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IRAQ IN U.S. FOREIGN POLICY

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS UNITED STATES SENATE

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FIRST SESSION

OCTOBER 19, 2005

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CONTENTS

	Page
Biden, Hon. Joseph R., U.S. Senator from Delaware	3
Prepared statement	8
Lugar, Hon. Richard G., U.S. Senator from Indiana, opening statement	1
Rice, Hon. Condoleezza, Secretary of State, Department of State, Washington, DC	9
Prepared statement	14

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

Responses of Secretary Rice to questions from:	
Senator Lugar	69
Senator Biden	70
Senator Hagel	84

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IRAQ IN U.S. FOREIGN POLICY

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2005

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10 a.m., in room SD–106, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Richard G. Lugar (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Present: Senators Lugar, Hagel, Chafee, Allen, Voinovich, Sununu, Martinez, Biden, Sarbanes, Dodd, Kerry, Feingold, Boxer, Nelson, and Obama.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. RICHARD G. LUGAR, U.S. SENATOR FROM INDIANA

The CHAIRMAN. This hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee is called to order. The committee is very pleased to welcome our Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice. Today we will continue our ongoing oversight of United States policies toward Iraq. We're engaged in a difficult mission in Iraq. The President and the Congress must be clear with the American people about the stakes involved and the difficulties yet to come.

Almost 2,000 heroic Americans have died in Iraq during the past 2½ years. During the insurgency, thousands of Iraqi Muslims have been killed by other Muslims. Each day, the Iraqi people are living with the fear caused by these tragic and senseless acts of violence, but they continue to show their resilience.

This is the 30th full committee hearing on Iraq held by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee since January 2003. In addition, we have held numerous other hearings that have partially touched on the subject of Iraq. We have maintained this focus because success in Iraq is critical to United States national security. Permanent instability or civil war in Iraq could set back American interests in the Middle East for a generation, increasing anti-Americanism, multiplying the threats from tyrants and terrorists, and reducing our credibility in the world.

In late July, our committee held a series of three hearings on Iraq. Our intent in those hearings was to go beyond describing conditions in Iraq or highlighting strategies that have not worked. Our goal was to systematically examine options for improving security, advancing political development, and demonstrating economic progress in Iraq. With the help of nine distinguished experts, we considered whether changes in military tactics, alliance strategy, resource allocations, Iraqi military training, or other factors should be adopted. And we asked whether there are ways to overcome eth-

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nic and sectarian divisions that would produce a workable, if imperfect, consensus on the structure of Iraq's Government. The experts, while expressing qualified optimism on some issues, testified that there were few easy answers in Iraq.

The insurgents and terrorists continue violent attacks intended to incite internal ethnic and religious conflict and to provoke a civil war among Iraqis. Progress in training and equipping Iraqi forces is painstaking work that does not lend itself to shortcuts. Some of Iraq's neighbors, particularly Syria and Iran, are interfering in Iraq for their own purposes. Any final political settlement will have to address thorny issues, such as who controls oil revenues, who runs the court system, who leads the security forces, and who has the power to tax.

Today's hearing provides the committee with the chance to engage Secretary Rice on many of these subjects, as well as to discuss the constitutional referendum that has just occurred in Iraq. This past weekend, millions of Iraqis voted to pass a constitution. The apparent success of the vote was a welcome development, although it does not solve the fundamental political problem of ethnic and sectarian fragmentation. A majority of Sunnis opposed the Constitution, and voters in two Sunni-dominated provinces overwhelmingly rejected the document. Thus, even as passage of the Constitution allows elections for a new government to go forward in December, the larger hope of reaching a political settlement between all of the major ethnic groups has not yet been realized. Further, we cannot assume that the establishment of democratic institutions in Iraq, in the short term, will yield a corresponding diminishment of the insurgency.

The Constitution and Iraqi attitudes toward it reflect the divisions within society. The Kurds and the Shiites who have dominated the drafting of the Constitution have opted for a weak central-government structure that maximizes their autonomy in the regions where they predominate. Meanwhile, most Sunnis reject such an arrangement as leaving them with few resources and little power. These perceived inequities fuel the insurgency by Sunni rejectionists and threaten civil conflict that could mean the permanent division of Iraq.

It has become common in discussions of Iraq to say that without security, little can be achieved politically or economically. But it's also important to understand that there is no purely military solution in Iraq. Success depends on establishing a political process that gives all the major ethnic groups a stake in the government.

It's notable that insurgent attacks in some Sunni areas were intentionally suspended during the voting to allow Sunni voters to go to the polls in the hopes of defeating the Constitution at the ballot box. This demonstrated that a substantial element of the insurgency is focused on the political outcome in Iraq, not merely on nihilistic terrorist philosophies.

For the next 2 months, until the December elections, the task before the coalition is convincing the Sunni minority to participate in the process, despite their distrust of the Constitution. To this end, we must also prevail on the Shiites and the Kurds to be flexible, even though they already have much of what they want in the current Constitution.

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We appreciate the creativity and the energy that our Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad has applied to these objectives in the runup to the vote last weekend. We're eager to hear from Secretary Rice if more can be done to support his efforts.

The December elections stand as a rallying point for Iraqis who want to make the political process work. The election of a Parliament offers the prospect of tangible political power for the Sunnis while demonstrating to all Iraqis that the benefits of political self-determination have arrived.

During this period, we must explore whether we can convince disaffected Sunnis, including the elements of the insurgency that are focused on a rational political outcome, to negotiate or otherwise replace violence with political means.

As we pursue these issues, we should recognize that most Americans are focused on an exit strategy in Iraq. Even if withdrawal time lines are deemed unwise because they might provide a strategic advantage to the insurgency, the American people need to more fully understand the basis upon which our troops are likely to come home. That is part of the reason why this committee has spent a great deal of time examining the training of Iraqi forces and the progress of the Iraqi political process, two elements that can lead to short-term improvements in Iraq and a withdrawal of some American troops.

The American people also need realistic and clear assessments of our progress in Iraq, even when the indicators are sobering. Beyond Iraq, they need more information about how the outcome in Iraq relates to United States national security and the broader War on Terrorism. They also need to see an all-out diplomatic effort aimed at addressing regional issues, including maintaining the momentum of the Arab-Israeli peace process. These are all vitally important issues to America's foreign policy.

We are deeply grateful to Secretary Rice for joining us today to address them, and we look forward to an enlightening discussion with her.

I would like to yield now to the distinguished ranking member of the committee, Senator Biden.

STATEMENT OF HON. JOSEPH R. BIDEN, JR., U.S. SENATOR FROM DELAWARE

Senator BIDEN. Mr. Chairman, thank you for having this hearing, and thank you for your diligence over the last several years of bringing in as many informed voices as possible from left, right, and center to deal with this issue.

I'd like the record to show, I did not see the chairman's statement before he made it. You're going to find some remarkable similarities in what I'm about to say and what the chairman just said. As a matter of fact, it dawned on me, there is a remarkable consensus—left, right, and center—leaders on my side of the aisle, like Senator Feingold and others, to leaders on the Republican side of the aisle, like Senator Hagel and others—we all agree—whether we disagree with the administration or not on how we got to Iraq, the circumstances under which we got to Iraq, and how we proceeded when we first got there; there is no doubt that there's a great deal at stake. I don't know anybody who's suggesting that we should—

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to use the phrase—it's a very trite phrase, but one that's very popular—"cut and run," I've heard no one suggest that. But I also heard the chairman today—and you'll hear me say—that the American people need some benchmarks here as to: What's the plan? What's the plan? How are we going to proceed?

And, Madam Secretary, your being here is very, very important, and I truly welcome you here. You have always been available to me personally, and I assume other members of the committee when we have asked your attendance. But I would respectfully suggest that at the moment when the American public's patience is being tried, they're questioning the collective judgment of their government and how we're proceeding—and I don't just mean the President; I mean across the board—someone of your stature—and there's few of your stature and your credibility—needs to be seen frequently, in my view, by the American people before the U.S. Congress, and other leaders, as well, in the administration, making clear what the facts are on the ground.

I would note, notwithstanding the herculean efforts of the chairman, the last time, other than your confirmation hearing, that we've had a senior administration official here specifically talking about Iraq, in detail, was May 18, 2004. May 18, 2004. And that was when Secretary Wolfowitz and Secretary Armitage were here. And it's not for lack of trying, I understand. I mean this sincerely. I have an inordinately high regard, as all my colleagues do, for our chairman, and he has done everything to bring in informed judgments, as well. But I can't overemphasize, Madam Secretary, what I have had the opportunity to say to the President and to you, as well as to Mr. Hadley and others, that in my judgment the gap between the rhetoric on Iraq and the reality the American people see on the ground has created a genuine credibility chasm. Not personal, in a sense. Credibility as to what we say about Iraq. Does it comport at all with what they see?

One way to begin to regain the trust of the American people, I think, is regular public accountability, and that's why I'd like to see, literally, monthly hearings with senior officials to report on both the progress and the problems. With more than 140,000 American troops on the line, I think that's the least we can do, and it's—it's not inconsistent—I'm asking for a month at a time; I'm not married to that, but regular—not inconsistent, Mr. Chairman, what you said in your opening statement, of the need for the American people to know the progress and the lack of progress and—warts and all.

The American people—I know you know this; I hope I'm not sounding like I'm lecturing, Madam Secretary; you know this better than I do—the American people are tough. They are really tough. And if they think there's a coherent plan, if they think there's a coherent rationale for what we're doing and a coherent rationale for how we bring our troops home, under what circumstances, they'll do anything. They will do anything. And there's no partisan interest in Iraq. There's only one interest, a national interest.

Your role is critical in advancing that national interest, because now stabilizing Iraq, as the chairman has pointed out, is a political and diplomatic challenge, equally as much as it is a military challenge. I've not heard a single person, including you, Madam Sec-

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retary, suggest there's a military solution alone to the situation in Iraq.

So, we have someone of your stature, credibility, and visibility who started off her career as Secretary of State by saying, "This is a time for diplomacy." And you've been engaging in that, and to your credit. But I think it is really front and center at this very, very moment.

Saturday, in my view, was a good day in Iraq. It was moving to see Iraqis of all sex and all ethnicities, voting in large numbers. But I hope that we've learned a lesson from previous good days in Iraq. Each time, there seems to be a tendency, when we've had previous good days in Iraq, to declare victory prematurely. Whether it was with the fall of Baghdad or the capture of Saddam, the transfer of sovereignty, or the elections last January, each time one good day was followed by a lot of totally predictable—totally predictable—bad days, difficult days. So, while we should be encouraged by the referendum, we must be clear-eyed about the hard, hard, hard road ahead.

While the Constitution appears to have passed, it is not yet the national compact that our able Ambassador to Iraq has tried to forge. And I think the best move you all have made in the last several years is sending Zal to Iraq. In fact, there's a risk, as a consequence of the election, that Sunni bitterness at having failed to defeat the draft will add even more fuel to the insurgency and possibly lead to a full-blown civil war.

Now, I know some have said that this overwhelming show of support for voting indicates that the insurgency is essentially on its last legs. I hope I'm wrong. I predict it would be rejuvenated—rejuvenated, as a—not diminished—as a consequence of the overwhelming rejection, not of the Constitution, in whole, but by the Sunnis, the majority of the Sunnis. And apparently, although the numbers aren't in yet, that I'm aware of, a fairly sizeable majority of Sunnis.

That's why, in my judgment, we must place a premium on two overriding priorities. And, again, I apologize, I'm going to be somewhat redundant with what the chairman had to say, and say it slightly differently. We must intensify the efforts to bring the Sunnis into the political process as our Ambassador has been doing very, very well, but on his own.

Last week's agreement to establish a committee to further amend the Constitution next year offers a ray of hope that we might be able to—we, with others involved, might be able to, in fact, form a consensus constitution. Last week's agreement to establish it was, as I said, in large part, due to the incredible negotiating skills of our Ambassador. But to succeed, it seems to me we need a second equally important change. We must fully engage the major powers and Iraq's neighbors in a stabilization strategy, something we simply have not done til now—and it is my hope that it's in training. I'm not presuming to suggest what's happening, but it is my hope that it's in training.

The major powers, with us in the lead, could form a contact group, or whatever you want to call it, that would become Iraq's main partner, taking some of the burden off of us. It would show the Iraqis a united international front, which would make it easy

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for them to make the hard compromise necessary for the political process to trump the violence. Every Iraqi leader we—I think all of us who have been to Iraq a number of times—every Iraqi leader I have met with, Sunni or Kurd or Shi'a, acknowledges they've got to make difficult compromises. But if I can put it in trite political terms—and we're all politicians—it's awfully hard to go back to a constituency that has been brutalized, that—as the Shi'a have, or the Kurds—who has gotten everything they want in a constitution, and be their leader and say, "No, we ought to give some of that up. We ought to give some of that up for the Sunnis. We've got to get the Sunnis in the deal." Give me a break. Politics is local. Politics is politics is politics. To put it in crass terms, those leaders who know they have to make concessions have to go and say, "The devil's making me do it. We have no choice. The international community, the world, is looking at us. We need to make further concessions." It's that simple and that complicated, I think, Madam Secretary. And I think we cannot do that alone, no matter how significant your diplomatic skills or our Ambassador's skills.

We need to show the Iraqis a united international front, which makes it easier for them to make the decisions they know they have to make. And it's just that kind of strong international pressure, I would argue, that forced the Shiites and the Kurds to reverse their last-minute gambit to rig the referendum in their favor. For all of those who say the United Nations has no influence at all, I would note that the Iraqi Parliament voted overwhelmingly to say that you had to have two-thirds of those eligible to vote in a province to vote to overturn the constitutional referendum. And you had the embattled and, some would argue, not particularly impressive—I don't share that view—Secretary General of the United Nations, through a press person coming out and saying, "No, that's not good enough." And what happened? With your good offices and others, immediately they turned that vote around. Tell me international pressure doesn't matter. It matters. It matters.

And so, we also need, I think, a regional strategy, Madam Secretary, to either force or induce Iraq's neighbors to act more responsibly. Countries like Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Iran, Turkey, and Syria have tremendous influence with the communities within Iraq. They can make a difference between an Iraq on the road to stability or one toward chaos. Some argue that such a strategy is naive. Well, the Clinton administration was not naive in Bosnia when it successfully engaged the Serbian leader, Milosevic, and another thug named Tudjman in the Dayton process. They're both thugs. Thugs. We engaged them. We got the Dayton process. It was the beginning of the end of the chaos.

And this administration, through the significant efforts of diplomacy was not naive when it engaged the Afghans' neighbors, including Iran—including Iran—in bringing Afghan factions into the Bonn Conference, producing what you rightfully have shown and visited and acknowledged and showcased Mr. Karzai, which was the last best hope there.

So, why would others join us? When I raise this, some of my colleagues look at me and say, "Why"—I've been beating on this, I realize, for awhile—they say, "Why would others join us?" Because

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they have as much at stake as we do in Iraq not becoming a permanent source of instability in the heart of the Middle East.

There are other important steps that I think we have to take, Madam Secretary. We're doing a better job training Iraqi security forces. It was a long time in coming. I know we've had our ongoing differences in that, but we're underway. But we still don't know how many Iraqi troops must be able to operate independently or with minimal U.S. support to allow us to draw down. You have a lot of stars sitting behind you, figuratively and literally. We've got to know. We have a right to know. What's the game plan? Like that old song, "What's the plan, Stan?" Tell us, how many, trained at what level, to what degree, are needed in order for us to reasonably look toward drawing down? We're not setting timetables. We're not saying "cut and run." We're saying give us a plan. "Staying the course" is clearly something the American people will not follow. Will not follow. So, tell us, what are the standards?

And, finally, we have to build the capacity of the Iraqi Government to provide essential services. As you well know—and I'm not blaming anybody—the Defense Ministry in Iraq is a basketcase. We've had to essentially go in there and put our uniforms in place running the show. They're a basketcase. The Interior Department is a basketcase. There is no capacity to govern at this point. There is none. And so, again, that's not meant as a criticism; it's an observation. The American people intuitively know it. We all know it, specifically. So, what's the plan? What, specifically, is the plan?

The approval of the Constitution was an important hurdle, but national elections and elite political deals won't lead to stability, in my view, as long as average Iraqis can't turn on the lights, can't drink the water, can't step out of their homes without stepping into raw sewage, and can't let their daughters leave the house for fear of being kidnapped. And now we've learned that, because of incompetent management and high security costs, that our $20 billion reconstruction effort is about run out of money. Why have we failed so miserably to deliver tangible improvements to the daily lives of the Iraqi people? And what is the plan to turn the reconstruction effort around? There has to be a plan. There may be one. I'm unaware of it. And I have tried, assiduously as I can, to learn what it is.

We must move with a sense of urgency, Madam Secretary, in all these fronts. The less progress we make, the more Iraq risks becoming what it was not before we went in, a pre-9/11 Afghanistan, a haven for radical jihadists in the center of the Middle East. It would be a terrible irony—terrible irony—if that were to happen. It would become, as someone said, a Bush-fulfilling prophecy. Worse, it would be a terrible blow to America's fundamental security interests.

So, I think what the American people really want to hear—and I know I want to hear from the administration—is a plan to bring our troops home, as soon and as safely as possible, while preserving our fundamental security interests—and they are real, and they are deep, those interests. We must not compound the mistake that was made in invading Iraq without a plan, by leaving Iraq without a plan to prevent from becoming a haven for terror and the grist from which not only a civil war will occur, but a regional war.

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So, Madam Secretary, I hope you can provide some clarity for such a plan today. I realize it's a big job. But, as I said—I'd conclude, Mr. Chairman, by saying I think the American people—I know we all do; I don't mean just "I"—the American people are tough, they're resilient, they're smart. They just want to know, What is the plan? What's the plan?

Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Senator Biden follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JOSEPH R. BIDEN., JR., U.S. SENATOR FROM DELAWARE

Madame Secretary, welcome. I'm glad you're here. It's important that you're here. And let me tell you why.

In my judgment, the gap between the administration's rhetoric on Iraq and the reality the American people see on the ground has created a credibility chasm.

One way to help regain the trust of the American people is regular, public accountability. That's why I'd like to see monthly hearings with senior officials to report on both the progress and the problems. With 140,000 American troops on the line, that's the least we can all do.

There is no partisan interest in Iraq. There is only a national interest. Your role is critical to advancing that national interest because stabilizing Iraq is a political and diplomatic challenge as much as it is a military challenge.

Saturday was a good day in Iraq. It was moving to see Iraqis of all sects and ethnicities voting in large numbers.

But I hope that we have learned a lesson from previous good days in Iraq.

Each time, there seemed to be a tendency to declare victory prematurely—whether it was with the fall of Baghdad, the capture of Saddam, the transfer of sovereignty, or the elections last January.

Each time, one good day was followed by a lot of difficult days. So, while we should be encouraged by the referendum, we must be clear-eyed about the very hard road ahead.

While the Constitution appears to have passed, it is not yet the national compact that our able Ambassador to Iraq has tried to forge. In fact, there is a risk that Sunni bitterness at having failed to defeat the draft will add even more fuel to the insurgency, and possibly lead to a full-blown civil war.

That is why, in my judgment, we must place a premium on two overriding priorities.

First, we must intensify the effort to bring Sunnis into the political process. Last week's agreement to establish a committee to further amend the Constitution next year offers a ray of hope that this can be achieved.

But to succeed, we need a second equally important change.

We must fully engage the major powers and Iraq's neighbors in a stabilization strategy—something we simply have not done till now.

The major powers, with us in the lead, could form a contact group that would become Iraq's main partner, taking some of the burden off of us. It would show the Iraqis a united international front, which would make it easier for them to make the hard compromises necessary for the political process to trump violence.

It was just that kind of strong international pressure that forced the Shiites and Kurds to reverse their last minute gambit to rig the referendum in their favor.

We also need a regional strategy to either force or induce Iraq's neighbors to act responsibly. Countries like Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Iran, Turkey, and Syria have tremendous influence with the key communities in Iraq. They can make the difference between an Iraq on the road to stability—or toward chaos.

Some argue that such a strategy is naive. Well, the Clinton administration was not naive in Bosnia when it successfully engaged the Serbian leader Milosevic and the Croatian leader Tudjman in the Dayton Peace Process. And this administration was not naive when it engaged Afghanistan's neighbors—including Iran—in bringing Afghanistan's factions into the Bonn Conference.

Why would others join us? Because they have as much of a stake as we do in Iraq not becoming a permanent source of instability in the heart of the Middle East.

There are other important steps we must take. We are doing a better job of training Iraqi security forces.

But we still don't know how many Iraqi troops must be able to operate independently or with minimal U.S. support to allow us to draw down—and what the time line is for training those troops to those standards.

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Finally, we must build the capacity of the Iraqi Government to provide essential services. The approval of the Constitution was an important hurdle, but national elections and elite political deals won't lead to stability as long as average Iraqis can't turn the lights on, can't drink the watér, can't step out of their homes without stepping into raw sewage, and can't let their daughters leave the house for fear of kidnapping.

And now we have learned that because of incompetent management and high security costs, the $20 billion reconstruction effort is running out of money.

Why have we failed so miserably to deliver tangible improvements in the daily lives of the Iraqi people and what is the plan to turn the reconstruction effort around?

We must move with a sense of urgency on all of these fronts. The less progress we make, the more Iraq risks becoming what it was not before we went in—a pre-9/11 Afghanistan—a haven for radical jihadists in the center of the Middle East. That would be a terrible irony. Worse, that would be a terrible blow to America's fundamental security interests.

So I think what the American people really want to hear from the administration is a plan to bring our troops home as soon and safely as possible while preserving our fundamental security interests.

We must not compound the mistake that was made in invading Iraq without a plan by leaving Iraq without a plan to prevent it from becoming a haven for terror. I hope, Madame Secretary, that you can provide clarity on such a plan today.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Senator Biden.

Secretary Rice, we appreciate your patience in listening to us. We very much look forward to listening to you, and we thank you for your thoughtful prepared statement. Please deliver it in full, if you wish to do so, or abbreviate it. If you choose to abbreviate it, it will be accepted for the record, of course, in full.

Secretary Rice.

STATEMENT OF HON. CONDOLEEZZA RICE, SECRETARY OF STATE, DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON, DC

Secretary RICE. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for inviting me.

I would like to deliver this in full. It's my first opportunity to talk to you specifically about Iraq.

I've spoken many times about why we are there, but I would like to talk about how we assure victory. In short, with the Iraqi Government, our political military strategy has to be to clear, hold, and build. To clear areas from insurgent control, to hold them securely, and to build durable national Iraqi institutions.

In 2003, enforcing U.N. resolutions, we overthrew a brutal dictator and liberated the nation. Our strategy then emphasized the military defeat of the regime's forces and the creation of a temporary government with the Coalition Provisional Authority and an Iraqi Governing Council. In 2004, President Bush outlined a five-step plan to end the occupation, transferring sovereignty to an Iraqi interim government, rebuilding Iraq's infrastructure, getting more international support, preparing for Iraq's first national election this past January, and helping to establish security. Our soldiers and marines fought battles, major battles, against the insurgency in places like Najaf, Sadr City, and Fallujah.

In 2005, we emphasized transition—a security transition to great reliance on Iraqi forces, and a political transition to a permanent constitutional democracy. The just-concluded referendum was a landmark in that process. Now we are preparing for 2006.

First, we must help Iraqis as they hold another vital election in December. Well over 9 million Iraqis voted on Sunday. Whether

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Iraqis voted "yes" or "no," they were voting for an Iraqi nation and for Iraqi democracy. And all their voices, pro and con, will be heard again in December. As the referendum passes, those who voted "no" this time will realize that their chosen representatives can then participate in the review of the Constitution that was agreed upon last week. This process will ultimately lead to Iraqis selecting a lasting government for a 4-year term.

We must then have a decisive strategy to help that government set a path toward democracy, stability, and prosperity. Our Nation, our service men and women, are fighting in Iraq at a pivotal time in world history. We must succeed. I look forward to working together with you on winning.

We know our objectives. We and the Iraqi Government will succeed if, together, we can break the back of the insurgency so that Iraqis can finish it off without large-scale military help from the United States, keep Iraq from becoming a safe haven from which Islamic extremists can terrorize the region or the world, demonstrate positive potential for democratic change and free expression in the Arab and Muslim worlds, even under the most difficult conditions, and turn the corner financially and economically so there is a sense of hope and a visible path toward self-reliance.

To achieve this we must know who we are fighting. Some of these people are creatures of a deposed tyrant; others, a small number of homegrown and imported Islamic extremists. They feed on a portion of the population that is overwhelmed by feelings of fear, resentment, and despair.

As I have said, our strategy is to clear, hold, and build. The enemy's strategy is to infect, terrorize, and pull down. They want to spread more fear, resentment, and despair, inciting sectarian violence, as they did 2 weeks ago in Hillah, when they blew up devout worshipers in a mosque and committed this atrocity during the holy month of Ramadan. They attack infrastructure, like electricity and water, so that average Iraqis lose hope. They target foreigners. The enemy forces have never won even a platoon-sized battle against our soldiers and marines, but their ultimate target is the coalition center of gravity, the will of America, of Britain, and of other coalition members.

Let us say it plainly. The terrorists want us to get discouraged and quit. They believe we do not have the will to see this through. They talk openly about this in their writings on their Web sites. And they attack the Iraqi Government, targeting the most dedicated public servants of the new Iraq. Mayors, physicians, teachers, policemen, and soldiers—none are exempt.

Millions of Iraqis are putting their lives on the line every single day to build a new nation, and the insurgents want most to strike at them. Sadly, this strategy has some short-term advantages, because it is easier to pull down than to build up. It is easier to sell fear than to grow hope. But the enemy's strategy has a fatal flaw. The enemy has no positive vision for the future of Iraq. They offer no alternative that could unite Iraq as a nation. And that is why most Iraqis despise the insurgents.

The enemy leaders know that their movement is unpopular. Zawahiri's July letter to Zarqawi reveals that he is, "extremely concerned" that, deprived of popular support, the insurgents will "be

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crushed in the shadows." "We don't want to repeat the mistakes of the Taliban," he warned, "whose regime collapsed in days because the people were passive or hostile." Knowing how unpopular they are, the enemy leaders also hate the idea of democracy. They will never let themselves or their ideas face the test of democratic choice.

Let me turn now to our political military strategy. We are moving from a stage of transition toward the strategy to prepare a permanent Iraqi Government for a decisive victory. The strategy that is being carried out has profited from the insights of strategic thinkers, civilian and military, inside and outside the government, who have reflected on our experience and on insurgencies in other periods of history.

We know what we must do. With our Iraqi allies, we are working to clear the toughest places—no sanctuaries for the enemy—and to disrupt foreign support for the insurgents. We're working to hold and steadily enlarge the secure areas integrating political and economic outreach with our military operations. We're working to build truly national institutions by working with more capable provincial and local authorities. We are challenging them to embody a national compact, not tools of a particular sect or ethnic group. These Iraqi institutions must sustain security forces, bring rule of law, visibly deliver essential services, and offer the Iraqi people hope for a better economic future.

None of these elements, as you have said, Mr. Chairman, can be achieved by military action alone. None are purely civilian either. This requires an integrated civil/military partnership. Let me briefly review that partnership.

Clearing the toughest places, no sanctuaries: As we enlarge security in major urban areas, and as insurgents retreat, they should find no large area where they can reorganize and operate freely. Recently, our forces have gone on the offensive. In Tal Afar, near the Syrian border, and in the west, along the Euphrates Valley, in places like al Qaim, Haditha, and Hit, American and Iraqi forces are clearing away insurgents. As one terrorist wrote to another, "If the government extends its control over the country, we will have to pack our bags and break camp."

Syria and Iran allow fighters and military assistance to reach insurgents in Iraq. In the case of Syria, we are concerned about cross-border infiltration, about unconstrained travel networks, and about the suspicious young men who are being waved through Damascus International Airport. As a part of our strategy, we have taken military steps, as with our offensive in Tal Afar, to cut off the flow of people or supplies near that border. We are also taking new diplomatic steps to convey the seriousness of our concerns. Syria—and, indeed, Iran—must decide whether they wish to side with the cause of war or with the cause of peace.

