

4 SEPTEMBER 2008



GENERAL DAVID PETRAEUS

INT: Hadi Hassan (ph). He's from Aswat al-Iraq. My question is about the Ashraf camp that is Mujahdi Khalq's home, I guess. They're now transferring the security, the security situation from the American forces to the Iraqi forces. They're saying that they are being protected by the international law, also by -- there's a Law 1948, I think. These forces are -- What did the American forces do about transferring the security? They don't have any fear that this opera- -- that they -- transferring these forces is going to be harmful to these people or they're going to be harmed?

GEN. PETRAEUS: As you may know, the residents of Camp Ashraf, the Mujahedin-e Khalq, are in a legal status that is called "Protected Persons Status" by international law. And U.S. forces still are responsible for the security of them because of that status. We have, however, begun the process of transition of security to Iraqi Security Forces, who are now joining us, they are jointly helping to secure Camp Ashraf. We were required by international law to request from the governor of Iraq assurances that the Mujahedin-e Khalq would continue to receive security and would be protected. We have recently received those assurances, and therefore began the process of, of planning the transition from Coalition Security Force security to security by Iraqi Security Forces. There will be additional steps required, again, to meet the requirements of international law. We have taken international organizations up there and also your Ministry of Human Rights and, I think, most recently that you heard the Prime Minister spokesman, Ali al-Dabbagh yesterday, I believe, or the day before, state that they will in fact be secured after the transition of that security to Iraqi Security Forces.

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