

Negroponte Discusses Iraq

John Negroponte was named by President Bush to be U.S. Ambassador to Iraq and confirmed by the Senate May 6, 2004. In this interview, he describes the main mission of the U.S. embassy as helping the Iraqi people take control of their own affairs. The Embassy will play a supportive, not commanding role.

Q: What is your Mission Statement as the new U.S. Ambassador to Iraq?

A: I am honored to serve as the new U.S. Ambassador to Iraq and am looking forward to working with the dedicated men and women who will be serving in our new Embassy.

Our mission will be to help the sovereign government and people of Iraq take control of their own affairs and rebuild their country. The new U.S. Embassy will be a supportive rather than commanding presence on the ground, providing policy direction and coordination for all U.S. Government activities in Iraq except for U.S. forces.

Q: What will be your new Embassy's role in Iraqi democratization and economic development?

A: In partnership with the Iraqi people, the U.S. Embassy will support democratization and rule of law, promote economic development and support efforts to restore security and eliminate terrorism. The United States is also providing unprecedented funding and reconstruction assistance to help Iraq achieve a level of prosperity commensurate with its natural and human resources and proud history.

Q: Looking ahead, what do you see as your greatest challenges?

A: There are two primary challenges ahead of our Embassy staff. One is supporting political stability. We will help the Iraqi people establish a forward momentum for their new democracy and political development. Another challenge is security. In coordination with the U.S. and coalition military, we will seek to expand and improve the training of Iraqi forces—including their civil defense, police and military.

Q: What will be the role of the United States in the upcoming elections?

A: We commend the hard work of the United Nations elections team, headed by Carina Perelli, in preparing the groundwork for the Iraqi elections.

The U.S. Embassy will work with the Iraqi people, the independent Electoral Commission, and the UN as Iraq prepares voter rolls, trains election workers, designates polling stations and distributes ballots for parliamentary elections to be held by January 31 of next year.

Q: What is your vision of Iraq in the future?

A: As President Bush has said, a prosperous, stable and democratic Iraq is central to the peace and stability of the region. All of our efforts over the past year have sought to support the Iraqi people achieve this goal and ensure that the new, free Iraq will be a constructive presence in the region, with a government at peace with its neighbors and its own citizens.

John Negroponte

John Negroponte was named by President Bush to take over as U.S. ambassador to Iraq at the new embassy to be set up in Baghdad in July. Currently chief U.S. envoy to the United Nations, he was sworn in to that post on September 18, 2001, just after the terrorist attacks on Washington and New York.

Negroponte has served for 37 years in the Department of State as a career diplomat. He had eight different assignments abroad including membership in the U.S. delegation to the Paris Peace Talks on Vietnam in 1968 through 1969.

He served as ambassador to Honduras, 1981-1985; ambassador to Mexico, 1989-1993; and ambassador to the Philippines, 1993-1996. From 1996 to 1997 he was special negotiator for the post-1999 U.S. presence in Panama.

He also served as deputy assistant secretary of state for oceans and fisheries affairs from 1976 through 1979 and was deputy assistant secretary of state for East Asia and Pacific affairs in 1980. President Reagan named Negroponte deputy



assistant to the president for national security affairs under General Colin Powell when the future secretary of state was the national security advisor.

From 1997 until he was called back to national service by President Bush in 2001, Negroponte was executive vice president for global markets of the McGraw-Hill Companies.