

NationalJournalMembership

Understanding the Crisis in Iraq

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Roadmap for the Presentation

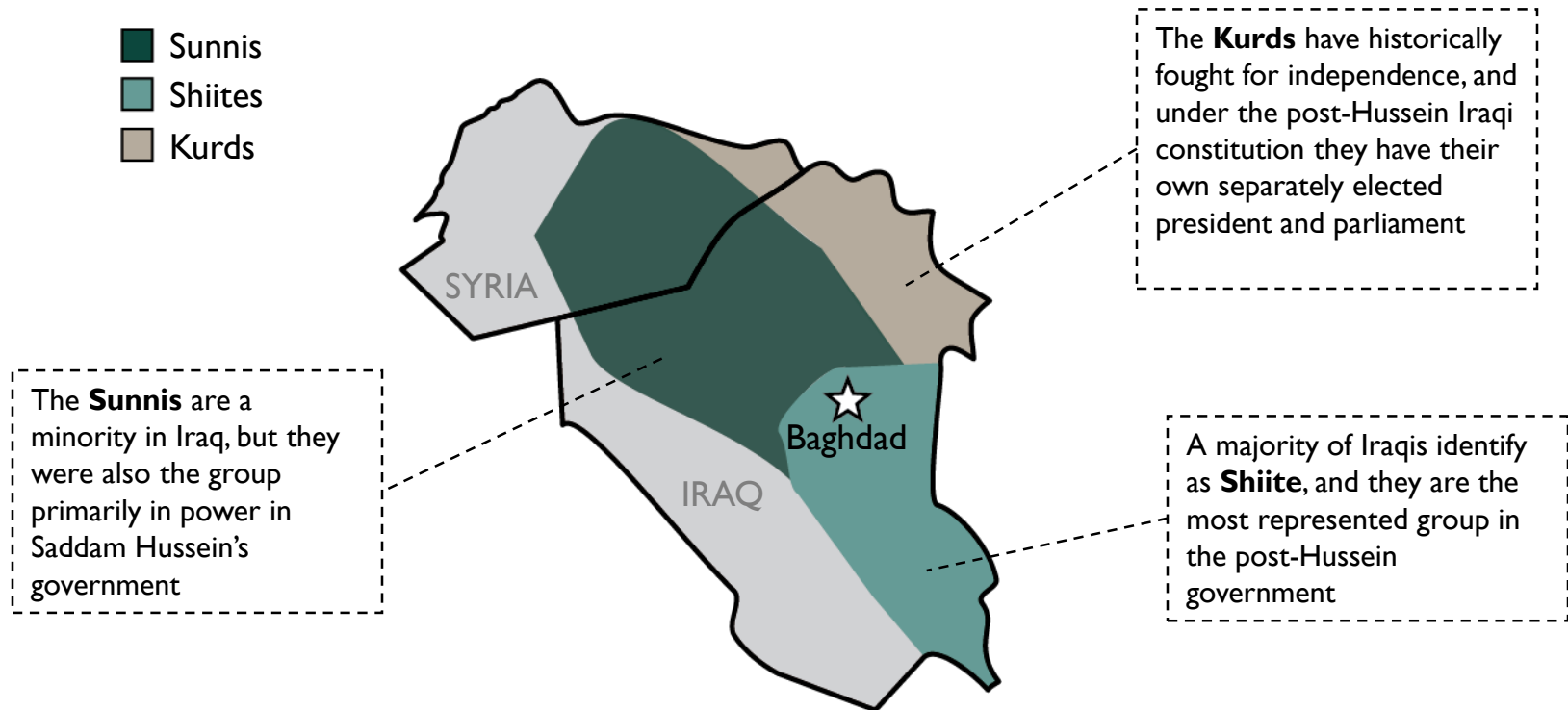
Introduction to the Crisis

└→ Potential U.S. Responses

└→ Potential Outcomes in Iraq

Sectarian Divides at Root of Crisis

Regional Map of Iraq's Major Sectarian Groups

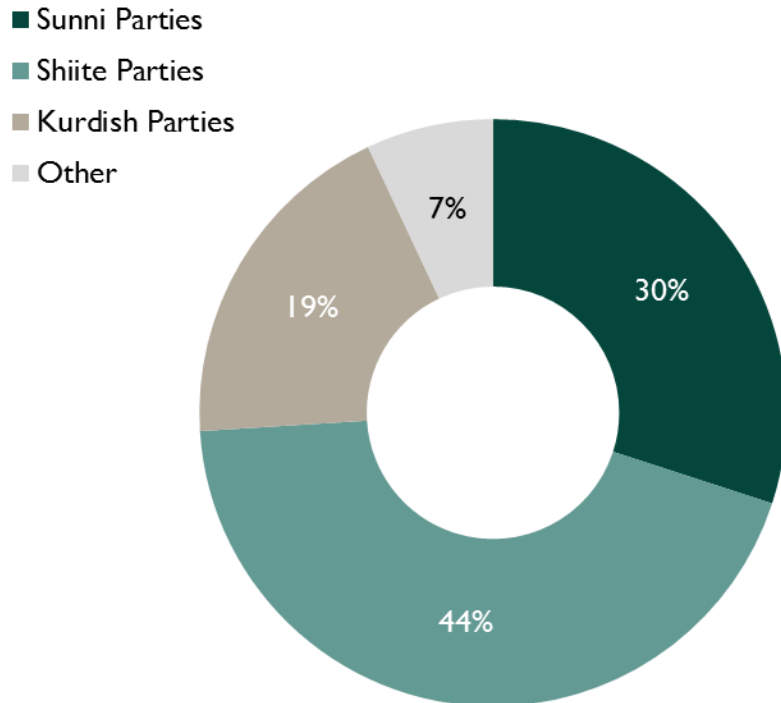


Analysis

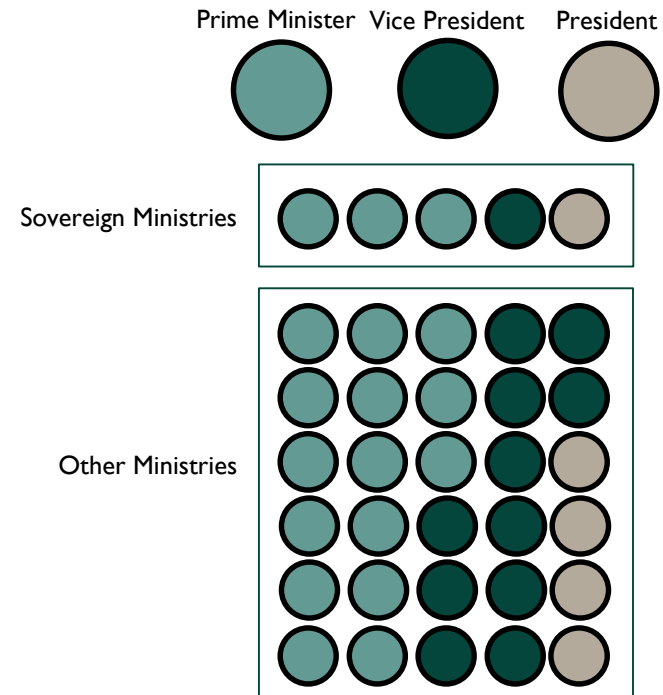
The current crisis is the result of conflict between Iraq's three major sectarian groups: the Sunni Arabs in the West, the Shiite Arabs in the South, and the Kurds in the Northeast

Divided Parliament Resulted in Power Sharing Agreement

2010 Parliament Election Results



2010 Party Breakdown of Iraqi Executive Branch



Analysis

- In the 2010 parliamentary elections, Shiite-aligned parties received the most seats, but a split between the major Shiite parties led to a power sharing agreement that resulted in the appointment of a mixed executive branch comprised of Shiite, Sunni, and Kurdish leaders
- This allowed Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, a Shiite, to remain in power alongside a Kurdish President and a Sunni Speaker

