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STATUS OF ONGOING U.S. EFFORTS IN IRAQ

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH CONGRESS
FIRST SESSION

HEARING HELD
SEPTEMBER 30, 2009

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STATUS OF ONGOING U.S. EFFORTS IN IRAQ

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
Washington, DC, Wednesday, September 30, 2009.

The committee met, pursuant to call, at 10:05 a.m., in room HVC–210, The Capitol, 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. Ladies and gentlemen, today our committee meets to receive testimony on the status of ongoing U.S. operations in Iraq. Our witnesses today are General Ray Odierno, the Commanding General, Multi-National Force—Iraq (MNF—I); and the Honorable Michael Vickers, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict.

We welcome you, gentlemen.

And, General Odierno, this is the first time I believe that you have appeared before this committee as such; is that correct?

General ODIERNO. It is, Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. We certainly welcome you.

On February 27, 2009, President Obama laid out a path for bringing to a close America's long war in Iraq that began with the invasion of March 20, 2003. America's men and women in uniform have fought heroically to help build a new Iraq, and over 4,300 Americans have died in that cause. We owe them our deep, deep gratitude.

Right now the United States has about 120,000 to 130,000 combat forces in Iraq and, under the current plan, will end this year with 11 combat brigades in Iraq, totally somewhere around 100,000 personnel. We will maintain that level through the Iraqi elections and for a period after the elections through the termination and formation of a new government.

In August 2010, our combat mission in Iraq will end, and our force presence will consist of 6 advise and assist brigades with about 50,000 U.S. military personnel. These brigades and personnel will be slowly withdrawn until December 31, 2011, as required by the U.S.-Iraq status of forces agreement (SOFA). No U.S. military personnel will remain in Iraq.

This readjustment in Iraq will not be an easy one for us and will not be easy, I suspect, for the Iraqis. Simply moving so many troops and so much equipment out of the country will be a significant logistical challenge. We have not conducted such a large move-

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ment over such a distance since Vietnam, and we all know that did not go well.

As part of the drawdown, U.S. military commands will consolidate and begin handing over responsibility for a variety of activities to the Iraqis, the U.S. Embassy or other U.S. agencies. I hope our witnesses can address how the planning for this transition is going. For their part the Iraqis will have to assume full responsibility for internal security, and there are questions if they will be fully capable in that area by the time we leave.

The Department of Defense (DOD) has requested authority to transfer some current U.S. military equipment to the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF), and I hope our witnesses will address that. Also, if they will take a minute to address potential future requests for assisting the Iraqis.

The Iraqis will also have to come to an agreement on the future of the country, and elections in January may be crucial in helping them define that. They have not yet determined how the elections will be carried out, and it remains to be seen if the elections will reinforce sectarian divisions or help create a truly national government. All of us who watched in horror the ethnic violence of 2006 and 2007 dearly hope for the latter.

Finally, the U.S. and Iraq will have to determine our future relationship. For many of you, January 1, 2012, is a date when our relations will transform instantly to a normal bilateral relationship. In some ways it will likely be true, but in other ways it just may not. Iraq will be incapable of providing fully for its external defense. Iraq may well continue to need help developing some aspects of its security forces. And we will continue to have interest in ensuring a stable Iraq that doesn't threaten its neighbors or undermine other regional goals.

I don't expect our witnesses here today to have all the answers to the questions. The war in Iraq is coming to a close, but my suspicion is that these transitions will take years to work through.

This is the first time this general has appeared before the House Armed Services Committee, but my guess is, General, that you will be with us many more times in the days ahead.

The CHAIRMAN. Now I turn to my good friend, the gentleman from California, our Ranking Member Buck McKeon.

STATEMENT OF HON. HOWARD P. "BUCK" MCKEON, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM CALIFORNIA, RANKING MEMBER, COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mr. MCKEON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And welcome to our witnesses.

It is great to have you here, General Odierno. We really appreciate you taking the time to be here today. Please pass on to all the men and women in your command how much we are proud of their achievements and how much we appreciate their service.

This is a timely hearing. While the focus in Washington is shifted to Afghanistan, we can't lose sight of the enormous challenges before us in Iraq. We have made remarkable progress in Iraq. Violence continues to stay at a level comparable to 2003. The provincial elections earlier in the year were a success, and the SOFA agreement has held together. Most recently, in June, the Iraqi Se-

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curity Forces assumed primary security responsibility within Iraqi cities, and the U.S. combat forces departed the last remaining cities.

The issue, therefore, is not whether we have won the war, but whether we will win the peace in Iraq. With national elections set for January, a referendum on the SOFA on the horizon, as well as other significant unresolved political hurdles like the status of Kirkuk, there are many unknowns that will determine the prospect of enduring domestic peace in Iraq.

In parallel with Iraq's demanding political calendar, the President's February 2009 plan calls for a dramatic reduction to the U.S. footprint in Iraq by August 2010. By next summer the President plans to decrease our troop strength by 60 percent, in addition to closing bases and moving material out of the theater.

This leads to some basic questions. First, is it still safe to assume that the Iraqi Security Forces will be able to assume security responsibility, and that electoral politics will not trigger sectarian violence? These are the assumptions underpinning the President's plan. This plan arguably made sense in February. Does it still make sense today? Many of us here have consistently held the position that scheduling troop withdrawals in Iraq should be based on the conditions on the ground. General, we would like to hear from you on this subject. Do we have contingency plans in the event the security situation demands revisiting the August 2010 timeline? I am concerned we may be biting off more than we can chew in Iraq.

As we begin executing the President's redeployment plan, we also need to keep an eye on the future. What do we want the U.S.-Iraqi bilateral relationship to look like? This leads me to concerns about the normalization of our relations with Iraq. After all, we have invested in Iraq, we should be taking steps to ensure that we pursue a robust security relationship with Baghdad. Our increase in combat forces was not the only reason the surge was successful; rather, Ambassador Crocker and General Petraeus knew how to leverage our presence to ensure Iraqi leadership made the right choices. I am concerned that we may be retreating from this posture too quickly in an effort to normalize our relationship with Iraq. We must remember this is an embryonic democracy.

As much as the situation in Iraq has improved, I think it is fair to say the situation is far from normal. So as long as we have a force presence in Iraq, our leadership should continue to improve itself in Iraqi political—involve itself in Iraqi political affairs to ensure the right decisions are made. Robust engagement seems to be the key to a redeployment plan.

Beyond the strategic and political military concerns, there are a host of issues ranging from operational implementation of the advisory and assist brigades to the enormous logistical challenges of moving all of our equipment out of Iraq. Accomplishing this all in such a narrow window of time is a Herculean task even if we did not face what you rightly call drivers of instability.

I hope we can discuss these issues over the course of the hearing. I look forward to a candid discussion on these important issues. And again, thank you, General, for being here this morning.

I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman.

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I seek unanimous consent that Representative Kilpatrick be allowed to participate in our committee this morning. The gentlelady just returned from the Middle East, and we welcome her. Without objection.

Now, as I understand it, Assistant Secretary Vickers has not submitted a written testimony and will not be making an opening statement. Is that correct?

Mr. VICKERS. That is correct, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

So, General Odierno, the floor is yours, and we welcome you and congratulate you for the excellent work that you are doing.

STATEMENT OF GEN. RAY ODIERNO, USA, COMMANDING GENERAL, MULTI-NATIONAL FORCE—IRAQ

General ODIERNO. Chairman Skelton, Congressman McKeon and distinguished members of the committee, thank you for providing me the opportunity today to appear before you to provide my assessment of the current situation, the challenges in Iraq, and how our strategy is adapting in order to achieve the President's vision.

First, I just want to tell you what a great honor it is to command Multi-National Force—Iraq. Having now spent a significant amount of time in Iraq, I remain encouraged by the steady and deliberate progress that has been made particularly over the past 2½ years. Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), as you all know, is now in its sixth consecutive year, and it has been a complex and challenging mission in a continuously evolving environment. But the one thing that remains constant is the demonstrated courage, compassion, and commitment of our soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, coastguardsmen, and civilians who continue to selflessly serve. I am humbled by the opportunity to serve with and privileged to lead these great Americans. And I also want to recognize the families of our service members who have sacrificed so much, yet continue to give their unwavering support in order to allow our service men and women the ability to focus on the mission at hand.

Although challenges remain in Iraq, with the continued support of Congress and the American people, I believe we are now in reach of our goals.

As we all know, Iraq is strategically located in the Middle East and remains vital to stability in this region. It has always played a significant role in regional security dynamics, but too often in the past Iraq has been a source of instability rather than stability. Today with our help Iraq, is slowly reestablishing diplomatic, economic, and security relationships with all its neighbors.

As a developing democracy in the heart of the Middle East, Iraq has formalized its relationship with the United States. This past January our country has implemented two historic bilateral agreements establishing the foundation for a long-term, comprehensive, strategic partnership. Together the Security Agreement and the Strategic Framework Agreement demonstrate America's continued commitment to Iraq, its people, and stability in the region, and they also reflect the maturing relationship and enhanced cooperation between our two nations.

The Strategic Framework Agreement establishes the foundation and mechanisms for an enduring relationship between Iraq and the

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United States through long-term cooperation in a variety of areas, including security, technological, educational, and cultural exchanges, just to name a few. The Security Agreement focuses on our current military relationship within the context of Iraqi sovereignty by regulating the temporary presence and activities of U.S. forces in Iraq and directing the withdrawal of our forces from Iraq by December 31, 2011.

Since implementing the security agreement this past January, we have conducted all military operations by, with, and through the Iraqi Security Forces operating within the Iraqi rule of law. I am extremely proud of how our leaders and service members at all levels adapted quickly and quickly adjusting our mind-set and operations in order to maintain operational momentum within the framework of the Security Agreement.

In line with the security agreement on June 30, 2009, the Iraqi Security Forces assumed primary responsibilities within the cities, and U.S. combat forces departed the last remaining cities. June 30th was a major milestone for the Government of Iraq, its security forces, and the Iraqi people, and a first step in the Iraqi Security Forces assuming full control of security in Iraq.

The positive psychological impact has been profound. The Iraqis wanted to be in charge, they wanted the responsibility, and they have demonstrated that they are capable. After some initial coordination issues immediately following 30 June, the strong partnerships that we have developed over the last several years in particular have grown even stronger.

Today, nine months after we began implementing the Security Agreement and three months after U.S. combat forces departed the cities, we continue to make consistent, deliberate progress in improving the security environment in Iraq. The combined, sustained efforts of U.S. and Iraqi Security Forces coupled with the efforts of our civilian partners have reduced security incidents and attacks of all types to levels on par with the summer of 2003.

While statistics do not paint the whole picture, they help provide some context in understanding the progress made to date. In the charts before you, we use six-month increments to specifically highlight the trends in both events and casualties over time. The security incidents chart displayed here clearly shows the improving trends across all types of attacks and incidents. Overall attacks have decreased 85 percent over the past 2 years, from 4,064 in August of 2007 to 594 in August of 2009, with 565 attacks through 28 September. In that same time period, U.S. military deaths have decreased by 93 percent, Iraqi Security Force deaths have decreased by 79 percent, and ethnosectarian deaths have decreased 88 percent. In fact, there is another noticeable decrease in ethnosectarian incidents, specifically during Ramadan, which has always reflected a sharp increase in insurgent and extremist activity. This year there are only 19 ethnosectarian incidents compared to 978 in 2006. Additionally, improvised explosive device explosions have decreased 74 percent.

But improvised explosive devices (IEDs) remain the weapons of choice of the insurgents and terrorists inside of Iraq. The second chart shows high-profile explosions that are specifically intended to have a large impact. You can see the steady decrease even after the

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Iraqis assumed responsibility in the cities. But these high-profile attacks remain a concern, especially following the two bombings in Baghdad on 19 August, which targeted the Ministries of Finance and Foreign Affairs. These were horrific attacks claimed and perpetrated by al Qaeda in Iraq and aimed specifically against the Government of Iraq's institutions in order to undermine the public's faith and confidence in the Government of Iraq.

There was a clear security lapse on 19 August in Baghdad, but I do not believe it is the result of any systemic problems, and I remain confident that the Iraqi Security Forces continue to learn, improve, and adjust. After the 19 August attacks, the Government of Iraq responded promptly and effectively. They reassessed security measures, made adjustments, and increased operations, aggressively enhancing security in the cities, all enabled by U.S. forces, and they continue to reassess their security posture.

The Government of Iraq leaders reinforced national unity, and the people responded. To date the extremist efforts to destabilize Iraq have failed. The overwhelming majority of the Iraqi people reject extremism. We have seen no indications of a return to the sectarian violence that plagued Iraq in 2006 and 2007.

Let me now take a little bit of time to discuss the Iraqi Security Forces. Overall the professionalism and operational effectiveness of the approximately 663,000-strong Iraqi Security Forces, including 245,000 soldiers and 407,000 police, continue to improve, thus both bolstering public confidence and trust in the Iraqi Security Forces. Supported by U.S. forces, the Iraqi Security Forces recently provided safe and secure environments for two mass Shi'a pilgrimages in July and August in which millions of pilgrims participated and transited throughout Iraq.

We continue to see signs of normalcy returning to Iraq. Recently the first international soccer match was held in Baghdad with over 50,000 people in attendance. And just last week I witnessed thousands of Iraqis in the parks and streets across Baghdad celebrating Eid, which is another indicator of the growing confidence in the Iraqi Security Forces, especially following the Baghdad bombings just one month prior. You can honestly feel a difference amongst the people in Baghdad and around a large majority of Iraq.

The Iraqi Army and Federal Police continue to improve counter-insurgency implementation, planning, and execution. In some cases police primacy has been established in the cities, but this is still a work in progress. The NATO Training Mission—Iraq continues to focus on institutional training for the Iraqi Security Forces, enhancing the long-term professionalism. Although small, improvement continues in logistics and the sharing and integration of intelligence and operations. The Regional Operation Centers and Provincial Joint Coordination Centers continue to improve.

The Iraqi Security Forces are now in the lead across the entire country with U.S. forces, advising and assisting and enabling operations in the cities, and providing full-spectrum partnership outside of the cities. The Iraqi Security Forces are conducting more and more precision intelligence-driven operations, most of which are unilateral U.S.-enabled operations relying on U.S. intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR), communications, and some aviation and logistical support. We are seeing improved integration

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of Government of Iraq human intelligence and U.S. technical intelligence. Outside the cities Iraqi Security Forces continue a combination of independent, U.S.-enabled and U.S.-partnered full-spectrum operations.

In addition, we continue to see strides in Government of Iraq counterterrorism operations. In May, we began national integrated operations with Iraqi Special Operations Forces facilitated by an Iraqi Operations Coordination Group, a standing Iraqi interagency organization collocated with U.S. counterterrorism forces. Every day we conduct jointly planned and executed counterterrorism operations with increasing operational tempo (OPTEMPO) in results.

I believe that by 2011, the Government of Iraq will have a national counterterrorism force capable of dealing with a variety of extremist threats. Just in the last week, we have jointly arrested 90 high-value individuals, including 52 al Qaeda in Iraq, 23 Shi'a extremists, and 15 Sunni insurgents and ex-Baathists. Since 2006, we have systematically decreased the number of foreign fighters entering Iraq and significantly reduced al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) to a small ideological core that recruits disenfranchised Iraqis and criminals.

In the north AQI and some remnants of Sunni insurgent groups continue in their attempt to reestablish a foothold with the objective of expanding back into Anbar and Baghdad. We are working with Iraqi Security Forces to establish a defense in depth across Iraq with Iraqi Security Forces in the cities and U.S. forces conducting partner full-spectrum operations in the surrounding belts and along the borders to deny extremists safe havens and reduce the flow of foreign fighters and lethal aid into Iraq.

We believe the Iraqi Security Forces will develop the capacity to conduct internal and basic external defense over the next 2½ years as we continue to draw down our forces. As most of you are aware, the Sons of Iraq program succeeded in drawing many out of the insurgency, giving them the opportunity to serve in their communities and earn salaries to support their families. In April, the Government of Iraq assumed full responsibility for the Sons of Iraq program. Over 23,000 former Sons of Iraq have transitioned to the Iraqi Security Forces and other nonsecurity employment since 2008, including over 5,500 in Baghdad over the last two months. In October, 5,000 more will transition in Baghdad. Despite budget cuts across the Government of Iraq, GOI has maintained funding for this program, understanding its importance not only to security, but also to building greater trust between the Sunni community and the government. Sons of Iraq payments through the summer are complete, and September pay is ongoing by the Government of Iraq. The Government of Iraq's goal is to integrate all of the Sons of Iraq into the ministries by the end of this year. I do not believe they will meet this timeline, but I do believe they will continue to execute the program in 2010 until it is complete. We will continue to monitor the progress of this program very closely.

