



U.S. Department of Defense
Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs)
Speech

On the Web:

<http://www.dod.mil/cgi-bin/dlprint.cgi?http://www.dod.mil/speeches/2005/sp20050203-depsecdef1082.html>

Media contact: +1 (703) 697-5131

Public contact:

<http://www.dod.mil/faq/comment.html>

or +1 (703) 428-0711

Testimony as Delivered to the Senate Armed Services Committee: Hearing on Military Operations in Iraq and Afghanistan

By Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, Washington, DC, Thursday, February 3, 2005.

WARNER:

The committee meets this morning to receive the testimony of Secretary Wolfowitz, General Myers, and Mr. Schlicher, on the broad range of issues relating to Iraq, Afghanistan, and any other trouble spots in the world.

It is the hope of the chair and, I think, joined by the ranking member that we can move along swiftly.

I'm going to ask unanimous consent that my full opening statement be placed into the record.

But I do want to observe that this past weekend we had -- the world -- the observation of a courageous people, the Iraqi people, fulfill the dreams that have been repressed in that nation some half century. And that is one that we accept on a daily basis here in this great nation, the right to vote.

It was an extraordinary moment not just in Iraqi history, but world history, and it sent a strong message far beyond the borders of Iraq.

That event took place because of the sacrifices of the men and women of the armed forces of the United States, the men and women of the Iraqi armed forces, and most importantly, the sacrifices of the courageous people of Iraq.

On March 20th, 2003, U.S. and coalition forces crossed the borders to start the liberation of those people.

We're not finished yet.

We will dwell this morning in some detail on where the professional witnesses here view this situation and what remains to be done.

Our president I think most eloquently stated on the afternoon of the election, and I quote him, "Today,

the people of Iraq have spoken to the world and the world is hearing the voice of freedom from the center of the Middle East."

We should also be very mindful that in Afghanistan the elections have been held after a brutal battle against the Taliban and efforts to eliminate the forces of Al Qaida.

These elections were held on October 9th, 2004, and President Karzai was inaugurated on December 8th.

In the aftermath of these historic elections, the committee meets today to receive this testimony, and we have foremost in our mind the sacrifices of so many that made them possible.

There were 200 instances of terrorism in the course of the weekend of the elections.

The Iraqi forces deserve great credit in showing their professionalism to step up and deal with the polling places and the security situations to enable this election.

WARNER:

Coalition forces were at the ready, but in the words of General Casey, they were really there but not called on. The Iraqis did the job, the security forces.

We hope that hearkens for the future, because our plans are to strengthen, every way possible, the effort to train these forces.

We're anxious to hear from the chairman particularly this morning as to the plans of General Abizaid, Casey, and the recommendations of General Luck and his team that went over.

We learned that there will probably be a concept of putting small numbers of our forces integral into the Iraqi units. It seems to this senator a very wise and sound tactic.

But I congratulate the -- certainly our president, the secretary of defense, the deputy, the chairman and all -- the secretary of state and his team, all that made it possible, for these accomplishments to date and making clear what remains to be done.

We will hear, I think, from the secretary this morning in some detail the steps that must be now taken to put in place the new government. It's going to be somewhat time consuming in the judgment of this senator.

The election results have to be confirmed and a series of steps taken to put in place a prime minister and a series of other ministers. Those have to be ratified. The basic security for each of these individuals must be developed, and their infrastructure, in which to bring in this enlarged and new interim government preparing to write a constitution and to have subsequent elections in December.

So I conclude by, again, expressing my deep reverence and concern and compassion for all the sacrifices that have taken place to enable the success that we have had thus far.

Iraqis understand, however, very clearly the need for U.S. coalition forces to stay and assist them in developing the capacity to ensure the security of their country. And I quote President al-Yawer who stated on Monday, "It is only complete nonsense to ask the troops to leave in this chaos and vacuum of power," end quote.

I commend our distinguished colleague Senator Lieberman, who earlier today in a public setting addressed the issues as he saw them.

And I agree with you, Senator, on what lies ahead on the road for the eventual return of our forces and other coalition forces.

WARNER:

So with that, I conclude and I put the balance of my statement in the record, and I turn to our distinguished colleague, the ranking member.

LEVIN:

Mr. Chairman, thank you.

This past weekend, millions of Iraqis, many at great personal risk and many who walked long distances, exercised their rights to vote in the elections.

They walked through a door that was opened by our soldiers and Marines who worked so bravely and tirelessly in the development and execution of a complex security plan that made the election possible.

The challenge now is to defeat the continuing insurgency, to find a way to involve the Sunnis in the political process, and to ensure that minority rights are enshrined in a new constitution which is scheduled to be considered by referendum this fall.

It is essential that we develop what should have been developed before we initiated military operations: an exit strategy.

Once we see who the new government is, we should discuss with that government what our exit strategy will be. Part of that strategy should be to promptly end our status as an occupying power.

The insurgents have used that status against us in their propaganda. If the new Iraqi government invites the international community -- including us -- to stay on, that invitation would end our status as an occupying power because we would then be there at the invitation of a democratically-elected Iraqi government, just as we are in South Korea at the invitation of a democratically-elected South Korean

government.

Such an invitation from an Iraqi government could also, for the first time, bring the military forces of Muslim nations into the international coalition.

In the meantime, we should move ahead on an accelerated basis with the training and equipping of Iraqi security forces. Part of that effort must be a realistic assessment of the capabilities of those forces now.

We should stop exaggerating the number of Iraqi forces that have already been fully trained and are capable and willing to take on the insurgency.

We need to mix a healthy dose of realism with our hopes.

Currently, we have no way of measuring the capabilities of Iraqi security forces. We have to establish badly-needed training and equipping standards for Iraqi units, which will allow an assessment of their readiness and capability.

We already have a model in the unit status reports -- system -- in the unit status reports system by which we judge the readiness of our own military forces. Only in that way will we be able to determine and apply the resources required to establish and maintain the necessary readiness and capabilities in Iraqi units which will allow American units to turn over security responsibilities to Iraqis.

LEVIN:

The elections in Iraq were an important milestone in a long process. That process will continue to require sacrifices of our military personnel and significant additional resources. I am satisfied those resources should be provided and will be provided.

Regardless of the differences over the policies which isolated us from most of the world and all of the Muslim world when we went into Iraq, regardless of the mistakes that were made in failing to have a plan for the post-combat stability phase and thoughtlessly disbanding the Iraqi army, it is essential that we support our troops.

And now that we are there, we must succeed in leaving Iraq secure and free of major civil strife.

I look forward to the testimony of our witnesses laying out the plans for the next phase in Iraq, as well as addressing the next steps in Afghanistan.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

WARNER:

Thank you, Senator Levin.

I note that yesterday afternoon this committee had an extensive briefing from members of the Department of Defense and I felt and I know other members present here expressed their appreciation for a detailed briefing, which I believe, Senator Levin, went a long way to clarify the means by which we're assessing the degree of achievement in training and the professional capabilities of the Iraqi -- the spectrum of security forces, from police through including the guard and reserve.

And that by necessity was behind closed doors, but I feel that our witnesses today will make some reference to the same material we received yesterday.

I also am very pleased to note the presence at the invitation of the chair and the ranking member of Ambassador Maureen Quinn, a coordinator for Afghanistan.

Good morning, Madam Ambassador, we thank you and perhaps at some point in the course of the questioning we will ask you to join the panel.

Secretary Wolfowitz?

WOLFOWITZ:

Mr. Chairman, thank you for this opportunity.

We meet in a historic week in the history of Iraq and in our relations with Iraq.

There are some appropriate cautions that people give about avoiding euphoria at this moment. I think those cautions are correct. I think the right way to think of what's happened on Sunday was that it was a major victorious battle in a war that is still not yet won and it is appropriate to celebrate that victory, but it's also important to think about the way ahead.

WARNER:

Can you draw that microphone up a little more directly to your delivery?

Thank you.

WOLFOWITZ:

Is that better?

WARNER:

And raise it just a bit.

Thank you.

WOLFOWITZ:

As we do so, I think it's particularly appropriate to pay honor to the memory of the 1,417 Americans that have been killed so far in this effort, but also to the 1,342 Iraqi police and army that have been killed and 126 other coalition members that have been killed.

This has been a victory that's been won at considerable cost.

That sacrifice has not been lost on the Iraqi people themselves.

WOLFOWITZ:

An Iraqi blogger, which are the people who post their news on Web sites -- this one named Allah (ph) publishes his views on a Web site called The Mesopotamian -- stated it eloquently on election day when he wrote, "My condolences to the great American people for their recent tragic losses of soldiers. The blood of Iraqis and Americans is being shed on the soil of Mesopotamia, a baptism with blood, a baptism of a lasting friendship and alliance for many years to come through thick and thin. We shall never forget the brave soldiers fallen while defending our freedom and future."

And I think we had a most vivid expression of that in that remarkable hug that we all witnessed last night.

I'd like to thank the members of this committee and the entire Congress for your continued support to our great men and women in uniform and to their civilian counterparts, including several State Department officers who have made the ultimate sacrifice in Iraq.

At the end of the day, the indispensable heroes of Sunday's historic events were the Iraqi voters, who risked their lives and at least 35 of whom paid with their lives to vote for their government representatives for the first time in their lives.

As Lieutenant General Thomas Metz, the commander of the Multinational Corps-Iraq said in congratulating his troops for the magnificent job they did on January 30th, "The one thing we could not do for the Iraqis was vote, and impressively, millions of them had the courage to do so."

One of the most impressive examples of that courage occurred in Baghdad, when a bomber approached the line of voters outside a primary school polling place. A 14-year police veteran named Abu Amir al-Shawali (ph) pushed the bomber away, yelling, "Let me save my people. Let me save my friends." As a result of al-Shawali's (ph) heroism, the bomber was only able to detonate his belt of explosives 50 feet away from the voting line, saving the lives of countless Iraqis, but taking the life of this brave Iraqi policeman.

This is one of several instances in which Iraqi police and soldiers gave their lives to shield Iraqi voters from suicide bombers and insurgents trying to penetrate the security rings around polling sites.

And I think it might be appropriate on this occasion, Mr. Chairman, to put up the article from USA Today and the picture of Sergeant al-Shawali (ph). I think he deserves that kind of recognition.

I would note that, in fact, our -- according to our reports of eight attempted suicide bombings, every one of them was stopped by Iraqi security forces at the outer security perimeter. That's a pretty impressive 100 percent record.

And from what we can tell from reports -- and we're still checking on this -- that life-giving sacrifice by policeman al-Shawali (ph) was not the only such incident.

There seems to be another one in which a policeman was inspecting a attacker, when he discovered the explosive-laden belt.

WOLFOWITZ:

The attacker pushed him to the ground, ran toward the polling station, and this policeman pursued him, tackling him outside the station in a body embrace that triggered the explosives.

This seems to be, from what we can tell, two separate instances of devotion far above and beyond the call of duty.

Although the final tally of votes will not be known for several days, it's already clear that Sunday's election has been an epoch- making event.

But as impressive as that election was, Iraq still faces a very difficult road ahead to defeat the terrorist threat and to achieve stability, much less freedom and democracy.

Nevertheless, I think it is appropriate to take just a few moments to dwell on the breathtaking images we saw this past weekend.

In fact, Mr. Chairman, I thought since a picture is worth a thousand words, I could save you many words and some minutes by handing out this packet of photos that my staff pulled off the Internet.

I'm not quite sure about copyright, so I'm a little concerned about distributing beyond the members of the committee. But I think if you look at them, there's just an incredible story there of Iraqi passion for democracy.

Two of my favorites, if I could hold them up for a minute, are this one of an old man crying as he puts his ballot in, and then this one of two young women hugging each other and crying.

We saw an incredible display of passion for democracy.

But I would say even more significantly we saw incredible bravery. It's important to remember that, for this demonstration of Iraqi commitment to their newfound democracy took place in the face of a systematic campaign of terror and intimidation that is almost unimaginable to most Americans.

It included assassinations and beheadings of election workers. It included threats to the children of candidates and threats to ordinary voters, not just risking their lives when they went to their polls, but fearful of what might happen to them afterwards.

We who are lucky enough to take for granted that our elections will take place in complete peace and security can appreciate the significance of what Iraqi voters have just done.

Indeed, I think some of the most remarkable stories from last Sunday are about the courage of these voters, and two in particular that I heard from General Ham, who is our commander up in Mosul, are worth repeating.

At one polling station in Mosul, and I would point out it was in a Sunni Arab neighborhood, the polls had been open for two hours and no one had come to vote.

But there was a crowd gathered some distance from the polls to watch what happened, and finding an old woman who seemed to be in her late 60s came forward and said, "I've waited all my life for this opportunity." And she came forward to vote and the rest of the crowd followed.

At another polling place in Mosul, also in a Sunni Arab neighborhood, the enemy actually brought a line of voters under small arms fire, wounding one of the voters.

WOLFOWITZ:

No doubt, they expected the other voters to run. They did exactly the opposite. They stayed in line, they shifted the line and crouched down to protect the wounded voter while Iraqi soldiers evacuated him to a hospital.

Forty-four Iraqis lost their lives attempting to cast their ballots. By 1:00 p.m. Sunday, terrorists had launched a record seven suicide bombings in Baghdad, and one south of Baghdad.

Despite that violence, Iraqis did not leave the lines they had waited all their lives for.

Before the election, there was concern that this purple dye that was used to mark voters' fingers could become -- as a fraud-prevention measure -- could become intimidation instrument, that people would be fearful that it would target them from the terrorists.

But rather than deterring people, these marks have become a purple badge of courage, as you will see in these photos I am sure you have seen already.

One Sunni voter raised his forefinger and declared, "This is my badge of honor, and no, I'm not keeping

my hand in my pocket."

Another Iraqi wrote, "When I moved to mark my finger with ink, I dipped it in deep as if I was poking the eyes of all the world's tyrants."

Mr. Chairman, this election also helps to clarify, without a doubt, who the enemy is in Iraq.

Our enemy in Iraq is not the Iraqi people. It is not a nationalist insurgency. It is an unholy alliance of old terrorists and new terrorists.

The old terrorists are the ones who brutalized and tortured the country and murdered hundreds of thousands of their countrymen over the course of three and a half decades.

These secret security forces of the former regime, best analogized I think to the Gestapo and the SS of the Nazi regime, are now allied with new terrorists drawn from across the region.

Like their Baathist allies, these new terrorists are ideologically opposed to democracy and fearful of what the success of freedom in this important Arab country will mean for them.

Just one month before the election, Osama bin Laden declared, and I quote, "Any Iraqi who takes part in this election consciously and willingly is an infidel."

With that statement, bin Laden made preventing the Iraqi election one of Al Qaida's highest priorities and provided ideological justification for murdering Iraqi voters.

Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, bin Laden's appointed prince in Iraq, also denounced the election.

WOLFOWITZ:

Indeed he denounced democracy more broadly, declaring "a fierce war on this evil principle of democracy and those who follow this wrong ideology. Democracy," he said, "is based on the right to choose your representatives and that is against the rule of God."

Through their opposition to elections and democracy, the terrorists have demonstrated that they are not interested in winning hearts and minds, but rather to simply intimidate the Iraqi people into submission.

Unlike almost every other historical insurgency, they offer no positive agenda beyond their own pursuit of power. And they explicitly seek to deny Iraqis a voice in their future.

That is why Iraqis refer to such men as Abdul Lati Fumein (ph), so-called religious adviser to Saddam before the fall of the regime, who fled the country with large amounts of money, leaving his recruits behind as terrorists.

Yet the determination of the terrorists to disrupt the election was defeated by the overwhelming

majority of Iraqis who want democracy to prevail. As Major General John Batiste, commander of our 1st Infantry Division said, "Iraqi votes are bullets to the hearts of terrorists. Iraqis know who they are fighting and they know they are fighting people who want to take them backwards to some new form of dictatorship as terrible as the one they have just been liberated from."

Mr. Chairman, as dramatic a moment as these elections were, this is not a time to sit on our hands congratulating ourselves, nor to declare victory and abandon the task that is only half accomplished.

Although I find it hard to agree with anyone who would say that the election was just the easy part -- it was hardly easy -- there is no question that there is still much hard work to be done, principally by the Iraqis themselves, but also by those of us upon whom they still depend for support.

While the election clearly demonstrated that the hearts and minds of the Iraqi people do not lie with the terrorists, no one should imagine for one moment that these would-be tyrants will quit just because of Sunday's vote.

The next few months will be particularly challenging because, while this election will produce a national assembly, that body will still face a formidable challenge to putting together a government. And it must do so in the face of a continuing war against a brutal enemy.

Mr. Chairman, I think, attempting to think about our immediate focused efforts in the next few months, I would suggest there are five.

WOLFOWITZ:

First is to recognize that success in this effort will require the integration of all elements of national power, both U.S. and Iraqi, as well as those of our coalition partners and hopefully others who may join in now.

This is not a military effort alone and there must be equal and parallel efforts in governance and infrastructure and economic development and strategic information.

Governance in particular presents important challenges, not only in standing up a government and writing a constitution, but in establishing government ministries that can both function effectively -- which is enough of a challenge -- but also that will serve the interests of the people, not their own personal agendas. The entire international community has an interest in the success of that effort.

Second, there will be many difficult compromises that will have to be made among different Iraqi groups on everything from fundamental constitutional questions to practical questions involving the sharing of power and resources.

Iraqis will have to work out these compromises. That's a big part of what democracy is really about. But we have enormous influence in Iraq and we should use it not to advance our own agenda, but to constantly remind Iraqis of the importance of resolving these issues in ways that preserve national unity in

the face of a ruthless enemy.

Third -- and I'll talk more about this in a few minutes -- on the military side the key to victory clearly lies in developing more and increasingly capable Iraqi security forces. That effort has produced important successes so far and we need to learn the lessons from those successes so that we can build on it and hopefully accelerate it.

Fourth, we and the Iraqis need to attach high priority to the development of an effective legal and judicial system, one that enforces the rule of law, that punishes the guilty, that protects the rights of all citizens and that provides equal justice under the law that is not only a key hallmark of democracy, but which is also crucial for fighting corruption and promoting economic development.

Iraq's currently weak judicial system is not yet able to punish law-breakers effectively, even those who are guilty of the most serious crimes against the Iraqi people and against coalition forces. Finding ways to protect judges from intimidation needs to be a high priority.

We also need to help the Iraqi government strengthen the tools of law enforcement, through everything from better communications equipment, to identification systems for criminals and foreigners, to forensic bomb analysis capability.

WOLFOWITZ:

And fifth, we need to work with the Iraqi government to keep up pressure on neighboring countries, particularly Syria, to stop the activities of Baathists and other terrorist supporters working from outside Iraq and to stop the flow of foreign fighters into the country.

Some of Iraq's neighbors probably fear a free Iraq, but they need to understand that it will be much more harmful for them if they try to obstruct Iraq's progress toward freedom.

Let's remember that we're facing an enemy that's not only ruthless, but adaptive and fiendishly clever, an enemy that obviously didn't give up just because Baghdad was liberated, that didn't give up just because Saddam Hussein was captured and that didn't give up just because the interim government was stood-up successfully on June 28th.

