

SIGIR OBSERVATIONS

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A NASCENT NORMALCY: THE EVOLUTION OF U.S. ASSISTANCE TO A SOVEREIGN IRAQ

This penultimate quarter of the Year of Transfer witnessed the emergence of nascent normalcy in Iraq. As U.S. reconstruction assistance continued to target civil and military capacity building, Iraq achieved progress on the security, political, and economic fronts. Violent incidents dropped to their lowest levels since 2004; the long-awaited Provincial Election Law finally passed; and commercial activity, spurred by Iraq’s oil-revenue windfall, continued to increase. But, as General Ray Odierno, the new Commanding General, Multi-National Force-Iraq (MNF-I), recently noted, Iraq “was a failed state [in 2006]. In 2008, it’s a fragile state. We’ve got to move it to a stable state.”¹ To sustain progress in this direction, Iraq must improve its provision of security and essential services, such as electricity, potable water, sewage systems, and health care services.

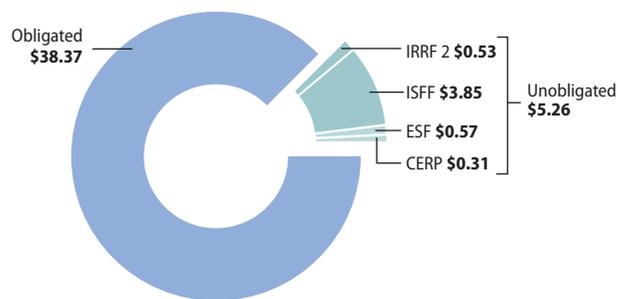
Iraq’s nascent normalcy follows upon—and, to some extent, stems from—the completion and transfer of most of the significant U.S. relief and reconstruction projects. Almost exactly five years ago, the Congress appropriated more than \$18 billion to the Iraq Relief and Reconstruction Fund (IRRF) to support the ambitious Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) rebuilding program. On September 30, 2008, the authority of U.S. agencies to obligate IRRF funds for new obligations expired. At that point, over 97% was obligated, and nearly 94% was spent.² The \$17.94 billion Iraq Security Forces Fund (ISFF) also is drawing down, with \$3.85 billion left to obligate and \$6.90 billion to expend.³ The Department of State’s (DoS’s) Economic Support Fund (ESF) and the

Department of Defense’s (DoD’s) Commander’s Emergency Response Program (CERP) have \$1.81 billion and \$0.88 billion left to expend, respectively.⁴ In sum, about \$10.72 billion of the four major U.S. reconstruction funds has yet to be expended, and \$5.26 billion remains unobligated. For an overview of amounts available for obligation in the four major funds, see Figure 1.1.

The ESF program expends funds at a much slower rate than CERP due in part to DoS’s use of Interagency Agreements, which transfer ESF monies to DoD or the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) for execution. Oddly, DoS reported that, although 100% of 2008 ESF funds were obligated, 0% was expended this quarter. For an executive summary of SIGIR’s audit on this issue, see Section 4.

FIGURE 1.1

BALANCES OF THE FOUR MAJOR FUNDS
\$ Billions



Note: Numbers affected by rounding.

Sources: DoS, *Iraq Weekly Status Report*, 10/1/2008; OSD, response to SIGIR data call, 10/14/2008; DoS, response to SIGIR data call, 10/14/2007; ITAO, responses to SIGIR data call, 1/4/2008 and 10/14/2008; GRD, response to SIGIR data call, 10/6/2008; USAID, response to SIGIR data call, 10/14/2008; ITAO, *Essential Indicators Report*, 10/2/2008.

The Supplemental appropriations passed by the Congress last quarter imposed conditions for the use of certain types of new U.S. aid for Iraq. For example, the Congress prohibited expending new appropriations on prisons and mandated the submission of detailed plans before specified other funds could be used. The Supplemental further required the Government of Iraq (GOI) to match some U.S. foreign assistance on a dollar-for-dollar basis. This quarter, the principal U.S. entity charged with monitoring the GOI's compliance with these new matching requirements merely enumerated the capital allocations in the GOI's budget, counting them as matching funds.

The recent Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2009 imposed a ceiling of \$2 million on the amount of CERP money that DoD could allocate to a single project. The new NDAA further requires the Secretary of Defense to approve CERP projects costing over \$1 million, certifying thereby that the project will meet Iraq's urgent humanitarian relief or reconstruction needs.

