IRAQI NEWS

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- Khabat daily, issued in Erbil by the KDP, 23 November 2004
Three employees killed, 400,000 dollars stolen in Ba'qubah robbery- Al-Sharqiyah

Al-Sharqiyah Satellite Channel, Baghdad, in Arabic, 23 Nov 04: Three employees working for Diyala Electrical Industries Company have been killed and four wounded in Ba'qubah in a robbery during which 400,000 dollars were stolen, Iraqi Al-Sharqiyah TV quoted the company as saying. The company’s assistant general manager said the money had been withdrawn from a bank to pay the salaries of the company's 2,000 employees. He added that the gunmen had managed to escape with the money.

Iraqi schoolgirl killed at checkpoint- Al-Diyar

Al-Diyar Satellite Channel In Arabic, Baghdad, 23 Nov 04: One schoolgirl died and another was wounded when a small bus carrying female students was fired upon at a checkpoint set up by Iraqi National Guard forces in the Al-Musayyib and Al-Iskandariyah areas, Iraq's Al-Diyar TV reported on 23 November. The incident occurred after the bus driver tried to bypass the checkpoint via a side road in an attempt to evade the checkpoint.

Iraqi Interior Ministry forms new police force, road security directorate- Voice of the Mujahidin

SCIRI's Voice of the Mujahidin in Arabic, 23 Nov 04: Iraqi Interior Minister Falah al-Naqib announced on 23 November that the ministry had formed a new type of police force, which has been named the Public Order Preservation Force, the Iran-based Iraqi Shi'i radio station Voice of the Mujahidin reported. In addition, a new directorate has been set up to protect highway travellers from murder, abduction and robbery. Al-Naqib added that Iraq would fortify its borders with hundreds of fresh graduates.

Consul-general says no timetable for UK troop withdrawal- Voice of the Mujahidin

SCIRI's Voice of the Mujahidin in Arabic, 23 Nov 04: Simon Collis, the British consul-general in Basra, has held a news conference in Basra in which he talked about security, democracy and commercial development, the Iran-based Iraqi Shi'i radio station Voice of the Mujahidin reported on 23
November. Collis said that no timetable for the withdrawal of British troops had been set. The consul also said that the consulate in Basra would help to provide security during January's elections, in cooperation with the Iraqi police.

**Iraqi vice-president meets Al-Sistani, discusses emergency law- Al-Diyar TV**

**Al-Diyar Satellite Channel In Arabic, Baghdad, 23 Nov 04:** Grand Ayatollah Al-Sayyid Ali al-Sistani met Iraqi Vice-President Ibrahim al-Ja'fari in Al-Najaf on 21 November, Iraqi Al-Diyar TV reported on 23 November. Towards the end of the meeting, Al-Ja'fari alluded to the possible enforcement of the Emergency Law in Iraq, adding that it could be enforced during or before the elections. Al-Ja'fari accused international parties of attempting to postpone the elections, which are scheduled to be held in January 2005. He added that the law pertaining to the declaration of a state of emergency had been referred to the cabinet and the Presidential Council for endorsement.

**Iraqi minister notes "mean alliance" in government- Al-Sharq al-Awsat**

**Al-Sharq al-Awsat [Baghdad edition of London-based daily Al-Sharq al-Awsat] 23 Nov 04:** Iraqi Defence Minister Hazim Sha'lan has talked about the possibility of putting on trial a number of Arab fighters captured during the fighting in Al-Fallujah, in an interview in the 23 November edition of the London-based newspaper Al-Sharq al-Awsat. Sha'lan said: "Is it possible for me to leave such an individual alive? Such a man is supposed to die because he has issued the death sentence against himself." He added: "This is a murderous and a dirty killer. How can I give him freedom and let him live?" He said that the trial of these people had been postponed because of a "mean alliance within the government", which he said had also blocked the Defence Ministry's budget. He said that this alliance aimed to "prevent security from being established in Iraq". He said that the situation in Al-Fallujah was under control, but talked about new phases of the battle against the insurgency in towns to the south of Baghdad and in Baghdad itself.

