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## Special Briefing on Iraq

### David Satterfield, Senior Advisor to the Secretary of State and Coordinator for Iraq

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New York City  
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(7:35 p.m. EDT)

**AMBASSADOR SATTERFIELD:** Okay. The focus of today's meeting chaired by Secretary General Ban was to examine the expanded mandate for the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq, UNAMI, to introduce the new Special Representative of the Secretary General for that mission, Ambassador Staffan de Mistura, replacing Ambassador Ashraf Qazi and to discuss progress made on the International Compact for Iraq.

You will recall the International Compact is the key international document which sets forth Iraqi commitments; pledges on economic, commercial, internal reforms, seeks support from the private and public sectors of the neighbors, the Middle East, the international community to make from the economic side efforts being undertaken on the political and security side reinforced and an overall success.

On the UNAMI debate, the Secretary General opened up by expressing strong interest to the United Nations in a functionally expanded mission in Iraq focused on three main areas: assisting the Government of Iraq in the process of dialogue and reconciliation, assisting on the issues related to helping to build greater institutional capacity within the country, and focused on helping to build bridges between Iraq and its neighbors.

With respect to that latter, the Secretary General made a proposal that the UN could provide assistance for a coordination center or a coordination cell which could help, under Iraqi leadership, in carrying on the work of the neighbors conference, the neighbors process between meetings so that there was a mechanism to work on setting agendas and monitoring the work of the working groups that are set up under the neighbors process, carrying forward the structural work, including agenda formation, of the neighbors process between the ministerial level meetings. And I think most of you know there is a ministerial meeting of the expanded neighbors -- Iraq's neighbors plus members of the international community, that will take place the beginning of November in Istanbul. That will be the second

such expanded ministerial following the meeting in early May in Sharm el-Sheikh.

Prime Minister Maliki has strongly endorsed the importance which the government and people of Iraq attach to this expanded UN role. The Prime Minister sounded several themes, and I think what's interesting to note here is that the themes that he expressed in his opening comments were mirrored by and large in the comments of every delegation that spoke in the room.

And it was basically this: The people of Iraq, the Government of Iraq, have been through an extraordinarily challenging period. The dictatorship of Saddam, the consequences of the overthrow of that dictatorship, the sectarian violence, the civil strife that emerged after the Samarra Mosque bombing February of 2006 – these posed enormous challenges on the people of Iraq, challenges to the Government of Iraq.

Those challenges aren't over, but the Government, the people of Iraq are beginning to make progress in emerging from the very darkest days of 2006, with the help of the Multinational Forces, with the help of Iraq's own forces, with the support of Iraq's neighbors and the international community that had been supportive and constructively engaged. There is still much work to do, but the corner has been turned in his presentation and is beginning to look better, but Iraq still needs help.

Iraqis, the Prime Minister said, are responsible in the end and the Government of Iraq is responsible for the future of that country. The people of Iraq alone must make decisions about how they wish to move forward. But they welcome assistance. They welcome assistance from the United Nations and they welcome assistance from friendly states in the region and from the international community.

That offer -- both pledge of a decision to turn away towards greater reconciliation, greater stability and security, and the willingness to accept help, based upon Iraqi responsibility as a fundamental issue, is something that was then mirrored by virtually every delegation that spoke during the course of the meeting. They all pledged support for the expanded role of the United Nations, as the Secretary General had outlined it, and upon the basis of fundamental Iraqi responsibility for their own political destiny, as the Prime Minister expressed it.

They all expressed support for the principle of a better dialogue between Iraq and its neighbors. Most delegations looked forward to the Istanbul meeting as something very positive and constructive. All of the delegations talked about the importance of the turn away from violence and every delegation, without exception, spoke to the need for national reconciliation to advance with a recognition of the difficulties standing in the way of moving that process forward to an absolute completion.

With respect to the International Compact following the conclusion of interventions on the issue of the expanded UNAMI mandate, the Secretary General turned to Ambassador Gambari, who is responsible with the UN Secretariat for the compact. Mr. Gambari gave a very good presentation on the state of developments with respect to a standing secretariat for the compact, the pledges that have been received, the hope that additional assistance would be provided, reported on the progress being made by the Iraqi Government on economic reforms. There were only brief interventions made by the European Commission and by Canada. And other statements, as we understand it, will be submitted in written form for the record.

