

# Fractured Iraq: Implications for Saudi National Security

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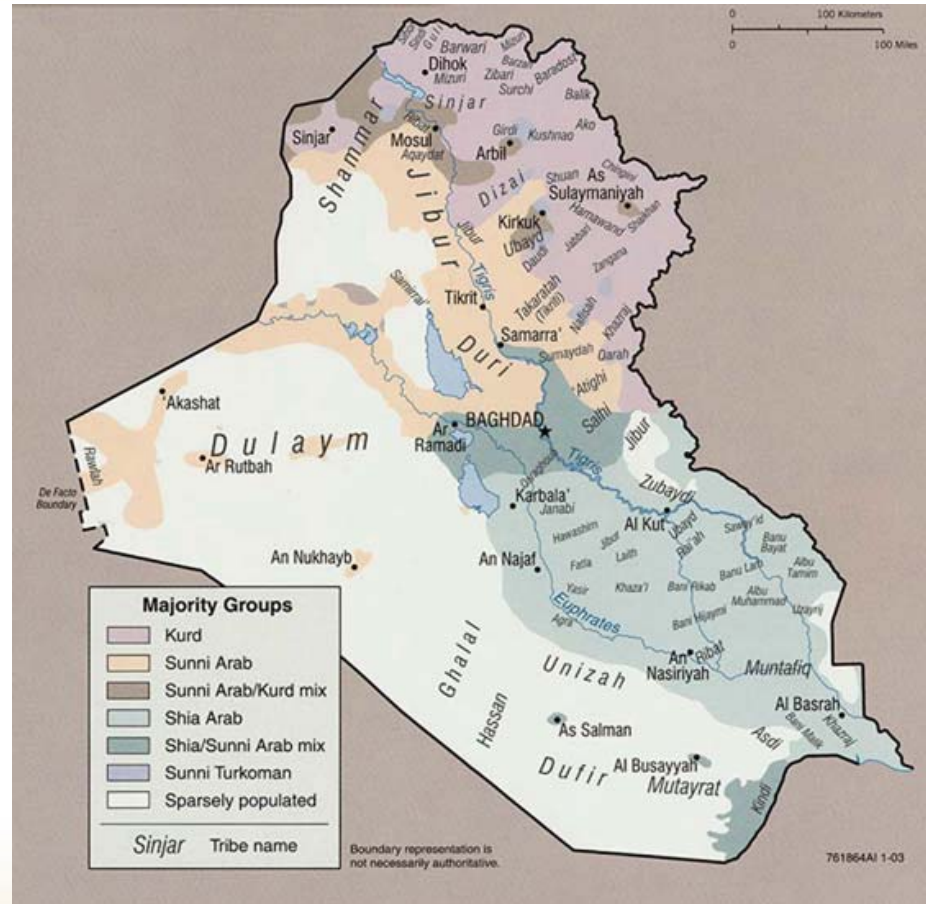
INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM AND INTELLIGENCE 2006

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# Challenges Confronting Iraq

