

FDCH TRANSCRIPTS

Congressional Hearings

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Senate Foreign Relations Committee Holds Hearing on Iraq: The Way Ahead, Part 1

LIST OF SPEAKERS

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LUGAR:

This hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee is called to order.

Today the Committee on Foreign Relations meets to continue our ongoing oversight of American policy toward Iraq.

The coalition intends to hand over sovereignty to an Iraqi government six weeks from tomorrow.

We're pleased to welcome Mr. Richard Armitage, deputy secretary of state; Mr. Paul Wolfowitz, deputy secretary of defense; Lieutenant General Walter Sharp, director of strategic plans and policy for the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

We look forward to a wide-ranging discussion that further clarifies the United States plans for the Iraq transition.

This is the 19th hearing on Iraq the Foreign Relations Committee has held since January 2003, and the fifth in this past month. Tomorrow we will hold another hearing on Iraq that will feature several expert witnesses from outside our government.

Within the substantial bounds of Congress' oversight capacity, we are attempting to illuminate United States plans, actions and options with regard to Iraq, both for the benefit of the American people and to inform our own policy-making role.

I am convinced that the confidence and commitment demonstrated by the pronouncement of a flexible but detailed plan for Iraq is necessary for our success.

With lives being lost, billions of dollars being spent in Iraq, the American people must be confident that we have carefully thought through an Iraq policy that will optimize our prospects for success.

And moreover, a detailed plan is necessary to prove to our allies and to Iraqis that we have a strategy and that we are committed to making it work. If we cannot provide this clarity, we risk the loss of support of the American people, loss of potential contributions from our allies, and the disillusionment of Iraqis.

As the June 30 transfer of sovereignty draws closer, violent attacks on coalition forces have increased and power struggles between Iraqi factions have intensified. The lack of security has hampered political and economic development in key parts of Iraq, and many nongovernmental aid organizations have pulled out of Iraq.

Adding to the difficulties, the appalling revelations about prisoner abuse in Iraq have repulsed Americans and hurt our reputation in the international community.

In dealing with the scandal, we need to establish absolute accountability and stay true to our values without reducing our efforts to overcome terrorism.

At this critical juncture, the committee and the American people need to hear directly from the administration. Are U.S. plans for building Iraq shifting to address the new realities on the ground? And have sufficient resources been identified to carry through with our plan?

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The Senate confirmed Ambassador John Negroponte to be ambassador to Iraq on an expedited basis to ensure that he and his team would be in place quickly. We're interesting in knowing how the State Department plans to staff, house and secure what will be one of the largest embassies in the world.

Undersecretary Marc Grossman has testified that the embassy could cost more than a billion dollars, but these funds were not included in the fiscal year 2005 budget request.

The administration recently requested an additional \$25 billion in contingency funds for Iraq and Afghanistan, but this amount does not apparently include any funding for the new embassy.

LUGAR:

Our diplomatic forces, as well as our military forces, must have what they need to succeed.

I'm especially interested in details surrounding the use of the \$18.4 billion provided for Iraq by the emergency supplemental signed last November 6th, 2003.

In this bill, Congress gave broad authority to the president to control these funds through the Office of Management and Budget. The OMB report submitted last month showed that only \$2.3 billion of the \$18.4 billion has been obligated by March 24, 2004.

Given the urgency of reconstruction efforts in Iraq and the role that they play in a successful outcome for the United States, it's perplexing that only about 12 percent of the money has been obligated. Committee inquiries indicate that reconstruction projects have been slowed by a long bureaucratic contracting process overseen by OMB and the Department of Defense.

In addition, OMB reports lack specificity. In many cases, the reports failed to identify the agency responsible for carrying out reconstruction projects.

Our committee needs to be reassured that Congress' intent is being fulfilled, that there is no unnecessary delay in reconstruction efforts.

Now, in Iraq we are perceived more as an occupation force by some than as a friend in helping to nurture a new nation. Delays in reconstruction undercut United States credibility and increase suspicions among Iraqis who are impatient for improvements. Without tangible progress in reconstruction, Iraqis will perceive little benefit in our presence.

Achieving the transfer of sovereignty on June 30, 2004, was always going to stretch our capabilities, but since we are firmly committed to that date, we should be attempting to accelerate stabilization and reconstruction in every possible way.

We are hopeful that Ambassador Lakhdar Brahimi will be successful in his work to construct an interim Iraqi government.

The Iraqis themselves must reach internal political consensus and balance, competing Sunni, Shia and Kurdish factions and their thoughts.

LUGAR:

Once the new government is named, the transition to sovereignty should begin immediately.

If possible, in my judgment, we should establish the United States embassy before the June 30 transfer and bring Ambassador Negroponte in earlier. Ambassador Bremer has provided extraordinary service, but at this stage he will begin to take on lame-duck status.

Undersecretary Grossman testified on April 22 about the importance of engaging the interim Iraqi government as soon as it's selected. We cannot simply turn on the lights in the embassy on June 30 and expect everything to go well. We must be rehearsing with Iraqi authorities and our coalition partners how decision-making and administrative power will be distributed and exercised.

It is critical therefore that Ambassador Negroponte and his team be put in place at the earliest moment.

And we should also be accelerating negotiations to complete a United Nations Security Council resolution to give international legitimacy to the new Iraqi government and to define new security arrangements.

In addition, the United Nations and the new interim government should consider accelerating elections scheduled for January 2005 or December 2004 for the transitional and maybe the permanent Iraqi government.

We are especially appreciative to have our witnesses with us today.

Now, let me just say, as a point of personal privilege and likewise history, that about 19 years ago in 1985, when I was newly anointed chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee on the first occasion, Paul Wolfowitz and Rich Armitage came before the committee on that occasion to talk about the Philippines. Their testimony was far-sighted and courageous.

In a chapter of a book that I wrote about the situation, I have stated that, for whatever it is worth, because it was remarkably prescient with regard to events that occurred throughout 1985 and the elections in February of 1986 and subsequently.

And my admiration for these two gentlemen has remained unabated ever since.

LUGAR:

I appreciate especially your coming today at this important time for both our committee and for our colleagues and for the American people who will witness this hearing.

Senator Biden has been delayed by train difficulties, pure and simply. He will be here. And when he arrives, I will call upon him, of course, for his opening statement and comment at that transition.

And at some stage we will have, as the committee knows, a roll call vote; approximately at 11:15. We will try to continue the hearing throughout that time. I will step over to the floor and vote as rapidly as possible and call upon one of my colleagues to chair the meeting so we may continue with our deliberations.

We thank the witnesses for coming, and we look forward to hearing from them, first of all, in the order that they're listed in our agenda, which would be Secretary Wolfowitz and then Secretary Armitage.

Secretary Wolfowitz, we are delighted that you are here, and would be pleased to hear your testimony.

WOLFOWITZ:

Mr. Chairman, delighted to have the opportunity to come here to talk about the very important questions that you outlined in your opening statement.

I want to thank you for the kind words that you just spoke about the role that Rich Armitage and I played some 20 years ago -- not quite 20 years ago. But you were unduly

modest because you, yourself, played an even more important role and with considerable courage, both in taking on an assignment that nobody else wanted to and then carrying it forward in the face of a great deal of pressure.

WOLFOWITZ:

And I think our country and the Philippine people have a lot to thank you for for that great leadership.

Mr. Chairman, I have a somewhat long statement which you can read, and I'd like to put into the record. I'd just like to put it aside and make a few brief comments about the overall situation in Iraq if I may.

LUGAR:

Your statement will be put in the record in full, and likewise that of Secretary Armitage.

WOLFOWITZ:

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, the great men and women who wear the uniform of the United States have already accomplished amazing things in Iraq. They have removed a regime that was a threat to the United States and to the entire Middle East, a regime that sponsored terrorism and developed and used weapons of mass destruction.

In the process, they have also liberated a nation of 25 million talented people, most of them Muslims, from the grip of one of the most cruel and sadistic tyrants in modern history.

But their work is not done. The enemy that was defeated in major combat a year ago continues to sow death and destruction in the effort to prevent the emergence of a new Iraq. They and their terrorist allies from inside and outside Iraq understand that real defeat for them will come when Iraqis achieve the ability to govern themselves in freedom and to provide for the security of their own country.

That is why the enemy realizes that the next year or year and a half will be so critical, because that is the time it will take to stand up Iraqi security forces that are fully trained, equipped and organized, and to elect a representative Iraqi government after 40 years of tyranny and abuse.

Already more than 775 American military have died in this noble cause. Many more have suffered grievous wounds. Brave civilians have been killed as well. More than 100 of our coalition partners have given their lives for this cause.

And by our own count, which is probably far from complete, 350 Iraqi policemen, civil defense fighters, and other security forces have given their lives for the cause of a new Iraq in the last year, and that doesn't count the thousands of Iraqis who have died fighting that evil regime for the last several decades, nor does it count the many brave Iraqi civilians who have stepped up to lead Iraq into a new future and who were gunned down and murdered for that reason alone.

Just this week, a second member of the Iraqi Governing Council, Ezzedine Salim, was brutally assassinated. The second member of the Iraqi Governing Council, along with that brave woman Akila Hashimi, gave their lives for the cause of Iraqi freedom.

WOLFOWITZ:

We owe it to these noble Americans, to the Iraqi and coalition partners, and indeed to ourselves and to the world to finish the work that they have so nobly advanced.

Today's hearing, like many other hearings in this distinguished body, will be listened to by the entire world. In recent weeks, we have been sending many messages to the world about our shock and horror at the abuse of Iraqi prisoners: messages of regret and remorse, messages of outrage and horror, messages of American commitment to correct our mistakes, to find the truth and to punish the guilty. It is entirely proper that we should do so.

Most of all, we are sending the message that in democracies abuses are not tolerated or covered up but revealed and punished. That is a very important message for the Iraqi people and a lesson, as well, as they seek to build a government that would be the first of this kind in the Arab world.

But it is even more important that the Iraqi people hear an additional message from this great body and from the American people: the message that we will win in Iraq and that we are determined to win and that we understand that winning means giving their country back to them, but also sticking with them until they have a reasonable chance to establish a government that represents them and creates security forces that can protect them.

Mr. Chairman, the enemies of a free Iraq are tough and determined killers and terrorists but they have nothing positive to offer the Iraqi people, only fear and death and destruction. Our weapon is not fear but hope. But it is a hope that is shared by millions of Iraqis.

In the coming months, they and we will be the targets of the killers who hope to block the progress to Iraqi self-government and Iraqi self-defense. They need to know that we will stand with them as they stand up for a free Iraq.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

LUGAR:

Thank you very much, Secretary Wolfowitz.  
Secretary Armitage?

ARMITAGE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members. I'll try to respond -- rather than going through my opening statement which you kindly submitted for the record -- to the individual items that you brought up, Mr. Chairman. I'll do it very briefly.

ARMITAGE:

I want to echo Paul's comments about your kind comments regarding us. It's been a pleasure to serve with you and in front of you, many times -- through the Philippines and other different foreign policy activities. And we're proud again to be here today.

You mentioned that you want to see things move to autonomy as rapidly as possible. Eleven of the Iraqi ministries right now are autonomous, and two more this week will become autonomous.

So that means their ministers make all the decisions, prepare the budgets, are responsible for all the programs, et cetera. And the CPA folks who have been in those

ministries revert to the position of senior adviser. And we'll attrit these away when the ministers themselves tell us that they feel that they no longer need senior advisers.

That's a story, I think, that has been untold: 13 of the 25 ministries this week are autonomous.

You talked about John Negroponte. Thank you very much -- and you other Senate colleagues -- for being so rapid in his -- both the nomination, the hearing and the confirmation.

Now, I understand the desire to have John out in Iraq as soon as possible. But let me explain our reasoning. We want to make sure that there's a clean break between Ambassador Bremer and Ambassador Negroponte.

Ambassador Negroponte is not Mr. Bremer's successor. He is the first U.S. ambassador to a sovereign Iraq, and we're trying to make that point dramatically.

We also want John's expertise as we move forward to another U.N. Security Council resolution, which I'll get to.

But we tried to meet you half way, sir. We chose as the DCM an ambassador from Albania who is a decorated Vietnam combat officer. We chose him for that reason as well as his overall leadership skills because we wanted to send him out early; he's there now. He's arranging the embassy. He's putting together the different political shops, governance shops, et cetera, right now.

We thought it was very helpful to have someone who, frankly, spoke the same language as our military colleagues and one who has walked the walk, as well as talking the talk.

Jim Jeffrey is there now. He's getting the job done for us.

You mentioned funding. We're going to need about \$483 million for the fourth quarter of the fiscal year, that is from July through September.

Right now I can lay my hands on \$477 million. The \$6 million that I don't quite have I plan to get by charging other agencies for their building, et cetera. With the State Department we have these cross-servicing agreements, so that's not a particular problem.

We do estimate, as Marc Grossman told you, that it will be about a little over a \$1 billion to run an embassy for fiscal year '05.

#### ARMITAGE:

And this money, I'm pleased to say, will be coming forward -- requesting at the beginning of the year, in a supplemental -- an administration-wide supplemental, or at least in a State and foreign ops supplemental.

I do want to be clear, however. The president has very kindly requested, and DOD has acceded, to continue to supply to the U.S. Embassy what we call the LOGCAP, the Logistics Civilian Augmentation Program, and security. And this over a year amounts to about \$800 million.

So, when I finally come forward to you with a supplemental, then it will be, I think, somewhat less than a billion dollars to operate the embassy.

We've got three properties that are in the process of renovation. They will be completed by the 15th of June. One is a residence which will serve as a chancery. It's inside the Green Zone. The palace which Ambassador Bremer is in now will be an annex. And Ambassador Negroponte will move into the residence, which Ambassador Bremer now occupies.

A little bit about the UNSCR: We desire to move ahead as rapidly as possible. And we've had informal consultations in New York and most recently with the G-8 foreign ministers here in Washington on Friday.

There's not a piece of paper that we've put forward. We've gleaned and garnered all the ideas of those who are most interested. We do want to await the outcome of the Brahimi consultations. Then we'd have an actual government which we would want to support in the resolution.

But we want to accomplish several other things as well. We want to make it very clear that occupation is over, sovereignty is Iraqis', the assets gained from the sale of oil belong to Iraqis now; those types of things.

We also want to talk about the security arrangements moving forward. We do feel, under Security Council 1511 and other associated memoranda, we have sufficient basis to continue to operate in Iraq. However, we would want, and many of our partners are desirous, of having a further U.N. Security Council resolution which makes this fact well known.

#### ARMITAGE:

So I've tried to respond to several of your items. One, if I may, about funding. I said I've got about \$477 million. \$196 million of that will come from the OMB 4th quarter apportionment, \$97 million of it comes from '03 and '04 monies which have already been appropriated, and the \$184 million remaining would be out of the so-called 1 percent funds which, following the law, the Iraq Reconstruction and Redevelopment Fund, up to 1 percent of the money was allowed to be used for administrative costs. So I think we've got a pretty good handle on that and I hope you'll agree with me by the end of the hearing.

So I'll stop there, sir, and move forward to the questions.

#### LUGAR:

Thank you very much, Secretary Armitage.

We'll try to have a 10-minute question round. At this point we have good attendance, and I'll proceed with the questions. I appreciate your response to some that I have raised in the opening statements.

I'm going to ask that you respond, both of you, to questions that will be submitted for the record. We have gotten into a detailed list of questions regarding the \$18.4 billion, and these are too voluminous for a 10-minute question-and-answer period. But it is important that you have an opportunity to detail, really, what is being done with the \$18.4 billion or what will be done, and what problems have occurred in terms of our bidding, contracting and so forth.

I want to ask, in a more general sense -- Ambassador Brahimi will soon name Iraqi leaders. What is our plan, or what should be our plan, for Mr. Jeffrey, if he is on board in Baghdad, or for General Abizaid, for General Sanchez, to visit with these people?

My thought, as I've expressed in other hearings, is that it would be very helpful to have some rehearsal off-stage before the curtain opens on the 1st of July specifically about these issues, of putting an Iraqi face on both governance and security, and what that means.

What I suspect it may mean in terms of many Iraqis is that they will want to take more responsibility. And we may wish that that was the case.

Clearly, in Fallujah we have had a step forward that was very substantial, in both the vetting of the general and the troops. And Mr. Bremer has pointed out this should not serve as a model of how things may go elsewhere, but it certainly is interesting as an instructive, pragmatic example currently in the security area.

In the governance area, it's never been quite clear what sovereignty meant. And, as you pointed out, Secretary Armitage, 11 of the 25 ministries -- as I understand that there are -- are presently passed over and they're moving but, Mr. Bremer points out, probably won't get to the end of the 25 list before June 30.

LUGAR:

Can either of you describe in the security area or in the governance area how these new leaders are coming together so that there is, at least, if not a smooth transition, some *modus vivendi* for people to talk as opposed to a public row as to who does what and push back by the Iraqis?

Would you have a go at this to begin with?

ARMITAGE:

Be glad to, Mr. Chairman.

First of all, what Mr. Brahimi or Ambassador Brahimi is doing is finally coming up with a list, and it will be winnowed down to 30 names. And it is his suggestions for a president, two vice presidents, a prime minister and 26 ministries because it'll include the ministry of defense, as well.

And he is going around the country. He was in Irbil two days ago, with the late Ezzedine Salim, as a matter of fact, talking with Iraqis about various lists of names and winnowing them down.

We've seen some of them. We haven't seen them all. I don't think it does any good to talk about them publicly because what matters is not so much what I think or Paul thinks, it's what Iraqis think about those names.

Once they are named -- and we hope to have that done by the end of the month of May, perhaps the first week of June. And then the TAL annex, which we have spoken about in the past, will be the -- the pen is held by Mr. Pachachi, and he and his colleagues will write the TAL annex, which will document the responsibilities of the Iraqi interim government.

I don't expect that document to be extraordinarily voluminous because as this is not an elected government. Mr. Brahimi and Ayatollah Sistani and others have spoken about the need to run the day-to-day business of government and not to be involved in a long-term negotiations between the long-term agreements internationally or et cetera.

