IRAQ: DEMOCRACY OR CIVIL WAR?

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY, EMERGING THREATS, AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED NINTH CONGRESS

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IRAQ: DEMOCRACY OR CIVIL WAR?

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2006

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY, EMERGING THREATS, AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS,
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:05 a.m., in room 2154, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Christopher Shays (chairman of the subcommittee) Presiding.

Present: Representatives Shays, Kucinich, and Van Hollen.

Staff present: J. Vincent Chase, chief investigator; R. Nicholas Palarino, Ph.D., staff director; Kaleb Redden and Alex Manning, professional staff members; Robert A. Briggs, analyst; Robert Kelley, chief counsel; Michael Girbov, graduate assistant; Andrew Su, minority professional staff member; and Jean Gosa, minority assistant clerk.

Mr. SHAYS. A quorum being present, the Subcommittee on National Security, Emerging Threats, and International Relations hearing entitled, "Iraq: Democracy or Civil War? What are the Consequences of Leaving Iraq," is called back to order. This is an extremely important topic, as I think we all can agree, and thus we want the record to be complete.

Today's hearing is a continuation of both Monday and Wednesday's hearing, but a continuation of Wednesday's hearing. At the end of today we will adjourn. At the start of each reconvening session, Members have the opportunity to make opening statements and I will begin with my statement.

Today we convene for the final day of our 3-day hearing, "Iraq: Democracy or Civil War?" examining security force levels, prospects for national reconciliation and the consequence of leaving Iraq immediately, later but still prematurely, or when Iraqis are capable of taking over for Coalition forces.

The conflict in Iraq finds United States and Coalition forces up against increasing insurgent sectarian and terrorist violence. Thomas Friedman of the New York Times, who has supported the U.S.' objective to foster progressive democracy in the Middle East, bluntly stated, "it is now obvious that we are not midwifing democracy in Iraq, we are baby-sitting a civil war."

While some may take issue with Mr. Friedman's choice of words, the broad contours of his point are clear: The violence in Iraq continues, if not increases; the new Iraqi leadership has not yet shown the political will to confront it, and efforts to promote peace and democracy are stalled.

Our witnesses this past Monday came to different conclusions about security in Iraq, but one thing was clear from their testimony. Our current baseline for overall security forces is inadequate. We do not have enough Coalition forces in Iraq.

In addition, it is clear to me, based on my 14 visits to Iraq and all our hearings, the 325,500 projected Iraqi security force level to be reached in December of this year will be inadequate and not allow us to bring most of our troops home.

At our second session this past Wednesday, officials from the Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development and a panel of distinguished Iraqis testified on the prospects, timing, and conditions for achieving national reconciliation and a permanent constitution. Ambassador David Satterfield, the senior advisor on Iraq to the Secretary of State, told us that quashing military violence is a priority—excuse me, told us that quashing militia violence is a priority, but that all of the tough decisions currently facing Iraqis, standing down militias, sharing the oil wealth, federalism and the rollback of debaathification are parts of the solution. He concluded that a grand bargain incorporating all of the parts would be required to achieve lasting reconciliation.

Our second panel on Wednesday comprised of Dr. Hajim Al-Hasani, former Speaker of the Iraqi Parliament and currently a Sunni member of Parliament; Mr. Karim Al-Musawi, Washington representative of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq; and Mr. Qubad Talabany, Washington representative of the Kurdish Region Government and son of Iraqi's President Jalal Talabany, identified what they saw as key mistakes that have led to sectarian violence in Iraq.

While they didn't agree on all of them, all of these were mentioned: permitting the looting that followed the U.S. invasion; allowing Iraqis to divide and identify by distinct groups; inadequate vetting of new volunteers for new security forces, especially in the national police, leading to corruption within the ranks; dissolving Iraqi security forces and not subsequently reconstituting them more quickly; creating a political vacuum by not having a provisional government prepared to take over when Hussein's government dissolved; and devoting insufficient attention to economic development.

We begin today by continuing the national reconciliation discussion with our second panel from Wednesday. Following the conclusion of this panel, we will hear testimony from today's panel discussing the consequence of leaving Iraq immediately, later but still prematurely, or when Iraqis are capable of taking over for Coalition forces.

For all the talk of U.S. withdrawal, serious consideration of the consequences of leaving Iraq has received relatively little attention. The administration has made clear its view that the consequences of leaving Iraq prematurely would be disastrous. It believes removing U.S. forces before Iraqis can defend themselves would abandon the Iraqi people to an environment of death and uncertainty, destabilize the Middle East, embolden terrorists around the globe, and leave the world a more dangerous place for generations to come.

I believe leaving Iraq prematurely would result in a full-scale civil war, Islamic terrorists winning a huge victory, and Iran being

the dominant power where two-thirds of the world's energy resides. That is my opinion. And this is why we are having our hearing today: What will be the consequences of leaving Iraq whenever we leave it?

I struggle with the fact that since we invaded Iraq and dissolved their entire security force, I also believe it would be immoral to leave Iraq before we replace these security forces. Again, I also struggle with the fact that President Bush said: As the Iraqis stand up, we will stand down.

But the fact is, this has not happened. As of August 30, 2006 there were 294,000 trained and equipped Iraqi security forces, and yet no Coalition forces have stepped down.

Debate will become more pronounced in the coming weeks and months over when the United States can withdraw forces in Iraq. Engaging in serious debate is healthy, it is exactly the sort of dialog our country needs to be having about Iraq right now, but this debate should be informed by serious consideration of the impact of our leaving Iraq, not by partisan politics.

We will hear testimony on this topic today from Dr. Fouad Ajami, Director of Middle East Studies at Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies; Dr. James Fearon, Professor of Political Science at Stanford University, an expert on ethic conflict and civil war; and Ambassador Peter Galbraith, Senior Diplomatic Fellow at the Center for Arms Control and Nonproliferation.

We thank all our witnesses for sharing their perspectives with us today and hope that this hearing will help illuminate the consequences of the paths our Nation may choose in Iraq. Iraq's future and our own hangs in the balance. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Hon. Christopher Shays follows:]

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Statement of Representative Christopher Shays
September 15, 2006

Today we convene for the final day of our three day hearing *Iraq: Democracy or Civil War?*, examining security force levels; prospects for national reconciliation; and the consequences of leaving Iraq immediately, later but still prematurely, or when Iraqis are capable of taking over for Coalition forces.

The conflict in Iraq finds US and Coalition forces up against increasing insurgent, sectarian, and terrorist violence.

Thomas Friedman of *The New York Times*, a supporter of the United States objective to foster progressive democracy in the Middle East, bluntly stated, "It is now obvious that we are not midwifing democracy in Iraq. We are baby-sitting a civil war."

While some may take issue with Mr. Friedman's choice of words, the broad contours of his point are clear—the violence in Iraq continues, if not increases, the new Iraqi leadership has not yet shown the political will to confront it, and efforts to promote peace and democracy are stalled.

Our witnesses this past Monday came to different conclusions about security in Iraq, but one thing was clear from their testimony: our current baseline for overall security forces is inadequate. We do not have enough Coalition forces in Iraq.

In addition it is clear to me, based on my fourteen visits to Iraq and all our hearings, the 325,500 projected Iraqi Security Force level to be reached in December of this year will be inadequate, and not allow us to bring most of our troops home.

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Ambassador David Satterfield, Senior Advisor on Iraq to the Secretary of State, told us that quashing militia violence is a priority, but that all of the tough decisions currently facing Iraqis—standing down militias, sharing the oil wealth, federalism, and the rollback of de-Baathification—are parts of the solution. He concluded that a grand bargain incorporating all of the parts would be required to achieve lasting reconciliation.

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- Permitting the looting that followed the US invasion;
- Allowing Iraqis to divide and identify by distinct groups;
- Inadequate vetting of new volunteers for the new Iraqi Security Forces, especially the national police, leading to corruption within the ranks;
- Dissolving Iraqi Security Forces, and not subsequently reconstituting them more quickly;

- Creating a political vacuum by not having a provisional government prepared to take over when Hussein's government dissolved; and
- Devoting insufficient attention to economic development.

We begin today by continuing the national reconciliation discussion with our second panel from Wednesday.

Following the conclusion of this panel, we will hear testimony from today's panel discussing the consequences of leaving Iraq immediately, later but still prematurely, or when Iraqis are capable of taking over for Coalition forces.

For all the talk of US withdrawal, serious consideration of the consequences of leaving Iraq has received relatively little attention.

The Administration has made clear its view that the consequences of leaving Iraq prematurely would be disastrous. It believes removing US forces before Iraqis can defend themselves would abandon the Iraqi people to an environment of death and uncertainty, destabilize the Middle East, embolden terrorists around the globe, and leave the world a more dangerous place for generations to come.

I believe leaving Iraq prematurely would result in a full scale civil war, Islamist terrorists winning a huge victory, and Iran being the dominant power where two-thirds of the world's energy resides. That is my opinion. And this is why we are having our hearing today: What will be the consequences of leaving Iraq, whenever we leave it?

I struggle with the fact that since we invaded Iraq, and dissolved their entire security force, I believe it would be immoral to leave Iraq before we replace those security forces.

I also struggle with the fact that President Bush said, "As the Iraqis stand up, we will stand down." But the fact is this has not happened. As of August 30, 2006 there were 294,000 trained and equipped Iraqi Security Forces and yet no Coalition Forces have stepped down.

Debate will become more pronounced in the coming weeks and months over when the United States can drawdown forces in Iraq. Engaging in serious debate is healthy: it is exactly the sort of dialogue our country needs to be having about Iraq right now.

But this debate should be informed by serious consideration of the impact of our leaving Iraq, not by partisan politics.

We will hear testimony on this topic today from Dr. Fouad Ajami, Director of Middle East Studies at Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies; Dr. James Fearon, Professor of Political Science at Stanford University and an expert on ethnic conflict and civil war; and Ambassador Peter Galbraith, Senior Diplomatic Fellow at the Center for Arms Control and Nonproliferation.

We thank all of our witness for sharing their perspectives with us today, and hope that this hearing will help illuminate the consequences of the paths our nation may choose in Iraq.

Iraq's future—and our own—hangs in the balance.

Mr. SHAYS. At this time I would recognize our distinguished ranking member, thank him for staying along with our other two colleagues, and Mr. Kucinich staying for this hearing.

Mr. Kucinich, you have the floor.

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

Mr. Chairman, this committee and this House, I am hopeful, appreciates the effort that you have made, Mr. Chairman, to create a forum where we could have this discussion. And while the Chair and I have come to different conclusions based on the facts that we are discussing today, I want you to know that I have the utmost confidence in your integrity and in your commitment to this country.

Today's hearing seeks to explore the question, what are the consequences of leaving Iraq? I think a better question to ask is, what are the consequences of our staying in Iraq? Despite the rosy assessments of the administration, the facts on the ground in Iraq are dismal. Iraq is mired in an increasingly bloody civil war, with U.S. troops and innocent Iraqis caught in the crossfire. The civilian death toll continues to rise at a staggering and gruesome pace. Attacks on our troops have not subsided.

In 3½ years, $380 billion later, most Iraqis still suffer daily, without the most basic of needs such as electricity, clean water, sewage or working hospitals. Every day as many as a 120, sometimes more, Iraqis die at the hands of execution-style death squads, kidnappings, murders, IEDs and sectarian violence.

Al Qaeda, which prior to the U.S. invasion had no influence, has now grown in influence and numbers of recruits in Iraq, and has become a breeding and training ground for terrorists who want to kill Americans.

Our own military intelligence officials have given up on Anbar Province, and 3 years after the invasion, our occupation is not even able to secure the capital of Baghdad. The civil war in Iraq cannot and will not be won by the administration's military occupation of Iraq. Repeatedly, our own generals have told us that the war in Iraq cannot be won by military force alone. There are currently just over 130,000 U.S. troops in Iraq, yet within the government we installed—the Ministry of Interior, according to a published report, is employing death-squad tactics. Hundreds of Iraqi bodies are showing up with signs of torture and execution, with published reports linking this to the Ministry of Interior.

How is it possible that our military presence is not sufficient to deter Iraqi Government-sponsored terror? Shouldn't this subcommittee investigate that question?

As I said, Mr. Chairman, the question today should not be the consequences of leaving Iraq, but the consequences of staying. The consequences of staying, as the President has already stated, will be the case at least until the end of his Presidency. This will mean we will not only compound past failures but we will make our Nation less safe.

Our continued occupation will ensure most of our bravest and finest will come home in flag-draped coffins. Our continued occupation will ensure that more of our young soldiers will return injured and maimed. Our continued occupation will ensure the bloody civil war will continue. Our continued occupation will ensure the death

squads continue. Our continued occupation will ensure taxpayer dollars will be subject to waste, fraud and abuse at the hands of Halliburton and other defense contractors. And our continued occupation will ensure al Qaeda continues to grow.

Our Bible says, "That which is crooked cannot be made straight." I think that those words would characterize our occupation presence in Iraq, because the administration manipulated intelligence, deliberately misled the public and Congress, and issued a false campaign of fear to sell this phony policy.

The war in Iraq has been a grave and tragic mistake. It has cost us blood and treasure. It has damaged our reputation in the world, it has squandered the world's goodwill after 9/11, and it has been a tremendous distraction from our efforts to challenge terrorism worldwide and to seek justice of those responsible for 9/11.

We have lost over 2,671 U.S. soldiers, tens of thousands more have been injured, many of them severely maimed; 100,000 to 200,000 innocent Iraqis have died as a result of the U.S. invasion. We have squandered over $380 billion of taxpayers' money, all of it in deficit spending. Over half of this deficit spending is derived from foreign sources. Think about it: We have to borrow from Beijing to occupy Baghdad.

The consequences of staying are that our troops remain bogged down in an unwinnable war, with no exit strategy, a rising death toll, and a country growing bloody and deadly as we create more terrorists, while politicians in Washington continue to ignore the advice of generals and pursue ideological and political agendas.

Stay the course? I believe our colleague and my friend Congressman Duncan said it best the other day, and I am paraphrasing. He said, When you are headed down a highway in the wrong direction, you take the exit ramp. We are headed in the wrong direction in Iraq.

Over 3 years after the administration's misguided war of choice, failed occupation, and disastrous reconstruction effort, Iraq is our quagmire. The consequences of staying are far more dangerous than the consequence of taking the exit ramp from Iraq.

I believe it is time we end this grave misadventure in Iraq and bring our troops home with the honor and dignity they deserve.

Mr. Chairman, I just handed you a letter requesting the committee examine the role of our intelligence apparatus in the current march to armed conflict with Iran. History appears to be repeating itself. The administration is using the same phony tactics to try to launch the next war as it did 4 years ago to mislead us into the current quagmire.

According to the Washington Post of September 14, 2006, article entitled "U.N. Inspectors Dispute Iran Report by House Panel," the Director of National Intelligence, DNI, conducted a pre-publication review of the House Intelligence Committee staff report on Iran which has come under scrutiny for making false, misleading, and unsubstantiated assertions about Iran's nuclear program. In the article a spokesperson for the DNI confirmed the agency did review the report prior to its publication, yet the final committee staff report, "included at least a dozen claims that were either demonstrably wrong or impossible to substantiate," including the gross exaggeration that the level of uranium enriched by nuclear plants

has now reached, "weapons grade," levels of 90 percent, when in reality the correct enrichment level found by the International Atomic Energy Agency was 3.6 percent.

This is a letter from the IAEA, Director of External Relations and Policy Coordination, Mr. Vilmos Cserveny to Chairman Hoekstra, September 12, 2006.

The publication of false, misleading and unsubstantiated statements by the House committee is regrettable, but the role of the DNI raises important questions. Was the text of the report given to DNI for review identical to the text later released to the public by the committee? Did the DNI recognize those claims made in the report that were wrong or impossible to substantiate at the time the DNI conducted its pre-publication review? During its review did DNI also note the same false, misleading, and unsubstantiated statements as those deemed by the IAEA in its letter to the committee to be wrong or impossible to substantiate? In its response to the committee did DNI state the inaccuracies it found and seek correction or clarification of those parts of the prepublication report? No. 5, did the DNI approve the report in spite of false and exaggerated claims made in the report?

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, these are troubling signs which this subcommittee has attempted to investigate, and the administration is heading the United States toward a military conflict with Iran.

In June our subcommittee held a classified Members' briefing, at my request, to investigate independent reports published in The New Yorker magazine and The Guardian that U.S. military personnel have been or are already deployed inside and around Iran, gathering intelligence and targeting information; and reports published in Newsweek, ABC News, and GQ magazine that the United States has been planning and is now recruiting members of MEK to conduct lethal operations and destabilizing operations inside of Iran. Unfortunately, despite your efforts, neither the Department of State nor the Department of Defense chose to appear for the classified briefing. Three months later this subcommittee has been unable to question State or the Department of Defense directly on these reports.

However, this subcommittee was briefed by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, and I believe the subcommittee should use its oversight authority to compare the statements and information provided the Members about Iran's nuclear program at the briefing with information provided to the House Intelligence Committee for their report.

These are precisely the sort of questions this subcommittee is designed to pursue. The latest report indicating DNI passivity or complicity in embellishing the danger of Iranian nuclear programs should be aggressively investigated by our subcommittee immediately. We cannot and must not permit this administration to build a case for war against Iran on falsehoods and pretext, as they did with Iraq.

We have seen similar patterns with the twisting of intelligence to create a war against Iraq. We must not let this happen again.

I ask this subcommittee to invite the DNI to appear immediately before the committee. It's imperative our questions be answered in

an expeditious manner. Once again, Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you for holding these series of hearings and I look forward to hearing from the witnesses.

Mr. SHAYS. I thank the gentlemen. Let me just comment on the letter, and I thank him for showing us the letter. What I'm going to suggest is that we first have a briefing with the Intelligence Committee, and we'll do that next week, and then you and I can decide where we go from there.

In reference to the meeting you described where the Defense Department did not show up, the State Department did not show up, but the DNI did, we had a classified briefing with the DNI. The State Department provided us classified materials. The Defense Department said they would give us a letter stating why they did not come and so on, and why they do not come, and we have yet to get that letter.

What we'll first do is, this week we'll schedule a meeting to go over that information, try to do it toward the beginning of the week so we can decide how to followup.

Mr. KUCINICH. I appreciate your help on this, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Hon. Dennis J. Kucinich follows:]

Ranking Minority Member
Subcommittee on National Security, Emerging Threats and International Relations
Committee on Government Reform
U.S. House of Representatives

Hearing on Iraq: Democracy or Civil War?
What are the consequences of leaving Iraq?

September 15, 2006

Today's hearing seeks to explore the question, what are the consequences of leaving Iraq?

I think the better question to ask is: what are the consequences of our staying.

Despite the rosy assessments of this Administration, the facts on the ground in Iraq are dismal.

Iraq is mired in an increasingly bloody civil war with US troops, and innocent Iraqis, caught in the crossfire. The civilian death toll continues to rise at a staggering and gruesome pace. Attacks on our troops have not subsided. And, three and one-half years, and $380 billion dollars later, most Iraqis still suffer daily without the most basic of needs such as electricity, clean water, sewage or working hospitals.

Everyday, 120 more Iraqis die at the hands of execution-style death squads, kidnappings, murders, IEDs, and sectarian violence.

Al Qaeda, which prior to the U.S. invasion had no influence, has now grown in influence and number of recruits. And, Iraq has become a breeding and training ground for terrorists who want to kill Americans.

Our own military intelligence officials have given up on Anbar Province, and three years after the invasion, our occupation is not even able to secure the capital of Baghdad.

The civil war in Iraq cannot and will not be won by the Administration's military occupation of Iraq. Repeatedly, our own generals have told us that the war in Iraq cannot be won by military force alone.

There are currently 130,000 U.S. troops in Iraq, yet within the government we installed, the Ministry of Interior is employing death squad tactics. Hundreds of Iraqi bodies are showing up with signs of torture and execution linked to the Ministry of Interior every month. How is it possible that our military presence is not sufficient to deter Iraqi government sponsored terror? Shouldn't this subcommittee investigate that question?

As I said Mr. Chairman, the question today should not be consequences of leaving Iraq, but the consequence of staying.

The consequences of staying, as the President has already stated will be the case until at least the end of his Presidency, will mean we will only compound past failures, and make our nation less safe.

Our continued occupation will ensure more of our bravest and finest will come home in flag draped coffins.
Our continued occupation will ensure that more of our young soldiers will returned injured and maimed.
Our continued occupation will ensure the bloody civil war will continue.
Our continued occupation will ensure the death squads continue.
Our continued occupation will ensure taxpayer dollars will be subject to waste, fraud and abuse at the hands of Halliburton and other defense contractors.
And, our continued occupation will ensure al-Qeada continues to grow.

That which is crooked, cannot be made straight.

This Administration manipulated intelligence, deliberately misled the public, and Congress, and used a false campaign of fear to sell this phony policy.

The war in Iraq has been a grave and tragic mistake. It has cost us in blood and treasure. It has damaged our reputation in the world. It has squandered the world's goodwill after 9/11. Who now says, "We are all Americans"? And, it has been a tremendous distraction from our efforts to root out terrorism worldwide and seek justice for those responsible for 9/11.

We have lost over 2,671 US soldiers. Tens of thousands more have been injured, many of them maimed severely. 100,000 to 200,000 innocent Iraqis have died as a result of the U.S. invasion.

We have squandered over $380 billion of the taxpayer's money, all of it in deficit spending. Over half of this deficit spending is derived from foreign sources.

Think about it. We have had to borrow from Beijing to occupy Baghdad.

The consequences of staying are that our troops remained bogged down in an unwinnable war, with no exit strategy, a rising death toll, in a country growing increasingly bloody and deadly, as we create more terrorist while politicians in Washington continue to ignore the advice of generals and pursue and ideological and political agenda.

"Stay the course"? I believe our colleague, and my friend, Congressman Duncan said it best the other day, and I am paraphrasing, he said when you are headed down a highway in the wrong direction, you take the exit ramp.

We are headed in the wrong direction in Iraq. Over three years after the Administration's misguided war of choice, failed occupation and disastrous reconstruction effort, Iraq is our quagmire. The consequences of staying are far more dangerous, than the consequences of taking the exit ramp from Iraq.

I believe it is time we end this grave misadventure in Iraq and bring our troops home with the honor and dignity they deserve.

Mr. Chairman, I just handed you a letter requesting the committee examine the role of our intelligence apparatus in the current march to armed conflict with Iran. History appears to be repeating itself. The Administration is using the same phony tactics to launch the next war as it did four years ago to mislead us in the current quagmire.

According to the Washington Post ("U.N. Inspectors Dispute Iran Report by House Panel," September 14, 2006), the Director of National Intelligence (DNI) conducted a prepublication review of a House Intelligence Committee staff report on Iran which has come under scrutiny for making false, misleading and unsubstantiated assertions about Iran's nuclear program.

In the article, a spokesperson for the DNI confirmed that the agency did review the report prior to its publication. Yet, the final committee staff report "included at least a dozen claims that were either demonstrably wrong or impossible to substantiate," including the gross exaggeration that the level of uranium enrichment by Iranian nuclear plants has now reached "weapons-grade" levels of 90%, when in reality the correct enrichment level found by the International Atomic Energy Agency was 3.6%. (Letter from IAEA Director of External Relations and Policy Coordination Vilmos Cserveny to Chairman Peter Hoekstra, September 12, 2006).

The publication of false, misleading and unsubstantiated statements by a House Committee is regrettable, but the role of the DNI raises important questions:

1) Was the text of the report given to DNI for review identical to the text later released to the public by the Committee?
2) Did the DNI recognize those claims made in the report that were wrong or impossible to substantiate at the time DNI conducted its prepublication review?
3) During its review, did DNI also note the same false, misleading and unsubstantiated statements as those deemed by the IAEA in its letter to the Committee to be wrong or impossible to substantiate?
4) In its response to the Committee, did DNI state the inaccuracies it found, and seek correction or clarification of those parts of the prepublication report?
5) Did the DNI approve the report, in spite of false and exaggerated claims made in the report?

There are troubling signs, which this Subcommittee has attempted to investigate, that the Administration is leading the U.S. toward a military conflict with Iran.

In June, our Subcommittee held a classified members briefing, at my request, to investigate independent reports published in the New Yorker magazine and the Guardian that U.S. military personnel have been or are already deployed inside and around Iran, gathering intelligence and targeting information, and reports published in Newsweek, ABC News and GQ magazine, that the U.S. has been planning and is now recruiting members of MEK to conduct lethal operations and destabilizing operations inside Iran.

Unfortunately, neither the Department of State nor the Department of Defense chose to appear for the classified briefing. Nearly three months later, the Subcommittee has been unable to question State or DOD directly on those reports. However, this Subcommittee was briefed by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, and I believe that the Subcommittee should use its oversight authority to compare the statements and information provided to Members about Iran's nuclear program at the briefing, with information provided to the House Intelligence Committee for their report.

These are precisely the sort of questions this Subcommittee is designed to pursue. The latest report implicating DNI passivity or complicity in embellishing the danger of the Iranian nuclear program should be aggressively investigated by our Subcommittee immediately. We cannot and must not permit this Administration to build a case for war against Iran on falsehoods and pretext. We have seen similar patterns with the twisting of intelligence to create a war against Iraq and we must not let this happen again. I ask that the Subcommittee invite the DNI to appear immediately before the committee. It is imperative that our questions be answered in an expeditious manner.

I thank you for holding this series of hearings, and look forward to hearing from the witnesses.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Lynch, thank you for being here.

If I could interrupt and say to our witnesses, this is how we do things in Congress. We make statements before the start of every hearing. And we hope that it has some value to our witnesses as well, so that they can in their questions respond to what concerns us. And I do think there is value in all three of you knowing that there is very real division in our own country about how we deal with Iraq, and having your input is helpful.

I want to thank the gentlemen who are here to be able to interact with the Iraqis, who can share their feelings, so I'm really grateful you're here.

Mr. Lynch, sorry for interrupting you. You can have as much time as you need.

Mr. LYNCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank you for your willingness to hold these hearings and also thank Ranking Member Kucinich for his work as well. I want to welcome back Mr. Talabany, Dr. Al-Hasani and Mr. AlMusawi and thank them and all the panelists here today to help the committee with its work.

Yesterday's media reports detailing the Iraqi police's discovery of nearly 100 death squad victims in Baghdad over just a 2-day span evidence the new nature of the conflict in Iraq. What began as a direct military operation to oust Saddam Hussein from military power in the interest of national and global security, and then later became a war against a durable and underestimated terrorist insurgency, is now primarily defined by heightened sectarian violence and the early evidence of a full-blown civil war.

According to the Department of Defense's most recent quarterly report to Congress on measuring stability and security in Iraq, I'll quote from it here:

"rising sectarian strife defines the emerging nature of violence in mid-2006 in Iraq as evidenced by an increasing number of execution-style killings, kidnappings and attacks on civilians, and a 51 percent increase in Iraqi casualties over the previous reporting period."

Now, as a result, our brave men and women in uniform who are already shouldering a massive effort against the insurgency are now being asked—and this has been the topic of our hearings here, the issue of reconciliation between Sunni and Shia in Iraq. That has become the defining conflict in Iraq, and yet we have committed our sons and daughters and enormous resources to that effort.

I don't think that there would have been many people in this body if, back in 2002, we were asked to commit our sons and daughters and enormous resources of this country for the purpose of reconciling the differences between Shia and Sunni. It would have been overreaching on our part. I don't think there was any appetite for that purpose. But that is where we are right now in Iraq.

Even now, U.S. force levels in Baghdad have had to be increased dramatically because of sectarian violence, with an additional 7,000 troops recently sent to the Iraqi capital.