**Iraqi president forms "secular" party for elections- Al-Diyar TV**

**Al-Diyar Satellite Channel In Arabic, Baghdad, 23 Nov 04:** Iraqi Al-Diyar TV on 23 November reported that Interim Iraqi President Ghazi al-Yawar has formed a political party with the aim of participating in the general elections, which are scheduled to be held in Iraq in late January 2005. Sources close to Al-Yawar said that he had concluded his discussions with a number of figures and ministers, in addition to political and tribal dignitaries, on the formation of a secular party under the name of Iraqis' Grouping
The sources added that among the people set to join the party are Iraqi Defence Minister Hazim Sha'lan, Minister of Industry and Minerals Hajim al-Hasani, a number of Iraqi government officials, academics and tribal chieftains.

**Iraqi Islamic Party leader says party to participate in elections - Voice of the Mujahidin**

**SCIRI's Voice of the Mujahidin in Arabic, 23 Nov 04:** Iraqi Shi'i group's Iran-based radio station Voice of the Mujahidin on 23 November reported that the Iraqi Islamic Party has backed down on its decision not to participate in the upcoming elections. Party leader Muhsin Abd-al-Hamid said: During the Dukan meetings, we asked for postponing the elections. He added: Our decision not to participate was not final; and we will participate in the elections. (Voice of the Mujahidin, in Arabic 1538 gmt 23 Nov 04)

**Iraqi envoy to Egypt rejects "interference" in federation, troop withdrawal:** The Iraqi ambassador in Cairo, Safiyah al-Suhayl, has said there must be no external interference in Iraq by countries that met in Sharm al-Shaykh with respect to the withdrawal of foreign forces and the creation of a federation, the Iran-based Iraqi Shi'i radio station Voice of the Mujahidin reported on 23 November. Al-Suhayl stressed that the federation issue was an Iraqi affair which had been agreed upon by representatives of the Iraqi people.

**Iraqi minister brands Al-Jazeera "channel of terrorism" - Al-Sharq al-Awsat**

**Al-Sharq al-Awsat [Baghdad edition of London-based daily Al-Sharq al-Awsat] 23 Nov 04:** In an interview published in the 23 November edition of the London-based newspaper Al-Sharq al-Awsat, Iraqi Defence Minister Hazim Sha'lan branded Qatari satellite TV channel Al-Jazeera a "channel of terrorism". "Al-Jazeera is the terrorism channel. This is very clear and we say this in the open and with conviction. Al-Jazeera is a terrorism channel. They work in secrecy and contrary to the law," the paper quoted him as saying.

**US tank carrier damaged in Baghdad blast, casualties reported - Al-Sharqiyah**

**Al-Sharqiyah Satellite Channel, Baghdad, in Arabic, 23 Nov 04:** A US tank carrier was damaged when an explosive charge exploded on 23 November on the highway connecting Al-Khadra district with the Al-Adl district in western Baghdad, Iraqi Al-Sharqiyah TV reported. Eyewitnesses were quoted as saying that a number of people travelling in the tank carrier
were killed in the incident before the arrival of US rescue teams. The US troops cordoned off the area and prevented reporters and citizens from coming near the area.

Two US tanks destroyed by land mines- Al-Sharqiyah

Al-Sharqiyah Satellite Channel, Baghdad, in Arabic, 23 Nov 04: Landmine explosions destroyed two US tanks on the evening of 22 November in western Bayji, to the north of Baghdad, Iraqi Al-Sharqiyah TV reported. A source in the city police centre was quoted as saying that a series of land mine explosions went off when US vehicles were passing near Bayji power unit, completely destroying one tank and damaging another. All those travelling in the tanks were killed or wounded, the source added. He said US troops immediately cordoned off the area, prevented citizens from approaching the scene of the incident and evacuated the dead and the wounded. The US Army did not comment on the incident, according to the TV.