After U.S. Withdrawal, Maliki Removed Sunni Leadership

2014 Party Breakdown of Iraqi Executive Branch



Prime Minister Vice President President

Sovereign Ministries

Other Ministries

In 2012, President Talabani, a Kurdish leader widely seen as a mediator, left the country for medical treatment after a stroke

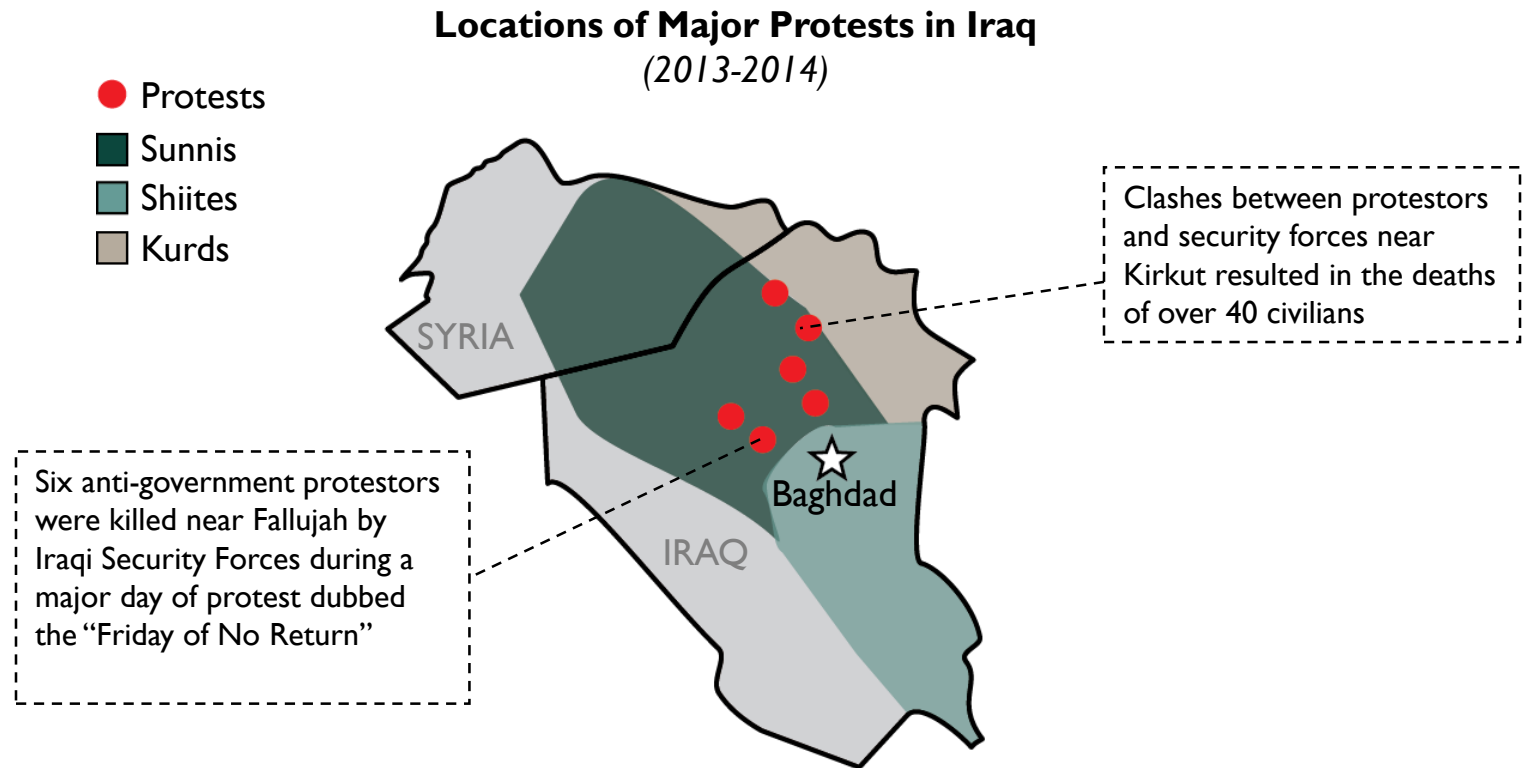
In 2012, the Sunni Finance Minister fled the country after the government arrested his bodyguards

In 2011, the government issued an arrest warrant for Sunni Vice President Tariq al-Hashimi, who then fled to Turkey. The government later sentenced him *in absentia* to death.