I would note we believe that progress has been made on the International Compact, but more needs to be done. The Iraqis are engaged in discussions with Saudi Arabia, with the Government of Russia, who are two principal debt holders,

non-Paris Club debt holders on the issue of debt forgiveness, debt relief. We hope those discussions move forward at as rapid a pace as possible.

With respect to Iraq's own economic performance, the Iraqi Government has noted and can take some pride in the fact that budget execution, which was a significant deficit area in 2005 and 2006, has significantly improved. It was positive change in budget execution capabilities that allowed the government to be responsive to the needs of Anbar in generating first \$100 million out of central government revenues for the Anbari Provincial Government and then an additional \$120 million which were just made available at the beginning of September for the provincial government. This is an ongoing challenge, but it's something the government is working on. The government is also cooperating closely with the International Monetary Fund standby arrangement in terms of its own budget practices.

Those were the basic themes of the meeting. Again, we think it was a very positive discussion. It was a quite frank discussion. The presentation at the end of the session by Prime Minister Maliki, which wrapped up all of the discussion held, recapped those themes of a turnaway by the people of Iraq from violence, given the difficulties that they have gone through and the difficulties that still exist and must be overcome, but a turn nevertheless to a more positive future, the commitment of the government to reconciliation, the recognition that the government has a fundamental responsibility which others can help with, but which the Government of Iraq and the people of Iraq alone must bear primary accountability for to determine the fate of the country, and a recognition as well of a different issue.

There was discussion in the latter part of the meeting of the significance of the refugee issue. The Government of Syria, the Government of Jordan expressed their concern over this issue, the sacrifices that they were making for the sake of Iraqi refugees present in their country. Prime Minister Maliki acknowledged this is first and foremost an Iraqi responsibility. He welcomed and expressed appreciation for the efforts made by those states which had taken on, as he said, for a temporary period, the presence of those individuals, and made the obvious comment, which we would underscore as well, that the way for those individuals to come back the soonest to their lives in Iraq – and that, after all, is the real course to resolution of this issue – is through the establishment of lasting security and stability in Iraq. And we, like the Government of Iraq, hope that the direction towards that goal is a positive one. That was the essential presentation.

**MR. GALLEGOS:** We have about four minutes left.

**AMBASSADOR SATTERFIELD:** All right.

**QUESTION:** Did the (inaudible)?

**AMBASSADOR SATTERFIELD:** And what would that be?

**QUESTION:** Your contractors killing people in the streets of Baghdad.

**AMBASSADOR SATTERFIELD:** Interestingly, that was not a --

**QUESTION:** It didn't come up?

**AMBASSADOR SATTERFIELD:** That was not a primary topic of a discussion of the UNAMI mandate and the

International Compact for Iraq.

**QUESTION:** Two quick (inaudible). You said that the UN – they talked about a functional piece, extension of its role. Did you talk about an actual increase (inaudible) people on the ground --

**AMBASSADOR SATTERFIELD:** There isn't – the Secretary General did outline an increase in personnel and I'll leave you to look at his remarks, which I think should be available shortly, on how he laid that out.

**QUESTION:** And the other thing is Iran. Did the Secretary have any contact whatsoever with --

**AMBASSADOR SATTERFIELD:** No.

**QUESTION:** -- Foreign Minister Motaki --

**AMBASSADOR SATTERFIELD:** No, did not.

**QUESTION:** Okay. She did not?

**AMBASSADOR SATTERFIELD:** No, did not.

**QUESTION:** On that issue --

**AMBASSADOR SATTERFIELD:** Opposite sides of the room.

**QUESTION:** The issue of the UN and Iran, was there any indication that the UN might work with Iran to curtail the shelling of the Kurds in the north?

