

TO CENTRALIZE OR DECENTRALIZE?

A1

Rank how connected you feel with these institutions:

1 – Very Connected – “Bottom line, this is who I rep the most and am the most committed to”

7 – Very Detached – “Bottom line, I don’t really identify with this level”

My Family	_____
Culture and/or Religion	_____
Spring Branch Neighborhoods	_____
Houston	_____
Texas	_____
The South	_____
The United States of America	_____

Rank how much you trust the following people in making decisions on your behalf

1 – Very Trustful – “They know my wants and needs enough to make a sound decision...I’ll benefit from supporting them”

7 – Very Untrustworthy – “They have no idea what my wants and needs...I don’t think I’ll get anything from them”

Parent/Guardian	_____
Cultural Representative or Religious Leader	_____
Your Representative to Houston City Council	_____
Houston Mayor Bill White	_____
Texas Governor Rick Perry	_____
United States Senator from Texas Kay Bailey Hutchinson	_____
President of the United States Barack Obama	_____

Discuss with your group any differences in opinion between your rankings.

PERSPECTIVE STUDY

To form a perspective, you have to look at the context and experiences that a person has in order to imagine their point of view. Forming a government for a new nation is difficult, and decisions are weighed by the perspectives that are brought to the discussion. In this exercise, you will fill out the graphic organizer to form the perspective of individual tribes in Iraq. When you fill out your graphic organizer, write in the 1st person.

Analyze the maps in the packet. Take notes of your analysis on the graphic organizer. They should be able to answer the questions below.

- What regions (North, Northeast, South...etc.) do each tribes live?
- Where do most of the people in Iraq live? So what regions are the most populous? What tribes represent the largest populations in Iraq?
- Where is all the oil in Iraq? Which tribe sits on oil? Which tribe can generate the most money through the sale of oil?

Read and annotate the article(s) provided. Then answer the fill out the following graphic organizer. Ask your group members if you are confused on anything.

- Which tribes advocate a decentralized (confederation) government? Which tribes oppose decentralization, and would much rather keep a strong central government?
- What are the fears and/or motivations that each tribe has in regards to decentralization?
- What type of government would your group advocate in Iraq? Why?

Edward Lazarus, FindLaw Columnist
Special to CNN.com

(FindLaw) -- The explosion of violence in Iraq has temporarily shifted the issue of "nation-building" off the front page. It has replaced that issue, instead, with the more pressing question of whether Iraq can be saved from utter chaos.

But assuming that the U.S.-led coalition can restore a semblance of order in the streets, the process of nation-building -- its excruciating difficulty, and tantalizing hope -- will regain its standing. In the end, that process will act as the ultimate test for whether history will judge the U.S. invasion as a wholesale disaster, albeit one mitigated by the removal of a terrible despot, or at least a partial success.

When this happens, a central focus will be the creation of a new Iraqi constitution. Somehow this document, which is the subject of a raging debate, must provide the architecture for a democratic state that is hard even to imagine at the moment.

Rarely has a document had to bear such weight. With the disappearance of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) as the *raison d'être* for the war, the liberation of the Iraqi people and the creation of a model democratic state have become the Administration's chief justifications for U.S. involvement in Iraq. Naturally, a real working constitution -- not some Soviet-style parchment of extravagant but meaningless guarantees -- is essential to the creation of such a democracy. Thus, the Iraqi nation's fate significantly depends on the success of the Iraqi constitution's framers.

With these stakes in mind, it seems worth comparing some of the challenges facing Iraq with those that faced the American colonies after our Revolutionary War. The results of this thought experiment -- even if briefly indulged -- are depressing indeed.

FROM THE REVOLUTION TO THE CONSTITUTION

After the Revolution, the Founding Fathers faced four profound structural questions for the government they were redesigning through the Constitution -- the new document that would replace the Articles of Confederation, which had proved grossly inadequate.

First, the Constitution's framers had to strengthen the federal government (which had proven too weak under the Articles), without unduly diminishing the power of individual states. Under the Articles of Confederation, the federal government had had little power. But under the Constitution, things were very different.

In the Constitution, the framers established a federal government of enumerated powers, with sufficient flexibility to meet whatever contingencies might arise. Meanwhile, the states retained significant authority over matters that did not require a uniform national approach.

Second, the framers had to find an appropriate balance of power between the small states and the larger states. They solved this problem by devising a bicameral legislature with one chamber organized by state according to population and the other chamber providing equal representation of all states.

Third, the framers needed to come up with a system of effective government that would not be overly dominated by either the executive or legislative branches. They managed this, as is familiar, through a careful "separation of powers" among three "co-equal" branches of government: the legislative, executive, and judicial.

And fourth, the framers had to figure out how to deal with the problem of slavery and the large slave population that existed in the South. Here, they decided on a rather ignominious course -- outlawing the slave trade after a substantial period of years, treating slaves as "three-fifths" of a person for determining state representation, and otherwise remaining silent on this potentially explosive subject.

AMERICA'S CONSTITUTIONAL CHALLENGES

None of this political balancing act came easily. But the Framers were inordinately fortunate to count among their number the wisest and most innovative minds -- James Madison, Thomas Jefferson, Alexander Hamilton, and many others -- of a highly creative moment in history.