Second, to hold and enlarge secure areas: In the past, our problem was that once an area was clear militarily, the Iraqi security forces were unable to hold it. Now Iraqi units are more capable. In August 2004, five Iraqi regular army battalions were in combat. Today, 91 Iraqi regular army battalions are in combat. A year ago, no American advisors were embedded with these battalions. Now all of these battalions have American advisors.

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With more capable Iraqi forces, we can implement this element of the strategy, holding secure areas, neighborhood by neighborhood. And this process has already begun.

Compare the situation a year ago in places like Haifa Street in Baghdad or Baghdad's Sadr City or downtown Mosul or Najaf or Fallujah, with the situation today. Security along the once notorious Airport Road in Baghdad has measurably improved. Najaf, where American forces fought a major battle last year, is now entirely under independent Iraqi military control.

As this strategy is being implemented, the military side recedes, and the civilian part, like police stations and civic leaders and economic development, move into the foreground. Our transition strategy emphasized the building of the Iraqi Army. Now our police-training efforts are receiving new levels of attention.

Third, we must build truly national institutions. The institutions of Saddam Hussein's government were violent and corrupt, tearing apart the ties that ordinarily bind communities together. The last 2 years have seen three temporary governments govern Iraq, making it extremely difficult to build national institutions, even under the best of circumstances. The new government that will come can finally set down real roots. To be effective, that government must bridge sects and ethnic groups, and its institutions must not become the tools of a particular sect or group.

Let me assure you, the United States will not try to pick winners. We will support parties and politicians, in every community, who are dedicated to peaceful participation in the future of a democratic Iraq. The national institutions must also sustain the security forces and bring rule of law to Iraq. The national institutions must also visibly deliver essential services. Thanks to you and other Members of Congress, the United States has already invested billions of dollars to keep electricity and fuel flowing across Iraq. In the transition phase, we concentrated on capital investment, adding capacity to a system that had deteriorated to the point of collapse. But with freedom, the demand for electricity has gone up by 50 percent, and the capability we have added is not being fully utilized because of constant insurgent attacks. We are, with the Iraqis, developing new ways to add security to this battered, but vital, system. And the Iraqis must reform their energy policies and pricing in order to make the system sustainable.

The national institutions must also offer the Iraqi people hope for a better economic future. Millions of farmers, small businessmen, and investors need a government that encourages growth rather than fostering dependence on handouts from the ruler. The next government will need to make some difficult, but necessary, decisions about economic reform.

In sum, we and the Iraqis must seize the vital opportunity provided by the establishment of a permanent government.

Now, what is required?

First, the Iraqis must continue to come together in order to build their nation. The state of Iraq was constructed across the fault lines of ancient civilizations, among Arabs and Kurds, Sunni and Shi'a, Muslims and Christians. No one can solve this problem for them. For years, these differences were dealt with through violence and repression. Now Iraqis are using compromise and politics.

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Second, the Iraqi Government must forge more effective partnerships with foreign governments, particularly in building their Ministries and governmental capacity. On our side of this partnership, the United States should sustain a maximum effort to help the Iraqi Government succeed, tying it more clearly to our immediate political military objectives. On Iraq's side, the Government must show us, and other assisting countries, that critical funds are being well spent, whatever their source. They must show commitment to the professionalization of their government and bureaucracy, and they must demonstrate the willingness to make tough decisions.

Third, Iraq must forge stronger partnerships with the international community beyond the United States. The Iraqis have made it clear that they want the multinational military coalition to remain. Among many contributors, the soldiers and civilians of the United Kingdom deserve special gratitude for their resolve, their skill, and their sacrifices. Now the military support from the coalition must be matched by diplomatic, economic, and political support from the entire international community. Earlier this year, in Brussels and Amman, scores of nations gathered to offer more support. NATO has opened a training mission near Baghdad, and now, as Iraq chooses a permanent constitutional government, it is time for Iraq's neighbors to do more to help.

The major oil-producing states of the gulf have gained tens of billions of dollars of additional revenue from rising oil prices. They are considering how to invest these gains for the future. These governments must be partners in shaping the region's future.

We understand that across the region there are needs and multilateral programs in the Palestinian territories, Lebanon, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, as well as Iraq. Rather than consider them in a disjointed way, they, together, form part of a broad regional effort in transforming the Arab and Muslim world. We hope that the governments of the region, as well as others in Europe and Asia, will examine these needs and then invest decisively on an unprecedented scale, to become continuing stakeholders in the future of Iraq and of the region.

Finally, the U.S. Government must deepen and strengthen the integration of our civilian and military activities. In Iraq, we have established an effective partnership between the Embassy and Ambassador Khalilzad, on the one hand, and the multinational forces command and General Casey, on the other.

To be sure, civilian agencies have already made an enormous effort. Hundreds of civilian employees and contractors have lost their lives in Iraq. But more can be done to mobilize the civilian agencies of our Government, especially to get more people in the field, outside of Baghdad's International Zone to follow up when the fighting stops. We will embed our diplomats, police trainers, and aid workers more fully on military bases, traveling with our soldiers and marines.

To execute our strategy, we will restructure a portion of the U.S. mission in Iraq. Learning from successful precedents used in Afghanistan, we will deploy Provincial Reconstruction Teams in key parts of the country. These will be civil/military teams working in concert with each of the major subordinate commands, training police, setting up courts, and helping local governments with essen-

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tial services like sewage treatment or irrigation. The first of these new PRTs will take the field next month.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, to succeed we need, most, your help and your support and that of the America people. We seek support across the aisle, from both Democrats and Republicans. And I know that we all, as Americans, know the importance of success in this mission. It is hard. It is hard to imagine decisive victory when violent men continue their attacks on Iraqi civilians and security forces and on American and coalition soldiers and marines. And we honor the sacrifice, because every individual has life stories and friends and families and incalculable sorrow that has been left behind. But, of course, there is a great deal at stake. A free Iraq will be at the heart of a different kind of Middle East. We must defeat the ideology of hatred, the ideology that forms the roots of the extremist threat that we face. Iraq's struggle, the region's struggle, is to show that there is a better way, a freer way, to lasting peace.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Secretary Rice follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. CONDOLEEZZA RICE, SECRETARY OF STATE, DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON, DC

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to discuss our strategy in Iraq.

I have spoken many times about why we are there. Today I want to discuss how to assure victory.

In short, with the Iraqi Government, our strategy—the key—is to clear, hold, and build: Clear areas from insurgent control, hold them securely, and build durable, national Iraqi institutions.

In 2003, enforcing U.N. resolutions, we overthrew a brutal dictator and liberated a nation. Our strategy emphasized the military defeat of the regime's forces and creation of a temporary government with the Coalition Provisional Authority and an Iraqi Governing Council.

In 2004, President Bush outlined a five-step plan to end the occupation: Transferring sovereignty to an Iraqi interim government, rebuilding Iraq's infrastructure, getting more international support, preparing for Iraq's first national election this past January, and helping establish security. Our soldiers and marines fought major battles against the insurgency in places like Najaf, Sadr City, and Fallujah.

In 2005, we emphasized transition: A security transition to greater reliance on Iraqi forces and a political transition to a permanent, constitutional democracy. The just-concluded referendum was a landmark in that process.

Now we are preparing for 2006. First, we must help Iraqis as they hold another vital election in December. Well over 9 million Iraqis voted on Saturday. Whether Iraqis voted yes or no, they were voting for an Iraqi nation, and for Iraqi democracy.

And all their voices, pro and con, will be heard again in December. If the referendum passes, those who voted no this time will realize that their chosen representatives can then participate in the review of the Constitution that was agreed upon last week.

This process will ultimately lead to Iraqis selecting a lasting government, for a 4-year term. We must then have a decisive strategy to help that government set a path toward democracy, stability, and prosperity.

Our Nation—our service men and women—are fighting in Iraq at a pivotal time in world history. We must succeed. Let's work together on how we will win.

OUR OBJECTIVES

We know our objectives. We and the Iraqi Government will succeed if together we can:

—Break the back of the insurgency so that Iraqis can finish it off without large-scale U.S. military help.

—Keep Iraq from becoming a safe haven from which Islamic extremists can terrorize the region or the world.

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—Demonstrate positive potential for democratic change and free expression in the Arab and Muslim world, even under the most difficult conditions.
—Turn the corner financially and economically, so there is a sense of hope and a visible path toward self-reliance.

ASSESSING THE ENEMY

To achieve this, we must know who we are fighting. Some of them creatures of a deposed tyrant, others a small number of homegrown and imported Islamist extremists, feed on a portion of the population overwhelmed by feelings of fear, resentment, and despair.

I have said our strategy is to clear, hold, and build. The enemy's strategy is to infect, terrorize, and pull down.

They want to spread more fear, resentment, and despair—inciting sectarian violence as they did 2 weeks ago in Hillah, when they blew up devout worshippers in a mosque, and committed this atrocity during the holy month of Ramadan. They attack infrastructure, like electricity and water, so that average Iraqis will lose hope.

They target foreigners. The enemy forces have never won even a platoon-size battle against our soldiers and marines. But their ultimate target is the coalition's center of gravity: The will of America, of Britain, or of other coalition members. Let us say it plainly: The terrorists want us to get discouraged and quit. They believe we do not have the will to see this through. They talk openly about this on their Web sites and in their writings.

And they attack the Iraqi Government, targeting the most dedicated public servants of the new Iraq. Mayors, physicians, teachers, policemen, or soldiers—none are exempt. Millions of Iraqis put their lives on the line every single day to build a new nation. The insurgents want to strike them.

Sadly, the enemy strategy has a short-term advantage. It is easier to pull down than to build up. It is easier to sow fear than to grow hope.

But the enemy strategy has a fatal weakness. The enemy has no positive vision for the future of Iraq. The enemy offers no alternative that could unite the Iraqi nation. That is why most Iraqis despise the insurgents.

The enemy leaders know their movement is unpopular. Zawahiri's July letter to Zarqawi reveals he is "extremely concerned" that, deprived of popular support, the insurgents will "be crushed in the shadows." "We don't want to repeat the mistake of the Taliban," he warned, whose regime "collapsed in days, because the people were either passive or hostile."

Knowing how unpopular they are, the enemy leaders also hate the idea of democracy. They will never let themselves or their ideas face the test of democratic choice.

OUR STRATEGY

Let me now turn to our strategy. We are moving from a stage of transition toward the strategy to prepare a permanent Iraqi Government for a decisive victory.

The strategy that is being carried out has profited from the insights of a number of strategic thinkers, civilian and military, inside and outside of government, who have reflected on our experience and on insurgencies in other periods of history.

With our Iraqi allies, we are working to:

—Clear the toughest places—no sanctuaries to the enemy—and disrupt foreign support for the insurgents.
—Hold and steadily enlarge the secure areas, integrating political and economic outreach with our military operations.
—Build truly national institutions working with more capable provincial and local authorities. Embodying a national compact—not tools of a particular sect or ethnic group—these Iraqi institutions must sustain security forces, bring rule of law, visibly deliver essential services, and offer the Iraqi people hope for a better economic future.

None of these elements can be achieved by military action alone. None are purely civilian. All require an integrated civil-military partnership. I will briefly review each of them.

Clear the toughest places—no sanctuaries. As we enlarge security in major urban areas and as insurgents retreat, they should find no large area where they can reorganize and operate freely. Recently our forces have gone on the offensive. In Tall Afar, near the Syrian border, and in the west along the Euphrates Valley in places like Al Qaim, Haditha, and Hit, Iraqi and American forces are clearing away the insurgents.

As one terrorist wrote to another: "[I]f the government extends its control over the country, we will have to pack our bags and break camp."

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Syria and Iran allow fighters and military assistance to reach insurgents in Iraq. In the case of Syria, we are concerned about cross-border infiltration, about unconstrained travel networks, and about the suspicious young men who are being waved through Damascus International Airport.

As part of our strategy, we have taken military steps, as with our offensive in Tal Afar, to cut off the flow of people or supplies near the border. We have also begun taking new diplomatic steps to convey the seriousness of our concerns. Syria and Iran must decide whether they wish to side with the cause of war or with the cause of peace.

Hold and enlarge secure areas. In the past our problem was that once an area was clear, the Iraqi security forces were unable to hold it. Now, Iraqi units are more capable.

—In August 2004, five Iraqi regular army battalions were in combat. Today, 91 Iraqi regular army battalions are in combat.

—A year ago, no American advisors were embedded with these battalions. Now all of these battalions have American advisors.

With more capable Iraqi forces, we can implement this element of the strategy—neighborhood by neighborhood. The process has already begun.

—Compare the situation a year ago in places like Haifa Street in Baghdad, or Baghdad's Sadr City, or downtown Mosul, or Najaf, or Fallujah, and the situation today.

—Security along the once notorious airport road in Baghdad has measurably improved. Najaf, where American forces fought a major battle last year, is now entirely under independent Iraqi military control.

As the strategy is implemented, the military side recedes and the civilian part—like police stations, civic leaders, economic development—move into the foreground. Our transition strategy emphasized building of the Iraqi Army. Now our police training efforts are receiving new levels of attention.

Build national institutions. The institutions of Saddam Hussein's government were violent and corrupt, tearing apart the ties that ordinarily bind communities together. The last 2 years have seen three temporary governments govern Iraq, making it extremely difficult to build national institutions even under the best of circumstances. The new government to come can finally set down real roots.

To be effective, that government must bridge sects and ethnic groups. And its institutions must not become the tools of a particular sect or group.

The United States will not pick winners. We will support parties and politicians in every community who are dedicated to peaceful participation the future of a democratic Iraq.

The national institutions must sustain the security forces. They also must bring the rule of law to Iraq.

The national institutions must visibly deliver essential services. Thanks to you and other Members of Congress, the United States has already invested billions of dollars to keep electricity and fuel flowing across Iraq. In the transition phase, we concentrated on capital investment, adding capacity to a system that had deteriorated to the point of collapse. But, with freedom, the demand for electricity has gone up by 50 percent and the capability we have added is not being fully utilized because of constant insurgent attacks. We are developing new ways to add security to this battered but vital system. And the Iraqis must reform their energy policies and pricing to make the system sustainable.

The national institutions must offer the Iraqi people hope for a better economic future.

Millions of farmers, small businessmen, and investors need a government that encourages growth rather than fostering dependence on handouts from the ruler. The next government will need to make some difficult but necessary decisions.

In sum, we and the Iraqis must seize the vital opportunity provided by the establishment of a permanent government.

WHAT IS REQUIRED?

First, Iraqis must continue to come together in order to build their nation. The state was constructed across the fault lines of ancient civilizations, among Arabs and Kurds, Sunni and Shi'a, Muslims and Christians. No one can solve this problem for them. For years these differences were dealt with through violence and repression. Now Iraqis are using compromise and politics.

Second, the Iraqi Government must forge a more effective partnership with foreign governments, particularly in building their Ministries and governmental capacity.

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—On our side of the partnership, the United States should sustain a maximum effort to help the Iraqi Government succeed, tying it more clearly to our immediate political-military objectives.
—On Iraq's side, the government must show us and other assisting countries that critical funds are being well spent—whatever their source. They must show commitment to the professionalization of their government and bureaucracy. And they must demonstrate the willingness to make tough decisions.

Third, Iraq must forge stronger partnerships with the international community beyond the United States.

The Iraqis have made it clear that they want the multinational military coalition to remain. Among many contributors, the soldiers and civilians of the United Kingdom deserve special gratitude for their resolve, their skill, and their sacrifices.

This military support must be matched by diplomatic, economic, and political support. Earlier this year, in Brussels and in Amman, scores of nations gathered to offer more support. NATO has now opened a training mission near Baghdad. And now, as Iraq chooses a permanent, constitutional government, it is time for Iraq's neighbors to do much more to help.

—The major oil producing states of the gulf have gained tens of billions of dollars of additional revenue from rising oil prices. They are considering how to invest these gains for the future.
—The governments must be partners in shaping the region's future.
—Across the region, there are needs and multilateral programs in the Palestinian territories, Lebanon, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, as well as Iraq. Rather than consider each in a disjointed way, together they form part of a broader regional effort transforming the Arab and Muslim world. We hope these governments, and others in Europe and Asia, will examine these needs and then invest decisively, on an unprecedented scale, to become continuing stakeholders in the future of Iraq and their region.

Finally, we—the U.S. Government—must deepen and strengthen the integration of our civilian and military activities.

—At the top in Iraq, we have established an effective partnership between the Embassy and Ambassador Khalilzad on the one hand, and the Multinational Forces command and General Casey on the other.
—To be sure, civilian agencies have already made an enormous effort. Hundreds of civilian employees and contractors have lost their lives in Iraq. But more can be done to mobilize the civilian agencies of our government, especially to get more people in the field, outside Baghdad's International Zone, to follow up when the fighting stops.
—We will embed our diplomats, police trainers, and aid workers more fully on military bases, traveling with our soldiers and marines.
—To execute our strategy we will restructure a portion of the U.S. mission in Iraq. Learning from successful precedents used in Afghanistan, we will deploy Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) in key parts of the country. These will be civil-military teams, working in concert with each of the major subordinate commands, training police, setting up courts, and helping local governments with essential services like sewage treatment or irrigation. The first of these new PRTs will take the field next month.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, to succeed, we need most your help and your support, and that of the American people. We seek support across the aisle, from Democrats and Republicans alike.

I know this is hard. It is hard to imagine decisive victory when violent men continue their attacks on Iraqi civilians and security forces and on American or coalition soldiers and marines. Every individual has life stories, friends, and families—and incalculable sorrow for those left behind.

But there is a great deal at stake. A free Iraq will be at the heart of a different kind of Middle East. We must defeat the ideology of hatred, the ideology that forms the roots of the extremist threat we face. Iraq's struggle—the region's struggle—is to show there is a better way, a freer way, to lasting peace.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, thank you very much, Secretary Rice.

Let me just mention that Secretary Rice can be with us only until 1 o'clock. That is a long time away, but the time will go rapidly as questions and answers ensue.

The Chair would like to suggest——

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Senator SARBANES. Mr. Chairman, could I—when was the last time Secretary Rice came before this committee? Could I inquire?

The CHAIRMAN. I think, the confirmation process.

Senator SARBANES. February of this year?

The CHAIRMAN. Yes.

Senator SARBANES. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Now, we will attempt to have a 10-minute round so that all members can ask questions and have answers. That will depend upon the fairness that each member uses. If members are going to exceed their 10 minutes, this is going to make it very difficult for other members, who are more junior, to have their questions. So, the Chair asks cooperation from the outset. Please stay within the 10-minute limit, each one of you. Now, this new apparatus lists the time in front of you, so it is not ambiguous. Please pay heed.

Now, I will start with the first questions to Secretary Rice.

Secretary, I would refer to an article by David Sanger in the New York Times of October 17. The headline was, "Redefining the War: The Administration's New Tone Signals a Longer, Broader Conflict." This article takes up the dialog, or the messages, between the two al-Qaeda leaders that you have mentioned. It suggests that, in fact, Iraq is perceived as a battleground in the overall War on Terror, and that those, at least on the al-Qaeda side, or their allies, see the possibility not only of discouraging us, but, likewise, of so disrupting the Iraqi economy and the morale of people there, that essentially they will take control. Now, I would agree with your characterization. This is not a very constructive or optimistic point of view. But, from their strategy, they may feel that it's an effective one, that this is an area that is in play, that, given the divisions between the people of Iraq, who may or may not have an image of being Iraqi—as opposed to being Kurds or Shiites or Sunnis—that conceivably terrorism may win the day, and then, from there, radiate outward into the surrounding territory, destabilizing others. The camps in Afghanistan are no longer there, nor are various other emplacements that may have given some basis for the movement. Iraq could now be that basis.

Now, this is, to say the least, troubling. As you've pointed out, these communications sometimes suggest that the insurgents there are being rather clumsy in killing so many people who are Iraqis, as opposed to aiming their fire entirely at Americans. And it suggests that the strategy might work better if they were humane with regard to Iraqis, and, likewise, with regard to some of the other objectives they've had.

If true, if this is a serious strategy by the al-Qaeda movement and therefore the whole War Against Terror, then I would like for you to address: How do we change our military strategy or our diplomatic strategy? You have outlined the course we have taken—namely, to secure various situations, to try to enlarge that security to larger areas, to have a cleansing process—hopefully, more and more with the cooperation of Iraqis up front. But, at the same time, it's a very complex strategy, and I'm not certain that I have ever, in my own mind's eye, been able to envision exactly how it works, except in day-by-day battles and the occasional thought that this particular area really needs concentrated support.

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Can you describe if this is the goal of the terrorists? Is this going to be the base for the future? Our military people have briefed us on a whole circle of terrorism in which you have outposts like London or Madrid or European sites, where cells loosely connected, or even individuals, create terror. The terrorists may say, "But, at the heart of this, at least we're going to have a home base." How do we fight that?

Secretary RICE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I think that what this demonstrates is that—what is very clear post-September 11 is that we are in a broad war against terrorism, not a narrow one. This is not an issue of simply al-Qaeda and Afghanistan. This is a question of going to the root cause of the extremist ideology that led people to fly airplanes into buildings on September 11, or led people to bomb in London or in Bali or so on. And the root cause of that extremist ideology is finding its place in a Middle East that has a sense of hopelessness, that has not advanced very far, where there is a freedom deficit in the Middle East that, unfortunately, really for about 60 years, we chose to ignore to try to deal and bring about stability. So, I think this does, in effect, go right to the heart of: What kind of Middle East is there going to be?

We have one vision of what the Middle East is going to look like. It's going to be a Middle East that is modernizing, progressive, where women's rights are assured, where Islam finds its place alongside democracy, where there are stable and democratic governments, where liberty is no longer denied to the people. There is no doubt that that is a long-term generational struggle.

The terrorist's view is that that long-term generational struggle should produce a Middle East that is closed, sectarian, where women have no rights, that looks, if you will, like the Taliban, but in a broad region. In order to do that, they have to expel us, they have to destabilize governments with which they are—we are associated. And from, I sense, Iraq, they also have to be sure that we don't win in the heart of that Middle East. And I think that's what they're saying.

And so, the way that we frustrate their strategy for their vision of the Middle East—and, obviously, it's a vision of the Middle East that we could not tolerate, in terms of our own security interests; we would be fighting terrorism for many, many, many generations to come if, in fact, that kind of Middle East emerged—we, indeed, have to win in Iraq, which becomes one of the pillars of a democratic, stable, prosperous Middle East in which the freedom deficit is not a cause for the rise of extremism.

You mentioned, also, we have to make progress in the Palestinian/Israeli issue, because that's another pillar. And, third, we have to see broad reform in the Middle East, so that beyond Iraq there is reform in places like Egypt and even in places like Saudi Arabia.

Now, the Iraq-specific strategy has to be to defeat them on that ground, and that means not allowing them to hold territory. That means that once they have been expelled from territory, you use the opportunity to bring in stable civilian institutions, economic development. It's not just a matter of a military strategy of expelling

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insurgents. It's a matter of creating, then, a stable political and economic environment in the wake of expelling those insurgents.

And, Mr. Chairman, what I was suggesting was that I think our military, now that they have Iraqi security forces that are more capable, is doing a very good job of clearing these places. We now have Iraqi security forces that can hold in many of these places. But we do need a more concerted civil/military approach to the followup on the political and economic side, and that's why we're considering a more integrated approach, along the lines that we've used in Afghanistan.

But I have no doubt, Mr. Chairman, that they think that if they can win in Iraq—and winning in Iraq to them means waiting us out—if they can win in Iraq, then they will have established the foundation for their vision of the Middle East. That is what's at stake, and that's why we can't allow them to succeed.

The CHAIRMAN. Now, at what point do we try to set some markers for progress of the Iraqis? For example, you're talking about waiting us out, but let's say that the Iraqis, after all is said and done, really don't want to have a united country; as a matter of fact, corruption abounds, the oil situation doesn't really improve, lights never come back on. Now, this is the sort of point in which some Americans would say, "Why are we there? These folks not only don't appreciate us, but they're hashing the whole thing up. They literally don't want to have the sort of Iraq that was envisioned by the British and the French 50 years ago, when they raided there, in Syria and Lebanon. As a matter of fact, the Wahhabis from Saudi Arabia may very well be infecting the whole area. They don't respect boundaries." At what point do we have some benchmarks for the Iraqis to say, "If you need us, succeed. Get on with it," as opposed to simply being on our case for being in the way and interfering with life, in general?

Secretary RICE. Right. Well, Mr. Chairman, I think the Iraqis are demonstrating that they do, in fact, want a modern and unified and democratic Iraq. That's why they went out 8½ million strong in January, despite the threats, and more—almost a million more, in this past referendum, despite the threats. I think they're also demonstrating it in the fact that, you know, there are all kinds of anecdotes about women who talk about a better future for their kids by going to the voting box. We've all heard these anecdotes. Now, it's true that it's difficult, because Iraq was drawn on the fault line of these ancient civilizations, and they have, in the past, contained those differences by either repression or by violence. Now they're trying politics and they're trying compromise, and it's tough. And we will remember, in our own experience, that once you try to do this by politics and compromise, it will be messy and a bit untidy, and there will be ups and downs, but, for the most part, they've moved along a political schedule that has been very ambitious to get from the transfer of sovereignty to interim elections to a constitution—to a constitutional referendum—and now to elections in December. I think they've done remarkably. They have demonstrated to us that this is what they want to do.

Now, we are pressing them very hard on this—they have to keep going. Senator Biden had a very interesting point. I remember being in Iraq myself and talking to Shi'a and Kurds and having to

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say to them—this was prior, of course, to the Sunnis now really fully engaging—I remember saying to them, "I know this is hard. We are telling you that people who you think repressed you, who were responsible for the atrocities against you, that you ought to open the political process. And, by the way, the Sunnis didn't vote in the last election. Why should you open the political process?" "But," I said to them, "Sunnis also suffered under Saddam Hussein. There were a set of elite privileged Sunnis, high-ranking Ba'athists who supported the regime, but you have a chance now for a unified Iraq." I think everything suggests that that's what they want to do, and we need to support them in it.

They are making progress along these benchmarks. Their security forces did manage, through tremendous efforts, to secure these elections better than the last elections. And, you know, the most interesting thing is, every time Zarqawi, who is the one who wants civil war—every time Zarqawi and his fighters do something to—that is sectarian—to blow up a Shi'a mosque or to go after a Kurdish party—they rally together to say, "No, that's not who we are." I think they're doing remarkably well at trying to forge a united nation.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Senator Biden.

Senator BIDEN. Thank you very much, Madam Secretary.

I'm going to ask you some very specific questions, if I can. You've laid out some specifics here, everything from PRTs to the nature of training to reconstruction. When does the President believe, assuming his strategy is put in place, he'll be able to begin to bring home American forces?

Secretary RICE. Well, I think that the President and his commanders have been very clear that we don't want to set a time schedule.

Senator BIDEN. Well, I'm not asking for a timetable. I mean in the continuum here, assuming that the strategy you've laid out works out as you hope it does and begins to take root, where Iraqis are taking over more and more of the cities and towns, where, in fact, there is a coalescence of civilian competence, where there is an increase in the number of Iraqi forces capable of working with—alone or with American forces. If your strategy works, are we looking at being able to, sometime next year, draw down American forces? Not totally. Are we looking 2 years down the road? I mean, I've dealt, for 33 years as a U.S. Senator, in the military. They have these plans. They never, never, never lay out a plan that doesn't have a strategy attached to it and say, "If this works, this is what we're looking at." And I would respect—I know I'm a broken record, with you particularly, over the last 3 years, that I think one thing the Vietnam generation learned is, no foreign policy can be sustained without the informed consent of the American people. And we haven't gotten that informed consent, in terms of them knowing what they're signing onto from here on out.

So, I'm not looking for a date to get out of Iraq, but at what point, assuming the strategy works, do you think we'll be able to see some sign of bringing some American forces home?

Secretary RICE. Senator Biden, I don't want to hazard what I think would be a guess, even if it were an assessment of when that

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might be possible, because I think that the commanders have done this in the right way. They, of course, are making plans. They're looking at how the Iraqi forces are progressing. They're looking at how many of these forces are really capable of independent operations. And, by the way, by "independent," we mean with its own logistics and indirect-fire support and all of that. They—there are 91 Iraqi battalions that are in the fight as the "teeth," if you will, of the fight—that is, the combat power.

Senator BIDEN. Right.

Secretary RICE. But the question is: Do they still need American support, in terms of logistics?

