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Iraq: Between Stabilisation and Destabilisation. Suicide Attacks, Kidnappings, Islamic Terrorism and the Threat of Civil War

The main purpose of the U.S. after toppling of Saddam Hussein's regime is in going to establish a more friendly to U.S. Iraqi government and initiating a democracy process in Iraq and Middle East. The American reasons for the war without approval of the United Nations Security Council, were possessing by Iraqi regime the Weapon of Mass Destruction (WMD) and its al-Qaeda' link. All these accusations proved to be false. It has been devastating for the American image, especially in the Arab opinion in which there is a deep-rooted anti-Americanism.¹

Other more hidden reason was the oil in going to the war with such a great political risk. First, the elimination of Saddam Hussein's regime could have been expected to end once and for all Iraq's long-standing threat to dominate either directly or through coercion the vast oil resources of the Gulf. Second, regime change could have been expected to free up Iraq's substantial oil production potential, which had been artificially constrained by war damage, sanctions, and a lack of investment. In time just before the war it was common considerations, that Iraq freed from the dictatorship would change these constraints which positively influence in increasing of Iraq's oil production and stabilise world oil markets in the medium to long term.²

From the military perspective it was victorious and short campaign. The result of American military capabilities was the rapid collapse of Iraqi conventional forces leading to the collapse of the regime – while the casualties –

¹ On anti-Americanism in the Arab world see more in: R. Fiedler, *U źródeł antyamerykanizmu. Stany Zjednoczone a świat arabski przed i po 11 września 2001*, "Przegląd Polityczny" 2004, no. 1.

² J. S. Duffield, *Oil and the Iraq War: How the United States could Have expected to Benefit, And Might Still*, "The Middle East Review of International Affairs," vol. 9, no. 2, June 2005.

whether American, coalition, civilian or Iraqi military – were minimised as was damage to Iraq's infrastructure. The ultimate aim in defeating Saddam Hussien's army and republican guard was achieved. The American losses were 129 soldiers. However the George W. Bush administration was unprepared for the *nation building* in Iraq.³ As Anthony Cordesman noted: "The problem was that the US chose a strategy whose post-conflict goals were unrealistic and impossible to achieve."⁴

Americans just after the campaign has made several mistakes, which contribute in weakening the Iraq political rebuilding. The main are related with:

- failing to the provided the personnel and skills necessary to secure Iraqi rear areas as the American and British troops advanced, and to prevent the massive looting of government offices and facilities, military bases and museums;⁵
- disbanding Iraqi police and security and military forces and no serious effort to rebuild security forces took place until June 2004;
- delay in creating effective Iraqi forces, which compounded the feeling that Iraqi had been occupied by hostile forces;
- a failure in assessing the nature, size of the Iraqi insurgency as it grew and became steadily more dangerous.⁶

In American strategy it was assumed, that building democracy in Iraq after repressive dictatorship would not be so difficult. The president's Bush administration had hope on Arab's willingness for democracy. Before the war an American war's planners did not seriously take into consideration such problems as a threat of Iraqi disintegration and fragmentation on separate Shiite, Sunni and Kurds enclaves. Another danger is related with disapproval, which causes Sunni Arabs insurgency, they can not stand the new political forces compounded by the Shiites and Kurds majorities. Analysts had long warned that if insurgency spread from Iraq's Sunni to its majority Shiite community, the Coalition would be in an untenable position.⁷

There are different scenarios about evolving the situation in Iraq: from the state's disintegration, or eventual establishing a new dictatorship through

³ J. Fallows, *Blind into Baghdad*, "The Atlantic" January/February 2004, p. 56–60.

⁴ Quoted: A. Cordesman, *Iraq's Evolving Insurgency*, Washington 23 June 2005: http://www.csis.org/features/050623_IraqInsurg.pdf.

