

REPORT ON IRAQ TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

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REPORT ON IRAQ TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 9, 2008

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 1:30 p.m. in room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Howard L. Berman (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Chairman BERMAN. The committee will come to order. Before we begin, let me outline today's proceedings, and welcome to our refurbished committee room.

After my opening statement and that of our distinguished colleague, Ranking Member Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, we will hear the witnesses' opening statements. I will recognize committee members for 5 minutes each based on seniority for those who are here at the opening of the hearing—that was 30 seconds ago—and an order of arrival for those joining us later.

Secondly, I would like to make it clear that our committee's policy, what it is on handling protests. We have no objection to audience members wearing tee shirts and hats expressing their views. But to maintain order in the hearing room, we request that audience members do not hold up or wave signs, make gestures to attract attention, stand up and protest, shout or yell your views, or otherwise disrupt the hearing. We will ask the capitol police to remove anyone from the room who violates this policy, and I should let people know that it is the policy of the capitol police to arrest anyone ejected from the hearing room.

Our witnesses are in the home stretch of a congressional testimony marathon. To some, this hearing may even seem like the fourth time around and endless loop. That is why we are asking both Ambassador Ryan Crocker and General David Petraeus to more or less summarize the main points of their testimony at their discretion, a report to Congress that has been heard once in the House and twice in the Senate already. This way we will move along more quickly to the questions posed by members of the committee.

To make sure that as many members of the committee as possible are yielded time, I intend to use the gavel at the 5-minute mark exactly. In other words, a member can use his or her time to give a speech or to question the witnesses, but no backloading, no 4½-minute speech, with then the questions coming. The witnesses will not be answering those kinds of questions.

Now that these housekeeping points have been made, I recognize myself for some opening remarks to our distinguished witnesses.

The committee has great respect, Mr. Ambassador, General Petraeus, for your accomplishments and deeply appreciate your service. We are also keenly aware of the sacrifices being made by the United States military and our dedicated diplomatic corps in Iraq, along with their families. But our respect and appreciation for you and the people you lead does not mean that we should yield in our oversight responsibilities.

Quite the opposite. We have to make a tough-minded assessment that is fact-based and not ideologically driven. It is right and appropriate to question the reports of progress that the Executive Branch offers to Congress.

Congress and the people who sent us to Washington want to see the years of effort in Iraq end with a positive meaningful and lasting result, a stable, cohesive Iraqi Government, democratic in nature, an Iraq that does not threatened its neighbors, and is able to resist domination by them, a country living under the rule of law with protection for individual and minority rights.

This would be good for Iraq, of course, but more importantly, it would be good for American interests. But are we there yet? Hardly. Can we get there at a cost appropriate to that benefit? I am not convinced. In fact, in some areas we seem to be slipping backwards.

General Petraeus, when you last came before this committee, you argued that the surge would allow United States troops to help their Iraqi counterparts seize and hold areas that were then under the control of anti-American forces. How effective could this effort have been when mortars and rockets can rain on the Green Zone launched from Sadr City District of Baghdad, directly across the Tigris. Our diplomats and other civilian personnel are literally under fire. For more than 2 weeks, our Embassy is bombarded. In all the past 2-plus weeks, we have seen the worst violence in the Green Zone since the war began 5 years ago.

I have a clear memory that the seize and hold component of the surge strategy, as conceived in late 2006 and implemented in 2007, would eventually be directed at the most violent and unstable areas of Sadr City. Yet we do not even seem to be close to seizing and holding Sadr City.

Why not? Are we focusing our efforts on securing this district for the long term or must we rely on the whims of Muqtada al-Sadr to maintain the peace? What can you tell us about how this situation came about? What is the source of this mortar and rocket fire? What is the reason for it? What, if anything, can be done to stop it?

Some reports say the rockets were made in China. Is that the case? And if so, how have they made their way to Baghdad?

On another subject, the surge was intended to quell the violence primarily in order to create political space for Iraqis to move on toward national reconciliation. Two years ago a key Iraqi leader with whom I met defined national reconciliation this way:

“Moderate Shiites, Sunni and Kurdish leaders coming together across sectarian lines as Iraqis to join hands so that they could get things done for the benefit of the whole country. The middle would rise in Iraq and lead the way in this process.”

Gentlemen, the American sacrifices involved in creating this space for reconciliation have not brought us there yet. We have not seen much progress. General, you have acknowledged this in your own quote in the Washington Post a little while ago, last month, conceding that no one in the United States or Iraqi Governments feels that there has been sufficient progress by any means in the area of national reconciliation, I quote, "or the provision of basic services in Iraq." You were both honest and obvious in those comments.

Ambassador Crocker, we would appreciate you addressing this point in your testimony.

The most disturbing strategic development of the war is that Iran, the most dangerous state in the region, so far has emerged as the winner. Their enemy Saddam is gone, and in its place is a government seemingly very open to Iranian friendship and influence. Iran's gains from the war were underscored again in recent days by the fact that representatives of Prime Minister Maliki traveled to Iran to negotiate a cease fire with the militia of Muqtada al-Sadr.

The last time you two gentlemen came before this committee Prime Minister Maliki had just told the world that if American forces were to leave Iraq he could "find new friends." Well, we haven't left, but he seems to be cementing his friendship with Iran.

Ambassador Crocker, what is the nature and level of Iranian influence in Iraq today, and what is the United States doing to limit it? To what extent was the cease fire in Basra the result of an Iranian initiative? To what extent does our ultimate success in Iraq depend on decisions in Tehran?

General Petraeus, without giving our enemies operational details, can you provide the American people with your plan to eliminate the Iranian anti-coalition presence in Iraq?

The surge produced a number of tactical successes and a few opportunities to achieve political progress as well. But strategically it seems to me that we are treading water. The surge was meant to buy time for Mr. Maliki and other Iraqi leaders to move toward ending this civil conflict with a political settlement. Unfortunately, they seem not to have much availed themselves of this opportunity, and in the meantime we have strained United States military readiness, sacrificed precious lives, and billions of hard-earned dollars, and curtailed our ability to address our country's other needs and priorities, all in the name of creating a more stable secure Iraq that would, in turn, help bring more security to the Middle East.

Gentlemen, are we anywhere near there yet? This committee awaits your answers.

I now have the pleasure of recognizing my friend, Ranking Member Ileana Ros-Lehtinen of Florida.

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

Ambassador Crocker and General Petraeus, thank you so much. I extend our warm welcome to you and our profound gratitude for your commitment and your leadership, and for the dedication of all who serve with you. My stepson and daughter-in-law continue to wear our Nation's uniform, and they are proud to have served our country in Iraq.

Today, on the fifth anniversary of the liberation of Baghdad and the Iraqi people by the United States and our coalition partners, I want to reiterate how grateful we are for the sacrifices made.

We must continue to base our Iraq policy not upon short-term domestic political considerations, but upon our enduring national security interests in Iraq, and indeed throughout the Middle East.

We must consider the consequences of our policy decisions, and recognize that immediate disengagement would only embolden the forces of radical Islam and leave an enormous power vacuum in Iraq—one to be filled by the regime in Iran, with its proxies in Iraq and throughout the region.

Our enemies have made clear their intentions, both in words and deeds.

In his most recent interview, released on April 2, senior al-Qaeda jihadist Ayman al-Zawahiri stated, and I quote:

“The battalions of the Mujahedin after expelling the occupier from Iraq, shall make their way toward Jerusalem.”

He further elaborated:

“There is no doubt that the American collapse has begun . . . and the raids on New York and Washington were identifying marks of this collapse.”

Al-Qaeda has been, if nothing else, consistent in its message in this regard.

In October 2006, al-Qaeda member Abu Hamza stated:

“We will not rest from our Jihad until we are under the olive trees . . . and we have blown up the filthiest house—which is called the White House.”

I am willing to take them at their word—that they desire nothing more than the destruction of the United States and that they are willing to stop at nothing to achieve it.

There are those in the United States who argue that the threat would disappear if the United States were not in Iraq. That is not only naive, but dangerous.

There are those who look at Iraq and Afghanistan as two independent battles, calling for retreat from one as the recipe for success in the other.

But they cannot be separated. We must look at them in an integrated manner, in the same way the radicals look at them as intertwined and as part of their broader effort to drive “all unbelieving forces” out “from the land of the Muslims” and to destroy the United States, the “Great Satan.”

Some in the U.S. are becoming impatient. They say we have done enough for Iraq.

However, they fail to fully comprehend the critical strategic interests that are at stake for us over there and the great sacrifices which Iraqis are making for their own freedom. While throughout Iraq the jihadists are losing—losing militarily and losing the support of the local Sunni population—they are by no means defeated.

As you, General Petraeus, testified in the Senate yesterday:

“Al-Qaeda’s senior leaders, who still view Iraq as the central front in their global strategy send funding, direction, and foreign fighters to Iraq.”

We must also recognize that Iran is engaged in a proxy war against us in Iraq; that Iranian agents and military forces are actively providing training, expertise and weapons to attack United States forces and the Government of Iraq.

Last week, U.S. Major General Kevin Bergner said:

“We have seen the continued use of Iranian-manufactured and -supplied rockets, mortars and explosively-formed penetrators . . . and in fact, we have captured individuals who tell us that they have recently been to Iran and have been trained by the Quds Force operatives.”

In the last year, we have witnessed important political progress, but we understand that we still face significant challenges on both of these fronts.

However, the recent passage of the pensions law, the de-Ba’athification law, the provincial powers legislation, the Fiscal Year 2008 budget, and consideration of the consumer protection law have clearly illustrated that they are up to the task.

It is critical that we lay the groundwork not only for normalized bilateral relations between the United States and Iraq, but for Iraq to take its place among responsible nations.

To start, we must begin by recognizing Iraq as a sovereign nation and our ally.

We must stop talking down to Iraq and start talking with Iraq as a partner.

Iraqis have volunteered in large numbers to fight for their freedom in their armed forces.

Many have died in the struggle against radicalism and for freedom. Iraqi casualties in this struggle far exceed our lamentable American casualties.

But we are not fighting their war for them. We are assisting them in their fight—which is both their fight and our fight—and the fight of every freedom-loving people everywhere.

Your work, General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker, has given our Iraqi ally a hope for freedom, a strategy for success.

We must not fail where they have succeeded. As former President Ronald Reagan stated in his first inaugural address:

“The American people are ready for peace. We will negotiate for it, sacrifice for it. But we will not surrender for it.”

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your time.

Chairman BERMAN. Our witnesses today are well known to all of us. Ambassador Ryan Crocker is one of the most distinguished members of our Diplomatic Corps. He has been Ambassador to Iraq since March of last year. His assignment to Iraq is his fifth ambassadorship. He has previously been our chief diplomat in Lebanon, Kuwait, Syria and Pakistan. He has received the Presidential Distinguished Service Award, and the Department of Defense Medal for Distinguished Civilian Service. In 2004, the President elevated him to the rank of career ambassador, the highest rank in the Foreign Service.

General David Petraeus is likewise one of our most distinguished military officers. He has been in his current post as commanding general of the Multi-National Forces in Iraq since February of last year. This is his third command in Iraq. He commanded the 101st Airborne Division during the initial phase of the war. He was in charge of training Iraqi security forces in 2004 and 2005, and as I indicated, he returned to Iraq as our top commander last year.

Gentlemen, you have testified before this committee 7 months ago. We do look forward to hearing your testimony again today, and Ambassador.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE RYAN C. CROCKER, UNITED STATES AMBASSADOR TO IRAQ, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Ambassador CROCKER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have circulated my full statement and ask that that be submitted for the record.

Chairman BERMAN. It will be.

Ambassador CROCKER. Mr. Chairman, Congresswoman Ros-Lehtinen, members of the committee, I must start by noting with genuine sadness the absence in the room today, the absence of Chairman Tom Lantos. I first met Chairman Lantos in Lebanon in 1982, and he is someone I have had the honor of working with off and on for the quarter of a century that followed. He was truly a great American. We all mourn his loss and I know we are all deeply grateful for the contributions he made to this great country.

Chairman BERMAN. Thank you.

[Applause.]

Ambassador CROCKER. It is an honor to appear before you today to provide my assessment of political, economic and diplomatic developments in Iraq.

Last September, I said that the cumulative trajectory of these developments was upwards, although the slope without line was not steep. The developments over the last 7 months have strengthened my sense of a positive trend. Immense challenges remain and progress is uneven and often frustratingly slow, but there is progress. Sustaining this progress will require continuing U.S. resolve and commitment.

Five years ago today, the statue of Saddam Hussein was toppled in Baghdad. The euphoria of that moment evaporated long ago, but as Iraq emerges from the shattering violence of 2006 and the early part of 2007, there is reason to sustain that commitment and the enormous investments we have made both in the lives of our young brave men and women and our resources. Let me describe briefly some developments upon which I base such a judgment.

The first is at the national level in the form of legislation and the development of Iraq's Parliament. In the last several months, Iraq's Parliament has formulated, debated vigorously, and in many cases passed legislation dealing with vital issues of reconciliation and nation building. A pension law extended benefits to individuals who had previously been denied them because of their service under the former regime. The Accountability and Justice Law, de-Ba'athification reform, reflects a strengthened spirit of reconciliation as does a far-reaching amnesty law.

The Provincial Powers Law is a major step forward in defining the relationship between the Federal and provincial governments and involve debate about the fundamental nature of the state, similar in its complexity to our own lengthy and difficult debate over states' rights. The Provincial Powers Law calls for provincial elections by October 1, and an electoral law is now under discussion that will set the parameters for those elections. All major parties have announced their support for elections, which will be a major step in Iraq's political development and will set the stage for national elections in late 2009.

The passage of the 2008 budget, with record amounts for capital expenditures, ensures that the Federal and provincial governments will have the resources for public spending. All of this, Mr. Chairman, has been done since I came before you in September.

These laws are not perfect and much depends on their implementation, but they are important steps.

Also important has been the development of Iraq's Council of Representatives as a national institution. Last summer, the council suffered from persistent and often paralyzing disputes over leadership and procedure. Now it is successfully grappling with complex issues and producing viable trade-offs and compromise packages. Coalitions have formed around issues and sectarian political groupings, which often were barriers to progress, have become more flexible.

Let me also talk about the intangibles: Attitudes among the Iraqi people. In 2006 and 2007, many of us understandably questioned whether hatred between Iraqis of different sectarian backgrounds was so deep that a civil war was inevitable. The Sunni Awakening movement in al-Anbar, which so courageously confronted al-Qaeda, continues to keep the peace in the area and to keep al-Qaeda out.

Fallujah, once a symbol for violence and terror, is now one of Iraq's safest cities. The Shiia holy cities of Najaf and Karbala are enjoying security and growing prosperity in the wake of popular rejection of extremists militia activity. The Shiia clerical leadership—the Marja'iyyah—based in Najaf—has played a quiet but important role in support of moderation and reconciliation.

In Baghdad, we can see that Iraqis are not pitted against each other purely on the basis of sectarian affiliation. The security improvements of the past months have diminished the atmosphere of suspicion.

News from Iraq in recent weeks has been dominated by the situation in Basra. The Iraqi decision to combat extremist militias has had major significance.

First, a Shiia majority government led by Prime Minister Maliki has demonstrated its commitment to taking on criminals and extremists regardless of sectarian identity.

Second, Iraq security forces led these operations in Basra and in towns and cities throughout the south. British and United States elements played supporting roles, as they should.

The operation in Basra has also shaken up Iraqi politics. The Prime Minister is confident in his decision and determined to press the fight against illegal groups, but also determined to take a hard look at lessons learned. The efforts of the government against these extremist elements have broad political support as a statement

April 5 by virtually all of Iraq's main political leaders—Sunni, Shiia and Kurd—made clear.

One conclusion I draw from these signs of progress is that the strategy that began with the surge is working. This does not mean, however, that U.S. support should be open-ended or that the level and nature of our engagement should not diminish over time.

It is in this context that we have begun negotiating a bilateral relationship between Iraq and the United States. In August, Iraq's five principal leaders requested a long-term relationship to include economic, political, diplomatic, and security cooperation. The heart of this relationship will be a legal framework for the presence of American troops, similar to that which exists in nearly 80 countries around the world.

This agreement will not establish permanent bases in Iraq, and we anticipate that it will expressly forswear them. The agreement will not specify troop levels and it will not tie the hands of the next administration. Our aim is to ensure that the next President arrives in office with a stable foundation upon which to base policy decisions, and that is what this agreement will do. Congress will remain fully informed as these negotiations proceed in the coming weeks and months.

In terms of economics, since September we have seen the revival of market-places across Iraq and the reopening of long-shuttered businesses. According to a Center for International Private Enterprise poll last month, 78 percent of Iraq business owners expect the Iraqi economy to continue to grow in the next 2 years.

With the improving security and rising government expenditures, the IMF projects that Iraq's GDP will grow 7 percent in real terms this year, and inflation has been tamed. Iraq's 2008 budget has allocated \$13 billion for capital investment and reconstruction, and a \$5 billion supplemental budget this summer will further invest export revenues in building infrastructure and providing services. This spending also benefits the United States. Iraq recently announced its decision to purchase 40 commercial aircraft from the United States at an estimated cost of \$5 billion.

The era of U.S.-funded major infrastructure projects is over. Our assistance focus has shifted to capacity development and an emphasis on local development through our network of ministerial advisors and 25 provincial reconstruction teams, PRTs. We are seeking to ensure that our assistance in partnership with the Iraqis leverages Iraq's own resources.

Iraq is increasingly using these resources to support projects and programs that we have helped develop. It has committed nearly \$200 million in support of a program to provide vocational training for concerned local citizens who stood up with us against al-Qaeda in the awakening. We developed technical specifications from which Iraq's state-owned oil company will build new oil export platforms and pipelines with over \$1 billion.

In Baghdad, the municipality has stepped up to take over labor contracts with \$100 million that we had been covering under the Community Stabilization Program.

Iraq will need to continue to improve governmental capacity, pass national-level hydrocarbon legislation, improve electrical production and distribution, improve the climate for foreign and do-

mestic investment, and take a number of other steps. We, along with other international partners, including the United Nations and the World Bank, will be assisting the Iraqis as they move forward with this challenging agenda.

In the region and the international community under dynamic new leadership, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq has increased the scope of its activities and the size of its staff. It is playing a key role in preparation for provincial elections and in providing technical assistance to resolve disputed internal boundaries. UNHCR has returned international staff to Iraq to assist with the return of internally displaced persons and refugees.

Regionally, support from Arab capitals for Iraq must improve for the sake of Iraq and the sake of the region. Bahrain's recent announcement that it will return an ambassador to Baghdad is welcome, and other Arab states should follow suit. Iraq is a multi-ethnic state, but it is also a founding member of the Arab League and an integral part of the Arab World. We encourage more active Arab engagement with Iraq and we expect that Prime Minister Maliki's effort against Shiia extremist militias in Basra will receive Arab support.

Iran continues to undermine the efforts of the Iraqi Government to establish a stable, secure state through the arming and training of militia elements engaged in violence against Iraqi security forces, coalition forces, and Iraqi civilians. The extent of Iran's malign influence was dramatically demonstrated when these elements clashed with Iraqi Government forces in Basra and Baghdad. We know more than ever about Iranian-supported lethal networks inside Iraq and their Quds Force sponsors, and we will continue to aggressively uproot and destroy them.

At the same time we support constructive relations between Iran and Iraq, and are participating in a tripartite process to discuss the security situation in Iraq. Iran has a choice to make.

Mr. Chairman, almost everything about Iraq is hard. It will continue to be hard as Iraqis struggle with the damage and trauma inflicted by 35 years of totalitarian Ba'athist rule. But hard does not mean hopeless, and the political and economic progress of the past few months is significant. I must underscore, however, that these gains are fragile, and they are reversible.

Americans have invested a great deal in Iraq, in blood as well as treasure, and they have the right to ask whether this is worth it, whether it is now time to walk away and let the Iraqis fend for themselves. Iraq has the potential to develop into a stable, secure, multi-sectarian democracy under the rule of law. Whether it realizes that potential is ultimately up to the Iraqi people. Our support, however, will continue to be critical.

I said in September that I cannot guarantee success in Iraq. That is still the case, although I think now we are closer. I remain convinced that a major departure from our current engagement would bring failure, and we have to be clear with ourselves about what failure could mean.

Al-Qaeda is in retreat in Iraq, but it is not yet defeated. Al-Qaeda's leaders are looking for every opportunity they can to hang on. Osama bin Laden has called Iraq "the perfect base," and along with the comments from Ayman al-Zawahiri, it reminds us that a

fundamental aim of al-Qaeda is to establish itself in the Arab world. It almost succeeded in Iraq. We cannot allow it a second chance.

It is not only al-Qaeda that would benefit. Iran has said publicly it will fill any vacuum in Iraq and extremist Shiia militias would reassert themselves. We saw them try in Basra and Baghdad. And in all of this, the Iraqi people would suffer on a scale far beyond what we have already seen. Spiraling conflict could draw in neighbors with devastating consequences for the region and the world.

Mr. Chairman, as monumental as the events of the last 5 years have been in Iraq, Iraqis, Americans—and the world, ultimately—will judge us far more on the basis of what will happen than what has happened. In the end, how we leave and what we leave behind will be more important than how we came. Our current course is hard, but it is working. Progress is real although fragile. We need to stay with it.

In the months ahead, we will continue to assist Iraq as it pursues further steps toward reconciliation and economic development. Over time, this will become increasingly an Iraqi process, as it should be. Our efforts will focus on increasing Iraq's integration regionally and internationally; assisting Iraqi institutions to strengthen the political process and promote economic activity; and supporting U.N. efforts as Iraq carries out local elections this year. These efforts will require an enhanced civilian commitment and continued support from the Congress and the American people.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, I want to recognize and thank all those who serve our country in Iraq, both military and civilian. Their courage and commitment, at great sacrifice, has earned the admiration of all Americans. They certainly have mine, and it is an honor for me to serve there with them.

Thank you, sir.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Crocker follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE RYAN C. CROCKER, UNITED STATES
AMBASSADOR TO IRAQ, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Mr. Chairman, Congresswoman Ros-Lehtinen, and Members of the Committee:

It is an honor to appear before you today to provide my assessment of political, economic and diplomatic developments in Iraq. When General Petraeus and I reported to you in September, I gave my considered judgment as to whether our goals in Iraq were attainable—can Iraq develop into a united, stable country with a democratically-elected government operating under the rule of law?

Last September, I said that the cumulative trajectory of political, economic and diplomatic developments in Iraq was upwards, although the slope of that line was not steep. Developments over the last seven months have strengthened my sense of a positive trend. Immense challenges remain and progress is uneven and often frustratingly slow; but there is progress. Sustaining that progress will require continuing U.S. resolve and commitment. What has been achieved is substantial, but it is also reversible. Five years ago, the statue of Saddam Hussein was toppled in Baghdad. The euphoria of that moment evaporated long ago. But as Iraq emerges from the shattering violence of 2006 and the early part of 2007, there is reason to sustain that commitment and the enormous investments we have made both in the lives of our young brave men and women and our resources. Let me describe the developments upon which I base such a judgment.

RECONCILIATION: NATIONAL AND PROVINCIAL POLITICS

The first is at the national level in the form of legislation and the development of Iraq's parliament. In September, we were disappointed that Iraq had not yet enacted some key pieces of legislation. In the last several months, however, Iraq's parliament has formulated, debated vigorously, and in many cases passed legislation

dealing with vital issues of reconciliation and nation building. A pension law extended benefits to individuals who had previously been denied them because of their service under the former regime. The Accountability and Justice Law (de-Ba'athification reform), passed after lengthy and often contentious debate, reflects a strengthened spirit of reconciliation, as does a far-reaching Amnesty Law.

The Provincial Powers Law is a major step forward in defining the relationship between the federal and provincial governments. Passage of this legislation required debate about the fundamental nature of the state, similar in its complexity to our own lengthy and difficult debate over states' rights. The Provincial Powers Law also called for provincial elections by October 1, 2008, and an Electoral Law is now under discussion that will set the parameters for elections. All major parties have announced their support for these elections, which will be a major step forward in Iraq's political development and will set the stage for national elections in late 2009.

In January, a vote by the Council of Representatives to change the design of the Iraqi flag means the flag now flies in all parts of the country for the first time in years. The passage of the 2008 budget, with record amounts for capital expenditures, ensures that the federal and provincial governments will have the resources for public spending. All of this has been done since September. These laws are not perfect and much depends on their implementation, but they are important steps.

Also important has been the development of Iraq's Council of Representatives (CoR) as a national institution. Last summer, the CoR suffered from persistent and often paralyzing disputes over leadership and procedure. Now, it is successfully grappling with complex issues and producing viable tradeoffs and compromise packages. As debates in Iraq's parliament became more about how to resolve tough problems in a practical way, Iraqi politics have become more fluid. While politics still have a sectarian bent and basis, cross-sectarian coalitions have formed around issues, and sectarian political groupings which often were barriers to progress have become more flexible.

Let me also talk about the intangibles: attitudes among the Iraqi people. In 2006 and 2007, many people understandably questioned whether hatred between Iraqis of different sectarian backgrounds was so deep that a civil war was inevitable. The Sunni Awakening movement in al-Anbar, which so courageously confronted al-Qa'ida, continues to keep the peace in the area and keep al-Qa'ida out. Fallujah, once a symbol for violence and terror, is now one of Iraq's safest cities. The Shi'a holy cities of Najaf and Karbala are enjoying security and growing prosperity in the wake of popular rejection of extremist militia activity. The Shi'a clerical leadership—the Marja'iyah—based in Najaf—has played a quiet but important role in support of moderation and reconciliation. In Baghdad, we can see that Iraqis are not pitted against each other purely on the basis of sectarian affiliation. The security improvements of the past months have diminished the atmosphere of suspicion and allowed for acts of humanity that transcend sectarian identities.

When I arrived in Baghdad a year ago, my first visit to a city district was to the predominantly Sunni area of Dora. Surge forces were just moving into neighborhoods still gripped by al-Qa'ida. Residents also were being terrorized by extremist Shi'a militias. Less than a year later, at the end of February 2008, tens of thousands of Shi'a pilgrims walked through those streets on their way to Karbala to commemorate the martyrdom of Imam Hussein. Sunni residents offered food and water as they passed through, and some joined the pilgrimage.

News from Iraq in recent weeks has been dominated by the situation in Basrah. Taken as a snapshot, with scenes of increasing violence and masked gunmen in the streets, it is hard to see how this situation supports a narrative of progress in Iraq. And there is still very much to be done to bring full government control to the streets of Basrah and eliminate entrenched extremist, criminal, and militia groups.

When viewed with a broader lens, the Iraqi decision to combat these groups in Basrah has major significance. First, a Shi'a majority government, led by Prime Minister Maliki, has demonstrated its commitment to taking on criminals and extremists regardless of sectarian identity. Second, Iraqi Security Forces led these operations, in Basrah, and in towns and cities throughout the south. British and U.S. elements played important roles, but these were supporting roles, as they should be.

The operation in Basrah has also shaken up Iraqi politics. The Prime Minister returned to Baghdad from Basrah shortly before General Petraeus and I left for Washington—and he is confident in his decision and determined to press the fight against illegal groups, but also determined to take a hard look at lessons learned. The efforts of the government against extremist militia elements have broad political support as a statement April 5th by virtually all of Iraq's main political leaders—Sunni, Shi'a, and Kurd—made clear.

A wildcard remains the Sadrist Trend—and whether the Iraqis can continue to drive a wedge between other elements of the Trend and Iranian-supported Special

Groups. A dangerous development in the immediate wake of the Basrah operation was what appeared to be a reunification between Special Groups and the mainline Jaysh al-Mahdi (JAM). We also saw a potential collapse of the JAM “freeze” in military operations. As the situation unfolded, however, Muqtada al-Sadr issued a statement that disavowed anyone possessing “heavy weapons”—which would include the signature weapons of the Special Groups. This statement can further sharpen the distinction between members of the Sadrist Trend, who should not pose a threat to the Iraqi state, and members of the Special Groups, who very much do.

One conclusion I draw from these signs of progress is that the strategy that began with the Surge is working. This does not mean, however, that U.S. support should be open-ended or that the level and nature of our engagement should not diminish over time. It is in this context that we have begun negotiating a bilateral relationship between Iraq and the United States. In August, Iraq’s five principal leaders requested a long-term relationship with the United States, to include economic, political, diplomatic, and security cooperation. The heart of this relationship will be a legal framework for the presence of American troops similar to that which exists in nearly 80 countries around the world.

The Iraqis view the negotiation of this framework as a strong affirmation of Iraqi sovereignty—placing Iraq on par with other U.S. allies and removing the stigma of Chapter VII status under the U.N. Charter, pursuant to which Coalition forces presently operate. Such an agreement is in Iraq’s interest—and ours. U.S. forces will remain in Iraq beyond December 31st, 2008, when the U.N. resolution presently governing their presence expires. Our troops will need basic authorizations and protections to continue operations—and this agreement will provide those authorizations and protections.

The agreement will not establish permanent bases in Iraq, and we anticipate that it will expressly forswear them. The agreement will not specify troop levels, and it will not tie the hands of the next Administration. Our aim is to ensure that the next President arrives in office with a stable foundation upon which to base policy decisions, and that is precisely what this agreement will do. Congress will remain fully informed as these negotiations proceed in the coming weeks and months.

Mr. Chairman, significant challenges remain in Iraq. A reinvigorated cabinet is necessary both for political balance and to improve the delivery of services to Iraq’s people. Challenges to the rule of law, especially corruption, are enormous. Disputed internal boundaries—the Article 140 process—must be resolved. The return of refugees and the internally displaced must be managed. The rights of women and minorities must be better protected. Iraqis are aware of the challenges they face, and are working on them.

Iraq’s political progress will not be linear. Developments which are on the whole positive can still have unanticipated or destabilizing consequences. The decision to hold provincial elections—vital for Iraq’s democratic development and long-term stability—will also produce new strains. Some of the violence we have seen recently in southern Iraq reflects changing dynamics within the Shi’a community as the political and security context changes. Such inflection points underscore the fragility of the situation in Iraq, but it would be wrong to conclude that any eruption of violence marks the beginning of an inevitable backslide.

ECONOMICS AND CAPACITY BUILDING

In September, I reported to you that there had been some gains in Iraq’s economy and in the country’s efforts to build capacity to translate these gains into more effective governance and services. Iraqis have built on these gains over the past months, as is most evident in the revival of marketplaces across Iraq and the reopening of long-shuttered businesses. According to a Center for International Private Enterprise poll last month, 78 percent of Iraqi business owners surveyed expect the Iraqi economy to grow in the next two years.

With the improving security and rising government expenditures, the IMF projects that Iraq’s GDP will grow 7 percent in real terms this year, and inflation has been tamed. The Dinar remains strong and the Central Bank has begun to bring down interest rates.

Iraq’s 2008 budget has allocated \$13 billion for reconstruction, and a \$5 billion supplemental budget this summer will further invest export revenues in building the infrastructure and providing the services that Iraq so badly needs. This spending also benefits the United States—Iraq recently announced its decision to purchase 40 commercial aircraft from the U.S. at an estimated cost of \$5 billion.

As Iraq is now earning the financial resources it needs for bricks and mortar construction through oil production and export, our assistance focus has shifted to capacity development and an emphasis on local and post-kinetic development through

our network of Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) and ministerial advisors. The era of U.S. funded major infrastructure projects is over. We are seeking to ensure that our assistance, in partnership with the Iraqis, leverages Iraq's own resources. Our 25 PRTs throughout Iraq have been working to improve provincial and local governance capabilities, particularly in budget design and execution. They are also helping to establish critical linkages between provincial and federal governments. Our PRTs are great enablers, and we are working to ensure their continued viability as our forces redeploy. The relatively small amounts they disburse through Quick Response Funds (QRF) have major impacts in local communities, and congressional support is important, as it is for other vital programs in the FY-08 Global War on Terror Supplemental request.

Iraq increasingly is using its own resources to support projects and programs that we have developed. It has committed nearly \$200 million in support of a program to provide vocational training for concerned local citizens who stood up with us in the Awakening. Our technical assistance advisers have helped design new procurement procedures for Iraq's Oil Ministry. We developed the technical specifications from which Iraq's state-owned oil company will build new oil export platforms and underwater pipelines worth over a billion dollars. And in Baghdad, in the last three months the municipality has stepped up to take over labor contracts worth \$100 million that we had been covering under the Community Stabilization Program.

Like so much else, Iraq's economy is fragile, the gains reversible and the challenges ahead substantial. Iraq will need to continue to improve governmental capacity, pass national-level hydrocarbon legislation, improve electrical production and distribution, improve the climate for foreign and domestic investment, create short- and long-term jobs and tackle the structural and economic problems of the vital agricultural sector. We will be helping the Iraqis as they take on this challenging agenda, along with other international partners including the United Nations and the World Bank.

REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL DYNAMICS

Along with the security surge last year, we also launched a diplomatic surge—focused on enhancing UN engagement in Iraq, anchoring the International Compact with Iraq, and establishing an expanded neighbors process, which serves as a contact group in support of Iraq.

The United Nations has taken advantages of an expanded mandate granted to the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI) to increase the scope of its activities and the size of its staff. Under dynamic new leadership, UNAMI is playing a key role in preparing for provincial elections and in providing technical assistance to resolve disputed internal boundaries. UNHCR has returned international staff to Iraq to assist with the return of internally displaced persons and refugees. The International Compact with Iraq provides a five-year framework for Iraq to reform its economy and achieve economic self-sufficiency in exchange for long-overdue Saddam era debt relief. Preparations are underway for a ministerial level Compact meeting in Sweden next month; 74 nations were represented at last year's gathering in Egypt.