Senator BIDEN. And how much do they need?

Secretary RICE. And how much do they need?

Senator BIDEN. Yeah.

Secretary RICE. It's not a surprising strategy to work first on the combat power, the "teeth," if you will, and then to work on the enablers for that combat.

Senator BIDEN. Madam Secretary, I don't disagree. But I would respectfully predict you'll hear repeatedly, today in the questioning, this notion of wondering what the benchmarks are here. What is the sense of when we know we're succeeding or not succeeding? How do we measure that? And I would suggest that you'll also hear that the Iraqis have to step up to the plate, they have to get to the point where, as the chairman said: When do we set benchmarks for them? And I'd respectfully suggest that if we indicated to them that we were going to—if the following things happened, we would be drawing down forces, that would help our effort, not hurt our effort. It would reinforce to the Iraqi people we don't plan on staying there forever, and it would put an inordinate pressure on Iraqi forces to step up to the plate. But I don't want to debate that in the 10 minutes we have. That's why I asked the question.

Let me move to a second question. I know you know this, because, as my mother would say, "God love you," you'd see me in your office, when you were National Security Advisor, on a regular basis—and I'm not suggesting you won't see me now.

Secretary RICE. Anytime.

Senator BIDEN. But back in April 2004, I laid out, in a speech, a proposal for the establishment of a contact group. And I think a lot of people thought, "Well, okay, that's a Democrat speaking, even though he's talked a lot about this and supported the President on this," and it didn't mean much. And then former Secretary Kissinger and Schultz, in January 2005 in the Washington Post, wrote an op-ed piece saying, "An international contact group should be formed to advise on the political and economic reconstruction of Iraq. Such a step would be a gesture of competent leadership, especially as American security and financial contributions will remain pivotal. Our European allies must not shame themselves in the traditional alliance by continuing to stand aloof for even a political process that, whatever their view of the recent history, will affect their future even more than ours, nor should we treat countries such as India and Russia, with their large Muslim populations, as spectators to outcomes on which their domestic stability may well depend."

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Now, I know you heard me say that a hundred times. I've been banging at it. Others have. And your immediate past predecessor—your immediate past predecessor, Secretary of State Powell, recommended the creation of a contact group while he was in office.

Now, what I don't understand is, why is the administration hesitating to establish a contact group? And I have met with Chirac, I have met with these foreign leaders. Depending on what you offer them as participation—to the extent of their participation, they all know they have a lot at stake. Why haven't we done this?

Secretary RICE. Well, Senator, I'd like to answer that, and then I would like to come back, just for a moment, to your first question.

Senator BIDEN. Sure.

Secretary RICE. We do, in effect, have a number of groups that are meeting and working with the Iraqis on various aspects. For instance, there have been meetings, as you know, in Sharm el-Sheikh and in Brussels, of a large part of the international community to offer political and economic support to the Iraqis. Second, in advance of the referendum, Ambassador Jeffries was out in the region with Iraq's neighbors and talking to these neighbors.

Senator BIDEN. Did those neighbors include Iran and Syria?

Secretary RICE. We did not talk to the Iranians or the Syrians. I'll come back to that.

The UAE, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Egypt, and so forth, the neighbors, plus the——

Senator BIDEN. I only have 3 minutes left. Is there a reason not to formalize this?

Secretary RICE. I think, Senator, the reason not to formalize is that it allows everybody to play a role here commensurate with what they're able to do. And I think, actually, a formal contact group begins to exclude people, not to include them.

Senator BIDEN. Well, I would——

Secretary RICE. I think that the Bonn process that you talked about, that you appreciated, in Afghanistan, actually did not have a contact-group character; it had an international-community character. There was a "Six-plus-Two," but that, of course, predates the Bonn event.

Senator BIDEN. It also had major powers.

Secretary RICE. Well, we have major powers very involved, in Great Britain and in Japan, and I think you will see——

Senator BIDEN. How about Russia, India, Pakistan, France?

Secretary RICE [continuing]. They were all represented at Brussels, and they are all participating. The Iraqis are also reaching out to them. The Iraqis have been in all of those places.

But let me just say one more thing about the international community.

Senator BIDEN. Sure.

Secretary RICE. There is no doubt that the international community needs to be more involved with the Iraqis. There's no doubt about it. Especially the neighbors. Now, they talk a great deal about their worries about instability. What Ambassador Jeffries did, and what Zal Khalilzad did before the referendum, was to say to them, "All right, you have a stake in the stability, so what are you going to do about it?" And, in fact, they have engaged the

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Sunni parties, and they have engaged the tribes, and they are working in that direction.

Senator BIDEN. Well, Madam Secretary, I guess the generic point I have been trying to make for 2 years is that I think we are better served if this is not a totally United States-run operation—politically, economically, militarily—and that we have an opportunity, because France, for example, as you know as well as I do, is—14 percent of their population is Muslim, without the civil rights that most Americans have. They are very worried about failure in Iraq. They have not been very responsible, but they're very worried. We've—just not seemed to have put them in a position or a spot where we can force the international community to basically take a piece of this publicly for the world to see.

I referenced a British proposal in a speech to Brookings on June 21 of this year, where the British said we should partner individual countries with individual clusters of Iraqi Ministries, where the civilians from those countries, who are experts in energy or experts in education or experts—would literally bring in—adopt, essentially, departments within the Iraqi Government. I have not met a single solitary expert who's visited the region—left, right, or center—who says any one of the Iraqi agencies has enough Iraqi civilian capacity to make that agency function. And so, I wonder, why have we not taken up—I realize it's old now—why aren't we reaching out to these other countries who have considerable administrative capacity, essentially, to take over the agency?

Secretary RICE. Senator, we are reaching out, but, most importantly, the Iraqis are reaching out. Let's remember, this is a sovereign government, and they are reaching out. In fact, the Brussels conference did give specific arrangements that countries were prepared to take, with various Ministries and with various departments.

Senator BIDEN. Can you tell us how many of those—how much money the international community has poured in since then? How many civilians they've brought into the country since then?

Secretary RICE. Since Madrid, the international pledges to Iraq are about $13.5 billion.

Senator BIDEN. Not the pledges. How much is—you know, "The check's in the mail."

Secretary RICE. We're working very hard on the disbursement of that. You know that's a problem, not just for Iraq, but broadly for the international community.

Senator BIDEN. All right.

Secretary RICE. Senator, I do need to go back to your question about how we benchmark, because we do have, with the Iraqis, a joint committee that is looking specifically at questions of what "conditions based" means, what Iraqi forces need to look like in order to be able to operate either independently or with minimal support. I think that the thing that we are focusing very much on, including General Casey and his people, is asking the questions: "Are they making progress in the strategy of being able to really hold the territory that they've cleared? Are they making progress in being able to take over whole segments of the country, as they have in the south, for instance, in Najaf? Are they being able to take over responsibility for some of the toughest places, like in the

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road to the airport or Haifa Street, which was always considered a dangerous place?" They are taking over responsibility now for some of the toughest places. Those are good benchmarks. And I think, frankly, they're better benchmarks such as: Can we point to things that they are actually doing, and doing capably? rather than trying to have a set of metrics that say, "When we have so many of these and so many of those, then we'll be able to transfer responsibility." I think that's how General Casey thinks about benchmarks, and I think he's absolutely right.

Senator BIDEN. Well, thank you, Madam Secretary. I think you've got to think bigger and bolder, or you're going to lose the folks. Thanks.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Biden.

Senator Hagel.

Senator HAGEL. Mr. Chairman, thank you. Secretary Rice, welcome.

Madam Secretary, 3 weeks ago, the Saudi Arabian Foreign Minister was here. You met with the Foreign Minister, as this panel did. And I'm going to read the opening paragraph from the New York Times newspaper headline, "Saudi Minister Warns U.S. Iraq May Face Disintegration." And it says, "Prince Saud al-Faisal, the Saudi Foreign Minister, said Thursday that he had been warning the Bush administration in recent days that Iraq was hurtling toward disintegration, a development that he said could drag the entire region into war."

Would you care to comment on the Foreign Minister's thoughts? Why would he make such a suggestion? Obviously, you don't agree. But this panel would very much appreciate your thoughts about it.

Secretary RICE. Sure, Senator Hagel.

I talked to Foreign Minister Saud al-Faisal about that statement. He says that that was not his intention, to suggest that U.S. policy is somehow contributing to the "disintegration of Iraq."

With all due respect to the Foreign Minister, I think the Iraqis are working very hard to prevent that disintegration by trying to vote and trying to build national institutions and trying to pass a Constitution, trying to get their economy in order. I really think that the proper role for Saudi Arabia or for any other country in the region is to help them, not critique them.

I've made that point very clear to countries in the region. I think they understand that. The Saudis were very helpful in reaching out to Sunnis during this most recent runup to the referendum. They, of course, have important tribal ties that they can use to help to incorporate Sunnis into the process. Of course, financial support to the Iraqis as they try to build their infrastructure and their economy would be most welcome. Certainly, we will be reaching out to members of the region to see if we can secure greater financial support.

So, this is a matter of being able to do something about the future. You don't just have to analyze it if you're Saudi Arabia. You have the opportunity to do something about it. In our conversations, the Saudis want to do something about what they may view as negative trends in the region.

Senator HAGEL. Well, this is a rather serious charge, and, as I noted, Madam Secretary, the Foreign Minister met with this panel

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and spoke rather clearly and plainly, even far deeper than what he said publicly. And I'm, I suspect, like many of us, concerned that a neighbor of Iraq who, as far as I know—and maybe you're telling me something different—has not been helping Iraq—I understand they have been helpful. If that's not the case, you should clarify that. But this is rather serious. They live in the region. This isn't theory for the Saudis.

Secretary RICE. I've said that they have been very helpful in the runup to the referendum, in reaching out to the Sunnis, in reaching out to the tribes. The Saudis have the capacity to help mitigate against what they may see as negative trends. And that was my point, that the Saudis not just comment on them, but actually actively be involved. I see now, in our discussions with the Saudis, since Ambassador Jeffries was out there, as Ambassador Khalilzad was in discussions with them, a much more active Saudi role in trying to help the Iraqis solve some of their problems.

Clearly, one of the roles that the Saudis, and others, will need to play is that the United States has taken a large part of the initial burden, in terms of financial support for the Iraqi infrastructure, development for the training of the Iraqi security forces, and so forth. The region will have to be more supportive in that way, and I think they are prepared to be more supportive in that way.

The other point that I would make is that Iraq needs political support. We have been working with the Arab League and with others to see if they will visit Iraq, if they will send trade missions to Iraq. Iraq needs to be integrated into the region and these are things that they can actively do, if they do, in fact, have concerns about the way things are going.

But when I talked to Saud al-Faisal, he was very clear to say that he had not intended to imply that our policies were hurtling Iraq toward disintegration.

Senator HAGEL. Would you, then—picking up on what you just said, some of the testimony you gave, and especially in light of what Senator Biden has talked about—support a United Nations-sponsored Middle East regional security summit after the election of the Government of Iraq in December, to try to bring the partners in the Middle East together, with the United States taking a secondary role?

Secretary RICE. Well, the United States did not take the lead role at Brussels. In fact, the lead role at Brussels was the Iraqi Government.

Senator HAGEL. I'm not talking about Brussels. I'm asking you a question about: Would you support a U.N.-sponsored Middle East regional conference after the election? With the Middle East players at the table.

Secretary RICE. My view of these things, Senator, is that agenda is everything. And it is not that we have any problem with having people together to discuss the future of Iraq. We would want to make certain that any such agenda was, indeed, in line with the Iraqis' movement toward democracy, toward women's rights, and so forth.

Senator HAGEL. Well, I suspect it would be, but you don't have an answer for me on that.

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Secretary RICE. I don't have a problem with the idea of an international conference. Indeed, a number of us have talked about a follow-on international conference of some kind to Brussels.

Senator HAGEL. May I ask——

Secretary RICE. My only point, Senator, is we have to be careful to commit to something until we know what its agenda might be.

Senator HAGEL. You may know that your Ambassador, Ambassador Bolton, answered a question about this yesterday regarding: Are we talking with the Secretary General of the United Nations about an accelerated, deepened U.N. role in Iraq after those elections? And he said that the current discussions were being held.

Secretary RICE. Yes, they are. About a deepened U.N. role, I discussed that, with Secretary General Annan yesterday, when I met him in New York, because we do want more U.N. organizations involved. The United Nations has been terrific in overseeing this referendum. They're going to be very involved in the elections. But they need to be more involved in the reconstruction and the life of the country, as well.

Senator HAGEL. You mentioned, in your testimony, the Syria/Iranian piece, and I think you said specifically in your testimony that the United States had begun taking new diplomatic steps to convey the seriousness of our concerns to Iran and Syria. Are we talking to Iran directly? How are we doing that? Can you explain what we're doing?

Secretary RICE. Well, in terms of Syria, you know that I was just recently in France and Great Britain and in Moscow. We talked about our concerns there. David Welch has recently been in the region, talking with countries like Egypt and Saudi Arabia about our concerns. We've made them known to the Syrians publicly. We've also made them known through people. But this is a period of time in which the international community is deepening the isolation of Syria, for a number of reasons, including Resolution 1559 and questions concerning what might happen with the Melis Report. So, we want to be a part of a broader diplomatic effort, not to simply look at our own concerns.

Senator HAGEL. But what are we doing? You mentioned that we are doing—we're taking new steps, you say, diplomatic steps to convey the seriousness.

Secretary RICE. Well, for one thing——

Senator HAGEL. Are we talking directly to Iran?

Secretary RICE. The trips involving Syria were a part of those new steps.

Now, with Iran, let me be very clear. We had, in Afghanistan, under U.N. auspices and under the "Six-plus-Two," direct discussions between Ambassador Khalilzad and his Iranian counterparts. That was in Afghanistan. We have considered whether contacts with Iran that are specifically related to Iraq might be useful between Ambassador Khalilzad and his counterpart on the same basis that we had them, essentially, in Afghanistan. We're considering whether that might be useful. But we don't lack channels to the Iranians.

Senator HAGEL. So, what are we doing differently, in this regard, from what we were doing 6 months ago to convey, as you say, the seriousness of our concern?

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Secretary RICE. I think, for one thing, Senator, remember this was related both to Iran and to Syria—the conditions in which Syria is living have changed dramatically in the last 6 months. There is the deepening isolation of Syria regarding other matters, not just Iraq, the clear concerns of the Palestinians about the Palestinian camps in Lebanon, the clear concerns about the continued Syrian activity with Resolution 1559, is the context in which we can approach questions of our concerns.

Senator HAGEL. But wouldn't you say that also about Iran? They just elected a new President, they have a new government.

Secretary RICE. Unfortunately, I think their new President and their new government has looked as if it's going the other way.

Senator HAGEL. So, how are we, then——

Secretary RICE. The speech to the United Nations——

Senator HAGEL [continuing]. Relaying our new concerns?

Secretary RICE [continuing]. Was hardly welcoming, Senator. In terms of Iran, we are continuing to use the multiple channels we have to Iran.

Senator HAGEL. So, we have a new strategy? A new way to do this?

Secretary RICE. What we have are new efforts, not new ways to do it, but new efforts, which means that we are turning up, if you will, the volume, diplomatically, on our concerns. We have really been more focused in the near term on our concerns about the Syrian border, because we think that there are things there that could be done forthwith that would have an almost immediate impact. And, again, the conditions now, and the conditions 6 months ago, concerning Syria are simply very different because of Syria's own diplomatic isolation.

Senator HAGEL. Do you think the Iranians have significant influence inside Iraq today?

Secretary RICE. I think the Iranians have influence inside of Iraq. But the one thing that I would note is that I have not seen any evidence that the Iraqis want to trade Saddam Hussein's dictatorship and tyranny for Iranian-style tyranny.

Senator HAGEL. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Senator Hagel.

Senator Dodd.

Senator DODD. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I don't know if Senator Sarbanes is—I guess he's not right here, so he'll be coming back shortly.

Thank you, Madam Secretary. And thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing. My hope would be, by the way—let me echo the concerns raised by, I think the—Senator Biden and Senator Sarbanes—we can't go this length of time again, quite candidly, from February, now, until mid-October, in having this kind of a public discussion about a policy that is draining our Treasury substantially. What is the number? I think somewhere between $4 and $6 billion a month, not to mention the lives that are being lost and soldiers being injured, as well as Iraqi citizens paying a price. This is just unacceptable, that we go this length of time without having a discussion about this subject matter in a public forum. So, I would hope that in the coming weeks and months, we can meet more frequently with you, Madam Secretary, in settings like this,

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so that the American public have an opportunity to hear the kinds of questions and drawn-out discussion. If we're available for Meet the Press and Face the Nation and other such programs, we ought to be available to this committee to meet more frequently—over an extended period of time, if necessary. I regret you're only going to be here a couple of hours.

I was in Iraq last week, Madam Secretary, with Jack Reed, the Senator from Rhode Island, a member of the Armed Services Committee. And let me, first of all, say—which I think all of us agree with—and that is the incredible job that our military people are doing. I was impressed with them before I went, but even more so meeting the commanding officers there and the command structure, as well as the troops. They just do a fabulous job. And that's—it's something we can't be unmindful for. They're doing their job.

I'm a little concerned—let me pick up with Senator Hagel's line of questioning. I have some others that I'd like to pursue with you in a minute, but I think he has an important line of questioning. While we were there, Qatar, going—before going to Iraq, there were news accounts about some military plans regarding Syria. Is there a White House Syrian group, for instance, that's meeting? Are we planning some action in Syrian that we ought to be aware of in this committee?

Secretary RICE. Senator, our policy toward Syria is on the table; we want a change in Syrian behavior, we want a change in Syrian behavior on the Iraqi border.

Senator DODD. I understand that——

Secretary RICE. And we want a change in regards to Lebanon, and in regards to the Palestinian/Israeli border.

Senator DODD. Are we considering military action, if necessary?

Secretary RICE. Senator, I'm not going to get into what the President's options might be, but the course on which we are now launched is a diplomatic course, vis-a-vis Syria. We are, of course, engaged in military operations up west, near al Qaim and the Euphrates area, in order to try and stem the flow of insurgents who are coming across the Syrian border.

Senator DODD. I understand all of that.

I'm talking about in Syria, now. You're not going to take the military option off the table in Syria, is that what you're telling me?

Secretary RICE. Well, Senator, I don't think the President ever takes any of his options off the table concerning anything to do with military force. But the course that we are currently on is a course to use our military power to try to stem the tide of people who are coming in that area, to clear some of those towns in which insurgents have been living, up in al Qaim, in that region, and to put pressure on the Syrians, diplomatically, to take steps that would make it easier to stem the flow of the insurgents. That's the course that we're on.

Senator DODD. What about Iran? What is their—to pursue the line of questioning further, there's been growing concern about militias in the south having closer ties with Iranians, in fact, not being supportive, the efforts, particularly by our British allies in Basra and places like that. You, sort of, painted a happy-talk pic-

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ture about how things are going here, and yet the reports we're receiving are that it's very troublesome what's occurring in the south.

Secretary RICE. I think I haven't addressed the south, Senator. My only point was that the Iraqis show no interest in becoming tools of Iran, just as they've thrown off Saddam Hussein. In fact, there is considerable—as you know—tension between Iranians and Iraqis, for a variety of historical and cultural reasons. Now, that doesn't mean that Iran is not a troubling presence in the south. It is a troubling presence in the south. It has its friends and allies there. Indeed, we've been concerned about support for militias and support for insurgencies.

The south is the British area. The British, of course, have diplomatic representation in Iran and can raise these issues with the Iranians directly. We have used channels that we do have with the Iranians. We are not without channels with the Iranians. We don't have a broad diplomatic engagement with the Iranians, but, of course, we have a Swiss channel, we have a channel that we've used in other places. And, as I said, we've even, on occasion, in Afghanistan, used the opportunity of the "Six plus Two," under U.N. auspices, to talk directly to the Iranians. So, we have channels to them. But the clear message should be to the Iranians from the international community, and I think it's coming not just from us, but from the neighbors, as well, that people expect the Iranians to behave as transparent neighbors, not as troublesome neighbors.

The best bulwark against Iranian influence in that region is going to be the continued stabilization of the south, and the continued evolution of the politics in the south away from sectarian policies.

Senator DODD. Well, again, the meetings we had in the region—there's a great concern about what Iran's intentions are. And I want to underscore the point that Senator Hagel made. I hear you talking about the various contacts we have. I don't think any of us are suggesting full diplomatic relations with Iran at all, but if, in fact, politics and diplomacy are going to be the way in which we try and achieve our goals in Iraq and in the region, it seems to me that it's in our interest to try and find a way to successfully pursue the political and diplomatic track with Iran. As uncomfortable as it is, and our concerns about it, it seems to me that we're going to have greater results if we do that, and do it openly—at least not shy away from the notion that we're engaged in that process.

Secretary RICE. Senator, I believe that we can note that Ambassador Khalilzad has some flexibility, as he did in Afghanistan, to engage, through multilateral processes, his Iranian counterpart.

Senator DODD. Let me jump, if I can—I note in your statement here you had, on page 8 of your testimony, describing how much progress has been made in Iraq, and you talked about, "The security along the once-notorious Airport Road in Baghdad has measurably improved." Madam Secretary, I was there last week, and there's still—I was there a year and a half ago. I rode that road from the airport to the Green Zone. But Senator Reed and I were not at all allowed to travel that road, nor did we ask to do so. We were informed it was still rather dangerous to be traveling it here. My point in bringing this up is not just that particular point, but I think it's to be credible about how the situation is in Iraq. To sug-

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gest somehow that the security situation is vastly improved in this area, I think, is wrong, and it's dangerous, in my view. You're trying to build support for what's going on.

Which draws me to the question of how the Sunnis are—whether or not they're feeling as though, politically, they can engage in this process. As I understand it, despite the good turnout on Saturday—and I applaud that—there was a substantial no-vote by the Sunni population here. And, again, you can—when that occurs in this country, obviously we attribute it to being good politics and they're engaging in the process. I think it's a rather—a significant jump to suggest somehow that the Sunnis here have decided this is okay, because they're going to be fairly treated under the draft Constitution—or the Constitution that was approved of on Saturday.

Haven't we, in a sense, allied ourselves too closely with the Shi'a and Kurd elements? And isn't it still a major problem for us, in terms of getting the Sunnis to feel as though they can be a part of a future Iraq under the circumstances? And shouldn't that no-vote by the Sunnis, despite the outpouring, be a matter of greater concern than you've reflected in your testimony?

Secretary RICE. Senator, first of all, on the question of the improvement in security in some areas, it is possible to note improvement and still say that there is a very difficult security situation.

Senator DODD. Well, that road isn't safe today. You know that as well as I——

Secretary RICE. The point is that I think that General Casey, in another testimony, talked about the fact there have been no major attacks against them on that road since June, so there has been an improvement.

Senator DODD. You wouldn't be on that road—if you fly to—when was the last time you were in Iraq?

Secretary RICE. I was there in April, and I hope to be back again soon.

Senator DODD. Well, I'm going to tell you right now, when you go back soon, they're not going to let you drive along that road.

Secretary RICE. I'm sure that's the case, Senator. But the security along that road has been taken largely by Iraqis, and it's simply to note that they are starting to take on some of the most difficult tasks.

But let me go to the question of the Sunnis. Of course the Sunnis voted overwhelmingly "no." They made very clear that that was going to be the case, although a number of Sunnis did not vote against the Constitution, and a couple of major Sunni parties, including the Iraqi Islamic Party, came out—rather late in the day, unfortunately, but did come out in favor of the Constitution.

Now, it is a balance in Iraq. The Sunnis are not the majority in the country. The Shi'a are the majority in the country. They participated heavily in the elections that created the first interim government, as did the Kurds. The Sunnis boycotted that initial election and, I think, believe now they made a mistake in boycotting that initial election.

And so, what we have been trying to do ever since I was there, when I talked about Sunni participation, and certainly the tireless efforts that Zal Khalilzad has been putting in, is to create space for the Sunnis to enter the political process so that before many of the

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decisions that are critical to them are made, they would be fully a part of the political process. That's why the constitutional process has put off, to the next national assembly, some of the major decisions concerning how federal units—other than those that are in the Kurdish areas—would be actually formed. That is, the law for that, the formulation of that, the rules for that have been put off to the next national assembly, when the Sunnis will be better represented.

As was noted, there is now provision for the amendment of the Constitution in order to take care of people's concerns about the Constitution. So, what you really have is a very delicate, but, I think, thus far, successful, balancing act of recognizing that the Kurds and the Shi'a did participate overwhelmingly in the interim elections, they did dominate the transitional national assembly, but not forcing some of the decisions that are most important to the Sunnis until the Sunnis, now a part of the political process, can become more involved. So, certain very important things have been put off. Also, by the way, the question of future resources—the division of future resources has been put off to the future.

It's a very difficult process. As I said, they were drawn along the fault lines of all of these civilizations. They're trying to deal with this new process.

But I think you're going to see the Sunnis participate, in very large numbers, in the elections, because they now recognize that their best bet for protecting their interests is going to be to elect candidates that will protect those interests in the election.

Senator DODD. Well, thank you. I'm going to have to come back to that when we—in another round.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Senator Dodd.

Senator Chafee.

Senator CHAFEE. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you, Madam Secretary.

I just returned from Liberia, where I participated in election oversight with some of your team. And I want to express my appreciation and admiration, including Ambassador Booth and Assistant Secretary Frazier, the USAID team, and everybody in the Embassy. They are doing good work.

I also want to extend my thanks and appreciation to the U.N. election workers. They do amazing work in difficult circumstances.

And I do want to follow up, this morning, on Senator Hagel and Senator Dodd's question about Iran and Syria and some of the discussion about possible military action. Under the Iraq war resolution, we restricted any military action to Iraq. So, would you agree that if anything were to occur on Syrian or Iranian soil, you would have to return to Congress to get that authorization?

Secretary RICE. Senator, I don't want to try and circumscribe Presidential War Powers. And I think you'll understand fully that the President retains those powers, in the War on Terrorism and in the war in Iraq. But I will say to you that, on the matter of both Syria and Iran, our course is one that, on the one hand, is working on the Syrian border, militarily, Euphrates and the like, to try and clear that area of insurgent strongholds and to prevent the tracking of people back across the border.

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We are on a diplomatic course to try to get pressure and help with the Syrians to get them to take very specific actions that would stem the flow from that side of the border, and that's the course that we're on.

Senator CHAFEE. So, that's a no.

Secretary RICE. Senator, I am not going to be in a position of circumscribing the President's powers.

Senator CHAFEE. Madam Secretary.

Secretary RICE. Yes.

Senator CHAFEE. Also in your statement you said that we're not going to pick winners—in your statement—we're not going—we're not going to pick winners.

Secretary RICE. That's right.

Senator CHAFEE. And in answer to Chairman Lugar's question, he talked about a vision of the Middle East, which includes women's rights——

The CHAIRMAN. The committee will be in order. Please cease. I thank you.

Please proceed.

Secretary RICE. Thank you, Senator.

Senator CHAFEE. I'll start over. In your statement, your prepared statement, you said, "We're not going to pick winners in elections." Yet, in answer to one of—Chairman Lugar's questions, you said you have a vision for the Middle East that includes women's rights and acceptance of Western engagement. How do you reconcile those two, if elections do not include those? This seemed to be a contradiction.

Secretary RICE. If the elections do not include what?

Senator CHAFEE. Women's rights or an engagement with the West. In answer to Chairman Lugar's question, you said, "That's our vision for the Middle East."

Secretary RICE. Yes.

Senator CHAFEE. And then you said, "We're not going to pick winners in elections."

Secretary RICE. I understand. We were very clear with the Iraqis that we expected them to have—that our partnership depended—as, by the way, it depends not just in Iraq, but throughout the Middle East—on respect for human rights, on respect for democracy. And, indeed, they've produced a Constitution that does, in fact, respect the rights of women, treats women as equal citizens in Iraq, gives, for instance, Iraqi nationality through——

Senator CHAFEE. Let's look ahead. If there were elections——

Secretary RICE. Yes.

Senator CHAFEE [continuing]. That did not include that vision wouldn't we be, then, picking winners?