Mr. Chairman, simply put, given the dramatic change in the nature of the conflict in Iraq, the administration's longstanding "stay the course" strategy is not working given that our course has significantly diverged since March 2003. We have failed to empower

the newly elected Iraqi Government and we have now overloaded our own Armed Forces with primary responsibility over all government services, from training Iraqi police officers to repairing public utilities and to engendering national reconciliation between the Shia and Sunni sects, the differences between which date back to 632 after the death of the Prophet Mohammed. That is not a realistic goal in my mind for U.S. troops.

I have been to Iraq five times and I have had dozens of meetings with your colleagues in the Iraqi Parliament, and also with General George Casey as well as President Talabany—your dad, Mr. Talabany, a good man—and members of the Iraqi Council of Representatives and other United States and Iraqi officials. I strongly believe that our Iraq strategy could be best served by implementing a transparent and fully accountable mechanism by which to transition the country's government operations to the elected Iraqi civilian government, thereby facilitating the safe and prompt return of our military forces and decreasing the detrimental consequences that our departure could have on Iraq.

To this end, I have actually filed and drafted legislation, the Iraq Transition Act, to establish a national bipartisan commission to guide and accomplish Iraq's transition to civilian control and also to report that progress when it happens to the Congress.

This legislation is rooted in a successful historical precedent; namely, the 1944 Filipino Rehabilitation Act. At the end of World War II, the latter part of World War II, this country found itself in the possession of the Philippine Islands, and by default, because we had just driven out the Japanese, we found that the military—the U.S. military was in control of every aspect of the government in the Philippines. And what we did then I think was instructive.

President Roosevelt established a national commission made up of representatives of the White House, the House and the Senate for the sole and singular purpose of transferring the military's control of that country to its civilian population.

Now, there are obviously great differences between the Philippines in 1944 and Iraq today, but the job that needs to be done is the same. The only way we can get our troops out of there in a deliberate and orderly and safe fashion is to transfer significantly and substantially the government operations from our military over to your civilian government. That has to happen. That is a necessary precondition to our withdrawal, and we seek it now.

There has been much talk about the Iraqis stepping up. You're here now. I want you to take this message back: We need to see you step up; we need to see you take responsibility.

I spoke with President Talabany back in April in the convention center during the first session of the Iraqi—the new Iraqi Council. He said—he admitted the overwhelming military presence of the United States in our country is not good, it's not good for our future, not good for the independence of Iraq. He said we need you to leave, but not just now.

The patience of the American people is growing thin and the nature of the conflict is not something that we can solve. It's a political solution that needs to be accomplished by Sunni and Shia. Your people will lose faith in the elected government that they've chosen.

Mr. Chairman, I am thankful that we have these panelists, not only this group but the ones to follow. Mr. Chairman, I welcome our panelists' thoughts on these suggestions and I look forward to their perspectives on the current political and security environment in Iraq. And I yield back the balance of my time. Thank you.

Mr. SHAYS. I thank the gentlemen. I just want to say to our panelists, we are so grateful you're here and we have such respect for all three of you. So this dialog is so that we have an honest exchange with each other. We know that your presence here is very helpful, and I just want to say how grateful we are that you are in fact here. You will have the opportunity to tell us what you think in response to what you're hearing. Thank you.

The gentleman from Maryland.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for holding this hearing. This is the third hearing we've had this week. The first hearing was on Monday, September 11th, and given the fact this is the week where we are remembering the attacks that took place in the United States September 11, 2001, I do think it is important that we go back and remember that there was absolutely no connection between the attacks that took place on the United States September 11, 2001 and Iraq. There was no connection between Saddam Hussein and the attacks that took place on the United States on September 11, 2001.

So as we passed that solemn occasion last Monday, we need to take a look at how we're doing with respect to our efforts against those who perpetrated those attacks and, unfortunately, despite the fact that the President of the United States in May 2003, aboard the aircraft carrier U.S.S. Lincoln proclaimed behind a banner that read "Mission Accomplished," that we had met our objectives, we have not yet begun to meet our objectives with respect to those who attacked this country on September 11, 2001.

The fact of the matter is Osama bin Laden remains alive and well somewhere along the Afghan-Pakistan border. Al Qaeda is still active and plotting attacks against the United States and others. In fact, what we we've seen is a resurgence of Taliban activity in Afghanistan, especially in southern Afghanistan, which is the heartland of the Taliban. They have seen—we have seen increased attacks. General Maples, the head of the DIA, testified earlier before the Senate with respect to the increased threat posed by the Taliban. Despite the increase, the United States has actually reduced the number of American forces in southern Afghanistan.

We've also seen recently the Pakistani Government has essentially entered into a nonaggression pact with those in the northwest frontier area, in the Waziristan area, essentially saying the Pakistani forces won't come after the Taliban.

We've learned recently that we've seen a record high opium crop, historical high opium crop in Afghanistan. Things are not going as well as they should in Afghanistan and the United States has not kept its eye on the ball and we have not completed the mission in Afghanistan.

This country was united, absolutely united in taking forceful action to get Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda. The international community was behind us. NATO, the United Nations, unanimously passed a resolution condemning the attacks on the United States

and joining us in the fight against terror. And yet today, just a little more than 5 years after those attacks, we have not completed that mission. Osama bin Laden is out there, al Qaeda is still plotting, and we are now having a hearing dealing with Iraq, which had nothing to do with September 11th. And what happened was the United States took its eye off the ball and we decided to take military action in Iraq. And we know what the consequences have been.

There were no weapons of mass destruction. There was, as I said, no connection between al Qaeda and Saddam Hussein. We knew that before, but now we have a bipartisan report out of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence confirming that. And I would just like to read, Mr. Chairman, Walter Pincus has a piece in the Washington Post today, the first paragraph which reads: "the CIA learned in late September 2002 from a high member of Saddam Hussein's inner circle that Iraq had no past or present contact with Osama bin Laden and that the Iraqi leader considered bin Laden an enemy of the Baghdad regime." That's according to that report.

I think anyone who followed Iraq and Afghanistan understood that. Saddam Hussein was the ideological opposite of Osama bin Laden. The consequence of our going into Iraq has, in fact, been to take the lid off the Pandora's box and unleash many forces that the United States has not been able to control and cannot control. And yet we constantly hear from the administration, despite the difficult situation in Iraq, trust us, stay the course.

These are the same people that told us last year that the insurgency was in, "its last throes." In June of last year Vice President Cheney said on the Larry King show that the insurgency was in its last throes. And yet just last week, we had a Pentagon report that came out—a report that was required, I might add, by the Congress—that said that in fact the insurgency remains, "potent and viable." Not only that, but the insurgency is no longer the worst of our problems. But the worst of our problems now is a civil war, emerging civil war, current civil war, call it what you want, thousands of people are being killed in Iraq in sectarian violence.

And yet I think back to last November. President Bush again, this time at the Naval Academy, big speech, big placard—this administration loves these placards—said, "Plan for Victory." And despite that, 6 months later we have a Pentagon report saying things are even worse today than they were back then, and yet these same people who say mission accomplished, plan for victory, that say trust us, they say let's stay the course. But stay the course is a slogan, it's not a strategy. More of the same. More of the same. Let's open up our newspapers and ask if we want more of the same, the same killing that's going on.

So we really need a national conversation. The President says he wants a national conversation. He says that 1 day, and then he goes out and the Vice President goes out and they finger-point at anyone who raises questions about their approach, engage in name calling. The President says he wants a national conversation, but he comes up here to Congress this week, he only talks to the Republican Caucus. So let's have a serious dialog about how we're going to address these issues and move forward in Iraq.

I'm very pleased, Mr. Chairman, you have these panelists here. We're probably not going to have another chance to say another word before the next panel is introduced, so I want to welcome them and give a special welcome to my good friend and former colleague, Peter Galbraith, Ambassador Galbraith who is here. And during this past week's hearing I have asked many of the panelists to come before us to comment on the book that Ambassador Galbraith wrote, The End of Iraq.

And what I would say is whether people agree or disagree with the particular prescription he puts forward, or they agree or disagree with the proposal Senator Biden has put forward, or others, at least these people are putting forward ideas on how to deal with the terrible political situation and challenges in Iraq. They're thinking about solutions, not just coming up with slogans like stay the course, without anything behind them, when we know things have not been getting better despite what we've heard.

I thank you again, Mr. Chairman, and I'm looking forward to the testimony from the Representatives at the dais now. Thank you for coming back.

Mr. SHAYS. I thank the gentleman very much. Again, I want to thank the panelists for agreeing to come back. I think, frankly, it's very beneficial since you have more Members to address and have an interaction with, so that is going to be very helpful.

I would just say to our panelists—first let me introduce them officially. Dr. Hajim Al-Hasani, member of Parliament and former Speaker, Iraqi Parliament. Sometimes, Dr. Al-Hasani, I will refer to you as Speaker, a habit we have in this country, once a Speaker, always a Speaker. Mr. Karim AlMusawi, Washington representative, Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq, and we appreciate very much your being here. And Mr. Qubad Talabany, representative of the Kurdish Regional Government of Iraq to the United States. Again, we thank you.

I'm going to ask, given there are so many of my Democratic colleagues who are here, I'm going to have them start out. But I would like to say it's the hope of the committee that we will, during the course of your opportunity here, have you speak to the issues involved with reconciliation, like oil revenue sharing, debaathification reform, federalism; are we going to see autonomous regions, see a much more centralized government; militia control and the value of militia and how you deal with militia; the issue of amnesty.

Then, after we have done that, I hope that before you leave you would then address what this panel is—today, I'll say it my way and I will say it Mr. Kucinich's way—the consequence of leaving, the consequence of staying, however you want to. I think it will bring out the same debate.

So I would like you to, if you would like to, just since you're back on the panel, to maybe make like a 2-minute opening statement if you choose to, just some reaction you want. And then we will have Mr. Kucinich start the questioning, then go to Mr. Lynch and Mr. Van Hollen, and I'll conclude. We'll do 10-minute rounds and get to our next panel.

Any opening statement that any you would like, preferably not read, but just shared with us?

Mr. Speaker.

Dr. AL-HASANI. Thank you. First of all, let me appreciate all the concerns both Democrats and Republicans have about what's going on in Iraq, concerns about the people here in the United States and the troops over there and the Iraqi people.

Let me again reiterate that I'm here as Iraqi nationalist and I would prefer to be referred to as Iraqi nationalist rather than Sunni. And I think the number of Iraqi nationalists are increasing since the change happened in Iraq.

I want to touch on some points that some of the Members made. Whether there was a relationship between Saddam Hussein and September 11, I don't know whether there was a relationship between Saddam Hussein and the September 11 incident specifically, but I think there was a relationship between Saddam Hussein and al Qaeda.

There is a road in Baghdad called Airport Road. It was packed by close to 3,000 Arab fighters and foreign fighters when American troops got into Baghdad, and hundreds of them, they died on that road. So I am sure there was some kind of connection between Saddam Hussein's regime and al Qaeda.

I think it's important for us to remember why we went to Iraq. It wasn't just to liberate Iraq. I think we went to Iraq to fight terrorism. Have we accomplished that? I don't think so. Terrorism is still there, and I think if we do not stay the course fighting terrorism—I'm not talking about just what's happening in Iraq fighting terrorism—I think terrorism will be coming back at us again.

There are certain turnarounds in Iraq in the last 6–8 months. I would like to mention some of these things because these are some important events, positive events that's happening in Iraq and people are not paying attention to them.

There is right now, because so many people talked about the failure in Anbar Province, in Anbar Province there are a lot of things, lot of positive things are happening. Today in Washington Post there was an interview with an Arab Sheik from Al-Anbar whose tribe is fighting along with American troops fighting al Qaeda and Saddam in Anbar. There are certain insurgency groups right now fighting with al Qaeda and Saddamist groups in Anbar.

I would like also here to mention, since Ambassador Khalilzad came to Iraq, I think he played a very important critical role in getting Iraqi closer, and I praise that role and I think he's doing wonderful job in that regard. He did a wonderful job when we were working on the constitution. He is doing a good job right now in Iraq.

Another positive thing that's happening in Iraq: For the first time most of the Iraqis, they agree on the personality of the Prime Minister. Today Sunni Arabs, Shias and Kurds, they don't have a problem with the Prime Minister. That wasn't the case with Allawi or Jaffi. That's a positive thing. We have a leader that we can talk to and agree with him on his reconciliation initiative.

There is an Iraqi national government today. Sunnis, Shia, Kurds, everybody is participating in that government, even the Iraqi nationalists are part of that government. That's a positive thing that nobody is paying attention to it.

People talked about we need to transfer here the power to the Iraqi Government. Absolutely. We want that. But on what condition do we want that? With the current situation, no. We need to have some kind of balance in the government which is not there yet. I said we have a national unity government but a lot of the institution is not balanced yet.

You are talking about some of these institutions like the army and the police forces. You don't have real representation of the Iraqi societies in both these institutions. We need to fix that before the troops leave Iraq and then, yes, we need the Iraqis to get the power.

This fight that's going on in Iraq, it's not Iraq's specific fight. We've got to remember that. All these killings that's happening, it's happening by the proxies of other countries in Iraq. And I don't mean any specific country. There are many countries involved in Iraq, supporting this group or other group. This is a fight between the United States and other countries in Iraq. So it isn't just a fight between Iraqis themselves. It's not Shia and Sunni fights.

I think the fights that you are seeing, it's between the political parties that claim that they represent this side or the other side. Iraqi people are normal people, and I say that honestly, and I swear in this committee, they don't have problems between themselves, Shia and Sunni. I have many friends who are Shia, I have many friends who are Sunni. I defend the Kurds and Shia more than I defend the Sunnis if they are oppressed.

Mr. SHAYS. Let me have you end on that nice note.

Mr. AlMusawi.

Mr. ALMUSAWI. I would like to also comment about progress in—the political progress in Iraq. We have right now Council of Representatives——

Mr. SHAYS. I'll ask you to speak a little louder.

Mr. ALMUSAWI. We have Council of Representatives today in Iraq, we have a constitution, we have an elected government, we have Prime Minister, and we have national unity government.

Regarding to the balance in the government, I believe there is a balance in the government today. And we took two issues to work on: the national unity and also the consequences of the last election in Iraq.

I would agree with Dr. Al-Hasani about the links between al Qaeda and Saddam Hussein. Besides that we have to talk about the human rights in Iraq. I think there is an ethical commitment for the United States to help Iraqis to get rid of this brutal regime. Also, there is mutual mission today. We have to achieve, we have to accomplish this mission together. We shouldn't talk about the past, which was right or wrong. We are right now in a very serious condition in Iraq. We need some help from our partners, from the international community, in particular from the United States, because we believe we have a mutual mission and we have to have some partners to help us there.

Regarding the security situation, I would also comment that we have a problem with our neighbors and, unfortunately, this is the frankness—that transferring Iraq from centralization to decentralization, this is a huge and very serious transfer. Some other

countries, unfortunately, are fueling the violence and they don't accept the serious participation of the Shia in the government.

This is my advice to all Iraqis—and I think we are working on this—that we have to get along with each other, we have to accept each other, we have to accept the new reality in Iraq, we have to understand that democracy is the only solution. We have to understand that the diversity, diversity of the Iraqis will not be content only by federalism.

These issues are the most crucial issues, debatable issues in Iraq right now. We have to accept them and then we will for sure make some good progress in Iraq.

The problem actually also about the death squads, we have to understand there is some problems between Iraq and other countries with our neighbors, and from that we need as Iraqis the help of the international community to talk or to see some commitments through the United Nations or through other institutions that could help Iraqis to protect borders.

I think there is serious interference from all our neighbors, there is no exception. And actually the visit of the Prime Minister Maliki—one of these signals that he's talking to the Iranians and other countries—they are also fueling the violence.

The death squads, we do not have any evidence so far about those death squads. Some of our—some Iraqis whom accusing, unfortunately, without any evidence. I would be very frank with you, that organization since 2003 dismantled from military brigade to a civilian organization, civil organization, and right now it's concern about reconstruction and development.

We have to stop accusing each other as Iraqis, if we don't give up, from this kind of accusation and we have to get along with each other and to accept each other, or we will not reach an agreement in Iraq. I think we still need the help of our partners, Americans. We believe they are doing a great job there and we believe together we will achieve our mission in Iraq.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SHAYS. Thank you very much.

Mr. Talabany.

Mr. TALABANY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for allowing us to come back and continue this very important discussion. I agree with most of what my esteemed colleagues said, so I won't repeat them. But I would like to repeat one thing that Speaker Hasani said regarding the role of Ambassador Khalilzad: I think your Ambassador in Iraq has played a remarkable role in most of the discussions that have been going on and have served your country and people very well and we would like to thank him for his efforts and his role.

I think what's happening in Iraq today is a mixed bag where we cannot just continue to focus on the negative. We cannot belittle the negative, we cannot belittle the challenges that we face. We face serious and grave challenges in this country. But I think my two colleagues have highlighted some of the successes and some of the progresses that Iraq has had since liberation.

Iraq is a large country with a large population, and not the entirety of this country is in turmoil. There are large portions of this country that are stable and secure, where people can go about their

daily lives. The Kurdistan region is an example. Many parts of the south are calm and quiet. Even certain areas of Baghdad are even today calm and quiet.

Unfortunately, there is violence and it is important to note the violence and it's important to address the violence, but this violence is happening in targeted areas of the country, and this is the violence that is making the airwaves, this is the violence that is making the news and is dominating the debate on Iraq.

Sectarian violence is hurting this country called Iraq, and the hurt is painful. And we cannot ignore it and we cannot think that it is not existing. It does exist and we must tackle it. But we mustn't take our eye off the real challenge and the real danger Iraq faces and that is al Qaeda, that is the threat of extremism on all sides, all forms of extremism. It is al Qaeda and the remnants of Saddam's former regime that are fueling what has now become the sectarian violence in the country, and we are too quick to change focus and focus our efforts on the sectarian violence while sometimes forgetting the real, real danger to the United States, to the Middle East at large, and to Iraq in particular, and that is al Qaeda and the former Ba'athists of Saddam Hussein.

I think in my opinion it may be more useful for me to end my talk here and engage in a dialog.

Mr. SHAYS. Thank you. The Peace Corps volunteer in me is just so grateful that the three of you are here and I am so grateful that my colleagues are here as well.

Mr. Kucinich, you have 10 minutes. If you need a little more, that's fine too.

Mr. KUCINICH. Thank you very much, again, Mr. Chairman, for holding these hearings and providing this opportunity to hear from representatives of the people of Iraq. I want to welcome the witnesses and say that whatever our views are on the politics of the United States, I think that all of us have a great deal of compassion for the struggle of the people of Iraq, for the losses which the people of Iraq have incurred, for the suffering and the pain of the people of Iraq over many generations, for the difficulties you find yourself in right now trying to figure out how you can achieve stability under extraordinarily difficult circumstances.

The people of Iraq did not choose this war. This war was chosen by the Government of the United States. Therefore, I think that there is a tremendous amount of compassion which flows to you from people everywhere. We recognize the difficulty you find yourself in and we join you in longing for a reconciliation.

This is a process we have to go through in our own country because of the divisions which this war has created in our own society. In South Africa the process of reconciliation, which was so important to ending the tradition of apartheid, was preceded by an insistence on truth, so that truth and reconciliation was presented simultaneously as the imperative for rebuilding the society.

This is something that we're faced with in the United States as we try to once again unite our country. And I'm sure it's the same kind of difficulties that you will find. For example, we grapple with the concerns that you expressed about the connection between Saddam Hussein and al Qaeda. However, just recently a report of the Select Committee on Intelligence, which I have a copy of here, was

very detailed in discounting those connections, which, in this country, was given as one of the causes of war. We were told that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction in the context of them representing an eminent threat.

I have to tell you how my heart went out to the people of Iraq when I saw the initial bombing campaign.

I don't know if any of you were in Baghdad or in Iraq at the time, but I can only imagine the terror that struck the hearts of people who were undergoing a massive bombing campaign. I think that it's important for us to find ways in which we can be supportive.

I happen to be convinced that the long-term presence of our troops there, despite the desire of you to see them stay for a while, may not be productive, but I want to ask you these questions, and maybe we could start with Dr. Al-Hasani.

What is the percentage of Iraqis now who have water throughout the day? How many Iraqis have access to water 24 hours a day?

Dr. AL-HASANI. I think water is not a big issue in Iraq. I think, probably more than 70 percent of Iraqis, they have access to water.

Mr. KUCINICH. And what about access to electricity——

Dr. AL-HASANI. That's a problem.

Mr. KUCINICH [continuing]. 24 hours a day?

Dr. AL-HASANI. That's a problem. That's a big problem.

Mr. KUCINICH. Can you explain to us how it's a problem?

Dr. AL-HASANI. Well, most of the Iraqis probably wouldn't get 4 hours of electricity per day. We tried very hard from the beginning to fix that problem, electricity problem in Iraq; and I think we couldn't do it for different reasons. One of them was terrorists attacking, you know, the electricity lines or generators. The other problem was corruption. Definitely, millions of dollars went, you know, through corruption which was supposed to be spent on electricity.

Mr. KUCINICH. One of the hearings that this subcommittee had was concerning the accountability for $10.8 billion in Iraq reconstruction funds.

Have you seen evidence of substantial reconstruction in Iraq that has helped to stabilize the society in Iraq?

Dr. AL-HASANI. To stabilize regarding reconstruction?

Mr. KUCINICH. Yes, reconstruction.

Dr. AL-HASANI. Yes.

Mr. KUCINICH. What have you seen?

Dr. AL-HASANI. I've seen it in places like Somalia and Fallujah. I was heading the committee of reconstructing Fallujah. It definitely, you know, had a very positive effect on Fallujahns. There were other efforts in other places, some of them failed; and, you know, as I mentioned, it failed mainly because of the corruption of the Iraqipeople who were responsible for the reconstruction and those also were headed by Americans, American companies. There was also corruption in that regard, too.

Mr. KUCINICH. We just had a report which has been alluded to with respect to Anbar Province, how, according to a senior Marine intelligence official, the situation in Anbar Province has deteriorated to the point of where it's considered militarily not sustainable at this point. My question to you is: If Fallujah is in Anbar Prov-

ince, how does the progress that you report on square with the instability which we hear being reported?

Dr. AL-HASANI. Let me say, first, I disagree totally with that report. I don't think there is in this room someone who has experience with Anbar or even the Iraqi Government, in that regard, as I do. I was leading the negotiation at the time in 2004 when the Fallujah thing, you know, erupted. I've been involved in Anbar Province since then. I think things in Anbar, although it is not to my likingness, but it is getting much better than it was before.

I'm very surprised of reports saying that we are losing Anbar. We are gaining Anbar. We had, you know, places that—you know, tribes. As I said, even some of the insurgency groups who are national insurgents, you know, people call them "resistance". These—even these people are turning their guns against al Qaeda and Saddam's loyalists. I say that for a fact. I know these facts. I live these facts every day in Anbar.

Mr. KUCINICH. Doctor, you started off in your brief testimony indicating your feelings about the connection between Saddam and al Qaeda; and I appreciate hearing your sentiments. We, however, have a report by our Senate Select Committee on Intelligence that indicates that there was no connection.

I appreciate your observation about Anbar. We have a report by a senior Marine intelligence expert saying that the situation is out of control. I appreciate what you say about the situation improving in Anbar, but we're getting reports that the level of violence and the actual incidence of violence are increasing and, actually, that it appears to be higher in Anbar than perhaps any other province, especially in the last few months.

So I think that it's important for us to hear from you; and, at the same time, we're presented with this challenge, Mr. Chairman, of squaring information that we get from people who are on the ground there with the testimony of the witnesses. And this is the difficulty because, in order to arrive at the truth, we have to get some symmetry; and we're having difficulty getting that. The best information we get, Mr. Chairman, is that there's information that is at a variance from what the esteemed Dr. Al-Hasani says. I know that we have to go on to other Members, and I'm not—would I be permitted to ask any of the others' questions?

Mr. SHAYS. I think it would be good to invite the two other gentlemen to respond to your questions, and I'm happy to have you have more time.

Dr. AL-HASANI. Can I make just one point regarding Anbar?

Mr. KUCINICH. Sure.

Dr. AL-HASANI. I said in my testimony at the beginning, you know, there were mistakes that has been done by the United States when they went over there; and I explained those mistakes, you know, what were these mistakes.

I think sometimes, you know, I'm getting the feeling there is some kind of conspiracy against Anbar when people are reporting reports like this. This is—I know for a fact this report is not true because I'm involved in Anbar. I know what's going on in Anbar; and I'm very, very surprised to hear a report saying that, you know, we are failing in Anbar; Anbar is uncontrollable. I know we have problems in Anbar, but I think the improvement we are see-

ing in Anbar—you know, it's much bigger than what people are thinking about it. That's why I'm surprised someone from the Marine writes a report like this one; and I say that, you know, honestly; and I'm ready to testify in other forms to tell you more information about what's going on in Anbar.

Mr. KUCINICH. Again, in response to Dr. Al-Hasani, I take what you're saying in this light, that you have much courage and a passion that is informed by optimism; and I respect that. At the same time, I'm confronted with a report that says that the influence of al Qaeda is actually being increased in Anbar, that now we're going to—I know, Mr. Chairman, you have indicated an interest in kind of going into that a little bit deeper, and I don't in any way intend to, you know, want to denigrate your assertions. I'm just saying this is the information we're getting.

Now, I wanted to, if I may, Mr. Chairman, ask Mr. AlMusawi: We've been getting some—actually, numerous reports, and there's published reports now of death squads that occupied Iraq. I'm particularly concerned about the role of the Ministry of Interior. Are you familiar with a brigade called the "Wolf Brigade"? Have you ever heard of that?

Mr. ALMUSAWI. Yes.

Mr. KUCINICH. And have concerns been expressed inside Iraq about the activities of the Wolf Brigade with respect to whether or not they truly represent the aspirations of the people of Iraq?

Mr. ALMUSAWI. There is no—as I mentioned before, there is no certain evidences that—whom those death squads are, belong to which party or to which sect. So, again, I would say that the death squads is unknown people right now, but what I could assure you that, after the explosion of Samawa, there is some Shia extremists take that initiative and try to reaction against the Sunnis, and this is—again, this is the law and again is the religious leaders' statements and degrees—degrees.

The death squads, again, this is unknown people, and we have to focus on moving the interior and defense secure ministries to take the initiative all over Iraq. There is some problem there and some Governorates, and I think the government should be—should have full power in all the Governorates, and this is belong to how to equip the Iraqi troops, how to recruit them and then how to let them control the city. We propose that maybe the people's community could help—communities—could help and decide to let the Iraqis, themselves, help themselves to protect their cities and towns.

One of the issue I would like to comment also about, how to make progress in Iraq and security on other sites, also. I think it's very important in this case to work on setting—or set priorities in Iraq. For example, some cities, we have to work on the security side, but the security isn't priority in some southern cities, but the security is very crucial, important and, for example, in Anbar or in Diyala or in Baghdad. Setting the priorities is very important to help some progress here.

Mr. KUCINICH. I thank you.

I just want to ask a followup question to Mr. Talabany; and that is that we get various reports here of, on one hand, a number of killings have been attributed to Shia militias. On the other hand,

we get reports saying the attribution to Shia militias is unsustainable and that a major element in these killings would be what could be called "state sponsored" coming from the apparatus of the Iraqi state through the Interior Ministry. This is of great concern to us because, when you see all of this carnage, these reports of so many people dying, do you have any sense of where this is coming from?

Mr. TALABANY. Sir, I disagree with the statement that the killing is a state-sponsored killing. I think—excuse me—Prime Minister Maliki has made it one of his top priorities to stamp out the actions of the death squads, and the new Minister of Interior is trying very hard to clean up his ministry.

I think in the past there were clearly elements within the Interior Ministry that were carrying out attacks against Iraqi civilians.

Mr. KUCINICH. But you're saying that's not happening now.

Mr. TALABANY. I think it is a priority of the Maliki-led government to end this activity, and the focus is on the international communities watching. We know that this cannot go on; and this is an issue, I think, that the Iraqi Government has to address and address firmly.