Iraq's neighbors also understand they have a major interest in Iraq's future. Turkey hosted the second ministerial meeting of Iraq's neighbors in November, and Kuwait will host the third meeting later this month. In addition to all of Iraq's neighbors, these expanded neighbors conferences also include the Permanent Five members of the Security Council, the Arab League, and the G-8.

Support from Arab capitals has not been strong—and must improve, for the sake of Iraq and the sake of the region. Bahrain's recent announcement that it will return an ambassador to Baghdad is welcome, and other Arab states should follow suit. Iraq is a multi-ethnic state, but it is also a founding member of the Arab League and an integral part of the Arab world. Last month, Iraq hosted a meeting of the Arab Parliamentary Union, bringing the leaders of Arab parliaments and consultative councils to Iraq for the first major inter-Arab gathering since 1990. It is noteworthy that the meeting was held in the Kurdish city of Irbil, under the recently redesigned Iraqi flag, highlighting both the remarkable prosperity and stability of Iraq's Kurdish Region and the presence of the Iraqi federal state. We hope that this event will encourage more active Arab engagements with Iraq, and we expect that Prime Minister Maliki's effort against Shi'a extremist militias in Basrah will receive Arab support.

The presence of the PKK terrorist organization in the remote mountains of Iraq along the Turkish border has produced tension between Turkey and Iraq, and led to a Turkish cross-border operation in February, including movement of Turkish ground forces into Iraq. At the same time, both governments are working to

strengthen their ties, and Iraqi President Talabani made a successful visit to Turkey in March.

Syria plays an ambivalent role. We have seen evidence of efforts to interdict some foreign fighters seeking to transit Syria to Iraq, but others continue to cross the border. Syria also harbors individuals who finance and support the Iraqi insurgency.

Iran continues to undermine the efforts of the Iraqi government to establish a stable, secure state through the arming and training of criminal militia elements engaged in violence against Iraqi security forces, coalition forces and Iraqi civilians. The extent of Iran's malign influence was dramatically demonstrated when these militia elements clashed with Iraqi government forces in Basrah and Baghdad. When the President announced the Surge, he pledged to seek out and destroy Iranian-supported lethal networks inside Iraq. We know more about these networks and their Quds Force sponsors than ever before—and we will continue to aggressively uproot and destroy them. At the same time, we support constructive relations between Iran and Iraq and are participating in a tripartite process to discuss the security situation in Iraq. Iran has a choice to make.

LOOKING AHEAD

Mr. Chairman, almost everything about Iraq is hard. It will continue to be hard as Iraqis struggle with the damage and trauma inflicted by 35 years of totalitarian Ba'athist rule. But hard does not mean hopeless, and the political and economic progress of the past few months is significant. I must underscore, however, that these gains are fragile, and they are reversible. Americans have invested a great deal in Iraq, in blood as well as treasure, and they have the right to ask whether this is worth it, whether it is now time to walk away and let the Iraqis fend for themselves. Iraq has the potential to develop into a stable, secure, multi-ethnic, multi-sectarian democracy under the rule of law. Whether it realizes that potential is ultimately up to the Iraqi people. Our support, however, will continue to be critical. I said in September that I cannot guarantee success in Iraq. That is still the case, although I think we are now closer. I remain convinced that a major departure from our current engagement would bring failure, and we have to be clear with ourselves about what failure would mean.

Al-Qa'ida is in retreat in Iraq, but it is not yet defeated. Al-Qa'ida's leaders are looking for every opportunity they can to hang on. Osama bin Ladin has called Iraq "the perfect base," and it reminds us that a fundamental aim of Al-Qa'ida is to establish itself in the Arab world. It almost succeeded in Iraq; we cannot allow it a second chance.

And it is not only Al-Qa'ida that would benefit—Iran has said publicly it will fill any vacuum in Iraq, and extremist Shi'a militias would reassert themselves. We saw them try in Basrah and Baghdad two weeks ago. And in all of this, the Iraqi people would suffer on a scale far beyond what we have already seen. Spiraling conflict could draw in neighbors with devastating consequences for the region and the world.

Mr. Chairman, as monumental as the events of the last five years have been in Iraq, Iraqis, Americans—and the world, ultimately—will judge us far more on the basis of what will happen than what has happened. In the end, how we leave and what we leave behind will be more important than how we came. Our current course is hard, but it is working. Progress is real although still fragile. We need to stay with it.

In the months ahead, we will continue to assist Iraq as it pursues further steps toward reconciliation and economic development. Over time, this will become increasingly an Iraqi process, as it should be. Our efforts will focus on increasing Iraq's integration regionally and internationally; assisting Iraqi institutions locally and nationally to strengthen the political process and promote economic activity; and supporting United Nations' efforts as Iraq carries out local elections toward the end of the year. These efforts will require an enhanced civilian commitment and continued support from the Congress and the American people.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, I want to recognize and thank all those who serve our country in Iraq, both military and civilian. Their courage and commitment, at great sacrifice, has earned the admiration of all Americans. They certainly have mine, and it is an honor to be with them.

Chairman BERMAN. Thank you, Mr. Ambassador.
General Petraeus.

**STATEMENT OF GENERAL DAVID H. PETRAEUS, COMMANDING
GENERAL, MULTI-NATIONAL FORCE—IRAQ, U.S. DEPART-
MENT OF DEFENSE**

General PETRAEUS. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Ros-Lehtinen, and I, too, want to begin by saluting your former chairman, Congressman Lantos.

Since Ambassador Crocker and I appeared before you 7 months ago, there has been significant but uneven security progress in Iraq. Levels of violence and civilian deaths have been reduced substantially. Al-Qaeda-Iraq and a number of other extremist elements have been dealt serious blows. The capabilities of Iraqi forces have grown, and there has been noteworthy involvement of local Iraqis in local security.

Nonetheless, the situation in certain areas are still unsatisfactory and innumerable challenges remain. Moreover, as events in the past 2 weeks have reminded us, the progress made since last spring is fragile and reversible. Still, security in Iraq is better than it was when we reported to you last September, and it is significantly better than it was 15 months ago when Iraq was on the brink of civil war.

A number of factors have contributed to the progress. First, has been the impact of increased numbers of coalition and Iraqi forces. You are well aware of the U.S. surge. Less recognized is that Iraq has also conducted a surge, adding well over 100,000 additional soldiers and police to its security forces in 2007.

A second factor has been the employment of coalition and Iraq forces in the conduct of counterinsurgency operations, deployed together to safeguard the Iraq people, to pursue al-Qaeda-Iraq to combat criminals and militia extremists, to foster local reconciliation and to enable political and economic progress.

Another important factor has been the attitudinal shift among certain elements of the Iraqi population. Since the first Sunni “Awakening” in late 2006, Sunni communities in Iraq increasingly have rejected al-Qaeda-Iraq’s indiscriminate violence and extremist ideology. Over time, Awakenings have prompted tens of thousands of Iraqis contribute to local security as so-called “Sons of Iraq.” With their assistance, the threat posed by al-Qaeda-Iraq—while still lethal and substantial—has been reduced significantly.

The recent flare-up in Basra, southern Iraq, and Baghdad underscored the importance of the cease fire declared by Muqtada al-Sadr last fall as another factor in the overall reduction in violence. Recently, of course, some militia elements became active again. Though a Sadr stand-down order resolved the situation to a degree, the flare-up also highlighted the destructive role Iran has played in funding, training, arming, and directing the so-called Special Groups and generated renewed concern about Iran in the minds of many Iraqi leaders. Unchecked, the Special Groups pose the greatest long-term threat to the viability of a democratic Iraq.

In September, I described the fundamental nature of the conflict in Iraq as a competition among ethnic and sectarian communities for power and resources. This competition continues, influenced heavily by outside actors, and its resolution remains the key to producing long-term stability in Iraq.

Various elements push Iraq's ethnosectarian competition toward violence. Terrorists, insurgents, militia extremists, and criminal gangs pose significant threats. Al-Qaeda's senior leaders, who still view Iraq as the central front in their global strategy, send funding, direction, and foreign fighters to Iraq. Action by neighboring states compounds the challenges. Syria has taken some steps to reduce the flow of foreign fighters, but not enough to shut down the key network that supports al-Qaeda-Iraq. And Iran has fueled the violence in a particularly damaging way, as I mentioned, through its lethal support to the Special Groups.

These challenges and recent weeks' violence notwithstanding, Iraq's ethnosectarian competition in many areas is now taking place more through political dialogue and less through violence. In fact, the recent escalation of violence in Baghdad and southern Iraq was dealt with temporarily, at least, by most parties acknowledging that the rational way ahead is talking rather than street fighting.

Though Iraq obviously remains a violent country, we do see progress in the security arena. As this chart illustrates, for nearly 6 months security incidents have been at a level not seen since early-to-mid-2005, though the level did spike in recent weeks as a result of the violence in Basra and Baghdad, but has now begun to turn down again, though the period ahead will be a sensitive one.

As our primary mission is to help protect the population, we closely monitor the number of Iraqi civilians killed due to violence. As this chart reflects, civilian deaths have decreased over the past year to a level not seen since the February 2006 Samarra Mosque bombing that set off the cycle of sectarian violence that tore the very fabric of Iraqi society in 2006 and early 2007.

Ethnosectarian violence is of particular concern in Iraq, as it is a cancer that continues to spread if left unchecked. As the box on the bottom left of this chart shows, the number of deaths due to ethnosectarian violence has fallen since we testified last September. A big factor has been the reduction in Baghdad. Some of this is, to be sure, due to sectarian hardening of certain Baghdad neighborhoods. However, that is only a partial explanation as numerous mixed neighborhoods still exist. In fact, coalition and Iraqi forces have focused along the fault lines to reduce the violence and enable Sunni and Shia leaders to begin the long process of healing in their communities.

As this next chart shows, even though the number of high profile attacks increased in March as al-Qaeda lashed out, the current level of such attacks remains far below its height a year ago. Moreover, as we have helped improve security and focused on enemy networks, we have seen a decrease in the effectiveness of such attacks.

The emergency of Iraqi volunteers helping to secure their local communities has been an important development. As this chart depicts, there are now over 91,000 Sons of Iraq—Shiia as well as Sunni—under contract to help coalition and Iraq forces protect their neighborhoods and secure infrastructure and roads. These volunteers have contributed significantly in various areas, and the savings in vehicles not lost because of reduced violence—not to

mention the priceless lives saved—have far outweighed the cost of their monthly contracts.

Sons of Iraq have also contributed to the discovery of improvised explosive devices and weapons and explosive caches. As this next chart shows, in fact, we have already found more caches in 2008 than we found in all of 2006. Given the importance of the Sons of Iraq, we are working closely with the Iraq Government to transition them into the Iraqi security forces or other forms of employment, and over 21,000 have already been accepted into the police, army or other government jobs.

Al-Qaeda also recognizes the significance of the Sons of Iraq, and al-Qaeda elements have targeted them repeatedly. However, these attacks—in addition to al-Qaeda’s use of women, children, and the handicapped as suicide bombers—have further alienated al-Qaeda from the Iraqi people. And the tenacious pursuit of al-Qaeda-Iraq, together with al-Qaeda’s loss of local support in many areas, has substantially reduced its capability numbers and freedom of movement. This chart displays the cumulative effect of the effort against al-Qaeda and its insurgent allies in Iraq. As you can see, we have reduced considerably the areas in which al-Qaeda-Iraq enjoys supports and sanctuary, though there clearly is more to be done.

Having noted that progress, al-Qaeda is still capable of lethal attacks in Iraq, and we must maintain relentless pressure on the organization, on the networks outside Iraq that support it, and on the resource flows that sustain it. This chart lays out the comprehensive strategy that we, the Iraqis, and our interagency and international partners are employment to reduce what al-Qaeda needs in Iraq.

As you can see, defeating al-Qaeda in Iraq requires not just actions by our elite counter-terrorist forces, but also major operations by coalition and Iraqi conventional forces, a sophisticated intelligence effort, political reconciliation, economic and social programs, information operations initiatives, diplomatic activity, the employment of counterinsurgency principles in detainee operations, and many other actions.

As we combat al-Qaeda in Iraq, we must remember that doing so not only reduces a major source of instability in Iraq; it also weakens an organization that al-Qaeda’s senior leaders view as a tool to spread its influence and foment regional instability. Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri have consistently advocated exploiting the situation in Iraq, and we have also seen AQI involved in destabilizing activities in the wider mid-east region.

Together with the Iraq security forces, we have also focused on the so-called Special Groups. These elements are funded, trained, armed, and directed by Iran’s Quds Force with help from Lebanese Hezbollah. It is these groups that have launched Iranian rockets and mortar rounds at Iraq’s seat of government in the international zone. Iraqi and coalition leaders have repeatedly noted their desire that Iran live up to promises made by President Ahmadinejad and other senior Iranian leaders to stop their support for the Special Groups. However, nefarious activities by the Quds Force have continued and Iraqi leaders now clearly recognize the threat they pose to Iraq. We should all watch Iranian actions closely in the weeks and months ahead as they will show the kind of

relationship Iran wishes to have with its neighbor and the character of future Iranian involvement in Iraq.

We have transferred responsibilities to Iraq forces as their capabilities and conditions on the ground have permitted. Currently, as this chart shows, half of Iraq's 18 provinces are under provincial Iraqi control. Many of these provinces—not just the successful ones in the Kurdish Regional Government area, but also a number of southern provinces—have done well. Challenges have emerged in some other others, including, of course, Basra. Nonetheless, this process will continue, and we expect Anbar and Qadisiyah Provinces to transition in the months ahead.

Iraqi forces have grown significantly since September, and over 540,000 individuals now serve in the Iraq security forces. The number of combat battalions capable of taking the lead in operations, albeit with some coalition support, has grown to well over 100. These units are bearing an increasing share of the burden, as evidenced by the fact that Iraqi security force losses have recently been three times our own.

We will, of course, conduct careful after-action reviews with our Iraqi partners in the wake of recent operations, as there were units and leaders found wanting in some cases, and some of our assessments may be downgraded as a result. Nonetheless, the performance of many units was solid, especially once they got their footing and gained a degree of confidence, and certain Iraqi elements proved very capable.

Iraq security ministries are steadily improving their ability to execute their budgets. As this chart shows, in 2007, as in 2006, Iraq security ministries spent more on their forces than the United States provided through the Iraq Security Forces Fund. We anticipate that Iraq will spend over \$8 billion on security this year and \$11 billion next year, and this projection recently enabled us to reduce significantly our Iraqi Security Forces Fund request for Fiscal Year 2009, from \$5.1 billion to \$2.8 billion.

While improved, Iraq security forces are not yet ready to defend Iraq or maintain security throughout the entire country on their own. Recent operations in Basra highlight improvements in the ability of the Iraq security forces to deploy substantial numbers of units, supplies, and replacements on short notice, they certainly could not have deployed a division's worth of army and police units on such short notice a year ago. On the other hand, the recent operations also underscored the considerable work still to be done in the area of expeditionary logistics, force enablers, staff development, and command and control.

We also continue to help Iraq through the U.S. Foreign Military Sales program. As of March 2008, the Iraqi Government had purchased over \$2 billion worth of equipment and services of American origin through FMS. Since September, and with your encouragement of the organizations in the process, FMS deliveries have improved.

While security has improved in many areas, and the Iraqi security forces are shouldering more of the load, the situation in Iraq remains exceedingly complex and challenging. Iraq could face a resurgence of al-Qaeda in Iraq or additional Shiia groups could violate Sadr's cease-fire order. External actors, like Iran, could stoke

violence within Iraq, and actions by other neighbors could undermine the security situation as well.

The Commander's Emergency Response Program, the State Department's Quick Response Fund, and USAID programs enable our commanders and troopers to help deal with its challenges. To that end, I respectfully ask that you provide us by June the additional CERP funds requested in the supplemental. Encouragingly, the Iraqi Government recently allocated \$300 million for us to manage as Iraq CERP they perform projects for their people, while building their own capacity to do so. The Iraq Government has also committed \$163 million to gradually assume Sons of Iraq contracts, \$510 million for small business loans, and \$196 million for a Joint Training, Education, and Reintegration Program. The Iraqi Government pledges to provide more as they execute the budget passed 2 months ago.

Last month I provided my chain of command recommendations for the way ahead in Iraq. During that process, I noted the objective of retaining and building on our hard-fought security gains while we draw down to the pre-surge level of 15 brigade combat teams, also redeploying two marine battalions in the Marine Expeditionary Unit. I emphasized the need to continue work with our Iraqi partners to secure the population and to transition responsibilities to the Iraqis as quickly as conditions permit, but without jeopardizing the security gains that have been made.

As in September, my recommendations are informed by operational and strategic considerations. The operational considerations include recognition that the military surge has achieved progress, but that the progress is reversible. Iraq security forces have strengthened their capabilities but still must grow further. The provincial elections in the fall, refugee returns, detainee releases, and efforts to resolve provincial boundary disputes will be very challenging. The transition of Sons of Iraq will require time and careful monitoring. Withdrawing too many forces too quickly could jeopardize the progress of the past year; and performing the necessary tasks in Iraq will require sizeable conventional forces as well as special operations forces and advisor teams.

The strategic considerations include recognition that the strain on the U.S. military, especially on its ground forces, has been considerable. A number of the security challenges inside Iraq are also related to significant regional and global threats; and a failed state in Iraq would pose serious consequences for the greater fight against al-Qaeda, for regional stability, for the already existing humanitarian crisis in Iraq, and for the effort to counter malign Iranian influence.

After weighing these factors, I recommended to my chain of command that we continue the drawdown of the surge combat forces and that, upon withdrawal of the last surge brigade combat team in July, we undertake a 45-day period of consolidation and evaluation. At the end of that period, we will assess the conditions on the ground, much as we have done as we have looked at where we could redeploy the surge forces, and determine where and when we can make recommendations for further reductions. This process will be continuous, with recommendations for further reductions made as conditions permit.

This approach does not, to be sure, allow establishment of a set withdrawal timeline. However, it does provide the flexibility those of us on the ground need to preserve the still fragile security gains our troopers have fought so hard and sacrificed so much to achieve.

With this approach, the security achievements of 2007 and early 2008 can form a foundation for the gradual establishment of sustainable security in Iraq. This is not only important to the 27 million citizen in Iraq, it is also vitally important to those in the Gulf region, to the citizens of the United States, and to the global community. It is clearly in our national interest to help Iraq prevent the resurgence of al-Qaeda in the heart of the Arab world, to help Iraq resist Iranian encroachment on its sovereignty, to avoid renewed ethnosectarian violence that could spill over Iraq's borders and make the existing refugee crisis even worse, and to enable Iraq to expand its role in the regional and global economies.

In closing, I want to comment briefly on those serving our Nation in Iraq as well. We have asked a great deal of them and of their families, and they have made enormous sacrifices. My keep personal awareness of the strain on them and on the force as a whole has been an important factor in my recommendations.

The Congress, the Executive Branch, and our fellow citizens have done an enormous amount to support our troopers and their loved ones, and all of us are very grateful for that. Nothing means more to those in harm's way than the knowledge that their country appreciates their sacrifices and those of their families.

Indeed, all Americans should take great pride in the civilian and military men and women serving our Nation in Iraq. It remains the greatest of honor to soldier with them.

Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of General Petraeus follows:]

Report to Congress on the Situation in Iraq

General David H. Petraeus
Commander, Multi-National Force–Iraq
8-9 April 2008

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide an update on the security situation in Iraq and to discuss the recommendations I recently provided to my chain of command.

Since Ambassador Crocker and I appeared before you seven months ago, there has been significant but uneven security progress in Iraq. Since September, levels of violence and civilian deaths have been reduced substantially, Al Qaeda-Iraq and a number of other extremist elements have been dealt serious blows, the capabilities of Iraqi Security Force elements have grown, and there has been noteworthy involvement of local Iraqis in local security. Nonetheless, the situation in certain areas is still unsatisfactory and innumerable challenges remain. Moreover, as events in the past two weeks have reminded us and as I have repeatedly cautioned, the progress made since last spring is fragile and reversible. Still, security in Iraq is better than it was when Ambassador Crocker and I reported to you last September, and it is significantly better than it was 15 months ago when Iraq was on the brink of civil war and the decision was made to deploy additional US forces to Iraq.

A number of factors have contributed to the progress that has been made. First, of course, has been the impact of increased numbers of Coalition and Iraqi Forces. You are well aware of the U.S. surge. Less recognized is that Iraq has also conducted a surge, adding well over 100,000 additional soldiers and police to the ranks of its security forces in 2007 and slowly increasing its capability to deploy and employ these forces.

A second factor has been the employment of Coalition and Iraqi Forces in the conduct of counterinsurgency operations across the country, deployed together to safeguard the Iraqi people, to pursue Al Qaeda-Iraq, to combat criminals and militia extremists, to foster local reconciliation, and to enable political and economic progress.

Another important factor has been the attitudinal shift among certain elements of the Iraqi population. Since the first Sunni “Awakening” in late 2006, Sunni communities in Iraq increasingly have rejected AQI’s indiscriminate violence and extremist ideology. These communities also recognized that they could not share in Iraq’s bounty if they didn’t participate in the political arena. Over time, Awakenings have prompted tens of thousands of Iraqis—some, former insurgents—to contribute to local security as so-called “Sons of Iraq.” With their assistance and with relentless pursuit of Al Qaeda-Iraq, the threat posed by AQI—while still lethal and substantial—has been reduced significantly.

The recent flare-up in Basrah, southern Iraq, and Baghdad underscored the importance of the ceasefire declared by Moqtada al-Sadr last fall as another factor in the overall reduction in violence. Recently, of course, some militia elements became active again. Though a Sadr stand-down order resolved the situation to a degree, the flare-up also highlighted the destructive role Iran has played in funding, training, arming, and directing the so-called Special Groups and generated renewed concern about Iran in the minds of many Iraqi leaders. Unchecked, the Special Groups pose the greatest long-term threat to the viability of a democratic Iraq.

As we look to the future, our task together with our Iraqi partners will be to build on the progress achieved and to deal with the many challenges that remain. I do believe that we can do this while continuing the ongoing drawdown of the surge forces.

The Nature of the Conflict

In September, I described the fundamental nature of the conflict in Iraq as a competition among ethnic and sectarian communities for power and resources. This competition continues, influenced heavily by outside actors, and its resolution remains the key to producing long-term stability in Iraq.

Various elements push Iraq's ethno-sectarian competition toward violence. Terrorists, insurgents, militia extremists, and criminal gangs pose significant threats. Al Qaeda's senior leaders, who still view Iraq as the central front in their global strategy, send funding, direction, and foreign fighters to Iraq. Actions by neighboring states compound Iraq's challenges. Syria has taken some steps to reduce the flow of foreign fighters through its territory, but not enough to shut down the key network that supports AQI. And Iran has fueled the violence in a particularly damaging way, through its lethal support to the Special Groups. Finally, insufficient Iraqi governmental capacity, lingering sectarian mistrust, and corruption add to Iraq's problems.

These challenges and recent weeks' violence notwithstanding, Iraq's ethno-sectarian competition in many areas is now taking place more through debate and less through violence. In fact, the recent escalation of violence in Baghdad and southern Iraq was dealt with temporarily, at least, by most parties acknowledging that the rational way ahead is political dialogue rather than street fighting.

Current Situation and Trends

As I stated at the outset, though Iraq obviously remains a violent country, we do see progress in the security arena.

As this chart [Slide 1] illustrates, for nearly six months, security incidents have been at a level not seen since early-to-mid-2005, though the level did spike in recent weeks as a result of the violence in Basrah and Baghdad. The level of incidents has, however, begun to turn down again, though the period ahead will be a sensitive one.

As our primary mission is to help protect the population, we closely monitor the number of Iraqi civilians killed due to violence. As this chart [Slide 2] reflects, civilian deaths have decreased over the past year to a level not seen since the February 2006 Samarra Mosque bombing that set off the cycle of sectarian violence that tore the very fabric of Iraqi society in 2006 and early 2007. This chart also reflects our increasing use of Iraqi-provided reports, with the top line reflecting Coalition and Iraqi data and the bottom line reflecting Coalition-confirmed data only. No matter which data is used, civilian deaths due to violence have been reduced significantly, though more work clearly needs to be done.

Ethno-sectarian violence is a particular concern in Iraq, as it is a cancer that continues to spread if left unchecked. As the box on the bottom left of this chart [Slide 3] shows, the number of deaths due to ethno-sectarian violence has fallen since we testified last September. A big factor has been the reduction of ethno-sectarian violence in Baghdad, density plots for which are shown

in the boxes depicting Iraq's capital over time. Some of this decrease is, to be sure, due to sectarian hardening of certain Baghdad neighborhoods; however, that is only a partial explanation as countless sectarian fault lines and numerous mixed neighborhoods still exist in Baghdad and elsewhere. In fact, Coalition and Iraqi Forces have focused along the fault lines to reduce the violence and enable Sunni and Shia leaders to begin the long process of healing in their local communities.

As this next chart [Slide 4] shows, even though the number of high profile attacks increased in March as AQI lashed out, the current level of such attacks remains far below its height a year ago. Moreover, as we have helped improve security and focused on enemy networks, we have seen a decrease in the effectiveness of such attacks. The number of deaths due to ethno-sectarian violence, in particular, has remained relatively low, illustrating the enemy's inability to date to re-ignite the cycle of ethno-sectarian violence.

The emergence of Iraqi volunteers helping to secure their local communities has been an important development. As this chart [Slide 5] depicts, there are now over 91,000 Sons of Iraq—Shia as well as Sunni—under contract to help Coalition and Iraqi Forces protect their neighborhoods and secure infrastructure and roads. These volunteers have contributed significantly in various areas, and the savings in vehicles not lost because of reduced violence—not to mention the priceless lives saved—have far outweighed the cost of their monthly contracts.

Sons of Iraq have also contributed to the discovery of improvised explosive devices and weapons and explosives caches. As this next chart [Slide 6] shows, in fact, we have already found more caches in 2008 than we found in all of 2006. Given the importance of the Sons of Iraq, we are working closely with the Iraqi Government to transition them into the Iraqi Security Forces or other forms of employment, and over 21,000 have already been accepted into the Police or Army or other government jobs. This process has been slow, but it is taking place, and we will continue to monitor it carefully.

Al Qaeda also recognizes the significance of the Sons of Iraq, and AQI elements have targeted them repeatedly. However, these attacks—in addition to AQI's use of women, children, and the handicapped as suicide bombers—have further alienated AQI from the Iraqi people. And the tenacious pursuit of AQI, together with AQI's loss of local support in many areas, has substantially reduced its capability, numbers, and freedom of movement. This chart [Slide 7] displays the cumulative effect of the effort against AQI and its insurgent allies. As you can see, we have reduced considerably the areas in which AQI enjoys support and sanctuary, though there clearly is more to be done.

Having noted that progress, AQI is still capable of lethal attacks, and we must maintain relentless pressure on the organization, on the networks outside Iraq that support it, and on the resource flows that sustain it. This chart [Slide 8] lays out the comprehensive strategy that we, the Iraqis, and our interagency and international partners are employing to reduce what AQI needs. As you can see, defeating Al Qaeda in Iraq requires not just actions by our elite counter-terrorist forces, but also major operations by Coalition and Iraqi conventional forces, a sophisticated intelligence effort, political reconciliation, economic and social programs, information operations initiatives, diplomatic activity, the employment of counterinsurgency principles in detainee operations, and many other actions. Related to this effort, I applaud Congress' support for additional intelligence,

surveillance, and reconnaissance assets in the upcoming Supplemental, as ISR is vital to the success of our operations in Iraq and elsewhere.

As we combat AQI, we must remember that doing so not only reduces a major source of instability in Iraq; it also weakens an organization that Al Qaeda's senior leaders view as a tool to spread its influence and foment regional instability. Usama bin Ladin and Ayman al-Zawahiri have consistently advocated exploiting the situation in Iraq, and we have also seen AQI involved in destabilizing activities in the wider Mid-east region.

Together with the Iraqi Security Forces, we have also focused on the Special Groups. These elements are funded, trained, armed, and directed by Iran's Qods Force, with help from Lebanese Hezbollah. It was these groups that launched Iranian rockets and mortar rounds at Iraq's seat of government two weeks ago, causing loss of innocent life and fear in the capital, and requiring Iraqi and Coalition actions in response. Iraqi and Coalition leaders have repeatedly noted their desire that Iran live up to promises made by President Ahmdeinajad and other senior Iranian leaders to stop their support for the Special Groups. However, nefarious activities by the Qods Force have continued, and Iraqi leaders now clearly recognize the threat they pose to Iraq. We should all watch Iranian actions closely in the weeks and months ahead, as they will show the kind of relationship Iran wishes to have with its neighbor and the character of future Iranian involvement in Iraq.

Iraqi Security Forces

The Iraqi Security Forces have continued to develop since September, and we have transferred responsibilities to Iraqi Forces as their capabilities and the conditions on the ground have permitted. Currently, as this chart [Slide 9] shows, half of Iraq's 18 provinces are under provincial Iraqi control. Many of these provinces—not just the successful provinces in the Kurdish Regional Government area, but also a number of southern provinces—have done well. Challenges have emerged in some others, including, of course, Basrah. Nonetheless, this process will continue, and we expect Anbar and Qadisiyah Provinces to transition in the months ahead.

Iraqi Forces have grown significantly since September, and over 540,000 individuals now serve in the Iraqi Security Forces. The number of combat battalions capable of taking the lead in operations, albeit with some Coalition support, has grown to well over 100 [Slide 10]. These units are bearing an increasing share of the burden, as evidenced by the fact that Iraqi Security Force losses have recently been three times our own. We will, of course, conduct careful after action reviews with our Iraqi partners in the wake of recent operations, as there were units and leaders found wanting in some cases, and some of our assessments may be downgraded as a result. Nonetheless, the performance of many units was solid, especially once they got their footing and gained a degree of confidence, and certain Iraqi elements proved quite capable.

Underpinning the advances of the past year have been improvements in Iraq's security institutions. An increasingly robust Iraqi-run training base enabled the Iraqi Security Forces to grow by over 133,000 soldiers and police over the past 16 months. And the still-expanding training base is expected to generate an additional 50,000 Iraqi soldiers and 16 Army and Special Operations battalions throughout the rest of 2008, along with over 23,000 police and 8 National Police battalions.

Additionally, Iraq's security ministries are steadily improving their ability to execute their budgets. As this chart [Slide 11] shows, in 2007, as in 2006, Iraq's security ministries spent more on their forces than the United States provided through the Iraqi Security Forces Fund (ISFF). We anticipate that Iraq will spend over \$8 billion on security this year and \$11 billion next year, and this projection enabled us recently to reduce significantly our Iraqi Security Forces Fund request for fiscal year 2009 from \$5.1 billion to \$2.8 billion.

While improved, Iraqi Security Forces are not yet ready to defend Iraq or maintain security throughout the country on their own. Recent operations in Basrah highlight improvements in the ability of the Iraqi Security Forces to deploy substantial numbers of units, supplies, and replacements on very short notice; they certainly could not have deployed a division's worth of Army and Police units on such short notice a year ago. On the other hand, the recent operations also underscored the considerable work still to be done in the areas of logistics, force enablers, staff development, and command and control.

We also continue to help Iraq through the U.S. Foreign Military Sales program. As of March 2008, the Iraqi government has purchased over \$2 billion worth of equipment and services of American origin through FMS. Since September, and with your encouragement of the organizations in the FMS process, delivery has improved as the FMS system has strived to support urgent wartime requirements. On a related note, I would ask that Congress consider restoring funding for the International Military Education and Training Program, which supports education for mid- and senior-level Iraqi military and civilian leaders and is an important component of the development of the leaders Iraq will need in the future.

Upcoming Challenges

While security has improved in many areas and the Iraqi Security Forces are shouldering more of the load, the situation in Iraq remains exceedingly complex and challenging. Iraq could face a resurgence of AQI or additional Shia groups could violate Moqtada al-Sadr's cease-fire order and return to violence. External actors, like Iran, could stoke violence within Iraq, and actions by other neighbors could undermine the security situation as well.

Other challenges result, paradoxically, from improved security, which has provided opportunities for political and economic progress and improved services at the local, provincial, and national levels. But the improvements have also created expectations that progress will continue. In the coming months, Iraq's leaders must strengthen governmental capacity, execute budgets, pass additional legislation, conduct provincial elections, carry out a census, determine the status of disputed territories, and resettle internally displaced persons and refugees. These tasks would challenge any government, much less a still developing government tested by war.

The Commander's Emergency Response Program, the State Department's Quick Response Fund, and USAID programs enable us to help Iraq deal with its challenges. To that end, I respectfully ask that you provide us by June the additional CERP funds requested in the Supplemental. These funds have an enormous impact. As I noted earlier, the salaries paid to the Sons of Iraq alone cost far less than the cost savings in vehicles not lost due to the enhanced security in local communities. Encouragingly, the Iraqi government recently allocated \$300 million for us to manage as "Iraqi CERP" to perform projects for their people, while building their own capacity to do so. The Iraqi government has also committed \$163 million to gradually assume Sons of Iraq contracts, \$510 million for small business loans, and \$196 million for a

Joint Training, Education, and Reintegration Program. The Iraqi government pledges to provide more as they execute the budget passed two months ago. Nonetheless, it is hugely important to have our resources continue, even as Iraqi funding begins to outstrip ours.

