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SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED**Democratic Principles Working Group - Important Themes
September 4-5, 2002**

The 30 Iraqi participants in the first session of the Democratic Principles Working Group, on September 4-5, 2002, generally agreed on a number of basic goals and objectives for post-Saddam Iraq. They differ on the route they take to those goals. Key issues discussed in this paper are:

- Role and duration of direct international involvement.
- Establishment, composition, and role of a Transitional Civil Authority.
- Permanent government structures such as Federalism.
- Timetable and conditions for national elections.

Direct International Involvement

- Most participants spoke with pride of what Iraq could become. However, most participants defined the United States as the primary guarantor of, or primary backer of, democracy in Iraq. Several people spoke of post-World War II Germany and Japan as positive models. Afghanistan was generally disparaged as a model ("Iraq is not like Afghanistan," said many.)
- While the majority expressed public pride that Iraqis could do rebuild their country themselves, a significant minority said publicly (and still more said privately) that the USG and the international community must be directly involved in the democratic transition process to avoid its politicization. They urged the USG to avoid favoring groups other than their own, and did not want to see an Iraqi transitional authority become entrenched, ultimately subverting the transition process.
- Participants expressed the need for non-Iraqi peacekeeping forces to enforce dismantling of Saddam era politico-military structures and to ensure that the military or security services did not undermine the transition process.
- While a small minority of contributors forecast direct international community involvement for only a few months, the vast majority that international oversight would be necessary for several years.

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The Transitional Civil Authority

- Most participants expected some kind of link between the Iraqi opposition and a transitional authority. However, of potential significance is that **oppositionists almost invariably assumed that their group or faction would be well-represented in, if not in control of, the transitional authority.** It will be impossible to reconcile all these claims until there can be free and fair elections in Iraq. Most opposition groups also had implicit ideas of people or groups with whom they would not or could not work constructively.
- One participant, with some support from other Iraqis, said that **political groups contesting for power immediately after regime change was not in Iraq's long-term interest.** He proposed a Sovereignty Council, consisting of a few people of high integrity who were above politics, to work with the international community, with the council establishing a constituent assembly to write the constitution and pave the way for national elections. The Iraqi army would work with local militias to provide local security. Local elections would be held early to give local leaders legitimacy.
- Participants generally favored **purging or disbanding the security apparatus of the current regime.** There was agreement the military should be reduced considerably, and that existing local and regional institutions should be relied upon during the transition. Technocrats staffing these institutions should be retained, although those too closely involved with the crimes or abuses of the regime would presumably be replaced.
- Many participants sent the message that the USG needs to **prepare for a stay of five to ten years.**

Permanent Government Structures and Federalism

- Contributors proposed that a new constitution be written but differed on whether its drafters should be chosen by popular election or appointment by either a provisional Iraqi government, or a council of notables.
- Representatives of the PUK and KDP spoke eloquently on the subject of federalism. Several participants tabled concrete ideas for a division of powers, with the national government responsible for defense, foreign policy, monetary policy, and

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control over natural resources, provided the revenues were distributed according to population and need. This represented a concrete step forward and deserves further discussions between Arabs and Kurds, among others.

- How many units should a federal Iraq have? Participants had a range of opinions on this, with some advocating for five, seven or more federal provinces (based on the current system of governorates).
- Regarding political structures, those few who addressed the issue advocated a bicameral legislature, with the lower house elected on the basis of population allocated to geographic units. There were differences regarding criteria for, and powers of, an upper house, with several participants suggesting that ethnic, religious or tribal factors should be given extra weight.
- Participants said that establishment of an independent judiciary at the local, regional and national level was an absolute necessity, as was the rule of law.
- All participants said that the military must be non-political, not subject to corrupt influences and dramatically reduced in size. Several contributors advocated an all-volunteer service. Civilian control of the military was deemed essential.

Elections

- Free and fair elections with full participation by all Iraqis without regard to ethnicity, religion, sex or tribal affiliation must be guaranteed, according to all contributors.
- Timetables for elections varied widely, with some participants foreseeing formation of electoral laws and completion of national elections within as few as six months and others projecting the process to take upwards of three years. The degree of international involvement in the elections process was also debated by contributors, although some level of external oversight was agreed. There was also some discussion of a quick timetable for local elections, so as to have some participatory process early on, followed by national and regional elections at a later date.
- Most contributors saw an urgent need for a new census.

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- Other important issues, such as human rights guarantees in a new constitution, truth, reconciliation and amnesty questions were discussed, with broad agreement on the importance of these issues but differences of degree and detail in how they should be addressed.

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