For the current range and median cost of CERP projects, see Figure 1.2.

In addition to imposing a cap on the amount of CERP funds that DoD can use on a reconstruction project, the NDAA:

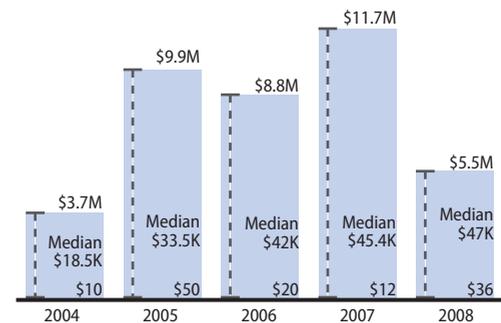
- requires the U.S. government to ensure that Iraqi funds are used to pay the costs of training, equipping, and sustaining the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF)
- requires the U.S. government to begin negotiations with the GOI on sharing the costs of combined operations
- expands the categories of security incidents that must be reported by private

security contractors operating in areas of combat operations

- limits certain noncompetitive contracts to no more than one year in duration
- requires additional regulations on the use of cost-reimbursable contracts
- mandates additional regulations for agencies other than the DoD to minimize the excessive use of tiering of subcontractors that add no or negligible value and to ensure that contractors or subcontractors do not receive indirect costs or profit on work performed by lower-tier subcontractors to which the higher-tier contractor adds no or negligible value
- imposes a prohibition on the use of funds to establish bases for the permanent stationing of U.S. troops in Iraq

FIGURE 1.2

RANGE AND MEDIAN COST OF CERP PROJECTS, 2004–2008
\$ Millions



Note: Numbers affected by rounding. Includes completed and ongoing projects.

Source: IRMS, CERP Excel Workbook, 10/3/2008.

THE DIPLOMATIC CONTOURS OF A NASCENT NORMALCY

Two bilateral accords are expected to define the continuing U.S. role in Iraq: the Strategic Framework Agreement (SFA) and the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA).

The SFA formalizes the “Declaration of Principles for a Long-Term Relationship of Cooperation and Friendship Between the Republic of Iraq and the United States of America” that President Bush and Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki signed in late 2007.⁵ It establishes the nature of continuing political, economic, and cultural relationships between the United States and the GOI.

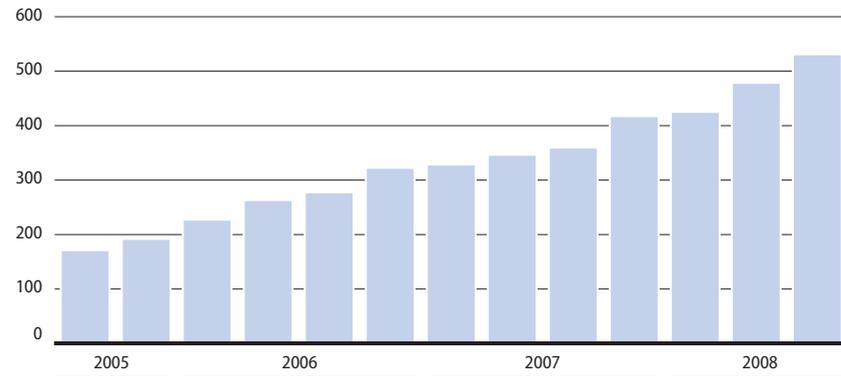
The more significant SOFA details the rights and responsibilities of U.S. personnel in Iraq after December 31, 2008. The SOFA would supersede UN Security Council Resolution 1511 (2003) as the legal basis for a continuing U.S. military and civilian presence in Iraq. Concerns about the immunity of U.S. military personnel from prosecution under Iraqi law have delayed this agreement. CPA Order 17 provided U.S. personnel with blanket immunity from prosecution under Iraqi law. The SOFA reportedly would waive contractor immunity and thus increase the cost of security for continuing U.S. relief efforts.

THE INCREASING FUNCTIONAL AUTONOMY OF A SOVEREIGN IRAQ

During this Year of Transfer, the GOI, a *de jure* sovereign entity since June 28, 2004, increasingly has asserted its *de facto* independence from U.S. supervision on matters of law, policy, and governance. This aspect of Iraq’s nascent normalcy has decreased GOI transparency for U.S. interlocutors who continue to engage Iraqis through capacity-building programs. For example, certain

Iraqi ministries deny U.S. advisors visibility into their budgets (e.g., the Ministry of Electricity), exacerbating the financial planning challenges caused by the volatile price of oil. The GOI committed just over \$20 billion for capital reconstruction projects in 2008.⁶ But lack of access to Iraqi budget data limits U.S. knowledge of actual budget execution rates.

