

**NOMINATIONS OF THE 110TH  
CONGRESS—FIRST SESSION**

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**HEARINGS**

BEFORE THE

**COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS  
UNITED STATES SENATE**

**ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS**

**FIRST SESSION**

—  
JANUARY 30 THROUGH DECEMBER 19, 2007  
—

Printed for the use of the Committee on Foreign Relations



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COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS  
110TH CONGRESS—FIRST SESSION

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ANTONY J. BLINKEN, *Staff Director*

KENNETH A. MYERS, Jr., *Republican Staff Director*

\*Note: Reassigned to Committee on Finance January 24, 2008.

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COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS  
110TH CONGRESS—SECOND SESSION

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ANTONY J. BLINKEN, *Staff Director*

KENNETH A. MYERS, Jr., *Republican Staff Director*

\*Note: Appointed February 12, 2008.

## NOMINATIONS

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THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2007

U.S. SENATE,  
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,  
*Washington, DC.*

Crocker, Ryan C., to be Ambassador to the Republic of Iraq  
Wood, William B., to be Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

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The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:19 a.m., in room SD-628, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. John F. Kerry presiding.

Present: Senators Kerry, Feingold, Menendez, Cardin, Casey, Jr., Webb, Lugar, Hagel, Coleman, Corker, Isakson, and Vitter.

### OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN F. KERRY, U.S. SENATOR FROM MASSACHUSETTS

Senator KERRY. This hearing will come to order.

Good morning, everybody, thank you for being here.

We have a couple of votes at 10:30, and so we're going to try to move as expeditiously as possible. Senator Lugar will be here in a little while.

It's my privilege to convene this hearing. We welcome both Ambassador Wood and Ambassador Crocker here to take part in it.

Needless to say, you've both been nominated for incredibly challenging, and important, posts. And I'm absolutely convinced, and indeed comforted by the fact that both of you have extensive experience. We're lucky to have individuals with your depth of background who are prepared to undertake these kinds of difficult tasks and in dangerous and complicated places. And we all, on this committee, trust the experience that you bring to the table, will serve you and the country well.

The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are obviously vital to America's national security interests. Certainly the war in Iraq, if not initially so, now is because of the implications on the down side.

Many of us on this committee have expressed opinions, and feel very strongly that the war in Iraq has had disastrous consequences for our national security. We've seen more than 3,000 of our bravest young men and women make the ultimate sacrifice, and we've spent over \$350 billion of taxpayers' money on a war that, it is hard not to conclude, has made us less safe, has made the region more volatile, has, in fact, strengthened some of our antagonists,

and particularly made more complicated the relationship with Iran, Hamas, and radical Islam.

The administration's mistakes and miscalculations have made a difficult situation in Iraq even more complicated. But the fact is, that we now owe it to our troops, to their families, and most importantly, to the country to find, not just a new way forward in Iraq, but the right way forward.

That will start with recognizing that there is no military solution to the violence in Iraq. The only hope for stability is a sustainable political solution that resolves the fundamental differences between the primary stakeholders.

The Sunni-Shia conflict that has erupted into civil conflict in Iraq, and now spread throughout the region, and beyond the region—it goes back over 1,300 years. As we discussed, Ambassador Crocker, right now both sides believe that they can win, and that's a dangerous equation.

The Sunni have to recognize that they will no longer be running the country in the way that they were, and agree to put down their arms and join the political process. And the Shia must move beyond their longstanding fears of Sunni domination and agree that they have to share power and come to some agreement with respect to the resources and the fundamental structure regarding the country.

The issues of oil revenues, federalism, de-Baathification, and the militias are essential to ending the violence.

In the absence of this political solution, I think it's the majority view of this committee, and the majority view of the Senate, and Congress when ultimately expressed, that sending more than 21,000 additional troops is not going to solve the fundamental problem. It may provide a little more security, it may not. But it is not going to solve the fundamental problem.

And so, we need to encourage that political solution, and I know that members of the committee will have questions regarding that as we proceed forward.

We also have to recognize that we cannot solve the problems in Iraq alone, I know, Ambassador, you share that view. Any sustainable solution has to involve Iraq's neighbors, and the international community. And, perhaps most incomprehensible is the failure of this administration to engage in the broad-based international diplomacy, and also the regional diplomacy.

In each of the trips I've made in the last several years, I have been struck by the plea of leaders of the neighboring countries for a more robust diplomatic effort on our behalf, which has yet to materialize. Iraqis need to take responsibility for Iraq, and your challenge, Ambassador, will be obviously, to help encourage that, and to try to help create the framework and structure to empower it.

I happen to believe that a deadline is essential. Because there's been a lack of accountability in their behavior. And, I think it was 6 months ago that General Casey, and Ambassador Khalilzad both said that the Iraqi Government had about 5 or 6 months to make the critical decisions, or else.

The "or else" has come, and passed. The 5 or 6 months has come, and passed. And the violence is higher, and the situation more grave. So, clearly there is an enormous challenge in front of us.

In addition, we've reached a critical juncture in Afghanistan. For several years now, I—and a few others—have been arguing that we needed a more robust presence in Afghanistan, and that we were taking our eye off the real conflict, which was in Afghanistan, where Osama bin Laden launched the attacks, and the Taliban is now somewhat resurgent.

So, there is an additional challenge there—the accumulated affects of violent terrorist insurgent attacks, corruption, inefficient social resources, and growing income disparities are taking their toll. A point could be reached at which the government becomes relevant to the people, and that is, indeed, the greatest challenge that we have is to maintain the credibility of the government that we helped give birth to.

So, America is facing extraordinary challenges in both Iraq and Afghanistan. And the coming months are going to be critical to both countries, and critical to our country as well, in terms of our larger interests in the region.

So, I had hoped that Senator Lugar would be here—he's not here yet. When Senator Coleman gets here, he's the ranking member on the committee, I'll recognize him for an opening statement, but we'd like to proceed—given the vote pressure—to your statements, and then we'll get around to questioning as rapidly as we can.

So, if you would like to start off, Ambassador Wood.

**STATEMENT OF HON. WILLIAM B. WOOD, NOMINEE TO BE  
AMBASSADOR TO THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN**

Mr. WOOD. I thank you very much, Senator Kerry.

I am grateful to the Senate for having confirmed me to be Ambassador to Colombia, and I am honored to appear before you again, as President Bush's nominee to be Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

The United States has been closely involved in Afghanistan since 2001, and rightly, since the Taliban regime served as the launching pad for al-Qaeda's savage attack on our cities that year.

Afghanistan is struggling to find its way to the path of responsive popular government and economic development that was interrupted in 1978 by a coup, then by invasion, then by internal strife. In Afghanistan, the United States is pursuing a comprehensive solution that combines the push of security and law enforcement, with the pull of economic opportunity, humanitarian aid, and peaceful reintegration.

Since 2001, the United States has provided \$14.2 billion in assistance, of which \$9 billion was to train and equip Afghan security and police forces, and \$5.2 billion was for reconstruction. If confirmed, my job would be to support every aspect of this comprehensive strategy.

Our assistance already has produced an impressive record of accomplishment. In the words of Assistant Secretary of State, Richard Boucher, in Berlin last month, compared to last year and previous years, this year there is more army, more police, more government, more roads, more development, more economic opportunity, more legitimate economy, and more pressure on the Taliban from all sides, including Pakistan.

Now, the administration is seeking assistance of \$10.6 billion over 2 years, of which \$8.6 billion is for police and security assistance, and \$2 billion for reconstruction, and other economic aid.

The major categories of our economic and reconstruction assistance include economic growth, democracy, governance, roads, electricity, health and education, and food aid.

Special programs are aimed at the south, traditionally the poorest region in Afghanistan, and a center for opium poppy cultivation, and insurgent activity.

An estimated one-third of the Afghan economy is based on the heroine trade. That share is declining steadily as legitimate economic activity grows faster. But poppy cultivation is well-defended by those who profit from it, including the supposedly spiritual Taliban.

Techniques to fight the drug trade differ from country to country, but continuation of the violence and corruption of the drug trade feeds the Taliban and puts a low ceiling on everything the Afghans and their friends can hope to accomplish. My job would be to try to forge a consensus, both inside and outside Afghanistan, about how to end the drug trade, and then make it work.

One challenge is the probability of increased violence in the spring by the Taliban, as there has been for the last several years. Although the Taliban probably poses no strategic threat to the Government of Afghanistan at this time, it is important that the Afghan Government, local leaders, internal security forces, and ISAF forces prepare for such attacks. I would consider it a critical part of my job to support them, however possible. These are impressive challenges, worthy of our best efforts.

For my part, I bring 30 years of experience in the Foreign Service to the task. In my current assignment, I have led one of our largest embassies in the world, with more than 2,200 personnel, and 40 offices and agencies in an environment of terrorism and narcotics trafficking.

I am enormously proud of the work of the embassy team over the last few years, and of the accomplishments of our partnership with the government of President Uribe. In this regard, I would like to note that 2 days ago, February 13, marked the fourth anniversary of the capture by the FARC terror organization of Mark Gonsolves, Keith Stansell, and Thomas Howes. They are America's longest-held hostages. In the embassy, we think about them every day, as we think about their families. Their safe return is not just a matter of policy for us, it is personal. We are grateful for the splendid cooperation of the Uribe Government in the matter, and we hold the FARC responsible for their well-being and immediate safe return.

Although the issues and solutions are different in Afghanistan, I would hope to bring to our new assignment the same focus on mission, teamwork within the embassy, and with our military colleagues, on international cooperation, and on partnership with the government of President Karzai.

Finally, I would like to renew the promise I made in my confirmation hearings in 2003, to embrace a full dialog with this committee, and with the Congress as a whole, to answer your questions fully and honestly, to welcome your visits, and above all, to cooperate to achieve our common goals in Afghanistan.



Thank you.  
 [The prepared statement of Mr. Wood follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. WILLIAM B. WOOD, NOMINEE TO BE  
 AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN

I am grateful to the Senate for having confirmed me to be Ambassador to Colombia and I am honored to appear before you again as President Bush's nominee to be Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. I want to thank the President and Secretary Rice for their confidence in me.

In both countries we have a completely positive agenda, helping governments that deserve our help to overcome decades-long problems and provide peace, rule of law, economic opportunity, and responsive government to their people. In both countries, we and our allies also face an acute threat from insurgency, terrorism, and illicit narcotics trafficking.

The United States has been closely involved in Afghanistan since 2001, and rightly, since the Taliban regime served as the launching pad for al-Qaeda's savage attack on our cities that year.

Afghanistan is struggling to find its way to the path of responsive popular government and economic development that was interrupted in 1978 by a coup, then by invasion, and then by internal strife.

After the ouster of the Taliban by Afghan forces in 2001 with strong United States support, in January 2004 Afghanistan adopted a liberal constitution that opened the door to national healing and effective, honest, inclusive government.

In October 2004 the Afghan people elected President Hamid Karzai in open, popular elections with the participation of some 15 candidates and more than 10.5 million registered voters. After his victory, President Karzai, who had been interim President since December 2001, named a multiethnic cabinet to confront the challenges and opportunities of the new Afghanistan, and to develop a new cooperation between the central government and local leadership. In 2005, a multiethnic, nationally representative Parliament was elected into office by the Afghan people. Twenty-seven percent of the Parliamentarians are women.

In Afghanistan, the United States is pursuing a comprehensive solution which combines the "push" of security and law enforcement, with the "pull" of economic opportunity, humanitarian aid, and peaceful reintegration. Since 2001, the United States has provided \$14.2 billion in assistance, of which \$9.0 billion was to train and equip Afghan security and police forces, and \$5.2 billion for reconstruction.

That assistance already has produced an impressive record of accomplishment. In the words of Assistant Secretary of State Boucher in Berlin last month, "... compared to last year and previous years, this year there is more army, more police, more government, more roads, more development, more economic opportunity, more legitimate economy, and more pressure on the Taliban from all sides, including Pakistan."

Now the administration is seeking assistance of \$10.6 billion over 2 years, of which \$8.6 billion is for police and security assistance and \$2.0 billion for reconstruction and other economic aid. If confirmed, my job will be to spend all funds effectively and transparently, to achieve the ends they were destined to serve in the best possible way.

The major categories of our economic and reconstruction assistance include economic growth, democracy and governance, roads and electricity, health and education, and food aid. Special programs are aimed at the south, traditionally the poorest region of Afghanistan and a center for opium poppy cultivation and insurgent support.

If confirmed, I expect to have the satisfaction of marking the completion of the road system from Kabul to Herat, which will open up new commercial possibilities and help knit the country together. The United States Government has completed 715 kilometers of the ring road, and has constructed almost 2,300 kilometers of secondary and tertiary roads. I would also expect to see major improvements in the power system. The Kajaki dam hydropower system and the southern power grid should come fully on line in 2008, to get electricity to Kandahar and the south.

I would work to accelerate provision of alternative livelihoods to opium production, including agricultural, livestock, and business assistance, particularly to the southern provinces that are the center of both poppy production and the insurgency. Part of my job would be to coordinate and advance this assistance, and a host of other projects that are moving forward under the auspices of the "Afghanistan Compact" adopted by Afghanistan and more than 60 donor countries and international organizations in London a year ago.

An innovative aspect of international work in Afghanistan is the Provincial Reconstruction Teams, which provide a local international presence, advance provincial development, governance, and security, and help ensure these efforts are coordinated at the national level. U.S. diplomats and USAID field officers work side by side with their military colleagues at 12 U.S.-led PRTs and 10 PRTs led by other ISAF countries. The United States is playing an important role in these teams and I would expect to make that a big part of my work.

An estimated one-third of the Afghan economy is based on the heroin trade. That share is declining steadily as legitimate economic activity grows faster. But poppy cultivation has existed in Afghanistan for years, and is well-defended by those who profit from it, including the supposedly spiritual Taliban.

Techniques to fight the drug trade differ from country to country. But one thing is clear: Continuation of the violence and corruption of the drug trade feeds the Taliban and puts a low ceiling on everything the Afghans and their friends can hope to accomplish there. In this regard, my job would be to try to forge a consensus both inside and outside Afghanistan about how to deal with the drug trade, and then make it work.

The region is a critical, difficult one, filled with hopeful news and with daunting challenges. If confirmed, my job will be to help a developing and democratic Afghanistan serve as a bridgehead of stability for its neighbors, and be part of their solution, not part of their problem. In return, the United States will expect that Afghanistan's neighbors do everything in their power to isolate that Taliban, dismantle its insurgency, and counter its support for the heroin trade. I would intend to continue the practice of my predecessor and Ambassador Crocker to maintain the closest possible dialog and cooperation between embassy Kabul and Embassy Islamabad. I note that Secretary of Defense Gates had successful talks with the Pakistani Government last weekend, in which the subject of Afghanistan figured prominently.

One challenge is the probability of increased violence in the spring by the Taliban, as there has been for the last several years. It is important that the Afghan Government, local leaders, internal security forces, and ISAF forces prepare for such attacks. I would consider it a critical part of my job to support them however possible. But it is also important that we not overemphasize what the Taliban is capable of. As General Eikenberry, outgoing commander of the Combined Forces Command in Afghanistan, said last month in Berlin: "The enemy is not strong. The challenge of Afghanistan is that the institutions of the state remain weak. . . . There have been no areas of Afghanistan where this extremist enemy has been able to take an existing presence of the Government of Afghanistan—with good security, with good social services—and push that out. There are no examples of that. It's the areas of weak governance where the enemy has been able to gain strength." I agree.

If confirmed, my job—more than any other—will be to cooperate with ISAF to maintain security, and to advance as rapidly as I can the strengthening of national and local Afghan institutions and the provision of new economic opportunity to the Afghan people.

These are impressive challenges, worthy of our best efforts. For my part, I bring 30 years of experience in the Foreign Service to the task. In my current assignment, I have led one of our largest embassies in the world—with more than 2,200 personnel and 40 offices and agencies—in an environment of terrorism and narcotics trafficking. Our core task was to support Colombia's popular government and strengthen its democratic institutions in order to better confront these challenges. The fight is not over and there is much more to be done. I am enormously proud of the work of the embassy team over the last few years, and of the accomplishments of our partnership with the government of President Uribe.

In this regard, I would like to note that 2 days ago, February 13, marked the fourth anniversary of the capture by the FARC terror organization of Marc Gonsalves, Keith Stansell, and Thomas Howes. They are America's longest-held hostages. In the embassy we think about them every day, as we think about their families. Their safe return is not just a matter of policy for us; it is personal. We are grateful for the splendid cooperation of the Uribe Government in the matter. And we hold the FARC responsible for their well-being and immediate safe return.

