

RELEASE IN FULL

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**From:** Abedin, Huma <AbedinH@state.gov>  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 3, 2011 5:26 PM  
**To:** H  
**Subject:** Fw: Sadr says to resist any U.S. presence in Iraq (Reuters)

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**From:** OpsNewsTicker  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 03, 2011 05:01 PM  
**To:** NEWS-Mahogany  
**Cc:** SES-O  
**Subject:** Sadr says to resist any U.S. presence in Iraq (Reuters)

BAGHDAD (Reuters) - Anti-U.S. Shi'ite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr said on Thursday he would resist any American presence in Iraq, including a civilian one, beyond year-end when all U.S. forces depart nearly nine years after the invasion that toppled Saddam Hussein.

Sadr, whose Mehdi Army militia once battled U.S. and Iraqi troops, has opposed any U.S. military footprint and his bloc is a key part of Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki's fragile coalition.

"We do not accept any kind of U.S. presence in Iraq, whether it is military or not," Sadr said in an interview aired on al-Arabiya television.

"If they stay in Iraq, through a military or non-military (presence) ... we will consider them an occupation and we will resist them whatever the price will be. Even a civilian presence, we reject it," the cleric said.

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