

## Section 3. Situation in Iraq

### 1. Security and Political Situation in Iraq

Through the efforts to restore public security by Iraq itself together with the United States and other countries, the overall public security situation has been seen to improve since the latter half of 2007, with reductions in the number of security incidents against Iraqi citizens and casualties of terrorist attacks. Factors for such improvement include effective counter terrorism operations by multinational forces and Iraqi Security Forces, increasing capabilities of the Iraqi Security Forces and the rejection of violence and extremism by the people of Iraq<sup>45</sup>.

On the other hand, such improvements in the public security situation remain fragile, and it has been pointed out that the security situation could stagnate or deteriorate<sup>46</sup>. In addition, the influence of neighboring countries has also been noted. In particular, it has been reported that Iran has provided weapons and training for Iraqi militia organizations, and that Syria is the major gateway to Iraq for terrorists<sup>47</sup>.

For the stability of the nation, the Iraqi government has, on its own initiative, implemented political efforts for the promotion of national reconciliation, in addition to security measures. In 2008, the Iraqi National Assembly adopted a number of significant laws: the Accountability and Justice Law, which enables former Ba'ath Party members who were purged from public offices from 2003 onwards to reassume public positions;



A woman casting her vote in Iraq's provincial elections [EPA/JJI]

the Amnesty law; and the Provincial Powers law. In July 2008, the Iraqi Accord Front (Tawafuq), which had broken away from the government in August 2007, rejoined the government. The end of January 2009 saw Iraq's first provincial elections since the establishment of the Iraqi constitution (excluding some provinces). This all represents a significant step toward the realization of national reconciliation in Iraq.

On the other hand, there still are a number of problems. For example, the issue of the status of disputed areas including Kirkuk remains unsolved, and the hydrocarbon draft law has yet to be adopted.

### 2. Trends of the Armed Forces of Foreign Countries in Iraq

The transfer of security responsibilities from multinational forces to the Iraqi authorities is under way in the provinces where the capabilities of Iraqi Security Forces have been enhanced and local conditions have improved. Up until the end of 2008, security responsibility had been transferred in 13 out of 18 provinces, including southeastern Muthanna Province, in which the Ground Self-Defense Force was engaged in humanitarian and reconstruction assistance activities. (See Fig. I-1-3-1)

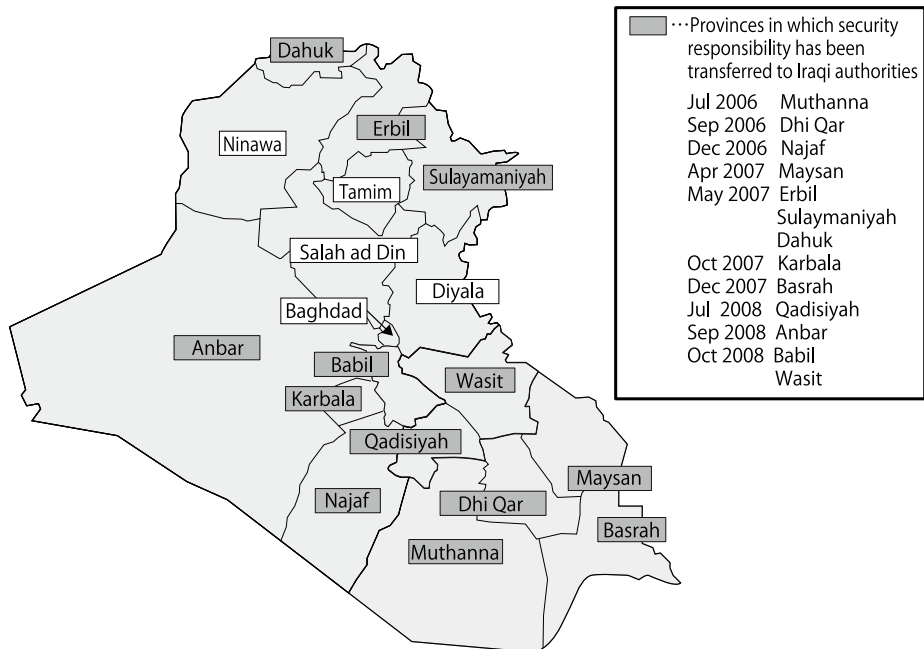
The mandate of the multinational forces was extended until the end of 2008 by Security Council resolution 1790 adopted in December 2007. The Iraqi government and concerned countries including the United States have discussed the activities of multinational forces after the expiration of the mandate<sup>48</sup>. In November 2008, the Iraqi National Congress passed an agreement with the United States on the temporary presence, activities and withdrawal of the U.S. forces in/from Iraq, which entered into effect at the beginning of 2009<sup>49</sup>. The Iraqi government also concluded similar agreements with other countries, including the United Kingdom and Australia.

In response to such developments, a number of countries have either withdrawn or drastically reduced their troop levels. As of November 2008, about 150,000 personnel from 21 countries were deployed in Iraq, but most countries - except the U.S. etc. - have withdrawn their troops by the end of 2008. By July 2008, the U.S. withdrew as many troops as had been “surged” since January 2007; and by February 2009 about 8,000 personnel had retreated<sup>50</sup>. U.S. President Obama, who took office in January 2009, announced in February that the combat mission in Iraq will end by the end of August 2010.



U.S. ambassador to Iraq, Crocker, and Iraq Foreign Minister, Zebari, shaking hands after signing the U.S.-Iraq Status of Forces Agreement [AP Images]

Fig. I-1-3-1 Current Situation of the Transfer of Security Authority



### 3. Efforts by the International Community toward the Stabilization of Iraq

The stabilization of Iraq is a common challenge to the international community and countries and international organizations, including the United Nations, are making various efforts.

Since 2005, the United States and others have deployed Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) made up of military and civilian personnel to provide support to local governments in Iraq. The United Nations has also been coordinating reconstruction, development and humanitarian assistance through the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI).

The International Compact with Iraq (ICI), an international framework to build a new partnership between the Iraqi government and the international community, was launched in May 2007. The Compact stipulates the common policy objectives and the measures to be taken, of both the Iraqi government and international community for the next five years in the areas of governance, security, and economic reconstruction.