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THE STATUS OF THE WAR AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN IRAQ

JOINT HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

MEETING JOINTLY WITH

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

[Serial No. 110–150]

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ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS

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THE STATUS OF THE WAR AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN IRAQ

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES, MEETING JOINTLY WITH THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS, *Washington, DC, Monday, September 10, 2007*

The committees met, pursuant to call, at 12:33 p.m., in room 345, Cannon House Office Building, Hon. Ike Skelton (chairman of the Committee on Armed Services) presiding.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. IKE SKELTON, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM MISSOURI, CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

The CHAIRMAN. Ladies and gentlemen, the hearing will come to order. I think there may be a seating problem. I hope the staff can get that squared away in the next.

[Disturbance in hearing room.]

The CHAIRMAN. We are going to have no disturbances in this room, and those that disturb are immediately asked to be escorted out. Do that right now. Out they go.

We need to make a couple housekeeping announcements. The acoustics are bad in this room, and we will ask to have the audience as quiet as possible because it is difficult to understand the questions and the answers from our witnesses. As I mentioned before, no disturbances will be tolerated, and we mean that. Remind Members to turn their cell phones off, keep their BlackBerrys below the desk, because they interfere with microphones.

We will adhere strictly to the five-minute rule, with the exception of the chairmen and ranking members, which is customary. Also Members should be advised that at 2:25 we will have a five-minute break for the witnesses, and again at 4:25 a five-minute break. And the Members should also know that if it is necessary—I doubt if it will be—but if it is necessary to go into a classified session later, we have arranged room 2118, the Rayburn room, for this purpose. However, as I said, I do not expect that.

So welcome to the joint meeting of the House Armed Services Committee and the House Foreign Affairs Committee for what may be the most important hearing of the year. It is our pleasure to welcome two of America's finest, General David Petraeus and Ambassador Ryan Crocker.

And I would like to thank each of you for appearing before us today. It is wonderful to see you both again.

And let me remind Members that the testimony we will be receiving reflects the best judgment of these two leaders. And later this week the Congress will receive the Presidential report required

by the 2007 supplemental appropriations bill, which will reflect the reports of our two witnesses today. This is their first appearance, public appearance, regarding the report.

I will start by commending all those troops, Foreign Service officers who serve under our witnesses, and their mission is most challenging. And they and their families have sacrificed tremendously and have served valiantly. We know that where there has been progress on the ground, it is due to their heroic efforts.

Today it is a critical moment. This Congress and the Nation are divided on the pace with which the United States should turn over responsibility to the Iraqis, but every Member here desires that we complete our military involvement in Iraq in a way that best preserves the national security of our country.

I think it is where we must begin by considering the overall security of this Nation. It is our responsibility here in Congress under the Constitution to ensure that the United States military can deter and, if needed, prevail anywhere our interests are threatened. Iraq is an important piece of that overall equation, but it is only a piece. There are very real trade-offs when we send 160,000 of our men and women in uniform to Iraq. Those troops in Iraq are not available for other missions. They are not available to go into Afghanistan to pursue Osama bin Laden and other al Qaeda leaders who ordered an attack on us one day short of six years ago. These troops and their depleted equipment are also not easily available to respond to a new conflict that might emerge.

It is the issue of readiness. My colleagues have heard me say this before, but in my 30 years in Congress, we have been involved in 12 military contingencies, some of them major in scope, almost all unexpected. Right now, with so many troops in Iraq, I think our response to an unexpected threat would come at a devastating cost. Our troops have become outstanding at counterinsurgencies, but we need them prepared for the full spectrum of combat. This is a lesson to be learned again and again.

In 1921, in his book, *America's Duty,* General Leonard Wood addressed a similar situation from his day by saying, the Spanish War gave little training, as did the Philippine insurrection. Campaigns of this kind are of limited value as a preparation for war with an organized, prepared power.

Wars stress armies. We should make sure that the strain on our force is undertaken consciously, and that this war is vital to our national security. We must be sure, if we talk about continuing the effort, that Iraq is the war worth the risk of breaking our Army and being unable to deal with other risks to our Nation. That is the strategic context in which I consider the situation in Iraq today.

Prominent for me also is how we have gotten to where we are in Iraq. We remember the discussion of weapons of mass destruction, the "Mission Accomplished" sign, General Garner's short tenure. We recall Paul Bremer, the long debate over the summer of 2004 about whether or not there was an insurgency, and then the grudging admission from the then-Secretary of Defense that fall that, yes, there was, in fact, a growing insurgency. We recall the first and second battles of Fallujah, and the idea that we could quickly train the Iraqi Security Forces to replace us.

We should remember this history as we evaluate the current status of our efforts in Iraq. The surge is just the latest in a long line of operations. It frankly looks as if there has been tactical progress in the security area, but we should at this point temper any enthusiasm with the caveat that this is Iraq, and nothing has been easy there.

In a poll of Iraqis released this morning, sponsored by ABC News, the BBC, and the Japanese broadcaster NHK, we learned that at least 65 percent of Iraqis say the surge is not working, and 72 percent say the U.S. presence is making Iraqis' security worse. This is troublesome. Our valiant troops are improving security in the areas where they are deployed. This makes good sense. They are the best. So of course things improve when we deploy more of them. Some called for more forces to be deployed immediately after the invasion, which just might have avoided a lot of the current troubles had we done so.

One of the great ironies of this hearing today is General Petraeus, who sits here before us, is almost certainly the right man for the job in Iraq, but he is the right person 3 years too late and 250,000 troops short. If we had your vision and approach, General, early on, we might not have gotten to the point where our troops are caught in the midst of brutal sectarian fighting, without an Iraqi Government bridging the political divides that drive the violence.

The surge was intended to provide breathing space, breathing space for the Iraqis to bridge sectarian divides with real political compromises. But while our troops are holding back the opposing team to let them make a touchdown, the Iraqis haven't even picked up the ball. The President's July report and the Government Accountability Office (GAO) report of a few days ago shared the lack of progress on individual benchmarks, and no one can make the case that the Iraqi Government has made great strides.

The witnesses must tell us why we should continue sending our young men and women to fight and die if the Iraqis won't make the tough sacrifices leading to reconciliation. What is the likelihood that things will change dramatically? Will there be political progress in the near term? Are we merely beating a dead horse?

The Commission on the Iraq Security Forces, chaired by retired General Jim Jones, and which my committee heard from just the other day, puts it well. He said, "At the end of the day, however, the future of Iraq hinges on the ability of the Iraqi people and the government to begin the process of achieving national reconciliation and to ending the sectarian violence. For the time being, all progress seems to flow from the most pressing requirement."

These are powerful words, and it is a powerful truth, but the disappointing part is that the Iraqis have not stepped up to the challenge. We know there have been local political gains, and in Anbar Province the Marines have done impressive work helping to turn local sheiks and tribal leaders against al Qaeda in that country.

It may well be that such local tactical gains may set the stage for the political partition of Iraq. This, of course, will carry with it additional problems. Seeing any progress requires reconciliation at the national level. Does anyone think that a national government run by the sectarian Shiite and Kurdish leaders will in the long

run provide funds and arms to former Sunni insurgents who they suspect still wish to overthrow them? And how long will the Sunnis wait quietly to be given assurances about revenue and power sharing?

I hope, General Petraeus, and I hope, Ambassador Crocker, that you can persuade us that there is a substantial reason to believe that Iraq will turn around in the near future. And you have the burden of answering these fundamental questions to those of us who have been watching Iraq for years. And every promising development so far has not turned out to be a solution for which we had hoped.

Columnist Tom Friedman said something wise in his column not long ago when he asked, "What will convey to you that the surge is working and worth sustaining?" His answer was, "If I saw Iraq's Shiite, Kurdish, and Sunni leaders stepping forward, declaring their willingness to work out their differences by a set deadline, and publicly asking us to stay until they do."

I think Mr. Friedman had a point, and one we need to keep in mind while we consider where we go from here in Iraq. Iraq leaders have not done this. And sadly, I don't think there is likelihood that they will in the future.

I will call on Chairman Lantos, Ranking Member Hunter, Ranking Member Ros-Lehtinen, and then we will proceed under the five-minute rule. We will appreciate everyone's cooperation in that regard.

Chairman Lantos.

STATEMENT OF HON. TOM LANTOS, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM CALIFORNIA, CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. LANTOS. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. And on behalf of all the members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, I want to extend a most cordial welcome to our two distinguished witnesses.

Two of our Nation's most capable public servants have come before us today to assess the situation in Iraq. General Petraeus, Ambassador Crocker, every single one of us wants you to succeed in your efforts to the maximum possible extent. We admire the heroism and sacrifice of our men and women in uniform, and the dedication of our diplomatic corps in Iraq, and we fully understand the terrible burden on their families.

Our witnesses have been sent here this morning to restore credibility to a discredited policy. We and the American people already know that the situation in Iraq is grim, and the growing majority of this Congress and of the American people want our troops out.

In October of 2003, I flew in a helicopter with you, General Petraeus, over northern Iraq around Mosul. As we passed over the countryside, you pointed out to me several ammunition dumps that had once belonged to the army of Saddam Hussein. I don't have enough troops to guard these places, you said. Someday this might come back to haunt us.

Well, General Petraeus, you saw it coming. Those unguarded ammo dumps became the arsenals of insurgency. Those weapons have been turned against us. How very typical of this war. The Ad-

ministration's myopic policies in Iraq have created a fiasco. Is it any wonder that on the subject of Iraq more and more Americans have little confidence in this Administration? We cannot take any of this Administration's assertions on Iraq at face value anymore, and no amount of charts or statistics will improve its credibility.

This is not a knock on you, General Petraeus, or on you, Ambassador Crocker, but the fact remains, gentlemen, that the Administration has sent you here today to convince the members of these two committees and the Congress that victory is at hand. With all due respect to you, I must say I don't buy it, and neither does the independent General Accountability Office or the Commission headed by General Jones. Both recently issued deeply disturbing and pessimistic reports.

The current escalation in our military presence in Iraq may have produced some technical successes, but strategically the escalation has failed. It was intended to buy time for Prime Minister Maliki and the other Iraqi political leaders to find ways to move toward the one thing that may end this terrible civil conflict, and that, of course, is a political settlement.

As best we can see, that time has been utterly squandered. Prime Minister Maliki has not shown the slightest inclination to move in the direction of compromise. Instead of working to build national institutions, a truly Iraqi Army, a competent bureaucracy, and nonsectarian police force, Maliki has moved in the opposite direction. The so-called unity accord announced with such fanfare a couple of weeks ago is just another in a long list of empty promises. Instead of acting as a leader for Iraq as a whole, Maliki has functioned as the front man for Shiite partisans, and he has presided over a Shiite coalition that includes some of the most notorious militias, death squads, and sectarian thugs in Iraq. This is not what the American people had in mind. And when Mr. Maliki states, as he recently did, that if the Americans leave, he can find, quote, new friends, we are reminded most forcefully of his and his party's intimate ties to Iran.

In his recent visit to Anbar Province, the President made much of our cooperation in the fight against al Qaeda with Sunni tribal militias. This alliance may in the short run be a positive development, but it also raises some serious and profound questions. Anbar, of course, includes just five percent of the population of Iraq; an important five percent, but still only five. What is more, by arming, training, and funding the Sunni militias in that province, we are working against our own strategy of building national Iraqi institutions.

America should not be in the business of arming, training, and funding both sides of a religious civil war in Iraq. Did the Administration learn nothing from our country's actions in Afghanistan two decades ago when, by supporting Islamic militants against the Soviet Union, we helped pave the way for the rise of the Taliban? Why are we now repeating the shortsighted patterns of the past?

In Iraq today we are wrecking our military, forcing their families to suffer needlessly, sacrificing the lives of our brave young men and women in uniform. And the enormous financial cost of this war is limiting our ability to address our global security needs, as well as pressing domestic problems such as health care, crumbling in-

frastructure, and public education. The costs of this war in Iraq will be passed along to our grandchildren and beyond.

In the last few days, General Petraeus, media have reported that you are prepared to support a slow drawdown of our forces in Iraq, beginning with a brigade or two perhaps at the end of this year. This clearly is nowhere near enough. We need to send Maliki's government a strong message, loud and clear. Removing a brigade is nothing but a political whisper, and it is unacceptable to the American people and to the majority of the Congress.

As long as American troops are doing the heavy lifting in Iraq, there is no reason, none at all, for the Iraqis themselves to step up. Military progress without political progress is meaningless. It is their country, and it is their turn. Prime Minister Maliki and the Iraqi politicians need to know that the free ride is over, and that American troops will not be party to their civil war.

The situation in Iraq cries out for a dramatic change of course. We need to get out of Iraq for that country's sake and for our own. It is time to go, and to go now.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Lantos can be found in the Appendix on page 156.]

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman.

The gentleman from California, Mr. Hunter.

STATEMENT OF HON. DUNCAN HUNTER, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM CALIFORNIA, RANKING MEMBER, COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mr. HUNTER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask unanimous consent to put my written statement into the record.

The CHAIRMAN. Without objection.

Mr. HUNTER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

You know, Mr. Chairman, we generally pass the threshold question when we have witnesses appearing before us, that threshold question being the credibility and the credentials of the witnesses. But I think it would be interesting to General Petraeus to know, and perhaps he does know, and Ambassador Crocker to some degree, that the last week or so has been spent attacking your credibility, with major attacks here in the United States, some of them emanating from right here, saying essentially that your testimony today is going to be, and I quote my friend from California Mr. Lantos, not your testimony, but testimony which is written by, quote, political operatives.

In fact, I know that is not the case. I haven't reviewed your testimony, but I know this: Duty, honor, country; those are the principles by which our great officers in the United States Army and the other services derive their careers and base their careers on. We have asked you for an independent assessment, and frankly, Mr. Chairman, the idea that we have spent the last week prepping the battlefield by attacking the credibility of the messenger is something that I think goes against the tradition of this great House. And the last thing that I saw that particularly irritated me was a massive full page ad in I think it was the *New York Times* stating that General Petraeus is, in fact, "General Betray Us." That is MoveOn.Org.

Mr. Chairman, one of the great assets of this country is the professionalism and the capability and the integrity of the people who lead our Armed Forces. General Petraeus is coming back not just as a guy who is going to give us his take on the Iraq situation, but as the leader of more than 160,000 American personnel in uniform in Iraq, and they are not only watching his testimony, but they are also watching our testimony. They are watching how we treat him. They are watching this Congress to see if we give credibility to what people in uniform say. And so, Mr. Chairman, I think it is an outrage that we spent the last week prepping the ground, bashing the credibility of a general officer whose trademark is integrity, who was unanimously supported by the U.S. Senate for his position—and unanimity in the U.S. Senate is almost a majority these days; and also Mr. Crocker, who brings an outstanding, unblemished record in the United States State Department to this very difficult position.

Now, you know, I haven't read the General Petraeus's report, but I do know some of the facts. I know the fact that we had 1,350 attacks in Anbar Province last October; that that is down by 80 percent. Now, my friend Mr. Lantos has pointed out that Anbar is about 5 percent of the population. I say to my friend that is true, but at times in this war it has been 50 percent of the American casualties, and therefore, what happens in Anbar Province is of importance to Americans, not just to the general public, but to the mothers and fathers and to the service people themselves who serve in that very difficult theater.

Now, in my estimation the standup of the Iraqi military is a key to a stabilized Iraq, and that means those 131 battalions that we have trained and equipped. And for those who said that we could have kept Saddam Hussein's army in place, and that was somehow a major blunder, I am reminded that Saddam Hussein's army had 11,000 Sunni generals. What are you going to do with an army with 11,000 Sunni generals, literally squads of generals, many of whom have made their careers beating up on a Shiite population, when that Army is supposed to be the honest broker that brings reconciliation to the communities in Iraq?

And you know something? If you look at the leadership of the Iraqi Army now as shaped by General Petraeus and his subordinates, you now see Shiites in leadership positions, you see Sunnis in leadership positions, you see Kurds in leadership positions. You see a military which is starting to emerge as a professional force. And for those who say that we could have simply adopted Saddam Hussein's army, and that would have been, quote, the smooth road, there is absolutely no precedent for that.

Mr. Chairman, I have been here before. I was here when the left in this body said that if we stood up to the Russians in Central Europe, we would bring on another war, that President Ronald Reagan was going to bring on World War Three. Instead we held tough, we stood tough, and we brought down the Berlin wall. And I was here when in Central America when we had the Communists supplying the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN), and we put a small protection around that fragile government, and we allowed them to have free and fair elections. I remember people in this body saying that would be our next Vietnam, we would be

bogged down. We hung tough. We provided that shield. And today there is El Salvadorans standing with American forces in Iraq.

Now, the key to having a stabilized Iraq which is a friend, not an enemy of the United States, which will not be a state sponsor of terrorism for the next 5 to 10 to 15 to 20 years, in my estimation is a successful hand-off of the security apparatus from American forces to the Iraqi Armed Forces, and that requires one thing. It requires reliability, having a reliable Iraqi force. And that is manifest in those 131 battalions that are now maturing. And the idea that this Congress is going to arbitrarily overlay a requirement for a reduction in America's forces when we are moving toward a maturing of the Iraqi forces and a successful hand-off which will be a victory for the United States I think should not be supported by this body.

So, Mr. Chairman, let's lead off this hearing with this stipulation, that the gentlemen who are appearing before us, and particularly General Petraeus, whose credibility has been attacked all week long by the left in this country, represents the very best in military tradition; that he is going to testify with an independent, candid view; and he is going to give us the one thing we ask of all of our military officers, and that is a candid, independent assessment, given with integrity, in the same tradition of MacArthur, and Eisenhower, and Schwarzkopf.

I look forward to this hearing, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank the gentleman.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Hunter can be found in the Appendix on page 91.]

The CHAIRMAN. Let it be understood that the capability, the integrity, the intelligence, and the wisdom of our two witnesses requires nothing but admiration from me and those of us that are about to receive their testimony. I have had a long friendship with General Petraeus, and when a few moments ago in my opening statement I said he is one of the best, he is. We expect their best judgment, and we will receive it.

Ms. Ros-Lehtinen.

STATEMENT OF HON. ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM FLORIDA, RANKING MEMBER, COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Gentlemen, for your leadership and for the dedication of all who serve with you, our Nation is eternally grateful. As the wife of a Vietnam veteran who was severely wounded in combat, I understand the sacrifices that you and all of our men and women defending our Nation's security interests in Iraq and beyond have made and continue to make on a daily basis.

I experienced the anxiety of having one's children in harm's way, as my stepson Douglas and daughter-in-law Lindsay, both Marine captains, served in Iraq, and now Lindsay continues to serve in Afghanistan. I take comfort listening to them defend the importance of our mission in Iraq, for our broader regional interests and strategic priorities, including our efforts to protect our homeland. They understand what is at stake, and they remind me that we cannot yield the victory to the radical Islamists.

Their words resonate so profoundly today, on the eve of the sixth anniversary of the horrific events of September 11th. Douglas and Lindsay were in Iraq during the historic elections and described the sight of Iraqi families lining up to vote for the first time, bringing their children as witnesses, despite the al Qaeda threats that the streets would run red with the blood of anyone who voted. They said it was nothing less than awe-inspiring. They will never forget that sight. And they ask Congress to never forget it either. They believe that those Iraqi voters deserve our continued assistance. They believe the Iraqis are worth it. And I do as well. General Petraeus, Ambassador Crocker, do you think so as well?

It is also significant that on the eve of this grim anniversary, we would be holding a hearing highlighting the contrast between those of us who are inspired by this new greatest generation and believe that we must confront and defeat al Qaeda and other jihadists on the Iraqi battlefield, and those of us who believe that we should simply retreat. I am distressed by the accusations leveled by some in the media and by some Members of Congress during hearings like these calling into question the integrity of our military, accusing the military of cherry-picking positive numbers to reflect a dramatic decline in sectarian violence. Some in Congress accuse you, General Petraeus, of presenting a report that is simply White House propaganda.

I have more respect for the military and for the military leaders' regard for the men and women whom they lead than to believe that you would misrepresent the facts and alter conclusions to serve partisan purposes. I trust your reporting and that of our troops on the ground regarding the levels of sectarian violence over those compiled by individuals and entities who wish to discredit the information to justify an immediate withdrawal.

General Petraeus, does this report reflect your knowledge and conclusions regarding the facts on the ground in Iraq? Do you stand behind it? The personal attacks launched today by MoveOn.org against General Petraeus, calling this man of honor and courage "General Betray Us" in a full-page ad in the *New York Times* is outrageous, and it is deplorable. It has been reported that the organization that paid for this ad has been coordinating its efforts in the last few months with certain Members to derail the strategy spearheaded by you, General Petraeus. I sincerely hope that those reports are untrue.

In an interview reported in *The Politico* published just last Friday, an anonymous Democratic Senator was quoted as saying, "No one wants to call Petraeus a liar on national TV. The expectation is that outside groups will do this for us."

This cannot be tolerated. I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to publicly denounce the ad that says that you are cooking the books for the White House and to apologize to you, General Petraeus, for casting doubt upon your integrity.

Today's hearing must focus on answering fundamental questions: How do we achieve critical U.S. strategic objectives? What policies will help us defend and advance our Nation's security interests?

The developments of viable, stable, representative governments, with economic development and political freedom for their citizens, is a key element of our broad strategic approach to the war against

Islamic militants, and this is considered by radical Islamists as the greatest threat to their aims, which is why Islamic jihadists, including al Qaeda, are blocking the development of such institutions in Iraq. Radical Islam sees Iraq as a central front in their war on freedom. The enemies of the emerging Iraqi representative government are the enemies of democracies everywhere. They are our enemies as well. Do we fight and defeat this enemy?

We must not fool ourselves into believing that we can accommodate our enemies, and thereby secure their cooperation. Accommodation has been tried in the past, with catastrophic consequences. Chamberlain genuinely believed he had bought peace in our time, washing his hands of what he believed to be an isolated dispute in a far-away country between people of whom we know nothing. Chamberlain only ensured that an immensely larger threat was thereby unleashed.

Many speak of national reconciliation and granting amnesty as if the Mahdi Army, other Islamic jihadists, al Qaeda in Iraq would lay down their arms simply because the Iraqi central government or the U.S. Congress asked them to. Our military strategy and our presence in Iraq is critical to progress on the political front, which helps ensure long-term security goals. Iraq has taken significant steps toward building a representative government, but it does have a long way to go on this difficult road. Our own history reminds us of how truly difficult that road is, but also of how worthy is the goal. Yet rapid withdrawal from Iraq would transmit to the radical Islamists that America has little real commitment to this goal and will abandon its stated core beliefs for temporary, short-term relief. There could be no greater confirmation of radical Islam's indictment of this decadent West and its Great Satan, us, America, which in their view is weak and unreliable.

The latest National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) on Iraq said perceptions that the coalition is withdrawing probably will encourage factions anticipating a power vacuum to seek local political solutions and security solutions that could intensify sectarian violence and intersectarian competition. Precipitous withdrawal plays into the Islamic terrorist agenda. Al Qaeda leader al-Zawahiri has affirmed jihad in Iraq requires several incremental goals. First, expel the Americans from Iraq. The second stage, establish an Islamic authority. The third stage, extend the jihad wave to the secular countries neighboring Iraq. The fourth stage, the clash with Israel. The enemy, however, did not count on the United States regaining the initiative and going on the offensive throughout the strategy behind the surge. This strategy has driven a wedge between the al Qaeda and the Sunni population, and that will help drive a similar wedge between the Shi'a extremists, particularly those in Sadr's Mahdi militia.

The Jones report suggests that the Iraqi Security Forces have made progress, with the exception of the national police, which are not to be confused with the Iraqi Police. The report concluded that there should be increasing improvements in both their readiness and their capability to provide for the internal security in Iraq.

As President Reagan would remind us, the ultimate determinant in the struggle now going on for the world will not be bombs and rockets, but a test of wills and ideas, a trial of spiritual resolve. For

all who have served and died defending what our Nation holds dear, I hope that we, too, rise to the occasion and not let them down by precipitously withdrawing from the fight before the mission is truly accomplished. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank the gentlelady.

General David Petraeus, the floor is yours.

STATEMENT OF GEN. DAVID H. PETRAEUS, COMMANDING GENERAL, MULTI-NATIONAL FORCE, IRAQ

General PETRAEUS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, ranking members——

The CHAIRMAN. We will have to ask you to stand a bit closer to the microphone, because the acoustics in here are not good at all.

General PETRAEUS. Mr. Chairman.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Mr. Chairman? Mr. Chairman, is there a written statement?

The CHAIRMAN. There is, and you should have it in front of you.

General PETRAEUS. Mr. Chairman, can you hear me now?

The CHAIRMAN. Would somebody please fix the microphone? The statements should be passed out by now.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Mr. Chairman, I am getting charts, not a statement.

The CHAIRMAN. This is what has been provided.

Is it working again? I don't want to have to take a recess. Let us get it fixed.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Mr. Chairman, will there be a statement that we can read?

The CHAIRMAN. We will have so to ask the General that.

He says yes.

How is the microphone?

General PETRAEUS. Testing.

The CHAIRMAN. Please remove the person making the disturbance.

Is it fixed?

Mr. BURTON. Mr. Chairman? Mr. Chairman?

The CHAIRMAN. Who is speaking?

Mr. BURTON. Congressman Burton.

The CHAIRMAN. Where are you? I can't see you.

Mr. BURTON. I am down here to your left. I should be on your right, but I am to your left.

The CHAIRMAN. I still don't see you.

Mr. BURTON. Right here. Look.

The CHAIRMAN. Okay.

Mr. BURTON. I see a number of people in the audience that I anticipate will be making a disturbance, and if this occurs during the testimony by our honored guests, I hope that you will be very firm and get them out of here.

The CHAIRMAN. You don't have to lecture me. They will be gone.

Mr. BURTON. I still see them out there.

The CHAIRMAN. Don't worry about them. We have done this before.

All right. Folks displaying a sign, out they go. This is a very important hearing. We are not about to have this nonsense go on, now or later.

How are we doing on the microphone?

[Disturbance in hearing room.]

The CHAIRMAN. Out they go.

Are we fixed yet? Is there any way to trade microphones from the front row to the podium?

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Ours don't work either.

The CHAIRMAN. I am told it will take five minutes to fix the microphone. We will take a five-minute break.

[recess.]

The CHAIRMAN. General, does it work?

General PETRAEUS. It does, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Let me, before I ask you to proceed, again state any demonstrations, any signs or demonstrative evidence will cause your removal.

Once again, General, the floor is yours.

General PETRAEUS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairmen, ranking members, members of the committees, thank you for the opportunity to provide my assessment of the security situation in Iraq and to discuss the recommendations I recently provided to my chain of command for the way forward.

At the outset, I would like to note that this is my testimony. Although I have briefed my assessment and recommendations to my chain of command, I wrote this testimony myself. It has not been cleared by nor shared with anyone in the Pentagon, the White House, or the Congress until it was just handed out.

As a bottom line up front, the military objectives of the surge are in large measure being met. In recent months, in the face of tough enemies and the brutal summer heat of Iraq, coalition and Iraqi Security Forces have achieved progress in the security arena. Though the improvements have been uneven across Iraq, the overall number of security incidents in Iraq has declined in 8 of the past 12 weeks, with the number of incidents in the last 2 weeks at the lowest level seen since June 2006.

One reason for the decline in incidents is that coalition and Iraqi forces have dealt significant blows to al Qaeda Iraq. Though al Qaeda and its affiliates in Iraq remain dangerous, we have taken away a number of their sanctuaries and gained the initiative in many areas. We have also disrupted Shi'a militia extremists, capturing the head and numerous other leaders of the Iranian-supported special groups, along with a senior Lebanese Hezbollah operative supporting Iran's activities in Iraq.

Coalition and Iraqi operations have helped reduce ethnosectarian violence as well, bringing down the number of ethnosectarian deaths substantially in Baghdad and across Iraq since the height of the sectarian violence last December. The number of overall civilian deaths has also declined during this period, although the numbers in each area are still at troubling levels.

Iraqi Security Forces have also continued to grow and to shoulder more of the load, albeit slowly and amid continuing concerns about the sectarian tendencies of some elements in their ranks. In general, however, Iraqi elements have been standing and fighting

and sustaining tough losses, and they have taken the lead in operations in many areas.

Additionally, in what may be the most significant development of the past eight months, the tribal rejection of al Qaeda that started in Anbar Province and helped produce such significant change there has now spread to a number of other locations as well.

Based on all this and on the further progress we believe we can achieve over the next few months, I believe that we will be able to reduce our forces to the presurge level of brigade combat teams by next summer without jeopardizing the security gains that we have fought so hard to achieve. Beyond that, while noting that the situation in Iraq remains complex, difficult, and sometimes downright frustrating, I also believe that it is possible to achieve our objectives in Iraq over time, although doing so will be neither quick nor easy.

Having provided that summary, I would like to review the nature of the conflict in Iraq, recall the situation before the surge, describe the current situation, and explain the recommendations I have provided to my chain of command for the way ahead in Iraq.

The fundamental source of the conflict in Iraq is competition among ethnic and sectarian communities for power and resources. This competition will take place, and its resolution is key to producing long-term stability in the new Iraq. The question is whether the competition takes place more or less violently. This chart shows the security challenges in Iraq.

The CHAIRMAN. General, let me interrupt you. The Members should have the charts in front of them. The chart over near the wall is very difficult to see from here. So I would urge the Members to look at the charts that have been handed out and should be immediately in front of them.

Thank you, General.

General PETRAEUS. This chart shows the security challenges in Iraq. Foreign and home-grown terrorists, insurgents, militia extremists, and criminals all push the ethnosectarian competition toward violence. Malign actions by Syria, and especially by Iran, fuel that violence. Lack of adequate governmental capacity, lingering sectarian mistrust, and various forms of corruption add to Iraq's challenges.

In our recent efforts to look to the future, we found it useful to revisit the past. In December 2006, during the height of the ethnosectarian violence that escalated in the wake of the bombing of the Golden Dome Mosque in Samarra, the leaders in Iraq at that time, General George Casey and Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad, concluded that the coalition was failing to achieve its objectives. Their review underscored the need to protect the population and reduce sectarian violence, especially in Baghdad. As a result, General Casey requested additional forces to enable the coalition to accomplish these tasks, and those forces began to flow in January. In the ensuing months, our forces and our Iraqi counterparts have focused on improving security, especially in Baghdad and the areas around it, wresting sanctuaries from al Qaeda control, and disrupting the efforts of the Iranian-supported militia extremists.

We have employed counterinsurgency practices that underscore the importance of units living among the people they are securing,

and accordingly, our forces have established dozens of joint security stations and patrol bases manned by coalition and Iraqi forces in Baghdad and in other areas across Iraq.

In mid-June, with all the surge brigades in place, we launched a series of offensive operations focused on expanding the gains achieved in the preceding months in Anbar Province, clearing Baqubah, several key Baghdad neighborhoods, the remaining sanctuaries in Anbar Province, and important areas in the so-called belts around Baghdad, and pursuing al Qaeda in the Diyala River Valley and several other areas. Throughout this period as well, we engaged in dialogue with insurgent groups and tribes, and this led to additional elements standing up to oppose al Qaeda and other extremists.

We also continued to emphasize the development of the Iraqi Security Forces, and we employed nonkinetic means to exploit the opportunities provided by the conduct of our kinetic combat operations, aided in this effort by the arrival of additional provincial reconstruction teams.

The progress our forces have achieved with our Iraqi counterparts has, as I noted at the outset, been substantial. While there have been setbacks as well as successes and tough losses along the way, overall our tactical commanders and I see improvements in the security environment. We do not, however, just rely on gut feel or personal observations. We also conduct considerable data collection and analysis to gauge progress and determine trends. We do this by gathering and refining data from coalition and Iraqi operation centers, using the methodology that has been in place for well over a year, and that has benefited over the past seven months from the increased presence of our forces living among the Iraqi people.

General PETRAEUS. We endeavor to ensure our analysis of that data is conducted with rigor and consistency as our ability to achieve a nuanced understanding of the security environment is dependent on collecting and analyzing data in a consistent way over time. Two U.S. Intelligence Agencies recently reviewed our methodology, and they concluded that the data we produce is the most accurate and authoritative in Iraq.

As I mentioned up front, and as the chart before you reflects, the level of security incidents has decreased significantly since the start of the surge of offensive operations in mid-June, declining in 8 of the past 12 weeks, with the level of incidents in the past 2 weeks the lowest since June 2006, and with the number of attacks this past week the lowest since April 2006. Civilian deaths of all categories, less natural causes, have also declined considerably by over 45 percent Iraq-wide since the height of sectarian violence in December. This is shown by the top line in this chart, and the decline by some 70 percent in Baghdad is shown by the bottom line.

Periodic mass casualty attacks by al Qaeda have tragically added to the numbers outside Baghdad in particular. Even without the sensational attacks, however, the level of civilian deaths is clearly still too high and continues to be of serious concern.

As the next chart shows, the number of ethnosectarian deaths, an important subset of the overall civilian casualty figures, has also declined significantly since the height of the sectarian violence

in December. Iraq-wide, as shown by the top line on this chart, the number of ethnosectarian deaths has come down by over 55 percent, and it would have come down much further were it not for the casualties inflicted by barbaric al Qaeda bombings attempting to reignite sectarian violence.

In Baghdad, as the bottom line shows, the number of ethnosectarian deaths has come down some 80 percent since December. This chart also displays the density of sectarian incidents in various Baghdad neighborhoods, and it both reflects the progress made in reducing ethnosectarian violence in the Iraqi capital and identifies the areas that remain the most challenging.

Now, as we have gone on the offensive in former al Qaeda and insurgent sanctuaries, and as locals have increasingly supported our efforts, we have found a substantially increased number of arms and munition and explosives caches. As this chart shows, we have so far this year already found and cleared over 4,400 caches, nearly 1,700 more than we discovered in all of last year. This may be a factor in the reduction in the number of overall improvised explosive device attacks in recent months, which, as this chart shows, has declined sharply by about one-third since June.

The change in the security situation in Anbar Province has, of course, been particularly dramatic. As this chart shows, monthly attack levels in Anbar have declined from some 1,350 in October of 2006 to a bit over 200 in August of this year. This dramatic decrease reflects the significance of the local rejection of al Qaeda and the newfound willingness of local Anbaris to volunteer to serve in the Iraqi Army and Iraqi Police Service. As I noted earlier, we are seeing similar actions in other locations as well.

To be sure, trends have not been uniformly positive across Iraq, as is shown by this chart depicting violence levels in several key Iraqi provinces. The trend in Nineveh Province, for example, has been much more up and down until a recent decline. And the same is true in Salah ad Din Province, Saddam's former home province, though recent trends there and in Baghdad have been in the right direction recently. In any event, the overall trajectory in Iraq, a steady decline of incidents in the past three months, is still quite significant.

The number of car bombings and suicide attacks has also declined in each of the past 5 months from a high of some 175 in March, as this chart shows, to about 90 this past month. While this trend in recent months has been heartening, the number of high-profile attacks is still too high, and we continue to work hard to destroy the networks that carry out these barbaric attacks.

Our operations have, in fact, produced substantial progress against al Qaeda and its affiliates in Iraq. As this chart shows, in the past eight months, we have considerably reduced the areas in which al Qaeda enjoyed sanctuary. We have also neutralized five media cells, detained the senior Iraqi leader of al Qaeda Iraq and killed or captured nearly 100 other key leaders and some 2,500 rank-and-file fighters.

Al Qaeda is certainly not defeated; however, it is off balance, and we are pursuing its leaders and operators aggressively. Of note, as the recent National Intelligence Estimate on Iraq explained, these gains against al Qaeda are a result of the synergy of actions by

conventional forces to deny the terrorists sanctuary, intelligence of surveillance and reconnaissance assets to find the enemy, and Special Operations elements to conduct targeted raids. A combination of these assets is necessary to prevent the creation of a terrorist safe haven in Iraq.

In the past six months, we have also targeted Shi'a militia extremists, capturing a number of senior leaders and fighters, as well as the deputy commander of Lebanese Hezbollah Department 2800, the organization created to support the training, arming, and funding and in some cases direction of the militia extremists by the Iranian Republican Guard's Quds Force. These elements have assassinated and kidnapped Iraqi governmental leaders, killed and wounded our soldiers with advanced explosive devices provided by Iran, and indiscriminately rocketed civilians in the international zone and elsewhere.

It is increasingly apparent to both coalition and Iraqi leaders that Iran, through the use of the Quds Force, seeks to turn the Iraqi Special Groups into a Hezbollah-like force to serve its interests and fight a proxy war against the Iraqi state and coalition forces in Iraq.

The most significant development in the past six months likely has been the increasing emergence of——

[Disturbance in hearing room.]

The CHAIRMAN. Let us suspend the—will the entire group that is back there supporting that person be removed.

General PETRAEUS. The most significant——

The CHAIRMAN. Just a minute, General.

General PETRAEUS. Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. Proceed.

General PETRAEUS. The most significant development in the past six months likely has been the increasing emergence of tribes and local citizens rejecting al Qaeda and other extremists. This has, of course, been most visible in Anbar Province. A year ago the province was assessed as lost politically. Today it is a model of what happens when local leaders and citizens decide to oppose al Qaeda and reject its Taliban-like ideology. While Anbar is unique, and the model it provides cannot be replicated everywhere in Iraq, it does demonstrate the dramatic change in security that is possible with the support and participation of local citizens.

As this chart shows, other tribes have been inspired by the actions of those in Anbar and have volunteered to fight extremists as well. We have, in coordination with the Iraqi Government's National Reconciliation Committee been engaging these tribes and groups of local citizens who want to oppose extremists and to contribute to local security. Some 20,000 such individuals are already being hired for the Iraqi police. Thousands of others are being assimilated into the Iraqi Army, and thousands more are vying for a spot in Iraq's security forces.

As I noted earlier, Iraqi Security Forces have continued to grow, to develop their capabilities, and to shoulder more of the burdens of providing security for their country. Despite concerns about sectarian influence, inadequate logistics and supporting institutions, and an insufficient number of qualified commissioned and noncommissioned officers, Iraqi units are engaged around the country.

As this chart shows, there are now nearly 140 Iraqi Army national police and Special Operations Forces battalions in the fight, with about 95 of those capable of taking the lead in operations, albeit with some coalition support.

Beyond that, all of Iraq's battalions have been heavily involved in combat operations that often result in the loss of leaders, soldiers and equipment. These losses are among the shortcomings identified by operational readiness assessments, but we should not take from these assessments the impression that Iraqi forces are not in the fight and contributing. Indeed, despite their shortages, many Iraqi units across Iraq now operate with minimal coalition assistance.

As counterinsurgency operations require substantial numbers of boots on the ground, we are helping the Iraqis expand the size of their security forces. Currently there are some 445,000 individuals on the payrolls of Iraq's Interior and Defense Ministries. Based on recent decisions by Prime Minister Maliki, the number of Iraqi Security Forces will grow further by the end of this year, possibly by as much as 40,000. Given the security challenges Iraq faces, we support this decision, and we will work with the two security ministries as they continue their efforts to expand their basic training capacity, leader development programs, logistical structures and elements, and various other institutional capabilities to support the substantial growth in Iraqi forces.

Significantly, in 2007, Iraq will, as in 2006, spend more on its security forces than it will receive in security assistance from the United States. In fact, Iraq is becoming one of the United States' larger foreign military sales (FMS) customers, committing some 1.6 billion to FMS already, with a possibility of up to 1.8 billion being committed before the end of the year. And I appreciate the attention that some Members of Congress have recently given to speeding up the FMS process for Iraq.

To summarize, the security situation in Iraq is improving, and Iraqi elements are slowly taking on more of the responsibility for protecting their citizens. Innumerable challenges lie ahead; however, coalition and Iraqi Security Forces have made progress toward achieving security. As a result, the United States will be in the position to reduce its forces in Iraq in the months ahead.

Two weeks ago I provided recommendations for the way ahead in Iraq to the members of my chain of command and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The essence of the approach I recommended is captured in its title: Security While Transitioning: From Leading to Partnering to Overwatch. This approach seeks to build on the security improvements our troopers and our Iraqi counterparts have fought so hard to achieve in recent months. It reflects recognition of the importance of securing the population and the imperative of transitioning responsibilities to Iraqi institutions and Iraqi forces as quickly as possible, but without rushing to failure. It includes substantial support for the continuing development of Iraqi security forces. It also stresses the need to continue the counterinsurgency strategy that we have been employing, but with Iraqis gradually shouldering more of the load. And it highlights the importance of regional and global diplomatic approaches. Finally, in recognition of the fact that this war is not only being fought on

the ground in Iraq, but also in cyberspace, it also notes the need to contest the enemy's growing use of that important medium to spread extremism.

The recommendations I provided were informed by operational and strategic considerations. The operational considerations include recognition that military aspects of the surge have achieved progress and generated momentum. Iraqi Security Forces have continued to grow and have slowly been shouldering more of the security burdens in Iraq.

A mission focused on either population security or transition alone will not be adequate to achieve our objectives. Success against al Qaeda-Iraq and Iranian-supported militia extremists requires conventional forces, as well as Special Operations Forces. And the security and local political situations will enable us to draw down the surge forces.

My recommendations also took into account a number of strategic considerations. Political progress will take place only if sufficient security exists. Long-term U.S. ground force viability will benefit from force reductions as the surge runs its course. Regional, global, and cyberspace initiatives are critical to success. And Iraqi leaders understandably want to assume greater sovereignty in their country, although, as they recently announced, they do desire continued presence of coalition forces in Iraq in 2008 under a new U.N. Security Council resolution. And following that, they want to negotiate a long-term security agreement with the United States and other nations.

Based on these considerations, and having worked the battlefield geometry with Lieutenant General Ray Odierno, the Multi-National Corps Commander, to ensure that we retain and build on the gains for which our troopers have fought, I have recommended a drawdown of the surge forces from Iraq. In fact, later this month, the Marine Expeditionary Unit deployed as part of the surge will depart Iraq. Beyond that, if my recommendations are approved, that unit's departure will be followed by the withdrawal of a brigade combat team without replacement in mid-December and the further redeployment without replacement of four other brigade combat teams and the two surge Marine battalions in the first 7 months of 2008 until we reach the presurge levels of 15 brigade combat teams by mid-July 2008.

I would also like to discuss the period beyond next summer. Force reductions will continue beyond the presurge levels of brigade combat teams that we will reach by mid-July 2008. However, in my professional judgment, it would be premature to make recommendations on the pace of such reductions at this time. In fact, our experience in Iraq has repeatedly shown that projecting too far into the future is not just difficult, it can be misleading and even hazardous.

The events of the past six months underscore that point. When I testified in January, for example, no one would have dared to forecast that Anbar Province would have been transformed the way it has in the past six months, nor would anyone have predicted that volunteers and one-time al Qaeda strongholds like Ghazaliyah and western Baghdad were an oddity and eastern Baghdad would seek to join the fight against al Qaeda. Nor would we have antici-

pated that a Shi'a-led government would accept significant numbers of Sunni volunteers into the ranks of the local police force in Abu Ghraib.

Beyond that, on a less encouraging note, none of us earlier this year appreciated the extent of Iranian involvement in Iraq, something about which we and Iraq's leaders all now have greater concern. In view of this, I do not believe it is reasonable to have an adequate appreciation for the pace of further reductions or mission adjustments beyond the summer of 2008 until about mid-March of next year. We will no later than that time consider factors similar to those on which I have based the current recommendations, having by then, of course, a better feel for the security situation, the improvements and the capabilities of our Iraqi counterparts and the enemy situation. I will then, as I did in developing the recommendations I have explained here today, also take into consideration the demands on our Nation's ground forces, although I believe that that consideration should once again inform, not drive the recommendations I make.

This chart captures the recommendations I have described, showing the recommended reduction of brigade combat teams as the surge runs its course, and illustrating the concept of our units adjusting their missions and transitioning responsibilities to Iraqis as the situation and Iraqi capabilities permit. It also reflects the "no later than" date for recommendations on force adjustments beyond next summer, and provides a possible approach we have considered for the future force structure and missions set in Iraq.

One may argue that the best way to speed the process in Iraq is to change the Muli-National Forces Iraq (MNFI) mission from one that emphasizes population security, counterterrorism and transition to one that is strictly focused on transition and counterterrorism. Making that change now would, in our view, be premature. We have learned before that there is a real danger in handing over tasks to the Iraqi Security Forces before their capacity and local conditions warrant. In fact, the drafters of the recently released National Intelligence Estimate on Iraq recognized this danger when they wrote—and I quote—we assess that changing the mission of coalition forces from a primarily counterinsurgency and stabilization role to a primary countercombat support role for Iraqi forces in counterterrorist operations to prevent al Qaeda Iraq from establishing a safe haven would erode security gains achieved thus far.

In describing the recommendations I have made, I should note, again, that like Ambassador Crocker, I believe Iraq's problems will require a long-term effort. There are no easy answers or quick solutions. And although we both believe this effort can succeed, it will take time. Our assessments underscore, in fact, the importance of recognizing that a premature drawdown of our forces would likely have devastating consequences. That assessment is supported by the findings of the 16 August Defense Intelligence Agency report on the implications of a rapid withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq. Summarizing it in an unclassified fashion, it concludes that a rapid withdrawal would result in the further release of the strong centrifugal forces in Iraq and produce a number of dangerous results, including a high risk of disintegration of the Iraqi Security Forces,

rapid deterioration of local security initiatives, al Qaeda-Iraq regaining lost ground and freedom of maneuver, a marked increase in violence, and further ethnosectarian displacement and refugee flows, alliances of convenience by Iraqi groups with internal and external forces to gain advantages over their rivals, and exacerbation of already challenging regional dynamics, especially with respect to Iran.

Lieutenant General Odierno and I share this assessment and believe that the best way to secure our national interests and to avoid an unfavorable outcome in Iraq is to continue to focus our operations on securing the Iraqi people while targeting terrorist groups and militia extremists and, as quickly as conditions are met, transitioning security tasks to Iraqi elements.

Before closing, I want to thank you and your colleagues for your support of our men and women in uniform in Iraq. The soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines and coastguardsmen with whom I am honored to serve are the best equipped and very likely the most professional force in our Nation's history. Impressively, despite all that has been asked of them in recent years, they continue to raise their right hands and volunteer to stay in uniform. With 3 weeks to go in this fiscal year, in fact, the Army elements in Iraq of Multi-National Corps Iraq, for example, have achieved well over 130 percent of the reenlistment goals in the initial term and careers categories and nearly 115 percent in the midcareer category. All of us appreciate what you have done to ensure that these great troopers have had what they have needed to accomplish their mission, just as we appreciate what you have done to take care of their families, as they, too, have made significant sacrifices in recent years.

The advances you have underwritten in weapons systems and individual equipment, in munitions and command control, and communications systems, and intelligence surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities, and vehicles, and counter-improvised explosive device (IED) systems and programs, and in manned and unmanned aircraft have proved invaluable in Iraq. The capabilities that you have funded most recently, especially the vehicles that will provide greater protection against improvised explosive devices, are also of enormous importance. Additionally, your funding of the Commander's Emergency Response Program has given our leaders a critical tool with which to prosecute the counterinsurgency campaign. Finally, we appreciate as well your funding of our new detention programs and rule-of-law initiatives in Iraq.

In closing, it remains an enormous privilege to soldier again in Iraq with America's new greatest generation. Our country's men and women in uniform have done a magnificent job in the most complex and challenging environment imaginable. All Americans should be very proud of their sons and daughters serving in Iraq today. Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of General Petraeus can be found in the Appendix on page 98.]

[Disturbance in hearing room.]

The CHAIRMAN. The person will be removed.

Let me make this announcement. Those who have been—please remove them. Those that have been—please remove them. Let me make this announcement that those who have cause for unlawful

conduct and improper conduct, who have, who are and who will throughout the remaining of this hearing, will been prosecuted under Section 10–503.62 of the District of Columbia, and we will prosecute them under the law. This is intolerable. We will not allow it, and I hope everyone that is considering it understands this, because they will be prosecuted.

Ambassador Crocker.

[Disturbance in hearing room.]

The CHAIRMAN. Order will be restored.

Mr. Ambassador.

STATEMENT OF RYAN CROCKER, UNITED STATES AMBASSADOR TO IRAQ

Ambassador CROCKER. Mr. Chairman, ranking members, members of the committees, thank you for the opportunity to address you today.

I consider it a privilege and an honor to serve in Iraq at a time when so much is at stake for our country and the people of the region, and when so many Americans of the highest caliber in our military and civilian services are doing the same. I know that a heavy responsibility weighs on my shoulders to provide the country with my best, most honest assessment of the situation in Iraq in its political, economic, and diplomatic dimensions and the implications for the United States. In doing so, I will not minimize the enormity of the challenges faced by Iraqis, nor the complexity of the situation. At the same time, I intend to demonstrate that it is possible for the United States to see its goals realized in Iraq, and that Iraqis are capable of tackling and addressing the problems confronting them today.

A secure, stable, democratic Iraq at peace with its neighbors is in my view obtainable. The cumulative trajectory of political, economic, and diplomatic developments in Iraq is upwards, although the slope of that line is not steep. This process will not be quick. It will be unpleasant, punctuated by setbacks as well as achievements, and it will require substantial U.S. resolve and commitment. There will be no single moment at which we can claim victory. Any turning point will likely only be recognized in retrospect. This is a sober assessment, but it should not be a disheartening one.

I have found it helpful during my time in Iraq to reflect on our own history. At many points in our early years, our survival as a Nation was questionable. Our efforts to build the institutions of government were not always successful in the first instance, and tough issues such as slavery, universal suffrage, civil rights, and States rights were resolved only after acrimonious debate and sometimes violence.

Iraq is experiencing a revolution, not just regime change. It is only by understanding this that we can appreciate what is happening in Iraq, what Iraqis have achieved, as well as maintain a sense of realism about the challenges that remain.

Evaluating where Iraqis are today only makes sense in the context of where we have been. Any Iraqi under 40 years of age, and that is the overwhelming majority of the population, would have known nothing but the rule of the Baath Party before liberation 4–

1/2 years ago. Those 35 years were filled with crimes against humanity on every scale. Saddam Hussein ruled without mercy, not hesitating to use lethal force and torture against even those in his inner circle. His genocidal campaign against the Kurds and savagery against southern Shi'a are well known, but he also used violence and intimidation as tools in the complete deconstruction of Iraqi society. No organization or institution survived that was not linked in some way to regime protection. He created a pervasive climate of fear in which even family members were afraid to talk to one another.

This is a legacy that Iraqis had as their history when Saddam's statute came down on April 9, 2003. No Nelson Mandela existed to emerge on the national political scene. Anyone with his leadership talents would not have survived. A new Iraq had to be built almost literally from scratch, and the builders in most cases were themselves reduced to their most basic identity, ethnic or sectarian.

Much progress has been made, particularly in building an institutional framework where there was none before. But rather than be in a period in which old animosities and suspicions were overcome, the past 18 months have further strained Iraqi society. The sectarian violence of 2006 and early 2007 had its seeds in Saddam's social deconstruction, and it had dire consequences for the people of Iraq as well as its politics. Extensive displacement and widespread sectarian killings by al Qaeda and other extremist groups have gnawed away at the already frayed fabric of Iraqi society and politics. It is no exaggeration to say that Iraq is and will remain for some time to come a traumatized society.

It is against this backdrop that development in Iraqi national politics must be seen. Iraqis are facing some of the most profound political, economic and security challenges imaginable. They are not simply grappling with the issue of who rules Iraq, but they are asking what kind of country Iraq will be, how it will be governed, and how Iraqis will share power and resources among each other. The Constitution approved in a referendum in 2005 answered some of these questions in theory, but much remains uncertain in both law and practice.

Some of the more promising political developments at the national level are neither measured in benchmarks nor visible to those far from Baghdad. For instance, there is a budding debate about federalism among Iraq's leaders and, importantly, within the Sunni community. Those living in places like Anbar and Salah ad Din are beginning to realize how localities having more of a say in daily decisionmaking will empower their communities. No longer is an all-powerful Baghdad seen as the panacea to Iraq's problems. This thinking is nascent, but it is ultimately critical to the evolution of a common vision among Iraq's leaders.

Similarly, there is a palpable frustration in Baghdad over the sectarian system that was used to divide the spoils of the state in the last few years. Leaders from all communities openly acknowledged that a focus on sectarian gains has led to poor governments and served Iraqis badly, and many claim to be ready to make the sacrifices that will be needed to put government performance ahead of sectarian and ethnic concern. Such ideas are no longer controversial, although their application will be.

Finally, we are seeing Iraqis come to terms with complex issues not by first providing a national framework, but instead by tackling immediate problems. One such example is how the central government has accepted over 1,700 young men from the Abu Ghraib area west of Baghdad, as General Petraeus mentioned—this number includes former members of insurgent groups—to be part of the Iraqi Security Forces. Another example is how the government, without much public fanfare, has contacted thousands of members of the former Iraqi Army, offering them retirement, return to the military or public-sector employment.

So without the proclamation of a general amnesty, we see provisional immunity being granted. And we see de-Baathification reform in advance of national legislation. In both instances the seeds of reconciliation are being planted.

We have come to associate progress on national reconciliation as meaning the passage of key pieces of legislation. There is logic to this, as the legislation we are urging Iraqis to produce does in one way or another have to do with the question of how to share power and resources among Iraq's communities. This legislation also has to do with the vision of the future Iraqi state. The oil and revenue-sharing laws, for instance, deal with deeper issues than simply whether Iraqis in oil-producing areas are willing to share their wealth with other Iraqis.

What is difficult about these laws is that they take Iraq another step down the road toward a Federal system that all Iraqis have not yet embraced. But once again, we see that even in the absence of legislation, there is practical action as a central government shares oil revenues through budget allocations on an equitable basis with Iraq's provinces.

In many respects, the debates currently occurring in Iraq on de-Baathification reform and provincial powers are akin to those surrounding our civil rights movement or struggle over States' rights. With de-Baathification, Iraqis are struggling to come to terms with a vicious past. They are trying to balance fear that the Baath Party would one day return to power with the recognition that many former members of the party are guilty of no crime and joined the organization not to repress others, but for personal survival.

With provincial powers, Iraqis are grappling with very serious questions about what the right balance between the center and the periphery is for Iraq. Some see the devolution of power to regions and provinces as being the best insurance against the rise of a future tyrannical figure in Baghdad. Others see Iraq with its complex demographics as in need of a strong central authority.

In short, we should not be surprised or dismayed that Iraqis have not fully resolved such issues. Rather we should ask whether the way in which they are approaching these issues gives us a sense of their seriousness and ultimate capability to resolve Iraq's fundamental problems. Is the collective national leadership of Iraq ready to prioritize Iraq over sectarian and community interests? Can and will they come to agreement about what sort of Iraq they want?

I do believe that Iraq's leaders have the will to tackle the country's pressing problems, although it will take longer than we originally anticipated because of the environment and the gravity of the

issues before them. Prime Minister Maliki and other Iraqi leaders face enormous obstacles in their efforts to govern effectively. I believe they approach the task with a deep sense of commitment and patriotism.

An important part of my assessment was the effort made by the leaders this past summer. After weeks of preparatory work and many days of intensive meetings, Iraq's five most prominent national leaders from the three major communities issued a communique on August 26th that committed them to an ongoing consultive process on key issues and noted agreement on draft legislation dealing with de-Baathification and provincial powers.

This agreement by no means solves all of Iraq's problems, but the commitment of its leaders to work together on hard issues is encouraging. Perhaps more significantly, these five Iraqi leaders together decided to publicly express their joint desire to develop a long-term relationship with the United States. Despite their many differences in perspectives and experiences, they all agreed on language acknowledging the need for a continued presence by the Multi-National Forces in Iraq and expressing gratitude for the sacrifices these forces have made for Iraqis.

At the provincial level, political gains have been more pronounced, particularly in the north and west of Iraq, where the security improvements have been in some places dramatic. In these areas there is abundant evidence that the security gains have opened the door for meaningful politics.

In Anbar, as General Petraeus has noted, the progress on the security side has been extraordinary. Six months ago, violence was rampant, our forces were under daily attack, and Iraqis were cowering from the intimidation of al Qaeda. But al Qaeda overplayed its hand in Anbar, and Anbaris began to reject its excesses, be they beheading schoolchildren or cutting off people's fingers for smoking. Recognizing that the coalition would help reject al Qaeda, the tribes began to fight with us, not against us, and the landscape in Anbar is dramatically different as a result. Tribal representatives are on the provincial council, which is now meeting regularly to find ways of restoring services, developing the economy, and executing a provincial budget. These leaders are looking for help to rebuild their cities, and they are talking of attracting investment.

Such scenes are also unfolding in parts of Diyala and Nineveh, where Iraqis have mobilized with the help of the coalition and Iraqi Security Forces to evict al Qaeda from their communities.

The world should note that when al Qaeda began implementing its twisted version of the caliphate in Iraq, Iraqis from Anbar to Baghdad to Diyala have overwhelming rejected it. Shi'a extremists are also facing rejection. Recent attacks by elements of the Iranian-backed Jaish al Mahdi on the worshippers in the holy city of Karbala have provoked a backlash and triggered a call by Moqtada al Sadr for Jaish al Mahdi to cease attacks against Iraqis and coalition forces.

A key challenge for Iraqis now is to link these positive developments in the provinces to the central government in Baghdad. Unlike our States, Iraqi provinces have little ability to generate funds through taxation, making them dependent on the central government for resources. The growing ability of the provinces to design

and execute budgets and the readiness of the central government to resource them are success stories. On September 5th, for example, Iraq senior Federal leadership traveled to Anbar where they announced a 70 percent increase in the 2007 provincial capital budget, as well as $50 million to compensate losses incurred by Anbaris in the fight against al Qaeda.

The support of the central government is also needed to maintain hard-won security through the rapid expansion of locally generated police. And the Government of Iraq has placed some 21,000 Anbaris on police rolls.

Iraq is starting to make some gains in the economy. Improving security is stimulating revival of markets with the active participation of local communities. In some places war damage is being cleared and buildings repaired, roads and sewers built and commerce energized. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) estimates that economic growth will exceed 6 percent for 2007.

Iraqi ministries and provincial councils have made substantial progress this year in utilizing Iraq's oil revenue for investment. The 2007 governmental budget allocated $10 billion, nearly one-third of Iraq's expected oil export revenue, to capital investment. Over $3 billion was allocated to the provinces in the Kurdish region for spending. The latest data show that the national ministries and provincial councils have proceeded to commit these funds at more than twice the rate of last year. Doing the best are the provincial authorities and in the process gaining experience with making plans and decisions and running fair tenders. In so doing, they are stimulating local business development and providing employment. Over time, we expect the experience with more responsive local authorities will change Iraqi attitudes toward their elected leaders and of the provinces toward Baghdad.

At two conferences in Dubai in the last two weeks, hundreds of Iraqi businessmen met an equal number of foreign investors newly interested in acquiring shares of businesses in Iraq. An auction of cell phone spectrum conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers netted the government a better-than-expected sum of $3.75 billion. The Minister of Finance plans to use the funds, along with all of the country's oil revenue, to apply to its pressing investment and current expenditure needs.

Overall, however, the Iraqi economy is performing significantly under potential. Insecurity in many parts of the countryside raises transport costs and especially affects manufacturing and agriculture.

Electricity supply is improved in many parts of the country, but it remains woefully inadequate in Baghdad. Many neighbors in the city receive only two hours a day or less from the national grid, although power supplies for essential services such as water-pumping stations or hospitals are much better. The Minister of Electricity said last week that it would take $25 billion through 2016 to meet demand requirements, but that by investing the $2 billion a year the ministry is now receiving from the government's budget, as well as private investment in power generation now permitted by law, that goal could now be met.

We are deploying our assistance funds to make a difference to ordinary Iraqis and to support our political objectives. Military units

are using Commanders' Emergency Response, CERP, Funds to ensure that residents see a difference when neighborhood violence declines. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Community Stabilization Funds provide tens of thousands of jobs throughout the country. With the recent apportionment of 2007 supplemental funds, we are putting Quick Response Funds, QRF, in the hands of our provincial reconstruction team leaders to help build communities and institutions in postkinetic environments. Vocational training and microfinance programs are supporting nascent private businesses. And in Baghdad we are increasing our engagement in capacity-building efforts with ministries.

On the diplomatic level there is expanding international and regional engagement with Iraq. In August, the U.N. Security Council, at Iraq's invitation, provided the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq, UNAMI, with an expanded mandate through United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1770. The work of the International Compact with Iraq moves forward, jointly chaired by Iraq and the United Nations. Seventy-four countries pledged support for Iraq's economic reform efforts at a ministerial conference in May. The U.N. has reported progress in 75 percent of the 400 areas Iraq has identified for action. Later this month the Iraqi Prime Minister and the U.N. Secretary General will chair a ministerial-level meeting in New York to discuss further progress under the Compact and how UNSCR 1770 can be most effectively implemented.

Many of Iraq's neighbors recognize that they have a stake in the outcome of the current conflict in Iraq and are engaging with Iraq in a constructive way. A neighbors ministerial in May, also attended by the P–5 and the G–8, has been followed by meetings of working groups on security, border issues, and energy. An ambassadorial-level meeting just took place in Baghdad, and another neighbors ministerial will be held in Istanbul in October.

