

**BRIEFING ON IRAQ AND
HEARING ON THE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2008**

BRIEFING AND HEARING
BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS
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IRAQ

THURSDAY, JANUARY 11, 2007

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:05 p.m. in room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Tom Lantos (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Chairman LANTOS. The Committee on Foreign Affairs will please come to order.

It is my great pleasure to welcome our most distinguished Secretary of State, Dr. Condoleezza Rice. In her 2 years at the helm of the Department of State, Dr. Rice brought her enormous foreign policy acumen to this hearing room on several occasions, and today marks the start of what we all hope will be her many appearances before the Foreign Affairs Committee under its new management. We are delighted to have you, Dr. Rice.

Let me also say, to set the stage both for you and for our colleagues, we all look forward to your next engagement with us on February 7th to discuss the budget requests from the Department of State; and, as is our practice, on that occasion we will have an opportunity to engage in a kind of comprehensive tour on the horizon that only you can provide.

Today, our focus is basically on Iraq, but I would like to give you an opportunity, Madam Secretary, to tell us at whatever length you choose your plans and your goals in terms of your upcoming visits to the Middle East. We certainly wish you the very best on this journey. You are confronting many difficult problems and we know you will discharge your responsibilities always with enormous skill.

Unfortunately, we will be having votes called shortly, so I will forgo my opening remarks and call on my good friend and distinguished colleague, the ranking member, to say whatever she chooses; and then we will turn it over to the Secretary.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much, Chairman Lantos. It is a joy to be serving with you as ranking member, and I also will forgo my opening statement until later so that we can hear from the Secretary.

Chairman LANTOS. Madam Secretary, on behalf of all members of the committee, welcome. We are delighted to have you, and we would be grateful if you could tell us as in as much length as you choose what your upcoming visit to the Middle East is designed to achieve.

**STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE CONDOLEEZZA RICE,
SECRETARY OF STATE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE**

Secretary RICE. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman; and thank you very much, Congresswoman Ros-Lehtinen. I look forward to continuing our long consultations. The fact is that we have worked very well together, Mr. Chairman, when you were ranking, and I look forward to your chairmanship of this committee.

Let me just say a few words about Iraq. I have a longer statement, Mr. Chairman, that I would like to have entered into the record.

Chairman LANTOS. Without objection.

Secretary RICE. In the opportunity of time, I will not read that. I just want to underscore a couple of things, and I will speak to the Middle East more broadly because I think it flows from the comments I will make on Iraq.

I think as I come before you today we all know this is a crucial moment for the United States. We all understand the enormous stakes in Iraq, the enormous stakes for our country, for the region, a region in which we have extremely important interests and have had long-standing interests and indeed, because of the centrality of that region, the importance for the world of a favorable outcome in Iraq. And just as we recognize the stakes are enormous, we also, as the President said last night, recognize that the current situation in Iraq is unacceptable. So if we put those two together, it means that we need a new strategy for dealing with Iraq.

Last night, the President laid out his views of how we might proceed. We understand that the current situation, the current strategy is not really working.

I would just underscore a couple of things about the new strategy. The first is that it is extremely important to recognize that the Iraqis face—after the Samara Golden Mosque bombing, after February 2006, an event that was carried out by al-Qaeda precisely to stoke sectarian violence between Shi'a and Sunnis, it was planned by the al-Qaeda to do that—the Iraqis face a different set of circumstances where the important political process that they are engaged in is threatened to be overrun by the inability to control Baghdad, the inability to provide population security for the people of Baghdad. What the President said last night and what we are talking about today is the urgent need to do something about the problem in Baghdad.

But I want to be very clear. It is an Iraqi responsibility to do something about this sectarian violence. No one believes that America can determine what kind of Iraq there is going to be. Is it going to be an Iraq for all people or is it going to be sectarian and divisive? That is something the Iraqis have to decide.

But if you believe, as we do, that they are now demonstrating, have now told us of their will to deal with that problem, the question is: Do they have the capability? It is the assessment of our political and military people in the field that they don't actually have the capability to deal with the urgent problem in Baghdad, they will bring their best forces from all around the country, but that we need to augment that effort, and that is the surge of American forces to which the President spoke last night.

But, very clearly, it can only work if the Iraqis are prepared to make the tough choices, if they are prepared to behave in an even-handed fashion toward their population.

Secondly, we recognize that no military force can resolve these difficulties and indeed this needs to be a comprehensive strategy; and so the President has ordered and we, in State, are responding to the need for a civilian surge. That is to deal with the political and economic side as well. We have had very good effect with our provincial reconstruction teams which get us down to the local and provincial level. These are civil affairs, civil military teams that go into a province, work with the local people, work with the local leadership, help to get projects and job growth in a specific area.

We all in America are Federalists, and we know that we could not possibly have developed as a country if everything was dependent upon success in Washington. So this is an effort to support the Iraqis bottom up and to, frankly, have multiple points of success, rather than just being dependent on success in Baghdad. So we are increasing significantly the commitment to these provincial reconstruction teams to carry out these important tasks.

I might just mention that we are having some effect in a place like Anbar, which is the epicenter of al-Qaeda. We are seeing local leaders respond to this al-Qaeda threat. The local sheiks there got together. They brought 1,100 young men together. They sent them to Jordan for training, as they call them, Sons of Anbar, to come in and get in the fight against al-Qaeda; and the reason the President talked about a surge of forces into Anbar last night was to support those positive developments.

Now all of this has to be put in the context of the region; and here, Mr. Chairman, I will talk about your request to talk a little bit about what I plan to do in the Middle East.

Obviously, Iraq is now the epicenter of how the Middle East turns out. And our diplomacy has to recognize the importance of Iraq to the region and the region to Iraq, but it also has to recognize that it is a different Middle East, a Middle East in which there is a new alignment, and our diplomacy has to respond to that new alignment.

On the one side, you have extremist forces: Hezbollah, Hamas, Syria, and Iran. In fact, it is Iran the state that is most responsible for supporting those extremist forces. On the other side of the ledger, you have young reformist governments like Lebanon, the Government of Iraq and, of course, the positive forces in the Palestinian Territories like Mahmoud Abbas. But you also, of course, have states like Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Jordan, and the Gulf States.

We have organized our diplomacy around the proposition that you begin with those who share your views of how the Middle East ought to develop; and, therefore, our diplomacy and my trip will focus heavily on rallying the support of those responsible Arab states to support the Government of Iraq, to support what needs to be done there, to support, of course, also Lebanon and the moderate Palestinians.

But, as to Iraq, I do believe that the states of the Gulf and the Egyptians and the Jordanians understand increasingly that if they are to resist as much they want to, if they are to resist Iranian in-

fluence or increases in Iranian influence in the Middle East, something that they fear quite rightly, then it is going to require support for Iraq. Because Iraq can either be a barrier to further Iranian influence or it can become a bridge if it is not dealt with effectively.

So one of the most important elements of my trip will be to talk to those countries. I will talk with them individually in Egypt, in Jordan, and in Saudi Arabia. I will then meet with the Gulf States. The GCC+2 will have its fourth meeting since September, and it really is rallying the states around support for these moderate governments and in opposition to the extremists forces that Iran, in particular, and Syria, as the kind of sidecar, are trying to unleash in the region.

I know there has been a lot of talk about talking to Iran and Syria. I have talked to you, some of you, about that. Let me say that it is not that we fear or I fear talking to anyone, but you have to ask: On what basis do you carry out such a conversation? We have to separate them. With Syria, we have tried. Colin Powell talked to Syria. Rich Armitage talked to Syria. William Burns talked to Syria, and that was as recently as February 2005. Then the Hariri assassination froze everyone internationally with engagement with Syria.

But it is not that we haven't talked to Syria. The problem is Syria hasn't acted on such approaches. It has supported extremists in the opposite direction, continues to support extremist forces in the region, continues to try to bring down the Government of Fuad Sinoira in Lebanon, continues to harbor and house the most radical Palestinian factions that are rewarding process toward a Palestinian state.

So I can't imagine, frankly, what this conversation looks like. If you go to the Syrians and you say you need to stop destabilizing Iraq because it is in your interest to do so, most certainly they do know that; and if they believe it is in their interest to stop destabilizing Iraq, they will stop destabilizing Iraq. On the other hand, if the idea is that we go somehow as supplicant to ask them to help us in Iraq—and they will have a price, I can assure you, one can only imagine that price is the reintroduction of Syrian influence into Lebanon or perhaps to shave the edges off the tribunal that the Syrians seem to fear will find some connection to the Hariri murder.

With Iran, we have 27 years of policy that we did not have diplomatic engagement with Iran, but this administration said that we were prepared to do that if the Iranians would suspend their enrichment activities leading to the technologies that could lead to a nuclear weapon, because it doesn't make sense to talk while they keep improving their nuclear capability. I said, if they did so, I would meet them anyplace, anytime; and that offer still stands.

But if we are talking about, in the absence of that commitment from Iran, the following kind of engagement: We go to the Iranians and as supplicants say to the Iranians, "Help us to secure Iraq," do we really believe that the Iranians are going to treat Iraq over here and not demand that we do something to alleviate the pressure that we are now bringing on their nuclear program and their nuclear ambitions? I don't think it is going to happen.

So we believe that the appropriate place for diplomacy for the United States is to concentrate on this new alignment, Mr. Chairman and Congresswoman Ros-Lehtinen. It is an alignment that could be quite favorable to all of our interests, to a stable Lebanon that is free of Syrian influence, to an Iraq that has the support of the region, to a Palestinian state that could live side by side with Israel in peace. That is the alignment that is going to support those goals, and that is where I will be focused in the diplomacy that I undertake.

I should mention that we have supported the Iraqis when, as any state might do, they have engaged their neighbors even when they have engaged Iran or Syria. But it is fine for the Iraqis to carry that activity.

And, finally, I would note that we have an international compact which is a pardon between the international community and the Iraqis. The Iraqis would agree to do certain things—enact an oil law, fight corruption; certain other activities—and the international community would promise support. It seems to me this is something that could have a positive effect on support for Iraq but also a positive effect on developments for reform in Iraq.

Let me close, Mr. Chairman, by saying I have been listening to many from this body and to many from the Senate. We have talked to lots of people. The President listened to advisors, old ones like me, who have been a part of this since the beginning and bear the responsibility for both good decisions and bad decisions; and he has talked to new advisors like Secretary Gates, who comes with a fresh look.

We understand the skepticism that we are hearing about whether or not this strategy can and will work. We understand that a lot rests on whether or not the Iraqi Government finally makes the difficult decisions that it needs to make. We also understand the continuing heartache that America experiences with the death of our men and women, whether in uniform or the brave civilians also who are serving there, and we certainly understand the continuing concern about those who are still in harm's way. But after a lot of thought and after looking at a lot of different options, the President very much decided that this is the best option for us going forward.

I have heard many people say that we can not fail and therefore we need to give ourselves, and most importantly, the Iraqis, a chance to succeed. That, Mr. Chairman, is what the President laid out last night; and I hope that you will find a way to support it, each and every one of you.

Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Secretary Rice follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE CONDOLEEZZA RICE, SECRETARY OF STATE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee:

As I come before you today, America faces a crucial moment. We all know that the stakes in Iraq are enormous. And we all share the belief that the situation in Iraq is unacceptable. On this we are united.

The new way forward that President Bush outlined last night requires us to do things differently. Most importantly, the Iraqis have devised their own strategy, and our efforts will support theirs. To do so, we will further decentralize and diversify our civilian presence in Iraq to better assist the Iraqi people. We will further integrate our civilian and military operations. And we will fashion a regional strategy

that supports reformers and responsible leaders in Iraq and across the Broader Middle East.

Among Americans and Iraqis, there is no confusion over one basic fact: It is *Iraqis* who are responsible for what kind of country Iraq will be. It is *they* who must decide whether Iraq will be characterized by national unity or sectarian conflict. The President has conveyed to the Iraqi leadership that we will support their good decisions, but that America's patience is limited.

Iraqis are now engaged in a task without precedent in their history. Iraq rests on the main religious and ethnic fault lines in the Middle East, and for centuries, Iraqis have settled their differences through oppression and violence. Now they are attempting to do so peacefully and politically. This is not easy, and as one could expect, many Iraqis have deep grievances, which some violent men interpret as a license to kill innocent people.

Baghdad has become the center of this conflict. We know that Al-Qaeda deliberately sought to provoke sectarian violence in Iraq by targeting Shia civilians. With last February's bombing of the Golden Mosque in Samarra, the success of their plan accelerated. Sectarian passions, incited to violence, now threaten to overwhelm Iraq's fragile, yet promising, process of reconciliation—a process that has produced successful elections and a new constitution, substantial agreement on a law to share Iraq's oil fairly, and commitment to a more reasonable approach to "de-baathification."

To succeed with national reconciliation, the Iraqi government must improve security for its people, particularly in Baghdad. Iraqis themselves must take up this essential challenge. They must protect their population from criminals and violent extremists who kill innocent Iraqis in the name of sectarian grievance. The Iraqi government must reestablish civil order in Baghdad to regain the trust of its people and control of its capital. President Bush has decided to augment our forces to help the Iraqis achieve this mission. Secretary Gates will have more to say on this.

Success in Iraq, however, relies on more than military efforts alone; it also requires robust political and economic progress. Our military operations must be fully integrated with our civilian and diplomatic efforts, across the entire U.S. government, to advance the strategy that I laid out before you last year: "clear, hold, and build." All of us in the State Department fully understand our role in this mission, and we are prepared to play it. We are ready to strengthen, indeed to "surge," our civilian efforts.

Our political and economic strategy mirrors our military plan: Iraqis are in the lead; we are supporting them. Improvement in the security situation, especially in Baghdad, will open a window of opportunity for the Iraqi government to accelerate the process of national reconciliation. We can and will measure whether this work is being done. We recognize that the trend of political progress in Iraq is just as important as the end result. On the hydrocarbon law, for example, Iraqis are transcending sectarian differences and achieving a national purpose. The is a positive trend, and the process is moving in the right direction.