Although the issues and solutions are different in Afghanistan, I would hope to bring to my new assignment the same focus on mission, on teamwork within the embassy and with our military colleagues, and on cooperative partnership with the government of President Karzai.

Finally, I would like to renew the promise I made in my confirmation hearings in 2003: To embrace a full dialog with this committee and with the Congress as a whole, to answer your questions fully and honestly, to welcome your visits, and above all to cooperate to achieve our common goals in Afghanistan.

Thank you.

Senator KERRY. Thank you very much.  
Ambassador Crocker.

**STATEMENT OF HON. RYAN C. CROCKER, NOMINEE TO BE  
AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF IRAQ**

Mr. CROCKER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator Lugar, distinguished members of the committee—

Senator KERRY. Let me, excuse me Ambassador Crocker, I see Senator Lugar has joined us. Let me turn to Senator Lugar and see if he has an opening statement first, and then we'll proceed.

**STATEMENT OF HON. RICHARD G. LUGAR,  
U.S. SENATOR FROM INDIANA**

Senator LUGAR. Mr. Chairman, I do have a short opening statement. Let me deliver a part of it, and then leave the rest for the record.

I just simply wanted to join you, Mr. Chairman, in welcoming our distinguished nominees, Ambassadors William Wood and Ryan Crocker. The posts they will soon occupy are among the most consequential ambassadorships in American history. They will be at the epicenter of our efforts to secure and reconstruct Afghanistan and Iraq, and help provide those governments with the best opportunity to achieve nationhood.

What happens in these countries in the coming months will deeply affect, and perhaps, determine whether the Middle East will move forward more productively and in peaceful conditions beyond the grip of terrorist influences and sectarian violence.

Two weeks ago, before this committee, former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger recalled a half-century of United States involvement in the Middle East. He argued that this history was not accidental. We have been deeply involved in the region, because we have enduring vital interests at stake, and protecting those interests cannot be relegated to a political timeline. We may make tactical decisions about the deployment or withdrawal of forces, but we must plan for a strong, strategic position in the region for many years to come.

We need to be prepared for a whole array of United States forces to defend oil assets, target terrorists, deter adventurism by Iran, provide a buffer against regional sectarian conflict, and generally reassure friendly governments that the United States is committed to the Middle East and South Asian security.

With so much at stake, I am pleased the President has nominated veteran diplomats and experienced managers to lead the American presence in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Mr. Chairman, I would ask that the rest of my statement be entered in the record, and I thank you for giving me this opportunity.

Senator KERRY. Thank you very much, Senator Lugar. Without objection, it will be made part of the record.

Ambassador Crocker, thank you.

[The prepared statement of Senator Lugar follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF RICHARD G. LUGAR,  
U.S. SENATOR FROM INDIANA

I join in welcoming our distinguished nominees, Ambassadors William Wood and Ryan Crocker. The posts they would occupy are among the most consequential ambassadorships in American history. They will be at the epicenter of our efforts to secure and reconstruct Afghanistan and Iraq and to help provide those governments with the opportunity to achieve nationhood.

What happens in these countries will deeply affect—and perhaps determine—whether the Middle East will move toward more productive and peaceful conditions beyond the grip of terrorist influences and sectarian violence.

Two weeks ago, before this committee, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger recalled a half-century of United States involvement in the Middle East. He argued that this history was not accidental. We have been deeply involved in the region because we have enduring vital interests at stake. Protecting these interests cannot be relegated to a political timeline.

We may make tactical decisions about the deployment or withdrawal of forces, but we must plan for a strong strategic position in the region for years to come. We need to be preparing for how we will array U.S. forces to defend oil assets, target terrorists, deter adventurism by Iran, provide a buffer against regional sectarian conflict, and generally reassure friendly governments that the United States is committed to Middle East and South Asian security. With so much at stake, I am pleased that the President has nominated veteran diplomat and managers to lead the American presence in Afghanistan and Iraq.

It is also vital that the Bush administration move quickly to fill the ambassadorial post in Pakistan being vacated by Ambassador Crocker. Our relations with that country also are important to U.S. national security. Ambassador Wood's efforts in Afghanistan will be heavily impacted by what happens across the border, and we must ensure that there is no prolonged absence in Islamabad at such a critical time for the region.

Today, we look forward to a thorough discussion with Ambassadors Wood and Crocker about their perspectives on Afghanistan and Iraq and their plans for providing leadership to our embassies. We recognize the deep personal commitment necessary to undertake these difficult assignments, and we are grateful that leaders of their stature and experience are willing to step forward.

Mr. CROCKER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, may I begin by introducing members of my family who are with me today?

Senator KERRY. Absolutely.

Mr. CROCKER. My wife, Christine.

Senator KERRY. Welcome, delighted to have you here.

Mr. CROCKER. Christine and I met in Baghdad in 1979, and we've deployed together ever since. To Beirut twice, to Afghanistan, and now to Pakistan.

Sitting next to Christine are my sister-in-law, Cindy Hall, and my niece, Cameron Hall. They have been our home front throughout these many years, and I'm delighted they're here today.

Senator KERRY. Well, we're delighted to welcome them, thank you.

Mr. CROCKER. Mr. Chairman, it's an honor and a privilege to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be Ambassador to Iraq. I thank you for this opportunity, and for your consideration.

Mr. Chairman, the picture is not a pretty one. Iraq today is in the grip of terrorist, insurgent, sectarian, and criminal violence that threatens the country's future. This violence, particularly in Baghdad, has spiraled out of control. Daily life for ordinary Iraqis in Baghdad is dangerous and difficult.

The only way to give political and economic progress in Iraq a chance, to give the Iraqi people a chance, is for the Iraqi Govern-

ment, with our help, to wrest the power on the street away from violent groups.

In an ideal world, the Iraqis would be able to do the job themselves. However, it takes time to build this capability, and this is why the United States needs to help.

But it is the Iraqis, Mr. Chairman, who must lead this effort, and Prime Minister al-Maliki has pledged to go after anyone who perpetrates sectarian or political killing, regardless of sectarian affiliation.

There are other problems as well. The hard political reality is that the average Iraqi still does not feel that the government's actions have brought about an improvement in security or the quality of life. They say much the same thing about the actions of the Coalition.

Not enough jobs is a problem, corruption is a problem. So are the lack of electricity, and the inability of the government to spend its own budget.

Despite all of the problems Iraq faces, there are also some encouraging developments. Iraq, since 2005, has held two national elections. The Iraqi people drafted and approved a constitution. Iraq is moving toward local and provincial elections, which should legitimize local political leaders, and broaden the representation of groups that did not participate in the past.

On the economic front, Iraqis are debating a hydrocarbon law that we hope will create new investment, and most important, reinforce the principle that all Iraqis will share in the future wealth of the economy. Iraq has made progress toward concluding an international compact, which, when completed, will commit Iraq to a comprehensive economic reform package and return for assistance and incentives by the international community.

All of this said, Mr. Chairman, it is security that remains the greatest challenge that Iraq faces. The President has laid out a new way forward. Containing the violence, particularly in Baghdad and Anbar, is the immediate imperative, but it is not the full solution.

The President's plan to augment our forces by more than 20,000 troops, also calls for a doubling of the number of provincial reconstruction teams, and PRTs, as well as strengthening the existing 10 PRTs to help with economic and political development at the provincial and local level.

A successful strategy for Iraq, as you've said, Mr. Chairman, must go beyond military operations. The two efforts, military and civilian, go hand-in-hand. The one cannot succeed without the other.

Mr. Chairman, I have spoken to General Petraeus, and I can assure you that if I am confirmed by the Senate, there will be full unity of effort by the civilian and the military components of the government.

Iraqis must see that military operations are accompanied by visible and enduring improvements in their lives, and to do this, we need resources. Our military has to be resourced to support Iraqi forces to clear and to hold. Adequate funding for the civilian agencies is equally important, if we are to accomplish the critical third element of that equation, to build.

Mr. Chairman, as the President has told Prime Minister Maliki, the patience of the American people is not unlimited. It will require hard work, and hard decisions on the part of the Iraqis. If you confirm me, I intend to deliver that message clearly to Iraq's leaders. The Iraqis have to make some tough choices, and then follow through on them. We need to help them to do so.

Their success will be ours, in Iraq, in the region, and beyond. But similarly, failure would feed the forces of terror and extremism well beyond Iraq's borders. We would all pay the price.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I would like to pay tribute to the extraordinary men and women of the State Department, USAID, and the other civilian agencies who join our military forces in serving our Nation. They have volunteered for difficult duty in Iraq, and elsewhere, as we fight this long war, at a cost to their family lives and often at great personal risk.

We have no shortage of volunteers for Iraq, a tribute to the loyalty and patriotism of those who serve the State Department and its sister agencies.

Mr. Chairman, without question, we are in a very hard fight. The one assurance I can give you is that, if I am confirmed, I will draw on all of my experience, and all my ability, to provide the best leadership I can for our mission in Iraq, and in support of the Iraqi people.

Thank you, sir.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Crocker follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. RYAN C. CROCKER, NOMINEE TO BE  
AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF IRAQ

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Lugar, distinguished committee members, ladies and gentlemen,

It is an honor and privilege to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be the next United States Ambassador to the Republic of Iraq. Thank you for this opportunity and for your consideration. It is an honor to have the chance to continue to serve our great Nation. And it is a particular privilege to have the opportunity to work with the brave men and women of the U.S. State Department and our other civilian agencies who serve alongside our military personnel.

Mr. Chairman, I first served in Iraq in the late 1970s when Saddam Hussein consolidated his hold on power. I next worked on Iraq issues from 2001 to 2003, when I was Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs. In 2003, I was the first Director of Governance for the Coalition Provisional Authority in Baghdad.

Mr. Chairman, Iraq today is in the grip of insurgent, terrorist, sectarian, and criminal violence that threatens the country's future. The central provinces of Baghdad, Anbar, and Diyala, in particular, face violence from many sources: Al-Qaeda in Iraq, sectarian Shia militias, Sunni insurgents, foreign jihadists, organized criminals, and groups backed by Iraq's neighbors that seem intent on spreading harm and chaos. This violence, particularly in Baghdad, has spiraled out of control. Daily life for ordinary Iraqis in Baghdad is dangerous and difficult.

The only way to give political and economic progress in Iraq a chance—to give the people a chance—is for the Iraqi Government, with our help, to wrest the power on the street away from these violent groups by directly confronting the sources of the violence. In an ideal world, the Iraqis would be able to do the job themselves. Unfortunately, it takes time to build this kind of capability. And this is why the United States needs to help. The Iraqi people need friends and allies to help them stop those in Iraq who are using violence to win power, but as the President and the Secretary have said repeatedly, we must see the Iraqis themselves leading this effort and delivering on their promises with concrete action.

Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki has pledged to go after anyone who perpetrates sectarian or political killing, regardless of sectarian affiliation. As he said himself last week, progress is slower than he—or we—would like. The leaders of some networks of insurgents and militias have been detained or killed. However, there is

much, much more that needs to be done by the Iraqi Government. The government must also deal with corruption as well as its inability to spend its own budget for reasons that make sense to individual Iraqi bureaucrats but make no sense in the face of the urgent need to provide security, develop an economy, and reestablish the Rule of Law. Security is, and will remain, the greatest and most immediate challenge we will face.

Mr. Chairman, on the economic and political fronts, we also face some very real challenges. The reality of Iraqi politics is that the average Iraqi still does not feel that the government's actions have brought about an improvement in security or the quality of life. They say the same thing about the actions of the coalition. The lack of jobs is a problem. Corruption is a problem. So is the lack of electricity. The legacy of more than 20 years of Saddam's misrule is coupled with a violent insurgency that began in April 2003 to increase the tribulations of the people of Baghdad and Iraq.

Despite all the problems Iraq faces, there are signs of hope. It is no small feat that Iraq since 2005 has held two national elections. The Iraqi people drafted and approved a constitution. In 2006, they formed a National Unity Government. And Iraq is moving closer to holding local and provincial elections, which could take place as early as this fall. Such elections should legitimize local political leaders and broaden the representation of groups that did not participate in the past. Although steps have been taken to start a process of reconciliation, visible progress remains to be seen. Iraqis have taken steps forward on reforms to the de-Baathification laws—but there is a long way to go before there is a law that everyone can accept.

In the region, Iraq's top leaders are now reaching out to their neighbors to normalize diplomatic and economic relationships. Iraq is also openly and directly confronting and engaging Syria and Iran on their unhelpful interference in Iraq's political and security situations, and trying to urge them to play more constructive roles.

On the economic front, Iraq is also moving toward a hydrocarbon law that we hope will create new investment that will benefit the Iraqi people and the world economy as well as reinforce the principle that all Iraqis will share in the future wealth of the country. Iraq has made steady progress toward concluding an international compact, which, when completed, will commit Iraq to a comprehensive economic reform package in return for assistance and incentives by compact donor countries. Again, like everything else, there will be massive amounts of work to be done, which will require the full commitment of the Iraqi Government to achieve.

Mr. Chairman, in support of these efforts, the President, on January 10, laid out a new way forward in Iraq. Containing the violence, particularly in Baghdad and Anbar, is the immediate imperative, but it is not the full solution. This is why the President's plan to augment our forces by 21,500 troops also includes a considerable civilian support reinforcement of the Provincial Reconstruction Teams—PRTs—to help with economic and political development at the provincial and local level. The President's plan calls for a doubling of the number of PRTs as well as strengthening the existing 10 PRTs. A successful strategy for Iraq must go beyond military operations. The two efforts—civilian and military—go hand in hand. The one cannot succeed without the other. Iraqis must see that military operations are accompanied by visible and enduring improvements in their lives. To do this, we need resources. Our military has to be resourced to clear and hold. Adequate funding for the civilian agencies is equally important if we are to accomplish the critical third element of the equation—building.

Mr. Chairman, as the President told Prime Minister Maliki, the patience of the American people is not unlimited. It will require hard work—and hard decisions—on the part of the Iraqis. If you confirm me, I intend to deliver that message clearly to Iraq's leaders. At the same time, the United States is not the kind of country that abandons its friends in their darkest hour. To do so now in Iraq would unleash a series of destructive consequences not just in Iraq, but for the entire region and for our own vital interests. The Iraqis have to make some hard choices and then follow through on them. We need to help them do so.

Mr. Chairman, before I close, I would like to pay tribute to the extraordinary men and women of the State Department, USAID, and the other civilian agencies serving our Nation. They have volunteered for difficult duty in Iraq and elsewhere as we fight this long war, at a cost to their family lives and often at great personal risk. We have no shortage of volunteers for Iraq, a tribute to the loyalty and patriotism of those who work for the State Department and our sister agencies. I would also like to take the opportunity to express my profound respect for our Foreign Service Nationals who help staff our embassies worldwide. They are dedicated, courageous colleagues who deserve a great deal of recognition. In Iraq, many of our local staff work under hardship, including threats to themselves and their families, in support of building a better world for them and for us.

Mr. Chairman, without question, we are in a very hard fight. The one assurance I can give you is that if confirmed, I will draw on all my experience and ability to provide the best leadership I can for our mission in support of the Iraqi people.

Senator KERRY. Thank you very much, Ambassador Crocker.

Let me just say to my colleagues, that we're under the gun, here, in terms of a vote coming up, so I'm going to limit everybody—myself included—to a 5-minute question period. I hope, I know we all chafe under the time we get, and it's difficult. Normally, I'd love to do more, but during the votes, for those who have extended questions, we can cycle through in a way that will give people a little more time to be able to ask questions if they want to.

Again, let me emphasize how lucky we are, I think, to have professionals of your caliber willing to take on this task. You are taking on probably two of the most important posts in the entire diplomatic field today, and certainly, two of the most challenging. And, so it's really important to us to be able to have the right people there.

Three of us here on this committee—Senator Webb, who's not here, Senator Hagel, and myself—were once young soldiers, plunked down in the middle of a civil war. And we learned, firsthand, how really difficult it is when you don't speak the language, and you're trying to sort through culture and history. And, so I think we're particularly sensitive to what our young soldiers are being asked to do over there. And we understand their enthusiasm, and their courage, and their commitment to the mission.

The issue really is, Ambassador Crocker, no matter what we do on the ground militarily, the fundamental struggle there is a struggle for power, with deep cultural and historical beliefs on both sides.