It's an enemy that will adapt. And we need to be prepared for its adaptations and anticipate them and try to be ahead of them.

But the good news, Mr. Chairman, is that this enemy does not offer anything positive to the Iraqi people. It's not an enemy that can ever defeat our soldiers one for one on the battlefield.

It is an enemy that's shown itself to be horribly clever and viciously evil, with no respect for the laws of civilization or for the Iraqi people. But that will be their undoing. Ultimately, it is the Iraqi people who will defeat it with our continued help.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Schlicher, I think, will discuss in more detail the political process going forward. I have already emphasized the critical importance in that process of compromise.

There's been a lot of attention to the fact that the election results may be distorted by the fact that intimidation was much more severe in predominantly Sunni areas; not because, I think, Sunnis predominantly support the insurgency, but because the insurgents are predominantly Sunni and that's where they live.

That's, I think, why the vote was particularly low in places like Al Anbar province.

What I find encouraging is that the non-Sunnis have been very forceful in expressions like this one that came from the security chief, Abdul-Aziz al-Hakim, whose leads, I believe, or is near the top of this United Iraq Alliance list.

I quote, "The national assembly" -- and this from a Shi'a cleric -- "The national assembly shall represent all Iraqi strata and we will make an all-out effort to this end. We will defend the rights of our Sunni brothers just the same way we do for those of the Shiites."

I think these statements are good indicators that Iraqis will work to form a transitional government that will attend to the interests of all Iraqis, including those Sunni Arabs whose vote was suppressed by the severe intimidation in some places.

Mr. Chairman, I know this committee has a particular interest, as do we in the Department of Defense, in the development of Iraqi security forces.

I think it's worth recalling that last year we intercepted a letter from Abu Musab al Zarqawi to his Al Qaida colleagues in Afghanistan. In that letter he warned of the dangers of Iraqi sovereignty, and especially the creation of capable Iraqi security forces.

He wrote, and I quote, "With the spread of the Iraqi army and the police, our future is becoming frightening. You end up having an army and police connected by lineage, blood and appearance to the people of the region. How can we kill their cousins and sons? This is a democracy. We will have no pretext."

Mr. Chairman, the endeavor to create those forces has not been without setbacks and disappointments. Most significantly, barbaric acts of intimidation have targeted Iraqi soldiers, police and their families, thinning the ranks of some units and rendering others ineffective.

Let me recall that, since June of 2003, nearly 1,400 Iraqi soldiers and policemen -- I would say that's by our count, which may well be an underestimate -- nearly 1,400 Iraqi soldiers and policemen have been killed in the line of duty as they sought to defend their newfound freedom.

Through it all, however, the coalition and the Iraqis have continued to press forward, modifying training programs, adapting operational constructs and increasing equipment authorizations.

Throughout that, we've had strong support from this committee and from the U.S. Congress. It has been critical in making that progress possible.

Mr. Chairman, this progress doesn't always transfer into quantifiable measures. And the quantifiable measures we come up with are sometimes undone by the shifting in categories. The shifting in categories is a necessary adaptation to circumstances, and I know it gets confusing even to those of us who track it every day.

One that I think has caused particular confusion -- let me just try to clear it up -- has to do with this change when we were carrying numbers on the order of 200,000, and then it seemed to suddenly drop to 130,000.

Those 70,000 people are people we had always identified as the least trained. I sometimes call them a kind of Pinkerton guard force, the so-called Facilities Protection Service. And we took them out of our counts, frankly, because the Iraqis took them out of the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Interior, and shifted them over to individual ministries where they were protecting oil or protecting electricity.

WOLFOWITZ:

And since they're not part of the training responsibility of General Petraeus's command, we thought it was better not to keep them in the number count. They are still there. They performed even on election today.

More generally, we have repeatedly tried to caution against making too much of raw numbers when there are large qualitative differences that are generally more important. The term "trained and equipped," when applied to Iraqi forces, can't be analogized to how we measure readiness in American military units.

One impressive metric is one I mentioned last Sunday, the number of suicide bombers that was stopped at the outer security perimeter of the polling sites. That was 100 percent out of a total of eight attempted attacks and it's an impressive record.

Measurement is also complicated by the fact that there's been a consistent development of new kinds of units with different capabilities. One such unit are the special police commando battalions, which are an entirely Iraqi invention. The first one, I believe, was formed only last November. They're among a number of different kinds of units that have the important capability that they can be deployed anywhere in the country, not just in their local area.

Since Prime Minister Allawi took office last June, 44 deployable military and police battalions, out of a total of 85 battalions overall, have been established. The additional battalions include regionally oriented national guard battalions that were recently incorporated in to the Iraqi army.

These deployable battalions have the feature that they can be moved anywhere in the country and in many cases currently are deployed in the most challenging areas. They're responsible in no small measure for the successful security that we achieved in Mosul and Baghdad on election day. There were seven

such battalions helping maintain security in Mosul, nine in Fallujah, three in Samarra and at least seven in Baghdad.

At the same time, none of these Iraqi forces are capable of replacing coalition units on a one-for-one basis. In fact, they may never be one-for-one the equivalent of our forces, but in some respects they will always be superior.

What I do mean by that? I mean, that they bring to the fight skills that our soldiers will never possess, particularly their understanding of the languages and cultures of Iraq, the ability immediately to recognize just by how someone speaks whether he's an Iraqi or foreigner: That's no small talent.

And they will contribute even more as we and Iraqi leaders continue their development, replace their losses and help develop their higher headquarters, combat support elements, and logistical units and systems needed for their support.

As we try to increase the speed with which they grow and with which, more importantly, they improve qualitatively, a major component in the effort will be the substantially increased emphasis that General Casey, our great commander in Iraq, has directed be given to Iraqi security force development this year.

Increasingly, I think you could say Iraqi have what I would call the hardware force component of personnel, equipment and infrastructure. Their most important gaps are intangible components that all successful military units need, what you might call the software: leadership, command and control arrangements, experience and unit cohesion. These intangibles take time to develop.

WOLFOWITZ:

Some of them are, frankly, best developed by actual combat experience. Some of the most important development will therefore take place on the job in active military operations.

Mr. Chairman, the president and Secretary Rumsfeld are committed to providing the resources needed for this endeavor and the forthcoming request for supplemental funding will include a substantial funding request for expansion of the Iraqi security force effort. We are counting on your support and I'm confident we will have it.

In sum, we believe that considerable momentum has been achieved in the development of Iraqi security forces, however much remains to be done as we help Iraq build not just battalions, brigades and divisions, but the institutions that support them and the civilian ministries that direct them.

That is an enormous endeavor. It is historically unprecedented. It has encountered challenges and suffered setbacks. But in recent months we have seen the results of the coalition's investment, most importantly in the performance of Iraqi units deployed to hot spots on January 30th.

Mr. Chairman, democracy is on the march in Iraq and this past Sunday Iraq's own army and police force helped to safeguard that march. Their performance was captured in an anecdote related by another

Iraqi blogger, this one named Ali, on his web site, which is called IraqiLib (ph), I guess meaning liberation.

He describes an encounter with one of the guards; doesn't say whether it was a soldier or policeman. The guard actually apologized to the voters for searching them, said, "We don't know how to thank you. Please excuse any inconvenience on our part. We wish we didn't have to search you or limit your freedom. You are heroes."

I think that politeness from an Iraqi soldier was something that's probably also a bit unprecedented in that country.

This Iraqi voter said, "I thanked him back and told him that he and his comrades are the true heroes and that we can never be grateful enough for their services."

WOLFOWITZ:

Mr. Chairman, today we all share that gratitude for the courage of the Iraqi forces and for the courage and sacrifice of American service men and women who have done so much to help bring Iraq to this moment and, hopefully soon, to many more like it.

Thank you, look forward to your questions.

WARNER:

Thank you, Mr. Secretary, and again, I thank you for your long participation in this endeavor personally, professionally.

General Myers?

MYERS:

Thank you, Chairman and Senator Levin and members of the committee for your continuing support of our men and women in uniform and for this opportunity to report on our progress in Iraq.

After visiting our troops in Iraq many times, I can only imagine their great pride as our troops and their coalition partners witnessed the Iraqi people lining up at the polls, bravely and emphatically taking responsibility for their own future.

Some Iraqis compared election day to a wedding or birthday. And as you saw on the TV news footage, some carried their children with them to the polls. By voting, these Iraqis were helping to chart their own future and the Iraq that their children would inherit.

The election wasn't without violence, as Secretary Wolfowitz said. One U.S. Marine and a number of

Iraqis gave their lives protecting this fledgling democracy on election day.

And not every Iraqi chose to vote. Yet we have hope that many of them will see this election as a call, a call to abandon the insurgency and join the political process just as we saw with the Taliban in Afghanistan.

In the days before the election, as Secretary Wolfowitz said, terrorist leader Zarqawi declared war against democracy. And to Zarqawi, the Iraqi people have said, "We won't let you win."

A senior U.S. Army officer serving in Baghdad commented on what he witnessed Sunday. His quote is, "Voters paraded down the street, holding up their fingers marked with the blue ink from the polls in overwhelming pride. Every Iraqi I talked to said, 'Thank you for this opportunity, for this freedom.' Today they earned their freedom." This lieutenant colonel went on to say, "We should all be joyful for that."

And, of course, we are because the election was a very important milestone on a very long road. The Iraqi government and the coalition, as Secretary Wolfowitz also said, still have much work to do.

The coalition must focus our efforts on reaching the point where we can shift our mission from fighting the counterinsurgency ourselves to developing Iraqi capacity to conduct those operations and create an environment that encourages sustained political and economic progress.

Since this past July, the coalition has accomplished a great deal in improving the quality of the Iraqi security forces on duty. Many of these forces are now much better trained and equipped. And if you look at their performance in Fallujah this past October and during the election you can see that.

I believe we have also gained a better understanding of their capabilities.

MYERS:

For them to be able to operate independently, they're going to need our continued help to build their leadership, their command and control, and intelligence capabilities at all levels.

I would also like to re-emphasize that security means more than just physical security. Iraqis need help building the Iraqi economy and industrial base to create jobs and income sufficient to support local and state government services for individual and families. They must be able to provide for their social welfare, ensuring educational opportunities, adequate wages, health care and other safety net programs are available to ensure the population has basic human services.

And all Iraqis must be able to participate in government without fear of intimidation. They need a mature judicial system and confidence in government's ability to maintain the rule of law.

Since the transition to Iraqi sovereignty last June, the Iraqi government has 26 ministries working to provide services to the country, along with governments at the regional and local level.

But these organization have a very tough task, because Saddam Hussein's regime sapped the Iraqi people of their spirit and tried to render them totally dependent. Saddam's government left behind a decayed infrastructure and no tradition of caring for the needs of the population.

The Iraqi government needs our continued support and mentorship as well.

So we must stay focused and we must not waiver in our resolve. The Iraqi people and the Iraqi security forces showed their resolve on Sunday, as did the coalition. We are grateful for the support of the American people and that support must continue.

And now is the time for the entire international community to show its resolve in the war on terrorism. As I have said before, this war is ultimately a test of wills and the Iraqis certainly passed that test on Sunday.

So right now there's an enormous upsurge of hope and enthusiasm, but the situation in Iraq certainly remains dynamic.

I firmly believe we have the right strategy for capitalizing on this recent success and helping build a new Iraq, democratic, at peace with its neighbors and representative of all its people.

I'm extremely proud of how well our military has performed, especially their flexibility and their adaptability in dealing with a difficult enemy.

MYERS:

I'm proud of their ability to cooperate with the Iraqi government and its citizens. And I'm proud of their courage and equally proud of their compassion under some very challenging conditions.

So on behalf of all the Joint Chiefs, I express my condolences for all the American, coalition, Iraqi men and women and their loved ones who have either been killed or wounded in this very, very noble endeavor. Because of their sacrifices, 25 million Iraqis have the chance to build a new democracy.

I thank you for your continued support and look forward to your questions.

WARNER:

Thank you very much, General.

And all of us here on the committee share the sentiment you've expressed. These elections would not have taken place had it not been for the steadfast commitment of the coalition forces and the sacrifices that they took.

And then in the final round, they fought really side by side with their Iraqi military partners. And it's a partnership which we have henceforth that will make this successful.

Mr. Schlicher, do you have some opening statements, or do you want to...

SCHLICHER:

Yes, sir, I do have some brief opening remarks.

WARNER:

All right, let's have your brief opening remarks.

SCHLICHER:

Mr. Chairman, Senator Levin, members of the committee, thank all of you for the opportunity to come and appear before you today to discuss the progress that we've seen in Iraq as the Iraqis lay the foundations of the democratic government that they have so clearly shown us that they're determined to achieve.

With your permission, I'll make a few brief remarks and submit my complete statement for the record.

And please let me remind, as the chairman noted at the beginning, that though my remarks are about Iraq, we also have with us today ambassador Maureen Quinn, the Afghan coordinator in State, who is available to answer any questions about Afghanistan that the committee might have.

SCHLICHER:

Please let me amplify and echo some of the themes that Secretary Wolfowitz so eloquently laid out earlier.

Earlier this week we saw enormously brave Iraqi men and women defying threats and bombs, lining up in their streets, walking to cast their votes in Iraq's first genuine election in generations.

Even as we speak, independent Iraqi election officials are counting those votes and Iraqi political leaders, anticipating the results, are debating the shapes of possible alliances to best represent their constituencies and the interests of their entire nation. Iraqi voters, meanwhile, are celebrating the opportunity to shape their own future.

As Secretary Wolfowitz noted, the bravery of the millions of Iraqi voters has really been remarkable. Terrorists threatened, kidnapped and killed candidates, killed election officials, killed security forces, killed potential voters, intimidated the many thousands, perhaps millions, of other voters. And some Iraqis, unfortunately, as a result of this intimidation, chose to stay home: some out of fear, but there are also those who chose to stay home out of alienation and perceived disenfranchisement.

We hope and expect that the new government, when it's formed, will reach out to all Iraqis to ensure that the voices of all elements in Iraq are heard in the continuing development of the democratic process.

And this subject principally alludes, of course, to the question of Sunni inclusion. We, like Secretary Wolfowitz, have noted the many public statements and we've also heard private statements in which all elements of the political class in Iraq right now are determined that the approach to the upcoming political processes that they have to be inclusive and include all members of society.

SCHLICHER:

And we certainly do applaud that intention on their part.

But in the face of violence, of threats, millions of Iraqis did go to their polls. They cast their secret ballots in accordance with their personal convictions.

And you may have seen on TV this very illustrative scene of an Iraqi official holding up the ballot for this election on Sunday with 111 choices and a ballot from the last so-called election of the Saddam era, where there was one choice. I think that kind of said it all, especially if you're an Iraqi.

It's also really important to note the enormous numbers of Iraqi women who came forward to vote for their freedom. And after the election, people celebrated not for the victory of any particular party, because the results are not yet known. Instead, they celebrated democracy.

And, Mr. Chairman, if you would allow me a personal comment at this point, as someone who's spent the last quarter century working in this part of the world and I think I understand the yearnings of average people there pretty well, I have to say this was a deeply, profoundly moving moment and I feel very, very proud to have been a small part of it.

While nothing should dim the glory of the election day, we should recognize that the election process was still new to Iraqis, so there are certain aspects in which it wasn't perfect. There have been a few reports of logistical problems, of voting irregularities, of some communities, villages that did not have the opportunity to vote.

The Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq, which is the same body that's done so well in managing the logistics of Sunday's election -- they're charged with administering and addressing all of these complaints. And we think that they will do so. We'll be watching and encouraging them to do so. And we think it's really important that they do so in a transparent process, especially a process that's transparent to all Iraqis.

SCHLICHER:

And if there are glitches that were the result of logistical problems, to explain those glitches to the

people. If there's some case where an election official didn't do what he or she should have done, the commission should point that out to the people as well.

At the same time in the wake of the election, all Iraqis can be pleased with the report of the International Mission for Iraqi Elections. That's the international mission that was established to observe the elections. They found that Iraq's electoral commission prepared and put in place a framework for an election that generally meets recognized standards in terms of the election law of planning and of preparations.

And we think that the Iraqi people likewise can be pleased by the courage and professionalism displayed by the Iraqi police and security forces, which Secretary Wolfowitz and General Myers have also mentioned. This played an essential role in safeguarding the elections and preventing their disruption by the practitioners of terror.

Now, without question, and again as my colleagues have pointed out very clearly today, the Iraqi people still have a long struggle ahead. But we are determined to stand resolutely beside them. The sacrifices of the multinational forces in Iraq to assure security and assist with logistics, and the tireless work of the American civilian and military personnel, have helped make this great day possible for the Iraqis.

And in this regard, Mr. Chairman, please allow me to salute the incredible job that Ambassador John Negroponte and his team at the embassy in Baghdad and at the embassy offices throughout Iraq have also done in this regard.

We also salute the U.N. Election Assistance Division, which did, really, a heroic job of working with the Iraqi electoral commission to actually make the elections possible in the face of all of the problems of security, of logistics, of organization that they have faced.

We look forward to continued U.N. involvement in Iraq in support of the subject matter and in the manners that the Iraqi government may request of them.

Sir, the elections, as I judge it, will have a longer-term effect on security as well.

SCHLICHER:

The elections can help to convince those who have been sitting on the fence that an elected, legitimate government of Iraq is empowered and is here to stay; that it is receiving support from Iraqis of all ethnicities, all religions and from all provinces.

And in the end, I hope it will convince them that the solution to their problems lies within the political process and not with the ranks of those who practice terror and seek to disenfranchise their fellow citizens via that terror.

By voting, millions of Iraqis have told the insurgents that they are not wanted, that their agenda is not

accepted, that their way is not legitimate, that their way is not representative of the people of Iraq.

The Iraqis have decided that security and the freedom to choose are what are important to them.

Our continued commitment will be necessary to help the Iraqi people rebuild their country. They need and deserve to see the quality of their daily lives improved. Hand in hand with increased security, Iraqis want dependable electricity and water and medical care, all of which the practitioners of terror have also been trying to deprive them of over the last months.

Closely coordinated with the Iraqi government, our reconstruction efforts have made progress in restoring essential services, in expanding the availability of quality medical assistance, in rehabilitating public buildings and roads, in advising the government on economic and financial reforms, and in introducing Iraqis at all levels to the basics of democratic practice and the rule of law.

WARNER:

Mr. Schlicher, we're going to have to get to the questioning now.

SCHLICHER:

Yes, sir.

WARNER:

I am going to put your full statement in.

And I'm glad that you acknowledged, as we do, the very valuable work done by our diplomatic corps under Ambassador Negroponte and the many who serve with him in civilian capacities.

SCHLICHER:

Thank you, sir.

I'll pass that on to him.

WARNER:

Thank you very much.

We're going to move quickly into a first round, gentlemen, and we hope to have a second round.

General, I'd like to start with you.

The president, last night, made these remarks which bear directly on the future of the employment of our military forces. I paraphrase him: Our strategy is adapting to circumstances.

