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Prepared Statement For the Senate and House Armed Services Committees

By Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, Washington, DC, Tuesday, April 21 and, Thursday, April 22, 2004.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

As he prepared to lead his troops into action in Fallujah, a Marine Company Commander took time to write his father, a retired Marine. "This battle is going to have far reaching effects on not only the war here," he wrote:

But in the overall war on terrorism. We have to be very precise in our application of combat power. We cannot kill a lot of innocent folks. . . . There will be no shock and awe. . . . This battle is the Marine Corps Belleau Wood for this war. . . . A lot of terrorists and foreign fighters are holed up in Fallujah. It has been a sanctuary for them.

The Marine Corps will either reaffirm its place in history as one of the greatest fighting organizations in the world or we will die trying. The Marines are fired up. I'm nervous for them though because I know how much is riding on this fight. However, every time I've been nervous during my career about the outcome of events when young Marines were involved they have ALWAYS exceeded my expectations.

God bless these great Americans who are ensuring we continue to fight an "away" schedule.

Our prayers are with him and all of our people currently serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. They are making America – and the world – more secure by helping the Iraqi and Afghan people build free and prosperous democracies in the heart of the Middle East. Whether members of Active Duty, Reserve, or National Guard units, or civilians, these heroes embody the best ideals of our nation – serving so that others may be free -- and we thank them all for the sacrifices they endure.

We also owe a sincere debt of gratitude to the roughly 24,000 men and women from our 34 Coalition partners, who are also serving the cause of freedom in Iraq. We would be remiss if we did not acknowledge the contributions made by civilians from a wide assortment of NGOs in Iraq who have recently become the target of terrorist attacks, such as Fern Holland, who quit practicing law in the United States in order to go to Iraq and help improve the lives of Iraqi women. Ms. Holland was brutally murdered for the work she was doing, and although it is small consolation to her family and friends, died doing what she believed in.

And finally, I'd like to thank the members of this Committee for their continued support to the members of our Armed Forces.

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Iraq: Thirty-Five Years Of Unimaginable Tyranny, One Year of Progress

A little over a year ago, we all watched the statue of Saddam Hussein fall in the heart of Baghdad. I remember watching the live coverage of that historic moment. Iraqis, eager to start a new page in their national history, enthusiastically tried to pull the statue down with the limited resources available to them – a length of rope that did not even reach all the way to the ground. Eventually, a group of U.S. Marines saw what was happening, and aided the Iraqi effort. Working together, the Marines and Iraqis brought down that symbol of oppression and provided an image that will be etched in our collective memory forever.

On that day, 25 million of some of the most talented people in the Muslim and Arab world were liberated from one of the worst tyrannies of the last 100 years. According to a somewhat popular theme these days, the world is full of bad guys, and that Saddam Hussein is just another bad guy. When I hear Saddam Hussein referred to that way, I can only conclude that there still exists a lack of real understanding of Saddam Hussein. In my career, I've known some bad guys up close and personal, people like former Philippine dictator Ferdinand Marcos and former Indonesian dictator Suharto. To paraphrase a famous vice-presidential debate, I knew these men, and Ferdinand Marcos was no Saddam Hussein; Suharto was no Saddam Hussein.

Saddam Hussein was more than just another bad guy. He institutionalized and sanctioned brutality on a scale that is simply unimaginable to most Americans. Hussein ruled by fear, creating a society in which the ideal citizen was an informer. The superintendent of the Baghdad policy academy told me that he had spent a year in jail for having made a disparaging comment about Saddam—to his best friend. In such a Republic of Fear, friendship itself became a weapon.

I have traveled to Iraq several times. I have spoken to hundreds of Iraqis, both in Iraq and here in the United States. And one of my strongest impressions is that fear of the old regime still pervades Iraq. But, a smothering blanket of apprehension woven by 35 years of repression—where even the smallest mistake could bring torture or death—won't be cast off in a few weeks' time.

Saddam Hussein began weaving this blanket of fear from the very beginning. In 1979, one of his first acts as President was a sweeping purge of top Baathist leaders. At a meeting of the Iraqi national assembly, Saddam tearfully talked about a coerced “confession” of disloyalty from a top party member, and then continued to name other guilty colleagues. Guards then dragged these people out of the meeting. Then, Saddam asked top ministers and leaders of the party for their first loyalty test—he called on them to form the firing squads that executed those he'd identified.

Saddam had videos of the whole event distributed throughout the Middle East, so people would know what sort of leader he was. Implicating members of his regime in his worst crimes and ensuring that his potential victims understood how seriously to take his threats, Saddam Hussein applied the techniques of a most brutal gangland boss, but on a national scale and as the head of an internationally recognized government.

One of the most heartbreaking stories to come out of Iraq almost defies belief. Scott Ritter – the former UNSCOM inspector and an opponent of the war – has described a prison in Baghdad, whose stench, he said, “was unreal,” an amalgam of urine, feces, vomit and sweat”; a hellhole where prisoners were “howling and dying of thirst.” In this prison, the oldest inmates were 12, the youngest mere toddlers. Their crime—being children of the regime's political enemies.

General Richard Myers, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, was recently returning from a trip to Iraq, and stopped at Ramstein AB, where he was told about some Iraqi businessmen who had recently passed through on their way to the United States, to the Texas Medical Center in Houston, where they were to undergo surgery to repair some of the damage inflicted on them some ten years ago. When Iraq's economy was falling into shambles, Saddam's way of placing blame was this: he ordered that a few merchants be rounded up. With flimsy evidence, they were found guilty of

destabilizing the Iraqi economy and were sentenced to lose their right hands. Black Xs tattooed on their foreheads branded them as criminals. The amputations were filmed, and the video—as well as the hands—were sent to Saddam. In a Houston doctor’s office, one man was quoted as saying: “You spend your whole life doing and saying the right things. Then someone comes and cuts your hands off for no reason at all. It’s a torture that never ends.”