Sunni have mostly run the country. Not always, there have been some instances of a kind of, you know, meeting of the minds, but by and large they've run it, and the most modern history, the Shia uprising of the early 1990s was met with a brutal—tens of thousands of Shia murdered—response. That memory, and my conversations with Shia over there, when I've been over there, is large.

The Sunni, on the other hand, are not only fearful in the neighboring countries—King Abdullah, President Mubarak, the Saudis—about the rise of Shiism, and the connection to Iran, but they are also, within Iraq, operating with a deep-rooted belief that they were born to run the show. And they believe they're going to return.

Those of us who have been watching this struggle now for these past few years are confounded by the absence of an Iraqi commitment to resolving those fundamental differences. We're now 4 years into it, we're several years into a sort of diplomatic, quote, effort. We still don't have an oil law. We still don't have a resolution of the fundamental structure of the federalism, and how that would play out.

So, would you share with the committee your vision of, sort of, the order of priorities, and what you see as the possibilities of your ability to affect that, and leverage it, and do you agree that that is the essential ingredient? Not what General Petraeus does, but in fact, Prime Minister Maliki's conference—which we have yet to see materialize—and the diplomatic, political resolution?



Mr. CROCKER. Mr. Chairman, I agree completely, that the core of the problem—and therefore the core of any possible solution—is political. Military—successful military action—can provide the space, and set the stage for political solutions, but it is only political solutions that can resolve the conflict.

That said, sir, the violence that we see every day on our TV screens, and that the Iraqis live through every day, has now dominated, in my view, the political discourse. It is hard for me to see how Iraqis can act on some of the other critical elements that you identified, in this atmosphere of violence.

And, that is why—in my view—the Baghdad security plan, led by Iraqis, supported by us, is a critical undertaking.

Senator KERRY. But, let me just ask you about that, quickly. In Israel, where the security has been intense, where for years the military has had super-training, there's a cohesiveness, there's a national state—there's been little to prevent somebody from walking into a restaurant, or a crowded bus, and blowing it up. It seems to me that, unless you, sort of—I mean, would you speak to that? I mean, isn't there even—with less security, less cohesiveness, greater divergency of different interests and militias, that ability to create violence, absent the political solution—no matter how many troops you put in, it seems to me—is going to loom large.

Mr. CROCKER. And that would lead me, Mr. Chairman, to approach this issue with the sense that we don't start with a list of priorities, one, two, three—we've got a series of urgent priorities.

If the surge effort is able to bring down violence, then that will quickly have to be reinforced, first on the ground, in these neighborhoods where it's taking place. That is the importance, I think, of the Provincial Reconstruction Teams. We've already chosen the core leadership for those teams. They will be going through training beginning in a couple of weeks and they will be on the ground before the end of March.

The hope, Mr. Chairman, would be that a combination of a dampening down of violence, reinforced by political and economic activity on the ground, could then create an atmosphere in which we and the Iraqis are able to leverage some of the more strategic issues that you mentioned. Getting the hydrocarbon law through, reforming the de-Baathification process, moving ahead with a constitutional reform process. On the economic side, moving toward budget implementation, so that Iraqi resources are actually expended by the Iraqi people. I see this as all linked together.

I think we have to see if a dynamic can be started there. Prime Minister Maliki's initiative for a regional conference that Iraq would host, I think, is an excellent step in this direction, to bring in all of Iraq's neighbors. Some have been supportive, some have been neutral, some of have been destructive. They all play a role, and that role needs to be shaped to be better.

So, I think this is a good initiative, and if this kind of regional diplomatic activity is accompanied by some positive steps on the ground, I think it will be more possible to get Iraq's neighbors to step forward in a constructive way.

Then one can take it a final circle out, to the international effort. The international engagement, through the international compact with Iraq can reinforce all of this, and be reinforced by progress at

the center. So, I would see these as interlocking imperatives—we've got to move on all of them, we've got to do it, pretty much in real time, but the violence is—if there was one that stands out, it is the violence, and the need to temper that down. And, I think we're starting in the right place.

Senator KERRY. Thank you, Ambassador. I have other questions, but I'll wait until we come back for the next round.

Senator Lugar.

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

Ambassador Wood, I have two areas I'll ask, to begin with, and then let you use up the—my allotted time.

First of all, you have mentioned experience in Colombia with the drug trade. Would you trace what parallels there might be between that experience in Colombia, and what you may find in Afghanistan? And, furthermore, how involved can the American ambassador, or the American presence be in governing and bringing to a halt the drug trade? Or, is the situation so self-sustainable that, regardless of our efforts, or of others, it is bound to be, and you simply try to temper it and live with it?

Second, arguably, the new supplemental that we're seeking has a sizable portion for security reform. Now, this would be the fourth attempt at police reform in Afghanistan, one by the Germans, two by us—none very sustainable thus far, or very comprehensive. And yet, this is tremendously important for the governance of the country, leaving aside the drug trade, governance in general, and the presidency of Hamid Karzai.

Would you give your thoughts—as you reflected upon the drug trade and police training in Afghanistan?

Mr. WOOD. I thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Regarding, there are some parallels between the situation in Colombia, but there are also many differences. From a technical point of view, the predominant drug in Colombia is cocoa, which is a shrub, which is difficult to eradicate, because you have to get the root system, as well as what's above the surface. And in Afghanistan, the predominant drug is opium poppy, which is a flower which you can kill simply by breaking the stem.

Colombia has a year-round growing season, Afghanistan only has one growing season a year. Possibly, for me, frankly, the principle difference is that virtually all of the cocoa grown in Colombia goes to the United States. Which means it directly affects our citizens, and a conservative estimate is that 3,000 United States citizens die a year from cocaine produced in Colombia. That's more Americans than died in the World Trade Towers. So, Colombian drugs represent a World Trade Tower tragedy every year.

In Afghanistan, only about an estimated 10 percent of the heroine reaches the United States, and the other 90 percent is in Europe, and Russian, and elsewhere.

That said, as I said in my statement, one thing that was completely clear in Colombia was that illicit narcotics trade corrupts everything it touches—good governance, clean governance, honorable livelihood in the countryside are all impossible where there is a flourishing drug trade. We think of terrorists as the lowest form of human life, because they target innocents. In Colombia, we've

seen terrorists corrupted by the drug trade, to give up even the vestige of ideology, in favor of serving that perverse industry.

So, as we support the Government of Karzai, as we support good governance, both centrally, and in the provinces, and where the people live—more local level, and sort of a valley-by-valley governance, destroying the opium poppy cultivation and the drug trade inside of Afghanistan is absolutely fundamental to achieving all of other goals—security, political, social, economic, developmental, humanitarian.

I think the United States can play a role—a very important role—in forming a consensus which currently does not exist, either inside Afghanistan, or amazingly, among the countries whose citizens are the primary victims of the heroine trade from Afghanistan. Again, the techniques may be different from those of Colombia, but it's absolutely crucial that we reach a consensus, and move out against this corrosive cancer.

Senator LUGAR. How about police reform?

Mr. WOOD. Police reform—police reform is absolutely fundamental. Policemen talk about the golden thread, which unites policemen with the communities they serve. And, if the communities don't trust the police, if the police don't feel a sense of responsibility to those communities, then it's not a police force, it's a internal, repressive force.

We are working very hard, I am having meetings with our—I have had meetings with our, our—people in charge of our police-training program, both on—in the State Department and in the Defense Department, which has the lead in the program for us. It's not easy. I think we can do it, and I can only say that it's one of my highest priorities.

Senator KERRY. Senator Feingold.

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

And thank you both for being here today. You're both going to be, obviously, taking on some of the most challenging assignments in our government. And I want to join the Chairman and all our colleagues in thanking you for your service.

I'd like also to take this opportunity to share with you my admiration and appreciation for the men and women who are serving in our embassies in Kabul and Baghdad, and for those serving in the Provincial Reconstruction Teams throughout each country. These are incredibly brave and committed individuals, and we so rarely hear about the sacrifices they make and the dangers they face as they do their work. So, I hope you'll both communicate that to the many people that you'll be working with.

Ambassador Crocker, it was good to see you this week, and I want to ask you if you're confident that sending more United States troops to Iraq—according to the President's new plan—will help address the increasing sectarian violence, as civilian fatalities, bombings, strengthen the sectarian militias, and the number of foreign fighters entering Iraq.

Mr. CROCKER. I think that the Baghdad security plan is an essential endeavor, if the tide is going to turn in Iraq. It will not, in itself, be sufficient, as I said earlier, but it is necessary, in my view, if the Iraqis are going to get to a better place in a number of areas.

The Iraqis are the main force in this effort, and I—as I look at the situation at this time, if I do go to Iraq, if I am confirmed by the Senate—I see this as an important transition period, in which the Iraqis simply must take the lead. They must take the lead in security, they must take the lead in doing what only Iraqis can do, which is broker political solutions—they must take the lead in driving their own economy.

Senator FEINGOLD. I certainly agree with that, but let me get back to the question of whether the troop surge will help. The data this committee has reviewed shows that regardless of the size of United States troops' presence in Iraq, Iraqi civilian fatalities, estimated strength of the insurgency, strength of the Shia militias, daily average of interethnic attack and the estimated number of foreign fighters have all risen during the past 3 years, without fail. Given that we can't, from this data, draw a connection between U.S. troop levels, and any of these important indicators, how can you be confident that sending in more U.S. troops will actually have a positive impact? And, I've heard your other disclaimers, but, what is it about this particular troop increase that you have any confidence in believing it will affect those factors?

Mr. CROCKER. There are several factors. First, and again, the most important is the commitment of Iraqi forces. As I understand it, 18 brigades of Iraqi forces committed to the Baghdad security plan. Previous efforts, again, as I understand it have not succeeded as had been hoped, because of limited forces. This time, the Iraqis are committed to providing very substantial forces.

That said, it seems to me that our role in support is going to be fairly crucial. They are not yet ready to undertake something as enormously challenging—and you've described the challenge—on their own. So, the—approximately five brigades of U.S. forces that we would commit to this, I think, play a critical, supporting role in increasing the chances for success of this entire endeavor.

And, this is a different mission than we have seen in the past. In this case, the explicit mission statement is to provide security for the Iraqi people. That's the "hold" part of the operation, clear and then hold. In the past, we have not had the forces, or even necessarily the mission, to do the hold.

Senator FEINGOLD. Ambassador, thank you.

Mr. CROCKER. There's no guarantee of success, sir.

Senator FEINGOLD. Let me quickly—I understand you wanted to answer more, but I only have a few more seconds to ask questions of Ambassador Wood, but I obviously enjoyed our conversation.

And, I also enjoyed our meeting, Ambassador Wood. Given that security conditions have continued to deteriorate, particularly in southern Afghanistan, tell us what specific changes the United States Government is making to react and respond effectively to the new conditions on the ground. What are we going to do differently?

Mr. WOOD. As you know, Senator Feingold, we've just had a change of command, and a restructuring of the ISAF leadership in Afghanistan. We recently decided to ask a brigade of the 10th Mountain Division to extend its stay, and the Pentagon announced yesterday that the 173rd Airborne Division—Airborne Brigade—would be moving to Afghanistan.

We are, and the President has requested \$10.6 billion in new funding. So, we in the United States are trying to do our part to beef up security, and beef up the social, economic, and other programs that form the counterpart of security, and a necessary counterpart. At the same time, Secretary Gates met in Seville with our NATO allies, urging them to increase their participation, and equally importantly, increase the aggressiveness of their deployment. More than 60 nations are contributing on the economic, and developmental, and humanitarian side—I think that we are sharpening our efforts. I don't think we're changing our efforts, but I think we're sharpening them, and focusing them better.

Certainly, the first thing, the first question I will be asking myself, if confirmed, upon arrival in Kabul is, "Is the mix right?" It looks to me like it's right at the moment, it looks to me like it's a good balance. But certainly, I think over the last month, just last month, we've seen a substantial refocusing and reenergizing of our efforts in Afghanistan. Thank you.

Senator KERRY. Thank you, Ambassador.

Thank you, Senator Feingold.

Senator Hagel.

Senator HAGEL. Mr. Chairman, thank you.

Gentlemen, welcome. We are grateful that each of you has agreed to take on a new assignment, a difficult assignment, but has been noted here this morning, the two of you represent two of the most highly regarded, experienced diplomats we have in our Government. And again, we are grateful that you agreed to take on new challenges.

Christine, thank you for your continued role in all of this, and we are very mindful of the fact that you began your career alongside the Ambassador, and it will be, what, 28 years since you met in Baghdad. I'm not sure it's a reunion, but nonetheless, you will be going back together, and thank you for doing what you're doing.

I'd like to focus on Iran with each of you for a moment. Headlines for papers across the world today are filled with headlines like the Washington Post, "Iranian Aid Forces in Iraq, Bush Alleges," "President Denies Seeking Pretexual War With Iran," there's another story, "Eleven Elite Iranian Troops Killed in Bombing, U.S. Role Alleged." It has been much the topic, Iran, our role, Iran's role in Iraq the last few days. And I want to get your, each of you, your sense of a couple of things.

One, I'm sure you both are aware of a July 2004 report that was offered by now-Defense Secretary Robert Gates, as well as the former National Security Advisor, Zbigniew Brzezinski, who just recently testified before this committee. They cochaired this report, underwritten by the Counsel on Foreign Relations, entitled, "Iran, Time for a New Approach." And they says some things, as I'm quoting from the Gates-Brzezinski report, "The current lack of sustained engagement with Iran harms U.S. interests in a critical region of the world." They went on to say, "Iran could play a potentially significant role in promoting a stable, pluralistic government in Baghdad." They went on to say, "It is in the interest of the United States to engage selectively with Iran to promote regional stability."

Since Iran is going to dominate much of your lives, as already it does with you, Ambassador Crocker, as you are Ambassador, currently, to Pakistan, and certainly Ambassador Wood will be dealing with Iran in his new capacity. My question to each of you—do you agree with what Secretary Gates and Dr. Brzezinski said in their report, that we should engage Iran, and I would also note—as you have both read, the 79 recommendations of the Baker-Hamilton report, which they also focus on new diplomatic initiatives with Syria and Iran.

We'll start with you, Ambassador Crocker.

Mr. CROCKER. Thank you, Senator Hagel.

I began my career in Iran, before the Revolution and I have some lingering sense of the complexities of that country and civilization.

Sir, I believe that Iran should be engaged. I think, in the context of Iraq, that engagement should focus between Iraq and Iran—I think, that's where the emphasis needs to be. The Iraqi Government has reached out to Tehran and, as you know, the Prime Minister and the President have visited, and there have been senior Iranian visitors in Baghdad. We, in no way, oppose this.

Similarly, Prime Minister Maliki's initiative to convene a conference of neighbors that would include Iran, I think, is important. Iran is a neighbor. Iraq's largest and longest land border is with Iran, that geography doesn't change. Iran is currently playing a, not only unhelpful, but I think a deeply disturbing role in Iraq. We would obviously like to see that change. At this juncture, I am not persuaded that we, ourselves, could be the agent of that change.

The Iranians understand us, I think, pretty clearly. Perhaps through engagement in a regional context they will take another look at what their long-term interests in the region are, and vis-a-vis Iraq are, and shift course. But, my own view is that this is the vector on which we should proceed.

Senator HAGEL. Thank you. If I could ask Ambassador Wood to respond.

Thank you, Ambassador Crocker.

Mr. WOOD. Thank you, Senator Hagel.

Just very briefly, of course, Iraq and Afghanistan bracket Iran, so for both of us, Iran is an important—fundamentally important issue. And, in the case of Afghanistan, the United States and Iran have a number of interests in common. There are a number of areas where we could, profitably, work together if we could begin a process of engagement. Iran is strongly counter-drug, for instance. They have one of the highest numbers of heroine addicts in the world. And their efforts to fight the heroine trade is extraordinary.

At the same time, we have to get past the issue of weapons of mass destruction, solve it, and we—indeed, if, as some reports are indicating—there is some involvement by Iran in providing weapons to people who are shooting at Americans, that becomes an enormously complicating factor.

I completely agree with Ambassador Crocker, and engagement—a constructive engagement with Iran would be to everyone's benefit. But I think the decision lies in Tehran more than it does in Washington.

Senator HAGEL. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, thank you.

Senator KERRY. Thank you, Senator Hagel.