So my first question would be, what visible changes in strategy and the manner in which we coordinate our responsibilities with the growing -- presumably -- professional capabilities of the Iraqi forces?

The president continued, "We will not set an artificial time table."

I thoroughly agree with him on that and I'd like to have your views on that.

And lastly, the president said, "We are in Iraq to achieve a result, a country that is democratic, representative of all of its people, at peace with its neighbors and able to defend itself. And when that result is achieved, our men and women serving in Iraq will return home with the honor they have earned."

Can you expound on those, I think, very wise remarks by our president last night in the State of the Union?

MYERS:

Mr. Chairman, I will.

I think one of the things that most Americans ought to be proudest of is how U.S. and coalition forces have adapted in Iraq from the time -- I guess starting with major combat.

But as major combat ended, the Coalition Provisional Authority was stood up and that gave way to the current Iraqi government, which will give way now to a new government.

And as -- over that time frame also we had a change in the opposition and the insurgency built up slowly over the first year and became very intense over the last six months for sure.

And so, we've adapted all the way along -- and Secretary Wolfowitz talked about part of that adaptation -- as we tried to categorize the sort of Iraqi security forces that were there to help provide for their own security.

And initially, we tracked those that were on the payroll and realized very quickly that was not sufficient.

MYERS:

And then we tracked those that were trained and decided later on that no, it's not just training; it's training and equipping, and we have to move.

One of the adaptations you'll see is -- what we're going to have to move -- and I think Senator Levin

mentioned this in his opening remarks -- we're going to have to move to a way where we can start tracking the capability.

And in our forces we have -- this is not easy. We've spent a lot of decades trying to perfect our way to track our true U.S. military capability and you have to realize in that country without a robust ministry of defense, without a robust ministry of interior, without the sort of reporting and communications abilities that we have, this will be difficult.

But I talked to General Petraeus today and that is certainly one of the adaptations where we have to go.

And the other thing I think yesterday in your briefing with General Sharp and others, we talked about -- and in my opening statement, where we -- while we focused on fighting the insurgency, we need to now focus on helping the Iraqis become self-reliant in their own security capability.

And so, you'll see some changes in how we do that in some of our emphasis, some of our focus. And that's going to have to occur over time. That's why I think setting time lines -- this ought to be conditions based, not time-lines based.

And that's what we've said all along, and I hope that we'll have support to do that. Certainly the president -- that's the president's intentions and that's the order we're marching to.

And if you'll put up that first slide on the mission.

This is the mission that we have been using and it's in our national strategy, not just military strategy. But this is the U.S. mission statement.

And I think it goes right along with what we heard last night in the State of the Union message and what we've been marching to. But that's our mission. That's in the first few pages of our national strategy.

WARNER:

Can you give us a few specifics on -- for example, we've received obviously through some of our sources the recommendations of General Luck. And I fully understand that General Abizaid and Casey are working through that and will -- through the secretary of defense and his staff and yourself, you'll give us more specifics.

But generally, we are looking at the option of including relatively small numbers of our forces into the Iraqi units. You might call it embedding, that's a term the American people understand now because of the courage of the journalists actually working with them.

This is on a daily basis. They're actually 24 hours, seven days a week, right with that unit, doing some training, coordinating and the like.

WARNER:

Can you expound on that? Because, to me, that is a very important change in our basic tactics.

MYERS:

Well, we have already instituted some assistance, training support, where we essentially do what you just said, Chairman; that is embed trainers with Iraqi units. Of course, our forces, while fighting insurgency, have also trained the national guard forces who, in many cases, work alongside our forces.

So this is just an extension of that, realizing that when you talk about capability with security forces, it's a function of several things. It's certainly a function of leadership. It's a function of motivation. It's a function of training, experience, the infrastructure they have to operate. It's a function of the equipment they have.

And one of the things, of course, we do well is we can help them in many of these areas, in terms of mentorship.

And we can also bring them real capability. We often throw around the term, which is another acronym, but the C4I, which is command and control, communications, computers and intelligence. And if you think about it in terms of Iraqi forces, command and control, we can help with that because we bring the next C, which is communications. We can help with...

WARNER:

Well, let me just finish up.

In summary, then, in every way, we're recognizing the growing competence of the Iraqi forces and enabling them to go into positions which formerly -- and missions performed by our forces. Am I correct in that?

MYERS:

Well, obviously the goal is that, to get them to take over...

WARNER:

Well, they certainly exhibited that on election day. That gave them a tremendous sense of confidence. I would hope that momentum -- as a matter of fact -- am I mistaken? -- some 2,000 or 3,000 Iraqis have volunteered in the last 72 hours to join their military forces. There's a clear manifestation.

MYERS:

Yes, sir. General Petraeus said in the last two days, that there there have been 2,500 people on each day trying to sign up.

WARNER:

On each day?

MYERS:

On each day, trying to sign up.

WARNER:

Well, that's a strong sign. Thank you.

MYERS:

They've been empowered.

WARNER:

Mr. Secretary, the coming government, as it begins to take charge, what changes in terms of their relationship with the direction and the operation of our troops do you anticipate? And will there be a new status of forces agreement to give adequate protection to our troops and its missions?

MYERS:

If I could preface that, Mr. Chairman, by your question about the changes in strategy the president referred to, I think it's important to help people understand that we have adapted to circumstances as we find them on the ground.

And I think one of the most -- the most significant change was what we saw in the elections on Sunday. Because, as you recall, Ambassador Bremer's original plan was to keep the CPA in operation as an occupation authority until the end of this year.

MYERS:

When it became clear in the summer of '03 that that was not a satisfactory way to go forward, first we

talked about a transfer of sovereignty to an appointed government.

When the Iraqi react was, "Well, wait a minute," particularly from Sistani in particular, but I think more broadly, "We'd like an elected government," we came up with the plan that the president announced, I believe it was in the fall of '03, which is produce first the interim government on June 28, and now this election.

And we need to be prepared to adapt further as you correctly point out. We're going to have what's called a transitional government, which will be elected, which now has authority under the U.N. resolution that the previous government did not have to negotiate the status of forces agreement, security agreement -- you can call it different things -- but the arrangements under which coalition forces will continue to operate in Iraq.

And also as we've said over and over again, if they want to us leave, they have the authority to ask us to leave.

WARNER:

Yes, well it's very clear that both the president and the prime minister said for the time being, it's essential that these forces remain in place, the coalition, unequivocally.

MYERS:

I think that's clear.

WARNER:

Senator Levin?

LEVIN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

We have been given a sheet of paper I guess that comes from the Department of State, but which carries the estimate that we had, as of January 19th, 125,373 trained, on-hand Iraqi security forces.

General, I'd like to ask you the first question.

Approximately how many of these forces, Iraqi security forces, are, would you say, fully trained and equipped and capable and ready to neutralize insurgents?

LEVIN:

Give us an estimate. Is it half? Is it two-thirds? Is it one-third?

MYERS:

Let me put up that other chart on the trained and equipped. We'll just put the chart up -- I think it's the same number, Senator Levin, that you have -- so everybody can see them.

And a couple things about the numbers. As you correctly said, these are trained and equipped. So in some cases those numbers are folks that have been trained and equipped a while back and have great capabilities. In other cases they're just fresh out of training.

I might add, though, the training has very high standards. And it's also tailored to the specific units because, as you have seen before, there are several different types of police units, there are several different types of army units and navy and air force units buried in the numbers. So it's complex.

And you'll also notice that, for Ministry of Defense, we think we're counting the actual numbers that are on duty. In the Ministry of Interior, we have a lot less confidence that our numbers include those that may be absent from their duty station.

The reporting there -- the Ministry of Interior just put out a new policy, where they're going to issue new I.D. cards and do a complete accounting of their forces.

Senator, it's just, you can't give one number. Of those numbers that are deployable around the nation, to meet the most pressing needs, General Petraeus says 48 battalions, which is about -- and that's police and Ministry of Defense battalions -- and that's about 40,000 that can go anywhere in the country and take on almost any threat.

It does not mean the rest of them are not useful, because in many parts of the country all you need are police on duty. And police on duty in the southern part of the country are very, very useful doing police duties down there.

So that's what I mentioned earlier when I was trying to answer Chairman Warner's question, is that we've got to devise better ways to track their overall capability. And that's one of the things we're going to do.

LEVIN:

Would you be able to give us an estimate as to what percentage -- just an estimate -- of the 136,000 are, in my description, fully trained and equipped, capable and ready to neutralize the insurgents? Would you give us a percentage, a rough estimate? Half? Two-thirds? One-third?

MYERS:

I think what I just said was that there are 48 deployable around the country, equals about 40,000, which is the number that can go anywhere and do anything.

No, I can't give you an estimate because that capacity and capability is building every day and it varies widely, as I just tried to describe. So it's difficult to do that.

As it is, by the way, as we try to describe our own forces, you may remember there have been times when a U.S. Army division will come back from combat and they'll go from reporting C-1, which is our highest level of readiness, to reporting C-3, and people ask the question, "Well, wait a minute. They just came out of combat. Aren't they exquisitely trained and prepared and motivated?" And the answer is, yes, but then they come back and they take leave and they do other things.

So we even have a harder time describing in these numbers because we do not have the exquisite system yet to do that. And it's not just our system, it's the system the Iraqis have to devise with their Ministry of Defense, their Ministry of Interior.

(CROSSTALK)

LEVIN:

I'm going to run out of time here.

If I could just ask you about that specific number, yesterday, we were given a chart which says Department of State, which had a total of 130,000, but did not break down the components by number.

LEVIN:

We were told that that was classified. But now today you're giving us apparently unclassified numbers for police, highway. But I'm very glad. I was going to raise havoc this morning with the Department of State for giving us just a total without a breakdown of the components and was going to ask them whether or not this represents a new approach of not giving us the breakdown component by component.

But I gather from the fact you've given us a January 31, '05 listing of components with numbers, General, that that is going to continue to be an unclassified approach. Is that fair to say?

MYERS:

Yes, sir. Yes, Senator.

LEVIN:

Now, General, could you give us an estimate as to how many insurgents that there are?

Here's the reason I ask you that question. General Casey, who's the multinational force commander, said just last week that coalition forces had killed or captured about 15,000 suspected insurgents last year. He went on to say that this means that the previous U.S. estimates of an insurgent force of 6,000 to 9,000 fighters were clearly inaccurate.

In response to a question, he stated that he thought that a recent estimate by Iraq's intelligence chief that the insurgency numbered as many as 40,000 hard-core fighters or 200,000, when part-time combatants and sympathizers were included, was too high an estimate. That's what General Casey said last week.

Could you give us an estimate of the number of insurgents that we're facing, both hard-core fighters and then that second figure that was used by the Iraqi intelligence chief of part-time combatants and sympathizers? Just a rough estimate.

MYERS:

Sir, I'll have to do that for the record if we can get that from the intelligence community. We don't have the insight into those numbers, in most cases, to provide a good estimate that would be a fair thing to throw in front of the committee right now.

What I can say is that there is a good intelligence report out just recently by the CIA that details an individual and what motivated this individual to participate in the insurgency.

And I think, as General Luck, when he came back and we described the threat I think very accurately several times in front of the committee in closed session. And so we know the elements of the threat very well, but to put numbers, accurate numbers against them because there are so many fence-sitters -- and fence-sitters can be very dangerous. They can have an occupation by day and implant an IED at night and they can attack the coalition. They can attack Iraqi security. They can attack Iraqi citizens.

And I think one of the things that we know from the elections, there'll be a lot less fence-sitters because they saw their fellow citizens go out and vote. I think that will help.

MYERS:

But, to come up with accurate estimates is just very, very difficult in this type of insurgency.

LEVIN:

Is it fair to say it's more than a few or a handful?

MYERS:

Certainly, yes.

LEVIN:

Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

WARNER:

Thank you very much.

Senator McCain?

MCCAIN:

I want to thank the witnesses. And we share their exuberance. And, as we take this victory lap over the elections, we are indeed encouraged and optimistic about the future.

I also think that we should view it with some concern because we know that it's going to be a rather long and difficult experience.

General Myers, I am disappointed that you don't have even a rough estimate of the number of insurgents. I don't know how you defeat an insurgency unless you have some handle on the number of people that you are facing.

MYERS:

We do have estimates. I said I'd provide them. They're...

MCCAIN:

Well, I'm surprised you don't have them readily at hand.

MYERS:

Well, they're...

MCCAIN:

The one fundamental of the conflict that we're facing. I don't have much time.

Secretary Wolfowitz?

MYERS:

They're classified, Senator, I'll get them to you. I'll get the classified numbers to you.

MCCAIN:

I think the American people should know the nature of the enemy that we are facing. I'm not sure that classified numbers are appropriate here.

Secretary Wolfowitz, what level of U.S. forces would you expect us to maintain for the next six months or the next year?

WOLFOWITZ:

I think we'll be able to come down to the level that was projected before this election.

As you know, Senator, we overlapped our deployments and extended, I guess it was OIF-3, so that we'd get a bump up of about 50,000 to cover the elections. Which I think was, in hindsight, a prudent thing to do.

We believe that we can come down by that 15,000, which I think would bring us -- General Myers knows the numbers better than I -- I think about 17 brigades, about 135,000.

MCCAIN:

Thank you.

In the case of this continuing question about "fully trained and equipped," one of the reasons why there's continuous questions is because of the various setbacks we've had in the training and equipping of the Iraqis. And we know how important it is for them to assume those responsibilities.

I think it would be -- and I made this suggestion yesterday, that if we went to a grading system such as we use for U.S. forces, we don't know how many individual American soldiers are fully trained and equipped, but we do grade their units. And perhaps we could, at some point, get a better handle as to unit readiness, and that would help us in assessing their ability to take on the tasks.

And by the way, how many of the -- it says "unauthorized absences personnel not included in the numbers of the Ministry of Defense forces." How many unauthorized absences are there?

WOLFOWITZ:

There's a considerable number. In part, Senator, because the whole notion of absence in their system is different from ours and in part because of, frankly, the mechanics involved in paying. There's no way for a soldier to send a check to his family in southern Iraq, so he has to take the cash and travel with it.

So I think the level -- it's hard to say whether it's authorized or unauthorized but I would say -- and, General Myers, please correct me -- that on average the fill in units is about 60 percent. And one of the things that General Luck is looking at is things that can be done to get that up.

What you say by the way, sir, I think is absolutely correct. It's units that really are most important. And one of the reasons these numbers seem to change constantly is because a lot of experimentation is going on with units.

We had I believe on June 28th, when the interim government took over, only one battalion that was considered deployable. There are now 45 such units. In my sense, that's one of the most important measures. It's still maybe 20 percent of the total force, but it's the most important part of the force.

MCCAIN:

I agree.

And, again, I think that combat readiness of units is probably a far more accurate indicator of our ability to carry out the mission.

I want to talk just a for a minute about NATO. We continue to hear about NATO involvement and at one time there was going to be a NATO training battalion and other involvement.

What's the current level of NATO involvement in training and what are the plans for increasing it?

MYERS:

NATO has agreed to take on training at staff college level, officer and NCO development. And NATO nations have done some of that outside Iraq.

MYERS:

For instance, Germany is training truck drivers on specific equipment they're donating to the Iraqi

forces in the United Arab Emirates.

But the status inside Iraq is they are in the process of standing that capability up inside Iraq to provide the higher-level education of the officer and the Iraqi NCO corps.

MCCAIN:

And that's the extent of NATO involvement?

MYERS:

To this point, I think that's where they're focused.

They are looking at things that they can do in the future. And, of course, we are always hopeful they will want to provide more.

MCCAIN:

Well, Mr. Secretary, since we have such an enormous strain on our active and Guard and Reserve forces, I would place a high priority on a common interest that we and our NATO allies have, and that is to see democracy established in Iraq.

And it seems to me it is now in our NATO allies' interest, as well as ours, to see that happen. And I would give a very high priority to consultations with our NATO allies to see if there are ways they can help us.

I don't think we're going to get a lot more troops there, but there certainly is a myriad of ways that our NATO allies could assist us in training, equipping, relieving us of some of our non-combat responsibilities and others. Because I think there are many of us who are aware that this burden that's been placed on our present-sized active duty and Guard and Reserve is a very, very heavy one.

And it seems to me that, after this election has proven to our NATO allies that we can win this thing, that they should take a fresh look at assisting us.

WOLFOWITZ:

Senator, I think you're absolutely right.

The numbers are not where we would like them in terms of NATO contribution. I think you're right, there's an opportunity now to boost those numbers.

I think also that we need to look at whether some of our coalition partners might better participate in

training than in some of the, sort of, fixed-site protection they're doing now, which is much less needed. And I think it's something we should be taking up.

I think you'll be going to Wehrkunde. I'm sure you will take it up and I think it's important.

By the way, on that point if I just might add one other thing, the numbers of trainers is in some ways -- the total number may not sound demanding, but since you need capable field grade officers for training, you're taking those numbers out of a much more limited pool.

WOLFOWITZ:

And I think NATO has a lot of very capable field grade officers, and it would be a wonderful thing for them to contribute more.

MCCAIN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

WARNER:

I wish to associate myself with Senator McCain's observation about NATO participation.

I just checked with staff for my own recollection. NATO made the announcement along about July that they were going to go in there and start that training program.

Would you supply the committee with the number of boots on the ground and what they've achieved in this period of time? Because that's a fairly significant lapse of period of time, and I want to know how far along are they on this program.

But I don't want to interfere with other members going.

General Myers, on the important question asked by McCain, the threat from these insurgents and the quantum, I asked that question closed briefing yesterday, and they said, "We're building up the Iraqi forces in proportion to what we perceive that threat would be."

So I'm confident there are some figures out there. And I think it's important that we release these figures publicly with regard to the magnitude and the quality of the insurgency that's being mounted in the past and hope will begin to attenuate in the future, given the extraordinary performance by so many over the weekend.

MYERS:

Let me just...

WARNER:

Did you have an opportunity...

MYERS:

Sure.

Chairman, let me just talk a little bit more about it.

Part of the reticence is that the numbers I see are normally classified, so in an open hearing, I'm a little reluctant to release that.

If that's the wish, then we will look at that, of course.

I think we have a pretty good handle on the number of foreign fighters that are in Iraq. And we generally say, you know, around a thousand or so.

But for instance, criminals -- General Luck comes back and tells us that he thinks a lot of the activity we're seeing is basic criminal activity. How many criminals in Iraq are pretty difficult to tell; difficult to tell in any country.

So that's why I'm hesitant just to throw out a number of what the enemy is, because the character of the enemy is so different, from Zarqawi, who is absolutely amoral, will do anything, will kill anybody to achieve his view of the world, is different from the fence-sitter that I described, of which there are probably thousands, but who, on any given day, or depending on how the situation is going, might be willing to join the political process in Iraq.

MYERS:

So it's a very difficult thing to get our hands around and throwing out one number probably doesn't do the complexity of the threat justice.

And we'll provide it to the committee. And if we can, we'll work with those who classify it, to declassify it if there are parts that are today classified.

WARNER:

Thank you very much.

MCCAIN:

Mr. Chairman, could I just mention why this is important.