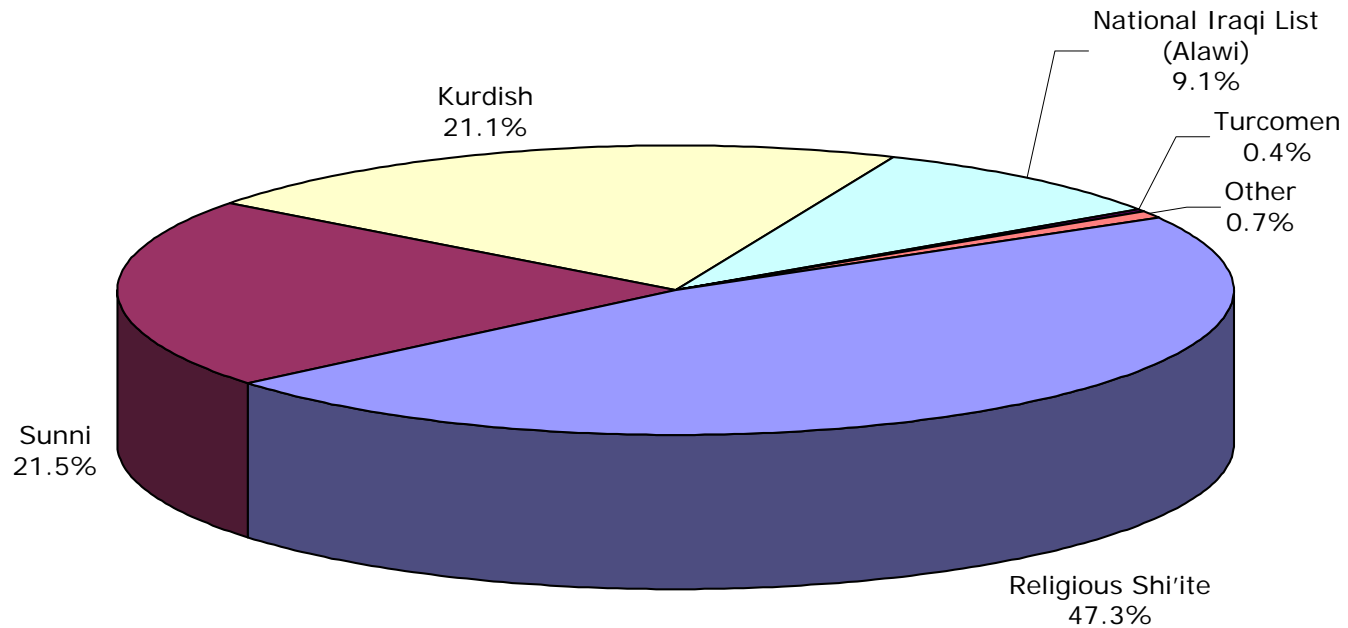
- Social, economic and especially security issues.
- Consequences of the 2003 US led invasion: rise of the insurgency, communal rivalries, lack of resources, and possibility of civil war.
- The Sunni-led insurgency shows no sign of abating; despite death of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi.
- These conditions are further complicated by Iranian interference.
- Uncertain if the new Iraqi government can provide stability and unite Kurds, Sunnis, and Shi'ites.
- Situation has grave implications for the entire region, especially Saudi Arabia.

# Ethnographic Distribution



# Election Results

Chart 1: Iraqi Election Results by Major Group - 12/05





# Kurdish Challenges to Iraqi Unity

# Kurdish Overview

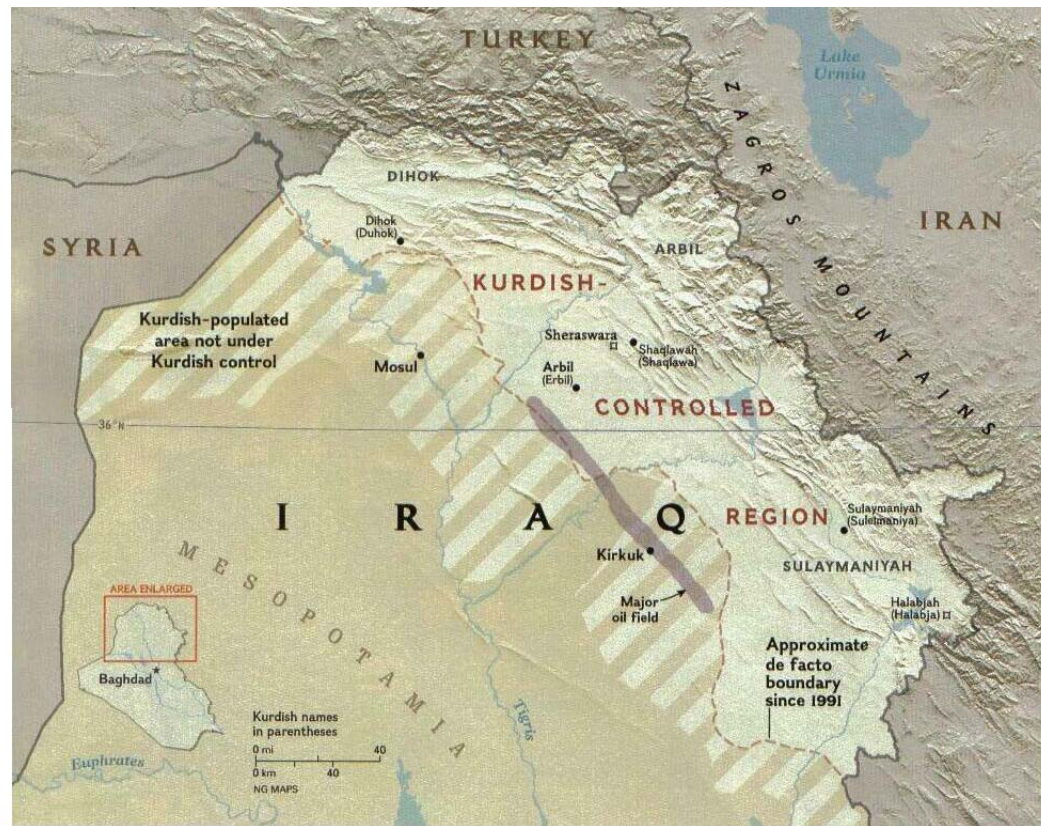
- **Population:** 18-20%
- **Geographic size:** 18%
- Live in semi-autonomous area known as the "Kurdistan Region."
- Protected by highly trained and formidable force: the Peshmerga.
- Kurdish independence and strong identity pose greatest challenge to a cohesive and unified Iraq.