Senator Menendez.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Let me just say, I am reticent to support either one of you. Not because of your abilities, or your qualifications—I think you're imminently qualified. But it seems that every time we support one of the President's nominees for one of these critical positions in Iraq or Afghanistan, then we hear from the President that—he uses it as a criticism for us not supporting his policies. And, as far as I'm concerned, if I do end up supporting your candidacies for these nominations, it won't be because I support his policies. And I would urge the White House to reconsider that tact, because I think they're going to put some very imminently qualified candidates, that would serve the country well, in peril, if that continues to be the course under which the administration criticizes those of us who vote for their nominees that are qualified, but ultimately is used as a criticism, subsequently, for not supporting the President's policies.

Having said that, let me ask both of you, when you take your oath, who is it to?

Mr. WOOD. The Constitution.

Mr. CROCKER. To the Constitution of the United States; to support and defend the Constitution of the United States, sir.

Senator MENENDEZ. Mr. Ambassador.

Mr. WOOD. Exactly, the Constitution.

Senator MENENDEZ. And that means, being honest and forthright when you come before the Senate, is that not true? As part of that oath?

Mr. CROCKER. Yes, sir.

Mr. WOOD. Absolutely.

Senator MENENDEZ. So, because I ask that question, because I think we need some honest and straightforward talk, particularly from those who are going to be our ambassadors in Iraq, in Afghanistan, because I'm not particularly sure that we've always heard that.

Let me ask you, Ambassador Crocker, when you were in Baghdad from May to August in 2003 as the first Director of Governance with the Coalition Provisional Authority, helping to create Iraq's governing council, there was an article in the Washington Post which read, "Crocker has spent the summer of 2003 helping to form Iraq's governing council, left the country, frustrated, at the CPA's reluctance to reach out to the minority Sunnis.

Is that a correct statement?

Mr. CROCKER. Not exactly, sir. First, I in no way contributed to that article.

Senator MENENDEZ. It's not quoting you. I'm asking you whether the paraphrasing of the statement, is that correct?

Mr. CROCKER. It is not correct.

Senator MENENDEZ. Is the Sunni population adequately represented in the current Iraqi Government?

Mr. CROCKER. No, sir. I was frustrated by our inability to identify in that period of time, Sunnis that had the leadership stature that we could find in the other communities. It was not that any-

one prevented me from making that effort. It was, in those initial months, the tangle of post-Saddam/Sunni politics—was such that it was very, very difficult to identify Sunni leaders of weight and consequence. That I found frustrating. And I still do.

Senator MENENDEZ. Isn't it essential for greater Sunni participation, if we're to have any hope of the type of government with national unity that we hope for?

Mr. CROCKER. Sir, it is one of a number of essential steps that have to be taken. It's really two things, the Sunnis have to be permitted to play a full role, and they have to be prepared to step forward to do it. And I'm not sure that either is the case right now.

Senator MENENDEZ. In the same article, it says, "Even before the invasion, he"—referring to you—"wrote a blunt memo for then-Secretary of State Colin Powell, warning of the uncontrolled sectarian and ethnic tensions that would be released by the overthrow of Saddam Hussein." Can you tell me about that memo?

Mr. CROCKER. Sir, what I can say is that as serving as a Foreign Service Officer of more than 35 years now, I consider it my obligation to offer the best advice I can to my superiors, to argue my points of view, whatever they may be, whatever the issue is. And then, once decisions are taken, it is my obligation to support those decisions. That would be my answer.

Senator MENENDEZ. Was the memo appropriately characterized by that statement that I read to you?

Mr. CROCKER. Sir, again, in this period, I put forward a range of views. I'd really prefer not to characterize the internal advice that I give to my own superiors. Decisions were taken, and I supported those policies.

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, let me just close by saying, that's why I asked you who your oath is to. We would appreciate the essence of your candid advice. And that's far more helpful than deviating from answering the question. And it's in that context that I hope—that if you ultimately achieve these positions, I know you've got to respond to the administration—but when you're here before the Senate, I hope you're going to give us some candid advice, not colored by what you feel you have to say because of the administration's policies.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator KERRY. Thank you, Senator Menendez.

Senator Coleman.

Senator COLEMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

First, I want to say, I'm thrilled to support these nominees. I had the pleasure of serving as Chairman of the Western Hemisphere subcommittee, my first 4 years in office here, and worked closely with Ambassador Wood in Colombia. He's an extraordinary, extraordinary public official who is—gives so much and takes on tough assignments. Colombia was very tough. And, I think we've seen transformation there, I think Uribe's been a great leader. A lot more to be done, but I am deeply impressed with the ability, the integrity, the energy that Ambassador Wood brings to the process.

Ambassador Crocker and I had a chance to be in Pakistan. I was in Pakistan when he served there—another tough, tough, tough assignment. And now, moving over to a tougher assignment. And, I



think the President has really picked among the best and the brightest and the most talented to take on what is a challenge.

Iraq is a challenge. Iraq is a mess. And we've got to change things. Afghanistan, which when I was in Kabul a couple of years ago, it was bustling. Very different from Baghdad, it was bustling. And now we see challenges. And so, I want to applaud the President for his leadership and vision in choosing these ambassadors. These are some very tough assignments.

Let me focus on two issues, I do want to follow up from my colleague from Nebraska. Ambassador Crocker, you've indicated, and I think your quote was that you were, that Iran is playing a deeply disturbing role in Iraq. They're also playing a deeply disturbing role in Lebanon, aren't they?

Mr. CROCKER. Without question, sir. It's a role they've played since 1982.

Senator COLEMAN. And they're playing a deeply disturbing role, I think, in Gaza, with Hamas?

Mr. CROCKER. Yes, sir.

Senator COLEMAN. And our allies, I believe that—one, I believe we have to have a realistic assessment of what we get out of discussion with Iran. I think we should be talking to the Iranians, particularly in the context of a regional discussion. I don't think we should be negotiating with them, unless they recognize that they are playing a deeply disturbing role, and are prepared to change that.

But one of the concerns I have is our allies—the Egyptians, the Saudis, the Jordanians—they have a stake in stability in Iraq, don't they?

Mr. CROCKER. Very much.

Senator COLEMAN. And is it fair to say that Iran's involvement there is one of the barriers, and one of the challenges we have to more fuller engagement from some of our other allies to play the kind of role that we need them to play in Iraq?

Mr. CROCKER. Sir, that's a very important observation. I'd just make two points. First, as I understand it, the reasons put forward by some of our Arab friends in the region for not engaging more fully with the current Iraqi Government is their concern that it is sectarian in nature and in action. Clearly, the Maliki Government needs to show the contrary—that it is a government of all of the Iraqi people, and that's why their performance in the security plan is going to be so closely watched, and so critical.

It is also the case, in my view, that if Iraq's Arab neighbors are concerned over Iranian involvement and influence in Iraq, then they are far better served by engaging themselves, constructively, with the Maliki Government, and with the Iraqi people, being present on the scene, and therefore, being a counterweight to Iranian influence in Iraq.

Iranian influence does not lessen if Iraq's Arab neighbors refrain from playing a constructive role.

Senator COLEMAN. And I would take it, by making that statement here, that that's the same kind of statement you're going to make in discussions with our allies who have an interest in greater stability in the Middle East. They're not playing the roles that need to be played now, and the other side of that is, some of us have

doubts about Maliki's ability to do what has to be done. There is concern that the ties with Iran are such that, is he willing to step forward. And a lot of us are concerned about that. So, I hope that what we're hearing here is what you will be expressing with great passion when you're confirmed.

Mr. CROCKER. That would be my intention, sir, again to both audiences, the Maliki Government, and Iraq's Arab neighbors.

Senator COLEMAN. Ambassador, how important is it that Musharraf fulfill a commitment he made to us when we were in Pakistan, with Senator Frist, leader at that time, a number of my colleagues, he met us, I think it was in uniform, but he said he was going to take off the uniform in a couple of years. There's an election supposed to be taking place, and he made a commitment to democratic principles. He talked about the importance of moderation in the Middle East, and he wanted to be a voice for that. How important is it for him to fulfill that commitment? To, in fact, move from military with a uniform to nonuniform, and have some measure of democracy, in fact. How important is it for civilian Afghanistan for that to occur in Pakistan?

Mr. WOOD. Senator Coleman, first, thank you very much for your kind words with reference to me, and I look forward to continuing to work with you.

Second, I think that the concept of democracy, the concept of civilian democracy, the concept of responsive government, the concept of government that is accountable directly to the voters is a central issue, everywhere in the world. And, obviously, we support it completely.

Frankly, regarding a more detailed answer to your question, I'm a little reluctant to answer a question about Pakistan, sitting next to the sitting Ambassador in Islamabad. So, Ryan, I don't—

Mr. CROCKER. Feel free. [Laughter.]

Mr. WOOD. I don't know if you'd like to elaborate on my answer.

Senator KERRY. Thank you very much, Senator Coleman.

Senator COLEMAN. I do hope that both of you have a lot of conversation. Obviously, what happens in Pakistan is critically important to stability in Afghanistan.

Senator KERRY. Senator Cardin.

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

And let me also take this opportunity to thank both of you for your career of service to our country. You have served our country with distinction, and we're proud of your service. And you're prepared to take on a very challenging assignment.

I just want to underscore what Senator Menendez said, I think it's extremely important that, in the information that you give to us individually, and to our committees, that you be as candid as possible. Because it's important that this country speak with the strongest voice possible on foreign policy issues, with the executive branch and the legislative branch working as closely as we can together. And, I think you can play a critical role in that regard.

I'm one of those who believe that in Iraq, the United States did not give diplomacy the appropriate attention before using military force in Iraq. I mention that because Senator Hagel brought up Iran, and Iran has been in the headlines, and I think many of us are concerned as to whether the use of force will be an opinion used

in Iran, prior to exhausting the diplomatic arena. And, that concerns many of us. Iran's a very—it's a country of great concern to America. It's a great concern to us for many reasons that have been mentioned here today. And it certainly will effect both Afghanistan and Iraq, whatever happens in Iran.

So, I just want to get your view as to the risk that we run? Obviously, we need to deal with Iran's support for terrorism, its support of nuclear weapons program, and we need to engage internationally and I agree with Senator Coleman, there are different ways of engaging internationally. It does not—and we have to be very careful in the manner in which we use engaging Iran. But, I do think that we need to be extremely active on the diplomatic front in that region, and with our allies, as it relates to Iran, and I would like to get your views as to the risks that we had in our foreign policy judgments as it relates to Iran.

Mr. CROCKER. Sir, if I could begin.

Iran is a central issue, there is no question about it, Iraq and Afghanistan, regionally and internationally, as they pursue a nuclear weapons program. The President, the Secretary of State, and other senior officials, I think, have all been clear—we, in no way, seek a military confrontation with Iran on any of these issues. These are problems to be solved politically, but it will require a different course of action on the part of Iran.

I think that statements such as you've seen in the last couple of days where we've brought forward the evidence that the government has of the Iranian involvement in supplying weapons and munitions that are being used to kill our soldiers, is an important part of this process. To make it clear to the Iranians that we know what they're doing, that, in my view, is probably the best way to get them to consider the consequences of their actions, and choose different courses.

But again, I would emphasize, I've been around the Iran issue now for a number of years—it is not the intention of the administration to seek conflict with Iran, it is precisely the opposite.

Senator CARDIN. Ambassador Wood, if you want to comment briefly, I want to ask one more question, so if you could be brief.

Mr. WOOD. I would only add that in my work in New York at our mission before the United Nations, I had the opportunity to work with Iranian diplomats. We didn't agree often, but when we agreed we were able to put those agreements into operation for the benefit of both countries.

The question is can—right now, Iran doesn't seem to want to work with us. And, right now, Iran seems to be taking positions in some really fundamental areas—weapons of mass destruction, and support for—or at least tolerance of support for groups—that are, that don't contribute to stability in a large part of the world, an important part of the world.

So, we have this sad dichotomy on the one hand—we know that if we could find a bridge, through acceptable policies in Iran, both Iran and the United States could benefit. But, we have this gap in the bridge. And the gap in the bridge is on some very fundamental things.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator KERRY. Thank you very much, Senator Cardin.

Let me just say to everybody, we've got three votes now, coming up shortly. So, if we can, I think, stay on this schedule, we ought to be able to get every Senator in before we're under the gun there.

So, Senator Corker.

Senator CORKER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And I want to thank both of you for your service. I know you're extremely qualified, and I look forward to supporting your nomination. I want to thank your families, too, for being here, and for what they do.

I met with General Petraeus, like many of us did individually when he was being confirmed, and I think a lot of us look to him to be someone who will have the strong leadership and the enterprising ability to actually do the things that need to be done on the ground in Iraq.

But, as I was talking with him, he said, "Look, you can confirm me and I'm important. But the most important person that needs to be in Iraq is Ambassador Crocker. He needs to be confirmed, and needs to be on the ground there, because what is happening on that side of the equation actually, in many ways, is more important than what we're doing militarily."

So, I have two questions. One is—and one of the things I asked General Petraeus was—Are you fully supported by the Administration? Are you getting everything you need? And will you tell us if you're not? Because, I think many of us wonder whether there's somebody here, in Washington, waking up every day, making sure that that is the case.

And I guess my first, my first question to you is, do you feel totally supported and explain to us a little bit the line of communication and who you work with daily, here, to make sure that you have the things on the ground there that are most important in solving our problems in Iraq.

Mr. CROCKER. In terms of communications, Senator Corker, I expect I will have direct access to the Secretary of State, to the National Security Advisor, among others, and direct access to the President, as necessary. There is no higher priority for this administration. It's been made clear to me in my consultations within the administration that if I am confirmed and go out there, that whatever I see that needs attention, I need to get it back to the appropriate level, and the phones I call will answer. So, I go out with the confidence that I will have the access I need, and as a result of that, the support I need.

Senator CORKER. The action on the ground, and you know, you obviously are involved in diplomacy, but obviously there's tremendous operational aspects to what you're doing, and rebuilding a country there, and I heard you mention about the core leadership groups being selected, and that people are being trained, and at the end of March many of them will be on the ground.

One of the things that truly is hard to understand. Unemployment is a huge factor there. One head of household there supports 13 people in Iraq, so it's much different than here in America, and ultimately, maybe even more important, in some ways.

But it seems to me the timing—I know that all of us are looking for tremendous changes to occur over the next 6 months. And it seems to me the timing of what you have to accomplish is going

to be slower, possibly, than necessary to tie in, the way it ought to tie in, to the military action today in Baghdad. I wonder if you could respond to that?

Mr. CROCKER. As I understand the timeline, Senator, none of this happens overnight. Not just on the civilian side, but not on the military side, either. This notion of a surge, it may almost be a misnomer, because it implies something big and immediate—this will be phased in over time, as I'm sure you heard when you spoke to General Petraeus. And, in terms of effects, I believe it is his judgment that it's going to be in the late—in the mid- to late-summer period—that we'll see those. So, the clear and the hold part of this operation will be phased in and built up over time. We're just not going to have one of those instant moments when you can say, "It worked, it's a great success," or "It's an absolute failure." That is going to be a judgment based on some period of time.

I'll have to make, obviously, my own direct assessments on the ground if I'm confirmed by the Senate. But my understanding now of the timelines to staff the PRTs, the 10 new PRTs, is that the combination of core staff, and then individuals identified in certain specialties by DoD, largely from reservists, should enable the PRTs to be ready to engage on the ground in the build effort, as soon as that ground is, in fact, held. That's the connection we have to make, and clearly, if I'm confirmed, that will be a top priority in my discussions with General Petraeus.

Senator CORKER. Thank you. I know the time is up. Thank you, sir.

Senator KERRY. Thank you very much, Senator Corker.

It looks like we're going to make it, here, so, Senator Casey.

Thank you.

Senator CASEY. In the short time we have, to both Ambassadors, I want to thank you for being here today. Your extraordinary public service and your valor—people forget that the work that you do involves a risk, a personal risk, as well—and we're grateful.

In the limited time we have, let me just ask about two questions—I hope—two or three.

First of all, Ambassador Crocker, I want to direct your attention to the President's plan, which I think is an escalation. Others use the term "surge," but in particular, I'm concerned about—and I know you are, and all of America is concerned about—the ability of the Iraqi Security Forces to do what they must do. Not just long-term, but especially in these early engagements in the streets and the neighborhoods in Baghdad—extraordinarily dangerous circumstances.

I really have my doubts, based upon the history, but also based upon some recent stories. There are several stories in the press—two that I am looking at in the New York Times. I know the Washington Post had one. New York Times, January 25 and January 30, you've seen these. We've referred to these before, but "the air of a class outing, cheering and laughing"—these are Iraqi forces—showing up late, not doing the job. The American forces having to do a lot more than they have to do. When we use the term "embedded forces," that sounds good until you see the reality of these articles.

