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[H.A.S.C. No. 110–107]

STATUS OF EFFORTS TO DEVELOP IRAQI SECURITY FORCES

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS
SECOND SESSION

HEARING HELD
JANUARY 17, 2008

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE
44-094 WASHINGTON : 2009

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office
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[There were no Questions submitted.]

STATUS OF EFFORTS TO DEVELOP IRAQI SECURITY FORCES

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
Washington, DC, Thursday, January 17, 2008.

The committee met, pursuant to call, at 10:06 a.m., in room 2118, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Ike Skelton (chairman of the committee) presiding.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. IKE SKELTON, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM MISSOURI, CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

The CHAIRMAN. Good morning.

Today, the Armed Services Committee is holding the very first hearing of our new year. And let me take this opportunity to welcome my colleagues back and hope the continuation will be productive in our usual bipartisan manner. I was pleased—I know other members of the committee are as pleased as I—with the passage of our bill once again, after the Presidential veto yesterday, and a special thanks to each of you for the hard work that you did.

And hopefully the Senate will take it up immediately on its returning into session next week and the President sign it into law, into the much needed help, particularly for our personnel.

We are meeting today to receive an update on the status of efforts to develop Iraqi Security Forces (ISF). Our witnesses today are General James Dubik, the Commander of the Multi-National Security Transition Command in Iraq; and Mark Kimmitt, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for the Middle East.

We welcome both of you.

And, General Dubik, a special thanks to you for appearing before us today. You are home on leave. We appreciate your willingness to come before us and update our committee on the Iraqi Security Forces.

But more than thanking you, we wish to thank your nice wife, who we met some years ago at Fort Hood, Sharon Basso, for not only tolerating your presence on leave, but being with us today. And we appreciate your being with us so very, very much.

Security in Iraq has improved over the past year due to nationally heroic efforts. Anbar sheiks deciding to fight the al Qaeda, the cease-fire declared by al-Sadr, and we should all be proud of our troops and we were very grateful for their progress.

The question now is: How do you sustain it? And part of that solution will depend on political progress in Iraq, but part will depend on developing an effective, non-sectarian Iraqi Security Force. So that is why we are here today, to hear our witnesses.

I met with the Iraqi defense minister—and if I pronounce his last name correctly—Qadir, in my office earlier this week. He expressed his personal belief that Iraq might be able to take responsibility for their own internal security as early as the first quarter of 2009 and would probably be able to handle their external security by 2018 or so.

The 2009 timeline is very optimistic, and I am sure we are all committed to helping them meet it. I hope our witnesses will address a realistic timeline today.

Dr. Snyder held a hearing yesterday on his subcommittee. And in that testimony, as Dr. Snyder relayed it to me—I was there to hear part of the hearing, and I was not able to come back for the question-and-answer because we were taking our defense bill up on the floor.

But evidently—and, Dr. Snyder, correct me if I am wrong—General McCaffrey said something to the effect that he is more and more inclined to think that a timeline is necessary or possible.

Later, during the question-and-answer, I hope you would clarify that because I was not there, but I appreciate your mentioning that to me, and I would like to think out loud with you gentlemen about that issue of a timeline.

We in Congress have been discussing it ad infinitum, as you may know from the various debates that we had.

Well, thank you for being with us today. It is special for you to take part of your leave time, much needed leave time, and I know how arduous your work is, General.

And Secretary Kimmitt, thank you, and you carry out a great family tradition and I compliment you on that, as well as your work for us today.

Mr. Saxton.

STATEMENT OF HON. JIM SAXTON, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM NEW JERSEY, COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much, and thank you for holding this hearing today. I think it is especially important that we hold this hearing because, simply put, the more we know about the Iraqi capabilities, both in terms of their strengths and their weaknesses, the better off we are in terms of our capability of dealing with it.

And General Dubik, it has been duly noted by the chairman that you and Mrs. Dubik have cut your R&R short and, again, we appreciate that very much, because before you return to the theater of operations, in your vital mission of assisting the Iraqi Government in developing, organizing and training, equipping and sustaining Iraqi forces, for you to be here today is very valuable to us. So we thank you for being here.

Secretary Kimmitt, thank you for being here, as well.

Since Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) began in 2003, the United States Government has made significant resource investments, in terms of manpower and funding, in the efforts to train and equip Iraqi Security Forces.

According to State and Defense Department data, by December 1st of last year, there were roughly 440,000 Iraqi forces trained and equipped by coalition forces, including over 190,000 military

personnel, over 244,000 Ministry of Interior police and border enforcement personnel, and some 3,500 special operations forces, who are very proud Iraqis.

I understand that these forces do not include the facilities protection service personnel or some of the 70,000 concerned local citizens, Iraqis, who have emerged from the bottom-up process that has spread from Anbar province across Iraq.

These local citizens have taken up responsibility for providing security and stability in their own neighborhoods, and I understand that about 20,000 of these individuals may be integrated into the Iraqi Security Forces.

There is a strong temptation to look at these numbers of Iraqi forces and ask why they cannot fully shoulder the burden of combating insurgents and terrorists within Iraq's borders. Yet, we must remember the unique challenges faced by the Government of Iraq, Iraqi forces themselves, and General Dubik's staff, challenges which we have frequently discussed in this hearing room, including rampant corruption and sectarian violence throughout the military and security forces.

Retired General Jim Jones and other members of the congressionally-mandated Independent Commission on the Security Forces of Iraq even went so far as to recommend the dissolution of the entire segment of security forces—the national police service, to be specific—because of frequent and widespread allegations of corruption and other illegal activities.

Yet there are also challenges which don't grab attention in the same way as corruption and violence.

I would like, General Dubik and Mr. Secretary, for you to address three areas today, if you would.

First, the combat capabilities of Iraqi Security Forces. I, for one, take heart in the optimism that those Iraqi officials who are nearest to the defense and security institutions, such as the defense minister, who met earlier this week with members of this committee and expressed his strong personal conviction that if current positive security trends continue, the Iraqi Security Forces, both military and police, would be able to take on responsibility for Iraq's internal security beginning early in 2009.

Would you agree with this assessment and what steps coalition forces and the Government of Iraq are taking to ensure that we can transition primary responsibility for internal security to the Iraqis at a fairly early date?

Moreover, it is clear that Iraq is situated in a challenging neighborhood. And the Iraqi minister mentioned that it could take more than 10 years for Iraqi forces to assume responsibility for Iraq's external security.

Would you agree with this assessment and what steps are we taking over the longer term to ensure the successful transition of these responsibilities?

The second area that I think is extremely important has to do with logistic capabilities of Iraqi Security Forces. We sometimes hear that Iraqis do not share what we call the U.S. military's "culture of maintenance."

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) and other experts have highlighted difficulties in creating workable logistics and

depot systems within Iraq. Could you please talk about the challenges that the coalition forces and the Government of Iraq are encountering in developing Iraqi Security Forces that are capable of maintaining the equipment that they receive?

For example, I am told that we are reportedly purchasing about 8,500 up-armored vehicles for them through the Iraqi Security Forces Fund. What assurances do we have that they will maintain these vehicles in a proper way and that they will retain control of them and not introduce them into the black market or other nefarious areas?

Third, the integration of Concerned Local Citizens (CLCs) into the Iraqi forces is an important subject. The Anbar awakening that occurred last year has clearly spread across the nation and tens of thousands of local citizens have stood up and begun to patrol their own neighborhoods.

Many of these citizens have asked to be incorporated into the Iraqi Security Forces. Given that a significant number of these individuals may have previously been involved in militias and the insurgency, what vetting system is in place to ensure that we don't introduce harmful elements into the Iraqi Security Forces?

Again, let me just say thanks for being here today, and we look forward to your testimony.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

In order for our testimony to begin at this time, we begin with Deputy Assistant Secretary Kimmitt, followed by General Dubik.

STATEMENT OF MARK KIMMITT, DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR MIDDLE EASTERN AFFAIRS, OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Secretary KIMMITT. Well, Mr. Chairman, Congressman Saxton, thank you for the opportunity to be here today.

I would also like to acknowledge the great work that has been done by General Jim Dubik and all the men and women in uniform working to train, equip, and modernize the Iraqi Security Forces.

I, too, would also like acknowledge Sharon Basso, here to support Jim, and all the other spouses and families who support their spouses, for the sacrifices they make, for the support they provide, for the love they give, while their spouses are deployed abroad.

I have known Lieutenant General Jim Dubik for 30 years. We were young officers together at Fort Lewis, Washington, and his reputation as a leader is only surpassed by his reputation as an innovator and a forward-thinker.

He has been at the leading edge of transforming the U.S. military, particularly the U.S. Army. And I think the Army that you see on the ground today, the U.S. Army, in many ways, reflects the thinking and the innovation from Lieutenant General Dubik.

He is uniquely qualified to take that same expertise and that same forward-thinking in the development of the Iraqi Security Forces. And there is probably no one better in the U.S. Army to be sitting here today to talk about the development of the Iraqi Security Forces, and we are certainly honored by the presence of him and the presence of Sharon.

And with that, let me pass it over to Jim for his opening remarks.

STATEMENT OF LT. GEN. JAMES DUBIK, U.S. ARMY, COMMANDER, MULTI-NATIONAL SECURITY TRANSITION COMMAND—IRAQ

General DUBIK. Thank you, Chairman Skelton, Representative Saxton, distinguished members of the committee. Thanks to each of you for the opportunity to appear before you today.

I am delighted to have with me my lovely and, I would add, talented wife, Sharon Basso, who has been and is a steadfast supporter of all of our deployed troops and their families and spouses.

Like you, she appreciates the impact of our current pace of operations, that is, that impact on our families and our people. And like you, she has worked hard over the years to mitigate that impact.

I would like to thank her here publicly for her support and her efforts.

I would also like to thank you for your continued support of the men and women in uniform, for the repeated visits that many of you have made into theater, and for the hard work that you have done on our behalf.

I am sure I don't need to tell you how much it means to our soldiers and our civilians to see their representatives with them in theater. All of us who are helping the Iraqis develop their ability to defend themselves and their citizens and their newfound freedom appreciate your work.

The work in developing security forces is hard, it is slow, and, if I may say so, it is among the most significant and rewarding that I have been able to do in my career. Personally, I am proud of it. And I know our troops and our civilians are proud of it.

But I want to assure you, most importantly, the Iraqis are proud of what they are accomplishing. They are proud of themselves. They are in the fight. They are committed to their own success.

And we are meeting some success, as you noted, Mr. Chairman. To summarize the main point of my testimony, the success is mixed.

The security forces are, in fact, bigger and better than they have been at any time since we have begun this effort, but the progress, of course, is mixed with some continuing challenges. It is my intent today to describe to you both the successes and the challenges.

In the last year, the Iraqi Army has grown by almost 550,000 soldiers. There are 15 more combat battalions in the lead at the end of the year than there were at the beginning of the year.

The national police has grown by 7,500 police, with nine more battalions rated at the operational readiness assessment (ORA) Level Two than there were at the beginning of the year. And the Iraqi police themselves have grown by about 45,000.

So much of this growth has taken place throughout the year; a good amount has taken just in the last six months.

I attribute this growth and this improvement to three major areas. First, the opportunities that have arisen from the increased offensive operations conducted by conventional forces coalition, special operations forces coalition, as well as Iraqi Security Forces, conventional and special.

Also, to the rejection of al Qaeda and other extremists by most of the Iraqi population. More people, in fact, want to serve. More people feel invested in their own future.

The second major cause, from my perspective, is the effort of the Government of Iraq to consolidate their security services under the Ministries of Defense and Interior.

And the third is the desire of the Government of Iraq to create a size of a security force capable of providing their own security. As I mentioned, we have seen significant growth across the board, and we are seeing the Iraqis want to take more responsibility for battle space and doing so.

Indeed, I believe that we will see that the total Iraqi Security Force by the end of 2008 may exceed 580,000 soldiers, sailors, airmen and police.

This growth is also related to their budget. Iraqis' two security ministries, in their budget, they have spent about $2 billion more a year since 2005. And 2007 will be the second year in a row that they will have spent more money for their security ministries than the Iraqi Security Force Fund has. And we expect that to be the case in 2009.