⁵ Baghdad museums unprotected by coalition forces had been looted, and some 170,000 artefacts a unique record of past civilisations were missing, G. Simons, *Future Iraq. U.S. Policy in Reshaping the Middle East*, London 2003, pp. 322–323.

⁶ A. Cordesman, *Inexcusable Failure. Progress in Training the Iraqi Army and Security Forces as of Mid-July 2004*; http://www.csis.org/features/iraq_inexcusablefailure.pdf.

⁷ For instance, A. H. Cordesman, *Iraq: Too Uncertain To Call*, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington D.C., November 14, 2003, p. 9.

the civil war – to very slow but progressive – building democracy and civil society.

In Iraq's perspective after two and half years from American invasion and toppling Hussein's regime the main threats are related with the Islamic extremism and Sunni discontent. The insurgency in Iraq is still incoherent and weak in its structure. The more the insurgency solidifies and develops coherent organisations, procedures, and strategy, the more vulnerable it is on military actions by the Coalition. In late 2005, the insurgents are too weak to allow that to happen. Even if they would prefer a more coherent organisation and strategy, they must recognise that as in nature only insurgencies with powerful survival instincts have a chance of success. And, the vagueness of the strategy makes it easier to mobilise strength by building a wide coalition among the various groups opposed to American involvement in Iraq.⁸

Describing the situation in Iraq it is difficult to compare it the four stages defined in the CIA's *Guide to the Analysis of Insurgency*. These are:

- preinsurgency – leadership emerges in response to domestic grievances or outside influences;
- organisational – infrastructure built, guerrillas recruited and trained, supplies acquired, and domestic and international support sought;
- guerrilla warfare – hit and run tactics used to attack government. Extensive insurgent political activity, both domestic and international may also occur simultaneously during this stage;
- mobile conventional warfare – larger units used in conventional warfare mode. Many insurgencies never reach this stage.⁹

According to Bruce Hoffman none of these above-mentioned stages are similar to the Iraqi situation. In his analyse of the Iraqi insurgency – it is “*netwar*,” the concept of warfare involving flatter, more linear networks rather than the pyramidal hierarchies and command and control systems.¹⁰

The strategy, which has emerged in 2003–2005, however inchoate, is a fairly standard one for insurgents opposing outside occupiers. Their ends are concentrated to:

- 1) show the weakness of the occupier by making the country ungovernable;

⁸ S. Metz, R. Millen, *Insurgency in Iraq and Afghanistan: Change and Continuity*, “Strategic Studies Institute” 2005.

⁹ *Central Intelligence Agency, Guide to the Analysis of Insurgency*, Government Printing Office, Washington D.C. no date, p. 3.

¹⁰ Quot.: B. Hoffman, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq*, “RAND National Security Research Division”, June 2004, p. 17.

- 2) increase support by showing boldness and provoking the counterinsurgents into steps that alienate or anger the population;
- 3) directly erode the will of the counterinsurgents by causing casualties.¹¹

The primary foundation of the ideology of the Iraqi insurgency is opposition to American involvement into Iraq's inner matters.¹² This is based both on nationalism and religion. As noted S. Metz and R. Millen – the Iraqi insurgents have not any kind of overarching ideological framework other than anti-Americanism. What they have is a proto-ideology concentrated on intense and growing dislike of the United States, but has no positive dimension that promises a better world once the Americans are expelled.¹³

The resistance is composed of full-time fighters, part-time supporters, and sympathisers. Counting insurgents is always tricky. Iraq's head of intelligence has estimated there are 40,000 full-time rebels plus 160,000 supporters. In March, the director of the US Defence Intelligence Agency testified that there were 15,000 to 20,000 insurgents in Iraq.¹⁴

Ahmed Hashim (U.S. Naval War College) selected the Iraqi insurgents into three groups: regime loyalists, Iraqi nationalist and Islamists groups.¹⁵ At first, the regime loyalists appeared to be the strongest element in the Iraqi insurgency. However, the elimination of Saddam's sons and captured in December 2003 Saddam himself seriously weakened these groups.¹⁶ Hashim suggested that former Saddam's supporters came into another groups, not only to the nationals but also to the islamists'.

