# Betting the 2006 Trifecta: Prospects for the United States in Iraq

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**The end of 2005 saw the emergence of a variety of convergent challenges that will determine the direction of events in Iraq and the United States' ability to realize its vision of a new regional political order centered on a democratic Iraq. It appears likely that 2006 will be a watershed year for the United States in the Gulf as it seeks to simultaneously manage a complicated trifecta: (1) uncertain domestic political environments in Iraq and the United States that will affect the ability of the United States to achieve its objectives in the coming year; (2) uneven progress in reconstruction projects to help bring Iraq back on its feet economically; and, (3) uncertainties in creating a viable Iraqi military capability to combat an increasingly lethal and resilient insurgency that is exacting a growing toll on the United States military and newly-trained Iraqi military units.**

During 2005, these convergent challenges developed significantly negative narratives. Each of these will require sustained and serious effort in 2006 to reverse negative perceptions surrounding them. All of these parallel challenges are linked, and success (or failure) in each track of the trifecta affects the fate of the others. Each of these challenges is unfolding on a timeline driven by independent variables that are not linked to one another. Committing available (and limited) resources to addressing these parallel challenges in an integrated way constitutes the preeminent foreign policy challenge facing the United States in the region and beyond in 2006. Not meeting these challenges will almost certainly lead to what one prominent congressional leader described as a potential "national security debacle."[2]

The purpose of this paper is to examine each of these challenges and to assess the difficulties facing the United States in each leg of the trifecta. In many ways, the trifecta provides an apt metaphor, since each of the respective "horses" has different characteristics which will in turn drive the betting strategy and resources that must be apportioned among and between the three challenges. Deciding how to place these bets for victory in the trifecta is the challenge facing the policy community and the national security establishment in 2006.

The stakes for regional security and stability seem clear: should the United States prove unable to successfully influence the direction of any of these parallel challenges, the internal situation in Iraq is likely to deteriorate. This could be a precursor to a region-wide period of inter- and intra-state conflict that will see non-state actors and transnational forces exerting a powerful influence on the regional security environment. Iraq enters 2006 poised on a precipice of sorts, with powerful internal forces pulling it together at the same time these forces are also pulling it apart. The forces of ethnocentrism,

religion, and sectarianism are creating important new interest blocs that are forming the basis for a potential new political order. This promises to fundamentally reshape national politics and perhaps even the politics of surrounding states. The negotiation process between these different blocs will determine how governance in Iraq shall work. While this process holds immense potential for the kind of political transformation sought by the Bush Administration in Iraq and the wider region, these same forces of sectarianism and ethnocentrism are also helping to create militias and other social structures that could challenge the ability of the newly created governmental and military institutions to control the country.

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Should Iraq disintegrate into chaos and civil war, or alternatively, into a series of warlord-controlled fiefdoms, the United States would face failure on two fronts: the possibility of terrorist havens combined with a restive domestic public uninterested in further military adventures abroad. More broadly, these negative outcomes in Iraq might mean the United States would face increasing difficulty in maintaining its position as the guarantor of peace and security in the region. The U.S. currently has a web of political relationships with ruling elites, backed by a substantial military infrastructure that stretches from the sands of Western Iraq to the foothills of Central Asia. Preventing this outcome must be considered a preeminent geostrategic challenge for 2006. Beyond the implications for regional security and stability, it must also be said that outcomes in Iraq will have consequences for the United States and its position of global ascendancy.

At the heart of the Bush Administration's grand strategy articulated after the September 11 attacks is a belief in the utility of preemptive force and preventive war to forestall the development of state and non-state actors that can threaten the American homeland and, over the long term, pose a challenge to U.S. global preeminence.[3] The Bush Administration came into power convinced that the Clinton Administration had frittered away the credibility of the U.S. deterrent posture and that countries around the world no longer feared the possibility of a U.S. military response. It sought to reverse this perceived erosion, particularly after the 9/11 attacks. It did so by "taking off the gloves" as part of the global war on terrorism, which formed a politically supportive framework to the decisions to invade Afghanistan and Iraq. If the Bush Administration sought to use Iraq to convey a broader message by seeking to convince potential adversaries about a reinvigorated commitment to use force to achieve its objectives, a forced withdrawal from Iraq would send just the opposite signal – that adversaries can ameliorate the impact of American conventional military superiority with asymmetric tactics and a long-range commitment to their cause. In this way, they would simply outlast America's willingness and commitment to engage in expensive wars far from its shores.