They also benefited from all the wisdom they could glean from the rich intellectual tradition of the Enlightenment, to which they were direct heirs. Locke, Montesquieu, and the other great thinkers of this tradition gave philosophical footing to the American nation-building enterprise.

Further, the framers, and the fledgling nation on whose behalf they were acting, enjoyed the luxury that, for all the difference between a typical Virginian and a typical New Yorker, they had a wealth of shared colonial experience and were united by powerful bonds forged in the fire of the revolutionary struggle against Britain. In short, they had a shared idea about what kind of government they did not want, and enough common experience to find a shared vision for a better way.

Even with all these advantages, the ultimate success of the American experiment was a nearer run than we like to admit. In 70 years, the constitutional compromise over slavery, having eaten away at the nation's connective tissue, finally split the nation, causing the Civil War. Had it not been for Lincoln's perseverance and a chance turn at the battle of Gettysburg, we might well be two countries now.

THE IRAQI CONSTITUTION: DAUNTING CHALLENGES

To begin with, the Iraqi constitution will have to find a workable balance between the interests of the country's Shiite Muslim majority and its ethnic and religious minorities, including the Kurds, who seek a degree of autonomy that the Shiites do not want to yield.

No less important, the Iraqi Constitution will also have to find a path to religious pluralism through the minefield of those Islamic factions who would like to make the country a theocracy. Already the key Iraqi players are at loggerheads about what role to give religious law in determining the laws of the nation.

These potentially intractable issues, moreover, come on top of the usual blockbuster Constitution-writing dilemmas -- such as how much power to give the national government vis-à-vis the regional authorities, and how to divide power within the national government.

IRAQ'S FRAMERS LACK THE AMERICAN ADVANTAGES

Unfortunately, in confronting these seemingly insurmountable problems, the Iraqis enjoy few, if any, of the advantages that blessed their American counterparts in 1789.

At least according to recent news accounts, there are no Madisons or Hamiltons on the horizon. Instead, the two main Iraqi rivals negotiating over the Constitution's content, Faisal Istrabadi and Salem Chalabi. Istrabadi is a medical malpractice lawyer from Indiana. Chalabi is the nephew of Ahmed Chalabi -- the former exile group leader whose suspect advice turns out to have misled the Bush administration at just about every turn.

Worse still, it appears that Istrabadi and Chalabi both view the constitutional drafting process not so much as a way of creating an enduring governmental structure, but as a way of ensuring greater power for their respective political patrons. Istrabadi's patron is Adnan Pachachi, who is likely to become the new Iraq's first president; Chalabi's, unsurprisingly, is Ahmed Chalabi, who is likely to become the new Iraq's first prime minister.

No wonder, then, that Salem Chalabi pushes for a weak presidency and strong prime minister's role: His patron (and uncle) is slated for the prime ministership, so of course he'd like that position to be as powerful -- and the presidency's powers as modest -- as possible.

Nor do the Iraqi framers have the same kind of deep reservoir of shared experience that served the American framers so well. To the contrary, the Iraqi Framers operate in the context of a near-civil war.

Remember, this is a country artificially created by outsiders only a few generations ago. Now, the various factions vying to shape the Iraqi constitution are divided by a history of profound ethnic and religious animosity that only Saddam's brutality kept in check.

CRAFTING A MEANINGFUL IRAQI CONSTITUTION

All this makes the process of writing a meaningful constitution darn near impossible. Constitutions may reflect shared purposes, but they really can't be expected to create them.

Of course, the Iraqi people richly deserve democracy: Self-government should be every person's birthright. But entitlement and reality can be worlds apart -- and bridging that gap will take nothing short of the Baghdad version of our "Miracle at Philadelphia."

Edward Lazarus, a FindLaw columnist, writes about, practices, and teaches law in Los Angeles. A former federal prosecutor, he is the author of two books -- most recently, "Closed Chambers: The Rise, Fall, and Future of the Modern Supreme Court."

FINDING THE RIGHT GOVERNMENT FOR IRAQ: U.S. HISTORY SHOWS THAT IT MAY TAKE TIME, PATIENCE, RETHINKING, AND AMENDMENT

By MARCI HAMILTON
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Saturday, Apr. 26, 2003

With General Jay Garner's arrival in Iraq this week, the question on everyone's mind is this: What kind of government will Iraq have? Will it be democratic enough? Will it fit the Iraqi people, or merely be an import from the U.S.? Will it permit the "right" amount of freedom? Will separation of church and state and other features of the U.S. Constitution and other western constitutions be a part of the new Iraqi Constitution, as well?

In the midst of anxiety about the answers to this questions, lots of doomsday scenarios are being painted. In particular, doomsayers like to point fingers at Afghanistan, where a fully operational democratic government is not yet in place.

The truth, however, is that there need not be a smooth road to a successful democracy. To the contrary, the U.S.'s own rocky road to representative democracy should give the pessimistic pause. No one should assume either that there is only one chance for Iraq to get it right, or only one form of government that can work in Iraq.

After all, the U.S.'s own experience belies these claims. While the U.S. system is now a masterpiece, it's important to remember that the Constitution that now governs was necessary because the first constitutional order in the United States failed. For centuries, this order has been a work in progress.

U.S. Mistakes, Not Just U.S. Successes, Can Lead to Valuable Lessons

In civics, Americans are taught the highlights of American history, in an account that focuses primarily on the Declaration of Independence and the Constitutional Convention. But this cherry-picking is a shame, because it makes the path of American democracy look too easy, too predetermined - as if Providence had guaranteed it from the start.

