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Speech

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Prepared Statement For the House Armed Services Committee

As Prepared for Delivery for the House Armed Services Committee by Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, Washington, DC, Tuesday, June 22, 2004.

Mr. Chairman, Congressman Skelton, Members of the Committee, I am happy to be here today to testify on the recent progress in the transition to Iraqi sovereignty and my talks last week with Prime Minister Allawi and his national security team.

As President Bush noted recently, the selection of the Iraqi Interim Government “brings us one step closer to realizing the dream of millions of Iraqis: a fully sovereign nation with a representative government that protects their rights and serves their needs.”

The transition to Iraqi sovereignty represents the culmination of the more than a year-long partnership between the Iraqi people and the Coalition forces serving in Iraq, working together to create a secure environment in which freedom and prosperity can grow. Whether from Australia or El Salvador, Poland or the Philippines, we owe a sincere debt of gratitude to the roughly 23,000 men and women from our 32 Coalition partners.

And of course, our prayers continue to be with all of our people currently serving in Iraq. I returned last week from a four-and-a-half-day trip that took us to northern, central, western and southern Iraq, visiting all five American divisions as well as the British and Polish division commanders in Iraq. In temperatures consistently above 100 degrees, I saw firsthand the tremendous work our brave young Americans are doing, and with every trip I make to Iraq I am consistently amazed at the leaps in progress they are achieving.

They are making America – and the world – more secure by helping the Iraqi people to plant the seeds of peaceful, representative government in the heart of the Middle East – a potentially watershed moment in the Global War on Terror. Whether members of Active Duty, Reserve, or National Guard units, or civilians working with the CPA or one of many NGOs active in Iraq, these heroes embody the best ideals of our nation. They serve so that others may be free and Americans can be secure, and we thank them all for the sacrifices they endure.

Finally, on behalf of these brave Americans, let me express thanks to the Congress and the members of this Committee for the continued and unfailing bipartisan support you give our armed forces. The \$25 billion budget amendment you authorized will ensure that our forces continue to have the full resources necessary to complete their missions in Iraq and Afghanistan. You have signaled to the world, both to our allies and to our enemies, America's commitment to see this new struggle against tyranny and barbarism through to the end.

Additionally, I would like to personally thank the members of this committee for your support of the Commander's Emergency Response Program and I would ask for your support in conference of the Train and Equip authorities to help U.S. military forces secure and stabilize Iraq and Afghanistan, enhance the ability of these countries' military and security forces to combat terrorism and support U.S. and Coalition military operations. Both provisions are extremely vital tools as we work to rebuild Iraq and provide security for our troops. The Department will continue to work with the Members to increase the Train and Equip authority to the President's requested amount of \$500 million in FY 2005.

Our Strategy in Iraq

Speaking at the United States Air Force Academy Graduation Ceremony three weeks ago, President Bush outlined the strategy for helping Iraqis achieve a fully constitutional government, one that enables Iraq to preserve its territorial integrity, reject both weapons of mass destruction and terrorism, and live peacefully with its neighbors. The strategy involves five interdependent phases to build Iraqi capacity and transfer responsibilities from the Coalition to Iraq rapidly—but not recklessly.

Transferring Authority to a Sovereign Iraq. The first phase of the President's plan will become effective on June 30th when the Coalition Provisional Authority transfers authority to the Interim Iraqi Government—a body that will consist of a president, two deputy-presidents, a prime minister and 26 ministries, and will be responsible for day-to-day governing of Iraqi state affairs and will work as a full partner in providing security to Iraq. On July 1, U.S. Embassy Iraq will open for business, as a full partner in helping to bring democracy, prosperity, and security to Iraq.

When Iraq becomes sovereign on June 30th, our engagement will naturally change. But our commitment will not. During this stage, our focus will rest on shaping and supporting Iraq's political transition and particularly on setting the stage for national elections.

Security. Security is the foundation for victory in Iraq—the foundation on which all other successes in Iraq are built. As President Bush noted, we are again at war against philosophies of death and tyranny. In Iraq, the forces presently trying to derail Iraq's progress towards democracy include the killers who used to work in Saddam's fascist intelligence services and the Fedayeen Saddam, Al Qaeda-inspired foreign terrorists, and the gangs that follow Muqtada al-Sadr. Accordingly, a critical step in the strategy is to help Iraqis fashion the stability and security on which representative government depends.

