

View on the Iraqi political map after the last election (March 7)

Ali Osam Abed Ali

Explosions in the Baghdad downtown broke out on April 4 and 6, right at the time when four winning coalitions leaders in the Iraqi parliamentary elections were starting consultations on future prime minister position holder. However, one may say people have accustomed to terrorist attacks. If it's possible to get accustomed to such bloody incidents.

Coalition to win

The total 27-million population of the country in Iraq is dominated by Arabs (55% – Shiite, however, Sunni, who are Iraqi and Arabic considered not a small number of more than 25, %). The northern area inhabited mostly by Kurds (21%, predominantly mostly Sunni). Every next election comes as a test for ethno-sectarian peace. Voting on March 7, 2010 was not exclusion.

Similar to other Western countries, elections procedure in Iraq includes pre-term voting. 850-thousands Iraqi army and security forces cast their votes on March, 5 in order to be ready to guarantee quietness on the major elections day of March, 7 – for the first time without direct support from the side of 130-thousands American military group. The mission proved to gain success: the number of 30 terrorist attacks and 38 victims during elections days was smaller if compared with 2005 election campaign. Saturday March, 6 was the day for voting abroad for Iraqi people in other 16 countries. All the rest voted on March, 7. The turnout fixed at the record level of 62 % could be called exemplary even for countries of traditional democracy in the West.

Votes counting longed until March, 26 and, contrary to forecasts, ex-prime Minister back in 2004-2005 Shiite leader with secular ideas and programmed Dr. Iyad Allawi's coalition "al-Iraqiya" was proclaimed the winner, getting 91 seats in the future parliament. This coalition, uniting secular bloc of Shiite and Sunni parties and groups under liberal and patriotic slogans has testified for the first time in the national modern history the domination of political power deprived of confessional and religious priorities. Similar to "al-

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Iraqiya”, another predominantly Shiite bloc, and the State of Law (SOL) coalition led by acting prime-Minister Nouri al-Maliki, now separated from Iraqi National Alliance (Mr. Al Hakeem group) attempted to attract Sunni votes to its side, however, not as successfully specially in the Sunni areas.

This bloc includes al-Maliki’s Islamic Dawa party and a number of influential political persons like Minister of oil Hussein al-Shahristani and Minister of defense Abdul Qder Al Obede, Sherwan Al Waele, Malik Dohan al Hassan and Al prince of Al Delem tribal in Al Anbar Ali Hatim al Sleman. Loyalist to the major external power, the USA, al-Maliki contrary to Allawi represents more traditional attitude based on the idea religious and national division of powers. Al-Maliki’s coalition result – 89 seats – did not makes him satisfied and was the reason for him to insist on the Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) to recalculate ballot papers manually. The Iraqi President (Kurd, according to Constitution of 2005) Jalal al-Talabani, having in mind to keep peace between the two competing groups, has given some support to al-Maliki claims because al-Talabani said we worked together with al-Maliki 4 years and I was also responsible during that period. However, the IHEC Chairman Faraj al-Haidar, quoting the international observers positive reports on voting and giving his own grounds, has rejected the idea of repeated calculation.

The third place has been taken by Shiite bloc “The Iraqi National Alliance” (INA) headed by Mr.Amar Al-Hakim. This coalition includes, in particular, Bader seniors like Hadi Al Amere , Fadela party and former adherents of the military resistance against the Western forces from the Shia Mahdi Armi led by Muqtada al-Sadr (the army was frozen and now they just have a political representative). It has won 70 places. The forth place has been held by the Kurdish parties union, the Kurdistan Alliance, a coalition of the two main ruling parties in South Kurdistan, namely the Kurdistan Democratic Party and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, – 43 places.

Peculiarities of the Iraqi elections

David H. Petraeus, commander-in-chief of the Western coalition troops back in February, 2007 – 2008, asked on 2010 New Year morning what could be done about situation with attracting popular votes in election through offering small gifts to people from parties running a political campaign, noted: “Iraqracy, if you will, the Iraqi specific form of democracy, first of all is still quite unique in the region, but has some very positive benefits.” The major advantage is that

political stage players have to communicate participants in the elections directly, and work on forming atmosphere of open dialogue.

On the other hand, the open lists of coalition's candidates have been implemented for the first time in Iraqi elections history. Information on every political bloc participants was included in large-size ballot papers we could view on TV-screens in reports from Iraq. This effected in part of Shiite voters supporting respected Sunni leaders and vice versa in case people found some personalities worth backing – thus overcoming sectarian devisions. Population from predominantly Sunni areas in Anbar, Mosul, Kirkuk Salah-al-Deen has done come back to the electoral process. It was the essence of “Petraeus doctrine” to attract Sunni combatant Shiite groups of al-Sadr through last years by offering their representatives positions in the local administration. And it worked properly also provide a good security in Al – Anbar and Mosul gave the people their good chance to vote.

However, no one among competing forces has won a decisive victory in the elections; its leaders are still hostile to each other, and no guarantee of stability exists. Could any of political sides institute itself as opposition peacefully? In the very moment both al-Maliki and Allawi declare their ability to build a coalition government together with “The Iraqi National Alliance” and the Kurdistan Alliance, and further on maintain friendly external policy in relations with other countries of the region.