FIGURE 1.3

TOTAL TRAINED IRAQI SECURITY FORCES, BETWEEN JULY 2005 AND AUGUST 2008
Thousands

Note: The trained number for November 2007 has been revised from 439,678 per March 9010 report.

Source: DoD, *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq*, 7/2005, 10/2005, 2/2006, 5/2006, 8/2006, 11/2006, 3/2007, 6/2007, 9/2007, 12/2007, 3/2008, 6/2008, 9/2008.

Iraqi Security Forces in the Lead

The growth in ISF capabilities has permitted Coalition forces to shift from the lead in kinetic operations to supporting roles. This shift allows MNF-I to continue to provide critical assistance to the Iraqi Army (IA) by “enabling from overwatch.”⁷ Of the 164 IA battalions conducting operations nationwide, approximately 107 are either in the lead or operating independently.⁸

The IA, supported by Iraqi police, mounted sustained offensive operations this quarter in Diyala province. This successful offensive marked the continuation of a positive trend observed during the previous quarter when IA forces executed effective operations in Basrah.

The ISF’s Leadership Initiative

The ISF suffers from a leadership shortage. A SIGIR April 2008 audit observed that the IA must strengthen its officer and non-commissioned officer (NCO) corps if it is to succeed in its long-term security mission.⁹ To ameliorate the leadership shortfall, the Ministry of Defense (MOD) has initiated a robust recall effort to

reinstate IA officers and NCOs dismissed by the 2003 CPA order disbanding the Army. The MOD established centers across Iraq this quarter where former IA officers and NCOs could register to return to service. By early October 2008, approximately 97,000 officers and NCOs had signed up.¹⁰ These experienced officers and NCOs will provide leadership to the relatively inexperienced enlisted men who comprise the ISF. For the number of total trained ISF personnel, see Figure 1.3.

Enhanced International Involvement

The United Nations (UN) took steps this quarter to increase its involvement in Iraq by:

- announcing a new anticorruption initiative aimed at strengthening the GOI’s weakened anticorruption institutions
- brokering a political compromise within Iraq’s Council of Representatives (CoR) that helped pass the Provincial Election Law
- supporting the GOI’s efforts to control the spread of cholera¹¹



Jordan's Ambassador to Iraq presents his credentials to President Talabani. (GOI Photo)

The UN Secretary General recently stated: “There is new hope that the people and Government of Iraq are overcoming daunting challenges and working together to rebuild their country, after years of war, dictatorship and neglect.”¹² Buttressing this hope, the GOI broadened regional ties with several neighboring states including Kuwait, Jordan, Bahrain, and Syria, which sent ambassadors to Baghdad this quarter for the first time since before the 2003 invasion.

Normalizing the International Zone

Another striking sign of Iraq's nascent normalcy is the impending decrease in U.S. control of the International Zone (IZ). Created by the CPA in 2003 as the “Green Zone,” the IZ encompasses approximately 3.5 square miles of downtown Baghdad, stretching along the Tigris River. Coalition forces guard all access points to the IZ and strictly control entry. When the U.S. Embassy accomplishes its move to the New Embassy Compound (NEC), expected to be completed by the end of this year, the IZ's borders will contract, whereupon ISF personnel will assume security responsibilities for most of the area.

Key Developments Security

President Bush recently noted that “violence in Iraq is down to its lowest point since the spring of 2004.”¹³ Notwithstanding vast and palpable

improvements on the security front, the situation in Iraq remains tenuous.¹⁴ Secretary of Defense Robert Gates recently cited two specific areas of concern: (1) “the prospect of violence in the lead-up to the [provincial and national] election[s]” and (2) “worrisome reports about sectarian [Shia] efforts to slow the assimilation of the Sons of Iraq (SOI) into the Iraqi security forces.”¹⁵ For a snapshot of security incidents across a four-year span, see Figure 1.4.