Since the beginning of our mission in Iraq, a principal goal has been to encourage and enable Iraqis to

defend, guard and police Iraq for themselves. It is far better that Iraqis—who have a native knowledge of everything from city neighborhoods and regional accents to religious sensitivities and even local license plates—deal with problems unique to Iraq. Allowing them to take the lead in securing Iraq is a major key to victory over the enemies of a free Iraq.

Although there are currently over 200,000 Iraqi Security Forces on duty or in training, Iraq's security forces are still a work in progress. They require training, equipment, leadership and team-building to be able to handle continuing threats—internal and external—on their own. We have accelerated our efforts to recruit, train, equip and, most importantly, mentor Iraqi security forces. However, U.S. and other international forces will remain indispensable to preserving security while Iraqi forces build their strength. This is recognized in UN Security Council Resolution 1546, which reaffirms the authorization for Multinational Force-Iraq.

U.S. forces in Iraq will remain under U.S. command and will have clear rules of engagement. U.S. commanders, however, will coordinate security efforts closely with their Iraqi counterparts. These troops will be maintained at the level required to do the job, as our commanders in Iraq constantly reassess the numbers of troops they need. As we have often said, and as the President reiterated in his recent address to the nation, if our commanders on the ground ask for more troops, they will get more troops.

Rebuilding Iraq's Infrastructure. The third step in the President's plan for victory in Iraq involves rebuilding Iraq's civil infrastructure—deeply damaged by decades of Saddam's neglect and the ravages of three wars Saddam brought upon his people. At present, 16 ministries which will address such programs—to include Health, Education and Public Works and Municipalities—have been handed over to Iraqis who are running these ministries with full authority. We will continue to work with Iraqis to build on what has already been achieved in areas such as healthcare and education.

Enlisting International Support. Investment in Iraq's success is not just an American investment, it is one that must be shared by the international community. The fourth step in the President's plan involves enlisting additional international support for Iraq's transition to democracy. The UN will play a critical role in that process. In the last couple of weeks, the UN Security Council unanimously passed Resolution 1546, endorsing the transition timetable adopted by Iraqis and encouraging other UN members to add their support. The international community at large will continue to play a key role in helping Iraq stand on its own feet—through such actions as economic assistance, debt relief, and continued military support.

Continue Building on Iraq's Capacity for Self-government. The fifth step in the President's plan involves nurturing Iraq's capacity for representative self-government that will lead to a constitutional government by the end of 2005. The Interim Government will serve until representatives to a Transitional Government are elected, no later than the end of January 2005 -- the first free elections held in Iraqi history.

By the end of 2005, Iraqis are scheduled to vote on a new constitution that will protect the rights

of all Iraqi citizens regardless of their religion or ethnicity. This is the historic point when Iraq will have the necessary legitimacy for durable self-rule. During this process Iraqis will decide for themselves the exact structure of their permanent government and the provisions of their Iraqi constitution.

As important as clarity about these five phases of our strategy is, it is equally important that we maintain the ability to adjust to rapidly evolving conditions in Iraq. For history has demonstrated that even the best laid plans for post-war reconstruction can go awry if not matched to the realities on the ground. For example, in World War II post-war planning for the reconstruction of Germany began three years before the end of the war. Before the German surrender, the Joint Chiefs of Staff's blueprint for the occupation of Germany, JCS 1067, specified tough programs to "prevent Germany from ever again becoming a threat to the peace of the world." No sooner did military and civilian officials arrive in devastated Germany after the war, however, than they began to realize this plan was wholly inadequate. All of the programs specified in JCS 1067, the result of three years worth of planning, either failed or were aborted. Eventually, more than two years after VE day, JCS 1067 was replaced altogether by JCS 1779, which stressed the goal of a "stable and productive Germany."