I recount these stories to illustrate what one writer has called the “density of evil” that permeated Iraq. In very many ways, its effects are also like a torture that doesn’t end. Such evil and fear is so alien to our own American experience that I think it’s necessary to talk about it to understand the plight of Iraqis today, if we are to have a proper understanding of one of the most formidable challenges facing us right now. Even though Saddam’s regime is gone and he himself has been captured, the fear of Saddam and his henchmen is still alive in the minds of Iraqis facing the difficult choice of whether to cooperate with us and with other brave Iraqis to build what they call “the New Iraq.” Until Iraqis are convinced that Saddam’s old regime has been permanently and irreversibly removed, and until a long and ghastly part of their history is put to rest and overcome, it is only natural that that fear will remain. That history of atrocities and the punishment of those responsible are directly linked to our success in helping the Iraqi people build a free, secure and democratic future.

The people of Iraq have much valuable information that can help us root out the remaining Baathists and help Iraqis find justice. To the extent that people of Iraq are willing to take part in the civic and political institutions that will constitute a new Iraq is linked to their understanding that the Saddamists are finished, and will never again return to power in Iraq.

Convincing them of this truth—that Saddam and the Saddamists are finished—will continue to require investments in our time and our resources to continue to build trust among the Iraqi people.

Iraq has been a free country for a single year after decades of systematic abuse by a regime of murderers and torturers. A year after Iraq’s liberation, it is important to pause and consider what we have accomplished together with the Iraqi people. For amidst the episodes of violence and tragedy of the loss of innocent life in suicide bombings, the good news of what is happening in Iraq often gets obscured or ignored. As one soldier recently wrote to the Houston Chronicle, “The reality is we are accomplishing a tremendous amount here, and the Iraqi people are not only benefiting greatly, but are enthusiastically supportive.”

The indisputable fact is that after 35 years of enduring unimaginable horrors, in the year since its liberation Iraq has seen the beginnings of a tremendous transformation for the better:

For 35 years, the Iraqi people were ruled by terror and Saddam’s personal fiat. Ba’athists suppressed dissent through murder, torture, and arbitrary imprisonment. They tortured children in order to coerce their parents, and raped women to punish their families. Iraqis had no real rights, only temporary privileges subject to the whims of Saddam and his sadistic sons.

Today, Iraqis have an interim Iraqi constitution that is the most liberal basic governance document in the Arab world. The Transitional Administrative Law, or TAL, contains assurances of:

- Freedom of Religion;
- Freedom of Expression;
- Freedom of the Press;
- Freedom of Assembly;
- Freedom of Movement;

The TAL guarantees equal rights for all citizens of Iraq regardless of ethnicity, denomination, or sex. It acknowledges the Islamic character of the majority of Iraqi society and, at the same time, affirms the right to freedom of religious belief and practice for every Iraqi. It provides for other fundamental pillars of true democracy, including separation of powers and an independent judiciary, rule of law,

fundamental civil rights, and civilian control of the military. This constitution emerged from an often heated, but ultimately healthy, political debate, one that would have been impossible a year ago – and one that is still impossible in many areas of the world.

Through 35 years of tyranny, money earmarked for life-saving medicines were used by Saddam's regime to buy means to end life. Money marked for hospitals went to rebuild palaces. Many of Iraq's hospitals and clinics that remained open to the public also served as ammunition or command bunkers. Today, health care spending in Iraq has increased 30 times over its pre-war levels, and children receive crucial vaccinations for the first time in years.

After 35 years of tyranny, Iraq's economy was moribund due to state control, rampant corruption, and Saddam's misallocation of resources to palaces and weapons and to the favorites of his regime. Today, the Iraqi economy is on the path of recovery and prosperity. Unemployment has fallen, inflation is a quarter of what it was before the war, and the New Iraqi Dinar has become the most heavily traded currency in the Middle East. And this is before the full effect of the \$18.4 billion in reconstruction grants you helped provide the Iraqi people is felt. This is still an area of great concern to us, but we are making progress despite years of neglect. It is that progress which the enemy seeks to stop today and which we must make increased efforts to accelerate.

For 35 years, Iraq's oil revenues helped build Saddam Hussein's palaces and lined the pockets of Saddam and his cronies. Today, Iraqi oil revenue goes to the Development Fund for Iraq, where it helps build a new infrastructure and a new future for the Iraqi people. At 2.5 million barrels per day, Iraqi oil production has reached its pre-war levels, and oil proceeds to date exceed \$7.5 billion and are projected to be \$14 billion this year.

After 35 years of tyranny, Iraq's dilapidated power plants were in a state of unimaginable disrepair. What electricity was produced was diverted to Baghdad in order to reward Saddam's cronies and punish the people whom Saddam despised. Today, power generation has surpassed prewar levels and is more evenly distributed, and new, modern power plants are being built.

For 35 years, Iraqi schools were propaganda factories for Saddam's cult of personality and Ba'ath party fascism. Today, that fanaticism no longer pervades the national education system and its teaching materials. 64,000 secondary teachers and 5,000 school principals and administrators have been retrained in modern teaching methods, and 72 million new textbooks will be distributed before the end of the school year. To date, Coalition forces have rehabilitated more than 2,500 schools. The Iraqi people have clearly demonstrated their preference for the new educational system, as school attendance this year has surpassed pre-conflict levels.

After 35 years of genocidal repression of Iraq's Marsh Arabs, the historical marshlands of southern Iraq were close to extinction. A lush ecosystem the size of New Jersey had been turned into a barren desert by Saddam's vindictive attempt to destroy a people whose history goes back thousands of years and make of them an example to warn anyone who would challenge his rule. Today, the marshlands are gradually being restored, and that ancient culture is being revived.