Iraqis must also take steps that accelerate economic development and growth. The government of Iraq has taken many important steps already on key economic issues, including policies to open Iraq's economy more fully and responsibly to foreign investment. The Iraqi government must now move urgently, especially in the most troubled areas, to deliver essential services to its people—programs that improve lives in meaningful ways, that restore confidence in national and local governance, and provide a stake in the country's future for all Iraqis who wish to see an expansion of hope rather than a continuation of violence. The Iraqi government is committing \$10 billion of its own resources to help create jobs, to break the logjams to growth in their economy, and to further national reconciliation.

To better disperse these new resources throughout the country, Iraqis are building new governmental structures. One innovation they have proposed is the creation of a new National Reconstruction Development Council, which would enable the Prime Minister to deliver resources faster and more effectively for major infrastructure projects. This Council will also help take the place of our own Relief and Reconstruction Fund. Another Iraqi innovation is the development of Project Management Units, to help Iraqis use their own resources more effectively to implement programs.

For these efforts to succeed, our support will be crucial. Since 2004, we have used money from the Iraq Relief and Reconstruction Fund and other programs to build infrastructure and help the central government move toward self-reliance. As we enter 2007, despite many problems, we have substantially and successfully completed this phase. As Iraqis take charge, we will narrow our focus in how we help their central government. Using FY 2006 Supplemental funding, we have worked with the Iraqis to improve their capacity to govern. Now, our advisory efforts will

concentrate on the most vital ministries. We will advise and invest our resources where we judge that our efforts will be most effective.

To oversee our economic support for the Iraqi people, and to ensure that it is closely integrated with our security strategy, I have appointed Tim Carney to the new position of coordinator for Iraq Transitional Assistance. He will be based in Baghdad and will work with Iraqi counterparts to facilitate a maximum degree of coordination in our economic and development efforts.

As Iraqis intensify efforts to improve lives, the main focus of our support will continue to shift toward helping the Iraqi government expand its reach, its relevance, and its resources beyond the Green Zone. We will help local leaders improve their capacity to govern and deliver public services. Our economic efforts will be more targeted on specific local needs with proven records of success, like micro-credit programs. And we will engage with leading private sector enterprises and other local businesses, including the more promising state-owned firms, to break the obstacles to growth.

Our decentralization of effort in Iraq will require a more decentralized presence. We must continue to get civilians and diplomats out of our embassy, out of the capital, and into the field, all across the country. The mechanism to do this is the Provincial Reconstruction Team, or PRT. We currently have ten PRTs deployed across Iraq, seven American and three coalition. Building on this existing presence, we plan to expand from 10 to at least 18 teams. For example, we will have six PRTs in Baghdad, not just one. We will go from one team in Anbar province to three—in Fallujah, Ramadi, and al Qaim. These PRTs will closely share responsibilities and reflect an unprecedented unity of civilian and military effort.

Expanding our PRT presence will also enable us to diversify our assistance across all of Iraq. Iraq has a federal government. Much of the street-level authority, and much of the opportunity for positive change in Iraq, lies outside the Green Zone, in local and provincial governments, with party leaders and tribal chiefs. By actively supporting these provincial groups and structures, we diversify our chances of success in Iraq. Our PRTs have had success working at the local level in towns like Mosul, Tikrit, and Tal Afar. Now we will invest in other parts of Iraq, like Anbar province, where local leaders are showing their desire and building their capacity to confront violent extremists and build new sources of hope for their people.

All total, we seek to deploy hundreds of additional civilians across Iraq to help Iraqis build their nation. And we will ask Congress to provide funding to support and secure our expanded civilian presence. We want to give our civilians, deployed in PRTs, the flexibility to devote extra resources where they can do the most good at the local level. Our expanded PRT presence will be a powerful tool to empower Iraq's reformers and responsible leaders in their struggle against violent extremism. We therefore plan to request, as part of our FY 2007 Supplemental, significant new operating funds for our PRTs, as well as hundreds of million of dollars to fund their programs. When we add in relevant USAID projects, we hope to approximately double our resource commitment to help local Iraqi communities through PRTs.

These commitments will not be indefinite. As I said earlier, one of our main objectives in this phase is to help the Iraqis use their own money to rebuild their country. The Iraqis have budgeted billions of dollars for this mission in 2007, and as their efforts become more effective, we have kept our FY 2008 requests limited. We want Iraqis to rely more and more on their own resources, their own people, and their own efforts. Therefore, by 2008 and 2009, the burden of local assistance should be assumed more effectively by the Iraqi government. In the meantime, though, our efforts will be vital.

The final piece of our effort is the development of a regional diplomatic strategy, which was a key recommendation of the Iraq Study Group. Iraq is central to the future of the Middle East. The security of this region is an enduring vital interest for the United States. America's presence in this part of the world contributes significantly to its stability and success. So as we recommit ourselves in Iraq, we are also enhancing our efforts to support reformers and responsible leaders in the region—and to deter and counter aggression to our friends and allies.

Our regional diplomacy is based on the substantially changed realities of the Middle East. Historic change is now unfolding in the region, and it is unleashing a great deal of tension, anxiety, and violence. But it is also revealing a new strategic alignment in the Middle East. This is the same alignment we see in Iraq. On one side are the many reformers and responsible leaders, who seek to advance their interests peacefully, politically, and diplomatically. On the other side are extremists, of every sect and ethnicity, who use violence to spread chaos, to undermine democratic governments, and to impose agendas of hate and intolerance.

This is why the proper partners in our regional diplomacy are those who share our goals. In this group, I would count, of course, our democratic allies, Turkey and

Israel. I would also count the governments of the Gulf states plus Egypt and Jordan, or the "GCC + 2." We have established unprecedented consultation with this group of countries. In fact, I will be returning to the region, and to this process, later this week. I would also count among our key partners the democratic reformers and leaders in places like Lebanon, the Palestinian territories, and of course, Iraq. Our most important goal now is to use our diplomacy to empower democratic and other responsible leaders across the region. We must help them show their fellow citizens that it is they, not violent extremists, who can best protect their lives, promote their interests, and advance a future of hope.

On Iraq, in particular, our regional diplomacy has several components. One concerns Iraq's neighbor to the north: Turkey. President Bush and I have engaged retired General Joe Ralston to work with Iraq and Turkey on concerns about terrorism from the Kurdish Worker's Party. Those efforts have helped to ease tensions, but we will do more to protect our ally, Turkey, from terrorist attacks.

Over the last six months, we have also supported significant progress in crafting an International Compact between the Iraqi government and the international community. Working with more than forty countries, Iraq has developed a set of written commitments to action on political, security, and economic targets. The creation of the Compact has been guided by a diplomatic process that has already met at the level of foreign ministers. This group involves all of Iraq's neighbors—including Iran—and other states that have invested significantly in Iraq's future. Iraq has led the Compact process. The United Nations has served as co-chair. And the World Bank has assisted. This diplomatic process also provides a structure that can easily accommodate flexible, informal meetings of smaller groups of countries about other topics of common concern.

While many of us are working to strengthen peace in the region, two governments have unfortunately chosen to align themselves with the forces of violent extremism—both in Iraq and across the Middle East. One is Syria. Despite many appeals, including from Syria's fellow Arab states, the leaders in Damascus continue to destabilize Iraq and their neighbors and support terrorism. The problem here is not a lack of talk *with* Syria but a lack of action *by* Syria.

Iran is the other. If the government in Tehran wants to help stabilize the region, as it now claims, it should end its support for violent extremists who destroy the aspirations of innocent Lebanese, Palestinians, and Iraqis. And it should end its pursuit of a nuclear weapons capability. I repeat my offer today: If Iran suspends its enrichment of uranium—which is, after all, an international demand, not just an American one—then the United States is prepared to reverse 27 years of policy, and I will meet with my Iranian counterpart—anytime, anywhere—to discuss every facet of our countries' relationship. Until then, we will continue to work with the Iraqis and use all of our power to limit and counter the activities of Iranian agents who are attacking our people and innocent civilians in Iraq.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee: I know there are no guarantees or magic formulas on the question of Iraq. I know that most Americans are skeptical and concerned about the prospects of success. I know and share the concern for those who remain in harm's way that all Americans feel, as well as the heartbreak they feel for the families who have lost loved ones.

I also know that, over the past several weeks, President Bush and our entire national security team have carefully considered a full range of new ideas. The President has heard from those of his advisors, like me, who have been around from the very beginning, and who bear responsibility for our policy thus far—its successes and its setbacks. He has also heard from new advisors who bring a fresh perspective. In addition, the President has weighed the thoughtful advice given to him by members of Congress, by our friends and allies abroad, and by outside experts, like the gracious public servants who made up the Iraq Study Group.

The conclusion the President reached, with which I fully agree, is that the most urgent task now is to help the Iraqi government establish confidence that it can—and *will*—protect all of its citizens, regardless of their sectarian identity, from violent extremists who threaten Iraq's young democracy—and that it will reinforce security with political reconciliation and economic support. Implementing this strategy will take time to succeed, and I fully expect that mistakes will be made along the way. I also know that violent extremists will retain their capacity and their appetite to murder innocent people. But reestablishing civil order—the willingness and the capacity of the Iraqi government to meet its responsibilities to its people—is essential.

The situation in Iraq is unacceptable, and the stakes are extraordinary—for the United States, for the region, and for the entire international community. It was, after all, the trouble and turmoil of the Middle East that produced the violent extremist ideology of Al-Qaeda, which led 19 young men to crash airplanes into our

cities five years ago on September 11. It is clear that, now and for many years to come, the crucible of the Middle East will remain the center of gravity for American and international interests.

There have been other critical times for America, when we have united as one nation to meet great challenges. Now must be such a time, for it is a national desire and a national imperative not to fail in Iraq. This, we believe, is the best strategy to ensure success. And I ask that you give it a chance to work.

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you very much, Madam Secretary.

Let me begin where you left off, with the President's speech last night.

Both last November and in every subsequent public expression of views, what the American people are looking for is a responsible plan for de-escalation and not escalation. The President last night provided a plan of escalation, and the reason that there is such broad disappointment and disapproval of his presentation has much less to do with the details of the plan than the general direction of the plan.

The American people overwhelmingly—and you know the figures as well as I do—by 80 percent, 85 percent, are in favor of a gradual redeployment de-escalation and not an escalation of our military presence.

One of the things which is so disappointing, Madam Secretary—and, as you recall, 2 days ago at the White House I raised this issue with the President—is that there is really no indication that the countries in the region like Egypt or Saudi Arabia are showing any willingness to participate in setting Iraq straight. Egypt has a huge military force. I raised the issue, and I am raising it now publicly. Have we asked the Egyptians to provide a significant number of police and military for stabilizing Baghdad? Have the Saudis, who have obtained hundreds of billions of dollars of unanticipated surplus oil revenues, have they stepped forward to carry some of the financial burden?

We have by now spent some \$400 billion on this enterprise, which is not much money for the Saudis, but they have not participated at all in any of this. Now if these regimes—which claim to want to see a stable and peaceful and prosperous Iraq, being so near facing the possibility of disaster for themselves if the civil war escalates to the point of becoming a regional war—are unwilling to do really anything except in the most minimal fashion, no wonder that the American people feel that we have done our share. It is now up to Iraq to, as you said at the outset, to provide for their own security.

Civil wars end. All civil wars end. And it is not our responsibility to end the particular civil war that we see in Iraq. It is not the function of the American military to play the role of a referee between the Sunni and the Shi'a; and I would be grateful if, at the outset, Madam Secretary, you could deal with this fundamental issue.

The American people are asking for a program of de-escalation. The President is giving us a program of escalation. The American people are asking, What do the neighbors who have so much to lose, like Egypt and Saudi Arabia, what are they doing to help? And on what do we base our optimism or the President's optimism? A government that has been so pathetically non-national in its ori-

entation; it has been so sectarian in its orientation. We suddenly see the light.

Before you answer—and I know there are a million quotes running around—I would just like to take as my point of departure General Abizaid’s comments. He has been there now for 4 years. He is a brilliant Arabic-speaking officer who has done his utmost to bring about a favorable result, as you know. This is what he said, and I quote:

“I met with every division of command, General Casey, the corps commander, General Dempsey. We all talked together. And I said, in your professional opinion, if we were to bring in more American troops now, does it add considerably to our ability to achieve success in Iraq? And they all said no. And the reason is because we want the Iraqis to do more. It is easy for the Iraqis to rely upon us to do this work. I believe that more American forces prevent the Iraqis from doing more, from taking more responsibility for their own future.”

One of the things which was disappointing in last night’s speech was the lack of any substantive placing of responsibility on the Iraqis except in an oratorical sense. There is no mechanism whereby this Iraqi Government will be held responsible or can be held responsible to do what they, in their own best interests, should do. You know better than I do that last time when they promised to bring in a certain number of Iraqi divisions they brought in only a fraction of them. What is the performance of the Prime Minister of Iraq that suddenly gives us or gives the President so much confidence in him?

Secretary RICE. Well, thank you, Congressman Lantos.

First of all, we certainly understand the skepticism about whether or not the Iraqi Government will perform. You put it very well. They didn’t the last time.

We do believe that this is a plan that originates with them because they recognize that the situation in Baghdad threatens to overrun any efforts at political reconciliation that they can carry out, and they have a new sense of urgency about it because of the impatience of the Iraqi people. I think he understands our impatience as well, and I think they do understand, too, that this is a democratic country. This is a democratic country, and people will hold them accountable, one way or another, for whether or not this works.

So I think the question becomes, Do you think that the problem with the Iraqis is a problem of will or a problem of capability? If you think it is only a problem of will, then it makes sense to deny any further American help and to say, “Go solve it; it is your problem.” But if you think in fact it is a problem of capability and will, then you want them to show the will, but you also want to make certain that they have the capability so that they don’t fail. And that is really what the President was talking about last night.

I think when Prime Minister Maliki came to Amman, Jordan, and he brought a plan, he really hoped that his forces could do it all alone. That was really what was in his mind, and it remains in some of his advisors’ minds. But what happened was that when they looked to the experts like General Casey and to his own mili-

tary people, the time in which the Iraqis would have forces capable of carrying out that kind of plan is some time in the summer. The problem is if Baghdad is not resolved relatively soon and they don't reestablish the confidence of the Iraqi people that they are prepared to defend them and protect them in a non-sectarian way, then the fabric of the society is going to fray to a point where I think they can't reach a political accommodation.