So I would see that we have a month or so roughly to work with the Iraqi interim government to make it very clear what sovereignty means. And it's not limited. They are sovereign. And this will be encompassed or spoken to in the U.N. Security Council resolution.

LUGAR:

Secretary Wolfowitz?



WOLFOWITZ:

I don't have a lot to add to that; agree with all of it.

We view moving forward in security area as definitely something that's going to be a partnership. So as soon as we know who our counterparts are, I think the kind of dialogue that you describe is something that should take place, and hopefully before the actual date that the government takes over.

You correctly said Iraqis look forward to taking more responsibility. I think you suggested we look forward to them taking more responsibility. That's part of this whole process.

One of the limitations, of course, is that this will not be an elected government. There will be an elected government at the end of this year. And I think Iraqis probably want this government to take more responsibility, but not too much.

To be helpful, Mr. Chairman, we have an easel chart that lists some of the specific powers and responsibilities that would flow to this interim government, according, at least, to the Transitional Administrative Law, and I think it bears out what Rich Armitage said: They are very extensive administrative responsibilities, but the most important task they have is to help organize and run elections for an elected transitional government at the end of this year.

LUGAR:

On the point of elections, and this may once again have to be a pragmatic set of decisions, but there would be some virtue, I would think, in having elections for somebody even prior to December. By that I mean, it might be persons that are going to a constitutional assembly, it might be persons with some regional powers.

But it appears to me at this point the legitimizing of Iraqis through people voting for them, have some votes on the board here, may be very important, despite the formality that we've been talking about of December and January and then the following December and what have you, so that, in fact, there is the sense of sharing. If there are insurgents, if there are terrorists who don't like the situation, they're going to be shooting at Iraqis, as well as Americans. There are going to be some Iraqi people up front, with a supporting cast of Americans, in the security and in the governance situations, as opposed to the other way around.

LUGAR:

And it seems to me without knowing precisely who the new leaders are going to be, what kind of responsibilities they have it be. We contemplated how we could have such a thing, whether you use the U.N. food rolls or whatever happens to be there -- maybe more rough and ready than the fastidious work that we would like to see later on. But have either of you thought about that? And what comment do you have?

ARMITAGE:

Mr. Chairman, U.N. representative for electoral process Karina Pirelli has been in Iraq since April. And she has been trying to set the atmosphere for these elections. And the first task that she has undertaken is, again, garnering nominations from Iraqis themselves

for the post of what we call federal election commission or they call Iraqi election commission -- seven of them. And there will eventually be seven.

She's winnowing down those names. They will be chosen by an international group of experts in electoral law. There will also be three director generals for a total of 10 people.

This is a first step in getting to where you want to be and where we all want to be late December-early January '04-'05. She has noted, as you have noted, that there's something contradictory about the ballot and the bullet.

But she's also noted that the spirit that she sees among the Iraqi people -- that when they see that they actually are going to have a buy-in, and if that means a vote, a say that their desire for this becomes much greater than the ability of enemies to defeat them. And she's noted past U.N. experiences in Timor and other places where elections took place in an atmosphere of some violence.

There are many municipal elections and neighborhood council elections which are being held with stunning regularity. And I've got the number in this book and I can't memorize the whole book. I think it's about 60,000 Iraqis hold some sort of elected position, some sort of position or another, not just in the Kurdish area where you'd expect it but throughout Iraq.

And it's not a position that comes without some danger. I mean, some of them have been assassinated because they look like they might be leaders who could stand on a larger stage.

So some of what you suggest is ongoing.

LUGAR:

Let me intrude before my time is up. To what extent will the law that has been promulgated by the governing council now -- the one that suggests 25 percent participation by Iraqi women as a minimum -- or the freedom of speech and the freedom of religion clauses, other things that are very important, we hope, to Iraqis, very important to us -- what's going to happen to that?

LUGAR:

Is this the law as we proceed?

ARMITAGE:

The so-called TAL, the Transitional Administrative Law, will be the law of the land, and it embodies a stunning array of rights never before held by the Iraqis, and it will last and cannot be amended except by a transitional government, which would be in place with the election of a 275-person national assembly in January. They have the ability to amend laws.

I'm not going to say that it's perfect and I can guarantee you that women's rights and religious rights will be respected as we'd want them, but we faced this in Afghanistan, we faced it earlier this year and we prevailed. And I believe we prevailed, not because of the wisdom and the strength of our arguments, but because Iraqis hold their religion very dear, but they also hold the idea of secular government to be something very worthy.

So I have some optimism we'll prevail.

WOLFOWITZ:

Mr. Chairman, if I might emphasize a point you made at the end of your question, that this is a key part of winning the military battle as well. And, in fact, page seven of my statement, I've got this quote from that notorious letter from that notorious terrorist Mr. Zarqawi where he says, "The problem is you end up having an army and police connected to the people. How can we kill their cousins and sons after the Americans start withdrawing? This is the democracy we will have no pretext in."

And also he refers to that as suffocation. It's winning for us; it's losing for them.

And if I might add, too, the points Secretary Armitage made about elections, there was a very interesting report recently in the Guardian of London that in some, I believe, it was 15 local elections in southern Iraq, in most of those the Islamists lost the election, and I think that tells you something also about what Rich said; that these are very religious people, but that doesn't mean they want a religious tyranny imposed on them.

LUGAR:

Good point.  
Senator Feingold?

FEINGOLD:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

FEINGOLD:

Let me first thank all of you and especially Secretary Armitage and Secretary Wolfowitz for being before us today.

It has always been important for you to appear before this committee as often as possible, but let me suggest that -- I hope this is the beginning of a pattern.

The American people, as you know, are extremely worried and concerned about what is happening in Iraq. And I think I can honestly say it goes all the way across the political spectrum.

There has never been a time when we need your answers and your guidance more, and I'm hoping this is the beginning of a very regular opportunity to have contact with you and ask these kinds of questions.

Secretary Wolfowitz, I want to ask you again how long we can reasonably anticipate needing a substantial troop presence in Iraq. I know that you can't give me an exact time frame; we've been through this before. But since our forces on the ground, training Iraqi security forces, and therefore we are in an excellent position to judge their capacities and to estimate how long it will be before they can provide for their own security, I would think you would be able to give me at least a reasonable estimate.

We've seen that slap-dash efforts to train and deploy Iraqi security forces can lead to dangerous failures and instability. So I guess what I want to know is, how long will it take to properly train Iraqis, such that they'll be able to provide for their own country's security, and for how long will security be primarily the responsibility of U.S. forces?

WOLFOWITZ:

Senator, you know, because you said in your question, the course of war is simply not something one can determine. We can say, I think, with reasonable confidence that we

have a plan to train and equip and organize very substantial Iraqi security forces by the end of this year.

We finally have the various obstacles to funding. I think, unblocked. I hope that's true. There have been some critical delays that have done harm.

We have unity of command for doing this. All the five Iraqi security forces will be -- the training and equipping and organizing of them will be the responsibility of a single lieutenant general, who happens to be the general who commanded for a year up in Mosul in northern Iraq, where the Iraqi security forces in fact have performed impressively in the fighting in the last month.

So I think we're on a course to substantial Iraqi security forces by the end of this year. But I can't tell you how strong the enemy will be. I can't predict exactly how things will go. But our goal is to put responsibility in their hands as quickly as we can and not too rapidly, to create problems.

FEINGOLD:

So if I were to look at a memo where you're planning your goals and the goal was stated as a reasonable goal that by the end of this year that the United States will no longer be primarily responsible for the security, is that a realistic goal?

WOLFOWITZ:

Senator, that's more than what I just said. What I said is there will be substantial capable Iraqi security forces by the end of this year, we believe. That's our plan.

How much they will still need help from the United States, I can't predict. We want it to be as little as possible.

I'll give you, sort of, real examples. In some of the fighting in recent weeks, Iraqi security forces have performed well, have been able to do things like going into mosques to seize weapons supplies. That's something that we would always prefer be done by Iraqis and not by Americans.

In the fighting I referred to up on Mosul, where the enemy attacked the government house, the governor, who by the way is a Sunni Arab, stayed there through the night through the fighting. The police initially left because they were out-gunned. The Iraqi Civil Defense Corps stayed and fought -- fought off the enemy. The police came back. Through all of it, they were in touch with General Ham, who had command of the American forces there. And I'm quite sure that the knowledge that General Ham was there to back them up if needed probably emboldened them and gave them courage. And that's the kind of arrangement we need to have.

We're in this to win, as I think you agree, and winning means having the Iraqis take as much responsibility as they possibly can but also not putting them so far out in front that they fail.

FEINGOLD:

Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Let me ask you a question about the transition. Let me start with Secretary Armitage.

When the CPA ceases to exist, what authority will take over the implementation of the \$20 billion reconstruction program that has been financed by the U.S. taxpayers? Who's going to be in charge of that?

And I'd like to also here Secretary Wolfowitz's feelings on this.

ARMITAGE:

Appropriated U.S. money, sir, the chief of mission, John Negroponte, will have the responsibility for it. For Iraqi money, which will be theirs and they'll have responsibility and they can contract with whomever they like.

FEINGOLD:

So the ambassador will be in charge of the entire \$20 billion?

ARMITAGE:

Correct.

FEINGOLD:

Secretary Wolfowitz, do you concur with that?

WOLFOWITZ:

I do.

I'd point out that Iraqi funds are very substantial.

FEINGOLD:

So the State Department will now have authority over the reconstruction funds? That's correct, isn't it?

ARMITAGE:

That's correct.

FEINGOLD:

Mr. Armitage, when do we expect to see a new Security Council resolution on Iraq and what will be, in your view, the substance of the resolution?

ARMITAGE:

We and our friends on the Security Council are desirous of moving forward shortly after we find the shape and the names of the new Iraqi government. We think it would be very important to have as one of the elements of the U.N. Security Council resolution a support for that IIG.

ARMITAGE:

Other elements which may very well find themselves in this will be, as I've said before: end of occupation, make a declaration of sovereignty for Iraq, make it clear that Iraqi assets -- particularly oil assets -- belong to Iraqis and would be managed by them, discuss security -- though we don't feel we need more, if you'll allow be to use the term, "international cover." we think it's a good thing and it would be very helpful for many of the other Security Council members to have a specific reference to security arrangements in Iraq during the time of interim Iraqi government.

Those are some of the things. There might be other elements. Everyone's got different ideas, but I'm pleased to say, in the consultations informally in New York, and more recently Secretary Powell had with the G-8, it was a pretty good comity of views. So I find everybody's within a certain box. And I think we'll be able to do this pretty well.

FEINGOLD:

Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Follow up to Secretary Wolfowitz: There are reports that our troop strength in Iraq will remain at about 135,000 troops until the end of 2005. Is that report inaccurate?

WOLFOWITZ:

We don't know what it'll be. We've had changes, as you know, month by month. We have several different plans to be able to deal with the different levels that might be required. Our current level is higher than we had planned for this time this year. I have no idea what it'll -- I mean, I clearly don't know...

FEINGOLD:

So it could well be accurate, then?

WOLFOWITZ:

It could be. It could be more, it could be less, Senator.

FEINGOLD:

Thank you.

Secretary Armitage, I've served on the, as you know, on this committee and on the Subcommittee on African Affairs for almost 12 years. One name that keeps coming up and is very familiar is the name of Victor Bout, because he appears at the center of an illicit arms trafficking network that has fuelled devastating conflicts in Angola, Sierra Leone, Liberia and elsewhere.

Is Victor Bout or any firm associated with Victor Bout providing air freight services for coalition forces in Iraq, as the Financial Times alleged in an article published yesterday?

Has the United States opposed including Bout on an asset-freeze list being compiled by the U.N., which targets individuals who are involved with the criminal regime of former Liberian President Charles Taylor? And if so, why?

ARMITAGE:

As you, I have seen the name Victor Bout. I believe he's a Ukrainian arms merchant, or merchant of death. I certainly hope what you suggest is not true. And as far as I'm concerned, he ought to be on any asset-freeze list and anything else you can do to him.

FEINGOLD:

So would you follow up with me on any awareness of that that might be available to the State Department?

ARMITAGE:

**DODDOA-010599**

Of course.

FEINGOLD:

Secretary Wolfowitz, do you know anything about the question I just asked with regard to Mr. Bout? Has he been involved with providing air freight services for coalition forces in Iraq?

WOLFOWITZ:

I don't know more than what you and Secretary Armitage know, but I share your concern about it and I will work with Secretary Armitage to look into it to try to fix the problem if there is one.

FEINGOLD:

Thank you.

Secretary Wolfowitz, in the lead up to the war on Iraq, I repeatedly raised questions which I felt were never satisfactorily answered about what exactly the plan was for dealing with weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. And given the number of troops we had on the ground, when Baghdad fell and the wide-scale looting that ensued, I remained uncertain that a viable plan for securing this material ever existed.

Mainly, concerns about WMD in Iraq have fallen out of favor in the administration's remarks about Iraq because at least as far as we can tell we've not found what was advertised. But yesterday, as you know, we learned that an artillery round containing sarin gas was employed as an IED near Baghdad International Airport.

I'm wondering what this means to you in terms of what we did and what plans we had for securing any weapons of mass destruction as we entered Iraq and entered Baghdad.

WOLFOWITZ:

Well in fact, as I think I know we briefed the Armed Services Committee in detail, and we had very extensive plans that transformed into what was called the Iraq Survey Group to find the weapons of mass destruction, to locate them, to make sure to the best of our ability they didn't leak out elsewhere.

And when David Kay stepped down, one of the reasons why we felt it was very important to continue the work of the Iraq Survey Group is not only to find out what may have happened to those things but also to secure them if they're around.

And I would note also, according to Stewart Cohen, at least, who was the national intelligence officer who prepared the NIE, that some 2,000 Iraqi officers were deliberately looting files and hard drives and so forth during the fall of Baghdad. So there was some pretty active work on their side apparently at trying to destroy at least records.

I don't know any more than what you've read in the newspapers about this device that has been discovered. It is obviously something that we're very concerned about. We're going to try to find out about it as much as we can.

FEINGOLD:

Mr. Chairman, I'm sure my time's up. Let me just conclude by saying, a number of us started in late July and early August of 2002 to raise these very questions, to ask what

was the plan with regard to a possible negative reaction from the Iraqi people, and also specifically what was the plan with regard to securing any weapons of mass destruction.

I, frankly, feel we were never given real answers to that, and I have a feeling that it's because there wasn't a serious plan, and I think at this point we're paying a serious price for it.

But I do thank the witnesses for their answers.

WOLFOWITZ:

Senator, there was a serious plan. I'd be happy to give you for the record the full table of organization, the number of people that were planned to do it. A lot of thought went into it. It may not have been perfect, but there was a lot of work done on it.

FEINGOLD:

I wish that we had been told about these plans, because whenever we made an effort to ask about it, we were just told to trust you, and we didn't get the assurance that we needed. But I would like to receive those materials.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

LUGAR:

Thank you very much, Senator Feingold.  
Senator Hagel?

HAGEL:

Mr. Chairman, thank you.  
Gentlemen, welcome.

Secretary Armitage, going back to the question Senator Feingold asked regarding a new U.N. resolution, how necessary is a new U.N. resolution as we move toward June 30th?

ARMITAGE:

It's very desirable; it's not exactly necessary, except in political terms. I think politically this will find great favor with our major Security Council partners, both the P-5 and the elected 10, and I think it makes a rather dramatic point to the Iraqi people, sir.

HAGEL:

Well, politically speaking, as we all know, that's the essence of the effort here. If we lose the Iraqi people, we've lost.

ARMITAGE:

Exactly.

HAGEL:

So I would hope that there is serious work being done now on working with our allies on getting a new U.N. resolution. You can assure this committee that's being done?

ARMITAGE:

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**DODDOA-010601**



I assure the committee. I assure you personally. It is being done, and it is being done almost on a daily basis.

HAGEL:

Thank you.

What additional resources could we expect from our partners, those not now participating in the effort in Iraq, if in fact we were able to get a new U.N. resolution? Resources meaning troops, meaning money, meaning training. Are we anticipating that?

ARMITAGE:

Let me parse it if I may, Senator.

We would be desirous of getting greater NATO involvement, although 17 of the 26 NATO countries are on the ground with us in NATO. There aren't large numbers of ground forces in NATO: Only the French have large ground forces, and I think it's very unlikely that they may be involved.

One possible involvement for them on the ground might be if the U.N., or in the U.N. Security Council resolution, there's a call to provide forces to protect the U.N. as they go about their business of elections, et cetera. And that might be something that might find some favor.

We would be desirous of engaging NATO in greater talks, particularly about providing headquarters, perhaps where the Polish division has been, something of that nature. But I think, in candor, it's a little premature.

A new U.N. Security Council resolution could possibly encourage some of the South Asian nations to step up a little more, and that would certainly be a target of opportunity.

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HAGEL:

What about Middle Eastern countries?

ARMITAGE:

I think it's unlikely. We've had discussions recently with King Abdullah, and I went around through the Gulf. We didn't specifically ask for forces, but there's a lot of neuralgia that exists in Iraq revolving around the neighbors. I think it might be a little premature.

HAGEL:

Thank you.

WOLFOVITZ:

Senator, I might add that we've been asking NATO for help, actually going back to December 2002. I did when I did in Brussels, and specifically said even those countries that may not support the war could contribute afterwards to reconstruction.

But, as Secretary Armitage said, their capacity is, unfortunately, declined substantially over the last 10 years. And even in Afghanistan, where NATO has an important role and has made a lot of commitments, they're having some trouble meeting some of their commitments, even in Afghanistan.

DODDOA-010602

HAGEL:

Thank you.

Let me take that point, Mr. Secretary, and ask about the reports, which I understand are accurate, that we will be moving 3,600 American troops from Korea into a brigade, the 2nd Division, into Iraq. Was that planned?

