

## HEARING TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON UNITED STATES POLICY TOWARD IRAQ

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2011

U.S. SENATE,  
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,  
*Washington, DC.*

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:04 a.m. in room SD-106, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Senator Carl Levin (chairman) presiding.

Committee members present: Senators Levin, Lieberman, Reed, Akaka, Nelson, Webb, Udall, Hagan, Begich, Manchin, Shaheen, Gillibrand, Blumenthal, McCain, Wicker, Brown, Portman, Ayotte, Collins, and Graham.

Committee staff members present: Richard D. DeBobes, staff director; and Leah C. Brewer, nominations and hearings clerk.

Majority staff members present: Ilona R. Cohen, counsel; Jessica L. Kingston, research assistant; Peter K. Levine, general counsel; William G.P. Monahan, counsel; Michael J. Noblet, professional staff member; and William K. Sutey, professional staff member.

Minority staff members present: David M. Morriss, minority staff director; Adam J. Barker, professional staff member; Christian D. Brose, professional staff member; Michael V. Kostiw, professional staff member; and Diana G. Tabler, professional staff member.

Staff assistants present: Jennifer R. Knowles, Christine G. Lang, and Breon N. Wells.

Committee members' assistants present: Vance Serchuk, assistant to Senator Lieberman; Carolyn Chuhta, assistant to Senator Reed; Nick Ikeda, assistant to Senator Akaka; Ann Premer, assistant to Senator Ben Nelson; Gordon I. Peterson, assistant to Senator Webb; Jennifer Barrett, assistant to Senator Udall; Roger Pena, assistant to Senator Hagan; Lindsay Kavanaugh, assistant to Senator Begich; Joanne McLaughlin, assistant to Senator Manchin; Clyde Taylor IV, assistant to Senator Chambliss; Andy Olson, assistant to Senator Graham; Charles Prosch, assistant to Senator Brown; and Ryan Kaldahl, assistant to Senator Collins.

### OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR CARL LEVIN, CHAIRMAN

Chairman LEVIN. Good morning, everybody. Welcome first to our witnesses, U.S. Ambassador to Iraq James Jeffrey and General Lloyd Austin, Commander, U.S. Forces-Iraq.

Before we begin, I want to extend a warm welcome to the newest members of the Armed Services Committee: Senator Jeanne Shaheen, Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, Senator Richard Blumenthal on the majority side; and Senator Rob Portman and Senator Kelly

Ayotte on the minority side. We also welcome back Senator John Cornyn, who is rejoining the committee after a brief hiatus.

This committee, as you will soon learn, has a tradition of bipartisanship. It is a long tradition. It is based on our common desire to provide our men and women in uniform and their families the support that they need and the support that they deserve, and that goal makes the work of this committee truly rewarding.

Senator Reed, Senator Tester, and I recently returned from visiting Iraq. One of my main impressions was that the team of Ambassador Jeffrey and General Austin is providing the strong leadership needed to manage the critical transition over the coming year leading up to the December 2011 deadline for withdrawal of all U.S. military forces from Iraq, a deadline that was set by President Bush and Prime Minister Maliki in the November 2008 security agreement that they entered into.

I believe that you two gentlemen are the right team to lead that transition and on behalf of the committee let me thank you both for your service and for the service of the men and women with whom you serve.

Last December, after 8 months of discussions among Iraq's political leaders, those leaders agreed to form a national unity government. But the agreement was only partial. Iraq still awaits the nominations by Prime Minister Maliki to the key cabinet positions of minister of defense, minister of interior, and minister of national security, as well as the resolution of issues relating to the powers of the National Council on Higher Priorities to be headed by former Prime Minister Allawi. The pressure on the Iraqi government to fill in those large gaps must continue.

During our trip to Iraq, we were told that plans are on track for the drawdown of U.S. forces and the shift of lead responsibility for our many programs from the Defense Navy to the State Department, including training of the Iraqi police. To carry out these responsibilities, the U.S. embassy in Baghdad anticipates that it will have some 15,000 to 20,000 personnel under its authority, including at two consulates, two embassy branch offices, three police training centers, and five Office of Security Cooperation locations. This will include thousands of State Department contractors to provide perimeter and movement security as U.S. military forces depart.

Whether this transition is successful will depend in no small part on whether the State Department is provided the resources that it needs to take on and sustain those responsibilities. Congress will need to do its part to ensure that the State Department has what it needs to do all that it can to help secure the hard-fought gains in Iraq that have come at great sacrifice of American lives and treasure.

Significant security challenges remain in Iraq. Security incidents in 2010 were down from 2009 levels, but terrorist groups, including al Qaeda in Iraq, continue to have the capacity to carry out high-profile attacks that kill dozens and wound hundreds of Iraqis.

Iran remains a highly negative influence, providing support to extremist groups. Another security challenge is the instability arising from the unsettled situation in Kirkuk and the boundary dispute in the north. U.S. Forces-Iraq has worked closely with the

Government of Iraq and Kurdish security forces to reduce tensions and to facilitate the integration of these forces.

Our goal is to leave behind an Iraq that is stable. During our trip, we heard that in general the Iraqi Security Forces have made major progress and are capable of dealing with internal security threats to the Iraqi people and are leading those operations. However, we also heard it will be some time before the Iraq Security Forces can provide for Iraq's external defense.

U.S. Forces-Iraq's training and advisory mission is focused on train-the-trainer programs as the training mission is transferred to the Iraq Ministry of Defense. U.S. Forces-Iraq continues to work with Iraq's Ministries of Defense and Interior with the goal of building their minimum essential capabilities.

Iraq will continue to need support in building its capabilities to meet internal and external threats for years to come. I'm concerned, however, by the latest report from the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, which finds that the development of Iraqi Security Forces is at risk from shortfalls in logistics capacity, corruption within the Ministry of Defense, and the failure to plan appropriately for the maintenance and sustainment of infrastructure and equipment.

The Special IG's report cites a report by the DOD Office of Inspector General which warns of problems with Iraq's development of its capability to achieve and sustain minimum material readiness levels for the Iraq Security Forces, saying that this "could result in a downward spiral of operational readiness that could put"—"would put Iraq's security and stability at risk."

General Austin, I'm interested in getting your professional military opinion on whether you agree with those assessments.

One major question is what security relationship the United States and Iraq will have once the 2008 security agreement expires in December. It is unclear whether the Maliki government will seek any type of continuing U.S. presence after December, given the terms of the security agreement that provides that all of our troops will be removed by this December. Iraq needs to engage with the United States sooner rather than later if such a request is going to be forthcoming.

The Government of Iraq needs to understand that the days of American taxpayers bearing the costs of developing Iraq's Security Forces are ending. Iraq has significant oil revenue which will continue to increase. According to the latest quarterly report from the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, Iraq's efforts to attract foreign investment "continue to bear fruit," in their words, and the development of Iraq's oil fields is making "better than expected progress."

We should work with the Government of Iraq to make available the equipment and training it needs for its long-term security, but Iraq should not expect American taxpayers to bear the costs of its security needs.

Finally, an important issue for the Government of Iraq remains the security of Christian and other religious minorities. During our visit we met with leaders of Christian communities, which have suffered from suicide attacks, targeted killings, kidnappings, and other intimidation by violent extremist forces. These communities

live in fear and large numbers of Christians have either fled the country or uprooted to safer regions in northern Iraq.

The leaders we met explained with pride how Iraq has been home to some of the earliest Christian communities and Iraqi Christians do not want to leave their country in order to feel safe and Iraq had a long tradition of religious tolerance. On our visit we urged the Government of Iraq to act with great urgency to provide the security necessary to preserve these ancient Christian and other religious minority communities and to protect those religious minorities.

Ambassador Jeffrey and General Austin, we know from our conversations in Iraq and here that you will continue to keep the safety of the various religious minority communities in Iraq as one of your top priorities in your discussions with the Government of Iraq.

We look forward to hearing from our witnesses this morning and we again thank you both for your service, as well as those with whom you serve.

Senator McCain.

#### **STATEMENT OF SENATOR JOHN MCCAIN**

Senator MCCAIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Let me also join you in taking this opportunity to welcome the six new members of our committee. I'm confident that the work of this body will be enriched and enhanced by their contributions and I join you in stating to them that our work has been bipartisan and it's been an honor for me to serve with you as chairman of this committee. Our bipartisanship is not devoid of passion when we occasionally disagree on an issue.

I want to thank our distinguished witnesses for joining us today. I have had the honor of knowing Ambassador Jeffrey and General Austin for many years, two great, great servants of our country, and on behalf of this committee we thank you for your service, and please convey to the brave men and women you lead, both military and civilian, the deep gratitude for their service that is felt by the American people and their representatives.

I'm very happy to have the chance today to focus on Iraq. It would have been unthinkable even 2 years ago to say that we would reach a point which most Americans, indeed some people in Washington, would increasingly be forgetting about Iraq. But that point has largely come and, as much as it reflects the dividends of success, especially the success of the surge, we disregard Iraq at great peril.

It's certainly true that many of the critical indicators in Iraq are encouraging. Al Qaeda in Iraq remains significantly weakened. Despite many horrific large-scale—especially against Iraq's Christian communities, overall levels of violence have been relatively low and steady compared to recent years. Iraq is increasingly bringing its vast oil and gas resources on line.

The country had a successful democratic election last year and, despite a painfully drawn-out period of political wrangling, a new government is now mostly formed in Baghdad. As demonstrations take place for democracy across the Middle East, I don't think you'll see those kinds of demonstrations in Iraq because the Iraqi people did have a chance to express their political will.

Yet, despite Iraq's progress, there remain serious questions about whether it will endure and what role our Nation can play and should play as Iraq's partner to reinforce success. The fact is 2011 will be one of the most consequential years for Iraq and for our partnership, year that will largely shape whether the country continues to emerge as an increasingly secure, self-sustaining democratic partner of the United States or whether Iraq tragically stumbles, sliding back into civil conflict, anarchic violence, and authoritarian rule.

These choices will ultimately be made by Iraqis. But make no mistake. After sacrificing hundreds of billions of American taxpayers' dollars and nearly 4,500 American lives, the United States has an enormous stake in Iraq's success. We have enduring national interests relating to Iraq that must be defended. We still maintain a significant capacity to influence events for better or for worse. And if, God forbid, Iraq's progress should unravel and the moment of opportunity is squandered, no one should think that the American people will be forgiving in holding their leaders accountable for that failure.

The security agreement signed by the Bush Administration and affirmed by the current administration states that all U.S. troops will leave Iraq by the end of this year. This means we're approaching a decisive transition, and I'll be blunt. I have real concerns about whether the proposed civilian-led mission that will take the lead once our troops are gone is sufficient to support Iraqi needs and U.S. interests, not because our civilians are not capable professionals—they most certainly are—but because of the huge and unprecedented challenges they face.

In short, we are asking the State Department to take on the mission of the U.S. military at a scale never contemplated before amid still-fragile security conditions. Many of the tasks now performed by U.S. troops will transition at great cost to civilians and contractors. Some such tasks will cease to be performed at all. Many relationships with key Iraqi leaders across the country will be hard to maintain for security reasons and vital military-led programs, from intelligence fusion to the peacekeeping activities performed along the still-tense Arab-Kurdish boundaries will be massively scaled back or effectively ended.

