

**THE TRANSITION TO A CIVILIAN-LED U.S.
PRESENCE IN IRAQ: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES**

HEARING
BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH CONGRESS
SECOND SESSION

NOVEMBER 18, 2010

Serial No. 111-135

Printed for the use of the Committee on Foreign Affairs



Available via the World Wide Web: <http://www.foreignaffairs.house.gov/>

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

62-399PDF

WASHINGTON : 2010

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office
Internet: bookstore.gpo.gov Phone: toll free (866) 512-1800; DC area (202) 512-1800
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THE TRANSITION TO A CIVILIAN-LED U.S. PRESENCE IN IRAQ: ISSUES AND CHAL- LENGES

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2010

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 1:24 p.m. in room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Howard L. Berman (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Chairman BERMAN. The committee will come to order. Of course, for the third day our Caucus is meeting, although I think it is about to end. So I hope we will be joined by some other members of the Caucus soon, although we are fortunate to have Mr. Klein.

In a moment I will recognize myself and the ranking member for up to 7 minutes for purposes of making an opening statement. I will recognize the chairman and ranking member of the Middle East and South Asia Subcommittee for 3 minutes for opening remarks, and then all other members will have an opportunity to make 1-minute opening statements, if they wish to do so. Members may also place written statements in the record.

Before I begin the opening statement, I would just like to say a few words relevant to the committee. We are coming to the end of this Congress. I hope, I expect, I intend for there to be one other hearing during this session, hopefully the first week of December, a hearing on the implementation of Iran sanctions. It is our intention to have such a hearing. That legislation is one of the things I think we can rightfully be proud of accomplishing in this past Congress. There are other issues as well, but I am not going to belabor all of that at this particular moment.

I do want to say to my ranking member that I do think we have accomplished a number of things together, and while we haven't agreed on absolutely every single issue, you have been a very good partner, a spirited partner. I don't want to be presumptuous, because I know these decisions haven't been made, but, were such a decision to be made, I would look forward to working with you for 2 years in your new capacity and my new capacity, if I can afford to be presumptuous about my own situation.

So we have a number of colleagues on the committee who will not be here again because we have a Caucus, and who will not be here in the next Congress. I would like to mention them, but since they are not here I am just going to mention one of my dear friends and, I think, a great member of the committee who will not be with

us in the next Congress, Congressman Klein, who made a tremendous contribution to the product of this committee and to the Congress.

I think all of us, and I know this is true of the ranking member from our earlier conversations over the years, shares the feeling. We will miss having you here very much, Congressman Klein.

[Applause.]

Chairman BERMAN. I will now begin the opening statement. This hearing will delve into a subject, and I apologize to the witnesses for the delay, a subject that, not too long ago, was at the very top of our foreign policy agenda: Iraq and the U.S. role there.

U.S. military forces currently face a December 31, 2011, deadline for a complete withdrawal, in accordance with the 2008 agreement with the Iraqis. As a result, the primarily Defense Department-led military campaign is being transformed into a diplomacy, assistance, and advisory effort led by the State Department and USAID. This transition is unprecedented in terms of its sheer complexity, the resources required to do it right, and the likely consequences of failure.

As part of this transition, the State Department will be expected to manage a number of specialized security-related tasks—often with the use of contractors—that in the past were handled exclusively by U.S. military forces. These include operating early-warning radar systems that alert our personnel to incoming rocket fire, handling unexploded munitions that land inside of U.S. compounds, running unmanned aerial surveillance, and recovering downed vehicles.

The State Department's largest program in Iraq is now—and will continue to be—police training, but the challenges facing the department in this area will become even greater with the launch of a new advanced police training and reform program and with the handoff of some training responsibilities from DoD.

In order to monitor political, economic, and security developments in Iraq; identify potential threats to U.S. interests before they emerge; and effectively engage with key political players, the State Department also plans a significant expansion of the U.S. diplomatic presence in Iraq. In addition to our Embassy in Baghdad—which is already by far the largest staff of any U.S. Embassy in the world—State is planning to open four other diplomatic posts: Consulates-general in Basra and Erbil and temporary posts, called “embassy branch offices” in Mosul and Kirkuk.

The U.S. transition is proceeding in a difficult and dangerous setting. Iraq's failure to form a workable governing coalition promptly after the elections has complicated, and, at times, worsened the security environment in which State is assuming the responsibilities once held by Defense.

Our diplomats and development professionals in Iraq continue to face significant perils, with insurgent rocket fire sometimes targeting the Embassy compound. Movements of U.S. officials outside their facilities often require security details of up to 20 or 25 people. And with the host country currently unable to provide the security and services routinely offered in most nations, the security environment may become even more treacherous after the withdrawal of U.S. forces.

The transition from Defense to State in Iraq is a massive undertaking, and it won't come cheap. But by any calculation, the costs associated with an increased State Department presence pale in comparison to the resources we have expended in Iraq through so many years of war and terrorism. If funding this transition will help preserve the hard-won progress in Iraq and provide a solid foundation from which the United States can support Iraq's internal stability and foster a peaceful Iraqi role in a strategically critical region, then it is likely to be worth paying the price—even in these difficult economic times.

I have a number of questions about the transition. How have Iraqi political problems been affecting transition plans and the security situation of our personnel on the ground? How often and under what circumstances will our diplomats be able to move around the country? What do they expect to accomplish after the U.S. military departs Iraq?

How will our diplomats, civilian professionals, contractors, and facilities be protected if U.S. troops are not at hand? What can we expect from the Government of Iraq in terms of protection of our diplomatic establishments? How is State responding to concerns over shortcomings in past management and oversight of its programs in Iraq—as raised, for example, by the Special Inspector-General for Iraq Reconstruction—particularly as State plans to ramp up use of private contractors to provide both security and life-support services?

And finally, the big question that I hope our witnesses from State and Defense will address head on: What are the consequences for U.S. national security if we shortchange the transition effort? In a world where Congress is going to have to make very, very difficult budgetary choices, why should funding the transition be a high priority? How will a robust civilian presence in Iraq after 2011 serve the larger national interest? What is the administration's long-term vision for U.S.-Iraq relations?

Regardless of how one feels about the origins of the Iraq war and U.S. policy in the last decade, these complicated issues challenge all of us to look ahead, in a bipartisan, manner at the kind of strengthened U.S. civilian presence in Iraq that can advance our interests and enable us to stand with the Iraqis who are fighting extremism and trying to develop their country.

In a moment I will introduce our witnesses, but first to the ranking member and presumptive chair of the next Congress, Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, for any opening remarks that she might have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Berman follows:]

Thursday, November 18, 2010

Chairman Howard L. Berman's opening statement at hearing, "The Transition to a Civilian-Led U.S. Presence in Iraq: Issues and Challenges"

Verbatim, as delivered

This hearing will delve into a subject that, not too long ago, was at the very top of our foreign policy agenda: Iraq and the U.S. role there.

U.S. military forces currently face a December 31, 2011, deadline for a complete withdrawal, in accordance with the 2008 agreement with the Iraqis. As a result, the primarily Defense Department-led military campaign is being transformed into a diplomacy, assistance, and advisory effort led by the State Department and USAID. This transition is unprecedented in terms of its sheer complexity, the resources required to do it right, and the likely consequences of failure.

As part of this transition, the State Department will be expected to manage a number of specialized security-related tasks – often with the use of contractors – that in the past were handled exclusively by U.S. military forces. These include operating early-warning radar systems that alert our personnel to incoming rocket fire; handling unexploded munitions that land inside of U.S. compounds; running unmanned aerial surveillance; and recovering downed vehicles.

The State Department's largest program in Iraq is now – and will continue to be – police training, but the challenges facing the Department in this area will become even greater with the launch of a new advanced police training and reform program and with the handoff of some training responsibilities from DOD.

In order to monitor political, economic, and security developments in Iraq; identify potential threats to U.S. interests before they emerge; and effectively engage with key political players, the State Department also plans a significant expansion of the U.S. diplomatic presence in Iraq. In addition to our Embassy in Baghdad— which is already by far the largest staff of any U.S. Embassy in the world—State is planning to open four other diplomatic posts: consulates-general in Basra and Erbil and temporary posts called "embassy branch offices" in Mosul and Kirkuk.

The U.S. transition is proceeding in a difficult and dangerous setting. Iraq's failure to form a workable governing coalition promptly after the elections has complicated, and, at times, worsened the security environment in which State is assuming the responsibilities once held by Defense.

Our diplomats and development professionals in Iraq continue to face significant perils, with insurgent rocket fire sometimes targeting the Embassy compound. Movements of U.S. officials outside their facilities often require security details of up to 20-25 people. And with the host country currently unable to provide the security and services routinely offered in most nations, the security environment may become even more treacherous after the withdrawal of U.S. forces.

The transition from Defense to State in Iraq is a massive undertaking, and won't come cheap. But by any calculation, the costs associated with an increased State Department presence pale in comparison to the resources we have expended in Iraq through so many years of war and terrorism. If funding this transition will help preserve the hard-won progress in Iraq and provide a solid foundation from which the

United States can support Iraq's internal stability and foster a peaceful Iraqi role in a strategically critical region, then it is likely to be worth paying the price—even in these difficult economic times.

I have numerous questions about the transition. How have Iraqi political problems been affecting transition plans and the security situation of our personnel on the ground? How often and under what circumstances will our diplomats be able to move about the country? What do they expect to accomplish after the U.S. military departs Iraq, including at the diplomatic posts established in Iraq's provinces?

How will our diplomats, civilian professionals, contractors, and facilities be protected if U.S. troops are not at hand? What can we expect from the Government of Iraq in terms of protection of our diplomatic establishments? How is State responding to concerns over shortcomings in past management and oversight of its programs in Iraq – as raised, for example, by the Special Inspector-General for Iraq Reconstruction – particularly as State plans to ramp up use of private contractors to provide both security and life-support services?

And finally, the big questions that I hope our witnesses from State and Defense will address head on: What are the consequences for U.S. national security if we shortchange the transition effort? In a world where Congress is going to have to make very, very difficult budgetary choices, why should funding the transition be a high priority? How will a robust civilian presence in Iraq after 2011 serve the larger national interest? And what is the administration's long-term vision for U.S.-Iraqi relations?

Regardless of how one feels about the origins of the Iraq war and U.S. policy in the last decade, these complicated issues challenge all of us to look ahead, in a bipartisan manner, at the kind of strengthened U.S. civilian presence in Iraq that can advance our interests and enable us to stand with the Iraqis who are fighting extremism and trying to develop their country.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman, and I also would like to begin my statement by thanking three departing members from our side from our committee, Senator elect Boozman of Arkansas and two gentlemen from South Carolina, Mr. Barrett and Mr. Inglis. We will miss them, and we thank them for the great service to our committee.

And thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this timely hearing today. The U.S. mission in Iraq is in a time of transition. Embassy leadership has rotated twice since the committee last received testimony from both the Department of State and the Department of Defense. A more fundamental transition is now underway as the U.S. combat mission in Iraq ended in August 2010 and the U.S. role shifts further.

As a result, while I respect and admire and thank our witnesses for their record of service to our nation, it is difficult to understand, Mr. Chairman, why the administration declined to send higher ranking officials from the State Department and the Defense Department to a full committee hearing on a matter as important as Iraq and future U.S. policy.

I am concerned that such a decision reflects a broader strategic ambivalence in the policy and our approach to Iraq. We owe it to our troops who have sacrificed so much in the course of their mission in Iraq to ensure that a strategic defeat does not spring from their hard-fought, tactical victory.

Unfortunately, for most of the last 2 years much of the focus has been on dealing with short-term considerations such as drawing down troop levels quickly without sufficient focus on the emergence of Iran as the key power broker in the country or the long-term se-

curity applications and situations or the nature and the extent of the future U.S.-Iraqi relationship.

We do have a strategic framework agreement with Iraq, but what is the administration's strategy for moving this effort forward? We must be both proactive and prospective. Iraq can play a critical role in limiting the Iranian influence, which, as all of us know, has been destabilizing in the region, and Iran's ability to threaten and intimidate its Gulf neighbors is well documented.

So a stable, secure and friendly Iraq can help separate Iran and Syria, can provide Turkey with a key alternative to economic involvement with Iran, can demonstrate to the Gulf states that Iran cannot dominate the northern Gulf, nor can it expand to the south, and, finally, a friendly Iraq can help our key allies in the region.

I would ask that our witnesses address this question: If they agree that greater U.S. leverage in Iraq can play a critical role in limiting Iran's influence and Iran's ability to threaten and intimidate its neighbors, and what specifically is the United States' near and also far reaching and long-term strategy for addressing the Iranian threat in Iraq? Would you agree that a stable, sovereign and secure Iraq will show that Sunni and Shiite Muslims can cooperate and can diffuse the threat of Sunni extremism, as well as the kind of Shiite extremism backed by Iran?

And going one step further, we have to recognize that Iran's activities in both Iraq and Afghanistan are components of a broader threat that it poses to U.S. interests and allies in the Middle East and beyond. The need for a sound, comprehensive strategy has never been more vital as we transition our presence to an overwhelmingly diplomatic one and as Iran seeks to exploit that transition period to draw the recently formed Iraqi Government under its thumb. We may still be able to achieve a lasting, grand strategic victory, but not if we treat Iraq as if they were some sort of end state rather than the need for a continuing strategic focus.

And finally, Mr. Chairman, given the need for full oversight of our Iraq policy, I am concerned about news that the State Department has failed to comply with repeated requests by the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction for contract data on the Iraqi police training program. Given the troubled history of our police training efforts there, the need for oversight of this program is particularly important so that we do not repeat past mistakes.

I share the concerns that were raised by Senators Grassley and Coburn in their October 6 letter to the Secretary of State about the continued failure of the Bureau to take immediate steps to address the lack of cooperation with the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction.

What guidance has been given employees of the Department of State in regards to responding to requests made by SIGIR to ensure that the unanswered request for information does not continue? What has been done by both State and DoD to implement the recommendations set forth by SIGIR?

And finally, Mr. Chairman, I would like to express concern regarding the plight of the residents of Camp Ashraf. Mr. Chairman, last year you and I issued a joint statement urging the Iraqi Government to live up to its commitment to ensure the continued well-being of all who live in Camp Ashraf. However, reports indicate

that denied medical care, including vital treatment for cancer patients, are still being denied to the residents of Ashraf.

Secretary Feltman, I would urge the Department of State to please intervene more proactively to ensure that the humanitarian protections to which Ashraf residents are entitled and were promised are going to be upheld.

Mr. Chairman, I thank the witnesses for their time and look forward to hearing from them about the administration's plans going forward. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the time.

Chairman BERMAN. Well, thank you very much, Ms. Ros-Lehtinen.

We are now—I hate to tell you—going to have a series of five votes. As soon as the fifth vote is cast I will come back here. Talk among yourselves or whatever.

I just have one thing, though, since the ranking member raised it. I want to reaffirm the notion that the commitments on Camp Ashraf that were made by the Iraqi Government and all that, I share the concern that those are kept and that we not forget about that issue.

With that, the committee will recess until we have finished the votes on the House Floor. Thank you.

[Recess.]

Chairman BERMAN. I see neither the chair nor the ranking member of the Middle East and South Asia Subcommittee and so does any member wish to—the gentleman from California, Mr. Rohrabacher, is recognized for 1 minute.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Thank you very much. I won't be able to attend the whole hearing because of a speech on the Floor of the House that I am working on about 1 hour from now, but, Mr. Chairman, I just would like to note that as we go into this phase where American troops are withdrawing we cannot throw those people who are our friends, throw them out as if they meant nothing to us.

Those people who are currently allied with us in the war against radical Islam, especially the mullah regime in Iran, should not be taken for granted and should not be put in a very dangerous situation. I talk specifically about Camp Ashraf. These are protected persons by our own definition. We should not try to placate or let the Iraqis build some sort of cordial relationship with the mullah dictatorship in Iran by the sacrifice of these freedom loving people.