That history demonstrates that the key to post-war reconstruction lies not in impressive looking paperwork devised thousands of miles away from the frontline, but flexibility when planning meets reality. In reconstruction, as in war, plans are at best the basis for future changes. Whereas it took the United States more than two years to alter its plans after World War II, in less than 15 months this Coalition has repeatedly demonstrated that it can be flexible when necessary, and it has done so in the face of an evil enemy that continues to kill and destroy. Examples of this flexibility include:

- Creating a new type of indigenous force (the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps) to fill the gap between the Iraqi police service and an army oriented to external defense;
- Requesting a large supplemental when the requirements for Iraqi reconstruction became clear;
- Responding to Iraqi demands for a more rapid resumption of sovereignty by developing the idea of a transitional government that could take power before a permanent constitution is ratified;
- Dropping the "caucus plan" for selecting the transitional government, when it turned out to be unpopular with Iraqis, and substituting a two-step process involving an interim government that will take power before legislative elections;
- Revising the mechanisms for implementing the de-Ba'athification policy to address complaints that the appeals process was not working as intended, and to respond to the Sunni minority's fears of marginalization.

Although the reconstruction plans first envisioned in the summer of 2002, and submitted by the CPA to Congress last July have undergone substantial changes, it has been the Coalition's ability to adapt to rapidly changing circumstances that has brought us now to the transfer of sovereignty, and the beginning of representative government in Iraq.

The Iraqi Interim Government

The first phase of the President's plan takes effect on June 30th, when the Coalition Provisional

Authority will cease to exist, transferring all governmental authority to the Iraqi Interim Government. This Interim Government was formed through a process of wide-ranging consultation with Iraqis, including political leaders, religious and tribal leaders, and civic associations. The process was led by Ambassador Lakhdar Brahimi, Special Adviser on Iraq to the Secretary General of the United Nations, working in consultation with the CPA and the Iraqi Governing Council.

The Iraqi Interim Government consists of a President, two Deputy Presidents, and a Prime Minister leading a Council of Ministers. The new government will also include an Interim National Council and a Judicial Authority. The Interim National Council will be chosen by a National Conference, to be held in July, involving at least a thousand Iraqis from across Iraq, and representing every province in the country, as well as various political parties, tribal leaders, trade and professional unions, universities, and religious leaders.

The composition of the Iraqi Interim Government is as follows:

President of Iraq – Sheikh Ghazi Ajil Al-Yawar
Deputy President of Iraq – Dr. Ibrahim Jaafari
Deputy President of Iraq – Dr. Rowsch Shaways
Prime Minister of Iraq – Dr. Ayad Allawi
Deputy Prime Minister – Dr. Barham Salih
Minister of Agriculture – Dr. Sawsan Ali Magid Al-Sharifi
Minister of Communications – Dr. Mohammad Ali Al-Hakim
Minister of Culture – Mr. Mufeed Mohammed Jawad al-Jaza'iri
Minister of Defense – Mr. Hazem Sha'alan
Minister of Displacement and Migration – Ms. Pascale Isho Warda
Minister of Education – Professor Sami Al-Mudhaffar
Minister of Electricity – Dr. Aiham Al-Sammarae
Minister of Environment – Professor Mishkat Moumin
Minister of Finance – Dr. Adel Abdul Mahdi
Minister of Foreign Affairs – Mr. Hoshyar Mahmood Mohammed Zebari
Minister of Health – Dr. Ala'adin Alwan
Minister of Higher Education – Dr. Taher Khalaf Jabur Al-Bakaa
Minister of Housing and Construction – Dr. Omar Al-Farouq Salim Al-Damluji
Minister of Human Rights – Dr. Bakhtiar Amin
Minister of Industry and Minerals – Dr. Hajem Al-Hassani
Minister of Interior – Mr. Falah al-Nakib
Minister of Justice – Dr. Malik Dohan Al-Hassan
Minister of Labor and Social Affairs – Ms. Leyla Abdul Latif
Minister of Public Works – Ms. Nasreen Mustapha Berwari
Minister of Oil – Mr. Thamir Abbas Ghadban
Minister of Planning – Dr. Mehdi Al-Hafidh
Minister of Science and Technology – Dr. Rashad Mandan Omar
Minister of State for Provinces – Judge Wa'il Abdul al-Latif
Minister of State for Women – Ms. Narmin Othman