Against the backdrop of these new mechanisms, the business of being neighbors is quietly unfolding. For the first time in years, Iraq is exporting oil through its neighbor, Turkey, as well as through the gulf. Iraq and Kuwait are nearing conclusion on a commercial deal for Kuwait to supply its northern neighbor with critically needed diesel. Jordan recently issued a statement welcoming the recent leaders' communique in supporting Iraqi efforts at reconciliation. And Saudi Arabia is planning on opening an embassy in Baghdad, its first since the fall of Saddam.

Syria's role has been more problematic. On one hand, Syria has hosted a meeting of the Border Security Working Group and interdicted some foreign terrorists in transit to Iraq. On the other hand, suicide bombers continue to cross the border from Syria to murder Iraqi civilians.

Iran plays a harmful role in Iraq. While claiming to support Iraq in its transition, Iran has actively undermined it by providing lethal capabilities to the enemies of the Iraqi state, as General Petraeus has noted. In doing so, the Iranian government seems to ignore the risks that an unstable Iraq carries for its own interests.

As we look ahead, we must acknowledge that 2006 was a bad year in Iraq. The country came close to unraveling politically, economically, and in security terms.

2007 has brought some improvements. The changes to our strategy last January, the surge, have helped change the dynamics in Iraq for the better. Our increased presence made besieged communities feel that they could defeat al Qaeda by working with us. Our population security measures have made it much harder for terrorists to conduct attacks. We have given Iraqis the time and space to reflect on what sort of country they want. Most Iraqis genuinely accept Iraq as a multi-ethnic, multi-sectarian society. It is the balance of power that is yet to be sorted out.

Enormous challenges remain. Iraqis still struggle with fundamental questions about how to share power, accept their differences, and overcome their past. Whether Iraq reaches its potential is, of course, ultimately the product of Iraqi decisions, but the involvement and support of the United States will be hugely important in shaping a positive outcome.

Our country has given a great deal in blood and treasure to stabilize the situation in Iraq and help Iraqis build institutions for a united democratic country governed under the rule of law. Realizing this vision will take more time and patience on the part of the United States.

I cannot guarantee success in Iraq. I do believe, as I have described, that it is attainable. I am certain that abandoning or drastically curtailing our efforts will bring failure, and the consequences of such a failure must be clearly understood by us all. An Iraq that falls into chaos or civil war will mean massive human suffering well beyond what has already occurred within Iraq's borders. It could well invite the intervention of regional states, all of which see their future connected to Iraq's in some fundamental way.

Undoubtedly, Iran would be a winner in this scenario, consolidating its influence over Iraqi resources and possibly territory. The Iranian president has already announced that Iran will fill any vacuum in Iraq.

In such an environment, the gains made against al Qaeda and other extremist groups could easily evaporate and they could establish strongholds to be used as safe havens for regional and international operations.

Our current course is hard. The alternatives are far worse. Every strategy requires recalibration as time goes on. This is particularly true in an environment like Iraq, where change is a daily or hourly occurrence. As chief of mission in Iraq, I am constantly assessing our efforts and seeking to ensure that they are coordinated with and complementary to the efforts of our military.

I believe that, thanks to the support of Congress, we have an appropriate civilian posture in Iraq. Over the coming year, we will continue to increase our civilian efforts outside of Baghdad and the international zone. This presence has allowed us to focus on capacity building, especially in the provinces. The number of provincial reconstruction teams has grown from 10 to 25 this year. In support of these efforts, we will be seeking additional economic assistance, including additional quick response funds for capacity building.

We will also seek support for two significant proposals that hold the prospect of creating permanent jobs for thousands of Iraqis. One would be the establishment of an Iraqi-American enterprise

fund modeled on our successful funds in Poland and elsewhere in Central Europe. Such a fund could make equity investments in new and revamped firms based in Iraq.

The second would be a large-scale operations and maintenance facility based on our highway trust fund. On a cost-sharing basis, such a fund would train Iraqis to budget for and maintain important public sector infrastructure such as power plants, dams, and roads. Over time, the cost sharing would phase down and out, leaving behind well-trained professionals and instilling the habits of preventive maintenance.

We will continue our efforts to assist Iraqis in the pursuit of national reconciliation, while recognizing that progress on this front may come in many forms and must ultimately be done by Iraqis themselves. We will seek additional ways to neutralize regional interference and enhance regional and international support, and we will help Iraqis consolidate the positive developments at local levels and connect them with the national government.

Finally, I expect we will invest much effort in developing the strategic partnership between the United States and Iraq, which is an investment in the future of both countries.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Crocker can be found in the Appendix on page 121.]

The CHAIRMAN. Since we had a few moments of lateness due to the microphone problem, we will postpone our first break for a short while; and because there are so many who wish to ask questions, we will adhere to the five-minute rule, with the exception of the chairman and ranking members. But I will limit myself to one question.

While the American sons and daughters are sweating and fighting as the true professionals that they are, it appears, Mr. Ambassador, using your phrase, that the key pieces of legislation have not been passed by the parliament. It appears to this country lawyer that the leaders and parliamentarians of Iraq have been sitting on their thumbs while the young men and women of America are doing their best to bring security.

The surge was announced in January, again in February. Here it is September. And since the surge was announced and began, the Iraqi leaders have made essentially no progress in passing and implementing measures to bring about national reconciliation.

Mr. Ambassador, why should we in Congress expect the next six months to be any different than it has been in the past?

Ambassador CROCKER. Mr. Chairman, you are frustrated. The American people are frustrated. I am frustrated every day I spend in Iraq on the lack of progress on legislative initiatives. Iraqis themselves are frustrated.

As I attempted to lay out in my statement, these are extremely complex legislative endeavors, and Iraqis are engaging on them with fundamental issues concerning the nature of the state as yet unresolved among them. So it is going to be difficult. It is going to take time.

The efforts in the course of the summer that I mentioned, the statement of August 26th in which Iraq's key leaders committed

themselves to continued engagement on these issues and announced agreement in principle on de-Baathification reform and provincial powers suggest to me that, first, they are serious; second, they are capable of coming together and thrashing out serious issues in a deliberate and serious manner.

That said, Mr. Chairman, I frankly do not expect that we are going to see rapid progress through these benchmarks. It is important to remind ourselves that the benchmarks are not an end to themselves. They are a means to national reconciliation. And I think it is very important that we maintain a sense of tactical flexibility and encourage the Iraqis to do the same to seize opportunities to advance national reconciliation when they arise, as we have seen in Anbar and as we have seen in the government's response to Anbar through distributing additional budget resources to this province and bringing its young men into security forces.

So while I would certainly share disappointment that progress has been slow on legislative benchmarks, that to my mind does not mean there has been no progress toward reconciliation. There has been.

And, finally, Mr. Chairman, I think it is important for all of us to remember that the surge hit its full stride just in the month of June. Sectarian violence is diminished, but it is not stopped. And I think it is going to take more time before the impact of improved security, which all of Iraq's leaders acknowledge has taken place, I think it will take more time before that impact is felt in such a manner that political compromise becomes easier.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Chairman Lantos.

Mr. LANTOS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to thank both of our distinguished witnesses for extremely thoughtful and serious testimony.

I first would like to ask you, General Petraeus, a very specific question. You have juxtaposed your proposal for a token withdrawal with a hypothetical rapid and irresponsible withdrawal. Now, as you know better than I do, there are very impressive members of the military with outstanding credentials who favor a much more rapid but responsible withdrawal of American forces. Would you be so kind and comment on this intermediate course? Because I believe juxtaposing your token proposal with a hypothetical rapid and irresponsible proposal does not do justice to this most important issue.

General PETRAEUS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

First of all, what I recommended was a very substantial withdrawal: five Army brigade combat teams, a Marine expeditionary unit, and two Marine battalions represent a very significant force. They are the force in fact that have helped us substantially in achieving some of the recent gains that our troopers have fought so hard to achieve. Posing that withdrawal I believe is a very substantial withdrawal, and I have given you my best professional military advice on what can be done given the considerations that I laid out, given the operational and strategic considerations, which do take into account the strain, very much which I am very aware of on our ground forces in particular.

I believe that this is the approach to take to sustain the gains that we have achieved, to build on them, to transition to Iraqi Security Forces as quickly as we possibly can but without, as I mentioned, rushing to failure and also still continuing the very important effort against al Qaeda Iraq and some of its affiliates and the militia extremists, in particular those who are supported by the Iranian Qods force.

I am not sure what proposal you are referring to, Mr. Chairman, but——

Mr. LANTOS. Well, let me help you a little bit, General Petraeus, because I don't know how accurate these news reports are. But responsible media have suggested that even Admiral Fallon, among others, has favored a more rapid and more substantial withdrawal than what you are proposing.

Without dealing in individuals, am I wrong in assuming that responsible military leaders, both active and retired, favor considerably more rapid withdrawals than you do, particularly in view of the fact that our global security requirements seem not to be part of the calculation that you properly are making because you are the commander for Iraq, you have no responsibility for Afghanistan or for any other contingency that might arise?

General PETRAEUS. Admiral Fallon fully supports the recommendations that I have made, as do the Joint Chiefs of Staff. In fact, I also talked to the Chief of Staff of the Army most recently this morning. We had discussions about the pace of the mission transition, but there has been no recommendation I am aware of that would have laid out by any of those individuals a more rapid withdrawal. And so, again, I am at a loss.

Again, I am the commander in Iraq. I have given you my best professional military advice on how to accomplish the mission that the Multi-National Force Iraq has, and that is represented in the recommendations that I have made.

Having said that, I did indeed take into account, as I mentioned, the strain on the ground forces. In my last job I was in an Army position responsible for some 18 or so schools and centers and experienced that very much. I might add, I was at Fort Benning, Georgia, this past Friday and spoke to the lieutenants, captains, and noncommissioned officers there as well and did indeed address that same fact. That was factored in.

But, again, what I have provided is as the national Multi-National Force Iraq commander, and I think that is, of course, what I think you want me to provide, to my chain of command, my recommendation on how to accomplish the mission that we have at this time.

Mr. LANTOS. Thank you very much.

Ambassador Crocker, I would like to explore with you the possibility of a diplomatic surge. This Administration has been singularly hostile to exploring diplomatic initiatives with countries and governments that we disapprove of. As a matter of fact, had it not been for congressional initiatives, I very much doubt that we would be as far along vis-a-vis North Korea as we happen to be at the moment or that we would be having diplomatic relations with Libya. Both of these were basically lubricated by congressional initiatives, not by the Administration.

Now, you have been allowed to participate in singularly circumscribed meetings with Iranian officials. Would you share with us your professional judgment as to the desirability of expanding diplomatic dialogue with both Syria and Iran, which the Administration at the moment seems to be opposed to?

Ambassador CROCKER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I have had some experience in the past, as I think you know, in negotiating with the Iranians. For a period after 9/11 there were U.N.-sponsored talks on Afghanistan that brought us together with the Iranians, and for a certain period we had pretty good success in coming to some agreements on the formation of the Afghan interim governments, on dealing with warlords, on some security related issues, and so forth. So I had that as perspective when I held my meetings with my Iranian counterparts in Iraq, and I found a really a completely different atmosphere than that which I had experienced in 2001, 2002.

I laid out the concerns we had over Iranian activity that was damaging to Iraq's security but found no readiness on the Iranian side at all to engage seriously on these issues. The impression I came away with after a couple of rounds is that the Iranians were interested simply in the appearance of discussions or being seen to be at the table with the U.S. as an arbiter of Iraq's present and future, rather than actually doing serious business.

So what I would like to see, Mr. Chairman, is, as the first step, the Iranians taking some measures on the ground to qualitatively improve Iraqi security which they say is in their own interest. If they are prepared to do that and, as I have indicated in my discussions with them, we are prepared to discuss other areas with respect to possibly beneficial cooperation between us on Iraq, and we could see where it goes from there. But, right now, I haven't seen any sign of earnest or seriousness on the Iranian side. Maybe it will come. These things can take time. We leave the option open. But I haven't seen it yet.

Mr. LANTOS. May I just pursue that for one more moment?

In my opening comments, I made reference to Prime Minister Maliki's observation that, should the United States leave, he has other friends in the region, meaning clearly Iran. Now, given the long relationship between many of the current Iraqi leadership with Iran, given the long periods during which members of the current Iraqi leadership lived in Iran, how serious, in your view, is this statement to be taken as? And is it possible that Maliki or others might at sometime in the future turn to Iran as a more dependable, quote/unquote, friend?

Ambassador CROCKER. Mr. Chairman, sometimes things are said in the heat of the political moment that, upon reflection, do not turn out to be the best way to phrase a position. I would refer you, in contrast, to Prime Minister Maliki's statement which I just saw this morning, I think he made it today, in which he said that Iraq needs the Multi-National Force to be present under the conditions that prevail now in Iraq. And, of course, Prime Minister Maliki was also a signatory to the April 26 communique that called for a long-term partnership between Iraq and the United States.

The Prime Minister, like most of the Iraqi leadership, I think, recognizes the challenge that Iran poses. One example, I think, of

that recognition is the fact that when Iranian-backed elements of the Jaish al-Mahdi conducted attacks in Karbala about ten days ago against one of Shi'a Islam's holiest shrines and on one of the holiest days of the year, the Prime Minister responded forcefully going down to Karbala himself to take charge of the situation.

I also note that the Prime Minister really did not spend much time in Iran. He does not speak Farsi. His initial period there was followed by a much longer sojourn in Syria, an Arab state.

So I think it is important, and I am sorry to be going on at length, but this is an important issue. I think it is very important to understand that Iraq is an Arab state, as you know so well. Both its Sunni and Shi'a Arab populations feel strongly about that identity. Many have ties to Iran, but it is a different culture, a different history, a different language, and a different past, as the eight-year Iranian-Iraq war with its enormous toll on human life attests. So some of our friends make the mistake of saying that if an individual is a Shi'a Muslim, affinities lie in Iran. Iraqi Arab Shi'a have manifestly demonstrated that that is not the case.

Mr. LANTOS. Thank you very much.

General PETRAEUS. May I add possibly, Mr. Chairman? Because I think what may have been confused in the press perhaps is that Central Command Headquarters did do an analysis for Admiral Fallon, and with the Multi-National Force Iraq staff contributing and my contribution, to a look several years down the road that would be a footprint for what might be termed a situation where there is a long-term security agreement, no longer the Security Council resolution. And it may be that that was what that was referring to. Because that is the only proposal for a dramatic reduction.

As I said, the discussions that we had had to do more with the timing of mission shifts rather than anything else. And he, again, as I said in fact had just reassured me the other day as well, fully supports the recommendations that I have made.

Mr. LANTOS. Thank you, General Petraeus. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

The gentleman from California, Mr. Hunter.

Mr. HUNTER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And, General Petraeus, give us a little depth in terms of your analysis of where the Iraqi Army stands today with respect to its officer corps, perhaps field grade officer corps, its NCO corps, and whether it is, in your view, becoming an instrument for reconciliation between Sunni, Shi'a, and Kurds.

And also tell us a little bit about how you feel the Nation and the people of Iraq in those communities now perceive the army. Do they perceive it as an institution of value with professionalism? You mentioned there are still those that follow a sectarian loyalty. But where do we stand right now since those days when we started to build this army from scratch?

General PETRAEUS. Well, as I mentioned, there is a very substantial number of Iraqi battalions, especially Iraqi Army battalions, that are very much in the fight. They may not meet operational readiness assessment level one criteria, perhaps, because of a shortage of equipment officers, noncommissioned officers, some of

those from combat losses in fact, but there are numerous of these battalions that are in the fight and again are taking tough casualties. Indeed, in many cases, regardless of what their operational readiness assessment may be, there may be no Coalition assistance whatsoever, in some of the southern provinces that have moved to provincial Iraqi, for example. In other cases, certainly they may be in the lead, with us supporting or literally partnering together with us.

There is an unevenness still about the Iraqi Army, although they are certainly the force that is seen by the Iraqi people as the more professional force than as one that is less sectarian certainly than, say, certain national police elements, about which a lot of action has been taken, I might add, by the Ministry of Interior and more is needed. And there are specific units in Iraqi Army which both Prime Minister Maliki and we want to take action and will take action. But, again, by and large, the Iraqi Army is standing and fighting and taking casualties.

It does not have all the commissioned or noncommissioned officers that it needs. In fact, it is short. The expansion of this force that has continued and has been considerably much greater than what was originally planned for, I might add, but is needed given the security challenge that Iraq has, especially since the sectarian violence of 2006 and into early 2007. And so we do indeed support very much that expansion, and they are taking on a variety of initiatives, both to bring back former officers—in fact, they have reached out to former military and offered them either service in the army, retirement, or other government employment.

By the way, a number of these were part of the army that was disestablished early or affected by other early policies. That has attracted some back, but they still need more. In fact, I think it is a challenge, clearly. It is one thing to train young troopers. It is another to produce a staff officer or battalion or brigade commander, and that is a challenge that they are facing right now.

They have implemented a number of initiatives to improve the manning of their commissioned and noncommissioned officer corps. The Iraqi military academies, there are now four of them, do produce well over 1,000 new lieutenants a year now. There is also a junior staff college, senior staff college, and a war college, again, need much more capacity, and that is in fact being increased, as is the basic training capacity. And I might add there is even now a basic training facility in Anbar Province as well as a police academy out there for the first time in two years.

The Iraqi Army is still viewed as a national instrument, certainly; and, in that regard, it is very heartening to see Sunni Arabs volunteer once again for their army. Because, as you may recall, for quite some time there was a dearth of volunteers and no one in Anbar Province would raise his hand or very few would raise their hands to serve in the army or in the police.

That is not a problem now in Sunni areas. They realize that they made a mistake by not volunteering, by leaving the force in some cases when their families or they were intimidated. They do not want to repeat that, just as they view not voting in the elections a mistake.

The citizens again view the army with more confidence than any other Iraqi Security Force institution. Again, I would hasten to say that there are some elements, again small elements in this case, of that force that do need to be dealt with in terms of their sectarian influence. And, again, Prime Minister Maliki is very much determined to deal with that.

Mr. HUNTER. Thank you.

Just one final question. You mentioned—and we are all familiar with Ambassador Crocker's team and their meetings with the Iranians. You mentioned early on that both of you, I believe, that military equipment, deadly military equipment continues to flow from Iran. Has that flow increased or decreased since your meetings?

General PETRAEUS. We believe that it has increased, at least based on the number of explosively formed projectile attacks, in particular, and to a lesser degree rocket attacks. It is tough to tell how long it takes to get it all the way into the pipeline. There was a brief drop-off for a couple of weeks, but it appears that that is increasing. And we do not see a sign of that abating, nor do we see signs of the training or other activity, although the Qods force itself, we believe, by and large those individuals have been pulled out of the country, as have the Lebanese Hezbollah trainers that were being used to augment that activity.

Mr. HUNTER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman.

We will have our five-minute break as soon as the gentlelady from Florida completes her questioning. So we recognize Ms. Ros-Lehtinen from Florida.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman; and thank you for the very calm way in which you have conducted this hearing.

Again, I offer my colleagues the opportunity to use this hearing to distance themselves from the despicable ad that was published today calling into question the patriotism of General Petraeus.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Point of order, Mr. Chairman. Nobody has to distance themselves from something they weren't associated with.

The CHAIRMAN. Please proceed.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Take it easy. Thank you.

General Petraeus, I wanted you to elaborate on the impact on the broader Middle East, on meddling by Iran and Syria, the impact on precipitous withdrawal by U.S., the consequences of failure, as you pointed out.

And Ambassador Crocker, I want to ask you about what we can do to get more countries to follow through 100 percent with their monetary pledges so far.

So, General Petraeus, what are the short- and long-term security and strategic interests for the United States in Iraq and, more importantly, the consequences of withdrawal before conditions warrant?

As we know, the NIE reports noted: Over the year, Tehran will continue to provide funding, weaponry, and training to Iraqi Shi'a militants and that the IC now assesses that Damascus is providing support to non-AQI groups inside Iraq in a bid to increase Syrian presence and influence.

Could you comment on statements by members of the radical Iranian regime that it will increase its interference in Iraq if the United States rapidly withdraws? What are we doing to prepare the Iraqi people as well as our own forces to counter this threat?

And Ambassador Crocker, you also had said: Our current course is hard; the alternatives are far worse. So if you could elaborate upon these "far worse" alternatives and the consequences for our Nation's security and our interests for us to withdraw prematurely.

And, last, we have gotten commitments from other nations in the region, and we want further financial contributions, commitments—friendly nations, not rogue nations—to help Iraq in its reconstruction and political reconciliation. How can we have those commitments translate into concrete action? How can we get them to deliver on their promises? After all, we have seen over the years these same countries promise to provide financial aid to Palestinians, for example. Those funds have never materialized, and then those countries blame Israel and blame the United States.

Thank you, gentlemen.

General PETRAEUS. Congresswoman, first of all, obviously, we want to avoid Iraq ever becoming an al Qaeda sanctuary. That is much less likely than it was perhaps certainly a year ago because of a number of factors, as I mentioned, the most significant being Sunni Arabs increasingly rejecting al Qaeda, its indiscriminate violence and its Taliban-like ideology.

But our forces have made it possible to clear cities like Ramadi and Baquba so that those individuals then could in fact stand up and contribute to local security, something that is hugely important. Local forces have to be involved in and invested in and supportive of local security. It is a practice anywhere in the world.

And in fact, when we were unable to get individuals to volunteer for the Fallujah police force, for example, what that meant is we had to have individuals from the outside come in, in many cases, who were not necessarily of the same ethno-sectarian background and not always as welcomed as they might have been. The fact is now that the Fallujah police force is largely composed of locals, it has just finished the tenth precinct out of ten, and that is allowing the Iraqi Army to move outside the city much greater to pursue al Qaeda in areas north of Fallujah, as an example.

We also want to avoid a situation that might provide an excuse for Iran to fill the void, as the saying was. We certainly want to avoid a further humanitarian disaster. Iraq has already had enormous humanitarian problems, with perhaps as many as two million outside the country and another as many as two million perhaps displaced inside the country. And, of course, we want to ensure Iraq's continued involvement in the global economy, particularly in the form of exporting its oil resources.

As you look at the neighbors, Syria has allowed its soil to be transited by foreign fighters who have come from a variety of source countries in the Gulf area and in North African countries. There are some signs that that may have been reduced somewhat in the last couple of months. We need to watch that a bit and see if that is the case.

We would certainly welcome an opportunity to confirm their excellence in tightening Damascus airport, Aleppo, and other meth-

ods used to enter their country and transit its soil to go into Iraq where many of them have become suicide bombers.

Iran, as we have already discussed, has carried out very, very harmful activities inside Iraq, funding, training, arming and, in some cases, even directing the activities of the special groups associated with the Jaish al-Mahdi, the Sadr militia.

We welcome, by the way, the recent announcement, directive, pledge of honor by Muqtada al-Sadr, ordering his forces to stand down. We have seen reduced activity by some of his Jaish al-Mahdi that seem to be honoring his order. However, it is not clear that the special groups in particular have done so, and in fact explosively formed penatrator (EFP) attacks and rocket attacks have continued, and we are monitoring that very closely and noting that those are criminal activities that we will in fact with Iraqi Security Forces seek to address.

We are going to try to interdict more of this activity from Iran. The Georgian brigade, the country of Georgia that has entered Iraq recently is positioned southeast of Baghdad, and it is very keen to contribute in fact in helping to control and interdict the flow of weapons and money and so forth from Iran that goes to these special groups.

Ambassador CROCKER. Thank you, ma'am.

With respect to how to get more countries to support Iraq positively, there are two important initiatives under way that I briefly touched on, the neighbors mechanism, and then the international compact.

What we found last spring when we moved toward ministerial level meetings of both groups in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, that the fact of convening a ministerial tended to focus government's attention on what they would bring to the table. So we had, as you know, some pretty good luck getting both neighbors and the international community more broadly to sign up to Paris club level standards of debt forgiveness. We have followed up with individual countries, some creditors who did not make commitments in Sharm El Sheikh, and I believe that the ministerial level meeting that will take place in New York in less than two weeks' time will be another opportunity to concentrate the world community on things they need to be doing for Iraq.

Now, in that connection, we have seen some interesting and positive signs in a period of only about ten days. At the end of August, Iraq hosted visits by two major European foreign ministers, Bernard Kushner of France and then Carl Bilt of Sweden; and these are the first non-Coalition European Union ministerial visits of this stature.

So I think there is starting to be an awareness that what happens in Iraq is very important to Europe and to the world and now some indications of a readiness on the part of these governments to involve themselves in a more direct way. And I think, again, both the New York ministerial and then the subsequent neighbors ministerial at the end of October in Istanbul, which again will bring not only the neighbors but the P5 and the G8 countries at the foreign minister level, are excellent opportunities for the Iraqis and for us to further energize concrete contributions to Iraq's future. So we will be working intensively on that.

I would only have very little to add to what I said earlier, what General Petraeus said about the consequences of abrupt changes in policy, except to note that, not for this chamber, because the committees you represent and you have a very sophisticated understanding of how the world works. But I sometimes think in this debate there is an implicit assumption that we can decide we don't want to be engaged in Iraq any longer, or at least not in the way we have been, and that the chapter comes to a close, the movie ends, and we all go on to other things. Iraq will still be there, and the actors in Iraq will make calculations and take actions without us, as will its neighbors, as Iran is already indicating it is quite prepared to do.

So I just think it is very important as we consider what our options are and where we are going in Iraq that we understand that this process will carry forward with or without us, and it is my assessment at least that going forward without us under current conditions would be extremely damaging for regional stability and for some of our own vital interests.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, gentlemen.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentlelady.

We will now have our five-minute break.

[recess.]

The CHAIRMAN. Will the witnesses resume their seats? Thank you very much. The gentleman from South Carolina is recognized for five minutes, Mr. Spratt.

Mr. SPRATT. General Petraeus, we first met in Ninawa Province some 4 years ago in 2003, and I have appreciated your service to our country ever since. Ambassador Crocker, the same goes for you. And thank you for your testimony today.

You know, we have conducted this entire testimony up until now without mentioning the budget at all. But there are finite limits on what we can do. Just as a reminder, I would like to put up a chart, two bar graphs. One shows what we have spent since the year 2003, when the war was first fought. The other shows—leave that there for the time being. If you add all those together, they come to over $600 billion through fiscal year 2008, a significant sum of money.

Now we asked the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), if you will put the next chart up, if they would look out 10 years and assume that there would be a gradual drawdown over 5 years to 75,000 troops in Iraq and Afghanistan. This chart is Iraq and Afghanistan. And it shows that on that assumption a 5-year drawdown to 75,000 troops in theater, both countries, and then a steady state of that force level would cost us $958 billion, a substantial sum of money. And it at least ought to be introduced into evidence of a hearing of this kind.

I want to ask a particular question about reconciliation. Everybody seems to agree that the one absolute essential is national reconciliation. Exactly what that means isn't clearly defined, but General Jones's report begins by saying the factional violence that is being fed by the slow and disappointing pace of national reconciliation, and it ends on the last page by saying everything hinges on

the process of national reconciliation. All progress flows from this most pressing requirement.

I guess my question is if the purpose of the surge is to buy some space and time so that Maliki and his government can work out reconciliation among the warring factions, why are we not seeing that happen? Now Ambassador Crocker, I know you mentioned a number of things, but they were token compared to the agenda that has yet to be completed, $10 billion for capital improvements, the whole allocation of oil, which has yet to be resolved, provisional elections, constitutional amendments, and the dismantlement of the militia. Lots has to be done to accomplish that. Why are we not seeing significant movement in that direction?

Ambassador CROCKER. Thank you, sir. These are issues that are as critical——

Mr. SPRATT. Press your button, please.

Ambassador CROCKER. These are issues that are as critical as they are complex. First, looking at it in time, the violence that has been done in Iraq that has deepened divisions and fears goes back to 1968, when the Baath took power. And obviously it didn't end in 2003, given the sectarian violence that we saw in 2006. So there is significant psychic damage to be overcome here.

Mr. SPRATT. Is there a linkage? Do you expect if the surge works, for example, we will see a move toward this major agenda of national reconciliation?

Ambassador CROCKER. Yes, sir, because I think we are already seeing some signs of it. What we have seen with respect to Sunni responses in Anbar, west of Baghdad, in Abu Ghraib, and some Baghdad neighborhoods of Sunnis now seeking to link to the Federal Government by being policemen or joining the Army is encouraging. It is also encouraging, of course, to see the government reaching back by making these appointments, by providing resources from Baghdad to what is effectively a 100 percent Sunni province. That is not reconciliation at a national level, but it holds the promise, it could be the seeds of reconciliation. And it happened in pretty short order. You know, really within weeks or so of security improving we begin to see these signs.

So, yes, sir, I think we can see it, because I think we are seeing it. Now, when that will be translated to the larger issues of legislative reconciliation, I can't give you a timeline. These are hard, they are complex, they are tied to fundamental visions of what Iraq is going to look like in the future. Is it going to be a dramatically decentralized Federal state? Is it going to have a tighter center? These things have to be worked through. But my bottom line would be that the kinds of progress we are seeing holds out the hope that these larger issues can be worked through without extensive violence.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Berman, the gentleman from California. Thank the gentleman from South Carolina. We are going two and two. Mr. Berman.

Mr. BERMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to question as quickly as I can in three different areas. The first is just, General Petraeus, a clarification. My sense, from listening to your testimony, is that at the heart of your recommendations regarding the timing and the quantity of the troop withdrawals is your belief that

this is not the time to have a mission change from population security, counterterrorism, and training Iraqi troops to simply counterterrorism and training Iraqi troops. And I just want to ask you to clarify, am I correct in that conclusion? Maybe I will just ask the three and then——

General PETRAEUS. That is correct, sir. Again, the idea is to continue the focus on securing the population, given the criticality of that, with Iraqi Security Forces certainly, wherever possible, while transitioning to them, and certainly all the while with Iraqi and coalition forces as well continuing the counterterrorist, the counter-al Qaeda militia extremist effort.

Mr. BERMAN. Thank you. My next question is about al Qaeda. I mean you talk about the killing or capturing 100 key al Qaeda in Iraq leaders, 2,500 rank and file fighters killed or captured. That is good, but I remember Secretary Rumsfeld once wondering are we creating more terrorists than we are killing? Do you really think al Qaeda in Iraq can be routed? How many more of them are there to kill? I would be curious about your thoughts about this issue.

And then my final question, perhaps for both of you, is the refugee issue. You touched on it hardly at all in your testimony. Two million Iraqis have fled to neighboring countries, two million people classified as internally displaced. One, to the extent you both have some hopeful aspects in your testimony, I am wondering if you are finding any reverse flows, at least to areas where some level of security has been achieved. And second, does the United States have some special obligation to assist refugees, particularly those who have risked their lives to assist our efforts in Iraq, people who have worked for our embassy, for coalition forces, and for Western nongovernmental organizations (NGOs)?

I would be interested in your answers to the last two sets of questions. Thank you.

General PETRAEUS. Sir, we are trying to conduct our operations in a way that takes more bad guys off the streets than are created by the operation. We believe that we are having success by this because we can see that certain areas that were in fact sanctuaries for al Qaeda, far beyond just Anbar Province, but also in areas south of Baghdad, north of Baghdad, Baqubah, and even areas now starting up the Tigris River Valley are in fact no longer safe havens for al Qaeda.

Now this has been helped not just by our own actions of both our Special Operations Forces and our conventional forces, and again it is the mix of those that is critical, it is also because of local individuals, again, standing up and saying no more to al Qaeda. And that is a hugely important development, needless to say. I have asked the intelligence analysts, you know, how many more are there, again that same kind of question? And the answer literally varies by which intelligence agency you ask. There are certainly several thousand more plus these affiliates, if you will, the insurgent groups, a number of which have actually broken off from al Qaeda, and are in fact now either fighting alongside us and applying to be part of legitimate Iraqi institutions.

And if I could point out, by the way, we have not armed tribes. We don't have weapons to give them. We have never given weapons to tribes. What we have done is applaud when they have asked if

they could point their weapons at al Qaeda instead of at us. And we have then worked very hard to try to help them tie into national institutions, because that is the piece that makes sure that there is some mitigation of risk, that we are not merely allowing tribes, again, to turn their weapons on al Qaeda and then turn them on, say, other Iraqis.

The refugee issue is one that I feel very strongly about. One reason I went back to Iraq is because of an obligation to the Iraqi people. I have now served there nearly three years. And Iraq, even when you are not there, is on your mind and in your heart. And there are a lot of courageous Iraqis who have stood up to try to contribute to this new Iraq. And we do—I do believe that we have an obligation to them.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank the gentleman. The gentleman from New Jersey, Mr. Saxton, please.

Mr. SAXTON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ambassador Crocker, General Petraeus, thank you so much for your hard work, for your skill, for your dedication, and for coming here today to tell us about our accomplishments in Iraq.

General Petraeus, I remember very well the first time you and I met. It was the airport in Mosul. Our group disembarked the helicopter. And first impressions are real important. And I remember trying to keep up with you as you sped across the tarmac, thinking to myself this general must have an agenda to get things done. And I have got to tell you that in the times that we have been together since that first meeting that has borne out to be true.

In Mosul, after a very thorough briefing, we went over to another location and we met some members of the security force that you had been training and mentoring. We met some members of the local council, who were as proud as they could be to be where they were, to be doing what they were doing for their people.

The second time we met was at a training location, when you had changed to be the head guy there, the head general in making sure that the Iraqis were getting the proper kind of military training. We went out to see a platoon train. It was a live fire exercise. I must admit to being a bit nervous that day, but everything worked out just fine. And I remember having a conversation with the trainees after the exercise had ended. And I remember how proud they were, and the confidence that you had exuded in them.

The third time we met was at Baghdad airport. And you made it possible for our group that day to go meet with a group of civil engineers, who were equally pleased to be receiving the attention that they were receiving. And so thank you for your hard work, your skill, and your dedication. And I got to tell you, quite frankly, that is the reason when I got up this morning and saw this ad in the *New York Times* it made me really sad, thinking that some group of people could interpret your great record in this way. It has been called a number of things today, and I will just leave it at that.

[Disturbance in hearing room.]

The CHAIRMAN. There is a disturbance. Remove them. Take them into custody. Take them into custody. There will be order.

Where is the Sergeant at Arms? Let me reiterate there will be no disturbances. If there are, they will be dealt with under the D.C. district code, and we intend to prosecute. Please proceed.

Mr. SAXTON. Let me ask you this question. This is a question for both of you, really. I believe that the way we leave Iraq in large part will tell the story of how we are perceived and treated by the rest of the world, particularly including the most extreme faction of the terrorist-practicing radicals that we face today.

The questions are these. Number one, will we leave the Iraqis celebrating freedom, or two, will we leave the forces of evil and terror to carry out their mission in and from Iraq? I am concerned that if some get their way we will get number two, the latter. Gentlemen, if we leave too early and under the wrong circumstances, what in your opinion will be the result?

Ambassador CROCKER. I think that is the critical question, sir. And that is what I was trying to get at, both in my statement and subsequently, that should we seek alternative courses of action then we have to consider very carefully what the consequences of those alternatives might be. I don't have a crystal ball, so all I can do is sketch out what might happen. I am informed always by my own history.

In 1982 in Beirut, just after our Marines had redeployed, there was a massacre in the Sabra and Shatila camps. I was in those camps in the wake of that massacre, and I knew that something not only terrible, but huge had happened. I didn't have enough imagination to look ahead a year to see what Hezbollah would do in Lebanon and what Hezbollah would do to us with the attack a little over a year later against our Marine barracks.

So that kind of informs me as I look at these things. I can't say for certain what will happen, but the possibilities are the ones I have sketched out and the ones I think you allude to.

The Iranians will emerge ascendant over much of Iraq. Their proxies will enjoy unparalleled support and power. That is likely to produce an Arab Sunni reaction that could very well reinvigorate al Qaeda in Iraq, and we would not have the forces there to do anything about it.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman. The gentleman from New Jersey, Mr. Chris Smith.

Mr. SMITH OF NEW JERSEY. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. First of all, I too want to add my accolades to the two distinguished witnesses, and thank you for your extraordinary service. I have just two brief questions.

First of all, and really piggybacking on Mr. Saxton, genocide and crimes against humanity over the last century and the beginning of this one have been unprecedented in human history. In recent years Cambodia, Rwanda, Sudan, and Iraq itself, with its genocide against the Kurds, among others, have witnessed massive numbers of ethnically based murders, rape, and cruelty. And I know in your testimony, General Petraeus, you said it would have devastating impact, consequences if we left prematurely. And you said, Ambassador Crocker, massive human suffering.

I don't think that fact is fully appreciated by many of us in the Congress as to what would happen. Are we talking about a potential genocide if we leave prematurely?

Second, I noted that General Batiste last week said—and I ask this to you, Ambassador Crocker, that the government of Iraq is incapable of stepping up to its responsibilities. I questioned that while he was here, pointing out that they are like any other government, struggling with a number of issues before them. We don't meet our own deadlines here in the Congress, and we are obviously a mature democracy.

Finally, on the benchmarks themselves, Ambassador Crocker, you talked about tactical flexibility. Even the GAO last week, Comptroller General Walker pointed out that he was just responding to a set of benchmarks that he had to respond to. Had he had the opportunity, he, working in a bipartisan way, would have come up with what I think are much better ones. The amnesty benchmark, number six, certainly that would be premature to move ahead before reconciliation with an amnesty, a general grant of amnesty. And militia disarmament, we know the Irish Republican Army only recently joined in full disarmament and decommissioning of weapons. And look how long that has gone on.

So if you could address some of those issues. Are there benchmarks that would better serve as a more accurate barometer as to what is going on?

General PETRAEUS. If I could start, Congressman, first of all, again, as Ambassador Crocker mentioned, the centrifugal forces in Iraq are very, very strong. And if they are unleashed, again it is hard to tell what could happen. Certainly humanitarian—a further humanitarian disaster among those is among the possible outcomes. Certainly Iran filling a void, al Qaeda regaining the momentum that has been taken away from it, potentially disintegration of certain elements in the Iraqi Security Forces, a rehijacking of some of those forces that were candidly hijacked by sectarian influences in 2006, in which the Iraqi government has worked very hard to clean up and still has a long way to go. But the fact is the National Police, as an example, is that the Minister of Interior has replaced the overall commander of the National Police, two of two division commanders, nine of nine brigade commanders, and 17 of 27 battalion commanders, and still has some work to do.

If I could just add very quickly on the amnesty issue, because it is something that the force is involved with together with the embassy, we have an engagement—a strategic engagement cell which helps our units engage these different local groups that want to oppose extremists. We link that cell with the Iraqi government's national reconciliation cell to try to speed the process of recognizing these organizations and then figuring out how to assimilate them into a legitimate governmental institution, keeping in mind that every institution of the security forces in Iraq is national. There are no local police. We may call them local police, but they are paid by the national Ministry of Interior, which does give them a considerable amount of leverage over them. They provide all the equipment, the training, and the funding. But in this initiative what has emerged de facto, tacitly, is what you might call conditional immunity. And in fact now there is actually a draft policy that the Iraqi government has developed that will address this. There is no other way to describe it. When you take someone who we know was part of Jaish al-Islami, an insurgent resistance group in Abu Ghraib,

right on the outskirts of Baghdad now, and that is near a Sunni-Shia fault line, so this is very important. When the government of Iraq takes them and puts them on hiring orders for the Ministry of Interior and takes them to the National Police Academy, they have given them conditional immunity. And Prime Minister Maliki recognizes that. He has actually discussed that concept with the Ambassador and myself. And we see that as sort of a halfway house, if you will, to true general amnesty, for which the conditions are not present right now.

Ambassador CROCKER. I would just very quickly, if I might, Mr. Chairman, because it is important, there is nothing inherently wrong with the benchmarks, as I noted in my testimony. In fact, they are important. It is just that, as you noted very perceptively, conditions are not yet in place for achievement of some of these more complex benchmarks. So I think we have got to be creative, and the Iraqis have to be creative, and we have got to encourage them. Just as we have seen with amnesty and the question of disbandment of militias, that in this case you really have both of those things happening on a local level, Jaish al-Islami giving up its guns and the government of Iraq then extending a conditional immunity. So really progress on both is just going to take longer, and it is going to come in ways that probably are not top down.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from Texas is recognized, Mr. Ortiz.

Mr. ORTIZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank both witnesses for your leadership, and I want to ask you both the same questions. Now we have had a military presence in Iraq for almost five years. And while everybody says to talk about diplomacy and reconciliation, that this is the way we are going to win this conflict, not by the war that is going on now. And General Petraeus, you mentioned on page six, one of your recommendations says that highlighting points of regional and global diplomacy approaches. Now, we have the countries that are around Iraq. We have Syria, Turkey, Jordan, and Iran. And I think that there is a need, and I was just wondering whether we have any type of comprehensive diplomatic plan to reach out to these countries, and then to Pakistan and Indonesia, because it seems to me that most of the crews that are coming to fight this war come from this area. Since this is one of your recommendations, General Petraeus, can you enlighten us a little bit as to what is the diplomacy or the reconciliation that is going on at this moment by the State Department or your——

General PETRAEUS. Thank you, Congressman Ortiz. In fact, the Ambassador and I are joined at the hip in having told our respective chains of command that you cannot win in Iraq solely in Iraq. There does have to be activity that supports the effort in Iraq. I will give you one example, and an example in which the State Department and the Central Command have moved out. Foreign fighters by and large come from Saudi Arabia and North Africa and some other countries in the region around Iraq. They transit through Syria by and large. And we have seen steps taken in response to diplomatic initiatives, again by State and the regional combatant commander, in some of these countries to make it much more difficult for a military-age male to travel to Syria, number

one. In some cases actually arresting them, stopping them, not allowing them to get plane tickets and so forth. That is the kind of effort that has to be pursued. There are a host of others related to that. We have encouraged personally a number of these, and in a number of cases the interagency has taken these up.

I also mentioned cyberspace in my comments. The ability of extremists to recruit and even to train and inspire on the Internet is something that again needs to be looked at very hard by both the executive and the legislative branches in the United States, we believe, as well.

Mr. ORTIZ. Let me just follow with, you said this was the effort that has to be pursued. Are we not pursuing them now?

General PETRAEUS. We are doing some of that, certainly. We also think that there is more that can be done. But there has been considerable effort—again, I just gave you the one example with respect to the flow of foreign fighters. But these foreign fighters, of course, are the suicide bombers who have on some occasions ignited or reignited ethno-sectarian violence in Iraq and caused truly horrific casualties. And so that is a very, very important effort. It is one reason why Ambassador Crocker's Paul Millenbasser and one of my two-star generals participated in recent talks in Syria as well.

Mr. ORTIZ. Mr. Ambassador?

Ambassador CROCKER. Yes, sir, it is a very important question, because I think it is an assessment that we share, that as complex and as difficult as Iraq's internal problems are, they exist in a region as well. And that region can make things either better or worse. So we spent a lot of time trying to figure out how the region can make things better, not worse. And that is where this neighbors conference mechanism comes into play. Again, there was an ambassadorial meeting just yesterday in Baghdad at which the Iraqi Foreign Minister expressed publicly his concerns over some of the neighbors facilitating terrorist elements into Iraq. That will go to the ministerial level in Istanbul at the end of October, beginning of November to apply further pressure there. So there are a lot of things in play. And it is going to take, I think, constant effort by all of us to ensure that this regional dimension doesn't undo the good things that may be happening inside Iraq.

Mr. ORTIZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. The gentleman from New York, Mr. Ackerman.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I find it absolutely astonishing that after three and a half hours of testimony from our top military and diplomatic leadership in Iraq that I can't recall anybody saying international war on terrorism. If this is really part of the international war on terrorism, nobody has made the nexus here. And if this is part of the international war on terrorism, how could one even suggest that we have a drawdown, that we cut back on the surge until every single terrorist that is supposed to be there—because that is why we are supposed to be fighting there, so they are not fighting here—how can we draw down until we kill each and every one of them? And that should be the argument that you are making, but you are not. Because this is not part of the

international war on terrorism. The mission, as the General stated, was to end the sectarian violence.

There are two parts of this. There is the sizzle and the steak. Our military is doing a great job providing the sizzle, buying us all the time that it might have to take in order for the diplomats, Ambassador Crocker and his group, to try to bring some reason to the Iraqis to be able to take charge and run their own country. And then we leave, forgetting about the international war on terrorism, trusting to the Iraqis and their expertise to keep these people off of our doorstep. It seems to me that we are trying to be in the middle of a dysfunctional, violent family. And the question that I first think about is can we afford to put a cop in every bad marriage, especially when the parties aren't even showing up for counseling? Our troops are doing a great job. They are maintaining order where they are when they are. But as any cop who responds to a call for family violence knows, it is going to start again as soon as he leaves. I don't know how long we stay until these people really have a better relationship, throw flowers at each other and sing Kumbaya. I don't know when that will happen.

My question is while we wait for this to happen, how much more blood should we invest? If it takes another four years, I would like to know from each of you your best, realistically optimistic view of where Iraq will be in those four years. And if it is that we spend during that time another 4,000 American lives, create another 20,000-plus people maimed for life, spend another $600 billion, see our military further decimated more than it has been already, will this be worth it where you see them 4 years from today?

General PETRAEUS. Congressman, first, if I could just start out and note that there is no question that al Qaeda Iraq is part of the greater al Qaeda movement. We have intercepted numerous communications between al Qaeda senior leadership, AQSL, as they are called and the——

Mr. ACKERMAN. Isn't it true, General, al Qaeda in Iraq formed in 2005?

General PETRAEUS. Congressman, I am not saying when it started. I am saying merely that al Qaeda Iraq clearly is part of the overall greater al Qaeda network.

Mr. ACKERMAN. But they didn't exist until we existed on scene.

General PETRAEUS. We have seen their communications, and there is no question also but that al Qaeda Iraq is a key element in igniting the ethno-sectarian violence. They have been in effect an element that has poured gas on burning embers with the bombing of the Golden Dome Mosque, for example, and with efforts that they have tried recently, for example, bombing the poor Yazidi villages in northwestern Iraq and so forth.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Are they a threat to us?

General PETRAEUS. Al Qaeda Central is a threat to us. I don't know what the result would be if we left Iraq and left al Qaeda Iraq in place. That is very, very——

Mr. ACKERMAN. Then how can you——

General PETRAEUS. I don't know where they would go from here. Again I am not trying to——

Mr. ACKERMAN. Then how could you suggest that we leave after the sectarian violence stops?

The CHAIRMAN. Go ahead and answer the question.

General PETRAEUS. I am not sure I understand that question, Congressman.

Mr. ACKERMAN. The question is your testimony appears to indicate that our mission is to end the sectarian violence. If we end the sectarian violence, how can we leave without killing everybody who we have identified as part of a terrorist organization such as al Qaeda in Iraq?

General PETRAEUS. Well, al Qaeda, again, as I mentioned, Congressman, is part of the sectarian violence. They really are the fuel, important, most important fuel on the Sunni Arab side of this ethno-sectarian violence.

Mr. ACKERMAN. The question again is how do we leave?

General PETRAEUS. The way to leave is to stabilize the situations in each area. And each area will require a slightly different solution. The solution in Anbar Province, as an example, has been one that is quite different from one that might be used in a mixed sectarian area. But stabilizing the area, trying to get the violence down, in some cases literally using cement T-walls to secure neighborhoods, and then to establish a sustainable security arrangement that increasingly is one that Iraqis can take over by themselves.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman. The gentleman from New York, Mr. McHugh.

Mr. MCHUGH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Gentlemen, let me add my words of deep appreciation and respect for the amazing job you have done. Whether one agrees with our current circumstances in the Middle East or not, I would hope no one of any thinking, responsible mind would question your devotion to country and dedication to duty. I appreciate it.

General, I enjoyed that back and forth with my fellow New Yorker, but let me put it a little bit more simply. Is Iraq an important part of the global war on terror in your mind?

General PETRAEUS. Well, I think that defeat of al Qaeda in Iraq would be a huge step forward in the global war on terror. And I think that failing to do that would be a shot of adrenaline to the global Islamic extremist movement.

Mr. MCHUGH. Then I assume you agree with the conclusions of the National Intelligence Estimate that if we were to leave Iraq precipitously, from a military perspective, that the likelihood would be of a return to effectiveness, if you will, of AQI, al Qaeda in Iraq. Is that something you agree with?

General PETRAEUS. I do. If we were to leave before we and Iraqi forces had a better handle on al Qaeda Iraq, that likely would be the outcome. We have made substantial progress against al Qaeda, as I mentioned in my opening statement. But as I also mentioned, al Qaeda remains very dangerous, and certainly still capable of horrific mass casualty, sensational attacks.

Mr. MCHUGH. A lot of good people believe that—and you have heard a little bit, and I expect you will hear more today—good people believe that we have an opportunity, by abandoning the mission, in they would argue a thoughtful way, in Iraq and redirecting our attention entirely against Afghanistan would be the best thing to do in the war on terror. From what you know of the circumstances for the moment, would taking that step, abandoning

the current conditions in Iraq for a total commitment to Afghanistan, be a net plus or minus in the war on terror?

General PETRAEUS. Well, as I mentioned, allowing al Qaeda Iraq to really rejuvenate, to regain its sanctuaries, would certainly lead to a resumption of the kinds of ethno-sectarian fueling attacks that they were conducting on a much more regular basis than they have been able to conduct since the surge of offensives that we have launched in particular. I am not sure what, you know, a huge injection of assets would do in the Afghanistan portion, the portion of Afghanistan that is directed against al Qaeda. And I think in fairness, that is probably a better question for General McCrystal, the Commander of the Joint Special Operations Command, or Admiral Fallon, the Combatant Commander.

Mr. MCHUGH. Thank you, sir. Ambassador Crocker, you said it, I think that everyone on this panel probably feels it, most, if not all Americans feel a great deal of frustration toward the Iraqi government and the slowness in which they have taken steps that are commensurate with the military side of this equation. I certainly share those. When folks talk about sending a message to the Iraqi government, there is very few things we can see and effect, such as military reductions, that we perceive as perhaps being helpful in turning the screws, encouraging them to make those hard decisions. Advise us, sir, what can we do effectively to send a message to facilitate positive steps by Maliki and the government that is currently in power?

Ambassador CROCKER. It is a great question, and certainly it is one that General Petraeus and I wrestle with almost every day. First on the issue of troop reductions as a lever, I think we have to be very careful about this. If the Iraqis develop the sense that we are prepared for a non-conditions based withdrawal of substantial numbers of our troops, my view is that it would make them less inclined to compromise, and not more. And the reason for that is that if they see us coming out, they are still going to be there. And they are then going to be looking over, increasingly over the tops of our heads over the horizon to figure out how they are going to survive and how they are going to get through the coming massive sectarian conflict. So it is the kind of thing we have got to think very carefully about. And I am extremely cautious in ever putting that out on the table.

I find that what I kind of need to do on a day-to-day basis is first try to understand, and that is why I spent some time in my statement on how things got to be the way they are in Iraq. That doesn't mean saying, well, you are an abused child, so it is okay to do whatever you want. But it does help to understand why these things are difficult. With that understanding, then figuring out where some pressure works, what kinds of pressure, where encouragement works, where some fresh thinking works. And we employ all of that on a fairly regular basis. And one example of a small success was our encouragement for the Anbar forum that took place just last Thursday that brought Federal and provincial leaders together in Anbar.

The CHAIRMAN. Before—the gentleman's time has expired. And I thank the gentleman. Before I call on Mr. Manzullo, the gentleman from Illinois, let me add a footnote. That we speak about bench-

marks, and we have had testimony in the Armed Services Committee that basically the benchmarks are really commitments made by the Maliki government.

Mr. Manzullo, five minutes.

Mr. MANZULLO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. General Petraeus, media reports refer to U.S. plans to build a military base near the Iran-Iraq border to curtail the flow of weapons into Iraq. Could you please elaborate on these plans? And is Iran the greatest threat to Iraqi security or is al Qaeda the greatest threat? And is the U.S. presence, and thus our massive resources in Iraq, hindering our ability to eradicate al Qaeda worldwide?

General PETRAEUS. First of all, Congressman, there is already a base in the area that I think—I haven't seen that article, but there is a base southeast of Baghdad in Kut, which is where in fact the new contribution from the country of Georgia, a brigade, is going to be based. And that is probably what that was referring to. There is an effort to work with the Iraqis to try to interdict the flow, as I mentioned earlier, of these arms, ammunition, and other assistance, lethal assistance coming from Iran that are being funneled to these breakaway, rogue militia special groups associated with the Jaish al-Mahdi, the Sadr militia.

You have asked a great question about which is the biggest threat, if you will? We tend to see al Qaeda Iraq as the wolf closest to the sled because it is the threat that carries out the most horrific attacks in Iraq, that cause the very high casualties, that attempt to reignite ethno-sectarian violence, as they did in fact with the February 2006 bombing of the Gold Dome Mosque. And you saw how the security incidents just climbed and climbed and climbed and climbed, and really all the way until just the last several months before they started to come down. They are still dangerous. They are off balance. They have lost the initiative in a number of areas. We have taken away sanctuaries in a number of important areas. But they still remain very, very lethal and very dangerous. And they will certainly try to reconstitute.

So that is in a sense what we see as the immediate and most pressing threat. And we put great emphasis on that with our Iraqi counterparts, because they are very much in this. It was the Iraqi Army that killed the emir of Mosul, as an example, and has actually had a number of other successes recently against al Qaeda elements. The long-term threat may well be the Iranian-supported militia extremists in Iraq. If these could become a surrogate in the form of a Hezbollah-like element, these are very worrisome. We have learned a great deal about Iran since we captured the head of the special groups and the deputy commander of Lebanese Hezbollah Department 2800. They have shared with us, they have explained, as have a number of others that we have captured, explained the level of assistance, training, equipping, funding, and so forth. And we captured documents with them that documented the attacks that they had carried out. And clearly were so detailed because they were in fact giving those to prove what they had done to justify the further expenditure of funds from Iran. Prime Minister Maliki, I think, sees that as perhaps the biggest threat. And a number of the Iraqi leaders, just as we have learned a great deal more in recent months, have also learned a great deal more. And

they have been very worried about what they have seen, despite the fact, as was mentioned earlier, that a number of them have a quite a long history with Iran, and in some cases many years in exile in Iran.

Mr. MANZULLO. The last question was is our presence in Iraq hindering our ability to fight al Qaeda worldwide?

General PETRAEUS. Again, I think that is probably a better question for the commander who is charged with the overall counterterrorist effort of the United States, Lieutenant General Stan McCrystal, who spends a great deal of time in Iran, has very sizable assets—in Iraq, has very sizable assets in Iraq as well. And I think he would be the one who would best be able to answer whether the relative mix against Iraq or Afghanistan, or elsewhere, because there are certainly al Qaeda affiliates, and we do track this with him. Every week in fact we get together and discuss not just al Qaeda in Iraq, but al Qaeda in the Levant, and in other areas, the Horn of Africa, and so forth as well.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank the gentleman from Illinois. Mr. Taylor, the gentleman from Mississippi.

Mr. TAYLOR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, General and Mr. Ambassador, for being here. General, we hear a lot of talk about there being a partnership with the Iraqis and building up Iraqi capabilities. When I looked around your headquarters at the Water Palace at Easter it sure looked like an all American show to me. In fact, I don't recall the presence of a single Iraqi there. Given the talk of standing them up so that we can create a situation where at some point the Americans can come home, at what point does it become more of a partnership in reality as opposed to a partnership in words?

General PETRAEUS. Thanks, Congressman. In fact, right across from our headquarters is the Iraqi Ground Force Headquarters, which is really the equivalent of the Multi-National Corps Iraq, and which is partnered very closely with Lieutenant General Odierno and his headquarters. We have a substantial number of transition team advisers in that headquarters. And in fact we have Iraqi liaison in our headquarters as well. Our biggest effort really, certainly from my level, is with the Iraqi Joint Headquarters, which is in their Ministry of Defense building, which is contiguous, literally with a door right between the wall, contiguous to the Multi-National Security Transition Command Iraq Headquarters, General Dubik's headquarters, which is the organization that is charged with supporting the development of the ministry and the joint headquarters. And that is how we work with them. I also provide a substantial number of officers from staff sections in the Multi-National Force Headquarters, the intelligence operations and others, who are actually partnered with the Iraqis there and also at the Baghdad Operational Command Headquarters.

Mr. TAYLOR. General, in your conversations with the Iraqis do you ever point at a calendar, whether this year, next year, the following year, the year after that, and say we expect you to be an operational force by this date? What I fail to see, and I would like you to enlighten me, is a target date. We hear numbers of Iraqis trained, we hear dollars spent on equipment. What I don't hear or see is a target date where you expect them to be able to police their

own country and to defend their own country. And if I am missing that, I would certainly like you to point that out.

General PETRAEUS. Thank you. Congressman, in fact the transition has been going on. And in fact, the dates are usually mutually agreed. There is a Joint Multi-National Force Iraq/Government of Iraq Committee that has representation from the different security ministries, and in fact determines the dates, for example, for provincial Iraqi control. Even during the surge——

Mr. TAYLOR. Those dates are, sir?

General PETRAEUS. Well, those are always—they are agreed by province. As an example, a couple of months ago we did it for Maysan Province. The three Iraqi Kurdish provinces were just recently done. Several provinces were done before the surge as well. And Karbala, for example, is coming up right after Ramadan, about a month or so from now. We have dates on a schedule that we work out with this committee. And it lays out the projected time frames for when this process of provincial Iraqi control will go forward. And we have that for each of the different provinces out there.

Sometimes the dates have slipped, there is no question about that. In the case of, for example, Diyala Province, which experienced real difficulties as Baqubah was on the verge of becoming the new capital of the caliphate of al Qaeda, that slipped. On the other hand, Anbar Province all of a sudden, which was not one that we were looking forward to at all, actually now has a date. And I think it is something like January of 2008.

So that process has been ongoing. There are numbers of provinces in which there are few, if any, coalition forces. Several have no coalition forces. Others have a single Special Forces team or what have you.

Mr. TAYLOR. General, for the record, could you supply that timeline by province to this committee?

General PETRAEUS. I would be happy to give you the provincial Iraqi control schedule that we have right now, yes, sir.

Mr. TAYLOR. Okay. Thank you. Thank you again.

[The information referred to can be found in the Appendix beginning on page 180.]

The CHAIRMAN. Let me ask a question. Would that be classified or unclassified?

General PETRAEUS. Sir, I think it is classified. Whatever it is we will get it to you.

The CHAIRMAN. We would appreciate that. I thank the gentleman from Mississippi.

Mr. TAYLOR. Thank you again, General Petraeus.

General PETRAEUS. Thank you, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. The general from American Samoa, Mr. Faleomavaega, please.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank both of you gentlemen for your service to our country. I keep hearing that our active duty and Marine forces are overstretched. And I also expect some very serious concerns about the capacity of our current ready reservists and National Guard organizations, which was confirmed by General Keane, who expressed some real serious concerns about the way we are using our ready reservists and National Guardsmen.

Gentlemen, with the tremendous strain and shortages in military equipment, preparedness, and training of our ready reservists and National Guardsmen and women, who are obligated now to serve in Iraq, does our military currently have the capacity to fight two fronts in Iraq and Afghanistan, and do we have enough added strategic reserves to fight another potential war front like Iran, the Taiwan Straits, or even to have the situation that is now brewing between the Kurds and our ally in Turkey? With the crisis now brewing there in that northern part of the country in Iraq, I wanted to know if we have the capacity—it seems like we have all the military personnel available to do whatever we want to do to perform a military mission, and I would like to hear your professional judgment on that, General Petraeus.

General PETRAEUS. Congressman, thank you. First of all, I very much share the concern over the strain on our military forces, and in particular on our ground forces and other so-called high demand, low density assets. As I mentioned, that was one of the factors that informed my recommendations to draw down the five Army brigade combat teams, the Marine expeditionary unit, and the two Marine battalions between now and next summer. I also am on the record as offering the opinion that our ground forces are too small. And I did that before the approval of the expansion of those. And I am gratified to see, frankly, the support that this body has given to the effort to expand our ground forces because of the strain that has put on them and, by the way, of course on their families.

With respect to your question, sir, again with respect, I am just not the one to answer that. I am pretty focused on the mission in Iraq, and not really equipped to answer whether or not—what else is out there for other contingencies, although I know in a general sense obviously that there is very little else out there.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Thank you, General. I have the highest respect for our men and women in military uniform. And I could not agree more with my good friend from California when he mentioned the statements by General MacArthur about duty, honor, and country. General Petraeus, one of your colleagues, the former Chief of Staff for the Army, General Eric Shinseki, was vilified and humiliated by civilian authority because he just wanted to offer a professional judgment of the situation there in Iraq. He recommended that we should have at least 250,000 soldiers if we really wanted to do a good job from the very beginning. Now they put him out to dry. General Taguba also was another good soldier vilified and humiliated by civilian authority of what he felt was doing his job and his duty to our country. It has been estimated that because there are six million people living in Baghdad that we would require at least a hundred thousand soldiers to bring security, real security to the people living in that city.

Could I ask for your opinion, General Petraeus, if you think that 160,000 soldiers that you now command is more than sufficient in capacity to do what you need to do right now in Iraq?