In the second half of 2003, the groups emerged that had no desire for the return of former regime. The main aim of their attacks against Coalition forces was specifically directed towards ending the American occupation of Iraq. These groups can be categorised as the Iraqi nationals. Most of these groups' fighters are recruited from Iraqi towns such as Falluja, Ramadi and Samarra – this area has become known as the "Sunni Tringle." Particularly in this area, insurgents developed increasingly sophisticated methods for

¹¹ Ibidem, compare with A. H. Cordesman, *Iraq and Asymmetric Warfare: The US vs. FRL/Islamist Duel*, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington D.C. December 6, 2003, pp. 8–11.

¹² As stated a cleric at the Shahid Bashar Qalandar mosque; "A Muslim does not accept a foreigner and a non-believer to rule over him," quote: *Special Report: Who Are the Insurgents*, United States Institute of Peace, April 2005.

¹³ Ibidem, p. 10.

¹⁴ B. M. Jenkins, *Can the Iraq Beast be Tamed?* "Boston Globe" 18 May, 2005.

¹⁵ A. Hashim, *The Sunni Insurgency in Iraq*, "Middle East Institute Perspective," August 15, 2003, <http://www.mideasti.org/articles/doc89.html>.

¹⁶ Saddam himself, being in hide tried to activate the tribal system in defence of the old regime. For example in October 2003, he wrote a letter to tribal leaders urging them to launch a jihad against "the hated invaders," *Who are the Insurgents*, A. Hashim, op. cit., p. 8.

attacking U.S. forces. Sunni rebels using improvised explosive devices (IEDs).¹⁷ They also kidnapped foreigners but avoided killing them as do it extreme Islamists' groups.

Islamist's Sunni groups are the most extreme and their main aim is connected with building Islamic state with no foreign influence on it. Other aim is related with Islamic revolution in the whole Middle East, especially in the Gulf monarchies. Islamists also desire us oil as the weapon against the West by cutting Western states from it. One of the Islamic group "The Soldiers of Islam" (Jund al-Islam), emerged in September 2001, made up of Kurdish Islamists. The group made the attempt to seize control of several villages near Halabja in northern Iraq in order to establish a mini Islamic state. The group is linked to al-Qaeda. The group in December 2003 changed its name to "The Supporters of Islam" (Ansar al-Islam). After U.S. invasion in Iraq, members of Ansar al-Islam scattered over Iraq and Syria, Jordan and Iran.¹⁸

Abu Musab al-Zarqawi plays a key role in directing Ansar, although he was not declared its leader.¹⁹ Ansar is also known as "Army Supporters of the Sunna" (Jaysh al-Ansar al-Sunna) and is also linked to another organisation "The Unity and Jihad Group" (Jama'at al-Jihad wal-Tawhid). "al-Qaeda of Jihad in the Land of Two Rivers," the demanding new brand name for the group led by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, has been the most active and most lethal insurgent group.²⁰ Although it has not claimed responsibility for any kidnappings this year, it has kidnapped more foreign civilians than any other group, 14 of whom it has killed. The various names of these organisations can be confusing. Al-Zarqawi's role in these groups is unclear.²¹

Besides the al-Zarqawi linked factions, there are a lot other groups, who are mainly responsible for conducting kidnappings in Iraq.

¹⁷ *Insurgency in Iraq*, "International Institute for Strategic Studies," "Strategic Comments," vol. 9, issue 8, October 2003, p. 1.

¹⁸ D. Linder, R. Levy, Y. Shahar, *Iraqi Wahabbi Factions affiliated with Abu Musa'ab al-Zarqawi*, March 20, 2005, <http://www.ict.org.il>.