In fact, the ten years between the Declaration and the Convention were some of the rockiest in this country's history. Our children, and the rest of the world, could learn as much from our mistakes as from our successes.

The Fraught Decade Between the Declaration and the Constitution

America's first attempt at representative democracy was embodied in the Articles of Confederation. It was an abject failure, for two main reasons.

First, the drafters of the Articles of Confederation were overly optimistic in their assessments of the characters of the men who would rule in state governments of the era. State governors had their powers curtailed, for fear they would operate as monarchs. State legislators correspondingly expanded their power, and they were no virtuous lot.

The expectation that these men would rule to serve the common good was dramatically disappointed. Instead, unchecked by the powerless state governors, the legislators became "vortices of corruption."

Second, the drafters of the Articles of Confederation were also overly optimistic in their belief that the states, on their own, would coordinate their agendas under the aegis of some larger purpose. Corrupt state legislators focused not on serving the public good, but on granting special favors to serve their own interests. They also seemed incapable of coordinating with other states a common trade policy, or serving common military needs.

Indeed, they refused even to pay their share of taxes to support the Congress. And Congress had no means to force them to do so; the Articles of Confederation simply had not effectively empowered Congress to force the states to coordinate in the interest of a greater good.

As a result, taxes were high, the economy was weak, and the people had little influence on the legislative cabals that purported to represent them. The States were, in effect, separate sovereigns, only loosely tied together by the Articles. They were under no compulsion to do what was in the greater good beyond their own borders.

Observing these developments, citizens became frustrated. Had they fought so fiercely for independence from Britain only to be subjects of the unaccountable, unworkable governments that had been set in place following the Declaration?

Angry, they took up arms once again. Shay's Rebellion in Massachusetts marked the moment when it became absolutely clear that the Articles had failed to create a stable or accountable governing system - or, indeed, even a government superior to the colonial regime that had been overthrown. The Constitutional Convention was called as an emergency meeting to head off the possibility of more civil unrest.

In sum, the first American experiment fell flat. These were dark times, not the gentle slide to democracy too often presumed.

The Constitution as an Imperfect and Amendable Document

The Framers were properly chastened by the failure of the Articles of Confederation. The Revolutionary Era that was ending had been utopian - with citizens placing an optimistic trust in human goodness and the essential virtue of Americans over Europeans. Now, however, the Framers had developed - and sought to accommodate in the Constitution - a more realistic distrust in all individuals holding power, based on experience that power indeed tends to corrupt. The checks and balances and the separation of powers--from the three branches of the federal government, to federalism, to separation of church and state--for which the United States Constitution is revered arose out of this fundamental understanding.

The root of the Framers' distrust was not a cynical assessment men were evil in all circumstances. On the contrary, it was a pragmatic distrust in human nature as corruptible but capable of good. This pragmatic distrust was married to a hope that a better constitutional arrangement could deter abuses of power and could direct officials' attention to the greater good. Utopia was no longer a goal.

Accordingly, when the Framers sent a cover letter with the completed Constitution to Congress, they humbly declared that this was not a perfect document. They noted, in particular, that surely there were abuses of power they had not been able to imagine, and therefore to deter. There was a palpable sense that they were imperfect men crafting what could only be an imperfect document.

Thus, the Framers had come to the Constitutional Convention not to create the perfect document, which they now understood all too well was impossible. Rather, they came to try to do the best they could under exigent circumstances. They were pragmatic, and experimental. If there is anything the United States' constitutional history has to offer Iraq, it is this humble spirit.

Within their document, the Framers included a formal amendment process. And after they had finished, it was used no fewer than twenty-seven times. If the Iraqi's first Constitution similarly evolves over time - or even has to be discarded, to start from scratch, as the Articles of Confederation were - we should not be surprised and the Iraqis should not despair.

Misleading U.S. History Should Not Create Unrealistic Expectations for Iraq

American triumphalism too often has moved the troubled history I have described far into the background, preferring to concentrate on the U.S.'s shining successes, rather than on its periods of unrest and uncertainty. The Constitution, for instance, is presented as having miraculously paved the way to U.S. power and might.

The Constitution is a miracle, to be sure. But if the decade before the Convention, and all the subsequent amendments (as well as the Civil War!) are forgotten, then a fundamental truth of constitution-making is missed. It is this: Constitutions are imperfect documents that need to be fitted to their people, and ever amended to improve their fit.

Thus, as the Iraqis debate their constitutional future, they should not be burdened with the expectation that they have only one chance to get it right. We are still trying to get it right, with amendments in our future, no doubt. Nor should the world stand in harsh judgment as the Iraqis search for the right balance of liberty and order for them.

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Top Shiite Politician Joins Call for Autonomous South Iraq

By EDWARD WONG

BAGHDAD, Iraq, Aug. 11 — One of Iraq's most powerful Shiite politicians on Thursday strongly backed demands for the formation of a semi-independent region in the oil-rich south, adding fresh turmoil to the drafting of a new constitution as the deadline for its completion draws near.

