun (F)

Minister of State for Tourism and Antiquities
Dr. Qahtan Abbas Numanal-Jabburi

Minister of State for Women's Affairs

Minister of State for CoR Affairs
Safa al-Din Muhammad al-Safi

Minister of State at Large
Muhammad Abbas Muhammad al-Uraybi

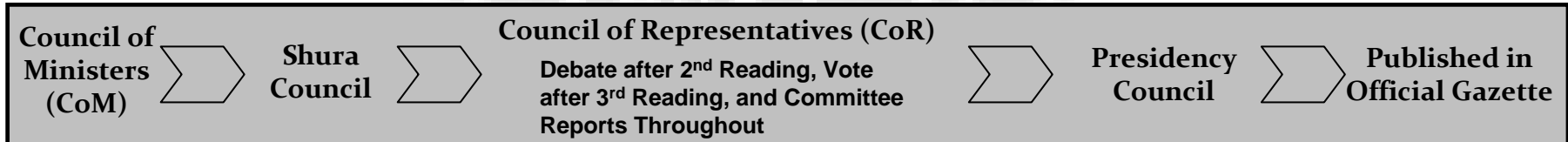
Minister of State at Large
Ali Muhammad Ahmad

Minister of State at Large
Hasan Radhi Kazim al-Sari

POLITICAL – Key Legislation



Legislative Process



- **Hydrocarbons Package:** The Framework Law was resubmitted to the Oil and Gas Committee on October 26 and then returned to the Council of Ministers. There has been no progress on the other three laws in the package.
- **Budget:** The first reading of the Amended 2009 Federal Budget bill was held on February 18, followed by a second reading and debate on February 21-24. A vote looks likely on February 28 or March 1. Though an initial first reading of the original budget was held on November 24, 2008, the budget was revised by the Ministry of Finance to take into account falling oil prices.

POLITICAL - Refugee Update



- **Regional governments report hosting as many as 2 million Iraqi refugees.**
- **The International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimates that over 2.8 million Iraqis are displaced inside Iraq.**
- **In FY08, the State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration contributed \$287.08 million to international organizations and nongovernmental organizations to assist displaced Iraqis inside the country and in the region.**
- **The U.S. admitted 13,823 Iraqi refugees in FY08 (which ended September 30).**
- **Since the program's inception in FY07, 21,065 Iraqi refugees have been admitted for U.S. resettlement; in FY09 alone, the U.S. seeks to admit a minimum of 17,000 Iraqi refugees.**
- **In FY 2008, a total of 1,142 Special Immigrant Visa (SIVs) were issued for Afghan and Iraqi translators and interpreters (under the Section 1059 program).**
- **As of December 2008, a total of 1,311 SIVs have been issued in FY09 (under the Section 1244 program).**



ECONOMIC – Oil

Oil prices seem to have stabilized around \$40 – 45 per barrel, well below the price Iraq needs to fully fund its 2009 budget. Iraq has sufficient fiscal revenues to cover a 2009 deficit, however, Iraq must make less optimistic assumptions for 2010

Crude Oil Update:

