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S. HRG. 110–153

SECURING AMERICA'S INTEREST IN IRAQ: THE REMAINING OPTIONS

HEARINGS

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

JANUARY 10, 11, 17, 18, 23, 25, 30, 31, AND FEBRUARY 1, 2007

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WHERE WE ARE: THE CURRENT SITUATION IN IRAQ

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 10, 2007

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:30 a.m., in room SH–216, Hart Senate Office Building, Hon. Richard G. Lugar, presiding.

Present: Senators Lugar, Biden, Dodd, Kerry, Feingold, Boxer, Bill Nelson, Obama, Menendez, Cardin, Casey, Webb, Hagel, Coleman, Corker, Sununu, Voinovich, Murkowski, Isakson, and Vitter.

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

Chairman LUGAR. Let me call the hearing to order. If we may have order in the committee room.

To the committee and to all who are assembled, let me indicate that technically the Senate has not yet acted upon the new chairmanships, ranking members, and membership of committees. The Senate will do so fairly promptly this week, but our business goes on in the committee. And it's my privilege today, as the outgoing chairman of the committee, to introduce my friend and great Senator, Joe Biden, who will be our chairman and will preside over today's hearing. We will assume he is chairman, and he will act as chairman today and tomorrow and—through a very vigorous series of hearings on Iraq and the Middle East that we have planned.

Let me just say that one of the strengths of our committee has been the commitment of Senator Biden and Democratic and Republican committee members to bipartisanship, but likewise to very, very substantial questioning of American foreign policy, regardless of which party—which President we have served under. I'm certain that that will continue. It's an important aspect that the face of America be as united as possible, and we have attempted to further that idea, I think, with some degree of success. For example, the India Nuclear Agreement that was just concluded celebrated a significant strategic development for our country with an overwhelming vote in this committee and support of Members of the House of Representatives who shared this bipartisan ethic.

So, with that introduction, let me just indicate I'm delighted to welcome our new members to the committee. I'm certain the chairman will want to do that, too. But it's especially good to welcome him to the chairmanship, and I turn over the gavel, which I do not see at the present, Mr. Chairman. [Laughter.]

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But, nevertheless, in due course that will be forthcoming, too. [Laughter.]

Chairman BIDEN. Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

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

Chairman BIDEN. Folks, let me echo the comments made by the Senator. Technically, we vote in the U.S. Congress on the organization. I am insisting on an open vote, not a secret ballot, if you get the meaning of that. There may very well be a secret ballot. We may keep him as chairman. I may vote for him. [Laughter.]

One of the things that Senator Lugar emphasized is that all of us on this committee, under his leadership and the brief stint before that under mine and now again under mine, is that we understand that no foreign policy in America can be sustained without the informed consent of the American people. And one of the overwhelming responsibilities of this committee, which has legislative responsibility, but quite frankly, its role, historically, has been more in playing the role of providing a platform upon which to inform the American people of the options—many times, difficult options—that must be chosen by a President of the United States in order to conduct the foreign policy of this country.

And this morning we begin the work of the new Congress with many new Members, including many new members on this committee. We welcome, today, new members—Senator Cardin, Senator Casey, Senator Corker, and Senator Webb, and we're delighted they have joined the committee. We also welcome veteran members of the U.S. Senate who are new to the Foreign Relations Committee—Senator DeMint, Senator Johnny Isakson from Georgia, Senator Bob Menendez from New Jersey, and Senator Vitter, who I don't see here yet, but I'm sure will be coming.

You join a committee that's tried to remain a place for sanity and civility in what has been a very partisan and sometimes polarized Senate over the last decade. We've not always succeeded, but, quite frankly, when we have, it's largely been due to the efforts of Chairman Lugar. I don't want to make this sound like a mutual admiration society, but, to state the fact, there is no one—no one in the U.S. Senate who knows more about foreign policy, and no one who has contributed more to American security than Chairman Lugar.

Today, we're brought together by a question that dominates our national debate, and it really boils down to a simple proposition. What options remain to meet our twin goals of bringing American forces home and leaving behind a stable Iraq? Over the next 4 weeks, this committee will seek answers to that question. First, we will hear from the Bush administration, then we'll hear from experts—left, right, and center—in our government and out of government, from across the United States and beyond our borders. Then we'll hear from men and women with very different ideas, but who are united in their devotion to this country and their desire to see us through this very difficult time.

The Bush administration, as well as important private groups and experts, have developed varying plans on how to proceed in Iraq. Tonight, I will sit, as will all of you, and listen to our President, and he will have my prayers and hopes that his plan will be

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one that will ease our burden and not deepen it. But it's a unique responsibility of the U.S. Congress, and especially and historically the Foreign Relations Committee in the U.S. Senate, to evaluate these plans, in public, to help our citizens understand the very difficult choices this country faces.

That's the best way to secure, in my view, as I said earlier, the informed consent of the American people. For without their informed consent, whatever policy we arrive at cannot long be sustained.

I have my own strongly held views, as the witnesses know and my colleagues know, about what to do and how we should proceed in Iraq. There will be plenty of time for me to talk about them in the days ahead. But, for now, I want to set out what Senator Lugar and I jointly hope to accomplish as we put together this agenda for the next several weeks, and how we hope to accomplish it.

First, let me make it clear what these hearings are not intended to be about. They are not about an effort to revisit the past, point fingers, or place blame on how we got to where we are. The American people spoke very loudly this past November. They know that we're in a significant mess in Iraq. But instead of arguing how we got into that mess, they want us to be proactive and be part of the solution. They expect us to help America get out of the mess we're in, not talk about how we got there.

We will start by receiving the most up-to-date unvarnished analysis of the situation and trends in Iraq and in the region. As a matter of fact, we began that inquiry yesterday. As all my colleagues know, and many people in the audience know, we have a "Secret Room" in the Senate. It's called "S–407," where we're able to have unvarnished discussions with the most sensitive information, requiring the highest clearance. And yesterday, all of my colleagues and I sat there for a considerable amount of time receiving a classified briefing from all the major intelligence agencies of the U.S. Government.

We continue that inquiry, the inquiry of determining what the facts are on the ground today, with the experts who will assist us in assessing the political, security, economic, and diplomatic realities that are on the ground today in Iraq and in the region.

We'll begin with Dr. Phebe Marr, who has given us her valuable time and scholarship and insight for many years in this committee and is one of the most welcome witnesses that we have had in both administrations, all administrations. She is a preeminent historian of Iraq, and she will provide a historical overview. It is our view that by illuminating the past, we're going to be better able to understand the present, and hopefully better prepared to deal with the present situation.

Michael O'Hanlon, of the Brookings Institution, has also graced us with his presence in the past, and he will focus on—I'd put it this way—focus on the numbers. How do we measure the current situation in Iraq? The trends, in terms of security, the economy, and public opinion.

And Mr. Said, the director of the Iraq Revenue Watch, will speak to us on the political dynamics inside Iraq. Who are the main players? What are their interests? And what possible scenarios could bring them together?

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And then Paul Pillar, the former national intelligence officer for Near East and South Asia, will address the dynamics in the region. He has, again, graced us with his presence in the past, and has been very valuable. The issue that we will ask him to discuss is: What do Iraq's neighbors want? And how can they affect the outcome on the ground in Iraq, if they can affect the outcome?

The goal today, as it was yesterday, is not to discuss policy options, although there are no limits on what any of the witnesses can discuss, but it's to get at the facts, as best we know them. We want this committee and the public to have a strong foundation upon which to evaluate the principal policy options that are being discussed in this country today. Starting tomorrow and over the following 3 weeks, we will turn to those options and ask: Where do we go from here? Secretary of State Rice has graciously indicated she is not only ready, but anxious, to appear before our committee, which she will do tomorrow, after President Bush announces the administration's plans, tonight.

The authors of every other major plan for Iraq will present their recommendations, including those who advocate escalation, those who advocate withdrawal, partition, federalization, siding with one side or the other, strengthening the center, and so on. The major authors of the plans—the authors of those major plans will come and testify over the next 3 weeks.

As we hear from them, we'll also hear from leading military, diplomatic, economic, and political experts, and we will ask this country's senior statesmen and stateswomen, former National Security Advisors, former Secretaries of State, to help us put everything we've heard in context as we conclude what will probably be the first round of hearings on Iraq.

The ultimate question for this committee is the question that'll be on the minds of every American as we listen to the President of the United States tonight. Will your plan, Mr. President, or other plans, put us on a better path in Iraq, or will it dig us into a deeper hole with more pain, and not much to show for it? We pray it will be the former. But together we have a responsibility and, I believe, an opportunity to help put this country on a better path.

So, let's begin. Let me turn this over now to Senator Lugar for any comments that he wishes to make.

Senator LUGAR. Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I thank you for holding this important hearing and for assembling such an excellent panel.

I would offer a special greeting, as you have, to Dr. Phebe Marr, who has been a tremendous resource for the committee, and for me personally. She testified at four different Iraq hearings during my recent chairmanship, and also appeared at a hearing held under Senator Biden in August 2002. Dr. Marr's calm and authoritative analysis on Iraq is grounded in a prodigious understanding of that country and a nonpartisan outlook that is badly needed in this debate.

Dr. Michael O'Hanlon has also provided excellent testimony before our committee in recent years. In 2005 and 2006, I wrote a series of 15 "Dear Colleague" letters to—on Iraq to all Senators. These letters introduced reports and documents that I found to be

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particularly illuminating. The Brookings Institution Iraq Index, a report overseen by Dr. O'Hanlon, accompanied the first letter that I sent, and it provides a remarkably detailed view of the economic and security situation in Iraq. The Iraq Index is updated regularly, and I continue to recommend it to any Member of Congress or citizen who wants a thoughtful grounding in the facts.

I also welcome Mr. Said and Dr. Pillar, who are testifying before this committee for the first time. We are grateful to have them as a new resource at this critical moment.

Tonight, President Bush will give a speech outlining his intended course in Iraq. In recent days, I have had opportunities to talk to the President about Iraq. Among other points, I underscored the need for a thorough effort to involve Congress in the decision-making process.

United States policy in Iraq would benefit greatly from meaningful executive branch consultations with legislators, and from careful study by Members of Congress, that's directed at dispassionately evaluating the President's plan and other options. Members of this committee and the entire Congress must be prepared to make reasoned judgments about what the President is proposing.

Initially, the President and his team need to explain what objectives we are trying to achieve: If forces are expanded, where and how they will be used; why such a strategy will succeed; and how Iraqi forces will be involved; how long additional troops may be needed; what contingencies are in place if the situation does not improve; and how this strategy fits into our discussion throughout the region.

The American media is understandably focused on the possibility of a troop surge in Iraq. But whatever may be the final conclusion on this point, relative success or failure is likely to hinge on many other factors and decisions. The complexity of the Iraq situation demands more of us than partisan sound bites or preconceived judgments.

With this in mind, this hearing, setting the terms of reference for what is happening in Iraq, is especially timely. I look forward to the insights of our distinguished panel and to working with Chairman Biden and all members of this committee as we continue our inquiry in the coming weeks.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman BIDEN. Thank you, Senator.

Let me explain to the new Members of the Senate that the way we proceed will be to hear from all the witnesses—and I'll announce that order in a moment—and then open it to questions, based on our seniority here.

This is a very important topic, to say the least. And we could probably, with some useful benefit to informing ourselves, spend 2 days with this panel alone. But my staff tells me, in consultation with the Republican staff, that, as a practical matter, we're going to limit each of us, including myself, to 8-minute rounds of questions. I realize that is, in some sense, is not sufficient to really explore in the kind of depth you may want to. My experience is, the witnesses are available to you, personally, after the hearing, and on the telephone and in their offices, and occasionally, if you ask

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them, they will make themselves available in your offices if it works with their schedule.

So, I apologize in advance that there's not going to be the kind of exposition that—if we were doing this as a seminar at a university, we'd be able to spend a whole lot more time. But the dictates of time make it difficult. So, we're going to limit it to 8-minute rounds, if I may.

But, first, let me begin. And the order in which I will ask the witnesses to deliver their statements will be Dr. Marr, Mr. O'Hanlon, Mr. Said, and Dr. Pillar.

Welcome, again, Phebe, and we're delighted to have you here. Thank you.

STATEMENT OF DR. PHEBE MARR, HISTORIAN, AUTHOR OF "THE MODERN HISTORY OF IRAQ," WASHINGTON, DC

Dr. MARR. Senator Biden, Senator Lugar, I want to say how delighted I am to be back again. And I can't commend you and the committee enough for what I think has been a remarkable job in the continuing debate on Iraq and in informing the American public on it. It has seemed to me to be quite a wonderful effort, I hope will continue with good effect.

I have been asked to address the historical context of this issue. And let me say that 2007 marks the 50th year that I've been involved in Iraq. I've done other things besides Iraq, but it was 1957 when I first went to Iraq. And so, I have the benefit of some historical hindsight in having actually been on the ground through all of the regimes, including the monarchy.

Iraq has had a very rich and varied history, but one of the things that has struck me as I have followed it as a scholar and personally is the discontinuity of Iraqi history. And, indeed, we're in the middle of another such period.

Actually, I'd like to address three questions this morning. The first is: Where is Iraq today? What are the chief political and social elements we face in Iraq? Second: How can we account for this situation? To what extent is it historical? And, last: Is this current situation likely to be lasting? Is it transient? Is it remediable?

Iraq, since 2003, has undergone not one, but several, revolutionary and radical changes of a proportion not seen since the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the formation of the state in the 1920s. And I think the degree and nature of these changes need to be recognized.

First has been a radical change in leadership. It's not simply that Iraqi leadership and its dictatorship have been decapitated, now physically, as well as literally, but that an entirely new leadership group has come to power. The ethnic and sectarian composition of that leadership has changed. Shia and Kurds have replaced Arab Sunnis as the dominant group. And its ideological orientation has also changed, from one that was secular, nationalist, and devoted to a unitary Iraqi State to one with differing visions of where Iraq should go. Overall the leadership has a view that is far more dominated by religion than it has been at any time in Iraq's history.

Since the nature and character of this leadership is critical to our endeavor, I'd like to just take a few minutes to indicate a few characteristics of these leaders worth noting. They result from a study

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that I've been engaged in at the United States Institute of Peace for the last couple of years. I've attached a couple of charts to my written testimony, and I think there's a special report coming out on the Internet very shortly. But there are three characteristics I'd like to call to your attention. One is inexperience and discontinuity in leadership over the past 4 years. Some 75 percent of the current leaders hold national positions for the first time. This makes for a very steep learning curve in governance. Second is the divide between the leaders with roots in the exile community, together with Kurds who have been living in the north, separate from the rest of Iraq, and those leaders who remained living inside Iraq under Saddam's rule. These groups have different narratives of the past and visions for the future. And third, and most important, the key leaders today have been shaped by decades of opposition to the former regime. Many spent years in underground movements or imprisoned by Saddam, and lost family members to the Baath. Few insiders, including professionals who simply worked under the Baath regime, have made it into the leadership. The suspicion, distrust, and hostility between these two groups is the core dynamic driving much of the politics in Iraq today, making reconciliation difficult.

A second fundamental change has been the destruction of governmental institutions, the bureaucracy and the army, about which much has been said. The institutions underpinned not just the Baath regime, but Iraq's Government since its founding in the 1920s. Both of these institutions were established under the British, under the mandate, but had their origins in the Ottoman period. Despite ups and downs and periods of instability in modern Iraq, these two institutions remained the backbone of the state until 2003. The collapse of much of Iraq's bureaucratic and military structure have left a void that, in my view, will take years, if not decades, to fill and has left an enormous political, social, and institutional vacuum. This vacuum is now filled, in part, by militias and a new mix of parties and factions.

A third radical change is underway as a result of these events: The collapse of the state as the Iraqis have known it since its creation under international mandate in 1920. Iraq is now a failing, if not yet a failed state, with a new central government that has difficulty cohering and whose reach does not extend much beyond the perimeters of the Green Zone. The establishment of a government that delivers services to the population—chief among them, security—is recognized as the chief task before Iraqis and its foreign supporters. However this issue of governance is resolved, the form of the Iraqi State is likely to change fundamentally. How governance will be reconstituted, power distributed in the future, is a big question. But Iraq is not likely to be a unified state dominated by a strong central government in Baghdad, at least for some time.

A fourth revolutionary change has been the seemingly radical shift in identity on the part of the population, which, in extreme form, has led to this vicious sectarian war in Baghdad and its environs, and to serious demographic shifts, and an effort, not yet successful, to make this communal identity territorial.

Many have seen these identities—Kurdish, Shia, Sunni, Turkmen, et cetera—as longstanding, even primordial, a bedrock of

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Iraqi society. But I think this is a misreading of Iraq's much more complex and interesting history. The intensity of these sectarian and ethnic divisions are more the result of a collapsing order, a vicious incitement of civil war by al-Qaeda, and political manipulation by politicians desirous of getting power. They were also exacerbated by an overweening central government and increasing persecution of the opposition by Saddam's dictatorship. However, the events of the past year have solidified emerging communal identities to an extent not known before in Iraq. And only time will tell whether they can be mitigated. This is likely to take enormous effort by Iraqis and by us.

And, last, another profound change is becoming apparent: The collapse of one of the Arab world's major cities—Baghdad. Baghdad has played a major role in Iraqi history, not just since the 1920s, but since its founding in the eighth century. Iraq, with its two rivers and complex irrigation system, as well as geographic openness to invasion from foreign territory, has seldom flourished unless it has had a relatively strong central government to harness its water resources and protect its population.

When Baghdad has declined or been destroyed, as it twice was by the Mongols, Iraq has fallen into long periods of decay. But one must remember that, ultimately, that city and Mesopotamia, now Iraq, have always revived.

Greater Baghdad now contains a quarter to a third of Iraq's population and its highest concentration of skills and infrastructure. Baghdad, as a city, is not lost, but its revival and the return of its middle class are essential to overcoming ethnic and sectarian divisions and the restoration of a functioning government.

One last thought on the current situation, and this may overlap a little with my colleague. Major ethnic and sectarian blocs are already fragmenting into smaller units based on personal interests, desire for power, differing visions and constituencies. It's these smaller units, and the leadership of the larger, better organized and financed parties, also intermixed with militias, that will be making the decisions on Iraq's direction. It seems to me that one way out of the conundrum of communal-identity politics is to encourage political alliances between these various groups on issues and interests, such as oil legislation, commercial legislation, regulation of water resources, economic development, and other issues. This is a slow, laborious process, but it's probably the only way in which some of the distrust and hostility between the leaders and groups can be broken down and a new political dynamic shaped.

Let me finish up by asking: Given this situation, what prognosis may be made? I feel Iraq faces three potential futures in the near and midterm, and it's still too early to tell which will dominate. Given the grievous mistakes made on all sides, this process is going to be very costly and time consuming, and no one should expect a clear outcome in the next 2 years, probably even in the next decade. But helping to shape the long-term future of Iraq in one direction or the other will have a profound effect on the region and, I believe, on our own security.

The first outcome is that Iraq will break up, as I'm calling it, into its three main ethnic and sectarian components—Kurdish, Arab Sunni, and Arab Shia—hastened by ethnic and sectarian conflicts

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spiraling out of control. Unless this division is shepherded and fostered by outside forces, however, I think this outcome is unlikely, on its own. This division is not historical, but has come to the fore in a moment of history characterized by political vacuum and chaos, as I've indicated. Such a division will pose real difficulties in Iraq and is radical in its implications for a region in which peace depends on tolerance and coexistence, not just within Islam, but among ethnic and national groups. While this breakup may happen, in my view it should not be encouraged or brokered by the United States, especially if we want to disengage our forces from the country. It will create more, not less, instability in the future.