Mr. Chairman, the Iraqis still have a lot of work to do, as do we. There are many challenges ahead. As I said, this is tough work.

The Iraqi Security Force structure and capability still lack some maturity. The ISF, the Iraqi Security Force, has not achieved self-reliance in all of the areas of logistics, maintenance, and life support.

Just this past December, the minister of interior adopted what he called self-sustaining life support. Further, the joint headquarters and the minister of defense have had a level of visibility of their maintenance that they did not have just six months ago. Both of these are positive signs; both are steps forward.

But the truth is that, right now, they cannot fix, supply, arm or fuel themselves completely enough at this point, and that is a major effort that we will have ongoing for the next several months to change that around.

The Iraqis also remain reliant on the coalition for too many combat enablers. They have fielded more and more battalions, but they lack air support, air mobility, engineer support, indirect fire support, and other combat enablers.

Aggressive use of the Foreign Military Sales (FMS) program is helping turn that around, but they still must purchase more helicopters, mortars, fixed-wing aircraft, artillery, and Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) assets, and they must increase their levels of protected mobility to achieve the level of self-sufficient combat power that they want.

Of course, such a capability rests, in large measure, on sound leadership and here, too, the Iraqi Security Forces are slowly improving. The Army, for example, has added, in the past year, 1,300 officers and 9,900 non-commissioned officers (NCOs).

But while the numbers are up, as I indicated, there is a gap in mid-level leadership positions, particularly in the non-commissioned officer and field grade officer levels. Developing leaders takes not only training, but time.

As we have observed in our own Army at various times in the last 20 or 30 years, gaps in leadership represent real and tangible holes in proficiency that can be filled, but not easily and not quickly.

One final word about perspective. While in the command of 1st U.S. Corps at Fort Lewis, I was asked to grow three Stryker brigades, and we encountered in that growth four major problems.

Number one, it was much harder to get leaders to arrive at the unit at the right time. Number two, synchronizing leaders with arrival of soldiers was difficult.

Number three, synchronizing the arrival of equipment to the training schedule, and, number four, building the base structure as fast as you can build a unit.

It is not surprising, Mr. Chairman, that these are the same four problems that the Iraqis are having in growing an army as fast as they are growing.

Also, they are growing an army while at war, while taking casualties, while taking losses, while forming a government and while developing their own processes in the security ministries.

So we should not underestimate the difficulty of growing the security forces.

I will tell you both the minister of interior and minister of defense are tackling these kinds of problems square on. The Iraqi Army, as I said, has grown 55,000 soldiers. That equates to 2 divisions, 8 brigades and 36 battalions, just in 2007 alone.

And the national police have replaced both of their division commanders, 10 of 9 brigade commanders, 18 of 28 battalion commanders, completed unit training, began the professional leadership training under the Italian Carabinieri, developed their own training center, and have begun training and organizing their own organic support brigade.

As I said, helping the Iraqi Security Forces has been and continues to be extraordinarily rewarding work, the most rewarding that I have had in my career.

And I would like to thank you, Mr. Chairman, Representative Saxton and the committee, on behalf of all of the soldiers and men and women of Multi-National Transition Command Iraq (MNSTC-I) for your support in this past year.

[The prepared statement of General Dubik can be found in the Appendix on page 47.]

The CHAIRMAN. General, thank you.

Secretary Kimmitt, thank you for your testimony.

And, General, a special thanks for your hard work that is so very, very important to the future of that country, as well as ours.

We on this committee know full well the strain on the Army, as well as the Marines. I guess it falls in the category of just old-fashioned readiness, and it is nothing new. We have been talking about it within these walls for many, many months.

And the question always arises as to how we can relieve that stress, relieve that strain on the American forces because we don't know what is around the corner for future conflicts. And as I have pointed out ad nauseam, I know, to my colleagues here, that we have had 12 American military conflicts in the last 30 years, since I have been in Congress, 4 of which have been major in size.

So everyone asks the question, well, when can they take responsibility for their own security, A, internally; B, externally. The minister of defense, who was in my office, as I had mentioned a few moments ago, said not one, but three times during our visit that his personal belief was that the Iraqi Security Forces would be able to take responsibility for internal security as early the first quarter of 2009.

And notes were clearly taken, and I know and my memory is good and my hearing is good, and that is what he said. And Congressman Davis from California was sitting about three feet from the defense minister, and her hearing is good and her memory is good.

So with that, would you give us, General—your front line, you are with them every day. Is their defense minister accurate?

General DUBIK. Well, sir, I will answer in two parts. First, the Iraqi Security Forces have taken charge of their own security now in 9 of the 18 provinces, 2 more most recently, Basra and Karbala, and they are in the lead with 15 more battalions than they were at the beginning of the year.

They are in the fight. They take casualties two and three times coalition force and they conduct combat operations even during training. So they are very much into the fight.

Their air force is now conducting about 300 patrols a week, up 1,000 percent from just a year ago, and their navy is up about 270 percent in the same time period.

So they are very much wanting to and getting into the fight for their security.

You are right, Mr. Chairman. I do see the minister of defense very often while I am in theater. We travel around the country. We visit together. We have meetings together privately, as well as publicly.

His discussions with me about their ability to assume internal security generally have centered around a period of time somewhere between the first quarter of 2009 and the beginning of 2012.

In his discussions with me, he continually raises the point that they, the Iraqi Security Forces, must purchase more air support, more indirect fire support. They have none now, except light 60-millimeter mortars. They must purchase more helicopters. They must complete the development of their logistics structure.

And he knows that the purchase of this equipment will take several years and then training to become proficient in these areas where he has no proficiency right now will take several years.

So internal security, discussions with me, he talks about a period first quarter 2009 through sometime 2012. External security beyond that, in the 2018–2020 period.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Saxton.

Mr. SAXTON. General, thank you.

I outlined three questions that I had in my opening statement, and let me just follow-up on the chairman. The chairman shared my enthusiasm for the question that he just asked, which was my first question. Let me just follow that up by asking this.

It has been widely reported that the national police were experiencing high levels of corruption and criminal behavior. Just recently, General Keane testified, actually, yesterday, that the min-

ister of interior has taken actions to try to limit this through the removal of commanders and officers throughout the ranks.

What is your assessment of corruption in not only the national police, but also each segment of the Iraqi Security Forces?

General DUBIK. Thank you, sir. With respect to the national police, as I said in my opening statement, around the middle of 2007, April–May–June timeframe, just before the Jones Commission came over, the national police commanding general had changed out both of his division commanders, replaced them both, one Sunni, one Shia.

He changed out all nine of his brigade commanders and then just recently, in the last six weeks, changed another brigade commander. So 10 of 9, to improve the quality of leadership. And of his 28 battalion commanders, I believe 18 changed out.

These are significant leadership changes, and they have had an effect. Matter of fact, my last discussion with General Odierno, before I left, he observed that the quality of the national police is improving and the number of negative comments in the readiness assessments of his transition teams is decreasing.

The second thing that they have done this year, national police, is complete really the first collective unit training that they have had. They were formed and not ever trained together like army units and just employed in the 2005 and 2006 time period.

In 2007, they began the unit training. That is now complete, and they have begun, in the fall, to begin the training battalion by battalion for leaders that will be done by the Italian Carabinieri, the gendarme-like organization from Italy, world class.

So the Jones Commission observations Minister Bulani had studied very, very carefully and came to a different conclusion because he has a vision, as does the Government of Iraq, of the need for national gendarme police once the current fight is over for the internal security of Iraq, and he has chosen reform rather than disbanding.

That is a program that is ongoing.

Mr. SAXTON. Thank you.

General DUBIK. And with respect to the minister of interior, if I could, sir, he has been very aggressive in his internal affairs and Inspector General (IG) functions, 6,000 internal affairs investigations and of the 6,000, 1,200 have resulted in firings and about 500 other disciplinary actions.

He has opened about 500 IG cases, 61 of which have gone to the Iraqi court system, 31 of those ended up with convictions. And the reform program is very serious. One of his personal aides has been assassinated in the last three months. He has had 14 of his internal affairs people killed and another 13 wounded.

Those are, of course, catastrophic losses with respect to his ministry, but he is no less deterred by his reform program. Matter of fact, he is emboldened by these attacks.

So he acknowledges he has got a problem. He is on a reform bent, and he is very aggressive in his reform bent, from my perspective.

Mr. SAXTON. Thank you. Could I just get a second quick question in, Mr. Chairman?

The logistics capabilities of the Iraqi Security Forces and the issue of maintenance, obviously, we are concerned, as we move forward, that we develop and maintain capabilities.

Could you just comment on logistics and maintenance?

General DUBIK. Yes, sure. This has been a problem for the Iraqi Security Forces for a while. It is a matter of choice initially. The important items were to build combat units first and then enablers and logistics second.

We are now in that period. On the logistics side, there are three major parts—supply, maintenance and life support. In December, the minister of defense had declared that they would be independent life support and he had been doing that very aggressively since then.

On the food item, they feed all themselves now. They do most of their fuel, except for emergency. There is still some fuel going from coalition forces to Iraqi Security Forces, but mostly for emergency purposes, sometimes for generators. There is a difficulty with fuel allocation inside the security ministries.

But we know the Iraqi Security Force Funds fund, in the army, only two life support contracts. Both of those contracts will be done in the spring of next year.

On the police side, 14 of the 18 training centers are completely under life support, maintenance, funded by the ministry of interior, the other 4 that are left. Again, we will be out of that business by March and April of 2008.

So on the life support, pretty good progress in the last four months.

Maintenance is also a mixed picture. On the plus side, the Humvee readiness rate is about in the 85–87 percent rate, which is not too bad. The backlog of their maintenance has grown until about six weeks ago and then it started to flatten off the last three weeks. It is starting to drop.

They have a much better visibility of what they must fix and they have a much better visibility of the number of mechanics, generator, radio, and vehicle that they have to train.

They now track the number of people in their mechanic schools and the number of mechanics tracked by division. This is all in anticipation of taking over more of their mechanical responsibilities and their maintenance responsibilities.

They have signed FMS cases to the tens of millions of dollars for spare parts, and they are working through the difficulties now of creating a spare parts flow system within their organizations.

By the end of 2008, we will have finished building one logistics base per division and we will have finished out the police. We, meaning the Government of Iraq and MNSTC-I, will finish out the regional maintenance facilities for the police forces.

So I expect, if you call me back this time next year, that we will have a much different discussion about maintenance than we had just six months ago.

In terms of supply, on the military side, the Taji National Depot, which includes a wheeled vehicle, track vehicle, small arms repair, generator repair, radio repair, and mechanic training, all that is very much on track, being built, will be finished the middle to late summer of 2008, and then the logistics system from national depot

through the regional bases five to the individual log bases division will be complete.

They have begun about four months ago building the motor transport regiments and that building of those units and the logistics units will also be complete about late summer 2008.

So we should begin about the beginning of the fall 2008, to be in a much better position in logistics, maintenance and life support.

Mr. SAXTON. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, sir.

The gentleman from Mississippi, Mr. Taylor.

Mr. TAYLOR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I apologize for the delay.

General, thank you very much for what you do and thank you for cutting your very short vacation even shorter to be with us.

I would think—well, one of the things that came to my attention is that al Qaeda overplayed their hands. A number of sheikhs have shifted their allegiance. But they have also—that has come with a price, that our Nation is apparently supplying funds to those sheikhs, who, in turn, pay people who used to be on the other side to become informants to help us find Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs).

And to paraphrase General Petraeus, would I rather pay them or have them shooting at us, and I guess I would rather pay them.

One of the things I would hope would be a sign that things are getting better is, at some point, the Iraqis would be paying those sheikhs.

Toward your efforts, using the same line of thought, what percentage of the funds that the Iraqi minister of defense allocates for all the functions that you are helping them stand up is Iraqi money? What percentage of that is American money?

General DUBIK. Sir, first, on the money business, 2006 was the first year that the Government of Iraq security ministries outspent the Iraqi security force fund and 2007 will end up the same way and, in my belief—correction—2008 will end up the same way, if the budget gets passed, as we expect it to get passed, the Iraqi budget.