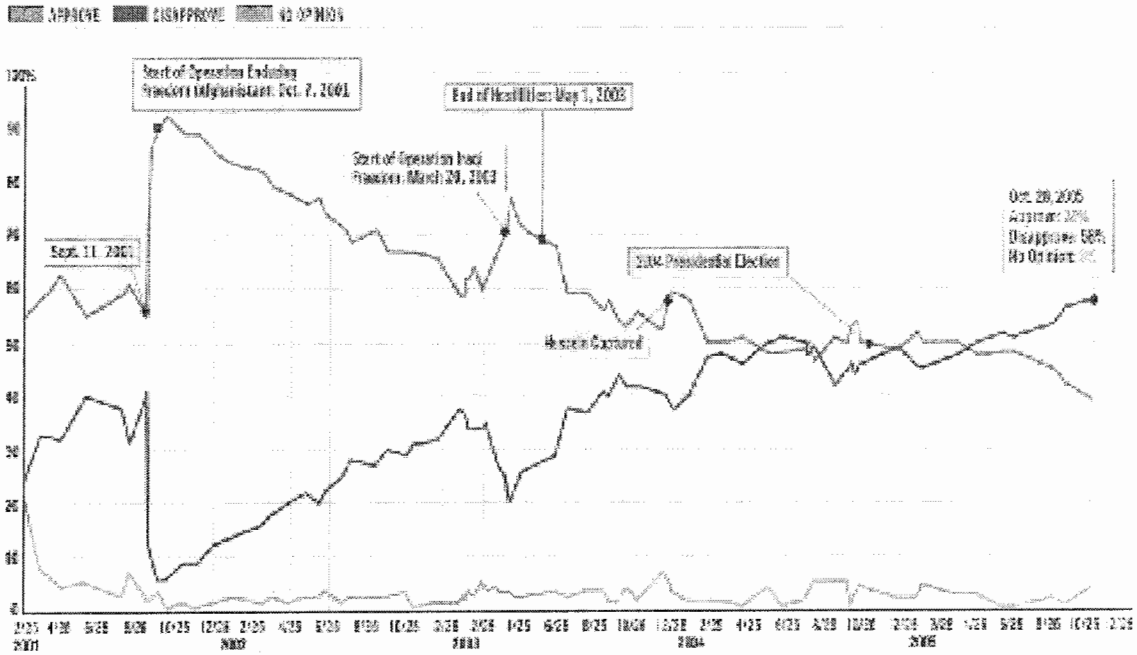
Failure in Iraq would repudiate the Bush's Administration's grand strategy calling for a more muscular approach to world affairs. However, it could serve more broadly as an important signpost as the forces of globalization impel the international system towards something various

scholars describe as "neomedievalism," in which states find it increasingly difficult to manage a global environment dominated by subsystem dynamics and non-state forces.[4] If America fails to impose its will in Iraq, this could represent part of a broader trend in which the United States and much of the developing world finds it increasingly difficult to exercise influence around the world using "traditional" state instruments of power, which are unsuited to a new and more complicated global environment.[5]

## The Achilles Heel: Domestic Politics

The overwhelming and bipartisan Senate vote in November 2005 for a resolution requesting that the Bush Administration provide quarterly updates on the progress of the war in Iraq reflected the dramatic decline in public support for the war over the previous 12 months. That same resolution expressed the Senate's sentiment by requiring the Administration to start turning over military missions to the U.S.-trained Iraq forces as soon as possible. The Senate resolution came amidst polling data indicating that 63 percent of

**Figure 1**



Americans disapproved of the situation in Iraq, with growing public sentiment calling for the return of some portion of the 153,000-odd troops in Iraq in 2006.[6] While the polling numbers go up temporarily in response to "good news" stories (such as the capture of Saddam), these improved public perceptions have so far proven temporary. The drop in public support for the war mirrors polling done by ABC News and the Washington Post showing a consistent drop in the American public's approval rating for President Bush throughout 2005 (Figure 1 below). The political fate of the Bush Presidency now appears inextricably intertwined with the Bush Administration's ability to manage the multi-tiered challenge of Iraq.[7]

The situation in late 2005 represented a dramatic reversal from March 2003, when 66 percent of the American public supported President Bush's decision to invade Iraq and remove Saddam Hussein from power. Declining public support for the war places inevitable pressure on the Bush Administration and its Republican allies in Congress to embrace the idea of an "exit" strategy and possibly establish deadlines for a phased drawdown of the American military presence, estimated at approximately 155,000 in late 2005. Various Democratic leaders, feeling emboldened by the drop in President Bush's support for his handling of Iraq, have now openly called for the withdrawal or drawdown of US troops.[8] Suspicions that the Bush Administration is already planning these steps emerged after the Pentagon announced in November 2005 that it planned to rotate 92,000 troops into Iraq over a two-year period beginning in mid-2006.[9] This would represent a significant reduction from the 150,000 troops in the country throughout much of 2005.