The second outcome is that Iraq may break down, a process that is well underway. Rather than cohesive ethnic and sectarian entities, the Iraqi polity will disintegrate into smaller units. These will comprise political parties and movements, militias, local tribal leaders, already mentioned. In reality, this is the Iraq that is emerging, with different local forces competing in an effort to establish control in various areas of the country. This scenario, a full-blown failed state, would cause serious problems for the region and the United States. Indeed, I feel that the failed-state syndrome may be spreading throughout the region, as events in Lebanon and Palestine indicate. We may be seeing the breakdown of the state system established in the region by the British and French after World War I.

A third outcome would be to slow and gradually arrest the decline, and for Iraq to gradually reconstitute a government that recognizes the new identities that have emerged, but learns to accommodate them in some new framework that allows for economic and social development. It'll be easy to rebuild this framework, I believe, if Iraqis do not divide indefatigably on ethnic and sectarian lines, but, rather, work within various groups and parties that are gradually participating in the political system to achieve mutual interest. Even if such a government does not control much territory out of Baghdad or the Green Zone, it's better to keep it intact as a symbol and a framework, toward which future generations can work, than to destroy it and try once again to establish another new and entirely radical framework.

Iraq is very far from achieving a new government that works, and the collapse we are witnessing is likely to get worse before it gets better. Only when the participants in Iraq recognize, in this struggle for power, that they are losing more than they can gain by continuing it, will it come to an end. That may be a long time.

In the meantime, the best we can probably do is to help staunch the violence, contain the struggle within Iraq's borders, and keep alive the possibility that after extremism has run its course, the potential for a different Iraq is still there.

Others in the region should be encouraged to do the same, a task which should be built on the fact that no state in the region, or its leadership, wants to see the collapse of the current state system, no matter how much in need of reform their domestic governments may be.

Thank you for your time.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Marr follows:]

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PREPARED STATEMENT OF DR. PHEBE MARR, HISTORIAN, AUTHOR OF "THE MODERN HISTORY OF IRAQ," WASHINGTON, DC

I will be focusing almost entirely on Iraq's domestic politics, my area of expertise, and hopefully bringing a little historical perspective to bear, since I have been working on Iraq for some 50 years now. I would like to address three questions today. First, where is Iraq today? What are the chief political and social characteristics we face? Second, how can we account for this situation? And lastly, is the current situation likely to be lasting? Or is it transient? Is it remediable?

First, what can be said about the situation in Iraq today? Iraq since 2003 has undergone not one but several revolutionary changes, of a proportion not seen since the collapse of Ottoman Empire and the formation of the new Iraqi state in the 1920s. The first has been a revolutionary change in leadership. It is not simply that a regime and its dictatorial head have been—not only figuratively but now literally—decapitated, but an entirely new leadership group has come to power. This leadership, brought to power essentially by elections in 2005, has now entirely reversed several of the characteristics of the old Baath regime, and even the transitional regimes that replaced it in 2003 and 2004. It has changed the ethnic and sectarian composition of the leadership. (It is now dominated by Shia and Kurds rather than Arab Sunnis.) It has changed the ideological orientation from one which was secular and nationalist, devoted to a unitary Iraqi state, to one with different visions but far more dominated by religion. At the same time, it has brought more women into power and in general is better educated. The new leaders come, more often, from urban origin, whereas Saddam's clique were more rural and small town born. But the change has also now brought new men and women into power. They have three distinct characteristics worth noting.

First is their inexperience and the discontinuity in their leadership. Some 76 percent in this Cabinet and Presidency hold such jobs for the first time. This has meant a lack of experience, a steep learning curve, and an inability to establish links with one another and with constituencies. Most have had little chance to gain experience because of the continual change of Cabinets.

Second, the change has also brought a divide between a group of leaders with roots in exile who have lived outside of Iraq and Kurds who have been living in the north separate from the rest of Iraq on the one hand, and those who remained inside living under Saddam on the other. The latter include key elements now in opposition, such as the Baath, as well as the younger generation and the dispossessed who follow Muqtada al-Sadr. Some 28 percent are outsiders, now mainly from Middle Eastern rather than Western countries; some 15 percent are Kurds; only 26 percent are insiders.

Third, and most important, is the fact that the key leaders in power today have all been shaped by years, even decades, of opposition to the former regime. The heads of the Kurdish parties and the Shia religio-political parties, such as SCIRI and Dawa, spent years in underground movements; were imprisoned by Saddam; lost family members to the Baath; and even fought the long Iran-Iraq war against the regime from the Iranian side. Some 43 percent of the current leaders were active in opposition politics. Since 2003, few "insiders"—especially those in any way affiliated with the Baath regime, such as professionals who worked in education or health, Sunni or Shia—have made it into the leadership. While many of this group are encompassed by the insurgency, or support it passively, others in this group would like to join the political process but are excluded. The suspicion, distrust, and hostility between these two groups is the core dynamic driving much of the politics in Iraq today, which makes a reconciliation process so difficult to achieve.

In conjunction with this leadership change has gone another fundamental upheaval: The erosion and destruction of the governmental institutions—the bureaucracy and the army—which underpinned not just the Baath regime but Iraq's Government since its founding in the 1920s. Both of these institutions were established by the British under the mandate, although both had their origins in the Ottoman period. Despite ups and downs and periods of instability, these two institutions remained the backbone of the state until 2003. Much has been made of the destruction (or collapse) of these institutions elsewhere, and I will not dwell on it here, but the profound impact this has had on the current situation in Iraq must be appreciated. The disbanding of all of Iraq's military and security forces, the removal of the Baath Party apparatus that ran the bureaucracy and the education establishment (de-Baathification), and, as a result, the collapse of much of Iraq's bureaucratic structure, have left a void that will takes years—if not decades to fill. While much of this structure—especially at the top—needed to be removed, and a good bit of the rest had been hollowed out and corrupted under Saddam's rule, the sudden and precipitous collapse of this governmental underpinning and the removal of much of the

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educated class that ran it have created an enormous political, social, and institutional vacuum. This vacuum is now filled in part by militias and a mix of new and often inexperienced political parties and factions.

As result of these events, a second radical change is underway in Iraq: The collapse of the state as Iraqis have known it since its formal creation under international mandate in 1920. Iraq is now a failing—if not yet a failed—state with a new central government that has difficulty cohering and whose reach does not extend much beyond the perimeters of the Green Zone in Baghdad and which does not, clearly, command a monopoly over the official use of force. Indeed, outside of the three Kurdish-run provinces, there is little provincial or local government yet either. The establishment of government that delivers services to the population, chief among them security, is now recognized as the chief task before Iraqis and its foreign supporters.

However, before that is accomplished, the form of the Iraqi state is likely to change fundamentally. For 35 years under the Baath, Iraq was a unitary state which was part of the Arab world. Now it is one in which ethnic and sectarian identities predominate and new and different subnational groups, including militias, are emerging. The constitution, drafted and passed in a referendum last year, provides for a radical devolution of authority to federal regions, an issue on which many Iraqis are divided and which may or may not come to complete fruition. How governance will be reconstituted and power distributed in the new entity that emerges from the current confusion is a large question, but Iraq is not likely to be a unified state dominated by a strong central government in Baghdad, at least for some time. In fact, a high degree of decentralization—or even an absence of formal government in many areas—may characterize Iraq for some time. The increasing fractures in the body politic have, of course, raised the question of whether the Iraqi state can—or even should—continue to exist, or whether it will be divided into ethnic and sectarian or perhaps subnational components. Should that happen, the results would be revolutionary indeed, not only for Iraq but for the entire surrounding region, with implications likely to reverberate for decades.

There have been other changes in Iraq that are almost as revolutionary as these changes in leadership and the transformation of the state. One has been the seeming change in identity on the part of the population, which, in its recent extreme form has led to a vicious sectarian war in Baghdad and its environs. This changing identity has now led to more serious demographic shifts and an effort—not yet successful—to make this communal identity "territorial" by carving out more purely ethnic or sectarian areas. While the development of a semi-independent Kurdish entity in the north has been taking shape for over a decade under the aegis of the Kurdish nationalist parties, carving out distinct Shia and Sunni areas—even emphasizing Shia and Sunni identity as the fundamental basis of political loyalty—is new.

Many have seen these identities (Kurdish, Shia, Sunni, Turkman, Christian, etc.) as longstanding, even primordial, a bedrock of Iraqi society that has long been submerged, manipulated, or repressed by foreign (British) or dictatorial (the Baath and Saddam Hussein) rule, and have now come to the fore as a natural expression by the population of their political aspirations. I recognize how compelling and attractive that view is for people looking for an understandable explanation of what is happening today, but I personally think it is a misreading of Iraq's much more complex and interesting history. One should be wary of reading back into the past what is happening today and of assuming it is the necessary foundation of the future. These intense sectarian divisions in Baghdad, where mixed marriages were common, is new and is partly the result of collapsing order, a vicious incitement of civil war by al-Qaeda, political manipulation by politicians desirous of getting a Shia majority, and is now driven by just plain fear and intimidation.

This is not to say that these ethnic and sectarian differences and identities are themselves new; they go back centuries, but their strength and their exclusivity have varied greatly over time. Ethnic and sectarian identity in Iraq has always had to compete with far stronger tribal, clan, and family ties. As Iraq modernized and joined the international community in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s, a middle class espoused political ideologies imported from outside (Nationalism—Iraqi, Arab and Kurdish—as well as Socialism and Communism) and for years—right through the 1970s when Saddam stamped them out they were the chief motivating factors of the emerging middle class. In recent decades, Islamic visions competed with them, often cutting across ethnic and sectarian lines.

An overweening central government and increasing persecution of the opposition and repression by Saddam's growing dictatorship in Baghdad are better explanations for these emerging identities. If Iraq and the Baghdad government had been more attractive, open, and promising, it is questionable whether these more exclu-

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sive and separatist identities would have taken root. Kurdish nationalism has always been espoused by the two Kurdish parties and their leaders (the KDP and the PUK), but they did not dominate the north—tribal leaders on the payroll of Saddam's government did—until Saddam's war with Iran and his subsequent attack on Kuwait so weakened his government that he could no longer control the north. Much the same could be said for the Shia-Sunni divide, which he clearly exacerbated by relying on his tribal Sunni relatives from Tikrit and then killing and repressing Shia when they rose up in 1991.

Even so, these sectarian identities have never been exclusive nor, until recently, expressed territorially. It was the power vacuum, and the innovation of elections on a body politic still unaccustomed to a peaceful competition for power, that provided the opportunity for leaders to mobilize a constituency along these lines. Despite this, the Shia bloc is politically divided. Sunnis, who have identified more with the state they have dominated in the past, are only now coming to grips with the idea of a "Sunni" rather than an Iraqi or Arab identity, largely out of fear they will be marginalized or exterminated. The events of the last year have solidified emerging communal identities to an extent not known before in Iraq; only time will tell whether they can be mitigated and overcome in the future. And this is likely to take enormous effort by Iraqis as well as by us.

Last, a fourth profound change is becoming apparent: The collapse of one of the Arab world's major cities, Baghdad. Baghdad has played a major role in Iraqi and Islamic history not just since 1920s, but since its founding in 762. It can be said that Iraq, with its two rivers and its complex irrigation system, as well as its geographic openness to invasion from foreign territory, has never flourished unless it had a relatively strong central government to harness its water resources and protect its population. Baghdad is the city that has provided that function. Its high point came in the 10th century when it was a center of learning and trade and integrated population and ideas from all over the known world. When Baghdad has declined or been destroyed (as it was, twice, by the Mongols in 1258 and 1402), Iraqi cohesion has ceased to exist and it has fallen into long periods of decay. But one must remember that, ultimately, the city—and Mesopotamia—always revived.

Today, the capital is in a serious state of erosion—from insurgency, sectarian warfare, and population displacement and emigration. Indeed, much of this decline predates our invasion. Since floods were controlled in the mid-1950s, Baghdad has been inundated with migrants from rural areas in the north and south, who created satellite cities—urban villages—which changed the ethnic composition of the city and diluted its urban core. The growth of Baghdad, especially in the 1970s and 1980s, drained other areas of population. Greater Baghdad contains between a quarter and a third of Iraq's population and its highest concentration of skills and infrastructure. However, even under Saddam, Baghdad began to lose its skilled middle class, which is now beginning to hemorrhage.

This strand of Iraq's population, its educated middle class, must be revived if the country is to get back on its feet. It is this class which has, for the most part, submerged its ethnic, sectarian, and tribal identity in broader visions and aspirations—political, social, and cultural—and has greater contact with and affinity for the outside world. Intermarriage among sects and even ethnic groups was increasingly common in this middle class, which staffed the bureaucracy, the educational establishments, and the top echelons of the military. Unfortunately, under the long decades of Baath rule, this class was "Baathized" to a degree, in order to survive, and has now found itself disadvantaged, and under current sectarian warfare, persecuted. And it is this class in Baghdad that is now fleeing in droves, not just for other places in Iraq, but outside to Jordan, Syria, the gulf, and Europe. While educated middle classes exist in other Iraqi cities—Mosul, Basra, Kirkuk, Irbil—they are much smaller, less cosmopolitan, and, now, far less mixed. They will not be able to function as the kind of mixing bowl necessary to create interactions between and among different groups, so essential in the modern world.

Baghdad as a city is by no means lost, but its revival (in more modest dimensions) and the return of its "mixed" middle class are essential to overcoming ethnic and sectarian divisions and to the revival of a functioning, nonsectarian government, all of which is critical to any decent future outcome in Iraq. However decentralized Iraq may become in its future iteration, none of its parts will be able to achieve their aspirations without Baghdad. And the weaker the central government is, the weaker the economic and social revival will be.

One last thought on the current situation. Before we give up and hasten to assume that ethnic and sectarian identity will be the basis of new state arrangements (either inside a weak Iraqi state or in independent entities), there is one other political dynamic emerging that bears notice. The major ethnic and sectarian blocs (the Kurds, the Sunnis, and the Shia) are already fragmenting into smaller units based

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on personal interests, a desire for power, and differing visions and constituencies. None of the larger ethnic and sectarian units on which a new regionalized state is proposed are homogeneous. These smaller units have been galvanized by the three elections of 2005, and have formed political parties and blocs. These blocs are themselves composed of smaller parties and groups often now supported by militias. While the militias have gotten most of the attention, the parties have not. It is the leadership of the larger, better organized and financed parties that now control the situation in Baghdad. More attention needs to be paid to them and to their leadership, since they will be making the decisions on Iraq's direction.

The most important of these parties are clear. In the north, the Kurds are divided between two principal political parties: The KDP and the PUK. Both parties are of longstanding, each with its own separate military forces and political party hierarchies. Both are led by men with monumental ambitions and egos. These leaders and parties, now cooperating in a common constitutional venture, the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG), have fought for decades in the past and are still not wholly integrated into a Kurdish government. They could split in the future. Kurdish society also has an emerging Islamic movement (the Kurdish Islamic Union is a good example); separate tribal groups with some stature; and ethnic and sectarian minorities (Turkmen, Christians) with distinct identities and outside supporters.

In the face of a disintegrating Iraqi state and the chaos and danger in Iraq, the Kurds have pulled together since 2003 in confronting the Arab part of Iraq and are increasingly separating themselves from Baghdad. However, the KRG in the north is not self-sustaining economically, politically, or militarily, nor can it be for many decades, and even as it moves in that direction, it faces the long-term affliction of isolation, provincialism, and hostility from its neighbors that could thwart its domestic development. Failure in this experiment or a complete collapse of Baghdad could again fracture the north and give rise to warlordism and tribal politics, as it did in the mid-1990s. Kurds need to be given encouragement not only to nurture their successful experiment in the north, but also to spread it to the south and to cooperate in reviving Iraq rather than moving in a direction of separatism.

In the Shia bloc, the UIA, there is even less unanimity. Several political parties or movements dominate this sector and only pull together under the increasingly weaker leadership of Aytollah Sistani, who wants to keep a "Shia majority" in Iraq. Whether he can continue to do so under the pressure of events is a large question. The major Shia parties are clearly SCIRI, under the cleric and politician Abdual Aziz al-Hakim, and the Sadrist movement under Muqtada al-Sadr, also a minor cleric. The Dawa Party of Prime Minister Maliki is a weak third.

SCIRI, formed in 1982 in Iran from Iraqis exiled there, was originally an umbrella group but has now become a party devoted to Hakim and the furtherance of Shia interests. It has been heavily financed and organized by Iran, and its militia, originally the Badr Brigade (now the Badr organization), was originally trained and officered by Iran. It has allegedly disarmed. It attracts educated middle-class Shia, who probably see it as the best avenue to power in a new Shia-dominated Iraq, but its leadership is distinctly clerical and has ties to Iran. SCIRI's leanings toward clerical rule are drawbacks in Iraq, especially for Arab Sunnis and Kurds.

Dawa has legitimacy as the founder of the Shia Islamic movement in Iraq in the late 1950s, but it was virtually emasculated by Saddam in the late 1970s and 1980s. Most of its leaders fled to Iran, Syria, Lebanon, and Europe where they remained in exile for decades. Their organization is weak and they have no militia to speak of.

The Sadrist movement is not an organized party. Its closest model would be Hezbollah in Lebanon, and its leader, Muqtada, is erratic, militant, and sometimes dangerous. He has few religious or educational credentials, but he draws on his father's name and legacy. (His father, the chief Ayatollah in Iraq, was killed by Saddam in 1999). More important, he has attracted a wide following among poor, the downtrodden and youth, who have not benefited from the changes in 2003. He has emphasized opposition to the occupation, Iraqi unity, and the fact that he and his followers are "insiders," not exiles. His militia, now seen by many in the United States as a major threat to the new government, is fractured and localized, often under the command of street toughs, and it is not clear the extent to which he can himself command all of them. A smaller Shia group, al-Fadhila, also an offshoot of the conservative Shia movement founded by Muqtada's father, Ayatollah Muhammad Sadiq al-Sadr, bears watching; it has influence in Basra.

These various Shia groups and their leaders are in competition for power and have been for decades (especially the Sadrists and Hakims), and it is not clear that unity can be kept between them. They also draw on different constituencies and have somewhat different visions for the future of Iraq. SCIRI, for example, espouses

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a Shia region in the south; Sadr is more in favor of a unified Iraq. Dawa sits somewhere in the middle.

The Sunni component of the spectrum is the most fragmented. The Sunni contingent which has been taken into the Cabinet and controls 16 percent of seats in Parliament (Iraqi Accordance Front or Tawafuq) is itself composed of several parties without much cohesion. Most important is the Iraqi Islamic Party (IIP), a party going back to the 1960s and roughly modeled after the Muslim Brotherhood. While it represents Sunnis, it is more nationalist than Sunni, and does have a history and some organization. The second component, known as Ahl al-Iraq (People of Iraq), is a mixture of secularists, tribal, and religious dignitaries, such as Adnan Dulaimi. As its name suggests, it has a nationalist focus. The third component, the National Dialogue Council, is relatively insignificant. Even if these groups come hand together on issues, it is not clear how much of the Sunni constituency they represent. The Iraqi Dialogue Front, under Salah Mutlaq, a former Baathist, who probably represents some of the ex-Baath constituency, got 4 percent of the votes and sits in Parliament but not the Cabinet. Whether these two groups can be said to represent "Sunnis"—and how many—is at issue, since much of the Sunni insurgency is still out of power and presumed to consist in large part of former Baathists, religious jihadis, and now indigenous Iraqi al-Qaeda elements. Bringing some of these non-Qaida elements into the process is essential, but expecting the Sunni community to stick together as Sunnis or to think and feel as Sunnis is premature. Many Sunnis, long associated with the state and its formation, think along nationalist lines, and have ambitions beyond a mere Sunni region.

And one should not forget, entirely, the remnants of the main secular bloc to run in the December 2005 election: The Iraqiya list, headed by Ayyad Allawi. This group constitutes the bulk of the educated Iraqis who think in national, rather than communal or ethnic terms. Although they only got 9 percent of the vote and have little chance of forming a government, they have positions in the Cabinet and could help in contributing to a more balanced, nonsectarian government in the future.