For 35 years, the Iraqi people's only link with the outside world was the poisonous propaganda of Saddam's state-run media. Today, Iraqis have a wealth of independent news sources. 170 newspapers are currently published in Iraq, and the Iraqi Media Network reaches more than 80 percent of the Iraqi population. The market in satellite dishes is booming.

For 35 years, Iraqis had no voice in their government or their nation's future. Today, more than half of the Iraqi population is active in community affairs and one in five belongs to a non-governmental organization. Ninety percent of Iraqi towns and provinces have local councils, which we think is a pretty good sign that the Iraqi polity is moving in the right direction. Recently, in the overwhelmingly Shia province of Diyala in southern Iraq, seventeen towns have held local elections – their first genuine elections ever – and in almost every one secular independents and non-religious parties did better than the Islamists.

Perhaps most importantly, in the year since Iraq has been liberated, no new mass graves have been filled with the bodies of innocent Iraqi men, women, and children capriciously murdered by a brutal regime, and the torture rooms and execution chambers have been shut down.

Despite all the violence and uncertainty caused by the enemies of a free Iraq, it is clear that Iraqis sense dramatic improvement in their everyday lives and anticipate much more. According to a recent Oxford Research International poll, despite the difficulties we all read about 56.5 percent of Iraqis said their lives were much better or somewhat better than a year ago. Despite the prevalence of alarmist quotes depicting some Iraqi “man-on-the-street” lamenting the good old days under Saddam Hussein, only 18.6 percent of those polled said they were much or somewhat worse off than a year ago. And a full 71 percent expect their lives will be much or somewhat better a year from now.

Moreover, the Iraqi people are expressing their optimism with their feet. Despite the continued threat of violence in Iraq, and the horrific terrorist attacks against Iraqi civilians intended to derail progress in Iraq, as several thousands of Iraqi refugees are returning to their homeland.

The Coalition’s Strategy to Achieve Victory in Iraq: Capacity Building

Despite the violence of recent weeks, we need to continue to move forward on all fronts implementing the coalition’s strategy to set conditions that will ensure a free Iraq that is stable and at peace with its neighbors. Events of the past month have taught us several lessons learned that have influenced our policy decisions. These lessons include:

- The importance of local initiative for fast action: local commanders should get a special allocation of reconstruction funds.
- The importance of Iraqi leadership and the need to intensify our efforts to train and develop Iraqi leaders
 - We need to cross-attach Coalition and Iraqi liaison officers, and more heavily embed Coalition trainers and mentors.
 - We need to continue to recruit vetted former senior (Colonel – Brigadier) Iraqi officers for the Iraqi Armed Forces and Ministry of Defense.
 - We need to speed police advisors and specialized trainers to police stations and academies.
- The importance of having an Iraqi rallying point and looking for ways to shorten the process by which Iraqis quickly create a government that embodies Iraqi nationality and sovereignty.
 - We need to continue to install and highlight an Iraqi chain of command: new defense minister, commander of the Armed Forces, chief of staff. New Interior Minister
 - We need to carry out the de-Ba’athification process in a way that is non-punitive to those with clean records.
 - We need to strengthen the legitimacy of an Iraqi interim government and the constitutional process.
 - We need to focus the Iraqi media spotlight on political activities of leading Iraqis, including Governing Council members.
 - We need to continue to encourage local elections.
- The importance of equipment and support and the need to accelerate the equipping of Iraqi security forces.
 - We need to rush delivery of critical items (weapons, ammunition, vehicles, radios)
 - We need to upgrade required items in light of current experience.
 - We need to enhance protection for security forces and police fixed sites.

Our strategy involves three interdependent lines of operations to build indigenous Iraq capacity and transition responsibilities from the coalition to Iraq rapidly, but not hastily. While these lessons to be learned from the violent events of the past few weeks affect the way we pursue these three lines of operation, these are still the three key elements that will bring success in Iraq.

The first element involves building capable Iraqi security forces to achieve stability. Accordingly, we have redoubled our efforts to recruit, train, equip and, most importantly, mentor Iraqi security forces – Police, Iraqi Civil Defense Corps, Army, Border Police, and the Facilities Protection Service. Over the next few months our aim is to certify the ability of these forces, that they are ready to assume greater responsibilities from coalition forces. Similarly, through technical assistance and mentoring by U.S. prosecutors and judges of their Iraqi counterparts, we have been helping to build the capacity of the Iraqi criminal justice sector: the Judicial Review Commission has reviewed and vetted all currently sitting judges and prosecutors; the Central Criminal Court of Iraq, established to deal with those who have committed the most notorious crimes in Iraq, is investigating and trying cases; and every pre-war local criminal court in Baghdad is open, fully functional, and every week more cases are set for trial or tried as compared to the week before.

The second element involves nurturing Iraq's capacity for representative, self-government with the aim of creating a government that the Iraqi people will feel is theirs and that moves us out of the position of being an occupying power. While many think that July 1 will be a magical date on which CPA will suddenly transition all of its responsibilities to a new Iraq government, it is actually just one step in a process. Already, free Iraqis have been gradually assuming responsibility for governmental functions for quite some time. Many Iraqi ministries report to the Governing Council rather than the CPA. Iraq now has a functioning judiciary to provide equal justice for all. At the local and provincial levels, elected assemblies are up and running. When the Interim Government assumes office on July 1, its most important task will be to prepare the way for elections to establish the Transitional Government in January of 2005. That government in turn will be replaced by elections for a fully constitutional government at the end of 2005.

The last element of the strategy involves the reconstruction of Iraq's infrastructure and the restoration of essential services that are providing better lives for Iraqis and putting people back to work. Iraq has tremendous potential. It has well-educated and industrious people. It has fertile land and water resources and it has abundant natural resources. Our strategy aims to put Iraq on course to realizing that potential and to setting conditions for Iraqis to reap greater prosperity in the future.

Lessons Learned and Challenges Ahead

Although the progress the Iraqi people have made in their climb up from tyranny has been both encouraging and impressive, significant challenges still remain.