So, I don't want to dwell on the details of this, but it's clear from some of the earlier reports that it's going to be extraordinarily dif-

ficult for the Iraqi Security Forces to do what they must do, which undergirds this strategy.

And, I'd ask you in the context of your work, but also in the context of what I see in Pennsylvania. Pennsylvania is now at the 150-mark. Third highest death toll in terms of soldiers who have perished in Iraq. I just want to ask you about your assessment of that, currently. The ability of the Iraqi Security Forces to do what they must do in this new engagement.

Mr. CROCKER. Sir, you're absolutely right to put the emphasis where you have, that was the point I was trying to make earlier in saying that we are transitioning. This is now a period in which the Iraqis carry the main effort. And that is as true in security as it is anywhere else.

There's a lot of discussion of benchmarks, and I think there are some very important benchmarks out there, along the lines you just described. First, will the Iraqi forces show up for the engagement in the time and in the numbers that they're committed to? Second, will they perform professionally and evenhandedly, going after perpetrators of violence, regardless of their political or sectarian affiliation? These are going to be very key tests that they are going to have to meet and pass.

The command structure that I understand they've established, I find encouraging. The Lieutenant General in overall command, who enjoys a good professional reputation, happens to be a Shia. His two deputies—to Major Generals, one police, one regular army—are both Sunnis. So, it looks to me like they're putting the right kind of balanced command structure in place that would indicate that, at least they understand some of the problems in the past, and are prepared to meet them.

But, ultimately, it will be what happens on the ground.

Senator CASEY. Well, I urge you—and I know you will do this anyway, but I think it's important to repeat it—to hold our government accountable for enforcing the kind of discipline and the kind of benchmarking, and any other measuring tool that we use to make sure Iraqi Security Forces are doing what they must do, promptly.

I know I have, maybe, another minute, but for both Ambassadors, because you both, obviously, play a role in the past and the future of this. The relationship between General Musharraf and Mr. Karzai, in terms of where that relationship is now, and especially in the context of President Bush bringing them together in September of 2006. Where is it, is it a positive relationship, or has it deteriorated? What can you tell us about that?

Mr. WOOD. In the meeting with the tri-apartheid supper with President Bush, plans were made for a jirga, an assembly of some nature, between Afghan and Pakistan leaders. It was hoped that that gathering could be held—would have already been held—it is still very much on the agenda, and we're hoping, we're hoping to see the two sides come together in a matter of months, to exchange their own views.

Going beyond that, I think that the relationship between Pakistan and Afghanistan is a complicated one. Both sides are contributing to help the—each is helping the other—each often wonders if the other could be doing more. I think that, I think that this is

a process that will continue, I think it will get better. I can only say that it would be my intention to continue the practice of Ambassador Crocker and, if confirmed, my predecessor, Ambassador Newman to maintain absolutely seamless communication between Embassy Kabul and Embassy Islamabad. So, that we can work together to help President Karzai and President Musharraf work together.

Senator CASEY. Thank you.

Senator KERRY. Thank you very much, Senator Casey.

Just a really quick question as we wrap up here—and we are going to wrap up—sometimes the Senate stands in the way of progress. Today it's somehow facilitating this hearing and liberating you people early, letting you off the hook.

I'm going to leave the record open for a week, since we're out of session, and that way it won't interrupt our ability to be able to expedite these nominations, which we want to do, but it will also allow for any questions of any colleagues who want to follow up in writing during that period of time.

In addition, let me just ask you, as a matter for the record—do either of you have any conflicts of interest, or issues from which you might have to recuse yourself, with respect to the performance of your responsibilities?

Ambassador Crocker.

Mr. CROCKER. I do not, sir.

Senator KERRY. Ambassador Wood.

Mr. WOOD. I have none, sir.

Senator KERRY. Okay.

And another quick question. Is the criticism of the Afghanis of President Karzai—both of you might comment on this, since you're currently there—is it legitimate with respect to the harboring of Taliban fighters within Pakistan, and also, obviously, the question that looms large to every American, is the al-Qaeda refuge? Do you want to both comment on that?

Mr. CROCKER. Yes, sir, if I could start.

As you know, Mr. Chairman, Pakistan has been in this fight since right after 9/11. They have lost hundreds of their soldiers, a number of their civilian officials, many progovernment tribal leaders in that tribal belt engaged against both al-Qaeda and a resurgent Taliban. So, in my judgment, their commitment is not in question on this.

The challenge they face, and President Musharraf has acknowledged this, is one of capacity. For example, there are several million Afghan refugees in Pakistan, many of them concentrated in large refugee camps, over which the Pakistani Government has no control, and in some cases, not even access. So, their ability in some cases, particularly against the Taliban, I think, is limited.

But, I've worked with him for over 2 years, closely on these issues. I believe President Musharraf is firmly committed to this fight.

Senator KERRY. Ambassador Wood.

Mr. WOOD. Senator, only to echo what Ambassador Crocker said.

Certainly my briefings here in Washington indicate that there is no intention, no policy of the Government of Pakistan to tolerate

a Taliban presence, to lend support to Taliban or other terrorist groups in that region.

Pakistan also faces an insurgency in Balukistan, which Pakistan has also not been able to resolve, physically. So, there is a parallel example, not related to the Taliban, and not related to Afghanistan, of the lack of capacity of Pakistan to deal directly and conclusively with the problem. But we don't think it's a question of will.

Senator KERRY. Thank you.

Senator Coleman.

Senator COLEMAN. Just for the record, I think it was the hope that we could move these nominations forward, perhaps voice vote them today, so that they could be on the ground very quickly.

Does your keeping the record open preclude that? In other words—?

Senator KERRY. Well, it would if we were going to do that. I was not aware that Senator Biden was planning to do that. If he is, obviously, we don't want to interrupt that.

I'm correct, it's going to happen at the next business meeting. So, it'll be the issue of, I think, the 1 week, since we're not here. So, it'll have to be the next business meeting.

In that case, obviously, unless Senator Biden changes—I think these are the last votes coming up—and so I don't think it's going to be possible for us to have a quorum between now and then, which is why I left that open. But I'd make that contingent on—if there were to be a business meeting to be able to be scheduled—then the record will not stay open that period of time.

Senator COLEMAN. Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

Senator KERRY. I appreciate your calling it to our attention.

Well, thank you very much, gentlemen. You've heard praise from everybody here, for obvious reasons. We're confident you will be confirmed, overwhelmingly, as rapidly as possible, and we look forward to getting you out there.

And again, we want to thank your families. This is not easy on anybody, we understand that, and we're very grateful to everybody for being willing to take this on.

Thank you, we stand adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 10:43 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

#### QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSES OF WILLIAM B. WOOD TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED  
BY SENATOR RICHARD G. LUGAR

*Question.* Since the 1947 partition of India, Pakistani and Afghan relations have been at odds about India's activities in Afghanistan. According to the World Food Program, the Government of Pakistan prohibits the transit of Indian aid bound for Afghanistan.

(A) What role do you see India playing in Afghanistan, as well as what role does it play in the tensions between Pakistan and Afghanistan?

(B) To what degree is a broader regional diplomatic approach necessary to sustainable stability and development in Afghanistan?

(C) How will you and your staff engage with the United States embassy in India?

(D) What other international institutions working in Afghanistan recognize and address India's role in the region?

*Answer.* (A) I understand that India has played a constructive role in Afghanistan and is considering expanding its activities there. There are four Indian consulates in Afghanistan plus an embassy in Kabul. It is the eighth largest donor overall and



does important infrastructure work, mainly in roads and power. The Indians are also considering assistance to help provide training to Afghan bureaucrats. Three Indians have been killed while working on reconstruction projects. In addition, last November, India hosted the Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghan Reconstruction. Both India and Afghanistan consider their relationship to be a close and important one.

The Afghan-Indian relationship does cause tension in the region. The Indians are frustrated by Pakistan's refusal to allow direct overland transit from India across Pakistan and into Afghanistan. The Pakistanis express concerns over Indian's growing presence in Afghanistan.

(B) The United States is pursuing a broad regional approach in Central and South Asia that will bind the two regions together and help secure Afghanistan's future. The objective is to link energy-rich Central Asia with energy-poor South Asia via an Afghan "land bridge" that will encourage stability and promote economic development.

(C) The staff of Embassy Kabul cooperates closely with our colleagues in New Delhi over the variety of issues important to United States' interests as they relate to Afghanistan and India. If confirmed, I will participate fully in this dialog.

(D) A variety of international organizations, including the U.N. and NATO, recognizes India's work in Afghanistan, and work with India to achieve their common goals.

*Question.* Afghanistan's Governments have never recognized the Durand Line between the two countries as an international border and have made claims on areas in the Pashtun and Baluch regions of Pakistan.

Is the issue of the Durand Line an important element of the current Afghan-Pakistan tension?

*Answer.* The Durand Line continues to be an unresolved issue between Afghanistan and Pakistan. The status of the line is not an active issue and neither the Pakistani nor Afghan Governments is pressing for it to be resolved immediately.

*Question.* Afghanistan has long been considered a "buffer" state to its neighbors who have manipulated politics, commerce, and governance. With the demise of the Soviet Union, the Central Asia nations have exerted more influence, although not always independently, as has China.

What significant, positive and negative activities and roles have China, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Iran each taken in regard to Afghan stabilization and reconstruction from the United States' perspective?

*Answer.* Regional stability, counterterrorism, energy security, trade and economic growth, and antinarcotics production and trafficking are common themes in Afghanistan's relationship with China, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Iran, and in this regard these countries have more of a stake in each other's prosperity than at any other time in history. All five of these regional neighbors have participated in the two Regional Economic Cooperation Conferences on Afghanistan, the first held in Kabul in December 2005 and the second in New Delhi in November 2006.

The Afghan Government is in the process of negotiating bilateral power purchase agreements with Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan as part of Afghanistan's Northern Electrical Power System (NEPS) project, which aims to bring reliable, unimpeded power to Kabul by 2009. Each country involved clearly recognizes the economic benefits that will come from cooperation. We remain confident in the ultimate success of this initiative.

Tajikistan and Afghanistan have a particularly strong bilateral relationship. A United States-funded bridge between Tajikistan and Afghanistan, due to be completed in summer 2007, will revitalize regional trade routes and serve as a symbol of positive change.

Iran and Afghanistan share antinarcotic and border security objectives, and near Herat, Afghanistan's largest western city, Iran has built multilane highways and provided uninterrupted electricity. Iran has invested over \$300 million in Afghanistan over the past 5 years. There are concerns, however, over the influence of Iranian economic assistance in certain parts of the country. We need to remain vigilant about Iranian activities in Afghanistan.

China has also played a low-key role in Afghanistan. Since 2001, China has pledged \$210 million in bilateral assistance for development projects, although we understand that very little has actually been distributed due to security concerns. China shares our concerns about cross-border extremism, narcotics production and trafficking, and the destabilization that Taliban-style radicalism could produce in Central Asia, including in nearby regions of China. China has sponsored the Shang-

hai Cooperation Organization, which is a regional grouping designed to enhance political and economic cooperation.

*Question.* A significant amount of information from a variety of sources indicates that continued instability in Afghanistan, especially in the south and east, is due to the unconstrained flow of persons and resources across the Afghan-Pakistan border, thus fueling insurgent efforts to destabilize Afghanistan's Government.

How will you and your entire embassy engage with Ambassador Crocker, until he departs, and our United States mission in Islamabad to moderate the negative influences across that border and encourage mutual support?

*Answer.* The staff at the United States embassy in Kabul is in frequent contact with its counterparts at the United States embassy in Islamabad. I intend to continue that close cooperation, including through regular informal exchanges of views, frequent visits, and occasional joint calls on our host governments. I will work with Ambassador Crocker and his successor to ensure that our messages to senior officials in the Pakistani and Afghan Governments and to our allies in NATO's International Security Assistance Force are mutually reinforcing. In the past, Embassies Kabul and Islamabad have periodically sent groups of their staff to the other capital in order to meet with their embassy counterparts, as well as with host government officials. If confirmed, I will seek to continue this practice.

*Question.* You have specifically highlighted the importance of our Provincial Reconstruction Teams across the country as a critical link for the central government, and that you intend to concentrate on their activities. It appears that significant resources have been shifted from the north and west to the highly volatile south and east. Though these resources are necessary in the south and east, the rationale to reduce resources elsewhere that are prone to following the same path of increasing violence and instability appears misguided.

(A) Are resources being reduced in the still volatile western and northern regions?

(B) How will you ensure that neglect does not precipitate a target for those being squeezed out of the south and east, as the poppy production has so easily done?

(C) To what degree have NATO nations backed up their call for increased reconstruction funds to accompany their security efforts since taking over security responsibility in November at International Security Assistance Force?

*Answer.* (A-B) I am committed to protecting the gains made throughout Afghanistan since 2001, particularly in the north and west. There has not been a significant shift of resources from the north and west to the south and east. Rather, we are adding resources—and asking allies to do the same—in the areas where they are most needed to accomplish our mission.

The increase of 3,500 United States troops in eastern Afghanistan, announced on February 9, will not reduce forces and engagement elsewhere in Afghanistan. Together with our allies, we will continue to ensure that the necessary capabilities and resources are allocated to accomplish our mission throughout all of Afghanistan.

Nor are we reducing our commitment to Provincial Reconstruction Teams in the north and west as a result of our efforts to augment efforts in the south and east. Sweden and NATO allies, Norway and Hungary, stepped in to lead Provincial Reconstruction Teams in the north and west when the British and Dutch moved assets from northern Provincial Reconstruction Teams to the more volatile south in 2005 and 2006. Thanks to this coordination among NATO allies, there has been no reduction of Provincial Reconstruction Team presence in the north and west.

(C) The international community—including NATO allies who took responsibility for security throughout Afghanistan in October 2006—has shown commitment and staying power in Afghanistan, both in security and development. Since 2001, NATO allies and others in the international community have made multiyear reconstruction and security assistance pledges to Afghanistan totaling over \$31.8 billion (through 2013), more than enough to cover all recurrent budgetary expenditures and put the country well on its way to meeting the 5-year operating (recurrent and development) target of \$20 billion established in the 5-year (2006–2011) Afghan National Development Strategy.

*Question.* Significant United States resources have been expended in concert with the international community since 2001 in removing the Taliban government, dispersing al-Qaeda, establishing an elected government, stabilizing, and helping to rebuild Afghanistan. The Government of Afghanistan has continued to call for the use of a common fund for reconstruction and development that is administered by the Afghan Government in order to empower its ministries and reduce competition for human and financial resources.

(A) Describe how United States funds flow to projects in Afghanistan, bilateral and multilateral assistance. Show these flows for the last 2 years.

(B) Why are the funds provided in this way and what is U.S. policy regarding the common international funding vehicle?

Answer. (A) I am committed to effective, efficient, and timely implementation of all United States and multilateral assistance in Afghanistan. Total United States assistance to Afghanistan stands at over \$14.2 billion from fiscal year 2001 to fiscal year 2007. This assistance cuts across U.S. Federal agencies, with roughly 65 percent coming from the Department of Defense, 30 percent coming from the Department of State and U.S. Agency for International Development, and another 5 percent coming from other Departments (Justice, Treasury, etc.). In fiscal year 2006, total United States security and reconstruction assistance to Afghanistan exceeded \$3.3 billion, and in fiscal year 2007 stands at over \$2.7 billion. In February, the administration requested an additional \$6.9 billion (combined Department of Defense and Department of State) in assistance for Afghanistan through a fiscal year 2007 supplemental.

Department of State and U.S. Agency for International Development funds—constituting roughly 30 percent of all United States aid to Afghanistan—are implemented through a variety of mechanisms, including procurement contracts, grants to nongovernmental organizations, technical assistance to the Afghan Government, and several U.N. and World Bank-administered programs and trust funds (Afghan Reconstruction Trust Fund, Law and Order Trust Fund of Afghanistan, Counter-Narcotics Trust Fund, and the National Solidarity Program). If confirmed, one of my first tasks will be to review implementation mechanisms for our projects, and coordination with other bilateral and multilateral donors.

(B) Increasing aid effectiveness was a major theme at the 2006 London Conference and figures prominently in the Afghanistan Compact adopted by over 60 nations. The Afghan Government asked that donors channel foreign assistance directly through it, both to strengthen the role of the government and to provide cost-effective and efficient means of disbursing aid.