Recommendations

Last month I provided my chain of command recommendations for the way ahead in Iraq. During that process, I noted the objective of retaining and building on our hard-fought security gains while we draw down to the pre-surge level of 15 brigade combat teams. I emphasized the need to continue work with our Iraqi partners to secure the population and to transition responsibilities to the Iraqis as quickly as conditions permit, but without jeopardizing the security gains that have been made.

As in September, my recommendations are informed by operational and strategic considerations. The operational considerations include recognition that:

- the military surge has achieved progress, but that the progress is reversible;
- Iraqi Security Forces have strengthened their capabilities but still must grow further;
- the provincial elections in the fall, refugee returns, detainee releases, and efforts to resolve provincial boundary disputes and Article 140 issues will be very challenging;
- the transition of Sons of Iraq into the Iraqi Security Forces or other pursuits will require time and careful monitoring;
- withdrawing too many forces too quickly could jeopardize the progress of the past year; and
- performing the necessary tasks in Iraq will require sizable conventional forces as well as special operations forces and advisor teams.

The strategic considerations include recognition that:

- the strain on the US military, especially on its ground forces, has been considerable;
- a number of the security challenges inside Iraq are also related to significant regional and global threats; and
- a failed state in Iraq would pose serious consequences for the greater fight against Al Qaeda, for regional stability, for the already existing humanitarian crisis in Iraq, and for the effort to counter malign Iranian influence.

After weighing these factors, I recommended to my chain of command that we continue the drawdown of the surge combat forces and that, upon the withdrawal of the last surge brigade combat team in July, we undertake a 45-day period of consolidation and evaluation. At the end of that period, we will commence a process of assessment to examine the conditions on the ground and, over time, determine when we can make recommendations for further reductions. This process will be continuous, with recommendations for further reductions made as conditions permit. This approach does not allow establishment of a set withdrawal timetable; however, it does provide the flexibility those of us on the ground need to preserve the still fragile security gains our troopers have fought so hard and sacrificed so much to achieve.

With this approach, the security achievements of 2007 and early 2008 can form a foundation for the gradual establishment of sustainable security in Iraq. This is not only important to the 27 million citizens of Iraq; it is also vitally important to those in the Gulf region, to the citizens of the United States, and to the global community. It clearly is in our national interest to help Iraq prevent the resurgence of Al Qaeda in the heart of the Arab world, to help Iraq resist Iranian

encroachment on its sovereignty, to avoid renewed ethno-sectarian violence that could spill over Iraq's borders and make the existing refugee crisis even worse, and to enable Iraq to expand its role in the regional and global economies.

Closing Comments

In closing, I want to comment briefly on those serving our Nation in Iraq. We have asked a great deal of them and of their families, and they have made enormous sacrifices. My keen personal awareness of the strain on them and on the force as a whole has been an important factor in my recommendations.

The Congress, the Executive Branch, and our fellow citizens have done an enormous amount to support our troopers and their loved ones, and all of us are grateful for that. Nothing means more to those in harm's way than the knowledge that their country appreciates their sacrifices and those of their families.

Indeed, all Americans should take great pride in the men and women serving our Nation in Iraq and in the courage, determination, resilience, and initiative they demonstrate each and every day. It remains the greatest of honors to soldier with them.

Thank you very much.

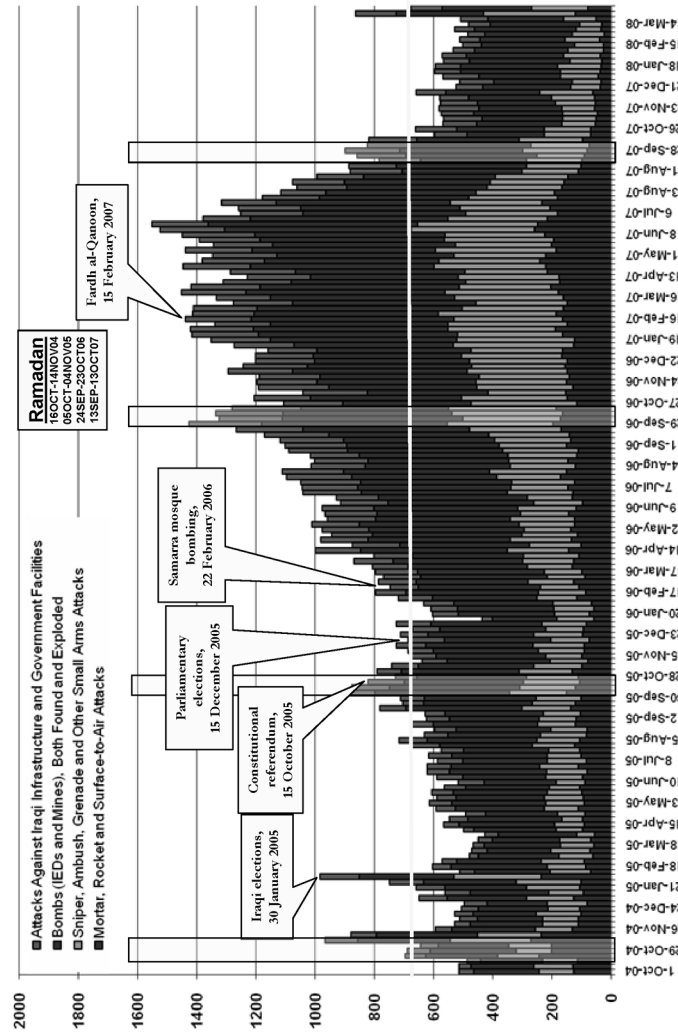


Multi-National Force-Iraq

***Charts to accompany the testimony of
GEN David H. Petraeus***

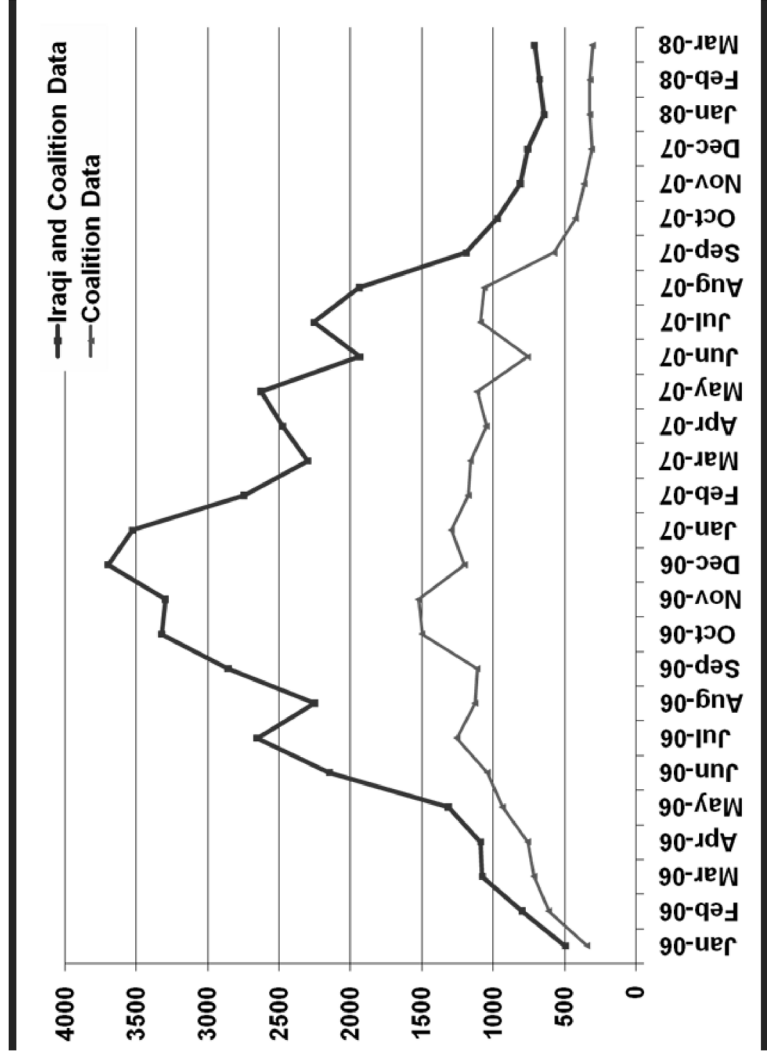
8-9 April 2008

Weekly Security Incidents

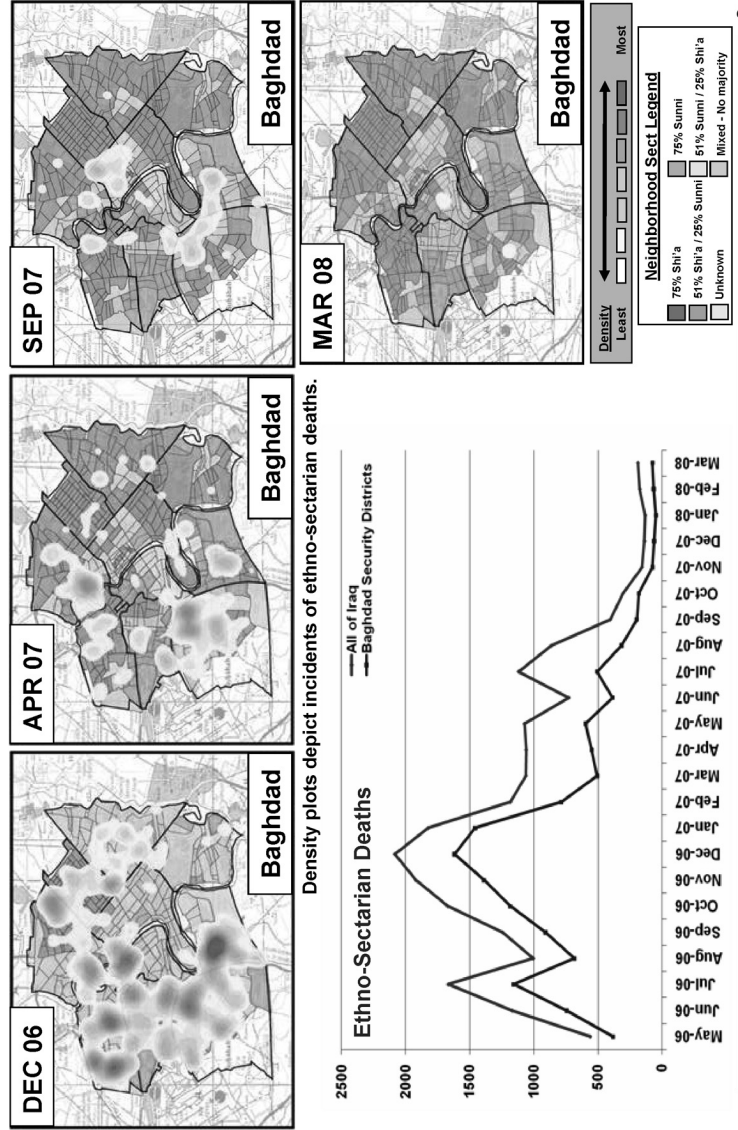


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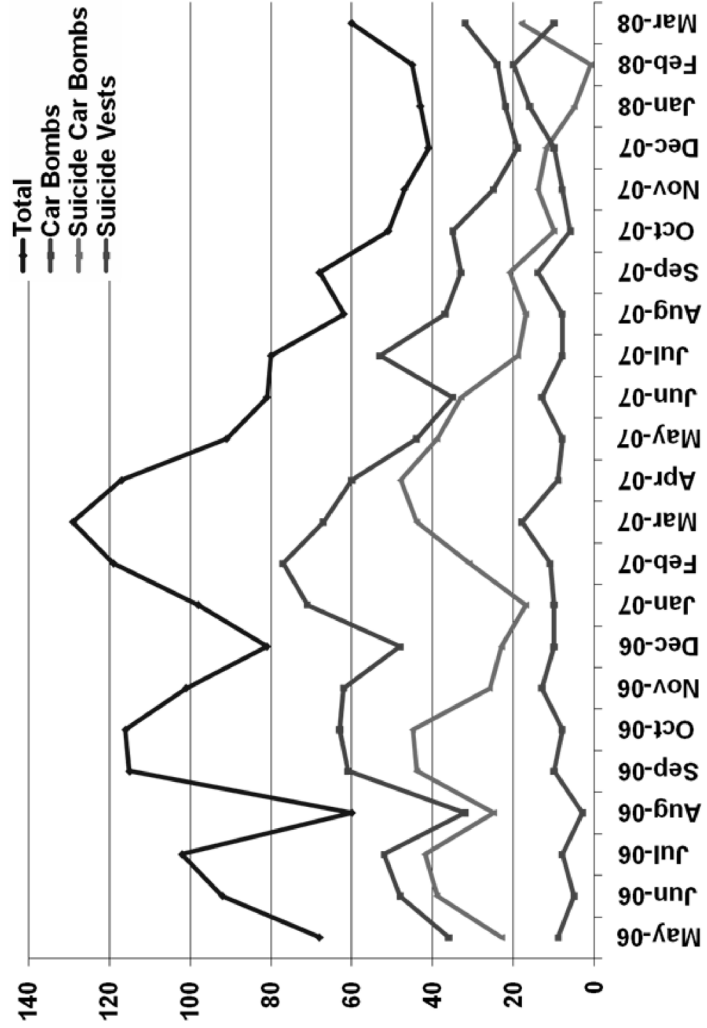
Civilian Deaths



Ethno-Sectarian Violence



High Profile Attacks (Explosions)



Sons of Iraq Concerned Local Citizens

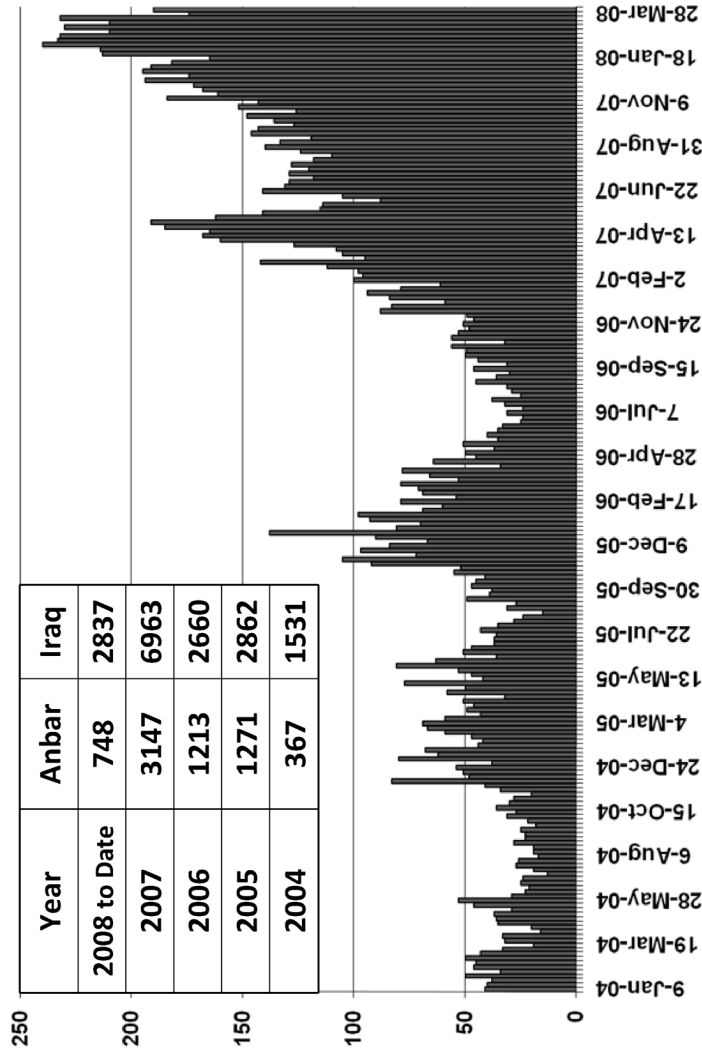
Total Contracted: 91,641
Volunteers: 4,605
Sunni: 78%
Shia: 19%
Other: 3%

Transitioned: 21,128
Anbar: 8,206
Iraqi Security Forces: 8,241
Non-Security Employment: 4,681

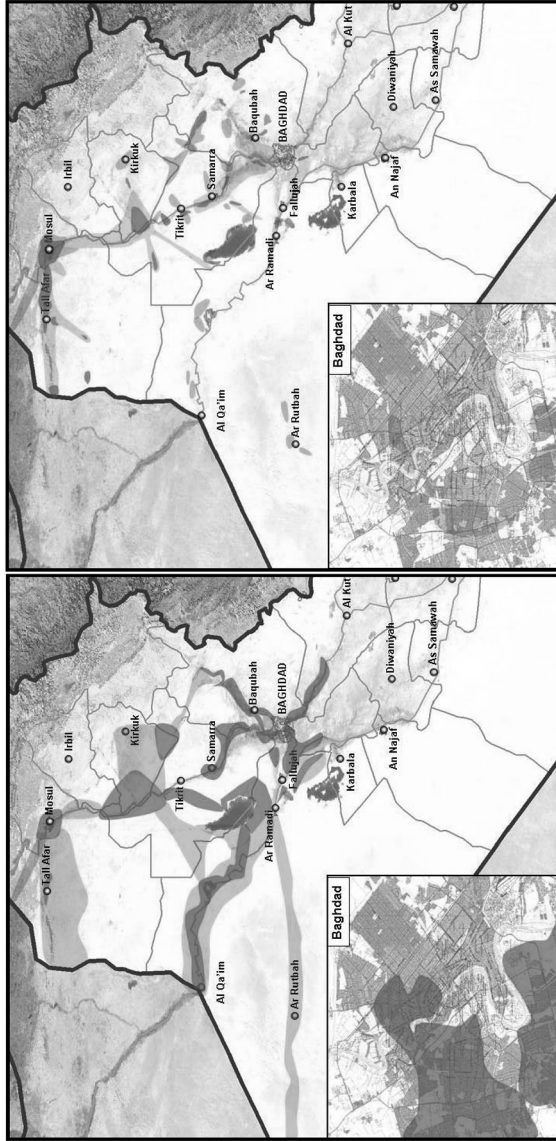
Costs:
Average Monthly CERP: \$16M



Caches Found and Cleared



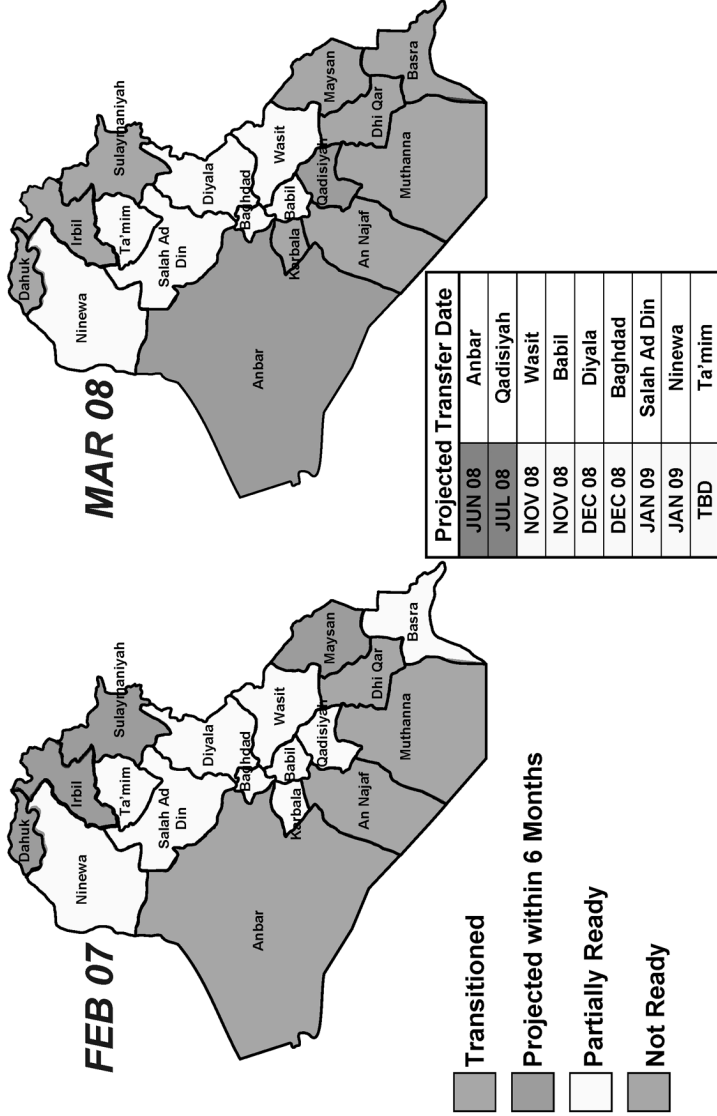
Al Qaeda in Iraq and Sunni Insurgents



December 2006

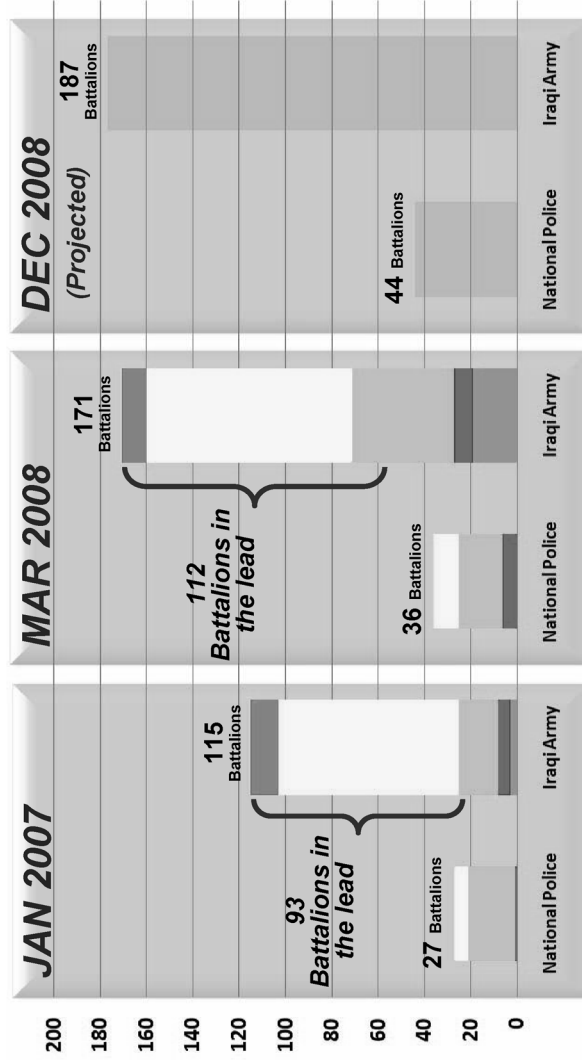
March 2008

Provincial Iraqi Control



Iraqi Combat Battalion Generation

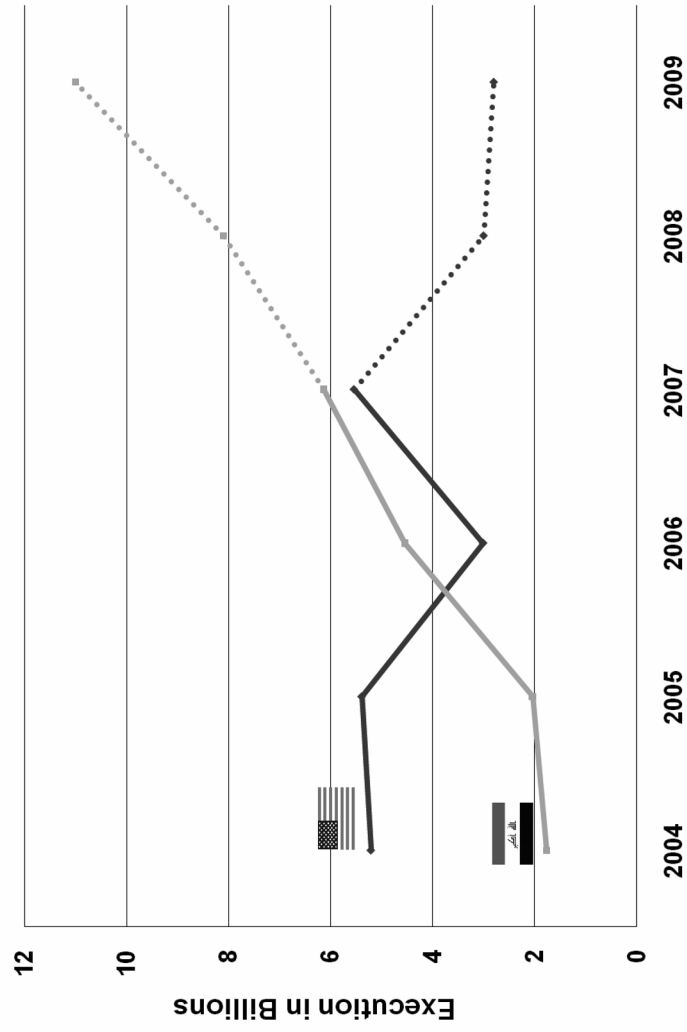
Infantry, Armor, Special Operations, and National Police Battalions



ORA 1 ORA 2 ORA 3 ORA 4 FORMING

Operational Readiness Assessment = ORA

Iraq Security Forces Expenditures



Chairman BERMAN. Thank you very much, General, and I will now recognize myself for 5 minutes.

Ambassador Crocker, General Petraeus, I would be grateful if both of you would respond.

The American people will decide the future direction of our troop presence in Iraq for themselves this November. They may very well decide in favor of a Presidential candidate who favors a relatively rapid withdrawal of our troop from Iraq. Just as there are consequences and costs negative in pursuing our current strategy, there will be consequences of such a withdrawal of them potentially very negative.

How do we minimize those consequences militarily and diplomatically? How could we most effectively transition to a significantly reduced presence in Iraq? What would be the essential tasks that such a reduced force could perform?

I would like your answers, understanding very well it doesn't mean your support for that strategy, but that is a realistic alternative and I think we here and the American people have a right to better understand how to cope with the consequences you fear.

Ambassador CROCKER. Mr. Chairman, of course, the whole premise of what General Petraeus and I have been involved in since we arrived is looking at conditions rather than timelines, and I just would say it straight. I don't see a good way to manage the situation in Iraq that is not conditions-based.

Now, I can't predict what the conditions will be in January 2009. They could be substantially different, and they could warrant substantial reductions of forces, but still, in my view, it would be taking into account an assessment of the conditions and then making recommendations accordingly.

Chairman BERMAN. Well, let me just pursue that further with either of you. There are costs, you are not here to answer the larger question of choices that have to be made and you are not expected to. But if those choices are made, you surely have ideas and thoughts on how best to minimize, mitigate the consequences that you think will flow from those decisions, and do we not have—is it not fair of us to ask you help us work through how best with a different strategy we might deal with them?

Ambassador CROCKER. It is a legitimate question, Mr. Chairman, and I am not trying to dodge it. I would characterize it as kind of a plan B approach, and I have been fully focused on making the current plan A try to work.

It is also extremely difficult, as I am sure you will appreciate, to answer that in a vacuum. What are the conditions at the time and what levels are we talking about?

Chairman BERMAN. Well, then I am not going to beat that horse anymore. Let me just ask General Petraeus. I am quite curious about the issue I raised in my opening statement regarding seize and hold and Sadr City, and what is it that allows mortars and rockets to—up through today—hit our Green Zone, and am I wrong in thinking that part of seize and hold was going to be at least eventually, if not initially, directed toward Sadr City?

General PETRAEUS. Eventually. And again our focus has always been primarily on what we term the wolf closes to the sled, which was al-Qaeda in Iraq which, of course, carried out the most horrific

attacks which ignited the ethnosectarian violence that engulfed the country in 2006 and created that situation of near civil war, if not actual civil war that the surge, in fact, was intended to address, and that has also carried out the most damaging attacks on infrastructure and just innocent civilians of any ethnosectarian grouping.

That has been the focus. There has been activity, and in effort to split the—to address the Sadr movement, if you will, which is a very legitimate political movement and a large one in Iraq, in fact, 30 seats helped elect Prime Minister Maliki as part of the overall Shiia coalition, and in fact in a number of neighborhoods this effort has worked where there has been in various locations, even with micro—

Chairman BERMAN. General, I hate to interrupt you, but if I do not do it for me, everyone else will get very mad if I do not do it for them.

General PETRAEUS. I am sorry. Fair enough, sir. Sorry.

Chairman BERMAN. I recognize the ranking member, Ms. Ros-Lehtinen for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for the way you are handling this hearing. Because I have other opportunities to interact, I would like to yield my time to Mr. Chabot of Ohio.

Mr. CHABOT. I thank the gentlelady for yielding, and General Petraeus, first of all, thank you very much for your distinguished service to our country, and I would like to begin by reading a few excerpts from the Wall Street Journal in their editorial yesterday:

“Sixteen months after President Bush ordered the change in strategy, the surge has earned a place among the most important counter-offenses in U.S. military annals. When it began, al-Qaeda dominated large swaths of central Iraq, Baghdad was a killing zone, Sunni and Shiites were heading toward civil war, and the Iraqi Government was seen as a failure. Today, al-Qaeda has been cleared from all but the northern reaches of Anbar and Diyala provinces, Sunni sheiks are working with coalition forces, and the long process of Sunni-Shiia political reconciliation has begun. The surge seized the offensive from the enemy so rapidly that it deserves to be studied for years as an example of effective counterinsurgency. None of this had been possible if Iraqis had not seen that the U.S. was committed to protect them. Americans are understandably impatient with war, but we have sacrificed too much and made too much progress in the last year not to finish the task. The surge has prevented a humiliating military defeat, and now is the time to sustain that commitment to achieve a political victory. The question now is whether Washington will squander these gains by withdrawing so quickly that we could still lose politically.”

General, would a precipitous withdrawal or a relatively rapid withdrawal, as the chairman just mentioned, would that jeopardize, would that risk the gains which have been made at such a high cost?

General PETRAEUS. Congressman, as I said in my statement, the gains are indeed fragile, and they are reversible. The pace of with-

drawal, obviously—the risk incurred by the pace of withdrawal obviously depends on the conditions. If suddenly again conditions just turn out perhaps better than anticipated, or continue on a good glide slope, then it may be possible to withdraw more rapidly. On the other hand, again it may not. So it does come down to the conditions, and that is what the Ambassador and I have stressed in fact is, and it is understandable, I think, why commanders on the ground, diplomats on the ground, who have been through this process of fighting so hard and sacrificing so much to achieve gains, in particular against al-Qaeda-Iraq want to be sure that we can solidify those gains and not risk this reverse that is possible.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you. Thank you very much, General. Thank you.

And Ambassador Crocker, if I could turn to you. One area of this administration's Iraqi policy that I, quite frankly, have found wanting is in not insisting that a considerable amount of the cost of rebuilding Iraq be paid from Iraqi oil reserves rather than from the American taxpayer. In Iraq, it is my understanding, has the second highest known oil reserves in the world, and recent reports suggest that Iraq has about \$30 billion in the bank from oil reserves, yet they have spent less than 3 percent of the \$3.5 billion capital budget allocated to the Iraqi oil ministry, only a very small portion was actually spent.

So now at a time when Americans are paying all-time high prices at the gas pump, and the oil-producing countries like Iraq are able to demand over \$100 a barrel for their oil, does it not just make sense that record high oil should help pay for Iraq's rebuilding rather than the hard-pressed United States taxpayers?

Ambassador CROCKER. It does indeed, Congressman, and that is exactly the road that we are moving down. As I said in my statement, we are out of the construction business in Iraq. We have a small number of projects that we are finishing up, but reconstruction from here on in is going to be an Iraqi financial responsibility, and they are stepping up to that both in terms of commitments, the amount of money that they are appropriating for this purpose, and their ability to actually spend it is also improving.

Chairman BERMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired, and I now recognize the chairman of the Middle East and South Asia Subcommittee, the gentleman from New York, Mr. Ackerman, for 5 minutes.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank both of you for your extraordinary service to our country, your patriotism and willingness to tackle probably the toughest job that our country has seen in a very long time.

That being said, we seem to have gotten ourselves into a fix. Now, we do not really know how to get ourselves out of it or unfixed. The reasons that we have gotten into this mess, and you could check them off from finding weapons of mass destruction, check, to getting rid of Saddam Hussein, check, to regime change, and check it all the way down to a constitution, to an elected Parliament, to people talking to each other. It seems that we have achieved all of our goals and every time we do that a new goal comes up, and now we are stuck on reducing the ethnic violence.

Well, good luck on that one. I do not know when you accomplish it. That is the big problem.

I know when we ask you certain questions, you are not there to determine policy, but you have to have that “can do” attitude and accept the policy and push straight ahead and answer that question, and say, yes, we can do it, and the brave men and women that you work with have been achieving quite a lot.

Our job is just the opposite. Our job is to question. Our job is to raise those points. Our job is to look at what the alternatives are, and if we cannot do it this way, how we do it another way, and you really were not expected to answer the question, you know, how do we pull out when your mission is to stay in.

But it reminds me of that old song after World War I that you probably know very well, the words are, “We are here because we are here.” When we are asked why the troops are there, well, we sent the troops over there and now we have to support them because they are there. Well, why are the troops there? Because we sent them.

And what do we have to do? We have to support them because they are there. So we are there because we are there because we are there because we are there and it never ends. How do you get out of this mess is the real question? How do you fix it?

