Foresight Case Study September 2021.

Study: Foresight, the Automated Subject Matter Expert (ASME) predicts the results of the upcoming Iraqi Parliamentary Elections

Narrative - Ambassador Michael Gfoeller (ret.), the Subject Matter Expert who ran these scenarios with Foresight, is a member of the board at Potentia Analytics and is an independent consultant on international politics and security matters who served as Senior Political Advisor to General Petraeus, then commander of U.S. Central Command.

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Here are the tentative results for the outcome of the upcoming Iraqi parliamentary elections, scheduled for October 10. I have reformulated the analytical matrix to reflect comprehensive discussions with several experts on Iraqi politics.

The principal result of my analysis is that the next Iraqi parliament will be extremely fragmented. No individual party will occupy even 40 seats. As in past elections, the only way to form a government will be through the construction of unwieldy coalitions.

Another key result is the rise of independent deputies. As a result of the creation of 83 electoral districts in Iraq for this election, a total of 37 independent deputies will enter the new parliament. They will account for 11 percent of the new parliament. Together with the deputies from the smaller parties, they will number 66, or 20 percent of the new parliament.

If these two rather inchoate forces can be formed into a block of some sort, they could exert an important degree of influence in the new legislature. It is to be anticipated that the various other factions will seek to recruit the independents and small parties to bolster their own strength. This will probably mean that local pragmatic issues will play a larger role in the deliberations of the new legislature than heretofore.

Although there probably will be no big winners in the upcoming parliamentary elections, according to the algorithm, there will be relative winners and losers. The two main Kurdish parties will be winners. The KDP, which received 28 seats in 2018, will see its total rise to 33, while the number of seats held by the PUK will increase from 18 to 22. These results are very "stubborn" in the sense that the algorithm consistently predicts electoral success for the Kurdish parties, under a broad range of starting assumptions.

The principal losers, on the other hand, will be the Sadrists and the PMF/Fatah. The Sadrists will see their total number of seats fall from 54 to 37. The PMF will see its block shrink from 48 seats to just 28.

With respect to the formation of potential governing coalitions, it would be possible for a coalition containing no Shi'ite parties to form in the next parliament, at least in principle. If they can unite their forces, the Kurdish block, with 55 seats, could play the role of king maker. According to the algorithm, a coalition composed of the Kurds, the independent deputies and the small parties, Allawi, and the Khanjar and Taqaddum factions could form a comfortable majority. A Shi'ite-led alliance composed of the Sadrists, the PMF, Abadi, Maliki, and Hakim could assemble only 135 seats. Hence a Shi'ite-led ruling coalition probably would be possible only with strong Kurdish support.

The Foresight algorithm predicts a large increase in the number of seats held by the main Sunni blocks. I found it difficult to collect accurate information about the Sunnis, but this result still seems generally credible. It, too, is "stubborn," in the sense that it persists across the multiple scenarios with which I experimented.

The results detailed in this analysis assume that any efforts at corrupt campaign practices on the part of the principal Iraqi political parties will cancel each other out in net terms. Should a particular party or an outside actor succeed in manipulating the election in its favor through massive fraud, the true results of the voting would be irretrievably distorted.

I have attached the analytical matrix and graphs below.

Prediction of Results:

	Projected Seat Count	2018 Election
KDP	33	25
PUK	22	18
Sadr	37	54
PMF	28	48
Allawi	22	21
Small Parties	29	64
Independents	37	—
Abadi	26	42
Maliki	22	25
Hakim	22	19

Khanjar/Sunnis   22   7

Taqaddum/Sunnis   28   7

Actor Name	Position	Power	Importance	
Sadr	54	40	100	✖
KDP	25	30	100	✖
Abadi	42	10	100	✖
Maliki	25	15	100	✖
PUK	18	25	100	✖
Hakim	19	10	100	✖
Small Parties	64	10	100	✖
Khanjar/Nujaifi	21	15	100	✖
Allawi	10	10	100	✖

Add Study Actors ✚   Close   Save Simulation

Figure 1- Political leader, position, power, importance

Position

Actor Name	Position		Power		Importance		
Maliki	25	🔗	15	🔗	100	🔗	✖
PUK	18	🔗	25	🔗	100	🔗	✖
Hakim	19	🔗	10	🔗	100	🔗	✖
Small Parties	64	🔗	10	🔗	100	🔗	✖
Khanjar/Nujaifi	21	🔗	15	🔗	100	🔗	✖
Allawi	10	🔗	10	🔗	100	🔗	✖
PMF	48	🔗	40	🔗	100	🔗	✖
Taqaddum/Sunnis	50	🔗	20	🔗	100	🔗	✖
Independents	82	🔗	10	🔗	100	🔗	✖

