

In terms of the civil war question, I would simply say that there has been a rise in sectarian violence, but that in itself does not constitute a civil war, that what you really can see when you look at the individual developments in Iraq over the last few months, again, this country is trying to pull itself together. You see its leadership is trying to come together and find tangible ways, rhetorical ways, symbolic ways of underscoring the importance of maintaining Iraq at the expense of empowering different sectarian groups.

There's a poll, which I don't have in front of me right now, but that I would recommend to you from the International Republican Institute that just came out a couple of days ago. And it's from June, so it's just -- it's within the last month or so. And they asked the question about, do you support breaking up Iraq into different parts along sectarian lines? And I'm sorry I don't have it in front of me to give you the exact amount, but it was over 70 percent of Iraqis really rejected that idea.

So again, I think there is a lot to point to the fact that -- not trying to diminish the reality that there is a real problem with sectarianism, that sectarian violence in Baghdad is on the rise, and that it is one of the most serious problems that this government has to deal with, but at the same time, that this government is still acting as a national government, it still has members at the most senior levels working to create an agenda that is not a sectarian agenda, and one that will advance the interests of the country as a whole.

Q Thanks.

Q Hi, you may have answered this question as far as you can in the previous answer, but if I could just press you a little bit more on the security situation.

You said that the tactical decisions are largely going to be made by General Casey and the security ministers in Baghdad. I guess I'd sort of raise the question of what's left. If they're going to make decisions on troops and where they're going and how many, other than this initiative about going after leaders, what is left for the two of them to talk about with a new strategy?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I think they can talk about -- I guess there's not a lot more I can say on this -- but they can talk about the developments of the Iraqi security forces, how that's going, if the emphasis or the emphases are in the right place. They can talk about the Ministry of Interior, which in fact the Prime Minister has acknowledged is in need of reform. They can talk about -- there's a range of security issues that don't require tactical shifts, putting troops here or there. They can talk about operational concepts -- what's the operational concept behind what they're doing in Baghdad versus what they're doing in Ramadi versus what's happening in Basra.

And let me just underscore what we all take to be a given, is that any time there's a situation like the one in Baghdad, doesn't just have a security solution. It's both a security and a political and to some extent an economic solution, but heavy on the security and the political.

So I think the President will be also looking to Maliki very much, what is being done by Iraq's leaders to really rally people to push back against sectarianism, and to do -- what kind of leadership is being exerted to get that message out.