So they have invested their money into the security ministries. I can give you the exact figures for the record, but the last two years and we expect the next year, their spending will be more than the Iraqi Security Force Fund.

Mr. TAYLOR. General, I appreciate that, but I probably was not as clear in my question as I should have been.

Of the total amount of money spent by the Iraqi defense forces, what percentage of that would be money that comes out of Baghdad, their money, presumably from the oil revenues? What percentage of that money comes from the United States Treasury?

Secretary KIMMITT. Congressman, maybe I can help you with that.

Mr. TAYLOR. Thank you, sir.

Secretary KIMMITT. The figures for 2007 were that the Iraqis themselves were putting about $7.5 billion into their budget. We put in about 5.5. This year, once their budget is complete, and we expect the Iraqis to pass their budget within the coming weeks, they can't go out of session until they pass it, they will have put

$9 billion and we would have put $3 billion in programs for the year.

Now, that is a fairly significant figure. They have a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of about $63 billion. So their gross domestic product, about 15 percent of that goes to their defense expenditures. In their budget itself, they have roughly a $40 billion budget. About 25 percent of that budget is consumed by their defense expenditures.

The minister of finance, Bayan Jabr, the former minister of interior, has been very forward-leaning on trying to convince his council of representatives, council of ministers on the need for increasing that figure.

Serendipitously for them, unfortunately for us, oil prices continue to rise. They are beneficiaries of that increased oil expenditures and they are also beneficiaries of the fact that they have taken tough actions to increase their oil output, as well.

So we would expect, this year, they put in three dollars for every one dollar that we put in and in subsequent years, we would expect and are advocating that the Iraqis themselves put more and more—take on more and more of the total defense burden for their country.

Mr. TAYLOR. Mr. Secretary, thank you for an excellent answer. I guess my question would be to what extent is the Bush Administration trying to draw a line where there will be an effective date for the Iraqis to pay for their own defense.

Secretary KIMMITT. Well, it is a very good question, Congressman, and what I would say is that the Administration remains committed to not only accelerating progress on the ground by our troops, but, frankly, every cent that we add on top of the Iraqis' defense budget accelerates the time when those functions, as General Dubik laid out, can be taken over by the Iraqis themselves.

So we have got to balance the need for making sure that the Iraqis have the capacity to do this themselves, but if we expect them to pay for everything, that will slow down the time when we can actually conduct a full transition to Iraqi security responsibilities.

Mr. TAYLOR. Last question. I was recently in Kuwait. I was somewhat taken aback at how much the Kuwaitis are charging the American military for fuel. It was of no better price than I would pay at the pump in Mississippi.

Do the Iraqis at least provide all of their own fuel for their defense forces?

Secretary KIMMITT. They do and what I would also articulate is that we have an agreement with Kuwait. There are some aspects of the fuel that they provide to us at a very reduced rate. I think it is somewhere on the order of 80 cents per gallon.

Mr. TAYLOR. Sir, I would disagree with you. That doesn't jive with the numbers I saw.

Secretary KIMMITT. Congressman, on that percentage of the fuel that has been agreed to for the defense, in so many terms, an agreed upon amount of fuel that is provided every month to those forces that are contributing to the defense of Kuwait.

It is true that the majority of the fuel that we purchase from Kuwait that is used inside of Iraq is provided at the market rate, but

there is a significant amount of fuel that is provided by the Kuwaiti government in accordance with our cooperation agreements that is significantly reduced for that amount that is contributing to the defense of Kuwait.

It is an issue that we continue to talk to Kuwait about. It is our view that all of those forces, whether they are semi-stationed in Kuwait, none are permanently stationed, or those transiting into Iraq, should receive that fuel at a reduced rate, and that is continuing dialogue that goes on between our Government and the Government of Kuwait.

Mr. TAYLOR. I would appreciate it if you would provide those details to the committee.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary KIMMITT. Be glad to, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank the gentleman.

The gentleman from New York, Mr. McHugh.

Mr. MCHUGH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Gentlemen, let me add my words of welcome and appreciation to both of you. General, I particularly tip the hat to you and your wife for interrupting that R&R, so valuable an opportunity and you find yourself here. We deeply appreciate it.

Just to go back to a point that a number of my colleagues, including my friend from New Jersey, who, in his opening statement, began to talk about these things, let us revisit the national police force just for a second.

General, back in 2006, General Dempsey noted that about 20 to 25 percent of the Iraqi national police force, in his words, "needed to be weeded out." We had just completed the second phase of retraining. As you noted several times here today, you are beginning the phase three based on the Italian model.

What would the figure be now from General Dempsey's 20 to 25 percent? How do you think we are doing and how far do we have to go?

General DUBIK. Thank you, Mr. Congressman.

Part of the change-out in leadership included, more recently, about 1,300 national policemen eliminated from the national police services. That number is—I don't know what percentage that would be of the now 30,000 police, but that is an instance of the commanders and the national police continuing to want to raise the quality of their force.

They also want to look at the nonsectarian nature of their leadership. As I mentioned, in the two division commanders, one is Sunni and one is Shia. At the brigade level, the split is about 30 percent to 70 percent, 30 Sunni, 70 percent Shia.

At the battalion level, it is about 20 to 80. So relatively representative of the split in the population. Both the minister of interior, Minister Bulani, and the commanding general of the national police, General Hussein, are very attentive to the fact that they need a national police, not a sectarian police, and they are also very attentive to the need of continuous reform in training and leadership, to the point that they created their own training center now in Numaniyah so that they can provide the advanced national police training after initial recruit training, and they have begun the plans for a national police leadership school.

So they continue professional development and education in an iterative way over time. I don't know where General Dempsey—how he chose 20 percent, so I can't really comment on that one.

Mr. MCHUGH. To 25, he gave himself a little leeway there.

Phase three, then, I assume, is more than just a retraining. It is also a re-bluing in that you are still vetting very heavily, and the Carabinieri have that as a primary objective, I assume.

Is there a phase four plan?

General DUBIK. Phase three will take a while. But there is a phase four and that is a desire to regionalize the national police once they are able to get out of Baghdad, which now most of them are in battle space in Baghdad, to regionalize them north, central, south, and west, very similar to the way the Carabinieri have regionalized themselves in Italy, and to provide backup for local police, so that once the counterinsurgency is over, the internal security of the nation of Iraq can be handed over to the police forces and the military forces can get out of the business of internal security.

Mr. MCHUGH. Thank you. Let me just squeeze in one last question.

As we review materials on some of the challenges faced both in the Ministry of the Interior (MOI) and the Ministry of Defense (MOD), absenteeism, ability to know who is showing up and variations of those kinds of challenges, every time in my eight visits there when we talked about the lack of readiness of the Iraqi forces, one of the biggest reasons given was that, "Well, you know, there is no banking system and these people have to leave to get their paychecks home to their families," et cetera, which seems legitimate.

I am just curious. Is anyone looking at the revitalization and restructure of a banking system as part of your initiative? It is certainly critical to the economy of Iraq, but it seems to me, at least based on what we have been told, that if you had a reliable banking system available to both MOI and MOD personnel, you could at least take away a large number of the excuses for absenteeism.

General DUBIK. Yes, sir. Ambassador Charlie Reis does have that in his portfolio as economic development. I don't think the revitalization of the banking system will be any near-term success.

So I expect that we will continue to have about 23 percent of the Iraqi Security Forces gone at any one time for leave. Their absent without leave (AWOL) rate, actually, in the last several months, is only 1.2 percent per month and that is a relatively low AWOL rate and significantly different than about 18 months ago.

The CHAIRMAN. Dr. Snyder, please.

Dr. SNYDER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Dubik, good morning. I wanted to ask, as you are looking ahead, Mr. Skelton asked you about the prospects of the internal security in early 2009—all of it being taken over by the Iraqi Security Forces.

Mr. Skelton also mentioned this issue of General McCaffrey's comment yesterday that—I think it was more in the context of as a new Administration comes in—there will be certainly a fresh look at what is going on and that he could foresee the possibility of a more formal timeline in terms of U.S. involvement, which, as he

said, he was much more receptive to in that context than he has been in the past.

I don't want to put words in his mouth, but I think that is what he was talking about.

But as you look ahead, for planning, at some point, timelines are going to have to be part of good planning, are they not? You have Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) and embedded PRTs. We have civilian parts of our government that want to continue to do good work, perhaps in an increased capacity as the security situation improves.

Don't we have to have some kind of timeline at some point in terms of this good planning in terms of who is going to be doing what chores in terms of providing security for all the different actions that are going on?

General DUBIK. For my part to the mission, train, equip, advise, develop, I think the size of the MNSTC-I command, composition of the command is about right for the foreseeable future.

The timeline in other aspects is going to be a decision made not by MNSTC-I commander based on input from General Petraeus, Ambassador Crocker, the joint staff to the secretary and for me, I am not—I think I would be way out ahead of my bosses to talk about any timeline.

Dr. SNYDER. What happens to the provincial reconstruction teams in those areas that you now say the security is handled by the Iraqi Security Forces? What is happening today in those areas that the security is provided by the Iraqi Security Forces?

General DUBIK. In the provinces that have gone PIC, the provincial Iraqi control, we have, in some cases, no U.S. forces there, other than the provincial reconstruction teams. In some cases, we have military transition teams or police transition teams that come in and out of the province as units do.

And the security situation is such that some of the PRTs have relatively easy movement around under the security contract provided by the State Department. Others have more difficulty moving around. But they have security provided by the contract security done by the Department of State.

Dr. SNYDER. So in those areas that you are labeling—that the security is currently handled by Iraqi Security Forces, if U.S. civilian teams want to go in there and work, their security is not provided by the Iraqi Security Forces. They are handled either by U.S. troops as part of an embedded PRT team going back into the area and providing security for them or by U.S. contractors to the State Department.

General DUBIK. That is correct.

Dr. SNYDER. Okay.

Secretary KIMMITT. If I could, Congressman, I——

Dr. SNYDER. In terms of—if I might, General Dubik. It seems like that is part of this planning process, is it not? I don't think that our impression of it, if you look ahead toward Iraqi Security Forces providing security, that we are going to say, but then anytime a U.S. civilian goes out, that they are going to be accompanied by U.S. security forces.

At some point, we have to have some kind of a goal or a timeline. And that is going to change, also?

General DUBIK. At some point, it is likely that condition will no longer obtain. I can't see that point right now from where I sit.

Dr. SNYDER. I can understand that.

Secretary KIMMITT. Congressman, if I could. I think it needs to be made clear that when we are talking about the provincial reconstruction teams or those that are working the satellite PRTs, an example is in the south.

In those provinces that have been handed over to Iraqi Security Forces, Muthanna, Maysan, Dhi Qar, the PRT that operates out of Tallil Air Base, of course, the close-in security for those teams as they move down the road, so on and so forth, is provided by our contractors.

But it is also important to understand that the overarching security in that area is also done by Iraqi police and Iraqi Security Forces. So there is a net contribution from the Iraqi Security Forces on the environment, the overall environment.

But with regard to the close-in protection for those convoys as they go to and from the PRT, that is provided, as General Dubik said, by either contract or U.S. military forces.

But I would not want to neglect the fact that the overarching security for that region, for that particular city they may be visiting that day is done by local ISF forces.

Dr. SNYDER. And I understand that. But you still have the issue that it is going to be more difficult for these PRTs and the civilian forms of our government to operate as apparently you are going to Iraqi Security Forces to control those areas because we are saying that we are going to have to augment that with U.S. forces of some kind.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Before I ask Mr. Bartlett, I don't have the exact figure in front of me, but my recollection is—and staff agrees—the goal for the total Iraqi Security Forces 6 months ago, a year ago, was in the 400,000s and today it 555,000.

Where does that end? Do you anticipate a higher figure for their goal in the future? Do you have a read on that, General?

General DUBIK. Yes, sir. There were four data points that came together with respect to size of Iraqi Security Forces required to provide more and more of their own security, given the level of threat assumptions of early 2006.

The first data point was the Iraqi army and correction of the Iraqi joint staff and the Iraqi minister of interior. That data point said that somewhere between 601,000 and 640,000 security force should be adequate for security of their nation.