Mr. KUCINICH. Thank you, Mr. Talabany; and thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SHAYS. I thank the gentleman very, very much. Thank you.

Mr. Lynch has the floor.

Mr. LYNCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Just on that note, Mr. Talabany, I do know from when I met with your dad that your cousin was gunned down as well in 2004, so we understand, you know, how this whole conflict has affected your own families. That is not lost on us; and we do acknowledge the courage that has been shown by the Iraqi people in trying to fight for democracy, 8 million Iraqis coming out under the threat of execution to come out and vote. Sometimes in this country we can't get them to come out when it rains, so we understand the courage that is being exhibited there.

While I'll acknowledge that—the establishment of the parliament, and I was in Fallujah not too long ago, back in April. I got to meet with some of the members of the Fallujah city council, newly established. There has been progress.

However, also, I got to spend a couple of days there because of one of your sandstorms, and during my stay, the electricity went out, and the U.S. Marines' Civil Affairs Unit had to go out and get the electricity back on. I was in Tikrit. In some of the circumstances, the army engineers had to go out and get the water back on. It just seems to me that some of those basic services—and I've heard it from Iraqis as well—that they would like more power to provide basic services to the people who elected them.

I know what would happen in my district if I was elected and yet every time the water went out and all the electricity went out I was powerless and my constituents had to go to some other group or government in order to get basic services restored. I would lose credibility very quickly. And that's sort of the anxiety that I heard among the Iraqi-elected leadership, that they weren't being given enough opportunity to do the things that governments should be doing.

I was also up on the border with Syria in Alheim, and there's a checkpoint there, a port of entry between Syria and Iraq, and I was surprised to find that most of the laborers there building that checkpoint were actually Indian. They had been hired by the contractors there, so there were Indian laborers. Here we are with 60-percent unemployment in Iraq, and we have Indian laborers building the checkpoint on the border with Iraq, between Syria and Iraq.

Just a point on democracy, and it's sort of a sidelight. There is nothing that makes my constituents happier or more content than when I can put them to work. If you can give them jobs, that will go a long way. So we need to figure out a way during this reconstruction process.

If we're spending money there, for God sakes, we should be putting Iraqis to work and not—you know, not otherwise. I think that would be a simple but constructive way to reduce some of the tension there. With such high unemployment, it just creates a ripe situation for insurgency and for unrest, I guess.

I just want to ask the three of you in no particular order, would it not be helpful—let me just back up a little bit.

I've been to see General Casey—I think I've seen him five or six times when I've been over there, and his job is—his No. 1 job—he has many jobs, and he's performing them all very well, and he's very courageous, but his No. 1 job is dealing with the military situation in Iraq. That's his prime responsibility. He is also responsible—he's been given the responsibility of transitioning the power from the military to the Iraqi civilian government.

However, every time we have a renewed insurgency—and most recently in Baghdad but there have been other examples as well. When I was there, it was Rhamadi. Fallujah was very quiet, but Rhamadi was exhibiting very high unrest, a lot of violence.

Would it not be to your benefit to have a body, to have a commission established whose primary and specific responsibility would be to move government operations, the responsibility for government operations, from the U.S. military to the Iraqi civilian government in areas like electricity production, transmission, generation, water systems, schools, hospitals, those things that we're doing right now with tens of thousands of U.S. military personnel? Would it not help you in terms of credibility and, I think, a maturing government——

I know the framework is there. The framework is there. We've established the framework of government there through the elective process. But would it not be helpful—and I've sponsored legislation to make this happen from our end, that we create a panel to see this transition of power. Wouldn't it help if, you know, the Iraqi Council of Representatives and the local government there had a corresponding body to accept the transfer of power?

I'll leave it to you to answer.

Dr. AL-HASANI. It would be very good, you know, to transfer this thing to the Iraqi side provided there is an accountability system.

The problem we have in Iraq—and I think you have the same problem with the American projects over there. There is no accountability system there. That's why corruption continues. We

need to have a system where we can hold people responsible if they misuse the money.

The projects that you are talking about are not Iraqi projects because, Iraqi projects, we do it. The Iraqi Government carries the Iraqi projects. You are talking about the money donated by the United States or other countries; and, long ago, I thought it would be better to give that money to the Iraqis provided you have accountability system and let them do that job.

You also have to followup where the money's going. It's your money. When I donate money, I want to know where that money is spent. You don't have that system. We don't have that system. We are trying to put a system that will make people accountable for what they are doing with the money invested in electricity projects or health projects or building road projects or other, you know, economic projects in Iraq, but, until now, I don't think we have done a good job.

Three-and-a-half years of different governments, Iraq's electricity system is deteriorating. We have less electricity than we used to have before. Water is a problem, but it's not as big problem as electricity. Health system, we have problem with that. We don't have hospitals enough that can treat many illnesses, including cancer, which is spreading like rain in Iraq because of different reasons. We don't have enough hospitals to treat, you know, cancer patients and other illnesses that we never experienced before.

So, yes, I think it will be good for the Iraqis to take that responsibility, provided that you and us, Iraqis, have an accountability system that can followup on this one.

Thank you.

Mr. LYNCH. Mr. AlMusawi.

Mr. ALMUSAWI. I had a meeting yesterday with one of al Maliki's advisors—he's here in the States—and he informed me that al Maliki is willing to make some changes in his cabinet to get some more competent ministers, and I think he is willing to do so, and this is one of his projects to make some progress in his time as prime minister.

I will give you an example about the corruption and about the accountability that Dr. Al-Hasani mentioned.

The last—the former electricity minister imported big generations—generators—sorry—for electricity. Those generators working with special oil should be imported also from Turkey. This kind of corruption in Iraq could have—I don't know how many oil in Iraq we have, what this is, and so the corruption is—right now, we do not have a qualified anti-corruption community. We do not have a powerful authority, judicial authority, so I think all these should go—should work together. Otherwise, I don't think we can make transfer just overnight.

Al Maliki is willing to do some changes. Al Maliki cabinet and Maliki, himself, should find some support, and we should enable him to work together with him. I mean, the United States should give al Maliki chance to improve his government practicing.

Al Maliki also mentioned that one of his problem, actually, is that some political parties that didn't supported him or enabling him to get rid of some obstacles, and one of these obstacles he couldn't do the changes in the government.

So, from that, I would say just there is—we have, again, to activate the political community of the National Security Council. Those are the leaders of Iraqi—the leaders—the political leadership of Iraq, and they have to enable Maliki to do some progress. It is not only al Maliki's duty. It is all Iraqis' duty and also the Iraqi political parties as well.

That's it. Thank you.

Mr. LYNCH. OK. Thank you.

Mr. Talabany.

Mr. TALABANY. Congressman, there has been gross mismanagement of Iraq's reconstruction, since Operation Iraqi Freedom, on both sides. I think we haven't proven to be capable to administer the kinds of funds that we have received, and I think there has been too little oversight into the funds that U.S. contractors have been implementing in the country. This has led to a worsening of the security situation in the country.

The economic development goes hand in hand with political and security development, and I think we have focused too much of our efforts on building up the political process and building up our security forces without really looking into the impact of economic development in Iraq. It's important that we build solid, transparent and accountable institutions in the country.

We have focused on finding the right ministers to run that ministry, but we haven't looked into building up the institution of the ministry. A good Minister of Interior alone cannot turn that ministry into a functioning, effective and professional military. It's going to require a cadre of offices, mid-level and low-level offices, that aren't there at the moment.

Whether we're not looking hard enough, whether they've left the country, whether there's too much political interference from different political parties, there are a variety of reasons why the situation is as it is, but I think we need to—in order to effectively govern and effectively spend our resources—which there are plenty of resources in the country. Iraq does not lack money, but it lacks an ability to effectively spend that money, and that is, I think, something that we still need assistance from the United States on, we still need a partnership on in training and building up our capacity to be able to administer our resources.

Mr. LYNCH. OK. In closing, I just want to say, as Mr. Kucinich talked about earlier, we had—at the end of the Coalition Provisional Authority before the Iraqi interim government came into effect and actually received power from the Coalitional Authority, we had between $9 and $10 billion, most of that in cash. We're doing additional hearings in this committee on the mismanagement on the U.S. side, the largest single cash shipment in the history of the Federal Reserve Bank out of New York. We've tracked it, because we have very good records, when it left New York, planeloads of cash, and we can track it when it arrives in Iraq. We have the testimony of individuals on the ground who received the shipment, and then we have stories of Humvees and vehicles with duffel bags full of cash bouncing through the desert, and then we have about $9 billion not accounted for. So, you know, those——

We've also got stories of corruption, of Halliburton employees and bribes being paid to Kuwaiti businessmen; and there's a long, sordid story there that we're going to have to get to the bottom of.

But, in the meantime, the American people are losing patience. You know, the financial cost here, as significant as it is, is secondary to the loss of life that we're experiencing among our sons and daughters; and I think unless we see some accountability, if you will, some examples of success and of an opportunity for us in the near term to withdraw our troops and bring them home, unless we see that——

You know, we're hearing from the President that, during his administration, he does not intend to bring troops home, in other words, stay the course; and that is—as my colleague from Maryland said, that "stay the course" is a slogan; it's not a plan. And there's a significant body of opinion in this country that the plan has to change.

So my recommendation to you would be you need to help us help you in a hurry, in a hurry, and take that back to your government, please. But we need the Iraqi Government with all its challenges—and I appreciate the courage and the leadership you've shown under very difficult circumstances—but the clock is ticking here, and we need to see significant assumption of responsibility by the elected Iraqi Government, and we need to see the very real possibility of reducing our troop levels in Iraq in the near term.

Mr. SHAYS. I thank the gentleman very much and say to our next panel, we do really deeply appreciate your patience. We have Mr. Van Hollen and myself, and then we'll be going to our next panel.

Mr. Van Hollen.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I do want to thank all the witnesses here, again, and just a comment to start with to Dr. Al-Hasani with respect to the issue of collaboration between al Qaeda and Saddam Hussein.

I can tell you that I think that the Bush administration would welcome any information you have. We've had some exhaustive panels and hearings in this country. We had a bipartisan 9/11 Commission report looking into this question. Let me just read from their report with respect to this issue.

They found bin Laden had, in fact, been tampering in Iraq. He was tampering in Iraq by, "sponsoring anti-Saddam Islamists in Iraqi Kurdistan and sought to attract them into his Islamic army."

He goes on to point out that bin Laden continued to aid a group of Islamist extremists operating in part of Iraq and Kurdistan outside of Baghdad's control. In other words, Osama bin Laden was tampering in Iraq, but he was tampering in Iraq in a way in opposition to the regime of Saddam Hussein, not in collaboration with it.

We've just had another report out of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence's bipartisan group exhaustively looking at this question for many, many years; and their conclusion is that there was no collaboration between the two.

Now, you cited some, you know—I don't know—Arab fighters on the streets. I'm not trying to be—I think it's important that we get our facts straight, and I hope one of the lessons that this country

learns is that we need to make our foreign policy and national security decisions based on facts and not on speculation.

All I can say is we've now had two exhaustive bipartisan looks at this very question, and both of them have concluded that there was no collaboration between Saddam Hussein and al Qaeda; and, in fact, to the extent that al Qaeda was active in Iraq, they were doing so in opposition to Saddam Hussein.

Just a comment, Mr. AlMusawi. You mentioned the issue of human rights, and I couldn't agree with you more on the issue.

Mr. ALMUSAWI. Say again, sir.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. You mentioned the sort of moral imperative with respect to the human rights situation in Iraq, and there's absolutely no doubt about it, that Saddam Hussein was a brutal dictator. I would just recall—and I don't want to go into this in great detail—back in the 1980's, when Saddam Hussein was using chemical weapons against the Kurds at the end of the Iran-Iraq War, my former colleague on the staff of the Senate Foreign Relations here, Peter Galbraith and I, traveled to the Turkish-Iraq border and interviewed thousands of the Kurdish refugees who were crossing that border because they'd been gassed by Saddam Hussein.

We documented that. We came back to Washington. We urged Members of the Senate to introduce legislation to impose economic sanctions against the government of Saddam Hussein to punish him for his use of chemical weapons—this is in 1988—and the Senate did that on a bipartisan basis, but the Reagan administration that was in power at the time actually opposed that legislation. They opposed legislation to impose economic sanctions against Saddam Hussein for his use of chemical weapons against the Kurds.

So I've always found it quite hypocritical for Members of this administration, some of whom were there during the Reagan administration, to say today that the reason we went into Iraq with our military forces this time was, in fact, for human rights reasons and pointing to the use of chemical weapons against the Kurds when they weren't willing to impose even economic sanctions at the time.

And let me also say this. At the end of the Persian Gulf War in 1991, it was an absolute tragedy that the United States did not do more to protect the Shia in the south at the end of that war. I couldn't agree with you more. We did create a no fly zone in the north; and, in fact, the north was fairly stable, as you know, from that time on.

So I couldn't agree with you more that there have been human rights tragedies in Iraq, and it's a very important part of this conversation. But for this administration to claim that as a justification for military action does not hold water given their past conduct and the conduct of others in the administration in that regard.

Now if I could just ask all of you. We're going to hear from a later panel here. Two of them have recently written books with regard to Iraq. We have Dr. Fouad Ajami, who is here, and Ambassador Peter Galbraith; and I just want to read a little piece out of a review that jointly reviewed those two books. In The New York Times, it was a review written by Noah Feldman, and he titled it "Out of One, Many," and the first paragraph of that review reads as follows:

"critics of American policy in Iraq since 2003 have sometimes charged that the United States created the sectarian divisions in the country by treating Iraqis as Shiites, Sunnis or Kurds rather than simply as Iraqis, but the opposite has, in fact, been the case. Under the influence of exiles like Ahmad Chalabi, administration officials anachronistically insisted that Iraq was cosmopolitan and post-ethnic. The most serious intellectual deficit that has plagued the American presence in Iraq and a crucial reason for our repeated failure to predict Iraqis' behavior has been insufficient awareness of the conflicting perspectives of Iraqis from different backgrounds and communities."

Now, I understand that the testimony you've given today and other days sort of contradicts that essential message, but I'll ask you if you could each respond, and I'm going to—one to an issue raised through Dr. Ajami's book and then one Ambassador Galbraith's; and it's a little bit unfair to Dr. Ajami, because I'm essentially putting forth the position of his book as expressed through someone who reviewed the book.

But he says the core argument is that the trouble we're seeing in Iraq results from a profound unwillingness of Sunni Arabs in Iraq and elsewhere to accept the rise of power of Shiites in what is, after all, their own country. Shia Arabs have long been second-class citizens, repressed and kept from political power even where, as in Iraq, they are the numerical majority. And he goes on to say that is the fundamental issue here.

If you could please each respond to that, that the fundamental issue is the unwillingness of a Sunni minority to accept the fact that Iraq is a majority Shia and essentially will be governed by a majority that is Shia. That whole theme has been interwoven in the statements that all of you have made earlier, and I'm curious as to what your response would be.

Dr. AL-HASANI. First, a comment on the relationship between al Qaeda and Saddam.

I was in Baghdad on April 10th, 1 day after American troops captured Baghdad; and I don't care whether Saddam Hussein had relationship with al Qaeda or not. Right now, I don't care about it, because I know al Qaeda is very dangerous to Iraq. More than anybody else in Iraq, al Qaeda are the most dangerous group in Iraq. And I don't think you will find many people from a certain group in Iraq can come where the public can say something like this because we know the situation in Iraq and how dangerous it is, you know, to talk about al Qaeda or other groups, but I know——

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Just on that point—and I want to make it clear. I wasn't saying that al Qaeda is not present and active in Iraq today. I think they—I think, in fact, al Qaeda is present in Iraq today, and I think they've taken advantage of the situation in Iraq that resulted from the invasion. So you have no argument with respect to that.

Dr. AL-HASANI. Anyway, my information is al Qaeda was there on April 9th. They were fighting the Americans in Baghdad.

Regarding the issue of whether there was a Shia and Sunni division in Iraq before American troops came, I think Iraq never experienced such a division between Shia and Sunni until 1991 when Saddam Hussein attacked Shia provinces in brutal way. That's

when this thing started to appear, but I think America contributed to that one. Ask me how. I will tell you how.

When Ambassador Bremer came to Iraq and formed the governing council, it was formed based on this division—Shia, Sunni, Kurd—and you can go and look at 25 members of the governing council. You will see how it was formed. So that was—and since then, all the governments after that were formed based on that one. I don't want to talk about the majority issue.

As I said, I don't care whether Shia are majority or Sunni are majority in Iraq because, in my eyes, these are all citizens of Iraq. I don't look at them, you know, whether they are majority or minority.

But, again, when you talk in majority sense, there is political consequences of that one as if you are trying to say this country, at the end, has to be ruled by this sect or other sect. This is not the right way to build the new state of Iraq. Citizenry is much more important than pointing finger to someone, saying he's a Shia or he is a Sunni. That's what I don't want in Iraq.

Who is the majority? We don't know. I don't think anyone can point and say that Shia are majority or the Sunni are majority because, when you exclude Kurds from the Sunni Arab, of course Shiite becomes majority in Iraq, but Kurds are Sunni. We don't have census that says who is majority; and, again, I end up by saying I really don't care who is majority in Iraq as long as they are loyal to Iraqi state, they are loyal to Iraqi people, and they care as much about their sect, the other sects, you know, as much as they care for their sect.

Thank you.

Mr. ALMUSAWI. I would say that, during the Saddam Hussein time, there was sectarian elimination, but under Saddam Hussein and his ownership to the Shia and the Kurds, that was unclear for some people in Iraq. But the reality is there was sectarian and ethnic discrimination, and the Shia, at least, they were not first-class people in there at that time, and this is the truth.

I could say that the saying of Dr. Ajami is the crucial part of the reality. I would give you an example about this case and how the Arab countries, some sectarian countries, who are fueling this kind of sectarian, still is fueling, one of high-level official from our neighbors telling one of senior official—senior, senior official from my party—was not good for you guys, Saddam Hussein and somebody like that, to fuel this kind of situation.

This is the mentality of these countries. They are really sectarian mentalities. They would not like to see a Shia in the power.

I disagree 100 percent with my brother, Dr. Hajim Al-Hasani, that he doesn't care who is the majority in Iraq. We don't need who's the majority, but the majority is the Shia. There is no question about it. But this is a privilege for the Shia? I would say this is not a privilege for the Shia to be majority or minority. We should accept each other again. We should work together to rebuild our country, and we should rebuild the democracy. The democracy is the only option, the only answer for all our questions.

Thank you, sir.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Thank you.

Mr. TALABANY. Congressman, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank you and Ambassador Galbraith for caring about the Kurds back in the days when very few people cared about the Kurds and few joined efforts to bring to the attention of the international community the crimes that were committed against my people. So, on behalf of the people of Kurdistan, I thank you both for your efforts.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, Mr. Talabany.

Mr. TALABANY. We cannot ignore the Sunni-Shia divide, not in Iraq, not in the Middle East. This is an historic divide that has existed, and tensions have existed and will continue to exist, and if we continue to ignore that these things exist in Iraq, we'll fail in our mission.

It is not for me as a Kurd to tell you what my Shia brother thinks or feels or what his—or his insecurities are. We each have insecurities, and all of our insecurities are valid. The Sunnis, they have insecurities. The Kurds have many insecurities.

We have to over-—the way we overcome these insecurities is by building a political process that can begin to address the main concerns of each community, and we haven't done that yet. We do have a national unity government where everybody is participating in the political process, but we're still coming to deal with the major issues that will ultimately bring these people together or polarize them even more.

We couldn't have formed the governing council under the CPA days without addressing the quota system. Had we had a predominantly Sunni governing council, the Shia and the Kurds would have felt out. Had it been the other way, the Sunnis would have been left out and would have felt left out. And Saddam and successive Iraqi governments, not just Saddam's government, alienated Shia and Kurds from participating in the top level of government, did not make Kurds and Shia feel like Iraqis.

The Iraqi army is a perfect example of this. Look at the officer corps of the Iraqi army, and let's find out what the percentages were, and you cannot tell our Shia brothers that this is insignificant. This is significant, and this is the core of the problems that we see today. It is that Iraq was founded on faulty logic 80 years ago, on the logic that everybody was Iraqi without anyone asking those people "do you want to be Iraqi?" we have an historic opportunity to address a mistake that was made 80 years ago today; and we should not let this opportunity pass by, ignoring realities on the ground.

Thank you.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Thank you very much, Mr. Talabany. Thank you for your remarks, and thank you for your assessment.

Mr. Chairman, in the interest of time, I have another question, but I think, in the interest of time, I can save it for the next panel. I want to thank all of you gentlemen for your testimony. Thank you.

Mr. SHAYS. Thank you, gentlemen, very much.

I'm going to ask—and I'm going to do something that I'm not comfortable doing. I'm going to be asking you to give some very short answers so we don't hold our next panel up, but I have a lot to cover, and if we don't have you respond to this, we will have failed to achieve one of our objectives.

I'll preface my point by saying I felt the United States made huge mistakes in the first 12 months. We started to rectify those mistakes. The mistakes were all the things we've talked about—the disbanding of the army, the police, the border patrol, the looting, the lack of cultural respect for Iraq in general—but we started to turn it around, having now dug a deep hole when we transferred power to you, the Iraqis, in June where the Allawi government, even though it was—you know, it was formed not by an election, but it was a huge start in the right direction.

We saw you in Iraq make huge, I think, huge progress, but there were deadlines that got you to do it, a deadline to elect a transitional government, a deadline to start the constitutional talks, a deadline to finish the constitutional talks, and you did it remarkably, a deadline to have an election to ratify that constitution, and met a deadline to elect that government.

But, candidly, since January of this year, I see no deadlines, and I see no action, no action to set provisional elections, no action to really begin, in earnest, reconciliation, no action to complete the constitution. I know we're asking you to complete a constitution in 2 years when it took us 13, I know that, but the fact is I don't know if you have the time, and I fear you don't. So this is what I want to talk about, reconciliation.

I happen to believe that we need to set some deadlines of transferring power. We said when the Iraqi troops stood up we would be able to take our troops out, and we haven't done it, clearly, because we didn't have enough security. But now we have 294,000 Iraqis who are trained and equipped, not all of them experienced, so we won't say that "everyone," but there has been no step down.

I don't believe we're going to see a step down until Sunnis and Shias, in particular, work out their differences. I pray as hard as I can pray that the Kurdish community is not going to see this as an opportunity to claim and want more in a landlocked region, because I see all hell breaking lose if that happens. I think your leadership knows that. I'm not sure your people do, and I fear that, and I want to say parenthetically how grateful I am to have you explain about not flying the Kurdish—the Iraqi flag because that was a flag of domination.

My first question to all of you—I need a short answer—isn't there logic in changing the flag? I mean, hasn't the flag been the flag of Saddam, and wouldn't it make sense to have a flag that all of you could feel proud to fly under?

Let me start with you, Mr. Speaker.

Dr. AL-HASANI. I, personally, don't have a problem changing the flag, but I think the problem is how are you going to change the flag.

Mr. SHAYS. OK.

Dr. AL-HASANI. Right now, the flag, the Iraqi flag, is the current flag.

Mr. SHAYS. This is a minimal one of——

Dr. AL-HASANI. The parliament will have to work on that one.

Mr. SHAYS. Thank you. I have—there'll be other questions where you'll need to go in greater depth.

Mr. ALMUSAWI. It's part of the constitution, article 12, talking about changing the flag. So that's——

Mr. SHAYS. Fair enough. OK, and, you know, I don't know——

Mr. ALMUSAWI. So it is no big deal for us to change the flag.

Mr. SHAYS. OK, but we shouldn't misinterpret what has happened in the Kurdish area of Iraq by not wanting to fly that flag based on—it seems to me I understand a little better. Thank you.

Let me ask you to tell me what is the hardest area of reconciliation. Is it the oil revenue sharing? Is it dealing with electricity? Is it debaatification? Is it federalism? Is it—you know, maybe, frankly, having more contractors be Iraqis as opposed to outsiders. Is it the militia control? Is it amnesty? Is it corruption?

Tell me the hardest thing that you have to deal with internally with each other and the easiest. I want the hardest and the easiest. And I'm not looking for long answers again. And if you don't know—Mr. Speaker, just because I think we give Mr. Talabany a good opportunity to perfect his answer while the rest of you speak, I'm going to go in reverse order and start and end with our sitting member of the parliament. Mr. Talabany.

Mr. TALABANY. Mr. Chairman, thank you.

It really is difficult to highlight one of these issues——

Mr. SHAYS. Give me two of them.

Mr. TALABANY. —as more important. I think they're all important. You cannot have reconciliation without having a viable oil policy, without getting the citizens of the country to understand the importance and the significance of federalism, without having a reconstruction——

Mr. SHAYS. Fair enough. Which will be the most difficult to resolve then? I'll take that one.

Mr. TALABANY. I think the militia issue will be one of the most difficult to resolve because this is dealing with armed units, where sometimes it's not as easy to sit down at a table with and come up with a diplomatic and peaceful solution to, and I think it is addressing the militia issue that is ultimately going to lead to more bloodshed before we ultimately come up with a solution to this problem.

Mr. SHAYS. OK. Mr. AlMusawi.

Mr. ALMUSAWI. Federalism could be——

Mr. SHAYS. Which is? I'm sorry.

Mr. ALMUSAWI. Federalism. Federalism. Federalism. Yeah. It's one of the crucial issues that maybe make some troubles, maybe, in the coming days. Maybe next week we will see some also talks in the Council of Representatives. About the 21st of this month should be the second reading of the proposal, of the federalism proposal.

Mr. SHAYS. Let me just go quickly back to you, Mr. Talabany. You didn't tell me the easiest thing to resolve.

Mr. TALABANY. Unfortunately, sir, in Iraq, nothing is easy.

Mr. SHAYS. Tell me, Mr. AlMusawi.

Mr. ALMUSAWI. Maybe I could say that the oil revenues is the easiest one because all the Iraqis agree to distribute the Iraqi wealth fairly among them.

Mr. SHAYS. Thank you. Mr. Speaker.

Dr. AL-HASANI. I think it's a package deal. It's very difficult to say which one is more difficult and which one is much easier. Although I probably think the federalism is going to be one of the top

issues, the nature of federalism. Nobody has problem with Kurdistan region, so my fellow Kurdish president, he has not to worry about that. We have problem in our——

Mr. SHAYS. You just want a safe place to visit.

Dr. AL-HASANI. Yeah, but I think, you know, federalism is—and then militia issue are the biggest problem, but it has to be a package deal on all these things.

We need to fast form the committee to revise the constitution. It is like what happened in United States. The constitution you have in the United States is not the original constitution. You differed on that constitution, and then you had a committee, you know, revise the constitution, and you have this constitution. The same thing should happen in Iraq. We should reach a deal on the constitution which has to do with how the future state of Iraq should look like.

Mr. SHAYS. Yes, sir. Go ahead.

Mr. ALMUSAWI. Federalism—actually, we have in Iraq—we have to have one governing style in Iraq. We shouldn't say Kurdistan should have federalism and the rest of Iraq shouldn't. We should have one federalism. We should have one flag. We should have one so Iraq should be one state. So, within Iraq, we should have one governing style.

Mr. SHAYS. Bunker Hunt, obviously a very successful oilman and comes from a pretty distinguished family in that area, came into my office and spread out a huge map of Iraq. He showed us all the areas where there was oil now, and then he showed me all the areas where there was potential oil. He said that when he looks at this map as an oilman, he says Iraq is awash with oil, and there are areas that have not been yet developed or investigated. But he says, on a scale of 1 to 10, the likelihood of finding oil is there. He said—and I said, well, Iraq has 10 percent of the world's oil and Saudi Arabia, you know, 20 to 25 percent, and his opinion was that Iraq has far more than 10 percent of the world's oil.

But he said and it wasn't just in a Shia area or the Kurdish area. It was all around. Tell me what the ultimate agreement you all think will be with oil, if that is the easiest to resolve. What do you think will it ultimately be? If you were to estimate, and I'll start with you this time, Mr. Al-Hasani.