*Area of concentration.*

# Kurdish Territorial Issues

- Kurdistan Regional Government has *de facto* control over Erbil, Dohuk, and Suleimaniya, in addition to portions of Diyala and Ninawa.
- The KRG claims Kirkuk, as well as larger portions of Diyala and Ninawa.
- Has aggressive border policy, which are fiercely guarded by the Peshmerga.



# Constitutional Demands

- The addition of a clause that would allow for a vote on independence within eight years.
- A redrawing of regional boundaries to include oil-rich Kirkuk.
- Peshmerga funded by central government.
- A federalist system more closely resembling a confederation based upon regionalism or ethnicity.

# Trigger Points in Conflict

- *Kurdification* policies, especially in the disputed city of Kirkuk, are destined to become main trigger points.
- Bulk of Iraq's 115 billion barrels of proven reserves located in the Shi'ite and Kurdish populated areas.
- Economy, not ideology, may be the decisive factor in whether Iraq can achieve unity with the Kurds.

# Constitutional Provisions for Oil Production and Revenues

- Article 116 stipulates that the government provide “a fair share” of the federal revenues it collects to meet the “needs” of each region, but the amount of support allotted to each [region] is discretionary.
- Contracts for oil exploration and production without prior government approval regarded as “contractually void.”
- Kurdish officials argue that the new constitution must allow the Kurdish region to produce its own oil.
- No constitutional provision for revenues that might be generated from wells yet to be exploited.

# Future of Kurdistan

- Kurdish officials disavow any plans for a “Greater Kurdistan.”
- The Kurds refuse to fully join Iraq if it means relinquishing their political advantages and hard-won independence.
- Kurdish officials have publicly expressed an intention to secede if Iraq falls into civil war.



# Shi'ite Challenges to Iraqi Unity

# Shi'ite Overview

- **Population:** 65%
- Controls the *United Iraqi Alliance* (UIA), largest bloc in parliament.
- Endured decades of political exclusion under Saddam's government.
- Key Shi'ite institutions strongly influenced by Iran.
- Iranian influence among Shi'ites represents a serious threat to a unified state.



*Area of concentration.*

# Shi'ite Agenda

- A unified federal state that includes "one entire region in the south."
- Access to Iraq's rich oil fields.
- An outlet to the sea.
- The opportunity to consolidate their vision and promulgate policies in the south, in a region entirely under their control.

# Core Principles

- The Shi'ite leadership has expressed an unwillingness to “negotiate” on “core principles”:
  - Full acceptance of the Constitution.
  - De-Ba’athification.
  - Rejection of terrorist activities.

# Major Political Parties

- **The SCIRI**
  - Best organized, wealthiest, led by Abdel Aziz al-Hakim.
  - 2.5-3 million supporters.
  - **Militia:** The Badr Organization for Reconstruction and Development.
  - Active in the administration of social programs.
  - Backed by Iran.
- **The Risaliyoun**
  - Led by Muqtada al-Sadr.
  - 1–1.5 million supporters.
  - **Militia:** The Mahdi Army.
  - Backed by Iran.
- **The Dawa**
  - Led by former Prime Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari.
  - Does not have militia.
  - Has significant Sunni membership.

# Iranian Interference in Iraq

- Infiltration, funding, and arming of the Shi'ite militias and training by the al-Quds Forces of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard (IRGC).
- Infiltration of the newly created military and police forces by Shi'ite officers with ties to the IRGC and Iran's Ministry of Intelligence (MOIS).
- Iranian "charities" provide cash and material support to other "charities," businesses, and religious organizations in Iraq.
- The IRGC and MOIS have placed key operatives in strategic positions in the new Iraqi administration.