The second data point was one that came from U.S. commanders, ground commanders, that came to a relatively same area. And the third data point was a study for—a study done by the Center for Army Analysis. It also came around to the same figure.

These three data points said that if we want a security force large enough to handle the security of the nation under around early 2006 threat conditions, then the security force should be somewhere around 600,000 to 640,000.

The Iraqis then started growing much more aggressively toward that goal, and we expect, as I said, to be around 580,000 at the end

of 2008. There are off-ramps for this. When I spoke to the prime minister, minister of defense, and minister of interior about their plans to grow a force this size, they are eager to off-ramp if not necessary because this is a large security force.

But they are at war and they recognize that they are going to be responsible to provide security more and more in their provinces. So this is the size security force that they think is necessary.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Bartlett.

Mr. BARTLETT. Thank you very much. Thank you for your testimony.

Whether you are an American who believes the war is going well or is not going well, most Americans would like to know that someday our presence there will no longer be needed.

I have been a proponent of an events-based calendar for getting out. I think that our Americans like to have on their refrigerator a chart which they can follow that looks to a time that we can get out.

How many security forces do we need? How many police forces do we need? What important laws do they need to have passed? And so forth.

Following on our chairman's question about our security forces, what number would you have for our people on their refrigerator so that as we embark toward that number, they can have some confidence that if the other challenges are coming along at the same pace, that we can then pull out of Iraq?

What number do we need? I know it is two different points. One is for internal security and one is for protecting the nation. But I think with our long reach and our expeditionary forces, that we don't necessarily have to be there to assure the world that we will be there when we are needed to protect them.

So what is that number that they can have on the refrigerator that we are marching toward and when we get there, we are coming home?

General DUBIK. Sir, when I talk to my dad about these kinds of things, my advice to him is put no number on the refrigerator.

Mr. BARTLETT. Does that mean we are going to be there forever?

General DUBIK. No, sir, that does not. We have already begun to reduce the number of brigades and we are in the process of doing that. The successes that we have had this past year have been fought for. We have paid dearly for these successes not just in money, but in blood.

And the best way forward, I think, is the way that we have outlined, to iteratively review the security situation, to review the status of the Iraqi Security Forces, to receive input, again, from my perspective, as a military commander, from the commanders on the ground, the joint staff, the Central Command, and to make a reasoned recommendation on an iterative basis as to what is the right force.

So that the successes that we have fought for we can retain and leave in such a way that the job is complete.

Mr. BARTLETT. We have now been in South Korea more than 50 years, one year at a time, and I don't think our people have any stomach for that in Iraq, and I think that they need to have a num-

ber that they can look to that when we get there, we are coming home. It just can't be nebulous.

In a hearing before our committee a little bit ago, we were told that in the judgment of the witness, that Iraq was the third most corrupt government in the world, that as much as a third of all of the moneys which we appropriate here for reconstruction just disappear.

Is this a cultural problem and can we expect any meaningful improvement in this?

General DUBIK. Sir, you probably have read the same reports. I have heard the prime minister talk about the need to reduce corruption in the government of Iraq.

The two ministers of defense and interior have selected, on purpose, the foreign military sales program so that they can purchase equipment, supplies, parts and weapons in such a way that it is objective and transparent, to help reduce the corruption in their ministries.

They both have acknowledged that they have work to do in this regard and as I quoted some of the work with the minister of interior, they are hard at trying to eliminate the corruption in their ministries.

They know that to be, in any way, a legitimate government, they must reduce the level of corruption and increase the transparency and objectivity of their ministries.

I wouldn't necessarily, from my standpoint, call it cultural. It is rampant and it is a problem that they are working on.

Mr. BARTLETT. Mr. Chairman, I spent some time in the country of Georgia, and they have corruption there. It is because they cannot pay their public officials enough, and in order to feed their family, they have got to shake down the citizenry.

Is that the problem in Iraq, or are they being paid enough that they don't have to be corrupt?

General DUBIK. Well, the payment for soldiers and policemen is adequate. It is very good, so good that we have no difficulty with either of the ministries recruiting policemen or soldiers, airmen or sailors.

Mr. BARTLETT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

The gentleman from Washington, Mr. Smith.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Dubik, it is great to see you here, and I just want to compliment you on your leadership out at Fort Lewis during your tour there, excellent commanding general, and we appreciated having you there and appreciate your service in Iraq.

A couple of questions about where this is going, because obviously one of our principal concerns is we are spending an enormous amount of money in Iraq and certainly the military has been—a huge percentage of our forces are dedicated to that effort, which is a big strain on the Treasury and, also, a big strain on the military when we do have other places of concern; certainly, Afghanistan, but there are others beyond that.

And when we talk about sort of when we are going to be able to begin to draw down, when Iraq is going to take responsibility,

we get relatively nebulous answers, and I understand that, to a certain extent.

But I am just wondering if you could help us out a little bit on some sort of—timeline might be the wrong word, but measure of our progress there, to be measured by when we can begin to do less.

I mean, we have measured our progress by a lot of different ways, how many troops have been trained, but when do you see us beginning to be able to draw down? And we talk about when we turned this province over to them, we turned that province over to them, but our force levels don't ever come down.

When do you see that sort of transition from us to them, literally, where we are able to pull out?

General DUBIK. Well, sir, the transition from us to them has been occurring. When Ambassador Crocker and General Petraeus were here the fall of last year, that began reduction in forces, and we are in a process of redeploying five brigades. That is a——

Mr. SMITH. Not to start off argumentative, but basically, the plan as was laid out there is to get us back to the point where we have the same number of forces next summer, summer of 2008, as we had in January of 2007.

So I am not sure I buy that argument that it is happening.

Secretary KIMMITT. If I could, Congressman. In fact, I think what we have got to recognize is that the additional forces that were asked for and sent over reflected an increased security situation, enhancing, which had been primarily accelerative from the point of the Sumarra bombings of the al-Askari mosques in February of 2006.

It is true that, as the President said last year, on January 10, that we were going to increase, for some period of time, the number of forces on the ground. You are correct that we would go from roughly 15 to roughly 20.

When Ambassador Crocker and General Petraeus came back in September, they said, "We think that the situation on the ground is such that we can return those."

As you know, Congress has asked and Ambassador Crocker and General Petraeus will again come back to testify in the March–April time period, and I think, at that point, they will be able to give a judgment whether the situation on the ground can contribute to further reductions in forces.

Mr. SMITH. And we will look forward to that.

If I can follow up. One of the other, I think, sort of measures in terms of the ability of the Iraqi forces and our goals, I mean, beyond the ability of the Iraqi forces, but in terms of what happens when we do leave an area, what happens when the Iraqi forces become responsible for its security, which has happened in some areas, primarily in the south.

And we all would love to have a pro Western, free, open, noncorrupt government, democratic and all of that. It is probably not going to happen anytime soon in the bulk of Iraq.

So I don't want us holding out for that. I want us to understand sort of what the options are if we begin to pull out. And as you look at the south, as you look at some of these provinces where Iraqis, be they local or central government, have taken over security, what

do you see happening and how does that sort of give us a picture of what happens when we begin to draw down?

Secretary KIMMITT. Congressman, if I could, in those areas in the south, Maysan, Dhi Qar, Muthanna, they were relatively homogeneous areas to start with. The amount of violence that had emanated from that area was pretty low to start with.

The real test is going to be what will happen in Basra and Basra province, in general, and in the city in particular. In many ways, the choices made by the British in terms of handing over that province will give us, in some ways, a leading indicator of what we might see in other parts of the country.

Mr. SMITH. But you don't see anything yet.

Secretary KIMMITT. What we see is that in those situations where there have been up-ticks in the violence, that the Iraqi Security Forces, either through the local police and, if necessary, the addition of external forces, have been able to quell the violence.

Whether that in Basra is quelled, whether—if there is violence just waiting to happen, Basra is an interesting city because of sort of the confluence of a number of different organizations. JAM is down there, Jaish al Mahdi. You see some of the Badr corps. You see old Basrawis that have sort of run the commercial enterprises for years and years.

While the violence has subsided significantly, General Mohan and General Chalili have done quite a good job in maintaining order down in that area.

There are some fundamental questions that will have to be made by the Basrawis in the years to come. Is this a city that is going to become the next Dubai? Is it going to become the next Mogadishu?

It would seem that, in the south, as we watch that confluence of the different forces, primarily the nonmilitary competition between the groups, that it is an open question. There are still enough coalition forces down there, primarily in Basra Air Station, that they believe they have got the ability to complement the Iraqi Security Forces.

But in many ways, that light hand of the British down in that area will be an opportunity to see what happens when a significant city, one that, quite frankly, sees 90 percent of the Gross National Product (GNP) flow through it in the form of oil heading down to the ports, whether that is a temporary or a permanent condition.

I think the British would tell you that they are comfortable with the security situation down there. They are able to react if the situation starts to turn in any specific direction. But more importantly, the Iraqi Security Forces feel that they have got a good handle on the security situation down there.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much.

General DUBIK. Representative Smith, if I could use Basra for an example. The Iraqis created a 14th division headquarters, which they have fielded. They are now filling out that division headquarters with three brigades.

They moved a special forces battalion in there. They took one of their mechanized battalions from the ninth division, moved it to Basra, and they redeployed parts of their helicopter fleet to Basra

to augment the security forces there under General Mohan, all in anticipation of Basra becoming a PIC province.

So they have matched their forces and created new forces to take care of that city.

Mr. SMITH. Thank the gentleman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank the gentleman.

It is interesting to point out, in a recent discussion with some British leaders, military leaders who are fully familiar with the Basra area, they were very optimistic in their discussion with us, just about a week ago, as a matter of fact.

Mr. Kline.

Mr. KLINE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, gentlemen, for being here. Thank you for giving up some leave time. That really is a sacrifice. I have always thought that leave ought to be leave, and so that is quite a sacrifice on your part.

General, you talked about combat enablers and General Jones, in his report, and others that we have heard testify, that always appears to be a shortfall, if you will, their ability to maintain.

They have virtually no medical capability, as I understand it. In fact, my niece is an Army nurse in Baghdad now and there there just aren't a lot of Iraqi doctors and nurses at hand.

But that is kind of a different issue than infantry forces, combat forces. And as I understand your mission, your first effort, your first priority, if you will, is to make sure that they are creating combat battalions and combat brigades, whether they are military or police. Is that correct?

General DUBIK. Yes, sir.

Mr. KLINE. Okay. And so as we look to U.S. forces being engaged in combat, it is that creating, if you will, of Iraqi combat forces that we look at as our means for getting out of a combat role, certainly for our conventional forces. That is correct, right? But the anticipation is, I would expect, that even as our combat role or infantry role, for simplicity's sake, goes down, that these enabling roles, particularly medical and logistics, maintenance is part of logistics, and perhaps fire and air support, will continue for some time after our combat, our active patrolling. That is correct, too, right?

General DUBIK. Yes, sir.

Mr. KLINE. Okay. Then the prospects, to continue on the question which has continued to come up, when are we going to get out of there sort of thing, it is not, in my judgment, it is not how fast we get everybody out of there. It is how soon we can get out of the business of being the guys who are going in and kicking down the doors and patrolling the streets.

And so that would occur presumably a long time, perhaps years, before we actually get whatever—get everybody out of there because we are going to be in this combat enabling role for some time. Is that an accurate understanding of the situation?

And just so I can understand, what are we doing, we, you, in the training mode, what are we doing about those combat—I know you talk about buying helicopters in support, but what are we doing in the—how are we going about training these people and what are we doing, for example, to get them medics and corpsmen and doctors and nurses?

How is that going?

General DUBIK. The combat enablers is a wide, wide scope of kinds of functions and they range from direct and indirect fire support, mortars, and artillery to close air support, rotary wing and fixed wing, to air mobility, rotary wing, to counterterrorist Iraqi special operations forces, signal capability, maintenance, logistics, supplies capability, the intelligence capability.

All those non—not infantry, not armor, not artillery. Everything else is a combat enabler. And, again, that aspect of the development of the Iraqi Security Force was intentionally secondary and is now becoming more and more primary.

