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Back in the UK [1]

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Coming back from Iraq?s Autonomous Region of Kurdistan to the UK on election day was certainly a shock. Set against the challenges faced by the Kurds after so many decades of real suffering, the squabbling between Nick and Dave and Gordon seemed so?..trivial.

This seemed especially so since the UK election campaign was notable for its deliberate avoidance of that big elephant in the room ? the government?s horrific finances. There really is a big problem but the three went out of their way to not scare the children by mentioning it other than in the most vacuous and tentative way.

Somehow, the whole country ? from the politicians to the chattering classes to the voters themselves ? just seemed oblivious to what?s coming down the pike, even with all the vivid images from Greece to remind them of what?s at stake. The final result from the polls perfectly reflected that drift.

Back in Iraq, they?ve just completed a recount of ballots cast in the Baghdad area in the general election last March, confirming results from the original tally. That means forming a government can go ahead after ongoing negotiations between the various parties since the election. That process makes the Nick?n?Dave?n?Gordon show look like a piece of cake.

It?s going to be messy in Iraq, what with Shiites and Sunnis and secularists and Kurds, all in more than one guise in a heady cocktail of wildly competing interests. Somehow, though, they seem more deserving of our best wishes than that oblivious lot in Westminster. At least the Iraqis have a valid excuse.

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