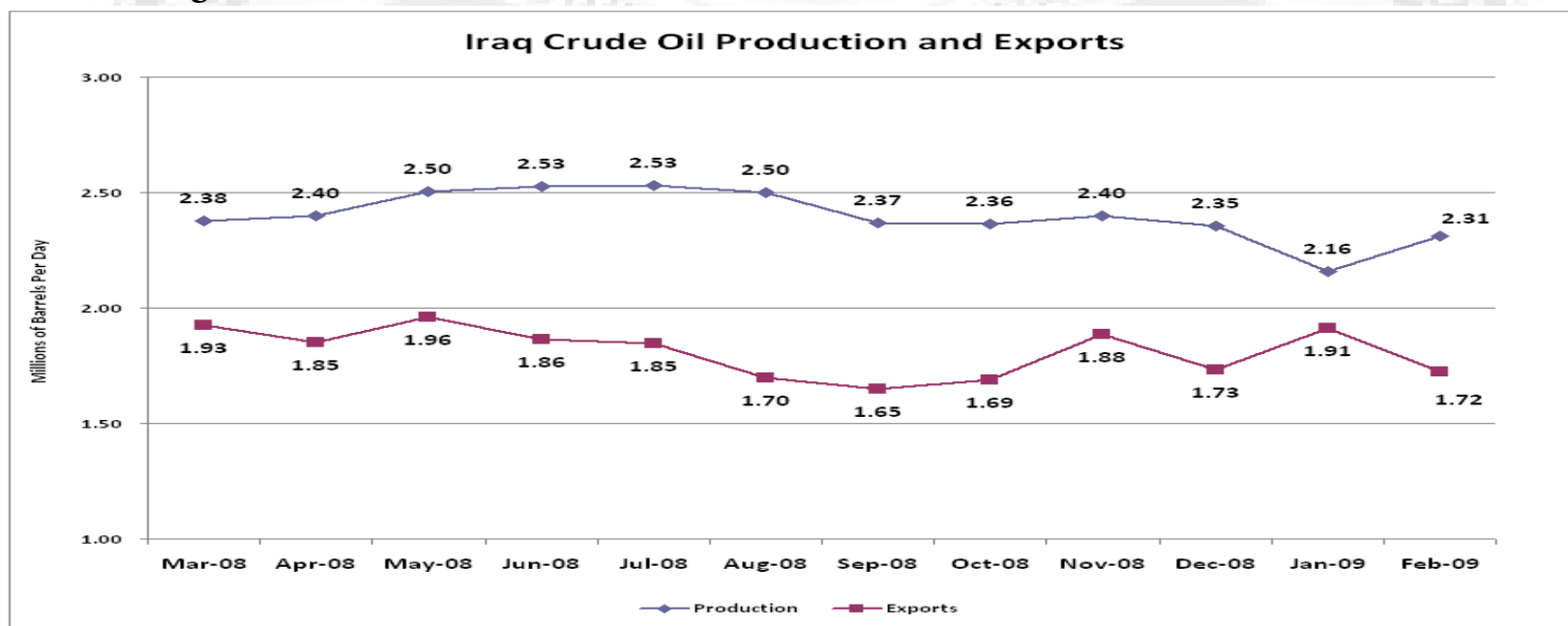
Price averages in world markets closed with the following prices:

Basrah Light at \$36.39/barrel

Dated Brent at \$40.61/barrel

WTI Cushing at \$37.12/barrel

Oman/Dubai at \$42.12/barrel



Revenue estimates:

2007: \$41.0 Billion

2008: \$61.9 Billion *

2009 (ytd): \$4.1 Billion

* Estimate adjusted as a result of newly-available Iraqi data.



ECONOMIC – Oil

Iraq continues to develop its oil sector through agreements made outside the bid round processes begun in October

Iraqi and South Korean Presidents Agree to Non-Binding Oil Contract:

- **During a visit to South Korea, Iraqi President Jalal Talabani signed a non-binding, \$3.6 billion agreement with South Korean President Lee Myung-Bak that grants South Korea the rights to develop oil fields in the southern region of Basrah. In return for the development rights, South Korea will help build infrastructure, including power plants. The South Korean president also asked Talabani to assist his country's companies with their bids to develop oil and gas fields, build an oil refinery in Baghdad, and purchase a power generator, according to a statement released by the president's office. Lee also asked for Talabani's support for greater South Korean participation in reconstruction projects as well as the Korea National Oil Corporation's (KNOC) oil development projects in the KRG. Last year, KNOC signed production-sharing agreements with the KRG for the Qush Tappa and Sangaw South Blocks, and agreed to buy shares in six other fields. It is unclear what impact this non-binding agreement will have on the tender process.**

ECONOMIC – Oil



Iraq continues to develop its oil sector through agreements made outside the bid round processes begun in October