# Al-Quds Forces

- Special command division of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard.
- Mainly functions as the special foreign intelligence division of the IRGC and specializes in unconventional warfare.
- Has a close relationship with the Badr Organization and the Mahdi Army, as well as with smaller Iraqi Shi'ite militias.
- Members of the al-Quds Forces organized what came to be known as the "Death Squads" under the former Iraqi Interior Minister.
- Estimated strength: 5,000.

# Badr Organization

- Led by Abdel Aziz al-Hakim.
- Armed wing of the SCIRI.
- The *Badr Brigade* was formed, armed and trained in IRGC training camps across Iran under overall control of the al-Quds Forces.
- Changed name from *Badr Brigade* to *Badr Organization of Reconstruction and Development* after pledging to disarm and dedicate itself to peaceful activities.
- Estimated strength: 25,000; largest Shi'ite militia in Iraq.

# Mahdi Army

- Controlled by radical cleric Muqtada al-Sadr.
- Main support base in poor areas of Baghdad and Basra.
- Supported, armed, and trained by IRGC, but not as comprehensively as Badr Brigade, due to its smaller size.
- Consists of fiercely loyal supporters who have served the Sadr family for centuries.
- Estimated strength: 10,000.

# Iranian Charities in Iraq

<b>Charity</b>	<b>Assets (\$ Billions) *</b>
Imam Reza Foundation	12-14
Foundation for the Disabled and Oppressed	10-12
Martyrs Foundation	5-7
The Foundation for the Construction of Housing	4
The Islamic Propagation Organization	2-3
Welfare Foundation	N/A
Islamic Economic Foundation	N/A

\* Note: 70-80% of the value of these assets are contained in real estate holdings granted by the Iranian government.

# Shi'ites Future in Iraq

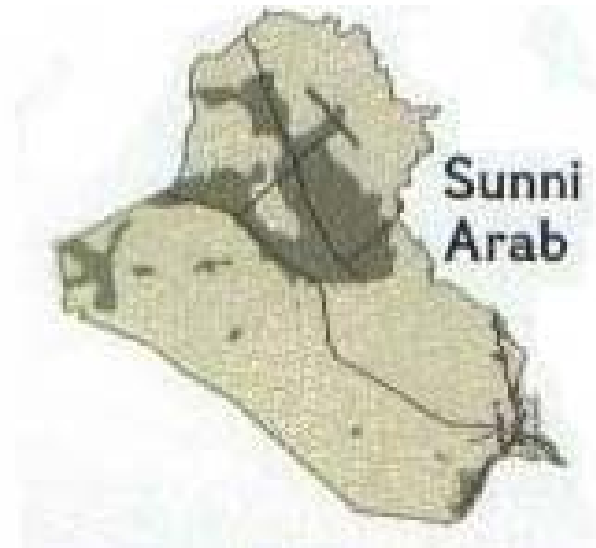
- Iraqi Shi'ite leaders want an autonomous region, but do not favor dissolution of the country.
- All signs indicate that Iran will continue to be deeply involved in influencing the Shi'ites and shaping the future of Iraq.
- It remains to be seen whether the Shi'ites can be weaned from Iran and will use their political clout to forge a viable unified state.



# Sunni Challenges to Iraqi Unity

# Sunni Overview

- **Population:** 12-15%
- Sunni Muslims have long dominated Iraq.
- Many Sunnis spurned the political process.
- Many have joined insurgency.
- This insurgency presents a major threat to lasting peace and stability in Iraq.