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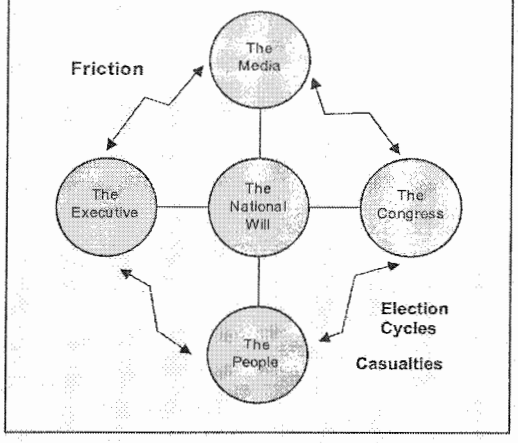
Since it is not up for reelection, the Bush Administration can ignore negative public opinion. However, congressmen and senators facing midterm elections in November 2006 cannot. The domestic political pressure being placed on senators and congressmen promises to lead to pressures on the Bush Administration to articulate a timeline of some sort to demonstrate "progress" in Iraq and the phasing down of the US military presence there. Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice acknowledged as much when she stated in November 2005 that 2006 would see a reduction in the US military presence in Iraq. One way for the Bush Administration to alleviate the pressure for a politically-driven timeline in Iraq would be to somehow reverse the broad-based negative public perceptions about the war in Iraq. Unfortunately, history provides little comfort on this score to those in the Bush Administration trying to reverse the slide in public support for the war.

Negative public opinion played important roles for the United Sates in both Vietnam and Korea, with support for both wars eroding as casualties steadily mounted. With the Iraq war, public support declined much more quickly than was the case with either Korea or Vietnam, perhaps reflecting the public's questions and confusion over the stakes in Iraq, and the Bush Administration's shifting series of rationales for the necessity of the invasion.[10] Presented with a confusing series of arguments for

the war, the public's aversion for casualties in Iraq has been more pronounced than either Korea or Vietnam. In Vietnam, for example, public support for the war remained relatively strong from 1963 until 1968, when 20,000 Americans had been killed, and then declined steadily after the Tet offensive in 1968. The Korean War, by contrast, remained an unpopular war throughout most of its duration. Some fear that the decline in public support for Iraq will lead to a repeat of the situation at the end of the Vietnam War, when the American public turned inward and became more suspicious of international engagement. One recently released survey showed that 42 percent of the American public believed that the U.S. should "mind its own business internationally and let other countries get along as best they can on their own."[11] This percentage is similar to polling at the end of the Cold War and at the end of the Vietnam War. These trends have prompted some commentators to point to the emergence of a possible "Iraq Syndrome," which, like the experience in Vietnam, might make the national political leadership extremely reluctant to exert forceful and energetic international leadership.[12]

**Figure 2**
The U.S. Center of Gravity: The National Will




As part of a strategy to shore up public support for the Iraq war, in November 2005 the Bush Administration released its National Strategy for Victory in Iraq. This outlined a plan to build up Iraqi military capabilities to take on the insurgents while decreasing the US involvement in direct combat operations. While the document addressed a variety of different facets related to achieving a successful outcome in Iraq, the real purpose of the document was to address a major vulnerability of the United States, one that has been attacked mercilessly by the insurgent groups in Iraq – the country's national will. In the insurgency in Iraq, military victory by the insurgents has become all but irrelevant. Instead, the insurgents have indirectly targeted U.S. domestic institutions and public opinion – the critical nodes that collectively comprise the "national will."

The intersection of mounting casualties, apparently unappreciative Iraqis, unflattering media coverage from the war zone, and bureaucratic friction within the U.S. government have all combined to produce an erosion of the national will to support the war in Iraq. President Bush made a series of speeches in late 2005 as part of an attempt to shore up this critical vulnerability. It remains to be seen if these speeches can turn around in 2006 the steady erosion of public support for the war. Should the national will, as measured in public opinion polling, continue to erode, it is virtually certain that domestic political factors will force the adoption of a timeline for a drawdown in Iraq that could prove disastrous.[14] With mounting and continuous casualties and with election cycles approaching, maintaining the national will throughout 2006 may prove to be the Bush Administration's most important challenge and determine success or failure in Iraq.