¹⁹ Osama bin Laden issued a statement in December 2004 confirming Zarqawi as the "Emir" of al-Qaeda in Iraq. Some analysts believe that Bin Laden made a strategic error by declaring Zarqawi the "emir" for operations in Iraq. Iraqis are deeply distrusting of outsiders and, in particular, neighbours in the region. Bin Laden's declaration could be seen by Iraqis in highly nationalistic terms as Saudi ordering a Jordanian to kill Iraqis. These analysts believe that this will motivate those Iraqis who were previously unsure of whether to offer their support to the elected government, A. Cordesman, *Iraq's Evolving Insurgency*, Center for Strategic and International Studies, August 5, 2005, p. 54.

²⁰ On al-Zarqawi see more in: L. Napoleoni, *Insurgent Iraq: Al-Zarqawi and the New Generation*, Seven Stories, Press 2005.

²¹ More in: D. Linder, R. Levy, Y. Shahar, op. cit., p. 23.

Their numbers does not determine the importance of the Islamist extremist elements. Islamists tend to conduct the bloodiest attacks, do most to try to divide Iraq along ethnic and sectarian lines, and create a series of high profile bombings and atrocities that captures media and public attention both inside and outside Iraq.²²

The most influential through radical Shia is Muqtada al-Sadr who in seeking to fan and exploit anti-American, nationalist, and Islamist sentiments in a bid for power. As noted Larry Dimond: "Althgouh he lacked the religious knowledge and authority of his father [...], Sadr managed to build a following among disaffected, unemployed, and poorly educated young men in Iraq's cities."²³ His Mahdi army demanded total withdrawal of U.S. forces, creation of a caliphate-type state, and imposition of strict Islamic law.²⁴ On 28 March 2004, Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) ordered the clousure of Sadr's incendiary newspaper, Hawza. It caused serious riots against coalitions forces. The crisis was resolved through negotiations in which resolving took considerable role Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani. It is noteworthy, that the influence of al-Sadr on Shia extremists is still very great and can provoke destabilisation in the near future.

Both Shiites and Sunni Islamists have appropriated the Internet in a quest to popularise their actions against coalition forces. The Iraqi insurgents have proven adept at manipulating the Internet, as well as international news outlets in order to send their message to the Iraqi and international audiences.²⁵

Ibrahim al-Marashi (Ph.d. Oxford University) described that al-Zarqawi linked groups and other Islamists and nationalists groups send via the Internet, types and video-types, messages to different types of audiences. Their main aim is related with manipulation of the public opinion by very often brutal scenes of executions (beheadings). The first kidnappings in Iraq confirmed that despite the background bloodshed of an ongoing war,

²² For example, some 400 people were killed in suicide bombings during the first two weeks of May 2005, many in bombings by Sunni extremist groups clearly targeting Shiites and Kurds. Radical Islamist groups such as Abu Musab al-Zarqawi's **al-Qaeda** in Iraq and the Army of the Adherents of the Sunna, as well as a number of smaller groups, claimed that democracy was "anti-Islamic" and a plot by Western imperialism to undermine Iraq's Muslim character and cultural traditions, in their words, polling stations were "centres of atheism," http://www.alm2sda.net/vb/show_thread.php?t=6822.

²³ Quote.: L. Diamond, *What went wrong in Iraq*, "Foreign Affairs" September/October 2004, <http://www.foreignaffairs.org/20040901faessey83505/larry-diamond>.

²⁴ J. S. Yaphe, *America's Shiite Dilemma: Whose Iraq is it?*, "National Defence University, Institute for National Strategic Studies," published 21 October 2004, http://www.ndu.edu/inss/Repository/Outside_Publications/Yaphe/BitterLemons_Oct.