Assistance covers a wide spectrum—including institutional reform, policy formulation, human resources management, budgetary preparation and execution, technical expertise, procurement, and other topics. USAID is also performing assessments of line ministries—through the 5-year, over \$200 million Afghans Building Capacity program (ABC) to identify where there are gaps in the ability to execute procurements, manage budgets, and provide effective oversight (internal and external to the ministry)—key elements required for the Government of Afghanistan to be able to more effectively execute projects on behalf of the people. The program will also provide technical assistance to the ministries to help build their capacity.

I am committed to increasing the Afghan Government's ability to efficiently disburse donor assistance, build its physical infrastructure, and develop institutional safeguards against corruption.

In the meantime, we have augmented our long-term capacity-building efforts with contributions totaling over \$500 million to the various international funding vehicles that channel assistance directly through the Afghan Government. The United States is the largest contributor to the Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan, and is the second largest contributor to the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund. We have also made significant contributions to the National Solidarity Program and Counter-Narcotics Trust Fund.

*Question.* Nongovernmental organizations have played a significant role in Afghanistan since well before the Taliban arrived.

What will your priorities be with regard to working with the nongovernmental organization community?

Where do you see the nongovernmental organization community in the larger picture of aid to Afghanistan?

Answer. If confirmed, I intend to establish a close dialog with nongovernmental organizations on human rights including women's rights, humanitarian issues, and the host of social and technical issues in which they are active. Nongovernmental organizations play a vital role in helping Afghanistan recover from the post-conflict devastation brought on by three decades of war and violence. Many of the State Department and U.S. Agency for International Development assistance programs in Afghanistan are channeled through United States and Afghan nongovernmental organizations who are working on the front lines of reconstruction.

Nongovernmental organizations work in all 34 Afghan provinces and help us reach remote corners of the country where our assistance would otherwise be limited. In addition, some organizations have longstanding ties to Afghanistan, providing a critical history of trust in a society that strongly values enduring relationships.

Nongovernmental organizations are also helping local communities strengthen their capacity and move beyond the traumatic Taliban period by emphasizing women's empowerment. Over 50 percent of United States funds provided to local Afghan nongovernmental organizations are either women-led or provide services that directly assist women and girls.

I will continue to coordinate closely with nongovernmental organizations as a priority partner in Afghanistan's reconstruction.

*Question.* The current supplemental request of \$8.6 billion contains a sizable portion for security sector reform, including a portion for the fourth attempt at police training in Afghanistan. In the November 2006 Inspectors General Report for the Department of State and the Department of Defense entitled "Interagency Assessment of Afghanistan Police Training and Readiness," Appendix J—a letter from Commander CENTCOM—indicated their concern that State did not appreciate their "legal and official role" as the official lead for police train and equip. This ambiguity raises concern over effective oversight and management of the program.

(A) What is the State Department's response to the report and what has State done to ensure the recommendations made have been implemented or considered for implementation?

(B) What recommendations have been adopted by State and other actors in the program?

(C) How will you ensure the State Department maintains its proper role in police training and equipping and assure full and effective oversight and policy guidance?

(D) What measures of effectiveness will be used in this new effort to train police to ensure that reconstruction resources are having more than just a superficial effect?

(E) How will this program be monitored to ensure that the policy of building a security sector capacity is more than just a spreadsheet calculation of output and rather a true measure of its effectiveness in meeting Afghans expectations and its institutional responsibilities?

*Answer.* (A) The State Department is pleased with the conclusion of the Inspector General Report that the Afghanistan Police Program is a well-executed program. State also agrees with the report's assessment of the challenges involved in effecting reform in an insecure environment.

All of the recommendations made by the report have either already been carried out or are in the process of being implemented. State has already increased the strength of the mentor program by more than 50 percent from 252 mentors at the time the report was drafted, to nearly 400 field mentors, 40 executive and professional mentors, and 80 training advisors present in Afghanistan today. We also continue to work with our international partners to encourage additional contributions and coordinate accordingly, particularly as the European Union (EU) works to develop and implement plans for an upcoming EU mission to Afghanistan. The EU anticipates providing up to 160 police advisors who will complement existing mentoring and reform efforts undertaken by Germany and the United States.

State has also created and filled a permanent Contracting Officer Representative position at Embassy Kabul and provided copies of the relevant contracting documents to both the embassy and Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (CSTC-A, the military organization responsible for oversight of security assistance programs in Afghanistan). State is also working with CSTC-A and Embassy Kabul to draft the strategic documents recommended in the report and has already begun implementing the first phase of a regionally based joint justice/police integration project to address the need identified by the report for linkages between the two sectors.

(B) Please see previous answer.

(C) State fully appreciates its leadership role in implementation of the Afghan Police Program and continues to work closely with Defense, Embassy Kabul, and CSTC-A to ensure that all elements of execution of this critical program are well coordinated, executed, and properly monitored. In addition to the contracting personnel mentioned above, State also has dedicated teams of expert police advisors embedded within Embassy Kabul and within CSTC-A to provide oversight for all elements of the program for which State has responsibility.

The CENTCOM letter referenced in the question (Appendix J) states only that the report "should be closely reviewed and amended to ensure that it accurately states the legal and official responsibilities and authorities related to the police train and equip mission," articulating a concern that the report be fully accurate in its description of the roles and responsibilities of each implementer—something both Defense and State had highlighted as a concern.

(D) Departments of State and Defense work closely together to ensure we are monitoring the program effectively using appropriate metrics. While we continue to monitor the number of police trained and deployed, we also work with CSTC-A to assess the capability of Afghan police, unit by unit, to assume responsibility for the internal security of Afghanistan. Such monitoring is accomplished through use of the field mentors who report regularly on the qualitative progress of the ANP they mentor.

(E) Please see previous answer.

*Question.* International observers and human rights defenders note serious discrepancies between the Afghan Government's declared support for international human rights standards and the activities of Afghan officials at the provincial and district levels.

How would you characterize those observations?

If confirmed, what initiatives would you undertake to help Afghanistan's Government better promote and protect human rights in all regions of the country?

*Answer.* Although Afghanistan has made important human rights progress since the fall of the Taliban in 2001, Afghanistan's human rights record remains poor. This is mainly due to weak central institutions, a deadly insurgency, and an ongoing recovery from 2½ decades of war.

In its annual Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for Afghanistan, the United States Department of State documented numerous cases of arbitrary arrests and detention, extrajudicial killings, torture, and poor prison conditions. Prolonged detention, often due to a severe lack of resources and pervasive corruption in the judicial system, is a serious problem. There are also cases of official impunity and abuse of authority by local leaders.

Afghans also frequently turn to the informal justice system, which does not always protect human rights principles. As reported in the U.S. Department of State's Annual Report on International Religious Freedom, freedom of religion, although provided for by the national constitution, is restricted in practice.

Afghanistan has, however, made historic progress toward democracy and the protection of human rights since the fall of the Taliban in 2001. The new Afghan Constitution includes broad human rights protections for all Afghans and recognition of Afghanistan's international human rights obligations. In accordance with the 2002 Bonn Agreement, the government established the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission, which now has nine regional offices throughout the country, has resolved numerous complaints of human rights violations, and closely monitors the overall human rights situation, as well as individual cases.

In the January 2006 Afghanistan Compact, the Government of Afghanistan committed to: Strengthen its capacity to comply with and report on its human rights treaty obligations; adopt corrective measures including codes of conduct and procedures aimed at preventing arbitrary arrest and detention, torture, extortion, and illegal expropriation of property; strengthen freedom of expression, including freedom of media; include human rights awareness in education curricula; promote human rights awareness among legislators, judicial personnel and other government agencies, communities, and the public; monitor human rights through the government and independently by the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission; and support the commission in the fulfillment of its objectives with regard to monitoring, investigation, protection, and promotion of human rights by end-2010.

The Government of Afghanistan also committed in the Afghanistan Compact to implement the Peace, Reconciliation, and Justice Action plan by end-2008. This transitional justice plan identified five areas for action, including strengthening the credibility and accountability of state institutions.

If confirmed, I will press the Afghan authorities, at all levels, on these issues and emphasize that good governance, respect for human rights including women's rights, and the rule of law are essential. Together with our allies and partners, and the United Nations, I will also encourage initiatives that consolidate a stronger sense among all Afghans that they have a stake in building a democratic government that respects human rights.

*Question.* The Karzai government has included known warlords and other individuals suspected of criminal activities in its administration. This risks a further loss of credibility for the new Government of Afghanistan and an inability to hold government officials accountable or effectively pursue the rule of law in general.

How is the United States dealing with such appointments? Is the administration (U.S.) looking into this issue?

What steps is it considering to try to address the negative impact this is having on the rule of law?

Answer. The United States is watching closely the historic transition of Afghanistan from civil war and a legacy of severe human rights abuse toward democracy and the protection of human rights. We support the Action Plan on Peace, Reconciliation, and Justice; the reconciliation of insurgents through the Program Takhim-e-Soh (PTS); the work of the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission; and reform and strengthening of the judicial system.

Specifically, we strongly encourage the Afghan Government's implementation of the 3-year Action Plan on Peace, Reconciliation, and Justice, adopted in December 2005 and launched by President Karzai on December 10, 2006. The plan has five key elements: Acknowledging of the suffering of the Afghan people; strengthening the credibility and accountability of state institutions; establishing the truth about atrocities committed between the Revolution in April 1978 and the fall of the Taliban in late 2001; promoting reconciliation; and establishing a proper accountability mechanism to investigate and prosecute individuals who committed war crimes and other egregious human rights abuses. All five components are important.

We also encourage a determined fight against corruption inside the Afghan Government. In 2006, President Karzai appointed an Attorney General and a Chief Justice who are focusing intensely on corruption. The Afghan Government has also taken a number of steps against corrupt governors and officials, and several governors have been removed over the past 12 months. Additionally, the Afghan Government initiated rank and pay reform to remove police officers involved in human rights violations and high-level corruption. The reform resulted in the removal of more than 70 senior-level officers. International support for recruiting and training of new Afghan National Police is also conditional upon new officers being vetted in a manner consistent with international human rights standards. We will make sure that these policies are continued and fully implemented.

RESPONSES OF RYAN CROCKER TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED  
BY SENATOR RICHARD G. LUGAR

*Question.* You may remember our meeting during June 2003, on my trip to Baghdad, where we sat in a poorly lit, somewhat air-conditioned conference room meeting with three clerics, a Sunni, a Shiite, and a Christian who waxed at length about their vision for Iraq and how it was under Saddam. Some have suggested the winner-take-all sectarian nature to Iraqi affairs occurred much later, or was created by the United States' unseating of Saddam. What is your view?

Answer. The majority of Iraqis still express gratitude for their liberation from Saddam Hussein's tyrannical regime. Circumstances afterwards, however, have undermined the conditions necessary to provide Iraqis with the security and stability they deserve. Since 2003, the combination of insurgent and al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI)-led attacks on Iraqi civilians, often based on their sectarian affiliation, has led to increased tension between Iraq's Sunni and Shia populations. The most damaging was an attack on one of the most holy Islamic Shia sites, Al-Askariya Mosque, in February 2006. As a result, sectarian tensions burst into the open.

The Government of Iraq is currently committed to a new Baghdad Security Plan that is focused on quelling sectarian violence and protecting the population. A key component of this strategy is Prime Minister Maliki's commitment to pursuing all perpetrators of violence regardless of their sect or party affiliation. We are supporting the Government of Iraq in these efforts.

*Question.* The National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) mentioned a "bottom up approach" could help reverse the negative trends. Would you care to comment?

Answer. The NIE defined a "bottom-up approach" to reversing negative trends in Iraq as one which promotes neighborhood watch groups and establishment of grievance committees. It is certainly true that any mechanism that empowers ordinary citizens to solve their problems according to a rule of law process, vice the force of violence, is a step in the right direction as part of a larger process of national reconciliation.

We believe that a coordinated set of actions at both the national and local level need to proceed simultaneously to help reverse the negative trends the NIE identified. At the local level, Provincial Reconstruction Teams are charged with strengthening moderates, marginalizing extremists, and otherwise empowering local governments to deliver goods and services to an electorate that will hold them accountable.

This is one way in which we are implementing a bottom-up approach. Much of the efforts to empower local Iraqis to solve their problems will have to be implemented by the Iraqis themselves. A new provincial powers law is being debated in the Council of Representatives, which will help, though the task of implanting it

will be a challenge. A host of reconciliation initiatives have been proposed. The process of mending frayed relationships will be one of which Iraqis will need to work for many years to come.

*Question.* I am hopeful Congress will begin meaningful debate soon on 2007 Supplemental Appropriations, which you will need to execute your mission. It has some \$824 million to operate the embassy and PRT's and another \$966 million for economic support programs, rule of law, democracy, migration and refugee assistance, and USAID operating expenses. Will this be sufficient to leverage the Iraqis to action on their budget execution?

*Answer.* The fiscal year 2007 Supplemental request level of \$2.34 billion is critical to building Iraqi self-reliance and to expanding our current efforts to improve the institutional capacity of key Iraqi ministries to address the needs of the Iraqi people. We will focus on developing the Iraqi Government's critical management capabilities, such as budget formulation and execution, which will improve services and enhance the governance capacity of Iraq's executive branch. With these funds, project management units will be established to help Iraqi ministries execute their budgets. Iraq has signaled its intent to improve its capital budget spending in 2007 by including a provision in the budget law passed by parliament that permits the Ministries of Finance and Planning and Development Cooperation to transfer capital investment funds from those ministries and provincial governments failing to spend 25 percent of their capital budgets by the midpoint of the fiscal year to ministries with better prospects for executing projects with those funds.

This funding will also expand the presence of Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs). One of the main missions of PRT's is to work with local governments to improve their capacity, including their ability to design programs and request money from the central government. We are encouraged that the 2007 Iraqi budget includes over \$2 billion for regional governments.

On January 10, the Secretary named Ambassador Tim Carney as the Coordinator for Economic Transition in Iraq. Ambassador Carney, who is based in Baghdad, reports directly to the ambassador and will work closely with Iraqi officials to ensure that Iraq's considerable resources are brought to bear on the task of rebuilding Iraq. One of the issues he will focus on is helping the Iraqis better execute their budgets, particularly on capital spending for investments to improve essential services and promote economic development.

USAID operating expenses are not included in the fiscal year 2007 Supplemental request, but have been included in the fiscal year 2008 GWOT Costs request.

*Question.* To what extent can private sector solutions be expanded effectively in Iraq? How can we structure our assistance to improve that effort?

*Answer.* Private sector solutions can and should be expanded effectively in Iraq. Iraq has a tradition of over 4,000 thousand years of entrepreneurship and commerce. Today, private sector-led growth could energize the Iraqi economy. This is especially true for such critical sectors as banking and microfinance, which could meet an enormous pent-up demand for credit, an economic force multiplier.

We have worked hard to support private-sector solutions in Iraq. Under the Iraq Relief and Reconstruction Fund (IRRF), we have supported a program to expand microfinance institutions to provide small- and medium-sized companies with the capital they would not otherwise be able to borrow. The goal of these programs is to help establish these institutions, which will then serve as models for other Iraqi institutions, including commercial banks, to emulate. To date, USG support has enabled six microcredit institutions to extend over 29,000 loans. We are also providing technical assistance programs to help Iraq enact the kinds of laws and regulations that will make it easier to register companies, conduct trade, and access credit. We have requested funds under the fiscal year 2007 supplemental to continue these activities until Iraqi institutions can fill this void.

It is also worth noting that DoD's effort to restart idle State Owned Enterprises (SOEs) and other manufacturing entities in Iraq has privatization as a long-term goal.

*Question.* Are our policies encouraging Iraqi Government officials to continue to reduce subsidies, reduce the public distribution system to a means tested entitlement for the poorest Iraqis, and provide the commercial legal framework to stimulate not only agriculture, but canning and other agribusiness?

*Answer.* As part of Iraq's Stand-By Arrangement (SBA) with the IMF, the GoI has agreed to phase out the PDS and replace it with a targeted, means-tested system to protect Iraq's most vulnerable citizens. We support GoI's efforts to phase out the PDS and have provided the GoI with a comprehensive analysis of the cost of the PDS and recommendations for how to eliminate this system. The Iraq Reconstruc-

tion and Management Office (IRMO) has an officer at the Ministry of Trade who monitors the PDS to make sure that food is getting to the various parts of Iraq. Also, the United States Department of Agriculture has an officer in Iraq who monitors food imports, including for the PDS.