US Marines start search for weapons in Al-Fallujah- Al-Sharqiyah

Al-Sharqiyah Satellite Channel, Baghdad, in Arabic, 23 Nov 04: US Marines have started operations to collect weapons abandoned by gunmen in Al-Fallujah, Iraqi Al-Sharqiyah TV reported on 23 November. The marines discovered a number of caches containing weapons which included Egyptian, Russian and German-made artillery cannons, in addition to hundreds of mortars, hand grenades, rocket-propelled grenade launchers, and material for making bombs, according to the TV. The weapons were hidden in caches underground, behind walls, and above water tanks, it added.

Clashes continue overnight in southern, eastern Al-Fallujah- Al-Sharqiyah

Al-Sharqiyah Satellite Channel, Baghdad, in Arabic, 23 Nov 04: US forces and gunmen in Al-Fallujah clashed in the southern and eastern parts of the city overnight until dawn on 23 November, Iraqi Al-Sharqiyah TV quoted residents as saying. The TV said US fighter jets had intervened to destroy a fortified position held by the gunmen, and eyewitnesses said flames of fire and columns of smoke had been seen in the sky over the area. The residents added that the fiercest confrontations took place in the districts of Al-Wahdah, Al-Mu'allimin, and Al-Askari, in the southern part of the city, with Al-Julan neighbourhood witnessing the fiercest clashes in the city's north. Residents were also quoted as saying that US troops were able to impose complete control over the main streets during the day, but could not advance deep into the city because of the gunmen's massed presence. They
added that the situation was preventing residents and rescue teams from evacuating dozens of bodies scattered all over the city's streets and alleys.

Iraqi officials says Iran, Israel organizing assassinations- Al-Sharqiyah

Al-Sharqiyah Satellite Channel, Baghdad, in Arabic, 23 Nov 04: Two Iraqi security officials accused Israeli and Iranian intelligence of forming subversive organizations in Iraq to carry out acts of terrorism and assassinations, Iraqi Al-Sharqiyah TV reported on 23 November. The police chief and the security director of Tikrit based their reports on the confession of a detained person thought to be involved in an unsuccessful assassination attempt in the area. Police Chief Maj-Gen Mizhir Taha al-Ghannam said in a report to the governor that subversive organizations were being formed in Tikrit and other cities of Salah al-Din Governorate to prepare acts of terrorism, and accused Israeli and Iranian intelligence of cooperating with Iraqi insurgent forces to carry out their plans. Tikrit Security Director Colonel Jasim Husayn Jubarah backed the report, warning that these organizations were also planning to carry out a large-scale assassination campaign on 800 current and former officials.

IRAQI BROADCAST MEDIA SUMMARIES, 23 Nov 04

Programme summary of Al-Iraqiyah TV news 23 Nov 04

- Multinational forces launch offensive on villages southwest of Baghdad, arrest 32 terror suspects
- International conference committed to supporting Iraq, says Foreign Minister Zebari Powell calls for wide participation in 30 January elections
- Sharm al-Shaykh conference on future of Iraq ends
- Prime Minister Iyad Allawi says "bankrupt" powers will not participate in election, says "dangerous terrorists" arrested in Al-Fallujah, huge quantities of weapons seized
- Deputy Prime Minister Barham Salih says registration procedures for pilgrimage to be eased
- At least 156 political groups approved by independent electoral commission
- Interim National Assembly ends discussion on ways to improve efficiency of Interior and Oil Ministries
- Iraqis criticize Arab satellite channels that spread harmful rumours
- Health Ministry announces plan to upgrade hospitals
- Minister of expatriates and immigration to look at problems of Iraqis displaced from Kirkuk under former regime
Programme summary of Al-Diyar TV news 23 Nov 04