Minister of State – Dr. Kasim Daoud
Minister of State – Dr. Mamu Farham Othman
Minister of State – Mr. Adnan al-Janabi
Minister of Trade – Mr. Mohammed Mostafa al-Jibouri
Minister of Transportation – Mr. Louay Hatem Sultan Al Erris
Minister of Water Resources – Dr. Abdul Latif Jamal Rashid
Minister of Youth and Sports – Mr. Ali Fa’iq Al-Ghabban

This is a remarkable group of individuals. They reflect a wide array of talents and backgrounds, and they are all committed to serving the interests of the Iraqi people and paving away for the first free elections in Iraqi history. They are doing so in full knowledge that they are risking their lives. I hope that the Members of this Committee will join me in pledging our full support, and our prayers, to the Interim Government as they prepare to assume ultimate authority in Iraq in less than three weeks.

The Iraqi Interim Government will operate under the legal framework established by the Transitional Administrative Law (TAL) and the TAL Annex. The President and the two Deputy Presidents will form a Presidency of the State that represents the sovereignty of Iraq and oversees the higher affairs of the country. The Presidency will have ceremonial functions and must unanimously approve orders issued by the Council of Ministers before they can become law.

The Prime Minister will have day-to-day responsibility for the management of the government. Iraq’s ministers, who will oversee the ministries, will report to the Prime Minister. The government will be responsible for improving security, promoting economic development, and for the important process of preparing for democratic elections in January 2005. The Council of Ministers, with the unanimous approval of the Presidency, may issue orders or decrees with the force of law. The Interim National Council can veto these orders or decrees by a two-thirds majority vote.

As noted above, the National Conference will choose an Interim National Council of 100 members. The Interim National Council will oversee the government and will have other substantive powers specified in the TAL Annex. It will be able to hear the views of citizens, advise and question the government on policy, form committees and veto orders or decrees from the Council of Ministers by a two-thirds majority vote. It will also have the authority to appoint replacements to the Presidency in the event that a member of the Presidency dies or resigns, and it will have the right to approve the 2005 Iraqi national budget.

As set out in the Transitional Administrative Law, the Judicial Authority is independent of the executive branch of government. The federal judicial branch will include a Federal Supreme Court, a Court of Cassation, Courts of Appeal and the Central Criminal Court of Iraq. In addition, there will be a Higher Juridical Council that will supervise the federal judiciary and administer the budget.

Some have argued that the Iraqi Interim Government will be a puppet of the United States, or will have only limited sovereignty. This is, quite simply, false, and ignores the fully sovereign powers of the Interim Government. For example, the Iraqi Interim Government that takes power on June 30 will have

the power to conclude agreements in the areas of diplomatic relations and economic reconstruction, including Iraq's sovereign debt.

At the same time, the Iraqi people desire to limit the powers of an unelected government. After 30 years of living under Saddam's tyranny, it is perfectly understandable that the Iraqi people would seek to limit the power of a government that is not yet fully accountable to the Iraqi electorate. And given our nation's history of resistance to taxation without representation, Americans should easily understand why Iraqis want the Interim Government's authority to be limited.

Consequently, the Iraqi Interim Government will not be able to amend the Transitional Administrative Law or to form agreements which permanently alter the destiny of Iraq. The Iraqi people have made clear that only an elected government should have such powers. The Interim Government will operate under rules defined in the Transitional Administrative Law, which provides a historic bill of rights for the Iraqi people and a roadmap to a permanent constitution in 2005.

The Iraqi Interim Government and the Multinational Force

Although this progress on the political track is impressive, the ability of the Iraqi people to achieve their aspirations will be heavily influence by the security situation in Iraq. As recent events have demonstrated, continuing attacks by insurgents, including members of Saddam's security services, foreign fighters and terrorists, and illegal militias challenge all those who are working for a better Iraq.

This is why both the new Prime Minister and Foreign Minister have publicly requested that the U. S.-led multinational forces remain in Iraq to help the Iraqi people complete their political transition and permit the United Nations and the international community to work to facilitate Iraq's reconstruction. In a statement this week, Prime Minister Allawi said:

We are deeply grateful for the sacrifices that the forces of friendly countries have made to help liberate us from one of the most abusive tyrants of modern times. . . .