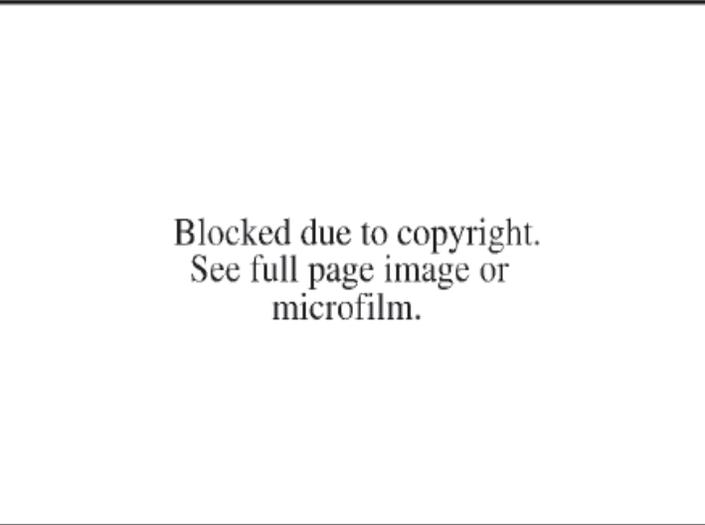
The politician, Abdul-Aziz al-Hakim, a religious Shiite with close ties to Iran, told a large gathering in the holy city of Najaf that it was "necessary" for Shiite Arabs to secure broad governing powers for the south, which is dominated by the Shiites and was long oppressed under the rule of Saddam Hussein.

Mr. Hakim has been holding direct talks with other Iraqi leaders over the new constitution, and his remarks signaled a sharpening of the position held by some Shiites just four days before the document is scheduled to be finished.

The issue of autonomous regions has become the biggest sticking point in the negotiations. Kurdish leaders, intent on preserving the broad powers of Iraqi Kurdistan in the north, have been the biggest proponents of regional autonomy, while the formerly governing Sunni Arabs, fearing an unfair division of oil resources, have adamantly rejected the idea.

Some Sunni Arab leaders on Thursday immediately denounced Mr. Hakim's call for a semi-independent southern region and said it would now be hard to finish the constitution on time.

"I don't think we will reach an agreement in four days," said Fakhri



Abdul-Aziz al-Hakim, brother of Muhammad Bakr al-Hakim and Iraq's most powerful Shiite politician, at a meeting on the new constitution.

al-Qaisi, a Sunni Arab member of the 71-member constitutional committee. "There's no agreement between any of the groups. All the doors have closed. The Kurds have insisted on their demands. The Shia insist on their demands."

Until now, Shiite religious leaders in Baghdad had spoken broadly of moderate regional powers. Mr. Hakim's comments lent support to stronger demands for autonomy by mostly secular Shiite politicians in the south. "To keep the political balance of the country, Iraq should be ruled under a federal system next to the central government," Mr. Hakim told thousands of worshippers, many of whom waved green flags, a symbol of Shiite Islam. "We think it is necessary to form one entire region in the south."

Mr. Hakim's remarks followed a meeting he had Wednesday in Najaf with Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, the most revered Shiite cleric in Iraq. The ayatollah told Shiite politicians last week that he supported the concept of autonomy, though he did not make specific recommendations.

Throughout the drafting of the constitution, the country's major ethnic and sectarian groups have bargained hard on a variety of matters, but no single issue has inspired more frustration or ill will than the definition of regional powers. Mr. Hakim's remarks highlighted the division just days before the Aug. 15 deadline, when the National Assembly is supposed to approve a draft of the constitution, paving the way for a popular referendum on the document in October and national elections in December.

The Bush administration has put

Abdul Razzaq al-Saiedy contributed reporting from Baghdad for this article, and an Iraqi employee of The New York Times from Najaf.



Some Iraqis are pushing for an autonomous region around Najaf.

enormous pressure on the Iraqis to stick to the timetable, in hopes that the process will help drain the Sunni Arab insurgency of some of its wrath and bolster flagging American opinion about the war in Iraq.

Mr. Qaisi, the Sunni leader, said Sunni Arabs could not approve of the creation of autonomous regions, as in a confederation, because that would lead to a breakup of Iraq. "We want the unity of Iraq," he said, "and we want to preserve this unity."

The guerrilla war continued to roil the country on Wednesday, as Iraqi officials reported that at least seven people, including three Iraqi soldiers and an intelligence officer, had been killed. The American military said a marine died in a roadside bomb explosion in Ramadi on Wednesday, and an unmanned aerial drone crashed near the northern city of Mosul on Wednesday night.

An Iraqi official involved in the trial of Mr. Hussein and his aides said Thursday that the tribunal was getting closer to setting a firm date. The tribunal is expected to give Mr.

Hussein's lawyers a definite date at the end of this month, and the official said the trial would almost certainly take place in mid-October at the earliest. Once a date is set, Mr. Hussein's lawyers will be given at least 45 days to prepare, said the official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because tribunal officials are supposed to limit their public statements.

The movement for southern autonomy that Mr. Hakim supports has been gathering momentum over the summer. Politicians in the south, particularly in the city of Basra, have been lobbying drafters of the constitution to enshrine the right of provinces in Iraq to break off into autonomous regions, similar to Iraqi Kurdistan. The south could profit enormously from such an arrangement — it has 80 to 90 percent of Iraq's vast oil reserves and the only ports in the country. Many southerners say they are frustrated that the central government in Baghdad does not allocate more oil revenue to their impoverished region.