I would liken your job to that of Sisyphus pushing that great huge stone up an endless hill. And when we ask you, “When can you stop pushing it?”, the answer is you do not know but you have to keep pushing it, and certainly your answer is, “We have made progress today. We have had some setbacks but we have made some progress recently.”

Well, are the setbacks irreversible? And the answer is not necessarily, but maybe so. Maybe we are going to have setbacks again. The surge seems to be working at this moment, but it seems we have not killed enough terrorists or dissuaded enough people from becoming such that they are not going to be replaced.

When does this end? You know, when do you stop pushing that big stone up the hill? And the answer is you really cannot see beyond that stone. You do not know what a just settlement looks like because you cannot see around it, and you will know it when you see it, but maybe the hill is a little bit too steep.

With the surge, you have gotten a re-do. You know, we have not had one of those since we played in the playground, but you get a re-do. Four thousand Americans who died do not get a re-do. Twenty thousand, thirty thousand whose lives have been dismembered do not get a re-do. Tens of thousands, scores of thousands of families who have been destroyed do not get a re-do. The only thing we know for us is there will be a lot more people who do not get re-dos.

How do you know we have won because at the end of this thing, unless we decide it is the end, nobody is going to hand you revolver, nobody is going to hand you the sword and say we quit, we have stopped, how do we know the Iraqis can stand up for themselves? Nobody seems to be able to answer that question.

Ambassador CROCKER. Sir, it is a question that we both ask ourselves constantly, and it is through asking that question and answering it on a localized basis that it is possible, in our judgment,

to execute the redeployments that are currently underway, and I think that that will continue to be the answer. It is going to be not one grand sweeping moment in which we can say it is all fixed, but it is going to be area by area, circumstance by circumstance. It is complicated. It will continue to be complicated, but I think it is doable.

Chairman BERMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired.

The gentleman from New Jersey, Mr. Smith.

Mr. SMITH OF NEW JERSEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker, thank you for your extraordinary leadership. You have really provided a leadership that the world has come to envy, and I personally want to thank you because under the most difficult hardships you have carried, both of you have carried yourselves with tremendous class. This is your fourth hearing, and I want to thank you for your incisive responses. I do not want to ask the most obvious questions because they have already been answered at least twice by both of you.

But I do have a question about the empowerment of concerned local citizens to take responsibility for security, the Sons of Iraq. It appears sound and workable, and the implementation of this initiative has clearly mitigated violence and helped transfer ownership of security issues to the Iraqis themselves, and, of course, this is on top of the additional build-up. General Petraeus, you have suggested that by December 8 of this year, 187 Iraqi army combat battalions comprised of about 750 personnel each, and 44 national police battalions will be up and running to combat the threat.

General Petraeus, you pointed out that the number of Sons of Iraq has grown from 21,000 to over 91,000, with an average monthly cost of \$16 million. I would like to give you an opportunity to respond to Wolf Blitzer's statement yesterday, and I quote him:

"A lot of people fear that as quickly as these guys switched from being enemies, insurgents, terrorists, killing Americans, killing Iraqi troops and now being on the payroll in effect of the U.S. Government, they could flip right back very quickly if they weren't on the payroll of the U.S. Government."

It's my sense that payroll issues notwithstanding, the surge in the Sons of Iraq has much more to do with enlightened self-interest, a growing understanding and recognition and awakening that al-Qaeda and other militants are the peoples' enemy, a sense that an individual can play a constructive and coordinated role in protecting their families, and that surge in the Sons of Iraq is a direct result of diplomatic outreach by U.S. and coalition forces at the local level.

How do you respond to Wolf Blitzer's comments?

General PETRAEUS. First of all, Congressman, it is the result of enlightened self-interest, and that is what we are trying to play on, and we have reminded these newly enlightened Sunni Arabs of what they receive from al-Qaeda, which was indiscriminate violence, an extremist ideology that on reflection they realize they wondered why they had ever let these folks into their communities. They did it because they felt disrespected, dispossessed and a variety of other feelings in the wake of liberation, having run the country before.

But then they also came to recognize that it ruined business in the Euphrates River Valley. You know, we jokingly say sometimes that every tribe is a little bit like the guys that we see on the Sopranos. They all have, you know, a trucking company, an import/export business, and a construction business. It is about enlightened self-interest, and they realize now, and we have helped them to that realization, as has the Iraqi Government, that you cannot participate in the bounty that Iraq has if you do not play. They did not vote in the elections in January 2005. They know that was a catastrophic error. As a result, that is why the Sunni Arabs, in particular, and others, want to see provincial elections in the fall, and it is one of the reasons that that law was a benchmark as the Ambassador mentioned.

Again, all we have tried to do is to play on that, to help them to that realization. Then they certainly help themselves, and then saw it when others stood up and raised their hand to fight against these people that had brought these problems to their doorstep instead of solutions.

Now, to move forward, they do have to be incorporated into legitimate institutions of the Iraqi Government or the legitimate economy, local businesses and so forth, and in fact, as I mentioned, as the chart showed, over 21,000 have already been incorporated into the security forces or other governmental positions, and a lot of that started in Anbar, and interestingly the Prime Minister, Shiia Prime Minister who went to Anbar for the first time in some 20 years last year, and then has been back again a couple more times, he has provided more resources to that almost exclusively Sunni Arab province than the Iraqi Government has provided to any other; again, trying to show them how important the government viewed the stand that they were taking against al-Qaeda-Iraq, then allowed the reopening of the border crossing at Alkeim with Syria, the life blood of the Euphrates River Valley starts to run back through it again, and the sheiks who again are all businessmen in addition to heads of tribes can start to see business revive in cities like Ramadi and Fallujah that is as late as the spring of last year you could not drive through in an armored vehicle without getting it. The other day we walked through without any body armor or Kevlar.

Mr. SMITH OF NEW JERSEY. Thank you very much.

Chairman BERMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired, and I recognize the chairman of the Africa and Global Health Subcommittee of our committee, Mr. Donald Payne of New Jersey.

Mr. PAYNE. I am kind of technically challenged with this new equipment here. But so good to see you, General and our Ambassador, and let me just say how proud I am of you, General Petraeus, for the outstanding work that you do and the way that you carry your office.

Let me though say that in October 2002, I was one of the members who led the opposition on the floor of the House. As a matter of fact, I managed the bill on the resolution authorizing President Bush to attack Iraq. As an early and staunch opponent of this war, I have watched every single prediction made by this administration proven wrong from the duration of the war, the reception we would receive, the cost, the number of casualties, the existence of weapons

of mass destruction to the countless number of Americans and Iraqis who have lost their lives. Every single one wrong.

During my years in Congress, I have had the privilege twice to be appointed as the congressional delegate to the United Nations. I strongly believe in the power of democracy and diplomacy. If we had allowed the United Nations' inspectors to complete their work before this war started instead of suddenly ordering them once Saddam Hussein said they could go anywhere, we would not be in this predicament today. There would have been no weapons of mass destruction. There would have been no biological weapons and we would have 4,000 Americans still alive.

Ironically, it was almost 5 years ago, on May 1, 2003, that President Bush deemed the operation in Iraq as "Mission accomplished," affirming an end to the major compact in Iraq. By that time approximately 175 brave Americans had lost their lives in combat. Yet today over 4,000 more confirmed deaths as this war continues; 67 fatalities from my home state of New Jersey.

The human cost of this war remains tragic. Tens of thousands of injured soldiers, countless number of Iraqi lives have been destroyed by this war. There is a great sense of sadness among those of us who foresaw over 5 years ago the tragedy that is now unfolding in Iraq without an answer of how it can end. The war that we were told would be swift and certain now continues to drain our tax dollars as a cost of living rises, gas prices, and all the rest, 80,000 jobs lost in March, unemployment over 5 percent for the first time in years.

It is just draining, but the thing that was very scary was that it was Osama bin Laden who said that we will win this war by bankrupting America, and I might ask you, Ambassador Crocker, how are we going to continue to fund this war, which we must do because we are in it, some of the questions that was asked by Mr. Ackerman?

You know, we are spending \$10.3 billion a month; \$339 million a day; 8,000 students could get PELL grants; 2.6 Americans without adequate health care, and on and on. But how do we continue to pay for this war?

Of course, it is off budget, but 1 day off budget has to be brought on the table, and is there a projection in your mind about how long this will go on?

It was once said that Saddam Hussein was responsible for 9/11. That was a part of this hoax also. We knew Saddam Hussein, but it was cleverly woven in. How many years and what cost, and in your opinion can we continue to sustain the financial cost in addition to the tremendous human cost?

Ambassador CROCKER. Sir, my mission is in Iraq. I cannot make those broader judgments. What I can say is that I believe that we and the Iraqis are making progress, that the trajectory is moving up in the areas I described in my statement, and that I believe that the consequences, the costs if you will of major failure in Iraq are so great that the two together require us to keep going, but I cannot answer that broad question.

Chairman BERMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired. The gentleman from Indiana, Mr. Burton.

Mr. BURTON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank both of you for your service with a great debt of gratitude, as well as all of our troops over there, and hope you will convey that, General, when you get back there.

Let me just say, Ambassador, you said that Osama bin Laden said that Iraq would be the perfect base of operation for the expansion of terrorism around the world, not just in the Middle East, as we have seen in New York on 9/11. So I hate to put you on the spot, but we need some direct answers from you folks. This is very important and I know politics is a tough thing for you to deal with, but we are going to have a new President in a little over 8 months, and one of the biggest issues in the Presidential campaign is a precipitous withdrawal versus hanging in there and defeating al-Qaeda and the terrorists.

Now, what I would like to know, and I am going to give you the time that you need to answer this, but I would like for it to be as concise as possible, what would happen if we had a very precipitous pullout, number one, or if we hung in there to win this battle?

I want to know and the American people really want to know what would happen if we with a new President said, we are going to jerk everybody out of there in 6 months, and the American people want to know this because right now the war is very unpopular, and the American people want to know the facts before we pick the next President.

Ambassador CROCKER. Sir, as you know, I am a career foreign service officer, and I have probably served both Democratic and Republican administrations, and I hope to do that loyally and to the best of my ability as long as I am in the service.

I tried to in my statement deal with the issue of a dramatic change in what we are doing in Iraq, but I am not linking that to Presidential campaigns or what happens in January or anything else.

I did say in my statement that if we decide that we just—

Mr. BURTON. We cannot hear you. Is your microphone on?

Ambassador CROCKER. Yes, sir. Do you hear me now?

I did say that if we were to decide that we just do not want to be engaged in this anymore, if we make a precipitous change in our conditions-based approach, that we could risk failure in Iraq, and I talked about what some of those consequences could be, including a base in the Arab world for al-Qaeda.

Mr. BURTON. I do not want to put words in your mouth, but I want to make sure we understand. If there was a precipitous pullout within a period of time, let us say 4, 5, 6 months, a vacuum would be created, and al-Qaeda would be the beneficiary if they were aggressive, along with Iran's help, to make that a base of operation for expanded terrorism around the world?

Ambassador CROCKER. My judgment is that where conditions are at this time, that you would see a spiral down, and that would lead to expanded sectarian conflict at levels we probably have not seen before. It would bring the neighbors, especially Iran, into the fight, and it would create space for al-Qaeda to root itself on Arab soil.

Mr. BURTON. I hope that everybody in America gets the gist of your comments because I think it is extremely important that they know between now and next November.

General, do you have anything you would like to add?

General PETRAEUS. Well, Congressman, the Ambassador has captured my sentiment on that as well, and what I have sought to do is again keep coming back to the conditions at the time that any change is made in our force levels. The reason that we have recommended conducting an assessment, just as we did, by the way, when we decided where and when to pull out surge force, it is the same assessment methodology of sitting down with the commanders on the ground, with the local Iraqis, assessing the enemy in friendly situations, and determining where and when you can withdraw your forces without unacceptable risk.

It is about risk and it is about the consequences that the Ambassador talked about with respect to al-Qaeda, sectarian conflict, regional stability, the humanitarian situation, and so forth.

Mr. BURTON. Let me just say I gather from your comments and I want to make sure that it is very, very clear that if a vacuum is created, it is likely that al-Qaeda and the neighbors like Iran would be the beneficiaries, and it could lead to a terrorist network base being established in Iraq when that void is created.

Chairman BERMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired. The gentleman from California, Mr. Sherman.

Mr. SHERMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

As the chair pointed out and I agree with him, it is possible that in our war with Saddam the winner has been Iran. Not only has Iran increased its influence in Iraq, but it has received a reprieve from any serious diplomatic or economic pressure to stop its nuclear enrichment program. I fear that we will focus exclusively on the battle in Iraq and lose the war on terrorism.

As Mr. Ackerman pointed out, we have an obsessive concentration on Iraq. We are there because we are there. Others have said that we are there because bin Laden has told us that that is the central front in the war on terrorism. I would point out that Mr. Bin Laden does not always tell us the truth.

The greatest cost of our effort in Iraq may be that we have made it impossible for our press and our country to focus sufficiently on the real threats—nuclear threats to our country from Iran, from North Korea, and elsewhere.

Now, Ambassador Crocker, your testimony states that the agreement will not specify any particular troop level, which implies that it will specify some obligation on the United States. What if the next President decides not to maintain a single soldier for a single day and decides to close our Embassy immediately? Will there be anything in this agreement that ties the new President's hands should the new President adopt a radical change in our policy?

Ambassador CROCKER. Congressman, in a word, no.

Mr. SHERMAN. Thank you for your answer.

General Petraeus, it is possible that the new President will be someone who has announced to the country that they want the most expeditious possible withdrawal, so you will wake up November 5, you will know who your new boss is going to be January 21. Will you begin on November 5 not only to carry out the operations that have to be carried out, but, of course, you do a long of long-term planning, will you begin to prepare plans to execute the policies of the incoming President, or alternatively, will the incoming

President face a circumstance, if, and I realize we may get an incoming President that supports your policies even more fervently than the current President, but if we get an incoming President who wants a new policy, will that President find on January 21 a dilemma where if they ordered immediate withdrawal, it will be an unplanned withdrawal? And if they do not order immediate withdrawal, then we continue to suffer casualties.

Will you start planning on November 5 to be the best possible servant for the new boss you are going to get January 21?

General PETRAEUS. Congressman, I can only serve one boss at a time, and I can only execute one policy at a time. I am sworn to the concept of civilian control of the military. I fully support it. And we can—you know, we execute the mission that we have at that time.

Now, as a transition approaches, obviously there is going to be back and forth to facilitate and to try to get inside the head, I would assume, and not me, this will be the secretary of defense, the chairman of the joint chiefs thinking their way through various contingencies, and again at some point there will be contingency planning directed, and obviously we would carry out the direction of the contingency planning.

Mr. SHERMAN. So you would expect to get contingency plans in a variety of different natures, some of them consistent with the incoming President as well?

General PETRAEUS. Very, very hypothetical on this. I am actually very uncomfortable, candidly, with where the conversation is going. As a military man, again, who subscribes to civilian control—

Mr. SHERMAN. I would hope that you would put yourself in a position to follow a new President but I have—

General PETRAEUS. That is exactly right.

Chairman BERMAN [continuing]. One more question for Ambassador Crocker and limited time.

General PETRAEUS. Okay. Yes, sir.

Mr. SHERMAN. We have a huge national budget deficit. The Iraqis are selling their oil for over \$100 a barrel, and they have a \$30 billion surplus. We are providing for their security with our troops and lives, and we are paying for their security forces. In fact, you have asked us to appropriate another \$2.5 billion for the Iraqi Security Forces Fund, and billions for Iraqi reconstruction.

Iraq has that \$20–30 billion surplus. They have got tens of billions of dollars of currency reserve, and they could be borrowing hundreds of billions of dollars if the Saudis carried out their promise to renounce the debt that Saddam incurred to them.

Why are we paying everything that we are paying? Why are you not demanding that the Saudis follow through with their promise and that the Iraqis spend their reserves?

Chairman BERMAN. I am sorry, but the time of the gentleman has expired. The gentleman from California, Mr. Rohrabacher.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Push the button here. Yes, I will follow up with that specific question.

Mr. SHERMAN. Great.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Why are they not paying more? And let me invite my colleagues to join me when tomorrow I drop a piece of legislation that would require that any status of forces agreement

with Iraq include a provision that the Iraqi Government will be paying for the cost of that security that we are providing them, and what is your reaction to that.

As you can hear today, if there is anything that is emerging it is the United States Government and the people of the United States have paid an awful price. It is time for the Iraqis to pay that price for their own protection.

Ambassador CROCKER. Congressman, I have certainly in the course of the last 2 days had that message emphasized loud and clear. I was aware of the—

Mr. ROHRABACHER. And would you make that part of the status of forces agreement so that if there is an agreement with Iraqi Government, they know that they are going to be obligated to pay the expenses rather than have the hard-pressed American taxpayers to pay for this?

Ambassador CROCKER. That is something we would have to consult on within the interagency, consider—

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Let me make the suggestion that the next time we ask the question the answer is yes after you have checked on this. And if not, there is going to be trouble on the Republican side as well as the Democratic side of getting support for an ongoing conflict. So I would invite my colleagues to join me in that legislation which I will drop tomorrow.

General, is it fair to say that there have been thousands of radical Islamic extremist terrorists who have been killed in Iraq since our troops went in there, non-Iraqis?

General PETRAEUS. It probably is thousands certainly of foreign fighters. I think we estimate at this time there is somewhere between 50 and 70 or so that come in a month, typically through Syria. At one time it was probably as high as 100, perhaps to 120.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Okay. So over these years that we have been fighting there, perhaps as many as 1,000 foreign fighters, terrorists have come in—this is what al-Qaeda is supposed to be all about.

Let me note that I would like to thank you and the troops for killing as many of them as you were able to kill because they now are not alive to come here and kill my family, and kill the families of those of us who are sitting here and the American people. That is a mission accomplished that we are grateful for.

In terms of getting the whole mission accomplished and getting us out of there, it seems to me what we are talking about is we need to—the Iraqis need to step up both financially and militarily, also perhaps we could use some help from other countries.

I understand Kosovo and Albania, in gratitude to our help in achieving peace and stability there, they are willing to send more troops. I would hope that we are searching out all the alternatives for having more people come in to help carry the burden, and I will ask the diplomat that. Is there any chance of that happening?

Ambassador CROCKER. There is an ongoing effort to seek out additional coalition partners to look for additional sources of troops, and indeed General Petraeus is more qualified to speak on this.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. America does not mind leading the way, but we do mind it if we are carrying the entire load whether it is the commitment of treasury, commitment of blood. The American people deserve to be taken into consideration and cannot be taken for

granted by everybody else in the world, and that is why I think we sent the wrong message that we will carry that burden no matter what in the future. It is time for the Iraqi people to step up not only in terms of financially, but in terms of their own personnel and taking care of their needs, and it is time for other people in the world to quit relying on Uncle Sam to carry the whole load, and I think, General Petraeus, we are all behind you. We are grateful to you and our diplomats who have been trying to do—you have been doing this for us, for the American people, but the American people cannot carry this load forever. So we are looking forward to a time when someone else can pick up some of it.

General PETRAEUS. Congressman, it is important to note, as I mentioned I think in my statement, that Iraqi security force members' losses are typically about three times our losses, and interestingly, the Sons of Iraq losses, again out of their 91,000 or so, are also 2.5 to three times our losses in addition.

So Iraqis are very much stepping up to the plate in that regard, and they are certainly giving their lives for their country as well.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Thank you.

Chairman BERMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired. The gentleman from Florida, Mr. Wexler, for 5 minutes.

Mr. WEXLER. Thank you.

General Petraeus, last week in anticipation of this hearing I sent an urgent e-mail asking my constituents and other Americans if they were serving on this committee, what is the one question they would pose to you. There was an extraordinary response with more than 5,000 questions submitted.

These e-mails and phone calls expressed deeply held frustrations about the war in Iraq, and reflect the concerns of millions across the nation who feel their opinions and concerns are cast aside by the Bush administration. I want to thank everyone who responded and submitted a question for today's hearing.

While many of the respondents rightfully highlighted the bravery of our troops, the majority of the e-mails expressed a strong desire to see withdrawal of American soldiers from Iraq, and an end to this 5-year war that has cost our Nation so dearly. Most of the questions boiled down to this: General, we often hear President Bush and Senator McCain say we must win in Iraq. What is the definition of winning? What would a military victory look like that was sufficient enough to allow us to begin leaving?

Then in a horrific turn of events, two of my constituents, Ester and Len Wolfer of Boca Raton, Florida, learned that this past Sunday their son had been killed for this war. Major Stuart Wolfer was a 36-year-old reservist on his second tour. He was married with three young children ages 5, 3 and 20 months. His family was relieved that he was in the Green Zone for they hoped he would be safe there. He was not.

I spoke to Mr. Wolfer yesterday, last night, who asked me to ask you simply, For what? For what had he lost his son?

So allow me to combine, if you will, the questions from the people that responded to me and Mr. Wolfer. What has all this been for? And please, respectfully, do not tell us, as you told Senator Warner yesterday, to remove a brutal dictator. That is not good enough. There are many dictators in the world. For what did Stuart Wolfer

and the other 4,024 sons and daughters die for, and how will we define victory so that we can bring this never ending war to a close?

And if I will, when Mr. Burton asks for a definition of what is failure, we get a litany of items, but when Mr. Ackerman asks what is the definition of victory, we get little. Please tell us, General, what is winning?

General PETRAEUS. Well, first of all, Congressman, let me tell you that what we are fighting for is national interests. It is interests that, as I stated, have to do with al-Qaeda, a sworn enemy of the United States and the free world. It has to do with the possible spread of sectarian conflict in Iraq, a conflict that had engulfed that country and had it on the brink of civil war. It has to do with regional stability of a region that is of critical importance to the global economy, and it has to do with certainly the influence of Iran, another obviously very important element in that region.

In terms of what it is that we are trying to achieve, I think simply it is a country that is at peace with itself and its neighbors. It is a country that can defend itself, that has a government that is reasonably representative, and broadly responsive to its citizens, and a country that is involved in and engaged in again the global economy.

Ambassador Crocker and I, for what it is worth, have typically seen ourselves as minimalists. We are not after the Holy Grail in Iraq. We are not after Jeffersonian democracy. We are after conditions that would allow our soldiers to disengage and that is, in fact, what we are doing as we achieve progress, as we have with the surge, and that is what is indeed allowing us to withdraw the surge forces—again, over one-quarter of our ground combat power, five of 20 brigade combat teams, plus to marine battalions in the Marine Expeditionary Unit—by the end of July.

Mr. WEXLER. Thank you.

Chairman BERMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired. The bells mean a recess. May they recess for the next 2 hours—not us—the floor.

The gentleman from California, Mr. Royce is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ROYCE. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and through you two gentlemen I would just like to express my gratitude to the men and women of the United States Armed Forces who have served so valiantly in Iraq and in Afghanistan. They deserve our deep appreciation and enduring support.

General Petraeus, there was a recent piece on the Christian Science Monitor that highlighted the withdraw from public life of the Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani who had all but remained silent on the recent violence of Basra, and this, of course, is in pretty stark contrast to his previous action back in August 2004, when he helped broker the cease fire between the Iraqi Government and cleric, Muqtada al-Sadr.

I was going to ask, in your opinion, does Sistani's lessening clout open the door for more radical clerics like Sadr to fill the vacuum?

I have heard that Sadr is on the fast track to becoming an ayatollah, and that, I presume, would give him greater power and

standing in his community, and I wanted to ask you about that. Thank you, General.

General PETRAEUS. First of all, Congressman, in fact, the Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani has actually just made a statement, I think it was yesterday or the day before, that weapons should only be in the hands of legitimate Iraqi security forces. So he has very much retained his influence, but he exercises it in the tradition that is called the quietest tradition rather than say the tradition in which clerics exercise political power in Iran where there is a much more direct involvement in the government and its functions.

There are a variety of rumors about what Muqtada al-Sadr is doing in Iran. He certainly apparently is undertaking religious studies to try to get to the next step, which is not by any means ayatollah, and how long that will take, again there is some debate over this, whether there is a special fast track or not.

Regardless of that, he has a name that is greatly respected in Iraqi society, the "Martyr Sadr," his father and uncle. He is the face of a movement that is very important to the Iraqi people. Traditionally was a nationalist movement, stayed in Iraq actually during the time of Saddam when others went outside the country, and a movement that is dedicated to serving the poor and down-trodden—

Mr. ROYCE. Right.

General PETRAEUS [continuing]. Of the Iraqi people. And so it is a movement that in a sense has to be reckoned with. It has to be. It cannot be discounted, and it is a movement that has to be incorporated into the political process and so forth—

Mr. ROYCE. Well, I thank you for your explanation, especially on his recent comment, I had not heard that, and I am encouraged by that.

Let me ask Ambassador Crocker, because you testified yesterday that Iran is pursuing a Lebanonization strategy by backing militias and other proxy groups in Iraq. That is a pretty striking statement given what Lebanon has done in terms of the divisions it has created, that it is phased as a result of Hezbollah as an arm of Iran.

It is also significant given that you saw Lebanon and Iraqi machinations up close when you were stationed there back in the eighties, and can you compare the Iranian actions you are seeing in Iraq today with what you saw back in Lebanon when you were stationed there?

Ambassador CROCKER. There are similarities and there are differences. The similarities are, again, Iranian support for extremist militia elements that they to a large extent control. There are also differences. One of them has been a substantial Iraqi rejection of these militia influences. That is what prompted the Sadr declaration of a freeze on military actions in August, and the recent fighting in Basra and Baghdad has also triggered again a broad popular rejection.

There is a history between Iraq and Iran. They fought an 8-year bitter civil war, and it puts limits, I think, on Iran's influence in Iraq that they perhaps do not have in Lebanon.

Mr. ROYCE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman BERMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired. The gentleman from American Samoa, Mr. Faleomavaega.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Chairman, for the record I want to associate myself with your opening statement and your sentiments and concerns concerning the issue that we are now debating.

General Petraeus, I received a call yesterday that one of my Samoan soldiers while leading his platoon patrolling a certain area in Baghdad was hit by an IED and was critically wounded and was immediately transferred from Iraq to Germany, and now after three serious operations he is now at Walter Reed Hospital. And this morning as I speak Sergeant First Class Sene Polu, a proud Samoan warrior from American Samoa is going through two additional serious operations.

Last night I visited Sergeant Polu and his family at Walter Reed Hospital, and accompanying me was a relative of mine whom I believe served with you in Iraq. He is Command Sergeant Major Iuni Savusa of U.S. Army Europe, and he sends his personal regards to you and to your family.

General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker, we have all been sworn to defend the constitution, to support and defend the constitution. Our duties and responsibilities in serving the American people come under the authority of the sacred document. Under our constitution, the power to declare war is vested in the Congress, not the President of the United States even though he is the commander in chief of all of our armed forces.

Moreover, under the constitution, the authority to establish an army and a navy is vested in the Congress, not the President.

We also believe and accept the unique concept that our military leaders and soldiers, sailors, marines and airmen come under civilian authority. The decisions and policies that have unleashed the tremendous powers of our military forces to wage war against Saddam Hussein came from Congress and the White House, and not by our military commanders. And yet when our military officers are given the opportunity to express their professional judgments as soldiers, they are condemned, criticized, vilified, and scapegoated by civilian authority.

A classic example of this, General Petraeus, is General Eric Shinseki, whose professional opinion on force structure requirements is a classic example of how badly we have conducted this war. Doing it on the cheap, and now after 5 years of mismanagement and bad decisions again from civilian authority, at the cost now of about \$500 billion, who puts a check on our civilian authority?

General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker, we have accomplished our military mission by defeating Saddam Hussein who supposedly had nuclear weapons, supposedly an imminent danger and posed a serious risk to the defense of our Nation, and of course, we all know he did not have nuclear weapons.

We have just now built a \$900-million Embassy in Baghdad to establish our diplomatic presence with a country that has a population of 25 million people, and going less because of all the—some 2–3 million refugees coming out of Iraq alone. Is not this matter of a political solution that should now be left to the Sunnis, the Kurds and the Shiites, who by the way make up 60 percent of the country's population?

I would respectfully request your response to that, Ambassador Crocker, and by the way I also want to pay my deepest respect for the tremendous service that you have given to our country.

Ambassador CROCKER. Thank you, sir.

It is certainly the case, in my view, that ultimately solutions in Iraq have to be political solutions. This cannot be a question of a military victory. There have to be political agreements, but it is also very much the case, in my view, that our current engagement is necessary to create and sustain the conditions in which Iraqis can work their way through to sustainable stability. And as I said in my statement, this is what they are doing at both local levels and at national levels.

It will be a difficult process and it will take time, but it is my judgment that the Iraqis are moving this process in the right direction.

Chairman BERMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired. The gentleman from Colorado, Mr. Tancredo.

Mr. TANCREDO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have no speeches to make here, just a few questions, and I will make them brief, and would hope for the same in terms of the responses.

First of all, also thank you and congratulations, General, on the apparent success of the strategy that we referred to as the surge, and thank you, Ambassador, for your efforts.

A couple of things. First of all, in January of last year, President Bush told us all in an address to the nation that "The Iraqi Government would take responsibility for security in all of Iraq's provinces by November 2007." Of course, that has not happened. I am just wondering whether, General Petraeus, you have any idea of why he made that statement and especially such a definitive statement, all Iraqi provinces will be under control of the Iraqi Government is what he said. Why would he say a thing like that, and that is one of the reasons why we get the kind of confusion around here that you see? That is number one.

Number two, there have been widespread reports about the development of gangs inside the military in Iraq, inside our military, you know, MS-13 graffiti appearing in Baghdad as weird as this sounds, but it was reported on national news. To what extent is this truly a problem? If it is a problem of a significant nature, to what do you attribute this?

Apparently some of these people are coming back into the United States after having been trained by our own military, of course, and using military tactics in order to advance their own lawless activities here.

And for Ambassador Crocker, there is a very specific law, U.S. Code 1253, that says that you may not—you may not give visas to any country that refuses to accept their nationals back who have committed some crime in the United States. Iraq is one of the countries that refuses to accept their nationals back who have committed crimes here. When we try to deport them, they are not citizens of the United States, we try to deport them. Iraq refuses to accept them. There is a law that says you must—it does not say you may—it says you must in fact stop giving visas to that country, any country that does this.

Can you tell me why you are not following the law, when you will begin to follow the law if you have any anticipation of doing it?

Those three things, and I would appreciate the answers as briefly as possible.

General PETRAEUS. Congressman, first of all, I am not aware of a problem with gangs, and that is one that I will have to check on. [The information referred to follows:]

WRITTEN RESPONSE RECEIVED FROM GENERAL DAVID H. PETRAEUS TO QUESTION
ASKED DURING THE HEARING BY THE HONORABLE THOMAS G. TANCREDO

A review of Provost Marshall records (which record all incidents) throughout Iraq revealed no reports of gang-related incidents or activity, including activities by MS-13. However, leader emphasis on this potential issue and watchfulness for any signs of its emergence are important. Leaders throughout the chain of command are aware that gang activity is prohibited by military regulations and of the need to report such activity should it occur.

General PETRAEUS. Second, I do not know why the statement was made that you quote. Presumably it was because of a projection that was provided to him. I believe that was before the time that I was the multinational force of Iraq commander.

If I could just take the opportunity to thank Congressman for conveying the message from Command Sergeant Major Savusa who is a great noncommissioned officer. I personally awarded him the Bronze Star for valor for an action when we were ambushed in the fight to Baghdad outside the Battle of Hila.

Ambassador CROCKER. Congressman, I am just not aware of this particular instance or instances. Obviously, I would be very grateful if I could get the details from you or our staff, and obviously we will look into it.

Mr. TANCREDO. Mr. Ambassador, we have written, and I have asked the Secretary of State about this question at least three times. We have written. We will continue to do so. I will provide you with more information and would appreciate a definitive answer to the question.

Mr. Manual Maranda, who is an employee of the Office of Legislative State Craft in the U.S. Embassy, came out with a list of charges. I am sure you are aware of them, charges that despite the excellent progress of the military, he believes that the State Department's efforts have been poorly managed, characterize them as willfully negligent, if not criminal. What are your responses to Mr. Maranda's allegations?

Ambassador CROCKER. These are Mr. Maranda's personal views to which he is entitled. I absolutely do not agree with them. I think that the civilians out in Iraq, both the State Department and other agencies, are doing extremely good work under very difficult circumstances, both in Baghdad and out in our now 25 Provincial Reconstruction Teams working at the local levels.

Mr. TANCREDO. Thank you, Mr. Ambassador. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman BERMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired. The gentleman from New York, Mr. Engel, for 5 minutes.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Gentlemen, welcome to the committee. As you know, I spent Christmas in Iraq, and had the opportunity to speak with both of

you, and I want to thank both of you for the service you provide to our country. What you are getting, obviously, is a sense of a lot of frustration from all of us, from many of us, from me certainly, and others as well.

When you testified, both of you, before our committee last September, you both talked about political benchmarks of the Iraqi Government, and almost served as a framework for what you were saying to us. The Iraqi Government has obviously been unable to achieve all of that.

We talk about Iran and we can all agree, I do not think we disagree, Iran is the biggest threat to the region right now. To me, the worst part of the war in Iraq, besides the lives lost and the money it cost, is the fact that because of our invasion we have actually given Iran the upper hand in the region.

Maliki, as much as we try to make him to be a democratic figure, is propped up in Parliament by the pro-Iranian factions. When we are talking about trying to broker things like with the Sadr group, it seems that Iran again has the upper hand.

