Pros and Cons of a Provisional Government

- There are calls in the press and from within the Iraqi opposition to form a provisional government prior to liberation. There are advantages and disadvantages to this:

Advantages:

- Demonstrates seriousness of Iraqi liberation planning.
  - Might encourage defections so long as resulting "Iraq Liberation Organization" (ILO) welcomes participation of Iraq's internal opposition.
  - Increases pressure upon Saddam.
  - Facilitates training and operational deployment of the Free Iraqi Force (FIF) in these ways:
    - The ILO could provide nationality documentation to volunteers. Documentation may be needed in transit to training sites.
    - The ILO would provide international legal status for FIF combatants. Saddam's regime would be liable for war crimes in event of their capture and mistreatment.
    - The ILO could be the military justice authority over the FIF personnel, thereby saving the U.S. military the requirement.
    - The ILO would be the single partner with whom the USG would negotiate such matters as FIF personnel salaries, claims, and long-term obligations. The USG would not have to sign "contracts" with 3,700 or more individuals or with the various opposition groups.
  - Allows leadership to emerge from within a common political body.
  - Provides better legal basis/political cover for post-liberation governance.
  - A streamlined voice prior to liberation eases transition to post-Saddam era.

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- Provides a vehicle for the Iraqi opposition to approach other governments.
- An Iraq-wide forum potentially dilutes ethnic and sectarian interests.

**Disadvantages:**
- Risk that groups won’t work together, damaging the opposition’s reputation.
  - Tiny groups with questionable constituencies may filibuster agreements.
- May constrain U.S. Iraq policy flexibility.
- Without real power, the opposition has little incentive to address issues responsibly.
- Arguments within opposition distract from the end goal of ousting Saddam.
- Practical problem of where to host ILO.

**Recommendations:**
- DoD should immediately convene a meeting of the Iraq Liberation Act (ILA) committee.
  - The ILA committee is a good venue to build unity and trust among Iraqi groups in advance of declaration of an ILO.
  - The ILA committee can decide: leader selection standards, salaries and per diem for volunteers, relationship of opposition groups with volunteers once training begins, and date and place for training.
- Tell the Iraqi opposition that the U.S. Government will promptly recognize an ILO comprising most of the major Iraqi opposition groups.
- The U.S. Government should recognize legitimacy of a provisional government upon declaration.
- The U.S. Government should not ask Iraqi opposition forces to fight as stateless persons on the battlefield.
- The ILO will not dispense ministries or hierarchical leadership, but will open offices in important capitals.
  - This avoids squabbling over ministries and positions.
  - Representation offices allow the Iraqi opposition to dispense patronage.
  - Such offices can gather support for US efforts on behalf of the ILO.
  - After liberation, such offices can coordinate donor assistance.
  - Such offices can merge with (and absorb) the Kurdistan Regional Government representations.
  - ILO can make agreements with the U.S. relating to aid and governance in the post-Liberation period.