Security in Iraq

When planning the military campaign to liberate Iraq, this Administration and the combatant commanders chose to launch a campaign that emphasized speed rather than mass. The astonishing speed of this military campaign enabled us to avoid many of the nightmare scenarios that were predicted before the war. Lest anybody forget, in part thanks to this war plan we managed to avoid most of the horror scenarios we feared going into this war:

- Iraq's oil fields were not turned into an ecological and economic disaster;
- Massive destruction of dams and bridges was prevented;
- Large-scale refugee flows were not generated;
- There was no humanitarian crisis from food or medical shortages;
- No friendly governments in the region collapsed because of the pressures of a protracted war.
- Iraq's neighbors did not intervene, nor did Israel;

- Ethnic conflict did not break out in mixed populations in northern Iraq or elsewhere; and
- There was no “Fortress Baghdad” with street-to-street fighting and heavy civilian casualties.

The avoidance of these calamities was not by accident, but rather the result of careful planning.

Because we did not wait to mass half a million forces in theater before launching Operation Iraqi Freedom, Saddam was not able to organize the large-scale urban warfare campaign about which so many military analysts warned. The historically unprecedented speed of the campaign may have led many Iraqi forces, such as the Fedayeen Saddam and Mukhabarrat, to disperse throughout the country rather than stand and fight in the streets as anticipated.

In order to destroy the last vestiges of Saddam’s tyranny, it was always necessary that we defeat these forces. The current violence is not an issue of reconstruction planning, nor is it due to a lack of forces. Overall, the decision to emphasize speed rather than mass was a deliberate choice, recommended by the Combatant Commander, General Franks, but approved by the President and the Secretary of Defense and concurred in by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Like all choices it involved necessary tradeoffs, but overall it has saved lives and helped to avoid terrible humanitarian and environmental disasters.

The timing of the current violence was not entirely unexpected. President Bush warned that we could expect increased violence in the months leading up to the transition to Iraqi sovereignty. We knew that the enemies of democracy in Iraq would do everything they could to disrupt the transition to sovereignty. This expectation was confirmed when we intercepted a letter from Abu Musab Zarqawi to his Al Qaeda colleagues in Afghanistan. In this letter, Zarqawi expressed disappointment that previous mass attacks were failing to shatter the unity of the Iraqi people. He advocated stepping up attacks to kill large numbers of Shi’a in order to provoke a sectarian civil war in Iraq. And some of the recent violence, including the attacks on Shi’ite worshippers in Karbala and Baghdad during the Ashoura holiday in early March which killed 140 Iraqis, bear Zarqawi’s hallmark.

However, the same political situation that is driving such attacks also is a source of optimism for the Iraqi people and their Coalition partners. Zarqawi recognized that the fast-approaching turnover of sovereignty would further weaken his cause, saying:

“With the spread of the [Iraqi] army and the police, our future is becoming frightening. The problem is you end up having an army and police connected by lineage, blood and appearance to the people of the region. How can we kill their cousins and sons and under what pretext, after the Americans start withdrawing? This is the democracy . . . we will have no pretext.”

Zarqawi’s letter strongly suggests that we are seeing an upsurge in violence precisely because the terrorists and extremists in Iraq believe we are winning and that their time to derail democracy in Iraq is running out.

U.S. Government Transition after CPA

We face another daunting challenge as we execute the transition from the Coalition Provisional Authority to a sovereign Iraqi government bolstered by a U.S. embassy less than 90 days from now. Fortunately, planning for this transition is well underway within the Defense and State Departments. LTG Mick Kicklighter (USA, Ret.) and Ambassador Frank Ricciardone lead Transition Teams for the two Departments, and they have worked hand in glove with the CPA and Defense and Army staffs since early January to make the transition a success. They have formed an Interagency Transition Planning Team (ITPT) and provide the State and Defense leadership for drafting an Operations Plan for the transition. Experts from 16 subject matter sectors (such as Security, Human Resources and Personnel, Facilities, Finance, Medical and Health Services, etc.)

from State and Defense coordinate closely to draft the highly detailed, time-phased plan. The ITPT as a whole meets almost daily, with sector leads meeting with their teams more often as required. General Kicklighter and Ambassador Ricciardone meet several times each week to ensure that planning and implementation of the plan are on track.

Transitional Administrative Law

While the ITPT sets the course for the U.S. Government transition, the TAL establishes a clear way forward for drafting and ratifying a permanent constitution for Iraq and the election of a government in accordance with its terms. This political transition is scheduled to evolve over three phases:

- Phase I (June 30, 2004) – Iraqi Interim Government
- Phase II (January 2005) – Iraqi Transitional Government
- Phase III (January 2006) – Iraqi Government under Permanent Constitution

According to the timeline laid out in the TAL, the Iraqi Interim Government will take power on June 30. This Interim Government will be selected by procedures being developed through intensive consultations among Iraqis, led by Ambassador Brahimi, the UN Secretary General's Special Advisor on Iraq. We believe the ideas put forth by Mr. Brahimi are promising and we look forward to more details from the UN. CPA officials will remain in close contact with Mr. Brahimi, members of the Iraqi Governing Council and other Iraqis as these procedures are completed in May. The Interim Government will serve until the Transitional National Assembly, or TNA, is elected in either December 2004 or January 2005.

The TNA will then elect a three-person Presidency Council comprised of a President and two Deputies, who will appoint by unanimous vote the Prime Minister and, on the Prime Minister's recommendation, a Council of Ministers. The Prime Minister and Council of Ministers must obtain a vote of confidence from the TNA before taking office. Together, the TNA, the Presidency Council and the Council of Ministers will comprise the Iraqi Transitional Government.

In addition to being the legislature, the TNA will also draft a permanent constitution for Iraq, which will be submitted for popular ratification by October 15, 2005. Elections under this new constitution are to be held by December 15, 2005, and the newly elected government, operating under the permanent constitution, will take office by December 31, 2005.