We went from a few dead-enders to killing or capturing 15,000 in the period of a year. And that's why there's a certain credibility problem here as to what the size and nature of the enemy we face. It's our responsibility to provide the wherewithal to conduct a conflict and if we go from a few dead-enders to 15,000 killed or injured and without any good handle on the threat that we're facing, I think it's hard for us to do our job and it's hard for the American people to realize how difficult a task that lies ahead of us.

WARNER:

Thank you, Senator.

Senator Kennedy?

WOLFOWITZ:

Mr. Chairman, you want the NATO numbers? Because I did find them.

WARNER:

Quickly.

WOLFOWITZ:

Very quickly, the total mission size is 459 personnel, 30 percent of that is U.S. Of the other 70 percent, there are still some 50 that aren't filled and the initial operating capability is scheduled for February 20th.

It's, in my view, a first step and I encourage all of you to urge more steps. It's the right direction, but it needs to go faster.

WARNER:

It's been sufficient time.

Senator Kennedy?

KENNEDY:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

And I think all of us take extraordinary pride in the incredible achievement of the Iraqis and their willingness to vote in these past elections.

KENNEDY:

I think all of us take recognition of that.

Of course, the United States, for some 200 years, has been a beacon of hope to peoples all over the world. I can remember when democracy was restored in Chile, turning out Pinochet. I remember when it was restored with Allwin in Argentina. I remember the people that waited 72 hours -- because this gentleman was 72 years old -- to get a vote in South Africa.

So we have seen over the period of history that America has had a very, very important impact in terms of seeing the march toward democratic regimes.

But now we have in Iraq, in listening to what is going to be determined as success, as defined by Mr. Wolfowitz, it's going to be the governmental agencies, they're going to be up and they're going to be functioning. There are going to be compromises. Iraqis are going to need help, we're going to be helpful to them in reaching compromises.

Iraqi security forces are going to be up and trained, they're going to be related to the number of terrorists -- and yet we're unsure. One thing we are sure is the total number are increasing.

They're going to have a legal and judicial system that's going to protect all rights of people. It's going to give equal justice under law. We're also going to protect justices and develop the capability of bombing experts. And then we're going to put pressure on Syria and other countries.

You talk about the mission creep, where is Osama bin Laden? This whole process started against the war on terror. This started with weapons of mass destruction. This started with, allegedly, the fact that Iraq was involved, as later disproved, with the terrorists.

And now we hear the spokesman from the administration talking about the maintenance of American personnel and troops, where we have already lost over 1,400 -- are going to be there until some governmental agencies are functioning effectively -- many people don't think governmental agencies are functioning effectively here in this country -- till the Iraqi security forces are up and trained, till the legal, judicial system.

America, listen to that -- how long are we going to be there? That's why we went to Iraq? That's why we went to Iraq? And we've got our forces are going to be over there?

Now, given the extraordinary achievements and accomplishments of this last week, where the Iraqi people indicated that they want to control their own political destiny, people ask me, "How long is it

going to take to train Iraqis to fight for their own country, to shed their own blood, as Americans are doing?"

KENNEDY:

My wife's got a nephew. Let's just take Charles William; I'll spare his last name. He's from Shreveport, Louisiana.

A little over eight months ago he went in the United States Army. He went for over 12 weeks to Fort Benning, got infantry training. He had 10 days off, he went to Fort Lewis, he got his equipment -- he was supposed to go to Kuwait for additional training. He went directly to Mosul.

He's a tail gunner on a Stryker; nine personnel in that. He's the oldest one, they call him Pops.

He's just back here now after eight months over there and he's on his rotation back. This soldier wants to stay in the military. But he had that amount of training and he is over there representing the best of the best.

You're getting 2,500 people that want to join that Iraqi military. You've got the 127,000 or 40,000 you think are equipped. When are the Iraqis going to fight for their own country?

When are they going to start shedding the kind of blood -- we're all proud of those individuals, Mr. Secretary, that exhibited this extraordinary heroism on election day. No one's begrudging that, we're all proud of that. We have other times in American history, we're proud of our service men.

We want to know when the Iraqis are going to go out there and shed their blood, as American service men with this amount of training, are willing to shed theirs.

KENNEDY:

Is that going to take four months? Is it going to take 12 months? Is that asking too much?

Is it asking too much that after -- with the new administration that we're going to say, "Look, OK, 12 months, we'll start drawing down some of our troops"?

Are we prepared to say that after 18 months shouldn't we be able to get a good many of our troops out with a goal of seeing the rest of ours as a goal -- as a goal, as I've stated?

When in the world are we going to have the Iraqis being able? And why in the world can't we expect them to take on these responsibilities when American service men are doing it and they're losing their lives and American taxpayers are paying out their taxpayers? How long are we going to do this for?

Mr. Secretary?

WOLFOWITZ:

Senator Kennedy, first of all, I recall vividly that same process you described of the advance of democracy in the 1980s.

I was at the State Department playing some role in supporting the transition to democracy in the Philippines when Ferdinand Marcos was removed peacefully. The following year, when Korea established its first democracy in history, one which has proven to be vital and viable.

I witnessed that process in Indonesia where I was ambassador. It took longer than I would have liked, but that country is on a march toward democracy.

It's an impressive movement. People want freedom. They want to pick their own representatives.

There is something importantly different in Iraq. In all the cases that you mentioned, that I just mentioned, these people were not fighting the remnants of a regime that was as brutal and as evil as Stalin or Hitler. That's what the Iraqi people are facing. The level of intimidation is extraordinary.

And they are facing it bravely, they are shredding their blood. As I mentioned in my opening comments, nearly 1,400 precisely by our count -- as I said, I think we underestimate; we count our people by name, we're not so good at counting Iraqis -- 1,342 -- that's 1,342 Iraqi soldiers and policemen have died in the line of duty fighting for a new Iraq. And those numbers are going up faster -- not that we want to see any numbers go up -- those numbers are going up faster than ours.

They are assuming more and more responsibility. One of our principle objectives here, we're not going to wait until they have functioning governmental institutions before we hand over security to Iraqi forces.

But what I said in my comments is they will be able to handle the job sooner the more effective their government is at functioning. This is not just a military task.

But our goal is to get them up and capable as fast as possible. And that's one of the principle considerations that I know General Casey and General Abizaid will have in mind when they make recommendations on things like force levels.

WOLFOWITZ:

The goal isn't just to get our people home if that leaves the people who are still there in greater danger. The real thing is to get Iraqis on the front lines and Americans in a supporting role.

Senator Levin referred earlier to Korea. We have had, over 50 years, a strategy for winning in Korea, a strategy for preserving peace on the peninsula and creating conditions under which the Koreans have been able to create one of the most impressive democracies in the world.

We haven't left. We haven't exited yet. But with some tragic exceptions over the course of that 50 years, we have been able to avoid a war and keep Americans from dying. And I think that's what we have to keep our eye on here.

I think you'll see that process proceed. I have talked to some of our commanders in the area. They believe that over the course of the next six months you will see whole areas of Iraq successfully handed over to Iraqi army and Iraqi police.

But what we don't want to do is prematurely hand over an area and then create a place where the enemy can organize and operate. I think you can see over the last couple years there have been a couple such mistake. We don't want to repeat them.

KENNEDY:

My time's up.

WARNER:

Thank you, Senator.

Senator Inhofe?

INHOFE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I know that we're all very aware that the cut-and-runners are out there, and they are sincere.

I think the argument out there that should not be there any longer is that there is reason for the insurgency that's out there now is to protest the American occupation there, American troops there, as opposed to the fact that it was a long-calculated risk.

I would like to read from three publications that are not necessarily -- certainly not Republican publications.

In October of 2003, Newsweek reported -- I'm quoting now -- "The terrorist campaign was planned by Saddam Hussein and his lieutenants. And Iraqi agents brought vast quantities of detonators, timers and wiring supplies, as well as coordinated guerrilla and war strategy hatched before the invasion of Iraq."

Last April, the New York Times reported that the Iraqi officers of the special operations and anti-terrorism branch were responsible for the planted IEDs and some of the larger car bombs in Iraq, and that they had prepared explosive-laden vests for suicide bombers before the war.

INHOFE:

In December, the U.S. News and World Report disclosed that -- I'm quoting now -- "Saddam sent more than 1,000 security and intelligence officers to military facilities near Baghdad in the fall of 2002 for two months of guerrilla training."

Now, I'd just like to ask for a short answer to Mr. Secretary and Mr. Schlicher.

The continuation of violence in Iraq -- is it a popular uprising stemming from the U.S. presence there or part of a calculated campaign by Saddam Hussein's security apparatus, just a short answer?

WOLFOWITZ:

Senator, I think there's a growing body of evidence that we're dealing with Saddam Hussein's security apparatus. It's some degree of what we're confronting and maybe a large amount was prepared before the war. If you read the Duelfer report carefully, which almost no one has, you will see it in there.

I reference in my testimony his religious adviser who was recruiting foreign fighters before the war. In testimony before this committee I've shown passports of foreign fighters that came in from Syria in March of 2003 during major combat phase. One of them crossed the border with an entry in his visa permit, purpose of visit was to perform jihad.

The Syrian intelligence knew what this guy was doing. The Iraqi intelligence knew what this guy was doing. It was the Iraqi intelligence that moved this guy down south where our Marines killed him.

One of the problems with answering the question that we heard earlier about numbers of enemy is I'd say one of the few strengths this enemy has, beyond its brutality, is the ability to keep secrets. In fact, the brutality is part of how it does keep secrets.

And so we're trying to figure out how much of what appears to be a growth in enemy is simply a growth in our estimates of the enemy, because we're learning more about them, and how much is in their ability to recruit more.

And I have to say, I was personally somewhat pleasantly surprised by what appeared to be a relatively ineffective attack on January 30th. I thought they were capable of much more than they showed and I don't think anyone would say they were holding back.

So as to your question, I think to some very large degree we're fighting the old regime.

There are, by the way, within Zarqawi's network, former members of Special Security Organization, former members of the Special Republican Guards. This is not a simply independent operation.

INHOFE:

And this bothers me. It always bothers me to have people continuously say that there's not a relationship between Al Qaida and Saddam Hussein, Zarqawi, the training that's taking place there. We knew that before the invasion took place.

And I think you probably agree with this statement, don't you?

WOLFOWITZ:

I do. And Secretary Powell pointed out to the United Nations, a man like Zarqawi doesn't hang around in a police state like Iraq without somebody noticing he's there.

INHOFE:

Yes, I don't want to run out of time here, so I'm going to ask, with your indulgence, tonight, Senator Thune and I are going to Iraq and we have a number of things we want to do there. First of all, to see what it looks like after the election.

But I have another mission. I was very proud of a very courageous Lieutenant Colonel Tim Ryan, the commander of Task Force 2, 12th Cavalry, in the 1st Cavalry Division in Iraq.

INHOFE:

He led the troops into battle in Fallujah late last year, involved in security operations. His major concern -- and he's not afraid to come out and say it, and I want to actually quote from an article that he has written.

I plan to meet with him. I plan to talk to other soldiers over there. To me the most effective voice we can have to getting the truth out as to our victories in Iraq is from our soldiers themselves.

He said, and I'm quoting now, "All right, I've had enough. I'm tired of reading distorted and grossly exaggerated stories from major news organizations about the failures of the war in Iraq.

"The inaccurate picture they paint has distorted the world view of the daily realities in Iraq. The result is a further erosion of international support for United States efforts there and a strengthening of the insurgents' resolve and recruiting efforts while weakening our own.

"Through their incomplete, uninformed and unbalanced reporting, many members of the media covering the war in Iraq are aiding and abetting the enemy."

That's pretty strong.

"From where I sit in Iraq" -- and he's sitting where he knows things we don't know -- "things are going

quite well. We're not under attack by the enemy. On the contrary, we are taking the fight to him daily and have him on the ropes.

"Fallujah, the area around the former insurgent stronghold, is more peaceful than it has been for more than a year. The total number of attacks in the greater al Anbar province is down by at least 70 percent to 80 percent since late last October."

Still quoting now, "Why don't the papers lead with 'Coalition Crushes Remaining Pockets of Insurgents'? or 'Enemy Forces Resort to Suicide Bombings of Civilians'? Instead, headlines focus almost exclusively on our hardship.

"The key to the enemies' success is use of his limited assets to gain the greatest influence over the masses. The media serves as that glass through which a relatively small event can be magnified to international proportions. And many of the enemy is exploiting this with incredible ease. This is not good for the news to counteract this bad, so the enemy scores a victory almost every day as a result of the media."

And every time I come back from over there, I feel like I'm coming back as a truth squad to tell the American people what these kids come up and tell me, the ones who are on the lines, risking their lives and recognizing that they have a mission that is the most significant mission perhaps any soldier has had ever on the battlefield before.

INHOFE:

So I would only say that we're going to encourage them to do this, and I would hope that, General Myers, as you talk to people, you'll encourage them to come out and tell the truth about what's going on, the great job that we're doing over there, and it doesn't require an answer.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

WOLFOWITZ:

Thank you, Senator.

WARNER:

I think we should give the witnesses the opportunity, if they wish to respond. It's an important observation that you made.

General Myers, you looked as if you wanted to add.

MYERS:

Well, I'm just very sympathetic to what Senator Inhofe said.

I have a chance to speak at many different forums around this country, and I always tell them, "You'd be better off if you could beam in one soldier, sailor, airman, Marine that's over in Iraq or Afghanistan -- if you could just beam them in, pick a Social Security number at random and ask them to come up here and tell you what they think. And you'll get it straight and you'll be proud of their understanding of the problem and their devotion to the mission."

And so I just identify myself with those remarks, and I think that that's absolutely right.

WARNER:

Thank you, General.

Senator Reed?

WOLFOWITZ:

And you can beam them in. You can go to, I think it's, worldtribune.com for that particular account. And I found a lot of valuable information that's not in our main news media, both from Americans in Iraq and from Iraqis in Iraq, that appears on these Web sites. It's a fascinating phenomenon.

And I quoted...

WARNER:

In the next round, I intend to Mr. Schlicher to give his views as to how the Arab press has covered the elections. But I will wait until that time.

Senator Reed?

REED:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, gentlemen.

Mr. Secretary, you indicated to Senator McCain that you anticipate 135,000 troops to be in Iraq next year. My rough calculation, that's about \$50 billion.

Will those funds be in the president's budget that's submitted in the next few days?

WOLFOWITZ:

They'll be in the supplemental request which will come up shortly after the budget.

REED:

So we already are looking at a supplemental budget for operations this year, I believe.

WOLFOWITZ:

Correct.

REED:

These troops next year will be paid out of the supplemental budget that is going to be considered in the next few days -- next few months, I should say?

WOLFOWITZ:

Well, you'll have a supplemental budget request that will be up here along for fiscal year '05, along with a fiscal year '06 authorization request. Fiscal year '06 authorization request will not make a prediction about what we think our force levels will be in '06. Those will be covered in the second supplemental.

We plan to fund the '06 expenditures for Iraq and Afghanistan with another supplemental request in fiscal year '06.

REED:

So we can assume that we will consider an \$80 billion supplemental this year for '05, and we'll have already anticipated a \$50 billion or more supplemental in '06. Is that accurate?

WOLFOWITZ:

I would not predict '06.

I was asked what force levels we're planning on, I thought, over the next six months or through the end of this calendar year, and I said, "We're planning on 135,000." And that's not a prediction. That's a planning factor. If we can bring those numbers down intelligently, we'll always work to bring them down.

But let me make an important point here. At roughly \$4 billion a month for our forces, if we can bring Iraqi forces up more quickly by keeping Americans in Iraq a little bit longer, just in cost alone it's a worthwhile trade-off. And in terms of American lives at risk, it's even an even more worthwhile trade-off.

So as I said earlier in, I think, a comment to Senator Kennedy, we want to do whatever we need to do to increase Iraqi capability as fast as possible. And that may mean a little more investment at the front end in our capability so that we bring them on-line faster.

REED:

Well, Mr. Secretary, I don't argue with your logic, but I think that logic suggests rather strongly that it's more than a planning estimate; that it's probably the best estimate right now of a roughly 130,000 troops, 17 brigades in Iraq through the end of '06. I think officials in the Army have indicated that. In fact, I think I wouldn't be surprised if even the CENTCOM commander would support that estimate.

So to sit here and to suggest that we're going to consider an \$80 billion supplemental for this year, but we shouldn't even think about a significant \$50 billion supplemental next year I think is a little disingenuous.

WOLFOWITZ:

Senator, I didn't say there won't be a significant supplemental in '06. I said I can't tell you what the size of it will be.

General Myers may comment. I don't think CENTCOM makes a prediction about what we'll need in '06.

I think we have a reasonably good fix on what we will need through the end of this calendar year and certainly through the end of this fiscal year.

REED:

And the Army general you referred to, I think, is making a prudent assumption about what he may be asked to provide forces for. But what we'll actually need in calendar year '06 -- unless General Myers has a different estimate -- I think it would be a wild guess at this point.

MYERS:

That's correct, Senator Reed.

I think, you know, the process that both the Army uses and that we use on the Joint Staff trying to

source what General Abizaid at Central Command and General Casey need -- we do a lot of worst-case planning, because of stress on the force, so we can make sure we can fulfill what we think would be the worst-case needs.

But those are not the predictions. That will be up to General Abizaid and General Casey. And they continually think through those. So to say that our worst-case planning is going to reflect reality, that's not correct.

WOLFOWITZ:

But there will be, I would predict, a substantial request for supplemental funding in fiscal year '06.

REED:

Right.

I thank you, Mr. Secretary. I think we all can agree upon that.

Let me get one other metric. If the figure is 136,000 troops, it would roughly equate to about \$50 billion.

WOLFOWITZ:

I'd want to check that for the record, but I think for Iraq alone that's right.

REED:

Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

WOLFOWITZ:

And remember, the \$80 billion includes Afghanistan as well as Iraq and some other things as well.

REED:

General Myers, you indicated when you had your chart up -- that chart in fact -- that these are very high standards these troops are being exposed to in terms of their training.

How long is the training for an MOD soldier, either national guard or military?

MYERS:

I will have to make sure I get this to you for the record. It varies by the type of unit.

REED:

Let's just say what's the average?

MYERS:

The average -- I'll get back to you. I'll get you all the units and break out the averages.

REED:

You don't have just a rough notion of how long these troops of how long these troops are being trained?

MYERS:

Sir, several months. But there are so many different types of units buried in those numbers that I'd like to give you specifically by unit.

There are some units there that are -- for regular army individual, 12 weeks: There's some basic training that goes on for eight weeks and there's four weeks of cadre training. For the national guard, it's three weeks of basic training and then four weeks of collective training.

For the intervention force, which is a little bit higher level force and some of those forces that we talked about earlier that are deployable around the country that can handle the bigger threats, it's eight weeks of basic training, four weeks of cadre training and then some urban operation trainings that go on for five weeks.

And then you get up in to the special forces-type units and they have 13 weeks on top of all that.

And I can provide that for the record if you wish.