Until our forces are fully capable, we will continue to need support from our friends in the Multi-National Force – Iraq. We appreciate the understanding and contributions of the international community, and we hope that additional international support will be forthcoming in response to United Nations Security Council Resolution 1546.

Similarly, addressing the UN Security Council earlier this month as that body was considering what became Resolution 1546, Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari said:

[Since April] last year we have been working very hard to re-establish Iraq's security, military, and police forces.

However, we have yet to reach the stage of being able to maintain our own security and therefore the people of Iraq need and request the assistance of multinational forces to work closely with Iraqi forces to stabilize the situation. I stress that any premature departure of international troops would lead to chaos and the real possibility of a civil war in Iraq. This would cause a humanitarian crisis and provide a foothold for terrorists to launch their evil campaign in our

country and beyond our borders. The continued presence of the multinational force will help preserve Iraq's unity, prevent regional intervention in our affairs and protect our borders at this critical stage of our reconstruction.

The Iraqi Armed Forces will be a principal partner of the Multinational Force. The Iraqi National Guard – built on the present Civil Defense Corps – will be part of the Iraqi Army, which will be responsible to the Iraqi Ministry of Defense. The objectives and functions of the Multinational Force after the transfer of sovereignty will remain as it has been, except that it will now coordinate with the sovereign Iraqi government through agreed consultative mechanisms.

We will need to develop an effective and cooperative security partnership between the Multinational Force and the sovereign government of Iraq. The commander of the Multinational Force will work in partnership with the sovereign Government of Iraq in helping to provide security while recognizing and respecting its sovereignty. To that end, Multinational Force commanders will, at the invitation of the Iraqi Prime Minister, participate in discussions of the Ministerial Committee for National Security on the broad framework of security policy. The Iraqi security forces will be responsible to the appropriate Iraqi ministers. The Multinational Force will coordinate with them at all levels – national, regional, and local – in order to maintain unity of command of military operations in which Iraqi forces are engaged with the Multinational Force.

While the Iraqi Government may withhold their forces from specific Multinational Force operations, units committed to joint operations with the MNF will act under unified command. Iraqi leaders and the MNF will keep each other informed of their respective activities, consult regularly to ensure the effective allocation and use of personnel, resources and facilities, will share intelligence, and will refer issues up the respective chains of command where necessary. This will be a partnership – where both sides will bring their views to the table and agreements will be reached through mutual consent.

We were able to fill in many details of this partnership during our talks last week with Prime Minister Allawi and his national security team. Those talks enabled us to gain insight into the new Iraqi government's strategy to defeat its enemies, as it prepares to assume sovereign authority and as our role changes from that of an occupying power responsible for maintaining security to helping the Iraqis defend themselves. We met with Prime Minister Allawi and his team for about eight hours over the course of three days. The meetings were very cordial and productive. Based on Lieutenant General Petraeus' ongoing work with the Iraqis, as well as on last week's discussions, we achieved consensus on a way ahead, which was reflected in Prime Minister Allawi's statement this past Sunday of Iraq's national security strategy.

A key element of these talks was the delineation of several mechanisms for the coordination of operations between Iraqi Security Forces and the Multinational Force. The Iraqis proposed the creation of a Joint Operating Center to coordinate operations at the national level. It will fill the gap between the Joint Coordinating Centers, which function at the regional and local levels, and the Ministerial Committee for National Security, which would deal with political-military issues at the strategic level.

Participants in this body will include representatives of the Prime Minister, the Ministers of Defense and the Interior, the Multinational Force Commander and the Chief of the Office of Security Transition.

The Iraqis also agreed that the Iraq Survey Group (ISG) will continue to operate as part of the Multinational Force authorized by UNSCRs 1511 and 1546, although they will want increased input and coordination in the ISG's activities.

We also agreed to establish a Joint Committee on Detainees. We agreed that representation in this Committee should include representatives from the Iraqi government, the Multinational Force, and ambassadors from contributing countries.