## Domestic Politics II: Iraq Redux

If it appears unclear whether the Bush Administration can manage the serious domestic political challenges surrounding the Iraq war at home, an even greater uncertainty surrounds its ability to manage the domestic political situation in Iraq. This could also force a withdrawal of U.S. forces before developing Iraqi governmental institutions are ready for the challenge of governance, which will include dealing with the country's insurgents and militias. Alternatively, the newly elected Iraqi government could move less aggressively in fielding its own forces against the insurgents as a way of distancing itself from the unpopular U.S. occupying force. The United States is therefore in a no-win situation. At a November 2005 reconciliation conference of Iraqi political parties in Cairo hosted by the Arab League, one of the only issues that the parties could agree upon was the desirability of ending the coalition occupation. The same gathering acknowledged a right of "legitimate national resistance" for insurgents opposing the occupation. The political sentiments at the conference mirror a broad-based public disapproval of the occupation. According to an ABC News-Time Magazine poll in December 2005, nearly two-thirds of all Iraqis opposed the presence of U.S. and coalition forces in Iraq – an increase of 14 points over the previous year.[15] Other polling in late 2005 indicated that as many as 80 percent of Iraqis favored a near-term withdrawal of U.S. troops.[16]

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Measuring public attitudes through polling often presents complicated and often contradictory data. Polling data in Iraq is no exception. While Iraqis today display mostly negative views towards the United States and its coalition partners, there are other signs suggesting that many Iraqis feel optimistic about the country's future – even if they are still concerned about security. The same polling results showed strong overall support for the constitution (70 percent), preference for a democratic political structure (57 percent), general optimism over the country's prospects in the next year (69 percent), and strong support for the idea of Iraq remaining as a unified country (70 percent). Not surprisingly, public attitudes towards many of these issues differ in the Sunni areas of Iraq, particularly in the province of Anbar and its capital Ramadi – the center of the insurgency. Sunnis in these areas are more in favor of another strongman ruling Iraq and tend to be somewhat less optimistic than those living in the Shiite and Kurdish areas.[17]

Whether or not these favorable trends in public attitudes can be translated into a successful transition to a democratic system of self-governance is unclear, but there is cause for optimism for the United States if it can help foster continued internal economic growth and an indigenous Iraqi military capability that can address the security problem posed by the insurgency. The otherwise favorable trends in Iraqi public sentiment suggest that the insurgency may eventually run out of steam, assuming an acceptable internal political solution to the country's governance can be worked out.

## Reconstruction

Iraqis seem remarkably unimpressed by the estimated $260 billion spent by the United States to topple Saddam Hussein and give them a chance at democracy. Moreover, the allocation of nearly $30 billion of U.S. taxpayer funding since 2003 to rebuild Iraq and reconstitute its security forces and the expenditure of nearly $13 billion to date seems to have had little impact on creating positive Iraqi perceptions of the United States' occupying force.[18] The facts and figures cited by U.S. government sources about the accomplishments of the reconstruction program in Iraq make the lack of positive Iraqi response that much more astonishing. These include:

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- 50 percent of all electric power in Iraq now comes from US projects.
- $4 billion has been spent on about 400 electrical projects that have added 2700 megawatts of capacity to the nation's system.
- 3 million Iraqis now have clean water from US projects and 4.5 million Iraqis are benefiting from sewage disposal projects. Approximately $1.8 billion has been spent on 350 water and sewage projects.
- 5 million Iraqi children have been vaccinated against a variety of diseases.
- 700 schools have been renovated. 36,000 teachers and 7 million textbooks have been funded.
- 248 health care centers have been renovated and 563 reequipped. Eighteen projects involving hospital renovations are also underway.[19]

The reconstruction effort, however, remains mired in the largely negative narrative storyline that has built up over the past two years. What could have been an important source of positive publicity in Iraq and the United States has gone unrealized. Despite all the efforts to reconstruct Iraq, many Iraqis still complain about the lack of electricity and other basic services nearly three years after the invasion.