In January, Iraqi's Independent High Electoral Commission orchestrated successful provincial elections in which all Iraqi sects and ethnicities participated and voted out also many of the incumbents since they failed to deliver tangible results and rejected those who were overtly supportive by Iran. The United Nations Assist-

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ance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI) and international observers deem these elections credible and legitimate, and the seating of the provincial government happened peacefully.

In July, Iraqis experienced another milestone with the Kurdistan regional government (KRG) elections, with over 78 percent voter turnout of the approximately 2.5 million eligible voters in the Kurdistan region. Kurds voted in their first direct and open election for the KRG President. President Masoud Barzani was elected with 70 percent of the votes. Voters also signaled a desire for change with the success of the Change List, which won 21 percent of the KRG Parliament, a moderate loss to the Kurdistan Alliance. On 20 August, 2009, the KRG Parliament and President were peacefully seated.

Although security is improving, it is not yet enduring. There still remain underlying, unresolved sources of potential conflict. I call these drivers of instability. From the beginning security in Iraq has been a complex problem that has required nuanced, evolving approaches, and our strategy has reflected this. In this environment, we cannot focus on immediate and traditional security threats alone, especially as the United States continues to assist Iraq in rebuilding the foundations of the security, civil, political, and economic institutions.

We continue to assist the Government of Iraq in addressing and finding ways to mitigate these root causes of instability. Current drivers of instability include communal and factional struggles for power and resources, insufficient Government of Iraq capacity, violent extremist groups, and interference from external state and nonstate actors.

Iraq is a nascent democracy emerging from 30 years of authoritarian rule based on ethnosectarian privilege. Its future as a stable multiethnic representative state rests upon its ability to deal with a myriad of these challenges, and some of these issues will take time to resolve.

The national elections in January of 2010 are critical to determining the path that Iraq will take into the future. The rules of the game are being debated in the Council of Representatives today. Having just returned yesterday from the Eid holiday, they have a condensed timeline to pass an election law and many issues to discuss, including Kirkuk, open versus closed lists, and a single versus multiple district election. There is a potential to build a competent, capable representative government, but there is also the potential to exacerbate societal divisions by appointing people based on their affiliations rather than their abilities.

Even as the Iraqi political system continues to mature, there is not yet consensus on the exact nature of Iraq's representative government, one that is accepted across ethnic, sectarian, and regional lines. Issues include the role and power of the central Iraqi Government vis-à-vis the provinces, the integration and balance of ethnic and sectarian groups within the government, revenue sharing, and long-standing Arab-Kurd issues.

Iraqi Government institutions continue to evolve, and their ability to provide essential services is improving, yet it will take time to develop the institutional process and bureaucratic expertise necessary to sustain programs over time. Also, decades of

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infrastructural neglect require substantial capital investment, and a recent decline in the price of oil, the mainstay of the economy, has resulted in budget shortfalls negatively impacting the Government of Iraq's ability to fund its many requirements.

While endemic corruption and mismanagement persist, the Government of Iraq continues to focus on anticorruption efforts, and there has been some progress in developing a culture of accountability for government officials.

Despite their increased capacity and progress in providing security, the Iraqi Security Forces continue to face shortcomings and budget constraints due in part to the declining oil revenues that affect their current and future operational capacity, including logistical support across the ministries. We continue to assist and advise the Ministries of Defense and Interior as they prioritize the minimum essential capabilities for a foundational defense capability, land, sea, and air, before the withdrawal of U.S. forces in December of 2011. Critical gaps remain in controlling and protecting Iraqi ground airspace and territorial waters.

In Iraq, much of the struggles are about power, land, and resources, which is reflective in the Arab-Kurd and Government of Iraq-Kurdistan regional government tensions. The key issues include the pending hydrocarbon law, revenue sharing, and the disputed internal boundaries, including areas in Ninawa Province, Diyala Province, and Kirkuk Province. We strongly support the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq process promoting political dialogue and resolution of these key issues.

Violent external groups and external influences take advantage of seams within Iraq, such as the Arab-Kurd tensions. Al Qaeda in Iraq, Sunni extremist groups, and Shi'a militant groups continue to pose threats to stability as they seek to exploit political fissures, destabilize the Government of Iraq, and undermine the progress made to date. Interference from external actors continues to exacerbate the security situation with Iraq through either tacit or direct support to extremists and proxy groups. Both enhanced security and diplomatic measures are required to secure Iraq's borders with Iran and Syria.

As outlined by the President on 1 September, 2010, 11 months from now our combat mission will end. Our transition force in Iraq will then focus on training and advising Iraqi Security Forces; conducting targeted counterterrorism missions by, with and through the Iraqis; protecting U.S. forces and others operating around the country, while providing support to civil capacity-building missions with our interagency partners as well as the United Nations.

We are reducing our footprint in Iraq by about 60 percent to an initial strength of 50,000 boots on the ground by 31 August, 2010. Our transition force will consist of three division headquarters and six advise and assist brigades, which were specifically tailored to support Iraqi civil development. We have already begun deliberately drawing down our forces without sacrificing security. From over 143,500 troops and 14 brigade combat teams on the ground in January, we have approximately 124,000 troops and 11 brigade combat teams (BCTs) operating in Iraq today. By the end of October, I believe we will be down to 120,000 troops in Iraq. As we go forward we will thin our lines across Iraq in order to reduce the

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risk and sustain stability through a deliberate transition of responsibilities to the Iraqi Security Forces.

We have already reduced our base footprint by over 200 bases so far and will continue to close bases deliberately and systematically in Iraq. We have also reduced our contractor footprint from 149,000 in January to just over 115,000 contractors today, saving over $441 million this year. On 1 January, 2010, we will also combine six headquarters elements of Multi-National Force—Iraq into a single headquarters called United States Forces—Iraq. This will reduce our headquarters force structure by 40 percent, while maintaining the overall capacity to command and control the force as we transition more and more responsibility to the Government of Iraq through the end of mission in 2011.

Over the course of this campaign, nonlethal operations have been critical to our success. As we change our mission and continue to draw down, they will become even more vital. I am referring specifically the Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP) and Information Operations, both of which have paid huge dividends so far.

This past spring, following the seating of the provincial governments, Multi-National Force—Iraq in concert with the State Department-led provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs) and the newly elected Iraqi provincial leaders focused CERP monies on projects designed to meet the essential needs of the Iraqi people, sustain security gains, and support provincial governance development.

CERP remains a critical enabler that we are using judiciously. In June, we returned $247 million of CERP money, and at the end of the year we will return another $135 million of CERP money. As we begin our responsible drawdown of forces and change of mission in mid- to late-fiscal year 2010 through fiscal year 2011, we expect our need for CERP to reduce; however, CERP will remain a critical enabler for stabilization, and our CERP expenditures in the future will remain within the 20 approved categories that have already been discussed.

Information Operations has also been a vital component of our overall operations in defeating violent extremist groups who themselves use emerging media conduits to recruit, solicit funding, and share their ideology. Our Information Operations have complemented our lethal operations and helped save lives, contributed to host nation stability, promoted support for democratic processes and the rule of law, and reduced the level of violence, yet we are engaged with adversaries who continue to exploit the information space to try and reverse our gains. So I cannot overstate the importance of Information Operations in achieving our national goals in Iraq.

Over the years, the environment and threat have changed, and we have continuously adapted our strategy from focusing on protecting the people in a counterinsurgency fight to concentrating on developing Iraqi capacity. Today, given the hard-fought security gains, we are transitioning to stability operations, and we will continue to responsibly transfer responsibilities to the Government of Iraq, the Iraqi Security Forces, and the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad.

Though the focus of our forces is shifting from security to capacity building, our strategic goal remains to foster a long-term part-

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nership with a sovereign, stable, self-reliant Iraq. We have a good plan that we are executing, and I am confident in our way ahead.

Iraq is a state and a society under construction, struggling to define its identity and its place in the world after decades of oppression and violence. The way in which we draw down our forces will impact not only the relationship between U.S. and Iraq into the future, but also the nature of the new Iraq. Our presence through 2011 provides psychological and physical support to the Iraqi people, the Government of Iraq and the Iraqi Security Forces. It provides the opportunity for different groups to build up their constituencies, to participate in politics, to form alliances, and to reach consensus. The level and nature of U.S. engagement with the Iraqis will continue to change as the U.S. military draws down.

Iraq is making steady progress, but has a long way to go. We must have strategic patience. Through the Strategic Framework Agreement, the United States has a mechanism for supporting Iraq to develop its institutional and human capacity. Success will be defined by our ability to support Iraq's developing institutional capacity, from governance to economics, that will sustain Iraq's long-term stability. The Iraqi Security Forces have made steady progress, and our efforts over the next 2½ years will help solidify the foundation of a professional and competent Iraqi Security Forces. We must leave Iraq with security forces capable of defending the Iraqi people and protecting their institutions.

I close as I began, by recognizing the soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, coastguardsmen, and civilians currently serving in Iraq. These great patriots and their families have made tremendous sacrifices on behalf of our Nation. They have made a positive difference in the lives of millions of all Americans—excuse me, they have made positive differences in the lives of millions, and all Americans should take pride in their accomplishments.

Not long ago Iraq was a society burdened by a seemingly endless cycle of violence and destruction. Today it is buoyed by a tremendous sense of hope for a bright and prosperous future as Iraqis prepare for their national elections, elections that will determine the future direction of Iraq. Having demonstrated tremendous resiliency, I believe the Iraqi people are determined to make Iraq something very different from what it once was. And we have invested an awful lot in Iraq, both from a monetary standpoint and from our personal investment of the many lives of those who have been killed and injured in Iraq, and I think we have a true opportunity to have success. So it is important I think that we continue along the line we are.

So thank you so much for the support that you have given us in the past and the support that I expect you will continue to give us as we move forward.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. General, thank you for your very thorough and positive report to us, and we welcome your presence here today, and thank you for your great contribution.

[The prepared statement of General Odierno can be found in the Appendix on page 49.]

The CHAIRMAN. General, in your opinion, how fast can we responsibly redeploy our troops from that country? And as you know,

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our military has been greatly stressed over the past several years, and we potentially face increased demand for troops in Afghanistan. So what are the risks in speeding up the redeployment of troops from Iraq?

General ODIERNO. Again, as we continue to look at the competing demands—first, my responsibility, as you stated, Mr. Chairman, is to present to my chain of command what the risks are inside of Iraq as we draw down our forces. And as I stated, the important part is that we do not want to lose the security progress that has been made. The physical and psychological presence of U.S. forces help significantly as Iraq continues to move forward. So what we don't want to do is we don't want to see what I mention as the drivers of instability cause a reduction in the confidence of the Iraqi people in moving forward with developing their nascent democracy. So we have to ensure that we don't take enough risk where ethnosectarian violence is able to continue, for example, over Arab-Kurd tensions, or that we don't allow al Qaeda and some of the outside external influences by Iran and others to cause violence inside of Iraq that will cause the Iraqi political system to fall.

So those are the risks. The plan we have I believe allows us to withdraw deliberately and maintain what I believe is an appropriate level of security that the Iraqi Security Forces ultimately can sustain and continue to improve.

That said, we work very carefully—I work very carefully with General Petraeus in order to identify any capabilities that we have and no longer need that can be used in Afghanistan. We have done that over the last several months, and we will continue to do that. We will not require—within our plan I have flexibility to speed up if I think the situation on the ground allows it or to slow down, and I will continue to make those judgments as we move forward.

As I announced, we will probably be down to about 120,000 strength by the end of October. That is a bit faster than we originally planned, and that is based on the improvement that we have seen out in Anbar Province where we have now replaced two brigades with one brigade out in Anbar. And so we are able to make those decisions as we see progress on the ground, and we will continue to do that. So what I have to do is delicately do this without losing the gains we have made, while understanding I cannot have forces there that are not being used efficiently.

The CHAIRMAN. General, the country of Iran has been in the news a great deal lately. What influence does that country have on your efforts in Iraq?

General ODIERNO. Well, obviously, as a neighbor Iran—all neighboring countries have influences inside of Iraq. What we want overall obviously is an Iran that wants to have positive influence inside of Iraq. Unfortunately we still see some malign intent with Iran as we continue to see training conducted in Iran of Iranian surrogates that now then come back into Iraq. We still continue to uncover large caches of rockets, rails to shoot rockets, and some explosively formed projectiles that are made in Iran. We continue to see the potential interference in the political process inside of Iraq. So those obviously are concerns.

The good part about this is that the Iraqi Security Forces are uncovering many of these elements in southern Iraq. They have con-

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tinued to go after these caches and individuals that have been trained inside of Iran, so that is a positive aspect. But it is still very much a concern that they continue to fund and conduct operations of surrogate elements inside of Iraq.

The CHAIRMAN. It appears that the future pole star for success in Iraq is the upcoming elections. From your vantage point today, do you see that in a positive light?

General ODIERNO. I think these elections are extremely important for the Government of Iraq, and I do believe that they will occur in a safe manner as I look at it today.

The important part about these elections is that this is the first election that will be conducted fully by the Iraqis. They will be conducted by the Iraqi High Electoral Commission. And this election will be conducted and secured by Iraqis with our just training and advice and assistance. We will see, I believe, a turnout among all Iraqi elements, all religious groups, all people from all areas of Iraq. So I think it will be critical to the future of Iraq.

We are seeing many coalitions form. The last count, there were almost 300 political parties that have registered for these elections. I think that is important to show how much these elections mean to the Iraqi people and the interest that has been shown.

And so I believe that these elections will occur. They will occur on time. Hopefully the Iraqis will pass an election law here in the next several days. We know they are working very hard to do that. These elections are important. Those who are elected will set the stage for Iraq over the next several years, whether they continue to move towards democratic process in an open economy or not. And so these will be very important elections for Iraq and the future of Iraq.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. McKeon.

Mr. MCKEON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you again, General, for your statement. And you know as well as anyone the sacrifice our country has made in bringing stability to Iraq.

Either satisfied with success or anxious to focus elsewhere, many in Washington are pushing to move on from Iraq. I am worried that that has led some to dismiss the strategic importance of Iraq. Please state for the American people what is at stake in Iraq, explain why it is in the national security interest to keep combat forces there until September 2010, and why it is necessary to keep a residual force in Iraq until the end of 2011 and even beyond.

General ODIERNO. Thank you, Congressman McKeon.

I would just say as you just look at the geographic location of Iraq, you notice the strategic importance of it. It is strategically placed within the Middle East. It is centered in between Iran and—the Persian Shi'a Iran and the Sunni Arab west and southern partners. And Iraq has always been a country that represents all of the Middle East with its population.

Iraq is moving towards a nascent democracy and wants to move towards an open economy, and the ability that it would have to potentially contribute to stability in the Middle East in the long term, in my mind, is strategically important to us, and we can't lose sight of that. We have an opportunity here to have a long-term strategic partner.

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To the Iraqis the Strategic Framework Agreement, which I discussed in my opening statement, is extremely important to them because that will help to develop a long-term relationship with the United States, an economic relationship, a security relationship, an educational relationship, technological exchanges. That is important to them as they want to move forward as a country that is respected, has a democracy, and can continue to develop its own economy with the vast resources that it has available to it, but it has yet been able to take advantage of. And so I think for those factors it is important for us to stay engaged.

We have spent—as I said earlier, we have spent a lot of money, and I know you all know that. We have spent a lot of personal sacrifice inside of Iraq. And security is headed in the right direction. We don't want to lose that. We want to give them the time and the space to continue this development. So by leaving our combat forces in there until September 1, 2010, allows them to go through their elections, allows them to seat their new government. And then allowing forces to stay there through 2011 allows them to continue to build their civil capacity so we can take advantage of the opportunities that we think Iraq brings to stability in the Middle East.

Mr. MCKEON. Thank you, General.

Every four years we hold an election to determine our President. We do that in November. And we understand that the President is sworn in in January, and it seems to be a very—for a couple of hundred years we have done that very, very well. Maybe you could explain the timeline of how their election works. They have a different system of government. And the election will be held in January, but it will take a while to establish a government. Perhaps you could explain that.