Secretary RICE. Well, Senator, I think what we mean by "not picking winners" is that we're not going to try to arrange the politics of Iraq to come out with some particular outcome. That would be, indeed, antidemocratic. But since we're making very clear throughout the region that deep relationships with the United States depend on democratic development—and not just in Iraq, which is far ahead, in terms of democratic development than any of its neighbors—I think our view of what kinds of outcomes we would hope for and expect are there. I think we have to trust the

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democratic process. I think we can trust the process in which 25 percent of the seats in the assembly are going to be for women. I think we can trust a process in which women are Ministers, in which women's rights are protected in the Constitution. Iraq seems to me to be much further along this road than almost any other state in the region.

Senator CHAFEE. We'll see. Also, in your prepared statement you said, "In 2004, President Bush outlined a five-step plan to end the occupation. And that is transferring sovereignty to an Iraqi interim government, rebuilding Iraq's infrastructure, getting more international support, preparing for Iraq's first national elections this past January, and establishing security." Five steps. It seems, of those five steps—a five-step plan to end the occupation—we're failing, if you will, on three of them. And that would be rebuilding Iraq's infrastructure, getting more international support, and helping establish security. Yes, we've had the elections, and, yes, we have transferred sovereignty. So, that would say we're going to be there a long time. Would you agree?

Secretary RICE. Well, Senator, I would put it a little differently. The first two steps, you're right, we have transferred sovereignty and ended the occupation, and there have been elections in Iraq. But it does not mean that there hasn't been forward movement on some of the other areas.

On the security front, I think we all agree that the way that security is going to move forward is when we have capable Iraqi security forces. And Iraqi security forces are becoming more capable. They were very capable in this recent election. They've been very capable in Tal Afar. They're increasingly capable of taking and holding territory. So, we're making progress on the security front, though I would be the first to admit that security is still very difficult in Iraq, not the least of which because violent men can always blow up, through suicide bombs, innocent people. This is the case, by the way, inside of some of the most stable states in the world. And so, violent men are going to be able to grab the headlines and kill innocents. The question is: Are Iraqi security forces coming along to be able to stabilize the situation so there's not a threat to the political process? And I think they are making progress.

And in terms of support from the international community, when the President spoke, we had not yet had the kind of outpouring of support for Iraq that you did have at the Brussels conference. I know that it, perhaps, didn't get that much attention back here. But you had over 80 countries pledging their support to Iraq in very specific ways, including support for their police training. You have, for instance, a police training academy in Jordan. You have Germans training police in the UAE. You have a NATO training mission for leadership of the armed forces inside of Iraq. Time and time again, people are coming now to support for Iraq. We need more help from the international community, but we have made significant progress.

Senator CHAFEE. Well, we all wish that were true, but we can't kid ourselves, either. And I think we're there for a long time.

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Now, you said—by those criteria, certainly. By those five criteria, you said that the Palestinian/Israeli conflict, and confronting it, is a pillar to our success in the region. Those are your words.

Secretary RICE. Yes.

Senator CHAFEE. Now, I was at a dinner—I think it was Gridiron or something like that—and humor was encouraged. And the President ran a video of looking for weapons of mass destruction, looking under chairs, looking under the table, "Where are they? Where are the WMD?" And, obviously, it was a joke. There were no WMD. It was all a joke, and the laugh was on us. Now the President's talking about "the roadmap." And he's saying, in his words, in May, "Israel must remove unauthorized outposts and stop settlement expansion." Is—are we going to someday see the same movie? "Where is the roadmap? It must be under here somewhere. It's under this table. It's under this chair." Or is we really—are we really working to do what the President's saying? And that is, remove unauthorized outposts and stop settlement expansion?

Secretary RICE. Well, interestingly, Senator, we've had the only return of territory to the Palestinians in the entire history of the conflict. The Israelis are out of the Gaza.

Senator CHAFEE. I'm asking about settlement expansion.

Secretary RICE. No, but if I may respond.

Senator CHAFEE. I'm asking that question.

Secretary RICE. Senator, I understand, and I will answer that question, but we can't lose sight of the historic change that has taken place, in that the Palestinians are actually now in control of the Gaza. We're working with them on issues of international egress and ingress, and matters of that kind. But let's remember that the Israelis took a historic decision to actually leave the territory.

Senator CHAFEE. While 8,000 settlers moved out of Gaza, while 30,000 moved into the West Bank, in opposition to the President's stated——

Secretary RICE. Actually——

Senator CHAFEE [continuing]. Objectives.

Secretary RICE [continuing]. Actually, Senator——

Senator CHAFEE [continuing]. That's——

Secretary RICE [continuing]. Actually——

Senator CHAFEE [continuing]. That's why I'm asking the question.

Secretary RICE. Actually, Senator, I don't think 30,000 have moved into disputed territories in the West Bank.

Senator CHAFEE. Probably more——

Secretary RICE. No, it's not more. In fact, you have had settlements that we are concerned about in so-called E1 around Jerusalem. We have told the Israelis, in no uncertain terms, that that would contravene American policy. Indeed, we, by law, deduct some of the resources that we are providing to the Israelis as a part of their loan guarantees, because of settlement activity. We are determined that there is not going to be any prejudging of what a final status agreement might look like.

But it's extremely important not to lose sight of the larger picture here. The Israelis are out of the Gaza. There are contacts and relationships between the Israelis and the Palestinians that are

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unknown in recent years because of the work that they did in the disengagement from the Gaza. We're training Palestinian security forces. They're going to have elections in January. This is an area that has started to move ahead. I think we just have to acknowledge that while there continue to be problems with settlement and even with the root of the fence, that there also has been great progress because of the Gaza withdrawal.

Senator CHAFEE. I only make the point because it's your words that it's a pillar to our success in the——

Secretary RICE. Absolutely.

Senator CHAFEE [continuing]. Middle East. And as you look to these Palestinian elections ahead, it's going to be more and more difficult for the moderate Abu Mazens of the world to carry the day while these activities continue, in my view.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Senator Chafee.

Senator Sarbanes.

Senator SARBANES. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I wanted to ask a question, first, about this system here, with beeps that go off and the red lights and so forth. How far beyond your 10 minutes do you have to go before something comes down from the ceiling——

[Laughter.]

Senator SARBANES [continuing]. And snatches you out of your seat?

The CHAIRMAN. Well, we'll——

Senator SARBANES. I just want to know whether that's also in the offing.

The CHAIRMAN. It is in the offing. [Laughter.]

Yes, they're secondary effects.

Senator SARBANES. Madam Secretary, do you think the Secretary of State visiting with the Foreign Relations Committee once a year in a public session to discuss U.S. foreign policy is adequate visitation?

Secretary RICE. Senator, I would be glad to come more often. And I'm one of the most open people you will find to consultation, to briefings. Indeed, I would like very much to come more often. Obviously, the committee has work. Obviously, I'm on travel a great deal. We make available to you many officials of the Department. But you can be certain, I enjoy the process of testimony, and I'm very happy to come back more often.

Senator SARBANES. Well, Mr. Chairman, I believe we've been extending invitations to the Secretary——

Secretary RICE. I think you have——

Senator SARBANES [continuing]. And they haven't——

Secretary RICE [continuing]. There was one invitation that had to be cancelled, Senator, because I had to travel. That's the only invitation, of which I am aware, that I was unable to accept. But I just want to assure you, I see no reason that we cannot get together more often.

Senator SARBANES. Now, in response to questions put to you by my colleagues here today—and I want to make sure I'm not drawing an inaccurate conclusion—you said that the administration does entertain the possibility of using military action against Syria or against Iran, and that it's your view that the administration

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could undertake to do that without obtaining from the Congress an authorization for such action. Is that correct?

Secretary RICE. Senator, I believe that what I said is that the President doesn't take any of his options off the table, and that I will not say anything that constrains his authority as Commander in Chief. But the course on which we are currently launched is a diplomatic course to try and bring international pressure on both Syria and Iran to do the right thing particularly on Syria.

Senator SARBANES. Well, I understand that, but I also understand that you're telling me that you also are reserving a military option against either of those two countries, and that you think you can exercise that military option without an authorization from the Congress.

Secretary RICE. Senator, I just have to repeat, the President never takes any option off the table. And he shouldn't. As to his authority as Commander in Chief, I don't want to say anything that might appear to abridge that. But we're on a different course concerning Syria and Iran.

Senator SARBANES. Leaving aside the President's authority, do you think it would be wise to take such action without an authorization from the Congress?

Secretary RICE. Senator, we are not on that course.

Senator SARBANES. I'm not asking you now to try to give a legal opinion with respect to his authorities, I'm asking you a question as to whether it would be wise to take such action without a congressional authorization.

Secretary RICE. Senator, I am not in a position to, nor do I wish to, prejudge what the President might do in a hypothetical situation. But I can tell you that we're currently on a course that is diplomatic in character.

Senator SARBANES. Well, when you say, in your statement, that they must choose either the "path of peace or the path of war"—I think that's the quote. Let me see if I can find it here. Do you recall that in your——

Secretary RICE. I do, Senator. I recall that.

Senator SARBANES. Yeah.

Secretary RICE. The "path of war," meaning the continued——

Senator SARBANES. "Whether they wish to side with the cause of war or with the cause of peace."

Secretary RICE. That's right. The "cause of war," being the insurgents who are making war on the Iraqi people. That's what that refers to.

Senator SARBANES. Now, is Iran doing the same things that Syria is doing?

Secretary RICE. The circumstances are different, Senator. And we have been concerned about the Iranian activities that may be supporting militias or insurgents in the south. It is a somewhat different situation. The concern in Syria is actually quite clear, which is that there are people who are coming in through Damascus Airport and then crossing the border into Iraq. And we believe that that can be rather easily cut off. It's a more complicated situation with Iran, but it's worrying.

Senator SARBANES. Now, on pages 7 and 8 of your statement, you outline a very ambitious agenda for the countries in the region,

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suggesting that they should take their oil revenues, become partners in shaping the region's future, and then invest very substantial sums. I mean, I don't know what you reason you have to think that they will do that, and it does raise this question of the reconstruction money that's going in.

Now, the United States has contributed, as I understand it, tens of billions of dollars in reconstruction assistance in Iraq. Is that correct?

Secretary RICE. That's correct.

Senator SARBANES. How much has come from other donors?

Secretary RICE. The total pledge to Iraq, at this point, is about $13.5 billion.

Senator SARBANES. Right.

Secretary RICE. The reference that I was making in the pages that you're referring to—now that we are moving to a permanent Iraqi Government, that commitment, that financial commitment, ought to be significantly increased.

Senator SARBANES. Well, how much of the $13.5 billion has actually been committed or disbursed?

Secretary RICE. I'll have to get that for you, Senator.

[The written answer submitted at a later date to the requested information follows:]

According to our estimates, non-U.S. donors have disbursed about $3 billion so far from their treasuries for assistance in Iraq—generally as deposits to the U.N. and World Bank trust funds, bilateral projects, or contributions to U.N. agencies for implementations.

The Department will continue to work with other donors and with the Government of Iraq to ensure that international assistance is as timely, effective, and well coordinated as possible.

Secretary RICE. Some of it is from multilateral institutions, for instance, the IMF and World Bank.

Senator SARBANES. I have a figure of $3 billion. Does that strike you as in the ballpark?

Secretary RICE. I won't quarrel with that number. It may well be. But I'd just remind that most of them would say—and we have been pushing back on this—that the security situation makes it difficult for them to actually disburse the money and make the projects work more quickly. But I believe that, through discussion with them and through additional resources to be made available, that they really should invest in Iraq.

Senator SARBANES. Well, I know you think they should. The question I was asking is: What makes you think they will?

Let me address the "freedom deficit" that you made reference to more than once so far in your testimony this morning. What is it you envision? Even if Iraq works out the way you're projecting—and, of course, there are lots of questions being raised about that, and many difficulties—but, beyond that, this tremendous freedom deficit that exists in the Middle East, are we going to have to embark on similar missions in order to correct the freedom deficit?

Secretary RICE. I think we're addressing the freedom deficit. More importantly, people within the region—nongovernmental organizations, citizens, opposition groups—are taking advantage of the opening the President has provided with his call for addressing the freedom deficit, to address it for themselves.

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Senator SARBANES. But you have regimes that maintain authoritarian or totalitarian control. How are we going to address that question in order to restore the freedom deficit?

Secretary RICE. Senator, we are addressing it. We're addressing it by making available to opposition and to citizens who wish to challenge the political system, or challenge the political ruling authorities, and making available assistance for democratic development, and for party-building. It's also the case that if you look, country by country in the region, yes, in some places the progress is small or slow, but it is progress. If you look at Egypt, which held—imperfect, to be sure—elections.

Senator SARBANES. Well, I'm looking at other countries that are much more constrained. And the question, of course, again, is whether we are entertaining using our military forces to try to address this freedom deficit.

Secretary RICE. Senator, I don't think anybody thinks that the question of reform in the Middle East is primarily a military question.

Senator SARBANES. Well, now, let me ask you this question, because it was put to you by a number of my colleagues, and you say, "Well, I can't really respond to it." Do you think 5 years from now some American forces will have come out?

Secretary RICE. Senator, I don't want to speculate. I do know that we're making progress with what the Iraqis themselves are capable of doing. As they are able to do certain tasks, as they are able to hold their own territory, they will not need us to do that.

Senator SARBANES. Well, let me make the question a little easier. What about 10 years from now?

Secretary RICE. Senator, I think that it's not appropriate even to try and speculate on how many years from now there will be a certain number of American forces in Iraq. What is appropriate is to say the Iraqis have made progress, they're making more progress. They're not going to need us there when they can hold these places on their own.

Senator SARBANES. I have to say to you, that leads me to draw the conclusion that you're leaving open the possibility that 10 years from now we will still have military forces in Iraq.

Secretary RICE. Senator, I don't know how to speculate about what will happen 10 years from now. But I do believe that we are moving on a course in which Iraqi security forces are rather rapidly able to take care of their own security concerns. As the President has said, at that point we are not going to need our forces there to do the things that Iraqis themselves ought to be doing. I assume, along with everyone else, that when the Iraqis are capable of doing that, then Americans are going to come home.

Senator SARBANES. Well, thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Senator Sarbanes.

Senator SARBANES. I do note that I went just over a minute, and the thing didn't come down from the ceiling. [Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN. Yes, it's very humane. [Laughter.]

Senator Allen.

Senator ALLEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary Rice, welcome. And thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing.

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I think that the referendum and the turnout is a good, positive benchmark of progress in Iraq, where the people of Iraq, including Sunnis, now have a stake. I think this will have a motivational impact on the people of Iraq, that they have voted for this Constitution, will be constituting a permanent government, and the seeds of liberty are taking root there. It will be difficult, as it is in most countries that have been repressed, to quickly or easily establish a free and just society, but it seems to me that the components are there, and this is a measurable benchmark that a lot of us like to look for, for progress in Iraq.

Secretary Rice, our opposition there are these various terrorist groups, whether they're remnants of Saddam's regime or al-Qaeda terrorists. I'd like to get your view on how much popular support these insurgents have. Are there indications that demonstrate what level of support these terrorists have? There were the Sunnis who came out in favor of ratification of this Constitution and their headquarters were bombed. But the question is: What measurements do you see, going forward, in support, if there is support, for these insurgents? And how well is the State Department and the Department of Defense coordinating on a strategy to counteract these terrorists?

Secretary RICE. In answer to the second question, Senator Allen, we are coordinating very closely, between General Casey and Ambassador Khalilzad, but also with what I've described as an effort to have even greater integration of our political and military strategy so that we have civil/military teams in some of these places that have actually been cleared by our military forces.

As to the popularity of the insurgents, I think that, in part, provides an answer to the question that's on everybody's mind: When will the Iraqis be able to do this on their own? The fact is that the insurgents are very unpopular. Every poll shows it. Anecdotal evidence of fighting between members of certain tribes and particularly the foreign fighters—demonstrates it.

I think it's hard to imagine how they could possibly be popular when what they do is slaughter innocent children or innocent school teachers. Their goal is to try and tear things down. We're trying to build things up. But they, themselves, have spoken of their concerns of their unpopularity. Indeed, they've tried to go after the heart of the democratic process by trying to terrify people into not voting. And they failed. They failed in January. And then, with even fewer attacks, they failed at the time of the referendum. And I would predict they're going to fail again in December.

So, the milestones that we should be watching are whether the political process in Iraq is continuing ahead with more and more Iraqis finding their place in that political process, including Sunni participation, even though, clearly, for a while, violent men will be able to make life miserable for Iraqis by attacking their infrastructure or killing innocent civilians. But they don't have a positive political program for Iraq. And that's being revealed every day.

Senator ALLEN. I do believe that the Constitution shows the people of Iraq that this is the sort of free and just society that they want to live in for themselves, as well as those for their children. The terrorists don't seem to have anything that would inspire or win the hearts of the people of Iraq. They don't want a Taliban-

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type government, nor do I think the vast majority of them want to go back to the repression that existed with Saddam Hussein's regime.

Are you satisfied that this Constitution includes what I call the four pillars of a free and just society: Freedom of religion, freedom of expression, private ownership of property, and the rule of law? Do you consider this Constitution with respect to these values to be acceptable?

Secretary RICE. It is a very good Constitution, Senator Allen. It is a Constitution for Iraqis, of course, and it is a Constitution that brings together democracy and Islam, which is very important to that region. But on all of the issues that you've raised—the rights of women, the freedom of religion, the individual rights that need to be protected—this is, indeed, a very good Constitution. The laws that will be passed to implement, if you will, some of the principles of the Constitution, some of that has been left—I think rightly so—to future national assemblies, when they are more representative. But there is no doubt that, in terms of the Constitution itself, it is a good Constitution.

Senator ALLEN. As we proceed, there was a concern that while there was a decrease in violence for this vote, this ratification, compared to January 30, that there was a concern that as we move toward December 15, when they're electing their permanent government, that the terrorists would increase their attacks. Now, with this progress that has been made, do we have any changes in our strategy as to how we're going to go forward? Not just us, but also, in addition, since this is a Constitution ratified by the people, the Iraqis actually governing themselves based upon their values, principles, Constitution, will we see more international support from other countries, other than the United States and the present coalition partners?

Secretary RICE. Well, we do have——

Senator ALLEN. I know those are two questions, but——

Secretary RICE [continuing]. Of course.

Senator ALLEN. I'm just—with this—you know, any sort of change in strategy for the next 2 months, plus added support.

Secretary RICE. I think that you will see not so much a change in strategy as an intensification of efforts to make certain that the areas where insurgents are still concentrated, that we continue to go after those. I think that's General Casey's plan. Probably some of the decrease in violence has to do with having gone after some of those areas. But, clearly, the Iraqi security forces that played a major role in this last election will be there, and there will be even more of them, and perhaps they'll be a little bit more robust as we are trying to put enabler capability also in the Iraqi forces to allow them to do this job. I don't believe that people believe, at this point, that we need to bring in more forces from the outside to do this, but, rather, that the Iraqi forces are the best forces. They played an important role in January, they played an even more important role this October, and they'll play an even more important role in protecting the electoral process at the end of the year.

I don't rule out that there will be violence, and maybe even a spike in violence, because the terrorists have made clear in all of their communications that they see the vote and democracy as the

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biggest threat to their success, because they know they're unpopular, and they know that if things go to the ballot box, then it's a bad thing for them. So, of course they'll try and disrupt those elections.

Senator ALLEN. Well, the adjustments—I can understand how the overall game plan is the same, but adjustments, as circumstances on the ground and as——

Secretary RICE. Of course.

Senator ALLEN [continuing]. Progress goes forward, I think, will have to be made, or would logically be made. And, as you get more Iraqis standing up to secure their own communities and their own regions and country, it would seem to me that we'd be in more and more of a supportive role.

However, for a country to succeed in the global community, the rest of the world does need to assist. You have everything from the problems we have with the worries about Syria; allowing terrorists to come in through Syria. They may be coming from North Africa or elsewhere. There's a concern about Iran and their influence. Then there's other countries I put in a different category, such as Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt, which can, I think, be more helpful, and then, also, our NATO allies, some of whom did not agree with our military action; however, could be very helpful.

Do you see a use or an effort to try to get in these different variations of countries—some in the neighborhood, some important countries economically in the world—getting them more involved now that there is this clearly Iraqi Government and Constitution in place?

Secretary RICE. Yes. And that's what I was trying to suggest, Senator, that we need to work harder again on, particularly, the region. And it's principally political and economic support. Frankly, I think, in terms of military support to something like the elections and the like, as I said, the Iraqi security forces are getting more capable. That's really going to be their responsibility. As they get more capable, it's very clear that the United States will not have to take on those tasks. We don't want to stay when we don't have to take on those tasks. But the region, and also our allies, could provide more financial and political support to the Iraqis. And we will be, and have been, working on exactly that.

Senator ALLEN. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Senator Allen.

Let me call now on Senator Kerry.

Now, I'll ask members to please observe, as Senator Allen did, that 10-minute situation so that we will be able to get to all of our Senators.

Senator Kerry.

Senator KERRY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Madam Secretary, I apologize for not being here for testimony. I was up in Massachusetts looking at our dam. For the moment, it's holding together, and, we hope, will.

The President has repeatedly summarized his Iraq plan in the following way, "As the Iraqis stand up, we will stand down." And in his speech to the Nation 2 weeks ago, he, again, didn't lay out any kind of specific political or new diplomatic initiative. Certainly, he—what he really said was, more—quote, "more sacrifice, more

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time, more resolve." He went on to describe those who question his handling of the war as "self-defeating pessimists."

Now, writing in next month's Foreign Affairs, Melvin Laird, the former Secretary of Defense under Richard Nixon during the Vietnam war, says, "Recent polls showing waning support for the war are a sign to the President that he needs to level with the American people. His west-Texas cowboy approach—shoot first and ask questions later, or do the job and let the results speak for themselves—is not working. As we learned in Vietnam," Laird writes, "When troops are dying, the Commander in Chief cannot be coy, vague, or secretive." He goes on to suggest that you, Madam Secretary, are in the best position to perhaps help set the record straight.

So, let me ask you: Do you think the President needs to do a better job to address what I don't think anybody would agree is a self-defeating pessimist in Melvin Laird, in his suggestion, as well as those of many other observers, Republican and Democrat alike, about the level of support and understanding of the American people and the specificity of how you are going to deal with the political solution to Iraq?

Secretary RICE. Senator, I'm quite certain that we can all—and I count myself first and foremost among them—be out more, and do more, to address concerns or to address any ambiguities that people may feel that there are about how we're going to proceed to victory in this war. That's what I've tried to lay out today in talking about——

Senator KERRY. Victory. How do you define "victory"? What is "victory"?

Secretary RICE. When we have laid the foundation for an Iraqi Government that is clearly moving along its political path—and they are well along that political path now—a permanent government that has begun to really deal with its sectarian differences, as they are trying to do through this Constitution and their process, when we see that there is an insurgency—I'm a firm believer that this insurgency may be able, for quite a long time, to commit—let me call them cowardly violent acts against innocent people—that is, to blow up children standing at a school bus——

Senator KERRY. We all understand what it is. And they would do that——

Secretary RICE [continuing]. And they will do that.

Senator KERRY [continuing]. For a long time.

Secretary RICE. But if I could look at the way other insurgencies have died, if you will, it is when they are clearly no longer a threat to the political path and the political stability of the country. I think that you could suggest, for instance, that in Colombia there was a time when people questioned whether or not the Colombian Government would survive. Nobody questions that today, even though there is still an insurgency that, from time to time, has kidnappings and the like. Algeria is another case. And so, there is clearly a political path that has been followed to a stable political system, even with its problems—and, Senator, I'm sure you'd be the first to agree with me, that we continued for a long time in our own history to have political tensions and political problems.

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Senator KERRY. I understand, but, Madam Secretary, let's get to this definition within the context of what you're saying——

Secretary RICE. Yes.

Senator KERRY [continuing]. For this government. What you're saying begs a political solution, not a military——

Secretary RICE. That's correct.

Senator KERRY [continuing]. Solution. But mostly what we've been pursuing, up until recently, has been military—until, perhaps, Ambassador Khalilzad, who I think most of us would agree is doing an outstanding job under difficult circumstances, but with limited ability, because he's basically trying to resolve a fundamental difference between Shi'a and Sunni. Shi'a, who are dominant in numbers, and will dominate the government. Sunni, who want to return to power. Now, there's nothing in the political equation, and nothing in the Constitution, that resolves that fundamental—that fundamental divide. How do you do that? What are your plans to do that?

Secretary RICE. Senator, I actually don't agree that there's nothing in the Constitution that addresses that fundamental divide. What addresses that fundamental divide is, it allows people, first of all, to have the vote as individuals, not as groups. And we have seen, since the start of the referendum and as people are getting ready for December, cross-cutting coalitions now developing in Iraq between some Kurds and some Shi'a, who—I'll use the terms in quotes, "more secular Shi'a," some Sunnis who—for instance, the Iraqi Islamic Party that supported the Constitution. I think you're starting to see cross-cutting cleavages, and that's a very good thing, because within those institutions—the national assembly, the Presidency—they will have to use compromise and politics to reconcile their differences.

Senator KERRY. But the fundamental differences, by any acknowledgment, were postponed. They came together, they agreed to have a committee that had the right to raise the fundamental issues, but they haven't resolved the fundamental issues.

Secretary RICE. Senator, to ask them to resolve it within several months, I think would have been superhuman.

Senator KERRY. Well, you're the ones who set the date for the Constitution——

Secretary RICE. No.

Senator KERRY [continuing]. With them.

Secretary RICE. To ask them to get to a framework in which they can work in an evolutionary way to the resolution of differences that are centuries old, I think, is completely reasonable.

Senator KERRY. Well, that is exactly the problem. But—well, let me get to that with a question. I see the light's already on. It's incredible how fast the time goes. But many of our military leaders, Iraqi leaders, and the Iraqi people themselves are now saying, in effect, that our military presence is as much a part of the problem as it is the solution. General Casey, our top commander, recently told the Senate Armed Services Committee that our military presence, "feeds the notion of occupation," and, "extends the amount of time that it will take for Iraqi security forces to become self-reliant."

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The Iraq Sovereignty Committee, made up of elected members of the Iraqi National Assembly, released a report in September stating that the presence of U.S. troops prevents Iraq from becoming fully sovereign.

A recent summary of numerous Iraqi public-opinion surveys concluded that a majority of Iraqis, "oppose the United States presence in Iraq, and those who strongly oppose it greatly outnumber those who strongly support it."

So, what do you say to this growing sense—among our military leaders, who have told it to us when we visit Iraq, to the general, sort of, input of people who have spent a lifetime studying the region—that the presence is adding to the numbers of terrorists, adding to the perception of occupation, adding to the problem, and that it doesn't deal with the real problem, which is the political solution needed between Shi'a and Sunni?

Secretary RICE. Well, first of all, Senator, when you come to the political solution, I think you have to see that these people have come a long way in 2½ years.

Senator KERRY. I——

Secretary RICE. It is very important, because you asked about a political solution. A political solution was not going to be born overnight in Iraq.

Senator KERRY. That's not what you told America and that's not what you told this committee.

Secretary RICE. Senator, as I've said before, we've had a long political evolution in the United States. We didn't even have it easy in Birmingham, let alone in Iraq.

Senator KERRY. That's not what you told America, Madam Secretary.

Secretary RICE. I ask us to focus on the political process that was laid out as a 2-year political process in the transitional administrative law, and they have been walking along in that political process.

Now, is there a fundamental difference between Shi'a and Sunni? Many Iraqis will tell you that there is, in fact, not a fundamental difference. What there is are different interests that have to be reconciled and that have to be dealt with, both about the past and about the future.

You're right, they have left, to a National Assembly that will be more representative, the writing of certain rules about how certain aspects of the Constitution will be carried out. That's the political process. There's nothing wrong with carrying out a political process in that way.

As to our military presence, our military presence there is requested, under U.N. mandate now, by the Iraqi Government, itself. And it requests it because it knows that whatever people's views of our military presence there, our military presence is needed until Iraqi forces are able to be more responsible for their own security.

Senator KERRY. Well, Madam Secretary, if I can just say to you, President Talibani, when he was here in Washington, had an interview with the Washington Post in which he said, we could withdraw 45-to-50,000 troops by the end of the year. He visited the White House, and he changed his tune. General Casey went to the

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Armed Services Committee and said we could withdraw troops by Christmas. Then the President said, "Well, I think that's rumor or speculation." So, it seems as if you and the administration have a point of view about withdrawing that is quite different from Iraqis and quite different from our own military.