WOLFOWITZ:

Let me put it this way. We had been discussing for some time with our Asian colleagues, with the Congress, the whole restructuring of the U.S. global footprint.

We have already made some adjustments to our posture in Korea, in both directions. We have moved troops off of the DMZ, where frankly, they were performing nothing except, kind of, a useless, and indeed I would say counterproductive, trip-wire function.

We are investing a great deal in our capability to reinforce Korea to the tune of, I believe the number is over \$10 billion of various force improvements. But it was concluded over a year ago, that it was long overdue to reduce the strain on our Army that comes from having these continuous one-year unaccompanied tours in Korea.

So we had planned on some reductions. We need an extra brigade in Iraq, and in fact the brigade in Korea is ideally suited for that.

HAGEL:

My understanding is that this will mean that for this brigade moving to Iraq from Korea is an additional 12-month commitment, in addition to the unaccompanied 12-month commitment they have just finished. Is that right?

WOLFOWITZ:

Do you know, General Sharp?

SHARP:

It will be a 12-month commitment, sir. As you know, we rotate troops into Korea on a continuous basis. So about half of them will have been in Korea already six months. So some of the tours will be short -- will be 12 months, others will go up to a maximum of 23 months.

WOLFOWITZ:

Thank you.

HAGEL:

So this was discussed with the Congress, this possibility of moving a combat brigade from Korea into Iraq. Isn't that what you just said, Mr. Secretary?

WOLFOWITZ:

With the leadership of the committees, yes.

HAGEL:

So Senator Warner, Senator Levin were consulted on this and they knew about it.

WOLFOWITZ:

Either they or their staffs were, yes.

HAGEL:

They or their staffs knew about it?

WOLFOWITZ:

I had been told that, yes, sir. And I consulted with several senators.

HAGEL:

Thank you.

Secretary Wolfowitz, how will prisoners, detainees, be handled after the transition of government in Iraq?

ARMITAGE:

May I...

HAGEL:

Secretary Armitage?

ARMITAGE:

Right now, two classes.

ARMITAGE:

There are POWs; there are criminals.

Criminals are handled right now by Iraqis. The management, as I understand it, of the military prisons are both the U.S. military working with the ministry of justice. And after the turnover, it is my understanding that we want as rapidly as possible to put those into the hands of Iraqis.

HAGEL:

"As rapidly as possible," do we have any idea what that means?

ARMITAGE:

I don't have that, sir.

HAGEL:

Does anybody?

WOLFOWITZ:

I don't.

HAGEL:

It's a fairly significant issue, as we all know. It's been a little attention brought to this issue the last two weeks. I would have thought that this government would put some time into this, especially what we've just been through the last two weeks.

Can someone get back to the committee with some plan?

WOLFOWITZ:

We absolutely will. I agree with you on the importance of it, Senator.

HAGEL:

Thank you.

Secretary Wolfowitz, Secretary Armitage, you know about the latest Washington Post stories regarding polls.

Now, I don't subscribe completely to polls, but just for everyone's quick review here, last week, The Washington Post reported on a recent poll conducted by the CPA: 80 percent of Iraqis lacked confidence in the CPA, 82 percent disapproved of the United States and allied militaries in Iraq. Furthermore, 45 percent of those polled in Baghdad, 67 percent polled in Basra said they backed Muqtada Sadr. This was before the prison abuse issue. Then there was a subsequent poll taken as well.

How concerned are you with these numbers? Do you believe these numbers? Mr. Secretary?

WOLFOWITZ:

I think we are concerned about them, and in fact, the reason why we have wanted to move toward Iraqi self-government is so that Iraqis feel that it's their people who are running their country, it's their security forces that are dealing with their country.

As you say, it's hard to know the reliability of polling data, especially in a country where people are, to put it mildly, not used to telling the truth to anyone. Although it is striking how some of these polls do seem to show important things. One of them is a poll that I've seen that shows very rapidly declining approval of our forces, but pretty steady confidence in Iraqi security forces.

I think it says that we're on the right track in moving as rapidly as we can to Iraqi self-government and Iraqi self-defense. We don't have an infinite amount of time however.

HAGEL:

Thank you.

Secretary Armitage?

ARMITAGE:

As Paul, very concerned about it.

ARMITAGE:

I would note, though, usually if you look at the question a little more closely and see how we'd like you out of here but not now, our forces who are operating around Najaf as they've, anaconda-like, closed in a bit on Muqtada al-Sadr, have found the people coming out thanking them for these activities.

So we're very concerned. But I think it's a more complicated picture than that poll would represent.

HAGEL:

Let me ask you both this: Do you believe a rising sense of nationalism in Iraq, if that's happening, is a result mainly of a target of the United States or an anti-American sense as much as anything else that may be occurring?

ARMITAGE:

My understanding of Iraq historically is they've always had a good sense of their self -- themselves -- and their place in the region, in the world at one time as the center for science and alphabets and things of that nature. So I don't think it's a direct result of this.

The reputation of being Arab...

(CROSSTALK)

HAGEL:

... Americanism. You don't think it's an anti- Americanism?

ARMITAGE:

No, I don't. I think it's the reputation in the Arab world has been of a very scratchy, tough people historically.

HAGEL:

Thank you.

Secretary Wolfowitz?

WOLFOWITZ:

I would agree with that, and I think overwhelming numbers of them are nonetheless -- whatever their feelings about our staying in Iraq -- grateful that we helped them to remove a terrible dictator.

HAGEL:

Let me ask a question about sovereignty which you have both noted -- a couple of pieces.

One, what is the role -- what will be the role -- of the Department of Defense come July 1st?

And the second part of that is: What in fact, and I see your charts here, but what in fact is the power of this new government yet to be determined, undefined, we don't know who they are, as to security?

I see in the Washington Post this morning the good friend of the Defense Department, Ahmed Chalabi, who is a Iraqi Governing Council member, says Iraqi government must have exclusive and complete control over the army and all security services of Iraq come July 1st.

So if you would both handle each of those parts.

Secretary Armitage? Thank you.

ARMITAGE:

Yes, Senator, thank you.

Iraqi forces will work for an Iraqi general who -- in the army, the military -- who will work for the ministry of defense. They will work in partnership -- partnership -- with coalition forces under, in the unity of command theory, a U.S. general.

The real question that you're asking is: Can they opt out of an operation if they don't want to or something of that nature? And the answer to that has to be yes. But if I may, this is not very unusual to us.

If you can think back to a fellow you all know by the name of Wes Clark; he in Kosovo when told the Russians were heading for the Kosovo airport, he told his British counterpart who worked for him to go stop them. The British said, "No, I think I'll check with headquarters for guidance on that issue." And he didn't do it.

So there will be a lot of management -- sort of alliance, coalition, partnership management as we go forward. But they are sovereign and they will be in charge of their forces.

HAGEL:

Thank you.

Secretary Wolfowitz?

WOLFOWITZ:

I agree exactly with what Rich just said.

HAGEL:

OK, well that makes it easy. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman?

LUGAR:

Thank you very much, Senator Hagel.

We welcome now the distinguished ranking member of the committee and are grateful that he has surmounted the obstacles presented to him this morning.

BIDEN:

This is a hearing on funding for Amtrak, isn't it?

(LAUGHTER)

All the trains out of New York, Mr. Chairman, today, were exceedingly late and I do apologize because this is a very important hearing and I appreciate you calling it and our witnesses being here.

May I have permission to make my opening statement then save my questions until the next round so I do not...

LUGAR:

Please proceed.

BIDEN:

... you know, use my time for a statement at this point?

And I apologize, gentlemen, for not hearing your statements -- you as well, General.

BIDEN:

From my point of view, notwithstanding the meeting last week with the president, which I truly appreciated, I don't think things are going all that well in Iraq notwithstanding that our people have performed miracles, opening schools and hospitals and restoring some oil production and setting up local councils.

But these successes, I think, have been dwarfed by two towering deficits that the administration created: a security deficit and a legitimacy deficit.

And the result, I think we're losing support, as Senator Hagel suggested, although I'm not associating him with my remarks -- I don't want to get him in trouble. But we're losing the support of the Iraqi people.

And what I hope will -- you probably already started, but when I get around to questioning -- have an opportunity -- I'd like to know what our strategy is to erase those deficits, the deficit in security and legitimacy because I think both are needed to be erased in order to build a successful plan. The success, in my judgment, make sure -- and this is what I told the president -- in my judgment would be a stable Iraq, secure within its borders with a representative government that doesn't threaten its neighbors or threaten us.

I'm convinced that we can defeat the insurgent forces. But while military superiority is essential, I don't think -- quite frankly, I don't think you all do either -- it's enough. We also need an effective political strategy.

And based on a very brief briefing I got from my staff and the opening statements, although I'm sure they were necessarily truncated, my chief concern is I'm not sure we have one, and secondly -- my second concern is we appear to have lost the Iraqi people.

As Senator Hagel said, 82 percent of the Iraqi people oppose our presence, although some pockets, they very much want us to stay. They're in a conundrum as the president said in the different context. He could understand why they chafed at occupation. They know they have to have these forces in order to prevent a civil war from occurring, but they don't like the forces being there.

And only 23 percent support the Iraqi Governing Council. At the same time, as Senator Hagel pointed out, Sadr gets alarmingly high marks at least in two major cities.

And these numbers suggest that -- I would suggest these numbers would be worse if this poll had been taken after the debacle at the prison.

BIDEN:

So my question is how do we reverse this downward dynamic?

I think we have to go back to first principles. First is, and I'm sure we agree, we can't want freedom for the Iraqi people more than the Iraqi people want it. And that's what the silent majority seeks in Iraq, I believe: freedom. I believe the polls all show, as well, that they neither want an Iranian-style theocracy, nor do they want another strongman.

But after being brutalized for three decades, they've learned to keep their heads down -- that middle, that 65 to 80 percent of the people that's that high.

It seems to me we have to create the conditions and encourage them to raise their heads. The Iraqi people must have more security and more security in their daily lives.

And they must believe that there's a legitimate plan to return sovereignty to them and that it makes sense.

Second, it seems to me, we have to square the circle between their need for significant international support for years to come, both political, economic and security, and their growing frustration with U.S. occupation or any occupation for that matter.

And I think that requires investing our European and Arab allies more heavily in Iraq today and working with them to prepare Iraqis to take back their country tomorrow.

As it stands, the Iraqis are going to wake up on July 1st of the so-called transfer -- and I'm not belittling that, this transfer of some form of some sovereignty -- to a group of people who they don't know.

There's going to be no single national figure. There's going to be no George Washington. There is no Madison. There is no Benjamin Franklin that's part of this. I don't mean in terms of their thinking, even in terms of their recognition.

And so, they're going to wake up and the bulk of the Iraqi people are not going to know the bulk of the people in this new government, although I believe it will be viewed regionally as more legitimate.

They're going to see 140,000 troops, Americans with American patches on their shoulders still patrolling the streets, and a new super ambassador who they're going to wonder, I suspect, is going to be the one pulling the strings, and a cast, as I said, of unelected and relatively unknown political figures.

That's not in any way to denigrate the capacity or the legitimacy of those who will be chosen.

And it seems to me we have to change that dynamic. And in order to do that, the president has to articulate a single overarching goal that everybody can kind of understand.

And I think this presents a significant opportunity for the president to state a goal that everyone can sort of rally around, and a rationale.

BIDEN:

And the goal should be that our job, the international community's job, is to hold successful elections in November of 2005. We want a civil election and not a civil war in December of 2005.

And I believe these elections should be the rallying point within Iraq, and quite frankly outside of Iraq, to build security and legitimacy. I think it's a rationale for European leaders who know they have a great stake in success or failure in Iraq to be able to justify to their people why they're there, with an implied end date to it: not a literal end date, an implied end date.

I believe it provides a rationale as well for Arab leaders to join in the effort.

I also believe that it provides a rationale for the interim Iraqi government to be able to speak to, to have interlocutors, to actually cooperate with this new military force, this old military force hopefully with a new face.

Because I asked the president in our meeting, I said, "Mr. President, we're all just plain old politicians. Imagine if you're about to be appointed to an interim government and you want to be a permanent, or at least an elected official running that country 13 months from now, or 16 months from now, and 82 percent of the people say, 'I hate the outfit that you're dealing with.' What are you going to do?"



I'm just a plain old politician, Mr. Secretary. You ain't going to talk to him. You're not going to be seen as cooperating with them. It will guarantee your defeat.

Now, this is the only thing I probably do know more than all you guys, just plain old politics.

And so, we have to provide them a rationale. Why are they going to be cooperating with, no matter what the face is, essentially a U.S.-led -- not essentially, a U.S.-led and dominant U.S. presence?

And I think this election process as a rationale for our staying cannot be repeated enough in my view.

And I also think it would be a strategy that the American people could understand and could understand that there's an end date, not a definite date, not a date to say, "We're out of here by such and such." but there is a strategy that is able to be articulated that the American people are smart -- and they are -- can understand.

Because we are also -- we issued a report here after the report done by the former controller by the Defense Department coming back last year saying the window of opportunity is closing in Iraq, meaning the Iraqi people. We wrote a report, the three of us, that basically said the window of opportunity in America is closing -- in America is closing.

And, fellows, we're all about the same generation. Once the folks decide this ain't going to work, I don't care how brilliant any of us are, I don't care how wonderful any plan we have is, it ain't going to work without the informed consent of the American people.

And so I think the president has an opportunity, and only the president can lead in this regard. And I would respectfully suggest the first order of business should be to form a contact group that would give those whose help we are seeking a seat at the table on the political decision. This includes the major powers in Europe. It includes the Security Council, not as a Security Council. And it includes our Arab allies who have a great deal to lose, and the incoming Iraqi government.

And I respectfully suggest that the president suggest publicly that he should literally call a summit of those folks. Get in the damn plane. Go to Europe. Pick a venue.

BIDEN:

Meet -- and meet with the G-8 in a little bit. Meet. Meet. Find out what's the deal, how do we get them involved?

Secondly, the enormous logistical security requirements for elections are going to require a surge of security forces. It required that in Bosnia. It required that in Kosovo. It even, in a sense, required that in Afghanistan; and we're not quite doing it the same way, but it required it.

And the president should seek, I believe, agreement for NATO to take over multinational security forces under U.S. command. I know, fellows, you know, we go back a long way, Mr. Secretary, about 30 years -- you a staffer and me essentially a staffer. A 29-year old United States senator is equivalent of being a staffer, only staffers know more, in this days. And notice I said "those days."

But the point is we know there's never been a single serious plan NATO has initiated that we haven't carried over to Brussels. Never. Never. So as that old song goes, "What's the plan, Stan?" We ought to show up.

Now I have met with a lot of your former colleagues. I've met with a total now of seven five-stars -- four-stars I should say -- who -- and I meet with them regularly in conferences, every single one of them reflecting various points of view in the military believe if the president says, "This is the deal I want," sits down, hammers it out at the NAC, authorizes you to hammer it out at the NAC, we can get a NATO-led mission. It's only going to be 3,000, maybe 7,000 forces over the next several months, but a NATO-led mission. That's an important symbolic and substantive change, in my view.

And so I believe that the president should ensure this new U.N. resolution you all talked about authorizes a NATO-led security force, supports the Brahimi plan for a caretaker government and elections, endorses a senior rep to be Iraq's primary international primary referee in what is going to be serious disputes between July 1 and January -- the end of January of '05 when these elections are -- when we're supposed to get to the next stage.

And I really believe, notwithstanding the elections -- it will make it harder now the election in India, but I believe if this were to occur we might find participation for countries such as Pakistan, Morocco, India -- and maybe even India, though I don't know now in terms of what's recently happened.

And once named, the incoming government should be invited to participate in drafting this resolution, in my humble opinion.

BIDEN:

Iraq should see its members, not new ambassadors -- and I have great respect, don't anybody in the press translate this as a knock on Negroponte; it's not -- but I don't want to see Negroponte's face, I don't want to see General Kimmitt -- who's a great American -- I don't want to see their face ever again on Iraqi television. Let's see Iraqis faces speaking the language without an accent on television.

And I think we have to spare no effort to help the Iraqis feel an effective security force.

I notice you said, Secretary Wolfowitz, that the Iraqi forces are -- they're gaining some confidence. I hope we take advantage of reminding, even though it's water under the bridge since then, but I don't know why we don't have a massive effort to train Iraqis using the offers that were originally offered by the French and the Germans and others, give them a way to buy in. American-trained -- we're already doing it in Jordan -- American-trained -- Arab forces training the Iraqis because I think you're right, this is an essential, overwhelming need.

And I think we have to spare, as I said, no effort to help the Iraqis field this force. And we should be inviting European and American-trained Arab officers to participate in that training beyond what we've done.

And last thing and I'll end. The president, I think, also has to make a gesture as dramatic and consequential as the symbolic damage done when in fact the prison scandal broke.

And I believe, Mr. Chairman, that I think we should be -- and I know you've heard me say this before -- I believe the president should find and go to both these secretaries and say, "Find me the remaining 100 or 200 most qualified men and women we have in the government that have any background in quasi-military police work." Go vet every one of the 8,000 prisoners. Release every damn one that's not a security risk if there's a doubt.

BIDEN:

Be seen to be releasing them. Sit down with the interim government. Ask them what plan for permission -- because we want to ask their permission -- to bulldoze down that damn prison. Bulldoze it to the ground. That will cause us big problems finding room for 2,000 people somewhere.

And ask them, what do they want for this symbol of tyranny? Do they want a new institution of their choice on that spot? The biggest school, a university, a hospital, what do they want? I think our gestures have to be as grand as the damage done.

And I think we should state clearly that we're willing to bring American forces home, once Iraqis and you have (ph) can handle their own security and there's a legitimate government.

So, folks, despite the fact I am very, very concerned about the state of affairs, I still think, quote, "this is winnable." But I do think it is not staying the course. It is changing the course, in order to be able to stay to be successful.

I apologize to my colleagues for not being here in time to make that at the beginning, and I'll hold my questions until the end, and I thank you, appreciate you listening.