REED:

Let me just follow up on an issue related to General Luck's report. It's the suggestion, at least in the press, that 5,000 soldiers and Marines would be assigned as mentors embedded in Iraqi units. Do we have 5,000 trained -- not just professionally trained as military officers and NCOs, but with language skills and cultural skills to work in a unit, maybe with one or two other Americans?

Mr. Secretary?

General Myers?

MYERS:

The numbers that I've seen, the estimates that were in the -- I didn't see any numbers in the Luck report. I saw some assessments by...

REED:

You have a advantage us on, General. We haven't seen the Luck report or General Luck, which I think would be very helpful to us.

Do you have any objections, by the way, if General Luck would come up here and testify before the committee?

MYERS:

I'll leave that to the secretary.

REED:

Mr. Secretary, do you have any objections?

WOLFOWITZ:

I think, Senator, General Luck is providing his advice to General Casey and General Abizaid and the secretary's waiting to hear what they recommend based on that report. And we certainly want to make information available that might be in a closed session. I think you discussed that the other day with the secretary.

We certainly want to make the information available, but we'd like to have a chance to see what our commanders conclude from it first.

REED:

That's entirely fair.

But getting back to your point.

MYERS:

The answer is we don't know the numbers yet, that General Casey and General Abizaid are looking at that and General Metz, who is, as you know the multinational force corps, combined forces over there -- they're going to have to look at this and see what the numbers are going to be.

MYERS:

But you're absolutely right, the types of individuals you would place with these units would be officers and NCOs. You would need translators. You would need people that would hopefully be culturally aware. And so they are people of some talent.

But how many and how we're going to put those in the units, that's up to General Casey to figure out the total number and the final number.

And, in fact, for that matter, the exact concept has not been determined by General Casey. We're going to wait for him. He has been asked to provide that detail and he will.

REED:

My time is expired, but just a final point, if I may, General Myers.

Are you concerned there's a capacity limitation, though, in terms of whatever numbers that is agreed to, that will limit our ability to fully staff all of these brigades or slow down our ability to integrate American mentors into these units?

MYERS:

We're going to have to wait and see what General Casey finally comes up with it.

But you pointed out these would be some very highly qualified individuals, if we go that route and depending on how extensively we go down that road.

REED:

Thank you.

WOLFOWITZ:

But I might say, Senator Reed, I think there are different levels of that capability.

And you referred to language capability, for example, which is an extraordinarily high requirement. I think for the most part we would probably look at having people working through translators.

It's not perfect, but right now I think the General Corelli (ph) has some 500 of his people essentially doing that with the seven Iraqi battalions that are in Baghdad. And they, I'm assuming, most are not Arabic speakers, so they must be working through translators.

I think it's important to recognize that one of the principal functions of that is to provide not so much advice and mentoring, although there's a large piece of that, but also just the connection with the capabilities that we have that are way above the level of what Iraqis might have in terms of intelligence and communications and air support and so forth.

REED:

Well, again, I'm presuming on my colleagues that I would suspect that you are looking back to our experiences in other places, particularly Vietnam, about both the effectiveness and limitation advising in cultures that are much different than ours.

WOLFOWITZ:

There are some lessons from the past and there's -- frankly, I think there are more lessons from the past couple years in Iraq, because each culture is different. Each condition is different, as you know.

REED:

Thank you.

WARNER:

Thank you, Senator Reed. And I appreciate you bringing up the issue of General Luck.

The Senate was informed in great detail about his mission and it was highly publicized when he went over and he can understand that there is a time in which he's got to consult with his military commanders and prepare the SecDef. But it seems to me that time has run pretty full-length now. And I think it's appropriate that the department, as early as possible, begin to share that report with the Congress of the United States.

Thank you.

Senator Collins?

COLLINS:

Thank you.

General Myers, you mentioned that you wished that you could beam servicemembers here so we could talk to them directly and hear what they say. And I would suggest that, although we can't do that, we can communicate with them by e-mail.

And I hear from Marines and soldiers in Iraq all the time. They're very patriotic. They're very proud of the work that they're doing. But they're also frustrated by continuing shortages of safety equipment, basic supplies.

And over the past year, I have repeatedly brought to the attention of the Pentagon specific incidences that I have heard from my soldiers about and yet the problems persist.

Today I want to read you parts of three different e-mails from three different soldiers serving us in Iraq. And I would note that each of them is involved in training Iraqi security forces.

Here's what the first soldier wrote: "We have tried to get ammo from other sources and through our proper chain of command. In this case we've been told to get Iraqi weapons and ammo as backup weapons. We've done this, but nobody's very confident with this plan. We have very little training in their weapons. We are not qualified with the AK-47. We've not sighted these weapons and they're not as reliable as our American weapons.

"I'm proud to serve my country and I'm willing to give my life for it. I hope that if one thing is accomplished here, it is that I will not have to send my son here 10 years from now. I need ammunition to make this happen and to be able to return home to my family in a year or so."

Here's the second one: "The holidays are very tough on the guys. I'm planning a Christmas Eve service because we can't get a chaplain to come out here. We can't keep oil or water delivery truck drivers nor interpreters nor other civilian help because they all think it's too dangerous. We are on the road where insurgents travel from Syria to Mosul. We have had problems with water, fuel, shortage of ammunition, et cetera."

Here's the third one: "Right now we don't have radios to communicate with our units. We depend heavily on e-mail -- yes, e-mail. Yahoo is our communications line."

I can't tell you how troubled I am about this. I've written to the Pentagon. I've brought it up at previous hearings last year. I keep getting these reports. There's a sufficient number of them that I have to believe there's some sort of logistics problem.

This isn't a question of money.

COLLINS:

You know that we in Congress will give you all that you need to make sure that our troops who are serving so bravely have everything they need to accomplish their dangerous mission as safely as possible.

Why are we still having these problems with such basic supplies, not to mention safety equipment, like the up-armored Humvees and body armor?

MYERS:

Senator, you raise a very good question and I, obviously, would be deeply troubled by that as well. And I appreciate when you do send us specific incidences so we can run them to ground and find out if we do have a problem.

The only one of those issues you just mentioned that I am aware of would be the radio issue, because I know in the type of combats that our Army and Marine Corps finds itself in today, the ground combat, they want radios at levels that they've never had to have radios before.

I don't know that we're short. I've never heard that. But I know that they have had to aggressively pursue additional radios so that all echelons -- echelons that were never planned to have radios -- would have them so they could communicate as indicated in that e- mail.

So all I can say is: we'll go back and look at this. None of this has come to the attention of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, I can guarantee you that. And we'll continue to try to chase this down.

COLLINS:

With one of these units, in December, I did contact the Pentagon and they did act to get this unit resupplied. But you can imagine how troubling it is to me that these soldiers are having to come to a United States senator to get the ammunition, the water, the food, the basic supplies that they need.

MYERS:

You bet.

COLLINS:

And in each case, these soldiers are telling me that they went up the chain of command and just couldn't get what they needed. Now, as I've said, in one of these cases it has been solved, but solved through my intervention which it just...

MYERS:

Shouldn't take that, no. Shouldn't take that, no.

COLLINS:

I want -- I'm sorry...

MYERS:

But you do -- the point you raise about logistics is very important. It is critical to our capability over there. And we'll go back and talk to our commanders to make sure that they've got what they want.

MYERS:

But we don't see any of those shortages. I don't see those. I get briefed on this every day, and we don't see that.

So I don't know where the disconnect is. But it will be my obligation to go find it.

COLLINS:

I think there is one.

And while I appreciate the help we've had from the Pentagon in solving some of these specific issues, in my mind they just shouldn't be happening. And we've got to solve this problem once and for all.

MYERS:

Agreed. Agree.

COLLINS:

General Myers, I also want to just very quickly touch on the training of the Iraqi troops.

And I, too, find the election so inspiring. And I'm so proud of the courage shown by the Iraqi forces.

But, again, I think the numbers indicate that we have a long ways to go to have fully equipped, trained, reliable and willing Iraqi forces who can substitute for American forces.

And again, an e-mail from someone who is deeply involved in the training.

This major tells me: "It's scary to think just how out of touch the chain of command is from what we're doing. The Iraqis are starting to quit now that we've been here two weeks. When they quit, the Iraqi commander says that they are on leave so that we don't drop them from the rolls.

"They have been lying about their numbers in order to get more money. They say they have 150 when there are only 100. The senior officers take a cut from the top.

"We've caught soldiers in houses stealing property and the commander won't react to it. They have no interest in learning the job because right now the Marines are doing all of it.

"We have to let them take a week's leave every three weeks, and they usually return late, if at all. We had 134 go on leave a week ago and only 37 returned."

I thought that Secretary Wolfowitz made a very important distinction between the hardware versus the software and the training of unit cohesion, leadership. And I guess I would ask you whether you think this case that I just read to you is an isolated incident or is there a pattern that is very challenging for us.

MYERS:

I think the case you read is -- first of all, I think you said that this individual doesn't think the chain of command is aware of the situation over there. I would take exception to that.

When I talk to General Casey, I know who he talks to, and I know -- I've been with his division commanders when I visit there. They know very well what's happening.

And they know that we're in a system -- and let me go back to a General Luck's comments, some of which I had on my opening statement -- a system that was devastated under many decades under Saddam. He broke their spirit. Corruption was rampant. There was a sense of helplessness. Anybody that showed initiative would be, you know, whacked on the head or their family members hurt or injured, killed, tortured.

So that's what has to change.

I think on January 30th a lot of that did change.

MYERS:

I think we saw a lot of Iraqis stand up and take responsibility. So hopefully that will have an impact on the culture that was devastated by Saddam Hussein.

So I don't know if that's typical. Certainly it happens. But that was the kind of society that has bred over all these decades.

And I think one of the things that whoever sent you that e-mail ought to take a lot of pride in is our men and women in the armed forces, a lot of what they do, besides train people how to shoot an AK-47 or a platoon tactics, they're role models for -- they learned well in their civics classes, and they are role models about what democracy means, what tolerance means.

So is it going to take time? Yes. Are those incidences going to continue? Probably.

I don't think they're necessarily the rule. I think those are issues.

The leave issue is interesting. Under Saddam Hussein, since they had a conscript army, they would allow them to go on leave but there was no penalty for not running on time. The only penalty was you had to add that time on to your conscription time.

And so they would say they're going for a week, they come back in two weeks, and they had to add seven days on to their years. So now it's a year and seven days.

So it is a different culture. And it's hard to get used to. It's hard for us to probably understand it. And it's part of what has to development.

So, I don't know if that's typical. I know that happens, certainly. And I think our commanders are well aware of that.

COLLINS:

Thank you.

WOLFOWITZ:

Senator Collins, I just might say I don't think it is typical. But I also would hasten to say the hero I mentioned earlier and his picture I put up is not typical either. The typical is somewhere in between and we're trying raise the level of typical.

And I think the events of last Sunday not only give us some confidence that things are working better, but I think it creates two important facts.

Number one, enormous pride in what Iraqis as a whole have done and what the Iraqi army has done. And pride is a critical part of countering the kind of phenomenon you describe.

WOLFOWITZ:

And secondly, more and more they will be feeling that they're fighting for their country, for their government. And this impression that it's all us pulling the strings and it's an occupation force hopefully will change some of that pattern.

But, as General Myers said, we're dealing with a number of pretty deep-seated habits that will take some time to work out.

COLLINS:

Thank you. And thank you all for your hard work.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your indulgence.

WARNER:

Thank you, Senator Collins.

And I commend the witnesses for their clear responses to those good questions.

And I would hope that some maybe in this hearing you can address that culture because it's perplexing, Mr. Schlicher. It's such stark contrast to our strong discipline. You're absent? You're in trouble. But it's not true in that culture. They go back home for extended periods as was pointed out.

They have no banking system. They have no way to convey the money they receive for their services to their wives and children and needed persons. So they have to journey all the way home with a pocket full of cash and then come back again.

At this time I must go to the floor to deliver remarks on behalf of Judge Gonzales for attorney general. Senator Sessions will continue with the chair. Thank you very much.

We'll now have Senator Biden.

BAYH:

Gentlemen, thank you for your presence here today and thank you for your service to our country.

I agree with all of the sentiments that have been expressed both by you and members of this committee about the election being a proud moment for freedom and a proud moment for our country. And I hope you will let those who are serving under your command know how grateful we are to them for having brought this about.

My question -- I have a couple of questions.

My first one -- let me start by praising the administration and what I understand may be the decision to increase the death benefit for those who have lost their lives in the line of duty. I think that's exactly the right thing to do.

What I'd like to ask is whether you would be willing to consider going a bit beyond that.

BAYH:

And let me tell you a conversation I had just last week with a bankruptcy official in Indiana, who was recounting to me an alarming increase in the number of bankruptcies by military families -- particularly reservists and guardsmen and -women who have been called up for extended periods of time -- and have found themselves with an inability to meet their mortgage payments, health care bills that sort of thing. And so many of these families are being forced into bankruptcy.

And I've referred to the pay cut that many of them take as the patriot penalty they are now taking. Some over businesses are will to step forward and make this up, but many can't afford to do that.

I propose some legislation to deal with this, but there's no pride of authorship. I'd like to know whether you'd be willing to take a look at this issue, because many these families are under great financial distress and it's, frankly, heartbreaking to think that they're being forced into bankruptcy while they're putting their lives on the line for our country and the cause of freedom.

WOLFOWITZ:

I'd be happy to take a look at it. And I guess I'd also -- first of all, I'd like to thank all of you and Senator Sessions who, I know, particularly took a lead on this question of death benefits.

One thing you can help us with is, if you agree with me that we have some special obligation for those people who are risking their lives in combat zones, and we need to extend special benefits to the them.

But if we then say, "Well, it's such a nice thing to have we should extend it elsewhere because, after all, military service is dangerous even here in the United States" -- if we can't put some boundaries around benefits in combat zones, we'll quickly find that they're not affordable for anybody.

And I think some special care and attention is necessary for servicemembers and their families who are living with that kind of risk and danger for a year at a time. And that's what we need to look after.

BAYH:

I hope we can work together on this in a way that's sustainable financially, but in a way that does right by these families. Because I don't think any of us want to see the kind of situation that's beginning to increase as the periods being called up are longer and longer beyond what they could have reasonably expected or planned for in their financial situation.

So I hope we can work together to try and address this in a way that's responsible.

WOLFOWITZ:

Happy to take a look at that.

BAYH:

My second question, Mr. Secretary, I want to agree with something have you said in your testimony about the role of Syria and Iran.

The Syrians seem to me to be playing game which I've called strategy of passive aggression, where they may not be actively assisting those who are coming into Iraq to do us harm, but certainly they're not doing enough to prevent that.

The Iranians, if you believe published reports, have infiltrated into the Shia community, and are awaiting that day when it might be in their interest to more actively participate in the insurgency; clearly building up a capacity -- maybe not as actively involved right now, but clearly with the potential to do that at some future point in time.

BAYH:

So my question to you would be -- and I agree with your sentiment that we need to send them a clear signal that it is not in their best interest, either of them, to facilitate the insurgency in Iraq -- with the position that we're in right now being stretched fairly significantly, what kind of credibility do our warnings have? In other words what could we look at to do in either Syria or Iran that would in a tangible way discourage them from inappropriate behavior in Iraq, other than just our verbal warnings?

WOLFOWITZ:

Let's be clear. I don't think it has anything to do with our capacity being limited. I mean, we're not looking to end this behavior with another war, but I think there are many things that -- I mean, Syria is not a strong country.

Part of what they do, as I indicated in my testimony, is out of fear of how a successful Iraq may further weaken their own people's support for them.

But I think what we need to stress is, "There is going to be a successful Iraq. It's in your interests to be on friendly terms with that successful Iraq. We notice what you're doing."

I think it's very important to call attention to what they're doing. Frankly, I think it may be important to call attention to who's responsible. There's some argument as to whether President Assad is fully in control in Syria or not. But we do know this is a police state and somebody's in control and we have a list of, sort of, who the top 12 leaders are. They all have some accountability here.

But we also need to make clear we're not in a position of hostility. It's not our policy to destabilize Syria. It shouldn't be their policy to destabilize Iraq, or Lebanon for that matter.

And I think another thing to do is to point to a potentially important opportunity. Things are moving forward on the Israeli- Palestinian front. I guess we should caution here, too, about the danger of euphoria, but I think a lot of us are hopeful that some real breakthroughs are possible there.

And I think the Syrians should think about whether they want to be left behind in that process or whether they want to participate. And if they want to participate, then they better stop interfering their neighbors.

BAYH:

Just briefly, Mr. Secretary -- and thank you for that -- my final question would be with regard to, we all want the new government to be successful. I'm concerned that if time passes without some tangible improvement in the economic activity at the local level, perhaps some disillusionment will set in, which could undermine all of the euphoria that rightfully has existed after the election and could itself feed the insurgency.

So my final question would be, what can we do try and demonstrate some tangible results at the local level?

We focused heretofore on larger projects, infrastructure projects. That's understandable but those take time. And I'm concerned that we have a window of opportunity here to try and show that democracy has some tangible benefits in addition to the obvious political freedom.

What can we do to step up our economic development efforts in a way that will be felt at the street level and encourage people that, yes, this is the right thing to do?

WOLFOWITZ:

Well, first of all let me agree strongly with the concern you expressed. I mean, in fact the euphoria has a risk built into it: that people's expectations may now be too high and can be disappointed.

I think most of the euphoria is just the pride they take in having stood up and taken risks and sent a message to the terrorists. But I'm sure there's also a sense that somehow this is going to make their lives better. So I think it's important to try to make sure that happens.

One of the challenges -- and this is why I talked about effective government ministries -- is the Iraqis have very substantial revenues.

Mr. Schlicher can correct me. I think it's on the order now of \$20 million a year.

We need to get them to put more of that money into places like Fallujah, for example, where people are coming to our Marines and asking, "Where are the payments that we were supposed to get for rebuilding our houses?"

So we need to keep the pressure on the Iraqi government. But I think also we need to look at how our own resources are being allocated. And I agree with what was implied in your question, that it's important to focus on things that produce immediately visible results even if that means giving up some of the desirable longer-term infrastructure projects.

And in that respect I guess I'm going to appeal to what you just said.

WOLFOWITZ:

Sometimes I encounter people down range, as we say, meaning in Iraq, who say, "But there's this complicated process for notifying Congress and all this stuff has been notified, and it's in certain lines and we can't move the lines."

And I say, "My impression is if you come back with any reasonable justification for reallocating, you'll get it. You may have to notify and consult, but it doesn't take forever. So tell us what you need to have. Don't feel you're in some kind of straight-jacket because of what you said 12 months ago."

And then, finally, let me also say I hope that this demonstration by the Iraqi people of what they're capable of will generate more support from other countries. So if we have to shift our funds from long-term infrastructure into more immediate projects, that there's money coming from other countries to backfill what we have to do. This should not be just the United States and Iraq paying for this.

And I think it's time in particular -- I'm going to say this -- it's time in particular for those countries that are enjoying huge revenue windfalls from the high oil prices to stop and think what their interest is. I'm not asking them out of altruism. I think those countries have a stake in success in Iraq and that that success should come sooner rather than later. And one thing they can do is help provide financial support.