Dr. AL-HASANI. Mr. Chairman, take all the oil and give us peace. Oil, it's a problem in Iraq.

Mr. SHAYS. I just want to say when you say take, you don't mean foreigners take. In other words, among the area.

Dr. AL-HASANI. Whoever wants to take the oil, let them take it. Peace is more important.

Mr. SHAYS. But don't you agree that oil is one way to give peace?

Dr. AL-HASANI. Let me be realistic about it. I think oil should be controlled by the Federal Government and distributed equally among Iraqi population.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. AlMusawi.

Mr. ALMUSAWI. That is what the Constitution was saying, the oil should be in the control of the Federal or the central government. So there is no big deal. I don't think we in the south, there is a huge amount of oil in the south. This is not for the Shia, for exam-

ple. This is for all Iraq. This is for Sunnis, for all Iraqis. We shouldn't concern about oil. Oil for all Iraqis.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Talabany.

Mr. TALABANY. History is instructive and we need to have systems in place in the country that can ensure that each and every Iraqi citizen—the way, Kurdish, Shia or Sunni benefits from the Nation's oil to this date it is—it has not been the state. Iraq has failed as a state to deliver its natural wealth proportionally and equitably throughout the country and people are insecure. It comes back to Iraq being a failed state, its inception. We need to address these insecurities and constitutions alone cannot do. We need actions and executions and checks and balances to do it in order to do so.

Mr. SHAYS. Let me say this. My 10 minutes have ended and I know we have a panel that thought that it would be starting at 10 o'clock. We told them that there would be another panel that we had continued. But I feel we need to move on. I would like you all to just end with maybe, if any brief comment you want to make, and then we will get on to our next panel. Is there anything we should have asked you that we didn't, and then we will get on with our next panel. And Mr. Speaker, we allow the speaker to go first but usually the speaker is the closer in our Chamber. So we are going to let you be the closer to Mr. Talabany. We are going to have you go first.

Mr. TALABANY. Mr. Chairman and distinguished Members of Congress, again we would like to thank you for putting this panel together. I think the one thing that if we can ask or request of you is that while we understand that this debate that is going on in this country is a valid debate and that clearly there are divisions in how you all see what is going on in Iraq, it is important and critical for us that this debate in this division not be translated as a wavering of your commitment to seeing the project through in Iraq and ensuring a viable state emerges from the ashes of tyranny in Iraq, and that is all I have to say.

Mr. SHAYS. Thank you very much.

Mr. ALMUSAWI. I think this is a very healthy debate about the Iraqi issues and I would insist on the cooperation between Americans and Iraqis to achieve the mutual goal of democratizing Iraq and stabilizing Iraq. We appreciate the help of Americans to liberate Iraqis there. There is no question about it. Most Iraqis have admitted that Americans did a great job for Iraq. Thank you.

Mr. SHAYS. Thank you. Mr. Speaker.

Dr. AL-HASANI. Well, let me thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank all of the members of the committee for inviting us here to exchange information, ideas about, you know, how we can fix the problem of Iraq. I wish just to say that please don't make Iraq's issue an election issue. Don't hurt us, you know. I think we are in this thing together. It is a nation building in Iraq. It is—we are building new states. It is, you know, we are in transitional period. It is very—this transitional period is difficult period. We've got to understand that. And we need to work together as partners to bring Iraq back to the international community and to bring peace to Iraq and its origin and spread democracy in Iraq. I wouldn't say any place else. I want to have democracy in Iraq because I think

that is the future of Iraq. And that is the future of the United States in the region. Thank you very much.

Mr. SHAYS. Thank you very much. I am going to just conclude by saying that in my visits to Iraq I leave in awe of what the Iraqi people are trying to do. Sunni, Shia, Kurds and others. And I feel that I'm in the presence of great men and women and I'll just end with a gentleman that I have come to know and love, Mr. Al-Alousi, who decided to go to Israel and when he came back, all of his security was taken from him. And after the first election, there was a second attempt to kill him. They didn't kill him. They killed his two sons. And he was visiting with me 2 or 3 months later and I said to him you can't go back. You need to stay in this country. And I will do everything I can to have you stay and be safe because he is a marked man. And he looked at me in horror that I would suggest such a thing. And he said my country needs me. And he's now part of your national assembly. He's now part of, I believe, of your council of representatives.

When I met with him in my last visit, I was in his home. He had no pictures of his family on the walls and I said could I see a picture of your two sons. And he brought out this picture that wasn't in a frame and two beautiful young men taller than him and he had his shoulder, his head on the shoulder of one of his children and then he said to me my wife can't—doesn't allow me to keep this picture open because she can't bear to look at it. And I recognize that every one of you in a sense is a marked person because you want a country under democracy and I know you do want to find common ground. My prayers are with you each and every day, and I can't tell you how grateful I am that you have come here today. I am so grateful.

We are going to have a 2-minute recess and then we will start with our next panel.

Thank you.

Mr. SHAYS. I want to announce our second panel and tell each of them directly that I'm very grateful for your patience and am extremely grateful for your participation. I have been looking forward so much to this panel. I think I am going to learn a lot.

We have Dr. Fouad Ajami, Director of Middle East Studies, School of Advanced International Studies, John Hopkins; Dr. Jim Fearon, Gabelle professor in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences and Professor of Political Science, Stanford University. We have Ambassador Peter Galbraith, Senior Diplomatic Fellow, Center for Arms Control and Nuclear Non-Proliferation, former U.S. Ambassador to Croatia.

I'll just note, Ambassador, that you as well have a famous father who I appreciated getting to interact on occasion and you happen to be sitting in the same seat where Mr. Talabany sat with his famous father. So I thank you all three of you for being here. I think you know we do swear in our witnesses and the only one in my 10 years of chairing a committee, this committee, we didn't swear in was the senior Senator from West Virginia. I chickened out, but I am not chickening out with you gentlemen.

If you'll stand. I'll swear you in.

[Witnesses sworn.]

Mr. SHAYS. I'll note for the record all three of you have responded in the affirmative. What we are going to do is we are going to do 5 minutes and roll over for 5 minutes if we need to. We would like you to not be more than 10. But we really need to hear from you, and Dr. Ajami, I just want to say that I didn't know you a number of years ago, and I heard you speak before the Aspen Group for breakfast and it was one of the most impressive meetings that I have had. I called up my wife afterwards and said I was there for an hour and I learned every minute this gentleman spoke. I consider you a tremendous gift. And I don't know our two other witnesses all that well, but I'll never forget that day when I had the opportunity to hear from you. Thank you so much for being here, all three of you.

Ambassador GALBRAITH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

STATEMENTS OF DR. FOUAD AJAMI, DIRECTOR OF MIDDLE EAST STUDIES, SCHOOL OF ADVANCED INTERNATIONAL STUDIES, JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY; DR. JIM FEARON, GABELLE PROFESSOR IN THE SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCE, AND PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL SCIENCE, STANFORD UNIVERSITY; AMBASSADOR PETER GALBRAITH, SENIOR DIPLOMATIC FELLOW, CENTER FOR ARMS CONTROL AND NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION, FORMER U.S. AMBASSADOR TO CROATIA

STATEMENT OF DR. FOUAD AJAMI

Dr. AJAMI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is a great honor to be here and I think in the exchange that preceded our panel I learned a lot from all four of you and any time you have some free time on your hands, you are definitely welcome to go down the hill to Johns Hopkins and meet with my students. Since those of you, you can't get paid, we will have free lecturing from you.

It is really a great privilege to be here. And I think Congressman Shays, I think it is hard to bring something new to you about Iraq. You have been in and out of that country for so many times. You have invested so much of your energy and your effort in that, in the great project in Iraq, driven in my belief by the most decent of motives, which is success for our country in Iraq and deliverance for the Iraqis and the same is true of all of your colleagues. I am—even the fact that you are on the ballot in Connecticut and Senator Lieberman is on the ballot, I regret being a voter in New York. I would have loved to cast my ballot for both of you.

Per your guidelines my assignment is really going to be in fact to just say something about the meaning of Iraq to the region around Iraq. The regional setting, if you will, of Iraq warrants the regional consequences of the decisions we will make in Iraq in the term to come.

For me, one way of highlighting the meaning and implications of this project in Iraq is a remark made by the mayor of Baghdad on the eve of the country's first national election of January 3, 2005, and the quotation is memorable, that particular quotation is memorable. The rulers of the region, he said, are nervous. The people of the region are envious. Now there is no denying of course that was a more hopeful time. And it is fair to ask as we must ask that

question periodically are the rulers of the region around Iraq still nervous and are the neighboring populations envious of the Iraqis or have the populations come to a different kind of conclusion about the play of things in Iraq?

The answer to this question is quite complex, and I would love to take it up in the question and answer with the distinguished members of the subcommittee, and just to focus on the question that you have put before us. And you, the panel, sharpened this question. As you and your colleagues weigh the consequences of withdrawal versus the consequences of staying on, it should be conceded that no one can say with confidence how long the American body politic will tolerate the expense in blood and pressure incurred in Iraq. It will be safe to say that this President will stay with this war, that this burden is likely to be passed on to his successor. But the Iraqis are approaching reckoning time for America's leaders are under pressure to force the pace, and I heard this from all four of you today.

The political process here at home in the United States is not likely to impose a precise deadline for American withdrawal. But the Iraqis should not be lulled into complacency, for the political process is more likely to draw parameters on this commitment in Iraq, limits of tolerance, limits of tolerance, and I think supporters and opponents of this war will have to concede that we are reaching these limits of tolerance on Iraq.

No great commitment can be abandoned without commensurate costs. It has to be understood. History works its will in unpredictable ways. This American debacle, for example, in Vietnam it should be recalled some 3 decades ago issued in the most unexpected of outcomes. That domino in Vietnam fell. There was horror in Cambodia but in fact the peace in Asia held. So the battle for Vietnam was lost but the wider war for the future of Asia was won. It is unlikely—and this is in thinking about, if you will, a comparison between Iraq and Vietnam because we are prone to make that kind of comparison. It is unlikely that the freedom in Iraq will be as forgiving as the freedom in Vietnam was because this region, the Arab-Islamic world differs from East Asia. The doctrines of radicalism are stronger in Iraq's neighborhood. There is no Japan-like power that will anchor peaceful change and provide help that success can stick on Muslim lands in the manner that Japan did in its own Asian worlds. We needn't give credence to the assertion of President Bush that the jihadists will turn up in our cities if we pull up stakes in Baghdad to recognize that the terrible price will be paid will be to opt for a hasty and unseemly withdrawal from Iraq. This is a region with a keen and unmerciful eye for the weakness of strangers. They watch strangers and they can see when strangers blink. Iraq may have tested our patience and been a disappointment to many who signed up for an easier campaign. We did not always possess the skills of imperial rule nor did we have an eye for the cunning and ambiguities of Arab-Iranian ways, but the heated debates about the origins of our drive into Iraq would surely pale by comparison to the debate that would erupt were we to give in to pessimism and despair and to cast Iraqis adrift.

The Arab-Muslim land has proven quite difficult to reform but look again at the spectacle, if you will, in the region around Iraq

and look what we have been able to do in this region in the last several years. Hezbollah notwithstanding, Lebanon has found its way out of the Syrian captivity. I know that now because of the troubles of the Cedar revolution it has become fashionable to say we should invite the Syrians back into Lebanon but we should do nothing of the sort because at that time Lebanon freedom is worthwhile Egyptians had come to question the Pharaonic system, because if Congress would like to take up a very serious debate, we should take up the debate of what we get out of the investment we make in the Egyptian autocracy of Mubarak. The Saudis now own up to the deeds of the prophets and the sermons of their preachers, not as much as we like them to but more now than some years ago. Kadhafi struck a plea bargain, turned in his deadly technology and material in the aftermath of Saddam's fall. And anyone who thinks that Kadhafi would have made that concession without watching Saddam being flushed out of the spider hole and without watching the soldiers of David Petraeus kill the two sons and one grandson of Saddam Hussein, I think really would have to think again about that.

We have not deterred every rogue in the region. We paid a high price in Iraq. We pay by the day and I know all of us are concerned about this. With our mission in Iraq, notice has been served that the Pax Americana are not free, that there are consequences for regimes that play with fire.

I have summarized, Mr. Chairman, the statement that I have with me which I very much seek your permission to be included in the record, and I look forward to the exchange. I thought I would lead with these brief set of remarks.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Ajami follows:]

U.S. House of Representative
Committee on Government Reform
Subcommittee on National Security, Emerging Threats, and International Relations

Chairman: Congressman Christopher Shays

Iraq in its Neighborhood

September 15, 2006

Fouad Ajami
The Majid Khadduri Professor and
Director Middle East Studies Department
The Johns Hopkins University
School of Advanced International Studies

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

I am honored to be here. I do have a brief written statement which I submit for the record, with your permission.

It is hard to think of bringing new things about Iraq to you, Congressman Shays. You have been in and out of that country so many times, and you have invested so much of your energy in that big American project. This has never been some distant political issue for you. You have been driven by the most decent of motives – success for our country in Iraq, and deliverance for the Iraqis.

In my small share of this inquiry and hearings you have held, I thought, per your guidelines, to focus on the regional setting of the Iraq war, on how this campaign in Iraq plays out under Arab and Iranian eyes. From the very beginning of this war, in 2003, this project in Iraq doubled up as a big endeavor to repair that country, to make it less lethal both to its own people and to its neighbors, and at the same time to offer it as a showcase of America's determination to make a stand against the political malignancies of the region. In those momentous three or so years behind us, Iraq would be the thing and its opposite. Autocrats and embattled liberals alike in the region would read their hopes and fears into Iraq.

For me, one way of highlighting the meaning of the war in Iraq for the larger Arab-Islamic world is a remark by a mayor of Baghdad in late 2004, that I picked up from the writing of one of our able commanders in Iraq, General Peter Chiarelli: "The rulers of the region are nervous, the people of the region are envious." This was on the eve of what could be dubbed the Revolution of Purple Ink, when in a dramatic election, in January 2005, Iraqis went to the polls and surprised themselves and inspired their neighbors by the example of their courage, and their desire to be done with despotism.

The question now is whether that hopeful, proud observation about the nervousness of the rulers and the envy of the neighboring populations still holds? Is the ruler in Cairo nervous about Iraq's example, or is he more likely now to hold up Iraq as a warning to those who would dare dream that there is for Arabs a way out of autocracy and dictatorship. In other words, does Iraq vindicate Hosni Mubarak, or does it give heart to those in Egypt who dared step forth in recent years to challenge the Pharaonic system that Mubarak has put in place with the transparent intention to bequeath power to his son after he himself passes from the scene? Does Iraq give sustenance to Bashar al Asad's primitive tyranny in Damascus, or does it inspire those brave enough in Syria to want for their country more than the sterile rule of the military and the minority sect that anchors that regime. In the same vein, are women in Arabia envious that their counterparts in Iraq vote and hold seats in the National Assembly or are they resigned to their condition, and grateful to be spared the violence and the insecurity of Iraq?

I raise these questions without offering settled answers to them, or to the larger debate about the meaning of this Iraq campaign in its regional setting. Opponents of the war in this country are sure that we had riled up that universe in Araby, shattered its peace, and unleashed its furies. But all had not been well in the region before America struck into Iraq. Anti-Americanism, anti-modernism, the rancid, floating hatred that fed the jihadists, and brought them our way five years ago, pre-dated Iraq. The American desire to launch out of Iraq a broader campaign of deterrence against radical forces of the region may not have been successful in every way, but the effort has paid its own dividends.

From the very beginning, it has to be understood, this battle often seemed like a struggle between American will and the laws of the gravity of the region. The local spectators in the Arab world, and in Iran, did not know how the play would unfold, but they were secure in the knowledge that they "knew" Iraq and its defects and that America didn't. These spectators had their age-old pessimism about their world. The American assertion that Iraq would change was the first challenge in a very long time to the pessimism of a people who had seen the coming and breaking of many storms, who had witnessed many false dawns. Ill-wishers in Cairo and Ramallah and Damascus and Amman were sure we would fail because little in their own world had worked, or had succeeded, in many, many years.

From the very beginning, America was destined to be alone in its work in Iraq. This was not about evicting Saddam from a succulent, little country next door as had been the case in 1990-1991. Back then the despot in Baghdad had broken faith with people who had bankrolled his long war against Iran, he had sacked an independent principality, he had assaulted the region's balance of power. He had brought his army to the edge of the oil fields in Saudi Arabia. Thrown back across an international frontier, the dictator had been folded back again into the order of his neighborhood. He had grown less menacing to the rulers, less meaningful and less inspiring to the populace. Truth be told, the order of power in the region had come into a level of comfort with Saddam. Sanctions and Anglo-American power seemed to be taking care of him. And by 2002, there was in the air the smell – the stench – of reconciliation between the Iraq regime and the Arab order of power. This new war, a dozen years later, was different. Shrewd and sly, the Arab rulers were never going to be enlisted in this American project. We were heading into the internal affairs of a big Arab country, our forces, and the repressed population they brought out into the streets, were toppling Saddam's monuments and statues. We were chasing a dictator – but to the Arab rulers a fellow strongman – into a spider hole; the man flushed out of that spider hole had been the dominant figure of an era of Arab political life. "There but for the grace of God go I," the young ruler in Damascus must have reasoned. And the ruler on the banks of the Nile understood the demonstration effect of what had played out in Iraq even as he insisted that Iraq held no meaning for Egypt. A trial awaited Saddam, a cautionary tale in a region where rulers had never been accountable for their terrible deeds.

It was inevitable that the Arabs would read this American project through the prism of their own experience, that they would translate this war, if you will, into Arab categories. We had upended an order of power in Baghdad, dominated as it had been for a long time

by the Sunni Arabs. We had, whether we intended it or not, emancipated the Shia stepchildren of the Arab world, and the Kurds as well. We had sinned against the order of the universe. Our innocence was astounding. We were over-turning the order of a millennium, but calling on the region to celebrate, and to bless, our work. We had protected the Kurds, but we wanted them to stay within Iraq, we were eager not to offend our erstwhile allies in Turkey even as they sandbagged our effort in Iraq, even after they had succumbed to new, incoherent levels of anti-Americanism. More to the point, we had set the Shia on their own course. We had done for them what they would never have been able to do on their own. We had rid them of a regime that had subjected them to more than three decades of terror. For our part, we were ambivalent about the coming of age of the Shia. We had battled radical Shi'ism in Iran and in Lebanon in the 1980s. The symbols of Shi'ism, we associated with political violence – radical mullahs, martyrology, suicide bombers. True, in the interim, we had had a war – undeclared but a war nonetheless – with Sunni jihadists. The furies that had targeted us in the 1990s, that had trailed us at home and abroad, taking its toll on our embassies and battleships and housing compounds, finally shattering the tranquility of our country on 9/11, were Sunni furies. These furies had emerged out of the deep structure of Egypt and the Arabian Peninsula. But there had lingered in us an aversion to radical Shi'ism, an understandable residue of the campaign of virtue and terror that Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini had waged against American power in the 1980s.

We were susceptible as well to the representations made to us by Arab rulers in the Sunni-ruled states about the dangers of radical Shi'ism. It was in that vein that the Jordanian monarch, Abdullah II, warned of the dangers of a "Shia crescent" stretching from Iran to Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon. And it was out of the same urge to simplify and distort the truth of the Arab world that the ruler in Cairo observed that the loyalty of the Shia Arabs was to Iran and not to their own governments. When the Jordanian monarch warned of that crescent, one of his subjects, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, was on the loose in Iraq hunting down American "crusaders" and Shia heretics alike. As for the ruler in Cairo, it was in his prisons that men like Ayman al-Zawahiri, a son of a great Cairene family, and countless others like him, had picked up the deadly hatred for the Pax Americana that sustains Mubarak's military autocracy. America had been caught in the crossfire: Zawahiri had targeted us because he had been unable to take on the reign of official terror in his own country. And still the ruler in Cairo would insist on the dangers of radical Shi'ism.

The Shia had come into the political life of Iraq, but strictly speaking there is no Shia government in that country. The Shia have the weight of their numbers, but the power in the land is divided. To balance a Shia prime minister and minister of interior, the Kurds claim the presidency, the ministry of foreign affairs, a deputy prime minister, and a chief of staff of the armed forces. For their part, the Sunni Arabs have sent the most representative of their community, some uncompromising hardliners into this government: for all the talk of their disinheritance, the Sunni Arabs claim the portfolios of a vice president, a deputy prime minister, a minister of defense, and the speakership of a Parliament. There is obvious "sectarianism" in the division of spoils, but it is better than the monopoly of power which is the rule of the day in neighboring lands.

Iran cannot run away with Iraq, and the talk of an ascendant Iran in Iraqi affairs is overblown. We belittle the Shia of Iraq – their sense of home, and of a tradition so thoroughly Iraqi and Arab - when we write them off as willing instruments of Iran's ambitions. Inevitably, there is Iranian money in Iraq, and Iranian agents, but this is the logic of a 900-mile Iranian-Iraqi border. True, in the long years of Tikriti/Saddamist dominion, Shia political men persecuted by the regime sought sanctuary in Iran; a political party, the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, and its military arm, the Badr Brigade, had risen in those years with Iranian patronage. But the Iraqi exiles are not uniform in their attitudes toward Iran. Those years in exile had been hard, the Iranian hosts had been given to arrogance and paternalism. The Iraqi exiles and their needs had been subordinated to the strategic necessities of the Iranian regime. Much is made, and appropriately so, of the way the Americans who prosecuted the first Gulf War of 1990-1991 had called for rebellions by the Shia (and the Kurds) only to walk away in indifference as the Saddam regime struck back with vengeance. But the Iranians, too, had looked after their own interests and had averted their gaze from the slaughter. No Iranians had crossed to Iraq to help their Shia brethren, nor had Iraqis themselves been permitted to cross into Iraq to aid that doomed rebellion. States are merciless, the Persian state no exception to that rule. Iraqis who waited out the Saddam tyranny in Iranian exile have brought back with them memories of Iranian indifference. Men like former prime minister Ibrahim Jaafari and his successor Nuri al-Maliki, leaders of the Daawa Party, are described by their detractors as allies of Iran. In a dispatch of days ago, (September 13), the visit of Nuri al-Maliki to Iran was described in The New York Times as something of a "homecoming." But Maliki's exile was in the main spent in Damascus; he had begun his exile in Iran only to quit that country for a long, extended stay of 17 years in Syria. Jaafari, too, had made a statement of his own on that Arab-Persian divide. He had quit Iran for London.

We should not try to impose more order and more consensus on the world of Shia Iraq than is warranted by the facts. In recent days a great fault-line within the Shia could be seen: the leader of the Supreme Council for the Revolution in Iraq, Sayyid Abdulaziz al-Hakim, has launched a big campaign for an autonomous Shia federated unit that would take in the overwhelmingly Shia provinces in the south and the middle Euphrates, but this project has triggered the furious opposition of Hakim's nemesis, the young cleric Moqtada al-Sadr. In the way of such distinctions, while Hakim seems deferential to Iran, Sadr, the descendent of another high clerical family long at odds with the Hakims, openly appeals to Iraqi and Arab sensibilities. Hakim's bid was transparent. He sought to be the uncrowned king of a Shia polity, in all but name. He had fought for that project, but he was rebuffed. Sadr was joined in opposition to that scheme by the Daawa Party of Maliki, by the Virtue Party, and by those secular Shiites who had come into the national assembly with former prime minister Iyad Allawi. A bitter struggle now plays out in the Shia provinces between the operatives of the Badr Brigade and Sadr's Mahdi Army. The fight is draped in religious colors – but it is about the spoils of power, control over oil and turf and the patronage of cabinet appointments. Nor have we heard the last of Shia secularism: trounced in the last round of elections, it survives. It is driven by the familiar desire of ordinary men and women aware of the dangers of mixing the sacred

and the profane, keen to keep the religious enforcers at bay. A nemesis stalks Iraq; but it is chaos and drift, not the false specter of Shia theocracy and dominion.

Increasingly Iraq seems ungovernable. The truculence of the Sunni Arabs has brought forth the Shia vengeance that a steady campaign of anti-Shia terror was bound to trigger. Sunni elements have come into the government, but only partly so. That incomparable Kurdish and Iraqi political leader, President Jalal Talabani, put it well when he said that there are elements in Iraq that partake of government in the daytime, and of terror at night. This is true of the Sunni Arabs, as it is true of the Shia. The (Sunni) insurgents had been relentless: in the most recent of events, they have taken terror deep into Sadr City. The results were predictable: the death squads of the Mahdi Army soon struck back.

It is idle to debate whether Iraq is in a state of civil war. The semantics are tendentious, and in the end irrelevant. Terror is on the loose in Iraq, and the battle for Baghdad will determine the future of this Iraqi government. A well-wisher of Iraq, outgoing British Ambassador William Patey, in a memorandum to his prime minister, which found its way into the public domain, put it starkly: "The prospect of a low-intensity civil war and a de-facto division of Iraq is probably more likely at this stage than a successful transition to a stable democracy," his memo read. Patey struck a balance in his note. "Iraq's position," he added, "is not hopeless." Its course was likely to be "messy and difficult" for the next five to 10 years. "Even the lowered expectations for President Bush in Iraq – a government that can sustain itself and govern itself and is an ally in the war on terror – must remain in doubt."

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It is not a rhetorical flourish to say that the burden lies with Iraq's leaders. No script had America staying indefinitely in Iraq, fighting Iraq's wars, securing Iraq's peace. The best we can do for Iraq is grant it time to develop the military and political capabilities that would secure it against insurgencies at home, and subversion from across its borders. No one can say with confidence how long the American body politic will tolerate the expense in blood and treasure incurred in Iraq. It would be safe to assume that this president will stick to this war, that its burden is likely to be passed onto his successor. The Iraqis are approaching reckoning time, for America's leaders are under pressure to force history's pace. The political process here at home is not likely to impose a precise deadline for an American withdrawal: But the Iraqis should not be lulled into complacency, for the same political process is more likely to draw parameters on this commitment in Iraq, limits of tolerance.

In contemplating the prospects of a reduced American commitment, we don't need to evoke the specter of a domino theory, nor do we need to fall back on the old, familiar argument of protecting our "credibility" in the eyes of Arabs and Iranians. It could be said that the sky will not fall in neighboring lands if we quit Iraq, that the states of the region can fend for themselves. Those who rule by terror (Egypt, Syria, Yemen) will hunker down and increase the dose of terror. Those who rule by money and the purse

(Saudi Arabia, the smaller states of the Gulf) will loosen the purse strings, and scurry away, if only temporarily, from the Pax Americana. They will insist that they had never signed up for this war, that they had warned us against Iraq's dangers, that they had tried to tell us that Iraq was, in their eyes, prone to sedition and violence, that it was never the proper soil for democratic aspirations. They will feel relieved, these rulers of the region, of the siren song of democracy, they will feel vindicated that the franji call for democratic reform can now be set aside in favor of autocratic stability. They will have waited out the American campaign for reform. They will begin to say, in louder decibel, what they had been whispering amid themselves: that the Bush diplomacy of freedom died in the anarchy of the Anbar province, and in the dangerous streets of Baghdad, that in Araby the choice is stark: tyranny or anarchy, and they will remind one and all of the maxim of their world: Better sixty years of tyranny than one day of anarchy.