General PETRAEUS. Congressman, there has never been a commander in history, I don't think, who would not like to have more forces, more money, more allies, and perhaps a variety of other assets. I have what we have in the military, what the military could provide for the surge. Beyond that, we certainly have an increasing

number of Iraqis, by the way. I might add that in fact one of Prime Minister Maliki's initiatives has been to expand the number of forces in general, and also the manning of each division, so that it is at 120 percent of authorized strength, so that with their leave policy, which is a must, and remember these guys don't ever go home except on leave with their pay. They are in the fight until it is over. And if they don't take their pay home at the end of the four weeks or so, or whatever that period is that was worked out for them, they will not get that pay. But I have also again recommended today reductions in our force level that I believe will be prudent based on what we have achieved and what I believe we will have achieved together with our Iraqi counterparts.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Thank you, General.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank the gentleman. The gentleman from American Samoa raises the issue of readiness. We have had, in the Armed Services Committee, extensive testimony and documentation, particularly in the Readiness Subcommittee under our friend from Texas, Mr. Ortiz, on the strains, particularly on the ground forces of the Army and the Marines. And I tell my friend from American Samoa it is very, very serious. Thank you for raising that issue.

Mr. Bartlett.

Mr. BARTLETT. Thank you both very much for your service and your testimony. Remembering all those years I sat in the bottom row and never had a chance to ask my question, I am going to yield most of my time to the most junior member on our side of the aisle. But first I must ask a very brief question and then make a very brief comment.

The brief question is, General, in an attempt to discredit your testimony today, the *New York Times* is quoted as saying that the Pentagon no longer counts deaths from car bombings. And the *Washington Post* is reported as saying that you will only count assassinations if a bullet entered the back of the head, and not the front. Unless you interrupt me to say that I am wrong, I am going to assume that both of these allegations are false.

General PETRAEUS. They are false. That is correct.

Mr. BARTLETT. Thank you for confirming.

General PETRAEUS. We have a formula for ethno-sectarian violence. There is a very clear definition about it. It is acts taken by individuals of one ethnic or sectarian grouping against another ethno-sectarian grouping in general for an ethno-sectarian reason. It is not that complicated. Candidly, if al Qaeda bombs a neighborhood that is Shia, that is an ethno-sectarian incident, and it is adjudged as such. And where this idea of the bullet entering comes into it is not something I am aware of.

Mr. BARTLETT. Thank you, sir. I just didn't want those allegations out there without the opportunity to refute them. Mr. Ambassador, on page four of your testimony you note the tension between deciding whether or not the power ought to be in the center or the periphery. Some see the devolution of power to regions and provinces being the best insurance against the rise of a future tyrannical figure in Baghdad. Others see Iraq, with its complex demographics, as in need of a strong central authority. I would submit, Mr. Ambassador, this is the essential question. And unless we

know which of those roads we ought to be traveling, I think that the probability of success is enormously diminished. If we haven't already, I hope we can decide which of those roads we ought to be traveling on, because they are very different processes, sir.

Let me yield the balance of my time now to our most junior member, Mr. Geoff Davis from Kentucky.

Mr. DAVIS OF KENTUCKY. Thank you. Not only am I junior, I don't get a microphone. I will relocate.

With the chairman's indulgence, I will ask that the time for the power failure not be counted against——

The CHAIRMAN. Please proceed.

Mr. DAVIS OF KENTUCKY. Thank you very much. Yes, it is somewhat ironic with our challenges today as we provide criticism to our Arabic partners, I find it ironic that the Iraqi National Assembly has been more legislatively effective this year than the United States Congress in passing laws. So I think our criticism should also measure ourselves.

First, General Petraeus, I want to commend you on your application of classic counterinsurgency principles working within localized and social cultural networks, to build from the bottom up, or as Speaker Tip O'Neill used to say, all politics is local. I have heard feedback from across the theater from friends of more than 30 years ranging down to young soldiers and their perspectives. I think people on both ends of the political spectrum are trying to oversimplify, to define as black and white issues that are best measured in shades of grey. You both have inherited a situation in which our instruments of power were initially employed with flawed assumptions and now in which any course of action has potentially significant second and third order of facts. And there is two areas that I would appreciate if you could comment on. First, one closer to home.

I have often heard from troops at all levels, ranging from central command staff all the way down to platoon members in Sadr City that the military is at war but the Nation is not. You have mentioned the need to fight in cyberspace and I assume meaning an information campaign in explaining both to the world our ideas and also to the people. And I guess the question there would be what would you tell the American people, not Congress, is the reason that we should support the recommendations of both of you. And then following on that, given the effects that these decisions will have on the future, do you have some suggestions on key reforms to our national security or interagency process that you would recommend to better integrate and facility our instruments of national power?

General PETRAEUS. Congressman, first of all, if I could, I do believe that our leaders get it in Iraq more than we ever have before. Part of that is just sheer experience. Just about every battalion or brigade commander, most company commanders have served in Iraq at least one tour before, some more than one. We have made mistakes along the way. We have learned a lot of lessons the hard way. But we have made significant changes in our institutional Army, Marine Corps in particular, and the other services in terms of our doctrine, the education of our commission, noncommissioned officers, the preparation at the combat training centers, the entire

road to deployment process. And I think that that has made a change in adopting some of the counterinsurgency practices that we are using.

With respect to who is at war and who isn't, I would merely associate myself with the remarks of the chairman of the joint chiefs, General Pace, who has said on a number of occasions, I believe before the House Armed Services Committee, among them, that he believes that the military obviously is at war but that he is not so sure about all of the other agencies, although I would certainly say that State and USAID are very much in the same camp.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Gentlemen. It is not just the military that is at war, it is their families, General. And we appreciate their sacrifices. Next on my list I have the gentleman from California, Mr. Royce.

Mr. ROYCE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. General Petraeus, I would just like to ask you your thoughts on al Qaeda in Iraq. You mentioned the reduction of the popular level of support. And I think General Jones' commission bears that out, his finding that that support level in Anbar had decreased dramatically. It sort of begs the question, where does al Qaeda in Iraq draw its support today and how do those fighters get into the country and what could we be doing in theory, what could we be doing?

Now, let us say in Saudi Arabia you have a young man buying a one-way plane ticket into Damascus. It shouldn't be that hard to figure out what might be going on. What could we be doing in these countries—And I ask the Ambassador the same question—in order to deter the influx? I would also like just some stats. I mean, is it 40 percent Saudi, 30 percent North African? If you have taken out 2,500 of their fighters and 100 of their officer corps recently, then clearly focusing on how they get into the country would be a question that I would be interested in.

And last, when you look at your plan to draw down the force, five brigades here over ensuing months and then as you step down to a few brigades left in Iraq for the purpose of overwatch, all of that is based upon how well the Iraqi military performs. The numbers you have given us would indicate now that there soon will be a half million soldiers or security people in Iraq under the Iraqi military. But what type of progress? Give us your unvarnished opinion of the progress that is being made or not being made by these Iraqi military units because the success of your plan to reach a position where you draw down to a few brigades left for overwatch is dependent upon their success. Thank you, General. Thank you, Ambassador Crocker.

General PETRAEUS. Congressman, by the way, the reduction of support for al Qaeda extends well beyond Anbar as well. It now is manifested, as we mentioned, both in Abu Ghraib, other areas that used to be sanctuaries for Iraq, three important neighborhoods, in particular Amiriyah, Ghazaliyah and Atamia. At each one of those in varying stages, the first two in particular, local individuals have stood up, literally generated local forces that have now been tied into our forces. Prime Minister Maliki has directed his army to work with them and coordinate with them. And the next step would be to work to get them into a legitimate Iraqi security force institution. Al Qaeda continues to get its support from a variety of

means. Certainly it gets direction, money, and expertise from the outside. It does send in from the outside foreigners to try to help rejuvenate areas. In fact, we killed the three—we called them the al Turkey brothers. These were individuals who had spent time in Afghanistan in the past who had come into Iraq. We missed them, they came in again and that time we were able literally to kill them.

So they were not able to do what they were supposed to do, which was to help in Northern Iraq, which was under big pressure. So there is outside support and there is also this flow of these foreign fighters, a number of whom do end up being suicide bombers. We still estimate that—and it is very hard to tell—but somewhere 80 percent or so of the suicide bombers are from outside Iraq. And that was what we were talking about earlier, the importance of the diplomatic offensive to work with source countries, to work with the countries through whom these fighters can transit to make it more difficult as you say. And there is a variety of mechanisms.

We believe, for example, that Saudi Arabia has taken steps, in fact, to make it tougher. The last Saudi foreign fighter we captured had actually had to take a bus to Damascus and then got into the network that eventually brought him into the country. We believe that Saudi Arabia is still probably the largest country in terms of the foreign fighters, although that again may be diminishing somewhat and there are certainly others that come from North Africa, Jordan, Syria, and so forth into Iraq. The Iraqi Security Forces range in quality from exceptionally good at the very high end with the Iraqi counterterrorist force, which is a true special mission unit in its capability equipment training. And is probably more active—undoubtedly more active than any other such unit in the region. The Iraqi commando battalion, which is expanding substantially and now has forces positioned outside Baghdad as well and other elements of the Iraqi special operations force brigade, the national police emergency response unit, also very, very active and the special tactics unit.

It then ranges all the way down through units that are variously good and aggressive, including special units typically in most of the provinces with whom we partner special forces teams who do an absolutely superb job, and Prime Minister Maliki, in fact, personally has come to place great importance on those because it was these high-end units and special units that he literally took with him.

Actually we moved some of them down by air, others by ground and then he took a column of about 40 vehicles personally to go to Karbala and to restore peace and stability to that situation after the confrontation between the militia of Sadr and the shrine security guards. But this runs all the way down. It runs the gamut to—and I have to be up front and say there are still some units, particularly in the national police, but also a handful in the Iraqi Army that were formed literally out of sectarian militias or were hijacked in the case of some of the national police units during the height of the sectarian violence.

And those still have issues that have to be addressed. And again, especially in the wake of the militia problems where Sadr's militia is very clearly linked to the assisnation of one and likely to gov-

ernors in southern provinces. They have become a huge concern to him and the government of Iraq.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, gentleman. The gentleman from Hawaii, Mr. Abercrombie.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Thank you for being here. Aloha to both of you. Mr. Chairman, in the course of the questioning so far, I think I have some answers that I was seeking. I would like to just make two observations based on that and yield what time I have left to Representative Castor as the junior most member. Very quickly, two points. I will submit for the record statements from General Petraeus starting in 2004 through General Casey in 2005, General Abizaid in 2006 and looping back to General Petraeus today not with the idea of trying to say this is what you said then and this is what you say now. On the contrary, I think that what it shows is is that the general remarks concern from the military point of view is that we are making steady progress but the Iraqis are not ready to take over. And this was true in 2004, 2005, 2006, and 2007. Our problem is is what do we do under those circumstances.

The problem is, Mr. Chairman, that four years later, the number of U.S. troops being killed continues to climb, thousands more Iraqis are dead and the cost of the war continues to escalate and the refugees continue to stream out of Iraq. My concern is, is that lost in all of the statistics is the question of very simple, yet heartbreaking fact. The rate and overall number of U.S. troops killed in Iraq has gone up, not down from 2006 to 2007. From January to August 2006, 462 U.S. troops; from January to August 2007, 740. The problem I think, Mr. Chairman, is that we are in a situation in which what, in effect we are saying is, is that there is only one plan for Iraq militarily speaking, indefinite occupation by U.S. troops. That is not a comment on the military; it is a comment on the politics which leads me, Ambassador, to my second statement.

Quickly in your very statement today, events have caught up with you and are riding you, your statements about oil, your statements about the oil revenues of central government and the regional government. Today we find out the Hunt Corporation of Texas has signed an oil exploration agreement with Kurdistan. The central government is cut out.

At the same time, we read that the Commerce Department is seeking an international legal advisor to draft laws and regulations that will govern Iraq's oil and gas sector. We are going to be doing the drafting of the oil protocols. Iraq is not a sovereign country. This advisor that is being sought by the Commerce Department has a contract that will run through 2008 with an option extension to 2010. We are occupying that country politically and militarily and are going to suffer the results. I will yield the rest of my time to Representative Castor.

Ms. CASTOR. And I thank my colleague. Thank you, Mr. Abercrombie. Thank you, gentlemen, for your service. Gentlemen, Admiral Michael Mullen, the new chairman of the joint chiefs of staff, told Congress that unless Iraqis achieved political unity, no amount of troops and no amount of time will make much of a difference. He also warned that the United States risked breaking the Army if the Pentagon decided to maintain its present troop level in Iraq beyond next spring. Add on to that last week's report by a commis-

sion of retired senior U.S. military officers where they said that Iraq's army, despite some progress, will be unable to take over internal security from the U.S. forces in the next 12 to 18 months.

The report also said that the 25,000-member Iraqi national police force is dysfunctional and so riddled with sectarianism and corruption that it should be disbanded. And the latest NIE, the consensus view of all U.S. Intelligence Agencies, said that the modest military gains achieved by the troop surge will mean little or nothing unless there is a fundamental shift in the factors driving Iraqi political and security development.

Gentlemen, while the American people have great confidence in our troops and our brave men and women in uniform, they have totally lost confidence at the top of our national government. There is a complete lack of credibility coming from the White House. It first justified the war by claiming that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction, none were found. Then the war was about establising a model democracy in the Arab world. Some model. After that, it was necessary to fight on to defeat al Qaeda which sprouted a local branch in Iraq. The troop surge was supposed to give Iraqi leaders the security and time to bring about national reconciliation. It didn't happen. Now, the President's latest spin is withdrawal could result in another Vietnam. I think the American people want to know as we are in the fifth year of this war how much longer, how many billions of dollars more while we are growing a global strategic risk.

General PETRAEUS. Congresswoman, if I could. One reason that I did recommend the reduction of forces is because of the recognition of the strain on our ground forces. Again, that was an important strategic consideration that did inform the recommendations that I made. I might point out, by the way, that we could have literally run the surge all the way until April. That is the first time that a surge brigade hits 15 months. But because of a variety of considerations and also frankly the battlefield geometry of figuring out how to most efficiently and with minimal release in place and so forth get to where we need to be by mid July, we recommended the reduction of the brigade combat teams in addition to the Marine expeditionary unit that will come out later this month with that replacement, but that the reduction of the brigade combat teams begin in mid December.

If I could also point out again that Iraqis are taking over a considerable responsibility. The recent celebration of the death of the seventh imam, which results in the convergence of about typically approaching a million pilgrims to an important shrine in north central Baghdad, the Kadhimiya Shrine, this year was planned and executed by Iraqi forces in a true interagency effort overseen by the Baghdad Operational Center and its commander, but also involving not just Army and police, but also emergency services, other transportation assets, medical assets and so forth.

Two years ago, there were nearly a thousand pilgrims who were stampeded to death when rumors of enemy action or perhaps actual activities resulted in that particular event. Every other year, there have been dozens of individuals killed by terrorist activity. This year we are not aware of any deaths due to extremist activity. And the only deaths at all were from accidents, just normal acci-

dents that took place on that day. So again, there is progress. There are locations where Iraqis are exclusively maintaining security in their areas, although you rightly note and I share it frankly, the frustration, particularly what happened during the period of ethno-sectarian violence, the sectarian violence in 2006 when some units literally took steps backward and the effort took steps backward. And that was a tragedy and it is something we are helping the Iraqis deal with now.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank the gentlelady. To follow through on a thought that the gentlelady raised, your recommendations for cutting back the numbers, General, do they go below the number of troops that we had prior to the so-called surge?

General PETRAEUS. They do not right now, Mr. Chairman. And that is something that we are working on. And let me explain why that is. There have been other forces that have come into Iraq for a variety of other tasks. One is connected with an improvised explosive device effort. Others provide additional intelligence surveillance and reconnaissance assets. These are assets that we would have wanted regardless of whether we were surging or not. And then the largest is probably the additional military police for the growing detainee population so that we do not run a catch and release program and just turn around and have a revolving door where we are taking in terroists and then letting them back into society without having gone through a rehabilitation or a pledge process, which by the way we are now doing. And it is one thing that I mentioned that I thank the Congress for the resources for because this is a very, very important effort, that we not just have the clock run out on these individuals and then they go back to their neighborhoods and resume what they were doing before, but that they have gone through some process that prepares them to re-enter society.

And by the way, we have about 800 juveniles as well. And we recently created a school that will help them as well. And then we have a pledge and guarantor process that tries to tie tribes and sheiks and other civic leaders into this so that there is a sense of responsibility at the local level for individuals who have been returned who are their family or tribal members.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from New Jersey, Mr. Payne.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you very much. And let me thank both of you for this very important report. I simply have a couple of quick questions. I wonder, General Petraeus, if the support of the tribal leaders against al Qaeda, is that irreversable or is it that that may change possibly in the future? The second thing that does disturb me about the GAO report and the vast difference in the calculation of the sectarian violence—and I just wonder. I know you answered the question by one of my colleagues that the times was just wrong. But is there any way that reconciling can be, since the two of you seem to be so far apart on that, and I just wonder, why is it taking the Iraqi Army so long to try to become proficient?

Now, I understand a war with Iraq and Iran, they say that an estimated million Iranians were killed. Now, as it—I know we were assisting Iraq. Was it our military's superiority or weaponry that was sort of the dark force that made the appearance of Iraqi competence because it seems to be confusing that after year after year

after year, the police—they say that the entire police department in one area needs to be reconstructed. But that is the national police, not the local police. The soldiers have performed poorly.

Why is there such a disconnect between their Iraq/Iran conflict and the fact that they can't seem to put a sustainable offensive together to weed out al Qaeda and these bandits that have come in who were not there, of course, before we went in? Therefore, I guess, Iraq is worse off than it was before al Qaeda came in. So I just get confused at why is it taking so long? Have they just gone on strike or let somebody else do the fighting because it is easier to let someone else do it and keep your powder dry and your head down and—what is missing in this picture?

General PETRAEUS. Thank you, Congressman. Sir, first of all, on the tribal leaders, they want to be part of the new Iraq. The Sunni Arabs in Anbar Province as an example went through various stages of post-liberation, feeling disrespected, unemployed, disgusted and even boycotting the elections and then realizing that they had made a huge mistake and were left out in many respects of the new Iraq. A number of them were resistance fighters during that time as they like to use the term and tacidly or actively supported al Qaeda until they came to really come to grips with the Taliban-like ideology of al Qaeda. The Ambassador talked about some of the practices that al Qaeda inflicted on the people.

And they recognized the indiscriminate violence that was a part of what al Qaeda was doing and they said no more. And then they realized that, okay, we are not going to run Iraq again, but it wouldn't be a bad thing if the Euphrates River Valley were a decent place in which we could live, work, and raise a family. And that seems to be their objective, in addition to certainly having their place at the table in Baghdad and getting their share of the resources. And although there is not a revenue sharing law agreed, interestingly there is revenue sharing.

Oil revenue sharing is taking place and the Ambassador mentioned now they have even learned the term supplemental because Anbar Province got a supplemental for its provincial budget. With respect to the GAO report, their data cut-off, the answer is the data cut-off. At the very least, their data cut-off was five weeks ago. And in some cases, I think—we might check this—but in some cases it was nine weeks ago.

At the very least, these last five weeks as we showed you on the slides, had actually been very significant. Remembering that we launched the surge of offensives in mid June, it took a couple of weeks to start seeing the results. And that is why I mentioned that eight of the last 12 weeks, in fact, the couple of security incidents has come down. And I don't know how far you have to go back to see that kind of trend. It is certainly a couple of years. And as I mentioned, the level of attacks or the subset of incidents is actually the lowest last week that it has been since April.

With respect to the Iraqi Army that defeated Iran or held their own against Iran, there are some remnants of that army still around. And there actually are some very highly professional Iraqi army and air force and naval officers who have been taken from the old army, the old air force, and so forth. That is 15 years ago.

And during that time, of course, they were defeated by the United States and coalition forces.

And Desert Storm suffered years of sanctions. Of course, then we were disestablished and, of course, literally had to start from the bottom. In fact, there was no ministry of defense literally. No building, in fact, when I took over as the Multi-National Security transition commander, Iraq commander in the summer of 2004. It was being rebuilt but it was not even reoccupied for a number of months later. There were no battalions at that time—or maybe one battalion operational despite heroic efforts by Major General Paul Eaton, whose effort had been largely inadequately resourced up to that time as well. This has been building, you know, the world's largest aircraft while in flight and while being shot at. And it takes us a year just to reconstitute a brigade that has actually already been in the fight, keep some 40 to 50 percent of its members, but just to get it ready to go back.

The road to deployment is we want to get at least to a year and ideally more. And they are starting, as I said, very much from scratch and just don't have a sufficient number of commission and noncommissioned officers who are out there from that old army again given the number of years. And even just since the army was just established in the summer of 2003, that in itself was the number of years. And these individuals are not necessarily fighting fit shall we say if they had been on the sidelines for most of the time since then. Thank you, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, General. We will take a five-minute break and return. And will I call upon Mr. McKeon and Mr. Chabot.

[recess.]

The CHAIRMAN. Order. We were told previously that the witnesses had a hard stop at 6:30. I have just spoken with General Petraeus and I hope that the Ambassador will agree with his decision to extend the time for an additional 20 minutes, wherever the Ambassador is. Will somebody find the Ambassador please? Mr. McKeon will be next. Well, Mr. McKeon and then Chabot, in that order. Now the gentleman from California, Mr. McKeon.

Mr. MCKEON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. General Petraeus, Ambassador Crocker, I would like to join with my colleagues and thanking you for your exemplary service. At the outset, I would like to associate myself with the remarks of Mr. Hunter and Ms. Ros-Lehtinen and their opening comments. Specifically, I have been deeply saddened by the attacks that have been made on General Petraeus for the last week or two citing what he was going to say and how he was going to say it and what his recommendations were going to be. I have here General Petraeus' statement that he gave us after the meeting started. If I might quote, "Although I have briefed my aessment recommendations to my chain of command, I wrote this testimony myself. It has not been cleared by nor shared with anyone in the Pentagon, the White House or Congress." I think it just indicates how some would like to politicize this war on terror and our war in Iraq and Afghanistan. And I am sorry that you have become a target for things—I read in a report that you have a 63 percent rating with the American people. And

I guess this is an attempt to tear you down to our level. And I am sure that will not work.

Anybody that has had a chance to see you here today will know of your integrity and your devotion to duty and that you are giving us your best assessment of the situation. General, I have heard the comment that the Army is broken. You talked about how the enlistment is going among the troops. Would you care to talk a little bit about the Army and is it broken?

General PETRAEUS. Well, sir, the part of the Army that I can talk about knowledgebly at this point is, of course, that which is in Iraq. And that is an Army that has sacrificed a great deal and whose family members have sacrificed a great deal. A number of those great soldiers, sailors, Marines, airmen, and Coast Guardsmen, and so, in addition to our soldiers, certainly are on a second, or perhaps third tour, some of them shorter tours and are on even more over time. We have asked an enormous amount of these individuals.

And candidly what impresses me so enormously in return is that they do continue to raise their right hand and to serve additional tours, to volunteer for additional tours in uniform. That is not just because of the tax-free bonuses I can assure you. There is no compensation that can make up for some of the sacrifices that some of our soldiers and their families have endured.

On July 4th, in fact, we had a large re-enlistment ceremony. 588 members of different services raised their right hand. And it was a pretty inspiring sight. As I mentioned, it far exceeded the goals for the units that are under the Multi-National Corps-Iraq already with several weeks to go. And as you know in the re-enlistment times, often the last few weeks of the fiscal year are a pretty frantic affair as soldiers have sorted out all the options and then finally make their choice. Our soldiers are not starry eyed idealists.

In fact, at this point, I prefer not to be a pessimist or an optimist but to be a realist. And I think a lot of our soldiers are that way. Morale is solid, but candidly morale is an individual thing. So is the view on what is going on in Iraq sometimes. There is 165,000 different American views of Iraq right now, and a lot of it depends on where you are and how things are going where you are. And the perspective of someone again in Anbar Province where there has been success that we did not expect or someone who is in one of the very tough ethno-sectarian fault-line areas, say, in West Rasheed of Baghdad or East Rasheed has a very different perspective.

And morale, frankly, is an individual thing. And it often comes down to the kind of day that you are having. I am not immune from those same swings. On days when we have had tough casualties, those are not good days. Morale is not high on those days. And I think the same is true of all of our forces. But with all of that, with the heat, with this really challenging barbaric difficult enemy who is elusive and hard to find and employs sniper tactics, improvised explosive devices, suicide bombs against us, our Iraqi colleagues and innocent civilians, against all of that, our soldiers continue to ruck up and go out each day from their patrol bases, combat outposts, joint security stations. And they do it ready for a hand grenade or a handshake. And if they get the handshake they

will take it; and if they get the hand grenade they know what to do in that case as well. Thank you, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much. The gentleman from Ohio, Mr. Chabot.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. General, first of all, thank you very much for your service to our country. We first met in Iraq a few years back. One of the more memorable incidents for me was when we were in a black hawk over Mosul and you pointed out the house where Saddam's murderous sons had met their end, Uday and Qusay. And Qusay, let us not forget, was directly responsible for the deaths of thousands of Shi'a and hundreds of them at his own hand. And Uday—one of his favorite pastimes was abducting young women off the streets of Baghdad, many of whom were never seen alive again. And these were to be Iraq's future leaders. They learned well from their father.

General, my question is this: In July of 2007, you told the New York Post that troop morale had remained high because soldiers understood they are "engaged in a critical endeavor." Many of those supporting a precipitous withdrawal from Iraq have regarded low troop morale as a reason for leaving. Could you comment on the current morale of our troops in Iraq?

General PETRAEUS. Well, again, as I mentioned, Congressman, I believe that morale is solid. But it is an individual thing and it depends on the kind of day that that individual has had. Our soldiers are determined. They know how important this task is and that is a crucial factor in what they are doing. When they raise their right hand again as so many have, they do it knowing that they may be called upon to serve again in Iraq or Afghanistan, for them and their family to make further sacrifices in addition to those that they have already made. I have got to be upfront. None of us want to stay in Iraq forever. We all want to come home. We all have days of frustration and all the rest of that.

But what we want to do is come home in the right way, having added, I guess, to the heritage of our services, accomplished the mission that our country has laid out for us. And again, I think that that is a very important factor in what our soldiers are doing, in addition to the fact that frankly they also just respect the individuals with whom they are carrying out this important mission, the men and women on the right and left who share very important values among them, selfless service and devotion to duty. And that indeed is a huge factor in why many of us continue to serve and to stay in uniform, because the privilege of serving with such individuals is truly enormous.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you, General. And finally, could you comment on the significance of Shiite militia leader Moktada al Sadr from his hideaway in Iran to suspend the operations of the Mahdi army for six months? Does this indicate that he clearly feels threatened, is on the run? Or what should U.S.-Iraqi military and political response be? And given its involvement in brutal crimes against civilians and its pronounced support for violence against the U.S., should the Mahdi army be declared a foreign terrorist organization?

General PETRAEUS. Well, first of all, we think that the action by Moktada al Sadr, his declaration from Iran is because of a sense

of embarrassment over what happened in the Shi'a holy city of Karbala where in one of the most holy celebrations of the year individuals associated with his militia confronted shrine guards and the result was a shootout, and eventually loss of life that again was an enormous embarrassment for all of Iraq, but in particular for his militia and for the Shi'a Arabs in Iraq. And it was one reason that Prime Minister Maliki personally went to Karbala the next morning after having deployed Iraqi special operations forces in the middle of the night by helicopter and others by ground.

In response to that, frankly we have applauded that. Again, we are not going to kill our way out of all of these problems in Iraq. You are not going to kill or capture all of the Sadr militia anymore than we are going to kill or capture all of the insurgents in Iraq. And, in fact, what we have tried very hard to do is to identify who the irreconcilables are, if you will, on either end of the spectrum, Sunni and Shi'a, and then to figure out where do the reconcilables begin and try to reach out to the reconcilables. Some of this is a little bit distasteful. It is not easy sitting across the table, let us say, or drinking tea with someone whose tribal members may have shot at our forces, or in fact, drawn blood and killed our forces. We learned a bit, in fact, about this from my former deputy commander, a Lieutenant General Graham Lamb, former head of 22 Special Air Services (SAS) and the director of Special Forces in the United Kingdom. And he reminded us that you reconcile with your enemies, not with your friends.

That is why it is called reconciliation. And he talked about how he sat across the table from individuals who were former IRA members who had been swinging pipes at his lads, as he put it, just a few years earlier. That was quite instructive for us. He, in fact, headed some of the early efforts that we had in the early part of this year and into the spring and then it was one—part of his initiative that the Ambassador and I established this strategic engagement cell of a senior diplomat, a senior United Kingdom two-star again and others supporting them who had reached out to individuals that could be reconciled and then helped connect them with the Iraqi government.

Some of that will have to be done with members of the Jaish al Mahdi, Sadr's militia. The question is who are the irreconcilables. And so on the one hand we have applauded. We have said we look forward to the opportunity to confirm the excellence of your militia in observing your pledge of honor. And that has enormous meaning in the Iraqi culture. And indeed a number of them have, in fact, obeyed what he said. However, there are a number of others who have not and those are now regarded as criminals. We are not taking on Jaish al Mahdi. We are with the Iraqi counterparts going after criminals who have violated Sadr's order and have carried out attacks on our forces, innocent civilians or Iraqi forces. Thank you, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, General. We are trying to get as many members as possible under the five-minute rule. The Ambassador and the General have agreed for an additional 20 minutes. I might point out that I am told there will be a vote called shortly after 6:30. I have also requested that the vote be held open a few moments longer for us and also remind the members of the two

committees that there is a ceremony that is supposed to begin at 7. Mr. Reyes.

Mr. REYES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. General, Ambassador, thank you both for your service to our country. I was curious in your statement, General Petraeus, you made mention that the Iraqis have taken the lead in many areas, that many operate with minimal coalition support, which is contrary to what General Jones' observations were last week when he said that they are probably 12 to 18 months away from being able to operate independently. Can you give us your opinion or your assessment of how——

General PETRAEUS. I can, indeed, sir.

Mr. REYES. Particularly in relation to General Jones' statement.

General PETRAEUS. I sure can. And in fact, he and I had a lot of conversations during his time in Iraq. And he, by the way, did a superb assessment and spent the time in Iraq, I might add, that is needed to do that type of assessment with his commissioners. What he is talking about is something different from what I was talking about in the statement. What he is talking about is the institutions of the Iraqi Security Forces being able to truly support their forces throughout the country. Administrative——

Mr. REYES. To be able to stand alone on their own?

General PETRAEUS. But we are talking about the institutions doing that as opposed to what I was talking about is the fact there are many Iraqi forces, units who are operating on their own. In Sumawa, for example, in a Muthanna province in the south, there are no coalition forces whatsoever. They are on their own. Occasionally they will call our Special Forces team that is in an adjacent province and ask for some assistance. The same is largely true in Nasiriyah. There is a superb Australian unit there largely focused on civil military operations. Again, when the Iraqi units in that area have been challenged with something they couldn't handle, they just call our Special Forces team and we bring some enablers to bear, if you will, closed air support, attack helicopters or what have you. The same is true in Najaf. There is only a single U.S. Special forces team in Najaf. Karbala, no forces. A very small contingent.

Mr. REYES. So——

General PETRAEUS. So there are a number of places where Iraqi forces are operating on their own. And by the way, they may not—those battalions in those areas may not be operational readiness assessment, number one. In other words, they may not be rated as meeting the readiness requirements for operating on their own. But de facto, the fact is they are operating on their own. But they might be short of equipment, leaders, maintenance standards or what have you. What General Jones is getting at was the institutional support. What he is talking about is the ability to support these forces with a logistical system, with depots, with maintenance, with administrative, and all the rest of that. That is the challenge. Again, we have found that it is challenging to build battalions, but it is really hard to rebuild an entire army and all of its institutions that go into supporting that battalion or battalion—you know, way over 100 battalions, the brigades, the divisions and all the rest of that with command control communications, intel-

ligence systems, combat enablers, Medevac and all the rest of that that makes up a force as we know it as opposed to forces that are unable to do that.

Mr. REYES. Thank you, General. Ambassador, you made mention about the provincial reconstruction teams and the fact that we went from 10 to 25. As I think all of us know, we are having a very tough time recruiting people from the different agencies that make up these teams. Can you briefly tell us—going from 10 to 25 in a country the size of California, that is not as good news as it seems, is it?

Ambassador CROCKER. Well, it is a very substantial increase and a lot of that has been in the areas of greatest population and greatest challenges. Like, Baghdad itself. So the surge of provincial reconstruction teams into the Baghdad area. And incidentally, all of those teams are embedded with brigade combat teams.

Mr. REYES. This is because of the security situation?

Ambassador CROCKER. Exactly. Although what we have discovered is that it makes for a tremendous unity of effort and it is actually a force multipler to have them together. So we are taking a look at the rest of the landscape and basically seeking to replicate kind of the embedded concept for almost all of the PRTs, because that fusion really works. And it helps to coordinate objectives so that we don't have a military unit kind of working in the same area as a PRT without the kind of coordination you need. So that has been tremendously effective.

Now, in terms of staffing these up, that is something I have given my particular personal focus to. The surge in PRT personnel that this operation is requiring is to be an additional 283 people in place by the end of the year. And to the annoyance of my staff, I check this about three times a week and also back with Washington. And I am firmly assured that we are on track to meet that requirement by December 31st. Now, this includes a lot of military personnel, which will then be back filled as we move into 2008. But as a report delivered by the special inspector generally for Iraq just last week indicated the PRT program is one of the most valuable programs the U.S. runs in Iraq. That was the special inspector general's comment. So we are clearly on to a good thing here. And we will continue to expand the limits of this endeavor to deliver the most effective response we can to capacity building needs, particularly on budget execution.

Let me make one final comment because I do think it is important, that as drawdowns and redeployments take place, a challenge we both have is being sure that PRTs continue to be able to do their mission where required, even as the military footprint changes. So we don't have all the answers to that. It is a work in progress, but something we are very much focused on.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Sherman.

Mr. SHERMAN. Thank you. Mr. Chairman, the ultimate question for our country is how much of the resources available to fight the global war on terror should be deployed in Iraq? That decision cannot be made in Baghdad because our fine gentlemen from Baghdad don't receive reports on what is going on in Afghanistan, Somalia, the tri borders area of Paraguay or Sudan. It is a shame that those with global perspective, the leaders here in Washington, so lack

credibility that they are unwilling to really step forward in front of the cameras and say that Iraq is the central front in the war on terror. So instead they imply that Iraq is the central front by telling us that the decision of how much of our resources to put into Iraq should be dependent upon a report drafted in Baghdad. In effect, we have substituted global perspective for battlefield valor. Now, General Petraeus, as a general, you are always planning for possible contingencies. The counterinsurgency manual is filled with hypothetical situations and possible responses.

And, General, you are sworn to defend our Constitution and you have carried out that oath with honor. Your duty to defend the Constitution would become more complex if we had a constitutional crisis here in Washington. Assume that Congress passes a law stating that no government fund should be used after March of next year, except for certain limited purposes such as force protection or for training. The President of the United States instead orders you to conduct U.S. led offensive military operations, a purpose for which Congress has said we have appropriated no funds. Under those circumstances, what do you do?

General PETRAEUS. Congressman, I am not trying to be flip. What I would do is consult my lawyer. And again, I am not trying to make light of this at all, but I would literally have to talk to my lawyer and obviously talk to my chain of command and get some advice and counsel on what, in fact, to do. And if I could mention——

Mr. SHERMAN. So, General, you are saying that you might very well disobey an order from the President of the United States.

General PETRAEUS. I didn't say that, Congressman. What I said is I would have to figure out what I was going to do. And if I could just follow up on one item you did say, Congressman. For what it is worth, al Qaeda believes that Iraq is the central——

Mr. SHERMAN. Al Qaeda is telling us they think it is the central front. They might be lying. They have been known to do so, General. And if we allow Ahmadinejad and bin Laden to tell us where to fight them, they may not give us their best advice. But I do have one more question and very limited time.

General PETRAEUS. Yes, sir.

Mr. SHERMAN. On about September 15th, this Nation is going to get a long detailed report, well over 100 pages, I would guess, and the press is going to call it the Petraeus report. Now, you know and I know that the White House has exercised editorial control over the report that will be released later this week. The country wants the Petraeus Report. They want a long, detailed report written in Baghdad without edits from the Pentagon or the White House. Are you willing to give to these committees your detailed report, the documents you gave to the White House for them to create the report that they plan to release later this week? And——

General PETRAEUS. Could I answer that so I can—first of all, on the benchmarks report, my understanding is that the law states that that report is submitted by the President with the input from the Ambassador and myself. So at least——

Mr. SHERMAN. General, my question was carefully couched. I realize months ago Congress may have asked for a report from the White House and we will be happy to get it and read it. But what

I said was what the country really wants right now, not months ago but right now is the Petraeus report. We want hundreds of pages written in Baghdad, edited by you without edits from the Pentagon and the White House. Can you get it to us?

General PETRAEUS. First of all, what I have tried to do today, Congressman, with respect is to give the Petraeus report and then I would add to that that Ambassador Crocker, and I did submit extensive input for the benchmark reports. The draft that I saw most recently—because like any of these reports, it does go up and it is then provided back to us for comment. It is essentially unchanged.

Mr. SHERMAN. In any case, you are warning us that if 100 pages or so is released by the White House later this week, they have done the final edits and it may or may not be your report as written?

General PETRAEUS. I don't think that there is any substantive change in that report according to the draft that I saw the other day. My guys had a copy, checked it against what we submitted, that the Ambassador and I collaborated on and there was nothing substantive whatsoever that was different in that report. And you may want to mention it, Ambassador.

Ambassador CROCKER. That is my understanding as well. The September 15th benchmark report will be an update of the July report. And the procedure for drafting it is exactly the same as it was in July. We provide input, but it is a White House report. So it is going to be again procedurally exactly the same as the July report.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from Texas, Mr. Thornberry, please.

Mr. THORNBERRY. I appreciate both of your service and your professionalism, especially in light of personal attacks against you.

Ambassador Crocker, how do you make elected representatives of the people to compromise with each other and reach agreement? We seem to have some difficulty with that. How do you make that happen in Baghdad——

Ambassador CROCKER. I will very carefully restrict myself to commenting about this situation in Baghdad, because it is a serious issue. It is at the core, ultimately, of what kind of Iraqi—future Iraq is going to have, whether it is representatives elected and otherwise are able to come together and reconcile.

The process in this is as important in some ways as actual results, and one of the elements out of this summer's activity that does give me some cautious encouragement is that representatives mainly from the parliament, from the council of representatives of the five major political blocks showed an ability to come together night after night and work their way through a lot of the major issues.

The issues they were able to get close to agreement on, they teed up to their leaders, and that is what was embodied in that August 26th declaration that, in addition to the points I have already mentioned, also included commitments on reforms regarding detainees, how they are held, what the conditions are, when they see a judge, when they are released, as well as how to deal with armed groups. The five got agreement on those points as well.

But it is the way they did it. Each evening, for weeks, representatives, Sunni, Shi'a, and Kurds, came together and showed an abil-

ity to work quite productively together; and that is what I am hoping is going to carry forward in the months ahead as they deal with other issues.

The real answer, of course, is you can't compel it. People have to see their interests served by a process of accommodation; and that is what we are seeing, I think, at least the hopeful beginnings of.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Thank you.

General Petraeus, what do we do about Iran? In answer to previous questions, you said the last time Ambassador Crocker went and talked to them, then the flow of arms accelerated. So some people suggest we need to have a diplomatic surge and go talk to them intensely. I am a little skeptical that that is going to make a difference. What do we do about the arms, the training, the money that comes from Iran and undermines our efforts?

General PETRAEUS. Well, inside Iraq, which is where my responsibility lies, we obviously are trying to interdict the flow of the arms, the training network, the money and so forth and also to disrupt the networks that carry that out.

It was very substantial, for example, to capture the head of the special groups in all of Iraq and that deputy commander of the Lebanese Hezbollah department that I talked about earlier that exists to support the Qods Force effort in supporting these special groups inside Iraq that are offshoots of the Sadr militia.

Beyond that, it does obviously become a regional problem. It is something that I have discussed extensively with Admiral Fallon and with others in the chain of command, and there certainly is examination of various contingencies depending on what does happen in terms of Iranian activity in Iraq. But our focus is on interdicting the flow and on disrupting, killing, or capturing those individuals who are engaged in it.

We also, in fact, killed the head of the network that carried out the attacks on our soils in Karbala where five of our soldiers were killed back in January. That was yet another effort in that overall offensive against those individuals.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Pence from Indiana.

Mr. PENCE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman; and I want to thank General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker for your service to the Nation.

The old book tells us if you owe debts, pay debts; if honor, then honor; if respect, then respect. And having met with both of you on several occasions down range in different assignments, I know this Nation owes you a debt of honor and a debt of respect, and I want to appreciate the way my colleagues have addressed this hearing today.

General Petraeus, just for clarification's sake, it seems to me you opened your testimony today with a very emphatic declarative. I think your words were: This is my testimony. I think you added that it had not been cleared by the White House or the Department of Defense and I just—again, we are getting the Petraeus report today.

General PETRAEUS. That is correct. As I stated, I obviously have given recommendations, and I gave an assessment of the situation as part of those recommendations during a week of video telecon-

ferences, consultations with Admiral Fallon, the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, the Secretary of Defense and then, ultimately, the President. But this is the testimony that I have provided today. This statement is one that I eventually took control of the electrons about two weeks ago and, as I mentioned, has not been shared with anybody outside of my inner circle.

Mr. PENCE. Thanks for clarifying that. I think it is important.

Two quick points: First, on the subject of joint security stations, when I was there in April in Baghdad with you, General Petraeus, we visited a joint security station downtown. I think your testimony today suggests that now the joint security stations, to use your phrase, are across Iraq. I wondered if you might comment for these committees about the extent to which embedding, if you will, American and Iraqi forces together, living together, deploying together in neighborhood areas has expanded beyond the scope of Baghdad, the impact that it has had.

And for Ambassador Crocker, just for the sake of efficiency, when I was in Ramadi in that same trip we met with Sheikh Sattar, some of the leaders of the Iraqi awakening movement. It was at that time I think 20 of the 22 sheiks in Al Anbar Province had organized that effort. Transformation of Al Anbar has been extraordinary.

You made a provocative comment today saying that that movement is, quote, unfolding in other parts of Iraq, and I think you mentioned Diyala and Ninawa Provinces.

I wonder if each of you, severally, can touch on those—I saw those things in their nascent form this spring, and it seems like both of them have expanded well beyond expectations to the good of U.S. interests and stability in Iraq.

General.

General PETRAEUS. Congressman, the concept, again, is that if you are going to secure the population, you have to live with the population. You can't commute to this fight. And the idea is that, wherever possible, to do it together with our Iraqi counterparts, in some cases police, some cases army, sometimes all of the above.

The idea of the joint security station is to be really command and control hubs typically for areas in which there are Coalition forces, Iraqi Army and Iraqi police, and sometimes now even these local volunteers who, again, by directive of Prime Minister Maliki, are individuals with whom the Iraqi Army is supposed to deal as well.

There are a number of other outposts, patrol bases and other small bits of infrastructure, if you will, that have also been established to apply this idea so central to counterinsurgency operations of again positioning in and among the population; and you see it in Ramadi.

For example, in Ramadi, there are a couple of dozen, I think is the last count, of police stations, patrol bases, combat outposts, you name it, many of which have both Coalition, either U.S. Army or U.S. Marines, together with Iraqi police or Iraqi soldiers. Or in some cases still local volunteers who are in the process of being transitioned into one of the security ministries.

We see the same in Fallujah. In Fallujah, though, it is police stations; and there are ten precincts now established in Fallujah. The

last one was just completed. In each of those, there is typically a Marine squad or a force of about that size, and over time we have been able to move our main force elements out of Fallujah and also now to move two of the three battalions of the Iraqi Army that were in that area, which frees them up to actually go up and replace the Marine expeditionary area unit that is coming out and continue the pressure on al Qaeda Iraq up in the Lake Tharthar area.

The CHAIRMAN. We thank the gentleman.

Try to move along.

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Chairman, I had posed a question to Mr. Crocker. I don't think he had a chance to respond.

The CHAIRMAN. I am sorry. Please answer as quickly as possible.

Ambassador CROCKER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

We are seeing the phenomenon of Anbar repeated elsewhere of Iraqis deciding they have had enough of terrorists. Anbar itself, the whole way it unfolded there is unique to Anbar. And we have got to have the—again, the area smarts and the technical flexibility to perceive what opportunities are with the regional differences.

So Diyala, for example, is much more complicated than Anbar. Because, instead of being just Sunni, that is Sunni, Shi'a, Kurd intermixed; and it has required much more careful handling, which I must say the military has done an absolute brilliant job of in an incredibly complex military context.

But, you know, again, in Anbar and Abu Ghraib west of Baghdad, in Baghdad, the three neighborhoods that General Petraeus mentioned, in Diyala, which is a little bit to the northeast, and also in Ninawa to the north and in Salahadin, a process under way that is conceptually similar to what happened in Anbar but has in each case its particular differences that have to be taken into account by us and by the Iraqis.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Dr. Snyder.

Dr. SNYDER. Gentlemen, I have a question for each of you. If you will each answer briefly, I then want to brag on you. So the quicker you are answering my questions, the quicker I get to brag on the two of you.

First, General Petraeus, the chart you passed out here earlier, the one that talks about the recommended force reduction mission shift, does it go out the time line here, General Petraeus? We have a straight line at the end. How far out does that line go? The specific question is, how many years do you anticipate U.S. troops will be in Iraq if you had Ambassador Crocker's crystal ball?

General PETRAEUS. And I am afraid that I do not. In fact, that is an illustrative document with respect to both a mission mix and the stair step there.

As I mentioned, there is every intention and recognition that forces will continue to be reduced after the mid-July time frame when we have reached the 15 Army brigade combat team level and Marine regimental combat team (RCT) level. What we need to do is get a bit closer to that time to where, with some degree of confidence, we can make an assessment and make recommendations on that.

Dr. SNYDER. Thank you.

Ambassador Crocker, you mentioned a reconstruction team. I had a different recollection, though, of the testimony last week of the Special Inspector General for Iraq reconstruction. One of the staff people was Ginger Cruz. She actually testified that, by the end of this year, State Department will have identified 68 percent of the State Department personnel to be on board. So they will not necessarily be on board. They will have just identified two-thirds of their staff requirements.

So while I appreciate your attentiveness to this, I think we still—I think the State Department is letting you down; and somehow we have got to grapple with this issue of how to get the other agencies to step forward and to assist the work that General Petraeus and his people are doing, the work that you want to do. So we may need to have another meeting with him and talk about now what exactly are we going to be having at the end of December, because they said there was only identified two-thirds of them by the end of this year.

The reason I want to brag on the two of you, I think you have all done a good job here today and have done a great job through your careers. I don't know if the two of you are going to be able to solve these problems, the challenges you have before you, but you are the All-Star team; and if anybody can do it, you can do it. I think that is why some of us find some of this stuff that has been said the last week pretty offensive. But we talk about reconciliation, you know, both in the Congress and the country. We have been going through sort of a soft partition into Bs and Rs, this soft partition to Red States and Blue States.

I think you all can be part of this reconciliation, because our country will do better at foreign policy if we are more united.

I put Secretary Gates in that category, too; and what I like about Secretary Gates is reports I get back from the Pentagon is that more junior generals actually feel like they can tell him when they think he is wrong or when they have other ideas—and I don't want you to respond to this—and I know that has not been the case for the last six years.

So I think there is some process stuff going on that may help get some of this reconciliation.

An example of this has been this report the General Jones group put out last week that has been referred to several times. It is like everything else in life. We pick and choose. And several people that are critical of what is going on have brought out some of the criticisms of the police and the Iraqi Army. But the last paragraphs, the concluding thoughts, and I am going to quote from the report:

Quote, while much remains to be done before success can be confidently declared, the strategic consequences of failure or even perceived failure for the United States and Coalition are enormous. We approach a truly strategic moment in the still-young century. Iraq's regional geostrategic position, the balance of power in the Middle East, the economic stability made possible by a flow of energy in many parts of the world and the ability to defeat and contain terrorism where it is most manifest are issues that do not lend themselves to easy or quick solutions. How we respond to them, however, could well define our Nation in the eyes of the world for years to come.

That is the end of the quote.

So those of us who are on whatever side we come down to now or in the last several years on what you all are about, we have got to start looking at this, I think this bigger picture, and I would——

My one question for you, Ambassador Crocker, there is a lot of criticism that we do not have the right strategic diplomatic picture that helps you do the work that you are doing. In fact, maybe I won't even put that as a question but leave that as a comment. I think we have got a lot of work to do in the Congress and the Administration to give you that kind of strategic diplomacy for that whole region.

Thank you for your service.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Wexler.

Mr. WEXLER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, General Petraeus, and Ambassador Crocker.

I vehemently opposed the surge when the President announced it last winter; and, instead, I called for our troops to be withdrawn.

In your testimony today, you claim that the surge is working and that you need more time. With all due respect, General, among unbiased, nonpartisan experts, the consensus is stark. The surge has failed based on most parameters. In truth, war-related deaths have doubled in Iraq in 2007 compared to last year. Tragically, it is my understanding that seven more American troops have died while we have been talking today. Cherry-picking statistics or selectively massaging information will not change the basic truth.

And please understand, General Petraeus, I do not question your credibility. You are a true patriot. I admire your service to our Nation. But I do question your facts; and it is my patriotic duty to represent my constituents and ask you, question you about your argument that the surge in troops be extended until next year, next summer, especially when your testimony stating that the dramatic reduction in sectarian deaths is opposite from the National Intelligence Estimate, the Government Accounting Office and several other nonbiased, nonpartisan reports.

I am skeptical, General, and, more importantly, the American people are skeptical. Because four years ago, very credible people, both in uniform and not in uniform, came before this Congress and sold us a bill of goods that turned out to be false; and that is why we went to war, based on false pretense to begin with.

This testimony today is eerily similar to the testimony the American people heard on April 28th, 1967, from General William Westmoreland when he told the American people America was making progress in Vietnam.

General, you say that we are making progress in Iraq, but the Iraqi parliament simply left Baghdad and shut down operations last month.

You say we are making progress, but the nonpartisan GAO office concluded that the Iraqi government has failed to meet 15 of the 18 political, economic, and security benchmarks that Congress mandated.

You say we are making progress, but war-related deaths have doubled, and an ABC/BBC poll recently said that 70 percent of

Iraqis say the surge has worsened their lives. Iraqis say the surge is not working.

I will conclude my comments, General, and give you a chance to respond, but just one more thing if I may.

We have heard a lot today about America's credibility. President Bush recently stated we should not have withdrawn our troops from Vietnam because of the great damage to America's credibility. General, there are 58,195 names etched to the Vietnam War Memorial. Twenty years from now when we build the Iraq War Memorial on the National Mall, how many more men and women will have been sacrificed to protect our so-called credibility? How many more names will be added to the Wall before we admit it is time to leave? How many more names, General?

General PETRAEUS. Congressman, first of all, I have not said that the surge should be extended. In fact, my recommendations are that the surge be curtailed earlier than it would have been.

The forces of the surge could have run all the way until April before we began pulling them out, and that would be if we did not recommend its continuation beyond that.

My recommendations, in fact, include the withdrawal of the Marine expeditionary unit this month without replacement and then a brigade, starting in mid-December, and then another one about every 45 days. And that is a considerable amount prior to, in fact, how far the surge could have run if we had just pushed everybody for 15 months.

And with respect to the facts that I have laid out to date, I very much stand by those. As I mentioned, the GAO report actually did cut off data at least five weeks and in some cases longer than that in the assessment that it made; and, in fact, those subsequent five weeks have been important in establishing a trend that security incidents have gone down as they have and have reached, as I mentioned, the lowest level since June, 2006, with respect to incidents and with April, 2006, in terms of attacks.

I stand by the explanation of the reduction in ethno-sectarian deaths and so forth.

And, last, I would say, Congressman, that no one is more conscious of the loss of life than the commander of the forces. That is something I take and feel very deeply; and if I did not think that this was a hugely important endeavor and if I did not think that it was an endeavor in which we could succeed, I would not have testified as I did to you all here today.

Thank you, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. Before I call on Mr. Jones, the gentleman from California asks for unanimous consent.

Mr. HUNTER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I am requesting unanimous consent that the questions of Mr. Graves of Missouri be submitted to General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Without objection.

[The information referred to can be found in the Appendix beginning on page 214.]

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Jones.

Mr. JONES. Thank you very much; and, General Petraeus, thank you; and, Ambassador Crocker, thank you as well.

And let me just say that many of the comments you have heard today about our troops—and thank you again for your leadership—but we had General Barry McCaffrey before the oversight committee chaired by Chairman Snyder about five or six weeks ago, and I have Camp Lejeune down in my district, and from time to time I have a chance to see some of the Marines that are out of uniform at certain locations and have conversations. What Barry McCaffrey said was that by April or May of 2008 that the Marine Corps, the Army, the Reserves, and the National Guard would start to unravel, that they are absolutely stressing one out; and, General, you have acknowledged that. So let me make that clear.

My question primarily is going to be for Ambassador Crocker. I want to start with reading a quote by Army Lieutenant General Jay Gardner, first U.S. official in charge of postwar Baghdad. This is his quote:

I don't know that the Iraqi government has ever demonstrated ability to lead the country, and we should not be surprised. You will never find in my lifetime one man that all Iraqis will coalesce around. Iraqis are too divided among sectarian, ethnic and tribal loyalties, and their loyalties are regional, not national.

Mr. Ambassador, I know you have over 20 some years in foreign service with the State Department, and I respect that very much. You made mention of Lebanon, where we had Marines killed at the barracks. You are dealing with a nation, a country that is not national. It is regional. It is a tribal system that has been part of that history of what is now Iraq.

And I listened to you carefully, and I appreciated your comments. You made some statements that like we would see some signs of—were encouraging. Those kind of statements which sound good in your written testimony.

But my question is for the American people—I mean, this is a huge investment, and I realize that it is a war on terrorism. I mean, many of us question whether we should have gone into Afghanistan, stayed in Afghanistan, gone after bin Ladin and al Qaeda instead of diverting to Iraq. But that damage is done. As Colin Powell said, you break it, you own it. Well, we own it. Sadly, mainly with blood.

My question to you is where—how can you say or how can you hope to encourage a national government when in this testimony today and in the days before people are talking about the great successes in Anbar, and that is not because of the national government. How can you take a country that has never had nationalism and believed that we can bring these people together when, as someone said before I spoke, I mean, they broke and decided not to meet with some of their responsibilities for 30 days. And that sent a bad signal to many people, maybe to our troops, maybe not to our troops. But how do you see this coming together, and how long will it take it to come together?

Ambassador CROCKER. Congressman, you pose, I think, the critical question; and that is why in my written testimony I focused a lot of attention on that.

What kind of state is ultimately going to emerge in Iraq because that is still very much an issue under discussion, a work in progress, with some elements of the population, mainly the Sunnis,

still focused on a strong central authority and others, mainly, but not exclusively, Kurds and Shi'as, saying it needs to be a decentralized federalism. So you have those differences. And even within those two camps often not a lot of detailed thought as to what either strong central authority or decentralized federalism would actually look like.

So, you know, that is part of the challenge. Iraqis will have to work through this.

Among the encouraging things I noted that I have seen is that now among Sunnis there is a discussion that maybe federalism is the way this country needs to go. That has in part been conditioned by the experience in Anbar but not exclusively.

That is why I say this is going to take time, and it is going to take further strategic patience on our part and further commitment. There simply are no easy, quick answers. There are no switches to flip that are going to cause the politics to come magically together. It is going to have to be worked through.

I believe that it can. I believe that the things that we have seen over the last six months and that I have described and General Petraeus has described do hold out cause for hope. But it is going to take their resolve and our backing to actually make that happen.

Now you mentioned Anbar. I think that that can be a very interesting illustration of this process, where something got started out in Anbar that the central government certainly didn't precipitate, but then the central government found ways to connect to it, both by hiring police and by providing additional resources to the provincial budget.

So, you know, this is going to be something that Iraqis are going to have to work through. I would like to be able to say we can get this done in six months or nine months or by next July. I can't sit here and do that.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Flake.

Mr. FLAKE. I thank you both for your enlightening testimony.

Ambassador Crocker, you mentioned there is abundant evidence that the security gains have opened the door for meaningful politics. I think we all agree that the purpose of the surge was to create the space necessary for the politicians to do their work. How do you strike a balance between giving them space and providing the convenient excuse not to reach conclusions on some of these debates?

They are talking about federalism, for example. We could have debates here on the topic. We do have such debates. Where—how do you respond to the criticism or the assumption that they would move faster if we had a more precipitous withdrawal or drawdown?

Ambassador CROCKER. I make two comments, sir.

First, we are engaged in this process. I spend a lot of my time, as does my staff, working with political figures, sorting through issues, offering advice, twisting some arms from time to time to help them get done what in many cases they have laid out as their own objectives but find it a little hard to actually get it over the finish line.

So we are involved in that and will continue to be.

With respect to the point on using leverage, using troops as leverage, to say we are going to start backing out of here regardless of whether you have got it done or not, as I said in a slightly different context earlier, I think we have to be very careful with that. Because if the notion takes hold among Iraqis that what we really do intend to do is just execute a non-conditions-based withdrawal, a person could say the famous precipitous withdrawal, I think it pushes them actually in the wrong direction. I think it creates a climate in which they are much less likely to compromise. Because they will be looking over our heads concluding that the U.S. is about to pull. So they had better be getting ready for what comes next, and what comes next will be a giant street fight.

It is not a climate I think that lends itself to compromise.

Mr. FLAKE. If I might then, without—putting troops aside then, what other leverage do we have? Aid that is contingent on them moving forward, you know, with regard to some of the benchmarks? What else is effective? Is there something that has been used in other scenarios, say the peace processes in Northern Ireland, where other—anything that you have used in prior diplomatic efforts that would be more useful here?

Ambassador CROCKER. Again, like so much else in Iraq, the political dynamic there is probably not unique in world history, but it is pretty special; and while we are always looking for good lessons from outside—in the case of Northern Ireland, for example, where an international commission was formed to help the people work through issues, we have gotten the documentation on that, and we have made it available to Iraqi political figures as something that we and they might work with. They are—they have got that under consideration.

Clearly, we do have leverage; and we do use it. I mean, the presence of 160,000 troops is a lot of leverage; and, you know, we are using those troops for their security. That gives us, again, not only the opportunity but the obligation to tell them they have got to use the space they are getting to move forward.

Mr. FLAKE. Quickly, for the General, some argue that the presence of U.S. troops gives al Qaeda simply a target. Is there a difference between their attacks on U.S. troops as opposed to attacks on other Coalition forces? I know there are different regions, but in Basra, for example, where the British have been.

General PETRAEUS. There are virtually no al Qaeda really in the southern part of Iraq because, of course, it is a Shi'a area and much less hospitable to them. We think there have been attacks over time occasionally but nothing at all recently in the southern part of Iraq.

Mr. FLAKE. In other areas, is there any evidence—I know we have performed different roles to different Coalition forces, but is there any evidence that they are more likely to attack America than other Coalition forces?

General PETRAEUS. No. In fact, they are probably more likely to attack Iraqi forces right now. In fact, they are very concerned by the rise of particularly these local volunteers who have been assimilated into the Iraqi forces because that represents a very, very significant challenge to them; and it means that locals are invested in security and, of course, they have an incentive that folks from

the outside can never have. They are going to fight and die for their neighborhood, again, in a way that others who might come in from elsewhere would not be willing to do the same.

So, in fact, we have seen a very substantial number of attacks on these forces as they have become more effective trying to take out their checkpoints, attack their bases, and so forth.

Mr. FLAKE. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Smith from Washington.

Mr. SMITH OF WASHINGTON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, General, Ambassador, for your service and for your testimony today.

I want to explore something we haven't talked that much about, and that is to some degree—Iraq to a very large degree is dividing along sectarian lines and has been for some time. I mean, if we are not there yet, we pretty soon will be to the point where there is no such thing as a mixed Shi'a-Sunni neighborhood.

So even while we are surging forward this ethnic cleansing division, whatever you want to call it, is going on, and I think there is a number of implications of that. One is it is sort of underscores the difficulty of reaching a solution.

You know, I guess I am the minority among some of my colleagues. I don't so much blame the Iraqis on this situation. It is an intractable situation. It is not like if they stuck around in August in parliament they would have solved this.

They have a deep division between Shi'a and Sunni that I think everyone in the room understands, and it is not a problem that leverage or anything is really going to solve. It is what it is. It is a reality on the ground, and I am concerned we don't seem to be reacting very much to that reality or as much as we should be. We still have this fantasy of a unity government in Iraq that we are supposedly fighting to create the space to come about. I think most people would have to acknowledge at this point it is not going to happen.

More on that in a second.

I have one quick question for General Petraeus. So when you figure out what ethno-sectarian violence is, you don't count Shi'a on Shi'a and Sunni on Sunni. And that is a little troubling in the sense that since this ethnic cleansing is going on and the neighborhoods are divided and a lot of the violence then comes down to once they have divided it that way then it is okay which Shi'a are going to be in charge and which Sunni are going to be in charge. To some degree, that is part of what is going on in Anbar.

General PETRAEUS. First of all, Congressman, we count in the civilian deaths, include all deaths, as I mentioned. They are in there.

