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**THE STATUS OF THE WAR AND  
POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN IRAQ**

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COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

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## **THE STATUS OF THE WAR AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN IRAQ**

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,  
*Washington, DC, Wednesday, April 9, 2008.*

The committee met, pursuant to call, at 9 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. Today the House Armed Services Committee meets in open session for an update on Iraq from two of America's finest, General David Petraeus and Ambassador Ryan Crocker.

Gentlemen, we thank you for appearing. I am glad to see you both and believe that our Nation is well served by your leadership.

This committee does not forget all the personnel who serve valiantly under General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker and who work day and night on our behalf. They and their families have sacrificed tremendously in an effort to carry out a most challenging mission. Where there has been progress, it is due to their efforts, and we thank them.

We shall now begin this hearing with recalling how we got here. Iraq was invaded on incorrect information. The turbulent aftermath following the initial victory was not considered despite warnings of the aftermath, including two such warnings from me. Now we are in our sixth year of attempting to quell this horrendous aftermath.

Preparing for this hearing, I went back and read my opening statement for our last hearing with you in September. I think I could have delivered the same statement as I did then, which means I either repeat myself or things haven't changed that much in Iraq.

One thing I do think worth repeating here is to remind members and everyone watching the hearing that all of us, everyone, desires to bring the war in Iraq to a close in a way that will best preserve our national security in this country. We must approach Iraq by considering our overall national security. Iraq is clearly an important piece of that puzzle, but only one piece.

Admiral Mullen, the Chairman of Joint Chiefs and General Hayden, the director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), have both said publicly that the next attack on our homeland will likely come from the Afghanistan-Pakistan border where Osama bin Laden is hiding. Troops in Iraq or those in units recovering from

being in Iraq cannot be sent to Afghanistan to apprehend bin Laden. Protecting this Nation from direct attack is job number one, yet our allocation of forces does not match this imperative. Yesterday Senator Warner asked whether our efforts in Iraq are making this Nation safer. When looking at the needs in Afghanistan, the effort in Iraq, however, is important as putting at risk our ability to decisively defeat those most likely to attack us.

Iraq is also preventing us from effectively preparing for the next conflict. We have had 12 military contingencies in the last 31 years. Some of them major and most of them unexpected. The Army would face a steep climb in trying to respond to another contingency. Readiness for most nondeployed units has fallen to unprecedented levels, and nearly all training is focused on counterinsurgency operations. Those contingencies have come on average about every five years. We are due for another. In my view, we are not doing what we must to prepare.

Turning back to Iraq itself, we should all recall that the surge is just the latest in a line of plans, and we are in our sixth year of war in Iraq. We have seen just about everything from Secretary Rumsfeld's denial that there was an insurgency to Ambassador Bremer's throwing fuel on the fire by firing every Baathist and member of the Iraqi army. We tried assaulting Fallujah twice. We tried rushing the Iraqi army into combat only to watch it fail.

We tried pretty much everything before we got to trying a counterinsurgency doctrine backed by increased forces. That worked tactically. Our forces have helped reduce violence. In my view, we cannot call the surge a strategic success without political reconciliation. The objective of the surge was to create the political space for the Iraqis to reconcile. Our troops have created that space, but the Iraqis have yet to step up. There have been some local gains and some legislative accomplishments, but those mostly haven't been implemented, so we don't know if those will really help or not. And a reconciliation based on a sharing of resources, a guarantee of political participation, equal treatment under the law and protection from violence, regardless of sect, simply hasn't happened.

The United States has poured billions of dollars into Iraqi reconstruction, and yet our senior military leadership considers an Iraqi commitment of a mere \$300 million for the reconstruction as a big deal. This Nation is facing record deficits, and the Iraqis have translated their oil revenues into budget surpluses rather than effective services. Under these circumstances and with a strategic risk to our Nation and our military readiness, we and the American people must ask, why should we stay in Iraq in large numbers?

Some of our witnesses want to argue for keeping large numbers in Iraq. I hope you can also explain the next strategy. The counterinsurgency strategy worked tactically, but the surge forces are going home. Political reconciliation hasn't happened, and violence has levelled off and may be creeping back. So how can we encourage and not force the intransigent political leaders of Iraq to forge a real Nation out of the base sectarian instincts.

So what is the new strategy? Last time you were here, General, you spoke of speeding up the Baghdad clock while putting more time on the Washington clock. You have succeeded in putting more

time on the Washington clock, but the strategic failure is that the Iraqi politicians don't seem to have picked up a sense of urgency. In my view, that sense of urgency will only come when we take the training wheels off and let the Iraqis begin to stand on their own two feet. While we hold them up, there is no real incentive for them to find their balance.

In closing my comments in the September hearing, I quoted Tom Friedman, a journalist, saying that he would be convinced of progress in Iraq by the various sectarian leaders stepping forward, declaring their willingness to work out their differences on a set timeline and asking us to stay until they do. They hadn't done that by last September, and I don't see a lot of change on that front.

So, ladies and gentlemen, I now turn to my good friend and ranking member, Mr. Duncan Hunter, for any comments that he might have.

**STATEMENT OF HON. DUNCAN HUNTER, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM CALIFORNIA, RANKING MEMBER, COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES**

Mr. HUNTER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing.

And gentlemen, I think when I see this team of leaders together appearing before us as they did last year, I think of the words duty, honor, and country because you represent I think great models for young Americans who would go into public service, either on the State Department side or on the military side. And behind you are lots and lots of family members representing all of the thousands of people in the military and in foreign service, thousands of family members who haven't seen their loved ones for a long time. And I know you have endured some big separations, as have your personnel. We want to thank you for your service to this country.

You know, Mr. Chairman, it was 15 months ago when the President announced the surge. And even a few days after it had been announced, some Members of Congress were declaring failure of this increase in American forces going into the country. And yet I think by all metrics it has been a success. And I am reminded that in Anbar Province where you had by some accounts and by statistics the most dangerous of situations, the situation is extremely benign. In fact, I have seen Marines coming back in large numbers from Anbar Province without combat action ribbons for a simple reason: they didn't make contact with the enemy because there isn't contact and contention to be had at most parts of that province now. And generally the violence level has dropped throughout Iraq as a result of the surge operation.

Now, you know, we have looked at this initial foray of the Iraqi army undertaken under the leadership of this newly formed Iraqi Government in Basra. And that has been described by some critics as a failure because they didn't complete all the objectives that they undertook.

Mr. Chairman, I see it exactly the opposite. I see this as inevitable and necessary of the engagement on the field of combat by the Iraqi military undertaking their own operations. And as I understand it, and I hope you would elaborate and explain today your evaluation of the performance of the Iraqi army, but only with a

few enablers being contributed by the United States, they undertook their own operations, meaning they had to stand on the field of battle. They had to face bullets. They had to utilize their own chain of command, their own logistics capability and their own battlefield effectiveness in this operation.

And, General, I remember when we had the first battle of Fallujah and green Iraqi troops were rushed to that battle to participate with Marines in that operation, and the next day, those troops did not show up. They weren't trained. They didn't have discipline, and they moved out of that battle area very quickly and very abruptly. And today, while we see Iraqi forces which are standing and fighting, which are exercising that chain of command and that logistical capability, and I would hope that today you could give us your unvarnished opinion on the stand up of the Iraqi military, because, in my estimation, a reliable Iraqi military is a key to the United States leaving Iraq in victory.

So I would hope that we would have some detail devoted to your evaluation of how they are doing. They have now stood up 134 battalions. A number of them have been engaged in some fairly heavy warfare. Others are located in more benign regions of the country and haven't been engaged in extensive operations. But I would hope you could give us today your testimony and your description and your evaluation of how well the Iraqi army is standing up.

Also, I hope, General, that you will go into the issue of desertions. I have seen that one figure was that there was four percent desertions in the Basra operations. I would hope you could tell us to what extent those were members of the military police or to what extent those were members of the Iraqi army, so we can get an understanding of, in your estimation, what that is attributable to and what kind of a grade you would give them on that particular operation.

Mr. Chairman, there is a lot of dissent as to whether or not the Iraqi Government has utilized this space that has been given to them by the surge operation and this quelling of violence, whether they have utilized that to their best advantage in terms of political reforms that will move this country down the road.

I would hope also, Ambassador Crocker, you can give us your best evaluation as to how far down the road they have moved, whether you think they have made reasonable progress, inadequate progress, and what you expect them to do in the future, and the extent of engagement that you think we should undertake to ensure that they continue to improve.

Also, I would hope both gentlemen could comment today on the extent of Iranian participation in the Iraqi situation, and particularly, General Petraeus, with respect to Iran's training and equipping of the antigovernment forces in Basra, to what extent you think that will now shape the security situation, whether Iran is backing off or going in full force with their special operations and their intel in trying to train and equip and effect the military situation inside Iraq. So if you could touch on that, I think that is very important to us.

So, Mr. Chairman, I think we have before us today two outstanding leaders who really represent the best in a model of service to this great country. I think they have made enormous advances

and improvements since this last hearing that we held. And I look forward to the hearing today and to learning especially your unvarnished take on the standup of the Iraqi military apparatus. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Hunter, thank you.

Gentlemen, again, we are very, very pleased that you are here today and look forward to your testimony.

General.

**STATEMENT OF GEN. DAVID PETRAEUS, USA, COMMANDER,  
MULTI-NATIONAL FORCES, IRAQ**

General PETRAEUS. Mr. Chairman, Congressman Hunter, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide an update on the situation in Iraq and to discuss the recommendations I recently provided to my chain of command.

Since Ambassador Crocker and I appeared before you seven months ago, there has been significant but uneven security progress in Iraq. Levels of violence and civilian deaths have been reduced substantially. Al Qaeda, Iraq (AQI) and a number of other extremist elements have been dealt serious blows. The capabilities of Iraqi security force (ISF) elements have grown, and there has been noteworthy involvement of local Iraqis and local security.

Nonetheless, the situation in certain areas is still unsatisfactory, and innumerable challenges remain. Moreover as events in the past two weeks have reminded us, the progress made since last spring is still fragile and reversible. Nonetheless, security in Iraq is better than it was when we reported to you last September, and it is significantly better than it was 15 months ago when Iraq was on the brink of civil war and the decision was made to deploy additional U.S. forces to Iraq.

A number of factors have contributed to the progress. First has been the impact of increased numbers of coalition and Iraqi forces. You are well aware of the U.S. surge. Less recognized is that Iraq has also conducted a surge, adding well over 100,000 additional soldiers and police to its security force ranks in 2007 and slowly increasing its capability to deploy and employ these forces.

A second factor has been the employment of coalition and Iraqi forces in the conduct of counterinsurgency operations deployed together to safeguard the Iraqi people; to pursue al Qaeda Iraq; to combat criminals and militia extremists; to foster local reconciliation; and to enable political and economic progress. Another important factor has been the attitudinal shift among certain elements of the Iraqi population.

Since the first Sunni awakening in late 2006, Sunni communities in Iraq increasingly have rejected al Qaeda Iraq's indiscriminate violence and extremist ideology. Over time, awakenings have prompted tens of thousands of Iraqis, some former insurgents, to contribute to local security as so-called Sons of Iraq (SOI). With their assistance and with relentless pursuit of al Qaeda Iraq, the threat posed by AQI, while still lethal and substantial, has been reduced significantly.

The recent flare-up in Basra, southern Iraq, and Baghdad underscoring the importance of the ceasefire declared by Muqtada al-

Sadr last fall, is another factor in the overall reduction in violence. Recently, of course, some militia elements have become active again. Though a Sadr stand-down order resolved the situation to a degree, the flare-up also highlighted the destructive role Iran has played in funding, training, arming, and directing the so-called special groups and generated renewed concern about Iran in the minds of many Iraqi leaders. Unchecked, the special groups pose the greatest long-term threat to the viability of a democratic Iraq.

As we look to the future, our tasks together with our Iraqi partners will be to build on the progress achieved and to deal with the many challenges that remain. I do believe that we can do this while continuing the ongoing drawdown of the surge forces.

In September, I described the fundamental nature of the conflict in Iraq as a competition among ethnic and sectarian communities for power and resources. This competition continues, influenced heavily by outside actors, and its resolution remains the key to producing long-term stability in Iraq. Various elements push Iraq's ethno-sectarian competition toward violence. Terrorists, insurgents, militia extremists, and criminal gangs all pose significant threats.

Al Qaeda's senior leaders, who still view Iraq as the central front in their global strategy, send funding, direction, and foreign fighters to Iraq. Actions by neighboring states compound the challenges. Syria has taken some steps to reduce the flow of foreign fighters through its territory, but not enough to shut down the key network that supports AQI. And Iran has fueled the violence in a particularly damaging way through its lethal support to the special groups.

These challenges in recent weeks, violence notwithstanding, Iraq's ethno-sectarian competition in many areas is now taking place more through debate and less through violence. In fact, the recent escalation of violence in Baghdad and southern Iraq was dealt with temporarily at least by most parties acknowledging that the rational way ahead is political dialogue rather than street fighting.

Though Iraq obviously remains a violent country, we do see progress in the security arena. As this chart illustrates, for nearly six months security incidents have been at a level not seen since early to mid 2005, though the level did spike in recent weeks as a result of the violence in Basra and Baghdad but has begun to turn down again, though the period ahead will be a sensitive one.

As our primary mission is to help protect the population, we closely monitor the number of Iraqi civilians killed due to violence. As this chart reflects, civilian deaths have decreased over the past year to a level not seen since the February 2006 Samarra Mosque bombing that set off the cycle of sectarian violence that tore the very fabric of Iraqi society in 2006 and early 2007.

Ethno-sectarian violence is a particular concern in Iraq as it is a cancer that continues to spread if left unchecked. As the box in the bottom left of this chart shows, the number of deaths due to ethno-sectarian violence has fallen since we testified last September. A big factor has been the reduction of that violence in Baghdad. Some of this decrease is, to be sure, due to sectarian hardening of certain Baghdad neighborhoods. However, that is only a partial explanation, as numerous mixed neighborhoods still exist.

In fact, coalition and Iraqi forces have focused along the fault lines to reduce the violence and enable Sunni and Shi'a leaders to begin the long process of healing in their local communities.

As the next chart shows, even though the number of high-profile attacks increased in March as al Qaeda lashed out, the current level of such attacks remains far below its height a year ago. Moreover, as we have helped improve security and focused on enemy networks, we have seen a decrease in the effectiveness of such attacks. The number of deaths due to ethno-sectarian violence in particular, as I noticed, has remained relatively low, illustrating the enemies' inability to date to reignite this cycle of ethno-sectarian violence.

The emergence of Iraqi volunteers helping to secure their local communities has been an important development. As this chart depicts, there are now over 91,000 Sons of Iraq, Shi'a as well as Sunni, under contract to help coalition and Iraqi forces protect their neighborhoods and secure infrastructure and roads. These volunteers have contributed significantly in various areas, and the savings and vehicles not lost because of reduced violence, not to mention the priceless lives saved, far outweigh the cost of their monthly contracts.

Sons of Iraq have also contributed to the discovery of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and weapons and explosive caches. As this next chart shows, in fact, we have already found more caches in 2008 than we found in all of 2006. Given the importance of the Sons of Iraq, we are working closely with the Iraqi Government to transition them into the Iraqi security force or other employment. And over 21,000 have already been accepted into the police or army or other government jobs. This process has been slow, but it is taking place.

Al Qaeda also recognizes the significance of the Sons of Iraq, and al Qaeda Iraq elements have targeted them repeatedly. However, these attacks, in addition to al Qaeda Iraq's use of women, children and the handicapped as suicide bombers, have further alienated AQI from the Iraqi people. And the tenacious pursuit of al Qaeda Iraq together with AQI's loss of local support in many areas has substantially reduced its capability, numbers, and freedom of movement. This chart displays the cumulative effect of the effort against AQI and its insurgent allies. As you can see, we have reduced considerably the areas in which AQI enjoys support and sanctuary, though there clearly is more to be done.

Having noted that progress, al Qaeda Iraq is still capable of lethal attacks, and we must maintain relentless pressure on the organization, on the networks outside Iraq that support it, and on the resource flows that sustain it. This chart lays out the comprehensive strategy that we, the Iraqis and our interagency and international partners are employing to reduce what AQI needs. As you can see, defeating al Qaeda in Iraq requires not just actions by our elite counterterrorist forces but also major operations by coalition and Iraqi conventional forces, a sophisticated intelligence effort, political reconciliation, economic and social programs information, operations initiatives, diplomatic activity, the employment of counterinsurgency principles and detainee operations, and many other actions.

Related to this effort, I applaud Congress's support for additional intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance assets in the upcoming supplemental as Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) is vital to the success of our operations in Iraq and elsewhere. As we combat AQI, we must remember that doing so not only reduces a major source of instability in Iraq, it also weakens an organization that al Qaeda senior leaders view as a tool to spread its influence and foment regional instability. Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri have consistently advocated exploiting the situation in Iraq, and we have also seen al Qaeda Iraq involved in destabilizing activities in the wider Mideast region.

Together with the Iraqi Security Forces, we have also focused on the special groups. These elements are funded, trained, armed and directed by Iran's Quds force with help from Lebanese Hezbollah. It was these groups that have launched Iranian rockets and mortar rounds at Iraq's seat of government in the international zone. Iraqi and coalition leaders have repeatedly noted their desire that Iran live up to promises made by President Ahmadinejad and other senior Iranian leaders to stop their support for the special groups. However, nefarious activities by the Quds force have continued, and Iraqi leaders now clearly recognize a threat they pose to Iraq. We should all watch Iranian actions closely in the weeks and months ahead, as they will show the kind of relationship Iran wishes to have with its neighbor and the character of future Iranian involvement in Iraq.

We have transferred responsibilities to Iraqi forces as their capabilities and the conditions on the ground have permitted. Currently, as this chart shows, half of Iraq's 18 provinces are under provisional Iraqi control. Many of these provinces, not just the successful ones in the Kurdish regional government area, but also a number of southern provinces, have done well. Challenges have emerged in some others, including of course Basra. Nonetheless, this process will continue, and we expect Anbar and Qadisiyah Provinces to transition in the months ahead.

Iraqi forces have grown significantly since September, and over 540,000 individuals now serve in the Iraqi Security Forces. The number of combat battalions capable of taking the lead in operations, albeit with some coalition support, has grown to well over a hundred. These units are bearing an increasing share of the burden as evidenced by the fact that Iraqi force losses have recently been three times our own. We will of course conduct careful after-action reviews with our Iraqi partners in the wake of recent operations, as there were units and leaders found wanting in some cases, and some of our assessments may be downgraded as a result. Nonetheless, the performance of many units was solid, especially once they got their footing and gained a degree of confidence. And certain Iraqi elements proved very capable.

Underpinning the advances of the past year have been improvements in Iraq's security institutions. An increasingly robust Iraqi-run training base enabled the Iraqi Security Forces to grow by over 133,000 soldiers and police over the past 16 months. And the still expanding training base is expected to generate an additional 73,000 soldiers and police through the rest of 2008.

Additionally, Iraq's security ministries are steadily improving their ability to execute their budgets. As this chart shows, in 2007 as in 2006, Iraq security ministries spent more on their forces than the United States provided through the Iraqi Security Forces Fund (ISFF). We anticipate that Iraq will spend over \$8 billion on security this year and \$11 billion next year. And this projection enabled us recently to reduce significantly our Iraqi Security Forces Fund request for fiscal year 2009 from \$5.1 billion to \$2.8 billion.

While improved Iraqi Security Forces are not yet ready to defend Iraq or maintain security throughout the country on their own. Recent operations in Basra highlight improvements in the ability of the Iraqi Security Forces to deploy substantial numbers of units, supplies and replacements on very short notice. They certainly could not have deployed a division's worth of army and police units on such short notice a year ago. On the other hand, the recent operations also underscored the considerable work to be done in the areas of expeditionary logistics, force enablers, staff development and command and control.

We also continue to help Iraq through the U.S. Foreign Military Sales Program. As of March 2008, the Iraqi Government has purchased over \$2 billion worth of equipment and services of American origin through the Foreign Military Sales Program (FMS). Since September, and with your encouragement of the organizations in the FMS process, FMS deliveries have improved.

While security has improved in many areas and the Iraqi Security Forces are shouldering more of the load, the situation in Iraq is exceedingly complex and challenging. Iraq could face a resurgence of AQI or additional Shi'a groups could violate Sadr's ceasefire order. External actors like Iran could stoke violence within Iraq. And actions by other neighbors could undermine the security situation as well.

The Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP), the State Department's Quick Response Fund, and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) programs enable us to help Iraq deal with these and other challenges. To that end, I respectfully ask that you provide us, by June, the additional CERP funds requested by the supplemental.

Encouragingly, the Iraqi Government recently allocated \$300 million for us to manage as Iraqi CERP to perform projects for their people while building their own capacity to do so, recognizing our capacity to help them. The Iraqi Government has also committed \$163 million to gradually assume Sons of Iraq contracts; \$510 million for small business loans; and \$196 million for a joint training education and reintegration program. The Iraqi Government pledges to provide more as they execute their budget passed two months ago.

Nonetheless, it is hugely important to have our resources continue, even as Iraqi funding begins to outstrip ours. Last month I provided my chain of command recommendations for the way ahead in Iraq. During that process I noted the objective of retaining and building on our hard-fought security gains while we draw down to the pre-surge level of 15 brigade combat teams. I emphasize the need to continue work with our Iraqi partners to secure the population and to transition responsibilities to the Iraqis as

quickly as conditions permit but without jeopardizing the security gains that have been made.

As in September, my recommendations are informed by operational and strategic considerations. The operational considerations include recognition that the military surge has achieved progress but that that progress is reversible. Iraqi Security Forces have strengthened their capabilities but still must grow further. The provincial elections in the fall, refugee returns, detainee releases and efforts to resolve provincial boundary disputes will be challenging. The transition of Sons of Iraq will require time and careful monitoring. Withdrawing too many forces too quickly could jeopardize the progress of the past year. And performing the necessary tasks in Iraq will require sizable conventional forces as well as Special Operations forces and advisor teams. The strategic considerations include recognition that the strain on the U.S. military, especially on its ground forces, has been considerable. A number of the security challenges inside Iraq are also related to significant regional and global threats. And a failed state in Iraq would pose serious consequences for the greater fight against al Qaeda, for regional stability, for the already existing humanitarian crisis in Iraq, and for the effort to counter malign Iranian influence.

After weighing these factors, I recommended to my chain of command that we continue the draw down of the surge forces and that upon the withdrawal the last surge brigade combat team in July, we undertake a 45-day period of consolidation and evaluation. At the end of that period, we will assess the conditions on the ground and determine where and when we can make recommendations for further reductions. This process will be continuous with recommendations for further reductions made as conditions permit. The approach does not, to be sure, allow establishment of a set withdrawal timetable. However, it does provide the flexibility those of us on the ground need to preserve the still fragile security gains our troopers have fought so hard and sacrificed so much to achieve. With this approach, the security achievements of 2007 and early 2008 can form a foundation for the gradual establishment of sustainable security in Iraq.

This is not only important to the 27 million citizens of Iraq, it is also vitally important to those in the Gulf region, to the citizens of the United States and to the global community. It is clearly in our national interest to help Iraq prevent the resurgence of al Qaeda in the heart of the Arab world; to help Iraq resist Iranian encroachment on its sovereignty; to avoid renewed ethno-sectarian violence that could spill over Iraq's borders and make the existing refugee crisis even worse; and to enable Iraq to expand its role in the regional and global economies.

In closing, I want to comment briefly on those serving our Nation in Iraq. We have asked a great deal of them and of their families, and they have made enormous sacrifices. My keen personal awareness of the strain on them and on the force as a whole has been an important factor in my recommendations. The Congress, the executive branch and our fellow citizens have done an enormous amount to support our troopers and their loved ones, and all of us are grateful for that. Nothing means more to those in harm's way than the knowledge that their country appreciates their sacrifices

and those of their families. Indeed, all Americans should take great pride in the men and women serving our Nation in Iraq, civilian as well as military, and in the courage, determination, resilience, and initiative they demonstrate each and every day. It remains the greatest of honors to soldier with them. Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of General Petraeus can be found in the Appendix on page 59.]

The CHAIRMAN. General, I certainly thank you for your testimony and for being with us today.

Ambassador.

**STATEMENT OF HON. AMBASSADOR RYAN CROCKER, UNITED STATES AMBASSADOR TO IRAQ**

Ambassador CROCKER. Mr. Chairman, Congressman Hunter, Members of the Committee, it is an honor to appear before you today to provide my assessment of political, economic and diplomatic developments in Iraq. When General Petraeus and I reported to you in September, I gave my considered judgment as to whether our goals in Iraq were attainable. Can Iraq develop into a united stable country with a democratically elected government operating under the rule of law?

Last September, I said that the cumulative trajectory of political, economic and diplomatic developments in Iraq was upwards, although the slope of that line was not steep. Developments over the past seven months have strengthened my sense of a positive trend. Immense challenges remain, and progress is uneven and often frustratingly slow, but there is progress. Sustaining that progress will require continuing U.S. resolve and commitment. What has been achieved is substantial, but it is also reversible.

Five years ago today, the statue of Saddam Hussein was toppled in Baghdad. The euphoria of that moment evaporated long ago. But as Iraq emerges from the shattering violence of 2006 and the early part of 2007, there is reason to sustain that commitment and the enormous investments we have made both in the lives of our young brave men and women and our resources.

Let me describe the developments upon which I base such a judgment. The first is at the national level in the form of legislation and the development of Iraq's parliament. In September, we were disappointed that Iraq had not yet enacted some key pieces of legislation. In the last several months, Iraq's parliament has formulated, debated vigorously and, in many cases, passed legislation dealing with vital issues of reconciliation and nation-building. A pension law extended benefits to individuals who had previously been denied them because of their service under the former regime. The accountability and justice law, de-Baathification reform, passed after lengthy and often contentious debate reflecting a strengthened spirit of reconciliation as does a far-reaching amnesty law. The Provincial Powers Law is a major step forward in defining the relationship between the Federal and provincial governments. Passage of this legislation requires debate about the fundamental nature of the state similar in its complexity to our own lengthy and difficult debate over States' rights. The Provincial Powers Law also called for provincial elections by October 1st of this year, and an electoral law is now under discussion that will set the parameters

for these elections. All major parties have announced their support for elections, and these will be a major step forward in Iraq's political development, setting the stage for national elections in late 2009. In January, a vote by the Council of Representatives to change the design of the Iraqi flag means the flag now flies in all parts of the country for the first time in years. The passage of the 2008 budget with record amounts for capital expenditures ensures that the Federal and provincial governments will have the resources for public spending.

Mr. Chairman, all of this has been done since September. These laws are not perfect, and much depends on their implementation, but they are important steps. Also important has been the development of Iraq's Council of Representatives as a national institution. Last summer, the Council of Representatives suffered from persistent and often paralyzing disputes over leadership and procedure. Now it is successfully grappling with complex issues and producing viable tradeoffs and compromised packages. As debates in Iraq's parliament become more about how to resolve tough problems in a practical way, Iraqi politics have become more fluid. While these politics still have a sectarian bent and basis, cross-sectarian coalitions have formed around issues, and sectarian political groupings, which often were barriers to progress, have become more flexible.

Let me also talk about the intangibles, attitudes among the Iraqi people. In 2006 and 2007, many of us understandably questioned whether hatred between Iraqis of different sectarian backgrounds was so deep that a civil war was inevitable. The Sunni awakening movement in al Anbar which so courageously confronted al Qaeda continues to keep the peace in the area and keep al Qaeda out. Fallujah, once a symbol for violence and terror, is now one of Iraq's safest cities. The Shi'a holy cities of an-Najaf and Karbala are enjoying security and growing prosperity in the wake of popular rejection of extremist militia activity. The Shi'a clerical leadership, the Marjaiyyah, based in an-Najaf, has played a quiet but important role in support of moderation and reconciliation. In Baghdad, we can see the Iraqis are not pitted against each other purely on the basis of sectarian affiliation. The security improvements of the past months have diminished the atmosphere of suspicion and allowed for acts of humanity that transcend sectarian identities. When I arrived in Baghdad a year ago my first visit to a city district was to the predominantly Sunni area of Dora. Surge forces were just moving into neighborhoods still gripped by al Qaeda. Residents also were being terrorized by extremist Shi'a militias. Less than a year later, at the end of February, tens of thousands of Shi'a pilgrims walked through those streets on the way to Karbala to commemorate the martyrdom of Imam Hussein. Sunni residents offered food and water as they passed through, and some joined the pilgrimage.