No one should interpret my comments today as a lack of support for Iraq and the continued U.S. involvement there. To the contrary, failure is not an option in Iraq and we must be prepared to bear the cost to ensure success, including the cost of our civilian operations and development programs, and which will be substantial however this transition plays out. Congress cannot shortchange this mission now.

What we need, however, is a more forward-looking strategy. The new Iraqi administration will govern the country for the next 4 years. What does it need to accomplish by the end of that time to set Iraq further down a path of lasting success? How can our two governments align our resources in a common plan that consistently advances our shared goal, the emergence of an Iraq that can secure itself, govern itself, generate its own wealth, and sustain its own development with less and less U.S. assistance.

Then, having established the optimal ends we seek as well as the U.S. presence and programs required to achieve them, how can we build the bipartisan support in Congress to sustain a robust commitment to Iraq, especially a commitment for what will increasingly be a civilian-led mission?

These are questions worth considering today and in the months ahead and I look forward to discussing all these issues today with our witnesses.

I also would like to point out that there is a place in Iraq that is inhabited by Iranian refugees called Camp Ashraf, and it has been under the protection of American troops. I am concerned about the welfare and wellbeing and security of these people. I hope that we can address this issue in a way that would reassure them of America and the Iraqi government's commitment to their security.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, Senator McCain. We share your concern also about the group that you mentioned at the end of your comments.

I think by agreement we are going to call on General Austin here first; your suggestion, gentlemen, that General Austin begin and that Ambassador Jeffrey follow.

General Austin.

**STATEMENT OF GEN LLOYD J. AUSTIN III, USA, COMMANDER,  
U.S. FORCES-IRAQ**

General AUSTIN. Chairman Levin, Senator McCain, distinguished members of the Armed Services Committee: Thank you for the opportunity to testify with Ambassador Jeffrey this morning. I am indeed fortunate to be partnered with Ambassador Jeffrey in one of the most professional diplomatic teams that I've ever seen.

I'd also like to thank you for your support to our men and women in uniform serving in Iraq and their families here at home. I'd like to spend a few minutes to give you my assessment on the current security environment and the capabilities of the Iraqi Security Forces and outline what U.S. Forces-Iraq is focused on for the remainder of the year.

The security environment in Iraq has been steadily improving over the past few years, most notably during the delay in government from March to December 2010. It was very encouraging to us that while Iraq was being served by a caretaker government the Iraqi Security Forces remained apolitical and performed admirably. They provided the Iraqi leaders with the time and the space that was necessary for peaceful dialogue and compromise to occur.

The commendable work on the part of the Iraqi Security Forces is paying off. Today Iraq has the most inclusive government in her nation's history and the security environment is the best it has been since 2003. Security incidents in 2010 were 25 percent lower than those in the previous year, and that trend has continued following government formation.

The security environment continues to improve, but it will remain complex and the threats to Iraq's stability will remain in 2012. Sunni extremist groups like al Qaeda will continue to target the Government of Iraq, the Iraqi Security Forces, and Iraqi civil-

ians in order to garner media attention and to attempt to demonstrate that the government cannot provide security for the Iraqi people. Shia extremist groups likewise will continue to target U.S. personnel and, in our absence, the Iraqi government and its institutions.

While the Iraqi Security Forces have a good capability to confront Sunni and Shia extremist groups and provide for internal security, they will have gaps in their external defense capabilities in 2012. Iraqi will not be able to defend its air sovereignty for some time. They will also require continued development on capabilities such as logistics and sustainment and intelligence, as well as more complex training.

Iraqi Security Forces will continue to develop their capabilities, which will require them to continue receiving modern equipment, conduct training on that equipment, and then conduct unit-level training. U.S. Forces-Iraq and the Iraqi Security Forces have just recently begun a collective training initiative which allows entire battalions to go through an intensive training cycle. This program provides the Iraqi army with the foundational collective training necessary for their units to operate and has been made possible by the much improved security environment. This training is a great step forward towards improving their proficiency, but they will still require much more comprehensive combined arms training and joint training in order to develop an external defense capability.

With the time that we have remaining, U.S. Forces-Iraq will continue to advise, train, assist, and equip the Iraqi Security Forces to narrow some of these capability gaps. We will also work closely with the U.S. Embassy-Iraq as we transition from a predominantly military-led to a civilian-led effort in Iraq.

We are dedicated to partnering with our embassy teammates in preparing for this important transition. The key to a successful transition is the need to fully resource the embassy to perform their task and responsibilities. We're developing the Office of Security Cooperation, which will fall under the embassy, and the OSC will provide oversight over all security cooperation in Iraq and it will assume responsibility for the near-\$13 billion worth of foreign military sales programs that we currently have with the Iraqis. It will also coordinate international military education and training. This office will work hard and be dedicated to closing any capability gaps within the Iraqi Security Forces.

Clearly, there is much work to do, but I am encouraged by the progress that Iraq has made over the last few years and I'm confident that Iraq can achieve its full potential if it stays on the path that it's currently on.

I'd like to close my remarks by recognizing the great men and women that are serving in Iraq and their families who are supporting them. While our soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, Coast Guardsmen, and civilians are serving overseas, our families are serving here at home, and certainly we would not be where we are today without the sacrifices of so many, and without the unwavering support from here at home.

Mr. Chairman, members of the Armed Services Committee, thank you once again for this opportunity to appear this morning

with Ambassador Jeffrey, and I stand ready to answer any questions that you may have.

[The prepared statement of General Austin and Ambassador Jeffrey follows:]

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you so much, General Austin.  
Ambassador Jeffrey.

**STATEMENT OF HON. JAMES F. JEFFREY, U.S. AMBASSADOR  
TO IRAQ**

Ambassador JEFFREY. Chairman Levin, Ranking Member McCain, Senators: Let me join with General Austin in thanking you for holding this hearing and inviting us to appear before you to discuss the issues associated with the United States transition from a military-led to a civilian-led presence in Iraq.

We face a critical moment now in Iraq, where we'll either step up to the plate, finish the job, and build upon the sacrifices made or we will risk core U.S. national security interests, be penny-wise and pound-foolish, and cede the field to al Qaeda and to other dangerous regional influences. We have thus an historic opportunity and a critical window to help Iraq emerge as a strategic partner and a force for stability and moderation in a troubled region. We cannot afford to let the gains we have sacrificed so much for slip away.

The President has clearly articulated our vision for partnership with Iraq. We seek an Iraq that is sovereign, stable, and self-reliant, with a government that is just, representative, and accountable, that denies support and safe haven to terrorists, is able to assume its rightful place in the community of nations, and contributes to the peace and security of the region.

The U.S. military have performed admirably, but they cannot stay in Iraq forever. The Department of State is ready to take the lead, but we need the support and resources to finish the job. We need to have platforms to carry out key transitional missions for the next 3 to 5 years. These include work throughout the country, especially in key areas such as Kirkuk and Mosul, where past experience has shown how a small number of Americans can have a great, disproportionate impact in helping to defuse crises and produce long-term solutions.

Our missions also include helping the Iraqis to professionalize their police, an absolutely critical component to the country's long-term stability, as General Austin said, to provide security assistance to help the Iraqis finish the job against al Qaeda and other terrorist groups, and to develop a core conventional defense capability. To not finish the job now creates substantial risks of what some people call a "Charlie Wilson's War moment," with both the resurgence of al Qaeda and the empowering of problematic regional players.

Al Qaeda is still capable of devastating attacks that threaten Iraq and beyond. Furthermore, gutting our presence in Iraq would also provide Iran increased ability to create anxieties in the region that could spiral out of control.

Along with the Iraqis, the United States has paid a dear price in this war: over 4,300 deaths, over 3,300 wounded among our mili-

tary forces and hundreds of embassy casualties as well. As Vice President Biden stated during his recent visit, "It is vital that we leave behind an Iraq that is worthy of the sacrifices that so many U.S. troops and civilians have made."

While all U.S. Government work in Iraq is expensive due to the security situation, a robust civilian presence represents a significant reduction in expenditures. Between 2010 and 2011, for example, the U.S. military withdrawal reduced the bill for taxpayers by about \$15 billion, while the increase in State's budget was just \$2.5 billion. And while the State Department's 2012 funding needs will naturally increase because of the military-to-civilian transition, the overall U.S. cost will continue to decrease dramatically.

Moreover, U.S. development assistance to Iraq is not open-ended. Iraq has vast untapped oil resources, but, due to the devastated oil infrastructure, it will be a number of years before Iraq will have meaningful new oil revenue for its own budget.

Getting the military-to-civilian transition in Iraq also will demonstrate more generally that we can transition security successes in war zones into long-term stability, including for Afghanistan.

In closing, I would like to thank the Department of Defense, Central Command, and above all General Austin and his troops for the support that they are giving us in this mission. I would also like to express my admiration and humility in the face of the commitment and sacrifice we see every day in Iraq on the part of our civilian staffs, military members, and our Iraqi partners as they risk their lives for a cause which they believe in, the Iraq I have just finished describing.

I thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today. We will be happy to answer any questions the committee may have and look forward to working hand in hand with you and other Congressional colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, at this time we'd like to submit our joint written statement for the record.

Chairman LEVIN. They will be made part of the record.

Senators Portman and Ayotte are with us. We welcomed you before very warmly and we repeat that welcome. We're delighted that you're with the committee, as our other new members on the Democratic side.

Senator AYOTTE. Thank you, Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. We welcome your statement, Ambassador, as to what the goals of the Obama Administration are in Iraq, and I think maybe all of us, or most of us, surely share that goal. You talked about stability and security and self-reliance of an Iraqi state and an Iraqi government, and that surely is and has been the goal.

One of the threats to that success, to that achievement of that goal and to the stability and security of Iraq is the failure of the political leaders of Iraq to reach conclusions on some critical issues. This has always been a problem. We've always expressed the importance of the political leaders coming together.

Some of the current political issues that are unresolved include the following: An agreement to create a National Council for Higher Policies with real executive power, headed by former Prime Minister Allawi. There is an agreement that the council be created, but

there's no agreement yet on what their powers are. I think I misspoke. There's an agreement that such a council be created, but there's no agreement yet on what the powers of that council will be.

The positions of ministers of defense, interior, and national security are still unfilled. There is no agreement yet on oil policies, the division of oil revenues. These are huge issues that remain unresolved and I believe threaten the goals and objectives that we have and hopefully the Iraqis have for themselves.

Can you comment on this matter? Is it important that the leaders of Iraq get on with the decisions in those areas, Ambassador?

Ambassador JEFFREY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. And we're going to have a 7-minute round, by the way. I usually announce how long the round of questions will be.

Ambassador JEFFREY. It is vitally important that they finish the job of forming the government. They've taken most of the steps necessary, but you have outlined several of the remaining issues that we've been pressing them on, but more importantly they've been pressing themselves on. We have seen some progress in the last several weeks on the National Council and the two sides have basically agreed to everything but the modality of how to select Dr. Ayad Allawi. Everybody agrees that he should be selected.

We think that this should be resolved in the next few days. I was in contact with President Barzani of the Kurdistan Regional Government this morning and the embassy with other people, trying to take the temperature of where we are on these steps. There are also some names that are floating on compromise candidates for both of those ministries that mentioned. Again, we are encouraged by what we've heard over the past several days, but the proof is in the pudding and we have to see if they will finish the job. It is very important that they finish the job and get on with the business of government.