We are focused on sectarian violence, ethno-sectarian violence, because in some cases it is Arabs and Kurds as well. Because that is what eats at the fabric of Iraqi society. That is what tore the fabric of Iraqi society in the latter part of 2006—if I could finish, sir—and it does not stop. It never stops until it is stopped by something else. And what we want to have happen is to have it stopped because there is a sustainable security situation; and, in some cases, we help it stop by cement walls.

Mr. SMITH OF WASHINGTON. That could well be, but what I said is essentially accurate that you don't count—in the charts that we

showed, you weren't showing the civilian deaths. You were showing——

General PETRAEUS. I did show you civilian deaths. In the chart, there are civilian deaths. I showed that slide, and that has come down substantially. Now it has not come down as much outside Baghdad because of the mass casualty attacks carried out by al Qaeda. And we account all of those, all civilian deaths. That is why I showed that slide and then showed the subset of that slide which is the ethno-sectarian deaths. We focus on that because of the damage that ethno-sectarian violence does to neighborhoods, particularly again in Baghdad.

And the problem with the discussion is that Baghdad is a mixed province still, as are Babil, Wasit, Diyala and other areas of Iraq; and beyond that, beyond that, the resources are provided by a central government.

So with the mechanism that exists now under the Iraqi constitution there has to be representation of and responsiveness to all Iraqis in that government to ensure that all due get——

Mr. SMITH OF WASHINGTON. My time is very limited. I wanted to ask Ambassador Crocker a question.

General PETRAEUS. Thank you for letting me answer that, anyway.

Mr. SMITH OF WASHINGTON. The question then is, what is the political solution we are moving towards? And that is what is most concerning to us. And the bottom line is, even under General Petraeus's description, in July of 2007 we will have roughly the same number of troops in Iraq that we have in January of 2007.

Now a lot of progress has happened, but that is obviously a problem for us. What is the political solution that we are working toward where the conditions are in place that we can begin to end our occupation? Keeping in mind the fact that this ethnic division is happening—and maybe Ambassador Crocker can correct me if I am wrong—but Baghdad is separating along ethnic lines, is it not, and what are the implications of where we are headed with all of this?

Ambassador CROCKER. Baghdad, like so many other parts of Iraq, in spite of the sectarian violence that occurred, remains a very mixed area; and that is why, again, abruptly changing course now could have some extremely nasty humanitarian consequences.

Iraq is still, to a large degree, an intermixed society. Now that puts special weight on the question you asked. So what kind of political society is it going to be?

According to the constitution, Iraq is a Federal state. The debate is over what kind of Federal state. Iraqis are going to need to work through this.

The encouraging news I see is that now all communities increasingly are ready to talk about translating federalism down to a practical level, and that is a conversation that very much does need to take place.

But, as I tried to lay out in my testimony, there is a tremendous amount of unfinished business here. There is that debate. There is within that debate the whole question of how the center and the periphery relate. For example, a hot debate that I had a chance to witness among Iraq's leaders was over can a provincial governor

under certain circumstances, emergency circumstances command Federal forces. That is a pretty big issue, and it is an unresolved issue.

So that is why in everything I said I tried to lay out that I see reasons to believe that Iraq can stabilize as a secure, democratic Federal state at peace with its neighbors, under the rule of law and an ally on the war on terrorism, but it is going to take a lot of work, and it is going to take time.

Mr. TAYLOR [presiding]. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York, Mr. Engel.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to say at the outset, gentlemen, that I respect both of you, and I thank you both for your service to the Nation. I am respectful of our troops who put their lives on the line for us every day. But I really must disagree with a lot of what I have heard here today.

The American people are fed up. I am fed up. And essentially what I am hearing from both of you today is essentially stay the course in Iraq.

How long can we put up with staying the course? Young Americans are dying in someone else's civil war, as far as I am concerned.

Ambassador Crocker, you mentioned that Iraq would slip into civil war if we leave. I mean, we are in civil war now. It has become apparent to me that the Iraqis will not step up until we step out, and as long as we have what seems to be an open-ended commitment, Iraqis will never step up. So we will have an open-ended commitment with many, many troops. At some point, you have to ask, is this the best way to keep the U.S. safe?

General Petraeus, you said that the Iraqi politicians were understanding more and more about the threat from Iran. Mr. Maliki is supported by a pro-Iranian parliamentarians in the parliament. That keeps his coalition in power. So how much can he really go against Iran? He is a product of Iran. His people that back him are supporters of Iran.

You know, for years we keep hearing rosy, upbeat pictures about Iraq. Victory is right around the corner, things are going well, and it never seems to materialize.

General Petraeus, I have an article here called "Battling for Iraq." It is an op-ed piece that you wrote three years ago in the *Washington Post*—today, this month, September—three years ago, and I want to just quote some of the things you said.

You said, now, however, 18 months after entering Iraq, I see tangible progress. Iraqi security elements are being rebuilt from the ground up.

You wrote that you said the institutions that oversee them are being re-established from the top down, and Iraqi leaders are stepping forward leading their country and their security forces courageously in the face of an enemy that has shown a willingness to do anything to disrupt the establishment of a new Iraq.

You talk about Iraqi police and soldiers and you say they are performing a wide variety of security missions. Training is on track and increasing in capacity.

And, finally, you said in this article, op-ed piece, three years ago, I meet with Iraqi Security Forces every day. I have seen the deter-

mination and the desire to assume the full burden of security tasked for Iraq. Iraqi Security Forces are developing steadily, and they are in the fight. Momentum has gathered in recent months.

So today you said—and I will just quote a few things: Coalition and Iraqi Security Forces have achieved progress in the security area. Iraqis Security Forces have also continued to grow and to shoulder more of the load.

And, finally, you said, the progress our forces have achieved with our Iraqi counterparts, as I noted at the outset, has been substantial.

So I guess my question really is, you know, why should we believe that your assessment today is any more accurate than it was three years ago in September of 2004? Three years ago, I was able to listen to the optimism, but, frankly, I find it hard to listen now four years plus into this war with no end in sight. Optimism is great, but reality is what we really need.

General PETRAEUS. Well, thank you, Congressman. I actually appreciate the opportunity to talk about that op-ed piece, because I stand by it.

I think what I said there was accurate. There are also a number of items in there that talk about the challenges that Iraq faced, about hardships that lay ahead, and a number of other items that are included in that piece.

And what I would note, by the way, is that Iraqis are dying in combat, are taking losses that are typically two to three, closer to three times ours in an average month. They are stepping up to the plate.

What did happen between that time and the progress that we started—all I was doing was saying was that we were getting our act together with the train and equip program and that we were beginning—training is on track. That is what it was. It was on track, and it was moving along. And over the course of the next 6, 8, 12 months, in fact, it generally continued to progress.

And then along came sectarian violence, and certainly the February bombing of the Gold Dome Mosque in Samara, and you saw what that did to the country of Iraq. It literally tore the fabric of Iraqi society at large between Sunni and Shi'a. And literally some of those forces that we were proud of in the beginning took enormous steps backward and were high-jacked by sectarian forces and influences at that time.

What I have tried to provide today is not a rosy picture. I have tried to provide an accurate picture. As I said, I have long since gone from being a pessimist or an optimist about Iraq. I am a realist. We have learned lessons very much the hard way. And, again, the damage done by sectarian violence in particular has been a huge setback for the overall effort; and it resulted in the change that had to be carried out as a result of General Casey and Ambassador Khalilzad assessing in December of 2006 that the effort was failing to achieve its objectives. That is where we were; and, as I mentioned, we have then made changes to that that have enabled the military progress that I have talked about.

And that is military progress indeed that has emerged certainly most in the last three months since the mid-June surge of offenses.

But it is something that we certainly are going to do all that we can to build on and to continue in the weeks and months ahead.

Mr. ENGEL. General, that was three years ago, and this is three years later. Will be we saying the same thing three years later?

Mr. TAYLOR. You are a minute over your time.

Mr. Akin.

Mr. AKIN. I wanted to say, General Petraeus, Ambassador Crocker, thank you for your service. I thank you, and I know my son who is having a little free time over in Fallujah would also like to thank you for your good service as well.

I would also like to compliment you on your testimony today. It is professional and credible, as we anticipated that it would be.

But some of us sitting here were guessing—trying to figure out what you are going to say today. And one of the things that did surprise me a bit was that you seem to be a little gentler on the Iraqi parliament and maybe not quite as aggressive on federalism, which seems to be working well in working with the local level.

So I guess my question is this: Instead of threatening, well, we are going to take our troops and go home, does it not make sense to a certain degree to say, look, if the national legislature can't figure out when to have elections in Anbar Province, we will help—we will take care of that for you. We will go ahead and schedule those. And, by the way, you need to understand that Anbar and the different provinces are going to be able to take care of their own garbage collection and police and all this, the types of things that we think of as local government functions, and can we not be building at the local level at the same time as at the Federal level both in terms of political leverage to encourage, to spur each one on, but also just because of the local progress seems to be working pretty well.

And my last question that kind of goes—if you comment on that, then the next piece would be, if we wanted to elect the equivalent of a mayor of a city or people to a city council that are not working for, you know, at the Federal level, do we have the authority to do that and can that process take place and is that happening?

Ambassador CROCKER. That is a series of good questions.

Let me start by saying that we are very much focused on how we can help in the provinces. In Anbar, for example, we have got three embedded PRTs as well as the main PRT out there. Been working very closely with the Marines on just these kinds of issues.

Okay, you have got a municipality now; and, by the way, of course, Iraq is now at the stage where Iraqis are forming their own municipal governments.

Mr. AKIN. Are they doing that right now?

Ambassador CROCKER. Yes, sir.

Mr. AKIN. Do they elect people to run? So that is going on right now?

Ambassador CROCKER. That is one of the other elements of the Anbar phenomenon. I think that every town of significance in Anbar has an elected mayor and municipal council; and the mission we have got is doing everything we can, military and civilians, to try to help these new councils learn to act like their councils. To, you know, deliver services, to pick up the trash. That is a major priority, and it is important.

At the same time, we do encourage, as I said, the linkages up and down the lines so that the municipal councils are tied in to the provincial council. Because that is where the provincial budget is executed, not just in Anbar but everywhere in the country. So that the municipalities are getting their share as well.

And this is not as easy as it may sound in a country that, at least since the 1960's—and you can argue all the way back to the creation of Iraq as a modern state—has never had that kind of contract between its government and its people.

So, again, it is part of the revolution and progress, if you will.

But we have seen that as conditions—as security conditions stabilize, a lot of things start happening, like these municipal councils, like the focus on services, like linkages from top to bottom.

And, again, Iraqis talk about federalism, but what does that mean in a case where resources all flow from the center? You know, the budget for Anbar comes from Baghdad. They don't have the capacity to develop a revenue base independently.

So all of those things are in play, and they have been in play basically just since security started to improve out there.

A tremendous amount has happened in a fairly short time which gives me, again, some encouragement that, as security conditions stabilize in other parts of the country, you can see not the same process, because as I said earlier, each place has its own unique characteristics, but roughly similar processes start to catch hold.

Mr. TAYLOR. The gentleman from Arkansas, Mr. Boozman.

Mr. BOOZMAN. General Petraeus, when I was over visiting not too long ago with you, two or three weeks ago, one of the real concerns that I had after I left was in visiting with the guys that had been there for a while, what I would call the backbone in the military, many of those guys were on their third deployment, and I am pleased to hear that, because we are making progress and we are going to be able to withdraw, occasionally we will have votes here that maybe mandate that you have to go over, you know, you have got to come back for the same amount of time that you have gone.

Besides the argument of not wanting to micromanage the war from Congress, which I believe very strongly that we shouldn't do, what does that do to your flexibility if we were to actually pass something like that?

General PETRAEUS. Congressman, that is not really a question that I can answer. That would have to be one that the Chief of Staff of the Army or the Commandant of the Marine Corps would have to address.

My job, as you know, is to request forces and then try to make the best possible use of them. Now I am not really sufficiently knowledgeable in what the status is at this point in time of reaching a point where we can start extending the time that forces are at home and so forth.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Let me ask very quickly, Mr. Crocker, one of the frustrations I have had in traveling there has been that the efforts to try—our Voice of America (VOA)-type efforts that was so successful against the Soviet Union, sometimes the people in the region have not spoken very well of that through the years. Is that better? Can you tell us a little bit about what we are trying to do to get the hearts and minds through the media?

Ambassador CROCKER. Yes, sir. That has, of course, been something that we have been engaged in since 2003, and, as you suggest, with some fairly mixed results in trying to get this right. We have got a couple of vehicles out there for it. One of them is Al Hurra, which has, quite frankly, as I understand it, been involved in a few controversies and has gone through some high-level personnel changes; as well as, of course, VOA, which has been a stalwart all along, as you point out. It is a complex media environment in Iraq and in the region, and it requires having people in place who know how messages resonate and who know how to put them together.

I was in Iraq in 2003 for several months as we put together the governing council and our first media efforts, and coming back a little over four years later, I have been impressed by the progress we have made. But to be completely frank with you, I think we still have a way to go both in Iraq and in the region in articulating an effective message to Arab audiences.

Mr. BOOZMAN. General Petraeus, I have tremendous respect for you and tremendous respect for General Jones. A lot of people have alluded that that report would be helpful. I think it would be helpful to me and others if at some point that perhaps you could maybe respond through writing or whatever some of the ideas that he has got that differ than the ideas of you. I would just encourage you, again, that would be very helpful to me if at some point you could delineate the differences that you have and then why.

I yield back.

Mr. TAYLOR. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California, Ms. Sanchez.

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ OF CALIFORNIA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, gentlemen, for being before us today. It is good to see you both again.

Gentlemen, as usual, I have tons of questions, General and Ambassador, but let me limit it to this one. The BBC released the results of a poll conducted in August that indicate that Iraqi opinion is at the gloomiest state ever since the BBC and ABC News polls began in February 2004. According to the latest poll, between 67 and 70 percent of Iraqis say that the surge has made things worse in some key areas, including security and the conditions for political dialogue, reconstruction, and economic developments. Since the last BBC-ABC News poll in February, the number of Iraqis who think that the U.S.-led coalition forces should leave immediately has risen sharply, from 35 to 47 percent, and 85 percent of Iraqis say they have little or no confidence in the U.S. and U.K. Forces.

So I know a lot of politicians live by polls, and I realize that the U.S. policy in Iraq shouldn't simply follow the polls, because there can be a wide range of influence on some of this. Nevertheless, it is a fundamental principle of the U.S. Army counterinsurgency doctrine that the attitudes of the population are an important center of gravity in such a conflict. I think that was stated in our counterinsurgency manual.

First, I have three questions for you. Were you aware of the poll? Do you have your own polling? And what are your findings versus the attitudes of the Iraqi public that we find in the BBC poll?

Second, how do you explain the sharply negative perception of Iraqis regarding security conditions in Iraq since the surge began? If your data so indicates that dramatic and sharp declines in violence have happened in the last three months, then why isn't it reflected in the attitudes of the Iraqi citizens who are living this hell day by day?

And third, one of the cornerstones of your counterinsurgency strategy is to deploy U.S. forces into the areas where they conduct operations, and the BBC poll indicates a dramatic increase in the percentage of Iraqis who want U.S. led forces to leave Iraq. And that supports the finding of the independent commission by General Jones that said massive troop presence and U.S. military facilities creates the negative perception among Iraqis that U.S. forces are a long-term occupying force. So how concerned are you that this apparent decline in public confidence is happening due to that, and how do we address it? Is it a public relations problem, or is there a substantive strategy issue that we need to face?

And I will start with the Ambassador.

Ambassador CROCKER. Thank you very much, Congresswoman.

No, I have not seen this particular poll. As you know, there are a lot of polls out there, and, to say the least, I think polling in Iraq at this point is probably a fairly inexact science, which is not to call into question this particular poll. I simply don't know. I know that I have seen——

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ OF CALIFORNIA. It is a BBC-ABC poll. They usually know how to conduct surveys quite well, I would say. I certainly find they count better than most of our generals count in Iraq. And General Petraeus will know what I mean by that.

Ambassador CROCKER. I have seen other national polling data that shows, for example, that the number of Iraqis who feel secure in their own neighborhoods and indeed feel secure moving around the city has gone up significantly. I don't know whether that is accurate either.

What I do know, since Iraq with all of its problems and imperfections is now an open political society where political figures do have a sense of where their constituencies are, that all of Iraq's principal leaders have registered the sense they have that there has been an improvement of security in the course of the surge. And they have also been very clear that they credit Multi-National Forces with much of that improvement, and that they don't want to see any marked precipitative reduction in how those forces are deployed until conditions sustain it.

Another example I would give you is the communique of the leaders on 26 August in which these five individuals who have some pretty substantial differences among them were all prepared to sign on to language that called for a long-term strategic relationship with the U.S. so, again——

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ OF CALIFORNIA. Well, sure. They want our money, and they want our—you know, I mean, we are about the only thing going on in the economy.

Ambassador CROCKER. Well, actually, there is a lot starting to go on in the economy. Again, we talked about what we are seeing in terms of provincial development.

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ OF CALIFORNIA. Potential development.

Ambassador CROCKER. Provincial development. That is coming out of the central treasury, and it is generating economic activity. We support that. We have a number of programs of our own that we work in coordination with the Iraqi Government. But there is economic activity. Again, it is anecdotal. But what I have noticed going around Baghdad is people, because they are feeling relatively better about their security conditions, are now asking, okay, so where are the services?

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ OF CALIFORNIA. Again, why is the poll so far off from your anecdotal?

Ambassador CROCKER. Ma'am, I haven't seen the poll. I don't know what the margin of error is or how it was conducted.

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ OF CALIFORNIA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

We have an ongoing vote. We are told they will hold the vote open for an extra two or three minutes for us. I don't believe we have time to call on additional Members, which I regret.

And I thank you for staying the additional 20 minutes, Mr. Ambassador and General. We all appreciate your being with us, your professionalism, and your duty to our country.

With that, we will adjourn the hearing.

[Whereupon, at 6:45 p.m., the joint committee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

SEPTEMBER 10, 2007

PREPARED STATEMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

SEPTEMBER 10, 2007

OPENING REMARKS OF RANKING MEMBER HUNTER

Hearing on the Status of the War and Political Developments in Iraq

September 10, 2007

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to start off by saying that this session is truly historic. Rarely have I seen such anticipation of a hearing from the Congress, from the media, and from the American public. I also appreciate the opportunity to have such outstanding partners in the form of my esteemed Foreign Affairs colleagues during this critical hearing.

Before I get into the substance of today's topic, I want to say something clearly and for the record: our witnesses–both General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker–have devoted their lives in service of our great nation and the American people. They have long, outstanding records of public service. These records are indisputable evidence of the integrity, candor, and patriotism with which they've served.

I also want to highlight the extreme care that both gentlemen have taken to keep their testimony independent from political influences. While they have discussed the military, economic, and political situation in Iraq with their chains of command–including President Bush, Secretary Gates, and Secretary Rice–I understand they did not "clear" their testimony with these bosses. I also understand this lack of information and input has been causing considerable consternation among White House, Pentagon, and State Department officials. And I see that as proof that today's testimony is as apolitical and independent as possible.

Given both of these factors–General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker's long, distinguished records of service and their insistence on keeping the Administration from reviewing or modifying their statements–I have no reason to doubt the integrity and truthfulness of the testimony we will hear today. I hope my colleagues feel the same and offer the same warm welcome and attentiveness to our witnesses.

Mr. Chairman, we've heard several different perspectives on the 18 benchmarks that Congress laid out in the Supplemental Appropriations Act just three months ago. These benchmarks were intended to measure the political, economic, and military progress of the Iraqi government, a government that is newly stood up and clumsy, as most new governments are. The President provided an interim progress report on these 18 benchmarks in July and will provide an updated progress report later this week. The Government Accountability Office provided us with a different view on these same benchmarks last week.

I appreciate everyone's efforts on assessing these metrics, but I can't help but wonder: **Do these benchmarks really provide a good or complete picture of what is happening on the ground?** None of those 18 benchmarks reflected the reduction of attacks in Anbar Province from 1,350 last October to less than one-fifth of that today. None reflected that Iraqi civilian deaths in Baghdad have dropped 74 percent from December to last month or that the number of violent incidents against civilians, Iraqi security forces, and coalition forces throughout Iraq has

declined in 8 of the last 11 weeks. Even Comptroller General David Walker expressed concern during testimony last week that the 18 benchmarks are **incapable** of measuring improvements at the local level or in the daily lives of the Iraqi people.

And if these metrics can't give an accurate picture of progress, where do we look to get an accurate assessment of what's going on? The soldiers, marines, diplomats, and other experts who live and work in Iraq–professionals like General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker–have a clearer view of progress at all levels. And while I look forward to hearing from Ambassador Crocker about political and economic efforts–including the steps the Iraqi government must take to achieve greater progress–I am even more eager to hear from General Petraeus about several items of great concern to the Armed Services Committee:

- What missions has he assigned our men and women in uniform and how are they doing;

- How do our servicemembers feel about the military surge that is supporting the overall new strategy for Iraq;
- What are his recommendations regarding future U.S. missions and force size; and
- How are Iraqi Security Forces performing?

As our witnesses know, I believe strongly that the most important element in a successful hand-off of security responsibilities to the Iraqis is the development of a reliable, capable Iraqi military. We heard from General Jim Jones and his independent commission last week that "many units in the Iraqi Army can now fight well… and appear to have a greater will to fight than was present in 2005 and 2006." The current Iraqi Army is about 131 battalions strong, and they are **not** the same green force that didn't show up for formation during the battle of Fallujah a couple of years ago. I've talked to my son–a Marine who served in Anbar–and his friends. Armed Services Committee members have heard testimony and had off-the-record discussions that Iraqi forces now not only show up for formation at all levels of rank but they are

standing and fighting alongside our military. This is especially remarkable in Anbar, where more and more Iraqis are signing up for the Iraqi Security Forces to work with each other, with local tribal leaders, and with coalition forces against Al Qaeda and other groups that are disrupting their lives.

We must use this momentum and make sure that every one of the 131 Iraqi Army battalions has what it needs to conduct operations. And we need to ensure that these forces rotate into battlefield operations and gain real-world combat experience. Then they can displace American heavy combat forces, which can then begin to depart responsibly for the United States or elsewhere where they're needed.

So I would like to hear from our witnesses about the maturity level of the Iraqi army at this point.

Finally, I want to address the issue raised by the media and others, who say that the military surge is not working. Many of my colleagues

have noted that the United States has the finest fighting force in the world. The increased presence of this force in Iraq has produced greater stability and security so let's be honest: **the military surge is working.** We can have a lengthy debate about the overall strategy for Iraq, the progress that has been made, and the realistic potential for future progress. But we should all agree: **our military men and women have not failed.**

Our troops need to hear that they're doing a great job. And we need to tell them as often as we can.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for holding this hearing. To my esteemed colleagues on the Armed Services and Foreign Affairs committees, I welcome the opportunity to participate in this historic hearing with you. And I look forward to the testimony of our distinguished witnesses.

Report to Congress on the Situation in Iraq

General David H. Petraeus
Commander, Multi-National Force-Iraq
10-11 September 2007

Mr. Chairmen, Ranking Members, Members of the Committees, thank you for the opportunity to provide my assessment of the security situation in Iraq and to discuss the recommendations I recently provided to my chain of command for the way forward.

At the outset, I would like to note that this is my testimony. Although I have briefed my assessment and recommendations to my chain of command, I wrote this testimony myself. It has not been cleared by, nor shared with, anyone in the Pentagon, the White House, or Congress.

As a bottom line up front, the military objectives of the surge are, in large measure, being met. In recent months, in the face of tough enemies and the brutal summer heat of Iraq, Coalition and Iraqi Security Forces have achieved progress in the security arena. Though the improvements have been uneven across Iraq, the overall number of security incidents in Iraq has declined in 8 of the past 12 weeks, with the numbers of incidents in the last two weeks at the lowest levels seen since June 2006.

One reason for the decline in incidents is that Coalition and Iraqi forces have dealt significant blows to Al Qaeda-Iraq. Though Al Qaeda and its affiliates in Iraq remain dangerous, we have taken away a number of their sanctuaries and gained the initiative in many areas.

We have also disrupted Shia militia extremists, capturing the head and numerous other leaders of the Iranian-supported Special Groups, along with a senior Lebanese Hezbollah operative supporting Iran's activities in Iraq.

Coalition and Iraqi operations have helped reduce ethno-sectarian violence, as well, bringing down the number of ethno-sectarian deaths substantially in Baghdad and across Iraq since the height of the sectarian violence last December. The number of overall civilian deaths has also declined during this period, although the numbers in each area are still at troubling levels.

Iraqi Security Forces have also continued to grow and to shoulder more of the load, albeit slowly and amid continuing concerns about the sectarian tendencies of some elements in their ranks. In general, however, Iraqi elements have been standing and fighting and sustaining tough losses, and they have taken the lead in operations in many areas.

Additionally, in what may be the most significant development of the past 8 months, the tribal rejection of Al Qaeda that started in Anbar Province and helped produce such significant change there has now spread to a number of other locations as well.

Based on all this and on the further progress we believe we can achieve over the next few months, I believe that we will be able to reduce our forces to the pre-surge level of brigade

combat teams by next summer without jeopardizing the security gains that we have fought so hard to achieve.

Beyond that, while noting that the situation in Iraq remains complex, difficult, and sometimes downright frustrating, I also believe that it is possible to achieve our objectives in Iraq over time, though doing so will be neither quick nor easy.

Having provided that summary, I would like to review the nature of the conflict in Iraq, recall the situation before the surge, describe the current situation, and explain the recommendations I have provided to my chain of command for the way ahead in Iraq.

The Nature of the Conflict

The fundamental source of the conflict in Iraq is competition among ethnic and sectarian communities for power and resources. This competition will take place, and its resolution is key to producing long-term stability in the new Iraq. The question is whether the competition takes place more – or less – violently. This chart shows the security challenges in Iraq. Foreign and home-grown terrorists, insurgents, militia extremists, and criminals all push the ethno-sectarian competition toward violence. Malign actions by Syria and, especially, by Iran fuel that violence. Lack of adequate governmental capacity, lingering sectarian mistrust, and various forms of corruption add to Iraq's challenges.

The Situation in December 2006 and the Surge

In our recent efforts to look to the future, we found it useful to revisit the past. In December 2006, during the height of the ethno-sectarian violence that escalated in the wake of the bombing of the Golden Dome Mosque in Samarra, the leaders in Iraq at that time – General George Casey and Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad – concluded that the coalition was failing to achieve its objectives. Their review underscored the need to protect the population and reduce sectarian violence, especially in Baghdad. As a result, General Casey requested additional forces to enable the Coalition to accomplish these tasks, and those forces began to flow in January.

In the ensuing months, our forces and our Iraqi counterparts have focused on improving security, especially in Baghdad and the areas around it, wresting sanctuaries from Al Qaeda control, and disrupting the efforts of the Iranian-supported militia extremists. We have employed counterinsurgency practices that underscore the importance of units living among the people they are securing, and accordingly, our forces have established dozens of joint security stations and patrol bases manned by Coalition and Iraqi forces in Baghdad and in other areas across Iraq.

In mid-June, with all the surge brigades in place, we launched a series of offensive operations focused on: expanding the gains achieved in the preceding months in Anbar Province; clearing Baqubah, several key Baghdad neighborhoods, the remaining sanctuaries in Anbar Province, and important areas in the so-called "belts" around Baghdad; and pursuing Al Qaeda in the Diyala River Valley and several other areas.

Throughout this period, as well, we engaged in dialogue with insurgent groups and tribes, and this led to additional elements standing up to oppose Al Qaeda and other extremists. We also continued to emphasize the development of the Iraqi Security Forces and we employed non-kinetic means to exploit the opportunities provided by the conduct of our kinetic operations – aided in this effort by the arrival of additional Provincial Reconstruction Teams.

Current Situation and Trends

The progress our forces have achieved with our Iraqi counterparts has, as I noted at the outset, been substantial. While there have been setbacks as well as successes and tough losses along the way, overall, our tactical commanders and I see improvements in the security environment. We do not, however, just rely on gut feel or personal observations; we also conduct considerable data collection and analysis to gauge progress and determine trends. We do this by gathering and refining data from coalition and Iraqi operations centers, using a methodology that has been in place for well over a year and that has benefited over the past seven months from the increased presence of our forces living among the Iraqi people. We endeavor to ensure our analysis of that data is conducted with rigor and consistency, as our ability to achieve a nuanced understanding of the security environment is dependent on collecting and analyzing data in a consistent way over time. Two US intelligence agencies recently reviewed our methodology, and they concluded that the data we produce is the most accurate and authoritative in Iraq.

As I mentioned up front, and as the chart before you reflects, the level of security incidents has decreased significantly since the start of the surge of offensive operations in mid-June, declining in 8 of the past 12 weeks, with the level of incidents in the past two weeks the lowest since June 2006 and with the number of attacks this past week the lowest since April 2006.

Civilian deaths of all categories, less natural causes, have also declined considerably, by over 45% Iraq-wide since the height of the sectarian violence in December. This is shown by the top line on this chart, and the decline by some 70% in Baghdad is shown by the bottom line. Periodic mass casualty attacks by Al Qaeda have tragically added to the numbers outside Baghdad, in particular. Even without the sensational attacks, however, the level of civilian deaths is clearly still too high and continues to be of serious concern.

As the next chart shows, the number of ethno-sectarian deaths, an important subset of the overall civilian casualty figures, has also declined significantly since the height of the sectarian violence in December. Iraq-wide, as shown by the top line on this chart, the number of ethno-sectarian deaths has come down by over 55%, and it would have come down much further were it not for the casualties inflicted by barbaric Al Qaeda bombings attempting to reignite sectarian violence. In Baghdad, as the bottom line shows, the number of ethno-sectarian deaths has come down by some 80% since December. This chart also displays the density of sectarian incidents in various Baghdad neighborhoods and it both reflects the progress made in reducing ethno-sectarian violence in the Iraqi capital and identifies the areas that remain the most challenging.

As we have gone on the offensive in former Al Qaeda and insurgent sanctuaries, and as locals have increasingly supported our efforts, we have found a substantially increased number of arms, ammunition, and explosives caches. As this chart shows, we have, so far this year, already found

and cleared over 4,400 caches, nearly 1,700 more than we discovered in all of last year. This may be a factor in the reduction in the number of overall improvised explosive device attacks in recent months, which as this chart shows, has declined sharply, by about one-third, since June.

The change in the security situation in Anbar Province has, of course, been particularly dramatic. As this chart shows, monthly attack levels in Anbar have declined from some 1,350 in October 2006 to a bit over 200 in August of this year. This dramatic decrease reflects the significance of the local rejection of Al Qaeda and the newfound willingness of local Anbaris to volunteer to serve in the Iraqi Army and Iraqi Police Service. As I noted earlier, we are seeing similar actions in other locations, as well.

To be sure, trends have not been uniformly positive across Iraq, as is shown by this chart depicting violence levels in several key Iraqi provinces. The trend in Ninevah Province, for example, has been much more up and down, until a recent decline, and the same is true in Sala ad Din Province, though recent trends there and in Baghdad have been in the right direction. In any event, the overall trajectory in Iraq – a steady decline of incidents in the past three months – is still quite significant.

The number of car bombings and suicide attacks has also declined in each of the past 5 months, from a high of some 175 in March, as this chart shows, to about 90 this past month. While this trend in recent months has been heartening, the number of high profile attacks is still too high, and we continue to work hard to destroy the networks that carry out these barbaric attacks.

Our operations have, in fact, produced substantial progress against Al Qaeda and its affiliates in Iraq. As this chart shows, in the past 8 months, we have considerably reduced the areas in which Al Qaeda enjoyed sanctuary. We have also neutralized 5 media cells, detained the senior Iraqi leader of Al Qaeda-Iraq, and killed or captured nearly 100 other key leaders and some 2,500 rank-and-file fighters. Al Qaeda is certainly not defeated; however, it is off balance and we are pursuing its leaders and operators aggressively. Of note, as the recent National Intelligence Estimate on Iraq explained, these gains against Al Qaeda are a result of the synergy of actions by: conventional forces to deny the terrorists sanctuary; intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance assets to find the enemy; and special operations elements to conduct targeted raids. A combination of these assets is necessary to prevent the creation of a terrorist safe haven in Iraq.

In the past six months we have also targeted Shia militia extremists, capturing a number of senior leaders and fighters, as well as the deputy commander of Lebanese Hezbollah Department 2800, the organization created to support the training, arming, funding, and, in some cases, direction of the militia extremists by the Iranian Republican Guard Corps' Qods Force. These elements have assassinated and kidnapped Iraqi governmental leaders, killed and wounded our soldiers with advanced explosive devices provided by Iran, and indiscriminately rocketed civilians in the International Zone and elsewhere. It is increasingly apparent to both Coalition and Iraqi leaders that Iran, through the use of the Qods Force, seeks to turn the Iraqi Special Groups into a Hezbollah-like force to serve its interests and fight a proxy war against the Iraqi state and coalition forces in Iraq.

The most significant development in the past six months likely has been the increasing emergence of tribes and local citizens rejecting Al Qaeda and other extremists. This has, of course, been most visible in Anbar Province. A year ago the province was assessed as "lost" politically. Today, it is a model of what happens when local leaders and citizens decide to oppose Al Qaeda and reject its Taliban-like ideology. While Anbar is unique and the model it provides cannot be replicated everywhere in Iraq, it does demonstrate the dramatic change in security that is possible with the support and participation of local citizens. As this chart shows, other tribes have been inspired by the actions of those in Anbar and have volunteered to fight extremists as well. We have, in coordination with the Iraqi government's National Reconciliation Committee, been engaging these tribes and groups of local citizens who want to oppose extremists and to contribute to local security. Some 20,000 such individuals are already being hired for the Iraqi Police, thousands of others are being assimilated into the Iraqi Army, and thousands more are vying for a spot in Iraq's Security Forces.

Iraqi Security Forces

As I noted earlier, Iraqi Security Forces have continued to grow, to develop their capabilities, and to shoulder more of the burden of providing security for their country. Despite concerns about sectarian influence, inadequate logistics and supporting institutions, and an insufficient number of qualified commissioned and non-commissioned officers, Iraqi units are engaged around the country.

As this chart shows, there are now nearly 140 Iraqi Army, National Police, and Special Operations Forces Battalions in the fight, with about 95 of those capable of taking the lead in operations, albeit with some coalition support. Beyond that, all of Iraq's battalions have been heavily involved in combat operations that often result in the loss of leaders, soldiers, and equipment. These losses are among the shortcomings identified by operational readiness assessments, but we should not take from these assessments the impression that Iraqi forces are not in the fight and contributing. Indeed, despite their shortages, many Iraqi units across Iraq now operate with minimal coalition assistance.

As counterinsurgency operations require substantial numbers of boots on the ground, we are helping the Iraqis expand the size of their security forces. Currently, there are some 445,000 individuals on the payrolls of Iraq's Interior and Defense Ministries. Based on recent decisions by Prime Minister Maliki, the number of Iraq's security forces will grow further by the end of this year, possibly by as much as 40,000. Given the security challenges Iraq faces, we support this decision, and we will work with the two security ministries as they continue their efforts to expand their basic training capacity, leader development programs, logistical structures and elements, and various other institutional capabilities to support the substantial growth in Iraqi forces.

Significantly, in 2007, Iraq will, as in 2006, spend more on its security forces than it will receive in security assistance from the United States. In fact, Iraq is becoming one of the United States' larger foreign military sales customers, committing some $1.6 billion to FMS already, with the possibility of up to $1.8 billion more being committed before the end of this year. And I

appreciate the attention that some members of Congress have recently given to speeding up the FMS process for Iraq.

To summarize, the security situation in Iraq is improving, and Iraqis elements are slowly taking on more of the responsibility for protecting their citizens. Innumerable challenges lie ahead; however, Coalition and Iraqi Security Forces have made progress toward achieving sustainable security. As a result, the United States will be in a position to reduce its forces in Iraq in the months ahead.

Recommendations

Two weeks ago I provided recommendations for the way ahead in Iraq to the members of my chain of command and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The essence of the approach I recommended is captured in its title: "Security While Transitioning: From Leading to Partnering to Overwatch." This approach seeks to build on the security improvements our troopers and our Iraqi counterparts have fought so hard to achieve in recent months. It reflects recognition of the importance of securing the population and the imperative of transitioning responsibilities to Iraqi institutions and Iraqi forces as quickly as possible, but without rushing to failure. It includes substantial support for the continuing development of Iraqi Security Forces. It also stresses the need to continue the counterinsurgency strategy that we have been employing, but with Iraqis gradually shouldering more of the load. And it highlights the importance of regional and global diplomatic approaches. Finally, in recognition of the fact that this war is not only being fought on the ground in Iraq but also in cyberspace, it also notes the need to contest the enemy's growing use of that important medium to spread extremism.

The recommendations I provided were informed by operational and strategic considerations. The operational considerations include recognition that:

- military aspects of the surge have achieved progress and generated momentum;
- Iraqi Security Forces have continued to grow and have slowly been shouldering more of the security burden in Iraq;
- a mission focus on either population security or transition alone will not be adequate to achieve our objectives;
- success against Al Qaeda-Iraq and Iranian-supported militia extremists requires conventional forces as well as special operations forces; and
- the security and local political situations will enable us to draw down the surge forces.

My recommendations also took into account a number of strategic considerations:

- political progress will take place only if sufficient security exists;
- long-term US ground force viability will benefit from force reductions as the surge runs its course;
- regional, global, and cyberspace initiatives are critical to success; and
- Iraqi leaders understandably want to assume greater sovereignty in their country, although, as they recently announced, they do desire continued presence of coalition forces in Iraq in 2008 under a new UN Security Council Resolution and, following

that, they want to negotiate a long term security agreement with the United States and other nations.

Based on these considerations, and having worked the battlefield geometry with Lieutenant General Ray Odierno to ensure that we retain and build on the gains for which our troopers have fought, I have recommended a drawdown of the surge forces from Iraq. In fact, later this month, the Marine Expeditionary Unit deployed as part of the surge will depart Iraq. Beyond that, if my recommendations are approved, that unit's departure will be followed by the withdrawal of a brigade combat team without replacement in mid-December and the further redeployment without replacement of four other brigade combat teams and the two surge Marine battalions in the first 7 months of 2008, until we reach the pre-surge level of 15 brigade combat teams by mid-July 2008.

I would also like to discuss the period beyond next summer. Force reductions will continue beyond the pre-surge levels of brigade combat teams that we will reach by mid-July 2008; however, in my professional judgment, it would be premature to make recommendations on the pace of such reductions at this time. In fact, our experience in Iraq has repeatedly shown that projecting too far into the future is not just difficult, it can be misleading and even hazardous. The events of the past six months underscore that point. When I testified in January, for example, no one would have dared to forecast that Anbar Province would have been transformed the way it has in the past 6 months. Nor would anyone have predicted that volunteers in one-time Al Qaeda strongholds like Ghazaliyah in western Baghdad or in Adamiya in eastern Baghdad would seek to join the fight against Al Qaeda. Nor would we have anticipated that a Shia-led government would accept significant numbers of Sunni volunteers into the ranks of the local police force in Abu Ghraib. Beyond that, on a less encouraging note, none of us earlier this year appreciated the extent of Iranian involvement in Iraq, something about which we and Iraq's leaders all now have greater concern.

In view of this, I do not believe it is reasonable to have an adequate appreciation for the pace of further reductions and mission adjustments beyond the summer of 2008 until about mid-March of next year. We will, no later than that time, consider factors similar to those on which I based the current recommendations, having by then, of course, a better feel for the security situation, the improvements in the capabilities of our Iraqi counterparts, and the enemy situation. I will then, as I did in developing the recommendations I have explained here today, also take into consideration the demands on our Nation's ground forces, although I believe that that consideration should once again inform, not drive, the recommendations I make.

This chart captures the recommendations I have described, showing the recommended reduction of brigade combat teams as the surge runs its course and illustrating the concept of our units adjusting their missions and transitioning responsibilities to Iraqis, as the situation and Iraqi capabilities permit. It also reflects the no-later-than date for recommendations on force adjustments beyond next summer and provides a possible approach we have considered for the future force structure and mission set in Iraq.

One may argue that the best way to speed the process in Iraq is to change the MNF-I mission from one that emphasizes population security, counter-terrorism, and transition, to one that is

strictly focused on transition and counter-terrorism. Making that change now would, in our view, be premature. We have learned before that there is a real danger in handing over tasks to the Iraqi Security Forces before their capacity and local conditions warrant. In fact, the drafters of the recently released National Intelligence Estimate on Iraq recognized this danger when they wrote, and I quote, "We assess that changing the mission of Coalition forces from a primarily counterinsurgency and stabilization role to a primary combat support role for Iraqi forces and counterterrorist operations to prevent AQI from establishing a safe haven would erode security gains achieved thus far."

In describing the recommendations I have made, I should note again that, like Ambassador Crocker, I believe Iraq's problems will require a long-term effort. There are no easy answers or quick solutions. And though we both believe this effort can succeed, it will take time. Our assessments underscore, in fact, the importance of recognizing that a premature drawdown of our forces would likely have devastating consequences.

That assessment is supported by the findings of a 16 August Defense Intelligence Agency report on the implications of a rapid withdrawal of US forces from Iraq. Summarizing it in an unclassified fashion, it concludes that a rapid withdrawal would result in the further release of the strong centrifugal forces in Iraq and produce a number of dangerous results, including a high risk of disintegration of the Iraqi Security Forces; rapid deterioration of local security initiatives; Al Qaeda-Iraq regaining lost ground and freedom of maneuver; a marked increase in violence and further ethno-sectarian displacement and refugee flows; alliances of convenience by Iraqi groups with internal and external forces to gain advantages over their rivals; and exacerbation of already challenging regional dynamics, especially with respect to Iran.

Lieutenant General Odierno and I share this assessment and believe that the best way to secure our national interests and avoid an unfavorable outcome in Iraq is to continue to focus our operations on securing the Iraqi people while targeting terrorist groups and militia extremists and, as quickly as conditions are met, transitioning security tasks to Iraqi elements.

Closing Comments

Before closing, I want to thank you and your colleagues for your support of our men and women in uniform in Iraq. The Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, and Coast Guardsmen with whom I'm honored to serve are the best equipped and, very likely, the most professional force in our nation's history. Impressively, despite all that has been asked of them in recent years, they continue to raise their right hands and volunteer to stay in uniform. With three weeks to go in this fiscal year, in fact, the Army elements in Iraq, for example, have achieved well over 130% of the reenlistment goals in the initial term and careerist categories and nearly 115% in the mid-career category. All of us appreciate what you have done to ensure that these great troopers have had what they've needed to accomplish their mission, just as we appreciate what you have done to take care of their families, as they, too, have made significant sacrifices in recent years.

The advances you have underwritten in weapons systems and individual equipment; in munitions; in command, control, and communications systems; in intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities; in vehicles and counter-IED systems and programs; and in manned

and unmanned aircraft have proven invaluable in Iraq. The capabilities that you have funded most recently – especially the vehicles that will provide greater protection against improvised explosive devices – are also of enormous importance. Additionally, your funding of the Commander's Emergency Response Program has given our leaders a critical tool with which to prosecute the counterinsurgency campaign. Finally, we appreciate as well your funding of our new detention programs and rule of law initiatives in Iraq.

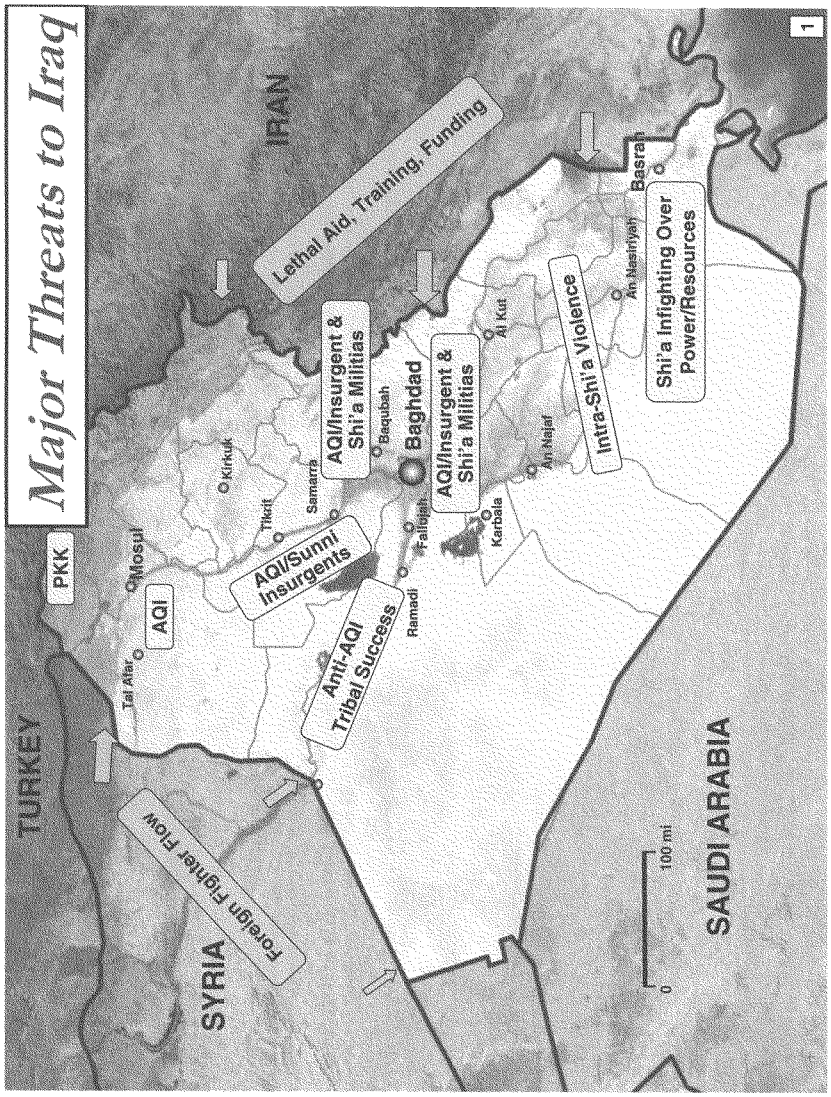
In closing, it remains an enormous privilege to soldier again in Iraq with America's new "Greatest Generation." Our country's men and women in uniform have done a magnificent job in the most complex and challenging environment imaginable. All Americans should be very proud of their sons and daughters serving in Iraq today.

Thank you very much.

Multi-National Force-Iraq

Charts to accompany the testimony of GEN David H. Petraeus

10-11 September 2007


Major Threats to Iraq
TURKEY
PKK
SYRIA
IRAN
SAUDI ARABIA
Foreign Fighter Flow
AQI
Mosul
Tal Afar
Kirkuk
Tikrit
Samarra
AQI/Sunni Insurgents
Anti-AQI Tribal Success
Ramadi
Fallujah
Baqubah
Baghdad
AQI/Insurgent & Shi'a Militias
Lethal Aid, Training, Funding
Karbala
An Najaf
Al Kut
Intra-Shi'a Violence
An Nasiriyah
Basrah
Shi'a Infighting Over Power/Resources
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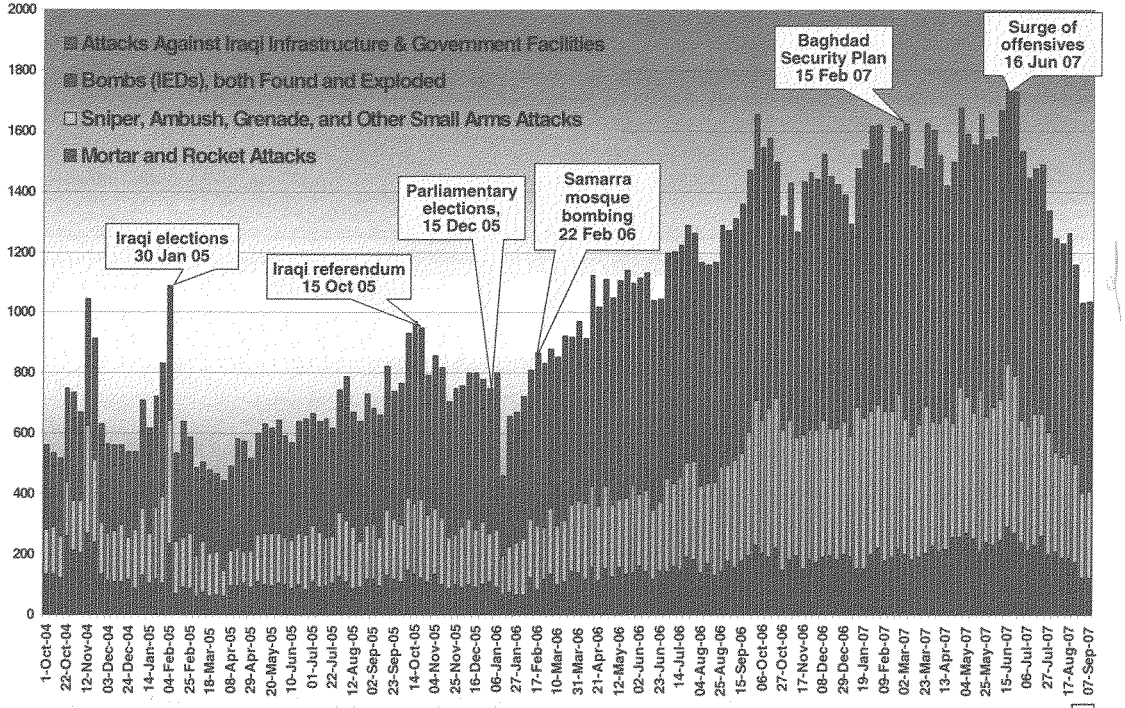
1

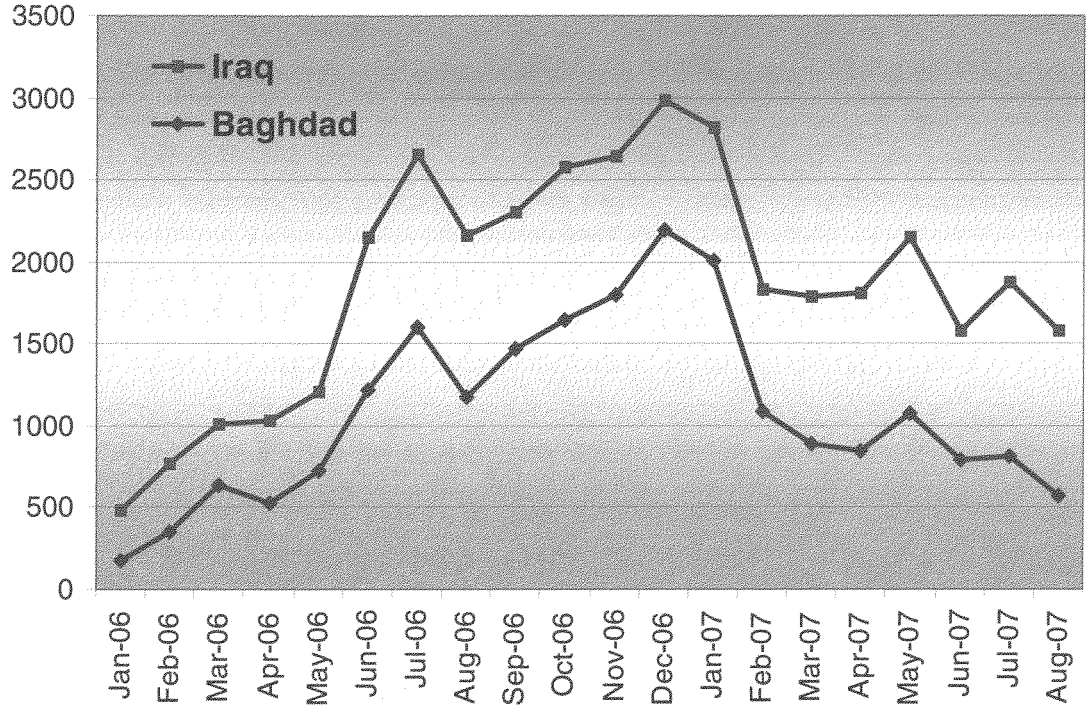
Overall Weekly Iraq Attack Trends

1 October 2004 – 7 September 2007



2

Iraq Civilian Deaths

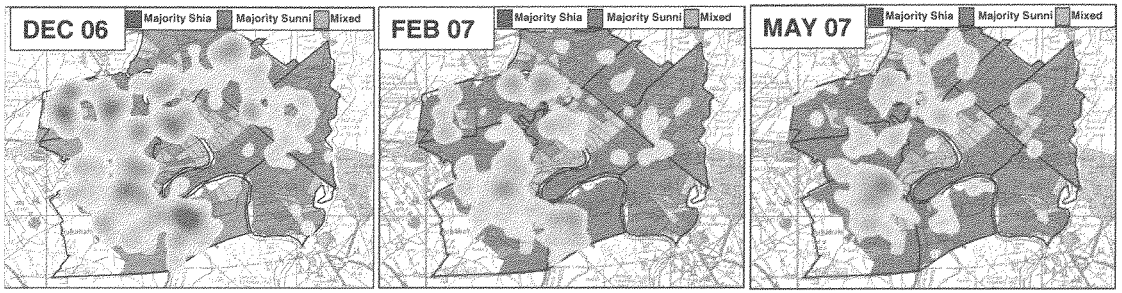


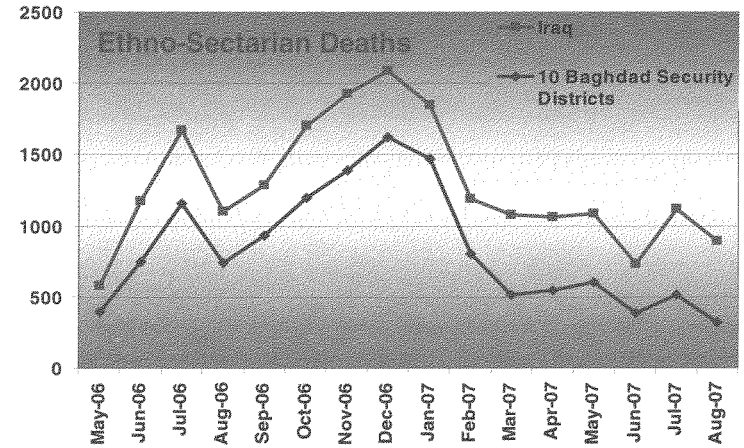
Source: Coalition and Host National Reporting

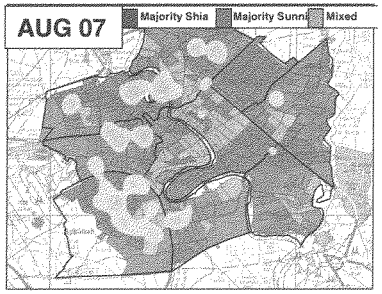
As of 31 Aug 07

3

Ethno-Sectarian Violence



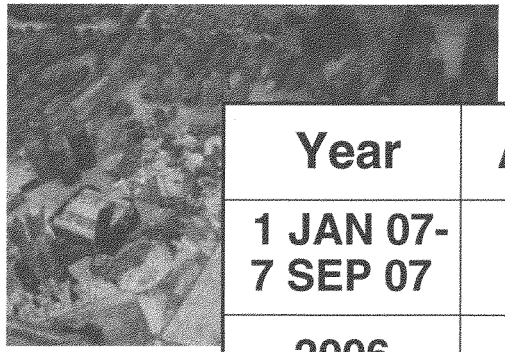


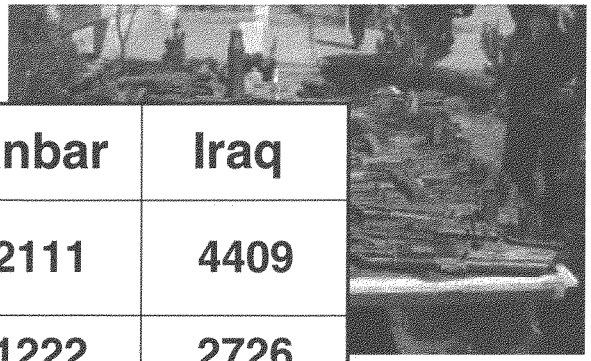


Density plots are of incidents where deaths occurred from any means that were clearly ethno-sectarian in motivation, to include car bombs

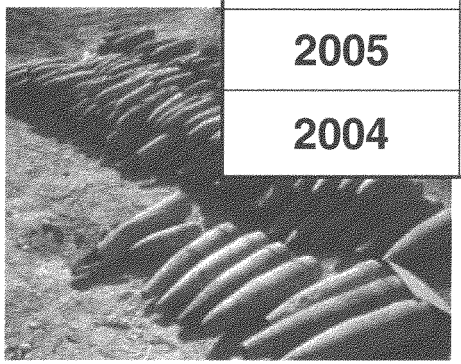
As of 31 Aug 07

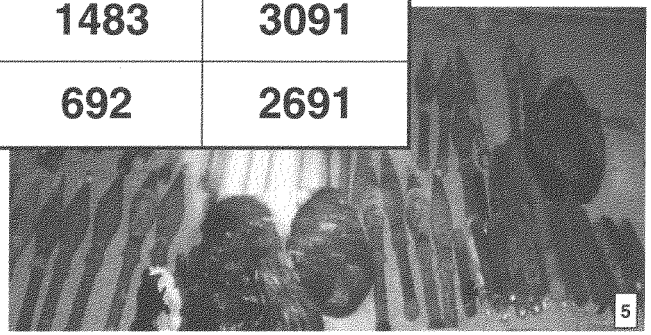
Caches Found & Cleared



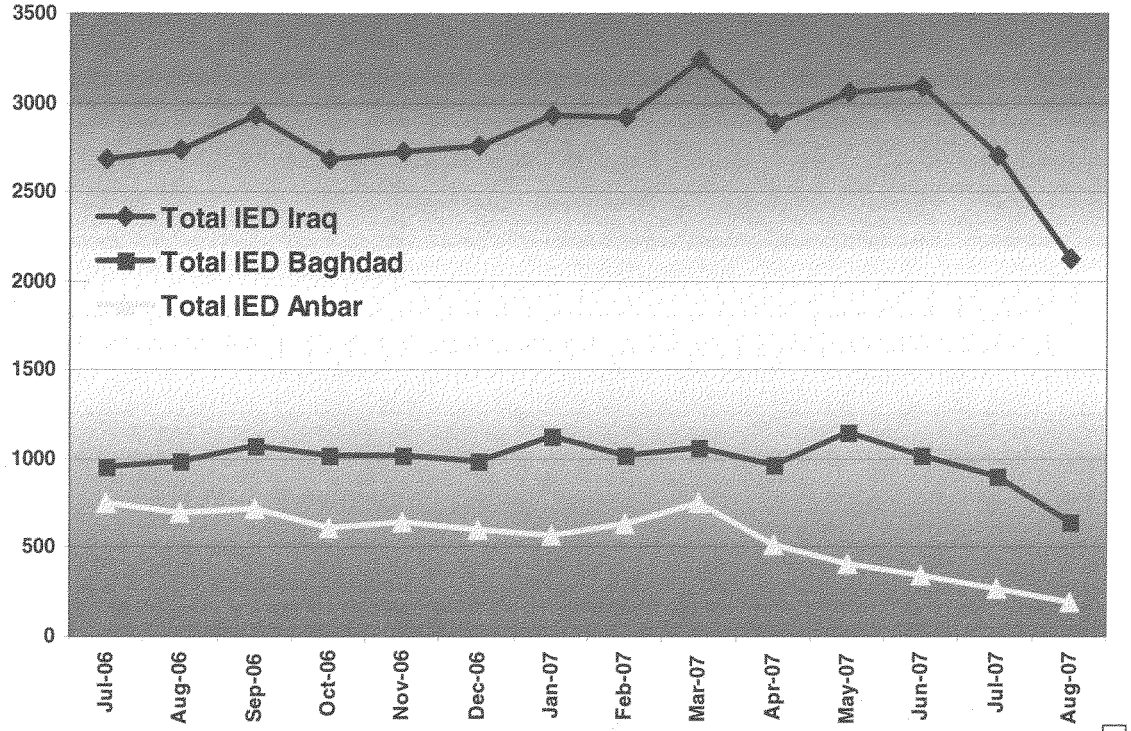


Year	Anbar	Iraq
1 JAN 07- 7 SEP 07	2111	4409
2006	1222	2726
2005	1483	3091
2004	692	2691





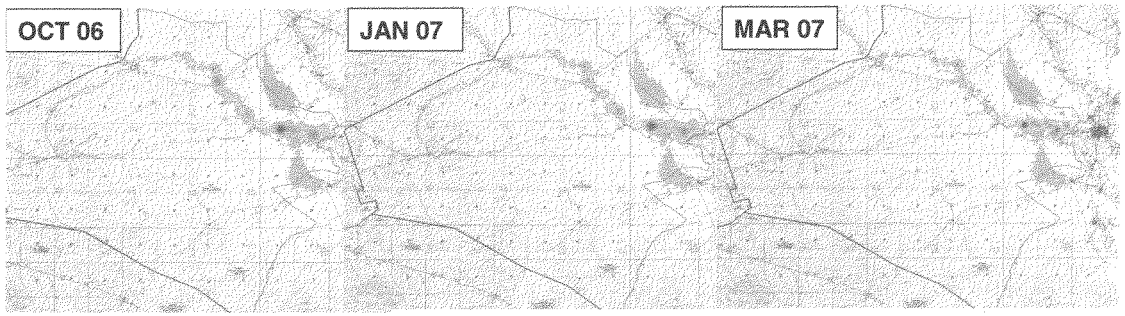
Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs)

