[H.A.S.C. No. 110–82]

A THIRD WAY: ALTERNATIVES FOR IRAQ'S FUTURE (PART 4 OF 4)

HEARING

BEFORE THE

OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

HEARING HELD
JULY 31, 2007

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

38–759 WASHINGTON : 2008

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office
Internet: bookstore.gpo.gov Phone: toll free (866) 512–1800; DC area (202) 512–1800
Fax: (202) 512–2104 Mail: Stop IDCC, Washington, DC 20402–0001

OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE

VIC SNYDER, Arkansas, *Chairman*

JOHN SPRATT, South Carolina
LORETTA SANCHEZ, California
ELLEN O. TAUSCHER, California
ROBERT ANDREWS, New Jersey
SUSAN A. DAVIS, California
JIM COOPER, Tennessee
HANK JOHNSON, Georgia
JOE SESTAK, Pennsylvania

W. TODD AKIN, Missouri
ROSCOE G. BARTLETT, Maryland
WALTER B. JONES, North Carolina
JEFF MILLER, Florida
PHIL GINGREY, Georgia
K. MICHAEL CONAWAY, Texas
GEOFF DAVIS, Kentucky

SUZANNE MCKENNA, *Professional Staff Member*
THOMAS HAWLEY, *Professional Staff Member*
ROGER ZAKHEIM, *Professional Staff Member*
SASHA ROGERS, *Research Assistant*

CONTENTS

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF HEARINGS

2007

Page

HEARING:

Tuesday, July 31, 2007, A Third Way: Alternatives for Iraq's Future (Part 4 of 4) 1

APPENDIX:

Tuesday, July 31, 2007 37

TUESDAY, JULY 31, 2007

A THIRD WAY: ALTERNATIVES FOR IRAQ'S FUTURE (PART 4 OF 4)

STATEMENTS PRESENTED BY MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

Akin, Hon. W. Todd, a Representative from Missouri, Ranking Member, Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee 2

Snyder, Hon. Vic, a Representative from Arkansas, Chairman, Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee 1

WITNESSES

Benjamin, Daniel, Director, Foreign Policy Studies, Senior Fellow, The Brookings Institution 14

Keane, Gen. Jack, (Ret.), Former Vice Chief of Staff of the Army, U.S. Army .. 3

McCaffrey, Gen. Barry R., U.S. Army (Ret.), Adjunct Professor of International Relations, United States Military Academy 9

Newbold, Lt. Gen. Gregory S., (Ret.), Former Director of Operations (J–3) for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, U.S. Marine Corps 6

O'Hanlon, Dr. Michael E., Senior Fellow, Foreign Policy Studies, The Brookings Institution 11

APPENDIX

PREPARED STATEMENTS:

Akin, Hon. W. Todd 43

Benjamin, Daniel 102

McCaffrey, Gen. Barry R., (Ret.) 46

Newbold, Lt. Gen. Gregory S., (Ret.) 52

O'Hanlon, Dr. Michael E., joint with Edward P. Joseph 57

Snyder, Hon. Vic 41

DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD:

[There were no Documents submitted.]

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD:

[There were no Questions submitted.]

A THIRD WAY: ALTERNATIVES FOR IRAQ'S FUTURE (PART 4 OF 4)

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE,
Washington, DC, Tuesday, July 31, 2007.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 1:05 p.m. in room 2212, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Vic Snyder (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. VIC SNYDER, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM ARKANSAS, CHAIRMAN, OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE

Dr. SNYDER. The hearing will come to order. Good afternoon. Welcome to the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations in the House Armed Services Committee. This is our fourth hearing on looking at alternatives and different strategies for Iraq.

My colleague, Mr. Akin and I entered into this series of hearings because we were frustrated by the tone of the discussion about Iraq this year and the polarization that has occurred. The political debate on our strategy in Iraq has too often been framed by whatis characterized as two extreme positions, precipitous withdrawal or stay the course indefinitely. And these hearings have been an attempt to bring in some smart, experienced people—I am not referring to the committee members, but referring to the witnesses—smart, experienced people that can help us identify and develop potentially alternative approaches for Iraq. But most importantly is to educate the committee. Our intent is much less to look at critiquing what has happened in the past, but to focus on the future.

Over the last three weeks, we have heard from retired senior military officers, defense policy experts and academics who specialize in Middle Eastern affairs. We have had the Honorable Bing West, Major General Paul Eaton, Colonel Paul Hughes, Dr. Steven Biddle last week. The full committee has also been holding hearings on trends and recent security developments in Iraq and the implications of the recent NIE with respect to al Qaeda, and we expect those kind of hearings to continue when we come back from the August recess.

Each witness today was selected because of his unique background and perspective. The written testimonies will be made a part of the record. I hope that we will have some vigorous discussion today not just between us and the committee members, but you should feel free to have that kind of, you know, intellectual dis-

cussion amongst yourselves. And we have been pleased over the last few weeks of how that has occurred.

For today's hearing we have another distinguished panel, including Retired General Jack Keane, who has been actively involved in advising the White House and the civilian and military leadership at the Pentagon and in the field, and who appeared before the full committee just last Friday; Retired General Barry McCaffrey, who has been traveling to and reporting on Iraq in his capacity as an adjunct professor at West Point for several years now, and was a cliffhanger because he had jury duty this morning, but we wanted him, and he wanted to be here, and that worked out fine; Retired Lieutenant General Greg Newbold, former Director of Operations for the Joint Chiefs of Staff; Dr. Michael O'Hanlon of the Brookings Institution, who just returned from eight days in Iraq, and recently had a publication in one of the major papers; and Mr. Daniel Benjamin of the Brookings Institution, whose scholarship in the field of counterterrorism can give us important insights in considering the future of Iraq.

Welcome to all of you.

I also wanted to acknowledge the presence of Mr. Saxton, and by unanimous consent he will be allowed to participate in this hearing today, along with the other Members.

And I will now turn to Ranking Member Mr. Akin from Missouri.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Snyder can be found in the Appendix on page 41.]

STATEMENT OF HON. W. TODD AKIN, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM MISSOURI, RANKING MEMBER, OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE

Mr. AKIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I wanted to likewise thank the witnesses for joining us, and welcome you all here.

I won't repeat what the Chairman has said, but the whole purpose of running a good number of hearings now week after week, and hearing from a quite a number of various witnesses, has been to say, well, what are the different alternatives? And are there specific alternatives different than what we are currently doing? And after reviewing our witnesses' testimonies, it is clear that some advocate departing from the current strategy; that is, you do not endorse a planning or a plan that emphasizes U.S. combat forces going door to door, performing a counterinsurgency mission aimed at securing and holding Iraq neighborhoods.

In light of the increasing reports that the surge is succeeding, I would like our witnesses to comment on how we in the Congress should view these developments. And particularly, Mr. O'Hanlon, I am interested in understanding how the significant changes taking place in Iraq that you described in your New York article affects your proposal for a soft partition. Particularly I want to get into the logic of what is a soft partition.

Those who advocate departing from the current strategy emphasize the need for improving the readiness of the Army and Marine Corps. General McCaffrey's testimony is heavily focused on this issue. While I think all Members agree this is an important issue and a vital priority, I am curious how your alternative will allow U.S. Troops to carry out the following military roles and missions:

one, training Iraqi forces; two, deterring conventional militaries from intervening in Iraq; three, supporting al Qaeda's enemies; and, four, conducting direct strike missions.

Almost all of the experts who have testified before this subcommittee on this subject agree that continuing with these roles and missions in Iraq is important.

Finally, according to previous witnesses, and there have been many, increased violence, humanitarian tragedy, a failed state, emboldened terrorists, and regional actors will all result in the wake of the withdrawal or significant drawdown of American forces. I would like to know how our witnesses will ensure that their plan will not make the situation worse. For those concerned about readiness, how will we ensure that subsequent to withdrawal the U.S. will not find itself in a situation where U.S. forces will have to return to Iraq in five or ten years?

I would also appreciate if you would take some time this afternoon to discuss how the U.S. should manage the consequences of withdrawal.

Thank you all for joining us and for giving us a chance to chat today.

Dr. SNYDER. Thank you, Mr. Akin.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Akin can be found in the Appendix on page 43.]

Dr. SNYDER. Mr. Akin laid down an agenda there, and I wanted to discuss the five-minute rule and our limitations on time. We will begin today with General Keane, who will at some point stand up somewhere between 2:15 and 2:30 because he has to leave, and we really appreciate him being here despite that constraint. We will put on our little clock that will turn red at the end of five minutes. If you have more to say, you say it. It is more just to give you an idea of where you all are at. When it comes to our turns, we will try pretty strictly to follow the five-minute rule. And so because of the number of you, when we ask a question, we want to hear a response from everyone. If everyone takes five minutes, we will be here for a half an hour per questioner, which won't work.

So let us begin today with General Keane, and then we will just start it and go down the other ways.

General Keane.

STATEMENT OF GEN. JACK KEANE, (RET.), FORMER VICE CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE ARMY, U.S. ARMY

General KEANE. Mr. Chairman, Congressman Snyder, Mr. Akin, fellow members of the subcommittee, thank you for the invitation to provide some testimony to you today. And I will make, I guess, a five-minute opening statement.

I welcome the opportunity to discuss the way ahead in Iraq. As we all know, it is a tough, complex problem, and truly must be approached as a regional issue with global implications. I understand the frustrations of Congress, as I said last week before the full committee, because I have been there myself, because we struggled and failed for three-plus years with our strategy in Iraq.

The President made a tough decision to change the strategy to conduct a counteroffensive. That operation began in February, and it is now in full stride with the arrival of our last forces in June.

As I said before, this counteroffensive from its inception is temporary. It is not designed to keep those force levels indefinitely. The time frame, generally speaking, is 12 to 18 months, with the intent to stabilize Baghdad, create the conditions to permit movement toward reconciliation, and buy time for the growth and development of the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF).

Based on my own observations, I want to share some facts with you and repeat some of those that I mentioned the last time, and I will do that very briefly. One is we have seized the initiative. We are on the offensive, and we have momentum over what we had in 2006, which was the opposite. Security has definitely improved. Michael O'Hanlon's article lays that out. And clearly sectarian violence is down, June being a one-year low. Suicide car bombings are down. And most importantly, down on the street, which I visited twice in the last few months, schools are open; markets are teeming with people, most are operating at full capacity; and the cafes, pool halls, and coffee houses are crowded. And most importantly, people believe things are improving.

The grass-roots movement among the Sunni, number three, is fundamentally a political movement in rejecting the al Qaeda, and their willingness to fight the al Qaeda, and also move toward reconciliation with the Shia government. This is a huge turnaround, with very significant ramifications. And people in Washington, I think, are just beginning to understand the magnitude of what this is. And I think it surprised all of us to the extent and the speed at which it is moving. But it should be instructive to us when local leaders decide to change because their people are pressuring them to change, how quickly that situation can dramatically change. And that is to the speed of it.

The al Qaeda, in my judgment, are being defeated in Iraq in 2007. And when we look back at it from 2009, I think we will see that. Their strategy to use suicide bombers exclusively against the Shia population has failed to provoke the Shia militia, as they had done so successfully in 2006. They lost two key sanctuaries in Diyala and Anbar provinces, and they are on the defensive, while we attack them simultaneously in every province that they have a presence, something we have never done before. The Shia militia, while still killing U.S. troops, are fragmented, with many of their special group leaders either dead or captured. Sadr has fled Iraq to Iran, frustrated and depressed, in terms of our intel sources, by the changing events in Iraq.

Economic progress, we have some, albeit not what it should be, but there are essential services, microloans, and opening of state factories beginning to take hold. Much, much more has to be done.

On the political side, no major piece of landmark legislation has been approved, and it is a disappointment, make no mistake about it. But the conditions are in place, and they are going to be strengthened, to achieve political reconciliation as we move down the road. It remains to be seen whether this government is up to that task.

So where do we go from here? In my judgment, we have to continue the plan that the President announced in December to grow the Army and the Marine Corps.

Number two, we must continue to cement the security gains that have been achieved in Iraq. The counteroffensive must continue, in my view, at least until the spring of 2008 before we begin to return to presurge force levels during 2008. That is about a 30- to 35,000 force reduction. During 2008, the trends will continue, violence down, suicide car bombs down, U.S. and Iraqi Forces casualties will continue to come down, and people will be more secure. More Sunnis will move toward reconciliation and further isolation of the al Qaeda. In my view, we will see some central government reconciliation. If we do not, and it is not achievable until the new elections in 2009 with a prospective new coalition, then we will continue to reduce our forces anyway, probably in a more deliberate, methodical manner, because we will be doing it under fire.

We need to develop a long-term security relationship with Iraq, which should be solidified in 2008, which contains the following: one, a recognition that Iraq is defenseless against its neighbors, and does not have a military organized, trained, and equipped for external defense.

Two, from 2008 through 2009, continue to increase the size of the Iraqi Security Forces from the 360,000, 390,000 by the end of this year, to 625,000 topped out by 2009. And the mission remains the same: internal defense. Most important, we have to properly equip this force, and it is not properly equipped.

Number three, continue to expand the quality and quantity of the U.S. advisory program to meet this need.

And number four, from 2010 plus, assuming internal defense is no longer a military issue, begin to transition the Iraqi military from internal defense to external defense. Enter into the Status of Force Agreements (SOFA), with the Iraqis, which will permit stationing of troops for advisory purposes and force protection in Iraq.

The timeline, as I see it, for this reduction, in summary, is 2008, down to the presurge levels and possibly beyond will hold Baghdad and the belt around it, and then reduce from out to the inside; establish long-range security arrangement with the Iraqis.

2009, continue force reduction and transition to the ISF. Based on ISF capability and security, we will go down below 100,000 for sure, close bases as required. We may as well be able to reduce from the four star command to the three star command, but that will remain to be seen.

2010, bring the force down to advisory only, with the appropriate force protection. Transition the Special Operation Force role to the Iraqi Security Force role, and for sure if we haven't reduced the headquarters in 2009, then take it down in 2010.

And then from 2010 on, transition to external defense forces, while operating a minimum of two or three bases, whatever the command feels is necessary to do that mission.

In conclusion, as we have always believed, if the counteroffensive works, you can reduce forces more rapidly because the level of violence goes down significantly, particularly after Sunni reconciliation. If it doesn't work, the force reduction should be slower, because you are withdrawing an Army under fire, and it must be done much more methodically and deliberately, but nonetheless must be done.

Complementary to military force should be our diplomatic effort in the region, which has been from the outset less than satisfactory. And we must take advantage of the mutual interests that the countries have in the region in Iraq not being a failed state, regardless of the historic differences. It is good to see the Administration taking this on at Sharm el Sheikh as we meet here today. Thank you for letting me provide some comments.

Dr. SNYDER. Thank you, General Keane, for being here again this week.

General Newbold.

STATEMENT OF LT. GEN. GREGORY S. NEWBOLD, (RET.), FORMER DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS (J–3) FOR THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF, U.S. MARINE CORPS

General NEWBOLD. Thank you, sir. What I would like to do is summarize my written testimony in as brief words as possible so we can focus on the questions, and hopefully some constructive answers.

In summary, I made my opposition to the war known when I was in uniform and since I have been out, but I must strongly say that it is my view that the Nation, having committed to war, it also ought to commit to winning it. My first preference is that the Nation do all things necessary to win, because the consequences of a forced withdrawal will be paid by future generations of Americans, and I think that would be tragic. And that unsettled nature of the region is a fact, I think, that is known to all.

Now having said that, I must say next that I think that there are eight ingredients to waging this successfully, and I will provide some criticism of them. The first thing we need is a coherent and sophisticated strategy, and so far we have not had one. I am not speaking of the surge, which I support, but what I am speaking of is a national strategy. We have been playing checkers while our enemy has been playing chess, and it is time to change that.

But we also need a militarily effective campaign in the country. We have had that. The military has performed, I think, profoundly well, and our young people have sacrificed enormously. They want to stay in the fight, and they would like to see us win it. But the corollary to that is what is done by the other elements of our national power, and, frankly, they have not been up to the bargain. We are occupying a nation of 25 million Muslims that has 40 percent unemployment, and we are surprised that it is in a state of unrest. We need, and frankly in a panel like this we ought to have, economists; we ought to have people of the political persuasion to talk about creating a viable government in Iraq, et cetera. But we have gone four and a half years without a viable political solution in Iraq, and I think that is tragic.

On the economic front, the unemployment, the fact that the utilities have not been brought up to prewar levels, that the pipeline is still subject to attack, I think it should be no wonder to us that there is an insurgency going on.

On the diplomatic level, the country is not isolated. The insurgency continues to be fed by neighbors, and there are larger issues than Iraq that need to be addressed by diplomacy. We are starting

to see some initiative, but four and a half years into a war is five years is too late.

Beyond those elements, I would say that the support of Congress is essential to prosecution of the war. And the fact is the momentum is very strongly moving against that, and it is likely to be exacerbated by upcoming elections.

And finally, I want to spend a moment on the Iraqis. The United States cannot impose stability and a political solution on Iraq. It can help to do that, but the Iraqis must take the lead themselves. While there have been some heroic instances of sacrifice by individual Iraqis or by groups of Iraqis, the fact is that it is still driven apart rather than driven together. And the factions have not seen enough way to forming a nation than they have to looking out for sectarian interests.

I would note one thing. Since the modern State of Iraq existed since largely about 1934, Iraq has had mandatory conscription until now. The greatest crisis in the history of the modern State of Iraq, and they have not seen fit to bring young people out of their neighborhoods, away from their sectarian mullahs, into a national entity, which would help the unemployment, which would guard their economy, which might even be a civilian conservation corps. But national service for a nation, that would indicate to me a commitment on the part of the Iraqis. It would indicate to me a commitment on the part of the Iraqis if they were willing to solve the oil problem, a division of the oil.

But as I said in the beginning, we cannot impose stability and a settlement on the Iraqis. They have to be willing to do it. And I think they need an impetus stronger than they have received so far.

My view is that the Nation, the U.S., is tired, that our people have grown exhausted by the war and by the debate over the war. They are tired of shouldering a burden largely with the British, and they wonder when it will ever end. The political nature of the debate in the United States has become more divided and divisive. The military is strained and stressed in ways that probably can't sustain this surge level beyond next February or March, and they deserve everything we can give to them. And I think the Iraqis need the impetus I have talked about before.

One caution before I make my recommendation. For those that would recommend a quick withdrawal, I think they also ought to sign on for the consequences. And the consequences are obvious. If we do not want local genocides and a civil war, then we shouldn't argue for a quick withdrawal. If we don't want a destabilized region, we shouldn't argue for quick withdrawal. If we don't believe that the free flow of oil is critical to the world's economy, then we ought to pay attention to the follow-on forces that will be required. If we don't want an unstable region and an Iraq that may foment terrorism, then we ought to be able to commit the resources in support of the assets of the United States that are necessary to quell that.

Now, my view. My view is we need a more modest set of goals than we have had as part of our national strategy. Setting new benchmarks and then achieving them would go a long way to being able to claim that we achieved what we wanted in Iraq.

I also think that the U.S. and our allies have paid a very dear price for what we have done not only in the young lives of Americans and how much we have committed of our national coffers. It is time for us to at least call for other nationals to be held accountable, those that pledged so much money at the beginning of the war and have yet to ante it up. The U.N. has been, in the Army term, absent without leave for years, and it is time to hold them accountable.

I think the U.S. has to pledge that whenever the withdrawal is completed, that we will not tolerate Iraq being a basis for terrorism. And I think we ought to also combine with the other nations of the region and the world to indicate that the world's economy depends on oil, and that that coalition of nations will ensure that it happens.

I think we ought to also commit publicly to the world that whenever the withdrawal takes, it ought to not signal a lack of U.S. resolve; that the U.S. is committed to our national security, to regional security, and the world's security, to play a role of leadership, and we intend to do that now and into the future.

I think we need to indicate a timeline for the withdrawal of forces. I am a strong minority opinion in that regard. I would not indicate an end date, but I would indicate a start date. And I would indicate that as the beginning of next spring. I would preserve the flexibility of our commanders and the flexibility of our national strategy in determining the speed of that withdrawal. And frankly, I would make it a point of leverage on the Iraqis for standing up their own capability.

And finally, I recommend that the U.S. Congress craft legislation similar to Goldwater-Nichols, that would create an interagency process that is a parallel to what has been done for the U.S. military. It is long past due time to have an efficient, interagency national security process with all the incentives and disincentives that made Goldwater-Nichols effective.

The only reason I agreed to appear before this subcommittee is this subcommittee has a reputation for bipartisanship and sincerity in approaching this issue. It is, as General Keane said, an impossibly complex, nearly theological problem. And not only do I applaud what the subcommittee is trying to do, but I urge them to be as active as they can in trying to reach out and gain a center of our national opinion so that we can move forward on this.

That is my comments, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. SNYDER. Thank you, General. We appreciate your thoughtful comments. My wife's a minister. She likes theological problems.

[The prepared statement of General Newbold can be found in the Appendix on page 52.]

Dr. SNYDER. General McCaffrey, we understand you are here today because some attorney downtown decided that the former drug czar was not the best person to have on a jury on a drug possession charge, and they dismissed you from the pool. General McCaffrey.

STATEMENT OF GEN. BARRY R. MCCAFFREY, U.S. ARMY (RET.), ADJUNCT PROFESSOR OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY

General MCCAFFREY. No comment on that case.

Let me thank the committee for the opportunity to appear before you. I am very proud to be associated with the people on the panel. I have known them all for years. Michael O'Hanlon is one the most objective, astute observers of the situation in Iraq that I follow. I certainly would associate myself with General Newbold's comments. That was right down the line, to be blunt, of what I believe.

Let me add some viewpoints. In my written testimony I spend a good bit of the time talking about resourcing the military to carry out the national security strategy we have chosen, or alternatives in the coming years. Let me turn directly and solely to Iraq.

A couple thoughts. First of all, we are in there. We have got 160,000 troops involved. We have had 32,000 killed and wounded. We are spending $12 billion a month. Oil is at stake. Our allies' safety and security, the Saudis, the Kuwaitis, the Gulf Coast States, the Jordanians, there is a lot at stake. And I could not agree more that the consequences of failure will be monumental to the American people for the coming 10 years or more. So we shouldn't be unmindful of that. And certainly one option I would immediately take off the table, we do not, in my view, in a responsible way have the option to walk away from the table. As General Colin Powell said, if you break it, you own it.

I also think the whole notion of bringing David Petraeus, who, I might add, probably is the most talented person I ever met in my life, but bringing him home in September to articulate where we are, why it is going in the right direction, and gaining the support of the American people is a grievous mistake. There is no reason why in September a bitter civil war in Iraq will be substantially changed. Yes, there are international terrorists there. Yes, there are 500 or so al Qaeda terrorists, most of them, I might add, who are Iraqi. But the bottom line is we are engaged right now in trying to tamp down a terrible struggle to the death for political survival in a bitterly divided nation. It seems to me we have to give General Petraeus a year to see if this so-called new set of tactics and approach will work, or I don't see any particular pay-off.

Second, it seems to me we now have not only a new, brilliant, modest, experienced, team-playing Secretary of Defense, we have got to give Dr. Rice and her ambassador Ryan Crocker the opportunity to start arguing for regional dialogue. That isn't an AAA conference, that isn't two one-day meetings. It seems to me you set up a forum, probably in a safe zone, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait or wherever, and you get the parties talking for the next five years. We have got to give her a year to engage regional dialogue.

Third, and the thing that I banged away at from the start, here we are losing 1,000 or so marines and soldiers killed and wounded a month, quite happily putting almost half of our combat power on the ground in Iraq, but we have not adequately resourced the Iraqi Army or Police from the start. It is immeasurably better today than it was a year ago. Petraeus, Dubik are now starting to get the kinds of resources they need.

But at the end of the day, we are out of Iraq in 36 months or less unless the Iraqis turn this around. When we leave, will we leave a force that has the potential to maintain internal order? And if the answer is it is 500 Cougars instead of 5,000 armored vehicles, if the answer is it is 70 junk Soviet helicopters when we have got 900 helicopters on the ground, if it is 3 C130's when we are using a huge piece of our Air Force lift assets to sustain this war, then we are not in the right ballpark. We cannot allow the Iraqi Army and Police to try and confront the situation on the ground with the anemic resourcing we have done to date.

Fourth observation, it seems to me, and this would be, you know, an almost antistrategic note, that we have got to draw down the force in Iraq. The Army, and to a lesser extent Marines, Air Force lift, Special Ops are starting to come apart. I would actually tell the Commander of CENTCOM, when this Administration leaves office, you have this force down to ten brigades, and you tell me what you are going to do with those ten brigades. But it is unmistakable in my mind that starting in April, the U.S. Army starts to unravel at an accelerated rate. It is already severely degraded. This is the first time since World War II that we are strategically as a ground combat force in such a vulnerable position. If the other shoe drops, Castro dies, a half million Cuban refugees, miscalculation on the Korean Peninsula, a whole series of potential vulnerabilities, a major strike on the homeland, with millions of refugees in flight, we have left the U.S. Armed Forces, the U.S. National Guard, the central load-bearing institution of domestic security, ill-equipped to move forward. So we have to draw down the force. We have got to tell the force providers, get on with it.

Fifth, it seems to me we have to get out of the cities. Now, I have no real argument. I think Petraeus has come up with a committed engagement strategy. I personally do not believe we are in Iraq to fight a counterinsurgency battle or to win the hearts and minds of the Iraqi people. We are there strictly to stand up a government, stand up a security force, ensure there isn't regional mischief that would knock the Iraqis off track, and then to largely disengage. So I think we ought to get out of the city. I don't understand why 30,000 U.S. combat troops in the city of Baghdad with 5-, 6 million Arabs murdering each other with electric drills, car bombs and 120 mortars, why are U.S. GIs door to door the solution to an underlying bitter sectarian struggle?

Seventh, we got to resource our failing military. And when I say resource, I don't just mean manpower. You know, we got this almost ludicrous notion that we are going to build the Army at 7,000 people a year. For God sakes, there are 300 million of us. We would have come apart already were it not for our Reserve components and National Guard. The Army should be 850,000 people. The Marines are short 25,000 at a minimum. We have 124,000 contractors on the ground in Iraq, without which communications doesn't work, logistics doesn't work. Almost no military function can be carried out except maneuver warfare because we lack the uniform capability to carry out these operations.

I might also add that 20 years from now when this committee has a hearing, the question will be, as the PRC legitimately emerges as a giant economic and military power in the Pacific re-

gion, do we have a high-technology Air Force and Navy two generations in advance of the threat as a deterrent to mischief in the Pacific region? And I would argue we are draining modernization dollars out of the Air Force and Navy to spend on consumables to fight the short-term war.

We can't forget about the next tier of countries, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. I went in for General Abizaid, spent a week in Saudi Arabia looking around. These people are drowning in money. They send their kids to our schools. They bank here. They had three U.S. Senators visit Saudi Arabia in three years. We have shunned them in the international community. They are vulnerable to what they see as the Persian threat to the east, and now, given the mess we have made of Iraq, to the north. The Pakistanis are vital to our continued prosecution of the operation in Afghanistan. So we got to pay some attention to the next line.

And finally, and I am echoing General Newbold's comments here, I actually don't think, notwithstanding the incredible leadership we now have, thank God, engaged in this, Secretary Gates, Rice, Petraeus, Crocker and others, I don't think we are going to decide the outcome in Iraq. I think this is an Iraqi issue. It bothers me intensely when I hear the great pride all of us have at battalion and brigade commanders with CERP funds picking up garbage, fixing sewage systems. That is not why this war is happening. These people aren't murdering each other because they are out of work or there is trash in the streets. They are fighting over something quite logical, power and survival, and the world that will exist when we come out of Iraq. So I think we ought to have a more—as General Newbold already articulated, a more modest view of what is possible. This is going to be an Arab country and an Arab army when we leave in three years.

Thank you.

Dr. SNYDER. Thank you, General McCaffrey.

[The prepared statement of General McCaffrey can be found in the Appendix on page 46.]

Dr. SNYDER. I wanted to acknowledge the presence of Adam Smith of Washington State, who is a member of the full committee, like Mr. Saxton, but is also not a member of this subcommittee. And we appreciate him being here today, and, without objection, will be allowed to participate.

Dr. O'Hanlon.

STATEMENT OF DR. MICHAEL E. O'HANLON, SENIOR FELLOW, FOREIGN POLICY STUDIES, THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

Dr. O'HANLON. Thank you. It is an honor to be here. I appreciate the opportunity.

The previous witnesses have already talked a lot about conditions in Iraq, and I would agree with General Keane and others that a number of trend lines are in the right direction at the tactical military level against certain of our enemies.

But, Congressman Akin, you asked me to talk about my trip and the concept of soft partition. I want to hone in right on that, because I think that overall we are seeing greater progress against the extremist militias, al Qaeda in Iraq and related Salafist movements, some of the more extreme Shia militias; less progress, how-

ever, in dealing with the sectarian war, the civil war. And I think if I was going to summarize our progress so far, we are actually making a fair amount of headway annihilating al Qaeda in Iraq and other Salafist movements, especially since the Sheiks have started to switch sides and work with us. But all we have done with the civil war is suppress it. We haven't solved it. And it is mostly because of the Iraqi political leadership not having done their part, whether at the top down or even at the bottom up so far.

Let me, if I could, begin with an image of a neighborhood. I know a lot of you have been to Iraq, and a lot of you have studied the different neighborhoods. A couple neighborhoods in Baghdad where the problem was vivid for me. Both of them were sort of along the airport road, from the Green Zone toward the west of the city, al Mansur to the north of the road, west Rashid to the south.

In the al Mansur area, and this is Ghazaliya specifically, what you are seeing is you have got Shia up in the northeast part of that neighborhood, and it is probably half a million people or more in this overall sector of town. It is a large part of Baghdad. And you have got Sunnis sort of to the southwest. And what we are doing is putting up a lot of concrete barriers and allowing a lot of Iraqi forces to man checkpoints, protecting their own neighborhoods. And there is a real good logic to that as long as we are there.

But what is the transition strategy? Which Iraqi units are going to be able to replace us in that objective, nonsectarian way? Now, you could say that the Shia can patrol their neighborhoods, the Sunni can patrol theirs. And that works as long as no one decides to rock the boat too much. But then they can start blocking each other's access points into their neighborhoods. They can start getting in mortar fire into each other's zones. You can imagine that coming undone. So that is a hard problem.

Even worse is West Rashid to the south of the airport road, because there, again, remarkable progress of our forces in essentially freezing in place the current situation, suppressing the violence. But what you have got is a checkerboard, Sunnis here, Shia there, Sunnis here, Shia there, all over that district. And there is not an economically viable subunit you can create that is all or mostly Sunni, and then another one that is all or mostly Shia. You can't even begin to put up concrete barriers and checkpoints, because if you try, you cut these people off, little urban ghettos of a few blocks on a side, and it doesn't work.

So this, for me, is the challenge. I don't think we have got this solved. I wrote an optimistic, overall positive op-ed yesterday with Ken Pollack about a lot of our progress, but this piece of it is going to require some major headway if we are going to be seeing our way toward a viable outcome in Iraq, and also some kind of an exit strategy.

So are what are the various ways you could see that happen? Well, one of them, of course, is if current strategy can really succeed on the political front in a way that it so far has not at all. And the Iraqi leadership is going to have to come along and start making compromises at the top. Over time you can try to build a nonsectarian military. General Keane quotes the total numbers. I am actually even more interested in the numbers that we think are

nonsectarian, and right now that is probably in the few thousands, a few thousand total people equivalent. And we are going to have to get those numbers up into the tens of thousands so they can at least patrol these intersectarian fault lines.

That is one strategy. Political leadership at the top helps create a more viable environment for compromise. And then from the bottom up you build up these nonsectarian security forces, and you develop a transition strategy. That is ambitious. So I put out another proposal, which is also ambitious, and this one is with Ed Joseph, the soft partition argument, building on Senator Biden. And I know people like Rahm Emanuel and some others have some interest in this kind of idea as well.

The idea there is to say maybe it is just too much to preserve some of these checkered neighborhoods. Maybe you are better off allowing people, or even encouraging people, not forcing people, to move, so that you essentially have more sectarian homogeneity in some of these neighborhoods, and you can put your more modest number of nonsectarian forces along the fault lines between these different groups. And the concept here is Baghdad is going to be mostly a Shia city. It already is, frankly, but you would allow the process to go a little further forward. But you would help the people who move with houses and jobs, and there are a number of mechanisms by which you could do that. I won't go into the details right now. But that is the kind of concept that I think is behind soft partition.