General ODIERNO. Congressman, I will walk through it in general terms. First, again, by the Constitution, the election is supposed to occur no later than the 31st of January. Right now it is scheduled for the 16th of January, again pending the passing of the election law. Once the election is completed, they take 45 days to certify the results of the election. And so what happens is we will have hundreds of international observers, maybe thousands. There is going to be quite a few international observers, as well as the Iraqi High Electoral Commission will certify the results. They will take all complaints, and then they will deem the elections to be credible, legitimate or not.

That takes 45 days. Once that happens, you then have 30 days to begin the formation of seating the Council of Representatives. You then have another 30 days to select the leadership, the Presidency, and then you have another time period to select the Prime Minister and then the Speaker. So within that time period, we expect that it will take from January to June or so, maybe July, to seat the new government. In 2005, following the elections, the government—the elections were in December, and the government was seated in May of 2005. This is the parliamentary system of government, and it just takes time for them to do this. So there is timelines on it. They will follow those timelines strictly, but it will take time to seat that government.

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Mr. MCKEON. Based on that timeline, then, you are comfortable with keeping combat troops in the country until August, and that will be sufficient, and you are comfortable with being able to pull them out securely at that time?

General ODIERNO. I do. I look at the first 60 days or so following the election as maybe the most critical time if we think there might be some sort of violence following the election as the results are certified. Our experiences in the past have been if within the 60 days, that is when you would see some level of violence. So that allows us, I think, to make sure that we believe this will be a peaceful transition of power, which we expect. But that will allow us to ensure this peaceful transition of power, and then allow us to draw down as they seat the government—draw down to a level of 50,000 by the end of August.

Mr. MCKEON. Thank you, General.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Ortiz.

Mr. ORTIZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General, Mr. Secretary, thank you so much. We appreciate your service.

You know, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) has suggested that there is a breakdown between U.S. Transportation Command (TRANSCOM) and the Army Central Command (CENTCOM) on the movement of equipment out of Iraq. For example, the GAO stated that a thorough inventory of equipment has not been completed, nor have any communicated—have they communicated with each other on how they are going to accelerate the movement of troops out of Iraq. In your opinion, are you concerned that this will increase the time required for all redeployment of forces and ultimately impact unit readiness? And do our forces in Kuwait have the forces available to support an accelerated redeployment of our troops out of Iraq? And what role, if any, will Turkey play in the redeployment of forces? And maybe you can give us a little——

General ODIERNO. Thank you, Congressman. I can answer some of those questions, and I will.

First off, we have been planning for the redeployment of forces and equipment for some time now. In Iraq I have a cell that has been established now for about six months that has representatives from CENTCOM, from the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, that we are coordinating the movement of all equipment and personnel out of the theater.

We have done a complete inventory of all the equipment that is in Iraq. We understand what we have in Iraq. And that immediately within the cell gets transmitted back to the services and to CENTCOM in order for them to decide how this equipment will be distributed, whether it comes back to the United States, whether it goes somewhere else.

So I feel confident that we have a good handle on this. We have already started moving equipment out that we believe is no longer needed based on the withdrawal of some of our forces already, and also on the change in mission that we have. And we have already sent out over 150,000 pieces of equipment from Iraq. So we continue to do this on a regular basis.

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We plan on in some ways using—we have taken a look at equipment going through Turkey, as well as Jordan, as well as Kuwait. And we have actually—we are now actually sending some equipment through Jordan as well as through Kuwait. We coordinate very carefully with Army Central Command, who is responsible for the logistics support inside of Kuwait. They also are represented in the cell that we have established, and we know what their capacity is. We have planned this in such a way where our redeployment fits within the capacity that is established in Kuwait for both people and equipment.

Mr. ORTIZ. And I know that for some years back you were utilizing a lot of the National Guard equipment and Reserve equipment because of the damage to some of the regular Army equipment. You still have a lot of equipment that belongs to the National Guard and Reserve in Iraq?

General ODIERNO. Congressman, I can't tell you exactly how much we have, but over the years, as we have deployed and redeployed units out of Iraq, we continue to rotate equipment through Iraq, depending on its usage and its wear, as you pointed out. So I don't know the exact figure, but I am certain there is National Guard equipment inside of Iraq.

So what will happen is, again, we have identified all this equipment that is transmitted back to the services; and most of it is Army equipment. So most of it back to the Army, through Army Materiel Command, and they then will provide us distribution instructions.

And, actually, it goes to our—we will ship the equipment to Kuwait or Jordan, and then they will ship it back and send it back to the units of its origin or to some other destination if they decide that there is another priority.

That decision will be made back here in the Pentagon between the Joint Staff, Secretary of Defense, and the services on where exactly the equipment goes.

Mr. ORTIZ. My time is now up. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman.

Let me point out, in front of each member is the timeline for each questioner, which is a rather new experience for us here, but I point that out to the members.

Mr. Wilson.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to thank the General for being here.

Mr. Secretary, thank you very much.

General, I appreciated so much the briefing I received last month with you in Baghdad. I appreciate your leadership.

In fact, I had two sons serve in Iraq. A reason I felt so comfortable about their service is persons like you, the capable American military leadership. It was really reassuring as a parent.

And I am so grateful for our troops serving currently, for our veterans. They are making a difference, defeating the terrorists overseas.

My question, and it is very similar to my good friend Congressman Solomon Ortiz, is relative to equipment. That is, as you execute the redeployment of personnel and equipment from Iraq, to

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what extent is it reasonable to simply move the equipment to Afghanistan? In your opinion, are we fully capitalizing on that opportunity?

General ODIERNO. Again, we are. I would say again, those decisions are made by others. But let me give you an example of what happened, though, recently.

We had 19 sets of route clearance equipment that was excess, that we once needed that we no longer needed, and we expedited the movement of that equipment to Afghanistan. So we identify those key pieces that are no longer needed in Iraq, they are needed in Afghanistan, and those are moved very quickly. That is completely coordinated through Central Command with General Petraeus and his team as we move equipment back and forth.

So, absolutely, we identify the critical pieces of equipment that are needed. We have moved some engineer and aviation equipment as well from Iraq to Afghanistan as our need for it has reduced, and we will continue to do this as we move forward.

Mr. WILSON. And I am particularly interested in unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), so I hope each one that could be moved would be moved. It just gives such protection to our troops and allies.

General, I understand that the relationship between the Multi-National Force—Iraq and Iraqi Security Forces is actually far more positive than the media portrays. In fact, on our tour, we were at Tallil, where my son Alan served for a year, and we visited with your personnel and the Iraqi security personnel in the same room working together. It was just startling to me.

Then we had the opportunity to see the new Iraqi Special Forces, and they have the latest, most modern equipment in the world.

I also noticed they have M249 crew-served weapons, which are made by FN Manufacturing of Richland County, South Carolina, my constituents. They are very proud to make those for our troops and for our Iraqi allies.

What is your assessment of the relationship and what measures can be taken to further improve communication and cooperation?

General ODIERNO. First, I will say over the last three years specifically, during and following the surge of forces, the partnerships that have been developed and the relationships that have been developed have been extremely strong with the Iraqi Security Forces, from private up to the Minister of Defense and Minister of Interior. In every operational command, in every Joint Provision Coordination Center, which are the ones that collect all the information, we have joint commands operating in every one of those.

There are always some anecdotal stories that will tell you maybe there are not good relationships, but I will tell you that the strength of the relationships between our leaders and their leaders continues today as we continue to support them as they move forward, and the large majority of Iraqi leaders are appreciative of that support that we continue to give as we move forward here and as they take more and more responsibility for security.

Mr. WILSON. Well, it was extraordinary as we were there that Congressman Patrick Murphy was on the congressional delegation (CODEL), and he had served in Iraq, and it looked like he just couldn't wait to join the Iraqi Special Forces.

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Mr. Secretary, as our military forces draw down in number and transition fully to an advise and assist role in Iraq, what support do you expect from the State Department? In your opinion, are the Department of Defense and State Department roles clearly defined?

Mr. VICKERS. The National Security Council (NSC) currently has a process under way to manage the transition of certain responsibilities from the Department of Defense to the Department of State. One of these will be assistance to Iraqi police forces over time, and I believe that process is well under way.

Mr. WILSON. And a final story, I was with Congressman Henry Cuellar one time seeing the training of the Iraqi police. He was right in the middle of them. I thought maybe it was dangerous. No, they all were practicing English. So it is just a great experience.

Thank you, and I appreciate your testimony today.

General ODIERNO. Congressman, if I could just add a little bit to the last comment. We are in the process of redeveloping a joint campaign plan between the U.S. Embassy and Multi-National Force—Iraq which is focused entirely on transitioning responsibilities to the Embassy as well as the Government of Iraq as we withdraw our forces in 2010 and '11, and we plan on publishing this document sometime around the first of the year. That will identify the deliverables and specifically what we transition to the U.S. Embassy, who has responsibility for it, and what transitions to the Government of Iraq. Because this is really important for the continued success post-2011 as well.

Mr. WILSON. And I am grateful to have a nephew stationed at the Embassy. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman.

The gentlewoman from California, Ms. Sanchez.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, gentlemen, once again, Mr. Secretary, General, once again, for being before us, and thank you for the work that you do for our country. And you are right. Our troops are just doing a great job. In fact, I get a lot of e-mails and a lot of information and a lot of calls from them about what is going on on the ground.

I know, General, you and I usually have a disagreement about what is really happening out there in Iraq, and I think usually I am closer to what is really going on than you. But let me just put for the record that I do believe we are getting out. We are getting out of Dodge, and we are going to get it done sooner rather than later, and that means that we really are looking at our State Department and other departments to get that other work done as we withdraw our troops.

General and Mr. Secretary, I would like both of you to answer this question: General, at the end of July, you and Secretary Gates visited with Kurdish leaders in Irbil; and you were widely quoted saying that the Arab-Kurd tensions over disputed internal boundaries and national petroleum policy were the biggest problem facing Iraq. In fact, you said Arab-Kurd tensions are the number one driver of insecurity. Yet, this morning when you began and you talked about the drivers, you didn't mention this.

So my questions are, do you still believe that the number one driver is insecurity, or do you still think it is up there? And what

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measures have been taken to manage and to reduce the tensions that are going on?

And, of course, Article 140 of the constitution of Iraq provides for a phased process of normalization, census, and referendum to determine the final boundaries of the Kurdish region within a democratic process. But some have said to me that they think the U.S. has to be more active in getting this 140 Article issue done, this process done. In fact, when I asked Secretary Gates in front of this committee, he said that the U.S. fully supports Article 140.

So my question is, how involved are we in that? What are we doing to push these sides to get to a resolution under the constitution? And if in fact we are going to have a responsible withdrawal, don't you think that getting that Article 140 process done is almost a precondition for us to be able to remove troops and make sure that these ethnic issues are taken care of? And why is 140 stalled and what are we doing to move it in the right direction?

General ODIERNO. Thank you, Congresswoman.

I still believe that Arab-Kurd tensions is the number one driver of instability inside of Iraq. I mentioned it. I might not have said it was number one, but I did mention it. And this is long-standing problems over land and resources and the distribution of those in these key areas that have been going on for hundreds of years inside of Iraq between the Kurds and the Arab population.

The Article 140 process back in December 2007, actually did not get finished by December of '07, which was the date in the Iraqi constitution it was supposed to be finished. And when that happened, what happened was we formed a United Nations (U.N.)—the U.N. took over trying to renegotiate and get the sides together. So we have a U.N. commission now that is working very hard between the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government to try to come to some agreement with these very difficult issues regarding disputed areas in terms of boundaries as well as a sharing of hydrocarbon and resources.

So what we are doing is we are fully in support of that effort. We support the U.N. We engage with both the Government of Iraq and the KRG on these issues to make sure they continue to participate in this process, and this process ultimately will follow hopefully and cause the implementation of the 140, Article 140, and the resolution of these issues.

In addition, we are attempting to work with the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government to reduce tensions in the areas. Over the last year or so, on several cases, it is the U.S. forces who have helped to reduce tensions between these groups. We now have them in discussion, and they are trying to come up with some sort of an architecture, security architecture, that will reduce tensions between the Arabs and Kurds. So we will be at such a level that everybody understands that they will solve this problem through the political processes of the U.N.

This is something that Iraq has to solve. This is an Iraq problem that the Iraqis have to solve. We have to be engaged at all levels, and we will continue to be engaged at all levels.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentlelady.

Mr. Franks.

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Mr. FRANKS. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman and General Odierno. Thank you for being here, Mr. Secretary.

You know, General, I remember not so long ago flying across Iraq in pitch darkness in a Blackhawk helicopter just about 150 feet off the ground, and my memory is very clear that I was much more disconcerted about that than you were.

I just appreciate what a great soldier of freedom you are. I am convinced when that day comes and we do get out of Dodge, that those streets of Dodge will be much safer because you passed that way.

No one knows the future. No one knows what will happen in Iraq. I suppose there are two people who try to predict the future, those who don't know and those who don't know they don't know.

But, that said, I think you have given Iraq a chance to live in freedom, and you may have brought a beachhead of freedom to the Middle East that potentially could help the whole of humanity turn in a better direction. And whatever happens beyond that, I certainly salute you for your noble and gallant service.

I suppose my first question is to some degree along Chairman Skelton's question, but it has to do with power vacuums. I know it has been said that U.S. presence, if it disappears, that there will be a power vacuum that could occur. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad himself has been quoted saying, "The political power of the occupiers is collapsing rapidly. Soon we will see a huge power vacuum in the region. Of course, we are prepared to fill the gap with the help of our neighbors and the regional friends like Saudi Arabia and with the help of the Iraqi nation."

Now, I know that Iran has been implicated very clearly in making the explosively formed penetrators that are one of the great dangers to our troops there. So I guess, taking into account the potential regional influence Iran may have, how close a relationship do you envision Iraq and Iran to have in the future, and how great a concern should that be when we are discussing the amount and type of U.S. forces that should remain in Iraq for ongoing stability?

General ODIERNO. First, I think we must always realize that Iran and Iraq are neighbors and they are going to have a relationship. The one thing, though, over time that I have learned spending in Iraq is the Iraqis are nationalists. They really don't want anyone interfering in their internal politics. They want Iraq to be for Iraq. And I think it is important to remember that as we move forward.

Again, I think the important part is about the key term that the President used in his strategy and the strategy we are doing is "responsible drawdown." And that is why it is so important to do it slowly, deliberately, so we are able to draw down in such a way where the Iraqi Security Forces continue to grow, all the other civil capacity builders continue to grow, and that allows Iraq to stand up as a country who can resist some of these outside forces who might attempt to have undue influence. That is also why it is so important for us to have a long-term relationship with Iraq.

So I think those are the keys as we move forward.

Mr. FRANKS. I suppose, you know, again, it is the obvious follow-up. You said in the close of your testimony that, "We must leave

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Iraq with the security force capable of defending the Iraqi people and protecting the Government of Iraq institutions."

Obviously, that is the long-term goal that we all want, very, very cogent remarks. What in the final analysis is your biggest concern with achieving this goal? What can we do to make sure that happens? What can the Congress do? I think you have carried Congress on your back this whole time. So I just want to make sure you can give us some perspective.

General ODIERNO. I would just say is that it is about strategic patience, and even after we leave in 2011, we can't just say, okay, Iraq is finished. We are going to need some additional support between now and 2011 to help build some of the capacities. We will identify what we need to you.

We will also need to continue to support them in some way beyond 2011, not by having troops in Iraq but by helping them to continue to develop their institutions, and we can have an influence on that.

So we have to make sure that we allow them to do that, and we keep that in mind as we move forward. Ultimately, I believe that will contribute to our own security and stability in the region.

Mr. FRANKS. Well, thank you, General. My time is gone, but I thank you again for your commitment to human freedom. My two little babies I think will live in a brighter place in life because of people like you, and I appreciate it.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman.

The gentlelady from California, Mrs. Davis.

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, General, Mr. Secretary, for being here and for your outstanding work. I know, General, you certainly are being credited for helping to turn this situation around, and we appreciate that.

I wanted to ask you, the *Wall Street Journal* reported yesterday that the Iraqis are having difficulty with their budget crunch and oil prices decreasing and purchasing equipment that they had already requested from the U.S. Government, and there are a number of issues combined with that. How difficult and how high a priority is it for us to get this straight, and are there policies that we in fact should be looking at right now that would allow them to purchase more of those in advance?

General ODIERNO. I think it is very important. We have been working this for quite some time.

First, the Iraqi budget, I know because of the price of oil, their budget has decreased quite significantly. Their combined Ministry of Defense–Ministry of the Interior (MOD–MOI) budget is about $10 billion a year. About 85 percent of that is fixed, non-discretionary, and it has to do mainly with salaries and other things. So that leaves a very small piece left to invest in modernization. They have already purchased several things such as patrol boats and many other Army and some Air Force equipment that they have to still pay for. So almost all of their even discretionary income is taken up.

