



Iraq's Government—One Year, Still No Progress

“Iraqis now have a fully constitutional government, marking the end of a democratic transitional process in Iraq that has been both difficult and inspiring. This broadly representative unity government offers a new opportunity for progress in Iraq” – President Bush, [5/20/06](#)

May 20th marks the one-year anniversary of the formation of the Maliki government. Since that time, there has not been sufficient progress on any of the key political benchmarks that are necessary to bring stability to Iraq. In the meantime, nearly [950 American troops have been killed and close to 7,000 have been wounded](#), while American taxpayers have spent more than \$120 billion. The current approach is not working and America cannot continue to invest in a failing government. What is needed is a responsible redeployment plan that puts a greater sense of urgency into the Iraqi political process and forces the Iraqis to step up and make the difficult compromises necessary to bring about a political solution.

Little to No Political Progress over the Past Year

[Insufficient progress has been made on political benchmarks](#). The Maliki government has made insufficient progress on reversing de-Baathification, scheduling provincial elections, drafting a plan for national reconciliation, amending the constitution, or reaching a political agreement on disbanding the militias. The only progress to date has been a draft oil law passed through the Iraqi cabinet but which has not yet been voted on by parliament and still faces significant opposition.

The can has been kicked down the road again on amending the Iraqi constitution. Amending the constitution to take into account Sunni concerns was a key condition for Sunnis to enter Iraq's political process in 2005. Yet almost two years later, there is still no satisfactory proposal that bridges divides. A parliamentary committee set up to study amendments to Iraq's constitution has failed to agree on a number of issues and is [presenting an incomplete draft to parliament](#).

[The Iraqi oil law will not be passed by the Bush administration's May timeline](#). Iraq's parliament has not begun serious consideration of the draft oil law, which is already facing major opposition from Iraqi politicians. The White House set a May deadline, which now appears to be in serious jeopardy. Even if the law does pass, it will most likely be a watered down bill that puts off the most critical issue of how to divide oil among the Shi'as, Kurds, and Sunnis.

The Iraqi parliament is [dysfunctional and gridlocked by sectarian rivalries](#). Instead of tackling the country's serious issues, the Iraqi parliament has had great difficulties in [getting its members to come to sessions](#). When Iraq parliamentarians do show up, the debate is often animated by sectarian rivalries rather than serious discussion over implementing the country's ambitious agenda for reform. Just last week, the speaker of parliament slapped a member after a heated argument.



Costs to the American People over the Past Year

Over the past year, [945 Americans were killed and 6,883 wounded](#). Since the Maliki government was formed, the equivalent of two American brigades have been lost in Iraq. In addition, the medical costs necessary to treat our wounded service members are staggering, as are the emotional burdens borne by our fallen troops' families.

U.S. involvement over the past year cost the American people over [\\$140 billion](#). Congress has appropriated close to \$140 billion for the war since Maliki took power, and now the president is asking for another emergency supplemental appropriations bill providing nearly \$100 billion more. American taxpayers have been repeatedly asked by the Bush administration to write a blank check to support a dysfunctional government.

Meanwhile, American troop levels in Iraq have actually risen over the past 12 months from [130,000 to more than 150,000](#). President Bush's Iraq policy will increase American troop levels to over [170,000](#) by the time the escalation is complete in July. Army units in Iraq are having their tours extended [from 12 months to 15 months](#), further exacerbating the strain on equipment, soldiers, and their families. While the United States escalates its involvement in Iraq, America's allies are drawing down their troops from 20,000 last May to [12,600 this May](#).

Costs to the Iraqi Population over the Past Year

More than [25,000 Iraqi civilians](#) have been killed over the past 12 months. Iraqis continue to bear the brunt of the civil war while their government continues to dither. The United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq, which had been collecting figures for Iraqi civilian deaths, has been denied information from the Iraqi government—making it even more difficult to determine the war's toll on Iraqi civilians. Yet [information collated by the *Los Angeles Times*](#) indicates that more than 5,500 Iraqis were killed during the first three months of 2007. Moreover, attacks during the first two months of the escalation [have only marginally declined](#). March averaged 157 attacks each day, while April's average dipped slightly to 149.

More than [half a million Iraqis have fled their homes](#), with 50,000 leaving every month. The upswing in sectarian violence has exacerbated the Iraqi refugee crisis. Since the Samarra mosque bombing in February 2006, nearly three-quarters of a million Iraqis have left their homes. In all, there are more than two million total Iraqi refugees abroad in Syria, Jordan, Egypt, and other countries, while 1.9 million Iraqis are internally displaced. Since the start of this fiscal year on October 1, 2006, the United States has accepted only [69 Iraqi refugees](#).

Nationwide electricity production is [below prewar levels](#), especially in Baghdad, where there were only 6.5 hours of power per day in late March. Iraq is still only producing about [4,000 megawatts](#) of electricity per day, 2,000 megawatts below the goal that was supposed to be reached in July of 2004. This level of electricity production meets only slightly more than half the demand, according to a [recent U.S. government report](#).



Oil production fails [to meet U.S. and Iraqi targets.](#) Iraq's greatest potential source of national wealth, its oil sector, continues to flounder. Despite billions of dollars in U.S. and foreign reconstruction assistance, the Government Accountability Office reports that "Iraq will need billions of additional dollars to rebuild, maintain, and secure" its oil and electricity sectors. Oil production remains well below the goal of three million barrels per day set by the United States. In addition, 10 percent to 30 percent of refined oil products are disappearing and being sold on the black market.

Iraq lost \$5 billion to corruption and failed to spend [\\$8 billion of its 2006 budget.](#) The Iraqi government is proving to be an unreliable steward of the Iraqi public's money. It failed to spend \$8 billion allocated to capital building and reconstruction projects that were necessary to get the country on its feet. Furthermore, Iraq's Commission on Public Integrity estimated the losses of official government corruption to be \$5 billion a year—or roughly an eighth of Iraq's 2007 budget.