For their part, the Iranians will press on: The spectacle of power they display is illusory. It is a broken society over which the mullahs rule. A society that throws on the scene a leader of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's derangement is not an orderly land; foreigners may not be able to overthrow that regime, but countries can atrophy as their leaders – in this case armed by an oil windfall of uncertain duration – strut on the world stage. The prospect of Iraq changing Iran, shaming it by the success of a liberal example next door, was unrealistic to begin with. Iran's is a deeper culture than Iraq's, proud to its place in the world, possessed of a keen sense of Persia's excellence and primacy in the region around it. What Iranians make of their own history will not wait on the kind of society that will emerge in Iraq. On the margins, a scholarly tradition in Najaf given to moderation and restraint could be a boon to the seminarians and clerics of Iran. But the Iranians will not know deliverance from the sterility and mediocrity of their world if Iraq were to fail. Their schadenfreude over an American debacle in Iraq will have to be exceedingly brief. A raging fire next door to them would not be pretty. And crafty players, the Iranians know what so many in America who guess at such matters do not: that Iraq is an unwieldy land, that the Arab-Persian divide in culture, language, and temperament is not easy to bridge.

No great commitments can be abandoned without commensurate costs, it has to be understood. History works its will in unpredictable ways. The American debacle in Vietnam, some three decades ago, issued in the most unexpected of outcomes. That domino in Vietnam fell, there was horror in Cambodia. But as Peter Kann explained it in the pages of The Wall Street Journal a year ago, the peace and prosperity of Asia held, and from "Korea and Taiwan down the whole arc of southeast Asia, the political and economic systems we advocated have triumphed." The battle for Vietnam had been lost but the wider war for the future of Asia had been won. The war in Vietnam had bought time for Vietnam's neighbors; they had been anxious to keep the peace, and they needed American protection. They saw the promise of economic salvation; the horrors and failures of communism had engendered in them a greater desire to be spared history's furies and ruin.

It is unlikely that a failure in Iraq would be as forgiving as the failure in Vietnam; this region differs from east Asia. The doctrines of radicalism are stronger in Iraq's

neighborhood, there is no Japan-like power that would anchor peaceful change, provide hope that success can stick on Muslim lands in the manner that Japan did in its own Asian world. We needn't give credence to the assertion of President Bush that the jihadists would turn up in our cities if we pulled up stakes from Baghdad to recognize that a terrible price would be paid were we to opt for a hasty and unseemly withdrawal from Iraq.. This is a region with a keen and unmerciful eye for the weakness of strangers. Iraq may have tested our patience, and been a disappointment to many who had signed up for an easier campaign. We did not possess the skills of imperial rule, nor did we have an eye for the cunning – and ambiguities – of Arab and Iranian ways. But the heated debate about the origins of our drive into Iraq would surely pale by comparison to the debate that would erupt were we to give in to pessimism and despair and to cast the Iraqis adrift.

Nowadays, we are warned that the campaign for freedom in Arab lands ought to be abandoned, that in Iraq (as in Lebanon and Palestine) the cause of freedom ought to yield, that we best return to the stability offered by the autocrats. We have shaken up that world, it is said, only to reap a whirlwind. On the face of it, this argument is not without a measure of sobriety and appeal: the autocrats in Jordan, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia keep the peace, while the lands that flirted with elections and new ways (the Palestinian territories, Lebanon, Iraq) seem overwhelmed and close to the abyss. But we have already been given a deeper truth about the wages of autocracy in Arab lands. It was the children of the autocracies who flew into our towers on a clear September morning five years ago, who set us on the road to Kabul and Baghdad, who gave us this overwhelming task of trying to repair an Islamic world that insists on our culpability in the sad story of its demise and retrogression.

Mr. SHAYS. No. You woke me up. This is a continuation of a hearing. So we already have our unanimous consent in terms of opening up and making sure that we make that clear. And your statement will be in the record, any statement of the Members as well.

Dr. Fearon. Thank you so much, Dr. Ajami.

STATEMENT OF DR. JIM FEARON

Dr. FEARON. Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to speak with you today about this important and quite intractable problem. I have been doing research and publishing articles on civil wars since the early 1990's. I can't claim specific expertise on Iraq although I have tried to follow this case closely over the last several years. What I think I can do that might be useful for the committee is to put the conflict in Iraq into some context provided by research on civil wars in general.

Since my time is very short, I'll boil my written testimony down into three main points. First, by standards used by political scientists and others who study civil war and in my opinion by any reasonable definition, there is a civil war going on now in Iraq. The scale and extent of the civil war is somewhat limited by the U.S. military presence. I would be happy to get into the definitional issues with you in the question period if you wish, but to save time for more substantive stuff, I am going to skip over these now. Suffice to say, if we are willing to call conflicts in Algeria, Colombia, Guatemala, or Sri Lanka or Lebanon after 1975 civil wars, then we really ought to call this a civil war as well.

The second set of points I want to make concerns how civil wars evolve, how they typically end and why. Civil wars usually last a long time. The median duration for civil wars that began since 1945 is about 7 years and the average duration has been a little more than 10 years. When they do end, civil wars typically end with decisive military victories. In at least three-quarters of the cases since 1945 either the government crushes the rebels or the rebels take over the government. By contrast, successful power sharing agreements to end civil wars have occurred far less often, and at best I would say 17 percent of the cases or at about one in six and I would say that is actually kind of a generous coding of what a power sharing agreement is.

Mr. SHAYS. Could you make that statement again? You are speaking so quickly.

Dr. FEARON. So when civil wars end they usually end with decisive military victories and that would be about three-quarters of the civil wars that started since 1945. So either in those cases the government crushes the rebels or the rebels take over the government. On the other hand, successful power sharing agreements to end civil wars are much more rare and have occurred by my reckoning in at best 17 percent of the cases since 1945 or about one in 6, and I would say that is actually a somewhat generous reading of what a power sharing agreement is.

In other words, in some of those cases it really looked like one side basically won and offered some concessions to, you know minor concessions.

Why are power sharing agreements so unusual, successful ones? It is definitely not for lack of trying. Combatants in civil wars often try to negotiate them but they usually fail. They tend to fail because once the parties to a conflict are organized for violence, it is extremely difficult for them to trust that the other side will observe the terms of a written agreement such as a constitution that tries to share power by dividing up control of political offices, tax or oil revenues or the state's military. Basically each side knows that the other will be tempted to use force to grab power or change the deal. Mutual fears and temptations for power then create a self-fulfilling prophecy of violence. When power sharing agreements have succeeded in ending civil wars, it has usually been after years of intense fighting that has clarified that neither side can win outright. And it is required that the combatants not be internally fractionalized. Otherwise if they are highly fractionalized, you can't trust that the other side would be—even be able to stick to a deal if you managed to reach one at the table.

Iraq does not satisfy these conditions. The parties are highly fractionalized and they have not fought to a stalemate, something the U.S. troops essentially prevents.

My third and final point is that this historical record on how civil war ends suggests unfortunately that in terms of achieving a peaceful democratic Iraq whose government can stand on its own, it probably doesn't matter much whether U.S. troops stay in Iraq for 1 more year, 5 more years or even 10 more years. Foreign troops can enforce power sharing and limit violence while they are present, but once we go, lack of trust, factionalization and the fact that lots of the players are organized for violent conflict means that the deals we backed are likely to fall apart as groups scramble for power and security.

Think of Bosnia where there is still an international sovereign guaranteeing power sharing more than 10 years after the war ended. And in that case as compared to Iraq the combatants had already fought to a stalemate when the agreement was struck in 1995, and they were not highly fractionalized internally.

Or think of Afghanistan now. Very hard to imagine that removal of NATO and U.S. troops would not lead to rapid escalation of the civil war and disintegration of the current political order. Iraq is likely to be a much harder and more costly case on this score than Bosnia and certainly no easier than Afghanistan.

In short, I think the administration core political strategy, the strategy for victory as well as the common argument these days that saving the Iraq mission requires that we get them to renegotiate the Constitution or otherwise get a fair deal on the sharing of oil revenues are both fundamentally unrealistic. Staying the course and even ramping up by increasing our troop presence are delay tactics rather than strategies likely to achieve the goal of a democratic Iraq that can stand on its own.

So what can be done at this point? Rapid withdrawal of the U.S. force I think would be a big mistake. Rapid withdrawal would pretty clearly lead, as Mr. Chairman, you suggested in your opening remarks, to a rapid escalation of Sunni, Shia militia conflict in Baghdad and some other cities and to levels of killing of civilians far higher than the current rates that are already dreadfully high.

Rapid withdrawal could also lead to an intra-Shiite war between militias loosely affiliated with Muqtada al-Sadr, the Badr Brigades and possibly some other Shiite militia grouping. Rapid withdrawal would also allow the organization that's known in English as al-Qaeda in Iraq to take fuller control in Anbar and the other Sunni majority provinces than it already has, which is fairly extensive, it seems. If mishandled, this can become a zone for exporting terrorist attacks within the region, possibly the world.

I think these considerations all point to gradual redeployment and repositioning of our forces within the regime as a better option by gradual—I mean roughly say 18 months to 3 years depending on how the conflict evolves. It would be very much needed to be keyed to events as they develop. Gradual redeployment would allow more gradual and less explosively violent sorting of Sunnis and Shias out of mixed neighborhoods and would lessen the risks of an intra-Shiite war resulting from an all out power grab by one or another Shiite faction. Intelligently pursued, gradual redeployment could allow us to influence the evolution of what I imagine will be a Lebanon-like conflict in Iraq in a way that minimizes the risk from al-Qaeda in Iraq and prevent any wholesale takeover of the country by Iran which I think at any rate is extremely unlikely.

In sum, we should not completely give up on the prospect that Iraqi political leaders will manage to make deals and provide service in such a way as to gain peace and security for the country as a whole, but we should make it clear at least privately that their time to do so is limited. In the interim, we need to plan for the possibility that a democratic Iraq that can stand on its own is not going to take root while we are there. This means planning to put ourselves in the best position to influence for the good the evolution of a civil conflict that only the Iraqis have an ability to end at this point.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Fearon follows:]

Testimony to U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Government Reform, Subcommittee on National Security, Emerging Threats, and International Relations on "Iraq: Democracy or Civil War?"

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1. Introduction

Let me begin by thanking Chairman Shays and the subcommittee for inviting me to testify. I am honored to have the opportunity to speak with you.

I am not a specialist on the politics of the Middle East, but I have spent a lot of time studying the politics of civil wars. In what follows, I begin with an executive summary. I then discuss some common patterns in how civil wars evolve and how they end, trying to assess where Iraq fits relative to the general pattern. The last four sections consider what this implies for US policy in Iraq looking forward.

2. Executive summary

- By any reasonable definition, Iraq is in the midst of a civil war, the scale and extent of which is limited somewhat by the US military presence.
- Civil wars typically last a long time, with the average duration of post-1945 civil wars being over a decade.
- When they end, they usually end with decisive military victories (at least 75%).
- Successful power-sharing agreements to end civil wars are rare, occurring in one in six cases, at best.
- When they have occurred, stable power-sharing agreements have usually required years of fighting to reach, and combatants who were not internally factionalized.
- The current US strategy in Iraq aims to help put in a place a national government that shares power and oil revenues among parties closely linked to the combatants in the civil war. The hope is that our presence will allow the power-sharing agreement to solidify and us to exit, leaving a stable, democratic government and a peaceful country.

- The historical record on civil war suggests that this strategy is highly unlikely to succeed, *whether the US stays in Iraq for six more months or six more years (or more).* Foreign troops and advisors can enforce power-sharing and limit violence while they are present, but it appears to be extremely difficult to change local beliefs that the national government can survive on its own while the foreigners are there in force. In a context of many factions and locally strong militias, mutual fears and temptations are likely to spiral into political disintegration and escalation of militia and insurgent-based conflict if and when we leave.

- Thus, *ramping up or "staying the course" amount to delay tactics, not plausible recipes for success as the administration has defined it.*

- Given that staying the course or ramping up are not likely to yield peace and a government that can stand on its own, I argue for gradual redeployment and repositioning of our forces in preference to an extremely costly permanent occupation that ties our hands and damages our strategic position in both the region and the world.

- Redeployment and repositioning need to be gradual primarily so that Sunni and Shiite civilians have more time to sort themselves out by neighborhood in the major cities, making for less killing in the medium run. Depending on how the conflict evolves, redeployment might take anywhere from 18 months to 3 years.

- The difficult questions for US policy concern the pace and manner of redeployment: how to manage it so as to maximize the leverage it will give us with various groups in Iraq; and how to manage it so as to minimize the odds of terrorists with regional and global objectives gaining a secure base in the Sunni areas.

2. What is a civil war?

A *civil war* is a violent conflict within a country, fought by organized groups that aim to take power at the center or in a region, or to change government policies.

How much violence is enough to qualify a conflict as a civil war as opposed to terrorism or low-level political violence is partly a matter of convention. By any reasonable standard, however, the conflict in Iraq has killed enough people to put it in the civil war category. For example, political scientists often use a threshold of at least 1,000 killed over the whole course of the conflict to mark off civil wars. One might consider this too low to capture our everyday understanding. But the rate of killing in Iraq – easily more than 30,000 in three years – puts it in the company of many recent conflicts that few hesitate to call "civil wars" (e.g., Sri Lanka, Algeria, Guatemala, Peru, Colombia).

An *insurgency* is best understood as a type of civil war (assuming it kills enough people). In Iraq, the civil war began with a disorganized insurgency of Baathists, Sunni

nationalists, and foreign jihadis using violence in hopes of expelling the US and destroying or replacing the Iraqi government set up after US invasion. In the last six months, insurgent attacks against Shiites have led to a widening of the civil war, as Shiite militias have responded by attacking Sunnis in the major cities. Sunni-Shiite militia and communal conflict has worsened in part as a direct result of the US strategy of "Iraq-ization" of the war effort.

Following our own example of the US Civil War, many Americans think of a civil war as a conflict that involves virtually everyone in a country and that sees fighting by regular forces along clear frontlines. If one uses this definition, then it might still be possible to maintain that Iraq is "not yet in civil war." But the argument between the administration and its critics over the definition of civil war is really a domestic political dispute that does not help us understand what is going on there. The violence in Iraq bears a strong resemblance to many internal conflicts around the world that are commonly described as civil wars, and it is instructive to compare them.

Moreover, the US Civil War was atypical – civil wars rarely involve regular armies fighting along clear-cut frontlines. Instead, insurgency and militia-based conflicts like what we see today in Iraq today have been far more common.

3. How civil wars end

Civil wars typically last much longer than international wars. For civil wars beginning since 1945, the average duration has been greater than 10 years, with fully half ending in more than seven years (the median). The numbers are fairly similar whether we are talking about wars for control of a central government, or wars of ethnic separatism.

When they finally do end, civil wars since 1945 have typically concluded with *a decisive military victory* for one side or the other. In contests for control of the central state, either the government crushes the rebels (at least 40% of 54 cases), or the rebels win control of the center (at least 35% of 54 cases). Thus, fully three quarters of civil wars fought for control of the state end with a decisive military victory.

Quite often, in perhaps 50% of these cases, what makes decisive victory possible is the provision or withdrawal of support from a foreign power to the government or rebel side. For example, the long civil war in Lebanon ended in 1991 after the US and Israel essentially changed their positions and became willing to see the Syrian-backed factions win control if this would lead to peace. International intervention in civil wars is extremely common and often determines the outcome.

Power-sharing agreements that divide up control of the central government among the combatants are far less common than decisive victories. I code at most 9 of 54 cases, or 17%, this way. Examples include El Salvador in 1992, South Africa in 1994 and Tajikistan in 1998.

In civil wars between a government and rebels who are fighting for secession or greater autonomy, negotiated settlements that confer some local autonomy have occurred in about one third of the 41 such wars that began after 1945 and have since ended. This leaves two thirds as cases where the government crushed the regional rebels, or the rebels won military victories that established a de facto autonomous state.

In the rare cases where they have occurred, successful power-sharing agreements have usually been reached after an intense or long-running civil war reaches a stalemate. One of the main obstacles to power-sharing agreements seems to be political and military divisions *within* the main parties to the larger conflict.

4. Why is successful power-sharing to end civil wars so rare?

If successful power-sharing agreements rarely end civil wars, this is not for lack of trying.

Negotiations on power-sharing are common in the midst of civil war, as are failed attempts to implement such agreements, often with the help of outside intervention by states or international institutions. For example, the point of departure for the Rwandan genocide and the rebel attack that ended it was the failure of an extensive power-sharing agreement between the Rwandan government, Hutu opposition parties, and the RPF insurgents.

The main reason power-sharing agreements rarely work is that civil war causes the combatants to be organized in a way that makes them fear that the other side will try to use force to grab power, and at the same time be tempted to use force to grab power themselves. These fears and temptations are mutually reinforcing. If one militia fears that another will try to use force to grab control of the army, or a city, then it has a strong incentive to use force to prevent this. The other militia understands this incentive, which gives it a good reason to act exactly as the first militia feared.

In the face of these mutual fears and temptations, agreements on paper about dividing up or sharing control of political offices or tax revenues are often just that – paper.

For example: Current US policy seeks to induce Shiite leaders to bring Sunni leaders into the national government and provide them with some spoils of office. The hope is that this will get Sunni leaders to work against the insurgency. There is some evidence that the strategy has been partly effective, at least in terms of bringing significant Sunni leaders in. But why, in the longer run, should Sunni leaders believe that once the US leaves, the Shiites who control the army/militias would continue to pay them off? The same question applies to proposals to change the constitution to "ensure" (on paper) that the Sunni regions gain an equitable part of Iraq's oil revenues.

Given the vicious fighting that has occurred and the deep factionalization among the Shiites, Sunni leaders would have to be crazy to count on the good will or good faith of Shiite and Kurdish leaders to ensure that a political deal would be respected after the US

leaves. The only long-run stable and self-enforcing solution would be for an implicit Sunni threat of renewed insurgency to keep a Shiite-dominated government sticking to power- and oil-revenue sharing arrangements. High levels of factionalization on both sides imply that such an arrangement will probably be impossible to reach without years of fighting to consolidate the combatants and clarify their relative strength.

A second example: Right now representatives of Shiite political factions with ties to different clusters of militias share power in the national parliament and across government ministries. The expectation that US forces would act to prevent illegal grabs of power at the national level, and wholesale attacks by, say, Mahdi Army militias against Badr Brigade militias over territorial control in Baghdad and other cities, is making for an armed and fractious peace between Shiite factions. Regardless of written constitutional rules and procedures, after the US leaves these Shiite factions and their affiliated militias will fear power grabs by the other and be tempted by the opportunity themselves. An intra-Shiite war is thus a plausible scenario following US withdrawal, whether that should come in six months or five years.

In sum, civil wars for control of a central government typically end with one-sided military victories rather than power-sharing agreements, because the parties are organized for combat and this makes trust in written agreements on the allocation of revenues or military force both dangerous and naïve. The US government and Iraqi politicians have attempted to put a power-sharing agreement in place in the context of a new, very weak central government and a violent insurgency and attendant militia conflicts. While the US military could easily destroy Saddam Hussein's formal army, militias and insurgents are "closer to the ground" and cannot by completely destroyed or reconfigured without many years of heavy occupation and counterinsurgency, if even then.

This means that however long we stay, power-sharing is likely to fall apart into violence once we leave.

5. Likely consequences of US withdrawal: Iraq versus Bosnia

What will that violence look like, on what scale and with what consequences? A central argument against rapid withdrawal of US troops is that this would lead to a quick descent into all-out civil war. The example of Bosnia in 1992 is sometimes invoked, when systematic campaigns of ethnic cleansing caused the deaths of tens of thousands in the space of months.

Though there are some important differences, the analogy is a pretty good one. As argued above, US withdrawal, whether fast *or* slow, is indeed likely to cause higher levels of violence and political disintegration in Iraq. But rapid withdrawal would be particularly likely to lead to mass killing of civilians.

In Bosnia, massive and bloody ethnic cleansing was the result of systematic military campaigns directed by irredentist neighboring states and their local clients. For

Milosevic and the Bosnian Serb leadership, the whole point was to rid eastern Bosnia and Banja Luka in the west of Muslims.

To my knowledge, no significant players on either the Sunni or Shiite side talk about wanting to break up Iraq by creating a homogenous Sunni or Shiite polity. Instead there remains a strong sense that "we are all Iraqis," even if they may strongly disagree about what this implies for politics.

To date, "ethnic" cleansing in Iraqi cities has been much less systematic, less centrally directed, and more individual than it was in Bosnia in 1992. The breakdown of policing plus insurgent attacks have led to the supply of local "protection" in the form of sectarian militias and gangs. Whether seeking generic revenge, suspected killers from the other side, or profit from extortion and theft, gangs make life extremely dangerous for members of the minority faith in their neighborhood. So Shiites exit Sunni-majority neighborhoods while Sunnis exit Shiite-majority neighborhoods. This is a "dirty war" in which gangs torture and kill suspected attackers or informants for the other side, along with people who just get in the way or have something they want.

Rapid reduction in US troop levels is not likely to cause a massive spasm of communal violence in which all Shiites start trying to kill all Sunnis and vice versa. But it *may* spur Moqtada al-Sadr to order his Mahdi army to undertake systematic campaigns of murder and, in effect, ethnic cleansing in neighborhoods in Baghdad and other cities where they are strong. Obviously a murky subject, some recent reports suggest that such plans exist.

Gradual redeployment and repositioning of US troops within the region is needed to allow populations to sort themselves out and form defensible lines that would lessen the odds of sudden, systematic campaigns of sectarian terror in mixed neighborhoods. This is one of the strongest arguments against rapid US military withdrawal. Gradual redeployment – or, for that matter, "staying the course" – improves the chances of a less violent transition to a "Lebanon equilibrium" of low-level, intermittent violence across relatively homogeneous neighborhoods controlled by different militias.

If Bosnia in 1992 serves as an instructive historical analogy, Bosnia in 1995 – when the Dayton agreements formally ended the war and initiated a power-sharing arrangement among the combatants – is much more problematic. I consider this comparison farther below.

6. Likely consequences of US withdrawal: Lebanon 1975-91 versus Turkey 1977-80

Turkish cities between 1977 and 1980 experienced major violent conflict between local militias and paramilitaries aligning themselves with "the left" or "the right." A standard estimate is that more than twenty people were killed *per day* on average, in thousands of attacks and counterattacks, assassinations, and death squad campaigns working off lists of enemies. Beginning with a massacre by rightists in the city of Kahramanmaras in December 1978, the left-right conflicts started to widen into ethnic violence, pitting Sunnis versus Alawites versus Kurds and Shiias in various cities.

As in Iraq today, the organization of the combatants was highly local and factionalized, especially on the left. The results often looked like urban gang violence. But, as in Iraq, the gangs and militias had shady ties to the political parties controlling the national parliament (like Iraq, Turkey in those years had a democratically elected government). Indeed, one might describe the civil conflicts in Turkey then and Iraq now as "militia-ized party politics."

Intense political rivalries among the leading Turkish politicians, along with their politically useful ties to the paramilitaries, prevented the democratic regime from moving decisively to end the violence. Much as we see in Iraq today, the elected politicians fiddled while the cities burned. Fearing that the lower ranks of military were starting to become infected by the violent factionalism of society, the military leaders undertook a coup in September 1980, after which they unleashed a major wave of repression against both left *and* right-wing militias and gang members. At the cost of military rule (for what turned out to be three years), the urban terror was ended.

Could US withdrawal from Iraq lead to military coup in which the Iraqi army leadership declares that the elected government is not working and that a strong hand is necessary to bring basic order to Iraq? Probably not. The Turkish military is a strong institution with enough autonomy from society and loyalty to the Kemalist national ideal that it could act independently from the divisions tearing society apart. Though the army favored the right more than the left, Turkish citizens saw the army as largely standing apart from the political and factional fighting, and thus as a credible intervener.

By contrast, the Iraqi army and, even more, the police force, appear to have little autonomy from society and politics. The police look like militia members in a different uniform, sometimes with some US training. The army has more institutional coherence and autonomy from militias than the police, but it seems Shiite dominated at this point with few functional mixed units. A power grab by some subset of the army leadership would be widely interpreted as a power grab by a particular Shiite faction, and would lead the army to disintegrate completely along sectarian and possibly factional lines.

What happened in Lebanon in 1975-76 is a more likely scenario. As violence between Christian militias and PLO factions started to take off in 1975, the army leadership in Lebanon initially stayed out, realizing that if they tried to intervene the national army would splinter. The violence escalated and eventually the army intervened, at which point it did break apart. Lebanon then entered a long period during which an array of Christian, Sunni, Shiite, and PLO militias fought each other off and on, probably as much *within* sectarian divides as across them. Syrian and Israeli military intervention sometimes reduced and sometimes escalated the violence. Alliances shifted, often in Byzantine ways. For example, the Syrians initially sided with the Christians against the PLO.

To some extent this scenario is already playing out in Iraq. US withdrawal – in my opinion whether this happens in the next year or in five years – will likely make Iraq (south of the Kurdish areas) look even more like Lebanon during its long civil war.

As in Lebanon, effective political authority will devolve to city, region, and often neighborhood levels, and after a period of fighting to draw lines, an equilibrium with low-level, intermittent violence will set in, punctuated by larger campaigns financed and aided by foreign powers. As in Lebanon, we can expect a good deal of intervention by neighboring states, and especially Iran, but this intervention will not necessarily bring them great strategic gains. To the contrary it may bring them a great deal of grief, just as it has the US.

The Lebanese civil war required international intervention and involvement to bring to conclusion. If an Iraqi civil war post-US withdrawal does not cause the formal break up of the country into three new states, which it could, then ending it will almost surely require considerable involvement by regional states to make whatever power-sharing arrangements they ultimately agree on credible. If Iraq is a bleeding sore in the heart of the Middle East for years (recall that civil wars typically last a long time), then its Sunni- and Shiite-led neighbors may have to come to a region-wide political agreement to be able to enjoy political and economic stability again.

7. "Ramping up" or "staying the course" are delay tactics, not a "strategy for victory"

In broad terms, the US has three options in Iraq: (1) ramp up, increasing our military presence and activity; (2) "stay the course" (aka "adapt to win"); and (3) gradual redeployment and repositioning our forces in the region, so as to limit our costs while remaining able to influence the conflict as it evolves.

The analysis above suggests that *none* of these options is likely to produce a peaceful, democratic Iraq that can stand on its own after US troops leave. While we are there in force we can act as the guarantor for the current or a renegotiated power-sharing agreement underlying the national government. But, in a context of many factions and locally strong militias, mutual fears and temptations will spiral into political disintegration and escalation of militia and insurgent-based conflict if and when we draw down.

"Ramping up" by adding more brigades could allow us temporarily to suppress the insurgency in the Sunni triangle with more success, and to prevent "Al Qaeda in Iraq" (AQI, which now consists overwhelmingly of Iraqi nationals) from controlling the larger towns in this area. Ramping up could also allow us to temporarily bring greater security to residents of Baghdad, by putting many more troops on the streets there.

But Congress and the Bush administration have to ask what the long-run point is. The militia structures may recede, but they are not going to go away (absent some truly massive, many-decade effort to remake Iraqi society root and branch, which would almost surely fail). Given this, given myriad factions, and given the inability of Iraqi

groups to credibly commit to any particular power- and oil-sharing agreement, *ramping up or staying the course amount to delay tactics*, not plausible recipes for success.

Note that more than ten years after NATO intervention, Bosnia is still at risk of political disintegration and possibly a return to some violence if the international guarantor closes up shop. And in that case the main combatants were not highly factionalized and had *already* fought to a stalemate by the summer of 1995, before the NATO bombing campaign and the Dayton agreement on power-sharing. Likewise, no one can imagine that Afghanistan would not return to chaos and full-blown civil war if NATO and US troops were to leave.

A long-term US military presence in Iraq is probably less likely to produce a regime that can survive by itself than the international intervention in Bosnia has been, and no more likely than in Afghanistan. Moreover, a permanent US military presence in Iraq will be vastly more costly in terms of lives, money, and America's larger strategic position and moral standing than the international commitment to Bosnia or Afghanistan has been.

Congress has to ask whether spending more than 60 billion dollars per year in Iraq for a mission that is unlikely to produce a decent government that can stand on its own is the best use of this money for protecting the US from terrorism.