News from Iraq in recent weeks has been dominated by the situation in Basra. Taken as a snapshot with scenes of increasing violence and masked gunmen in the streets it is hard to see how this situation supports a narrative of progress in Iraq. And there is still very much to be done to bring full government control to the streets of Basra and eliminate entrenched extremist, criminal and militia groups. When viewed with a broader lens, however, the

Iraqi decision to combat these groups in Basra has major significance. First, a Shi'a majority government led by Prime Minister Maliki has demonstrated its commitment to taking on criminals and extremists regardless of sectarian identity. Second, Iraqi Security Forces led these operations in Basra and in towns and cities throughout the south. British and U.S. elements played important roles, but these were supporting roles, as they should be. The operation in Basra has also shaken up Iraqi politics. The prime minister returned to Baghdad from Basra shortly before General Petraeus and I left for Washington, and he is confident in his decision and determined to press the fight against illegal groups but also determined to take a hard look at lessons learned. The efforts of the government against extremist militia elements have broad political support as a statement April 5th by virtually all of Iraq's main political leaders—Sunni, Shi'a and Kurd—made clear. A wild card remains the Sadrist Trend, and whether the Iraqis can continue to drive a wedge between other elements of the trend and Iranian supported Jaysh al-Mahdi special groups. A dangerous development in the immediate wake of the Basra operation was what appeared to be a reunification between special groups and the main line Jaysh al-Mahdi. We also saw a potential collapse of the Jaysh al-Mahdi freeze in military operations. As the situation unfolded, however, Muqtada al-Sadr issued a statement that disavowed anyone possessing heavy weapons which would include the signature weapons of the special groups. This statement can further sharpen the distinction between members of the Sadrist Trend who should not pose a threat to the Iraqi state and members of the special groups who very much do.

One conclusion I draw from these signs of progress is that the strategy that began with the surge is working. This does not mean, however, that U.S. support should be open-ended or that the level and nature of our engagement should not diminish over time. It is in this context that we have begun negotiating a bilateral relationship and agreement between Iraq and the United States. In August, Iraq's five principal leaders requested a long-term relationship with the United States to include economic, political, diplomatic and security cooperation. The heart of this relationship will be a legal framework for the presence of American troops similar to that which exists in nearly 80 countries around the world. The Iraqis view the negotiation of this framework as a strong affirmation of Iraqi sovereignty placing Iraq on par with other U.S. allies and removing the stigma of Chapter VII status under the U.N. Charter pursuant to which coalition forces presently operate. Such an agreement is in Iraq's interest and ours. U.S. forces will remain in Iraq beyond December 31, 2008, when the U.N. Resolution presently governing their presence expires. Our troops will need basic authorizations and protections to continue operations, and this agreement will provide those authorizations and protections.

The agreement will not establish permanent bases in Iraq, and we anticipate that it will expressly forswear them. The agreement will not specify troop levels, and it will not tie the hands of the next administration. Our aim is to ensure that the next President arrives in office with a stable foundation upon which to base policy decisions, and that is precisely what this agreement will do. Con-

gress will remain fully informed as these negotiations proceed in the coming weeks and months.

Mr. Chairman, significant challenges remain in Iraq. A reinvigorated cabinet is necessary both for political balance and to improve the delivery of services to Iraq's people. Challenges to the rule of law, especially corruption, are enormous. Disputed internal boundaries, the Article 140 process, must be resolved. The return of refugees and the internally displaced must be managed. The rights of women and minorities must be better protected. Iraqis are aware of the challenges they face and are working on them. Iraq's political progress will not be linear. Developments which are on the whole positive can still have unanticipated or destabilizing consequences. The decision to hold provincial elections, vital for Iraq's democratic development and long-term stability, will also produce new strains. Some of the violence we have seen recently in southern Iraq reflects changing dynamics within the Shi'a community as the political insecurity context changes. Such inflection points underscore the fragility of the situation in Iraq, but it would be wrong to conclude that any eruption of violence marks the beginning of an inevitable backslide.

In terms of economics and capacity building, in September I reported to you that there had been some gains in Iraq's economy and in the country's efforts to build capacity to translate these gains into more effective governance and services. Iraqis have built on these gains over the past months, as is most evident in the revival of marketplaces across Iraq and the reopening of long-shuttered businesses. According to a Center for International Private Enterprise poll last month, 78 percent of Iraqi business owners surveyed expect the Iraqi economy to grow in the next 2 years. With the improving security and rising government expenditures, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) projects that Iraq's GDP will grow seven percent in real terms this year, and inflation has been tamed. The dinar remains strong, and the Central Bank has begun to bring down interest rates. Iraq's 2008 budget has allocated \$13 billion for reconstruction, and a \$5 billion supplemental budget this summer will further invest export revenues in building the infrastructure and providing the services that Iraq so badly needs.

This spending also benefits the United States. Iraq recently announced its decision to purchase 40 commercial aircraft from the U.S. at an estimated cost of \$5 billion. As Iraq is now earning the financial resources it needs for brick-and-mortar construction through oil production and export, our assistance focus has shifted to capacity development and an emphasis on local and post-kinetic development through our network of provincial reconstruction teams and ministerial advisors. The era of U.S.-funded major infrastructure projects is over. We are seeking to ensure that our assistance in partnership with the Iraqis leverages Iraq's own resources. Our 25 Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) throughout Iraq have been working to improve provincial and local governance capabilities, particularly in budget design and execution. They are also helping to establish critical linkages between provincial and Federal Governments. Our PRTs are great enablers, and we are working to ensure their continued viability as our forces redeploy. The relatively small amounts they disperse through Quick Re-

response Funds have major impacts in local communities, and congressional support is important as it is for other vital programs in the fiscal year 2008 supplemental request. Iraq increasingly is using its own resources to support projects and programs that we have developed. It has committed nearly \$200 million in support of a program to provide vocational training for concerned local citizens who stood up with us in the awakening.

Our technical assistance advisors have helped design new procurement procedures for Iraq's oil ministry. We developed the technical specifications from which Iraq's state-owned oil company will build new oil export platforms and underwater pipelines worth over \$1 billion. And in Baghdad, in the last three months, the municipality has stepped up to take over labor contracts worth \$100 million that we have been covering under the community stabilization program. Like so much else, Iraq's economy is fragile, the gains reversible and the challenges ahead substantial. Iraq will need to continue to improve governmental capacity, pass national-level hydrocarbon legislation, improve electrical production and distribution, improve the climate for foreign and domestic investment, create short- and long-term jobs and tackle the structural and economic problems of the vital agricultural sector. We will be helping the Iraqis as they take on this challenging agenda along with other international partners, including the United Nations and the World Bank.

Along with the security surge last year, we also saw a diplomatic surge focused on enhancing U.N. Engagement in Iraq, anchoring the international compact with Iraq and establishing an expanding neighbors process which serves as a contact group in support of Iraq. The United Nations has taken advantage of an expanded mandate granted to the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq, UNAMI, to increase the scope of its activities and the size of its staff. Under dynamic new leadership, UNAMI is playing a key role in preparing for provincial elections and in providing technical assistance to resolve disputed internal boundaries. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has returned international status to Iraq to assist with the return of internally displaced persons and refugees. The international compact with Iraq provides a five-year framework for Iraq to reform its economy and achieve economic self-sufficiency in exchange for long overdue Saddam-era debt relief. Preparations are under way for a ministerial level compact meeting in Sweden next month; 74 nations were represented at last year's gathering in Egypt.

Iraq's neighbors also understand they have a major interest in Iraq's future. Turkey hosted the second ministerial meeting of Iraq's neighbors in November, and Kuwait will host a third meeting later this month. In addition to all of Iraq's neighbors, these expanded conferences also include the permanent five members of the Security Council, the Arab League and G-8. Support from Arab capitals has not been strong and must improve for the sake of Iraq and the sake of the region. Bahrain's recent announcement that it will return an ambassador to Baghdad is welcome, and other Arab states should follow suit.

Iraq is a multi-ethnic state but it is also a founding member of the Arab League and an integral part of the Arab world. Last

month Iraq hosted a meeting of the Arab Parliamentary Union bringing the leaders of Arab parliaments and consultative councils to Iraq for the first major inter-Arab gathering since 1990. It is noteworthy that the meeting was held in the Kurdish city of Irbil, under the recently redesigned Iraqi flag highlighting both the remarkable prosperity and stability of Iraq's Kurdish region and the presence of the Iraqi Federal state. We hope that this event will encourage more active engagements with Iraq, and we expect that Prime Minister Maliki's efforts against Shi'a extremist militias in Basra will also receive Arab support.

The presence of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) terrorist organization in the remote mountains of Iraq along the Turkish border has produced tension between Turkey and Iraq and led to a Turkish cross-border operation in February, including movement of Turkish ground forces into Iraq. At the same time, both governments are working to strengthen their ties, and Iraqi President Talabani made a successful visit to Turkey in March.

Syria plays an ambivalent role. We have seen evidence of efforts to interdict some foreign fighters seeking to transit Syria to Iraq, but others continue to cross the border. Syria also harbors individuals who finance and support the Iraqi insurgency. Iran continues to undermine the efforts of the Iraqi Government to establish a stable secure state through the army and training of militia elements engaged in violence against Iraqi Security Forces, coalition forces and Iraqi civilians. The extent of Iran's malign influence was dramatically demonstrated when these militia elements clashed with Iraqi Government forces in Basra and Baghdad. When the President announced the surge, he pledged to seek out and destroy Iranian-supported lethal networks inside Iraq. We know more about these networks and their Quds Force sponsors than ever before, and we will continue to aggressively uproot and destroy them. At the same time, we support constructive relations between Iran and Iraq and are participating in a tripartite process to discuss the security situation in Iraq. Iran has a choice to make.

Mr. Chairman, almost everything about Iraq is hard. It will continue to be hard as Iraqis struggle with the damage and trauma inflicted by 35 years of totalitarian Baathist rule. But hard does not mean hopeless. And the political and economic progress of the past few months is significant.

I must underscore, however, that these gains are fragile, and they are reversible. Americans have invested a great deal in Iraq in blood as well as treasure, and they have the right to ask whether this is worth it, whether it is now time to walk away and let the Iraqis fend for themselves. Iraq has the potential to develop into a stable secure multi-ethnic multi-sectarian democracy under the rule of law. Whether it realizes that potential is ultimately up to the Iraqi people. Our support, however, will continue to be critical. I said in September that I cannot guarantee success in Iraq. That is still the case, although I think we are now closer.

I do remain convinced that a major departure from our current engagement would bring failure, and we have to be clear with ourselves about what failure could mean. Al Qaeda is in retreat in Iraq, but it is not yet defeated. Al Qaeda's leaders are looking for every opportunity they can to hang on. Osama bin Laden has called

Iraq the perfect base, and it reminds us that a fundamental aim of al Qaeda is to establish itself in the Arab world. It almost succeeded in Iraq. We cannot allow it a second chance. And it is not only al Qaeda that would benefit. Iran has said publicly it will fill any vacuum in Iraq, and extremist Shi'a militias would reassert themselves. We saw them try in Basra and Baghdad over the last several weeks. And in all of this, the Iraqi people would suffer on a scale far beyond what we have already seen. Spiraling conflicts could draw in neighbors with devastating consequences for the region and the world.

Mr. Chairman, as monumental as the events of the last 5 years have been in Iraq, Iraqis, Americans and the world ultimately will judge us far more on the basis of what will happen than what has happened. In the end, how we leave and what we leave behind will be more important than how we came. Our current course is hard, but it is working. Progress is real, although fragile. We need to stay with it.

In the months ahead, we will continue to assist Iraq as it pursues further steps toward reconciliation and economic development. Over time this will become increasingly an Iraqi process, as it should be. Our efforts will focus on increasing Iraq's integration regionally and internationally, assisting Iraqi institutions locally and nationally to strengthen the political process and promote economic activity and supporting the efforts of the United Nations as Iraq carries out local elections toward the end of the year. These efforts will require an enhanced civilian commitment and continued support from the Congress and the American people.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, I want to recognize and thank all those who serve our country in Iraq, both military and civilian. Their courage and their commitment at great sacrifice has earned the admiration of all Americans. They certainly have mine, and it is an honor to serve there with them. Thank you sir.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Crocker can be found in the Appendix on page 78.]

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Ambassador, thank you very much.

Mr. Ambassador, in your comments, you said that U.S. support should not be open-ended. I certainly agree with that. You also point out that whether Iraq realizes its potential is ultimately up to the Iraqi people. Is that not correct?

Ambassador CROCKER. That is correct, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. You point out in your testimony the need for a reinvigorated cabinet, for political balance; the need for delivery of services to the Iraqi people; the need for the rule of law, the problems of corruption, which are enormous, you say; the disputed internal boundaries, return of refugees, return of internally displaced people; the rights of minority and women all must be protected. All of this is part of what needs to be done in what is being called reconciliation.

Am I not correct, Mr. Ambassador?

Ambassador CROCKER. Yes. That is correct, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. CHAIRMAN. The surge in forces and the counterinsurgency doctrine has led to reduced violence. Its purpose was to create political space for the Iraqis to move forward on reconciliation within its government and within its people.

Now we know there has been some incremental progress. But there has not been this fundamental reconciliation, the list of which you just gave us. So where do we go from here? We will be returning the surge forces, redeploying them. So what is our strategy for the future? What leverage do you have on the Iraqi Government to take the training wheels off and to get on with its task? We have been at this now for years. How do you do that?

General, Mr. Ambassador.

General PETRAEUS. First of all, Mr. Chairman, I would point out that they want to do that as much as we do. Indeed, they have put themselves under enormous personal pressure and collective pressure of the various political elements in Iraq to increasingly exercise their sovereignty. In fact, that is exactly what Prime Minister Maliki did, of course, when he decided as the constitutional commander in chief of the armed forces of Iraq to deploy forces on short notice to Basra and then to enter into operations against militia elements down there that were the source of crime and other security challenges. That was not something that we pushed him to do, candidly. That was something that they wanted to do. They feel that pressure themselves.

So, again, it is not about us twisting their arm, I don't think, to exercise their sovereignty. It is truly about us enabling that and trying to support it as much as we can while keeping as light a hand on the bicycle seat as possible. There are numerous provinces throughout Iraq in which we have no forces, or virtually no forces, perhaps a Special Forces team or not much more than that. By the way, these were challenged, some of these provinces were challenged during the outbreak of violence that accompanied the start of the Basra operation. In the bulk of those southern provinces, Iraqi forces proved up to the task.

The CHAIRMAN. At what point, General, will you recommend redeployment of additional forces beyond the several brigades that are a part of the so-called surge?

General PETRAEUS. As I have laid out, Mr. Chairman, we will be reducing by over one quarter of our ground combat powers.

The CHAIRMAN. From what to what, sir?

General PETRAEUS. From 20 brigades to 15 brigade combat teams, and also taking out two Marine battalions and the Marine Expeditionary Unit. That is a substantial amount. At the end of that, we think it makes sense to have some time to let the dust settle, perhaps to do some adjustment of forces.

The CHAIRMAN. That is my question, General. At what point do we—do you make recommendations to start going into the 15 brigades?

General PETRAEUS. As the conditions are then met, and we look at the security and local governance conditions that allow us to thin out our forces and thereby to redeploy additional elements.

The CHAIRMAN. What will be those conditions?

General PETRAEUS. As I said, it is essentially what we have used in the past. We are thinning out very substantially right now. And we had to decide where to do that. We looked at primarily the security and local governance conditions, the enemy situation, the ability of Iraqi Security Forces to take on more of a load and us to take on a less of a load. The ability, again, of the local authorities to

carry on and perform tasks in some cases that we were helping or perhaps performing.

Again, those are the conditions that we examine. That is exactly the process that has guided us as we have determined which forces to take out and where to move them during the course of the reduction of the surge forces.

The CHAIRMAN. Can you foresee the reduction beyond the 15?

General PETRAEUS. I can foresee the reduction beyond the 15, yes, sir. Again, the key is in fact we are looking at four or five locations already that we have an eye on, looking to see if those conditions can be met there. Again, we have a number of months and a number of substantial actions to take before then. But we are already identifying areas that we think are likely candidates for that.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you have a judgment as to how many brigades of that 15, as you look at those certain areas, could be redeployed?

General PETRAEUS. Sir, I am not sure. Again, what we are doing is looking at these different areas. Over time, I think all of them. Again, the question is at what pace that will take place.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Ambassador, outside businesses, mostly American contractors, have been substantial employers in Iraq. Can you tell us, beyond the American contractual employment, how many market sustainable jobs have been created in the last 12 months?

Ambassador CROCKER. I can't give you a reliable figure.

The CHAIRMAN. What is your best judgment?

Ambassador CROCKER. Thousands and thousands of jobs, Mr. Chairman.

I referred in my testimony to one district of Baghdad, the district of Dora. A year ago, there were no markets. There was no economic activity at all. The Dora market today has something like 1,000 separate shops that are open and doing business. This has been replicated throughout the country in Ramadi and Fallujah, Anbar, and other parts of Baghdad. There has been a very substantial increase in economic activity and job creation as a result.

The Iraqi Government is also moving forward to create more jobs. The Council of Ministers yesterday passed a support program for development in Mosul, Baghdad and Basra, all three areas affected by conflict, \$350 million for reconstruction and for job creation. So this is an ongoing process.

The CHAIRMAN. My understanding is that some people within our government state that the unemployment rate in Iraq is between 25 percent and 50 percent. If that is the case, can you predict what the unemployment rate will be one year from now, Mr. Ambassador?

Ambassador CROCKER. Again, I cannot predict what it will be exactly because, frankly, we don't have a great deal of confidence in figures that indicate what it is now. There is both unemployment and underemployment. What I would be confident in, with the continuation of the security improvements we have seen, is that in conditions of better security, you are going to see more economic activity.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you agree, Mr. Ambassador, that jobs and economic security are the basis of a strong Iraq?

Ambassador CROCKER. That is absolutely the case, Mr. Chairman. That is why both we and the Iraqi government put so much emphasis on job creation and economic development.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Hunter.

Mr. HUNTER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thanks for this hearing. Gentlemen, excellent testimony. I think you gave us a good broad brush of how things are going.

A reliable, effective military is produced by military operations. A number of us have recommended that the Iraqi battalions now numbering 134, I believe, be rotated into combat operations on a regular basis so that they all achieve a certain competency, able to develop their logistics chains, exercise their chain of command, develop battlefield effectiveness.

I know we have done that in the Baghdad operations on a regular basis. So, General Petraeus, could you give us your take on the combat experience of the Iraqi army. How many battalions now have a modicum of combat experience, and how do you rate them? You might speak to the Basra experience as well as the Baghdad experience.

General PETRAEUS. First of all, Congressman, I think that just about all of the battalions in the Iraqi army at this point have been in some form of combat, with perhaps a few exceptions of units that have just come out of basic training and units fielding and that have deployed areas now relatively peaceful, let's say a place like Anbar Province. Although, even there what we are doing is pushing them farther out from Anbar to pursue the enemy, try to keep our hooks into him. So, again, they are getting tested in combat and, by and large, have done well.

Again, in the southern provinces in which they were tested recently, virtually all of them, Karbala Hill, Wasit, Qadisiyyah, Muthanna, and Dhi Qar, there were various challenges to them, and forces responded to those effectively. In Basra, unfortunately, one of the units that was thrust right into it very quickly was a unit that was just out of its unit set fielding. Others were local police who are intimidate-able, if you will, because of coming from local areas, and conditions were not set for them as they might have been, frankly, so that they could get overwhelmed, could get intimidated by individuals who are actually well equipped and well trained.

As, however, conditions have been established, as they have now got their footing, as additional experienced forces have flowed into Basra, it is very much an ongoing operation. They have then moved on. They have secured the ports. They have secured some key checkpoints and routes through which smuggling flows and so forth.

All of this is still very much ongoing there, as it is in some of the other areas where the violence has gone up in recent weeks. The units that rotated through Baghdad did well. In fact, the Iraqis now are able to move them back to the locations from which they came. In several cases, they were from Ninawa province from Mosul. They can go back and help with the effort there to keep the pressure on al Qaeda Iraq.

As you know, the violence by al Qaeda Iraq has gone down significantly across the board, with the one exception of Ninawa prov-

ince. As we focused on the Euphrates River Valley, the Basra neighborhoods north and south of Baghdad, Diyala River Valley, Baqubah, literally moved on up. However, it has not gone up nearly the way it came down across the board in the other provinces. Again, up there they are very much in the lead.

As I mentioned, there are over 100 battalions assessed to be in the lead, regardless of whether they are operational readiness assessment one or not. Frankly, the Operational Readiness Assessment (ORA) is difficult for the Iraqis because it is a very mechanical assessment. You either have the right number of leaders or you don't; right number of troopers, noncommissioned officers, equipment, maintenance, and so forth. What they do is they tend to pull leaders out once they have proven themselves in these units to form new units. So it is very difficult to keep the manning level to literally keep the arithmetic right to achieve ORA one status.

What we tend to look at more is, are they capable of being in the lead, which is more based on demonstrated performance? And as I mentioned, there are over 100 of those units. In fact, it appears we are looking now to confirm that versus their recent performance, and it appears that that generally was an accurate assessment.

Mr. HUNTER. Give us your take, if you could, on the success or the degree of success or failures in the Basra operation. What do you see there, General?

General PETRAEUS. Sir, the deployment was very impressive. As I mentioned in my statement, there is no way they could have deployed about a division's worth. Over time, it was three brigades equivalent of forces plus division headquarters and a lot of enablers. That never could have happened a year ago. In fact, they didn't have the capability to do that. They then used their C-130's cycled through multiple sorties a day to bring in supplies, reinforcements, medical, Black Hawk casualties, and so on to deploy their various other elements.

The Iraqi special operations forces elements across the board, all of them were involved, from the army, the police, and various provincial SWAT teams as well. It was actually SWAT battalions in some cases. Needless to say, those tended to perform better than the brand new unit that I mentioned, and better than local police in, again, very, very contentious areas where they could get overwhelmed quickly and where the conditions weren't set. That is the area where there has to be some serious after-action review work done. That has to do with the setting of conditions with the planning, the detailed planning and preparation before going right into combat.

There was, candidly, an expectation that there was going to be more of that done. There were lines of operation, political, tribal, security, and so forth, and what happened in the end was there was a pretty precipitous entry into combat operations before, again, some of these units were set the way they should. Again, the operation very much still ongoing.

Mr. HUNTER. What is the state of play right now in Basra in terms of territory held by the antigovernment forces?

General PETRAEUS. Well, as I mentioned, the Iraqi Security Forces took control of the ports, which is very, very important be-

cause some of those were in the grip of militias or smugglers. They have also taken control of some key areas through which smuggling and weaponry supply took place.

On the other hand, there are still some militia strongholds that they will have to deal with over time. Some of this in the end is going to end up being political probably more than it will be military. There is a lot of discussion. The president of Iraq yesterday issued a statement, or today I guess it was, issued a statement about militias, and as has Prime Minister Maliki and others. Again, I think some of this is going to have to be sorted out in that end so that they don't end up in a real pitched battle in some of these very densely packed neighborhoods and cause untold damage.

Mr. HUNTER. Just a last question on that. General, if you were to give a grade or a status report on the maturation and the reliability of the Iraqi army, where do you put them right now?

General PETRAEUS. Again, it is a very, very mixed bag across the board, ranging from exceedingly good units in the Iraqi special operation force brigade, down to some of these very new units. So you have to end up somewhere in the middle. So I think it is somewhere in the B minus, B range, with recognition that there is a lot of work needed to be done still in the so-called expeditionary logistics and a variety of different command and control systems, staff planning, and so forth.

Mr. HUNTER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. CHAIRMAN. Mr. Hunter, thank you very much.

Under the five-minute rule, we will proceed with Mr. Spratt.

Mr. SPRATT. General Petraeus, Ambassador Crocker, we are fortunate to have two men of your character, commitment and caliber in the tough assignments that you have got. We appreciate your service to our country.

The cost of our deployment is not the determining factor in deciding how we size our forces or how long we stay engaged there. But when the cost is \$600 billion dollars and rising and there is no exit sign in sight, it has to be a consideration. As odd as it may seem, it is a rare briefing, believe me, on the Hill that makes any mention of the cost of the war in Iraq as widely discussed outside that context, at least not since Secretary Wolfowitz ventured the prediction that this deployment would last no more than 6 to 12 months and that the Iraqis, with their vast amount of wealth, would be able to shoulder most of the cost.

To put this decision that faces us, you and us, in context, the chairman has asked me just to give you, give us all a brief overview of what the cost of the commitment has been, the cost to date of what we have incurred, and what is the cost to go.

The first chart we have got is a very simple table which simply shows that, from 2001 through this fiscal year, \$608 billion has been provided for Iraq; \$771 billion for Iraq and Afghanistan together. The next chart shows that the cost is climbing every year. Beginning with 2003, there is a steady, steady relentless increase in the cost of the war. The total cost there is shown as \$608 billion.

We have been unable to induce the Department of Defense to do us a projection of the likely cost to go. So we asked our own budget shop, the CBO, the Congressional Budget Office, to do such a projection. The next chart shows CBO's estimate of the cost from 2009

through 2018. This series of bar graphs assumes that there will be a drawn down to 75,000 troops in both theaters, Iraq and Afghanistan, a very questionable assumption, but that there will be a draw down to 75,000 troops by 2013, and thereafter sort of a steady state at this level, 75,000 troops over the next 5 years, through 2018.

So, the total cost from 2009, if these projections are anything close to accurate, the total cost from 2009 to 2018 will come to about \$1 trillion. If you add this \$1 trillion for the outyear costs to the \$608 billion already appropriated, the total comes to about \$1 trillion 600 billion. If you adjust that for debt service—and we are borrowing every dime of this, so you may as well add the interest to it—it is well over \$2 trillion.

I have run these numbers past the Pentagon—they are not complicated—and asked them for their projections if they consider ours wrong or at least their corrections to our projections. They have not validated these numbers, but neither have they invalidated these numbers.

Here is what we do have from the Department of Defense (DOD). We have a request from the Department of Defense for Iraq and Afghanistan in 2009, the next fiscal year, the budget year we are about to begin work on, of \$70 billion. I don't think either of you would support that number. Indeed, the Pentagon says it is a place holder. It is a place holder. But given the supplemental request for this year, which has not been fully appropriated yet, it is \$196 billion. It is hard to believe that we will fall or drop from \$196 billion to \$70 billion between 2008 and 2009. So one thing we don't have yet, even though we are about to begin the budget season, is a real number for 2009.

Second, we don't have a realistic number for the out years beyond 2009. We have instead, believe it or not, an actual decline in real dollars in the Pentagon's Fiscal Year Defense Plan (FYDP). We have a decline in real dollars for 2005 for the Department of Defense budget over the next five—over the four years following 2009.

I think you would agree that these are consequential numbers, whether you agree with them exactly or not. Whenever you spend \$2 trillion on one thing, you don't have \$2 trillion to spend on something else. A good example is Afghanistan. Admiral Mullen sat where you sat just last week and said: We are under sourcing, under resourcing, undermanning Afghanistan. But to move the resource levels up to where they ought to be, our allies are not coming through with any big numbers. To do that would require that we detract from Iraq. And as long as Iraq is the number one objective and Afghanistan the subordinate objective, we don't have the wherewithal to do that. There is an opportunity cost to be paid.

So my basic question is this, look at these costs. As you make your assessment of the situation after the five brigade combat teams have been withdrawn, are considerations like this a factor, the tradeoffs, the effectiveness in stretching out the Army, the priorities? Is this something you two will weigh in your consideration as to what we should do for our continued deployment?

[The charts referred to can be found in the Appendix beginning on page 95.]

General PETRAEUS. Absolutely, Congressman. In fact, as I mentioned in my statement, that is one of the major strategic considerations that I offered.

Mr. SPRATT. Could you tell us, what your—with the \$70 billion, what the likely supplemental request for this year is?

General PETRAEUS. Sir, as you know, that is a service responsibility.

Mr. SPRATT. Thank you, sir.

I think I have been overruled.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Saxton.

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Chairman, may I just ask, Mr. Chairman, if the five-minute rule, as the way it has played out here in the last few minutes, somehow we need to permit I would think General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker to answer questions.