Second of all, I would hope that the people in Iraq understand that we see it when churches are bombed. We feel it badly when, yes, Muslims are killing Muslims, but when Muslims there in Iraq start killing Christians it raises even greater alarm here in the United States. Just last week, 50 Christians were killed in a Syrian church as it was bombed by radical Muslims.

We have got to make sure that the Government of Iraq knows that is unacceptable, all of the factions in Iraq know that is unacceptable. We need to have a consulate in Erbil to give the Kurds a little bit of protection so they will know that they aren't going to be so victimized, and perhaps the Christians, the Syrian Christians, need a province of their own in Iraq that will give them some sort of safety in that type of environment.

Those are issues that I think need to be put in the record, Mr. Chairman, at the beginning of this hearing. Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to register those areas of concern.

Chairman BERMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired. And now I think we should hear the testimony of our witnesses.

Ambassador Jeffrey Feltman serves as the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs. Previously he served as a U.S. Ambassador to Lebanon. He was also head of the Coalition Provisional Authority's (CPA) Office in the Erbil Province of Iraq and simultaneously served as Deputy Regional Coordinator for the CPA's Northern Area. Ambassador Feltman has been a career member of the Foreign Service since 1986, and I think he is uniquely and specially qualified to testify on this subject.

Dr. Colin Kahl is the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for the Middle East. Prior to joining the department he was a Council on Foreign Relations Fellow, working at the department on counterinsurgency, counterterrorism, and stability operations. Dr. Kahl has also served as coordinator for the Obama campaign's Iraq—Obama campaign? Was it the Obama campaign? The Obama campaign's Iraq Policy Expert Group. Oh, I get it. Okay. It was. Well, it is good they have an expert group. And was a Senior Fellow at the Center for a New American Security, a Washington-based think tank.

Gentlemen, we are very pleased you could be with us, and we look forward to your testimony. Your entire statements will be included in the record. If you choose to summarize, that will be good. Assistant Secretary Feltman?

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE JEFFREY D. FELTMAN, ASSISTANT SECRETARY, BUREAU OF NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE (FORMER UNITED STATES AMBASSADOR TO LEBANON)

Ambassador FELTMAN. Chairman Berman, Ranking Member Ros-Lehtinen, honorable members of the committee, thank you for holding this hearing and for inviting Dr. Kahl and me to appear before you today. Thank you for agreeing to enter my entire statement into the record.

The next few years will be critical for our relationship with Iraq, for Iraq's relationship with its neighbors and for the relationship between the people of Iraq and their own government. In each of these relationships, the United States has a tremendous amount at stake. With Iraq situated strategically in the Middle East, it is profoundly in our national interest that Iraq emerge as a strategic partner to the United States, a sovereign, stable, self-reliant nation and a positive force for moderation and stability in the region.

For most of the past 40 years, Iraq has played a negative, a destabilizing role in the region, often allied with our adversaries and posing a threat to U.S. interests and those of our friends and allies. In the year ahead, as the military continues its drawdown in accordance with our security agreement with Iraq, our mission is clear. We must secure the gains our nation and our military have made at great cost and great sacrifice, and we must help Iraqis move forward in a long-term partnership with us.

Even a few years ago, we might not have been able to anticipate having the strategic opportunity that we have today. My written statement describes a number of the challenges Iraqis are facing, including the need to establish and rebuild functioning social, economic and governing institutions.

Iraqis have made significant strides, particularly in the security area. Iraq has substantial natural resources, a rich cultural history and resilient, diverse population, but Iraq is not yet in a position to resolve its challenges and make strategic progress on its own without continued assistance from us. Left unresolved, the problems Iraq faces have the potential to seriously affect our country's national security as a weak and an unstable Iraq could provide sanctuary for international terrorists, become a tool of Iraq's aggressive neighbors and destabilize the Gulf.

Last week's agreement on the framework to form an inclusive representative government was a real milestone, but none of us should be under the illusion that success is a foregone conclusion or that there won't be significant challenges ahead. It is in our interest that we remain engaged and be a leading partner of Iraq through this transition and beyond.

As you know and as my colleague here can further illuminate, the United States is drawing down its military presence in Iraq. That presence has already been reduced to below 50,000 troops and is slated to draw all the way down by the end of 2011. But we need a long-term and sustainable partnership with Iraq, and Iraq's leaders have made it clear that they want a close, an enduring and a civilian-led partnership with the United States.

The State Department, working intensively with our colleagues in the Defense Department, the White House and agencies all across the government, is determined to secure that long-term partnership and to get this transition right. I would like to thank Dr. Kahl and his colleagues at the Department of Defense in particular for their close coordination with us at State on this effort.

What we have done is identify the areas where Iraq most needs our continued assistance over the next 3-5 years in order to become more stable and self-reliant. We have identified the programs that will have the biggest impact and the most critical areas, and we are implementing those programs with our Iraqi partners, building off the progress they and our Embassy and military colleagues have made over the last few years.

One of the most important examples of work the State Department will be assuming is the police development program. Over the past 7 years, the United States has helped Iraq's Ministry of Interior to expand its security forces up to approximately 600,000 people and train them in counterterrorism and basic police skills.

But now we must ensure that these forces also have the management, leadership and technical tools and capabilities to provide for internal security, protect Iraq's vulnerable minorities that we have heard already talked about and uphold the rule of law. This is a basic element of civil society, of more reliant economic growth and of respect for human rights.

Likewise, as our military presence continues to draw down, we will continue robust security cooperation with Iraq through an Office of Security Cooperation. We are also implementing assistance

programs aimed at ensuring that Iraq's economy will be able to stand on its own feet and be truly self-reliant. Iraq isn't there yet. Despite having vast oil wealth in the ground, Iraq lacks more basic infrastructure and will not be able to fully benefit from these resources for at least 5 more years.

Our programs help Iraq to establish banking and regulatory frameworks and put in place policies for economic growth and diversification which will also help secure the investments of U.S. companies in Iraq.

Outside of Baghdad, as you mentioned, Mr. Chairman, we plan to open two consulates general in Basra and Erbil and two temporary embassy branch offices in Kirkuk and Mosul. Our officers there in these offices will engage directly with Iraqis at the regional and local levels, helping to diffuse tensions and build institution and other capacities. Tensions between Iraq's communities are still significant, and we have an important role to play in helping Iraq's leaders resolve these sources of friction.

Turning to how we are transitioning from a military to civilian lead, let me say first that we have, as you all know, the finest military in the world, and they have done heroic work in Iraq. The State Department will now assume some of these roles and activities previously carried out by the military; some of these the State Department has never done before. Dr. Kahl may talk more about the excellent support that DoD is providing to us as we move forward.

Within the State Department there are seven operational areas we focus on when we talk about transition: Property, facilities, security, life support, medical, aviation and contractor oversight. In each of these cases, we are engaged in very robust planning and pursuing our interests in partnership with the Iraqis.

In summation, securing Iraq's future as a sovereign, stable, self-reliant nation, a positive force in the region and a strategic partner to the United States is a massive undertaking. I see the transition from a military-led presence in Iraq to a civilian-led presence to be a defining test of the Foreign Service and of the nation's diplomatic corps that I am proud to serve in.

Our civilian effort in Iraq is a prime example of Secretary Clinton's strong desire to create a more expeditionary workforce that can rise to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century. It is imperative that we succeed and that we are able to seize the opportunity and make good on the enormous investments and sacrifices made by Americans and Iraqis over the last 7 years.

I look forward to answering any questions the committee may have, and I look forward to working with this committee on achieving these goals.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Feltman follows:]

TESTIMONY OF
AMBASSADOR JEFFREY D. FELTMAN
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS
BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
NOVEMBER 18, 2010

Chairman Berman, Ranking Member Ros-Lehtinen, Honorable Members of the Committee:

Thank you for inviting me to discuss issues and challenges associated with the United States' transition from a military-led to a civilian-led presence in Iraq. The planning for this transition was set in motion more than two years ago and its implementation continues today on a daily basis. At the U.S. Department of State, the Department of Defense, and many other agencies and offices, hundreds of colleagues have participated in this unprecedented undertaking. At the State Department, there has been tremendous effort on the part of Secretary of State Clinton and her deputies, and all the way down to the desk officers, to make sure that we secure the gains made by our military colleagues and work with our Iraqi partners to achieve an Iraq that is sovereign, stable, and self-reliant.

This is a critical time in Iraq's history and the history of the U.S.-Iraqi relationship. For much of the past 40 years, our two nations have been at odds; Iraq has posed a threat to our interests and to its neighbors and has been a destabilizing force in the region. In this moment of transition in Iraq and in our bilateral relationship, we have an opportunity to help Iraq emerge as a strategic partner of the United States and a positive force for stability and moderation in a troubled region.

Alongside the changes in our bilateral relationship, Iraq itself is transitioning from years of extreme instability and strife. As Iraq's economy and governing institutions develop, and regulatory and legal frameworks and the rule of law become more firmly established, Iraq will become increasingly self-sufficient, able to protect its people and promote their welfare without current levels of U.S. or other outside assistance. But Iraq is not there yet, and our continued assistance over the next few years will be critical to ensuring that Iraq can sustain its progress and secure a brighter future for its people.

The Challenges Facing Iraq

Iraq faces no shortage of challenges. The primary political challenge of the weeks and months to come will be to implement the agreement on government formation and power-sharing, recently signed, and then for Iraq's political leaders to make the necessary but difficult compromises regarding a number of major outstanding issues, including passage of a hydrocarbons law, resolution of disputed internal boundaries, reintegration of displaced persons,

and reforming the de-Baathification process. The agreement on government formation, signed by Iraqi leaders on Thursday, November 11, comes after months of difficult negotiations over power-sharing and coalition politics. The agreement led to the Council of Representatives' election of a parliament speaker and a president of Iraq later on November 11. The parliament met again on November 13 to stress the importance of national partnership, and Iraqi leaders plan to meet again following the Eid al-Adha holiday to continue the complex negotiation of ministerial portfolios and implementation of the government formation agreement. Iraqis have agreed to usher in a government that is representative and inclusive, reflecting Iraq's diverse population and the results of the March elections. In deciding to form such a government, Iraqis have chosen a path of national reconciliation and responsibility. We welcome this development, even as we recognize the many difficult decisions and complicated negotiations that lie ahead. Now it will be up to Iraq's leaders to follow through.

Another serious challenge is that posed by violent extremists in Iraq. While October marked another month of reduced numbers of civilian casualties and overall levels of violence in Iraq remain at or near their lowest point since 2003, we have seen a disturbing uptick in what appear to be coordinated attacks on the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and attacks targeting specific sectarian communities. A recent spate of attacks, including the horrific October 31 attack on congregants of the Sayidat al-Nejat Christian church, the bombings in Shia areas of Baghdad, followed by attacks on pilgrims in Karbala and Najaf in the first week of November, attacks on Christians in Baghdad on November 9 and 10, and coordinated attacks on ISF in Diyala and Kirkuk, bears the hallmarks of al-Qaida-related groups.

We condemn these senseless and reprehensible acts of violence against civilians and Iraqi forces. Much of our on-the-ground coordination with Iraq is aimed tirelessly at bolstering the Government of Iraq's ability to maintain security and protect Iraq's diverse population, while also respecting their human rights. We continue to train and mentor the Iraqi Security Forces, who have responded to these incidents, even while they have been target of attacks themselves. Prime Minister Maliki has acted to protect these vulnerable groups and launched investigations into the attacks. We stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the Iraqi people in rejecting violence aimed at sowing dissent and dividing Iraqi communities.

In addition to the immediate political and security challenges is a wide range of factors that threaten Iraq's progress: lingering ethnic and sectarian tensions; disputed internal boundaries and Arab-Kurd and Sunni-Shia faultlines; new and fragile democratic institutions; a 30-year legacy of failed economic policies, high unemployment, and broken oil infrastructure; widespread corruption; a large youth population scarred by war and deprivation; an underdeveloped criminal justice system; millions of displaced citizens; and neighbors looking to exercise undue influence within Iraq.

Taken together, these problems have the potential to directly and seriously affect our own country's national security interests. A weak and unstable Iraq could provide sanctuary for

international terrorists, become a tool of Iraq's aggressive neighbors, face intensified internal strife, and have a destabilizing effect on the region and on international energy markets.

U.S. Policy Responses – Helping Iraq Move Forward

Accordingly, our programs are designed to perform as one integrated whole to help Iraq tackle these problems and mitigate these risks:

The Strategic Framework Agreement (SFA) signed between the USG and the Government of Iraq (GOI) is the foundation for building our continued strategic partnership. This is a partnership that includes a robust diplomatic, political, economic, and security cooperation relationship. The Department of Defense, the interagency community, and every functional bureau of the State Department are involved in advancing the goals of this important partnership.

Our consulates and Embassy Branch Offices (EBOs) will be positioned along key faultlines in order to defuse potential Arab-Kurd or Sunni-Shia crises, to mitigate foreign interference, and to seize opportunities for investment, stimulating economic opportunity for Iraq's growing population and reducing unemployment.

The Administration has approved a robust Office of Security Cooperation (OSC-I) under U.S. Chief of Mission authority in Iraq and we are working with our Iraqi partners on the way forward. The mission of any OSC is to build security relationships that develop partner military capabilities for self-defense and multinational operations and promote specific U.S. interests. One of the key components of our strategy depends on the development of Iraqi Security Forces that are capable of defending the population against internal and external threats. A future OSC-I will provide a key element of support for that development and help to cement our enduring partnership with Iraq.

The State Department Police Development Program will be an important component of efforts to promote the rule of law in Iraq and U.S. strategic interests in the region. It is designed to support and assist the Government of Iraq in developing the leadership and management of its police and Ministry of the Interior and will incorporate mentoring and advising on strategic planning; budget execution; improved border enforcement; as well as sophisticated training on combating terrorist financing, crime scene exploitation, forensics, and human rights. It will be a time-limited program based out of three Iraqi cities, Baghdad, Basrah, and Irbil, and will reach crucial policing institutions in the northern, central, and southern regions of the country.

Our rule of law and police development programs address the most important remaining gap in Iraq's internal security: its lack of a strong and professional police force integrated within a judicial system that is effective and impartial. Honest police and fair judges are essential to Iraqis' confidence in their government, and to economic growth and job creation. We have been working in concert with our colleagues at the Department of Defense to ensure that the transition

of the police training mission to a State Department-run program is smooth and builds upon the progress the program has already made training thousands of Iraqi police. While current Defense Department-led police training efforts have already demonstrated success – the ISF’s work protecting polling places during the national elections offers one example – our task now is to ensure that the GOI is able to sustain that progress in a civilian policing context. This program is being coordinated with the Department of Justice and Department of Homeland Security, who have coordinated programs in Iraq since 2004.

A crucial area of our engagement with Iraq is economic growth and diversification. Iraq is actively re-engaging with the international economy after years of war, isolation, and economic mismanagement. Given the circumstances, remarkable progress is being made in a variety of key fields that are vital to the success of Iraq’s economy, including oil, electricity, and finance. Baghdad has stabilized the dinar and tamed inflation. Ministries are spending their own capital to improve infrastructure. International investors are beginning to look seriously at opportunities in Iraq. Much of this progress has been achieved through the assistance of our diplomats and partners in Iraq.

Nevertheless, the Iraqi economy still faces significant challenges. Over-reliance on oil for government revenue subjects Iraq to swings in international oil prices. Even with additional oil production and exports, Iraq is likely to face fiscal difficulties in the near term. Expansion of Iraq’s oil sector could be hindered by infrastructural and political challenges. Unemployment remains high. Barriers to foreign investment including corruption, the security environment, and an under-developed banking system continue to dissuade investors from entering Iraq. Our development assistance programs, led by USAID, focus on traditional economic, political, and cultural cooperation. These programs help strengthen institutions, address ethnic and sectarian tensions, and provide economic opportunities for Iraq’s people. A major focus of USAID’s development program is on improving health and education in Iraq. Furthermore, USAID and USDA focus on strengthening the agricultural sector – a major source of employment in Iraq. The programs in place will increase job opportunities for Iraq’s young people. State Department programming also provides basic humanitarian assistance, including support for the voluntary return and reintegration of Iraq’s displaced through shelter rehabilitation and socio-economic reintegration, as well as protection and basic assistance for those who remain displaced.

