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UNITED STATES IS HELPING IRAQI INSPECTORS GENERAL TO BE AN EFFECTIVE FORCE IN FIGHTING CORRUPTION

Remarks as prepared by Layla Jassim al-Mokhtar, Inspector General, Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Iraq, to the President's Council on Integrity and Efficiency, July 12, 2005, Washington, DC

(Introduction of Inspector General al-Mokhtar by the Honorable Joseph E. Schmitz, Inspector General of the U.S. Department of Defense, and former Coalition Provisional Authority Administrator L. Paul Bremer III)

Thank you Ambassador Bremer for your kind introduction and for all you have done to help build a free and democratic Iraq. Thank you to my counterpart Inspector General, the US Department of Defense IG, Joseph Schmitz for the invitation to me to visit with him and others interested in the work of Iraqi IG's, and thanks to all of you for allowing me to make comments to your meeting.

I am pleased to visit with you at a time near to two important dates: the first of those is the first anniversary of the sovereignty of the Republic of Iraq; the second of those is your own Independence Day.

As one of 31 Iraqi Inspectors General working to build an effective anti-corruption system in Iraq and working to improve the efficiency of our ministries, I believe we Iraqi Inspectors General face many of the same challenges which you, our fellow Inspectors General, face.

Before my remarks on Inspector General issues, I want to express the gratitude of myself and all Iraqi people for the sacrifices made by the people of the United States as well as by the US and coalition military forces in bringing freedom to Iraq. It has not been easy. It will take time to develop the governmental institutions of Iraq, including the anti-corruption system. We are grateful that your respected President and the US government are committed to assisting us in finishing the job which has begun.

For those of you who may not be familiar with the Iraqi anti-corruption system, it was established by Coalition Provisional Authority orders and consists of three inter-related entities: The Commission of Public Integrity, the Board of Supreme Audit (which previously existed) and the Inspectors General. CPA Order 57 of February 5, 2004 provided for an effective program in all Iraqi ministries with processes of review, audit, and investigation in order to improve the level of responsibility and integrity. The program additionally provided for monitoring ministry performance and for fighting fraud, waste, abuse of power, and any other misconduct through the offices of the Inspectors General.

In the Ministry of Defense, the Inspector General structure consists of: an Inspection Directorate, Audit Directorate, Investigations Directorate, and Administrative Directorate. There is also a proposal to establish a directorate for intelligence oversight. The MoD Inspector General office started with the following staff: an Inspection Directorate of one civilian and two military, Investigation Directorate of four civilians headed by a female legal counselor, Audit Directorate of three civilians, and Administrative Directorate of four civilians headed by a female engineer. The initial activities of the IG office were to recruit highly qualified employees who could accomplish the work to be done, then to train those employees and to make the best use of their expertise. At the start of this process, recruiting a sufficient number of qualified employees was a challenge. Some reasons for this included a lack of understanding what the mission and goals of the IG system would be. The security situation, including the location of the ministry building itself, was also an issue. Assassination of a number of MoD officials and employees also presented some recruiting difficulties. Despite the challenges, we were able to hire qualified people and that process will continue until we reach our full strength.

The year 2004 set the stage for the first phase of planning and organizational process which will conclude in 2006. Throughout this time the IG office continues its duties in the Ministry of Defense. The present number of employees is fifty-two, with plans to increase this number to eighty-one by the end of 2005.

With regard to Inspectors General in the other Iraqi ministries, they are engaged in doing their duties. They are going about their activities intended to spread and support the concepts of integrity, transparency and efficiency. These Inspectors General are doing audits, inspections, and investigations in response to information which comes to them. Generally, all of the ministry IG's are still working to hire their full number of authorized employees. Many of my fellow Iraqi IG's have taken advantage of training opportunities for their staffs and many of their present staff members are trained in their basic responsibilities. The size of IG offices in these ministries varies according to the size of the ministry. The

Ministry of the Interior IG is probably the largest with about 400 employees while the smallest ministry IG offices have about 10 employees.

These Iraqi IG's have many of the same problems and issues which confront you. They work on staff and budget issues, work to educate their ministers and other government officials on the IG mission so that IG's can be used efficiently and wisely, and they work hard at their duties. I would hope that there could be a cooperative program between the US Inspectors General offices and their Iraqi counterparts for the purpose of building and maintaining an active IG system.

It should be noted that the Iraqi Transitional Government and appropriate committees of the Transitional National Assembly have expressed strong intentions to fight corruption and encourage integrity. These goals are supportive of the same goals sought to be accomplished by the Inspectors General.

As I mentioned earlier, I believe the IG's of Iraq and the IG's of the US, despite the very different environments in which we do our work, each care about many of the same issues. I encourage you to develop IG-to-IG relationships with your fellow Iraqi IG's. Another way in which the fight against fraud, waste, and abuse in Iraq could be strengthened would be for your PCIE to establish an organization-to-organization relationship with our Iraqi IG organization.

A good foundation for an effective Iraqi IG system and an effective Ministry of Defense IG office has been laid. I have invited my counterpart, Mr. Schmitz to return to Iraq and to evaluate first-hand the ways in which we can expand our efforts and our cooperation. I do this because I believe a working IG system in Iraq, as a part of an effective Iraqi anti-corruption system, is important to both of our sovereign nations achieving our national goals. I hope many of the other IG's in this room will have a chance to visit counterpart Iraqi IG's and develop supporting relationships.

The Inspectors General of Iraq and I are grateful for the anti-corruption efforts of the United States Government and the Coalition nations. Open and transparent government is a concept which will take time to become permanent. The long-term success of the anti-corruption system in Iraq will be greatly assisted by support from our colleagues, the Inspectors General of the US Government.

The vision and commitment of Inspector General Schmitz to a sustainable anti-corruption system in Iraq is demonstrated by the many ways in which he has supported and encouraged the Ministry of Defense Inspector General office. Stuart Bowen, the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, has played an important part by providing for valuable liaison to the Iraqi IG's and important

cooperative relationship have been developed between members of my office and SIGIR. The US Department of State and the US Embassy Baghdad through the Iraq Reconstruction Management Office has also provided very important advisory assistance to the Commission of Public Integrity and to my own MoD IG office. For these and for many other ways in which support has been provided to the IG's and anti-corruption agencies in Iraq, we are grateful.

There are three final thoughts I would like to emphasize. First, Iraqi Inspectors General do very much appreciate the continuing support given by the US and Coalition nations to the new and developing anti-corruption institutions in Iraq.

Secondly, In February of 2005, all of the Iraqi IG's endorsed a plan for an Iraqi Academy of Principled Governance to provide for training and to provide a broadly based, multi-agency institution to sustain anti-corruption efforts throughout the Iraqi Government. Others of the Iraqi anti-corruption entities have expressed preferences for narrower, single agency training institutions, but I believe that inter-agency disagreement may be something present in all governments. The IG's believe that their idea of a government-wide Academy of Principled Governance associated with an inter-agency Iraqi anti-corruption effort is the preferable path to build a sustainable system for the country. What no Iraqi anti-corruption official disagrees with is the need to create and effective and enduring government system to fight corruption in Iraq. We hope you will aid in this effort.

Lastly, I thank all of you for your kindness in receiving me and for your interest in the work of Inspectors General in Iraq. I again thank Mr. Schmitz for his invitation which allowed me to be with you here today.