

**STATEMENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
BEFORE THE SUB-COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY,
HOMELAND DEFENSE AND FOREIGN OPERATIONS
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
MARCH 2, 2011**

Chairman Chaffetz, Representative Tierney, and distinguished committee members, we appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the issues and challenges associated with the United States' transition from a military to civilian-led presence in Iraq.

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

Consistent with the U.S.-Iraq Security Agreement and with Presidential direction articulated on February 27, 2009, to implement the responsible drawdown, more than 90,000 U.S. forces have departed Iraq since January 2009. On September 1, U.S. forces completed the change of mission from combat to stability operations. We are currently at approximately 47,000 forces in Iraq and will remain at that number through the fall. We will withdraw remaining forces in accordance with the Security Agreement by December 31, 2011.

The Iraqis Are In The Lead

We understand that that members have concerns about the readiness of the Iraqi government to provide security in Iraq as U.S. forces draw down between now and December 2011, particularly as extremist groups, such as al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), continue to wage attacks against innocent Iraqi civilians. Indeed, we continue to see evidence that extremists groups are capable of horrific attacks. Nevertheless, these attacks have repeatedly failed to accomplish AQI's objective: to spark a return to widespread insurgency and communal civil war. Moreover, despite the often exaggerated media narrative that depicts Iraq on the verge of unraveling, the underlying security situation remains strong.

Overall levels of attacks and Iraqi civilian casualties have remained relatively constant at their lowest levels of the post-2003 period for more than two years. This consistently low level is even more remarkable considering it has been maintained as the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) have assumed primary responsibility for security, and our force numbers have declined from roughly 144,000 in January 2009 to approximately 47,000 today.

Since January 1, 2009, the ISF have been in the lead on security operations, a role they have more capably embraced with each passing month. On September 1, 2010, we made the transition to Operation New Dawn and drew down to below 50,000 U.S. troops, fulfilling the President's commitment and further cementing the Iraqis' lead security role. While the U.S. continues to provide vital support to the ISF – training, equipping, mentoring, advising, and providing critical technical enablers – the Iraqis are in charge, and they simply no longer need such large numbers of U.S. forces to help them keep the violence in check.

Transition

This transition includes four key components: 1) ensuring the ISF reach minimum essential capabilities (MEC); 2) developing a State-led police development program (PDP); 3) expanding the U.S. diplomatic presence; and 4) establishing an Office of Security Cooperation-Iraq (OSC-I). These programs, implemented under the Strategic Framework Agreement, are the foundation for building our continued strategic partnership with Iraq. This is a partnership that includes robust diplomatic, political, economic, and security cooperation.

The ISF modernization program is designed to provide the ISF with the MEC required to defend Iraq against internal threats, while creating foundational capabilities to defend against external threats. The ISF modernization program aims to promote ISF-Peshmerga integration, promote a culture of sustainment within the ISF, and smooth the transition to a State-led PDP to set the Iraqi police on a path toward police primacy. Funding Iraqi Security Forces Funding (ISFF) at \$1.5 billion in FY11 will allow U.S. Forces-Iraq (USF-I) to realize strategic objectives in Iraq, while still maintaining a manageable level of risk.

The State Department will assume leadership of the PDP. Over the past seven years, the United States has helped Iraq's Ministry of the Interior and Defense grow their security forces dramatically, to over six hundred thousand people. Now we need to build upon that force generation to ensure these forces have the training and capabilities to meet their basic policing responsibilities, to

protect Iraq's vulnerable minorities, and uphold the rule of law. This is a basic element of a stable society, respect for human rights, and more reliable economic growth.

Outside of Baghdad, State intends to open two consulates general and two Embassy Branch Offices (EBOs) in highly strategic locations in the country: the consulates in Basrah and Erbil, and the EBOs in Kirkuk and Mosul. State's officers in these posts will conduct crucial engagement directly with Iraqis at the regional and local levels, helping them to build institutional and other capacity. Tensions between Iraq's communities are still significant and State will have an important role to play in helping Iraq's leaders to resolve drivers of tension.

Following the completion of the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq by December 31, 2011, the Office of Security Cooperation-Iraq (OSC-I) will form the cornerstone of the U.S.-Iraqi strategic security partnership, and it will serve as the hub of both security assistance and security cooperation activities. The OSC-I will be under Chief of Mission authority and facilitate the transition from a military-led to a civilian-led mission by continuing to support ISF development and modernization. The OSC-I represents a critical component of the normalization of the USG-Government of Iraq (GoI) bilateral relationship. We seek Congressional support in obtaining the appropriate authorities in FY11 to begin immediate facility and site work for the OSC-I.