On the oil account, two positive developments. As with everything else in Iraq, it moves forward in relatively small steps, Senator, but it does move forward. The Kurds and the other coalition parties agreed on a 19-point plan or on most of the 19-point plan that includes giving priority to a hydrocarbons law and a revenue-sharing law. This is vital.

But meanwhile the central government, Prime Minister Maliki personally, and the Kurdistan Regional Government have agreed on an interim step of allowing up to 150,000 barrels of oil from the Kurdistan Regional Government to flow out through the Turkish pipeline. This is a very significant development and it gives us hope that they will continue down that path, sir.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you.

General Austin, is the withdrawal of our forces by the end of this year as agreed to by President Bush and Prime Minister Maliki on track?

General AUSTIN. Thank you, Senator. It is indeed on track. We just recently completed our planning process that will govern the rest, the remainder of our activities from now until the end of December, and we've issued Operations Order 1101, which again prescribes the major activities that will be conducted, focused on

strengthening the Iraqi Security Forces, reposturing our forces, and also transitioning responsibilities to the embassy, the Government of Iraq, and Central Command.

We continue to synchronize that plan and we're also synchronizing the activities of the embassy along with our activities as we go about executing the plan.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you.

Is there any indication—I'll ask this of both of you—that Iraq is going to request that any elements of our military forces remain beyond December?

Ambassador JEFFREY. We have received no such request, Senator. We are working with the Iraqis, as the General said, on the security elements of our post-2011 presence, which will include a large OSCI element for security cooperation and the police training, which will be a major program. Both of these are under the framework of the strategic framework agreement, which was the second agreement signed in 2008. It does not have a deadline and it calls for a broad cooperation across the spectrum of bilateral relations, including specifically security.

So we're working with the Iraqis now on just exactly what the components of that would be, sir.

Chairman LEVIN. Do you expect any requests beyond that from the Iraqi government?

Ambassador JEFFREY. We haven't yet, sir, and I can't say what they'll say in the future.

Chairman LEVIN. We don't have any indication that such a request is going to be forthcoming as of this time?

Ambassador JEFFREY. As of this time, there's no specific request on the table, and they will want to see how we will meet their training and equipping needs with the program that we set up.

General AUSTIN. Senator, I echo the Ambassador's comments. We haven't received any request. And again, I think he covered the entire gamut there, so I would not add anything to that.

Chairman LEVIN. Another threat to the stability and the security and the self-reliance of Iraq is Iran. Can you tell us, Ambassador, in your view, whether or not Iranian behavior in Iraq represents a threat to their stability and to their successful transition to their own total sovereignty? And what also is the susceptibility of that government to Iranian influence or to their destabilizing efforts?

Ambassador JEFFREY. Senator, as the President has said many times, we are concerned with Iranian behavior in the region and in pursuit of nuclear weapons.

Chairman LEVIN. Does that include in Iraq?

Ambassador JEFFREY. In Iraq specifically, sir, we first of all have to note that as a neighbor of Iraq's, as a country that has suffered devastating losses from an invasion by Iraq in 1980, Iran obviously has legitimate interests, just like Turkey does in Iraq, just like Jordan does, just like Kuwait and Saudi Arabia do. There is significant trade. There is a tremendous amount of religious pilgrimage and such into Iraq.

Nonetheless, what concerns us about Iran and Iraq begins with the support that we have seen over the years of armed militias who have attacked us and who have attacked the Iraqi government. This culminated in a series of battles where Prime Minister Maliki

took them on in 2008, first in Basra and then in Sadr City and Baghdad.

We are watching that closely. We are seeing continued signs that Iran has not given up its support for these groups, and this is very troubling to us.

In terms of the susceptibility of the government, the Iraqi government, like any government, pays attention to its important neighbors, but we are absolutely convinced that this is a government that is nationalist in orientation and is fully aware of the threats to its sovereignty and will take the necessary steps to protect it.

Chairman LEVIN. Just to complete that, they may be concerned about their neighbors, but specifically is there a problem that Iran creates for Iraq with their current behavior?

Ambassador JEFFREY. There is no—with Iraq, the government has to face many pressing and long-term problems, some of which you've described.

Chairman LEVIN. Is one of those Iranian behavior?

Ambassador JEFFREY. It's not on the short list at this time for the Iraqi government, but they are well aware of the potential for trouble.

Chairman LEVIN. Is it on the long list?

Ambassador JEFFREY. They're well aware of the potential for trouble, Senator.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much.

Senator Gillibrand, you are welcome here. We're delighted that you are here. When we made that comment before I don't believe that you were present, so it's great to have you here.

Senator McCain.

Senator MCCAIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

As is well known, I'm deeply concerned about this issue of complete U.S. withdrawal. General Austin, I think that we would agree that the Battle of Fallujah was one kind of counterinsurgency that could even be compared to the Battle of Hue—house to house, kind of high casualty, high intensity conflict. And we fast forward to the Battle of Sadr City, which made extensive use of technological capabilities that we've developed over the intervening time.

In the absence of the United States, would the Iraqis have the kind of capability that was vital in winning the Battle of Sadr City?

General AUSTIN. Senator, certainly not. They would have to develop that type of capability over time. The capability that I believe that you're referring to is the capability to employ—acquire targets and employ precision fires that limit collateral damage.

Senator MCCAIN. In the words of General Petraeus, "We made them take a knee," right?

General AUSTIN. Absolutely, Senator.

Senator MCCAIN. And without the U.S. presence there, it would take a long time before the Iraqis would have the ability to replicate that capability?

General AUSTIN. It will take some time for them to develop that.

Senator MCCAIN. The Iraqis are interested in having an air force, for obvious reasons. Are they going to be able to build an air force without U.S. presence there?

General AUSTIN. They do have a number of options to both acquire equipment from and ask for training from other nations. But certainly—

Senator MCCAIN. So they would have to acquire equipment and then get trainers from other nations?

General AUSTIN. They would.

Senator MCCAIN. Would you agree, Ambassador Jeffrey, that the highest priority of the Iranian government during this year is to prevent any change to the security agreement with Iraq so as to ensure that no U.S. troops will remain in Iraq by January 1, 2012?

Ambassador JEFFREY. Senator, I can't assess with full accuracy Iran's intentions.

Senator MCCAIN. My question is would you agree that it's their highest—the Iranian government's highest priority?

Ambassador JEFFREY. I would say that it is a significant priority of the Iranians to not have U.S. forces on its doorstep.

Senator MCCAIN. How concerned are you, Ambassador Jeffrey, about the violence against U.S. civilian officials that might entail or occur after our withdrawal?

Ambassador JEFFREY. Senator, my highest priority as Ambassador is the security and safety of my personnel. My people on a given week are the subject of sometimes one, two, or three attacks, between indirect fire and typically IEDs. We had an IED against one of our columns two days ago. So it's a very big concern of ours. Nonetheless, it is a concern we have lived with since we started operating there in 2003.

Senator MCCAIN. Al Sadr resided in Iran for a period of time, came back, and then went back to Iran. Now I understand he's back again. Is that correct?

Ambassador JEFFREY. The latest I heard was that he is back in Iran, sir. But it's very hard for us to keep track of his going back and forth.

Senator MCCAIN. And his followers are a key element in the formation of the Maliki government?

Ambassador JEFFREY. His followers or his party played a role back in the October period when the Maliki government was first forming. But at the end of the day, Senator, they received 660,000 votes out of more than 12 million cast. They have only 39 seats in the coalition, which is roughly 300 seats, and their role, which is relatively minor in the government, reflects their voting power.

Senator MCCAIN. But it also played a key role in the formation of the government. When they swung by Maliki, it then enabled Maliki to form the government. I'm very concerned about Sadr, his activities, his followers, and his close ties with Iran, as well as Talabani and others. I mean, I'll just be very blunt. And I'm deeply concerned about that.

I'm also concerned, Ambassador and General, the Government of Iraq has already released a lot of individuals who had been detained by the U.S. military. We hear reports that the prime minister has released many more as part of a political negotiation to form a new government, especially with the Sadrists. Do you have concern about that, General Austin?

General AUSTIN. Senator, I am always concerned if—

Senator MCCAIN. I mean, it's happening? These detainees are being released?

General AUSTIN. There are a number of detainees that are routinely released because of lack of evidence or because they may have served their sentence.

Senator MCCAIN. Do you believe that some of those have been released because of the influence of Sadr?

General AUSTIN. I have no proof to confirm that.

Senator MCCAIN. Is it your opinion?

General AUSTIN. Without proof, I would be hesitant to provide an opinion on that.

Senator MCCAIN. As you know, in the Kurdish Iraqi areas like Mosul and Kirkuk there is a significant U.S., quote, "peacekeeping" presence. What is your degree of concern about the removal of that presence as far as igniting some conflicts between the two parties?

General AUSTIN. Our presence up there has provided a means to build confidence and enable the Arab and Kurd elements, Kurdish elements, to work together there. They've done—the troops have done a magnificent job of working well together. The tensions—in some areas, tensions still remain, and I think that as we remove those combined security locations, I think that has to be carefully managed.

At the end of the day, the issues that are present there, though, need to be resolved politically and that may take some time.

Senator MCCAIN. I hope, Ambassador, you'll make some representations to the Iraqi government concerning the situation in Camp Ashraf, and I want to thank both of you for your service, and may I urge you to continue to make a case for continued United States assistance as the Iraqi government goes through a very difficult and challenging transition. There are enormous pressures for cutting spending that are going to be and probably increase here in the Congress, and we're going to have to convince a lot of people of the importance of sustaining and assisting a free and independent Iraq as it makes this transition.

I thank you for your service to the country.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator McCain.

Senator Reed.

Senator REED. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, gentlemen, for your service and for the service of your colleagues. As Senator Levin indicated, we were there just a few days ago to firsthand witness the progress, but also the challenges. I want to underscore something that Senator McCain said which is absolutely critical. That is the need to generate bipartisan support for an increasingly civilian-led effort. As the mission migrates from the Department of Defense and from the DOD budget to the civilian side, the State Department, as it looks more like foreign aid than supporting troops in the field, the reality, which Senator McCain pointed out, in this environment it's going to be very, very difficult to sustain.

He's also pointed out, I think quite perceptively, if we don't sustain this effort then we have invested a lot of blood and lives and material in an effort that could be frustrated, and that would be a tragedy, as you pointed out, Ambassador Jeffrey, in one of those

moments, those Charlie Wilson moments, where, goodness gracious, what were we thinking.

So again, I think that is a central point and it was very well said by Senator McCain. I wanted to emphasize it.

Let me just—I think it's important to get a kind of perspective. You suggested, Ambassador—you didn't suggest. You pointed out that the cost, rough cost of our operations this year, for example in Iraq is what? Military, civilian efforts combined? You have an idea?

Ambassador JEFFREY. On the civilian side, sir, it's roughly 2 plus billion. That includes the assistance program, which is roughly half a billion dollars, and we're beginning to get some of the moneys for the police training program. It's a complicated accounting. And then the operations budget is \$1.787 billion, sir. So you add it all up, it's somewhere over \$2 billion. For the military side, I'd have to defer to General Austin.

Senator REED. General Austin, what's your rough estimate of your operating numbers this year?

General AUSTIN. In fiscal year 2010, Senator, it was \$72 billion.

Senator REED. \$72 billion. So you've got roughly \$74 billion we are committing annually. When the transition is completed, what's the number that you need, Mr. Ambassador?