The Iraqis also requested help in creating a command center in the Prime Minister's office. We agreed that we could re-allocate resources already committed to creating command centers at the Ministries of Defense and the Interior, and at the Joint Headquarters and could begin work quickly. General Sanchez noted that once the Iraqis have identified appropriate officers, we can embed them at lower-level Multinational Force headquarters. These embedded officers could be connected to the Prime Minister's command center to provide situational awareness before lower-level Iraqi headquarters were up and running.

Iraqi Security Forces

Of course, the long-term key to success in Iraq requires building indigenous Iraqi capacity and transitioning responsibilities from the coalition to Iraq. Nowhere is this more vital than in our efforts to build capable Iraqi security forces to achieve stability. Our plan was – and is – for Iraqi forces to develop strength, capability, and experience with the help of the Multinational Force, with the MNF playing a crucial supporting role until the Iraqis can stand on their own.

Current plans call for:

- *Iraqi Army:* 27 battalions, or 35,000 soldiers, trained and on duty by October. Most of their equipment is planned to be on hand by that time, with vehicles continuing to be delivered through March 2005.
- *Iraqi National Guard:* 45 battalions (40,000 soldiers) by September, with possible additional battalions beyond. Equipment is arriving rapidly, and the 45 battalions should be equipped by September.
- *Iraqi Police Service:* 90,000 policemen, which is the current number on duty, full trained by June 2005. Equipment is flowing in, and they are planned to be fully equipped by September.
- *Iraqi Border Patrol:* 20,000 by July, to be fully equipped by September.
- *Facility Protection Service:* There are currently 74,000 on duty, with the final number to be determined by the Iraqi Ministry of the Interior. These forces might also be fully equipped by September.

During our meetings with Prime Minister Allawi, the Prime Minister conveyed a clear sense of priorities for the different elements of the Iraqi Security Forces. The first priority will be the Iraqi

Intervention Force (previously called the Iraqi National Task Force). This force's main mission will be to defeat enemy forces in urban areas, and will have a troop strength of 6,600 troops organized into three brigades.

The second priority will be an Iraq Special Operations Force, consisting of a 764-troop Iraqi Counter Terrorist Force, similar to our SWAT teams, and a supporting Commando Battalion, similar to a Ranger Battalion, comprised of 828 troops.

The third priority will be the creation of an Iraqi National Guard, based on the current Iraqi Civil Defense Corps, as part of the Iraq Army. While the planned size of the force will remain initially at 45 battalions, a command structure of six division headquarters and eighteen brigade headquarters would be added. This would create an all-Iraqi chain of command for the ICDC battalions, through brigade and division headquarters, to the Army Chief of Staff and Defense Minister, and finally all the way up to the Prime Minister.

The areas of operation of the six divisions could be aligned with the AOs of the Multinational Force's six Major Subordinate Commands. This would facilitate coordination between Iraqi and international forces at the regional level.

The fourth priority is the continued development of two divisions of the Regular Army. While the current mission statement of the regular army emphasizes defense against external conventional attack, the new government wants to be able to use it against the internal enemy, the real current threat to Iraq's security. Additionally, although the Iraqis had considered adding two more divisions, they agreed that this is a lower priority that can be deferred to a later date.

Lessons Learned

The spike in combat activity we witnessed in Iraq, and the mixed performance of Iraqi Security Forces we saw in response, have provided further lessons we can apply to increase the impact of what we are doing to recruit, train, equip and, most importantly, mentor Iraqi security forces.

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 arrangement provides liaison, which produces mutual confidence, and it also helps us develop Iraqi leadership. Similarly, we need police liaisons and specialized trainers to get down to police stations around the country to provide confidence and set the example.

Second, the Iraqi security forces need more and better equipment. We had not planned for them to be fully equipped at this point, and many police and ICDC units were outgunned in recent action. We are reexamining 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 those problems finally seem to be fixed. We need to make up for lost time, but any further delay is

unacceptable.

Third, 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 report to 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. The rest of the chain needs to be filled, but Iraqis in the security forces can see today that there are Iraqis at the top.

The greatest factor in the mixed performance of the security forces was an intangible: fear. 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. Until Iraqis are convinced that Saddam's regime has been permanently and irreversibly removed, and until a long and ghastly part of their history is put to rest and overcome, that fear will remain. Convincing them of this truth – that Saddam and the Saddamists are finished – will continue to require investments of our time and our resources and our precious men and women in uniform, to continue to build trust among the Iraqi people. That is why it is so important in this time of stress to show that our commitment to their freedom is rock-solid.