As their combat battalions grow in numbers and capabilities, we must augment that so we can get out of the other business, as well.

There is a program—the Iraqi Air Force is responsible for the rotary and fixed wing. There is a flight school, a pilot school, and a training program now that is associated with training their air mobility, reconnaissance, surveillance and——

Mr. KLINE. If I could just interrupt. Are you responsible——

General DUBIK. Yes.

Mr. KLINE [continuing]. To coordinate that?

General DUBIK. Yes.

Mr. KLINE. All that medical logistics and everything.

General DUBIK. Yes.

Mr. KLINE. That comes under your headquarters.

General DUBIK. Yes.

Mr. KLINE. And you are finding perhaps other surrogates to do it, other countries or Americans or other coalition partners.

General DUBIK. There are coalition partners involved in every aspect of this. I will say that the medical aspect is lower on the work list than are the combat enablers like rotary wing, fixed wing aircraft, intelligence, fires, fixed wing aircraft, airlift.

Those kinds of enablers are higher on the priority list that we have with the government of Iraq than are some of the softer enablers.

Mr. KLINE. Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman.

Ms. Davis from California.

Mrs. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you to both of you for being here. Thank you for your candor.

General, I know when I was there in July, it was a different time. I think we weren't quite as optimistic, I might say.

There are really a number of questions. If I could just go to the internal security. And having had an opportunity to hear from the defense minister the other day, there is one issue of reconstituting of the Iraqi concerned citizens group, and I think the estimate is about 20,000 of those 60,000 individuals, it is hopeful that they could be brought into the security forces.

What about the others? I mean, how are we thinking about that, mitigating that problem, if it exists, and certainly whether or not the government really is very excited about their involvement?

General DUBIK. Thank you, ma'am, and nice to see you again, appreciate it.

The Concerned Local Citizens (CLC) group is something that the Government of Iraq has embraced. They are concerned, as are we. There is risk involved in doing this.

These are former enemies, but, after all, one reconciles with enemies, not friends. So the risk has to be mitigated. The Government of Iraq has chosen to mitigate that risk by layered—with our consultation, with layered vetting. Each of these citizens who wants to get into the security forces are vetted by coalition forces, local commanders.

Then their names go to the Baghdad operations center or similar operations centers around the country. From there, they go to the——

Mrs. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. Excuse me, General, but one of the questions, I understand, is whether or not they have been really tracking. There is a system for tracking military personnel today.

Is that available to them so that they could be vetting those citizens, as well?

General DUBIK. They are put into two databases, one for Defense, one for Interior. Each of these concerned local citizens who want to become—the biometric data are entered into the database, checked to see if they were involved in any other activities.

The Iraqi side is a lot more difficult because of their paper society, and it is a lot harder for them to track this. That is why it is a little slower, but they have set in a process to do this and, in fact, have hired quite a few.

In Abu Ghraib, 1,700 already hired; in Baghdad, 2,000 put on temporary contract while the vetting process is complete; another 3,000——

Mrs. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. You have a reasonable confidence level in that process.

General DUBIK. I do.

Mrs. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. Can I turn to a few other questions? Thank you. Thank you, General.

The control of their borders, where does this fit into the equation in terms of internal security versus external security and how do you believe that they are preparing to forcibly do that?

General DUBIK. The Department of Border Enforcement falls under the Minister of Interior. He has a separate section of the interior that handles this, trains these guys.

The priority had been, first, to make sure that the borders on the Syrian side are up and running, and then the borders on the Iranian side, and then the Turkish side.

He has increased the numbers of people there. He has increased the amount of technology that is available in terms of checking passports and biometric entry, and he has increased the number of women in the Department of Border Enforcement so that they can properly check both men and women coming across the border.

Mrs. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. On equipment, in terms of patrolling the borders, I know one of the issues of the defense minister was for more Abrams tanks.

Is this an issue in that regard and is that something that you feel, even from the viewpoint of maintenance, is realistic right now?

General DUBIK. The request for Abrams tanks is unassociated with the Department of Border Enforcement. The minister of inte-

rior does the borders. The minister of defense, for internal security reasons, believes, as we have protected mobility in the shape of Strykers, Bradleys, M1s and up-armored Humvees, and now Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles (MRAPs), thanks very much, the Iraqi minister of defense believes that their protected mobility should increase, as well.

Mrs. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. Should we be making special arrangements for them to be able to purchase those? Is that part of the Iraqi security fund that you are suggesting? I know, in your last comments, that you left out perhaps—is that part of that?

General DUBIK. Well, the desire of the minister of interior for long-term procurement of U.S. equipment is something that he has just recently developed.

He has an aspiration to do this, and I believe that he is on the right road to begin the correct negotiations within his own government, and then within the U.S. Government, to put us on the path that is mutually satisfactory.

Mrs. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. Dr. Gingrey, please.

Dr. GINGREY. Mr. Chairman, thank you.

General Dubik and Secretary Kimmitt, it is good to see you again. We appreciate you being here. And I am very encouraged by the testimony you have given.

We continue to get questions both from committee, as we have this morning, and from the general public in regard to a date certain, maybe not something necessarily you put on your refrigerator, but those questions keep coming up. Those questions continue to be proffered to our Presidential candidates in both parties.

And I think it is like asking when is the last episode of American Idol. In this situation, General, as you pointed out, it is hard to know exactly, but you did encourage us by pointing out that General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker will be reporting back to us in the spring, that we have already made the decision to redeploy the surge, if you will, and I think that is exactly what we should do.

But I think a date certain would be a mistake. I have always felt that way and I think, from what you testified this morning, that you feel the same way.

The people in this country don't worry about the Korean Peninsula because we happen to have about 25,000 troops at the demilitarized zone (DMZ), but they would darn sure be worried if all of a sudden North Korea was invading South Korea.

So I think, as you point out, it is going to be a while, but it will be based on what is on the ground, and I am pleased to hear that.

I would like for you to maybe just comment. What would the possible scenario be if we decided to have a date certain, whether things are going bad, certainly when things were going bad, there was a loud hue and cry to quit and come home and now that things are going good, we are hearing the same thing, well, we don't need to continue to spend $10 billion a month, let's bring some more home.

But there is a risk to that and I wish, General, if you and Secretary Kimmitt would both comment on that. What is the downside, worst-case scenario of making that mistake?

General DUBIK. Sir, if I could comment on knowledge in warfare. Certainly, the case in February of 2007, no one would have predicted what we were facing, the conditions were facing in October of 2007.

Things change in war and we have fought hard to get the successes that we have now, we the Iraqi Security Forces, we the coalition forces.

The fight is not over. The enemy is very much active, trying to seize back the initiative. They tried a second Sumarra bombing in, I believe, June of last year. They continue to try to re-incite the violence by vehicle and suicide bombings in and around Baghdad. Just recently we saw that.

The enemy, whether al Qaeda, the remnants of al Qaeda, or other violent extremist groups of militias, these people want to reverse the successes that we have fought for.

We have seized the initiative. They want to seize it back. So from my professional standpoint, the iterative approach of analyzing periodically the actual security conditions, the actual state of the Iraqi Security Forces is a much wiser way to look at the conduct of warfare than long-term predictions in the future based on conditions that exist today.

Warfare changes back and forth and we have got to be much more, I think, iterative in our approach.

Dr. GINGREY. Secretary Kimmitt.

Secretary KIMMITT. Congressman, if I could. I think there is an issue of American standing and the confidence of our Allies in the region. The Allies that we have in the region are watching us carefully. They are wanting to see, they are hoping that we will finish the job that we started.

We have been in the Gulf region for 60-plus years. We expect to be in the region for years and years to come. Our Allies and our partners in the region need us there, want us there because they have other threats and other challenges and if they don't believe that they can count on the United States to finish the job that they started in Iraq, they are going to have serious questions about whether they should be listening to us when we say we are going to stand by you against emergent threats and existing threats in the region.

It goes to our credibility in the region. It goes to our national interests in the region, and I believe it goes to our credibility as a nation.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

The gentleman from Connecticut, Mr. Courtney, please.

Mr. COURTNEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to thank the witnesses and spouses who are here today. The topic that you are talking about, in addition to the Armed Services Committee certainly wanting to get an updated status as far as your progress, also seems to be relevant to issues that seem to be emerging on the front pages of the paper as far as the legal status of American troops in Iraq.

I guess I should probably direct this question to Secretary Kimmitt.

It appears that the Iraqi Government does not want to continue authorizing legal status of our troops under the U.N. resolution,

but wants to have a sort of separate negotiated agreement between the U.S. and Iraq.

Is that your understanding, Secretary Kimmitt, about their position?

Secretary KIMMITT. I can articulate that perhaps differently, but please go ahead.

Mr. COURTNEY. Well, I guess, first of all, I actually would like to hear what your thoughts are about whether or not their preference should really be driving that outcome because certainly even those who have questions about our presence in Iraq, or those who support our presence in Iraq, I think would probably feel a lot more comfortable having a U.N. legal basis rather than something that is just bilateral between our country and Iraq.

And, second, if it turns out we are going to end up doing this separate, the issue of when Iraq is going to be ready to take over its own security is a pretty big deal because the term of the agreement certainly could be driven or governed, to a large degree, by what they are saying.

I mean, if the secretary from the Iraq Ministry is saying 2012 before they are going to have capability of securing their own country internally, that is a pretty disturbing, I think, prospect in terms of what we negotiate, if there is going to be negotiation for an agreement.

So I think it is a two-part question. Maybe you could comment.

Secretary KIMMITT. Sir, if I could, it is clear that the Iraqis are seeking, in 2009, not to be having this relationship based on Chapter Seven United Nations Security Council resolution (UNSCR), which gives to them pretty much a view that they are being occupied by an external force.

We are now at the position where we are seeking to normalize that relationship of our presence there and their sovereign rights. That is not to presuppose that there will be a United Nations Security Council resolution next year, but it is clear that the type of Security Council resolution that Iraq does not prefer would be a Chapter Seven, by any means, by any use of force necessary.

They are a sovereign country. They believe—and this goes back to taking on more and more of the responsibility for themselves. At the same time, they understand that there will be a need for coalition forces, in general, and American forces, in particular, in the future and that is why this year we will be sitting down as an adjunct, as a follow-on from the Declaration of Principles that was signed between our two countries in November, between Prime Minister Maliki and President Bush.

The declaration of principles was signed. Another renewal of the UNSCR for 2008 was agreed upon by the United Nations. And now we are going to be sitting down in the near future with the Government of Iraq on one side of the table and the United States on the other side of the table to work toward a more Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA)-like relationship between our countries as we enjoy with many other countries around the world.

This one will have to have some additional aspects, such as our capability to conduct operations, and many of these other issues that will have to be negotiated.

But not for a minute should this body be concerned that somehow we will forfeit rights and immunities of the American soldier on the ground. There are some absolute redlines that will go into this in negotiations and those are not redlines that we are willing—and the protection and the rights of the American soldiers, as we have in many other countries, are not one that we are prepared to forfeit to remain inside, nor, for that matter, do we believe the Iraqis are going to suggest that there ought to be different rights and authorities for our soldiers in 2009 as they had in 2007.

Mr. COURTNEY. I have got a lot of confidence you are going to protect their legal position.

I guess what I am more concerned about really is just that this new SOFA agreement is not going to be an open-ended enabler for them not to move and to take more responsibility for their own future.

And I think I am about to run out of time here, but my, certainly, advice to the Administration would be that if this process goes forward, that it be as transparent as possible and that Congress is part of the loop in terms of that discussion.

We do not want long-term commitments being made that lock in this country for a time period and to an ally that maybe a lot of people in this country don't feel are really holding up their end.

With that, I yield back. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank the gentleman.

Mr. Wilson.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you, Mr. Chairman, for this very informative hearing.

General Dubik, we appreciate your service. We appreciate your wife, Sharon's service. It is very inspiring to people of the United States.

Mr. Secretary, thank you for your input today and service, also.

I really have the perspective of being a Member of Congress, a 31-year veteran of the National Guard. On my eight visits to Iraq, I have never been more proud of the American fighting personnel, men and women who are, I think, making a phenomenal difference.