²⁵ See more in: G. R. Bunt, *Islam in the Digital Age: E-Jihad, Online Fatwas and Cyber Islamic Environments*, London 2003.

hostage situations could still gain worldwide publicity and create domestic political crises, especially for coalition partners facing strong domestic opposition to the war. The kidnappers' demands are calculated to curry favour in Iraq and undermine support for the coalition abroad. Kidnappers have demanded the release of female prisoners, the rebuilding of houses destroyed by coalition operations, the withdrawal of foreign forces from Iraq, demonstrations against coalition membership, and a halt to operations by foreign companies in Iraq.

In their intention is to gain the Iraqi disapproval and discontent to the American occupation and also provoking the public discussion in those countries on senseless of sending their troops to Iraq.

Al-Marashi typed following messages:²⁶

- messages to the Iraqis are designed to serve as warnings for any Iraqis serving in the police, army, security forces, and also for those who are “collaborating with the Crusader Army.” For instance, videotape posted on the website of al-Zarqawi linked groups in October 2004, depicted the beheading of two Iraqis, reported to be members of the Iraqi Intelligence service. There are also bombings into Iraqi volunteers to work in the police. Very often Iraqi recruits have been target of attacks;
- messages to the nations deploying troops in Iraq. The main focus of many Iraqi insurgent's groups has been to kidnap foreigners from nations contributing military forces to the Coalition. In the past 12 months, well over 200 civilians from 36 countries have been kidnapped. Between 15 and 20 percent were killed, at least 15 by beheading.

Usually, these foreigners were threatened with decapitation unless their leaders withdraw their troops from Iraq. One of the first victim was Kim Sun-il, a 33 year old South Korean translator beheaded on June 22, 2003 by Jama'at al-Jihad wal-Tawhid in retaliation for his nation's refusal to withdraw its troops from Iraq.

Iraqi insurgents gained success threatened to behead the Filipino hostage, Angelo dela Cruz, unless the Philippines withdrew its troops from Iraq. The Philippine government acceded to the kidnappers' demands and withdrew 51 soldiers and police officers from Iraq.²⁷

Iraqi groups also kidnapped Italians, Pakistanis and even private Nepalese security guards were targeted as troops contributing to the Coalition.

²⁶ I. al-Marashi, *Iraq's Hostage Crisis: Kidnappings, Mass Media and the Iraqi Insurgency*, “The Middle East Review of International Affairs,” vol. 8, no. 4, December 2004, pp. 5–12, <http://meria.idc.ac.il/journal/2004/issue4/jv8no4al.html>.

²⁷ J. Glanz, *Iraqi Insurgents Using Abduction as Prime Weapon*, “New York Times” July 26, 2004.

- Messages to the United States and Britain. The first brutal, released to internet, execution was done on Nicholas Evan Berg, a young American businessman conducting telecommunications work in Iraq. Berg was captured in April 2004. On May 11, 2004, an Ansar website broadcasted a video entitled "Abu Musab al-Zarqawi Slaughters an American," which shows Berg being decapitated / over a period of five minutes.²⁸

Jama'at al-Jihad wal-Tawhid kidnapped British engineer Kenneth Bigley in Baghdad on September 16, 2004 along with two Americans Jack Hensley and Eugene Armstrong. The two Americans were beheaded, with the videos of their murderer posted on the internet on September 21. The next day, in another video, Bigley was pleading for his life, begging British Prime Minister Tony Blair to help him and release the Iraqi women held by the coalition. The demand was not exaggerated as many previous in other foreigners' kidnappings, mainly in demand for leaving all the coalitions troops from Iraq in a very short time. The new insurgent's tactic in more modest demands considerably influenced on the public opinion in Great Britain. Various individuals, politicians and non-governmental organisations participated in a campaign to save Bigley's life. Nevertheless, these attempts failed to save his life. On October 10, a video of his execution was posted on Islamist website.

In intentions of the Iraqi insurgents, kidnapping British and American citizens are aimed in the public opinion of these countries. Terrorists are counting on rising disapproval and disappointment in British's and American's public reception. Keeping Bigley's in hide nearly the whole month led in Great Britain and later murdering him by the terrorists led to the weakening of Blair's government in the public perception.