BAYH:

Thank you very much, gentlemen.

SESSIONS:

Thank you, Senator Bayh.

And you raised some important comments.

And I thank you, Secretary Wolfowitz, for mentioning Fallujah.

I was there, I guess, two weeks ago with General Sadler. And he was concerned that some of the commitments the Iraqi government had made with regard to refurbishing that town had not been met.

Mr. Schlicher -- either one of you, really -- just briefly, who is responsible -- who has the authority or the responsibility for ensuring that the water, electricity, sewage in the country is being improved from our side? Is it State or Defense or...

SCHLICHER:

Sir, all of the programs that help bolster the capacity of the Iraqi ministries are centered in the embassy under an organization called IRMO. That is a state organization. It's headed by Ambassador Bill Taylor who, prior to this mission, was our Afghan coordinator.

He works very closely, in turn, with the PCO, which answer to the DOD.

SESSIONS:

Who is that?

SCHLICHER:

It's the Projects and Contracting Office within the mission.

So they work very closely together.

SESSIONS:

That's a State Department entity?

SCHLICHER:

IRMO is State. PCO is DOD, Department of the Army, I believe.

And if I could, sir, they partner both with the Iraqi ministries. And in the case of certain post-conflict zones like Fallujah, the Iraqi government has identified ministerial action officers, if you will, who are -- it's Minister Hajim al-Hosni (ph) in the case of Fallujah.

And Prime Minister Allawi wants those points of contacts to get together the different line ministries who can help in those places to coordinate their efforts together and, in turn, to partner with the mission's efforts.

WOLFOWITZ:

Senator, it's a somewhat complicated division of responsibilities. And rather than try to add any detail to what Ambassador Schlicher already said, I'd like to second what he said earlier about Ambassador Negroponte and, for that matter, his number two ambassador, Jim Jeffrey. There is a great State Department team. There is real cooperation between State and DOD.

A wonderful example of it, I believe, is how they went through the difficult reallocation -- I guess it was in August -- to move \$1.8 billion of project money from infrastructure into security forces to meet General Petraeus' needs.

So I don't know any way to do this in a simple way. We have two U.S. government departments and then we have multiple Iraqi ministries, as Mr. Schlicher just said, and we just have to do our best to work closely together.

SESSIONS:

Well, I've worked in the federal government with a lot of different agencies and I know how difficult it can be. But I suppose the answer to the question is, if we in Congress have questions about how well the infrastructure's improvements are going we call you.

WOLFOWITZ:

Yes, sir.

SESSIONS:

And then you can blame it on Defense if they didn't do their part. But used to be we blamed Secretary Wolfowitz for it all, I guess, but now we have a relationship with General Casey and Ambassador Negroponte that's here working real well. And I guess, at the bottom line, the personal relationships meeting every day, as I understand they do, is a key to that cooperation level we need.

WOLFOWITZ:

Yes, sir. Our impression is that that cooperation is excellent.

And in addition to the great personal relationship and working relationship, the mission has built in different sorts of institutions into the scheme to make sure that the political and military sides of the house are knit up.

SESSIONS:

Well, I think we'd like to see if we can improve that. I think there's a consensus here in Congress that we'd love to see the electricity and water and all do better for the reasons you all have previously stated.

Secretary Wolfowitz, I'm just going to take a moment to say this. I have been so proud of our men and women in uniform. And we've repeatedly talked about that. But I also want to say I've been proud of President Bush for his steadfastness and his insight and courage to stay the course.

I think the same goes for Secretary Rumsfeld. He's a man of extraordinary experience, good judgment, who has seen this big picture correctly.

And I know many have blamed you. They've said you're the one that really thought it all up and conjured these things up and so any difficulty is your fault.

But I think you have been a brilliant assistant secretary of defense. You've served our country extraordinarily well. And the election that we had just a few days ago -- those pictures, if you looked at them, that you passed out would bring tears to anyone's eyes who have sensitivity to the historic moment.

SESSIONS:

I would also just say that this has not been the only accomplishment.

I visited with President Karzai in Afghanistan on two different occasions. He's a wonderful, decent, good person. They're establishing a decent, good government. War of 20 years decimation of that country has ended.

You have worked with Pakistan and worked with them and they have turned against terrorism and they are a good ally with us in fighting the terrorists.

We have seen now the Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein collapse and a new election occur -- a historic thing.

Gadhafi in Libya has renounced terrorism. We've had an election for the PLO leader that -- sure we're not there yet, but that is a historic event.

The Ukraine has had a free and democratic election, tense and tough. And you were on the right side are pushing for a reelection count that allowed forces for progress to succeed.

This Abdul Khan and his proliferation of nuclear weapons ended because the United States was willing to use force when we had to to confront the bad problems around our world.

So I would just say that, no, we don't need to get overoptimistic. There are a lot of difficulties ahead. But I am telling you that election just a few days ago in Iraq, I believe, was historic. It was achieved by

the excellent performance of our men and women in uniform, the courage and the professionalism, General Myers, they've shown.

But it also is -- I think those of you who have been in the hot seat, who have had to make the tough calls day after day, have performed well. Nobody's perfect, but I think we've made real progress and I, for one, want to say thank you.

WOLFOWITZ:

Senator Sessions, thank you for that and thank you for the personal comment.

I must say I find it almost laughable when people suggest that Secretary Rumsfeld needs me to tell him what to think, or Secretary Powell somehow needs me to tell him what to think, and most of all that the president of the United States needs other people to tell him what to think. He's made some very, very tough decisions, as you point out, which have had some very big successes.

And let me just say the one in that list -- I mean, it's an impressive list, but one that you didn't mention and people are very afraid to mention it, because if we talk too much about our success in preventing attacks on the United States we know we could be attacked tomorrow. We know the enemy is out there plotting every day.

I can't tell you that we're safe, but I can tell you that we know that many, many attempted plots have been broken up because we have killed or captured thousands of terrorists, because we have worked with some 90 countries around the world to get information about those plots.

It's required, by the way, difficult decisions, which I know have caused controversy about how you deal with detainees, how you get information from detainees. But that information is life-saving information.

The president has taken a lot of criticism for it and I think he deserves a lot of credit for the fact that we have done as well as we have.

But people should not be lulled into a false sense of complacency that because we haven't been attacked here since September 11th that things are safe.

WOLFOWITZ:

The enemy is out there. Osama bin Laden is still out there, although he's -- there are a lot of indications that he's in increasingly difficult circumstances.

And let's not forget he declared war on Sunday's election. It was a big defeat for him and for his friend Mr. Zarqawi.

We are really in a fight to not just protect the lives of Americans, but to protect the open society that we

live for and that the whole world depends on.

And it's not going to be over any time soon. But I think we've made a lot of progress in -- what is it -- three years since September 11th.

SESSIONS:

I have to agree. I think any objective observer would agree.

Senator Byrd, I believe you're next.

BYRD:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, thank you for your testimony.

And I know that millions of Americans are pleased at the results of the recent election in Iraq. Iraq, by all indications then -- if we base it on the election results, and we're not sure that we know exactly the results yet -- is beginning to take care of itself. And to me, this indicates that we should start bringing our troops home soon.

I think our troops have performed magnificently, under the most stressful conditions, and the wounds that they bring home are the most terrible wounds of the most terrible war that our service men have ever fought.

I wonder about the mental strains and stress that these men undergo 24 hours out of every day.

How they must watch to the left, and watch to the right, and watch to the rear and watch to the front, because they know not from where that single bullet, or that explosive, may leave a resounding hole in their own flesh, and that concern and prayerful waiting by those who love them and who await their return.

BYRD:

I don't think, Mr. Chairman, that we realize to the fullest extent how much these men deserve, how much they've suffered. They didn't ask to go there, most of them. And they were made promises that haven't been kept. I think they've been imposed on in many respects.

Yes, they are patriotic. They're doing what they were told to do, but they're not doing what they were told was the cause and the reason or reasons why we should invade Iraq.

I think this is a major, major imposition upon them and their loved ones.

And so, I shall do everything I can insofar as the Appropriations Committee is concerned to support every penny that is asked for for those men and women, the soldiers and the Marines and the people who have served so well in this most dreadful of wars that will leave the most dreadful of wounds upon our body politic.

We're fighting two wars, Mr. Secretary.

We're fighting a war in Afghanistan in which we were attacked, in which the United States was attacked by 19 hijackers on September 11, 2001. Not one of these hijackers was an Iraqi, not one.

BYRD:

And that war is different from the war that we are fighting in Iraq.

I was fully supportive and am still supportive of the war in Afghanistan. Our country was invaded by these 19 hijackers.

And I was supportive and am still supportive of our commander in chief, our president -- I prefer to call Mr. Bush our president rather than the overdrawn term commander in chief.

I was supportive of everything he did, his quick reaction, his going after the attackers. I'm still supportive of that war, but that is not the same war that we're fighting in Iraq. They're different wars.

In Iraq, we were not attacked. No, we did the attacking.

And that war is the result of the Bush administration's pernicious, preemptive strike doctrine and nothing we can say will erase the blotch upon the escutcheon of the Senate when it voted 77-23 to turn over lock, stock and barrel the power to send our military forces wherever the president wished, whenever he wished and for whatever he wished in respect to Iraq.

That was a terrible blotch upon the escutcheon of the Senate.

And that's why today the president can say, we will do this or we won't do this, and Mr. Rumsfeld can say, we will do this and we'll stay there until this happens or that happens. It's because we turned over the Senate's -- the Congress's prerogative to declare war under the Constitution to one man -- one man.

And whether he be Democrat or Republican, that turnover of power will remain there until kingdom come unless Congress at some point votes to retrieve that power.

And the preemptive strike doctrine, which I suppose you had a considerable amount of input, is unconstitutional on its face because it takes away from the collective bodies, not just one, but bodies of the legislative branch under the Constitution.

It takes away from those collective bodies the power to declare war and shifts it to one man, which the

framers would never, never have intended happen.

BYRD:

I'm not one of the 77; I'm one of the 23. But all that aside now, we can talk about that for a long time, all that aside, the war in Iraq and Afghanistan -- the war in Iraq and the war in Afghanistan, not being the same, but two separate wars -- the war in Afghanistan having been a war which resulted from the invasion of our country by 19 hijackers causing the deaths of 3,000 Americans and causing many other terrible results, that war is one war, but the war in Iraq is the result of, as I said, a pernicious doctrine under this administration of preemptive strikes.

I am against that war. I was against it. I will remain against it. But I shall never fail to support the American troops. It wasn't their fault that they were lulled in or brought in to a war to which the American people were lied about and misled time and time again about.

Having said that, these two wars have already cost the American taxpayers almost \$150 billion. We're told that the president will be requesting another \$80 billion for the war effort in the next few days. And yet the president stubbornly refuses to share with the American people any notion of a timetable.

You see, that wouldn't have been the case if the Senate had done its duty. That wouldn't have been the case. Any notion of a timetable for withdrawing our troops from Iraq or Afghanistan. It's been almost two years since the invasion of Iraq and the U.S.-led coalition, which was never robust to begin with, is shrinking, not growing.

I read that the president made a round of telephone calls to world leaders about the Iraqi elections. That is all well and good, but telephone calls don't pay the bills.

What, if anything, is the administration doing to relieve the burden on American taxpayers and attract more monetary support and more military support from Iraq's neighbors and from the international community.

And how much longer does the president expect the American people to shoulder almost 100 percent of the cost in Iraq and 90 percent of the casualties, 90 percent of the blood that has been shed there of the occupation forces?

BYRD:

So if you could give us some insight as to when the burden on the American taxpayers can be expected to be at least one in which there is attracted more monetary and military support from the world community and from Iraq's neighbors.

WOLFOWITZ:

Senator Byrd, if I could just make, I guess, four points.

First of all, with enormous respect for your views and your real scholarship about the Constitution, I do not believe that these are separate wars. Mr. Zarqawi was allied with bin Laden in Afghanistan and running training camps in Afghanistan. He was organizing worldwide terrorist operations in France and England and Turkey and Georgia before we went into Iraq. He's now focused on Iraq. He's a major enemy. Osama bin Laden is focused on Iraq. He's attached his prestige to this war. And winning this war, in fact, will be a big blow against bin Laden.

Secondly, you spoke eloquently and I can't improve on it about the tragic price of war. I think any war is terrible. And with an enemy that resorts to the kinds of vicious weapons that this one does, it's got a particular ugliness.

But I think it is also a lesson that we can take from history that it's important not to leave a weakened enemy out on the battlefield. In fact, I think it's fair to say that we rested on our laurels when the Soviet Union withdrew from Afghanistan and concluded we'd dealt with the problem and we could ignore it, and that that is part of what created the sanctuary from which bin Laden could organize the attacks of September 11th. I think it's very important that we not only defeat them, but that we not give them that opportunity in Iraq.

Third, I think it's very important to say, while every American casualty is painful, we are not 90 percent of the casualties. As I mentioned previously, the Iraqis' police and army have lost almost as many now as we have and in a shorter period of time, since June 1st. They are taking a larger share of the combat, and our goal is to have them take an increasing share of the combat.

WOLFOWITZ:

Finally, on this question of who pays, I agree with you that I think it is in the interest of the entire world to see the Iraqi people succeed.

And I think Sunday was a powerful statement to the whole world of what the Iraqi people want, and I hope it will inspire those countries that love freedom and democracy -- and that's our closest allies around the world -- will look at this issue in a different light, after the Iraqi people made that statement on Sunday.

And secondly, I agree with you that the countries in the region -- especially the ones that enjoy substantial oil wealth -- have an interest in stability. And that interest in stability will be promoted by helping to bring this war to an end as quickly as possible. And I think that's what our goal should be.

So while we may disagree on certain points, I think we agree on the way ahead.

SESSIONS:

Senator Thune?

BYRD:

Mr. Chairman, may I not pursue that, just a moment?

SESSIONS:

Briefly. Yes, sir.

I'll give extra time to the senator from West Virginia.

BYRD:

Mr. Chairman, a little extra time here I don't think is going to make any of us suffer. I've waited a long time. I've listened to the rosy scenarios that have been spread before this committee, time and time and time again. And I'm about filled up with these scenarios, these wonderful scenarios. I've heard of them time and time and time again.

And so the credibility, as far as I'm concerned, Mr. Secretary -- and I say with it all respect to you -- your credibility has suffered, and so has the administration's, by the time-and-time-again rosy scenarios, and by the failure to find those weapons of mass destruction which would lead to mushroom clouds.

Thank God there were none. But that's why we went into Iraq.

BYRD:

And so, credibility is an important thing here, too.

But I still haven't heard the secretary answer my question: how much longer does the president expect the American people to shoulder almost 100 percent of the cost of the war in Iraq and 90 percent of the casualties? Ninety percent of the casualties.

Would I give my son if I had a son? Would I give a grandson?

Mr. Secretary, would you give a son? Would you give a grandson? Perhaps you have given some. I know not. But would you give them and then answer the questions as you have?

Let me ask you once more: What, if anything, is the administration doing to relieve the burden on American taxpayers and attract more monetary and military support from Iraq's neighbors and the international community? Can you answer that question?

WOLFOWITZ:

We've made several efforts, Senator Byrd, over the last two years -- and Mr. Schlicher might elaborate on them -- in various fora to elicit contributions from international financial institutions and from our allies. And those have met with some success. Not what we would have liked, I think.

We have a new opportunity, I believe, now in the wake of these elections, to look at going further. And while it's a little early to say how we will do it, I think we should.

Do you want to add anything?

SCHLICHER:

Yes, sir, if I could add on the military burden side with just a few observations on recent coalition developments.

The multinational forces have 28 non-U.S. contributors right now. They total 25,000 troops. There are four other non-MNF nations which contribute to U.N. protection and to the NATO training mission.

The number of coalition nations has dropped at the end of 2004, as countries completed their scheduled deployments. But in the most recent period, the number of troops, as I understand it, has actually grown, in part due to the new arrival of 3,000 Korean troops.

Additionally, the U.S. is helping Bosnia prepare an explosive ordnance disposal unit for their first deployment this summer. And there are also going to be additional troops from Romania and Georgia, 550 and 100 respectively, who are going to be coming in the next few weeks to do U.N. protection duty.

SCHLICHER:

Those are recent additions, so that that helps answer the part on the military burden, sir.

On the economic burden, we've been working closely with the Iraqis and the Bilateral Joint Economic Commission on a full range of economic issues. One of those issues is how the Iraqis can get out in front in organizing, according to their desires, their interests and how the international donor community can help them meet their needs.

There's another donor meeting scheduled -- please don't hold me to it -- I think it's in April. So that's going to be a very important pivotal point.

And we're certainly going to be in touch with a very wide variety of countries to urge them to seize the opportunity presented by these elections to show their support for that new government. Some may choose to do it in military terms, some may choose to do it in economic terms, but the time is certainly ripe for it.

BYRD:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My time is up.

MYERS:

Senator Sessions, could I make a comment on some of the comments that Senator Byrd made?

SESSIONS:

General Myers?

MYERS:

Senator, you eloquently talked about the sacrifice that our military makes, and it's absolutely right.

But I think we need to realize that of all the people that are involved in this, whether it's the American public or whether it's the Congress or whether it is those of us in the Pentagon, the ones who probably understand what's at stake here more than anybody else are the men and women that are out there on the front line, whether it's Iraq or Afghanistan. They understand that.

I've got to tell you that I think they're very proud of their service, that they understand why they're there and they're proud of their sacrifice. And the reason I say that is that, as you visit those that are as you put, eloquently again, so badly injured because there are some terrible weapons out there these days, the improvised explosive device being one of them, which mangles human bodies. But the people who I meet -- the men and women I meet -- in Bethesda, Walter Reed and other places around this country are proud of what they're doing.

MYERS:

And it's more than Iraq. It's more than Afghanistan. I think they understand what this threat is all about. This is, these are people, Osama bin Laden, Zawahiri, Zarqawi and others who join with them in jihad not just in Iraq, not just in Afghanistan, but essentially around the world. And their stated intent, often stated, recently stated, is to do away with our way of life.

Our military are proud of their contributions to stopping this threat. General Abizaid has said, "You can fight them there or you can fight them here." I've not said that, but General Abizaid has said that. There's a great deal of truth in it.

Thank you.

SESSIONS:

Senator Thune?

THUNE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you all for your testimony this morning in response to these questions. This is a global war on terror, and Iraq is a breeding ground for that war, has been for some time.

I've believed for some time that it was only a matter of time until we were going to go in and have to deal with the situation there. But I think what we've seen in this last week is a remarkable display of courage on behalf of the Iraqi people.

And that -- it also occurred to me that the Iraqi election may also be part of a much larger trend, and that is the democratization of the Muslim Arab world.

And you had mentioned the hatred they have for our way of life. But if you look at, just in this last year in April, the world's most populous Muslim country, Indonesia, held parliamentary elections in which they rejected Islamic extremist parties. Of course, you mentioned Afghanistan in October of last year and more recently the Palestinian territories and now Iraq.