So there is a gap between the time, the urgency of doing the Baghdad project and the forces that are available to them; and that is the purpose of the American forces. With them in the lead, with them on the front lines, the Iraqis bringing their best forces to the fight, organizing Baghdad into military districts where the military commander knows that the rules of engagement now from his own Prime Minister would be that no one is off limits, no neighborhood is off limits, this is to be even-handed, if you are a Shi'a killer or Sunni killer, you are equally guilty before the law, that is what I think gives the President some confidence that this is the right plan.

We are very clear that the Iraqis have not performed before. This is a process. I think we will be able to see whether they are meeting the most important conditions. I think the most important condition is the one that I mentioned, which is: Are they living up to their obligations under these rules of engagement that really allow them to take care of the problem?

I know that there is some concern about whether we are sending our people into a civil war. I think that I would characterize what is going on in Baghdad not as all Sunnis and Shi'a have decided to go after each other and therefore Sunni and Shi'a populations are randomly going and attacking one another. Rather, the bulk of this is organized death squads, Shi'a and Sunnis that are going largely into neighborhoods.

You see the results. They will go in. They will kill the men. Those are the bodies that show up. They send the women into exile. That is why there are internally displaced people.

So it is an organized effort to disrupt civil order for sectarian purposes, and the Iraqi Government has got to get on top of that. If they take the right course, that is something that can be defeated. It is not just a kind of wild Sunni on Shi'a violence.

Let me make one final point, Mr. Chairman, and that is I think we need to recognize that the origin of this sectarian violence—I am not saying there wasn't sectarianism in Iraq before—but at the time of the February Samara bombing, we had already learned that sectarian violence was the plan of Zarqawi and al-Qaeda. Zarqawi had written a letter to Zawahiri saying, "I'm going to set off a war against the Shi'a."

So this is a direct result of al-Qaeda activity, and in that regard I think it should not be considered as a barometer for whether or not Iraqis might have the social fabric to live together, although admittedly the continuing cycles of sectarian violence are fraying that fabric.

Chairman LANTOS. Many medical conditions can be nipped in the bud, and the solution is happy and final. But if a problem is allowed to develop, there comes a point when solutions, which earlier could have been effective, are no longer realistic. You cannot un-

scramble an omelet. You don't need to be reminded of General Shinseki's proposal that we would need something like 400,000 people to undertake this mission.

Now, I was in Iraq in a military helicopter shortly after the major military operations ended; and the general who was with me pointed to huge ammunition dumps, all of them unguarded because we did not have adequate troops to guard them. And we agreed that we will pay for this later on, and we are paying for it very dearly.

What is the logic behind expecting that approximately 20,000 additional troops—basically in a city, a metropolis deeply divided, of 5 million people—can really turn the corner? We all so much want us to prevail and to bring some stability and tranquility to these people who have suffered so much. But it is very difficult to follow the logic which expects, after all this period of sectarian violence and increasing hatred and hostility and bloodshed, to expect that one more modest push will do it.

Secretary RICE. Well, Mr. Chairman, I would agree with you that you need to nip things in the bud, and we still believe, and this Iraqi Government believes, this is something that can be done, that Baghdad is not yet beyond the point at which it can be brought back from the brink. It is not yet at the point in which civil order is so broken down that, with a concerted effort of Iraqi security forces supported by American forces, they can't deal with these death squads that are carrying out the violence.

Again, I think it is not simply that every Shi'a and every Sunni want to fight with one another. This is a deliberate campaign of armed people, who go into neighborhoods and do terrible things, and they have to be stopped, and that is a civil order problem.

Chairman LANTOS. Isn't it a little bit more than that, Madam Secretary? I mean, the Sunnis had been in control, they had been the commanding force not only in Iraq but in much of the region for a long, long time. There are countless stories of how the Sunnis still believe that they are the majority. After this protracted period, literally centuries of the suppression of the Shi'a, they now are in the majority. They feel very powerful. This is payback time from their point of view. From the Sunni point of view, it is desperate desire to regain their earlier predominance. Isn't it much more than just some bad groups engaging in some violence under deep sectarian divisions here which we are attempting to paper over?

Secretary RICE. There are the absolutely sectarian divisions that go back from the fact, as you know well, Iraq was drawn literally on the fault lines between Sunni and Shi'a. But I would make a couple of points.

First of all, these people have managed before to live together. They are intermarried. Sometimes the tribes are both Sunni and Shi'a. It is not as if—

Chairman LANTOS. But they lived under a police state.

Secretary RICE. That is right.

Chairman LANTOS. And the police state has a way of dealing with people who get out of line.

Secretary RICE. But that is exactly my point, Mr. Chairman. When the democratic process took place and it became one man, one vote, it is absolutely the case that they could have come to an

irreconcilable place where Sunni were determined to reestablish their power—and certainly there were some, the Baathists, in particular, who were in that camp—and it could have come to a place where Shi'a were determined to work the will of the majority even if it meant completely crushing the interest of the minority. But that is not where they went. They went inside to a Constitution that, while not perfect, is certainly a document that could provide the basis for a unity government.

They went to a unity government in which they brought Sunnis and Shi'a and Kurds together. The President, after all, is a Kurd. The Vice President is a Sunni. They went to the development of what we believe is going to be a very good oil law which didn't do what people thought it would do, which is the Kurds said, What is mine is mine and what is yours is negotiable. That is not the oil law that they created.

So I think this is evidence that these are a people who actually do want to live in the same body.

Now, what has happened is that because this new political process has been slow—and I will underscore slow—in doing all of the work of national reconciliation because some of the early moves were, frankly, very sectarian, like the de-Baathification law that cut much too deep, it did create an environment in which, once the spark was set at Samara, the sectarian violence didn't get controlled. It is unfortunate, frankly, just as a historical fact, that the government was very new—the government hadn't even been formed, and so it took them some time to get on top of it.

But I think that the possibility of a national compromise, a national reconciliation is still there. They are still working at it every day. That is why they are still working on an oil law, working at a new de-Baathification law, promising to hold provincial elections.

But if they don't find a way to provide population security so that Iraqis across the spectrum believe that they will be protected by their government, then people are going to do precisely what they are starting to do but in larger numbers. They are going to depend on protection of militias, depend on protections of armed men. That is what they are trying to get a handle on, and that is why the President wants to act now on Baghdad, rather than waiting until the Iraqis can completely do it themselves.

Chairman LANTOS. Before I turn it over to my friend from Florida, could I just ask you to comment on the lack of Saudi and Egyptian help?

Secretary RICE. Sure.

The Saudis have been quite helpful on the Sunni outreach side and I think in convincing of some of the tribes to be a part of the political process. I think we have been, or the Iraqis have been reluctant to have forces from their neighbors and near neighbors actually in their country.

Chairman LANTOS. How about financial help?

Secretary RICE. Financial help—I do believe what the Saudis should do is debt relief. That is the single best thing they could do for the Iraqis.

Chairman LANTOS. Why haven't they, Madam Secretary?

Secretary RICE. It is part of the international compact which is being negotiated. But, frankly, we had spent a lot of time remind-

ing the Saudis and convincing them, and I think they are getting there, that an Iraq that is a failed Iraq is really going to be much worse for their interest; and if they are worried about Iranian influence, that is the way to make sure Iran has influence in the region. But I think they will act. They too, would like to see the Maliki government demonstrate some evenhandedness between Sunnis and Shi'a.

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you very much.

Congresswoman Ros-Lehtinen.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much to my friend and colleague, Chairman Lantos. Welcome, Secretary Rice.

My stepson and daughter-in-law have served in Iraq, and they continue to serve our country as proud Marine officers. They may be serving abroad again soon, so I understand the sacrifices of our military families.

I support the President's new strategy for victory in Iraq and hope to push that forward. I have a fuller statement there explaining why. But I would like to use my time, Mr. Chairman, to give it to other members who sometimes don't have the opportunity to speak to important people like Secretary Rice; and I would like to start with Mr. Barrett, if I could yield my time to Mr. Barrett.

Mr. BARRETT. I thank you, Gentlelady. Madam Secretary, thank you for being here today.

Three questions I'm going to give you all at a time.

Why 21,500? Is this a number that is going to take to be successful for victory, or is this a number because of what we had? Number two, please clarify rules of engagement. You touched on it earlier. Iraqi and United States. Is this exactly what we need? And third and last, Moqtada al-Sadr. He has to be dealt about. Who is going to deal with him, us or the Iraqis?

Secretary RICE. Thank you, Congressman.

First of all, the number was established in the following way: When the mission was determined to be to support the Iraqis in their effort to gain confidence of the population and to protect the population, the commanders determined what numbers they would need to be able to support Iraqi forces, because this is an Iraqi lead. The United States isn't going to fix the sectarian problem. It means getting an American battalion within each of the nine districts that are being developed. So that is how the numbers were developed. Of course, the 4,000 for Anbar to deal with the positive developments there of the people of Anbar starting to fight back against al-Qaeda.

General Pace was asked this question this morning in a press conference that we did, and he made very clear that the Joint Chiefs considered their role to resource the mission and requirements that they get from the field and not to allow what they have to dictate what they recommend to the President.

On rules of engagement, this has been the crux of the argument and discussion with the—I should say the discussion with the Iraqis. They haven't really argued about it, but it has been the crux of the discussions. Those have been the most candid discussion. We cannot get into a situation again, and we think about this being a problem for American forces, but there were circumstances where Iraqi forces were trying to do the right thing and were pulled up

short politically. That can't happen again, and that has been the crux of it.

And finally, on Sadr, this is something that the Iraqis are really going to have to deal with. The Prime Minister said in his speech that under no circumstances are any forces of disruption outside the law, any of them, going to be spared and that they will go after those who are killing innocent Iraqis whoever they are and wherever they come from and whatever their stripe.

Chairman LANTOS. Congressman Berman.

Mr. BERMAN. Because of the impending votes and the time out, I will limit all of the comments I wanted to make and just follow up on Mr. Barrett's last question.

Is it our intention to destroy Sadr's militia, to either get them to disband or to force them to disband? And what is there in the record that would make the President think that this Prime Minister, this political base and his previous record of actions is going to have the Iraqi army lead the effort to destroy that militia, if that is our intention?

Secretary RICE. Congressman, I think they will begin with the death squads that are killing innocent Iraqis, and some of those are indeed associated and may indeed come from the Jaish al-Mahdi, the al-Sadr militia. They also have a requirement that they themselves have set to disband militias that were not covered under the early orders about how militias like the Peshmerga would be dealt with.

I think the reason that we believe in and think that they, this time, are going to actually deal with death squads and with those who are causing this chaos, whoever they are, is it is a necessity. When they came to us, they said that Baghdad couldn't continue as it is going, and I think everybody agrees with that. And so necessity and self-preservation means that they have to do the things that they have to do.

Now the rules of engagement: We are going to know fairly soon whether or not they are living up to the obligation—the promise—to follow rules of engagement in a non-sectarian, non-political way. We are going to know very soon, and the President was very clear that he is not going to stay involved in a plan in which the Iraqis are not carrying out their obligations. So I think we will have a very good sense of whether they are going through with it.

Mr. BERMAN. I hope you are right, but I have to say I think the President here is making, if you pardon the expression, a Hail Maliki pass without any foundation for persuading the American people or the Congress that this has a real chance of success.

Secretary RICE. May I just note, you know, the Iraqis are already engaged in some security sweeps. They have begun some activity. I think obviously when the forces come in, start coming in on February 1st, we will get an early indication of how they intend to use them. But we think this is the best chance that they will have to stabilize Baghdad.

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. Rohrabacher.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Sometimes you win the game when you throw a Hail Mary pass, and maybe this will be a worthwhile endeavor.

Just prefacing my question about Iraq, let me note this administration's insistence on sending to prison two border guards for what they were doing when they intercepted a drug dealer on our southern border undermines the President's support among those of us who would like to offer more support. Because if he thinks this lowly of securing our southern borders, it makes us question why we are sending troops overseas. I will just preface it with that.

Is this not—and we wish you success—but is this not the Iraqi people's last chance because of the public opinion here in the United States? And we wish you success. We wish the President success because we want the forces of evil to be thwarted there in Iraq. But if the Iraqi people don't step up after we have given them this chance, this is their last chance, is it not?

Secretary RICE. Well, obviously, failure in Iraq would be of great consequence for us and for the American people as well. And so I think what we are trying to do is in what is a very important and pretty bad set of circumstances in Baghdad to give them a chance to get on top of the sectarian violence. I don't think they have many more chances to do it.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. I would say it is their last chance. If you do not succeed, you are talking about the frame of the social network. Aren't we really talking about the disintegration of Iraq as a nation? And if that comes, would not the Kurdish population declare their own nationhood and perhaps wouldn't that affect Iran in a very negative way to have a Kurdish nation there?

Secretary RICE. Well, I don't think there is any doubt that if we can't help the Iraqis maintain their unity—and, by the way, the Iraqis always talk about a unified Iraq. They don't talk about Iraq divided into three parts like goals. They talked always about a unified Iraq.

When we invaded Iraq to overthrow Saddam Hussein, we did make a representation to the region that we understood the importance of the territorial integrity of Iraq and the unity of Iraq. We did that because obviously the dynamic between the Kurds and Turkey, the dynamics between the south and Iran, not to mention the dynamics between the Sunnis and the rest of the region, would be quite difficult to manage if in fact Iraq does not remain unified. It is another reason to recognize the stakes that we have in an Iraq that remains unified.

Let me be very clear. Most of the country has not collapsed into "sectarian violence." Most of the country is either peaceful under Iraqi control or is kind of going about it in its own way. But with the center of the country, Baghdad, with the capital having a sectarian problem, it does undermine the confidence of the whole country in the unity of Iraq, and it is why it is very important for the Iraqi Government to succeed in it.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. For them and for the people of that region. Chairman LANTOS. Thank you.

As a sign of our respect and affection for you, you will now be able to have a late lunch; and the committee will stand in recess.

[Recess.]

Chairman LANTOS. The committee is now in session.

The Chair is pleased to announce that the House, overwhelmingly and in a bipartisan basis, has approved the stem cell legislation.

Mr. Ackerman.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Madam Secretary, welcome. It is very good to see you here with us again today.