Add Study Actors ✚   Close   Save Simulation

Figure 2- political leader, position, power, importance
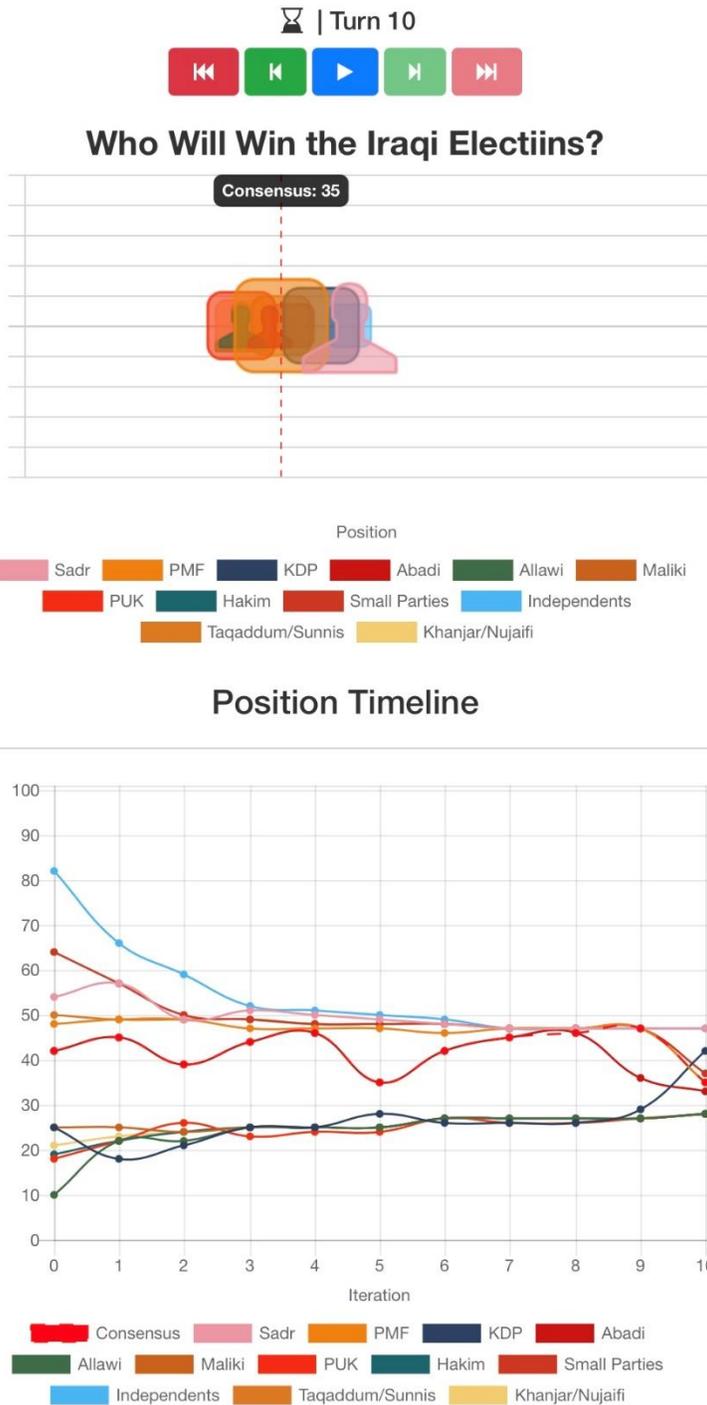
Figure 3 - position consensus 35 and timeline

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Amb. Michael Gfoeller (ret.) is an independent consultant on international politics and security matters.

He served for 26 years (1984 to 2010) as a US Foreign Service Officer. His career included service in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia; Manama, Bahrain; Iraq; Moscow, Russia; Yerevan, Armenia; Chisinau, Moldova; Warsaw, Poland; and Brussels, Belgium. From 2004 to 2008, he served as Deputy Chief of Mission and Charge' d'Affaires at the US Embassy in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

He served for two years (2008-2010) as the Senior Political Advisor to General David Petraeus, then Commander, US Central Command. He retired from the State Department with the rank of Ambassador. His foreign languages include Arabic, Russian, French, and German.

Amb. Gfoeller is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, the Cosmos Club, the Union League Club of New York, and a Board Member of Potentia Analytics. He is also a Founding Partner of Arabia Analytica, LLC.

Additional links related to Ambassador Michael Gfoeller (Ret.):
- https://mepc.org/us-commitments-gulf-arab-states
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CtiGCGY1bb0
- https://ncusar.org/blog/2020/09/vision-or-mirage-book-discussion/
- https://gulfif.org/event/upcoming-online-panel/

ABOUT Foresight™: https://www.foresightai.ai

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