The TAL provisions relevant to security arrangements also provide the appropriate framework for implementing our security strategy in Iraq. Article 59(B) of the TAL states that Iraqi armed forces will be "a principal partner in the multinational force operating in Iraq under unified command pursuant to" UNSCR 1511. Article 59(C) states that the elected Iraqi Transitional Government "shall have the authority to conclude binding international agreements regarding the activities of the multinational force," and that "nothing in this Law shall affect rights and obligations . . . under UNSCR 1511 . . . which will govern the multinational force's activities pending entry into force of those agreements." And perhaps most importantly, Article 26 (C) ensures that CPA orders and regulations "shall remain in force until rescinded or amended by legislation duly enacted and having the force of law." This includes CPA Order #17, which provides SOFA-like protections for Coalition Forces, and will stay in effect until an international agreement is negotiated with the sovereign Iraqi government.

Now, I cannot sit here today and predict the exact form of the permanent government. Iraqis will decide to establish the exact provisions of their permanent Iraqi constitution, or who will emerge as the leaders of the new Iraq. After 35 years of totalitarian dictatorship, it is a complicated task to build new political institutions and it cannot happen overnight.

Americans of all people should understand that democracy does not guarantee specific outcomes, it opens ideas up for debate. One need only look back at our own Constitutional Convention to be reminded that with any attempt to establish rule for the people by the people, there is always a great

deal of uncertainty and controversy, right up until the ink has dried and even afterwards. We should not expect Iraqis to achieve immediately what we and the British, for example, have labored to accomplish over the course of centuries. Throughout the world, particularly in Eastern Europe and in East Asia, new democracies have emerged in the last 10 or 20 years. They are all different and none is perfect. Neither is ours. But even an imperfect Iraqi democracy will be an improvement light years beyond what that country has endured for the past 35 years.

And let me say one more thing here. I believe it is wrong to assume that Iraqi Arabs and Kurds, some of the most intelligent people in the world, cannot achieve what Lithuania, Korea, and other newly emerging democracies throughout Eastern Europe and East Asia have accomplished in the past twenty years. Since the liberation of Iraq a year ago, Iraqis have conducted themselves extraordinarily well for a nation so long exposed to Saddam Hussein's unique level of sadism. In a remarkably short period of time, Iraqi leaders, for all their diversity, have shown they are learning the arts of political compromise and that they are dedicated to their country's unity.

Iraqi Security Forces

One institution we are focusing intently on is the Iraqi Security Forces, whose performance during the spike in combat activity over the past three weeks has been mixed. At least half of the security forces stood their ground and in Fallujah some ICDC units fought bravely and well. Other units did not face the enemy, avoided contact altogether, and a small proportion cooperated with the enemy.

Our disappointment with the security forces has to be tempered with realism. Overall, they were not capable by themselves of deterring or withstanding the recent attacks, and that fact should not surprise us. We have been fielding Iraqi security forces as fast as we could, but we never intended for Iraqi security forces to take over responsibility for Iraq's security on June 30th, much less April 5th. Our plan was and is for Iraqi forces to develop strength, capability, and experience under the security umbrella of the Coalition, while the Coalition retained overall security responsibilities. Recent events provide lessons we can apply to increase the impact of what we are doing.

The first lesson is the need for stronger leaders in the security forces. We will build on the leaders whose units fought and we will replace those whose units did not. We will integrate Iraqi officers with Coalition forces and we will embed Coalition officers with the Iraqi security forces. This cross-attachment provides liaison, which produces mutual confidence, and it also helps us develop Iraqi leadership. Similarly, we need police advisors and specialized trainers to get down to police stations around the country to provide confidence and set the example.

Second, it is clear that the members of the security forces, most of whom are Iraqi patriots, need an Iraqi rallying point. They need to understand they operate under an Iraqi chain of command, and that at the top of that chain of command is a lawfully constituted Iraqi government. The chain of command is being put in place now. A defense minister has been named, along with a commander in chief of the armed forces and a chief of staff. A new interior minister has also taken office. We need to fill in the rest of the chain, but Iraqis in the security forces can see today that there are Iraqis at the top.

The other and harder part of creating a national rallying point for the security forces is the creation of an Iraqi government. This is one of the important reasons to maintain the momentum of the governance process, including not only the June 30 transition but the important steps beyond.

Third, the Iraqi security forces need more and better equipment. We had not planned for them to be fully equipped at this point, but some of our ICDC units were outgunned in recent action, so we are relooking the equipment requirements. We have also incurred some delays in equipping the Iraqi security forces. Part of the delay has been caused by challenges in the contracting process and we hope those problems have been fixed. We need to make up some of our lost time, but any delay is unacceptable.

The greatest factor in the mixed performance of the security forces was an intangible: fear. The fear of becoming a casualty is doubtless ever-present; almost 300 members of the Iraqi security forces have been killed and almost 700 wounded. But fear of the future is a much greater factor. The enemies of a democratic future for Iraq have so terrorized the cities of central Iraq that many members of the security forces doubt that they or their families can be protected from the retribution that may follow their participation in operations alongside the Coalition. The intimidation is crude but often effective, especially in a society in which keeping your head down was an essential survival technique for over 30 years. That fear takes time to overcome.

The enthusiasm of Iraqis to go into combat alongside the Coalition is also colored by their perception of our commitment to the new Iraq. If they sense that we will not see them through to a new constitution, an election, and strong Iraqi institutions, we should not be surprised to see them melt away or even work a deal with those who would shoot their way to power. That is why it is so important in this time of stress to show that our commitment to their freedom is rock-solid.

Afghanistan

We also confront challenges in Afghanistan where the United States, its Coalition partners, and NATO have committed to helping the Afghans build a moderate, democratic, and representative government. Despite some setbacks, Afghanistan has made enormous progress on several fronts.