You also then take this notion we are applying at the neighborhood-by-neighborhood level and you broaden it, which is the idea of creating local security forces that are designed and hired to protect their own people, their own neighborhoods, their own kin. That is what is working in al-Anbar. That is what is working in a number of other places. The logic of soft partition says do that more generally throughout Iraq. Try to create three autonomous zones. And most security forces then work for the autonomous regional governments. And, of course, the police would be recruited and trained locally and protect their own neighborhoods.

So another big piece of this, in addition to the job creation, the housing help and the population movements, is putting more of the security forces under the control of the regional governments.

There are a number of other aspects that we try to think through in this report that I did with Ed Joseph on the mechanics of soft partition. I am happy to discuss those in the Q and A. I don't want to throw too much detail right at you in the way of just conjuring up this image.

But let me conclude by saying I would agree with a number of the American and Iraqi officials we met with last week, and a number, of course, of you who have talked with me about this plan who say it can't work until the Iraqis want it, and right now for the most part they don't. A number of Kurds do, and the occasional Shia. Mr. al-Hakim, for example, has been in favor of this at times. But precisely because Hakim is in favor of it, other Shia are not in favor of it. And Sunnis still worry that this will be a way to ultimately put them off in the western ghetto of Iraq, without oil, without much control and influence in Baghdad.

And there are a lot of things that you have to mitigate in terms of people's fears before this plan can work, but I think if you share oil equally, which, you know, on a per capita basis, which has to be part of any future concept for Iraq, soft partition can actually offer something to each major ethnic group. For the Kurds, it is not much change from what they have got. For the Sunnis, it allows them to institutionalize policing themselves and get the Shia militias to agree to stay out of their neighborhoods and give them some more defensible front lines. For the Shia, it allows them to finally build the democratic Shia-led state that, frankly, they have wanted for a long time, and for two and a half years after the invasion they were willing to try to build without much violence, until things just got out of hand.

So I am happy to go into this in more detail later, but my trip, as much as it made me optimistic about the tactics that we are using and the military progress, it led me to think that we have not yet solved the ethnic problem or the sectarian problem. We have to get a solution to that. One piece of it could be the current strategy, and we finally see reconciliation and compromise among the different leaders in Iraq. But another strategy might be for them to agree, listen, we better agree on one thing if we can't agree on other things, which is we are better off living somewhat apart and preserving a limited state rather than pretending we can actually stitch it all back together.

So I still stand by soft partition as my preferred political framework. Unfortunately, right now I don't have enough converts to have that be the main proposal. So Senator Biden and a few others and I are going to keep pushing it. I don't think it has to be the framework. I think you might be able to pull it off with the current strategy, but I am dubious, even after my generally inspiring trip of last week. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Dr. O'Hanlon joint with Edward P. Joseph can be found in the Appendix on page 57.]

Dr. SNYDER. Mr. Benjamin.

STATEMENT OF DANIEL BENJAMIN, DIRECTOR, FOREIGN POLICY STUDIES, SENIOR FELLOW, THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

Mr. BENJAMIN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Representative Akin, members of the committee, I want to thank you for the opportunity to testify today, and especially to be in here in such distinguished company.

The previous speakers have all addressed the very largest issues. I would like to narrow my focus a little bit here and discuss really just the different sort of scenarios we might envision in terms of the terrorist threat as it might develop, depending upon how we pursue our policy in the region.

Let me restate the obvious and say that prediction in this environment is especially hazardous, and we have all paid a price for overly optimistic scenarios over the last several years. Let's begin by acknowledging a fact that I think now is beyond dispute. There were no jihadist terrorists in Iraq before the U.S. invasion of 2003. Today there are probably several thousand. Some are undoubtedly foreigners, including most of the suicide bombers. Nonetheless, this

is primarily an Iraqi group, and it will comprise a significant security threat for some time to come.

Well, what is the future of al Qaeda in Iraq? We have heard from my colleague Mike O'Hanlon, the man in the next office, that there is good news, and I welcome that. But I have to say that we have had an awful lot of relentlessly downbeat news over the last few years, and at the moment I am prepared to look on the pessimistic side and to prepare for the worst.

Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) has shown itself over the years to be an adaptive and highly mobile organization. It can move operations to areas of greater opportunity at really the snap of a finger. It is resilient. It has demonstrated the ability to penetrate Iraqi forces and the regime. And we need only think back a few weeks to the bombing in Baghdad that killed several of those al-Anbar sheiks who had decided to cooperate together against al Qaeda. I would argue that absent a broader political agreement that creates a framework for nationwide security, we may reduce the group, but we will not eliminate it. And the fact is the tool we have used against al Qaeda, our military, is far from the ideal one for combating terrorism, through no fault of its own. It simply wasn't designed to do this, and it is a very difficult target for the military. Until we have a strong Iraqi intelligence service working in the country, we will continue to face very serious difficulties.

Well, what is al Qaeda in Iraq going to be doing over the next few years? If we maintain our presence in the country, I think there is no question they will continue to target us first and foremost. After all, this is how they demonstrate their valor to like-minded people within the Muslim world, and this is how they demonstrate their bona fides, by killing Crusader forces. We should also expect AQI to continue attacks designed to cause large numbers of Shia casualties and to stoke sectarian strife.

What if the U.S. withdraws from Iraq, under whatever set of circumstances? A central argument of the Administration has been that a U.S. Departure from Iraq would lead to a jihadist takeover. I do not find this to be a credible scenario. Al Qaeda is losing support among Sunnis, as we have heard, and a few thousand people are simply not going to take over the country. Even if all the other Sunnis stood aside and the Iraqi military were to dissolve, the Shia militias would still stand between al Qaeda and that kind of dominance. Al Qaeda in Iraq has also shown an incapability of holding territory over a sustained period of time. In short, jihadist Iraq is an improbable outcome.

A more likely outcome, actually, of our departure is that the Shia militias would be galvanized to take on al Qaeda directly, and that some of those who have enjoyed watching the United States kill Sunni opponents for them would move into action. I don't think we should have any—and by the way, they might be much more successful than we are because they would be less constrained, shall we say, in the use of force.

We should not have any illusions about what this would look like. It would occur within the context of considerable sectarian violence. AQI will not shy from this fight. There is a strong anti-Shia animus within al Qaeda in Iraq and within the broader jihadist movement. Jihadist communications frequently describe the Shia

as worse than the Americans. And the rise of Iran is viewed as a deplorable event.

Let me emphasize I do not consider withdrawal from Iraq and leaving the Shia militias to take on al Qaeda to be an attractive course, but I am skeptical, as I suggested before, that we can achieve the, quote, complete victory that the President has called for in his speech in South Carolina referring to al Qaeda.

Let me try to summarize some of the other points in my testimony and move us right along. If we do depart Iraq, we will need to devise a reliable covert capability for dealing with the problem of terrorist safe havens in largely ungoverned space. The problem already exists in Pakistan and may well materialize in Iraq. My own view is that our senior military commanders have been averse to using Special Forces on counterterrorism missions for which they are very trained. And I argued in a recent New York Times op-ed with Steven Simon that it is time to look at deploying the CIA and giving them more responsibility in this area.

Another Administration argument is a U.S. departure from Iraq will embolden the terrorists. Well, obviously there is a great degree of truth in this, but I would add that the terrorists to a large degree already believe that they have been victorious, and one need only read their comments on their Web sites and the like. And I think we need to ask what are the implications of the sense of achievements that they have developed?

Well, it is often suggested that leaving Iraq before the destruction of AQI will lead to an enhanced jihadist threat to the United States homeland. Undoubtedly, if there are more jihadists out there, then there is a greater aggregate threat. However, most of AQI's fighters are going to be incapable of participating in any kind of direct attack on America because they lack the cultural abilities to navigate in Western societies. A few may try to carry their violence to the West, and the possibility that one of the doctors involved in the recent car bomb conspiracy in the United Kingdom, that he was an Iraqi jihadist, is certainly an ominous hint. But if the U.S. forces depart, I suggest the more direct threat will be offshore to American interests, and especially to the regimes of the Muslim world, which are still viewed as apostate and deserving of overthrow.

The dangers associated with this are evident from the recent uprising at the Palestinian refugee camp in Lebanon, where fighters from Iraq reportedly played a key role. We can also look at Saudi Arabia, which recently announced the arrest of 172 militants, a very striking event. Terrorism is a game of small numbers, and 172 in this context is a very large one. The return of only a couple of hundred jihadists to Saudi Arabia could prove a challenge for the Interior Ministry and its forces. Other countries that face serious domestic terrorist problems include Jordan and Syria, the two major recipients of refugees from Iraq's turmoil.

Farther away, we can also see that there may be some spillover from Iraq, particularly in Europe. The number of Muslims who have traveled from Europe to Iraq appear to be relatively small, and many of those have been killed in action. It is also true that Abu Mussab al Zarqawi was building a network in Europe. But I think a consideration of the European dimension of the problem

points to one crucial conclusion. Against all the problems we may face by departing Iraq, we need to balance the gains we would make by reducing the ability of AQI members to galvanize others around the world. In Western Europe and even the United States, the ability of al Qaeda in Iraq to broadcast its heroic deeds in the form of videos and communiques has had a powerful effect on those liable to be radicalized. Some European experts contend that a U.S. withdrawal from Iraq would significantly reduce terrorist activity in their continent. I can't say that with any certainty, but we need to recognize that this would cap the radicals' ability to argue that the United States is a predatory power that is occupying an Islamic nation.

I think that we need to recognize that we are on the horns of a dilemma. On the one hand there is the jihadist myth that says the United States is a paper tiger, and that will result in a certain amount of jubilation if we depart. On the other hand is the argument that we are a predatory power in occupying Iraq. To a certain extent I believe the jihadists have already declared the first part to be—I am sorry, have already discounted the first part; that is, it is already built into their appreciation of their situation. We would benefit greatly by no longer having them able to make the second argument.

Let me also just turn to one other potential development, and that is the danger of what we might call Afghanistan two. The news that Saudi Arabia, for example, is buying up tribes in Iraq suggests that what we face over the long term, whether we stay or not, is a proxy war, and this could have devastating implications for the neighborhood and for the rest of us.

I view the likelihood of a wider regional war as being rather slim. These are not militaries that are going to invade each other. They are not capable, by and large, of offensive operations. But if they do start conducting a proxy war in Iraq, then the possibility of anti-Shia sentiment being used to mobilize the Sunni world is quite dangerous indeed, and we could see this becoming a conflict that sucks in radicals from all over the region. And with all the money and weaponry that would be delivered to them if this is a replay of Afghanistan, we could see a recreation of organizations like al Qaeda, as we did in the 1980's and the 1990's.

I think the United States ought to make it a high-level diplomatic priority to prevent that. I am fully cognizant of the fact that we have very few levers to deal with this precisely because of our lack of influence over Iran. Nonetheless, I think that this is something we should be clear-eyed about and recognize as one of the worst possible outcomes we could face. Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Benjamin can be found in the Appendix on page 102.]

Dr. SNYDER. Thank you all for your thoughtful comments. Those buzzers you heard were the sound of votes going off. What we will do is we are going to take a few minutes, we will use my time, Mr. Akin, and see if anyone has questions for General Keane, because you will have to leave during these votes. This is a series of eight votes. I hope the rest of you can stay. Lori on the staff here will help you find rooms with phones, or rooms with privacy or treats, or whatever you need to entice you to stick around, because most

of us will come back after the votes. We have about probably five, six minutes before we have to leave.

General Keane, I wanted to ask you one question and see if anybody else has any specific questions for you before we have to run across the street. When you and I talked on the phone last week—and I hope you don't mind me sharing this little tidbit here—you expressed frustration, as Mr. Akin and I have, with the polarization that has gone on in this debate. It is not just in this town; it is just the way the nature of the debate is around the country. And the comment you made to me stuck with me in which you said, you know, the sides aren't that far apart; that, in your view, you used to talk about 12 to 18 months, and I think you then expressed a view that people who recognize—are interested in pulling troops out recognize it is going to be a fair amount of time to withdraw troops if we started today.

Would you flesh that out for me? What do you mean when you say the sides aren't that far apart, if I am quoting you right? Because that is not the way those of us here in this town see it.

General KEANE. Yeah, I think so. I don't disagree with the President in not stating when he would believe we would have a withdrawal of surge forces, because he doesn't want to flag that before an operation actually begins. And I think that is appropriate behavior for a Commander in Chief.

But for the life of me, one of the things that just always has frustrated me, why we could not get senior congressional Democratic and Republican leaders together and share the details of what the intentions were; that this was 12 to 18 months at best, and we were probably going to go back to presurge levels in 2008 one way or the other, which is—believe me, is going to happen one way or the other, one way being it is successful, the other being it is not. And if that is the case, that they—we may be, at least at this tactical level, which this is, to take, you know, a bipartisan approach to it, given the fact that the withdrawal of troops has become such a trigger point, you know, for so many people. And I have been frustrated from that ever since I got involved in the details of this, going back to the November and December time frame on this.

Other than those who want precipitous withdrawal, and just keeping moving it right out of the country as fast as you can get it, I believe they are on one side, and they are in the minority, where there are others who want to start to begin some kind of a phased withdrawal, and so does the Administration, and so do the military commanders. And why we couldn't put that together somehow is frustrating to me.

Dr. SNYDER. Mr. Akin, do you have any questions for General Keane?

Mr. AKIN. Yeah, just a couple quick ones.

I forget how many witnesses we have talked to, but, boy, we have talked to a whole lot of them, because we have been doing this for a number of weeks at a time, and this has been really popular. Usually when you see a committee sitting there, you see the Chairman and the other guy who is the Ranking Member, who is sort of the captive audience that has to be here, and there is nobody else. In all of these hearings you see many Congressmen sitting

here, because people are very interested in what we are talking about.

Now, one of the things that has happened is a chance for—having sitting here, has been seeing a pattern in what we have heard our witnesses say. So I just want to check if you fit into the same pattern. The first pattern is a fairly rapid or precipitous withdrawal of troops, aside from leaving us somewhat exposed as we are retreating, is going to create a lot of problems, first of all, in terms of a great deal of killing within the country, and then also regional instability at a minimum. Do all of you pretty much agree that we just can't zip out of there very quickly? Is that pretty common? Everybody else has said the same thing.

Everyone else said the same thing. The second thing we asked was—we asked every one of you and tasked you when you came here to this hearing to come up with—if you don't like what we are doing, give us a better alternative. Now, of the different people we have heard from, nobody has really offered us a very different alternative. They have given us all kinds of lists of insights and some of them very helpful and insightful. But when you come down to what we have heard, most people are saying what you are doing right now, I can't think of something a whole lot different. This has got to—do you disagree with that.

General MCCAFFREY. I would not be in that camp. I think from the start that the notion that we have not focused as a center of mass on the training, equipment and deploying Iraqi security forces was a fundamental mistake of the war. I wouldn't have dismissed the old army. I would have fired all their generals; taken the captains and made them lieutenant colonels; equipped them in a first-rate fashion. And it is still grossly under-resourced. How could we possibly sit there and boast, to me, in Iraq that they were going to send 500 cougar armor vehicles to the Iraqi Army and me counter with, the right answer is 5,000? And in every case across the board—we are now in, what, year four of the war, we have got an Iraqi army driving around in Toyota trucks, no mortars, no artillery.

Mr. AKIN. Let me explain what I am saying. What I'm saying is, starting with the beginning of this year, with the new approach that we are doing, which is significant——

General MCCAFFREY. I still don't see an argument for the Iraqi security forces as a——

Mr. AKIN. So what you are saying is——

General MCCAFFREY. All the arguments over withdrawing U.S. Forces—turn the argument around and talk—regional dialogue, internal political reconciliation to build the Iraqi security forces. That is the future of the war because we are coming out one way or the other in the next 36 months. This war is an endgame.

Mr. AKIN. You say we are not doing that currently now anywhere near what——

General MCCAFFREY. Not even in the ballpark.

Mr. AKIN. Of what you think we should be doing.

General MCCAFFREY. Right.

General KEANE. In addition to that is that we have finally owned up to the fact that the size of the Iraqi security forces, which have gradually, incrementally increased in our objectives, is decidedly

inadequate given the level of responsibility for internal defense. And that thing has got to grow, and I think rightfully so, the commander is talking about 600,000. And some of us for some time have been arguing for 600,000 or 700,000 is about right, and I completely agree with what General McCaffrey is saying, that we have got to properly equip them finally.

Dr. SNYDER. I know the doctor wanted to give a question to General Keane. It is fair to say to Members, we have got less than five minutes to go on the vote. We are in recess. General Keane, thank you for being with us. I hope the other four of you can stay because we are very interested in what you have to say.

[Recess.]

Dr. SNYDER. We will resume our hearing.

Gentlemen, I apologize for the delay. And it is bad timing, but that just happens sometimes.

Mr. Bartlett, for five minutes.

Mr. BARTLETT. Thank you very much, and thank you for your patience. I am intrigued by the discussion, Dr. O'Hanlon, of a soft partitioning of Iraq. For a long time, I have felt that there are only two probable outcomes: One is a soft partitioning, and another is another strongman hopefully a little more benevolent than Saddam Hussein was. I just don't see any middle ground for people who have been at each other's throats for 1,400 years, which is why, by the way, I voted for the Spratt substitute which said we shouldn't go to war in Iraq unless we had a U.N. Resolution so that it wasn't our war; it was their war. If the President couldn't get that, I wanted him to come back to the Congress for another vote before we went there.

My question about the soft partitioning is, how do you handle those that are living in the wrong place? Clearly we could have built a McMansion for each one of them with far less money than we spent on the war if that is what we were going to do going in. And second, what do you do about those mixed marriages, you know, to make sure that there wasn't going to be any problems?

Before you answer my question, before my time runs out, I would like for you to help me in the little poll I have been conducting. If you will take a piece of paper and write on it four things: They hate each other. They hate al Qaeda—General McCaffrey, unless you have a fantastic memory——

General MCCAFFREY. I am actually sort of reluctant to get involved in wherever you are going.

Mr. BARTLETT. I want you to write down four things, and beside each one of those four things, I want you to put down the percent of the violence in Iraq that you think is engendered by that. Okay? So the four things are: They hate each other; they hate al Qaeda; they hate us; and something else. We are just trying to get some sense of what the problem is. We have a lot of violence in Iraq, and we are trying to get some sense of where it is coming from. And we have now asked a number of people this same question. Hate each other, hate al Qaeda, hate us and something else. If you would just write down the percentage of the violence in Iraq that you think is engendered by each of those.

General McCaffrey, you seem to have finished. If you could give me your numbers.

General MCCAFFREY. I don't want to accept the premise of your argument. I think that where we are is, we are involved in a struggle in a country of 28 million people. We have got 160,000 of our terrific kids in there. It is overwhelmingly a civil war between two of the three factions. There will be a second fight between the Kurds and the Arabs in the coming five years. And interlaced with that, we had a huge failure of governmental institutions in Iraq allowing massive criminality, men who threaten Iraqi mothers and business people. And then, on top of that, we have got elements of an international jihadist movement throwing kerosene on fire. So I think that complexity is what we are trying to deal with.

Mr. BARTLETT. They hate each other you would place very high? It is a civil war?

General MCCAFFREY. I think the dominant challenge right now is—but I am not sure it is hatred. It is fear, fear of the future. It is, where am I going to be five years from now when the Americans are gone? And that is really the crux of it. And they are logical to be fearful of the future.

Mr. BARTLETT. One of our witnesses described—if you had to use one word to describe the climate over there, it is fear was the word he used, if you had to limit it to one word.

General Newbold, do you have numbers down by yours?

General NEWBOLD. Sir, I am with General McCaffrey on this in one sense, and that is, I am reluctant to give precise numbers. I would say overwhelmingly the two reasons for the violence in Iraq are: They perceive us as an occupying power in their country; and the other one is the bitter sectarian issues and the fear, as General McCaffrey described, to cause them to want to defend or attack. Overwhelming it is those two, and there is some fighting with al Qaeda now.

Mr. BARTLETT. So problems with each other and with us are the two major reasons from your perspective.

Do the other two have numbers down?

Dr. O'HANLON. I will go quickly if you allow me to modify, as General McCaffrey has, from hatred to fear. I will say 50 percent for that; and then 35 percent al Qaeda; 15 percent U.S.

Mr. BARTLETT. And one last.

Mr. BENJAMIN. I think I am going to duck on the numbers as well. But I would note that if you simply break down the number of casualties, then it is overwhelmingly sectarian. But if you were looking at the amount of ordnance that is being spent on attacking the United States, you might come up with a very different sort of figure. So, you know, it is a very confusing sort of situation. In terms of the big picture, I think there is relatively little violence that involves their hatred for al Qaeda. But that is simply because of the numbers that are involved.

Mr. BARTLETT. That has been pretty consistent with all of the witnesses. So you would put down problems with each other and problems with us are the two major reasons for the violence?

Mr. BENJAMIN. Yes. And sometimes it is hard to disentangle them, too; in other words, that our presence may be providing an opportunity for sectarian violence by providing a shield of some kind or—it is simply a profoundly complicated dynamic that is unfolding. And in fact, even to say it is sectarian is often confusing

because we have lots of violence between Shi'a, for example, and lots of violence between different groups of Sunni. So, very often, it is criminality; it is turf protection. I think that what we are getting at here is the concept of a civil war is in some ways not appropriate for this. There is a civil war going on, but there is also a war, as Thomas Hobbes would have called it, a war of all against each other. And that is part of the reason why bringing a pacification strategy to any kind of successful conclusion is so difficult.

Mr. BARTLETT. I understand the problem, Mr. Chairman, giving a quantitative answer to a qualitative problem. But thank you all very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. SNYDER. Ms. Davis for five minutes.

Ms. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you all for being here. Let me just catch my notes for a second. One of the things that was said earlier is that I think, maybe as General Keane said, that he was perplexed by the fact that we hadn't really spoken about our intentions, had not been clear about where we were going. And on the other hand, you spoke about the need for regional strategies, a strategic plan. I would like you to talk a little bit about the capacity issue because I have always been concerned that we didn't really have the interagency infrastructure. We know that. It was mentioned that we should provide the military resources, too.

I think, General McCaffrey, you mentioned that we ought to be giving the Iraqis better equipment, more equipment. Why aren't we doing that? This whole issue of whether we are able to develop the capacity to do what we want to do right now, where do you see that? If that is something we should be doing, why aren't we? Is that a problem of the Congress? Is it something that, again, in the capacity that we ought to be doing more in terms of oversight? Where do you see that? How would you grade that, and how would you grade it in the next six months? I mean, how is it going to improve?

Dr. O'HANLON. I can begin with an anecdote from my trip which is that we met a number of Iraqi security forces complaining about how Baghdad was not providing them the equipment that they were due. And this gets to the point General McCaffrey was making, and I will defer to him and others in a second. But there is the question of whether the U.S. should be doing this now or the Iraqi central government. Unfortunately, if the Iraqi central government won't, that doesn't happen. So you could conclude, if they are not doing it fast enough, we really have to step in even though it breeds a certain dependency in them. That is the conundrum I think. It is not for sure lack of attention to the issue. But they are complaining that, for example, some of the Sunni units are not getting help from the Shi'a dominated ministry of the interior. And that is a big part of the challenge. And just also Baghdad not having the capacity to administer properly. It is one of the reasons that those of us who favor decentralization or regionalization believe that you have got to lower the role for Baghdad in some of these decisions.

General KEANE. If I could make a comment. The first part of your question, ma'am, addressed intentions and interagency process, et cetera. We have done extremely poorly in that regard. The interagency process has been broken. The Afghan crisis and the one in Iraq have been militarized. And it is my strong view that—particularly in Iraq, where you are dealing with an insurgency and a civil war—that the problems and therefore the solutions have a breadth about them that are economic, political, diplomatic, informational and military and that we have done extremely poorly in understanding the sophisticated nature of the conflict and therefore in articulating our intentions and the clear strategy for going about it. And that is why I recommended the Goldwater-Nichols for the interagency.

General MCCAFFREY. Let me first of all endorse General Newbold's characterization of the struggle. Put it in context, from the start, I thought taking out the Saddam regime was the right thing to do. And General Newbold and others were looking prescient and in later years didn't agree with that. But I thought going in and knocking him out of office before he got nuclear weapons, we would have to do it now or five years later. And I now think that the consequences of leaving them in the lurch will be catastrophic for the region, for the Iraqi people and for our own interest.

Having said that, even the President's characterization of the struggle uses conceptual architecture that is entirely inappropriate in my personal judgment of what we are doing, talking about victory, talking about al Qaeda in Iraq, mentioned 30 times in a speech, they will follow us here. That is not what is going on for God's sake. We are not going to have a classic military victory in Iraq. I don't even like the word counterinsurgency.

The Maliki government—the Kurdish in the north are doing pretty good. But if you look at each province of Iraq in turn, there is no province in the country in which the central government holds sway. How can you talk about an insurgency against a government that is dysfunctional? So if you can't talk about the problem in a realistic light, then you can't come up with a strategy to confront it. And that has been part of our problem. Mr. Rumsfeld was in denial of the evidence in front of his eyes and dominated this government and intimidated the Congress. And we are way down the road now and in trouble.

Dr. SNYDER. Mr. Jones for five minutes.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Chairman, thank you. And I thank the panel for being here. And for a moment, I have to go back a little bit in history. For the last four years, I have sent over 6,700 letters to families and extended families who have lost loved ones in Afghanistan and Iraq. That is my mea culpa for voting to give the President authority to go into Iraq. Afghanistan, I am all for it. Rudyard Kipling wrote some writings called, "Epitaphs of the War, 1914–1918." His son was killed in World War I. He did not become a hawk after his son's death. And under, "Common Form," he said, "if any question of why we died, tell them because our fathers lied." And I feel guilty because I didn't do what I should have done when we were getting all these classified briefings.

General Newbold, very quick. I want to read from your article in 2006 why Iraq was a mistake: From 2000 until 2002, I was a Marine Corps lieutenant general and director of operations for the Joint Chiefs of Staff. After 9/11, I was a witness and therefore a party to the actions that led us to the invasion of Iraq and unnecessary war. Inside the military family, I made no secret of my view that the zealots' rationale for war made no sense.

When you wrote that article, did anyone in this Administration call you and say, General Newbold, why did you write that? Tell me what happened that made you want to write that article? Did anyone ever ask you that question?

General NEWBOLD. No, sir. I think I was off the Christmas card list by that time.

Mr. JONES. Well, I am there with you, by the way, now because of my position. I say that, Mr. Chairman, because we cannot go back. You are right to say we do not go back. But if we don't learn that, whether it is a Democratic Administration or a Republican Administration, that we must demand the truth and those who created the lie and the misconception and manipulated the intelligence should have to go before the American people and apologize. They should have to apologize because you do not send people to war unless you have no other choice. And we had a choice. And we did not pursue the options.

And again, I want to thank you, General Newbold; you and General McCaffrey, I thank you both, and these fine gentlemen to your left. For the military people, as far as I am concerned, you are two of the top heroes in this country. And I thank you for being men of integrity that deal with honesty—whether I agree with it or not—that you deal with honesty, and I appreciate that from both of you.

When I listen to General McCaffrey and General Newbold and Dr. O'Hanlon and Mr. Benjamin, I hear what might be happening is good or somewhat good. You talk about, Dr. O'Hanlon, the fact that we have got to have a stable government. You made that clear. I am not putting words in your mouth. You made that clear. You said the military cannot do it.

I hear General McCaffrey and General Newbold say that, by April of next spring, if we are still there under this stress and pressure, meaning our military, we are going to start to unravel. General McCaffrey, when we start to unravel, what should Members of Congress be looking for to see that we are unraveling?

General MCCAFFREY. Well, I think for the last 24 months, I have been talking rather predictably about what will happen when you get an Army of essentially 500,000 people, you call up a huge number of your Guard and Reserve to sustain it, you put them in an operation where essentially we have got 44 brigades; 22 are in Iraq; 2 are in Afghanistan. Right now, we have no operational strategic reserve. If there is a problem in Korea, Cuba, you name it, we are in trouble. Thank God for the Air Force and the Navy and for nuclear weapons, which are providing a deterrent element to mischief during this period of huge vulnerability.

I personally don't believe—I better not believe that this Secretary of the Army, this Secretary of Defense are going to sustain this surge beyond April. The next rotation does not work. We are going

to start sending—one of my sons, a fellow entry battalion commander in the 82nd airborne, had a battalion that was home for 48 days; they sent them back on 6 months, extended it to a year, extended it to 15 months. We are going to have our staff sergeants and our captains are going to walk on us. So the leadership—our most precious asset isn't our equipment, our marvelous technology; it is our leadership. And I gave a talk yesterday, a couple of days ago, in the Army-Navy Club. One of the dads came up and said, my son is now deploying on his seventh tour as a JASOC operative. We have allowed this tiny military force and an undermanned CIA and Defense contractors to fight the war. And the rest of us aren't in the war.

Dr. SNYDER. Mr. Johnson for five minutes.

Mr. JOHNSON. Thank you.

I was struck with some of the testimony or by some of the testimony today having to do with the anguish in not being able to make things happen with the Congress; in other words, Congress not being able to come together to kind of work on something that—come to a consensus as far as our strategy for going forward. And it just seems to me that we have to take into consideration the fact that Congress is elected by the people, and Congress is a coequal branch of government to the executive branch.

And in the Congress, you have got two Houses; someone elected every two years. That is us, the House. And it makes us very in tune with the people. We are subject to the people. And the people were at one time in favor of this war, but they have now lost confidence, and the American people want to see this war come to an end. They want to see us redeploy our troops and get them out of harm's way in the midsts of a civil war in Iraq. And I think that that is the reason why Congress and the military leadership, along with the executive branch, were unable to come up with a consensus. It is because of the American people, and that is to be respected, and that is really an admirable part of our system of government.

And I respect the people, the collective wisdom of the people. And I don't fear what will happen in Iraq when we come out because come out is something that we will have to do. And I think you all agree with that. It is just a matter of when. And certainly how is extremely important. And as soon as we can re-enlist the confidence of the American people in terms of how we exit from Iraq, that is going to be the best thing that I think we can do.

And so I have a hard time, General Newbold, with this concept of winning the war in Iraq or victory. Many people in America feel like that is not possible. What is your definition of winning the war?

General NEWBOLD. Well, sir, you will recall the way I characterize that is that, having gotten into a fight that we should not have entered into, then it was important to win. And using that very general term, because the consequences of disruption to the region and et cetera were so grave. But following that, I then outlined the reasons why I don't think that is any longer possible and that it is important to have a strategy of more moderate aims to sustain America's leadership in the world community and to conduct the withdrawal in a way that may allow the Iraqis to assume their re-

sponsibilities, the preeminence of their responsibilities, while we draw down our forces. So what I am trying to do is, in a moderate withdrawal timeline, is to retain as much as we can of our strategic interests in the world while giving some opportunity for the Iraqis to govern their own country.

Mr. JOHNSON. In terms of being able to supply the Iraqis, I think someone mentioned about we have an anemic resourcing of the Iraqi army. General McCaffrey, isn't that because we cannot trust them to not turn those arms against us?

General MCCAFFREY. Well, certainly there are a bunch of valid arguments for not appropriately equipping the Iraqis. They are going to use the weapons against each other. They are going to use the weapons against their neighbors. They are going to use the weapons against us. They are simple people. They can only use Soviet junk, so we are going to give them recycled Soviet equipment.

A bunch of those arguments are all very interesting, but a prerequisite to us getting out of there in 36 months is leaving in place security forces that can protect the people. I actually think Dr. O'Hanlon is right. I don't think we are going to adjudicate soft partition. But I do think we can leave neighborhood cops with guns, regional forces. Because in that part of the world, disarmament invites slaughter. So I would argue that we—necessary, but not sufficient condition of withdrawal is that we better stand up the Iraqis in an appropriate way. Certainly helicopters, C–130's, body armor, U.S. small automatic weapons, light-armored vehicles.

If we are willing to spend $10 billion a month driving around Iraq getting blown up by IEDs, why wouldn't we be willing to spend $5 billion a year for the next 3 to 4 years to appropriately equip their security forces? And so any concern about their trustworthiness, I would probably endorse. They are not very trustworthy right now. The Iraqi police are a uniformed criminal operation. The Iraqi army is a pretty thin reed except for certain kinds of units. We have got to stand them up. We are going to be out of there in 36 months. We have got a very short period of time to accomplish these missions.