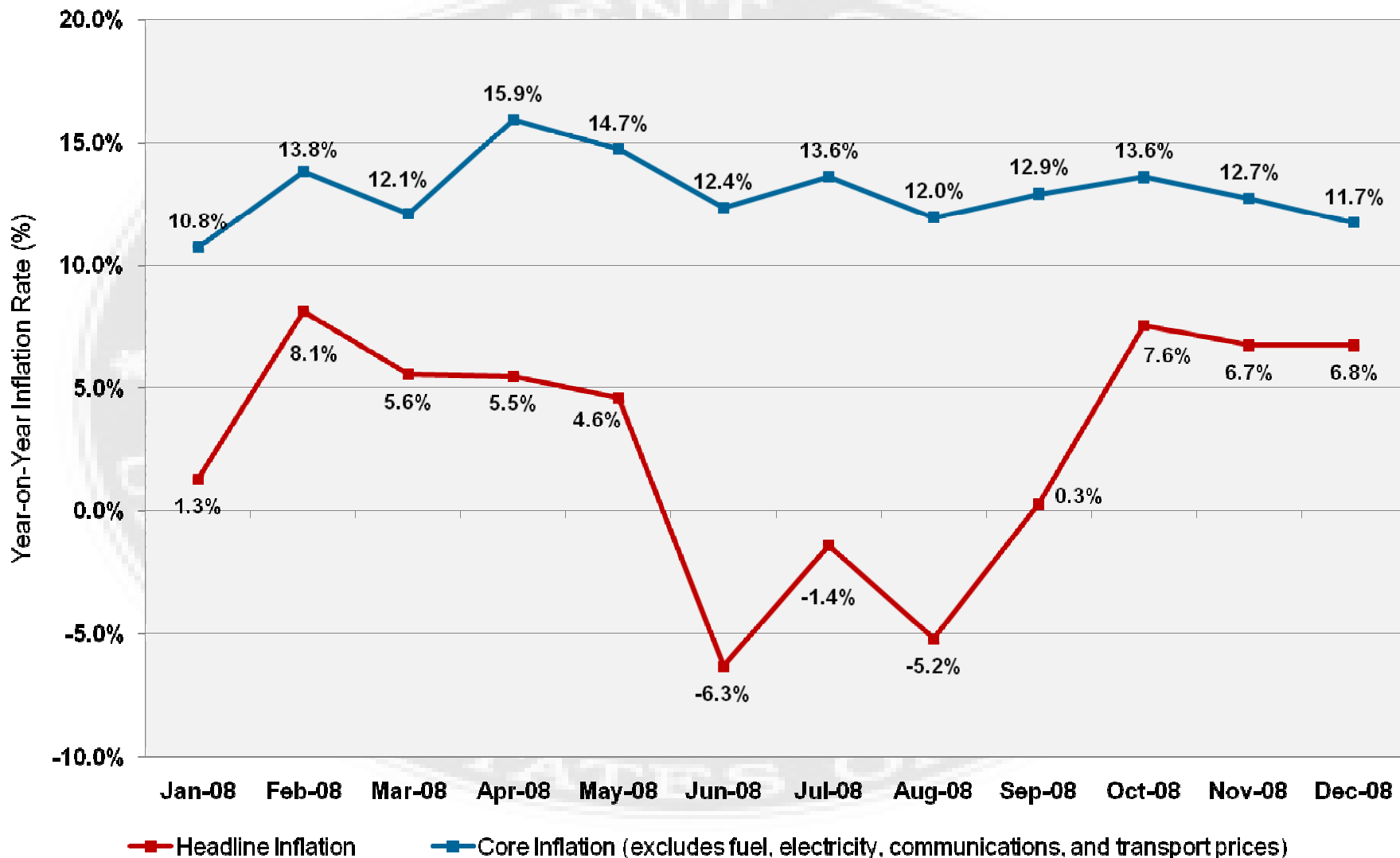
Bids for Nasiriyah Field in Review:

- Deputy Minister of Oil Ahmed al-Shamaa said February 18 that the Government of Iraq will finish reviewing technical offers for the Nasiriyah oil field this month and award the contract for the field, which has reserves of 4.4 billion barrels. Italy's Eni SpA, Spain's Repsol and Japan's Nippon Oil are all competing for a technical services contract to develop the field, which has the potential to produce 300,000 barrels per day. The Nasiriyah field was not offered up for tender in either of the October or December bid rounds.