In January of this year, the Afghan people reached a critical milestone when they adopted a constitution laying the foundation for strong democratic institutions and guaranteeing civil liberties such as freedom of religion and equality between men and women. The Afghans have made steady progress in disarmament, with 40% of the heavy weapons around Kabul secured. A nation-wide heavy weapons survey is identifying all remaining heavy weapons in the country for removal by June 2004. The Afghan Ministry of Defense will likely meet its goal of 9,500 Afghan National Army troops by the summer. The 7,646-strong force has already contributed to the success of Coalition stability operations in the South and East. The army allowed the central government to respond effectively to the recent unrest and factional fighting in Herat and Meymaneh.

With the more than \$2 billion that you helped provide, the President was able to commit personally to accelerate progress in Afghanistan's reconstruction and security. This commitment has allowed us to increase the number of Provincial Reconstruction Teams throughout Afghanistan. The coalition recently established its 13th team in the southern province of Oruzgan. We hope to set up three more in the South and East by June of this year. Countries leading PRT's include the UK, New Zealand, and Germany. These teams play an active role in defusing regional tensions among rival warlords, engage in public works projects, and help provide security for reconstruction activities through presence patrols and assistance to local police and security forces, among other things.

Operation Mountain Storm is underway in the South and East, where al-Qaeda networks and the Taliban continue to threaten stability and reconstruction. We are following up these combat operations with focused reconstruction and humanitarian assistance. One vehicle for this focused reconstruction and humanitarian assistance will be the Regional Development Zone, which will be rolled out in the less developed and more insecure regions.

We are improving relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan and enhancing cooperation in counterinsurgency operations along the Afghan border with Pakistan. In 2003, we established a Tripartite Commission made up of U.S., Afghan, and Pakistani authorities that meets regularly to share military intelligence and address common security concerns.

We are actively engaging NATO countries to expand their security presence in Afghanistan. NATO

recently completed an operations plan for expanding the International Security Assistance Force beyond Kabul and Konduz. We are lobbying NATO countries to contribute the resources necessary for this expansion.

False Pessimism About The Iraqi Transition

But while it is important not to view the accomplishments in Iraq and Afghanistan through rose-colored glasses, some critics seem to have given themselves over completely to the darkest of pessimism. To some, all progress in Iraq is illusory, every silver lining has a cloud.

It is important to address and correct the misperceptions about developments in Iraq. The American people need to know what their forces are accomplishing in Iraq, how the efforts of our servicemen and women are transforming the lives of 25 million Iraqis for the better, and transforming a region that has for too long accommodated despotism to the detriment of its freedom starved populations. And both our friends and our enemies, in Iraq and Afghanistan, need to know that we have the will and resolve to accomplish our objectives.

For example, some say the June 30 date for the transfer of sovereignty is completely arbitrary, driven more by the demands of U.S. electoral politics than by actual conditions in Iraq, and that therefore the deadline should be extended. The choice of an early date as opposed to a later date was not arbitrary at all. If you will recall, our original plan envisaged a sovereign Iraqi government only at the end of a multi-step process of drafting a new constitution and holding elections by the end of 2005. The President decided to shorten this timetable, for two key reasons having to do with our strategy in Iraq.

First, the Iraqis seemed to hold back from taking responsibility as long as the CPA was in total charge. A shorter timetable was seen as a necessary incentive to prepare the Iraqis for sovereignty. For without the sense of urgency and accountability that a fixed deadline imposes, Iraqi leaders have been unable to resolve the difficult issues required to conduct elections and shape a new government.

Second, an early end to the occupation is essential to our political strategy to defeat the terrorists. A sovereign Iraqi government will be better able to marginalize its extremist opponents politically while Coalition forces defeat them militarily. As the letter from Zarqawi demonstrates, such a transformation is the worst possible scenario for those who oppose the emergence of democracy in Iraq. They fear it, and that's why they are trying so hard to derail it.

Moving ahead is important to inspire Iraqi confidence that the transition is moving forward and that their country will not be occupied indefinitely. But it is important also to make clear that coalition forces will not leave on July 1— there will still be threats to security in Iraq. But, on July 1, Iraq will be governed by an Iraqi government. This is in accordance with the expressed wishes of the Iraqi people. In a recent public opinion survey, 60% of Iraqis said that U.S. and other Coalition forces should remain in Iraq for more than one year, until security is restored, or until an Iraqi government is in place.

Some say the transfer of authority to Iraqis will not be genuine, that it will only be symbolic. This is also not true. On July 1, an Iraqi government will be given responsibility for day-to-day governing of Iraqi state affairs. Iraqis will control all 26 ministries with strong U.S. support. The Iraqi Police, Border Patrol, and Facilities Protection Forces – 80 percent of the Iraqi Security Forces – will be under the new Iraqi Interior Ministry. The Iraqi Civil Defense Corps and Iraqi Army will, for purposes of operational control, be under the unified command of the Multi-National Force Iraq, commanded by General Sanchez. However, administratively they will be under the command of the Ministry of Defense. These arrangements are similar to those utilized in Germany and Korea during the Cold War, put real power into the hands of our Iraqi partners, and go beyond any token symbolism.

Some say that we are in Iraq with an “illegitimate” coalition that is just window dressing for this Administration’s unilateralism. However, the Coalition’s mission to reconstruct Iraq has been an international effort from the start. Thirty-four nations besides the United States have forces on the ground in Iraq, spearheaded by the two multinational divisions led by the British and the Poles. These 34 nations include Britain, Japan, and Italy – three G-7 countries – plus Poland, South Korea, and many others. Jordan and the United Arab Emirates are training Iraqi police forces. Over seventy nations participated in the Madrid Donors’ Conference, pledging between \$14-19 billion dollars for Iraqi reconstruction, including significant pledges from the World Bank and IMF.