Dr. SNYDER. Mr. Sestak for five minutes.

Mr. SESTAK. Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

I thought that the general, prior to his leaving, although I have a different reason why, was correct that there is some commonality that I think the Republicans and the Democrats might begin to think about of coming together. Because while I think this war is absolutely necessary to end, it is very insufficient. How we end it as you all have pointed out, the means by which we do so is actually more important to our security and to the safety of our troops.

The four elements that I am curious about is how you spoke of the U.S. Army, that it is—General, in your terms, that it is going to unravel in an accelerated way beginning next spring. So some drawdown needs to begin. And then I am taking that, how quickly that drawdown can be done. Despite those that would like it very soon, an Army study in 2005/2006 showed that, with 58 fort operating bases in Iraq and their assumption at the time that it would take 100 days to close four at a time—now, that is conservative—that is 4 years. You look at Kuwait, and we can only put two to two and a half brigade combat equivalents into Kuwait to clean

them up, shrink wrap the helos and get them on the ships at a time unless we build more of those facilities. That is 18 to 24 months, because we have 48 combat equivalents if you take all the logistical stuff. And that doesn't include the 70,000 other containers we will probably have to leave behind. So we are beginning to unravel. It is going to take some time to do this. So it is not like the Soviet Union getting out of Afghanistan and losing 500 troops as they got their 120,000 out in 9 months.

The second one that I feel on the political sphere is you bring up the specter of the weight of defeat, the concern with that. On the other hand, you also brightly brought out—particularly you did, General, when you talked about the People's Republic of China, for instance, where I really believe the center of gravity for us in the next century is in the Western Pacific. What can't we do because of this specter of defeat if we stay too long? Because you have to weigh both of them because, to me, Iraq is a set piece within an overall security environment. President Bush said we won't have an open-ended commitment. Defining the end of that word open is the critical issue here. What is that timeline? You said 36 months. I mean, when do you generals say, you know, we can't have a specter of defeat. We are going to try some moderated benchmarks so to speak. But when is enough, enough that the Iraqis do not have to give us permission, when we say enough is enough as you weigh both of the military timeline versus—I think it actually fits well into trying to have us come together from those who want out soon to those that realize it is going to take us time to begin to address our strategic interests by giving us some time for the regional. But what is that timeline? Yours is 36 months; correct, sir?

General MCCAFFREY. The reason I use 36 months is I actually don't think Congress should or will have a major impact on the operational decisions in Iraq nor the withdrawal rate until this President is out of office. I think he is going to be forced into a drawdown by the impending partial collapse of the U.S. Army by next spring. So I think he is going to start drawing down. We will hit the end of his Administration. Then we'll have to see, what have the Iraqis done? If it looks like it does today, the next President is pulling us out. If it doesn't, if they draw back from all out civil war, I suppose we could be there for 15 years with 30,000 or 40,000 advisors, log, air power, intel, which would be a nice outcome if the Iraqis stabilize the situation. So that is the question. Will that happen? Yes or no; I really don't have a clue. Certainly it doesn't look very good right now.

Mr. SESTAK. General.

General NEWBOLD. I'll give you the logic for my timelines. First of all, I agree with General Keane and General McCaffrey, that we can no longer sustain the current levels of operations in Iraq beyond about next February. So the forces have to start drawing down then anyway. It is my belief that we ought to use that as an impetus to the Iraqis, and we ought to use it to let a little air out of the balloon of the stressed forces and also to let some of the steam out of the hot political debate right now. It is my belief that the timeline will accelerate or decelerate depending upon actions over there.

We can indicate a general timeline, but the events get a vote of their own. If, for example, the civil war spreads and it becomes much more virulent and violent, for my own part, I think it is time to accelerate the timeline. If the success in Anbar or in Kurdistan spreads elsewhere, then I think General McCaffrey's alternative that he listed as one of his may allow us to retard the timeline a little bit because essentially violence is disappearing in vast segments of the country. So, beginning next February/March, I think we start our drawdown. I think under the most optimistic timelines, we couldn't do it under a year without abandoning people and things and that the circumstances on the ground will probably define whether it is a year or three years.

Dr. SNYDER. Mr. Saxton for five minutes.

Mr. SAXTON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And first, thank you for making it possible for me to be here. I appreciate it very much. I think this is one of the most important activities that is currently going on in the Congress, and I thank you and the ranking member for initiating it.

There has been a lot said about Iraq and lots of different opinions relative to the process of creating a more stable situation which serves the interests of the Iraqi people and certainly serves the interests of our constituents here in America as well. My perception is that, in the region, Iraq certainly does not exist in a vacuum and that it has some neighbors that have the potential and in fact are troublesome—don't have the potential of being troublesome; they are troublesome. And I am just curious if you have given much thought to what activities we might see on the part of Iran once we see the—whether it is a year from now or three years from now—when we have a significant drawdown and hence less capabilities and a still building or emerging capability on the part of Iraqi forces, who are currently trained—in the process of being trained for internal security, not external security. I see the Iranians as troublemakers, not just now but in the future. I think they have some objectives which take them literally through Iraq to Syria and Lebanon and maybe some other places. So I was wondering if each of you share my concern about that, and if so, should we be making some plans currently to try to deal with it before it happens if it does happen?

Mr. BENJAMIN. Shall I take a crack at that? I think the Iranians perceive their foremost goal right now in getting the United States out of the region. And Iran is a country that has traditional borders. It certainly wants to have a great deal of influence over Iraq. It is unclear how much influence it ultimately will have over Iraq because of tensions between Shi'a in Iraq and Shi'a in Iran. And that is a very complicated issue in its own right. I think Iran also wants to be a regional hegemon. I don't think there is any question about that. I don't see Iranian forces mobilizing beyond their borders. I am not sure why they would want to do that since that would, I think, spoil their effort to be a regional hegemon without incurring great costs. And it seems fairly clear that the Sunni powers in the region would not look kindly upon that.

The Iranians have over time shown a willingness to use subversion and terrorism as tools of policy, and they are certainly determined to acquire nuclear capability at a minimum. But I don't see

them acting as a military force that is going to march through the region, if that answers your question.

There is no question that they have been put into an extraordinarily advantageous position by the fact that we removed their enemies to their west and to their east, and we may regret that at some point. But I also think that we as a great naval power and with many friends in the region have many different instruments for maintaining hedges against Iranian ambitions. So I don't see us as being completely out of luck in that regard. That said, the diplomacy over the nuclear program is very frustrating at this point.

General NEWBOLD. If I could, Congressmen, I personally share your suspicion of the radical regime in Iran. The issue is, how do we address it? For my own part, I think a military action against Iran would be ineffective and counterproductive. The great Achilles heel of Iran is economic. The official unemployment in Iran is 20 percent, and there are estimates that that is hidden, and it is probably double that. I think Iran is a little bit like al Qaeda and Anbar. They have the great capacity to ruin themselves. So that by employing the most effective tool to convince Iranians themselves that their extremist regime is undermining their country and their way of life, I think we have a better pathway out of that while maintaining a military——

General MCCAFFREY. Perhaps I could add to that. Go directly to the point of contention of Iranian nuclear weapons. In my judgment, they made that decision ten years ago. They are going nuclear. The consequences will be harmful to the security of the Iranian people. It will prompt a reaction from their Sunni-Arab neighbors; the Saudis and the Gulf Coast states are already talking about nuclear power requirements—that is step one—to countering with an Arab-Sunni bomb, the Persian-Shi'a bomb. Iran does have huge internal contradictions. Half the Nation is Persian. Their unemployment is terrible. The economy is terrible. The government is goofy and doesn't have the loyalty of the people. Their ability to project power is tiny compared to the U.S. naval and air power we could bring to bear.

Having said that, I would caution people. Military Science 101 is—the most dangerous military operations we conduct are retrograde operations, and we have done a lot of them over the years, pulling out of the disaster of the Korean War up north in the Yalu river. We pulled out of Vietnam, and we are about to do the same thing in the coming two to three years. During that withdrawal, I would not find it beyond belief that the Iranians would intervene in a manner to humiliate the U.S. Armed Forces during withdrawal. And I think the ability to put a huge Shi'a population, to have them try and seal off our lines of communications as we come out with the assistance of significant Iranian military intervention is there.

That is why I have been extremely concerned about that Baker-Hamilton Commission, the notion that we will get the combat troops out and stand there with embedded trainers. I think 34,000 Americans spread all over that great country will be potential hostages to Iranian intransigence if we went that road. I personally told the President, you keep a floor of something like seven brigades. And if you think politically you have got to go below that,

get out of Iraq in its entirety and don't stand there except for a Marine battalion in the green zone.

Mr. SAXTON. Let me just ask about the seven brigades. Would you leave them in place where they are? All of our brigades are kind of located in Baghdad or kind of the central part of the country. Would it make more sense to put them someplace else under those circumstances?

General MCCAFFREY. Personally, I think we ought to get down to ten brigades and have a clump of combat division down south to guard our LOC, someplace where you can keep the lines of communication open. You have got to keep a division around Baghdad to tell the Iraqi army, don't throw the government out of power, or we will re-intervene. And you probably need a substantial force out in the western desert to protect the Sunnis, as we withdraw, from Shi'a revenge.

But the whole Kurdish question then is the next shoe. How do you deter the Turks from intervening? I think we are going to have to keep substantial combat forces in division-size clumps with armor, high intensity combat capability until we pull out.

Dr. SNYDER. General Newbold, I was one of those that did not vote for the resolution in 2002, but I find myself in the position of having great concerns about, where is our responsibility now that we are there? You all have approached this from the national security perspective; how can we salvage what is in the best interest for our country.

Taking a little bit different tact on it, where is our responsibility, the morality of the issue? We had Dan Biden a couple of weeks ago—he is probably wrong like everybody will be wrong about things we say about this predicament in the future. But he says his prediction is he reluctantly has concluded we need to leave, and the result will be hundreds of thousands if not millions of Iraqi deaths. And I asked him that question, where is our responsibility as a nation, as Mr. Johnson pointed out, that overwhelmingly supported this war? Does that enter into your thinking at all about where we are now in terms of our responsibility as a nation?

General NEWBOLD. I think it does for the very personal reasons on the ground that relate to individuals and genocidal activities and et cetera. But there are strategic reasons for that as well. The United States is committed to this. It has a reputational issue. It has credibility issues for now and in the future. So for both of those reasons, I think the United States has to be prudent, as Congressmen Sestak said, in the manner of our withdrawal.

Dr. SNYDER. Mr. Benjamin, in your written statement, you discussed a little bit—well, I will probably do an inartful job of summarizing this—that you are saying that if U.S. troops were to leave, that the publicity that would come from that has probably already occurred in terms of the damages being inflicted on U.S. Forces. Give me a brief answer. But isn't that part of what happened after Somalia, after the Lebanon barracks bombing, after Khobar towers in Saudi Arabia, that each step of the way, we said that if we pull back, if we pull back, if we pull back—I am just stating this as an argument—it didn't work out the way we thought it would? How can you so strongly make this statement that somehow the complete withdrawal at this—starting next week

or next month, would not be perceived as a much greater defeat for U.S. Forces than the kind of activity that is going on now?

Mr. BENJAMIN. I think it would be perceived as a much greater defeat than——

Dr. SNYDER. And that answers my question.

Mr. BENJAMIN. Than Somalia and others. What I am saying is that they have already registered a sense that they have achieved that goal.

Dr. SNYDER. So you don't think the decision by the Congress three months from now or on the defensive ropes this week—I am just making this up—that that would not be perceived as greater than what is going on now?

Mr. BENJAMIN. I think, at the margins, it could certainly make a difference. But I think the jihadist movement believes that it has achieved a great feat.

Dr. SNYDER. I don't think that General Newbold and General McCaffrey or General Wes Clark, who was here a few weeks ago, think that that would only be at the margins. Would that be a fair statement? I am getting a nod of the head from General McCaffrey.

General MCCAFFREY. That is a fair statement. Dan Benjamin and I agree on a lot of things. In that regard, though, I have a greater fear of the consequences of an accelerated time.

Dr. SNYDER. Which, also, Mr. Benjamin, is probably accurate in predicting the unreliability of all our predictions is a problem.

Mr. BENJAMIN. That was the easy part.

Dr. SNYDER. Yeah.

General McCaffrey, Dr. Kahn was with us about two or three weeks ago, and he is the only person that suggested that he thought that the Muslim world that had military needed to be stepping forward and helping with this troop situation. There was a lot of skepticism expressed by the Committee about that. He suggested there ought to be about 50,000 Muslim troops. Our leverage there is, we have really large amounts of money going to countries like Egypt and Saudi Arabia to help them. Is that at all a realistic possibility?

General MCCAFFREY. No. It is not even on the table, nor am I confident it is even a good idea. If we introduced large numbers of Egyptians, Syrian forces, would we not start building an enhanced threat to the 80 percent of the country who are not Sunni Muslim? Would that then generate increased intervention by the Iranians? But it is not going to happen. It is like legalizing drugs or—it is an interesting debate, but nobody is stupid enough to do it. So the Egyptians are not going to intervene in Iraq at this point. Certainly the Saudis are not.

Dr. SNYDER. Dr. O'Hanlon, in your statement—this is my last question. In your soft partition, the movement of two to five million people in a country that has already had several million move, that doesn't seem very soft. You are asking impressive numbers of people to give up land that may have been in the family for generations. That doesn't seem like a very soft partition.

Dr. O'HANLON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

It gets to Mr. CongressmanBartlett's question as well, which we didn't have a chance to discuss before. This would be a voluntary relocation problem. You only move if you want to, and you only do

that, presumably, if you—if the fear for your own security is great enough and justified——

Dr. SNYDER. If half the neighborhood leaves and the police say, you can stay here, but we are going with these folks, that is not very voluntary.

Dr. O'HANLON. I agree with you. It would be hard for people to stay behind. But you would have to work out security procedures. And we try to spell them out in the report where you would actually promise people a certain amount of residual security in the neighborhood they remained. And one last point, very quickly, on the issue of mixed marriage, people can choose if they want to go or not. But our presumption is, if you get up in the range of 90-plus percent of ethnic homogeneity, you have much less sectarian strife. Because it is not so much hatred that drives it; it is fear. If you have 90 percent dominance of one group in one area or another, it is clear who is in charge, and therefore we think there will be less violence.

Dr. SNYDER. Gentlemen, I am cognizant of the time. You have been very patient with us with the votes. Mr. Akin and I kind of shorted ourselves just before the vote. I took five minutes. We'll let Mr. Akin see if he has any further questions, and then we better call it a day so you all can get on with your lives.

Mr. Akin.

Mr. AKIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wanted to probe a little bit further on a couple of things that you had said, Dr. O'Hanlon, that struck me as interesting. And that is that we are having—the successes are the most optimistic things you hear. The first things you were hearing almost a year ago was there has been some breakthroughs in a few areas with a few sheiks in the Anbar province. And then the thing seems to be expanding. We seem to be capitalizing on the mistakes of the enemies. And at a local level, we are achieving some successes, apparently. I guess my question is this, why don't we just capitalize on that? Why don't we drive that? Why don't reward the local communities that meet certain basic parameters and further guarantee them maybe by whatever coercive force we can bring to bear on the central government to say, look, there are a lot of things that are going to go on here that are not the jurisdiction of the Federal Government. I am talking like kind of a Republican conservative. Bear with me.

For instance, education and your local police force and food distribution, et cetera, et cetera, the Federal Government has nothing to do with that, and you are going to be in charge of that right here in your town, and it is time for you to start putting your own neighborhood together, your own province or state or whatever you want to call it together and basically—because what I am hearing is the military may be having some modicum of success. But the State Department and the political piece of it, we don't have a lot of confidence the politicians in Baghdad are going to solve their own problem. Why don't we instead say, look, why don't we build Iraq the way America was built? Why don't we start with the local towns and the local states and build them up and give them certain basic rights under themselves and use that as pressure to help bring the centralized thing more into focus and approach it from that point of view. I guess my question is, then, is that practical?

What would be the political obstacles to doing something like that? And do we have enough influence to basically start driving a local solution and put local—and then I think the political piece—this is the American public. Americans love to keep score. We are sick of always seeing that the bad guys have got four more runs on us, and we never see what we are getting done.

It seems like if we put a list together—these are parameters of a successful community. There is a minimum amount of violence. We have got this, this and this, and all these pieces in place. If we start coloring the map in, which communities have gotten in and which ones haven't, and when you do, we create rewards. Is that a possible way to move forward, Dr. O'Hanlon, to start with?

Dr. O'HANLON. Congressman, great set of questions. And in fact a lot of the benchmarks that we have not talked as much about as the oil law or the debaathification process have to do with empowering the regions. There is the regional powers that—there is the idea of having the regional elections so they can be a more representative government. I think Governor Tommy Thompson has put forth a plan that tries to argue for this idea of empowering the provinces. I think Ken Pollock and Tony Cortisman, my two colleagues on this trip, both have some sympathies there.

The main thing that will not achieve, that soft partition would—because soft partition I distinguish from what you are saying as creating three autonomous regions and rebuilding the security forces along those lines. The soft partition is more if you worry about the security problem. Your approach I think is more of a way to try to do bottom-up politics and hope that the security problem might actually diminish on its own if governance capacity and the confidence with which services are delivered improve and then people have more stake in the system. So I think it is a very interesting proposition.

The bottom line—I won't say who said this to me in Iraq. It is not super sensitive anyway. Frankly, what we need is for one of these kind of Plan Bs to be become Plan I, where if the Iraqis would enthusiastically get behind either soft partition or your approach similar to Governor Thompson's or another approach of decentralization, I think it would be great. And If it doesn't happen, of course, there is only so much we can push.

It raises the question, should we be more actively trying to construct a new political arrangement with them? And I would say yeah. I mean, I think you try to work in this current approach for a couple more months, let everyone know that the surge is achieving some military goals, but it cannot continue to do so unless there is political help from Baghdad. If that doesn't happen in the course of this fall, let's say, then we've got to find a Plan B or give them an ultimatum, Plan B or get out. I think that is the conversation we may need to have with them within let's say six months.

Mr. AKIN. I guess the way I was thinking of packaging it wasn't so much that it was a Plan B, but it is one more step forward. And the first step was to create some level of peace on the street. But I think the leverage is you say, look, Mr. Sunni, we understand this town is 60 percent Sunni and you guys will have a lot of influence running the local police, but you have got to understand that there is another town over here that is 60 percent Shi'a. And

maybe one of the parameters is that there has to be justice and consistency the way laws are administered by local police. Anyway, I appreciate what you are saying. I didn't know that other people had been working—I wanted to give one last part of a minute. Anybody else want to take a shot at why that is a lousy idea or if you like the idea?

General MCCAFFREY. Let me, if I may, add one thing. I am sympathetic—I listened to Senator Biden with great admiration. And Dr. O'Hanlon certainly has been thinking about this very objectively for several years now. I don't think we have much of a vote left. We gave them a constitution. We gave them a security force. We are on our way out. The American people have had it with this thing. We are not going to keep up $10 billion a month. We are not going to redesign the governmental architecture of Iraq. They may do it, or they may decide to do it through warfare. But I think, to be honest, this discussion is outside of the reality of Iraq. I don't think this is going to happen. We are not going to direct it.

General NEWBOLD. My only comment was, Congressman, in the summer of 2003, I was approached by a member of the National Security Counsel staff for ways to seek stability in the country, and I proposed almost precisely what you are recommending. I think, at that point, it was important to establish the basis of governance from the bottom up and to give exaggerated rewards and exaggerated disincentives for those that were turbulent or sectarian or et cetera. I agree with General McCaffrey that the genie is probably out of the bottle, but I wish they had done it in 2003.

Dr. SNYDER. Mrs. Davis wants the last word here.

Ms. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. Thank you. That just raises the question, the PRTs that we have put out there, we are trying to have them model some of this behavior, correct, and hopefully within an Iraqi mind-set as opposed to a Western mind-set? But that doesn't jive with what you are just saying. Is that effort worthwhile? Is it working in the way that we are hoping it would?

Mr. O'HANLON. There is a certain amount of the effort that, you are right, is already happening and we are trying to expedite. It is not quite as radical as to say most of the budget resources should go to the provinces. We are trying to give them more powers. I think it makes sense. From what I saw of the PRTs, they are doing a reasonably good job, but it is a very fledgling effort in the broader situation. So I think it really should be viewed as a plan B, because it would be enough of a departure from what is going on right now. The idea of giving most of the resources to the provinces would be a big change.

Ms. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. But it is our mind-set more than—isn't it?

General MCCAFFREY. Let me offer a countervailing view. I think that whole notion of the PRT in Afghanistan was incredibly sound. A 14th century country, pathetically grateful for our intervention, you can get out with a small security detachment and stay alive. It has been absolutely marvelous.

In Iraq, I don't understand what we are doing. We are coming out of there, we are not there to rebuild the local economy of Diyala Province. We are not there to kid them into picking up their own garbage. I do not understand the strategic sense behind it. It is

hard to live out there with a contract security force and a tiny group of Americans. What are we thinking of? You know, I think I am probably one out from several other people at the table, but I think the PRT is a failed effort already.

Dr. SNYDER. Gentlemen, we appreciate you and your being patient with us. You did double duty here today. All four of you are very well respected, as is General Keane, and we appreciate you being here. And Members may have some questions for the record, but you have been all through that before.

But thank you so much. We appreciate you. The committee is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:19 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

JULY 31, 2007

PREPARED STATEMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

JULY 31, 2007

Opening Statement of
Chairman Dr. Vic Snyder
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations

Hearing on "A Third Way: Alternative Futures for Iraq"

July 31, 2007

The hearing will come to order.

Good afternoon, and welcome to the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations' fourth hearing on alternative strategies for Iraq.

My colleague, Mr. Akin, and I entered into this series of hearings because we were frustrated by the tone of the discussion about Iraq this year, and the polarization that has occurred. The political debate on the U.S. strategy for Iraq has too often been framed by two extreme positions: "precipitous withdrawal" or "stay the course" indefinitely. These hearings are an effort to bring in smart, experienced people who can help us identify and develop alternative approaches for Iraq. Our intent is not to critique current or past policies, but to focus on the future. Through these hearings, we hope to enhance the public debate and inform full committee deliberations.

Over the last three weeks, we heard from retired senior military officers, defense policy experts, and academics who specialize in Middle Eastern affairs. Last week, we had a highly productive session with the Honorable Bing West, Major General Paul Eaton, Colonel Paul Hughes of the U.S. Institute of Peace, and Dr. Stephen Biddle of the Council on Foreign Relations. The full committee has also held hearings on trends and recent security developments in Iraq and the implications of the recent National Intelligence Estimate with respect to Al-Qaeda, and has passed legislation requiring the administration to report on a comprehensive strategy for the redeployment of U.S. troops from Iraq.

These sessions make clear that we are focused on the future, and not merely intent on rehashing how we got to where we are. Our witnesses have been asked to address alternative strategies, and have been given guidance that should allow the subcommittee and the public to draw comparisons in key areas. Some of the specific things we are looking for are:

- The financial and personnel requirements to implement a given alternative;
- The impact on the people of Iraq;
- The impact on regional stability;
- The impact on U.S. national security generally; and
- The impact on the U.S. military.

Each witness today was selected because of his unique background and perspective.

Our witnesses' written statements will be made part of the record and will help us better understand their views. I hope that today will bring a vigorous discussion not only between the subcommittee members and the witnesses, but between the witnesses themselves. Anyone who has been here for our previous hearings, which are all available in audio format on the Armed Services website, will tell you that is exactly the kind of productive exchange we are looking for.

For today's hearing, we have another distinguished panel, including

- Retired General Jack Keane, who has been actively involved in advising the White House and the civilian and military leadership at the Pentagon and in the field and who appeared before the full committee just last Friday;
- Retired General Barry McCaffrey, who has been traveling to and reporting on Iraq in his capacity as an adjunct professor at West Point for several years now;
- Retired Lieutenant General Greg Newbold, former Director of Operations for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, whose reservations about the war are well known;
- Dr. Michael O'Hanlon of the Brookings Institute, who just returned from eight days in Iraq and has proposed a "soft partition" of Iraq as a possible course of action; and
- Mr. Daniel Benjamin of the Brookings Institute, whose scholarship in the field of counterterrorism can give us important insights in considering the future of Iraq.

Welcome to all of you.

Statement of Ranking Member Todd Akin
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations
House Armed Services Committee

Subcommittee Hearing on A Third Way: Alternatives for Iraq
Part4 of 4

July 31, 2007

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Good afternoon to our witnesses; thank you for being here today.

Today's hearing is the last in a series aimed at breaking out of the false construct of talking about Iraq in terms constrained to "precipitous withdrawal" or "stay the course". While these hearings have been helpful, I want to reiterate the purpose of this exercise: we are here to discuss alternatives that truly offer a different plan to the current strategy. Simply critiquing the current approach is not the point of this hearing and is not helpful. So, I look forward to hearing the witnesses discuss and define an alternative plan.

After reviewing our witnesses' testimonies, it is clear that some advocate departing from the current strategy – that is you do not endorse pursuing a plan that emphasizes U.S. combat forces going "door to door" performing a counterinsurgency mission aimed at securing and holding Iraqi neighborhoods. In light of increasing reports that the "surge is succeeding", I would like our witnesses to comment on how we in the Congress should view these developments. In particular, Mr. O'Hanlon, I'm interested in understanding how the "significant changes taking place" in Iraq that you described in the NY Times yesterday affects your proposal for soft partition.

Those who advocate departing from the current strategy emphasize the need for improving the readiness of the Army and Marine Corps. General McCaffery's testimony is heavily focused on this issue. While I think all members agree that this is an important issue and a vital priority, I'm curious how your alternative will allow U.S. troops to carry out the following military roles and missions: (1) training Iraqi forces; (2) deterring conventional militaries from intervening in Iraq; (3) supporting al Qaeda's enemies; and (4) conducting direct strike missions? Almost all of the experts who have testified before this subcommittee on this subject agree that continuing these roles and missions in Iraq is important.

Finally, according to previous witnesses, increased violence, humanitarian tragedy, a failed state, emboldened terrorists and regional actors will all result in the wake of the withdrawal or significant drawdown of American forces. I'd like to know how our witnesses will ensure that their plan will not to make the situation worse. For those concerned about readiness, how will we ensure that subsequent to withdrawal the U.S. will not find itself in a situation where U.S. forces will have to return to Iraq in five or ten years? I would also appreciate it if you would take some time this morning to discuss how the U.S. should manage the consequences of withdrawal.

Again, thank you for being here today.

[Yield Back to Chairman Snyder]

Adjunct Professor of International Affairs

31 July 2007

TESTIMONY OF GENERAL BARRY R. MCCAFFREY (USA, Ret.)
ADJUNCT PROFESSOR OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY
BEFORE THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
July 31, 2007

1. THE CONGRESS MUST STEP UP TO YOUR CONSTITUTIONAL DUTIES:

- Let me begin by saying this statement is the same argument I was privileged to make to the Senate Armed Services Committee on 17 April 2007. I thank you for the opportunity to testify today. This House Committee is a vital part of America's defense. Thanks to all of you on this committee for your intelligent oversight, your commitment to our Armed Forces, and for upholding Article 1 of the Constitution to raise and support an Army and maintain a Navy.

- America has a lot at stake in the coming 24 months. The war in Iraq is going badly. The under-resourced war in Afghanistan is now starting to turn around for the better despite the growing Taliban violence and the massive drag of opium production which has turned the nation into the largest narco-state in history. The consequences of failure in Iraq will be a disaster to the American people and our allies if we cannot achieve our objective to create a stable, law-based state which is at peace with its neighbors. Iraq must create enough consensus among the three major warring factions of Shia, Kurds, and Sunni to govern without the continuation of the bitter civil war which now has engulfed the Iraqi people.

- We have 160,000 US troops in combat in Iraq and 22,000 fighting bravely with our NATO allies in Afghanistan. These are the finest, most courageous military men and women we have ever fielded in battle. Our commanders -- almost without exception at company, battalion, and brigade level have served multiple combat tours. They are the most capable battle leaders that I have encountered in my many years of watching our Armed Forces with admiration.

- Our new leadership team in Iraq – our brilliant new commander General Dave Petraeus and the equally talented and experienced Ambassador Ryan Crocker---are launched on a new approach to use political reconciliation, new tactics, more equipment to strengthen the Iraqi Security Forces, and enhanced US combat protective power to stabilize the situation. We must give them time and space. They deserve Congressional political backing to push this one last chance at success in Iraq.

- However, the purpose of my testimony is not to talk about the ongoing tactical operations in CENTCOM – but instead the disastrous state of America's ground combat forces. Congress has been missing-in-action during the past several years while undebated and misguided strategies were implemented by former Secretary Rumsfeld and his team of arrogant and inexperienced civilian

associates in the Pentagon. The JCS failed to protect the Armed Forces from bad judgment and illegal orders. They have gotten us in a terrible strategic position of vulnerability. The Army is starting to crack under the strain of lack of resources, lack of political support and leadership from both the Administration and this Congress, and isolation from the American people who have now walked away from the war.

- No one is actually at war except the Armed Forces, their US civilian contractors, and the CIA. There is only rhetoric and posturing from the rest of our government and the national legislature. Where is the shared sacrifice of 300 million Americans in the wealthiest nation in history? Where is the tax supplement to pay for a $12 billion a month war? Where are the political leaders calling publicly for America's parents and teachers to send their sons and daughters to fight "the long war on terror?" Where is the political energy to increase the size of our Marine Corps and US Army? Where is the willingness of Congress to implement a modern "lend-lease program" to give our Afghan and Iraqi allies the tools of war they need to protect their own people? Where is the mobilization of America's massive industrial capacity to fix the disastrous state of our ground combat military equipment?

- We are fortunate that we now have Bob Gates as the Secretary of Defense. He is experienced, a patriot, and open to pragmatic logic on dealing with the perils we now face. Secretary Condi Rice is immensely experienced and now using the leverage of her powerful office to exert America's essential "goodness" in the diplomatic arena. The White House Chief-of-Staff Josh Bolton has now opened a frank dialog with many in the public policy arena to begin to build the unity that we will need to deal with the international menaces we now face. We are not going to successfully deal with the many national security problems we now encounter unless the Congress and the Administration can hammer out a new strategy going forward which depends on international dialog, political and economic nation-building, and strong military determination and power.

2. THE CURRENT ARMY IS TOO SMALL:

- Our Army has 44 brigades – but 24 are deployed. We cannot sustain the current rate (22+ brigades to Iraq; 2+ brigades to Afghanistan) of deployment. The Army will unravel.

- We will not be able to handle possible missions to Korea, the Taiwan Straits, the Balkans, Cuba (death of Castro), Syria, Venezuela, Darfur, and possibly Iran. We may be attacked by terrorists here in the continental United States. We may suffer from natural disasters – massive earthquakes or major hurricanes such as the devastation caused by Katrina in the Gulf Coast States.

- The Secretary of Defense recently announced a 3-month extension on all Army deployments – a 25% increase. This was a good call by Secretary Gates for Army families. We have been piecemealing out these extensions to an enormously over-committed force at the last minute. However, this is just another indication of inadequate Army manpower.

3. THE HOUSE SHOULD CONCLUDE THAT WE DON'T HAVE ENOUGH TROOPS:

- The combat overload on the Army is having a negative effect on readiness. First time active-duty soldiers will spend more time at war than at home.

- We are encountering a negative effect on the retention of mid- and senior-grade noncommissioned officers. We also are already seeing the impact on the retention of company-grade officers.

- All "fully combat ready" active-duty and reserve combat units are now deployed or deploying to Iraq or Afghanistan. No fully-trained national strategic reserve brigades are now prepared to deploy to new combat operations.

- Secretary Gates has publicly stated that the 15 month extension recognizes that "our forces are stretched…there's no question about that."

- We have used a back-door draft to keep 70,000 soldiers in the Army with the "stop loss program" beyond their voluntary commitment. We have jerked 20,000 sailors and airmen into ground combat roles and taken them away from their required air and sea power duties. We have recalled as many as 15,000 IRR (individual readiness reserve) – in many cases these people had no current, relevant military skills. They were simply needed as bodies.