Mr. CHAIRMAN. Certainly. If you have an answer to that last question, feel free to do so. Thank you very much.

General PETRAEUS. Well, what I was going to say, Mr. Chairman, is merely, again, we work very closely with the services. But at the end of the day, as you well know, it is the services that provide the input to the department and provide those numbers.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Saxton.

Mr. SAXTON. Thank you, General, Ambassador Crocker.

First, let me thank you for your great candor here this morning in explaining what you see as progress, as well as what you see as challenges for the future. I think it is important that we understand that, we understand your perspective, and that the American people have an opportunity to understand your perspectives, particularly with regard to their concerns about the future.

General Petraeus, in your testimony you note your recommendation for a 45-day period of consolidation and evaluation followed by a process of assessment to determine possible further reductions in U.S. force levels in Iraq. I believe that it is very important that we understand that process and that the American people have an opportunity to understand that process as well.

So if you could each take whatever time you need to describe that assessment process, including some of the factors which you will be tracking.

General PETRAEUS. Congressman, essentially, it is hard. This is looking at the security and local government conditions in a particular area to determine where and how we can thin out our forces rather than completely handing off. That is what we have done already. In Anbar Province, for example, we are in the process of going from 14 battalions down to about 6 battalions. That is part of the ongoing process.

So this is really an assessment process that we have used repeatedly as we have looked at where we should end up, if you will, in doing the so-called battlefield geometry of determining troop-to-task analysis and where you want to position forces, again, when the dust settles. That is the same process that we will do in the future.

As I mentioned earlier, there are already several areas that we have identified that are the candidate locations for further reductions. In each case, we sit down with the commanders, with their

staffs. We walk the ground. We work with the local authorities. Again, at the heart of it, it has to do with the security situation. What is the enemy situation? What is the Iraqi capability to deal with that? What are the factors in terms of local governance, basic services, and other factors that feed into the sense that the population will support their legitimate forces? And then we determine where we want the forces to end up and what strength, and that allows you to withdraw certain forces over time.

Ambassador CROCKER. Sir, there is also what we call a political-military calculus that we have to take into account, as well as the battlefield geometry. One element of that is assessing not only what the conditions are with our current force presence, but how things change as we redeploy, how various elements on the scene may reposition their selves because we are no longer there. So it is a complex evaluation both of current conditions but also projecting how our redeployment will change future conditions.

Mr. SAXTON. It sounds to me like you are saying that this process of assessment has been used in the past and it has resulted, at least in one result, at least, has been that we are now talking and projecting that we are going to reduce forces, bring the surge folks home, if you will. So this assessment process is not something that you are creating for the future, it is something that has actually been used in the past to arrive at the decisions that you have now made.

General PETRAEUS. That is correct, sir. In fact, we are certainly well over halfway through the reduction of the surge forces, and that is exactly the process that we have used as we have sat down and worked this out. Obviously, I sit a good bit with the Multi-national Corps Iraq commander, previously General Odinerio, now General Austin, as we do that process and work that out.

As I mentioned, we also certainly sit down with the commanders in those areas, walk the streets, talk to local Iraqis, look at the trends, look at the metrics. I showed you some of the metrics today, that if you look at them on a local basis, again, guide the assessment that I have described to you. Again, it is exactly the process that we have used to examine where we could in fact draw our forces down as we bring the surge forces home.

It has not been just mechanical. We haven't just pulled one out that we put in. We actually will look a good bit different at the end of this than we did before. As an example, far fewer forces in Anbar Province because of the progress that has been made there.

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Chairman, thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Ortiz.

Mr. ORTIZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank both of you gentlemen for your service and sacrifices that you have made. We appreciate both of you being with us today.

General Petraeus, the human cost of the war is a loss of 4,000 American lives. The security gains of this surge are, in my opinion, arguable, as evidenced by the recent fighting in Baghdad and Basra. Another cost is the significant decrease in our current military readiness. In fact nearly all Stateside units are unable to complete all of their assigned worked if called upon or for contingency combat operations. I firmly believe that we have to be prepared to

fight yesterday, today and tomorrow. I am afraid that we are running out of options should another contingency arise requiring the use of our ground forces.

Now how long do you believe the ground forces can sustain the current operational tempo and the pace of deployment? And how much of a strategic risk to America should we expect to assume before we see real progress?

I ask these questions because we have had different hearings where we see that our equipment is being destroyed. We have too many deployments. The troops are tired. Maybe you can enlighten the committee as to how long can the ground forces sustain the current operational tempo, and the risk to us Americans we expect to assume before we see real, real progress in Iraq and Afghanistan.

General PETRAEUS. Congressman, as I mentioned in my statement and in response to an earlier question, I am keenly aware of the strain. I can tell you that there is nothing that a commander feels more than, in fact, the losses that we have sustained over there.

As I mentioned yesterday, I have been deployed personally for four-and-a-half years since 2001. So this is something that my family and I do know a great deal about personally. The forces that are in Iraq are the ones that I can talk to. I can tell you that those forces are better prepared to do what we are doing there now than they ever have been at any time that I have been in Iraq.

I have mentioned several times that there were two huge facts that were different when I returned to Iraq in February 2007. One was the damage done by sectarian violence, which was horrific, which we were going to try to stop and, by and large, have achieved great progress in stopping. The second was how much more our troopers get it about what it is they are doing. The counterinsurgency is not just stability-and-support, hearts-and-minds operations. It includes by doctrine, by definition, offense, defense, as well as stability and support. They are conducting big operations on occasion or have in the course of the past year in places like Ramadi, south Baghdad, Baqubah, and others and have done a magnificent job in that, thanks in large measure to the equipment and to the vast improvements that have been paid in what our soldiers have down range now.

When I look at what we had when I was a division commander and went through the berm in the fight to Baghdad, and what divisions have now, it is extraordinary. We are very grateful. I would like to single out particularly the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles have already saved countless lives in Iraq. And the speed with which you made that happen, together with the department, was very impressive.

Again, having said all that, I am aware keenly of the strain and stress on the force, on the individuals, on the equipment, on readiness and so forth. Having noted that, paradoxically, our troopers have incredible resilience. The reenlistment of the Third Infantry Division, which is completing its third tour in Iraq now, they have already met halfway through the year their reenlistment goal for the entire year.

So there is something special about what it is our men and women are doing in their minds and about the cause that they are serving. It is something larger than self. It is something that is very important. And of course, ultimately, on the battlefield, it is about the soldier on their right and left. But they have continued to raise their right hand.

There is one segment of the population that we are concerned about, and that is the young captains. Some of them have been in the cycle where we have asked an extraordinary amount of them in particular, and I know the Army is working very hard to look at the issues involving them.

We should note, and I am sure the Army has explained, there is also a different readiness model. There is no question but that the strategic reserve right now is, as General Cody rightly pointed out, the lowest he has seen in his time. But also it is programmed that when units come back, that they will refit and all the rest of that.

That will be rebuilt over time. I think that over time, I am hopeful, I have certainly given my support to 12-month deployments. Operationally, we would welcome that, both because of the strain and stress and really just the general recognition of the value in that. Hopefully, this reduction can allow that over time.

The CHAIRMAN. Along that same line, General, do you take into account the strain on the American forces in your recommendations to redeploy from Iraq?

General PETRAEUS. Absolutely, yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. McHugh from New York.

Mr. MCHUGH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Gentlemen, thank you so much for being here. Over 10 hours yesterday over the United States Senate. God knows how many hours today before the House. Your courage, your commitment has been well underscored. We appreciate your being here and all that you do.

I guess the big debate right now, the big question is, what, if anything, happens through a precipitous withdrawal? Both of you have spoken about Basra. I guess we will be learning lessons there for some time. But as I look at the lead up to Basra, as I look to what conditions were on the ground there that created the opportunity for the Quds force to come in to become involved with the so-called special groups, with the criminal elements that operated out of the port, taking revenues that should have gone to the Iraqi people and instead directing them into illegal activities, all of the nefarious elements that came to fore there, is there a lesson to us about precipitous withdrawal?

We have been blessed with great coalition partners. But in the south I think there is some reason to be concerned that perhaps the turnover there happened without proper conditions on the ground. Am I totally wrong there, or are there some lessons we can learn about why we need to be prudent in the days ahead?

General PETRAEUS. Well, there are lessons to be learned. But it is also very important to recognize that, again, this was sought by the Iraqis. They very much wanted to have Basra shift to provincial Iraqi control. There were a number of measures taken to shore

up their police and soldiers in the months prior to the handoff. But there is also no question that there were some of these criminal elements that were able to get their tentacles into port operations and some other areas and that were then leading to bigger problems in Prime Minister Maliki's mind and threatening the security of the area that produces some 90-plus percent of the revenue for Iraq.

But it is, again, why the commanders on the ground, why I have recommended that our reductions be conditions-based. As the Ambassador and I both mentioned, there are enormous implications here for really the safety and security of our own country with respect to al Qaeda, with respect to the spread of sectarian conflict, regional stability, and, again, a region that is obviously of vital importance to the global economy, Iranian influence, and so forth.

So there have been gains. We both mentioned that they were fragile gains. We want to see those hard-won gains preserved by ensuring that conditions are present, albeit with some risk, certainly. We are going to have to take some risks. Again, I am keenly aware that there are some other risks in Iraq out there.

Obviously, the earlier questioning has featured a great deal about that, and I mentioned that in, again, the considerations that I have used to guide the recommendations for the future.

Mr. MCHUGH. I think all of us, certainly I, feel very strongly that the Iraqi Government needs to do more. All of us want to see further gains, even though I would certainly argue there has been a substantial amount of progress over the past 12 months or so.

All of us, myself included, are disappointed in the Arab neighbors, who definitely need to do more on their own behalf and in terms of their own security as it is directly affected by Iraq. If that were all that were afoot here, I think each and every one of us would vote to bring our forces home as quickly as we could physically do that.

But as I see your testimony here, when, Ambassador Crocker, you talked yesterday about the impact of an earlier conditional withdrawal, "with devastating consequences for the region and the world," when both of you talk today, as, General Petraeus, you have, saying, al Qaeda's senior leaders "still view Iraq as a central front in their global strategy," and, Ambassador, you say Osama bin Laden has called Iraq the "perfect base," this is not just about Iraq and the benefit of the Iraqi people, or even the region, is it? We are really talking about the primary security interest of each and every American. Or do I have that wrong?

General PETRAEUS. That is correct.

Ambassador CROCKER. It is correct, Congressman.

Al Qaeda is a strategic enemy of the United States. It was dangerously close to setting down lasting roots in Iraq in Arab territory, which as I noted in my testimony, is a main goal of this predominantly Arab terrorist organization. If it were to have succeeded, or to succeed in the future, it is certainly my judgment that the threat to the United States would rise considerably.

Mr. MCHUGH. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Reyes, the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. REYES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Gentlemen, thank you for being here and for your service to our country.

I, like my colleague, agree that all of us want to see our troops returned home as quickly as possible.

General Petraeus, I know that you are knowledgeable to the findings of the most recent National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) on Iraq. At this point in time, no portion of the most recent Iraq NIE has been declassified, so we can't talk about the findings of that assessment, at least not in an open hearing like this. But in the unclassified key judgments from the August 2007 update, it stated: There have been measurable but uneven improvements in the Iraq security situation since our last National Intelligence Estimate on Iraq in January of 2007. That was the August NIE, the declassified portion.

So, as someone, like many of my colleagues here today, who has studied the current NIE and previous intelligence estimates, I have to say that the situation in Iraq, as has been verified by the Director of National Intelligence, is somewhat inconsistent with the actions that you are recommending or proposing in terms of the drawdown of the surge.

So my question is—and, actually, two questions. First of all, has the security situation on the ground in Iraq changed so much that we can actually start pulling back the surge forces? The second question is, what happens if the security situation changes during the so called 45-day pause? Are we going to reinstate the surge? And if we are, how long can such a reconstituted surge be sustained, in your opinion?

General PETRAEUS. First of all, again, I would not have recommended drawing down the surge if I did not think that the security progress enabled that, not just in terms of all the metrics that I have shown but also in the slowly but steadily improving capabilities of Iraqi forces, Iraqi governance, and other aspects that we take into account.

Mr. REYES. Irrespective of what has happened in Basra?

General PETRAEUS. In fact, the Iraqis are in the lead in Basra, Congressman. Again, they are the ones. We have some transition teams. We have some advisors. We have certainly provided enablers in the form of intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, closed air support, which the Iraqis do not have a sufficient capability yet but are developing.

Mr. REYES. In your statement, you also said that the current situation is fragile and reversible. You are not concerned that Basra could be the string that would start unraveling the rest of the fragile stability that you talked about?

General PETRAEUS. In fact, in the other southern provinces, it is the reason I highlighted that, because they could succumb to the same kind of challenges that you have in Basra. And there were attempts by militia elements in these other southern provinces. Virtually all of them that are south of Baghdad, down to Basra, and, again, in all but really, Mayson, which is the Marsh Arabs who have always been out of control, weren't under control under Saddam and aren't under control by anybody right now either, frankly. The rest of those have done well. In fact, the Iraqi forces in those areas, with small assistance, if any, from our forces, have

been equal to the task of ensuring the continued security in those areas. So I do believe I think we can move this forward and continue on the course that we are on.

Mr. REYES. So if at any point in the 45-day pause security deteriorates, what does that mean? What contingency plans do we have? Will you reinstate the surge?

General PETRAEUS. That would be a pretty remote thought in my mind, for a variety of different reasons. One is the strategic considerations that I have explained. The other is, we do have the ability to move some forces around, obviously, and we would certainly want to do that, both Iraqi forces as well as our forces.

Again, the Iraqis have now built some capability to respond in the form of the emergency response unit in the Ministry of Interior, this very substantial and very good Iraqi Special Operations Force Brigade, and a number of these so-called Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT), but they are much more than SWAT teams in many cases. In Hillah, for example, it is a SWAT battalion. They have moved these around, and they have used these as required. That would certainly be the option that we would want to see exercised.

Mr. REYES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank the gentleman.

Mr. Everett from Alabama.

Mr. EVERETT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General, Ambassador, thank you very much for your service, for those that you lead. We appreciate your dedication to this country.

General, thank you for your earlier service and some of the comments that you had observed in the way that this ought to be conducted in Iraq.

None of us like the cost of this. If our Congressional Research Service (CRS) is correct, we are looking at \$1 trillion. It is right that we discuss it. It is also right that we, as Mr. McHugh said, we are disappointed that the Iraqis and other countries over there are not contributing more to this campaign. But if we are going to look at that \$1 trillion, then we probably should also ask at the same time, how much is 3,000 lives worth? How much is 30,000 lives worth?

We have all agreed that we are fighting an enemy that is determined to kill Americans, and they will continue to kill Americans. They have been killing Americans for 20, 25 years prior to 9/11. While it is fair to bring that figure up, it is also fair to ask how much value do we place on 3,000 American lives or 30,000 American lives.

Mr. Ambassador, you spoke to this in your testimony. There are obviously countries over there who disagree with a free Iraq, disagree with free elections, disagree with the fact that all their citizens have rights. Would you discuss in a little more detail some of those countries that are contributing those outside actors, as you have said, that are contributing, and also how they are contributing, if they are contributing, the percentage of them that may be in the country, if they are contributing for materials, manpower, and exactly how they are engaged?

I would hope members would keep in mind that these are countries that do not want us to succeed in Iraq by any method.

Mr. Ambassador.

Ambassador CROCKER. Thank you, Congressman.

As I noted in my testimony, as one looks at Iraq's neighbors, the primary problem is with Iran, which, as both the General and I have said, is providing training, equipment, arms, ammunition, and explosives to radical militia elements that they effectively control. These are groups that target coalition forces, Iraqi forces, and Iraqi civilians. It is destabilizing to Iraq.

Iran has stated that its policy is to support the Iraqi Government. In my view, if you take sort of an objective analysis of the Iran-Iraq relationship, that is what Iran should be doing, supporting the central government. Because the truth is no people suffered more from Saddam Hussein's regime in Baghdad than the Iranian people, with the sole exception of the Iraqis themselves. A vicious 8-year war from 1980 to 1988 cost hundreds of thousands of lives on both sides.

So it should be in Iran's national interest to make a sharp departure from the policies they are following into a consistency on the ground with their stated policy of supporting the central government. But that is not what is happening, and the events in Baghdad and Basra of recent weeks have put that into very sharp contrast.

There was a problem with Syria, as we both noted. Foreign fighters, terrorists continue to infiltrate into Iraq through Syria. They have taken some steps to control this. But clearly they have not done enough. These individuals often are not Syrian themselves. They come from other countries in the region. We actually have seen some effective acts by these countries, in North Africa, the Arabian Peninsula and so forth, to take steps to ensure that their nationals do not have the opportunity to make that journey through Syria.

Mr. EVERETT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. CHAIRMAN. We will call on Dr. Snyder and Mr. Bartlett and then take the short break.

Dr. Snyder.

Dr. SNYDER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, gentlemen, for being here. We consider you the Dream Team. We very much appreciate your service. Also, we appreciate the reality of being away from your family and away from your personal life also. We appreciate you.

General Petraeus, do you have an exact time in your mind as to when Iraq became the number one priority compared to Afghanistan? Is there a date in your mind that you can relate back to when that occurred?

General PETRAEUS. Sir, not in mind. I have been pretty head down inside Iraq for most of that time, and I am not sure who made that determination, when that was made.

Dr. SNYDER. I think it was on March 5, Admiral Fallon was testifying, sitting about where you are sitting now, as Mr. Spratt referred to. And one of the things he said, maybe it was short-timer's syndrome, I don't know, but he said he needed 2,000 more troops in Afghanistan.

You have talked a lot today and yesterday about conditions-based. Here we have a combatant commander sitting down testifying he needs 2,000 more troops, trainers primarily, today in Af-

ghanistan. How should the Congress respond to that kind of comment?

General PETRAEUS. Well, again, you are asking the Commander in Iraq.

Dr. SNYDER. I assume you would say you would want the troops today.

General PETRAEUS. Again, obviously. I don't know how the Congress responds. I guess the Congress weighs how much more it can resource. I think you are already funding an expansion of the Army and of the Marine Corps, I believe. Again, I have been sort of focused on another task.

Dr. SNYDER. The reason I asked that is because I think, Ambassador Crocker, in your written statement you referred to some would choose to walk away from Iraq. The discussions that we have here is, how do we resource everything we need to do? Part of it is when we have Admiral Fallon saying we need 2,000 more troops today, not next month, not 6 months; today. But the reason that is not occurring is because Iraq is priority number one. Most of us aren't sure when that occurred. We don't know when this need for additional troops is going to be met. We consider Afghanistan also to be an utmost high priority for the United States. And yet it is not happening today. And we are responsible for it. You are not responsible for it. You are doing great at what you are doing. But we are responsible for it.

I wanted to ask, in this chart here that you presented, this section over here, nonkinetics, this chart that you two presented, you list services and job programs. I didn't see any charts today in some of the specifics with regard to services. I will list topics here and you tell me if such a chart would be available: electricity production availability, prenatal care for pregnant women, vaccination rates for children five years of age and under, neonatal deaths, availability of clean and safe water, availability of sewer systems, oil production, oil exports.

Would you have charts available on all of those indications of services available to the Iraqi people?

Ambassador CROCKER. We certainly have data available on some of those categories, oil production exports, electricity generation, and so forth.

Dr. SNYDER. One of the frustrations we have when we hear that things are better in a neighborhood, generally people talk about, we can walk through this neighborhood. But we don't know what is going on behind those doors. We are now five years plus into this. We don't know where we are at with the quality of life for children, for health care, for prenatal care. Economics I think is a very hard thing to get a handle on, as Chairman Skelton was talking about. There was a paucity in your presentation, Ambassador Crocker, on those quality-of-life things for the Iraqi people.

I wanted to ask, with regard to the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), which you talked about, Ambassador Crocker. We have a report coming out, this committee does, in the next couple of weeks on PRTs. I hope in your free time you will get a chance to read it because we would love to hear your comments on it. We think it is pretty thorough. What are the PRTs' specific objectives,

and how are you measuring the performance of PRTs in meeting those objectives in Iraq?

Ambassador CROCKER. The PRTs have a number of objectives: improving local governance, improve linkages between local governance and the Federal Government, helping local governments deliver services to the people, helping them with budget formulation and execution. We have established what we call a maturity model. All PRTs are required to report quarterly where they are in these various categories, these various responsibilities. And we have developed a set of criteria to ensure a reasonable uniformity of standards across the PRTs to measure this.

Dr. SNYDER. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General PETRAEUS. Mr. Chairman, could I just put in a soldier's plug for the PRTs, and commander's plug, because they have been of enormous value to us, and they have provided expertise to brigade and division commanders that just is not resident otherwise. Given even with all the tremendous talent that we have, even from the reserve components, they have been of just enormous help to us.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Bartlett. Then we will have a quick break.

Mr. BARTLETT. Thank you both very much for your service and your honest testimony. I have a couple of brief questions that I hope both of you might choose to respond to.

As we have stood up in the surge, Moqtada al-Sadr, perhaps in enlightened self-interest, stood down. We do not know how many other insurgent groups following al-Sadr's lead also stood down. Clearly, this kind of violence should subside and it did.

How much of the apparent success of the surge is attributable to this stand-down?

Both of you have noted that the tenuous successes are reversible. Is the continued stand-down of insurgent groups essential to the continued political improvements, dependent on continuation of the surge, or has there been a fundamental cultural change so that insurgent groups' stand-up would no longer be effective? Is our presence in Iraq equivalent to a temporary plug in a hole in the dike that, when removed, would result in escalating erosion and ultimate irreversible failure of the dike?

We would appreciate your observations.

General PETRAEUS. Well, Congressman, as I mentioned in my statement, the stand-downs of insurgent groups are actually more importantly the awakening of some insurgent groups to actually, actively oppose al Qaeda Iraq, and the extremist ideology and violence that they had brought to these local communities has been a very important factor, as has certainly the stand-down of the Sadr militia, although we did continue to go after the special group elements throughout that time and, in fact, have detained a number of them along with substantial quantities of weapons and documents and so forth that very clearly lay out the role that Iran has played, the contribution that Lebanese Hezbollah has played, as well, with the Quds force.

To come back to the insurgent groups, the key is obviously the transition of them into legitimate employment, legitimate Iraqi se-

curity force ranks and so forth; and that process has been ongoing. It is most advanced in Anbar Province—still some more to be done there, but thousands of the Sons of Iraq, as they are now called, have actually transitioned in Anbar Province into the police, the army or into other government employment. And there is a comprehensive program, as I described, of joint Iraqi-American training in reintegration activities, if you will, to help them transition either to civilian employment, other government employment or, again, the 20, 30 percent or so that will end up in either the Iraqi police or the Iraqi army.

But it is very important that that transition take place, and that was one reason that I listed as one of the factors, the operational considerations, as we do go forward.

Ambassador CROCKER. Congressman, I think there has been a fundamental change that is of real significance, and it is a popular rejection of terrorism and violence. We saw it first and most clearly with the Sunni Arab population of Anbar and their courageous stance against al Qaeda.

But we have also seen it among the Shi'a, and this goes back to August when Jaysh al-Mahdi militias tried to take control of one of Shi'a Islam's most holy shrines in the city of Karbala. There was a very substantial popular backlash against that militia action, and that is what led Moqtada al-Sadr at the end of August to declare a freeze on Jaysh al-Mahdi activities.

It wasn't a case so much of him taking a need to kind of keep his powder dry during the surge. We weren't in that area anyway. It was his recognition that these kinds of militia activities were distinctly unpopular with the Iraqi people; and I think we are seeing that same thing again in response to the actions in Baghdad and Basra. There is a degree of political unity behind the prime minister for taking these actions that spans the political spectrum, and that is because politicians understand that that is where the people are.

Mr. BARTLETT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. We will have a five-minute break and then we will take up Mr. Smith and Mr. McKeon. Let me ask the people in the audience to please remain seated until the two witnesses make their exit for a quick break.

[Recess.]

The CHAIRMAN. The hearing will resume.

Mr. Smith.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, gentlemen, for your testimony. I think the thing that we are all struggling with is the ultimate goal here is stability and reconciliation, and there are so many different factors going into that. Dr. Snyder mentioned a couple. With electricity, you have certainly mentioned a fair number.

But ultimately, we are sort of looking at what the long-term goals are and how we get there. And one of the questions I had is, is there any way that you figure our troop presence in some ways contributes to instability or makes reconciliation more difficult; and if so, how have you factored that into your plans for getting to those ultimate goals?

General PETRAEUS. Well, it is very akin, Congressman, to the idea that in a sense we might hold them back in the security tasks as well. And so it is another area where we are constantly looking at, is this the time to allow them to get into the deep end and be there if necessary, but how hard do you need to hang on to the bicycle seat, that kind of measure. And we look at that across the board and in this area as well.

But in the security arena and local governance and the provision of basic services and all the rest of that, we are keenly aware that there could be cases where they are going to say, well, Why should we do it for ourselves if they are doing it for us?

Counter to that is this impulse that I mentioned earlier, that we have seen repeatedly really, which is the desire to exercise sovereignty and the desire to be in charge. And occasionally it actually pushes them to do—not more than occasionally; it pushes them to want to do something perhaps before they are completely ready to do that. And there have been some issues that have evolved as a result of that.

Mr. SMITH. On a different issue in the same area, do you think our presence motivates insurgents, or I think it clearly motivates Iran to cause more problems in Iraq than they otherwise would, because if we are not there, as I think Ambassador Crocker mentioned, Iran doesn't have much interest in Iraqi instability. But if we are there, given the conflict we have with Iran and the very real threats that Iran poses, they have to be worried about what our military would do if it got too secure in Iraq.

So do you factor that in in terms of how we reach ultimate conciliation with Iran, and also with the various Shi'a factions?

I want to throw one more question at you, and they are on the Shi'a factions. Because what happened in Basra and Baghdad recently could be simply dismissed as the government v. unlawful militias. But if you dig very deep down you find out that there is more to it. It is basically rival militias fighting it out.

The Badr brigades seem to be more closely allied right now with the Iraqi Government, but the Badr brigades also to some extent are allied with Iran. So what is our long-term strategy there? Are we really choosing sides between the Badr brigades and the Mahdi army, and if so, why do we perceive that to be in our interest?

Ambassador CROCKER. Those are two very good questions, Congressman.

With respect to Iranian activities in Iraq, my earlier comments were my analysis of what I think should be Iran's long-term strategic calculations, not what they necessarily are. Clearly, they are motivated to try to put pressure on us. That is obviously part of it. But having watched this dynamic for a number of years in the region, I think what the Iranians are doing is pursuing a policy, if you will, of Lebanization, doing what they did in Lebanon. And they, in conjunction with Syria, have pursued a policy of backing more than one militia in Lebanon for the last quarter of a century.

And we haven't been there in Lebanon as a military force since 1984. So I think they would be pursuing these kinds of efforts in Iraq.

Mr. SMITH. I am almost out of time. Could one of you quickly touch on the issue of the side that we are choosing in the Shi'a faction, and then why that is in our interest?

Ambassador CROCKER. Yes, sir. That is also a very important point. The way Iraqis are reading the events of Basra and Baghdad is the government against extremist militias. That is what has fused political support for Prime Minister Maliki and his government in a way that we just haven't seen, at least during the year I was there. So Iraqis themselves, Kurds and Sunnis, as well as most of the Shi'a, are perceiving this as government against Shi'a extremists.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. McKeon.

Mr. MCKEON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, General and Ambassador, for your service and that of all of the men and women you command that are out there fighting for our freedoms.

You know, there is lots of discussion as to mistakes that have been made previously. I think those can be discussed forever. But what I would like to focus on a little bit is now going forward from here.

I have a quote from bin Laden. You know, some people say that we should get out right away; some people say we should phase out; some people say we should set dates. There are lots of comments. But I think we have also talked about the price of being there and the price of leaving. And I think bin Laden puts a focus pretty good; he says, "The world's millstone and pillar is in Baghdad, the capital of the caliphate."

The whole world is watching this war and the two adversaries, the Islamic nations on the one hand and the United States and its allies on the other. It is either victory and glory or misery and humiliation. I think he understands the consequences of us leaving early before we finish our mission. I am hopeful that the American people understand that, and I think they do.

General, could you please comment a little bit on the morale of our troops and their families, how they feel about the mission?