Secretary RICE. Senator, we have a joint process with the Iraqis to determine, specifically, what conditions can be met by what forces. We want to be out of Iraq with our forces as soon as possible. We have no desire to stay in Iraq. But we also don't want to create a situation, in which we withdraw prematurely and leave Iraqi forces incapable of dealing with the insurgency that is made up of terrorists and Ba'athists, essentially, who would try and overthrow their government.

Now, I laid out, earlier today, a set of steps we're trying to take, which demonstrate that political stability, and political control, rests with the Iraqi Government. It means that you go into areas, kick the insurgents out and create a secure environment, and then you create political and civil and economic development in that region so that area can be held.

Senator KERRY. Right. Well——

Secretary RICE. That is the political military strategy, and—by the way, most of the country is, of course, stable. We're talking largely about the Sunni area.

Senator KERRY. Talking largely about Sunni. I understand that.

Mr. Chairman, I know my time is up. You know, I just think that realistically, when you assess what you've just said, it really doesn't deal with that fundamental difference that I just described, which is—from every leader and every person you talk to in the region, they are all worried about Iran and Iran's influence with respect to the Shi'a. And the Shi'a have been adamant about the Islamic component of the state and about the federalization. The Sunni are adamant about the strong center, and not being fundamentally defined in Islamic terms. That is the fundamental difference here. And it seems to me that no amount of troops, and no amount of talk about the insurgency—and the insurgency according to every expert we talk to in CIA briefings and everything—is fundamentally Sunni. Fundamentally. Maybe 2 percent, slightly larger, are foreign fighters. The Iraqis don't want foreign fighters in there. In the end, the Shi'a and the Kurds will never tolerate them being there. So, if you could resolve the Sunni/Shi'a issue, which I think most people feel has not been addressed significantly, that's the way you're going to end violence.

Secretary RICE. Senator, it's not conceivable that the Sunnis and the Shi'as are going to overcome hundreds of years of differences within a matter of a couple of years. But I would hope we all believe enough in democratic processes to believe that is really the only way that people resolve their ethnic and other differences. It has certainly been the case in much of the world that democratic institutions allow people to resolve their differences.

By the way, the only other answer is that you repress one or the other. The only other answer to "don't let them work it out through a democratic process" is that the Sunni continue to repress the Shi'a. I think that's not acceptable to American values——

Senator KERRY. Of course it's not.

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Secretary RICE [continuing]. And it's ultimately not acceptable to stability in the Middle East. So there are really only two choices.

Senator KERRY. I would suggest to you, that's not the only other answer. With all due respect, that's not the only other answer. The other answer is that you, the administration, and the Sunni neighbors—mostly Sunni—get together. Why are they so absent? The Sunni neighbors ought to be involved in getting a compromise which the Kurds and Shi'a give up more than they've been willing to give up. And if you don't do that, this insurgency is not going to end.

Secretary RICE. Senator, that's precisely what's happening. That's what Ambassador Khalilzad was in——

Senator KERRY. That's stunningly late in the happening——

Secretary RICE [continuing]. Well, it is——

Senator KERRY [continuing]. Madam Secretary.

Secretary RICE. Senator, for something that's been going on a couple of hundred years, they're actually doing pretty well. But, again——

Senator KERRY. Our presence there has not been for a couple of hundred years.

Secretary RICE. But, Senator, if I may just say, what it is we're replacing. We're replacing a situation in which this was done by repression, so that the Sunnis repressed the Shi'a majority and the Kurdish minority.

Senator KERRY. Correct.

Secretary RICE. That's not an acceptable outcome. And so, the placement of political institutions, a constitution, an assembly that will be elected with better Sunni representation in December, is the way to give these people a framework in which to resolve their differences.

I agree with you, their neighbors need to be fundamentally involved in helping to close that divide. That's why we're reaching out to the Saudis and reaching out to the UAE and to others, to ask their support. They were very supportive in helping on the referendum to do precisely that.

But it's not as if Iraq and the Middle East was stable along the Shi'a/Sunni divide before the liberation of Iraq.

Senator KERRY. Of course not. I realize that.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate your indulgence. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. All right.

Now, I did not interrupt the dialog. It was important. But it was 15 minutes.

Secretary RICE. Sorry.

The CHAIRMAN. And let me just say, please, if we're to have fairness to all of our Senators, we need to try to stay within the 10 minutes.

Senator KERRY. Mr. Chairman, could I just say something about that quickly?

The CHAIRMAN. Yes, of course.

Senator KERRY. The reason it's so difficult is, this is the first hearing we've had since, I think, March.

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The CHAIRMAN. I appreciate it. That point has been made now several times. And we are having a hearing, and we're trying to stay within the rules.

Senator Voinovich.

Senator VOINOVICH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Madam Secretary, I'm sorry I was gone over half an hour, but I was meeting with Secretary Bodman to talk about a second declaration of independence from oil so that we become more independent from foreign sources of energy. I believe that we're in jeopardy today because we are getting too much oil from places that are not friendly to the United States. And I think your testimony was wonderful today. You should come back to the Foreign Relations Committee to testify every 3 or 4 months, because the American people need to understand what it is that we're trying to do in Iraq.

I just received a letter from a father who lost his son in Iraq, and he was responding to my letter of condolences. He wrote, "In the spirit of helping you gauge public opinion, it's important to tell you that we do not consider the American mission in Iraq noble at all." The letter goes on to say, "We hope Members of Congress begin to more seriously question this tragic mistake and call an end to continued financial support for a misguided effort that does not speak well for America and the world."

I think it's really important that the administration continue to level with the American people about how important it is that we are successful in Iraq, and that if we are not successful in Iraq, that the conflict will spill over into the Greater Middle East, because it is the goal of the fundamentalists to take it over. The best way I explain it is to say that we are fighting Muslim extremists, religious fanatics, who have hijacked the Quran so they can make people believe that jihad against the United States, and any people that share our values, is the way to get to heaven.

One of the things that I'm really concerned about is how this affects the motivation of the insurgents. Through the chairman's auspices, we had a chance to meet with the King of Jordan and several other leaders. The question I asked them and ask today is: How do we convince the Muslims of the world that suicide and killing women and children represents a violation of the Quran, and that if you kill you don't go to heaven, you go to hell? I don't think we are getting information about this across to the American people.

I'll never forget when Secretary Rumsfeld was briefing us in a private session, I asked him, "What about Ayatollah Ali al Sistani?" I know, that without Ayatollah Ali al Sistani, we would be in bad shape in Iraq. Al Sistani has been very supportive of peace in Iraq, even though we've never spoken to him.

What are we doing to reach out to the Muslim world to reach the hearts and minds of millions of Muslims all over the world? Because if we don't do that, God only knows how long this is going to last.

Secretary RICE. Senator, it's an essential issue, because, of course, this has to be within Islam, as well. Islam has got to declare itself not for people who blow up innocent schoolchildren, but for a peaceful route. And since we believe that, as you said, these

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people have hijacked this great religion and try to pervert its tenets, it's extremely important argument.

Probably the most active person in this regard has been King Abdullah of Jordan, who has been active in holding conferences and meetings and seeking statements from influential clerics and scholars about both the need for Shi'a and Sunni Islam to come together, but also that it is not in accordance with the principles of Islam to kill innocents or take life. I think you're finally seeing more people speak up from within Islam. And we're encouraging it. We're encouraging people here, who, in the United States, are scholars of Islam or have contacts with the broader Islamic community, to do precisely that. There have been fatwahs that have actually been issued by clerics in Iraq, saying that for a follower of Islam to blow up innocent people is not a religious thing to do. But we have to—they and we—have to do much, much more to get this message out because Islam does not want to be tarred with the image like al Zarqawi. That isn't good for Islam, and I don't think that Islamic scholars or leaders want people to think that's what Islam is about.

But they need more to speak out, and people are beginning to speak out.

Senator VOINOVICH. And we're encouraging that to happen?

Secretary RICE. Absolutely. One of the things that Karen Hughes has been doing is meeting with Muslims here in the United States and Muslims abroad. She's in Indonesia, as we speak, talking to those communities.

But the real leadership for this needs to come from within the Muslim and Arab worlds. And, in that sense, I really do applaud King Abdullah in what he's doing. I think we can be good partners, because, of course, one thing that I remind people is that the United States has a large Muslim population. It is not as if we are isolated from the tenets of Islam.

Senator VOINOVICH. I've talked to Karen Hughes about the fact that we need to do the job, right here in our country, of dealing with anti-Semitism and xenophobia, which is growing in our Nation, so we don't have a radicalization of our own Muslim populations right here in the United States.

Secretary RICE. Right.

Senator VOINOVICH. In that same line, the State Department, in terms of people that speak Farsi and Arabic, I know you've got a problem recruiting linguists. We really need to get more people in the Department to speak the language. I think it would help us a great deal.

The other thing that bothers me, which deals with the issue of help from our neighbors is that it seems to me that we're not getting the help that we need from our allies. How do we get it in their heads how important this is? Now, for instance, our Italian brothers and sisters are going to withdraw 3,000 troops. Bulgaria, 400. Poland, 1,700. The Ukraine, 1,600. I looked at a list of the amount of money that's been pledged so far. A billion dollars. A billion dollars. And about half of it is from the Japanese, in terms of reconstruction.

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What kind of help are we getting from these people, in terms of the reconstruction, because this is not just our problem, it's theirs, too?

Secretary RICE. Senator, first of all, I think it may be that $1 billion is for specific kinds of activities. But, in fact, the total, internationally, is about $13.5 billion. You're right, a significant chunk of that, by the way, came from the Japanese.

Senator VOINOVICH. How much did you just say?

Secretary RICE. $13.5 billion, total. But that includes multilateral organizations like the World Bank and the IMF. And the Japanese are quite a large portion, actually, of the remaining money, although for instance, I think there's been about $500 million from Saudi Arabia and so forth.

My point to you is that, you are right, this is not just our struggle. Iraq is a front line in the War on Terrorism. You know, when we look back on September 11, we see that there was an ideology of extremism that was growing and fulminating in the Middle East that came to strike not just us, but places like London and Madrid.

Senator VOINOVICH. Osama bin Laden declared war against the United States in 1998, and we ignored it.

Secretary RICE. And that same war, by the way, is being waged against London and Madrid and Bali and all kinds of places. So, this should be a full international effort. We will ask more from the international community. They are helping. The countries that you named that may, in fact, withdraw some of their forces, have pledged to do as much as they can, in terms of training and other kinds of support to Iraq, which, at this point, may be exactly what we need from them. So, they have not just walked out on their obligations. Those countries have been very clear that they want to continue to support the mission.

But, of course, we need more support from the international system, and we especially need more support from the neighbors.

Senator VOINOVICH. Well, I would suggest that you come up here more often. I know the President has a lot of things on his plate, but there's a lot of confusion out in the country today, and we need to repeat over and over again why we're in Iraq and what we're trying to accomplish. I think we have to level with the American people that this is not going to be over in 2 years. I refer to it as the "fourth world war." The first one as the First World War, the Second World, the cold war, and now this is another world war. This is a formidable opponent that we have, and we're not going to be able to walk out of Iraq and it's going to be over with. This is going to continue. And we have a major challenge ahead of us. And it took us, what, 40 years to win the cold war? But millions of people today are enjoying democracy that didn't enjoy it before the cold war, and that's part of your vision and the President's vision.

Secretary RICE. Yes. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Senator Voinovich.

Secretary RICE. May I—if you don't mind, just——

The CHAIRMAN. Fine.

Secretary RICE [continuing]. Because I wanted to just follow up on what Senator Voinovich has said. It is a long struggle. But on September 11, we learned that the Middle East was not stable. In

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fact, there was a deep malignancy growing in the Middle East. The freedom deficit, extremism, all of the reasons that we know. But the fact of the matter is, it's not as if the status quo was stable and holding. We had to make a decision that we were going to go after the root cause of what caused September 11. It's not just the people who flew those planes into the buildings. It's the extremist ideology that led them to fly those planes into buildings, or, as we've seen now, blow up a subway in London, or blow up small schoolchildren in Russia. This is a virulent and tough extremist ideology, an ideology of hatred that has its roots in a Middle East which has deep malignancies. If we tire and decide that we're going to withdraw and leave the people of the Middle East to despair, I can assure you that the people of the United States are going to live in insecurity and fear for many, many decades to come. If, instead, we can deliver on a different kind of Middle East, of which a different kind of Iraq is an essential part, then we have the chance to do, Senator Voinovich, what you talked about in Europe.

I know people say the situations are different. But nobody, 60 years ago, imagined a Europe in which there would not be major war again. Nobody imagined the reconciliation of Germany and France. Nobody took it seriously. But because the United States stayed true to its values, because we stayed and helped, we did achieve that. And now no one can imagine major war again in Europe.

It'll be the case in the Middle East, too. It's not going to be a military operation of the kind we had to conduct against a big Soviet Union, but it is a generational struggle in the same way.

Senator VOINOVICH. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Senator Feingold.

Senator FEINGOLD. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Welcome, Secretary Rice. We always appreciate your presence here, and I will join the chorus and say we really do hope it'll be more often.

The title of this hearing is "Iraq and U.S. Foreign Policy." And that strikes me as a good start, because we need to make sure that our Iraq policy is advancing our foreign policy and national security goals, not obstructing them, as seems to me to be the case currently.

The administration continues to speak about "staying the course in Iraq," with the apparent end goal being elimination of the current insurgency and establishment of a peaceful democratic state. And, obviously, that is a laudable ambition, but it is not, and it cannot be, the basis for our foreign policy or our national security strategy.

I feel that our current, largely single-minded and somewhat self-defeating focus on Iraq is causing us to overlook what should be our most fundamental goal, and that fundamental goal is combating the global terrorist networks that continue to threaten the United States. It's time to think about whether our military presence in Iraq is consistent with that goal. Increasing numbers of military experts are coming to the view that it is not. As is the America public. It's becoming increasingly clear that we have actually created a breeding ground for terrorism in Iraq and that the

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indefinite presence of tens of thousands of U.S. troops is often actually fueling—fueling, not dampening—the insurgency.

Obviously, that is not the fault of the brave men and women in uniform who are serving our country; it's the fault of the people who sent them to Iraq without a clear idea of what their mission was and how long it would take.

I give credit to the courage of the Senator from Ohio, Senator Voinovich, for reading that letter from that family member.

Madam Secretary, we owe our servicemembers some clarity and leadership. And we owe this country some serious thinking about how we can get our Iraq policy on track—on track so that it helps, rather than hinders us, in the broader fight against terrorism.

In that regard, Madam Secretary, I want to return to the subject that Senator Biden and Senator Kerry were talking about, which has to do with whether to withdraw the troops—should we start withdrawing the troops. I want to hone it more to the issue of whether it would be a good idea to have a public flexible timetable that we would suggest to finish the mission, achieve our goals, and bring the troops home. Notice I said "a flexible timetable," not a drop-dead date, not a deadline, not "cut and run." So, that's what my questions are about.

And it's interesting that Senator Kerry quoted a very Republican former Wisconsin Congressman who was Defense Secretary under Richard Nixon, Melvin Laird. Let me quote something else from that same article that Senator Kerry mentioned.

Melvin Laird said, "We owe it to the rest of people back home to let them know that there is an exit strategy. And, more important, we owe it to the Iraqi people."

Our presence is what feeds the insurgency. And our gradual withdrawal would feed the confidence and the ability of average Iraqis to stand up to the insurgency.

I'd like your reaction to Melvin Laird's remarks.

Secretary RICE. I simply don't agree that it is our presence that is feeding the insurgency. I think the insurgents have a couple of aims. For some of them, one aim is to return to a day when high-ranking Ba'athists were in power who repressed, by force, Shi'a and Kurds. And, by the way, a fair number of Sunnis, too, who were in political opposition. That's one goal for some of them.

For others that means, yes, the fact that we liberated Iraq is an irritant because they have a different view. They would prefer the Iraq that we were dealing with under Saddam Hussein.

For the Zarqawi element of this, however, I would return to what Senator Voinovich said. These people were not just pacific people somewhere sitting around, and then we liberated Iraq and they decided there was a jihad to fight. This jihad, this violent extremist ideology has been developing in the heart of the Middle East out of the absence of freedom and the absence of hope for a very long time. It reached its full bloom—after several initial starts, it reached its full bloom on September 11, when they flew those airplanes into those buildings.

Now, we are fighting the global War on Terrorism, because, of course, we are tracking down and fighting the al-Qaeda network. And I was just in Afghanistan, which used to be their home base.

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Senator FEINGOLD. Well, Madam Secretary, I'm sorry, this doesn't track with my question. My question was about the relationship between our presence in Iraq, our military presence, and the insurgency. And I want to tell you something, because I was in—this isn't just armchair people here in the United States—I was in Iraq in February, and I asked our military commanders the nature of the insurgency. At the time, they told me, as you were suggesting, a significant or major role of foreign insurgents being the ones that were blowing themselves up, and that, at that point, those who conducted some of those kinds of attacks were less likely to be Iraqis. This has changed. Your own people have told us that this has now changed. And what—the point here is, is that the way we are doing this is actually playing into the hands of the insurgents.

I asked one of the top commanders in Iraq, I said, "What would happen if we suggested to the world that there is a timeframe during which we will try to achieve this?" His response to me, which, of course, was off the record, was, "Senator, nothing would take the wind out of the sails of the insurgents more than providing a clear public plan and timeframe for a remaining U.S. mission."

So, what I want to know is not the general statements about how we're fighting the war against terrorism, which, of course, we all agree on. Why does the administration continue to refuse even a flexible timetable for how long U.S. troops are likely to be in Iraq?

Secretary RICE. Senator, we'd like our discussions of withdrawal and of bringing down the numbers of forces to be results-based rather than time-based. In terms of results, we know exactly what we want to achieve. We want Iraqi security forces that can hold their territory, where insurgents can't leave a city and then come back and terrorize the population. That's one of the things that we need to stay and achieve.

Senator FEINGOLD. Well, let me suggest on that point, Madam Secretary, with all respect, that I think one of the reasons you see that happening is that it's very credible for insurgents, for terrorists outside of Iraq, terrorists within Iraq, to convince people who are desperate that we're there to stay. You know, the President himself, in one of his speeches, said recently he didn't support necessarily putting more troops into Iraq, for fear that people would think we are going to stay there forever. Now, doesn't that same logic apply to the issue of a public timetable? I think the analysis actually is the reverse. The more you don't suggest that the so-called American occupation is going to end, the easier it is for them to recruit the insurgents.

Secretary RICE. Senator, we've been very clear that we don't want to stay. That's a different matter than giving a timetable for when we think we will leave. I have no doubt that as the Iraqi security forces get better—and they are getting better, and are holding territory, and they are doing these things with minimal help—that we are going to be able to bring down the levels of our forces. I have no doubt that that's going to happen in a reasonable timeframe.

The problem is, Senator, if you start making the issue when you will leave rather than what you have achieved, then you focus the insurgency and everybody else on when you will leave. If you focus

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this on what you will achieve, and recognize that you want to do that within a reasonable timeframe—because we don't want to stay. We've been very clear that we don't want to stay.

Senator FEINGOLD. Well, you see, Madam Secretary, that's what undercuts our credibility. People naturally are a little bit suspicious of a country that invades another country. That's a reasonable thing, to be suspicious. We have good intentions. But to the extent we don't suggest a vision, a scenario of when we might achieve these goals and when we might leave, naturally people become suspicious. They wonder if we're not there for some other reason. And you've heard the reasons—oil or domination in the Middle East.

I believe that this logic that the administration has is the actual opposite of what would be most likely to take the wind out of the sails of the insurgents. And I've got to tell you, Madam Secretary, you and the President are an ever-narrowing group of people who believe that this logic is correct. Experts around the world, military experts, people I talk to in Iraq, experts here, just about everyone agrees, including Melvin Laird, that our approach, without talking about a public timetable, is feeding the insurgency.

Secretary RICE. I understand your view of this, Senator. In talking with the Iraqi Government, which, after all, has probably most at stake here, the issue for them has been to have a joint committee that looks at conditions-based withdrawal.

Senator FEINGOLD. Then why did President Talibani suggest that there is a scenario of when we could bring the troops back? He specifically talked about a timeframe.

Secretary RICE. Well, I think that the Iraqi Government—the Minister of Defense, the Prime Minister, and others—are engaged in a process that allows us to know when we have achieved what we need to achieve. You do not want American forces to leave and then find out that Iraqi forces are incapable of holding their own territory. That's a mistake we have made in the past.

Senator FEINGOLD. Well, Mr. Chairman, the American people are for a vision of when we can finish this. The Iraqi people are for it. The Iraqi leaders are. Our generals in Iraq, when they're allowed to talk about this, are. There are very few left who believe that we should have a secret strategy that does not indicate when we can finish this.

But I do thank you, Madam Secretary.

Secretary RICE. Thank you, Senator. May I just say, I don't think we have a "secret strategy," Senator. What we have is a strategy that will be based on results. That's the issue.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Senator Feingold.

Senator Martinez.

Senator MARTINEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you for holding this hearing.

Madam Secretary, it's nice to see you, having sat in the chair for a long time in my prior—I know the hour is dawning, so I'll be brief. One of the benefits of being at the tail end is that I—a lot has been asked already.

So, I appreciate very much your opening statement and the roadmap that it lays out. And I do believe that it does offer a vision for—a strategy, as well as how to accomplish it. And I thank you

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for that. I think it ought to be shared. I agree with Senator Voinovich that it's something we need to more clearly disseminate to the American people.

I was recently with Secretary Rumsfeld visiting with some troops in Florida, and one of the things that really struck me was, out of the large number of troops that were there—many of them, of course, had served in Iraq—CENTCOM, we're proud to have in Florida—and one of the things that one of them brought up was the—really heartfelt sort of passion—was, "When we're there, we understand our mission. We come back, and we are shocked and dismayed about how little is being said in America about the success of our mission, about the things that are happening, about how the Iraqi people interact with us, how they behave toward us, how they welcome us, and as well as the successes that are being accomplished, whether it be in health, whether it be in, frankly, creation of institutions, as well as how well the Iraqi troops are performing."

Now, I know this sounds completely out of place, because this sounds like a positive question, but I really do wish that you would share with us what you can about the frustration that this young man felt about how little is said about the good that they're accomplishing and how much they believe in their mission. Because, not to belabor the question, but it is so clear that there's a complete misdirection between basing success upon when we withdraw troops as opposed to basing success on when we've accomplished a certain mission, which you clearly detail in your opening statement.

Secretary RICE. Thank you, Senator.

When I talk to our troops, they express that they know what it is that they're fighting for. They know that an Iraq that finally achieves stability and achieves political reconciliation and some measure of prosperity is going to be a different kind of partner for the rest of the Middle East, and that the Middle East is going to be different, and that American children and grandchildren are then not going to live in fear of this extremist ideology, which has its roots in this very malignant water that is the Middle East.

I think that the mission is being achieved in many ways. First of all, if you look at the political process, I know that it's difficult, and that they've put off some hard decisions, but, you know, with all due respect to us, we, unfortunately, put off the decision about how to deal with slavery for more than 100 years. And, unfortunately, it came back to haunt us. Hopefully, they'll do better than we did. In our original Constitution, my ancestors were three-fifths of a man. That wasn't a very good compromise. They haven't done anything nearly so outrageous.

And so, I think we need to be supportive of the political process that they are engaged in. It's not just so that our troops know that their mission is succeeding, but so that the Iraqi people hear an expression of confidence in their ability to overcome their differences. All they ever hear is that somehow they want civil war. They don't want civil war. Zarqawi wants civil war. We need to express confidence that the Iraqi people, in this very difficult process, are working their way through their differences rather than using repression and violence. That is an extraordinary thing for Iraq.

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Second, our forces are sustaining the development of Iraqi forces that are fighting bravely, that are getting better and better, that are securing their own towns, that are securing their own roads, that are bringing stability to parts of the country which have not been stable, so that our economic and reconstruction plans can take place.

If you talk to some of the commanders out there who have given sewage-treatment capability to a place, if you go to a place like Fallujah, where now they have 70 percent of the people with water and electricity, if you go to these towns in, for instance, what used to be called Sadr City, that had raw sewage running in the streets—and thanks to our people working with Iraqis, has been cleaned up and people have been given a better chance. The hundreds of schools that have been rehabilitated, the transformation networks that have been restored, the healthcare centers that are providing immunization to a population that had fallen into the worst ranks, in terms of child mortality and infant mortality, and in terms of lack of immunization, certainly for anything that approximated a developing country. We are doing a lot for the Iraqi people, and I think our forces know that their mission, in that sense, is making a difference in the lives of Iraqis. But the real difference that it's making is allowing Iraqis to pursue a political path, rather than a path of repression and violence.

And I just want to repeat what I said to Senator Kerry. Iraq was maintained by violence and repression. That's how Shi'a and Kurds were kept from expressing their desires and their interests. That was not acceptable. Now they're trying to make a political compact between Sunnis and Shi'a and Kurds and Turkemen and all others. And that political compact is imperfect. Their Constitution is not perfect. They've left certain things that have to be worked out later on.

But for a country that has been through what they've been through the last 2½ years, they've made remarkable progress. From our point of view, to stay with them and work with them until they are a pillar of a different kind of Middle East is going to make an enormous difference not just to their security, but to our security. That's what really has to be understood. It is not as if the Middle East was stable and humming along and happily moving toward political reconciliation and stability, and then we decided to liberate Iraq. The Middle East was a malignant place that produced an ideology of extremism so great that people flew airplanes into our buildings one fine September morning.

We need to keep that in mind when we say, "We caused instability in the Middle East," or, "We're creating terrorists." What kind of Middle East do we think we were dealing with? The status quo was not sustainable. And so, Iraq—and, by the way, other cases, like Lebanon, like the vote for women in Kuwait, like municipal elections in Saudi Arabia, like the first Presidential elections in Egypt——

Senator MARTINEZ. Palestinian Authority.

Secretary RICE [continuing]. The Palestinian Authority, which is now seeking real peace with Israel. This is a different Middle East, already, than the one that produced Mohamed Atta and the suicide bombers. And we have to stay with it.

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I want to assure you, I don't think that this is, largely, going to be a military commitment for the United States. When I talk about the cold war, I don't mean a military commitment of the 50 years that we had to stay in Europe, because it's a different kind of challenge. But we do have to stay committed, and we have to stay committed to success, not just to an early withdrawal.

Senator MARTINEZ. At the risk of being corny, I do get excited when I see the ink-stained finger and the smiling faces of people as they've exercised their right to vote, as millions of Iraqis had an opportunity to Sunday. I know you harken back to your youth in Birmingham. I also have an interesting growing-up experience, and I know that, for 46 years, the people in the land where I come from have not had an opportunity to go vote and to smile openly and point to a stained finger. That, in and of itself, I think, is a measure of success. The fact that over 60 percent of Iraqis have rejected the path of simply the old way of violence, but have chosen to engage in a political process, I think, is, frankly, encouraging.

I thank you for your appearance today, and I'm going to give back a minute and 13 seconds. I know you count the clock, Madam Secretary.

Secretary RICE. Thank you.

Senator MARTINEZ. Following Notre Dame, I know the clock is an important thing these days. [Laughter.]

Secretary RICE. Unfortunately, it should have run out. [Laughter.]

Senator MARTINEZ. I understand.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Senator Martinez.

Secretary Rice, if you would allow us, I'd like to give the full 10 minutes to Senator Boxer.

Secretary RICE. Of course.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, now Senator Nelson has appeared.

Secretary RICE. Senator.

The CHAIRMAN. Yes?

Secretary RICE. I'm prepared to stay and take the questions of the other Senators.

The CHAIRMAN. Very well. I would appreciate that.

And, Senator Boxer, you're recognized.

Senator BOXER. Thank you so much. And thank you for agreeing to stay for—so everyone can get their chance to ask you a question.

I've given to your aide a CD–ROM that holds more than 100,000 names, with addresses, of those who signed a petition asking for a change in the administration's Iraq policy, to come up with a success strategy that will lead to the return of our brave and courageous troops. It calls on the administration to now give us credibility, responsibility, and accountability in the war in Iraq.