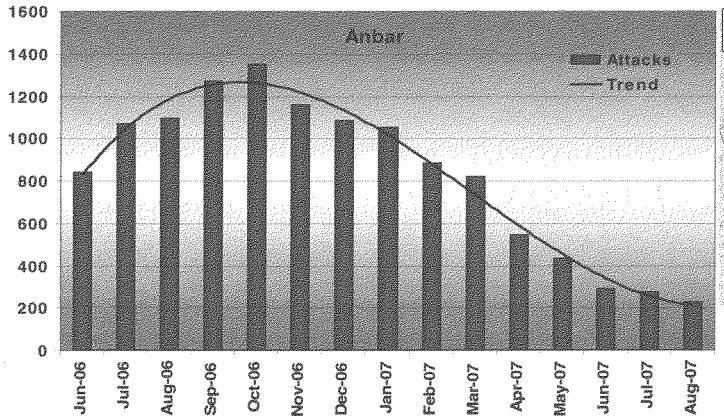


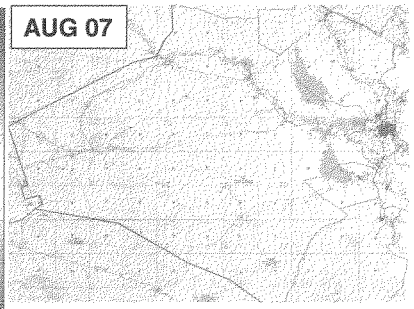
Total IEDs = IED explosions + IEDs found + IED hoaxes

6

Anbar Attacks





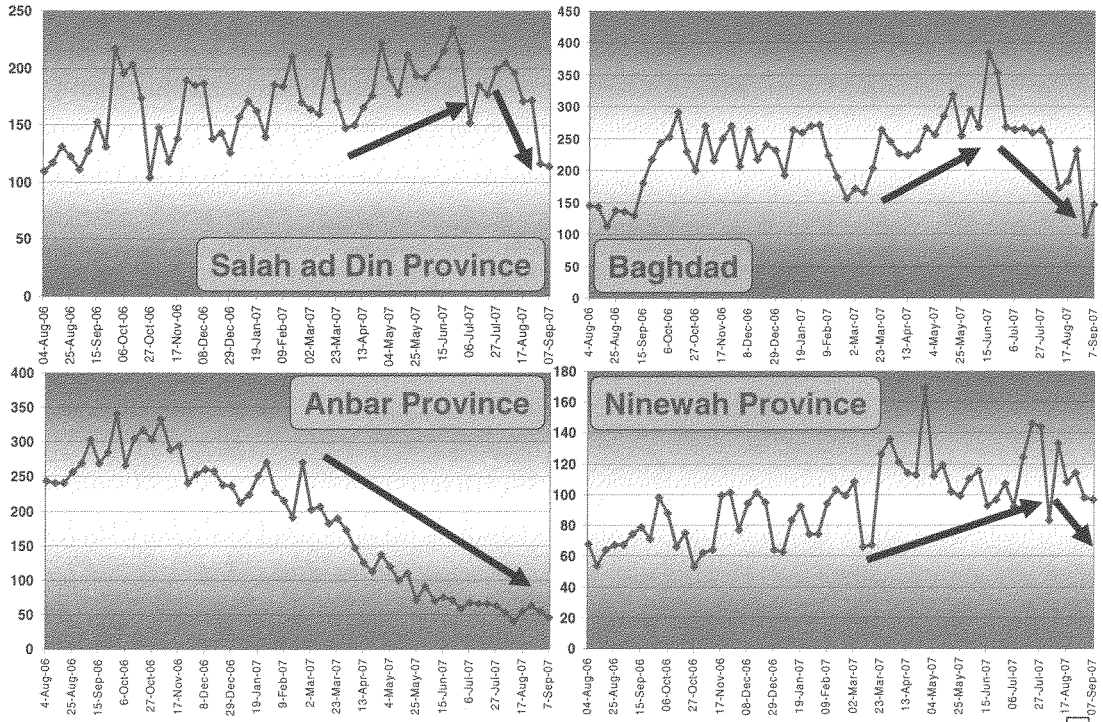


Density plots are of locations where attacks occurred

As of 31 Aug 07

7

Iraq Violence Trends

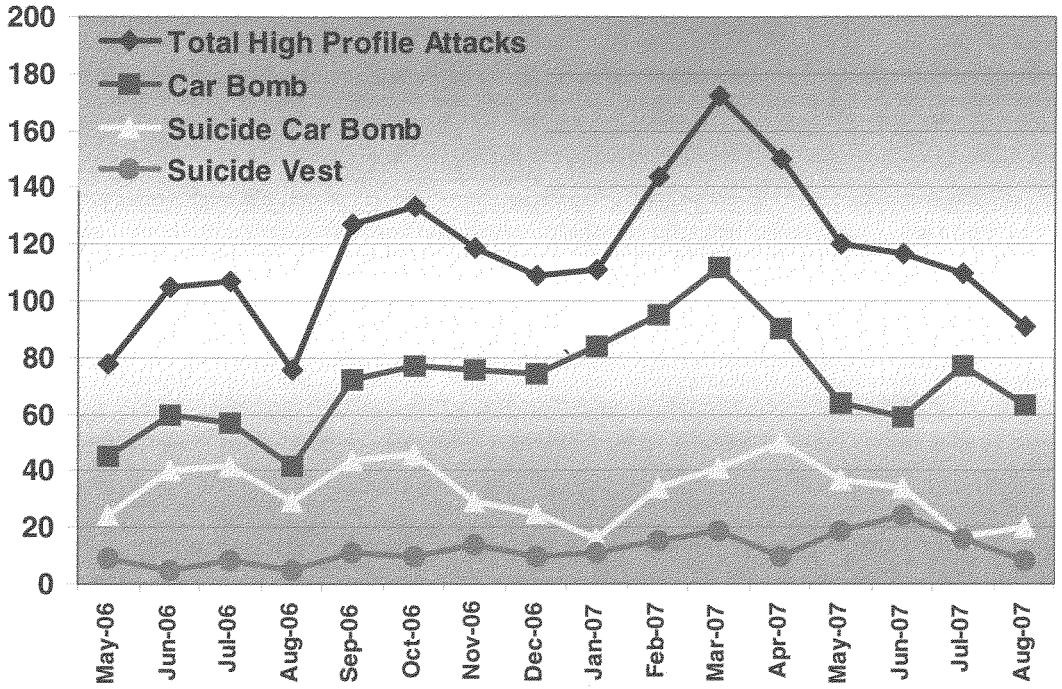


Level of Violence = Attacks + Murders Events

As of 7 Sep 07

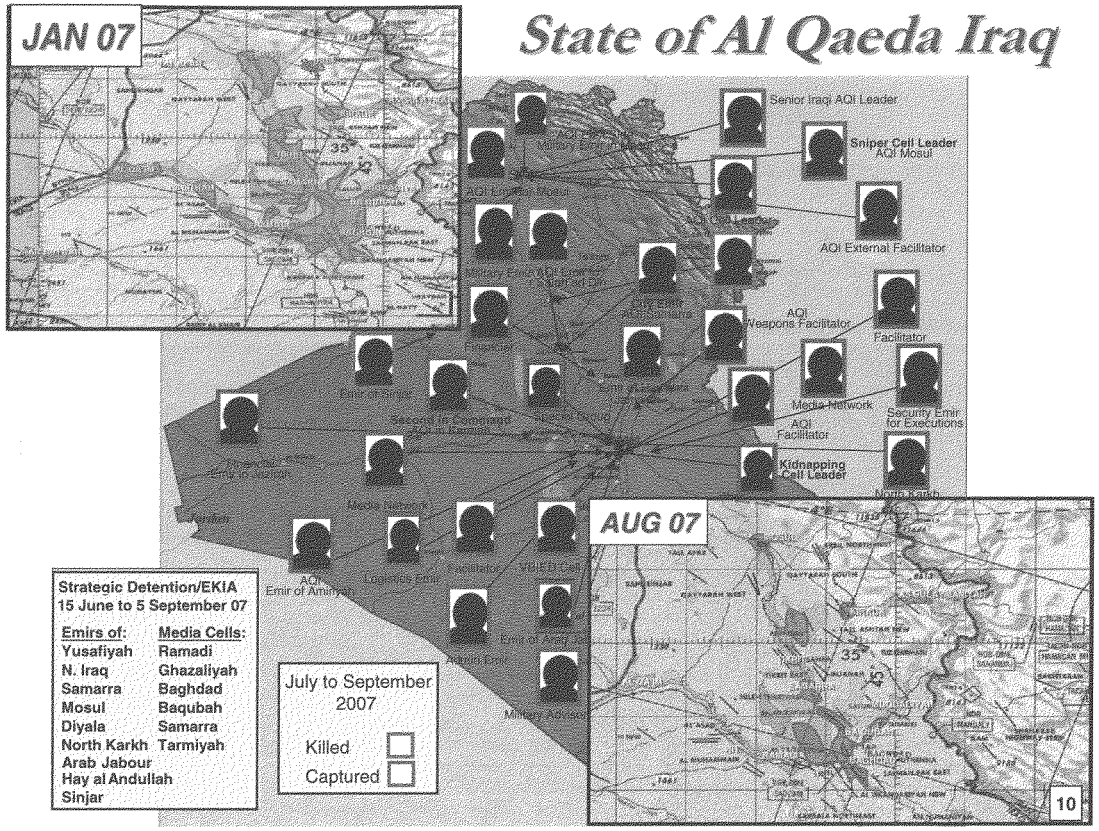
8

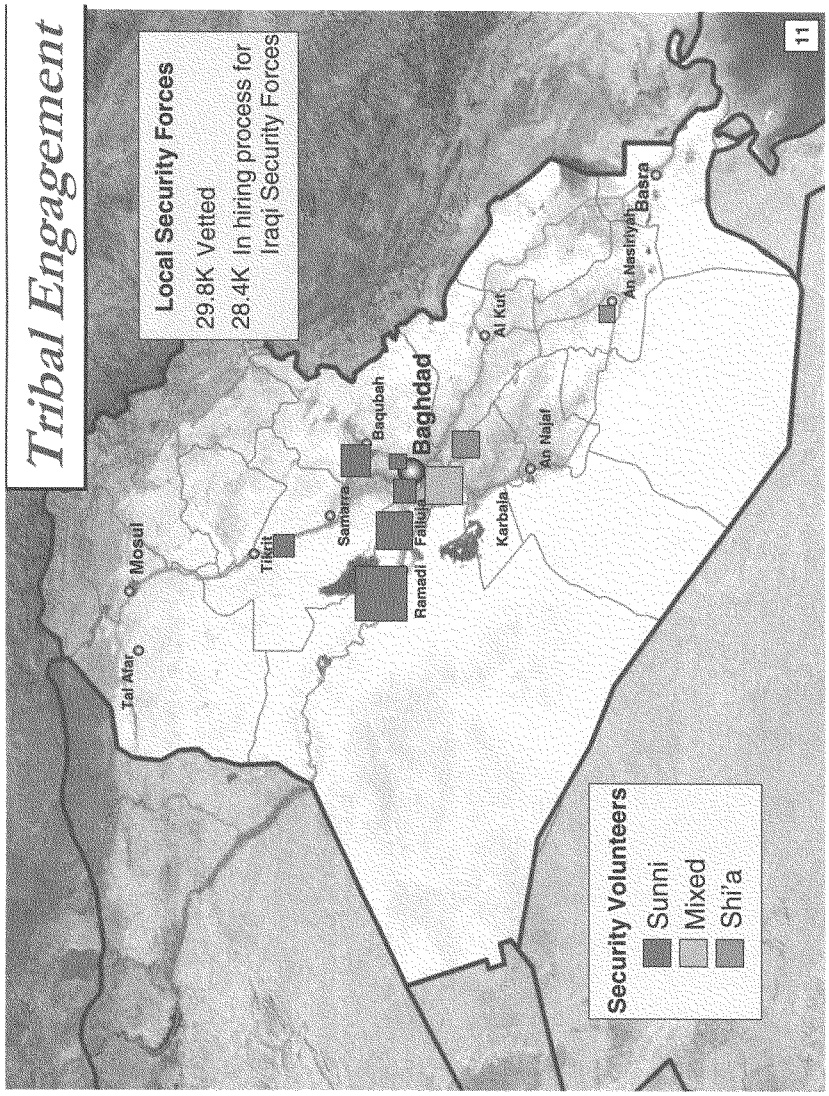
High Profile Attacks



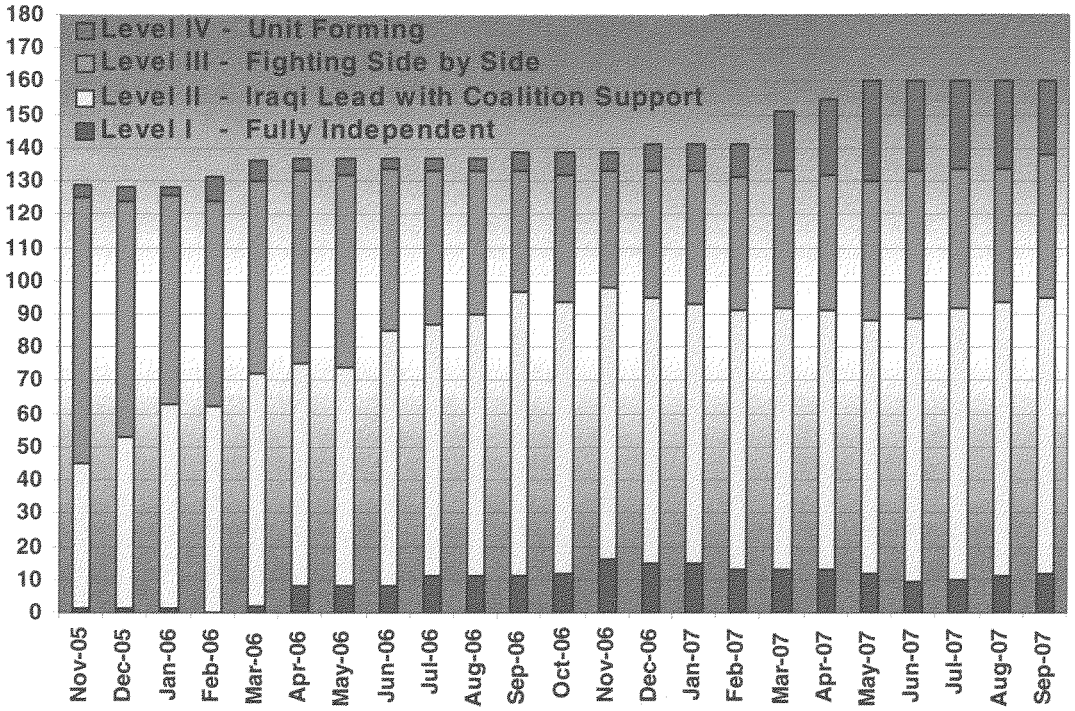
As of 31 AUG 07; High Profile = Car bombs + suicide car bombs + suicide vests

State of Al Qaeda Iraq




Tribal Engagement
Local Security Forces
29.8K Vetted
28.4K In hiring process for Iraqi Security Forces
Tal Afar
Mosul
Tikrit
Samarra
Baqubah
Baghdad
Ramadi
Fallujah
Karbala
An Najaf
Al Kut
An Nasiriyah
Basra
Security Volunteers
Sunni
Mixed
Shi'a
11

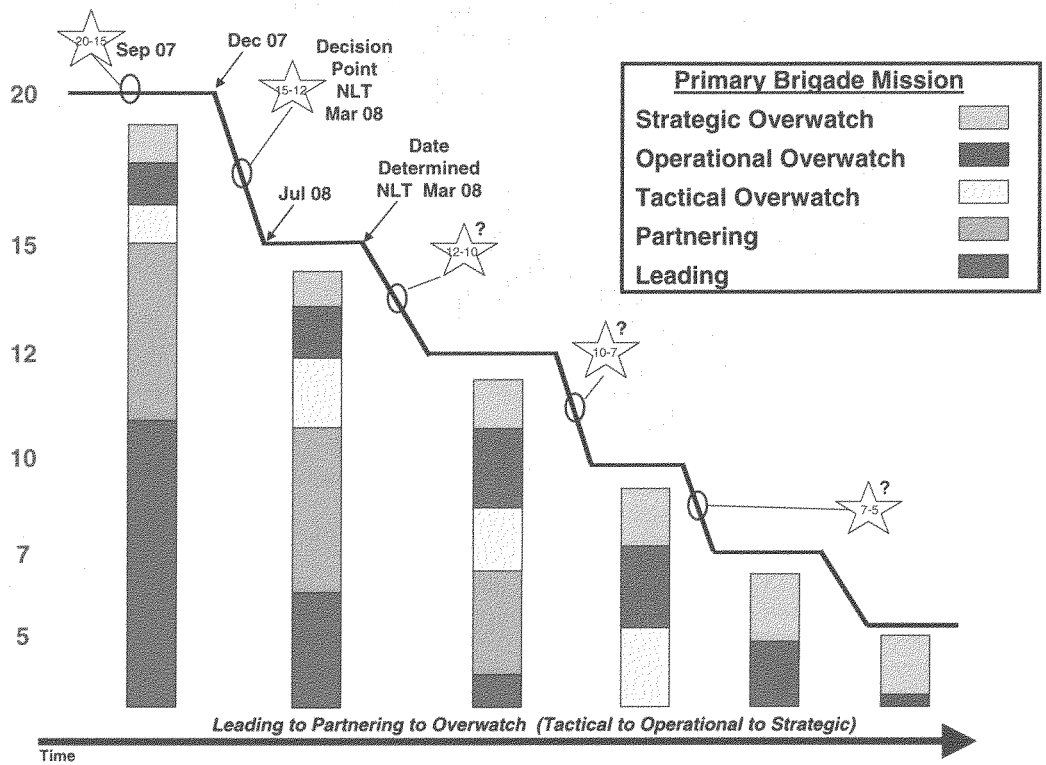
Iraqi Security Forces Capabilities



Iraqi Army Battalions, National Police Battalions, and Special Operating Force Battalions

12

Recommended Force Reductions/Mission Shift



STATEMENT OF AMBASSADOR RYAN C. CROCKER, UNITED STATES AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF IRAQ, BEFORE A JOINT HEARING OF THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND THE COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES SEPTEMBER 10, 2007

Introduction

Mr. Chairman,

Thank you for the opportunity to address Congress this week. I have considered it a privilege and an honor to serve in Iraq at a time when so much is at stake for our country and the people of the region – and when so many Americans of the highest caliber in our military and civilian services are doing the same. I know that a heavy responsibility weighs on my shoulders to provide the country with my best, most honest assessment of the situation in Iraq and the implications for the United States.

Americans, in this chamber and beyond, are looking for more than an update on the latest events. They want to know the answers to some key questions. Are our objectives realistic? Is it possible that Iraq will become a united, stable country with a democratic government operating under the rule of law? What is the trajectory – is Iraq, on the whole, moving in the right direction? Can we expect more and under what time frame? Are there alternative courses of action for our country which are superior?

These are sensible questions to be asked by a nation investing in and sacrificing for another country and people. In asking these questions, however, we must not lose sight of the vital interests the United States has in a successful outcome in Iraq.

My intention today is to give you an assessment of political, economic, and diplomatic developments in Iraq. In doing so, I will not minimize the enormity of the challenges faced by Iraqis, nor the complexity of the situation. Yet at the same time, I intend to demonstrate that it *is* possible for the United States to see its goals realized in Iraq and that Iraqis *are* capable of tackling and addressing the problems confronting them today. A secure, stable democratic Iraq at peace with its neighbors is attainable. In my judgment, the cumulative trajectory of political, economic, and diplomatic developments in Iraq is upwards, although the slope of that line is not steep. The process will not be quick, it will be uneven, punctuated by setbacks as well as achievements, and it will require substantial U.S. resolve

and commitment. There will be no single moment at which we can claim victory; any turning point will likely only be recognized in retrospect.

This is a sober assessment, but it should not be a disheartening one. I have found it helpful, during my time in Iraq to reflect on our own history. At many points in the early years, our survival as a nation was questionable. Our efforts to build the institutions of government were not always successful in the first instance. And tough issues – such as slavery, universal suffrage, civil rights, and state rights – were resolved only after acrimonious debate and sometimes violence.

Iraq is experiencing a revolution – not just regime change. It is only by understanding this that we can appreciate what is happening in Iraq and what Iraqis have achieved, as well as maintain a sense of realism about the challenges that remain.

Context

Evaluating where Iraqis are today only makes sense in the context of where they have been. Any Iraqi under 40 years old – and that is the overwhelming majority of the population – would have known nothing but the rule of the Ba'ath party before liberation four and a half years ago. Those 35 years were filled with crimes against humanity on every scale. Saddam Hussein ruled without any mercy, not hesitating to use lethal force and torture against even those in his inner circle. His genocidal campaign against the Kurds and savagery toward southern Shi'a are well known. But he also used violence and intimidation as tools in the complete deconstruction of Iraqi society. No organization or institution survived that was not linked in some way to regime protection. He created a pervasive climate of fear in which even family members were afraid to talk to one another.

This is the legacy that Iraqis had as their history when Saddam's statue came down on April 9, 2003. No Nelson Mandela existed to emerge on the national political scene; anyone with his leadership talents would have not survived. A new Iraq had to be built almost literally from scratch, and the builders in most cases were themselves reduced to their most basic identity, ethnic or sectarian.

Much progress has been made, particularly in building an institutional framework where there was none before. But rather than being a period in which old animosities and suspicions were overcome, the past 18 months in particular have further strained Iraqi society. The sectarian violence of 2006 and early 2007 had its seeds in Saddam's social deconstruction and it had dire consequences for the people of Iraq as well as its politics. Extensive displacement and widespread sectarian killings by al-Qa'ida and other extremist groups have gnawed away at

the already frayed fabric of Iraqi society and politics. It is no exaggeration to say that Iraq is – and will remain for some time – a traumatized society.

National Politics

It is against this backdrop that developments in Iraq must be seen. Iraqis are facing some of the most profound political, economic, and security challenges imaginable. They are not simply grappling with the issue of *who* rules Iraq – but they are asking what kind of country Iraq will be, how it will be governed, and how Iraqis will share power and resources among each other. The constitution approved in a referendum in 2005 answered some of these questions in theory, but much remains uncertain in both law and practice.

Some of the more promising political developments at the national level are neither measured in benchmarks nor visible to those far from Baghdad. For instance, there is a budding debate about federalism among Iraq's leaders and, importantly, within the Sunni community. Those living in place like al-Anbar and Salahaddin are beginning to realize how localities having more of a say in daily decision making will empower their communities. No longer is an all-powerful Baghdad seen as the panacea to Iraq's problems. This thinking is nascent, but it is ultimately critical to the evolution of a common vision among all Iraqi leaders.

Similarly, there is a palpable frustration in Baghdad over the sectarian system that was used to divide the spoils of the state in the last few years. Leaders from all communities openly acknowledge that a focus on sectarian gains has led to poor governance and served Iraqis badly. And many claim to be ready to make the sacrifices that will be needed to put government performance ahead of sectarian and ethnic concerns. Such ideas are no longer controversial, although their application will be.

Finally, we are seeing Iraqis come to terms with complex issues not by first providing a national framework, but instead by tackling immediate problems. One such example is how the central government has accepted over 1700 young men from the Abu Ghurayb area west of Baghdad, including former members of insurgent groups, to be part of the Iraqi security forces. Another is how the government, without much public fanfare, has contacted thousands of members of the former Iraqi army, offering them retirement, return to the military, or public sector employment. So without the proclamation of a general amnesty, we see amnesty being granted, and de-baathification reform in advance of national legislation. In both instances, the seeds of reconciliation are being planted.

Our country, however, has come to associate progress on national reconciliation as meaning the passage of key pieces of legislation. There is logic to this, as the

legislation we are urging the Iraqis to produce does – in one way or another – have to do with the question of how to share power and resources among Iraq's many communities. This legislation also has to do with the vision of the future Iraqi state. The oil and revenues sharing laws, for instance, deal with deeper issues than simply whether Iraqis in oil producing areas are willing to share their wealth with other Iraqis. What is difficult about the oil laws is that they take Iraq another step down the road toward a federal system that all Iraqis have not yet embraced. But once again, we see that even in the absence of legislation there is practical action as the central government shares oil revenues through budget allocations on an equitable basis with Iraq's provinces.

In many respects, the debates currently occurring in Iraq are akin to those surrounding our civil rights movement or struggle over states rights. With de-ba'athification, Iraqis are struggling to come to terms with a vicious past. They are trying to balance fear that the Ba'ath party would one day return to power with the recognition that many former members of the party are guilty of no crime and joined the organization not to repress others but for personal survival. With provincial powers, they are grappling with very serious questions about what the right balance between the center and the periphery is for Iraq. Some see the devolution of power to regions and provinces as being the best insurance against the rise of a future tyrannical figure in Baghdad. Others see Iraq, with its complex demographics, as in need of a strong central authority.

In short, we should not be surprised or dismayed that Iraqis have not fully resolved such issues. Rather, we should ask whether the way in which they are approaching such issues gives us a sense of their seriousness and ultimate capability to resolve Iraq's fundamental problems. Is the collective national leadership of Iraq ready to prioritize Iraq over sectarian and community interests? Can and will they come to agreement about what sort of Iraq they want?

I do believe that Iraq's leaders have the will to tackle the country's pressing problems, although it will take longer than we originally anticipated because of the environment and the gravity of the issues before them. Prime Minister al-Maliki and the other Iraqi leaders face enormous obstacles in their efforts to govern effectively. They approach the task with a deep sense of commitment and patriotism. An important part of this positive judgment was the effort made by the leaders this past summer. After weeks of preparatory work and many days of intensive meetings, Iraq's five most prominent national leaders from the three major communities issued a communiqué on August 26 that noted agreement on draft legislation dealing with de-ba'athification and provincial powers. This agreement by no means solves all of Iraq's problems. But the commitment of its leaders to work together on hard issues is encouraging.

Perhaps most significantly, these five Iraqi leaders together decided to publicly express their joint desire to develop a long term relationship with the United States. Despite their many differences in perspectives and experiences, they all agreed on language acknowledging the need for a continue presence by the multi-national forces in Iraq and expressing gratitude for the sacrifices these forces have made for Iraqis.

Provincial and Local Politics

At the provincial level, political gains have been more pronounced, particularly in the north and west of Iraq where the security improvements have been in some places dramatic. In these areas, there is abundant evidence that the security gains have opened the door for meaningful politics.

In al-Anbar, the progress on the security side has been extraordinary. Six months ago, violence was rampant, our forces were under daily attack, and Iraqis were cowering from the intimidation of al-Qa'ida. But al-Qa'ida overplayed its hand in al-Anbar and Anbaris began to reject its excesses – be they beheading school children or cutting off peoples' fingers as punishment for smoking. Recognizing the Coalition could help eject al-Qa'ida, the tribes began to fight with us, not against us, and the landscape in al-Anbar is dramatically different as a result. Tribal representatives are on the provincial council, which is now meeting regularly to find ways of restoring services, developing the economy, and executing a provincial budget. These leaders are looking for help to rebuild their cities and talking of attracting investment. Such scenes are also unfolding in parts of Diyala and Ninewa, where Iraqis have mobilized with the help of the Coalition and Iraqi security forces to evict al-Qa'ida from their communities. The world should note that when al-Qa'ida began implementing its twisted vision of the Caliphate in Iraq, Iraqis, from al-Anbar to Baghdad to Diyala', have overwhelmingly rejected it.

Shi'a extremists are also facing rejection. Recent attacks by elements of the Iranian backed Jaysh al-Mahdi on worshipers in the holy city of Karbala have provoked a backlash and triggered a call by Muqtada as-Sadr for Jaysh al-Mahdi to cease attacks against Iraqis and coalition forces.

A key challenge for Iraqis now is to link these positive developments in the provinces to the central government in Baghdad. Unlike our states, Iraqi provinces have little ability to generate funds through taxation, making them dependent on the central government for resources. The growing ability of the provinces to design and execute budgets and the readiness of the central government to resource them are success stories. On September 5, Iraq's senior federal leadership traveled to al-Anbar where they announced a 70% increase in

the 2007 provincial capital budget as well as $50 million to compensate losses in the fight against al-Qa'ida. The support of the central government is also needed to maintain hard-won security in areas like al-Anbar through the rapid expansion of locally-generated police. The Government of Iraq has placed some 21,000 Anbaris on police roles.

Economics and Capacity Building

Iraq is starting to make some gains in the economy. Improving security is stimulating revival of markets, with the active participation of local communities. War damage is being cleared and buildings repaired, roads and sewers built and commerce energized.

The IMF estimates that economic growth will exceed six percent for 2007. Iraqi ministries and provincial councils have made substantial progress this year in utilizing Iraq's oil revenue for investment. The 2007 governmental budget allocated $10 billion (nearly one-third Iraq's expected oil export revenue) to capital investment. Over $3 billion was allocated to the provinces and the Kurdish Region for spending. The latest data show that spending units (national ministries and provincial councils) have proceeded to commit these funds at more than twice the rate of last year. Doing the best are the provincial authorities, in the process gaining experience with making plans and decisions, and running fair tenders. In so doing, they are stimulating local business development and providing employment. Over time we expect the experience with more responsive local authorities will change Iraqi attitudes towards their elected leaders, and of the provinces towards Baghdad.

At two conferences in Dubai in the last two weeks, hundreds of Iraqi businessmen met an equal number of foreign investors newly interested in acquiring shares of businesses in Iraq. An auction of cell phone spectrum conducted by Pricewaterhouse Coopers netted the Government a better-than-expected sum of $3.75 billion. The Minister of Finance plans to use the funds, along with all the country's oil revenue, to apply to its pressing investment and current expenditure needs.

Overall, however, the Iraqi economy is performing significantly under potential. Insecurity in the countryside raises transport costs and especially affects manufacturing and agriculture. Electricity supply has improved in many parts of the country, but is woefully inadequate in Baghdad. Many neighborhoods in the city receive two hours a day or less from the national grid, although power supplies for essential services such as water pumping stations or hospitals are much better. The Minister of Electricity said last week that it would take $25 billion through 2016 to meet demand requirements, but that by investing the $2

billion a year the Ministry is now receiving from the government's budget, as well as private investment in power generation, that goal could be met.

We are deploying our assistance funds to make a difference to ordinary Iraqis and to support our political objectives. Military units are using Commanders Emergency Response (CERP) funds to ensure that residents see a difference when neighborhood violence declines. USAID Community Stabilization Funds provide tens of thousands of jobs. With the recent apportionment of 2007 Supplemental funds, we are putting "Quick Response Funds" in the hands of our Provincial Reconstruction Team leaders to build communities and institutions in post-kinetic environments. Vocational training and microfinance programs are supporting nascent private businesses. And in Baghdad, we are increasing our engagement and capacity building efforts with ministries.

Regional and International Dynamics

There is expanding international and regional engagement with Iraq. In August, the UN Security Council, at Iraq's invitation, provided the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI) with an expanded mandate through UNSCR 1770. The work of the International Compact with Iraq moves forward, jointly chaired by Iraq and the UN. Seventy-four countries pledged support for Iraq's economic reform efforts at a Ministerial Conference in May. The UN has reported progress in 75% of the 400 areas Iraq has identified for action. Later this month, the Iraqi Prime Minister and the UN Secretary General will chair a ministerial-level meeting in New York to discuss further progress under the Compact and how UNSCR 1770 can be most effectively implemented.

Many of Iraq's neighbors recognize that they have a stake in the outcome of the current conflict in Iraq, and are engaging with Iraq in a constructive way. A neighbors' ministerial in May, also attended by the P-5 and the G-8, has been followed by meetings of working groups on security, border issues, and energy. An ambassadorial level meeting just took place in Baghdad, and another neighbors' ministerial will be held in Istanbul in October.

Against the backdrop of these new mechanisms, the business of being neighbors is quietly unfolding. For the first time in years, Iraq is exporting oil through its neighbor, Turkey, as well as through the Gulf. Iraq and Kuwait are nearing conclusion on a commercial deal for Kuwait to supply its northern neighbor with critically needed diesel. Jordan recently issued a statement welcoming the recent leaders' communiqué and supporting Iraqi efforts at reconciliation. And Saudi Arabia is planning on opening an Embassy in Baghdad – its first since the fall of Saddam.

Syria's role has been more problematic. On one hand, Syria has hosted a meeting of the border security working group and interdicted some foreign terrorists in transit to Iraq. On the other hand, suicide-bombers continue to cross the border from Syria to murder Iraqi civilians.

Iran plays a harmful role in Iraq. While claiming to support Iraq in its transition, Iran has actively undermined it by providing lethal capabilities to the enemies of the Iraqi state. In doing so, the Iranian government seems to ignore the risks that an unstable Iraq carries for its own interests.

Looking Ahead

2006 was a bad year in Iraq. The country came close to unraveling politically, economically, and in security terms. 2007 has brought improvement. Enormous challenges remain. Iraqis still struggle with fundamental questions about how to share power, accept their differences and overcome their past. The changes to our strategy last January – the surge – have helped change the dynamics in Iraq for the better. Our increased presence made besieged communities feel that they could defeat al-Qa'ida by working with us. Our population security measures have made it much harder for terrorists to conduct attacks. We have given Iraqis the time and space to reflect on what sort of country they want. Most Iraqis genuinely accept Iraq as a multi-ethnic, multi-sectarian society - it is the balance of power that has yet to be sorted out.

Whether Iraq reaches its potential is of course ultimately the product of Iraqi decisions. But the involvement and support of the United States will be hugely important in shaping a positive outcome. Our country has given a great deal in blood and treasure to stabilize the situation in Iraq and help Iraqis build institutions for a united, democratic country governed under the rule of law. Realizing this vision will take more time and patience on the part of the United States.

I cannot guarantee success in Iraq. I do believe, as I have described, that it is attainable. I am certain that abandoning or drastically curtailing our efforts will bring failure, and the consequences of such a failure must be clearly understood. An Iraq that falls into chaos or civil war will mean massive human suffering – well beyond what has already occurred within Iraq's borders. It could well invite the intervention of regional states, all of which see their future connected to Iraq's in some fundamental way. Undoubtedly, Iran would be a winner in this scenario, consolidating its influence over Iraqi resources and possibly territory. The Iranian President has already announced that Iran will fill any vacuum in Iraq. In such an environment, the gains made against al-Qa'ida and other extremists groups could easily evaporate and they could establish strongholds to be used as safehavens for

regional and international operations. Our current course is hard. The alternatives are far worse.

Every strategy requires recalibration as time goes on. This is particularly true in an environment like Iraq where change is a daily or hourly occurrence. As chief of mission in Iraq, I am constantly assessing our efforts and seeking to ensure that they are coordinated with and complementary to the efforts of our military. I believe that, thanks to the support of Congress, we have an appropriate civilian posture in Iraq. Over the coming year, we will continue to increase our civilian efforts outside of Baghdad and the international zone. This presence has allowed us to focus on capacity building, especially in the provinces -- units which are likely to grow in influence as more power devolves from Baghdad. The number of Provincial Reconstruction Teams has grown from ten to 25 this year. In support of these goals, we will be asking Congress for additional economic assistance including additional quick response funds for capacity building. We will also seek support for two significant proposals that hold the prospect of creating permanent jobs for thousands of Iraqis. One would be the establishment of an "Iraqi-American Enterprise Fund," modeled on our successful funds in Poland and elsewhere in Central Europe. Such a fund could make equity investments in new and revamped firms based in Iraq. The second would be a large-scale operations and maintenance facility based on our Highway Trust Fund. On a cost-sharing basis, such a fund would train Iraqis to budget for and maintain important public sector infrastructure (power plants, dams, roads). Over time, the cost-sharing would phase down and out, leaving behind well-trained professionals and instilling the habits of preventative maintenance.

We will continue our efforts to assist Iraqis in the pursuit of national reconciliation, while recognizing that progress on this front may come in many forms and must ultimately be done by Iraqis themselves. We will seek additional ways to neutralize regional interference and enhance regional and international support. And we will help Iraqis consolidate the positive developments at local levels and connect them with the national government. Finally, I expect we will invest much effort in developing the strategic partnership between the United States and Iraq, which is an investment in the future of both countries.

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COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

HEARING ON "THE STATUS OF THE WAR AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN IRAQ"

SEPTEMBER 10, 2007

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to welcome our two distinguished witnesses: General David H. Petraeus, the Commanding General of the Multinational Force in Iraq, and the Honorable Ryan C. Crocker, United States Ambassador to Iraq. I thank you for traveling to Washington to appear before us today.

As we work to resolve the ongoing conflict in Iraq, it is essential that we obtain as much accurate information as possible about the situation on the ground. I look forward to your informative testimony.

Despite the multitude of mistakes perpetrated by President Bush and former Defense Secretary Rumsfeld, our troops have achieved a military success in ousting Saddam Hussein and assisting the Iraqis in administering a democratic election and electing a democratic government. However, only the Iraqi government can secure a lasting peace. Time and time again, the Iraqi government has demonstrated an inability to deliver on the political benchmarks that they themselves agreed were essential to achieving national reconciliation. Continuing to put the lives of our soldiers and our national treasury in the hands of what by most informed accounts, even by members of the Bush Administration, is an ineffective central Iraqi government is irresponsible and contrary to the wishes of the overwhelming majority of the American people.

Mr. Chairman, we are here today because the Congress has listened to the American people, and demanded accountability, oversight, and competence. We saw fit to demand benchmark reports because the American people lost confidence in the Rubber Stamp Republican Congress and the Bush-Cheney team. The American people want a new strategy for success in Iraq.

Last week, the Foreign Affairs Committee heard testimony on the recently released Government Accountability Office report on Iraqi progress toward the 18 legislative, economic, and security benchmarks. The Comptroller General of the GAO sat before the Committee and informed members that only 3 of these benchmarks have been met by the Maliki government. Despite the surge, despite increasing U.S. military involvement, the Iraqi government has not made substantial progress toward stabilizing their country. The over 3750 U.S. casualties and the $3,816 per second we are spending in Iraq have not bought peace or security.

Mr. Chairman, President Bush rationalized his surge, over opposition by myself and other House Democrats, by arguing it

would give the Iraqi government "the breathing space it needs to make progress in other critical areas," bringing about reconciliation between warring factions, Sunni and Shia. However, non-partisan assessments, such as last week's GAO report, have illustrated that the surge has not, as the President hoped, helped Iraq to meet the eighteen benchmarks. Instead, ongoing and escalating U.S. military involvement in Iraq is hindering that nation's ability to move beyond the devastation of war and death, to build a successful new government, and to create a stable and secure environment. In fact, in the seven months since the surge began, increased American military presence has not been able to end the relentless cycles of sectarian violence that continue to plague Iraq. Nor have larger numbers of U.S. troops been successful in unifying and strengthening the Iraqi government.

Deteriorating Security Situation

Instead, the security situation continues to deteriorate.

Sectarian violence remains high, and even the Bush Administration has noted the unsatisfactory progress toward political reconciliation. The Sunni-led insurgency continues, with insurgents conducting increasingly complex and well-coordinated attacks. Countries in the region have not contributed to efforts to stabilize Iraq. Instead, U.S. military officials have cited evidence that Iran may be supplying militias within Iraq, in an attempt to further destabilize the country. Relations are also strained on the northern border, where Turkey has accused Iraqi Kurds of harboring anti-Turkey guerrillas.

The GAO report is not the only non-partisan assessment to note a lack of progress. The August 2007 National Intelligence Estimate also cited ongoing violence, stating, "the level of overall violence, including attacks on and casualties among civilians, remain high; Iraq's sectarian groups remain unreconciled." The report went on to note that al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) "retains the ability to conduct high-profile attacks," and "Iraqi political leaders remain unable to govern effectively."

Like the August National Intelligence Estimate, the GAO report released last week flies in the face of the Bush administration's ongoing insistence that the surge is working. It paints an extremely disturbing picture of an Iraq where violence remains endemic, where key legislation has not been passed, and where Iraqi economic commitments remain ambiguous and uncertain. With only three of the eighteen legislative, security, and economic benchmarks met, the report clearly indicates that, despite the US military surge, the Iraqi government has failed to achieve the required reforms.

The ever-increasing sectarian violence is causing immense daily challenges for Iraqis. Millions have been displaced, and an Iraqi Red Crescent Organization has reported an increase of nearly 630,000 internally displaced persons from February 2007 to July 2007. The same organization predicts an additional 80,000 to 100,000 persons are displaced each month. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees has estimated that 1.8 million Iraqis are now refugees, with an additional 40,000 to 50,000 fleeing to

neighboring countries each month. Iraq has become a humanitarian disaster, and one that continues to get worse every day.

We are not here today to debate whether there has been some decrease in violence in Baghdad. The United States military is a skilled and highly proficient organization, and where there are large numbers of U.S. troops, it is unsurprising that we see fewer incidents of violence. However, it is our responsibility to take a longer-term view. The United States will not and should not permanently prop up the Iraqi government and military. U.S. military involvement in Iraq will come to an end, and, when U.S. forces leave, the responsibility for securing their nation will fall to Iraqis themselves. And so far, we have not seen a demonstrated commitment by the Iraqi government.

Mr. Chairman, President Bush stated in June 2005, "Our strategy can be summed up this way: As the Iraqis stand up, we will stand down." Instead of concentrating on building local capacity and applying pressure to the Maliki government to force

them to take responsibility for the destiny of their nation, the Administration has chosen to pursue policies, namely the Baghdad security plan, that focus on continued combat by U.S. forces, rather than transferring responsibilities to Iraqis. As a result, Iraqi security forces (ISF) remain entirely dependent upon U.S. troops; the August 2007 National Intelligence Estimate reports that the ISF "have not improved enough to conduct major combat operations independent of the Coalition" and "remain reliant on the Coalition for important aspects of logistics and combat support."

War in Iraq is threatening our national security

In addition, evidence suggests that not only is increased U.S. military presence in Iraq not making that nation more secure, it may also be threatening our national security by damaging our ability to respond to real threats to our own homeland. The recently released video by Osama bin Laden serves to illustrate that President Bush has not caught this international outlaw, nor

brought him to justice. Instead, he has diverted us from the real war on terror to the war of his choice in Iraq.

Yesterday, the former chairman and vice chairman of the 9/11 commission, Thomas H. Kean and Lee H. Hamilton, published an op-ed in the Washington Post examining the question of whether our nation is safer today, six years after 9/11. Kean and Hamilton concluded, "We still lack a sense of urgency in the face of grave danger." The persistence of this threat is attributed to "a mixed record of reform, a lack of focus, and a resilient foe," and the authors note that our own actions have contributed to a rise of radicalization and rage in the Muslim world. **Kean and Hamilton write that "no conflict drains more time, attention, blood, treasure, and support from our worldwide counterterrorism efforts than the war in Iraq. It has become a powerful recruiting and training tool for al-Qaeda."**

Yesterday the nonpartisan United States Institute of Peace released the report of a panel of experts, which stated that "The United States faces too many challenges around the world to

continue its current level of effort in Iraq, or even the deployment that was in place before the surge." We heard testimony last week from General Batiste, who told Congress that the United States military was being stretched too thin by the war in Iraq, and spoke of the detrimental effect this ongoing conflict is having on our servicemen and their families. Whether or not we believe the war in Iraq is crucial to the war against terrorism, it certainly is not the only front to this global effort, and we must ensure that we are able to devote sufficient attention to serious threats, both actual and potential, to our national security.

Concerns about independence of reporting

The American people deserve much, much better than what this Administration has given them. They deserve independent reporting. I welcome General Petraeus to Congress today, and I thank him for his courageous service to our nation. However, I am extremely concerned about reports that have indicated that his report was prepared by the White House. Surveys have indicated

that the American people share this concern. Only 4 in 10, according to a recent Washington Post-ABC Poll, believe that today's report will speak to the reality of the situation in Iraq. This doubt crosses party lines, and it includes one third, a substantial minority, of respondents who identified as Republicans.

Such a lack of confidence should not be surprising. After leading America into war in 2003 on the false pretense of the presence weapons of mass destruction, the Bush Administration has subsequently demonstrated its complete disregard for the will of the American people, 70% of whom now disapprove of the war in Iraq. As a result, the Administration has lost credibility in the eyes of the country. A new Washington Post-ABC News poll reveals that a majority think that today's report for General Petraeus is likely to try to portray the situation as better than it is in reality, while two thirds believe that the President will not change his course, no matter what his top General reports.

Military victory has been achieved in Iraq; we now need diplomacy

Mr. Chairman, our troops in Iraq did everything we asked them to do. We sent them overseas to fight an army; they are now caught in the midst of an insurgent civil war and political upheaval. I have, for some time now, advocated for Congressional legislation declaring a military victory in Iraq, and recognizing the success of our military. Our brave troops have completed the task we set for them; it is time now to bring them home. Our next steps should not be a continuing escalation of military involvement, but instead a diplomatic surge.

As the former chairman and vice chairman of the 9/11 Commission, Thomas H. Kean and Lee H. Hamilton, recently stated, "Military power is essential to our security, but if the only tool is a hammer, pretty soon every problem looks like a nail. We must use all the tools of U.S. power -- including foreign aid, educational assistance and vigorous public diplomacy that emphasizes scholarship, libraries and exchange programs -- to

shape a Middle East and a Muslim world that are less hostile to our interests and values. America's long-term security relies on being viewed not as a threat but as a source of opportunity and hope."

This is why I introduced H.R. 930, the "Military Success in Iraq and Diplomatic Surge for National and Political Reconciliation in Iraq Act of 2007." This legislation would make diplomacy and statecraft tools of the first, rather than the last, resort. We must seek constructive engagement with Iraq, its neighbors, and the rest of the international community, as we work to bring resolution to this calamitous conflict that has already gone on far too long. Even top military officials are beginning to explore withdrawal options. Recent reports have indicated that General Petraeus's superior, Admiral William J. Fallon, has reportedly begun developing plans to redefine the U.S. mission in Iraq, including a radical reduction in troop numbers; he is far from the only high ranking military official to question the President's strategy.

Mr. Chairman, Democrats in Congress will not continue to rubber stamp the President's ill-conceived war effort. Last November, the American people spoke loudly and clearly, demanding a new direction to U.S. foreign policy, and we here in Congress are committed to seeing that change be brought about. We are working to see the extensive funds currently being spent to sustain the war in Iraq go to important domestic programs and to securing our homeland against real and imminent threats.

The Cost of the War

According to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office (CBO), the U.S. is spending an estimated $10 billion per month in Iraq. This $10 billion a month translates into $329,670,330 per day, $13,736,264 per hour, $228,938 per minute, and $3,816 per second. For this huge sum of money, we could have repaired the more than 70,000 bridges across America rated structurally deficient ($188 billion), potentially averting the tragedy that occurred August 1st in Minneapolis, Minnesota. We could have

rebuilt the levees in New Orleans ($50 billion), protecting that city from future hurricanes that could bring Katrina-like destruction upon the city. We could have provided all U.S. public safety officials with interoperable communication equipment ($10 billion), allowing them to effectively communicate in the event of an emergency, and we could have paid for screening all air cargo on passenger planes for the next ten years ($3.6 billion). And, we could have enrolled 1.4 million additional children in Head Start programs ($10 billion). Instead of funding increased death and destruction in Iraq, we could have spent hard-earned taxpayer dollars on important progress here at home.

Given the enormous amount of resources involved, coupled with the catastrophic costs in human lives, we would certainly expect adequate oversight and management of U.S. funds and military supplies. We would expect clear records of exactly where those $10 billion a month is going, and to whom it is being given. And yet, the GAO reports that the Pentagon has lost track of over 190,000 weapons, given to Iraqis, particularly in 2004 and 2005.

The report's author stated that the U.S. military does not know what happened to 30 percent of the weapons the United States distributed to Iraqi forces from 2004 through early this year as part of an effort to train and equip the troops. These weapons could be used to kill our American troops.

Even more tragic than this misappropriation of funds is the loss of so many of our sons and daughters. The Department of Defense had confirmed a total of 3754 U.S. casualties. In addition, more than 27,660 have been wounded in the Iraq war since it began in March 2003. June, July, and August have marked the bloodiest months yet in the conflict, and U.S. casualties in Iraq are 62 percent higher this year than at this time in 2006. This misguided, mismanaged, and misrepresented war has claimed too many lives of our brave servicemen; its depth, breadth, and scope are without precedent in American history.

Congressional actions

This Congress has responded to the clearly expressed will of the American people, and passed many pieces of legislation seeking to scale down U.S. military involvement in Iraq, all of which have been struck down by President Bush. On July 12th, the House passed H.R. 2956, the Responsible Redeployment from Iraq Act, which I was proud to cosponsor. This legislation, sponsored by Armed Services Committee Chairman Ike Skelton, would begin the responsible redeployment of U.S. troops within 120 days and complete redeployment by April 1, 2008. The President would have to report to Congress why troops should remain in Iraq for limited purposes such as to fight terrorism or to train Iraqi forces. Congress also recently passed an amendment to H.R. 2764, the FY 2008 foreign aid bill, which would reconvene the Iraq Study Group, a proposal that reports indicate the President is strongly opposed to.

Mr. Chairman, President Bush and Vice-President Cheney have been given numerous chances and ample time by the American people and the Congress to straighten out the mess in

Iraq. They have failed. It is pure fantasy to imagine that President Bush's military surge has created the necessary safety and security to meet economic, legislative, and security benchmarks. It is time for a new strategy, a new plan that will encourage Iraqis to take charge of their own destiny, seek constructive and sustained regional engagement, and substitute the ill-advised military surge for a thoughtful diplomatic one. It is time to be realistic and pragmatic, to recognize that our troops achieved what they were initially sent in for and that continued U.S. military engagement is not bringing about the desired results.

I look forward to the testimony of our two witnesses today. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I yield back the balance of my time.

OPENING STATEMENT OF
THE HONORABLE RUSS CARNAHAN (MO-03)
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Joint Hearing with the House Committee on Armed Services on
The Status of the War and Political Developments in Iraq

Monday, September 10, 2007, 12:30pm
345 Cannon House Office Building

Chairman Lantos, and Chairman Skelton, thank you for holding this joint hearing. General Petraeus, and Ambassador Crocker, I would also like to thank both of you for being here today to testify.

There are many questions, and I suspect, not a whole lot of answers to the quagmire that we find ourselves in Iraq. We are now many years removed from "Mission Accomplished," and I don't think anyone believes we are anywhere close to a stable Iraq. I would like to focus my remarks and my questions today on two of the many areas there are to talk about.

First, it is widely anticipated that we are going to hear today that we should keep the surge going until the Spring. My question is just how long is the US occupation supposed to last? We have heard reports that troops will need to stay there for 9 or 10 more years -- is it really reasonable to expect that our Armed Forces, and the American public can sustain a 15 year war in and occupation of Iraq? And beyond next spring -- just what is the role of the US military given the fact that the internal political situation in Iraq is essentially dysfunctional?

My other line of questioning revolves around the report yesterday in the Washington Post that sources at the United Nations stated that Ambassador Crocker asked the UN to delay issuing a report on the human rights situation in Iraq, which is expected to address, among other things, the sectarian violence in Iraq. This report is also expected to address issues of US and Iraqi abuse since the surge. Mr. Delahunt's subcommittee has held a long series of hearings about the US's standing in the world today. Not surprisingly, we found that others around the world do not think very highly of how we have been conducting ourselves in recent years. From Abu Grhaib and Guatanamo Bay to this Administration's basic refusal to adhere the Geneva Conventions, it is no wonder why -- so, I read this article yesterday with great concern ~ are we facing yet another instance of our country committing more atrocities? Mr. Crocker, I would like to know if you requested this delay, and if so, why? Also, I would like you to speak to the purported findings -- are we committing more violations of human rights that could plunge our country's already low approval ratings even lower?

I would like to thank the witnesses for being here today, and I look forward to hearing their testimony.

Congressman Gene Green
House Foreign Affairs Committee
The Status of the War and Political Development in Iraq Hearing with General Petraeus
September 10, 2007

Chairman Lantos and Chairman Skelton, thank you for holding this joint hearing of our two committees. I would like to welcome General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker and I look forward to their testimony. I would also like to thank them for their service to our country. You have bravely and selflessly served our country under the most difficult circumstances.

Despite your efforts, and relentless work by our military, the overall picture in Iraq remains one of instability and of a government not willing to make the necessary political to move its country forward. For more than four years the Administration has had the flexibility to conduct this war as it has seen fit, and I have continued to support funding to ensure our troops have the equipment and resources necessary to carry out their mission, but through no fault of their own, they are carrying out a flawed mission and receiving inconsistent help, at best, from Iraqi security forces. Despite Administration statements otherwise, it seems the empirical evidence, what we read and hear in the news, all point toward a cycle of continued violence and sectarian fighting in Iraq.

This indefinite, open-ended commitment of our resources and troops cannot continue. The Administration must accept binding benchmarks for the Iraqi government to hold their feet to the fire, force them to make progress, or start redeploying our troops. Instead, the President vetoed legislation that would have done this earlier this year, and will soon be sending us a request for another $50 billion to continue funding the same war strategy we have seen for the last four and half years.

I understand some progress is being made, but it does not appear to be widespread, and there are many accounts of other areas, that appeared stable two or three years ago, to be backsliding into violent, unstable areas.

Our highest priority is our responsibility to continue to protect our nation from terrorists. While American troops and resources remain in Iraq, the National Intelligence Estimate reports that Al Qaeda is regaining strength and reconstituting in Afghanistan. Last week in front of these two committees, General John Batiste testified that "our all-volunteer military cannot continue the current cycle of deployments for much longer and certainly not much beyond April of 2008. Our Army and Marine Corps are at a breaking point…We have no strategic reserve." We cannot continue to police a civil war that is depleting our military resource and hampering our ability to recruit and maintain experienced military personnel.

I look forward to the testimony from General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker today, but as we heard from multiple witnesses last week, the situation in Iraq appears to be continued violence with political and sectarian infighting. Again, I thank the chairmen for holding this hearing.

Statement of the Honorable J. Gresham Barrett
Third Congressional District of South Carolina
U.S. House of Representatives

Committee on Foreign Affairs
Committee on Armed Services
September 10, 2007

Chairmen Skelton and Lantos and Ranking Members Hunter and Ros-Lehtinen, thank you for allowing me to share my thoughts regarding the testimony of General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker. This is a significant moment in our nature's history, and I am grateful for the opportunity to hear from two of our nation's finest public servants.

Let me begin by saying that I was honored to meet General Petraeus when I traveled to the city of Mosul in Northern Iraq in 2003. I was struck by his honesty and his integrity, and I have the greatest amount of respect for him. He is the right man for the job in Iraq, and I am appreciative of his hard work and dedication in drafting and implementing the surge plan that our troops are currently operating under in Iraq. Furthermore, I can not express my gratitude enough for our brave men and women in uniform who are working and sacrificing every day to ensure victory. We owe it to these troops on the ground, those who have served, and those who have died to complete the mission in Iraq.

Our troops have made real and noticeable progress in Iraq, especially in the Al Anbar province and Baghdad. In recent months, we have seen blows dealt to al Qaeda by Coalition and Iraqi security forces, the reduction of sectarian violence, and the stabilization of areas that were terrorist strongholds merely eight months ago. While many of my colleagues and I would like to see more movement in the political arena, I am hopeful that with the improved state of security on the ground more progress will be made by the Iraqi government. As we move forward, the Iraqi government must be held accountable for their failures, but we must also acknowledge their successes and give them the time to establish a system that works for their people. For these reasons, I am very interested to learn more about Ambassador Crocker's hopes for the political future of Iraq and his recommendations on how to foster greater development by the Iraqi government.

The stakes are too high- for Iraq, the entire Middle East region, and the world- for us to retreat now, especially as we begin to see the positive results of the surge effort. We can not lose the fight that we are engaged in in Iraq. Our national security depends on our troops' ability to secure the nation and defeat al Qaeda. The enemy is there; the enemy is real, and we can not ignore the threat that they pose to this nation.

After reading through the testimony of General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker, I am appreciative of their honest assessment of the situation in Iraq. I trust that both of these men are providing us with the most reliable and up-to-date information

available regarding the progress being made by U.S. and Collation forces and the Iraqi Government. I will continue to evaluate information regarding the military and political situation in Iraq as the plan moves forward, and again, I am thankful for the opportunity to submit my statement.

The Honorable Gus M. Bilirakis
Opening Statement

JOINT FULL COMMITTEE HEARING OF ARMED SERVICES AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS
STATUS OF THE WAR AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN IRAQ

September 10, 2007

Good afternoon, General Patraeus and Ambassador Crocker. What an honor to have you both here testifying today to report on your work and its progress in Iraq. I commend you both for the dedicated public service you have provided this nation. First, I'd like to recognize the distinguished chairman and ranking member of the Armed Services Committee and its members as well as Chairman Lantos and Ranking Member Ileana Ros-Lehtinen for calling this very important hearing.

General Patraeus and Ambassador Crocker, as you know, I had the privilege of meeting with you for the first time about three weeks ago in Baghdad as I made my first trip to Iraq. General Patraeus, I was impressed with your competence, modesty, sincerity, and straightforwardness. You are a soldier and a scholar. From my perspective, particularly as I traveled through Anbar province, your innovativeness on the battlefield has resulted in progress in areas which had been previously labeled as "lost to the enemy."

I appreciated the blunt, accurate assessments you provided me in our conversation last month in Iraq. While we all appreciate that the situation in Iraq is difficult, you reassured me that we are heading toward the right track and that this is a just cause. Failure in Iraq is not an option.

I am reassured that your officers and soldiers on the ground are actively and forcefully engaging the enemy and working to stand up Iraq's security forces. General Patraeus, your ability to coordinate with local officials and tribal leaders in Anbar province has succeeded in securing Anbar and nearly half of the neighborhoods in Baghdad. It's obvious that we are fighting this war differently. A continuation of this success will help to transition from a defensive posture to a more scaled down mission.

I am looking forward to listening to your assessment this afternoon to learn in greater detail what the U.S. military in conjunction with your leadership has been able to accomplish since the surge was fully implemented just a few weeks ago. I also look forward to learning from both you and Ambassador Crocker what this Congress can do to facilitate progress in Iraq. More importantly, what do the troops need NOW, and what will they need when they return from war?

Ambassador Crocker, I look forward to hearing from you about the realities behind the current political situation in Iraq and how they match up with the discussions currently taking place in Washington. Particularly, I am eager to hear your assessment of the political benchmarks this Congress has set for the Iraqi government to meet. The biggest question I have for you is, are we - as in this Congress - looking at the right things when we assess political progress?

I look forward to answers to these questions as well as many others. Again, thank you for your service and your testimony this afternoon.

House Committee on Foreign Affairs 9/14/07
Statement for the Record, Representative Poe
General Petraeus Hearing

Congressman Ted Poe
September 10, 2007

Mr. Chairman, first let me say thank you to General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker for being here with us today. I appreciate all the work they are doing to achieve security and political reconciliation in Iraq. I look forward to hearing from both of you.

Regarding the credibility of our witnesses, let me just take a moment to say, unfortunately, there are some interest groups that are trying to discredit the testimony of General Petraeus and I think it's shameful. General Petraeus has faithfully served in the US military for over 30 years. In January, the Senate unanimously approved (81-0) the nomination of General Petraeus, as Commander of the Multi-National Force in Iraq. These character attacks are an insult to our service men and woman and must stop.

As Congress continues to discuss the progress being made in Iraq and our future involvement in the war, what concerns me most, Mr. Chairman, is the threat Iran poses to a politically vulnerable Iraq. What will happen if the United States leaves before the job is done? It is no secret that Iran is interested in asserting its influence in Iraq. Iran has been accused of funneling money and arms to militias in Iraq with the aim of enticing sectarian violence and disrupting political reconciliation. To me, the goal seems obvious; Iran does not want Iraq to succeed. A stable democratic Iraq is a threat to Iranian power in the region. If the United States doesn't provide the support that is necessary to help Iraqis stand on their own politically, then the way I see it Mr. Chairman, we are not only jeopardizing Iraq's security, but our own long-term security interests as well.

And that's just the way it is.

9-10-07

Opening Statement by Chairman Lantos at hearing With General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker

Two of our nation's most capable public servants have come before us today to assess the situation in Iraq. General Petraeus, Ambassador Crocker, every single one of us wants you to succeed in your efforts to the maximum possible extent. We admire the heroism and sacrifice of our men and women in uniform and the dedication of our diplomatic corps in Iraq, and we fully understand the terrible burden on their families.

Our witnesses have been sent here this morning to restore credibility to a discredited policy. We and the American people already know that the situation in Iraq is grim, and a growing majority of this Congress and of the American people want our troops out.

In October of 2003 I flew in a helicopter with you, General Petraeus, over Northern Iraq around Mosul. As we passed over the countryside, you pointed out to me several ammunition dumps that had once belonged to the army of Saddam Hussein. "I don't have enough troops to guard these places," you said. "Someday, this might come back to haunt us."