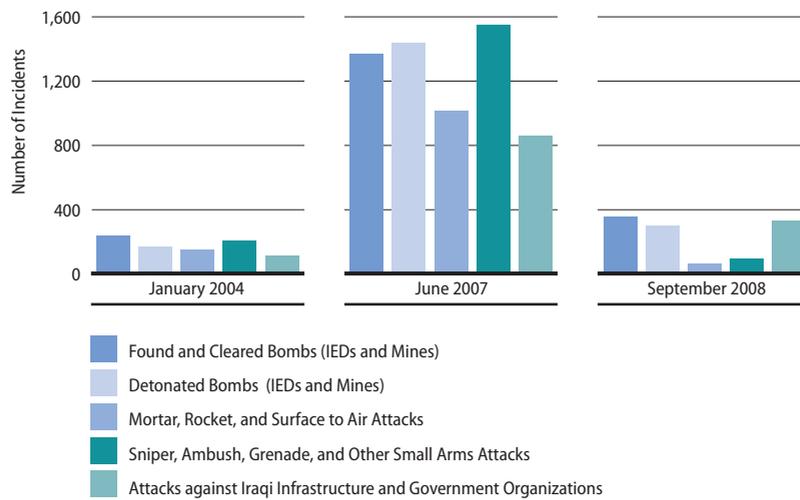
Provincial Elections

On September 24, 2008, the CoR passed the long anticipated Provincial Election Law, mandating that elections must occur before January 31, 2009. The law further provides that:¹⁶

- Of Iraq's 15 majority-Arab provinces, all but Tameem (Kirkuk) must conduct provincial elections by the end of January 2009.
- Provincial elections in the three Kurdish provinces must occur sometime later in 2009.
- 25% of the seats on each Provincial Council (PC) must be reserved for women.
- No seats on PCs will be reserved for Christians and other religious minorities.

Iraq's long-awaited provincial elections hopefully will repair some of the civil fissures caused by the Sunni boycott of the January 2005 provincial elections, setting the stage for the late 2009 parliamentary elections. The parliamentary elections will subject Prime Minister Maliki's administration to its first electoral review.

FIGURE 1.4
SECURITY INCIDENTS—THREE SNAPSHOTS IN TIME



Note: Numbers affected by rounding.

Source: OSD, response to SIGIR data call, 10/6/2008.

Sons of Iraq

In mid-summer 2007, the United States created the Sons of Iraq (SOI) to bring tens of thousands of disaffected Sunnis into Iraq’s civil security apparatus, thereby reducing the pool of potential insurgents. The SOI initiative, along with the Surge and the August 2007 Sadrist ceasefire, helped reduce attack levels in Iraq from their June 2007 peak to their current post-invasion lows. The United States pressed the Maliki government this quarter to integrate the SOI into the ISF. The GOI’s halting response underscores the continuing need for Sunni/Shia reconciliation.

There are approximately 95,000 members of the SOI, with 51,000 in Baghdad.¹⁷ Since the program’s inception in the summer of 2007, the United States has paid the SOI with CERP funds. On October 1, 2008, the GOI assumed responsibility for overseeing and paying just over 50,000 SOI members. The GOI stated that it intends to integrate only 20,000 of these into the regular ISF.¹⁸ The remainder will be pensioned off, hired for non-security-related government positions, or released from service entirely.

Provincial Iraqi Control—Anbar and Babylon

On September 1, 2008, the United States transferred Anbar province, once a hive of Sunni insurgent activity, to Provincial Iraqi Control (PIC). On October 23, 2008, Babylon became the 12th province to PIC.¹⁹ Current U.S. plans call for the transfer of Wassit province to Iraqi control before the end of 2008.²⁰

Continuing Challenges Rule of Law

Iraq’s rule-of-law system remains broken, most evidenced by the fact that Iraqi judges continue to be assassinated across the country. In 2008, terrorists have killed 7 judges, adding to the 11 murdered in 2007. Since 2003, over 40 judges and family members have been assassinated. The problem of judicial security, which SIGIR raised in its October 2007 Quarterly Report, remains unresolved. The Ministry of the Interior says it is working on a solution, but none has been forthcoming.