Madam Secretary, I read the President's speech a little earlier last evening and listened very carefully as he delivered it. I listened again late at night when it was repeated, and I read it again this morning. I had been so hopeful that there would be a real change in strategy, some enlightenment in a different direction to try to solve this problem, other than just changing a mathematical number with no real, at least to me, discernable difference in what we are doing.

The President said that Iraq was key and critical to winning the war on terrorism, pointed out that terrorism was the main challenge to our generation and our century. He related what some of the problems were, the dangers of failure. Iraq would be a place from which terrorists would launch future attacks on the United States, he evoked the specter of what happened on September 11th again, and repeated that we must succeed in Iraq.

What I don't understand is the mixed messages that are there.

First, it really looks like we are starting to pass the ball to the Iraqis and hold them responsible. I don't know how the Iraqis—and he gave them a 10-month basic, next November deadline—I don't know what the Iraqis can do in less than a year that our troops couldn't do in 4 years. They are not as well-trained as we are, they are not as good as our troops are, they are not as determined, evidently, as our troops are. Where we have not been successful, how will they be successful?

And then, after putting out all of the dire consequences of the war on terrorism and saying that Iraq is critical to us winning the war on terrorism, then make the statement such as, "Our patience is not infinite," implying that we are going to leave. How do we leave if this is all the case, and lose the war on terrorism unless Iraq is not the only critical element, the key to the war on terrorism? How do we leave if the President is right in his assessment that attacks are going to be launched from Iraq, such as 9/11, which, of course wasn't, if we leave Iraq? What message does that send to the Iraqi people?

I fail to understand, and I think it is a confused message, and I think it is just more of the same with more people from which the only thing that will result is a greater number of casualties, both on us and on the Iraqis. Why will this work with 20,000 new troops?

Secretary RICE. Thank you, Congressman.

First of all, in terms of what can the Iraqis do that we have not been able to do, I think that the mission that is now being defined is one that is quite critical but one that really only they can do, which is to determine the basis for what kind of Iraq this is going to be, and that means to have a government that is prepared to deal with this population in an even-handed fashion.

There is nothing worse than being a citizen of a country and believing that your government is not going to deal with you in an

even-handed fashion because of the color of your skin or because of your religious sect. We know that very, very well in our own country.

And what has developed, I think, is that since the Shi'a majority government has come into being, they have done a lot of things to reach out to the Sunnis. They have worked with the Kurds. They have made some progress. But the sectarian violence in Baghdad and the way that it has been handled has called into question their willingness to go after Shi'a death squads that are going into mixed neighborhoods and cleansing them of Sunnis, and that has eroded the confidence of the population. That is not something, no matter how good our military is, and they are very, very good, they can't fix that problem.

What the President outlined last night is that the Iraqis have undertaken that they want to fix that problem, that they have the will to do it now, but they don't quite have the capability to do it. So our 20,000 or 20,000 plus forces, minus the 4,000 that would go into Anbar, are to give them augmented strength to do what they need to do.

But they have got to be on the front lines of this. They have to go into the neighborhoods and make sure that these populations are protected. That is why I think we believe that, with their responsibility, with their plan, this has a better chance for success.

The second point is that it has to be properly resourced. When we have tried to deal with Baghdad before, there haven't been enough reliable forces. But what is really new in this is the acceptance of Iraqi responsibility for dealing with the nature of what their country is going to become and demonstrating that to the population.

The third point is that we are decentralizing and diversifying our efforts to get out of Baghdad and to grow in a sense, to bring from the bottom up strong leadership among local and provincial leaders. Because no country can really succeed just from the top down. This is having some effects in some places like Mosul. I think it is beginning to have an effect in Anbar, and that should also strengthen our efforts.

But as to the question of our patience being limited, I do know that the President feels that our patience with Iraqi indecision, Iraqis unwillingness to make tough decisions is not limitless. It can't be. That doesn't mean that we don't recognize that we will continue to have interest in Iraq, that we continue to have responsibility for the territorial integrity of Iraq, something we promised the neighborhood, that we continue to have responsibility for fighting al-Qaeda. But on the Iraqis' dealings with their own national reconciliation, I think it would be the wrong signal—

Mr. ACKERMAN. Could you address—

Chairman LANTOS. I am sorry. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Can I explore this for 10 seconds?

With the President's patience limited and November being cited, do we leave—and the Iraqis not stepping up to the plate by our standard, do we leave or start to leave in November?

Secretary RICE. I don't think that is what the President was saying. But we do know that this plan for Baghdad, and for national

reconciliation, is not going to work unless they step up and I think if we say to them, "We have unlimited patience with your living up to the obligation you have undertaken," then that would be a mistake.

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you.

Mr. Fortenberry.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Good afternoon, Madam Secretary.

I want to return to your opening comments where in referencing your upcoming trip you referred to the opportunity for a new alignment in the Middle East. What is compelling that new alignment now? Is it the fact of the growing Shi'a dominance of Iraq backed by Iran that is compelling Sunni-dominated countries or majority Sunni countries to think more broadly about the goal of stabilization in the Middle East? That is the primary question. But the premise is the extent of Iran's influence in Iraq currently.

Secretary RICE. I would put it more broadly, Congressman. I think it is the assertiveness of Iran in general, the sense that Iran is trying to extend its influence through Iraq into the region more broadly. I do think it has taken—and the chairman mentioned this—we are dealing with Sunni-Shi'a tensions that are not just Iraqi, they are region-wide, and concern that the Iraqi Government, because it is Shi'a, will somehow have—will be a bridge for Iranian influence into the region. What I have been spending all of my time and all of my breath telling our Arab allies, who are indeed governed by Sunnis, is that these Iraqis are Arabs. They are not Persians. They are not Iranian or Iranian clients. They want to have an Iraq that, of course, has good relations with its Iranian neighbor but they are not wanting to trade the yoke of Saddam Hussein for the yoke of Iran. There is an opportunity to make this government—even though it is Shi'a led—an Arab government that is not unduly influenced by Iran and that is not a bridge. But if they treat the Iraqi Government as if it is just a client for Iran, then they are going to get into a self-fulfilling prophecy. But I think the reason the realignment is taking place is that there is growing concern about Iran's assertiveness, and the war in Lebanon this summer really crystallized for the states of the region that Iran's influence through Hezbollah and indeed Iran's increasing efforts to insert itself into the Palestinian-Israeli issue is a real problem for the governments in this region. I think that is causing a realignment that even makes them understand that a Palestinian state that would live in peace side by side with Israel would be preferable to a Hamas-governed Palestinian Territory where Iranian and other extremist influence could play.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Thank you.

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. Faleomavaega.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I certainly want to offer my personal welcome to our Secretary of State, and I certainly would be remiss if I do not offer my deepest appreciation for your allowing some thousands of Samoans to be taken in a visa pilot program that you had initiated in the South Pacific, where at the time for 3 years members of my community have had to go all the way to New Zealand, some \$1,500 a pop. Two hundred of those people are requesting visas. That is \$200,000 of expenses not even

guaranteed if it would be done, but I want to offer my thank you for your help in getting that with our Ambassador of New Zealand, Ambassador McCormick, who I met just a couple weeks ago. Thank you so much.

I was taken by the question raised by my colleague, Congressman Barrett, concerning Muqtada al-Sadr. I think the media as well as many of our national officials have pictured him as not only as a killer, an extremist deeply anti-American, but I wanted just to kind of share with you a perspective and the fact that we can talk about nuclear dangers and all of this and that, but sometimes we seem to dismiss it as unimportant, a 1,000-year rivalry among the Sunnis and the Shiites all wanting—all factions wanting to claim the rights of succession to the Prophet Mohammed. This has a lot of cultural barriers, sometimes we dismiss it and think it is not important, taking into consideration 40 years of suppression of rule in Iraq by Saddam Hussein and of course the Shiites were the real—in terms of repression, this is really what happened. We are also quite aware of when we supported the Shah of Iran and his brutal repression of the people of Iran, predominantly Shiites. It is my understanding that at that time Vice President Saddam Hussein made a deal with the Shah of Iran, Ayatollah Khomeini. That is why the Ayatollah ended up in Paris for all those years. And at the time Saddam Hussein eventually became President, he tried to figure out a way to put the blame on the highest cleric at that time in Iraq was Ayatollah al-Sadr, who happens to be the father of Muqtada al-Sadr. What did they do with the Ayatollah? This is what Saddam Hussein did, got his sister in his presence, raped and murdered her, and then after that burned the beard of the Ayatollah al-Sadr—this is Muqtada's father—while he was alive and drove nails into his head. If you can put that perspective in terms of if you were his son—I suppose if it was Bush 41 and Bush 43, I would have some really, really strong feelings about how my people had been treated by Saddam and his regime, and I think we have to put that in perspective as to why Muqtada al-Sadr is very much part of this whole thing because of course the Mahdi militia that he now controls simply because he wants to make sure the Shiites are never going to be under suppression by the Sunnis.

This is where we find ourselves in the situation now in Iraq, and I just wanted to ask you the question of whether or not—and I am sure that you probably may have already explained this, the surge or the addition of troops as we have tried before, would it really bring some sense of resolution to the crisis that we now face ourselves in Iraq? And I just wanted to give that question to you.

Secretary RICE. Well, thank you. First of all, I think you make a very important point about the deep grievances that are there. And they are deep grievances that are not just in Iraq, they are deep grievances that are region-wide, and it underscores the difficulty of overcoming that through political process rather than through violence and repression. I think we also have to recognize that in the modern era the continued oppression of the Shi'a by dictatorships is simply not going to survive. It is going to explode to the surface, and what is happening in Iraq is that you have now one man, one vote, and the Shi'a are in the majority, and so they have been the majority in the government. But the task is for the

Shi'a and indeed the Kurds to see themselves as a part of a broader picture to put majoritarian interests below that of the nation as a whole, but that is a hard lesson to learn. I think we recognize that our own democracies had a tough time with some of that, and it takes time, and I recognize—and myself feel some impatience with the Iraqis sometimes for not getting the oil law passed, for not getting the de-Baathification law quite right, but they are asked to do something quite remarkable given the history that you just cited and so the political process now gives them a chance to solve their problems politically. It would have an enormous impact on this region if in fact that became the model, and as tough as it is, it is worth continuing to pursue because succeeding in that would mean a very different kind of Middle East.

As to the question of why the surge would help, I think that what you are trying to do in this case is to give some breathing space to national reconciliation. The points of General Abizaid have been noted a couple of times, but General Abizaid was talking in a particular context, he went on to say, you know, that given certain circumstances it might help. And we all had hoped that the additional forces would be Iraqi forces, but those Iraqi forces are simply not going to be ready in time to help deal with the Baghdad problem which threatens to overwhelm the political process that has a chance to deal in a political rather than a repressive or violent way with the tensions that you have outlined.

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you very much. Mr. Burton.

Mr. BURTON. It is nice seeing you again.

Secretary RICE. Nice seeing you.

Mr. BURTON. Tough times for you, but you are handling it well.

Secretary RICE. Thank you.

Mr. BURTON. Last night the President's speech was, I thought, very effective and very good, and I listened not only to the President's speech but I also listened to the response from my Democrat colleagues on what should be done or shouldn't be done. And they have continually pointed out from their perspective that we need to start redeploying, moving our troops out of there, and putting them someplace else. What I would like to ask you today, and I don't want to be redundant, you may have been asked and answered this before I arrived, but what I would like to know from your perspective, and I know nobody has a crystal ball, but if we were going to signal that we were going to redeploy, if we were going to say we would pull our troops out of there within a given time period, what would happen, number one? And number two, long term, what would that lead to? Would it lead to another conflict of maybe more devastating magnitude than what we have seen so far? And could it lead to a war throughout that entire region?

Secretary RICE. Thank you, Congressman. First of all, let me just say that redeployment really means withdrawal, and I think we need to be clear about the language. And withdrawal under the circumstances would, I think, before the Iraqis are ready and before they have had a chance to make their political process work and before their security forces can handle the jobs, before al-Qaeda is defeated—and make no mistake about it, we have been emphasizing Baghdad and saying Anbar is the center of al-Qaeda, but al-Qaeda's fingerprints are on a lot of what is happening in Baghdad

too, and we have to keep that in mind. So I think the notion of withdrawing and leaving this country to terrorists' safe haven of the kind that was Afghanistan but this time in a country that is central to the Middle East, leaving an Iraq that cannot govern itself, cannot sustain itself, an Iraq in which its neighbors are tempted to, so to speak, pick at its bones if it cannot govern itself, and we have to remember that it has a particularly troublesome neighbor to the east, and I might just mention, of course America's own credibility with our friends and allies in the region. Our friends and allies in the region still remember that after Beirut we left Lebanon. They still remember that. They still remember, from their point of view, that that said that when times get tough America will leave. And you say, but we have been together through the Gulf War, through—but they still remember. If the United States is not willing to keep its commitments, not willing to finish the job, I think of the negative impact on our influence in the region, on our standing in the region. If there is not American influence in the region, there will be other influences in the region, and my candidate would be Iran. So the stakes are enormously high in Iraq, and let me just say, we all fully understand—this administration fully understands and I understand personally that this has not gone as we would have hoped it would have gone. We understand the difficulties. We understand how hard it is, but we know that it is not done, and we have made mistakes, there is no doubt about it. But to allow this to fail for lack of trying, for lack of willingness to augment our forces, to give the Iraqis a chance to stabilize their capital, I think would be a real tragedy. And I thank you also, Congressman, for the expression of concern, but let me just say, I can't think of anything that is a greater honor or indeed more stimulating, and in many ways I feel myself very, very lucky because if you are going to do this you might as well try to do it at a time of consequence. So thank you very much.

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. Payne.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you very much. Ms. Secretary, I wish you well on your trip. Just a quick comment and then I will ask about this surge. I saw where the United States went into Somalia and attempted to get three al-Qaeda-accused persons that had been there for about a decade anyway, but the swiftness of our action once we decided to do that certainly shows we can do what we want to do. I just look at Darfur with 450,000 who have been slaughtered by al-Bashir and his government and all we have asked for is just a no-fly zone to prevent the Sudanese from continually bombing and killing innocent people, 450,000 there, but we cannot even do that. And so I would hope that in some of these other issues we can take as gravely and as important the lives of those innocent people as we are going after these three suspected al-Qaeda operatives.