Not only kidnappings and suicidal bombings causing lower support for British and American engagement in Iraq, but also a lack of visible perspective in stabilising of the Iraqi political and economical situation.

- Messages to international businesses. Insurgents have carried out kidnappings in order to drive foreign companies out of Iraq or to deter future from aiding in the U.S.-led reconstruction of the country. Turkish presence in Iraq is visible in the reconstruction effort not only in the north of Iraq but also in southern part of this country. Turkey before the Gulf War in 1991 was one of Iraq's largest trading partners. Now, most of the trucks providing transportation to Iraq originate in Turkey. Trucks have been the primary victims in the insurgents' campaign.

²⁸ The video of Berg's death shows him wearing an orange boiler suit, symbolic of those worn by al-Qaeda inmates detained at the Guantanamo Bay facility, I. al-Marashi, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

- Messages with Islamic Themes. Kidnappers have used hostages in attempts to force foreign leaders to change their policy on broader Islamic issues. For instance in late August 2004, the Islamic Army in Iraq kidnapped two French reporters, George Malbrunot and Christian Chesnot, despite the fact that France opposed the 2003 war. The group gave the French government 48 hours to revoke its ban on Muslim girls wearing headscarves at schools.

General Abizaid described the current conflict in Iraq as a “classical guerilla-type campaign.” According to the RAND’s specialist Bruce Hoffman – unlike a classical guerrilla-type campaign, the Iraq insurgency has no centre of gravity, no clear leader, no defined or unifying ideology.²⁹

CSIS’s analysts, Anthony Cordesman described the internal situation in Iraq as: “civil war is not a risk, it is ongoing reality. The question is just how it will become. The insurgency has gradually created a low-level civil war, and Sunni Islamist extremists have made a concerted effort to drive it towards a broader Sunni vs. Shi’ite conflict.”³⁰

As Steven Metz noticed: “by staying in Iraq, United States will face a protracted insurgency, but withdrawing before new Iraq is able to stand on its own, the ultimate strategic objective – a unified, stable Iraq that does not threaten its neighbours and does not support international terrorism – will not be met.”³¹

Another opinion about importance of withdrawing all American forces, was expressed by Barry Rubin, for whom American staying in Iraq without time-deadline of exit from that country, will be more harmful for US Iraqi interests: “Over the course of 2005, the United States should plan a phased withdrawal in coordination with the new Iraqi government. Remaining in Iraq too long will bring the United States into confrontation with a new government and the Shiites majority. It will make the United States responsible for every internal conflict in Iraq and every misdeed of the new regime, squandering the good will that the United States has managed to gain but still not winning the war militarily.”³²

The internal situation may worsen when Iraq’s Arab Shiites decide to support polarisation along ethnic and sectarian lines. So far Shiite leaders as the Grand Ayatollah al-Sistani, Adel Aziz al-Hakim and the Muqtada

²⁹ B. Hoffman, op. cit., p. 16.

³⁰ Quotation from: A. Cordesman, op. cit., p. 76.

³¹ Quotation from: S. Metz, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq*, “The Washington Quarterly,” Winter 2003–2004, p. 35.

³² Quote from: B. Rubin, *Reality Bites: The Impending Logic of Withdrawal from Iraq*, “The Washington Quarterly,” Spring 2005, pp. 79–80.

al-Sadr have been strong voices calling for inclusion and opposing and general reprisals against Iraq's Sunni.

Forming the new Iraqi cabinet presented problems, in part because so many Sunnis chose not to participate in the political process before January 30th, 2005 election. The new cabinet did, however, include seven Sunnis.³³

The Sunni minority held the top government positions in Saddam Hussein's regime, and it is now waging a rearguard battle to retain at least some of its status. Kurds are now seeking to exploit the results of the latest war in order to expand their autonomous territory, move toward independence. By boycotting elections in January 2005, Sunnis forced themselves into effective political exile. "They're not going to make the same mistake twice," says an American adviser to the political process. "If they don't like the constitution, they will do a massive drive to vote it down."³⁴ Many Sunni leaders view the constitution as a recipe for the dissolution of Iraq, and remain bitterly opposed to provisions establishing federalism-provisions they say were passed without their consent.