One way out of the conundrum of communal identity politics is to encourage new political alliances between individuals and groups on issues and interests, rather than alliances based on identity. This will be very difficult, especially for the Shia, who see their identity as a ticket to majority rule, but it can be done, and, to a certain extent, already is being done. On issues such as oil legislation, regulation of water resources, economic development, and some other issues—even that of federalism and keeping Iraq together—voting blocs can be created across ethnic and sectarian lines, in ways that benefit all communities. This is a slow, laborious process, but it is probably the only way in which some of the distrust and hostility between these leaders can be broken down and new political dynamics shaped.

To the extent that educated professionals can be brought into government to help shape these deals and bridge the gap, that will help. Ultimately, state organizations and institutions can be rebuilt under new management. While no new grand vision is likely to emerge any time soon from this process, pragmatism may take root, and with it the bones of a government which delivers services. If this happens, larger groups of Iraqis will give their new government some loyalty. It is the state—and effective governance—which needs, gradually, to be put back into the equation, to enable ethnic and sectarian loyalties to be damped down and to curb the insurgency. In this process, no two factors are more important than reviving economic development (not just oil revenues) and bringing back an educated middle class which has some degree of contact with and understanding of the outside world beyond the exclusive domain of tribe, family, sect and ethnic group.

Given this situation, what prognosis may be made? Is the current situation likely to last? Or is it a transient stage? What is a likely long-term outcome and what would be "best" for Iraqis, the region, and the United States?

Iraq faces three potential futures in the near and midterm, and it is still too early to tell which will dominate. All that one can say, thanks to grievous mistakes made on all sides, is that the process is going to be very costly and time-consuming; no one should expect any clear outcome in the next 2 years and probably not even in the next decade. But helping to shape that long-term future in one direction or the other will have a profound effect on the region and, I believe, our own security.

The first outcome is that Iraq will "break up" into three main ethnic and sectarian components—Kurdish, Arab Sunni, and Arab Shia—hastened by the ethnic and sectarian conflicts spiraling out of control, and already indicated in the constitution. Many see this as inevitable and (in the West) as a possible way to "fix" the Iraqi situation and hence to reduce our deep military involvement. Iraq may end up with such a division, but, unless it is shepherded and fostered by outside forces, it is unlikely, for several reasons. This division is not historical, but has come to the fore in a moment of history characterized by a political vacuum, chaos, and shrewd polit-

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ical leaders who have mobilized constituents on this basis—especially the two Kurdish parties and SCIRI. But such a clear-cut division has real difficulties in Iraq. One is that it does not correspond to reality. Even in the Kurdish area—where there is more substance to the claim, this identity is fostered by two leaders and two parties who have near total control over their opponents and region. But these parties have no clear borders recognized by neighbors, or by Arabs to the south, and they will be challenged by all. And they do not have the economic wherewithal for maintenance of a sustainable state, either in terms of economic investment (some 70 percent of their income still comes from the central government in Baghdad), ability to defend their borders, or recognition. Independence, as many of their leaders recognize, may come with a big economic price tag that their constituents may not ultimately be willing to pay.

Elsewhere in Iraq, there is insufficient sectarian homogeneity to form the basis of a state or even a region. Shia parties themselves disagree profoundly on whether a federal state in the south—under Shia religious control—should be established. SCIRI is forwarding this project because it wants to control this territory, eclipse Sadrists, and impose its vision on the Shia population. It is opposed by Sadrists and other more secular Shia, and they will contest the issue, if not in Parliament, on the street. Creation of such a Shia entity will pose questions of its boundaries—and we already see sectarian strife in Baghdad as a component of the struggle over who will control portions of the city. This is also a new political principle and dynamic likely to spread to neighboring states like Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, which have a mix of Shia and Sunni populations, with immensely destabilizing prospects. And it is an exclusivist principle. What kind of state will it be? The leadership of SCIRI, with its strong clerical leadership, its earlier reliance on its own militia, and its emphasis on a "Shia" majority, does not give confidence that it will be any more democratic than its parent model in Iran. Moreover, getting a stable, recognized, "Shia" government in this region will be a long and contentious proposition providing little stability in the south. If the Kurds are unable to defend their borders themselves, how will the Shia be able to do so?

But it is in Arab Sunni areas—with Anbar at its heart—that this project fails abysmally. First, Arab Sunni Iraqis, whether the more rural variety inhabiting towns and cities along the Euphrates and Tigris, or their more sophisticated cousins—urban cousins—in Baghdad and Mosul, have been nurtured for decades on Arabism and on loyalty to an Iraqi state, which they helped create since 1920. True, some are more religiously oriented than secular, but this does not detract from their sense of nationalism. Getting Iraqi Sunnis to identify as Sunnis is going to be a long and very difficult task, let alone getting them to concentrate on governing a truncated "Sunni" federal area. And they are surrounded by neighboring Arab countries with leaders and populations who agree with them. And, as in the case with the Shia, where will the borders of this entity be? How much of Baghdad will it include? Will it divide the city of Mosul with Kurds along the Tigris River? And what about Diyala province with its Sunni, Shia, and Kurdish and Turkman populations? How is that to be divided up? While sectarian cleansing in these areas is underway to an alarming degree, it is by no means complete and in no way desirable. The results are not going to be a homogenous Sunni area but a patchwork quilt. Moreover, unless the sting of the Sunni insurgency is drawn, any map of Iraq shows that the Arab Sunnis population control strategic portions of Iraqi territory—which they can use, as they have been doing—to prevent both Kurdish and Shia progress. Included in this territory are water resources—both the Tigris and Euprhates; access to neighboring Arab countries, and communications right across the center of the country, as well as Iraq's ability to export oil through pipelines.

In the end, the creation of new entities—even regions—based on Shia and Sunni identity is radical in its implications for a region in which peace depends on tolerance and coexistence between Islam's two major sects. I will not mention here the obvious implications for the geostrategic position of Iran and its role in the region or the equally obvious reactions from other Sunni-dominated states. While this breakup may happen, it should not be encouraged or brokered by the United States, especially if we want, ultimately, to disengage our forces from the country. I believe it will create more, not less, instability in the future.

A second outcome is that Iraq may "break down," a process that is also well underway. Rather than cohesive ethnic and sectarian entities, Iraqi society will disintegrate into smaller units. These will comprise the political parties and movements we already see, with their various leaders and organizations; different militias; local tribal leaders and warlords, criminal organizations that can control access to resources; and, in urban areas, a combination of local groups and educated leaders who command the necessary skills to run things. Some of these groups and organizations may overlap—especially parties and their militias—and they will function

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through some fig leaf of government. But the territory over which they rule will vary and possibly shift as will their command over Iraq's resources. This breakdown is almost wholly a function of a collapse of the central government in Baghdad. The process of building an alternative regional government in the wake of this collapse is furthest advanced in the three Kurdish provinces in the north, but it is not complete there by any means.

In reality, this is the Iraq that is emerging, with differing local forces competing and engaging with one another in an effort to reestablish control and primacy in various areas of the country. In some cases these struggles are violent. But none of these local warlords, militias, parties, or provincial governments—even if they can keep a modicum of order in their territory—can achieve the kind of economic development, security, contacts with the outside world, and promise of a modern life and a future to which most Iraqis aspire. In the meantime, organized criminal elements—and a myriad of freebooters—are increasingly stealing Iraq's patrimony, while its oil wells and other resources go further into decline. And in some areas, such as Baghdad, the absence of government has led to a Hobbesian nightmare of insecurity, violence, and the most vicious personal attacks on human beings seen anywhere in the modern world. Iraq could descend further into breakdown, as local warlords, militias, criminal elements, and others assert control. This scenario—a full blown "failed state"—is already causing problems for the region and for the United States. Indeed, the failed state syndrome may be spreading, as events in Lebanon this summer and now in Palestine indicate. Needless to say, it is precisely the failed state syndrome that produces the best opportunity for al-Qaeda and other jihadists opposed to United States and Western interests to nest in the region.

A third outcome is to slow and gradually arrest the decline, and for Iraq to gradually reconstitute an Iraqi Government that recognizes the new divisions which have emerged, but learns to accommodate them and overcome them in some new framework that allows for economic and social development. No society can exist without governance, and that is the root of Iraq's problems today. It will be easier to rebuild this framework, I believe, if Iraqis do not divide, indefatigably, on ethnic and sectarian lines, but rather work with the various groups and parties that are gradually participating in the new political system to achieve mutual interests. This does not preclude the emergence of new parties, but none are on the horizon now. Such accommodations will exclude extremes, such as al-Qaeda, and possibly some—though not all—Sadrist elements, and it must include many of the Sunnis—ex-Baathists and others—who are not yet in the government. This aim can be advanced by pushing leaders in Baghdad to cut deals and make agreements on issues on which they have mutual interests—across the ethnic and sectarian divide. It is also essential to expand areas of economic development; government services (especially security) and to bring back the middle class and put them in positions of administrative and military authority. Regardless of who is running politics, an infusion of educated, experienced technocrats will help moderate the process and push it toward the middle. Over time, new links and understandings may become institutionalized and a government in Baghdad gradually take shape. Even if this government does not control much territory outside of Baghdad or the Green Zone, it is better to keep it intact as a symbol and a framework toward which a future generation can work, than to destroy it and try, once again, to establish a new and entirely radical framework.

Iraq is very far from achieving a new government that works, and the collapse we are witnessing is more likely to get worse before it gets better. Only when the participants in this struggle for power recognize that they are losing more than they can gain by continuing, will it come to an end. That may be a very long time. In the meantime, the best we can probably do is to staunch the violence; contain the struggle; and keep alive the possibility that after extremism has run its course, the potential for a different Iraq is still there. Others in the region should be encouraged to do the same, a task which should be made easier by the fact that no state in the region—or its leadership—wants to see the collapse of the current state system, no matter how much in need of reform is its domestic government may be.

SEAT DISTRIBUTION FROM THE DECEMBER 15, 2005, IRAQI LEGISLATIVE ELECTION

Party	Total seats	Percentage
Shia Parties:		
United Iraqi Alliance	128	46.55
Progressives	2	0.73
Total	130	47.27

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SEAT DISTRIBUTION FROM THE DECEMBER 15, 2005, IRAQI LEGISLATIVE ELECTION—Continued

Party	Total seats	Percentage
Sunni Parties:		
Accord Front	44	16.00
Iraqi Dialogue Front	11	4.00
Liberation and Reconciliation Bloc	3	1.09
Total	58	21.09
Kurdish Parties:		
Kurdistan Alliance	53	19.27
Islamic Union of Kurdistan	5	1.82
Total	58	21.09
Secular Nationalist Parties:		
National Iraqi List	25	9.09
Iraqi Nation List (Mithal al-Alusi)	1	0.36
Total	26	9.45
Minority Parties:		
The Two Rivers List (Assyrian)	1	0.36
The Yazidi Movement	1	0.36
Iraqi Turkman Front	1	0.36
Total	3	1.09

MINISTRIES AND LEADERSHIP POSITIONS BY PARTY, PERMANENT GOVERNMENT, 2006

Party	No. of ministries +leadership positions	Percentage
UIA	21	45.65
SCIRI	5	10.87
Dawa	1	2.17
Dawa Tandhim	3	6.52
Sadrists	4	8.70
Islamic Action	1	2.17
Hezbollah	1	2.17
Independent	6	13.04
Kurdistan Alliance	8	17.39
PUK	4	8.70
KDP	4	8.70
Tawafuq	9	19.57
Iraqiya	6	13.04
Independent	2	4.35

[EDITOR'S NOTE.—The charts presented by Dr. Marr were not reproducible. They will be maintained for viewing in the committee's premanent record.]

Chairman BIDEN. Doctor, thank you. Thank you very much. Michael.

STATEMENT OF DR. MICHAEL O'HANLON, SENIOR FELLOW AND SYDNEY STEIN, JR., CHAIR, THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION, WASHINGTON, DC

Dr. O'HANLON. Thank you, Senator. It's a great honor to appear before this committee today.

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Chairman BIDEN. By the way—excuse me for interrupting—I note that, in the interest of time, you've been unable to go through the entire statements each of you had——

Dr. MARR. Oh, yes.

Chairman BIDEN [continuing]. Your entire statements will be placed in the record for everyone to have available.

Dr. O'HANLON. Thank you for the honor to testify today.

I think the numbers in Iraq essentially add up to what we all, I think, are realizing in our gut more and more, which is, the state of Iraq today is poor. As a person trying to maintain an objective database on this for 3½ years now, I tried hard not to use that kind of a sweeping conclusion for the first couple of years. There was always reason to think that the glass might be half full, or at least the data themselves might suggest that you could find information that would allow you to reach that conclusion. And we thought, as providing a database, it was important for us not to prejudge where things were headed. But I think it's increasingly clear that in Iraq the situation is poor, that we are losing. One can debate whether we've lost. I would agree with Secretary Powell's characterization, that we are losing, but there is still hope for salvaging something. And the degree of setback or degree of an unfortunate outcome matters a great deal, even if we are not going to wind up where we hope to be, on the scale that we had hoped. But the data, I think, are very clear, and let me go through just a couple of points to try to summarize why I say that.

On the testimony I've prepared today, we have 18 security indicators, 6 economic indicators, and another half dozen or so political and public opinion indicators. The latter category has some hope, has some positive element, but the first two are almost uniformly bad. Of the 18 security indicators that we're presenting for you today, 17 of them are either bad or, at best, stagnant, in terms of the trend lines. Only one can be said to be positive, and that's the one that I think, unfortunately, is less important and less—itself, less promising than we once hoped—which is the progress in training Iraqi security forces, because even though we are making technical progress, getting them equipment, getting them training. We all know that their sectarian trends and tendencies are growing, and one can't even speak, necessarily, of a clearly improving Iraqi security force, at this time. We've tried to guestimate about how many of the Iraqi security forces may be not only technically proficient, but politically dependable in some way. Very hard to come up with that kind of a number. I've talked to people in the military and the administration on this. I know you all have, too. But I think that, at best, there are several thousand Iraqi forces that can be reliably said to be politically dependable, even if there may be 100,000 or more that pass at least a modest standard of technical capability. So, the security environment is quite poor.

On the economic front, of the six categories that we summarize in our testimony today, only one of them shows any real positive motion, and that's the GDP. But that, of course, is essentially a top-down effect from high oil prices and from foreign aid, and it doesn't necessarily reach all the middle-class Iraqis that we need to reach.

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So, this is why I conclude that things aren't good, and, in fact, are quite poor, on balance.

Let me identify, very quickly, six categories, and give you just a little bit of information on each of the six, and try to do so quickly, because I realize it's easy to swamp people with data. And, by the way, I should say, by way of background, not all this data is of equally good quality. Again, those of you—and most of you who have been to Iraq know how hard it is to get information from the ground, and we also know that the numbers—you know, the benchmarks may be off, and the trends may be somewhat off. But I still think the overall gist of this is pretty clear.

I should also say, our information is largely U.S. Government information, but we also try to depend a great deal on journalists working in the field, on nongovernmental organizations in the field, and, to some extent, our own research. But we are not in Iraq, with a lot of interns, gathering data; we are primarily trying to compile and assess trends.

First point of the six categories—and this is obvious, but I'd better make it clear and get it on the table anyway—the violence levels in Iraq have been escalating dramatically. We've seen this again in the recent data. There is considerable disagreement about how many people in Iraq are dying per month, but it's probably in the range of 4–5,000 civilians a month, which is at least double what it was just a couple of years ago. And, frankly, in this broad semantic debate about whether Iraq is in civil war or not, by that standard Iraq is very, very clearly in civil war. The sheer level of violence makes this one of the two or three most violent places in earth. And, frankly, we're getting to the point where it even begins to rival some of the more violent periods during Saddam's rule, which is a terrible thing to have to say. It's not as bad, of course, as the worst period of the Iran-Iraq war or of Saddam's genocides against his own people, but it is essentially rivaling—essentially—what I might say is the average level of Saddam's level of violence over his 25 years in power, about 4–5,000 civilians being killed per month.

One backup piece of information on this, or corroborating statistic, the number of attacks per day that we're seeing from militias or sectarian groups or insurgents is now almost 200, which is an escalation of at least a factor of five from a couple of years ago. So, the first point, again, is fairly obvious, but, I think, worth emphasizing.

Second point—and Dr. Marr made this point, and we all are aware of it—is the growing sectarian nature of the violence. And here, I'm just going to highlight one or two statistics, which come largely from Pentagon data bases. In the early 2 years of Iraq's war—or of our experience in Iraq since 2003—there were very few sectarian attacks, maybe zero or one per day, according to the Pentagon's best effort to tabulate. More of the attacks were a Sunni-based insurgency against anyone associated with the government, whether it was our forces, Iraqi Shia, Iraqi Sunni, Iraq Kurd. The violence was very much of an insurgent and terrorist nature. And zero or one attacks per day were assessed as sectarian. Now it's 30 sectarian attacks a day. Three zero. So, this is a dramatic escalation in the amount of sectarian violence.

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We have a terrorist threat, an insurgency threat, and a civil war from sectarian violence, all at the same time. And I don't want to make too much of the semantic issue here. If you want to call it "sectarian strife" or "large-scale sectarian strife" rather than "civil war," I suppose we can still have that debate, but the sheer amount of violence and the growing political impetus to the violence from the different sectarian leaders makes Iraq unambiguously qualified, in my mind, as a place where we have a civil war today. So, I wanted to underscore the sectarian nature of the violence.

Third point, related to the first two, is that, if you want to put it in a nutshell, Iraq is becoming Bosnia. Ethnic cleansing and displacement are becoming paramount. And here, I think the statistics have been underappreciated in much of the public debate, so far. So, let me try to be very clear on one big, important data point; 100,000 Iraqis per month are being driven from their homes right now. Roughly half are winding up abroad, roughly half are moving to different parts of Iraq. This is Bosnia-scale ethnic cleansing. I agree with Dr. Marr that it would be preferable—and Iraqis certainly would prefer—to retain some level of multiethnic society, and that separation of the country into autonomous zones raises a lot of tough questions. However, let's be clear about what the data show. It's happening already. And right now, it's the militias and the death squads that are driving the ethnic cleansing, and the movement toward a breakup of Iraq. And the question, pretty soon, is going to be whether we try to manage that process or let the militias alone drive it, because it's happening; 100,000 people a month are being driven from their homes. Iraq looks like Bosnia, more and more. That's my third point.

Fourth point, disturbing—again, not surprising, but disturbing—middle- and upperclass flight. We have huge problems of Iraqi professional classes, the people we need to get involved in rebuilding this country, no longer able to do so. To some extent, it's a legacy of the issue about de-Baathification and the degree to which Ambassador Bremer expanded the de-Baathification approach beyond what was initially planned, but also, now, Iraqis are being driven from their homes because of the amount of kidnaping of upperclass individuals, much of it financially driven. And just one very disturbing statistic: Physicians in Iraq. We now estimate that a third of them have left the country or have been killed or kidnaped in the time since liberation of Iraq from Saddam, 4 years ago. So, one-third of all physicians are out of Iraq and no longer practicing. And that's probably, if anything, an underestimate. So, middle-class and upperclass flight, or the death of many middle-class and upperclass individuals, has become a real challenge for putting this country back together in any meaningful way.

Fifth point. And this makes me, I should admit in advance, sympathetic to President Bush's planned—from what I understand—planned focus on job creation in his speech tonight. I think it's overdue. But unemployment is a big problem in Iraq. And I think the Commander Emergency Response Program, which we used, on a pilot scale, on a smaller scale, in the early years, was a very good idea. If you want to call it "make work," that's fine. If you want to call it "FDR-style job creation," that's fine. I think that's what

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Iraq needs today, because the unemployment rate is stubbornly high. And even if job creation is not, per se, a good economic development strategy, it may be a good security strategy, because it takes angry young men off the streets. So, the unemployment rate, as best we can tell, is still stuck in the 30-plus-percent range. Now, by developing-country standards, that's not necessarily without precedent, but in Iraq it fuels the civil war and the sectarian strife and the insurgency, and that's the reason why it's of great concern, in addition to the obvious reasons.