- We have called up all of our National Guard enhanced readiness combat brigades at least once for 18 months of combat requirements. The reserve components have been forced to act as an alternate full-time combat extension of our active units with protracted deployments. This is not what they enlisted for – nor is it a sensible use of the national reserve components.

4. SENIOR ARMY LEADERS HAVE SPOKEN:

- Gordon Sullivan, the President of AUSA and former Army Chief-of-Staff has publicly stated that even with 65,000 new G.I.s by 2012 – the entire U.S. Army will only be 547,000 soldiers. In my view, the Army should be 800,000. The Army and Marines are being asked to shoulder a disproportionate share of nation's burden.

- Gen. Peter Schoomaker our just departed Army Chief-of-Staff stated that "We have to go to some extraordinary measures to make sure that we have the ability to respond properly [to the President's surge strategy]. General Speakes noted: "We can fulfill the national strategy but it will take us increased casualties to do the job."

- In recent Senate testimony, the former Army CSA Pete Schoomaker said that the increase of 17,500 Army combat troops in Iraq represents only the "tip of the iceberg" ---and will potentially require thousands of additional support troops and trainers, as well as equipment -- further eroding the Army's readiness to respond to other world contingencies.

- General Schoomaker further asserted to the Senate Armed Services Committee: "I am not satisfied with the readiness of our non-deployed forces…We are in a dangerous period." He added that he recently met with his Chinese counterpart, who made it clear that China is scrutinizing U.S. capabilities.

- Even if United States were to carry out a significant troop reduction in Iraq, General Schoomaker said in Senate testimony that he would advise going ahead with the Army's plan for a permanent increase of 65,000 active-duty soldiers by 2013. "The Army's too small for the century we're in," he said.

5. THE MARINES NEED MORE TROOPS:

- In Senate testimony, the past Marine Corps Commandant General Conway discussed a required increase of Marine troops from 180,000 to 202,000 – an increase of 5 battalions. This Marine increase will take 5 years; it doesn't address the current shortage of Marines.

- Deployment-to-dwell ratio is currently 1:1; DOD policy states that stateside training and recovery time should be 1:2. We do not have enough Marines. The numbers speak for themselves.

- This increase in deployment-to-dwell ratio means a direct decrease in the readiness of deployed units to carry out the full range of missions required for our global fighting force.

- Over 70% of the proposed Marine Corps end strength increase will be comprised of first-time Marines – challenging recruiting and retention efforts.

6. WEAKENING OF THE ARMY NATIONAL GUARD:

- The mathematics of our extended deployments suggest that we will be forced to call up as many as nine National Guard combat brigades plus required support forces in the coming 12 months for involuntary second combat tours ---if we are to re-set the force and create a strategic reserve. (Note that DOD Assistant Secretary Chu states that this is "no big deal.")

- The second round of involuntary call-ups may begin to topple the weakened National Guard structure which is so critical to US domestic security.

- 88% of non-deployed Army National Guard units are rated as not ready or poorly equipped. The readiness of our National Guard forces is at a historic low.

- However, the Washington Post has reported that the Pentagon is still planning to rely on these unready forces to meet surge requirements.

- The Army Guard/Reserve is anticipated to grow to 20-30 percent of deployed combat forces.

- We are now seeing a high loss rate in both active and reserve components of senior NCOs, West Point graduates, and many other highly-qualified battle leaders.

7. RECRUITING STANDARDS ARE COMPROMISED; TROOP BASIC TRAINING STANDARDS ARE COMPROMISED:

- The Army is lowering standards to meet enlistment goals and initial entry training standards in order to make manpower requirements. Recruitment will continue to be challenging as the Army tries to power up to add 65,000 permanent troops.

- In 2006, there was almost a 50% increase in waivers of enlistment standards from 2004 – waivers for moral turpitude, drug use, medical issues and criminal records.

- Recruitment from least-skilled category recruits have climbed eight-fold over past 2 years; the percentage of recruits who are high school graduates dropped 13% from '04 to '06.

- We are increasing the age of first-time enlistees – we are now enlisting 42 year old soldiers. We should only want soldiers in superb health – from age 18 to about 30 years old. The Army is not push-button warfare – this is brutal, hard business.

- The Promotion rates for officers and NCOs have skyrocketed to replace departing leaders. We are short thousands of officers. We have serious mismatch problems for NCOs.

- We have been forced to use US and foreign contractors to substitute for required military functions. (128,000 contractors in Iraq – includes more than 2000 armed contractor personnel.) Thousands of these brave and dedicated people have been killed or wounded. They perform most of our logistics functions in the combat zone. (Transportation, maintenance, fuel, long-haul communications, food service, contractor operation of computer based command and control, etc.) Under conditions of great danger such as open warfare caused by Iranian or Syrian intervention—they will discontinue operations. Our logistics system is a house of cards.

8. A LOT OF US ARMY COMBAT EQUIPMENT AND TOO MANY AIR FORCE AIR LIFT ASSETS ARE BROKEN:

- The shortfall on Army equipment is $212 billon to reset the force and its reserve stockpiles – as well as buy the required force modernization for the additional troops.

- The National Guard Bureau Chief – LTG Steven Blum in House testimony stated that the Army Guard has only 40% of its required equipment. (Generators, trucks, communications, helicopters, tentage, modernized fighting vehicles, medical equipment, etc.) We are compromising the quality of National Guard force training and limiting the Guard's ability to respond to domestic disasters; fundamentally the National Guard is in a "degraded state back at home."

- About 40 percent of Army/Marine Corps equipment is in Iraq or Afghanistan or undergoing repair/maintenance. We are now drawing down gear from prepositioned stocks of major equipment. (i.e., Humvees, tanks) The situation creates a US strategic vulnerability since rapid deploying units will find their equipment is unavailable for other conflicts.

- LTG Blum has stated that even if the National Guard receives the funding currently pledged by the Army and Air Force – the equipment accounts will still be short $40 billion required to bring units back to 90% level of readiness.

- Equipment shortages mean troops train on outdated equipment – or equipment which is not identical to the material they will be using in combat.

- The nature and pace of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan is wearing out critical equipment much faster than expected. In some cases, equipment is being used as much as nine times the intended peacetime training tempo.

- The DOD Inspector General concluded that U.S. troops are being sent into combat without the necessary equipment – troops are forced to delay operations while they wait for the right equipment to become available. (DoD/IG, Equipment Status of Deployed Forces.)

- The required number of late model Improved Humvees will not reach Iraq until the end of year. The latest models of up-armor Humvees will better protect against the advanced roadside bombs which currently cause about 70% of all US casualties in Iraq. Only MRAP vehicles will have the armor to defeat current attacks.

- We are flying the wings off our C17, C5, and C130 fleet. We are being forced into excessive reliance on contract air lift for personnel and cargo. (To include former Soviet aircraft).

9. CONCLUSION:

- We are breaking our commitment to our soldiers. In return for their voluntary service – we are not providing them with tools they need to carry out their mission. We must fix the broken equipment of the Army, Marines, and Air Force on a crash basis.

- We are failing our troops in that we are stretching them too thin and asking them to do more with much less. Many of these combat, CS, and CSS units are now serving on their third, fourth, or even fifth combat tour. 32,000 have been killed or wounded. Their training resources are being grossly short-changed. Their follow-on medical care is inadequate and under-resourced. We have ignored the reality of inadequate numbers of ground combat troops. We must increase the active duty US Army strength by 150,000 soldiers in the coming 36 months. We must increase the active duty Marines by 25, 000 troops. We must create the Special Operations forces needed to protect us in the coming 25 years of the War on Terror. We must buy the strategic airlift and air re-fueling requirements to deploy global combat power. (600+ C17 aircraft for a single aircraft fleet.)

- The monthly burn rate of $10 billion a month in Iraq and $2 billion a month in Afghanistan has caused us to inadequately fund the modernization of the US Air Force and Navy by diverting funds (as much as $55 billion) to support the on-going ground war. If this continues, we will be in terrible trouble in the coming decade when the PRC emerges as a global military power. We will then have inadequate deterrence power in the Pacific.

- Secretary Rumsfeld unilaterally pushed through a concept to bring our deployed military forces back from Europe, Okinawa, and South Korea. There was no serious debate on the strategic wisdom of abandoning NATO/Japanese/Korean provided training and basing infrastructure – for an unfunded infrastructure requirement in the United States. Have we analyzed and funded the Air Force and Naval resources required to project power from US basing back to operational areas in the global fight? How much time will be required to build the US transportation systems (rail, inter-state highways, airports, and seaports) required to launch stateside units back to operational areas? Why is it a good idea to increase the separation of military families from their service members with a concept of unit unaccompanied deployments to rotational missions in the Balkans, etc?

- The U.S. Armed Forces are in a position of strategic peril. Congress must act.

Barry R. McCaffrey
General, USA (Ret.)
Adjunct Professor of International Affairs
USMA West Point, NY

WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF GREGORY S. NEWBOLD, LTGEN USMC (RET) BEFORE THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE, SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHTS AND INVESTIGATIONS

JULY 31, 2007

INTRODUCTION

The traditional opening remark is that I am pleased to appear before the Subcommittee in testimony today. The truth, though, is that it is with some reluctance that I am appearing. My discomfort flows from two personal observations. The first is that I can state with fair certainty that I have no insights that will uncover what has eluded both those in authority and those whose habit is to offer opinions. My second observation is that, as sincere as this subcommittee's goals and actions are acknowledged to be, my sense is that positions from the relevant actors in our capital are generally already deeply set and that hearings don't contribute to solutions, but only provide the veneer of a search for them. . Current rhetoric in the Iraq debate is not to illuminate and solve, but to defend or to blame. If this is understandable, it is also sad, because we are confronted with the most complex, vexing, and consequential problem of the post Cold War era, and a closed mind is a recipe for amplifying failure. Despite my misgiving about appearing, I concluded that a request from one of the few committees truly focused on finding solutions to our nation's best interest ought to be given due credit. And also because I did not also remove my sense of duty when I took off my uniform.

You have asked for thoughts on a "Third Way" in Iraq. I will summarize my points in this introduction and elaborate on them only briefly in the body of my testimony. My logic is that, if the thoughts are to be of little consequence, they ought to at least be brief. After diagnosing the elements of the problem, I'll attempt to offer some advice on how to address these elements in an approach that may contribute to A Third Way.

> My first and strongest counsel to you is that we won't solve Iraq without a compelling and practical national strategy. Until then, we're playing checkers and our enemies are playing chess.
>
> My second most urgent point to you is to argue that we have militarized a problem that is without military solutions. We are occupying a proud country of 25 million Muslims, that has 40% unemployment, a dysfunctional government, with ancient and bitter sectarian animosities and neighbors who are aggravating unrest. How is it that we think that the solutions to those problems will be developed by those who carry weapons? Where is the diplomat, the economist, the Information Agency official, and the expert on the rule of law on this panel or when General Patraeus is to appear in September?
>
> Third, it is past time that the US recognized and appreciated (or held accountable) other actors in this drama. Iraq is not an isolated state at war, but a region in

turmoil. The consequences of the end of the Iraq engagement are enormous, and many of the relevant players wish us ill. Others, with far more at stake that the US, Great Britain and a few others, sit idle.

Finally, whether it is right or outrageous, my opinion is that the US now lacks the will to prosecute the war for the time and in the manner that it would take to ensure victory by our previous standards. It's time to modify the standards.

National Strategy as It Applies to Iraq.. We've taken a short view to craft a strategy for a Long War. We're seeking solutions for Iraq, when our threats and interests are only narrowly defined there. The US must define its most fundamental interests – our way of life, our security, and our economic well being – and apply them to our current interests and threats. As it applies to the Middle East in general and to Iraq in particular, we should seek a region which does not export violence, respects the territory of others, and allows the free flow of oil to sustain the region and the world's standard of living. With this as the benchmark, the US should declare that the strife of a thousand years cannot be tranquillized by outsiders, and Iraqis will determine their own future. The US will assist the Iraqis and international organizations in stabilizing the country, but in an ever diminishing fashion. In the future, the US will expend energies and resources – including future use of military force – to safeguard two fundamental elements of our interests:

- There will be no bases in Iraq for exporting terrorism;
- Iraq will be stabilized to the extent that it can export its petroleum products in order to support its own population and assist the world's economy.

While in uniform and out of it, I have made clear my opposition to the rationale for this war, I just as firmly have believed that the US cannot afford a defeat. From a strategic perspective, the perception of a US defeat in Iraq will be a price paid by future generations of Americans. Men who are the very essence of evil will use American precipitous withdrawal as a rallying cry for new legions of converts to attack us and our interests. For this reason, the US must spend as much energy in setting the conditions and perceptions for our withdrawal as we will spend in military planning, and we must demonstrate strength and wisdom in the process. I'm asking a lot.

Militarization of the Problem. Nearly exclusive reliance on the military tool is an intellectual weakness more appropriate for third rate dictators than a country long in the role of world leadership. Importantly, this over reliance has been a habit of successive administrations, and is not unique to this one. The same sad failing is true of the pundits who almost universally describe national security problems and fixes in military terms. But the point is more than academic. The problems of Iraq have not been used to guide to prescribe the preeminent tools used to craft solutions – if they were, the military would be a tool supporting the diplomat, the Justice Department official, the economist from Treasury or Commerce, or the Information Agency officer. The military would be an enabler – a force setting the conditions and the environment for the other tools to succeed. Done properly, our plan would be addressing rampant unemployment that puts over half of the military age youth in the condition of sitting idle, with the choice of

supporting those who align with occupiers, or joining gangs and factions. Were we more thoughtful, we would not name, as War Czar, a very fine military officer, but rather a seasoned diplomat experienced in crisis management. We wouldn't call for a summit to review the progress of the war, to be shown only key figures from the Defense Department. As I questioned in my introduction, why aren't the panels testifying now and in September composed of oil and infrastructure experts, or experienced observers on the cultural underpinnings and tribal instincts of the host nation, or diplomats who are called to task for the failure to enlist broader regional support?

Broadening Accountability. To be sure, the United States is living with a problem of its own making, and is now paying the price. We have spent over $360B dollars, lost over 3600 lives, and suffered in excess of 26,000 casualties. Our tough experience is shared most notably by our British allies, but few others. Meanwhile, the Iranians provide direct support to those who kill our patriots, the Syrians take comfort in our losses, and the Saudis and North Africans provide strong cadres of the zealots who inflict such grievous losses on the innocent population of Iraq. The world, in general, turns a blind eye. Most notably, the UN is abjectly failing in their global responsibilities. To be sure, the US earlier isolated and dismissed them, but the time for recovering from bruised feelings ended years ago. It's time for them to show some leadership, and individual countries to declare their position for the future.

More than all of that, though, the Iraqis have created or tolerated the nightmare that is current Iraq. To put it in terms that I highlighted earlier, the political, economic, diplomatic, and "hearts and minds" issues that are at the heart of the turmoil in Iraq are overwhelmingly their problems, but are largely considered to be problems to be solved by the US. To illustrate the point, the Iraqis have had national conscription from the early 1930s – the beginning of their modern era – until now. With the most significant crisis the Iraqis have faced in the last seventy years, they apparently don't feel obligated to compel service to their country. While incredibly high unemployment exists, their economic lifeblood (the pipelines) suffer frequent attacks, and the infrastructure of their country is in decay, the nation refuses to implement what was not only the engine for low unemployment, but also probably the single greatest entity in Iraq for dissolving prejudice among factions. We cannot impose peace and prosperity on the Iraqis – they have to want it, and want it so desperately that they will fight for it, or compromise deeply held positions to achieve it. At the moment, they don't care enough. As long as the United States is carrying the load, don't expect the mass of Iraqis to sacrifice enough to solve the problem.

US Resolve to Further Prosecute the War. The US population is weary of a war that has uncertain benefits, but great cost in resources and lives – with no end in sight. In truth, the difficulties of this war are compounded by a steady drumbeat of almost exclusively negative reporting. Particularly troubling to me is that the US Armed Forces are often heroic, always at risk, and rarely given due credit for their generosity and compassion in a country 10,000 miles from their home. They are an afterthought in the conscience of a nation pre-occupied with Paris Hilton, Lindsay Lohan, and Michael Vick.

Yet the nation is tired, and the overwhelming momentum of political and public opinion is impatient and wants a withdrawal. Options that may be strategically or militarily realistic – to stay engaged in Iraq for five to ten more years – are politically infeasible. The Coalition will undoubtedly withdraw short of full accomplishment of our mission, so the pressing issue now is how we will set acceptable conditions in the aftermath.

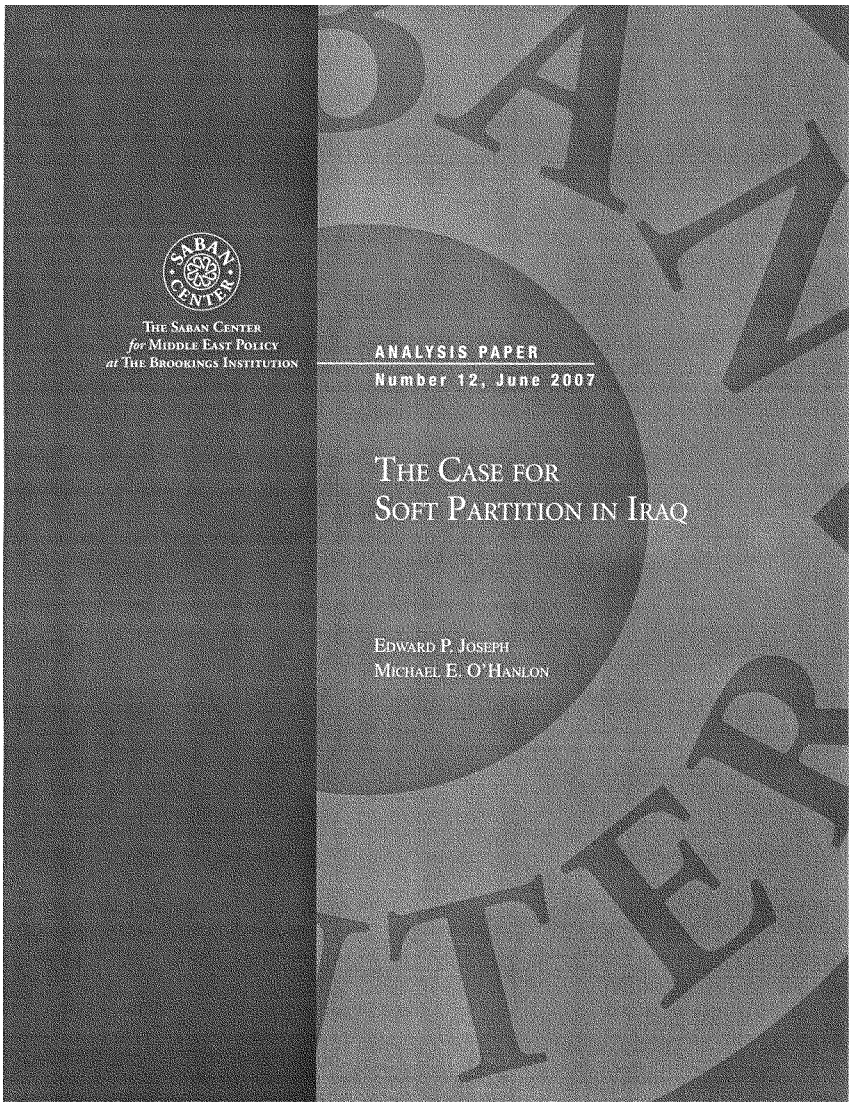
One strong caution -- it is all too easy to simply call for a withdrawal without imagining the consequences and signing on to them. If you aren't willing to witness gross violence and local instances of genocide, don't call for troop withdrawals. If you aren't willing to face the possibility of an Iraq that is a breeding ground for terror, then you had best call for a strong regional presence and robust capability to stamp out training camps after our troops have departed. If you want the Iraqis to take on the responsibilities that we now assume, then at least in the short term, you had better fund their development.

So what is "The Third Way?" I recommend considering the following:

1. A concise and public articulation of America's goals in the world and in the region. The goals should be realistic, balanced, modest, and therefore more achievable.
2. A declaration that the US and our few allies have paid a deep price in the Iraq conflict, but one that we will now begin to turn over to others. The US expects the Iraqis, the regional players, and the global community either to contribute more to solving the problems in Iraq, or be willing to inherit the results.
3. A pledge that the US will provide resources and training to support and sustain those in Iraq who are willing to demonstrate energy and selflessness in solving their problems.
4. A warning that none should mistake America's new position with a lack of resolve. In fact, resources which become available from a drawdown in Iraq will available to confront those injudicious enough to challenge us.
5. A diplomatic campaign worthy of its military parallel to engage the region and the global community in solving Iraq's woes, or in clearly labeling those who would prefer to abet the crisis.
6. An announced window for the first withdrawal of US ground combat forces. For a variety of reasons, I would recommend spring, 2008. I would not recommend setting a precise date for final withdrawal, because the US needs to preserve flexibility and leverage. Trainers and aircraft may be available to support the Iraqi government longer, as long as the Iraqis demonstrate the resolve to win their fight and reclaim their nation.
7. Finally, legislation that provides the Interagency equivalent of the Goldwater-Nichols Act, so that our nation will be more astute, more prepared, and more coordinated in future response to crises.

I applaud the Subcommittee for sincerity in attempting to examine this in a largely non-partisan way. I hope that you engage others – on the opposite side of the aisle -- to help you craft solutions. Then seek those in the Administration who are willing to open their

minds to combined solutions. The nation deserves no less, and those who have fought for you are watching.


SABAN CENTER
The Saban Center
for Middle East Policy
at The Brookings Institution
ANALYSIS PAPER
Number 12, June 2007
The Case for
Soft Partition in Iraq
Edward P. Joseph
Michael E. O'Hanlon

The Saban Center
for Middle East Policy
at The Brookings Institution

ANALYSIS PAPER
Number 12, June 2007

The Case for Soft Partition in Iraq

Edward P. Joseph
Michael E. O'Hanlon

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments V
Abbreviations VII
Executive Summary IX
The Authors XIII
The Case for Soft Partition 1
Implementing Soft Partition 15
Conclusion 31
Appendix 33
Maps 37

Acknowledgments

The authors are grateful to a wide range of scholars and political leaders in the United States and Iraq. Most of the political leaders cannot be named, although the authors owe a special intellectual debt to Senator Joseph Biden and Leslie Gelb, a former President of the Council on Foreign Relations, who first articulated the basic contours of a plan similar to the soft partition concept developed here. The authors also wish to thank Antony Blinken, Staff Director of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Prof. Chaim Kaufmann of Lehigh University and Jonathan Morrow, formerly of the United States Institute of Peace. At the Saban Center for Middle East Policy at Brookings, the assistance of Bruce Riedel, and most of all Martin Indyk and Kenneth Pollack, has been extremely important. In Foreign Policy Studies at the Brookings Institution we are very grateful to Molly Browning, Jason Campbell, Roberta Cohen, Elizabeth Ferris and Carlos Pascual.

Abbreviations

IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IOM	International Organization for Migration
METT	Mission-Enemy-Terrain-Tactics
NIE	National Intelligence Estimate
SIIC	Supreme Islamic Iraqi Council (Formerly The Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq)
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNPROFOR	United Nations Protection Force

Executive Summary

The time may be approaching when the only hope for a more stable Iraq is a soft partition of the country. Soft partition would involve the Iraqis, with the assistance of the international community, dividing their country into three main regions. Each would assume primary responsibility for its own security and governance, as Iraqi Kurdistan already does. Creating such a structure could prove difficult and risky. However, when measured against the alternatives—continuing to police an ethno-sectarian war, or withdrawing and allowing the conflict to escalate—the risks of soft partition appear more acceptable. Indeed, soft partition in many ways simply responds to current realities on the ground, particularly since the February 2006 bombing of the Samarra mosque, a major Shi'i shrine, dramatically escalated inter-sectarian violence. If the U.S. troop surge, and the related effort to broker political accommodation through the existing coalition government of Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki fail, soft partition may be the only means of avoiding an intensification of the civil war and growing threat of a regional conflagration. While most would regret the loss of a multi-ethnic, diverse Iraq, the country has become so violent and so divided along ethno-sectarian lines that such a goal may no longer be achievable.

Soft partition would represent a substantial departure from the current approach of the Bush Administration and that proposed by the Iraq Study Group, both of which envision a unitary Iraq ruled largely from Baghdad. It would require new negotiations, the formation of a revised legal framework for the country, the creation of new institutions at the regional level, and the organized but voluntary movement of populations. For these reasons, we refer to it as a "Plan B" for Iraq. It would require acquiescence from most major Iraqi political factors (though not necessarily all, which is an unrealistic standard in any event). It might best be negotiated outside the current Iraqi political process, perhaps under the auspices of a special representative of the United Nations as suggested by Carlos Pascual of the Brookings Institution.

International mediation could succeed where the current, U.S.-led effort to pry concessions out of al-Maliki's government has failed. Indeed, Kurds and Shi'i Arabs would have far more incentive to cede on the fundamental issue of oil production and revenue-sharing if they knew that their core strategic objectives would be realized through secure, empowered regions. Although it would surely play a facilitating role along with the United Nations, the United States need not bear the burden, nor the stigma, of leading Iraqis towards soft partition. At the outset, it would suffice for the United States simply to cease its insistence on the alternative of an Iraq ruled from Baghdad that at once fails to serve Sunni Arabs while serving as a symbolic threat to Shi'i Arabs—an Iraq that has encouraged the Shi'i Arabs to cement their dominance of the country's power center against any potential Sunni Arab revival.

Soft partition has a number of advantages over other "Plan B" proposals currently under discussion. Most others focus on a U.S. troop withdrawal or on the containment of civil war spillover to other countries, rather than the prevention of a substantial worsening of Iraq's civil war. Soft partition could allow the United States and its partners to preserve their core strategic goals: an Iraq that lives in peace with its neighbors, opposes terrorism, and gradually progresses towards a more stable future. It would further allow for the possibility over time for the reestablishment of an Iraq increasingly integrated across sectarian lines rather than permanently segregated. If carefully implemented, it would help end the war and the enormous loss of life on all sides.

Such a plan for soft partition (as opposed to hard-partition which involves the outright division of Iraq) is consistent with the plan of Senator Joseph Biden (D-Del) and Leslie Gelb, a former President of the Council on Foreign Relations. Our plan builds upon their proposal, setting out the full rationale for such an approach as well as the means by which this new regionalized political system would be implemented through soft partition. Those means include creating processes to help people voluntarily relocate to parts of Iraq where they would no longer be in the minority, and hence where they should be safer. This is not an appealing prospect to put it mildly. However, if the choice becomes sustaining a failing U.S. troop surge or abandoning Iraq altogether, with all the risks that entails in terms of intensified violence and regional turmoil, then soft partition might soon become the least bad option. The question will then be less whether it is morally and strategically acceptable, and more whether it is achievable. Accordingly, the latter portion of this paper focuses on the mechanisms for implementing a viable soft partition of Iraq.

Sunni and Shi'i Arabs have traditionally opposed partition, whether hard or soft. However, with 50,000 to 100,000 persons being displaced from their homes and several thousand losing their lives every month, sectarian identities are hardening as ethno-sectarian separation is increasing. In short, Iraq today increasingly resembles Bosnia-Herzegovina (hereafter Bosnia) in the early 1990s, where one of us worked extensively. While Iraq may not yet resemble Bosnia in 1995 in which ethnic separation had progressed to the point where fairly clear regional borders could be established, it is well beyond the Bosnia of 1992 when the separation was just beginning. Moreover, while Bosnia eventually wound up as a reasonably stable federation, as many as 200,000 may have lost their lives before that settlement. A comparable per capita casualty toll in Iraq would imply one million dead. It should be the goal of policymakers to avoid such a calamity by trying to manage the ethnic relocation process, if it becomes unstoppable, rather than allow terrorists and militias to use violence to drive this process to its grim, logical conclusion.

To make soft partition viable, several imposing practical challenges must be addressed. These include sharing oil revenue among the regions, creating reasonably secure boundaries between them, and restructuring the international troop presence. Helping minority populations relocate if they wish requires a plan for providing security to those who are moving as well as those left behind. That means the international troop presence will not decline immediately, although we estimate that it could be reduced substantially within eighteen months or so. Population movements also necessitate housing swaps and job creation programs.

Soft partition cannot be imposed from the outside. Indeed, it need not be. Iraq's new constitution, approved by plebiscite in October 2005, already permits the creation of "regions." Still, a framework for soft partition would go much further than Iraq has to date. Among other things, it would involve the organized movement of two million to five million Iraqis, which could only happen safely if influential leaders encouraged their supporters to cooperate, and if there were a modicum of agreement on where to draw borders and how to share oil revenue.

As noted, unless the U.S. troop surge succeeds dramatically, a soft partition model may be the only hope for avoiding an all-out civil war. Indeed, even if the surge achieves some positive results, the resulting political window might best be used to negotiate and implement soft partition. As of writing, it is too soon to know exactly how the current approach will fare. We are highly skeptical of its prospects. But one need not have a final assessment of the surge to begin considering which "Plan B" might succeed it in the event of failure—or even of a partial but insufficient success.

The Authors

Edward P. Joseph is Visiting Scholar and Professorial Lecturer at the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies of the Johns Hopkins University as well as a career professional in conflict management, democracy and elections. He served for a decade in the Balkans, including nearly throughout the entire war in Bosnia-Herzegovina as a peacekeeper with the United Nations, on post-war active duty with the Army, as a senior official with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and Project Director for the International Crisis Group. In July 1995, contemporaneous with the massacres in Srebrenica, Joseph and one United Nations colleague coordinated the evacuation of Muslim civilians from the neighboring Zepa "safe area." In the fall of 2004, based in Baghdad's civilian areas, the "red zone", Joseph coordinated the United States Agency for International Development-funded governance program for the Interim Iraqi government. He is a frequent commentator on the Balkans and has published articles on both that region and Iraq. He earned a bachelors degree and masters degree in international studies from Johns Hopkins University and from the School of Advanced International Studies of the Johns Hopkins University respectively. Joseph also has a law degree from the University of Virginia. He is a helicopter pilot in the U.S. Army Reserve.

Michael E. O'Hanlon is a Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution, where he holds the Sydney Stein, Jr. Chair and specializes in U.S. national security policy. He is the Director of Research of the Brookings Institution's *21st Century Defense Initiative*, and he directs the Brookings Institution's *Opportunity08* initiative to provide independent input into the debate over America's future. Since 2003 he has been the senior author of the Iraq Index with Jason Campbell. His recent books include *Hard Power: The New Politics of National Security* (with Kurt Campbell, 2006), and *A War Like No Other: The Truth About China's Challenge to America* (with Richard Bush, 2007). O'Hanlon was a Peace Corps volunteer in the former Zaire for two years. He received his Ph.D. from Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs before working for the U.S. Congress from 1989 to 1994, after which time he joined the Brookings Institution.

66

The Case for Soft Partition

Debates about whether soft partition is stabilizing, incendiary or even immoral go back for decades. Opponents of a partition of Iraq include Iraqi officials, the Bush Administration and the Iraq Study Group headed by former Secretary of State James Baker and former Congressman Lee Hamilton. In general, these opponents of partition argue that the country is still too mixed demographically, with up to a third of marriages across ethno-sectarian lines, and too unified culturally between its Sunni and Shi'i Arabs. Consequently, despite sectarian violence and population separation, they argue that such a proposal cannot work.[1] Opponents also fear the internal and regional implications of partitioning Iraq, bearing in mind the opposition to partition among prominent political factions within the country and among neighbors like Saudi Arabia and Jordan.