Let me just ask a question about the surge. The question about surging appears that when you surge it is like a wave. You come in, you bring a lot in, you have a lot of activity, but surges seem then to recline, I guess. You can't keep a surge. Like I guess on a swing with a child, you surge up but you can't stay up. So is this a surge? Or is it an escalation? Because if you are going to then continue, and I recall that word in the 1960s when Vietnam, the word "escalation," I see that we are not using escalation here but

a surge would seem to me mean it is time certain. I don't see how a surge can work with just the group of people additional in and then they are supposed to maintain that momentum.

The other thing I just wonder about is the 21,000 more, whether that is enough, because I also question how many combatants we currently have. We say we have 132,000 troops, but I have been led to believe that we have almost that same number of contractors, which are soldiers themselves, I guess. So we could look at the current numbers, maybe being over 250,000 persons in a combative or supportive role if we take in these contractors. So I just wonder the number of contractors, whether that is classified information because I wonder how many are we going to need to contain and bring democracy to Iraq.

Secretary RICE. Thank you, Congressman Payne. On the contractor number, I don't know myself the exact numbers of contractors. I think most of the contract personnel that is there in a security fashion, is there as a part of protection forces or security forces or that kind of thing, not actually involved there in with the central mission, but I can certainly check that for you.

The question about the surge, I think it is intended to be one that is for the time that is necessary for the Iraqis to—under new rules of engagement, under a new structure for the plans for the City of Baghdad to be able to deal with the death squads that are running in these neighborhoods, to be able to deal with some of the militia activity, and as a consequence of working with the Iraqis to leave a better trained Iraqi force behind to be able to hold these areas. So in that sense, it is there for a very specific mission, which though I can't give you a time, I think would be time limited by its very nature.

The point that I think the President was trying to make last night is that what we understand is that the Iraqis have to deliver on the rules of engagement part, and they have to deliver their own forces. If they do that, we think that this has a good opportunity to actually help them get their hands around the sectarian violence. But as I said, it would also leave behind better trained Iraqi troops, and again, there was a gap between when Iraqi troops were going to be ready sometime in the summer to early fall, to turn them over to Iraqi control, and the need to deal with Baghdad now. So I think everybody thinks of this as something that is mission limited and thus ultimately time limited.

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. Boozman.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for being here, Madam Secretary. As you may or may not know, Tom Osborne, the great coach from Nebraska who was a Congressman here for the last couple of terms and did a wonderful job, here is a guy who won the national championship three times and somebody one day asked him, "How do you win? What is there about winning?" And he said that you win by doing the little things. Earlier today Mr. Woolsey was here and was talking about the importance, and related a story about a Romanian KGB agent who said one of the keys in dismantling the Iron Curtain was through our Voice of America program, how good it was. And he was very critical of the program that, you know, that—what has replaced that for the Arab countries, very critical. In my travels on several occa-

sions, that has been brought up to our delegation. Those leaders, at all different levels, really felt like it is just not doing the job. Is that something—would you agree with that assessment? Is that something—that to me, we have got all of these things going on that aren't fixable, but that to me really is one of those real things that is kind of the basis of a lot of the stuff that is going on that is fixable. So again, I would appreciate your comments.

Secretary RICE. Well, thank you. First of all, I do agree that we need to do a better job in terms of what we were able to do to begin to reproduce what we were able to do at the time of the Cold War with the Voice of America, Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberty, which was a lot of our success in Eastern Europe. Of course times have changed. We now talk about satellite TV. There is a satellite dish on most apartment buildings in most of the Arab world. We face a certain skepticism if it is seen to be an American Government product and I think we have to understand that. We didn't face that skepticism with Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty. We were known to be the voice of the truth. I think in the Arab world sometimes there is great, great suspicion of American programs. But that said, we are trying to rebuild some of that capability. We did let it go at the end of the Cold War, disbanded USIA, basically believed that the job had been done and didn't foresee that a lot of this would be needed for hearts and minds in a very different part of the world. So with stations like Al-Hura, Radio Farda, which is focused on Iran, we are doing our best to improve our capability, and we are also trying to get people out and around, to be good voices on the media that is there. I know we all have a particular view of Aljazeera, it is a view with which I completely agree, it is very often—most often propaganda. However, even with Aljazeera, we try to get our people out on Aljazeera; we try to get our people out on Al Arabia because satellite TV is extremely important to spreading the message. So I agree with you about the importance of that path.

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. Wexler.

Mr. WEXLER. Thank you. Madam Secretary, each time you have very generously testified before our committee you have done so with conviction, with passion, vociferously defending this administration's policies. I very much respect your intellect and certainly your consistency.

Last night the President, when he addressed the Nation, made a stunning admission that the United States effectively had already implemented the strategy that he was proposing anew, the strategy of American troops going door to door in Baghdad, American troops going neighborhood to neighborhood, removing the killers in Baghdad. And then the President said, "But we didn't have enough troops to hold the gains." The quote from the President was—this is the President's language: "This time we will have the forces level we need to hold the areas that have been cleared."

You have focused a good bit of your answers on the mistakes that the Iraqi Government has made. With all due respect, the Iraqi Government did not determine the troop level that we employed in Baghdad. That was the American Government that made that choice. It was the American administration that rejected General Shinseki's initial estimation of troops. It was the American Govern-

ment that made the mistake on the amount of money it would take. It was the American Government that made the mistake on the nuclear program in Iraq. It was the American Government that mischaracterized the connection between al-Qaeda and Saddam Hussein. But yet today we focus on the mistakes of the Iraqi Government.

Now why is it a fair, I believe, question to ask? Because in November the American people spoke, and the American people said, "No new troops, no new troops." You in fairness, in response to Mr. Burton, said, "We need to be clear about our language, redeployment means withdrawal." I grant you that. That is fair. But you too need to be fair and clear about your language. Surge means escalation. The American people in November said, "No new troops." So we as the representatives of the American people have the obligation, I would argue, to ask you, we have a whole series of American misjudgments, American mistakes. Who was it that told the President of the United States, recommended to the President of the United States we had enough troops in Baghdad when as you described we knew al-Qaeda was about to blow up a Shiite holy site and create a civil war? Why didn't we ask for 40,000 more American troops before that happened to stop it? But last night, the President went on TV and asked for 20,000 more American troops. I would respectfully suggest not so much because of the Prime Minister of Iraq's mistakes but because of the mistakes of the United States Government and the American people have a right to ask, is it the same people that made these mistakes that now want us to buy into this escalation of troops? And if so, why should we give you the benefit of the doubt this time when it appears so evident that so many mistakes have been made in the past?

Secretary RICE. Well, Congressman, thank you very much. First of all, I don't think we did know that al-Qaeda was going to blow up the Samara Mosque. With all due respect, we don't have a crystal ball and we didn't see it coming. We did know that al-Qaeda was going to try to stoke a civil war because we knew that Zarqawi was planning to do so. I don't frankly know that 40,000 troops would have stopped him from blowing up the Samara Mosque. So I fully accept that the American administration has made mistakes. I think we have done some very good things. I think we have done some things that would not have worked out as we would have had them work out. We fully accept the responsibility for that. Some of the people who are advising the President, like me, are the same people who have been advising him since the beginning of the war. Others who are advising him, like Secretary Gates, came to this with fresh eyes. We all came to the same conclusion, listening to the military commanders on the ground, listening to our political people, that the urgency of dealing with the Baghdad situation and helping the Iraqis to deal with that situation required a surge, and by surge—and I am not here to speak again to what Congressman Payne said—a surge to do a specific mission related to Baghdad security.

Now, in fact, the last Baghdad security plan did not fail because American troops didn't show up. It failed because Iraqi troops didn't show up in the numbers that they promised, and it failed be-

cause the rules of engagement were rules of engagement that allowed political interference. I think we believe that we fixed that problem this time. But to be absolutely clear, we understand that this plan depends very much on execution, it depends on human beings to execute it. And if human beings don't execute it well, then it is going to fail.

Mr. WEXLER. Madam Secretary, with all due respect, it is now your testimony that American troops were sent into harm's way in Baghdad knowing that the commitment of the Iraqi troops was not there that you thought would be there and, so be it, that is just the way the cookie crumbles?

Secretary RICE. Congressman, let me say what my testimony is if you don't mind.

Mr. WEXLER. Please do.

Secretary RICE. My testimony is that we had a plan for the security of Baghdad. It succeeded very often in clearing the neighborhoods because we had enough forces, Iraqi and American, to do that, but because there were not enough Iraqi forces that indeed were supposed to be a part of this plan, it turned out to be impossible to hold those areas after they were cleared. So in fact, the first part of the plan worked. The other part that didn't, of course, get done is that the build section—and we have spent too little time or I have spent too little time talking about the economic and political side of this that has to accompany the military effort because it wasn't possible to hold the areas. It was also not possible to build.

This plan also is an Iraqi plan that has a different structure to it with districts in Baghdad that are governed by military commanders, with forces at their disposal in a kind of wheel-and-spoke fashion. So Congressman, I want to be very clear about what the President was saying last night. We understand that there were problems with the Baghdad security plan the last time around. We also understand what those problems were. And we understand first and foremost that without Iraqi buy-in to this plan it is not going to work, and that is where the President has spent most of his time with Prime Minister Maliki, making certain that he has the Iraqi buy-in and the Iraqi assurances that we need.

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. Royce.

Mr. ROYCE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Secretary Rice, I was in Haifa, Israel, in August when it was being shelled by Hezbollah. So I have seen the effects in the trauma hospital of Iran's involvement in Lebanon. Incidentally, the Hezbollah general on that southern front, Karani, had a brother, Mahmoud Karani, who in fact came into the United States. He was caught. Here he had come in in the trunk of a car in my State, in California. Later he was caught up in Dearborn, Michigan, with a cell, Hezbollah cell, and found to have been trained by Iranian intelligence. That does raise certain questions about our border security. It also raises questions about support for our border patrol. But the question I would like to get at today is something that our Director of Central Intelligence, former Director Woolsey—as you know, he was here this morning prior to you, and he raised this question. He said that the head of Hezbollah for Iraq is al-Sadr, and likewise the Iraq Study Group raised a point that Muqtada al-Sadr is, as they said,

following the Hezbollah model that they are following in Lebanon. In other words, they are building a political party now in their areas that they influence in Iraq that controls basic services within the government and controls an armed militia outside of the government. And I was going to ask if you shared that assessment, and then I would go to one thing that you said previously in your testimony today. You said that Iraqis will have to deal with Sadr, and I was going to ask how likely that is, but also, do we have no role to play in dealing with Sadr?

Secretary RICE. Well, on the latter point, I think it is important to recognize what you have just said, Sadr is a political force. He has people in the legislature. He has had people in the government, although currently standing down from that. And when I say Iraqis have to deal with Sadr, I mean they have to deal both with the violence he causes and with the political problem that he causes. But I do think it is best done as an Iraqi responsibility because of the nature of the problem. I don't doubt that at some level Sadr's forces see as a model the way that Hezbollah has emerged in Lebanon. A poor Shi'a area, as the south of Lebanon is, as Sadr City is in Iraq, historically discriminated against, historically impoverished, where social services are not delivered by the central government, where there is a sense of discrimination, and where people take their aid from whomever can offer it, and in this case a well-organized group can offer it. I think that is undoubtedly what they have in mind. Therefore, the wise thing for the Iraqi Government to do is to make sure that they don't repeat the conditions that the Lebanese Government created in order to let that take hold. That means getting goods and services and education and jobs programs into these areas where there has been deprivation. It means that you don't live with a political party that has an armed militia beside it. At some point in time it has to be disarmed. It means, too, that you don't permit outside forces to become embedded in the training of these. Now, there isn't really, frankly, very much evidence of the Iranian influence with Sadr himself, but I will say that we do believe that the Iranians of course have a role in helping militias and in helping violent people who are hurting our forces. But I think that it is a forewarning to the Iraqi Government that unless they provide the kinds of services from the central government and from localities that they will face an organization that has a Hezbollah-like model in mind.

Mr. ROYCE. Thank you, Secretary Rice.

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. Engel.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And Madam Secretary, I want to just make a couple of quick statements and then I just want to ask you a question about Iraq. First, thank you for your testimony, and thank you for calling me the other week. I really appreciated our exchange of views, and I thought it was very, very helpful. You know we have always talked about the Syrian Accountability Act, which I authored and cosponsored with Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, and I just, again, want to urge the administration to implement all the sanctions of the Syrian Accountability Act. I know that you are going to the Middle East, and one of the things that has been talked about is the Israeli-Palestinian dispute, and I just want to say that I disagree with the Iraq Commission and

others who say that the key for solving all the problems in the Middle East is solving the Israeli-Palestinian dispute because the translation to that usually means, let's put pressure on Israel to make concessions without really getting anything in return, let her make concessions to a Hamas government that denies their right to exist, and just keep pressure on Israel. So I hope that that won't be the case, and that we want the goal of a Palestinian state living side-by-side in peace with Israel, but I think such a state can only happen if the Palestinians recognize Israel's right to exist.

My question about Iraq is this, no one wants chaos in Iraq, and no one obviously wants defeat in Iraq, and no one wants terrorism to get the upper hand. The question is: Does the President's plan simply perpetuate the problem? Is Iraq winnable? That is the question. And if it is, what do we mean by winning? Because we have said a couple of times, our goals in Iraq are one thing and then we seem to kind of shift it.

We had a hearing this morning on Iran, and I think that a case can be made that as long as we are bogged down in Iraq the Iranians will continue their mischief, and we lack the ability to deal with them because of our being bogged down in Iraq. So the question really is: If we need to deal with combating terrorism, and we do, are our goals best served by pouring more troops and resources into Iraq? Or might our goals be better served by realizing our limitations and realizing again that by being bogged down in Iraq we are exacerbating the terrorist problem by being led by Iran, who is the leader of terrorism, by not being able to deal with that sufficiently? Iran is thumbing its nose at us because they know we are too preoccupied in Iraq to deal with them sufficiently.

Secretary RICE. Thank you. Well, first of all on the Syrian Accountability Act, let me thank you again, you and Congresswoman Ros-Lehtinen, for it. I think you will see us use it. We have been trying to use it to leverage contributions, so to speak, multilaterally but the President is determined to use those powers. So thank you very much.

