

IRAQI GOVERNMENT – RECONSTRUCTION RESPONSIBILITY

Question: Who in the Reconstruction organization is responsible for reconstructing the government and setting up the democratic process?

Do we have veto power over the establishment of a non-democratic form of government?

Answer:

- President Bush announced L. Paul Bremer as the Envoy to Iraq. Amb Bremer has the responsibility of administering Iraq. He is in charge of the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA). Part of his responsibility is establishing the Interim Authority and the transfer of responsibilities to the Interim Authority.
- Since we are confident that the vast majority of Iraqis want a democratic government (as stated at the Nasiriyah meeting) we do not envision the need for a veto power over the new government.

Question: What will the Interim Authority look like?

Answer:

- The Iraqis will decide the structure of the Interim Authority. The U.S. government is working closely with Iraqis to solicit their views about the structure and functions of an Interim Authority.
- Plans are by no means final, but one possibility would be an Interim Authority with several different components:
- An Interim Authority Leadership Council: responsible for various government functions, including the running of ministries. It would also serve as the Iraqi people's liaison to ORHA, the Coalition, and the international community.
- An Interim Authority Constitutional Commission: commission responsible to organize, draft, and ratification of a new constitution.
- An Interim Authority Legal Reform Commission: responsible for ensuring that all Ba'athist elements were eliminated from the legal code. It might also consider issues of transitional justice.
- An Interim Authority Economic Reform Commission: this commission might be responsible for examining issues of national finance, monetary policy, trade, etc.

Questions: How does/will Ambassador Bremer interface with the Interim Authority? Does he have veto power if they make a decision we don't like?

Answer:

- The Interim Authority will have two main functions:
 - First, it will progressively assume the responsibility for administering those government offices and ministries that are handed over to it by the Coalition Provisional Authority.
 - Second, it will take the necessary steps – reforming election procedures, drafting a new constitution for ratification by the Iraqi people, etc. – preparatory to the formation of a new Iraqi government representing the will of the Iraqi people.
- ORHA will maintain responsibility for security and finances. We are confident that any problems that may arise will be worked out in a cooperative manner.

Questions: There are many groups organized to compete for power in the Interim Authority and future government. Who do we back? Are there any we do not want to gain power or have a voice in the government?

Answer:

- The USG is not backing any group, as all Iraqis have the right to participate effectively in the political process.
- As stated in the thirteen charter items established at the Nasiriya conference of free Iraqis:
 - “The future of government of Iraq should not be based on communal identity.”
 - “A future government should be organized as a democratic federal system, but on the basis of countrywide consultation.”
- We are confident the new Iraqi government of free Iraqis will marginalize any groups that oppose democracy.