General PETRAEUS. Congressman, first of all, let me just say that I don't want to start off by generalizing about morale. I want to start off by explaining that morale is an individual event. And morale depends from soldier to soldier, and for me as well, on the kind of day that you are having out there in the theater. And it is a roller-coaster existence.

Now, having said that, there is actually something called the mental health assessment which is done every year. The last one was done in the late fall, I believe it was, and after several years of a generalization of morale as going down, morale actually went up.

We have talked about it, talked to the command, Sergeant Major Hill, my senior noncommissioned officer in Multi-National Forces Iraq (MNF-I) and a long time as the same in the 101st Airborne Division, and a number of other commissioned and noncommissioned leaders and troopers; and I think it is a sense that they have had that they are making progress, that in a number of different areas

where they were operating they could see tangible results, and that they saw the reversal of the ethno-sectarian violence, the progress that had been made by al Qaeda and so forth and so on.

And, of course, if you feel like you are making progress, then I think you obviously feel better about what it is you are engaged in.

Beyond that, the other indicator that we look at very closely, as I mentioned earlier, is reenlistment. And again I focus on reenlistment in theater, and it has repeatedly been way above what the goals are for the units that are deployed there.

As I mentioned, one of the units that is there, just completing its third tour in Iraq, has already met its reenlistment goal for the entire fiscal year.

So, again, no question about the strain, the sacrifice of our troopers and on their families, some of them making the ultimate sacrifice. But our great young men and women continue to raise their right hand and want to continue to serve, by and large, with perhaps that one population that we are concerned most about, which is the young captains. And again, as I mentioned earlier, that is something that I know that my service and the other services are looking very hard at to try to figure out how to give them some breaks and how to give them additional incentives to stay with this very important mission.

Mr. MCKEON. I have just a little time left. Could you expand on the Sons of Iraq and how that is helping us?

General PETRAEUS. Well, sir, the Sons of Iraq are individuals. It really dates all the way back to Anbar Province and the first awakening which—to be fair, it started before the surge, but then was very much enabled by the surge because that enabled us to clear areas over time.

But it started with a sheikh in Anbar Province coming to a brigade commander in Ramadi, saying back in October of 2006, Would you support us if we turned our weapons on al Qaeda instead of on you? And the brigade commander got that test question right. He pledged support.

It took some time to build those forces, to get them going, to get it established. By mid-March they were ready to clear Baqubah, or I am sorry, Ramadi. Over time, this played out in other areas.

Originally, they were not paid. Over time they did ask if we could pay them, because they were helping with security. We have lots of security contractors and now we have 91,000 more, called Sons of Iraq. The calculations we have done showed that this is a pretty good bargain, because the cost in their salaries per month is a lot less than the amount of vehicle losses that don't take place because we have this support. They are helping us to hold areas that have been cleared of al Qaeda or their insurgent allies.

So, again, they are a very, very important component of this. They help with local security most of all. And quantity has a quality of its own in counterinsurgency operations where the enemy can attack anywhere and you must guard everywhere; and they have helped us to do that.

They have, by the way, been targeted very heavily by al Qaeda, which shows the importance that al Qaeda sees, because they are also a manifestation of the population rejecting al Qaeda. And their losses have been similar, around two and a half to three times our

losses in recent months, as al Qaeda has relentlessly tried to go after them, to intimidate them, to get them to desert their posts. And, by and large, they are very much hanging in there; they are fairly cohesive, tribally based elements.

Mr. MCKEON. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. Ms. Sanchez.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, gentlemen, for being before us today. I want to go back to a report that General Jones did back in September. And I know that the last time you were before our committee it had just come out and we had some discussion over it.

But I think that some people have forgotten about this report. And in particular to General Petraeus I have a question or several questions with respect to what I call the Iraqification of Iraq, or the army, the fact that to a large extent it seems to me over the last 5 years or so we have been thinking that the way to get out of Iraq is to set up the army and the police forces and let them take care—get them to a point where we leave the country in a stabilized situation, and they are able to continue that stability.

So in the September 2007 report of the Independent Commission on the Security Forces of Iraq, which again was chaired by General Jim Jones, it painted a fairly pessimistic outlook for Iraqi security independence. And according to the report the national police force was dysfunctional and should be disbanded; the Ministry of Interior was riddled with corruption and incompetence, and that it was a ministry in name only according to the report. It said that the Iraqi army was doing better, but wouldn't be capable of full operations for at least 12 to 18 months and was lacking in adequate weapons, transport, logistics, intelligence, planning capabilities.

And, of course, I ask this question because we saw their performance, or their lack of performance, in the last couple of weeks in Basra and other areas—it wasn't very encouraging. And because, again, our general strategy is based on the capabilities of the Iraqi forces, my questions would be, in particular, to you, General.

Because you spent a year in the mission of training those forces, my questions are first, do you agree with the findings of General Jones and the Commission, and where do you disagree and why? Have you acted on the recommendations of the Jones Commission and which ones of the major recommendations have you acted on?

The Commission found that the Ministry of Interior, the national police and the border guards were heavily infiltrated by sectarian militias and were making little or no contribution to that fight. Do you agree with that assessment? What have you done to address these problems with the Maliki government, and are there any reforms that are likely to occur because of that?

The report also asserts that the massive troop presence of U.S. military and its facilities creates a perception among the Iraqis that the U.S. forces are a long-term occupying force. Do you agree with that assessment and do you agree with the recommendation that significant reductions, consolidations and realignments of the U.S. forces must happen in Iraq in order for that perception to go away? And what friction do you see because of the fact that we may be looked upon as an occupying force to the Iraqi population?

And last, in theory, reduction of U.S. forces should be possible as Iraqi army forces achieve the necessary state of readiness and effective independent operations. In light of this reality, what can be done to accelerate the process of training, equipping and transferring responsibility to the Iraqi forces? Should we devote more resources to it? What do we do about those who didn't fight or ran away?

Do you agree with the Jones Commission that the Iraqi army is not ready to be independent in 12 to 18 months? That would be the end of this year. And how much of the Iraqi army do you believe will really be ready to operate independently within the time frame, that is, by December of this year?

General PETRAEUS. Well, I have tried to write as quickly as I could, Congresswoman.

Ms. SANCHEZ. I can go over them again if you would like.

General PETRAEUS. Let me try to answer them if I can.

Ms. SANCHEZ. You know what I am asking, General.

General PETRAEUS. I do indeed.

First of all, we have acted on a number of the recommendations that the Jones Commission report made, and frankly, we agreed with their assessment of the national police that it was. And I am on the record as stating repeatedly that the national police were hijacked by sectarian interests during the height of the sectarian violence and they had become a sectarian actor. And, in fact, every one of the brigade commanders, division commanders and overall commander of the national police were relieved, as were about 70 percent of the battalion commanders. In one case, by the way, the relief was twice in one unit.

And they actually have—they have become net contributors now, rather than net consumers or net sectarian actors. And, in fact, if you talk to the commanders on the ground in Baghdad or elsewhere where there are national police operating, you will find that in a number of cases the national police are pulling their load and that the commander of the national police over the course of about the last 8 to 10 months has made substantial progress in that it has been directed by the Minister of Interior.

Each brigade has gone through a reblueing process, a period of training where the entire brigade goes off to a training center and goes through intensive training. And now the Italian carabinieri are actually in helping units one after another to do additional work.

The Ministry of Interior has worked to reduce sectarian influence, militia influence and so forth. This is not easy when you are in a situation that that ministry was in at the end of the sectarian violence of 2006–2007, but they have indeed made progress, in our assessment.

I also brought in another team to look at some specifics, based on General Jones's Commission's report, and again did follow a number of the steps with respect to that. As General Dubik, the head of the training-equip mission, has been pursuing.

The Iraqi army has taken over numerous areas already, as I have mentioned in my testimony today, and although there clearly were units that did not measure up and leaders that did not measure up in Basra—and by the way, we then, together with our Iraqi

counterparts, provided a list of individuals that we thought didn't meet the mark in Basra, as well as in Baghdad; and also a list of those who did very well—to provide our input. Because they do have a leader assessment process in the Ministries of Defense and Interior and they will use that; and in some cases, the Prime Minister directed their relief.

I also mentioned that the Iraqi Security Forces did do well in the face of violence that sprang up at the time of the Basra operation start in the southern provinces; and again they did a creditable job. And those are areas that have been—many of those have been handed off to provincial Iraqi control. One of the others will be handed off in the next few months.

Again, the same is playing out in Anbar Province, of all places, at one time the most dangerous province in Iraq, now a place where a unit returned to Fort Stewart from the Army, as well where the concern of the infantry battalion was that many of them had not received combat infantryman badges because they hadn't been in real combat and, again, Iraqi forces stepping up in those locations.

So that is, I think, a pretty quick answer, although 3 minutes over the time.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Thank you, General. And I will submit it further in writing so that you can get the specifics to me, because I am interested. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Thornberry.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General, today and some yesterday, there have been calls to declassify recent Intelligence Community assessments. And kind of left hanging is this implication that there is something radically different in this assessment than in your public testimony today.

So I guess I would just like to ask briefly, do you take Intelligence Community products into account in writing your public testimony, and is there something substantially different in that particular assessment from the thrust of your public testimony that you have given today?

General PETRAEUS. We do take it into account. In fact, we draw very heavily, obviously, on our own intelligence assessments as well. But certainly take it into account. And there is not any difference that I am aware of, having looked at that fairly quickly between what that says and what we have said. And I am not the one who does declassification of intelligence documents.

Mr. THORNBERRY. I understand. Let me go to, I think, maybe a larger point.

General, in your testimony you talked about the gradual establishment of sustainable security in Iraq as vitally important to the citizens of the United States.

And, Ambassador, in your testimony you said we have to be clear with ourselves about what failure would mean. The American people don't hear that sort of talk very much. What they hear is what happened today on the ground with this bombing or this suicide bomber. And that is, if something happened on the ground; if it is relatively quiet, they don't get any news.

And I think it is important for them to hear from each of you why Iraq is important, what we have at stake. Not just what we are doing for them, but why it is important for us.

So I would invite you both to elaborate on the comments that you made in your written testimony.

General PETRAEUS. Well, again, Congressman, I think we have an enormous national interest in the security instability of Iraq with respect, as I have mentioned, to al Qaeda Iraq and al Qaeda in that particular area, the possible resumption of sectarian conflict that could not only engulf Iraq once again, but also potentially spread over Iraq's borders.

Some of your Members have rightly noted that there is already a humanitarian crisis in Iraq. There are already, by most accounts, somewhere around two million internally displaced and two million others displaced out of the country. That could get far, far worse.

In fact, we have seen some signs of a reversal of that, of the security conditions allowing some citizens to return to their homes and their families.

Again, there is certainly a regional stability issue and there is obviously an issue in terms of the global economy with Iraq being the second or third most, the country with the second or third most oil resources in the world.

Ambassador CROCKER. Congressman, both General Petraeus and I have spoken about the cost of failure. I would like to spend just a moment on how a stable and secure Iraq could transform the region.

For most of Iraq's modern history, since the 1958 revolution, Iraq has been a negative factor for regional stability. And, indeed, that revolution in 1958 and our concerns over where it was going is what triggered the decision to send Marines to Lebanon. So over the course of these years, we saw the Iran-Iraq War; we saw the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait; the threat to Saudi Arabia; the Iraqi subversion in Syria, in Jordan, in Lebanon; kind of an unbroken saga of destabilizing actions or outright military invasions.

A stable Iraq, in my judgment—and I spend a lot of time in this region—could be an anchor in the Arab world and the broader Middle East, and we could have a positive dynamic throughout the region that we really haven't seen for decades. I can't predict what the specific consequences of that would be, but it would be a far more positive dynamic than we have seen in, literally, decades.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. McIntyre from North Carolina.

Mr. MCINTYRE. Thank you, gentlemen. Thank you for your service to our country.

As I mentioned to General Petraeus before the hearing today, I was in Iraq just 10 days ago and had the opportunity to meet with many of our fine men and women serving our country there, including General Lloyd Austin from Ft. Bragg of whom we are particularly proud in our area of North Carolina, and had opportunities also to visit detainee centers at Cropper and Bucca.

I wanted to ask you, Mr. Ambassador, specifically, as we measure progress in Iraq, I am struck by the fact that there has been no discussion really today of where we stand on the 18 benchmarks that were so widely discussed last September. The GAO said we

had met 3, 3 out of 18 benchmarks. Can you tell us what your assessment is as to where we stand on those benchmarks?

Having heard the testimony today that you all do not believe that timelines are in order, but where do we stand on the benchmarks.

Ambassador CROCKER. Well, actually, Congressman, I would state that in just about an eight-week period we saw benchmark legislation enacted on accountability and justice, that is, deBaathification reform on amnesty and the provincial powers law with its stipulation for elections by this fall, I would also describe as significant benchmarks.

We are actually going through this process right now of doing an updated assessment on the benchmarks. That is something that I expect we will have done in the next week or so.

But pending that, I would say we are certainly well above three. I think I would say either "achieved" or "significant progress" on about a dozen of them.

Mr. MCINTYRE. Achieved or significant progress. But as far as checking off the benchmark as having been achieved, can you tell us about how many you think that have been done?

Ambassador CROCKER. Well, again, we are going through the process right now and we can and will do that.

In my testimony, as I described the legislative achievements, I did so in their own terms because this is something I said in September. You can have a situation in which all of the benchmarks are achieved and you still don't have meaningful reconciliation. You can also have circumstances in which relatively few of them are achieved, but you are getting reconciliation anyway.

Mr. MCINTYRE. I know my time is limited. Excuse me.

So you are saying, within next week you can provide us an assessment as to where we stand specifically on the 18 benchmarks that the Iraqi Government agreed to meet in working with the U.S. Government to make sure that we are accomplishing the political, economic progress that we want to see in the country, as well as the military progress; is that correct?

Ambassador CROCKER. Yes, sir.

Mr. MCINTYRE. Will you submit that to this committee within the next week?

Ambassador CROCKER. I will.

Mr. MCINTYRE. If you will, do that in writing, please.

Ambassador CROCKER. Yes, sir.

Mr. MCINTYRE. Thank you.

And, General Petraeus, I just wanted to ask with regard to local police, following up on Ms. Sanchez' question, I have heard a continuous concern. We talked today about national police and also the military, and commended you for your work with the military and all that you have done with the national police.

Can you tell us your assessment of the corruption problem with the local police?

General PETRAEUS. Well, first of all, Congressman if I could just add that everybody in the Tarheel State ought to be very proud of the 18th Airborne Corps headquarters, Lloyd Austin and his great team and all the other troopers and Marines from Ft. Bragg and points east, that have served so magnificently.

Mr. MCINTYRE. Thank you for your service there, too.

Ambassador CROCKER. Sir, with respect to the local police, they have again taken on more and more and more. And interestingly what is emerging as the poster child for this is Anbar Province. Fallujah again, one of the most dangerous cities in Iraq, now has no Iraqi army or military in it. It has 10 police precincts, each of which is a gated community, essentially.

They have had a Marine squad per police precinct. They are gradually downsizing those, so we will probably have one for every two for a while and then gradually reduce those. And they are doing a creditable job.

There are always temptations in Iraq and there is something cultural, frankly, about ensuring that there is not corruption ongoing, and there is an effort. They have, in fact, relieved police chiefs, in some cases detained police chiefs in Anbar among other places to make sure that they are not supplementing their income by illicit means.

Iraq is a country with enormous oil riches and other natural blessings; and again, there has to be continued effort to make sure that local police don't succumb to the temptations again to try to get their hands into some of this.

Mr. MCINTYRE. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Jones.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much.

And to the two gentlemen at the desk, thank you for your leadership, your patriotism to this great Nation and all the good things you are trying to do for America.

Ambassador Crocker, I want to ask you a question, but I don't want you to answer it right now because I have got a second question, and you can combine them both.

How often do you have communications with the Iraqi governmental leadership, especially Prime Minister Maliki? Second, to what Mr. Sproul was saying, the issue and the reasons, which you have nothing to do but to protect the security of this Nation, so this was not meant toward you, his bringing these figures up.

The reason is that this country right now is borrowing money from foreign governments to pay our bills. In the year 2001 a gallon of 87 octane gas cost \$1.42; today it is \$3.35. In addition, in 2001 a barrel of oil was \$28; today it is over \$100.

And I am not going on and on. But the issue is that we in this Congress are going to be cutting programs to help our elderly with health care. So we do want you, as you are trying to do today, to give us, as you have done, the honest assessment of where everything is. But the American people do support the troops, as we support the troops. The American people want to know that the Iraqi Government understands that we do not have treasure and blood to go on and on and on.

And, Mr. Ambassador, the reason I bring this up is that a couple of your statements, as well as the General's, were very, very—you know, statements such as “gains are fragile and reversible,” “cannot guarantee success, but we are closer”; and we appreciate those statements.

But recently Prime Minister Maliki demanded al-Sadr to disband his Mahdi army, threatened to bar al-Sadr followers from the political process if the cleric refused; and I quote, “A decision was taken yesterday that no longer have a right to participate in the political process or take part in the upcoming elections unless they end the Mahdi army.”

My question to you because of the word “fragile,” which I appreciate—and you have been very honest, “fragile”—do you have conversations with Maliki? Does he take you into discussion as it relates to political decisions that are going to be forthcoming?

Because this is the question to you: If, by chance, that he would bar al-Sadr’s group from the political process, what would be the results of that?

Ambassador CROCKER. Congressman, General Petraeus and I see a great deal of the Iraqi political leadership. We met with Prime Minister Maliki, for example, I think just the day before we got on the plane to come back here. We also have extensive contacts with the other elements of the leadership, and we do in those contacts register our views. We consult.

But at the same time Prime Minister Maliki is the leader of a sovereign government, and as we saw in Basra, he will take his own decisions. He did not extensively consult with us before that operation. We learned of it just a couple of days before he embarked on it.

With respect to the Jaysh al-Mahdi, I point out that it is not just the Prime Minister. President Talabani, the Kurdish President of Iraq, yesterday also called on Moqtada al-Sadr to disband that militia and commit himself fully to the political process. And again I think this is one of the really positive developments we have seen that I referred to earlier, a popular rejection of militia, extremist terrorist violence, both Sunni and Shi’a. And it is reflected not only in the Prime Minister’s call, but a position that spans the political spectrum, a statement issued last Saturday specifically called for the disbanding of militias. And that was a collective view of all the major political movements.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman.

The gentlelady from California, Mrs. Tauscher.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Petraeus, Ambassador Crocker, thank you for your service and to your families and the people that you represent. Gentlemen, over the last few weeks some of the national polling, a CBS-New York Times poll, have increasingly larger numbers of Americans saying, for example, looking back, do you think the United States did the right thing in taking military action against Iraq or should the United States have stayed out? Sixty-two percent say “stayed out.”

Do you favor or oppose the U.S. war in Iraq? Sixty-six percent say “oppose.”

All in all, do you think this situation in Iraq was worth going to war over or not? Sixty-two percent, “not worth it.”

Now, both of you have stated in repeated testimony that our withdrawal from Iraq or redeployment from Iraq is going to be conditions-based. Apparently that is a metric for Iraq.

Those are not the only conditions that we have to look at; we have to also look at the conditions here. My constituents in California repeatedly tell me that they don't believe that we can sustain the number of troops or the treasure that we are expending.

The American people, gentlemen, love their troops and appreciate their sacrifice, but they do not like this mission and they want to know what is going to happen. And we have an election coming forward in November and that is going to be significantly about this. On January 21st of 2009, if you report to a commander in chief that says that they want a plan for the withdrawal of troops in the next 60 days, what will you advise them?

General PETRAEUS. Well, I would sit down first, Congresswoman; I would try to back up and ask what the mission is, what are the objectives, what is the desired end state. With an understanding of that mission, then you can state what resources are required.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. General, if the mission is to maintain the security gains as best we have made during the surge, but to bring our troops home so that they can rest, retrain and be redeployable, and we can fix our readiness problem and cut the amount of money that we are spending in Iraq, which is \$600 billion now going to well over \$1 trillion in the future, what would your response be?

General PETRAEUS. My response would be dialogue on what the risk would be again. And this about risk.

At the end of the day, let me just state up front, I absolutely support the principle of civilian control in the military. We are not self-employed in uniform. We take orders and we follow them. But what we want to do, of course, is to have dialogue within the chain of command about what the mission is, what the desired end state is, the objectives and so forth; then be able to provide the assessment of a commander on the ground of what we believe are the resources required. If they are less than that, you know, this is the risk to various elements; and then it is up to other folks to determine where they want to take the risk.

But again, as I stated, I fully believe in, subscribe to and have sworn an oath to the Constitution and the concept of civilian control in the military.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Ambassador Crocker, considering that we will have a new President on January 20th and our President could say that they want to have you give them an assessment, for example, on how we spread the risk, how we spread the risk away from the American people and our military, who in the region could step up, who around the world could step up to help stabilize the Iraq Government and their security situation in lieu of our departure?

What would you advise the President as to who could be available and how we would begin that engagement?

Ambassador CROCKER. Well, again Congresswoman that is looking fairly far into the future, and I have learned to keep my timelines pretty short when I am predicting things to do with Iraq.

I would anticipate it would be a briefing on the efforts that are under way. I described, for example, the efforts we have made to have the United Nations more actively engaged in Iraq; they are.

Our efforts with the international community, more broadly; again, it is noteworthy, I think, that Sweden is hosting this upcoming ministerial on the international compact with Iraq. It is the

first time that a European state has stepped forward that was not a member of the Coalition, so, you know, we are trying to broaden there.

And we have constant efforts under way in the region that, frankly, I wish had been a little more successful, but we will keep at it. And I think what I would probably be doing is providing an update on these sorts of things.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Hayes

Mr. HAYES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And, gentlemen, thank you for being here. Please convey our gratitude and incredible appreciation to the men and women with whom you serve.

Three questions: Number one, the Anbar model is obviously working, it would appear, for a number of reasons, mainly because tribal leaders are working with elected leaders and our military officials to come up with a plan that cooperates and works. If you would, comment on that.

Number two, elected leaders and tribal leaders are the ones that can provide this timeline that everybody talks about. What do you see happening? How do we precipitate, how do we cause that to happen so that the Iraqis say, We are going to be ready by this date? Immediately then you can come up with a timeline that we need.

And last, in the south, very significant, the Basra situation, you have Iraqi Shi'a battling Iranian-influenced Shi'a who are Moqtada al-Sadr. How do we work that out; and if you will, just kind of explain the dynamic of that? Because with Maliki taking on al-Sadr, that is pushing back on Iran, and people need to know about that.

And the last comment: David Walker sat where you are sitting and said the benchmarks we have for Iraq are not the right ones. So the benchmarks of Iraqi spending money of their own on us, helping to fight the war against the terrorists, is very significant in the benchmark area.

Thank you.

General PETRAEUS. Congressman, if I could take the first and third and the Ambassador will take the second and the fourth.

The Anbar model is a model that we have tried to apply elsewhere. It is a model that certainly works in an area that is almost exclusively Sunni Arab, with substantial tribal influence, and an area in which al Qaeda very clearly overplayed its hand, where again the population was devastated by what al Qaeda did to them in terms of violence, in terms of these oppressive practices that they implemented, not to mention the ideology to which they subscribe, which the people of the Euphrates River valley didn't embrace.

There were reasons why they were willing to support al Qaeda having to do with a variety of actions early on, feelings of dis-possession, disrespect and the like. But over time they came to realize what al Qaeda had done to their river valley, done to business, done to basic services and so forth, and chose to reject it; and because, again, of the relative cohesion of the population and the tribal structures were able to use that, and they were able to use it to cobble together a fairly coherent response to al Qaeda.

We are applying that where we can. Again, the circumstances there are fairly unique so you have to adapt it to each area. And when you have a place where there are sectarian or ethnic differences, say, in Diyala Province or Ninawa, it is a bit more sensitive and you have got to be a little bit more skillful in your application perhaps, or just different in your application, because those in Anbar demonstrated enormous skill.

With respect to Basra, again as the Ambassador mentioned earlier, this is, in our view, truly a decision by a prime minister to take on elements that were very much threatening the peace, rule of law, good order and so forth in Basra, that were carrying out acts of intimidation, including murder and so forth, and not just—it wasn't a purely politically inspired activity. It does happen that some of the most lethal elements associated with that militia, the so-called "special groups," are in fact backed by Iran or trained, equipped and funded by them.

So again this was a fairly courageous decision. It was a fairly sudden decision. It was one that came after some months of preparing a more deliberate approach and is still very much playing out. It is far too soon to say that Basra has succeeded, or has failed either. It is safe to say that Basra is going to continue for months actually, and it is a tough nut to crack. But the fact is that the Prime Minister has taken it on and his forces are grappling with that particular issue.

Ambassador CROCKER. Congressman, on the role of elected and tribal leaders, Iraqis, both Iraqi leaders and the Iraqi population at large, want to be in a position of taking charge of their own country and their own security. It is not a situation in which they are really all saying, well, let the Americans do it. And again, the Basra operation reflects that sentiment, that they should be able to do things for themselves. So I think clearly Iraqis are moving in that direction.

But just as we look at conditions rather than timelines, so do thoughtful Iraqis. One thing that will be important are the provincial elections because you mentioned tribal and elected leaders. Many tribal leaders and their followers sat out the last election and are therefore not represented in government. They are not going to make that mistake this time; they have been very clear on that. So these elections are going to be important to kind of recalibrate through the voting booths who Iraq's leaders are at the provincial level.

With regard to the benchmarks, the benchmarks have importance. We track them, and as I undertook to Congressman McIntyre, we will provide our assessment of where they are. But what they don't do, and as your suggestion implies, they simply don't tell the whole story. And it is important to focus on a number of other things.

A key element is that which you mentioned, the ability of Iraq to spend its own funds on its own reconstruction and development, and we place a very high emphasis on that even though it is not a benchmark.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Andrews from New Jersey.

Mr. ANDREWS. I thank the chairman.

I thank the witnesses for their service to our country. Please thank the people you represent as well. We are very grateful.

Ambassador Crocker, the words I hear, “talk about transition to Iraqis running Iraq.” But the substance I see looks more to me like an indefinite American occupation of Iraq. I want to ask you some questions about that.

A significant though not exclusive source of the hostilities in Iraq are Sunni resisters who do not want to live in a country that is 61 percent Shiite. Iraq is a country where who controls the guns and the money and the power is going to be very, very important.

When you were here in September, the essential argument you made to the American people was that General Petraeus and his forces would do their very best to tamp down the violence—and they have, and we thank them for that—and that the Iraqi politicians would then take advantage of that hiatus and do the best they could to reach political reconciliation. They have not.

Let’s first talk about sharing of power with the provinces, particularly those that are majority Sunni. There have not been provincial elections yet, have there?

Ambassador CROCKER. There have been provincial elections, one round, in which many Sunnis boycotted. The next elections will be this fall.

Mr. ANDREWS. But there have not been meaningful provincial elections that vested real power in the provincial government. Would you agree with that?

Ambassador CROCKER. Actually, Congressman, the provincial governments do have significant power. That has now been codified in the Provincial Powers Law that was just passed by the parliament. The most important power they have is the access to resources.

Mr. ANDREWS. Let’s talk about resources. At this point in time, the most important economic resource in Iraq is oil revenues. The Iraqi parliament has not passed a hydrocarbon law since September, has it?

Ambassador CROCKER. No, it has not.

Mr. ANDREWS. And, finally, a very important thing is control of the military and the Interior Ministry, the police. Now there was a deBaathification law passed by the Iraqi parliament and enacted into law. But it is my understanding that the terms of that statute say that former members of the Baathist party may not work in the military and may not work in the Interior of Ministry. Is that correct?

Ambassador CROCKER. The most senior levels of the Baath party.

Mr. ANDREWS. Aren’t the people at the most senior levels the one whose participation in political negotiations is the most important?

Ambassador CROCKER. As I said in my testimony, Congressman, the implementation of these laws, this one, as well as the others, is going to be of key importance. I would note though—and we are still awaiting that—but I would note that these laws were passed in a new spirit of reconciliation that we would expect to see also inform the implementation of these.

Mr. ANDREWS. I do understand that. I do understand that there is a new spirit of reconciliation. But the argument that was made by you in September was that a reduction in violence would create

the opportunity for a period of real political reconciliation. And that was the rationale of the so-called surge.