Iraqi Prime Minister Maliki and Chief Justice Medhat cut the ceremonial ribbon opening the new Rusafa Justice Palace in Baghdad on September 10, 2008. (USACE photo)



Corruption

Corruption afflicted Iraq for decades before the 2003 invasion, and it has continued to do so since, amounting to a “second insurgency.” As a recent IMF report stated, there is a continuing and compelling need for the GOI to press for reforms that could help it contain the corruption problem.²¹

Battling GOI corruption is chiefly the mission of the Board of Supreme Audit (BSA), the Commission on Integrity (CoI), and the Iraq Inspectors General (IGs). Each of these entities faces significant impediments to meeting their respective missions. The BSA released a report earlier this year indicating numerous weaknesses within the Iraq IGs. And the BSA’s audit burden has massively increased as Iraq’s budget has expanded.

The CoI, ostensibly the GOI’s chief fraud-fighting organization, reported this quarter that the new Amnesty Law, approved by the CoR in February, erased, by operation of law, more than half of its cases.²² As of September 30, 2008, 690 CoI corruption cases had been closed pursuant to the application of this law.²³ Other weaknesses hamper the CoI’s mission: it lacks an effective presence outside of Baghdad, its Commissioner has not been confirmed by the CoR, and its statutory authority remains in limbo. In sum, the CoI has limited capacity to fight corruption.

Corruption problems were observed during a recent SIGIR assessment of three schools in Sadr City,²⁴ which were funded with Iraqi money under the Iraq-Commander’s Emergency Response Program (I-CERP). SIGIR’s inspectors

discovered that a local Iraqi contractor working on the projects requested release from his contract because he had received multiple requests from GOI officials for bribes. When he refused to comply with the requests, he and his family were threatened. For an executive summary of the inspection, see Section 4.

Updating the Year of Transfer Oil Income and the Iraqi Budget

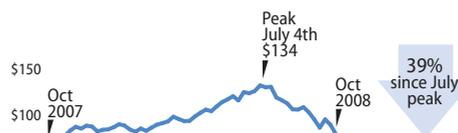
The Ministry of Finance (MOF) published the GOI’s new strategic budget plan this quarter, projecting that 94% of Iraq’s 2009 revenues will come from oil income and estimating that oil exports will average 1.9 million barrels per day at an average per barrel price of \$80.

On August 18, 2008, the IMF reported that Iraq’s “growth prospects have improved in 2008, underpinned by increasing oil production and exports.”²⁵ But if oil prices continue their recent declines, the GOI will need to revise its 2009 budget. In mid-October 2008, the price of Iraqi oil was down 39% from its mid-summer peak on July 4, 2008. See Figure 1.5.

FIGURE 1.5

KIRKUK CRUDE OIL PRICES

Dollars per barrel



Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration, “Weekly Iraq Kirkuk Netback Price at U.S. Gulf, 10/15/2008,” www.eia.doe.gov, accessed 10/17/2008.

consultation with the Administrator of USAID, to develop an interagency strategy to respond to reconstruction and stabilization operations.

The RSCMA provides for a presidentially appointed, Senate-confirmed Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization, whose significant duties and responsibilities include:

- coordinating with relevant agencies to develop interagency contingency plans and procedures to mobilize and deploy civilian personnel and conduct reconstruction and stabilization operations to address the various types of crises
- identifying personnel in state and local governments and in the private sector who are available to participate in a Civilian Reserve Corps (CRC) or otherwise participate in or contribute to reconstruction and stabilization activities
- taking steps to ensure that training and education of civilian personnel to perform such reconstruction and stabilization activities is adequate and is carried out, as appropriate, with other agencies involved with stabilization operations
- planning, in conjunction with USAID, to address requirements—such as demobilization, disarmament, rebuilding of civil society, policing, human rights monitoring, and public information—that commonly arise in reconstruction and stabilization crises
- maintaining the capacity to field on short notice an evaluation team comprising personnel from all relevant agencies to undertake on-site needs assessment

The RSCMA further provides that the Secretary of State, in consultation with the USAID Administrator, may create a Response Readiness Corps (RRC) and a CRC. The RRC “shall be composed of active and standby components consisting of United States Government personnel, including employees of the Department of State, the United States Agency for International Development, and other agencies who are recruited and trained (and employed in the case of the active component) to provide such [contingency relief and reconstruction operations] assistance when deployed to do so by the Secretary to support the purposes of this Act.” The CRC employs and trains “individuals who have the skills necessary for carrying out reconstruction and stabilization activities, and who have volunteered for that purpose.”