General, you said, and I agree with you, that Iran is funding, training, arming, and protecting the insurgents. They are obviously doing that.

Ambassador Crocker, you said that you want to look at conditions rather than timelines. You also said that U.S. support should not be open-ended. The frustration with us is it seems like the support is open-ended, and every time we say that we want the Iraqis to do this, and that is why we have the surge, and we want to allow them to be able to do things, 6 months later, 8 months later when they have not achieved that, we sort of change the rules. We say, well, you know, we are here for another reason.

So please address the frustration that you hear. Nobody questions the job that you are both doing, certainly not me. You have a very difficult situation, but we as Members of Congress are just frustrated. We do not want an open-ended war. We want the war to end. We do not see the goals that we say we are setting achievable, and how can we know that 6 months from now, a year from now, 5 years from now we are not going to be here saying the same thing, and moving the goalpost a little bit and find that the Iraqi Government has not achieve any of the things that we need?

Ambassador CROCKER. Congressman, first, I have been very careful during my tenure in Iraq, I have not said in X months Y will be achieved. I have been very careful about that. That said, there are achievements with respect to the benchmark legislation, the laws that I cited in my statement that were passed in the first few weeks of this year or the first 2 months of this year constitute achievement of benchmarks both de-Ba'athification reform, amnesty, provincial powers, the Provincial Powers Law which set a date for elections, these are all benchmarks.

I have said previously that I think there is a risk of focusing too much attention on the benchmarks as an absolute measure of success or failure. I think you could get all the benchmarks and still not have sustainable security in Iraq.

Mr. ENGEL. But you can understand, and I would like the General to answer, the frustration that we have. Both of you used the term that what is happening in Iraq is fragile and reversible. In

fact, I would characterize both of your testimony last September as much more upbeat than your testimony now. Your testimony now is sober. It is not as upbeat as it was.

So, General, again, we are all frustrated. We want the war to end. We want it to end responsibly, and yet it seems to be never ending.

General PETRAEUS. Congressman, with respect, I believe the testimony in September was sober and forthright as well, and what we have tried to do today is to be forthright. That is why we have stated the facts as we see them and the way—

Chairman BERMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired. And the gentleman from Texas, Mr. Paul.

Mr. PAUL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I would like unanimous consent to submit a written statement for the record.

Mr. Chairman, I want to submit several questions to the panel, and there will not be enough time to answer these, but I want these questions to be on the record.

First, I would like to ask, why should the American people continue to support a war that was justified by false information since Saddam Hussein never aggressed [sic] against the United States, Iraq had nothing to do with 9/11, and Iraq had no weapons of mass destruction?

It is said that one must continue the war because we have already sacrificed so much, but what is moral about demanding even more needless sacrifice of American lives merely to save face with the mistake of invading and occupying Iraq?

Doesn't it seem awfully strange that the Iraqi Government we support is an ally of the Iranians, who are our declared enemies?

Are we not now supporting the Iranians by propping up their allies in Iraq? If Maliki is our ally, and he has diplomatic relations with Ahmadinejad, why can't we? Why must we continue to provoke Iran, just looking for an excuse to bomb that country? Does our policy in Iraq not guarantee chaos in this region for years to come?

It is estimated that up to 2,000 Iraqi soldiers refused to fight against al-Sadr's militia. Why should we not expect many of the 80,000 Sunnis we have recently armed to someday turn their weapons against us since they, as well as the Mahdi Army, detest any and all foreign occupation?

Is it not true that our ally, Maliki, broke the cease fire declared by al-Sadr by initiating the recent violence? Is it not true that the current cease fire was brokered by the Iranians, who also condemned the attacks on the Green Zone? How can we blame all of the violence on the Iranians?

Is it not true that with the recent surge in violence in Iraq that the March attacks are now back at the same level as they were in 2005? Does Iran not have a greater justification to be involved in neighboring Iraq than we do since it is 6,000 miles from our shores? If China or Russia were occupying Mexico, how would we react?

Since no one can define "winning the war," just who do we expect to surrender? Does this not mean that this war will be endless since our political leaders will not end it; that is, until we go broke, and maybe that is not far off?

I do have one question, even though there is not enough time to get all of those questions answered, but I do have one question I do believe there is enough time to answer, and probably rather briefly. In your estimation, does the administration have the authority to bomb Iran without further congressional approval?

General PETRAEUS. Congressman, I am the commander for Iraq, and I do not know the answer to that question, and it is not within my purview.

Ambassador CROCKER. Congressman, nor is it in mine. My job is Iraq. I am just not competent to pronounce on an issue like that.

Mr. PAUL. Well, it just seems to me that we could not get an answer like no. It seems pretty obvious that, under our Constitution, that is the way it works. We are supposed to confer with the Congress, and it would be spreading the war. We know how the war spread in Vietnam without congressional approval and what that led to.

So it seems to me that to not say, no, the administration does not have authority to bomb another country without getting authority from the Congress, so it disturbs me to no end that we cannot get a flat-out "no" on this question, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Chairman BERMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired. His entire remarks are part of the record, and the gentleman from Massachusetts, Mr. Delahunt.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Yes, Ambassador Clark, I was extremely concerned about your response to a question that was posed to you yesterday by Senator Clinton. Specifically, when she asked you whether the long-term agreements between the United States and Iraq, which I would note are being negotiated with minimal consultation with the United States Congress, when she asked you whether it would be submitted to the Iraqi Parliament, you said that it was unclear whether they would bring it to a vote or whether they would simply read it to the members of the Iraqi Parliament.

I am sure you are aware, or maybe you are not, but the Iraqi Government has already committed to bringing this agreement before the Iraqi Parliament. This is what the Iraqi Foreign Minister had to say in a press conference with Secretary of State, Ms. Rice, on January 18, 2008, and I am quoting, "The final decision will rest with the representatives of Iraq, the Iraqi Council of Representatives." That is the formal name of their Parliament.

Furthermore, according to the Iraqi Constitution, international agreements must be approved by a two-thirds vote of the Iraqi Parliament. In the so-called "Declaration of Principles," which was signed by President Bush and Prime Minister Maliki last November, the United States and Iraqi Governments committed to, and I am quoting from the declaration, "respecting and upholding the Constitution as the expression of the will of the Iraqi people and standing against any attempt to impede, suspend, or violate it."

If the Maliki government bypasses the Iraqi Parliament and approves this agreement unilaterally, thus violating the Iraqi Constitution, will the Bush administration respect the commitment it made in the Declaration of Principles and reject any agreement? Because from this particular perch, our acquiescence, in such a

clear violation of the Iraq Constitution, would further erode our credibility not just in Iraq but elsewhere.

So if you could give me an answer to that after I pose this question to you. It is a request, really. I would like you to convey to the Iraqi Parliament, or Council of Representatives, in the Iraqi Executive Branch, the so-called "Council of Ministers," that should the United Nations' mandate be allowed to expire at the end of this year, it is the view of many of us in Congress, with support from constitutional scholars, that the continued use of force in Iraq by U.N. armed forces will require authorization by the United States Congress.

Now, the administration position is different, but many of us in Congress feel vigorously and profoundly that, as one of my colleagues earlier read, "The power and the authority has to come from the U.S. Congress."

The administration claims that the use of force against Iraq has two prongs: One to address the threat posed by the government of Saddam Hussein and one to enforce relevant United Nations resolutions.

The first prong is gone, but the administration continues to claim that it is in effect because of an endless threat in Iraq. With this proposal, the second prong would disappear with the U.N. mandate.

So I am just simply making a request. I think, to be fair to the Iraqi Government, both the legislative branch, as well as the Council of Ministers, please inform them that there are strong feelings here in the United States that once, in this Congress, in this institution, that once that mandate expires, then it is this Government, the next administration has to come back to get authorization. Could you please convey that to both Prime Minister Maliki and to the speaker of the Council of Representatives?

Ambassador CROCKER. I can certainly do that, sir, but I would imagine that they have already heard you.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I hope they have. Can you answer my first question, then, which is—

Ambassador CROCKER. Yes, sir. Very quickly, the Iraqi Government will determine its own procedures, and I am sure they will do so with full respect for their Constitution.

Chairman BERMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired, and the gentleman from Arizona, Mr. Flake, is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FLAKE. Thank you, Chairman, and I thank the witnesses, General and Ambassador. Thank you for your distinguished service.

I, myself, was more than somewhat skeptical when the surge plan was presented that we would see the type of gains that we have seen, and I think a lot of it is certainly due to your diligence and the diligence, certainly, of our troops.

I do have concerns for the long term, and I want to associate myself with the comments made by Mr. Ackerman. I still am, after hearing testimony and hearing testimony before other bodies and hearing the questions here, I still have a hard time seeing the big picture and what constitutes success. That is not just one side of

the aisle with those kinds of concerns. Many on this side of the aisle have that as well.

I do not expect that you can say any more than you have said, but just to let you know that is a concern, the long term, in terms of what constitutes success. I think that there is a sincere effort, I know, in this body, to exercise our Article I authority, that we do have the power of the purse, and we desperately want to see success, but a lot of us are concerned that we do not see the framework that can be actually measured. I am still waiting for that, and if you have any thoughts on that, I would appreciate hearing them. If not, I will pass it on to the next questioner.

Ambassador CROCKER. It is a very valid question, Congressman. There is not going to be, in my view, a single moment when you have success border to border in Iraq. It is going to be a process, and the fact that we are now in the process of redeploying surge forces back home because conditions permit it, I would term as a success.

As I said earlier, I think that is how this will proceed, that it will be area by area and issue by issue that gradually moves us from an active role in combat in different places, eventually into overwatch and eventually into more conventional roles, such as assisting with training of Iraqi forces. But it is going to be an incremental process over time, not a single, dazzling moment.

Mr. FLAKE. I yield back.

Chairman BERMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired, and the gentleman from Missouri, Mr. Carnahan, is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CARNAHAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I want to thank the gentlemen here before us today for their service.

I want to really just acknowledge what I am sure you have heard over the last 2 days, and that is a mounting backlash to the Iraqis not standing up sufficiently—militarily, politically, and especially financially—the cost of this war, in human terms, to our reputation and standing in the world, to our readiness, as Chairman Skelton has outlined eloquently; to our resources being diverted from our struggling economy and needs at home; and from the greater al-Qaeda threat to the United States in Afghanistan.

As Ambassador Crocker acknowledged to Senator Biden yesterday, this war was sold on assurances that oil revenues would be used to help fund reconstruction of what is one of the most oil-rich nations in the world. During our last hearing, there were many stories about waste and mismanagement and corruption in terms of use of U.S. funds.

Now we see the growing surplus in the Iraqi Government that, frankly, we are paying for twice. We are paying in our tax funds, and we are paying at the pump.

There was a bipartisan letter from Senators Levin and Warner asking the GAO why United States taxpayer money is being overwhelmingly used to fund Iraqi reconstruction. What specific actions, gentlemen, are being taken to use the oil-rich Iraq Government's surplus to pay for the war and reconstruction costs?

Ambassador CROCKER. Sir, as I said earlier, we are getting out of the bricks-and-mortar construction business. We have been clear,

and the Iraqis themselves have been clear, that construction/reconstruction going forward is an Iraqi responsibility.

That is best shown, I think, through decisions that the government has taken just in the last few days to provide \$350 million, for example—this was a decision yesterday—for reconstruction in Basra in Mosul, and in parts of Baghdad that have been affected by the recent violence.

They are also talking about a separate \$5 billion reconstruction fund to concentrate on key areas, such as health and education. This will all be their money.

Mr. CARNAHAN. Let me interrupt, Ambassador. Is this an issue of the Iraqis just being overly dependent on us, using our budget as a crutch, or are there other difficulties with them really dipping into their own vast resources to fund what is going on there?

Ambassador CROCKER. One of the challenges they have faced is simple capacity, just the ability to execute. We saw this, for example, in our 2006 budget. They only managed to actually execute something like 22 percent of their capital budget. They just, you know, could not spend the money in a productive way. That percentage almost tripled in 2007 to about 63 percent, still, obviously, short of ideal. But they are developing a capacity not only to plan how they want to spend their money but then to actually implement that, but it has been an incremental process.

Mr. CARNAHAN. Thank you, both. I yield back.

Chairman BERMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired. The gentleman from Indiana, Mr. Pence, is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PENCE. Thank you, Chairman. I want to add my greetings and gratitude to both of these great public servants on behalf of the people of eastern Indiana. Your leadership, as a soldier and diplomat, has been exceptional, and you represent the very finest of this country, and I am grateful for your service.

Thank you for your hospitality in my two most recent trips to Iraq, and I am pleased to extend that hospitality to Capitol Hill for you all.

The first question: Ambassador Crocker, Iran is in the news today. They recently announced the installation of some 6,000 new centrifuges for their allegedly peaceful nuclear program. I was provoked by a question of a colleague in the Senate yesterday. Senator Barack Obama of Illinois told you we needed “a diplomatic surge that includes Iran.” Senator Obama also said, “We should be talking to them as well.”

Ambassador Crocker, I am under the impression we have been talking to Iran, particularly in 2007. I am aware of several meetings that you, as the American Ambassador to Iraq, have had with your counterpart from Iran. Am I right in understanding, are you talking to Iran? Are we engaged in a dialogue with Iran?

Ambassador CROCKER. You are correct, Congressman, that we have had discussions on security in Iraq with the Iranians on three occasions. These are trilateral discussions. The Iraqis are in the room as well, but it is our one authorized—

Mr. PENCE. I am remembering—forgive me for interrupting—I am remembering a 4-hour meeting perhaps at the home of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki. Very serious issues were discussed with your counterpart from Iran.

Ambassador CROCKER. That is correct, and we have also had talks at an experts' level. The Iraqis, a few days ago, announced that they would like to see to arrange another round of these talks. We have said that if that is what Iraq is requesting, we are prepared to sit down.

Mr. PENCE. The Secretary of State and the administration have said, We are talking to Iran. We are willing to continue to talk to Iran.

Ambassador CROCKER. Yes, sir, on the issue of security in Iraq.

Mr. PENCE. Security in Iraq, precisely. Very quickly, have those talks produced any results relative to Iran's direct involvement in violence against United States troops within Iraq or enmity toward Israel or their nuclear weapons program? Any concessions whatsoever from Iran?

Ambassador CROCKER. To be perfectly frank, Congressman, thus far, I have seen no concrete results as a result of these discussions.

Mr. PENCE. Very good. General Petraeus, I want you to know, in my visits to Iraq over the last year, and from the evidence you have presented here today, it is clear to me and to many of us in this Congress and across the country, the surge is working. The strategy that you brought to this theater of combat has achieved significant military progress, and I commend you for it.

You have made repeated references to the fragile nature of our success. I recognize that. I accept that it is not irreversible, but it has been substantial and dramatic progress.

In the minute-and-a-half left remaining, let me ask you, Other than the American soldier and their extraordinary professionalism, what accounts for the extraordinary progress in the last 15 months in Iraq, in the expansion of security and stability following the advent of the surge?

General PETRAEUS. Well, as I mentioned, Congressman, it was also the Iraqi surge, the increase of their armed forces and police forces of over 100,000; the increase in the "Sons of Iraq" additional security forces, if you will, at the local level; and I think something that really has to be highlighted again and again, and that is the rejection by more and more and more Sunni-Arab communities of al-Qaeda Iraq.

That is a very significant action. It is important that it took place, of course, in the heart of the Arab world. I would like to think that that is something that others could take a lesson from as well. Indeed, frankly, there are other countries in the region that have also become mightily concerned about the threat of that form of extremism and have taken a number of different actions to moderate various elements in their societies that produce the kind of feeling that can support al-Qaeda and its affiliates.

Mr. PENCE. Thank you, both. Thank you, Chairman.

Chairman BERMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired. The gentlewoman from California, Ms. Woolsey.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Gentlemen, it is not easy to get two Members to agree on anything up here, as I am sure you see. It is even rarer when 92 Members come together and agree on something, and that is exactly what has happened. Ninety-two Members of this House, including Foreign Affairs Committee members, Congresswoman Lee, Chairman Payne, Chairman Delahunt, Representative Meeks,

Vice Chair Watson, Representative Sheila Jackson Lee, Representative Hinojosa, Representative Linda Sánchez, myself, Representative Scott, and my colleague across the aisle, Representative Paul; we have all gone on record opposed to this open-ended occupation.

We signed our names to a letter to the President stating that we will only support appropriating additional funds for United States military operations in Iraq during Fiscal Year 2008 and beyond for the protection and safe redeployment of our troops out of Iraq before President Bush leaves office.

I would like to ask, Mr. Chairman, unanimous consent that the letter be included in the record. Unanimous consent.

Chairman BERMAN. Without objection.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Thank you.

[The information referred to follows:]

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

July 20, 2007

The Honorable George W. Bush
President
United States of America
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

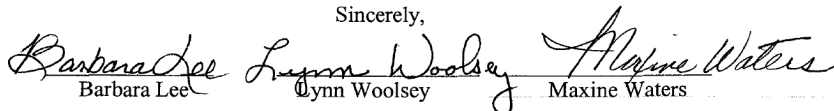
Dear Mr. President:

We are writing to inform you that we will only support appropriating additional funds for U.S. military operations in Iraq during Fiscal Year 2008 and beyond for the protection and safe redeployment of our troops out of Iraq before you leave office.

More than 3,600 of our brave soldiers have died in Iraq. More than 26,000 have been seriously wounded. Hundreds of thousands of Iraqis have been killed or injured in the hostilities and more than 4 million have been displaced from their homes. Furthermore, this conflict has degenerated into a sectarian civil war and U.S. taxpayers have paid more than \$500 billion, despite assurances that you and your key advisors gave our nation at the time you ordered the invasion in March, 2003 that this military intervention would cost far less and be paid from Iraqi oil revenues.

We agree with a clear and growing majority of the American people who are opposed to continued, open-ended U.S. military operations in Iraq, and believe it is unwise and unacceptable for you to continue to unilaterally impose these staggering costs and the soaring debt on American taxpayers currently and for generations to come.

Sincerely,


Barbara Lee Lynn Woolsey Maxine Waters

CONGRESSIONAL SIGNATORIES (92)

U.S. Rep. Barbara Lee
U.S. Rep. Lynn Woolsey
U.S. Rep. Maxine Waters
U.S. Rep. Neil Abercrombie
U.S. Rep. Tammy Baldwin
U.S. Rep. Earl Blumenauer
U.S. Rep. Robert Brady
U.S. Rep. Corrine Brown
U.S. Rep. G. K. Butterfield
U.S. Rep. Lois Capps
U.S. Rep. Julia Carson
U.S. Rep. Donna Christensen
U.S. Rep. Yvette Clarke
U.S. Rep. William Lacy Clay
U.S. Rep. Emanuel Cleaver
U.S. Rep. Steve Cohen
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U.S. Rep. Maurice Hinchey
U.S. Rep. Ruben Hinojosa
U.S. Rep. Mazie Hirono
U.S. Rep. Paul Hodes
U.S. Rep. Rush Holt
U.S. Rep. Michael Honda
U.S. Rep. Jesse Jackson, Jr.
U.S. Rep. Hank Johnson
U.S. Rep. Stephanie Tubbs Jones
U.S. Rep. Marcy Kaptur
U.S. Rep. Dennis Kucinich
U.S. Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee
U.S. Rep. John Lewis
U.S. Rep. David Loebsack
U.S. Rep. Zoe Lofgren
U.S. Rep. Stephen Lynch
U.S. Rep. Carolyn Maloney
U.S. Rep. Ed Markey
U.S. Rep. Betty McCollum
U.S. Rep. Jim McDermott
U.S. Rep. James McGovern
U.S. Rep. Gregory Meeks
U.S. Rep. Gwen Moore
U.S. Rep. Jim Moran
U.S. Rep. Christopher Murphy
U.S. Rep. Jerrold Nadler
U.S. Rep. Grace Flores Napolitano
U.S. Rep. Richard Neal
U.S. Rep. Eleanor Holmes Norton
U.S. Rep. Jim Oberstar
U.S. Rep. John Olver
U.S. Rep. Frank Pallone Jr.
U.S. Rep. Ed Pastor
U.S. Rep. Donald Payne
U.S. Rep. Ron Paul
U.S. Rep. Charles Rangel
U.S. Rep. Steven R. Rothman
U.S. Rep. Bobby Rush
U.S. Rep. Linda Sanchez
U.S. Rep. Jan Schakowsky
U.S. Rep. Bobby Scott
U.S. Rep. David Scott
U.S. Rep. Louise Slaughter
U.S. Rep. Hilda Solis
U.S. Rep. Pete Stark
U.S. Rep. Ellen Tauscher
U.S. Rep. Bennie Thompson
U.S. Rep. Mike Thompson
U.S. Rep. John Tierney
U.S. Rep. Ed Towns
U.S. Rep. Nydia Velazquez
U.S. Rep. Diane Watson
U.S. Rep. Mel Watt
U.S. Rep. Henry Waxman
U.S. Rep. Anthony Weiner
U.S. Rep. Peter Welch
U.S. Rep. Albert Wynn

Ms. WOOLSEY. Gentlemen, polls show that up to 80 percent of the American public supports redeployment of our troops out of Iraq. When that statistic was presented with those staggering numbers, the Vice President's response was, "So?"

Well, I want to tell you, that "so" came from the same administration that got us into Iraq with misleading information in the first place, and I do not feel that that is where you are coming from. I want to believe that you have more respect for the American people than our Vice President.

So what we need to know, and I am absolutely certain that you have eventualities, you have contingencies, that you are truly waiting for conditions on the ground to tell us when we are going to come and go because you have to be planning. So how do you plan? How do you base the rate that troops can safely be redeployed? By the month? By the quarter? What funding stream would be necessary to accomplish this?

We have no idea. We cannot get that information here in the Congress. What will it cost to bring our troops home because we are going to have to pay for that as well? How long would it take for a complete troops redeployment?

General PETRAEUS. Congressman, as I explained earlier, the process of determining how rapidly we can bring forces home is really the process that we exercised when we determined the pace and also the location, really, of where we could reduce forces to bring down the surge forces: The five-brigade combat teams, two Marine battalions, and the Marine Expeditionary Unit.

What we have done in those cases is we look at the security and the local governance conditions in an area to determine where we can thin out our forces and thereby redeploy additional elements. Obviously, we look at the enemy situation in the area. We look at the ability of Iraqi forces to deal with the threats that are present. That is what we have been doing. That is how we rework the battlefield geometry to draw down the surge forces.

Ms. WOOLSEY. General, you have told us this, so I have heard it, and we have all heard this. You must be basing it on some numbers of what it would take to be safe in bringing our troops home, what it is going to cost to bring our troops home, what it will cost to be involved in reconciliation and capacity building within Iraq.

Where do we get those numbers? Is it available to the public?

General PETRAEUS. It is not arithmetic, Congresswoman. As I mentioned yesterday, this is more akin to calculus than it is to arithmetic. It is more akin to the political-military calculus that the Ambassador described earlier, I think, in this hearing today, and it is the battlefield geometry. What we are trying to do is determine how quickly we can bring our forces—again, we very much share the frustration.

Those of us who have been at this for a long time obviously want the war to end as much as anybody else, perhaps maybe more. It is sometimes said that the biggest piece activists are those who, of course, are actually downrange, risking it all.

What we want to do is come home the right way without jeopardizing the gains we have fought to achieve and achieving the important national interests that we have.

Chairman BERMAN. The time of the gentlewoman has expired. The gentleman from South Carolina, Mr. Wilson.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much, General and Ambassador, for your service. I have had the privilege of working with both of you over the years, from Mosul to Baghdad, from Islamabad to Baghdad, and every time I have been so impressed by your leadership, and we are very grateful. We are also grateful for the courageous service of our military and civilian personnel serving in Iraq and in the entire region, making a difference, protecting American families by defeating the terrorists overseas.

I am particularly grateful, as a 31-year veteran of the Army National Guard. I have, currently, four sons, thanks to my wife's training, who are serving the United States military, and two have served in Iraq.

General Petraeus, I share a concern of Chairman Berman about the attacks on the Green Zone. This is truly a direct attack on the Iraqi Government, on the Prime Minister's quarters and office, the ministries, the Parliament. Additionally, it is an attack on American personnel.

I was saddened to hear, and my sympathy goes to the Wolper family of Boca Raton, Florida, for their loss. I can particularly identify. I had a nephew serve in the Green Zone. I had also a son serve in the Green Zone. On March 24, 2008, General, you gave an interview with BBC, and you stated, "The rockets that were launched at the Green Zone yesterday, for example, were Iranian-provided, Iranian-made rockets launched by Special Groups elements that are paid for, that are funded, that are trained, that have been equipped and been directed, by and large, by the Iranian CUDS Force."

What specific evidence do you have, or could you tell us about, that directly relates these rockets to Iran?

General PETRAEUS. Well, we have found fragments of the different rockets that have come in. We have also found weapons caches that, again, clearly are of the type that come from Iran, and we have detained a number of Special Groups members over the last 6 months or so, including some very senior leaders and financiers, who have been relatively talkative in explaining the whole process of how these individuals move to and from Iran, where they are trained, indoctrinated; how they are funded; how they bring weapons, and so forth into the country.

We will lay that out for the public here at some point. We have, frankly, a press conference that is literally written and ready to go that can lay that out. We have even detained, for example, four of what are called "16 master trainers," individuals who had multiple trips back and then were brought back into Iraq to help train others.

We do know these are the individuals that have been directing and launching these attacks. We have killed a number of them with armed UAVs and attack helicopters and direct fire, but it is a very, very difficult tactical problem because they think nothing of launching them from school yards, innocent civilians' back yards, and so forth.

Mr. WILSON. Additionally, Ambassador Crocker, I am going to give you an example question because I asked it of you earlier, because I want the American people to know this, that al-Zawahiri, the al-Qaeda spokesman for Bin Laden, on July 9, 2005, made the goals of al-Qaeda very clear.

First, expel the Americans from Iraq. The second stage is, establish authority in Iraq. The third stage is, extend the Jihad wave to the secular countries around Iraq. The fourth state is the clash with Israel, which is the extermination of the people who live in Israel.

Now, if they achieve their four stages, would they be satisfied with what they have, or will they continue attacks on the United States?

Ambassador CROCKER. Congressman, as you know, I have been focused on al-Qaeda for quite some time. I opened our Embassy in Afghanistan after 9/11. I served 2½ years as our Ambassador to Pakistan, and, of course, now I am in Iraq.

It is my judgment that al-Qaeda has been and remains a strategic enemy of the United States and that if they can find the means, they will attack us again. I am familiar with the 2005 al-Zawahiri statements that you cite. The question I would have is whether this would, indeed, be sequential or whether, if they can get that secure base, they will begin planning more or less immediately for that kind of attack.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you very much.

Chairman BERMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired. The gentlewoman from Texas, Ms. Sheila Jackson Lee, is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. It is important to note our respect, mutually, for both of you gentlemen, and thank you for the courtesies shown to our delegation during the 5th year—week, if you will—of the invasion of the United States into Iraq.

One of the Senators in yesterday's hearing, I think, captured a lot of our sentiment without reflecting on the very fine and outstanding work of the United States military and our civilian support system through the State Department. He asked a simple question: How do we get out of this mess?

I hope that this does not characterize all of my questions, but I, frankly, believe that you all are outstanding public servants, and you are implementing the policies of this administration.

So you are in a difficult box, but I hope to pose some questions that really attract what I believe will help us reach a solution.

First of all, I would like to take note of some of the visual pictures of our trip. It is noteworthy that the Americans are armed, with helmets and flak jackets. The civilian population—this little girl in a pink dress was trying to play on the streets. We were walking through, and I have great gratitude to be able to so.

General, none of these are classified shots, so I want you to note that.

This is one of the streets that we were walking on, certainly our weaponry and otherwise there. Here is another one. Here is a little boy, civilian, compared to Americans walking through the streets.

As I walked through these streets, I also saw a lot of quality-of-life needs—trash and lack of clean water—in terms of conversations. The Sunni men that were there were criticizing or complaining that they wished that they could have a government that would rid itself of sectarianism. That is what they view their leader, Mr. Maliki, as a sectarian who continues to promote divisions between the groups. The good news, Ambassador Crocker, is that they will be participating in the election.

We have spoken about the Iraqi security forces. I, frankly, believe we do not give them enough credit, and that is why we are in the plight that we are in today. An outstanding general, who, frankly, believes that his forces are getting ready and getting ready better; one of the generals that we met, an Iraqi general. We decided to make sure that we let everyone know that the soldiers are well dressed, but they are also, I believe, on the road of great competency.

What we are continuously presented with, however, is quite the contrary. Let me raise the points of the resolution of 2002, and I will read from it, just to note that we were to deal with the United Nations resolutions and to rid ourselves from the al-Qaeda.

Let me ask General Petraeus. Saddam Hussein is gone, is he not? I, obviously, need to get a quick answer because my time is running out.

General PETRAEUS. Absolutely.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. There has been a democratic election.

General PETRAEUS. Correct.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Al-Qaeda, to your knowledge, is an amoeba. It is free flowing. It may be in Iraq. It may be in Afghanistan. Is that not true?

General PETRAEUS. It is certainly in Iraq. It is less in Iraq than it was a year ago.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. It finds itself in other places.

General PETRAEUS. Not easily. Again, it has to find a place where it can put down—

Ms. JACKSON LEE. You would suggest that it is not in Afghanistan and—

General PETRAEUS. I did not say that.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Well, that is my question. Does it find itself in other places, al-Qaeda?

General PETRAEUS. Certainly. Al-Qaeda, in fact, is throughout the region of the Middle East.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. With that in mind, let me say, General, that I, frankly, believe that we are operating without authority. The 2002 resolution has been complete. The military has completed its tasks. I would declare it a military success, and I would ask that you convey to the President that we should now bring our troops home.

To Ambassador Crocker, even though there may be light being made of diplomacy, is it not important that we continue to work on a diplomatic end in giving technical assistance to Iraq to use its own money to help build up its country?

Ambassador CROCKER. Yes, ma'am, it is, and we are very much involved in that. In fact, we are going to be bringing out a number

of additional advisers from the Department of Treasury who will focus precisely on budget execution.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. With that in mind, then, we can use the diplomacy and technical assistance and complete our tasks and end the war so that we do not continue to have the loss of lives, as I did, with two soldiers being buried in my district.

I believe there is no more authority for this war. I believe it is terminated, and I believe that our soldiers should come home certainly to a welcoming and grateful nation. I yield back my time.

Chairman BERMAN. The time of the gentlelady has expired. The gentleman from South Carolina, Mr. Gresham Barrett, is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BARRETT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. General and Ambassador, God bless you. Thank you for being here today. Please tell our heroes that we love them, and we pray for them every day.

One quick statement. A lot of our colleagues, over the last couple of days, have talked about the cost of the war. The only thing I would ask them is to think about the cost of actually losing this war.

General, in regards to the Basra operations, I know there were some good things and some bad things, but the leader of their country, a sovereign nation, took two brigades in 24 hours, with Special Operations guys, took them to the field, and had mixed results, but isn't that a success? They could not have done that a year ago, could they, General?

General PETRAEUS. They could not have, Congressman, and I did highlight that, and then they moved another brigade subsequent to that, and they had their C-130's turning several times a day with supplies, reinforcements, casualty back-haul, and so forth.

I think the more important point, if I could, is that Basra is, by no means, over. Basra is going to be ongoing for a number of months and will require a sustainable solution over time, and it is still very much the early days, actually, in Basra.

Mr. BARRETT. But in that sense of the action, the leader of the nation taking charge, a big success, wouldn't you agree?

General PETRAEUS. Well, we have talked repeatedly about wanting Iraq to be a sovereign country, wanting their leader of the sovereign country to make decisions, and he made one, and, candidly, it was a bit of a surprise. It was much more sudden than the very deliberate process that, in fact, we were actually, literally, working on at the time that he made the decision, based on his assessment of security issues there, and then gave orders to do that. He did ask for our support, and we said that we would provide support. It would not be ground forces; it is advisers and close air support and ISR support and that type of thing.

Mr. BARRETT. Yes, sir. Ambassador?

Ambassador CROCKER. Yes, sir. Looking at the Basra operation from the political standpoint, advice to military, the Prime Minister's decisiveness in this, including going down personally to Basra for the opening phases of this operation, has garnered him widespread political support from almost all of Iraq's leaders—Sunni, Kurd, as well as Shiia—because he is being perceived, as the Shiia Prime Minister of Iraq, as willing and able to take on

Shiia extremist militias. This is being perceived broadly in Iraq as a national effort against extremist groups.

It is worth noting, as you consider the implications of the Basra operation, that you have Iraqi forces engaged with Shiia extremist militias in Basra. At the same time, up in Mosul, they are engaged with us against al-Qaeda and al-Qaeda's extremist Sunni supporters.

So the perception increasingly is of a national endeavor against the extremes, whether Sunni or Shiia, that threaten the state.

Mr. BARRETT. Got you. Very quickly, Ambassador, when I was over there, just a few weeks ago, I was very concerned about the level of corruption. I kept hearing the theme on and on again. I have got about a minute. Tell me what we are doing to stem that because I think that is a major problem, and, General, you, too, if you can.

Ambassador CROCKER. It is a major problem. The Iraq Government is now publicly recognizing that it has a major problem. There have been two conferences to address this issue, one convened by the government itself and the other at the request of the government, with the United Nations to try and develop a work plan.