Now, the views expressed in that petition reflect recent polls. In a CBS News poll just the other day, 64 percent of Americans don't believe the result of the war with Iraq was worth the loss of American life and other costs, 57 percent don't believe removing Saddam was worth it, 55 percent believe the United States should not have taken military action against Iraq, and 59 percent of Americans believe United States troops should leave Iraq as soon as possible.

I believe those poll numbers reflect deep disillusionment with this administration's false expectations and rosy scenarios. Today

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I'd like to look at some of what I call the "milestones of false expectation" that we have been given by this administration, which I believe have led to these polls.

First, the false expectation about the expected length of the war. In February 2003, Rumsfeld—Secretary Rumsfeld said the war, "could last 6 days, 6 weeks, I doubt 6 months." The truth is, we have 17,000 Americans dead and wounded, and still counting.

Then the false expectations about the response of the Iraqi people. Vice President Cheney said, "My belief is we will, in fact, be greeted as liberators." The truth is that attacks against United States military personnel are common outside the Green Zone, and when I was in Iraq, I guess, a month before you were there, there was actually attacks inside the Green Zone 2 days or 3 days before.

Then the false expectations about the cost of the war. Mitch Daniels, budget director, said, "Iraq will be an affordable endeavor, will not require sustained aid." The truth is, we're up to $200 billion, and counting, while deficits at home are soaring. Soaring.

There were false expectations about burden-sharing. USAID Administrator Natsios said, "The rest of the rebuilding of Iraq will be done by other countries, but the American part will only be $1.7 billion. We have no plans for any further funding for this." We now know that the United States has obligated $17.1 billion in reconstruction assistance for Iraq. Foreign donors have obligated $2.7.

The administration created false expectations about finding weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. In May 2003, President Bush told Polish TV viewers, "We found the weapons of mass destruction," referring to two mobile trailers. The truth is that Saddam Hussein did not have any WMD when the war began, and the trailers were for hydrogen generation.

The administration created false expectations about the strength of the insurgency. In May of this year, Vice President Cheney said, "I think the insurgents—they're in the last throes, if you will, of this insurgency." Well, the truth is, insurgent attacks have remained constant.

And I want to show you a chart. From the minute he said that, insurgent attacks remained constant. We'll put that up. Experts are telling us that our presence is fueling—fueling—the insurgency. This is where Vice President Cheney made his comments and we see the same, and a huge spike over here.

So, we've heard false expectations about the length of the war. Let's put up the other chart. The length of the war, the response of the Iraqi people, the cost of the war, burden-sharing, WMDs, and the insurgency. I'm sure you cannot see this, but this is just a list of all these things and the quotes.

The administration created false expectations not just for the American people, but also for the Iraqi people.

Listen to an Iraqi woman named Marwa, as told to 60 Minutes, "We've had our own pain for I don't know how long, for as long as I can remember, under Saddam's regime and now under the United States occupation. If it isn't going to get any better than this, then leave us to heal by ourselves. We don't need foreign interference."

Listen to Sammy, another Iraqi citizen, "We never had terrorism before the occupation and before the American Army was here. We

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never had al-Qaeda. We never had Zarqawi. We never had car bombs."

And I'd ask unanimous consent to place in the record a State Department listing of those countries that had al-Qaeda right before 9/11. Noteworthy: Iraq is not on this list.

The CHAIRMAN. It will be placed in the record.

Senator BOXER. Thank you.

[The State Department listing previously referred to follows:]

Albania	Iran	Saudi Arabia
Algeria	Ireland	Somalia
Afghanistan	Italy	South Africa
Azerbaijan	Jordan	Sudan
Australia	Kenya	Switzerland
Austria	Kosovo	Tajikistan
Bahrain	Lebanon	Tanzania
Bangladesh	Libya	Tunisia
Belgium	Malaysia	Turkey
Bosnia	Mauritania	Uganda
Egypt	Netherland	United Arab Emirates
Eritrea	Pakistan	United Kingdom
France	Philippines	United States
Germany	Qatar	Uzbekistan
India	Russia	Yemen

Senator BOXER. Madam Secretary, our country is sick at heart of the spin and the false expectations. They want the truth, and they deserve it. But when you were asked, this past Sunday on Meet the Press, about the anxiety of the American people, you said, "We went to war in Iraq because we were attacked on September 11." You said that again. Never mind that Dick Cheney said Saddam Hussein had nothing to do with September 11. The 9/11 Commission found no link. Your own State Department said there wasn't one al-Qaeda cell inside there. But yet, that's what you said.

You said, "The fact of the matter is, when we were attacked on September 11, we had a choice to make. We could decide that the proximate cause was al-Qaeda and the people who flew those planes into buildings, and, therefore, we would go after al-Qaeda or perhaps the Taliban and our work would be done, and we could try to defend ourselves, or we could take a bolder approach, which was to say that we had to go after the root cause of the kind of terrorism that was produced there, and that meant a different kind of Middle East."

Now, Secretary Rice, when I voted to go to war against Osama bin Laden—and every Senator did after 9/11—it was never our mission, to quote you, "to form a different kind of Middle East." It was our mission to go after those who attacked us, to get Osama bin Laden, as the President said, "dead or alive." I voted for the use of force against those responsible for 9/11. Now, in an unbelievable rewriting of history, you talk about this bolder mission we undertook in response to 9/11 to transform the Middle East with Iraq as an anchor.

And I ask unanimous consent to place into the record the war resolution that was passed by this Senate and the House declaring war on those who attacked us. And, Mr. Chairman, not one mention of Iraq or rebuilding a different Middle East.

The CHAIRMAN. It will be placed in the record.

[The joint resolution previously referred to follows:]

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S.J. RES. 23

JOINT RESOLUTION To authorize the use of United States Armed Forces against those responsible for the recent attacks launched against the United States

Whereas on September 11, 2001, acts of treacherous violence were committed against the United States and its citizens;

Whereas such acts render it both necessary and appropriate that the United States exercise its rights to self-defense and to protect United States citizens both at home and abroad;

Whereas in light of the threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States posed by these grave acts of violence;

Whereas such acts continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States; and

Whereas the President has authority under the Constitution to take action to deter and prevent acts of international terrorism against the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Represenative of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This joint resolution may be cited as the "Authorization for Use of Military Force'.

SEC. 2. AUTHORIZATION FOR USE OF UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES.

(a) That the President is authorized to use all necessary and appropriate force against those nations, organizations, or persons he determines planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001, or harbored such organizations or persons, in order to prevent any future acts of international terrorism against the United States by such nations, orgzniations or persons.

(b) WAR POWERS RESOLUTION REGUIREMENTS.—

(1) SPECIFIC STATUTORY AUTHORIZATION.—Consistent with section 8(a)(1) of the War Powers Resolution, the Congress declares that this section is intended to constitute specific statutory authorization within the meaning of section 5(b) of the War Powers Resolution.

(2) APPLICABILITY OF OTHER REQUIREMENTS.—Nothing in this resolution supercedes any requirement of the War Powers Resolution.

Senator BOXER. So, I want to ask you this question. Can you provide for me documentation that building and rebuilding the Middle East was the reason we went to war after 9/11? Can you give me that documentation?

Secretary RICE. Senator, the question that I've raised is whether or not the way to resolve what happened to us on September 11, the way to deal with future threats of the kind that we faced on September 11, is to simply assume that if we take down al-Qaeda and go after Osama bin Laden and get him, and, indeed, even change Afghanistan, that that will protect us, in the long term, from the kind of attack that we faced on September 11.

Senator BOXER. So, when you asked us to go to war—when this President asked us to go to war, that's what you had in mind? But you never told the U.S. Senate?

Secretary RICE. Senator——

Senator BOXER. And you never told the——

Secretary RICE [continuing]. Senator Boxer——

Senator BOXER [continuing]. American people?

Secretary RICE [continuing]. Senator Boxer, the resolutions stand on their own. My point is that the President and I and others believe that the problem—the attack that we experienced on September 11 is not just because Mohamed Atta and his hijackers flew planes into buildings, it is because they were representing an extremist ideology.

Senator BOXER. Excuse me——

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Secretary RICE. I will be the first to say——

Senator BOXER [continuing]. I'm not trying to get into the mind of any of the people who attacked us. I want to capture them, not get into their mind.

The point I'm making is, here, not what their mindset was, but what our goal was in going after the people who attacked us. And what you are saying here today is a way broader vision of that. And either you didn't tell the American people that at the time, you didn't tell the U.S. Senate that at the time, because, let me tell you, if the people of the United States of America knew at the time that our mission was to rebuild the entire Middle East, which you have, several times, called a malignancy, that part of the world, if that was what the war was about, the first war, and even the second war, they would have walked away from this administration long before they've walked away. And they are gone.

Secretary RICE. Senator——

Senator BOXER. They don't want——

Secretary RICE [continuing]. Senator——

Senator BOXER [continuing]. They don't want the job of——

Secretary RICE [continuing]. Senator, I would like to answer——

Senator BOXER [continuing]. Rebuilding the Middle East on the backs of our brave men and women and the taxpayers of the United States of America. They want to go get the people who attacked us and defend our own country from them in the future.

Secretary RICE. Senator, may I have an opportunity to answer? Thank you.

Senator BOXER. Yes.

Secretary RICE. Senator, the war resolutions stand on their own. The war resolution against al-Qaeda was very clear, and it led us to war in Afghanistan to try to deal with the near-term camps that produced al-Qaeda.

Second, the Iraqi regime had been not just a regime that was, according to all intelligence, and according to U.N. resolution after U.N. resolution after U.N. resolution, a threat because of its attachment to weapons of mass destruction, but also because of its role in terrorism and also because it had been a threat to its neighbors. Our first war against Iraq was not because it had weapons of mass destruction, but because it tried to annex Kuwait.

So, yes, it had been a force for instability in the region. Everybody knew it. And if you look at the resolutions that the United Nations had passed against Iraq, they are not just about weapons of mass destruction, they are also about terrorism and about the threat to Iraq's neighbors. We were in a state of war with Iraq, flying missions over Iraq to keep their forces from threatening their neighbors just before the 2003 action was taken.

Now, Senator, I understand what the Senate voted for in the resolution on al-Qaeda, and I know what the Senate voted for in the resolution on Iraq. What I am describing to you the administration's broader strategy for a Middle East that will not produce these kinds of ideologies of extremism. Look at the 9/11 report on what the root causes of September 11 really were, and they were the extremist ideology that produced these people. Nineteen of them, of course, are dead, but even if you caught every single one of them, you would still be dealing with the extremist ideology that

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produced them, and there will just be more of them to come. Until you deal with the root cause, which, frankly, is the nature of the Middle East, it is the fact that there is a freedom deficit. It is that those extremist elements have been allowed to grow and prosper because they have no legitimate channels of political dissent and activity. Unless you deal with that overwhelming problem in the Middle East and produce a different kind of Middle East, you're going to be capturing individual terrorists until our grandchildren are all too old to care.

So, what I'm describing to you, Senator, is not what you voted for in the war resolution, but the broader strategy of the administration, and, by the way, the broader strategy that is shared by Prime Minister Blair and a number of reformists in the Middle East itself, that America's goal has to be a Middle East in which people are not denied freedom, in which women are not denied their rights, in which repression is not the way in which politics is managed, and in which, just as we did in Europe, we provide a democratic foundation for a lasting peace. That's what I'm describing to you.

Senator BOXER. Well, I know my time's up, I would just say you make a great speech, but you miss the point I made, which is that the American people were not told after 9/11 that the purpose was to rebuild the Middle East when they sent their sons and daughters to war. And 25 percent of the dead are from my State. So, they have to be told the truth, they were not told the truth, there's changing missions, changing reasons, twisted language here, and I just say it's no wonder they walked away from this administration.

Secretary RICE. Well, Senator, let me give you an analogy, because I am trying to answer your point. And, by the way, I honor, of course, the sacrifices that the American people have made. We're from the same State. I know what has happened in California.

But let me just note that we also didn't go and defeat Adolf Hitler in order to produce a democratic Germany. We went and defeated Adolf Hitler because he was a threat to peace and security. We defeated Saddam——

Senator BOXER. I understand that. I lost relatives in the holocaust. It has nothing to do with what we're talking about today.

Secretary RICE. Senator, may I finish my answer to you?

Senator BOXER. To me. I think——

Secretary RICE. Well, Senator, it's——

Senator BOXER [continuing]. You're——

Secretary RICE [continuing]. It's very——

Senator BOXER [continuing]. It's very intriguing——

Secretary RICE [continuing]. Senator, I'm trying to answer your question, and I'd appreciate an opportunity to do so.

We didn't go to World War II to defeat Adolf Hitler in order to produce a democratic Germany, but we understood, after the war, that unless we produced a democratic foundation for a new Europe, we would be fighting wars in Europe time and time again. And now we cannot imagine a Europe in which France and Germany fight. Now we cannot imagine a Europe in which America's going to have to go back and fight in a major war.

We went in to deal with Saddam Hussein because he was a threat to peace and international security, as resolution after reso-

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lution after resolution noted. But, having liberated Iraq, it is our goal to form a democratic foundation so that you have Iraq as a pillar of a different kind of Middle East. Because if we really think that the Middle East was stable, then we can't explain what produced this extremism and this ideology of hatred. Dealing with that is what will give you long-term peace, not catching terrorists one by one.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Senator Boxer.

Thank you, Secretary.

Senator Nelson.

Senator NELSON. Mr. Chairman, I have been in and out in other committee meetings, so I'm going to defer to my colleague, Senator Obama, and then I will pick up after him.

Secretary RICE. Thank you.

Could I just mention, Senator, I'm happy to stay, but I am supposed to be briefing the House in just about 10 minutes.

Senator NELSON. Yes.

Secretary RICE. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Obama.

Senator OBAMA. Well, thank you very much, Secretary Rice. I'm glad you are here. As has been noted, I think this dialog was overdue. And I hope that we will have some additional opportunities to talk about our strategy here.

Let me just pick up on the last colloquy between yourself and Senator Boxer and attempt to clarify why Senator Boxer's points weigh on the minds of many of us.

The breadth of the mission in Iraq is relevant, not just looking backward, but also going forward. I was not in this Chamber to vote on the resolutions. I can say that the argument, initially, for going to war in Iraq seemed to be a relatively narrow one: Saddam Hussein threatened stability in the region, potentially possessed weapons of mass destruction, and, if we did not get rid of him, could be part of a broader terrorist network that threatened the security of the United States.

Based on what I heard you say on Meet the Press, and what I have heard you repeat today, it appears that we are now involved in a broader mission; it is to construct a democratic structure in an intact, cohesive Iraq that will then spread democracy and freedom to other parts of the Middle East. It's a difficult task. You acknowledge it. But it's one that you think is absolutely necessary for our long-term security interests.

This broadening of the mission is disturbing and difficult for those of us in the Senate to deal with because it requires a leap of faith on our part that a mission of that breadth can be accomplished in a reasonable timeframe, to use your words. And when Senator Feingold or others on this panel ask what exactly that meaningful timeframe is, what that reasonable timeframe might be, the administration declines to provide any sense of what that is. I heard you say, today at least, you think it's going to be less than 50 years, which is encouraging. But, beyond that, we don't know. What we hear is: We're going to "stay the course."

Now, if the mission is that broad, and the measure of result- or condition-based success is premised on us having executed the transformation of Iraq into a stable, democratic, multiethnic nation

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state that is not harboring any terrorist activity, then the concern is that that could take a very long time. Experts may have different estimates, in terms of how long it will take, but my guess is even those experts upon which you rely are indicating that that is a multiyear, even multidecade, process that continues to involve billions of dollars of American taxpayer money and potentially the continuing death of our troops. That is why this issue of the nature of this mission, and what constitutes success, is so important.

You've tried to provide what that success would look like, but I have to say it appears to be a moving target. I pay extremely close attention to this, and it is still not clear to me exactly what the scope of our mission and the definition of success are.

Having used up half my time, let me go to a few key points that you spoke about.

You indicated that our objectives would be to break the back of the insurgency, keep Iraq from becoming a safe haven for terrorists, demonstrate positive potential for democratic change and free expression, and turn the corner financially and economically so that there is a sense of hope.

Let me ask this. If we had an Iraq that was made up of a Kurdish north, a Shi'a south, and a disgruntled Sunni center, that constituted a loose federation and was not engaged in all-out civil war, but wasn't practicing the sort of democracy that we enjoy here in the United States, and there was still some insurgent activity, but not at the current levels, would that meet your criteria of success? Or, is our measure of success something much broader: A coherent, multiethnic national coalition government that has all the accoutrements of democracy, as we understand it?

Secretary RICE. Thank you, Senator Obama.

I would, first of all, note that the goal of overthrowing Saddam Hussein was certainly linked to his ability to make mischief and instability in the region. As we saw when we had to fight him in a war in 1991. So, that's the first point. But then, having overthrown him, we did face the question of: "What would we leave?" Because, of course, you don't just overthrow or liberate a place and then have no idea of how it moves forward from then, particularly in a society that is as fractured and had been through a long period of totalitarianism, like Iraq. So, that's the answer. It is not as if it were: We had taken a broad mission somehow at the beginning of the war. But having overthrown him, we did owe the Iraqi people, their neighbors, and the international community an answer as to what we thought the future looked like.

Now, I would distinguish between a short-term goal in which I do think the involvement of our military forces is needed. That short-term goal is to make Iraqi forces capable enough of holding their own territory against insurgents so that there is not, as I suggested in the case of Colombia, a threat to the political stability of the Iraqi regime. In other words, there will be some level of insurgency, I'm quite sure, for quite some time to come. Can they pull off a kidnapping? Can they have a bombing here, a bombing there? There are lots of relatively stable governments in which insurgencies have continued to do that kind of thing, but nobody would question that there is a danger to them.

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Senator OBAMA. OK. So, that's something very specific, right? And——

Secretary RICE. Right.

Senator OBAMA [continuing]. So, that is a meaningful goal and what I consider a benchmark that I understand——

Secretary RICE. Right.

Senator OBAMA [continuing]. Which is that the insurgency is not capable of collapsing an Iraqi Government.

Secretary RICE. That's right.

Senator OBAMA. OK.

Secretary RICE. And the Iraqi forces are, themselves, capable of ensuring that.

Senator OBAMA. All right.

Secretary RICE. And so, that's how I see our military presence. And when we say "break the back of the insurgency," that's what we mean.

Senator OBAMA. OK.

Secretary RICE. Now, when you come to the longer term goal at that point, you would have laid a foundation for a context of stability in which the Iraqis can work out their political problems and their economic development and so forth.

When you talk about the longer term goal of stable, democratic, multiethnic, unitary Iraq, that's going to take a long time.

Senator OBAMA. OK.

Secretary RICE. But I see that as a political——

Senator OBAMA. That's a political problem, as opposed to a military problem.

Secretary RICE [continuing]. Not as a military problem.

Senator OBAMA. So, I guess—here's my point. We've talked about how brave and effective our military is—as long as they're given missions that make sense.

Secretary RICE. Yes.

Senator OBAMA. Of course, our military is always effective, and they are always brave, and if there are problems with our military efforts, it's not because of our fighting forces. It is because we've given them missions that don't require military solutions, but, rather political solutions. So, let me just make this point, and maybe you can answer.

My understanding is that we currently have a series of battalions made up of Kurdish forces, Shi'a militia forces, and so forth. These are all being counted as 91 battalions. Correct me if I'm wrong, but the vast majority of these battalions are not multiethnic forces made up of Sunnis, Shi'as, and Kurds. In fact, the Kurdish battalions, as I understand, don't even fly an Iraqi flag. There may be all sorts of centrifugal forces taking place politically that don't hold the country together.

If our concern is just making sure that the insurgency doesn't bring down the government, how can we be certain that it's not, in fact, the political failures of the process that are collapsing the government and breaking things up into some sort of loose federation or civil war, rather than the insurgency? Do you understand my question? My point is that if our military presence there is designed, in the short term, solely to make sure that the insurgency doesn't bring down the political process, what happens if the polit-

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ical process collapses under its own weight? Are we committed to holding Iraq together in perpetuity, even if the parties involved, the Iraqi people, determine that they don't want to form the sort of visionary Iraqi nation that yourself and the President seem to envision?

Secretary RICE. Let me just say that our military presence was there to make certain the insurgency could not—but also to create Iraqi security forces that can do that. That's an important part of our presence.

Senator OBAMA. I understand.

Secretary RICE. In terms of what kind of Iraq will emerge, obviously the sectarianism and centrifugal forces would be a threat, also, to a stable and unified Iraq.

Senator OBAMA. And, just to pinpoint this, I think the concern that a lot of people have is that these are the more relevant issues involved than the insurgency. It may be that some of these centrifugal forces and ethnic divisions are going to determine our success, and not the insurgency itself.

Secretary RICE. I would say that either is a threat to the kind of success that we want. Obviously, if there's an armed insurgency, they can overthrow a government.

Senator OBAMA. I understand.

Secretary RICE. That's a real threat. But the political side, of course, is hard, and that's why we are working within the context of the transitional administrative-law path that was laid out, to get them to stable political institutions.

Now, I understand that there are centrifugal forces. And yes, there are problems with the ethnic composition of the armed forces. General Casey has gone on a personal effort to recruit more Sunnis into the rank and file. The leadership is actually quite representative, but it's into the rank and file. But it's not principally, of course, a military task to work the political side. It is a military task to provide a secure environment in which politics can be worked. For instance, when the Iraqi Islamic Party decided that it was going to support the Constitution, the insurgency went after their offices. The fact that they were unable to deter the Iraqi Islamic Party, anyway, from supporting the Constitution is a good sign, because it says that the insurgency isn't having that kind of impact on the political circumstance.

But, yes, it is up to our diplomats and our politics and our civil-society-building and our economic development and the building of national institutions to nurture what I think are actually centripetal, rather than centrifugal, forces in Iraq that would hold them together. It's going to be a federation. It is not going to be, I think, as tight a federal structure as it might later be.

Senator OBAMA. I know I'm out of time, but you haven't really answered my question. What happens if the politics don't work in this thing? Does "stay the course" mean that we are there to hold the country together even if the politics of it dictate that, in fact, that's not what is possible?

Secretary RICE. Senator, I don't think that there's evidence, at this point, that that is what we're facing. I think what we are there to do is to nurture, which, what I think, are actually strong centripetal, not centrifugal, forces. And I know we read a lot about sec-

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tarianism and civil war, and yes, they're having to overcome their differences through politics, not through violence and repression, which is how they did it in the past, but there is a sense of being Iraqi. Yes, there is a strong sense of being Shi'a or Sunni or Kurd, but there is also a sense of being Iraqi. And if we do this well—and I think we're starting to do it well—in a unity of our political and the military strategy, I think we will nurture those centripetal forces. Their neighbors want a unified Iraq, and I think they can help with this process, as well.

I understand that, yes, it might not work. But every day, we have to get up and work at our hardest to make it work, and everything, thus far, suggests that they're trying to hold together, when it really did come time to think about changes to this Constitution. Because the politics is actually not as sectarian as it appears, there are a lot of cross-cutting alliances and coalitions that are building. One of the things that I think we and others can encourage is that the coalitions and the politics for the December elections be cross-cutting, not sectarian. And that's what we will work toward.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Senator OBAMA. You're very generous. I wish I had more time.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator——

Secretary RICE. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN [continuing]. Nelson. Senator Nelson.

Secretary RICE. Yes, we've got to go. I'm sorry, Senator, We have 5 minutes, yes? We have to be at the House in 5 minutes, I'm told.

The CHAIRMAN. Can we take just the 5, please?

Secretary RICE. Of course; yes. Sure.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Nelson.

Senator NELSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I think the frustration that you've heard here, Madam Secretary, is that, for those of us who were here and voted for the resolution authorizing the President to expend funds for the purpose of invading Iraq, we were clearly given an impression, at the time, that the interests of the United States were severely threatened because of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. You've heard the stories about the unmanned aerial vehicles even being poised by Saddam Hussein to launch from ships off the east coast of the United States. But we were not told about the disputes in the intelligence community with regard to them—over whether those unmanned aerial vehicles were for offensive purposes, or for reconnaissance purposes. And so, I think the expression of frustration that you've heard from the two previous Senators comes from seeing that the reason we were given for invading Iraq has now morphed into a much different reason.

And then we hear that, for example, there are 91 Iraqi Army battalions in the fight. According to General Petreus, it's actually 116. But General Petreus has also said that there are different degrees of support, and there is only one battalion that is fully independent and combat-ready.

And so, I think, at the end of the day, you and I would come down at the same bottom line, which is that in order for our troops to be able to train the Iraqi Army so it can stabilize that country, we need the support of the American people. I would urge clarity

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and transparency, as Senator Biden has also mentioned, in your future comments about this conflict.

The final thing that I would like to ask about—because it is affecting the daily lives of people here right now—is energy price spikes, a lot of which is caused by manipulation by OPEC and the increased demand for oil in China. What have you been doing, diplomatically, to persuade the leaders of OPEC, at this time of very high energy prices, to increase their production?

Secretary RICE. Senator, on the last question, we, obviously, have been talking to the OPEC producers, and they, I think, would agree that very high oil prices, while good for budgets for them, are a threat to the international economy, and so, therefore, concerned about that. I think it's also the case that with oil prices very high, they have an incentive to produce.

The problem is that there is very strong demand pressure, as you mentioned, from places like China and India and other places. And so, our strategy has to be, over the long term, as the President's energy bill would do, to diversify us and, in fact, the rest of the world away from just hydrocarbons as the energy supply, because these very fast-growing dynamic economies, like China, if they have to depend simply on oil for energy, we're going to continue to have a demand crunch.

The Saudis have said that they would try to increase production over the longer term, but I think most people believe these countries are running pretty hard to try to take advantage of the very high prices.

As to the first statement, Senator, I think that we were very clear that we wanted to liberate Iraq because Saddam Hussein was a threat to peace and stability. He had been sanctioned by numerous U.N. Security Council resolutions, not to mention probably some of the toughest sanctions that have ever been put on a single state, because people thought he was a threat to international peace and security. We all thought he had weapons of mass destruction. And certainly those were the basis of most of the resolutions. He had materially supported terrorism. That was in the resolutions. He had attacked his neighbors. He had used weapons of mass destruction against his own people and his neighbors. He was fighting us over the skies of southern and northern Iraq. So, he was a threat.

Having overthrown him, though, it was important to have a vision for what we thought Iraq should be, not to just say, "We've overthrown him, and now it's over."

And in structuring that vision, we went to our principles, and our principles say that the world is safer when democracy spreads, and the world is less safe when democracy is in retreat. That's what we've always believed. We've been right about it across the world—in Europe, where we made that the basis for a new Germany; in Asia, where we made it the basis for a new Japan—and we're going to be right about it in Iraq, where we've made it the basis for a new Iraq and, ultimately, the basis for a new Middle East.

Senator NELSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I hope the Secretary is right. But to continue this kind of operation you have to have the American people with you. I wore the uniform of this

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country during a time in which we did not have the support of the American people, and that didn't turn out too good. And we don't want it to turn out like it did last time.

Secretary RICE. I agree, Senator. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Nelson.

Thank you very much, Secretary Rice.

Secretary RICE. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. We appreciate a great hearing.

And the hearing is adjourned, and hopefully our staff can expedite your way to the House.

Secretary RICE. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 1:33 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSES OF SECRETARY OF STATE CONDOLEEZZA RICE TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR LUGAR

Question. On Sunday, October 16, the Washington Post Outlook section featured a story about some of the Arabic linguist challenges our foreign service is facing. It suggested only 27 FSO's were top-rated Arabic speakers. How many of those have done tours in Baghdad? Why is that number so low? (Perhaps a full breakdown would be helpful.)

Answer. Twenty-nine active-duty Foreign Service Generalists currently speak and read at least one dialect of Arabic at a level 4/4 or better. An additional 192 Foreign Service Generalists speak and read Arabic at least at the 3/3 level but below the 4/4 level (3/3, 3/4, 4/3, etc.). In total 196 Foreign Service Generalist positions require proficiency in Arabic, 91 of which require 3/3 or better proficiency.