In 2003, under the CPA, the Ministry of Trade promulgated a rule stating that anyone could register to receive their PDS benefits at a new location as long as they had their ration card. However, there are reports that the pre-2003 practice of de-registering at one's former food distribution point and registering at the food distribution point in one's new neighborhood is now being reinstated. It is not certain that the GoI is redirecting food from areas with net population losses to areas with net population gains to ensure adequate supplies.

*Question.* The international community is gearing up to help with the refugee and IDP population, but what is the Iraqi Government doing?

*Answer.* The response to the IDP situation within the Government of Iraq rests on the Ministry of Displacement and Migration (MODM). The ministry, which was created in 2003, has branches in each of the Iraqi provinces, except the three Kurdish provinces. MODM periodically distributes food and nonfood items and collects data on the number of displaced persons.

For a third consecutive year, the U.S. Government has funded a capacity building program to train MODM staff and assist it to develop its mandate, operating procedures and policies, and its coordinating role with nongovernmental organizations assisting IDPs. The Iraqi Government, United States Government, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations' focal point for refugees and IDPs, will continue to work with MODM to strengthen its capacity to coordinate assistance to IDPs and refugees.

UNHCR is increasing its staff in the region to help with the increased numbers of IDPs and refugees.

The Ministry of Trade provides all Iraqis, including IDPs, monthly food rations. The Ministry of Social Affairs provides rent subsidies to a small percentage of IDPs (around 10 percent).

*Question.* Who in the embassy will you charge with the refugee and IDP issue? What is the military role in this matter?

*Answer.* We have a political officer designated as the Refugee Coordinator at our embassy in Iraq. The Refugee Coordinator works closely with counterparts at the State Department, particularly those in the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration and USAID/OFDA, as well as with counterparts at United States embassies in the region, such as Amman and Damascus. The Refugee Coordinator also works with the Multi-National Force in Iraq to address protection issues relating to Iraqi IDPs and refugees. I would refer you to the Department of Defense for more specific information on the role of the military in this matter.

*Question.* The old oil-for-food food ration system is still in place—but I understand that Iraqis cannot access it if they have fled from their homes. Can we help the Iraqis construct a more flexible distribution to help feed IDPs?

*Answer.* To date, the overwhelming majority of Iraqi internally displaced persons (IDPs) have sought shelter with host families. United States Government agencies are actively providing protection and assistance to IDPs and their host communities in Iraq, including distribution of food and other necessities. With additional resources, including funds in the fiscal year 2007 supplemental request, we will expand our assistance program activities to reach more IDPs and host communities.

Since fiscal year 2003, the Agency for International Development's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) has contributed more than \$194 million to provide humanitarian assistance to vulnerable populations in Iraq. In fiscal year 2006, OFDA's program assisted 175,000 IDPs. In fiscal year 2007, OFDA plans to increase the number of beneficiaries to 300,000.

OFDA's partner organizations fund rapid response mobile teams and provide emergency food assistance and relief commodities, including winterization supplies. OFDA's partners are also improving IDPs' access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation facilities, supporting small-scale community infrastructure, and providing water by tanker truck where necessary. In addition, they oversee livelihood programs providing income generation and cash-for-work opportunities, as well as vocational training.

In addition, the State Department, in partnership with the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Committee of the Red Cross, provides substantial relief to IDPs in Iraq, including supplying food and household items to 50,000 vulnerable families.



Neither the United States Government nor other entities directly advise the Government of Iraq (GoI) on the Public Distribution System (PDS). As part of Iraq's Stand-By Arrangement (SBA) with the IMF, the GoI has agreed to phase out the PDS and replace it with a targeted, means-tested system to protect Iraq's most vulnerable citizens. We support the GoI's efforts to phase out the PDS. We have provided the GoI with a comprehensive analysis of the cost of the PDS and recommendations for how to eliminate this system.

In 2003, under the CPA, the Ministry of Trade promulgated a rule stating that anyone could register to receive their PDS benefits at a new location as long as they had their ration card. However, there are reports that the pre-2003 practice of requiring Iraqis to de-register at their former food distribution point and re-register at the food distribution point in their new neighborhood is now being reinstated.

*Question.* How much does it cost to train an Arabic speaker to 3:3 capability? What percentage of Arabic speakers in the Foreign Service have served at least a year in Iraq? Please be as detailed as you can in responding to this.

*Answer.* The Arabic course at the Foreign Service Institute (FSI), which is designed to bring an individual from a 0/0 (zero) level of proficiency to a 3S/3R (General Professional Proficiency in speaking and reading), is a 2-year program. The first year, in Washington, DC, is designed to bring an individual from 0 to 2S/2R (Limited Working Proficiency) and estimated instructional costs are about \$28,000 for 44 weeks of training (based on fiscal year 2006 tuition rate). The second year, overseas at FSI's field school in Tunis, typically brings these individuals to a 3S/3R and estimated instructional costs are about \$32,000 (based on fiscal year 2006 cost recovery formulation). Instruction cost estimates do not include nontraining expenditures, such as employee salaries and benefits, post allowances, per diem (in Washington), travel and POV shipping, post-housing and post-support. State Department recruiters specifically target schools and organizations with language programs to increase the recruitment of Arabic and other critical needs language speakers. Since 2004, the Department has given bonus points in the hiring process to Foreign Service candidates with demonstrated proficiency in languages such as Arabic, Urdu, and Farsi, among others. These bonus points materially increase the chance of receiving a job offer for candidates who have passed the written examination and oral assessment.

The Department of State requires Arabic speakers to demonstrate a score of S2/RO (Limited Working Speaking Proficiency/No Reading Proficiency) or above to meet tenure requirements. As of December 31, 2006, there were 676 Foreign Service generalists and specialists with a tested Arabic proficiency of S2/RO or higher, including employees trained by FSI and employees who already spoke Arabic before joining the Department. These Arabic speakers fill critical language designated positions at more than 20 embassies and consulates throughout Near East Asia.

Of the 676 Arabic speakers, 74 Foreign Service employees (11 percent) have served in Iraq for at least 1 year. Twenty-nine of those employees speak Arabic at a proficiency level of S3/R3 or above and 45 employees speak Arabic at a level less than S3/R3. When the initial deployment for Iraq began in 2003, most personnel were sent for 6-month assignments. Eighty-seven of the Foreign Service's Arabic speakers (13 percent) have served in Iraq for a 6-month assignment, with 41 employees at a proficiency level less than S3/R3 and 46 employees at S3/R3 or above. If 6-month and 1-year tours in Iraq are considered together, 161 of the Foreign Service's Arabic speakers (24 percent of the total) have served in Iraq since 2003.

*Question.* Secretary Gates said that he engaged the cabinet in this issue, but have you had opportunity to engage other cabinet agencies who have been slow to provide needed expertise? What else can be done to ensure we get the most qualified individuals on the job?

*Answer.* NSPD 36 directed cabinet agencies to encourage their employees to take assignments in Iraq on a nonreimbursable basis. In response, some highly qualified United States Government employees from a number of Federal agencies have served with distinction in Iraq. But, in other cases, equally talented employees have found it difficult to volunteer for Iraq service, because their parent agencies do not have the necessary budget for overseas travel, danger pay, and other extraordinary personnel costs. In the fiscal year 2007 supplemental, we have requested funding to reimburse other agencies for these extra costs for employees going to serve in Iraq. We believe this funding will make an appreciable difference in the ability of all cabinet agencies to contribute directly to our mission in Iraq.

RESPONSES OF WILLIAM B. WOOD TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED  
BY SENATOR BARBARA BOXER

*Question.* On December 26, 2006, the Los Angeles Times published an article entitled "Heroin From Afghanistan Is Cutting a Deadly Path." According to the article, "supplies of highly potent Afghan heroin in the United States are growing so fast that the pure white powder is rapidly overtaking lower-quality Mexican heroin, prompting fears of increased addiction and overdoses."

Can you please review this article in detail and comment on its assertions? How much Afghan opium has entered the United States each year since 2000? Has it increased on a yearly basis? Is there a significant difference between Afghan and Mexican opium?

*Answer.* The United States Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) has no reports that can verify the article's suggestion that Afghan heroin, as a percentage of the United States market, has doubled from 7 to 14 percent. Though DEA does not break down heroin by country of origin (except for Mexico), DEA believes that the United States' market share of Afghan heroin is approximately 8 percent, and asserts that it has not seen a spike in the United States. Further, the Department of Homeland Security Contraband Smuggling Unit reports that it has not seen anything indicating that there is an increase in Afghan heroin in the United States. The reporter for this article used Heroin Signature Program numbers for Southwest Asian heroin as the basis for his story. This number encompasses more than just Afghanistan and is not the overall measure of heroin in the United States. Moreover, local law enforcement also is not in a position to be able to determine where the heroin is sourced from; only DEA analyzes and categorizes this information through lab analyses and its Heroin Domestic Monitoring Program (ROMP). The HDMP reported that in calendar year 2005, only 3 percent of the samples purchased and analyzed was identified as Southwest Asian heroin. South American heroin accounted for 56 percent and Mexican heroin for 40 percent of the samples purchased and analyzed.

The difference between Afghan heroin and Mexican heroin is in its purity levels. Afghan heroin can have purity levels of up to 90 percent while Mexican black tar heroin is of low quality, with purity levels of less than 35 percent. Mexican brown tar heroin purity can range from 50–70 percent. Many of the deaths due to overdoses have been attributed to Fentanyl, a synthetic heroin with very high purity levels, which may be confused with heroin from Southwest Asia.

The Center for Disease Control's Epidemic Intelligence Service reports that the increase in the number of deaths cannot be attributed specifically to heroin as the statistics used from the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-10 codes) indicate deaths from a broad range of drugs.

*Question.* S. 147—the Afghan Women Empowerment Act—would provide resources where they are much needed in Afghanistan, to Afghan women-led nongovernmental organizations, empowering those who will continue to provide for the needs of the Afghan people long after the international community has left.

S. 147 would provide \$30 million to women-led nongovernmental organizations to specifically focus on providing direct services to Afghan women—services such as adult literacy education, technical and vocational training, and health care services. In addition, it would authorize the President to appropriate \$5 million to the Afghan Ministry of Women's Affairs and \$10 million to the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission.

How could such funds benefit the women of Afghanistan?

*Answer.* In fiscal year 2006, \$50 million was provided specifically to support programs and activities benefiting women and girls. Activities funded include micro-finance, and small- and medium-enterprise loans for women; vocational training and employment opportunities to women, especially in areas of poppy production; comprehensive programs for maternal and child health; community education for girls in remote areas; literacy and textbooks for girls; support to the Women's Teacher Training Institute and the Women's Dormitory at Kabul University; access to justice systems for women; gender advisor for economic governance and private sector strengthening; support to the Afghan Women's Business Federation and Arzu Carpets; capacity building for the Ministry of Women's Affairs; and support for recurrent operations and maintenance costs related to women programs of the Government of Afghanistan's budget.

The United States agrees that women-led and women-focused nongovernmental organizations are critical to Afghanistan's advancement. Should the \$30 million specified in S. 147 be made available, we would provide technical assistance and other resources benefiting women-led nongovernmental organizations, as is planned

under the mission's new, comprehensive capacity building program known as Afghans Building Capacity, or "ABC," which, among other things, focuses on teaching nongovernmental organization-specific skills to develop, implement, and monitor effective projects. Women-led nongovernmental organizations are lacking. This intense capacity building effort will help.

With additional funding we would intend to pursue the following implementation steps:

- Outreach—Strengthen and diversify our outreach to women-led/focused organizations. Although we have grants with five women-led organizations today and work closely with the Afghan Women's Network's 80 members, we are looking to include others.
- Capacity Building—As noted above, we would provide training and technical assistance to women-led and women-focused nongovernmental organizations as well as to entities that interact with the nongovernmental organizations, such as the various ministries, universities, businesses and local government offices. This training and assistance will specifically target the design, implementation and monitoring of projects. It also aims to build skills among women-focused and women-led nongovernmental organizations so that they may better involve communities in program development, implementation, and monitoring.

*Question.* Pakistan is currently one of the largest recipients of United States foreign aid. In fact, funding to reimburse Pakistan for its support of United States-led counterterrorism operations is currently estimated at \$80 million per month. However, the Afghan Government and many other experts argue that Pakistan has done little to stop the flow of weapons and fighters into Afghanistan, and in fact may even be aiding the insurgency. What can be done to produce stronger results from Pakistan?

Answer, Pakistan is a vital partner in our fight against the Taliban and al-Qaeda. The Government of Pakistan is committed to the war on terror and is taking strong measures to eliminate the threat posed by both the Taliban and al-Qaeda. Pakistan has lost hundreds of its soldiers, a number of its civilian officials, and dozens of pro-government tribal leaders in the tribal belt who have engaged in combating the Taliban and al-Qaeda.

As President Musharraf has acknowledged, Pakistan does not have enough security forces to control the rugged 1,500 mile border with Afghanistan. Several million Afghan refugees live in Pakistan, many of them concentrated in large refugee camps; the Taliban has used these camps as hideouts. The Government of Pakistan also perceives militant extremism in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas as a major threat to the nation's internal security. However, President Musharraf has undertaken military operations against terrorists on Pakistani soil in spite of domestic opposition.

We continue to urge the Government of Pakistan to take forceful measures against all terrorist groups, including the Taliban. We also support President Musharraf's efforts to adopt a more comprehensive approach to combating terrorism and countering insurgency.

I understand that the State Department plans to support an initiative to enhance the capacity of local security forces in the border regions, such as the indigenous Frontier Corps, Frontier Constabulary, and tribal levies. We will also support Pakistan's Sustainable Development Plan for the tribal areas for economic and social development and governance reform intended to meet the needs of the local population and render them more resistant to violent extremists such as al-Qaeda and the Taliban.

For my part, if confirmed, I intend to work daily not only with the Government of Afghanistan but also with our embassy in Islamabad to strengthen Afghan-Pakistani cooperation along the border and effective action against terrorists and their supporters there.

*Question.* There have been reports that many Afghans feel that their country is not a high priority for the United States. What will you do to change this perception?

Answer. Polling data shows that the United States continues to enjoy the confidence of the Afghan people. Even in less secure areas of the country, a 60 percent majority continues to express confidence in the U.S. mission (ABC News Poll, October 2006). Nationwide, the trend is even better. A large majority of Afghan citizens view the United States' influence as positive, and 74 percent of Afghans have a favorable view of the United States (ABC News Poll, October 2006). The Taliban is facing the opposite scenario. It has a national approval rating of 7 percent—its low-

est since 2004. Over 90 percent of Afghans disapprove of Taliban attacks on Afghan citizens—whether military or civilians (ABC News Poll, October 2006).

Afghans continue to consider electricity, jobs, roads, and security as their top priorities. Our assistance program—over \$14.2 billion since 2001, with an additional \$10.6 billion requested for fiscal year 2007 and fiscal year 2008—is addressing these concerns, which is one reason why a majority of Afghan citizens continue to be hopeful for the future.

If confirmed, I will work hard to ensure that United States efforts in Afghanistan receive the support of the Afghan people and that they in turn understand the extent of their efforts and do their part to ensure success.

*Question.* International observers and human rights defenders note serious discrepancies between the Afghan Government's declared support for strong human rights and the activities of Afghan officials at the provincial and district levels. Do you believe these characterizations are accurate? If confirmed, what specific initiatives would you undertake as ambassador to help Afghanistan's Government better promote and protect human rights in all regions of the country?

*Answer.* Although Afghanistan has made important human rights progress since the fall of the Taliban in 2001, Afghanistan's human rights record remains poor. This is mainly due to weak central institutions, a deadly insurgency, and an ongoing recovery from 2½ decades of war.

In its annual Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for Afghanistan, the United States Department of State documented numerous cases of arbitrary arrests and detention, extrajudicial killings, torture, and poor prison conditions. Prolonged detention, often due to a severe lack of resources and pervasive corruption in the judicial system, is a serious problem. There are also cases of official impunity and abuse of authority by local leaders. Afghans also frequently turn to the informal justice system, which does not always protect human rights principles. As reported in the United States Department of State's Annual Report on International Religious Freedom, freedom of religion, although provided for by the national constitution, is restricted in practice.

Afghanistan has, however, made historic progress toward democracy and the protection of human rights since the fall of the Taliban in 2001. The new Afghan Constitution includes broad human rights protections for all Afghans and recognition of Afghanistan's international human rights obligations. In accordance with the 2002 Bonn Agreement, the government established the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission, which now has nine regional offices throughout the country, has resolved numerous complaints of human rights violations, and closely monitors the overall human rights situation, as well as individual cases.