Analysis

Prime Minister Maliki's use of arrest warrants to remove major Sunni leaders led to calls for his resignation and major anti-government protests in Sunni areas of Iraq

Maliki Used Force to Shut Down Sunni Protests



Analysis

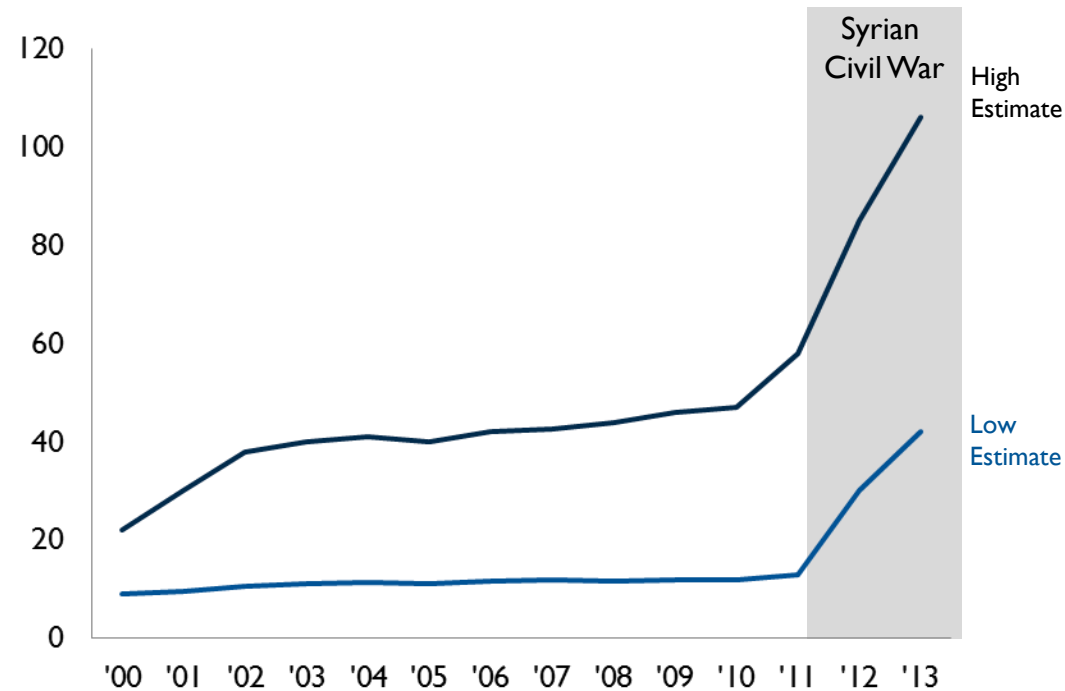
- Maliki's removal of Sunni leaders from the government initiated a wave of anti-government protests in major Sunni cities
- Government violence against protestors led Sunni and Kurdish leaders to temporarily suspend their participation in the government
- Sunni militant groups, including the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), aligned themselves with the protestors and began to escalate the violence in Sunni areas

Militants Moved From Syria Into Iraq

Direction of Militant Advances



Number of Salafi-Jihadists (Sunni Militants)
(in thousands)