LUGAR:

Thank you, Senator Biden.  
Senator Chafee?

CHAFEE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.  
Welcome, gentlemen.

Despite some of the progress we are making there and some of the positive signs, some of the generals on the ground have expressed great concern.

In particular, an Army general who is posted in western Iraq, when asked whether he believes the United States is losing there, he said, "I think strategically we are." And an Army colonel who is based in Baghdad said, "Unless we ensure that we have coherency in our policy, we will lose strategically." And he went on to say, "We don't understand the war we're in."

And then a senior general went on to say, "I do not believe we have a clearly defined war strategy, end state and exit strategy before we commenced our invasion. And that," he said, "it is doubtful we can go on much longer like this. The American people may not stand for it, and they should not."

So maybe somewhere in between what you're portraying and what they're portraying is the truth. But nonetheless, there's cause for alarm, which I certainly here from my constituents back in Rhode Island.

But what I'd like to ask is that, just yesterday, King Abdullah of Jordan was asked a question, "Do you see a link between the war in Iraq and the Palestinian-Israeli peace process?"

And he answered, "They, sort of, feed off each other."

The core issue in the hearts of everybody in the Middle East is the Israeli-Palestinian one. The core issue. They feed off one another, they are related.

And what I'd like to go back to is what the president said on February 28th of '03, in a speech before the American Enterprise Institute. Where he said, "Success in Iraq could also begin a new stage for Middle Eastern peace, and set in progress towards a truly democratic Palestinian state."

And he went on to say, "America will seize every opportunity in pursuit of peace. And the end of the present regime in Iraq would create such an opportunity." He said it: the end of the present regime in Iraq would create this opportunity.

CHAFEE:

And then Secretary Wolfowitz. I'll also say I gave you a shot in May of '03 right after the end of the war when things were going very, very well. And I asked at a hearing, from the transcript, "It seems to me that we have thrown a rock into the pool that is the Middle East. And just for the sake of my question, if all goes well in restoring order in Iraq, what is our strategic vision of the ripples now going out from that rock we have thrown into the pool? What is the strategic vision in the Middle East now?"

And you answered, "A clean piece of canvas." You said, "I would say several things. I think some of them hopefully will happen even perhaps before some of the other results are achieved inside Iraq. I think one of the ripples is a positive impact on the Arab-Israeli peace process.

"And clearly we need it. We need to move that process forward. I think we have credibility, enormous credibility, not that we did not have it before. We have it more than we did before." Those are your words from May of '03 when things were going well.

And so my question is why the paralysis? If this is so important, by your own words, why the paralysis on this important issue, as King Abdullah said, "a core issue"?

ARMITAGE:

Perhaps I should...

WOLFOWITZ:

Let me ask...

CHAFEE:

I'll ask Secretary Wolfowitz since I quoted him, if I could.

WOLFOWITZ:

OK, but I'm going to turn to my colleague from the State Department on this issue of what you call paralysis.

But I would say this. I think that in fact part of our problem, as those quotes made clear, I think success in Iraq will have these effects. We are not at success, to put it mildly, and we need to get there. I agree very strongly with what both the chairman and Senator Biden said on that point.

I think if we go back to last year when there was a bit of euphoria, I believe, and a sense that we really were getting success, I know I heard from Arab democrats that there was some sense of exhilaration in the Arab world about the prospects of change.

And I don't claim to be expert enough to say it's cause and effect. But I think the meeting in Sharm Al Sheikh, we saw some signs of the Egyptians and the Saudis stepping up to responsibilities to support the peace process.

And again, I can't say it's cause and effect but I don't think it's helped the peace process that the enemy in Iraq has proved as resilient as it has.

And let's be clear. That enemy includes Saddam Hussein, who was out there funding attacks on coalition forces right up until he was captured in December.

WOLFOWITZ:

It includes number six on the black list, Izzat Ibrahim al-Duri, who is still at large and still funding attacks on American and coalition forces with money that he salted away in banks in neighboring countries.

It includes the former killers, as I mentioned in my opening statement, from the so-called M-14 branch of the Iraqi Intelligence, the so-called Anti-Terrorism branch. George Orwell would have used that phrase: anti-terrorism meant that they specialized in killings, hijackings, assassinations and bombings."

Those people are still out there. They're still -- they're killing people, killing Iraqis, killing Americans. Their goal is to prevent exactly that process that, I agree with Senator Biden, we need to move forward...

CHAFEE:

If I could just go back, if I could, in talking about the paralysis -- and there've been so many opportunities after Aqaba. In June there was the long, seven-week cease-fire. Abu Mazen came here to the Foreign Relations Committee and begged -- and he met with the president -- begged us to help him on the settlements, the wall, the prisoners held without charges.

"Please empower me with my people." And he went back empty-handed. These are the missed opportunities.

When the Geneva Accords came in October of last year there was a cold shoulder given to those.

I believe this is what's hurting us in Iraq: not taking the opportunities, even as the president said, taking the opportunities that are presented to us and energizing our adversaries in Iraq.

ARMITAGE:

Senator, may I? One, there are others who would say that what happened to Abu Mazen was that we held him too close and thus burned him. And he became...

CHAFEE:

He wouldn't say that. He wouldn't say that.

ARMITAGE:

Several of those who served with him when he was prime minister would say that, and gave us advice to be somewhat cautious.

You're right, we had a seven week hudna, or cease-fire. The difficulty with a cease-fire is the Palestinian Authority can have a cease-fire, but if they won't control Hamas then it's for naught. And they're not controlling Hamas. They're not even trying to.

We thought we were on the verge of something in this very frustrating, almost "Perils of Pauline," Middle East saga of a search for peace, with the Sharon plan for disengaging from Gaza. Where 80 percent of the people of Israel, by opinion polls, appear to be for it, but Likud was not for it and hence he was unsuccessful.

We thought it was rather noteworthy, for the first time since 1967, to have 21 Gaza settlements and four West Bank settlements turned over to the Palestinians. We were quite bullish on this. And now we're disappointed.

But Mr. Sharon is making some other refinements or modifications to his plan. He will be eventually showing us that. We have not seen it, to my knowledge, yet.

Secretary Powell met at the Dead Sea with Abu Ala. Dr. Rice met with Abu Ala in Berlin. And so there's -- it's, kind of, like a duck on the water: Doesn't appear to be moving very much, but underneath there's a lot of churning going on. And we're doing a lot of it. Some of the Palestinians are doing it. Certainly our Israeli allies are.

CHAFEE:

I'd just like to go further and say there's a lot of churning going on, but in the meantime the days are slipping by, the months are slipping by, the tide is turning and, if you believe what King Abdullah says, and he's geographically located, as he says, in between Iraq and a hard place, and he says this is the core issue.

And my constituents just see paralysis on this issue. And maybe you could level with us. Is it an election issue, that certain base that you got to be careful of?

CHAFEE:

What's the truth?

ARMITAGE:

The affection of the president for Israel and for that democracy has nothing to do with elections. It has to do with his view of Israel as one of the great democracies in the world, perhaps the most pure democracy.

However, it was our president who was the only one whose spoken up about a vision of two states living side by side. He's held that vision for two years now. He's not shying away from it. And, hence, he has encouraged Secretary Powell to meet with Abu Ala and Dr. Rice to meet with him as well.

It's frustrating for us, as well as for you and your constituents, but it's most frustrating for the Palestinians who are having their houses bulldozed and for those 11 or 12 IDF soldiers who were killed last week.

CHAFEE:

Well, I'll conclude just by saying every visitor that I get said only the Americans can push this forward. I hear it every time -- only the Americans. And sadly, we are not exercising that power.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

LUGAR:

Thank you very much, Senator Chafee.  
Senator Boxer?

BOXER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Gentlemen, I know how hard you are working and I know that the burdens that you bear are very heavy.

But I have to say I was very disappointed in your opening statements, to be honest with you. Listening to you, one would never know what is happening in America, how people are so distraught over this. And I think if you look at the faces of my colleagues, I've never seen us quite look this way. It's not partisanship.

And I didn't get, as Senator Biden pointed out, where are you changing course? I don't hear it.

And if there's one thing I want to say is to agree with my ranking member here that this is the moment to do it if ever there was a moment.

Now, the essence of our country has taken an enormous hit in the world to the point where American business people, Mr. Secretary, are telling me and telling us that they've never seen such a negative view of America in many, many, many years.

As they put it -- one put it, one very successful businessman, the American brand is being pummelled.

Now, some of it, I believe, is due to a go-it-alone policy that's been perceived as arrogant, and I won't go through it all, but we've seen it over and over.

And then there's the prison scandal, which has really seared the soul of America.

Now, some of the things that we saw, we have seen even worse by the terrorists, but our strength is that we're not like them and they repel us because they have no respect for human rights.

BOXER:

But all of us who have seen the original photos and then moving pictures, frankly, of torture -- I need to ask you, Secretary Wolfowitz, in Newsday yesterday Pentagon officials adamantly denied charges in a New Yorker magazine article that Defense Secretary Rumsfeld and other key officials had approved a plan to expand from Afghanistan to Iraq a secret interrogation program that included rough treatment and sexual humiliation.

Do you stand by that? Do you deny as a Pentagon spokesman...

WOLFOWITZ:

Senator Boxer, we are trying to find out what, if any, possible truth could have led to that story. I'm aware of nothing that would substantiate that.

BOXER:

So you don't deny it? You're saying you're still looking into it?

WOLFOWITZ:

No, I -- we stand by our denials. When something comes out like that and people claim that they have sources inside that reveals something, you have to try to find out.

BOXER:

OK.

So do you agree with Pentagon officials who basically said that those charges are wrong, that there was never a plan that was approved to expand from Afghanistan to Iraq a secret interrogation program that included rough treatment and sexual humiliation?

WOLFOWITZ:

To the best of our knowledge, yes, Senator.

BOXER:

OK.

Mr. Wolfowitz, you spoke eloquently about your desire to help the good people of Iraq. We were all stunned by those pictures of Abu Ghraib. And one of these pictures -- I mean, I'll never forget any of them. But one of them that is haunting me is that of a beautiful Iraqi woman who is staring into the camera with dead eyes and then in the next shot she is lifting her blouse and she is exposing her nudity to the camera with the same dead eyes.

Have you seen this photo, Mr. Wolfowitz?

WOLFOWITZ:

No, I haven't, Senator. I've seen some of the photos.

Let me explain. Secretary Rumsfeld, when this thing began, put together a considerable task force to dig into the facts to find out what had happened to make sure that we get to the bottom of this. And I would underscore that the Army had already -- the reason we...

BOXER:

Sir, if I might...

WOLFOWITZ:

Can I just...

BOXER:

... I don't have time. I only have five minutes left. And I understand that you're looking into it.

BOXER:

But I want to find out what you personally know.

So if I might just continue, please, Mr. Chairman...

WOLFOWITZ:



I know enough to be horrified at what has happened. I have not spent the two hours that Secretary Rumsfeld did looking at all of the photos. I will look at the one you mentioned.

BOXER:

Thank you.

Given the Islamic rules for modest dress, even the removal of a head scarf is a major violation of faith for many Iraqi women. So the abuse that was inflicted upon these female Iraqi prisoners is not only physical abuse, but it is mental abuse.

According to a recent article written by Tracy Wilkinson, a Polk Award-winning journalist for the Los Angeles Times, quote, "One woman told her attorney she was forced to disrobe in front of male prison guards. After much coaxing, another woman described how she was raped by U.S. soldiers. Then she fainted," unquote.

Secretary Wolfowitz, have you looked into this particular claim, that Iraqi women were actually raped by our soldiers?

WOLFOWITZ:

Senator Boxer, we're looking into all of this, and the behavior you described is absolutely appalling, to treat any woman that way, Muslim or otherwise. And I share your horror at it. I very strongly do. It's absolutely contrary to everything we're trying to accomplish in Iraq.

BOXER:

OK. I know you don't have the answers, but I would appreciate in writing if you could let us know how many Iraqi women have been raped in U.S. prisons. And we know that many of them are disowned then by their families.

Secretary Rumsfeld is on the record saying restitution would be provided for the victims. And could you tell us how far along we're getting in this plan, and if we're looking particularly at these women who, as I say, are -- many of them disowned by their families?

WOLFOWITZ:

I know that we are looking into how to do restitution the best possible way. There are legal issues involved, too, with respect to whether or not it might affect the trials of people that these people may have to testify against.

I consider it very important to make restitution and to do it as quickly as we possibly can and as generously as we possibly can.

BOXER:

Secretary Wolfowitz, because I'm the only woman on this committee, sometimes I will do a lot of these issues. And it has come to my attention and the attention of the women senators that there have been reports of 129 credible cases of sexual assault against our women military by our military in Iraq, Kuwait, Afghanistan and Bahrain.

And the rules today say that a woman who is the victim of rape in our military, she's allowed to use the military hospital but she has to pay for an abortion if she chooses to end this pregnancy of violence.

And I am asking you if you would consider supporting Senator Snowe and my bill that would say if a women in our military is sacrificing her life and she is raped, that she is not forced to pay for this abortion; that the military will in fact pay for it.

WOLFOWITZ:

I would certainly consider that, Senator.

BOXER:

Thank you.

Secretary Wolfowitz, in March '03, you said the oil revenues of Iraq could bring between \$50 billion and \$110 billion over the course of the next couple of years. And you went on to say, "We're dealing with a country that can really finance it's own reconstruction, and relatively soon."

Do you still feel that way?

WOLFOWITZ:

If I might say, first, Senator, that was in the context of a hearing on the House side some days after the war had already begun. And I introduced those comments by emphasizing that no one can predict what the cost of reconstruction in Iraq will be.

At that moment, we fully -- anticipate is too strong a word -- we were very fearful that, among other things, the oil fields of Iraq might be completely destroyed. So the bill could have been much, much greater even than it's turned out to be. And that caveat is frequently omitted.

Let me note that the end of the last year alone, Iraq has contributed some \$21 billion in Iraqi assets to the running of the country and to the reconstruction of the country. Oil revenues are currently above target partly because the production has come back faster, also because of higher oil prices.

I would get you the exact numbers for the record, but I don't think in the end those numbers will turn out to be too far off the mark.

BOXER:

OK. So you don't think we need to put any more American dollars into Iraqi reconstruction?

WOLFOWITZ:

No. In fact, I think when we came up with the request for the supplemental -- and I'm working from memory here and I hope this doesn't -- if my memory is wrong, we don't go back again and say I got it wrong. But it was -- the estimate of Iraqi needs for reconstruction was something like \$75 billion based on the World Bank needs assessment and other requirements that the World Bank didn't take account of, and that we said in testimony that we consider the American contribution would be on the order of the \$20 billion that we requested and that it would apply...

BOXER:

So just yes or no: Will we have to put more American dollars into reconstruction in Iraq, in your opinion?

WOLFOWITZ:

We don't think that there will be any need for a supplemental of the enormous kind that we had last year. I would assume that there will probably be some kind of American economic assistance program in the future.

WOLFOWITZ:

But Iraqi revenue...

BOXER:

So you're asking us for \$25 billion for the military, for the troops, nothing for reconstruction. And that will be it until we won't we need any more; is that correct? You won't have to come back?

WOLFOWITZ:

First of all, the \$25 billion for the troops -- it's more complicated. That's not the amount for this year. It's the amount to get us into early next year when we'll be able to request a supplemental.

We have, thanks to the approval of Congress, some \$18.6 billion, as you know, in appropriated funds available for Iraqi reconstruction. In addition, as I just mentioned, there's \$20 billion just in the last 12 months from Iraqi funds: some of it for operating the government, some of it for reconstruction.

There's some \$15 billion or so from international sources that Secretary Powell raised at the Madrid conference. And we anticipate, I think -- I'm going to be careful with my numbers -- very substantial Iraqi contributions in coming years to their reconstruction.

BOXER:

OK.

Well, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Chairman, maybe you followed all this. I don't know exactly what they're going to ask us for. Thanks.

LUGAR:

Thank you very much, Senator Boxer.  
Senator Brownback?

BROWNBACK:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Gentlemen, glad to have you here.

Secretary Wolfowitz or Armitage, just in following that line, is there a chance we're going to get some money back from the U.N. oil- for-food program? There's been a huge controversy about the number of dollars.

And we were tracking that, the subcommittee I was on during the time period that that was operating for those years, the billions of dollars of oil revenues that were flowing out of Iraq then, that were supposed to go into food, that appears as if now there were billions that were skimmed off of that either by Saddam or people on the other end of this.

Do we know where that is in its investigation? And is there a chance there's going to be some substantial resources that should come back to Iraq for its reconstruction from that program?

ARMITAGE:

Mr. Volcker, of course, is running the investigation for the U.N. We, just as a sidebar, have provided to members of committee, in an appropriate fashion, those documents which we had that might in any way refer to this.

I think there will be at the end of the day -- my view is, you will find wrongdoing and you will find monies. And I hope the people who are involved, as I said in the House side the other day, are hung.

But having said that, I don't think the monies will be substantial in terms of billions of billions of dollars. I don't think it runs that high. But if, you know -- follow the trail and follow the money.

BROWNBACK:

Let me ask you on this sarin gas and mustard gas issue that's come up.

BROWNBACK:

I'm looking off of two news stories. I just want to quote to you some individuals. This is the Reuters story yesterday, where David Kay is asked about this sarin gas weapon and he says it appears to be, this is just his direct quote: "It was probably just scavenged from one of the 125 plus ammunition storage points that still remain," Kay said.

And then the article goes on to say, "more forensic testing should determine with some confidence when it was produced."

Now he speculated it was probably left over from the 1980s, produced either during the Iraq-Iran War or before the 1991 Gulf War. That's David Kay's comments on this sarin gas that they found.

And this is General Mark Kimmitt. This is in a Fox news story on Monday. "Iraq Survey Group confirmed today that a 155 millimeter artillery round" -- which, as I understand, is a pretty good size shell -- "contained sarin nerve agent had been found."