But, as Mamun Fandi, professor of Cairo University and the head of the International institute for strategic studies in the Middle East, London department, and states in sceptical manner: “Democracy is a fruit not to be grown in desert, and Arabic democracy, the very fact of its existence is an insolent lie and self-illusion...”

What's going to happen?

Under Iraqi legislation the new government should be formed by the winning coalition in 30 days. If it fails, the initiative goes to the next in turn party coalition according to the place taken in election race. The basic obstacle is hidden in the rule which reads: to succeed in government forming, the ruling political bloc should posses at least 163 seats– 50% plus one – in the Parliament. Political leaders, Allawi and al-Maliki – would be forced to seek for coalition agreement with other blocs – since at the first glance the two leading forces are unable to be in consent with each other. But what happened could not be predicted by anyone.

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The picture is complicated in Baghdad now. Al Iraqiya bloc is still saying it won the election and the president must ask it to establish the government within 30 days (that term was over and ended on 13-7-2010 (article published on Ur radiostation under the title “The process of new Iraqi government establishing is not clear and under an external and internal pressure” Also the parliament members couldn’t seat all together since the first meeting ⁽¹⁾. On the other hand Al Mliki Alliance (89 seats) which succeeded to do a weak collation with INA (70 seats) couldn’t nominate their common prime Minister candidate until this moment. The obstacle in Baghdad now is that Al Iraqiya (91 seats) insists the president must ask particularly the biggest party which have taken more votes in the election to establish the new government selection. But Al Maliki State of law group and INA say the biggest coalition which appeared after the first parliament meeting (89+70 seats) has the right to establish the new government. And the Iraq constitution is not clear in this case. So Al Maliki and Hakem think they have the right to establish the new government.

Americans, who have already paid 4400 soldiers lives plus no one know how much USD bln for their invasion in Iraq, would be most likely interested in success of the “al-Iraqiya” secular Allawi coalition. Other option, expressed by Joseph Bayden American v president during his visit to Iraq in July, 2010 and meeting with some political leaders separately in Baghdad, was that USA would be happy to see good alliance between Allawi and al-Maliki as well in forming the government ⁽²⁾. This solution is to meet Sunni parties’ aspirations, which are for the first time after Saddam rule can come back to fair share participation in ruling the country. Again Al Maliki Alliance and Al Maliki himself, who was a prime Minister during the last 4 years, is trusted by Americans. And the Americans think he can do a good job and become an important balancing part of the next government.

If to describe oppositions between Allawi and al-Maliki groups, the latest consider Allawi coalition policy and his secular attitude too much oriented on all-Arabic region values. All-Maliki would prefer more “pro-Iraqi” policy and ideology, different from “general Arabic attitude”. However, Allawi’s ideas look more prospective, since no one can imagine Iraq future (similar like its past) being separated from all Arabic world.

The initiative on cabinet forming would very likely go to Allawi(91 ch) or al-Maliki (89 ch) Also maybe a person from outside the both coalitions or from probably from the same. coalitions but not Dr. Allawi or Mr. Al Malki . Also possible the PM will be from al Hakem group (INA). Everything depends

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on the coalitions building between all sides, including Iraqi bloc + Law bloc + the Kurdish bloc / or Iraqi + INA + Kurdish / or all the 4 group in one coalitional government – mostly like the previous government was. Then the Kurdish forces will go with the biggest governmental coalition.

Mr. Jamal Al Batekh from Al Iraqiya said to the Middle East newspaper on 12 August 2010 “The New prime Minister must be acceptable by the Iraqi people inside Iraq, International community and also be a friend to the USA”.⁽³⁾

There are many reasons which will put a strong pressure on the political Iraq leaders to be in rush to establish the new government. It can be the Iraqi people pressure, the International community and regional pressure and, finally, the USA which will start withdrawing their military forces from Iraq (first group of 50000 soldiers will leave very soon).

Same Shorresh – Iraqi parliament member from the Democratic Kurdish party said to the Iraqi voice radio:

“Now some groups including the Kurdish are speaking about limiting the prime Minister authority and passing some of his authority to his deputies, Security Council and the president”.⁽⁴⁾

On the other hand Christopher Hel, the ex- American Ambassador in Iraq who is supposed to leave his duty in Iraq soon,“ keeps optimistic on the Iraqi political situation. He said in an interview with NPR American radio station that a new Iraq government will be established soon. In his view, debates and disputes between politicians reflect a normal situation, which can happen in any democratic country when only a small gap (number of votes) separates winning party from other political groups’.⁽⁵⁾

General tasks

Any party taking control of the Iraqi government will face complicated tasks. First, to deal with historical heritage of Iran (1980-1988) and Gulf (1990-1991) wars. Second, to get rid of limitations on oil exports, imposed on Iraq by the UN.(resolutions 661 and 778 released under UN Statute Chapter 7). This is one of the most important problems for Iraq as the OPEK second member in oil reserves. The third, restructuring the Iraqi army operational abilities before the final American troops withdrawal. The forth is implementation of the current budget of USD 72, 4 bln, with priorities in fighting unemployment and restoring national system of energy supply. And, finally, regaining international partner’s credence in oil fields exploiting, with the goal to advance daily oil products exports from 2, 5 to 12 million barrels in the next 6-10 years.