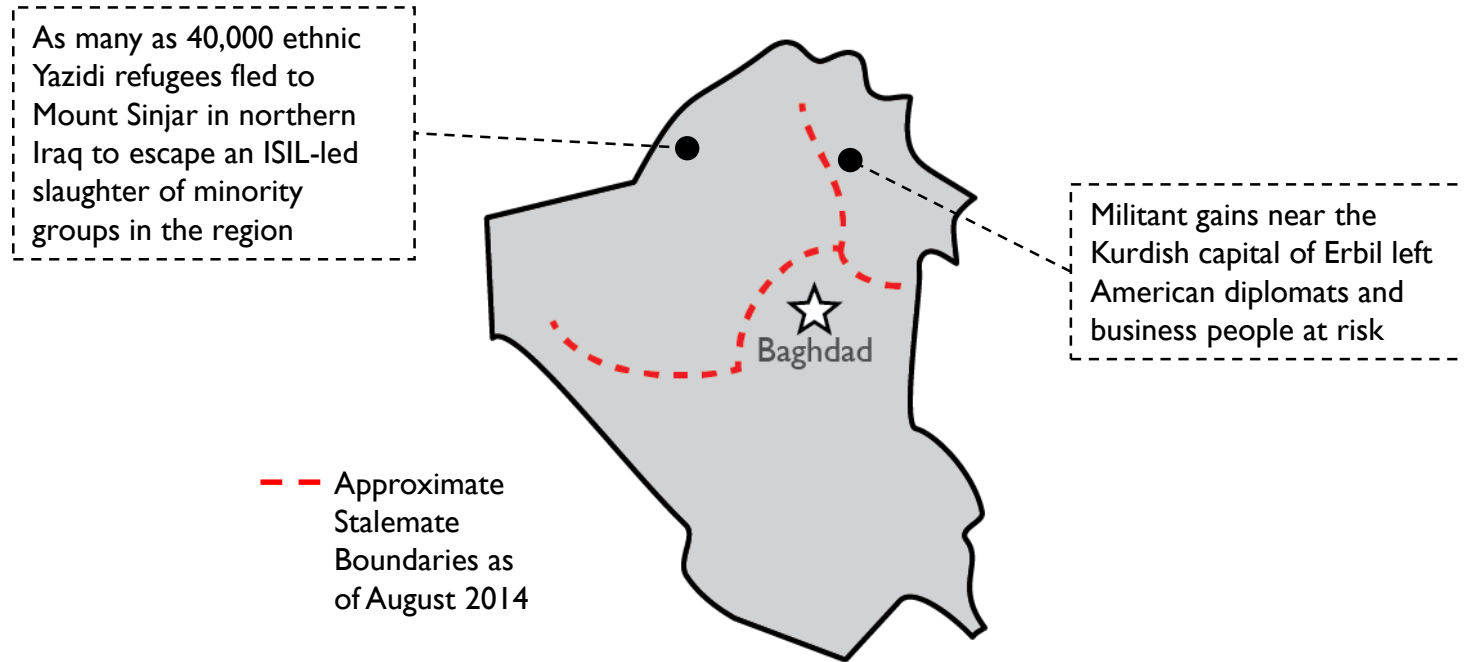


Analysis

- After capturing a border town, ISIL transferred thousands of militants from Syria into Iraq, capturing several important Sunni cities in a rapid advance towards Baghdad
- Since the beginning of the Syrian Civil War, the number of jihadists aligned with extremist Sunni causes has increased dramatically

Crises in Northern Iraq Prompt U.S. Action

Locations of Crises in Northern Iraq



Analysis

- As ISIL militants swept through additional areas of northern Iraq, hundreds of thousands of regional minorities fled from an anticipated ethnic cleansing; up to 40,000 ethnic Yazidi refugees were left stranded and surrounded on a mountain by ISIL, prompting the Obama administration to deliver food and water supplies and deploy special forces to direct airstrikes as part of a rescue mission
- When ISIL advances left American personnel in the Kurdish capital of Erbil at risk, U.S. airstrikes were used to assist Kurdish militias defending the capital