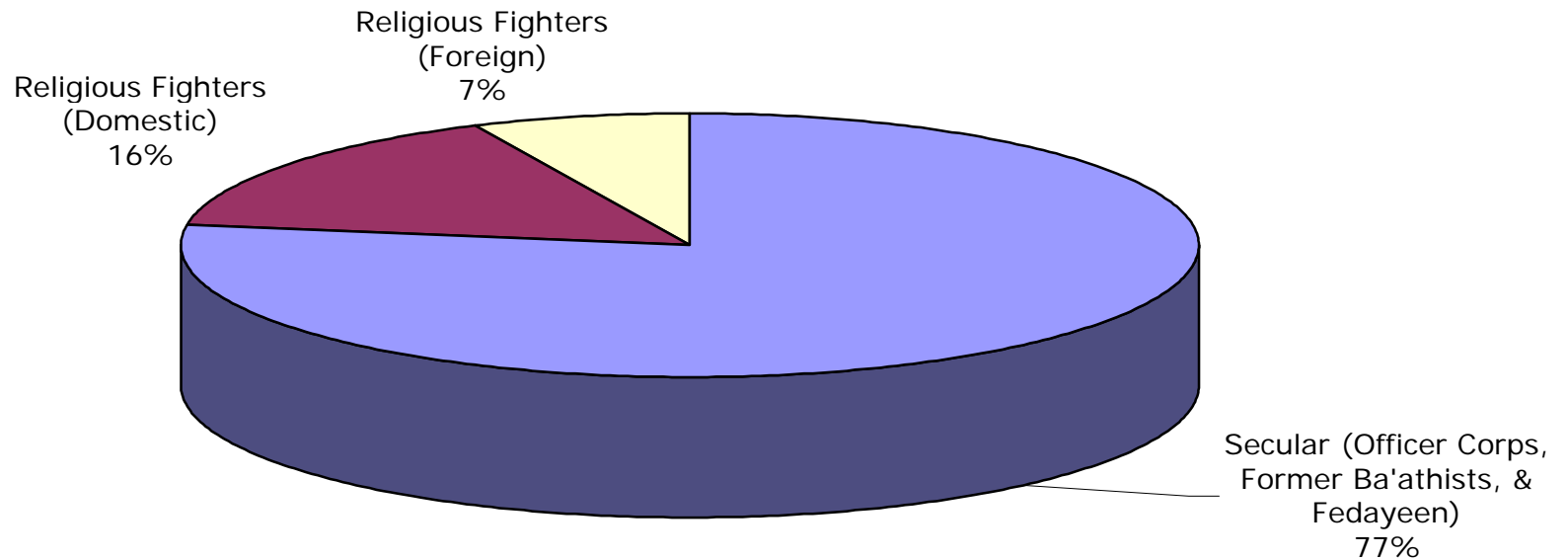
*Area of concentration.*

# The Insurgency

- The insurgency consists of the following elements:
  - The Officer Corp (former military and security officials of Saddam's regime).
  - Former Ba'athists.
  - Jihadi elements (a minority of which are foreign fighters).
- The base of support is Iraq's Sunni population.
- Real level of support in Sunni community is unknown, but all indications show it to be very high.
- Armed Strength: Approximately 77,000+.

# Composition of the Insurgency

Chart 2: Composition of Insurgency



# Al-Qaeda in Iraq

- There is active help from the Iranian al-Quds forces in transporting al-Qaeda fighters from Afghanistan to Iraq through Iran.
- Iran has also provided al-Qaeda material support in the form of explosives, food, and logistical help.
- Operational structure resembles what was formerly the al-Qaeda organization in Saudi Arabia.
- The idea of an overall commander is a Western delusion – no single leader orchestrates al-Qaeda operations in Iraq.
- Each network operates independently and has its own fighters, funding, logistical support, recruitment and training.