In constitutional referendum on 15 October 2005 Iraqis supported the new constitution. Official vote totals showed the new constitution was approved largely through the support of the majority Shiite Muslim Arabs and ethnic Kurds, whose representatives oversaw its drafting. The Sunni Muslim Arabs, who have formed the bulk of the ongoing insurgency and remain mainly outside the government, opposed the constitution.³⁵

The Shiites see the vacuum created in Iraq as an historic opportunity to foment a Shiite religious awakening in Iraq with the aim of establishing an Islamic-Shiite regime. The conflicting interests among the three groups are visible in preparing the constitution, which demonstrate a deep mistrust Sunnis to the Shiite-Kurds coalition and their intentions in creating Iraq as the federal state.

There are still real two pessimistic scenarios. One is the possibility that the political instability and governmental vacuum will result in the partition of Iraq and secession of certain areas, especially Kurdish north and Shiite south. This fear is particularly acute regarding the Kurdish region. Iraqi Kurdistan is a defined territorial unit populated by the majority of Kurds who possess a military organisation and who have already attained a large

³³ Iraq's Minister of Defense, Sadoon al-Dulaimi was announced on May 16, 2005. He was chosen after a long political struggle to find a Sunni with real political credentials who was acceptable to Iraq's Shiites and Kurds, A. Cordesman, op. cit., p. 77.

³⁴ S. Johnson, *The Sunni Question; After the framers of Iraq's new constitution reach an agreement, there's still one group of Iraqis that could nullify it*, "Newsweek International" 9/5/2005.

³⁵ L. Kaplow, *Iraqis back constitution Strong dissent by Sunnis may deepen rifts*, "The Atlanta Journal and Constitution" 10/26/2005.

degree of autonomy. If the Kurds try to exploit the vacuum and strike for independence, they are liable to spark a violent internal struggle in Iraq that might invite military intervention by Iran, and even more by Turkey, because of fear that Kurdish independence in Iraq would encourage a similar inclination among the large Kurdish populations in their countries.³⁶

The second concern is the establishment of an Islamic-Shiite regime in Iraq. Unlike the Kurds, the Shiites do not seek autonomy. During the war between Iraq and Iraq, they demonstrated loyalty to the Iraqi state and displayed no sign of wishing to separate from it. Instead, they struggled for equality and greater participation in government. The vacuum created in Iraq in the wake of the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime could provide the Shiites with the opportunity to lead the future regime on an Islamic-Shiite platform. To attain it, they can exploit a number of factors:

- their majority in the Iraqi population;
- the emotional post-war outburst among Shiites who had been oppressed under the previous regime;
- the weakness of the Sunni population that was identified with Saddam Hussein's regime and now is responsible for terrorism and blocking political transformation;
- the Shiite religious assets of special importance that are located in Iraq, led by two holy cities: Najaf and Karbala, whose sanctity is superior to the Shiite sites in Iran;
- unlike the Kurds, the Shiites do not enjoy American cooperation and protection;
- Shiite regime in Iraq could undermine American plans to establish a moderate regime and ignite a struggle to oust American forces;
- Shiite dominated Iraq could also ally itself to the Islamic Shiite regime in Iran and create a consolidated stronghold of Shiite power in the Gulf.³⁷

As Shibley Telhami (Saban Center for Middle East Policy) noted: "a possible breakup of Iraq might push Iraqi Shiites closer to Iran strategically, which is not a happy outcome for most of them. Iraqi Shiites do have religious affinity with Iran. They are, however, also Arab and Iraqi and feel the

³⁶ See more in: K. Salih, *What Future for the Kurds*, "The Middle East Review of International Affairs," vol. 9, no. 1, Article 7, March 2005, <http://meria.idc.ac.il/journal/2005/issue1/jv9no1a7.html>, compare with: B. Park, *Iraq's Kurds and Turkey: challenges for US policy*, "Parameters" 9/22/2004.