8. Costs of redeployment and repositioning

Even if ramping up or staying the course are not "strategies for victory" as the administration has defined it, this does not imply that immediate withdrawal is the best course of action.

Indeed, in principle it could be that the costs of withdrawal are so high at this point that the best option is to continue the status quo as long as possible. I seriously doubt this is the case. But I would agree that there are potential risks and costs to US national security from reducing our troop presence in Iraq, and that the question of "how to do it" to minimize these risks and costs is extremely complicated.

There are three major areas where reduction of US troop presence in Iraq could have costs and risks that need to be considered in thinking through the best feasible pace and manner of redeployment:

(a) Iraqi civilian deaths;

(b) the threat of "Al Qaeda in Iraq" gaining secure base areas and using them to organize terror attacks against countries in the region and the US; and

(c) dangers that might arise from increased Iranian influence in Iraq and the region as a whole.

On (a), Iraqi civilian casualties: Rapid withdrawal of US forces would most likely cause rapid escalation of the sectarian and intra-sectarian dirty war, making for a sharp rise in civilian deaths well above the current rates.

A more gradual reduction and repositioning of US forces within the region would be far better, as it would allow mixed populations to sort themselves out in the larger cities, and to keep the rate of escalation of militia conflict as low as feasible. Gradual redeployment would also allow the US to prevent (through joint operations and other such mechanisms) the Iraqi army from rapidly becoming a full partisan in the dirty war.

On (b), Al Qaeda in Iraq: AQI is now the principle insurgent enemy of US forces in the Sunni-dominated provinces to the west of Baghdad, although it remains unclear how to interpret the nature and likely trajectory of this organization. AQI apparently consists overwhelmingly of Iraqi nationals, with at best a small fraction of foreign jihadis involved. It has been successful in controlling cities and territory because of its brutality; financing through the *hawala* system and some foreign sponsors; in some cases mistakes in US counterinsurgency strategy and tactics; the general fear and resentment of Shiite dominance that prevails in the Sunni areas; and general dislike of the US presence in the country.

Reduction of US troop presence in Al Anbar and the other Sunni-majority provinces would almost certainly lead to AQI and other Sunni insurgent forces taking fuller political and military control in these areas. The question for US policy is what sort of threat this would pose US interests, and what could be done about it.

Though we are obviously in the realm of speculation here, I think the common assumption that Al Anbar would become like southern Afghanistan under the Taliban – a home for Al Qaeda training camps producing terrorists to attack the US homeland – merits critical scrutiny.

In the first place, by redeploying our forces within the region, we could retain the ability to prevent large-scale operations of this sort. Second, given that AQI is manned almost entirely by Iraqi nationals who will be fighting the Shiite-dominated Iraqi army, it is not clear that it would see any particular advantage or interest in the global and anti-Western terrorist program of Bin Laden and al-Zawahiri. To the contrary, they might become particularly interested in gaining US covert support (or lack of opposition).

Third, if AQI's *hawala* funding is driven by the perception that they are taking on the US, this could begin to dry up following US redeployment and a shift of the conflict to clearer Sunni/Shiite lines. If so, there would be an opportunity for US dollars and Iraqi government dinars to buy away the support of various sheiks and local power-holders who would be forced under AQI's sway initially.

Likewise, even if "AQI" does gain ground in the Sunni-majority provinces, it is unlikely that it will be or become a coherent political organization any time soon. Rather, high levels of factionalization will persist, limiting its capacity for coherent action on a global

or regional scale (if it even has the inclination) and making it easier to acquire information about who is doing what.

On (c), Iranian influence: This seems to me the least persuasive argument about the costs of reducing the US military presence in Iraq.

In the first place, it should be stressed that if the US were to *succeed* in helping to set up a peaceful, democratic Iraqi government that can stand on it own, there is no question but that Iran would have much more influence with this government and in the Middle East in general than it had under the Saddam Hussein regime. The demographic fact is that democracy in Iraq means, to some large extent, rule by Iraqi Shiites, who have close religious and political ties to Iran. The example of a Shiite-dominated Arab (and possibly Kurdish) state would inevitably have major ramifications to the west of Iraq.

Compared to this scenario (which is the implausible object of current US policy), the scenario of a Lebanon-like civil war in Iraq that follows US redeployment probably implies *less* Iranian influence in the Middle East as a whole, and more costly Iranian influence in Iraq for Iran itself. Iran would be draw in, much more than at present, to funding and arming Shiite factions against each other and against Sunni insurgents. Even if they manage to establish a Shiite faction in a relatively dominant position in Baghdad, their clients will be highly ungrateful if Iran subsequently tries to steal oil revenues, and they will probably have to face the costs of an unremitting Sunni insurgency. The unlikely event of a military invasion by Iranian forces to grab oil fields in the south could be made even more unlikely by appropriate repositioning of US forces in the region.

Various Iranian leaders have said that they much prefer the US continue to "stay the course" in Iraq, and that they are quite worried about the prospect of an escalated civil war on their doorstep. With respect to Iranian influence and overall strategic position, redeployment of US forces would most likely increase the US's leverage and would not advantage Iran more than the current policy does.

9. Conclusion

"Staying the course" or "ramping up" in Iraq may put off political disintegration and major escalation of the civil war in progress, but are unlikely to produce a democratic government that can stand on its own and maintain peace after US troops are gone. The most likely scenario following reduction of US troop presence is the escalation of a Lebanon-like civil war. Unfortunately, the odds that this will occur are probably not much better if US troops stay for five (or even more) years as opposed to one.

The evidence supporting this assessment is drawn from the experience of other civil wars. Historically, civil wars tend to last a long time and usually end with decisive military victories. Successful power-sharing agreements to end civil wars are rare. When they have occurred, they have typically required that the combatants not be highly factionalized and that the balance of military power and prospects for victory be well established by years of fighting.

The US has tried to help into being a democratic Iraqi government that depends on power- and oil-revenue sharing among the major religious and ethnic groups. Probably the most common piece of advice these days from US experts and pundits on the question of "how to save the Iraq mission" is that a new political or constitutional bargain must be struck that gives the Sunnis clear assurance of a fair share of the oil revenues. But even if the terms of the constitution are altered – which seems unlikely given Shiite and Kurdish opposition to what is an excellent deal for them – it is not clear why Sunnis would have a good reason to believe that the terms would be respected, especially after the US departs.

In addition, many Sunnis, especially those in the insurgency, seem to believe that they would have a good military chance against the Shiite-dominated government if the US were gone. This belief is hard to change while the US is backing or back-stopping the Iraqi army.

In addition to being logistically problematic, rapid US troop withdrawal from Iraq would yield rapid escalation of militia violence and empowerment of the extremely brutal Sadrist faction on the Shiite side. Redeployment and repositioning of US troops therefore needs to be gradual and tuned to circumstances as they develop, undertaken always with an eye to the deals that can be struck with the various players. The US needs to develop a surge capacity and rapid response forces in Iraq or in the region in order to take on armed groups that get especially ambitious and so threaten to cause quicker escalation of the civil war.

We should not give up on the prospect that Iraqi political leaders will manage to make deals and provide services in such a way as to gain peace and security for the country as a whole. But we should make it clear, at least privately, that their time to do so is limited. In the interim, we need to plan for the possibility that a democratic Iraq that can stand on its own is not going to take root while we are there. This means planning to put ourselves in the best position to influence for the good the evolution of a civil conflict that only Iraqis have the power to end at this point.

Mr. SHAYS. Thank you very much, Dr. Fearon.

Ambassador, you have the floor. Thank you.

STATEMENT OF AMBASSADOR PETER GALBRAITH

Ambassador GALBRAITH. Mr. Chairman, members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity of testifying before you this afternoon.

Mr. Chairman, the dire consequences of withdrawal that you described earlier today have in fact already taken place without there being a withdrawal. That is to say, there is a civil war. Iran is the dominant power and terrorists already have a base from which they operate and in fact have gained strength.

Further, the solution that has been discussed at great length today, which is the will of the Iraqi government, is in my view largely irrelevant.

Iraq's government of national unity does not represent a single nation. It is not unified but, most importantly, it doesn't govern anything. Iraq's south is governed by Shiite religious parties, not the government in Baghdad, who run the region as theocratic fiefdoms with elements borrowed from the Iranian model.

In Iraq, however, the Shiite militias enforce a form of Islamic rule that is more severe than that which exists in neighboring Iran. The Sunni center is a battleground and we have already discussed today the report about the largest and most Sunni province, Anbar. Baghdad is the front line of a brutal civil war between the Sunnis and the Shiites that is on average taking 100 lives a day. The city is divided between a Shia east which is controlled by the most radical of the Shiite militias, Mahdi Army, and the Sunni west which is under the control of al-Qaeda, its offshoots and former Baathists. Government ministers rarely risk going to their ministries outside the Green Zone and most of them spend their time visiting each other designing policies that in fact never leave the paper on which they are written.

Kurdistan in the north is for all practical purposes an independent country. It has its own democratically elected parliament, president, prime minister and cabinet. The Kurdistan regional government has its army, the peshmerga, the exclusive power of taxation within Kurdistan and full control over all natural resources in the territory of Kurdistan, including oil and water, and as we speak the Kurdistan parliament is considering a Kurdistan law on the exportation of petroleum in Kurdistan.

The Iraqi army is banned from Kurdistan except with the approval of the Kurdistan National Assembly and, as has already been discussed, the Iraq flag does not fly in Kurdistan. Further in January 2005, 98 percent of the Kurds participating in a formal referendum, which was virtually everybody participating in the regular elections, voted for an independent Kurdistan, 2 percent voted to remain in Iraq. Kurdistan's powers, as I described them, are recognized in the Iraqi Constitution, which makes Kurdistan law superior to Iraqi law except for the very few matters that are wholly within the jurisdiction of the Federal Government as defined in Article 110 of the Constitution. These exclusive powers do not include human rights, natural resources, religion or taxation.

The important point here is that the Constitution permits other parts of Iraq to form regions with the same powers as Kurdistan and, as you know, SCIRI is pushing to do precisely that to create a nine-government Shiite region that would have its own army and substantial control over the petroleum.

Iraq's constitutional design with virtually independent regions and a powerless central government is no accident. It reflects the deep divisions within Iraq and resembles much more a peace treaty among at least two sovereignties that were the parties, the Kurds and the Shiites, and not a blueprint for a common state that is not desired by the Kurds and about which the Shiites are at best ambivalent. The Iraqi police and army who are key to our strategy for exit are also a reflection of a divided country. The army is divided into Kurdish, Sunni and Shiite battalions which are basically loyal to their own communities.

According to Iraq's top defense ministry officials, a third of the army consists of ghost soldiers, names that are used to collect salaries and only about 10 percent actually show up for combat on given occasions. Iraq's police are participants in the civil war responsible for many of the abductions and killings. In my judgment, it is virtually impossible to build national institutions such as an army and a police when there is no nation.

Let's face up to the reality. Iraq has broken up and is in the midst of a civil war. Recognizing this clarifies our policy options. To achieve President Bush's goal of a unified democratic Iraq, the United States would have to put Iraq back together again. This would require two military missions that we are not now undertaking. First, we would have to use force to disarm Shiite militias and dismantle the southern theocracies. Second, we would have to end the Sunni-Shiite civil war being fought in Baghdad and other mixed areas. The first task would involve taking on an enemy more numerous and better armed than the Sunni insurgents, an enemy with a powerful ally nextdoor, Iran. Ending the civil war would require U.S. troops to become the police in Baghdad and other mixed areas. It is not a task that the Iraqi security forces can undertake because they are either Shiite or Sunni and therefore partisans in the civil war.

Either mission would mean many more troops than we have now and many more casualties.

In fact, the United States is not committed to the unity of Iraq except in a rhetorical way. During the occupation, it was we who allowed the Shiite militias to grow from a few thousand to the number that exists now. And it was Ambassador Khalilzad last summer who brokered the provisions of the Iraqi Constitution that basically created powerful regions and a powerless central government. That then comes to our choice. If the United States is not prepared to build a unified Iraq and personally I see no reason to expand American lives and treasures to put back together a country that is not desired by a large part of its inhabitants, then the alternative is to work with the reality of a divided land.

If we are not going to disarm the Shiite militias and dismantle the theocracies, what purpose is served by our presence in the south? It is true that if we withdraw, the south would be pro-Iranian and theocratic, but that is equally the case with our current

mission. And if we are not going to help end the civil war, what purpose is served by continued military presence in Baghdad? It is true that if we withdraw, there will be horrific sectarian killing and widespread sectarian cleansing but that is going on right now.

The current strategy for combating the insurgency has also clearly failed. It involves handing off combat duties to the Iraqi army. Mostly the Shiite battalions that fight in Sunni Arab areas as the Sunni unit are not reliable. The consequences of course the more we Iraqisize, the more opposition there is in Sunni areas. The alternative is to encourage the formation of a Sunni Arab region with its own army as allowed under Iraq's Constitution. At and upon its formation I would urge a U.S. military withdrawal so that the new Sunni authorities as they develop their own military are not seen as collaborators.

Mr. Chairman, in my view, the United States is one overwhelming interest in Iraq today to keep al-Qaeda from having a base from which it can attack the United States and the West. If the Sunni Arabs can not provide for their own security, then the United States must be prepared to reengage. And this in my view is best accomplished by placing a small over the horizon force in pro-American Kurdistan. It would discharge a moral debt to people who were our allies and it would enable us to move rapidly back into the Sunni areas with a powerful ally, the Kurdistan army, the Peshmerga, who are the most significant militarily capable force within Iraq.

The choices are stark. We can try to win as defined by President Bush, but that would require more resources than the President or I believe the Congress is prepared to commit. Or we can reshape the mission in Iraq to the resources we are prepared to commit. I think I have outlined a three-part program that is achievable: Withdraw from parts of Iraq where we will accomplish nothing, focus on the threat from al-Qaeda and other salafi jihadis, and support our friends.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Galbraith follows:]

Ambassador Peter W. Galbraith
Testimony before
Committee on Government Reform
Subcommittee on National Security, Emerging Threats, and International Relations
House of Representatives
September 15, 2006

Mr. Chairman, Members of the subcommittee

Current US strategy in Iraq rests on two pillars: a political process that leads to the formation of an effective and inclusive Iraqi national government and a security process that builds up an ever larger and more capable Iraqi Army and police. The Bush Administration has emphasized the steps that have already been accomplished: the holding of Iraq-wide democratic elections, the writing of a constitution and its overwhelming adoption in a referendum, and the formation of a Government of National Unity. On the security front, we have been told about the size of the Iraqi armed forces, about their increasing capability (albeit assessments of combat readiness seem to fluctuate), how the Iraqi Government is now beginning to assume command over the armed force and how the Iraqis are now responsible for security in one province.

I do not diminish the remarkable events that have taken place in Iraq since 2003. I was in Iraq during the January 2005 elections—moving about freely with Iraqis and not limited by the security measures that apply to official visitors—and I was very moved by the large turnout of people determined to have their say. I sat with Iraq's leaders in August 2005 as they wrote the country's constitution. It was a process of tough bargaining by elected political leaders—behind closed doors—that one might expect when the most important issues are at stake. I was in Baghdad this February with the Iraqi leaders as they tried to from a government of national unity

But, where are we three months after the completion of the Government of National Unity?

Iraq's south is governed by Shiite religious parties who run the region as theocratic fiefdoms with elements borrowed from the Iranian model. In Iraq, however, Shiite militias generally enforce an Islamic law that is more severe than that which applies in neighboring Iran, a country that exercises enormous political, military and economic influence on the Shiite parts of Iraq. The much advertised human rights provisions of the Iraqi constitution do not apply in the south and to the extent that the central government has any influence in the south, it is because the same Shiite religious parties that dominate the federal government also control different parts of the south.

The Sunni center is a battleground. Most recently, a classified report from the marines on the ground in Anbar Province asserts that the coalition has lost control of Iraq's largest province.

Baghdad is front line of a brutal civil war between Iraq's Shiites and Sunni Arabs that has in recent months produced an average of 100 murders per day. The city is today divided between the Shiite east which is controlled by the most radical of the Shiite militias, the Mahdi Army and the Sunni west where different neighborhoods are controlled by al-Qaeda offshoots and imitators or by the Baathists. Government ministers rarely risk going to their ministries outside the Green Zone, and mostly spend their time visiting each other designing policies that never leave the paper on which they are written.

Kurdistan, in the north, is for all practical purposes an independent country. It has its own democratically elected parliament, a President, a Prime Minister and Cabinet. The Kurdistan Regional Government has its own army, the peshmerga, has exclusive power of taxation within Kurdistan and full control of all natural resources on the territory of Kurdistan, including oil and water. By Kurdistan law, the Iraqi Army is banned from Kurdistan's territory except with the approval of the Kurdistan National Assembly. By presidential decree, the Iraqi flag is banned in Kurdistan. In January 2005, 98% of Iraq's Kurds voted for full independence in an informal referendum held simultaneous with the national elections.

Kurdistan's powers, as I have described, are recognized in the Iraqi constitution which makes Kurdistan's law superior to Iraqi law except for the very few matters that are wholly within the exclusive jurisdiction of the federal government as listed in Article 110 of the Constitution. The exclusive powers of the federal government do not include religion, human rights, or natural resources, or taxation. On these matters regional constitutions and law are supreme.

The Constitution permits other parts of Iraq to form regions with the same powers as Kurdistan and SCIRI is pushing ahead with plans to form a nine-governorate Shiite region that would have its own army and substantial control over its vast petroleum resources. Iraq's constitutional design—with virtually independent regions and a powerless central government—is no accident. It reflects the deep divisions within Iraq, and resembles much more closely a peace treaty among sovereign states than a blue print for a common state that is not desired by the Kurds and about which the Shiites are, at best, ambivalent.

Iraq's Army and police are a reflection of a deeply divided country. The Army is divided into Kurdish, Shiite and Sunni battalions. The Kurdish battalions are loyal to Kurdistan, not Iraq; the Shiite battalions are loyal to the Shiite religious parties; and the Sunni battalions are mostly not considered reliable. According to Iraq's top Defense Ministry officials, a third of the army consists of ghost soldiers—names that are used to collect salaries—and only about 10% show up for combat on a given occasion. Iraq's police are participants in the civil war, responsible for many of the abductions and killings. (Kurdistan has its own police force). It is virtually impossible to build national institutions, such as an army and police, where there is no nation.

Iraq has, in fact, broken up and is in the midst of a civil war. Recognizing this reality clarifies our policy options. To achieve President Bush's goal of a unified and democratic Iraq, the United States would have to put Iraq back together. This means two military missions that we are not now undertaking. First, we would have to use force to disarm the Shiite militias and dismantle the southern theocracies. Second, we would have to end the Sunni-Shiite civil war being fought in Baghdad and other mixed areas. The first task would involve taking on an enemy more numerous and better armed than the Sunni insurgents, an enemy with a powerful ally in next door Iran. Ending the civil war would require US troops to become the police in Baghdad and other mixed areas. This is not a task that Iraqi security forces can undertake as they are either Shiite or Sunni, and therefore partisans in the civil war. Either mission would require many more troops and lead to many more casualties.

In truth, however, the Bush Administration's commitment to the unity of Iraq is mostly rhetorical. During the occupation, it permitted the Shiite militias to grow from a few thousand Badr Corps members to the large number today. And, Ambassador Khalilzad brokered the constitution that creates strong regions (with armies) and a powerless central government.

If the United States is not prepared to build a unified Iraq—and I see no reason to expend American lives and treasure in putting back together a country not desired by a large part of its inhabitants—then the alternative is to work with the reality of a divided land. Recognizing reality also provides a way out.

If we are not going to disarm the Shiite militias and dismantle theocracies, what purpose is served by our presence in the south? It is true that if we withdraw, the South will be pro-Iranian and theocratic, but that is equally the case if we stay under the current mission.

If we are not going to help end the civil war, what purpose is served by a continued military presence in Iraq's capital? It is true that if we withdraw there will be horrific sectarian killing and widespread "sectarian cleansing" but that is going on right now.

The current strategy for combating the insurgency has clearly failed. It involves handing off combat duties to the Iraqi Army. Mostly, it is Shiite battalions that fight in the Sunni Arab areas, as the Sunni units are not reliable. What the Bush Administration portrays as Iraqi, the local population sees as a hostile force loyal to a Shiite dominated government in Baghdad installed by the Americans invader and closely aligned with the traditional enemy, Iran. The more we "Iraqize" the fight in the Sunni heartland, the more we strengthen the insurgency.

The alternative is to encourage the formation of a Sunni Arab Region with its own army, as allowed by Iraq's constitution. Upon its formation, the US military should promptly withdraw from Sunni territory so as to allow the new leaders to establish their authority without being seen as collaborators.

The US has one overriding interest in Iraq today—to keep al-Qaeda from having a base from which it can plot attacks on the US. If Sunni Arabs cannot provide for their own security, the US must be prepared to reengage.

This is best accomplished by placing a small over the horizon force in Kurdistan. The Kurds are among the most pro-American people in the world and would welcome a US military presence, not the least because it would help protect them from Arab Iraqis who resent their close cooperation with the US during the 2003 War and thereafter. From Kurdistan, the US military could readily move back into any Sunni Arab where al-Qaeda or its allies established a base. The Kurdish peshmerga, Iraq's only reliable indigenous military force, would willingly assist their American allies with intelligence and operationally. By deploying to what is still nominally Iraqi territory, the US would avoid the political complications---in the US and in Iraq---involved in reentering Iraq following a total withdrawal.

The choices we face in Iraq are stark. We can try to win—as defined by President Bush—but that would require many more resources than the President, or the Congress, is prepared to commit. Or, we can reshape the mission in Iraq to the resources we are prepared to commit. I have outlined a three part approach that is achievable: (1) withdraw from the parts of Iraq where we will accomplish nothing, (2) focus on the threat from al-Qaeda and other salafi jihadis, and (3) support our friends.

Other widely discussed options—such as threatening to withdraw US troops if Iraqis do not unify -- ignores the fact that large numbers of Iraqis—including all the Kurds—do not want a unified country. Insisting the Iraqi government follow a specific course of specific action—such as a plan for national reconciliation—ignores the fact that the government exercises no real authority any place in the country and that its decisions—no matter how admirable—do not matter.

Finally, the least acceptable option is continuing the present course of action. We will not accomplish our objectives and it is a formula for a war without end.

Mr. SHAYS. Thank you, all three of you, for your very, very helpful testimony and it is very provocative. So you give us a tremendous opportunity to have some very interesting dialog.

I know that Mr. Kucinich needs to get on his way fairly soon and our colleague from Massachusetts just wanted to explain that he's visiting with some of his constituents who have been injured in Iraq and Afghanistan and so he's visiting the hospital.

Mr. Kucinich, you have the floor.

Mr. KUCINICH. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and before I ask a few questions I just want to once again thank you for creating a forum on one of the most crucial issues of our time and I must say that you know you have created these forums in a Congress which has not been particularly hospitable to these kind of discussions. And you have done it at some political risk and I think that needs to be acknowledged and that needs to be appreciated.

Thank you.

I want to ask Ambassador Galbraith, you made a point of saying something I think was extremely important. You said that there is large number of Iraqis, including Kurds, all the Kurds you said, who do not want a unified country. Under those circumstances, would U.S. presence with the intention of forcing a unified country be in effect a prescription for endless war?

Ambassador GALBRAITH. Yes.

Mr. KUCINICH. Thank you. To Mr. Fearon, are we in a civil nuclear in Iraq right now?

Dr. FEARON. Yes, I would say by pretty much any reasonable definition there is a civil war going on and I would say it's been going on for a couple of years now.

Mr. KUCINICH. If we stay will the civil war continue?

Dr. FEARON. Yes, at a lower level than it would if we were to precipitously withdraw.

Mr. KUCINICH. If we leave, it will continue?

Dr. FEARON. Yes. It will escalate, I would expect.

Mr. KUCINICH. It will continue whether we stay or whether we go?

Dr. FEARON. Yeah. I think the question is at what level and what would it exactly look like.

Mr. KUCINICH. If the United States stays in Iraq based on your study of civil wars and how long they last, would you want to make a prediction as to how long this war could go on?

Dr. FEARON. Well, it depends on our policies. In principle, if we went up to half a million troops or something, that is not going to happen, and undertook an incredibly ambitious campaign to kind of take back ground that's been lost, we could get some level of peace and quiet. The main point of my testimony was that I think that even if you did that, it wouldn't lead to a situation where we could leave without it returning to a high probability of violence like we see now or something worse.

Mr. KUCINICH. So you are saying that whether we are there for 6 months or 6 years we are still looking at a level of violence occurring once we leave.

Dr. FEARON. Yes. I think that the basic problem that power sharing agreements, we—while we are there we can help people keep to it and not fear that the other side will try to take over every-

thing, but when we leave that will fall apart and that is why we are basically stuck in the same kind of situation in Afghanistan and why Bosnia still 10 years later, although as I said, I think that is a much easier and less costly case for various reasons than Iraq, which is still basically not a sovereign state.

Mr. KUCINICH. I have to say that each member of the panel has very important testimony, and I am hopeful that this hearing is going to get wide publication.

You have said, Mr. Fearon, that civil wars typically last a long time with the average duration of post-1945 civil wars being over a decade. You have said that we are in a civil war in Iraq right now and have been for a few years. So would it be fair so say that if the United States continues with the intention of trying to monitor the civil war that we could be there at least another 10 years?

Dr. FEARON. I think that if the goal is as stated, that we will stay there until we can leave and have a high expectation that the government will survive and not fall apart into internal war or higher levels of conflict, I think we need to be there for many, many, many years and you have to—so what was the strategy in Bosnia? The strategy in Bosnia was to basically have, you know, an office of the high representative, an international sovereign power as it were, backing the Dayton agreements and providing a kind of implicit threat that kept the parties from falling into squabbling over governance.

Mr. KUCINICH. And then there was Srebrenica.

Dr. FEARON. I am talking about since the Dayton agreement since 1995. The theory was that by staying in a long time in this capacity economic reconstruction would occur and a set of new interests and institutions would develop that would tie people together and make it in their interest to keep the place together after the office of the high representative closes up, and that has actually been somewhat successful. It looks like this theory may ultimately work.

You know it's been costly. I think you have to ask, you know, could such an approach work in Iraq and it seems to me the chances—it is a very different case in a bunch of ways and it is hard to imagine that it wouldn't be vastly more costly and very unlikely to succeed. The reason being that as long as we are there, we are going to be—our troops are there, they are going to be shot at and they are going to be attracting foreign fighters and attracting a lot of opposition. It's just going to be a vastly more costly proposition. It's not right next to the European Union, which has tons of enticements. I think it is pretty much an open-ended commitment if we keep with the goal that the administration has set.

Mr. KUCINICH. I am going to wrap this up, Mr. Chairman, and just say there is an intersection between what I have heard Dr. Fearon say and Ambassador Galbraith say and here it is in his written testimony. Dr. Fearon says that ramping up or staying the course had delay tactics, not a strategy for victory. The United States has three options in Iraq. Ramp up, increasing our military presence and activities; second, stay the course, that is adapt and win; or three, gradual redeployment and repositioning our force in the region so as to limit our cause while remaining to influence the conflict as it resolves. It goes on to say the analysis above suggests

that none of these options, none of these options is likely to produce a peaceful democratic Iraq that can stand on its own after U.S. troops leave.

And Ambassador Galbraith makes the case that there are forces that are pulling Iraq apart or will work against its unity whether we are there or not. Dr. Fearon makes the case that with the three options that are under discussion as of late, it is unlikely to produce a peaceful democratic Iraq that can stand on its own after our troops leave.

So Mr. Chairman, without your involvement and initiation, we wouldn't even have had the opportunity to hear this kind of testimony. I thank you once again. I thank the witnesses. You have given us a lot to think about, and I am hopeful that the transcript of this hearing will be made available soon to other Members of Congress so this can be the basis for some deeper thinking about what our path needs to be. I want to thank all of the witnesses.