I also have the perspective of being a parent. My oldest son served for a year there. I currently have another son serving in Iraq. And we are very proud.

And I hear from them a point that both of you have made this morning that just doesn't come across, and that is the bravery, the courage, the involvement of the Iraqi Army, the Iraqi police. And so I really have been impressed by your presentation today.

But we do have concerns, all of us. Beginning in October 2006, each of the 10 national police brigades were to be taken offline for 4 weeks of re-vetting and retraining due to a pattern of unprofessional, in some cases, maybe even criminal behavior.

Has this training been completed? How have you measured the effectiveness of this re-bluing effort?

General DUBIK. Sir, that specific part of the training is completed. But the professionalization of the national police is not going to be done in one four-week period, and that is why the minister of interior has had an ongoing national police reform initiative.

That training that you referred to was just one part of it. The initial part that continues is not one phase and then goes to two. Phase one, continual assessment of leadership, goes on and I talked about the replacement of the national police commanding generals, brigade commanders, battalion commanders, the 1,300 national police that he let go from service.

The second phase, the training that you talked about, third phase, leadership professionalization, a six-week program that the Italian Carabinieri will have been conducting battalion by battalion for the national police to increase the proficiency of their force, the creation of the training center in Numaniyah, the creating of the national police leadership center.

So the continual reform of the national police is something that the minister of interior and commanding general of the national police knows must go on over time.

In terms of measurement, I will give you one quick indicator. I believe in the beginning of 2007 to now, we have had nine more national police battalions move from the readiness status three to readiness status two, and this is a pretty significant improvement.

I did talk to General Odierno about this. He is observing much more professional behavior by national police than before. The transition teams are commenting—the negative comments are much fewer now.

When the national police moved to Diwaniyah recently for temporary duty to assist the coalition force brigade in Diwaniyah, the division commander told me, when I went to visit him, that he was—he didn't know who these guys were, but they were very good.

So the overall impression, as well as the empirics of their readiness assessment I think are going in the right direction. But they will not keep going in that direction without sustained reform, dedication of the minister of interior and the commander of the national police, which currently they are very committed to.

Mr. WILSON. It is really encouraging to me that we haven't even heard any citing of sectarian divisions in your presentation.

Has progress been made in regard to the various sects of the country, their ability to work together?

General DUBIK. In the national police right now, there are 2,000 new recruits, just finished their initial training, beginning the national police specialized training, 500 of these are Sunni.

The national police commanding general, General Hussein, is actively recruiting Sunnis into the national police because he knows to be a national force, he must be at least representative of the population.

The split in the leadership, division commanders, one Sunni, one Shia, about 30 percent Sunni, 70 percent Shia for the brigade commanders, 20 percent Sunni, 80 percent Shia at the battalion commander, rough, rough percentages, but these are reflective of the society.

He knows he has to do that, and he is actively recruiting to do that.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Mr. Wilson.

Before I call on the gentlelady from New Hampshire, Secretary Kimmitt, let me ask you a question that has been gnawing.

Our country is currently planning to transfer about 8,500 M–114 up-armored Humvees to the Iraqi Security Forces. Because these vehicles are not excess, there is still a requirement for them in our country. The law requires that the Department of Defense charge fair market value for them, which I am told is $11,300 per vehicle, which seems to me to be a large depreciation. But that comes to about $96 million.

The current plan, as I understand, is that rather than having the Iraqis pay for these vehicles, the United States will pay itself out of the Iraqi Security Forces fund, which is an appropriated fund.

Now, does it make sense for us to pay for our own vehicles to transfer them to the Iraqi forces when it seems that they have a fair amount of money, revenues coming in from the oil that they have? And how do we explain this to the good people of America?

Mr. Secretary.

Secretary KIMMITT. Mr. Chairman, first, let me offer the floor to General Dubik because he is intimately involved in this, and perhaps I can finish up on that.

General DUBIK. Yes, sir. The transfer this year will be 4,244 vehicles, paid for by the Iraqi Security Force fund, as you outline, at fair market price.

The Iraqis have, through the FMS system, paid for all of the spare parts, for continuing maintenance. The initial contract is $65 million and they now have a letter of request for additional spare parts for the long-term sustainment of these vehicles.

The decision to use the Iraqi Security Force fund was one of expediency. As the MRAPs, which I must say, again, thanks for your support in the MRAP program, as MRAPs came in, we could transfer these M–114 Humvees, up-armored Humvees to the Iraqi Security Force without any diminution of protected mobility inside theater.

The use of Iraqi Security Force funds was one of choice for the most expeditious, fastest way to increase the protected mobility of the Iraqi Security Forces, which was to all of our benefit. But they are paying. They are paying for all of the maintenance.

The CHAIRMAN. It doesn't seem that difficult for them to write a check for $96 million. General.

General DUBIK. Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. Who made this decision?

General DUBIK. Yes, sir. We made this decision——

The CHAIRMAN. No. Who made this decision?

General DUBIK. We requested the—this is a pseudo-FMS case that I had requested. It went through the Multi-National Force Iraq, went to Central Command (CENTCOM), went through the Pentagon for approval, and then back to me for a decision.

Secretary KIMMITT. Mr. Chairman, if I could. This is really an example of what the ISF does. In many ways, we give the Iraqi—use the appropriated funds given by Congress to the Iraqis, of which they then pay us back by purchasing goods and services, in many cases, from the United States of America.

Whether they use the money to buy American M–4s, use the money to buy Humvees that have been used and are now considered excess to the inventory——

The CHAIRMAN. But these are not excess. These have not been excess.

Secretary KIMMITT. These were determined or—I should rephrase my term as excess to the needs on the ground. The Army was very heavily involved in this and felt that given their future procurement decisions that they were making, that these were not needed as part of their long-term acquisition strategy, and that is why the Army felt that this was an appropriate use for these Humvees in order to give greater protection to the Iraqi Security Forces who are fighting side by side with us.

The CHAIRMAN. Ms. Shea-Porter.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you for being here. Although I was the wife of a lowly lieutenant, I know how valuable leave time was. So thank you for this.

I have to ask you, though, General, we are entering the sixth year of this conflict and we ran a war, a world war, in one, in four. And so all of the good news that we are hearing today really does not ring true in the sense that the problems seem so deep and so entrenched inside the Iraqi Government itself and the people that I just wonder what is really happening there.

So I wanted to ask you a couple of questions about that.

I know that we are talking about the sheikhs and how they seem to like us how and they realize al Qaeda has been a problem, which it certainly has been. But we are also paying the sheikhs. Can't they come to that conclusion themselves?

Have we won their hearts or is this really a fact that we are giving them money, and so we are getting their cooperation?

General DUBIK. Well, ma'am, all I can do in terms of report is report what I see and if I have given you a completely rosy picture, I apologize, because my essential line is——

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. I think you have been very clear.

General DUBIK. It is a mixed picture.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Yes.

General DUBIK. There are some very, very positive aspects and some aspects that still need a lot of work.

In terms of the concerned local citizens——

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. They are paid, too, aren't they?

General DUBIK. They are paid.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Right, by us.

General DUBIK. They are paid by us.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. And let me just say, General, I think you have given a very honest assessment. What I am concerned about is the part of do we actually have the Iraqi people with us.

General DUBIK. Again, the concerned local citizens are a reflection of the turn that a large number of the Iraqi people have made against al Qaeda. This is not just a small part of the population. To have walked the streets of Fallujah in June of 2007 and then to walk the streets of Fallujah in December of 2007, it is an entirely different place.

The same——

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Why do we have to pay the sheikhs and pay the so-called volunteers, the neighborhood volunteers, if they are really with us, for their country?

General DUBIK. It is their country. Many of the lower level insurgents are lower level insurgents because they have no other source of income. This is a way to give hope to those people and to put them to use in a positive way rather than them——

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Well, actually, isn't it true that the Iraqi Shias did not want the Sunnis—they wouldn't hire them. So what I am getting at here is we have been talking about national reconciliation and then the administration shifted gears and I hear the word local reconciliation a lot now.

And so we see that we have had to pay them because the Shias would not allow them in, but I am also concerned about the ministry of the interior, when we don't know how many people show up every day. We are not certain about the Iraqi Police Service (IPS), how many people actually show up for that.

I know that last year, last summer, the Iraqi parliament, more than half wanted us to go home, signed a petition to leave. And then I think in the final insult, we had the weapons deal where they bought small weapons from the Chinese instead of from the United States because they said we just took too long in our FMS process.

And I just have to wonder, does this show a lack of commitment to their own nation rebuilding and why did we shift from talking about national to local reconciliation? And why do we have to pay each layer there to do what seems to be the natural thing to do to beat back al Qaeda and beat back forces?

General DUBIK. I think it is the case that the government of Iraq was hesitant to embrace former insurgents at first. They were nervous and have good reason to be nervous about including former insurgents into their security forces.

But over time, they have seen and acknowledged publicly, the prime minister, the deputy prime minister, the ministers of interior and defense, the minister of finance, national security advisor, all on public record of now embracing the concerned local citizens initiatives, realizing that they must take over the contracts and beginning the movement to figure out how they can manage the contracts now and pay the concerned local citizens, and figure out not just a program for those 20-some percent that may end up in the security forces, but the 80 percent that need jobs.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Let me ask you. Do you think we have the support of the Iraqi parliament for all of your efforts? And I thank you for your efforts, and I will say that I, too, have been to Iraq, and you simply cannot say enough about our troops there.

But do you think we have the support of the Iraqi parliament and the highest levels of government for our efforts?

Secretary KIMMITT. Ma'am, if I could talk about the Iraqi parliament, the council of representatives, it is clear that, in all cases, we don't have a majority opinion of support for the United States. We saw the Sadr-ists, for example, last fall, as you recognized, in fact, that don't want to see a continued occupation by the United States forces.

But in general, they recognize the importance of maintaining stability in their country, improving the security in their country, and I think, in many ways, they see us in most cases as bad medicine. There is this tension between their sovereign rights as a nation and their capabilities of exercising those sovereign rights.

So it is our view that as the Iraqi parliament, the council of representatives continues to debate some of the core issues on reconciliation, for example, in many ways, they are still coming to agreements among themselves. And so for them to be completely in agreement among the presence of external forces in their country, I think it would be natural for them to continue to have some concerns about our continued presence.

But that shouldn't be considered a rejection of our presence or a rejection of our contributions inside the country.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. I would just say signing a petition asking us to leave and having a majority of parliament would say something different to me.

But I thank you both for being here and for your service.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank the gentlelady.

The gentleman from Georgia, Mr. Johnson.

Mr. JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to thank both of you gentlemen and your spouses and families for your service to the Nation, your fine service to the Nation.

And, Secretary Kimmitt, you mentioned a little earlier that there were countries in the Middle East that are looking at us to see whether or not we will finish the job that we started.

Would you remind the American people of what that job was and is and what does victory mean in Iraq?

Secretary KIMMITT. Sir, as we continue to say in our quarterly report to Congress, we are seeking an Iraq that is free, unified, and is an ally alongside of us in the war on terror and a pluralistic democratic nation.

And it is our sensing that the nation is moving in that direction. It has rejected and it has overcome the Saddam era of brutalities, the divisions that were inflicted by Saddam and his Baath party, the genocide, attempted genocide of the Kurds in the north and the Shia in the south.

This is a country that is moving along on the democratic process, and it is one that is, as General Dubik has so brilliantly outlined today, getting closer and closer to taking over responsibility for its own security.

Mr. JOHNSON. Well, many people in America feel that the invasion of Iraq destabilized the Middle East area and created a cesspool of terrorist development, which has only now started to take on a semblance of being under control, perhaps due to the surge that was undertaken last year.

And most people feel that we are trapped in a quagmire in Iraq, a quagmire of violence, internal strife, civil discord, and our troops are trapped in the middle of it, and the Iraqi leadership does not want that quagmire to come to an end because we are providing them with their security, and we are also the means whereby they are able to generate income.

In other words, the American public are paying for their security, and they are paying for their stability. And without us being there, then the entire situation would degenerate back into this civil conflict, and if we do leave, then the parties would be able to work their differences out amongst themselves without us being there.