**AMBASSADOR SATTERFIELD:** There was no discussion of that issue.

**QUESTION:** Or the possibility of (inaudible)?

**AMBASSADOR SATTERFIELD:** There was no discussion of that issue.

**QUESTION:** Did Secretary Rice talk about Blackwater at all with Prime Minister Maliki on the sidelines?

**AMBASSADOR SATTERFIELD:** She did not have a side session with Prime Minister Maliki.

**QUESTION:** Do you anticipate that she will talk to him about it?

**AMBASSADOR SATTERFIELD:** The Secretary has spoken with Prime Minister Maliki previously on this issue. Our Chargé in Baghdad is very much engaged with Prime Minister Maliki on this issue. We have set up a joint commission

of inquiry which will start its meetings, we believe, this coming week. Our Chargé Pat Butenis in Iraq is the head for our side of this commission. The Iraqi Minister of Defense Abd al-Qadir will be the head from the Iraqi side. Both those co-chairs have met to discuss how to move ahead. Beyond that, as I think you know, the Secretary has asked Ambassador Pat Kennedy to lead a review within the Department of State on the overall issue of civilian security contractors in Iraq.

**QUESTION:** You just said that (inaudible) delegation --

**QUESTION:** (Inaudible.)

**AMBASSADOR SATTERFIELD:** Pardon?

**QUESTION:** You said that nearly all delegations committed to help reconciliation.

**AMBASSADOR SATTERFIELD:** Yes.

**QUESTION:** Did the Iranians commit in this?

**AMBASSADOR SATTERFIELD:** In the midst of a very long Iranian presentation which seemed more focused on the United States than on issues regarding Iraq, yes, I believe somewhere in those remarks there was a reference to the need to advance national reconciliation.

**QUESTION:** What did the Iranians say about the United States?

**AMBASSADOR SATTERFIELD:** I'll refer you to the Iranian text for that. It was a quite long discussion, longer than any other presentation, mirroring their presentation at Sharm el-Sheikh.

**QUESTION:** Anything that piqued your interest or that --

**AMBASSADOR SATTERFIELD:** Piqued our interest? No.

**QUESTION:** You don't seem to be very convinced by their commitment.

**AMBASSADOR SATTERFIELD:** You would have to take their commitment in the context of what they are doing on the ground. What they are doing on the ground is continuing to supply arms and training on arms to the most violent, most lethal, most radical elements in Iraq. We don't believe this is consistent with a pledge to support reconciliation.

**MR. GALLEGOS:** One last question.

**QUESTION:** In terms of the International Compact, any dollars, in terms of dollars, any pledges?

**AMBASSADOR SATTERFIELD:** No, this wasn't a pledging conference. But it was very clear from the comments made

by the Representative of the Secretary General Mr. Gambari, as well as the Prime Minister, that there is a hope for continued progress on public and private sector assistance: public sector, principally in the form of debt forgiveness – I've identified Russia and Saudi Arabia as the key countries engaged in technical dialogue right now with Iraqis on this; and certainly, investment in the form of private sector --

**QUESTION:** Well, this was already pledged in Sharm el-Sheikh.

**AMBASSADOR SATTERFIELD:** This was not a pledging conference. This was a review of the status of work on setting up a secretariat for the International Compact, and more or less a technical and little bit more than technical review of where things stood.

**QUESTION:** But you seem to say that there was not progress on this debt forgiveness issue.

**AMBASSADOR SATTERFIELD:** We would like to see more progress made on debt forgiveness, yes.

**QUESTION:** Did the Secretary make that point in her presentation? Did she also make any of her points that's she made (inaudible) Iran and Syria to do more to reduce the violence?

**AMBASSADOR SATTERFIELD:** The Secretary has made clear in her remarks, and I think the text of her (inaudible) will be made available to you, that all of those neighbors of Iraq – all, without exception – should support security, stability, respect for Iraq's sovereignty.

**QUESTION:** She didn't specify Syria or Iran?

**AMBASSADOR SATTERFIELD:** There was no singling out.

**QUESTION:** The Iraqis said the first meeting of the joint commission is going to be tomorrow, Sunday. Does that square with what you know?

**AMBASSADOR SATTERFIELD:** I've been in meetings all day long. I'd have to trust – if they said that, then fine. We have been working with them on it.

**QUESTION:** And was it Motaki who made the Iranian presentation?

**AMBASSADOR SATTERFIELD:** Yes, it was. Yes, it was.

Okay, thank you all very much.

**QUESTION:** Thank you.

2007/796



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