Last point, I'll finish on Iraqi pessimism. For the first 2 years of this effort, Iraqi optimism was one of the few things we could really latch onto and say that the political process plus the gratitude of the Iraqis that Saddam was gone—maybe not gratitude toward us, per se, because they quickly became angry with us, but gratitude in a broader sense—plus their hope about the future, provided a real sense that this country could come together, because the optimism rates about the country's prognosis, among Iraqis themselves, were in the 70-percent range for the first couple of years. Those numbers have plummeted. They're still higher than I would have predicted, to be honest with you. They still look like they are 40–45 percent optimism, but they are way, way down from what they used to be. And if you look at a couple of other indicators of Iraqi public opinion, especially from a June 2006 poll done by our International Republican Institute, only 25—excuse me, I'll put it another way—75 percent of all Iraqis consider the security environment to be poor—75 percent; and 60 percent consider the economic environment to be poor. So——

Chairman BIDEN. Can I ask a point of clarification?

Dr. O'HANLON. Yes; please.

Chairman BIDEN. Is that polling data, or that data about pessimism, does that include the roughly 1 million people who have been displaced or are out of country, or does it include——

Dr. O'HANLON. It's a very good point, Senator. It does not, as far as I understand. And, therefore, if you did address these individuals who have suffered most directly, the numbers might well be lower. But, in any event, I think the overall gist, the trendlines, are bad. And when you ask Iraqis about the security environment or the economic environment, they're even more pessimistic than they are in general terms.

That's my overall message, and I look forward to the conversation later.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Dr. O'Hanlon follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MICHAEL O'HANLON, SENIOR FELLOW AND SYDNEY STEIN, JR., CHAIR, BROOKINGS INSTITUTION, WASHINGTON, DC

The year 2006 was, tragically and inescapably, a bad one in Iraq. Our ongoing work at Brookings makes this conclusion abundantly clear in quantitative terms. Violence got worse for Iraqi civilians and barely declined at all for American and Iraqi troops. And the economy was fairly stagnant as well.

Despite the drama of Saddam's execution in the year's final days, 2006 will probably be remembered most for two developments inside Iraq. The first is the failure of the 2005 election process to produce any sense of progress. In fact, 2006 was the year that politicians in Iraq did much more to advance the interests of their own sects and religions than to build a new cohesive country. (In a September poll, Prime Minister al-Maliki was viewed unfavorably by 85 percent of all Sunni Arabs,

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for example.) The second is the related commencement of Iraq's civil war dating back to the February 22 bombing of the hallowed Shia mosque in Samarra. While some still question whether Iraq is in civil war, there is no longer much serious debate about the situation. The sheer level of violence, and the increasing politicization of the violence to include many more Shia attacks on Sunnis as well as the reverse, qualify the mayhem in Iraq as civil war by most definitions of the term. And the country has become one of the three or four most violent places on Earth.

It is still possible to find signs of hope in our Brookings statistics on Iraq: The numbers of Iraqi security forces who are trained and technically proficient, the gradually improving GDP, recent reductions in Iraqi state subsidies for consumer goods (which distort the economy and divert government resources), the number of children being immunized. But those same children cannot feel safe en route to school in much of today's Iraq; that GDP growth is a top-down phenomenon having little if any discernible effect on the unemployment rate or well-being of Iraqis in places such as Al Anbar province and Sadr City, Baghdad; reductions in subsidies are not enough to spur much private sector investment in such a violent country; and those increasingly proficient security forces remain politically unreliable in most cases, just as inclined to stoke sectarian strife as to contain it.

The performance of Iraq's utilities remains stagnant—not bad by the standards of developing countries, but hardly better than under Saddam. Oil production and electricity availability remain generally flat nationwide. Fuels for household cooking and heating and transportation fall even further short of estimated need than they did a year or two ago, as does electricity production in Baghdad.

Despite some unconvincing rhetoric from President Bush in the prelude to the November elections that "absolutely, we're winning," most Americans now agree on the diagnosis of the situation in Iraq. Former Secretary Baker and former Congressman Hamilton recently warned of a "further slide toward chaos." Secretary of Defense, Robert Gates, stated in his confirmation hearings that we aren't winning, even if he declined to go as far as Colin Powell and assert that we are actually losing. Former Secretary Rumsfeld himself, in his leaked November memo, recognized that Iraq was going badly and put out a laundry list of potential options in Iraq that we may have to consider to salvage the situation, including a Dayton-like process modeled on Bosnia's experience to negotiate an end to the civil war.

Iraqis tend to share a similar diagnosis. According to a June 2006 poll, 59 percent call the economy poor and 75 percent describe the security environment as poor. The security situation in particular has only deteriorated since then.

Against this backdrop, dramatic measures are clearly needed. At a minimum, we will likely require some combination of the options now being proposed by the Iraq Study Group, the Pentagon, and others. President Bush is likely to recommend several of these in his eagerly awaited January speech—a massive program to create jobs, a surge of 25,000 more American troops to Iraq to try to improve security in Baghdad, an ultimatum to Iraqi political leaders that if they fail to achieve consensus on key issues like sharing oil, American support for the operation could very soon decline.

Our Brookings data suggest rationales for each of these possible policy steps, even if there are also counterarguments. Coalition forces have never reached the numbers needed to provide security for the population in Iraq, and indigenous forces remain suspect—in their technical proficiency, and even more so in their political dependability. These two realities make at least a tactical case for a surge, if it is really feasible on the part of our already overworked soldiers and marines. Despite the success of military commanders in putting Iraqis to work with their commander emergency response program funds, the administration never chose to emphasize job creation in its economic reconstruction plans meaning that the unemployment rate has remained stubbornly high. And for all our happiness about Iraq's democracy, it is clear that extremely few Iraqi leaders enjoy any real support outside of their own sectarian group. Trying to force them to work across sectarian lines must be a focus of our policy efforts, if there is to be any hope of ultimate stability in Iraq.

Social scientists and military experts do not know how to assess, rigorously, the probabilities that such steps will succeed at this late hour in Iraq. Overall, however, it seems fair to say that most have become quite pessimistic. If the above types of ideas fail, therefore, "Plan B" options may well be needed within a year, ranging from a federalism plan for Iraq that Rumsfeld and Senator Biden have been discussing to plans that would go even further and help Iraqis relocate to parts of their country where they could feel safer (as Bosnia expert, Edward Joseph, and I have recently advocated in The American Interest). Such an idea is widely unpopular—with Iraqis themselves, with President Bush, with most Americans who value the

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notion of interethnic tolerance. But with 100,000 Iraqis per month being displaced from their homes, making for a total of some 2 million since Saddam was overthrown, ethnic cleansing is already happening. Unless current trends are reversed, the question may soon become not whether we can stop this Bosnia-like violence—but whether we try to manage it or let the death squads continue to dictate its scale and its character.

Although it has been said before about previous new years, it seems very likely that 2007 will be make or break time in Iraq.

Category	11/03	11/04	11/05	11/06
Security				
U.S./other foreign troops in Iraq (thousands)	123/24	138/24	160/23	140/17
U.S. troops killed	82	137	96	68
Percent killed by IEDs	24	13	48	54
U.S. troops wounded	337	1,397	466	508
Iraqi Army/police fatalities	50	160	176	123
Iraqi civilian fatalities	1,250	2,900	1,800	4,000
Multiple fatality bombings (for month in question)	6	11	41	65
Estimated strength of insurgency	5,000	20,000	20,000	25,000
Estimated strength of Shia militias	5,000	10,000	20,000	50,000
Daily average of interethnic attacks	0	1	1	30
Estimated number of foreign fighters	250	750	1,250	1,350
Number of daily attacks by insurgents/militias	32	77	90	185
Attacks on oil/gas assets	9	30	0	11
Iraqis internally displaced 100,000 since 04/03 (total)	100,000	175,000	200,000	650,000
Iraqi refugees since 04/03 (total)	100,000	350,000	900,000	1,500,000
Iraqi physicians murdered or kidnapped/fled Iraq	100/1,000	250/2,000	1,000/5,000	2,250/12,000
Iraqi Security Forces technically proficient	0	10,000	35,000	115,000
Iraqi Security Forces politically dependable	0	0	5,000	10,000
Economics				
Oil production (millions of barrels/day; prewar: 2.5)	2.1	2.0	2.0	2.1
Percent of household fuel needs available	76	77	88	54
Electricity production (in megawatts, prewar: 4,000)	3,600	3,200	3,700	3,700
Ave. hours/day of power, Baghdad (prewar: 20)	12	12	9	7
Unemployment rate (percent)	50	35	33	33
Per capita GDP (real dollars; prewar: $900)	550	1,000	1,100	1,150
Politics, Public Opinion, Democracy, Law				
No. of Trained Judges	0	250	350	750
Telephone subscribers (prewar: 800,000)	600,000	2,135,000	5,500,000	8,100,000
Independent media companies (prewar: 0)	100	150	225	400
Iraqi optimism (percent who think things going in right direction)	65	54	49	45

Chairman BIDEN. Thank you.
Mr. Said.

STATEMENT OF YAHIA SAID, DIRECTOR, IRAQ REVENUE WATCH, LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS, LONDON, ENGLAND

Mr. SAID. Mr. Chairman, Senators, I'm honored to be here, and I'm pleased by your interest in the situation in Iraq, and efforts to find a solution that will be helpful to the Iraqi and American people.

Chairman BIDEN. As Strom Thurmond used to say, "Will you pull the machine closer so everyone can hear you?" Thank you very much.

Mr. SAID. Some of the statements I'm going to make are going to echo what was said before, and, in a way, will confirm, through

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anecdotal evidence, what has been suggested through the numbers and statistics.

The conflict in Iraq is not only pervasive, as the numbers suggest, but it's very complex. And it's very important not to try to simplify it. The situation in Iraq has suffered, and policymaking in Iraq has suffered, because the conflict was reduced to some of its elements rather than looked at in its complexity. This is not only a conflict between democracy and its enemies, it's not only a conflict between insurgency and counterinsurgency, it's not only a conflict between Sunni and Shia. This is a multifaceted, overlapping series of conflicts which is a function of the various groups and interests and agendas. And what I will try to do in my statement is try to address some of the elements of the conflict, to just illustrate the complexity of it, and hopefully that will help inform policymaking. I will also try to address the question: Why are these conflicts taking such a violent form? And finally, I will try to address issues of national dialog and efforts at finding a peaceful resolution to these conflicts.

As the numbers suggested by Mr. O'Hanlon, the insurgency continues—and by "insurgency" I mean attacks against coalition forces—continues to be a significant part of the conflict. The majority of attacks continue to target coalition forces and coalition personnel, and the high numbers of casualties are evidence to that. But the insurgency is also a domestic political game. Many groups from the various communities, from various political directions, engage in the insurgency to acquire political legitimacy and to acquire, through that, a right to govern. Indeed, when the Iraqi Government proposed or suggested the option of an amnesty lately, insurgents bristled and said, "They shouldn't be pardoned for fighting the occupation, they should be rewarded by being given positions in power." The insurgency is also about many other factors, including money. And it's becoming harder and harder to distinguish whether a commercial interest is a goal in itself or is a means to a goal.

The sectarian violence, as, again, the numbers have suggested, is on the rise, and is tearing at the fabric of society, but it's not producing the kind of consolidation, the kind of alignment along sectarian and ethnic lines that some of the architects of the violence have hoped for. Indeed, as Ms. Marr has suggested, there is fragmentation. There is fragmentation within communities, there is fragmentation within political blocs and individual political parties. There is also increasing and growing specter of warlordism as rogue military commanders take control of fragments of militias and even state security structures. And the evidence for the fragmentation is everywhere. On my recent trip to Baghdad, a driver from a Sunni neighborhood complained to me that the Sunni insurgents, the Sunni fighters, kill more of their own kin than they do of Shia militias. The fighting between the Sadrists and militias affiliated with the Supreme Council of Islamic Revolution in Iraq, the SCIRI, and security forces controlled by them, have swept throughout the south of the country, and, over the last year, the Sadrists have gained control, at least temporarily, of various cities in the south. Even in Kurdistan the tensions are not far below the surface.

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One of the largest movements—the largest political movement in Iraq today are the Sadrists, and I think it's worthwhile to focus a little bit on that component of the situation in Iraq, because it's also illustrative of the dynamics. While other political parties control state and security structures, particularly the SCIRI, the Sadrists control the streets. But this is a very controversial and contradictory movement. The Sadrists nurture a nationalist image. They don't engage in sectarian rhetoric. They have clashed frequently with coalition forces. At the same time, they have participated in the political process, they have 30 MPs, 6 ministers currently in boycott.

Many ex-Baathists—Shia ex-Baathists—joined the Sadrist movement, yet the Sadrist movement has been the most vocal in calling for revenge and for punishing regime officials. The Sadrists style themselves after Hezbollah in Lebanon, and seek to protect their communities and constituents and provide services. At the same time, their militias are undisciplined and engage in criminal violence and looting, themselves, and, of course, man some of the feared death squads.

This is a movement of the poor. This is an antiestablishment movement. Their grassroots support comes from the very poor Arab Shia in the countryside and the slums of Baghdad. And, as such, their natural enemies are not necessarily the Sunnis, but are the establishment, regardless of their sectarian or ethnic affiliation. As—and we see that through their clashes with the Shia establishment, with the merchant and religious Shia establishment represented by SCIRI.

So, you have one movement that is fighting three conflicts. It's fighting an insurgency, it's fighting an antiestablishment revolt, and it's fighting a sectarian civil war.

So, why does the conflict in Iraq take such violent forms? It does, because there is a political vacuum, as Ms. Marr—Professor Marr—has suggested. And this political vacuum is signaling to the various groups and communities the necessity to protect their interests and achieve their goals through violent means, because there is no framework for a peaceful resolution of conflicts, for a peaceful reconciliation of the diverging interests.

This violence, of course, is also feeding into the collapse of the state, and you have a vicious circle of political vacuum, violence, and state collapse.

Now, the political process that took place over the last 3 years was supposed to address that. It was supposed to create that vehicle for a peaceful resolution of conflict, for ways for Iraqis to come together and reconcile their differences. But, unfortunately, and despite a tremendous effort by Iraqis, Americans, and others, this has not been the case. Indeed, the political process is defunct, and, as Ms. Marr suggested, the state also has not emerged. We don't have, in Iraq, a legitimate public authority that could protect people and provide them with services.

Why did this process fail? And this is not about pointing fingers at the past, but it's very important to understand some of the reasons for the failings. It's tempting to point the finger at external factors. Indeed, the Iraqis love to point the finger at external factors. And if you ask them, "It's the Americans' fault, it's the

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Israelis, it's the Iranians, it's Saddam," and everybody possible. But there are, of course, internal reasons. And one of them is the fact that many Iraqis, a majority of Iraqis, are sitting on the fence, or, as my colleague has just suggested, are pessimistic. Iraqis have little faith in the process—in the political process and its results, and in the elites that emerge from it. They don't have confidence in this regime—in the current regime and its sustainability.

What you have is a pervasive atmosphere—it's two sentiments that—dominating the situation in Iraq—which is fear and apathy. And you see that everywhere. And it's these sentiments that provide the perfect cover for corruption, for terrorism, for violence, and for sectarian hate. Even government officials are inflicted by this sentiment, and this explains how they use their positions to undermine, to dismantle the machinery of government that has been entrusted to them. And, indeed, you can hear echoes of that pessimism or apathy in the Prime Minister's recent interview with the Wall Street Journal.

Within this atmosphere, we're seeing, now, a hardening of positions on all sides. There is this mood, if you like, of going for a last push. And it's not only evident through the terrorist and the sectarian violence, but also in the government's own position. Clearly, the model of a full-spectrum national unity government, which we still have in Iraq now, has not worked. It has even furthered the dismantling of the machinery of the state, because it was reduced to farming out ministries to individual parties and groups. Now the strongest parties in the government, particularly the SCIRI and the Kurds, are trying to build a narrower government, and hope that it would be more efficient and work more as a team. But there are risks to this approach. These parties don't have strong grassroots support, and will rely more both on coercion, but also on continued U.S. support and bolstering. The execution of Saddam Hussein, and the manner in which it was carried out, and the rhetoric and the timing and everything, is indication of this hardening. That event was clearly designed to intimidate political opponents of the government, and particularly the Sunni community.

The new security plan and the push for an all-out assault, in combination with the surge option, is also an indication of that. There is very little evidence to show, today, that the Iraqi Government will be able to mobilize the resources necessary to make this security plan more successful than those who preceded it. And a temporary surge will also probably not lead to sustainable outcomes. At the same time, if the plan—if the security plan is carried out in a one-sided way, and the Prime Minister has indicated that he views Sunni violence, terrorist violence, as the primary problem, and that the Shia militias are a secondary reaction to that—so, if this plan is carried out in a one-sided way with disregard to human rights, it can exacerbate the situation and make finding a political peaceful solution even harder. And, at the end of the day, the only solution to the situation in Iraq has to come through dialog, has to come through engagement and ownership of a broad cross-section of Iraqis, to overcome that feeling of apathy and disconnection. The dialog has to be genuine—as in, the parties have to produce real concessions—all the parties. It has to be broad. It has to involve not only the sectarian protagonists, but also those who still

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believe in the viability of the Iraqi states and in the necessity, as Professor Marr has indicated, of having a central state in that particular region.

Unfortunately, the government's action, the hardening of the government's position over the last 6 months—the Iraqi Government has closed down to opposition newspapers, TV stations, has issued arrest warrants for leading opposition figures—do not create a conducive environment for an open and genuine dialog. So, there is need for international intervention on that front, and I'll address that later.

Dialog, of course, doesn't mean that one needs to throw out the results of the political process of the last 3 years. I think the Constitution—the Iraqi Constitution, with all its shortcomings, serves as a good starting point for dialog, but the Constitution needs to be transformed, through genuine dialog, from a dysfunctional to a rational federal structure.

Oil, and—negotiations on an oil deal, which have apparently concluded recently, also provide a model for the—for that rational federalism. The main principles that the negotiators have agreed on is to maximize the benefit of Iraq's oil wealth to all Iraqis, to use oil as a way to unite the nation, and to build a framework based on transparency, which is very important in a situation of lack—of poor trust, and on efficiency and equity.

Major issues have been resolved, like having a central account to accumulate all oil revenues, and manage the oil revenues on—at the federal level. Apparently, even the issue—the current issue of contracting, and who has the right to contract, has been resolved, as well as the structure for a national oil company.

But there remains issues open, and it's very important not to let the details derail the negotiations. And it's also very important to have a professional and open dialog on those issues, as in involving the proper professionals in the negotiations, and not reduce them to a political kitchen cabinet. One needs financial people, one needs economists and petroleum experts, involved in the debate.

And one of the critical issues is how the revenue-sharing framework is going to work. Will it be through the writing of checks, which is unsustainable in the long term? There is no reason for Basrah to transfer money to the central government so that it can write checks to the other regions. Unless the revenue-sharing is carried out through the budget, through an integral budgetary process, the arrangement will be unsustainable. So, it's very important to make sure that the integrity of budgetary process is preserved.

In conclusion, I think policies for Iraq should be informed by the complexity of the conflict. A surge, or the security plan envisioned now for Iraq, reduces the conflict to one between a democracy and its enemies; between democracy and terror. But if it is carried out with disregard to human rights, if it is carried out with disregard to the rule of law and in a one-sided way, it may exacerbate the situation and may also increase sectarian tensions and undermine the very democracy it purports to defend.