They are doing it now with us there. If we leave, they fight it out amongst themselves, come to a conclusion as to who is going to be the winner, and then the Americans can deal with that reality as opposed to trying to prop up a government artificially that we like, that was not necessarily arrived at by the will of the Iraqi people.

And so I can appreciate what you are saying in terms of the Iraqi Security Forces advancing, making advancements in terms of taking care of themselves, but you cannot tell us when or you refuse to tell us when that can be accomplished.

And what I want to ask is what role does all of the corruption that you have spoken of today, what role does that have in terms of our ability to extract ourselves from Iraq? The corruption appears to be pervasive, ongoing, with no end in sight.

What impact does that have on our ability to extract ourselves from Iraq?

Secretary KIMMITT. Well, Congressman, as mentioned earlier by General Dubik, it is important to note the progress that the Iraqis themselves are making toward the corruption endemic within their own country.

The commission of public integrity was formed very quickly after American forces came in, and each of the different ministries have their own internal inspector general functions, of which General Dubik laid out, within the ministry of interior, how many ongoing investigations there are and the progress that has been made.

We feel comfortable that the Iraqis understand the significance of the corruption within their country and the leadership is taking action to address that.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank the gentleman.

We have left the gentleman from Pennsylvania, Mr. Sestak. We have the gentleman from Georgia, Mr. Marshall. And I understand the gentleman from Maryland, Mr. Bartlett, wishes to ask a follow-on question.

So, Mr. Sestak, please.

Mr. SESTAK. Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

Congressman Gingrey from Georgia, on the other side, had brought up—who I have great respect for—the issue of date certain, which wasn't what this hearing was about. But if I could just give maybe a perspective, after listening to you, sir, who is responsible for the Middle East affairs and you, responsible for Iraq's army security.

The Congress is responsible for the common defense. So when I look at the common defense and think about a date certain, and Congressman Gingrey brought up the issue of 25,000 troops, 27,000, sitting on the demilitarized zone (DMZ), there is not one Army unit here at home, our active Guard or Reserve, since presurge days, that could respond to defend those men and women.

You know our Op Plan 5027, sir. You know what is supposed to defend them in terms of divisions, now brigades. The response we

get is the Navy and the Air Force will protect them, in open testimony.

Afghanistan, the most violent area we have had, with record opium production this year and the Taliban back in the ungoverned regions, from which they controlled and al Qaeda hid and struck us. In Pakistan today, the intelligence agency testified almost a year ago, safe haven for al Qaeda, who started it all, and the most dangerous place of the world, Pakistan.

That is the short term. The long term, as I look at the common defense, and I think about a date certain, is your Army, sir, now recruits, for the first time in several decades, 42 percent of its recruits in the below mental category, that your Army, sir, wants to transform to the Future Combat System (FCS) and other transformational systems that will take a cohort 20 years from now to be the best and the brightest.

And we don't even train any more for several years in any other warfare except for Iraq. And China, the center of gravity for our Nation the next year.

So I sit back, and I think about General McCaffrey yesterday testifying that the Sunnis woke up, and they realized we could be leaving. So they decided to play. You know the saying in Iraq, Insha'allah, God willing tomorrow.

So before we say that it is—and I understand your viewpoints, but many people have said a date certain, given 15 to 24 months, which it probably takes us to get out through those 2 cleaning stations that you have in Kuwait and down road Tampa, may be what is needed to help America's overall security.

But I appreciate your viewpoint. You have one corner of the world, Iraq security, but ultimately it is about American security, 25,000 troops, no reinforcements. You never would have lived with that five, six, seven years ago.

In any case, my question really had to do with the Iraqi Security Forces. Someone testified about eight months ago that it is not going to be an ultimate issue of their training. Rather, it is going to be a question of their willingness to fight and their loyalty.

You addressed their willingness to fight here. Tell me about their loyalty. The intelligence community says it is not a science, it is an art, in testimony, determine their loyalty.

Would you embed our troops there, as some have asked? Can you tell us which ones? Because ultimately this is really about—I am sure they want to fight each other now, five years from now, when we leave. What about their loyalty, sir?

General DUBIK. Thanks, first, Mr. Congressman, for your acknowledgment of their willingness to fight because they are very willing to fight.

Mr. SESTAK. Sir, about their loyalty.

General DUBIK. Their loyalty is an issue that both the ministers of defense and interior are concerned about. Both know that to have legitimate security forces for their nation, they must be loyal to their nation and not to their local area or tribe or sect.

Mr. SESTAK. Would you embed any of our forces in their units and, if so, what percentage? That is a great test of loyalty.

General DUBIK. We are already embedded in——

Mr. SESTAK. Correct. What percentage?

General DUBIK. I don't——

Mr. SESTAK. And leaving just embedded trainers behind, not combat forces nearby, U.S.

General DUBIK. I don't know what the percentage is in terms of embedded forces. I don't have the number. They work for General Odierno.

Mr. SESTAK. Could I get that?

General DUBIK. I would be happy to provide that for you.

Mr. SESTAK. It would be great.

General DUBIK. It is a matter of open record, but it is not my area of responsibility. So I don't have the number——

Mr. SESTAK. Because when I asked that question of the intelligence community, as I said, they said it is an art, not a science. And some are talking eventually of embedded forces without nearby combat forces because ultimately I think this is about that.

I am out of time. I am sorry. Thank you.

General DUBIK. If I could, just for the record, the number is over 5,000 American troops, roughly about 5,500 American troops and over 600 units embedded into the Iraqi military.

Mr. SESTAK. How many units are there in the Iraqi military? The 600 units, is that brigade, is that company, is that squadron?

General DUBIK. We will provide the answer to you for the record.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Marshall.

Mr. MARSHALL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you both for your service.

I want to pick up a little bit on what Mr. Sestak was talking about. If you step back and take a historical view of similar engagements by the United States, you have to conclude that the history suggests that it will be quite a challenge for us ultimately to have a stable Iraq.

We are very good at building security forces. We are not so good at building the civilian counterpart or creating a representative government that security forces remain subservient to as security forces do here in the United States.

In fact, our history is to the contrary. A lot of the militaries that we create lined up in the interest of establishing stability for their countries, or at least ostensibly so, taking over.

You combine that with the fact that, historically, nations whose primary wealth is based on oil, that is Iraq, have a very difficult time establishing democracies, any kind of representative government.

What typically happens is one tribe, one family, one group, one sect wins control of the valuable resource, then uses that control to cement its control. And so you see the Saud family in Saudi Arabia, et cetera, hiring individuals, like many in this room, to defend their control over the resource.

So we have got a twofold challenge here. And I am just wondering to what extent there are discussions at your level in the military, in Iraq, in the Pentagon, in the State Department about these twin challenges that we face and how we are going to get past that where Iraq is concerned.

I have thought, for example, that it would probably would be wise for us to—well, wise for Iraq, frankly, to assure that we are

embedded, supporting, et cetera, their military for the foreseeable future, providing transportation, communications, sort of conventional support that protects Iraq from any serious conventional threat from other countries, that sort of thing, so that the military is kind of dependent upon us.

And since we are not interested in having the military take over, maybe the military won't, as it historically has done when we have helped build militaries.

Is there any kind of conversation going on about that right now?

General DUBIK. I will just talk internal conversation that I have had with the chief of the joint forces, national security advisor, Dr. Rubaie, General Babakir, the chief of joint forces, Minister Bulani, the minister of interior, Mr. Abd Qadir, the minister of defense, about this subject.

The command and control of military forces in Iraq and Saddam had been under the military. Of course, Saddam personally, but through the military. The minister of defense is in the chain of command. The chief of joint forces is not.

And it is a matter of a continued discussion and education, quite frankly, about the relationship of the military as subordinate to civilian control. They are aware that that is the path that they are on, they should be on, and they need to figure out how to do that.

The minister of interior's role in this is very important, because the interior security of Iraq under Saddam was a military function. The police forces, as we know them, were not really responsible for interior security. And he knows that he has a responsibility to change that around in the current governmental arrangement. That is why he has chosen reform as aggressively as he has in the national police and why he is on such a training program for Iraqi police.

He should be responsible for internal security——

Mr. MARSHALL. General, could I interrupt here?

Mr. Secretary, discussions in the Pentagon about these kinds of issues?

Secretary KIMMITT. Well, on the issue of the government, along with the embedding in the military forces, there is also our ministry capacity teams, the programs that are run through the State Department, trying to promote and insist that each of the different ministries, not simply the ministry of defense, ministry of interior, but ministry of finance——

Mr. MARSHALL. If I could interrupt. Is it accepted that this is a challenge, that this could well be an issue, because historically it has been, these two issues, these twin issues?

Secretary KIMMITT. It is certainly an issue, and it is an issue that the Iraqis themselves are confronting every day.

What type of social contract do they want to have with the central government as sects or as citizens of Iraq?

Mr. MARSHALL. Thank you, gentlemen.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank the gentleman from Georgia.

Let me ask one question, and I don't know to whom to address this. But as I understand it, during the year 2006, there was a problem with pay for the locally hired police forces, based on being

a Sunni or another Shiite group and some, consequently, didn't get paid.

Did that change in 2007, and what is the present status of that police force, which, of course, comes from the central government?

General DUBIK. Yes, sir. I would say, by and large, the pay problem is solved in that the central government is providing pay through the provinces to policemen.

There are instances where that is not the case, and the ministry of interior has done two things to—three things, actually, to mitigate that in the future.

First, he is automating his pay system, like the military has. Second, he is much more aggressively having meetings with the provincial directors of police at the national level. And, third, he has pay contact teams that travel around the country to solve this problem.

But it still exists in instances. As a general rule, it is much better.

The CHAIRMAN. I can see where that would be very discouraging for a police officer, very discouraging, to not get paid or not getting paid on time. I thank you for that.

Mr. Bartlett.

Mr. BARTLETT. Thank you very much for indulging me another brief question.

In earlier testimony today, when we were discussing the projected dates for readiness of the Iraqi Security Forces for internal security and external security, I think I remember that the projected date for the external security was somewhere around, what, 2018, 2020.

Does that mean that we are going to have to have our forces in Iraq for at least another decade?

Secretary KIMMITT. Sir, I don't think that one should draw that conclusion at all. If you take, for example, one of those elements that a nation would want to have for external defense, an air force, there are no fighter aircrafts inside of Iraq at present.

And if you think how long it takes not simply to buy a fighter aircraft, but to train a pilot, train an air force, get to a certain level of competency, Minister Qadir has made some very tough decisions, where his first priorities are for the ground forces and later on for the elements for external defense, such as an air force.

Does that mean that we need to keep American aircraft stationed inside of Iraq for the external defense until 2020? Of course not. That was mentioned earlier, the significant capability of the United States military to project power perhaps from other bases in the Middle East, to serve as a deterrent to any adversary against Iraq, but that does not necessarily mean that those forces would need to be stationed—in fact, it probably means that they wouldn't be stationed in Iraq.

But nonetheless, with the basing structure that we do have currently in the Middle East, I think that the Iraqi Security Forces can remain confident that they don't need—that they need to take their first priorities on the ground forces and perhaps later on those other elements for independent external defense.

Mr. BARTLETT. I gather that your reply indicates that we would probably need to be there until they were ready for internal security challenges.

Secretary KIMMITT. We are there currently, Congressman, to help them face the internal security challenges. They are——

Mr. BARTLETT. What was the date at which you projected they would be ready for that? Was it 2012 or 2013?

Secretary KIMMITT. Again, I think the minister mentioned a number of times that he believes first quarter of 2009 to 2012 would be a time when the Iraqi Security Forces could probably take responsibility for the tip of the spear for that issue, logistics enablers, so on and so forth, other security cooperation may go beyond that.

But I will defer to General Dubik on that judgment.

Mr. BARTLETT. So our citizens could reasonably anticipate that sometime in that timeframe, that we could be leaving.

Secretary KIMMITT. Congressman, what I believe is that we are going to maintain the security relationship, the security cooperation relationship with Iraq for some period of time, the way we have a security cooperation relationship with Saudi Arabia and probably a hundred other nations around the world.