Well, General Petraeus, you saw it coming. Those unguarded ammo dumps became the arsenals of insurgency. Those weapons have been turned against us. How very typical of this war.

The Administration's myopic policies in Iraq have created a fiasco. Is it any wonder that on the subject of Iraq, more and more Americans have little confidence in this Administration? We can not take ANY of this Administration's assertions on Iraq at face value anymore, and no amount of charts or statistics will improve its credibility.

This is not a knock on you, General Petraeus, or on you, Ambassador Crocker. But the fact remains, gentlemen, that the Administration has sent you here today to convince the members of these two Committees and the Congress that victory is at hand.

With all due respect to you, I must say ... I don't buy it. And neither does the independent Government Accountability Office or the Commission headed by General Jones. Both recently issued deeply pessimistic reports.

The current escalation in our military presence in Iraq may have produced some tactical successes. But strategically, the escalation has failed. It was intended to buy time for Prime Minister Maliki and the other Iraqi political leaders to find ways

to move toward the one thing that may end this terrible civil conflict – and that, of course, is a political settlement. As best we can see, that time has been utterly squandered.

Prime Minister Maliki has not shown the slightest inclination to move in the direction of compromise. Instead of working to build national institutions – a truly Iraqi army, a competent bureaucracy, a non-sectarian police force – Maliki has moved in the opposite direction. The so-called "Unity Accord" announced with such fanfare a couple of weeks ago, is just another in a long list of empty promises.

Instead of acting as a leader for Iraq as a whole, Maliki has functioned as the front man for Shiite partisans. And he has presided over a Shiite coalition that includes some of the most notorious militias, death squads, and sectarian thugs in Iraq.

This is not what the American people had in mind. And when Mr. Maliki states, as he recently did, that if the Americans leave, he can find, quote, "new friends," we are reminded most forcefully of his and his Party's intimate ties to Iran.

In his recent visit to Anbar Province, the President made much of our cooperation in the fight against Al Qaeda with Sunni tribal militias. This alliance may in the short run be a positive development – but it also raises some serious and profound questions.

Anbar, of course, includes just five per cent of the population of Iraq – an important five per cent, but still only five. What's more, by arming, training and funding the Sunni militias in that province, we are working against our own strategy of building national Iraqi institutions.

America should not be in the business of arming, training and funding both sides of a religious civil war in Iraq. Did the Administration learn nothing from our country's actions in Afghanistan two decades ago, when by supporting Islamist militants against the Soviet Union, we helped pave the way for the rise of the Taliban? Why are we now repeating the short-sighted patterns of the past?

In Iraq today, we are wrecking our military, forcing their families to suffer needlessly, sacrificing the lives of our brave young men and women in uniform. And the enormous financial cost of this war is limiting our ability to address our global security needs, as well as pressing domestic problems such as health care, crumbling infrastructure and public education. The cost of this war in Iraq will be passed along to our grandchildren and beyond.

In the last few days, General Petraeus, media have reported that you are prepared to support a slow drawdown of our forces in Iraq – beginning with a brigade or two, perhaps at the end of this year.

This clearly is nowhere near enough.

We need to send Maliki's government a strong message, loud and clear. Removing a brigade is nothing but a political whisper – and it is unacceptable to the American people and to the majority of the Congress.

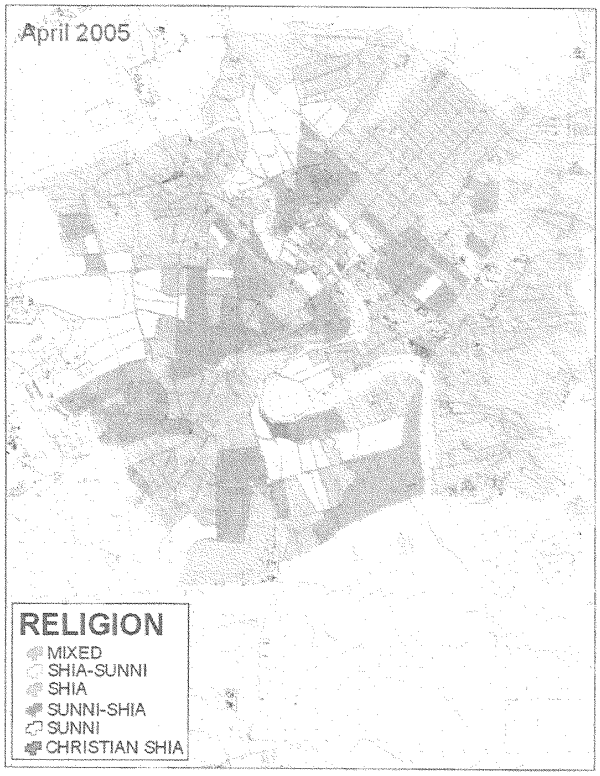
As long as American troops are doing the heavy lifting in Iraq, there is no reason – none at all – for the Iraqis themselves to step up. Military progress without political progress is meaningless.

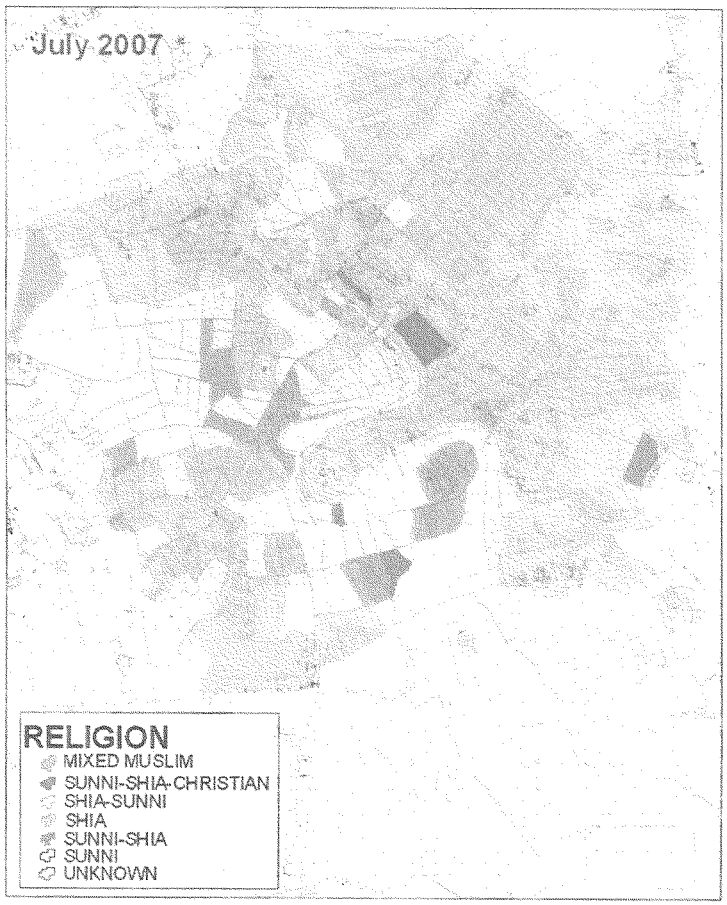
It is their country – and it is their turn. Prime Minister Maliki and the Iraqi politicians need to know that the free ride is over and that American troops will not be party to their civil war.

The situation in Iraq cries out for a dramatic change of course. We need to get out of Iraq, for that country's sake and for our own. It is time to go – and to go now.

DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

SEPTEMBER 10, 2007


April 2005
RELIGION
MIXED
SHIA-SUNNI
SHIA
SUNNI-SHIA
SUNNI
CHRISTIAN SHIA

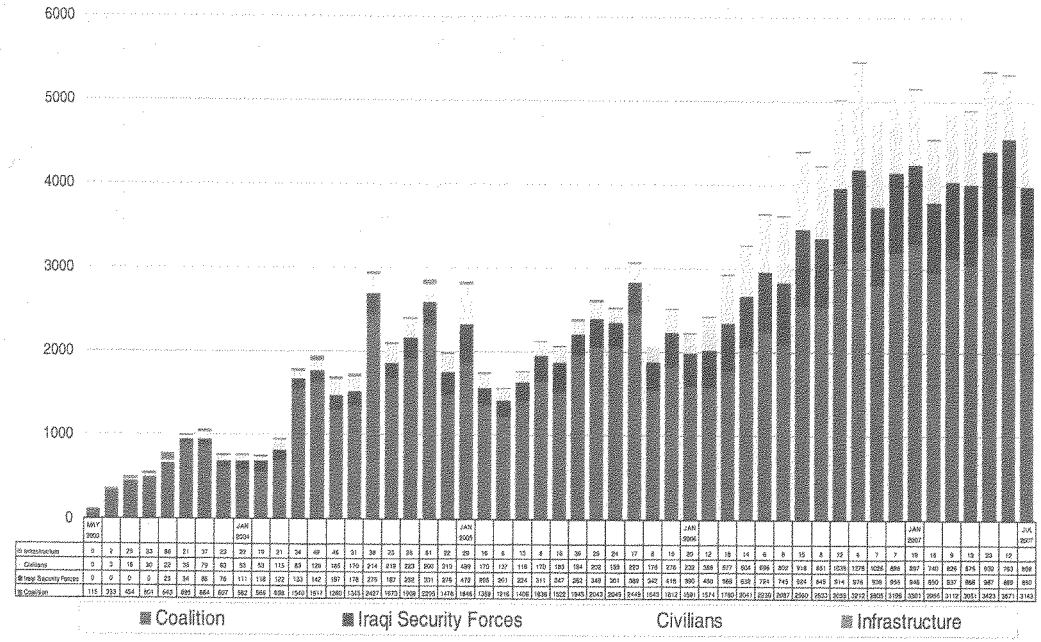

July 2007
RELIGION
MIXED MUSLIM
SUNNI-SHIA-CHRISTIAN
SHIA-SUNNI
SHIA
SUNNI-SHIA
SUNNI
UNKNOWN

List of Enclosed Documents

1. Chart of Attack Trends from DIA
2. Breakdown of Total OIF Costs
3. Increase in OIF Funding 2003-2008
4. CBO Estimate of Future War Costs
5. Iraqi Oil Production
6. Iraqi Electricity Generation
7. Chart of GAO Benchmark Assessments
8. Map of Iraqi Provinces and Major Cities
9. Map of Iraqi Religious/Ethnic Distributions
10. Map of Baghdad

UNCLASSIFIED

Iraq: Monthly Attack Trends by Category



	MAY 2003								JAN 2004										JAN 2005										JAN 2006										JAN 2007						
Infrastructure	0	2	29	33	56	21	37	23	29	19	31	34	49	46	31	38	25	35	61	32	29	16	6	12	6	18	38	29	24	17	8	19	20	12	18	14	6	9	15	8	12	6	7	7	19	15	9	13	23	12
Civilians	0	3	16	30	22	36	79	63	53	53	115	83	129	165	170	214	219	223	300	210	489	170	137	118	170	193	184	202	159	223	178	276	239	368	577	604	696	702	918	851	1035	1278	1026	886	897	740	826	875	939	793	959
Iraqi Security Forces	0	0	0	0	23	34	86	76	111	118	122	133	142	167	178	275	187	252	331	275	472	855	261	224	311	247	252	349	361	389	242	418	390	450	568	538	724	743	924	849	914	976	936	951	946	850	937	868	947	489	850
Coalition	115	333	454	651	643	895	864	607	582	566	638	1540	1517	1280	1345	2427	1673	1908	2205	1476	1846	1389	1216	1406	1636	1522	1945	2043	2045	2449	1545	1612	1591	1574	1780	2041	2239	2087	2590	2533	2633	3212	2805	3196	3381	2991	3112	3051	3423	3671	3143

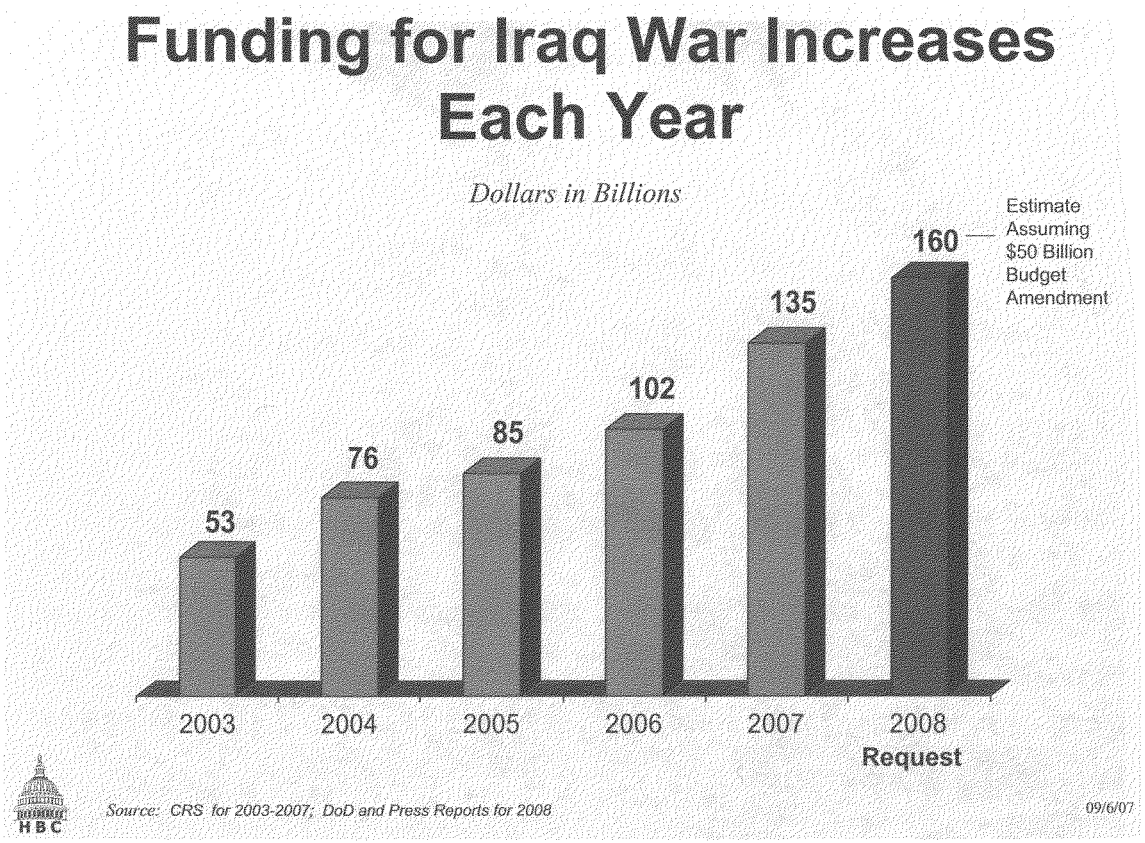
UNCLASSIFIED

Derived From: Multiple Sources
Declassify On: 20320806

Non-Partisan CRS Report:

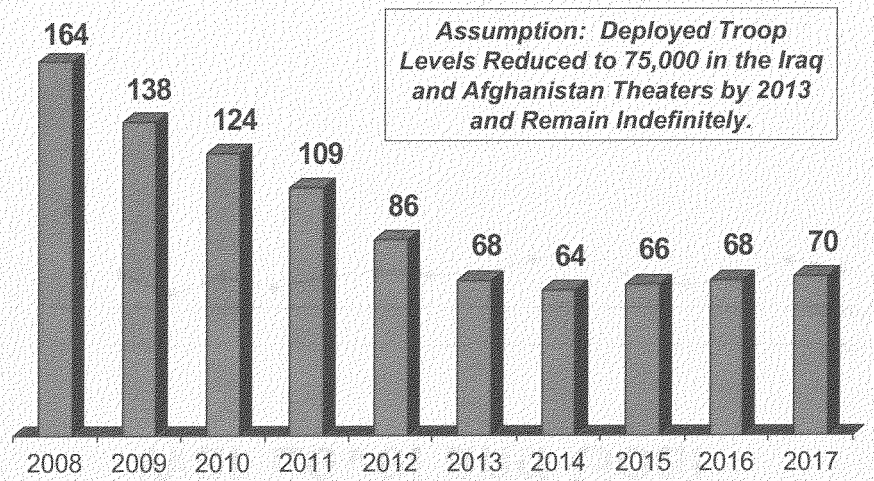
COST OF IRAQ WAR RISING

PER YEAR	$120,000,000,000
PER MONTH	$10,000,000,000
PER WEEK	$2,307,692,380
PER DAY	$329,670,330
PER HOUR	$13,736,264
PER MINUTE	$228,938
PER SECOND	$3,816


Funding for Iraq War Increases Each Year
Dollars in Billions
53
76
85
102
135
160
Estimate Assuming $50 Billion Budget Amendment
2003
2004
2005
2006
2007
2008 Request
Source: CRS for 2003-2007; DoD and Press Reports for 2008
09/6/07
HBC

CBO Calculates $958 Billion of Future War Costs Assuming "Surge" Lasts Until June 2008

Dollars in Billions



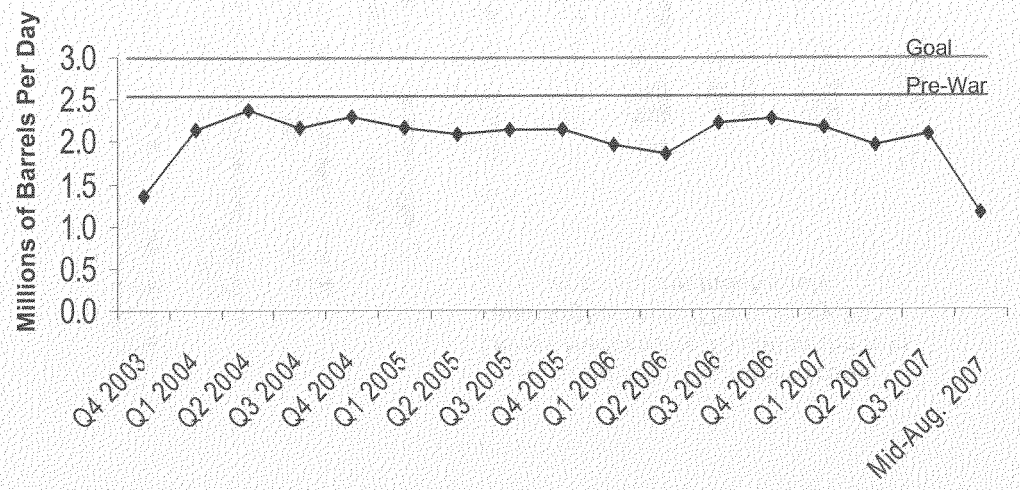
Estimates Reflect Costs for Iraq and Afghanistan

HBC

Source: CBO

07/31/07

Iraq Oil Production Below Pre-War Level and Goal

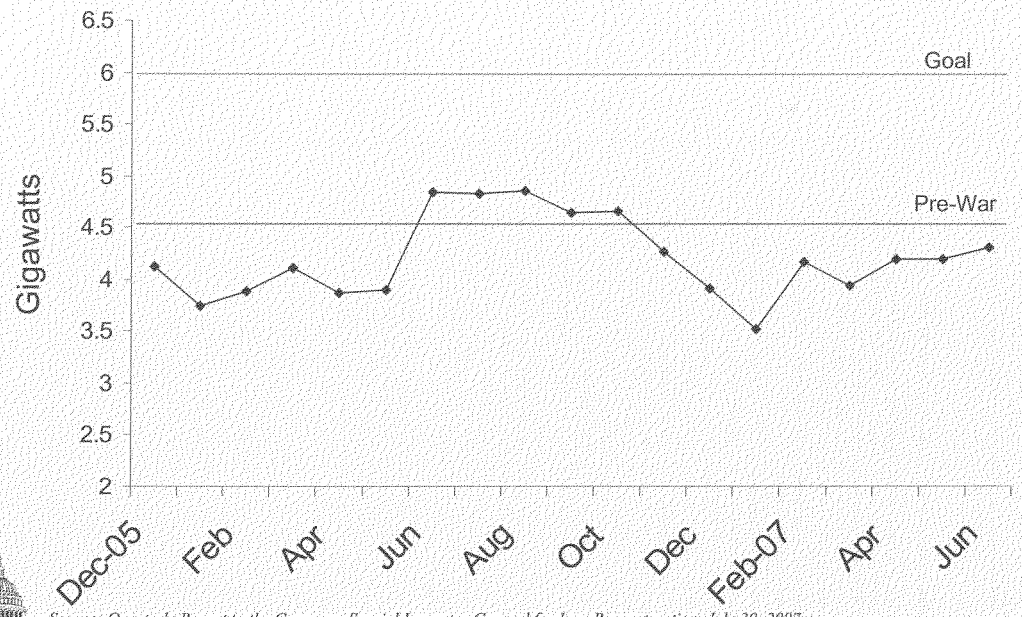


HBC

Source: Quarterly Report to the Congress, Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, July 30, 2007

09/05/07

Iraq's Electricity Generating Capacity Below Pre-War Level and Goal



HBC

Source: Quarterly Report to the Congress, Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, July 30, 2007

09/05/07

Benchmark	GAO assessment	Status
1. Forming a Constitutional Review Committee and completing the constitutional review.	○	Committee formed but amendments not approved by the Iraqi legislature and no referendum scheduled.
2. Enacting and implementing legislation on de-Ba'athification.	○	Laws drafted.
3. Enacting and implementing legislation to ensure the equitable distribution of hydrocarbon resources of the people of Iraq without regard to the sect or ethnicity of recipients, and enacting and implementing legislation to ensure that the energy resources of Iraq benefit Sunni Arabs, Shia Arabs, Kurds, and other Iraqi citizens in an equitable manner.	○	3 of 4 components drafted; none being considered by parliament.
4. Enacting and implementing legislation on procedures to form semi-autonomous regions.	◐	Law enacted; implementation scheduled for 2008.
5. Enacting and implementing legislation establishing an independent High Electoral Commission, provincial elections law, provincial council authorities, and a date for provincial elections.	○	Commission law enacted and implemented; however, supporting laws not enacted.
6. Enacting and implementing legislation addressing amnesty.	○	No law drafted.
7. Enacting and implementing legislation establishing a strong militia disarmament program to ensure that such security forces are accountable only to the central government and loyal to the Constitution of Iraq.	○	No law drafted.
8. Establishing supporting political, media, economic, and services committees in support of the Baghdad security plan.	●	Committees established.
9. Providing three trained and ready brigades to support Baghdad operations.	◐	Forces provided; some of limited effectiveness.
10. Providing Iraqi commanders with all authorities to execute this plan and to make tactical and operational decisions, in consultation with U.S. commanders, without political intervention, to include the authority to pursue all extremists, including Sunni insurgents and Shiite militias.	○	Political intervention continues.
11. Ensuring that Iraqi security forces are providing even-handed enforcement of the law.	○	Iraqi security forces engaged in sectarian-based abuses.
12. Ensuring that, according to President Bush, Prime Minister Maliki said "the Baghdad security plan will not provide a safe haven for any outlaws, regardless of [their] sectarian or political affiliation."	◐	Militia infiltration of some security forces enables some safe havens.
13. Reducing the level of sectarian violence in Iraq and eliminating militia control of local security.	○	Militias control some local security; unclear whether sectarian violence has decreased.
14. Establishing all of the planned joint security stations in neighborhoods across Baghdad.	●	32 of 34 stations established.
15. Increasing the number of Iraqi security forces units capable of operating independently.	○	Number of independent units declined between March and July 2007.
16. Ensuring that the rights of minority political parties in the Iraqi legislature are protected.	●	Legislators' rights protected; minority citizens' rights unprotected.
17. Allocating and spending $10 billion in Iraqi revenues for reconstruction projects, including delivery of essential services, on an equitable basis.	◐	Funds allocated but unlikely to be fully spent.
18. Ensuring that Iraq's political authorities are not undermining or making false accusations against members of the Iraqi security forces.	○	Unsubstantiated accusations continue to be made.

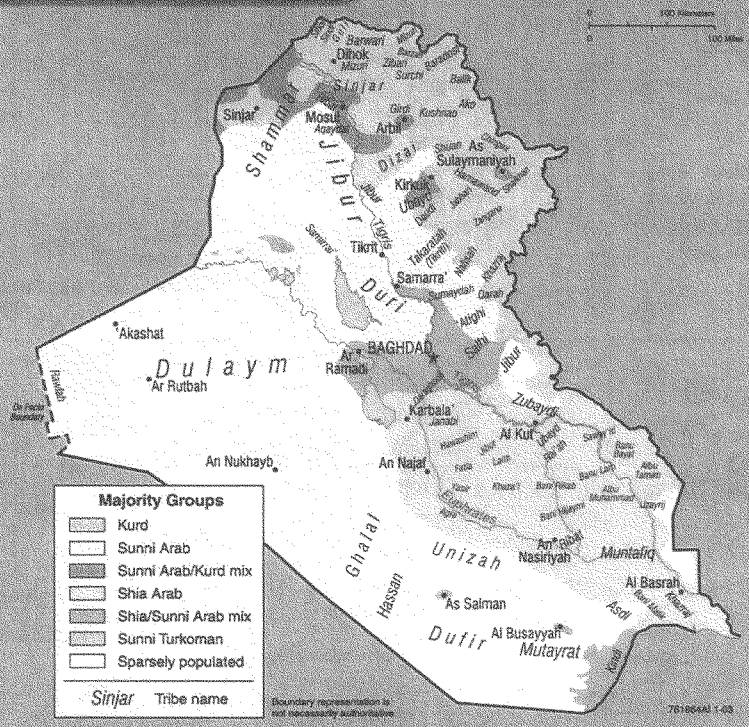
● Met ◐ Partially met ○ Not met

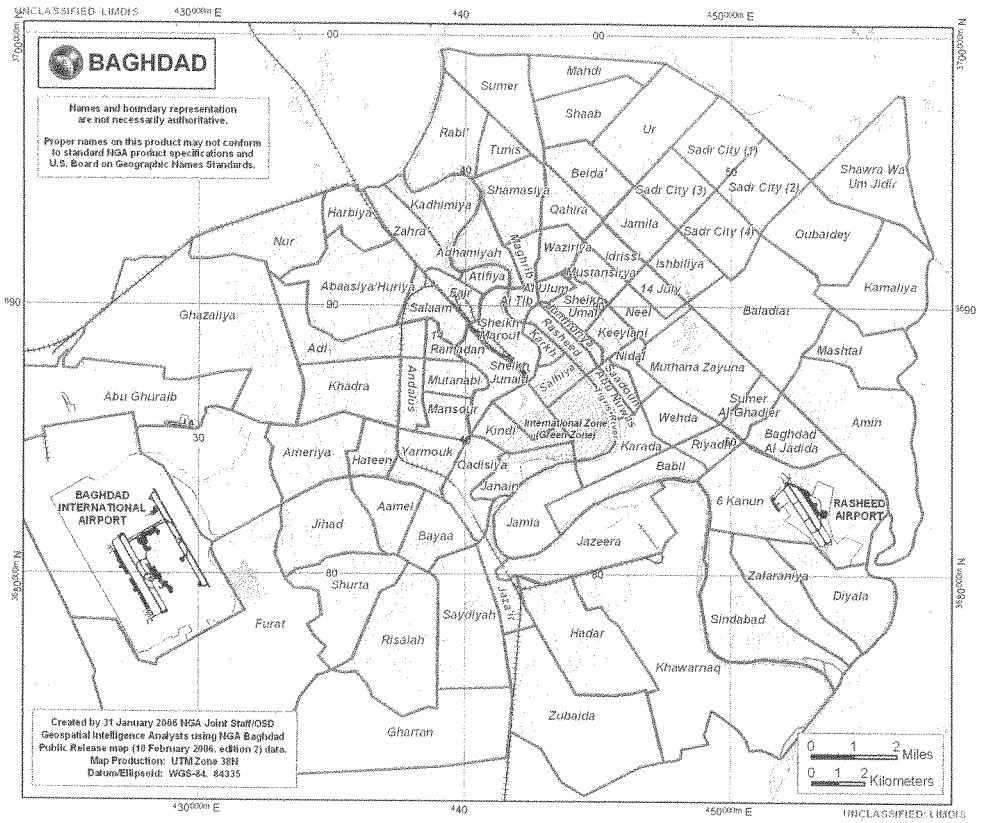
Source: GAO analysis of UN, U.S., and Iraqi data.

Map No. 3835 Rev. 4 UNITED NATIONS
January 2004

Department of Peacekeeping Operations
Cartographic Section

Distribution of Ethnoreligious Groups and Major Tribes


Majority Groups
Kurd
Sunni Arab
Sunni Arab/Kurd mix
Shia Arab
Shia/Sunni Arab mix
Sunni Turkoman
Sparsely populated
Sinjar Tribe name
Boundary representation is not necessarily authoritative
Dinok
Sinjar
Mosul
Arbil
Kirkuk
Tikrit
Samarra'
BAGHDAD
Ar Ramadi
Akashat
Ar Rutbah
Karbala'
Al Kut
An Nukhayb
An Najaf
An Nasiriyah
Al Basrah
As Salman
Al Busayyah
Shamar
Jibur
Dulaym
Dufi
Ghalal
Hassan
Unizah
Dufir
Muntafiq
Mutayrat
Zubayd
Asdi
Euphrates
Tigris
Al Qa'im
Rawah
Hadithah
Ar Ruwayshid
Ar Rutbah
Al Qurnah
Al Faw
Umm Qasr
Safwan
Zubayr
Al Ma'qil
Al Hindiyah
Al Hillah
Al Diwaniyah
Al Kufah
Al Hillah
Al Amarah
Al Qadisiyah
Al Kut
Al Ma'dan
Al Qurnah
Al Basrah
Al Zubayr
Al Faw
Umm Qasr
Safwan


UNCLASSIFIED: LIMDIS
BAGHDAD
Names and boundary representation are not necessarily authoritative.
Proper names on this product may not conform to standard NGA product specifications and U.S. Board on Geographic Names Standards.
Sumer
Mahdi
Shaab
Ur
Rabi'
Tunis
Sadr City (1)
Sadr City (2)
Sadr City (3)
Sadr City (4)
Beida'
Shawra Wa' Um Jidir
Shamasiya
Kadhimiya
Qahira
Harbiya
Zahra'
Jamila
Oubaidey
Nur
Adhamiyah
Wazirlya
Idrissi
Ishbiliya
Mustansiya
Atifiya
Abaasiya/Huriya
Ali Ulum
14 Jully
Kamaliya
Ghazaliya
Salaam
Al Tib
Sheikh Umar
Neel
Baladiat
Sheikh Marouf
Rashead
Keeylani
Adl
Ramadan
Nidal
Mashtal
Sheikh Junaidi
Muthana Zayuna
Khadra
Mutanabi
Andalus
Sumer Al Ghadier
Abu Ghuraib
Mansour
Wehda
Amin
International Zone (Green Zone)
Kindi
Baghdad Al Jadida
Ameriya
Hateen
Yarmouk
Karada
Riyadh
Qadisiya
Babil
Janain
BAGHDAD INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
6 Kanun
RASHEED AIRPORT
Aamel
Jihad
Bayaa
Jamia
Jazeera
Shurta
Zafaraniya
Diyala
Saydiyah
Furat
Risalah
Hadar
Sindabad
Khawarnaq
Zubaida
Ghartan
Created by 31 January 2006 NGA Joint Staff/OSD Geospatial Intelligence Analysts using NGA Baghdad Public Release map (10 February 2006, edition 2) data.
Map Production: UTM Zone 38N
Datum/Ellipsoid: WGS-84, 84335
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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

SEPTEMBER 10, 2007

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. SKELTON

The CHAIRMAN. In your testimony, you discussed reducing the level of U.S. forces in Iraq by five brigades by next spring. Is this reduction dependent on maintaining the current trend of reduced attacks? If so, what are your plans if attack levels begin to once again climb? If not, why then can you not reduce the level of troops in Iraq sooner than currently planned? What gives you confidence that any reduced level of violence will be maintained after U.S. troop levels decline as is planned?

General PETRAIUS. Our recommendation to reduce the number of Brigade Combat Teams in Iraq is based on the improvements we have made to the security situation thus far and the further progress we believe we can achieve over the next few months. In the month since I testified before Congress, attacks have continued generally to trend downward and are now at their lowest level since March 2006, despite the fact that this period is also Ramadan, during which we have historically seen an increase in attacks. While we are cognizant of the hard work that lies ahead, we believe we can continue to make additional improvements to the security situation over the coming months. This belief is based on a number of factors, including an increasing number of concerned local citizens who are stepping forward, rejecting extremism, and assisting in providing security; the growing capabilities of the Iraqi Security Forces; and the degradation of the enemy, which can be attributed both to our operations and to the Iraqi popular rejection of them. We continue to closely monitor these factors, as well as the level of violence, and should a marked increase in attacks and a decrease in overall security occur, we will reevaluate our way forward at that tune.

As I stated during testimony, we will transition parts of the country to Iraqi Security Forces as conditions on the ground and the capabilities of our Iraqi partners (including concerned local citizens) permit. We believe conditions-based transition will allow us to maintain and further reduce the level of violence despite a decrease in Coalition Forces. To ensure these transitions occur in an orderly fashion, and having taken into account the so-called battlefield geometry to ensure that wre retain and build on the gains for which our troopers have fought, we believe the best way to draw down the 5 surge brigades, 2 Marine battalions, and Marine Expeditionary Force is to do so deliberately over the following months. The process has already begun, and we expect it to be complete by mid-July.

As these transitions occur. Coalition Forces will gradually move from leading and partnering to an overwatch posture. In the overwatch posture, Coalition Forces will continue to monitor developments and provide quick-reaction force support, intelligence, and other key enablers. Transition teams will also continue to support the development of Iraqi forces. While in overwatch, should a situation develop that is beyond the capacity of Iraqi Forces to handle on their own. Coalition Forces will be readily available to back up our Iraqi counterparts.

The CHAIRMAN. Ambassador Crocker: The current strategy was designed to reduce violence to provide space for the government of Iraq to make progress on national reconciliation. Do you believe that the government will achieve the measures usually referred to as the 'benchmarks', mentioned in the President's January 10 speech and subsequently enacted in legislation before the first Army brigade is redeployed out of Iraq? If so, why do you expect the record of progress in the government of Iraq to be different in the future than in the past?

General PETRAIUS. Respectfully, U.S. Mission—Iraq will answer.

The CHAIRMAN. You have often discussed the concept of bottom-up reconciliation, which involves reaching agreements with local tribal groups or other relatively small groups in Iraq. Ultimately, it would appear that this strategy will at best result in reduced violence through empowering a relatively large number of local actors, many of whom will maintain a hostile attitude toward the government of Iraq or other local groups. It would seem that this situation would require a large number of military personnel to police the situation and ensure that no group could either once again take up arms against the government or against other local groups. Do you believe that the Iraqi security forces will be able to fulfill that role? If not, for how long do you believe U.S. forces would have to be in Iraq fulfilling the role of peacekeepers and what level of forces do you believe would be required?

General PETRAIUS. Both we and the Government of Iraq are aware of the many benefits—and risks—of bottom-up reconciliation. The benefits are vast—local citizens are rejecting extremism, assisting us in providing security, providing us with actionable intelligence, and seeking a new and legitimate relationship with the Iraqi Government. There are associated risks, however, with developing a new relationship with individuals who at best condoned insurgent behavior and at worst actively fought against the Government of Iraq. As we move forward with the opportunity presented before us and begin to take the initial steps toward turning local accommodation into national reconciliation, we are mindful of the risks and work to mitigate them.

We are mitigating the risk in a number of ways. In the short-term, we are solidifying the desire of local citizens to serve their communities and their government through the initiation of contract security arrangements. As they join these contract arrangements, concerned citizens take a pledge of loyalty to the Government of Iraq. Also, to maintain accountability and control, we are collecting their biometric data. As we move forward, we are working to transition responsibility for bottom-up reconciliation to the Government of Iraq. This involves a number of different areas. First, the Government of Iraq is beginning to assume responsibility for the security contracts. Simultaneously, we are working with the Ministries of Defense, Interior, and Finance to move these concerned local citizens either into permanent positions in the legitimate Iraqi Security Forces or into other governmental employment. So, in response to the question you posed, it is not that we expect Iraqi Security Forces to be peacekeepers overseeing groups of concerned local citizens; we aim to have the concerned local citizens join legitimate Iraqi Security Force units.

Specifically, we are planning to have many of the volunteers fill available authorizations in the Iraqi Police. One of the big ideas fundamental to not only bottom-up reconciliation but also to sustainable security is the concept of local citizens protecting their local areas, and we feel the optimal way to do so is by having local citizens be the local police for their area. These local police will always remain tied to the central government, as the central government controls the payrolls and provides other financial support.

As I stated in the previous answer, as the capabilities of the Iraqi Security Forces increase and as conditions on the ground permit, we will transition responsibility for areas of Iraq to our Iraqi partners, and Coalition Forces will assume an overwatch position. We are currently executing the drawdowm of surge forces; by March, we expect to have a better sense of the situation on the ground, the capabilities of the Iraqi Security Forces, and the enemy situation. Based on those considerations, we will be able to make recommendations for further force reductions.

The CHAIRMAN. Recently, Basra and other southern provinces of Iraq have become the location of a violent struggle for power between Shia parties. How do you plan to deal with this situation? Does the government of Iraq have a plan to deal with the violence in Basra and, if so, what is that plan? Are you concerned that the situation might undermine the security of U.S. supply convoys or might threaten the export of oil from Basra?

General PETRAIUS. There is no doubt there has been an intra-Shi'a struggle for power and economic resources in the southern provinces and also no doubt that struggle will continue. While that struggle has certainly become violent at times, for the most part it is playing out more peacefully than more violently. Over the past few months, we have seen southern Shi'a sheiks and political leaders essentially censure the violence instigated by Jaish al Mahdi to the point where Muqtada al Sadr has self-imposed a ceasefire on Jaish al Mahdi activities, though some extremists followers are not complying with his order. Shi'a religious leaders also are generally able to exert a calming influence on Iraqi Shi'as as tensions escalate, though they have been targeted themselves from time to time. So while not perfect by any means, there is something of a self-correction mechanism culturally and communally that mitigates a broader intra-Shi'a conflict.

Along with fostering political accommodation, the Government of Iraq is also working to secure Basra and lower the levels of violence there. First, though infiltration of the Iraqi Security Forces by militias has been a concern, the capabilities of the Iraqi Security Forces have improved in recent months. The forces—especially the Army elements—are relatively well-trained and well-equipped, and they have been reinforced by armored, light, and special operations forces (two brigade equivalents) that have deployed to Basra in the past two months. Moreover, two qualified officers were recently installed as well, General Mohan Hafith Fahad, the new commander of the Basra Operations Command, and Major General Jalil, the new Provincial Director of Police. Under their leadership Iraqi Forces are conducting operations in Basra and, despite some intra-Shi'a violence, maintaining security for their citizens. Coalition forces conducted an orderly handover of the Basra Palace to an

Iraqi element, and Coalition elements are now in an overwatch position from Basra Airfield, providing quick-reaction force support, intelligence, and other key enablers, as well as transition teams to support the development of Iraqi forces. These efforts are paying off; the overall level of violence there has decreased in the past month.

To date, our convoys have continued unimpeded, the oil continues to flow from Basra and goods are moving through the port. We carefully monitor the situation in Basra and the southeast, but we do not foresee violence reaching a level where it would affect our logistics operations or Iraq's export of petroleum. As noted above, I believe southern Iraqis understand Basra to be the lifeblood of economy and thus have incentives to keep Basra working, even while they work to resolve their competition for power, influence, and resources.

The CHAIRMAN. What conditions must be present before the Iraqi Security Forces can successfully take the lead in the counterinsurgency fight and U.S. forces can transition to other missions such as training and providing operational or strategic overwatch? Do any of these conditions rely on action from the government of Iraq and, if so, is the government of Iraq aggressively acting to bring, this about?

General PETRAIUS. Successfully transferring Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) to the lead for counterinsurgency operations will depend on several key conditions. These include a sustainable security environment that exists at levels commensurate with ISF capabilities, eliminating sectarian behavior within the security organizations, continuing ISF expansion, and developing ISF combat enablers, especially logistics and administration. Additionally, the development of sufficient numbers of ISF leaders is also vital to their success.

Achievement of these conditions takes significant effort from all involved, including MNF–I, the U.S. Embassy, and, most importantly, the Government of Iraq and the Iraqi Security Forces themselves. The Government of Iraq, the Ministries of Defense and Interior, and senior leaders within the Iraqi Security Forces take very seriously their commitment to improving their forces. Though many challenges still exist, we are seeing progress in several areas, most notably the steady increase in both the number and quality of Iraqi military and police units. They are in the fight throughout the country, showing increasing resiliency, often in the face of heavy combat operations and with minimal Coalition assistance. As we look to the future—growing a larger force as well as sustaining the current one—we are also assisting Iraq in developing their institutional base. The recent establishment of a bomb disposal school at Besmaya is but one example of how Iraq is increasing its ability to expand and replenish critical security capacity over time. Additionally, the Coalition continues its concerted effort to assist the Iraqi government in making maximum use of the Foreign Military Sales (FMS) program, as it constitutes the majority of ISF capital expenditure. In 2007, Iraq's Ministry of Defense has so far dedicated $1.1B in FMS, and the Ministry of Interior plans to invest $500M. We projcet that in 2008 both ministries will maintain or expand their use of FMS.

Depending on the conditions on the ground and capabilities of the Iraqi Forces in a particular area, Coalition Forces either lead, partner, or provide overwatch for the ISF. Where conditions require, Coalition Forces remain in the lead and bear sionificant support responsibilities for the ISF. In less demanding environments, Coalition Forces partner with the ISF, conducting joint operations that not only help improve the Iraqi Forces but also help demonstrate to the Iraqi citizens the increasing capabilities of the ISF. In overwatch status, the ISF take the lead in conducting operations and Coalition Forces provide enablers and have quick reaction forces available to respond if needed to provide backup.

The CHAIRMAN. On June 12, 2007, Lieutenant General Martin Dempsey testified before the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations. General Dempsey was asked to identify the significant differences between the 2006 Joint Campaign Plan and the April 2007 "interim" campaign plan signed by General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker. General Dempsey testified that an assessment had been made that the effort to transition security responsibility to the Iraqi Security Forces had put the Iraqi population at an unacceptable level of risk. He further testified that, during the surge securing the population takes priority over the effort to transition security responsibility to the ISF. What impact has this shift in priority, had on the training of Iraqi forces and the plans to transition to security responsibility to the Iraqis?

General PETRAIUS. The current emphasis on protecting the population has not come at the expense of transitioning security responsibility to the Iraqis or of focusing on further developing our Iraqi partners. Instead, securing the population, increasing the capabilities of our Iraqi counterparts, and transitioning security responsibilities to them are occurring simultaneously and success depends on achieving the proper balance of these complimentary tasks. Securing the population remains the overarching goal; Coalition Forces and ISF work together to achieve that

end-state. Most all Coalition operations are conducted jointly, with Iraqi Forces in the lead wherever possible—and this on-the-ground experience improves the capabilities of the Iraqi Forces. Iraqi units increasingly also conduct checkpoints, patrols, and other missions on their own, and are advised by their Coalition Transition Teams, who not only teach, coach, and mentor them but also provide a link to Coalition enablers. Overall, we are seeing an increase in the skills and capabilities of the Iraqi Security Forces. The tasks of developing and of transitioning security responsibility to Iraqi forces in a given area are facilitated by lower violence. Consequently, the quickest and most effective route to transition is through this focus on population security. As the ISF improve, and as conditions on the ground permit, we will continue transitioning responsibility for securing the population to the Iraqi Security Forces.

The CHAIRMAN. The current strategy was designed to reduce violence to provide space for the government of Iraq to make progress on national reconciliation. Do you believe that the government will achieve the measures, usually referred to as the 'benchmarks', mentioned in the President's January 10 speech and subsequently enacted in legislation before the first Army brigade is redeployed out of Iraq? If so, why do you expect the record of progress in the government of Iraq to be different in the future than in the past?

Ambassador CROCKER. Iraq's leaders have many difficult problems to tackle, which will take time to fully resolve. We should not be surprised at this, given the challenging environment and the gravity of the issues.

Several of the benchmarks mentioned in the President's speech on January 10 require the passage of legislation by the GOI. Recently, there has been positive movement on some of the most important legislation. The companion bills to the Hydrocarbon Framework Law are near completion; these companion bills reorganize the Ministry of Oil and reconstitute the Iraq National Oil Company. The Revenue Management law has been drafted, but still faces some opposition since fundamental questions remain on how oil revenues will be allocated; nevertheless, even without legislation, the central government shares oil revenues on an equitable basis with Iraq's provinces. De-Ba'athification reform legislation was recently approved by the Presidency Council and the Council of Ministers and is being reviewed by the Council of Representatives.

The commitment of Iraq's leaders to work on these and many other hard issues is encouraging. While we recognize and appreciate their willingness to come together and address these fundamental issues, it is also important that they achieve concrete results.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. TAYLOR

Mr. TAYLOR. General in your conversations with the Iraqis, do you ever point at a calendar, whether this year, next year, or the following year, the year after that, and say, we expect you to be an operational force by this date? What I've failed to see—and I'd like you to enlighten me—is a target date. We hear numbers of Iraqis trained. We hear dollars spent on equipment.

What I don't hear or see is a target date where you expect them to be able to police their own country and defend their own country. And if I'm missing that, I would certainly like you to point that out.

General, for the record, could you supply that timeline, by province, to this committee?

General PETRAEUS. Mr. Taylor, seven Iraqi provinces have already transitioned to provincial Iraqi control, and Karbala has been approved for a transfer of security responsibility near the end of October 2007.

We currently project that Babil, Basrah, and Ninewah Provinces will transfer to provincial Iraqi control in late 2007 or early 2008; that Wasit and Diwaniyah Provinces will transfer in January 208; and that Al Anbar, Diyala, Salah ah Din and Baghdad Provinces will transfer later that year. The transfer of Kirkuk will not be scheduled until the Iraqi constitutional provisions under Article 140 are resolved.

These forecasts could change, as they are based on the current assessment of the political situation, security situation, Iraqi Security Forces capabilities and development, and Coalition Force posture.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. SMITH

Mr. SMITH. Do you acknowledge the extent of the cleansing that has occurred and the consequent physical separation of Sunni and Shi'a in Iraq as highlighted above and in other reports in recent months?

General PETRAIUS. Tragic ethno-sectarian displacement has unquestionably taken place in Baghdad and, to a lesser extent, throughout other parts of Iraq. There are neighborhoods in Baghdad and in a number of other villages and towns where coercion, intimidation, and violence resulted in sectarian displacement that tore the very fabric of Iraqi society in Baghdad in 2006 and into 2007. There clearly has been continued displacement even in recent months, but not in the numbers seen at the height of the sectarian violence in late 2006 and early 2007. By actively working in partnership with Iraqi Security Forces to literally sit on neighborhoods and secure the people and then to stabilize their communities, we are working to lower the levels of displacement and are starting to see some people return to their old neighborhoods.

Mr. SMITH. Can you provide data that explains more thoroughly to what extent Sunni-Shi'a physical separation has occurred in Baghdad and throughout Iraq, as well as what the trends are?

General PETRAIUS. The maps below depict the extent to which Sunni-Shi'a physical separation has occurred in Baghdad over time. Although the security situation has improved in Baghdad and throughout Iraq, population displacement continues, albeit at a decreased rate. The UN High Commission for Refugees estimates approximately 60,000 people are displaced each month, but with the improvements in the security situation we expect this number has decreased, though that is based more on the assessment of leaders on the ground than on any accepted, reliable database on displacement. Moreover, some displaced people are now retunung to their communities. In Anbar, for example, security has improved drastically over the last year, and tribal initiatives have enabled 2,000 displaced families to return to select areas.

[The maps referred to can be found in the Appendix beginning on page 107.]

Mr. SMITH. Given the significant amount of sectarian cleansing that has already occurred, what are the political implications of this reality to the Iraq that we are trying to rebuild?

General PETRAIUS. Respectfully submit that this question is best addressed by US Mission-Iraq.

Mr. SMITH. What sort of governmental framework is the U.S. urging Iraq to establish in order to realistically reflect these (self-partitioned) sectarian divisions?

General PETRAIUS. Respectfully submit that this question is best addressed by US Mission-Iraq.

Mr. SMITH. Under your current plans, when U.S. forces eventually "stand down" in Iraq, to whom specifcally do you anticipate transitioning security responsibility?

General PETRAIUS. When security conditions and Iraqi forces are ready in a given area, the Joint Campaign Plan envisions a transition from Coalition Forces "leading" Iraqi Security Forces in conducting security operations to Coalition Forces "partnering" with Iraqi Security Forces, where we provide assistance and fill critical gaps in capabilities before and during operations, to Coalition Forces ultimately "overwatching" operations conducted by Iraqi Security Forces. In all cases, we will turn security responsibility over to legitimate security forces of the Government of Iraq and not to local militias, and our forces will retain certain discrete roles such as high-level counter-terrorism.

Mr. SMITH. The central government security apparatus appears to have limited control over the security situation in various provinces and towns throughout the country. Do our plans, then, contemplate eventually turning over security to locally based militias or other provincial or regional forces?

General PETRAIUS. As stated in the answer above, the Coalition is transferring security responsibilities to the Government of Iraq as conditions on the ground and the capabilities of Iraqi Security Forces permit. Furthermore, these transitions take place in accordance with established criteria and protocols, and as they occur, the Government of Iraq assumes responsibility for commanding and controlling the Iraqi Security Forces. While many of these Iraqi Security Forces are local and provincial-based forces, they are ultimately still instruments of the national government, and all are on national payrolls. Because the pay and operational-level direction of Iraqi police and army forces continue to come through central government ministries, the Government of Iraq maintains reasonable control over its uniformed forces.

Increasing numbers of local citizens are stepping forward, rejecting extremists, and expressing a desire to help secure their communities. Many are now assisting Coalition and Iraqi Forces, often under the auspices of security contracts, and the intent is for many of these volunteers to formally enter the Iraqi Security Forces through a variety of developing programs and processes. The key is that all local security forces fall under official governmental control. We do not promote the use of local militias as a substitute for Iraqi Security Forces and work diligently to get

local volunteers tied into the central government as rapidly as possible. This is what has already been done in Anbar Province, for example, where some 21,000 "Anbaris" now serve in the Iraqi Police and thousands more serve in various Iraqi Army units. Seventeen hundred former insurgents in the Abu Ghraib area, west of Baghdad, have been hired for the Iraqi Police, and other such actions are ongoing.

Mr. SMITH. If not, is your contention that Iraq will have a central government strong enough to handle security throughout the country?

General PETRAIUS. The continued maturation of the Iraqi Security Forces and their parent security ministries is helping to strengthen the central government, which is also growing governmental capacity across the other ministries. As the security infrastructure improves, it will become easier for the central government to link to the provinces through that command and control network, enabling the central government to maintain situational awareness and provide security forces as required by any province's operational environment.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. MCINTYRE

Mr. MCINTYRE. On pages seven and eight of your testimony, you state that "one may argue that the best way to speed the process in Iraq is to change the . . . mission from one that emphasizes population security, counter-terrorism, and transition to one that is strictly focused on transition and counter-terrorism.". . . if this did occur despite your recommendation, and we were to focus strictly on transition and counter-terrorism, what would be the minimal number of U.S. troops necessary to stay in Iran to accomplish that mission?

General PETRAIUS. Our present mission balances three key components: securing the population, countering terrorism, and preparing the Iraqis for security transition. To accomplish the three interdependent components of our mission based on our assessment of the conditions on the ground, we have determined that 15 U.S. Brigade Combat Teams is the minimum force size to mitigate the level of risk for the conditions we expect to see through next summer. We will assess the potential for further reductions in force posture in the spring. Should our mission change away from securing the population prematurely to focusing on transition and counter-terrorism alone, I believe we would be unable to execute either counter-terrorism or transition satisfactorily.

Since we changed the mission of MNF–I to focus on securing the population, we have learned how dependent successful counter-terrorism operations are upon the information we derive from having conventional forces out among the population and on the denial of sanctuaries to the extremists. This is an important lesson. Without a secure population, counter-terrorism strikes can continue indefinitely without lasting effects on terrorist networks because those networks have sanctuaries among the population from which they regenerate and conduct operations. This was the lesson of Ramadi, a city in which we conducted several years of targeted counter-terror raids without ever cleaning out the al Qaeda presence. The turnaround of Ramadi came when conventional forces, teamed with local volunteers and Iraqi forces cleared it block by block and stayed out with the people. It is in reducing those sanctuaries, which can only be done by conventional and host nation forces that clear the neighborhoods, hold the ground, obtain better intelligence from the host population, and force terrorist targets to move that we can truly kill or capture members of terrorist networks faster than they can replace their losses. A population held hostage by terrorists, whose only contact with Coalition forces is in seeing a counter-terrorism force enter their area for a short period of time for a kinetic strike, has little incentive to cooperate with Coalition or Iraqi Security Forces. The steady presence of Coalition or Iraqi Security forces also serves as a catalyst to give hope to groups of concerned local citizens that will take risks against extremists if they have guaranteed backing in that fight.

An abrupt shift to transition before the Iraqi Security Forces are ready would also place too much emphasis for them on the immediate fight rather than sinking the deeper institutional roots that will allow for an enduring transition. This transition process has begun with many Iraqi units, but the Iraqi Security Forces require further expansion and development before they can assume the entire mission. A quick transition would likely leave Iraqi Security Forces unable to independently protect the population and this would also undermine our light against terrorists and lead to a resurgence in violence that does not serve our interest.

Mr. MCINTYRE. Second, please characterize the level of militia infltration within the Iraqi Security Force—military, National Police and local police. Can you assign a percentage to each?

General PETRAIUS. As you know, CPA Order #91 in 2004 brought militia members into the Iraqi Security Forces as a means to co-opt their pedigree and make them a more positive national force. Militia influence, both Shi'a and Kurd (Peshmerga), are a factor within the security forces. While we cannot quantify militia infiltration in the Iraq Security Forces with percentages, the militia infiltration in the Iraqi Army is highest in units deployed to southern provinces and portions of eastern Baghdad. Militia infiltration decreases significantly in units stationed in Anbar, but it is difficult to assess the Peshmerga influence in units in northern provinces. U.S. advisors assess that the Iraqi Army is influenced less by militias than are local or national police forces. We assess a significant portion of the Shi'a-dominated National Police are affiliated with Moqtada al-Sadr's Jaysh al-Mahdi, as are local Iraqi Police in areas where militias are pervasive. We continually work with the Government of Iraq to minimize the militia influences in the Army and Police via work at the transition teams and hiah level meetings with governmental officials.

Mr. MCINTYRE. We continue to hear that Iraq's situation cannot be solved just militarily, but economically and politically as well. A number of parties have recently withdrawn their ministers from the Iraqi cabinet, leaving 17 seats in the cabinet vacant. Also, some parties are not even participating in the parliament. How do you see this matter as being resolved? What is your assessment of this situation?

Ambassador CROCKER. Resolution of these issues will require further efforts to build broad based political participation and cooperation. Iraqis still struggle with fundamental questions about how to share power, reconcile their differences and overcome their past. Most Iraqis genuinely accept their country as a multi-ethnic, multi-sectarian society; it is the balance of power that has yet to be sorted out. The constitution approved in a referendum in 2005 answered some of these questions in theory, but much is still being worked out in both law and practice.

On August 26, top Sunni, Shia, and Kurdish leaders agreed to a communiqué, which outlined the principles of power sharing and reconciliation. Future provincial and parliamentary elections also will contribute to broad based political participation and more equitable representation in both local and national politics. We will continue our efforts to assist Iraqis in the pursuit of national reconciliation, while recognizing that progress on this front may come in various forms and must ultimately be achieved by Iraqis themselves.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. FORBES

Mr. FORBES. In the hearing on September 10th, one of the Members asked you about the price tag for the war in Iraq. He noted that our children and our grandchildren will be paying for this war because it has a large price tag—and he was particularly talking about the price tag in dollars and cents and its effect on our Federal budget. Now, at the same time as the hearing, there were many Americans, parents driving home from work, taking their kids to gymnastics or a soccer game. They weren't able to listen to your testimony, but most Americans recognize that there is a price tag associated with this war. There is a cost with continuing to conduct operations now in Iraq. What I want to know from you, is what is the price of failure in Iraq? What is the cost and the consequences for our children and our grandchildren and our national security if we leave Iraq before it is stable and secure?

General PETRAIUS. While I agree that there is a large cost associated with continuing to conduct operations in Iraq. I am also aware of the importance of this endeavor and the potential consequences of failure. I believe a rapid withdrawal of Coalition troops from Iraq—one that took place before Iraq is stable and secure—would result in the further release of the strong centrifugal forces in Iraq and would produce a number of dangerous results, including a high risk of disintegration of the Iraqi Security Forces; rapid deterioration of local security initiatives; al Qaeda-Iraq regaining lost ground and freedom of maneuver; a marked increase in violence and further ethno-sectarian displacement and refugee flows; alliances of convenience by Iraqi groups with internal and eternal forces to gain advantages over their rivals; and an exacerbation of already challenging regional dynamics, especially with respect to Iran. Such results would, in my view, constitute failure in Iraq—our shared vision of a stable and secure Iraq would not be achieved and American and global interests in Iraq and the region would not be protected.

Mr. FORBES. From your perspective on the ground in Iraq, what are the greatest misconceptions held by the American people and elected officials about the conflict in Iraq? What misconceptions do the Iraqi political leadership hold? What misconceptions do al-Qaeda operatives have? Lastly, what are the one or two bottom

line facts the American people and the Members here in Congress need to know about the situation in Iraq?

General PETRAIUS. Two misconceptions held by some Americans are that we have already failed in Iraq and that a rapid departure of Coalition forces would bring only minimal consequences. I do not believe those are true; to the contrary. I believe there has been recent progress in Iraq, although there clearly is much work to be done. Beyond that, a premature withdrawal of Coalition forces would have many negative consequences.

While further success in this endeavor will take a continued commitment of time, personnel, and resources, we are making progress in Iraq and there are reasons for hope. We have made measurable improvements to the security situation. We have dealt significant blows to al Qaeda-Iraq and disrupted Shi'a militia extremists. Our operations have helped reduce the rate of security incidents, ethno-sectarian violence, and the number of overall civilian deaths, although the numbers in each area are still at troubling levels. Additionally, we are increasingly being joined in our efforts by local citizens who are tired of the violence and now want to be part of the solution. Clearly, much work remains to be done, but we are far from the point of failure. Also, while we have not seen commensurate progress in the political arena, there are reasons for hope there as well. Most significantly, actions are ongoing that are outpacing the laws that are still being debated. For example, the central government is allocating budgets to the provinces and the provinces are spending their money; conditional local amnesty is occurring, albeit in limited numbers so far; and oil revenue is being shared in a manner generally consistent with what we believe the hydrocarbon law will codify. In the coming months, we will continue to assist our Iraqi counterparts as they work to resolve their differences, enact legislation, and foster reconciliation.

Second, the American public needs to understand that the consequences of failure would not be minimal; instead, they could be felt throughout the region and the world. As I explained above, a rapid withdrawal of Coalition troops from Iraq—one that took place before Iraq is stable and secure—would most likely result in a situation in Iraq that jeopardizes several of our vital and important national interests. Among these would be the resurgence of an emboldened al Qaeda that could make use of the disorder and communal distrust in Iraq to once again find safe havens. Iranian influence over the vital region would increase, and humanitarian displacements could threaten the fragile stability of several neighboring countries. In short, rapid withdrawal not tied to security conditions would leave the United States and the region in a more vulnerable position.

One worrisome misconception commonly held by the Iraqi political leadership is their view of politics as a zero-sum game, one where compromise is seen as weakness. This phenomenon is largely the result of years of "winner takes all" repression under Saddam. Furthermore, this zero-sum approach fuels the Shi'a-dominated government's reticence to make concessions to the Sunni minority and the Sunni minority's inability to accept any concessions they are offered. In turn, these attitudes make furthering political process and fostering reconciliation complicated and slow. We work daily to help the Iraqi leaders find appropriate compromises and the confidence they need to believe that gains in one area or with one group need not be balanced by losses in another.

Al-Qaeda in Iraq mistakenly believes that Sunnis will accept their extreme interpretation of Shari'a law and that their unimaginably brutal methods will be accepted. Courageous sheiks in Anbar are disproving al Qaeda's hypothesis by rejecting their violence and extremism and turning against them. Despite local Iraqis throughout the country following the lead of the sheiks and similarly rejecting al Qaeda and what it stands for, al Qaeda seems to be clinging to their misguided approach and an ideology that does not resonate with many in Iraq. Together with our Iraqi partners, we are determined to continue proving AQI wrong. Another misconception held by AQI is that Iraqi Sunnis would see their Shi'a brethren as apostates. Islam is part of the Iraqi psyche, but the Iraqi identity also includes relative secularism in government and diversity and tolerance in civil life, although these qualities were strained severely by the sectarian violence following the bombing of the Samarra Mosque in February 2006.

Mr. FORBES. Do you believe that the security situation is the primary roadblock that is inhibiting agreements on political agreements, and if not, what is the most significant barrier to progress right now?