# Al-Qaeda in Iraq (cont.)

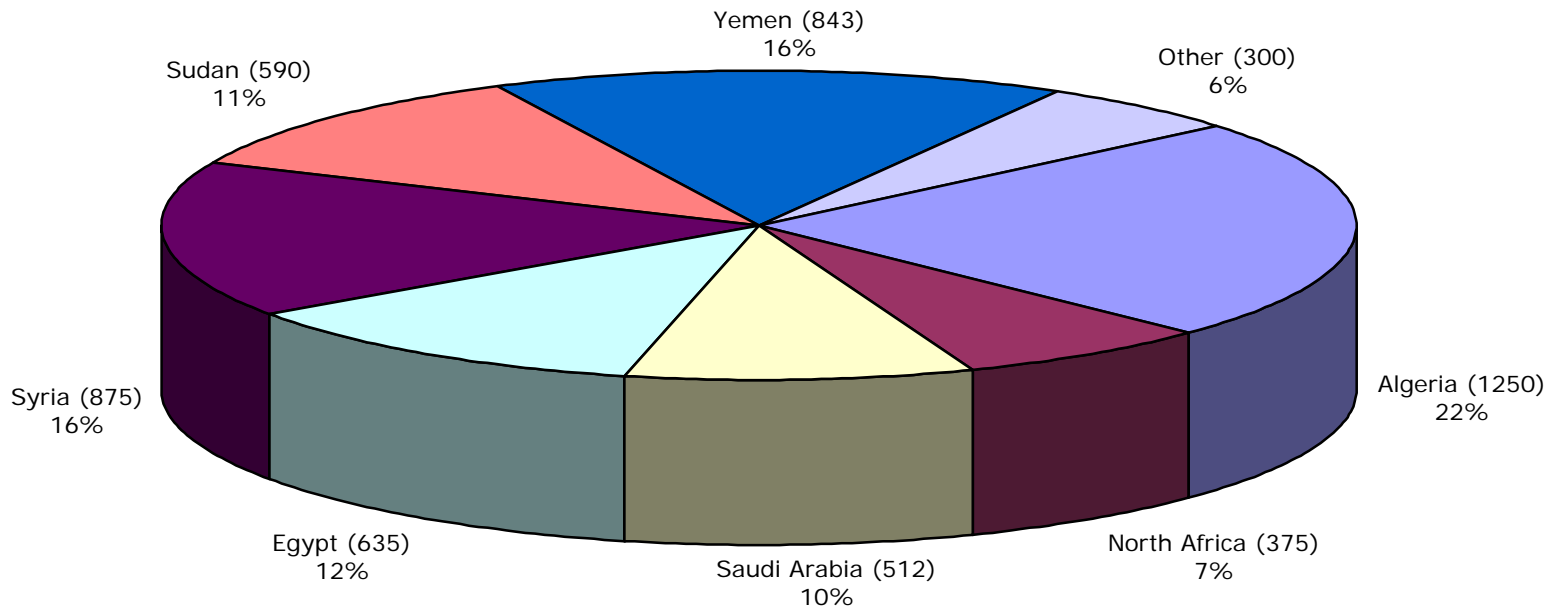
- Abu Musab al-Zarqawi was one of several commanders that possessed such a network, but not necessarily the most dangerous.
- Several foreign commanders run their own networks. The most powerful and dangerous is led by an Algerian, but others – which vary in size and strength – are controlled by a Yemeni, a Saudi, and an Egyptian.
- The Egyptian has taken over what was left of Zarqawi's network and merged it with his own.

# Foreign Insurgents

- Foreign insurgents constitute small percentage of the insurgency.
- Insurgents come from several countries in the Middle East and North Africa.
- Algerians are largest, most experienced, and most violent group (former GIA and GSPC fighters), with sizable support from fighters from other N. African countries (Morocco, Tunisia, and Libya).
- Although Saudis form only the sixth largest contingent, this should still be a major concern for the government.

# Foreign Fighters in Iraq

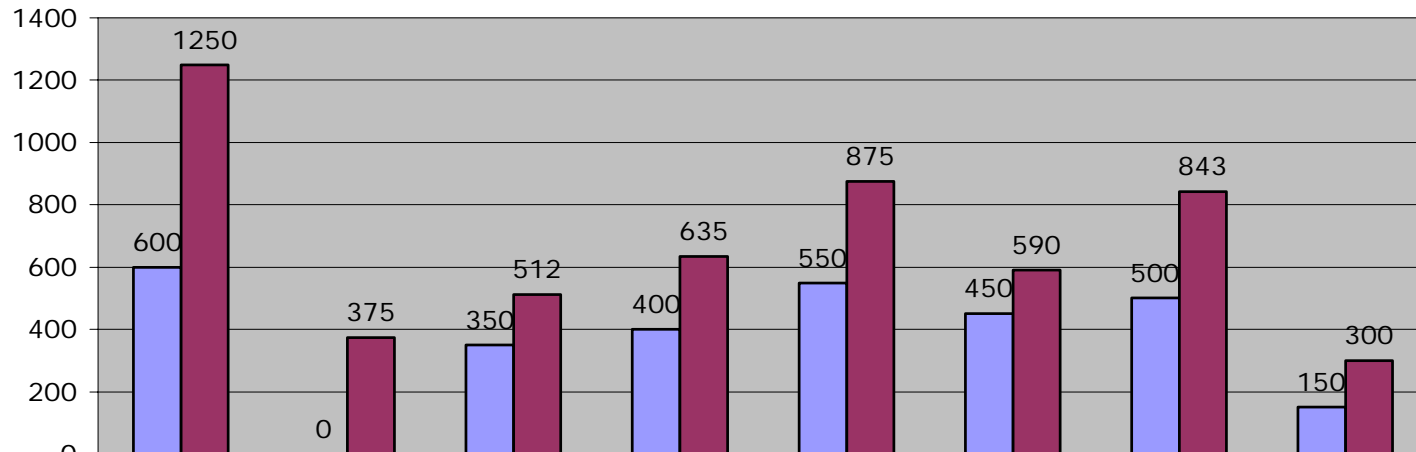
**Chart 3: Foreign Fighters in Iraq (5,380 Total)  
Cumulative to March 2006**