On Israel and the Palestinians, we see this as a conflict that has its own logic and needs to be resolved on its own terms. Obviously it would be a very good thing for the Middle East if this were resolved. It is not that it would solve all the problems of the Middle East but one can't imagine a truly different kind of Middle East without this resolved. But we are going to do it on the logic that makes sense for that conflict. It may well be that as people realign their interests in the way that I was describing, that there may be more interest, for instance, on the part of some of the Arab states in being supportive of the establishment of the right kind of Palestinian state. But let me just assure you, we are not about to sacrifice the interests that we have maintained in a stable and democratic Jewish state of Israel and indeed, a Palestinian state that can live side by side. We are not about to sacrifice that.

As to Iraq, I do think—not only do I think it is winnable, I think if it is lost, then we really will empower Iran in a very major way because then Iran's ability to meddle in the affairs of an Iraq that is truly unable to govern itself, and in effect to use Iraq as a bridge for Iranian assertiveness to the region, I think, is only going to grow. The converse of that though is if we are able to stabilize a

Shi'a-led government in the middle of the Middle East, and one that by the way that is not theocratic, which I do not think the Iraqis will be, that is really a barrier to further expansion of Iranian influence. I don't think that it is an issue of being bogged down. I know that it is not an issue of being bogged down that makes it difficult to deal with Iran. What makes it difficult to deal with Iran is that it is a state that has tentacles out through extremist groups like Hezbollah and now is trying to push those tentacles into Hamas, and that it has a sidecar, Syria, that is certainly helping it in those activities. Iran is in pursuit of a nuclear weapon. But I would not—I don't feel at all a lack of optimism or, to put it differently, pessimism about our ability to deal with Iran. We have in the last year gone from people questioning whether or not the Iranians are really trying to get a nuclear weapon to Chapter 7 sanctions against Iran in the Security Council. Now, I would be the first to say those sanctions are not enough because they are not strong enough to change Iran's calculations. However, being under Chapter 7 resolution is not very good company to keep. It is states like Sudan, it is being with states like North Korea, and a few states that I think we will soon be out from under, like Liberia and the DROC. It is not the kind of company that you want to keep. Given the reputational risks for private financial institutions and private investors as well as the shadow of further sanctions, I think you are beginning to see an effect on Iran's ability to invest in its oil and gas industry and in its ability to move its assets. So it has a collateral effect that is very important, and I think we have to press our allies to be very tough on this matter. Frankly, one of our problems is that we have not had the kind of concerted international effort on Syria or, to that matter, Iran that we need to build. I think we are getting there, but that is ultimately going to help us to deal with Iran, and perhaps change Iran's calculations. But I think an Iraq that fails is going to be a real boon for Iran.

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. McCaul.

Mr. MCCAUL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Madam Secretary, I want to thank you for the job you are doing under tremendous pressure, and we all recognize that here. I served as a consultant to the Iraq Study Group and while I don't agree with all the findings, there are many that I do. Number one, this is one you mentioned, and that is that failure is not an option. I think failure for all Americans is something that we cannot afford. It will create a situation far worse than what we have today. Secondly, this is not going to be won militarily alone. I think that there is a political solution to this. I am hopeful that the President's plan and the surge in troops will provide the security and stability necessary so that we will have a breathing period, if you will, so that a political solution can be reached, and I know you are working in that effort. I have three short questions I want to ask you. One, one of my concerns all along with this conflict is—

Chairman LANTOS. I am sorry to interrupt my colleague. I don't want you to use up all of your time because then we won't get a chance to hear the answers. So ask your first question. Then we will listen to you.

Mr. McCAUL. Okay. You would rather me take it one at a time, Mr. Chairman?

Chairman LANTOS. Yes.

Mr. McCAUL. Iran. The concern I have is that Iran, we have created, if you will, maybe an opportunity for a power grab, a greater extension into Iraq. We know their tentacles are there. Can you comment on the Shi'a and their allegiance? Is their allegiance to Iraq nationality first or is it to Persia?

Secretary RICE. I believe that the great, great, great majority of Iraqi Shi'a are Iraqi patriots and that they see themselves as Arabs first and have no desire to trade the yoke of Saddam Hussein for the yoke of Iran.

Mr. McCAUL. Okay. And I hope that is true. The second has to do with Iran and how are we dealing with Iran. We heard from Jim Woolsey earlier at a hearing, the idea of an internal resistance to deal with the current regime. To the extent you can comment on that, what are we doing to assist that internal resistance? And then if you can also comment on the role of the MEK and their status on the terrorist list and whether that is something that can be potentially changed.

Secretary RICE. Well, the MEK is still listed as terrorists and I think that given the history they will continue to be. In terms of the Iranian internal circumstances, we have been pretty up front in trying to find those who wish to build another kind of Iran. We have grants that we are prepared to make to groups that are trying to form. But I think we need to recognize that Iran is a rather complicated place, and there is some internal turmoil in Iran that is emerging already. You hear it in the way that people—that the near riot that broke out when Ahmadinejad went to Tehran University. You see it in the fact that, from my point of view quite extraordinarily, the Deputy Oil Minister talking about how their policies are leading to a lack of investment in Iran's oil fields. I think there is some turmoil there, and I think that policies that demonstrate that Iran's policies are serving to isolate it further will, in fact, cause that turmoil to grow and perhaps change Iran's policies.

I just want to say, I hear very often at least the undercurrent, Well, by taking out Saddam Hussein we have made life easier for Iran. I think we also have to recognize that having Saddam Hussein there of course made life hard for the whole region. So whatever near-term or short-term advantage Iran might feel, if we do our work well, it will be a long-term loss for Iran to have an Iraq that is Shi'a-led and not theocratic and democratic and connected to the Arab world. I just ask you to imagine what life would be like if we had Saddam Hussein chasing Iran for nuclear preeminence as Iran chases a nuclear weapon.

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. Delahunt.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Madam Secretary. I would just make an observation as a follow-up to the question posed by Mr. McCaul, that there has been a number of agreements executed between Iran and Iraq, including the bilateral military cooperation agreement, according to the CRS. I would be interested—I am not going to ask you now—if you can communicate to the committee what the terms of that bilateral

agreement between Iraq and Iran is. I think that would be of interest to us.

In addition, I would also note for the record that Foreign Minister Zeybari back in June made a comment that—and I am quoting here: “Iran doesn’t want to claim they want to obtain a nuclear weapon or a nuclear bomb so there is no need that we ask them for any guarantee now.”

I think we all can agree that is somewhat disturbing. So in terms of where Iraq is in relation to the Islamic Republic of Iran I think is very much open to debate. There are a number of agreements that have been executed. But I heard what you said earlier about the plan being an “Iraqi plan.” And yet today in the *New York Times*, there is a headline that says, “Promising Troops Where They Aren’t Really Wanted.” And a close associate of the Prime Minister, Mr. al-Abadi, has this to say: “The government believes there is no need for extra troops from the American side. The existing troops can do the job.” That is his quote, not mine. And I am also aware that we talk about American public opinion, but the Department of State and independent groups have done extensive polling, and I find it very disturbing the results that in excess of 70 percent of the Iraqi people, according to DoS poll as well as the University of Maryland poll, want the Americans out. They want us out in the course of at least a year—I think that is how the question was proposed—because their belief is that it is provoking more violence rather than de-escalating the violence. In addition, in the University of Maryland poll there was a question about support for attacks by Iraqis on American military personnel. And I think it is very disturbing to hear or read that the conclusion is that in excess of 60 percent of the Iraqi population said it was okay. I mean, I guess my point is, are we really wanted there by the Iraqi people, Madam Secretary? And if so, how do you account for the polling there?

Secretary RICE. Well, first of all, I do understand that one has to be very careful on how one reads polls because you have to know precisely what was asked and of whom and under what circumstances. I am a social scientist. I know quite a bit about polling, and one has to be careful in how one—even Department of State polls have to be carefully read from the assumptions that were built in and so forth. But that said, I don’t doubt that Iraqis would like to see their country free of foreign forces. It is a country that doesn’t particularly like having foreign forces on its soil, but I do know that the Iraqi Government overwhelmingly, with the exception of the Sadr bloc, has made very clear that they do not think that America can afford to leave and that is why the Iraqi Government requested through the United Nations an extension of the multinational forces for Iraq. Every time those leaders are here they thank us for the liberation of Iraq, but of course they want to get to the day when they themselves are able to take care of their security problem, and I think that also explains why, when the Maliki government came forward in Jordan with its plan, it wanted this to be all Iraqi forces. I fully remember that and want you to understand that. That is a good sign. However, when the experts took a look at the plan and said, What would need to be done in order to bring stability and security to the population of Bagh-

dad? It was the assessment of our generals and frankly of their defense experts that there was a gap between what they had and what they would need and that that gap was going to persist well into the summer.

Mr. DELAHUNT. So this is an American plan, not an Iraqi plan?

Secretary RICE. No, no. I said they brought the plan but we then sat with their experts and our experts. Prime Minister Maliki handed the plan to the President. He said, "Now go and get our experts together to see how we can execute this plan." It is a perfectly logical thing to do. So when they sat together, they recognized there was a gap between Iraqi capabilities now and Iraqi capabilities in the summer and nobody felt that this could wait until the summer. And that is how the augmentation came through. Now I don't doubt—Iraq is now actually a very free wheeling kind of democracy and people say all kinds of things and I am not at all surprised that there are a lot of Iraqis that still believe that Iraqi forces can do this on their own. I think they want to do it on their own but we do have to ask the question, given the stakes and given that security in Baghdad is a very high priority, we don't want them to fail. And so helping to augment their capabilities so that they can succeed is a logical thing to do.

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. Smith.

Mr. SMITH OF NEW JERSEY. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. And welcome again, Madam Secretary. Thank you for your candor and your leadership. Let me just ask a couple of brief questions. In the past when I met with the leader of the reconciliation commission in Iraq and several of its members, I got the distinct feeling they felt isolated and not supported by either their own government or by the international community.

Secondly, on the plight of the Assyrian Christians and other Christians who are a minority in Iraq, as we know, according to information we received at a hearing of this committee in late December, approximately 40 percent of those seeking refugee status from Iraq over the past 3 years have been Christians, and UNHCR has said very clearly they were destitute of those who had managed to get out. My question is, despite these reports, the United States is not making direct access to those refugee programs available to the Iraqi religious minority. Is there consideration being given to creating a new or expanded option for those Christians who are fleeing? I hoped that that would have happened already, UNHCR has not done it either. So this is a very pressing issue.

Finally, on the issue of labor guidelines. We all know that we held hearings on this last year. I traveled to Iraq to check it out myself in September. There is a concern that many of the foreign workers, the 35,000-plus that have been brought in, many of whom were brought in under brokers who were used in deceptive practices and other kinds of very misguided procedures. Unfortunately, some of them could be construed as trafficked individuals. General Casey, to his credit, issued a zero tolerance policy and put into place a number of important steps to try to mitigate and hopefully end the status of that labor agreement. How was it proceeding? Are we hiring people who are getting a fair wage for their work, under the circumstances that we would consider to be fair?

Secretary RICE. Thank you, Congressman. As you said, obviously we do have a zero tolerance. You know how strongly we feel about trafficking, how much we have been an international leader on trafficking. Anytime we have a chance to stop it, even in places where we don't have as much influence as we do in Iraq, we try to do it. I think it is fair to say that this is a very complicated place right now. They have got a lot on their plate, and they are not going to do everything perfectly but of course we are pressing the case.

Let me go first to the reconciliation commission. I also have heard that they sometimes feel they are not listened to. The Prime Minister's people say they do work with them, they do listen to them, but it is awfully important there be a sense that the work that they are doing is really being taken seriously. I think it is. I think some of the proposals that are coming out are really coming out of that commission, but it should be taken very seriously.

Finally, on refugee policy and the current refugee policy more generally, I have asked to look again at our refugee policies on Iraq. As you know, we have had some delay in the way that UNHCR deals with these cases. We have places where people will not—where they are residing where they are not classified as refugees by the government, which causes some problems, and of course we have had a fairly limited program for special refugees, so to speak. So I do think this is something worth looking at.

Mr. SMITH OF NEW JERSEY. If you could do that as quickly as possible, those people really are on the edge. Many will die. I heard, while I was in Baghdad, from several of those individuals, and they are in dire straits, and they are often looked at as if they are the Americans by the warring factions, and they are Iraqis, but they are singled out in a way that leads to putting them in dire straits and often leads to their death. So, I would hope a special program or at least an inclusion of them in programs could be done as quickly as possible.

Secretary RICE. We will take a look.

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. Meeks.

Mr. MEEKS. Madam Secretary, when I remember sitting in this committee now close to 4 years ago and at that time there was a big deal that was being made about the "coalition of the willing" and that we were not doing this by ourselves. And then I look in the *New York Times* today, and I see the biggest partner of the "coalition of the willing," the British, they are not surging with us. They are talking about redeploying or, as you say, withdrawing. They are not talking about escalating. And I have not heard of any of the "coalition of the willing" surging with us. It seems as though we are surging alone, and that coalition that was a big deal a few years ago that we were not going at it alone is no longer intact.

So my first question is, Where is the "coalition of the willing"? Is there anyone surging with us or are we surging alone?

Secondly, listening to the President last night, I couldn't help but think about a number of the things that he had said in the past and how he has pulled on the Americans' emotion strings, if you will. I can recall vividly you, in fact, talking about a mushroom cloud, and the American people were fearful as a result of that. I recall the President saying, "Bring it on." And the American people

at that time, because it was seen to be patriotic, we are going to go get them. And then I recall the banner, Mission Accomplished, and that was supposed to be it. We went in there, we did our thing and everything that we talked about was done. Then I recall every press conference. There was a plan for victory that we never seemed to see happen. Then we had the deck of cards with all of the different heads of the Saddam Hussein regime and we were supposed to pick them off one by one, and Americans were supposed to feel that once we captured them, then it would be over, particularly when we found Saddam Hussein in a hole. Americans were hopeful. That was going to be the end. There was going to be some peace. That didn't happen. Then we had elections in Iraq. That was going to change things. Then that was going to make it better in Iraq, and Americans had its hope up. Then stay the course. And now, surge. And then I listen to the President. So my question is, last night the President then said that the U.S. has responsibility and engagement is not open ended. And allegedly there are benchmarks being set up. Now to me the President has a credibility problem. So if you are going to set up benchmarks at this point, is there a timetable? How do we know? Is it a month? Is it 6 months? Is it a year? How do we know? What are those benchmarks? What is that timetable that we will be utilizing to determine whether or not the Iraqi Government has shown up, doing their thing, taken control of their country or they are not? Is it open ended, or do we have dates to go? Forget about withdrawing now, I am not even talking about withdrawing, but dates to see if the Iraqis have met their benchmarks to show that they are keeping up their end of the bargain based upon the plan for which I heard you say they brought to us and said they can do? There should not be any excuses because it is their plan.