So what I want to be able to do is assist them in some small ways by using stay-behind equipment, potentially leaving for them, as well as improving their ability to not have to pay all costs up

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front for foreign military sales (FMS), where they can spread it over a longer time period.

Mrs. DAVIS. As I understand it, they don't meet a number of the criteria that we have.

General ODIERNO. That is exactly right. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) bank has to certify them. And, of course, they are trying to get through that certification by having enough reserves so they get certified. So it is a very complex problem, and we have things competing against each other. So we are trying to come up with many different ways to help them to get the equipment we think is necessary for them to have a foundational capability by 2011.

Part of that might be is we might have to—what we believe is there is, in fiscal year '10 and '11, we think we have a requirement of about $3.5 billion that we need to help them in order to finish getting the foundational capacity that they need in order to be able to have security by 2011. Then we will have to continue some sort of a foreign military financing (FMF) program through the State Department after 2011. If we are able to do that, that will allow them to slowly build up and have the security capability necessary to protect themselves.

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you. I appreciate that.

One of the things that must be frustrating is that violence does continue to flare from time to time. I noticed that one of the high-ranking Iraqi Army generals was recently killed as well. I guess that was reported yesterday.

What effect does that have in terms of the government, the army? Or have we gotten so numb to that now in a sense that it doesn't have the kind of impact?

General ODIERNO. I think for the Iraqis—first of all, it was a brigade commander that was killed yesterday up in Mosul. No, it does have an impact. The Iraqi Security Forces, like our forces, understand what their duty is and what their mission is, and they are very dedicated to providing security to their people. And I have seen many acts of bravery by Iraqi leaders and their soldiers, and in a lot of ways they are no different from our soldiers when it comes to that.

So they see that as their mission, and they are trying to root out these last remnants of al Qaeda and other insurgents in some of these very difficult areas.

The sad part, Congresswoman, is that we continue to see these attacks against innocent civilians. They absolutely mean nothing to the outcome, and all it does is kill innocent people. It is frustrating to us, and it is frustrating to the Iraqis. That is what we are trying to stop inside of Iraq now, these mass bombings that occur. Although much less frequently than before, they still occur and kill many innocent people. Those are the kinds of incidents we are trying to stop.

Mrs. DAVIS. Are our civilians able to move freely, go down and have a cup of tea, to engage in an informal fashion yet at this point?

General ODIERNO. They can, in order to meet with Iraqi officials. I would say you can, but it is still a little bit difficult to move freely. They are targets, is part of the problem.

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The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentlelady.

The gentleman from Texas, Mr. Conaway.

Mr. CONAWAY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General, thank you for being here this morning, and Secretary Vickers, thank you. I will have a question in a second.

General, the hash marks on your right sleeve I think indicate deployments away from family and the comforts of this country. I can't count them from here. But as a representative of all the men and women sitting behind you who have earned those stripes and, more importantly, their families who endured during those deployments, thank you very much. We sincerely appreciate your great service to this country. Please pass that on from us to the folks who you lead. I know you are very proud to lead them.

Following up a little bit on what Susan just asked, the Department of Defense has asked for $750 million of legislative authority to give equipment to the Iraqis. Much of that will be excess equipment that it might be cheaper to leave it than bring it home. And this may be a better question for the Secretary. Much of it is going to be non-excess equipment, equipment that we may need or do need, judge that we need in other places. How do we reimburse the services that give that equipment up? How do they replace it? Is that going to be a supplemental? Where do we find the money to replace that equipment that otherwise would be needed for some of the other forces?

General ODIERNO. I will let the Secretary answer that.

Mr. CONAWAY. He has been very quiet all morning.

General ODIERNO. I will say just one thing. We divide it into several groups. There is excess equipment that is truly excess to all of our requirements, so that is not required. But there is some equipment that might not be completely excess but what we have determined is it actually costs us more money to send it back than it would to leave it there. So that is the decision process we go through on this equipment.

Now, in terms of the authority and reimbursing, I leave that to the Secretary.

Mr. VICKERS. Our J–4, our logistics director to the Joint Staff, is leading a process right now looking at this issue with the services about, as General Odierno said, what amount of the inventory is excess that we could leave in Iraq, what costs too much to bring back, how we reimburse the services, but also what we would ship elsewhere, for example, for other needs, and that process is still under way.

Mr. CONAWAY. Sure. I understand that. But how do we get the services reimbursed for that equipment that is considered non-essential? I have great confidence in your ability to decide which is which and to figure out it costs more to ship it home. But how do repay? Is it going to be a supplemental, an additional budget request? Where are you guys coming up for the money for the services? Out of hide, or what are you going to do?

Mr. VICKERS. I think that is being worked in the 2011 budget process, sir, is my understanding; and it will be resolved before then. But I am sorry I don't have a better answer for you right now.

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Mr. CONAWAY. Okay, if you don't mind getting back with us on the record on that.

Mr. VICKERS. I will, sir.

[The information referred to was not available at the time of printing.]

Mr. CONAWAY. General, as you have lived with the Strategic Framework and the Status of Forces Agreement for several months now, are there anything about those agreements that need be to adjusted or tweaked that you need help with from a legislative standpoint in terms of filling out the rest of these two or three years we are involved that would make it easier or better, from your perspective?

General ODIERNO. Well, I think I will be honest with you. I have been pleased. Frankly, it has turned out better than I probably originally thought it would as we walked into this. But I think—and it is because, again, I go back to the relationships. The relationship we will have built with the Government of Iraq has allowed us to execute this agreement in a very fair, appropriate manner.

I think we have the authorities we need inside of the Security Agreement to execute what we need to do. It also, importantly, puts the Iraqis out front. Although we are still conducting combat operations, we do everything through the Iraqis. I think that is where we want to be today, because we want to slowly give them more and more responsibility. So I feel comfortable so far with the agreement as it is written.

Mr. CONAWAY. All right. One last question as it relates to the risks that the elections won't come off in January. Other than them not being put into the form of election laws, what other risk do you see that those elections won't come off appropriately?

General ODIERNO. As I look at it today, if we get the election law passed, I believe unless there is some unforeseen event that would happen—and I have trouble getting my arms around what that might be—I really believe the elections will occur on time, unless there is something that caused a large amount of sectarian violence to break out between now and the election. But I just don't see it, because the Iraqi people don't want to go there. They are tired of that, and they want to move forward.

Mr. CONAWAY. Again, General, thank you for your long service, and please convey to the folks you lead how much we appreciate it, but especially their families, because I think a lot of times the families don't get bragged on enough, what they do to allow you and your team to do what it does.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman.

The gentleman from Rhode Island, Mr. Langevin.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Thank you Mr. Chairman.

General, welcome, and, Mr. Secretary, welcome to you, too. Thank you both for your service and, General, particularly your great leadership of our forces in Iraq. I hope you also pass on our deep appreciation for all of those that you lead who wear the Nation's uniform of how grateful we are for their sacrifice and their service.

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General, when you and I had the opportunity to meet when I was there to visit in Iraq over the Memorial Day recess, it was just prior to the beginning of the drawdown of troops; and the particular area that you still had concern about was in Mosul in particular, the presence there still of al Qaeda in Iraq. Can you give me an update on the current situation there, the strength of insurgent forces there, and what you have seen as we have started to withdraw?

Also, on a broader sense, as we get closer to 2011 and once we have completed withdrawal of all of our forces, can you give us an assessment of what the intelligence sources suggest, what does your personal assessment conclude, is the strength of those that might be waiting for us to leave and their ability to carry out attacks to undo everything that we have achieved to this point?

General ODIERNO. Thank you, Congressman.

First, with Mosul, Mosul continues to be probably the most difficult area. Nineveh Province, Mosul is part of Nineveh Province, is probably still the most difficult area. However, we are still making progress. Incidents have come down a little bit.

What we have been able to do is, with the Iraqi Security Forces taking responsibility inside of the cities, that has allowed us to move outside in the belts around Mosul and also move towards the border with Syria, which has made it much more difficult for foreign fighters and other groups to transit. So I think, because of that, we are starting to see a reduction in some of the capacity up there.

But the current concern goes back to their attempt to exploit some of the political fissures, Arab-Kurd tensions being one of them, in Nineveh Province, where you have some of the groups such as al Qaeda trying to ignite some sort of conflict between Arabs and Kurds and potentially some Shi'a minority groups and Kurdish minority groups.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Is al Qaeda still the main problem?

General ODIERNO. It is. Again, its capabilities are degraded, but they are still a bit resilient, and they are still able to conduct operations. We have been able to cut into their finance network a bit, but they are like a Mafia organization. They extort money from many small businesses in order to fund their operations. We realize that, and we are going after that, working with the Iraqis. We believe if we can really go after their funding it will significantly limit what they can do.

Mr. LANGEVIN. On the broader question of those who would be waiting for us to leave and the assessment of their strengths and ability?

General ODIERNO. Yes. I think the important part is if we can get the Iraqi Security Forces, as I stated earlier, to a level, they are on the right track. If we continue to progress over the next two-and-a-half years, if we continue to fund some of the things they need, I believe that they will be ready and they will be able to handle the groups that are remaining.

The development of the Iraqi special operations forces and their ability to do counterterrorism operations improves every day. The improvement of the conventional forces to do counterinsurgency operations is getting better. Police primacy is probably the one area

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that will probably need continued support following 2011. I think we will have police primacy in many parts of Iraq but not in all parts.

Mr. LANGEVIN. On the advise and assist brigades that you developed, can you can give a little more clarity of each of the troop levels for the advise and assist brigades? I know it is 35,000 overall, but give us just a breakdown on that.

Again, I understand that the role of those will be to continue to train and equip and support the Iraqi Security Forces. What specifically would the advise and assist brigades accomplish that is not being done already today?

General ODIERNO. First of all, what we have done is we used to have—there is about 4,000 people in the advise and assist brigades. What they do, what they will be able to do they have not done before is we used to have external advisory teams that we took from all over, the Army and Marine Corps mainly, and put them into Iraq and they were independent entities. What we have now done is we have embedded all of these inside of these brigades so it gives us unity of command and unity of effort. These brigades control all of this training and assist. They will be able to develop at all levels. So it will be much more organized, controlled, and I believe we will get better results from it.

In addition, they will be able to continue to provide security for the provincial reconstruction teams and other nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and U.N. individuals who want to still work in building Iraqi civil capacity. So that will be what they do. And also always provide protection for our force. But that will be what they do.

So what we have done is we have better organized them to do that mission. We do some of that today, but really we are organized more for combat operations and not for training and assistance. So what we have done is we still have the ability to defend ourselves, but they are better organized to do this type of mission.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. TAYLOR [presiding]. Mr. Coffman for five minutes.

Mr. COFFMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Odierno, I was in Iraq in 2005–2006 with the United States Marine Corps working with Sunni Arabs in a civil affairs capacity. And one thing I noticed from the population is that they repeatedly expressed a concern to me that the army—that the Iraqi Army at that time working in the area was predominantly Shi'a, with very few Sunnis in the Iraqi Army, and they really saw that as an occupation force and not as a force of their own. Is there better integration in the military today?

General ODIERNO. The army and the police force itself is representative of the population, so I believe there has been more done to integrate both Sunni and Shi'a. You don't hear that much anymore.

The Sons of Iraq and integrating some of them in the security forces, out in Anbar specifically, which we did in 2007 has helped specifically out in Anbar and some of the other areas. But we have Sunni leaders, we have Shi'a leaders, we have Kurd leaders. So I think the army for the most part reflects a good cross-section.

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I still think some Iraqis will tell you they are concerned that leaders have not yet been, by constitution, approved by the Council of Representatives and are solely selected by the Prime Minister, so we have to work our way through that. I think that is one issue that continues to raise its head as we continue to move forward, and we continue to work that with them. It is about the Council of Representatives enforcing their will based on the constitution.

Mr. COFFMAN. Thank you, General.

Another question, when we look at the insurgency today—again, when I was there in 2005–2006, the foreign fighters were a large part of the insurgency at that time and certainly were al Qaeda-linked. How would you describe the insurgency inside of Iraq today?

General ODIERNO. It is much different than it was.

First, the numbers and size of it is significantly less than it was. Foreign fighters are coming in at a rate of 90 percent less than what it was back then. There is very few that come across every month, and once they get into the country, they have difficulty maneuvering. But there are still some that are coming in.

We are seeing a smaller and smaller group, and, in some cases, I would argue it is moving more to criminality than it is an insurgency. But it is hard sometimes to determine the difference, whether it is criminal activity or insurgent activity. But some of those have combined.

Because of the many insurgents either reconciling, coming back to the Government of Iraq, or over time have been killed or captured, many criminals are now being used in order to attempt to try to conduct some of these activities. So it is a different understanding of those elements.

Overall, I would just continue to emphasize that the security around most of the country is fairly normal. In only a few places do we have serious incidents, and in many instances life has really returned to normal inside of Iraq.

Mr. COFFMAN. General, how do you see the combat service support elements of the Iraqi military today? Are they still largely dependent on the United States, or are they increasingly independent?

General ODIERNO. They are better, but they are still not where they need to be to be completely independent. They still need our support.

Part of the area that is hurting the Iraqi Security Force combat service support (CSS) is that they put a freeze on hiring based on their budget constraints; and in '09, '10, and '11 is when they are supposed to really build the CSS. And if they continue to have this freeze they won't have the individuals to fill the positions. That is part of the problem. We are working with them now to ensure that happens.

But, overall, we have seen improvement, but it is not yet where we believe they can be completely independent of providing their CSS.

Mr. COFFMAN. General, how much is corruption a factor today? Obviously, in 2005–2006, it was a significant factor in the Iraqi Government. How would you evaluate it today?

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General ODIERNO. Corruption is still problematic. It is still endemic inside of Iraqi society and in the ministries. However, we are starting to see—I know specifically in the Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Defense, they are taking specific steps in order to counter corruption. We have seen the arrest of two ministers involved in corruption. We have seen the firing of some generals involved in corruption. So they are starting to understand the importance of government officials being accountable for their actions and the fact that corruption will not be accepted.

I still think we will have years in order for them to solve this problem, but they are beginning to move on the right path.

Mr. COFFMAN. Thank you, General.

Mr. TAYLOR. Mr. Courtney for five minutes.

Mr. COURTNEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you General and Secretary for being with us today.

I was with Mr. Lynch in July, as you may recall, visiting. You had pretty much just passed at least the 40-month mark, at least, when we were visiting you. I think when they write the history books of this whole conflict your service is going to just stand out in terms of your dogged persistence. And I think, again, the fact that there are so many empty seats in this room is the ultimate statement on how successful you have been. Two years ago, this topic, you couldn't move in a committee hearing room, and, again, I think that by itself says a lot.

One of the other things that, two years ago, when General Petraeus testified, he was joined by Ambassador Crocker to sort of report in from Iraq, and, obviously, some things have changed. The Green Zone has now been disbursed in terms of the new U.S. Embassy, and you are in a new physical location. As Congresswoman Sanchez indicated, the political challenges facing Iraq are still as much a part of the end game here as it was two years ago. How is the relationship between your office and the ambassador? How often do you interact, and what efforts are still being made by us to keep moving forward on the political end?

General ODIERNO. Thank you so much for the question.

First of all, we interact every single day. We probably meet personally three or four times a week. I have an office in the Embassy that I man. But I also have about 300 people within MNF—I that are actually in the Embassy that are in support of economic, police, training, and other agencies, planning, that are there every single day working with the Embassy. So we are completely integrated at every level. We continue to be completely integrated.

We are updating this joint campaign plan, which is a joint plan between Ambassador Hill and myself. We are working this very hard, very closely together. It is very important, because it really is going to set what the deliverables are as we transition to civilian capacity building once the military completes civilian capacity building.

The way I put it to all of my people is, in 2003, we had a chance to do this. We didn't do it quite right. We have a chance now. We have got to make sure we have the planning and the deliverables necessary to make sure this works as we reduce our presence. We are hand in hand doing a joint process with the Embassy, and I feel very comfortable with this.

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So I believe we have a real good system in place. Every meeting that I hold, we have a member of the Embassy at the meeting. So our relationship is good. Ambassador Hill and I work very closely together on a daily basis. As I tell him, the only thing Ambassador Hill and I disagree with every day is that he is a Red Sox fan and I am a Yankees fan. So, besides that, we do pretty well.