# Change in Foreign Fighters

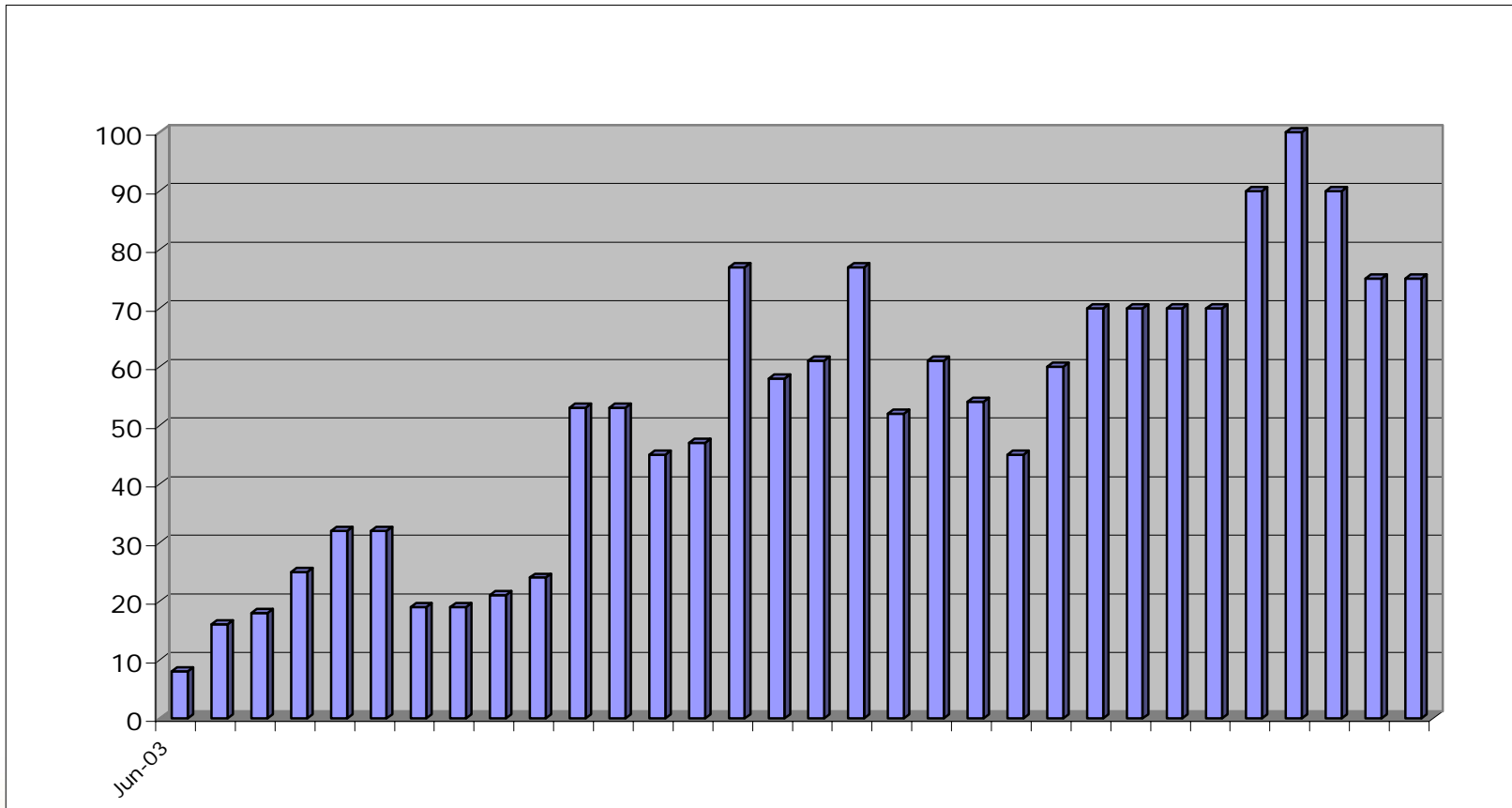
Chart 4: Change in Foreign Fighters in Iraq