Now the record shows that there was a deBaathification law. But as you just said, key members, former members of the party, can't work in the defense or Interior Ministry, which means they have no access to the guns. There have been some provincial statutes passed. But the meaningful elections, by my judgment, have not occurred, and we hear it will occur by October 1st. We have heard that for a very long time. Perhaps the most important thing, which is the money, the hydrocarbon law has not been passed.

Now I am not meaning to say here that not doing all those things since September is a mark of abject failure. But, my goodness, not doing them since April of 2003 sure looks like that. The war didn't begin in September. As far as the American people are concerned, it was April of 2003 when Saddam fell, and the forces of which General Petraeus participated did such a great job in making that happen.

It is now five years. No hydrocarbon law, no meaningful distribution to the provinces, no deBaathification law. Why should the American people wait five more minutes for that to happen?

Ambassador CROCKER. Congressman, while there is no hydrocarbon law and revenue-sharing law, in fact revenues are being shared to the provinces. This process is ongoing. It is seen as equitable both in predominantly Sunni and predominantly Shi'a provinces. The provinces have resources because the oil revenues are in fact being shared. That I think is the important indicator.

You talked about Sunni resisters not wanting to be part of the Shi'a majority country. Well, in fact as we have seen in Anbar, Baghdad, and elsewhere, the Sunnis have decided they don't want to have anything to do with al Qaeda and its supporters. They took a very courageous stand against them. That actually triggered a broader reconciliation process.

Mr. ANDREWS. My time has expired. I will quickly say that not having anything to do with al Qaeda is one thing, wanting to have something to do with the new government is quite another.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman.

The gentleman from Virginia, Mr. Forbes.

Mr. FORBES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. General, Ambassador, thank you so much for being here.

The question I am going to ask you, you might not be able to answer. I just haven't found who could articulate this answer best. So I am going to try it on the two of you.

Let me set it up by saying how much I appreciate what both of you do. The chairman and I had the privilege of spending Christmas Eve with both of you in Iraq this year. We thank you for that opportunity. I know you mentioned yesterday you thought your men and women that were serving there were America's newest Greatest Generation. That is certainly true. All the people we talked to, not one exception, they believed in what you are doing.

I get frustrated sometimes, too, when I see charts coming up that suggest \$1 trillion over the next 10 years. But I don't see a chart that talks about the fact that just the deficits we will have on Social Security and Medicare will be 53 times that amount. We talked about borrowing money. We just borrowed \$168 billion to give to

people to help feel good about the economy. All of that, put it in a bag, shake it up, put it on the shelf.

I want to cut to the chase on this. When I am traveling around, I am looking at average homemaker, factory worker, salesman, who have children, and they are looking and saying some of what you heard today. We are having to spend \$3 something for a gallon of gas. We have to make a tough choice. We have to spend X number of dollars for a gallon of milk. That is a tough choice.

The question they are trying to grapple with inside is, how come it is worth \$608 billion for them and their family to spend in Iraq for safety and security?

General, I want to preface it by, yesterday, I think your response to Senator Warner was—when he asked you, were we safer in America because we are in Iraq, and you said, yes. The result of the question though, I want to also ask, if we prematurely pull out of Iraq, are we less safe in America? When we talk about things like we just mentioned earlier, enormous national interest, al Qaeda strengthening in Iraq, sectarian violence, all those things people say, that is wonderful; we support them, but is it worth \$608 billion? How do we answer the housewife, factory worker, whatever, and say, this is why it is important to you that we spend these moneys and do this fight?

General PETRAEUS. Again, I think that what happens in Iraq has ripple effects that certainly will ripple all the way right into the United States. If there is a disruption to the oil flow, just as an example—which is, by the way, flowing quite well out of Iraq, and they have exceeded their goals for oil export on top of course what they are getting paid for it—but would find an even higher price at the gas tank.

If there are, again, if there is widespread regional instability and all the rest of that, again, the repercussions eventually will be felt in the United States. More immediately of course is the impact of al Qaeda being able to establish a base there from which it could then project trained and possibly equipped terrorists that, again, eventually all has an impact, as it has in the past, on the United States and on our own citizens.

So, as I have stated here this morning and said yesterday before the committees, we have an enormous interest in doing all that we can to get this right. It is of huge importance to our country.

Mr. FORBES. Ambassador.

Ambassador CROCKER. I would just add to that, Congressman, I was in Lebanon in the early 1980's, and when we withdrew our Marines from Lebanon in early 1984 after the Marine barracks bombing in October of 1983, countries in the region made some judgments about what the United States was willing to do in Iran. Iran and Syria in particular made some judgments, and those judgments, which I think were incorrect judgments, continue to inform their actions today, over a quarter of a century later.

Were we to take the decision to disengage from Iraq without regard to the conditions and the consequences, the region and indeed the world would also come to conclusions about the will of the United States that I think would have some very grave consequences, not just in Iraq but for U.S. interests more broadly.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. We will have to close this hearing at 12:30 for the staff to prepare for the 1 hearing that we have scheduled. We will do our best to get as many in between now and then. General, we thank you for your patience with us.

Ms. Davis.

Mrs. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to you, General, Mr. Ambassador, and really to all the men and women who are sacrificing along with you today.

I wanted to just ask you for a minute about the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA). Mr. Ambassador, you referenced that in your remarks, and I know also at the Senate hearing yesterday it was mentioned, and that the Iraqi Parliament would have an opportunity to vote, as I understand it, on the Status of Forces Agreement negotiated by the executive branch and the government of Iraq, while the United States Congress would not. That strikes people in our districts as strange. I wonder if you could please comment on that. Why would we not have a say in that as being proposed?

I wonder if you could also talk about how it is being used as leverage in moving us to the outcomes that we are looking to in moving our troops out of Iraq.

Ambassador CROCKER. It is our intention to negotiate the Status of Forces Agreement basically as we have done with some 80 other similar agreements with different countries. Each one of those agreements has both its unique aspects and also broadly similar stipulations as well that are shared among the agreements.

This one will have as its unique aspects the authorities and protections that our forces would need to continue operations after the end of the year. But it is our intention that this will be negotiated as an executive agreement, as all the other SOFAs are. We have had only one SOFA, and that is with NATO, that has risen to the level of requiring Senate advice and consent because it does have explicit security commitments in it.

We do not intend for this Status of Forces Agreement to rise to that level. So it will not trigger the treaty ratification process. Iraq has its own system, and I would say at this point it is not clear exactly how that will play out, whether this agreement would actually go to the Council of Representatives for a vote or whether it would simply be read to the Council of Representatives. We will handle this certainly within the context of our own system.

Mrs. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. Do you see this as a vehicle for leverage that would actually bring about a result that would not occur were it not for the agreement? Can you think of an instance in which that is true, and are we using that leverage appropriately?

Ambassador CROCKER. I am sorry, ma'am. Could you repeat that?

Mrs. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. I am interested in knowing how we would use that Status of Forces Agreement for leverage; that some Iraqi actions have to take place in order for us to move forward with that kind of an agreement that would provide the kind of security that they are looking for.

Ambassador CROCKER. Well, I think, like other agreements, it is a question of mutual interest. We both have interests in this process in ensuring that our forces do have the authorities after the ex-

piration of the Security Council Resolution to continue operations. So it is not a question I think so much of having something to give to them that we should expect payment, as it were, for. I think it is simply moving our relations to a more normal level while still ensuring that we have got the authorities we need. I think that is the benefit in it for us.

Mrs. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. I think that people would look at this, and perhaps it is another way of explaining it, but this is a unique situation that we are in. I think that the public believes that there is some role that we should be playing to at least be a greater part on consultation on that agreement.

I wonder, just very quickly, going back to the Awakening Councils, because I think that we have had an opportunity to look at that as a very positive force. You can interpret it that way, but I think others are concerned that the 80 percent or so of individuals that are not going to be included in either the army or the police, that that perhaps marriage of convenience that has occurred is going to shift back and that we are not developing the kind of strategic security there that we need. Is that a great concern to you?

Ambassador CROCKER. Actually, Congresswoman, we have had that discussion with the prime minister and other senior officials. Twenty to thirty percent, as you say, should be integrated into the security forces. The prime minister is committed to ensuring that the remainder receive employment in the civilian sector, is committed to job training programs and employment opportunity.

So the intention is that, over time, all of these individuals will be receiving gainful employment, just not all of them in the security field.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentlelady.

Mr. Wilson.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General, Ambassador, thank you very much for your service. It is with heartfelt thanks that I have for our service members and the civilians who are serving in Iraq and the region protecting American families. I say this as a veteran of 31 years in the Army Guard, as the parent of four sons who serve in the military, and as a grandparent. I am particularly grateful—my oldest son served for a year in Iraq. I am so grateful for him. This weekend, he and his wife Jennifer will have their first son. Michael McCrory Wilson will be born this weekend.

Additionally, when I visited with you last month, I had the privilege of visiting with my son who is a doctor in the Navy. He arrived back home with his three children under five on Easter evening. So it has been an extraordinary time for our family. Our family understands the best way to protect American families is to beat the terrorists overseas. The best way to win the war is to have victory, and not bring the war home.

So I really appreciate, again, what you are doing. I believe the enemy have a clear plan. And I really refer to Zawahiri, the al Qaeda spokesman for Osama bin Laden, on July 9, 2005, came up with the plan: The first stage, expel the Americans from Iraq. The second stage, establish authority in Iraq. The third stage, extend the jihad waive to the secular countries neighboring Iraq. That would mean Saudi Arabia. It would mean Turkey. It would mean

Egypt. It would mean the Persian Gulf states of Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Dubai. And then the fourth stage, the clash with Israel, that is the extermination of the people of Israel.

Now if al Qaeda achieves their goals, it is my view that they would, after the extermination of the people of Israel, after the conquest of the region, will they attack America again, or will they be satisfied with the fruits of what they have stolen?

Ambassador CROCKER. Congressman, that is exactly why a base in Iraq is so important to al Qaeda, to be, as I said, and as you have just quoted from Zawahiri, a base in the Arab world. The re-establishment of the caliphate, according to their ideology, is an essential goal.

I spent a lot of time thinking about al Qaeda. I was in Pakistan for two-and-a-half years. That is where I first had the pleasure of meeting you. It is my judgment that al Qaeda will seek the space and find the opportunity to strike again after us, if they possibly can.

So while I would not disagree with Zawahiri's analysis, I would not be confident that al Qaeda would take it in phases. I think once they have, if they can get a secure base, I would assume that they are going to use that to plan attacks in different spheres. They may not go from A to B to C to strike at us. We could come right after A. That is why it is so essential to see that they do not reestablish themselves in Iran.

Mr. WILSON. Additionally, a statement I would like to make is, we have a radio talk show host at home who is extremely articulate, who is very supportive of you, General Petraeus; of you, Ambassador Crocker. His name is Keven Cohen. He has stated that every day that there's not an attack on the United States is a day of success.

So I want to thank you for the days, years of success that we have had. I believe it is because of the commitment of the American men and women, military and civilian, who have put their lives on the line. I have visited in the region 10 times now. Every time I go, I am so encouraged by the young people I meet, of all ranks, who are very supportive of our efforts to protect American families by defeating the terrorists overseas.

I just want to thank you so much for what both of you and your personnel have done for our country. God bless you.

Ambassador CROCKER. Thank you, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much. We will have to close our hearing out. We will begin the 1 hearing with Mr. Marshall and proceed from there on with those that did not have the opportunity to ask questions at this hearing.

Gentlemen, we thank you for your testimony, we thank you for your service. We appreciate it. We appreciate your leadership, and those fine young people that serve under you. Thank you, again.

[Whereupon, at 12:33 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]



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**A P P E N D I X**

APRIL 9, 2008

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**PREPARED STATEMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD**

APRIL 9, 2008

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## Report to Congress on the Situation in Iraq

General David H. Petraeus  
Commander, Multi-National Force–Iraq  
8-9 April 2008

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide an update on the security situation in Iraq and to discuss the recommendations I recently provided to my chain of command.

Since Ambassador Crocker and I appeared before you seven months ago, there has been significant but uneven security progress in Iraq. Since September, levels of violence and civilian deaths have been reduced substantially, Al Qaeda-Iraq and a number of other extremist elements have been dealt serious blows, the capabilities of Iraqi Security Force elements have grown, and there has been noteworthy involvement of local Iraqis in local security. Nonetheless, the situation in certain areas is still unsatisfactory and innumerable challenges remain. Moreover, as events in the past two weeks have reminded us and as I have repeatedly cautioned, the progress made since last spring is fragile and reversible. Still, security in Iraq is better than it was when Ambassador Crocker and I reported to you last September, and it is significantly better than it was 15 months ago when Iraq was on the brink of civil war and the decision was made to deploy additional US forces to Iraq.

A number of factors have contributed to the progress that has been made. First, of course, has been the impact of increased numbers of Coalition and Iraqi Forces. You are well aware of the U.S. surge. Less recognized is that Iraq has also conducted a surge, adding well over 100,000 additional soldiers and police to the ranks of its security forces in 2007 and slowly increasing its capability to deploy and employ these forces.

A second factor has been the employment of Coalition and Iraqi Forces in the conduct of counterinsurgency operations across the country, deployed together to safeguard the Iraqi people, to pursue Al Qaeda-Iraq, to combat criminals and militia extremists, to foster local reconciliation, and to enable political and economic progress.

Another important factor has been the attitudinal shift among certain elements of the Iraqi population. Since the first Sunni "Awakening" in late 2006, Sunni communities in Iraq increasingly have rejected AQI's indiscriminate violence and extremist ideology. These communities also recognized that they could not share in Iraq's bounty if they didn't participate in the political arena. Over time, Awakenings have prompted tens of thousands of Iraqis—some, former insurgents—to contribute to local security as so-called "Sons of Iraq." With their assistance and with relentless pursuit of Al Qaeda-Iraq, the threat posed by AQI—while still lethal and substantial—has been reduced significantly.

The recent flare-up in Basrah, southern Iraq, and Baghdad underscored the importance of the ceasefire declared by Moqtada al-Sadr last fall as another factor in the overall reduction in violence. Recently, of course, some militia elements became active again. Though a Sadr stand-down order resolved the situation to a degree, the flare-up also highlighted the destructive role Iran has played in funding, training, arming, and directing the so-called Special Groups and generated renewed concern about Iran in the minds of many Iraqi leaders. Unchecked, the Special Groups pose the greatest long-term threat to the viability of a democratic Iraq.

As we look to the future, our task together with our Iraqi partners will be to build on the progress achieved and to deal with the many challenges that remain. I do believe that we can do this while continuing the ongoing drawdown of the surge forces.

#### The Nature of the Conflict

In September, I described the fundamental nature of the conflict in Iraq as a competition among ethnic and sectarian communities for power and resources. This competition continues, influenced heavily by outside actors, and its resolution remains the key to producing long-term stability in Iraq.

Various elements push Iraq's ethno-sectarian competition toward violence. Terrorists, insurgents, militia extremists, and criminal gangs pose significant threats. Al Qaeda's senior leaders, who still view Iraq as the central front in their global strategy, send funding, direction, and foreign fighters to Iraq. Actions by neighboring states compound Iraq's challenges. Syria has taken some steps to reduce the flow of foreign fighters through its territory, but not enough to shut down the key network that supports AQI. And Iran has fueled the violence in a particularly damaging way, through its lethal support to the Special Groups. Finally, insufficient Iraqi governmental capacity, lingering sectarian mistrust, and corruption add to Iraq's problems.

These challenges and recent weeks' violence notwithstanding, Iraq's ethno-sectarian competition in many areas is now taking place more through debate and less through violence. In fact, the recent escalation of violence in Baghdad and southern Iraq was dealt with temporarily, at least, by most parties acknowledging that the rational way ahead is political dialogue rather than street fighting.

#### Current Situation and Trends

As I stated at the outset, though Iraq obviously remains a violent country, we do see progress in the security arena.

As this chart [Slide 1] illustrates, for nearly six months, security incidents have been at a level not seen since early-to-mid-2005, though the level did spike in recent weeks as a result of the violence in Basrah and Baghdad. The level of incidents has, however, begun to turn down again, though the period ahead will be a sensitive one.

As our primary mission is to help protect the population, we closely monitor the number of Iraqi civilians killed due to violence. As this chart [Slide 2] reflects, civilian deaths have decreased over the past year to a level not seen since the February 2006 Samarra Mosque bombing that set off the cycle of sectarian violence that tore the very fabric of Iraqi society in 2006 and early 2007. This chart also reflects our increasing use of Iraqi-provided reports, with the top line reflecting Coalition and Iraqi data and the bottom line reflecting Coalition-confirmed data only. No matter which data is used, civilian deaths due to violence have been reduced significantly, though more work clearly needs to be done.

Ethno-sectarian violence is a particular concern in Iraq, as it is a cancer that continues to spread if left unchecked. As the box on the bottom left of this chart [Slide 3] shows, the number of deaths due to ethno-sectarian violence has fallen since we testified last September. A big factor has been the reduction of ethno-sectarian violence in Baghdad, density plots for which are shown

in the boxes depicting Iraq's capital over time. Some of this decrease is, to be sure, due to sectarian hardening of certain Baghdad neighborhoods; however, that is only a partial explanation as countless sectarian fault lines and numerous mixed neighborhoods still exist in Baghdad and elsewhere. In fact, Coalition and Iraqi Forces have focused along the fault lines to reduce the violence and enable Sunni and Shia leaders to begin the long process of healing in their local communities.

As this next chart [Slide 4] shows, even though the number of high profile attacks increased in March as AQI lashed out, the current level of such attacks remains far below its height a year ago. Moreover, as we have helped improve security and focused on enemy networks, we have seen a decrease in the effectiveness of such attacks. The number of deaths due to ethno-sectarian violence, in particular, has remained relatively low, illustrating the enemy's inability to date to re-ignite the cycle of ethno-sectarian violence.

The emergence of Iraqi volunteers helping to secure their local communities has been an important development. As this chart [Slide 5] depicts, there are now over 91,000 Sons of Iraq—Shia as well as Sunni—under contract to help Coalition and Iraqi Forces protect their neighborhoods and secure infrastructure and roads. These volunteers have contributed significantly in various areas, and the savings in vehicles not lost because of reduced violence—not to mention the priceless lives saved—have far outweighed the cost of their monthly contracts.

Sons of Iraq have also contributed to the discovery of improvised explosive devices and weapons and explosives caches. As this next chart [Slide 6] shows, in fact, we have already found more caches in 2008 than we found in all of 2006. Given the importance of the Sons of Iraq, we are working closely with the Iraqi Government to transition them into the Iraqi Security Forces or other forms of employment, and over 21,000 have already been accepted into the Police or Army or other government jobs. This process has been slow, but it is taking place, and we will continue to monitor it carefully.

Al Qaeda also recognizes the significance of the Sons of Iraq, and AQI elements have targeted them repeatedly. However, these attacks—in addition to AQI's use of women, children, and the handicapped as suicide bombers—have further alienated AQI from the Iraqi people. And the tenacious pursuit of AQI, together with AQI's loss of local support in many areas, has substantially reduced its capability, numbers, and freedom of movement. This chart [Slide 7] displays the cumulative effect of the effort against AQI and its insurgent allies. As you can see, we have reduced considerably the areas in which AQI enjoys support and sanctuary, though there clearly is more to be done.

Having noted that progress, AQI is still capable of lethal attacks, and we must maintain relentless pressure on the organization, on the networks outside Iraq that support it, and on the resource flows that sustain it. This chart [Slide 8] lays out the comprehensive strategy that we, the Iraqis, and our interagency and international partners are employing to reduce what AQI needs. As you can see, defeating Al Qaeda in Iraq requires not just actions by our elite counter-terrorist forces, but also major operations by Coalition and Iraqi conventional forces, a sophisticated intelligence effort, political reconciliation, economic and social programs, information operations initiatives, diplomatic activity, the employment of counterinsurgency principles in detainee operations, and many other actions. Related to this effort, I applaud Congress' support for additional intelligence,

surveillance, and reconnaissance assets in the upcoming Supplemental, as ISR is vital to the success of our operations in Iraq and elsewhere.

As we combat AQI, we must remember that doing so not only reduces a major source of instability in Iraq; it also weakens an organization that Al Qaeda's senior leaders view as a tool to spread its influence and foment regional instability. Usama bin Ladin and Ayman al-Zawahiri have consistently advocated exploiting the situation in Iraq, and we have also seen AQI involved in destabilizing activities in the wider Mid-east region.

Together with the Iraqi Security Forces, we have also focused on the Special Groups. These elements are funded, trained, armed, and directed by Iran's Qods Force, with help from Lebanese Hezbollah. It was these groups that launched Iranian rockets and mortar rounds at Iraq's seat of government two weeks ago, causing loss of innocent life and fear in the capital, and requiring Iraqi and Coalition actions in response. Iraqi and Coalition leaders have repeatedly noted their desire that Iran live up to promises made by President Ahmedinajad and other senior Iranian leaders to stop their support for the Special Groups. However, nefarious activities by the Qods Force have continued, and Iraqi leaders now clearly recognize the threat they pose to Iraq. We should all watch Iranian actions closely in the weeks and months ahead, as they will show the kind of relationship Iran wishes to have with its neighbor and the character of future Iranian involvement in Iraq.

#### Iraqi Security Forces

The Iraqi Security Forces have continued to develop since September, and we have transferred responsibilities to Iraqi Forces as their capabilities and the conditions on the ground have permitted. Currently, as this chart [Slide 9] shows, half of Iraq's 18 provinces are under provincial Iraqi control. Many of these provinces—not just the successful provinces in the Kurdish Regional Government area, but also a number of southern provinces—have done well. Challenges have emerged in some others, including, of course, Basrah. Nonetheless, this process will continue, and we expect Anbar and Qadisiyah Provinces to transition in the months ahead.

Iraqi Forces have grown significantly since September, and over 540,000 individuals now serve in the Iraqi Security Forces. The number of combat battalions capable of taking the lead in ~~operations~~, albeit with some Coalition support, has grown to well over 100 [Slide 10]. These units are bearing an increasing share of the burden, as evidenced by the fact that Iraqi Security Force losses have recently been three times our own. We will, of course, conduct careful after action reviews with our Iraqi partners in the wake of recent operations, as there were units and leaders found wanting in some cases, and some of our assessments may be downgraded as a result. Nonetheless, the performance of many units was solid, especially once they got their footing and gained a degree of confidence, and certain Iraqi elements proved quite capable.

Underpinning the advances of the past year have been improvements in Iraq's security institutions. An increasingly robust Iraqi-run training base enabled the Iraqi Security Forces to grow by over 133,000 soldiers and police over the past 16 months. And the still-expanding training base is expected to generate an additional 50,000 Iraqi soldiers and 16 Army and Special Operations battalions throughout the rest of 2008, along with over 23,000 police and 8 National Police battalions.

Additionally, Iraq's security ministries are steadily improving their ability to execute their budgets. As this chart [Slide 11] shows, in 2007, as in 2006, Iraq's security ministries spent more on their forces than the United States provided through the Iraqi Security Forces Fund (ISFF). We anticipate that Iraq will spend over \$8 billion on security this year and \$11 billion next year, and this projection enabled us recently to reduce significantly our Iraqi Security Forces Fund request for fiscal year 2009 from \$5.1 billion to \$2.8 billion.

While improved, Iraqi Security Forces are not yet ready to defend Iraq or maintain security throughout the country on their own. Recent operations in Basrah highlight improvements in the ability of the Iraqi Security Forces to deploy substantial numbers of units, supplies, and replacements on very short notice; they certainly could not have deployed a division's worth of Army and Police units on such short notice a year ago. On the other hand, the recent operations also underscored the considerable work still to be done in the areas of logistics, force enablers, staff development, and command and control.

We also continue to help Iraq through the U.S. Foreign Military Sales program. As of March 2008, the Iraqi government has purchased over \$2 billion worth of equipment and services of American origin through FMS. Since September, and with your encouragement of the organizations in the FMS process, delivery has improved as the FMS system has strived to support urgent wartime requirements. On a related note, I would ask that Congress consider restoring funding for the International Military Education and Training Program, which supports education for mid- and senior-level Iraqi military and civilian leaders and is an important component of the development of the leaders Iraq will need in the future.

#### Upcoming Challenges

While security has improved in many areas and the Iraqi Security Forces are shouldering more of the load, the situation in Iraq remains exceedingly complex and challenging. Iraq could face a resurgence of AQI or additional Shia groups could violate Moqtada al-Sadr's cease-fire order and return to violence. External actors, like Iran, could stoke violence within Iraq, and actions by other neighbors could undermine the security situation as well.

Other challenges result, paradoxically, from improved security, which has provided opportunities for political and economic progress and improved services at the local, provincial, and national levels. But the improvements have also created expectations that progress will continue. In the coming months, Iraq's leaders must strengthen governmental capacity, execute budgets, pass additional legislation, conduct provincial elections, carry out a census, determine the status of disputed territories, and resettle internally displaced persons and refugees. These tasks would challenge any government, much less a still developing government tested by war.

The Commander's Emergency Response Program, the State Department's Quick Response Fund, and USAID programs enable us to help Iraq deal with its challenges. To that end, I respectfully ask that you provide us by June the additional CERP funds requested in the Supplemental. These funds have an enormous impact. As I noted earlier, the salaries paid to the Sons of Iraq alone cost far less than the cost savings in vehicles not lost due to the enhanced security in local communities. Encouragingly, the Iraqi government recently allocated \$300 million for us to manage as "Iraqi CERP" to perform projects for their people, while building their own capacity to do so. The Iraqi government has also committed \$163 million to gradually assume Sons of Iraq contracts, \$510 million for small business loans, and \$196 million for a

Joint Training, Education, and Reintegration Program. The Iraqi government pledges to provide more as they execute the budget passed two months ago. Nonetheless, it is hugely important to have our resources continue, even as Iraqi funding begins to outstrip ours.

#### Recommendations

Last month I provided my chain of command recommendations for the way ahead in Iraq. During that process, I noted the objective of retaining and building on our hard-fought security gains while we draw down to the pre-surge level of 15 brigade combat teams. I emphasized the need to continue work with our Iraqi partners to secure the population and to transition responsibilities to the Iraqis as quickly as conditions permit, but without jeopardizing the security gains that have been made.

As in September, my recommendations are informed by operational and strategic considerations. The operational considerations include recognition that:

- the military surge has achieved progress, but that the progress is reversible;
- Iraqi Security Forces have strengthened their capabilities but still must grow further;
- the provincial elections in the fall, refugee returns, detainee releases, and efforts to resolve provincial boundary disputes and Article 140 issues will be very challenging;
- the transition of Sons of Iraq into the Iraqi Security Forces or other pursuits will require time and careful monitoring;
- withdrawing too many forces too quickly could jeopardize the progress of the past year; and
- performing the necessary tasks in Iraq will require sizable conventional forces as well as special operations forces and advisor teams.

The strategic considerations include recognition that:

- the strain on the US military, especially on its ground forces, has been considerable;
- a number of the security challenges inside Iraq are also related to significant regional and global threats; and
- a failed state in Iraq would pose serious consequences for the greater fight against Al Qaeda, for regional stability, for the already existing humanitarian crisis in Iraq, and for the effort to counter malign Iranian influence.

After weighing these factors, I recommended to my chain of command that we continue the drawdown of the surge combat forces and that, upon the withdrawal of the last surge brigade combat team in July, we undertake a 45-day period of consolidation and evaluation. At the end of that period, we will commence a process of assessment to examine the conditions on the ground and, over time, determine when we can make recommendations for further reductions. This process will be continuous, with recommendations for further reductions made as conditions permit. This approach does not allow establishment of a set withdrawal timetable; however, it does provide the flexibility those of us on the ground need to preserve the still fragile security gains our troopers have fought so hard and sacrificed so much to achieve.

With this approach, the security achievements of 2007 and early 2008 can form a foundation for the gradual establishment of sustainable security in Iraq. This is not only important to the 27 million citizens of Iraq; it is also vitally important to those in the Gulf region, to the citizens of the United States, and to the global community. It clearly is in our national interest to help Iraq prevent the resurgence of Al Qaeda in the heart of the Arab world, to help Iraq resist Iranian

encroachment on its sovereignty, to avoid renewed ethno-sectarian violence that could spill over Iraq's borders and make the existing refugee crisis even worse, and to enable Iraq to expand its role in the regional and global economies.