Our assistance programs are also focused on private sector development, anti-corruption, and legal and regulatory reform, essential to creating new jobs and economic growth. The Departments of State, Treasury, Commerce, and Agriculture partner with Iraqis to help them transition from failed economic policies to the path of economic self-reliance. As Iraq develops its oil resources and increases net revenue, we expect it to augment the cost sharing that already takes place on a number of assistance programs.

Recognizing the importance of “matching” as a tool for achieving Iraqi buy-in and long-term sustainability, Embassy Baghdad places considerable emphasis on receiving matching

funding or other support from the Government of Iraq as a core component of assistance planning, execution, and evaluation. As set forth in the April 2009 matching guidelines, all USG agencies in Baghdad are working closely with their Iraqi counterparts to secure cash or in-kind matching for bilateral assistance programs.

We are using our bilateral assistance to Iraq, guided by the Strategic Framework Agreement, to help build Iraqi institutions, support sound macroeconomic policies, improve the livelihoods of Iraqi citizens, promote private sector growth, and encourage international economic engagement. U.S. assistance is vital at present to help consolidate hard-won gains and ensure a smooth transition from military- to civilian-led engagement in Iraq.

We are working closely with Iraqi officials and entrepreneurs to cement mutually-beneficial economic ties between our two countries. Iraq has great potential as an export market for U.S. businesses, which will further strengthen long-term economic linkages with the potential to help create jobs here in the United States.

Transition from U.S. Military to U.S. Civilian Lead

Our FY 2010 and FY 2011 programs are all designed to advance Iraq on this trajectory towards self-reliance. The transition has been underway now for well over a year. Our Embassy and the U.S. military command began intensive work on transition under Ambassador Hill and General Odierno and continue close coordination under the leadership of Ambassador Jeffrey and General Austin. Both USF-I and the Embassy are synchronized on the ground on a strategy coordinating all the elements of national power, and guiding the detailed planning of the military and civilian elements of the U.S. Government operating in Iraq.

USF-I identified 1,127 essential activities that they were performing in Iraq that needed to be transitioned to other bodies. USF-I and the Embassy completed the process of canvassing, categorizing, and defining "handover" plans for these activities and functions, determining what would be turned over to Iraqi entities, to American civilian, multilateral or private institutions, and which activities would be terminated. The Embassy has already taken the lead on 150 of these tasks, and will assume control of another 310 as USF-I complete its drawdown. The remaining programs will be transferred to CENTCOM, the Government of Iraq, or phased out with program completion.

On the operational side, there are seven key components to our transition: property, facilities, security, life support, aviation, medical, and contractor oversight. For property issues, the Embassy is aggressively pursuing property negotiations with the caretaker government. The timeline for securing agreement is tight as our goal is for each site to be fully operational by October 1, 2011.

Regarding facilities, to the maximum extent possible we will repurpose existing Defense Department infrastructure and property for each of the Consulate General and Embassy Branch

Office site. The State Department's Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations (OBO) is finalizing site plans and coordinating site preparation and construction with USF-I at each site now.

The State Department's Bureau of Diplomatic Security will assume security responsibilities for all diplomatic personnel and facilities in Iraq, an unprecedented undertaking in a non-permissive environment without military support. In addition to static and movement security, this will include operating and maintaining 60 MRAPs, explosive ordinance disposal (EOD) teams, Unmanned Aerial Vehicle reconnaissance/surveillance, tactical communications, advance warning capabilities for indirect fire, tactical operations centers at each site, and tactical intelligence.

For life support, the Defense Department has agreed to provide logistical support through LOGCAP IV on a reimbursable basis, and we are actively engaged in realizing that transition. The State Department will also take over responsibility for emergency medical care and casualty evacuation from the Defense Department. Medical support will be provided through a contract provider, separate from the LOGCAP contract.

On aviation, the State Department's International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Bureau's Air Wing (INL/A) will manage and execute State's aviation operations in Iraq in support of INL, Diplomatic Security (DS), and the Embassy. Costs are tracked and allocated equitably to respective programs. Baghdad will serve as the main hub, with Erbil and Basra as supporting hubs. Operations and facilities will be coordinated and streamlined to ensure cost efficiency and standardization.

For contractor oversight, we are taking a host of measures to ensure proper U.S. Government management and oversight over the increased number of contractors, including private security contractors, that are necessary to support our operations after the military's withdrawal. Department-wide, we have instituted stronger qualification and conduct requirements for our security contractors, as well as mandatory cultural awareness training. A Diplomatic Security direct-hire must ride in every security convoy and additional personnel are deploying across the country to ensure we have the full range of officers with oversight responsibilities at every site in Iraq. These are just a few of the measures we are taking to ensure proper oversight of our security contractors.

Oversight of the LOGCAP life support contract is also a challenge, and one in which we are benefiting greatly from the Defense Department's assistance in continuing to provide contract oversight and administration experts from the Defense Contract Management Agency (DCMA) and the Defense Contract Audit Agency (DCAA).

We have a number of ways to mark the progress of this transition. To reach full operating capacity by October 1, 2011, there are a number of key milestones and intermediate objectives we must meet. We have already made significant progress. For example, down from

the height of the PRT program in 2008, when there were 33 PRTs and ePRTs, there are now 16 PRTs in operation. From May through September we will close down the remaining PRTs gradually. Applicable processes and functions will be transferred from PRTs to Iraqi provincial governments, nongovernmental organizations, or other U.S. posts. Our ability to conclude an orderly closeout of the PRT program is one important benchmark.

Going forward, we have additional milestones we will use to ensure we are ready to assume full operations at our diplomatic sites when the military withdraws. Contracts for site design and construction will be let in January. By July of 2011, the INL Police Development Program (PDP) will establish its initial operating capacity. By October 1, 2011, we hope that all of our diplomatic posts outside the Embassy and the PDP should be at full operating capacity.

Conclusion

The next few years in Iraq will be critical, both for its reconstitution as a stable, responsible, and thriving democratic state, and for its reintegration into the region. National reconciliation inside Iraq will be an important element of Iraq's ability to maintain positive relations with its neighbors. The establishment of a new representative and responsible government in Iraq also acts as a counterargument to the erroneous regional narrative that Iran exercises an overriding influence in Iraq. In fact, Iran's recent attempts to wield influence over developments in Iraq have been markedly unsuccessful. In 2008, Iran failed in its attempt to prevent Iraq's leaders from signing the Security Agreement with the United States. In the run-up to the elections in March of this year, Iran also failed in its push for the Iraqi election law to specify a "closed list" system. After the elections, Iran invited the winners to Tehran in a failed attempt to get a government with a "made-in-Tehran" imprimatur. Recent political developments in Iraq show that Iraq's political leaders recognize that an inclusive government is in Iraq's best interests, not the narrow government and marginalization of Iraq's Sunnis favored by Iran.

The United States and Iran ought to have a shared interest in Iraq's stability. The U.S. understands that Iraq needs to maintain productive relationships with all of its neighbors, including Iran, and we encourage Iran to maintain constructive and peaceful relations with Iraq, with whom it shares a history of cultural, religious, and economic ties. But Iran needs to understand and accept that Iraq is a country that can only prosper if all of its people, Sunni and Shia, Arab and Kurd, Muslim and Christian, see that their interests are protected and reflected in the government. And we remain troubled by Iran's continued support and training of militant groups that target both Iraqis and U.S. personnel. Iran should respect Iraqi sovereignty and end its support for those who carry out terrorist attacks in Iraq. It is up to Iraq's new government to choose the relationship it wants with Iran. Iraq has enormous potential to be a political and economic leader in the region, and it has the resources to provide a high standard of living to its citizens. It is our view that Iraqi political leaders can realize this potential by making choices that

lead to the development of a strong, independent state that has a balanced and productive relationship with its neighbors, including Iran.

The assistance provided by the United States to Iraq is not a substitute for Iraqi responsibility. Our assistance is not open-ended, rather it aims to help Iraq meet its needs, stand up its economy, and cement its democratic system over the next five to seven years, at which point Iraq will have meaningful new economic development and revenues to become more fully self-reliant. Our continued help during this critical window, however, is vital.

The strategic importance of this moment cannot be overemphasized. In the last week, the broad outlines of Iraq's new government have become clear, and it will be an inclusive government, with full participation by Iraq's Sunni Arabs. This agreement received broad support from important regional and international actors including Turkey, Egypt, the UAE, Kuwait, the Arab League, and the United Nations among others. The process leading to agreement on the new governing coalition was long and arduous, but the issues at stake were vital, and the fact that Iraq's leaders were able to address their differences through negotiations, not force, was encouraging. The initiative of Kurdistan Regional Government President Masoud Barzani led to the breakthrough and brought leaders of Iraq's political coalitions to address, in face to face meetings, the thorniest of the issues that divide them – issues like de-Baathification, hydrocarbons legislation, and the status of Kirkuk. The conversations that began in those meetings will need to continue as the new government takes shape and begins its work.

Democratic governance – especially in a new democracy like Iraq – can be chaotic, and it would be a mistake to downplay the challenges that lie ahead. The unexpected walkout of Iraqiyya during the parliamentary session last week is an example of this. There will be times when the very inclusiveness of the new government will be a source of frustration, because a broad government is not the most efficient government. But the Iraqi people have chosen inclusivity and national reconciliation despite these challenges, and we strongly support their efforts.

Chairman Berman, Ranking Member Ros-Lehtinen, Members of the Committee, thank you, again, for allowing me the opportunity to address our evolving relationship with Iraq. I look forward to answering any questions you may have and to continuing to work with the Committee and the Congress to help secure our interests in a more stable, prosperous, and peaceful Middle East.

Chairman BERMAN. Thank you very much, Assistant Secretary Feltman.

And now Secretary Kahl?

STATEMENT OF COLIN KAHL, PH.D., DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR THE MIDDLE EAST, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Mr. KAHL. Chairman Berman, Representative Ros-Lehtinen and distinguished committee members, I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today alongside my colleague and friend, Assistant Secretary Jeff Feltman, to discuss the issues and challenges associated with the United States' transition from a predominantly military to a civilian-led presence in Iraq.

This transition includes four key components. The first is ensuring that the Iraqi Security Forces reach what we are DoD call minimum essential capabilities or MEC. The second is developing a State-led police development program. Third is expanding the diplomatic presence, and fourth is establishing an Office of Security Cooperation in Iraq or what we call OSC-I.

These programs, implemented under the Strategic Framework Agreement, are the foundation for building our continued strategic partnership with the government and people of Iraq. This is a partnership that includes robust diplomatic, political, economic and security cooperation.

Assistant Secretary Feltman has discussed the overall U.S. policy and the specific programs for our post 2011 presence, so I want to focus my remarks on the security situation in Iraq, which is enabling our responsible drawdown to continue as the Iraqis step forward and assume primary responsibility, as well as the support the Department of Defense is providing to the State Department to help the transition process that Assistant Secretary Feltman alluded to.

The first thing I want to talk about is the security environment. I know members have concerns about the readiness of the Iraqi Government to provide security in Iraq as U.S. forces draw down between now and December of next year, particularly as extremist groups, such as al-Qaeda in Iraq, continue to wage high profile attacks against innocent Iraqi civilians.

Indeed, we continue to see evidence that extremist groups are capable of horrific attacks. Recent examples include the October 31 attack on Christian church members, the bombings in Shia neighborhoods of Baghdad, followed by attacks on pilgrims in Karbala and Najaf in the first week of November, attacks on Christians in Baghdad on November 9 and 10 and recent coordinated attacks on Iraqi Security Forces in Diyala and Kirkuk.

Nevertheless, it is crucial to keep in mind that these attacks have repeatedly failed to accomplish al-Qaeda in Iraq's number one strategic objective, and that is to spark a return to widespread insurgency and communal civil war. Moreover, despite the often exaggerated media narrative that depicts an Iraq that is teetering on the brink of failure or just on the verge of unraveling, the underlying security situation as assessed by our commanders on the ground remains strong.

Overall levels of attacks and Iraqi civilian casualties have remained relatively constant at their lowest levels of the post 2003 period for more than 2 years. This consistently low level of violence is even more remarkable considering that it has been maintained as the Iraqi Security Forces have assumed primary responsibility for security throughout the country and as our force levels have declined from roughly 144,000 troops on the ground when we took office in January 2009 to roughly 50,000 today, while those troops have simultaneously shifted their mission from helping to lead combat counterinsurgency operations to a predominantly supporting, advise and assist role.

Since January 1, 2009, the Iraqi Security Forces have been in the lead on security operations, a role that they have more capably embraced with each passing month. On September 1 of this year, we made the official transition to Operation New Dawn and drew down to below 50,000 U.S. troops, fulfilling the President's commitment made at Camp Lejeune in February 2009 and further cementing the Iraqis' status as in the lead in the security role.

While the United States continues to provide vital support to the Iraq Security Forces, including training, equipping, mentoring, advising and providing certain critical technical enablers, the Iraqis are very much in charge, and they simply no longer need such large numbers of U.S. forces to keep the violence in check. The ISF have also remained professional and independent of political pressure, despite the prolonged period of uncertainty associated with Iraq's Government formation period.

Beyond the increased capability of the ISF, the primary factor underlying the improved security situation is a viable political process that now exists as the enduring framework in which key disputes and questions related to the distribution of power and resources can be resolved.

The vast majority of Iraq's major parties, factions and communal groups, including many former militants, are now heavily invested in the political system. In the 6 months it took to form a government in Iraq in 2006 following the December 2005 elections, extremists exploited a security vacuum to plunge Iraq into civil war.

In 2010, no such vacuum emerged, despite 8 months of sometimes raucous government formation negotiations, largely due to the activities of the ISF and a functioning caretaker government. That is progress. Last week, after months of heated negotiations, Iraqi leaders took a major step forward with the formation of a government coalition, including all the major Iraqi political blocs, as well as agreement on a set of political reforms addressing a series of divisive issues.

As Vice President Joe Biden often remarks, "politics has broken out" in Iraq. As we all know, it is often messy, as it is even in the most developed democracies, but the Iraqi commitment to the political process is real. As we have witnessed in recent weeks, violence will continue to challenge this process, but as long as the Iraqis stay committed to resolving their differences through the force of words rather than the force of arms, we believe Iraq is unlikely to sink back into widespread violence.

Iraq will continue to suffer terrorist attacks, both over the next year and after U.S. forces complete their drawdown, but the level

of U.S. support required to assist the Iraq Security Forces in keeping violence at low levels and below a threshold that we judge would threaten the viability of the Iraqi state is a small fraction of previous years. Moreover, it is our judgment that the current military footprint on the ground is currently so modest compared to what it used to be in the past that the remaining drawdown over the next year is unlikely to trigger a dramatic surge in violence.

I want to say a few words about what DoD is doing to help the State Department in the transition that is ongoing. As Assistant Secretary Feltman stated, the Department of State, the Department of Defense and other agencies and offices have undertaken unprecedented levels of coordination and planning for the transition in Iraq. DoD has an excellent working relationship with the State Department, and we are working together at all levels to achieve a successful transition.

As one would expect with a transition of this scope and complexity, challenges exist. DoD is doing everything it can to help set up the State Department for success during this process. After a comprehensive review process, USF-I, that is U.S. Forces in Iraq, identified 1,127 essential activities that DoD performs in Iraq. The tasks were binned into 24 different categories, examples of which include intelligence, telecommunications and reconciliation efforts.

In close coordination with Embassy Baghdad, USF-I completed the process of canvassing, categorizing and defining handover plans for these activities and functions, determining what would be turned over to the Iraqis, what would be turned over to U.S. civilian agencies or multilateral or private institutions or terminated altogether.