ECONOMIC - Fiscal and Monetary Affairs



Year-on-Year Inflation



ECONOMIC – Private Sector



As Iraq opens itself up to private investment, firms in neighboring countries look for opportunities in Iraq

Contract Awarded to Iranian Firm to Redevelop Basrah:

- **The Basrah Investment Commission awarded a \$1.5 billion contract to an unnamed Iranian firm to redevelop parts of Basrah. The contract includes the construction of 5,000 new housing units in addition to schools, hospitals parks, a supermarket, and commercial units for up to 2,000 shops. The awarding of this contract is the largest construction contract awarded to an Iranian firm since 2003 and comes in the wake of Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki's visit to Iraq, during which both countries agreed to boost bilateral trade.**

ECONOMIC - Public Services



Improved security has allowed Iraq to take control of and reinvest in critical infrastructure, but high unemployment and a lack of aid threatens stability

Minister of Electricity Speaks about Electricity Sector Security and Budget Concerns:

- **Minister of Electricity Karim Wahid said February 22 that while Iraq's electricity sector has not been attacked since June 2008, the Minister has thus far only been allocated \$1 billion in the 2009 budget after requesting \$7 billion. Speaking in an interview with AFP, the minister also said he was satisfied with all of the major contracts his ministry has signed. At the end of 2008, between 10% and 20% of the down-payments had been made for all of the contracts. Minister Wahid also said France has been invited to help construct a nuclear power plant, saying in his perspective the future of the sector is nuclear power.**

ECONOMIC - Public Services



Improved security has allowed Iraq to take control of and reinvest in critical infrastructure, but high unemployment and a lack of aid threatens stability

UN Report Finds High Unemployment Among Young Iraqi Men:

- **Analysis from the United Nations' Information Analysis Unit found that 28% of Iraqi males between the ages of 15 and 29 are unemployed. Using statistics from government, banking, and other figures from 11 UN agencies and four independent organizations, the report also found Iraq's overall unemployment rate to be 18%, with an additional 10% employed only in part-time work. Only 17% of women hold jobs. Public sector employment is considered preferable to many private sector jobs, which Raad Ommar, heads of the Iraqi American Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Baghdad said are thought to pay less than positions in the government. When oil prices were high, the Government of Iraq announced raises for civil servants ranging from 50% to 100% in an effort to retain workers as well as to entice doctors, teachers, and other trained professions to return to Iraq.**

ECONOMIC - Public Services



Improved security has allowed Iraq to take control of and reinvest in critical infrastructure, but high unemployment and a lack of aid threatens stability