Of the 29 advanced Arabic speakers, 11 have served in Iraq in the last 3 years. All but two relatively junior employees have served in an Arabic country, and many have served a significant portion of their careers in Arabic-speaking countries. Currently, 14 are serving in Arabic-speaking countries (including Chief of Mission in Sudan) and only six are serving overseas in non-Arabic speaking countries (one of whom serves as U.S. Ambassador in Islamabad and one as U.S. Ambassador to the Gambia).

Eight Arabic-speaking posts—including Baghdad, Khartoum, Beirut, and three posts in Saudi Arabia—are "unaccompanied" posts requiring most employees to be separated from their families for long periods of time. The conditions at many of the other Arabic-speaking posts involve a high level of hardship and limits on educational and other opportunities. It is appropriate that Foreign Service employees, even those with the most advanced Arabic skills, serve some of their careers outside the Arabic-speaking world, for service need reasons and career development as well as for personal considerations.

Question. Some State Department jobs on the ground in Iraq have not been filled, such as those with the State Embedded Teams with the major subordinate commands. Other positions have been filled by junior personnel who have volunteered. It is great that so many of our young FSO's have signed up for these challenging assignments, sometimes for repeat engagements. Nevertheless, the importance of this mission demands our best, and Ambassador Khalilzad's Provincial Reconstruction Team plan will need such assets to succeed. Have you considered using "directed assignments" to fill these critical jobs? In what sort of situation would you use that authority?

Answer. The Department agrees that filling these critical jobs is of the utmost importance. The Department has been very successful in staffing the Embassy in Baghdad, including a current 90-percent fill rate for senior and mid-level positions in the Embassy (due to training and transfers the fill rate at most missions is not typically as high).

Although we have not always been able to fill positions for the Regional Embassy Offices (REOs) and the State Embedded Teams (SETs) as far in advance as we would like, we have ultimately been able to fill the vast majority of these positions, albeit sometimes with officers at a lower personal grade than the position. In the REO/SETs we currently have 92 percent of the 47 positions filled. All officers, and

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particularly entry-level officers, being proposed for service in the REO/SETs are vetted through several offices in the Department for suitability, past performance and experience. In the case of entry-level we also consider what life/work experiences they brought with them into the Department.

Given our past successes, we have every confidence that the men and women of the Foreign Service will continue to answer the call for our best to serve in Iraq. Nevertheless, the Secretary has the authority and tools in place to direct assignments should critical vacancies not be filled through the normal assignment processes. The Department is prepared to do so should it become necessary.

Responses of Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to Questions Submitted by Senator Biden

Question. Beyond the holding of elections, which I agree are very important, what measures should the American people use to tell whether or not our policies are succeeding in Iraq?

Answer. The Department of Defense, in close consultation with the Department of State, has submitted an October 2005 Report to Congress, "Measuring Security and Stability in Iraq," in accordance with Conference Report 109–72 Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2005. I refer you to this report, which outlines USG efforts to develop and use metrics in assessing progress toward achieving our objectives in Iraq. The report's overview states "the broad purpose of the strategy is to assist in creating an Iraq that is at peace with its neighbors, is an ally in the war on terror, has a representative government that respects the human rights of all Iraqis, and has security forces that can maintain domestic order and deny a safe haven for terrorists in Iraq."

The report may be viewed at the following website: http://www.defenselink.mil/home/features/Iraq_Reports/Index.html. In addition, we suggest you review the State Department's "Iraq Weekly Status Report" available at: http://www.state.gov/p/nea/rls/rpt/iraqstatus/2005/.

Question. Recently you said during an appearance on Fox News Sunday that, "There is no political base any longer for this insurgency," and that, "The political process will sap the energy from this insurgency because an insurgency cannot ultimately survive without a political base."

- If there is no longer a political base for the insurgency, how quickly should we expect it to diminish?
- How should we measure whether or not the insurgency has a political base?
- Is it possible that the insurgency could stay at the same level or even increase while at the same time Sunnis are participating in the political process?
- Do you have an estimate of how Sunnis voted on the Constitution. Was it more like 90–10 against, or more like 60–40 against? How do you read that?

Answer. The insurgency has relied on intimidation and terror as a means of operating against the Iraqi people, Iraqi security forces, and the coalition. Jihadist elements of the insurgency have correctly identified democracy and the democratic process as the greatest threat to their ambitions of ruling Iraq and using it as a base to attack other regional states. Even Iraqis, who oppose what they see as occupation, increasingly reject attacks that are more deadly to Iraqis than coalition forces, widening a division between the terrorists and those who have supported insurgent attacks against the coalition. As more Iraqis are drawn into the political process and the building of a free and democratic Iraq, the insurgency will be seen as increasingly detrimental to the long-term interests of all Iraqis, including those whose cities, towns, and villages the insurgency is now operating. Evidence of the insurgency's loss of a political base was seen in the turnout in the October 15, 2005, constitutional referendum and the engagement of Sunni populations in peaceful political action. Turnout in mostly Sunni Salah al-Din province exceeded that of many of the provinces in the south, and turnout in mostly Sunni Al-Anbar province was many times higher than what it was in January. While it is not possible to give a precise estimate of its potential impact on the insurgency, the December 15 election is likely to produce a Sunni Arab leadership with a stake in the political system that is motivated to oppose the insurgency, rather than tolerate or support it.

The October 15 referendum was a "Yes" or "No" vote, and the ethnicity of voters is not recorded. The vote in mostly Sunni provinces ranged from 3 percent in favor in Al-Anbar to 45 percent in favor in Ninewa (Mosul). Endorsement of the draft constitution by the Iraqi Islamic Party appears to have had an impact in persuading a number of Sunnis, though not a majority, to vote in favor of the draft constitution.

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Nationwide, most of the Sunni Arabs in Iraq who voted did appear to have voted against the draft constitution. It is also true, however, that most of Sunni Arabs voted in this referendum, a major change in their position since the January election.

Question. I'd like to better understand the administration's position on the federalism provisions of the Iraqi Constitution. The President, in a recent speech, said the following: ". . . democratic federalism is the best hope for unifying a diverse population, because a federal constitutional system respects the rights and religious traditions of all citizens." This appeared to be a not so subtle endorsement of the Constitution's federalism provisions. In recent remarks at Princeton, you said: ". . . it needs to remain a unified Iraq, a united Iraq . . . it cannot be several Iraqs." While not necessarily contradictory, you clearly emphasized the need for Iraq's unity. Over the past several weeks, as I understand it, our Ambassador has been largely focused on convincing Kurds and Shi'a to address Sunni concerns. I think he has done a superb job after having been handed a tall order.

But there appears to be a certain degree of schizophrenia in the attitude toward federalism. Yesterday, a Washington Post editorial said: "It is certainly the case that . . . Zalmay Khalilzad has been working as hard, or harder, than any Iraqi politician to forge an agreement among Sunnis, Shiites and Kurds. Yet at other times President Bush and his senior aides publicly praise and defend the extreme form of 'federalism' written into the Constitution by Shiites and Kurds—even though it is that agenda that fuels Sunni opposition and threatens to tear the country apart."

- What is our position on the provisions related to federalism in the current draft of the Iraqi Constitution?

Answer. The provisions of the Iraqi Constitution, including those related to federalism, are for the Iraqi people to decide. We continue to support the principles outlined in UNSCR 1546 and to work with the Government of Iraq to develop a federal, democratic, pluralistic, and unified Iraq.

Due to the horrific repression and violence visited upon the Iraqi people by the former dictatorial regime, many Iraqis believe it is very important to ensure that the Iraqi Government never again becomes a tool of repression. The Iraqi draft constitution has several provisions related to this objective, including those that establish a democratic electoral system implemented by an independent electoral authority; checks and balances between the executive, legislative, and independent judicial branches of the national government; and federalism through local governments with defined authority that are directly answerable to the local population.

Some Iraqis, in particular some Sunni Arabs, believe that the federalism provisions in the draft constitution may lead Iraq to break apart. I believe exactly the opposite. While much about federalism remains to be decided by the Iraqi people as they interpret, implement, and possibly amend their Constitution, the federalism articles and other provisions will contribute to the belief by a number of Iraqi communities that they need not attempt to break from Iraq to avoid a repetition of Iraq's unfortunate history. In other words, it may be these federalism provisions that keep Iraq together.

The Iraqi central government under the draft constitution is hardly powerless. All regions and governorates must comply fully with the provisions of the federal Constitution. All of Iraq's oil and gas resources belong to all of the Iraqi people. The central government has full and exclusive authority over the formulation of national security policy, foreign policy, and fiscal/monetary policy. The national legislature is responsible for promulgating a law that will define the procedures to form any new regions.

In fact, evidence suggests that the various Iraqi communities are participating in a unified Iraq: Iraqi Kurds, the community many observers have seen as most likely to attempt to leave Iraq, are instead heavily engaged in national politics. Iraqi Kurds serve as the President, Deputy Prime Minister, Foreign Minister, and several other senior posts in the national government. High voter turnout in the predominantly Sunni western provinces during the constitutional referendum demonstrated a willingness of Sunni Arab Iraqis to participate in the political process.

Question. The Constitution doesn't permit amendments to the very substantial powers of regions unless the regions agree.

- Would the administration support the federalism provisions staying as is, with implementing legislation that essentially codifies those provisions as drafted?

Answer. The draft constitution states in Article 122 "Articles of the Constitution may not be amended if such amendment takes away from the powers of the regions that are not within the exclusive powers of the federal authorities except by the con-

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sent of the legislative authority of the concerned region and the approval of the majority of its citizens in a general referendum." Separately, a provision in the agreed October modifications to the Constitution suspends Article 122 of the Constitution until amendments arising out of a special and temporary mechanism "have been decided upon."

We believe that the current draft constitution provides a basis for Iraq to establish a federal and united state. How these provisions are interpreted and implemented will determine the reality on the ground.

Again, these are matters for the Iraqi people to decide.

Question. What is the administration's position on the creation of a strongly autonomous nine-province "super region" in southern Iraq as one powerful Iraqi politician has proposed? What relationship would you expect between that region and Iran?

Answer. This will be a decision for the Iraqi people. In making this decision, they will need to consider, among other things, whether such a large region would be the best way to ensure efficient and responsive governance.

Under the draft constitution, the national government has exclusive authority over the formulation of foreign policy. I do not believe that Iraqis in the south, or anywhere else in Iraq, seek or would accept the domination or interference of Iran in their country.

The United States understands that it is important that Iraq have good and transparent relations with Iran.

Question. Which countries in the region support the current federalism provisions in the Constitution? Which countries have expressed concerns about them?

Answer. Most countries in the region have congratulated the Iraqi people on the completion of the constitution drafting and the referendum of a few days ago, but—appropriately—have not taken a stance on the substance of individual provisions of the draft constitution.

However, all of Iraq's neighbors agreed to the statement from the June 2005 International Conference on Iraq in Brussels, which ". . . expressed support for Iraqi efforts to achieve a democratic, pluralist, and unified Iraq, with a federal structure if so decided by the Iraqi people."

Question. Have you heard some Sunnis express support for a regional entity based in western Iraq? What would be the likely political orientation of a Sunni "ministate"? Are you concerned that it might have close ties to foreign jihadists as seems to be the case today in key parts of western and central Iraq?

Answer. We have heard a few Iraqi Sunni Arabs discuss such a possibility. Iraqis, including insurgents through their public statements consistently reject ties to foreign jihadists. At this time, I do not believe the formation of such a region would significantly affect the larger political and security issues in Iraq: Iraqis much reach a national accord that respects and represents the interests of all Iraqis. We will continue to work with the GOI to encourage an inclusive political process to that end.

Question. Many liberal, secular Iraqis who supported the war have expressed deep disappointment over the Constitution. In addition to concerns over federalism, they are worried about the door being opened to the application of Shari'a and the possible limitations on women's rights.

- What steps do you intend to take to ensure that women do not end up in a situation where they have fewer rights than they did before the war?

Answer. Women in Iraq, and all Iraqis for that matter, now have rights and freedoms not known to them under the former regime. Iraqis, representing Iraq's diverse communities, were successful in forging a compact that not only embodies fundamental democratic and human rights principles, but also makes special mention of the rights and privileges afforded to women. The Constitution provides that all Iraqis, regardless of gender, are equal before the law and that there is equal opportunity for all citizens. Both men and women have the right to participate in public affairs and enjoy full political rights, including voting, nomination for public office, and serving in public office. In this Constitution, women are allowed to transmit citizenship to their children—something many constitutions of other states in the region do not provide. The Constitution contains a provision, similar to the one in the Transitional Administrative Law, whereby the electoral law for the Council of Representatives aims to achieve the goal of women constituting no less than one-quarter of the Council's members.

Our goal in Iraq remains to support Iraqis as they build democratic institutions and a thriving civil society that promote and protect the rights of all Iraqis on an

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equal basis. Through programs sponsored by USAID and the Department of State, including the $10 million Iraqi Women's Democracy Initiative, we are conducting activities designed to improve the status of women and securing the rights of women in the new democracy. Grantees under this Initiative have provided Iraqi women with leadership training. A large proportion of these women were included in registered political entity lists for the January 30 elections and at least 40 percent of women Transitional National Assembly (TNA) members were trained with funds under this Initiative.

We continue to organize conferences for various women's groups to facilitate and ensure their fully informed participation in the political process. At the same time, we continue to provide opportunities for public speaking, and training in media skills, coalition-building, and networking, with a focus on legal, judicial, and constitutional reform. We also supported the establishment of a women's advocacy group, the purpose of which is to lobby Iraqi Government officials, politicians, and community leaders to support interpretations of legislation that would enshrine human rights protections in the Iraqi Constitution, including the rights of women.

In addition, a USAID partner organized an Engendering the Constitution Committee that includes members from government and nongovernmental organizations. The committee worked to ensure the inclusion of gender considerations in the draft constitution. We also conducted a technical analysis of the Constitution, focusing on numerous legal implications of its applications vis-a-vis women's rights. A multiparty women's caucus has also been created to bring women from different political parties together to seek agreement on points related to protecting women's rights. USAID and the Department of State will continue to find successful programs and establish new programs that will focus on guaranteeing legislation that protects the rights of all Iraqis. Our focus in the coming months is to continue to support programs that empower women and ensure that they play an active role in building a strong economically viable and pluralistic society. This will include expansion of previous programs plus training of new female Parliamentarians, support of judicial watchdog organizations, judicial training, and access to cutting edge skills for women to enhance their economic opportunities.

We recognize there is concern about interpretation and implementation of some articles, specifically the role of the religious and civil courts. Article 39 of the Constitution clearly states that "Iraqis are free in their commitment to their personal status according to their religions, sects, beliefs, or choices and that shall be regulated by law." This article specifically provides freedom of choice for all Iraqis with respect to their personal status. The Constitution provides a sound basis for the protection of women's rights, and while the Constitution leaves certain issues to the new government to implement, we will continue to work with the Iraqi Government to ensure the protection of the rights and principles guaranteed in their Constitution. We intend to continue our engagement with Iraqi Government, civil society, and women leaders as they continue to advocate for the rights of Iraqi women.

Question. Eight months ago, I asked you about foreign offers to train Iraqi Security Forces. Three months later, you replied that the Iraqis had not yet responded to the French and Egyptian offers to train substantial numbers of Iraqi Security Forces. My understanding is that they still have not responded.

Please describe any steps the administration has taken to encourage the Iraqi Government to accept these offers.

Could you provide an updated, comprehensive list of offers to train Iraqi Security Forces, a description of the specific offers that were made, and what steps we have taken in each instance to facilitate delivery of the offer?

Answer. Many countries have made offers to train Iraqi Security Forces (ISF), both inside and outside of Iraq. Iraqi Government officials have stated their perception that out-country training is disruptive and expressed their preference for in-country training of ISF. We have supported the Iraqi Government preference for in-country training, while we have encouraged Iraqi officials to also seriously consider out-country training opportunities and we have emphasized to donor countries that Iraq prefers in-country training. The Iraqi Government has the final decision in bilateral agreements. Nevertheless, the Government of Iraq has accepted some ISF training opportunities outside of Iraq. We are aware of training in many of the countries:

(1) Egypt is hosting ongoing ISF training.

(2) Germany has conducted, and continues to conduct training for both the Iraqi Police Service and the Iraqi Army in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) under bilateral agreements. The UAE provides transportation and facilitates; Germany provides equipment and instructors. Belgium has pledged to send 15 to 20 trainers to assist in the effort and may increase that commitment.

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(3) Greece has offered to train military doctors.
(4) Jordan provides pilot and crew training for the UH–1 helicopter, C–130 aircraft and other training for Iraqi officers and senior Non-Commissioned Officers. Jordan also hosts the International Police Training Center where police trainers from 16 countries (including Austria, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Jordan, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States) teach basic police skills.
(5) France has offered to provide gendarme training for the ISF.
(6) Italy has trained Iraqi staff officers at the Italian War College. Italy's Chief of Police has expressed interest in training Iraqi police in antiterrorism and organized crime; the Iraqis have not made a policy decision on that offer.
(7) Malaysia has shown a willingness to provide ISF training. Malaysia also offered to train Iraqi Government officials at their Civil Service Institute and the Iraqi Government has agreed to send some civil servants to Malaysia for training.
(8) King Mohammed VI of Morocco offered ISF training at all Moroccan training centers and institutes.
(9) NATO has opened a training facility just outside of Baghdad, where it conducts training for junior and senior officers. The following countries have contributed officers to the NATO Training Mission in Iraq (NTM–I): Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Turkey, United Kingdom, and the United States. However, all 26 NATO allies are providing equipment or financial contributions to the mission. Iraqis also attend NATO schools outside of Iraq.

NTM–I has also requested all 26 NATO allies to provide training courses to the ISF under the following categories: Police and Strategy; Intelligence; Management; Training; Finance, Budgeting and Programs; Acquisition, Logistics and Equipment; Infrastructure; Communication, Command and Control; General; Army; Air Force; and Public Affairs. Furthermore, the United States is supporting this NATO training requirement by encouraging non-NATO allied countries to make training contributions as well.

(10) The Netherlands has conducted Junior Officer leadership courses for Iraqis.
(11) Spain is currently training ISF on demining techniques.
(12) Slovakia is training ISF in specialized Military Police training.
(13) Turkey has trained Iraqi officers in crowd and riot control and is scheduled to offer courses this year in military observer training, combating smuggling and trafficking, and internal security. Turkey has also offered several courses for 2006, ranging from border security to explosive ordnance detection.

Both MNF–I and our Embassy in Baghdad are ready to support any offer by our allies to contribute to the MNF–I and MNSTC–I programs to train the ISF. However, the Iraqi Government and its allies are free to conclude their own bilateral agreements. We will offer the Iraqi Government resources and expertise to assist them in evaluating and facilitating bilateral training offers where possible.

Question. You stated in your testimony that "Now our police training efforts are receiving new levels of attention." Could you elaborate? What are we doing differently? Please describe the training program? Please describe the field training program for new recruits? How many international police trainers are involved in the field training program? How long is the program? What is the budget for the police training program? How much has the United States contributed and how much do we plan to contribute?

Answer. Our underlying objective of training 135,000 Iraqi police by March 2007 remains unchanged. Basic police training continues at the Jordan International Police Training Center and at several sites throughout Iraq. The police training effort is moving to a new level in several respects, however. Basic police skills training will be expanded from 8 to 10 weeks in duration in the near future. Specialized and technical training programs are being delivered to build police institutional capacity for management, supervision, and a range of required operational police skills. With the exception of Basra, where British civilian police experts are mentoring Iraq civilian police, all police technical assistance, training, and mentoring in Iraq is furnished by 500 U.S. International Police Liaison Officers (IPLOs) and 259 U.S. international police trainers (IPTs). Operational difficulties emanating from the insurgency have delayed full implementation of a planned traditional field training program by the IPLOs. Alternatively, using these personnel, CENTCOM has developed and is using innovative field training and mentoring techniques suitable to the current conditions. For example, the nascent CENTCOM Police Partnership Program (P^3) embeds IPLOs and IPTs within small military teams in order to work with local police stations to deliver technical assistance and on-the-ground training to operational police units in selected areas. In conjunction with MNF–I, Embassy Baghdad

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is moving to develop and deploy provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs) that will include additional police and other criminal justice development advisors to assist police stations and districts at the local level as well as prosecutors and judges. The U.S. budget for the Iraq police training program in both Jordan and Iraq for FY06 is $530.7 million. Since 2003, the United States has expended more than $1.1 billion in training the Iraq police. In addition, the U.S. military has supplied uniforms, weapons, and refurbished police infrastructure.

Question. Two years ago, international donors gathered in Madrid and made pledges for Iraq's reconstruction. Delivery of these pledges has been slow and was the subject of discussions during the June conference in Brussels.

(a) How much of the $13.6 billion pledged at the Madrid donors' conference has been disbursed?

(b) What is the administration doing to encourage our allies to make good on their promises.

Answer. According to our estimates, through the middle of October, other donors have disbursed about $3 billion from their treasuries for assistance in Iraq through deposits to the United Nations and World Bank trust funds, through bilateral projects, or through U.N. agencies for implementation.

The administration is actively engaged with the Iraqi Government and with other donors to persuade donors to make good on their pledges and encourage greater support for Iraq's transition. Senior administration officials regularly raise the issue with our allies and potential donors. In addition to these frequent contacts, there have been four meetings of the International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq (IRFFI) since Madrid in October 2003: In Abu Dhabi, Doha, Tokyo, and the Dead Sea, Jordan. These meetings have proved venues for donors to engage with senior Iraqi Government officials and discuss assistance strategies. At these meetings, donors have announced disbursements, and made some additional pledges. We envision a continuation of the IRFFI conferences and increased engagement with the newly elected Iraqi Government early next year. The Department will continue to work with other donors and with the Government of Iraq to encourage timely, effective, and well-coordinated disbursements of assistance.

Question. You stated in response to my question about a British proposal to partner countries with individual Ministries or clusters of Ministries, that "the Brussels conference did give specific arrangements that countries were prepared to take with various Ministries, with various Departments, with various sectors of the economy." Could you elaborate on these arrangements? Which countries have partnered with which Iraqi Ministries? What is their strategy in each case? How many personnel and financial resources have they devoted to the effort?

Answer. A number of countries have expressed interest in helping the Iraqis build their governing capacity, both at the national and local level. At Brussels, and at the follow-on Dead Sea meeting of the International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq (IRFFI) Review Board meeting, Iraq outlined its national development priorities, including for capacity-building.

Iraq has followed up on these meetings by organizing, in cooperation with the United Nations, an international donors' coordination mechanism in Baghdad, which in turn has set up sectoral working groups. These working groups have fostered a multilateral approach, under which donors coordinate their policy and development assistance in individual sectors. Four have begun to meet, in the areas of health, education, electricity, and rule of law. One of the key topics ITG representatives and donors discuss are specific ways to build capacity.

We will continue to work with Iraq and our international partners to develop programs. To date, several countries have expressed interest in participating in capacity-building activities, including Canada, the United Kingdom, Italy, Japan, Poland, and the Netherlands, in addition to support from the World Bank and United Nations. As Iraqi priorities become clearer, we hope that donors will step forward and identify Ministries with which they are willing to work on concrete projects, and we will encourage such developments. To date, no final agreements have been reached on such proposals.

Question. Which countries who are now part of the coalition with military personnel in Iraq have informed you or the Iraqis that they will be withdrawing their forces? Please provide a list, naming each country, its contribution, and when it has indicated it will withdraw its forces.

Answer. The coalition in Iraq has remained at or about 30 nations. NATO is also on the ground in Iraq. Our coalition partners have been steadfast, courageous, and determined despite the fact that many are also overextended and facing increasing domestic pressure. All coalition partners, including the United States, look forward

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to the day when Iraqis can secure Iraq. Yet, together, we remain committed to creating the conditions and stable environment that will permit all troops to return home.

Norwegian Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg has declared that Norway will withdraw its six officers from the Multinational Force–Iraq and its eight officers from the NATO Training Mission–Iraq by the end of the year. We are aware of no other nations that have plans to withdraw from Iraq.

At the same time, in the past days, Latvia has extended their mandate for a year, Korea has agreed to protect U.N. workers, Mongolia has offered additional commitments, Singapore has again decided to redeploy a Landing Ship Transport (LST) and the associated 100-or-so soldiers, and Tonga has expressed a desire to rejoin the coalition in 2006.

Question. The upcoming December elections and the agreement to create a committee next year to recommend amendments to the Constitution offers a chance—perhaps the last chance—to fully engage Sunnis in the political process. Whether or not it succeeds depends upon the degree to which Sunnis are convinced they can have a meaningful stake in Iraq and protect their interests through politics. And that, in turn, depends upon convincing Shiites and Kurds that it is in their interest to compromise.

- Please describe your strategy for involving Sunnis in the political process and breaking them off from the insurgency.
- Please describe your strategy for convincing the Kurds and Shiites to compromise with the Sunnis.

Answer. As Sunni Arab Iraqis see that their interests are protected through the political process—and that supporting or tolerating the insurgents and terrorists only yields violence and death, breakdown of public services, economic devastation and lawlessness—they will continue to increasingly turn against the insurgents and terrorists.

The most important means to achieve this goal is to ensure that all Iraqis have the opportunity to participate in selecting their leaders in the December election. The choice of these leaders, and the conduct of the election, is the responsibility of Iraqis. The United States will continue to assist the electoral and security authorities, as requested, to see that all Iraqis are able to participate safely in the election.

Fortunately, we can already see that Iraqi Sunni Arabs understand the importance of their participation in the political process. Sunni Arab representatives participated in the writing of the draft constitution, and secured several compromises. In contrast to the January elections, the Independent Electoral Committee of Iraq (IECI) reported significantly larger turnouts in Sunni majority regions in the recent referendum. Sunni leaders are also organizing themselves to participate in the December election, and it appears Sunnis will join other Iraqis in voting in high numbers in the election. Changes in the Iraqi electoral process make it more likely that the new Parliament will have representation from all elements of Iraqi society.

Iraqi leaders of all communities understand that is in all Iraqis' interests to ensure that Sunni Arabs (and all Iraqis) are represented, and feel they are represented, in the Iraqi Government. We will continue to encourage Iraqi leaders, including the Shi'a and Kurds, to increase the participation of all communities in the political process and the government. Leaders and members of all communities have consistently told us they understand the need for full participation by all and are continuing to conduct cross-sectarian political dialog.

Question. A united international front would make it easier for Iraqis to make the hard compromises necessary for the political process to trump violence. It was just that kind of strong international pressure that forced the Shiites and Kurds to reverse their last minute gambit to rig the referendum in their favor.

- Will our Ambassador continue to be the primary interlocutor during political negotiations in the coming months, or will you attempt to get others to join him so that the effort is not seen as exclusively American?

Answer. The United States continues to engage all international partners—including regional states, coalition members, the United Nations, NATO, and the European Union—in support of the political process in Iraq.

We are in close touch with the United Nations and United Kingdom, among others in Baghdad and elsewhere, to determine joint positions and approaches to Iraqis on issues of shared concern. The U.K. Ambassador and the U.N. Representative in Iraq both played key roles in achieving the compromises that led to agreement on the Constitution. U.N. advisers continue to work closely with Iraqis in arranging the elections and training national assembly members and staff.

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From September 29 to October 10, the Secretary's Senior Advisor and Coordinator for Iraq traveled to Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Jordan, UAE, and Qatar to encourage those countries to become more involved in reconstruction and stability efforts within Iraq and to play a helpful political and security role.

Question. You stated in your testimony that as part of the administration's new strategy to "clear, hold, and build," that we would have to clear "the toughest places—no sanctuaries—as we enlarge security in major urban areas and as the insurgents retreat, they should find no large area where they can reorganize and operate freely." Which areas would you describe as the "toughest?" Which areas remain to be cleared?

Answer. The insurgency is primarily a Sunni Arab phenomenon and is not a national movement; it has a very narrow base in the country. It continues to be composed of semiautonomous and fully autonomous groups with a variety of motivations. The insurgency remains concentrated in Baghdad, Ninevah, Al-Anbar and Salah ad Din provinces. Multi-National Force–Iraq operations have disrupted a number of key insurgent cells, limited their freedom of action, and maintained cooperation with influential local leaders in order to keep reconstruction and democracy-building moving forward. A significant factor enabling progress against the insurgency is the dramatic increase in intelligence tips received from the population in the past several months.

Question. We are receiving reports from Iraq which suggest militias remain more powerful than Iraqi security forces. Obviously, Iraq cannot become a united and stable country if the de facto powers on the ground are a patchwork of militias.