In the January 2006 Afghanistan Compact, the Government of Afghanistan committed to: Strengthen its capacity to comply with and report on its human rights treaty obligations; adopt corrective measures including codes of conduct and procedures aimed at preventing arbitrary arrest and detention, torture, extortion, and illegal expropriation of property; strengthen freedom of expression, including freedom of media; include human rights awareness in education curricula; promote human rights awareness among legislators, judicial personnel and other Government agencies, communities, and the public; monitor human rights through the government and independently by the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission; and support the commission in the fulfillment of its objectives with regard to monitoring, investigation, protection, and promotion of human rights by end-2010.

The Government of Afghanistan also committed in the Afghanistan Compact to implement the Peace, Reconciliation, and Justice Action plan by end-2008. This transitional justice plan identified five areas for action, including strengthening the credibility and accountability of state institutions.

If confirmed, I will press the Afghan authorities, at all levels, on these issues and emphasize that good governance, respect for human rights including women's rights, and the rule of law are essential. Together with our allies and partners, and the United Nations, I will also encourage initiatives that consolidate a stronger sense among all Afghans that they have a stake in building a democratic government that respects human rights.

*Question.* The significant rise in attacks against schools in Afghanistan—particularly against girls' schools—is of grave concern. What more can be done to ensure that children can safely attend school in Afghanistan? Is there any truth to recent reports that the Taliban is working to re-open girls' schools in the south?

*Answer.* I share your concerns about attacks against schools and teachers in Afghanistan. Education for all young people and training for those who lost their

school years during the last two decades of conflict are key to Afghanistan's future stability and development.

Afghan law makes education up to the secondary level mandatory, and provides for free education up to the college, or bachelor's degree, level. According to the Ministry of Education there were 9,033 basic and secondary schools operating in Afghanistan in 2006. School enrollment increased from 4.2 million children in 2003 to over 5.2 million during the year 2006. Of these, in primary school, approximately 35 percent are girls.

Violence, however, continues to impede access to education in some parts of the country where Taliban and other extremists threaten or physically attack schools, officials, teachers, and students, especially in girls schools. The majority of school-related violence in 2006 occurred in 11 provinces in the south. The Ministry of Education reported that 20 teachers were killed, 198 schools were attacked, and a total of 370 schools were closed temporarily during the year owing to attacks, preventing almost 220,000 students from receiving an education.

The Afghan Government is prosecuting individual cases of attacks against teachers, students, and schools. In some districts, the local population has organized to protect their schools. Full access to education, however, will only be achieved through improved security. The United States is training and equipping Afghan National Police and Afghan National Army troops to help.

We have no reason to believe that the Taliban are working to re-open girl schools in the south.

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RESPONSES OF RYAN CROCKER TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED  
BY SENATOR RICHARD G. LUGAR

*Question.* You may remember our meeting during June 2003, on my trip to Baghdad, where we sat in a poorly lit, somewhat air-conditioned conference room meeting with three clerics, a Sunni, a Shiite, and a Christian who waxed at length about their vision for Iraq and how it was under Saddam. Some have suggested the winner-take-all sectarian nature to Iraqi affairs occurred much later, or was created by the United States' unseating of Saddam. What is your view?

*Answer.* The majority of Iraqis still express gratitude for their liberation from Saddam Hussein's tyrannical regime. Circumstances afterwards, however, have undermined the conditions necessary to provide Iraqis with the security and stability they deserve. Since 2003, the combination of insurgent and al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI)-led attacks on Iraqi civilians, often based on their sectarian affiliation, has led to increased tension between Iraq's Sunni and Shia populations. The most damaging was an attack on one of the most holy Islamic Shia sites, Al-Askariya Mosque, in February 2006. As a result, sectarian tensions burst into the open.

The Government of Iraq is currently committed to a new Baghdad Security Plan that is focused on quelling sectarian violence and protecting the population. A key component of this strategy is Prime Minister Maliki's commitment to pursuing all perpetrators of violence regardless of their sect or party affiliation. We are supporting the Government of Iraq in these efforts.

*Question.* The National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) mentioned a "bottom up approach" could help reverse the negative trends. Would you care to comment?

*Answer.* The NIE defined a "bottom-up approach" to reversing negative trends in Iraq as one which promotes neighborhood watch groups and establishment of grievance committees. It is certainly true that any mechanism that empowers ordinary citizens to solve their problems according to a rule of law process, vice the force of violence, is a step in the right direction as part of a larger process of national reconciliation.

We believe that a coordinated set of actions at both the national and local level need to proceed simultaneously to help reverse the negative trends the NIE identified. At the local level, Provincial Reconstruction Teams are charged with strengthening moderates, marginalizing extremists, and otherwise empowering local governments to deliver goods and services to an electorate that will hold them accountable.

This is one way in which we are implementing a bottom-up approach. Much of the efforts to empower local Iraqis to solve their problems will have to be implemented by the Iraqis themselves. A new provincial powers law is being debated in the Council of Representatives, which will help, though the task of implanting it will be a challenge. A host of reconciliation initiatives have been proposed. The process of mending frayed relationships will be one of which Iraqis will need to work for many years to come.

*Question.* I am hopeful Congress will begin meaningful debate soon on 2007 Supplemental Appropriations, which you will need to execute your mission. It has some \$824 million to operate the embassy and PRT's and another \$966 million for economic support programs, rule of law, democracy, migration and refugee assistance, and USAID operating expenses. Will this be sufficient to leverage the Iraqis to action on their budget execution?

*Answer.* The fiscal year 2007 supplemental request level of \$2.34 billion is critical to building Iraqi self-reliance and to expanding our current efforts to improve the institutional capacity of key Iraqi ministries to address the needs of the Iraqi people. We will focus on developing the Iraqi Government's critical management capabilities, such as budget formulation and execution, which will improve services and enhance the governance capacity of Iraq's executive branch. With these funds, project management units will be established to help Iraqi ministries execute their budgets. Iraq has signaled its intent to improve its capital budget spending in 2007 by including a provision in the budget law passed by parliament that permits the Ministries of Finance and Planning and Development Cooperation to transfer capital investment funds from those ministries and provincial governments failing to spend 25 percent of their capital budgets by the midpoint of the fiscal year to ministries with better prospects for executing projects with those funds.

This funding will also expand the presence of Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs). One of the main missions of PRT's is to work with local governments to improve their capacity, including their ability to design programs and request money from the central government. We are encouraged that the 2007 Iraqi budget includes over \$2 billion for regional governments.

On January 10, the Secretary named Ambassador Tim Carney as the Coordinator for Economic Transition in Iraq. Ambassador Carney, who is based in Baghdad, reports directly to the ambassador and will work closely with Iraqi officials to ensure that Iraq's considerable resources are brought to bear on the task of rebuilding Iraq. One of the issues he will focus on is helping the Iraqis better execute their budgets, particularly on capital spending for investments to improve essential services and promote economic development.

USAID operating expenses are not included in the fiscal year 2007 supplemental request, but have been included in the fiscal year 2008 GWOT costs request.

*Question.* To what extent can private sector solutions be expanded effectively in Iraq? How can we structure our assistance to improve that effort?

*Answer.* Private sector solutions can and should be expanded effectively in Iraq. Iraq has a tradition of over 4,000 years of entrepreneurship and commerce. Today, private sector-led growth could energize the Iraqi economy. This is especially true for such critical sectors as banking and microfinance, which could meet an enormous pent-up demand for credit, an economic force multiplier.

We have worked hard to support private-sector solutions in Iraq. Under the Iraq Relief and Reconstruction Fund (IRRF), we have supported a program to expand microfinance institutions to provide small- and medium-sized companies with the capital they would not otherwise be able to borrow. The goal of these programs is to help establish these institutions, which will then serve as models for other Iraqi institutions, including commercial banks, to emulate. To date, United States Government support has enabled six microcredit institutions to extend over 29,000 loans. We are also providing technical assistance programs to help Iraq enact the kinds of laws and regulations that will make it easier to register companies, conduct trade, and access credit. We have requested funds under the fiscal year 2007 supplemental to continue these activities until Iraqi institutions can fill this void.

It is also worth noting that DoD's effort to restart idle State Owned Enterprises (SOEs) and other manufacturing entities in Iraq has privatization as a long-term goal.

*Question.* Are our policies encouraging Iraqi Government officials to continue to reduce subsidies, reduce the public distribution system to a means tested entitlement for the poorest Iraqis, and provide the commercial legal framework to stimulate not only agriculture, but canning and other agribusiness?

*Answer.* As part of Iraq's Stand-By Arrangement (SBA) with the IMF, the GoI has agreed to phase out the PDS and replace it with a targeted, means-tested system to protect Iraq's most vulnerable citizens. We support GoI's efforts to phase out the PDS and have provided the GoI with a comprehensive analysis of the cost of the PDS and recommendations for how to eliminate this system. The Iraq Reconstruction and Management Office (IRMO) has an officer at the Ministry of Trade who monitors the PDS to make sure that food is getting to the various parts of Iraq.

Also, the United States Department of Agriculture has an officer in Iraq who monitors food imports, including for the PDS.

In 2003, under the CPA, the Ministry of Trade promulgated a rule stating that anyone could register to receive their PDS benefits at a new location as long as they had their ration card. However, there are reports that the pre-2003 practice of de-registering at one's former food distribution point and registering at the food distribution point in one's new neighborhood is now being reinstated. It is not certain that the GoI is redirecting food from areas with net population losses to areas with net population gains to ensure adequate supplies.

*Question.* The international community is gearing up to help with the refugee and IDP population, but what is the Iraqi Government doing?

*Answer.* The response to the IDP situation within the Government of Iraq rests on the Ministry of Displacement and Migration (MODM). The ministry, which was created in 2003, has branches in each of the Iraqi provinces, except the three Kurdish provinces. MODM periodically distributes food and nonfood items and collects data on the number of displaced persons.

For a third consecutive year, the U.S. Government has funded a capacity building program to train MODM staff and assist it to develop its mandate, operating procedures and policies, and its coordinating role with nongovernmental organizations assisting IDPs. The Iraqi Government, United States Government, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations' focal point for refugees and IDPs, will continue to work with MODM to strengthen its capacity to coordinate assistance to IDPs and refugees.

UNHCR is increasing its staff in the region to help with the increased numbers of IDPs and refugees.

The Ministry of Trade provides all Iraqis, including IDPs, monthly food rations. The Ministry of Social Affairs provides rent subsidies to a small percentage of IDPs (around 10 percent).

*Question.* Who in the embassy will you charge with the refugee and IDP issue? What is the military role in this matter?

*Answer.* We have a political officer designated as the Refugee Coordinator at our embassy in Iraq. The Refugee Coordinator works closely with counterparts at the State Department, particularly those in the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration and USAID/OFDA, as well as with counterparts at United States embassies in the region, such as Amman and Damascus. The Refugee Coordinator also works with the Multi-National Force in Iraq to address protection issues relating to Iraqi IDPs and refugees. I would refer you to the Department of Defense for more specific information on the role of the military in this matter.

*Question.* The old oil-for-food food ration system is still in place—but I understand that Iraqis cannot access it if they have fled from their homes. Can we help the Iraqis construct a more flexible distribution to help feed IDPs?

*Answer.* To date, the overwhelming majority of Iraqi internally displaced persons (IDPs) have sought shelter with host families. United States Government agencies are actively providing protection and assistance to IDPs and their host communities in Iraq, including distribution of food and other necessities. With additional resources, including funds in the fiscal year 2007 supplemental request, we will expand our assistance program activities to reach more IDPs and host communities.

Since fiscal year 2003, the Agency for International Development's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) has contributed more than \$194 million to provide humanitarian assistance to vulnerable populations in Iraq. In fiscal year 2006, OFDA's program assisted 175,000 IDPs. In fiscal year 2007, OFDA plans to increase the number of beneficiaries to 300,000.

OFDA's partner organizations fund rapid response mobile teams and provide emergency food assistance and relief commodities, including winterization supplies. OFDA's partners are also improving IDPs' access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation facilities, supporting small-scale community infrastructure, and providing water by tanker truck where necessary. In addition, they oversee livelihood programs providing income generation and cash-for-work opportunities, as well as vocational training.

In addition, the State Department, in partnership with the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Committee of the Red Cross, provides substantial relief to IDPs in Iraq, including supplying food and household items to 50,000 vulnerable families.

Neither the United States Government nor other entities directly advise the Government of Iraq (GoI) on the Public Distribution System (PDS). As part of Iraq's Stand-By Arrangement (SBA) with the IMF, the GoI has agreed to phase out the

PDS and replace it with a targeted, means-tested system to protect Iraq's most vulnerable citizens. We support the GoI's efforts to phase out the PDS. We have provided the GoI with a comprehensive analysis of the cost of the PDS and recommendations for how to eliminate this system.

In 2003, under the CPA, the Ministry of Trade promulgated a rule stating that anyone could register to receive their PDS benefits at a new location as long as they had their ration card. However, there are reports that the pre-2003 practice of requiring Iraqis to de-register at their former food distribution point and re-register at the food distribution point in their new neighborhood is now being reinstated.

*Question.* How much does it cost to train an Arabic speaker to 3:3 capability? What percentage of Arabic speakers in the Foreign Service have served at least a year in Iraq? Please be as detailed as you can in responding to this.

*Answer.* The Arabic course at the Foreign Service Institute (FSI), which is designed to bring an individual from a 0/0 (zero) level of proficiency to a 3S/3R (General Professional Proficiency in speaking and reading), is a 2-year program. The first year, in Washington, DC, is designed to bring an individual from 0 to 2S/2R (Limited Working Proficiency) and estimated instructional costs are about \$28,000 for 44 weeks of training (based on fiscal year 2006 tuition rate). The second year, overseas at FSI's field school in Tunis, typically brings these individuals to a 3S/3R and estimated instructional costs are about \$32,000 (based on fiscal year 2006 cost recovery formulation). Instruction cost estimates do not include nontraining expenditures, such as employee salaries and benefits, post allowances, per diem (in Washington), travel and POV shipping, post-housing and post-support.

State Department recruiters specifically target schools and organizations with language programs to increase the recruitment of Arabic and other critical needs language speakers. Since 2004, the Department has given bonus points in the hiring process to Foreign Service candidates with demonstrated proficiency in languages such as Arabic, Urdu, and Farsi, among others. These bonus points materially increase the chance of receiving a job offer for candidates who have passed the written examination and oral assessment.

The Department of State requires Arabic speakers to demonstrate a score of S2/R0 (Limited Working Speaking Proficiency/No Reading Proficiency) or above to meet tenure requirements. As of December 31, 2006, there were 676 Foreign Service generalists and specialists with a tested Arabic proficiency of S2/R0 or higher, including employees trained by FSI and employees who already spoke Arabic before joining the Department. These Arabic speakers fill critical language designated positions at more than 20 embassies and consulates throughout Near East Asia.

Of the 676 Arabic speakers, 74 Foreign Service employees (11 percent) have served in Iraq for at least 1 year. Twenty-nine of those employees speak Arabic at a proficiency level of S3/R3 or above and 45 employees speak Arabic at a level less than S3/R3. When the initial deployment for Iraq began in 2003, most personnel were sent for 6-month assignments. Eighty-seven of the Foreign Service's Arabic speakers (13 percent) have served in Iraq for a 6-month assignment, with 41 employees at a proficiency level less than S3/R3 and 46 employees at S3/R3 or above. If 6-month and 1-year tours in Iraq are considered together, 161 of the Foreign Service's Arabic speakers (24 percent of the total) have served in Iraq since 2003.

*Question.* Secretary Gates said that he engaged the cabinet in this issue, but have you had opportunity to engage other cabinet agencies who have been slow to provide needed expertise? What else can be done to ensure we get the most qualified individuals on the job?

*Answer.* NSPD 36 directed cabinet agencies to encourage their employees to take assignments in Iraq on a nonreimbursable basis. In response, some highly qualified United States Government employees from a number of Federal agencies have served with distinction in Iraq. But, in other cases, equally talented employees have found it difficult to volunteer for Iraq service, because their parent agencies do not have the necessary budget for overseas travel, danger pay, and other extraordinary personnel costs. In the fiscal year 2007 supplemental, we have requested funding to reimburse other agencies for these extra costs for employees going to serve in Iraq. We believe this funding will make an appreciable difference in the ability of all cabinet agencies to contribute directly to our mission in Iraq.