Mr. SHAYS. Thank the gentleman. I'm going to yield myself 10 minutes. We are going to do a second round. So we will go through this.

I am wrestling with the testimony of all three of you because all three of you I agree with. So and it seems like a contradiction. I don't agree with every fact. Maybe I will after the panel is over.

I want to ask you, Dr. Ajami, what is your reaction to the testimony of Dr. Fearon and Ambassador Galbraith?

Dr. AJAMI. Now Peter and I have books out at the same time, so but I wish his book well and I have great esteem for him as an analyst, and it was just a pleasure to meet Dr. Fearon and I think on Peter's point about how Peter sketched the landscape in Iraq, consider Iraq today. It has a Kurdish President, Jalal Talabani, who has brought the Kurds from, if you will, from Kurdistan to Baghdad. It has a very talented Deputy Prime Minister Barham Salih, a friend of all of us, I suspect. It has a Kurdish Foreign Minister. So when meetings with the legate out of state now take place, the man who represents Iraq is not an Arab but he's a Kurd. That is progress because indeed part of the debacle of Arab life has been the destruction of the pluralism of the region. That Arab nationalism insisted on this ethnic supremacy of the Arab's read on the ethnic supremacy of the Sunni Arabs and the Sunni will lead. We can talk about it at another time. There is also the Chief of Staff of the armed forces, again, comes from the Kurds. So the Kurds are well represented in Baghdad. And I don't think they want the independence that Ambassador Galbraith wants for them. I do know the man who was responsible for the referendum in Kurdistan Shirka Bacas who put a question to the Kurds who said would you want to live in independent Kurdistan or do you want to be part of Iraq. And emotionally and overwhelmingly the Kurds opted for a show of hands in favor of independence. But the Kurds know the world as it is, and the Kurds know that Iraq is a better bargain for them. I have talked to many, many Kurdish intellectuals and leaders, not as in as much depth as Peter. Peter knows the world of the Kurds with a great intimacy and great depth. The Kurds know this Iraq is the best deal that they can have against the designs of Turkey, against the designs of Iran, and against the designs of Syria.

And then finally there is the issue of separating Kurdistan from its region and protecting it with American forces and wrapping it, if you will, with an American flag. I tell you civilization, Mr. Chairman, culturally for the Kurds, nothing could be worse. We are not going to do it. We will never do it. We will never choose Kurdistan and ditch the Arabs. Let's be realistic about it. It is a large Arab world. We will never ditch the Arab world and adopt a Kurdish state and we will never ditch the Turks.

Now personally, I would rather ditch the Turks in favor of the Kurds. That is my own politics based on my own sense of how the Turks treated us in the prelude to the war. So I don't think we should wish for the Kurds what they themselves don't want and what they can't handle. Indeed, the Kurds have a place in Iraq. Iraq has become a binational state. It is a gift to the Kurds. It is a gift to the Iraqis. It is really also an example to the other Arabs, a message to the other Arabs to handle pluralism and to handle diversity. And finally we turn to the Shia, and it is a world I know with great dependence. I have written—you know, for the record I grew up in a Shia family in Lebanon, very secular. I have written a book about a man named Musa Sadr before the name al-Sadr and Muqtada became such a legendary name, and I am very interested in the place of the Shia Arab. If you take a look at the Shia, while Peter brushes them with the argument that they are all seeking theocracy, the nemesis is not theocracy. It's disorder. It's drift. It really is drift. And healthy debate has just broken out within the Shia community about the bid of Sayyid Abdulaziz al-Hakim for a big Shia federated region. And guess what happened. He was rejected and he was frustrated and fought by Muqtada al-Sadr, by the virtual party, by the Daawa Party and the Shia secularists. So oddly and as we are saying that the Iraqi Shia want out of Iraq and want to drift toward Iran. Indeed the Iraqi Shia being the majority population of the country are reconciled to being in Iraq and want Iraq to stay whole and intact and indeed Hakim's bid for this big superior region in which he would be the uncrowned king of that region did not work.

My final point is that there is this kind of argument making the rounds. The Jordanians make it under the Shia crescent. The Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak says that the Shia Arabs are loyal to Iran, not to their government. This is really quite in my opinion a very pernicious doctrine. Wherever they are, the Shia are loyal to the land and where they live. The idea that this big Shia community of Iraq will somehow be drifting toward Iran, that Iran will be able to erase the Arab Persian divide, the linguistic divide, the philosophical divide between the Arabs and the Iranians is really quite in my opinion really a smear on the Shia Arabs.

We are falling for the representations made to us by the Sunni rulers who are falling for these representations. I had the great honor of meeting Grand Ayatollah al-Sistani and he is of Iranian birth and if you go to Najaf and meet with the seminarians and the clerics in Najaf, what you hear from them behind closed doors and when you talk to many of them, they have no use for Iran's mullah factions. They have no use for the clerical state of the Iranians. So we should understand the Shias of Iraq are Arabs through and through. There is nothing that separates them, by the

way, ethnically or linguistically, from the Sunni Arabs in Iraq. It just happened that they went to the market towns of Najaf and Karbala and they were converted to Shiism rather than to the Sunni doctrine. They are Arabs. They are Iraqis. There are deep philosophical and linguistic differences between the Iraqis and the Iranis, and many, many, many of the Iraqi exiles who spent time in Iran who have returned with a deep animus toward the Iranians with memories of the persecution by the Iranians with tales of Iranian puerilism toward them. And we talk a lot about how the Americans betrayed and abandoned the Shia and Kurdish rebellions in 1991. That was a disgraceful thing that we did, but guess who else did not come to the rescue of the Shia of the southern Iraq? The Iranians, nor did they allow Iraqis who were living in Iran to cross the border to fight with their kinsmen. So we should just be done with this idea that you know that Iran is going to run away with 25 million Iraqis, carry them and just put them in this big Persian imperium and make them clones of the Iranians. It isn't—it's ahistorical. It is not deep. It is not deep. This linguistic divide between Arab and Persian, this temperamental divide, this ethnic divide is very important and I think we should describe Iraq as the Kurds want to stay in Iraq not because they love Iraq. There is no other choice. The Shia want to stay in Iraq because they are the majority.

The Sunnis, we can talk about them. They are supremacists, many of them. They ruled Iraq and for them Iraq is now a stolen country. We came and took it away from them and you know, I think they're coming to the recognition that their supremacy cannot be maintained and I think perhaps they are coming to their senses.

Mr. SHAYS. Thank you. I am going to go to you, Mr. Galbraith, Ambassador Galbraith, because I do want to make sure that there is some response. But I want to ask you, Dr. Fearon, and it will probably be for my second questioning because I am going to try to stay 10 minutes and we can go back and forth with my colleague, Mr. Van Hollen. I am going to ask you where you found the most successful resolutions of civil war. I am going to ask you to tell me what I would have seen and say like South Africa and is there any—are there any areas where we can find some hope that while you are using the percentages, you know, where have we seen some successes and can we draw parallels or not. Because I happen to see some extraordinarily good faith efforts on the part of Iranians, or excuse me, Iraqis to sort out their differences.

I just want to ask you, Dr. Ajami, to speak before I go to the Ambassador. Is the—does Iraq break up, so you have these three units, because I look at Baghdad and I look at other areas and I don't see it so clean and neat where you can just have these different, you know, a Shia, a Sunni and a Kurdish area.

Dr. AJAMI. Mr. Chairman, there is no clean breakup in Iraq, as you know. And I think the prospects would be the Iraqis will live unhappily together for quite some time. And again as a child of Lebanon and a student of Lebanon, there is something stubborn of our nation states: They persevere. They continue to exist because they are almost—usually they are just kind of a convenience. People can't find another form of life. And I think Iraq will continue

in this fashion. And I think Baghdad itself, I mean, the great question would be what becomes of that city. And who would have it and would it be partitioned along sectarian and ethnic lines. It could be a catastrophe for the Iraqis. If that is the future they end up with then indeed this war would have been a terrible, terrible war. We've rolled history's dice and it would be that we lost, and the Iraqis lost.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Galbraith, I am going to go to Mr. Van Hollen, but when I start my second round, this is the question that I'll ask: I would like you to speak to what you heard with Dr. Ajami. But also I would like you to speak to what I heard when I visited other nations in the region and I was lectured by other Arabs that Iran would not tolerate three separate states for more than one reason. The Kurdish area, obviously the Turks would have a challenge. The Syrians, I am told, and I would like your—I am told that Iran would have huge problems with the Kurdish state. But I am also told that the Iranians would have a hard time with a Shia Arab community given they also have a fairly large Arab Shia community in Iran, that they fear not just a Kurdish state but a Shia Arab state. And so I'll be coming to ask you to comment on that and anything else you would like to but, Mr. Van Hollen, you have the floor.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Let me thank all of you for your excellent testimony and just pick up, Mr. Ajami, where you left off, which is that if you see the outcome that you painted with a partition essentially that Iraq is lost, and of course the title of Mr. Galbraith's book is the End of Iraq. And I don't think he says it with any satisfaction. I think it's more a portrait of how he portrays the reality in the ground. In your statement, you say Iraq seems ungovernable. I think clearly the facts on the ground show that the situation is getting worse, not better. You quote the outgoing British Ambassador and said, just quote from your testimony, "the prospect of a low intensity civil war and a de facti division of Iraq is probably more likely at this stage than a successful transition to a stable democracy," according to his government. So I mean, the issue we are all grappling with I guess is what really do the Iraqi people want because I think we would all agree that it is not what we all wish really for Iraq at this point. It is really a decision for the Iraqi people. And we heard the testimony of Mr. Talabany, and I agree with you that those who are part of the current government, that they do want a united Iraq. I think that is absolutely true. Mr. Talabany, Karim AlMusawi, others you mentioned, both Kurds, Sunni and Shia. The question really Mr. Galbraith has raised, are they really governing. What do they govern? Are really, are these other groups more in control of the future of Iraq than those who are in the government today? And if in fact Mr. Galbraith is right and Mr. Fearon is right, who I understood his testimony also we have a civil war, and the question as I understand his testimony is really quite how do you manage that to a position where you can reduce as much as possible the violence. But maybe at the end of the day I think you would agree that the result may also be some kind of de facto partition.

So I guess the question for all of us, and, Mr. Ajami, I ask you, how do we know when we have reached the point where Iraq has fallen apart? Mr. Galbraith's testimony, as I say, he said well, we are now already at the point where we are fighting to put it back together, not holding it together. I understand from your testimony you think that we are still holding it together but it increasingly is falling apart. How do we know when we have reached that point?

Dr. AJAMI. I wish I knew the answer, Congressman Van Hollen. I think it's a very good question, and I think we understand that Iraq has been full of surprises and full of disappointment and full of heartbreak. I mean, we—and there is a question had we known then, if you will, what we now know, would we still have pulled the trigger in 2003. I really don't know the answer. I have written a book. I have spent these last 3 years in and out of Iraq. I have and even Congressman Shays have forgotten, but we hung around on one trip with the incomparable General Petraeus when the chairman was there.

We just—we are—all we roll history's dice and I have this very philosophical attitude about this war in Iraq, the Arabs have a word, which I like very much called Maktoob, "written." I think this war was written, was fated. Once 9/11 happened, I can tell you it really, it is not an attempt to kind of claim now what I didn't think then. Immediately I knew that we would end up, we would go and I even had an expression, there was a highway that would lead from Kabul to Baghdad because I just understood that Kabul would not give us satisfaction for what happened to us on 9/11, that subliminally nations sometimes do things subliminally.

We concluded that it was Arabs who attacked us and we were going to shoot Arab targets, and Saddam. He drew the short straw, and we wanted to take on Arab radicalism and we went from Kabul, which the Arabs had rented out for $20 million a year as we know. We went from Kabul to Baghdad to take a swipe as this Arab radicalism, to try to reform the Arab world.

Was that the right place to make a stand against Arab radicalism? I don't know. Has it been frustrating in the extreme? Absolutely. Were there some real stakes in Iraq? I think so. I really think so. And one day, I very much would like to spend some time trying to explain at least my—not now because the time here is limited—my sense of how Iraq emerged out of 9/11. The Senate report, which I read very, very carefully, tries to establish and tries to question whether there is this link, if you will, between Saddam and 9/11 in kind of a Anglo Saxon way of inquiry, rules of evidence.

That, I think, is doomed. You know, we don't need to spend time thinking. Did Mohammed Atta, the lead hijacker, meet with Iraqi intelligence? It is idle. I didn't really dwell on that.

My concern was different. My concern was Arabs attacked us on 9/11, young Arabs who came right from the mainstream of Arab society, Saudis, Lebanese, Egyptians and that we tried, in some way, to go at this phenomenon, and Iraq was the place, this return address, if you will, that we chose. It might not have been perfect, but it gave us a place and gave us a kind of a battleground to take on the furies of the Arab world. It is not perfect.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Well, now, I appreciate the philosophical context from your own perspective that you just outlined. I guess I would clearly disagree that this was a fated decision. I think it was a very intentional decision that we didn't have to fall into through any kind of fate, and I would just point out, as you well know, that if the intention was to go after people who attacked us based on a form of Islamic extremism, that the one target, Saddam Hussein, would not be the appropriate target, because he was many bad things, and he was a brutal dictator, but one thing he was not was a purveyor of Islamic extremism.

And let me just get back to my question of my panelists. Dr. Fearon, do you believe, as Mr. Galbraith does, and I understand—I think I read your testimony, you suggest we are in a civil war. You make that very clear. And where do you see—where do you see the end game of the civil war going?

In other words do you think we have gotten to the point where the clear result of this will be some form of partition? We already have these internal migrations within Baghdad. I agree with the chairman and others. Baghdad is a city of 5 million people, people of all different backgrounds, but unfortunately, given the violence, you are seeing this day-to-day migration and a de facto separation on the ground.

So I guess I would ask, with respect to you, Dr. Fearon, do you also see the end result of this civil war—and again based on your look at the situation in the former Yugoslavia, the Balkans, being some form of partition where the best the United States can do is to try and manage the—manage the violence so it doesn't spiral even more out of control as this partition happens?

Dr. FEARON. Actually, no. I am very much against pushing for the United States to push for partition of Iraq. I think that is an absolutely terrible idea.

I think it could happen over time that the Iraqis come to that. It is possible. I don't think it is necessarily the case that it is necessarily going to happen or somehow inevitable or fated by the fact that these are three natural distinct nations. I don't think that is true. But it could—you know, there are lots of ways things could play out, and that is one of the ways things could play out.

But for us, to try and push this on them, first of all, I think it is none of our business. It is for them to decide.

Second, I think it is abundantly evident that while, you know, almost all Kurds would, in some notion of their best possible world, have an independent state in the north there, this is not at all the case for Sunnis and Shias who say, over and over again, and you read it from reporting, good reporting by U.S. reporters, and if you talk, from talking to people who visit the region and know people there, they say we are Iraqis. And I think they believe that passionately that they disagree on what that implies about politics.

So I think, you know, what is the problem with pushing this on them? Well for one thing—there is a number of problems. But one of them is that it would basically confirm—confirm very damaging conventional wisdom among Arabs in the region about to why things are going badly in Iraq. When I talk to people who talk to people in the streets around the Arab world or in Iraq and say, well, what do they think about what is going on and why are

things going badly, their theory—and this may be surprising to you, us here—and their theory, a very common theory is that the United States is an incredibly powerful country.

If things are going badly, it has to be because they want it to go badly. And why do they want it to go badly? Because they want to keep the Arabs down, they want to break us up, they are serving the interests of their Israeli masters. Now, that is crazy from our perspective, and especially the last part is just kind of nuts. But that is an extremely common perspective.

If we go in and start pushing for partition, what will it do? It will just leave people to say, there, absolutely confirms what our theory was.

Let me say, a tiny bit more about long run outcomes. I think the model here really shouldn't be—it is not Yugoslavia. It is much more. Lebanon, I think, is a much more appropriate historical analogy. And what we are likely to see pretty much, whether we stay or go, is a gradual or depending on how fast we go rapid transition to a Lebanon-like situation where you have basically a political authority insofar as its exists, devolves down to region, city, even neighborhood levels, there are lots of militias, there is at lot of fighting between militias off and on, a great deal of the fighting is not across sectarian lines but within it.

It is important to remember about the Lebanese conflict there was a huge amount of fighting among the Christian militias and among the Muslim militias. There's going to be a ton of foreign intervention just like there was in Lebanon, that will periodically escalate they a lot, will help things de-escalate but I think we are looking at a long run conflict that will be quite messy. Hopefully, it will settle down to a fairly—not high intensity conflict for a long period of time.

In the long run, is there a possibility of a stable Iraq? Yes, I think so. I think there is actually a basis there which is based on economic efficiency. There is common interests of all these people there in efficiently producing, controlling, and distributing and selling oil.

I don't understand. Maybe Ambassador Galbraith can explain what is the Kurdish theory, if they were independent, what is the theory about how they are going to be able to profit from the oil if they have to export it across countries that can basically tax away their profits? It seems to me there is a very good interest in having an Iraqi central government to manage kind of efficient exploitation of the oil resources there.

But how do you get there? What is the—the only kind of long-run stable basis for Iraq that I can see is that the Sunnis, and to some extent, the Kurds, recognize that there is—they need to make significant concessions on oil share, on revenue sharing, and in government to the Sunnis on the implicit recognition that if they don't, they are going to face a disabling long run insurgency that will make it hard for them to have peace and economic prosperity.

But I just don't think we can get there quickly because there are all these Sunnis who believe, that have guns and believe they can take power if the United States leaves, and there are Shia leaders who think like Muktada al-Sadr, I believe, that they can grab

power and the dictators, if the United States leaves, and it is very hard to disabuse them of those beliefs while we are there.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. I think we got to the heart of the issue here, and I would welcome Ambassador Galbraith's response to that, because the fault lines in this hearing.

Ambassador GALBRAITH. Thank you very much, and I think I will note that actually I, in addition to knowing something about Iraq, I actually also know something about Yugoslavia. And perhaps the best way to describe Iraq is the combination of Yugoslavia and Lebanon. Clearly, Kurdistan is a Slovenia, Croatia, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia kind of situation.

And I have great respect for Dr. Ajami. I reviewed his book, and—very favorably in the New York review of books.

But I don't think it is—I don't think that one can justly dismiss a vote of 2 million Kurds, 98 percent voting for independence is meaningless sentimentality. Why are the Kurds given less credit than Croatians or Slovenians who voted on independence? I think they are serious about it.

And the truth is, in more than a quarter century of visiting Kurdistan and knowing the Kurds, I have not met one who has told me that he would prefer to be—he or she would prefer to be part of Iraq if he had the option of an independent Kurdistan.

And it is in my judgment—and I suppose this is my experience in Yugoslavia—that it is very hard to get people to commit to a state that they actually don't believe in. And it is not just that the Kurds don't want to be independent. It is that they positively hate Iraq.

Now, Barham Salih, Jalal Talabani, Hoshir Sofali, wonderful close friends of mine of long standing. They are sincere. They are doing everything in their power to end the violence. At a level below that in Kurdistan, there is a lot of ambivalence because everything bad that happens in Iraq, is something that brings them closer to what they want, which is independence.

And at a level below that, people don't even disguise their feelings. And it is very understandable. What has Iraq meant to Kurdistan? It has meant—not just Saddam Hussein, but 80 years of repression culminating in the genocide that you and I documented in the 1980's. That doesn't escape from peoples' memories, plus of course, you have had the 15 years of independence, and there is this growing confidence.

Now, you can seek speak of Kurdistan of the Kurds are well represented in Baghdad. That is absolutely true.

What are they doing in Baghdad? One of the things they are doing, it is not the only thing they are doing, but one of them is defending Kurdistan. And one of the things that they are defending is that the government in Baghdad should have absolutely no presence, no authority, in Kurdistan.

So they are defending what they are doing—and it is a shrewd strategy—they are defending the current de facto independence of Kurdistan.

That is not a reflection of a commitment to a unified Iraq. That is a reflection of a shrewd strategy. And what you also see from these leaders, is a shrewd strategy in the fact sense that they are not going to declare independence tomorrow and they have a public

that understands that precisely for the reasons that Dr. Ajami has described.

But we have to, when we look at the Kurdish situation, hasn't received a lot of attention because there have been fewer problems. There are all sorts of things that can change if this if you want to look ahead. Of course, there is a referendum on Kirkuk that is in the constitution. If that referendum somehow isn't held, you are going to see a different situation. There is the Saddam trial.

Mr. SHAYS. Can you just explain, when you say different situation, I don't know what that means. You said if there isn't the election referendum, you said, different things, can you be for more specific?

Ambassador GALBRAITH. Sure, I understand right now while there is this popular desire for independence, which I believe is every bit as strong as in Croatia, Slovenia, or any of these other countries that became independent, the leaders are not pushing for independence right now.

But I am suggesting there are events that could trigger Kurdistan's independence.

And I was just citing a couple of them, one of which would be if, for some reason, the referendum was not held in accordance to the constitution.

Mr. SHAYS. So then your point was that then there would be a movement toward independence?

Ambassador GALBRAITH. It could be. I am just giving an example. There was another example in today's paper which I think is brilliant. You have the judge in the Saddam trial saying—the judge in the trial of Saddam Hussein for the Kurdish genocide saying that Saddam Hussein was not a dictator.

Now imagine a situation in which Saddam Hussein is a acquitted of the crimes against the Kurds and convicted of the crimes against the Shiites.

These are the kinds of events that can take the next step, which is, I think, a question you have, had that can take it the next step, in a country where there is no shared identity as between Arabs and Kurds. Now I will readily agree that the situation in the, between the Sunni Arabs and the Shiites is different. There are elements of nationalism among the Shiites. But it is by no means the notion that is a parallel situation.

Just a point about the oil because this is a—oh, 2 more points I want to make. First, I want to be clear. I do not believe the United States should push for the partition of Iraq.

I am not an advocate of the partition of Iraq.

I believe that Iraq has already broken up. And I am an opponent of putting it back together, of using, of sending American troops, American treasure, to try to do something that is in any event not desired by a significant part of the population. And I think that is a critical distinction. I could not agree with Dr. Fearon more that the United States should not be in the business of breaking up Iraq. But the fact is, this has happened. Kurdistan I have already described.

You have this terrible civil war in Baghdad. If there were some feasible way to prevent it, I would urge—I would do it just as a humanitarian matter. But there isn't. And we are not doing it. And

we can have—we can send a few more troops to Baghdad and it makes a temporary difference, especially if you turn out not to count the car bombings in the casualty tolls. But the fact is that if this sectarian violence comes back, we are not going to use our troops as policemen. It would require the kind of major foreign intervention such as Syria and Lebanon or NATO in Bosnia to bring this to an end. And it is not going to happen.

So this division, including the division in Baghdad, between a Shiite east and a Sunni west and the ending of mixed areas that even the breakup of mixed marriages, is already happening. And nobody can be advocating that. But in the end, it is my judgment that a Shiite-governed region and a Sunni-governed region perhaps in some kind of federation, is a better result than an endless power struggle between these two groups for domination.

Oil is the other point worth commenting on.

First, there are pipelines that go out of Iraq, and there are set tariffs so I don't think as a practical matter an independent, a land-locked independent Kurdistan would be able to export its oil. This is fairly standard. It is also likely that if Kurdistan were to become independent, it would be through a process of negotiation with the Arabs, many of whom, including one of the Arab panelists today, say bluntly, yes, I can understand why the Kurds want to be independent, and I think we should let them if that is what they want. So it is likely if there were an independent Kurdistan its best relationship would be with Arab Iraq.

The issue of, as you know, the Iraqi constitution has a complicated formula on oil.

Actually, technically, oil is not an exclusive power of the central Government, meaning that regional law applies and regional power both producing fields and new fields.

But new fields are clearly under the control of the region. And this is why I can say that Kurdistan—all of Kurdistan's oil is controlled by Kurdistan because there are no existing fields if you exclude Kirkuk.

But then there is the separate issue of revenue sharing to which the Iraqis have reached an agreement on revenue sharing with each of these—not a constitutional deal, which is not a good idea, but a law in which each region will get revenues from oil according to their population, if it, in fact, is implemented. It is very complicated.

One of the complications is how much to the central government. After all, the Kurds would say nothing of our share because the central Government doesn't do anything in Kurdistan.

But this is a complicated issue.

But the second issue is, does the revenue sharing formula fix the problem for the Sunni Arabs? And there are people who believe, oh, yes if only they get their 20 percent the problem will be fixed. If fact is that in 2003, before the invasion and for years before, they were getting 70 percent of the oil—or more.

And so the notion that from their point of view they will be happy with a mere 20 percent, however just that might be, it still represents a major cut in income for them.

Mr. SHAYS. It is a good segue for me to claim time since 24 minutes have gone by. I, basically, when I met with Sunni representa-

tives, they will say to me, we are willing to compromise. We only want 50 percent. And you know, since they had 100 percent, seems like a compromise.

But it is very clear as well that the whole issue of what their population is, they would not concede, even if it were true it seems to me that they are 20 percent of the population. Therefore, getting 20 percent of the oil, it strikes me as a challenge for them.

Ambassador Galbraith, I mean nothing other than the observation here, and take it for what it is, I was absolutely riveted by the book, Trading Places by Mr. Prestowitz. And it was that Japan—we had traded places with Japan, or Japan basically had traded places with us, and now they were the dominant power, and it would happen in a certain period of time. And that book is on a book shelf and he may have written another book of why he was wrong, but he was dead wrong.

And yet I gave that book to everybody I could find. And I am frankly riveted as well by your comments. I find them very compelling.

And then, Dr. Fearon, I thought you were like over there in terms of your analysis and you are—I just smile thinking about it, you enacted a mission in the highest sense and you go where those facts take you. And I thought my gosh, we are going to fail in Iraq, and we better just kind of give up and walk away and so on, but your facts didn't lead you to that, but I made that assumption that is where you are going. And you didn't volunteer it because we didn't ask you. And I have to tell you, this is the most fascinating panel I have had before us in a long time, and we have had great panels.

I want to ask you, Dr. Galbraith, to comment on whether you have heard the same concern that Iran is not—I am going to give you a few things to answer—is not concerned about even a Shia Arab state, as much as we know Iran is concerned about a Kurdish state.

And so that is one of the issues that I would like you to address.

Ambassador GALBRAITH. I think to be honest, I cannot speak to the degree of Iranian concern about the impact of a Iraqi specific to your question of a Shiite state in Iraq, that it would have on "Arabstan" across the—and on their Arab population.

Mr. SHAYS. Maybe you could expand it to tell me how Turkey would react to a Kurdish state and how Syria would react? I would be interested to know that.

Ambassador GALBRAITH. Yes this is a critical question but——

Mr. SHAYS. I am going to add one more part to it just so you can integrate it—and what the impact is of a Kurdish region that is completely land-locked?

Ambassador GALBRAITH. Of course, Syria, Turkey and Iran do not wish to see an independent Kurdistan, because they all have Kurdish populations. Frankly, Syria is not an important—doesn't have a lot of say on it. Iran is opposed. It has some tools—notably sabotage, assassinations, terrorism, exploiting divisions among the Iraqi Kurds, but the Iranians, interestingly, basically took a decision that what they wanted was—what they wanted was the success of the Shiites in the south, that they saw in this constitution, which, in my view, is a road map for partition, and, so initially

they opposed some of the autonomy for the Kurds in the constitutional negotiations last August.

And then when it became clear that the Kurds wouldn't agree to the constitution, basically they said OK, a de facto independent Kurdistan is better, is a price we are prepared to pay to have the Shiite dominated rest of Iraq. And I think that is still their view. So the critical country is Turkey.

And frankly, in America, we tend to see Turkey as monolithic on this, but it definitely is not. There is, of course, a strong body in Turkey that considers an independent Kurdistan a great threat, but they don't actually know what to do about it.

There is another body of opinion in Turkey who advances an argument that goes basically like this. Yes, we would prefer it didn't happen, but we don't have a military option. After all, it took us 15 years to defeat the PKK, and that was in Turkey, and the most they had was 5,000 guerrillas.