The withdrawal of U.S. forces also reduces the conflict to an issue of a fight between an occupying army and a nationalist resistance. But, at the same time, a withdrawal may spell the end to the

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Green-Zone-based Iraqi State, and that could unleash further spirals of violence.

Segregation, or the various proposals on the table that are aimed at addressing Iraq through an ethnic prism, reduces the conflict to one between Sunnis and Shia. But, in that atmosphere of fragmentations, as Professor Marr has suggested, that means that we will just replace one civil war with three civil wars, one failed state with three failed states. And, as I hope the next speaker will address Iraqi partition or segregation will lead to unimaginable consequences at the regional level.

So, the only solution for Iraq will have to be long term and comprehensive, as Professor Marr has suggested, and will have to be based on an open and inclusive dialog, but it's something the Iraqis, on their own, cannot do, and they will need an international intervention to identify the protagonists, to bring them to the negotiations table, and to help prod them to reach compromise. What Iraq needs today is an internationally sponsored and mediated peace process.

And I will finish at that. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Said follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF YAHIA KHAIRI SAID, DIRECTOR, REVENUE WATCH INSTITUTE, LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS, LONDON, ENGLAND

The conflict in Iraq today is as complex as it is pervasive. This is a reflection of the various groups and interests at play as well as the legacies of the past. The conflict can not be reduced to simple dichotomies of democracy against its enemies, resistance against the occupation or Shia vs. Sunni. Likewise there is no single universal solution to the conflict. Neither the current proposal for a "surge" nor the proposal to withdraw coalition forces are likely to bring peace. What is needed is a comprehensive and long-term approach based on an open and inclusive dialog at national and international levels, in which the fair distribution of Iraqi oil revenues is used as an incentive for uniting Iraqis.

THE NATURE OF THE CONFLICT

The Insurgency: The targeting of Multinational Forces continues to account for a significant portion of the violence as evidenced by the consistently high numbers of coalition casualties. The insurgency is also an arena of domestic political conflict. Groups from different ethnic and political backgrounds use the "resistance" to legitimate their claim to power. Sunni insurgents bristled at the government's offer of an amnesty last year, insisting that they should be rewarded, not pardoned for fighting the occupation. Al-Qaeda uses videos of attacks on U.S. troops to recruit and fundraise for its own global war. Some insurgent attacks are simply a cover for economic crimes. As with many such conflicts, it is often hard to discern whether the violence is purely a means to commercial gain or an end in itself.

Spiralling sectarian violence is polarising communities and tearing society apart. However, it is not producing the consolidation and political mobilization along ethnic and sectarian lines as intended by its architects. Quite the opposite, the pervasive violence and uncertainty is leading to fragmentation within communities, political blocks, and individual parties. Warlordism is emerging as rogue commanders assume control of fragments of militias and individual units of the state security forces.

A resident of a Sunni neighborhood in Baghdad recently complained to me that Sunni fighters kill more of their own kin than they do Shia militias. Tribal rivalries broke into open conflict in the Anbar province this summer pitching Sunni tribes against each other and against the foreign al-Qaeda fighters. The head of the prominent Tamim tribe recently expressed a widely held sentiment among fellow Sunnis when he lambasted the "Iraqi un-Islamic Party" which purports to represent them in government. Likewise among the Shiites, there are frequent and violent confrontations between the SCIRI-controlled militias and police forces on one side, and militias associated with the Sadrist movement, on the other. These confrontations allowed the Sadrists at various times to briefly seize control of most major cities in central and southern Iraq. The competition to control Basra's oil smuggling busi-

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ness among various militias and political parties often takes the form of street warfare. Less overtly, tensions bubble just under the surface between the two main Kurdish parties and between them on one side and Kurdish Islamists on the other. Outburst of separatism by Kurdish leaders—like the recent spat over the national flag—should be viewed in the context of competition for power in Kurdistan itself.

The Sadrist Movement is emblematic of the complexities and contradictions of Iraq's political and security landscape. While SCIRI and other political groups control government positions and resources, the Sadrists control the street. They nurture a nationalist image clashing occasionally with Multinational Forces and deriding the new elite who came with the invasion. This did not stop them from actively participating in the political process. The Sadrists have 30 members of Parliament and 6 ministers. Many Shia ex-Baathists joined the Sadrists after the collapse of the regime yet the movement is most vocal in seeking revenge against regime officials. Among Shia groups the Sadrists are the least likely to employ sectarian rhetoric yet their warlords are implicated in the worst instances of sectarian violence. The Sadrists try to emulate Hezbollah in Lebanon by seeking to protect and provide social services to their constituents and by meting out vigilante justice against criminals and those engaged in what they deem to be "un-Islamic" conduct. But its militias are undisciplined and often engage in looting and criminal activities themselves. The Sadr leadership freely admits to having only indirect control over their fighters. The Sadrists style themselves as the representatives of the poor and downtrodden. Indeed their main strength is the support of millions of poor Arab Shia in the rural south and the slums of Baghdad who are in a rebellious mood aimed at the establishment regardless of its sectarian color. As such SCIRI and other Shia groups representing the merchant and religious elite with strong ties to Iran are the Sadrists' natural enemy. In short, the Sadrists are simultaneously fighting a nationalist insurgency, a revolt against the establishment and a sectarian conflict.

STATE WEAKNESS AND THE POLITICAL PROCESS

The pervasiveness of the violence in Iraq today, the persistent power vacuum and progressive hollowing out of the state are components of a vicious circle. State weakness sends signals to the various groups that they can, and, in fact, need to defend their interests and achieve their goals through violent means. The political process over the past 3 years was supposed to fill the vacuum by establishing a framework where Iraqis can reconcile competing interests through peaceful means. The goal was to establish a legitimate public authority which would protect Iraqis and provide them with essential services. Despite enormous efforts, expenditures and sacrifice by Iraqis, Americans, and others, this goal has yet to be achieved.

It is tempting under such circumstances to blame everything on enemies and external influences such as al-Qaeda and Iraq's neighbors. Iraqis habitually blame their woes on the Americans, Iran, Arab States, Israel, Saddam, and so on. There is no question that external factors, sometimes by intent and sometimes by mistake, have played a role in shaping the current predicament. But the roots for such consistent failure need to be explored and addressed inside society itself.

Despite overcoming great risks to vote in two elections and a referendum, Iraqis have little faith in the political process and the leadership it has produced. Indeed political participation for most Iraqis has been limited to these three votes. There are few in Iraq today who believe in the viability and sustainability of the new regime. A substantial majority sits on the proverbial fence. This is not only a result of the authoritarian legacy or the fact that change came from the outside. It is also the result of disappointed hopes and broken promises over the past 4 years.

Fear and apathy are the most pervasive sentiments in Iraq today. They provide the perfect cover for corruption, crime, and terror and sap the energy from the enormous task of reconstruction. These sentiments extend to many officials and politicians who do not shy from dismantling the machinery of government and the state they have been entrusted with in pursuit of short-term narrow gains. One could even hear echoes of this apathy in the recent interview by Prime Minister Maliki with the Wall Street Journal.

Faced with this predicament, there is a hardening of positions on all sides and a determination to go for "one last push." This is not only expressed through the debilitating terrorist and militia violence but also in the posture of the Iraqi Government.

The model of a full spectrum "National Unity" government is clearly not working and has indeed exacerbated the decline of the state. The farming out of ministries to individual parties and groups produced a weak and divided government unable to function as a team.

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The strongest parties in government, particularly the SCIRI and the Kurds, seem resolved to build a narrower coalition government which may exclude the Sadrists and some Sunni parties. This has already taken place on the ground with Sunni parties only nominally participating in government and the Sadrists boycotting it.

Without the Sadrists, however, this coalition has little grassroots support. It will have to rely more on cordon and will be more susceptible to external influences. It will be even more dependent on continuous U.S. support.

The handling of the Saddam execution is illustrative of the hardening of the government's stance. The rush to execute the former dictator, the rhetoric preceding it and the manner in which it was carried out were clearly designed to intimidate the Sunnis.

The government has also hardened its rhetoric and actions against political opponents, closing down two opposition TV stations and issuing an arrest warrant for the most prominent opposition figure—the head of the Association of Muslim Scholars.

SECURITY PLANS

The security plan announced a couple of days ago is the culmination of this approach. While officially targeted at all militias and armed groups, the Prime Minister has clearly indicated that he views Sunni violence as the main source of tensions and Shia militias as a reaction to Sunni violence.

It is not clear yet whether the government will limit the targets of the security plan to Sunni groups or whether it will also take on the Sadrists. Either way it is unlikely that it will be able to muster the resources necessary to achieve better results than previous efforts, including the two recent Baghdad security plans. Even a temporary U.S. surge in support of the plan is no guarantee for achieving sustainable outcomes. A military offensive—especially if it fails to protect civilians on all sides—is liable to inflame the sectarian conflict and make a peaceful settlement even less likely. The U.S. forces can find themselves embroiled, as a party, in the sectarian conflict.

There is no doubt that there is an urgent need to confront the terrorists, criminals, and those spreading sectarian hatred and to protect civilians from them. This can only be achieved on the basis of legitimacy and respect for human rights and the rule of law. It is, therefore, particularly disconcerting when the Iraqi Government insists on taking over control of the security portfolio in order to fight the enemies "our way," dispensing with what they view as exaggerated and misplaced U.S. concern for human rights.

The new security plan and the associated surge option emphasises the aspect of struggle between a nascent democracy and its opponents. Yet if it is carried out without regard to human rights and in a way that exacerbates sectarian tensions, it is only likely to make matters worse and destroy the very democracy it seeks to protect.

If the conflict in Iraq was primarily about occupation and resistance then a speedy withdrawal of coalition forces would offer the best solution. In today's context a withdrawal will cause a spike in other forms of violence and precipitate the collapse of the last remnants of the Iraqi state unleashing an open-ended conflict with unpredictable consequences.

A solution based on ethnic segregation emphasises another aspect of the conflict. But in the context of fragmentation and warlordism, it is unlikely to bring any relief. On the contrary it will exacerbate ethnic cleansing and undermine regional stability.

NATIONAL DIALOG

Ultimately the violence in Iraq can only end through a political process which unites Iraqis rather than dividing them. For this to happen it is necessary to engage all constituencies in the shaping of the new Iraq and provide them with a sense of ownership in the outcome. This requires open and inclusive dialog and readiness for compromise on all sides. It will require broadening the political process to include those Iraqis who still believe in nation-building and coexistence rather than limiting it to the combatants and extremists on all sides. Current national dialog and reconciliation efforts have fallen short of these ideals.

Dialog will clearly require regional and international mediation. International assistance is needed to help identify the protagonists, bring them to the negotiations, and encourage them to compromise. In short Iraq is in need of an internationally mediated peace process.

The International Compact with Iraq offers a platform for such dialog as well as a framework for mobilizing international assistance once a settlement is reached.

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Other initiatives by the United Nations and the League of Arab States are essential for success in this context.

The final settlement can not dispense with the achievements of the last 3 years. Those, including the constitution, will have to serve as the starting point of any discussion over Iraq's future. The constitution will need to be reviewed and implemented in a way that provides a basis for rational federalism. The winners of the political process will have to be prepared to make real concessions and genuinely share power and resources if compromise is to be achieved.

Over the past months, Iraqi officials have been negotiating a framework for the management and sharing of Iraq's oil wealth which can provide a model for the shape of federalism in the new Iraq. Negotiators were in agreement that such framework should maximise the benefit from the wealth to all Iraqis and promote national cohesion. It should be based on the principles of efficiency, transparency, and equity. Transparency is particularly important as it helps build trust among the various parties and prevent abuse.

The negotiators succeeded in overcoming a number of obstacles agreeing in particular on the federal management and sharing of all oil revenues, a structure for a National Oil Company and a framework for coordinating negotiations and contracting with International Operating Companies. Some details will still need to be worked out, chief among them is the exact mechanism for revenue-sharing. If the new framework is to contribute to national cohesion, transparency and accountability the budgetary process must be the main vehicle for revenue-sharing.

A draft framework along these lines has been developed over the past months and will shortly be presented to Parliament. It is critical for the success of this effort that deliberations on the subject are carried out in an open, inclusive, and professional manner.

Chairman BIDEN. Thank you very much.

Doctor.

STATEMENT OF DR. PAUL PILLAR, VISITING PROFESSOR, SECURITY STUDIES PROGRAM, GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY, WASHINGTON, DC

Dr. PILLAR. Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you very much for the privilege of participating in this most important set of hearings. And I commend the committee, as Phebe Marr did in her opening comment, for its approach to educating the American public on this topic.

You've asked me to address the relationship between the conflict in Iraq and other trends and developments in the Middle East. And, in that connection, I would focus on five major dimensions on which the war has had impact elsewhere in the region or on the perceptions and concerns of other Middle Eastern actors. Those five are: Sectarian divisions, extremism and terrorism, political change and democratization, ethnic separatism, and the alignments and the relative influence of other states in the region.

With the violence in Iraq having increasingly assumed the character of a civil war between Sunnis and Shiites, as described by my fellow panelist, it has intensified sectarian sentiment, suspicions, and resentments all along the Sunni-Shia divide, only a portion of which runs through Iraq. Just as important, this divide coincides with longstanding and deeply resented patterns of economic privilege and political power.

The evident conviction of many Iraqi Shiites, who, as we know, constitute a majority in their country, that their time for political dominance has come, cannot help but put revisionist thoughts in the minds of their coreligionists elsewhere in the region. The conflict in Iraq has made this sectarian divide more salient, not only for ordinary Shia and Sunni populations, but also for regimes. It's a concern for Saudi leaders, for example, because of Saudi sym-

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pathy for their Sunni brethren in Iraq, and because of any possibility of restiveness among the Saudi Shia minority. Looking out from Riyadh, Saudis today see themselves as encircled by a Shia arc that now includes control of both of the other major Persian Gulf countries—Iran and Iraq. King Abdullah of Jordan has spoken in similar terms about such a Shia arc.

For the United States, one consequence—not the only one—but one consequence of this regionwide intensification of sectarian sentiment is that it is difficult for the United States to do just about anything in Iraq without it being perceived, fairly or unfairly, as favoring one community over the other and thereby antagonizing either Sunnis or Shiites, or perhaps both, elsewhere in the region.

A second dimension on which the war in Iraq is having repercussions throughout the Middle East, and, in this case, even beyond, concerns extremist sentiment and the threat of jihadist terrorism. Iraq is now the biggest and most prominent jihad, and may ultimately have effects at least as significant as those of earlier ones, partly because it is seen as a struggle against the United States, in the eyes of the jihadists, the sole remaining superpower and the leader of the West. I concur, and I think just about any other serious student of international terrorism would concur, in the judgments recently declassified from the national intelligence estimate on terrorism which stated that—in the words of the estimators—that, "The war in Iraq has become a cause celebre for jihadists. It is shaping a new generation of terrorist leaders and operatives. It is one of the major factors fueling the spread of the global jihadist movement, and is being exploited by al-Qaeda to attract new recruits and donors."

Some of the possible effects within the surrounding region may already be seen in, for example, the suicide bombings in Amman, in November 2005, which were carried out by Iraqis from the al-Qaeda-in-Iraq group.

A third important regional dimension is the possibility of favorable political change, especially democratization, within Middle Eastern countries. One hopeful development in the Middle East over the last few years has been an increase in open discussion of such political change. And I believe the current administration, with its rhetorical emphasis on democratization, deserves at least a share of the credit for that.

In looking not just for talk, but for meaningful reform, however, it is harder to be encouraged. What passes for political reform in the Middle East has generally been, in countries such as Egypt, slow, fragmentary, very cautious, subject to backsliding, and more a matter of form than of substance.

It is difficult to point convincingly to effects, one way or the other, that the war in Iraq has had on political reform in other Middle Eastern states, but, in my judgment, the all-too-glaring troubles in Iraq have tended, on balance, to discourage political reform in other Middle Eastern countries, for two reasons. First, the demonstration of what can go terribly wrong in a violent and destructive way has been a disincentive to experiment with political change. Middle Eastern leaders, like political leaders anywhere, tend to stick with what has worked with them so far when confronted with such frightening and uncertain consequences of

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change. And, second, the identification of the United States with both the cause of democratization and the war in Iraq has, unfortunately, led the former subject to be tarnished with some of the ill will and controversy associated with the latter, however illogical that connection may be.

The fourth major issue, and an important one for three of the states that border Iraq, is ethic separatism. And here, of course, we're talking about the status of the Kurds, the prototypical stateless ethnic group. Kurdish separatism is a concern for both Syria and Iran, for example, which have significant Kurdish minorities. The strongest worries, however, are in Turkey, where Kurds constitute about 20 percent of the population and where the organization that has usually been known as the Kurdistan Workers Party, or PKK, waged an insurgent and terrorist campaign that left an estimated 35,000 people dead. Ankara has been very sensitive about any suggestion of independence for Iraqi Kurdistan because of worries about rekindling separatist sentiment among Turkish Kurds. Turkey also is unhappy about what it regards as insufficient action by Iraq or the United States against PKK fighters who have taken refuge in northern Iraq.

The final set of issues I would highlight concerns effects on the geopolitics of the Middle East; that is, on the relative power and the foreign policies of neighboring states. Among the neighbors the largest winner has been Iran. The war has crippled what had been the largest regional counterweight to Iranian influence, not to mention doing away with a dictator who started a war in the 1980s that resulted in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Iranians. Iranians today view the war in Iraq with mixed motives. The current leadership in Tehran probably is pleased to see the United States continue to be bogged down and bleeding in Iraq for the time being, but it also has no reason to want escalating and unending disorder on its western border. Tehran has been reaching out and providing assistance to a wide variety of Iraqi groups. Although some of this assistance may help to make trouble for United States forces, it is best understood as an effort by Tehran to cast out as many lines of influence as it possibly can do, that whenever the dust in Iraq finally settles, it will have a good chance of having the friendship of, or at least access to, whoever is in power in Iraq.

Syria is another neighbor that faces a significantly changed geopolitical environment as a result of events in Iraq. The bitter and longstanding rivalry between the Syrian and Iraqi wings of the Baathist movement had been a major determinant of Syrian foreign policy for many years. It was the principal factor that led Damascus to break ranks with its Arab brethren and ally with Iran during the Iran-Iraq war. The demise of the Iraqi Baathist regime has changed all this, as punctuated by the restoration of diplomatic relations just 2 months ago, in November, between Syria and Iraq. Sectarian considerations also must enter into thinking in Damascus, where the regime is dominated by the minority Alawite sect, but rules a Sunni majority. Meanwhile, Syria's main foreign-policy aim continues to be return of the Golan Heights, which Syrian leaders realize could come about only through cooperation with the United States.

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I've highlighted what I regard as the main issues that involve the regional impact of this war. They are not the only issues, of course. A major concern of Jordan, for example, is the influx onto its territory of an estimated 700,000 Iraq refugees. Syria also faces a major Iraqi refugee problem, as do Lebanon and Egypt, and, to lesser degrees, other neighboring states.

Oil is another interest for several Middle Eastern states, given the obvious effects that different possible levels of Iraqi production and export could have on the oil market, and, thus, on the finances of these countries.

A concluding point, Mr. Chairman, concerns the United States directly. Given how much the war in Iraq has become a preoccupation for the United States, it necessarily colors virtually all of our other dealings with countries in the region. It has been one of the chief reasons for the decline in the standing of the United States among publics in the region, as recorded by opinion polls by such organizations as the Pew group taken over the last several years. It has been a reason for concern and doubt among Middle Eastern governments regarding the attention and commitment that Washington can give to other endeavors. And Middle Eastern governments know that it has, in effect, relegated to a lower priority almost every other U.S. interest in the Middle East.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Pillar follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DR. PAUL PILLAR, VISITING PROFESSOR, SECURITY STUDIES PROGRAM, GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY, WASHINGTON, DC

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for the privilege of participating in this very important series of hearings related to the conflict in Iraq. I have been asked to address the relationship between that conflict and other trends and developments in the Middle East.