Secretary RICE. Well, first of all, Congressman, let me be very clear about what their plan is. Their plan is for Baghdad—there are other elements of this plan that the President is putting forward for Anbar, and for the decentralization of our political and economic structures. I want to be very clear that the Baghdad plan with the nine districts and so forth that we would help to resource, that is the part that is an Iraqi plan, and obviously it is going to be very important to monitor how they are doing on meeting their commitments.

But I will tell you the benchmark, if you want to call it that, that I am most interested in is, are they going to make the difficult decisions when it comes time to take down death squads that are related somehow politically to influential people, or who are of one sectarian stripe or another. I think that is probably, in the short time, the most important benchmark.

Mr. MEEKS. How will we know—

Secretary RICE. I think we are going to know right away when the commanders say that they did or did not receive the green light to do what they needed to do.

Chairman LANTOS. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. Tancredo.

Mr. TANCREDO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, let me thank you, start off by thanking you for allowing the transitive President Chen through San Francisco. I think that is a very good

development, and I want to thank you publicly for allowing that to occur.

Secondly, I want to bring to your attention something that has come up recently as a result of the fact that once in Colorado, I think once in Tennessee, an Iraqi national who was here, was arrested for a very serious crime in both cases. At least in one case it was manslaughter; I think in the other case it was something similar or just as serious. It turns out we cannot return these people, who would otherwise be returned to their country of origin if they committed an act like this in the United States, after serving their time they would be deported back to the country of origin. Turns out that Iraq won't accept their nationals who have committed crimes in the United States. They will not accept them back if we try to deport them.

It also turns out, when we looked into it, there is something like 40,000 Chinese that fall into the same category. China will not accept back their nationals.

In a letter I sent to you and a response I got today, I understand—although I have not read it yet, and I was just given a part of the response, it said that—as you know, by the way, that the law requires, U.S. Code 1253 states very clearly that on being notified by the Attorney General that the government of a foreign country denies the ability of the United States to actually send back or deport someone who has committed one of these crimes, that we are to stop giving that country visas.

I mean, it is a very clear law. It gives absolutely no wiggle room, if you will, to the Department of State; and in your letter back you said something like, Well, we need to consider foreign policy considerations. What other foreign policy considerations that have prevented us from actually sending back criminal aliens to countries like Iraq, which we are doing a great deal for, it seems to me that they should at least reciprocate by taking their own people back if they have committed a crime in the United States. And the same thing with China, considering our trade relationship with them.

And the second question deals specifically with the issue of the President's speech. If you could explain in detail what exactly he meant by a benchmark being established for November, if, in fact, the Iraqi Government, or by that time Iraq's Government is to take over responsibilities for the security in all provinces in Iraq by November. That is what I heard him say. But I wondered if you could actually tell me what that means in terms of, especially, what would be the response if they did not? What are the ramifications for failing to meet that benchmark in very specific ways?

Secretary RICE. Congressman, I don't think it will be a matter of the Iraqis failing from a lack of will to do it. If for some reason we are unable to train their forces to be able to do it, then perhaps that would be a cause, but we fully expect that by November they are going to be able to do this.

Mr. TANCREDO. What if they don't?

Secretary RICE. I really don't think it is a good thing to speculate what options we might have.

Mr. TANCREDO. Then the benchmark means nothing?

Secretary RICE. No. The benchmark is that you meet the benchmark and then we will still have to work with the Iraqis—we don't

want to cut off our nose to spite our face. If they are moving along and doing rather well in their country, and the generals come and say, "Well, it is going to be a little bit longer," I think we will want to consider that.

What the President is saying is, November is the time that they are supposed to take over the responsibility. We expect them to do it. We think they will be ready to do it. A lot depends, frankly, on how well the training goes for those forces, but we fully expect them to do it. I just don't want to get into trying to talk about what consequences there may be if they don't deliver.

I think that we have made very clear to them that it is time for them to deliver. I am frankly much more concerned initially about, as I said to Congressman Meeks, what happens as this Baghdad security plan unfolds. Are they living up to the rules of engagement that they have agreed to? Are they bringing in the best forces they need to do? Are they acting in an evenhanded fashion? Let us cross that bridge, get them trained, and I think they will meet the November time frame.

As to the point about the various countries and their willingness to take back criminals, this is something that we have and are discussing with the Chinese. I think that we understand the law. We also understand that there are certain downsides to having no visa traffic between the United States and China. So that is what is meant by foreign policy considerations. One has to consider those things.

When it comes to Iraq, the Iraqis have a lot of problems, a lot of problems that we want them to solve. And the issue of the return of our criminals to a country that is already having trouble dealing with the detainees that we are picking up on a daily basis, and they are trying to take these people off the streets who are doing very terrible things, I think we want to be judicious in how hard we press them on this issue. Although we raise it with them, we want them to take them back, I just ask for a little bit of judiciousness with a country that is obviously fighting on many, many different fronts right now.

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. Sherman.

Mr. SHERMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Madam Secretary, I am simply concerned that we are putting far too little of our diplomatic and economic power behind the effort to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons and putting all of our power—diplomatic, our good name and, of course, our military—behind this effort in Iraq.

The Global War on Terrorism has many fronts and will last for many years. You and I were with the President about a month ago when he compared the Global War on Terrorism to the Cold War. Let us learn from the Cold War. We won that one; there are some good lessons. Kissinger and Nixon told us that if we did not prevail in Vietnam, the Stalinists would take over Southeast Asia, South Asia, and eventually win the Cold War.

Eventually we got smarter. We realized that Vietnam was the worst possible place to bottle totalitarian communism. We withdrew from Vietnam, and I would venture that if we had never withdrawn from Vietnam, we would not have prevailed in the Cold War. In any case, we withdrew from Vietnam and we prevailed.

Now we are being told by the administration that there is no way to prevail against the worldwide terrorists unless we achieve stability, perhaps democracy, in Iraq. We are told that this is the case because if Iraq is not completely pacified, then terrorists will have a place where they can meet and plot against us. But, of course, terrorists right now are not only meeting and plotting against us in Iraq, but in many places in Waziristan, in northwest Pakistan, many places in Afghanistan, many places in the Congo are available to them; they just don't need to go to Iraq.

And so it seems fairly obvious that in this war against terrorism there will be many places where terrorists can plot against us, and if we devote 100 percent of all of our effort to try to deprive terrorists of one place where they can meet, we are kind of losing sight of the entire effort.

Is Iraq the be-all and end-all of the war on terrorism? And as you speak, reflect on the words of Kissinger and Nixon; why did they have it wrong, but you have got it right?

Secretary RICE. Well, with all due respect to my good friend Henry Kissinger, I think we have a history with al-Qaeda that we didn't have with Vietnam.

Mr. SHERMAN. That was part of the global war.

Secretary RICE. Let me answer.

We have a history with al-Qaeda. It is the history of September 11th and we know what it would mean to have al-Qaeda able to roam freely in one of the most important states of the Middle East. We also know what it would mean to have an Iraq that is so disabled and so crippled that Iranian influence became a major factor in the Middle East, really endangering American interests that go back more than 60 years in the Persian Gulf region.

We know, too, what it would mean to our allies in the region to have that kind of Iranian influence and what that would mean for American influence. It is going to be one way or another in the Middle East, and if it is not American influence, I will bet you it will be Iranian influence.

As I said, Iraq given over to terrorists in its Sunni areas and Iraq given over to Iranian influence is most certainly then going to be a bridge for Iran into the region, and an Iraq that is successful is going to be a blockade.

I just frankly think that our interests are so much clearer in what would happen if Iraq fails—our interests in the war on terrorism and the implications of that failure. I would just point, Congressman, to the fact that I think whether it was the Baker-Hamilton Study Group or many of the experts that I have been listening to as they have been testifying, there is a very generalized sense that Iraq, if it fails, is going to have enormous consequences for the United States; and I just think we have a different history with Iraq.

Chairman LANTOS. The gentleman's time has expired.

Secretary RICE. Mr. Chairman, I didn't answer Congressman Meeks question about the "coalition of the willing," and I should do that.

Chairman LANTOS. Please.

Secretary RICE. We don't anticipate that there will be additional forces because in the areas that those coalitions' partners are, they

are not needed. In fact, part of the reason for the British being able to contemplate bringing down their forces is that the area that they are in is about to be transferred to Iraqi control.

But we still have nearly 20 countries involved in Iraq including the Japanese, the South Koreans, several of the Baltic States. The contributions have always been relatively small, but the Australians are still there.

The “coalition of the willing” continues in Iraq, but it is obviously very tied now to how various areas of the country are doing in the areas for which those countries have responsibility.

Chairman LANTOS. Mr. Pence.

Mr. PENCE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to welcome the Secretary of State to the 110th Congress. I hope you are enjoying it as much as we all are.

Chairman LANTOS. I hope she enjoys it more.

Mr. PENCE. So do I, Mr. Chairman.

I want to take a moment to commend the President and our Commander-in-Chief for deciding not to fail in Iraq. And in consultation with your good offices, Madam Secretary, developing a new strategy and new tactics to achieve a victory of freedom. I also want to commend you for your tenacious commitment to see freedom win in Iraq and for what we again heard today on the subject of Iran, your clarion understanding of how we deal with those who have enmity toward our Nation and our values in the world.

I wish you journey’s mercies on your travels tomorrow, and our prayers go with you and your outstanding team as you represent America one more time in that troubled place.

Secretary RICE. Thank you.

Mr. PENCE. I was speaking to a high school group in Columbus, Indiana. From the mouths of babes, I was asked a wonderful question that I wanted to flip back around for you.

Knowing I was a fiscal conservative, I had an industrious honor student stand up and say, “Congressman Pence, can we afford to win the war in Iraq?” And I paused for a moment and thought and said that I thought for their generation, the real question was, Can we afford to lose the war in Iraq?

And I wonder, within the time that I have remaining, Madam Secretary, if you would address what the cost of losing would be. What would be the cost to America’s interest in the region? And in your very respected judgment and experience, what would it leave for future generations of Americans to face if we chose to fail by any means in Iraq?

Secretary RICE. Thank you, Congressman Pence. I think it is the right question because these are difficult times. They are crucible times.

And for the President, he has to try to make decisions that are going to give us that opportunity to succeed. The reason that he believes that we really must succeed is to prevent an Iraq that is given over to al-Qaeda in its Sunni areas, where Sunnis have made their accommodation with al-Qaeda—and al-Qaeda has a base not in underdeveloped Afghanistan off the central front, but right in the middle of the Middle East.

And let us make no mistake about al-Qaeda. We have done a lot to disable that organization, we have done a lot to go after the or-

ganization that did September 11th, but they are still alive. I think it was perhaps Senator McCain that said, "The difference here is that when we leave, they will follow us home"; and I think we have to keep that in mind.

Secondly, I can't emphasize enough—everybody here is worried about Iran. Yes, there have been some short-term gains of Iranian influence because of Iraq, but do you really want a long-term gain on Iranian influence, where Iran is able to do whatever it wishes in the south of Iraq, where the Iraqi Shi'a have to make their accommodations with Iran because they have no other friends?

Do you then want to set off the Shi'a-Sunni divide throughout the region where Sunni states are choosing their sides with Sunnis within Iraq and Shi'a are choosing their friends with Shi'a, and you really now are talking about sectarian conflict on a regional basis?

Do you want to incent Turkey to again be concerned about a Kurdish north that would most certainly have to make different decisions than the Kurds have courageously made, decisions now to be a part of a unified Iraq? Because if Iraq falls apart, they are going to have to make different decisions and that is going to be a problem with Turkey. Is that the Iraq you want to create?

You know, I have to say that as I think about what we face as a country, we have been through these difficult and dark times before. We all look back now on the end of the Cold War, and I was lucky enough to be the White House Soviet specialist at the end of the Cold War. I was behind the Jim Baker that signed the agreement that unified Germany. I was there when Eastern Europe was liberated, in Poland when Lech Walesa met President George H.W. Bush. I was there for the early signs when the Soviet Union was about to collapse peacefully. A couple of months ago I went to a NATO summit in Riga, and the Czech President said, maybe a little bit more boldly than most of us would have said, "This is the first NATO summit on the territory of the former Soviet Union."

Now if you think for a minute that anybody would have believed that possible in 1946 when the Italian Communists won 48 percent of the vote and the French Communists won 46 percent of the vote, or when Czechoslovakia fell to a Communist coup in 1948 or when the Chinese Communists won their revolution in 1949, the Soviet Union exploded a nuclear weapon 5 years ahead of schedule, and in 1950 the Korean War broke out—think if anybody would have thought that 1989 and 1990 and 1991 was possible.

I have been accused of being overly idealistic, and one friend even said, "Maybe you are drinking the Kool-Aid." Well, you say that a country that spans 12 time zones with 30,000 nuclear weapons, 5 million men under arms, an empire that stretched from Cuba to Angola to the north of Europe, that it was just going to collapse peacefully one day and Europe was going to be united in Western values—that was drinking the Kool-Aid.

So I hope that when we think about the prospects for what could be in the Middle East, if we are resolved enough to win in Iraq against obviously difficult odds, because we are trying to help the Iraqis do something fundamentally very, very hard, but if we think about the benefits of giving it all we have got, I think we will decide that as a country we really don't have a choice.

Chairman LANTOS. Ambassador Watson.

Ms. WATSON. Thank you, and I want to thank the Secretary for spending this amount of time with us. And I would hope that the next time we meet we will not be on this same issue because I have listened for the last few hours, both about Iran and Iraq, and I can't identify what victory in Iraq really is.

But I hope diplomacy will win out over bullets and guns; and I will expect that you can join me in that one.