The most sensitive position – is possible organizing the population census (inventory) and referendum in the oil reserves richest area of Kirkuk under the Article 140 of Constitution.. If this referendum would transfer this territory under Kurdish control, a division of the country could be provoked.

Both Allawi and al-Maliki speak about further democratization of Iraq with the purpose to transform the country in a democratic society pattern in the Middle East. However, as “the_clash of civilizations” theory de Samuel Hantington implies, “modernization for the Islamic world countries is not equal to westernization.”⁽⁶⁾

Mahmmud Osman, the Iraqi Parliament member (*Kurdish Coalition*) had commented in an interview on *Al Baghdadia* T.V channel (*the Middle-* aired in August 2010); if *Al Iraqiya Bloc* had been asked directly after the announcement of the election results to establish and form the new government coalition, as the dominant and winning party which had secured the majority of votes- it would have prevented the current political unrest in Iraq.⁽⁷⁾

Dr. Iyad Allwi *- ex Iraqi prime Minister and the leader of *Al Iraqiya Bloc* stated in an interview on *Al Belade T.V* channel (a special interview aired on August 14th 2010)stated that: “the Iraqi constitution is very clear in this situation and *Al Iraqiya Bloc* have the right to select and establish the new Iraqi government .Dr. Allawi Also added that the Iraqi High Court doesn’t have the authority to contest the new constitution. Also -he stated -there is very important evidence that defines the role of the ruling president to assert the right of the winning party to establish the new government; which had been the case in the past two elections”⁽⁸⁾

Finally its very clear there is a real and a dangerous political obstacle in Iraq since the last election result have been appeared and the situation is coming more complicated specially every party is saying I have the right to select the new government, in the same time the people inside Iraq is coming very upset and the security situation are very sensitive specially the USA are withdrawing their troops from Iraq and they just kept 50000 soldiers inside Iraq according to the Iraqi – American convention, Probably in this situation without the USA influence and help particularly in this time as a friend to the Iraq government and the political parties inside Iraq this obstacle will take more time to be solve and the American will lose all what they have been achieved in Iraq during the last few years and this is the reason which lead the new American Ambassador to Baghdad Mr. James Jeffery who arrived to Baghdad just on the 17 August to be in rush to meet all the political leaders parties in Iraq specially there are another parts are worry towards the Iraqi case (Syria . K.S.A. Turkey) and also Iran.

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1. Article published on Ur radiostation under the title “The process of new Iraqi government establishing is not clear and under an external and internal pressure”[www.uragency.net/ index.php?aa=newsid22=10341](http://www.uragency.net/index.php?aa=newsid22=10341) on 12-8-2010).
 2. Member in Al Iraqiya Bloc, Iraqiya are not happy because the American support to Al Malike, 14 August, 2010
<http://www.ipairaq.com/index.php?name=inner&t=politics&id=28955>
 3. Al Batekh, Jamal Middle East newspaper ,12 August 2010
(www.aawsat.com – edition No 11580)
 4. Shorresh, Same –(Radio Nawa= [http://radionawa.com/ar/news detailsn.aspx?id=28257&linked=15](http://radionawa.com/ar/news/detailsn.aspx?id=28257&linked=15)
 5. Hel, Christopher, the ex- American Ambassador in Iraq, new Iraq government will be established soon, an interview with NPR American radio station (published by al Nakhil Iraqi news 13, August.2010
<http://www.nakhilnews.com> (pages/ news.phpnid=1333.)
 6. Hantington, Samuel P, clash of civilizations, “modernization for the Islamic world countries is not equal to westernization, 1996
<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/48950/samuel-p-huntington/the-clash-of-civilizations>.
 7. Osman, Mahmmod, interview on Al Baghdadia T.V channel (the Middle- aired in August 2010)
- * Iyad Allawi was born in Baghdad in 1944, received a Medical education in Baghdad University, 1978 – Was attacked by Saddam Hussein intelligence service in England, survived.
In 1989 formed an opposition group in London.
He came back to Iraq on July 13, 2003. Prime Minister of transitional government for 280 days in 2004-2005, the time when new Constitution was adopted. His major achievement in the office – rebuilding Iraq international relations, starting a real reconciliation, rebuilding the new Iraqi army (started from 500 soldiers in Baghdad airport), increasing the salaries and asking the International community to cancel the Iraqi debt (more than 100 bln USD
One of the most important initiatives by Allawi – the plan of Iraqi emigrants return to the country.
8. Dr. Allawi. Iyad- ex Iraqi prime Minister and the leader of Al Iraqiya Bloc stated in an interview on Al Belade T.V channel (a special interview aired, August 14th, 2010)
[http:// wifaq.com/videofiles_arb.asp?titleID=64](http://wifaq.com/videofiles_arb.asp?titleID=64)