Setting State Up for Success

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

After a comprehensive review process, USF-I identified 1,127 essential activities that DoD performs in Iraq. The tasks were divided into 24 categories; examples include intelligence, telecommunications, and reconciliation. In close coordination with Embassy Baghdad, USF-I completed the process of canvassing, categorizing, and defining "handover" plans for these activities and functions, determining what would be turned over to Iraqi entities, U.S. civilian agencies, or multilateral or private institutions or terminated altogether. The Embassy has already taken the lead on 150 of these tasks, and will assume control of another

310 as USF-I completes its drawdown; 82 will be transferred to USCENTCOM, and 36 to the Iraqi government; 530 have been completed, and 22 were identified as non-essential and will be phased out.

To facilitate the whole-of-government coordination, in November 2010, DoD embedded a staff officer within the transition team in State to serve as a liaison and work day-to-day issues. DoD and State have also established an Ad Hoc Senior Executive Steering Group for coordination and synchronization. The group is co-chaired at the Deputy Assistant Secretary level and meets biweekly to review status and progress of the eight subordinate functional areas (supply chain, equipment, contracting, medical, facilities and construction, information technology, security, and aviation).

Additionally, to expeditiously respond to requests for equipment, a combined OSD/Joint Staff equipping board was established in early January 2011. The process consists of working level representatives from all Services, Joint Staff, and OSD, which feed recommendations for sourcing of equipment to a General Officer/Flag Officer board (chaired by the Joint Staff J-4) for approval.

Currently in Iraq, a State-DoD team has been established in each of the remaining locations to develop practical solutions to issues resulting from the downsizing of the site footprint. The transition of these sites is not a turnkey operation and each presents unique challenges. For example, each team needs to establish new perimeters and move the T-walls, re-site and move containerized housing units, reroute utilities, and, where needed, undertake general site preparation. The Chairs of the Senior Executive Steering Group recently returned from Iraq where they conducted site visits to future State Department locations to assess transition plans.

Initially, State will not have the management and oversight capacity in theater to handle the large-scale support requirements for the fourteen remaining sites. Therefore, DoD will provide a number of specific functions on a reimbursable basis:

- Logistics Civil Augmentation Program IV (LOGCAP 4) will be retained to provide general base operations and life support. (The request for proposal was released in January 2011.)
- Food distribution and fuel distribution and supply will be provided by the Defense Logistics Agency.

- Selected maintenance and security contract support will be provided by the Army Sustainment Command.
- Administrative contract support will continue to be provided by the Defense Contract Management Agency.
- The Synchronized Predeployment and Operational Tracker (SPOT) and the Total Operational Picture Support System (TOPSS) have been designated by State as the personnel management tool.

DoD has received and continues to address State requests for approximately 80,000 individual equipment items ranging from medical equipment to counter-rocket protection. As mentioned above, in order to streamline and centralize the request process, a joint equipping board has been established.

Rules of engagement for filling the equipment needs have been established. Excess items are being transferred at no cost. State is to provide funding for Defense services associated with these transfers (transportation and maintenance) primarily for items that need to be shipped from outside the theater. Non-excess items are being provided on a reimbursable basis through sales from stock. In instances where funding is not available, those items will be addressed on a case-by-case basis by the equipping board cited above. DoD will consider loaning non-excess equipment on a case-by-case basis based on readiness impacts. All equipment transfers are being completed in accordance with the Economy Act. There have already been a number of success stories with respect to equipment. For example: 60 Caiman Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles, CT scanners, CH-46 helicopters, and night vision goggles that are being provided.

CONCLUSION

The United States' continued engagement in Iraq remains vital. We are now at the point where the strategic dividends of our sacrifice are within reach, as long we take the proper steps to consolidate them. A long-term strategic partnership with Iraq, based on mutual interests and mutual respect, presents many advantages for the United States. Recent turmoil in the broader Middle East highlights the importance of active U.S. engagement and shoring up our relations with our key regional partners. U.S. support in recent years has proven critical to the emergence of a sovereign, stable, self-reliant and democratic Iraq that is a long-term strategic partner of the United States. We must stay focused on Iraq in order to advance our broader regional objectives of peace, prosperity and security.

Reduced funding for State's Iraq program will severely impact meeting our national objectives in Iraq. Our country has sacrificed a great deal in Iraq, and fully resourcing the State mission to its completion is vital to ensuring that this enormous national investment produces enduring results. We are ten yards from the goal line and need one final push. A sovereign, stable, self-reliant Iraq that is a partner with the U.S. and a force for stability in a strategically critical region is within reach.