The Embassy has already taken the lead on 150 of these tasks and will assume control of another 310 as USF-I complete its drawdown over the next year. Eighty-two will be transferred to U.S. Central Command and 36 to the Iraqi Government. Five hundred and thirty have been completed, and 22 were identified as nonessential and therefore will be phased out.

In addition, we are leaning forward to provide the State Department with excess equipment and other forms of support. Recently, for example, the Army has identified 60 excess MRAPS and nine fuel trucks for transfer to the State Department for use beyond 2011. An OSD and Joint Staff team is also working with State to plan for the receipt and maintenance of this equipment. We are working with the State Department to help them define other requirements for additional equipment and support. We have established a State-DoD Senior Ad Hoc Working Group that meets on a weekly basis to work through State's requests, as well as other emerging requirements.

On September 27, the Deputy Secretary of Defense approved providing life support after 2011 to the State Department on a reimbursable basis, so-called LOGCAP support. Embassy Baghdad is receiving substantial technical support from USF-I, the Army Materiel Command and OSD staff. This is a good start, but in the coming year DoD will likely have to do even more to assist the State Department to ensure a successful transition, and we will.

In conclusion, our continued engagement in Iraq remains vital. We are now at the point where the strategic dividends of our enor-

mous sacrifice are within reach, as long we take the proper steps to consolidate our hard-fought gains. Building a long-term strategic partnership with Iraq, based on mutual interests and mutual respect, presents many advantages for the United States.

Continued U.S. support for the Iraqi Security Forces, including joint training exercises and military exchanges, will also help to ensure steady improvements in Iraqi capabilities even beyond 2011 and over time improved interoperability that will facilitate Iraq's long-term cooperation with the United States and other regional states to address common challenges.

Continued security assistance and cooperation through the Office of Security Cooperation in Iraq that we are in the process of standing up will assist in addressing concerns we share with Iraq, such as counterterrorism, counterproliferation, maritime security and air defense.

In this context, however, reduced funding is a challenge for the transition. Security costs are high, and planners must base costs on the conditions today, not on best case assumptions of what they may be in 2012. As the U.S. draws down its military presence, the Iraqi Government must feel that it has the foundational capabilities to defend against external threats both objectively and subjectively.

Our country has sacrificed a great deal in Iraq, and fully resourcing the mission to its completion is vital to ensuring that this enormous national investment produces enduring results. We are 10 yards from the goal line and need one final push.

With that I look forward to your questions. Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Kahl follows:]

**TESTIMONY OF
DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
FOR THE MIDDLE EAST DR. COLIN KAHL
BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
NOVEMBER 18, 2010**

Chairman Berman, Representative Ros-Lehtinen, and distinguished committee members, I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the issues and challenges associated with the United States' transition from a military to civilian-led presence in Iraq. This transition includes four key components: 1) ensuring the Iraqi Security Forces reach minimum essential capabilities; 2) developing a State-led police development program; 3) expanding the diplomatic presence; and 4) and establishing an Office of Security Cooperation in Iraq (OSC-I). These programs, implemented under the Strategic Framework Agreement, are the foundation for building our continued strategic partnership with Iraq. This is a partnership that includes robust diplomatic, political, economic, and security cooperation.

Assistant Secretary Feltman has discussed the overall U.S. policy and the specific programs for our post-2011 presence, so I will focus on the security situation in Iraq, which is enabling our responsible drawdown as the Iraqis step

forward and assume responsibility; and the support the Department of Defense is providing to the State Department to help set them up for success.

The Iraqis Are In The Lead

I know members have concerns about the readiness of the Iraqi government to provide security in Iraq as U.S. forces draw down between now and December 2011, particularly as extremist groups, such as AQI, continue to wage attacks against innocent Iraqi civilians. Indeed, we continue to see evidence that extremists groups are capable of horrific attacks. Recent examples include: the October 31 attack on Sayidat al-Nejat Christian church members; the bombings in Shia areas of Baghdad, followed by attacks on pilgrims in Karbala and Najaf in the first week of November; attacks on Christians in Baghdad on November 9 and 10, and coordinated attacks on Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) in Diyala and Kirkuk. Nevertheless, these attacks have repeatedly failed to accomplish AQI's objective: to spark a return to widespread insurgency and communal civil war. Moreover, despite the often exaggerated media narrative that depicts Iraq on the verge of unraveling, the underlying security situation remains strong. Overall levels of attacks and Iraqi civilian casualties have remained relatively constant at their lowest levels of the post-2003 period for more than two years. This consistently low level is even more remarkable considering it has been maintained as the ISF

have assumed primary responsibility for security and as our force numbers have declined from roughly 144,000 in January 2009 to roughly 50,000 today.

Since January 1, 2009, the ISF have been in the lead on security operations, a role they have more capably embraced with each passing month. On September 1, we made the transition to Operation New Dawn and drew down to below 50,000 U.S. troops, fulfilling the President's commitment and further cementing the Iraqis' lead security role. While the U.S. continues to provide vital support to the ISF -- training, equipping, mentoring, advising, and providing critical technical enablers -- the Iraqis are in charge, and they simply no longer need such large numbers of U.S. forces to help them keep the violence in check. The ISF have also remained professional despite the prolonged period of uncertainty associated with Iraq's government formation negotiations.

Beyond the increased capability of the ISF, the primary factor underlying the improved security situation is a viable political process that now exists as the enduring framework in which key questions of the distribution of power and resources in Iraq can be resolved. The vast majority of Iraq's major parties, factions, and communal groups -- including many former militants -- are now heavily invested in the political system. In the six months it took to form a government in 2006, extremists exploited a security vacuum to plunge Iraq into

civil war. In 2010, no such vacuum emerged, largely due to the activities of the ISF and a functioning caretaker government.

Last week, after months of heated negotiations, Iraqi leaders took a major step forward with an agreement to form a governing coalition including all the major Iraqi political blocs, as well as agreement on a set of political reforms addressing divisive issues. As Vice President Joseph Biden has remarked, "politics has broken out" in Iraq. It is often messy, as it is in even the most developed democracies, but the Iraqi commitment to the political process is real. And, as we have witnessed in recent weeks, violence will continue to challenge this process. But as long as Iraqis stay committed to resolving their differences through the force of words rather than the force of arms, Iraq is unlikely to sink back into widespread violence.

Iraq will continue to suffer terrorist attacks, both over the next year and after the U.S. completes its drawdown. But the level of U.S. support required to assist the ISF in keeping violence at levels below a threshold that would threaten the Iraqi state is a small fraction of previous years. Moreover, our military footprint on the ground is currently so light compared to what it used to be that the remaining drawdown is very unlikely to trigger a dramatic uptick in violence

Setting State Up for Success

As Assistant Secretary Feltman stated, the Department of State, the Department of Defense, and other agencies and offices have undertaken unprecedented levels of coordination and planning for the transition in Iraq. DoD has an excellent working relationship with the State Department and we are working together at all levels to achieve a successful transition. As one would expect with a transition of this scope and complexity, challenges exist. DoD is doing everything it can to help set up the State Department for success.

After a comprehensive review process, USF-I identified 1,127 essential activities that DoD performs in Iraq. The tasks were binned into 24 categories; examples include intelligence, telecommunications, and reconciliation. In close coordination with Embassy Baghdad, USF-I completed the process of canvassing, categorizing, and defining “handover” plans for these activities and functions, determining what would be turned over to Iraqi entities, U.S. civilian agencies, or multilateral or private institutions or terminated altogether. The Embassy has already taken the lead on 150 of these tasks, and will assume control of another 310 as USF-I complete its drawdown; 82 will be transferred to USCENCOM, and 36 to the Iraqi government; 530 have been completed, and 22 were identified as non-essential and will be phased out.

In addition, we are learning forward to provide State with excess equipment and other support. The Army has identified 60 excess MRAPS and nine fuel trucks for transfer to State. An OSD and Joint Staff team is working with State to plan for the receipt and maintenance of this equipment. We are also working with State to help them to define requirements for other equipment and support. We have established a State-DoD Senior Ad Hoc Working Group that meets on a weekly basis to work through State's requests as well as other emerging requirements. On September 27, the Deputy Secretary of Defense approved providing life support post-2011 to the State Department on a reimbursable basis. Embassy Baghdad is receiving substantial technical support from USF-I, the Army Materiel Command, and OSD staff.

CONCLUSION

Our continued engagement in Iraq remains vital. We are now at the point where the strategic dividends of our sacrifice are within reach, as long we take the proper steps to consolidate them. A long-term strategic partnership with Iraq, based on mutual interests and mutual respect, presents many advantages for the United States. Continued U.S. support to the ISF, including joint training exercises and military exchanges, will also help to ensure steady improvements in Iraqi capabilities and, over time, improved interoperability that will facilitate Iraq's long-term cooperation with the United States and other regional states to address

common challenges. Continued security assistance and cooperation through the OSC-I will assist in addressing concerns we share with Iraq, such as counterterrorism, counter-proliferation, maritime security, and air defense.

Reduced funding is a challenge for the transition. Security costs are high and planners must base costs on the conditions today, not on best-case assumptions of what they may be in 2012. As the U.S. draws down its military presence, the Iraqi government must feel that it has the foundational capabilities to defend against external threats both objectively and subjectively. Our country has sacrificed a great deal in Iraq, and fully resourcing the mission to its completion is vital to ensuring that this enormous national investment produces enduring results. We are ten yards from the goal line and need one final push. A sovereign, stable, self-reliant Iraq that is a partner with the U.S. and a force for stability in a strategically critical region is within reach.

Once again, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify today. I look forward to answering your questions.

Chairman BERMAN. Well, thank both of you very much, and I will now yield myself 5 minutes to begin the questioning.

Secretary Kahl, in the forthcoming Brookings study on Iraq that is about to be released, the authors say the U.S.' top priority in Iraq should be to prevent the outbreak of another civil war. This is a quote from the draft:

“By far, the most important U.S. military mission now is to support Iraq’s internal stability by continuing to perform peace keeping functions, especially, but not exclusively, in Kirkuk and other territories disputed by Arabs and Kurds in northern Iraq.”

The authors say that the U.S. troops can be a crucial substitute until trust is reestablished between contending Iraqi groups. Do you agree with that view? Do you foresee U.S. troops playing that role on an ongoing basis? What will the consequences be if they don’t?

Mr. KAHL. Well, I have not read the draft Brookings report, although I am familiar with the arguments made by many of its authors and its general conclusions.

I think the judgment of the Department of Defense, as well as other agencies and departments, to include the State Department, is that a return to the dark days of 2006 and 2007 where there was an all-out communal civil war is unlikely under most foreseeable circumstances, and I think it is our general assessment that the drawdown is completely compatible with consolidating the security gains that we have seen over the last 2 years.

I think it is worth noting that we have pulled out almost 100,000 forces since January 2009, and yet those security trends have stayed relatively positive. That included us leaving the cities in June 2009, handing over formal security responsibility to the Iraqis for the first time and then of course drawing down and changing our mission this past September.

So I think we have actually seen some evidence for the fact that the Iraqi Security Forces, which now number more than 660,000, are capable of beating back the extremists and preventing the kind of back sliding that that report mentions.

I will say, though, that in the next year and beyond we will continue to work with the Iraqi Security Forces to professionalize them, modernize them, and the State Department will be actively engaged precisely on some of those Arab-Kurd fault line areas that were mentioned in the report.

I would defer to Assistant Secretary Feltman, but keep in mind that two of the embassy branch offices are in Kirkuk and Mosul for precisely the kind of conflict resolution and engagement efforts that will continue to be important in the coming years.

Chairman BERMAN. Just to add that while there are a number of things for the State Department that are new in terms of security operations, they are still not going to be involved in peace-keeping operations in those areas.

Secretary Feltman, real quickly. Sadr. He seems to have been a critical part of Maliki’s ability to apparently become the next prime minister or continue in that job. He started out after the election vigorously opposed to Maliki. What do you think convinced Sadr to

throw his support to Maliki? To what extent will the Sadrists exert influence in the government that is being formed, and to what extent is the Sadrist faction a threat to U.S. interests in Iraq? A minute and 25 seconds.

Ambassador FELTMAN. Mr. Chairman, I think the question is even related to what you asked my colleague and friend, Colin, just a second ago because I think what the Iraqis have done is they have built an inclusive government. The Iraqis themselves have said they want everybody inside because they want the differences among them to be fought out on political grounds, through political means, through the constitutional organs, not on the street.

And so, yes, the Sadrists are part of this equation, but the Sadrists are only one part of the equation. Everybody is inside. I think the little theatrics, the melodrama we saw in the Parliament on November 11, showed, as Vice President Biden said and as Colin quoted, "Politics has broken out in Iraq."

And so I think it is actually positive that everybody is inside. It may not be the most efficient way to do things, but—

Chairman BERMAN. Let me just interject only because of the time. Taking your line, is Alawi, as a key part of the government, part of that sort of getting everybody inside and in the political process?

Ambassador FELTMAN. Alawi himself played a critical role in bringing all of Iraqiya in. Alawi right now seems to be in a little bit of a huff off in London, but all of his Sunni leaders that are part of Iraqiya that are so important to Iraq's stability, to the regional integration, have agreed that they are part of the government.

Chairman BERMAN. My time has expired. I recognize the gentlelady, the ranking member, for 5 minutes and ask Ambassador Watson if she would just take the chair for a moment while I have a quick meeting. I will be back.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman. Secretary Feltman, Chairman Berman and I had asked about or had related to you our concerns about Camp Ashraf residents, their humanitarian problems, lack of protection. If you could elaborate on that? That is number one.

Number two, I wanted to ask you about the reports that we have been hearing about hundreds of former Sunni sectarian fighters who had joined the Awakening or the Sons of Iraq, reconciled with the government, many of whom have gained extensive knowledge about the U.S. military, and they appear to have rejoined al-Qaeda.

Reports indicate that many of these Awakening fighters are still on the Iraqi Government's payroll and are covertly aiding the insurgency. If you could verify that and what vetting mechanisms we have in place to prevent covert assistance to the insurgency by Awakening fighters?

And then lastly, sirs, what is the administration's strategy to address concerns surrounding the development fund for Iraq and the outstanding United Nations Security Council resolution that Iraq is still technically subjected to? Do you believe that we can utilize this leverage with the Iraqi Government as a means to hedge against the growing Iranian influence in the government?

So if I could ask you, any of you, those three questions? Thank you.

Ambassador FELTMAN. Thank you, Congresswoman Ros-Lehtinen. First of all, I think I speak for all of us that are working on this Iraq file. We agree with you and the chairman 100 percent that the Iraqi Government needs to live up to its commitments to protect the human rights of the residents of Camp Ashraf. We agree 100 percent.

It is something that we are watching and monitoring extremely closely. It is not only us, there is international effort as well. The U.N. and others are also involved in encouraging the Iraqi Government to live up to its commitments. Basic food, basic medical supplies and basic fuel are getting in to the residents of Camp Ashraf.

There are a lot of mutual provocations between the Iraqis and the residents that aren't particularly helpful. We have told everyone to lower the rhetoric because this could quickly lead to a miscalculation and get out of control. When there have been incidents reported to us, we have engaged with the committee of the Iraqi Government that is in charge of this portfolio.

I think that our engagement has had some success and reminded the Iraqis of their obligations under international humanitarian law to provide for the human rights of the residents of Camp Ashraf. So we agree with you and we need to keep watching this. We are glad that we have international partners that are involved.

In terms of the Sons of Iraq, in general I would say that this has been a success story. By the time of the Iraqi elections in March, about 43 percent of the roughly 95,000 people who are part of the Sons of Iraq had been incorporated into security, or for the most part civilian positions inside the government. This was all put on hold during the elections and government formation, but the Iraqis have formed a Sons of Iraq Coordination Center in the Ministry of Defense to continue the programs. They are continuing the payments.

In terms of allegations of individual members I will ask Dr. Kahl if he can comment, but in general this has been a success story. I think that the overall numbers tell us this. If you look at 2007, there were about 3,800 violent incidents a month in Iraq. Thirty-eight hundred. And now today there are some horrible incidents happening, but it is roughly 250 to 300 a month. A big difference from 3,800 a couple of years ago.