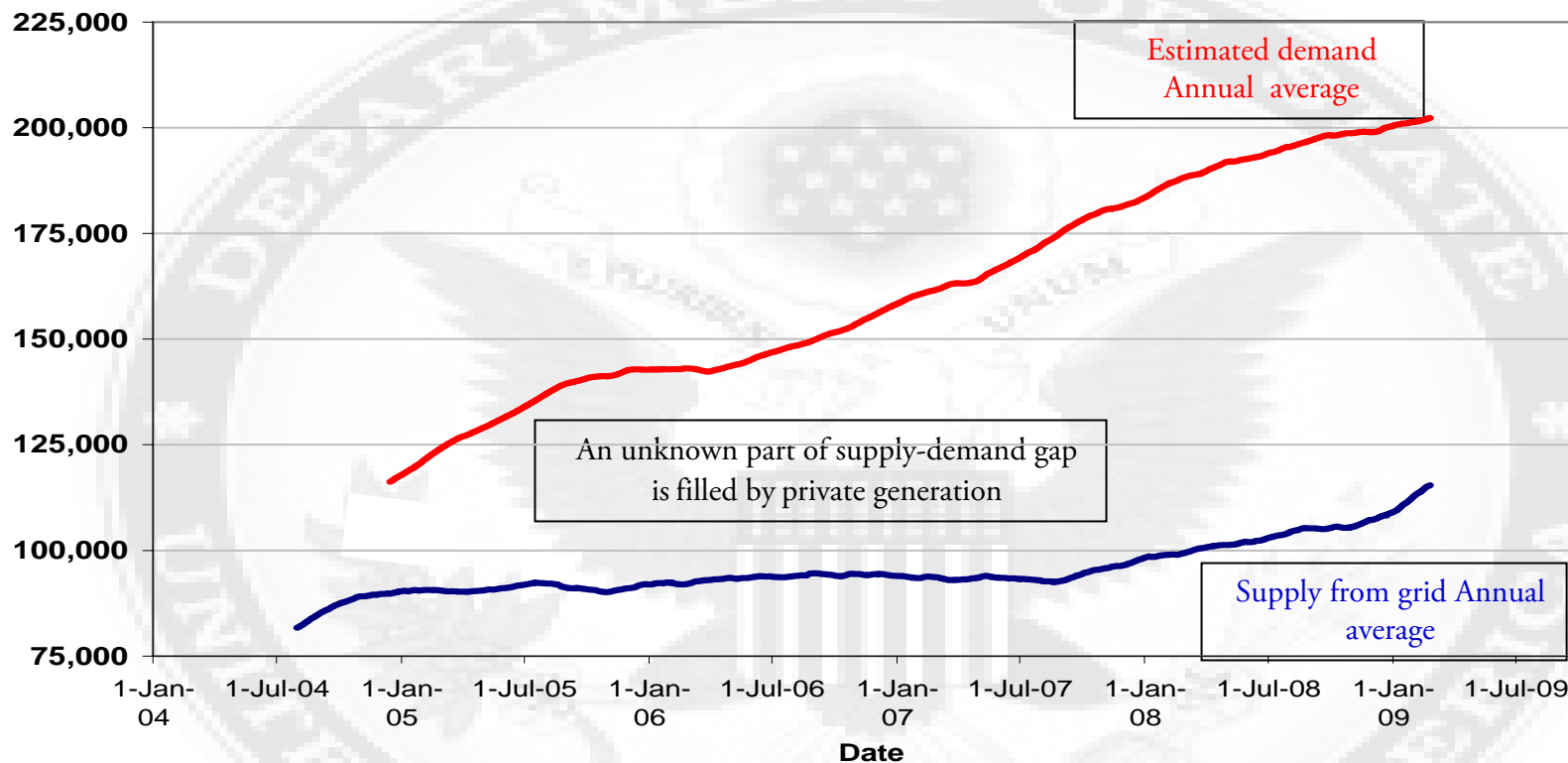
Iraqi Widows in Need of Aid:

- According to the Government of Iraq and social service organizations, the needs of widows and their families have come to exceed the available support and aid available to them. Among women aged 15-80, 1 in 11 are estimated to be widows, although the figure may not be accurate due to continued violence and displacement. The United Nations estimated in a report that during the height of sectarian violence in 2006, between 90 and 100 women became widows each day. Some widows have entered into forced “temporary marriages” which can be as short in length as an hour, to receive financial aid from government, religious or tribal leaders. Others have become prostitutes or joined the insurgency to receive a steady income. Efforts to increase the approximately \$50 dollars and \$12 per child have not moved forward. Only around one in six widows receive state aid, and those which do are said to receive benefits because of their political connections or temporary marriages.



Public Services – Electricity

GOI needs to strengthen policy actions to manage demand and usage patterns



- Daily electricity supply from the grid February 18-24 was 29% above the year-earlier period and met 61% of demand, compared with 52% for the year-earlier period.
- Updated hours of power have not been received for the current week.



Beyond Baghdad



Arba'ainiyah pilgrims making their way toward the Imam Husayn and Imam Abbas shrines in Karbala

Erbil

“True success will take place when we leave Iraq to a government that is taking responsibility for its future.”

President Barak Obama

Recent Highlights

On February 12, the regional reconstruction team (RRT) at Erbil took part in a ribbon cutting ceremony inaugurating the opening of the Erbil Orphanage/Senior Citizen Center. The center which has the capacity to house 100 orphan boys, 100 orphan girls and 100 senior citizens received over \$10 million in funds from the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). Residents of the new assisted living complex have access to a medical unit, entertainment hall, library, music room, computer room, swimming pool and large dining facility. The Erbil RRT allocated \$200,000 in QRF funds to provide the center with furnishings and equipment.