Ambassador JEFFREY. We haven't quite finalized that for fiscal year 2012, Senator. What I can say is the building blocks would be where we are now. We would like to take over the ISF training and equipping program as a State Department FMF program. Right now that's \$1.5 billion. We would ask for less, but it would be a significant percentage of the \$1.5 billion.

The police training program is approximately a billion dollars a year, and the operations in the field, taking over some of the security missions and the logistical missions, but particularly security missions that the military has been doing—perimeter security and movement security—on the order of half a billion or more a year. So if you add all that up, you would get a figure that I would rather not add up, but it would be about twice what we are doing now.

Senator REED. Can you add it up, because you're better at math than I am.

Ambassador JEFFREY. If I had to add it up, it would be over \$5 billion, Senator.

Senator REED. So we're going essentially from 74, \$78 billion down to \$5 billion.

Ambassador JEFFREY. There would be some DOD costs associated with the OSCI, Senator. We don't quite know how much that would be, because they would be doing the security and obviously some of the payment of those. But clearly we're looking at a 90 percent roughly reduction.

Senator REED. We're looking at a 90 percent reduction, which is good news. But the reality is, unless we're prepared to fund your efforts at the tune of \$5 to \$6 billion a year, then you're going to have a difficult time sustaining the progress that we've made; is that fair?

Ambassador JEFFREY. I'm not going to sustain the progress that we've made, at least in supporting the Iraqi Government.

Senator REED. Unless you have that money, that's right.

What percentage is that of the State Department's budget?

Ambassador JEFFREY. It's between 5 and 7 percent of the State Department's foreign assistance budget, the moneys that we would have for the FMF and for the U.S. AID, roughly half a billion dollars for ESF, and then the police training. For the DCNP—that is, if you strip out salaries for our people, the basic operating budget—it's pretty big, somewhere between—almost as high as 30 percent in the statistics I've seen.

Senator REED. So we're looking at some categories 30 percent of the budget. So this is not a nominal figure in State. This is a huge amount of money.

Ambassador JEFFREY. This would be—taken together, this would be probably the single biggest program in the State Department in fiscal year 2012, Senator.

Senator REED. Again, let me reiterate. I think we all understand that when programs migrate from Department of Defense keep the troops in the field to support, rightfully so, over to foreign aid, that's a category that's a lot harder to sell, bluntly, and we've got to make that sale. I think that's the message that I heard on both sides.

Let me interject another issue, which is I saw competition on the DOD side between assets for Iraq and assets for Afghanistan. And at the same time you're trying to do this in Iraq, your colleagues are trying to do the same thing in Afghanistan—pull military forces out, stand up Afghani forces, turn this over to the civilian mission.

So what's your view—this is going to be a competition not only for money for your effort, but also for money for Afghanistan's efforts, which means that we have the same dilemma there. Is that an accurate assessment?

Ambassador JEFFREY. Basically, it is, Senator. There is one difference. In a year I'll be operating without the U.S. military. My colleagues in Afghanistan will not be operating without the U.S. military.

Senator REED. Let me just, another point is, when we were there the Department of Defense and State have identified over a thousand tasks that have to be transitioned or accommodated. Some of them have clear sort of DOD fingerprints—clearing travel routes, protecting personnel, etcetera. Others are tasks that are sort of subsumed in the CERP funding, the local activities, etcetera.

I must say I think when you look closely at all these functions and the kind of support you're getting indirectly, sort of the positive spillover benefits from the military presence, that that number of \$6 billion plus that you've suggested is probably an underestimate. Do you have a reaction to that, Mr. Ambassador?

Ambassador JEFFREY. As I said, we try not to talk specifically figures at this point, but in the order of magnitude of double what we're doing now is what we'll be looking for in fiscal year 2012. The support activities that the military are doing, it's very hard to put a figure onto that and how much of that would transfer to us because it's apples and oranges. We have to pay the salaries of our PSDs; combat troop salaries are in the DOD base.

But we get extraordinary support, billions of dollars of support, from the military every year, everything from CRAM identification of incoming rockets to logistical support, there's no doubt about it.

Senator REED. Thank you. My time has expired. Again, gentlemen, thank you for your extraordinary service.

Thank you.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, Senator Reed.

What are PSCs, for the record?

Ambassador JEFFREY. Personal security details. These are the people who—

Chairman LEVIN. "Private security contractors," is that what "PSCs" means?

Ambassador JEFFREY. Yes, sir. But—

Chairman LEVIN. Just filling in what the acronym means.

Ambassador JEFFREY. Exactly. But they could be military or they could be contractor security.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much.

Senator Graham.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you both for your service. I think Senator Reed brought up some very good points. The Nation needs to understand what's about to occur here. If you bring all the troops home—we all would like that to happen as soon as possible—you still have a country that is in a very early stage of development in terms of democracy. Would both of you agree with that, that Iraq is an infant democracy at best?

General AUSTIN. Yes, sir.

Ambassador JEFFREY. I would drop the "at best." I think they're a solid infant democracy, Senator.

Senator GRAHAM. Okay. So we're going to say they're in the solid infant category. Now, just like with any other infant, you need to provide some assistance and nurturing to make sure they grow up strong and healthy, and that's the challenge forward; is that correct? Take it from an infancy to a mature democracy?

Ambassador JEFFREY. The Iraqis appreciate our assistance. I mean, there's an issue of sovereignty here.

Senator GRAHAM. No, I'm not saying that we're going to do it for them. We're going to help them.

Ambassador JEFFREY. Yes, sir, it is in the strategic framework specifically, political support. We of course support them in election monitoring and in setting up elections and in many other ways, and a lot of—

Senator GRAHAM. Does the general population want us to continue to be their partner in some fashion?

Ambassador JEFFREY. The general population wants us to be their partner, yes, sir.

Senator GRAHAM. Does the military want us to help train their air force, General Austin?

General AUSTIN. They do, Senator Graham.

Senator GRAHAM. Okay. So we've got an Iraqi navy to develop, too. They want us to help them in that regard?

General AUSTIN. They do.

Senator GRAHAM. So we're not staying in a place where we're not wanted, is that a fair statement, whatever "staying" is?

Ambassador JEFFREY. That's a fair statement, Senator, but there are—most polls say that the Iraqi population in general would like to see the military presence to be withdrawn.

Senator GRAHAM. I understand that. Now, that goes back to what is penny-wise and pound-foolish from an Iraqi-American point of view. To carry out your mission in 2012 without U.S. military security being provided, we're basically creating a small State Department army; is that correct?

Ambassador JEFFREY. I would have a problem with two words, Senator, "creating" and "army," and I'll explain it. Right now we have some 2,700 security contractors and many hundreds of State Department security personnel. That figure will go up significantly, by an order of magnitude. But we already have—the point I'm trying to make is we already have a large number of security personnel operating in Iraq under—

Senator GRAHAM. Is it enough to do the job?

Ambassador JEFFREY. If we get the money to have the additional security, it's enough to do the job.

Senator GRAHAM. Well, let's talk about that additional security. Will it include MRAPs?

Ambassador JEFFREY. It will, Senator.

Senator GRAHAM. Will it include helicopters?

Ambassador JEFFREY. It'll include a large number of helicopters, Senator.

Senator GRAHAM. Will these helicopters be armed?

Ambassador JEFFREY. They will not be armed, Senator.

Senator GRAHAM. But you're going to have a helicopter fleet. You're going to have an MRAP fleet. If something happens, do you have enough capacity to shoot your way out of it, or are you going to have to rely on the Iraqi Security Forces if you're up in Kirkuk or Mosul and something bad happens?

Ambassador JEFFREY. Currently, Senator, both the U.S. military and my own convoys move with Iraqi security support in the cities. We assume that will continue.

Senator GRAHAM. How dependent are you today on American military security for your movements?

Ambassador JEFFREY. Essentially all movements outside of Baghdad, that is all PRT movements, by agreement between the embassy and CENTCOM are conducted by USFI forces. That of course will change when the forces go.

Senator GRAHAM. Okay. So if all movements in Iraq to do your State Department and other agency jobs require U.S. Forces-Iraq to provide security and next year they're gone, who fills that vacuum?

Ambassador JEFFREY. First of all—

Senator GRAHAM. Well, let me ask this question. Would it be wise from an Iraqi-U.S. point of view that that vacuum not be completely—that we not create a complete vacuum? Would it make sense, would it make sense financially, security-wise, to have a military footprint left behind, if the Iraqis request, to continue to provide security for U.S. State Department officials and others?

Ambassador JEFFREY. We are always happy to have U.S. military security. They're the best in the world.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you.

From a professional military point of view, what lies ahead in Iraq is the holding and building. Do you believe it makes sense, given the security requirements that lie ahead for our State Department officials and others to get out and about in Iraq, that it would be wise to have an American military contingent in 2012 in Iraq?

General AUSTIN. Senator, the Iraqi Security Forces have the ability to control the internal security in the country currently. As you know, they are leading the effort to do that now, and they do need continued work on logistics and intelligence capabilities, and so—

Senator GRAHAM. Do you feel comfortable with the Iraqi Security Forces as they exist January 1, 2012, to protect the thousands of Americans and other people in Iraq trying to provide assistance to that country? Can they do the job? Are you comfortable with them being able to provide that security?

General AUSTIN. I think that adequate security will be provided, provided the Ambassador is adequately resourced to mitigate—

Senator GRAHAM. Is it your opinion we do not need from a military point of view any troops in Iraq in 2012?

General AUSTIN. Senator, what we're focused on now is abiding by the agreement that—

Senator GRAHAM. I know, but you're advising Congress. You're somebody we respect. You've been on the ground a lot. Please put on the table what you see as reasonably necessary or an insurance policy, for lack of a better word? If you can construct the perfect scenario, what would you have that scenario be regarding military involvement in Iraq in 2012 and beyond?

General AUSTIN. Senator, I would prefer to avoid speculating on what we would be able to do and what we could provide, because I think the Iraqis would have to make a request and then we would—as a matter of policy, our government would have to—

Senator GRAHAM. My time is up, but I totally understand what you're saying. If such a request were made by the Iraqi government that, we would love to have some military assistance here to help us with the boundary disputes, to train our air force, to help us develop better security for your people and ours, if such a request was made would you be favorably disposed to say yes?

General AUSTIN. If that is the policy of the American government—

Senator GRAHAM. No, I'm talking about you. Would you recommend to us to say yes?

General AUSTIN. Senator, again that's beyond my pay grade to make that recommendation.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, Senator Graham.

Senator Akaka.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I want to welcome Ambassador Jeffrey and General Austin to our hearing today and thank you for your testimonies today and your continued efforts to ensure that Iraq becomes a stable, self-sufficient, and democratic nation. I also would like to recognize the outstanding men and women you both lead in Iraq, and we appreciate their sacrifice and hard work.

Ambassador Jeffrey, in our transition we're looking at many ways of bringing that about, and in particular the Provincial Reconstruction Teams have been in place since November 2005 throughout Iraq and have worked towards building up provincial and local economies. My question to you is, can you discuss the current status of the reconstruction teams as they hand over their mission to our consulate office?

Ambassador JEFFREY. Yes, sir. We have gone from a total, including outlier posts, of roughly 30 down to 16 right now. These are collocated, with the exception of Irbil, with the U.S. military. As we discussed, they receive U.S. military security. They're embedded in the U.S. military units. They're combined military-civilian teams focusing on political, development assistance, rule of law, and the like.