Thirty-four of our closest friends have troops that are bravely fighting alongside us in Iraq. British, Italians, Bulgarians, Thais, Poles, Danes, Estonians, Ukrainians, and Spanish have been killed while trying to advance freedom and democracy in Iraq and it is wrong to denigrate their efforts. Perhaps most significantly, more than 250 Iraqis have died in the line of duty fighting for a free Iraq since June 1.

Some say that just as we should have waited for the United Nation’s permission to go to war, we should bring the United Nations into Iraq today. This is a misleading statement, as this Administration has made a significant effort to involve the United Nations in the reconstruction of Iraq. The Coalition’s ongoing efforts in Iraq have repeatedly received the endorsement of the UN. UN Security Council Resolution 1483 – passed May 22, 2003 – supports the formation of the CPA and an Iraqi Interim Administration. UNSCR 1500 – passed August 14, 2003 – welcomed the establishment of the Governing Council. UNSCR 1511 – passed October 16, 2003 – authorizes a multinational force under U.S. command. All three of these resolutions were unanimously endorsed by the UN Security Council.

The Administration has worked closely with the United Nations Secretary General throughout the past year. Before his tragic murder by terrorists, UN envoy Sergio Viera de Mello was instrumental in establishing the Iraqi Governing Council. Since then we have welcomed the proposals of the new UN envoy, Lakdar Brahimi, regarding the creation of the Iraqi Interim Government. Since the tragic bombing of the UN Headquarters in Baghdad last August – which Zarqawi boasts was his doing and which was clearly aimed at driving out the UN – security for the UN has been a major challenge. However, the UN representative for Security Coordination’s Office has been in Baghdad since mid-January. A UN Election Commission headed by Carina Perelli has in Iraq this month. And Ambassador Brahimi has already conducted two important missions to Iraq and we look forward to his return next month.

Some say the recent attacks against Coalition forces by Muqtada al-Sadr’s militia signal the start of a major Shi’a uprising that would pit Iraq’s Shi’a – who are a majority of the population – against the coalition. In reality, however, Sadr does not have widespread support in the Iraq Shi’a community. A recent ABC News poll showed that only one percent of Iraqis named al-Sadr as the national leader they trust most. Last week in Najaf, Iraqi residents of that city distributed leaflets against Sadr that said: “We don’t want anyone, whoever he is, to surround himself with armed bodyguards and return us to an era of slavery for the Iraqi people.” And immediately after al-Sadr urged his followers to attack U.S. forces, the Shiite clerical establishment issued a statement calling for Sadr to stop “resorting to violence, occupying public buildings, and other actions” that make him an outlaw.

And that is what Muqtada al-Sadr is, an outlaw. He does not represent a “legitimate voice” in Iraq, but rather a threat to the legitimate rule of law in Iraq. Immediately after the liberation of Iraq he ordered his followers to begin taking over the mosques of moderate Shiites. He has been indicted by an Iraqi judge for complicity in the assassination of a prominent moderate Shi’a cleric, Ayatollah Abdel Majid al-Khoei, in April 2003.

Muqtada al-Sadr’s reliance on armed gangs to deny Iraqi men and women their basic freedoms, his use of intimidation and possibly murder against his political rivals, and his imposition of vigilante law and illegal courts are incompatible with the New Iraq that most Iraqis want.

Some say we have no plan for the scheduled transition to Iraqi sovereignty on July 1st. Such statements ignore the progress made in our discussions with the United Nations over the last two months. UN envoy Ambassador Brahimi just announced on April 14 his general concept for the Iraqi Interim Government that will govern from July 1 to early 2005. That concept is the product of weeks of consultation by UN and Coalition officials with Iraqis. Ambassador Brahimi remains confident that the process of setting up an Interim Government could be completed in a relatively short period of time. It is worth recalling that some permanent members of the UN Security Council complained that CPA's plan was moving too slowly to sovereignty.

As for the shape of the US presence, the Command and Control relationships are in the process of being finalized. DoD will create the Office of Security Cooperation (OSC) that will be headed by Major General David Petraeus. OSC will consist of the Coalition Military Assistance Training Team (CMATT) and the Coalition Police Advisory Training Team (CPATT). Major General Petraeus will have authority and responsibility for effectively using available resources and for recruiting, equipping, training and positioning the Iraqi Security Forces.

Some say the new Iraq will be dominated by the Shi'a majority that will inevitably establish an Iranian-style theocracy in Iraq. Although the eventual shape of the permanent Iraqi government will be for the Iraqis themselves to determine, thus far events on the ground are cause for cautious optimism. Over the past two months, 17 local elections have been held in overwhelmingly Shiite provinces in Southern Iraq. And in almost every case independents and representatives of non-religious parties did better than the Islamists.

In addition, certain key provisions of the TAL suggest Iraqis have already chosen a more tolerant course. First, the TAL reflects a unanimous consensus of the Governing Council that includes Shi'ite representatives, Sunni Iraqis, Kurdish Iraqis and others. These Iraqis embraced a democratic form of government that reflects the principle that there shall be neither the tyranny of the majority nor tyranny of the minority. The rights, beliefs and practices of all Iraqis are protected.

The TAL also achieves a reasonable balance with regard to the role of Islam in Iraq, combining clear guarantees of religious and other freedoms with recognition of Islam's role in Iraqi society. Article 13(F) states that "Each Iraqi has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religious belief and practice. Coercion in such matters shall be prohibited." Article 7(A) states that "Islam is the official religion . . . and is to be considered a source of legislation." No law may contradict "the universally agreed tenets of Islam, the principles of democracy, or the [individual] rights" granted in the TAL. The exact meaning of this will of course have to be worked out in practice. But it incorporates the view that the "universally agreed tenets of Islam" are compatible with democracy and individual rights.