Mr. COURTNEY. Well, I have to side with the State Department on that issue.

Just to follow up on Congressman Conaway's question about SOFA, there was a lot of time spent in terms of trying to balance the jurisdictional issues in terms of if there was disputes and how to resolve disputes. And I think, again, you were talking in July when we were over there about the fact that it was still kind of new to people, but we were trying to get it done at the street level rather than have it go up above. Do you find that you have to kind of referee or at least the systems requires refereeing?

General ODIERNO. I think we are all honest brokers, is how I put it, in some of these issues. Sometimes we become the honest broker. They know we will work for both sides trying to come up with the right solution. Those times are coming less and less, but we still are, on many issues, the honest broker. So what we try to do is play a role that allows the Iraqis to solve it, with us facilitating the process for them to solve these problems.

That is a change in mindset that we have to have. It is not that we have less leverage. It is that our leverage is different today than what it was, and it needs to be different because of the security agreement, because we recognize their sovereignty. We want them to build the capacity to solve these problems themselves. So it is our responsibility to make sure we help them to solve those problems themselves in any way we can.

Mr. COURTNEY. And, real quick, you mentioned that the CERP money, a substantial amount of money was returned. I mean, why is that happening? It is just the need isn't there? Were we overbudgeted?

General ODIERNO. A couple of things. First, some of the money was actually used to pay the Sons of Iraq, and that was the first $240 million we returned. The Iraqis took over the payments of the Sons of Iraq. Since that is why we said we needed this, we turned it over.

The other thing is we also had $270 million of Iraqi CERP money that they gave us. So we used their money before using our money. So both of those combinations allowed us to turn back some money.

The other thing is, obviously, now we are very careful that we will not do projects that we know we cannot track and make sure they are successfully completed. So sometimes we don't have the capacity to ensure that these projects are done and done properly and they are finished properly. So I think that all of those contributed to us turning the money back in.

But I do want to emphasize it is still a very important program. We still need some CERP money in the next few years to do this. But it will be a request that is, obviously, less than it was in the past.

Mr. TAYLOR. Mr. Shuster for five minutes.

Mr. SHUSTER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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And, General, thank you for being here today. I appreciate your service. I just want to echo what my colleague from Connecticut said. When they write the story about Iraq, your name will be prominent in that story. Because in my several trips over there, I can't remember a time when I haven't met with you in Iraq. This is the first time I think I have seen you out of Iraq in the last several years. So, again, I appreciate that service.

Secretary Vickers, I am glad that you are still over at the Defense Department, especially with what is going on in Afghanistan. We know you are an old hand at Afghanistan. So thanks for being here today.

General, you said to us in my last trip there in June that November, December, January and February will be the key months—two months before the election, two months after the election—as to whether we will be able to continue the drawdown.

I think you mentioned here today that you don't foresee that happening, but violence will be—that will be one of those things that we look at. Is that the only thing, a spike in violence, that could possibly cause you to say to the President, let's slow down or stop the drawdown, a spike in violence?

General ODIERNO. Again, I think unless we had some sort of not only violence but if we saw a collapse for some reason in the government itself, which I don't foresee. But it is what we look at, is what are those potential points of instability that could cause us to have concern about the seating of the government and the successful seating of this government and will they be able to continue peacefully as they move forward.

Mr. SHUSTER. The last election, as I recall, it took months before they were every able to form a coalition. Would that be something, if they haven't formed a government in February?

General ODIERNO. I think what we would have to decide is if we think it will not happen peacefully, and I think I will know that by the first 60 days following the elections. So even if they are having trouble forming coalitions, as long as they are doing it peacefully, I think we can continue. We will still have 50,000 people. That is still quite a bit of individuals, that we can still have some impact if we need to.

Mr. SHUSTER. Thank you.

The next question, we talked about the loss of oil revenue. How diversified is the Iraqi economy and what have we been doing or what have they been doing to diversify it?

General ODIERNO. It is not diversified. About 90 percent of their revenue comes out of the oil industry right now.

One of the things they are doing, in October, there will be an investment conference held here—I think it is the 20th and 21st—where we will have many of the Iraqi leadership coming over to meet with U.S. businessmen. They have done the same thing in London already. These are the kinds of things we have to do to attempt to diversify the economy.

They still have some work to do in investment laws that they have to pass. They are working those now, and I am hopeful that maybe before the October meeting they will have passed one of these investment laws. There is some indication they might be able to do that, but we will have to wait and see.

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So it is important that they start to develop an atmosphere where businesses—there is lots of opportunity in Iraq for investment, but it is about does it have the environment for investors to go in. That is what we have to continue to help them to focus on.

I think I also believe getting a new government in will help. I think you will see the Iraqi Government continue to mature. I think the next government will be more mature than the last government. They will understand the process more, they will understand their roles, and I think that will help them to also work some of these key issues that have to be worked in order to diversify the economy.

Mr. SHUSTER. When you are in the economy diversifying it, education has got to play a key role, as well as building a representative democracy. What has been happening as far the education? Have you been building that up?

General ODIERNO. First of all, a week ago, they reported that 6.6 million children will go to school in Iraq. Their school year will start here at the end of September, the beginning of October. That is the highest number that they have had in a very, very long time, in fact, maybe the highest number on record. I know the highest number since 2003, and I think it is actually the highest number even before that. So that is a positive sign, that they will have 6.6 million children that will go to school.

Their universities are now developing relationships with U.S. universities. We know that some of the land grant universities around the U.S. have visited and are conducting regular engagements with them and exchanges.

The Government of Iraq also approved $4.5 million in grants for Iraqi students, Fulbright scholarships for Iraqi students to study around the world, mostly in the United States and Western Europe. So I think these are all positive steps that are starting to be taken that will allow them to continue to educate their population.

The Iraqis have always been a fairly educated population, but there has been some problem with that based on what has happened here in the aftermath of 2003. But we see that starting to regenerate itself, and we are encouraged, but there is still quite a bit of work to do.

In the Strategic Framework Agreement, this is one of the strong parts of this agreement, is the education piece.

Mr. SHUSTER. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN [presiding]. I thank the gentleman.

The gentleman from Pennsylvania, Mr. Sestak.

Mr. SESTAK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, General.

General, I just have two questions. One is just a tactical issue.

You have mentioned that we have withdrawn 150,000 pieces of equipment already from Iraq. GAO says there is 31 million pieces of equipment in Iraq. Do you really believe that we can be totally out of there by the end of 2011, in view of that number and all the other numbers attendant to that? And do you plan per the Army requirements to close up the bases even with the environmental requirements?

As you know, in Korea, they have been closing them up, but they put a stop to them because they haven't followed the correct procedures, nor have we funded for it.

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Are you planning to help expedite this to turn over more of those pieces of equipment? Because is a large difference between 150,000 and 31 million.

General ODIERNO. First, Congressman, if I could, I believe it is 3.1 million is the number we have, 3.1 million pieces of equipment. Still, 150,000 is a small piece of 3.1 million as well.

First off, I do believe we can get that equipment out by then. When we say 3.1 million, of course, that goes from the smallest piece of equipment up to a tank. So there are several different kinds.

As we close our bases, we have a very sophisticated process that we go through that includes environmental assessment based on a security arrangement which we signed with the Government of Iraq which addresses this issue; and they have to go through very specific points in order to determine this. So I feel confident we are following what we agreed to in the security agreement with the Government of Iraq on how we turn over these bases.

In some cases, it takes nine to ten months to do this. So the important part is we are able to identify this ahead of time in order to have the time to do the things necessary.

In addition, many of these bases will actually be turned over—they won't be closed. They will be turned over to the Government of Iraq, especially the big bases.

Mr. SESTAK. You do this in a non-permissive environment? That is the plan?

General ODIERNO. We have closed 200 bases so far. So we have already done it, in some cases, in a non-permissive environment.

Mr. SESTAK. My second question is, Iran consistently comes through this committee and almost any security briefing in the general area of southwest Asia or the Middle East, whether it is Afghanistan or tomorrow's hearing on ballistic missile defense (BMD). And you spoke a lot of Iran, but over the last couple of years, I was struck by several comments that had been made.

One was by the intelligence agency when they sat before the committee and said, if we are not there bleeding, Iran will work for stability in Iraq.

The second one was made by General Eikenberry as he departed Afghanistan as a General. And when asked if Iran works towards our same objectives in Afghanistan, as we do, he replied, yes, they do. They want stability there, and they don't like al Qaeda because they are Sunni.

The third one was the national intelligence estimate (NIE) that came out about 2007, and in testimony here the intelligence community again testified that, with regard to foreign policy and security decisions, Iran takes a cost-benefit approach, rather than a headlong rush to a decision irregardless of cost or benefits to its diplomatic, political, and other goals.

You have worked—and you can't miss it, particularly in this job—and you have brought up Iran a number of times. What perspective can you provide us?

Because Iran will continue to be brought up in almost any security briefing, and you can provide us, rather than "they cause mischief." Got it. North Vietnam caused mischief. But what can you take away to give us of how to deal with this nation, in view of

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those three statements that say, you know, maybe this nation overall, much like other nations we have had to deal with, has similar goals but comes about it from a different way?

General ODIERNO. I would just say, first, if we weren't there to bleed that they wouldn't conduct attacks, it is hard to say. What I would tell you is I know right now that on a daily basis they conduct attacks against Iraqi Security Forces with no U.S. forces around. So I am not sure that quite tracks with that statement.

But what I would say is, again, I think Iran needs to have a relationship with Iraq, but it has to be the right kind of relationship, defining what is best for Iraq, what is best for Iran. I think they should have free trade. I think they should have a relationship that helps with religious activities, et cetera.

But, again, I think they have objectives that aren't clear to us. Iraq is important to them because of the potential Sunni-Shi'a issues that are in the Middle East, and Iraq falls in the middle of that. So I think there are other reasons why they want to be in Iraq besides just having normal relationships.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Hunter.

Mr. SESTAK. So could the Secretary just answer, if you don't mind? The Secretary is just going to make a comment, sir.

Mr. VICKERS. Just one comment on Afghanistan. Their meddling there is somewhat less than they have done in Iraq, but they do support Sunni groups. Strange alliances, but they do, in fact.

The CHAIRMAN. I didn't catch that, so thank you very much.

Mr. Hunter, please?

Mr. HUNTER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

First, Mr. Vickers, I know you through reputation. Just thanks for your work as the Assistant Secretary of Defense (ASD) when it comes to counterterrorism (CT) and counterinsurgency (COIN) and the doctrine that is being reinvented right now for Afghanistan.

And, General, you have been praised eloquently here. I will just back that up by saying thanks for letting us walk up to the men and women who have served in Iraq and say thanks for winning this. I think that is important.

The first question is, if you could both put your heads together and say—I think we have been through two-and-a-half, maybe three generals—McKiernan, McNeil, and now McChrystal in Afghanistan—during the time that you have been in charge of Iraq, what lessons learned would you like to see brought over to Afghanistan from Iraq that you haven't seen?

General ODIERNO. Well, I would just say, first, I have been—as you said, I have spent a large majority of the last several years in Iraq, so I don't pretend to understand the environment in Afghanistan in order to understand what could be applicable inside of Afghanistan versus Iraq.

One of the lessons I learned is you have got to understand the environment, and you have to understand what are the social, economic, political, military issues that underpin the reason why violence is occurring.

So, the one thing—and from what I have seen, General McChrystal is doing exactly this. He is outlining what are the underlying factors that are causing the instability inside of Afghani-

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stan, and you have to take a whole government approach to solve those problems.

So I can't tell you specific because I don't understand the environment enough in Afghanistan. But I can tell you that, from everything I have read, that he understands that completely and understands the fact that it is a complete approach that has to be taken to solve the problem there, just like we needed to do that in order to solve the problem in Iraq and will continue to need to do that until we leave at the end of 2011.

Mr. HUNTER. Let me ask a quick follow-up before Mr. Vickers answers that.

Do you think you would have seen the success in Iraq that you have seen now if you did not have the surge?

General ODIERNO. Well, again, I would say, obviously, the surge of forces in Iraq helped us to create the security environment that we have now, along with many others things.

The one thing I tell everyone with the surge in Iraq, it was just not about the surge of forces. It was about the change in our tactics, procedures, the techniques, and procedures. It was about a surge of the State Department people as well in order to create embedded provincial reconstruction teams with the brigades. It was about an outreach program to the Sunni insurgents that allowed them to begin to reconcile and form the Sons of Iraq. It was about understanding what was causing the underlying impacts and that we tried to go after these using a combination of CERP, military capacity, and others. So that is what I learned in terms of the surge.

Mr. HUNTER. So a lot of things happened, but you wouldn't have been able to do it without that increased security to allow all of those things to take place.

General ODIERNO. Well, again, the surge of forces clearly had an impact on our ability to improve the security inside of Iraq.

Mr. HUNTER. Got you. Thank you.

Mr. Vickers, first question: Lessons learned, without being critical of anything that is going on, possibly lessons learned. I know tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) are different in Iraq and Afghanistan, different people, different kind of violence, different area. The actual terrain is different. But if you could take something from Iraq and put it in Afghanistan, maybe systems of lessons learned, the ways that we did things there that we are not doing in Afghanistan, what would that be?

Mr. VICKERS. Well, first, the difference is the insurgency is more rural-based. It is less based on ethno-sectarian conflict in Afghanistan. It is more a Pashtun-based insurgency in the south and the east. And then there is the critical importance of the sanctuary that Afghan insurgent groups enjoy in Pakistan. They also receive more funding from external sources than I believe Iraqi insurgents did, getting more internally.

That said, there are common principles in good counterinsurgency that can be transported; and I think General McChrystal is doing some of that now. The focus on protecting the population is a core mission for forces, and the integration of all elements of power, the whole of government approach, as General Odierno talked about. But also things like counterterrorism and counter-

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narcotics to make sure they support our overall COIN effort, as was done very, very well in Iraq.

Mr. VICKERS. As you know, we have a major review going on right now at the White House of our Afghanistan-Pakistan strategy, and so that is probably about as much as I would like to say now.

Mr. HUNTER. I am out of time. Thank you both for your service. And thanks for winning once again, General.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman.

We have Dr. Snyder, Mr. Taylor and Ms. Giffords in that order. Dr. Snyder.

Dr. SNYDER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, gentlemen, for being here.

I was unable to be here earlier, General Odierno, and you may have answered some of these questions, but in your written statement on page seven, you talk about nonlethal operations, a force multiplier, and in specific you talk about CERP and the Information Operations. There is very little mention of the provincial reconstruction teams. Have they not been as much a force multiplier as you have desired, or do you not consider them in that category? Is there a reason why you did not discuss them more?

General ODIERNO. No. I did because it is the House Armed Services Committee, but they are absolutely critical to what we do. The provincial reconstruction teams, as I just stated earlier, were a key piece in the surge of allowing us to get out and reach and build civil capacity, and it continues to be very important.

Dr. SNYDER. How is that working as you have transitioned? You mentioned the number of bases that you have closed, and PRTs can only operate in a secure environment. Have they had to pull back, or are they using Iraqi forces to provide security?

General ODIERNO. Well, the plan we have, we have 27 locations. Some are satellite locations now. We provide the security for them in all those areas. When we plan our drawdown, one of the considerations we take into place is the breach of the provincial reconstruction teams, and we have coordinated with the State Department how we will do this. So they will be able to maintain a fairly significant number, 16 is the number we are looking at, throughout the country and will be able to continue. One of the main missions of the advisory and assistance will be to provide security for the provincial reconstruction teams to make sure that they have the access necessary.

Dr. SNYDER. You don't foresee that that will be—at some point the PRTs will have Iraqi troop security—only Iraqi troops for security?

General ODIERNO. I think we will slowly turn that over to them so when we get to post-2011, that they would be able to do that. That will be part of the process.

Dr. SNYDER. As you had mentioned earlier in discussion, I think, from Mr. Shuster about economic investment coming from abroad, what is the current status, if you know, in terms of the Iraqi, I would use the word "diaspora," Iraqis who left the country to Jordan and other countries? Are they returning, are they not returning?

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General ODIERNO. They are returning, but in very small numbers.

Dr. SNYDER. Do the ones that are outside the borders, do they participate in the elections?

General ODIERNO. In 2005, they participated in the election. As part of the election law, it will be—they will develop what countries they will provide the opportunity for those not in Iraq to vote, and that will be part of the election law as they approve it.