To be sure, the Iraqi reconstruction effort has been plagued by a variety of problems:

- A security situation that makes it difficult to execute reconstruction projects. The insurgents have killed at least 412 contractors since 2003, forcing a diversion of some funding from reconstruction to security functions. Security functions are now consuming approximately 25 percent of reconstruction funding, a significant increase over the 9 percent originally forecast. The Agency for International Development reportedly canceled two electricity-generating projects in 2004 due to increased security costs.
- Reports of corruption in the awarding of reconstruction contracts and accounting "irregularities" that caused the loss of $1.27 billion between June 2004 and February 2005.
- Poorly trained Iraqi staffs that are unprepared to operate and maintain newly completed projects, particularly in the water and electrical sectors.
- Dilapidated oil, electrical and water infrastructures. The deteriorated state of Iraq's oil infrastructure has made it impossible to boost production to the target level of 2.5 million barrels per day. The General Accounting Office estimates

that an additional $30 billion in investments will be required to increase oil production to 5 million barrels per day. Electricity production has not reached the desired goal of 6,000 megawatts in spite of over $2 billion in reconstruction funding. Iraq today produces approximately 4,600 megawatts a day, which is only slightly better than pre-war levels. A similar story can be told about access to fresh water. Despite investments of nearly $1.2 billion, it is estimated that only 65 percent of Iraqis have access to potable water.

• A personnel staffing structure in which U.S. officials constantly cycle through temporary four-month assignments before departing. As a result, there is no continuity or institutional knowledge base in the oversight and administration of the reconstruction program.

• Despite the commitment of significant funding, the overall reconstruction requirement remains significantly underfunded. According to a United Nations/World Bank report released in 2003, Iraq will need more than $60 billion in reconstruction-related funding through 2007 – significantly more than is currently budgeted.[20]

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Progress in reconstruction is critical in 2006 if the United States is to help create conditions on the ground that are conducive to long-term stability. The Bush Administration has to hope that the negative perceptions surrounding the reconstruction can be reversed in 2006. There are hopeful signs on the horizon. It appears as if the new Iraqi government will have a direct say in how $800 million in uncommitted reconstruction funding will be spent in 2006 – giving the government a more direct stake in the process. There are also encouraging indicators of macroeconomic progress that can help improve the overall living circumstances of most Iraqis and thereby improve the environment in which the reconstruction program is being executed. Supported by progress on reconstruction, improved economic conditions can in turn potentially feed into a more positive environment. While still too high, the 32 unemployment rate in 2005 is down dramatically from 50 percent in 2003. The economy grew at a rate of 4 percent in 2005 and, according to some U.S. officials, may grow by double digits in 2006. An estimated 30,000 new businesses registered with the government in 2005, 18,000 of them supported by small "micro loans" from U.S. reconstruction funds.[21] Access to the Internet has exploded in Iraq, and cell phone usage has quadrupled over the last year; purchases of cars, air conditioners and other consumer items increased significantly in 2005. If the forward momentum in economic progress can be maintained in 2006, some of the negative perceptions surrounding the reconstruction can be reversed with competent and professional oversight and management by Iraqi and U.S. officials.

## Security and the Insurgency

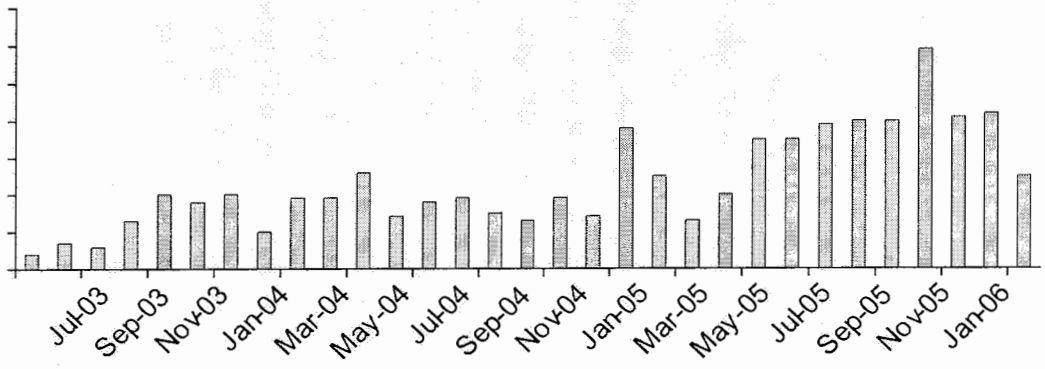
The last element in the trifecta is the insurgency, which showed no signs of abating at the end of 2005. The insurgency has grown steadily more deadly for U.S. military forces, Iraqi civilians and newly trained Iraqi military units. Coalition forces faced an average of 500-600 attacks per week in 2005, a significant increase over 2004.[22] Insurgent capabilities became more sophisticated

during 2005, particularly in the manufacture and employment of improvised explosive devices (Figure 3 below).