Events in other countries in the region will depend primarily on issues and conditions in those countries; in my judgment, the hoped-for beneficial demonstration effects that success in Iraq would have had on the politics of the broader Middle East have always been overly optimistic. Nonetheless, the development of a multifaceted and worsening armed conflict in Iraq does have significant implications for the rest of the region and by implication for U.S. interests in the region. Unfortunately, conflict and instability tend to have greater repercussions in a neighborhood than do success and stability.

In the case of Iraq and the Middle East, regional consequences involve concerns by neighbors about what may yet lie ahead as well as adjustments that regional actors already have made. The consequences involve regimes in the region as well as nonstate actors such as terrorist groups. And they involve direct consequences of the violence in Iraq as well as more indirect reverberations from the conflict there.

I want to emphasize how much uncertainty is involved in trying to analyze the regional impact of the current war in Iraq, much less of various future scenarios or policy options. It is simply impossible to predict the full range of important regional effects, partly because of the uncertainty that clouds Iraq's own future but also because of the complexity of factors affecting events elsewhere in the Middle East. Any prognostications that speak with certainty about particular future effects ought to be met with skepticism.

With that understanding, I would identify five major dimensions on which—although specific future consequences may be uncertain—the war in Iraq already has had discernible impact elsewhere in the Middle East and is likely to have more, and which, therefore, are worthy of attention as debates over policy proceed. Those five are: Sectarian divisions, extremism and terrorism, political change and democratization, ethnic separatism, and the alignments and relative influence of states in the region.

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SECTARIAN CONFLICT

Sectarian divides within the Muslim world deserve to be discussed first, because the violence in Iraq has increasingly assumed the character of a civil war between Sunni and Shia. As such, it has intensified sectarian sentiment, suspicions, and resentments all along the Sunni-Shia faultline, only a portion of which runs through Iraq. It would be almost impossible to overstate how strongly this divide, which the Iraq war has made more salient, stokes feelings and fears among many people of the Middle East. Rooted in centuries-old disputes over succession to the Prophet, the conflict manifests itself today in, for example, the perspective of some Sunnis (particularly the more doctrinaire Wahhabis of Saudi Arabia) that Shia are not even true Muslims. Just as important, the sectarian divide coincides with resented patterns of economic privilege and political power.

The special significance of Iraq is that, although Shiites are a minority of Muslims worldwide, they are a majority in Iraq (as well as, of course, next door in Iran). The evident conviction of many Iraqi Shiites that their time for political dominance has come cannot help but put revisionist thoughts in the minds of their coreligionists elsewhere in the region. These include the Shia minority in Saudi Arabia, who are concentrated in the oil-rich eastern province and see themselves treated as second-class citizens. They include the Shiites who constitute a majority in Bahrain but are still under the rule of a Sunni government. And they include Shiites in Lebanon, who probably are the fastest-growing community in that religiously divided country and who believe that current power-sharing arrangements give them an unfairly small portion of power—a sentiment exploited by Lebanese Hezbollah.

The conflict in Iraq has made this sectarian divide more salient not only for Shia populations but also for regimes. The sectarian coloration of that conflict is an acute concern for Saudi leaders, for example, because of their own sympathy for Sunni Arabs in Iraq, the emotions of other Saudis over the plight of their Sunni brethren in Iraq, and any possibility of restiveness among Saudi Shiites. Looking out from Riyadh, Saudis now see themselves as encircled by a Shia arc that includes control of both of the other large Persian Gulf States—Iran and Iraq—Shia activism in Lebanon, and significant Shia populations in the Arab Gulf States as well as to their south in Yemen. King Abdullah of Jordan also has spoken publicly about such a Shia arc.

For the United States, this intensification of sectarian conflict carries several hazards, only one of which is the specter of direct intervention by other regional actors in the Iraqi civil war. There also are issues of stability in the other countries that must manage their own part of the Sunni-Shia divide. And not least, there is the difficulty of the United States doing almost anything in Iraq without it being perceived, fairly or unfairly, as favoring one community over the other and thereby antagonizing either Sunnis or Shiites, or perhaps both, elsewhere in the region.

EXTREMISM AND TERRORISM

A second dimension on which the war in Iraq is having repercussions throughout the Middle East—and in this case even beyond—concerns extremist sentiment and the threat of international terrorism, particularly from Islamist terrorists often styled as "jihadists." Other wars in other Muslim lands have served as jihads in recent years, including in Bosnia, Chechnya, Kosovo, and especially Afghanistan. The Afghan jihad against the Soviets served as an inspiration to radical Islamists, a training ground for terrorists, and a networking opportunity for jihadists of diverse nationalities. We have seen the effects in much of the international terrorism of the past decade and a half. Iraq is now the biggest and most prominent jihad. It may ultimately have effects at least as significant as those of earlier jihads, because it is taking place in a large and important country that is part of the core of the Arab and Muslim worlds, and because it is partly a struggle against the United States, the sole remaining superpower and the leader of the West.

The effects of the war in Iraq on international terrorism were aptly summarized in the National Intelligence Estimate on international terrorism that was partially declassified last fall. In the words of the estimators, the war in Iraq has become a "cause celebre" for jihadists, is "shaping a new generation of terrorist leaders and operatives," is one of the major factors fueling the spread of the global jihadist movement, and is being exploited by al-Qaeda "to attract new recruits and donors." I concur with those judgments, as I believe would almost any other serious student of international terrorism.

The full effects on terrorism of the war in Iraq, as of the earlier anti-Soviet campaign in Afghanistan, will not be seen and felt for a good number of years. But some of the possible effects within the surrounding region may already be seen in, for example, the suicide bombings in Amman, Jordan, in November 2005, which were

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perpetrated by Iraqis who belonged to the "al-Qaeda in Iraq" organization. Another possible effect is the recent use in Afghanistan of suicide bombings, a tactic not previously part of the repertoire of insurgents there but perhaps partly exported from, or inspired by, Iraq where the tactic has been used extensively.

I believe that the most important variable in Iraq in the months or years ahead as far as the effects on international terrorism are concerned is the sheer continuation of the war, as well as the continued U.S. participation in it. "Jihad" means, literally, "struggle." What is important to the jihadist, more so than any particular outcome, is participation in a struggle. As long as the jihadists' struggle in Iraq is not completely extinguished, it will continue to inspire the Islamist rank-and-file and to be exploited by the likes of al-Qaeda.

POLITICAL CHANGE AND DEMOCRATIZATION

A third important regional dimension is the possibility of political change within Middle Eastern countries, especially change in the favorable direction of more democracy and more civil and political liberties in what is still, by most measures, the most undemocratic and illiberal region of the world. One hopeful development in the Middle East over the last few years has been an increase in open discussion of issues of political change. There has been, at least, more talk about the subject; it has been more of a live topic in more Middle Eastern countries than a few years earlier. I believe the current U.S. administration, with its rhetorical emphasis on democratization, deserves a share of the credit for this.

In looking not just for talk but for meaningful action, however, it is harder to be encouraged. What passes for political reform in the Middle East has generally been slow, fragmentary, very cautious, subject to backsliding, and more a matter of form than of substance.

It is difficult to point convincingly to effects, in one direction or another, that the war in Iraq has had on political reform in other Middle Eastern states. Inspired statesmanship should have good reason to move ahead with reform regardless of what is happening in Iraq. But most Middle Eastern statesmanship is not inspired. And in my judgment, the all-too-glaring troubles in Iraq have tended, on balance, to discourage political reform in other Middle Eastern countries, for two reasons.

First, the demonstration of what can go wrong—in a very violent and destructive way—has been a disincentive to experiment with political change. Middle Eastern leaders, like leaders anywhere, tend to stick with what they've got and with what has worked for them so far, when confronted with such frightening and uncertain consequences of political change. If today's Iraq is the face of a new Middle East, then most Middle Eastern leaders, not to mention most publics, do not want to be part of it.

Second, the identification of the United States with both the cause of democratization and the war in Iraq has led the former to be tarnished with some of the ill will and controversy associated with the latter. This connection is, of course, illogical. But it should not be surprising, given that some in the Middle East had already tended to view liberal democracy with suspicion as an alien import from the West.

The issue of political change and democratization is important for many Middle Eastern countries, but I would mention two as being of particular significance. One is Egypt, the most populous Arab country and a keystone of U.S. policy in the region. The Mubarak government has evidently seen the need at least to appear to be open to reform, as manifested in the holding in 2005 of an ostensibly competitive Presidential election, in place of the prior procedure of a one-candidate referendum. But such procedural change has not reflected any significant loosening of Mubarak's hold on power. A continuing emergency law helps to maintain that hold, opposition Presidential candidates have not been treated fairly, and the most popular and effective opposition party remains outlawed.

The other key country is Saudi Arabia, in which neither the form nor the reality is remotely democratic, and in which power is still in the hands of a privileged royal family in alliance with a religious establishment. King Abdullah appears to recognize the need for reform if Saudi Arabia is not to fall victim to more sudden and destructive kinds of change. He faces stubborn opposition, however, not least from within the royal family. Anything in the regional environment that makes political reform appear riskier will make his task harder.

ETHNIC SEPARATISM

The fourth major issue, and an important one for three of the states that border Iraq, is ethnic separatism. This really means the issue of the Kurds, who ever since the peace of Versailles have been the prototypical stateless ethnic group. Kurdish separatism is a concern for Syria, in which Kurds, who are concentrated in the

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northeast part of the country, constitute a bit less than 10 percent of the Syrian population. It also is a concern in multiethnic Iran, where Kurds in the northwest represent about 7 percent of Iran's population. Kurdish dissatisfaction led to deadly riots in Syria in 2004 and in Iran in 2005. The strongest worries, however, are in Turkey, where Kurds constitute about 20 percent of the population and where the organization usually known as the Kurdistan Workers Party, or PKK, waged an insurgent and terrorist campaign that has left an estimated 35,000 people dead. Ankara has been very sensitive about any suggestion of independence for Iraqi Kurdistan, because of worries about rekindling separatist sentiment among the Kurds of southeastern Turkey. The Government of Turkey also has a strong interest in the status of PKK fighters who have taken refuge in northern Iraq, and it has been unhappy about what it considers to be insufficient U.S. or Iraqi efforts against those fighters.

The views of regional governments toward the Kurds, as events in Iraq play out over the coming months, will depend at least as much on the legal and political forms applied to Iraqi Kurdistan as on the practical facts on the ground. After all, since 1991 the Iraqi Kurds have enjoyed—and neighboring governments have lived with—what has largely been de facto independence, despite Kurdish participation in politics in Baghdad. The situation may be similar to that of Taiwan in the Far East, in which de facto independence is tolerated but any move to make it de jure would be destabilizing.

ALIGNMENTS AND POWER OF NEIGHBORING STATES

The final set of issues I would highlight concerns the effects the situation in Iraq is having on the geopolitics of the Middle East—that is, the effects on the relative power, and the foreign policies, of neighboring states. The geopolitical impact stems from at least three aspects of that situation: The change in the ideological map of the region resulting from removal of the Iraqi Baathist regime; the competition of neighboring states for influence within Iraq; and the debilitating effects of the war itself, which has greatly weakened what had been one of the stronger states in the area.

Among the neighbors, the largest winner has been Iran. The war has not only toppled the dictator who initiated an earlier war that killed hundreds of thousands of Iranians; it also has crippled what had been the largest regional counterweight to Iranian influence. Meanwhile, the all-consuming preoccupation that the Iraq war has become for the United States, along with the growing unpopularity of the war among Americans, probably has made Iranian leaders less fearful than they otherwise might have been about forceful U.S. action, including military action, against Iran. This confidence is tempered, however, by the fact that the occupation of Iraq has completed a U.S. military encirclement of Iran, a posture that nonetheless suits the internal political purposes of Iranian hard-liners as they play off an image of confrontation with Washington.

Iranians today view the war in Iraq with a mixture of motives. The current leadership in Tehran probably is pleased to see the United States continue to be bogged down and bleeding in Iraq for the time being. But it also has no reason to want escalating and unending disorder on its western border. Tehran seems determined to exercise as much influence as it can inside Iraq as whatever process of political reconstruction there unfolds. It has been reaching out, and providing assistance to, a wide variety of Iraqi groups, not just its traditional allies such as the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq. Although some of this assistance may help to make trouble for U.S. forces, it is best understood as an effort by Tehran to throw out as many lines of influence as it can so that whenever the dust in Iraq finally settles, it will have a good chance of having the friendship of, or at least access to, whoever is in power. Iranian leaders probably realize that creation in Iraq of a duplicate of their own system of clerical rule is not feasible, but they at least want to avoid a regime in Baghdad that is hostile to Iran.

Iranian leaders almost certainly hoped, prior to March 2003, that they would be able—as was the case in Afghanistan—to work cooperatively with the United States on the political reconstruction of Iraq. That, of course, did not happen. But the shared U.S. and Iranian interest in avoiding escalating and unending disorder in Iraq probably would make Tehran, despite all the ill will that has transpired over other issues, receptive to engagement with Washington. The Iranians would want such engagement, however, not to be limited to any one issue—be it Iraq, or the nuclear program, or anything else—but instead to address all matters in dispute.

Syria is another neighbor that faces a significantly changed geopolitical environment as a result of events in Iraq. The bitter and longstanding rivalry between the Syrian and Iraqi wings of the Baathist movement had been a major determinant

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of Syrian foreign policy. It was the principal factor that led Damascus to break ranks with its Arab brethren and to ally with Iran, and later to participate in Operation Desert Storm, which reversed Saddam Hussein's aggression in Kuwait. With the demise of the Iraqi Baathist regime, the foreign policy equation for Syria has changed. Syria restored relations with Iraq in November 2006. Although the economic ties between Syria and Iran are substantial, Syria's main reason for its otherwise counterintuitive alliance with Tehran is over. The sectarian dimension also must influence thinking in Damascus, because the regime is dominated by the minority Alawite sect but rules a Sunni majority. The implication of all these factors is that there is significant potential for coaxing Syria away from the alignment with Iran and its client Hezbollah, and toward more cooperation with the United States, with the hope for Syria of realizing what is still its main foreign policy goal: The return of the Golan Heights.

Other regional states, including the gulf Arabs, are conscious of the strength that Iraq once had and that, if it were again to become stable and united, could be the basis for Iraq once again throwing its weight around. They also are conscious of the fact that the issues involved in previous conflicts involving Iraq were not all the creation of Saddam Hussein. The longstanding enmity between Persian and Arab that underlay the Iran-Iraq war certainly was not. And Kuwaitis viewing the turmoil to their north know that the notion of Kuwait as rightfully the 19th province of Iraq also predated Saddam, and has been part of the undercurrent of relations with Iraq ever since Kuwait became independent.

I have highlighted several of the main issues that involve the regional impact of the Iraq war. They are not the only issues. A major concern, for example, of another of Iraq's immediate neighbors—Jordan—is the influx of approximately 700,000 Iraqi refugees. Syria and other neighbors also are facing a significant Iraqi refugee problem. Oil is another issue of high interest to several Middle Eastern states, given the effects that different levels of Iraqi production and export could have on oil prices and consequently on the finances and economies of those states.

A concluding point concerns the United States directly. Given how much the war in Iraq has become a preoccupation for the United States, it necessarily colors virtually all of our other dealings with the Middle East and with countries in the region. It has been one of the chief reasons for the slide in the standing of the United States among publics in the region, as recorded by opinion polls taken over the last several years. It has been a reason for concern and doubt among governments regarding the attention and commitment that Washington can give to other endeavors. And Middle Eastern governments know that it has, in effect, relegated to a lower priority almost every other U.S. interest in the region.

Chairman BIDEN. Thank you very much. Your collective testimony has generated a number of questions, and let me begin.

Dr. Marr and Mr. Said, I've actually—as many have—read the Iraqi Constitution, and I have it in front of me, and it is a—if I were to make a comparison, I'd compare it to our Articles of Confederation rather than the American Constitution. And it lays out in detail how regions can become regions; and, if they become regions, what authority they have, the 18 governates can. Tell me, if you will, Dr. Marr, in light of your point, on page two or three, in which you say, "Iraq is not likely to be a unified state dominated by a strong central government in Baghdad for at least some time" and "the high degree of decentralization called for in the Constitution." How do we square that?

Dr. MARR. I've read the Constitution, too, but, I must say, not in the last month, so you may have to spark——

Chairman BIDEN. Well, then——

Dr. MARR. No; I know the whole issue of regionalism—the question of whether Iraq, or rather federalism, is going to be defined by large regions is a very controversial one. Now, we have a clearly formulated region in the KRG, the Kurdish Regional Government, which, as you know, would like, in my view, to expand and take in other Kurdish-majority areas, including Kirkuk, which I don't believe will be done entirely tranquilly. I think that's a flashpoint

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that could cause a lot of difficulty. And I also believe that, within that region, while the Kurds are cooperating—and I give them high marks on a lot of things—looking beneath the surface, some of these differences, some of this fragmentation exists there, as well. However, the Kurds have a solid region. Now, what is at stake here is whether there's enough homogeneity among these two other sectarian groups—"The Shia" and "The Sunnis"—to form a region similar to that in Kurdistan. And one particular party, SCIRI, Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq—I won't say that again—would like to form a nine-province Shia region in the south, which, of course, they expect to control.

If we look at that map up there, it looks as though there's a Shia majority down there, but, in fact, there's much more fragmentation. I don't believe that that could be accomplished without quite a bit of controversy with others, for example, the Sadrists, just to mention one. And, indeed, that piece of legislation, as you know, the legislation to enable the Parliament to form that region, was postponed for 18 months, precisely because people see it as controversial.

When we come to the so-called Sunni region, that's even more difficult, because the Sunnis, in my view—you can't speak of them as "The Sunnis" because they're very diverse. As a whole, Sunnis have played the major role in the formation of the state, and have dominated the state—not exclusively, but it's been something they feel they've done. Getting Sunnis to identify as Sunnis rather than Iraqis, nationalists, or even Arab nationalists, is extremely difficult.

Last, but not least, there are large mixed areas, which are undergoing a lot of sectarian differentiation. They are a patchwork quilt. If we look at greater Baghdad, if we had a map here of where these areas are, Kirkuk, many other areas such as Diala, they are a nightmare. They include Kurds, Turkmen, Shia, Sunnis—actually creating borders, dividing them up, would be very difficult. And, in the end, I think we would have a system, if we follow through with this, which is, in some ways, repugnant to many people, that the dominant identity has to be what you were born with, in——

Chairman BIDEN. If I can——

Dr. MARR [continuing]. One way or another.

Chairman BIDEN [continuing]. Interrupt. The dominant identity, as I read the Constitution, doesn't require it to be based upon a region, based upon ethnicity. In my seven visits to Iraq, I meet with people, and they say they want to have their local policeman running their local areas. They've gotten along very well. And they don't want a national police force dominated by a bunch of thugs patrolling their streets.

Question. Do any of you picture, in your lifetime, the likelihood that a national police force will be patrolling the streets of Fallujah? It's a serious question. Does anybody see that in their lifetime?

[No response.]

Chairman BIDEN. I don't think so. I don't see it, either. So, it's about time, I think, we, maybe, stop pushing a rope here.

One of the questions I have, as well, is: What is the role of Sistani? What influence does he possess now? Anyone. Yes.

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Mr. SAID. Well, I'll address the issue of Sistani, but I also would like to come back on the issue of the Constitution.

Sistani has great moral authority in Iraq, and it extends beyond the Shia community. However, that authority has been eroding over the past 3 years.

Chairman BIDEN. Why?

Mr. SAID. In part, because Sistani himself has been manipulated, if you like, by some of the Shia political parties.

Senator BOXER. I'm sorry, say that louder.