Dr. SNYDER. We focus a lot here in the Congress, and the American people do, too, on troop strengths, I think probably sometimes to our detriment; that we should focus on an Afghanistan discussion, for example, and a whole lot of other things. But I wanted to ask, are there any limits or considerations with regard to U.S. Government civilian numbers? I assume those numbers are relatively small. I don't see them—you mentioned civilian contractors have come down substantially, but I think we have a whole lot smaller numbers of U.S. civilian personnel there. Is that a number that you are following, and, if so, which way is that going?

General ODIERNO. Obviously I work—the Ambassador is obviously the one who tracks the civilians that work in the State Department side. As part of our contracts, we have some American citizens who work as part of the contractors, and I do track that.

But in terms of the State Department side, we do watch that. They are—what they are trying to determine is part of our joint campaign plan. They are to determine the number that is needed as we transition, and I think that number will not go down. I think it will stay about what it is now, and, in fact, some cases have to come up. For example, if they take over the police training, they will need more civilians than they do now.

Dr. SNYDER. And it is not just State Department, it could be Justice Department, Ag.

General ODIERNO. Exactly. Justice Department, Agriculture Department, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), et cetera.

Dr. SNYDER. Are you satisfied with the morale of our troops?

General ODIERNO. As I go around, I am very satisfied. And one of the things we always check—I talk to them all the time. Reenlistments are over 100 percent in Iraq. In fact, in June we finished reenlistment, and they have met all of the goals. So, I mean, I think that is also a sign of morale. They are proud of what they have accomplished in Iraq and are starting to see some of the progress that has been part of their sacrifice.

Dr. SNYDER. As you have closed bases and pulled back U.S. troops, are you satisfied with the ability to do medical evacuations of wounded troops?

General ODIERNO. About once every two weeks, I get updated on our ability to conduct medical evacuation. I am absolutely confident that we can provide medical evacuation for all of our soldiers, sailors, and marines that are currently stationed there.

Dr. SNYDER. Does Iraq have any helicopters and helicopter pilots that they do their own medical evacuations?

General ODIERNO. They do have the capacity to do that, but it is small.

Dr. SNYDER. Thank you, General. Thank you for your service.

Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

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The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman from Arkansas.

The gentleman from Missouri, Mr. Taylor.

Mr. TAYLOR. General, like everyone else in this room, on behalf of the people in south Mississippi, we are very grateful for what you have done and continue to do over there in the many years of your life that you have devoted to this effort in Iraq.

I have always been impressed by the brilliance of whoever discovered the Sons of Iraq policy, and literally found out that for a fairly small amount of money, we can take people who were shooting at us to become our defenders. Since that has been such a successful program, you did touch on it for about a paragraph in your testimony, what steps are being taken to see to it that those people who are now on our side remain on the side of the Government of Iraq? Do they recognize the significance of what has happened? What steps are they taking to work those people, to either keep them on the payroll in their present capacity or find some other job within the Iraqi Government for them?

General ODIERNO. Thank you, Congressman. The Government of Iraq does understand the importance they play. It is very interesting. They have a plan in place to move all of them—they actually showed us a list of all the names of the Sons of Iraq. And they showed us the list, that some will go to this ministry, some will go to this ministry, some will go to the local governmental ministry. And they laid it all out and said, we are going to begin to execute this, and they started to execute that in August. So that is a positive sign.

But what is interesting is after the bombings on 19 August in Baghdad, the Commander of the Baghdad Operational Command came back and said, I want to slow down the movement of the Sons of Iraq into the other nonsecurity ministries, I want to keep them on longer because of what they do for us in order to help us in the security. So they made a decision to keep them on a bit longer. I think that shows first the recognition of the senior commanders of how important the Sons of Iraq are to the security, and, secondly, that they, I believe, will transition them and take care of them. In 2009, when they had all the budget cuts, the only line that was not cut was the Sons of Iraq, and they continue to have that fully funded. So I think those are all positive signs.

What I have to make sure happens is since they will not get them all transitioned to the ministries by the end of 2009, we have to make sure that that will be taken care of in 2010. And we will work very hard with the Reconciliation Committee of the Government of Iraq in order to do that.

Mr. TAYLOR. I didn't see it in your prepared remarks, but obviously one sign of things getting back to normal would be electricity to the average Iraqi. And I know—have we gotten to the point where we have reached or they have reached prewar levels of electricity to the average citizen?

General ODIERNO. Actually they are above the prewar levels. They are producing I think it is an average of 155,000 megawatts. What that means basically is about a 20 percent increase from last year. And even more importantly is they have less units now going off line. So what they are able to do is maintain a more stable grid.

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That said, although they are producing more electricity, they still have some problems with distribution. And so they have some problems in some areas of distributing electricity to all the people. So my guess is you would run into some Iraqis who have yet to see an increase.

The other problem, of course, is demand has increased fivefold since 2003, which is a sign of freedom and other things, but also obviously puts more pressure on the Government of Iraq to provide more and more electricity.

Mr. TAYLOR. I guess lastly I am going to ask you to look out into the future. It is my impression from several thousand miles away that we have replaced a strong, brutal thug with more of a distribution of the powers amongst the sheikhs. And if you had to say, it would look more like the Magna Carta than the Declaration of Independence or the United States Constitution. I was just curious, in your opinion, do you think it remains for the foreseeable future some sort of a power-sharing agreement amongst the sheikhs, or is power being consolidated in Baghdad? How do you see their political system going forward?

General ODIERNO. I think it is still to be determined. But what I would say is what we are seeing is following the provincial elections of this year; people want to see more of a nationalistic government. And I think as we see the new alliances form for this election, you are seeing that they are reaching it. They are just not a Shi'a alliance. There will be a Shi'a plus some Sunnis and some others. Maliki's—Prime Minister Maliki's alliance will be a nationalistic alliance that has many different groups in it. So I see that as extremely positive that they have recognized the fact that to be successful you have to be able to have more than one representative or one area of the people inside of Iraq.

Mr. TAYLOR. Thanks again for your service.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman.

Ms. Giffords.

Ms. GIFFORDS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Odierno, it is good to see you again. Thank you for your time to come here and for your service to our Nation. Unfortunately because of a conflict I wasn't here for most of the hearing, but I did have a chance to read your testimony. And, of course, it impresses me that within your second paragraph you talk about military families, and you talk about their unwavering service and their sacrifice.

I know a lot of strategic questions have been asked already, but I would like to talk about the families. As a military spouse myself, and as someone with Fort Huachuca and Davis-Monthan, I have a lot of military interest in southern Arizona. I have a chance to meet with military families and really learn about the unspoken heroes, the real stories of hardship that have happened behind the scenes. And I still remember quite succinctly the first time we met in Iraq and you talked about your wife, and you talked about if we lose the families, we will lose the soldiers, the sailors, the airmen and the marines. So could you talk about our efforts to draw down the changing stresses on the service members and their families as well?

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General ODIERNO. I think what we are trying to do obviously is reduce the time between deployment—I mean, increase the time between deployments, because we all know—and all of us and all the people sitting behind me in uniform, they have all been on several deployments. And although we tend to play off what that really means, we know that there is an impact on every single person who deploys, and you need a time to recover from that deployment. And if you are not given enough time, it can have an impact not only on the soldier, but the family.

So number one is we got to try to increase the amount of time between deployments, where they can enjoy their families, get settled again, understand and build those relationships, and then allow time for them to recoup and recover with their families. And we also have to realize the impact that these deployments have on a single parent because you become a single parent for a very long time, and I think sometimes that is the part we miss is we think about the soldiers and the help they need, and we forget about the impact of our wives or husbands who become single parents for very long periods of time, sometimes during very difficult times for their children as they are growing up.

So I still think there is some work we have to do along those lines. I know the Army and the Marine Corps and the Air Force and Navy are looking at this, and they constantly look at it. But, you know, the strength of our families, you can only rely on that so much without giving them the assistance necessary. And so I think it is something that we absolutely have to keep our eye on as we continue to move forward with supposedly increased requirements now in Afghanistan.

Ms. GIFFORDS. General, obviously we would look forward to any of your suggestions. We were able to implement through the Wounded Warriors Assistance Act a couple of years ago some help for soldiers that were getting out of the military. But I think when I last saw you, there was a—I don't want to say epidemic, but a real strong spike in the number of suicides, particularly in the Army. And I know that you talked about implementing some programs there in Iraq, but can you talk about whether or not those were successful, and have we seen the numbers decrease?

General ODIERNO. We have actually—although we hadn't had a suicide in about 60 days, which is the longest period we have gone, but I think we may have had one last night, so unfortunately that might have ended. But I think we have started to see some of these programs take hold, the fact that we have more counselors, the fact that we continue to have more awareness. It is really about leadership awareness and leadership down the chain of command to recognize when an individual has problems.

So I am seeing some progress, at least in Iraq itself. I can't speak for the Army as a whole, but I can speak for in Iraq itself. But we still have too many, so we still have more to do. And again, what is always disappointing to me is it is not because people don't care, but when you break down a suicide, you always find that there are three or four places if somebody had intervened, we could have stopped the act from happening. And so what we got to do is understand where those intervention points are and then do it so we save a life. And that is what we have to continue to work on.

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Ms. GIFFORDS. General, Mr. Chairman, there is incredibly strong bipartisan support for our service members and the families, but oftentimes we look to you, those commanding generals and officers in the field, to let us know what is working and what is not working. So having that feedback is very important.

And just in closing I just have to thank you for your willingness to reach out to The Colbert Show. This is a population that wouldn't necessarily be paying attention to day-to-day operations in Iraq, but you are able to put, I mean, a real face on how hard it is and what the service members go through. I mean, of course it was a comedy, but it was very well done. I just thank you for your willingness to reach out and engage on that level.

General ODIERNO. Thank you. And I think he is due for another haircut.

Ms. GIFFORDS. I think so, too.

The CHAIRMAN. We will make judicial notice of the fact.

I have Ms. Shea-Porter, and Mr. Coffman wishes a second round. So Ms. Shea-Porter.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Thank you. And as a former military spouse, I would like to associate myself with the remarks of Congresswoman Giffords, and thank you for the attention you are giving to these military men and women, who, as you know, have carried the burden for so long for the rest of us. So thank you.

I wanted to talk to you about a conversation I had with General Petraeus earlier this year when I was talking about the electrocution deaths of some of our soldiers. And I was told there was Operation Task Force Safe Actions for Fire and Electricity (SAFE), and that they were going to be doing the investigation. And I believe that the investigation was supposed to end right about now, but again comes some horrible news about a former military man who came as a contractor to Iraq, Mr. Hermanson, and he was recently electrocuted. And so I had a couple of questions for you, General.

First of all, was his facility inspected, or were you only inspecting the facilities that soldiers occupied?

General ODIERNO. It was not inspected. What happens is as a contractor it is the responsibility of the contractor to ensure they have adequate facilities, so we were not inspecting those facilities. However, since that incident we have sent Task Force SAFE over to first outline to all the contractors what is expected of them in terms of proper safety requirements. And we have also offered them any assistance that they might need with Task Force SAFE to go look at all of their facilities to ensure they are in line with what we believe to be safe structures.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Since we knew that we were having trouble with the contractors who were supposed to be doing the safe wiring, why was the decision made not to inspect the contractors' facilities?

General ODIERNO. I am not sure we made a conscious decision not to inspect them. I think what we focused on was the Department of Defense personnel. And I think as we continue to expand this, we will look. But there are some contractual issues that we have to work through. So we asked the lawyers to take a look at this to see what we can and can't do because of the fact they are contractors, so we are working our way through this now.

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This obviously highlighted a problem that we all didn't understand at the time, and so we continue to work it. And what I am telling you is we are working this problem now, but we have to go through some legal reviews and other things. We have offered some initial assistance just to make sure we don't have any repeated offenses in that specific contractor. But there are many other contractors that have facilities that in some cases aren't even under the Department of Defense. And I don't remember, but I think this one wasn't even under the Department of Defense either. I think it was under a Department of State contract as well. So that throws in a whole other issue of how we do this.

So we are working through this because we want to get rid of the bureaucracy so we save the lives of the people who are going there to work, and that is important to us.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. These men and women serve this country as well, and I really don't understand it because I know that many of them had access to the medical care that the military was providing, and so clearly there was some crossing over there that they felt comfortable not even reimbursing, as you recall, I am sure. So I just can't understand what happened there.

Were there any other services provided for the people in those buildings?

General ODIERNO. I will have to get back with you on that.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. If you could do that, I would appreciate that.

[The information referred to can be found in the Appendix on page 65.]

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. I have one last question. Can you comment on whether the Department of Defense has declined to investigate the apparent electrocution of the American Department of Defense contractor?

General ODIERNO. Again, I have to go ahead and take a look at that and see exactly what happened, okay? I will get you an answer back on that.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. I would appreciate that General, because I feel very certain that when that family sent their loved one over to serve this country, they expected that we would do what we could to protect all of them, whether they were in uniform or whether they were serving as civilians.

[The information referred to can be found in the Appendix on page 65.]

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Thank you, and I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentlelady.

Mr. Coffman, second round.

Mr. COFFMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General, Mr. Secretary, could you discuss Kurdish aspirations, because I think that there certainly was some concern when some of the Kurdish provinces were engaging in their own negotiations in terms of oil exploration and development. Given the fact that the central government relies on those oil revenues, what are Kurdish aspirations, and how does the oil issue enter the equation?

General ODIERNO. I can't speak for Kurdish aspirations, but what I can speak to is the two oil fields that are producing oil inside of Kurdistan are actually oils fed to the central government, and they are getting all of the revenue from those oil fields.

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Mr. COFFMAN. There have been reports that some new—not the existing oil fields, but there are some new exploration.

General ODIERNO. Yeah. The issue has to do, Congressman, with there is some new exploration that has been done since 2003. Those are pumping oil, those are going to the central government. There are also—there might be some additional exploration going on. That is the issue. Who pays for the exploration? The central government could be doing it. Does the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) have the authority to issue these contracts? And that is what is yet to be resolved and has to be resolved through the hydrocarbon legislation.

Mr. COFFMAN. De-Baathification clearly went too far in the aftermath of the invasion, post-invasion of Iraq. Where is that now, because it certainly led to a lot of resentment among Sunni Arabs?

General ODIERNO. They have what they call the accountability and justice law, which was passed a couple of years ago, which also has had some significant problems in implementation. So what it is going to require, I believe, is for them to go back and pass some more legislation that will adequately address this issue, and that is something that I think they have to do internally.

But the accountability and justice law has been something that has been very difficult to implement because it in some cases had not appeared to make sense based on some of the individuals that would no longer be allowed to work who had been serving honorably for several years already within the system. So the Government of Iraq knows that they have to readdress this problem, but it is still one that has to be addressed.

Mr. COFFMAN. The problems with the Shi'a militias, how would you evaluate the Shi'a militias of today. And to what extent are they aligned with Iran?

General ODIERNO. The number of Shi'a militias has declined significantly, and the number of Shi'a militias in Iraq have declined significantly since the March–April 2008 operation done by the Government of Iraq in both Basra and Iraq. I think there are—what you don't see any more is large movement of Shi'a militias who control areas, but what you have now is some militant groups that don't control areas, but conduct attacks for several different reasons. And I think we have seen the militia element move in their ability—in what they do and their abilities. So although they continue to be a threat because they do conduct attacks against both U.S. forces and Iraqi Security Forces and others, their influence has been significantly reduced to what it was in 2007 and the beginning of 2008.

Mr. COFFMAN. To what extent is Iran—I think you mentioned briefly Iran providing them training. To what extent is—and I think you also mentioned Iran providing them munitions and weapons.

General ODIERNO. Yeah.

Mr. COFFMAN. What is the trend line on that now?

General ODIERNO. I think it is less than what it was, but what they have done is they appear to target it a little more to certain organizations, small organizations that continue to train inside of Iraq—train inside of Iran, and who come across with increased capabilities to conduct operations and attacks inside of Iraq. And

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they are still provided munitions such as rockets and explosive-form projectiles.

Mr. COFFMAN. Many of the Sunnis in Iraq, at least when I was there, would speak of the Shi'a and say the question is at the end of the day are they Arabs first, or are they Shi'a first? And they would speak of this in reference to the influence of Iran over a Shi'a-dominated Iraqi Government. How do you see that at this time?

General ODIERNO. You know, the people I deal with—again, I don't—what I would say is the people I deal with, I believe, are Iraqis first, I will put it that way. And I think that Iraq is first and foremost in their mind. There are, of course, many who are trying to influence. I think Iran is trying to influence some. I think there is others, Syria and others, trying to influence as well. That is what makes Iraq so important, I think, in the long run.