These strong reservations present a high hurdle for the advocates of partition. We share some of these concerns and, as a matter of principle and theory, we dislike partition as a solution to ethno-sectarian conflict. However, at some point it can become the lesser of a range of possible evils. Iraqi realities are beginning to trump theory. Ethnic killing and cleansing are the most important evidence of this trend. The proof goes further than acts of violence alone. The views and actions of an even larger percentage of the population than the violent minority (or "extremists" as Iraqi officials label them) indicate a drift towards separation. Disproving the notion that Iraqis "want to live together," citizens through their political choices and their movements are actually "voting" for separation. For example, voters twice rejected credible, non-sectarian alternatives to the current governing coalition by an increasing margin in the January and December 2005 legislative elections. Furthermore, in their flight from danger, Iraqis have demonstrated that they seek security not just by gaining distance from the violence—but more importantly by sheltering with members of the same ethno-sectarian group. By doing so they render the remaining minorities within Iraq's emerging regions even more vulnerable, thereby increasing the likelihood that they will even-

[1] Sudarsan Raghavan, "Marriages Between Sects Come Under Siege in Iraq," *The Washington Post*, March 4, 2007, p. A-16. In the words of the Iraq Study Group, "devolving Iraq into three semiautonomous regions with loose central control [Federalism] ... could result in mass population movements, collapse of the Iraqi security forces, strengthening of militias, ethnic cleansing, destabilization of neighboring states, or attempts by neighboring states to dominate Iraqi regions. [Further], Iraqis, particularly Sunni Arabs, told us that such a division would confirm wider fears across the Arab world that the United States invaded Iraq to weaken a strong Arab state." See the Iraq Study Group (James A. Baker, III and Lee H. Hamilton, Co-Chairs), *The Iraq Study Group* (New York, NY: Vintage, 2006), p. 39.

tually have to leave (a phenomenon known as the "security dilemma").[2]

Ardent defenders of Iraqi unity, like those of Bosnian unity before them, argue passionately against the notion that "ethnic differences are an insurmountable barrier to national concord."[3] It is true that (as in Bosnia) there is nothing inherently incompatible about Iraq's peoples, tribes and sects, particularly, the Sunni Arab and Shi'i Arab communities. Unlike in the Balkans, achieving ethno-sectarian "purity" is not itself a driving ideological imperative for political parties and armed groups in Iraq. However, it is also true that the Sunnis and the Shi'ah have clear identities and long-standing group grievances that are part and parcel of a self-sustaining civil war which U.S. forces are being asked to referee.

Most Iraqis today still do not favor soft partition. Yet the country's political attitudes on this point are more complex than usually understood. Of course, the Kurds are nearly unanimous in their demands for maximal sovereignty. The deeply splintered Sunni Arabs tend to oppose soft partition, out of fear that it will be a prelude to hard partition, a consequent loss of oil revenues and excessive Iranian influence in Iraq. However, the preferred outcome of many Sunni Arabs is the restoration of their previous dominance in Iraq, an entirely unrealistic goal. They will have to find a new model and as good as any other approach is soft partition involving reliable guarantees for equal sharing of oil revenues. As for the Shi'i Arabs, many oppose the plan for regional autonomy promoted by 'Abd al-Aziz al-Hakim, the leader of the most prominent Shi'i Islamist Party, the Supreme Islamic Iraqi Council (SIIC, previously the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq). Yet they seem less confident in the prospect of maintaining a multi-ethnic, diverse Iraq. Few Shi'i Arabs, other than former Interim Prime Minister Iyad Allawi whose support has dwindled, offer an alternative that is other than a Shi'i Arab-dominated Iraq.

As for the wider ramifications, a carelessly conceived and implemented partition could potentially cause regional destabilization and conflict. Indeed, this is a crucial difference between Iraq and Bosnia. In the latter's case, its neighbors, Serbia and Croatia, were unified in their ambition to divide Bosnia and achieved a common approach. By contrast in Iraq it is precisely the ongoing civil war that presents the worst risk for regional stability. Rather than mitigating this internal conflict, the current insistence on maintaining the façade of a centralized government in Iraq is fuelling the conflict and perpetuating the security dilemma that each community feels. Given the depth of mistrust between ethno-sectarian groups and the nearly complete polarization of the security forces, exhortations to the government to "reform" and "reconcile" are likely to fail—even if they are worth a final try.

This paper explores how a soft partition plan would be implemented in Iraq. Among other elements it details how voluntary population movements could be executed. This process would require large numbers of U.S. forces, comparable to past levels, for the first twelve to eighteen months. Substantial, albeit

[2] Drawn from the realist school of international relations, the underlying theory of the security dilemma is that in a state of anarchy, one state's defensive action makes everyone less secure. Barry Posen of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology applied the concept of security dilemma to ethnic conflict, arguing that as multi-ethnic entities (such as Tito's Yugoslavia or presumably Saddam's Iraq) collapse, a situation of anarchy emerges among competing ethnic groups. The search for security then motivates these groups to seek either to control the state or resist it (given that the new state is "biased against them.") Today's Iraq evinces examples of both phenomena as Sunni Arabs resist Shi'i Arab domination of the state. In addition, as the displaced seek security through homogeneity, they are unintentionally accelerating inter-communal anxiety and the security dilemma. See Barry Posen, "The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict," *Survival*, Vol. 35, No. 1, Spring, 1993, pp. 27-47. See also Carter Johnson, University of Maryland, "Sovereignty or Demography? Reconsidering the Evidence on Partition in Ethnic Civil Wars," DC Area Workshop on Contentious Politics, University of Maryland, Spring 2005, available at <http://www.bsos.umd.edu/gvpt/davenport/dcawcp/paper/DCAWCP_CJohnson_Partition.pdf>.

[3] Eric Davis, Rutgers University, "Ethnic-Religious Divisions and Prospects for a Democracy in Iraq" at "The Middle East in 2005", International Conference at the University of California, Los Angeles, May 19-21, 2005, available at <http://www.international.ucla.edu/article.asp?parentid=24920>.

reduced, numbers would be needed for several years afterwards. However, the number of expected U.S. fatalities should decline dramatically fairly soon after the beginning of the soft partition process. Some will find the ethics of assisting Iraqis in the segregation of their own country problematic. To be sure, the idea is distasteful. Nonetheless, the mass movement of populations is far preferable to insisting that people at risk stay put or return to their homes to prop up an illusion of political co-existence. As for the propriety of population movements, no less an organization devoted to human dignity than Human Rights Watch stated that the willingness of Arab settlers in Kirkuk to give up their homes to Kurds in return for assistance in finding new homes and livelihoods elsewhere "offered great hope of peacefully resolving the crisis in northern Iraq."[4]

Iraq's Sectarian Civil War and the Security Dilemma

Iraq's descent into civil war has had a corrosive effect on the country's demography. According to January 2007 data from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), there are 2 million refugees (Iraqis fleeing across the international borders), and 1.7 million internally displaced persons (IDPs). Another 50,000 to 100,000 are being driven from their homes each month.[5] UNHCR anticipates a possible increase of one million displaced persons in Iraq over the course of 2007.[6] The displaced are a representative sample of all of Iraq's major ethno-sectarian groups, with the exception of the Kurds of whom only modest numbers have been forced to move.[7] Despite repeated appeals from Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki for all those displaced to return to their homes, particularly in Baghdad, there are scant indications of willingness to do so. To the contrary, rather than any imminent reversal of the ethno-sectarian flight, a recent report of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) concluded that "these large movements will have long-lasting social, political and economic impacts in Iraq."[8] As of June 2007, there was only a slight reported slowing of the displacement process despite the effort to improve security in Iraq through the new U.S. troop surge strategy.

The IOM monitors the movements of the displaced in fifteen of Iraq's eighteen governorates (provinces) and confirms that in general, IDPs are moving to *homogenous communities*, sometimes within the same city (such as Baghdad), sometimes to different regions.[9] According to the IOM: "Shias tended to move from the center to the south. Sunnis tended to move from the south to the upper center, especially al-Anbar. Both ethnicities moved from mixed communities to homogenous ones in the same city, especially volatile Baghdad and Baquba. Christians primarily fled to Ninewa and Kurds were usually displaced to Diyala or Tameem/Kirkuk."[10] Echoing this view, Refugees International explained the consequences of ethno-sectarian flight in this manner: "as Iraqis race to es-

[4] Human Rights Watch, "Claims in Conflict: Reversing Ethnic Cleansing in Northern Iraq", Summary, August 2004, available at <http://hrw.org/reports/2004/iraq0804/2.htm>.

[5] UNHCR data cited in Sudarsan Raghavan, "War in Iraq Propelling a Massive Migration," *The Washington Post*, February 4, 2007, p.A-1, available at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/02/03/AR2007020301604.html>. The IOM, *infra*, cites a figure of 1.5 million internally displaced, with 200,000 displaced between 2003 and 2005.

[6] Refugees International, *Iraq: The World's Fastest Growing Displacement Crisis*, March 2007, p. 10, available at <http://www.refugeesinternational.org/content/issue/detail/9915>.

[7] By one recent count, the displaced in Iraq are 90 percent Arab, 7 percent Assyrian Christian, 2 percent Kurdish, 1 percent Turkomen, and less than 1 percent Chaldean Christian. Broken down differently, 64 percent were Shi'i Muslim, 28 percent Sunni Muslim, and 7 percent Christian. See IOM, *Iraq Displacement: 2006 Year in Review*, Geneva, Switzerland, January 2007, p. 5, available at <http://www.iom-iraq.net/library/2006%20Iraq%20Displacement%20Review.pdf>.

[8] IOM, op.cit., p. 2.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid.

cape sectarian violence and de facto ethnic cleansing in southern and central areas[,] Iraq is becoming Balkanized as formerly mixed neighborhoods disintegrate into Sunni and Shia redoubts, all afraid of one another."[11]

The data from refugee experts confirm that the impetus for ethno-sectarian flight comes from the ethno-sectarian nature of the killing, rather than armed conflict *per se*.[12] Put otherwise, those with the best on-the-ground intelligence and the most at stake, Iraqi civilians, are not simply fleeing the violence. Rather they are seeking security and they define security in large part through ethno-sectarian demographics. If they lack the means to escape Iraq or to move to relatively quiet areas such as Kurdistan, Basra or Karbala, then instead they move to nearby locations where they are part of the ethno-sectarian majority, and where militias of their own group tend to be in control. To illustrate, a Shi'i Arab family profiled by *The Washington Post* fled the predominantly Sunni Arab neighborhood of Ghazaliya in western Baghdad after receiving threatening leaflets. They chose to move to the mostly Shi'i Arab Kadhimiyah neighborhood. Although still in Baghdad, vulnerable to violence and facing material hardships, the family now feels a sense of security as explained by one of the daughters: "we were living in constant anxiety [in the old neighborhood.] Here we at least feel comfortable. We are living as one [with our new Shi'i Arab neighbors.]"[13] A Sunni Arab family interviewed by *Time* had a similar experience. Fleeing from Baghdad's mostly Shi'i Arab Shualla neighborhood to Sunni Arab Adhamiya, Ayesha Ubaid stated that, after the move, "she feels as safe as it is possible to be in Baghdad."[14] She added that despite the promise to protect their house, their erstwhile Shi'i Arab neighbors did nothing as a Shi'i Arab family quickly moved in to take the place of the displaced Sunni Ubaid family.

The Iraqi government does not approve of such movements, and recently demanded that recent settlers leave occupied housing promptly unless they can prove a legal right to the premises, such as a lease. This demand sparked a furor among Sunni and Shi'i Arab IDPs who insist that it is too dangerous to return home. "The government can say whatever it wants, but if it tells me to leave, I will not," a Shi'i Arab man who had fled his home in a Sunni Arab neighborhood in Baghdad told *National Public Radio*, "Where can I go?"[15]

U.S. forces have been pulled into the dispute over squatters' rights. In Ghazaliyah in western Baghdad, Sunni Arabs appealed to the U.S. Army to have the Iraqi government suspend its demand to expel those without legal proof of occupancy. U.S. forces have begun to assist IDPs in legalizing their new status and swapping homes. In Bosnia, the international community set up post-war property commissions to regularize the status of the massive number of homes and apartments that changed hands during the war. In the vast majority of cases minorities who recovered the legal right to their property in Bosnia quickly sold it. No such system exists in Baghdad and residents have to attempt to strike deals on their own, or to appeal to U.S. forces for a reprieve. If these approaches fail, they turn to militias and other enforcers to find ways of "convincing" own-

[11] Refugees International, op.cit., p. 1.
[12] Ibid, p.7. The least likely reason provided by displaced persons for their flight was "armed conflict."
[13] Joshua Partlow, "For Baghdad's Uprooted Girls, Schools Offers a Hard Haven," *The Washington Post*, February 17, 2007, p. A-18, available at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/02/16/AR2007021602195.html>.
[14] Bobby Ghosh, "Behind the Sunni-Shi'ite Divide", *Time Magazine*, February 22, 2007, p. 40.
[15] The man acknowledged that his home was provided to him by representatives of Muqtada as-Sadr, whose Mahdi Army in all likelihood knew of its availability as they had expelled the Sunni Arab owners. Ann Garrels, "Baghdad Squatters Face Deadline to Leave," National Public Radio, *Morning Edition*, February 20, 2007, available at <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=7492225>.

ers to give them the permission that they need to stay in their new-found homes.[16]

As Baghdad has succumbed to the Balkanization of its neighborhoods, the United States has acknowledged the value of ethno-sectarian separation. Segregating communities, according to the U.S. commander in Doura, a south Baghdad neighborhood, is a regrettable but "necessary interim step to allow the situation to calm down."[17] In the most visible endorsement of separation, U.S. troops have controversially begun to create so-called gated communities in at least ten of Baghdad's most violent neighborhoods. In Adhamiya, American commanders began erecting a three-mile wall "to break contact between Sunnis and Shiites."[18] The proposal has been hotly contested and there has been a backlash, particularly from Sunni Arabs in Adhamiya. The Iraqi reaction to the Adhamiya plan illustrates the difficulty of dividing up mixed populations while leaving them essentially in place. Physical separation boosts security, but keeping the communities cheek-by-jowl makes residents angry and resentful. One Sunni Arab resident chafed that the barriers imprisoned him and his fellow Sunni Arabs.[19] At some point soon, U.S. and Iraqi officials may have to reassess the viability of maintaining vulnerable minority populations in their current locations where they are surrounded by hostile majorities, such as the Sunni Arab communities in Doura or Adhamiya.

To summarize, the manner in which Sunni and Shi'i Arabs seek security is part and parcel of the increasing, accelerating emergence of largely homogenous ethno-sectarian regions in Iraq. The *internal* displacement in Iraq has become an accelerant of the conflict, creating a self-sustaining momentum. The flight of refugees across international borders has also robbed the country of a core, moderate middle class needed for reconciliation. Not only are extremists on both sides making the civil conflict "self-sustaining," in the words of the National Intelligence Estimate (NIE), the movement of victims is further widening the sectarian divide.[20] It will be very difficult to reverse this, if indeed it is even possible.

Both the Iraq Study Group and the Bush Administration expressly oppose devolving power to semi-autonomous regions. Instead, both advocate maximal support for, as the Iraq Study Group puts it, "central control by governmental authorities in Baghdad."[21] To stem sectarian violence they logically advocate goading Iraq's dominant Shi'i Arabs and Kurds to meet a number of "milestones" that will foster "reconciliation."[22] Resistance to this approach so far has not been surprising, however, given the strong sectarian sympathies

---

[16] The National Public Radio report quoted a Shi'i Arab man who fled his house, yet refused to give the Sunni Arab occupants legal rights. He is now worried that relatives of his who are still living in his old neighborhood will be threatened unless he complies. Ann Garrels, op.cit. A property commission exists for Kirkuk, but as discussed *infra* has had incomplete results because many of the Kurds expelled from the city by Saddam have no documents to establish their ownership rights.

[17] Colonel Jeff Petersen, commander in the South Dora neighborhood of Baghdad, quoted in Ann Garrels, op.cit.

[18] Edward Wong and David S. Cloud, "U.S. Erects Baghdad Wall to Keep Sects Apart," *The New York Times*, April 21, 2007, available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/04/21/world/middleeast/21iraq.html?ex=1334808000&en=b08d5548fc11ec02&ei=5090&partner=rssuserland&emc=rss>.

[19] Wong and Cloud, op.cit. For other Iraqi reactions to the wall, see Alissa J. Rubin, "Outcry Over Wall Shows Depth of Iraqi Resentment," *The New York Times*, April 23, 2007, available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/04/23/world/middleeast/23cnd-Iraq.html?ex=1334980800&en=391a7d54f96691dc&ei=5088&partner=rssnyt&emc=rss>.

[20] The NIE states that "Extremists—most notably the Sunni jihadist group al-Qa'ida in Iraq (AQI) and Shia oppositionist Jaysh al-Mahdi (JAM) [Muqtada as-Sadr's Mahdi Army]—continue to act as very effective accelerators for what has become a *self-sustaining inter-sectarian struggle between Shia and Sunnis*" (emphasis added). The NIE adds that "Significant population displacement, both within Iraq and the movement of Iraqis into neighboring countries, indicates the hardening of ethno-sectarian divisions, diminishes Iraq's professional and entrepreneurial classes, and strains the capacities of the countries to which they have relocated. The UN estimates over a million Iraqis are now in Syria and Jordan." National Intelligence Council, "Prospects for Iraq's Stability: A Challenging Road Ahead," *National Intelligence Estimate*, January 2007, Washington, D.C., p. 7, available at <http://dni.gov/press_releases/20070202_release.pdf>.

[21] The Iraq Study Group, op.cit., p. 39.

[22] The main difference between the Iraq Study Group and the Bush Administration is on how to achieve the milestones. The Iraq Study Group advocates a comprehensive regional and international diplomatic approach in conjunction with strict conditionality toward the ruling Iraqis. If the government does not meet the milestones, continued U.S. military and economic support will be cut. The Iraq Study Group also advocates a transition in the U.S. military role from security to training and support, along with a progressive drawdown of forces. The Bush Administration is committed to using U.S. troops in a primary security role while attempting to goad the Iraqis into meeting largely similar milestones. Both approaches envision a unitary Iraq without regions.

and motivations of most in al-Maliki's government.[23] The abject bias of Prime Minister al-Maliki, a Shi'i Arab from the *Da'wa* party, and his government is well documented. This bias was detailed in a leaked memo written by National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley which described "an aggressive push [in government] to consolidate Shia power and influence." Hadley's memo suggested that al-Maliki himself is either ignorant or duplicitous or weak.[24] However, al-Maliki is only the tip of the iceberg. The Iraqi government is split almost wholly along ethno-sectarian lines. Based on the parliamentary seat allocation from the December 2005 election, less than 10 percent of Iraqi parties in the Council of Representatives (the unicameral parliament) are simply "Iraqi"—in the sense that they represent more than one ethno-sectarian group. The Iraqi National List of Iyad Allawi, the main non-sectarian party that ran in the most recent parliamentary elections, holds 13 percent of ministry or leadership positions.[25] All the other ministries have been allocated along ethno-sectarian lines.

The most sensitive function of government, providing security, is also contaminated by ethno-sectarian mistrust at the highest levels. Shi'i Arabs openly admit that Deputy Prime Minister Salam az-Zubayi, a Sunni Arab whose portfolio includes oversight of security affairs, is deliberately kept in the dark. They say that they "cannot share details about security operations with Sunni leaders [like az-Zubayi] because of fears that the Sunnis will disclose the plans to insurgent groups."[26] For their part, Sunni Arab leaders suspect that the government makes only half-hearted efforts to rein in Shi'i Arab militias, while deploying forces vigorously against the Sunni Arab insurgency. U.S. Army Gen. David Petraeus and other American officials are currently quite focused on this problem, but it is not yet clear how much improvement will be possible.

In other words, the rational Shi'i Arab concern that sensitive information would be leaked to insurgents has reinforced the equally rational Sunni Arab conviction that central government is biased against them.[27] Hadley captured the problem of the systematic anti-Sunni Arab exploitation of the tools of government with this blunt assessment in his memo:

> Despite Maliki's reassuring words, repeated reports from our commanders on the ground contributed to our concerns about Maliki's government. Reports of nondelivery of services to Sunni areas, intervention by the

[23] Two sage Iraqi observers, the former Iraqi Representative to the United States, Rend al-Rahim and Laith Kubba, of the National Endowment for Democracy and a former Spokesman for Transitional Prime Minister Ibrahim Ja'fari, each cite fundamental flaws in the strategy to obtain progress on "benchmarks" or "milestones" through pressure. Writing in *The Washington Post*, al-Rahim argued that "[t]he paramount problem in Iraq is the disagreement among Iraqis themselves and their reluctance to compromise, and what is needed first and foremost is an agreement among Iraqi social and political groups. Only then will regional and international agreements be relevant. Similarly, the attention the United States pays to the legal aspects of national reconciliation puts the cart before the horse: Laws and constitutional revision must be outcomes of a national agreement, not conditions for one." Rend al-Rahim, "A Dayton Process for Iraq," *The Washington Post*, May 10, 2007, p. A-23, available at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/05/09/AR2007050902447.html>. Kubba, speaking publicly at the United States Institute of Peace on February 6, 2007, maintained that neither the threat of withdrawal, nor cutting back on assistance, would achieve the political accommodation sought by the U.S. for the simple reason that each of three main groups (Shi'i Arabs, Sunni Arabs and Kurds) believes in the main that it can fight on without U.S. help.

[24] Hadley's memo states (with added emphasis): "While there does seem to be an aggressive push to consolidate Shia power and influence, it is less clear whether Maliki is a witting participant. The information he receives is undoubtedly skewed by his small circle of *Da'wa* advisers, coloring his actions and interpretation of reality. His intentions seem good when he talks with Americans, and sensitive reporting suggests he is trying to stand up to the Shia hierarchy and force positive change. But the reality on the streets of Baghdad *suggests Maliki is either ignorant of what is going on, misrepresenting his intentions, or that his capabilities are not yet sufficient to turn his good intentions into action.*" Michael R. Gordon, "Bush Adviser's Memo Cites Doubts About Iraqi Leader," *The New York Times*, November 29, 2006, p. A-1.

[25] Phebe Marr, "Iraq's New Political Map," *USIP Special Report*, January 2007, p. 23, available at <http://www.usip.org/pubs/specialreports/sr179.html>. Allawi's nationalist slate did only marginally better in the January 2005 elections, getting 13.82 percent of the vote.

[26] Ernesto Londono, "For Eminent Sunni, Lessons in Weakness: Maliki Deputy Describes Marginalization," *The Washington Post*, February 10, 2007, p. A-1, available at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/02/09/AR2007020902344.html>.

[27] Partition theorists maintain that this perceived "biased nature of the state", drives groups in divided societies to seek to mobilize either to control the state or wage a violent secession (or insurgency.) See Johnson, op.cit., pp. 6-7.

> prime minister's office to stop military action against Shi'i targets and to encourage them against Sunni ones, removal of Iraq's most effective commanders on a sectarian basis and efforts to ensure Shi'i majorities in all ministries—when combined with the escalation of Jaish al-Mahdi's [Muqtada as-Sadr's Mahdi Army] killings—all suggest a campaign to consolidate Shia power in Baghdad.[28]

The disparity in services afforded Sunni Arabs in Baghdad cited by Hadley plays into the hands of Sunni Arab insurgents. According to Maj. Guy Parmeter, the operations officer for the U.S. battalion that operates in the Sunni Arab areas of west Baghdad: "When the government is denying services to Sunnis, they are pushing them toward the Sunni extremists who attack the Shiite-dominated security forces ... [making] it harder to deliver services in those areas."[29]

The anti-Sunni Arab bias in the security forces has not been lost on the Sunni Arab public, 56 percent of which, according to a recent *ABC News*-led poll, reported experiencing violence from the Iraqi Police or Iraqi Army forces. By contrast, only 7 to 8 percent of Shi'i Arabs reported similar experiences. Virtually no Kurds were on the receiving end of security force violence. According to *ABC News*:

> As in many of these measures, there's a *night-and-day difference between Sunni Arabs and other Iraqis* in their trust in institutions—the national government, the Iraqi Army and police, local leaders and local militias alike. And while most Shiites and Kurds think members of Iraq's National Assembly are willing to make needed compromises for peace, 90 percent of Sunni Arabs don't buy it [Emphasis added].[30]

If Sunni Arabs needed more evidence of the intrinsic government bias against them, it came on December 30, 2006 with Saddam Hussein's execution. Bending to the palpable eagerness of Shi'i Arabs to hasten Saddam's demise, the U.S. handed the former dictator over to al-Maliki's government which promptly carried out the execution on the day that Sunnis began the Id al-Adha holiday. The rushed selection of the date, which was one day before the Sh'iah begin Id al-Adha, reinforced Sunni Arab conviction that Shi'i Arab political dominance means constant humiliation. As media analyst Kadhim al-Mukhdadi said, "It was their way of telling us [Sunnis], 'We're in charge now, and you are so weak that even your holy days have no meaning anymore.'"[31] Not surprisingly, according to the Brookings Iraq Index, 85 percent of Sunni Arabs express dislike for al-Maliki.[32]

Is Partition the Solution?

Many commentators oppose the soft partition of Iraq because there is no longstanding enmity between Sunni and Shi'i Arabs.[33] Democracy advocates cite polls taken in Iraq showing that despite the violence and separation, Sunni and Shi'i Arab populations continue to have a strong "Iraqi national identity" and oppose

---

[28] Hadley memo quoted in National Public Radio, "Hadley's Memo on Maliki Reveals U.S. Analysis," *All Things Considered*, November 29, 2006, available at <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=6556440>. See also Michael R. Gordon, op.cit., p. A-1.

[29] Alissa J. Rubin, "Sunni Baghdad Becomes Land of Silent Ruins: Strife and Neglect Cut Access to Life's Basics," *The New York Times*, March 26, 2007, p. A1.

[30] Poll conducted on March 5, 2007. See ABC News-USA Today-BBC-ARD, "Iraq: Where Things Stand," March 19, 2007, p. 10, available at <http://abcnews.go.com/images/US/1033aIraqpoll.pdf>.

[31] Kadhim Al-Mukhdadi quoted in Ghosh, op.cit., p. 39. In addition, the harassment of a seemingly dignified Saddam on the gallows (principally by supporters of Muqtada as-Sadr) was photographed and sent around the world, further outraging Sunnis. See Anthony Shadid, "Across the Arab World, a Widening Rift; Sunni-Shiite Tension Called Region's 'Most Dangerous Problem'," *The Washington Post*, February 12, 2007, p. A-1.

[32] Jason Campbell and Michael E. O'Hanlon, *The Iraq Index*, Brookings Institution, June 4, 2007, p. 50, available at <http://www.brookings.edu/iraqindex>.

[33] Phebe Marr quoted in Peter Beinart, "We Broke It", *The New Republic*, December 18, 2006, available at <http://www.tnr.com/doc.mhtml?i=20061218&s=trb121806>. See also Rend al-Rahim, op.cit.

partition.[34] Despite this, there is strong evidence that violence is steadily eroding national unity.[35] In addition, there are demonstrable roots to Sunni-Shi'i tension, such as the longstanding Sunni Arab dominance of the oppressive Ba'th Party, common scorn among Sunnis for Shi'ah whom they view as "Persian" and lower in class standing, and Saddam's pogroms against the Shi'i Arabs in the early 1990s.[36] According to Vali Nasr of the Naval Postgraduate School: "When [Saddam] killed a Sunni, it was personal—because of something that person had done; when it came to killing Shi'ites, he was indiscriminate. He didn't need a specific reason. Their being Shi'ite was enough."[37] Although Shi'i Arabs profess support for an Iraqi national identity, they also have a shared memory of oppression and a widespread feeling of an entitlement to rule. This has left Iraq in the grips of an insidious form of "identity politics."[38]

The most recent *ABC News* survey provides important evidence for the growing acceptance of regionalism. Although all polling in Iraq must be read with caution, the figures are striking. The poll shows that a solid majority of Shi'ah (59 percent) believe that Iraq *should* either be reconstituted into regions or divided outright into separate states. An even larger majority (73 percent) believes that Iraq *will* be divided in one of these two manners at some point in the future—the personal preference of the respondents notwithstanding. The number of Iraqis now saying that the country should remain unified has dropped from 79 percent in February 2004 to 58 percent in March 2007. Almost the exact same number (57 percent) also says that regardless of their personal preferences Iraq *will* be divided either into regions or separate states.[39]

In any event, whatever Iraqis say in surveys about rejecting division of the country, what they do at elections suggests they are embracing it and hastening its arrival. Secular and religious Shi'ah alike heeded Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani's *fatwa* and streamed to the polls in December 2005 propelling heavily sectarian, religious-oriented parties into power. The parade of Shi'i Arabs wagging their purple fingers at the polls elicited deep-set Sunni Arab anxieties. For the Sunni Arabs, "the officially sanctioned emergence of the Shiites as the ruling element in Iraq was a massive psychological blow [confirming their] worst fears about [the Shi'ah.]"[40] When Sunni Arabs decided to participate in the second parliamentary election of the year they emulated their Shi'i Arab counterparts and voted overwhelmingly for sectarian parties. At the December 2005 poll,

---

[34] International Republican Institute Executive President Judy Van Rest said, referring to her organization's June 2006 poll, "Through everything that's gone on, there's a strong feeling that the country should stay together," quoted in David R. Sands, "Iraqis Dismiss Split, Approve of al-Maliki," *The Washington Times*, July 19, 2006. The poll reported 78 percent of respondents disagreeing with the suggestion that Iraqis should be segregated according to religion or sect. *Survey of Iraqi Public Opinion*, International Republican Institute, July 19, 2006. Poll material cited in *The Three-State Solution: Examining the Option of Partitioning Iraq*, Angela Stephens, January, 2007, unpublished paper, Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies.

[35] "The complex webs of tribal affiliations and social status that rule everyday life in Iraq do not always line up as simply Shi'ite against Sunni. But increasingly, despite the urging of some Shi'ite religious leaders and Sunni politicians, the attacks have been." Sabrina Tavernise, "Sectarian Hatred Pulls Apart Iraq's Mixed Towns," *The New York Times*, November 20, 2005 cited in Chaim Kaufmann, "Living Together After Ethnic Killing: in Theory, in History, and in Iraq Today" paper presented at "Iraq: The Approaching Endgame," conference organized by the Mortara Center for International Studies, Department of Government, Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, Center for Peace and Security Studies, Georgetown University, February 16, 2007, p. 39, available at <http://mortara.georgetown.edu/includes/20050901/TextFiles/Kaufmann1.pdf>.

[36] Yitzhak Nakash, *The Shi'is of Iraq* (Princeton, NJ; Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 76; and Vali Nasr, "When the Shiites Rise," *Foreign Policy*, July/August 2006.

[37] Vali Nasr quoted in Ghosh, op.cit., p. 35.

[38] Iraqi-American academic Kanan Makiya, an erstwhile fervent supporter of the U.S. invasion, in an interview broadcast by National Public Radio on April 18, 2007. Makiya, a Shi'i Arab, lamented that beginning in the immediate wake of the invasion even enlightened, exiled Iraqis "began thinking of themselves of Shiites first and Iraqis second." Makiya believes that the country's majority Shi'i Arabs "are trapped in their victim-hood. The abused has become the abuser." See Kanan Makiya, "Changing Assumptions on Iraq," National Public Radio, *Morning Edition*, April 18, 2007, available at <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=9635035>.

[39] Respondents were offered a choice of "One unified Iraq with central government in Baghdad", or "A group of regional states with their own regional governments and a federal government in Baghdad", or "Dividing the country into separate independent states." ABC News et al, op.cit., pp.23-4.

[40] Ahmed S. Hashim, "Iraq's Civil War", *Current History*, January 2007, p. 7.

voters from all sides rejected the option of national unity by an even greater margin than they had twelve months previously.[41]

To summarize, as in the former Yugoslavia, elections in Iraq have been less a transition point to democracy than an exercise in ethno-sectarian politics and the pursuit of group self-interest. As Shi'i Arab voters in particular have asserted their dominance by voting *en bloc*, they have provoked further sectarian responses from the Sunni Arabs. As each side has responded (by dividing the government along sectarian lines, by forming militias, by launching reprisal attacks), ethno-sectarian identities, which have deep roots in each group's historical experience, have hardened.

A new political and security architecture for Iraq that would devolve most power and governance to the regions would be a major change from the current approach. Yet it is consistent with the Iraqi constitution ratified in August 2005. Though Sunnis overwhelmingly opposed it, over 78 percent of Iraqis voted in favor of a constitution that licenses an autonomous Kurdish region and allows for creation of other similar regions.