On DFI, Iraq, as you know, was subject to a number of Chapter 7 obligations under the Security Council, mostly stemming from the 1990 invasion of Kuwait. Iraq has made some progress in moving to get out from under these Chapter 7 obligations. We want to see Iraq get out from under these Chapter 7 obligations as they meet the benchmarks that are there. They have met the requirements, for example, to get out from under the WMD-related Chapter 7 obligations and they are working to complete the Oil for Food.

But some of these are actually things I think that even the Iraqis would agree are helpful. Resolution 1483 had a Chapter 7 obligation on all of us to return—

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you. Thank you. I am sorry. My time is up.

Ambassador FELTMAN. Oh, I am sorry.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. But thank you. Good answers. Thank you, Madam Ambassador.

I would ask Mr. Fortenberry to take over for me. I have a few more appointments.

Ms. WATSON [presiding]. Yes. I was just going to go to Mr. Fortenberry for questions. In the meantime, I will recognize myself for the next 5 minutes while he is taking the ranking member's place.

I address this to both of you. The Commission on Wartime Contracting in Iraq and Afghanistan has been expressing concern that the transition has, at least in the past, proceeded too slowly and suffered from inadequate coordination between the State and DoD.

What are some of the specific steps both Departments have been taking to improve the collaboration and clarify what needs to be done as military forces leave and the State inherits some of their responsibilities, along with what is being done in your various Departments to make certain that transition decisions can be made quickly and at high levels in order to avoid a bureaucratic backlog that may halt a successful transition?

I will start with you, Mr. Feltman, or Mr. Kahl?

Ambassador FELTMAN. Thank you. There are a number of reports that we have that help us, to guide us, that show us some of the challenges of working in these environments so I am glad you brought this up. We certainly have a lot of lessons learned.

I think the coordination right now, echoing what Dr. Kahl said earlier, is excellent. I will use one example, what we call LOGCAP. LOGCAP is Logistics Civil Augmentation Program, it means life support. It is the DoD contracting mechanism that provides the life support for people working in Iraq. We in the State Department have never had anything quite this complicated to deal with, and DoD has generously said that they will continue the LOGCAP contracting for us on a reimbursable basis.

It is the type of example of coordination that we are doing now where DoD knows how to do this life supporting contracting, they know how to monitor it; they know how to make sure that there is proper oversight built in. They know all it takes, we are learning. So they have agreed to renew the LOGCAP on a reimbursable basis to make sure we get it right. That is one example.

Police training is another one, a very key one. We will have our police training program in place by July 1 next year, but not actually taking responsibility for the program until October 1 next year.

Ms. WATSON. Let me just ask. Is your police training separate from the training of their forces to be able to defend their own country? Is it a separate type of training?

Ambassador FELTMAN. It is a separate type of training, but we have built in a 3-month overlap so that the transition is smooth.

What DoD has done is they have done force generation, built up the Iraqi forces, built up the Iraqi security services. There were 58,000 police in 2003, there are now over 600,000 people that work in the security field. That is force generation. There has been focus on basic training and counterterrorism operations.

What the State Department will do is move to everything you need for a criminal justice and security system to work. You want honest cops on the—

Ms. WATSON. Yes. Do they have courts? Do they have people—

Ambassador FELTMAN. Yes. Our program will be integrated into a criminal justice program that includes Department of Justice, Department of Homeland Security, all—

Ms. WATSON. That is us. Do they have theirs up and running?

Ambassador FELTMAN. Theirs are there, but there is a lot of work that needs to be done to have an integrated system of policemen on the streets, pretrial detention, court systems for criminal cases and then rehabilitation and jail sentence afterwards.

So we are doing a whole government approach that goes from the honest cop on the street to the fair judge in the courtroom.

Ms. WATSON. You know, what is really frustrating me, and I asked this way, way back when the word came to our committee. It looks like we are in nation building, and it looks like we are going to have a long-term commitment if we still have establishment of a judiciary to do.

You know, every time there is development of a new program in the process it is costing us a lot. Can we see an end in sight in terms of the judiciary? I mean, we are building a nation, and we are paying the cost of it. What confounds me is why is it taking the Iraqis so long to see their own people trained to fight crime and then to protect their own borders? What is wrong?

Ambassador FELTMAN. I am sorry. I left out a key difference between the DoD force generation security program and what we are doing now. We are working much more on train the trainers so that they themselves are doing the work.

Ms. WATSON. That is what I wanted to hear. Train the trainers so we can get our people out of there in a reasonable amount of time.

Ambassador FELTMAN. Yes, we are talking about a transitional program and not doing things that the Iraqis themselves need to be responsible for. We are talking about how to unleash the Iraqi capacity so they can do it themselves.

Ms. WATSON. Absolutely. We have been there what, 8 years now?

Ambassador FELTMAN. Yes, about 7, 8 years.

Ms. WATSON. Yes. Slow learners I guess. You know, what did they do before? Did they depend on Saddam Hussein? Yes, sir? Mr. Kahl?

Mr. KAHL. I would just say one of the challenges of course is it has been a little bit like building an airplane in flight.

We have been generating a lot of these institutions, helping them build back institutions that were flattened or that were left to degrade under Saddam Hussein's dictatorship and then 20 years of war and sanctions and other things, as well as obviously the strife that inflicted the country in the aftermath of the 2003 invasion. So we are building institutions in an incredibly challenging environment.

There are institutions for the rule of law. They continue to be a work in progress, but in fact one of the things, I think one just anecdote, one of the things that actually catalyzed the government formation coalition that we saw over the last couple weeks was a ruling by the Iraqi Constitutional Court that time was up and that the Iraqis had to go on with forming their government.

The fact that the court made that ruling and that the Iraqi politicians complied I think is evidence of an evolving rule of law.

Ms. WATSON. Yes. My time is up now, but I will just say this last thing before I go to Mr. Fortenberry.

I see a long-term commitment. I mean, we have had this conversation in this committee a couple of years ago. It is still going on. I am wondering. It appears to me that they would like us to leave their country, and maybe we ought to compromise and leave sooner. If we have been training the trainers in the last few years, they are slow learners if they don't have it now.

And with that I will go on to Congressman Fortenberry.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Thank you, Madam Ambassador. Gentlemen, I appreciate your willingness to come out today. I believe primarily my discussion will be with you, Mr. Secretary Feltman. A pleasure to see you again.

As you know, I am from Nebraska. Now, when you think about Nebraska, you might think of corn, cattle, football, something like that, but it is also home to a diverse set of communities that are a diversity of communities of refugees, many of whom are Iraqis who have sought asylum and a peaceful environment out on the prairie.

I want to also commend your deputy, Mr. Corbin, for coming out to Nebraska. We actually had a very productive town hall meeting, as I have shared privately with you before, with the Iraqi community and learned that there is a good continuity there, even in Nebraska, among people who perhaps in their former homeland didn't necessarily have the type of interaction that you would expect in America, so that was a pleasant surprise.

With that said, I think the extent to which we can judge our efforts in Iraq as a success is also dependent upon a very important question. To the degree that we have to help protect ethnic and religious minorities and help them fully integrate into the economic and political life of the emerging new country, there is a quiet diaspora going on in Iraq, and that has become heightened of late with the bombing of the Catholic church. Many people perhaps don't realize that Iraq had as many as 2 million Christians at one time. The number may now be as low as 400,000.

This problem that is going on not only in Iraq, but in other places in the Middle East, robs people of their ancient homeland. It is a grave injustice. It is becoming incumbent upon countries such as the United States to help absorb populations who have a right to remain in peace and security and again their ancient homeland.

So again, the bombing of the church several weeks ago highlights the vulnerability here of that particular religious minority, but there are others. In my town of Lincoln we have a fairly well established Yezidi community as well, another ancient religion who has traditionally enjoyed some degree of insulation within the borders of Iraq. So it is my understanding that the Prime Minister visited the church that was bombed. I think that was an important signal. It is my understanding that they have committed to rebuild the church with Iraq's funds.

What else can we do to work in tandem particularly with the international community, as well as strengthen the political cul-

ture, to demand, to cajole, to admonish that the religious minority populations are an essential part of Iraq's important cultural history in the Middle East and provide a leavening presence in that country? Their loss would be devastating I think to the future of their country.

Ambassador FELTMAN. Congressman, thank you. We share your horror over the church bombings and other attacks that these vulnerable minorities have suffered. It is atrocious, reprehensible.

I would say that we in the government spend more time thinking and talking about the Iraqi minorities than we do the larger groups in Iraq, and that is because they are more vulnerable. They deserve to have more attention, more thought put toward how we might be of assistance.

As you know from the anecdote that you described, our minorities coordinator, Michael Corbin, is doing a really good job of reaching out to the minority communities in the United States to hear from them, to get an idea from them of what their people back home most need, where we might most be of service.

After that church bombing it was not only that the Prime Minister visited the church and vowed to use government funds to rebuild it—and we will hold him to that, by the way—you had condemnation from across the spectrum, including the Grand Ayatollah Sistani from Najah. I think all of the Iraqis were—

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Does this shock the sensibilities of all of Iraq?

Ambassador FELTMAN. Yes. Words like shock were used in these condemnations, and I think they were sincere.

Now, in terms of what is the United States doing, first of all, whenever there is an attack like this our forces, our military people, go to the Iraqis and say hey, how can we help? How can we follow up? How can we help you get to the bottom of this? We are not in the cities anymore, but we can help provide background. Our political leaders from Washington, as well as Ambassador Jeffrey, go to the political leadership and make similar pleas.

When we designed our strategy for Iraq for the transition period ahead, we picked out those places for embassy branch offices partially because of the minorities being there, so that we would be able to engage with the minorities on the ground, the Christian communities in Ninawa Province, continue the assistance programs that we are providing that have both short-term emergency humanitarian aspects and long-term job creation aspects.

We need to work in partnership with the Iraqis to have a viable future for these communities in Iraq. We agree. The fact that there is now an inclusive government coming together that is proud to represent all of Iraq's groups, I think we have a good partner for this.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Ms. WATSON. I would like now to call on Mr. Costa from California for questions.

Mr. COSTA. Thank you very much, Madam Chairperson. Secretary Kahl, you talked about the drawdown dates. What do you believe the military's presence in Iraq will look like 5 years from now?

Mr. KAHL. Congressman, that is a good question. We have an agreement with the Iraqis. It was negotiated by the Bush adminis-

tration in November 2008. At the time it was referred to as the Status of Forces Agreement.

Mr. COSTA. Right.

Mr. KAHL. We call it the Security Agreement. It calls for remaining forces to be out of Iraq by 2011. The President has been clear that we are going to comply with the terms of the Security Agreement.

We will have a robust Office of Security Cooperation that lingers beyond that, which falls under the Chief of Mission authority. That will be—

Mr. COSTA. But at the end of the day, it really is going to depend upon the Iraqis' ability to stand on their own and what presence they want us to play?

Mr. KAHL. Well, it is not completely condition dependent because we have an agreement. So the only conditions in which—

Mr. COSTA. I am talking beyond the agreement.

Mr. KAHL. I understand, sir. It would require the Iraqis to request—

Mr. COSTA. Right.

Mr. KAHL [continuing]. An additional stay and for us to—

Mr. COSTA. Agree to it.

Mr. KAHL [continuing]. Agree to that.

Mr. COSTA. Yes. In terms of the transition between you and the State Department, I think there is concern—there always has been—in terms of American personnel, Embassy people, USAID, to ensure security is there in the outlying provinces.

Do you feel confident that that is going to be able to protect those American men and women and others who are assisting in getting the government's feet and its economy back on track?

Mr. KAHL. I feel confident that the State Department is planning against the security conditions as they are now, and since we expect the security conditions to continue to improve I think that the State Department will be well positioned beyond 2011 to continue to operate and contribute to Iraq's progress beyond that point.

If circumstances were to deteriorate substantially then we would have to re-evaluate, but we don't anticipate that circumstances are going to deteriorate substantially.

Mr. COSTA. Secretary Feltman, I am concerned about the overall ability of this government to try to institute these institutions of democracy and what still seems to me in that part of the world to be a situation in which corruption, if not a way of life, is endemic.

I told that to Prime Minister Maliki when I first met him 4 years ago, and I am not so sure how much progress we have made there. Could you give us an assessment, notwithstanding the institutions' performances so far, as to that level of corruption?

Ambassador FELTMAN. Congressman Costa, corruption is a problem. You put your finger on it when you talked to Prime Minister Maliki. It is one of the many problems that Iraq has to deal with, but it is a significant one.

There is an Iraqi Commission that has been established and we are supporting it; they have had some successes. In 2009, they prosecuted and convicted the Deputy Minister of Transportation. They have prosecuted collaborators of the Minister of Trade and these people are in prison. So there has been some success.

We also have rule of law advisors who are working in the provinces with provincial leaders against this. We are supporting OIGs in various ministries, but it needs to be more institutionalized. This is a real challenge.

We ourselves have a coordinator against anticorruption measures in the Embassy, so we have a part of the Embassy that is working full-time on the very issue you have recognized because the Iraqi people have to see that the government is accountable. Accountability is part of having a responsible democratic government.

Mr. COSTA. And how would you grade the ability of the government this far to demonstrate some level of credibility that it is just not a way of life as I described it to the Prime Minister and that they are making changes, that there is some people that are viewed or believed to be on the up and up?

Ambassador FELTMAN. A couple thing. Maybe even partially in response to your meeting, Prime Minister Maliki did announce, and with our support, an anticorruption campaign that he himself has put his name and office behind so that there was a high level push. Again, we are supporting this in terms of institution and financing as well to give it some heft.

These prosecutions that took place were high profile prosecutions so people can see that there is stuff taking place. A lot more needs to be done.

Mr. COSTA. Yes, obviously. I want to switch tracks quickly before my time runs out.

On my last visit there we went out to Anbar Province and we started doing some exchanges. Not only do they have a tremendous amount of oil resources, but it used to be the bread basket of the Middle East. There is tremendous agricultural opportunities with the Tigris and Euphrates.

What efforts have taken place to get the agricultural economy going again? We have done some exchanges with some of our universities, with Fresno State in California and Anbar University. Is there more of that going on?

Ambassador FELTMAN. Well, a couple things. USDA in June took out a delegation with representatives from 17 U.S. agribusiness firms to try to find partnerships and opportunities with Iraqis. They met with over 200 Iraqi agribusiness representatives. So we are trying to promote some U.S. business exchanges in line with what you are doing on the academic side.

Also, AID is stepping up work in the agricultural sector, because it is not only that that used to be a bread basket, it is a real potential for employment generation. Iraq needs jobs that are in the non oil sector, and this is a real potential.

Mr. COSTA. Thank you.

Ms. WATSON. Thank you. I now yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Texas, Mr. Poe.

Mr. POE. Thank you, Madam Chairman. Thank you both for being here.

I want to zero in on first Camp Ashraf and the situation as it is today and what is taking place there. I personally am concerned about the residents of Camp Ashraf, the 4,000 people that are in there. I have received information from the residents about several things that are taking place. Here are some photographs taken by

residents of Camp Ashraf, and I will have to let these get closer to you all.

Their concern is about the 112 loudspeakers that are posted around the entire camp that are blaring in to Camp Ashraf at all times of the day and night apparently comments such as we are going to set Ashraf on fire; Ahmadinejad is a great President, all of you should follow him; you will soon see how the Iraqis are going to attack and destroy this camp; and we will hang every one of you.

It seems to me to be some type of psychological torture, torment, whatever you want to call it, to the residents of Camp Ashraf. First of all, I am not sure who is doing this. Is it Iranians with the permission of the Iraqis? Is it Iraqis? Is it both? Do either one of you know about this? Secretary Feltman?

Ambassador FELTMAN. The residents of Camp Ashraf and their family and family members here have certainly told us about this. We are aware of this, yes.