They have been extremely effective in partnering with the U.S. military on the delivery of aid, be it CERP, be it our own quick reaction funds, and so forth. What we are going to do is transform, if we get permission and the funding, four of those, in Irbil, Mosul, Kirkuk, and Basra, into in two cases consulates, Irbil and Basra, and in two cases temporary for a number of years embassy branch offices. This also requires, of course, the Iraqis to approve at least the embassy branch offices. They have approved the two consulates. We also will keep the Baghdad PRT in operation running out of the embassy. So we'll have five.

Then we're looking at ways in various other areas, such as Diyala and other areas that are important, to conduct fly-ins, to leverage the presence of either the police trainers or the OSCI to develop, if you will, lily pads that I can physically get people and get security in, so that I can move and have contact with the governmental folks, so that we maintain some of the tremendous contacts and some of the tremendous programs that we've had in places other than the five where we will continue to have a significant presence.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you. We'd like to continue oversight there.

In October of 2010, the State Department had over 1,000 employees and 2,700 contractors in Iraq. Current reports indicate that they plan to have and hire 7,000 more security contractors. Ambassador Jeffrey, how will you ensure that these contracts are fulfilled in an appropriate manner, avoiding the types of problems that surfaced under the Blackwater security efforts?

Ambassador JEFFREY. Senator, we currently have 2,700 security contractors. We'll go in the embassy qua embassy to 5,500. And then our police training program, they'll require some security as well, let's say the better part of a thousand more. Then OSCI working through DOD will also have security contractors as well.

We are very, very concerned about that, given the Blackwater incident in 2007 in downtown Baghdad. The State Department under Under Secretary Pat Kennedy, who's still in the job and still watches this closely, did a report outlining all of the problems that led to that tragic event, and we have taken various precautions and various modifications and reforms, as have the Iraqis.

All of these security companies have to be registered with two Iraqi ministries. They're under Iraqi law. We in addition have a va-

riety of new procedures, TTPs as we call them or SOPs, that require, for example, a commissioned or full-time State Department security employee to ride in every convoy. We have cameras on the vehicles to record everything that goes on. We have Blue Force Trackers to monitor where they are. We have done special training in rules of engagement and cultural awareness. We have Iraqi Security Forces traveling with us and coordinating with us, and I'm happy to report in thousands of moves in Baghdad and in the north in Irbil where we've done that since 2007 we have not had a serious incident.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you.

General Austin, the U.S. Government's presence in Iraq will change without question significantly as we draw closer to the end of 2011 and we redeploy the remaining military troops. What are the future plans for the bases and the facilities? Is any equipment going to be handed over to the State Department, given to Iraq, or brought back to the United States?

General AUSTIN. Thank you, Senator. Actually, we'll do some of all of that. We will transfer and have transferred equipment to the State Department to help in their future endeavors. As they identify additional requirements, we'll work with the leadership in DOD to make sure that we transition or transfer equipment as expeditiously as possible.

We're also transitioning or transferring equipment to the Iraqi Security Forces. As we've drawn down from a much larger footprint that we had, that was over 100,000, to the footprint that we have today—we have 77 bases that we're operating out of today. When we transitioned, by the way, in September from combat operations to Operation New Dawn, we were at somewhere around 92 bases. So as you can see, we've continued to shrink our footprint somewhat.

In that process, we have continued to transfer equipment to both the Iraqis and, again, identified equipment that should be transferred to the embassy based upon their request. So it's some of all of that, Senator.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, Senator Akaka.

Senator WICKER.

Senator WICKER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Austin, I want to take another stab at Senator Graham's line of questioning. I realize that you are a military man, that you take orders and you don't speak for yourself. You are under the command of the President of the United States as our Commander in Chief. We appreciate that, and you're going to implement the policies that you're directed to implement.

But I assure you it's all right for you to come before Congress and give opinions as to your best judgment. I think that's what Senator Graham was unable to get from you in his line of questioning. The military troops are going to be gone after January 1, 2012. We're going to have a number of American personnel there who will still be in harm's way. So my question is, in your judgment, based upon your expertise, will our American personnel in Iraq be as secure without U.S. troops as they would have been if troops remained present?

General AUSTIN. Thank you, Senator. I think Ambassador Jeffrey would agree with me when I say this, but because of I am who I am I always believe that it can be done better with the United States military. But as you pointed out earlier, we are right now focused on achieving the objectives that have been laid out with the current security agreement that exists between our country and Iraq, and that's where our focus has been.

Senator WICKER. I understand that there are other considerations, and part of that is what the people of Iraq want and what the government wants that they've put in place. Could you quantify on a scale of one to two, with ten being the security of our American personnel if troops remain, what will be your comfort level about their security without those troops there?

General AUSTIN. Senator, I would like to avoid trying to quantify any kind of assessment such as that without—

Senator WICKER. But clearly your opinion is that our personnel would be less safe than if we had troops there. I think that is your judgment. You're going to implement a different policy, but that is your judgment; is that not correct, General?

General AUSTIN. Senator, I think that, again because of who I am, I always believe that the military, our military, adds much value to any situation. So I think that Ambassador Jeffrey and his team, if adequately resourced, can provide for the security of the folks that they'll have working there. It can be done better with our help for sure, because again we have a long history of doing these types of things.

Senator WICKER. Thank you.

Then, Mr. Ambassador, let me ask you this. I want to make sure that we get your testimony complete. With regard to contract security personnel, your answer to Senator Akaka was: One group of 2,700 security personnel, another group of 5,500, and then you mentioned others, but I didn't get numbers there.

Ambassador JEFFREY. Thank you. If I could take a moment because I think this is an important point. We have operated with our own security, contract security, in Iraq under extraordinarily—far worse conditions than we are now, when I was there last time in 2004–2005. It was total rock and roll. We were in Basra, we were in Hillah, we were in Kirkuk, operating on our own. We took casualties, but we did the mission.

We are continuing to operate in Baghdad and in Irbil with our security personnel. They do a very, very good job. They keep our people safe. Baghdad is one of the areas where we've seen more attacks than most other areas. And we're prepared to do this throughout the country.

Because the military security for the places where we'll still be locating around the country is being withdrawn, we have to increase our security forces, both perimeter security around the consulates and EOBs and movement security, the PSDs. So therefore we're going from, as I said, the current level, which is 2,700 security contractors and roughly 300 State Department security personnel and support personnel, to some 5,500 contractors, and augmenting somewhat the number of State Department personnel who will be supervising them.

In addition, the police training program will bring with it some additional security personnel.

Senator WICKER. How many will that be?

Ambassador JEFFREY. I would say the better part of a thousand, Senator. But that we need to get back to you on.

Senator WICKER. We've got 5,500, then a thousand.

Ambassador JEFFREY. And then—

Senator WICKER. Then there's OSI.

Ambassador JEFFREY. OSCI, which is the—

Senator WICKER. OSCI.

Ambassador JEFFREY.—military support element under the embassy, that will be providing security assistance, training and equipping, and these FMS cases, they will require security as well. But I don't have a number on that.

Senator WICKER. Okay. You mentioned what the population of Iraq want with regard to continued U.S. presence. I know at a time there was extensive public opinion polling going on of the Iraq people. Mr. Ambassador, is that still the case?

Ambassador JEFFREY. There is a good number of different polls that come out all the time, done by various international agencies, private companies, the Iraqis themselves, sir.

Senator WICKER. Are you privy to that information?

Ambassador JEFFREY. We see a lot of it, that's right.

Senator WICKER. Based on that, the information you have is that a substantial majority of the Iraqi people would like the United States to continue with a security presence there absent the military; is that correct?

Ambassador JEFFREY. They want an overall relationship with the—I wouldn't say a substantial majority, but it's much higher wanting a relationship with us than the percent of the population that want to have an American force presence. That typically is quite low, between 7 and 20 percent, other than in the Kurdish areas, where it's up about 50 percent or higher sometimes.

Senator WICKER. But with regard to the situation that we intend to have after January 1, is there majority support for that?

Ambassador JEFFREY. I would have to check the polls, Senator. It's a tricky question. It was a tricky question when—

Senator WICKER. They get tricky even done inside the United States.

Ambassador JEFFREY. I know, but—

Senator WICKER. It depends on the question.

Ambassador JEFFREY.—they're particularly tricky, frankly, in the Middle East, where I've spent much of my career. They were tricky inside Turkey, where essentially—in all of these countries, there is a nervousness about countries having too close relations with anybody, including Iran, which does not fare well in any poll in Iraq. Or the Sunni Arab countries or Turkey, they're nervous about relations with anybody because all of these countries have had a long history of being exploited by neighbors, colonialization and such in the case of Iraq. So the general reaction of the population is to be wary.

But nonetheless, as we judge these things, taking that in mind, we would say that there is a general positive feeling on the part

of the population towards relations with the United States in general, the program we'll have after 2012.

Senator WICKER. Thank you, and thank you both for your service.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Wicker.

Senator Ben Nelson.

Senator NELSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and let me add my appreciation for your service and the men and women in uniform who serve, as well as the civilians who serve the interests at the present time.

I find the discussion about good, better, or best in terms of security there in Iraq as to how we provide it and which will work best, but the presence, the amount of our presence, and the quality and the nature of our presence is an Iraqi decision more than it is ours. So having said that, and the discussion about good, better, and best security for them, isn't the question, General, whether or not the State Department will be able to, with proper resourcing, be able to provide adequate security?

General AUSTIN. I think that is one of the important questions, yes, Senator.

Senator NELSON. Yes, we could do it better. We could provide—we could do the belt and suspenders approach. I understand the level of continuing to provide even more and I would support and appreciate the fact that you've pointed out that you feel that the military can do it better. You should feel that way. We should all feel that way.

But it's not about better. It's about adequate and getting it done sufficiently to protect our presence in Iraq as well.

Now, I think the—let's get it on the table. Mr. Ambassador, you said they haven't asked for any continuing presence at the present time. This is a tough question because you don't have a crystal ball. Do you expect that they will ask for maybe some continuing military presence after the expiration date? It's a possibility. Do you expect it?

Ambassador JEFFREY. Again, my crystal ball doesn't reach that far, Senator. I expect them to want to talk more with us about their security needs, how these security needs can be met. This is a country with security forces right now of some 650,000. They have basically beaten an insurgency and they're doing well against a continued but still relatively small compared to the past terrorist threat.

Senator NELSON. They probably have a reasonable understanding of their capabilities today, and we would hope that they would have a reasonable expectation and understanding and evaluation of their security capabilities at the point of departure. So it's not unreasonable to expect that if they're inadequately resourced, they are inadequately resourced in security, that they might want to have some additional help. But we're not anticipating that at the present time, but that's perhaps one of the plans that we ought to have in mind. Is that fair?

Ambassador JEFFREY. As I said, we are already preparing to provide that help—police training, FMS cases, FMS funding and that sort of thing. And the multitude of security and military assistance of various forms that are required, particularly to turn them into

a foundational conventional defense force, which they need to be and where they're not now, will require a good deal of help.

How that help is construed and whether it can fall into the program that we have set out after 2012 or would require something more is something that they haven't come to us and talked to us about.

Senator NELSON. But this would constitute conditions on the ground at the time, is that fair?

Ambassador JEFFREY. That's what will drive their decisions on talking to us about this, Senator.