The constitution acknowledges the stark reality of Iraq's identity politics in other ways. Incorporating provisions from the Transitional Administrative Law (the interim constitution adopted during the reign of U.S. pro-consul L. Paul Bremer), the constitution speaks of rectifying "the injustice caused by the previous regime's practices in altering the demographic character of certain regions, including Kirkuk."[42] The constitution sets out an end-2007 deadline to hold a referendum on Kirkuk. The Kurdish position on maximal autonomy (up to and including sovereignty) has the backing of almost 90 percent of Kurdish voters responding to a January 2005 referendum question. Kurdish politics have long revolved around the struggle for an independent Kurdistan with Kirkuk ("our Jerusalem," as Kurds like to say) at its center.[43]

With respect to aspirations among some Shi'ah to form a nine-governorate autonomous region in southern Iraq, the constitution imposes a six-month deadline from the first session of the newly convened parliament that was elected in December 2005 to elaborate the procedures for forming such "regions." Only 10 percent support among voters in each of the affected governorates is needed to seek a referendum to create an autonomous region.[44] SIIC leaders have made no secret of their determination to achieve their goal of forming a Shi'i region in southern Iraq, but they vigorously reject the allegation that it is simply a partisan project. After meeting with President Bush in Washington on December 4, 2006, al-Hakim gave an impassioned public defense of such an enhanced federalism. He dismissed the charge that it was a first-step towards formal partition of the country. Al-Hakim explicitly

[41] Even a staunch opponent of partition, the Iraq historian Phebe Marr, has conceded that the moderate, non-sectarian, Iraqi-in-identity Iraqi National List was the big "loser" in the latest elections. The Iraqi National List won barely 9 per cent of the vote, whereas non-sectarian parties, including Allawi's, had gained around 18 percent during the January 30, 2005 elections. See Iraqi election results in Marr, op.cit., pp. 22-3. Polls taken by the University of Michigan and Eastern Michigan University purportedly reveal a strengthening in the Iraqi identity from 2004 to 2006. University of Michigan News Service, "Iraqi Attitudes: Survey Documents Big Changes," June 14, 2006.

[42] See Article 136, Second and Article 138 of the Iraqi Constitution. The latter incorporates by reference Articles 53(A) and 58 from the Transitional Administrative Law, each of which accommodates the strong Kurdish interest in Kirkuk. The International Crisis Group warns of a "looming crisis" over the Kirkuk referendum. International Crisis Group, *Iraq and the Kurds: Resolving the Kirkuk Crisis*, April 19, 2007, available at <http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=4782&l=1>.

[43] See Articles 114 [118] and 115 [119] of Iraqi Constitution. The Constitution forbids only Baghdad from merging with a region, however, in a change from the Transitional Administrative Law, Baghdad is no longer expressly proscribed from forming its own region. See also Jonathan Morrow, "Weak Viability: The Iraqi Federal State and the Constitutional Amendment Process," USIP Special Report 168, July 2006, p. 12, available at <http://www.usip.org/pubs/specialreports/sr168.html>. For the Iraqi constitution, see Associated Press, Full Text of the Iraqi Constitution, October 16, 2005 available at <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/9719734/>.

[44] Ibid.

linked the pursuit of such a regional autonomy concept with the Shi'i narrative of oppression at the hands of Baghdad which had imposed an "artificial unity" on the country.[45]

Al-Hakim is not necessarily representative of most Shi'i political thinking on soft partition, and his own views have been in flux. The fact remains that realities on the ground are supporting the argument for dividing Iraq up whatever the theoretical and constitutional arguments might be.

Moreover, it is hard to know if the opposition of other Shi'i leaders to federalism has arisen primarily out of ideology or out of simple rivalry with al-Hakim. Establishing a "region" would consolidate SIIC's power in the central-southern governorates such as Babil, Najaf and Karbala, as well as provide it with control over fractious Basra governorate's oil. This would threaten Muqtada as-Sadr, whose strongholds are in the poor neighborhoods of Baghdad (the constitution excludes Baghdad from any autonomous region) and the southern provinces of Maysan and Dhi Qar.[46] Yet few of SIIC's principal opponents on the matter of federalism, most notably Prime Minister al-Maliki and as-Sadr, have demonstrated serious commitment to an alternative that cedes Sunni Arabs a meaningful place in government. To the contrary, aside from former Prime Minister Allawi and a few others, Shi'i politicians largely seem to share the objective of preserving a Shi'i-dominated ruling structure. A soft partition arrangement that did not consolidate SIIC's power might find favor among Shi'ah opposed to the concept at present.[47] To make soft partition more attractive the constitution might need to be modified to allow Baghdad, in whole or part, to join autonomous regions.

Iraq's Sunni Arabs bitterly and categorically reject soft partition. However, it is not clear what they want, since they have withheld strong support for the new Iraqi political system. The Sunni Arab insurgency reflects a widely shared Sunni Arab hostility to a constitution stacked in favor of the Shi'ah and Kurds and to *any order that will not restore Sunni Arab primacy.* U.S. Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad learned this lesson firsthand. Remembered for his signature efforts to bring disenfranchised Sunni Arabs into the political process during the fall of 2005, Khalilzad was "never able to find people who could reduce the violence."[48] So while it is hard to argue that enhanced regionalism would find any initial Sunni Arab support, there is no viable alternative for this large group of embittered Iraqis. A credible commitment by other Iraqis and the international community to share oil revenues equally across all communities, to maintain the capital in Baghdad, rule out hard partition or secession by any group, and to retain a significantly smaller U.S. troop presence to assist such a process might soften Sunni Arab opposition to soft partition. Admittedly, winning Sunni Arab acquiescence for such a plan—without which it could not be safely implemented—will be difficult. However, if no other solution becomes apparent in the coming months, many Sunni Arabs may conclude there is no alternative.

Several key countries in the region oppose soft partition. As the Iraq Study Group noted, there are conspiracy theories in the wider Sunni Arab world (that the

[45] 'Abd al-Aziz al-Hakim speech at the United States Institute of Peace, December 4, 2006, available at <http://www.usip.org/events/2006/Alhakim_speech.pdf>.
[46] Marr, op.cit., p. 9.
[47] As Iraq Constitutional expert Jonathan Morrow states: "Yet there has been no concrete formulation of an Iraqi nationalist or centralist constitutional position within the Shia camp, perhaps because Shia leaders know how hard such a position will be to sustain. A 'Sadrist' constitutional position has not been articulated, and no meaningful alliances have been forged to date, as some international commentators predicted, between the nationalist agendas of the Shiite Sadrist and the Sunni Arab parties." Morrow, op.cit., p.8.
[48] Edward Wong, "Departing U.S. Envoy Says He Met With Iraq Rebels," *The New York Times*, March 26, 2007, p. A10, available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/03/26/world/middleeast/26zal.html?ex=1332561600&en=69714bf2c7bb95be&ei=5090&partner=rssuserland&emc=rss>.

Iraq Study Group fears would spread under a partition of Iraq) that the United States invaded Iraq "to weaken a strong Arab state."[49] However, the main reason Iraq is weak is because of its own internal chaos. To a considerable extent, measures to mitigate the violence should make Iraq stronger, not weaker, in comparison to its current state. The most pressing problem for Iraq's neighbors, apart from the specter of a worsening Iraqi civil war, is the enormous and potentially destabilizing refugee flow stemming from the escalating violence within the country.[50]

To some it is immoral to contemplate even the voluntary, organized departure of populations. However, insisting that people remain in danger to prop up an illusion of political co-existence presents an even larger moral problem. If offered reasonable alternatives and secure passage, there are indications that many Iraqis, currently living in fear as vulnerable minorities, would willingly leave their homes. Baghdad is the main place where this holds true, but it is not the only such location. Kirkuk is the site of deeply contentious claims between Kurds, expelled *en masse* by Saddam Hussein, and Arabs who were settled into the Kurds' homes by Saddam and his predecessors. Human Rights Watch conducted interviews which revealed that "many of the Arab settlers [in Kirkuk] ... recognized Kurdish claims to their properties [and] ... many [stated] that they were willing to give up their homes in Arabized villages in return for humanitarian assistance in finding new homes and livelihoods for their families."[51] Human Rights Watch stated that the willingness of Arab settlers in Kirkuk to give up their homes to Kurds and move out meant that the crisis over the city could be settled in a peaceful manner.[52]

The Balkan wars of the 1990s revealed that warring parties, even amidst brutal ethnic cleansing campaigns, can sometimes agree on population movements. The mass exodus of Serbs from Croatia in 1995, though triggered by a Croat military assault, was actually part of a tacit deal between Zagreb and Belgrade. The population movement and expulsions created conditions for the final recognition of Croatia's borders, but happened well before there was any overt Croat-Serb agreement. Although certainly not free from violence (the Croat commander of the operation is now on trial in the Hague for alleged war crimes), the forced movements of Serbs from Croatia in 1995 was nevertheless far less traumatizing and ultimately more stabilizing than the ferocious, unagreed ethnic cleansing meted out by the Serbs in Bosnia during 1992-5.

It may be difficult to talk about trading territory in Iraq anytime soon. However, it might be possible for leaders to agree to limited population movements, perhaps starting in parts of Baghdad and Kirkuk.[53] This would have to be handled carefully, to be sure. Attempts to implement such population movements in the absence of agreements on core political issues could also stoke conflict—for example by increasing the stakes of holding onto land where oil is drilled, if there is no prior agreement on oil revenue sharing. Under such an approach, Iraqi officials would set up a mechanism that

[49] The Iraq Study Group, op.cit., p. 31.

[50] Sudarsan Raghavan, "War in Iraq Propelling A Massive Migration," op.cit.; Shadid, op.cit.

[51] Human Rights Watch, op.cit. According to the International Crisis Group, some 8,000 mainly Shi'i Arab settlers or "wafidin" (newcomers) have departed Kirkuk voluntarily, even transferring their residency registration to their new governorates (vital for Kurdish aims to consolidate control of Kirkuk). Rather than express bitterness at the Kurds for forcing them out, the former Shi'i Arab residents expressed sympathy and criticized the presumably Sunni Arab and other "wafadin" who remain. International Crisis Group, op.cit., p. 7.

[52] Human Rights Watch Report, op.cit.

[53] As noted above, the U.S. tactic of erecting barriers around "gated communities" reflects increasing belief in the merits of a form of ethno-sectarian separation. In Kirkuk the International Crisis Group, op.cit., has warned of a "looming crisis" caused by Kurdish determination to move forward with the Constitutionally-mandated referendum on the future of the city and has called for a "new mechanism prioritizing consensus" instead of the provocative referendum. Although not cited as a recommendation, facilitating the voluntary departure of Arabs settled in Kirkuk under the Ba'thist regime could help to achieve such a consensus.

would allow property swaps to be negotiated and then recorded legally (which U.S. troops are already being asked to do in isolated cases). Mixed Iraqi and U.S. security units could, if requested, provide security. Iraqi government officials would assist those whose employment is affected by the relocation to obtain work. Subsidies and stipends could be provided as well (discussed further below). At a minimum such an informal, localized, gradual option should be retained.

In summarizing the state of Iraq today, we cannot do better than the authors of the January 2007 NIE. They write of a "hardening of ethno-sectarian identities, a sea change in the character of the violence, ethno-sectarian mobilization, and population displacements." The NIE also states that:

> Decades of subordination to Sunni political, social, and economic domination have made the Shia deeply insecure about their hold on power. This insecurity leads the Shia to mistrust US efforts to reconcile Iraqi sects and reinforces their unwillingness to engage with the Sunnis on a variety of issues, including adjusting the structure of Iraq's federal system, reining in Shia militias, and easing de-Baathification...Many Sunni Arabs remain unwilling to accept their minority status, believe the central government is illegitimate and incompetent, and are convinced that Shia dominance will increase Iranian influence over Iraq, in ways that erode the state's Arab character and increase Sunni repression...The Kurds are moving systematically to increase their control of Kirkuk to guarantee annexation of all or most of the city and province into the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) after the constitutionally mandated referendum scheduled to occur no later than 31 December 2007. Arab groups in Kirkuk continue to resist violently what they see as Kurdish encroachment.[54]

Perhaps the most persuasive argument for soft partition, or regionalism, is to consider the alternatives:

- The U.S. troop surge may soon fail, at least given current and likely future constraints on American resources;
- A complete withdrawal of U.S. troops from the country could lead to genocide within Iraq and perhaps even outside intervention by regional parties;
- A partial withdrawal of U.S. troops (leaving behind trainers) along with redeployment of the rest to Iraq's borders, might reduce the risks of regional war resulting from the Iraqi civil war, but would do little to prevent a radical worsening of civil strife within Iraq.

Some argue that such an *all-out civil war* is needed to produce stable internal borders and to convince Iraqi players that peace is preferable. Whether or not they are right, this option would nonetheless be a stark humanitarian tragedy and an utter failure for the overall U.S. effort in Iraq. Moreover, there is no guarantee a peace would emerge from such a civil war anytime soon. Just as likely there would be a period of genocide followed by warlordism and ongoing civil strife, with some Iraqi actors welcoming al-Qa'ida and Iran into their areas to provide assistance.

Strategies focused as much on Iraqi politics as U.S. military options have a better chance of avoiding the necessity for soft partition, yet they also have important downsides. A regional peace process could help if regional states truly want peace. However, Iran in

[54] National Intelligence Council, op.cit., p. 5.

particular may be more intent on dealing the United States and its partners a decisive defeat, which is best accomplished by sustaining the violence within Iraq. Another approach is a "Musharraf option" in which a secular Iraqi leader like former Prime Minister Iyad Allawi and a small junta of others rules by decree and martial law for several years. This could dictate the resolution of some key political issues. However, it is unclear how such a junta could enforce its decisions or create security on Iraq's streets given the degree of chaos and sectarianism in the country (and the chaos and sectarianism within the security forces). Finally, *outright partition* of Iraq into three separate states, as some advocate, could indeed produce the regional conflagration that critics like the Iraq Study Group are so worried about.[55]

All of this implies that soft partition may soon become the best option available for Iraq. Soft partition is also consistent with core American strategic interests in the region. The question is, can soft partition really work? Reportedly, officials in the U.S. government who have examined the idea have doubted its practicality. Alas, their assessments were made largely in the fall of 2006, and since then another extended period of ethnic cleansing has made a form of enhanced federalism in the shape of soft partition more feasible. Nonetheless, many questions remain. To address the doubts of those who might countenance soft partition in theory, but doubt its practical viability, we now examine several concrete questions that would need to be answered for a soft partition plan to be adopted and implemented.

[55] Among the neighbors most neuralgic to outright partition is Turkey. However uneasy relations between Kurdistan and Turkey are, experts agree that Ankara clearly sees a difference between an autonomous Kurdish region and sovereign, independent Kurdistan.

Implementing Soft Partition

The advocates of soft partition must answer a series of significant questions. Where should the boundaries between the new Iraqi regions be drawn and who should draw them? How can security and services, such as new houses and jobs, be provided for those relocated by soft partition? Will the new regional institutions be able to carry out responsibilities previously assumed by Baghdad? How should oil revenues be shared? How will electricity and other utilities be provided and shared? How can extremists seeking to thwart the plan be identified and stopped? Finally, what military missions would remain for the U.S.-led coalition forces to perform? Each of these matters requires voluminous implementation plans. Our goal here is not to write such an operational manual but to address the broad questions and key challenges.

The core element of our plan is the proposal to allow and facilitate the voluntary relocation of populations, to help those who feel unsafe where they are now to move. Mechanisms would have to be developed to help them relocate to parts of the country where they would feel safer and where they could start over. It is important to note that this ambitious idea might be tested on a "pilot basis" first, if that proves more appealing to Iraq's political leaders. Housing swaps and facilitated population movements could be arranged for some neighborhoods as a trial run. As in the Balkans, this idea could respond pragmatically to the realities of Iraq—and keep more people alive, and help those relocating to ensure they have a roof over their heads—without requiring an elaborate new political arrangement to be negotiated in advance. Depending upon the future course of events, the new political arrangement could then be negotiated on a more comprehensive and formal level. Most of this section assumes such an official accord, including a revised legal and constitutional framework for the country, but does not prejudge the means of reaching these goals.

Drawing Regional Boundaries

In an Iraq of autonomous regions, it is natural that one largely autonomous region would be primarily Shi'i, one primarily Sunni Arab, and one Kurdish. Creating regions is more advantageous than working through the 18 existing provincial governorates because it simplifies the security challenge and creates a smaller number of internal borders between different sectarian groups that need to be patrolled. It would also allow for larger entities to be the chief governing structures in Iraq, which should translate into greater capacity for creating strong bureaucracies and security forces and finding talented politicians to lead.

In any case, these new regions will not and cannot be ethnically pure zones. The number of inter-sectarian marriages alone precludes it. The fact that some people will want to stay where they are, even while remaining in the minority, should also be respected. Some Iraqis presently displaced may wish in the future to return to their original homes—almost half of those recently

displaced say they hope to do so—and there is no reason to rule out that possibility.[56] The existence of other minorities in Iraq such as Turkomen and Assyro-Chaldean Christians is another reason why ethno-sectarian separation will never produce ethno-sectarian homogeneity. Minority rights will have to be a concern of all the new regional governments regardless of where lines are drawn. For all these reasons, and to avoid exacerbating ethno-sectarian divisions, it would be best to define three new autonomous regions as much by geography as ethnicity. That will also allow inter-sectarian boundaries to follow natural geographic barriers such as rivers as much as possible, thereby easing the problem of monitoring and enforcement (as discussed below).

Conceptualizing a Kurdish region is for the most part straightforward, except for the Kirkuk issue (which will also be dealt with below). Creating the other two main regions is harder but hardly impossible once it is accepted that this will be an imperfect enterprise. Most regions south of the greater Baghdad area would be in the new, mainly Shi'i Arab region. Most regions north and west of Baghdad, up to Kurdistan, would be in the primarily Sunni Arab region.

The difficult issues concern Baghdad, Mosul, Kirkuk, and most of the territory within twenty-five to fifty miles of Baghdad (see maps). The Biden-Gelb plan for a federal Iraq would have Baghdad administered as an international city.[57] On its own, such a proposal is probably not stabilizing as it would maintain the unacceptable *status quo*. Some two-thirds of population displacements at the moment are occurring in Baghdad, with some Baghdadis leaving the city and some relocating inside it. The capital therefore needs to be part of the soft partitioning of Iraq.[58] In theory, Baghdad could be its own special, separate region, a fourth major region of Iraq. Indeed, the present constitution precludes Baghdad from joining any region—although the major changes proposed here would probably imply important constitutional revisions. Whether Baghdad remains as one region, or is split into Sunni and Shi'i Arab subparts, population transfers there would likely be a critical and central element of any successful new approach.

We advocate where possible dividing major cities along natural boundaries. In Baghdad and Mosul the Tigris River represents a natural border. There are various possibilities for the mixed Sunni-Shi'i Arab areas around Baghdad. Most land to the north of Baghdad could be allocated to the Sunni Arab region, while land to the south could go to the Shi'i Arab region. Or the dividing line could run along the Tigris River (with areas to the east given to the Shi'i Arabs and to the west to the Sunni Arabs). Or a combination of these approaches could be used, with the goal being to minimize the necessary population relocations while also creating simple and defensible borders. Any framework that Sunni and Shi'i Arabs found acceptable would be consistent with the enhanced federalism that underpins our soft partition model.

The actual drawing of boundaries would have to be done very carefully. A strong outside, non-U.S. role would be essential to avoid the perception and reality of bias. Indeed, the United Nations (with possible Arab League involvement) should probably take the lead. Unlike the Dayton process for Bosnia, during which Ambassador Richard Holbrooke was the lead player for the United States, the Iraq case would present a situation in which Washington would probably lack the necessary credibility to steer the process. In any event, all three major Iraqi ethno-sectarian groups would need to be represented in a roughly equal manner—the Shi'ah should not have more influence in the border demarcation process simply because they are the most numerous. Locally strong political actors would presumably be chosen to deal with a given part

[56] IOM, op.cit., p. 9.
[57] Joseph Biden, "Iraq: A Way Forward," October 6, 2006, available at <http://www.planforiraq.com/plan>, with press release available at <http://biden.senate.gov/newsroom/details.cfm?id=264509>.
[58] IOM, op.cit., p. 4.

of the country as well. For example, the Turkomen would have some role in decisions affecting the north.

Several principles would guide efforts to create the new regions. First, borders could not affect oil revenue distribution as all Iraqis would have to share equally in their country's petroleum wealth. Second, any person who felt the need to relocate would have to be compensated fairly and assisted in finding a new life elsewhere. Third, minorities would require protections for their rights in the new regions. The regional governments, as well as the federal system, would provide individuals with legal review procedures, backed up by advice and help from the international community, to address individual grievances promptly and fairly.

Protecting Populations During Relocation: General Principles and Lessons from Bosnia

In a polarized environment like Iraq, once people of a given ethno-sectarian group decide to move, their neighbors from other groups ought presumably to let them go. In reality, it may not be so simple or safe. U.S.-led Coalition forces and Iraqi security units should plan for population movements that are fraught with danger. Those relocating might be targeted by hateful neighbors seeking a final chance to settle scores and to ensure that those departing never return. The displaced individuals themselves might be tempted to take revenge on their oppressors, with parting shots and burning of the homes of their enemies. Furthermore, as some members of a local minority relocate, those minority members remaining behind might feel particularly vulnerable and might be targeted for expulsion by thugs from the local majority. Finally, even after moving out of their neighborhoods, convoys of relocating individuals might be attacked along their departure route. Nothing about the relocation process would necessarily be easy.

Addressing these dangers is vital. Most countries do not have good doctrine or training for their armed forces on how to protect civilians in general. The specific task of convoy escort creates its own additional challenges.[59]

Several principles should guide the convoy escort mission. One is to use substantial combat capability with any convoy, involving units trained in proper convoy escort tactics. A second is to develop a broad strategy that goes beyond just the tactical movement of populations. Security forces should gradually build up around a given neighborhood in the days before a major population movement is due to occur, patrolling to discourage and detect any ambush preparations. On the actual day of the relocation operation, Iraqi and U.S.-led Coalition forces would deploy in sufficient numbers to look for snipers, cover the flanks of the civilian convoys, inspect suspicious vehicles for explosives, and conduct similar tasks. Convoy routes would ideally be made at least somewhat unpredictable to further complicate any terrorist, militia or insurgent ambush plans. After the convoy's departure, some forces would then have to remain in place in larger than usual strength for least several days to help the neighborhood stabilize.

We might not want U.S. forces to participate directly in what some might see as sanctioning a form of segregation, even though it would be more accurately described as protecting people as they started new lives. However, U.S. troops would have to, if for no other reason than the difficulty and sheer magnitude of the task. Already U.S. troops are being pulled into the fray, sought after to assist persons in Baghdad find new housing or avoid eviction in the first place.

[59] Thomas E. Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq* (New York: Penguin Press, 2006), pp. 115-332; Victoria K. Holt and Tobias C. Berkman, *The Impossible Mandate?: Military Preparedness, the Responsibility to Protect and Modern Peace Operations* (Washington, D.C.: Henry L. Stimson Center, 2006), pp. 188-96; and Lt. Gen. David H. Petraeus and Lt. Gen. James F. Amos, *Counterinsurgency*, Field Manual 3-24 (Washington, D.C.: Headquarters, U.S. Army, December 2006), available at <http://www.us.army.mil>.

U.S. forces would have to remain involved for the mission to succeed. Select Iraqi units could assist in certain population relocation operations. The composition of these Iraqi Army units would reflect the ethnic mix of the areas where movements would occur. Since most operations would be small scale, units could be of relatively small size. U.S. and British officers would only call upon those Iraqi units that had proven their fidelity in combat. For example, in the movement of Sunni Arabs from a Shi'i Arab neighborhood, a select Shi'i-dominated army unit would provide perimeter security, while a Sunni Arab unit would provide close protection for those Sunni Arabs leaving. The reverse would be the case in movements from Sunni Arab to Shi'i Arab neighborhoods.

Once a movement from a given neighborhood had begun, it might take on a life of its own and accelerate. Those from a minority population who had planned to stay put might find this harder to do than they had imagined. Majority population militia fighters might try to pressure them to leave. Indeed, this moral hazard is perhaps the single strongest argument against a population relocation program—although in the end it has to be balanced against the fact that such behavior is already occurring on a widespread basis. Security forces will need to remain after relocation operations to counter such thugs to the extent possible. However, they also might need to escort more people out of the neighborhood than originally expected.

Timing is also important. People should not be promised help in moving safely until Iraqi and U.S.-led Coalition forces are ready to assist them. Population transfers will have to be carefully scheduled and sequenced. If possible, the schedules should not be made public until shortly before they are implemented. Iraqi and U.S.-led Coalition forces will have to be diligent to ensure they do not commit themselves to more than they can safely handle. This will require some flexibility as the aggregate scale of this effort will be much larger than anything attempted on an organized basis by the international community in the recent past. These operations should be feasible, however, with some experiences from Bosnia and elsewhere informing the planning.

For example, although the vast majority of Muslim civilians were brutally expelled by the Serbs, there were exceptions. The United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR, the UN peacekeepers) evacuated approximately seven to eight thousand Muslims (mostly women and children) from the Zepa "safe area", thereby saving their lives, while a similar number (nearly all men) were being massacred in nearby Srebrenica. The UNPROFOR decision to evacuate Zepa was so controversial that the UNHCR refused to participate. However, UNHCR's officials did not witness the shrieks of terror from the huddled Muslim women as Serb jeeps rolled by—a sound that erased any qualms that one of the authors, Edward P. Joseph, had about the propriety of the mission. Although still traumatic for the families of victims and survivors, the United Nations acknowledged in its widely-respected report on Srebrenica and Zepa that the loss of these two enclaves helped pave the way for the territorial settlement that ended the war.[60]

The key is to have the parties in Iraq accept the relocation policy at least informally—again, with the caveat that it will be essential to strike an agreement on the over-arching issues of oil production and revenue-sharing. With an informal understanding among the belligerents, ethnic relocation can be less traumatic and destabilizing. As noted above, the vast majority of Croatia's Serbs were expelled during two military operations (in May and August 1995) that had at least tacit acquiescence from Belgrade. Likewise, thousands of Serbs left western Bosnia *after* the war was over,

[60] As the United Nations stated in its seminal report on Srebrenica, "there is no doubt that the capture of Srebrenica and Zepa by the Serbs made it easier for the Bosniacs and Serbs to agree on the territorial basis for a peace settlement." See Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to General Assembly resolution 53/35, "The fall of Srebrenica," November 15, 1999, para. 485, p. 104, available at <http://www.un.org/peace/srebrenica.pdf>.

without violence, as part of a process of land swaps agreed between Croats and Serbs at Dayton.

Of course, the Balkans are not the only place that partition, hard or soft, and population relocations, have been attempted. Critics of dividing up countries into smaller entities often invoke other cases, such as the Levant in which the effort to create a Jewish state alongside an Arab one has clearly not worked to date. They also cite the Indian subcontinent in the late 1940s. The former case underscores the need for political agreement among all major parties. If only one side wants partition and the associated population relocation, then it will probably not work. The Indian subcontinent case underscores the need for proper preparation and security. The lack of preparation was exacerbated by Britain's rather late decision to bring forward the withdrawal date. The departing British created a boundary force made up of Indian and Pakistani troops, led by British, Indian, and Pakistani officers, but it was overwhelmed by the massive population movement for which there had been no preparation. The boundary force also failed because there were so many ex-servicemen who had been demobilized on both sides of the line. These ex-servicemen included Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs (who were interested in a separate Sikh state), and many resorted to violence. There was also greed at work, with various partisans keen to push out the Muslims (or Hindus or Sikhs) and grab their property. Individuals were slaughtered in trains, in their homes, and in the streets. Many also died of disease or privation while trying to find refuge. The overall death toll reached well into the many hundreds of thousands if not the low millions.[61] This was partition done badly, and it would be essential to avoid such dynamics in Iraq.

Obtaining agreement in Iraq will require rapprochement among some key Sunni and Shi'i Arab leaders, and as well a constructive role by the Kurds, who already have relative security in their own territory. The Kurds see the oil-rich, multi-ethnic town of Kirkuk as both the capital of their longed-for state and a symbol of their oppression at the hands of Saddam Hussein (who engineered mass Sunni Arab migration to Kirkuk while expelling Kurds). Thousands of Kurds have already returned to Kirkuk, heightening tensions in anticipation of a vote on Kirkuk's political status scheduled for later this year. U.S. pressure on the Kurds, whose territory has been used as a base for Kurdish separatists in Turkey, could encourage them to cut a deal on Kirkuk's oil while earning greater Sunni Arab cooperation on property swaps in the town. Progress on ethnic movements in Baghdad and Kirkuk could establish the basis for more ambitious land swaps similar to those in Sarajevo and western Bosnia that were a crucial prerequisite for attaining peace in Bosnia.

How many people might ultimately move nationwide, if soft partition policy were adopted in Iraq in the coming months? More than two million probably already have, in the time since Saddam's regime fell in April 2003. The largest flows have occurred since the Samarra mosque bombing of February 22, 2006 initiated what most now describe as a civil war. Most of Iraq's mixed populations live in and around Baghdad, Mosul, Erbil, and Kirkuk, four of Iraq's five largest cities. Their populations total about nine million (nearly six million for Baghdad, close to two million for Mosul, and almost one million each for the other two). Counting surrounding areas, these areas account for about half of Iraq's overall population or twelve to fourteen million persons. In general, only those who were in the local minority would choose to move under this new framework. Some people would not choose to move even if they were local minorities. As noted above, unlike the Balkans, achieving ethnic purity is not in and of itself a driving ideological imperative in Iraq. On balance, the safest estimate would seem to be that somewhere between two million and five million

[61] Stanley Wolpert, *Shameful Flight: The Last Years of the British Empire in India* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 129-182; and Stephen Philip Cohen, *The Idea of Pakistan* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2004), pp. 39-51.

people might choose to relocate under our proposal, if it were fully implemented on a national scale.[62]

While these numbers are huge, the lowest is comparable to what has already happened in Iraq since the invasion of 2003. This rebuts the argument of those who say Iraq is too mixed ethnically for soft partition. The Iraq they are referring to is already disappearing. Tragically, but unmistakably, the unmixing of populations is already well underway, and the question may soon be whether the process continues via violence or in an organized and humane manner.

Helping People Start Over After Relocation

For individuals who fear for their lives and their families, relocation can be an entirely welcome prospect despite all the attendant difficulties. Refugees International recounted that despite the grave hardships that a woman who had fled Baghdad for Kurdistan had endured, she was grateful, because: "Here at least, we are safe."[63] Any plan that seeks to be humane, and to create the basis for long-term stability, must do better than that. It must exceed the essential tasks of protecting people as they relocate. It must help them to start new lives, meaning access to services such as health care, government food assistance and education for their children. Such a package of relocation assistance also requires providing housing and jobs.

Job creation is the more difficult of these two tasks. Ideally, a vibrant private sector should create the necessary jobs. However, Iraq lacks a sufficiently dynamic, growing private sector. Nor is such a private sector likely to emerge anytime soon, especially given the current levels of violence and the resulting paucity of investment coming in from Iraqis or foreigners. In the short-term, therefore, an official jobs creation program is necessary to assist with relocation. Such a program has long been a good idea for Iraq as a means of lowering the high unemployment rate and thereby reducing the pool of possible recruits for insurgent or militia groups. In the context of relocation, the state should offer modest-paying employment to individuals who are willing to move. The economic value of many of these jobs would admittedly be quite limited. However, the purpose of such employment is more to enhance security and to facilitate the relocation process than to act as a form of economic stimulus. The cost of an Iraq-wide job creation program might be $2 billion to $3 billion a year (2 million to 3 million jobs with a $1,000 annual salary), with only a fraction of that paying to create jobs for the relocated.

Housing is a daunting task, but is easier to address. One method is to create a federal housing swap program that would involve a registry of homes. This swap program would have to be managed by a body that represented all ethno-sectarian groups and was under strong UN oversight. The current Shi'i leadership of the Ministry of Housing should not manage the process. The program would create different price categories of housing. The goal of the program would be to assist families obtain new homes with comparable value to those they had felt the need to evacuate. An alternative approach would be to assign a simple dinar value to each home in an assessment process, with individuals relocating given a corresponding number of credits (or cash) to acquire a new home elsewhere.

Some new construction would of course be needed under this plan to ensure an adequate stock of housing, as some homes would have been destroyed in the warfare and violence. Even if the assumption is that a new home costs $10,000 and that 100,000 to 250,000 dwellings for 500,000 to 2 million persons are required, the costs would be bearable at around $1 billion to $2.5

[62] For good demographic information and maps on Iraq, see the University of Texas Perry-Castaneda Library Map Collection, available at <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/iraq.html>.
[63] Refugees International, op.cit., p. 2.

billion. Put otherwise, these homes could be built for the equivalent cost of around three to ten days of U.S. military operations in Iraq.[64]

Sharing Oil Revenue and Sharing Utilities

In an Iraq composed of autonomous regions, resources will have to be shared in a manner seen as fair by all. Otherwise, the civil war could worsen rather than abate. Indeed, Iraq's civil war began in earnest *after* the August 2005 referendum on the constitution, and its ambiguous stance on resource allocation issues. It is clear that many Iraqis voted their ethno-sectarian interests rather than national interests—and that many viewed the constitution as exacerbating worries about regional schisms, including competition for resources, rather than healing them.