³⁷ See more in: V. Nasr, *Regional Implications of Shi'a Revival in Iraq*, "The Washington Quarterly," Summer 2004, pp. 21-22; B. Rahimi, *Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani and the Democratization of Post-Saddam Iraq*, "The Middle East Review of International Affairs" (MERIA), vol. 8, no. 4, Article 2 - December 2004, <http://meria.idc.ac.il/journal/2004/issue4/jv8no4a2.html>.

force of ancient rivalries between Arabs and Persians, as well as the newer Iran-Iraq rivalries that drove the two countries into a bloody war in the 1980s.”³⁸

The another serious problem, except the threat of sectarians' wars and tensions among Sunnis, Shiites and Kurds, is related with security, especially internal. The new Iraq urgently needs to establish security, the most exigent challenge facing governments in the Middle East. If current plans are successfully implemented, the total number of Iraqi military, regular police, and police units should rise from 96,000 in September 2004 and 172,000 today, to 230,000 forces by the end of December of 2005, and 270,000 by mid-2006.³⁹ However the numbers of army and police forces are not so important as their effectiveness in combating the Islamic terrorism.

Conclusions

Nearly three years lasted war in Iraq took its toll in more than 2000 killed Americans soldiers and around 100,000 killed Iraqi civilians. The cost of war except the human price is related with ruined economy and very low capabilities in oil production.

The main threat concerns the Islamic terrorists and Sunni nationals, who are trying to push Iraqis into civil war and create Islamic State or new Sunni dictatorship in Iraq. The victims of their terrorist's activity are mainly Iraqis who badly need a sense of security and better perspectives in economic field.

Now-day situation in Iraq is still a very complicated: there is real threat of civil war especially between Shiites and Sunnis. Kurds are more interested in building their own state. They have *de facto* their own institutions and security forces. On the other hand democracy in Iraq is making progress, first the elections to the Constitutional Assembly and the second considerable step was in mid October referendum and acceptance by Iraqis the new constitutions. It seemed that Iraqi Sunnis would throw constitution.

Unfortunately, Iraq is now the most dangerous state in the world. Terrorism, suicidal bombings and numerous murders remind that new government and its infrastructure is fragile and still ineffective.

Ahead Iraqis should be national reconciliation and effective weakening jihadists who are responsible for the most bloody and numerous in victims

³⁸ Quote: S. Telhami, *Rush to Stabilize May Backfire in Polarized Iraq*, "San Jose Mercury News," October 30, 2005.

³⁹ A. Cordesman, *The Future of Iraq*, "Congressional Testimony" 7/18/2005.

terrorist's acts. The referendum has showed a growing split between the radical jihadists and the other insurgents, who are mostly Baathists. Jihadists headed by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, have been threatening to kill anyone who votes. The vast majority of Sunni organisations in Iraq-including several insurgent groups-have called on Sunnis to mobilise and vote to defeat the constitution, which they view as anti-Sunni.

It seemed that opposition against Iraqi government and American led collusion in Iraq is not consistent. The old principle: *divide et impera* requires that new Iraqi authorities should gain moderate Sunnis who are afraid about their new and unclear situation. Weakening of the Sunni opposition and including the Arab Sunnis into a new Iraq's political system and economy structure will bring to unified Iraq. If the Shiites and Kurds fail in their attempts it would be real threat of disintegration of the Iraqi State.

The new elections and the scale of the Arab Sunnis participation in it and the Shiite's and Kurds' policy and their attitudes in solving the Sunni problem will be crucial for the Iraq near future between two tendencies: stabilisation and destabilisation.