Senator NELSON. In terms of turning over equipment, I've always been concerned about the fact that we don't want to be the kind of military that we are bought and paid for by a foreign country on the one hand. On the other hand, as we transfer equipment are we finding ways for them to pay for the costs of that equipment, either at the current time or with some future arrangement for them to pay us back for that equipment, rather than simply providing it and leaving it free of charge? General Austin?

General AUSTIN. Some of the equipment has in fact and will in fact be paid for, Senator. So it depends on the category of the equipment. But the answer to your question is yes.

Senator NELSON. Well, I know that some time ago we entered into an agreement with them where when they were having trouble acquiring equipment because of their own internal inadequacies and procedures, we actually acquired it on their behalf with their money. So my hope is that we will be as careful with the taxpayers' dollars in the transfer of the equipment as we should be, recognizing that we are paying for a great deal of the war in Iraq. It's a tremendous impact on our budget. It's not the driving force as to whether or not we continue to do what we think is right, but it is a factor, and I hope that everybody will be focused on that as we create this transition.

Can you assure me, both of you, that, not out of the goodness of our heart, but recognizing the importance to doing this in a good, sound economic way that we will try to recover as much of our costs in that transfer as possible? Ambassador?

Ambassador JEFFREY. We have been pressing them to increase and they have, Senator. They spend \$8 billion a year on their security forces. That has been going up. The percentage of how much they put into their equipment that's purchased externally and how much we put into it has been rising very much in their favor and it will continue to do so. This is not a long-term program that we're envisaging.

Senator NELSON. General?

General AUSTIN. Yes, sir. In addition to that, they have about \$13 billion or so worth of foreign military sales cases that we are working with them. So they are not only investing in their own future, but we are playing a large part of that. They're investing in our equipment as well.

Senator NELSON. So this could be the third leg of that, to recover some of our costs as we make that transfer. It's consistent with where the trend is and we just ought to make sure this is part of that trend?

General AUSTIN. Yes, sir.

Senator NELSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. If I could clarify something, Ambassador, in answer to Senator Nelson's question you said the percentage that Iraq is paying is rising in their favor. You mean that the percentage that they're paying is rising; they're paying more?

Ambassador JEFFREY. They're paying more. That is, of the weapons systems that have been flowing in to them, the percent of the total cost that they pay for has been rising consistently for the last several years.

Chairman LEVIN. When you use the term "rising in their favor," it's rising in our favor, not in their favor, as far as I think Senator Nelson's point was.

Ambassador JEFFREY. Exactly.

Chairman LEVIN. Senator Ayotte.

Senator AYOTTE. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I want to again commend both Ambassador Jeffrey and General Austin for your distinguished service. I want to also thank our men and women in the armed forces for their sacrifice and the tremendous progress that we've made in Iraq, and also their State Department counterparts and the important work that you do.

I wanted to ask the Ambassador: Can you think of another circumstance where the State Department has had the security responsibilities you said that we will have approximately at least 5,500 contractors, perhaps another thousand security personnel, where you have had that type of security responsibility and have had success in transitioning from a military security basis to that much security responsibility?

Ambassador JEFFREY. Again, back in 2004–2005, Senator, when I was there before, we provided essentially all of our own security for our operations throughout Iraq. It was not as large as this program, but it was significant. The State Department provides the security for all of our personnel in Pakistan. And while it's a somewhat from other circumstances unfortunate analogy, but I was involved in the transition on the military side; we turned over to the embassy in Saigon a tremendous equipment delivery and security mission in February 1973.

Senator AYOTTE. Ambassador, I believe you testified that when you were in Iraq previously that it was sort of rock and roll in terms of what you were dealing with. One of the concerns that I have is obviously we don't want to put our personnel in that position again, where those are the circumstances under which they are working, and I'm sure you share that concern as well.

What circumstances do you anticipate that you may recommend to your superiors that we approach the Iraqi government to ask for an extension of the 2011 deadline?

Ambassador JEFFREY. Let me put that a little bit differently, Senator. The assumptions I have made that we can do—I would go beyond adequate—that we can do security that I'm comfortable with putting people out there, are based upon the continuation of the current security trends. That is, with attacks down 90 percent from the high point back in that era; with the Iraqi Security Forces on the job. They still have some areas they need to be improved and that exposes certain weaknesses, but they're the outer security, we're the inner security, if you will. Most of the time, they

fend off most of the threats, particularly the bigger tactical or military threats, and we have to worry more about bombs, IEDs, snipers, and that kind of thing, as opposed to platoon-sized ambushes.

If that were to change, if the Iraqi Security Forces no longer could control large areas where we're moving, I would be in a different circumstance and I would have to consider options at that time, and there are many options. But again, I'd like to wait until those circumstances arise and I do not expect them to arise at this point.

Senator AYOTTE. With that many contractors that you're currently relying on, and obviously probably relying on additional contractors as this transition is made, are you confident that there's sufficient oversight to address waste, fraud, and abuse with taxpayer dollars that are obviously funding those contractors?

Ambassador JEFFREY. Any large program, Senator—and this is already a large program—requires oversight. It requires both people on the ground, contracting officer representatives, who follow up. We have a very, very active program at the embassy. We're under constant supervision, as cited earlier by the chairman, the Special Inspector for Iraq, SIGIR; our own inspector general, military inspectors general for their side of the operation; and our own internal controls and my Deputy Assistant, Ambassador Peter Bodde, particularly watches over that.

Senator AYOTTE. General, a question about our forces in Kuwait. They are offering logistical support in Iraq and also Afghanistan at this time. Do you anticipate any enhanced force presence in Kuwait to ensure in case there is an emergency in Iraq, either Iranian aggression or some other form where security regresses in Iraq?

General AUSTIN. Actually, Senator, that positioning of forces in Kuwait really falls in the domain of the Central Command Commander, General Mattis, and the commander that he has forward on the ground there, General Webster. So in support of our operations in Iraq, I would not want to speculate that we want to increase the—we have to increase the amount of forces in Kuwait. That is not a part of the plan as we look ahead here.

Senator AYOTTE. Thank you very much.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Ayotte.

Senator Webb is next.

Senator WEBB. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ambassador Jeffrey and General Austin, I'd like to thank you and all the people who are working with you during this transitional period as we climb out of a hole that we dug 8 years ago, in the view of many people, including myself, having come from an enormous strategic blunder. We were worried, and were saying so at the time, that this endeavor would harm the country's economy, that it would blow the top off of the price of oil. I recall when Congress voted to go to war in Iraq oil was \$24 a barrel. It went up to \$143. Today it's about \$102.

We were concerned that this activity would empower rather than contain Iran, that it would encourage greater activities of al Qaeda in a country where it had not been active to any degree before, that it had the potential to destabilize the region. Most importantly, there were concerns, and I shared them and wrote about them before the invasion, that this invasion of Iraq would create the temp-

tation or the possibility of a long-term occupation by the United States in a part of the world where we, quite frankly, should not be an occupying power.

I think this last point has been kind of the underlying premise of a number of questions that have been raised today about what's going to happen to the military presence in Iraq in the immediate future. I have read the SOFA, I have read the strategic framework agreement. They're not airtight, as I think you know, in terms of the requirement for United States military withdrawal.

There are people on this committee, there are people in the Senate, who have argued that the United States should remain in Iraq in the same sense that it's remained in Korea, as a projection force. Some arguments were made during the past campaign that we should be there for another 50 years.

So there really are two different questions when it comes down to whether our military should remain in Iraq. The first is whether they are needed in domestic terms, which is what a lot of the discussion has centered on today. But the second one and the most important one is beyond this transition period should we or are we discussing the notion of providing bases in Iraq as a projection force that could be used externally from Iraq or in a situation other than for the domestic concerns that you're talking about.

Ambassador, have you had any discussions of that?

Ambassador JEFFREY. We haven't, Senator. But to go back to 2008, I was involved peripherally in the negotiation of these agreements when I worked on the National Security Council and the Iraqis made it very clear at that time, and it is in black and white in the agreement I think somewhere between articles 24 and 27, that we are not to have permanent bases, we are not to use our presence in Iraq to project power of any sort or in any way outside of Iraq. That was the explicit understanding that the administration at the highest levels—and I was present for these deliberations—went into with that agreement, that our presence in Iraq as we move forward from 2008 to the end of 2011 would be solely to help the Iraqi Security Forces and the general stability of the country.

Our belief, Senator, after 20 years of having highs of 500,000 troops in '91 and lows of a few tens of thousands of troops with Operation Northern Watch and Southern Watch, was that securing Iraq, making it a relatively peaceful place that wasn't requiring these kind of military commitments, large or medium-sized, that many administrations and both parties have supported for the 20 years, was a great security benefit in and of itself. So therefore we decided to keep the forces on to finish the fight, if you will, and we think we're pretty close to there by the end of this year. But the Iraqis have no intention of having us have bases or project power and that's not our intent at all, sir.

Senator WEBB. Let me clarify something from what you said or get a clarification from you. There has been a lot of discussion this week in the previous hearing on Foreign Relations and on this one as well that Iraq is not at present capable of providing security against external threat. I assume we are keeping military forces in Iraq to address that issue for some period of time, where that is a part of a formula?

Ambassador JEFFREY. We are not going to keep—under the current agreement, Senator, we are not going to keep military forces in Iraq after—forces qua forces, after 2011. What we will do, given the fact that Iraq does not have a foundational conventional defense, external defense capability—it's just beginning to focus that because its focus has been on internal security—what we're going to do is to continue our training and equipping program, which will be quite extensive, both FMF programs and FMS programs that they purchase for main battle tanks, for armored personnel carriers, 155-millimeter self-propelled and towed howitzers, aircraft systems and other platforms, that they can develop this capability.

So we're going to be there with them, helping them do this in a very broad and extensive way, but at this point not with combat troops on the ground, sir.

Senator WEBB. In an advisory capacity, as opposed to with independent units?

Ambassador JEFFREY. That's the plan, exactly.

Senator WEBB. So just so I'll understand, it's been some time since I've read the strategic framework agreement, but there was—and I can provide it for the record if necessary—there was loose language in the sense of a further agreement being possible if the Iraqi government, for instance, decided that it needed help beyond a period of time.

Ambassador JEFFREY. In the first agreement, the strategic—the security agreement, Senator, there is an article that says that either side can ask to extend it, just like either side can ask to terminate it. In the strategic framework agreement, there's a section on security. That's section 3. Section 10 basically states that additional agreements within the framework of the strategic framework agreement can be set up to do one of the many purposes of the strategic framework agreement, which can be culture, it can be energy, and it could be security.

Senator WEBB. So just to clarify the point because my time is up, it is your understanding that as of the end of '11 the formal commitment of the United States as ground forces per se or combat forces per se will have ended and the transition would be into advisory roles, as we've been discussing today; is that correct?

Ambassador JEFFREY. It is our plan that we will have a security relationship, Senator, quite possibly a follow-on agreement under article 10 to talk about how we would do that advisory and training function, but that it would be an advisory and training function under title 22 authorities under the State Department as a security assistance organization, as opposed to a combatant commander subordinate force, sir.

Senator WEBB. Thank you very much.

Thank you, General.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Webb.

Senator Udall.

Senator UDALL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Before Senator Webb departs, I wanted to associate myself with his initial remarks. I think the Senator brings an incisive set of impressions and analysis to the decisions leading up to the invasion of Iraq. I know I served in the House at the time and asked many of those same questions. I know the chairman as well has been

deeply involved in those considerations. I think at great peril do we forget those lessons in the long run.