The increased effectiveness of Improvised Explosive Device (IED) attacks dating from May 2005 has been linked in various reports to alleged Iranian and Hezbollah assistance to the insurgents. The IEDs now killing U.S. and coalition forces in Iraq combine the skillful use of camouflage with infrared motion detectors that cannot be blocked by electronic jammers and projectiles that can penetrate through up to 4-inch armor plating.[23] That makes all but the most heavily armored vehicles vulnerable to these deadly devices.

While true that the insurgency is concentrated in four of Iraq's 18 provinces in the Sunni heartland (Baghdad, Al Anbar, Salah ad Din, and Ninawa), these provinces contain nearly 50 percent of the country's population of approximately 25 million people. While the strictly military problems facing the U.S. military in Iraq are unlikely to decrease, there is potential for improvement in the overall security situation.[24] In late 2005, the United States at least rhetorically moved from the "search and destroy" counterinsurgency strategy to one of "clear and hold." In operations in Western Iraq in October and November, coalition troops started garrisoning towns that had been cleared of insurgents as part of an effort to improve local security. While most counterinsurgency experts agree that there are simply not enough coalition troops on the ground to execute the "clear and hold" strategy throughout the 4 predominately Sunni provinces, newly trained units of the Iraq Security Forces (ISF) are intended to step into the breach in 2006.[25] According to the Bush Administration, over 214,000 Iraqi ISF are now trained, with over 30 battalions of Iraqi military units now allegedly capable of supporting

Figure 3
IED Fatalities by Month




Source: Iraq Coalition Casualty Count Website at http://icasualties.org/oif/IED.aspx

coalition anti-insurgent operations.[26] Any long-term success in implementing the new "clear and hold" counterinsurgency strategy in Iraq will ultimately depend on the military effectiveness of the ISF.

As in all insurgencies, the critical factor shaping the future direction of the Iraq insurgency is the support and/or neutrality of the population in which the insurgents exist.[27] Active insurgents are estimated to number between 15,000 and 20,000, with foreign jihadists associated with Jordanian terrorist Abu Musab al Zarqawi estimated to number between 700 and 2,000. As was the case with other insurgencies – notably in Algeria – the public's neutrality towards or tacit support for the insurgents may be eroded due to the continuous and gruesome indiscriminate violence visited upon noncombatants by the insurgents. Public tips to coalition forces about insurgent activities rose significantly in 2005, from just under 500 in March 2005 to over 4,700 that September.[28] There have been other hopeful signs that the Sunni-Baathist resistance elements are growing uncomfortable with the partnership of convenience forged with the Zarqawi network. In December 2005, citizens in Ramadi turned in Amir Khalaf Fanus, a senior Zarqawi operative known locally as "The Butcher."[29] There are other signs that the mainstream Sunni political and religious leadership are growing uncomfortable with the continued relationship with Zarqawi. In December 2005, a Sunni religious leader with ties to the insurgency called on Iraqis not just to resist terrorism but also Zarqawi's "masked terrorism."[30] According to other reports, representatives of Iraqi insurgents have held a number of "exploratory" meetings with U.S. military officials to discuss terms under which the insurgents could join the political process. The talks have reportedly not yet produced any results, though some insurgent interlocutors have proposed a phased approach to decreasing the levels of violence.[31] Other analysts have suggested that the fissures between Zarqawi and the Sunni mainstream insurgents will invariably lead to the isolation of the Zarqawi network, and that the Sunni leadership will "take care" of Zarqawi and his network of non-Iraqi jihadists in their own way and in due course.[32] The will of the Sunni leadership to take such steps is inevitably tied to its perception that the unfolding political process can and will address its grievances and not lead to the creation of a theocratic Shiite administered state.

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## Conclusion

The situation in Iraq is clearly complicated, with contradictory information making it difficult to see a clear way ahead in 2006. With the passing of the December 15, 2005 elections and the beginning of the bargaining process between the Iraqi stakeholders, the influence of the United States will gradually diminish. Be that as it may, the United States can still shape the course of events by improving its management of the three-tiered trifecta: domestic politics in Iraq and the United States, reconstruction and economic development, and security. In recognition of its past mistakes in Iraq, the Bush Administration announced in December 2005 that the State Department would have ultimate control over reconstruction activities and that the Defense Department had promulgated

a new directive directing the Military Departments to enhance their capabilities to perform missions associated with post-conflict operations and reconstruction. Whether or not these changes will result in a more integrated approach to policy execution inside Iraq remains to be seen.