This is another quote from him: "The round had been rigged as an IED which was discovered by a U.S. force convoy. The round detonated before it would be rendered inoperable, which caused a very small dispersal of the agent."

Then I've got -- in this same story they're citing a senior Bush administration official which they do not give the name of, said, "Two weeks ago, U.S. military units discovered mustard gas that was used as part of an IED. Tests conducted by the Iraq Survey Group, a U.S. organization searching for weapons of mass destruction, has concluded the mustard gas was, quote, 'Stored improperly,' which made the gas, quote, 'ineffective.'"

And now we know that Iraq used sarin gas during the Iraq-Iran War. However now, "Kimmitt" -- I'm going back to him -- "said the shell belonged to a class of ordinance that Saddam's government said was destroyed before the 1991 Gulf War. Experts believe both the sarin and mustard gas weapons date back to that time."

Here's again Kimmitt: "It was a weapon that we believe was stocked from the ex-regime time and thought to be an ordinary artillery shell set up to explode like an

ordinary IED, and basically from the detonation of that, when it exploded, it indicated it actually had some sarin in it.

"It was a binary type of shell in which two chemicals held in separate sections are mixed after firing to produce sarin gas."

And then they quote later a former Iraqi nuclear scientist, Ghazi George (ph), as saying that Saddam stored these around the country.

Can you react? You had this question a little bit earlier, but it appears as if -- I mean, there are people that are commenting on this to some extent, and I would appreciate if you could comment on either the sarin gas or the mustard gas to what we know has actually taken place or what's happened with those to date.

WOLFOWITZ:

Senator Brownback, with your permission, I'd really like to reply for the record. It's just very important that we be precise about what we know and what we don't know. And there's some things we're still trying to find out about exactly the origin of those shells, whether it was a failure of the Iraqis to account for them or whether they were simply stray shells and so forth.

They're very key issues here, which I think it would be important to give you a careful answer on.

BROWNBACK:

Can you answer whether or not we know if sarin gas or mustard gas has been used in the Iraqi theater within the last two weeks?

WOLFOWITZ:

Sir, the tests that came back were field tests done by two different independent type of tests in the field. They have a good degree of reliability, but not near 100 percent.

WOLFOWITZ:

So right now, the shells and the substance are being sent back to the United States for a conclusive test back here.

BROWNBACK:

And what did the field tests reveal?

WOLFOWITZ:

That they were sarin, sir. But again, that's not 100 percent guaranteed.

BROWNBACK:

Apparently, in this one article, that two soldiers are showing signs of reaction to a chemical weapon -- that they're showing symptoms similar to a mild chemical weapons exposure. Is that correct, as well?

WOLFOWITZ:

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Yes, sir, that's correct. While they were transporting it back, they showed nausea and had some orientation problems. But they are well now, they have been treated, and they're back to duty.

BROWNBACK:

OK, now, what about this mustard gas, two weeks ago, reported by the Iraqi Survey Group?

WOLFOWITZ:

Sir, the information I have is as you had laid out, that they had found it and that it's also being tested. I don't have any further information on that round.

BROWNBACK:

OK. Was there a field test as to whether this was mustard gas?

WOLFOWITZ:

I do not know, sir.

BROWNBACK:

OK, now, that's why the Iraqi Survey Group that was reporting that. But you don't know anything further about the mustard gas one?

WOLFOWITZ:

No, sir, not the earlier one.

BROWNBACK:

Do we -- and Secretary Wolfowitz, I'm presuming you're going to say the same answer, but I do want to ask this -- do we know any of the sources of these shells, not necessarily the gas, but the sources of these shells? Do we know anything about that yet?

WOLFOWITZ:

Not that I'm aware of, and that's one of the important questions to be answered.

BROWNBACK:

There's a speculation in this article from the Iraqi nuclear scientist, Ghazi George (ph), was saying that lots of them have gone west to Syria and have been brought back with the insurgencies. And he was speculating this was a stepping up of the insurgency against the United States and against the coalition forces. Have any reaction to that thought or any that you can put forward?

WOLFOWITZ:

I'd say, at the moment that's a speculation. It's a hypothesis. It's certainly is something we're looking at very hard because it would be a -- if it's a systematic pattern and it's something that will cause us very great concern, obviously.

BROWNBACK:

And when you have a chance, I'm sure you will be issuing statements publicly about the full nature, whether this is sarin gas or mustard gas, in this last instance.

If I could ask Secretary Armitage, when do you anticipate that Saddam will be going on trial -- Saddam Hussein?

ARMITAGE:

I saw a speculation in the press from the Iraqis that it would happen before a turnover. I think that's very unlikely. This is an Iraqi determination. They are having a small debate among themselves as to whether they ought to try Saddam Hussein first or whether they should try some lesser lights first.

We are -- the U.S. government, the Department of Justice, is in an advisory role to them to help them get their house in order so this will stand up to international scrutiny. Beyond that, there's no time set.

BROWNBACK:

This year?

ARMITAGE:

There's no time set.

BROWNBACK:

Secretary Armitage, if I could, you mention that you've made the trip in the region recently. And I know Secretary Powell has been over at the World Economic Forum, and I applaud all of those connections and move into the region. I made that trip before, as well.

I'm wondering how much of OPEC is putting pressure back on us through gas prices because we're pushing democracy and open societies in the region. And these are generally monarchies and dictatorships that are in the region and we are clearly standing for democracy and open societies. There's clearly a rub in the region of what's taking place. Are they pushing pressure back on us through oil production?

ARMITAGE:

First of all, in OPEC, sir, it's a mixed bag. The Kuwaitis, for instance, did not go along with the idea of cutting back on production. And as far as I know, the Saudis a month and a half or so ago said they were going to cut back and then didn't.

Further, they are now saying that they may increase -- they've got excess capacity and they may increase it.

I think -- this is a personal opinion I ought to refer to those on the Energy Committee, but this is as much psychological as anything else. The spike in prices to \$41-plus a barrel, I think there is some argument can be made for the need for more refining capacity here in the United States. But beyond that, I'm out of my league.

The question of democracy and openness in the region is one that's moving within every country in the region at varying speeds and in various ways.

Paul mentioned that even the Saudis and the Egyptians had had some rather far-reaching statements. And it's true. Other states have gone a lot farther with women's rights, transparency, et cetera. And this is why the upcoming G-8 summit at Sea Island.

and its promise of some discussion of the Greater Middle East Initiative and putting some wind in the sails of those reformers in the various countries, is so important.

BROWNBACK:

I think it's one of the most dramatic moves towards democracy I've seen in that region at any time. And I certainly applaud that.

Mr. Chairman?

LUGAR:

Thank you very much, Mr. Brownback.  
Senator Sarbanes?

SARBANES:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, first of all I want to commend you and Senator Biden for these series of hearings you're been holding with respect to Iraq. I think they have really focused on important, substantive questions. And I think that's obviously a very important responsibility of this committee. And I just want to underscore my appreciation to you and the ranking member, Senator Biden, for undertaking that responsibility.

Secretary Wolfowitz -- and I'm going to direct this as well to the other members of the panel, but let me start with you -- as we look ahead and make our calculations about the path that lies ahead, it seems to me we have to have some sense of what the miscalculations were that have resulted in us confronting the situation we now have in Iraq.

So the question I want to put to you -- and then I'll do it to the others as well -- is -- because you've been a central player in all of this -- what were the miscalculations?

WOLFOWITZ:

Senator, when people start listing the miscalculations they rarely bother listing all the things that we calculated on that didn't happen, and I think in part didn't happen because of the way in which the military campaign was conducted, which is to say with enormous speed; faster than I believe Saddam or his people believed we could advance.

I think that may be the reason why we didn't face the enormous destruction of Iraqi oil fields, for example.

WOLFOWITZ:

It may be a reason that we didn't face extensive urban fighting as we had anticipated. Indeed, in anticipation of it we decided on a plan that would emphasize speed over mass.

One can go back and look at many things that maybe we needed to do differently, and we are doing that. And I agree with the spirit of your question, that if we want to set the course going forward, then it's important to figure out if we made some misjudgments in the past.

And I would say one that we believe was done a bit too severely was the policy of de-Baathification, and that's in fact why Ambassador Bremer announced just a couple of weeks ago that we were going to look at modifying it.



I must say that as soon as we talked about modifying it, we heard very, very strong expressions, particularly from the Kurds and the Shia, that we might be abandoning it, we might be opening the door to bringing the Baathists back to power. So there's always a balance to be struck.

I would say of all the things that were underestimated, the one that almost no one that I know of predicted, with the exception of a retired Marine colonel named Gary Anderson who wrote this in a op-ed piece in The Post I believe it was April 2nd of last year, was to properly estimate the resilience of the regime that had abused this country for 35 years; to properly estimate that Saddam Hussein would still be out there funding attacks on Americans until he was captured; that one of his principal deputies, Izzat Ibrahim al-Douri, would still be out there funding operations against us; that they would have hundreds of millions of dollars in bank accounts in neighboring countries to support those operations; that the old Iraqi intelligence service, which had so much blood on its hands, which I believe is not reconcilable, we're not talking about an ordinary person who joined the Baath Party in order to get a promotion as a teacher. Those are the people we're trying to bring back in.

But the real killers who number in the thousands were much tougher people I think than anyone imagined, and they are out there killing and they are working with Mr. Zarqawi, who seems to have been associated with him from before the war. They're bringing in foreign fighters, as they did in the early stages of the war. And they may not be good in large-scale open battle, but they seem to have a dangerous capability for urban guerrilla tactics, and that's what we're up against.

I think the great strength we have against them remains the fact that the Iraqi people don't want these people back, and if they have confidence that they can stand up against those people, they do so. In fact, they do so even when they know they may be murdered for it, as the member of the governing council was just yesterday, and his police chiefs are, and his security officers are.

The number of Iraqis that actually will stand up and fight for their country is considerable, and I think that is where success is going to lie for us, is empowering those people more rapidly. If anything, I would say we were slow in doing it, maybe in part because we thought we'd have something like peacekeeping operations instead of a continuing war.

SARBANES:

Secretary Armitage?

ARMITAGE:

I look at this question, or to answer it, Senator Sarbanes, by saying what I would do differently? And the single thing I would have done differently after the splendid military victory was to more rapidly to brought in the tribal sheiks.

I think that -- I'll speak for myself -- that the Shia and Sunni and Kurd and Turkmen and a couple of others, and we could deal with them in that way. It was wrong I think. I think they're a tribal society in a way that I didn't fully appreciate, and I wish that I had been involved much more in bringing the tribal sheiks into things earlier on. I think we'd be a lot farther down the pike now.

DODDOA-010626

SARBANES:

General Sharp?

SHARP:

As you know, as the military looks at the situation on the ground, we continuously assess as to what changes need to be made based upon the circumstances that we're under.

As you know, we're working very hard now to train the Iraqi security forces. As a result of their performance in the recent days, we're looking at leadership training and specialized training in order to be able to get the leaders and the people in the security forces to be able to stand up.

On the military side, we continue to assess the capabilities of both the Iraqi security forces and our coalition partners and us, and to determine how to best defeat the threat that's out there.

So you see us adjusting boundaries, you see us integrating some of the Iraqi security forces and military into our military forces and vice versa.

We're standing up a new headquarters in order to be able to best work in the new environment with a strategic situation with Ambassador Negroponte going in.

SHARP:

So we're standing up a headquarters there, with General Sanchez to work on the military and political level and then General Metz working on the tactical and operational level.

And we're sending, for example, General Petraeus back to again take all of the Iraqi security forces and make sure that we are focusing the efforts on those to get the Iraqis enabled to be able to take over responsibility for their own security.

SARBANES:

The difficulty I'm having here is obviously I would assume none of you at the table calculated that we would be confronting the situation we are confronting there now.

So the question becomes what miscalculations -- let me ask a couple of specifics. Secretary Wolfowitz, you said that they were drawing money from the surrounding countries. They had deposits in the surrounding countries, and were now calling on those resources to carry out this insurgency that's taking place, if I understood you correctly. Is that right?

WOLFOWITZ:

Saying that Saddam and his gang have access to enormous resources. And they are using those resources to pay for hired killings.

SARBANES:

Now, those are coming from the surrounding countries?

WOLFOWITZ:

I'm not sure where they're coming from, Senator.

SARBANES:

Well, what cooperation are we getting from the surrounding countries? I see the king of Jordan said just yesterday that he thought Iraq needed a strongman as I understand it, and that that was what was now needed in the situation in the current situation, which, of course, is very much at odds, as I understand it, with what you're projecting to do.

WOLFOWITZ:

Well, I would say we're getting very excellent cooperation from Jordan. It's the kind of ally with whom you can have differences of view that lead you to better policies.

I think we need a lot more cooperation from Syria.

ARMITAGE:

The question of Iran is a more interesting one in a way, because during the time of the Arbameen, where Zargawi was threatening to bring about civil war -- publicly he threatened it -- the Iranians were actually quite helpful because they kept many of their pilgrims home. And they made fewer targets and a much more manageable situation.

At the same time, however, we find them in the south particularly trying to buy clerics with their money. So it's a mixed view.

Kuwait has been extraordinarily helpful, as well.

SARBANES:

What is the legal status of the U.S. contractors operating in Iraq, the nonmilitary people that are in there, some of them apparently doing military-type activities?

WOLFOWITZ:

I'm not aware that it's different from their status as contractors for us in Kosovo or Bosnia. And we make extensive use of contractors everywhere. And we're doing so in Iraq. And they operate under -- if they're working for the U.S. military, they operate according to U.S. military regulations. And, of course, the status of everything in Iraq is under the overall authority of the CPA.

SARBANES:

So the U.S. military, in effect, has the responsibility for the conduct of the private contractors, is that correct?

WOLFOWITZ:

No. Those contractors that are working for us, but there are many contractors that are working for CPA, or working on their own or working for the Iraqi Governing Council. There are contractors all over the country.

SARBANES:

Now, is it your view that the -- you don't need another status of forces agreement after June 30th, when you transfer sovereignty, in order to ensure the legal status of American forces?

ARMITAGE:

Senator Sarbanes, as a legal matter that would be the case. As a political matter it might be something else again.

Security Council Resolution 1511, combined with CPA Order 17, gives us the sufficient legal cover, if you will, for status of forces agreements.

However, it clearly -- if we do move forward, as we're planning to, with a new U.N. Security Council resolution, we'd also want to put this in that resolution as well. An extra bit of protection.

SARBANES:

What would the status be...

ARMITAGE:

Our view of 1511 is not universally shared by our allies, sir.

SARBANES:

What would be the status of the private contractors after June 30th when sovereignty is transferred?

ARMITAGE:

I've got to take it for the record, Senator Sarbanes; I don't know.

SARBANES:

That could be quite a problem, could it not? Would they still be under the rules of the U.S. military?

WOLFOWITZ:

I repeat, they were under the rules of the Coalition Provisional Authority, and since that authority will transfer to the interim government, I assume they will be under the authority of the interim government.

And if there are issues about how they conduct themselves -- for example, I think obviously one of your concerns is: What are they allowed to carry in the way of weapons? -- I assume those will be laws and regulations written by the interim government.

I think, Senator, that the policies and regulations of the Coalition Provisional Authority which govern them now...

SARBANES:

Are these issues going to be -- I know I'm running over my time. One final -- are these issues going to be worked out before the transition date? I mean, are these people just going to be left, I don't want to use the expression "high and dry," but left with a potential serious problem on their hands? I mean...

WOLFOWITZ:

Senator, I believe...

SARBANES:

Thank you.

LUGAR:

Thank you very much.  
Senator Voinovich?

VOINOVICH:

I'd like to thank you for convening this meeting. And we've been doing this now for over a year. And at the time we started we wanted to know: Do we have a plan? Do we know what we're doing? And the American people want to know that we're not like a leaf meandering down a stream.

And I'm comforted by the testimony that we've had this morning. But my concern is that are we really leveling with the American people?

For example, we know we're talking about troop commitments. And if we look at what we've done in Bosnia, if you look at what we've done in Kosovo, we've been there for quite some time. It seems to me that we ought to talk about what's the future going to be; some rough estimates about the commitment that we're going to be making in terms of troops and the cost of it.

I was somewhat comforted by the fact that you indicate that we might not be asking for more money for reconstruction. But my constituents are interested: Are we going to put more money into reconstruction in Iraq?

The other issue that I'm very concerned about is the issue of the involvement of religious leaders in Iraq, including Ayatollah Sistani, in terms of developing a transition plan.

I think one of the things that we may have miscalculated -- and you're talking about errors that you made, I think that one of the errors that we made is the militancy of Muslim fundamentalism. Several people said that -- I think it was Senator Biden said 82 percent of the Iraq people would like to see us out of there like that was a change.

Do we really know how many of them wanted us in there? I mean they wanted to get rid of Saddam Hussein; there's no question about that. But do they like us any more than -- and, you know, do they want a secular, Western democracy in that country?

And what about Muqtada al-Sadr? Thirty-one years old. He seems to have a great deal of support from some people. Where's he getting his support? Is this an effort on his part to work with -- I don't know, is he working with people up in Iran to have a Muslim type of regime where they control things?

It just seems to me that there's a lot more going on over there than what we anticipated. The American people thought and we were led to believe we'll be looked upon as liberators and that they'll be glad to have us there. But it appears to me that the sooner we get out, the happier they're going to be.

And I'm just real concerned that -- you know, people ask me, "What's going to happen, you know, come July 1st?" And I just tell them that it's going to be jump ball.

VOINOVICH:

DODDOA-010630

We're not really sure what's going to happen. We hope there are some things that are going to happen.

And I just wonder if we're not being as candid as we should be with the American people about what we're into over there. And I think they would feel probably more comforted if we leveled with them a little more than maybe what we're doing right now. And I'd like you to react to that.

WOLFOWITZ:

Senator, I think we are being candid. We try to be candid, and things change. We had a plan that anticipated I think that we could proceed with an occupation regime for much longer than it turned out the Iraqis would have patience for. We had a plan that assumed we'd have basically more stable security conditions than we've encountered.