Closing Comments

In closing, I want to comment briefly on those serving our Nation in Iraq. We have asked a great deal of them and of their families, and they have made enormous sacrifices. My keen personal awareness of the strain on them and on the force as a whole has been an important factor in my recommendations.

The Congress, the Executive Branch, and our fellow citizens have done an enormous amount to support our troopers and their loved ones, and all of us are grateful for that. Nothing means more to those in harm's way than the knowledge that their country appreciates their sacrifices and those of their families.

Indeed, all Americans should take great pride in the men and women serving our Nation in Iraq and in the courage, determination, resilience, and initiative they demonstrate each and every day. It remains the greatest of honors to soldier with them.

Thank you very much.



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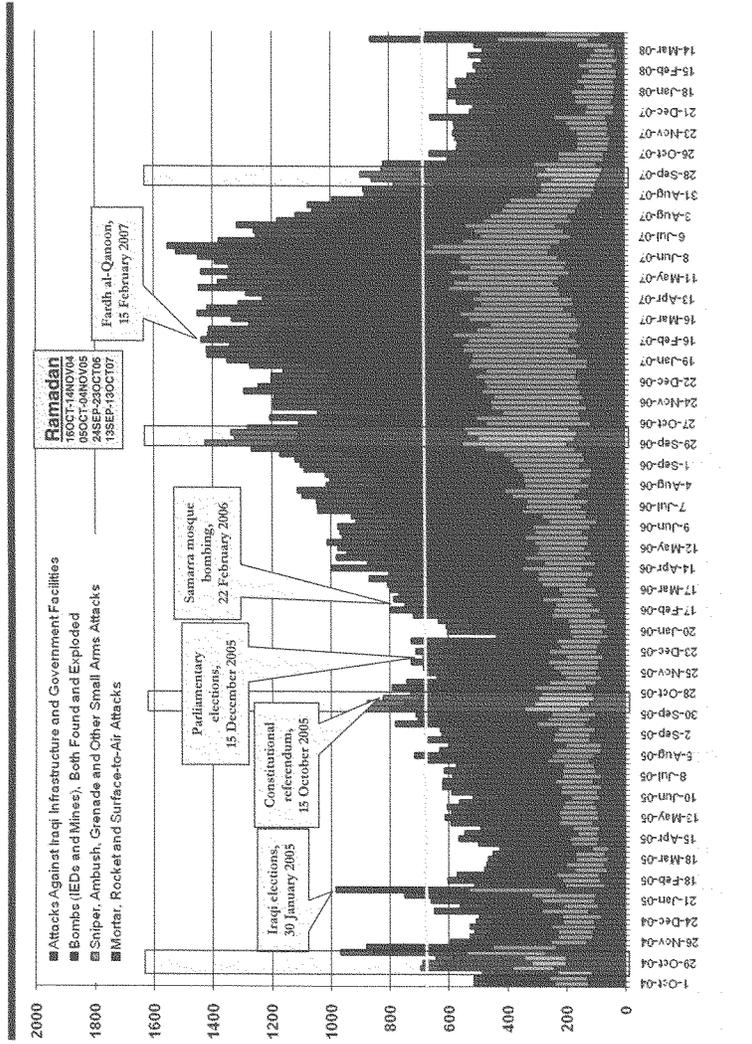
*Multi-National Force-Iraq*

*Charts to accompany the testimony of  
GEN David H. Petraeus*

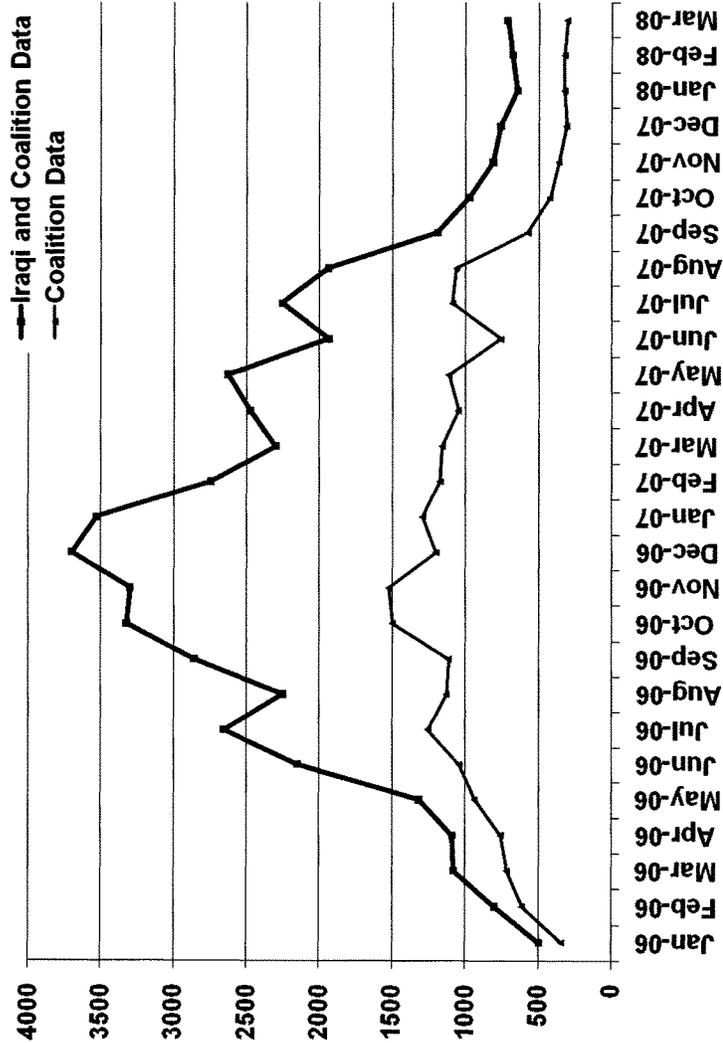
8-9 April 2008

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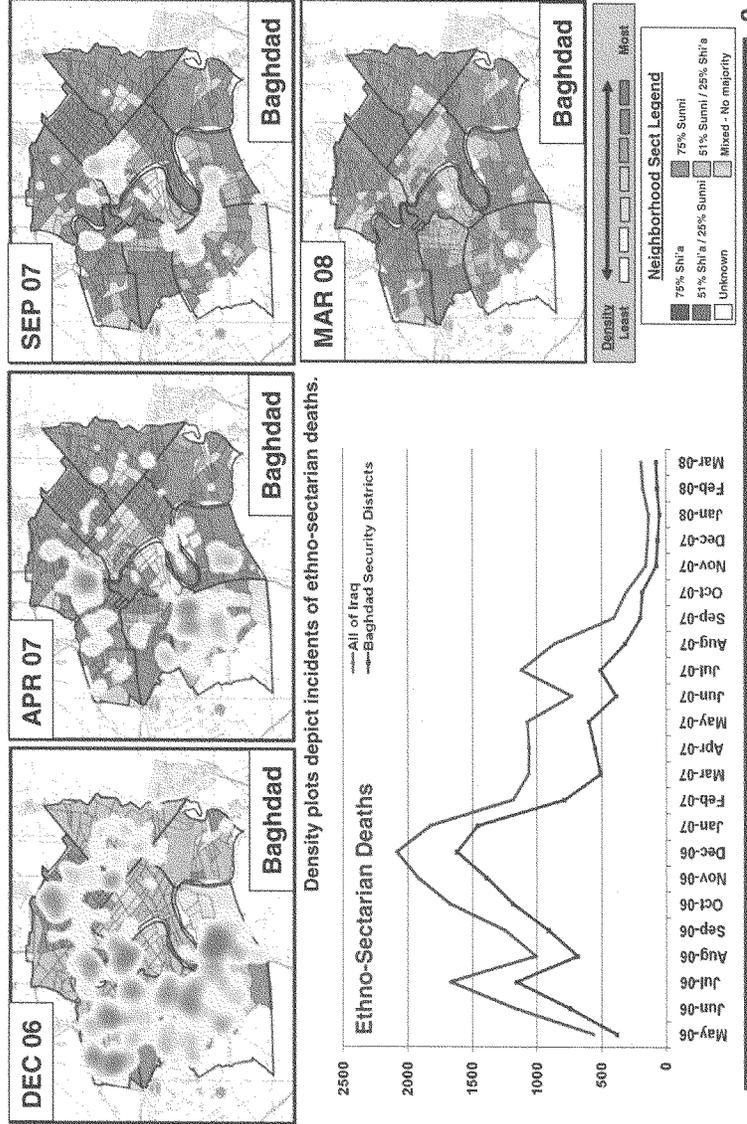
## Weekly Security Incidents



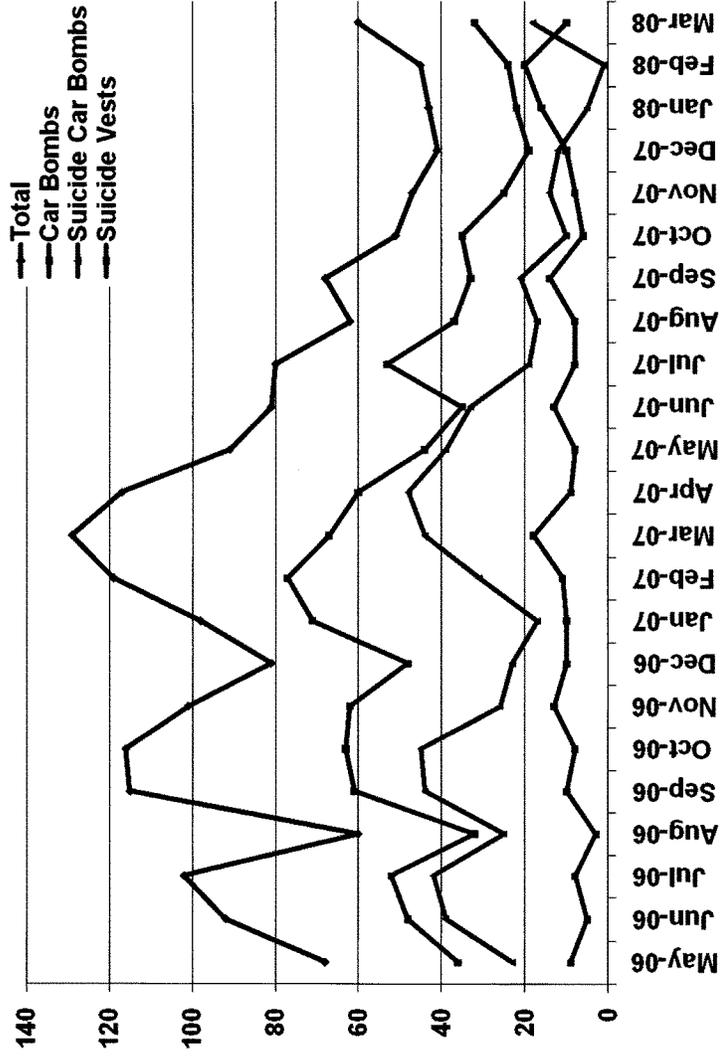
# Civilian Deaths



# Ethno-Sectarian Violence



### High Profile Attacks (Explosions)

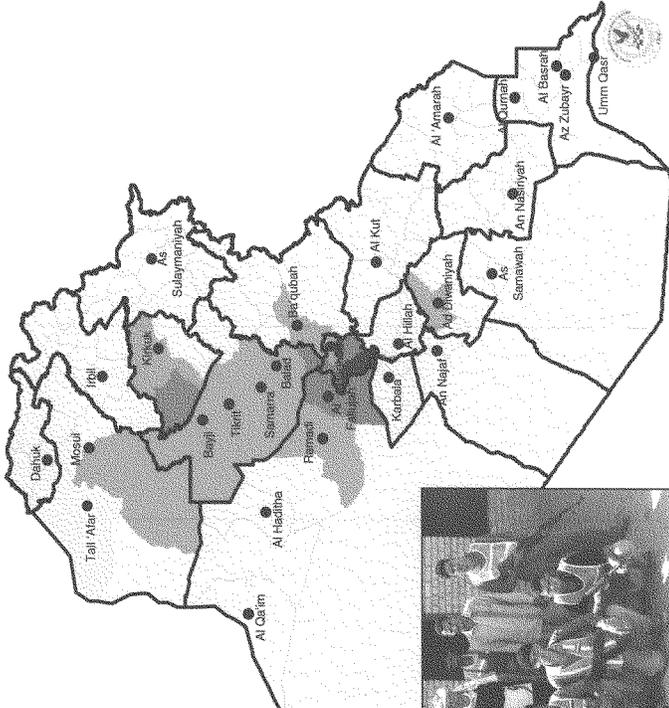


# Sons of Iraq Concerned Local Citizens

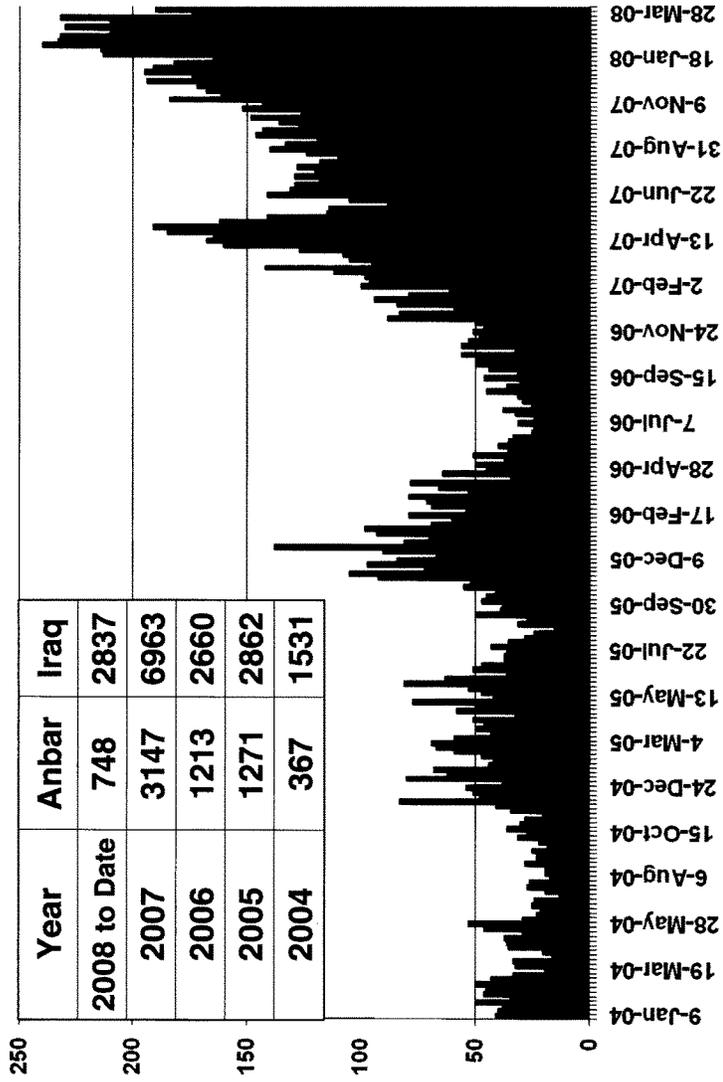
**Total Contracted:** 91,641  
**Volunteers:** 4,605  
**Sunni:** 78%  
**Shia:** 19%  
**Other:** 3%

**Transitioned:** 21,128  
**Anbar:** 8,206  
**Iraqi Security Forces:** 8,241  
**Non-Security Employment:** 4,681

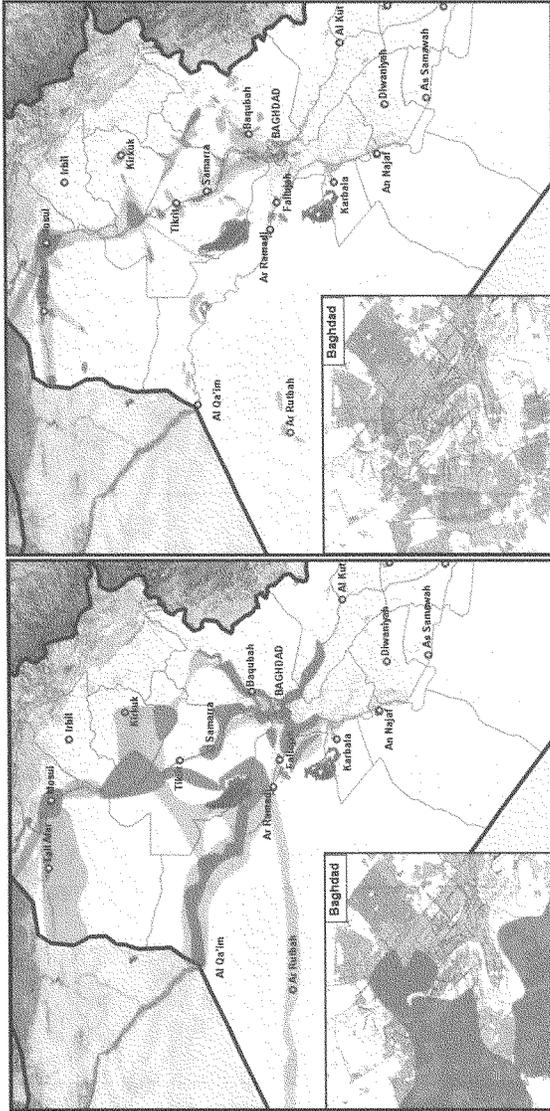
**Costs:**  
**Average Monthly CERP:** \$16M



## Caches Found and Cleared



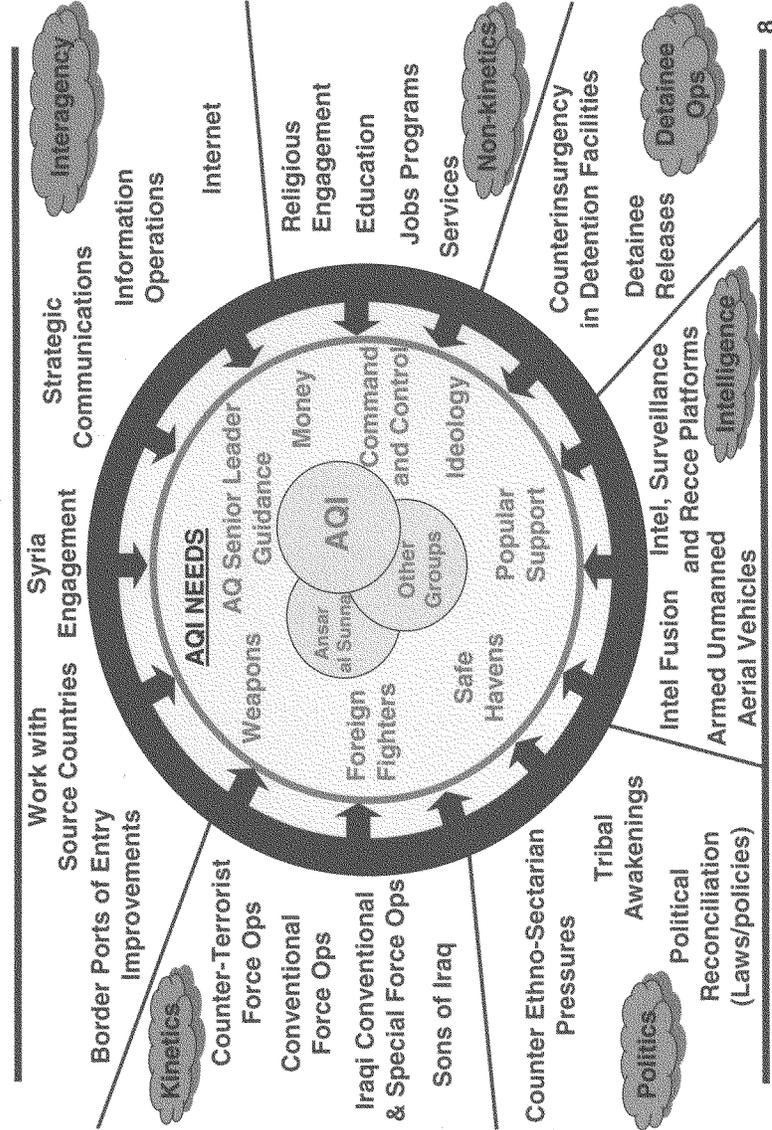
*Al Qaeda in Iraq and Sunni Insurgents*



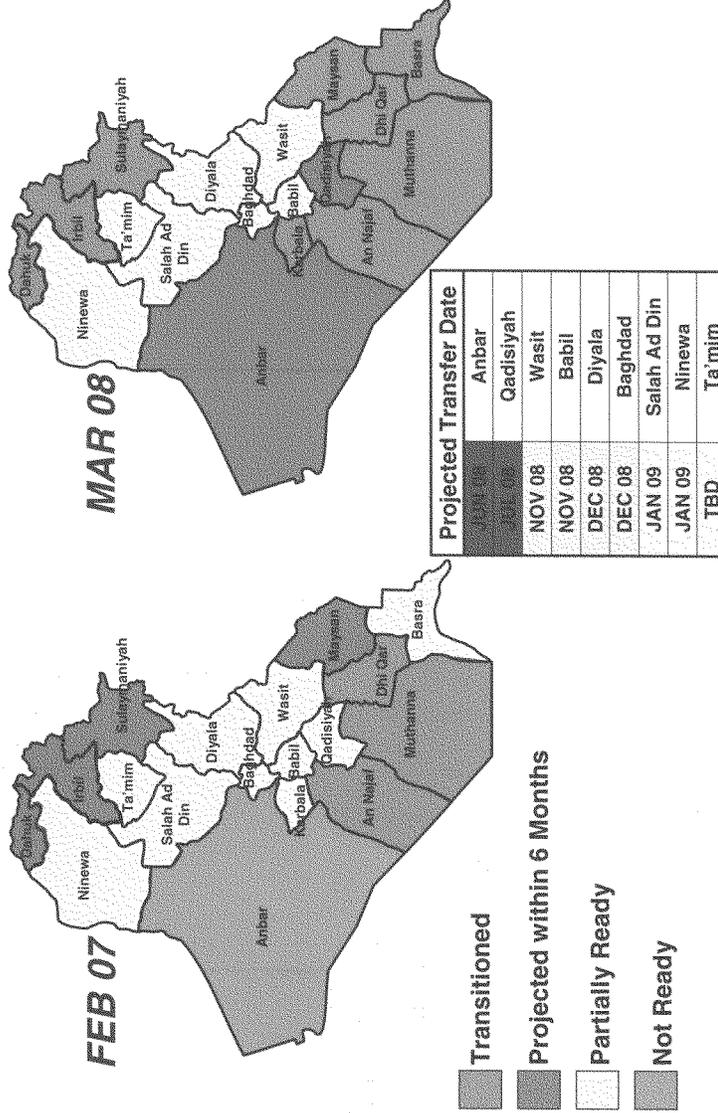
March 2008

December 2006

# Anaconda Strategy vs. AQI

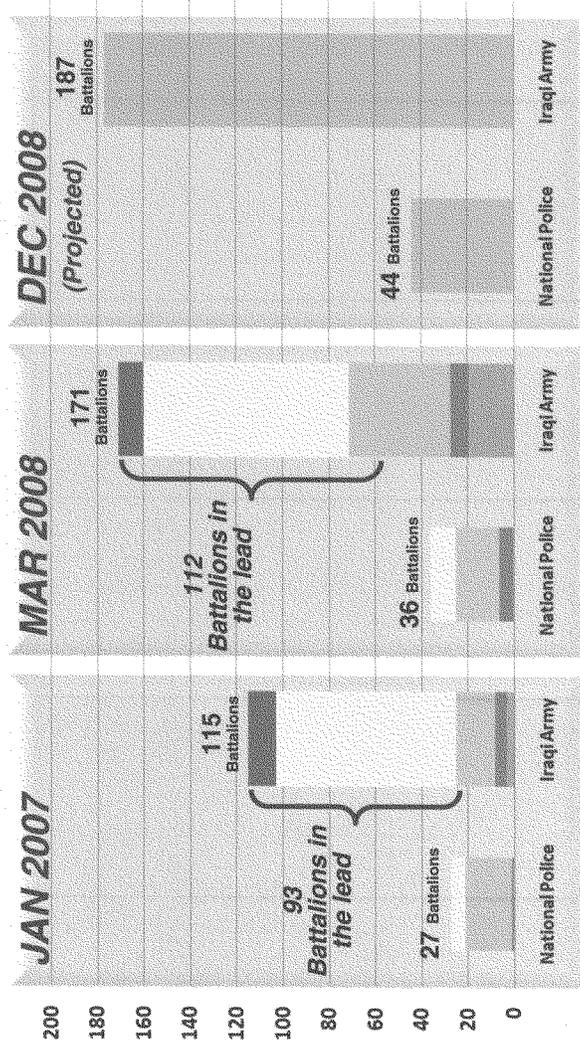


**Provincial Iraqi Control**



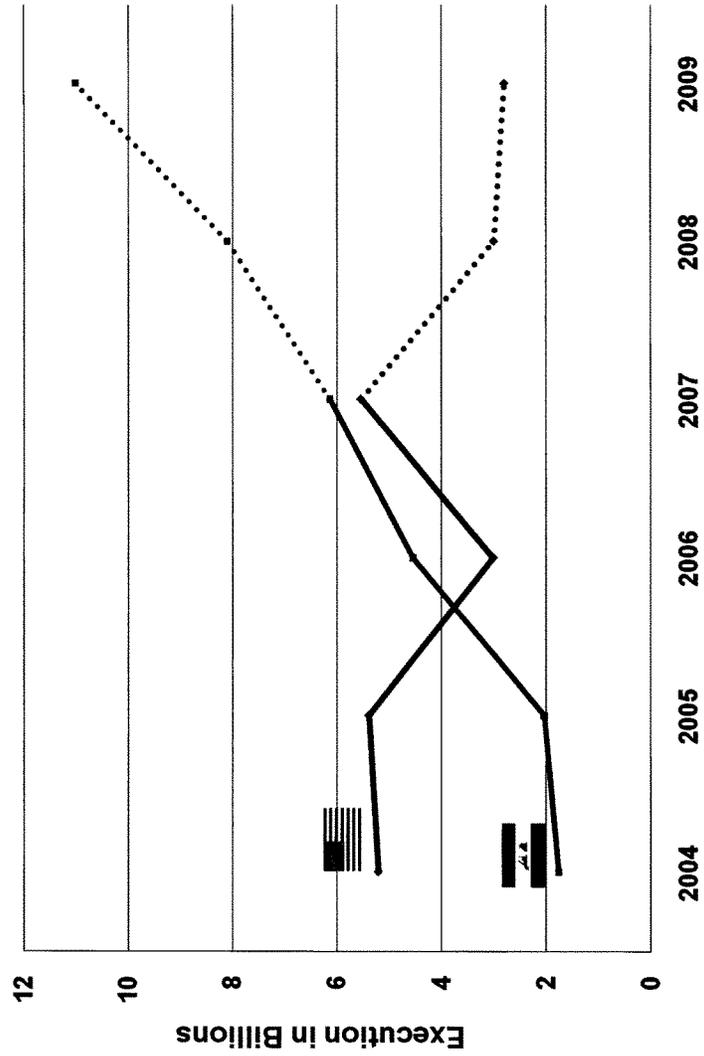
## Iraqi Combat Battalion Generation

Infantry, Armor, Special Operations, and National Police Battalions



Operational Readiness Assessment = ORA

## Iraq Security Forces Expenditures



78

TESTIMONY

OF

AMBASSADOR RYAN C. CROCKER

BEFORE THE

HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

APRIL 9, 2008

Mr. Chairman, Congressman Hunter, and Members of the Committee:

It is an honor to appear before you today to provide my assessment of political, economic and diplomatic developments in Iraq. When General Petraeus and I reported to you in September, I gave my considered judgment as to whether our goals in Iraq were attainable – can Iraq develop into a united, stable country with a democratically-elected government operating under the rule of law?

Last September, I said that the cumulative trajectory of political, economic and diplomatic developments in Iraq was upwards, although the slope of that line was not steep. Developments over the last seven months have strengthened my sense of a positive trend. Immense challenges remain and progress is uneven and often frustratingly slow; but there is progress. Sustaining that progress will require continuing U.S. resolve and commitment. What has been achieved is substantial, but it is also reversible. Five years ago, the statue of Saddam Hussein was toppled in Baghdad. The euphoria of that moment evaporated long ago. But as Iraq emerges from the shattering violence of 2006 and the early part of 2007, there is reason to sustain that commitment and the enormous investments we have made both in the lives of our young brave men and women and our resources. Let me describe the developments upon which I base such a judgment.