Anbar

In the city of Ramadi, local sanitation and sewer crews are taking part of the “Keep Ramadi Clean” campaign and working alongside local residents to clean up the city one community at a time. The program has resulted in numerous benefits including teaching municipal employees good management practices and reconnecting the municipal government with the community by “putting an Iraqi face on an Iraqi solution to an Iraqi problem.”

Diwaniyah

The Housing and Construction Ministry has undertaken a large housing project near the city of Diwaniyah which will provide housing for hundreds of low-income families. The 4,400 hundred acre site, intended to reduce overcrowding in Diwhaniyah city, will consist of 42 residential buildings, three schools, a health center, markets, a mosque, guard buildings and parks.

DIPLOMATIC – Political Engagement



GOI makes progress on bilateral relations with Kuwait, expands engagement with the OIC

Kuwaiti FM Visits Baghdad:

- **Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Muhammad al-Sabah met with Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki, Foreign Minister Hoshiyar Zebari, and other top Iraqi officials February 26. This is the first high level Kuwaiti delegation visit to Iraq since the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. The officials discussed joint oil fields, maritime border issues, and war reparations. Iraqi officials stated that it was "illogical" to continue paying Kuwait compensation, however, Kuwait asserts that compensation payments must continue. Iraq currently pays 5% of its oil revenues as compensation to the Kuwaiti government.**

Secretary General of OIC Visits Baghdad:

- **Secretary General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, visited Baghdad February 22. Secretary Ihsanoglu, who held talks with Prime Minister Maliki, commended the Iraqi government for successfully carrying out provincial elections and expressed the OIC's desire to help Iraqi reconciliation efforts. Prime Minister Maliki thanked the OIC for its 2006 initiative that brought Sunni and Shi'a leaders together in Mecca and stated that Iraq seeks to become an active member of the OIC.**

DIPLOMATIC – Political Engagement



GOI makes progress on bilateral relations with Kuwait, expands engagement with the OIC

GOI Pays 13.3 Billion in Compensation to Kuwait:

- **Kuwait's Public Authority for Compensation announced February 23 that it has received a total of \$13.3 billion in compensation from Iraq, stemming from the 1990 invasion of Kuwait. Iraq is obligated to pay 5% of its oil revenues into a fund administered by the United Nations Security Council to pay reparations for war damage during the seven-month Iraqi occupation. The fund has received claims worth \$368 billion, but has so far approved the payment of just over \$52 billion, including approximately \$39 billion for Kuwait, based on figures from the fund and Kuwait.**

SECURITY - Situation Update



Violence levels have reached a six-year low as Iraqi Security Forces increase in capability

Violence Levels in Iraq at Six-Year Low:

- **Attack levels in Iraq are at their lowest levels since August 2003, according to Multi-National Force-Iraq's Director for Strategic Effects. U.S. Major General David Perkins told reporters February 22 the decrease in violence marks a 90% decrease since the surge of U.S. troops began in 2007. Contributing to the decrease has been the 25% increase in size of the Iraqi Security Forces from 463,000 to 618,000. Not only are there more ISF to patrol the country, but their capabilities have increased as well, as was evident during the recent provincial elections during which the ISF led security efforts and there were no major violent attacks.**

Operation New Hope Begins in Ninewa:

- **Iraqi Security Forces (ISF), with support from the U.S. military, began Operation New Hope February 20 in Ninewa province to defeat al-Qaida in Iraq (AQI) elements from the province and to restore essential services to the citizens of Mosul, officials said. Brigadier General Said Ahmed Abdullah, spokesman for Ninewa's military command, said 84 suspects had been detained so far in the operation. Operation New Hope reflects the first large scale military operation conducted under the bilateral Security Agreement, which went into effect January 1, 2009.**

SECURITY - Situation Update



Violence levels have reached a six-year low as Iraqi Security Forces increase in capability

Troops Find Recently Made Iranian Munitions:

