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‘Serious Rifts’ Again Reported in Iraqi Shi’ite Alliance

By Jason Ditz

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Having [announced a formal agreement to merge over a month and a half ago](#), the rifts between the two major Shi’ite blocs, the State of Law and the Iraqi National Alliance (INA) are growing wider all the time. The tensions are nothing new but despite State of Law officials downplaying them, the situation seems to be getting worse, not better.



The two sides [seem primarily to be unable to agree on a prime minister](#), with State of Law openly ruling out anyone not named Nouri al-Maliki and the Sadrists, the INA's largest faction, seemingly unwilling to give on this point without major concessions on some other issues, including a blanket release of Sadr bloc prisoners.

In fact the fait accompli Shi'ite government seems to be anything but at this point, with the secularist Iraqiya bloc making good progress negotiating with the Kurdistan Alliance, and also [holding talks with the Sadrists](#), possibly making them a better offer than Maliki, who was responsible for jailing so many of their group, ever could.

Three and a half months after the March 7 election, everything we thought we knew about the process so far seems to be unraveling, with Iraqiya claiming victory then being apparently ruled out of the equation at least twice, only to find themselves once again a possible head of a government coalition.

At some point in the next few weeks the Iraqi parliament will have to vote on a new president, and that new president will have to tap one party or another to take the first crack at forming a government. Beyond that, it's anyone's guess, and it remains a distinct possibility that there is more negotiating going forward than there has been so far, and we could still be speculating in the fall.