Perhaps the most difficult of the trifecta challenges facing the Bush Administration is in the realm of domestic politics, both at home and in Iraq. At home, a host of variables not directly associated with Iraq can affect the American domestic political landscape in ways that make it more difficult for the United States to maintain its position on the ground. Natural disasters like the Katrina hurricane, for example, build negative public perceptions of the Bush Administration, which in turn gives President Bush less political capital to expend on Iraq. But the domestic political challenge lies not just in the United States. Negative Iraqi public perceptions of the occupation will also force the emergent Iraqi government to address this issue, possibly by seeking a premature timetable for American withdrawal. In both cases, domestic politics in Iraq and the United States could force the adoption of deadlines unrelated to the time needed to address the trifecta problems of security, economic progress and political negotiation and compromise between the stakeholders in Iraq.

A host of critical questions remain: Can indigenous Iraqi military units defeat the insurgency? Will 2006 see a broader Sunni buy-in to the political process, which may in turn lead to the marginalization of the Zarqawi network? Will the Shiite and Kurdish militias challenge the national-level security institutions for local control over their respective areas? Can the Bush Administration restore public trust and confidence and thereby relieve domestic political pressure for a premature withdrawal of U.S. forces?

**A peaceful, stable Iraq capable of policing its own borders and peacefully managing the difficult and long-term process of transition to democratic rule will allay the concerns of its neighbors, which fear the prospect of an unpoliced terrorist haven spreading mayhem throughout the region.**

The answers to these critical questions will determine the direction of events in Iraq in 2006, which, in turn, will affect the security and stability of the surrounding states. A peaceful, stable Iraq capable of policing its own borders and peacefully managing the difficult and long-term process of transition to democratic rule will allay the concerns of its neighbors, which fear the prospect of an unpoliced terrorist haven spreading mayhem throughout the region. For the United States, meeting the challenges of the trifecta will require more money, patience and political skill at home and abroad, as the country seeks to preserve its long-term position as the guarantor of regional security in the Gulf.

## Endnotes

1- The views expressed in this article are the author's own.

2- Remarks by Senator Joseph Biden on November 21, 2005 titled "Turning the Corner in Iraq," Council on Foreign Relations, New York City.

3- James J. Wirtz and James A. Russell, "U.S. Policy on Preventive War and Preemption," The Nonproliferation Review, Spring 2003, Vol. 10, No. 3, pp. 113-123.

4- Philip Cerny , "Terrorism and the New Security Dilemma," Naval War College Review, Vol. 58, No. 1, Winter 2005 pp. 11-35. Cerny uses the term "neomedievalism" as a metaphor to describe an international environment no longer primarily controlled by state structures. Cerny describes an international system characterized by such things as more fluid territorial boundaries both within and across states, multiple fragmented loyalties and identities, and the spread of gray zones, where the rule of law does not necessarily exist. (p. 19)

5- The paradigmatic disconnect between the United States' view of the security environment and its instruments of national power is addressed in Tom Johnson and James A. Russell, "A Hard Day's Night? The United States and the Global War on Terrorism," Comparative Strategy, Vol. 24, No. 2, April-June 2005

6- Poll results from CNN/Gallup/USA Today as cited in Joan Vennochi, "Poll Watching Pols Now Say No on Iraq," Boston Glove, November 17, 2005, internet edition at http://www.boston.com/news/globe/editorial_opinion/oped/articles/2005/11/17/poll_watching_pols_now_say_no_on_iraq/?p1=MEWell_Pos4

7- James A. Russell, Occupation of Iraq: Geostrategic and Institutional Challenges, Strategic Insights, Vol. 2, No. 8, August 2003, at http://www.ccc.nps.navy.mil/si/aug03/middleEast2.asp.

8- On November 17, 2005, Rep. John Murtha (D-Pa) – considered a hawkish Democrat, stated that "It's time to bring them [the troops] home." As quoted in Liz Sidoti, "Hawkish Democrat Calls for Iraq Pullout," Associated Press.

9- Charles Aldinger, "92,000 US Troops Told to Prepare for Iraq Rotation," Reuters, November 7, 2005.

10- John Mueller, "The Iraq Syndrome," Foreign Affairs, November/December 2005, pp. 44-54.

11- Results of a survey by the Pew Research Center and the Council on Foreign Relations as reported in Linda Feldman, "Why Iraq War Support Fell So Fast," Christian Science Monitor, November 21, 2005, Internet Edition at http://www.csmonitor.com/2005/1121/p01s02-usfp.html.