Reconciliation: National and Provincial Politics

The first is at the national level in the form of legislation and the development of Iraq's parliament. In September, we were disappointed that Iraq had not yet enacted some key pieces of legislation. In the last several months, however, Iraq's parliament has

formulated, debated vigorously, and in many cases passed legislation dealing with vital issues of reconciliation and nation building. A pension law extended benefits to individuals who had previously been denied them because of their service under the former regime. The Accountability and Justice Law (de-Ba'athification reform), passed after lengthy and often contentious debate, reflects a strengthened spirit of reconciliation, as does a far-reaching Amnesty Law.

The Provincial Powers Law is a major step forward in defining the relationship between the federal and provincial governments. Passage of this legislation required debate about the fundamental nature of the state, similar in its complexity to our own lengthy and difficult debate over states' rights. The Provincial Powers Law also called for provincial elections by October 1, 2008, and an Electoral Law is now under discussion that will set the parameters for elections. All major parties have announced their support for these elections, which will be a major step forward in Iraq's political development and will set the stage for national elections in late 2009.

In January, a vote by the Council of Representatives to change the design of the Iraqi flag means the flag now flies in all parts of the country for the first time in years. The passage of the 2008 budget, with record amounts for capital expenditures, ensures that the federal and provincial governments will have the resources for public spending. All of this has been done since September. These laws are not perfect and much depends on their implementation, but they are important steps.

Also important has been the development of Iraq's Council of Representatives (CoR) as a national institution. Last summer, the CoR suffered from persistent and often paralyzing disputes over leadership and procedure. Now, it is successfully grappling with complex issues and producing viable tradeoffs and compromise packages. As debates in Iraq's parliament became more about how to resolve tough problems in a practical way, Iraqi politics have become more fluid. While politics still have a sectarian bent and basis, cross-sectarian coalitions have formed around issues, and sectarian political groupings which often were barriers to progress have become more flexible.

Let me also talk about the intangibles: attitudes among the Iraqi people. In 2006 and 2007, many people understandably questioned whether hatred between Iraqis of different sectarian backgrounds was so deep that a civil war was inevitable. The Sunni Awakening movement in al-Anbar, which so courageously confronted al-Qa'ida, continues to keep the peace in the area and keep al-Qa'ida out. Fallujah, once a symbol for violence and terror, is now one of Iraq's safest cities. The Shi'a holy cities of Najaf and Karbala are enjoying security and growing prosperity in the wake of popular rejection of extremist militia activity. The Shi'a clerical leadership – the Marja'iyah – based in Najaf – has played a quiet but important role in support of moderation and reconciliation. In Baghdad, we can see that Iraqis are not pitted against each other purely on the basis of sectarian affiliation. The security improvements of the past months have diminished the atmosphere of suspicion and allowed for acts of humanity that transcend sectarian identities.

When I arrived in Baghdad a year ago, my first visit to a city district was to the predominantly Sunni area of Dora. Surge forces were just moving into neighborhoods still gripped by al-Qa'ida. Residents also were being terrorized by extremist Shi'a militias. Less than a year later, at the end of February 2008, tens of thousands of Shi'a pilgrims walked through those streets on their way to Karbala to commemorate the martyrdom of Imam Hussein. Sunni residents offered food and water as they passed through, and some joined the pilgrimage.

News from Iraq in recent weeks has been dominated by the situation in Basrah. Taken as a snapshot, with scenes of increasing violence and masked gunmen in the streets, it is hard to see how this situation supports a narrative of progress in Iraq. And there is still very much to be done to bring full government control to the streets of Basrah and eliminate entrenched extremist, criminal, and militia groups.

When viewed with a broader lens, the Iraqi decision to combat these groups in Basrah has major significance. First, a Shi'a majority government, led by Prime Minister Maliki, has demonstrated its commitment to taking on criminals and extremists regardless of sectarian identity. Second, Iraqi Security Forces led these operations, in Basrah, and in towns and cities throughout the south. British and U.S. elements played important roles, but these were supporting roles, as they should be.

The operation in Basrah has also shaken up Iraqi politics. The Prime Minister returned to Baghdad from Basrah shortly before General Petraeus and I left for Washington – and he

is confident in his decision and determined to press the fight against illegal groups, but also determined to take a hard look at lessons learned. The efforts of the government against extremist militia elements have broad political support as a statement April 5<sup>th</sup> by virtually all of Iraq's main political leaders – Sunni, Shi'a, and Kurd – made clear.

A wildcard remains the Sadrist Trend – and whether the Iraqis can continue to drive a wedge between other elements of the Trend and Iranian-supported Special Groups. A dangerous development in the immediate wake of the Basrah operation was what appeared to be a reunification between Special Groups and the mainline Jaysh al-Mahdi (JAM). We also saw a potential collapse of the JAM “freeze” in military operations. As the situation unfolded, however, Muqtada al-Sadr issued a statement that disavowed anyone possessing “heavy weapons” – which would include the signature weapons of the Special Groups. This statement can further sharpen the distinction between members of the Sadrist Trend, who should not pose a threat to the Iraqi state, and members of the Special Groups, who very much do.

One conclusion I draw from these signs of progress is that the strategy that began with the Surge is working. This does not mean, however, that U.S. support should be open-ended or that the level and nature of our engagement should not diminish over time. It is in this context that we have begun negotiating a bilateral relationship between Iraq and the United States. In August, Iraq's five principal leaders requested a long-term relationship with the United States, to include economic, political, diplomatic, and security cooperation. The heart of this relationship will be a legal framework for the

presence of American troops similar to that which exists in nearly 80 countries around the world.

The Iraqis view the negotiation of this framework as a strong affirmation of Iraqi sovereignty – placing Iraq on par with other U.S. allies and removing the stigma of Chapter VII status under the U.N. Charter, pursuant to which Coalition forces presently operate. Such an agreement is in Iraq’s interest – and ours. U.S. forces will remain in Iraq beyond December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2008, when the U.N. resolution presently governing their presence expires. Our troops will need basic authorizations and protections to continue operations – and this agreement will provide those authorizations and protections.

The agreement will not establish permanent bases in Iraq, and we anticipate that it will expressly forswear them. The agreement will not specify troop levels, and it will not tie the hands of the next Administration. Our aim is to ensure that the next President arrives in office with a stable foundation upon which to base policy decisions, and that is precisely what this agreement will do. Congress will remain fully informed as these negotiations proceed in the coming weeks and months.

Mr. Chairman, significant challenges remain in Iraq. A reinvigorated cabinet is necessary both for political balance and to improve the delivery of services to Iraq’s people. Challenges to the rule of law, especially corruption, are enormous. Disputed internal boundaries – the Article 140 process – must be resolved. The return of refugees and the internally displaced must be managed. The rights of women and minorities must

be better protected. Iraqis are aware of the challenges they face, and are working on them.

Iraq's political progress will not be linear. Developments which are on the whole positive can still have unanticipated or destabilizing consequences. The decision to hold provincial elections – vital for Iraq's democratic development and long-term stability – will also produce new strains. Some of the violence we have seen recently in southern Iraq reflects changing dynamics within the Shi'a community as the political and security context changes. Such inflection points underscore the fragility of the situation in Iraq, but it would be wrong to conclude that any eruption of violence marks the beginning of an inevitable backslide.

#### Economics and Capacity Building

In September, I reported to you that there had been some gains in Iraq's economy and in the country's efforts to build capacity to translate these gains into more effective governance and services. Iraqis have built on these gains over the past months, as is most evident in the revival of marketplaces across Iraq and the reopening of long-shuttered businesses. According to a Center for International Private Enterprise poll last month, 78 percent of Iraqi business owners surveyed expect the Iraqi economy to grow in the next two years.

With the improving security and rising government expenditures, the IMF projects that Iraq's GDP will grow 7 percent in real terms this year, and inflation has been tamed. The Dinar remains strong and the Central Bank has begun to bring down interest rates.

Iraq's 2008 budget has allocated \$13 billion for reconstruction, and a \$5 billion supplemental budget this summer will further invest export revenues in building the infrastructure and providing the services that Iraq so badly needs. This spending also benefits the United States – Iraq recently announced its decision to purchase 40 commercial aircraft from the U.S. at an estimated cost of \$5 billion.

As Iraq is now earning the financial resources it needs for bricks and mortar construction through oil production and export, our assistance focus has shifted to capacity development and an emphasis on local and post-kinetic development through our network of Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) and ministerial advisors. The era of U.S. funded major infrastructure projects is over. We are seeking to ensure that our assistance, in partnership with the Iraqis, leverages Iraq's own resources. Our 25 PRTs throughout Iraq have been working to improve provincial and local governance capabilities, particularly in budget design and execution. They are also helping to establish critical linkages between provincial and federal governments. Our PRTs are great enablers, and we are working to ensure their continued viability as our forces redeploy. The relatively small amounts they disburse through Quick Response Funds (QRF) have major impacts in local communities, and congressional support is important, as it is for other vital programs in the FY-08 Global War on Terror Supplemental request.

Iraq increasingly is using its own resources to support projects and programs that we have developed. It has committed nearly \$200 million in support of a program to provide vocational training for concerned local citizens who stood up with us in the Awakening. Our technical assistance advisers have helped design new procurement procedures for Iraq's Oil Ministry. We developed the technical specifications from which Iraq's state-owned oil company will build new oil export platforms and underwater pipelines worth over a billion dollars. And in Baghdad, in the last three months the municipality has stepped up to take over labor contracts worth \$100 million that we had been covering under the Community Stabilization Program.

Like so much else, Iraq's economy is fragile, the gains reversible and the challenges ahead substantial. Iraq will need to continue to improve governmental capacity, pass national-level hydrocarbon legislation, improve electrical production and distribution, improve the climate for foreign and domestic investment, create short- and long-term jobs and tackle the structural and economic problems of the vital agricultural sector. We will be helping the Iraqis as they take on this challenging agenda, along with other international partners including the United Nations and the World Bank.

#### Regional and International Dynamics

Along with the security surge last year, we also launched a diplomatic surge – focused on enhancing UN engagement in Iraq, anchoring the International Compact with Iraq, and

establishing an expanded neighbors process, which serves as a contact group in support of Iraq.

The United Nations has taken advantages of an expanded mandate granted to the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI) to increase the scope of its activities and the size of its staff. Under dynamic new leadership, UNAMI is playing a key role in preparing for provincial elections and in providing technical assistance to resolve disputed internal boundaries. UNHCR has returned international staff to Iraq to assist with the return of internally displaced persons and refugees. The International Compact with Iraq provides a five-year framework for Iraq to reform its economy and achieve economic self-sufficiency in exchange for long-overdue Saddam era debt relief. Preparations are underway for a ministerial level Compact meeting in Sweden next month; 74 nations were represented at last year's gathering in Egypt.

Iraq's neighbors also understand they have a major interest in Iraq's future. Turkey hosted the second ministerial meeting of Iraq's neighbors in November, and Kuwait will host the third meeting later this month. In addition to all of Iraq's neighbors, these expanded neighbors conferences also include the Permanent Five members of the Security Council, the Arab League, and the G-8.

Support from Arab capitals has not been strong – and must improve, for the sake of Iraq and the sake of the region. Bahrain's recent announcement that it will return an ambassador to Baghdad is welcome, and other Arab states should follow suit. Iraq is a

multi-ethnic state, but it is also a founding member of the Arab League and an integral part of the Arab world. Last month, Iraq hosted a meeting of the Arab Parliamentary Union, bringing the leaders of Arab parliaments and consultative councils to Iraq for the first major inter-Arab gathering since 1990. It is noteworthy that the meeting was held in the Kurdish city of Irbil, under the recently redesigned Iraqi flag, highlighting both the remarkable prosperity and stability of Iraq's Kurdish Region and the presence of the Iraqi federal state. We hope that this event will encourage more active Arab engagements with Iraq, and we expect that Prime Minister Maliki's effort against Shi'a extremist militias in Basrah will receive Arab support.

The presence of the PKK terrorist organization in the remote mountains of Iraq along the Turkish border has produced tension between Turkey and Iraq, and led to a Turkish cross-border operation in February, including movement of Turkish ground forces into Iraq. At the same time, both governments are working to strengthen their ties, and Iraqi President Talabani made a successful visit to Turkey in March.

Syria plays an ambivalent role. We have seen evidence of efforts to interdict some foreign fighters seeking to transit Syria to Iraq, but others continue to cross the boarder. Syria also harbors individuals who finance and support the Iraqi insurgency.

Iran continues to undermine the efforts of the Iraqi government to establish a stable, secure state through the arming and training of criminal militia elements engaged in violence against Iraqi security forces, coalition forces and Iraqi civilians. The extent of

Iran's malign influence was dramatically demonstrated when these militia elements clashed with Iraqi government forces in Basrah and Baghdad. When the President announced the Surge, he pledged to seek out and destroy Iranian-supported lethal networks inside Iraq. We know more about these networks and their Quds Force sponsors than ever before – and we will continue to aggressively uproot and destroy them. At the same time, we support constructive relations between Iran and Iraq and are participating in a tripartite process to discuss the security situation in Iraq. Iran has a choice to make.

#### Looking Ahead

Mr. Chairman, almost everything about Iraq is hard. It will continue to be hard as Iraqis struggle with the damage and trauma inflicted by 35 years of totalitarian Ba'athist rule. But hard does not mean hopeless, and the political and economic progress of the past few months is significant. I must underscore, however, that these gains are fragile, and they are reversible. Americans have invested a great deal in Iraq, in blood as well as treasure, and they have the right to ask whether this is worth it, whether it is now time to walk away and let the Iraqis fend for themselves. Iraq has the potential to develop into a stable, secure, multi-ethnic, multi-sectarian democracy under the rule of law. Whether it realizes that potential is ultimately up to the Iraqi people. Our support, however, will continue to be critical. I said in September that I cannot guarantee success in Iraq. That is still the case, although I think we are now closer. I remain convinced that a major departure from our current engagement would bring failure, and we have to be clear with ourselves about what failure would mean.

Al-Qa'ida is in retreat in Iraq, but it is not yet defeated. Al-Qa'ida's leaders are looking for every opportunity they can to hang on. Osama bin Ladin has called Iraq "the perfect base," and it reminds us that a fundamental aim of Al-Qa'ida is to establish itself in the Arab world. It almost succeeded in Iraq; we cannot allow it a second chance.

And it is not only Al-Qa'ida that would benefit -- Iran has said publicly it will fill any vacuum in Iraq, and extremist Shi'a militias would reassert themselves. We saw them try in Basrah and Baghdad two weeks ago. And in all of this, the Iraqi people would suffer on a scale far beyond what we have already seen. Spiraling conflict could draw in neighbors with devastating consequences for the region and the world.

Mr. Chairman, as monumental as the events of the last five years have been in Iraq, Iraqis, Americans -- and the world, ultimately -- will judge us far more on the basis of what will happen than what has happened. In the end, how we leave and what we leave behind will be more important than how we came. Our current course is hard, but it is working. Progress is real although still fragile. We need to stay with it.

In the months ahead, we will continue to assist Iraq as it pursues further steps toward reconciliation and economic development. Over time, this will become increasingly an Iraqi process, as it should be. Our efforts will focus on increasing Iraq's integration regionally and internationally; assisting Iraqi institutions locally and nationally to strengthen the political process and promote economic activity; and supporting United

Nations' efforts as Iraq carries out local elections toward the end of the year. These efforts will require an enhanced civilian commitment and continued support from the Congress and the American people.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, I want to recognize and thank all those who serve our country in Iraq, both military and civilian. Their courage and commitment, at great sacrifice, has earned the admiration of all Americans. They certainly have mine, and it is an honor to be with them.

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**DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD**

APRIL 9, 2008

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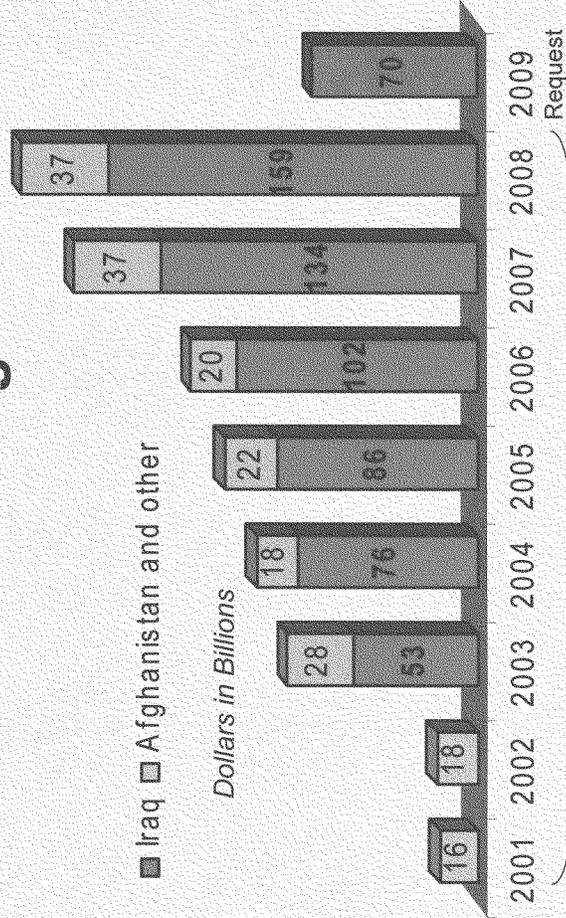
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# War Costs Total \$800 Billion Through 2008

<b>Operation Iraqi Freedom</b>	<b>\$608 Billion</b>
<b>Operation Enduring Freedom</b>	<b>\$163 Billion</b>
<b>Operation Noble Eagle</b>	<b>\$29 Billion</b>

# War Costs Total \$800 Billion From 2001 Through 2008



War costs total \$800 billion through 2008, of which \$600 billion is for Iraq

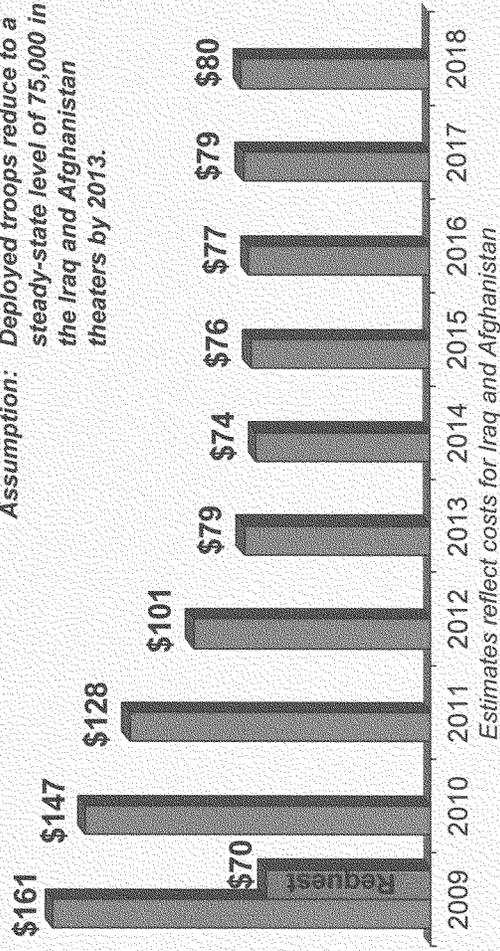
Source: Congressional Research Service 2/22/2008



# CBO Calculates Future War Costs Totaling \$1.0 Trillion over Ten Years

Dollars in Billions

Assumption: Deployed troops reduce to a steady-state level of 75,000 in the Iraq and Afghanistan theaters by 2013.



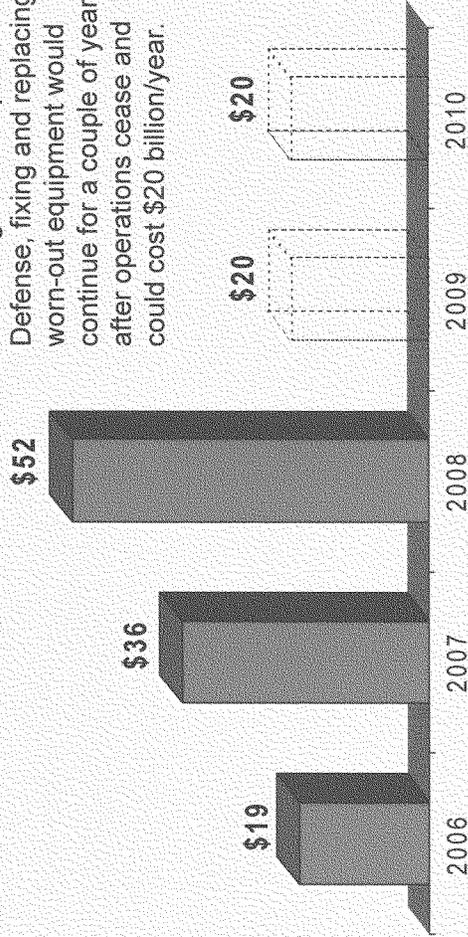
House Budget Committee

Source: CBO estimate 2/5/2008

# Reconstitution or “Reset” Costs Have Increased Each Year

Dollars in Billions

According to the Department of Defense, fixing and replacing worn-out equipment would continue for a couple of years after operations cease and could cost \$20 billion/year.



Estimates reflect costs for Iraq and Afghanistan



House Budget Committee

Source: CBO

4/7/08

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**QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS POST HEARING**

APRIL 9, 2008

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### QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY DR. GINGREY

Dr. GINGREY. A number of Members of the House Armed Services Committee, primarily of the majority, including our distinguished Chairman, have expressed serious concerns about the adverse effects of this prolonged commitment to Operation Iraqi Freedom on the readiness and morale of our troops, especially in light of inevitable future military conflicts in other parts of the world. They are implying, and in some cases directly stating, that it is time to bring them home in mass, without further regard to the political or security situation in Iraq so that the troops can be rested, reequipped, and reset. If Congress forces this premature exit based on politics and public opinion at home, despite the unquestioned progress on the ground (which gives hope and likelihood of ultimate victory), what effect would this have on the morale of our troops as they are deployed into the next conflict well rested, well equipped, and fully reset?

General PETRAEUS. Our troopers are rightly proud of all that they have helped accomplish in Iraq. They are also governed by discipline, and we can count on them to well and faithfully execute whatever missions they are assigned or orders they are given.

Dr. GINGREY. During those two days of hearings in the Senate and House, you have heard time and again the concern of some Members that the reduction in violence that General Petraeus has reported has not been matched by political progress, and that we need to drawdown or completely withdraw in order to compel the Iraqis to make political progress.

Ambassador, has there been measurable political progress—has the Iraqi government passed any laws? Do any of these laws affect political reconciliation? Are our troops in the way of political progress?

Is the Iraqi political process helped or hampered by our troop presence?

What would happen politically if our troops left tomorrow?

Ambassador CROCKER. As of April 2008, Iraq's Council of Representatives (CoR) has formulated, vigorously debated, and passed legislation dealing with issues of reconciliation and nation building. These include the Accountability and Justice Law, the 2008 Budget, the Provincial Powers Law, and the Amnesty Law. The CoR is dealing with complex issues in a more practical manner, through compromise and greater flexibility in political groupings.

The CoR passed the Law on Accountability and Justice (also known as the de-Baathification reform law) in January 2008. This law prescribes solutions for two important issues for former members of the Baath party: employment and retirement. It allows an estimated 36,000 former members to return to government employment. In conjunction with amendments to the Unified Pension Law, it also restores pension rights to former civil servants and military officials without regard to former party affiliation.

On February 13, the CoR passed the Provincial Powers Law, the Amnesty Law, and the 2008 budget in an omnibus package resulting from political compromises by Iraq's main political blocs. The Provincial Powers Law is a major step forward in defining the relationship between the federal and provincial governments. This law will enter into effect after provincial elections are held. Success in defining provincial powers could add momentum to the broader political process and encourage progress on hydrocarbons legislation and other key issues, such as constitutional reform and disputed internal boundaries.

The Amnesty Law provides for the release of Iraqi detainees held in Iraqi government detention facilities who have not yet been charged with or convicted of a crime. As the majority of persons held in detention by the government of Iraq are Sunni, the law is widely seen as a gesture to the Sunni community intended to foster national reconciliation. On March 2, regional committees began accepting applications for amnesty releases.

The Coalition troop presence supports the Iraqi political process and plays a crucial role in the Prime Minister's initiative to develop Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and assume the lead in security for the Iraqi people. Most significantly, Coalition forces contribute to the security and stability that is a prerequisite for political progress and reconciliation in Iraq. Additionally, Coalition forces help further the political

process by preparing the Iraqi Security Forces to take on additional security responsibilities, allowing them to provide the long-term security necessary for Iraq's continued political development. Thus, U.S. troops remain a key stabilizing factor in Iraq; Coalition forces also play an important role in targeting al-Qaeda in Iraq and other extremists.

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#### QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. MURPHY

Mr. MURPHY. According to information provided by the Army and Marine Corps to the office of Representative Altmire, at least twelve service members have died in Iraq as a result of accidental electrocutions since 2003. On January 2, 2008 Staff Sergeant Ryan Maseth of Shaler, Pennsylvania, was electrocuted while taking a shower in his living quarters in the Radwaniyah Palace Complex (RPC) in Baghdad. Recent news reports and statements from the Department of Defense in response to Staff Sergeant Maseth's death indicate that a lack of government oversight and poor contract management may have contributed to accidental deaths or injuries of U.S. personnel serving overseas. Since 2003 when the first accidental electrocution death was reported, how many deaths or injuries from accidental electrocutions of military and contract personnel in Iraq, as well as any other military installation, have occurred? Did the Army or Defense Contract Management Agency (DCMA) actually fund Kellogg, Brown and Root Services, Inc. (KBR) to perform electrical repair work at the RPC complex, prior to the death of Ryan Maseth? What were the dates of this contract? Did KBR submit reports documenting safety hazards relating to the improper grounding of electrical devices at the RPC complex? Did KBR receive 3.2 million under ACL07-139-D9-005 to repair deficiencies identified in KBR's Feb. 10, 2007 technical inspection report? What measures have the Department of Defense and its affiliates taken to ensure proper safety and code enforcement by contractors operating in Iraq, specifically KBR, in eliminating issues of electrical safety hazard since 2003?

General PETRAEUS. **Since 2003 when the first accidental electrocution death was reported, how many deaths or injuries from accidental electrocutions of military and contract personnel in Iraq, as well as any other military installation, have occurred?** According to safety records maintained by the Multi-National Corps-Iraq (MNC-I) Safety Office and U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center, between September 2003 and May 2008 eleven military personnel and two contractor employees died due to accidental electrocutions in Iraq. The same records show two Soldiers died in the United States and one in Germany by accidental electrocution. The 13 recorded deaths due to accidental electrocution in Iraq occurred under the following circumstances: five died from contact with power distribution lines, two installing communications equipment, two performing maintenance on generators, two taking a shower, one while power washing equipment, and one while swimming. The only two events that occurred inside billeting facilities (both while taking a shower) were on different bases in Iraq and occurred 3-1/2 years apart (May 2004 and January 2008).

**Did the Army or Defense Contract Management Agency (DCMA) actually fund Kellogg, Brown and Root Services, Inc. (KBR) to perform electrical repair work at the RPC complex, prior to the death of Ryan Maseth?** Yes, the Army funded KBR to perform maintenance as part of a contract modification under the Logistics Civil Augmentation Program. The funds were for limited maintenance to include electrical repairs initiated by customer service order requests.

**What were the dates of this contract?** The contract modification was made using a "change letter" that was issued on 23 February 2007.

**Did KBR submit reports documenting safety hazards relating to the improper grounding of electrical devices at the RPC complex?** Yes, KBR submitted reports documenting potential grounding issues. It is my understanding that, prior to the 23 February 2007 contract modification, KBR conducted only limited technical inspections of the RPC complex. The last inspections were performed on 10 February 2007. These inspections revealed no deficiencies related to the water pump contributing to SSG Maseth's death but did indicate other grounding issues.

**Did KBR receive \$3.2 million under ACL07-139-D9-005 to repair deficiencies identified in KBR's Feb. 10, 2007 technical inspection report?** KBR received an estimated \$3.2 million pursuant to the 23 February 2007 contract modification in order to perform maintenance services.