Mr. SAID. He has been—the image—the institution of Mr. Sistani has been manipulated by some of—by the—some of the Shia parties who have been trying to glean legitimacy from him. The institution of the Shia Marjiya has been used for political means to advance narrow party political objectives. And this has reflected negatively on—has tarnished, has limited—has reduced the omnipotence of Sistani. At the end of the day, it's very important to remember that Sistani is an apolitical—is a nonpolitical religious leader who does not like to meddle in politics. And he has largely withdrawn from interference since the last elections.

Chairman BIDEN. Let me follow up with a question, since my time is up.

Mr. O'Hanlon, you indicated that—which comports what we've been told—that there are roughly about 5,000 politically reliable, as well as well-trained, Iraqi forces. I listened this morning to Mr. Bartlett, speaking for the President—and I'm assuming he's going to say what Mr. Bartlett said today—that, in a surge that will be in conjunction with Iraqi forces, who will be moved into neighborhoods, who will be the ones, "going door to door," do you believe there are a sufficient number of reliable Iraqi forces to work with whatever surge plan the President moves forward, if the President's plan envisions a significant Iraqi military initiative along with this surge?

Dr. O'HANLON. Right now, Senator, I'd say no. I think the only hope for changing that is if there can be some kind of a broad political dynamic that's created in the next couple of months, that's been different from what we've seen in the past—some resolution on sharing oil, on rehabilitating former Baathists who don't have blood on their hands, letting them regain their jobs, all the things that probably should have been done 2 or 3 years ago. There's some hope of creating—and it's, of course, a political question. It's less about training and less about the mathematics of the schedule, and more about this national need for consensus.

Chairman BIDEN. Do you all agree that oil has the potential to be the glue that holds the country together, rather than splits it apart?

Mr. SAID. Definitely. And as the resolution on the oil negotiation shows, one could come up with solutions that go beyond the Constitution——

Chairman BIDEN. Well——

Mr. SAID [continuing]. Beyond the——

Chairman BIDEN [continuing]. There's been no resolution on the distribution of the revenue. There has been a resolution—tentative, as I understand it—on who has authority to determine whether or not investments will be made, in what wells and where. But if

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you're sitting out there in the Sunni province, where you've got a lot of nice sand and shale, and not much else, you're going to want to know, "How much is coming my way?" in terms of revenue-sharing, and, "What guarantees are there to be?" In my understanding, that's the point that has not been resolved. Is that correct?

Dr. MARR. I'm not entirely sure of that. But I think negotiations are going on now, and, to my surprise, I've been impressed by the fact that there have been some compromises on this—by the Kurds, for example, who are the most eager to get going on this. Maybe not enough compromises yet, but there have actually been some. So, I think it could move ahead in that direction, but it could also be a point of contention, depending on how it's done.

Chairman BIDEN. That's encouraging. My time is up. I thank you.

Senator Lugar.

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

I appreciate the four statements. And I suspect that—I appreciate them even more having read, in the Wall Street Journal yesterday, a story called "Nightmare Scenario," which relates to the U.S. withdrawal from the region. Now, although a lot of our debate, politically, has been over whether troops should come in or whether they should come out, and the timeframe for the coming out, and so forth, the Wall Street Journal had this paragraph that said, "The United States is pushing a wide-ranging strategy to persuade Sunni allies that are serious about countering the rise of Iran in exchange for Arab help in Iraq and Palestinian territories. Key to the effort is to continue to promise to keep United States forces in Iraq for as long as necessary. But the United States is also beefing up the U.S. forces in the Persian Gulf, plans to deepen security cooperation with the gulf allies. The Pentagon has proposed sending a second carrier battle group to the gulf region. There are also advanced plans in the way to knit together the air defense systems of the six smaller states, including Qatar, Oman, and the United Arab Emirates, and to build a United States-administered missile defense system. Similarly, the Air Force is laying plans to lay up exercises with Arab allies in the region. One proposal calls for the United States to hold combined air exercise with Oman and the UAE."

Now, that's a very sizable agenda going on, quite apart from the debate that we're having as to whether as many as 20,000 troops, in some form or other, get to Baghdad. I want to raise a question of the panel, of any of you. You've illustrated the interests of each of the regional governments, and discussed in your testimony, how critical U.S. presence is for them. Absent that, they have testified, either publicly or covertly, that they will take action—the Jordanians, even—to carve out, maybe, a space to take care of these 700,000 refugees that you have mentioned; or the Saudis, quite overtly, that they may come to the assistance of Sunnis in Iraq under certain conditions. Likewise, the Syrians, conflicted, in a way, because of the nature of their government, but their Sunni majority has a deep interest in Iraq outcomes. Furthermore, the Turks, as you have mentioned, quite apart from Iran—characterized as the big winner—each with important interests in Iraq.

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What if Secretary Rice, as she heads out to the area Friday to begin a very important and timely tour, were to suggest all of us need to come together—by "all of us," I mean the United States and Iraq, the Turks, the Iranians and the Syrians and the Jordanians, and even the Egyptians and the Saudis—around the same table to meet rather continuously? This is not the old debate, "Should we have negotiations with Syria? Should we ever talk to Iran?" Rather, the subject of conversation question is, each of these countries has an interest in Iraq, presently, and an interest in us—that is, the United States presence in the region. What about this carrier group? What about the six countries with conducting air exercises over here? What do they think about the United States having more troops in the general area? Where? What should they be doing? Now, we may not want to share all of our plans, although this is pretty explicit in the Wall Street Journal, in terms of a permanent presence. But absence means chaos for a good number of people. And you have to consider those who will take advantage of the situation in ways that, strategically, may be injurious to the United States and certainly a good number of other people, including the specter raised in the article of all-out warfare, which would likely constrict the supply of oil to everybody in the world, the price goes sky high, recessions occur—the subject, really not discussed today, but an implication of this predicament.

Now, is it practical, if the Secretary were to say, "I'd like to have a meeting. We can have it wherever you want to have it, but we'd like to see everybody around the table"—what would be the response, at this point, of the neighbors? Would they come together? Would they want to see each other? Would they want to participate with us? Do you have any feel about some type of strategy, of grand diplomacy in which we, sort of, lay all the cards on the table and try to think through what is happening in this troubled period, which you all have said is going to take time to evolve—not 6 months or a year or so forth, but an evolutionary struggle for a state to evolve in Iraq, in which that kind of time can only be guaranteed if all the rest of the players are not restive and aggressive? Anyone have thoughts about this idea? Yes.

Mr. SAID. I think you raise a very important point. And there's a situation of putting the cart before the horse in the debate about Iraq—surge, withdrawal, troop movement. I think the decision on troops should come on the back of such settlement that you have outlined—a comprehensive regional agreement. Iraq's neighbors will have various attitudes toward that, because some of them, as has been suggested, are flourishing—and generally like the current state of affairs, although they fear deterioration. Others have been crying for attention. Saudi Arabia, in particular, had been demanding attention to the situation of Iraq, from the United States, as well as Turkey. So, there will be various responses.

One problem with having a comprehensive regional conference to address all the issues in the region, that this is a—quite a big load for one conference, but there is no doubt that, as suggested, also, by the Baker-Hamilton Report, that there is need for a regional approach. Iraq cannot be solved on its own, Palestine cannot be solved on its own. But the decision on troops and troop movements

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should come on the back of such—the blueprint of such agreement, rather than come ahead of it.

Senator LUGAR. Yes.

Dr. O'HANLON. Senator, I'd like to add one word on this, and it's sort of a hawkish case for regional engagement, if you will, which is that, I—Paul Pillar mentioned, earlier, that Iran's interest here may be trying to maximize its influence. I think there's also a chance that Iran is trying to deal the United States a major strategic defeat and try to drive us, not only out of Iraq, but out of the region, and that Iraq—that Iran has gotten more ambitious as this war has gone worse.

I would see one purpose of a regional conference as disabusing Iran of the notion that it can drive us out of the region, and sitting down and making it clear to Iran that they should have an interest in some level of stability in Iraq, because, even if Iraq totally fails, which it might, we are going to stay committed, to the extent our regional partners wish, to the Persian Gulf, and that Iran has no chance of driving us out of the region. I think that message is worth sending. I'd be very curious—I know people in this room have been articulate about the need for different options in Iraq, but I haven't heard anybody say we should get out of the Persian Gulf. And I think Iran needs to be disabused of the notion that they could drive us out.

Senator LUGAR. And particularly because we have negotiations with Iran about nuclear weapons. That goes on somewhere very close to this. And perhaps a feeling, by Iran, that, in fact, if we are in a withdrawal status would have, I think, a deep effect upon that set of negotiations.

Dr. PILLAR. Senator Lugar, if I could just add to what Mike said. If you look at the perspectives of, say, the Saudis—and the issue has been raised about Saudi concern, about the ties with the United States, and so on—it really isn't American troops fighting in Iraq that are most important to the Saudis, as far as their own security is concerned; it has to do with those other aspects of the U.S. presence, the overall U.S. security guarantee, and so on.

And my other final comment would be, how the regional actors would respond to that kind of initiative depends on other things, as well, such as what the United States is doing vis-a-vis the Arab-Israeli conflict. And that's the reason the Iraq Study Group highlighted that issue, as well.

Senator LUGAR. Thank you.

Chairman BIDEN. Thank you.

Senator Kerry.

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

There's so much to try to tackle, and it's hard to do, obviously, in a short period of time. We appreciate your testimony this morning.

Let me try to cut to the, sort of—there's a short-term and a long-term set of interests here. The long-term interests are enormous. And you've just touched on them. I mean, obviously, none of us on either side of the aisle—I don't think anybody in Congress—wants to give short shrift to the large strategic interests we have in the region. And anybody who's been talking, like myself, about the need to push the process—and I recommended an international

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peace conference in—3 years ago. Nothing's happened. We've been sitting around not engaging in this kind of political resolution, while we've continued down the military side. But none of us have suggested that there isn't a huge interest in the stability of the region, in the—in our neighbors, in a whole set of strategic issues. But when you measure those interests against what Iraq is doing to our interests, you come out on a real low side of that ledger. Iran is more powerful. Hezbollah is more powerful. Hamas is more powerful. "The Shia Revival," as Vali Nasr refers to it, is more real. I mean, things that weren't staring us in the face are now staring us in every quarter. We're worse off.

So, our current policy is, in fact, not protecting our interests, not doing for the forces that we want to support in those countries, what's in their interest. And, in the end, we're setting ourselves backward.

Against that, you have to, sort of, ask yourself, OK, so where do you go here, to put those interests back on the table and resolve this? No. 1 issue in front of us is this question of more troops. Now, that speaks, I think, to both short and long term. Let me just come to it very quickly.

General Abizaid said—and now he's leaving, we understand there's a transition, but I don't think you could quickly dismiss his experience, his being in the field, General Casey being in the field, and what they've observed and learned in that period of time—and he said, point blank on November 15 of last year, "I've met with every divisional commander, 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."

Now, Mr. Said, you just said, yourself, that adding more troops may, in fact, make it more difficult to get a resolution. So, my question to each of you, in sum, is: If there isn't sufficient evidence of this kind of summitry and diplomacy, if there isn't a sufficient political process in place—and I want your judgment as to whether or not there is—will more troops have any chance of, in fact, getting what we want, or is it going to make matters worse? And, if it does, where are we, after putting them in, in 6 months, if it hasn't worked?

Mr. O'Hanlon.

Dr. O'HANLON. Senator Kerry, very tough question. I like your idea of a ledger. On the positive side of the troop-surge proposal, I would say, we all know, tactically, there have never been enough troops in Iraq to clear and hold. So, that's the tactical argument for this case. It would have been a much more compelling argument 3 and 4 years ago than it is today, but I think it remains, at some level, in the plus column. On the negative column, of course, we know that there is no political resolution of these very sectarian divides——

Senator KERRY. Well, hold on a minute. I mean, 30,000 troops or 20,000 troops, is there anybody who imagines, measured against the task, that that's enough to do the job?

Dr. O'HANLON. You have to hope that you can get momentum in Baghdad, or in parts of Baghdad, and then that will begin to have

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a spillover effect. So, narrowly speaking, I would say no; there's no hope you can do it nationwide with 20,000 troops.

Senator KERRY. Go ahead and finish up.

Dr. O'HANLON. Well, I think—I think, you know, that's the main tactical argument in favor. Most of the other arguments say, either there's a danger to this, to our Army and Marines, to the Iraqi sense of dependency on us, or it's not going to be enough.

Getting to Senator Biden's question earlier, "Are there enough Iraqi security forces to team with us to be dependable?" Absolutely not, unless there's a much stronger political consensus in Iraq.

So, I would not oppose the surge, but I would only support it if it's in the context of a much broader——

Senator KERRY. Political settlement. And you don't see the political settlement effort or capacity there now.

Dr. O'HANLON. Not now.

Dr. MARR. I would ask——

Senator KERRY. Dr. Marr.

Dr. MARR [continuing]. Very carefully, what these troops are going to do. I have some questions as they get involved in this complex sectarian situation and other issues. Are they going to attack simply Muqtada, or are they also going to attack insurgents? What are the Iraqis going to do? What are others going to do? What are these troops going to do, and what is the strategy that is going to be employed?

One other issue, about sending them or not sending them in, is the question of how we get Iraqis—I don't want to say to just step up to the plate; that's a very simplistic idea—but, indeed, Iraqis themselves are the only ones who can ultimately sort out and move ahead on this sectarian strife issue. And whether sending the troops in and doing the job for them is going to provide an atmosphere which enables them to do it, or whether it's going to delay the hard choice they face. This is another issue——

Senator KERRY. Do you see the political process in place to resolve the fundamental differences between an Abdul Aziz al-Hakim and a Muqtada al-Sadr, between the very—the interests of the militias, the warlordism that Mr. Said just referred to, the Sunni reluctance to participate, the Sunni desire to reemerge as the people who run the country, the interests of certain individuals with respect to Iran, the Persian-Arab divide? I mean, all of these things are, it seems to me, so huge, so historically and culturally deep in this issue, that, as it further disintegrates into this morass of individual interests, you can't—our troops can't pull that back together, can they, Mr. Said?

Mr. SAID. No. Troops, alone, can never resolve this. I mean—well, there's one caveat to that, of course. If you send 500,000 troops to Iraq, you may be able to steamroll the situation without there being a political consensus, but there is no—neither the resources nor the will to do that. So, given the lack of the possibility to mobilize the necessary troops, the troops need to come on the back of political consensus, on the back of a political settlement that is internationally mediated, that is supported by Iraq's neighbors, as well as the various communities in Iraq.

Senator KERRY. I mean, I want to get your answer, too, Mr. Pillar, but, as you do, because time runs so fast, could you just touch

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on the question of to what degree the presence of the American troops delays the willingness of people to resolve those issues, and acts as a cover for people's other interests to be able to play out to see who's on top and who's on the bottom?

Dr. PILLAR. I think there's a strong sense, both among Iraqis and with the regional players, the subject of Senator Lugar's question, that, as long as the United States is doing the heavy lifting, however much of an interest they have in eventually resolving the situation, they are not the ones in the front having to do it. There is an issue of having to concentrate the minds.

Senator KERRY. Do you want to comment, Mr. Pillar? You said something about the Green Zone state that struck me. The Green Zone state might fall. Isn't the fact that it is only a Green Zone state, kind of fundamental to this question of legitimacy and of resolving these larger political differences?

Dr. PILLAR. I think some—I think that was your——

Senator KERRY. And would you, as you touch on that, tell me: If the troops start going after the militia—and I'm reading that they're talking about an evenhandedness in the application of this—what is the Muqtada al-Sadr response to that? And where do the Badr Brigade and the Jaish al-Mahdi come out in that conflict?

Mr. SAID. It's speculative, at this point, to judge what the troops are going to do. The Iraqi Government security plan, although, declares that all the militias will be attacked, but also, in the same breath, states that they view Sunni violence as the primary objective. So, on the back of this security plan, the surge of U.S. troops can be seen as taking sides in the ongoing sectarian conflict. The United States may declare that it will go differently, but, at this point, the agreement, since the meeting in Amman between the Prime Minister and the President, seems to have been to go for one last push in support of the elites that have emerged out of the current political process and against their enemies. And this could contribute—if mishandled, and especially if no protection is offered to all communities, to all Iraqi communities, this could embroil the United States in a new role in Iraq, as being a party in the conflict.

Senator KERRY. My time is up, but——

Mr. SAID. Thank you.

Senator KERRY [continuing]. But none of you answered the question—maybe you will as you go along here—of: What happens if this fails?

Mr. SAID. It will make—it will make the negotiations even harder. I mean, we have a window of opportunity today, and maybe passing, for a negotiated settlement, including the region. Further blood, more blood—and, if it's seen as one-sided—will make negotiations even harder, down the road.

Chairman BIDEN. Thank you very much, Senator.

Senator Hagel.

Senator HAGEL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you each for your presentations and your continued efforts to educate and inform not just the Congress, but the American people. And that, as we all appreciate, is of great essence, on probably the most significant issue this Nation has faced since Vietnam. Not just as you all have said, and each in your own way, noted, that it is not just an Iraqi issue, it is far broader, and the consequences

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are far more significant. It's a regional issue, and some of us have been saying that for some time.

As I have listened to your presentations and my colleagues' questions, no matter the question, no matter the answer, no matter the issue, the dynamic, it all comes back to one fundamental thing, and that's the absolute requirement for political settlement, not just in Iraq, but in the Middle East. And each of you has been very articulate in framing those issues in some specificity.

I noted, Mr. Said, in your testimony and comments, if I can quote—I think you said something to the effect that no framework for a peaceful resolution exists now in Iraq. You then further, toward the end of your statement, said, "What Iraq needs now is an international sponsored peace process, a framework." You engaged Senator Lugar on this issue, to some extent. With that in mind, and each of you have noted Professor Marr's point about: Only the Iraqis, essentially, can settle their differences. Dr. Brookings—I mean, Dr. O'Hanlon——

[Laughter.]

Chairman BIDEN. You don't mind Dr. Brookings, do you?

Dr. O'HANLON. Thank you. [Laughter.]

Senator HAGEL. I think your mother was from that side of the family. [Laughter.]

Dr. O'Hanlon noted that this was going to require a broad political dynamic. So, if I have listened as attentively as I think I have to each of you, you all come to the same conclusion. So, here's the question. We will, tonight, learn, from the President of the United States, what he is going to propose to the Congress and the American people, and to our allies—most specifically, to the Iraqi Government—on where we go from here. I think it's pretty clear what that proposal is going to consist of. And you mentioned Baker-Hamilton. I don't think that there is any great—I'll listen to the President tonight, carefully, obviously, to find out, but I don't think there is any great attention in what the President is going to say tonight that comes from, or a result of, the 79 recommendations that came out of the Baker-Hamilton Commission—one, specifically, which has been noted here, engagement with Iran and Syria, and the wider diplomatic regional focus.

If you all had the opportunity—and I know you all talk to the White House and decisionmakers—but to focus on two or three most specific issues, in the President's presentation tonight, as to what he will be proposing, what would you say are the most important two or three? Or what would you like to see are the most important two or three? Or, if you were the President, what do you think is the essence of where we go from here, and why? And I know we are limited in our time, but I have 4 minutes; that gives each of you 1 minute. And we would start with Dr. Marr.

Thank you.

Chairman BIDEN. You can go over, on your answers.

Dr. MARR. I would focus on regional cooperation. That is to say, getting the regional community in, either by a big conference, which I tend to think isn't going to work very well, or by a contact group, something that allows us to deal with them individually—would be very important, and getting them on board on stablizing Iraq. And, second, on the kinds of pressures, incentives, other

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things we're going to have to undertake, as the group that's providing most of the force in Iraq, to nudge Iraqis—that means the political parties in power now—to cooperate, to get on with reconciliation, to deal with the de-Baathification issue, and other things. Ultimately that's going to determine what kind of response we get in Iraq.

