



**Iraq Transition: Civil War or Civil Society?  
April 21, 2004**

**Opening Statement  
Iraq: The Security Situation**

Mr. Chairman, thank you for calling this hearing. I look forward to the testimony.

In my judgment, success in Iraq requires two things:

First, we need to promote the emergence of that silent majority of Iraqis who can provide an alternative to the extremes... and who can create a participatory republic that will endure when we leave.

Second, we need to get the help from outside Iraq – in terms of troops, money, manpower and, maybe most important, legitimacy – to see this mission to completion.

Establishing security is critical to both of these goals.

Without security, Iraqis will not step forward to participate in the political process. Without security, militias will move in to fill the vacuum, as we have seen with the recent upsurge in violence.

Without security, development projects and economic reconstruction cannot go forward – the huge \$18.6 billion aid package we approved last Fall cannot be spent. And by the way, of that \$18.6 billion, less than \$3 billion has even been obligated – six months after we approved it. That may be a procurement problem. If so, the Administration should tell us and we'll fix it. But a lot of this is security. And some 20 percent apparently will be used not for reconstruction, but to pay for private security guards to protect those doing the reconstruction. I don't begrudge that – they shouldn't go out there without security. But we're paying them up to \$1500 a day. Yet our active duty forces are probably making that a month. And our Reserves are making 30-50% less than they did in the private sector back home, but they've still got the same mortgage, car and tuition payments.

Finally, without security, other nations will be reluctant to send troops and aid to help shoulder the enormous burden.

Even under the best of circumstances – even if we had succeeded in bringing a semblance of law and order to Iraq -- we would still be facing an enormous challenge.

Iraq is recovering from the trauma of 35 years of brutal dictatorship. Iraqis learned to keep their heads down and stay out of public life for the sake of self-preservation.

Old habits die hard. And while some Iraqis have stepped up to the challenge, the moderate majority has stayed silent – watching events unfold, acting on instincts finely-honed over three decades. According to the polls, about 20 percent of Iraqis support an Islamic state. Nearly 30 percent want a strong leader. But fifty percent support a democracy. We have to empower that largest group and get them engaged in building Iraq's future.

But these are not the best of circumstances. Security is still sorely lacking in Iraq. Indeed, Iraqis consistently identify its absence as the most urgent issue facing the country.

Far from being “unknowable,” as the Secretary of Defense likes to say, this absence of security was predicted in dozens of Congressional hearings, think tank studies and the work of some in the Administration itself. The Administration failed to heed these warnings. That made it more difficult to build security in Iraq.

First, the Administration failed to go in with enough forces because of Pentagon's desire to validate a new theory of warfare. Gen. Shinseki was ridiculed for suggesting it would take several hundred thousand troops to secure Iraq. He's looking prescient today. So is whoever wrote an NSC memo that, extrapolating from past missions, estimated that we would require a force of 500,000 to stabilize Iraq.

The failure to provide those forces made it difficult to establish full control of Iraq... to stop the looting... to guard more than 100 large depots with six hundred thousands tons of arms and ammunition, some of which have wound up in Rejectionist hands... or to give the Iraqi people a sense of security. And it produced the power vacuum I mentioned earlier.

Second, the Administration failed to understand that it would take years, not months, to train Iraqis to provide for their own security.

When Dick Lugar, Chuck Hagel and I went to Baghdad last summer, our experts on the ground were clear and candid.

They told us that it would take 5 years to train an Iraqi police force of 75,000, and 3 years to train a new, small Iraqi army of 40,000. They told us that 5,500 international gendarme were needed for an effective police training program.

But the Administration insisted on putting 200,000 Iraqis in uniform right away. We rushed people out the door.

Now, fewer than ten percent of the police and army have been fully trained. Virtually none are adequately equipped.

Over half of the first army battalion we have trained has quit, while another battalion refused to fight in Fallujah. Some of the Iraqis that we "trained" even took up arms against us.

Last week, General John Abizaid called Iraqi security forces a "great disappointment." And Ambassador Bremer made it clear that Iraqis will not be ready to take over security on June 30.

Mr. Chairman, it is clear that Iraqis will not have the capacity to establish security for many months, and probably several years, at least without reverting to dictatorship – and that's something none of us want to see.

While Iraqi security forces are being trained, I believe we will need substantially more outside forces. More American forces, and more international forces.

Otherwise, the militias will continue to proliferate, intimidating Iraqi moderates, hampering reconstruction, and threatening our overall objectives to establish a stable, representative Iraq.

That's my judgment of the situation. I look forward to hearing the judgment of our witnesses, and their ideas for building security in Iraq.