- **In a press conference February 18, U.S. Army Colonel Philip Battaglia, commander of the 1st Cavalry Division's 4th Brigade Combat Team in Multi-National Division – Center, said Coalition and Iraqi Forces discovered Iranian weapons that were manufactured as recently as 2008. The weapons – discovered over the last several months – include hundreds of 107mm and 122mm rockets, and approximately 500 explosively formed penetrators (EFPs), designed to pierce armored vehicles. Colonel Battaglia said, “We have found many Iranian-made munitions with a manufacture date as late as 2008.”**

SECURITY – Security Transition



Coalition Forces continue to responsibly transition duties to Iraqi Security Forces

Iraqis Assume Full Control of FOB Iskan:

- Coalition Forces transferred authority of Forward Operating Base (FOB) Iskan to the Iraqi Ministry of Electricity (MOE) during a ceremony February 22. The transfer is significant because it returns security responsibility for the Musayyib Thermal Power Plant, located on the FOB, to the Iraqi government. The plant provides power to Babil province and 25% of the electricity to Baghdad.

NIA Graduates 20 from First Ever Counter-Threat Finance Course:

- Twenty employees from the Ministry of Interior's National Information and Investigation Agency (NIIA) completed the first Counter-Threat Finance Training course February 11. The training took place at the NIIA's new Baghdad Information Bureau Headquarters located in Baghdad's Karada District. The course provided NIIA investigators advanced training in tracking criminal financiers and preventing crimes. During the course, students learned investigative techniques regarding money laundering, cash smuggling, and sources of terrorist financing.



SECURITY - Iraqi Security Forces

Iraq Security Forces as of Dec 31, 2008 ^a			
Component	Current Authorized Personnel ^b	Assigned Personnel ^c	Total Trained Personnel to date ^d
Ministry of Interior (MoI) Forces ^e			
Iraqi Police Service ^f	334,739	305,831	220,013
National Police	46,580	43,538	56,577
Border Enforcement ^g	45,550	40,976	38,846
Total MoI	426,869	390,345	315,436
Ministry of Defense (MoD) Forces ^h			
Army	174,805	196,127	240,058
Army Training and Support Forces ⁱ	22,345	19,990	22,930
Air Force	3,690	2,148	4,572
Navy	3,596	1,887	1,494
Total MoD	204,436	220,152	269,054
Counter Terrorism Bureau			
Special Operations ^j	6,190	4,209	4,564
Total Iraqi Security Forces	637,495	614,706	589,054

- Increase of 1.6K assigned and 8.5K trained since last report.

a. Numbers do not include ministry staffs.

b. Numbers reflect Government of Iraq (GOI) authorizations.

c. Numbers are based upon GOI payroll data and do not reflect present for duty totals.

d. Numbers reflect total Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) personnel trained to date, some of which are no longer assigned due to casualties, AWOL, and normal separation.

e. MoI strength excludes other services within Ministry Of Interior (MOI), including the MOI HQ, MOI Forensics, Facility Protection Services, and contracted guards.

f. The Iraqi Police Service consists of all provincial police forces (station, patrol, traffic, and special units) assigned to all 18 Iraqi provinces.

g. Data associated with Ports of Entry Directorate has been pulled out of the Directorate of Border Enforcement. Expect authorized and assigned strengths to fluctuate as the new PoED organization takes shape.

h. The Ministry Of Defense (MOD) authorized numbers are derived from Modified Tables of Organization and Equipment (MTOEs).

i. The MoD Army Training and Support Forces include logistics units and training center cadre.

j. Does not include personnel assigned to Counterterrorism Bureau (CTB) or Counterterrorism Command (CTC) headquarters.



CONTACT INFORMATION

This brief draws from multiple sources. References are cited on the following pages.

For additional information, please see:

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<http://www.state.gov/p/nea/rls/rpt/1227/c26862.htm>
- Department of Defense, Section 9010 Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq
http://www.defenselink.mil/pubs/pdfs/9010_Report_to_Congress_Dec_08.pdf

Please forward all questions and/or comments to:

NEA-I-IPOG-DL@state.gov



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- Source for President Obama's Quote: <http://www.cfr.org/publication/16791>

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