The largest question here is oil. Most Iraqi oil is found in the mainly Shi'i Arab regions, followed by the Kurdish zones. A disproportionately small share, relative to population, is located under land on which Sunni Arabs are the majority population. Making exact estimates is difficult, but it appears in broad terms that Iraq's Sunni Arabs, while constituting nearly 20 percent of the population, control land with only roughly 10 percent of Iraq's oil resources.

Iraqi Oil Reserves by Province

Governorate	Ethno-sectarian mix	Percent of Estimated Oil Reserves
Basra	Shi'i Arab	59
Maysan	Shi'i Arab	8
Dhi Qar	Shi'i Arab	5
Muthanna	Shi'i Arab	0
Qadisiyyah	Shi'i Arab	0
Najaf	Shi'i Arab	0
Karbala	Shi'i Arab	0
Babil	Shi'i Arab/Sunni Arab	0
Wasit	Shi'i Arab/Sunni Arab	1
Anbar	Sunni Arab	0
Baghdad	Shi'i Arab/Sunni Arab	6
Salah ad-Din	Sunni Arab	3
Diyala	Shi'i Arab/Sunni Arab/Kurd	1 (three gas fields)
Tamim	Kurd/Sunni Arab	12
Sulaimaniyyah	Kurd	0 (two gas fields)
Erbil	Kurd	3
Dahuk	Kurd	0
Ninawa	Sunni Arab/Kurd	3

Note: Numbers may not add due to rounding.

Source: Kamil al-Mehaidi, "Geographical Distribution of Iraqi Oil Fields and Its Relation with the New Constitution," *Iraq Revenue Watch Institute*, New York, NY, May 2006, p.14, available at <http://www.iraqrevenuewatch.org/reports/052706.pdf>.

[64] While prices of course vary enormously from neighborhood to neighborhood and city to city, Iraqi houses typically cost $2,000 to $20,000. See International Medical Corps, "Iraqis on the Move: Sectarian Displacement in Baghdad," Santa Monica, California, January 2007, pp. 9-10, available at <http://www.imcworldwide.org/content/article/detail/994/>.

In recent years, the Kurds in particular have been aiming to develop oil interests on their territory that would produce revenue they would keep for themselves. An oil law now being written may reverse this trend, but it is not yet clear.

A successful soft partition of Iraq must be based upon the fair distribution of oil revenue. The simplest approach in theory would guarantee an equal amount of oil revenue to every Iraqi. In practical terms this is difficult to achieve. Some money could be sent directly to individuals (as in Alaska), making it possible for Iraqis to verify they were all receiving equal payments (provided that there was a reliable system of establishing identity and distributing the money). However, oil is the main source of financing for the regional governments and the federal government. It would therefore be important to direct some oil revenue to these tiers of government as well as directly to the population. The best means of spreading the oil revenue throughout Iraq to the regions would be on a capitation basis. The difficulty with this approach is that it requires accurate and trusted census data. Even if such figures are available, it is unclear that regions with lower birthrates will welcome a capitation-based oil revenue sharing scheme, as it will over time reward regions with higher birthrates (unless measures are taken to prevent this). Similarly, another concern that such a revenue-sharing approach should address is the need to retain some money at the federal government level in Baghdad. The federal government will sometimes focus more on one region than another, meaning that resources going to the central government will not necessarily be spent in a manner that all will regard as fair.

To address these concerns, several pots of oil revenue should be created.[65] Some fraction of oil revenue, perhaps 25 percent, could be allocated directly to individuals (this will require hard and rapid work to provide identity cards even to those who have been displaced and now lack a permanent address). Perhaps 35 percent might go to the regions based on a capitation basis (possibly with a stipulation ensuring that a region growing relatively slowly would retain most of its future share of oil revenue anyway, even as its share of the total population diminished). Another 20 percent might go to the federal government in Baghdad. A further 10 percent might be used to maintain, modernize, and protect oil facilities. A small exception to the overall philosophy of equal sharing might be to give the final 10 percent of oil revenue to the region in which the oil was produced to act as an incentive to help it protect the oil wells and to work hard to entice investors to improve and develop oil resources.

Although it receives virtually all of the attention, oil is not the sole issue of this type in Iraq. A soft partition arrangement also needs to allocate utilities and state-supplied consumer goods, such as electricity, gasoline, heating oil, water and sewerage services. There has been an effort to do so since Saddam was overthrown, but the results have not been impressive.

Sharing oil revenues directly with Iraqi citizens can help with this problem. If revenue sharing occurs, consumer subsidies—still way too high in Iraq, despite progress in reducing them over the last two years—can be further reduced.[66] The subsidy reduction should be more politically feasible if executed in conjunction with introduction of a direct payment to each individual from a share of Iraq's oil revenue. It should also help make the economy function more efficiently. With the government playing less of a role in artificially suppressing prices, the black market would become less important and government's role in selecting where, and which, goods are most easily available would naturally decline.

[65] For a similar argument, see Kenneth M. Pollack and the Iraq Strategy Working Group of the Saban Center for Middle East Policy, *A Switch in Time: A New Strategy for America in Iraq* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 2006), pp. 71-5, available at <http://www.brookings.edu/fp/saban/analysis/20060215_iraqreport.htm>.

[66] Government Accountability Office, "Securing, Stabilizing, and Rebuilding Iraq: Key Issues for Congressional Oversight," GAO-07-308SP, January 2007, p. 62, available at <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d07308sp.pdf>.

An additional measure that would make sense would be the installation of meters on individual homes using electricity, gas, and water.[67] Much of the reason would be to encourage efficiency and conservation, and to ensure supplies were not wasted. A utilities oversight board would also be a sensible addition, to ensure fairness across regions. It should include representatives of the international community to build Iraqi confidence in the integrity of the process.

Tracking People: Checkpoints and Identity Cards

Carrying out a soft partition of Iraq to create three autonomous regions and helping people relocate will not alone guarantee stability. There will be numerous other potential challenges and problems. Some minorities will stay behind regardless (indeed, given mixed marriages and other considerations, that is not only inevitable but desirable), allowing for the possibility of ongoing ethno-sectarian strife. Some extremists, including certainly al-Qa'ida, will attempt to challenge any arrangement that promises greater stability in Iraq. Some insurgents and militia members will also likely challenge an accord that would codify their loss of given neighborhoods and regions to other ethno-sectarian groups. They will fight militias from other groups and their own ethno-sectarian groups. In short, there will be systematic and serious efforts to sustain the violence, even after a deal is reached and largely implemented.

This reality is not a fatal blow to the soft partition proposal. For two main reasons the levels of violence should be less than they are today in any event. First, there will be less reason for Iraqis to kill and cleanse members of other ethno-sectarian groups out of paranoia and fear, since if afraid they can relocate. Second, uncertainty about the future nature of Iraq's political system will be reduced, giving major sectarian groups less reason to fight to improve their position and their leverage in subsequent negotiations over power sharing and resource allocation.

Additional steps could reinforce the sense of security that comes from separation and soft partition. The main goal should be to make it hard for dangerous individuals to cross internal borders. This runs the risk of punishing innocents of course, but the only punishment that is being proposed here is a restriction on a person's movements. This is a significant risk to be sure, but it does not imply imprisonment or physical harm to the person in question. It is a price worth paying for improved security.

Valuable lessons to help citizens in transition are already available from the experience of IDPs and from the U.S. military's increased efforts to control access to volatile neighborhoods in Baghdad. As Refugees International has reported, many IDPs are struggling to obtain vitally-needed government assistance because they do not have ration cards. Iraqi ration cards have a political significance as they serve as the basis for the voter registration system, which is why some Iraqi towns make it difficult to transfer the cards. Many displaced families also lack other important documents, such as school records, complicating the entry of their children into new education systems. The record of the Ministry of Displaced and Migration on assisting IDPs is not good.[68] But specific problems can by now be identified, making it easier to address some of them.

The rapid issuance of identity cards and the setting up of checkpoints, linked together by computer systems, are vital measures for a system of autonomous regions. (The computer systems should use wireless communications and have their own dedicated power sources to minimize dependence on vulnerable infrastructure and grids.) Identity cards have shown themselves to be an important contributor towards achieving greater security and stability in violence-plagued states.[69] Stu-

[67] Government Accountability Office, op.cit., p. 77.
[68] Refugees International, op.cit., pp. 5-6.

dents of counterinsurgency have recommended their use in Iraq, but this advice has not been taken up. For one thing, this policy is expensive; a national identity card system in Iraq might cost $1 billion. However, a soft partitioned Iraq would have a strong incentive to introduce such a system to improve security.[70] The new ethno-sectarian borders could be monitored more effectively with identity cards and with checkpoints in place. Biometrics are already assisting U.S. military and Iraqi security forces in controlling access to neighborhoods that militants have targeted locally; the policy could be broadened throughout Iraq.[71]

This control system would place some burdens on Iraq's internal trade and other aspects of its economy. It would complicate the efforts of individuals to cross from one region to another to visit family and friends. For the most part these burdens would be bearable. For individuals or businesses that need to make frequent crossings across Iraq's new internal borders, or those willing to pay for the privilege, an EZ pass system might be developed to expedite movements for those with important and regular business to conduct.

Certainly, some infiltration of dangerous individuals into the security forces manning the checkpoints could occur, resulting in illicit crossings. Still, this problem could be mitigated by having the Shi'i Arab sides of checkpoints manned by Shi'i Arabs, the Sunni Arab sides mostly by Sunni Arabs, and the checkpoints on the Kurdish zones by Kurds.

Reducing and Redefining the Foreign Military Role

As noted above, the process of soft partitioning Iraq into three autonomous regions would be demanding. The challenges would begin with trying to convince major political leaders to accept the essential notion of soft partition, working out arrangements on internal borders, and figuring out how to compensate those who relocated.

There would also be major operational challenges. These would include protecting people as they relocated from one region to another, as well as protecting those who chose to stay put. U.S. and other Coalition forces might have to pay particular short-term attention to towns and neighborhoods that remained heavily mixed ethnically, out of fear that such places would continue to remain the most vulnerable to the ethnic cleansing that is today so prevalent in Iraq's diverse areas. In addition, Iraq's security forces, weak as they are, would temporarily become even weaker as they were reconstituted into regional police and paramilitary organizations. These realities, together with the ongoing challenges of training Iraqi forces, would surely preclude any major reductions in U.S. force levels during the first twelve to eighteen months that would be needed to implement soft partition.

After soft partition is enforced, the situation should improve considerably. Forces levels can be gauged relative to the population and the strength of the Iraqi security establishment. Iraq, with a population of twenty-five million, would need almost 500,000 police or peacekeepers if one insisted on applying one-size-fits-all force planning rules and using the Balkans experiences as models. Even if one optimistically assumed that all Iraqi regional security forces could be counted towards this goal, and that their total is the 350,000 personnel in current Iraqi Army and Police units, that would imply a requirement for 150,000 foreign peacekeepers. That in turn would likely necessitate over 100,000 U.S.

[69] David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (New York: Praeger, 2005), pp. 116-121.
[70] Kenneth M. Pollack et al., op.cit., p. 41.
[71] "In some sealed-off areas, troops armed with biometric scanning devices will compile a neighborhood census by recording residents' fingerprints and eye patterns and will perhaps issue special badges, military officials said." Karin Brulliard, "'Gated Communities' For the War-Ravaged: U.S. Tries High Walls and High Tech To Bring Safety to Parts of Baghdad," *The Washington Post*, April 23, 2007, p. A-1, available at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/04/22/AR2007042201419.html>.

troops (U.S. forces currently account for over 90 percent of foreign forces in Iraq).

However this arithmetic is not necessarily correct. Force levels are not simply a function of the size of the civilian population, but of the mission that the forces will execute.

In addition to the Balkan deployments, other missions can serve as admittedly unscientific guides to force requirements. In post-war Japan, the United States deployed 360,000 troops to occupy a country of 70 million.[72] Using post-war Japan as a template, it might appear that the Bush Administration initially deployed adequate forces to post-Saddam Iraq except for the fact that the mission is so radically different. In certain, relatively successful UN peacekeeping missions in recent years, such as Mozambique and Cambodia, deployed force levels never approached what they have been in Iraq. Fewer than 20,000 peacekeepers helped keep order in Cambodia with its more than 7 million inhabitants, while less than 10,000 were needed for 15 million Mozambicans.[73] The point is not that the U.S. presence in Iraq has been adequate, but that a simple analogy with Bosnia and Kosovo is not necessarily correct. Of course, the Mozambique and Cambodia missions were peacekeeping, designed to shore up a negotiated agreement rather than to impose a new political order. Our proposal for a soft partitioning of Iraq would also require a negotiated accord, which means that while some foreign troops would be needed, they might not need to be as many as the Balkans examples imply.

Still, on balance this is an issue where it is better to err on the side of too many troops, not too few. The nightmare scenario in implementing soft partition is trying to control a process neighborhood by neighborhood and city by city, but then unleashing a nationwide reign of terror that begins to resemble the Indian subcontinent in 1947. For example, if one began the managed relocation process in parts of Baghdad, other parts of the city and perhaps Mosul or Kirkuk might then erupt in violence. Sectarian warlords could foment violence against members of other ethnic groups in their neighborhoods, trying to ensure that those minorities would choose to flee, and if the dynamic escalated it could lead to a worsening war. At a minimum, therefore, the international community would need to maintain enough forces in Iraq so that *it did not scale back deployments in some places while helping to protect relocating populations elsewhere.* It might actually take somewhat more troops to implement the soft partition plan than are in Iraq at present. It would certainly require at least as many for the first twelve to eighteen months or so. However, it must be recognized that we are beyond the point of having good options in Iraq, or of being able to fully resource any options (except withdrawal). A plan for soft partition needs to be prudent, and minimize the odds of violence spiraling out of control. But it need not guarantee tranquility in order to be our best option. On balance, sustaining U.S. forces for a year to a year and a half at their current size would be an imperfect approach, but probably not an imprudent one in comparison with alternatives.

In a federal, soft partitioned Iraq, after the initial transition period, U.S. troops would generally not have their current responsibility for street by street and neighborhood by neighborhood security. Rather, their missions would include activities such as patrolling Iraq's internal borders and helping man checkpoints to make it hard for Sunni Arab suicide bombers or Shi'i Arab militia extremists to attack members of other ethno-sectarian groups. In addition they would train

[72] James Dobbins, John G. McGinn, Keith Crane, Seth G. Jones, Rollie Lal, Andrew Rathmell, Rachel Swanger, and Anga Timilsina, *America's Role in Nation-Building from Germany to Iraq* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2003), pp. 25-8.

[73] See United Nations, "Cambodia – UNTAC, Facts and Figures," available at <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/co_mission/untacfacts.html> and United Nations, "Mozambique – ONUMOZ, Facts and Figures," available at <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/co_mission/onumozF.html>.

Iraqi regional security forces, maintain rapid strike capabilities to help in attacks on any al-Qa'ida cells that were uncovered, and help protect the Green Zone (or whichever part of Baghdad became the protected federal and diplomatic neighborhood).

Such an approach certainly entails risks. Even if it succeeded in quelling most of the civil violence across ethno-sectarian lines, it would by design do little to foster reconciliation within ethno-sectarian groups. The militia conflicts that have been prevalent in Basra and elsewhere even within a largely homogeneous population (the Shi'ah in Basra) demonstrate the dangers of such an approach. Furthermore, in an optimal world it would probably be best to have enough forces to intercede frequently in such fighting—with the goal of forcing militias to disband and allowing time for regional security structures to become established. Unfortunately, U.S. Iraq policy is no longer made in anything like an optimal world of resource availability. Low-to-medium grade violence, in the context of a broad political architecture for the country that is generally acceptable to major political forces, has become an acceptable outcome. The United States and its foreign partners will need some rapid-response forces to help deter militias from becoming too strong and to be capable, along with local Iraqi forces, of tackling them should they stray badly out of line. However, policing and patrolling the streets of Iraq, within homogenous ethno-sectarian zones, would no longer be the main mission of U.S. forces, with consequences that would have to be recognized and accepted from the beginning. Again, soft partition is not an ideal or risk-free solution; it is simply becoming the only option we may have left, short of abandoning Iraq to an all-out civil war.

So returning to the question of troop sizing, and trying to be more precise, how many U.S. forces would such missions require? This list of tasks would be more demanding than what NATO troops performed in Bosnia, even if it would be easier than what U.S.-led Coalition forces are presently attempting in Iraq. By that logic, 300,000 troops might be needed in Iraq in the early years after soft partition (as the Bosnia deployment began with 60,000 NATO troops for a country of 5 million). This simple extrapolation from the Bosnia experience assumes too much about the degree of scientific and military precision with which that deployment was drawn up. In fact, one of the reasons why these missions used so many troops was because NATO, at that relatively quiet moment in its history, had many to offer. While it would be imprudent to go to the extremes that former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld went and discard previous missions as possible guides for force strength requirements, it is not axiomatic that a future Iraq deployment would need to achieve similar ratios of peacekeepers to population.

Rigorously determining proper troop requirements to stabilize an Iraq of autonomous regions is difficult. The U.S. military has method for doing such calculations based on "mission-enemy-terrain-tactics" (METT) procedures. These METT guidelines essentially build force requirements from the ground up. For example, one postulates a certain number of checkpoints each manned by a certain number of U.S. soldiers, and then allows for troop rotations and logistical support and military backup. That leads to an estimate of how many troops are needed for this job.

In the case of force requirements for soft partition, we take a simpler and more approximate approach. Imagine that the task of U.S. troops in Baghdad after soft partition will largely consist of patrolling the area on either side of the Tigris River, the presumed line of demarcation. Doing so would require manning checkpoints and so forth, and patrolling throughout a security perimeter extending out at least several hundred meters in each direction from the border separating the two main Sunni and Shi'i Arab regions from each other. Notionally speaking, once coverage of the Green Zone was included, and allowance made for backup capabilities, the United States might in effect share responsibility for roughly 20 to 30 percent of the city. If 100,000 forces were needed for all of Baghdad, that would then imply 20,000 to 30,000 U.S. troops for the reduced area. With U.S. forces in other parts of Iraq after soft partition concentrated mostly in areas where

different ethno-sectarian groups were in contact—around Baghdad, and in northern parts of the country near Kirkuk and Kurdistan—the Baghdad requirement might be roughly half of the Iraq-wide deployment.

Put in broad terms, about 50,000 American troops might be needed for the first several years after soft partition was implemented. That would follow, as noted above, the transition period of 12 to 18 months when forces would not decline at all from current levels of roughly 150,000 Americans.

Building Regional Institutions

If Iraq's central government is ill-equipped to handle the enormous challenges of securing and rebuilding the country, how can three autonomous regions possibly do so? It would seem that they would necessarily lack the requisite manpower and expertise. This is especially problematic in a country from which perhaps a quarter to half of its professional class has fled during the last four years of violence—and that had been unable to develop a strong civil society during decades of Ba'thist rule before that.[74]

Despite these challenges, there are many reasons to hope, and indeed expect, that an Iraq of autonomous regions would work better than today's state. Much of the reason has to do with legitimacy. Local governments may have less expertise, but they can have much higher standing with their own people. That in turn can allow them to govern more effectively. Moreover, regions would be reasonably large, with some four to five million in Kurdistan, four to five million in the Sunni Arab zone, and twelve to fifteen million in the Shi'i Arab region. That would provide a reasonable population base from which to draw leaders.

A number of developing countries around the world, some of them much smaller than Iraq and no better equipped with experienced personnel, have demonstrated that they can be successful. Small size is clearly not inconsistent with achieving some measure of stability and growth. Iraqi Kurdistan has been successful in creating such capacity, particularly in the period since 1991. While largely a testament to the entrepreneurial abilities and commitment of the Kurdish people, it also shows how legitimacy can be a powerful spur to action.[75]

The last four years give reason to hope that this dynamic can prevail in Iraq. There have been local successes. Gen. Petraeus and the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) were relatively successful around Mosul in 2003-4. The Shi'i heartland north of Basra and south of the Baghdad area has made some progress since Saddam's downfall.

The advantages of regionalization and devolution seem strongest with regard to security. The main problem with Iraqi security forces today is not lack of technical capacity *per se*, but lack of dependability and lack of independence from the ethno-sectarian conflicts that are tearing the country apart. There is no doubt that in a regional system, local police forces might be corrupt because it could prove difficult to replace their commanders (as there would be fewer potential alternative candidates than at the national level). However, this argument is trumped by the fact that Iraq's security forces today are unable or unwilling to prevent widespread militia and insurgent activity, largely because of their ethno-sectarian affiliations.[76] In addition, as the January 2007 NIE observes, taking a "bottom up approach" to security through neighborhood watch groups and the like may help restore frayed relationships between

[74] See Toby Dodge, *Inventing Iraq: The Failure of Nation Building and a History Denied* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), p. 157; Kanan Makiya, *Republic of Fear: The Politics of Modern Iraq*, updated edition (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998), pp. 46-146; Campbell and O'Hanlon, op.cit., March 1, 2007.

[75] Peter W. Galbraith, *The End of Iraq: How American Incompetence Created a War Without End* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2006), pp. 147-72.

[76] On the importance of working at the local level to improve policing and the rule of law more generally, see Seth G. Jones, Jeremy M. Wilson, Andrew Rathmell, and K. Jack Riley, *Establishing Law and Order After Conflict* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2005), p. 220.

tribal and religious groups.[77] It is also at this local level when protecting their own people, that security forces are most prepared to do their jobs. For example, in late 2006 Iraqi Army units fighting principally near their home bases had absent without leave rates of under 10 percent, whereas rates often exceed 50 percent when the units were deployed to other areas.[78] More recently, in Anbar province many Sunni Arab fighters are now joining regional security forces and fighting al-Qa'ida in their own neighborhoods. A similar plan for allowing certain militia fighters to join new regional security forces, as part of a militia demobilization plan, would make sense as part of a soft partition plan.

Some would argue that allowing justice to be delivered only at the local level will allow many individuals who have attacked innocents from other ethno-sectarian groups to get off scot-free. For example, many Sunni Arab police and courts would likely not consider an individual who had attacked U.S.-led Coalition forces or even the Iraqi government to be guilty of a prosecutable crime. Indeed, we know from public opinion polling by the University of Maryland's Program on International Policy Attitudes as well as the International Republican Institute that the overwhelming majority of Sunni Arabs have condoned attacks on Americans and that they disapprove strongly of the al-Maliki government.[79]

At one level this is a highly regrettable result. However, in any post-conflict environment, such as in Iraq, far more crimes have been committed than the police and courts are capable of handling. This is not just a matter of capacity; it also concerns the political strength of governmental institutions and the need to ensure the personal security of state officials.[80] In addition, amnesty provisions are often needed to make peace settlements work.[81] Put otherwise, a strict demand that every crime be fully prosecuted and punished is not generally realistic in post-conflict environments. On balance, therefore, soft partition may improve the prospects for peace in Iraq by creating a *de facto* amnesty. To be sure, there may need to be some basis for ensuring federal prosecution of particularly heinous crimes of the past, but it will not be practical to hold individuals accountable for all of their transgressions.

Moving to an approach with three autonomous regions could also help simplify the international community's role in Iraq. There might be a natural division of labor if one imagines Sunni-majority states such as Morocco and Jordan and Saudi Arabia providing help for the Sunni Arab region, the United States helping the Kurds, and a combined international mission working with the Shi'ah.

Going beyond security issues, there are reasons to think soft partition might ameliorate the situation in other ways. A number of government activities are inherently dependent on the person performing a job at the local level—the teacher, the clerk, the nurse. There is little reason to think such people will perform worse if regulated and supervised at the regional rather than the national level. In addition, a basic approach that takes power and money from Baghdad and reallocates it to the regions will help address a persistent problem in contemporary Iraq—that through inertia, incompetence, corruption, or ethno-sectarian bias, funds often do not flow to the regions that need them in a timely fashion.[82] That should change under the framework we propose. Clerks and aides and nurses may in fact work better under the new arrangement if it means that they are paid more reliably.

---

[77] National Intelligence Council, op.cit., p. 7.
[78] Department of Defense, "Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq," Report to Congress, Washington, D.C., November 2006, p. 48, available at <http://www.defenselink.mil/pubs/pdfs/9010Quarterly-Report-20061216.pdf>.
[79] Campbell and O'Hanlon, op.cit, June 4, 2007, p. 50.
[80] Department of Defense, op.cit., p. 8.
[81] Tonya L. Putnam, "Human Rights and Sustainable Peace," in Stephen John Stedman, Donald Rothchild, and Elizabeth M. Cousens (eds.), *Ending Civil Wars: The Implementation of Peace Agreements* (Boulder, Col.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002), pp. 248-51.
[82] See for example, Senator Jack Reed, "Trip Report: Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Iraq," Washington, D.C., October 2006, p. 37.

Some aspects of governance are complex enough that federal resources are helpful. Whether it is a matter of building modern hospitals or universities, writing laws to protect and encourage investment, developing a sophisticated infrastructure plan, or luring investors from abroad, central governments are often best prepared for the task. In today's Iraq, widespread violence means that hospitals and universities are unable to function properly, infrastructure is sabotaged even if it is being built to conform with a carefully designed plan, and investors have little reason to put their money at risk. This is not an argument to retain Iraq's current system of government. Rather, the logic of this argument is that Baghdad will still have to play an important role, albeit a more limited and targeted one, in a structure based on regional autonomy.

Rules on foreign investment will presumably need to be overseen by Baghdad, as will procedures for carrying out international banking and trade. Many training institutes for judges, prosecutors, administrators, physicians, and others might be retained in the capital. Border police and customs will need to be conducted, or at least overseen, by the federal government. A small Iraqi national army will presumably be needed for territorial security even if most police and paramilitary functions devolve to the regions. Diplomatic activities will be conducted most efficiently out of the capital as well.

On balance, however, under this soft partition model, the overall assumption will be that, if the regions can do it, they should do it. At least 75 percent of government activity and spending should occur at the regional level.

For this reason, Iraq's best and most ambitious politicians will often prefer to pursue regional positions rather than federal ones. There will have to be at least one parliamentary body in a new federal government in Baghdad composed of members of regional governments to ensure a certain level of competence, and cooperation between ethno-sectarian groups. The same applies to members of the cabinet and probably the posts of prime minister and president. Bosnia provides a model here, if not of great efficiency, then at least of a system that can preserve peace.

Of course, civil war is not Iraq's only problem. There are battles within ethno-sectarian groups. The Kurds have faced a serious problem in the past, but their two major groupings have cooperated in recent years. However, the Sunni and Shi'i Arab communities each have many centers of power that have often been willing to fight for their interests against each other.[83] In the words of the January 2007 NIE: "The absence of unifying leaders among the Arab Sunni or Shia with the capacity to speak for or exert control over their confessional groups limits prospects for reconciliation."[84] It also increases the prospects for violence.

This problem will not be easy to solve. But it also needs to be kept in perspective. As bad as the violence within Iraq's individual ethno-sectarian groups has been, it has been far less severe than violence between ethno-sectarian groups. It is for this reason that, despite the reports of ongoing problems in places such as largely Shi'i Arab Basra, 96 percent of Iraqis in the south of the country (including Basra) report feeling safe in their neighborhood—in contrast to only 26 percent in Baghdad and 40 to 45 percent in most other mixed areas of Iraq.[85] Polls can be deceptive, but these numbers are nonetheless striking.

---

[83] Daniel L. Byman and Kenneth M. Pollack, *Things Fall Apart: Containing the Spillover from an Iraqi Civil War*, Saban Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 2007), p. 16, available at <http://www.brook.edu/fp/saban/analysis jan2007 iraq_civilwar.htm>.
[84] National Intelligence Council, op.cit., p. 5.
[85] Department of Defense, op.cit., p. 25.

Conclusion

There is a strong case that regional governments will do better than the federal government has been doing in Iraq. Whether or not they will function well enough to hold the country together under a system of regional autonomy is less clear. For this reason, and for all of its virtues, the soft partition of Iraq could fail during its implementation. However, just as in Bosnia, there are powerful reasons to think that such a scheme will work—at least well enough for the United States to reduce its force levels substantially after a transition period, reduce its casualties dramatically, and work toward the day when a relatively stable country can emerge from the current conflagration.

The core elements of soft partition, beyond those already usefully articulated by Senator Joseph Biden, Leslie Gelb, and others, should feature a mechanism to help people relocate to places where they would feel safer. This is actually a complex task, involving security for those leaving as well as those left behind, and help for the displaced with new housing and jobs. Yet it has been successfully carried out in the recent past in Bosnia, and it might begin on a small scale in Iraq with "pilot programs." Soft partition also requires better checkpoints along the internal borders that will be drawn between ethno-sectarian groups, and major efforts to build up regional governance capacity. Most importantly it requires a system that will fairly share Iraq's oil wealth equally among all of its peoples and disburse most oil revenue directly to the people and the regions.

Soft partition could fail. It could fail because Iraqis simply refuse to consider it or change their minds after they have initially decided to adopt it. It could fail through poor implementation, with violence accelerating as populations start to relocate. It could come too late to save many lives, and it would require the creation of major Iraqi institutions largely from scratch. Leaving aside the unsavory aspects of having the international community help relocate people based on their ethnicity or confession, soft partition is not an option to turn to lightly or happily. But it may soon be all we have left.

Ultimately, only Iraqis can choose this new political architecture for their country. However, the United States has an important role to play in any such decision. The U.S. political system may soon reach a point where it is unwilling to sustain the current strategy. At that point, not as an ultimatum but as an expression of political and strategic reality, a U.S. President may have to inform Iraqi leaders that they have two choices: try to sustain the current strategy on their own, or adopt a "Plan B" such as soft partition that the United States would be willing to help support, albeit with GIs playing a more limited role than at present. Regional players will certainly be critical in the implementation of any plan as will European Union states and the United Nations and its various agencies. The key players, however, are in the United States and Iraq. It is in these two countries where a new policy for trying to build a stable Iraq may soon have to be fashioned.

Appendix

A Synopsis of The Historical and Theoretical Debate over Partition

Partition has a long history, and has been tried many times. Many cases were the consequence of the era of colonialism and world wars, such as Treaty of Versailles following the First World War that carved up much of the Middle East (including Iraq) and the Balkans, the Greco-Turkish population transfers, and the British departure from the Indian subcontinent after the Second World War. Most recently, questions of autonomy, federalism, and partition have focused on the Balkans. Other modern cases have been important as well, ranging from Nigeria to the Horn of Africa to the Indian subcontinent to Indonesia, including the new state of East Timor.

The international community has traditionally opposed partition when it would lead to multiple independent states. This opposition has been rooted in the very nature of the United Nations system, based on a compact among sovereign states that have an interest in preserving their own prerogatives, powers, and territories. However, this normative objection largely faded after the fall of the Berlin wall and the wars it unleashed between the ethnic groups of former Yugoslavia. As one scholar put it, "before Bosnia, the conventional wisdom was that multi-communal states that had torn themselves apart by war should be put back together by means such as power-sharing between communities ... electoral reform ... and third-party party aid or intervention to assist these efforts."[86] However, after three and a half years of war, U.S. and Western officials gradually realized that "pre-Bosnia prescriptions like state-building and power-sharing would not work. Peace for Bosnia required engaging seriously on the logic of communal wars themselves – especially .... population geography and hardening of identities. [In Bosnia's case], this meant accepting a very loose federal arrangement that amounted to de facto partition."[87] Americans also seemed to realize that the moral imperative to stop the Bosnian war trumped concerns about the unrealistic goal of restoring a truly multi-ethnic society.[88]

Put otherwise, the case of Bosnia, as well as the related ethnic conflict in neighboring Croatia, widened acceptance of mass population movements and partition as a means of managing conflict. In Bosnia, massive ethnic flight was codified in a territorial and constitutional settlement known as the Dayton

[86] Chaim Kaufmann, "What We Have Learned About Ethnic Conflict? What Can We Do In Iraq" paper presented at "Iraq: The Approaching Endgame," conference organized by the Mortara Center for International Studies, Department of Government, Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, Center for Peace and Security Studies, Georgetown University, February 16, 2007, p. 1, available at <http://mortara.georgetown.edu/includes/20050901/TextFiles/Kaufmann2.pdf>.
[87] Ibid, p. 3.
[88] Ivo H. Daalder, *Getting to Dayton: The Making of America's Bosnia Policy* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2000), pp. 173-8.