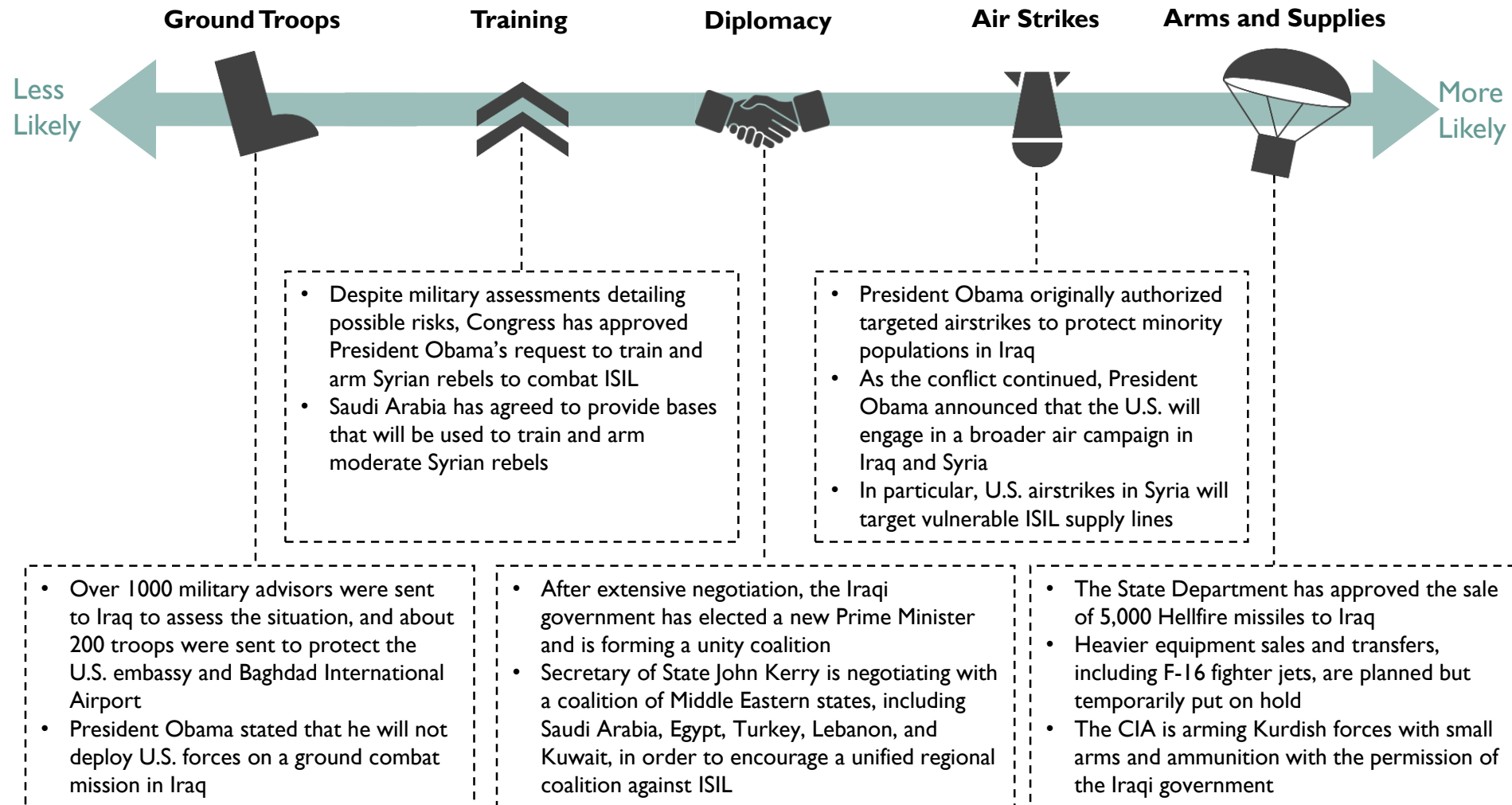
Roadmap for the Presentation

Introduction to the Crisis

└─ Potential U.S. Responses

└─ Potential Outcomes in Iraq

U.S. Employing Several Options for Response



Roadmap for the Presentation

Introduction to the Crisis

└─ Potential U.S. Responses

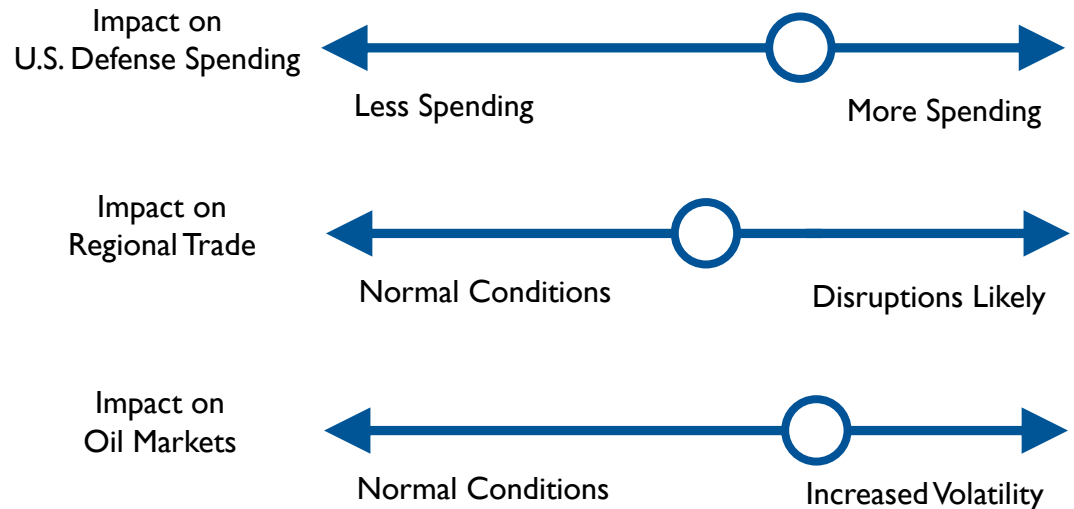
└─ Potential Outcomes in Iraq

Most Likely Outcome: Extended Stalemate

Approximate Stalemate Boundaries as of September 2014



Possible Consequences of Extended Stalemate

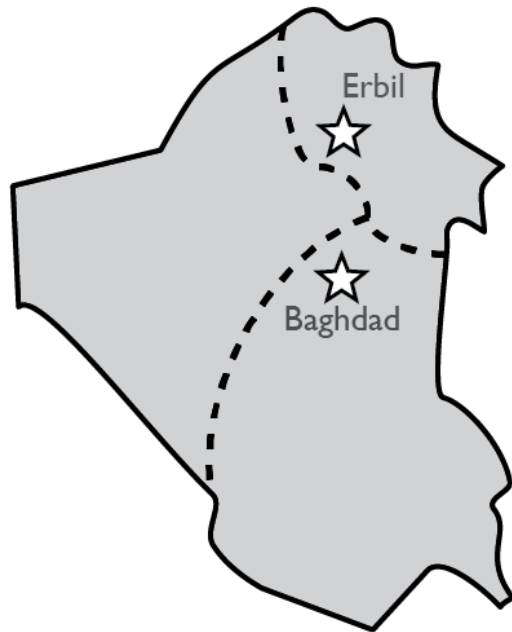


Analysis

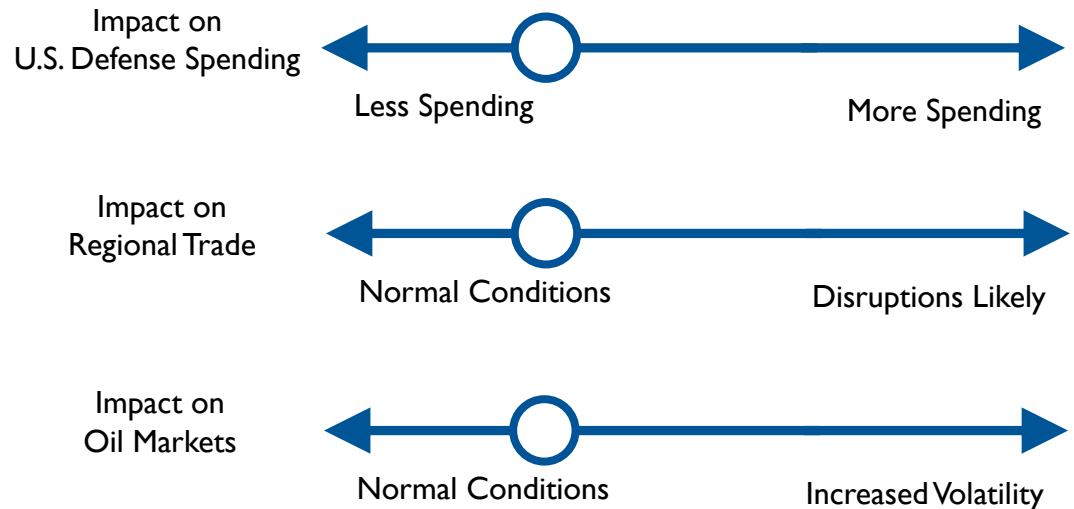
- The most likely outcome is an extended stalemate, whereby Iraqi security forces with American aid prevent Sunni militants from overrunning Baghdad but are unable to retake Sunni or Kurdish territory
- In this scenario, it is likely that the Kurdish regional government would continue to move towards greater autonomy, either by declaring independence or by seeking far greater autonomy as a condition for rejoining the Iraqi central government