Mr. POE. And what is your opinion of it? Do you think that is the way we ought to be treating folks in Camp Ashraf?

Ambassador FELTMAN. Congressman, Camp Ashraf is under Iraqi sovereignty. That is just a fact. We have to accept the fact that it is under Iraqi sovereignty.

Mr. POE. I understand that, but do you think these are Iranians or Iraqis that are blaring these loud speakers?

Ambassador FELTMAN. I don't know who is blaring it in, but the commitment that we have from the Iraqis that they must live up to, that we will be working to make sure they live up to, is that they do not deport them to a country where they could be tortured for their political beliefs, where they could be arrested and detained for their political beliefs.

That is a commitment that the Iraqis have given us. It is part of an international understanding that is with the Iraqis now.

Mr. POE. Excuse me. I am just limited on time. Do you think that that is a commitment that they are going to live up to or we just hope they are going to live up to?

Ambassador FELTMAN. We are watching this all the time. The Camp Ashraf residents are not popular in Iraq. They were part of the whole—

Mr. POE. I know where they came from. I know they are Iranians.

Ambassador FELTMAN. So this is a political issue in Iraq, and both sides around that camp in our view have engaged in needless and dangerous provocations basically.

Mr. POE. Well, do you think that setting up 112 loudspeakers that are going off all day and night saying all kinds of propaganda things against the Camp Ashraf residents is something that should be a concern to the United States, or we should just forget this because now it is not our problem?

Ambassador FELTMAN. No. I think all of these basically dangerous versions of name calling, provocations, et cetera, should all be stopped because you don't know when things are going to get out of control. You don't know when someone is going to cross a line that leads to violence.

Mr. POE. I agree.

Ambassador FELTMAN. It has happened before.

Mr. POE. So what are we doing about this, these loudspeakers?
Ambassador FELTMAN. We are in constant touch with the Iraqis on this. The U.N. is in constant touch with the Iraqis on this. There have been some incidents that have taken place lately that we have played a facilitating role in calming things down.

Mr. POE. Are we trying to get these loudspeakers down, or are we just talking about it?

Ambassador FELTMAN. We are telling people you need to lower the temperature on both sides.

Mr. POE. So if they don't, what do we do? I am just concerned about when we are finally gone what happens to these residents in Camp Ashraf?

Ambassador FELTMAN. We support an international solution for this whole problem. We need to have an international resolution for the whole problem of the residents of Camp Ashraf. You can't predict when there might be one of these provocations that crosses the line and leads to violence.

Mr. POE. Exactly. Are you concerned as a representative of the United States about the Iranian influence in not only Camp Ashraf, but Iraq as well?

Ambassador FELTMAN. Yes, of course. We are concerned about Iranian influence across the region. I am the Assistant Secretary for NEA. We see Iran's bad behavior in a lot of different places, but what we see happening—

Mr. POE. Has it stabilized? Is it getting worse? Is it about the same? Is it getting better? I mean, kind of give me a thermometer of what your opinion is of the Iranian influence in Iraq.

Ambassador FELTMAN. It is there, but I think that the Iraqis have shown time and time again that they are making decisions based on Iraqi considerations.

You know, whether that is talking about government formation, how to conduct elections, how to do their alliances, whether to go against the Iranian backed Shia militias, time and time again the Iraqis have acted like Iraqis.

Mr. POE. One more question if I may. The Christians that have been murdered in Iraq. Our position as a nation. Who is responsible for that? Al-Qaeda claims responsibility. Do you agree that al-Qaeda is responsible for that or somebody else?

Ambassador FELTMAN. Yes, and specifically a group called the Islamic State of Iraq, which is an al-Qaeda affiliate, has taken credit. We think it is credible.

I think it shows how awful these people are that they are doing this sort of thing, but it also shows their desperation, that they are having to go after these vulnerable minorities because they have failed to reignite the Sunni-Shia clashes that I think they had hoped to ignite.

Mr. POE. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Ms. WATSON. I now yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas, Sheila Jackson Lee.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Chair, it is a pleasure to have the opportunity to be yielded by such a distinguished diplomat as yourself. Let me thank Congresswoman Watson for her own service in the cause of diplomacy and peace and human rights. I thank Chair-

man Berman for yielding the chair to the congresswoman and thank the chairman for this hearing.

If I have had a moment of pleasure on this committee, it is because of the very fine staff and diplomats of the United States Department of State, so I want to take this opportunity to personally thank you and the Secretary of State and the numbers of individuals that I have engaged with in a number of opportunities to represent the United States in faraway places.

We, I believe, have the moral compass of right. This is not a hearing about Haiti, but am I outraged about the failing government in Haiti, the suffering people with cholera? I am. Am I concerned about the Sudanese and the elections coming up? I am. And the hot spot that Pakistan has become, Burma and others? Yes, I am.

And I raise those particular countries because at one point or another we have stuck our nose in there, rightly so. I hope we will be sticking our nose back in Haiti because I believe that we are in a complete collapse there, but this is not a hearing on Haiti.

But we have taken up the cause of human rights, and I want Mr. Feltman and your esteemed colleague here to comment on Iraq from this perspective. Let me give my bias. We went into Iraq looking for weapons of mass destruction, and all we did is destroy and make worse to a certain extent. I am not a fan of the present government. I am not a fan of Maliki, a Shiite, and al-Alawi, who is a Sunni, whose name I may not have pronounced correctly, but I know him when I see him.

It is a constant, continuous contact sport of who can have the upper hand, who can fill their pockets even more. So we have less troops there, but I don't think the United States can abandon its responsibility concerning human rights.

So let me pointedly ask a question about the people in Camp Ashraf. Not only do they have loud noises and torture and afraid for their life and the people in this country, Iranian-Americans whose families were left behind or whose families went to be able to save the lives of other family members living in utter fear.

Can you tell me what humanitarian act is it to let sick and dying people die because they have no access to medical care? Elham, Mehdi, both suffering massively from cancer, being denied the opportunity, one with thyroid cancer, one with acute kidney cancer in a critical state, already lost one of their kidneys, and they need to undergo an operation and they can't seem to get into a hospital.

Where is our stance on human rights? We are continuing to plow investment into Iraq. Let me be very clear. I hope we have a pathway of economic opportunity. I hope there is a pathway for businesses in the United States. After all, look at the enormous measure of blood that we shed in that place. And what do we have to show for it?

I believe if we do not leave behind a civilized society that in their own way—they don't have to follow the American way. They don't have to have the Harris County Public Health System. But in their own way cannot treat people in a humanitarian way. If they cannot form a government in less than 100 years, which it appears to be, that still is not stable and still we have not agreed to then we have failed.

If we keep continuing to say they are a sovereign nation, sovereign about what? They are not a sovereign nation. They are a collapsed government. There is nothing positive going on there other than the massive new embassy that we have and the hard working State Department employees that ground out their lives there every single day. Thank them for their service.

Mr. Feltman, I can't let you leave this room without telling me what are you going to do in our State Department about the conditions in Camp Ashraf? I come here every time there is a hearing and say the same thing. What we understand is the Iraqi soldiers are the ones that are intimidating these people. Now, if you can prove that they are spies then it is something else.

May I yield 1 additional minute? Let me yield for him to answer the question, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman BERMAN [presiding]. Yes. Unanimous consent to 1 additional minute to answer.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Thank you. If they are spies, Mr. Feltman, let us know that because that is a sovereign issue, but I want the State Department to act. Thank you.

Ambassador FELTMAN. We will have to look into the individual cases you raise. I as Jeff Feltman am not familiar with the individual cases you raise. I will tell you that every time I have gone to Iraq, and I was going to Iraq on a fairly regular basis—a week a month—for a long time I go to see the Minister of Human Rights. I go to see the Minister of Human Rights because I care about the same values that you have described and because it is part of our policy to be promoting universal standards and adherence to human rights, and so it is an important part of our dialogue to keep in touch with the Minister of Human Rights.

Yes, we talk about Camp Ashraf with the Minister of Human Rights. We talk about the prisons. Iraq has a long way to go.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. What are we going to do? We need to go to Camp Ashraf. We can't listen to the human rights director. He is not telling the truth. What can we do, the U.S.?

Ambassador FELTMAN. I think that she, the Human Rights Minister, who is a woman, has actually been very effective in working with us on some of the issues dealing with Camp Ashraf, and I think she has also been a very good advocate for the very values that you are describing. She is working in extremely difficult circumstances.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Okay. I need a report in writing because my time is up. A report in writing not on these cases, but the conditions in Camp Ashraf and what the United States and she, the director, the Secretary of Human Rights, is actually doing regarding the ceasing of torture of these people in Camp Ashraf. She is doing nothing.

And I yield back. Thank you.

Chairman BERMAN. The time of the gentlelady has expired.

I thank both of you. I apologize for the delayed start, the 45 minute intermission. I appreciate very much your being here, and with that this committee hearing is adjourned. Thank you.

Ambassador FELTMAN. Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 3:35 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X



MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE HEARING RECORD

FULL COMMITTEE HEARING NOTICE
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515-0128

Howard L. Berman (D-CA), Chairman

November 15, 2010

TO: MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

You are respectfully requested to attend an OPEN hearing of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, to be held in **Room 2172 of the Rayburn House Office Building (and available live, via the WEBCAST link on the Committee website at <http://www.hcfa.house.gov>)**:

DATE: Thursday, November 18, 2010

TIME: 1:00 p.m.

SUBJECT: The Transition to a Civilian-Led U.S. Presence in Iraq: Issues and Challenges

WITNESSES: The Honorable Jeffrey D. Feltman
Assistant Secretary
Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs
U.S. Department of State
(Former United States Ambassador to Lebanon)

Colin Kahl, Ph.D.
Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for the Middle East
U.S. Department of Defense

By Direction of the Chairman

The Committee on Foreign Affairs seeks to make its facilities accessible to persons with disabilities. If you are in need of special accommodations, please call 202/225-3021 at least four business days in advance of the event, whenever practicable. Questions with regard to special accommodations in general (including availability of Committee materials in alternative formats and assistive listening devices) may be directed to the Committee.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

MINUTES OF FULL COMMITTEE HEARING

Day Thursday Date 11/18/10 Room 2172 RHOB

Starting Time 1:24 P.M. Ending Time 3:35 P.M.

Recesses 1 (1:40 to 2:30)

Presiding Member(s)

Howard L. Berman (CA), Chairman; Diane E. Watson (CA)

CHECK ALL OF THE FOLLOWING THAT APPLY:

Open Session	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Electronically Recorded (taped)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Executive (closed) Session		Stenographic Record	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Televised	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

TITLE OF HEARING or BILLS FOR MARKUP: (Include bill number(s) and title(s) of legislation.)

The Transition to a Civilian-Led U.S. Presence in Iraq: Issues and Challenges

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Howard L. Berman, Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Diane E. Watson, Chris Smith, Dan Burton, Sheila Jackson Lee, Dana Rohrabacher, Shelley Berkley, Donald Manzullo, Jim Costa, Joe Wilson, Ron Klein, Jeff Fortenberry, Ted Poe

NON-COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

n/a

HEARING WITNESSES: Same as meeting notice attached? Yes No

(If "no", please list below and include title, agency, department, or organization.)

STATEMENTS FOR THE RECORD: (List any statements submitted for the record.)

n/a

ACTIONS TAKEN DURING THE MARKUP: (Attach copies of legislation and amendments.)

n/a

RECORDED VOTES TAKEN (FOR MARKUP): (Attach final vote tally sheet listing each member.)

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Yeas</u>	<u>Nays</u>	<u>Present</u>	<u>Not Voting</u>
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TIME SCHEDULED TO RECONVENE

or
TIME ADJOURNED 3:35 P.M.



Doug Campbell, Deputy Staff Director

Opening Statement
Congressman Dan Burton
Committee on Foreign Affairs
“The Transition to a Civilian-Led U.S. Presence in Iraq: Issues”
November 18, 2010

Mr. Chairman, as we prepare for the final withdrawal of American troops in Iraq, my primary concern is with the safety of those Americans who are still there working to ensure that the blood and treasure spent in this war was not in vain. We cannot reverse course in the creation of a more free, democratic and open society. As we are discussing the process of turning over U.S. influence in the country from the Department of Defense to the State Department, the biggest question is whether the State Department is fully capable of handling the security demands necessary to protect U.S. citizens as they work to maintain all we have fought for.

My primary concern is with the violence that is perpetuated by Iranian proxies in the region. The Iranian regime is eagerly anticipating the withdrawal of U.S. troops so that it can fill the void and take the opportunity to assert its influence and pressure Iraqis to reverse their pursuit of freedom and embrace a more radical and anti-U.S. ideology. Will Iraq's fragile democracy be able to resist Iranian advances? The recent elections give us some hope, but this progress must continue. Is the State Department up to the task of protecting its people from harm in an unprecedented way? These are questions that I hope will be addressed in detail here today.

I also want to raise the issue of the plight of Iraq's minority Christian population. Less than two weeks ago on November 7th, militants seized a Baghdad church during evening mass, leaving over fifty people dead and many more wounded. I would like to express my deepest sorrow and personal condolences to

the victims and their families. It's obvious to me that there is a concerted and calculated plan on the part of Al Qaeda to eliminate this minority from the Iraqi populace. Last Wednesday, a number of bombings targeting the Christian community in Baghdad killed at least four and wounded many others. Many have expressed dismay at the lack of concern from the West over this tragedy. Iraqi Christians are facing danger on a daily basis and it is my hope that we, as Members of Congress, will not turn a blind eye to their suffering. Religious freedom is an essential liberty for any pluralistic society and we should do everything in our power to help protect liberty for this and any other persecuted minority in Iraq.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for calling this timely and important hearing and I look forward to hearing from our distinguished witnesses.

Gary L. Ackerman (NY)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs hearing
The Transition to a Civilian-Led U.S. Presence in Iraq: Issues and Challenges
November 18, 2010

Thank you Mr. Chairman. Today's hearing is an important one.

Most Americans and most Members of Congress think that we're basically done in Iraq. That with our combat troops out, and with the rest of our 50,000 troops coming home at the end of next year, the era of big budgets and supplemental spending is going to be over. Iraq will go into that blessedly large category of countries that are problematic but not our problem.

There's just one hitch: this view is utterly detached from both reality in Iraq and the Administration's plans for it.

Assistant Secretary Feltman in his testimony, explains that American assistance to is intended to "help Iraq meet its needs, stand up its economy, and cement its democratic system over the next five to seven years." Repeat: five to seven years. To do all this assisting and standing up and cementing, the U.S. Mission in Iraq will be spending billions of dollars, operating five major diplomatic facilities, and employing as many as 13,000 people, who will be operating a fleet of military vehicles and helicopters, and, may be engaged in such traditional diplomatic operations as "counter-rocket, artillery, and mortar notification and neutralization response."

Deputy Assistant Secretary Kohl in his testimony tells us that since January 2009, the Iraqis have been in the lead on security operations and no longer need large numbers of U.S. forces to keep violence in check. But he also warns that "We are now at the point where the strategic dividends of our sacrifice are within reach, *as long as we take the*

proper steps to consolidate them. Meaning what? “A long-term strategic partnership with Iraq based on mutual interest and mutual respect.”

Secretary Feltman emphasizes essentially the same point noting that “The strategic importance of this moment cannot be overemphasized.” I think we have a major problem here.

Everything that the Administration is planning for Iraq is built on the assumption that the U.S. Congress is going to be willing to cut a multi-billion dollar Iraq check every year for the better part of this decade. I’d like to know why our witnesses think that’s a safe assumption.

If there’s one lesson the Obama Administration can’t seem to learn, it has to be that nothing explains itself, and nothing sells itself. If the Administration thinks it’s vital to our national security to spend billions of dollars over the next 5-7 years to establish a strategic partnership with Iraq, I would suggest that a vastly more robust effort to sell this policy to the Congress and to the American people is going to be necessary.

Personally, I’d prefer that we not repeat our dismal performance in Afghanistan where after driving out the Soviets and then driving out the Taliban, we as nation, abandoned our prior allies to their fates. It was short-sighted and produced exactly the bad results that were anticipated at the time.