You look at what these people, when they have a taste of freedom, what they're doing, and the incredible display of courage in going out, in turnout numbers that are comparable to what we experience here in this country, under threat of their very lives and attacks that they are exposed to consistently, still turned out in huge numbers to express their support for freedom and democracy.

And I really believe that, Mr. Chairman, this could be, 2005 could be a decisive year in the cause of freedom in the Middle East and democracy in that area of the world. And I think it's so important because I do see that as in this broader global war on terror that we're fighting as the key center or epicenter if you want to call it for where that threat will come from in the future.

Just one question perhaps, Mr. Secretary, it's sort of a follow-up to that. And that is, do you believe that the success of the Iraqi elections offers any lessons regarding the president's stated goal of expanding democratic opportunities in the Middle East?

In other words, based on what we have seen and experienced there, is this a trend that we can see continue and the policies that have been employed there, again, realizing full well that there's a lot of turbulence ahead. There'll be a lot of adversity and a lot of heavy lifting ahead for the Iraqi people and for their neighbors in the region.

But is this something that we could see expand and grow and really transform that area of the world? The democratization of the Middle East in what traditionally has been an area very hostile to the United

States?

WOLFOWITZ:

Senator, it does and it doesn't. It does in the sense that what we saw was this passion for freedom and for self- government that we've seen in Ukraine and Chile and South Africa and in South Korea, in the Philippines. I experienced that one very closely in 1986.

WOLFOWITZ:

And even in Iraq, under conditions of unbelievable intimidation, people want to be free, they want to choose their leaders. And that, I think, is what the president was talking about, is something universal.

It doesn't in the following very important sense: I hope Iraq will be an exception in -- this was a case where we used American force because we believed, based on, I think, very strong intelligence, that this country -- this country, that regime was a threat to us, and that changed the calculations.

But, I think, if you look at the trend over the last 20 years, and it's an impressive trend, Senator Kennedy talked earlier about the spread of freedom and democracy in Latin America in the 1980s and in South Africa.

And I don't know if you were here -- I commented on my own experience when I was assistant secretary of state for East Asia, with the Philippines and with Korea and with Taiwan and then, much later unfortunately, 10 years later, Indonesia came along, and Thailand has come along.

We've seen an incredible expanse of freedom in Central and Eastern Europe and, most recently, in Georgia and Ukraine.

It's stunning, and every one of those cases happened without American combat forces.

And I would hope that that is the kind of change we can see in the Middle East going forward.

And I hope the governments that feel, correctly, that they're being called upon to reform will understand that it's not to destabilize, it's not to bring about revolutions, but that in fact, I think, reform is the best way for them to preserve stability.

I go back, in fact, when I was ambassador to Indonesia and I had my farewell call on President Suharto, who was the dictator of that country at the time -- a mild dictator compared to Saddam Hussein, I would note, but a dictator nonetheless -- and he -- I talked in sort of oblique ways about the need to have political change in Indonesia and he talked less obliquely about the need to preserve stability.

And I said, "Well, Mr. President, you talk about dynamic stability. You don't actually preserve stability by standing still. You have to move forward."

And I would submit that what happened to him 10 years later is because he didn't move forward, because he tried to stop progress, because he tried to suppress civil society in Indonesia, because he drew more and more power around him.

And then there are examples elsewhere.

Taiwan's a stunning one. Actually, South Korea's a stunning one, where authoritarian leaders -- Spain is another one, actually, if you go back 30 years -- where authoritarian leaders have seen the need to prepare the way for something that's less authoritarian after them.

And it's possible, it happens -- the whole world is better off for it.

WOLFOWITZ:

I think that's what the president is talking about.

I hope Iraq will be an exception; that we won't need to use American troops to protect ourselves. And there are ways, through many peaceful means, to support free and democratic forces throughout the Muslim world.

THUNE:

I would just say that I share that view, and I hope that the power of example, which can be a powerful tool, as other nations in that region, and around the world see and begin to taste what freedom and democracy are about. But it is the power of that example and the power of freedom, and not the power of the military, that can bring that result about.

But clearly we've made tremendous strides and progress in Iraq. And I hope we continue on that path.

And would say to the general, please convey to the troops as well our appreciation for the extraordinary work that they're doing.

I share what the chairman has echoed earlier today, that there is hardly anywhere I go where I talk to people who have been in the theater -- or their families, for that matter -- who don't believe profoundly in the mission and in what they're trying to accomplish there.

They really are very committed to it. And they think that what they're doing is making a difference, and I happen to share that view.

So, thank you.

MYERS:

Senator, I'd just say I agree with you very strongly about the power of example. And you mentioned those four cases: Indonesia, Palestinian Authority, Iraq and Afghanistan. I think there's a message there that is having an effect.

SESSIONS:

Senator Clinton?

CLINTON:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I apologize for not being able to be here in person for the testimony of the witnesses, and I thank them for appearing before the committee.

I, too, want to express my profound admiration for the Iraqi people and their desire to have their voices heard through the ballot box. I think no one could see the pictures coming out of Sunday's election without being very moved by the notion of ordinary Iraqis braving threats, risking lives, even losing their lives, in order to vote.

And there is no doubt it could not have happened without our men and women in uniform being there to guarantee that vote going forward.

CLINTON:

And they deserve our equal support, respect and gratitude.

And I don't think that there's any argument about the extraordinary display of freedom and the move toward democracy being in the short-, medium- and long-term interests of humanity and the United States. But, as is clear from the questioning, there are lots of concerns about the direction that we have headed and some of the decisions that have been made.

And there has been relatively little oversight. This committee, I think, is notable in the Congress for performing more oversight than anyone else and in a bipartisan way, thanks to our chairman and our ranking member.

But I think vigorous oversight and hard questions are, you know, par of democracy. So I hope that we can keep focused on what are the real issues that we need to address going forward.

To that end, I just have a couple of questions and then I'd like to ask unanimous consent to submit others for the record.

SESSIONS:

Yes.

CLINTON:

Mr. Secretary, we are going to be receiving a supplemental and many of us have argued, as you know, that we need a larger Army. And, indeed, the Army is currently using temporary measures paid for through supplementals to pay for a larger force in order to meet our needs in Iraq.

We obviously have a strain on our active-duty as well as our reserve components. That's an issue that is not going away. Every day we wait to deal with it means it's going to take longer and be more expensive if the decision is made to permanently expand the size of the standing Army.

Is the Defense Department considering making the larger Army a permanent part of the defense budget? And will DOD be looking at the size of the overall force during its quadrennial defense review this year?

WOLFOWITZ:

I think the answer to both questions is yes.

In fact, in the five-year defense plan that will come with the '06 budget, you will see that we will bring the cost of this larger Army into what we call the top line in our regular budget starting in fiscal year '07 and that we've had to make some very considerable adjustments in the rest of the defense program in order to pay for that.

We need to fund it through supplementals in this fiscal year, next fiscal year, because that's not the kind of change you can -- it's like trying to turn a tanker on an dime. But we're not trying to hide the cost, either.

One of the reasons we're very pleased that we've put out the FY '05 supplemental number along with the '06 budget request is so the Congress can see that those costs will be going forward.

WOLFOWITZ:

But, yes, we think the only prudent thing at this point is to plan for that as a permanent change. Permanent changes, of course, mean permanent bills, and that's how we have to adjust the defense program.

And definitely, I think, in the quarterly annual defense review the question of whether this increase is the right one is one of the questions that we'll be addressing.

General Myers, do you want to add to that at all?

MYERS:

I would only say it's -- and I think Senator Clinton knows this well -- it's more than just the people. There's equipment needs as well. And that's why, as you'll see in the budget submission, that the Army needs additional resources to do what they need to do in the future. And that's all wrapped in there.

CLINTON:

Well, I think it is a very difficult decision. I grant that. But it's also a very important one for this Congress and the American public to grasp.

The budget implications, given the extraordinary deficit situation we're facing, are ones that have, in my view, very serious consequences for our long-term ability to sustain any kind of aggressive defense posture. So we need to start this conversation now and not do it in a piecemeal way.

Let me ask you, too, Mr. Secretary, can you clarify once and for all, is there any consideration being given to extending reserve component deployments?

WOLFOWITZ:

I think you're referring to this issue of whether or not -- I mean, this question of I think a narrow interpretation of the law, this is the question of the two years.

CLINTON:

Right.

WOLFOWITZ:

And I think our very strong view is there's enough burden on reservists as it is, with the prospect of 24 cumulative months, and nobody should start saying, "Well, it's consecutive in the law." I think our policy is very clear.

CLINTON:

So that is -- I can take that as a clear policy statement?

WOLFOWITZ:

Yes.

CLINTON:

All right.

WOLFOWITZ:

And if I could add, too, on your point about the Army, it is important, as I think both you and General Myers noted. It's not just more people, but a major reorganization of how those people operate.

And we have a, I guess, typically opaque bureaucratic term called modularity. And what it really means is restructuring the Army so it's deployable in more small units.

And one of the things that does is it spreads the burden of these difficult deployments over a much larger portion of the force and makes it, I think, considerably less stressful on everyone.

MYERS:

And the discussion includes the reserve component as well. I mean, it's going to be -- it's one total piece.

CLINTON:

Well, I appreciate that and my time is up, but, you know, and I think -- you know, perhaps this is something for the chairman and the ranking member to consider -- but running parallel with these decisions, moving from supplemental to top-line budgeting, looking at the quadrennial review, it may be time to consider, perhaps, the Congress taking a look in a, sort of, Goldwater-Nichols, but it would be perhaps Warner-Levin, approach toward acquisition and purchasing rules in the Pentagon.

I think that, you know, we have so many tough decisions ahead of us. And I, for one, am not convinced that we've really done all we need to do legally to set forth a road map and, working with the Defense Department, to have a new approach, some new thinking, some 21st-century, on-time inventory kinds of thinking that we've done sort of from the back end, but in a more forward-looking way.

And that -- because we're going to face a lot of very tough decisions on this budget with respect to some of the reports we hear about decisions that have been made with respect to certain weapon systems. Taken out of context, they'll be great fodder for political battles; put into a broader context of what we're trying to achieve that might or might not be the case.

But I think we need a new look at that.

WARNER:

Senator, we thank you for that observation. It is a matter that the distinguished ranking member and I are frequently discussing. And I can assure you and other members of the committee that we will, in this Congress, address those critical questions and do it not just in a simple hearing but in a more extensive way.

I thank the senator.

WARNER:

Senator Akaka?

AKAKA:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I want to apologize for not being here to hear the testimonies as well of Secretary Wolfowitz, General Myers and Mr. Schlicher. And the reason is that I've been at the Veterans' Affairs Committee hearing on survivor benefits and we've just concluded that here.

WARNER:

As ranking member of that committee, though, it's very important and essential that you be there. And I'm delighted -- and it's the intention of Senator Levin and myself, Senator Sessions and Senator Lieberman, to be in consultation with you and Senator Craig as to how quickly we can move that piece of legislation.

AKAKA:

Chairman Craig and I heard the witnesses who are survivors and widows of some of our service people.

But I'm here to ask a question or two of our panel.

Secretary Wolfowitz, it is reported that Army leaders are considering seeking a change in Pentagon policy that would allow for longer and more frequent call-ups of some reservists to meet demands of conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. And my question is very close to what has been asked by Senator Clinton on this matter.

And here's the question: As the Army considers making last year's temporary increase to 30,000 Army troops permanent, what is OSD doing to ensure that, as our troops are being stretched out throughout and around the world, to ensure that we continue to have quality force that we need?

Secondly, what is OSD doing to ensure that OPTEMPO does not diminish the quality of life to the point of impacting retention, retention for active-duty, Reserve as well as National Guard troops?

WOLFOWITZ:

I think the heart of the answer is that we are looking not only to increase the size of the Army, but also to do two other things.

One is what we call modularity, as I said, which is to create a larger number of deployable units, kind of, along the way the Marine Corps is already organized, so that the burden of these deployments, if they have to be sustained, is across a larger effective force.

WOLFOWITZ:

And secondly, a lot is being done to redistribute roughly 100,000 positions between the reserve and the active force, so that we aren't in the position where, for certain critical specialties that we're short on, we have to keep calling up the same reservists over and over again.

That's been a problem going back to Bosnia and Kosovo. And I think the Army's doing a lot to shift the active-reserve balance in these critical specialties, so that that stress is relieved.

General Myers, do you want to add to that?

AKAKA:

Being on the Readiness Committee, I'm interested in readiness and keeping the quality of the force.

MYERS:

You bet. And we all are.

And I spend a great deal of my time trying to look around corners to make sure that, as we ask a lot of our forces, active duty and reserve component, that we are taking those steps to make sure that recruiting and retention stay healthy.

I think today, actually, we're in pretty good shape. And thanks to Congress for the help they've given in providing incentives and bonuses for people to stay in, and also the increase of our recruiting force almost across the board, we're staying up with recruiting in most cases.

The one area that I think there's -- where you need to watch very carefully is in the Army Reserve. The Army Guard is in pretty good shape; the Army Reserve is going to take some attention. And we're putting

the attention to it.

But the most important thing we can do, and we've tried to do, is provide, particularly for our reserve component forces, predictability in their lives.

And so the secretary of defense has instituted policies about how often they can be called up, and the timelines that we're going to follow.

And we started off not doing that very well, several years ago. We're doing that much better today. I think we are providing better predictability -- in fact, pretty good predictability.

Every once in a while, we'll be caught by a condition.

MYERS:

For instance, in Iraq, we've had the security situation change, and had to extend -- no reserve units, but active duty units -- for 15, 30, 45 days longer than we anticipated having them in there.

So we focus very hard on predictability and, where the situations permit -- which is in most cases -- we try to live up to the promises we make. And we feel like if we don't do that, we are actually breaking our promise. So we take that very, very seriously. And the secretary in particular takes that very, very seriously.

On top of that there are a myriad of things that are going on, some of which will be reflected in the budget, in terms of balancing between the active and the reserve component, making sure we have the right forces in both components, and that they are well trained.

And I think you'll see a lot of that as we look at what the Army's going to do over the next many years as they try to fashion an army for this 21st century.

AKAKA:

As you know, this committee has been trying to maintain and improve the quality of life of our military and this plays into the retention factor. And I'm asking these questions just to be sure we are focusing on retention and trying to keep our forces down.

MYERS:

Absolutely, sir. It's a critical issue. I'm very happy that you're focusing on it. I think a lot of people need to focus on this particular issue.

We have a very important mission. We have very high OPSTEMPO, personnel tempo in trying to meet that mission. And the last thing we want to have happen is come out of this period with a force that is not

fully recruited, that we don't have the numbers we need. And I'm not talking, again, just active duty, but in the reserve component as well.

AKAKA:

Thank you very much for your responses, Mr. Secretary and General Myers.

MYERS:

Thanks.

WARNER:

Thank you, Senator Akaka.

WOLFOWITZ:

Mr. Chairman, could I just make one note on a...

WARNER:

Of course.

WOLFOWITZ:

... a statistical point earlier? I think I was asked on the personnel fill of Iraqi units, and I think I used the figure of roughly 60 percent.

That figure, as I understand it, applies to regular army units. The fill for national guard units is actually considerably better: according to General Petraeus, well over 90 percent. And these special police battalions, of which there are now seven, average 85 to 90 percent strength.

We'll try to give you a breakdown in detail, but it's one more illustration of the fact that we're dealing with a force that's made up of many diverse components, and it's a bit hard to generalize.

WARNER:

Thank you, Mr. Secretary, we'll do that.

It's important that we cover Afghanistan in this hearing. That's an extraordinary success story, and I'd

like to invite Ambassador Maureen Quinn, the coordinator for Afghanistan, to join our witnesses.

WARNER:

Mr. Schlicher, I desire you to remain, so if you'll just have a panel. And you can make such opening comments as you so desire, Secretary Wolfowitz. I think we want to keep the comments to a minimum. And General Myers and then we'll turn to Ambassador Quinn for her overview of the Afghan situation.

LEVIN:

Mr. Chairman, I'm wondering if you might yield to me for two questions on Iraq. I have to go to the floor I believe right now.

WARNER:

All right. But, of course, Senator.

LEVIN:

I would appreciate that.

Just one question first of Mr. Schlicher.

The Transitional Administrative Law provides that two-thirds of the voters in any three Iraqi provinces can veto the constitution, which would mean that the Kurds, the Sunnis and the Shiites could probably defeat the constitution if they were united in opposition to it.

My question is this: Will that Transitional Administrative Law for the referendum on the constitution that's to be drafted under the new assembly -- will that be controlling?

That's my question. Will the Transitional Administrative Law be controlling for the referendum on the constitution that's going to be drafted under the new national assembly?

Or can that assembly amend the Transitional Administrative Law?

SCHLICHER:

Sir, it's my understanding...

WARNER:

Let me interrupt. I think that's a very important question. I think the witness should be given the opportunity to explain the origin of that law, how it was under a previous group and is carried forward.

SCHLICHER:

Yes, sir.

The Transitional Administrative Law in many sense serves as the interim constitution of Iraq. It was negotiated actually during this time period last year. It culminated in March last year.

And again in many senses it serves as an interim constitution, it does many important things especially giving the Iraqis for the first time an equivalent of a bill of rights. But it also sets out many procedures for the political processes that we're going to see during the course of this year, which is where Senator Levin's question hooks in.

Senator Levin, it's my understanding that the TAL will be controlling until the adoption of a new constitution.

LEVIN:

Which means that it will be controlling as to how that new constitution is adopted?

SCHLICHER:

Yes, sir. That's my understanding.

LEVIN:

Thank you.

Now one other, last question. This goes to Secretary Wolfowitz.

The special inspector general for Iraq reconstruction, Stuart Bowen, issued an audit report this week in which he concluded that the Coalition Provisional Authority failed to establish or implement managerial, financial and contractual controls needed to ensure that funds provided to the interim Iraqi government ministries were properly used during the period before the transfer of sovereignty on June 30, 2004.

LEVIN:

That report indicated that the CPA was, quote, "burdened by severe inefficiencies and poor management and failed to review and compare financial budgetary and operational performance to

planned or expected results." And that left the expenditure of about \$9 billion in Iraqi funds, quote, "open to fraud, kickbacks and misappropriation of funds."

It said that, in this report, there was no assurance that funds were not provided for ghost employees and gave a number of examples of where that was a likely or a very real possibility because the authorization of payments to numbers of people were way above the validated number of those employees.

And I'm wondering whether or not you have made a response to the CPA inspector general's report. And, if not, if you've not given a written response, would you, do you agree with it in general and will you give a detailed written response to this committee.

WOLFOWITZ:

Ambassador Bremer gave a very detailed response to the initial report and I'll submit that for the record. It's pretty powerful and quite eloquent.

And I think I could summarize it by saying that, you know, you have to weigh the risks. There are risks of not having adequate controls on how money is spent, and there are risks on have having such controls on how money is spent that important functions don't get informed like paying police and paying school teachers and keeping the country functioning.

And it's almost as though there's criticism when it comes to U.S. appropriated funds that we haven't spent it fast enough and, now when it comes to Iraqi funds, that we spent it too fast.