- Has the influence of militias waned or increased in recent months? Are militias more powerful than Iraqi security forces in places such as Basra?
- Which militias are active in Baghdad and which areas of the city do they control?
- Who is the primary provider of security for the President—Iraqi security forces, coalition forces, or the Pesh Merga?
- Who is the primary provider of security for members of SCIRI in the government—is it Iraqi security forces or the Badr organization?
- Who has the primary power in the Sadr City—Iraqi security forces or the Mahdi army?
- To what extent are Iraqi security forces comprised of former militia members?
- How many Iraqi security force units consist primarily of one ethnic or sectarian group? How many units rated at being Level I or Level II consist of primarily one ethnic or sectarian group? Please identify these units and their composition.

Answer. We agree Iraq cannot become a united and stable country if the de facto powers on the ground are a patchwork of militias. Recruitment of militiamen into the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) has helped the situation in recent months somewhat; however, there must be a gradual process of weaning security forces drawn from militias away from loyalty to their ethnic or religious group and fostering sole loyalty to the Government of Iraq.

Beginning October 1, 2005, the ISF assumed responsibility for Iraqi Presidential security. The Badr organization provides security for government officials that are members of the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI). In Sadr City the ISF is in control, though the Mahdi army continues to maintain a presence.

At this time, specific data reflecting ethnic or sectarian composition of Iraqi units is unavailable. Iraqi security personnel are assigned to regional units within the guidelines of the Iraqi Constitution. Specifically, Article 9 of the Iraqi Constitution states: "The Iraqi Armed Forces and Security Services will be composed of the components of the Iraqi people with due consideration given to their balance and representation without discrimination or exclusion." Trained Iraqi security personnel are usually assigned to the region from which they are recruited. This practice often results in a force composition which reflects the region protected.

Question. We have seen reports of sectarian violence in places such as Samarra, Basra, and the area south of Baghdad. Some Iraqi officials have told the committee that there is "ethnic cleansing" underway.

- Please describe the extent of sectarian violence in Iraq. What is the trend? Which areas have been most affected? What has been the scale of population shifts? What effect has this sectarian violence had on polarizing politics?

Answer. We monitor sectarian violence closely. Such violence is deplorable and unjustifiable. Given the number of actors in Iraq, it is sometimes difficult to categorize specific incidents as sectarian violence, insurgent activity, or criminal violence, and I would defer to the intelligence community for an assessment of the

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trend. I would note, however, that the areas most affected are, not surprisingly, those areas in which Iraqis of different ethnicities or sects are intermixed.

Violence that appears to be sectarian-driven is indeed polarizing. We and Iraqi leaders fear that such attacks may provoke retaliation, which does not seem to have happened on a large scale. We support Iraqi Government, as well as Iraqi religious, community, and political leaders, as they work to prevent both attacks and retaliation. It is very helpful that leaders from throughout Iraq—as well as members of the international community—have urged Iraqis to exercise restraint and to work toward comity among all Iraqi communities. We continue to urge Iraqi leaders to speak out against all sectarian acts of violence—to make clear that any such acts are anathema to all.

Ending such violence will require continued progress on the political and security fronts. All communities will need to believe their interests and safety can be protected and advanced by politics, not violence. In this context, we are also urging Iraqis to focus on policy-based, rather than identity-based, politics. At the same time, Iraqi security services and justice system will continue to improve their ability to prevent such attacks and to hold responsible any attackers through the legal system.

Question. Iraqi journalists who recently visited the United States and met with the President described to the committee a state of fear on the ground. They indicated that militias—not Iraqi security forces—were the main power in the streets. They said that fear of retribution from militias who answer to political parties was negatively impacting press freedom to the point where they felt that they could not criticize political figures, the political process, or even the Constitution. In fact, they indicated that the only party they felt safe in criticizing was the United States. The administration has cited the number of Iraqi publications as a "striking indicator of the growth of commercial and independent media."

- Can you comment on the state of press freedom in Iraq today?

Answer. A free, professional, and impartial press is essential to the development of institutions of democratic civil societies. Its role as the watchdog over government and in ensuring public accountability is crucial. Iraq's press will play a crucial role as the nascent democracy continues to develop.

The latest available figures show that over 200 newspapers and other publications are currently published and distributed in the country. In addition, Iraqi viewers now have more choice of broadcast media than ever before; they appear to be watching pan-Arab media which carries significant Iraq-focused content, as well as approximately three dozen terrestrial and satellite channels that are attracting audiences inside Iraq and, to some extent, neighboring countries. Among the satellite offerings, perhaps fully half are still broadcasting from outside Iraq, due to a combination of security, economic, and political, and technical professional limitations on media.

These statistics demonstrate that Iraqi press is now enjoying unprecedented freedom, despite many challenges. The rights to speak, publish, and broadcast are being exercised with little or no interference by the government. Despite threats of violence, journalists frequently and openly criticize the government, government Ministers and senior officials, with a freedom that is rare in the region. Iraqi Ministers and Commissions (such as the Special Tribunal and the Electoral Commission) routinely submit to critical questioning by Iraq's media.

However, challenges remain. Many journalists have only limited professional training. The unsettled security situation has hindered media efforts in some areas. At least 22 journalists and media assistants were killed or abducted during the year. There was some self-censorship due to intimidation by politically affiliated militias and insurgents. Despite the enabling legal framework, the lack of independent commercial financing resulted in many media outlets being affiliated with political parties and candidates.

We are working with other donors and the Iraqi Government to advise on media regulatory issues, promote security to facilitate media coverage, and provide training to ensure that Iraq continues to enjoy a competent free press.

Question. A recent article in the New York Times on October 15, 2005, indicated that American and Syrian forces have engaged in at least one clash along the border. The article contained conflicting accounts of whether U.S. forces have actually entered Syrian territory.

- Have U.S. military personnel entered Syria since the invasion of Iraq in March 2003? If the answer is yes, please elaborate with specific details.
- Please provide details on the clash between U.S. and Syrian forces along the Iraq-Syrian border.

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- Please describe Syria's involvement in Iraq. What do you believe is the most effective way to influence Syrian behavior? Since the administration began criticizing Syria's role in Iraq, has Syrian behavior improved or worsen?

Answer. I defer to the Department of Defense regarding the New York Times article about Syrian border crossings. I can say that MNF–I forces continually operate along the Iraqi-Syrian border and are currently conducting operations there. We remained deeply concerned about the Syrian Government's failure to contribute to Iraq stability. There is little evidence to indicate that the regime in Damascus has taken serious steps to curtail the flow of terrorist elements from its territory into Iraq or to cease the use of Syrian territory as a base for former Iraqi regime elements. In fact, the Syrians have not demonstrated a willingness to meaningfully address or assume accountability for these issues as well as others that we have brought to their attention, beginning with the then-Secretary Powell's visit to Syria in May 2003. I have repeatedly called for Syrian action, including at the Brussels Conference in June and as I stated in my opening statement today. The international community, not just the United States, has made its dissatisfaction with Syrian behavior known on many occasions. In order to be a proper participant in this international community, Syria must do more.

Question. Iran is said to have close ties to key actors in the Iraqi Shi'a establishment. Reports indicate that Iran has engaged in an intensive effort to extend its influence in southern Iraq in particular. The British Government recently pointed to Iran as the source of explosives technology which killed eight British soldiers.

- Please describe Iran's role in Iraq.
- What do you believe is Iran's strategic objective?
- Does Iran have influence with elements of the Shi'a community? Who are they?
- How do you believe Iran's negative role can be curtailed? How can it be induced to use its influence with the Shi'a to play a more positive role?

Answer. CLASSIFIED.

Question. What has Turkey told us of its concerns in Iraq? How have we responded?

Answer. Turkey shares our goal of a democratic, stable, and unified Iraq, but is concerned that political divisions in Iraq will lead to an independent Kurdish state. We are working with Turkey and with Iraq against the terrorist Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK)'s presence in Iraq. We have also organized trilateral discussions that encourage direct cooperation between Turkey and Iraq. We believe this approach strengthens Iraqi Government sovereignty, which advances our goal of a unified Iraq.

Question. One of the problems with our reconstruction efforts in Iraq has been the large percentage of contracts that has gone to expensive international contractors who have charged huge premiums for security. By some estimates, these charges have amounted to 25–40 percent of the value of some contracts. Iraqi contractors, on the other hand, are able to operate more freely. And using them has the benefit of stimulating the local economy and boosting employment.

- Can you provide detail on steps that you have taken to transfer contracts to Iraqi businesses?
- Of the more than $20 billion appropriated for reconstruction activity in Iraq, what is the total value of contracts that have gone to Iraqis in nonsecurity areas?
- What contracts with international companies have you cancelled in order to transfer business to Iraqis, and what was their value?

Answer. We have accelerated efforts to shift to more cost-effective, fixed-price contracts directly with local Iraqi firms. We have also shifted more funds into a pilot program to provide grants directly to capable Iraqi Ministries that enable Ministry staff to manage projects directly, increasing Iraqi participation and lowering project costs. The effects of these reforms will become clearer in the coming months. According to the Embassy, no contracts have been cancelled in order to transfer business to Iraqis.

The Project and Contracting Office has sought to maximize the use of local Iraqi firms wherever possible. Between 40 to 50 percent of PCO's IRRF construction projects completed or now underway have been contracted directly to Iraqi firms. PCO expects an even higher percentage of future projects to be contracted directly to Iraqi firms. Iraqi firms receive between 20 and 25 percent of the dollar value of construction projects underway or completed, either under direct contracts or under subcontracts with Design-Build contractors.

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Question. A USA Today story on October 10 said that U.S. reconstruction resources are drying up, mostly due to skyrocketing security costs.

- How much of the money Congress appropriated for reconstruction has been spent or obligated?
- How much additional international assistance does Iraq require in the coming year? In the next 3 years?
- Does the administration plan to ask Congress for additional resources for Iraq? If so, how much? If you have not decided, when will you plan to make such a decision?
- What is your current estimate of the cost of security as a percentage of reconstruction contracts in Iraq?
- What is the average security-related delay in reconstruction spending?
- If contracts are unable to be carried out due to security, does the U.S. Government continue to pay the contractor? Please provide an estimate of the amount of money which has been lost due to delays in spending?

Answer. As of October 19, of the $20.9 billion in U.S. assistance funds (IRRF I and IRRF II) allocated to reconstruction, we had obligated to projects over $17.1 billion (82 percent) and disbursed over $11.2 billion (54 percent).

The October 2003 Joint Needs Assessment prepared by the United Nations and the World Bank prior to the 2003 Madrid Donors Conference estimated Iraq's assistance needs to be approximately $56 billion. While we have learned much and the situation on the ground has changed since the time of this assessment, it illustrates that Iraq's assistance needs are immense. We expect that Iraq will continue to require major donor assistance over the next several years.

The IRRF programs have created a solid base on which to achieve our long-term goal of a stable, prosperous, and democratic Iraq, but many challenges remain. We expressed some of these needs in the President's FY 2006 Budget request of $459 million, which the recent House-Senate Foreign Operations appropriations conference funded at $61 million in ESF and allowed the potential for some funding in INL. It is too early to speculate on what the President may decide regarding future funding requests.

The terms of individual contracts determine whether the U.S. Government continues to pay contractors if they are unable to perform their contracts due to security concerns. Some contracts provide that they may be terminated if security risks are too high to permit performance.

Currently, an estimated 16–22 percent of each IRRF construction project goes to providing direct security for both the implementing partner and the project itself. This represents an increase of 7–11 percent from originally estimated costs and does not include indirect costs caused by delays related to security. We are currently refining our understanding of these indirect costs, and plan to provide further information on this subject in our next quarterly report to Congress on the IRRF, due January 5, 2006.

Question. Please provide the committee with a breakdown by Iraqi governorate of both obligated and committed U.S. funds across the country. What is the strategy behind that spending? Is the strategy to spend funds equitably? Is the strategy to spend more money in those areas with greatest needs? Is more money spent in areas where the security environment is more favorable to reconstruction or is the strategy to spend more money and show more progress in those areas with the greatest insurgent activity?

Answer. We seek to help foster a single national identity in Iraq that brings about stability and cooperation across Iraq's diverse political and cultural landscape. We are continuing to work to ensure we make best use of the Iraq Relief and Reconstruction Fund (IRRF) to support Iraq's reconstruction. We have dedicated considerable resources to addressing enormous national infrastructure needs in the energy, water and sanitation, transportation, and education sectors. We have also spent considerable sums on national democracy programs and Iraqi security forces. These services will benefit all of Iraq's people.

U.S.-funded reconstruction efforts have not been restricted to areas where the security environment is more favorable. Indeed, our strategy includes undertaking major projects in areas where the security environment is very challenging, such as Sadr City. We continue to fund projects in these areas because we recognize the importance of those projects to the overall success of our mission in Iraq. The more we can do in these very challenging areas, the greater the confidence the local populace will have in the Iraqi Government.

The Department will seek to respond to your request for a breakdown of U.S. assistance programs, by governorate, more completely by the end of November.

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[EDITOR'S NOTE.—The answer submitted at a later date to the above request follows:]

Last fall, the Department promised to respond to your request for a breakdown of U.S. assistance programs by governorate. We are pleased to provide the attached set of seven maps, which provide an indicative picture of the distribution of construction programs in the following sectors of the Iraq Relief and Reconstruction Fund (IRRF): Electricity; water and sanitation; justice, public safety, infrastructure and civil society; oil; roads, bridges and construction (including school projects); transportation and telecommunications; and health.

The totals in each of the sectors are current as of February 11, 2006, and do not include overhead or contingency reserve funds, or projects which have not yet been obligated. They also do not include construction contracts issued through the Multinational Strategic Transition Corps–Iraq (MNSTC–I), which deal with the security sector of the IRRF. The distribution may change as remaining IRRF funds are obligated.

IRRF programs are designed, after consulting with Iraqi authorities, first and foremost according to what is needed to facilitate Iraq's transition to self-reliance and prosperity. Equitable geographic distribution is a factor in this process, but is not the sole determinant for any IRRF project.

[EDITOR'S NOTE.—The maps provided could not be converted for print and will be maintained in the committee's permanent files.]

Question. I have heard reports that a U.S. Government contractor is importing ice to Baghdad from Kuwait. And that 70 percent of that ice melts by the time it reaches the Iraqi capital. Can you confirm this and provide any details on this particular contract? If it is accurate that we are importing ice by air, why are U.S. contractors not buying Iraqi ice?

Answer. We have made inquiries and raised your question with the Embassy in Baghdad, but we have not located any information about the report you received concerning a U.S. Government contractor importing ice from Kuwait to Iraq. We will gladly follow up any additional information you provide us about this specific report.

Question. Could you please provide for the record, the current status in each of the following areas, our goal in each area, and the date by which you plan to achieve that goal.

1. Iraqi Police Force on duty trained to Level I
2. Iraqi Armed Forces on duty trained to Level I
3. Border Patrol on duty trained to Level I
4. Total Iraqi Security Forces on duty trained to Level I
5. Crude Oil Production
6. Crude Oil Exports in million barrels per day
7. Amount of electricity in MW generated nationwide
8. Amount of electricity in MW generated in Baghdad
9. Average hours of electricity per day nationwide
10. Average hours of electricity per day in Baghdad
11. Average megawatt hours generated
12. Iraqi unemployment
13. Total non-American aid disbursed to Iraqi reconstruction
14. Percentage of sewage treated nationwide
15. Sewage treatment projects completed
16. Percentage of drinking water that is potable
17. Water treatment projects completed

Answer.

1–4. Iraqi security forces

Standing up Iraqi security forces is an important part of the administration's transition strategy in Iraq. With USG assistance, the Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior forces continue to make progress in their ability to provide security for the Iraqi people.

Ministry of Interior

The Iraqi Police Force is trained to enforce the law, safeguard the public, and provide internal security at the local level. Currently the Iraqi Police Force is over 70,000 strong and projected to reach its full complement of 135,000 by February 2007. Over 17,000 Border Police have been trained and equipped, and the Government of Iraq has authorized a total force of more than 28,000 Border Police, which

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MNSTC–I plans to train and equip by May 2006. For police and border forces, we do not apply the metrics used for Defense forces (Level I, II, etc.).

Ministry of Defense

The training progress of Iraqi Armed Forces should be considered in a broader context. The most accurate measure of progress is the number of Iraqi units that lead planning and successful execution of counterinsurgency operations with minimal assistance of coalition forces (Level II). At this level, Iraqi units control their areas of responsibility, and it is at this level where there has been steady progress.

Currently more than 80,000 Iraqis have been trained as members of the military forces. In several parts of Iraq, Iraqi forces have already taken responsibility for security. One MOD battalion operates fully independently of MNF–I forces and has the lead in one province. Within 6 months, we expect a significant percentage of Iraqi MOD forces will achieve Level II readiness.

5–6. Oil

Crude Oil Production

Iraqi production averaged 2.11 million barrels per day (BPD) for the first 10 months of 2005, including an average of 1.94 million barrels per day in October 2005. The goal is to produce 2.8 million BPD by December 2006.

Crude Oil Exports

Iraq exported an average of 1.42 million BPD for the first 10 months of 2005, including an average of 1.24 million BPD in October 2005. The goal is to export 2.0 million BPD by December 2006.

Iraq's ability to meet production and export targets is impacted by two factors:

- Insurgent attacks, especially on the northern pipeline, which have led to lower production and exports, and a resultant $2.2 billion in foregone revenue for the first 9 months in 2005.
- The deterioration of its oil and gas infrastructure over the last 25 years, including mismanagement of reservoirs, corrosion of pipelines and facilities, and damage after three wars and looting.

We are working with the Iraqi Government to address infrastructure security issues through the creation of dedicated security units (Strategic Infrastructure Battalions) to protect key oil and energy infrastructure nodes and routes, and by physically hardening key infrastructure points. USG projects in the oil sector are intended to eliminate logistical bottlenecks and to improve infrastructure for production and exports. The two most important projects are the rehabilitation of the Rumaila field to restore reservoir pressure and the reconnection of pipelines across the Tigris River at the al-Fathah crossing. These projects are scheduled to be completed in the second quarter of 2006.

7–11. Electricity

Under USG programs ($5.2 billion in funds from IRRF 1 and 2), nearly 1,660 megawatts (MW) of new electricity generation capacity has been added, and we have increased the reliability of 1,100 MW in generation. Power in Iraq has generally averaged over 12 hours per day during July–November 2005, although power availability in Baghdad is often lower due to insurgent attacks on transmission and fuel infrastructures and to unequal power sharing by southern governorates. The USG is working with the Ministry of Electricity to strengthen technical skills and implement a fuel strategy to improve the efficiency and sustainability of power plants.

Peak generation nationwide (megawatts, MW)

Peak generation nationwide for November 1–7 averaged 4,200 MW. The goal for peak generation by end of December 2005 is 5,500 MW.

Peak generation in Baghdad area (MW)

Baghdad area generation includes five power plants near the city. Because Iraq's electricity is one network (excluding imports), power generated throughout the country supplies all geographical locations. Peak generation for Baghdad for November 1–7 averaged 810 MW. There are no set goals for Baghdad area plants. Current generation levels are significantly below the plants capacities because of ongoing fall maintenance, the overall deteriorated condition of the plants, insufficient skills within the Ministry of Electricity to perform required operations and maintenance, and the continued interdiction of fuel supplies.

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Hours of electricity per day nationwide

The daily hours of electricity nationwide for November 1–7 averaged 14.6 hours. The goal for hours of electricity by the end of December 2005 is 12 hours, although insurgent attacks may impact performance of this sector.

Hours of electricity per day in Baghdad

Baghdad's daily hours of power, in general, have been severely limited by continuing attacks on the high voltage transmission lines and fuel supply infrastructure. The daily hours of power in Baghdad for November 1–7 averaged 10.6 hours. The Iraqi Government's goal by the end of December 2005 is 12 hours.

Electricity supplied nationwide (megawatt-hours, MWh)

The electricity supplied for November 1–7 averaged 91,000 MWh; the goal by the end of December 2005 is 110,000 MWh.

12. Iraqi unemployment

We have not set a specific unemployment rate goal for Iraq. In April 2004, the date of the most recent nationwide survey, the Central Statistics Office estimated national unemployment at 22.5 percent (including both job seekers and long-term unemployed). This survey found much higher unemployment in some governorates, particularly among the young.

Because unemployment provides a fertile breeding ground for insurgents, we have made short-term job creation for youth a major priority in our reconstruction assistance. IRRF projects directly employ over 135,000 Iraqis at present. From August 2004 through September 2005, USG managed reconstruction programs provided approximately 4.6 million job opportunities to Iraqis, ranging from a few weeks to 1 year in duration, making the USG one of the largest employers in Iraq.

While short-term projects increase the number of employment opportunities, creating longer term and full-time jobs is primarily the task of Iraq's private sector. We are helping the Iraqi Government address long-term job creation through programs aimed at strengthening private sector development, lending programs and support for market-oriented reforms.

13. Total non-American aid disbursed to Iraqi reconstruction

The entire international community will benefit from a stable, democratic, prosperous Iraq, and so we encourage strong multilateral support for Iraq's reconstruction. Our short-term goal is to ensure full disbursement of the $13.5 billion pledged as quickly as possible. The total non-American aid disbursed on Iraqi reconstruction, both to the United Nations and World Bank trust funds and to bilateral projects, was $3.14 billion as of October 19, 2005. We continue to support Iraqi Government efforts to encourage countries and international institutions to increase their pledges and disbursements of funds already pledged. We are working to foster greater donor coordination for assistance to Iraq.

14–17. Water

Percentage of sewage treated nationwide

Iraq's water and sanitation facilities currently operate at a fraction of their prewar capacity due to years of neglect, electricity shortages, and post-war looting. A June 2005 report from the Iraq Ministry of Public Works and Municipalities (MMPW) states that sewage treatment covers only 6 percent of the population, with the river system receiving untreated waste from more than 20 million people. The MMPW report estimates that 37 percent of all dwellings are connected to a sewage system, mostly in the urban areas. According to the United Nations Development Program's (UNDP) Iraq Living Conditions Survey 2004 (ILCS 2004), 64 percent of households in Iraq are classified as having "improved" sanitation toilet facilities, which are defined as covered dry pit latrines, latrines connected to a public sewage network, or latrines connected to a septic tank.

Sewage treatment projects completed

Seven total major sewage or wastewater treatment facilities have been rehabilitated to date in Iraq, including renovation of all three sewage treatment plants in the city of Baghdad. The completion of sewage and wastewater treatment projects to date has the capacity to serve 7.3 million people in Iraq.

By the end of 2006, completion of additional U.S. projects are expected to serve another 1.5 million Iraqis. Rehabilitation is underway on a major sewage treatment plant in Karbala and is scheduled for completion in February 2006. This treatment plant will have the capacity to serve the population of Karbala, which is estimated at approximately 550,000 people.

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Percentage of drinking water that is potable

According to the June 2005 MMPW report, approximately 50 percent of treated water that reaches a distribution system is lost due to leakage.

There is little data available on water quality in Iraq, but the MMPW report assumed that nearly all water used for drinking fails to meet WHO standards due to poor operations and maintenance. According to the ILCS 2004, which used the U.N. definition of safe sources for drinking water, approximately 54 percent of households nationwide have access to a safe and stable supply of drinking water, while 17 percent of households have neither safe nor stable drinking water. Groundwater in the governorate of Basrah is largely not drinkable due to its high salinity. In the ILCS 2004, three in four households in Basrah were reported as having unsafe drinking water.

Water treatment projects completed

Rehabilitation or expansion has been completed on five large-scale water treatment plants and 14 compact water treatment plants, with the capacity to serve 3.1 million Iraqis. A new water treatment plant is being built in Nasiriyah, which will have the capacity to serve the entire population of the city (approximately 550,000 people). USAID's Rural Water Supply Initiative is underway and will provide wells, treatment plants, or storage facilities for approximately 200,000 Iraqis living in rural areas where water is scarce or brackish. Fourteen of the planned 49 rural water supply projects have been completed.

In January 2005 USAID completed the $23 million rehabilitation of the Sweet Water Canal to provide higher quality raw water to the Basrah and Umm Qasr region, serving approximately 1.8 million Iraqis.

Responses of Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to Questions Submitted by Senator Hagel

Question. During our exchange, you noted that (1) the administration is considering whether to pursue direct dialog with Iran in the context of Iraq, similar to the Afghanistan context, and, (2) Ambassador Khalilzad has some flexibility to engage through multilateral processes his Iranian counterparts. (Note: As necessary, please provide classified answers to fully respond to the questions.)

Does the administration intend to allow Ambassador Khalilzad to engage his Iranian counterparts similar to the model in Afghanistan?

Has Ambassador Khalilzad engaged Iranian Government officials in Iraq or elsewhere? What was discussed?

Answer. CLASSIFIED.

Question. In your testimony you announced that you will begin to apply in Iraq the successful Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) model that was used in Afghanistan. This is good news.

Please give us a detailed description of this plan. How many teams will there be? Which U.S. agencies will be represented? Where will the teams be located? What is the time line for their deployment?

Answer. There will be 15 Provincial Reconstruction Teams (one in each non-KRG province) and one Regional Reconstruction Team that covers the three KRG provinces. They will be located in or near the provincial capitals for the non-KRG provinces, and in Erbil for the RRT. The Department of State, Department of Defense, Department of Justice, and the U.S. Agency for International Development will be represented in the PRT program. It is likely that other agencies will be added to the PRTs in the future. In addition, we are inviting our coalition partners to place representatives in the PRTs.

The initial three "proof of concept" PRTs will be established by mid-November in the provinces of Ninawa (Mosul), Tamim (Kirkuk), and Babil (Hillah). We will stand up the additional PRTs in the coming months.

Question. The Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction has determined that there is a reconstruction gap meaning that the FY 2003 and FY 2004 funds that Congress allocated for Iraq's reconstruction will fail to achieve prewar levels of water, electricity, health and oil networks in Iraq. In some cases, security costs for specific projects reached 80 percent of a project's funds. At the same time, corruption in Iraq is endemic. For example, the current Iraqi Government has charged the Iraqi Defense Minister of the Interim Government and others for embezzling more than $1 billion.

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(a) Please describe in detail U.S. efforts, across the interagency, to ensure that U.S. funds are being effectively and transparently spent for the purpose of rebuilding Iraq.

(b) Does the administration intend to request additional reconstruction funds from Congress for Iraq?

Answer. (a) The Department works closely with our implementing partners, including USAID and DOD's Project Contracting Office, to monitor vigorously contract compliance for all projects. As we noted in the quarterly report on Iraq reconstruction of October 7, Embassy Baghdad is working to improve its information management system to better track the status of all contracts. This improved system will enhance our ability to correct problems and prevent abuse.

In addition to our own internal monitoring, the Department cooperates closely with both the GAO and with the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction (SIGIR), which conduct their own investigations into allegations of malfeasance to minimize abuse of taxpayer funds. Beyond monitoring our projects, IRRF funds support several projects to combat corruption in Iraq, including providing technical training and operational support to the Commission on Public Integrity, the agency in the Iraqi Government charged with fighting corruption.

(b) The Iraq Relief and Reconstruction programs have created a solid base on which to achieve our long-term goal of a stable, prosperous, and democratic Iraq. For example, IRRF assistance has added 1,600 megawatts and rehabilitated facilities providing an additional 1,100 MW of electricity, which will increase Iraq's generation capacity by roughly 50 percent over the estimated prewar levels. IRRF programs have also provided clean water and sewage treatment to millions of Iraqis denied services under the previous regime. Many challenges remain to reconstruction. These include attacks by insurgents, distortions in Iraq's economy caused by subsidies on food and fuel, the limited, but growing, capacity of Iraqi Ministries and the need to keep worn-out infrastructure operating. All of these factors have had an effect on slowing down and, in some cases, reducing the output of the reconstruction effort.

Our strategy requires sustained commitment of personnel and financial resources. These are expressed in the FY06 budget request ($459 million), which we urge Congress to fund fully. The FY 2006 budget request is designed to ensure the successful continuation of ongoing nonconstruction programs initially funded from the FY 2003 and FY 2004 Supplemental IRRF funds, which we expect to be exhausted. Additional foreign assistance beyond FY 2006 is currently under discussion.

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