Many of the Shiite politicians who initially backed the idea of southern autonomy are secular. The most powerful supporter has been Ahmad Chalabi, a vice prime minister and a former Pentagon favorite. Mr. Hakim is the first leading religious Shiite figure to lend his backing in such a public way.

Mr. Hakim's party, the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, founded in the 1980's in Iran, wields considerable power in Basra and the rest of the south. It heads a coalition that has a majority of the seats on the Basra governing council, and its armed wing, the Badr Organization, controls many of the senior positions in the Basra security forces. Religious Shiite mores have taken hold in Basra, and Mr. Hakim's portrait is plastered along streets and police checkpoints throughout the city.

Mr. Hakim's comments on Thursday came at a huge public gathering in Najaf marking the death of his older brother, Muhammad Bakr al-Hakim, a much-loved cleric killed by a car bomb in August 2003.

Some Shiites have supported creating a region out of Al Basra Province and neighboring provinces, while others have pushed for a much larger region that would also encompass the holy cities of Najaf and Karbala.

But there are also Shiites who vehemently oppose any move toward autonomy. Moktada al-Sadr, the young rebel cleric who led two uprisings against the Americans last year, and Ayatollah Muhammad Yacoubi, another radical cleric with ties to Mr. Sadr, have both denounced the movement, saying it goes against the concept of central Islamic rule.

Iraqis Agree to Delay Action on Creating Autonomous Regions

RICHARD OPPEL Jr.; ABDUL AL-SAIEDI

New York Times (1857-Current file); Sep 25, 2006; ProQuest Historical Newspapers The New York Times (1851 - 2005)
pg. A4

Iraqis Agree to Delay Action on Creating Autonomous Regions

By RICHARD A. OPPEL Jr.
and ABDUL RAZZAQ AL-SAIEDI

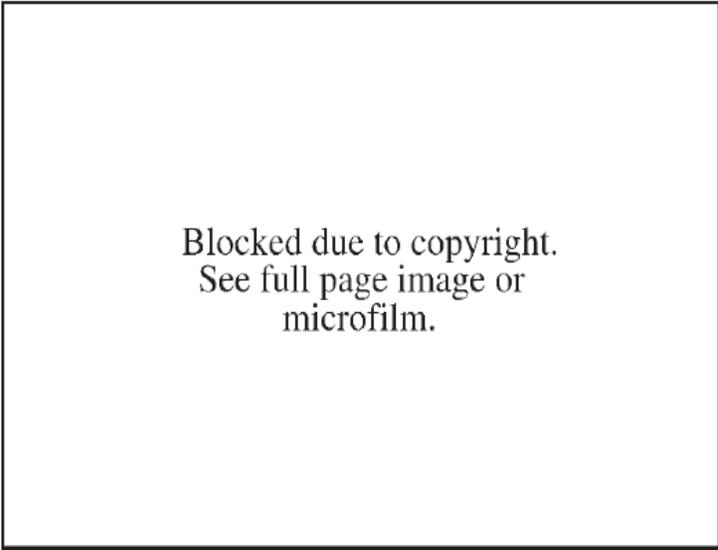
BAGHDAD, Sept. 24 — Iraqi political leaders agreed on Sunday to postpone until at least 2008 any effort to carve up the country into powerful autonomous states, easing concerns that Shiites would move quickly to split off into one large confederation in southern Iraq.

The delay was part of a deal reached over the weekend to start debate on a bill that could eventually allow the country to be broken into autonomous regions.

The fight is at the heart of one of the most critical and divisive issues in Iraq: whether Shiites in the south will be able to form semi-independent regions, like Kurdistan in the north, that would control their own security as well as billions of barrels of oil.

Autonomous states are allowed by the new Iraqi Constitution, but the charter requires Parliament first to pass a bill defining how that would occur. A powerful faction of Shiites and Kurds tried to pass such a proposal three weeks ago. But their move angered Sunni Arabs and some Shiite and secular lawmakers, who united to block the bill and suggested that the issue could endanger Iraq's fragile government.

During a meeting of political leaders on Sunday, Sunni parties and other critics won two important concessions from the Shiite and Kurdish



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John Spanner/Polaris, for The New York Times

A bomb outside a Christian church in Baghdad killed one and wounded 12 yesterday. Juliet Benjamin, right, said, "What is their crime?"

factions in return for allowing the proposal to be debated in Parliament this week.

The first postpones for 18 months the effective date of any legislation allowing the creation of autonomous regions. The second requires Parliament to form a committee immediately to consider amendments to the Constitution, including Sunni proposals to restrict autonomous states.

Moreover, Sunni negotiators emphasized that they did not agree to support the legislation that would be introduced this week but only to allow it to be debated, said Dhafir al-Ani, a leading Sunni lawmaker. "The issue is just to consider it and go with the process," Mr. Ani said.

The deal does allow supporters to put the issue before Parliament with a promise from rivals to debate the issue in good faith. When the bill was brought up earlier, it spurred an ac-

rimonious fight. Mahmoud Mashhadani, the speaker of Parliament and a Sunni Arab, accused supporters of trying to sneak the bill past him, while other Sunni legislators said they had been double-crossed.

The political progress came as violence continued throughout Iraq. Two marines were killed as a result of "enemy action" in Anbar Province on Sunday, the United States military said.