We are engaged in doing everything we can to assist on this. We have recently reorganized our own anticorruption effort within the Embassy, in coordination with MNF. I brought out a senior officer, a former Ambassador, to head that up. We have got efforts underway to assist the various elements of the anticorruption apparatus in the Iraqi Government in gaining capacity and strength, in particular, the Commission on Integrity, which has got a new and very promising head.

Mr. BARRETT. Sorry, sir.

Chairman BERMAN. I am sorry, but the time for the gentleman has expired, and the gentleman from Oregon, Mr. Wu, is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WU. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As I see it, the central foreign policy problem in Iraq is no longer really in Iraq. The challenge is what is going on in the rest of the world, in the following sense.

When our Government is so monofocused on one country, on Iraq, we are not able, in my view, to pay adequate attention to the rest of the world, to Russia, to China, to India, to Japan, to Europe, whether they are friends, adversaries, competitors, or otherwise, and, as the world's lone superpower, great powers have great responsibilities, and the challenge is whether we have the bandwidth to deal with all of the things that we need to deal with around the world.

General, I want to be very specific in this. I do not think that this is a military problem. I think the uniformed services have done absolutely everything that the civilian authority has asked it to do, and I thank you for that. But I would like to ask both of you gentlemen, what are the metrics of success? What are the metrics by which we reach a point where we can begin to deploy our political, diplomatic, and military resources to face the challenges that we face elsewhere in the world?

Ambassador, you answered an earlier question where you said that you deal with conditions and not with timelines. Well, let us put some metrics on the conditions that you are talking about, and, General, you, in answer to an earlier question, gave some fairly general answers to what constitutes, if you will, success. I would like to hear some metrics from both of you gentlemen about when we can begin to start paying attention, adequate attention, to the rest of the world.

Ambassador CROCKER. Well, again, we approached this, obviously, from the focus on Iraq. As you know, Congressman, re-deployments are underway. The surge forces are coming home, and General Petraeus and I have both described the process by which we are able to make recommendations in that regard.

Mr. WU. With all due respect, Ambassador, I am asking you about metrics. What are identifiable criteria that we can measure against so that we can consider objectives achieved?

General PETRAEUS. Congressman, if I could, the metrics are among those that I showed you today. That is a subset of the overall metrics that we use to track basically how we are doing. What we showed you was all of them totaled up, but we also look at them by region. Let me give you an example.

Mr. WU. Excuse me, General. Based on the metrics that you put up, at what point on those graphs do we reach the point where we can redeploy our military and our diplomatic resources?

General PETRAEUS. At the point where those metrics for an area, such as Anbar Province, and I wish we had included that, we have a provincial slide, and it shows it going just like that, in terms of violence, and then we lay down the troop to task. We have to look at what it is that we are trying to accomplish, look at the local Iraqi security forces and the local governance, and that is what has enabled us to reduce. We are in the process of reducing from 14 battalions in Anbar Province down to about six. That is a very substantial reduction to take place in the course of about, I guess, 8 or 9 months or so. It is based on those kinds of—

Mr. WU. Thank you, General. Perhaps offline here, we can get both of you gentlemen to respond, at what point on those charts, we can define success. I would be happy to take that as a written response outside of this hearing.

General PETRAEUS. Congressman, let me be, again, forthright with you, which is the spirit that we have been in. There is not an arithmetical solution that says that for Anbar Province, when you hit this number and this metric; it is much more about a number of different metrics that we look at.

At the end of the day, this is about feel. This is what we pay our commanders to do, is to make judgments and to assess a situation and to say, "I think that we can take this battalion out of here, this battalion out of here. We can leave these smaller elements." This is how we cobble together the response. By the way, we have got to make sure we have a Medivac within the "golden hour," and all the rest of this, again, a very complex endeavor, and that is how you are able to determine how much you can come down over time.

Chairman BERMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. WU. Thank you, sir.

Chairman BERMAN. The gentleman from Florida, Mr. Mack, is recognized for 5 minutes. There is a legal dispute resolved in the favor of Mr. Fortenberry with the agreement of Mr. Mack. Mr. Fortenberry is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MACK. Mr. Chairman, I yield my time to Mr. Fortenberry.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ambassador Crocker and General Petraeus, welcome. Thank you for joining us today. On behalf of the people of the First District of Nebraska, let me thank you for your service and sacrifice on behalf of our Nation.

General Petraeus, under current operational and policy assumptions, and recognizing the complexity and fluidity of the situation, what will Iraq look like in 6 months, your best judgment?

General PETRAEUS. Well, in part, as we projected with the provincial Iraqi control, there will be a number of additional provinces that will be under Iraqi control. Again, I think we had the projections on there. Sometimes those actually come forward, as in the case of, say, Anbar Province. Sometimes they move back, as has been the case with, say, Ninawa Province.

In those provinces, there will be more robust Iraqi governance. Iraqi forces will be shouldering more of the burden. We certainly intend to keep the heat on al-Qaeda Iraq and to try to reduce further the areas in which they have influence, to some degree. I would not call it a safe haven at this point, but operating space, and to continue to press that.

There clearly has to be both a military and a political solution with respect to the militia forces. Again, there is a huge political component to that, given their connection, and that is something that clearly has to be worked out, and it is something, frankly, that the Iraqi political leaders are very much seized with right now.

There will have been provincial elections, and that will have enabled more representative governance in the various Iraqi provinces. We hope that that can satisfy the aspirations of those who made a bad decision in the last elections back in January 2005, when large numbers of Sunni Arabs, for example, boycotted the vote.

I certainly hope that basic services have been improved in terms of electricity, water, sewage. There are projects ongoing in a variety of those different areas. They, obviously, depend, to a considerable degree, on the security situation, but, again, there have been improvements in those areas, and that certainly the oil exporting continues as it is, if not perhaps even tuned up a bit more, although the North, I think, recently broke either its all-time record, or certainly its post-liberation record.

We hope, as we get into a variety of different ministry activities, more of the health clinics that we have helped Iraq build will be open by that point in time. I think it is between a third and a half right now that are open, and, again, we hope to see several dozen more of those opened over time.

Again, I would just go on like that down the various lines of operation that are in our joint campaign plan. As you know, there is not a military campaign plan in Iraq or a separate Embassy campaign plan. It is a joint campaign plan signed by the two of us, and we do link arms as we try to take this forward and try to make progress across the board. Thank you.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Thank you, General. Briefly, switching to the Ambassador, Mr. Ambassador, I noted in your testimony you refer to a "diplomatic surge." I was pleased to see that, in that Congressman McCaul, my colleague, and I introduced a resolution last year calling for a diplomatic surge to make it the stated objective of Congress to augment our security efforts by engaging international stakeholders and robust diplomacy to help ensure their support for political, economic, and humanitarian assistance toward the rapid stabilization of Iraq.

Thus far, you have talked about enhanced U.N. engagement in Iraq, the International Compact, and the Neighbors Conferences. What specific outcomes do you seek to accomplish in this regard by the end of the year?

Ambassador CROCKER. Well, with respect to the neighbors, the Arab neighbors, what we would very much like to see is the Arabs reengaging with Iraq. There are no Arab ambassadors currently in Baghdad, and that is not good for Iraq, and it is not good for the Arab states.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Debt relief and economic assistance as well?

Ambassador CROCKER. Certainly, on debt relief, some have granted it; others have not. That needs to move forward.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. I think that these are very important considerations. Thank you, gentlemen.

Chairman BERMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired. The gentleman from New York, Mr. Crowley, is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CROWLEY. I thank the chairman and thank both Ambassador Crocker and General Petraeus for being here this morning, this afternoon, for these past couple of days and your testimony that you have given before both the Senate and the House.

I also want to thank both of you for my recent trip to Iraq, where I was treated very warmly and protected very well and felt very secure and safe on that particular CODEL led by my good friend and colleague from California, Mr. Costa.

I want to thank the men and women who are serving in our armed services over there who are exemplary and, I think, are just fantastic and terrific people who are doing the best job that they can under what I think are extremely difficult, if not somewhat impossible, circumstances.

I never once doubted for a moment that our troops would be successful in the surge. I think that we can basically do whatever we want to do militarily. The real question really lies as to whether or not the Iraqis have the ability to do what they need to do politically to move forward.

That really comes to, I think, the question for me, and that is, we have seen a steady decline in the coalition of the willing in Iraq, and I would ask both Ambassador Crocker and you, General Petraeus, whether or not that is disconcerting to you, whether you have concern about the lack of involvement by the greater free world in what is happening in Iraq today, that lack of involvement.

Ambassador CROCKER. Congressman, that international involvement is very important, but it can take different forms. We have got good, strong, coalition partners. Their roles may transform over time. The Australians, for example, as they decrease their military

role are increasing their role in economic engagement with Iraq, and we welcome this.

It is also why the kinds of efforts that the congressman was just asking about, I think, are so important, to have the Arabs more engaged with Iraq, again, not as military coalition partners but at a political level.

Mr. CROWLEY. I am very interested in the investments that are being made in an economic way to help in Iraq by our allies, but what I am really concerned about is the fact that the United States is paying 95 percent of the cost of the military action in the occupation within Iraq today, and our allies, in reverse of the first Gulf War where that was not the case, where most of the burden was placed on the rest of the world, we are paying certainly our fair share in that. That is not the case in this circumstance.

It comes down to, for me, whether or not this is worth any additional American lives in keeping this effort going when there seems to be an intractable problem in getting the Iraqis to get their act together. We know how complicated the situation is. One just has to look at the Senate and, certainly, Senator McCain and his, time to time, inability to understand or get the clear picture about what a Shiia is and what a Sunni is, or who is involved in al-Qaeda, who is not involved in al-Qaeda. But, certainly, the American people look at this as well and say this is a very, very difficult situation, and they are questioning whether or not it is worth additional American lives to be put on the line for something that is intractable for a long period.

General PETRAEUS. It is my view, Congressman, that there is political progress, and I tried to outline that in my testimony. We see it at local levels, among both Sunnis and Shiia who are sick and tired of militia and terrorist activity and making that clear. We see it at the national level where improving security has created an environment where the kinds of compromises on legislation that just could not be had, say, 6 or 9 months ago are now achievable.

Mr. CROWLEY. Is it fair to describe the Iraqi legislature as dysfunctional?

General PETRAEUS. No, sir. I do not believe it is. The Iraqi Council of Representatives, the Parliament, showed us, in the first couple of months of this year, that they are able to come together and make the trade-offs across sectarian lines to get through some complex pieces of legislation like, again, an amnesty law, enormously important to the Sunnis. It required an atmosphere in which the Shiia would not see that as threatening, and that is the atmosphere we are increasingly getting now.

Mr. CROWLEY. Ambassador, thank you. Mr. Chairman, I know my time is about to expire. I just want to congratulate our ally, Jordan, for the work that they are doing in terms of helping to train Iraqi police, as well as extending themselves, in terms of opening up their borders for refugees. I think it is important to note for our other allies in the Arab world to recognize it and my colleagues as well. Thank you.

General PETRAEUS. Counterterrorism, too.

Chairman BERMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired. We are now on the 10-minute bells for a series of eight votes. I am not going to ask General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker to hang

around until that is over. So what I am prepared to do is sit here and chair this hearing until every member who wants to stay with me and give up the chance to be Mr. Natcher and set the record for consecutive votes made is willing to miss votes with me to ask questions. I, of course, am not opposed in the next election.

So each member will have to make a decision, but I will be here as long as somebody is willing to be recognized to take their time, and for people who do not want to do that, would you be all right if you submit questions in writing?

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. A parliamentary inquiry, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman BERMAN. Yes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you. Just to make sure for some of us who will be going to vote: The ones who stay will not be able to ask a second round of questions that go longer than 5 minutes, anything outside of the proper—

Chairman BERMAN. No. It will be just the 5-minute rule, no second rounds.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. That is wonderful. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman BERMAN. If we complete the first round, it will be a miracle. The gentleman from Texas, Mr. McCaul, is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCCAUL. I thank the chairman. General, Ambassador, thank you for your extraordinary service to this country.

The Wall Street Journal today reported that “[a]s General David Petraeus briefs Congress this week on Iraq, it is clear his surge has achieved remarkable results. The most crucial is that the U.S. can no longer be defeated militarily in Iraq, which could not be said a year ago. The question now is whether Washington will squander these gains by withdrawing so quickly that we could still lose politically.”

I think we all want our troops to come home, but I think we want this to be done in the most responsible, efficient way possible.

With respect to the cost of the war, there has been a lot of discussion about that, and I think that actually a lot of members on both sides of the aisle agree with the fact that the Iraqi people, with their oil revenues a \$50 billion surplus, and the stakeholders in the region need to begin to step up to the plate in terms of financing this operation. I think you are going to see, again, a growing movement in the Congress toward that.

But as we talk about the cost, I think we also need to talk about what is the cost of failure? How much will that cost not only the American people but the world?

My question has two parts. One is, if we fail, and I like to win—I think most Americans like to win—what would the consequences of failure be in the world?

The second part of my question has to do with Iran. General, you have testified that Iranian caches have been captured, that agents of Iran have been found in Iraq. It seems to me that Iran’s influence is just as deep and involved as al-Qaeda, that, in some respects, that, in and of itself, is an act of war. What, Ambassador, can be done on the world stage in terms of the international response to what the Iranian Government is now doing to us and to our troops in Iraq?

General PETRAEUS. Congressman, perhaps I will take the first one, and the Ambassador can take the second one, and, if I could, just to recognize the tremendous job that was done by Three Corps Headquarters out of Fort Hood, First Cav. Division, now Fourth Infantry Division, and others from Fort Hood, Fort Bliss, Fort Sam, and other great military installations in Texas and also air force bases and so forth, all that played very key parts in the surge, and, really, the operational-level commander of that, of course, is Lieutenant General Reyo Dierno, and he and his team did a magnificent job.

Sir, with respect to the consequences, obviously, they are unknowable. No one can predict the extent of what might happen, again, with respect to al-Qaeda, whether the ethnosectarian conflict might brew back up, and whether that could lead to fragmentation of Iraq, bring other countries into it, produce a variety of different regional-stability issues, or how it could lead again Iranian influence to expand and also perhaps to cause disruption in the global economy. All of those are issues that, I think, are central to the national interests that we have in trying to get Iraq right, to get reasonable progress so that we can reasonably attain those very, very important national interests that we have.

Ambassador CROCKER. If I could just add to that, Congressman, I mentioned, I think, in a previous hearing that I was in Lebanon in the early eighties, at a time when we withdrew our Marines from Lebanon in 1984, following the Marine barracks bombing. Other nations made calculations and came to conclusions as a result of that withdrawal, particularly Syria and Iran, as to what the United States would or would not be willing to do, and that still shapes the Middle Eastern environment.

Those same calculations would be made if we, in my view, if we were to withdraw from Iraq, leaving behind a failed or failing state with the specific consequences we described: Sectarian violence, al-Qaeda's return, and significant Iranian influence. Those would be the first-order consequences, if you will, but there would be second- and third-order consequences that I do not have the power of imagination to predict that would be enormously negative to our national interests over the long term.

Chairman BERMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired. The gentleman from Georgia, Mr. Scott, is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and, General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker, thank you very much for your service. We are all very proud of you, and we are very appreciative of what you are doing.

My comments, I want them set within the tone of recognizing that you are here doing your jobs. You are carrying out orders. It is the orders that I have troubles with.

My first order of concern as to why I believe we must immediately have a plan in place to immediately start redeploying is simply because of the breaking of the back of our military. Our military is overstrained, is overstretched significantly. Both General Casey, generals within the Army, have already indicated that every one of our combat units, for the Marines, for the Army, as well as for our National Guard, have already been used up. Our

readiness levels are shot. We have had our soldiers on three and four tours of duty.

You know, if you really want to get a taste of this war, I always advise my colleagues to make sure you go to Landstuhl Air Base. I have been over there three times every time I go over into the war zone. I have been over there three times at Landstuhl. If you want to know the cost of this, you look in the eyes of these soldiers, and you know what that cost is.

I am here to tell you, General, I am very concerned about the complete brutalization of our military in this process, and this is the elephant in the room that we continue to try to gloss over. I get tons of calls in my office, at every one of my town hall meetings, where soldiers who have served their duty come back with great complaints. The way we treat our wounded warriors and our veterans is despicable, and as we talk about this surge, even the generals have said that the 30,000 surge that we have had in place has caused unsustainable stress on our military.

Secondly, with your offer and your extension, again, in all due respect, because I respect you for the job that you are doing, but our military advisers are saying to us, those who are in the Pentagon, those that are here now, not just the retirees, this pause that you are asking for in the slowdown, in order to sustain it at the 140,000-troop level, will cause immeasurable harm. I am not just talking about the physical harm. I am talking about the mental stress.

Nearly 200,000 of the 516,000 soldiers that have served in Iraq have been over there on their second tour, 63,000 on their third tour, and about 28,000 now moving on to their fourth tours of duty. I am not telling you anything that you do not know, but one fact is glaring out. Thirty percent of every one of these troops that have served in Iraq are suffering from mental health problems. I am not even counting the divorce rates that are there.

So when we evaluate, going forward, what we are going to do in 100 years there, or how long we are going to stay, we must take into consideration the tremendous damage that we are doing to our men and women in uniform, and it is for that reason that we need to plan a redeployment out.

The other reason is this: In 6½ months, you may not say we are going to end this war. I might not say it. I am saying and hoping we end it. But the American people are going to end this war, and they are going to come to the polls in November, and they are going to speak loudly: We need to have a plan in order so that we can move out.

I think one piece that is missing is this great reluctance to understand the impact of Iran. Iran is a major player in this. I recall, you are a student of history, and you know full well what happened in World War II. A lot of us did not want to move with Russia. Russia was a problem. But we had to deal with other countries who we did not agree with in order to come to a conclusion: This war must end for the sake of our military.

Our military is weaker today than it was 5 years ago. Iran is stronger today than it was 5 years ago. It is no wonder that, in the recent action in Basra, where there was a settlement for peace, who negotiated it? Iran. Where was it negotiated? In Iran.

We have got civil war upon civil war here. These folks have been fighting for centuries. What are we going to do in the next 6 months to settle this? How are you, as commander, going to deal and look soldiers in the face to send them to their deaths, knowing that this matter is coming to an end? The American people are going to say it is coming to an end. There is going to be a change in the presidency, and we cannot continue it with the brutalization and the back breaking that we are doing to our military.

Chairman BERMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you very much.

Chairman BERMAN. The gentleman from South Carolina, with my apologies for making him be here 10 minutes longer than he needed to be, Mr. Inglis.

Mr. INGLIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. General and Ambassador, you know, our military is really the incredible race horse that will run its heart out for the American people, and, really, in sort of three phases, you have been completely successful.

We asked you to go depose a madman who we thought was dangerous to us. You did that; a complete success.

The second phase: Disrupt terrorist networks, no further attacks on the United States; score that one as a success, too.

The third phase; I was not completely sold, but the idea of a surge seems to have worked in terms of the military consequences of creating this security zone space for them to decide questions. Now, of course, you need to make those decisions.

So, in each phase, our military has accomplished exactly what we asked you to do. Ambassador Crocker said something very helpful in your testimony, sir. You said that, essentially, we are supporters of their democracy, of Iraq's democracy, but we are not guarantors of their democracy. Maybe that is my way of phrasing it, not yours.

I wonder, General and Ambassador, what would be the warning signs that we are going from supporter status to guarantor status?

Ambassador CROCKER. Congressman, I do not see us moving in that direction. We are trying to, as you rightly said, create the conditions where they can take the political decisions necessary to further reconciliation and get themselves on the track to a stable future, but these have to be their decisions. We cannot pass their laws for them. It would be impossible, and it would not have any effect, even if it were possible. So I do not think I see the circumstances under which this would arise.

Mr. INGLIS. Your answer worries me because there would be no warning signals for you that we have gone from supporter to guarantor. I think there is a point at which you clearly go from supporter to guarantor. In other words, you say that we will stay indefinitely. That would be the warning sign that we cannot stay indefinitely. At some point, you have to say, "We supported you, but we are not going to guarantee you."

Ambassador CROCKER. I have got you now. Well, I think one way to frame that would be the effort we are beginning now for a strategic framework agreement and a status of forces agreement. As I noted in my testimony, to give our military the authorities and protections it will need when the Security Council resolution expires at the end of the year, we will need that kind of agreement.

It is our firm intention to negotiate it as an executive agreement, meaning that it will not contain within it the commitments or, I guess, in your term, the guarantees, that would require the advice and consent of the Senate.

Mr. INGLIS. Thank you. General, is the recent call off the hostilities by al-Sadr, is that a sign of weakness on his part or strength; the weakness that he saw reinforcements coming his way and maybe was not going to be able to withstand them, and a weakening of his position in cooperating with Iran, or is it strength, in that he is able to show, Listen, I can turn it on or turn it off?

General PETRAEUS. As with all of these, I think there are a number of factors that probably are at play. One of them is probably related to the reason for the cease fire in the first place back after the violence that was precipitated in the holy city of Karbala by his militia forces, that that damaged the image of his movement, and I think there is concern over the political ramifications of continued violence that is clearly laid at the feet of the militia, which the population actually has begun to turn against.

There is not a blank check there just because he is cloaked in the name of the al-Sadr movement and has the lineage that he has, if you will. So, in that sense, I think it is very much based on a concern, and also a sense, frankly, that if it did play out as well, they could sustain some pretty significant losses.

Chairman BERMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired. The gentleman from California, Mr. Costa, is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. COSTA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, too, want to thank Ambassador Crocker and General Petraeus for the good work that you have done and the kudos that the rest of my colleagues have given your team. When our CODEL was in Iraq in March, the military did a great job of moving us where we wanted to go when we wanted to go, and Rich Houghton did a good job of making sure that we, more or less, stayed out of harm's way.

A couple of different questions; a lot of them have been answered. We know that there are a number of factors that have allowed us to reach the reduction in violence over the last year. Among those, as you have stated, is the Sunni agreement that we have reached, and, obviously, that payment of some 90,000 strong, I guess, militia, sons of Iraq, is key to that.

General PETRAEUS. Twenty thousand of those are Shiia, by the way, sir, just to be sure that we are—

Mr. COSTA. Right. You add 70 plus the 20, and you have got 90.

General PETRAEUS. That is right. Yes, sir.

Mr. COSTA. My question is, how long are we going to be able to, one, continue to pay them; and, two, what is the process, because there has been a reluctance on the part of the Maliki government to incorporate these into either the security force or to train them with, you know, jobs that they can perform? How long can we pay them?

General PETRAEUS. Congressman, again, the process is that we have already transitioned about 20,000 of these individuals over time into Iraqi security force jobs, other government positions, and there are a host of programs, some already established, many that are expanding, that we have just tried, pilot programs that are now

moving. There is a Civilian Conservation Corps kind of concept. There is the Job Training and Reintegration program. There is basic education. There is skills—

Mr. COSTA. So you believe you have the resources to successfully mainstream all of these within the next 12 months.

General PETRAEUS. We do, and we are now helped because of the Iraqi—that I mentioned and the funding, again—

Mr. COSTA. With the Maliki government's support.

General PETRAEUS. Yes, sir. I think, in the statement, if you just want to look at it—I think it is about three pages from the end—it details all of—

Mr. COSTA. I will refer back to it. I do not have a lot of time, and I have waited a long time, and we have got votes to go.

General PETRAEUS. By the way, I think it is nearly \$1 billion, totally, if you add it all up.

Mr. COSTA. All right. I think we are going to learn more from the Basra situation. I think it is a good case study, and many of the questions I had about winners and losers and how well they have performed and whether or not Maliki's credibility has increased as a result of this, I think you have answered.

I would like to go, Mr. Ambassador, to an issue that was raised, and it has been discussed over the last year, as to whether or not the right form of government exists to really bring these factions together. I guess the national security adviser to Maliki, Rubeyeya, wrote a column back in January—I am sure you are familiar with it—stating that “[t]he current political framework is based on a pluralistic, democratic vision that, while admirable, is entirely unsuited to resolving the three-way divide. It ignores the underlying issues and expects that a consensus will emerge simply by enacting a liberal, constitutional legal order.”

He goes on to say that “[p]luralistic democracy will not take root unless the National Political Compact recognizes and accommodates the fears and the aspirations of the Iraq community,” and then he talks about some other factors in there.

I would like you to comment on the expectation level. It has got to be terribly frustrating, doing what you guys do every day, but do we have the right mix here to have an expectation level that we can reach in the next year?

Ambassador CROCKER. Well, I think we do, Congressman. What Dr. Rubaie was talking about, what the thrust of that op-ed was, was the creation of regions within Iraq. There is already a Kurdish region.

Mr. COSTA. We were there. It seems to be doing well.

Ambassador CROCKER. Exactly. There is a regions law that was passed 18 months ago. There was a moratorium on its effective date that will become effective, actually, this month, and that will permit a province, or a grouping of provinces, to begin a process of regionalization, if they so choose.

Mr. COSTA. Included in that are the five contracts that the Kurds had signed on the oil leases. Will they be observed by the government in Baghdad?

Ambassador CROCKER. Well, this is some of the unfinished business in determining who has authority to do what, and the validity of those oil contracts on a national resource signed by a regional

government is contested now between the Federal Government and the regional government. It is one of the things they are going to have to work out.

Mr. COSTA. I have more questions. I do not have any more time. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and keep up the good work, gentlemen.

Chairman BERMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired. My metric is arithmetical, and it is down to one, and I recognize the gentlelady from California, Ms. Lee.

Ms. LEE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for allowing the hearing to conclude with my final questions. Good afternoon, General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker. Let me again thank you both for your service. Both of you, as well as our very brave troops, have made countless sacrifices.

I am one, however, who believes, like many, that there is no military solution in Iraq. We are occupying a country that has descended, really, into a civil war, which our troops are basically called to referee, and this was very clear last week in Basra when American commanders felt obligated to risk American troops to rescue, for the most part, Iraqi forces from an unwise, ill-conceived, and unilateral decision by the Prime Minister of Iraq, and it is reported that at least 1,000 Iraqi security forces refused to fight or abandon their posts.

It appears also, and we have heard this over and over today, that Iran has gained a very strong foothold in Iraq and that al-Qaeda is still ever present.

So, first, General Petraeus, can you explain al-Qaeda's presence and Iran's role in Iraq prior to "shock and awe" 5 years ago, and is America safer now?

Secondly, General Petraeus, let me just say, and some have mentioned, that many see the signs that parallel the march to war against Iraq now setting the stage for a preemptive military strike against Iran. You mentioned earlier that that is not within your authorization, but, with regard to a flat-out yes or no, are you authorized to conduct military operations against Iran? And I would just like, again, maybe a flat-out yes or no. Okay.

General PETRAEUS. Could I just give you that answer in private later? It will reassure you. I think that is probably a classified answer. I would be happy to answer to you right after this, if that is okay.

Ms. LEE. Okay. Certainly. Ambassador Crocker, let me ask you the question, and we will go back to General Petraeus. On six occasions—I just want to remind you—President Bush did sign the legislation containing provisions relating to no permanent military bases in Iraq, but, in December, he issued a signing statement, in essence, not especially approving of that policy.

So now, with the SOFA Agreement pending, let me ask you, and you said that we do not intend to seek permanent military bases in Iraq, the President somehow is not clear on that, so maybe you are defining "military bases" differently than what he is defining "military bases."

I agree that the administration can obligate the expenditure of public funds to guarantee the security of a sovereign country without congressional approval, especially now that the American peo-

ple have spent over \$500 billion on Iraq, which has contributed significantly to this recession that is hurting millions of Americans.

So could you, Ambassador Crocker, clarify this permanent-military-base issue and the confusion of either the President or the President's staff and appointees?

Ambassador CROCKER. Yes, ma'am. The position is as I stated it in my testimony. We are not seeking permanent military bases in Iraq. That is our position. That is something that the Iraqis are not seeking either, and, as I said, it is our expectation that the Status of Forces Agreement, when negotiated, will explicitly forswear permanent military bases. So I think we are quite clear on that.

Ms. LEE. Okay. Well, Ambassador Crocker, I would urge you to let the President know that because that signing statement is really undermining exactly what you are saying.

General Petraeus, could you answer my question—I do not have much time left—with regard to the presence of al-Qaeda in Iran in Iraq prior to “shock and awe”?

General PETRAEUS. I am not aware of a presence of al-Qaeda in Iraq prior. There is some discussion of links with some extremist organizations, but, again, I am not sure how much stock I would put in that either.

Prior, of course, Iran and Iraq were not exactly kissing cousins in those days. In fact, they had, of course, a lengthy, 8-year war that dominated most of their relations between 1980 and 1988 or so.

Ms. LEE. So how could America be more secure now, 5 years later, if Iran and al-Qaeda were not present 5 years ago? Is my time up? Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, General, and thank you, Mr. Ambassador. I will look forward to your responses privately.

Chairman BERMAN. The time of the gentlelady has expired.

Mr. Ambassador, General, we do thank you very much for being here. We do congratulate you for your and our forces' successes in the considerable areas where there has been success. Our hearts are with you. Our minds have some reservations. But thank you for your patience here, and good luck. The hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:57 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE HEARING RECORD

WRITTEN RESPONSES FROM GENERAL DAVID H. PETRAEUS, COMMANDING GENERAL, MULTI-NATIONAL FORCE—IRAQ, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE, TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY THE HONORABLE BILL DELAHUNT, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

Question:

What are the sources of your monthly totals, which appear under two categories, “Coalition Data” and “Iraqi and Coalition Data”?

Response:

“Coalition Data” consists of combat and incident reports rendered or verified by the units of the Multi-National Force-Iraq (MNF–I). These unit reports are entered into a database known as the Combined Information Data Network Exchange (CIDNE) which allows data to be analyzed and sorted.

The category of “Iraqi and Coalition Data” includes all MNF–I reports in CIDNE as well as reports from the Government of Iraq and the Iraqi Security Forces. Elements of the Iraqi Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior submit combat and incident reports through their own channels. These reports are translated by Coalition personnel and, after being screened to prevent duplication with existing Coalition reports, are entered into CIDNE at the Iraqi National Operations Center and the Iraqi Ground Forces Command Headquarters.

Question:

Why are the deaths reported under “Iraqi and Coalition Data” so much higher than the deaths reported under “Coalition Data?” For example, for 2006, the totals are roughly 25,000 versus 12,000.

Response:

“Coalition Data” represents the reports submitted by Coalition forces, and “Iraqi and Coalition Data” represents all reports verified and submitted by the Coalition as well as all reports submitted by official Iraqi sources (after removal of duplicate reports). The difference between the two values represents those incidents reported solely by Iraqi sources. The differences are attributable to the fact that Iraqi Security Forces have been located in areas where Coalition forces were not present and, although it is improving, in the past, Iraqi reports were occasionally inflated for a variety of reasons (including sectarian and political influences) and sometimes lack rigorous analysis and confirmation.

Question:

Do you consider these sources necessarily incomplete, or do you think that there two categories are capturing the vast majority of civilian deaths?

Response:

It is likely that some civilian deaths occur at a time or place where Coalition and Iraqi units are not present and therefore no report is submitted. We do not know the precise magnitude of this missing information. However, trends in Coalition and Iraqi data are consistent with each other, and this consistency leads us to believe that, though the exact figure may be inexact, the trends are indicative of the security situation in Iraq. In addition, as the Iraqi Security Force presence continues to get more robust across Iraq, we expect the number of deaths not captured in either Coalition or Iraqi reporting to continue to decrease over time.

Question:

Do the reporting mechanisms for these sources remain constant over time (e.g., the number and locations of posts to which Iraqis can report a death)?

Response:

All reports are generated by Coalition units or Iraqi Security Forces. The number of the units in Iraq and the areas in which they operate vary over time. In general, as the Iraqi Security Force presence continues to get more robust across Iraq, we expect the number of deaths not captured in either Coalition or Iraqi reporting to decrease over time.

Question:

How do you differentiate a civilian from an irregular militia or insurgent member? Do you include Iraqi Army, militia, and insurgent deaths in either of your two categories?

Response:

Deaths are reported as falling into one of four categories: Coalition, Iraqi Security Forces, anti-Iraqi forces (including irregular militia, insurgents, or other violent extremists), and civilians. Coalition units and Iraqi Security Forces identify anti-Iraqi forces by their actions, including attacks on security forces and civilians. Casualties who are not members of Coalition Forces and Iraqi Security Forces, and who are not identified at the time of the report as members of anti-Iraqi forces, are counted as civilians. Of note, we have included “Sons of Iraq” members as civilians, as they are not technically part of the Iraqi Security Forces.

Question:

The Iraqi Ministry of Health survey indicated 151,000 violent deaths during the war, and an additional 250,000 or more “excess deaths” by non-violent means, such as illnesses among children caused by reduced access to clean water, nutrition, and power. Do either of your categories include an estimate of non-violent deaths in excess of what would be expected before the U.S. invasion?

Response:

Neither of our categories includes non-violent deaths.

Question:

What is the total figures for the entire war generated by your two categories, and how do they compare to the more than 400,000 war-related Iraqi deaths reported by the Iraqi Ministry of Health and the 600,000 estimated by the John Hopkins University mortality study?

Response:

For the period 1 Jan 2004 to 31 May 2008, the SIGACTS III database contains 48,241 Iraqi deaths reported by Coalition forces and 81,809 reported by Coalition and Iraqi forces. No data from prior to 1 Jan 2004 is available. These deaths include civilians, Iraqi Security Forces, and anti-Iraqi forces. Because foreign fighters are included in the anti-Iraqi forces category, these numbers are slightly higher than what the total would be for Iraqi citizens only; however, no discrimination in that data is possible.