In response to both of those changes, we have considerably speeded up the transition to sovereignty. And I share Senator Biden's comments that I think we should put a lot of focus on successful elections. I think that's going to be one of the keys to changing the way Iraqis view us.

With respect to the security problem, we have enormously speeded up both the speed and the level of effort in equipping Iraqi security forces.

I think -- I don't remember the exact numbers; I'll get them for you for the record -- some of those early polls were very striking, because they had overwhelming percentages of the Iraqis polled -- I think in the neighborhood of 70-plus percent -- saying they wanted the Americans to leave. And equally large numbers wanted us to stay for at least two years.

That's not a contradiction. It's people who genuinely welcomed us as liberators, but did not want us owning their country or occupying their country. I think this label of "occupying power" is a very unfortunate one. It will be good, July 1st, to be rid of it.

VOINOVICH:

Actually, some people have exploited that, and that's why this transition to turn it over to them is very, very important.

Do you believe that, because we're doing that, that that's going to lessen some of the ability of people like al-Sadr to ignite folks to be against us?

WOLFOWITZ:

Senator, you're absolutely right. Although, it's not going to be transformational on July 1st. That's why Senator Biden is so correct when he says the key thing, I think, is not when they have a sovereign appointed government but when they have a sovereign elected government.

The issue of Mr. Sadr -- everything I see suggests this is a man who is very young, exploited a very distinguished family name -- both his father and I think his great-uncle were distinguished religious clerics and martyrs. But he's basically intimidated a large part of the country by putting together gangs of young people with heavy weapons and an ability intimidate people.

And as our operations have begun to shut down those operations, what we're also seeing is a lot of Iraqis in the south, who I think were intimidated by him previously, coming out and saying, "We've had enough of this lawlessness."

And I'm told that AP has reported that Ayatollah Sistani has actually come out publicly and said Sadr's forces should get out Najaf and Karbala. That's an early report. I'd be careful with it. But certainly we're hearing many reports that, as Iraqis see law and order being restored, they're coming out much more openly against Sadr.

So I think in that case, we're dealing with a fairly thuggish individual who, with the power of the gun, was intimidating people.

I think it's by no means as serious a problem as the much more ruthless former elements of the old regime and terrorists that we're dealing with up north.

VOINOVICH:

Is he getting any encouragement from Muslims in Iran?

WOLFOWITZ:

My impression is that the Iranians are finding him an embarrassment.

I don't know, Rich, if you want to comment...

ARMITAGE:

If I may, you used a sports analogy about a jump ball. And I know this is not a game, it's very serious business. But if you'll allow me, we've got a game plan, but we are going to have to audible from time to time.

Muqtada al-Sadr is a case of an audible. This is a thug, just as Paul described. He's been unable to garner popular support. Shia support in the south. They are turning on him. And as I said earlier, Senator Voinovich, when our forces come in with wisdom and determination, carefully, in the area, they've been welcomed by people.

The situation is very complex: it's not good. But there are some signs that we ought to look at, and that's one of them.

ARMITAGE:

The Iranians actually came to Baghdad and they met with the British and they met with us to talk about Muqtada al-Sadr because, as Paul suggested, they find him an embarrassment and he's getting in their way.

VOINOVICH:

Well, has the -- has any thought been given to some type of effort to -- instead of having a kind of a democracy that we're hoping for that we'll end up with something like we have in Iran?

ARMITAGE:

We've been very leery of it and very watchful of it, and we're, thus far, quite satisfied that the most important cleric, Grand Ayatollah al-Sistani, has stated that he does not want a theocracy.

If there's another surprise in this area, it was the more secular nature of Iraqi society than I had initially understood, though that is in no way a suggestion they're not faithful to their beliefs.

WOLFOWITZ:

And in fact, I think, Senator, before you came in I mentioned that there was a report recently of some 17 local elections in southern Iraq where the Islamists were defeated in most of those elections.

VOINOVICH:

I heard that and I was, quite frankly, surprised at that.

So you believe that there is enough support for some type of secular Western type of democracy there?

WOLFOWITZ:

I think, Senator, most Iraqis don't want to go back to a tyranny, even the ones that were deeply religious. And if there is a fair degree of local autonomy, it wouldn't surprise me that in some parts of Iraq you find very conservative governments with respect to issues like what kinds of images you can show on television, for example.

But I don't think most Iraqis, if they're free to vote their conscience, would want to see a government that imposes the kind of tyranny we see in Iran. They've been through 35 years of a different sort of tyranny.

VOINOVICH:

Well, certainly the stuff that's happened in prison has really been ammunition for those who talk about us as defiling their country.

WOLFOWITZ:

Terrible ammunition, but I hope that the way in which we deal with it will be an example that this is a country that doesn't tolerate abuse and it punishes abuse, and that hopefully Iraqi will be the first Arab country that has the same approach to those things.

VOINOVICH:

I'd just like to also say that you say that you need this resolution from the United Nations, but you're not certain that you're going to get it. It just seems to me that one of the things -- when we supported the \$87 billion for Iraq, one of the conditions was that we would get support from other countries in terms of reconstruction, and we would get support from other countries in terms of reducing their debt to the countries.

Are we getting any -- I mean, we've got some help, but it seems to me that it's not very enthusiastic.

ARMITAGE:

Perhaps I misspoke. We are going to get a U.N. Security Council resolution. And the good news from my point of view is the informal consultations, both in New York and more recently Secretary Powell with the G-8, indicate that all of our thinking is within certain acceptable bounds. So it's a matter of working out and accommodating everyone's views.

So I'm absolutely positive we're going to get a U.N. Security Council resolution, without question.

VOINOVICH:



Again, could you repeat how much reconstruction money have you got from other countries? And how many countries have reduced their debts or eliminated them since we've made the \$87 billion commitment?

ARMITAGE:

The international donors came up with \$13.8 billion, I believe, which about a billion has been disbursed. We are in to it for \$20 billion, as you've indicated, sir.

All the major debtors except for Russia, I believe, have indicated a willingness to engage in substantial debt reduction. It hasn't happened yet, but that's the status as I know it.

VOINOVICH:

Mr. Chairman, let me just ask one question.

The question I have is that that -- when we passed that, authorized the \$87 billion, there was a requirement in there for a report. Have we ever received a report back from you yet on where we stand in terms of that request?

ARMITAGE:

I don't know and I'll find out.

VOINOVICH:

Well, I'd like to see it, because I've asked this question several times and I'd like to see exactly how much money are we getting from our allies and how much are they cooperating with us.

Because, again, you get back the streets of Ohio and people are saying, "We're Uncle Sugar." You know, we're over there and we're taking care of everything and where are the rest of the people who should be just as interested in what happens in Iraq as we are interested in it? Where are they?

ARMITAGE:

It's the neighbors, you bet. I'll find out where it is, Senator.

ACTING CHAIRMAN:

Thank you.

Let me announce to all the members that...

WOLFOWITZ:

(OFF-MIKE) there's \$12 billion of Iraqi funds that have been applied to running the government and doing reconstruction. Another \$8 billion committed for the rest of this year.

ACTING CHAIRMAN:

Let me announce, for the benefit of the members here, there's a vote on -- Chairman Lugar has gone to vote. He will be back. He will continue these hearings. Senator Dodd?

DODD:

Thanks, Mr. Chairman, and maybe someone would call over and see if they'd hold it up a couple of minutes so we can get a line of questioning in here.

BIDEN:

Apparently they've already said they'd hold it a few more minutes. There's six minutes left.

DODD:

Well, thanks.

And thanks to our witnesses for being here. And let me echo the comments, by the way, of Senator Sarbanes, about you, Senator Biden and Senator Lugar. These have been tremendously helpful -- these hearings. And it's exactly what the Congress should be doing.

In the absence of legislating, holding oversight hearings on critical issues, both domestic and foreign, are absolutely essential. And these have been worthwhile hearings, and I want the chairman and the ranking member to know how much all of us appreciate it -- very, very much.

Let me begin by just expressing to you what I think is obvious but probably needs to be stated again, and that is: Anybody who ever thought this was going to be easy was deluding themselves. This is a difficult task. And so you all know that as we raise questions about these matters here, at least, I think, for all of us at this side of the dais, there is an appreciation of how complicated and difficult this mission is.

Secondly, I think without exception all of us want you to succeed, want the administration to succeed, want this policy to succeed. That it's critically important that the present situation we find ourselves in -- and the exact description I think that Senator Voinovich gave is one that's not narrowly held.

There are a lot of people across this country who are very, very worried about how this is progressing, what the end game is, whether or not we're going to achieve even a part of our goals here and the growing fear that we may in fact be, in some ways, in a worse situation if we're not careful at the end of August. So I raise that point with you.

And to express what Senator Voinovich said, and it's my view as well, one of the concerns they have is that there's a lack of candor and transparency about what's going on.

And let me, if I can, jump to this issue -- of the prison issue, if I may, for a minute.

DODD:

I'm very interested in knowing whether or not the State Department was aware of the situation at the prison.

We know now that General Myers had asked CBS to delay using those photographs for several weeks. Was the State Department aware of this, Mr. Armitage?

ARMITAGE:

If I may, we were aware that there was some alleged abuses back in the January-February timetable. And Secretary Powell, as he said publicly, made this a subject of discussions with his colleagues, the principals, as well as the president.

DODD:

Were you briefed on it, though? Were you actually briefed by the Taguba report?

ARMITAGE:

No. Were not briefed on it, to my knowledge. Heard from the press that there were photos about a week or so before they appeared.

DODD:

And so were you aware that a request had been made to a major network to delay the release of those photographs?

ARMITAGE:

I was aware because the press person who told me worked for that network.

DODD:

The reason I raise that, we had Mr. Negroponte here and all of us supported his nomination. And he appeared here on the 27th of April. The reports came out the following day.

And I'm just curious as to why, in the interest in the interest of candor and transparency, that either in direct testimony or a response to questions the designee to be the ambassador in Iraq wouldn't have laid out to this committee a critical issue that was about to explode onto the public scene within 24 hours.

ARMITAGE:

I don't think he knew anything about it. I don't think any of us in the Department of State had any idea what were on the pictures. I've told you the sum of our knowledge of this is there were some photographs.

DODD:

But beyond that...

ARMITAGE:

I don't think he had any inkling.

DODD:

Senator Feingold asked John Negroponte a very specific question about the human rights issues, and it would have been a perfect opportunity, if not in direct testimony, to say, "By the way, we've got a problem here that you ought to be aware of and we don't want to give you the details of," but certainly lay out to the committee, it would have been helpful at that point.

ARMITAGE:

I say again, I don't think he knew anything about pictures, Senator Dodd.

DODD:

But he knew about the prison abuse?

ARMITAGE:

I'll have to find out.

We at the Department of State knew about it, and I don't know how much he was read into it as he went through his...

DODD:

Well, would he have been briefed about that before coming up here?

ARMITAGE:

He wouldn't have been briefed in New York, sir. I don't know if he was briefed down here on it.

WOLFOWITZ:

Senator...

DODD:

Go ahead, I'm sorry.

WOLFOWITZ:

I think the whole world knew that there was prison abuse. Central Command announced the investigation I think January 16th, and I believe in March, I don't know the exact date, they announced that criminal proceedings were being brought against some U.S. military personnel.

The shocking part of it is when you see the pictures and you understand what's being talked about.

DODD:

I understand that, Mr. Secretary. And I'm not going -- I'm not trying to get down to the details. I'm just about the candor and transparency.

Now, I know, on a particularly sensitive issue like the ambassadorship to Iraq that's coming up, there's a Q&A period, and you go back and forth. And it goes to the point that Senator Voinovich is raising. This is where we begin to get ourselves in trouble. Sometimes, it's not the act, it's the perjury that occurs.

Now, I'm not suggesting perjury was the case here, but it's usually being candid about what's going on and how all matters are revealed, how they become -- the public becomes aware of things.

And what I'm trying to get at is whether or not John Negroponte was aware of the abuses, whether or not he'd seen the photographs or not, whether or not during the question-and-answer period of training or preparation for him to come up here, these issues were raised in any way.

ARMITAGE:

I'll ask him.

DODD:

But you're not aware of it?

ARMITAGE:

No, I'm not, sir.

DODD:

I want to if I can pick up very quickly on a question that Senator Sarbanes raised and the chairman wisely asked you to possibly amend the answers, particularly with regard to contractors dealing with detainees or prisoners.

How would you feel about just a direct prohibition of having contract employees involved in the interrogation of detainees and prisoners in Iraq?

And one of the problems, it seems to me here, is the lack of authority and direct control of some of these people here. I guess there are 20,000 of them in the country. Do you have a quick response as to how you'd feel about such a prohibition against contractors being directly involved in the interrogation of detainees?

WOLFOWITZ:

Senator Dodd, there are so many people trying to look into this and fix the problem, I wouldn't want to speculate.

I do think it is absolutely essential lesson from this is not to have people involved in interrogation who aren't thoroughly trained and disciplined and know the rules and follow the rules. And if you could have a contractor that meets those qualifications, it might be better than have a less well-trained uniformed person.

But I think it absolutely brings home the importance of having disciplined, trained people doing the work.

ARMITAGE:

I don't know what the military manpower of the situation is, but to have this done without training, without oversight, supervision there is not acceptable.

DODD:

Let me ask you about the -- there was apparently in January of 2002 a memo from -- the legal counsel at the White House, Mr. Alberto Gonzalez, wrote a memo to the Department of State -- wrote to the president and the Department of State, I guess -- in which he says, "In my judgment this new paradigm of terrorism renders obsolete Geneva's strict limitations on questioning of enemy prisoners and renders quaint some of its provisions of the Geneva Accords." Were you aware of that memo?

ARMITAGE:

Yes, I was aware of it as I came here today because I saw our general counsel look at it. I don't remember seeing it at the time. And I've heard -- and I'll have to check it and I

think you'll want to check -- that that quote was disavowed, that it was in an earlier draft of a memo that was being prepared and was not in the final draft, particularly the comment about obsolete. But you've -- now -- or I have exhausted my knowledge of this.

DODD:

And do you want to comment on what your own reaction -- I gather that the secretary, the quote was "hit the roof," on all of this. Now, this goes back to January of 2002, more than two years ago.

But it raises concerns on the part of many of us here that in fact prior to actually the commencement of hostilities in Iraq, that there was this preparation and notion that we were going to, sort of, walk away from the rule of law.

And I wonder if you might take an opportunity here, both of you here, to comment on your general observations as to -- whether or not you use the word obsolete or quaint here and I'm not going to -- they say that's an early draft. What is your view regarding the Geneva Conventions, Geneva Accords, and whether or not the United States ought to be adhering to its principles and its letter?

ARMITAGE:

Whether you're talking Geneva II or Geneva III, it seems to me that what separates us and allows us to listen to a higher standard is where principle is involved, we're not -- or we're deaf, rather, to expediency.

And so, my view is we ought to always do the principled thing and we ought to embrace these. They are protections for us, as well as for others.

DODD:

Mr. Secretary?

WOLFOWITZ:

I agree with that, Senator.

In fact, I think the U.S. military would view us as having a greater practical interest in the Geneva Convention than any other country, because we count on them to try to protect our prisoners when they're detained.

I would emphasize that if we're talking about January 2002, we're in the context of post-September 11th and the issue of how you try to obtain information that could prevent a repetition of the September 11th attacks on the United States. It was not at all in anticipation of a war in Iraq.

DODD:

I appreciate that. You can certainly appreciate the fact that this is unsettling. This wasn't a memo from some freshman law student who may have an ideological point of view; this was the counsel to the president of the United States in the White House.

Were you aware of this memo?

WOLFOWITZ:

No, I wasn't.

DODD:

Did the Department of Defense receive a similar memo?

WOLFOWITZ:

I can't tell you. I can find out.

DODD:

I'd appreciate it, if you would.

General, do you have any quick comments on this?

SHARP:

Sir, we are 100 percent behind the Geneva Convention and the importance of it.

DODD:

Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, thank you.

LUGAR:

Thank you very much, Senator Dodd.

On this issue as well as on earlier ones, if you would clarify for the record any further research you have on the counsel's memo, it is an important point, and we appreciate your underlining it.

Senator Coleman?

COLEMAN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And, gentlemen, thank you for being with us today. These are challenging times and we appreciate your efforts.

There has been a lot of discussion about the course we're on and changing course. General Sharp, I think you described the approach that I'd like to see. It's not about changing course. We need to stay on course with the transition in June 30th, we need to stay on course with elections at the end of the year, the start of the next year. But we have to continue I think -- these are your words -- continually reassess based on the circumstances on the ground.

COLEMAN:

Let me first just raise the issue of security. Obviously you're aware of the tragic killing of President Salim yesterday. Can you talk to me a little bit about security then for folks on the governing council, American officials? Does that incident cause us to reassess circumstances on the ground and to change our course of conduct?

WOLFOWITZ:

Senator, Iraq is a dangerous place. I mean, I visited in late October and was staying in Al Rashid Hotel. And we were rocketed. And one American was killed and four Americans and one Brit were seriously wounded. It's going to keep happening.

from Zarqawi to one of his associates in Afghanistan. That's this remarkable letter that I think you've heard about and that I quote in my testimony.

We're pretty certain that Zarqawi has been working with former Iraqi intelligence officers and others in this fight in Fallujah, that he was probably there at least some of the time.

And, unfortunately, the fact is that it doesn't take large numbers of people, especially if some of them are willing to commit suicide, to do enormous damage.

COLEMAN:

Yes. About a month ago we read the papers that Iraq was in the middle of a civil uprising, al-Sadr on one side, Shiites on the other. I don't see much of that. I mean, my sense is that we're killing al-Sadr's folks and he's not replenishing.

Give me a sense of the situation in Iraq vis-a-vis civil uprising. You've got a sense of that.

WOLFOWITZ:

Let me make three points.

