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SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3204

September 5, 2007

The Honorable George W. Bush  
The White House  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

In the wake of your recent trip to Iraq and as your Administration prepares to submit its Congressionally-mandated report on progress in Iraq by September 15, it is important that the American people have an accurate perception of the situation in Iraq. In order to provide a complete picture to the American people of current conditions in Iraq, I write to request that the Administration's report address the issues listed below and that General Petraeus, the Commander, Multi-National Forces-Iraq (MNF-I) and Ambassador Ryan Crocker, the U.S. Ambassador to Iraq, be prepared to discuss these issues when they appear before Congress prior to the delivery of the September 15 report.

- 1) When you announced the escalation of U.S. forces in Iraq, you said that the increase would provide the Iraqis with the "space" necessary for political reconciliation. Why has the increase in U.S. forces in Iraq not translated to the desired reconciliation effect that would facilitate the passage of meaningful legislation including equitable distribution of oil resources and revenues, constitutional reform, militia disarmament programs, and scheduling of local and provincial elections?
- 2) The declassified key judgments of the National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) "Prospects for Iraq's Stability" states that in the next six to 12 months, "the Iraqi Government will continue to struggle to achieve national-level political reconciliation and improved governance". If the escalation was supposed to lead to political reconciliation, do you agree with the NIE key judgments that reflect that this goal is unlikely to be attained in the next six to 12 months?
- 3) The declassified key judgments of the NIE assess that the level of overall violence in Iraq remains high; Iraq's sectarian groups remain unreconciled; and al-Qa'ida in Iraq (AQI) retains the ability to conduct high-profile attacks. What factors are preventing U.S. and Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) from maintaining the initiative at the local level and defeating insurgents and extremist networks that still retain operational and strategic capabilities?
- 4) The declassified key judgments of the NIE state that the Iraqi Army is still not capable of conducting independent major operations. Indeed, the newly released Government Accountability Office (GAO) report "Securing, Stabilizing, and Rebuilding Iraq: Iraqi Government Has Not Met Most Legislative, Security, and Economic Benchmarks" concludes that benchmarks on Iraqi Army capabilities have not been met. In fact, the ISF is not improving

and the number of Iraqi army units capable of operating independently declined from ten this past March to six this past July. Why is the overall unit capability trend-line declining? Will Iraqi Army assessments provided in the NIE and the GAO report be reconciled in the September 15<sup>th</sup> report in order to fully understand the scope of Iraqi Army capabilities and combat proficiencies?

5) Press reports indicate that the Congressionally-mandated commission to examine the Iraqi Security Forces led by General James Jones (Retired) will recommend remaking the 26,000-member Iraqi National Police (INP) force to purge it of corrupt officers and Shiite militants suspected of complicity in sectarian killings. Why has there been little success thus far in reforming the INP? Why hasn't the Iraqi government made reforming the police a top priority? If endemic corruption and the inability of the INP to support the rule of law were known in 2002 and 2003, and as press reports describing the Jones Report suggest continues, why have wholesale INP reforms taken this long to implement?

6) The GAO report "Securing, Stabilizing, and Rebuilding Iraq: Iraqi Government Has Not Met Most Legislative, Security, and Economic Benchmarks" concludes that the benchmark of ensuring that the ISF are providing even-handed enforcement of the law has not been met. In fact the report assesses that the ISF engages in sectarian-based abuses. Have ISF sectarian loyalties hampered operational success? Will these conclusions be reflected in the September 15<sup>th</sup> report?

7) Recent press reports suggest that Iraqi intelligence operations are fueling sectarian violence and promoting sectarian agendas. What is the assessment of the Iraqi intelligence services and their ability to provide objective intelligence support to ISF operations?

8) What is the strategy for addressing the influence of Muqtada al Sadr's Jaysh al-Mahdi (JAM) militia to the security and political situation in Iraq? Were JAM's recent activities fueling sectarian violence and what were their roles in attacks of U.S. and Iraqi forces?

9) What are the nationalities of suicide bombers and foreign fighters conducting attacks in Iraq? What efforts are being made by the U.S. and Iraq to stem the flow of suicide bombers and foreign fighters from these countries?