At least 20 Iraqis were slain in bombings and other attacks, The Associated Press reported. The A.P. also reported that Saddam Hussein's legal team said it would continue to boycott the deposed leader's genocide trial in Baghdad. The lawyers are angry that Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki fired a judge who prosecutors had charged was biased toward Mr. Hussein.

In one of Sunday's worst attacks, a bomb exploded near a Christian church in Baghdad, killing at least one person and wounding more than a dozen. Almaz Yunadim, a 34-year-old homemaker who witnessed the attack, said the attack was probably spurred by comments made by Pope Benedict XVI that many Muslims found offensive.

"People are being killed because of what the pope has said," she said. "The person who doesn't know how to speak should step down."

The political deal reached on Sun-

Khalid W. Hassan and Wisam A. Habeeb contributed reporting.

day says the legislation defining how autonomous states are formed will not take effect until 18 months after it is approved, said Khalid al-Atiya, a deputy speaker of Parliament who is a negotiator for one of the Shiite factions. The constitutional committee is expected to complete its work within a year, Mr. Atiya said through an aide.

The most ardent supporter of the proposal is Abdul Aziz al-Hakim, leader of the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq, a powerful Shiite party. Mr. Hakim wants to carve out a nine-province state that would include most of the people and oil in southern Iraq.

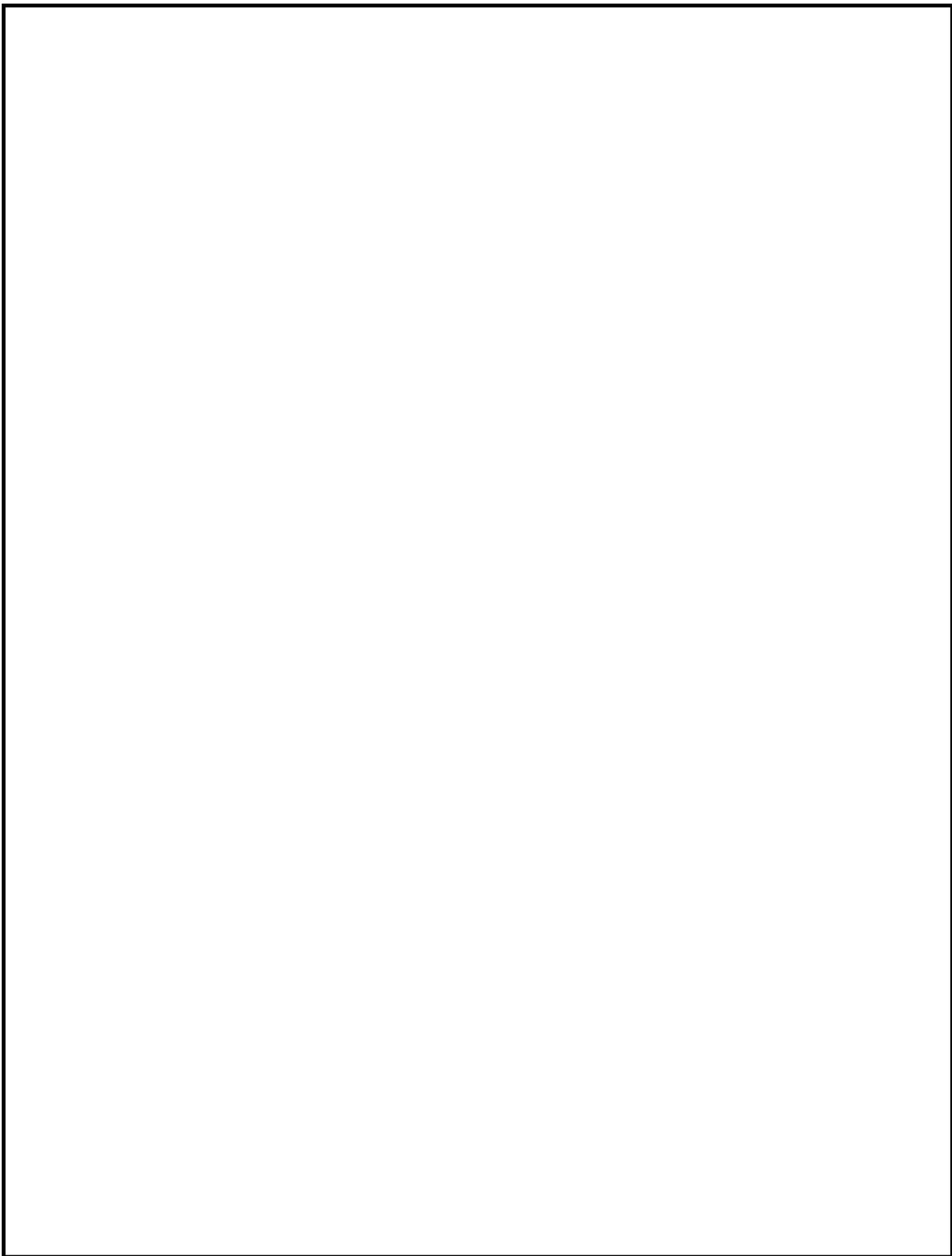
Sunni Arabs are suspicious of the plan, believing that it is sure to rob them of their share of Iraq's oil wealth. And some Shiite leaders worry that Mr. Hakim's plan for one giant Shiite state would create a dynasty for Mr. Hakim and leave their parties marginalized. They would prefer smaller autonomous states in areas where their influence is more concentrated.