I think on the whole it seems to me Ambassador Bremer made some difficult decisions and made them the right way. But this was a difficult situation. There was no perfect answer. And you certainly couldn't have waited until you had a perfect system of controls.

And I think that you'll see as the thrust of this letter and I will find out, Senator Levin, if he's changed his view at all in light of the report.

LEVIN:

And whether that represents the views of the department?

WOLFOWITZ:

OK.

LEVIN:

Thank you.

WARNER:

And thank you very much, Senator Levin.

Now, Mr. Secretary, some overview on Afghanistan, I think a success story of considerable proportions owing to the leadership of the president, secretaries of state, defense and yourself and many others.

WOLFOWITZ:

And I think, you know, once again -- I mean, not once again, but in this case also we have a case where the enemy declared war on democratic elections. The elections went ahead in spite of them. The intimidation level wasn't as severe as it is in Iraq but it was real.

You have these very moving stories of women dressing themselves, preparing themselves for death to go out and vote.

I had the privilege when I was in Indonesia recently to look at the tsunami relief operation to talk to a woman who's head of one of the largest Indonesian Muslim women's organizations, who turns out to have been the only woman on the 11-member U.N. election commission. She was there for six months. She said the passion of Afghan women to vote was just something extraordinary.

And I think it's producing results on the battlefield. Not that this war is over, not that the Taliban is going to give up tomorrow, but I think they're losing public support. I think we're getting better intelligence and we are even seeing some of them talking about maybe giving it up.

WOLFOWITZ:

So it's a perfect illustration, I think, of the point that these, basically, counterinsurgency wars are not won just on the battlefield; that the political piece of it is just as important.

General Myers, do you want to add, or do you want to...

WARNER:

Extraordinary contribution by President Karzai. It's a great chapter in world history.

General Myers, any comment about your force structure there? And there, NATO is really heavily pulling on the oar, am I not correct?

MYERS:

You're correct.

Two quick comments.

One is that our forces that are there are primarily there along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border and working in our provincial reconstruction teams; along the border because that is where the residual threat of Al Qaida remains.

By the way, it's negligible at this point.

But also, in other parts of Afghanistan...

WARNER:

But on that point, we should put in the record there's, seven days and seven nights a week, concentrating on Osama bin Laden and the possibility of taking him into custody. Am I not correct?

MYERS:

You bet. It is a 24 and seven, 365 days a year operation. And I'll just leave it at that. But it's a very intense operation.

And I think NATO is expanding its responsibility. Right now, they have the northern part of Afghanistan. It's their responsibility. They also have a force in Kabul that provides security there at the airport and the city.

That will continue to expand to the west and eventually to the south and to the whole of the country, so we can see a day in the not too distant future where NATO could conceivably be in command of the whole operation.

WARNER:

Well that's a success story. And I commend General Jones for his leadership on that. He has kept the members of this committee, individually and collectively, very well informed on that issue.

MYERS:

Thank you, sir.

WARNER:

Now, Madam Ambassador, we'd like to have your observations. We thank you for your work.

QUINN:

I heard a comment at the beginning about can we look at the next steps on Afghanistan? So maybe I can just make a few comments on what we're focused on in 2005.

Obviously, this year we're working with President Karzai, his government, the U.N. community on the national assembly local elections very hard to support those; probably late spring, early summer.

In addition, we're continuing the development of the security success. As you well know, our military, the Department of Defense has very successfully worked on the Afghan national army. That continues full speed. And we are working as well on the development of the Afghan national police. And we're addressing the other elements of the security sector, countering narcotics, promoting justice and hopefully -- probably take into 2006 -- but completing the demilitarization, demobilization, reintegration process.

This year in particular we're giving an extra focus on counternarcotics. I'm not going to go into detail on that here but, as you know, we're very much engaged on those issues.

WARNER:

Well, some detail on that's important because the proliferation of that narcotic situation could undermine to some extent the successes that the coalition brought together to liberate that country. And now, under the presidency of Karzai, it's got to be a problem addressed and we cannot let this continued growth and proliferation grow.

QUINN:

Yes, Mr. Chairman, I agree fully.

What I would add on that point is President Karzai has committed himself to address this issue. He's mobilized his government to do that. They had a very successful mini-loya jirga in December where they called in the mullahs and the governors and the district leaders to tell them -- give them the central government message that they needed to take back to their provinces, which they are doing.

We've had some preliminary reports of voluntary actions on eradication, plowing over poppy fields.

In support of that government effort what we're looking at is five key areas.

We're, again, promoting the public information message, get the message out that this is wrong, that there's no benefits in it and that the fields will be eradicated.

We're focusing on interdiction as well, going after the drug traffickers, helping them there. Our Drug

Enforcement Agency is very much involved in that.

We're also focused on the law enforcement aspect. In Afghanistan, unluckily, the judicial system is really being built from scratch, so in the narcotics area we're focused on special judicial prosecutorial task force so that when people are brought in, that they can be prosecuted and therefore, as well, we're looking for secure detention facilities and building those up.

We believe in a comprehensive approach, so we're looking at and working on very hard in the alternative livelihoods area so that, when the farmers who depend so much on this crop, their fields are destroyed, or that they have the opportunity to develop other -- it's not only crops, but it's also the community development so that they can get other crops to market, et cetera.

And, finally, it's the eradication is a key element...

WARNER:

You're of the professional opinion that the maximum attention that not only our nation but the outside world can bring to bear on it is now being exerted?

QUINN:

I do so. I believe so, Mr. Chairman.

WARNER:

I accept that. Thank you very much.

QUINN:

The final point I want to mention is the reconstruction. I think the United States has done a significant job already, particularly in the roads area, but we're continuing to focus on that, the roads, the power sector, water, energy, schools, clinics and, most importantly, developing the human capacity of the Afghan people. And we're continuing that and committed to it.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

WARNER:

And I thank you, Madam Ambassador.

Now, Ambassador Schlicher, I think we should have the record today reflect your personal

observations as well as the factual chronology of how this new government is going to, as we say, be stood up.

You've had the elections. Are we on time for the February 15th date for certification so best you know?

SCHLICHER:

Yes, sir. To the best of my knowledge, we are.

And with your permission, I'll go through what I know about the coming process.

WARNER:

And I think it's important for those following this hearing, particularly the American public, to understand the magnificence of these elections.

Let us hope that can be in some way replicated in each of these steps. Because these are not inconsequential nor easy steps to be taken, as this government is stood up.

SCHLICHER:

Yes, sir. That's absolutely right.

WARNER:

And your best estimate of the times -- even though your professional judgment may be at variance with some of the printed time tables and the like, I think that we should have at least your opinion. Because you've got extensive experience in this area.

SCHLICHER:

Yes, sir. Let me go through what the process is, as we understand it.

Once the election commission has received and tabulated all of the results from the more than 5,000 polling stations around Iraq -- and that's what's happening now -- it will begin to calculate the allocation of the 275 seats in the transitional national assembly.

And at the same time, in parallel, it's allocating the seats in the 18 provincial assemblies that have been elected and in the Kurdistan regional government election which also took place.

The commission has stated that it expects to announce the progress of the tally periodically. And it's

target for announcing final results in all of those electoral processes is still February 15th. And we've received no indication that that timeline is slipping.

Meanwhile, we understand that in parallel to the tallying effort, and informally the political parties have begun to talk with each other and negotiate about the possible shape of the coming government, as they await the final results themselves.

Now, once the allocation of seats is announced, the transitional national assembly, this 275-person body, will convene. Its first responsibility is to select that body's leadership and adopt that body's internal rules.

It will then select, by a two-thirds majority vote, a three- member transitional government presidency council for the executive branch, which will consist of a president of the state and two deputy presidents.

That three-person presidency body will be selected as a single slate. And perhaps there will be competing slates; that depends on how the politicians negotiate.

Now under the transitional law, the three members of the presidency council are required to unanimously nominate a prime minister within two weeks of their assumption of office.

If the presidency council fails to name a prime minister in that two-week period, the responsibility for naming a prime minister reverts to the national assembly itself. In that instance, the assembly would have to confirm a nomination by a two-thirds majority of the assembly.

After the naming of the prime minister, that prime minister then has up to one month in which to name a council of ministers. If the prime ministerial...

WARNER:

They need not be members of the 275 assembly.

SCHLICHER:

Sir, they may be members, or they...

WARNER:

They may be, or may not be. That's an important fact. I want to point that out.

Because that is the area in which, presumably, the strong Shiite faction -- I'm not going to quantify how strong it may be -- can begin to show its hand as to whether or not they feel it's -- as we do, I'm sure, here in this country -- it's important to get some Sunni participation in that ministerial level.

WARNER:

Am I correct on that?

SCHLICHER:

Yes, sir, that's certainly one of the opportunities.

Now, if the prime minister is unable to nominate a cabinet within that up-to-one-month period he has, the presidency council would then nominate another prime minister.

When the prime minister has named a council of ministers, that slate must then be approved by a simple majority vote of the assembly.

Now, in the interim and the period we're in now, the current Iraqi interim government will remain in place until their replacements are confirmed. And upon confirmation by the transitional assembly, the new prime minister and council of ministers will then assume power.

So, sir, that's an overview of the process we're likely to see.

WARNER:

And let's put some timelines, because the earliest date could be what if there's no extension of times and -- you mentioned several 30-day periods -- and then what would be the furthest date out?

SCHLICHER:

Sir, as I calculate it -- and I'm going to have to say I'm not very good at math -- but as I calculate it, the earliest that we might see would be around March 1st, which I understand is an informal target date for the politicians who are doing...

WARNER:

That's for all the steps you've enumerated to be completed?

SCHLICHER:

At least some of the most important ones. Very optimistically, I think they could do it in that time period.

I think what they're talking about in Iraq right now is a more generic formulation of several weeks.

WARNER:

So that could now go into the month of April?

SCHLICHER:

Yes, sir, I think that's right. If you tag all the...

(CROSSTALK)

SCHLICHER:

... worst-case scenarios for each of these out.

WARNER:

So April. And if suddenly they've got tied up and they couldn't agree on the prime minister, you're talking about into May and June, because of those 30-day extensions.

SCHLICHER:

The 30-day period, sir, is for the prime ministerial nominee to nominate a cabinet.

WARNER:

But then if they can't settle on the prime minister, it goes back to the assembly and then goes back to another prime minister. I presume that starts another 30-day period.

SCHLICHER:

Up to 30 days.

WARNER:

Right. So you're looking at built-in time sequences that could result -- and I'm not faulting the system, but I think the people of this country better understand...

SCHLICHER:

Yes, sir, that's...

WARNER:

... the complexity of this process and how it could extend into April or May before a government is up, everybody's taken his oath of office, and they can begin to function.

SCHLICHER:

And I hope that we all understand the political delicacy of each of these steps for the Iraqi...

WARNER:

Correct.

(UNKNOWN)

Mr. Chairman, that is very important, because part of the euphoria is the expectation there's going to be a government when they count the ballots on February 15th.

WARNER:

No, that's true, and that's why I...

(UNKNOWN)

Thank you for pointing that out. It's very important.

WARNER:

If I may say, I have publicly said this three or four times, when the secretary of defense -- and by the way, I'm delighted to have you here today, but the record should reflect that he came before this committee last week for about two and a half to three hours of intensive questioning in our committee room down here. So we've had good representation from the Department of Defense for this committee here.

So I think it's important that that's all laid out.

And within that period of time, General, we can anticipate that the insurgents and those anathematical to this government could well exercise these horrific measures that they have had in the past to try and delay or somehow disrupt this process that's been laid out by Ambassador Schlicher. Am I correct?

MYERS:

Chairman, that's certainly possible.

WARNER:

And we've got to remain on guard. And that's why all this discussion of pulling troops out at this time, in the judgment of this senator, I think the president stated it well: We've got milestones and it's achievement and it's facts on the ground and the situation that's going to dictate our troop level policy.

Senator Byrd, would you like to ask a question at this...

BYRD:

I thank you, Mr. Chairman. You're always very considerate of the members of this committee. And you give us an opportunity to speak our minds, as our questions. And you do an excellent job, especially with respect to fairness and consideration and courtesy.

WARNER:

Well, I thank you, Senator. I have to say I learned some of that from you.

BYRD:

Well, thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

It has already been referenced that the inspector general of the Coalition Provisional Authority reported that \$8.8 billion from the development fund for Iraq, comprised mostly of Iraqi oil revenue, was spent with virtually no financial controls at all -- \$8.8 billion.

Mr. Secretary, that is \$8.80 for every minute that has passed since Jesus Christ was born -- \$8.80 for every minute since Jesus Christ was born 2,000 years ago.

The report concluded that the accounting controls over this money were weak or nonexistent, leaving the door open to fraud, kickbacks and misappropriation of funds. In short, this inspector general report illustrates that there is no way that the Defense Department could know what exactly happened to \$8.8

billion in reconstruction funds for Iraq.

I am somewhat concerned by your answer to Senator Levin's, quote, "question" on reconstruction spending. I was concerned by your initial response as you responded to the question concerning this inspector general's report.

BYRD:

Now, perhaps I was wrong, but it struck me -- Mr. Secretary, your response struck me has been somewhat dismissive, nonchalant, blase.

I remember a great Roman once who was taken to task by his fellow countrymen for having put aside his wife. And he was reminded of what a great Roman matron this was, how loyal she had been, what a beautiful woman she was, how careful she had been in the rearing of her family. And he was taken with the coals, as it were.

Whereupon he said -- he took off one of his shoes and he said, you know, "You see this shoe? It has a wonderful color about it. The leather has been properly selected. The tone of the color and the pliability of the leather is certainly without equal. A beautiful pair of shoes it is, but," he said, "only I know where it pinches."

BYRD; Well, your response, Mr. Secretary, reminded me of that story. And it was, as if to say, I think, "Well, so what? It was a huge sum, but keep in mind the difficulties we were up against. Keep in mind what would've happened if we hadn't spent it. So father knows best. Don't ask any questions."

Again this seems to me to be an outgrowth of our unwise decision to turn everything over to one man or woman, the president of the United States.

So the Pentagon has repeatedly -- has repeatedly asked for more and more flexibilities on how it spends money. Ted Stevens and I have had to wrestle with this in our appropriation monies over the past few years.

It appears that the Pentagon had unlimited flexibility with this \$8.8 billion and now the inspector general tells Congress that the Pentagon can't tell us where these funds went. That does not speak well for the Defense Department's use of flexibilities.

So I have been after the Pentagon for years. I've talked with Defense Secretary Rumsfeld repeatedly about the failure of the Defense Department to account for the funds that it spends. But I have to say that this instance here involving \$8.8 billion certainly takes the cake.

How can the Defense Department be held accountable for wasted reconstruction money if it doesn't bother to regulate how it spends billions upon billions of dollars in Iraq? So father does not always know best.

Our problem is this: Our problem is that we have to go back time and again to the people and ask for money. How do we know that the expenditure of this \$8.8 billion in reconstruction fund has done any good for Iraq? This report paints a picture of Pentagon officials throwing cash around willy-nilly while Iraq was falling into chaos.

I know I asked Mr. Bremer would he come back before the Appropriations Committee if the chairman, the then-chairman, Mr. Stevens, should request that he come back. He said, "I'm too busy. I'm too busy."

Well, that was the attitude. That's the attitude that we were met with. I can guarantee you that would not have been the attitude had we not given away, had we not given our power, the power of the Congress to declare war.

BYRD:

How can you possibly assure the American people that these funds were well spent if the Pentagon can't even tell Congress where that cash ended up? And that's my question.

WOLFOWITZ:

Senator Byrd, there's nothing nonchalant of my view of this issue. I think it's a difficult issue. I'd encourage you -- I'll give you Ambassador Bremer's response to the draft report and see if there's an additional one.

Let me just, for example, read from it.

He says, and this is Ambassador Bremer writing, "The draft suggests that CPA should have delayed paying Iraqi public servants until we had fully modern pay records. This would have taken many months, if not years. More than a million Iraqi families depended on the Iraqi government for their salaries.

"When the CPA arrived in Iraq after liberation, unemployment was over 50 percent. Not paying the civil servants would have been destabilizing and would have increased the security threat to Iraqis and to Americans.

"In brief, such a course would have cost lives."

There's nothing nonchalant about that concern.

And let me point out, I don't want it to be said I don't care how the Iraqis spend their money, but let's be clear. This was not U.S.- appropriated funds; this was Iraqi money. And we were there under authority of the United Nations, which specifically said that, under successive U.N. Security Council resolutions, it was policy to transfer to the Iraqis as much responsibility as possible, as quickly as possible.

I'm quoting again from Ambassador Bremer's letter, and it said, "to have tried to have the sort of

controls that the inspector general was suggesting would have been directly contrary to U.S. government policy and to the mandate of the United Nations."

I think there's an important question Senator Levin has asked for any final response Ambassador Bremer might have. I think we should look at whether things could have been done differently. And we should see if there are lessons to be learned if there were a similar situation.

But there was a crisis at hand. There were very large Iraqi funds available to deal with that crisis. And I think that basically Ambassador Bremer made the right decision to go to those Iraqi funds before coming back to the taxpayer and asking for appropriated funds.

BYRD:

Mr. Chairman, I'll simply close by saying that Mr. Bremer might very well have added, "And I didn't have time. I didn't have time to appear before the Appropriations Committee again to make explanations that the people's representatives in the Senate and the House might have asked more questions as to how the money was spent."

Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

WARNER:

Thank you, Senator Byrd.

Senator Byrd, I want the record to reflect that Senator Levitt and I wrote letters to the secretary of defense at the time Ambassador Bremer was completing his duties urging that he come before this committee and he did not come.

BYRD:

Yes. I thank the chairman.

WARNER:

Thank you very much.

BYRD:

He has certainly not left any step along the way out of the equation. He has done everything he can and so has his counterpart, Mr. Levin. I thank them.

WARNER:

I thank my senior colleague. Thank you very much.

Last, gentleman, just an observation by myself, and that is: I look forward to this trip being undertaken by the president of the United States to Europe. And I do hope, in the course of that trip -- and I know he will, and rightly so -- talk about Iraq and the successes we've had to date.

And I'm just hopeful that our president will receive some reciprocal acknowledgments on this trip. And those acknowledgments might well result in further participation by nations in the European theater and others in helping us -- when I say "us," the existing coalition forces -- conclude our goals.

WARNER:

So I wish our president well on this trip. And he certainly has the support of this senator in his efforts to try and increase participation of other countries in a variety of ways -- training new Iraqi security forces, working on the infrastructure, improvements that are necessary -- a variety of ways to bring this chapter of world history to a conclusion successfully so the people of Iraq can manifest, in so many ways, the exuberance and courage that they did here of this recent weekend.

I hope you share that view, Secretary Wolfowitz.

WOLFOWITZ:

I do very strongly, Senator.

WARNER:

I'm highly optimistic about this trip coming up.

I thank our witnesses. We've had an excellent hearing. I realize it's gone a little bit longer than we planned, but we had a number of senators, well over half the committee, participate.

The hearing's now concluded.

Source: Federal Document Clearing House, Inc.

<http://www.dod.mil/speeches/2005/sp20050203-depsecdef1082.html>