Agreement.[89] Paradoxically, the agreement succeeded in keeping Bosnia as a single (though highly decentralized and federal) state, with nominal right of all refugees to return.[90] Driving the belief in the utility of partition for Bosnia and other similarly afflicted countries, according to the political scientist Chaim Kaufmann of Lehigh University, was "a new theory centered on 'security dilemmas.'"[91] The theory explained Bosnia's, as well as Croatia's, relentless spiral of violence as the consequence of a divided society's breakdown in order. With groups vying either to dominate the new order or to secede from it, the result is a situation in which no ethnic community can provide for its own security without threatening the security of others. In this context, isolated minorities (or even vulnerable majorities) are expelled or flee, further separating communities and hardening their separate identities. Partition theorists conclude that when an ethnic civil war has crossed a threshold of mutual mistrust and ethnic flight, a durable peace can come only from separating the parties into homogenous regions capable of self-defense and partitioning the state.[92]

A number of thinkers have challenged this approach, arguing that it ignores other explanations of ethnic conflict (such as opportunistic élites manipulating the masses) and other means of resolving mutual mistrust besides partition (like power-sharing guarantees). Furthermore, they argue that the historical record shows that partitions fail to resolve "underlying grievances" and therefore do not prevent later conflict between the newly formed states.[93] While it certainly did fail or has failed in places such as the Levant and the Indian subcontinent, it has achieved at least a measured success in much of the Balkans in recent times.

---

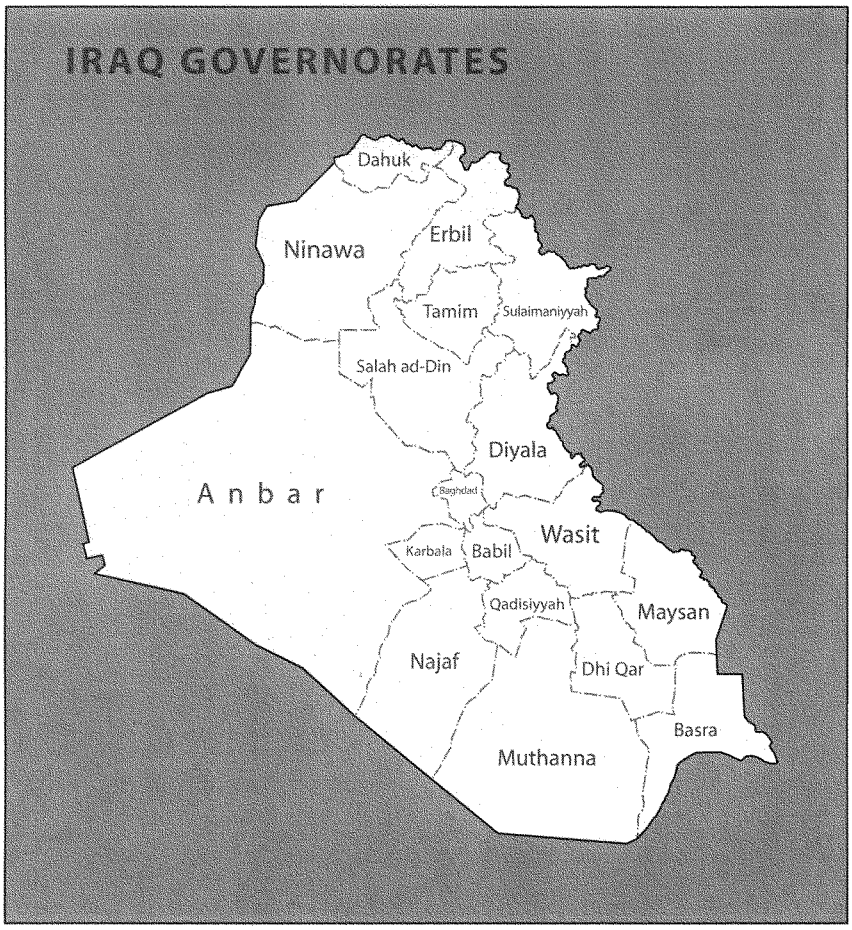
[89] The Framework Agreement for Peace negotiated at Dayton and signed formally in Paris in December 1995 "gives" the Serbs their ethnically predominant "entity" (the Republika Srpska) while "giving" the capital Sarajevo to effective Muslim control in the Croat-Muslim Federation. At the same time, the Dayton Agreement created a new, federated, highly decentralized state of Bosnia-Herzegovina, with full rights of return to all refugees. Implementation of an accord that creates few incentives for the secessionist Serbs to cooperate with the central government has unsurprisingly been difficult. However, there has been no serious outbreak of violence since its signing.

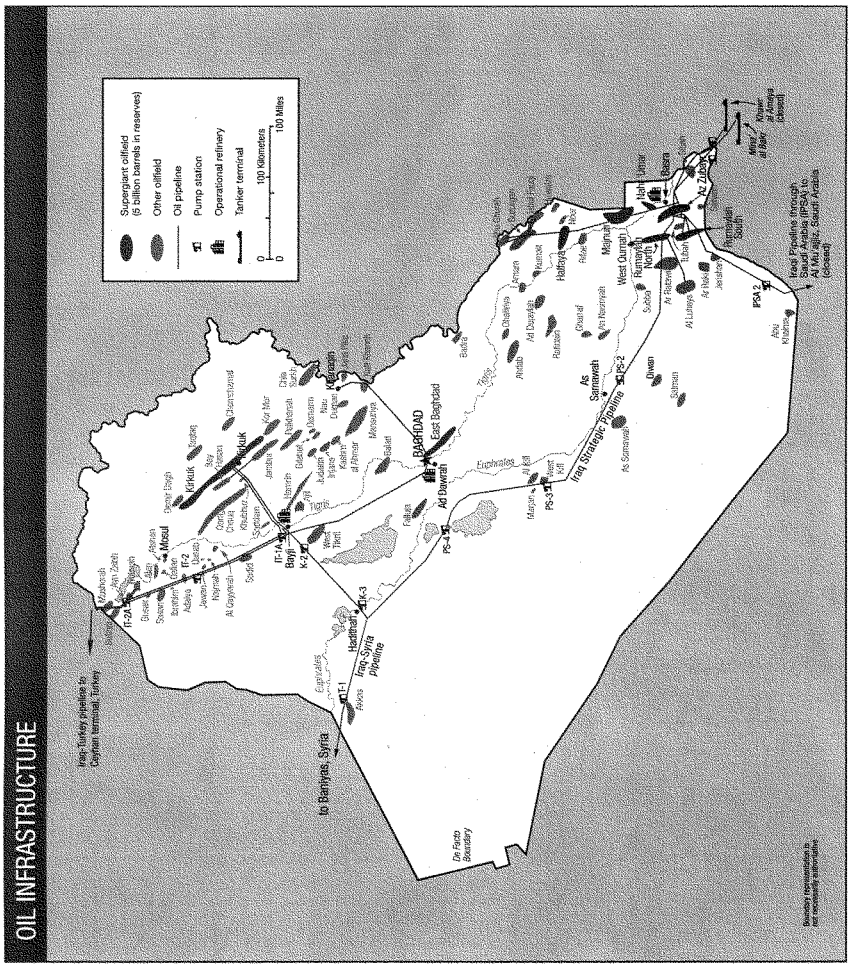
[90] In the event, only Muslims have returned in substantial numbers to their former residences in "foreign" territory, and then only with great difficulty that still leaves a majority of formerly displaced living in new homes. Both Serbs and Croats have overwhelmingly elected to settle in their new, homogenous locations.

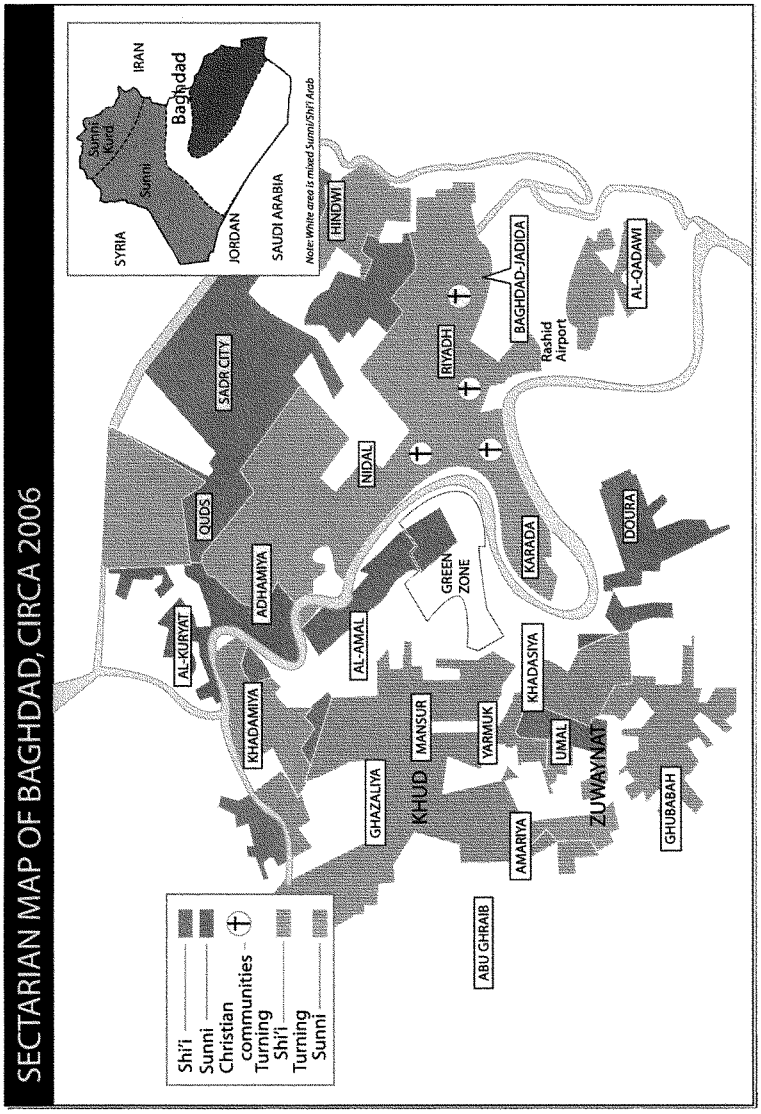
[91] Kaufmann, "What We Have Learned About Ethnic Conflict?" op.cit., p.1.

[92] See Johnson, op.cit., p. 7. Chaim Kaufmann stresses that both separation of populations and formal political separation are both essential. "At one time I believed that separation of warring populations into defensible regions was a nearly sufficient condition for reducing inter-communal security dilemmas and suggested that so long as this was done, minor differences in governing arrangements between loose autonomy, de facto partition, and de jure partition would not matter much. ... I was wrong: sovereign states receive a variety of advantages in international law and practice that make them less vulnerable to future revanchism, thus further reducing future inter-communal security dilemmas." Chaim Kaufmann, "Living Together After Ethnic Killing," op.cit., p.7.

[93] Among the leading skeptics on partition is the Yale political scientist Nicholas Sambanis. See Nicholas Sambanis, "Partition and Civil War Recurrence", paper presented at "Iraq: The Approaching Endgame," conference organized by the Mortara Center for International Studies, Department of Government, Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, Center for Peace and Security Studies, Georgetown University, February 16, 2007, available at <http://pantheon.yale.edu/~ns237/index/research/Partition2.pdf>. See also Nicholas Sambanis, "Partition as a solution to ethnic war: an empirical critique of the theoretical literature," *World Politics*, Vol. 52, No. 4, pp. 437-83. Johnson provides a compelling rebuttal to Sambanis' claims about the empirical record, arguing that in his data Sambanis also included partitions that did not result in ethnic separation. "While Sambanis does look at partitions, he does not test the claims set forth by partition theorists [in that his data does not address the issue of demographic separation.]" Johnson, op.cit., p. 16. Johnson reviews Sabmanis's empirical data anew, concluding that "the results here are unequivocal: *partitions that have separated warring ethnic groups have terminated low-level violence for at least five years*.... The numbers suggest that a 'good partition' is the best choice, if the goal is to prevent low-level violence." Johnson, op.cit., p. 27 [emphasis in original].


IRAQ GOVERNORATES
Dahuk
Ninawa
Erbil
Tamim
Sulaimaniyyah
Salah ad-Din
Diyala
Anbar
Baghdad
Wasit
Karbala
Babil
Qadisiyyah
Maysan
Najaf
Dhi Qar
Basra
Muthanna


OIL INFRASTRUCTURE
Iraq-Turkey pipeline to Ceyhan terminal, Turkey
Supergiant oilfield (5 billion barrels in reserves)
Other oilfield
Oil pipeline
Pump station
Operational refinery
Tanker terminal
0 100 Kilometers
0 100 Miles
to Baniyas, Syria
Iraq-Syria pipeline
Mosul
Kirkuk
Bayji
Haditha
BAGHDAD
East Baghdad
Ad Dawrah
Euphrates
Tigris
Iraq Strategic Pipeline
As Samawah
Basra
Rumaylah North
Rumaylah South
Iraq Pipeline through Saudi Arabia (IPSA) to Al Mu'ajiz, Saudi Arabia (closed)
Mina' al Bakr
Al Faw
Al Ahmadi (closed)
On Facto Boundary
Boundary representation is not necessarily authoritative.


SECTARIAN MAP OF BAGHDAD, CIRCA 2006
Shi'i
Sunni
Christian communities
Turning Shi'i
Turning Sunni
SYRIA
IRAN
Sunni Kurd
Sunni
Baghdad
JORDAN
SAUDI ARABIA
Note: White area is mixed Sunni/Shi'i Arab
AL-KURYAT
KHADAMIYA
ADHAMIYA
QUDS
SADR CITY
HINDWI
GHAZALIYA
KHUD
MANSUR
AL-AMAL
NIDAL
RIYADH
BAGHDAD-JADIDA
Rashid Airport
AL-QADAWI
GREEN ZONE
KARADA
DOURA
YARMUK
KHADASIYA
UMAL
ZUWAYNAT
AMARIYA
GHUBABAH
ABU GHRAIB

100

The Saban Center for Middle East Policy

The Saban Center for Middle East Policy was established on May 13, 2002 with an inaugural address by His Majesty King Abdullah II of Jordan. The creation of the Saban Center reflects the Brookings Institution's commitment to expand dramatically its research and analysis of Middle East policy issues at a time when the region has come to dominate the U.S. foreign policy agenda.

The Saban Center provides Washington policymakers with balanced, objective, in-depth and timely research and policy analysis from experienced and knowledgeable scholars who can bring fresh perspectives to bear on the critical problems of the Middle East. The center upholds the Brookings tradition of being open to a broad range of views. The Saban Center's central objective is to advance understanding of developments in the Middle East through policy-relevant scholarship and debate.

The center's foundation was made possible by a generous grant from Haim and Cheryl Saban of Los Angeles. Ambassador Martin S. Indyk, Senior Fellow in Foreign Policy Studies, is the Director of the Saban Center. Kenneth M. Pollack is the center's Director of Research. Joining them is a core group of Middle East experts who conduct original research and develop innovative programs to promote a better understanding of the policy choices facing American decision makers in the Middle East. They include Tamara Cofman Wittes, a specialist on political reform in the Arab world who directs the Middle East Democracy and Development Project; Bruce Riedel, who served as a senior advisor to three Presidents on the Middle East and South Asia at the National Security Council during a 29 year career in the CIA, a specialist on counterterrorism; Suzanne Maloney, a former senior State Department official who focuses on Iran and economic development; Shibley Telhami, who holds the Sadat Chair at the University of Maryland; Daniel Byman, a Middle East terrorism expert from Georgetown University; Steven Heydemann, a specialist on Middle East democratization issues from Georgetown University; and Ammar Abdulhamid, a Syrian dissident and specialist on Syrian politics. The center is located in the Foreign Policy Studies Program at Brookings, led by Carlos Pascual, its Director and a Brookings vice president.

The Saban Center is undertaking path breaking research in five areas: the implications of regime change in Iraq, including post-war nation-building and Persian Gulf security; the dynamics of Iranian domestic politics and the threat of nuclear proliferation; mechanisms and requirements for a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; policy for the war against terrorism, including the continuing challenge of state-sponsorship of terrorism; and political and economic change in the Arab world, in particular in Syria and Lebanon, and the methods required to promote democratization.

The center also houses the ongoing Brookings Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World, which is directed by Stephen Grand. The project focuses on analyzing the problems in the relationship between the United States and Muslim states and communities around the globe, with the objective of developing effective policy responses. The project's activities includes a task force of experts, a global conference series bringing together American and Muslim world leaders, a visiting fellows program for specialists from the Islamic world, initiatives in science and the arts, and a monograph and book series. As part of the project, a center has been opened in Doha, Qatar under the directorship of Hady Amr.

The Brookings Institution
1775 Massachusetts Ave., NW
Washington, D.C. 20036-2103
www.brookings.edu

Daniel Benjamin
Senior Fellow, The Brookings Institution
Testimony before the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee
The House Armed Services Committee
Washington, DC
July 31, 2007

Mr. Chairman, Representative Akin, Members of the Committee:

I want to thank you for the opportunity to testify today on some of the potential developments that may confront us in the Persian Gulf, the Middle East and the wider world as a result of the war in Iraq. It is no exaggeration to say that the set of challenges that we have encountered in Iraq since 2003 have defied our powers of prediction over and again. The sad fact is that we should not expect that to change anytime soon. Iraq today is the center of a series of conflicts -- some full-blown, others nascent -- that are at once interlocking and overlaid. There is a bewildering array of drivers behind these conflicts and a panoply of triggers that might accelerate or decelerate certain trends. Prediction, in this environment, seems especially hazardous.

With that caveat, I would like to address some issues related to the terrorist threat and how it might develop in Iraq and how it will affect Iraq's neighborhood and our own.

We should begin by acknowledging a fact that should now be beyond dispute: There were essentially no jihadist terrorists in Iraq before the Unites States invasion of 2003. The Jordanian terrorist, Abu Mussab al Zarqawi, who would eventually emerge as the leader of al Qaeda in Iraq, may have traveled in and out of that part of the country that was ruled by Saddam Hussein, but his base was in the Kurdish zone to the north, which was protected by the U.S. and the no-fly zone. Today, there are probably several thousand jihadists in the ranks of al Qaeda in Iraq. Some of the leaders are undoubtedly foreigners. Most of the suicide bombers themselves come from Saudi Arabia and elsewhere. Nonetheless, this is a primarily Iraqi group, and it will comprise a significant security threat for some time to come.

What is the future of al Qaeda in Iraq? Much, obviously, depends on the success of U.S., coalition and Iraqi forces currently in the field. Recently, there have been indicators that some analysts interpret as encouraging. If there is indeed a positive turn of events underway, we should all be grateful. Given the relentless deterioration in conditions of the post-invasion period, we should, however, be prepared for more of the same. The perils of overly optimistic thinking about Iraq are too well known to require further recapitulation here.

Al Qaeda in Iraq: The Question of Targets and the Myth of a Jihadist Takeover

The first question to be addressed about al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) regards the group's orientation – its targeting priorities – and this is a matter of some debate. Over the last few years, it has focused its attacks overwhelmingly on targets inside Iraq: U.S. forces, Iraqi forces and the Shia civilian population. It has also managed to kill a significant number of Sunni leaders who have banded together to oppose AQI. The most recent instance of this involved the suicide bombing that claimed the lives of several al Anbar sheikhs who were meeting in Baghdad. We have also seen attacks outside the country, such as the bombing of American-owned hotels in Amman, Jordan in the fall of 2005, which appears to have been orchestrated by AQI. We have seen as well a "bleed-out" phenomenon begin in earnest with the uprising in the Nahr el-Bared refugee camp in Lebanon, which reportedly involved fighters who had seen action in Iraq.

It seems a reasonable surmise that as long as the security situation in Iraq remains unsettled, AQI will continue to devote the greatest part of its energies to operations within the country's borders. There are, of course, different scenarios for the future in Iraq, and it is worth examining each. For the time that U.S. forces remain in country, we can be confident that AQI will continue to target them; it is, after all, the aim of AQI to demonstrate its valor in opposing the occupation to the Muslim world. The videos of its killings of "Crusader" forces are among the most valuable and successful propaganda productions in memory, and they have played a critical role in motivating and recruiting radical Islamist terrorists around the world. We should also expect AQI to continue attacks designed to cause large numbers of Shia casualties with the aim of stoking sectarian strife. This has been an AQI strategy from early on, and there is no reason to believe it will cease any time soon.

And if the United States withdraws from Iraq? A central argument of President Bush and his Administration has been that a U.S. departure from Iraq could lead to a jihadist takeover of the nation. I do not find this to be a credible scenario. First, as we have seen in al-Anbar province, there is growing Sunni antipathy to al Qaeda, and what has been true in the province that was most dominated by al Qaeda is likely to be true in other provinces. Al Qaeda has grown considerably in Iraq, but it has failed to mobilize the population behind it. A force that numbers in the few thousands will never be able to take over the entire country. Even if all other Sunnis stood aside and the Iraqi military were to dissolve, al Qaeda has nothing like the manpower to defeat the Shia militias. The group has thus far shown itself incapable of holding territory over a sustained period of time. While it doubtless will continue to be capable of carrying out mass casualty attacks, much more is required to take Baghdad. In short, jihadist Iraq is an extremely improbable outcome.

Indeed, one could argue that a more likely result of a U.S. departure would be that the Shia militias would be energized to take on al Qaeda directly. That is, those sectarian groups that have been sitting back and watching while the U.S. has done them the favor of fighting Sunnis would be mobilized into action; those that have been confronting U.S. forces militarily would redirect their fire at Sunni insurgents and the hated AQI. We should not have any illusions about what this would look like: It would occur within the context of considerable sectarian violence. AQI, it should be added, will not shy from

this fight. The group's strategy of targeting Shia reflects not only an understanding of how to keep Iraq destabilized but also a powerful anti-Shia animus. Jihadist communications have described the Shia as "worse" than the Americans, and the rise of Iran is viewed as a deplorable event. AQI will seek to strengthen its claim of leadership of the anti-Shia cause in Iraq and throughout the Muslim world, especially if a U.S. withdrawal turns the conflict in Iraq into a primarily sectarian one.

Let me emphasize: I do not consider withdrawal from Iraq and leaving the Shia militias to take the lead against al Qaeda to be an attractive course. The costs will likely be high in terms of civilian suffering. But I am skeptical that the United States can achieve in the near term the "complete victory" that President Bush called for in his speech in South Carolina just last week. However positive the recent news out of al- Anbar has been, AQI has shown itself to be an adaptive and mobile organization. It has can move operations to areas of greater opportunity, it is resilient and it has demonstrated the ability to penetrate the Iraqi forces and regime, undermining our ability to corner it. Absent a broader political agreement that creates a framework for nationwide security, we may reduce the group, but it is difficult to imagine eliminating it. The tool we have used against al Qaeda – our military – is far from the ideal one for combating terrorism. Until we have a strong Iraqi intelligence service working in the country, we will continue to face considerable difficulties.

We should understand that this will remain the case however our forces are configured in the next phase of the war. Much has been said about withdrawing Army and Marine units into garrisons to remove them from the midst of the sectarian strife, reserving them instead for missions primarily against al Qaeda. Another camp argues for redeploying U.S. forces to the periphery – either inside or outside Iraq – and keeping them on call for counterterrorism missions. There will be some utility in this, especially when intelligence indicates that centralized bases are appearing or even large centers of jihadist activity. But the military remains a poor instrument for dealing with small, highly dispersed and widely distributed terrorist cells. Moreover, the use of military force against such cells often results in the kind of collateral damage that spurs anger and further radicalization.

Let me add that if we do depart Iraq, we will need to solve the problem of devising a reliable covert capability for dealing with the problem of a terrorist safe haven in largely ungoverned spaces. This problem already exists in Pakistan, and it may well materialize in Iraq. Our senior military commanders seem chronically averse to deploying Special Forces on counterterrorism missions. I have recently argued, together with Steven Simon of the Council on Foreign Relations, that it is time to take another look at these kinds of missions and to build up the CIA's capabilities and responsibilities in this area. I am submitting our article in The New York Times on this subject for the record.

An Emboldened Enemy

Another Administration argument is that a U.S. departure from Iraq will embolden the terrorists. This is, to a significant degree, true. But it should be noted that the jihadist

movement has already declared victory in Iraq and appears to be delighted by its accomplishments. No doubt there is some bluster in these statements. But there is also plenty of genuine satisfaction at the role AQI has played in foiling our efforts to stand up a democratic and friendly regime in Iraq and to pacify the country. We need to ask what the implications of this sense of achievement will be.

It is often suggested that leaving Iraq before the destruction of AQI will lead to an enhanced jihadist threat to the U.S. homeland – this is the clear sense of President Bush's repeated remarks to the effect that the al Qaeda group that attacked the United States on September 11, 2001 and AQI are the same. We are also all familiar with the argument that we must fight the terrorists "over there" so that we don't have to "over here." There is an element of truth here insofar as more jihadists means a greater aggregate threat to the United States, and this is not to be taken lightly.

It is worth considering, however, the nature of the AQI threat. Most of the fighters in the group are not going to be capable of participating directly in attacks on the U.S. homeland because they lack the cultural capabilities to navigate in Western societies. Many and perhaps most will continue to fight for the upper hand in Iraq. As suggested earlier, I am skeptical that they will make much headway in this regard, but they will, at a minimum, continue to carry out spectacular bombings against military and civilian targets. A few may try to carry their violence to the West, and the possibility that one of the doctors involved in the recent car bomb conspiracy in the United Kingdom was an Iraqi jihadist, is an ominous hint of that fact. But if U.S. forces depart, the more direct threat will be offshore to American interests abroad – especially in the Muslim world.

Indeed, the Muslim world itself, already roiled by the effects of Iraq, looks to be the region most threatened in the coming years. Those who have honed their skills in Iraq will want to continue to employ them. A reasonable conclusion about their likely targets would point to U.S. and other Western interests in the Middle East and Persian Gulf regions and the regimes of Muslim world, which the militants continue to view as "apostate" and deserving of overthrow. I have mentioned those fighters who appear to have made their way to Lebanon. Others may return to Saudi Arabia, which is widely believed to be the number one exporter of radicals to Iraq – and the work of the Israeli scholar Reuven Paz and the Saudi analyst Nawaf Obeid has supported this contention. It is difficult to judge the extent to which radicalism is on the rise in Saudi Arabia at the moment. But the fact that Saudi authorities recently announced the arrest of 172 militants was a striking event. Terrorism is game of small numbers, and 172 is a large one. We don't know much about the offenses that these individuals were involved in, but if they were serious –and not merely the voicing of "deviant" beliefs – their arrests should be seen a significant event. The return of only a couple of hundred jihadists to Saudi Arabia could prove a challenge for the Interior Ministry and its forces. Those who return, it should be remembered, will return as victors, and that will give them an aura that will help them as they seek to promote their cause.

Other countries that face serious domestic terrorist problems include Jordan and Syria, the two major recipients of refugees from Iraq's turmoil. Refugee populations are

notorious incubators of extremism, and within them, radicals from within Iraq could find useful operatives and logistical support. Both countries have highly capable domestic security, but, of course, no security service is perfect. Particularly Jordan, which has a produced a number of key figures in the jihadist movement from one of its founding fathers, Abdullah Azzam, to Zarqawi, gives reason to worry. This subcommittee needs no reminder of how critical Jordan is to the stability of Middle East.

What is true in terms of a rising threat level for those directly on the Iraqi border will also hold for other Muslim countries or areas at a greater remove. I have mentioned the recent events in Lebanon, a country whose political fragility makes even a small influx of fighters from Iraq enormously worrying. Several countries in the Maghreb are also concerned about returning fighters. The possibility of al Qaeda infiltration in Gaza or even the West Bank as a result of the spillover effect from Iraq could have grave consequences. Thus far, all the parties – Israel, Fatah and Hamas – have worked to keep out al Qaeda because of the likely disastrous consequences of a catastrophic attack. But no intelligence operation is omnipotent. Let me emphasize as well that the spillover has already begun and is likely to continue – though possibly in smaller measure – even if U.S. forces remain in Iraq.

Farther away still is one of the most active areas of jihadist activity: Europe. The number of Muslims who traveled from Europe to Iraq appears to be relatively small, and many of those will have been killed in action. It is also true that Zarqawi was building a network in Europe. But a consideration of the European dimension of the problem we are considering points to one crucial point. Against all the problems we may face by departing Iraq, we need to balance the gains we would make by reducing the ability of AQI members to galvanize others around the world. In Western Europe and even the United States, the ability of AQI to broadcast its heroic deeds in the form of videos and communiques has had a powerful effect on those liable to be radicalized. Without U.S. forces to attack, the militants in Iraq would soon be of reduced interest to outsiders. Some European experts contend that the end of the conflict in Iraq would significantly reduce terrorist activity on their continent. At a minimum, it would cap the radicals' ability to argue that the United States is a predatory power that is occupying an Islamic nation. That, in turn, should over time diminish radicalization and with it, the threat to the United States. The radicals who are most likely to attack the U.S. homeland today are not going to come directly from Iraq but rather will be individuals at home in Western societies who have been moved to violence by their anger at events in Iraq.

Some will argue that the perception of a U.S. defeat in Iraq will outweigh any gains we might make by removing this obvious irritant to Muslim sensibilities. Since it appears that the jihadists already believe that they have won, and there are real doubts about our ability to achieve a "total victory," this may seem somewhat beside the point. We are stuck on the horns of dilemma: One jihadist myth says the United States is a paper tiger; another says we are a vicious, anti-Muslim power. There is a growing consensus among counterterrorism analysts that undermining that latter argument would be truly beneficial now, and that argues for departing from Iraq.

The Danger of Afghanistan II

At least one other development should concern us about the trajectory of the terrorist threat, and that is the possibility of the development of a full-blown proxy war in Iraq. Like many others, I view the possibility of a wider regional war because of the fighting in Iraq as being unlikely. Iraq's Sunni neighbors – with the exception of Turkey – have limited military capabilities and are not geared for offensive operations. Iran may seek to exercise sway over Iraqi events, but its extensive ties to various groups in Iraq obviate the need for a significant military presence.

That said, the possibility of a proxy war is considerable. There have been a number of rumors regarding Saudi efforts to establish relations with Sunni tribes in Iraq in return for money and perhaps arms. I take recent reporting in The New York Times about the discomfiture of the Bush Administration regarding Saudi lack of support for the Maliki government in Baghdad to provide further evidence of this. The antipathy between the Saudis and Shia Iran needs no retelling here, and Iranian advances in terms of influence in Iraq, influence through Hezbollah in Lebanon and through Tehran's nuclear program constitutes the basis for considerable Saudi anxiety. The United States, of course, is not out of Iraq yet, and so it appears that a proxy war could well happen whether we are there or not; it stands to reason that our departure might accelerate the process of "buying up" support in Iraq.

Such a development could herald the appearance of a pernicious dynamic in the region. In much the same way that support from the Sunni Arabs – primarily Saudi Arabia – and the United States fueled the fight against the Soviets in Afghanistan in the 1980s and catalyzed a new radicalism, the fight against the Shia could have a similar effect. A proxy war backed by Gulf money against the Iranian-backed forces could draw in radical Islamists from the region. (It would certainly give regimes worried about extremists a direction to point them to.) Anti-Shia sentiment could become a powerful mobilizing force in the region, and we need only recall the rather remarkable comments of leaders such as President Mubarak of Egypt and King Abdullah of Jordan to get a sense of the explosive potential here. One would like to think that the regional actors have seen the dangers of riding this tiger in the past. But we should not believe that they necessarily would not avoid courting such dangers if the alternative is Iranian hegemony.

Avoiding such a proxy war and the radicalization it might yield ought to be a primary goal of U.S. diplomacy today. Unfortunately, we have few levers at our disposal, especially because our options for limiting Iranian influence are scant. We may not be able to make Saudis and Iranians trust each other. We should, at a minimum, seek to illustrate to them the dangers of an Afghanistan-like conflict as part of an effort to forestall a cataclysm.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to appear here today.

○