12- Mueller, op.cit.

13- Adapted from Harry Summers, On Strategy: The Vietnam War in Context, Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War

College, Carlisle, Pa., 1981, 137 pp.

14- Andy Terrill and Conrad Crane, Precedents, Variables, and Options in Planning a U.S. Military Disengagement Strategy from Iraq, Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle, Pa, October 2005. The authors argue that; "Potential successful dates for beginning a withdrawal must be teased out by analysts weighting a miasma of complex political, military, and economic factors and cannot be established in a manner that bypasses intelligence judgments, destroys options for flexibility, and risks a premature haphazard withdrawal that may lead to the collapse of all efforts associated with the U.S. presence in Iraq." (p. vii).

15- Gary Langer and Jon Cohen, "Poll: Broad Optimism in Iraq, But Also Deep Divisions Among Groups," ABC News, December 12, 2005, Internet edition.

16- As indicated in data sheet accompanying Nina Kamp, Michael O'Hanlon and Amy Unikewicz, "The State of Iraq: An Update," New York Times, December 14, 2005. Internet edition.

17- Ibid.

18- Figures drawn from Statement of Joseph Christoff, Director International Affairs and Trade, General Accounting Office, "Rebuilding Iraq: Enhancing Security, Measuring Program Results, and Maintaining Infrastructure Are Necessary to Make Significant and Sustainable Progress," Testimony before the Committee on Government Reform, Subcommittee on National Security, Emerging Threats, and International Relations, House of Representatives, October 18, 2005.

19- Figures drawn from Briefing by Dan Speckhard, Director, Iraq Reconstruction and Management Office, Baghdad November 13, 2005. at http://www.mnf-iraq.com/Transcripts/051113b.htm

20- More detail on the problems experienced by the United States in reconstruction programs can be found in a report by Lionel Beehner, Council on Foreign Relations, published in the Daily Star, November 11th 2005; Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq, October 2005,Report to the Congress in accordance with Conference Report 109-72 Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2005; Previously cited GAO report; Paul Richter, "Rapid Personnel Shifts Hinder U.S. Efforts to Rebuild Iraq," Los Angeles Times, November 17, 2005 as posted on the Gulf 2000 website.

21- Speckhard, op. cit.

22- Data drawn from Iraq Index, The Brookings Institution, Washington DC, December 12, 2005, p. 21 at www.brookings.edu/iraqindex.

23- Jim Krane, "Bombs in Iraq Getting More Sophisticated," Associated Press, November 9, 2003. Also see Michael Ware, "Inside Iran's Secret War for Iraq," Time, August 22, 2005.

24- A discussion of the failures of US counterinsurgency strategy in Iraq can be

found in Alastair Finlan, "Trapped in the Dead Ground: US Counter-insurgency Strategy in Iraq, Journal of Small Wars and Insurgencies, Vol. 16, No. 1, pp. 1-21.

25- Details in David Ignatius, "A Better Strategy for Iraq," Washington Post, November 4, 2005, p. A23. In testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in October 2005, October Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice stated: "Our political-military strategy has to be to clear, hold and build: to clear areas from insurgent control, to hold them securely, and to build durable, national Iraqi institutions."

26- Iraq Index, Op. cit.

27- Christopher Ford, "Speak no Evil: Targeting a Population's Neutrality to Defeat an Insurgency," Parameters, Vol. 35, No.2. Summer 2005 pp. 51. Ford notes that while insurgents need the population's "neutrality" to conduct their operations, successful counterinsurgency operations by the state and/or occupying force requires the positive support of the population.

28- Iraq Index, op.cit. p. 25

29- Ahmed Janabi, "Zarqawi v Iraqis: Conflict of Interest?" posed on Al Jazeeera.net on December 15, 2005 at http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/05C28140-6985-4A55-98AB-65CC37965246.htm.

30- As cited by Fawaz Gerges, "Let Iraq's Sunnis Chase Al Qaeda Out," Christian Science Monitor, December 15, 2005, posted at http://www.csmonitor.com/2005/1215/p09s02-coop.html. Gerges quotes Sheikh Mahmoud Mehdi al-Sumaydai, a member of the Association of Muslim Scholars.

31- Liz Sly, "Iraqi Insurgents Reach Out to U.S.," Chicago Tribune, December 13, 2005 posted online at http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/nationworld/chi-0512130112dec13,1,2056827.story?coll=chi-newsnationworld-hed, registration required.

32- Gerges, op. cit.