This would be going into a foreign country with a well armed Peshmerger force of 100,000. Further, if we did that, we would you know say goodbye to our chances of joining the European Union for the rest of this century, and it would cause a big rift in the United States. So this recognition actually across the board that there isn't a good military option.

That said, there is a body now that basically argues something different which is, who are the Kurds? Well, they are white people who are in Turkey, they are secular, they are western oriented, they aspire to be democratic, and they are not Arabs. In short, Kurdistan is a good buffer as against an Iranian dominated Arab Iraq, or pro Iranian Arab Iraq.

And the reality of Turkish policy toward Kurdistan reflects that. The largest investor in Iraqi Kurdistan is Turkey.

There are increasingly good relations between Kurdistan's leaders and Turkish leaders.

And the Turkish government has been actively promoting oil deals that were made by Turkish companies, not with Baghdad, but with the Kurdistan regional Government.

So, Turkey—I don't want to overstate this, but it is a more nuanced situation than the conventional view here in Washington that, you know, Kurds is just a red flag before the Turks. It had a more sophisticated position to their credit.

Mr. SHAYS. Can I make an assumption that the Kurds are pretty astute negotiators, have become somewhat sophisticated in relationships? Can I make an assumption that 12 years of dealing with an embargo and secret relations with Turkey have helped relationships?

Ambassador GALBRAITH. Very much so. And there has also been conscious policy, Barham Salih was an architect of it when he was the Kurdistan prime minister, of the Sulimaner region involving Turkey and I think it has had payoffs.

Mr. SHAYS. Dr. Fearon, let me have you react. I am going to come back to you on the most successful south African, the issue of where you have seen some success.

But I am going to also ask you to just think about, when we became a country, if there had been an academician who had come before us and said, you know, this is going to be an absolute failure

there has never been a democratic state who has rid itself of the greatest power in the world, and so on, would that have been a deflating message to Americans who were trying to be free? And does it prove a point that there may be other elements to this picture that are unique and different? And I would ask you to tell me if there are some unique and different issues. Because it was a miracle in 1776. And when we talk about all the things that could go wrong, the list was longer than we could list of what could have gone wrong when we became a Nation.

If you could have gotten Virginia and Massachusetts to agree on anything, you know, I mean, but you had then, you had extraordinary leaders who were able to break through that. You know, Washington deciding to go north just as a Virginian to be north. But we also had the help of the French, who landed in Rhode Island, took troops to New York, and convinced Washington not to attack the Brits in New York even though he wanted to redeem himself, convinced him to have a month-long March to Yorktown, and then we fought in Yorktown and the French lost more—had greater deaths than Americans had.

I just look at this and say, you know, so I am going to ask you to tell me, do you see any leaders in Iraq or anyone that can break this mold that you see, and so then I can say there is hope and promise. And Dr. Ajami, I would like you to comment to the things you have heard today.

Dr. Ajami I am going to go to you and then come back to Dr. Fearon. I am giving him a chance to think about that.

Dr. AJAMI. Which part would you like?

Mr. SHAYS. Any comments, Ambassador Galbraith said, I found as he was saying some points, I saw you nodding your head. And then I would just like to know where you might disagree, relations with Iran and Turkey and all those things.

Dr. AJAMI. Yes, I would be quite thrilled to see Kurdish independence. I think Iraq was a travesty. I think the way the Kurds were brought into Iraq in 1920 and beyond, they were simply brought in for one reason, to balance the demographic power of the Shia. That was it. The Brits were bringing the HASHMATs, to look at the country and they said, oh, too many Shia. What do we do? Force the Kurds into Iraq. It was a debacle. I think the Kurds are a proud and good people. Peter is absolutely right. And Congressman Van Hollen, these people are—they have endured so much suffering and there remains in them such decency.

The problem in Iraq, I think—and I don't want to pile on the Sunni Arabs here. The Sunni Arabs simply were unreconciled to this new Iraq. And though they are a minority in Iraq, they have a more sectarian mindset, because they look at the region and say, oh, we live in a region of Sunni Arabs, the neighborhood around us. But actually, if you really think about it, and this is one of the great ironies of Iraq, the possible borders, the borders which have human habitation for Iraq, not across the——

Mr. SHAYS. Bring the mic a little closer.

Dr. AJAMI. There is a great irony which I savor about Iraq and about its Arab legend, insisting on the very and Arabness of Iraq, the Iraq shares possible borders across human habitations with

Turkey and Iran. Its borders with Saudi Arabia, with Jordan with the Arab countries, are very difficult to reign.

So, but nevertheless, the Sunni Arabs insisted this country belongs to them. And I just have few sentences, if you would permit me, in terms of how the Sunni Arabs view this American war. We had whether, we intended it or not, emancipated the Shia stepchildren of the Arab world and the Kurds as well. We had sinned against the order of the universe. Our innocence was astounding.

We were overturning the order of a millennium, but calling on the region to celebrate and to bless our work. This is in the written part of my testimony, that in fact, the Sunni Arabs, insisted and the region around them, supported that whether, it is in Jordan or Saudi Arabia or Egypt or whether it is in Sunni Arab communities beyond—they insisted on the right of the Sunni Arabs to the bounty of Iraq, and I think that day is over.

That is it.

Now, Iraq has been, I think, in the last few years, it has been blessed with some good leaders. I think they are lucky to have Jalal Talibani. And I don't know what Talibani's ultimate intentions are. I just think he really would like to hold Iraq together.

And I think there is room for ambiguity. Peter would like to clarify things. But I am a child of them where we never name things. You know there is a Persian tradition if you allow me where, if a dog rubs up against you, and you are on your way to prayer, and renders you, if you will, impure and you have to go wash again, you look away from the dog and you say, God willing, it is a goat and Peter would like to say—Peter insists that we call it a dog.

And of course, everybody knows it is a—you know he wants to call it a dog, and the person calling it a goat knows it is a dog. And it is so.

I think if the Kurds could have an independent state in all but name, that ambiguity is a saving ambiguity. Now Peter would like to tear the veil of ambiguity.

But Middle Eastern life, that is what you do. You, in fact, live with this ambiguity.

So, you know, I like Sulaimani, I like Kurdistan, I am on the board of trustees of an American University which our friend Barham Salih is putting up in Sulaimani and Kurdistan. Great. Whatever the Kurds can get out of this federalism arrangement, I think the more, the better and they deserve it. They deserve it. But I am not sure naming the State, the government of Kurdistan, is what really serves the interests of the Kurds.

Mr. SHAYS. I am struck by the fact that the danger of all three of you is that you are so darned interesting that I would keep you here all day. But we are not going to do that. But I do not, Dr. Fearon, I do want you to just kind of help me out a little bit. I find your testimony fascinating, and but I want to know what I should draw from it in the end, if, in fact, you don't think we should be leaving Iraq prematurely and so on.

And I want you to tell me, again, just to remind you, where there has been you know really violent fighting and remarkable willingness to come together, where would that be?

Dr. FEARON. You mentioned the South Africa case. I wrote down a list of the cases that I had coded as power sharing agreements,

successful power sharing agreements, and it is a short list and a number of them are kind of dubious, so one side really won the war, pretty much all of them occur after quite long conflicts.

South Africa is, in many ways, the most promising, or I don't know, optimistic example, and there you had a long, costly fight that wore both sides down. You had remarkable leadership from—and very not the kind of leadership you could just count on appearing somewhere else, in Nelson Mandela, who used that leadership in part to put together a very dominant ANC which, you know there was some factionalization, but it really helped a great deal that he had, that there was this dominant organization on the African side.

And then another thing which was really important and for the success in South Africa was, I think, that basically the main parties, the white regime and the whites and the Africans needed each other economically.

And that provided a real glue in the end and a reason for the outgoing regime to have some trust that they wouldn't just be expropriated out of hand.

But you know leadership was also very important and it is important that this took time for the regime to come to the belief that it really had to settle.

Now if you look at Iraq, I am just worried that we just don't see those kind of conditions. I am worried that there is, you know great factionalization on the Shiite and Sunni sides, and that on each of those sides you have parties who I think really believe very much that they can take power if the United States were gone by using force.

And the problem is that is a very hard belief to change while we are there because their theory is, well, when the United States goes we will be able to take over.

Mr. SHAYS. I am going to just react to one point and then Mr. Van Hollen, I am going to go to you here and this will be our last round. We will go one more time here, but if I ask the Iraqis, what is their biggest fear, almost to a person they say that you will leave, that you will leave us. And some say that you will leave us before we can grab hold of democracy. That is what they tell me. They may say it differently but that you will leave us too soon. And then I think, well, no wonder they think that because we have a debate where we are talking about leaving now or prematurely or some time, and then some of them even make reference, and a lot of them are educated over elsewhere, they make the analogy just like you did in Vietnam.

And you know when I hear people say, Vietnam didn't cause what we thought, it still had impact over us over a long period of time. Saddam never would have gone into Kuwait if we he really believed we would get him out. He just thought that because of Vietnam we never would go. In fact, he never thought we would get him out and remove him from power in part because the French and others convinced him we wouldn't.

And so what we are trying to deal with is the consequence of leaving and when we leave. And so I still want to kind of get a sense of that. I am going to ask you, Dr. Fearon, tell me in spite of the fact that you say it takes a long time, and then I don't hear

you say, get out, I don't hear you take the position Ambassador Galbraith has basically suggested, that it is a fait accompli and let's just acknowledge it and leave. And if I am not saying that right, Ambassador I, do want you to clarify, that is kind of the message I am hearing.

So could you comment on that?

Dr. FEARON. I can try. You know, first of all, it is just an extremely, as you know, our discussion has, you know, I think, showed, it is an extremely difficult intractable problem where I think you are very well aware I think of the enormous costs we are paying for being there.

And I think Congress needs to ask itself is it, and I am saying this is an easy question, either, you know, is it worth $60 billion a year and a constant stream of loss of American lives, to—for a mission that has, I think, you know, quite low prospects of leading to the end point that was the point of departure or has been the argument that the administration has set as the goal?

You have to ask yourself, are those costs, not to mention a whole bunch of other costs——

Mr. SHAYS. What is your conclusion? Because I thought basically earlier, your conclusion was that for better or worse, it is worse—it is better than the alternative so——

Dr. FEARON. Let me cut to the chase. I think that the costs of rapid withdrawal would be too high and we shouldn't do that, but that the U.S. Government and the administration and Congress need to actively begin and much more creatively, more creatively and actively than we have been doing planning for a gradual exit, where we kind of go step by step and see how circumstances develop, and basically have as our aim well, you know, we hope for the best and try to and aim for the best but basically accept the possibility that what we will be doing is trying to manage a gradual evolution of a Lebanon like conflict where we do our best to leave troops in the region and position them in as much a way so as to prevent really big and threatening al Qaeda bases in western Iraq, and prevent a really rapid escalation or genocidal escalation in the cities in Iraq.

Mr. SHAYS. Let me say this. I want to go to Mr. Van Hollen. I am just going to make 1 or 2 points, and then I will have a last round which won't be long as to get you to be able to answer any other question.

What I have seen, as I said, the big mistakes, first 12 months, what I thought was real and noticeable progress for the next 18, since January of this year, wrestling with who the government would be, 4½ months of stagnation and therefore, I think, going in the opposite direction, and then, 3½ months, where I haven't seen any real heavy lifting on the part of the leadership, Sistani even telling the leaders to come back home. And so that is what I see.

And I knew that I would have to come back home and report that because that is the one promise I have made, whenever I go, I come back and I say the truth and let the truth take me where it takes me, no matter the consequences.

And when I was there in July, the new government had been had been in power for now 6 weeks, and I didn't see them doing any-

thing. I saw them talking. And I knew I was going to have to come back in not my usual 3½ months or 3 months.

When I came back, I just saw a continuation. So I came to the conclusion that we needed to light a fire under the Iraqi politicians. My way of doing it was to say, we know there is a certain point where when the Iraqis step up, we can step down.

We should be able to know that.

Now the president said that we have enough troops but now we have 264,000—294,000 Iraqi security and they haven't resulted in any stepdown.

So whenever we get to that point where we have enough, because when you combine the 264, I think we are up to then, and the American 150,000 plus the 20,000 contractors, we are up to about 494,000 security.

The administration, it seems to me, has to tell us when we are at that point that in a worst-case scenario, the Iraqis we can deal with, with the challenge of they will still be fighting but we can respond to it, and that we then tell the Iraqis that we are going to, when we reach that number, every Iraqi who has had a year's worth of training on the line, on the firing line, we bring down an American troop.

And my point and my logic is to say, we need to let them know there is a point where they are going to have to take over. And we don't want to leave a day before they are capable, but we don't want to leave, stay a day later than we have to. That still, I have to say, suggests to me, Mr. Galbraith, that it is not going to be troops in Kurdistan—I mean, you didn't say Kurdistan, you said, you were going to locate the troops where?

Ambassador GALBRAITH. In Kurdistan, as an over-the-horizon force that could move back into the Sunni Arab areas.

Mr. SHAYS. And I was going to ask you why not Kuwait? But I am struck by the fact that we need troops there, however small, they need to be an operational troop for us. We also will have to provide air, fixed and helicopter support, medics and so on. That is kind of how I am wrestling with this issue. And it is because I do think there has to be this point.

And the interesting thing—and I am sorry to go on—but the interesting thing is by my suggesting it, it somehow wrapped me in with the group that wants to leave now or arbitrarily, and I don't want to do that. And it is almost like we don't have any room to have a discussion between those who want, you know, to leave right now or arbitrarily, and those who say stay the course and just keep plugging away. It seems to me there has to be something else.

And my last point is, I realize that I am preaching to Sunni, Shias and Kurds why can't they work together, but Mr. Van Hollen and I and everyone else aren't working together—I don't mean that as a criticism to him or me, but bottom line with this election it is just not happening. It will have to wait until after the election. But there is going to have to be a point where Republicans and Democrats can say is there a way we, in this country, can find the common ground and give a common message to the Iraqis so they know what they are in for, whatever that is?

That is kind of the wrestling I have been doing now after 14 trips and the 3 days of hearings that I have heard. And what I will want

you to just respond to, and I won't take 10, even 10 minutes my next round, I am going to want you to tell me, with the reconciliation, shall I know it is a package, but is there any one that is a key, with oil, debaathification, federalism, militia, amnesty whatever, that is what I will want in my next round and last round. And it will be short. You have the floor.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. This has been a terrific hearing, and again, thank all the witnesses here. And I would just note that Mr. Talabani, in his sort of final statement that he made, went back, took us back to the creation of Iraq and the fact that the Kurds were put into Iraq, and he said we now have to correct the historic mistake. Those were his words.

Now how we do that is, of course, central question here, Mr. Talabani wasn't proposing any kind of partition. But he was suggesting that as part of national reconciliation, we have to, whatever we do, it has to somehow reflect the will of all the different groups within Iraq and trying to decipher what the will of those different groups in Iraq is, is obviously a difficult task.

Now, I would agree that from a U.S. perspective, the idea of having a United democratic state of Iraq is probably in the United States best interests. But as we have learned, the question is not only what we want, because we have learned I think very clearly over the last many years in Iraq, we cannot impose our will on Iraq.

And the question is, what is going to be the task for the Iraqi people in the days ahead? What are they going to decide and what will our role be while they make those decisions and how long are we going to stay in Iraq while they make those decisions?

Now, Dr. Fearon, I happen to agree with you and maybe others on the panel that an immediate withdrawal of U.S. forces in Iraq would lead to a greater blood bath, even greater civil war, than we see today and I have opposed that kind of immediate withdrawal.

At the same time, we do, I think, need to lay out a plan for the American people that shows them how this is going to come to an end. It is messy, Dr. Ajami, you are absolutely right. It is a very messy situation. And it may not be easy to come up with a neat solution. But we have to come up with, there has to be some evolution of this that allows us to have a plan for ultimate U.S. withdrawal, sooner rather than later.

And I think what, and Mr. Galbraith, as, I understand what the Ambassador said, and I think he wants to make this clear, is he is not proposing partition. It is his analysis that we have sort of already gotten there, that is the reality on the ground, and that the question is, rather, how much more time are we going to keep U.S. forces there in the middle of a civil war where the parties have agreed, at least among themselves to sort of decide if Iraq is going to break up.

So these are all difficult questions, Dr. Fearon, and I guess my question to you and the others on the panel is, you say we shouldn't push the Iraqis toward partition. I agree. I think we all agree. No one should be pushing them toward partition.

At what point do we make a decision? What are the sort of the political milestones we need to look at to determine when the United States needs to begin seriously withdrawing its troops? Be-

cause as you have said, laid out here, we should sort of be there to prevent the blood bath as developments progress.

But we need to have some milestones. We need to say, if this doesn't happen by this date, we need to make a determination that maybe the Iraqis have decided for themselves that Iraq shouldn't be all together. Ambassador Galbraith already reached that conclusion. He has a lot of great facts to support that. And let me end with this because then the question for you, Ambassador Galbraith, is if that is the fact, would not the immediate withdrawal of U.S. forces out of areas like Baghdad for example into Kurdistan, would that not need lead you to believe to an increase in the blood bath in the Baghdad area and other areas? So I throw that out to everybody.

I will begin where I ended, with Ambassador Galbraith.

Ambassador GALBRAITH. Well, perhaps to speak a bit more broadly if I may both to what you said and to what the chairman said, because it really is of a peace. I have known the Iraqi opposition, obviously the Kurds best but secular Arabs, secular Shiites, religious Shiites for a very long time as Congressman Van Hollen knows from our time together 20 years ago on the Foreign Relations Committee. And these are the people who are saying that we should stay. They are my friends. And so it is somewhat painful for me to come to a different conclusion.

But I think that we have to focus on two things: First on the interests of the United States, and second, on what is achievable?

The interests of the United States, it seems to me—and actually President Bush partially defined this when he said keeping of weapons of mass destruction out of the hands of the most dangerous states. I would refine that. It is nuclear weapons, because the others are not in the same category.

And while we have been tied up in Iraq, North Korea has become the only country to withdraw from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, it is clearly reprocessed plutonium into nuclear weapons, and we have talked tough and done nothing. Iran had suspended its uranium enrichment. It has gone away from that. It has reserved its uranium enrichment. And again we have tough rhetoric but we don't actually have a military option.

And Iran is a particular problem. First, it is the fact that our Army is tied up in Iraq, our military; but second that as long as we are in the south of Iraq, and I mean not just us but the British, our coalition partners, should we take any military action against Iran, the Iranians can retaliate, and they have allies who will retaliate against us, and whether Fouad and I agree about just how theocratic it is, I think he would agree there are plenty of forces in the south who would respond to an American attack on Iran by attacking the United States and there would be Iranian forces in there as well.

So I am not in favor of military action on Iran, but I do believe it is tough to negotiate when you don't have a military option and the Iranians know we don't.

So plus—basically, my argument for getting out quickly is based on our other foreign policy priorities, that is the first point.

The second point is that I don't believe we are accomplishing anything in the south. I won't elaborate and I don't believe we are

actually preventing any blood bath in Baghdad. I don't think it will be any worse or significantly worse if we withdraw. I don't actually think we are doing any good because we are not doing the kind of activities that would really stop a blood bath. So if we are not accomplishing anything, and if it is diverting resources from the real threats to our national security then the answer is, yes, I am in favor of very rapid withdraw from those parts of Iraq.

I would focus again on the remaining threat, al Qaeda. And the reason I say Mr. Chairman, Kurdistan as opposed to Kuwait—well, there are several reasons. First, if Kurdistan is adjacent to the Sunni areas whereas Kuwait is not, second it is still inside Iraq and I think you can imagine if we pulled completely out of Iraq, the political problems in this country, as well as in Iraq, should we intervene, third the Kuwaitis, there is a lot of anti-Americanism there, whereas the Kurds are basically very pro American.

So those are the arguments for the over-the-horizon force in Kurdistan.

The final point I would make has to do with the math of the security forces, because I think this is so critical. We talk about 294,000 security forces. But let's go. It is 115,000 in the Army. According to the top Iraqi defense ministers, I have spent a lot of time talking to them, 10 percent of those will show up in combat. So it is not 115,000, it is 12,000. And of the Iraqi police, the 180,000, well, many of them, of course, are, we exclude Kurdistan, they have their own police force. But many of them are, of course, are Sunnis in Sunni areas, Shiite in Shiite areas, but where they are in mixed areas—and those areas are reasonably stable, or at least the Shiite areas are, the Sunni areas are a separate problem, the Shiite areas are stable. But where they are in the mixed areas, the police are not the answer. They are the problem. They are the partisans in the civil war. The army is a bit too.

So, it is not an answer to civil war to say if Iraqis stand up we will stand down. As Iraqis stand up, the civil war gets worse. I will leave it at that.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Dr. Fearon.

Dr. FEARON. Let me address briefly your question about political milestones, and at the same time, Congressman Shays's comments about looking for a course between rapid withdrawal and, you know, staying forever. I think that we, the historical experience suggests and a lot of realities on the ground suggests that it is extremely unlikely that we are going to reach a point with training and helping the government in the various ways we are trying to where drawing down troops doesn't pose a very significant risk of the conflict increasing significantly.

So I think what that means we just have to face up to the fact that if we are not willing to kind of stay for a decade or decades, kind of back stopping a decent Iraqi government or a government that has people trying to make for a decent government, then we simply have to take a graduated approach where we are, we tell them I don't know how you do this diplomatically, it is going to be private, I would hope that we are going to draw down in steps, and we will take a step—and we have to just expect that there is a high likelihood that things could then get worse. I think the, at least

temporarily, I think we want to move in steps or gradually and see how things evolve.

It is an extremely complicated situation with lots of players, lots of interests involved. We will not be just disappearing. We are still going to be an incredibly important player there with a lot of means of leverage, economic, military, diplomatic.

One of the advantages, Mr. Chairman, you were talking about the government not really moving fast, it is possible that taking these kind of steps would help to bring a greater sense of urgency. It could also cause things to get worse. It is hard to say. But it could, you know, it could very well light a fire under the politicians as it were, and make them make some hopefully not a last ditch, but maybe last ditch efforts to make the current situation work.

I think we ought to get more economic resources flowing where we ought to get economic resources flowing, because I think in the longer run, or the medium run, for us to continue to play a, you know, a constructive role we are going to be wanting to say, we want you guys to come to an agreement, and we are going to support the people who we think are working in a positive way for that and punish or not help the people who aren't.

And I think we will find people of those predilections on all sides of the conflict and it is going to be a very complicated situation.

Dr. AJAMI. Mr. Chairman, first a personal note, and then a policy conclusion. The personal note, I think some members of my family are among your constituents, I believe, if I am not, you can correct me, that, Norwalk and Groton are your constituency, and two of them are twins who went into West Point and into the military and one of them is on his way to Kuwait and most likely Iraq.

Both of them, one of them is in Korea, and one of them is on his way to, we believe, Iraq, trust me, they will be casting absentee ballots for Congressman Shays. So at least that front is secure.

Now on the balance, the good news, if you will from Iraq, something has happened in Iraq. And it will give us our deliverance in the medium run, a balance of terror has been arrived at in Iraq. A lot of this war in Iraq was motivated and triggered by the Sunni Arab belief that they are a martial race, and that Shia are not. They even had an expression. They would say for us, "hukm" which means ruling for you, self flagellation. They had disdain for them. And now the Mahdi army and the Badr brigade, the Sunnis are looking into the abyss. And they now understand if war were to come, if they persist, they may not win.

This is the first time in the history of Iraq that this conclusion has been arrived at by the Sunni Arabs, that two can kill, and that actually there is a rough balance of terror in the country, that they can't go north because they will meet the Peshmergas and they can't come south because eventually they will want to fight it out with Muktada al Sadr and the Badr brigade maybe the outcome is not so good.

So we are on the road to deliverance. It has never been—it is a scourge to our souls, and I know, for you, Mr. Chairman and I know Congressman Van Hollen, this has been a very, very serious engagement because you both have much invested in this question and it is really a great honor to be here with you.

Thank you.

Mr. SHAYS. I think we're done. So, by this, if there is any comments that you want to make, Ambassador, Dr. Fearon, since I so appreciated Dr. Ajami's last comments, I don't want him to make any more.

But, no, is there anything we should have brought up in this hearing that we didn't bring up, any dialog that we should have had?

Ambassador GALBRAITH. I have one final substantive comment which is simply I'm afraid that lighting a fire under the Iraqi politicians isn't going to work because they can't actually do anything. They don't govern anything. They are good people, but even if they could agree, and quite often they do agree, it doesn't actually translate beyond the Green Zone; it doesn't translate into action.

The second point I would say, Mr. Chairman, is that you referred to passing out to everybody the book Trading Places, and then, of course, it all turning out wrong. I think I would be remiss if I didn't tell that you my publisher would be quite happy if you passed out this book, even if I turned out to be wrong.

Mr. SHAYS. You know what, I would like you both to tell us your book and just hold it up a second so I can see it again. This book is The End of Iraq, and when did it come out?

Ambassador GALBRAITH. It came out in July of this year.

Mr. SHAYS. And your book?

Dr. AJAMI. It's called The Foreigner's Gift. By the way, a wisecrack said the two should have one title, The Foreigner's Gift, subtitled The End of Iraq. It came out by the same publisher, we have the same publisher, the same month. So we have had this friendly rivalry. I wish Peter well as his is a great read. I have actually with your permission, I have inscribed this book for you. I think it's actually under the Federal guidelines of accepting—it is not $25.

Mr. SHAYS. If it was worth more than I'm allowed, I would actually buy it from you.

Dr. AJAMI. It is inscribed. It's here for you.

Mr. SHAYS. Dr. Fearon.

Dr. FEARON. On the books, I would have had more intelligent things to say in the dialog with these guys but both were sold out at the Stanford book store last week.

I just want to thank the committee very much for inviting me to talk, and it's been absolutely fascinating and I appreciate your questions and I deeply appreciate your intense involvement and interest in this.

I guess the closing comments I want to make is that I'm worried that it's not just kind of a stasis or worries—nothing is happening, say, in the Iraqi Parliament or among Iraqi leaders. In the last some months I have been worried there's a certain stasis on Iraq on the U.S. Government side, the administration side in particular. It seems like it is a very, very difficult situation and we need some creative thinking and some initiatives. I don't know how much this has to do with the outcome of the election, but it would be a shame if that were the case, because we need to be thinking about and planning for multiple possible outcomes and not just the kind of most optimistic scenario in the coming months.

Mr. SHAYS. I'll just make this last point in doing something I don't always do enough of, and that's to thank my committee. When I told them about a month ago we were going to have a set of three hearings in 1 week just shortly after having a hearing next week, they looked at me, and I said this is really important, and they knew it was. I want to thank Dr. Nicholas Palarino, my staff director. He has been to Iraq 14 times, 13 with me and once on his own. My wife doesn't like me going if he's not with me. He was a former colonel and has earned his doctorate.

I want to point out the gentleman sitting next to me, Mr. Robert Kelley, the chief counsel, has been in Iraq for 20 months. He did something so unusual working for the State Department, he would help us in our travels but he would tell me candidly, kind of, when I was getting the straight story and when I wasn't. He would once in a while say, you may need to ask this question to draw out the answers that you need as a Member of Congress. He's done a fabulous job in putting together this.

And Mr. Robert Briggs, analyst of the subcommittee, and Mr. Michael Girbov, a Georgetown University graduate student, and Mr. Kaleb Redden, the Presidential management fellow. A lot of work has gone into these hearings and I'm very grateful to my committee. And I'll just again say I just can't thank you enough for the dialog and the challenging information you presented us with that we need to wrestle with. I'm just so grateful.

Mr. Van Hollen, any last comment that you'd like to make before we go?

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Just to thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding these hearings and to thank the last panel for their very insightful comments.

Mr. SHAYS. Thank you very much. This hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:19 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

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