Senator HAGEL. Mr. O'Hanlon.

Dr. O'HANLON. Senator, I would focus, as Phebe has just said, on the need for political reconciliation. I think it's the overwhelming prerequisite to any kind of success, or even averting complete failure in Iraq, at this point. It's hard for the President to really create the right mentality in Iraqi minds, because, of course, he is so committed to this operation. But it strikes me that the Iraqis need to feel like 2007 is a make-or-break year. Hopefully, they can read our politics well enough to know that this country may support the President tonight if he asks for more effort in various ways, but I think it's probably his last chance to really get that kind of support from the country, and he may not even get it this time. And so, I hope that there's a sense of acute focus among Iraqis on the need to resolve issues like sharing oil equally, reining in militias, rehabilitating former Baathists who don't have blood on their hands directly, and dealing with issues like Kirkuk. If that doesn't work, the President can't talk about it very easily tonight, but I think the backup plan is to think about this more like Bosnia and move toward a facilitated resolution of the civil war, where we move toward autonomous regions and help people relocate so they're in neighborhoods where they feel safer. I think that's the obvious backup plan, and pretty much the only choice we're going to have within 9 to 12 months, unless things turn around quickly.

Senator HAGEL. Thank you.

Mr. Said.

Mr. SAID. For a political settlement in Iraq, Iraqis need to come together to decide on the shape of the state they want to live in. That's the essence of a political process that is—that doesn't exist now. We have the formal mechanisms—we have elections, we have a constitution, we have a government—but they are not working. And the evidence to that is the violence and the apathy that I have spoken about. So, there needs to be an external intervention, because Iraqi forces, Iraqi political entities and groups, are clearly unable to reach that consensus on their own. There is a need for international intervention in that regard. And it's better that it's multilateral rather than the United States doing it alone, as it has been trying over the last 3 years. There is a need to bring in more players, who can cajole the various actors, who can bring them to the table, and who can provide the essential support needed to implement whatever the Iraqis agree on—needed to support whatever the Iraqis can agree on.

And only on the back of that, one can then decide which forces stay, which forces leave. Maybe other actors will be able to bring their own forces to the table after having been engaged properly.

Senator HAGEL. Thank you.

Dr. PILLAR. It is unfortunate that—but true, as you said, Senator—that what we hear tonight probably is not going to be drawn much from the Baker-Hamilton Report, so I would just use the last

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few seconds to say I endorse strongly both the approach in the report that the regional engagement, including engagement with the likes of Syria and Iran, has to be part of a package, and, second, to support the whole concept of an approach toward the troop presence in Iraq that let's Iraqis, as well as the American people, look forward to a future in which, as the report put it, by the first quarter of 2008, essentially the combat role by United States troops will be over.

Senator HAGEL. Thank you, to each of you. Mr. Chairman, thank you.

Chairman BIDEN. Thank you very much. We usually move—at least I have been moving based on seniority, but Senator—my good friend, Senator Dodd, is here, but he suggested that I move to Senator Feingold.

Senator DODD. Before you jump too quickly at that, Mr. Chairman, as a strong supporter of the seniority system—I've, over the years, acquired the ability to appreciate it—let me briefly, briefly say—let me congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on taking the gavel here—to thank Dick Lugar for tremendous leadership on this committee. And it's a continuation—a continuum here. I'm not surprised at all that Joe Biden is convening a hearing like this, with a distinguished group of panelists, to talk about the critical foreign policy issue of the day. It's exactly what Dick Lugar has been doing before. It's great to see this kind of leadership move back and forth here, with people who are highly competent, know what they're talking about, and providing great leadership in the country on this issue. So, I thank you, Mr. Chairman, very, very much.

Chairman BIDEN. Thank you.

Senator Feingold.

Senator FEINGOLD. Well, as an increasingly strong supporter of the seniority system——

[Laughter.]

Senator FEINGOLD [continuing]. Let me thank Senator Dodd for his tremendous courtesy in this regard.

Senator KERRY. Ask Senator Webb how he feels about this.

[Laughter.]

Senator FEINGOLD. Thank you all for coming to testify in front of this committee. And thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, for arranging this and the rest of the hearings we'll be having over the next few weeks. I know you and your staff have worked hard to lay out a range of good hearings and witnesses so this committee can grapple with one of the most significant challenges, really, in our Nation's history.

Unfortunately, these hearings are taking place in the context of increasing violence in Iraq, a lack of political agreement among Iraqi political factions, an overstrained United States military, and an overwhelming and accurate sense among the American people that the President's policies in Iraq are wrong. This really is, of course, a tragic situation. And I appreciate your candor and insights today on what I hope will be the first of many open, honest, and candid hearings we'll have.

My colleagues have already addressed a number of important issues. I don't want to take a lot of time here today, but I do want to talk about a critical aspect of the administration's Iraq policy:

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What the role of the United States military in Iraq is, given what you've been talking about, political deadlock and increasing sectarian violence; what impact the current United States military presence in Iraq is having on the political, economic, and security conditions in Iraq; and, most importantly, what impact our continuing presence in Iraq is having on our efforts to defeat terrorist networks not just in Iraq, not just in the region, but around the world. I think sometimes we forget this isn't a regional issue, it is an international issue. And I think one of the greatest failings of our view of this is that we look at this either in—through the prism of Iraq or even through the prism of the Middle East. That is insufficient, in light of what happened to us on 9/11, in light of the challenges to the security of the American people.

So, let me start with Dr. Pillar. Let me focus on a statement you made in your testimony. To paraphrase, you said you concurred with the statements in the declassified national intelligence estimate published by DNI on September 26, 2006, that suggested that Iraq could become a "cause celebre" for jihadists, and that it is "shaping a new generation of terrorist leaders and operatives," and is being exploited by al-Qaeda to "attract new recruits and donors."

First, in speaking generally about your analysis, would the withdrawal of American troops from Iraq at some point help counter the ability of al-Qaeda and other jihadists around the world to recruit new members?

Dr. PILLAR. Yes, sir; I believe it would, which is not to say that it would undo much of the damage that's already been done. What's taking place in Iraq right now is that the current prominent jihad mirrors what took place in Afghanistan in the earlier jihad against the Soviets in the 1980s, where a number of effects occurred. One, it became a huge inspiration and propaganda point, a kind of rallying point. Two, it was a training ground, in a very specific way. Lots of people learned how to handle firearms and explosives to put to other use. And third, it was the ultimate extremist networking opportunity, in which you had people of different nationalities—Pakistanis, Arabs, what have you—who came together. And we're still seeing the effects of that today. I think most of the long-term effects of the jihad in Iraq paralleling that most of those we have yet to see. What's already occurred cannot be undone. But the short answer to your question is yes; we can avoid compounding the damage by reducing, or bringing to a close, our presence there.

Senator FEINGOLD. Thank you for that direct answer. So, more specifically, then, is it safe to say that al-Qaeda will continue to exploit the presence of a significant level of United States military personnel in Iraq?

Dr. PILLAR. There's no question in my mind that it will. It's been one of the biggest propaganda points that al-Qaeda has been offered.

Senator FEINGOLD. In your prepared statement, you said that, "The most important variable in Iraq in the months or years ahead is the sheer continuation of the war, as well as the continued United States participation in it." So, for example, if the United States began redeploying from Iraq, what would be the long-term impact on al-Qaeda, globally, in your view?

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Dr. PILLAR. Senator Feingold, I think you have to bear in mind that "jihad" means, literally, "struggle." What's most important for the people we're talking about is not a particular outcome, or what we, back in this country, might consider, in our lexicon, victory or defeat and what have you. It's participation in a struggle, and especially participation in a struggle against a superpower. And with the Soviets no longer around, that's us. So, just about any outcome that is within the realm of imagination of anyone in this room, which would involve at least some violence still in Iraq, is going to serve that purpose of a struggle. So, that's the most important thing, not a particular outcome or this side winning or that side losing.

Senator FEINGOLD. Thank you, Doctor.

Dr. O'Hanlon, thanks for your testimony. First, let me applaud the work that you and your colleagues at Brookings are doing on Iraq. Your data and analysis are helpful and insightful. Let me ask you some questions about some of the—what lies beneath the data.

Your data obviously highlights troubling trends. It shows that, regardless of the size of United States troop presence in Iraq—and your data shows that it has gone from 123,000 in 2003 to 140,000 in 2006—Iraqi civilian fatalities, estimated strength of the insurgency, strength of the Shia militias, and daily average interethnic attacks and the estimated number of foreign fighters have all risen over the past 3 years, without fail. Given that we can't, from this data, draw a connection between U.S. troop levels and the improvement of any of these important indicators, can we draw a conclusion with your data that sending in more U.S. troops will actually have an impact on any of these key indicators?

Dr. O'HANLON. No; not from the data, Senator. I think there's a possibility of constructing a theory that the added troops could help, especially in the context of a broader political and economic initiative. But there's no data that would prove that it would work. And, in fact, I think that, to the contrary, I would be, while not against the surge proposal, if done in a broader context, I'd be skeptical, at this point, that it can make a big difference.

Senator FEINGOLD. As you mentioned, the other big troubling statistic is shown in the number of Iraqis who are displaced. This is turning into an incredible humanitarian tragedy. According to your data, in your view: Would an increase in United States military personnel in Iraq address any of the driving factors of their displacement—presumably things like bombings, growing militias, interethnic attacks? As we discussed, it appears as if the numbers don't support the hypothesis that more troops will help settle things down.

Dr. O'HANLON. Well, again, you can tell a story, you can construct a theory of how more neighborhood-by-neighborhood security might help reduce the ethnic displacement. But, again, we have no evidence from the information, that we've accumulated over 4 years' time, to prove that. Even in an earlier period, when there was less violence and less for the United States and its partners to deal with day to day in Iraq, we were not able to get things on a positive trajectory. So, I think, if anything, the data would make one skeptical. Can't prove it, one way or another, but should make one skeptical about the prospects.

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Senator FEINGOLD. Well, studying your data, what dynamics or variables, in your view, have had the most significant impact on reducing violence in Iraq? The top-line numbers you've given us show, again, pretty consistent increase in the violence across the board, but do you see any connections or positive stories in that data that should contribute to formulating policy proposals?

Dr. O'HANLON. I see virtually no positive news on the hard numbers of security or economics. The only good news really is in the politics and the public opinion, although there's less than there used to be. Two or three years ago, it was possible to tell a better story, because 2 or 3 years ago, the Shia really seemed to believe in the future of Iraq, and that's when you had the Grand Ayatollah al-Sistani more vocal, trying to rein in some of the militias. The overall Shia response to the insurgency seemed to be one of patience, of believing time was on their side anyway. They stayed optimistic in the polls. They still seemed to believe in the idea of an integrated Iraq. The Sunni Arabs were very skeptical all along, and very quickly soured on our presence, as you know, but the Shia stayed positive for a long time. Unfortunately, that's gone, to a large extent, and I don't know how to recreate it.

So, I'm certainly much more pessimistic about the idea of building an integrated Iraq, at this point, than I have been in the previous 4 years.

Senator FEINGOLD. Well, thanks, all of you.

And, again, thank you very much, Senator Dodd.

Chairman BIDEN. Thank you, Senator.

I would note the presence of Chairman Lantos's wife, Annette Lantos, in the audience. Welcome. I'm glad you've come over to the other side. Thank you.

Senator Coleman is next, but he is absent.

So, Senator Corker.

Senator CORKER. Mr. Chairman, it's an honor to be on this committee.

Chairman BIDEN. We welcome you. We're delighted to have you with us.

Senator CORKER. Thank you. And I'm glad to see that, after Ranking Member Lugar had 35 hearings, you're doing the same. This is a tremendous service to us in the Senate, to our country, and I appreciate what you're doing very much, and echo what Senator Dodd said, a minute ago.

I'm a new member. I'll ask one question and then move on to other members. But I know that we all want to see a stable Iraq, and we all want to see our men and women in uniform home as soon as possible. And I keep hearing that possibly the addition of troops would be better served after political settlements could occur. And I guess the question is: Is there any real thought that political settlements can occur with so much chaos, with so much lack of security for citizens there in Iraq today?

Dr. MARR. I'll start by taking a crack at that. I'm not optimistic either, but I'm a realist. And so, my expectations, from the start, were perhaps not of the highest.

I think the idea that we're operating in a timeframe where, in the next year or two, according to our exigencies here, the situation is going to play out in Iraq is wrong. Their timeframe—as you can

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see if you talk to any of these leaders coming over here—is a much longer one. And I, frankly, think this chaos, perhaps not with the same level of killing—but this kind of instability is going to go on for a very long time, until the population and the political leadership that either benefits or loses from it comes to the conclusion that they're losing more than they're gaining. And the settlement is not going to result from some grand conference, some grand reconciliation. I'd like to suggest, again, it's going to be much more mundane and prosaic. And we see it going on at a local level. It will come from different groups making different deals with different people across these divides until something more cohesive emerges. That's going to take quite some time. And whether our patience with this process is going to last or not is an open question.

Dr. O'HANLON. A somewhat different take, Senator, although I greatly respect Dr. Marr's point and I think there's a lot to it. I would also say, when 100,000 people a month are being driven from their homes, the idea that the conflict can stay at this level indefinitely, and essentially retain a character like we're seeing today, is not what I would agree with or prognosticate. I would say that we have a couple of years to save anything like a multiethnic integrated Iraq. Frankly, I don't think it's that important to save it. I think stability is much more important than salvaging the kind of Iraq that's been there in the past, from America's strategic-interest perspective. And I think we're going to have to see progress on that in the course of 2007, in part because of American politics, but in part because another year's worth of this level of ethnic cleansing and Iraq starts to look more and more like three separated regions, where you essentially had a civil war divide the country. I see Dr. Marr is disagreeing with me, but that's what the numbers say to me.

And so, I think that we are going to have to view 2007 as our last best chance to have anything like current strategy succeed, and, if it doesn't, with or without a surge, I think within a year we're going to have to start having a conversation about whether Iraq has to be divided up into a—what you could call a federal structure or a soft partition—you know, different phrases can be used—but basically where oil revenue is shared, but, otherwise, most of the governance, most of the security is done in three separate provinces, there is some kind of a loose federal structure, a small federal army. And, otherwise, you help people relocate, if they need to, to places where they will feel safer, and help them with relocation assistance, in terms of housing and jobs.

Dr. PILLAR. Well, it is valid to say that—to point out that the security affects the politics, just as the politics affects the security. I strongly agree with Phebe Marr's observations about the timeframe involved and about how Iraqis are going to keep doing what they're doing until they believe they don't have a chance to get the upper hand. If you're looking for an analogy in the Middle East, that I think is frightening in a way, but perhaps most apt, it was the Lebanese civil war, which raged on for something like 14 years, from the mid-1970s to the late 1980s, until all the Lebanese parties—and that, too, was one characterized by a very complex sectarian mosaic—until they basically exhausted themselves, literally

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and figuratively, and finally, with the help of the Saudis and the Syrians, reached a peace agreement, even though that left a number of people dissatisfied. We're seeing the effects of it today. But that's the kind of timeframe I think we're dealing with, with regard to resolving, if it's ever going to be even halfway resolved, the political conflict in Iraq.

Senator CORKER. Well, are you recommending, then, that things stay as is until they get so bad that people start making those kinds of deals? Is that what you're recommending?

Dr. PILLAR. It wasn't a recommendation, Senator Corker, it was an analytic observation about the situation we face.

Chairman BIDEN. Thank you.

I would note that we did not have 135,000 forces in Lebanon during that period. And I know you're making an accurate—I think, accurate observation, but—at any rate.

Senator Boxer.

Senator BOXER. I want to thank Senator Dodd for understanding my conflict here with the Environment Committee. I really do appreciate it. And I want to thank——

Chairman BIDEN. You're a chairwoman of that committee——

Senator BOXER. Yes.

Chairman BIDEN [continuing]. And he has interests before that committee, and, don't worry, he's not going to fool around with you. [Laughter.]

Senator BOXER. I shall never forget the problems of Connecticut. [Laughter.]

Acid rain and everything else.

Senators Biden and Lugar, thank you for continuing to work so closely together. And this panel, I think, has been fascinating. And I find that, you know, as I've listened, a couple of things are leaping out at me that I think make sense in a very difficult chaotic situation. And the things I think make sense happen to be the things that my chairman has been talking about, and I'm going to pursue what Mr. O'Hanlon has talked about—which is to try and wake up, smell the roses, and figure out what is actually happening on the ground. People are moving toward their ethnic identities. That's not America. This is what we don't want to see happen. But either we're going to accept that or our kids are getting killed—and more and more and more. And if you listen to Dr. Marr—and she's so learned—she says, "Only when the participants in the struggle for power recognize they're losing more than they can gain will this violence come to an end. This may be a very long time. And, in the meantime, the best we can do is staunch the violence, contain the struggle." Listen. How many more dead will that be? And I'm not asking you that, because you're not a military expert. But I will ask the Secretary of State that.

And I have to say, Dr. Marr, with all due respect, when you talk about—you see, kind of, an ending, and you say—and you could be right—"This will end when"—and I'm quoting you—"different people make different deals across a period of time." How is that better than the idea of accepting the fact that that dealmaking ought to happen from all the parties accepting the reality of this, and then doing what Mr. Said says, which is come to a political agreement, and then figure out how to enforce that agreement with

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international forces, not just on the backs of the American people. I just—and I say "the American people," because their kids are bearing the brunt of this.

I think it's very interesting—I read, Mr. Said, your amazing article, December 9, 2002. Is it—am I right that your family fled Iraq because of Saddam Hussein? OK. And this is what you wrote in 2002, "There are many reasons why Iraqis who have long sought to topple Saddam Hussein are opposed to the impending war." This is before the war started. "This, after all, is not the first time the United States has pursued regime change in Iraq. All previous attempts ended with disastrous consequences for the Iraqi people."

But I would add a sentence: And this time, although it isn't ended, a lot of families here are coping with disastrous consequences, not only the dead, but the wounded and the post-traumatic stress and the brain injuries and so on.

Now, Mr. Said, every poll shows us that 60 percent of the Iraqis today think it's OK to shoot an American. Could you explain to us why that is the case? Could you—why do you think that's so?

Mr. SAID. I mean, it's understandable. The effect of United States troops in Iraq today—not the whole consequences of the invasion, which obviously are—have been catastrophic for thousands of Iraqis and Americans—is ambiguous, it's a mixed bag. On one hand, the foreign troops are an irritant, they are creating a reaction in the form of an insurgency, which continues to be the bulk of the violence taking place in Iraq today. And the number—60 percent—confirms that, that for most Iraqis they view the American presence as an occupation, and they continue to consider fighting the occupation a legitimate pursuit.

Senator BOXER. OK. Well, let me——

Mr. SAID. However, if I may——

Senator BOXER. Yes. Go ahead.

Mr. SAID [continuing]. The presence of United States troops today is critical for the survival of the Iraqi State and actually for the physical survival of many Iraqis. The United States troops in Iraq today have a humanitarian mission, as well as a——

Senator BOXER. I get it. Why do 70 percent of the Iraqi people say we should get out, 60 percent say it's OK to shoot? So, this may be the case, but clearly that message hasn't gotten through.

Now, Dr. Marr, have you ever read the book, "The Reckoning," by Sandra Mackey?

Dr. MARR. Yes. I know her. Yes.

Senator BOXER. Both of you make me very proud, by the way, just as an aside. But I read that book before I voted on whether or not I wanted to give this President authority to go to war. She predicted everything that has happened. And one of the things she said—and I want—and you may not agree with her—is that after World War I, Iraq was put together, was it not, as a country?

Dr. MARR. No; I think there were some elements of being together before that. There was Mesopotamia——

Senator BOXER. I understand.

Dr. MARR. You know, there's a sense of living within that territory that is more than just throwing a country——

Senator BOXER. But is it not——

Dr. MARR [continuing]. Together.

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