10) On August 10, 2007 the United Nations Security Council approved a resolution to expand the role of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) in Iraq's reconstruction process. What will be the future role of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) in coordinating reconstruction and aid distribution, regional dialogue, refugee and humanitarian assistance, and reconciliation efforts? Will UNAMI personnel and mission support specialists be able to operate independently given the current security situation in Iraq? What security arrangements and support will MNF-I and the ISF provide to the UNAMI mission?

11) What steps, if any, are being taken to address the under-representation of Sunnis in provincial councils?

12) Since the beginning of the escalation, has the number of internally displaced persons and refugees in Iraq increased or decreased? If it has not decreased, what does that mean for the effectiveness of the increase in troops which was supposed to provide the space for political reconciliation? How many segregated enclaves have been established in Iraqi neighborhoods and cities as a result of sectarian cleansing? Who provides local security in these segregated enclaves? Have any of these enclaves become *de facto* sanctuaries for outlaws and extremist groups or networks?

13) Why has intra-sectarian violence continued to worsen in the southern provinces of Iraq and in Basra specifically despite the increase of U.S forces in Iraq since January 2007? What is the assessment of the provincial governments in southern Iraq and their capabilities to address intra-sectarian violence?

14) Will the strategic capabilities and ability to respond to other contingencies outside of Iraq by the U.S. military be reduced if current troop levels in Iraq are sustained throughout 2008?

15) General Petraeus recently said that “There are limits to what our military can provide, so, my recommendations have to be informed by — not driven by — but they have to be informed by the strain we have put on our military services.” How much longer can the U.S. sustain the current troop levels in Iraq given deployment policies and the shrinking pool of ready-to-deploy units available past April 2008? How many troops are scheduled to redeploy from Iraq in 2008 based on plans to sustain current troop levels? If no action is taken to reduce current troop levels and they are sustained beyond April 2008, what will be the impact on the 15 months deployed/12 month dwell policy? Would this policy still remain in effect? If the current troop levels in Iraq are sustained past April 2008 how many units and personnel serving in Iraq will have their 15 month deployment tours extended? If tours are not extended, how many additional National Guard units and Reserve personnel will be activated for deployment to fill the shortage of unavailable Active ready-to-deploy units? Of these personnel required to fill gaps how many will violate stated dwell time policies?

16) How much will readiness in the Army and Marines suffer if the current troop levels are sustained beyond April 2008? What impact will sustaining the current troop levels past April 2008 have on operational readiness rates for Army and Marine equipment? What is the projected cost to repair and re-set equipment? What is the length of time required to restore equipment to fully viable operational readiness rates?

17) On May 31, 2007, U.S. Ambassador to Iraq Ryan C. Crocker sent Secretary of State Rice a diplomatic cable detailing diplomatic staff shortages in the U.S. Embassy of Iraq. What is the current state of Department of Defense/Department of State coordination in Iraq? Has Ambassador Crocker’s May request for more diplomatic officers and specialists to be deployed to Iraq been filled?

18) On the eve of Operation Iraqi Freedom March 19, 2003, you stated that American and Coalition forces would disarm Iraq, free its people, defend the world from grave danger, and undermine Saddam Hussein’s ability to wage war. On January 23, 2007, during the State of the Union Address, you admitted that “This is not the fight we entered in Iraq”. Does the

Administration agree that the nature and mission of the fight that our forces are engaged in now in Iraq in 2007 is fundamentally different than the conflict that our armed forces entered in 2003?

19) The importance of Congressional oversight on Iraq policy formulations was recently highlighted in an exchange of letters I had with Secretary of Defense Gates and the Department of Defense. In fact, Secretary Gates affirmed his belief that congressional oversight is a "fundamental element of our system of government". In regards to the Iraq debate, I should further note to you that Secretary Gates expressed his views that this debate has been constructive, appropriate, and necessary. Does the Administration agree that Congressional oversight plays an important role in developing policy towards Iraq? Can you clarify the importance of Congress in overseeing Iraq policy?

20) Will you provide assurances to Congress and the American people that the Administration is currently planning for contingencies regarding the redeployment of U.S. forces out of Iraq?

I trust that these issues will be addressed in the September 15 report on Iraq being prepared by the White House as well as the testimony of General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Hillary Rodham Clinton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long, sweeping tail on the final "n".

Hillary Rodham Clinton

CC: The Honorable Robert Gates  
The Honorable Condoleezza Rice  
The Honorable Stephen Hadley  
Lt. General Douglas Lute  
General David Petraeus  
Ambassador Ryan Crocker  
General Peter Pace