Number one, in Zarqawi's infamous letter, where he expresses a sense of desperation that if they can't destabilize the country before it gets its own government they will suffer what he calls suffocation, he identifies his principal target as being attacks on the Shia in an effort to create a Shia-Sunni civil war. And that would explain a number of the attacks we've seen, including the horrendous bombings in southern Iraq on the Ashura holiday. And they've been totally unsuccessful in creating a Sunni-Shia civil war.

Number two, with respect to Sadr, we think it's a very different situation; that in fact, as the Shia majority have come to understand that there will be resolute action taken against him and his forces, not only are we reducing his forces in number but, equally importantly, we're getting more and more of the population coming out and speaking against him.

On the worrisome side, I guess I would have to put on the table that up north, particularly in Kirkuk, which is a mixed Kurdish-Arab city, we've had remarkable good luck over the last year in preventing what we've always feared could be a source of real ethnic violence. It's a little troubled right now, and it's one of the situations we're looking at closely.

We come up here, we try to emphasize some of the positive things that are happening. We're not trying to suggest by any means that this is a rosy scenario, but we do think that Iraq is moving forward toward self-government and self-defense, and that's the key to winning.

COLEMAN:

Do I have time for one more question, Mr. Chairman?

LUGAR:

Yes, you do.

COLEMAN:



SHARP:

Sir, the mission is to provide a secure and stable environment for Iraq. That encompasses several things right now. Clearly, killing terrorists and capturing terrorists.

Secondly, is working with Iraqi security forces to provide a safe environment for the people of Iraq in and among the cities.

So, as you know, right now we patrol with Iraqi security forces. We train Iraqi security forces. And we are moving, in some cities, to be able to hand off a lot of that to the Iraqi security forces.

BIDEN:

Do you have enough forces for the mission?

SHARP:

Sir, General Abizaid, General Sanchez, all the commanders on the ground -- and I was there as recently as three weeks ago -- General Myers asked this same question to all the division commanders there.

And their consistent answer across the board is, yes, they have enough forces in order to be able to accomplish that mission and are working hard to be able to get the security responsibilities handed off to the Iraqi security forces. And that's why you see...

BIDEN:

Well, who are you going to hand them over to, General?

There's no seriously trained Iraqi force now. I mean, this malarkey you guys came up with is you got 200,000 trained Iraqis. I mean, every single solitary expert, including your guys that we met with in Iraq, said it's going to take three years to train 40,000 Iraqi military; three to five years to get up to the 79,000 Iraqi police needed.

And you point out you're doing a good job now. You're going out and trying to identify leaders to lead. You don't -- you haven't had those folks.

So you really don't have -- I mean, some places it's spotty. Some places you have folks who are -- you can rely on. And that's why, as has been pointed out to me by our military, the insurgents are smart enough to go blow up the police stations and blow up the policemen and blow up people who are in line signing up to become police officers and/or join the military.

I mean, these guys aren't stupid. That's their target.

And I'm not suggesting there are not plenty of Iraqis who want to do this. But right now the military I speak with, and I -- you know, that old thing, I know I'm going to be asked names and off the record I'm happy to give you the names -- tell me that -- and what I hear from Iraqis who, people -- there's a number of Iraqi-Americans with families in Iraq who keep in touch with us. All you got to do is go to Detroit.

And all kidding aside, they say, the stuff they get from home, quote/unquote, is that, you know, you still don't let your daughter out of the house. You're still not able to go -- send her -- down to the corner store to get milk.

You know, there is rampant crime. And so -- and all the evidence is none of the Iraqis think that they have security.

And it's not just insurgents. I mean, there -- everybody, like in Israel, is worried a bus is going to blow up because somebody's going to, you know, some -- either in country or out of country person.

So I don't, I really don't -- I mean, is -- for example, is disarming the militias part of the mission? All militias?

SHARP:

Sir, let me talk to a couple of things. First off, to be clear, we are not going to hand off security on 1 July writ large across the country to the Iraqi security forces.

As you point out, those security forces will not be nearly trained by 1 July. In fact, by 1 July we'll have approximately 10 percent of the total required Iraqi police, academy trained, and another 20 percent trained by the shorter three-week program that our military does throughout the country.

We will continue, and are continuing to accelerate, the training both in Jordan and in Baghdad and in Irbil and then at the different academies across the country.

There's been a recent change where we have really started focusing on training mid-level leadership, specialized training, so that Iraqis who want to take the security responsibilities have the capability to be able to do that.

There is a CPA regulation out that says that you are not allowed to carry weapons without a card -- you know, a weapons card that has to be issued by the CPA or the correct authority. And as soldiers come and see people doing this, they are being arrested and doing it.

We are searching very...

BIDEN:

If I could interrupt in the interest of time. General, and I -- by the way, I think you're on the right track. I'm not being critical of what you're trying to do. What I'm trying to get at is: seeing someone with a weapon and arresting them is very different than aggressively going and disarming the population.

What about the militias?

SHARP:

Sir...

BIDEN:

I don't mean just Sadr's militia. What about the other militias that exist within the country? Is it part of the mission -- I'm not saying if it should or shouldn't; I want to know though, is it part of the mission? Is the commander in the various regions in Iraq have a mission to disarm the militias? Is that part of it?

SHARP:

Sir, the militias, if they are active -- let me start with: We actively go out to try to find weapons caches and work on every tip that we get from the Iraqis to be able to get at, not just if we see weapons on the street, but the number of cordons-and- searches, the number of raids that we do consistently brings in a lot of different weapons across the board.

We are actively trying to get at all of those different weapons out there. The question...

BIDEN:

Do you have enough forces for that, General? I mean, we didn't have -- we had 850,000 tons of open ammunition dumps that we didn't have enough soldiers to guard. So we obviously didn't have enough for the mission.

It's one thing to disarm them. It's one thing to destroy. And now that's not my number - I think that's right, 850,000 tons. It may have been 900,000, I don't remember the number issued by the CPA that what was there.

We had helicopters, guys with night-vision goggles watching people going in and out, but we didn't have enough forces.

Do we have enough forces now to be certain that if there's any ammunition dumps that are still there that we can either control them or destroy them?

SHARP:

Sir, we -- every time we find an ammunition dump out there, we assess, number one, how quickly can somebody take things out of that ammunition dump.

If it looks like it's the type ammunition and weapons that could go against coalition forces, we immediately secure them. Is that to say that they are all completely secured across the country? No. There are some that have been covered up so that they could not be stolen.

But we find ammunition caches every day and are using our forces to be able to try to destroy those and guard those.

BIDEN:

Well, there are at least five major militias. The Dawa Party, the Badr Brigade, the two Kurdish parties' militias -- is it a -- I'm not saying that some of this should or shouldn't. Is it our policy, as part of the mission of Abizaid in Iraq, to disarm the militias?

BIDEN:

That's my specific question for anyone to answer, including you, General. Is that part of the mission statement?

SHARP:

Sir, the mission is to not allow any of the militia forces in order to be able to go against the rule of law in Iraq.

BIDEN:

With all due respect, General, that's not an answer. The question is: Are the militias -- are we specifically have as a mission statement to disarm the Dawa Party's militia, roughly about 10,000 people, the Badr Brigade, roughly 10,000 militia by your numbers? Now, I'm not making them; I mean, these are numbers I get from you guys.

Is that part of the mission? I'm not suggesting it has to be. Is that part of the mission?

WOLFOWITZ:

Senator, I think the correct interpretation of the mission statement that General Sharp just gave you is that is not part of the mission unless it is necessary to bring them under control.

In the case of Sadr, it's proving to be necessary. In the case of the Kurdish militias, for example, it would give us -- frankly, it would be a source of instability if we were to try to go out and forcibly disarm them. In fact, they have been a source of stability in many parts of the country; not one you want to rely on long term.

The approach to those militias is to try over time to integrate them into new Iraqi security forces. And the real answer to disarming militias is to create an alternative security institution. And then the militias can go away.

BIDEN:

Just a real quick adjunct to that, are we using the Badr Brigade or the Dawa militia -- allowing them to independently engage Sadr in Najaf?

It's one thing to integrate the militias into a U.S. command structure so that there is some cooperation. And it's another thing -- and I'm not saying one's right or wrong, just it's a different thing to essentially give a green light to one of the militias to take on another militia in Iraq.

With regard to Najaf and Sadr, are any existing Iraqi militia engaged, given the green light, to take on Sadr?

WOLFOWITZ:

You say engage or given a green light. Engaged they may do on their own. Green light means, I think, under our direction or command.

BIDEN:

No, not command, just saying, "Go to it, guys, any way you want." Not our command.

WOLFOWITZ:

Senator, that is precisely what we're trying to avoid is...

BIDEN:

That's why I'm asking the question.

WOLFOWITZ:

We are trying to avoid it. I can't say that someone -- I mean, we're making a lot of, as Secretary Armitage called them, audibles. And tactical commanders have to decide what is the best way to bring law and order. And I wouldn't want to rule if at some point, in order to deal with what you understand is one of our fundamental dilemmas in Najaf, which is coalition...

BIDEN:

I'm truly agnostic in this. I'm just trying to get at what the deal is.

WOLFOWITZ:

Understand. And I'm trying to say we're agnostic.

The principle is to establish law and order in a disciplined way and to do it without putting coalition forces into the areas of the holy shrines in Najaf and Karbala.

And that's why we're proceeding very carefully. We want Iraqis to do it as much as possible. We want regular Iraqi security forces to do it as much as possible. If some commander came and said, "There's a militia force here that I would like to use," I'm sure it would be scrutinized pretty carefully but I wouldn't rule it out as a possibility.

LUGAR:

Mr. Secretary, it looks like you've got your uniform back on. What's...

ARMITAGE:

No, I don't dare. But just there have been some reports, that the Badr Corps, as far as I know independently, have conducted some what I'd call low-level operations against the Mahdi Army.

BIDEN:

Thank you.

LUGAR:

Thank you, Senator Biden.  
Senator Nelson?

NELSON:

Senator Biden, I'm not nearly as agnostic. I think we're going to have to have more troops.

BIDEN:

Oh, I'm not agnostic on the troops. I meant on the issue of whether or not -- I just wanted to find out if and how we are engaging, using and/or dealing with the militias of consequence in Iraq. That's what I meant. I wasn't making a statement.

BIDEN:

I said for purposes of the question, I'm agnostic on that issue. I'm not agnostic on the fact, if you may recall, I am literally the very first person here to call for significant increase in the number of American troops, a year and two months ago.

NELSON:

Well, as you have been a mentor to so many of us, I agree with you on that issue. And that is a predicate to ask this question: Given the fact that we have seen, for example, when we were ready to take on Fallujah, parts of the Iraq civil defense force melted away -- I know we are going through the training. I've been to one of the training camps for the police in Jordan.

But when it came time for the ICDC to perform, they suddenly vanished. That's one of the reasons that I think we're going to have to have more troops, not less troops. And I was somewhat concerned when I saw in the London Times of yesterday that the shift of

focus seems to be from talking about forces staying in Iraq as long as it takes to now that there's much more of a focus of our forces leaving.

And specifically, the London Times is talking about that Blair and Bush are drawing up plans to speed the pull-out.

Mr. Secretary Wolfowitz, you want to talk about that?

WOLFOWITZ:

I wouldn't believe everything I read in the London Times, certainly not that one.

We are looking at sustaining pretty high levels of U.S. forces, and certainly higher than we anticipated earlier, for some time. And I would add, you know, we knew there were problems with the ICDC in Fallujah, the locally recruited one. The 36th battalion of the ICDC by the way, which was not a local battalion, did come to Fallujah, did do some pretty serious fighting.

If you go up to Mosul where General Petraeus' 101st Airborne Division trained ICDC, I think more effectively than anywhere else in the country, they stood their ground and fought successfully and defended the government house in Mosul.

So it's a mixed picture.

What we believe is very important is that we think we know how to improve the picture in places like Mosul from good to excellent and in places like Fallujah from terrible to hopefully at least moderate.

NELSON:

How did they perform in Ramadi?

WOLFOWITZ:

Probably not very well.

NELSON:

They melted away.

WOLFOWITZ:

And in some cases they helped the enemy. That's one of our problems.

NELSON:

Mr. Secretary Armitage, you know my...  
(CROSSTALK)

WOLFOWITZ:

Senator Nelson, if I might say, so everyone understands, Fallujah and Ramadi have been, since the beginning, the most difficult parts of the country with the most seriously embedded elements of the old regimes there fighting us.

NELSON:

Mr. Secretary, you know my personal affection and respect for you. I want to pick up on the question that Senator Dodd was asking and follow that.

ARMITAGE:

I'd be glad to discuss that now.

We, along with our European friends, we have been skeptical from the beginning about their willingness to stop the nuclear program.

Our European friends have been somewhat less skeptical. But in recent months, given the difficulty that the IAEA has had in getting Iran to do what they said they'd do, ratify the additional protocol and throw open to inspection those things which need to be thrown open for inspection, I'd say there is a gathering feeling in Europe that they're hiding and they're holding something out.

NELSON:

You are going to be getting a letter that Senator Ensign and I are now circulating for signatures on this subject. It's addressed to the president, but I'm sure that you all will weigh on it. And this is something that I would like to follow up in detail perhaps in a closed session. The concern of the interest of the United States being threatened by a nuclear Iran, of course, is enormous.

Could you tell us something about, Mr. Secretary, the corruption in the ministries in Iraq?

ARMITAGE:

There is a lot of speculation in the very free Iraqi press about this. Anyone who is seen participating in the Governing Council is, at one time or another as far as I can see, accused of these matters.

There are some investigations, which are ongoing, which I would prefer not to mention here, and would refer you to I.G.s and others.

But I think there is a lot of speculation that makes it seem that it's a lot higher than it is.

Having said that, there is no question people, some people have used their positions to enrich themselves, or people around them have used their position to enrich themselves without necessarily reference to the principal.

NELSON:

Either you or Secretary Wolfowitz, would you care to comment about the cutting off of the payments to Mr. Chalabi?

WOLFOWITZ:

That was a decision that was made in light of the process of transferring sovereignty to the Iraqi people. We felt it was no longer appropriate for us to continue funding in that fashion.

There has been some very valuable intelligence that's been gathered through that process that's been very important for our forces, but we will seek to obtain that in the future through normal intelligence channels.

NELSON:

Mr. Chairman, thank you.

LUGAR:

Thank you very much, Senator Nelson.  
Senator Corzine?

CORZINE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I appreciate the hearings you're having. I think the topics on the table are absolutely essential for us to explore. I have to say I'm a little out of sync with some of my colleagues. I think there is a basic question that I think needs answering: Are we ready for anything that looks like a credible transfer of sovereignty on June 30th?

I don't understand how we can be so bent on it when we don't know -- we're told that sovereignty would include the ability of the Iraqis to formulate foreign policy and diplomatic relationships, and then I wonder how they're going to deal with the Iranians post-June 30th.

CORZINE:

I don't understand what it means to transfer sovereignty when the command and control of prisons is not yet identified, if I heard a response to Senator Hagel's questions earlier on and questions about contracting of projects, which at least Secretary Armitage's comment said would be under the control of the chief of mission would assume the ultimate authority for all the projects and contracts as of July 1.

ARMITAGE:

U.S.-appropriated money, sir.

CORZINE:

Right.

Well, are the Iraqis going to be able to make that distinction and understanding with regard to how that operates either with regard to contractors or major projects that are going on?

I think a failed transfer runs grave risks for the long-run potential of success of providing a stable and democratic Iraq over a period of time. And it may be good politics to make sure that we no longer have "occupying power" after our name. But if it is the public regime or if it is ineffectual, it may end up setting a framework for failure in the long-term.

So I'm really troubled by it. And I make that more as a statement. I do have serious questions about how they formulate foreign policy and diplomatic representation in conjunction with how you're going to deal with the Iranians if they get in.

ARMITAGE:

Thank you, Senator Corzine. I followed very closely your very excellent questions to my colleague, Marc Grossman, and these are clearly a follow-on to that. So you've had these concerns for some time.

You're dead right, as far as I can see. An ineffectual or a faulty transition would be a disaster for us. A puppet would even be worse.



The TAL annex, which is to be written, is going to contain -- and it will be written by Iraqis -- the duties and the responsibilities of this caretaker government until January of 2005.

It is not an elected government, which has been remarked upon by all concerned, including Ayatollah Sistani. And as it's not the truly representative government, it has to be somewhat careful and circumscribed in what it actually does.

Ambassador Brahimi envisions that this government will run the operations day to day.

What does this mean in foreign policy? They'll send out diplomatic communications. They could, in theory, establish relations with Iran over time. I'm sure they will. All the other neighbors have relationships with Iran.

They make their own autonomous judgments. They run their budgets. They take their money from the oil and they distribute it to meet their budget needs.

So in everything, I think, except the ability to make long-range lasting agreements, which tie the hands of a democratically government, they will have full sovereignty.

ARMITAGE:

Now, that's not Rich Armitage's view. This is Mr. Brahimi's view. This, I believe, is the view of the leading Iraqis who want to be sovereign but don't want to have the binding agreements in the long-run signed by somebody who is going to be there for seven months.

CORZINE:

Well, it may not be treaties and long-run policies, but it is the opening for dialogue that might be contradictory to establishing security and stability on the ground in Southern Iraq as we were just commenting on in another dialogue.

I just think my point really gets at, that this transfer of sovereignty doesn't feel to this senator as flushed out in detail in a way that the American people, or at least I could convey to the people that I represent, that it has been challenged.

And I don't know whether there are any contingency plans if it doesn't work. You know, is there serious thinking about what happens if a lot of these questions, which are reasonable for indefinite answers, at this point, although we are only 44 days from this so-called transfer, are we dealing with contingencies if this comes unwound?

ARMITAGE:

I would run the risk of being seen in your eyes as a wiseguy I'd say. I'd prefer to look at this somewhat like people prefer to look at the music of Wagner: it's better than it sounds.

It may be better than it sounds, particularly if the people in Iraq buy it. That's what's important...

CORZINE:

I couldn't agree more.