Good morning to both of you. Welcome. Thank you again for the hospitality that you provided to Senator Whitehouse and myself when we were with you in October. Senator Austin, thank you for your in-depth military operations brief and the way in which your service personnel showed us the country.

Ambassador Jeffrey, your hard work paid off. We were privy, with your assistance, to a series of meetings with political leaders across the spectrum in Iraq. I note that your analogy of mixing bitter tea with sugar so that everybody could drink out of the same pot of tea in the end prevailed. So congratulations for those successes there and for the establishment of a government.

I also want to acknowledge the partnership that you have. I think it models certainly the partnership that Ambassador Ryan Crocker and General David Petraeus had preceding you. The jointness that we now have in our civilian and military efforts is really, really key to the successes that we want to have.

I know the immense challenge that you have in front of us. We're discussing that here today. As you've explained, the success of the transition will be dependent on a number of factors, many of which we have little or no control over. But again, we're engaged and your leadership is very, very important.

If I might specifically move to Al-Anbar, we had a chance, General, to travel out to Ramadi and the progress there was significant. In your written testimony, you assess that AQI will remain capable of signature attacks, but will lack public support. Are there any conditions under which you could imagine that public support for AQI would again increase like we saw in those tough days in Al Anbar in particular?

General AUSTIN. I'll offer my thoughts first and then offer the Ambassador the opportunity to provide his thoughts.

I don't think so, Senator Udall. I think the people don't want what AQ brings to their country. They had a good look at that a while back and a couple of years ago they decided that they wanted something different. So AQ does not enjoy the support of the people, and I don't see them returning to prominence, to prominence to the degree that they were a while back.

I think that the people have seen better times. They want different things. They want a greater sense of security in the country. So I don't see it returning.

Ambassador JEFFREY. I agree with General Austin, sir.

Senator UDALL. Ambassador, we had—again referencing the image you continue to share with the Iraqi leadership of bitter tea sweetened, the Sadrists are now part of the ruling coalition government. Sadr himself I understand has returned back to Iran after he had a triumphant return to Iraq earlier this year. Is there any significance to those developments?

Ambassador JEFFREY. As a general rule, Senator, it's good that all—at this time in Iraq, it's not just our assessment from the outside, but it's the assessment of the Iraqis that an inclusive government that brings in all of the political actors, including some of the more problematic political actors, is a good thing to allow inside the

government and inside the coalition and the parliament people to work out compromises and to move forward.

So in that sense, Iraqis believe, including some that are quite suspicious of the Sadrist movement, that them being in the government is a good thing. Many Iraqis that I talk to also are quite pleased that their role in government is not particularly large. I think that I'll just stop there.

Senator UDALL. Yes.

We've had some—moving to another point—conversation this morning, including Senator Nelson's questions to you, about the transfer of equipment, authorities and missions from the DOD to the State Department. I think we all acknowledge there will be some other bumps in the road as the transition continues. Can you help us understand if there's more we could do in the Congress to help expedite this transition?

Then I was also thinking in addition, given the—and my notes said "eventual likelihood"; I think it has to be a certain likelihood—that there will be a similar transition in Afghanistan, do you see a need for a set of authorities to guide such transition? So in other words, from DOD to State. Ambassador and then maybe the General could add his thoughts.

Ambassador JEFFREY. Very briefly and I'll turn it over to the General because there are some authority questions on the DOD side. It's not a question of authorities at this time, Senator. It's a question of the funding. We need the funding. As we talked earlier, this will be a substantial part of the State Department budget, but a very small part of what we had been paying just a year before overall from the Federal budget for Iraq. We're hoping that people will focus on that latter point rather than on the former point, that it's a big chunk of the State Department budget.

Senator UDALL. I think if I remember—if I can interrupt, General, just for 30 seconds—Ambassador, that, although the number 17,000 employees sounds large, it's actually a significant decrease from I think what was 85,000 personnel on the ground at one point in Iraq. Is that accurate? Please correct me if I'm misinformed.

Ambassador JEFFREY. The military presence, I'll leave that to General Austin. I can't give the figures for that. But it obviously is many times what the 15 and to 10 to 20,000 range that we're looking at.

Senator UDALL. I think over that working lunch we had with your team that we were actually drawing down quite significantly.

Ambassador JEFFREY. The overall U.S. Government footprint in the country will be a dramatic decrease of way more than 90 percent from its highest point.

Ambassador JEFFREY. General Austin?

General AUSTIN. When we were operating as a coalition force, Senator, we had upwards of 160,000 total people in the country. We drew down to about 100,000 or so when the U.S. began to provide the majority of the assistance there.

Then most recently, as you know, we've drawn down to a little less than 50,000. So that's a pretty significant transition over time.

Back to your question on authorities, we do need additional authorities to fund the renovation and construction associated with the standup of the Office of Security Cooperation. So we would look

forward to working with the Congress to be able to obtain those authorities.

Senator UDALL. Thank you again for your service. I look forward to seeing you in country perhaps later this year.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Udall.

Senator Manchin.

Senator MANCHIN. Mr. Chairman, thank you.

To Ambassador Jeffrey and to General Austin, thank you also much for your appearance today. As one of the new people on the committee and new to the Senate, I want to also thank you and the Defense Department for bringing us up to speed as quickly as they possibly can.

A few questions I have and, General Austin, I'll start with you if I may. As a person who comes from the State of West Virginia, who is extremely patriotic, like this entire Nation, we thank you for your service.

Sir, September 11, the attack on September 11, we pretty much at that time knew that al Qaeda was our enemy and that was our direction of force, if you will. Who have you identified as our enemy today that we're fighting in the Middle East, whether it be Afghanistan or Iraq? And what is the strength of the force of that enemy?

General AUSTIN. Iraq remains a very complex environment, Senator, and there are a number of elements that play in Iraq that oppose not only our efforts, but, most importantly, the Government of Iraq's efforts. To start with, we've spoken of al Qaeda earlier. Al Qaeda is much diminished in terms of capability if we look at it today versus what it was a couple of years ago. Our counterterrorist forces have had tremendous impact in reducing the capability of the network. We've taken off a number of their senior leaders off the battlefield over time. We've reduced their capability to finance themselves. And we continue to place pressure on al Qaeda.

Senator MANCHIN. What's the number, sir, just for my information, as far as what would be their number of strength? Is it 10,000, 5,000, 100,000, al Qaeda?

General AUSTIN. I'll take that question for the record, sir, because I want to make sure we're accurate there. But it's in the—it's several thousand, but certainly not 10,000.

[The information referred to follows:]

[COMMITTEE INSERT]

Senator MANCHIN. Okay.

General AUSTIN. And again, their ability to do what we saw them do in the past is somewhat diminished. Having said that, they do have the capability to conduct high-profile attacks and we've seen that most recently here during the Abereen celebration here as we saw Shia pilgrims march down towards Karbala. We expected that al Qaeda would try to attack some of the pilgrims and they did.

There are also other Sunni insurgent elements that are in the environment, like JRTN for example. Their focus is currently on U.S. forces. Again, we believe that if we are no longer there then they will turn their focus on the government.

Turning to Shia extremist elements, there are three major elements that we focus on on a daily basis. The first is Khateb Hezbollah and the number for Khateb Hezbollah is a couple of

thousand. Then Asaib al-Haq, also a couple of thousand. And then the Promise Day Brigade, who has been—that element has been associated with Sadr.

So it remains a complex environment. Each of the elements have their own focus. The Shia extremists, for example, are primarily focused on us currently. There's no question in my mind that again if we are no longer there they will turn and focus on the Government of Iraq.

Senator MANCHIN. Again trying to get a handle on this, the amount of forces that we have in the Middle East right now is at what level, the amounts? 100,000?

General AUSTIN. In the entire Middle East?

Senator MANCHIN. Iraq, Afghanistan.

General AUSTIN. I think there are about 98,000 troops in Afghanistan. As you know, our current footprint in Iraq is less than 50,000, a little bit above 47,000 currently.

Senator MANCHIN. So a little less than 150,000, and we've identified not that many thousand enemies.

General AUSTIN. Right. Of course, we have forces in other parts of the Middle East.

Senator MANCHIN. I'm sure of that. But I'm just saying it makes it—for those of us who don't have the military experience, and us being such a technology military might, we have such a presence with such few enemies identified.

General AUSTIN. Understand the question, Senator. I would say that when you look at the numbers, I think it could be misleading to just compare numbers of friendly forces to numbers of—suspected numbers of enemy forces. You've got to really take into account the type of operations, the type of warfare that you're conducting. The types of things that we're doing in both Iraq and Afghanistan are very, very difficult operations.

Now, currently in Iraq we are focused primarily on advising, training, and assisting and equipping the Iraqi Security Forces. We are partnering with them in conducting counterterrorist operations, but again we shifted our focus from combat operations with our conventional forces back on the 1st of September.

Senator MANCHIN. What changes do you see that's different from the Soviet war that they had with Afghanistan and the war that we're fighting?

General AUSTIN. I would defer to Dave Petraeus and his leadership to really provide those comments.

Senator MANCHIN. I'm saying, they had overwhelming forces and superiority, the same as we have overwhelming forces and superiority in comparison; correct?

General AUSTIN. There have been a number of attempts to compare what the Soviets did to what we are doing in Afghanistan. Some people would draw parallels and others not. Again, I think we're taking a different approach to what we're doing there in terms of protecting the people and working with the people. So it's very difficult to draw a direct—to make a direct comparison from the Soviets to us.

Senator MANCHIN. Ambassador Jeffrey, if I may. There has been a tremendous amount of resources that the American people have invested into the war in the Middle East, especially Iraq and Af-

ghanistan, a tremendous amount that I have heard Afghanistan and Iraq have that could be extracted, and also in the oil and development of the oil fields in Iraq. It's hard for a lot of especially West Virginians, but Americans, to understand. Is there a return on that for us or any sharing of that, or are we just—we're all in with nothing in return?

Ambassador JEFFREY. Senator, it's a good question and it's a question that is both above my pay grade and it's a question that every single citizen needs to look at. The logic of what we've been doing since World War II, and almost everything that I've been involved in for the last 40 years flows from that, is that if we can maintain international security, freedom of trade, promote democracy, we won't ever have to go through something like what we went through in the first half of the last century—World War I, World War II, the advent of the nuclear threat; and that in the long run, while it is indirect, that brings tremendous benefits to the American people and to the rest of the world.

It's not a zero sum game. It's not that we benefit like Rome benefited at the expense of many of the people on the periphery. Everybody benefits together, the system is stable, and we're able to deal with the threats to it. What we're doing in the Middle East is dealing with one of the threats to this system that's been in place for the last 60 years, sir.

Senator MANCHIN. So basically we get as a country and our general fund, if you will, gets no return at all on the investment we're making. That'll be turned over to the private sector.

Ambassador JEFFREY. As I said, Senator, we as a Nation benefit tremendously from international security and not having to spend 15 or 20 percent of our GDP on the military.

Senator MANCHIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have other questions I'll submit.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Manchin.

Senator Blumenthal.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to join in thanking both of you and the men and women who serve with you for your service and say particularly to you, General Austin, many of your soldiers and others who serve in our military are from Connecticut and have been to Iraq not just once but twice, and some three times, in tours of service. I would guess that very rarely in our country's history have so many individuals borne so much of the burden, so few of the total number of people who live in this country, our citizens, borne so much of the burden militarily for this country.