This bold new policy authorization requires appropriations to support it. Some of that funding may come from the President’s FY 2009 budget request to the Congress, which included \$248.6 million for a Civilian Stabilization Initiative that would vastly improve civilian partnership with U.S. Armed Forces in post-conflict stabilization situations, including establishing an Active Response Corps of 250 persons, a Standby Response Corps of 2,000 persons, and a Civilian Response Corps of 2,000 persons.

In the FY 2008 supplemental appropriation, \$55 million was provided for the initial development and deployment of civilian capacity to respond to post-conflict stabilization and reconstruction challenges, for the active response and standby response components of the initiative; additional funds were provided for the same

purposes in the FY 2009 “bridge” appropriation (which covers part of that fiscal year).

RSCMA establishes in U.S. law a contingency operations program that the President set in motion with National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD) 44, “Management of Interagency Efforts Concerning Reconstruction and Stabilization.” Still unresolved, however, is how to integrate the civilian and military components of contingency

relief and reconstruction operations. DoD is well advanced in developing doctrine and programs responsive to DoD Directive 3000.05, “Military Support for Stability, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction Operations.” There exists significant mission overlap between RSCMA and DoD Directive 3000.05, which must be resolved to ensure unity of effort in future contingency relief and reconstruction operations.

SIGIR OVERSIGHT

Consistent with the expansion of its mandate in the National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2008, SIGIR has added more investigators, inspectors, and auditors to its staff. These new personnel, some based in Iraq and some in Virginia, have strengthened SIGIR’s oversight, particularly in the Investigations Directorate.

Investigations

As of October 14, 2008, the Investigations Directorate has 67 active criminal investigations. This quarter, 3 more individuals were convicted as a result of SIGIR investigations, bringing to 11 the total of persons convicted as a result of SIGIR’s work. Additionally, 1 defendant was indicted this quarter, bringing to 18 the total

number of persons indicted from SIGIR’s work. Currently, three defendants are on trial in federal court in Trenton, New Jersey, and four more are awaiting trial.

On October 9, 2008, work performed by SIGIR and its investigative partners resulted in a DoD contract employee pleading guilty to receiving almost \$160,000 in bribes from contractors in connection with his work at Balad Air Base in Iraq. Under the terms of the plea agreement, he will serve 50 months in prison and forfeit all of his ill-gotten gains. In an astonishing personnel oversight, the employee was hired even though he had served five years in prison on a second-degree murder conviction.



SIGIR's comprehensive review of the Falluja Waste Water Treatment System found that the project will cost three times original estimates, be completed three years late, and serve far fewer homes than originally contemplated.

Inspections

Improvements in the security situation, coupled with enhanced cooperation from MNF-I, have improved SIGIR's capacity to conduct on-site project assessments in Iraq. This quarter, SIGIR visited nine sites: the Sadr City R3 Water Treatment Plant, three I-CERP-funded schools in Sadr City, and five water sector projects in Falluja.

The Falluja inspection report stands out as one of SIGIR's most emblematic and comprehensive reviews. Ambassador Ryan Crocker requested SIGIR to assess this project, and the report reveals that the treatment plant, which had an original price tag of \$32.5 million, now will cost upwards of \$98 million. Moreover, the project will be completed more than three years late and will serve just over a third of the number of homes originally intended. SIGIR found that those desiring service from the system will have to secure access for themselves rather than have it provided through the project. This "last mile" shortfall is typical of poorly planned projects in Iraq.

Audits

SIGIR's Audit Directorate issued seven reports this quarter. Highlights include audits that:

- examined more than 1,200 terminated contracting actions, finding waste, incidents in which suspended contractors were given follow-on work, and one company that was paid \$31 million for a facility that was never built

- analyzed the cost, outcome, and oversight of USAID's Local Governance Program (LGP) and \$600 million in contracts with Research Triangle Institute (RTI)
- assessed the U.S. strategy for democracy and governance in Iraq and identified opportunities to improve the strategy and assess its results against strategic objectives
- provided new insight into the total number of private security contractors operating in Iraq, the costs of providing their services, and the overall need for improved reporting on this issue

The Reconstruction Data Gap

Under NSPD 36, the Chief of Mission (COM) is responsible for coordinating U.S. reconstruction efforts in Iraq. At Ambassador Crocker's request, SIGIR executed an audit this quarter examining the process by which information on reconstruction projects is reported to the COM. SIGIR found no formalized policies or guidance on when or how reconstruction project status is reported to the COM. SIGIR recommended that the Embassy Coordinator for Economic Transition in Iraq (CETI) establish a process to ensure that all projects, regardless of funding source or agency management, are accurately reported to the COM.