ARMITAGE:

... and if the leading lights in Iraq and the intellectuals and the academics, if they see it as a way forward, which dramatically makes the points that we're not occupiers, we're

is a very impressive man -- the current foreign minister. I don't know if he will continue in that job.

At some point -- and sooner rather than later -- it's important for them to make their decisions. It's important for them to feel it's their country. I agree with what I think was the thrust of Senator Biden's comments, that that will make the situation safer for our forces while they are there and make it possible for us to leave sooner rather than later.

I think it might also help the American people to realize that we've been in a similarly uncertain process in Afghanistan since December of 2001 when a virtually unknown man named Hamid Karzai was selected by the same ambassador, Lakhdar Brahimi, to lead the Afghan transitional administration.

And it's been successful, I think remarkably successful, because that wasn't the end of the process, it was the start of a process, and a process that has led to a successful constitution for Afghanistan, a process that will lead to elections in Afghanistan.

But let's be clear. I mean, democracy...

CORZINE:

Also been very flexible with respect to a timetable, too. There have been lots of slippages and movements and changes.

WOLFOWITZ:

And we need to be prepared to call audibles (ph), as Secretary Armitage said. But we also -- the purpose of all of this is not to meet any timetable of ours. It's to develop confidence on the part of the Iraqis that we're not there to take over their country, we're not there to seize their oil. We will stay while they need us, but they need to step up and take responsibility. And when they do so, they will make some decisions that we don't like.

You know, we have a terrific ally in South Korea, a democratic ally, that has its own views about security on the Peninsula, it's own views about how to deal with North Korea. We're much better off for having that democratic ally than having some American puppet that does exactly what we say.

CORZINE:

I would concur with the analysis with regard to Korea. I think it took, what, 50 years? 30 years? It took a very, very long time.

WOLFOWITZ:

We're very much in the walking stage. But you've got to walk at some point.

LUGAR:

Thank you very much, Senator Corzine.

Senator Biden and I have just a couple of questions each, and then we will conclude the hearing.

Let me ask this basic question: Many scholars who have appeared before our committee have talked about the whole proposition of whether Iraqis feel like they want to be Iraqis as opposed to Kurds or Sunnis or Shiites or members of Arab tribes. And this

becomes a crucial question at the point that sovereignty passes and as we turn over more authority, as we will be doing, to Iraq.

What is your own basic assumption about the nationhood status, as opposed to the worst case scenario? And that is that the Kurds or the Sunnis or others do not find the arrangement satisfactory, either in the interim period or in the constitutional formulation, and as a result want a carve-out or want separatism or want their own situation and are prepared to fight about it and to create, if not a civil war, at least elements of instability, purely by their desire to not be co-opted,

ARMITAGE:

This possibility certainly exists. And we're very alert to it. And during the whole discussion of federalism, we were alert to it. And federalism, which devolves power to more local communities, but one that's based not on ethnicity, but on location, is where we went.

I think we're somewhat heartened that thus far, even in the face of someone who's vowed intention was to bring about civil war, Zarqawi, that we haven't had it. And even in very troubled places, where the Sunnis had displaced the Kurds in various cities and taken their lands under Saddam Hussein's rule, the violence that one would expect to occur after that has been somewhat lessened, partially because IOM and others have been in there working hard, but partially I think because most Iraqis are willing to give it a ride and see where it goes.

WOLFOWITZ:

Senator Lugar, actually it was the same day that we were in the al-Rashid Hotel when it was attacked; that evening, we had dinner with Abdel Aziz al-Hakim, the head of SCIRI organization, the younger brother of Abdel Bakr Hakim, who was brutally assassinated in Najaf last August.

WOLFOWITZ:

This was late October. And I said to him that I thought there was a lot that Iraqis might profitably learn from our constitution about the rule of law, separation of powers and so forth.

But I thought that they have two problems that are uniquely Iraqi, that we probably couldn't help them much on. One was the issue that you're alluding to, of regional separation. And the other, I said, was the role of religion.

And I was frankly surprised when he showed enormous knowledge of our constitution. He said, "No, I think your constitution is the answer to one and a half of our two problems."

And he proceeded to explain that the answer in his view, to maintain the unity of Iraq, is what they call regional federalism, federalism that is based not on a Kurdish bloc and a Sunni bloc and a Shia bloc, but rather much more local autonomy.

And I do think a key part of holding that country together is to convince Iraqis that it's not going to be held together in the old-fashioned way, it's not going to be held together by a brutal central rule from Baghdad, that people will have a great deal of local autonomy.

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And I think what we're counting on is Iraqis develop the capacity to provide for their own internal security, very few of them I think want to see Syria influencing things or Turkey influencing things or Iran influencing things, and certainly not doing it at the point of a gun.

LUGAR:

But we trust they will have the ability to repel that, I suspect -- that's axiomatic -- make sure it doesn't happen.

I'm just curious, in the U.N. resolution that we're attempting to work with, should there perhaps be some clause that indicates the international community would come to the rescue of Iraq, in the event there was external effort, really, to terminate this country or to invade it?

In other words, you've mentioned the international community will not look kindly on this. Well that's quite true. But isn't this the time to formalize what the international community is prepared to do about that?

And by that, I mean the whole community, not just the United States. .

ARMITAGE:

I think my initial impression of that idea, Mr. Chairman, is that somewhere in the preparatory paragraphs of the U.N. Security Council resolution could express views about territorial integrity and all that, and the need to respect it and how we'd view disfavor against that.

But in the operative paragraphs, I think you'd find it very difficult to keep the Security Council on board to some ironclad, "We will do X if Y happens."

ARMITAGE:

I think that would actually complicate matters if we put that in one of the operative paragraphs.

LUGAR:

Well, I agree, it would. I'm just concerned about the fact that we have already had great difficulty with the Security Council in terms of responsibility beyond our own. And clearly if we are to attempt to move on to Iraqi sovereignty and a lesser United States role and others have not stepped forward despite all the invitations, it would be well to discuss this in advance.

ARMITAGE:

No, indeed, it will be. I have no doubts that your comments will be viewed with great interest.

I would note, Mr. Chairman, that on Iraq particularly, we've had three 15-0 votes in the Security Council since our one failure prior to the war. So there's a great deal of comity of views out there on the need to get it right.

LUGAR:

Well, that is reassuring.

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WOLFOWITZ:

Mr. Chairman, it strikes me that what you're suggesting certainly should be the goal going forward. I'm not saying tactically. I can't judge whether this next resolution will bear that load or not. But, it seems to me, putting that idea forward and moving toward it over time is certainly something that we ought to be trying to accomplish.

LUGAR:

Perhaps Ambassador Negroponte in both of his hats, as it turns out, might offer this counsel during the course of his work at the U.N. prior to going to Baghdad.

WOLFOWITZ:

By the way, I might add, we're very lucky to have him.

LUGAR:

I agree.

Senator Biden?

BIDEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Gentlemen, there's been -- I've been impressed with this hearing more than any other that we've had or other committees have had at the more willingness to acknowledge things that we miscalculated. And I think that gives the American people some confidence, because obviously everybody knows things aren't going as initially planned. And it's an oversimplification, but up to now there has been basically: Steady as we go, we're doing great, things are OK. It's like I said to the secretary, I think it's like that Calypso song that was popular years ago, "Don't Worry, Be Happy," you know, I mean, everything's fine. And you guys today more than any time that I recall hearing in the last several months have said: Well, you know, we need some changes, we miscalculated. For example, you said, Secretary Wolfowitz, you certainly are there, we're going to be there longer and with more forces than we thought initially and so on.

And I say that as a compliment. That's not a backhanded criticism. I want to emphasize, I think it leads people to say: OK, you know, these guys get it, they acknowledge they know there's got to be some changes.

But what I don't get a sense of, because we didn't get to specific specifics, and maybe it exists, is, for lack of a better phrase, there seems to be a little bit of a lack of imagination right now about doing what I hope we all agree needs to be done. We got to sort of change the mindset here of the American people about the possibilities of success; the Iraqi people about the genuineness of us wanting to hand it over to them in an orderly way so they can succeed; about the region looking at our motives; about the Europeans and the Asians, how they think of us.

And I understand we can make a legal case that existing U.N. resolutions give us essentially a status-of-forces agreement already, authorize us to do a number of things.

BIDEN:

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But what I'd like to touch on for just a few minutes here is the use of the resolution, the purpose of the resolution, not only substantively, but diplomatically in the much larger sense. What do we want to communicate, not just factually accomplish, but strategically in the diplomatic sense, accomplish?

And it seems to me that one of the things that would be very important is to get a new U.N. resolution that specifically authorized a multinational force and, if possible, assuming we could do the preparatory work, under a command that was no specifically U.S. command, but in fact U.S. command. I can only think of one outfit: NATO.

It would seem to me it would be useful if we were able to in that U.N. resolution be able to get named, essentially, a referee, so the only major figure with whom there was any discussion was not the Iraqi acting government and Mr. Negroponte, so there's somebody else in there, not just generically, but somebody.

It would seem to me to communicate this notion -- based on, Secretary Wolfowitz, your comments about my comments about elections being sort of the grail we're holding out there to be accomplished -- that the more, sort of, detail we can put into the resolution, the longer political legs in terms of what is my basic premise, which is that it's just simply in raw street terms it's going to be hard for these guys to be seen to cooperate with us in order to get it right because of the nature of -- 1,000 reasons, culturally, all the way from there to the specific incidences at Abu Ghraib prison and everything in between.

And here's my point, and here's the question. In order to get those bigger pieces done -- or what I consider, maybe it's the wrong adjective -- but these things done in a resolution, it seems to me there is a practical need at various levels to give up some of the total control of the political situation and the political future of Iraq.

That's why I've been toying with this thing. I've been banging it around. I know State is banging around other concepts. I suspect Defense is, as well. I know Dr. Rice said she was about -- what do you call it? -- an international support group, a board of directors, a contact group.

But in order to do any of that, when I speak to these leaders whether or not they're foreign ministers or our European friends and friends in the region or heads of state that I've had the opportunity to speak to, they all basically come back with one thing: Well, we want a piece of the action, meaning the political decision -- actually sit down and be able to -- a little bit like, General, when you go to the MAC you sit there and you actually work out. I forget the literal military term. You actually work out a document that specifies what you're about to undertake as NATO.

I mean, it's not generic. It's very specific. I mean, you know, you don't fly spec everything, but it's very specific.

That same kind of interchange, whomever I speak with, whether it's the Brits, the Germans, the Russians, the Belgians -- well, I haven't spoken to the Russians, I take that back -- the French, the Italians, the Jordanians, the Egyptians, they all are looking for a chance to sit at that table and actually bang out with us, "OK, here's the deal. This is the political game plan. These are the steps. These are the objectives," as opposed to being asked to sign onto a well thought out, arguably, plan that we've come up with that sets election dates, transition dates, you know and so on.

And so, for example, I was told before I came in one of the secretaries indicated that we've already turned over de facto sovereignty to seven, 10, 12 Iraqi ministries.

We've had discussions with him. Iraqis have had discussions with him. This is even more important.

Or maybe he wanted P-5, plus neighbors, plus E.U. We recently had discussions with the E.U. on this.

So I'm not sure that any of us are off the page. We're all on the same page. Whether we're going fast enough or imagine it's isn't enough, I don't know.

We've had discussions with de Hoop Scheffer at NATO about this. And I would characterize him as very interested, the secretary general, in this matter. Not ready to take it on. Doesn't think the body is ready yet. But we don't let him...

BIDEN:

Here's where I am. I apologize. I'll finish this in a second. A high-ranking -- a high-ranking by definition, a foreign minister is high-ranking -- a foreign minister, one of our major NATO allies was here in recent weeks.

BIDEN:

We had a private meeting with him, and I raised NATO.

ARMITAGE:

I'll do the investigative work and figure out who this was.

BIDEN:

I don't want to -- you know, I mean, it's pretty obvious, but I don't want to -- and told me how, "No, no, NATO, we can't do that." And on the way out I said, "By the way, if the president of the United States gets on a plane and went to your capital and said, 'Mr. Leader of this country, I want this,' could he say no?" He said, "Don't do that."

The truth is the president, quote, figuratively speaking, gets -- the only person to do this now is the president. Every single solitary person from four stars to undersecretaries to secretaries can't do it. They're going to get the answer.

WOLFOWITZ:

Not even deputy secretaries.

BIDEN:

Deputy secretaries can't even do it, and you are an incredibly competent person. You can't do it because they don't want to do this, they don't want to wear the jacket, they don't want to get into the deal, but they know they're going to have to get into the deal.

And so, does the Defense Department support the notion of literally creating a contact group that actually oversaw the political transition? Would you support that at Defense? Have you talked about it?

WOLFOWITZ:

It's a general -- let me put it this way.

BIDEN:

No, it's very specific.

WOLFOWITZ:

I certainly agree with the spirit of what you're suggesting, and we have been eager to get a larger NATO role. We'd love to see a larger NATO role.

I appreciate what you said earlier on, that it may only generate 3,000 or 4,000 additional troops, but that it's symbolically important.

I think it is important, by the way, on that point for people to be realistic. I don't think anybody is going to want to put a lot of troops into Iraq until...

BIDEN:

Absolutely not.

WOLFOWITZ:

... the killing stops. It's that we're stuck.

BIDEN:

Absolutely.

WOLFOWITZ:

We and the Iraqis are stuck.

But I think the symbolism is important. I think, especially at this stage, we ought to be careful about deciding ourselves who's an appropriate contact group. The Iraqis have a lot to say about it. I'm not sure they want...

BIDEN:

No. As you know, in the beginning, I said I would include the Iraqis in determining who that should be. I don't want to...

WOLFOWITZ:

I think the spirit of it, we agree and one of the reasons -- we agree very strongly that anything that puts U.S. troops in the background instead of the foreground, that reduces the appearance that we're there as an occupying power, that reduces the appearance that we're there unilaterally, I think improves our chances for success.

BIDEN:

OK. Well, I'll conclude...

(CROSSTALK)

WOLFOWITZ:

Let me just say, I mean, more than 30 countries are there with us, and those are the countries...

BIDEN:

No, I know.

WOLFOWITZ:



... that really I think need to get pride of place in anything we do.  
(CROSSTALK)

BIDEN:

Look, I don't give a damn about anybody else's pride or place anymore.

BIDEN:

The only pride I'm worried about right now is the Iraqi pride, because unless we figure out how to somewhat satisfy the Iraqi pride, we're all in deep, deep, deep, deep, deep, deep trouble.

And so what I mean by Iraqi pride, which is a way for me to conclude, Mr. Chairman, is that the new president, the new prime minister, the new vice president, they ain't going to want to hang out with you. They're not going to want to hang out with you.

You need to give them an excuse. You need to give them a straw man. You need to give them something for them to say: Something's changed here.

You're still going to have the same 140,000 American troops there. They're still going to be your guys, General. And it's still going to be their job.

But you got to have an excuse. You got to have an excuse. Take it from a plain, old politician who got elected to this place when I was 29. I may not know much, but I know politics. You got to give them an excuse. No kidding. I'm not joking about this.

And so what happens here is, I think we think too much -- to use a trite phrase these days -- too much "inside the box" here.

For example, if I could wave a wand, I'd find a NATO general who's not an American who headed up the force in Iraq. He still has Jonesy looking over him. Jones still runs the show. He's still the supreme allied commander. I'd want to see somebody in a bright, different colored uniform standing there.

I don't care what country he's from. Because you got to give these guys an excuse, fellows. If you don't, if you don't, I respectfully suggest this is not going to work.

And you got to give the countries who know they have to be involved -- it's a little, you know what it's like? It's a little bit like when God forbid a woman feels a lump in her chest, in her breast, she knows, God, the best thing to do is immediately go to the doctor, immediately get it checked out.

Or a guy's having trouble, and he thinks it may be prostate cancer, he knows he should immediately get it checked out.

But what do we do? Human beings go: Ah, that's OK, it's all right. Because, if you go, you're afraid of the answer you might get. That's human nature.

Well, you know, that's where most of our friends are -- our European powers. They know they got to get in the game. But they're going to do everything to not go to the doctor. And the doc has to show up at the house and say, "You need the exam."

The doc -- his name is Bush. He's the doc. He's got to show up on the door step. He's got to say, "Look, we need this. You need this. I'm willing to deal -- not on the essentials. I'm willing to lay out and be part of a negotiation of how we move from here. But this is the deal."

Because, for example, the question when we talk about Iraqi forces: Can Iraqi forces opt out of an operation? I don't worry about that. Because I have no faith in their forces anyway.

I worry whether they can opt us out. Can a new Iraqi government say, "Woah, boys, no, no, no, no, no, no; no Fallujah, no this, no that"? It's a different question. We won't get into that now.

But the point I'm making is the president has to be the doctor here, fellows. Because each of these countries know they can't afford us to lose, and I strongly recommend, for what it's worth, that you better figure out -- you guys, I don't mean you particularly -- the administration better get together in a game plan, specifically, not generically, specifically how we're going to get other people in.

BIDEN:

And I have great respect for the troops that are there, Paul, from the 29 or 30 other countries. I really do. But come home with me, nobody knows they're there. Come with me back to Missouri where I was last week. Nobody knows they're there. When they leave, they don't even know they left.

And so we've got to get some of the big dogs in the pen even if they just hang out, don't do anything, just hang out, because you've got to change the face of this. Anyway, I appreciate your time.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And with your permission, gentlemen, I may just drop you, not even for the record, but I'd like to importune you on the telephone about some specifics that we haven't had a chance to get to here.

ARMITAGE:

Look forward to it.

BIDEN:

Thank you very much.

LUGAR:

Thank you very much. Senator Biden. I agree with your earlier comment that the participation of the committee members today, the interesting questions that were asked, and important responses that we had furthered all of our understanding. And we appreciate your time and your patience.

But I think this was a good example of congressional oversight. And it will continue tomorrow. We look forward to another hearing on Iraq with people outside of our government who may offer us some constructive advice. We thank you. And the hearing is adjourned.

ARMITAGE:

Thank you.

WOLFOWITZ:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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