■ Sep-05  
■ Mar-06



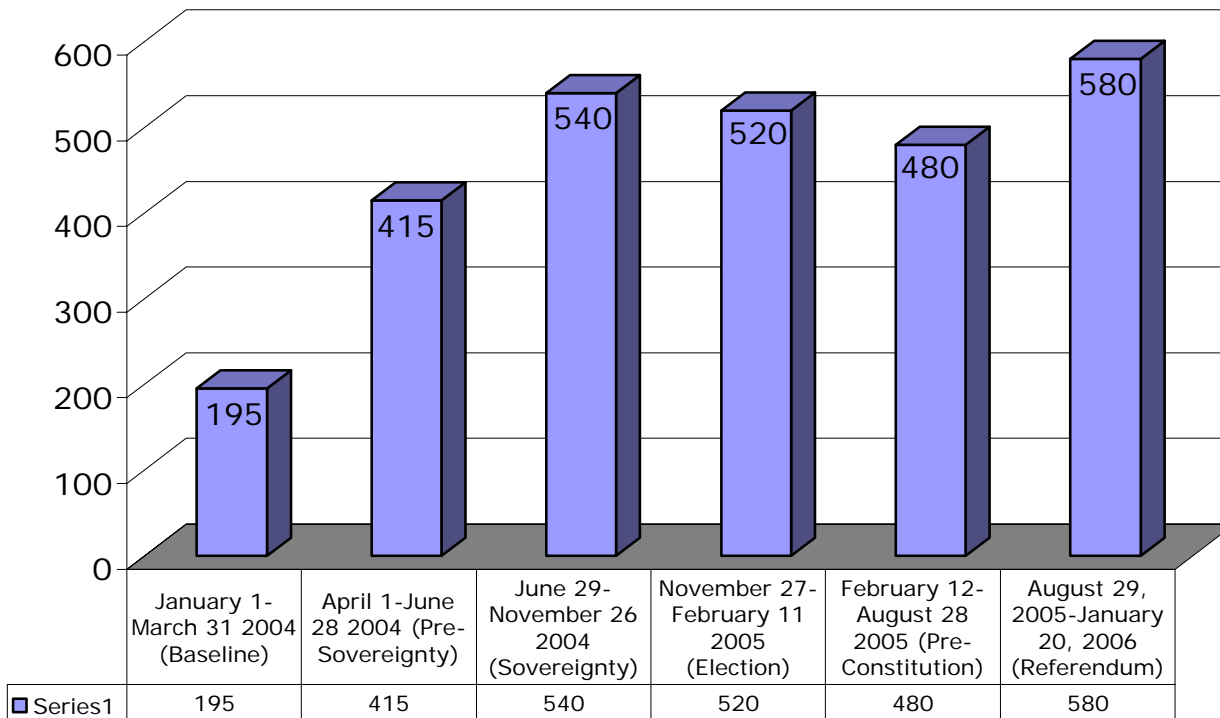
	Algeria	North Africa	Saudi Arabia	Egypt	Syria	Sudan	Yemen	Other
■ Sep-05	600	0	350	400	550	450	500	150
■ Mar-06	1250	375	512	635	875	590	843	300

# Daily Attacks



# Weekly Attacks

Chart 6: Average Weekly Attacks by Milestone





# Conclusions

# Challenges to Iraqi Unity

- The strength of the Kurdish quest for quasi-independence will continue to grow and the issue of Kirkuk could trigger open conflict with the central government in Baghdad.
- Iranian influence can be expected to increase as American influence wanes.
- The insurgency will continue to grow in strength and popularity.
- All indicators point to increased likelihood of civil war and the disintegration of the Iraqi state.

# Nawaf Obaid

## *Managing Director*

Nawaf Obaid is currently the Managing Director of the Saudi National Security Assessment Project, a government consultancy based in Riyadh.

He is the author of *The Oil Kingdom at 100: Petroleum Policymaking in Saudi Arabia* (Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2000). He is also an Adjunct Fellow in the Office of the Arleigh Burke Chair in Strategy at the Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS) in Washington DC where co-authored with, Anthony Cordesman, *National Security in Saudi Arabia: Threats, Responses, and Challenges* (Praeger & CSIS Publications, September 30, 2005).

He has a BSFS from Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service, an MA in Public Policy from Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government, and completed doctoral courses at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Security Studies Program.