The CHAIRMAN. I certainly thank the gentleman.

General Odierno, we thank you for your appearance, for your excellent testimony. We thank you for the service that you are rendering. You are making history in your leadership in Iraq for our country, and we thank you for that.

I may also mention that all of us in this committee feel that the young men and young women in your command are making history as well. And when the final chapter of Iraq is written in our efforts there, I know full well that your name will be very, very prominent as well as all those young men and young women who have worked so hard and so professionally, and the families that we support, and we just can't thank them enough.

So, General, thank you very much.

Mr. Vickers, thank you for being with us.

The hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:34 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

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APPENDIX

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PREPARED STATEMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

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General Odierno's HASC Testimony, 30 September

as of 29 Sep

Chairman Skelton, Congressmen McKeon, and distinguished members of the committee, thank you for providing me the opportunity to appear before you today to provide my assessment of the current situation, the challenges in Iraq and how our strategy is adapting in order to achieve the President's vision.

It is a great honor to command Multi-National Forces-Iraq. Having now spent a significant amount of time in Iraq, I remain encouraged by the steady and deliberate progress that has been made particularly over the past two-and-a-half years. Operation Iraqi Freedom, now in its sixth consecutive year, has been a complex and challenging mission in a continuously evolving environment. But, the one thing that remains constant is the demonstrated courage, compassion, and commitment of our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, Coast Guardsmen and Civilians who continue to selflessly serve. I am humbled by the opportunity to serve with and priviledged to lead these great Americans. I also want to recognize the families of our service members who have sacrificed so much, yet continue to give their unwavering support in order to allow our service men and women the ability to focus on the mission at hand.

Although challenges remain in Iraq—with the continued support of Congress and the American people—I believe we are now within reach of our goals.

Iraq – An Enduring National Interest

Iraq is strategically located in the Middle East and remains vital to stability in this region. It has always played a significant role in regional security dynamics. But, too often in the past Iraq has been a source of instability rather than stability. Today, with our help, Iraq is slowly reestablishing diplomatic, economic and security relationships with its neighbors.

As a developing democracy in the heart of the Middle East, Iraq has formalized its relationship with the United States. This past January, our countries implemented two historic, bilateral agreements establishing the foundation for a long-term, comprehensive, strategic partnership. Together, the Security Agreement and Strategic Framework Agreement demonstrate America's continued commitment to Iraq, its people, and stability in the region. And, they also reflect the maturing relationship and enhanced cooperation between our two nations.

The Strategic Framework Agreement (SFA), signed in November 2008, establishes the foundation and mechanisms for an enduring relationship between Iraq and the US through long-term cooperation in a variety of areas including technological, educational and cultural exchanges—just to name a few. The Security Agreement focuses on our current military relationship within the context of Iraqi sovereignty—by regulating the temporary presence and activities of all US Forces in Iraq—and directing the withdrawal of our forces from Iraq by December 31, 2011. Since implementing the Security Agreement this past January, we have conducted all military operations by, with and through the Iraqi Security Forces, operating within the Iraqi rule of law. I am proud of how our leaders and service members

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adapted rapidly—quickly adjusting our mindset and operations to maintain operational momentum within the framework of the Security Agreement.

In line with the Security Agreement, on June 30, 2009, the Iraqi Security Forces assumed primary security responsibilities within the cities and US combat forces departed the last remaining cities.

June 30 was a major milestone for the Government of Iraq, its security forces, the Iraqi people—and a first step in the ISF assuming full control of security. The positive psychological impact has been profound. The Iraqis wanted to be in charge; they wanted the responsibilities; and they have demonstrated that they are capable. After some initial coordination issues immediately following 30 June, the strong partnerships that we have developed over the last two years in particular have grown even stronger.

Current Operating Environment: Consistent, Deliberate Progress

Positive Trends in Security Incidents

Today, nine months after we began implementing the Security Agreement and began fully transparent operations by, with and through the Iraqi Security Forces—and three months after US combat forces departed the cities—we continue to make consistent, deliberate progress in improving the security environment in Iraq. The combined, sustained efforts of US, coalition and Iraqi security forces—coupled with the efforts of our civilian partners—have reduced security incidents and attacks of all types to levels on par with 2003. While statistics do not paint the whole picture, they help provide some context in understanding the progress made to date.

In the charts before you, we used six month increments to specifically highlight the trends in both events and casualties over time. The "Security Incidents" chart clearly shows the improving trends across all types of attacks and incidents. Overall attacks have decreased 85% over the past two years from 4064 in August 2007 to 594 in August 2009—with 563 in September so far (through 28 Sep). In that same time period, US military deaths have decreased by 93%, Iraqi Security Force (ISF) deaths have decreased 79%, and ethno-sectarian deaths have decreased 88%. In fact, there is another noticeable decrease in ethno-sectarian incidents, specifically during Ramadan which has always reflected a sharp increase in insurgent and extremist activity. This year, there were only 19 ethno-sectarian incidents compared to 978 in 2006. Additionally, improvised explosive device (IED) explosions have decreased 74%.

IEDs remain the weapon of choice for insurgents. The second chart shows high profile explosions that are specifically intended to have a large impact. You can see the steady decrease—even after the Iraqis assumed responsibility in the cities. But these HPAs remain a concern especially following the two bombings in Baghdad on 19 August which targeted the Ministries of Finance and Foreign Affairs. These were horrific attacks, claimed and perpetrated by Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) and aimed specifically against Government of Iraq (GoI) institutions in order to undermine the public's faith and confidence in the GoI.

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There was a clear security lapse on 19 August in Baghdad, but I do not believe it was the result of any systemic problems and I remain confident that the Iraqi Security Forces continue to learn, improve and adjust. After the 19 August attacks, the GoI responded promptly and effectively. They reassessed security measures, made adjustments and increased operations, aggressively enhancing security in the cities—all enabled by US forces. And they continue to reassess today. GoI leaders reinforced national unity, and the people responded. To date, the extremists' efforts to destabilize Iraq have failed, the overwhelming majority of the Iraqi people have rejected extremism. We see no indications of a return to the sectarian violence that plagued Iraq in 2006-2007.

Let me now discuss the...

Iraqi Security Forces

Overall, the professionalism and operational effectiveness of the approximately 663,000-strong Iraqi Security Forces—including 245,000 Soldiers and over 407,000 Police—continue to improve, thus bolstering public confidence and trust in the ISF. Supported by US forces, the ISF recently provided safe and secure environments for two mass Shi'a pilgrimages in July and August in which millions of pilgrims participated. Iraqis are beginning to share more information with security forces who are also conducting more active patrolling resulting in an increasing number of weapon caches found. And, just last week, I witnessed thousands of Iraqis in the parks and streets across Baghdad celebrating Eid which is another indicator of the growing confidence in the ISF, especially following the Baghdad bombings just one month prior. You can honestly feel a difference amongst the people in Baghdad and around the large majority of Iraq.

The Iraqi Army and Federal Police continue to improve counter-insurgency implementation, planning and execution. In some cases, police primacy has been established in the cities, but this is still a work in progress. The NATO-Training Mission-Iraq (NTM-I) continues to focus on institutional training for the Iraqi Security Forces, enhancing their long-term professionalism. Although small, improvement continues in logistics and the sharing and integration of intelligence and operations. Their regional Operations Centers and Provincial Joint Coordination Centers continue to improve.

The Iraqi Security Forces are now in the lead across the entire country, with US forces advising, assisting and enabling operations in the cities and providing full-spectrum partnership outside the cities. The ISF are conducting more and more precision intelligence-driven operations, most of which are unilateral, US-enabled operations, relying on US intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance (ISR), communications, aviation, and logistical support. We are seeing improved integration of GoI Human Intelligence (HUMINT) and US technical intelligence. Outside the cities, ISF continue a combination of independent, US-enabled and US-partnered full spectrum operations.

In addition, we continue to see great strides in GoI counter-terrorism operations. In May we began national, integrated operations with the Iraqi Special Operations Forces, facilitated

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by the Iraqi Operations Coordination Group (IOCG)—a standing Iraqi interagency organization—colocated with US counter-terrorism forces. Every day we conduct jointly planned and executed counter-terrorism operations—with increasing optempo and results. I believe that by 2011, the Government of Iraq will have a national counter-terrorism force capable of dealing with a variety of extremist threats. Just in the last week, we have jointly arrested 90 high value individuals including 52 Al Qaeda in Iraq, 23 Shi'a extremists and 15 Sunni insurgents and Ba'athists.

Since 2006, we have systemically decreased the number of foreign fighters entering Iraq and significantly reduced al Qaeda in Iraq to a small ideological core that recruits disenfranchised Iraqis and criminals. In the north, AQI and some remnants of Sunni insurgent groups continue in their attempt to reestablish a foothold with the objective of expanding back into Anbar and Baghdad.

We are working with the Iraqi Security Forces to establish a defense in depth across Iraq. With the ISF in the cities and US forces conducting partnered, full spectrum operations in the surrounding belts and borders to deny extremist safe havens and reduce the flow of foreign fighters and lethal aid into Iraq, we believe the ISF will develop the capacity to conduct internal and basic external defense over the next two and one half years as we continue to drawdown our forces.

Sons of Iraq

As you are aware, the Sons of Iraq program succeeded in drawing many out of the insurgency, giving them the opportunity to serve their communities and earn salaries to support their families. In April, the Government of Iraq assumed responsibility for the Sons of Iraq (SoI) program. Over 23,000 former SoI have transitioned to the Iraqi security forces and other non-security employment since 2008, including over 5,500 in Baghdad over the last two months. In October, over 5,000 more will transition in Baghdad. Despite budget cuts across the Government of Iraq, the GoI has maintained funding for this program, understanding its importance not only to security but also to building greater trust between the Sunni community and the government. SoI payments through the summer are complete and September pay is ongoing. The GoI goal is to integrate all of the SoI into the ministries at the end of the year, but we do not believe they will meet this timeline. We continue to monitor the progress of this program very closely.

Maturing Democracy: Election Success

In January, Iraq's Independent High Electoral Commission orchestrated successful provincial elections in which all Iraqi sects and ethnicities participated, voted out many incumbents since they failed to deliver tangible results and rejected those who were overtly supported by Iran. The United Nations Assistance Mission-Iraq (UNAMI) and international observers deemed these elections credible and legitimate and the seating of the provincial governments happened peacefully.

In July, Iraqis experienced another milestone with the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) elections. With over a 78% voter turnout of the approximately 2.5 million eligible

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voters in the Kurdish region, Kurds voted in their first direct and open election for the KRG President. President Masoud Barzani was reelected with 70% of the votes. Voters also signaled a desire for change with the success of the Change List which won 21% of the KRG parliament—a moderate loss to the Kurdistan Alliance. On 20 August 2009, the KRG Parliament and President were peacefully seated.

But Iraq Still Faces Significant Challenges: Drivers of Instability

Although security is improving, it is not yet enduring. There still remain underlying, unresolved sources of potential conflict. I call these drivers of instability. From the beginning, security in Iraq has been a complex problem that has required nuanced, evolving approaches—and our strategy has reflected this. In this environment, we cannot focus on immediate and traditional security threats alone, especially as the United States continues to assist Iraq in rebuilding the foundations of their security, civil, political and economic institutions. We continue to assist the Government of Iraq (GoI) in addressing and finding ways to mitigate these root causes of instability. Current drivers of instability include communal and factional struggles for power and resources, insufficient GoI capacity, violent extremist groups, and interference from external state and non-state actors. Iraq is a nascent democracy emerging from over 30 years of authoritarian rule based on ethno-sectarian privilege. Its future as a stable, multi-ethnic, representative state rests upon its ability to deal with the myriad of these challenges—and some of these issues will take time to resolve.

The national elections in January 2010 are critical to determining the path that Iraq will take into the future. The rules of the game are being debated in the Council of Representatives. Having just returned yesterday from the Eid holiday, they have a condensed timeline to pass an election law and many issues to discuss, including Kirkuk, open versus closed lists and a single versus a multiple district election. There is the potential to build a competent, capable and representative government, but there is also the potential to exacerbate societal divisions by appointing people based on their affiliations rather than their abilities.

Even as Iraqi political system continues to mature, there is not yet consensus on the exact nature of Iraq's representative government that is accepted across ethnic, sectarian, and regional lines. Issues include the role and power of the central Iraqi government vis-à-vis the provinces, the integration and balance of ethnic and sectarian groups within the government, revenue sharing, and long-standing Arab-Kurd issues.

GOI Development and Capacity

Iraqi governmental institutions continue to evolve and their ability to provide essential services is improving; yet, it will take time to develop the institutional processes and bureaucratic expertise necessary to sustain programs over time. Also, decades of infrastructural neglect require substantial capital investment, and the recent decline in the price of oil—the mainstay of the Iraqi economy—has resulted in budget shortfalls, negatively impacting the GoI's ability to fund its many requirements. While endemic

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corruption and mismanagement persists, the GoI continues to focus on anti-corruption efforts and there has been some progress in developing a culture of accountability for government officials.

Despite their increased capacity and progress in providing security, the Iraqi Security Forces continue to face shortcomings and budget constraints, due in part to declining oil revenues that affect their current and future operational capacity including logistical support across the ministries. We continue to assist and advise the Ministries of Defense and Interior as they prioritize their minimum essential capabilities for a foundational defense capability—land, sea and air—before the withdrawal of US forces in December 2011. Critical gaps remain in controlling and protecting Iraqi ground airspace and territorial waters.

Arab-Kurd Tensions

In Iraq, much of the struggles are about power, land and resources which is reflective in the Arab-Kurd and GoI-KRG tensions. The key issues include the pending hydrocarbon law, revenue sharing and the disputed internal boundaries (DIBs) including areas in Ninawa and Diyala provinces and Kirkuk. We strongly support the United Nations Assistance Mission-Iraq (UNAMI) process promoting political dialogue and resolution.

External Influences

Violent external groups and external influences take advantage of seams within Iraq—such as the Arab-Kurd tensions. Al Qaeda in Iraq, Sunni extremist groups, and Shi'a militant groups continue to pose threats to stability as they seek to exploit political fissures, destabilize the Government of Iraq and undermine the progress made to date. Interference from external actors continues to exacerbate the security situation within Iraq through either tacit or direct support to extremists and proxy groups. Both enhanced security and diplomatic measures are required to secure Iraq's borders with Iran and Syria.

Strategic Patience: Evolving Strategy and Responsible Drawdown

As outlined by the President, on 1 September 2010—eleven months from now our combat mission will end. Our transition force in Iraq will then focus on training and advising Iraqi Security Forces; conducting targeted counter-terrorism missions by, with and through the Iraqis; protecting US forces and others operating around the country, while providing support to civil capacity-building missions with our interagency partners and the UN.

We are reducing our footprint in Iraq by about 60% to an initial strength of 50,000 boots on the ground by 31 August 2010. Our transition force will consist of three Division Headquarters and six "Advise and Assist" Brigades (AABs), which are specifically tailored to support Iraqi civil development. We have already begun deliberately drawing down our forces—without sacrificing security. From over 143,500 troops and 14 Brigade Combat Teams on the ground in January, we have approximately 124,000 troops and 11 Brigade Combat Teams operating in Iraq today. By the end of October, I believe we will be down to 120,000 troops in Iraq. As we go forward, we will thin our lines across Iraq in order to

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reduce the risk and sustain stability through a deliberate transition of responsibilities to the Iraqi Security Forces.

We have reduced our base footprint by nearly 100 bases so far and will continue to close bases deliberately and systematically. We have also reduced contractors from 149,000 in January to just over 115,000 contractors today saving over $441 million. On 1 January 2010, we will also combine six headquarters elements of Multi-National Force-Iraq into a single headquarters called United States Forces-Iraq (USF-I). This will reduce our headquarters force structure by 40% while maintaining the overall capacity to command and control the force as we transition more and more responsibility to the GoI through the end of our mission in 2011.

Non-lethal Operations: A Force Multiplier

Over the course of this campaign, non-lethal operations have been critical to our success—and as we change our mission and continue to drawdown, they will become even more vital. I am referring specifically to the Commanders' Emergency Response Program (CERP) and Information Operations (IO)—both of which have paid huge dividends so far. This past spring, following the seating of the provincial governments, MNF-I –in concert with the State Department-led Provincial Reconstruction Teams and the newly elected Iraqi provincial leaders—focused CERP monies on projects designed to meet the essential needs of the Iraqi people, sustain security gains and support provincial governance development. CERP remains a critical enabler that we are using judiciously. We returned $247M in June of this year and another $135M this month. As we begin our Responsible Drawdown of forces and change of mission in mid-to-late Fiscal Year 10 through Fiscal Year 11, we expect our need for CERP to reduce commensurately. However, CERP will remain a critical enabler for stabilization and our CERP expenditures in the future will remain within the 20 approved categories.