- In this scenario, U.S. may allocate more existing defense funds to support Iraqi security forces
- In addition, further areas with oil resources and infrastructure would be at risk if militants made further gains

Possible Outcome: Negotiated Settlement

Hypothetical Borders of a Federalized Iraq



Possible Consequences of Negotiated Settlement

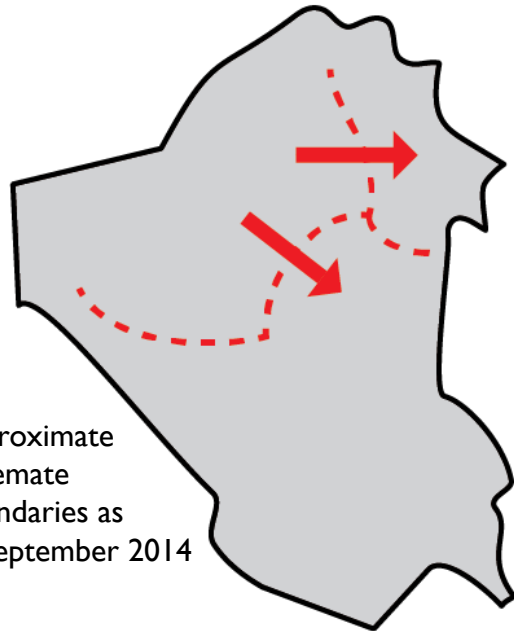


Analysis

- In a sign of progress, Prime Minister Maliki has agreed to step down and allow a new government to be formed
- One possible arrangement would be a “federalized” Iraq, with more regional autonomy and a second capital for the Kurds in Erbil
- A successfully negotiated resolution would require less support from the U.S. and would pose less risk to oil and trade infrastructure
- While armed conflict with the most extreme militants may persist, restoring the legitimacy of the central government might convince other Sunni militias to abandon their alliance with ISIL

Possible Outcome: Further Militant Gains

Direction of Potential Militant Gains



— Approximate
Stalemate
Boundaries as
of September 2014

Possible Consequences of Further Militant Gains

Impact on
U.S. Defense Spending

← Less Spending More Spending →

Impact on
Regional Trade

← Normal Conditions Disruptions Likely →

Impact on
Oil Markets

← Normal Conditions Increased Volatility →

Analysis

- If Iraqi Security Forces suffered the same organizational collapses that plagued them earlier in the conflict, it is possible that Baghdad and other areas further south could be at risk
- The U.S. would need to either intervene on a greater scale or pull out of the conflict if it became clear that the Iraqi government could not hold its ground in Baghdad, which could place U.S. personnel in harm's way
- Trade could be disrupted if Baghdad is besieged or if Baghdad International Airport is closed
- More areas with oil resources and related infrastructure would be at risk if militants made further gains