The fight over autonomous regions threatened to doom the entire Constitution until a deal was worked out just before Iraqis voted on the charter last October. In that deal, Sunni leaders dropped their opposition to the idea in return for a provision requiring Parliament to renegotiate the parts that trouble the Sunnis. Now, with the formation of the committee, that process will begin.

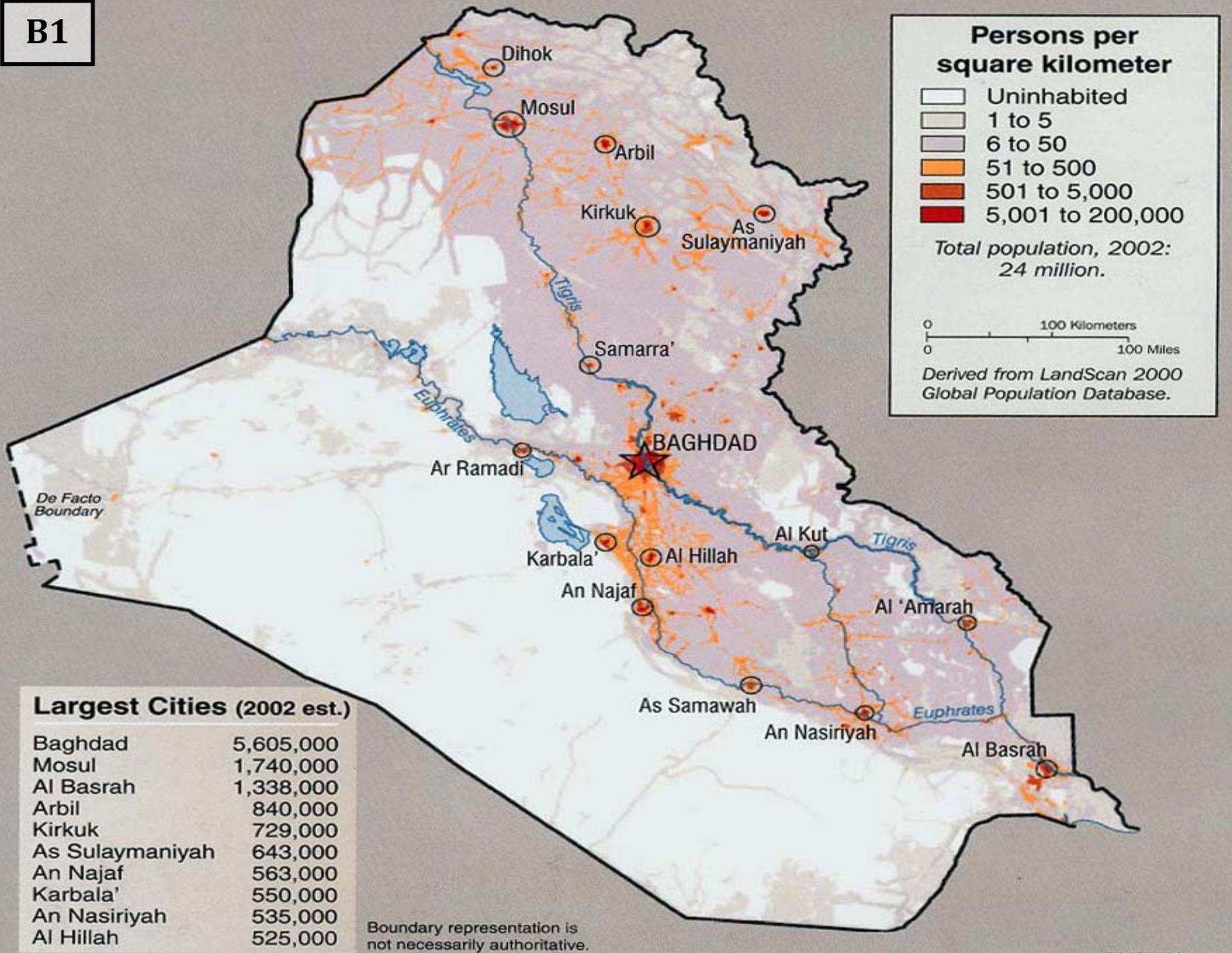
Mr. Ani, the Sunni lawmaker, said 27 committee members would be selected Tuesday. Another Sunni politician, Khalaf al-Alyan, said Sunni parties would get 5 seats, the Kurds 5 seats, the secular coalition of the former interim prime minister, Ayad Allawi, 2 seats and the dominant Shiite coalition, the United Iraqi Alliance, 12. Other parties would get the remaining 3 seats.

Divisions remain within the Shiite coalition. Opposition from legislators loyal to the Shiite cleric Moktada al-Sadr, as well as members of the Fadhila Party, helped derail the legislation three weeks ago.