General PETRAIUS. Ambassador Crocker and I believe that the primary roadblock to lasting political agreements in Iraq is the ethnic and sectarian competition for the division of power and resources in the post-Saddam Iraq that is currently taking place. This competition will occur; the question is whether it is resolved more peacefully or more violently. The surge has in large part been successful in improving

security and thus providing Iraqi leaders with an environment that allows them the opportunity to resolve this competition more peacefully. They are now endeavoring to do just that. The August communiqué was a heartening sign of agrecment among Iraq's key leaders—leaders that represent Iraq's Sunni, Shi'a, and Kurd communities. Now that the Council of Representatives is back in session, it is up to the Iraqi leaders to ensure the promises set forth in their communiqucaré are translated into action. Doing so will undoubtedly be both difficult and frustrating, as the issues they face are fundamental in nature and akin to some of the major pieces of legislation our country has grappled with over the course of its history and continues to grapple with today, such as states rights and various income redistribution measures. Still, we are committed to doing everything in our power to assist the Iraqis in resolving these critical issues in a manner generally agreeable to all parties involved, and the seriousness with which they came together at their late August summit has given us hope that they are up to the task before them.

Mr. FORBES. Ambassador Crocker: We frequently hear about the involvement of Iran in Iraq. What action are our allies in the region taking to strengthen and embrace the new Iraqi government, namely Saudi Arabia? Well after a year of the establishment of the Maliki government, the Saudis are finally considering establishing a diplomatic mission there. Why has one of the most influential neighbors in the region not taken one of the most basic steps to provide legitimacy to the Iraqi government while our men and women are fighting there? In the mean time, we are also mulling a $20 billion arms deal to that country.

General PETRAIUS. U.S. Mission—Iraq will answer.

Mr. FORBES. Ambassador Crocker: There's growing evidence that despite what Iraqis may say about reconciliation, when they vote with their feet, they are overwhelmingly moving to locations with like-minded Iraqis. Kurds with Kurds, Sunni with Sunni, and so on. What implications does this have for the way in which political reconciliation may occur?

General PETRAIUS. U.S. Mission—Iraq will answer.

Mr. FORBES. Ambassador Crocker: What opportunities and threats does this create for the United States in the long run?

General PETRAIUS. U.S. Mission—Iraq will answer.

Mr. FORBES. Ambassador Crocker: Does it make sense to build political institutions in autonomous regions and provinces, and focus national reconciliation only on the broadest issues that cannot be worked at the local level?

General PETRAIUS. U.S. Mission—Iraq will answer.

Mr. FORBES. Ambassador Crocker: Are there hopes that oil may be found in the mostly Sunni region?

General PETRAIUS. U.S. Mission—Iraq will answer.

Mr. FORBES. Ambassador Crocker: Do you believe that the security situation is the primary roadblock that is inhibiting agreements on political agreements, and if not, what is the most significant barrier to progress right now?

General PETRAIUS. U.S. Mission—Iraq will answer.

Mr. FORBES. Why do you suppose this videotape addressed to the American People consists of an argument to end the war in Iraq and Afghanistan?

General PETRAIUS. I believe al Qaeda most likely argued in favor of ending the war in Iraq and Afghanistan in a futile attempt to undermine American public support.

Mr. FORBES. Second: the first option Bin Laden lays out to end the war is increased violence until al-Qaeda achieves "victory." In your professional judgment, what does victory look like to al Qaeda, and what role, if any, are al Qaeda forces in Iraq performing to achieve this?

General PETRAIUS. Al Qaeda in Iraq has stated that its goal is the establishment of an Islamic caliphate in Iraq. Al Qaeda employs indiseriminant violence to coerce and intimidate Iraqis into accepting its distorted version of Islam.

Mr. FORBES. Are we successful in countering this role?

General PETRAIUS. We have made some significant progress against al Qaeda Iraq. However, it is too early to declare victory against AQI. While AQI still remains a dangerous organization capable of conducting horrific and senseless attacks, Coalition and Iraqi Security Forces have regained the initiative in a number of areas across Iraq, knocking AQI off balance. Additionally, as you know, we are increasingly being assisted in our efforts by tribal sheiks and local Iraqi citizens. Tired of the violence and having realized the extremist nature of the foreign-led AQI, local citizens are rejecting extremism and assisting the Coalition by providing actionable intelligence, taking part in operations, and preventing AQI from hiding among the population. With their assistance and as a result of the surge of operations made possible by the surge of forces, we have captured and killed AQI senior leaders and rank and file members, driven AQI out of previously uncontested safe havens, and

severely limited AQI's freedom of movement. Still, we remain mindful of the work that remains to be done before AQI is defeated. In the coming months, we will continue to do that work—conducting operations and building on the momentum we have fought so hard to achieve.

Mr. FORBES. Third, aside from the "end-game" scenarios presented in this transcript, which were first, increased violence until al Qaeda achieves "victory," or a complete reversal of the expansion of democracy around the world and conversion to sharia law, what other outcomes are possible in the overarching war against Islamic extremists and what national resources or effort are required to achieve them?

General PETRAIUS. The question about various outcomes from and resources for the overarching; war against Islamic extremists should best be addressed to the Office of the Secretary of Defense. My responsibility as the MNF–I Commander is to determine what strategy and what resources are needed for Iraq to achieve sustainable security and commensurate political and economic development and reconciliation.

Mr. FORBES. We frequently hear about the involvement of Iran in Iraq. What *action* are our allies in the region taking to strengthen and embrace the new Iraqi government, namely Saudi Arabia? Well after a year of the establishment of the Maliki government, the Saudis are finally considering establishing a diplomatic mission there. Why has one of the most influential neighbors in the region not taken one of the most basic steps to provide legitimacy to the Iraqi government while our men and women are fighting there? In the mean time, we are also mulling a $20 billion arms deal to that country.

Ambassador CROCKER. The Saudi government has publicly committed to re-opening a diplomatic mission in Iraq, and a Saudi delegation visited Baghdad in mid August in conjunction with these plans. While there has been no official announcement yet, we expect the Saudi government will soon announce the appointment of an ambassador. The Saudi Foreign Minister, Prince Saud al-Faisal, will attend the upcoming Expanded Neighbors Ministerial Conference in Istanbul in early November and previously attended the Expanded Neighbors Ministerial Conference held in May in Sharm el-Sheikh. Saudi Arabia is also a charter member of the International Compact with Iraq and has pledged to forgive 80 percent of Iraq's sizeable debt to Saudi Arabia and to provide up to $1 billion to Iraq in reconstruction and trade assistance. All of these actions are clear indicators that Saudi Arabia and the U.S. share a common goal of a stable, unified Iraq.

Mr. FORBES. There's growing evidence that despite what Iraqis may say about reconciliation, when they vote with their feet, they are overwhelmingly moving to locations with like-minded Iraqis. Kurds with Kurds, Sunni with Sunni, and so on.

- What implications does this have for the way in which political reconciliation may occur?
- What opportunities and threats does this create for the United States in the long run?
- Does it make sense to build political institutions in autonomous regions and provinces, and focus national reconciliation only on the broadest issues that cannot be worked at the local level?
- Are there hopes that oil may be found in the mostly Sunni region?

Ambassador CROCKER. For most Iraqis, the decision to relocate is driven primarily by security needs rather than political considerations. That said, many Iraqis who have relocated have moved to neighborhoods in which their sect or ethnic group is the majority. While this has led to some neighborhoods becoming more homogenous, many Iraqi cities remain mixed.

The vast majority of Iraqis strongly advocate a united Iraq. Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki and the Iraqi Government are committed to fostering national political reconciliation to create a united, peaceful, and democratic Iraq. Iraqi leaders are working to reach political accommodation among the various parties in Baghdad, and, as importantly, in the provinces. The United States Government continues to support these efforts.

Iraq is a federal state with a national governing authority, regional governments, governorates or provinces, and local administrations. The Iraqi Constitution provides for a decentralized government that can delegate powers to regions or provinces. Regional and provincial governments are active throughout Iraq, and Provincial Reconstruction Teams are working with provincial and local governing councils to build government capacity at local levels. We see effective local government as an important element in undermining support for insurgents.

Sunni areas may have significant reserves of crude oil or natural gas, but this cannot be proven due to the lack of seismic testing in the areas. Iraq has about 80

discovered fields, of which about 20 are currently producing crude oil or natural gas. These fields are mostly in the south, but also around Kirkuk. It will take many years before the Sunni areas are fully explored and developed. The Council of Representatives needs to pass the Hydrocarbon Framework Law, thereby replacing the old Saddam Era law, before any exploration can move forward.

Mr. FORBES. Do you believe that the security situation is the primary roadblock that is inhibiting agreements on political agreements, and if not, what is the most significant barrier to progress right now?

Ambassador CROCKER. The presence of U.S. and Coalition Forces in Iraq is an essential facilitator of political reconciliation; as security conditions improve, GOI officials are better able to provide services, develop the economy, and work out compromises on key pieces of legislation aimed at achieving lasting national reconciliation. At the same time, political agreements are difficult to achieve because Iraq's democratic, federal system allows for competing political parties to establish positions and pursue platforms which reflect their constituents' interests. Reconciling these competing interests is a difficult task—as in any young democracy.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. MCCAUL

Mr. MCCAUL. Do you believe that we have reached a point where we can further intensify our diplomatic efforts to achieve political benchmarks with the Iraqi government and neighbors such as Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Jordan?

General PETRAIUS. Yes. A robust diplomatic effort is a necessary component of our efforts to build a secure Iraq. Security will in turn provide Iraq's leaders with the time and space to resolve their differences, build trust among Iraqs many communities, faster reconciliation, and achieve political benchmarks.

In coordination with both the U.S. Embassy and my parent headquarters, U.S. Central Command, we continue to support Iraq's efforts to engage positively with its neighbors—who, as Ambassador Crocker mentioned in his testimony, also recognize they have a stake in the outcome of the current conflict in Iraq. One important means of engagement is the Neighbors Process. Central to this process are meetings that gather representatives from Iraq's neighbors (Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Jordan, Turkey, Iran), the five permanent UN Security Council members, and several other countries, including Egypt. So fax, the Neighbors Process has produced key deliverables; its working groups centered on refugees, energy, and border security have all met; and a follow-up ministerial committee will be held next month in Istanbul. Additionally, we have recently seen same of Iraq's neighboring governments send helpful moderating messages. For example, Saudi Arabia's leading cleric recently called for Saudis to refrain from joining a jihad in Iraq and for those with money "to be careful where it is spent." Last, Iraq's leaders have held bilateral meetings with many of Iraq's neighbors, and through these meetings they have forged deeper economic and security ties, which will in turn contribute to a more secure environment inside Iraq and a more stable one outside Iraq. In the coming months, we will continue to work through our Embassy counterparts to seek diplomatic solutions that will increase security and stability far Iraq and help resolve regional issues.

Mr. MCCAUL. Why aren't we putting more pressure on these governments to be involved in achieving greater security and stability in Iraq, such as having Saudi Arabia provide much needed debt relief to the Iraqi government?

General PETRAIUS. Respectfully submit this question should be answered by the U.S. Embassy.

Mr. MCCAUL. What efforts do you envision being necessary to ensure long term peace and security?

General PETRAIUS. Long-term peace and security depends upon building sustainable stability in Iraq. We believe a number of factors will contribute to sustainable stability, including capable Iraqi Security Forces, support of the local populace, positive assistance from Iraq's neighbors, a strong economy, and a capable government. As such, MNF–I and the U.S. Embassy endeavor to help our Iraqi partners make each of these factors a reality. We continue to develop the Iraqi Security Forces through training, coaching, and mentoring by Coalition transition teams and through partnerships with Coalition units on the ground; by developing training institutions that the Iraqis can continue running after we depart; and by building up the ministries that support the Iraqi Security Forces. In recent months, Coalition and Iraqi Forces have benefited from increasing support and participation from local citizens as well. Tired of the violence and extremism, local citizens are actively supporting as well as assisting our efforts. We are now working to recruit many of these volunteers into the Iraqi Security Forces, thus solidifying their support and offering

them a legitimate way to take part in security. Along with the Iraqi Government, we also seek positive engagement with Iraq's neighbors. However, we are aware that some countries are operating illicitly in Iraq, contributing to continued violence and instability. We cannot accept such actions, and continue to work with our Iraqi Partners, the U.S. Embassy, CETTCOM, and the Interagency to counter illicit influence.

A capable government and a strong economy will also contribute immeasurably to long-terms peace and stability in Iraq. Thus, our troopers, together with Provincial Reconstruction Teams and the U.S. Embassy, work hard to develop governance and create self-sustaining economic programs as well.

Mr. MCCAUL. Many of my colleagues here in Congress have advocated for an immediate withdrawal from Iraq leaving a huge power vacuum in Iraq. Can you specify what you believe will happen after a pre-mature withdrawal?

General PETRAIUS. A rapid withdrawal would result in the further release of the strong centrifugal forces in Iraq and would likely produce a number of dangerous results, including a high risk of the disintegration of the Iraqi Security Forces, a rapid deterioration of local security, al Qaeda-Iraq regaining lost ground and increasing their freedom of maneuver, a marked increase in violence, further ethnosectarian displacement and refugee flows, alliances of convenience among Iraqi groups and other internal and external forces to gain advantages over their rivals, and an exacerbation of already challenging regional dynamics, especially with respect to Iran. Such results would, in my view, constitute failure in Iraq—our shared vision of a stable and secure Iraq would not be achieved and American and global interests in Iraq and the region would not be protected. This assessment is supported by the findings of a 16 August Defense Intelligence Agency report on the implications of a rapid withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq.

Mr. MCCAUL. In the case of an immediate withdrawal of Coalition forces from Iraq, do you believe that a power vacuum will be filled by Iran?

General PETRAIUS. Yes, I believe that upon a rapid withdrawal of Coalition Forces, Iran would try to fill the resulting power vacuum in order to further its influence in the region. In fact, the Iranian president has already announced that Iran will do just that—fill any vacuum in Iraq.

My belief is largely based on Iranian actions to date, which have been and continue to be exceedingly unhelpful. Iran actively supports extremists in Iraq with training, sophisticated weapons, and funds. This lethal support, which generally comes by way of officers in the Iranian Republican Guards-Quds Force, provides the means with which extremists injure and kill Coalition and Iraqi troops, innocent Iraqi citizens, and Iraqi leaders. This support will not be tolerated, and we hope that Iran will decide to cease its support and instead play a stabilizing role in Iraq.

Mr. MCCAUL. Can you describe the effect that the Iraq debate in Congress has had on your efforts in Iraq? How has the inability to count on continued monetary and moral support from the Congress affected the mission?

General PETRAIUS. We are clearly aware of the debates ongoing within Congress and more broadly throughout our country. We are not, however, preoccupied by the debates; we have more than enough other tasks and responsibilities to keep us occupied. That being said, we are mindful of the debates back home and the pace of the Washington Clock, and our Iraqi partners are as well. We all deeply appreciate the frustration many Congressmen feel and express through debate; we too feel frustration with the pace of progress. Still, we continue to work to professionally execute the mission we were given to the best of our abilities.

The fiscal and policy support Congress has given us to date has been significant and deeply appreciatted. Most importantly, these funds have put advanced technology and flexible nonkinetic funds into the hands of our troops, such as Mine-Resistant Ambush-Protected vehicles to better protect our soldiers from improvised explosive devices, advanced unmanned aerial vehicles, funds for the Commander's Emergency Response Program for military commanders and Quick Response Funds for Provincial Reconstruction Teams. This snapshot of programs shows the wide range of issues we're dealing with along with our Interagency partners to complete the mission, and Congressional support for these and many more efforts continues to be crucial.

Mr. MCCAUL. As you know, a bi-partisan group of Congressmen and Senators introduced The Iraq Study Group Implementations Act of 2007, which would implement into law the recommendations of the Iraq Study group. This is an attempt to break the political stalemate over the war and to help find a bi-partisan way to move forward with the mission. Do you believe that if the Congress passed this bill it would provide a more solid foundation for your efforts in Iraq?

General PETRAIUS. No, I do not believe so. As I stated in my response to your previous question for the record from 18 September, while we are implementing many

of the individual ISG recommendations, the fundamental underpinning of the ISG—to significantly decrease Coalition Forces and change the mission to focusing primarily on counterterror operations and training the Iraqi Security Forces—is different from the Coalition strategy that we are now implementing. The current USM–I/MNF–I strategy, which has led to measurable, albeit uneven, progress in the security environment, has been to focus on population security and to transition responsibility as conditions permit—as situations improve and as the Iraqi Security Forces become capable of assuming greater security responsibilities. We believe that this is the best approach to achieve the objectives of the mission in Iraq.

Mr. MCCAUL. I would like to know your opinion on the Iraq Study Group Recommendations as a way forward in Iraq.

General PETRAEUS. The ISG recommended changing the coalition strategy, specifically drawing down Coalition combat power (although it noted that a temporary increase was an option) while placing greater emphasis on 1) training, advising and equipping the Iraqi Security Forces and 2) conducting counter-terrorism operations. We have, in many respects, taken both those later actions, with additional assets applied to the train and equip mission, and with progress in the mission against al Qaeda-Iraq, noting that the achievements against AQI have required conventional, as well as special forces. We have also, however, put emphasis on protection of the Iraqi population in order to establish the security conditions that would enable economic and political progress. This latter effort required the surge in Coalition combat power.

Many of the other ISG recommendations are also, in fact, being implemented. Of the ISG's 79 recommendations, 40 are within the purview of Multi-National Force-Iraq (MNF–I) and the United States Mission Iraq (USM–I) to implement or to influence the Government of Iraq to implement. Of these, 36 are effectively being implemented.

Of the 36 recommendations being implemented, recommendations 1–12 are focused on diplomatic actions; recommendations 19–31, 35–36, 38–39 are focused on political actions; recommendations 62–63, 65, 68 are focused on economic actions: recommendation 45 is focused on security; and recommendations 52–55, 57–61 are focused on facilitating the rule of law.

Four recommendations are within the authority of MNF–I or USM–I but are not being implemented. Recommendations 50–51 seek the transfer of the National Police and Border Police from the Ministry of Interior to the Ministry of Defense. This proposal continues to be evaluated as part of the long-term evolution of the Interior forces, but this decision will eventually be made by the Government of Iraq, not the Coalition, and we are not at the point where we would recommend it, given all the other challenges with which each Ministry is grappling. Recommendation 42 requires the U.S. to complete ISF training and equipping by the first quarter of FY08. As the GoI understandably continues to adjust its ISF requirements, ISF growth and development will not be completed by 1st QTR FY08. Recommendation 43 discusses changing the Coalition priorities to focus on counter-terrorism and ISF development. While both missions are important and receive enormous Coalition effort, they alone are not sufcient to achieve our objectives. Counter-terrorism (CT) is a coalition priority, but to be conducted most effectively, it requires complementary conventional operations to secure the population, from which greater amounts of actionable intelligence will be generated and by which terrorist sanctuaries are removed. Although MNF–I's mission focuses fundamentally on population security, the Coalition is also working to improve the capability of the Iraqi Security Forces through training and equipping programs and by robust partnering and advisory efforts, which is in consonance with the ISG recommendation, but which also is fundamentally harder to do with a reduced Coalition footprint in the short term as those units conduct operations with their Iraqi partners.

The remaining 39 ISG recommendations are directed toward the U.S. national govcmment and, as such, are beyond the scope of either MNF–I or USM–I. Of the recommendations that are out of the purview of MNF–I or USM–I, recommendations 13–18 relate to the Arab-Israeli conflict; recommendation 37 seeks to ensure that U.S. Executive and Legislative actions do not undercut Iraqi amnesty proposals; recommendations 40–41, 44 relate to U.S. national policy statements and DOD personnel assignments; recommendations 46–49 concern resetting the military forces; recommend 56 suggests assigning DoJ lead for Iraqi police training; recommendations 64, 66–67, 69–71 deal with U.S. national economic policy decisions; and recommendations 72–79 concern U.S. national budgetary, personnel and intelligence policy.

The current USM–I/MNF–I strategy, which has led to measurable, albeit uneven, progress in the security environment, has been to focus on population security and to transition responsibility as conditions permit—as situations improve and as the

Iraqi Security Forces become capable of assuming greater security responsibilities. We believe that this is the best approach to achieve the objectives of the mission in Iraq.

Mr. MCCAUL. The Military Surge was never intended to be a permanent solution for the problems in Iraq. As the ISG Report stated, a military surge would serve to create enough security and stability for the Iraqi government to reach a political and diplomatic compromise. Based on the specific successes that you have delineated in your testimony, specifically

a. the increased security in Baghdad and the Anbar province;
b. the turning of vast numbers of Sunni tribal leaders to the coalition cause; and
c. a significant decrease in the number of attacks on coalition forces and Iraqi civilians since the surge was at full strength

- Do you believe that we have reached a point where we can further intensify our diplomatic efforts to achieve political benchmarks with the Iraqi government and neighbors such as Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Jordan?
- Why aren't we putting more pressure on these governments to be involved in achieving greater security and stability in Iraq, such having Saudi Arabia provide much needed debt relief to the Iraqi government?
- What efforts do you envision being necessary to ensure long term peace and security?

Ambassador CROCKER. The military surge has opened up political space by providing increased security for the population in a number of areas in Iraq. This gives the Iraqi government opportunities for more intensive engagement in addressing the benchmarks while simultaneously tackling a number of other major issues confronting the country. Political leaders understand that they need to make progress—both in achieving the goals outlined in the benchmarks, and in other critical areas, such as improved delivery of essential services. This is always on our agenda in our discussions with them. The August 26 meeting of top political leaders, which generated commitments to advance key legislation on matters of great importance to the Iraqi people, such as hydrocarbons and provincial powers, demonstrated that Iraq's leaders have the political will to move ahead, although the issues are difficult and progress remains slow.

We strongly encourage regional states, and others, to increase their support to Iraq. There are positive developments in Iraq's relations with its neighbors as well. The Saudi government has publicly committed to reopening a diplomatic mission in Iraq. Saudi Arabia is also a charter member of the International Compact with Iraq and has pledged to forgive 80 per cent of the sizeable amount of Iraqi debt it holds and to provide up to $1 billion to Iraq in reconstruction and trade assistance. The Turkish government will host the upcoming Expanded Neighbors Ministerial Conference in Istanbul in early November. Saudi Arabia, Jordan and other neighboring countries will participate in the meeting aimed at bolstering security and stability in Iraq. Secretary Rice will represent the United States.

National reconciliation will be the key to long-term peace and stability in Iraq. Iraqi leaders are working to reach a political accommodation among the various parties in Baghdad and, just as importantly, in the provinces. We are urging the leaders to come together, reach agreements, and show the Iraqi people and the rest of the world their determination to create a stable and prosperous country. The Neighbors and the international community at large, including the United Nations and other multinational bodies, have significant roles to play in promoting reconciliation and assisting the Iraqi government, and we will support the efforts of these countries and organizations.

Mr. MCCAUL. Many of my colleagues here in Congress have advocated for an immediate withdrawal from Iraq leaving a huge power vacuum in Iraq. Can you specify what you believe will happen after a pre-mature withdrawal?

- Do you believe that that power vacuum will be filled by Iran?

Ambassador CROCKER. Should the U.S. abandon or drastically curtail its efforts, Iraq could fall into chaos or civil war and become a safe haven for terrorists who could strike America at home and abroad. Civil war in Iraq would also likely trigger the intervention of regional states, all of which have a vital national interest in Iraq's future. I agree that Iran would attempt to fill any power vacuum in Iraq, as Iranian President Ahmadinejad has asserted publicly.

Mr. MCCAUL. Can you describe the effect that the Iraq debate in Congress has had on your efforts in Iraq? How has the inability to count on continued monetary and moral support from the Congress affected the mission?

Ambassador CROCKER. Iraq has emerged from decades of dictatorship into a new era of popular participation in government. The Iraqi people appreciate that internal debate among elected officials is an essential part of a democratic system. That said, continued support from the U.S. Congress is essential to the U.S. mission in Iraq and to helping achieve a self-reliant, democratic, united, stable Iraq, at peace with itself and its neighbors, which will remain a strategic partner in the fight against terror and in promoting stability in the region.

Mr. MCCAUL. As you know, a bi-partisan group of Congressmen and Senators introduced The Iraq Study Group Implementations Act of 2007, which would implement into law the recommendations of the Iraq Study group. This is an attempt to break the political stalemate over the war and to help find a bipartisan way to move forward with the mission. Do you believe that if the Congress passed this bill it would provide a more solid foundation for your efforts in Iraq?

Ambassador CROCKER. The 2006 bipartisan Iraq Study Group report provided an in-depth and candid analysis of the situation in Iraq and detailed a way forward for the American presence there. The Iraq Study Group Implementations Act of 2007 attempts to implement some of those recommendations, but also includes language that contradicts the report. While the recommendations help guide our efforts in Iraq, forcing the strict implementation of those recommendations would remove the flexibility we need on the ground to work toward a stable, democratic Iraq.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. INGLIS

Mr. INGLIS. What do you think of the idea of setting up a series of rewards and consequences, divided equally between the sects, and trying to establish those as leverage points? We could use SWET projects (sewer, water, electricity, trash) first, then, if insufficient progress was made, we could transition to the point where we would start withdrawing combat troops?

General PETRAEUS. I agree that rewards and consequences tied to public works are important factors in accomplishing our mission, and we have endeavored to build a system that provides leaders on the ground with the resources they need to address projects in their areas. Multi-National Corps-Iraq (MNC–I) commanders use the Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP) and Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) leaders use Quick Response Funds (QRF) to finance sewer, water, electricity, trash removal, and other essential service projects in neighborhoods, villages, and communities across Iraq. Each commander faces a different situation in his area, and he is generally best positioned to understand the sectarian undercurrents of the neighborhood he is securing, so we continue to provide him with as much flexibility as possible by pushing down CERP funds for his use. Likewise, the partnerships between Brigade Combat Teams with CERP and the PRTs with Quick Response Funds allow for the combination of efforts to the same effect across a larger area, though we always have to be careful to coordinate these efforts toward the same ends. We have made considerable progress on public works projects over the past year, both with these local infusions from leaders on the ground and in working to improve the capabilities of the larger Iraqi services ministries that will eventually take over those functions in their entirety, though much work obviously remains.

The use of the threat of Coalition Force withdrawal as a "stick" has different utility in various regions of Iraq and must be judiciously applied. Our objective is to secure the population through active partnership with Iraqi Security Forces and thereby increase the trust and confidence necessary for sustainable security. We will withdraw forces from an area when the conditions are set for a relatively seamless relief in place by Iraqi forces and when the capabilities of Iraqi forces permit, while simultaneously maintaining the capability to provide that Iraqi force with enablers and support as required—a relationship we call "overwatch."

Mr. INGLIS. On one of my trips to the Middle East, I spoke to some helicopter pilots. The first question they asked was what people thought of them back home. Well, people back home in SC know that they're doing an outstanding job. Once we got past that question, they told me that sometimes they wonder what the point is. There's a tremendous amount of energy going into the endeavor, and it's impossible not to feel it when you're over there. All the same, even the people on the ground, when they have a minute to step back and reflect, sometimes wonder what the purpose is to this endeavor. With that in mind, what will victory look like, and what conditions will prevail before we know that victory has been achieved?

General PETRAEUS. Our troopers have recognized that success in a counterinsurgency fight comes street-by-street and day-by-day, with periodic setbacks a long the way. The overall impact of the many incremental improvements

our troopers and our Iraqi counterparts are continually making becomes more apparent when you step back and look holistically across a longer period of time. Our amazing troopers are in the fight everyday at the street level and rarely have the ability to see the overall impact of the many efforts ongoing, but taking that broader view is one of my key duties. Success over the long term will be characterized by an improved security situation that the Iraqis can sustain themselves, though Coalition Forces may indeed still lend support and training as part of along-term security relationship desired by the Government of Iraq. Our long-range goal remains an Iraq at peace with its neighbors and an ally in the war on terror, with a representative government that respects the human rights of all Iraqis and with security, forces sufficient to maintain domestic order, to defend Iraq's territorial integrity, and to deny Iraq as a safe haven for terrorists.

Mr. INGLIS. The men and women in our armed forces are doing a fantastic job at providing security to the Iraqis, but now the success of their mission is being judged based on the performance of the Iraqi politicians, which they can't control. Our military functions in a culture of accountability, which is why they are doing such a good job. What I'd like to know is how to impose this accountability on the Iraqis.

- What do you think of the idea of setting up a series of rewards and consequences, divided equally between the sects, and trying to establish those as leverage points? We could use SWET projects (sewer, water, electricity, trash) first, then, if insufficient progress was made, we could transition to the point where we would start withdrawing combat troops? They would get projects as rewards, and lose future projects as consequences for failure.

Ambassador CROCKER. The use of "success checkpoints" or performance standards to impose accountability in Iraq carries risks as well as benefits. A focus on quantifiable metrics can divert attention away from more complex indicators of progress. Success checkpoints can also be inconsistent with our goal of having Iraqis take greater responsibility for their country and pressuring them may actually alienate those whom we are trying most to influence.

A practical obstacle to implementing the accountability mechanism you suggest has also emerged: The mechanism depends on the existence of U.S. projects that can be used to reward performance or penalize nonperformance. However, our role in sectors such as water and electricity has shifted from funding and constructing projects to developing the capabilities of the Iraqi ministries responsible for these and other sectors. Termination of the handful of remaining projects would result in the waste of the substantial sums that have already been invested in them.

Mr. INGLIS. On one of my trips to the Middle East, I spoke to some helicopter pilots. The first question they asked was what people thought of them back home. Well, people back home in SC know that they're doing an outstanding job. Once we got past that question, they told me that sometimes they wonder what the point is. There's a tremendous amount of energy going into the endeavor, and it's impossible not to feel it when you're over there. All the same, even the people on the ground, when they have a minute to step back and reflect, sometimes wonder what the purpose is to this endeavor.

- With that in mind, what will victory look like, and what conditions will prevail before we know that victory has been achieved?

Ambassador CROCKER. Victory in Iraq ultimately will be made manifest by a self-reliant, democratic, united, stable Iraq, at peace with itself and its neighbors, which will remain a strategic partner in the fight against terror and in promoting stability in the region. Helping the Iraqis attain this success will require the dedication and commitment of the United States and the international community, working in conjunction with the Government of Iraq (GOI).

There are a number of enablers required to create the conditions for this successful process. Foremost, population security is the foundation for political, economic, and diplomatic progress. The U.S. must continue to work with and build capacity in Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) in order to maintain security, defeat terrorists, and neutralize insurgents. For this to be sustainable, the ISF must become self-reliant. Political accommodation must continue in order to achieve reconciliation in both Baghdad and the provinces. To help foster the conditions to sustain reconciliation, we must help build Iraq's governing capacity and improve its ability to provide essential services, at both a national and local level. Long term stability will also be greatly enhanced by a strong and growing Iraqi economy and a governance system that adheres to the rule of law. We will continue our diplomatic efforts in order to

increase international support for Iraq. Ultimately, an economically prosperous, democratic Iraq can help fosterstability in the Middle East.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. BILIRAKIS

Mr. BILIRAKIS. How can my constituents be certain that improved security in certain areas of the country and decreased sectarian violence in others is a sign that we are making the kind of progress toward our goals that justifies the heartbreaking casualties that we have thus far sustained and further delaying our ultimate exit from Iraq?

General PETRAEUS. I am keenly aware of the costs of this war. I have gone to countless memorial services in Iraq, and the human tragedy of war deeply affects me—I feel pain, for each and every life lost. Still, I am also aware of the importance of this endeavor. I believe it is in our national interest to build a stable and secure Iraq, one that is not an al Qaeda sanctuary, that is not in the grip of Iranian-supported Shi'a militia, and that does not become a bigger humanitarian disaster. I also believe that we are making progress toward building sustainable security and avoiding the consequences of failure, but I am also mindful of the fact that further progress will require continued time, cost, and commitment on the part of our country, our Coalition partner, and the people of Iraq.

As I stated during my testimony, our forces, in partnership with Iraqi Security Forces and an increasing number of local citizens, are making measurable improvements to the security situation. In particular, Coalition and Iraqi operations have helped reduce ethno-sectarian violence, as evidenced by the substantial decrease in the number of ethno-sectarian deaths occurring in Baghdad and across Iraq when compared against the height of sectarian violence last December. The number of overall civilian deaths has also declined during this period, although the numbers are still at troubling levels in some areas.

The improvements to the security situation are in turn providing Iraqi leaders with the time and space to resolve their difficult political issues, foster reconciliation, and strengthen their economy. During the height of sectarian violence late last year, Iraqi leaders focused their energy simply on quelling the violence. Now that the levels of violence are more manageable—though admittedly still too high—Iraqi leaders are able to focus their energies on the key tasks that only they can solve. The 26 August communiqué released by Iraq's senior leaders was a heartening step toward resolving their difficult issues, and now that the Council of Representatives is back in session, it is up to Iraqi leaders to ensure the promises set forth in the communiqué are translated into laws. In the meantime, another sign of progress are the ongoing actions that are outpacing the laws. For example, the Government of Iraq has not yet passed a provincial powers law, de'Baathification reform, or a hydrocarbon law. Still, the central government is allocating budgets to the provinces and the provinces are spending their money; conditional immunity is occurring in some local areas; and oil revenue is being shared in a manner generally consistent with what we believe the hydrocarbon law will codify. Such developments are tangible signs of political progress, though surely much more still needs to be done, and both the Embassy and MNF–I remain committed to assisting the Iraqis in the coming months in resolving their difficult issues.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Ambassador Crocker, how can we better empower the dedicated and earnest statesmen and stateswomen in Iraq who are capable of holding the nation together and leading that country to peace and prosperity in the near future? There is a concern that the country becoming irreversibly Balkanized? I can tell you that in my recent trip to Iraq, clearly there was a consensus that national unity over partition was not only desired but demanded. What should be the role of the United States, if any, if Iraq breaks apart into separate nations of Kurds, Sunni and Shi'a?

General PETRAEUS. Recommend U.S. Embassy—Iraq answer.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. How do we better engage our Coalition Partners to adequately address the current political situation in Iraq? It is particularly disheartening to me to know that our Coalition partners who seek to reap the benefits of the oil industry in Iraq have failed to put up even a fraction of the billions of dollars they have pledged for the reconstruction effort in Iraq. What can we do to encourage our partners to live up to their promises so that we can expedite the rebuilding of Iraq?

General PETRAEUS. There are a number of ways in which we engage current and potential Coalition partners. Much of this work is done through the Departments of Defense and State, as well as U.S. Central Command. At MNF–I level, a principal means through which to strengthen current partnerships and build new ones is the semi-annual Coalition Conference. This conference is designed to provide sen-

ior military and defense officials from current and potential Coalition countries with information regarding the way ahead as well as current and emerging needs, including militarily, financially, and through donations of equipment. The next conference will be held later this month in Bahrain; 60 countries, including the 27 current members of the Coalition, have been invited to attend, and some will offer additional elements and resources to help the effort while others continue plans, similar to ours, to slowly draw down their forces.

NATO member nations can also contribute through participation in NATO Training Mission-Iraq (NTM–I). Currently, 16 NATO members have personnel deployed to Iraq as part of NTM–I, including 6 countries contributing personnel exclusively through NTM–I. NTM–I focuses on training Iraqi Security Forces in the critical area of leadership and institutional development, most notably through the development of the Iraqi Training and Doctrine Command and National Defense University. Additionally, select National Police units will benefit from Carabineri training. NATO members and other states are also seriously considering programs where they will admit additional Iraqi officers and civilians for schooling in their home institutions.

Last, partner countries can contribute is through United Nations Assistance Mission Iraq (UNAMI), which recently expanded its mandate. Among other things, the expanded mandate authorizes the head of UNAMI to "advise, support and assist" the Iraqi Government in advancing an "inclusive, national dialogue and political reconciliation", reviewing the Constitution, setting internal boundaries, and dealing with the millions of Iraqis who have fled their homes.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. General Petraeus: Can you provide some insight into the ways the local population is beginning to gain trust in our efforts by increasing intelligence tips—things like comparing the number of tips provided by civilians on al Qaeda hide-outs, weapons stockpiles, IED locations, etc, since you assumed command of the Multi-National Force in Iraq in February?

General PETRAEUS. In recent months, a groundswell of bottom-up support for our ongoing efforts to build security has emerged. Tired of the violence, local citizens are rejecting al Qaeda and becoming part of the solution. They are doing so in two principal ways: by providing intelligence and by actively assisting Coalition and Iraqi Forces in providing security.

First, the local population has shown an increasing willingness to provide intelligence through the Tips Initiative. Since the beginning of Operation Fardh al-Qanoon in mid-February, we have seen an over 50% increase in the number of tips being reported. Much more so than in previous years, these tips often yield "actionable intelligence"—information that provides Coalition and Iraqi Forces the details necessary to perform operations such as uncovering IEDs, detaining irreconcilable individuals, and locating weapons caches. One measurable example is the increasing numbers of weapons caches. Coalition and Iraqi Forces have uncovered over 4,900 weapons caches so far this year, compared to just over 2,700 found in all of last year.

Beyond providing us tips and intelligence, the local populace is now actively assisting Coalition and Iraqi Forces as well. Over 29,000 concerned local citizens are now under contract to help provide security in their neighborhoods as well as for critical infrastructure, and the number of willing citizens continues to grow. This active support and participation of local citizens in local security will continue to be important—indeed, it is the foundation on which we build sustainable security.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. General, what steps are being taken to ensure that we solidify the progress that you have attributed to the troop surge so that those gains are not reversed when we start drawingdown American troops in the future? What danger is there that a precipitous withdrawal or repositioning of troops could threaten those gains?

General PETRAEUS. As we begin to drawdown the 5 surge brigades, 2 Marine battalions, and Marine Expeditionary Force, we are mindful of the imperative not to jeopardize the gains our troopers and our Iraqi partners have fought so hard to achieve thus far. In making my recommendation for the drawdown. I took into consideration the security gains we have achieved thus far, the additional gains we expect to achieve in the coming months, the enemy situation, and the increasing capabilities of Iraqi Security Forces. The progress we have made in each of those areas is what gives me confidence that our gains will not be reversed as we move forward. The essence of our way ahead is captured in its title: "Security While Transitioning: From Leading to Partnering to Overwatch." Together with our Iraqi partners, we will continue to secure the population, and we will only transition areas of Iraq as conditions on the ground and the capabilities of Iraqi Security Forces (including concerned local citizens) permit. As we do so, Coalition Forces will move from leading and partnering with the Iraqi forces to an overwatch posture. In overwatch, Coali-

tion Forces will continue to monitor developments and provide quick-reaction force support, intelligence, and other key enablers. Transition teams will also continue to support the development of Iraqi forces. While in overwatch, should a situation develop that is beyond the capacity of Iraqi Forces to handle on their own, Coalition Forces will be readily available to back up our Iraqi counterparts. Additionally, our forces will continue to work with the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) and Embassy personnel to strengthen local economies, build governance capacity, resume essential services, and provide employment opportunities, as they, too, are key aspects of developing long,-term security and stability.

As I stated in my testimony, I believe a premature drawdown or hasty repositioning of troops outside of Iraq could have devastating consequences. That assessment is supported by the findings of a 16 August Defense Intelligence Agency report on the implications of a rapid withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq. Summarizing it in an unclassified fashion, it concludes that a rapid withdrawal would result in the further release of the strong centrifugal forces in Iraq and produce a number of dangerous results, including a high risk of disintegration of the Iraqi Security Forces; rapid deterioration of local security initiatives; al Qaeda-Iraq regaining lost ground and freedom of maneuver; a marked increase in violence and further ethno-sectarian displacement and refugee flows; alliances of convenience by Iraqi groups with internal and external forces to gain advantages over their rivals, and exacerbation of already challenging regional dynamics, especially with respect to Iran.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Ambassador Crocker, would you please tell us as clearly as you can what the Administration's goals are in Iraq and what victory will look like there when the President and his commanders determine that it is appropriate to bring our troops home? Also, do you believe the current political benchmarks undermine the ability of Iraqis to make political gains because of the arbitrary nature of the criteria set forth in the benchmarks which do not fully measure the reality of little milestones taking place in local communities?

General PETRAEUS. Recommend U.S. Embassy—Iraq answer.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Can you elaborate on the number of humanitarian projects that have been initiated such as clinics and hospitals, expected completion time-frame? Has the troop surge improved your ability to initiate/complete these projects faster?

General PETRAEUS. The United States Army Corps of Engineers has awarded, is overseeing, or has completed 2,100 projects across Iraq. These projects span a wide variety of areas, to include clinics, hospitals, and schools. Already, 16 renovations at 13 hospitals have taken place; 73 primary health centers have been constructed; and 809 school projects have been successfully completed. By December 2008, we expect 10 additional renovations at 7 hospitals and 66 more primary health clinics to be completed under the Army Corps of Engineers Iraq Reconstruction Management System. Our units on the ground have completed thousands more such projects using CERP funds. For example, after the horrific bombings of the Yzidis on August 14th, Multi-National Division-North took on nine reconstruction projects: five immediate projects (rubble removal, well repairs, and purchase of water trucks) that were completed within days of the attacks; two short-term projects to repair electrical lines; and two long-term road repair projects.

As you know, the security situation has delayed many projects from being completed on time. However, as a result of the troop sure and resultant increase in the security situation, we are seeing a decrease in the number of projects being delayed due to security considerations.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Also, can you elaborate on the number of environmental clean-up repair projects, i.e. sewage treatment plants back on-line, clean and safe drinking water supply systems back on-line or expanded into certain areas?

General PETRAEUS. There are numerous environmental projects that are being developed, that are being executed, and that have already been completed since January 2004. The below information illustrates the number of projects nation-wide as part of the United States Army Corps of Engineers Iraq Reconstruction and Management System in these three categories:

- Sewage. 363 projects have been completed out of 508 total planned; these projects are designed to rehabilitate, repair, or construct new sewer networks and pump stations as well as to clean existing sewer lines.
- Water. 1,750 projects have been completed out of 2,123 planned; these projects are designed to rehabilitate, repair, or construct new water networks, treatment plants, and pump stations.
- General Clean-up. 197 projects have been completed out of 359 planned; the projects are designed to clean up trash along roadways, in irrigation canals, and around government buildings and schools.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. We fully realize that after 30-plus years of neglect under Saddam Hussein, the Iraqi power grid will take a great investment in time and capital to get up to accepted normal western standards, and that it will be some time yet before all areas of Iraq have full electric power. What impact has the troop surge had on the ability of our military and private contractors to increase the power grid output?

General PETRAEUS. As a result of the increase in Coalition troops, the increasing capabilities of Iraqi Security Forces, and our focus on securing the population, there has been a measurable increase in security throughout much of Iraq. This increase in security, as well as the additional troops, has positively impacted the ability of military and private contractors to undertake projects focused on improving Iraq's electrical sector. In particular, the coordinated repair of the electrical grid transmission network has been facilitated by Iraqi Army forces that provide security for Ministry of Electricity repair teams. Iraq reached an all-time high of over 5,500 megawatts in September and has another 2,000 potential megawatts of installed capacity that we are working diligently to help the ministry bring on line for the Iraqi people.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Finally, ideally we all want the Iraqi government to not only take full responsibility for its own internal security as rapidly as possible, but also stabilize its economy so that it's selfsustaining. Key to this is obviously the Iraqi government's ability to get the revenue from its vast oil reserves to market as soon as possible.

What impact has the troop surge had on the ability of military and private contractors to repair the internal oil infrastructure so they can get that product into the world markets and the funds to begin paying their own way?

General PETRAEUS. As a result of the increase in Coalition troops, the increasing capabilities of Iraqi Security Forces, and our focus on securing the population, there has been a measurable increase in security throughout much of Iraq. Much like with the electrical sector, the increase in security, as well as the additional troops, has positively impacted the ability of military and private contractors to repair internal oil infrastructure. In particular, Coalition Forces have devoted extensive efforts to assisting the Iraqis in improving the Baiji Coil Refinery and the crude oil pipelines from Kirkuk to Baiji to Turkey. Crude is once again being exported to Turkey—a real success story that has taken a team effort from Iraqi ministries, Iraqi Security Forces, and our own forces to accomplish. Also, Coalition Forces are working with the Iraqi Ministry of Defense to be better postured to protect these vital lines. We have transferred control of the strategic infrastructure battalions—tasked with maintaining security of, among other things, oil pipelines—and this move has increased the capabilities of these critical units.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. How can my constituents be certain that improved security in certain areas of the country and decreased sectarian violence in others is a sign that we are making the kind of progress toward our goals that justifies the heartbreaking casualties that we have thus far sustained and further delaying our ultimate exit from Iraq?

Ambassador CROCKER. Given that the stability of Iraq is essential to stability in the region and to U.S. national security, the U.S. must continue to foster a self-reliant, democratic, united, stable Iraq, at peace with itself and its neighbors, which will remain a strategic partner in the fight against terror and in promoting stability in the region. Helping the Iraqis attain this goal will require the dedication and commitment of the United States and the international community, working in conjunction with the Government of Iraq. The presence of U.S. and Coalition Forces in Iraq is still an essential facilitator of political progress; as security conditions improve, GOI officials will be better able to provide services, develop the economy, and work out compromises on key pieces of legislation to achieve a lasting national reconciliation.

I can assure you and your constituents that political progress is being made at both the national and local levels. De-Ba'athification reform legislation was recently approved by the Council of Ministers and is being reviewed by the Council of Representatives. The Council of Ministers has just sent a record $48 billion 2008 budget to the Council of Representatives. National Hydrocarbon Framework and Revenue Management legislation has yet to be passed, but even without legislation, the central government shares oil revenues on an equitable basis with Iraq's provinces.

The GOI is also working more closely with provincial governments. The amount of the GOI capital budget that goes directly to the 18 provinces may increase to over $3 billion next year. On September 30, the Provincial Council of Babil was rewarded for its effective budget execution with an additional $40 million in its 2007 capital expenditures budget. The Provincial Council of Anbar was rewarded with a 70 per-

cent increase in its 2007 provincial capital budget as well as $50 million in compensation for losses suffered in al-Anbar in the fight against al Qaeda.

All of these developments illustrate that Iraq is making progress in the critical task of building democracy and effective governance. Progress toward these goals comes only at a heavy price, but is necessary in order to leave behind a self-reliant, democratic and stable Iraq.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Ambassador Crocker, how can we better empower the dedicated and earnest statesmen and stateswomen in Iraq who are capable of holding the nation together and leading that country to peace and prosperity in the near future? There is a concern that the country is becoming irreversibly Balkanized? I can tell you that in my recent trip to Iraq, clearly there was a consensus that national unity over partition was not only desired but demanded. What should be the role of the United States, if any, if Iraq breaks apart into separate nations of Kurds, Sunni and Shia?

Ambassador CROCKER. Political reconciliation is an essential component of a united, peaceful, stable, and democratic Iraq. Iraqi leaders are working to reach political accommodation among the various parties in Baghdad and, just as importantly, in the provinces. The U.S. role is to urge Iraq's leaders to come together, reach agreements, and show the Iraqi people and the rest of the world their determination to create a united, stable, and prosperous Iraq. We will continue our efforts to assist Iraqis in the pursuit of national reconciliation, while recognizing that progress on this front may come in various forms and must ultimately be achieved by Iraqis themselves.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. How do we better engage our Coalition Partners to adequately address the current political situation in Iraq? It is particularly disheartening to me to know that our Coalition partners who seek to reap the benefits of the oil industry in Iraq have failed to put up even a fraction of the billions of dollars they have pledged for the reconstruction effort in Iraq. What we can do to encourage our partners to live up to their promises so that we can expedite the rebuilding of Iraq?

Ambassador CROCKER. We have been working with the Iraqi Government, Iraq's neighbors, and the broader international community to increase international support for Iraq. The United Nations Security Council renewed and expanded the mandate for the UN Assistance Mission Iraq (UNAMI) in resolution 1770 on August 10. The new mandate encourages UN engagement with Iraq on political reconciliation, economic and electoral reform, humanitarian assistance, and regional dialogue. The Expanded Neighbors Ministerial, which will took place in Istanbul on November 2–3, helped to sustain progress achieved by the working groups on energy, refugees, and border security, and created a 'support mechanism' for the neighbors process.

We continue to engage the international community for further assistance to Iraq and for nations to deliver on their commitments. In addition to direct bilateral donations, 26 countries have worked since 2003 through the International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq to pledge more than $1.6 billion, 98 percent of which has been deposited and most of which is committed to specific projects. More recently, the International Compact with Iraq has linked foreign assistance to a framework of concrete steps by the GoI toward political and economic reform, generating additional, post-Madrid Conference pledges of $690 million in new assistance and pledges for upwards of $25 billion in debt reduction.

Total non-U.S. disbursements, including recent new commitments to projects funded by Japanese soft loans, are approaching $6 billion. Some donors, including Australia and the European Community, have already delivered funds in excess of their initial pledges, while others have pledged additional funds or made major soft loans to the GoI. The Section 2207 Report to Congress (as required by P.L. 108–106) summarizes the pledges and subsequent activities of major foreign donors in greater detail.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Ambassador Crocker and General Petraeus: Can you provide some insight into the ways the local population is beginning to gain trust in our efforts by increasing intelligence tips—things like comparing the number of tips provided by civilians on al Qaeda hide-outs, weapons stockpiles, IED locations, etc, since you assumed command of the Multi-National Force in Iraq in February?

Ambassador CROCKER. The surge of U.S. forces has created conditions where local citizens feel sufficiently secure in providing increasingly more tips to Iraqi Security Forces. This has resulted in a significant increase in the removal of weapon and IED stockpiles and eradicated many sanctuaries for al Qaeda in Iraq. The counter-insurgency effort is successfully working with the Iraqi population to drive a wedge between locals and al Qaeda in Iraq.

Groups of concerned local citizens have stood up against al Qaeda; guarding their own roads and local infrastructure, manning checkpoints, and providing Coalition Forces and the Iraqi Security Forces with information that has led to the capture

of terrorists and tremendous improvements in provincial security. A local citizen in Amiriyah, for example, called in a tip to local volunteers about a large munitions cache including some 60 mortar rounds. The volunteer seized the cache and turned it over to Coalition Forces who in turn removed and destroyed the weapons. This effort is growing in Sunni as well as in Shi'a neighborhoods.

Al Qaeda still exerts influence in certain areas, but the surge has wrested control from the extremist group in many of their former areas of strength, such as Ramadi, Baqu'ba, Arab Jabour, and many Baghdad neighborhoods. Working with the local population has brought about a significant increase in "neighborhood intelligence" through tips that have resulted in improved security.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Would you please tell us as clearly as you can what the Administration's goals are in Iraq and what victory will look like there when the President and his commanders determine that it is appropriate to bring our troops home? Also, do you believe the current political benchmarks undermine the ability of Iraqis to make political gains because of the arbitrary nature of the criteria set forth in the benchmarks which do not fully measure the reality of little milestones taking place in local communities.

Ambassador CROCKER. Victory in Iraq will be made manifest by a self-reliant, democratic, united, stable country, at peace with itself and its neighbors, which will remain a strategic partner in the fight against terror and in promoting stability in the region. Helping the Iraqis attain these goals will require the dedication and commitment of the United States and the international community, working in conjunction with the Government of Iraq. Because the current political benchmarks focus on national legislation, they provide only a partial gauge of national political progress. Most importantly, they fail to capture reconciliation and accommodation that is occurring in the provinces and at the local level.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. The military has gone to great lengths to provide the media direct access to our units in the field—to get them to see all the positive work that is being done—clinics, power generation, rebuilding of sewage treatment plants, and basic infrastructure but yet the press reports on the nightly news here at home seem to ignore those positive gains.

a. Can you elaborate on the number of humanitarian projects that have been initiated such as clinics and hospitals, expected completion timeframe? Has the troop surge improved your ability to initiate/complete these projects faster?

b. Also, Can you elaborate on the number of environmental clean-up repair projects, i.e. sewage treatment plants back on-line, clean and safe drinking water supply systems back on-line or expanded into certain areas?

c. We fully realize that after 30 plus years of neglect under Saddam Hussein, the Iraqi power grid will take a great investment in time and capital to get up to accepted normal western standards, and that it will be some time yet before all areas of Iraq have full electric power. What impact has the troop surge had on the ability of our military and private contractors to increase the power grid output?

d. Finally, ideally we all want the Iraqi government to not only take full responsibility for its own internal security as rapidly as possible, but also stabilize its economy so that it's self-sustaining. Key to this is obviously the Iraqi government's ability to get the revenue from its vast oil reserves to market as soon as possible. What impact has the troop surge had on the ability of military and private contractors to repair the internal oil infrastructure so they can get that product into the world markets and the funds to begin paying their own way?

Ambassador CROCKER. a. Humanitarian support to the Iraqi people has been a centerpiece of U.S. reconstruction efforts in Iraq, especially in the areas of healthcare and education. There have been 18 hospital renovation projects and more than 80 Primary Healthcare Centers, all of which are expected to be completed by March 2008. Eight hundred and ten schools have been completed to date, through IRRF funding, providing classrooms for over 323,000 students.

b. We have completed 20 major and 200 smaller projects to provide drinking water to nearly six million Iraqis. Several projects are expected to continue into 2008. Upon completion, these projects will provide safe drinking water to more than 8 million Iraqis. We also have completed numerous sewerage projects, which provide service to five million Iraqis. The sewerage projects are now substantially complete.

c. The increased security provided by the troop surge, improvements in operations and maintenance, and the installation of new generating capacity have contributed to record levels of electricity supply over the past month.

d. Since 2004, the U.S. has been engaged with the Ministries of Oil and Defense to improve security of the oil infrastructure and pipelines. As the primary engine of Iraq's economy, it is critical that they are able to exploit this resource for the benefit of the Iraqi people. While the troop surge was designed to decrease violence aimed at Iraqi civilians rather than to improve pipeline security, the U.S. remains committed to the security of Iraq's oil infrastructure.

Together with the Government of Iraq, we are building a 70km pipeline exclusion zone (PEZ) from Kirkuk to Baygi in Northern Iraq. The fences, berms, and watchtowers of the PEZ will protect two large pipelines supplying crude oil both export and for Iraq's newest refinery, as well as petroleum products and natural gas.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. CUMMINGS

Mr. CUMMINGS. Newly-released statistics for Iraqi civilian deaths in August show a twenty percent increase since July. Further, according to information from the Iraq Study Group and the Center for Strategic and International Studies, the Administration has not included deaths of people who have been shot in the head from the front in calculating levels of violence. Moreover, the Administration has failed to count deaths of Shiite on Shiite violence, which is on the rise in the oil-rich South; nor do they count intra-Sunni violence in the Sunni Triangle. It has been reported that the Administration has not even counted deaths from car bombs, yet we read about deadly car bombs in Iraq nearly every day. Are these reports correct? If so, what types of deaths do you include in calculating the number of Iraqi civilian deaths?

General PETRAEUS. We use a number of different indicators to assess the level of violence in Iraq, including some that relate to the number of Iraqi civilian deaths. In particular, we measure the number of all Iraqi civilian deaths due to violence as well as an important subset. Iraqi civilian deaths due to ethno-sectarian violence.

In measuring the overall number of civilian deaths due to violence, we are focused on Iraqi civilians—meaning all Iraqis minus those that are in the Iraqi Security Forces and those that belong to a hostile group—whose death is the result of enemy action or criminal activities. Death as a result of enemy action would include Iraqi civilians killed in a high-profile attack such as a vehicle-borne IED or suicide vest attack, commonly set off by al Qaeda Iraq; Iraqi civilians assassinated by extremists; and Iraqi civilians killed by improvised explosive devices emplaced by insurgents. Deaths as a result of criminal activity are also included, and examples are innocent Iraqi civilians murdered or kidnapped by death squads or armed criminal gangs.

We gather this data from Coalition and Iraqi Forces reports that are submitted to Coalition and Iraqi operations centers. Our reports also benefit from the increased presence of our forces among the neighborhoods in the past 7 months. We continue the refinement of our data in the days after incidents take place, updating initial information as needed. In this way, the first report is supplemented by follow-up reporting to ensure that we have the most accurate data possible.

Beyond looking at the number of civilian deaths, we also focus specifically on deaths due to ethno-sectarian violence. The definition and methodology we use to determine if violent acts should be classified as ethno-sectarian have not changed since July 2005. MNF–I defines ethno-sectarian violence as an event and any associated civilian deaths caused by or during murder/executions, kidnappings, direct or indirect fire attacks, and all types of explosive devices identified as being conducted by one ethnic/religious person/group directed at a different ethnic/religious person/group, where the primary motivation for the event is based on ethnicity or religious sect.

To determine whether a particular event should be included as ethno-sectarian violence, analysts review each civilian death, focusing on the ethnicity and/or religious sect of the victim(s), the entity being attacked, the demographics of the area where the attack occurred, and the method of attack. I have attached to this response the full MNF–I document regarding the classifcation of ethno-sectarian deaths.

With regards to the specific examples listed in your question, those shot in the head can be included as ethno-sectarian violence if our analysts think the individual in question was executed as a result of ethno-sectarian, but not intra-sectarian, violence. Similarly, car bomb victims are counted if our analysts assess that the car bomb was detonated for ethno-sectarian reasons. As I stated above and as it explains in more detail in the attached MNF–I document, our analysts look at not only the method of attack but also at other factors including where the attack occurred and the sects of the victim and of the perpetrator.

It is correct that we do not count Shi'a-on-Shi'a or Sunni-on-Sunni violence in calculating ethno-sectarian violence, though we do count deaths from such actions in the number of overall civilian deaths. While we clearly want to decrease all violence in Iraq, one of our principal focuses is on reducing ethno-sectarian violence, as it is this violence that tore the very fabric of Iraqi society.

The fundamental source of conflict in Iraq is a competition among and even within ethnic and sectarian communities for power and resources. This conflict must be resolved; we are working to ensure it is resolved more peacefully rather than more violently, and the level of ethno-sectarian violence helps inform us as to how we are faring in this task. In the wake of the bombing of the Al-Askari Mosque in Samarra in February 2006, ethno-sectarian violence began to spiral out of control, causing a tragic escalation of violence and death. Together with our Iraqi partners, we have made considerable progress in decreasing overall violence and deaths, as well as ethno-sectarian violence and deaths from it, though al Qaeda Iraqi continually tries to reignite it through the spectacular attacks they attempts to conduct. We remain determined not to let them succeed.

Mr. CUMMINGS. I am also greatly concerned about the Defense Department adjusting its fgures for sectarian killings in the five month period before the surge began. There is a major discrepancy between the data on the March 2007 report and June 2007 report for this period; the original number of approximately 5,500 deaths was increased to 7,400—offering the appearance of significantly decreased violence since the troop surge began. As such, the President and the Pentagon appear to be picking and choosing which numbers will be included in death tolls. I must ask: what exactly do you count, General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker, as violence in Iraq? Further, how do your calculations differ in methodology in comparison to those utilized by the Government Accountability Office?

General PETRAEUS. There is no single metric that can fully measure the levels of violence in Iraq and identify if Iraq is becoming more or less stable. In fact, Multi-National Force-Iraq (MNF–I) uses a variety of different indicators to assess Iraq's levels of violence and its stability. I showed the committees several of those different statistical assessments during my September Congressional testimony.

The primary metrics MNF–I uses to measure violence and determine levels of stability include the detailed analysis of the number of casualties and number and types of attacks initiated against Coalition Forces, Iraqi Authorities, Iraqi Security Forces, Iraqi nationals, and key infrastructure. Types of attacks include, but are not limited to, improvised explosive devices anti other bombs, both those found and those that explode; sniper, grenade, ambush, and other small arms attacks; mortar and rocket attacks; and murders. Due to the particular nature of violence in Iraq, MNF–I also focuses closely on levels of ethno-sectarian violence, and the definition used to classify incidents as ethno-sectarian is noted above in the answer to question one.

With regards to the number of ethno-sectarian deaths, the definition and methodology we use to determine if violent acts should be classifed as ethno-sectarian have not changed since July 2005. The only significant change to the reported level of ethno-sectarian violence is one that resulted from our receipt of backlogged data from the Iraqi National Command Center in March 2007. After verifying the data, we updated previous accounts of the levels of sectarian violence with these reports to ensure we had the most accurate depiction of the sectarian violence we are measuring. This additional data did not arrive in time for inclusion in the March 9010 Report to Congress, but was reflected in the June 2007 9010 Report. Since then, MNF–I has worked hard to improve our coordination with our Iraqi counterparts to ensure we receive Iraqi reports in a timely and consistent manner. We believe that using verified Iraqi data adds to the accuracy of our statistics.

The September 2007 Government Accountability Report, "Securing, Stabilizing, and Rebuilding Iraq," did not offer an alternative methodology to the one we use, but it did comment on our methodology, arguing that "measuring sectarian violence is difficult since the perpetrator's intent is not clearly known" (page 9). Though such assessments are not easy, we respectfully disagree with the GAO and stand by our methodology. We believe it yields the most accurate and comprehensive measurement of ethno-sectarian violence, and our claim is backed up by the Central Intelligence Agency and the Defense Intelligence Agency, who both concluded that the data our methodology produces is the most accurate and authoritative in Iraq. The GAO Report also recommended using broader measures of population security in judging sectarian violence trends. In fact, we continue to take other trends and measurements into account, such as the ethno-sectarian make-up of Baghdad neighborhoods and the number of overall civilian deaths. Indeed, it is through using multiple different measurements of the different aspects of violence and other changes

in Iraq that we gain a comprehensive, timely picture of what is occurring throughout Iraq.