Joint Oversight of Private Security Contractors

The role of private security contractors (PSCs) in Iraq remains controversial. SIGIR is engaged in an intensive effort to evaluate these security contractors, in conjunction with the Inspectors General from DoS, DoD, and USAID. This quarter, SIGIR produced an overview of over 300 companies that provide security services in Iraq at a total cost of approximately \$6 billion. Of note, SIGIR has two ongoing audits of PSCs.

Forensic Auditing

Last year, SIGIR initiated a program to meet its forensic audit mandate, launching a series of focused financial reviews of large reconstruction contracts to examine outcomes, costs, and management oversight. SIGIR continues to produce these focused reviews—this quarter’s RTI audit being the latest—and, over the course of next year, will expand to contracts funded by all major reconstruction accounts.

To strengthen efforts to meet its forensic audit mandate, SIGIR has begun to use innovative technological tools to identify evidence of contract fraud. This new initiative will strengthen SIGIR’s audit and investigative efforts to address vulnerabilities to fraud that have plagued the Iraq reconstruction enterprise since 2003.

Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction

In May 2008, President Bush appointed retired U.S. Marine Corps General Arnold Fields to be the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR). Explicitly modeled on SIGIR, SIGAR is responsible for the oversight of over \$25 billion invested in relief and reconstruction projects in Afghanistan. SIGIR continues to provide administrative support to Major General Fields and his team.

The Commission on Wartime Contracting

The NDAA for FY 2009 created the bipartisan Commission on Wartime Contracting in Iraq and Afghanistan, charging it to examine reconstruction, security, and logistical support contracts and to report on waste, fraud, abuse, and mismanagement. SIGIR and the Commission have established a close working relationship, and SIGIR will continue to support the Commission’s efforts throughout 2009.

THE HUMAN TOLL

While sporadic violence continues to plague Baghdad, relative quiet prevailed in the IZ this quarter. Importantly, this quarter saw a significant number of U.S. Embassy personnel relocate to hardened housing facilities at the NEC.

Contractors

The Department of Labor (DoL) reported 33 new death claims for civilian contractors working on U.S.-funded reconstruction projects in Iraq this quarter. This quarter, DoL also reported that at least 465 contractors sustained injuries that caused them to miss four or more days of work. Since Iraq reconstruction began, 1,264 death claims have been filed with DoL.

U.S. Civilians

DoS reported that four U.S. civilians died in Iraq this quarter, two of whom perished from injuries sustained in an improvised explosive device (IED) blast in Mosul. Since hostilities commenced in 2003, 276 U.S. civilians have died in Iraq.

Journalists

Journalists continue to risk their lives to report on developments in Iraq. This quarter, at least four reporters were killed there, with another assassinated in Kirkuk on October 10. In one particularly tragic case, a senior correspondent for Al-Sharqiya television and his two associates were kidnapped in Mosul while filming a reality-TV program that gave away free Iftar

meals to poor families (Iftar is the elaborate feast that breaks the Ramadan fast). Their bodies were later found a short distance from where they were abducted.²⁷ Since March 2003, 135 journalists and 51 media support workers have been killed in Iraq.²⁸

Internally Displaced Persons and Refugees

Continuing violence in Mosul caused approximately 1,000 Christian families to flee their homes in early October.²⁹ The GOI announced that it intends to investigate this situation and take whatever measures are necessary to control the violence and reassure local citizens.

In September 2008, U.S. officials reported that at least 12,118 Iraqi refugees had arrived in the United States since October 2007.³⁰ This surpassed the initial goal of admitting 12,000 Iraqi refugees by October 1, 2008. In addition, 870 Iraqis received Special Immigrant Visas (SIVs) between October 1, 2007 and August 31, 2008.

The European Commission (EC) recently issued a report on the Iraqi refugee crisis. The EC's report, which drew on a wide array of primary and secondary sources, estimated that there are approximately 1 million–1.5 million refugees from Iraq in Syria and 450,000–500,000 in Jordan.³¹ The EC report concluded that approximately “5 million Iraqis [are] living in temporary conditions in several countries,” of which 2.8 million are internally displaced persons (IDPs) adrift in their native land.³²