But if we’re going to avoid making the very same mistake in Iraq, the Executive Branch is going to have to work a lot harder on salesmanship. Because it looks to me like your customers are already leaving.

Opening Statement for Congressman Joe Wilson (SC-02)

Success in Iraq

House Committee on Foreign Affairs
November 18, 2010

Mr. Chairman, thank you for calling this important hearing on Iraq today. With official U.S. combat missions in Iraq coming to a close this past summer of 2010, it is imperative that we continue to better understand the focus on Iraq as a civilian operation now and what may deter the country from success.

As co-chair of the Victory in Iraq Caucus, I have faith in our military and the people of Iraq who want to live in a country of freedom and democracy. I am particularly grateful I had two sons and a nephew, serve in Iraq, Army, Navy, and Air Force where they saw firsthand the capabilities of the people of Iraq.

The initial U.S. role in Iraq has now transitioned to the people of Iraq. Iraqis must maintain their own security for continued stability so the Country can move in the right direction. I have all the confidence in the world that the Iraqi security forces have been trained to deal with such an important transition and the primary role in keeping peace in their country.

I am hopeful the current Administration's plan under the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) and Strategic Framework Agreement (FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT) will help to normalize civilian ties between our two countries, thus moving us forward to become trusted partners. With that said, I consistently expressed then and do so again today of a concern with the Administration's plan being so focused on the "paperwork" of a withdrawal that outside influences will take advantage of such a transition.

What must not be forgotten is the great sacrifice and success on behalf of our U.S. men and women in uniform, as well as coalition forces, without which no transition would even be possible. Each election that takes place in Iraq is evidence of their continuing success. However, with this now being a U.S. civilian-led effort working with the people of Iraq, there must be a follow through by the U.S. government to protect U.S. and Iraqi interests. More to the point, what policies are in place to help dilute negative interference from the outside-- that of Iran.

There is an apparent Iranian intrusion on the political and security efforts in Iraq. Iran has increasingly expanded its regional influence by fostering sectarianism and instability in the new government of Iraq.

Again, thank you Mr. Chairman for calling this hearing and I am eager to hear the testimony of our witnesses.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF
THE HONORABLE RUSS CARNAHAN (MO-03)
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**Hearing on
The Transition to Civilian-Led U.S. Presence in Iraq: Issues and Challenges
Thursday November 18, 2010 1:00 P.M.
2172 Rayburn House Office Building**

Chairman Berman and Ranking Member Ros-Lehtinen, thank you for holding this hearing regarding the transition to civilian-led engagement in Iraq. I appreciate the attention that is being given to this timely and important topic, and I look forward to hearing an update on the transition of responsibilities from the Department of Defense to the State Department.

Under the Status of Forces Agreement and the Strategic Framework Agreement between the U.S. and Iraqi governments, we are embarking on a new phase in Iraq, including a full removal of U.S. armed forces by December 31, 2011 and complete shift from a military-led operation to a State department-led diplomatic, development, and advisory effort. The size and scope of State's new role in Iraq is unprecedented and could significantly impact the effectiveness of the U.S. government's civil-military relationship in years to come.

The nature of the mission poses several significant challenges for our civilian leaders. In order to address dangerous security threats and protect its civilian personnel, the State Department and its diplomatic mission in Iraq must take on new responsibilities. While at the same time, the United State's continuing assistance program will be among the largest aid efforts in which our country has ever been engaged.

Earlier this year, I chaired an International Organizations, Human Rights, and Oversight Subcommittee hearing on reconstruction efforts in Iraq. Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction Stuart Bowen's testimony raised serious concerns about U.S. management and oversight practices, estimating that at least \$4 billion had been wasted in our stabilization and reconstruction programs alone. Moreover, in his recent testimony before the Oversight and Government Reform Committee, Mr. Bowen emphasized that previous organizational transitions in Iraq have been the occasions of significant waste. Unless swiftly addressed in the coming months, the State Department's historically insufficient capacity for project, contract, and grant administration further foreshadows institutional challenges to come in the transition to civilian control in Iraq.

I look forward to hearing testimony from today's witnesses on the status of the State Department's capacity building in anticipation of the transition, as well as how it plans to evaluate the effectiveness of this undertaking and apply lessons learned to our engagement in Afghanistan. In addition to agency capacity, past waste in Iraq has reportedly been due to insufficient interagency coordination. I hope the witnesses will also shed light on the effectiveness of DoD-State coordination in the planning stages of

the transition. The safety of our personnel, the integrity of tax payer dollars, and the overall achievement of our mission in Iraq all depend on the success of the upcoming transition.

In closing, I'd like to thank the panelists for their testimonies and presence here today. I hope that your answers and opinions will further our understanding of the status, challenges, and best way forward for transition to civilian control of our mission in Iraq.

**QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
THE HONORABLE RUSS CARNAHAN (MO-03)
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**Hearing on
The Transition to Civilian-Led U.S. Presence in Iraq: Issues and Challenges
Thursday November 18, 2010 1:00 P.M.
2172 Rayburn House Office Building**

Questions to Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs Jeffrey D. Feltman

Question:

We have seen significant challenges with respect to reconstruction efforts in Iraq due to a lack of sufficient interagency coordination, particularly between the Department of Defense and the State Department. Ever more concerning, this trend of poor DoD-State coordination has continued in planning for the transition to State control of the mission. In fact, the Commission on Wartime Contracting in Iraq and Afghanistan has criticized the transition for failing to take a “whole of government” approach to the planning among the 14 agencies that are represented under the Chief of Mission’s authority. Major criticism cites a lack of transparency, visibility, and basic data resulting in potential waste, fraud, and abuse. Some analysis indicates recent improve in interagency planning for the transition, however. Please give me your assessment of agency coordination, particularly between DoD and State, as well as your recommendations for improving such coordination.

Answer:

The magnitude of this transition is unprecedented, and it is being conducted in a very challenging security environment. In anticipation of the planned U.S. military drawdown, we have sustained an intensive, two-year effort both within the State Department and with our partners across the U.S. government. This process has included daily involvement of both Deputy Secretaries of State and close coordination with USF-I and the Department of Defense (DoD). We continue to work daily with DoD and other agencies to implement and, as necessary, adjust our planning, and resolve any issues that may arise. We are on track to complete the transition successfully.

We can point to a number of successes in the ongoing DoD-State partnership on Iraq transition. Beginning in 2009, the Embassy and USF-I together painstakingly broke down the breadth of U.S. military programmatic responsibilities in Iraq into over 1,127 specific tasks falling under rule of law, governance, economic development and security. During the past year, they have reviewed these tasks, and determined which will be

assumed by the embassy, which will be handed over to an increasingly capable Iraqi government, and which will pass to NGOs, international organizations, or cease.

The recent agreement by DoD to allow State to use the U.S. Army's critically important life support contract, Logistics Civil Augmentation Program (LOGCAP), and agreement to transfer 60 Mine Resistant Ambush Protective vehicles (MRAPs) are just two of the many examples of cooperation. State will benefit greatly from the Defense Department's assistance in continuing to provide contract oversight and administration experts from the Defense Contract Management Agency (DCMA) and the Defense Contract Audit Agency (DCAA) for LOGCAP, maintenance of tactical vehicles and security equipment and other contracts.

State and DoD have also worked hand-in hand to prepare State's facilities for operations after the military withdrawal. State's Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations (OBO) has worked alongside USF-I for months to maximize use of USF-I assets and excess property during the initial phase of preparations. This phase includes constructing perimeter walls, identifying and marshalling items of excess military property, and scope development and design.

Interagency coordination more broadly on transition has also been strong. The Administration has carried out a whole-of-government effort, with regular meetings of both Principals and Deputies to track progress and make key decisions. A robust set of interagency working groups in Washington and in Baghdad support this process and delve into the details of every facet of transition. For example, the Defense-to-State Transition Senior Executive Steering Group meets biweekly and is co-chaired by DAS Gary Motsek from DoD and DAS Will Moser from DOS A/LM. In attendance (in person or via SVTC) to discuss contracts, logistics, DoD excess and facilities are senior interagency and DOS representatives and relevant flag officers in Washington, Baghdad, CENTCOM and at various military support commands. This is a coordinating mechanism to identify and push through solutions to the Iraq Transition.

Question:

Please give a brief overview of what mechanisms the U.S. government has in place to evaluate the transition process?

Answer:

The Administration has a whole-of-government approach in planning and executing the transition in Iraq. Senior State, DOD and other interagency officials play a key role in Iraq policy, led by the Vice President, who makes regular trips to Iraq to engage key leaders and chairs monthly meetings of Agency Principals here in Washington. In addition to these meetings, there are regular meetings of agency Deputies to track progress and make the necessary key decisions. There is a robust set of interagency working groups in Washington and in Baghdad that continuously meet to support this process and delve into the details of every facet of the transition.

These working groups deal with both policy and operational issues. On the policy side, the Embassy and USF-I maintain a series of working groups to address the ongoing handover or closeout of the 1,127 tasks performed by the military related to security, economics and energy, rule of law, and politics.

Operationally, there is a set of interagency working groups in Washington and Iraq that track the seven key operational (or administrative) components to our transition: property, facilities, security, life support, aviation, medical, and contractor oversight. We evaluate our progress in transition against the decision making- and planning-benchmarks and timelines that we have laid out. We use these benchmarks to ensure we are ready to assume full operations at our diplomatic sites by October 1, 2011. See question 2b for additional detail on this process.

Question:

What are we doing to ensure lessons learned from the transition to civilian-led presence in Iraq are applied for future planning, especially given the impending transition in Afghanistan?

Answer:

The Department of State is systematically working to identify and share the lessons learned from the transition in Iraq to Afghanistan. This process is currently underway in Washington and with Embassies Kabul and Baghdad. The Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs/Iraq (NEA/I) is working with the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs (SCA) and the Office of the Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan (SRAP) to inform the Afghanistan transition planning process. The process includes meetings between officers from each bureau to transmit lessons learned in the Iraq transition process along with the exchange of formal papers and products that SCA and SRAP will be able to use in the development of Afghanistan transition planning.

There is also an integrated, interagency civilian-military effort underway to capture and institutionalize Lessons Learned and Best Practices from Afghanistan and Iraq Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) led by the Center for Complex Operations. Although transition encompasses aspects of the entire range of civil-military engagement in Iraq, this project will look at elements of our provincial presence in both countries to identify lessons that have immediate operational and tactical relevance, as well as those which can inform key aspects of reconstruction and stabilization operations in the future. The project uses interview questions and surveys to collect lessons learned from personnel serving in both Afghanistan and Iraq PRTs. An interagency analysis team reviews these interviews and develops best practices that are shared with the rest of the community for implementation in both countries. These lessons are being incorporated into our Iraq transition planning through a series of interagency workshops that will begin in January. Our best practices will help determine how the Embassy, Consulates, and Embassy Branch Offices (EBOs) conduct diplomatic engagements throughout the provinces after the transition. The Bureau for Near Eastern Affairs' Iraq Office and

State's Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization will also incorporate our lessons learned into the training curriculum for staff members assigned to Iraq and other similar posts to ensure that we continue to build on the knowledge we have developed to date. The same process will be used during the Iraq transition to collect information from interagency participants both in Washington DC and in Iraq so that those lessons can be applied to the future military-to-civilian transition in Afghanistan

Question:

What is your indication on how effective planning has been for such evaluation, and how can evaluation mechanisms be strengthened?

Answer:

We use a series of benchmarks to ensure we are ready to assume full operations at our diplomatic sites by October 1, 2011. A key benchmark is the ability to close out or transfer PRT programs and personnel to ensure continuity of effort. For example, there are now 16 PRTs in operation, down from the height of the PRT program in 2008, when there were 33 PRTs and ePRTs. From May through September 2011 we will close down the remaining PRTs gradually. Applicable processes and functions will be transferred from PRTs to Iraqi provincial governments, nongovernmental organizations, or other U.S. posts.

We have identified timelines and phases of the operation for each of the seven transition elements we track -- property, facilities, security, life support, aviation, medical, and contractor oversight --to ensure that we hit our benchmarks each step of the way.

Property negotiations continue to move ahead. Iraq's National Security Council provisionally approved our land use plan on November 7. Although we have not concluded property agreements with the Iraqis, we have begun the process of upgrading key sites. We have deployed facilities management and regional security officers to the consulate and Embassy Branch Office (EBO) sites to work with the Department of Defense (DoD) to build relationships with the Iraq Security Forces (ISF) leadership and liaise with State's Overseas Building Operations (OBO) on site build-out. We plan to let contracts for site design and construction in January, 2011.

As mentioned earlier, the Embassy and USF-I painstakingly broke down the breadth of U.S. military responsibilities in Iraq into over 1,127 specific tasks. During the past year, they have reviewed these tasks, and determined which will be assumed by the embassy, which will be handed over to an increasingly capable Iraqi government, and which the U.S. military will cease. As a measure of progress, 350 of these tasks have already been transferred to State, and we are positioned well to continue to meet our goals through the end of transition.

By July of 2011, the State-run Police Development Program (PDP) will establish its initial operating capacity. By October 1, 2011, all of our diplomatic posts outside the Embassy and the PDP will be at full operating capacity.

On life support, we are currently working with DoD to finalize a work statement for LOGCAP IV. We will conduct a solicitation and award a contract by late summer and contractor mobilization and transition will follow.

For aviation, our plan entails a six phase operation unfolding between July 2011 – the initial operational capacity date for all our programs – and December 2011, the final month of transition, at which point we plan to have a full complement of fixed wing and rotary wing aircraft to ensure that our capabilities for air movement meet our requirements.

Under our medical transition, we will provide medical support through a contract provider. As with other aspects of our transition, we plan to let the medical contract in January. Equipment and facility transfers with DoD will continue until June, at which point, in keeping with the rest of our transition timetable, we will be at an initial operating capacity. By October we will have achieved full operational capacity, with medical contractors providing full medical services. DoD will have a presence in country through December, and there will therefore be some overlap until January 2012, when State carries forward the enduring mission and the final transition of 24/7 Casualty Evacuation (CASEVAC) coverage.

Along each of these dimensions of transition we maintain steady progress to date, and we are confident that we are well positioned to continue to meet our timelines and ensure a smooth transition using the plans and evaluation tools we have in place.

Question:

Specifically, could enhanced interagency coordination help improve this process?

Answer:

We believe interagency coordination has been outstanding throughout the transition. There is always room for improvement, however. We are looking for ways to enhance our cooperation with the Department of Defense to maximize the benefits that support from Defense could give us. Of particular importance to the Department of State is equipment essential for our security.

Question:

SIGIR Stuart Bowen testified earlier this year on an oversight hearing of reconstruction efforts in Iraq. During which, he asserted that an estimated \$4 billion has been wasted in our stabilization and reconstruction programs in Iraq. He further indicated poor State Department management and oversight of contracting as a large factor in waste, fraud,

and abuse, due, in large part, to insufficient resourcing and institutional capacity. Given the planned increases in contracted personnel to fulfill transition needs, what is State doing to improve its capacity to efficiently manage and oversee contracts?

Answer:

The Department has continued to work towards and implement more robust and efficient contract oversight and administration of contracts in support of the mission in Iraq. For example, the Department's two largest sets of service contracts in place that are used to support requirements in Iraq are those in support of the Diplomatic Security (DS) and International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) missions there. For DS, it's the Worldwide Protective Services (WPS) multiple award contracts under which task orders are competed and issued for specific locations. For INL, it's the Civilian Police Training, Corrections and Judicial advisory services (CIVPOL) multiple award contracts under which task orders are competed and issued for specific locations.