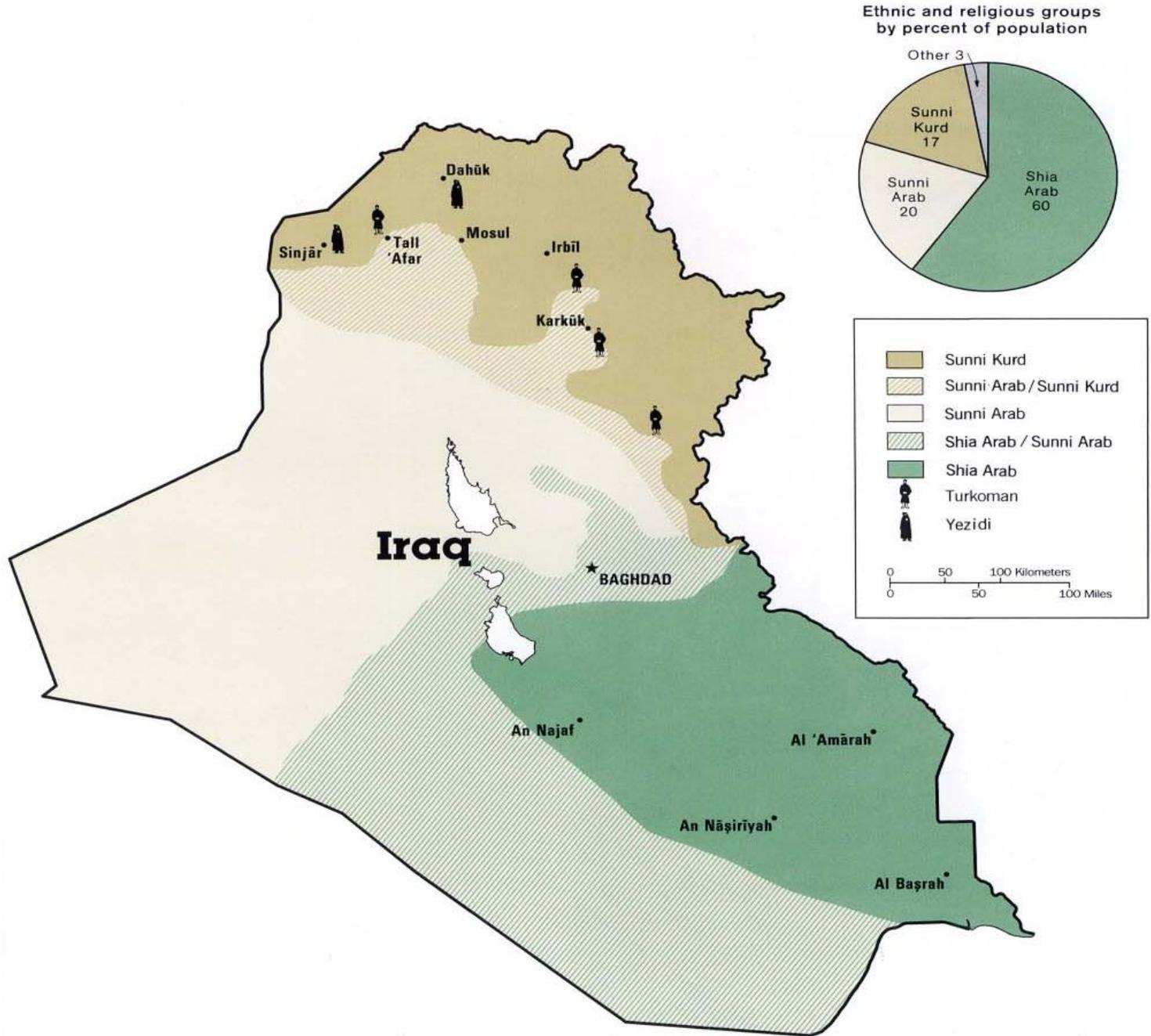
Fadhila has agreed to debate the bill, but its members will vote for the measure only if it discourages the creation of one huge federation across southern Iraq, said Hassan al-Shimiri, a party official. Its stance is at odds with that of Mr. Hakim's party, but such a provision "would ease the fears of people who are afraid of fragmenting the country," Mr. Shimiri said.



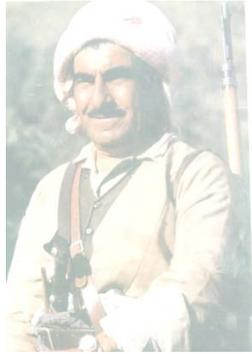
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Ethnoreligious Groups



KURDS



SHIITES



IRAQI

A2

GOVERNMENT

TO CENTRALIZE OF DECENTRALIZE?

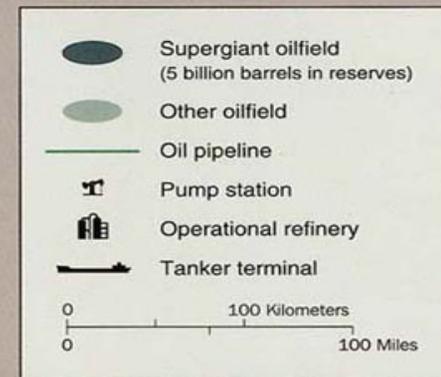
SUNNI ARABS



YOUR GROUP

B3

Iraq-Turkey pipeline to Ceyhan terminal, Turkey



to Baniyas, Syria

Euphrates
Tigris

De Facto Boundary

IRAQ'S OIL INFRASTRUCTURE

2003

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Boundary representation is not necessarily authoritative.

Iraqi Pipeline through Saudi Arabia (IPSA) to Al Mu'ajjiz, Saudi Arabia (closed)