Some say this Administration is leading the American people into another Vietnam-like quagmire that can never be won. As Senator McCain, former Senator Fred Thompson, and many others have pointed out, that comparison is more emotion than analysis. In Vietnam, the Communists were an entrenched movement, with a strong nationalist credential, external support from two major Communist powers, and a friendly population in many parts of the country. In Iraq, the extremism in the Sunni triangle represents a small minority of the Iraqi population seeking to restore the regime of terror that gripped Iraq for more than three decades – plus an admixture of foreign jihadists and Iraqi extremists, some of them associated with Al Qaeda. While we do not know how much these groups work together – and while their long term goals may diverge – they are united in the common purpose of defeating us and preventing a free Iraq from emerging. They offer no positive vision to Iraqis but only visions of death and terror.

One possible resemblance with the Vietnam experience, however, is the enemy's hope that it can shape perceptions here -- demoralizing the American people as well as our servicemen and women in the field. That was a decisive factor in the outcome in Vietnam. That is why Senator

Kerry's strong statement that America must stay the course in Iraq is so important. That is the message we in Washington must convey on a bipartisan basis not only to our own people, not only to our servicemen and women, but also to the Iraqis, both friend and foe.

It seems that this message is starting to get through to Bin Laden's associate Zarqawi. In the same letter I quoted previously, he lamented that America would not be pushed out "no matter how numerous its wounds become and how much of its blood is spilled." That is an accurate description of this country's courage and staying power in a just cause. Conveying that message can shorten the conflict.

Conclusion: Only One Option – To Win

Finally, some say there are no good options in Iraq. This is not true. In fact, there is only one option in Iraq – to continue moving ahead and helping the Iraqi people build a free and prosperous democracy. This will not be easy. Only the most naïve person would think that. And it will be a long road. After the abuse it has suffered, it will take time for Iraq to catch up even with the new democracies of Europe and Asia, much less long-established ones like our own.

But Iraqis recognize these challenges and embrace them as a revolutionary opportunity to build a free nation and to better their lives. Recently, Nesreen Berwari, the woman serving as the Iraqi Minister of Municipalities and Public Works said: "On April 9, 2003, Iraqis were offered the opportunity to begin to dream their future. Before April 9, 2003, we were not allowed to dream. We could not imagine life with the kinds of positive challenges we face today." Minister Berwari's optimism persists even though she recently survived a second assassination attempt on her life which killed her bodyguard.

From the start of the Global War on Terror it has been clear that we would have to face many difficult challenges and endure many sacrifices in order to ensure the safety of our citizens and our way of life. But as Minister Berwari suggests, these should be seen as positive challenges not as excuses for inaction or retreat. When has it ever been the American way to back down from such a challenge?

Last October, in his farewell speech, General John Keane aptly described the American character in the face of challenges such as we face today in Iraq. General Keane said:

"I want to tell you something about this war against terror we are fighting in Iraq and around the world. The foreign terrorists, the Baath Party sympathizers, the Islamic extremists who wantonly kill Americans and innocent people from many nations, have no idea what they are up against.

Their strategic objective is the political and moral will of the American people. They want to destroy our confidence. They think they know us because they have heard of Lebanon in '83, or Somalia in '94, or the USS Cole in 2000. They think we are morally weak and we will lose our resolve. But their knowledge is superficial and their understanding is shallow.

To understand America and Americans, they need to understand the Marne in 1918, or Tarawa in '43, Omaha Beach in '44 or the Chosin Reservoir in 1950. They need to understand that a nation that produces Alvin York and Audie Murphy; John Pershing and George Marshall; Chesty Puller and George Patton; Randy Shugart and Gary Gordon; produces heroes in every generation. They are out there now... performing every day.

Our enemies are cunning, but they are ignorant and their ignorance will be their undoing. They do not know our will, our courage, or our character."

Last summer, a colonel in the 101st Air Assault Division told me that he explained the job in Iraq to his soldiers like this: He told them that what they're doing in Iraq is every bit as important as what their grandfathers did in Germany or Japan in World War II or what their fathers did in Europe and Asia during the Cold War.

Those soldiers are helping to reshape history in a way that will make America and the world safer. Like the joint effort to pull down Saddam's statue a little over a year ago, our troops are supporting the Iraqi people in their effort to overcome their tyrannical past and build a better, more peaceful future.

Needed Enhance Authorities

One of the most important ways in which Congress can support the global war on terrorism is to support three special authorities we have requested:

- (1) \$500 million to train and equip military and security forces in Iraq, Afghanistan, and friendly nearby regional nations to enhance their capability to combat terrorism and support U. S. operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. It is critical that this authority include security forces because the terrorism threat in Iraq is inside its borders. Security forces – not the New Iraqi Army – play the primary role in confronting this threat.
- (2) The Commanders Emergency Response Program (\$300 million) to enable military leaders in Iraq and Afghanistan to respond to urgent humanitarian relief and reconstruction needs. This has been a remarkably successful program. With quick turnaround projects averaging about \$7,000 each, commanders not only help people in their operations area, but also gain their support in defeating terrorists and building themselves a better future. As we have already done in FY 2004, we propose to expand CERP to Afghanistan, as well as to continue the program in Iraq.
- (3) Increased drawdown authority (\$200 million) under the Afghanistan Freedom Support Act, to provide additional help for the Afghan National Army. During this pivotal year, this authority is critical for advancing democracy and stability in Afghanistan. During my visit to Afghanistan, everyone I met gave very high marks to the professionalism and competence of the ANA.

The President's FY 2005 budget does not request specific appropriations for these three authorities, and therefore the Department would need to reprogram funding to use them. This underscores the importance of Congress increasing the Department's General Transfer Authority (GTA) to \$4 billion – which would still represent just one percent of total DoD funding. Higher GTA also would give us a greater ability to shift funds from less pressing needs to fund must-pay bills and emerging requirements. As we have seen in the past three years, such requirements have become a constant feature of our military programs.

This Administration looks forward to continuing to work with the members of Congress to help support our Armed Forces throughout the world who are doing their part to make American and her people more secure. Thank you.



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