To you, Ambassador, my thanks on behalf of Connecticut and our country to the members of the foreign service who are in not only Iraq but other dangerous places in the world. We have only to look at today's headlines to see how dangerous those places are to civilians as well as military.

I want to focus my questions on an area that hasn't been covered and perhaps would seem to be outside this committee's jurisdiction, but I think are very relevant to the transition you've been describing, the economic progress of Iraq, which in the long run, maybe even in the short run, will make possible its funding for the continued protection of its own citizens.

Perhaps, Ambassador, if you could give us your analysis of the progress that's been made economically, the prognosis for Iraq making further progress and thereby funding some of the activities we've been describing today.

Ambassador JEFFREY. Certainly, Senator. Very briefly, Iraq has a population of about in country 27, 28 million people. It has a per capita income of roughly \$3,000 per person. This puts it on roughly the level of the Republic of the Congo. So it is a very, very poor country today. This is the result—although it is naturally a rich country, not just in oil but in agriculture, an educated population, this is the result of just horrific leadership by Saddam Hussein and some of his predecessors over decades and repeated wars and internal turmoil.

The bulk of the economy, over two-thirds, is in the oil extraction. Right now they're improving thanks to the help of international oil companies that were brought in about a year and a half ago, that are doing well, and we anticipate that oil production totally will be up perhaps as high as 2.6, 2.8 million barrels—that's roughly equivalent to or a little bit more than Kuwait or the UAE and a little bit less than Iran—by the end of the year, with exports well over 2 million barrels a day. That's their main foreign exchange earner.

The non-oil economy is growing at a rate of about 6 to 8 percent. The problem, Senator, is that—and thus over time that will begin to deal with the unemployment problem. But right now we have 18 percent unemployment, which is obviously very high and obviously has a security dimension as well, because next to unemployment there is an even higher level of underemployment, particularly of young men, that is very worrisome to us, and it's one of the targets of the many programs we've done through U.S. AID, through the military and its CERP program and such.

In terms of the oil, as I said, the Iraqis have had considerable success with the international oil companies in increasing up to 10 percent the output of these fields. This could go up as high as 6 to 8 million barrels a day. Some people see even higher, putting it almost in the range of Saudi Arabia.

However, there are major, major breaks on such developments. First of all is the infrastructure. In fact, they will be slowed down in terms of continuing to export their additional production because they have to repair the offshore terminals. That work won't be complete until the end of this year at best.

Second, they will then have before them major improvements to the internal storage tank and pipeline infrastructure that gets the oil from the fields to the terminals. They're going to have to repair the northern pipeline that goes to Turkey if they want to get that over 700,000 barrels, and the potential up in the north is quite a bit above that.

So that will take them—an awful lot of their oil earnings will have to be poured back into repairing the infrastructure in order to prime the pump, if you will.

Likewise, the oil companies are on cost-plus contracts basically and they're starting to recover their costs. So much of the increased production profits, if you will, are going to go to covering the costs of the oil companies, rather than improving the Iraqi budget. So it's

going to be a number of years before we see a significant impact on the Iraqi budget of these increases. Nonetheless, the very economic activity associated with that and the general slow improvement in the economy augurs well for the next 5 years if we can get over the remaining security and economic problems.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. At what point do you envision that the Iraqis themselves would take over a greater share of funding their own security?

Ambassador JEFFREY. They are right now funding the vast majority of their security, \$8 billion a year. Our ISF program is about \$1.5 billion I think was asked for in the program, and we have about a billion dollar police training program. So right now it's \$2.5 billion plus the cost of the U.S. military being there.

But within a few years our programs will basically terminate and they will be on their own, and we think that they're in a position where they can continue at that level.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. What is the current level of security of the Iraqi oil fields and its production and output facilities?

Ambassador JEFFREY. The security of them is provided both by Iraqi forces, again the outer perimeter. It is provided—the inner perimeter is the security companies themselves. They, just like us, hire private security contractors to do the job. There are many of them operating in the private sector there. But also there's oversight by General Austin's people in the south, who coordinate closely with the oil companies and with the Iraqi Security Forces in terms of intelligence-sharing and improving the capabilities of the Iraqi forces.

So you've basically got three separate levels of security, sir.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Thank you very much, and again my thanks to both of you for your service to the country.

Thank you.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Blumenthal.

We'll have a round two for those who want to ask questions. I just have a few.

General Austin, you were reluctant to speculate as to what your recommendation would be if there were a request from the Iraq government for any military support beyond the December date. My question is the following. It relates to that question, but it's a question which is asking your personal and professional military view from a military perspective as to whether or not you agree with the current policy of the administration to remove all U.S. military forces from Iraq by the end of this year?

General AUSTIN. Senator, the agreement that I think that we're referring to is between our country and the Government of Iraq, and that agreement says that unless a request is placed—is made by the Iraqis to extend the agreement or a request for assistance is made, then our mandate is to reposition or reposture all forces.

So we're on track to do that. Now, I think certainly if the Iraqis decide that they want to—they need further assistance and a request is made to our government, then I think Secretary Gates has been clear. He said that certainly we would consider that. But that's the policy—that policy is in the domain of our leadership and I really would not like to speculate on—

Chairman LEVIN. I'm not asking you to speculate as to what would happen if there's a request. I am asking for your personal professional military view on whether or not you believe that we have the correct policy now, which is to remove all of our troops, combat troops, from Iraq by the end of this year?

General AUSTIN. I think that—

Chairman LEVIN. That is a question which you are obligated to answer under the commitments that you have made to this committee and under our rules.

General AUSTIN. Right. Thank you, Senator. As I said earlier, I do believe that Ambassador Jeffrey and his team can provide adequate security for their elements that they'll have remaining. I do believe also that it can be provided better with the help of U.S. forces. And I also believe that, as I stated earlier, that the Iraqi Security Forces will have gaps in their capabilities to defend themselves in the future. So certainly if they request and our government agrees to provide assistance, then I think—then certainly I think that is absolutely the right thing to do.

Chairman LEVIN. You say it's always true that our troops can provide better strategy and I think as a military man that's understandable. But that's not my question, whether we can provide better security than contractors can provide. My question is what is your personal and professional military view as to whether or not our policy is correct to remove all of our forces as provided for in that agreement by the end of this year? And if you disagree with that policy, you better say so right now.

General AUSTIN. My personal opinion is again I think the Iraqis will require further assistance.

Chairman LEVIN. Military combat assistance on the ground after the end of this year?

General AUSTIN. Assistance to develop their capabilities.

Chairman LEVIN. That could be training, that could be equipment.

General AUSTIN. That would be training, equipment. And of course—

Chairman LEVIN. I'm asking you beyond that. I'm asking you whether or not our decision, President Bush's decision, implemented by agreement, to remove all of our ground forces by the end of this year is the right decision for us to make? Or do you believe it's wrong and we should offer to keep our troops there whether or not we get a request, that we need to keep our troops there whether or not we get a request?

General AUSTIN. I think we should only offer to provide assistance if requested by the Iraqi government, Senator.

Chairman LEVIN. Then what your recommendation would be if there were such a request, do you know what that recommendation would be right now?

General AUSTIN. It would be based upon the things that they requested assistance for or with. If that's training on their counterterrorist forces, if that's combined arms training, if that's training or assistance with logistical support, whatever it is, it would be my responsibility to look at what's being asked for and what we agree to do and then provide an assessment to my leadership on what that would require in terms of forces.

Chairman LEVIN. I'm going to ask you that question again for the record, because I think it's incumbent on you to give us an answer to the question that I ask. And I'll ask it for you—of you for the record, and then you can decide whether or not to respond to that question that I ask you. Okay?

General AUSTIN. Yes, sir.

[The information referred to follows:]

[COMMITTEE INSERT]

Chairman LEVIN. Now, there's another unresolved issue, which is the future of a group that's at Camp Ashraf, which is an Iranian dissident group. Ambassador, I want to know whether or not you believe that the Government of Iraq has the obligation to provide adequate protection for these people and whether or not they are doing it and whether you are confident, if they are providing adequate protection, that they will continue to do so after December.

Ambassador JEFFREY. First of all, Mr. Chairman, they do have obligations both under international law and in a specific written agreement with us from 2008 to both provide adequate humanitarian protection and care of these people and not to force them to go to a country where they could legitimately expect to be mistreated.

The Iraqis generally are providing adequate security and protection for these people. We have had a number of unfortunate incidents. We are on this. The United Nations and we go up there every week. We are in constant contact with the Iraqis and we talk to them about this all the time.

Chairman LEVIN. How confident are you that they're going to provide protection after December?

Ambassador JEFFREY. I absolutely think that they'll continue to provide. I mean, there are no U.S. forces there, Senator, and I don't think that whether we are present or after we're gone that will change their position. The international community has certain basic expectations of all members of the international community and one of them is not to mistreat people who are in these conditions.

Chairman LEVIN. Can you give us a confidence level? Are you very confident they're going to provide protection, somewhat confident?

Ambassador JEFFREY. I'm confident. On a scale of not confident to very confident, I'm confident.

Chairman LEVIN. On a scale?

Ambassador JEFFREY. As I said, confident would be one level below very confident.

Chairman LEVIN. Got you.

On the question of violence against religious minorities, as you know, we met with leaders of the Iraq Christian community. They're very concerned. You two are very concerned as well, I believe. Give us your assessment of the situation, but also whether or not Iraqis are training units that are comprised of these religious minorities who can be deployed to the areas where they come from and where their respective communities reside in order to provide security? Can you give us an answer to both of those questions?

General AUSTIN. Yes, sir. I'll take the last question first. The prime minister has directed that 500 Iraqi Christians be hired and incorporated into the MOI, the Ministry of Interior, to provide additional assistance in protecting the Christian neighborhoods.

Chairman LEVIN. And villages and communities?

General AUSTIN. That's right, Senator. So these 500 will be really employed across the country from Mosul and in Baghdad and in other places. That hiring process is taking place. Initially there were some applicants that were above the age limit and the prime minister has come back and offered an age waiver for those applicants. But we expect to see them on board in about a week or so.

Chairman LEVIN. Ambassador?

Ambassador JEFFREY. Senator, on my list of things that make me optimistic, I would say that the reaction across the board in Iraq to the attack on the church on the 31st of October is one of those things that make me feel best about the future of Iraq in terms of an inclusive society that can deal with violence and can deal with diversity.

Everybody across the board has been magnificent in outreach. They followed that up with concrete actions. We have seen, unfortunately, a number of major attacks, particularly by al Qaeda, since that time, but no major attack by al Qaeda has been conducted successfully on a Christian facility. Al Qaeda would like to do more, but Christian facilities are getting a lot of protection.

But it's also the sincerity and the depth of the reaction of people from all religious groups in Iraq to this. The Christians really are considered a part of the community by all of the other communities in Iraq, and that's a good model for people in other places.

Chairman LEVIN. Well, I hope that you'll keep that real concern on the radar screen, because there may be good intent, but they're also having to deal with some people there who have very ill intent, malicious intent, and they're going to have to put some resources in there to implement their intent to carry out what you say is their beliefs, that there is a history there of tolerance and participation by the Christian community, that the leadership you believe of Iraq want to protect. They need to put resources in order to carry out that intent because of the threat that exists there.

We will stand adjourned, with thanks again to both of you for your testimony and for your service. We hope you'll pass that along to the men and women with whom you work.

[Whereupon, at 12:23 p.m., the committee adjourned.]