- Iraqi President Al-Yawar forms political party, will run in elections
- Shi'i cleric Al-Sistani received Vice-President Al-Ja'fari on Sunday. Al-Ja'fari hinted after meeting it is possible to apply emergency law before or during elections, accuses international parties of trying to postpone January vote
- Prime Minister Iyad Allawi yesterday welcomed Paris Club decision to waive 80 per cent of Iraqi debt, called on Arab countries to do same
- Iraqi Interior Minister Al-Naqib escapes assassination attempt
- Iraqi Foreign Minister Zebari says number of Arab gunmen fled Al-Fallujah to neighbouring cities, some of them crossed into Syria and Jordan
- Iraqi National Council member Mish'an al-Juburi says National Council decided to re-establish the De-Ba'thification Committee for local security reasons
- Iraqi National Council member Husayn al-Sadr denounces assassinations of Association of Muslim Scholars members
- Security sources say 41 people killed yesterday in bomb explosion and clashes in Bayji
- Border Guards confiscate quantity of hashish from smugglers

Updates from Iraqi Kurdish Press, 23 Nov 04

Khabat daily, issued in Erbil by the KDP, 23 November 2004

- Rebuilding Iraq should be based on willing co-habitation, the KDP leader said during his reception Monday to a number of Gardi tribe dignitaries.
- KRG-Erbil PM Nechirvan Barzani received the president of the Kurdish National Congress in North America (KNC) Dr. Sman Shali, who briefed his host on the KNC activities and invited him for the next yearly conference in the US. Barzani respectfully accepted the invitation.
- Kirkuk Governor refuses conduction of provincial elections without implementation of Article 58 of the Iraqi Transitional Administrative Law. He also insisted on the right of the IDPs to participate in the elections.
- The Civil Affairs officer of the Korean troops in Erbil announces sending 37 citizens from Kurdistan to Turkey for health, educational and industrial trainings soon. Another 200 persons would be send abroad next years, the officer added in a press conference Monday.
- In Haweeja town south to Kirkuk, the police arrested Deputy Mayor and 17 terrorists, amongst them Syrian Arabs.

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- Sharm Al-Sheikh summit concluded this afternoon and issued a communiqué calling for a greater UN role in the Iraqi political process, condemning and requesting to halt all acts of abduction and terrorism, as well as the need for the Iraqis to determine their political future themselves in democratic ways.
(summarized editorial) Kurdistan political leadership must review its post-Saddam tender policies to reverse Arabization. The leadership committed a number of fatal mistakes in the wake of the regime fall and later during liberation of Kirkuk, including not using adequate political, legal and administrative pressure to push for the complete implementation of Article 58 of the Transitional Administrative Law (TAL). Had the Kurds pushed harder in Baghdad for elimination of [Kurdistan] Arabization, the US mistakes could not pass and the Iraqi parties who do not oppose [Kurdistan] Arabization could not have delayed the settlement of the issue.

The Shiites aim at parliament majority. Al-Sistani is seriously mobilizing his aides and proxies to guarantee such majority. However, three major constraints hamper Al-Sistani’s efforts; First: The Shiite political parties are not happy with the “independent” candidates Al-Sistani wants to include in the Shiite list. Second: No non-Shiite political party or personality agrees to be part of a Shiite list and Third: [PM] Allawi and his party are not very much like by the Shiites, therefore they will have their own list and consequently weaken the Shiite front in the elections.

An informed source informed Chawder that the KDP and PUK are seriously considering postponing Kurdistan National Assembly elections until after the Iraqi parliament elections. During the last bilateral meeting in Salahaddin, the PUK proposed the idea to the PUK and the latter is studying the option. Both parties agreed that Kirkuk provincial elections should not be conducted until the reversing Arabization.

The issue of Iraqi and Kurdistani political parties’ joint candidacy lists is the hottest topic on all agendas and the deadline for the settlement is the end of this month. In a recent KDP-PUK joint meeting, the KDP demanded PUK for 55% of the seats for a joint list but the latter strongly refused. The issue was discussed again in their meeting on 17 November, when KRG-Erbil PM Nechirvan Barzani (also KDP politburo member) persistently, but very softly, demanded a joint list. The PUK considers this softness as a positive sign to a possible agreement.