**What measures have the Department of Defense and its affiliates taken to ensure proper safety and code enforcement by contractors operating in Iraq, specifically KBR, in eliminating issues of electrical safety hazard since 2003?** Multi-National Force-Iraq is currently reviewing facilities maintenance

electrical standards and incorporating changes into our theater support contracts to help insure proper electrical safety standards. The Defense Contract Management Agency (DCMA) has directed KBR to implement a theater-wide, full technical inspection of all maintained facilities where no prior inspection was performed. Additionally, DCMA directed KBR to perform life, health, and safety inspections on all other maintained buildings to begin any necessary repairs. The MNC-I Safety Office has issued several safety alerts on electrocution hazards. Additionally, the Army Sustainment Command has made annual improvements to the contract statements of work based on lessons learned to insure electrical safety.

#### QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MRS. DRAKE

Mrs. DRAKE. What have the operations in Basrah done to bolster Maliki's role as a nationalist leader? How have various segments of the Iraqi population—meaning, Shi'a, Kurdish, and particularly Sunni—reacted to his decision to take on criminal elements in the third largest Iraqi city? How do you think Iranian leaders have changed their view of Maliki, if at all?

Can you give us your thoughts on Iran's role/actions should American forces withdraw over the next year? How do you see that situation playing out?

Ambassador CROCKER. The Iraqi decision to combat entrenched militia groups in Basrah has major significance. First, a Shi'a majority government, led by Prime Minister Maliki, has demonstrated its commitment to taking on criminals and extremists regardless of sectarian identity. Second, Iraqi security forces led such operations not only in Basrah but in towns and cities throughout the South, as well as in Sadr City. The operation in Basrah has also improved the standing of Prime Minister Maliki as a nationalist leader. The efforts of the government against criminal groups and extremist militia elements have broad political support, as a statement on April 5th by virtually all of Iraq's main political leaders—Sunni, Shia and Kurd—made clear.

Iran continues to pursue its goals by simultaneously providing support to the GOI and militant Shia groups. Predicting Iranian behavior in the event of a U.S. troop drawdown is difficult, and would be contingent on a number of factors, including: the ability of Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) to confront Iranian backed extremists; the GOI's delivery of essential services and promotion of economic development, especially in provinces with a Shi'a majority; and, Iraq's continued reintegration into the region. While the GOI has made tremendous strides on all of these fronts, a premature withdrawal of Coalition Forces could undermine these efforts.

Mrs. DRAKE. General Petraeus, from what I have seen, the operations in Basra were conducted largely with Iraqi ground forces utilizing American and British air support. As Iraqi forces throughout the country begin to mature, how do you see the U.S. military role evolving? What types of support will we be asked to provide? What types of logistic and "enabling" capabilities can the Iraqi forces provide, and what is the timeline for development of these capabilities?

General PETRAEUS. As Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) mature, Coalition Forces are transitioning from leading operations, to partnering with Iraqi Forces, to providing overwatch. As this evolution occurs, we are seeing the ISF assume increased responsibility, as highlighted by recent ISF security operations in Basra, Mosul, and Sadr City. Concurrently, the security ministries—the Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Interior, and the Counter-Terrorism Bureau—are improving their institutional performance to enable Iraq to assume greater responsibility for force management functions, which include the generation of new forces and the replenishment and sustainment of forces already in the fight. Despite this progress, the ISF are still dependent on Coalition Forces for enabling capabilities in a number of key areas, including: logistics support, close air support, air weapons teams, communications, and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance support.

As we help the ISF to become more capable and more independent, our focus is increasingly moving beyond growing the force to the development of military and police enablers. In the military, the expansion of enablers will focus on logistics, aviation, intelligence, and command and control. In the police forces, efforts will center on facilities, logistics, leadership, internal affairs, and forensics. We are seeing improvement in each of these areas. As an example of progress in logistics, the Ministry of Defense now has at the Taji National Depot a facility to refurbish and repair light wheeled vehicles. Over time, this capability will extend to include heavy and tracked vehicles. The Depot also has a superb small arms repair and maintenance facility that will be opened in May 2008. Simultaneously, the Ministry is establishing "Location Commands"—regional centers that will serve as both supply distribution hubs and maintenance and recovery centers. Though these actions rep-

resent significant progress, more work needs to be done. The development of combat enablers requires complex, interrelated actions at various levels of command as well as across the domains of doctrine, training, organization, logistics, materiel, personnel, and facilities. In addition, progress is also dependent on the security situation and other factors. Because of this complexity, it is difficult to set a timeline on the attainment of complete self-sufficiency.

Mrs. DRAKE. General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker, What have the operations in Basra done to bolster Maliki's role as a nationalist leader? How have various segments of the Iraqi population—meaning, Shi'a, Kurdish, and particularly Sunni—reacted to his decision to take on criminal elements in the third largest Iraqi city? How do you think Iranian leaders have changed their view of Maliki, if at all?

General PETRAEUS. The Iraqi-led security operations that Prime Minister Maliki directed in Basra bolstered his standing as a strong, nationalist leader, as the Iraqi public saw him taking a decisive stand against criminal gangs and illegal militias. Perhaps the greatest improvement in the Prime Minister's standing has come in the way in which other Iraqi political parties and leaders now view him. With the exception of the Sadrists, major Iraqi political leaders almost unanimously supported his move to reestablish the rule of law in Basra. The Prime Minister's action against illegal elements, without regard to sectarian identity, had a significant impact on Shi'a, Kurdish, and Sunni leaders, and the operations led to a reopening of talks on stalled political issues such as the Hydrocarbons Law and the return of the Sunni Tawafuq Front to the government—though much work remains on both of these matters. Still, as Ambassador Crocker stated in his Congressional testimony in April, Basra operations have resulted in a significant change in tone toward Prime Minister Maliki and the government.

The Iranian regime's lack of transparency makes it difficult to know with certainty how Iranian leaders' views of Prime Minister Maliki may have changed since the Basra operations. The Iranian regime's statements indicate that the regime has chosen to support publicly the Prime Minister's campaign against criminal gangs and illegal militias. At the same time, the Iranian Government has continued to provide lethal assistance to Special Groups and various reports indicate that training, funding, and arming of the Special Groups is ongoing in Iran. Given the latter, it is unlikely the Iranian regime has viewed the Prime Minister's actions against Special Groups criminals with favor. In addition, the confrontation between the Iraqi Government and Iranian-backed militias in Basra and Baghdad has led Iraqi leaders to repeatedly and directly confront the Iranian regime regarding its support of illegal militias inside Iraq. This cannot be a comfortable development for the Supreme Leader and the element he employs to determine and execute policy in Iraq—the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-Qods Force.

Mrs. DRAKE. General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker, Can you give us your thoughts on Iran's role/actions should American forces withdraw over the next year? How do you see that situation playing out?

General PETRAEUS. If U.S. forces were to withdraw from Iraq over the next year, Iran would likely seek to exploit gaps in security and governance capacity to achieve its strategic goals in Iraq. Iranian President Ahmedinejad has said that if a power vacuum develops in Iraq, Iran is ready to "fill the gap," and we believe him. Iran's goals in Iraq include a Shia-dominated government that is not a future threat to Iran and that is subject to influence by Iran; as Ambassador Crocker has observed, Iran wants to "Lebanonize" Iraq. Iran also seeks economic relations that benefit Iran and unhindered access to Shia holy sites.

The most likely scenario over the next year is that Iran's leaders will continue to covertly fund a wide array of diverse, often competing Iraqi groups and actors. In addition to training, arming, funding, and directing Shi'a militia "Special Groups," Iran will likely attempt to influence Iraqi political processes and outcomes through funding candidates and parties. Economically, Iran will likely continue to exploit the lack of competition to remain Iraq's largest trading partner. It is also likely Iran will attempt to increase its soft power in Iraq by further proliferating front companies that are clandestinely operated by elements of the Iranian regime—especially the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps-Qods Force—and by expanding its already ongoing intimidation campaign against select members of the Iraqi government and against any significant opponents of Iranian influence in Iraq. (Two governors and two police chiefs were assassinated in 2007 using Iranian-made explosively formed penetrators.)

In a worst case scenario, should U.S. forces withdraw over the next year, Iraq would not have adequate strength in its government or security forces to resist Iranian influence and manipulation. In this context, Iran would likely seek to replicate the role it has played in Lebanon by funding and supporting a proxy militia that

conducts violent attacks, perpetuates political instability, and inhibits economic progress. It is likely to train, equip, and fund such forces in any event—and when the force creates problems, Iran would then rein it in.

#### QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. WITTMAN

Mr. WITTMAN. General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker, part of the National Strategy for Victory in Iraq called for an increased role in inter-agency assistance to the military. How satisfied are you with the inter-agency role/assistance and how do you measure the effectiveness? Can you share some success stories?

General PETRAEUS. There has been significant progress in inter-agency cooperation in Iraq, but we continuously seek to develop additional mechanisms for enhancing our collaboration. The complexity of today's national security challenges is such that no single agency or department has all of the requisite resources, authority, or expertise to single-handedly provide effective responses. Interagency collaboration is imperative to successfully leveraging the capabilities resident in the US government. In Iraq, we see that agencies and departments are increasingly working together to clarify lines of authority and improve coordination of interagency operations in a timely and efficient manner. We measure effectiveness in terms of both improved processes as well as outcomes. Examples of success stories include our Joint Campaign Plan, fusion cells, and reconstruction teams. Our Joint Campaign Plan, has helped foster collaboration and unity of effort across the four lines of operation in Iraq: security, economic, political, and diplomatic. Our periodic Campaign Assessment and Review Boards, which are internal reviews of the campaign plan with interagency participation, help us to ensure that the different components of our effort in Iraq are mutually reinforcing and achieve maximum effect. The creation of fusion cells has also been a success story. These entities enable the capacity which MNF-I can bring to bear to be combined with interagency expertise to make progress on a number of important issues. As an example, the focused efforts of the Energy Fusion Cell have helped Iraq to make significant improvements in its energy sector. Partially due to the efforts of this cell, oil production and exports are at record levels. Production in the month of May 2008 should be at the highest level it has been since 2004, and production over the last four months has been the highest since the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The focus of this cell has also been key in improving Iraqi power generation, which has now increased beyond the level that was produced before the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom. In fact, energy production over the past year has averaged 10% higher than the previous year, despite a drought that has left Iraq with much less hydropower (some 450 to 850 megawatts less). Reconstruction teams are a third success story. As a result of the civilian surge, there are now 31 Provincial Reconstruction and Provincial Support Teams in Iraq supporting all 18 provinces. These interagency teams play an invaluable role in strengthening governance at the local, municipal, and provincial levels by providing assistance to help create jobs, deliver basic services, and build up local economies. These teams are also helping Provincial governments to spend their money more effectively, and they are providing support to reconciliation efforts at all levels.

Mr. WITTMAN. General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker, it appears that our "surge" plan has worked or progressed quite well as seen by the improvements in the security environment, but this increase in security can also be attributed to Muqtada al-Sadr keeping his Shiite militia at bay during this period. As soon as he turned his militia loose, the environment became dangerous, and he has since pulled his militia back. Is there a plan for keeping al-Sadr at bay? How do you control him?

General PETRAEUS. Of greater long-term importance than Moqtada al-Sadr's specific decisions are the factors that shape the environment in which his movement exists. The ceasefires declared by Moqtada al-Sadr have indeed contributed to a reduction in violence in Iraq, but they came after Jaysh al-Mahdi (JAM) and the Special Groups (SG) took serious losses in combat with Iraqi and Coalition forces. Iraq and Coalition forces have placed intense pressure on JAM and the SG as they have targeted criminal elements and their mafia-like activity, and the leaders of the Iraqi Government have demonstrated great determination in combating militias across Iraq. Success by Iraqi and Coalition forces played a large role in Sadr's decision to lay down arms.

Another important factor in Sadr's decisions is his need for popular support, and his desire to protect the legitimacy and reputation of his movement. Atmospherics in Basra and Sadr City indicate that most residents were tired of the bloodshed and of criminal activities by militias and desired a return to normalcy. Sadr's decisions

to lay down arms in both cities were in part acknowledgments of this trend toward a popular rejection of violence (a trend that Iran, whose Qods Force funds, trains, and equips the militia Special Groups, also recognized).

Our strategy for addressing JAM/SG violence acknowledges both of these factors. First, Coalition forces assist the Iraqi Government in maintaining its monopoly on the legitimate use of force by helping confront violent militia activity. ISF and Coalition operations continue to degrade the military capability of Sadr's militias. Second, we seek to assist the government of Iraq in its efforts to draw reconcilable elements of the Sadrist Trend into the political process. By providing for security and improving living conditions, Iraqi and Coalition efforts reinforce and encourage the Shi'a population's increasingly negative view of militias and their violence.

Thus far, our strategy seems to be having the desired effect. Sadr continues to instruct his militias to lay down their arms, and he recently announced an initiative to redirect the majority of JAM to social services programs and peaceful resistance to the Coalition, while maintaining a smaller armed element. This decision highlights the pressure Sadr is under regarding militia activity. Also, many leaders of the Sadrist movement are leaning toward participation in the political process as a way to give voice to the legitimate concerns of their constituencies.

Mr. WITTMAN. General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker, What role does the United States play in the negotiations between Prime Minister Maliki and Muqtada al-Sadr? Should there be more oversight and involvement on the part of the United States? How does the State Department measure the effectiveness of their communications?

General PETRAEUS. I respectfully defer to Ambassador Crocker and the Department of State to comment on what role, if any, the United States should play in negotiations between Government of Iraq leaders and Muqtada al-Sadr and on how they measure their effectiveness in communications. Ambassador Crocker and I meet regularly with Prime Minister Maliki and other Iraqi political leaders and representatives during the course of our duties here in Iraq. We register our views and concerns, and Prime Minister often consults with us on topics of interest to him. At the same time, Prime Minister Maliki is the leader of a sovereign government and, as we saw in a number of recent events, will make his own decisions, as he should.

Mr. WITTMAN. Part of the National Strategy for Victory in Iraq called for an increased role in inter-agency assistance to the military. How satisfied are you with the inter-agency role/assistance and how do you measure the effectiveness? Can you share some success stories?

Ambassador CROCKER. In February 2007, the President announced the establishment of ten new State Department-led Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) as a civilian complement to the military "surge." In April 2007, Multinational Corps-Iraq (MNC-I) requested another five teams to support the "surge." By September 2007, all of these teams had begun operations. As of April 2008, there are 31 active PRTs, Provincial Support Teams (PSTs), and embedded PRTs (ePRTs) staffed by personnel from Department of State, the Department of Defense, the U.S. Agency for International Development, the Department Of Justice, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. PRTs support the counterinsurgency strategy, build Iraqi governance and economic capacity throughout the country, and support our political engagement with provincial and municipal officials. We enjoy great cooperation from our interagency partners in this most successful interagency initiative.

On April 3, General Petraeus and I requested through the National Security Council the assignment of experts from civilian agencies to MNF-I's Joint Inter-Agency Task Force or JIATF. Representatives from the State Department, USAID, the Department of Homeland Security and several Department of Defense Combat Support Agencies arrived during the summer and are now embedded as part of the MNF-I operational planning staff. In addition, the Department of the Treasury and the Federal Bureau of Investigation have designated specific personnel as liaisons to the JIATF. They are focused on strategic level planning using all elements of national power, not just the military, to address difficult problem sets through coordinated, inter-agency action against specific strategic threats.

Mr. WITTMAN. It appears that our "surge" plan has worked or progressed quite well as seen by the improvements in the security environment, but this increase in security can also be attributed to Muqtada al-Sadr keeping his Shiite militia at bay during this period. As soon as he turned his militia loose, the environment became dangerous, and he has since pulled his militia back. Is there a plan for keeping al-Sadr at bay? How do you control him?

Ambassador CROCKER. Muqtada al-Sadr called for his militia to "freeze" its operations because of both increasing operational losses from fighting Coalition forces and flagging support of the Iraqi people. As the threat from al-Qaeda and insur-

gents continued to diminish, Sadr's militia was increasingly perceived as an unnecessary element in Iraqi society: their extortion of money from shopkeepers, kidnappings for ransom, linkage to the assassinations of two southern governors and several police chiefs, and violence in the holy city of Karbala tarnished their reputation in the eyes of many Iraqis.

Economic development and reconciliation are the best ways to prevent a resurgence of violent extremist groups like Sadr's militia. This is accomplished chiefly by building on recent security gains and eliminating the need for Sadr's militia to fill any security void. Better security also facilitates economic and political development, which strengthens the GOI and undermines support for extremists. Simultaneously, we will continue to offensively target extremists, including those in al-Sadr's organization, further marginalizing it.

Mr. WITTMAN. What role does the United States play in the negotiations between Prime Minister Maliki and Muqtada al-Sadr? Should there be more oversight and involvement on the part of the United States? How does the State Department measure the effectiveness of their communications?

Ambassador CROCKER. The relationship between Muqtada al-Sadr and Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki is complex. The Sadrist movement is a populist movement with deep roots in Iraq. In December 2005, Muqtada al-Sadr ostensibly transitioned this movement from armed resistance to Coalition forces to political engagement, and he captured 28 seats in the Iraqi legislative body, the Council of Representatives (CoR). Muqtada and his followers then supported Maliki's ascension to Prime Minister.

In a March 30, 2008 public announcement, Muqtada al-Sadr called on the Jaysh al-Mahdi militia to lay down arms, ending a week of violence in Basrah and the Sadr City area of Baghdad, as the Government of Iraq sought to bring these areas under its control. Prime Minister Maliki declared April 1 that the operation against Shia militias in Southern Iraq was a success. A statement issued by the Prime Minister's office stated that the operation had achieved "security, stability and success" in Basrah.

Against that background, the Government of Iraq, as a sovereign government, makes its own decisions about who to negotiate with, when, and under what terms. The U.S. government is prepared to provide advice and support to the Government of Iraq, but would involve itself in an internal Iraqi political matter only if invited to do so. We would not be in a position to measure the effectiveness of these communications.

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#### QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MS. GIFFORDS

Ms. GIFFORDS. General Petraeus, I'd like to take a moment to consider the opportunity costs we're faced with under the current 15 month deployment schedules. Many military leaders, including Admiral Mullen, have stressed the importance of getting back to at least a 1 to 1 ratio of deployment time to dwell time, and of course even more dwell time would be better. It's important for the well-being of our troops, and it's central to their ability to regroup and train. Given that our current force levels in Iraq preclude a prompt return to a 1 to 1 ratio, I'm very concerned that our troops don't have enough time to develop skills critical to fighting the broader war on terror, particularly in Afghanistan. In one section of the counterinsurgency manual you helped draft, you stress that successful counterinsurgency operations depend on a thorough understanding of the culture within which they are being conducted. This makes a great deal of sense to me. I would imagine that it is very difficult to gain the trust and cooperation of the population if you have no understanding of their culture, and that it's hard to defeat an insurgency with no comprehension of the cultural context that gave rise to it. But that understanding is not something that can be built overnight. As I understand from my constituents conducting cultural training down at Fort Huachuca in Arizona, developing true cross-cultural competence requires extensive training time—time that we don't have right now with 15 month deployments and just a year of dwell time. Unfortunately, Admiral Fallon came before this committee just one month ago and testified that the number of personnel trained in culture and language is seriously insufficient for the missions at hand. Can you elaborate on the importance of "cross-cultural competence" or cultural understanding in counterinsurgency operations?

General PETRAEUS. Language and cultural training are indeed essential to the proper conduct of counterinsurgency operations. In Iraq, our day-to-day missions involve partnering with Iraqi counterparts, working with local government and religious leaders, and building trust with local citizens in the neighborhoods we patrol. All of these activities require communication and cultural awareness and sensitivity. Though deployment time/dwell time ratios remain a concern—a concern al-

layed slightly by the President's recent announcement of a return to 12-month tours—training time is not a significant inhibiting factor to the basic cultural and language training we provide to deploying troopers. The training we do conduct during reset cycles is very much focused on our current counterinsurgency missions and involves both culture and basic language training; this training is quickly reinforced and expanded as our troopers deploy and operate in Iraq. Between training, cultural immersion, and individuals' extensive experience from past deployments, our troopers in general operate with significant cross-cultural competence in Iraq. Language competency throughout our forces remains a concern, since the training required is extensive and is provided primarily to linguist specialists.

Ms. GIFFORDS. General Petraeus, I'd like to take a moment to consider the opportunity costs we're faced with under the current 15 month deployment schedules. Many military leaders, including Admiral Mullen, have stressed the importance of getting back to at least a 1 to 1 ratio of deployment time to dwell time, and of course even more dwell time would be better. It's important for the well-being of our troops, and it's central to their ability to regroup and train. Given that our current force levels in Iraq preclude a prompt return to a 1 to 1 ratio, I'm very concerned that our troops don't have enough time to develop skills critical to fighting the broader war on terror, particularly in Afghanistan. In one section of the counterinsurgency manual you helped draft, you stress that successful counterinsurgency operations depend on a thorough understanding of the culture within which they are being conducted. This makes a great deal of sense to me. I would imagine that it is very difficult to gain the trust and cooperation of the population if you have no understanding of their culture, and that it's hard to defeat an insurgency with no comprehension of the cultural context that gave rise to it. But that understanding is not something that can be built overnight. As I understand from my constituents conducting cultural training down at Fort Huachuca in Arizona, developing true cross-cultural competence requires extensive training time—time that we don't have right now with 15 month deployments and just a year of dwell time. Unfortunately, Admiral Fallon came before this committee just one month ago and testified that the number of personnel trained in culture and language is seriously insufficient for the missions at hand. Do you believe that you have enough troops in the field today who possess cross-cultural competence or have been trained in culture and language?

General PETRAEUS. The pre-deployment training we conduct involves both culture and basic language training; this training is quickly reinforced and expanded as our troopers deploy and operate in Iraq. Between training, cultural immersion, and individuals' extensive experience from past deployments, our troopers in general operate with significant cross-cultural competence in Iraq. Language competency throughout our forces remains a concern, since the training required is extensive and is provided primarily to linguist specialists.

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General PETRAEUS. Training time has not been a significant inhibiting factor to deploying units. Units arrive in theater well prepared for operations in Iraq. Indeed, I continue to believe that our current force is the best trained, best equipped force

in America's history. Leaders at every level, many of whom are on their 2nd or 3rd combat deployments, are maximizing training time and using their experience from previous deployments to prepare and train their units well. The President's recent announcement of a return to 12-month tours should increase dwell time for our troopers, allowing them to conduct even more quality training and also to enjoy additional, well-deserved time at home station between deployments.

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General PETRAEUS. The importance of basic culture and language training has been emphasized up and down the military's chain of command. Over the course of the last five years of operation in Iraq, we have worked to rapidly integrate lessons learned into training cycles for deploying units. Basic language and culture training is one of the important adjustments that we have made to pre-deployment training, and it has, in large part, had its intended effect. Our troopers now generally operate with significant cross-cultural competence in Iraq.

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General PETRAEUS. Before addressing cultural training, I would like to note that Human Terrain Teams have been valuable to our forces in Iraq, and Congressional support for this program is important. We are in need of more of these teams, as the experts serving on Human Terrain Teams provide important cultural insights to our combat units and can help to improve continuity through unit transitions. With regard to cultural training, one of the most important actions Congress can take is to keep resources placed against education, even given the pressures and constraints which come into play during wartime. Efforts worthy of support include:

initiatives to enhance cultural immersion opportunities for Reserve Officer Training Corps and West Point cadets; programs to provide opportunities for graduate education for our officer corps; and career management processes that incentivize and provide opportunities for joint and interagency assignments and education. The more we study and work outside of our intellectual comfort zones, the better we can leverage cultural understanding to succeed in today's complex operating environments.

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#### QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MS. TSONGAS

Ms. TSONGAS. The President's most recent orders were to carry out the surge so that the U.S. military could help reduce the violence in Iraq and bring greater stability to the country. This stability would then create an opening for the country's political leadership to achieve a similar stability in Iraq's governance. Military achievements, however, have not translated to this stated political goal. The urgency the current administration felt to achieve these military goals has not been shared by the Iraqi government of Mr. Maliki, over whom our military leaders have no control. It is my belief that postponing the drawdown of our troops until "conditions permit," as you stated yesterday, only highlights the military's incapacity to drive the political side of the equation, and hampers our country's ability to force the Iraqi governments' long overdue political resolution. You have stated your dissatisfaction with the political progress made by the Iraqi political elites, in spite of our military's best efforts. On this we both agree. I would endorse a timetable as a means to drive political reconciliation. General Petraeus, as a military man with tremendous experience, a demonstrated track record and the extraordinary power of the United States backing you up, what are the tactics you would employ to encourage the Iraqis to make fundamental movements towards political stability?

General PETRAEUS. There is no purely military or purely political solution in Iraq, and we are using a variety of approaches to bring about political stability. All four lines of operation—security, economic, diplomatic, and political—are mutually reinforcing and thus must be pursued to achieve a long-term solution in Iraq. Though the pursuit of political reconciliation and good governance along the political line of operation is the main effort, success in this area depends on security conditions that enable and foster compromise. Enduring domestic political progress will also rest on supporting economic and diplomatic developments. I believe that political compromise among Iraqi political leaders is a necessary condition for a political solution. Iraq leaders have put themselves under enormous personal pressure and are also under the collective pressure of various political elements in Iraq to create stability and long-term solutions for Iraq. They have already worked together and compromised on a number of difficult issues in order to pass important pieces of legislation earlier this year—among them, a budget law, a de-Ba'athification reform law, a provincial powers law, and an amnesty law. They recognize that in order to succeed in a political process, they will need to produce results, and producing results requires compromise. With regard to expectations about the pace of progress, it is important to recognize that Iraq's political leaders are still struggling with fundamental questions such as the degree of devolution to the provinces of various authorities and powers in Iraq, an issue similar to our own debate over state's rights at the birth of the United States. Iraq's political leaders have already begun to make progress in these areas, and they are continuing to move forward on issues such as the provincial elections scheduled for later this year. Supporting political solutions in Iraq is not purely a matter of convincing Iraqi leaders of the importance of compromise. It is also a matter of helping Iraqi leaders to set conditions that enable progress. Our leverage lies in our robust engagement, ability to work with the government of Iraq, and willingness to help its leaders at local as well as national level make and implement the hard decisions that are in the best interests of all the Iraqi people.

Ms. TSONGAS. Ambassador Crocker, as someone who has spent decades developing relationships with diplomats throughout the Middle East, what are the tactics you would employ to encourage the Iraqis to make fundamental movements towards political stability?

Ambassador CROCKER. We encourage and support Iraqi political leaders across the board to accelerate actions necessary to promote political stability and national reconciliation—by passing legislation in key areas, broadening participation by all of Iraq's communities in the political process, and improving the delivery of basic services. We also encourage Iraq to work with its neighbors and the broader international community, including through organizations such as the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq. International agreements, like the International Com-

pact with Iraq, elicit Iraqi progress in key reconciliation-related areas such as economic self-reliance, good governance, rule of law, and civil society. It is important that the Iraqi government and people have a strong sense of ownership over the projects and processes they embark on; however, the United States and the international community can contribute to helping strengthen Iraq's institutions, providing technical assistance, and encouraging dialogue both on the national and provincial levels.

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**QUESTION SUBMITTED BY MR. HAYES**

Mr. HAYES. Several Members of Congress have noted that the Iraqi Council of Representatives and some Iraqi leaders generally do not support a permanent U.S. military presence in Iraq. It seems to me that after the provincial elections later this year, some Iraqi officials may try to develop or institute a drawdown schedule. After provincial elections, is an Iraqi-provided timeline for U.S. withdrawal a reasonable expectation?

General PETRAEUS. The majority of Iraqis see the benefit of the continued presence of Coalition forces in the near-term, even as they oppose a long-term presence or permanent US basing. Provincial elections will affect local and governorate leadership and thus would likely not lead to a change in national policy. Iraq's national leaders continue to recognize the much-needed military support, in boots on the ground and in key combat enablers, provided by Coalition forces as key to allowing progress in other areas as Iraqi forces continue to develop.

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**QUESTION SUBMITTED BY MR. MCINTYRE**

Mr. MCINTYRE. So you are saying, within next week you can provide us an assessment as to where we stand specifically on the 18 benchmarks that the Iraqi Government agreed to meet in working with the U.S. Government to make sure that we are accomplishing the political, economic progress that we want to see in the country, as well as the military progress. Is that correct?

Ambassador CROCKER. I provided sensitive information by letter to Representative McIntyre on May 9, 2008.