If you take a look at countries such as Jordan, currently at peace, but we still have a significant training element that works with the Jordanian forces not only to improve their forces, but help them maintain their readiness.

It would be envisioned that even well beyond the time period when active combat operations were going on inside of Iraq, that we would maintain an element inside of Iraq, certainly not combat forces, but security cooperation elements the way we have in many countries around the world, to continue to work with them as allies, to continue to work with them as partners, to continue to have bilateral exchanges, International Military Education and Training (IMET) between our two countries.

Mr. BARTLETT. So much earlier than this, you would expect that we might——

The CHAIRMAN. Wait, wait. Let me interrupt. Was that a yes or a no to his question?

Secretary KIMMITT. Chairman, without sounding flippant, I perhaps would need to have the question asked again so I could currently specifically understand the question.

The CHAIRMAN. Let the reporter repeat the question, please. Does the reporter have the question to repeat?

If not, Mr. Bartlett, would you ask that question again?

Mr. BARTLETT. I believe the question asked if we—if our citizens should conclude that we will need to have forces in Iraq until their security forces were ready for internal security challenges and that date, you indicated, was somewhere between late in 2009 and 2012.

Secretary KIMMITT. Sir, what I was reflecting was what Minister Abd Qadir himself believes is that range of time where—in which, somewhere in that range, he believes, it is his judgment, his independent judgment that the Iraqi Security Forces could take on the internal security force responsibility.

Mr. BARTLETT. I gather that you kind of concurred with that in the way in which you gave that testimony. Is that correct?

Secretary KIMMITT. Congressman, what I would say is that we do, as Lieutenant General Dubik said, look at this as an iterative process rather than project a date certain in the future.

We iteratively reflect on the conditions on the ground and adjust our troop levels and our troop contributions as conditions on the ground merit.

Mr. BARTLETT. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much. The reason I am asking these questions is I think that the American people need to have some confidence that at some point in time, that our troops are coming home, and I was just trying to probe to see when, in your judgment, that point in time would be.

Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

And before I call on Mr. Cummings, General, you may or may not be able to touch on this question. But yesterday, General McCaffrey, who had just returned recently from Iraq, testified before our subcommittee and I was privileged to be present for part of that hearing.

And in that hearing, he testified to the effect that the United States Army has 10 percent of its young soldiers who should not be in uniform because of their past history.

In your opinion, if that is true, does that affect the performance of the United States Army in its various duties in Iraq?

General DUBIK. Sir, I have seen no diminution in capability of soldiers or leaders in Iraq in my command or as I have traveled around talking to the leaders under General Odierno's command, nor have I seen any diminution of quality in the forces at Fort Lewis during the two years plus I commanded there.

The CHAIRMAN. That is encouraging. Thank you.

General DUBIK. Yes, sir. I was, as you were speaking, having some flashbacks of several people that I know that fall in that category.

Secretary KIMMITT. Some sitting at this table.

General DUBIK. That is one of the great things about the United States Army. You can come in and start your life over. And so it is the case that we want to have brought into the Army a wide variety of people, and we ought to use as many indicators as possible for success.

Now, that being the case, there is a floor below which you fall and you start having difficulty, as we did in, say, the mid 1970's, late 1970's, where you had a quality of force that couldn't be trained.

I don't think we have been to that floor yet.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Let me ask you this, General Dubik.

You stated in your written testimony that the national police has grown by 7,500, with the addition of 5 battalions, 1 brigade headquarters, and a training school, with 9 more battalions rated as an operational readiness assessment level two, at the start of the year, and the Iraqi police added some 45,000 new police to their rolls this year.

Although I am pleased to hear that there has been significant growth of the Iraqi police, especially over the last six months, I still remain deeply concerned that we are building forces composed of militias and sectarian groups that are riddled with corruption.

What is the point of building a national police force that, when left to its own devices, will likely create increased sectarian violence, if you agree with that?

General DUBIK. The national police are in need of reform. The commanding general of the national police himself is the leader of the national police reform program.

Minister Bulani, the minister of interior, himself is very aggressive in encouraging General Hussein to continue the reform. So there is no argument from the leaders inside the ministry of interior that the national police need reform and there is also no argument that this reform will take time.

That is why they are on the program that they are. That is why they have replaced leadership, they have replaced national policemen, they have increased the professionalization training provided by the Italian Carabinieri. They have established the training center and the continue to assess their leadership in coordination with the national police transition teams that are embedded with each of the national police units.

Mr. CUMMINGS. December, the December 9010 report makes clear that the government of Iraq has taken responsibility for determining requirements for the size of the Iraqi Security Forces.

The report also suggests that the current authorized size of 555,000 is likely to be increased. However, the report does not state what the ultimate size and composition of the Iraqi Security Forces will likely be nor does it make clear how much future U.S. support would be required due to such an increase.

Mr. Kimmitt and Lieutenant General Dubik, if the surge has created some notable success such that our military forces can stand down while the Iraqi forces stand up, what exactly is being done to ensure that the ISF has a targeted and calculated goal in sight, namely, with regards to its structure, size, and equipment level requirements?

General DUBIK. Well, sir, first, I will say that the government of Iraq itself has a general goal of about 600,000 to 650,000 Iraqi Security Forces. But they, like us, look at this requirement at least on a semiannual basis, if not much more frequently than that, because they want to buy the most security for the least amounts of people, the same as we do.

So I don't know if they are going to grow that large, because if they don't have to, they don't want to grow that large. So I would answer it that way.

Second, in terms of our commitment, I think it is right that we annually and semiannually come before you to lay out the requirements and the needs. This iterative approach is exactly right, because we have already been through a case where the requirements have grown and when we are in a position where the requirements can diminish, we ought to state that case before you.

And I am personally very comfortable with the process that is in place for laying that out before you rather than a long term, one time here is how we think the future will be based on the facts we know today.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman.

General, Mr. Secretary, thank you for your testimony, for being with us today.

And, General, you get a gold wreath around your stars for appearing today and your wife, Sharon, gets two gold wreaths for allowing you to be here and to share this time.

It has been very instructive, very, very helpful, and for you to come back during your leave time, which I know is so precious to any soldier, and especially to you, who has been deployed so long, but you do have our appreciation and we wish you continued success in the days ahead.

Mr. Secretary, thank you again for being with us. General, thank you.

The meeting is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:26 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

JANUARY 17, 2008

PREPARED STATEMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

JANUARY 17, 2008

STATEMENT OF

LIEUTENANT GENERAL JAMES DUBIK, UNITED STATES ARMY

COMMANDER

MULTI-NATIONAL SECURITY TRANSITION COMMAND-IRAQ

BEFORE THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

ON IRAQI SECURITY FORCES

JANUARY 17, 2008

Chairman Skelton, Representative Saxton, distinguished members of this committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.

I am delighted to have with me my lovely wife, Sharon, who has likewise been a steadfast supporter of our deployed troops and their families. Like you, she appreciates the impact our current pace of operations is having on our people and like you, she has worked hard over the last few years to try to minimize it. I'd like to thank her, here, for that effort and that support.

I also thank all of you for your continued support of our men and women in uniform and for the repeated visits so many of you have made to the theater to see their good work firsthand. I'm sure I don't need to tell you how very much it means to them, to all of us who are helping the Iraqi's to get their Security Forces into a position where they can defend themselves, their citizens and their new-found freedom.

It is tough work and slow-going, but it is -- if I may say so, -- the most significant and rewarding work I have done in the Army. I am proud of it. My troops are proud of it. But most importantly the Iraqi's are proud of what they are accomplishing. They are proud of themselves, and they are committed -- to their own success. And we are meeting with some success, Mr. Chairman.

To summarize the essential point of my testimony: The Iraqi Security Forces are bigger and better than they have been at any time since the effort to establish them began. This progress is of course mixed with some continuing challenges as well. I intend today to describe both to you and the committee.

In just the last year, the Iraqi Army grew almost 55,000 soldiers with 15 more combat battalions in the lead this year than last, the National Police has grown by 7500, with the addition of five

battalions, one brigade headquarters and a training school with 9 more battalions rated as ORA 2 than at the start of the year, and the Iraqi Police added some 45,000 new police to their roll this year. And much of this growth has been in the last 6 months.

I attribute this to THREE things. FIRST is the opportunity provided by increased offensive operations—conventional SOF and ISF—and the rejection of Al Qaeda and other extremists by much of the Iraqi population. More people WANT to serve. More people feel INVESTED in their own futures. SECOND is the concerted effort to consolidate the security functions of various ministries into the Ministries of Defense and Interior. And THIRD is the GOIs desire to grow their security forces to a size and capability needed to provide for their own security. As I mentioned, we have seen significant growth across the board. We are seeing the Iraqi's want to take more responsibility for the battlespace.

Indeed, I believe we will see the total I-S-F number may exceed 580,000 by the end of 2008, up from about 500,000 today. This growth is also related to budget. Iraq's two security ministries' budget has grown about $2B a year since 2005. This is the second year in a row that Iraq's security ministries out spent the ISFF.

Mr. Chairman, the Iraqi's still have a lot of work to do, as do we. There are many challenges ahead. As I said, this is tough work. Force structure and capability still lack a certain maturity. The ISF have not yet achieved self reliance in all area of logistics, maintenance and life support. Just this past December the Iraqi Ministry of Defense adopted what we refer to as self-sustaining life support. Further the JHQ and MOI have a level of visibility of their maintenance status that they did not have just 6 months ago. Positive signs, indeed, and steps forward but the truth is that they simply

cannot fix, supply, arm or fuel themselves completely enough at this point.

The Iraqi's also remain reliant on the coalition for too many combat enablers -- air support, air mobility, engineer support, indirect fire support and the like. Aggressive use of Foreign Military Sales is helping turn that around, but they must purchase helicopters, mortars, fixed-wing aircraft, artillery, ISR assets and increase their levels of protected mobility and to achieve self sufficient combat power. Of course, such capability rests in large measure on sound leadership. Here, too, the Iraqi Security Forces are slowly improving adding 1,300 officers and 9,900 NCOs in the Iraqi Army in the last year But while the numbers overall are up, as I indicated, there is a gap in mid-grade leadership positions, particularly at the non-commissioned officer and field grade officer levels. Developing these leaders not only takes training but time. As we have observed in our own Army at various times over the last 20-30 years, such gaps in leadership represent a very real and very tangible hole in proficiency that cannot be easily filled and it will affect them for at least a decade.

Just one final word about perspective here, if I may. When I was in command out at Fort Lewis, I was tasked to grow three Stryker Brigades. I encountered four main problems in doing so. It's hard to produce leaders as fast as you stand up a unit. It's hard to synchronize arrival of those leaders with soldiers. It's hard to synchronize the training of those soldiers with the delivery of their equipment. And it's a whole lot easier to build units than it is to build bases.

Mr. Chairman, we are fighting those very same problems in Iraq today. And it should not surprise us, especially given Iraq is growing their security forces while at war, while forming a government, and

while developing their security ministries. We should not underestimate the difficulties involved. But I will tell you, both the Minister of Interior and the Minister of Defense are tackling them square-on.

Two quick examples: the U.S. Army over the last year grew by about 2.3 percent, some 11,000 soldiers. The Iraqi Army over that same year grew by 55 percent or, as I mentioned, nearly 55,000 soldiers, 2 Divisions, 8 Brigades, and 36 Battalions in 2007, and put them into the fight. This year the National Police have replaced 2 of 2 Division Commanders, 10 of 9 Brigade Commanders and 17 of 24 Battalion Commanders, completed initial unit training of all Brigades; began professional leadership training with the Italian Carabinieri; established its own training center, and began training an organic support brigade. As I said, helping the ISF do this has been and continues to be extraordinarily rewarding work, the most rewarding of my career.

I want to thank you and this committee, on behalf of all the men and women in the Multinational Security Transition Command-Iraq, for your support of that work in the past. If I had any closing thought at all it would simply be to ask you to continue that support in the future, most especially by providing for the I-S-F fund into 2009 so we can assist the GoI completing their security forces, continuing to professionalize their leadership and training and setting the ground work for long-term US-Iraq security relationship. It is money well spent, Mr. Chairman. It is work worth doing.

Thank you.

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