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## President's FY 2008 Supplemental Request for the Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan

### John D. Negroponte, Deputy Secretary of State

Statement for the Record on Blackwater Before the Senate Appropriations Committee

Washington, DC

September 26, 2007

Thank you, Chairman, for that question. Something went tragically wrong on September 16 and we are taking steps to address the matter.

First, Ambassador Crocker's team is taking a hard look at what transpired and is conducting a thorough internal investigation to get at the facts to the greatest extent possible.

Second, following direct contacts between Secretary Rice and Prime Minister Maliki, our Embassy in Baghdad and the Prime Minister's office have established a joint Government of Iraq and United States Government Commission of Inquiry to examine issues of security and safety related to USG-affiliated Personal Security Detail operations, including the effect of CPA Order 17 (revised) on such operations, and to make policy recommendations.

And third, the Secretary has directed Patrick Kennedy, an extremely capable and senior Department management officer, to carry out a full and complete review of security practices for our diplomats in Iraq. His review will address the question of how we are providing this security to our employees, taking into account rules of engagement and standards of conduct for the persons providing the security. Our diplomatic security bureau is dispatching additional personnel to Baghdad to increase the number of Regional Security Officers moving with Blackwater teams.

The security firms we use to support our Iraq Mission operations must meet strict Diplomatic Security-mandated standards that address required experience, strict vetting of personnel, and specified pre-deployment training. We also provide close in-country supervision and require that personnel follow the mission's policies on use of force. In many cases the individuals hired by these security firms are veterans who served honorably in America's armed forces.

Security personnel must follow stringent procedures aimed at avoiding the use of force, for which they are extensively trained and on which they are briefed before each mission. From January 1 to September 18, 2007, Blackwater

conducted 1873 missions in which protective security details or PSDs escorted American diplomats or visitors to locations outside the International, or Green, Zone in Baghdad. In only 56 of those missions have PSD members had cause to use their weapons, and each such incident is reviewed by management officials to ensure that procedures were followed.

I personally was grateful for the presence of my Blackwater security detail, largely comprised of ex-Special Forces and other military, when I served as Ambassador to Iraq. Their alert and controlled posture kept me safe – to get my job done.

I have a great deal of respect for their work. Without the dedicated service of our PSDs and their willingness to expose themselves to the risks that they do, the civilians of the Department of State would not be able to carry out our critical responsibilities in places like Iraq and Afghanistan. Yet I think there is broad agreement that we need to be there to help win the peace.

With the multiple inquiries that are underway, we expect to be in a better position to judge the adequacy of our efforts and what changes may be needed in the very near future.

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