Mr. CUMMINGS. An article published in the *New York Times* today titled, "Iranian Raises Possibility of an Intrusion into Iraq," emphasized that the "sharp escalation of a dispute over border fighting" has led to Iranian officials warning yesterday that if the Iraqi government could not stop militants crossing into Iran and carrying out attacks, then Iran would respond military. As you are aware, the United States has a strained relationship with Iran ranging from issues involving its nuclear power developments to exporting deadly roadside bombs to Iraq and supporting armed groups that have led directly to the deaths of American, Iraqi troops and other security forces. On the other hand, for months now Iran has charged that the United States is supporting groups such as, Pezak or Pejak for its acronym, who are believed to be mounting attacks from the Iraqi territory in the Kurdish north. In response, Iran has been involved in weeks of intermittent shelling.

Could you confirm whether the U.S. has been involved in supporting the Pejak group or others similar to it? If so, what is the extent of our relationship with these groups?

General PETRAEUS. Multi-National Force-Iraq has no relationship with the Pejak. Additionally, there are no MNF–I forces positioned in the area in which the Pejak operates.

Mr. CUMMINGS. To what extent is the security problem in Iraq a domestic one and how alarmed are you about shelling at the Kurdish northern border? Do you believe that such issues can be resolved—if so, what diplomatic solution do you believe should be implemented?

General PETRAEUS. As I stated above, the fundamental source of conflict in Iraq is a competition for the division of power and resources among and within Iraq's diverse ethnic and sectarian communities. This competition will take place in the wake of Saddam's rule, and Coalition and Iraqi Security Forces are working to help ensure it is resolved more peacefully than more violently. However, Iraq's ongoing internal conflicts are not entirely domestically based. Indeed, some neighboring countries are conducting illicit operations in Iraq and knowingly allowing extremists to transit their borders into Iraq. Such actions are breeding instability and promoting a more violent, instead of a more peaceful, resolution of Iraq's difficult issues, and these actions must be curbed if Iraq is to achieve security and stability.

We remain concerned about cross-boundary attacks on Iraq's northern border region in the vicinity of the immediate tri-border area Iraq shares with Turkey and Iran. We continue to support the Government of Iraq's efforts to work with Turkey and Iran to address the security concerns that exist along their common borders. Some positive steps are taking place, but work clearly remains to be done as well. The Government of Iraq has publicly denounced Kongra Gel's (KGK) terrorist actions. Senior leaders of Turkey and Iraq recently held direct talks on the security situation and pledged to cooperate in curbing actions of terrorist groups. This recent dialogue represents a significant step forward. And, after a brief closure, Iran reopened its borders with Iraq in Iraqi Kurdistan. In terms of what more the U.S. can do with regards to supporting and encouraging diplomatic solutions in the tri-border region, I recommend you consult with the U.S. Embassy or U.S. Central Command.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Iranian President Ahmadinejad recently said that there will soon be a "great power vacuum" in Iraq and Iran stands ready to fill that gap. How would you assess the level of Iranian influence in Iraq? What are Iran's goals and strategy in Iraq? Syria's? How much do these two nations influence the security situation in Iraq? To what extent would Iran capitalize on a U.S. withdrawal from Iraq? Does Iran prefer to see the United States withdraw or remain bogged down in Iraq?

General PETRAEUS. As I stated above, some neighboring countries, most notably Iran and Syria, have taken actions that promote violence and instability in Iraq. Both must decide whether they want to play stabilizing or destabilizing roles in Iraq.

Currently, Iran continues to actively support extremists in Iraq with training, sophisticated weapons, and funds. This lethal support, which generally comes by way of officers in the Iranian Republican Guards-Quds Force, provides the means with which extremists injure and kill Coalition and Iraqi troops, innocent Iraqi citizens, and Iraqi leaders. This support cannot be tolerated, and U.S. Embassy and MNF–I representatives, as well as senior representatives of the Government of Iraq, have conveyed that point to Iran. We hope that Iran will decide to cease its support and instead play a stabilizing role in Iraq.

I do not know the extent to which Iran would capitalize on a U.S. withdrawal from Iraq or whether Iran wants us to remain in Iraq or for us to withdraw. We

do know that recently, the Iranian President stated that upon a rapid withdrawal of Coalition Forces, Iran would try to fill the resulting power vacuum in order to further its influence in the region, and Iran's exceedingly unhelpful actions to date lead us to believe him, though it is not clear what actual national capacity Iran has to do so. On the other hand, given the disparity between the Iranian regime's public statements and its covert actions, it is difficult to discern Tehran's true intentions. Publicly the regime in Tehran calls for U.S. withdrawal and professes support for Iraq's government, while at the same time it contributes directly to the violence that necessitates the Coalition's presence to assist Iraqi Security Forces.

The Syrian government has said that it supports the government of Iraq, and it participates in the Neighbors Conferences aimed at assisting the government of Iraq. However, Syria continues to harbor former Saddam regime leaders and could do more to reduce the transit of foreign fighters into Iraq through Syria. There have been some positive signs over the past few months, however, that Syria and other states in the region are cracking down on foreign terrorists, but far too many still get through, and we are working with the Interagency in Washington to pursue a comprehensive Interagency program to combat the foreign fighter flow.

Mr. CUMMINGS. According to a recent Pentagon report, one-third of Iraqis would like to see Iraq split into three independent states. How viable is that solution? How likely is it? How likely is it that an independent Kurdistan will emerge in the next 5–10 years? Should the U.S. welcome such a development?

General PETRAEUS. One of the tough political issues with which Iraqi leaders are currently grappling is the relative balance of power between the central government and the provinces. Potential outcomes could include a strong central authority, a significant devolution of power to the provinces or to three regions, or the creation of three independent states. Of these outcomes, I see the latter three independent states—as being; highly unlikely, as none of Iraq's ethnic and sectarian groups are calling for that outcome. We were, in fact, reminded of the degree to which most Iraqis favor a singular Iraqi state when they responded to the recent non-binding Senate resolution in favor of soft partition.

In fact, the real debate regards the relative power between the central government and Iraq's provinces, but within the confines of a singular Iraqi state. As this debate occurs, there are both centrifugal forces pulling Iraq toward stronger provincial and regional power and centripetal forces pushing toward a stronger center. Centrifugal forces include the distrust among Iraq's ethno-sectarian groups, the ongoing sectarian violence, a constitutionally weak central government, frustration with the rate of national political progress and the provision of basic services, the growth of provincial capacity. Iranian influence in some areas of Southern Iraq, and Kurdish regional aspirations. These forces are matched by centripetal forces keeping Iraq's power at the national level, including national control of oil revenues, a strong sense of nationalism and Iraqi identity, central funding of the Iraqi Security Forces, national funding of ministerial activities and personnel in the provinces, central control of non-KRG border ports of entry, the national identity of the Iraqi Army, the ongoing rejection of al Qaeda Iraq, the calming influence of Grand Ayatollah Sistani, the creation of operational military commands in Iraq's largest cities, and a wariness of Iranian influence. These forces, and the actions they create, will help inform the debate in the Council of Representatives regarding issues like provincial powers and the sharing of hydrocarbon revenue. As these debates are resolved, Iraq will begin to codify the relative strengths and responsibilities of the central government relative to the provinces.

In the end, this issue—like all of fraq's political issues—is one the Iraqis must resolve themselves, and we cannot predict what the final outcome will be. That being said, it remains unlikely that Iraq will devolve into three independent states. Beyond being unlikely, it would also be extremely difficult to execute. Some of Iraq's most populous areas, including Baghdad, Mosul, and Diyala, are ethnically mixed. Devolving Iraq into three independent areas would require resettlements of large numbers of Iraqis and could very likely involve even more suffering and violence than we saw at the height of ethno-sectarian violence in late 2006.

The question as to whether Kurdistan will emerge as an independent country at some point in the future and what future U.S. policy should be is beyond the scope of my current responsibilities as the MNF–I commander. I respectfully request you address that question to the U.S. Department of State.

Mr. CUMMINGS. A variety of proposals have been made for scaling back or ending the U.S. presence in Iraq while preserving U.S. national interests. What is your opinion of the following ideas: near-term total withdrawal; near-term scaling back of U.S. forces to handle essential tasks only, such as border control, anti-al-Qaeda operations, training of Iraqi security forces, and U.S. force protections; redeployment

of forces to Iraqi Kurdistan only; combination of limited deployment in Iraq and over-the-horizon redeployment to Gulf countries?

General PETRAEUS. I believe a near-term total withdrawal of Coalition troops from Iraq—one that took place rapidly and before Iraq is stable and secure—would result in the further release of the strong centrifugal forces in Iraq that I discussed above and would produce a number of dangerous results, including a high risk of disintegration of the Iraqi Security Forces; rapid deterioration of local security initiatives; al Qaeda-Iraq regaining lost ground and freedom of maneuver; a marked increase in violence and further ethno-sectarian displacement and refugee flows: alliances of convenience by Iraqi groups with internal and external forces to gain advantages over their rivals; and an exacerbation of already challenging regional dynamics, especially with respect to Iran. Shared visions of a stable and secure Iraq would not be achieved and American and global interests in Iraq and the region would not be protected.

A near-term scaling back of U.S. forces to only handle essential tasks such as border control, anti-al Qaeda operations, training security forces, and force protection would not be the optimal way to achieve our end-state of a stable and secure Iraq—in fact, it may be counter-productive to our objectives here—and even to accomplishing the tasks just identified. Our present mission balances three key components: securing the population, countering terrorism, and preparing the Iraqis for security transition. Should our mission prematurely change from securing the population to focusing on training the Iraqi Security Forces, securing the border and conducting counter-terrorism missions, I believe we would be unable to execute these missions satisfactorily, thus precluding our ability to secure the population and transition security responsibilities to the Iraqi forces.

Since we changed the mission of MNF–I to focus on securing the population, we have learned how dependent successful counter-terrorism operations are upon the information we derive from having conventional forces out among the population and on the denial of sanctuaries to the extremists. This is an important lesson. Without a secure population, counter-terrorism strikes can continue indefinitely without lasting effects on terrorist networks because those networks have sanctuaries among the population from where they regenerate and conduct operations. It is in reducing those sanctuaries, which can only be done by conventional and host nation forces that clear the neighborhoods, hold the ground, obtain better intelligence from the host population, and force terrorist targets to move that we can truly kill or capture members of terrorist networks faster than they can replace their losses. A population held hostage by terrorists, whose only contact with Coalition forces is in seeing a counter-terrorism force enter their area for a short period of time for a kinetic strike, has little incentive to cooperate with Coalition or Iraqi Security Forces. The steady presence of Coalition or Iraqi Security forces also serves as a catalyst to give hope to groups of concerned local citizens that will take risks against extremists if they have guaranteed backing in that fight.

Additionally, it is not practicable to focus solely on training Iraqi Forces and protecting the borders. Iraq's borders are remote and its security forces are also widely dispersed across the country. In order to support our troopers working at the borders and training Iraqi forces, we would still need a sizable number of support troops at major bases throughout the country simply to provide quick reaction forces as well as logistical and medical support for our troopers. But beyond the logistical issues, we believe that as with counter terror missions, the best way to help increase the capabilities of Iraqi Security Forces is through a combination of factors, including having transition teams teach, coach, arid mentor the Iraqi Security Forces and having Iraqi forces partner with Coalition units on operations as they work collectively to secure the population. Taking out that critical piece—Coalition Force units leading and partnering with Iraqi Forces on operations—would, in my professional opinion, force Iraqi units to assume the entire security mission before they were ready, thus leaving them unable to independently protect the population and creating the conditions in which a resurgence of violence was more likely to occur. Similarly, moving Coalition Forces to the borders may help—in the areas of the borders where Coalition Forces are located—with securing those pieces of territory. While securing Iraq's borders are important, having Coalition Forces execute that mission without also working internal to the country would again leave the Iraqi Forces on their own inside Iraq before they are ready, thus creating the conditions in which Iraq could become far less secure and stable.

A redeployment of forces to Iraqi Kurdistan only or a very limited deployment of troops to Iraq with others in other countries before conditions warrant would, much like a near-term total withdrawal of Coalition troops, result in the further release of the strong centrifugal forces in Iraq and produce a number of dangerous results. Our troopers would not be available to clear, control, and retain areas of Iraq or

partner with Iraqi Forces, leaving them to secure the population before their capabilities permit, thus allowing for a rush to failure. We would then be faced with the difficult decision as to whether to again move our troopers back into Iraq to re-secure the population. In my professional military opinion, we should not transition areas before conditions on the ground and the capabilities of the Iraqis permit. As conditions do allow, and as we continue to degrade the enemy, we can continue to transition areas of Iraq to our Iraqi partners without sacrificing the security gains our troopers have fought so hard to achieve.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Use often hear that security and stability is necessary before the Iraqi Government can make progress on some of the Congressionally-mandated benchmarks. We also hear that the coalition and Iraqi Government are attempting to replicate the "Anbar experience" elsewhere. What is your assessment of the likelihood of success in this endeavor?

General PETRAEUS. I do believe it is possible to achieve our objectives in Iraq over time. This belief is informed by the current signs of progress, which give us some hope for additional future successes. Together with our Iraqi Security Force partners, who continue to improve and shoulder more of the load, we have made measurable improvements to the security situation. And, in recent months, we have been assisted in our security efforts by a groundswell of bottomup support in Anbar Province and other areas of the country. Local citizens are rejecting extremism and actively contributing to securing their neighborhoods. We are now working with the Government of Iraq to translate this local accommodation into national reconciliation actions. Additionally, the security improvements at the ground level are giving Iraqi leaders the time and space to resolve Iraq's tough political issues. And while Iraq's leaders work to enact key pieces of legislation, they are simultaneously taking actions that are outpacing the legislation. The central government is allocating budgets to the provinces and the provinces are spending money; conditional amnesty is occurring; at local levels, albeit in limited numbers so far; and oil revenue is being shared in a manner generally consistent with what we believe the hydrocarbon law will codify.

In spite of these important signs of progress, we must remain mindful of the fact that achieving long-term security and stability in Iraq will be neither quick nor easy. It will take continued time, commitment, and resources on the part of our country. Even more importantly, it will take the will and resolve of the Iraqi leaders and the Iraqi people to continue to develop their security forces and assume a greater responsibility for securing their country, to continue to foster reconciliation, and to continue to resolve their tough political issues in a manner that is generally acceptable to all parties involved.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Is Anbar Province progress an exception to the rule as far as ensuring sustainable military and political stabilization methods, or do you foresee it spreading to other areas, such as areas controlled by the radical Shiite cleric, Muqtada al-Sadr, who runs the Mahdi Army militia? Specifically, to what extent do you believe success in Anbar is transferable to the rest of Iraq?

General PETRAEUS. Coalition Forces and the Government of Iraq remain committed to reaching out to all political, religious, and tribal forces across Iraq that are willing to help reduce malign external influences and contribute to a stable environment. As we do so, we are endeavoring to turn the "Anbar Awakening" into a National Awakening—at least in those parts of the country where the Anbar effect is relevant. There are some characteristics to the Anbar Awakening and the success it has helped to foster that are unique to Anbar—namely. a mono-sect environment, a widespread rejection of AQI, and heavy tribal influences. However, other characteristics of the Anbar Awakening are present and readily transferable elsewhere, such as the widespread rejection of all forms of extremism and the fundamental desire of local citizens to secure their local communities. As we move forward, these two big ideas—the rejection of extremism and the importance of local individuals providing local security—are guiding our efforts across Iraq. Moreover, these ideas are proving to be attractive across the country, as there are now over 67,000 of these concerned local citizens across Iraq, in the north and in the south, Sunni and Shi'a, all increasingly bound by these big ideas.

Mr. CUMMINGS. What methods or key factors would need to be in place in order to ensure such positive developments in other areas throughout Iraq?

General PETRAEUS. We are working with the Government of Iraq to transform the mbar Awakening into a National Awakening using a number of methods.

At the MNF–1 level. our Force Strategic Engagement Cell is working with our Iraqi counterparts in the Iraqi National Reconciliation Committee on establishing, policies designed to solidify the support of concerned local citizens and to tie them into the Government of Iraq. In recent weeks; the Reconciliation Committee has emphasized the importance of cooperation between the Iraqi Security Forces and the

concerned local citizens, pointed out the value of tribal support councils, started to recruit concerned local citizens into the Iraqi Security Forces, and begun to lay the groundwork to take over the temporary security contracts. These policies represent small steps forward toward turning bottom up accommodation into national reconciliation. In the coming months, we will continue to work closely with the Reconciliation Committee and other key Iraqi leaders, helping them operate transparently and efficiently so that they can make the most of an important but fleeting opportunity.

At the unit level, the increased level of security that our troopers have fought so hard to achieve, combined with the continued brutality of extremist groups, has created an environment where local citizens continue to come forward, reject extremism, and volunteer to be part of the solution. As these volunteers come forward, our troopers are working hard—together with their Iraqi Security Force counterparts and other local leaders in their battle space—to implement the concepts listed in the previous paragraph. Our troopers are assisting in vetting concerned local citizens and putting them under temporary contracts to provide them a legitimate means to assist in security. They are empowering tribal support councils and helping coordinate the efforts of Iraqi Forces and concerned local citizens. In the coming months, we will continue this process of solidifying the support of locals and tying them into the central government, and we will continue to transfer responsibility for this process to the Government of Iraq.

Mr. CUMMINGS. What impact, if any, will such "bottom up" developments in Anbar have on the national government?

General PETRAEUS. The bottom-up developments in Anbar Province—and their expansion to other parts of Iraq—represent what probably is the single-most important change to the security situation this year. The increased participation of locals in providing actionable intelligence, supporting security efforts, and rejecting al Qaeda and other extremists have been critical to our ability to improve the security situation. This improved level of security is now providing Iraqi leaders the time and space to begin to resolve their political issues. Additionally, as I mentioned above, we are seeing actions outpace the legislation that is still being debated, and the bottom-up developments are spurring on some of that action. For example, Iraq has not yet passed de-Ba'athification reform. However, we are now seeing the Government of Iraq apply conditional amnesty, as it begins to incorporate local volunteers—some of whom used to work against Coalition and Iraqi Forces—into legitimate Iraqi Security Forces.

Last, these bottom-up developments are tangible signs that Sunnis, many of whom were disaffected in the past, have realized the truly barbaric nature of al Qaeda and have rejected the future offered by extremism. Instead, these former enemies are now seeking a new relationship with the Government of Iraq. This is a hugely important development, and we will continue in the coming months to work with Iraqi leaders to build on the considerable momentum we have generated.

Mr. CUMMINGS. What is our assessment of the willingness and ability of the members of the Council of Representatives and other Iraqi political leaders to make the compromises necessary to pass the legislation mentioned in the benchmarks? For instance, the appearance of foot-dragging or ineffectiveness amongst Iraqi leaders on the political front has hindered the development and implementation of critical legislation. In your opinion, how essential is the presence of U.S. troops on the ground in order to give al-Maliki and other key leaders of the Iraqi government political breathing space to make such needed changes legislatively? Can progress simply not be made militarily when it appears that Iraqi leaders will not or cannot capitalize on moving forward politically despite our continued presence?

General PETRAEUS. Ambassador Crocker and I believe that the challenge to political agreements in Iraq is the ethnic and sectarian competition for the division of power and resources in the post-Saddarn Iraq that is currently taking place. This competition will occur; the question is whether it is resolved more peacefully or more violently. The surge has in large part been successful in improving security and thus providing Iraqi leaders with an environment that allows them the opportunity to resolve this competition more peacefully. They are now endeavoring to do just that. The August communiqué signed by Iraq's top leaders was a heartening sign of agreement among Iraq's key leaders—leaders that represent Iraq's Sunni, Shi'a, and Kurd communities. Now that the Council of Representatives is back in session, it is up to the Iraqi leaders to ensure the commitments in their communiqué are translated into action. Doing so will undoubtedly be both difficult and frustrating, as we have come to appreciate more deeply that the issues Iraq faces are fundamental in nature and akin to some of the major pieces of legislation our country has grappled with over the course of our history and continues to grapple with today, such as states rights and various income redistribution measures.

Still, we are committed to doing everything in our power to help the Iraqis in resolving these critical issues in a manner generally agreeable to all parties involved, and the seriousness with which they came together at their late August summit has given us hope that they are up to the task before them.

The presence of Coalition Forces has clearly helped to stabilize Iraq and is providing the Iraqi government with the time and space to resolve their difficult political issues, foster reconciliation, and strengthen their economy. During the height of sectarian violence late last year, Iraqi leaders focused their energy simply on quelling the violence. Now that the levels of violence are more manageable—though admittedly still too high—Iraqi leaders are able to focus their energies more on they key tasks that only they can solve. In the coming months, together with our Iraqi partners, we will continue working hard to maintain the security gains our troopers have fought so hard to achieve, while also beginning the process of transitioning security responsibilities to the Iraqis as conditions on the ground and the capabilities of the Iraqi Security Forces permit.

Mr. CUMMINGS. NATO ally Turkey recently re-elected Tayyip Erdogan as Prime Minister and elected his former foreign minister, Abdullah Gul, as President. How will the new Turkish government impact the possibility of Turkish attacks against the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) terrorist encampments in Iraqi Kurdistan? In general, how much of a problem for the future stability of Iraq is the Turkish-Kurdish factor?

General PETRAEUS. Activities by the PKK remain a concern to both the Iraqi and Turkish governments. Both countries remain committed to combating PKK activity and have been attempting to resolve this problem through dialogue. Turkey has so far been reluctant to negotiate directly with the KRG, as it sees its relationship with the Government of Iraq as a sufficient commitment to regional stability. Moreover, Turkey feels direct contact with the KRG would give the KRG an elevated status and implicit state-like legitimacy. Turkish and Iraqi officials intend to meet every six months to discuss PKK issues and more frequently if required. During a 28 September joint press conference with Iraqi Interior Minister Jawad al Boulani, Turkish Interior Minister Besir Atalay said "We are expecting this cooperation against terrorism to be broadened as much as possible." For his part, Boulani said "The PKK is an organization that aims to harm Turkey. You can be sure that the necessary steps will be taken in the coming period to prevent terrorist attacks."

Future stability for Iraq will depend on all of Iraq's diverse ethnic and sectarian communities, including the Turkish-Kurdish community, resolving their differences and forging political compromises on the tough issues facing the country. As I stated above, stability in Iraq also depends on Iraq building positive relationships with its neighboring countries. To that end, the ongoing dialogue between Iraq and Turkey is important, and the U.S. Embassy and MNF–I will continue to support the expansion of this dialogue.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Are you concerned, if at all, that these same individuals—enraged by the ongoing U.S. presence in Iraq—will become a growing threat to our interests in the Middle East and beyond? If so, what have we done diplomatically in response to these concerns? Given the humanitarian situation that you see on the ground, and the implications for regional stability, what are the U.S. strategy and benchmarks for responding to the humanitarian crisis? What level of funding do you think would be appropriate to match the scale of the humanitarian crisis and enable the U.S. to press the international community and Government of Iraq to adequately respond?

General PETRAEUS. My diplomatic counterpart, Ambassador Crocker, works closely with the Iraqi and regional leaders on these important diplomatic issues. These questions are best answered by his team and the Department of State.

Mr. CUMMINGS. If Turkey suspended our use of its territory, including Incirlik Air Force Base—as some have suggested it might in the wake of putative passage of an Armenian Genocide resolution—what effect would that action have on our operations in Iraq, including our ability to re-supply our troops? How difficult would it be to move those Turkey-based operations elsewhere, and what would be the monetary cost?

General PETRAEUS. While any denial of staging areas could limit the Coalition's flexibility to re-supply its members, the impact of losing Turkey as a supply hub can be mitigated, though not without a considerable amount of effort on our part.

The continued use of Turkey's Incirlik Air Force Base is of most concern. United States Transportation Command (TRANSCOM) is examining, as a contingency, the effect of not being able to use Incirlik as a strategic hub to support our troops in Iraq. We will coordinate our strategic airlift requirements with TRANSCOM as they conduct their analysis to ensure that viable alternatives are developed to support our mission.

MNF–I also receives a portion of its food and fuel supplies (approximately 15%) and nominal amounts of construction material via Turkey. These supplies could get shipped from Kuwait and Jordan if access from Turkey were denied. The impact on our troopers would be minimal, albeit with slightly longer lead times for transporting goods to some of our northern bases. Still, we are confident the excess capacity from Kuwait and Jordan could make up for any potential loss of use from Turkey.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Do you foresee any post-Bush-Administration circumstances in which the international community, including Middle Eastern states, would agree to send significant numbers of troops to help stabilize Iraq? What sort of role can we realistically encourage Iraq's Arab neighbors—Sunni and Shiite—to play in stabilizing Iraq? NATO members? Other states? Would Iraqis collectively be willing to accept such a force and, if so, from which countries? What efforts have been made to include the United Nations, the Arab League and the neighboring states of Iraq to assist in diplomatic efforts to gain political reconciliation in Iraq? How willing is the Arab League to get involved? What are the key hurdles that have been difficult to overcome? Do you have any particular concerns regarding the Arab League, Syria and/or Iran's involvement in this process?

General PETRAEUS. Ambassador Crocker and I work closely with the Government of Iraq leaders on seeking regional and international assistance in building a secure and stable Iraq. Within the region, many countries recognize that they have a key stake in ensuring the emergence of a stable Iraq, and they are positively engaging the Iraqi leaders in a constructive way. The Sharm El Sheikh Neighbor's Ministerial Meeting in May 2007 included members of the Arab League, the five permanent United Nations Security Council Members, and members of the G8. So far, the Neighbors Process has produced key deliverables; its working groups centered on refugees, energy, and border security have met and a follow-up ministerial committee will be held next month in Istanbul.

While we seek positive engagement with Iraq's neighbors. we are also aware that some countries are operating illicitly in Iraq. We cannot accept actions that seek to promote violence and instability in Iraq. Syria has recently played a more positive role, though former regime elements still hide in Syria and foreign fighters continued to transit its territory. Syria did host the recent Border Security Working Group as part of the Neighbors Conference, and we have seen indications of improved security at the Damascus Airport and have reason to believe they have interdicted some foreign terrorists in transit to Iraq. However, there is still far more work to be done in stemming the flow of foreign fighters and suicide bombers, and we are working with the Interagency in Washington to pursue a comprehensive Interagency program to combat the foreign fighter flow. With regards to Iran, as I explained in an earlier answer, Iran must decide whether it wants to play a stabilizing or destabilizing role in Iraq. We of course hope that Iran chooses to join Iraq's other neighbors in working to be a stabilizing force.

The Iraqi willingness to accept forces from neighboring countries is unknown. There would certainly be sectarian concerns over the make-up of any force emanating from the Middle East. Moreover, as a practical matter, the majority of the neighboring nations lack the capacity to deploy and sustain a force of sufficient size to help stabilize Iraq, though, in coordination with Coalition support, some would be able to provide a modest number of troops or niche capabilities.

With regards to the international community, there is a broad range of ways other countries can and do contribute to our ongoing operations. Currently, 27 countries have forces assigned to Multi-National Force-Iraq, and we are holding a Coalition Conference later this month in Bahrain, where we hope to garner additional support from potential contributing nations. Other countries participate by way of NATO Training Mission-Iraq (NTM–I) and United Nations Assistance Mission Iraq (UNAMI). NTM–I currently focuses on mentoring key individuals in the Ministries of Interior and Defense and the Joint Headquarters; assisting the Iraqis with institutional development of the Iraqi Security Forces; and training in specialized skills, such as Italian carbinieri training. NATO members and other states are also seriously considering programs where they will admit additional Iraqi officers and civilians for schooling in their home institutions. As outlined in the new United Nations Assistance Mission-Iraq (UNAMI) mandate, we hope to see increased efforts by the UN to strengthen institutions for representative government, promote political dialogue and national reconciliation, increase electoral support, support resolution of disputed internal borders relating to Article 140 of the Iraqi Constitution, and increase efforts to deliver humanitarian assistance.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Newly-released statistics for Iraqi civilian deaths in August show a 20 percent increase since July. Further, according to information from the Iraq Study Group and the Center for Strategic and International Studies, the administration has not included deaths of people who have been shot in the head from the

front in calculating levels of violence. Moreover, the administration has failed to count deaths of Shiite on Shiite violence, which is on the rise in the oil-rich South; nor do they count intra-Sunni violence in the Sunni Triangle. It has been reported that the Administration has not even counted deaths from car bombs, yet we read about deadly car bomb in Iraq nearly every day. Are these reports correct? If so, what types of deaths do you include in calculating the number of Iraqi civilian deaths?

a. I am also greatly concerned about the Defense Department adjusting its figures for sectarian killings in the five month period before the surge began. There is a major discrepancy between the data on the March 2007 report and June 2007 report for this period; the original number of approximately 5,500 deaths was increased to 7,400—offering the appearance of significantly decreased violence since the troop surge began. As such, the President and the Pentagon appear to be picking and choosing which numbers will be included in death tolls. I must ask: what exactly do you count, General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker, as violence in Iraq? Further, how do your calculations differ in methodology in comparison to those utilized by the Government Accountability Office?

Ambassador CROCKER. While I recognize the value of their reports, I am unable to comment on the data used by the Iraq Study Group and the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Civilian casualty metrics, along with Coalition Force and Iraqi Security Force statistics, continue a strong downward trend. The basis for all casualty statistics are reports from Coalition and Iraq Security forces, which include all deaths or injuries identified by, or reported to, our forces, and our partners in Iraq. Where possible, these reports attempt to further identify the nature of the violence by categorizing assassinations, abductions, street crime and intimidation, rape, etc; as well as the methods of attack as well as forensic data related to the perpetrators. I am not aware of any attempt to suppress casualty reports; all reported violence is captured, to include attacks that fail (cause no casualties). The databases are constantly revised to reflect the latest Iraqi and Coalition Force investigations. Many organizations use these databases and filter information required to address specific concerns, for example: tracking attacks employing explosively formed penetrator weapons. This can lead to misunderstandings if the exact time the data was extracted and the specific filters applied are not understood, because new reports are constantly entered and old reports are revised. Although there are different reporting methodologies for casualty statistics, these methodologies are clearly defined, and understood by analysts in stake holding organizations. I defer to the Department of Defense and other organizations for comment on their reporting methodologies.

Mr. CUMMINGS. An article published in the *New York Times* today titled, "Iranian Raises Possibility of an Intrusion into Iraq," emphasized that the "sharp escalation of a dispute over border fighting" has led to Iranian officials warning yesterday that if the Iraqi government could not stop militants crossing into Iran and carrying out attacks, then Iran would respond militarily. As you are aware, the United States has a strained relationship with Iran ranging from issues involving its nuclear power developments to exporting deadly roadside bombs to Iraq and supporting armed groups that have led directly to the deaths of American, Iraqi troops and other security forces. On the other hand, for months now Iran has charged that the United States is supporting groups such as, Pezak or Pejak for its acronym, who are believed to be mounting attacks from the Iraqi territory in the Kurdish north. In response, Iran has been involved in weeks of intermittent shelling. Could you confirm whether the U.S. has been involved in supporting the Pejak group or others similar to it? If so, what is the extent of our relationship with these groups? Further, to what extent is the security problem in Iraq a domestic one and how alarmed are you about shelling at the Kurdish northern border? Do you believe that such issues can be resolved—if so, what diplomatic solution do you believe should be implemented?

Ambassador CROCKER. The United States strongly condemns the violent attacks carried out by PJAK. The Government of Iraq (GOI) and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) should take concrete action to rein in all organizations and individuals operating within their borders, like PJAK, who are using terrorism and violence to achieve their ends.

We condemn Iranian cross-border artillery barrages and support Iraq's efforts to engage neighboring countries, including Iran, through the Expanded Neighbors Conference and its technical-level working groups, particularly on border security.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Iranian President Ahmadinejad recently said that there will soon be a "great power vacuum" in Iraq and Iran stands ready to fill that gap. How

would you assess the level of Iranian influence in Iraq? What are Iran's goals and strategy in Iraq? Syria's? How much do these two nations influence the security situation in Iraq? What is Iran's strategy in Iraq? How much damage are they causing to our forces? To what extent would Iran capitalize on a U.S. withdrawal from Iraq? Does Iran prefer to see the U.S. withdraw or remain bogged down in Iraq?

Ambassador CROCKER. Iranian involvement in Iraq supports extremist militias through training, funding and provision of munitions that have targeted Iraqi civilians, Iraqi Security Forces, and Coalition Forces. The lethal activities of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) personnel contradict Iran's stated policy of supporting the Iraqi Government. We expect the Iranians to bring the IRGC's actions in line with Iran's stated policy, and we have conveyed this expectation to Iran on numerous occasions.

Syria has also played an unhelpful role in allowing the transit of foreign fighters and suicide bombers whose terrorist acts are killing innocent Iraqis. Recently, Syria has signaled a potential willingness to act in a positive way by hosting a Border Security Working Group in Damascus in August. The Syrian government has also reportedly placed an embargo on the transit of foreign terrorists through its territory. Despite this, suicide bombers continue to cross the border into Iraq.

In the absence of Coalition forces in Iraq, adverse Iranian influence would undoubtedly spread and possibly contribute to the erosion of the democratic government or compromise its independence. We and the international community are pressing Iran and Syria to fulfill their public commitments to the Government of Iraq—commitments to help secure their common borders, eliminate smuggling of weapons, and cease movement of terrorists into Iraq.

Mr. CUMMINGS. According to a recent Pentagon report, one-third of Iraqis would like to see Iraq split into three independent states. How viable is that solution? How likely is it? How likely is it that an independent Kurdistan will emerge in the next 5–10 years? Should the U.S. welcome such a development?

Ambassador CROCKER. The U.S. continues to support a united, federal, and democratically elected Government of Iraq. While the U.S. does not encourage a federal system based on ethnicity or religious sect, Iraq's constitution recognizes the three provinces which comprise the Kurdistan Regional government as a federal region and allows for the creation of additional federal regions. The Council of Representatives passed implementing legislation that defines two methods for initiating the formation of regions, which will go into effect in April 2008. The nature of Iraq's federal system, whether resulting in a strong central government or a more decentralized federal system, is a matter of an ongoing debate that must be decided upon by Iraq's leaders and citizens.

Mr. CUMMINGS. A variety of proposals have been made for scaling back or ending the U.S. presence in Iraq while preserving U.S. national interests. What is your opinion of the following ideas:

- near-term total withdrawal;
- near-term scaling back of U.S. forces to handle essential tasks only, such as border control, anti-al-Qaeda operations, training of Iraqi security forces, and U.S. force protections;
- redeployment of forces to Iraqi Kurdistan only;
- combination of limited deployment in Iraq and over-the-horizon redeployment to Gulf countries.

Ambassador CROCKER. The challenges that Iraq faces domestically and the impact that instability in Iraq would have on regional and U.S. security necessitate a steadfast commitment from the U.S. As a result of recent progress in reducing violence in Iraq, the President has announced that, beginning in December 2007, the U.S. move to the next phase of our strategy, in which U.S. forces will gradually transition from surge operations and transfer responsibility for population security to Iraqi forces, or Provincial Iraqi Control (PIC). In doing so, we will continue to focus on population security by targeting terrorist groups and militia extremists and transitioning security tasks to Iraqi security forces. In 2007, the Coalition transferred security responsibility in the provinces of Maysan, Dohuk, Erbil, and Sulaymaniyah, bringing to seven the number of Iraq's 18 provinces in which Iraqis are responsible for security.

Transfer to PIC does not mean that Coalition forces are withdrawing from a given province. When a province transitions to PIC, Coalition forces change their posture to security "overwatch", where they are available to assist Iraqi forces if needed. Ultimately, adjustments in the mission and levels of U.S. forces, both within Iraq and regionally, will be determined by conditions on the ground.

Mr. CUMMINGS. We often hear that security and stability is necessary before the Iraqi Government can make progress on some of the Congressionally-mandated benchmarks. We also hear that the coalition and Iraqi Government are attempting to replicate the "Anbar experience" elsewhere. What is your assessment of the likelihood of success in this endeavor?

Ambassador CROCKER. Recent experience in al-Anbar demonstrates that when local leaders cooperate to protect their people, they can successfully wrest control of security away from extremist groups. At the same time, each Iraqi province faces different historical, demographic, political and security challenges. In this sense, the al-Anbar experience cannot necessarily be "replicated." But, the al-Anbar example is inspiring Iraqis in Diyala, Ninewa, Babil, Karbala, and Salah ad Din to re-assert control over their communities in ways that take into account the unique challenges they face. In some of these provinces, Sunni and Shi'a are working together in this endeavor. A recent example of Sunni-Shi'a cooperation involves the visit of Shi'a leader Ammar al-Hakim, son of the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq political leader Abdul-Aziz al-Hakim, to the Sunni Sahawa al-Iraqi group's leader Sheikh Ahmed Abu Risha in al-Anbar. By showing that local political reconciliation is possible, al-Anbar is helping set the foundation for fostering future progress across Iraq.

Mr. CUMMINGS. What is your assessment of the willingness and ability of the members of Council of Representatives and other Iraqi political leaders to make the compromises necessary to pass the legislation mentioned in the benchmarks? For instance, the appearance of foot-dragging or ineffectiveness amongst Iraqi leaders on the political front has hindered the development and implementation of critical legislation. In your opinion, how essential are the presence of U.S. troops on the ground in order to give al-Maliki and other key leaders of the Iraqi government political breathing space to make such needed changes legislatively? Can progress simply not be made military when it appears that Iraqi leaders will not or cannot capitalize on moving forward politically despite our continued presence?

Ambassador CROCKER. The presence of U.S. and Coalition Forces in Iraq is an essential facilitator of political reconciliation. As security conditions improve, GOI officials are better able to provide services, develop the economy, and work out compromises on key pieces of legislation. At the same time, the reconciliation process, especially as it relates to benchmarks, is difficult because Iraq's democratic, federal governance system allows competing political parties to establish positions and pursue platforms in line with their constituents' wishes.

Progress is being made on reconciliation at both the national and local levels. De-Ba'athification reform legislation was recently approved by the Council of Ministers and is being reviewed by the Council of Representatives. The Hydrocarbon Framework Law has been drafted and in outline form it was approved by the Council of Ministers. The Revenue Management law has been drafted, but still faces some opposition since fundamental questions remain on how oil revenues will be allocated. Nevertheless, even without legislation, the central government shares oil revenues on an equitable basis with Iraq's provinces.

The GOI is also working more closely with the provincial governments. The amount of the GOI capital budget that goes directly to the 18 provinces is expected to increase to over $3 billion next year. This will improve provincial governance across the country. For example, on September 30, the Provincial Council of Babil was rewarded for its effective budget execution with an additional $40 million in its 2007 capital expenditures budget. The Provincial Council of Anbar was rewarded with a 70 percent increase in its 2007 provincial capital budget as well as $50 million in compensation for losses suffered in the fight against al Qaeda.

Mr. CUMMINGS. NATO ally Turkey recently re-elected Tayyip Erdogan as Prime Minister and elected his former foreign minister, Abdullah Gul, as President. How will the new Turkish government impact the possibility of Turkish attacks against PKK terrorist encampments in Iraqi Kurdistan? In general, how much of a problem for the future stability of Iraq is the Turkish-Kurdish factor?

Ambassador CROCKER. Despite growing public calls in Turkey for cross-border operations against PKK targets inside Iraq, the Government of Turkey (GOT) has refrained from such actions although it has made clear it reserves the right to defend itself. On October 17 the Turkish parliament approved a one-year blanket authorization for military operations against PKK targets in Iraq. Prime Minister Erdogan has stated that he hopes the motion will not be applied and noted that its passage does not mean an incursion is imminent. We continue to stress to Turkey the importance of addressing the threat from PKK terrorism through dialogue with its neighbors and allies.

Maintaining good Turkish-Iraqi relations is an important component of securing and stabilizing Iraq. The two nations share a common border, a wide range of economic interests, as well as security interests. Moreover, Turkey is the only NATO

member and most developed democracy among Iraq's neighbors. More than 70 percent of the materiel for our forces in Iraq transits Incirlik Air Base in Turkey. Turkey has played an important role in rallying international support for Iraq, including a pledge to host the November Expanded Iraq Neighbors Ministerial in Istanbul. The problem of PKK terrorism is a serious one that risks undermining Turkey-Iraq relations and a variety of efforts to bolster stability in Iraq.

With our encouragement, the GOT and GOI have engaged on several occasions to peacefully resolve the issue of PKK terrorism. Most recently, both countries signed an important bilateral counter-terrorism agreement. Under the accord, the two countries pledged to take all necessary measures, including financial and intelligence, to combat the PKK and other militant groups.

We believe this is a step in the right direction, and we are encouraging both sides to continue on the path of positive engagement. Turkish cross-border operations in the 1990s did not resolve the PKK problem, and they would not at this juncture. Moreover, armed conflict in Iraqi Kurdistan, currently the most secure area of Iraq, could destabilize that region and add to problems elsewhere in the country. Resolving the issue of PKK terrorism cooperatively is a difficult undertaking but one that we believe is important to the future stability of Iraq.

Mr. CUMMINGS. The Iraqi displacement crisis is the fastest growing in the world. There are an estimated 2 million Iraqis displaced inside Iraq and over 2 million Iraqi refugees that have sought refuge in neighboring states, with 100,000 more displaced every month. Are you concerned, if at all, that these same individuals—enraged by the ongoing U.S. presence in Iraq—will become a growing threat to our interests in the Middle East and beyond? If so, what have we done diplomatically in response to these concerns? Moreover, the administration has requested in FY 2008 Global War on Terror Supplemental merely an additional $35 million in funding for displaced Iraqis. This request is inadequate to meet the immediate needs of displaced Iraqis, provide relief to communities and countries that are hosting Iraqi refugees and resettle vulnerable Iraqis in the United States. Humanitarian agencies that serve Iraqis inside Iraq, in neighboring countries and resettle them in the U.S. have concluded that at least $1.4 billion in additional Supplemental funding is needed.

- Given the humanitarian situation that you see on the ground, and the implications for regional stability, what are the U.S. strategy and benchmarks for responding to the humanitarian crisis?
- What level of funding do you think would be appropriate to match the scale of the humanitarian crisis and enable the U.S. to press the international community and Government of Iraq to adequately respond?

Ambassador CROCKER. The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Iraqi Ministry of Displacement and Migration estimate that, since February 2006, between 24,000 and 60,000 Iraqis have been displaced each month to other parts of Iraq as internally displaced persons (IDPs) or to neighboring countries as refugees. The vast majority of those internally or externally displaced have left their homes due to sectarian violence or the general security situation in Iraq. Those within Iraq have largely settled with relatives, often in neighborhoods where they can sustain themselves until they can return to their homes.

The USG strategy is to provide protection and assistance while encouraging international donors to increase their contributions to sustain the displaced population until conditions in Iraq permit their return. The USG and the international community are directing their assistance to countries hosting Iraqi refugees and to communities within Iraq hosting IDPs, both of which are facing great challenges in accommodating large displaced populations. Syria, host to an estimated 1.2 million refugees, and Jordan, host to approximately 500,000 refugees, have both expressed concern over the strain that large numbers of Iraqi refugees have placed on their public services.

In response to the increasing number of displaced Iraqis and the strain they are placing on host countries and communities, we have pushed international humanitarian agencies and NGOs toward greater engagement inside Iraq and in neighboring countries. As a result, the international response to appeals from the UN, other international organizations and NGOs on behalf of displaced Iraqis increased from $62.5 million in 2006 to $385 million in 2007.

State Department and USAID humanitarian assistance targeting displaced Iraqis climbed from $43 million in FY 2006 to almost $200 million available in FY 2007. As you noted, the President's Global War on Terror request sent to the Hill last February included $35 million for Migration and Refugee Assistance funding related to Iraq humanitarian needs. Since that request was made, humanitarian and other needs have increased considerably. As Deputy Secretary Negroponte recently testi-

fied, the Administration is reassessing requirements, and we expect to send a revised request to the Hill soon.

In 2007, we have focused on ensuring that Iraqi refugee children could participate in host-country education opportunities as a way to invest in the future generation of Iraqis. We contributed $39 million to the $130 million UNHCR/UNICEF Joint Education Appeal, and we have worked with regional governments, especially Jordan, to ensure that Iraqi children are permitted to enroll in school regardless of the legal status of their parents.

In the coming fiscal year we plan to give increased attention to refugee health and protection programs. Recently a number of UN humanitarian agencies, including UNHCR, WHO, UNICEF, and UNFPA, issued an $85 million health appeal for Iraqi refugees. We plan on generously contributing to that appeal in FY 2008.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Do you foresee any post-Bush-Administration circumstances in which the international community, including Middle Eastern states, would agree to send significant numbers of troops to help stabilize Iraq? What sort of role can we realistically encourage Iraq's Arab neighbors—Sunni and Shiite—to play in stabilizing Iraq? NATO members? Other states? Would Iraqis collectively be willing to accept such a force and, if so, from which countries? What efforts have been made to include the United Nations, the Arab League and the neighboring states of Iraq to assist in diplomatic efforts to gain political reconciliation in Iraq? How willing is the Arab League to get involved? What are the key hurdles that have been difficult to overcome? Do you have any particular concerns regarding the Arab League, Syria and/or Iran's involvement in this process?

Ambassador CROCKER. The international community has already contributed substantially to the Coalition's military presence in Iraq. International forces now include approximately 11,700 troops under MNF–I command. NATO plays an important role through the NATO Training Mission Iraq (NTM–I) in its work to strengthen the capabilities of the Iraqi National Police—a gendarmerie force—and conduct military leadership training. Looking ahead, we expect the Coalition military role to transition from active counterinsurgency and stabilization/population security roles to training and mentoring Iraqi forces. The objective is the development of a modern military force able to operate independently and defend the country without the need for substantial foreign military support. This is a realistic objective and we believe that the Iraqis are on track to reach it.

Regarding an international role in encouraging reconciliation in Iraq, the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) has recently received an expanded mandate from the U.N. Security Council, which includes both facilitating Iraqi national reconciliation efforts and fostering regional dialogue, and Secretary General Ban has appointed a new Special Representative for Iraq. We are actively supporting UNAMI's expanded role.

The Arab League has declared its support for the Iraqi people, with Secretary General Amre Moussa noting the importance of political reconciliation, inclusive of all groups, and calling for an end to sectarian violence. The U.S. government welcomes Arab League involvement in Iraq and sees such involvement as an important element in Iraq's reintegration into the region. The U.S. also encourages a more rapid establishment of normal diplomatic representation with Arab League member states. In fact, we expect that the Saudi government will soon announce the appointment of an ambassador to Iraq. The Expanded Neighbors Ministerial in Istanbul, scheduled for November 2–3, will offer renewed opportunities for regional engagement with Iraq, especially through the Neighbors working groups focused on border security, refugees, and energy.

We have called on Syria and Iran to match their rhetoric about a peaceful and secure Iraq with actions that promote peace and security. In particular, Syria must increase its efforts to reduce the flow of foreign fighters across its border into Iraq, and Iran must cease its lethal assistance to the Jaysh al-Mahdi and other groups that target Coalition and Iraqi Security Forces, along with Iraqi civilians.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. CONAWAY

Mr. CONAWAY. Currently U.S. security doctrine is to clear, hold, and build in Baghdad and surrounding cities. Following the British pullback from the strategic port city of Basra, Shiite militias and tribes began engaging in a bloody and destructive power struggle.

General, what lessons, if any, can U.S. officials expect to learn as we watch what has ensued in Basra?

General PETRAEUS. The United States Army/United States Marine Corps field manual, *Counterinsurgency,* identifies the need to "learn and adapt" as an impera-

tive for success in twenty-first century counterinsurgency campaigns. As such, MNF–I endeavors to continually learn from experience as we build sustainable security and derive Iraqi solutions that Iraqis can keep going on their own, with our forces moving to an overwatch position. MNF–I also endeavors to take successes in one area and apply them in others. However, we also appreciate that different parts of Iraq often require different approaches, largely due to the population make-up in a given area. A viable solution for Sunni-dominated Anbar Province will be different than a solution for mixed-population provinces like Diyala or Baghdad or for Shia-dominated provinces like Maysan or Basrah.

In Basrah, as in the other Southern provinces, Multi-National Division-Southeast has conducted a deliberate campaign to build sustainable security. As conditions on the ground and the capabilities of Iraqi forces have permitted, MNF–I has transitioned security responsibility to Iraqi control. In Basrah, though infiltration of the Iraqi Security Forces by militias has been a concern, the capabilities of the Iraqi Security Forces have improved in recent months. The forces—especially the Army elements—are relatively well-trained and well-equipped, and they have been reinforced by armored, light, and special operations forces (two brigade equivalents) deployed to Basrah in the past two months. Moreover, two qualified officers were recently installed as well, General Mohan Hafith Fahad, the new commander of the Basrah Operations Command, and Major General Jalil, the new Provincial Director of Police. Under their leadership, Iraqi Forces are conducting operations in Basrah and, despite some intra-Shia violence, maintaining security for their citizens. Coalition forces conducted an orderly handover of the Basrah Palace to an Iraqi element, and Coalition elements are now in an overwatch position from Basrah Airfield, providing quick-reaction force support, intelligence, and other key enablers, as well as transition teams to support the development of Iraqi forces. The overall level of violence there has decreased in the past month; however, there is no doubt that an intra-Shi'a struggle for economic and political power continues in Basrah. Nonetheless, we believe that overall, the differences will be resolved generally more peacefully rather than more violently. The various parties are slowly achieving political accommodation, the country's oil continues to be pumped, the ports are working (albeit with militia concerns), and the ground transportation network into Iraq is generally unimpeded.

In terms of extrapolating lessons from the Shi'a south and Basra in particular, a few stand out in particular. The concept of an operations command to allow the central government to achieve unity of command over security force activities is working in Baghdad, Diyala, and now in Basra, and Iraqi leaders are looking at applying this concept in other key provinces like Ninevah and Anbar. Second, and related to the first, as our forces move to an overwatch position, we continue to refine the processes by which Iraqis request additional enablers and we work with them to support their targeted counter-terror raids and apply precision strikes.

Mr. CONAWAY. Ambassador Crocker, as we continue to place a strong emphasis on Iraqi security forces and their training, what is being done to improve the leadership skills of Iraq government officials and personnel"? In short, how are we equipping them with the key skills required to run the country and to train others?

General PETRAEUS. Respectfully submit this for U.S. Mission—Iraq to answer.

Mr. CONAWAY. Ambassador Crocker, as we continue to place a strong emphasis on Iraqi security forces and their training, what is being done to improve the leadership skills of Iraq government officials and personnel? In short, how are we equipping them with the key skills required to run the country and to train others?

Ambassador CROCKER. Through the Local Governance Program, Provincial Reconstruction Teams have trained 2,000 council members, 28 governors, 42 deputy governors, 420 directors general, and staff in 380 departments to increase leadership capacity to manage and execute budgets.

USAID and the Iraq Transition Assistance Office (ITAO) continue to build the leadership capacity and skills of Iraqi officials to govern and train. USAID's Democracy and Governance program encourages the integration of democratic principles at national, provincial, and local levels of Iraqi government. USAID has also provided support to develop the electoral process, civil society, and training in public administration functions (e.g. project management, procurement) for Iraqi government officials at both the provincial and national levels. To strengthen the management skills of city administrators, civil society organizations, and civic institutions, USAID has committed over $271 million to 5,906 Community Action Program projects and has established over 1,400 community associations in Iraq's 18 provincial governorates. These projects aim to develop skill sets that will improve the delivery of essential municipal services, such as water, sewer, electricity, and solid waste collection and disposal.

ITAO's Ministerial Engagement Coordinating Committee (MECC) draws together embassy representatives, MNF-I officials, and international partners to work with GoI counterparts to create six-month action plans establishing specific priorities, benchmarks, and other metrics that support Iraq's National Development Strategy. This helps Iraqi officials to develop the long term programming and planning skills that are essential to good governance.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. GRAVES

Mr. GRAVES. What else do you need from the United States Congress to complete your mission?

General PETRAEUS. The most important actions Congress can take to help us complete the mission are to provide uninterrupted resourcing and requested authorities for both Defense and Interagency requirements in Iraq, as has been the case with Congressional support to date. This fiscal and policy support has been significant and deeply appreciated. For example, Congressional funding has put advanced technology and flexible non-kinetic funds into the hands of our troops, such as the Mine-Resistant Ambush-Protected vehicles to better protect our soldiers from improvised explosive devices, advanced unmanned aerial vehicles, funds for the Commander's Emergency Relief Program for military commanders and the Quick Response Fund for Provincial Reconstruction Teams, and expanded detention facilities to support the Rule of Law effort. We also need spending authorities such as Contingency Contract Authority and the continued ability to contract for needed personnel support. This snapshot of programs shows the range of issues we're dealing with along with our Interagency partners to complete the mission, and Congressional support for these and many more efforts continues to be crucial.

Mr. GRAVES. In your expert opinion, what constitutes success in Iraq and what constitutes failure? And what are the consequences of failure?

General PETRAEUS. In the long-term, success in Iraq means achieving irreversible momentum among the Iraqis toward our nation's desired endstate for Iraq. We define that goal as a stable Iraq committed to participatory government under the rule of law, maintaining order, denied as a safe haven for terrorists, integrated into the regional and international community, and engaged in a long-term strategic relationship with the United States. Military success in Iraq is necessary, but insufficient, to achieve this endstate. To achieve our overall goals in Iraq, military success must be complemented by political and economic success. Political success will include political accommodation among the competing ethnic and sectarian groups. It will also require a representative government that is able to provide equitably for the needs of all its citizens. Those needs include self sustaining economic development that provides meaningful employment opportunities throughout Iraq.

Failure in Iraq means that our shared vision of Iraq—as outlined above—is not achieved and that American and global interests in Iraq and the region are not protected. The consequences of that failure are significant. Should Iraq collapse into violence (and we got a glimpse of that during the height of ethno-sectarian violence in 2006), many of our vital and important national interests would be negatively affected. A humanitarian disaster would likely occur and the number of refugees and internally displaced persons would grow as people seek to escape an all-out civil war, ethnic cleansing, or separation. Portions of Iraq could become safe havens for terrorists, with the possibility of groups exporting that terrorism to the region and beyond. Iranian regional ambitions would be facilitated. Last, there is a significant risk that Iraq would be the catalyst for broader regional turmoil as Turkey, Iran, Syria, and other neighbors acted to defend their interests. These consequences would have an adverse impact on the global economy, as potential interruptions in the export of oil from Gulf Region would impact global economic markets.

Mr. GRAVES. What else can we be doing to most effectively hold the Iraqi Government accountable for its actions?

General PETRAEUS. As we stated during our testimony, Ambassador Crocker and I share Congress's sense of frustration with the pace of political progress in Iraq. We have consistently conveyed this concern to our Iraqi partners and that message has been reinforced by high-level visits from Administration officials and Congressional delegations, as well as directly from the President. As Ambassador Crocker testified, though, the issues with which Iraq's leaders are grappling are enormous and fundamental to the future of Iraq. Consequently, the pace at which they resolve these issues—realistically—is not likely to be as quick as we would like to see.

As we go forward in Iraq, we have three primary means of leverage: the power of persuasion, the conditional expenditure of funds, and the application of force. As we have done to date, these tools must be used in ways that help the Iraqi govern-

ment understand that it is accountable to the citizens it serves while not infringing unduly on its sovereignty.

Mr. GRAVES. What is your assessment of the strength of al Qaeda in Iraq?

General PETRAEUS. As al Qaeda-Iraq's (AQI) agenda and brutal tactics have become transparent to Iraqi citizens, they have increasingly rejected AQI's extremist ideology. A&I's roots in the Sunni community are shallow because of its foreign origin and foreign leadership, and AQI espouses an extremist ideology that has no history or tradition in Iraq. At the same time, Coalition and Iraqi forces coupled with regional and interagency efforts have dealt substantial blows to AQI's operatives inside Iraq, its foreign terrorist facilitator networks, and its media propaganda cells. Still, while we have made significant progress, AQI remains dangerous and capable of localized, high profile attacks, and we will continue to work alongside our Iraqi partners to root them out.

Mr. GRAVES. Are you getting the support you need from the President and Secretary of Defense?

General PETRAEUS. Yes. It is my professional obligation to determine what Multi-National Force-Iraq needs to accomplish the mission MNF–I was given, and I provide those requirements as they arise through the chain of command to the Secretary of Defense and the President. I have the opportunity to interface with both the President and the Secretary of Defense on nearly a weekly basis by video-teleconference. During those meetings, we. routinely discuss tile situation on the ground and any shortfalls with which our command needs assistance. The President and Secretary Gates have been very supportive of our mission here and have engaged the Interagency to resolve some very difficult requirements.

Mr. GRAVES. Has there been any undue influence by the White House or Pentagon in command decisions that have inhibited your ability or the ability of those under you to carry out your mission?

General PETRAEUS. No. I have provided my forthright professional advice as to what it will require to accomplish the mission MNF–I was given and my chain of command has supported me and my troopers.

Mr. GRAVES. What else do you need from the United States Congress to complete your mission?

Ambassador CROCKER. We thank the Congress for providing crucial funds and resources for our military and civilian efforts in Iraq. We need your continued support.

Security is the foundation for creating a peaceful, stable and democratic Iraq. For Iraqis to bridge sectarian divides, they need to feel safe in their homes and neighborhoods. For lasting reconciliation to take root, Iraqis must feel confident that they do not need sectarian gangs to protect them. For a vibrant economy, Iraqis must have the freedom to operate businesses and conduct trade without fear of violence.

We therefore ask Congress to support our efforts to work with the Iraqi Government in securing Iraq so its citizens can raise their families in peace and build the prosperity that has been lacking for so long.

Mr. GRAVES. In your expert opinion, what constitutes success in Iraq and what constitutes failure? And what are the consequences of failure?

Ambassador CROCKER. Success in Iraq ultimately will be made manifest by a self-reliant, democratic, united, stable Iraq, at peace with itself and its neighbors, which will remain a strategic partner in the fight against terror and in promoting stability in the region. Helping the Iraqis attain this success will require the dedication and commitment of the United States and the international community, working in conjunction with the Government of Iraq (GOI).

The most immediate way to precipitate failure would be for the U.S. to abandon or drastically curtail its efforts to support the GOI. Should this transpire, Iraq could fall into chaos or civil war and become a safe haven for terrorists who would seek to strike America at home and abroad. Civil war in Iraq would also likely trigger the intervention of regional states, all of which have a vital national interest in Iraq's future. The Iranian President has already announced that Iran will fill any vacuum in Iraq. Should the U.S. quit Iraq prematurely, the gains made against al-Qaeda in Iraq and other extremist groups could easily be reversed, setting back our efforts against international terrorism.

Mr. GRAVES. What else can we be doing to most effectively hold the Iraqi Government accountable for its actions?

Ambassador CROCKER. We are pressing political leaders to accelerate actions necessary to promote national reconciliation—by passing legislation in key areas, completing constitutional reform, broadening participation by all of Iraq's communities in the political process, and improving the delivery of essential services. These steps are essential if Iraq is to become a stable, united, and democratic country. And the goals are attainable with continued support and encouragement from us and the international community.

In the end, however, the Iraqi government is accountable to the Iraqi people, not to us. Iraq's leaders are working harder to reach accommodation among the country's many factions, both in Baghdad and around the country. They understand the urgent need to show their fellow citizens that they can govern effectively and that conditions of daily life will improve. We see signs across the country that the Iraqi people increasingly understand that they can influence government decisions that affect them. In part, this is the result of the many programs we and international partners have undertaken to educate and inform Iraqis about their rights and responsibilities as citizens in a democracy. This is a profound change in a country where the previous regime was accountable to no one but its leader.

Mr. GRAVES. What is your assessment of the strength of al-Qaeda in Iraq?

Ambassador CROCKER. Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) has suffered major setbacks and is a weaker organization than it was at this same time last year. In the past eight months we have considerably reduced the areas in which AQI can operate. We have also neutralized five important media cells, detained the senior Iraqi leader of AQI, and killed or captured nearly 100 other key leaders and some 2,500 rank-and-file fighters. Al-Anbar province, where AQI used to operate relatively freely, has made the most progress in getting rid of AQI extremists. The local rejection of AQI and the newfound willingness of Anbaris to volunteer to serve in the Iraqi army and Iraqi police services has been a key component in keeping AQI off balance and denying them sanctuary. Anti-AQI sentiment is spreading, and tribes who once fought against us are now fighting with us in efforts to defeat AQI extremists.

While AQI is off-balance, they are certainly not defeated. AQI remains capable of conducting spectacular attacks and still poses a significant threat to the stability of Iraq. Coalition and Iraqi forces will continue to pursue AQI leaders and operators aggressively, and we will continue working locally with tribal leaders on anti-AQI initiatives.

Mr. GRAVES. Are you getting the support you need from the President and Secretary of Defense?

Ambassador CROCKER. As Ambassador, it is my job to support the President. He provides the leadership and direction that I need to advance our country's objectives in Iraq. As Ambassador, I take my primary policy direction from the Secretary of State. Both Secretary Rice and Secretary Gates are fully engaged in, and supportive of, our work here.

Mr. GRAVES. Has there been any undue influence by the White House or Pentagon in command decisions that have inhibited your ability or the ability of those under you to carry out your mission?

Ambassador CROCKER. No. The President sets our broad policy objectives in Iraq. The President and Secretary Rice solicit my advice and recommendations on the best way to advance our policy goals, and they expect me—in close coordination with General Petraeus—to develop the strategy for achieving those goals successfully in Iraq.

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