DS:

The State Department uses private security contractors (PSCs) to help meet the extraordinary security requirements in critical threat and non-permissive environments. Through operational changes already implemented and an examination conducted during the Department's Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR) process, State is ensuring proper management, oversight, and operational control of the private security contractors we deploy overseas. The Department institutionalized many of these changes through the new WPS contracts awarded in September 2010, which incorporates lessons learned to ensure that private security contractors perform their requirements in a professional, responsible, culturally sensitive, and cost effective manner. The WPS AQM Contracting Officers, and DS Contracting Officer's Representatives (COR) for the base contracts work closely together in DOS Rosslyn offices overseeing the contracts performance via weekly meetings with all contractors with active task orders and interacting daily with the A/CORs and RSOs at Post in theatre.

The Department currently employs approximately 2,700 PSC personnel in Iraq, including 900 supporting protective security details in Baghdad, Erbil and Tallil and 1,800 providing static guard services to facilities under Chief of Mission (COM) authority in Baghdad. Following the transition in Iraq, the WPS contracts will facilitate the employment of approximately 4,000 static guards and 1,500 protective security personnel to protect U.S. Government employees and facilities under COM authority in Baghdad, Erbil, Mosul, Kirkuk, and Basrah. PSC management and oversight will be performed in each location by Diplomatic Security (DS) personnel specifically assigned to support WPS contract oversight at each post. DS currently employs 81 agents in Iraq to manage the Embassy's security programs in Baghdad, Erbil and Tallil. As the Department's presence in Iraq expands, DS is establishing 20 new Special Agent positions and up to 78 Security Protective Specialist (SPS) positions to manage each post's security programs and provide operational oversight of protective security details. Should SPS recruitment fall short of program deadlines, DS will fill all vacant SPS positions with TDY DS agents until SPS personnel can be deployed to Iraq.

DS's plan for management, oversight, and operational control of PSC personnel includes:

- Ensuring professionalism and responsibility through improved direct oversight of security contractor personnel:
 - DS agents at each post will serve as managers for the Static Guard and Personal Protective Security programs;
 - DS agents at each post will also serve as Contracting Officer's Representatives (CORs) and Assistant CORs (A/COR) for the direct management and oversight of the WPS contract;
 - DS personnel at each post will be assigned as Government Technical Monitors (GTMs) to assist the COR and A/COR in the oversight of the WPS contract.
 - Direct hire Diplomatic Security personnel (DS agents or SPS officers) provide direct operational oversight of all protective motorcades.
 - Diplomatic Security personnel will continue to conduct frequent, unannounced health and welfare after-hours visits to WPS housing compounds. Colocation of contractor life support areas on Embassy, Consulate or EBO compounds will enhance after-hours oversight of contractor personnel;
 - Revised mission firearms policies strengthen rules on the use of force and new less-than-lethal equipment fielded as a means to minimize the need for deadly force; and
 - Video recording systems and tracking systems installed in vehicles to enhance oversight and contractor accountability.
 - All incidents involving a weapons discharge and other serious incidents are thoroughly investigated by the Regional Security Office.

- Improving the image of the security footprint through enhanced cultural sensitivity:
 - Mandatory country-specific cultural awareness training for all security contractors prior to deployment to Iraq;
 - Revised standards of conduct, including a ban on alcohol; and
 - Interpreters included in protective security details.

- Achieving greater efficiencies through new contract terms:
 - One set of terms and conditions, enhancing the ability to provide appropriate and consistent oversight;
 - Reduced acquisition timelines;
 - Larger number of qualified base contract holders, thereby increasing competition and controlling costs;
 - Timely options in the event a company fails to perform;
 - More efficient program management compared to multiple, stand-alone contracts; and

- Computerized tracking of contractor personnel to aid in reviewing personnel rosters used to support labor invoices.

INL:

Since 2005, the Department has continued to improve its management of the INL contract. INL initiated a series of measures beginning with internal reviews that examined the Bureau's contract oversight in Iraq, Afghanistan and Jordan. Results from those reviews led to separating the duties of contract management from program management and establishing a U.S.-based contract support team geographically focused on that region. The bureau also established distinct program offices for Afghanistan and Iraq, respectively.

The U.S.-based support team now conducts contract oversight and support for Embassies Baghdad and Kabul by reviewing and monitoring invoices, supporting oversight personnel in-country, providing technical guidance to contractors, dealing with vendors on contract issues raised by post personnel, assisting in developing statements of work, and reconciling historical invoices.

For both posts, program officers and in-country contracting officer representatives (ICORs) provide direct oversight of the contracts, including technical direction to the contractors, verifying services detailed on invoices, and ensuring vendors comply with contract terms. Each INL at Post Narcotics Affairs Section (NAS) Director and the Police Program Manager provide programmatic direction in coordination with the ICORs.

In addition to DynCorp, under the 2010 contract, INL contracts with PA& E and CPI in Afghanistan and Iraq. The integrated support, program and country team meets weekly both domestically and in-country with each contractor. Working with the Contracting Officers in AQM, this integrated approach has dramatically increased INL's contract oversight presence for each country. As issues arise, INL works with the contractors to identify corrective actions and monitor their implementation.

To date the increased rigor of invoicing reviews for Afghanistan and Iraq has yielded actual savings of \$21.3 million and another \$33.8 million has been collected in refunds from contractors. INL also increased the specificity of our Statements of Work and their compliance; instituted physical inventorying efforts of all INL government-owned personal property for Iraq and Afghanistan, resulting in an automated property management system; and implemented the 100% inventorying of all INL issued-weapons in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as arms inspections. As recently as February 2009, an arms inspection in Iraq demonstrated that DynCorp's internal controls met all required standards in the handling and storage of INL weapons.

In Iraq, INL brought on board the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to provide expertise in monitoring the oversight and implementation of INL's prison project and other construction projects. USACE provides INL Senior Management with weekly and monthly reports that support the project statistics. USACE travels to the various

construction sites to conduct inspections, reviews all construction project planning and completion monitoring, and reviews INL program directed changes to the Statements of Work. The USACE also has their own quality assurance program to inspect the sites and hires Iraqi engineers to monitor the projects on a daily basis.

In addition to the Task Orders for Iraq and Afghanistan, INL finances Civilian Police Task Orders in Kosovo, Sudan, the West Bank, Lebanon, Liberia and Haiti with an aggregate value in excess of \$300 million. For each Task Order, Contracting Officer's Representatives (COR) and I-CORs were appointed who monitor contractor performance in the field, review and validate invoices and make recommendations for Task Order modifications as appropriate. INL was proactive in requiring proper training for all Contracting Officers' Representatives (CORs) prior to their designation and deployment. In addition, INL periodically reviews the activities and files of CORs to ensure sufficiency of oversight and the adequacy of file documentation. INL also utilizes Industrial Property Management Specialists to identify and provide additional approaches in the oversight and management of government-owned property held by contractors worldwide under the CIVPOL program; and INL has engaged DCAA to review aspects of several DynCorp contracts and task orders valued at \$3 billion, worldwide.

Some other examples of the Department's oversight and administration of important contracts in Iraq include the following:

O&M Services at Post:

The prime contractor PA&E works exclusively on the Embassy compound where they perform Operations and Maintenance services. Their Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) is the Deputy Facilities Manager. Between the Facilities Manager and the Deputy, all work performed by PA&E is visible and verifiable on a daily basis and a detailed review is conducted on at least a weekly basis with critical work being checked more frequently. Billing and staffing levels are reviewed monthly with the Financial Management Officer where reconciliation of differences in billing can be researched. All problems, if any, are immediately reported to the Contracting Office in Washington for immediate appropriate action. In addition, all residents of the Embassy compound are customers. They are quick to observe and report any work that has not been performed in accordance with the contract requirements.

Linguist Services:

Linguist/Subject Matter Expert (L/SME) contracts are reviewed by a COR in Washington DC for the offices served in Iraq. The COR has frequent interaction with the Contracting Officer located in Rosslyn, VA. The contractor's time sheets are verified by an individual designated by the contracting officer as Government Task Managers (GTM), each of whom have firsthand knowledge of the contract requirements, contractor employee's attendance and deliverables. This is the person to whom the L/SME reports to on a daily basis. An erroneous entry on a time card would be readily noticed and a timely correction made. Government managers at this level are experienced and very detailed in their review. Further, while comprehensive in nature, the L/SME contract is not physically large. From experience, one COR with a responsive base of Government

managers is more than adequate to verify contractor performance as well as secure adequate internal controls.

Question:

The United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI) was created following the 2003 war in Iraq. In August 2007, with the support of the United States, the UN Security Council unanimously voted to update and broaden the mandate of UNAMI, expanding the mission's responsibilities to include facilitating national reconciliation, fostering dialogue between Iraq and its neighbors, and providing humanitarian assistance. As the U.S. increases its civilian presence, how will the U.S. work with UNAMI to support Iraq's transition to a post-conflict state?

Answer:

Through its mandate, unanimously renewed by the United Nations (UN) Security Council in August of this year, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI) seeks to advise, support, and assist the Iraqi people and government to strengthen democratic institutions, advance national reconciliation and inclusive political dialogue, aid vulnerable groups (including refugees and internally displaced persons), promote the protection of human rights, and promote judicial and legal reform. These efforts are critical in parallel to our efforts to help the Iraqi people establish a sovereign, stable, and self-reliant Iraq. The U.S. Government (USG) fully supports both UNAMI and its mandate, and our support for UNAMI comes through coordination of political action, logistical support, and advocacy.

UNAMI and USG staff work closely together to plan and implement policies to further our respective missions. At the working level, UNAMI and USG officials regularly meet in Baghdad and at our PRTs in Iraq's disputed internal boundaries (DIBs) region to further efforts at Arab-Kurd reconciliation. The USG and UNAMI also coordinate on critical humanitarian issues, including assistance to refugees and internally displaced persons. Representatives of UNAMI work with USG and other international partners in Baghdad and Kuwait to resolve outstanding issues between Iraq and Kuwait stemming from the 1991 Gulf War. Most prominently, during the recent government formation process UN Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) Ad Melkert and Ambassador Jeffrey worked closely together to facilitate meetings between Iraq's political leaders. SRSG Melkert met with Deputy Secretary of State Steinberg in October 2010 to brief him on these and other efforts, and UNAMI continues to meet with Ambassador Jeffrey and other senior USG officials regularly.

USG and UN officials meet regularly to ensure continued logistical support for UNAMI as the USG transitions from a military-led to a civilian-led mission. In May 2010, high-level representatives from the USG and UNAMI, led by Undersecretary for Management Patrick Kennedy and SRSG Melkert, met in Washington to discuss key logistics issues for UNAMI post 2011. In New York, Washington, and in the field,

representatives from the UN and the USG at the working level meet regularly to continue these discussions. Through these meetings, the USG and UNAMI have been able to agree on key issues such as modalities for sharing threat information, access for UN aircraft to USG landing zones, and coordinated movements of USG and UNAMI officials.

A key mission of our Consulates and Embassy Branch Offices will be to provide security and logistical support for UNAMI. This is particularly true along the DIBs area, where the EBOs in Mosul and Kirkuk, along with the Erbil Consulate, will work with UNAMI to mediate and mitigate Arab-Kurd tensions and advance a political process in which all parties are confident their concerns are being addressed. UNAMI plans to maintain presences in Erbil, Baghdad, Kirkuk, and Basrah provinces. Our close proximity to them in these locations will allow us to continue our close coordination of engagement and assistance with them.

The USG strongly advocates for support for UNAMI within the international community, particularly through working with the UN Security Council and General Assembly to ensure UNAMI has the political and resource assistance it needs to fulfill its mandate.

**QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
THE HONORABLE RUSS CARNAHAN (MO-03)
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**Hearing on
The Transition to Civilian-Led U.S. Presence in Iraq: Issues and Challenges
Thursday November 18, 2010 1:00 P.M.
2172 Rayburn House Office Building**

Question for Assistant Secretary of Defense Colin Kahl

Response was not available at the time of printing for the following question:

Question:

- We have seen significant challenges with respect to reconstruction efforts in Iraq due to a lack of sufficient interagency coordination, particularly between the Department of Defense and the State Department. Ever more concerning, this trend of poor DoD-State coordination has continued in planning for the transition to State control of the mission. In fact, the Commission on Wartime Contracting in Iraq and Afghanistan has criticized the transition for failing to take a “whole of government” approach to the planning among the 14 agencies that are represented under the Chief of Mission’s authority. Major criticism cites a lack of transparency, visibility, and basic data resulting in potential waste, fraud, and abuse. Some analysis indicates recent improve in interagency planning for the transition, however. Please give me your assessment of agency coordination, particularly between DoD and State, as well as your recommendations for improving such coordination.
 - Please give a brief overview of what mechanisms the U.S. government has in place to evaluate the transition process?
 - What are we doing to ensure lessons learned from the transition to civilian-led presence in Iraq are applied for future planning, especially given the impending transition in Afghanistan?
 - What is your indication on how effective planning has been for such evaluation, and how can evaluation mechanisms be strengthened?
 - Specifically, could enhanced interagency coordination help improve this process?
-

**Congresswoman Barbara Lee, of California
Questions for the Record**

The Transition to a Civilian-Led U.S. Presence in Iraq: Issues and Challenges
November 18, 2010

Questions for Assistant Secretary of State Jeffrey D. Feltman and Assistant Secretary of Defense Colin Kahl

Responses were not available at the time of printing for the following questions:

Status of Forces Agreement / 2011 Withdrawal Deadline

Q1: When President Obama was in the Senate, he supported legislation introduced by then-Senator Clinton, S.2426, requiring that any agreement between the United States and Iraq, including a status of forces agreement (SOFA) that involves "commitments or risks affecting the nation as a whole" to be approved in advance by the Congress.

If the current SOFA or is amended, or the timeline for redeployment of U.S. military troops and contractors out of Iraq amended, will the agreement be brought to Congress for approval?

Q2: *Assistant Secretary Kahl, can you confirm the 2011 withdrawal deadline will apply to all U.S. troops and military (DOD) contractors?*

Q3: *Can you foresee a scenario in which the U.S. could accelerate the pace of its military drawdown in Iraq and the transition to a civilian-led U.S presence?*

DOD Accounting

In July it was reported that the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction found the Department of Defense is unable to properly account for 96% of more than \$9 billion provided for DOD reconstruction projects in Iraq.

And just last month, the Special Inspector General for Reconstruction in Afghanistan released the results of a comprehensive audit of reconstruction activities in Afghanistan which revealed the four DOD contracting organizations managing reconstruction do not coordinate or share information with one another, and there is minimal sharing of information across government agencies.

Q4: *Have these findings altered in any way the Administration's budget request for DOD reconstruction activities in Iraq or Afghanistan in FY11, such as the Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP)?*

If not, how do you plan to address the lack of accountability within these programs prior to Congress appropriating additional funds?

Abuse by U.S. trained Iraq Army and Police Force

As reported by the Guardian and other news outlets, the release of military documents related to Iraq on the site wikileaks in late October revealed that "US authorities failed to investigate hundreds of reports of abuse, torture, rape and even murder by Iraqi police and soldiers whose conduct appears to be systematic and normally unpunished."

Q5: Assistant Secretary Kahl, can you respond to these reports? I would also like your assessment as to whether the U.S. government has lived up to its legal responsibilities in Iraq with regard to the Leahy law, which prohibits U.S. military assistance to foreign military units that have committed gross violations of human rights?

Q6: According to an article from October 22, 2010, a Pentagon spokesman told the New York Times that under its procedure, when reports of Iraqi abuse were received the US military "notifies the responsible government of Iraq agency or ministry for investigation and follow-up".

I find it deeply troubling that after training and equipping these Iraqi Security Forces, upon receiving reports of abuse, we would simply wash our hands of the issue by passing it along to an Iraqi government that we all know is grossly underdeveloped from a rule of law perspective.

Is that still the active policy for Department of Defense officials when information is received alleging abuse by Iraqi police or military units?

DOD Activities post-Combat Mission in Iraq

On August 31, 2010, President Obama declared an end to the combat mission in Iraq.

Q7: Can you please define the role and activities of the remaining U.S. troops in Iraq following the redeployment of all combat troops earlier this year?

Q8: Are U.S. troops or military contractors still conducting or participating in forward operating missions? Can you define their rules of engagement?