The data in the SIGACTS III database comes from first-hand observations by Coalition and Iraqi Security Forces and the official reports of Iraq’s security ministries, the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Defense. Other estimates of civilian casualties, such as those made by John Hopkins University and the Iraqi Ministry of Health, use methods or rely on estimates which we cannot corroborate.

WRITTEN RESPONSES FROM GENERAL DAVID H. PETRAEUS, COMMANDING GENERAL, MULTI-NATIONAL FORCE—IRAQ, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE, TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY THE HONORABLE DIANE E. WATSON, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Question:

In January 2007, President Bush announced his new “surge” strategy. More than a year later, there is growing belief that the surge has worked. U.S. casualties are down and levels of violence, particularly in Baghdad and other urban areas, have diminished. But there has also been a distinct upswing in violence in Iraq over the past month in which attacks on military targets in Baghdad tripled. This past week-

end was particularly violent during which, I understand, at least eleven U.S. soldiers lost their lives.

Despite the current overall drop in violence, I am not convinced that the surge strategy is viable or sustainable over the long term. The problem with the surge strategy—and perhaps it should be more accurately described as a tactic—is that it is not part of a larger, long-term, plan for bringing political stability to Iraq.

The surge may have brought temporary, incremental success, but I don't believe we can obtain long-term success by providing payments to tribal leaders in exchange for a lasting peace or their abiding allegiance. Instead such a tactic will buy us a temporary peace, nothing more than a lull between what will inevitably be a new round of rising sectarian violence. And we may have already witnessed the beginnings of the new round of sectarian violence as a result of what has generally been described as a poorly coordinated push into Basra.

Moreover, the current U.S. policy of purchasing peace could lead to greater long-term instability. In effect, what we may be doing, in seeking to lessen the violence, is to stoke Iraq's tribal affiliations and strengthen a warlord base in opposition to the central government. This is not a prescription for a lasting or viable peace in Iraq.

General Petraeus/Ambassador Crocker, how will what I see as current short-term security maneuvers in Iraq, as represented by the so-called surge strategy, bring long-term military and political stability to Iraq?

You have basically told the Committee here today that the American people should plan for more of the same in Iraq over the rest of the year. It is nothing more than a holding pattern. What is your strategic vision for Iraq that will stabilize the country and lead to a draw down and redeployment of U.S. forces over the next year?

It is clear that Iraqi security forces were not up to the task of standing on their own during recent military maneuvers in Basra. General Petraeus, what must be done in order for the Iraqi military to be able to stand on its own without U.S. support and why hasn't that been accomplished yet?

Response:

How will what I see as current short-term security maneuvers in Iraq, as represented by the so-called surge strategy, bring long-term military and political stability to Iraq? Military efforts and security gains provide the foundation for long-term stability and development in Iraq. In line with the comprehensive approach required by our campaign plan, we are pursuing progress along multiple lines of operation: security, political, economic, and diplomatic. The intent of the surge strategy was to reduce violence and create "breathing space" in which gains along other lines of operation could be achieved. Iraq's leaders have begun to take advantage of the breathing space our troopers have fought so hard to provide.

What is your strategic vision for Iraq that will stabilize the country and lead to a draw down and redeployment of U.S. forces over the next year? The United States' strategic goal in Iraq remains a unified, democratic, and federal Iraq that can govern, defend, and sustain itself and is an ally in the war on terror. Achieving this goal requires progress by the Iraqi government on the security, economic, diplomatic, and political fronts. The last year has seen gains in all of these areas. Security responsibility continues to transition to increasingly robust and capable Iraqi security forces. The government of Iraq is increasingly asserting itself on the international stage, and Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, and Bahrain have recently announced that they will be sending Ambassadors to Baghdad. Iraq increasingly shoulders the burden of funding reconstruction and economic development efforts, with the US focus shifting to capacity-building and good governance initiatives. And the Iraqi government has demonstrated increased unity, passing a number of important laws over the past year. Gains in all of these areas have enabled us to reach levels of security incidents not seen since early 2004. These security gains have been sustained even as three brigade combat teams, a Marine Expeditionary Unit, and two Marine battalions have withdrawn without replacement. The fourth surge brigade has already given up its sector of responsibility and will be completely withdrawn by the end of June, and the final surge brigade will withdraw without replacement by the end of July. We have also reduced the number of individuals in Coalition detention facilities by a net of 3,500 detainees. After a short period of consolidation and evaluation after the end of July, we will continue to draw down forces as the conditions allow.

What must be done in order for the Iraqi military to be able to stand on its own without U.S. support and why hasn't that been accomplished yet? Generating robust and capable military forces requires not just initial recruitment, training, and equipment, but also developing leaders, equipping forces with combat enablers such as logistics and intelligence, and expanding command and control capacity. Building

these capabilities takes time and dedicated efforts. We see indicators of substantial improvement in the Iraqi Security Forces. Iraqi forces have grown significantly since September, and over 540,000 now serve in the Iraqi Security Forces. The number of combat battalions capable of taking the lead in operations, albeit with some coalition support, has grown to well over 100. Eight of sixteen Iraqi provinces are now under Provincial Iraqi Control, with two more provinces due to transition over the next two months. Ongoing Iraqi Security Force operations in Basra, Mosul, and Sadr City demonstrate increased planning capability, mobility, and tactical competence, as well as an ability to conduct simultaneous major operations throughout the country.

The enablers that Coalition forces provide are in line with expectations and generally involve capabilities that take more time to build (i.e. close air support capability). The performance of many units has been solid, and some formations and specialist organizations are proving to be extremely capable. As progress continues in increasing the size and the capability of Iraqi Security Forces, these forces will continue to assume an ever larger share of the responsibility for security in Iraq.

Question:

It is estimated that Iraq exports over 1.9 million barrels of oil per day, with revenues estimated at \$41 billion in 2007. Iraqi oil proceeds in 2008 could yield an estimated \$56 billion.

Why are we spending U.S. taxpayer dollars at the current rate when Iraq has accrued close to \$100 billion in oil revenues in 2007 and 2008? Can you tell me how much of Iraq's oil revenues have been used for reconstruction? How much of Iraq's oil revenues have been used for the Iraqi security forces?

Response:

The Iraqi Government has an increasing ability to meet its responsibility to fund reconstruction and security operations in Iraq, and it is making progress in picking up a greater share of the load. As Ambassador Crocker recently stated before Congress, "The era of US-funded major infrastructure projects is over." Instead, we are focusing our efforts on helping to build Iraqi governmental capacity so that Iraqis can better leverage their own resources. For example, Iraq's 2008 budget contains \$13 billion for reconstruction, with an additional multi-billion dollar reconstruction spending package in the works. In terms of security spending, we anticipate Iraq will spend over \$8 billion on security this year and \$11 billion next year, and a 2008 supplemental of \$4.3 billion for security spending has been proposed.

As Iraqi spending on reconstruction and Iraqi Security Forces continues to increase, U.S. spending will continue to decrease. As an example, increased Iraqi spending on the Iraqi Security Forces has enabled us to decrease our budget request for the Iraqi Security Forces Fund for fiscal year 2009 from \$5.1 billion to \$2.0 billion. This trend will continue over time.

As Iraq continues to spend more and the United States spends less, a period of transition is needed because Iraqi capacity is still limited. However, Iraqi capacity is gradually improving as well, as evidenced by a solid increase in budget execution last year. In the meantime, we are looking for additional ways to help Iraq to leverage our capacity to spend its own funds. A good example of this is the Iraqi Commander's Emergency Response Program, which we call "I-CERP." The Iraqis have already allocated \$300 million for this fund, of which \$270 million has been deposited in an account on which Coalition forces can draw. Coalition forces have already made substantial progress in using this money to deliver schools, health clinics, community centers, and other projects on behalf of the Iraqi Government to the Iraqi people.

Question:

I am very concerned about the humanitarian crisis in Iraq from the decades of conflict and deteriorating basic services in the country. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) reports that there are over 2.7 million internally displaced people in Iraq. Although the IOM reports that the rate of displacement has fallen, the condition of those displaced is worsening. The U.N. estimates that conflict and violence since the U.S.-led invasion in 2003 have led to 151,000 civilian deaths, created tens of thousands of widows and orphans, and cut off 60% of the population from at least one essential service.

What are you doing to urge the Iraqi government to address this very serious humanitarian problem?

What do you see as the prospects for the return of those people who have been displaced?

Are you thinking about property compensation or restitution for those displaced, particularly since many of those returning will find their properties occupied by others?

How do you propose to have any kind of real political reconciliation in Iraq until these horrendous conditions are dealt with? Do you support Senators Kennedy's and Biden's calls for the White House to establish a coordinator for Iraqi refugee policy and increase funding for refugee assistance?

Response:

Refugee and displacement issues remain a serious concern. There are, however, indicators that the situation has begun to improve. According to US Agency for International Development (USAID) reporting, the rate of displacement of Iraqi citizens has been slowing considerably for at least the last four months, and some Iraqis (in significant numbers in some areas) are returning to their homes. These returns are motivated by a variety of factors, including: improved security in places of origin, deteriorating conditions in places of displacement, increased restrictions in neighboring countries, and tribal reconciliation.

The most important role that the US military plays in addressing refugee and IDP concerns is protecting the population and assisting Iraqi Security Forces. On a daily basis, Multi-National Force-Iraq (MNF-I) subordinate units and Iraqi Security Forces patrol local neighborhoods and the countryside to protect the population from terrorist threats and illegal militias. They update the US Mission-Iraq (USM-I) on displaced civilians that they encounter and they provide humanitarian assistance when required. Recent Iraqi and Coalition security operations in Basra, Baghdad, and Mosul have also enhanced the security and stability within these communities by reducing sectarian and terrorist attacks, thus creating the conditions for many displaced Iraqis to return to their homes. In the wake of those operations and many others Coalition forces have distributed humanitarian assistance items, helped USAID and NGOs see to the needs of the populace, and worked with Iraqi elements to help them to do the same.

Aside from improving security for Iraqis, MNF-I works closely with our USM-I counterpart and with the USAID, which serves as the Coalition lead in tracking and developing policy regarding refugees and IDPs. MNF-I partners with and supports Provincial Reconstruction Teams to monitor and track the status of displaced persons and related issues. In addition to providing over \$500 million in humanitarian assistance targeted at refugee and IDP-related issues, US government agencies have appointed senior level officials to work on these issues; Ambassador James Foley serves as the Senior Coordinator for Iraqi Refugees for the Department of State, and Lori Scialabba serves as the Department of Homeland Security's Senior Advisor on Iraqi Refugees.

The Iraqi Government has begun to give more attention to the problem of Iraqi refugees. It drafted a national policy on internally-displaced persons and also a Basic Law for the Ministry of Displacement and Migration. The GOI has begun housing compensation payments to two of the hardest hit areas that were affected by terrorist and sectarian violence this past year—\$50 million each to Anbar and Diyala Provinces for compensation to residents whose homes were damaged or destroyed. The central government is also taking steps to commit similar funds for housing compensation in Basra, Baghdad and Mosul—areas that have seen the most recent fighting between government forces and criminal special groups and AQI terrorists. The GOI has also pledged to give \$25 million to neighboring countries that have taken in Iraqi refugees (\$15 million has been dispersed to Syria, \$2 million to Lebanon, and \$8 million to Jordan), and we continue to encourage the GOI to increase its assistance for displaced Iraqis.

Addressing Iraq's refugee and IDP issues remains an important issue, and one that certainly affects reconciliation in Iraq. We will continue to work with our Iraqi counterparts to improve security and enable the large-scale returns that will ultimately be a large part of the solution.

WRITTEN RESPONSE FROM GENERAL DAVID H. PETRAEUS, COMMANDING GENERAL, MULTI-NATIONAL FORCE—IRAQ, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE, TO QUESTION SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY THE HONORABLE JOHN TANNER, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF TENNESSEE

Question:

General Petraeus, as you know, soldiers from Fort Campbell, where you used to serve and a portion of which I have the honor of representing in the House of Representatives, are serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. Tennessee National Guardsmen

are serving in both countries as well as Kosovo. Currently, more than 10% of active duty forces have deployed to Iraq three times or more. With countless more troops facing three or more deployments to Iraq, is there a point at which this operational tempo undermines our ability to execute our counterinsurgency strategy in Iraq?

Response:

Despite a demanding operational tempo, the forces I see in Iraq are better prepared to conduct counterinsurgency operations now than they have been at any time that I have been in Iraq. Our soldiers understand counterinsurgency operations and are more adept at them than any soldiers in our history. Our service members, many of whom have substantial experience, are now better trained and equipped to meet the demands of this complex environment. Focused on protecting and serving the population, they remain capable of meeting the demands of intense combat when necessary. In fact, our armed forces are showing increased sophistication in areas which include: the use of intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance, time-sensitive targeting, and the ability of conventional and special operations forces to operate effectively with one another. Thanks to Congress and the Department of Defense, our forces are now also better equipped than they were in 2003. The Mine-Resistant, Ambush Protected vehicle is a noteworthy example of an equipment improvement that has saved countless lives. In short, despite the strain of repeated deployments, our forces are executing the counterinsurgency strategy in Iraq better than ever before in our time in Iraq.

That being said, there is clearly strain on the Active and Reserve Components. I am aware keenly of the strain and the stress on the force, on the individuals, on equipment, and on readiness. Many Soldiers have completed or are in the midst of second or third deployments. This is obviously difficult for them and their families. My own family is well acquainted with the challenge of separation, as I have now been deployed for more than four and a half years since 2001. Having noted that, our troopers have incredible resilience. The 3rd Infantry Division, which is completing its third tour in Iraq now, met its reenlistment goal for the entire fiscal year halfway through the year. Though it is beyond my brief to determine the overall health of the services, this is, nonetheless, something about which I am concerned and about which I engage in dialogue with the Service Chiefs and DoD leadership.

WRITTEN RESPONSES FROM THE HONORABLE RYAN C. CROCKER, UNITED STATES AMBASSADOR TO IRAQ, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE, TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY THE HONORABLE BILL DELAHUNT, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

Question:

I am writing to follow up on my questions during yesterday's Foreign Affairs hearing on Iraq.

First, I wish to thank you for committing to convey to the Iraqi Council of Ministers and the Iraqi Council of Representatives that there is a serious dispute between Members of the U.S. Congress and the Bush Administration regarding the proposed long-term bilateral agreement(s)

Specifically, it is the view of many of us in Congress, and of the vast majority of constitutional scholars who have appeared before the Subcommittee that I chair, that should the United Nations Mandate be allowed to expire at the end of this year, the continued use of force in Iraq by U.S. armed forces will require authorization by the U.S. Congress.

The Administration's position—expressed in a letter signed by Assistant Secretary of State Jeffrey Bergner after one of our hearings—is that if the UN Mandate is not renewed, there will still be authority for the U.S. to use force in Iraq.

Many of us in Congress, supported, as I noted, by the weight of constitutional scholarship, dispute that claim vigorously. The 2002 resolution authorizing the use of force against Iraq had two prongs, one to address the threat posed by the Government of Saddam Hussein, and one to enforce relevant United Nations resolutions. The first prong is gone, and the administration's claim that it continues to be in effect because of an endless threat in Iraq is absurd. The second prong would disappear with the UN Mandate.

This is what I want conveyed to the Government of Iraq: that if the Mandate is allowed to expire, and is not renewed as it has been four times before, then the potential exists for a significant constitutional confrontation within the U.S. Government.

I am obviously not asking you to adopt the Congressional position; I am simply asking you to inform the executive and legislative branches in Iraq of this dispute, so that they can make a fully informed decision.

Second, as I mentioned, I was extremely troubled by your response to Senator Hillary Clinton on April 8, which you repeated to Representative Susan Davis on April 9. Specifically, when asked whether the Iraqi government would seek approval by the Iraqi parliament, formally known as the Council of Representatives, of any long-term bilateral U.S.-Iraqi agreement(s), you responded by saying it was unclear whether there would be a formal vote in the parliament or whether it would just be read aloud.

The fact is that the Iraqi government has already made a commitment that the Council of Representatives will decide the fate of any US-Iraqi agreement(s). Hoshayr Zebari, the Iraqi Foreign Minister, said in a press conference with U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice on January 18, 2008 that, with regards to the agreement: "The final decision will rest with the representatives of Iraq, the Iraqi Council of Representatives." According to the Iraqi Constitution, international agreements must be approved by a 2/3 vote in the Council of Representatives.

Furthermore, in the Declaration of Principles, which was signed by President Bush and Prime Minister Maliki on November 26, 2007, the U.S. and Iraqi governments committed to: "Respecting and upholding the Constitution as the expression of the will of the Iraqi people and standing against any attempt to impede, suspend, or violate it."

Therefore, I request your answer in writing to the following question: if there is no formal vote in the Council of Representatives on any U.S.-Iraqi agreement(s), or if the Maliki government bypasses the Council of Representatives and approves the U.S.-Iraq long-term agreement(s) unilaterally—thus violating the Iraqi Constitution—will the Bush Administration respect the commitment to the Iraqi Constitution that it made in the Declaration of Principles, and reject any US-Iraq agreement that has not been formally approved by the Council of Representatives?

Response:

We are confident Iraq will meet its domestic legal requirements for approval of the Strategic Framework and the Status of Forces Agreement. These requirements are established by Iraqi law. We do not believe it appropriate for the United States to specify the procedures the government of Iraq must follow to meet the requirements of Iraqi law.

WRITTEN RESPONSES FROM THE HONORABLE RYAN C. CROCKER, UNITED STATES AMBASSADOR TO IRAQ, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE, TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY THE HONORABLE DIANE E. WATSON, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Question:

In January 2007, President Bush announced his new "surge" strategy. More than a year later, there is growing belief that the surge has worked. U.S. casualties are down and levels of violence, particularly in Baghdad and other urban areas, have diminished. But there has also been a distinct upswing in violence in Iraq over the past month in which attacks on military targets in Baghdad tripled. This past weekend was particularly violent during which, I understand, at least eleven U.S. soldiers lost their lives.

Despite the current overall drop in violence, I am not convinced that the surge strategy is viable or sustainable over the long term. The problem with the surge strategy—and perhaps it should be more accurately described as a tactic—is that it is not part of a larger, long-term, plan for bringing political stability to Iraq.

The surge may have brought temporary, incremental success, but I don't believe we can obtain long-term success by providing payments to tribal leaders in exchange for a lasting peace or their abiding allegiance. Instead such a tactic will buy us a temporary peace, nothing more than a lull between what will inevitably be a new round of rising sectarian violence. And we may have already witnessed the beginnings of the new round of sectarian violence as a result of what has generally been described as a poorly coordinated push into Basra.

Moreover, the current U.S. policy of purchasing peace could lead to greater long-term instability. In effect, what we may be doing, in seeking to lessen the violence, is to stoke Iraq's tribal affiliations and strengthen a warlord base in opposition to the central government. This is not a prescription for a lasting or viable peace in Iraq.

General Petraeus/Ambassador Crocker, how will what I see as current short-term security maneuvers in Iraq, as represented by the so-called surge strategy, bring long-term military and political stability to Iraq?

You have basically told the Committee here today that the American people should plan for more of the same in Iraq over the rest of the year. It is nothing more than a holding pattern. What is your strategic vision for Iraq that will stabilize the country and lead to a draw down and redeployment of U.S. forces over the next year?

It is clear that Iraqi security forces were not up to the task of standing on their own during recent military maneuvers in Basra. General Petraeus, what must be done in order for the Iraqi military to be able to stand on its own without U.S. support and why hasn't that been accomplished yet?

Response:

The surge resulted from our assessment that the intense levels of violence we witnessed in 2006 were a major factor in the inability of Iraq's leaders to make progress on a variety of difficult issues, and, in particular, issues related to political accommodation and national reconciliation. The purpose of the surge was to improve security in the short term and provide Iraq's leaders with the "breathing space" to engage in a political process that would lead to progress on these issues.

One of the contributions of the surge was to give the Iraqi government time to improve its own ability to maintain security. In 2007, Iraq added well over 100,000 additional soldiers and police to the ranks of its security forces. It is slowly increasing its capability to deploy and employ these forces.

The surge was also accompanied by the adoption of a counterinsurgency strategy intended to promote long-term security and stability. Coalition and Iraqi Forces were deployed together to safeguard the Iraqi people, to pursue Al Qaeda-Iraq, to combat criminals and militia extremists, to foster local reconciliation, and to enable political and economic progress.

The additional security provided by surge forces also amplified a growing grassroots Sunni Arab rejection of terrorist activities in western Iraq. This, in turn, led directly to heavy blows inflicted on Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), which found itself facing an increasingly hostile population. This popular rejection of AQI terrorism has in large part spread throughout Iraq and encouraged citizens to increase cooperation with Iraqi Security Forces as well as Coalition forces. The resulting relationships have laid a much-needed foundation for security cooperation and confidence that has already significantly decreased levels of violence. In the wake of recent operations in Basra, we are seeing indications of a similar rejection of extremism, violence, and lawlessness within segments of Iraq's Shi'a community.

While political progress was not as rapid and extensive as we would have liked, there has been significant improvement. The Council of Representatives passed key laws on amnesty, de-Baathification reform, provincial powers, and the national budget. We regard each of these as essential steps toward long-term stability. The extensive negotiations and willingness to compromise in the passing of the legislation are also good indicators of a maturing political dialogue that will also contribute to a more stable Iraq. Planning for provincial elections is now underway—another critical requirement for future stability.

We view the surge as a successful initiative in that it has reduced violence and permitted political progress, but it is important to remember that the current situation is fragile and the gains we have seen are reversible. We will need to base our strategy going forward on the conditions we see on the ground. Nevertheless, we are convinced that many essential components of a stable Iraq are beginning to take root, and we expect continued progress in the near future.

Question:

It is estimated that Iraq exports over 1.9 million barrels of oil per day, with revenues estimated at \$41 billion in 2007. Iraqi oil proceeds in 2008 could yield an estimated \$56 billion.

Why are we spending U.S. taxpayer dollars at the current rate when Iraq has accrued close to \$100 billion in oil revenues in 2007 and 2008? Can you tell me how much of Iraq's oil revenues have been used for reconstruction? How much of Iraq's oil revenues have been used for the Iraqi security forces?

Response:

Largely as a result of security gains from the President's military and civilian "surge" in early 2007, Iraq's oil production and exports have increased steadily over the last six months, particularly in the north. At the same time, the price at which Iraqi crude is sold on the global market has risen significantly to prices well above the \$57 per barrel projected in Iraq's 2008 budget. It is important to remember that, while production and export gains are encouraging, they can also be reversed. Thus,

while there are currently projections for a significant windfall in 2008, any number of events, such as pipeline failures, pipeline interdictions, or inclement weather, could cause average production and export levels to drop by the end of the year, decreasing the currently-projected windfall.

It is also important to note that the Government of Iraq (GOI) budgeted a combined \$91 billion for overall expenditures in 2007 and 2008. In addition to increasing allocations for reconstruction and security spending, detailed below, the majority of the GOI's budget can be categorized as operating expenditures (e.g., salaries, pensions, goods and services, social benefits, debt service).

We agree that Iraq must do more to finance its own reconstruction and security given its increasing revenues. Since 2006, the U.S. Government has been re-focusing its foreign assistance from bricks and mortar reconstruction projects to programs that boost Iraqi capacity at the national and provincial levels. At the same time, the GOI has increasingly borne the financial responsibility for Iraq's reconstruction needs. Our assistance has shifted to concentrate on people and capacity building rather than large-scale infrastructure projects, increasing the GOI's ability to provide essential services to its citizens. We are also providing humanitarian assistance to refugees and funding small, high-impact projects to support security gains by Iraqi and US military forces.

Our policy goal is to leverage remaining U.S. foreign assistance to enable the Iraqis to invest their own resources more responsibly and productively. Programs such as those carried out through Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), the Local Governance Program, and ministerial capacity building efforts are designed to support ever-increasing GOI reconstruction efforts.

The GOI has allocated greater amounts in its annual budget for reconstruction and investment each year since 2005, from \$5.0 billion in 2005 to \$13.1 billion in 2008, an increase of over 150 percent. The GOI also plans to issue a supplemental of at least \$5 billion in the coming months, some of which will be allocated for reconstruction spending. The GOI is making good on its pledges to spend this money. Capital budget execution has improved significantly at all levels of government since 2005, when the GOI spent \$1.2 billion of its \$5 billion capital budget, to an estimated \$6.3 billion out of a \$10 billion capital budget in 2007. We expect this trend to continue in 2008 given security improvements and improvements in technical capacity at all levels of government.

The GOI has also increased allocations for security ministries over the last three years, from \$2.1 billion in 2005 to \$9 billion in 2008. Security spending, like capital reconstruction spending, has improved since 2005. The Ministries of Defense and Interior spent \$2.08 billion out of a combined \$2.14 billion total allocation in 2005, and more than doubled that by 2007, during which they spent \$4.6 billion out of a combined \$7.3 billion overall allocation. Ultimately, we expect the GOI to bear the full burden of the cost of its security forces.

Question:

I am very concerned about the humanitarian crisis in Iraq from the decades of conflict and deteriorating basic services in the country. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) reports that there are over 2.7 million internally displaced people in Iraq. Although the IOM reports that the rate of displacement has fallen, the condition of those displaced is worsening. The U.N. estimates that conflict and violence since the U.S.-led invasion in 2003 have led to 151,000 civilian deaths, created tens of thousands of widows and orphans, and cut off 60% of the population from at least one essential service.

What are you doing to urge the Iraqi government to address this very serious humanitarian problem?

What do you see as the prospects for the return of those people who have been displaced?

Are you thinking about property compensation or restitution for those displaced, particularly since many of those returning will find their properties occupied by others?

How do you propose to have any kind of real political reconciliation in Iraq until these horrendous conditions are dealt with? Do you support Senators Kennedy's and Biden's calls for the White House to establish a coordinator for Iraqi refugee policy and increase funding for refugee assistance?

Response:

The United States Government (USG) and the Government of Iraq (GOI) recognize that several aspects of the humanitarian situation in Iraq need to be addressed. Three of the most pressing humanitarian issues that the GOI, USG and international community have focused attention on are: ensuring widows and children

are given assistance; providing essential resources to internally displaced persons (IDP); and, assisting countries that have accepted Iraqi refugees.

Given the fact that Iraq has historically been a very patriarchal society, the rising death toll among Iraqi men has created a unique predicament for women and orphanages. The GOI, USG, and international community have worked together to provide compensation to surviving family members to help ensure that they can purchase the necessary goods to help sustain their families. Similarly, Coalition Forces and the international community have urged the GOI to ensure that orphanages are well maintained with medical supplies, food, and water to help all Iraqi children who have been left without families.

While GOI pledged to give \$25 million to its neighboring countries that have taken in Iraqi refugees (\$15 million has been dispersed to Syria, \$2 million to Lebanon, and \$8 million pledged to Jordan), the USG continues to encourage the GOI to increase its assistance for displaced Iraqis. President Bush recently stated that the GOI needs to utilize its increasing resources in a manner that aids all Iraqis; which undoubtedly includes IDPs as well as refugees.

The U.S. Agency for International Development's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) is the lead agency on issues related to IDPs in Iraq.

State Department and USAID humanitarian assistance targeting IDPs and refugees climbed from \$43 million in fiscal year 2006 to \$171 million contributed in fiscal year 2007. Included in this program expansion is USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA)'s efforts to assist approximately 920,000 Iraqi beneficiaries, which included IDPs and host community citizens and families. OFDA funding went from \$8 million in fiscal year 2006 to \$37 million in fiscal year 2007. OFDA funds activities through five non-governmental organizations (NGO) and international organization (IO) partners to implement programs that span all of Iraq's eighteen governorates in the following sectors: health, water and sanitation, non-food relief distribution, temporary shelter improvements, income generation, host community support, protection, and IDP data collection and analysis. The State Department provided nearly \$123 million in fiscal year 2007 through IO and NGO partners to provide health, education, shelter, water and sanitation, and protection to hundreds of thousands of Iraqi refugees and conflict victims. Thus far in fiscal year 2008, the State Department and USAID have together made available a total of \$208 million in humanitarian assistance targeting IDPs and refugees. Since 2003, the USG has been the single largest contributor of humanitarian assistance for refugees and Iraqi IDPs, providing more than \$500 million to date.

The GOI, USG, and the international humanitarian assistance community have started working together to address these and other issues as they plan for the potential of large-scale returns. The GOI, the office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and other international organizations are developing a joint survey to assist in better understanding the needs of IDPs, refugees, and host communities in reference to potential large-scale returns. UNHCR, in cooperation with other International Organizations and the GOI, has started to develop the different elements of the survey. It expects to issue an interim report in the fall of 2008. The U.S. Department of State has convened an interagency working group to begin to address some of the many return-related issues.

Regarding the issue of property compensation or restitution, the GOI and the USG both recognize the psychological and physical importance of ensuring that returning IDPs can either reclaim their property or collect compensation. Property restitution/compensation ultimately is an internal Iraqi issue. However, the USG has been and will continue to engage the GOI on this and all returns-related issues.

The Administration recognizes the urgency of the Iraqi displacement situation and understands that this will affect national reconciliation in the long-term. In September 2007, the Departments of State and Homeland Security appointed senior level officials to work on Iraqi refugee issues: Secretary Rice appointed Ambassador James Foley as the Senior Coordinator for Iraqi Refugees and Secretary Chertoff appointed Lori Scialabba as his Senior Advisor on Iraqi Refugees. Ambassador Foley and Ms. Scialabba have been working closely together to facilitate and streamline the processing of Iraqi refugee cases for resettlement in the United States. The Administration is working towards resettling 12,000 Iraqi refugees in fiscal year 2008. A senior refugee coordinator has been assigned to the Embassy in Baghdad, and we have begun processing Special Immigration Visas for eligible Iraqi staff members as well as refugee cases. We also have helped to organize and have participated in international and regional meetings to focus attention on the Iraqi refugee issue. We continue to publicly and privately press for additional support for international humanitarian organizations engaged in providing support for displaced Iraqis and for governments hosting refugees.

Question:

Ambassador Crocker, I have a number of Assyrian Christians in my congressional district. I have met with them and they have reported to me that 1 in 3 Assyrian Christians is a refugee and even more are internally displaced.

In your opinion, is ethno-religious cleansing taking place with respect to the Assyrian community? What is the U.S. Government doing to protect this persecuted minority group as well as other minority groups?

Response:

The Government of Iraq is focused on improving security for all Iraqis, including Iraq's Assyrian Christian citizens and other minority groups. When the fight against al-Qaida in Iraq (AQI) shifted to the northern province of Ninewa, home to a large number of religious minorities, including Christians, Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki made it a priority to send Iraqi Security Forces to the area. Iraqi Security Forces, with support from Coalition Forces, continue their campaign to bolster security in the area. In fact, this support often deters criminal organizations from targeting and intimidating minority groups.

Our Provincial Reconstruction Team in Mosul and Coalition Forces have been working closely with the Iraqi Security Forces to ensure that Christians from the Nineveh area are recruited fairly into the Iraqi Police force. The Iraqi Police in Ninewa are in the process of filling 700 positions with Christians to serve in their own communities. By maintaining a diverse police force, Iraq will be in a better position to attend to the needs of its diverse minority communities.

WRITTEN RESPONSE FROM THE HONORABLE RYAN C. CROCKER, UNITED STATES AMBASSADOR TO IRAQ, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE, TO QUESTION SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY THE HONORABLE JOHN TANNER, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF TENNESSEE

Question:

Ambassador Crocker, at what point does a strong, centralized government in Baghdad fade from the realm of reasonable probability? What is the consequence of a decentralized government in Iraq?

Response:

When the Iraqi people ratified their new Constitution, they showed their preference for a federal state. This decision arose in part from a national desire to create a state that could not be absolutely dominated by the center, as was the case during Saddam Hussein's rule. The Iraqi Constitution provides for a federal system and the Iraqi Council of Representatives passed a law to establish mechanisms by which provinces can form regions with additional authorities. (The area of the Kurdistan Regional Government is the only region thus far.) The recent Provincial Powers Law, which grants certain powers to Iraq's provinces, constitutes another legislative mechanism for devolving authority from the center. The exact nature of Iraq's federal system and the relative strength of the central government and regional/provincial bodies remain subjects of discussion and negotiation among Iraqis, but it is clear that some degree of decentralization is desired by the Iraqi people.

The U.S. actively promotes the strengthening of governmental and non-governmental institutions throughout Iraq, in addition to assisting the central government in meeting its national responsibilities. Our Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) play a vital role in improving local governance, supporting the rule of law, promoting economic development, and building respect for human rights. PRTs build ties between the central and provincial governments that facilitate the disbursement of Iraq's national funds, another step forward in developing an effective federal system. It is our view that the marked progress occurring at the provincial level is laying the groundwork for real national reconciliation in Iraq.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE RON PAUL, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF TEXAS

Mr Chairman, I would like to thank you for calling this hearing on the current state of affairs in Iraq with General David Petraeus and Ambassador Ryan Crocker. Reviewing the presentations by our panel, I have noted with some concern that they seem more focused on justifying a future attack on Iran than reporting on progress in Iraq. Much of the assertions about Iran in Iraq seem illogical, others seem intended to inflame the situation with little justification.