This is also why it is inadvisable to set a hard deadline for the Multinational Force's mandate in Iraq. Such a deadline would risk creating the impression amongst the great majority of moderate Iraqis who hope for a new Iraq that we were not committed to the long-term stability of Iraq. It would encourage the terrorists and murderers from Saddam's intelligence services to wait us out so that they could unleash a wave of violence in order to regain political power and begin their tyranny over the Iraqi people anew. Creating artificial deadlines for withdrawal will only serve to undermine our current mission in Iraq. It will put at risk the significant gains already made by the Iraqi people in the rebuilding of their nation, and will endanger the lives of American soldiers.

The Role of NATO and the UN

Contrary to assertions that we are in Iraq with a coalition that is just window dressing for unilateralism, the Coalition's mission to liberate and reconstruct Iraq has been an international effort from the start. This includes heavy NATO participation, as sixteen of our NATO allies currently have more than 19,000 troops deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom's stability operations. Appropriately, British and Polish representatives participated in our meetings with Iraq's national security leaders.

Similarly, 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 – supported the formation of the CPA and an Iraqi Interim Administration. UNSCR 1500 – passed August 14, 2003 – recognized the establishment of the Governing Council. UNSCR 1511 – passed October 16, 2003 – authorizes a multinational force under unified 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. The new UN envoy, Lakdar Brahimi, has been invaluable in facilitating 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, and a UN Election Commission headed by Carina Perelli has been in Iraq since April.

On May 24th the U.S. and UK submitted a draft UN Security Council Resolution that defines U.S. and international responsibilities in Iraq. This resolution was passed unanimously on June 8th as UNSCR 1546. We look forward to the United Nations providing election expertise and assistance in preparation for the election of the Iraqi Transitional Government by January 2005. We have also proposed a specific allotment of international forces falling under the unified command of the Multinational Force whose sole mission would be the protection of UN personnel and facilities in Iraq. This would permit the United Nations to expand their presence and activities within Iraq, something this Administration has supported since Iraq's liberation over a year ago.

We look forward to the continued participation of these international organizations in Iraq after the transition to Iraqi sovereignty. Many allies support an increased role by NATO in Iraq. Several have called for the passing of a new UN Security Council Resolution authorizing a NATO force presence, functional tasking, such as election support, ordnance disposal, the protection of UN personnel, or assisting in the equipping of Iraqi security forces.

Conclusion

My recent travels through Iraq, from my visit to Basra in the far south to Lake Dokan in Northern Iraq, as well our meetings with Prime Minister Allawi and his team, have convinced me that the Iraqi Interim Government is comprised of leaders who understand the magnitude of the task laid before them, but also recognize the necessity of compromise and sacrifice required to achieve a free and prosperous Iraq. More importantly, accompanying this realization of the hardships to come is an unflinching optimism on the part of the Iraqi people. In his statement Sunday, Dr. Allawi declared:

The enemy we are fighting is truly evil. They have nothing to offer the Iraqi people except death and destruction and the slaughter of innocents. Having suffered under tyranny for so many years, the Iraqi people are determined to establish a democratic government that provides freedom and equal rights for all its citizens. We are prepared to fight and, if necessary, die for that cause. We are confident that we will prevail.”

One Iraqi, identified only as Omar, reflected recently on the assassination of the President of the Iraqi Governing Council, Izzedine Salim, on his website: "Are we sad?" he wrote in his Web log. "Yes of

course, but we're absolutely not discouraged because we know our enemies and we decided to go in this battle to the end. . . . I've tasted freedom, my friends, and I'd rather die fighting to preserve my freedom before I find myself trapped in another nightmare of blood and oppression."

Like Omar, brave young Americans in Iraq are committed as well and we are as a nation. And we remain cautiously optimistic, despite the daily death and violence caused by the evil enemy Prime Minister Allawi described. Our own history attests to the fact that democracy can be a hard-won prize. But we also know that the goal is worth the fight.

<http://www.defenselink.mil/speeches/2004/sp20040622-depsecdef0521.html>