I have three things, and I am going to run them all together, and then if time allows, you can respond.

But what I am hearing now is that we have helped draft up a law in Iraq that would give Western oil companies about 75 percent of the profits and contracts for the next 30 years. And you mentioned "given the stakes," are these the stakes? I would like you to comment on that.

What is really disturbing is that occupying Iraq is not something that we want to do. But I said here, when it was decided to build the largest Embassy in the world with 5,000 workers at the cost of approximately \$1 billion, that, to me, says we are going to have a massive presence for a long, long time in a country that I think has 28 million people. And I understand that currently the total of Embassy personnel, well within that total there are less than 10 people who are fluent in Arabic.

So I am just wondering why we are spending that much money, why we are making it appear that we are going to be there for a long time.

And I would hope that you would help us understand the work that you do. And I respect it and admire it, and it might play a major part, rather than this surge or this escalation of military personnel and weapons.

Thank you.

Secretary RICE. Thank you very much, Congresswoman Watson.

First of all, we have not helped to draft a law that would advantage Western oil companies. We have encouraged the Iraqis to have a private sector with a free, open market. I think they will make the best deals they can with whatever companies they can. That has really been our goal.

There are a lot easier ways to ensure oil supplies than what we have done in Iraq, and I think the notion that we somehow are seeking oil is not right, and we ought to put that to rest right now.

Ms. WATSON. I am going to share an article that I pulled up, Googled up, and I will share it with you.

Secretary RICE. Now—

Ms. WATSON. I know you can read it, but I am going to share.

Secretary RICE. The Embassy is—\$569 million to build it. But you are right, it is a large Embassy. We do expect to have a presence in Iraq for a long time. It doesn't mean a military presence necessarily. It means that like we have a presence in China, India, and Egypt. We need an Embassy, and given the security situation there, it is an Embassy that has special features. I think it is perfectly logical that we will want to have a large diplomatic presence, a large aid presence, and a large presence to engage the Iraqi people. Iraq is one of the most important countries in one of the world's most important regions, and that is the reason for the large Embassy there.

In terms of the Arabic, I said earlier and I would like to repeat it because it is very important. We do have an awful lot of people who have Arabic at different levels working in the Embassy. And, in fact, we have a program to try to recruit more people with those skills through our critical languages program and to begin to train people in lower grades in critical languages. That is an initiative that Margaret Spellings and Don Rumsfeld and John Negroponte and I announced, because the truth of the matter is, this country is underinvested in people who can speak the critical languages like Arabic and Persian.

I am an example of how the country invested in people who could speak Russian; and we did not make the same investment in critical languages of the Middle East, and now we are going to have to catch up, and I hope there will be support for our efforts. It can't be just the U.S. Government; I hope that universities will incentivize people to learn these critical languages.

Finally, you are absolutely right—this can't be military alone. I think the President was clear that we need the military surge because the Iraqis need help for the difficult mission that they want to undertake. But he was also very clear—and I thank you for giving me the chance, because we haven't talked enough about it—this has to be a political and economic surge.

We need very much to decentralize our efforts, our political and economic efforts, out of Baghdad. We will have three new provincial reconstruction teams in Baghdad. We will have several in Anbar. I think it is five in Baghdad and three in Anbar.

We also are going to continue to build these provincial reconstruction teams out with localities and provinces because we don't want the only point for success to be Baghdad. We want this country to build its governance in economic and political structure from the bottom up. And if I could introduce you, Congresswoman, to some of the provincial reconstruction team leaders who are out there in places like Mosul and places very far from Baghdad, who are engaging the local population, engaging local leadership, helping to bring reconstruction and job programs right to the local level, I think you would get a sense of how we are trying to bring the work that we do to support the building of a stable and democratic Iraq.

Finally, on the diplomatic front, I am going to leave tomorrow because I think it is extremely important that we embed this in a regional strategy. Iraq is central not just to our interest; it is central to the interests of the region. We are pressing the regional states to be more responsive to Iraqi needs, to be politically more supportive. We do have an international compact, which is a set of benchmarks for the Iraqis to meet with a set of benefits that would come from the international community as the Iraqis meet those benchmarks: Like the oil law and the anticorruption measures that they might take.

So thank you for giving me a chance to talk about some of the things we are doing that are nonmilitary.

Chairman LANTOS. I am sorry. The gentlewoman's time has expired.

Ms. WATSON. I will call you.

Mr. SIRES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Madam Secretary, I am the new kid on the block here, so just bear with me.

I am constantly amazed at our effort, the money that we have spent, the human toll that we have in the region, and you mentioned the word before, self-preservation. Everybody is concerned about Iran, if we lose, if we withdraw, how they are going to step in. I guess my question is, What would it take for these people to see the light, the neighbors of Iraq?

I am talking about Saudi Arabia. They have to come to the dance floor. What would it take? Would it take a plan for us, instead of a surge, to say that we are going to withdraw 20,000 troops every 6 months until they participate? I mean, what would it take from us?

And the other part is, you spoke about Aljazeera and how we need a vehicle for us to get out our message in this area. Maybe I am wrong, but I thought I read where Saudi Arabia is one of the biggest contributors to Aljazeera, and I am sure they can use a little force. I don't think they have to worry about the FCC in that part of the world. Can we get them to at least participate in trying to change some of the opinions that these people have of us?

Secretary RICE. Thank you, Congressman.

First of all, you are right. It is one of our friends. It is in Qatar that Aljazeera is, but the point is still well taken, and we have indeed engaged the Government of Qatar in telling them that Aljazeera is engaging in propaganda that is endangering our forces. You can be sure that is something that we press very hard with them. They keep saying they are making changes in the management, but it never quite materializes.

Mr. SIRES. It is the money.

Secretary RICE. You make a very good point of that. What would it take for them to be more involved?

I think they are becoming much more involved than they were. They have been pretty involved in getting Sunnis involved in the political process in a useful way, and we have to recognize that. Jordan is training lots of policemen for the Iraqis in Jordan.

A lot of them have now begun to really have missions in Iraq, if not at the Embassy level at least at the chargé level. The Arab League did send the head of the Arab League there because part of this is to have Iraq have an Arab identity, not one that is linked through the Shi'a to Iran. So I think those are useful things.

We want the Gulf States to really—the things they could do most importantly is debt relief, especially Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, because in fact the Iraqis—and a point I have not made and I should have made to Congresswoman Watson—the Iraqis are about to spend \$10 billion of their own money on reconstruction, as well they should. They have been slow to spend it; we have been pressing them to spend it. So they do have resources.

One of the issues is, can debt relief help the Iraqis to have even more resources? Because one of the limits on the resources has to do with this overhang of debt that we hope people will forgive.

The international compact gives everybody an opportunity to step up, and we plan to press that. Frankly, the Iraqis need to demonstrate to the region, just like they need to demonstrate to their own people, that they are going to be evenhanded in the treatment

of Sunnis and Shi'as. With that I think then they will get a better response and a good response from the region.

But I don't want to leave the impression that the region has done nothing. They have been much more engaged with the Iraqis over the last year. They could, frankly, be more engaged than that.

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you.

Ms. Jackson Lee.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. First, Mr. Chairman, let me express my appreciation. It is an honor to be able to serve with you and serve with Ranking Member Ros-Lehtinen, but also with all of the members of this committee.

Last evening I sat in front of the television with a little black book and intently tried to take notes—even though I knew they would be reported very aptly in today's newspapers—of the President's speech. And I recognized constitutionally we are three separate branches of government with the President being the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces and, in actuality, can call our troops into battle.

The most frustrating aspect of what I heard last night was seemingly the conspicuous ignoring of the vast input of Members of Congress—I note there were a number of Senators who had recently come back from Iraq who wanted to engage and I am not sure whether they were completely engaged—and completely ignoring the creature of the Congress which was the Baker Commission, a studious, thoughtful presentation of diplomacy first.

The concern that I have for the President's representation last night, and as you recalled for me—and I will quickly get to the question—the Cold War, my brief recollections that Lech Walesa of Poland claimed Martin Luther King as an idol, claimed a social movement of nonviolence.

We cannot compare large portions of the end of the Cold War to the violent upheaval in Iraq. There was a great deal of diplomacy utilized in the coming to a conclusion of the Cold War. Although there may have been a number of conflicts that we can recount—I know that, and you are the Soviet expert. But what you have done based—the President has based his efforts on is an Iraqi dependent policy. You are sending troops into battle based upon a failed government that has never kept its promises short of our forced election. When I say "forced," we provided them the protection.

So I ask the question—and you may have answered it already, and I will ask the question. Riddled in my remarks may be some errors because obviously I am just becoming familiar with the vastness of the details that this committee has been privy to. How are we, the American people, to rely upon a dependent foreign policy versus a coalition foreign policy? I don't think we should send our troops into battle based upon this dependent foreign policy of an Iraqi Government that has failed to engage the Sunnis and the Shiites, has failed to engage in diplomacy.

Secretary RICE. Thank you, Congresswoman. Let me just make clear about the Cold War.

I was actually talking about the first part of the Cold War, not the last part of the Cold War, and I think it would be fair to say that the first part of the Cold War was pretty violent. The first

part of the Cold War was pretty tough from the point of view of totalitarianism and the first part of the Cold War also, of course, produced the Korean War which was pretty violent. So my point was not about Lech Walesa and the end of the Cold War.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. I was speaking about the end of the Cold War because, as we all know, 50 years ago—I want to separate out as we went toward the end—there was diplomacy.

Secretary RICE. Yes, absolutely. But my point is, Congresswoman, that it was only about the difficulty that we experienced at the beginning and the fact that we did not give up despite that difficulty.

Now, in terms of the diplomacy at the end—I am going to get to your Iraq question—but the diplomacy at the end, let us be very clear. I was here for that diplomacy. The Soviet Union was in collapse. We had all of the leverage. It was pretty easy to unify Germany because East Germany was falling apart daily because the Soviet Union had lost its will and lost its capability.

That is not the situation that we are in with Iran at this particular point in time. So I think it is extremely important to recognize that diplomacy requires leverage.

Now, we are actually being very active on the diplomatic front. I have personally worked to put together a regional grouping of countries that have a like-minded view of where we are going in the Middle East, the GCC+2. And I have been able to put it together because they don't like the Iranian assertiveness any more than we do.

We have also put together a diplomatic effort that has isolated Iran in terms of its nuclear programs. I think it is actually starting to have an effect on Iran's ability to access capital from the international financial system, and that may make a difference in how Iran sees its interests.

So diplomacy is very much in evidence here. But when it comes to the Iraq situation, there isn't much to be done in terms of the negotiations with al-Qaeda that is there or with the terrorists that are killing innocent people.

What you are absolutely right about and why I fully understand your skepticism is that the Iraqi Government is, has been, I would say—I would not say they have not delivered, but would say they have been slow to deliver on their own promises of national reconciliation. But let us remember they are 9 months old as a government in a country that has decades of history of repression and tyranny against the various groups that are—the very group that is now in the majority.

I think one question that we might ask is, Why the outcome in terms of national reconciliation hasn't actually been one in which the Kurds refused to deal with a national unity government? In fact, there are some people who thought that is what they would do. In fact, the President of Iraq is a Kurd.

It is interesting to ask why Sunnis have come back into the process and why Tarik al-Hashimi, the head of the IIP Party, though he has lost two brothers and a sister, continues to hang in there to try to form a national unity government. Why have the Shi'a, who won the majority of the vote, continued to pursue a national reconciliation plan? I think it is because even though it is really,

really hard; given the tremendous grievances that they have against one another throughout history, they understand that their best future is together.

Now in the time that they have been in office, or even before they came into office, we have to recognize that al-Qaeda did set out to stoke sectarian violence through the bombing of the Golden Mosque and that to a certain extent it succeeded. What the President was talking about last night was a limited mission for additional American forces to bridge the gap for the Iraqis between the force that they need to deal with in Baghdad and the force that they have.

I want to repeat again, if you really do think that this is just a matter of will, that all the Iraqis have to do is step up, then in fact I think the right policy might be to challenge them on that, step back and say, "Step up." But it is the assessment of our people on the ground, our military people, our political people and, indeed, in conjunction with their military experts that they don't currently have those forces. It would be at least the summer, maybe a little bit later, before they have those forces. And because the sectarian violence in Baghdad that needs to be dealt with that is so urgent, they have got to regain the confidence of the population that they will indeed deal evenhandedly with the violent people who are killing innocent Iraqis.

If I may, I just want to repeat something that I have been saying today because there is an image that is pervasive of Sunnis and Shi'as simply going at each other, random Sunnis and random Shi'as, just simply going at each other because they hate each other. The chairman is absolutely right; there are deep enmities between these groups. But the real problem is, in these mixed neighborhoods and to a certain extent in some Sunni neighborhoods, you have organized violent people, organized gangs, organized death squads, that are going into neighborhoods killing the men and sending the women into exile. That is a breakdown in civil order, and the Iraqi Government has got to get control of that problem.

In order to do that, they developed a plan that puts a military governor in Baghdad, that puts two deputies in nine districts where Iraqi army forces, Iraqi national police and Iraqi police will operate out of police stations like the spoke out of a wheel, spoke-to-wheel, and where we are supporting them with an American battalion in each of those nine districts.

This is a very limited mission, I think, for a very important, high-priority task. But I absolutely fully agree and admit that if the Iraqis aren't able to step up to their part of the bargain, this isn't going to work.

What gives some comfort to me is that I think they now understand that everything is on the line for them in convincing their population that they can actually govern.

Chairman LANTOS. Madam Secretary, before I thank you, let me just say, and I know I speak for every member of this committee, we stand in awe of your intellectual brilliance and your mastery of a global portfolio of unprecedented proportions and complexity, and we are immensely proud of you.

Let me also wish you on behalf of every member of this committee Godspeed and good successes in your mission. Let me tell

you, we are looking forward to February 7th when we will have the pleasure of seeing you again.

Secretary RICE. I look forward to it.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. If I could also extend our best wishes to the Secretary as well. And it is just so wonderful to be speaking on behalf of American values of freedom, democracy and respect for human rights, so be proud.

Secretary RICE. Thank you very much. Thank you.

Chairman LANTOS. Thank you very much.

This briefing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 5:10 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]



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