Particularly, I am concerned about claims that a new enemy in Iraq has emerged with ties to Iran. First we were told that the enemy was Saddam Hussein and his Baathist Party. Then we were told the enemy was the “dead-enders” from Saddam’s former government. Then the prime enemy became “al-Qaeda in Iraq,” a prime focus of the presentation by Ambassador Crocker and General Petraeus last September. Now we are told that the new enemies are mysterious “Special Groups” that are said to have spun off from al-Sadr’s Mahdi Army.

If this phenomenon of constantly emerging enemies bent on destabilizing Iraq is accurate and our presence in Iraq keeps generating new enemies, perhaps the problem is the occupation itself. If this is the case, doesn’t it make sense that our departure from Iraq may actually have a stabilizing effect?

I suspect these allegations that Iranian-supported “Special Groups” are now the prime enemy are in reality designed to provide an excuse for a planned US attack on Iran or are meant as justification for a permanent US military presence in Iraq.

It makes little sense to assert that Iran is funding militias to undermine the Iraqi government. The current Iraqi government may have been approved by the United States, but essentially it was made in Iran. The leading political parties of Iraq, the DAWA and the Supreme Islamic Iraqi Council have close ties to Iran. Leaders of these parties were in exile in Iran until the US invasion of Iraq. Iranian president Ahmadinejad is warmly welcomed in Baghdad by Iraqi Prime Minister Maliki. Why would Iran set up militias in the south to destabilize a government with such strong Iranian ties? I find the allegation that Iran just cannot tolerate an elected government next door to be unsatisfying, particularly considering that Iran itself regularly holds elections where a wide variety of political parties compete for power.

It is alleged that the rockets fired into the Green Zone during the recent clashes in Baghdad and Basra were made in 2007 in Iran. Is it not true, however, that if the Iranian government were to actually arm the Iraqi militias, these groups would have more modern weapons to counter U.S. helicopter gunships and heavy tanks? Is there any hard proof that the Iranian government is arming groups in Iraq? There are reports that thousands of US weapons have gone missing in Iraq. If some of these turn up in the hands of insurgents, would it make sense to suggest that the US government is intentionally arming them?

In fact, there is plenty of evidence that Iran is trying to prevent the further destabilization of Iraq, which makes sense considering that Iran is next door and would keenly feel the effects of an Iraq fallen into civil war. The Associated Press reported yesterday that the Iranian government has condemned attacks on the “Green Zone” in Iraq. According to other press reports, the government of Iran brokered a ceasefire after recent Iraqi government moves against elements of al-Sadr’s Mahdi Army in Basra.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to conclude by again stating my concern that the real purpose of today’s testimony is to further set the stage for an attack on Iran. Congress should make it very clear that there is no authority under current law for an attack on Iran. It is in our best interest to talk with Iran and to work with Iran to help stabilize the situation in Iraq. It is also in our immediate interest to remove US forces from Iraq as quickly as it is safe to do so.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE GENE GREEN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF TEXAS

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this important hearing. I would like to welcome General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker here today and more importantly thank you for your service to our country.

Despite your continuing efforts and the efforts of our brave men and women in the armed services, the situation in Iraq is still dismal.

General Petraeus, on March 13, 2008, you told a group of journalists that U.S. officials believe that the Iraqi government’s progress on national reconciliation and its conditions of public services have been insufficient to date. In addition, the Iraqi government continues to fail to meet the eighteen benchmarks that were tied to funding authorized by the 2007 supplemental appropriations act. On September 4, 2007 the Government Accountability Office released a critical assessment of Iraq’s progress towards these eighteen political and military benchmarks. While the Iraqi government has made some headway since September, political conflict between provincial leaders and the Maliki government as well as Sunni/Shia tensions continue to thwart most progress. The fact that Muqtada al-Sadr was better able to affect events in Basra than the Iraqi government shows how little influence the Iraqi government has outside of Baghdad. The Administration’s strategy toward the Iraqi government is not working.

I am also concerned about the state of the military and the impact of Iraq on our war-fighting ability. CIA Director Michael Hayden recently said that a terrorist attack against the United States would most certainly originate from the Afghan-Pakistan border region. Yet, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Adm. Michael Mullen, has indicated that we do not have enough troops in Afghanistan, and that we do not have the ability to send more because of the demands of the Iraq War. Because of this, our efforts against Al Qaeda in Afghanistan are threatened. As I have said before, this indefinite, open-ended commitment of our resources and troops cannot continue.

Yet, General Petraeus, in your Senate testimony yesterday you recommend that we implement an open-ended suspension of U.S. troop withdrawals this summer due to the recent upsurge in violence. However, there are many accounts that areas that are currently stable, are apt to revert into violent, unstable areas at any time. The Iraqi government must be held accountable and forced to make progress, or we should start redeploying our troops. We cannot continue to police a civil war that is depleting our military resources and hampering our ability to recruit and maintain experienced military personnel. Yet the Administration continues to send us funding requests that do just that.

I look forward to the testimony from General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker today, and I again thank the chairman for holding this hearing.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE MIKE PENCE, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF INDIANA

I welcome back our distinguished witnesses and I thank you both for your extraordinary service to this country. During each of my last two visits to Iraq I was hosted by our esteemed witnesses. I am glad to return the favor in welcoming them today.

Tragic events ebb and flow in Iraq. There is the constant threat of bloodshed and instability. But the direction is also unmistakable. Because of the surge and because of newfound cooperation by Sunni Arabs, we are making significant progress in Iraq but that progress is not irreversible. It is still possible to squander those hard fought gains by overconfidence on the battlefield or by initiating a reckless and precipitous withdrawal.

What I saw first hand in my last two trips to Iraq is born out in the testimony of our witnesses today. Despite the unwillingness of many in Washington to accept it, the surge is working. Significant military and political progress has been achieved during the past 15 months, but the fight is far from over.

General Petraeus has made repeated references to the "fragile" nature of our successes. I welcome his candor and modesty, but fragile progress is not insignificant progress. And fragile progress is not unmeasurable progress. Violence in Iraq in the form of sectarian attacks, civilian and military casualties have been dramatically reduced since the advent of the surge and the American people deserve to know that. However fragile, our gains in Iraq have been substantial and I commend our witnesses for their parts in bringing about this transformational change in Iraq.

I recall the debate we had on the House floor last year about the President's decision to surge forces in Iraq with new commanders and new tactics. Many current leaders in Congress opposed the surge. Many said the surge would not work, that the war was "lost."

Because they believed the surge would not work, many said the only way forward in Iraq was backward to retreat and withdrawal. But as our witnesses attest today, the surge is working and the progress, while fragile, has been significant and has paved the way for measurable political progress in Iraq.

Not all the trends in Iraq are to my liking, to be sure. I share everyone's concerns about the pace of reform by the Iraqi government and the problem of corruption.

I yield to no one in my concern for the expenditure of scarce taxpayer resources. I authored an amendment in 2003 to the Iraq supplemental funding bill, calling for all reconstruction to take the form of a loan. I still support this. But focusing on dollar amounts without a view of the overall security situation is short-sighted.

Practically everyone in Congress has correctly praised our troops' sacrifice and heroism. Almost all of us have lamented the heavy burden, the operational tempo, required to sustain repeated deployments in support of the War on Terror. Mobilization of the National Guard and Reserve components affect virtually every congressional district, including mine in Indiana. There have been heartbreaking sacrifices in the lives of thousands of American families. But we must not permit those sacrifices to have been in vain.

To those who clamor for retreat, to those who call for withdrawal before this work is completed, I ask "At what cost?" At what cost are we willing to accept a politically motivated retreat? What losses are we ready to accept? Loss of security? Loss of prestige? The loss of more lives? Loss of blood-bought freedoms for the Iraqi people?

Let there be no mistake about the consequences of failure in Iraq. The void created by an untimely American departure, will not be left void. It will be filled. We know it will not be filled by friends of freedom and democracy. And whatever errors or flaws we have witnessed in our strategy to-date, they will pale in comparison to the tragedy and destruction awaiting us and the Iraqi people if we fail to bring this matter to a successful conclusion.

To turn our backs on a widening American success at this critical time would ensure a widening conflict, expanding tyranny and growing human misery.

America has always had to make the hard decisions in defense of liberty. Ours is a noble tradition of running into the burning building while others are running out. Our forefathers and our men and women in the field today know why they sacrifice even when some forget. Again, we are faced with difficult decisions. Experts will debate which strategies worked and which ones did not, but history will judge either our resolve in the battle against freedom's foes, or it will record our retreat and the human tragedy which followed.

Mr. Chairman, at this critical hour, we must show the patience of a diplomat and the perseverance of a soldier. On behalf of our national interest and in defense of the cause of liberty, we must advance, not retreat. We must advance with responsible diplomatic efforts and advance with reasonable security measures. Strategies may change, but our resolve must not. This is our duty.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE SHEILA JACKSON LEE, A REPRESENTATIVE
IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF TEXAS

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 would like to begin by thanking you for your exemplary service to our nation. I had the opportunity to meet with you both in Iraq last month, and I thank you for traveling to Washington to appear before us today, on the fifth anniversary of the capture of Baghdad by U.S. forces. 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.

We have achieved the military goals laid out by the 2002 Resolution.

In 2002, when I voted against the Joint Resolution to Authorize the Use of United States Armed Forces Against Iraq, I did so because I believed that this would be a war without end. I believed this resolution would trap us in a conflict that, like the Vietnam war, would consume American resources and lives without tangible yield. Unfortunately for the people of both this country and Iraq, I was right. The 2002 Resolution that provided the authorization for the use of military force in Iraq, and authorized the President to:

- "(1) defend the national security of the United States against the continuing threat posed by Iraq; and
- (2) enforce all relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions regarding Iraq."

Specifically, the resolution called for the disarming of any weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, removal of the rogue Iraqi regime, the capture of any al-Qaeda operatives in Iraq, as well as the promotion of democracy in Iraq.

Mr. Chairman, our troops have achieved extraordinary military success in Iraq, toppling the regime of Saddam Hussein in only 21 days, assuring the world that Iraq does not possess weapons of mass destruction, assisting the Iraqis in holding free elections, and setting the nation on a path toward democracy. However, while our troops have achieved the objectives for which they were sent to Iraq, they are now caught in the midst of a sectarian conflict. Unfortunately, there is no military solution to Iraq's ongoing political and sectarian conflicts. This is a war without end. Though President Bush continues to rely on a strategy that seeks to stabilize and reconcile Iraq by force, only the Iraqi government can secure a lasting peace. Thus far, the Iraqi government has demonstrated an inability or an unwillingness to deliver on the political benchmarks that they themselves agreed were essential to achieving national reconciliation, which was the rationale and stated objective of the surge.

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. Moreover, the surge has consolidated power with local sectarian leaders precisely because the central government has proven ineffectual. Our military has already paid too heavy a price for this Administration's ill-advised and poorly planned war effort in Iraq.

H.R. 4020 the "Military Success in Iraq Commemoration Act of 2007"

Because I feel it is time that we recognize the success of our nation's armed forces, I have introduced H.R. 4020, the "Military Success in Iraq Commemoration Act of 2007." This legislation recognizes the extraordinary performance of the Armed Forces in achieving the military objectives of the United States in Iraq as expressed by the Congressional mandate allowing for use of force, encourages the President to issue a proclamation calling upon the people of the United States to observe a national day of celebration commemorating the military success of American troops in Iraq.

Most importantly, my legislation provides affirmative and tangible expressions of appreciation from a grateful nation to all veterans of the war in Iraq. It authorizes the Secretary of Defense to award grants to State and local governments "to conduct suitable activities commemorating military success in Iraq" and "to create appropriate memorials honoring those who lost their lives securing military success in Iraq." My legislation sets up grants for veterans of Operation Iraqi Freedom, stating "the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall award to each veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom a grant in the amount of \$5,000. The purpose of that grant is to facilitate the veteran's transition to civilian life." I am pleased that thirteen of my colleagues have already signed onto this important legislation.

Mr. Chairman, I also introduced similar legislation, H.R.930, the "Military Success in Iraq And Diplomatic Surge for National and Political Reconciliation in Iraq Act of 2007," that called for a surge in U.S. diplomatic efforts. I firmly believe that the conflict in Iraq will not be resolved by an increased military presence, and it is time that the United States government recognize the immense need for increased political and diplomatic engagement and pressure.

The surge has not been successful.

Recent weeks have witnessed some of the most intense fighting since January 2007, calling claims that the surge has successfully quelled violence into question. Whether or not one accepts that the surge has achieved its military objectives, however, the underlying rationale for the military surge was not merely that increased numbers of U.S. troops in Iraq would improve the security situation. Instead, the surge was based on the assumption that a reduction in violence and increased security would create time and space for the Iraqi government to make significant progress toward effective governance, national reconciliation, and economic development. This desired progress has not occurred.

On March 19, 2008, as a nation, we marked the fifth anniversary of the U.S. invasion of Iraq. Less than a week later, four American soldiers were killed in a roadside bombing, bringing us to another grim milestone: 4,000 U.S. troops killed in Iraq. As the death toll continues to rise, it is increasingly clear that these deaths are reflections of the Bush Administration's misconstrued and mismanaged war effort. The Administration's 'Stay the Course Strategy' has not helped the nation of Iraq establish a stable government, nor has it fostered reconciliation among warring Iraqi factions. Despite the surge in American troops, insecurity and instability remain endemic in Iraq.

The American people do not support this war. According to a CNN-Opinion Research Corp. poll conducted on the eve of the five-year anniversary, only 32% of Americans support the conflict in Iraq. In addition, 61% stated they want the next president to redeploy most U.S. troops out of Iraq within a few months of taking office. Together with many of my Democratic colleagues, I will continue to listen to the American people, and to push for the redeployment of U.S. forces from Iraq.

Meanwhile, conditions on the ground in Iraq continue to deteriorate. Last month, I traveled to Iraq, where I had the opportunity to meet with top leaders and officials, as well as the brave men and women of our Armed Forces. My exchanges with the people of Iraq and our service members on the ground reinforced my belief that the long-term solution to Iraq's instability, insecurity, and persistent sectarian conflict is diplomatic, and that continued military operations, however tactically successful, will never bring about the necessary ethnic, religious, and sectarian reconciliation.

Today, I believe we all must ask a number of fundamental and crucially important questions. In the absence of the political reconciliation repeatedly promised by the Bush Administration, how long will we ask our troops to sacrifice their lives for an Iraqi government that has, thus far, proven unwilling and/or unable to secure the future of its own nation? When will we say that a price tag of \$600 billion dollars (and rising) is too much? When will we finally work together to bring our troops safely home?

Lack of Iraqi Governance/Political Progress

While many analysts acknowledge a decline in violence in Iraq from the peak levels of mid-2007, an increased sense of security in Baghdad, and a marked decrease in U.S. casualties from last year's peaks, numerous experts have argued that claims that these facts point to the success of the surge are dangerously inaccurate. In a soon-to-be published report, Steven Simon, a Senior Fellow for Middle Eastern Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations, writes that such claims "misconstrue the causes of the recent fall in violence and, more important, ignore a fatal flaw in the strategy."

While the surge has likely been one factor leading to a short-term reduction in violence, it has also undermined the Iraqi government by arming and funding Sunni insurgent groups not loyal to Baghdad. U.S. actions appear to have further complicated already serious tensions between Sunni groups, rather than creating the President's desired sustainable framework based on "bottom-up reconciliation." The Center for American Progress writes, "the measures taken to achieve [short-term security progress] have exacerbated Iraq's internal divisions and tensions over the long term," pointing to, in particular, the provision of U.S. funds to approximately 91,000 predominately Sunni militiamen across Iraq, many of whom have little or no allegiance to Iraq's central government. The U.S. continues to back these "Sons of Iraq," local security volunteers tasked with manning checkpoints, protecting critical infrastructure, and providing information about suspicious activity. I am concerned about the future these volunteers, who, if they are not ultimately incorporated into either the security structure or civilian jobs, could potentially form new militias and pose a threat to any stability Iraq might achieve.

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. Last September's GAO report illustrated that the surge had not, as the President hoped, helped Iraq meet the eighteen benchmarks. Since that time, progress has been extremely lackluster, and meaningful political reconciliation has yet to occur. The United States Institute of Peace writes, in a recent report on the Iraqi parliament, "the laws that it has passed, such as de-Baathification reform and provincial powers, are vague, and much will depend on their implementation." The USIP report goes on to state "The benchmarks were intended to serve as proxy indicators for a broader 'national reconciliation.' The benchmarks have not succeeded in this regard . . . Political progress is slow, halting, and superficial."

These laws passed by the Iraqi parliament, and cited by the Bush Administration as evidence of significant progress, do not, by themselves, represent a major step forward. The wording of all three laws is exceptionally vague and has raised more questions than it has answers. The De-Baathification Reform law, passed January 12, 2008, may, in the eyes of many experts, lead to the purging of *more* Baathists from the government than before and may actually hinder reconciliation rather than promoting it.

The Amnesty Law, passed February 13, 2008, provides for the amnesty of 5,000 "non-terrorist" detainees, and is also vaguely worded. Its implementation remains uncertain, with militias reluctant to disarm and the government reportedly worried about potentially accelerating the Sunni insurgency.

The third piece of legislation approved recently, the Provincial Powers law, was intended to satisfy the benchmark calling for increased provincial devolution; however, it represents only the beginning of a process that is supposed to lead to provincial elections on October 1, 2008, was passed on February 13, 2008. The success of this initiative, and of the scheduled elections, requires not only the passage of additional legislation and the appointment of the requisite election commission members, but also party leadership at the local level, which is currently absent. Other legislation required by the benchmarks, such as an oil distribution law, has not yet been passed. Even General Petraeus stated, on March 13, that "No one [in the U.S. and Iraqi governments] feels that there has been sufficient progress by any means in the area of national reconciliation.

Mr. Chairman, we can endlessly debate what role the President's surge strategy may have played in decreasing levels of violence in Baghdad and other targeted re-

gions of the country. Unfortunately, no amount of military prowess can resolve Iraq's most serious problems. Larger numbers of U.S. troops have not, and will never, be successful in unifying and strengthening the Iraqi government. Any tactical success of the surge aside, a stable and unified Iraq is today more elusive than it was before the surge in U.S. troops.

Cost of War: Lives and Resources

As a nation, we have already paid an enormous price for the war in Iraq. We have squandered an exponentially increasing amount of money, and, worst of all, lost an unacceptably large number of American lives. However, the over 4000 U.S. casualties and the \$3,919 per second (\$123.6 billion per year) we are spending in Iraq have bought neither peace nor security.

Nearly 1.7 million U.S. troops have been deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan since September 2001, and, of these, more than 599,000 have been deployed more than once. From my state of Texas alone, 211,377 brave men and women in uniform have been deployed since 2001, with 33,690 currently deployed, as of February 29, 2008. Soldiers on their second, third, and fourth deployments, according to a study by the Army's Mental Health Advisory Team, commonly report "low morale, more mental health problems, and more stress-related work problems." The same study found that 27% of noncommissioned officers on their third or fourth tour exhibited symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder.

Ret. Admiral William Fallon (USN), the former Commander of U.S. Central Command, testified before the House Armed Services Committee last month that, ". . . I think that our troops are in need of a change in the deployment cycle. We've had too many, from my experience, of several of our key segments of the troop population—senior NCOs, mid to junior officers—on multiple rotations. I look at my commanders, and some of them have logged more months in Iraq in the last decade than they have at home by a significant amount."

General Petraeus's recommendation that troop redeployments be paused after initial withdrawals in July would leave approximately 140,000 American troops in Iraq through the summer. According to military sources, the Joint Chiefs of Staff have expressed serious concerns about the toll of the conflict on our Armed Forces. The percentage of troops sent back to Iraq for repeat deployments is likely only to increase in coming months.

The war in Iraq continues to consume the increasingly limited reserves of our military. General Richard Cody, Army Vice Chief of Staff told the New York Times last week, "Our readiness is being consumed as fast as we build it . . . Lengthy and repeated deployments with insufficient recovery time have placed incredible stress on our soldiers and our families, testing the resolve of our all-volunteer force like never before." Mr. Chairman, we simply cannot continue on our current trajectory, which is not only abhorrent but also physically impossible; we have neither the money nor the man-power.

The biggest tragedy of the war in Iraq has been the deaths of so many of our brave sons and daughters, with the prospect of peace still remaining out of reach. As of April 8, 2008, the Department of Defense reported that 4,017 American servicemembers have been killed since the beginning of the war. In addition, an estimated 29,676 service members have been wounded in Iraq, and, as of March 1st, more than 31,300 have been treated for non-combat injuries and illness. Of that unspeakable number, 373 Texans have been killed and 2,863 wounded in Operation Iraqi Freedom, in addition to the 29 Texans killed and 157 wounded in Operation Enduring Freedom.

Mr. Chairman, our troops have done everything we asked of them, yet those who return do not receive adequate care or recognition. Many of the 750,000 troops who have been discharged since the war in Iraq began suffer compromised mental or physical health. An estimated 260,000 have been treated at veterans' health facilities, 200,000 have received some level of care from walk-in facilities, and 100,000 have been diagnosed as having mental health conditions.

In addition to the tragic loss of life in Iraq, we have expended vast amounts of money to prolong the war effort. According to the Congressional Research Services, we are currently spending \$10.3 billion a month on the war in Iraq. This translates into \$339 million every single day, each dollar of which represents a missed opportunity to invest in critical priorities here at home. For the cost of one day of warfare in Iraq, we could hire 2,060 more Border Patrol agents to protect our borders; give 18,000 more students Pell Grants, enabling them to attend college; provide 48,000 homeless veterans with a place to live; provide needed nutrition to 480,000 women, infants, and children; or provide vaccinations to 317,000 more children. For the \$339 million we are spending each and every day in Iraq, we could provide the 2.6 million

Americans currently without adequate health insurance with access to medical and dental care at community health centers.

While the U.S. economy is facing a recession, our ability to implement a full-scale economic stimulus package has been hampered by the enormous government expenditures on the war efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan. As Members of the House of Representatives, it is our duty to ensure the security of the American people, both fiscally and physically. American economists agree that the outrageous funds America has spent on the ill-advised war efforts has hit Americans hard, within their homes and at the gas pumps. Joseph Stiglitz, Columbia University Professor and winner of the Nobel Prize for Economic, reiterated last month, "There is no such thing as a free lunch, and there is no such thing as a free war. The Iraq adventure has seriously weakened the U.S. economy, whose woes go far beyond loose mortgage lending. You can't spend \$3 trillion—yes, \$3 trillion—on a failed war abroad and not feel the pain at home."

As a Member of the New Direction Congress, I refuse to rubber-stamp this administration's irresponsible spending on the war. We need to be focusing our funds on ensuring that our veterans are taken care of when they get home, we must ensure that our veterans have a home to return to, and we must stand up and hold this administration and its representatives accountable for their spending.

Humanitarian Situation

Mr. Chairman, the war in Iraq has created an immense humanitarian emergency. 43% of Iraqis suffer from "absolute poverty," 70% have no access to clean water, and 80% lack access to effective sanitation. As many as 4.5 million Iraqis, or nearly one in five of the nation's residents, have been displaced due to violence. This includes 2.3 million Iraqi refugees and 2.2 million Iraqis displaced within Iraq itself, and these Iraqis are particularly vulnerable, facing dire conditions and a desperate struggle to survive. I feel very strongly that the United States must seek out ways that it can do more to alleviate this growing crisis.

The displaced Iraqi population is quite unique. It is a predominantly urban population, with 36% of IDPs reportedly living in Baghdad. Those displaced to neighboring countries are also primarily living in urban centers, rather than camps. This seriously compromises the ability of humanitarian aid organizations to deliver much needed services.

Iraqis have primarily fled to Syria, which currently hosts over 1 million Iraqi refugees, and Jordan, which has absorbed 500,000. The vast majority of countries in the region are not signatories to the 1951 Refugee Convention, and the Iraqis who have fled to these countries are not afforded the rights and protections of refugees. Meanwhile, the ever-increasing sectarian violence is causing immense daily challenges for Iraqis. In addition to the millions already displaced, an Iraqi Red Crescent Organization predicts that an additional 80,000 to 100,000 persons are displaced each month. Iraq has become a humanitarian disaster, and one that continues to get worse every day.

Women and children are particularly vulnerable. Some 80% of the displaced are women and children, and, as a result of four years of high Iraqi casualties (the majority of whom have been male), many households are now headed by women. Because many of the women who have fled to Syria are barred from seeking legal employment, thousands have been forced into prostitution to support themselves and their children.

As Chair of the Congressional Children's Caucus, I am particularly disturbed that, according to UNHCR, a total of 2 million Iraqi children are displaced. Furthermore, 28% of Iraqi children are malnourished. Displaced Iraqi children are particularly vulnerable. Iraqi children are not allowed to enroll in school in Syria, and over 90% of school age children in Jordan cannot afford to attend school. In all, over 800,000 may now be out of school, and many children instead go to work as child laborers to help support their families.

I am particularly appalled that, in the midst of this enormous refugee crisis, the President's FY 2009 budget request includes deep cuts for refugee programs. The Administration's request of \$764 million for refugee assistance would represent a cut of \$260 million, or 25.4%, in comparison with last year's totals, and would likely require expanded funding to be appropriated through a supplemental request. With the increasing number of refugees globally, and ongoing conflicts not only in Iraq but also in Sudan, Afghanistan, Somalia, and elsewhere producing ever-growing numbers of people fleeing violence and instability, it is extremely irresponsible and morally reprehensible that the Bush Administration plans to decrease funding for refugees.

Mr. Chairman, the enormous number of displaced Iraqis is both a serious problem in itself and a symptom of ongoing violence and instability in Iraq. I believe that

it is important that we address both of these serious issues, that we work to meet the needs of those already displaced, and to prevent further displacement by working to create a more secure environment within Iraq. So long as sectarian violence continues unabated, the pattern of population displacement too will continue to accelerate. Experts recognize that the ability of the international community to effectively address the displaced persons issue. Reconciliation will also augment the ability of the Iraqi government to build their capacity to provide security, as well as basic services, for those returning to their homes.

Weakening our National Security

As a Senior Member and subcommittee Chairwoman on the Committee on Homeland Security, I am also particularly concerned that 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 homeland. Nearly seven years have passed since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and President Bush has not caught the perpetrator, Osama bin-Laden. Instead, he has diverted us from the real war on terror to the war of his choice in Iraq.

Last week, the Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia, of which I am a Member, heard testimony on "Strategic Chaos and Taliban Resurgence in Afghanistan" from a distinguished panel that included U.S. retired Lieutenant General David W. Barno. After listening to the Lieutenant General describe the acute need for more U.S. resources in Afghanistan, the first front in the war on terrorism, I asked whether the United States would ever be able to meet its commitments in Afghanistan if we keep pouring lives and resources into Iraq. Lt. General Barno emphasized that Iraq continues to be an enormous drain on our military, and that our involvement in Iraq is significantly hindering our ability to effectively fight terrorism in Afghanistan.

Lt. General Barno is not the only one to have expressed this grim reality. Admiral Michael Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, has stated, "so, should we be in a position where more troops are removed from Iraq, the possibility of sending additional troops [to Afghanistan]—where we need them, clearly—certainly is a possibility. But it's really going to be based on the availability of troops. We don't have troops—particularly the Brigade Combat Team size—sitting on the shelf, ready to go."

Mr. Chairman, according to a National Intelligence Estimate released in July 2007, Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan and the area along the Pakistan border has regained its strength over the past several years. The NIE, entitled "The Terrorist Threat to the U.S. Homeland," projected Al-Qaeda's strength in the region to be comparable to its pre-9/11 abilities. According to testimony by Director of National Intelligence Mike McConnell, delivered in February, Afghanistan's President Hamid Karzai's government controls only one-third of the country. The rest, ominously, is controlled by either the Taliban or local tribal leaders. Similarly, the United Nations reports a sharp increase in insurgent and terrorist violence in Afghanistan during 2007, resulting in an estimated 8,000 conflict-related deaths and an average of 566 incidents per month. As stated by General James Conway, Commandant of the Marine Corps, we "cannot have one foot in Afghanistan and one foot in Iraq."

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. It is becoming painfully clear that the war in Iraq, and in particular the President's troop surge, has vastly diminished our military readiness. According to Retired Major General Arnold Punaro, of the Commission on the National Guard and Reserves, "We think there is an appalling gap in readiness for homeland defense, because it will be the Guard and reserve that have to respond to these things."

Mr. Chairman, General Richard Cody, Army Vice Chief of Staff, stated earlier this month that "When the five-brigade surge went in . . . that took all the stroke out of the shock absorbers for the United States Army . . . I've never seen our lack of strategic depth be where it is today." He is far from alone in his views. 88% of current and former military officers surveyed by Foreign Policy magazine and the Center for New American Security believe that the Iraqi war has "stretched the U.S. military dangerously thin," while 60% say that the U.S. military is weaker than it was five years ago.

Mr. Chairman, according to the Department of Defense, over 468,500 members of the National Guard and reserves have been deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan, 26,386 of whom hail from my home state of Texas. Nearly one quarter of these brave Americans have been deployed more than once. One year ago, the Commission

on the National Guard and Reserves determined that 88% of Army National Guard units were not prepared to fight, and a February 2008 GAO report found that even fewer are combat-ready today. Last week, Army Vice Chief of Staff Richard Cody testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee that the Army “no longer has fully ready combat brigades on standby should a threat or conflict occur.” According to Army estimates, it will cost between \$12 and \$13 billion a year for at least two years to replace, repair, and rebuild equipment lost or destroyed in the war.

While the Administration billed the war in Iraq as being crucial to the international war on terrorism, these facts clearly illustrate that, far from enhancing our national security, the war in Iraq has made us, as a nation, less secure. The open ended U.S. military commitment to Iraq has weakened our ability to fight terrorism in Afghanistan, and to respond to any emerging threats around the globe.

Declaration of Principles: An Executive Agreement

Like many of my colleagues, I am concerned about the form any long-term U.S. commitment to Iraq will take, as well as the content of any such agreement. The governments of Iraq and the United States recently announced their intention to forge a “strategic framework agreement,” a long-term, bilateral pact, to be completed by July 31, 2008. This negotiated agreement is to be based on the “Declaration of Principles for a Long-Term Relationship of Cooperation and Friendship Between the Republic of Iraq and the United States of America,” signed November 26, 2007, by Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki and President Bush. Under the terms of this Declaration of Principles, the “strategic framework agreement” will replace the UN mandate, now set to expire at the end of 2008, and it will terminate other obligations, placed on Iraq by the UN Security Council since 1990.

Under the Declaration of Principles, the parties will negotiate a security agreement, which will provide for U.S. support of the Iraqi government and Security Forces in their efforts to provide security and stability and to fight al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups. The Declaration of Principles envisions an agreement setting forth a wide-ranging set of commitments, which will cover issues including politics, economics, and security. However, it is not clear whether this agreement will take the form of a treaty or some other type of international compact.

The Declaration of Principles contains provisions for ongoing U.S. security commitment, which seem to imply the U.S. will remain engaged in combat operations, on behalf of the Iraqi government, against both foreign and internal adversaries. The extent of these security commitments is not clear. General Douglas Lute, President Bush’s special Deputy National Security Advisor for Iraq and Afghanistan, has stated that the issue of permanent U.S. bases on Iraqi soil will be one of the issues that must be negotiated between the two nations.

Yesterday, Ambassador Crocker indicated, in response to questions from the Senate Armed Services Committee, that the Administration intends to negotiate this as an Executive Agreement, which would not be subject to congressional approval. I am extremely concerned about the direction of U.S. policy in Iraq, and the future of U.S. commitments. I am also very worried about the Administration’s apparent desire to circumvent congressional approval and oversight, as well as the still-open question of the establishment of permanent U.S. bases in Iraq, to which I am strongly opposed.

Reconstruction: U.S. v. Iraq Commitments

Though much of Iraq’s infrastructure now lies in ruins, the country still has an immense abundance of energy resources. In proven oil reserves, Iraq ranks behind only Saudi Arabia and Canada, though the exact extent of its reserves remains controversial. Most estimates are in the range of 115 billion barrels, with approximately 65% located in the southern fields, particularly the Rumalia fields. In addition to known reserves, with only about 10% of Iraq having been adequately explored for oil to date, many experts estimate that large additional reserves may be located in the Western Desert region.

Mr. Chairman, given the vast natural resources possessed by the Iraqi nation, I am concerned that the United States has paid and continues to pay a disproportionate amount for Iraq reconstruction, especially when the Iraqi government reportedly has a \$25–30 billion budget surplus this year. To date the United States has appropriated more than \$45 billion for Iraq reconstruction. American funded reconstruction programs have included: the training and equipping of Iraqi security forces; construction of road, sanitation, electric power, oil production, and other infrastructure; and a range of programs to offer expert advice to the Iraqi government, establish business centers, provide school books and vaccinations, finance village development projects, and promote civil liberties.

Mr. Chairman, Iraq is a resource-rich nation. Though still facing problems including a lack of technology, damage from previous mismanagement, the effects of looting, and water intrusion, Iraqi oil production is currently at around 2 million barrels per day. The price of oil has skyrocketed to over \$100 a barrel and Iraqi oil exports are generating an estimated \$56.4 billion this year alone (according to the GAO), yet it is U.S. taxpayers who continue to foot the bill for Iraqi reconstruction. The government of Iraq is stashing its money in global banks, including a reported \$30 billion in the U.S., instead of investing this money in the development of crucial Iraqi infrastructure. Why is the United States financing these projects when the Iraqi government is capable of providing the funds?

Conclusion

Mr. Chairman, as I have said before, we are fighting a war without end in Iraq. 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. 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.