Information Operations have also been a vital component of our overall operations in defeating violent extremist groups who, themselves, use emerging media conduits to recruit, solicit funding and share their ideology. Our information operations have complemented our lethal operations and helped save lives, contributed to host-nation stability, promoted support for democratic processes and the rule of law—and reduced the level of violence. Yet, we are engaged with adversaries who continue to exploit the information space to try and reverse our gains. So, I cannot overstate the importance of IO to achieving our national goals in Iraq.

Over the years, the environment and threat have changed and we have continously adapted our strategy from focusing on protecting the people in a counter-insurgency fight to concentrating on developing Iraqi capacity. Today, given the hard-fought security gains, we are transitioning to stability operations and we will continue to responsibly transfer responsibilities to the Government of Iraq, the Iraqi Security Forces and the US Embassy in Baghdad.

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Though the focus of our forces is shifting from security to capacity building, our strategic goal remains to foster a long-term partnership with a sovereign, stable, and self-reliant Iraq. We have a good plan that we are executing. I am confident in our way ahead.

Iraq is a state and a society under construction, struggling to define its identity and its place in the world after decades of oppression and violence. The way in which we draw down our forces will impact not only the relationship between US and Iraq into the future, but also the nature of the new Iraq. Our presence through 2011 provides psychological and physical support to the Iraqi people, the Government of Iraq and the Iraqi Security Forces. It provides the opportunity for different groups to build up their constituencies , to participate in politics, to form alliances and to reach consensus. The level and nature of US engagement with the Iraqis will continue to change as the US military draws down. Iraq is making steady progres, but has a long way to go. We must have strategic patience. Through the Strategic Framework Agreement, the US has a mechanism for supporting Iraq to develop its institutional and human capacity.

Success will be defined by our ability to support Iraq's developing institutional capacity—from governance to economics—that will sustain Iraq's long-term stability. The ISF have made steady progress and our efforts over the next two and a half years will help solidify the foundation of a professional and competent Iraqi Security Forces. We must leave Iraq with a security force capable of providing defending the Iraqi people and protecting GoI institutions.

Conclusion

I close as I began, by recognizing the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, Coast Guardsmen, and civilians currently serving in Iraq. These great patriots and their families have made tremendous sacrifices on behalf of our nation. They have made a positive difference in the lives of millions and all Americans should take pride in their accomplishments. Not long ago, Iraq was a society burdened by a seemingly endless cycle of violence and destruction. Today, it is buoyed by a tremendous sense of hope for a bright and prosperous future as Iraqis prepare for the national elections—elections that will determine the future direction of Iraq. Having demonstrated tremendous resiliency, I believe the Iraqi people are determined to make Iraq something very different from what it once was.

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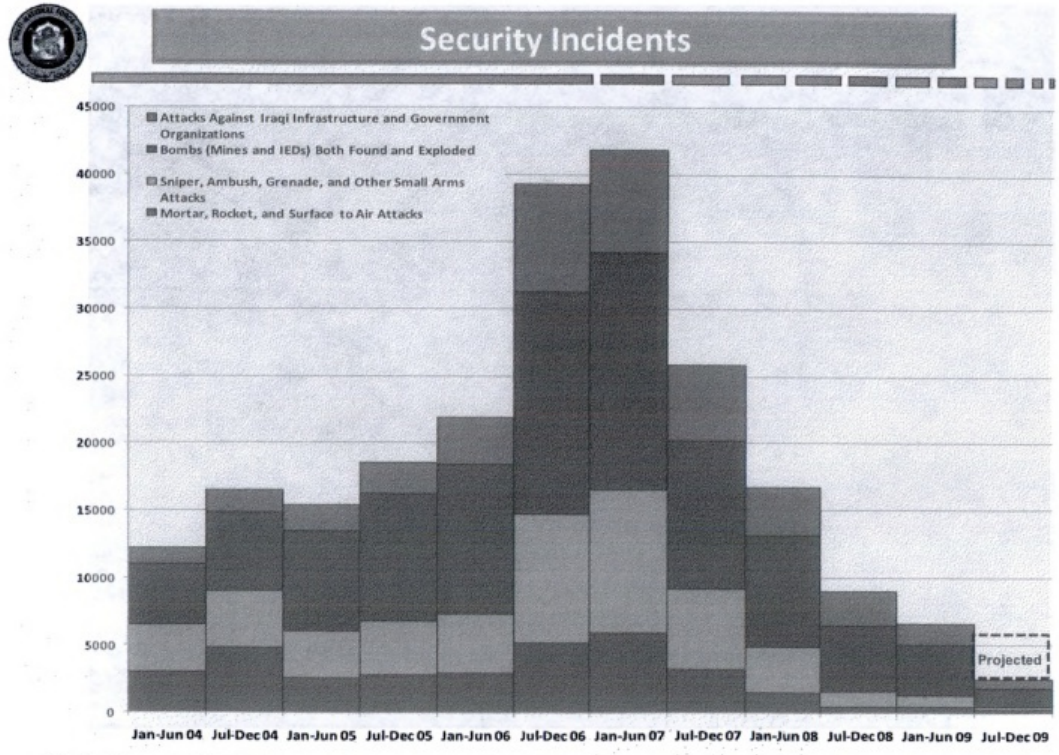

Chart includes potential attacks (IEDs/mines found and cleared) and executed attacks.
Sources: SIGACTS (CF & HN reports) as of 25-Sep-09

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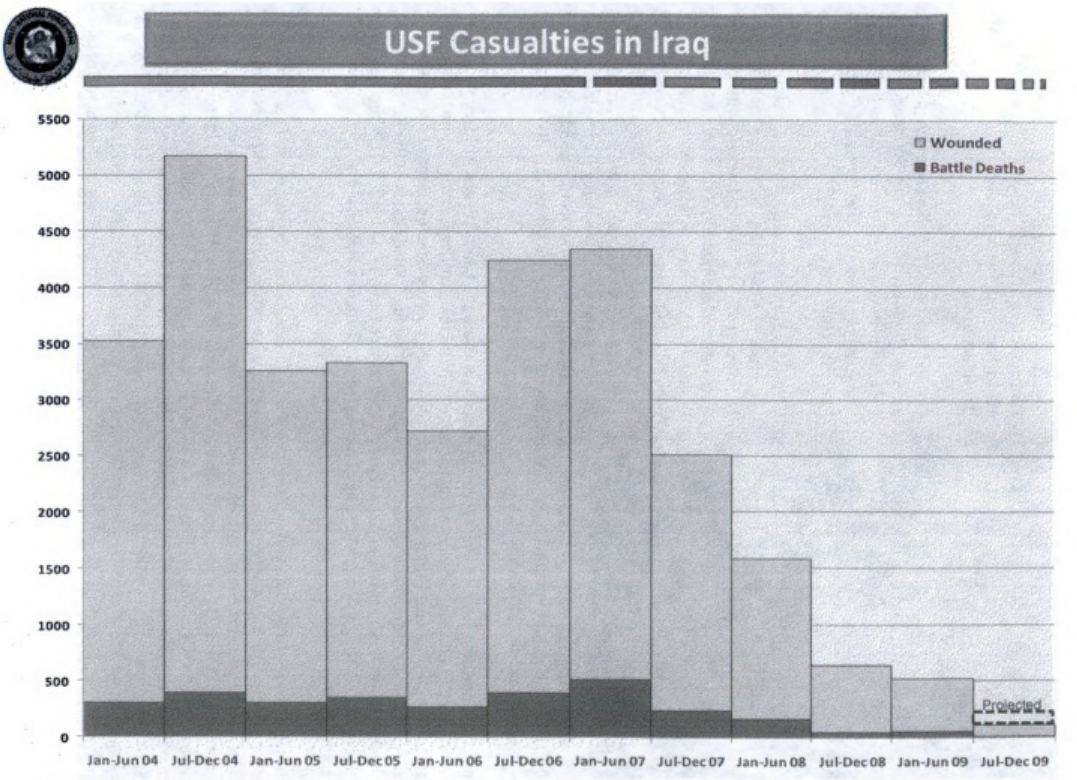

Source: MNF-I CJ1 and Icasualties.org as of 25-Sep-09

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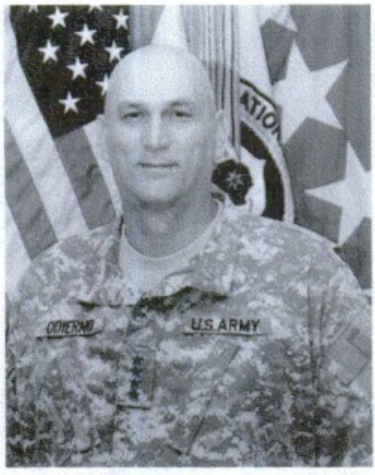

Gen. Ray Odierno
Commanding General
Multi-National Force - Iraq
Baghdad, Iraq

General Raymond T. Odierno assumed command of Multi-National Force - Iraq September 16th, 2008, following his assignment as the Commanding General, U.S. Army III Corps, from May 2006 to September 2008.

General Odierno returned to Iraq to assume command of MNF-I less than seven months after completing a 15-month deployment with III Corps from December 2006 to February 2008, during which he served as the Commanding General, Multi-National Corps - Iraq. As the day-to-day commander of Coalition Forces in Iraq, General Odierno was the operational architect of the Surge and was responsible for implementing the counterinsurgency strategy that led to the dramatic decrease in violence in Iraq in 2007 and 2008. He is noted for being one of few Army generals in history to command a division, corps and entire theater in the same conflict.

A native of northern New Jersey, General Odierno attended the United States Military Academy at West Point, graduating in 1976 with a commission in Field Artillery. During more than 33 years of service, General Odierno has commanded units at every echelon, from platoon to theater, with duty in Germany, Albania, Kuwait, Iraq, and the United States. After his first assignment with U.S. Army Europe, General Odierno was assigned to the XVIII Airborne Corps Artillery at Fort Bragg, N.C., where he commanded two batteries and served as a battalion operations officer.

Following advanced civilian and military schooling, General Odierno returned to U.S. Army Europe and the 7th Army, serving as a battalion executive officer, division artillery executive officer, and brigade executive officer, deploying in that capacity for Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm. He later commanded 2nd Battalion, 8th Field Artillery, 7th Infantry Division, and the Division Artillery, 1st Cavalry Division. From October 2001 to June 2004, General Odierno commanded the 4th Infantry Division, leading the division throughout the first year of Operation Iraqi Freedom from April 2003 to March 2004. The unit was headquartered in the restive Sunni triangle north of Baghdad, and in a significant accomplishment late in the deployment, Soldiers from the 4th Infantry Division captured former President Saddam Hussein near his hometown of Tikrit in December 2003.

His other significant assignments include Arms Control Officer, Office of the Secretary of Defense; Chief of Staff, V Corps; Assistant Division Commander (Support), 1st Armored Division; Deputy Commanding General, Task Force Hawk, Albania; Director of Force

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Management, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans; and Assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in Washington, D.C., where he was the primary military advisor to Secretaries of State Colin Powell and Condoleezza Rice. During this time, he accompanied the Secretary of State on all diplomatic journeys and state visits, traveling over 335,000 miles and visiting over 65 countries, while attending international events ranging from NATO and APEC Summits to Pakistan earthquake relief efforts.

General Odierno has a Bachelor of Science degree in Engineering from West Point and master's degrees in Nuclear Effects Engineering and National Security and Strategy from North Carolina State University and the Naval War College, respectively. He is also a graduate of the Army War College.

Awards and decorations earned by General Odierno include two awards of the Defense Distinguished Service Medal, two awards of the Army Distinguished Service Medal, the Defense Superior Service Medal, six awards of the Legion of Merit, the Bronze Star Medal, the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, four awards of the Meritorious Service Medal, the Army Commendation Medal, the Army Achievement Medal, and the Combat Action Badge. He received the highest award in the State Department, the Secretary of State Distinguished Service Medal, and recently the Romanian President awarded General Odierno the Romanian Order of Military Merit. General Odierno is the 2009 recipient of the Naval War College Distinguished Graduate Leadership Award for his strategic leadership and insight.

General Odierno has published articles on counterinsurgency operations in journals such as Joint Forces Quarterly and Military Review and has been featured numerous times in print media such as Time Magazine, US News and World Report, Newsweek, The Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post, The New York Times and Los Angeles Times. He has also engaged with several news media outlets, to include NBC, CBS, ABC, FOX, CNN and BBC. Over the last few years, he has spoken with audiences and at locations as diverse as New York University's Stern School of Business, the Institute of World Politics in Washington, D.C., the National Committee on American Foreign Policy, the Union League Club of New York, where he received an achievement award for his lifetime of service to the nation, the Links Club, and, most recently, the Colbert Nation.

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WITNESS RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS ASKED DURING THE HEARING

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RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MS. SHEA-PORTER

General ODIERNO. Throughout the Iraqi Theater of Operations contractor camps exist where provision of life support for employees is the responsibility of the contractor. However, every contract has differing provisions and levels of Government support for their personnel. All of our contracts require that every contractor will uphold both U.S. and local laws and require that the contractor complies with the CENTCOM and MNF—I regulations and living standards (as applicable).

With regards to the contractor and specific contract in question, the U.S. Government provided: office space, dining facilities and water, medical care (contractor personnel shall be authorized medical care in emergencies to prevent loss of life, limb, or eyesight of any personnel/employee), MWR/PX/Fitness Center, electrical power, badges, ammunition storage, fuel (the Government will provide fuel access to all contract vehicles/generators that are used in direct support of the contract). [See page 41.]

General ODIERNO. At the direction of the Multi-National Force—Iraq Commander and in coordination with the DOS, Task Force SAFE conducted an on-site investigation of Camp Olympia from September 3-7, 2009. The investigation found that improper bonding and grounding of electrical systems in Mr. Hermanson's billet combined with a faulty water heater element caused the metal pipes in the shower to be energized. Task Force SAFE found many of Camp Olympia's electrical facilities to be improperly bonded or ungrounded, and identified 1,031 immediate Life, Health, and Safety defects which were reported to Triple Canopy, and the Department of State Regional Security Office for immediate correction. Triple Canopy was issued a Cure Notice on September 4, 2009, from Joint Contracting Command Iraq-Afghanistan directing them to take actions to repair the shortcomings identified by Task Force SAFE within 10 days. In response, Triple Canopy hired an electrical team comprised of local national and U.S. electricians led by a U.S. Master Electrician to make the necessary repairs. [See page 41.]

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QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS POST HEARING

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QUESTION SUBMITTED BY MR. TURNER

Mr. TURNER. On January 10, 2007, President Bush ordered a "surge" of 20,000 additional soldiers, increasing the number to nearly 160,000 U.S. forces in Iraq. During this time the Democrat leadership brought many resolutions and bills to the floor disapproving of the President's decision to increase the number of troops and demanding an immediate withdrawal from Iraq. On February 16, 2007, the House passed H.Con.Res. 63 opposing this mission and on March 23, 2007, the House voted on H.R. 1591 to remove all U.S. forces in Iraq by August 2008. According to the "Security Incidents" chart provided in your written testimony, the number of potential and executed attacks decreased from approximately 40,000 to approximately 25,000 during the end of 2006 through the end of 2007 coinciding with the "surge" of American troops. General Odierno, was the "surge" successful in combating the insurgents and decreasing the security threats in the region?

General ODIERNO. Yes. The "surge" of forces in Iraq helped us to create the security environment that we have now, along with many other things. The "surge" was more than a surge of U.S. forces; it was a surge of ideas and represented a change in our tactics, techniques and procedures. It also consisted of integrating support led by the State Department which included embedded provincial reconstruction teams with our brigades. It was about an outreach program to the Sunni insurgents that allowed them to begin to reconcile and form the Sons of Iraq.

It was about understanding what was causing the underlying impacts and using a combination of increase in troops, partnership with the State Department and engagement with former insurgents to enable security so the people and government of Iraq could build their capacities and develop a stable, democratic government.

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STATUS OF ONGOING U.S. EFFORTS IN IRAQ

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH CONGRESS
FIRST SESSION

HEARING HELD
SEPTEMBER 30, 2009

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COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
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STATUS OF ONGOING U.S. EFFORTS IN IRAQ

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH CONGRESS
FIRST SESSION

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