HALTING THE DESCENT: U.S. POLICY TOWARD A DETERIORATING SITUATION IN IRAQ

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON
THE MIDDLE EAST AND SOUTH ASIA

OF THE

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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HALTING THE DESCENT: U.S. POLICY TOWARD A DETERIORATING SITUATION IN IRAQ

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 21, 2012

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 1:30 p.m., in room 2172 Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Steve Chabot (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Mr. CHABOT. The committee will come to order.

I'd like to take just a moment, if I may, to comment on the decision by our esteemed ranking member, the gentleman from New York, Mr. Ackerman, who has announced that he will be retiring at the conclusion of this session of Congress.

I've enjoyed working with the gentleman a great deal over the years, during his service as chairman and ranking member of this subcommittee and on the full committee as well, and other capacities in the Congress. He's one of the more articulate members of this body, and has brought with him wisdom to our debates, as well as a healthy dose of sarcasm, I would say, when needed, sometimes maybe not necessarily needed, but usually it's a very good thing. But, I've always enjoyed his contributions.

I guess we have plenty of time over the next, approximately, a year, a number of months yet in this Congress, to pay tribute to Mr. Ackerman. In fact, I'm sure we'll probably do nothing more than that for a long time, and that would not be enough, I'm sure, that the gentleman would probably think, before he walks off into the sunset. But, in the wake of his recent announcement, I thought it fitting to at least say something at least briefly now, and I know we all look forward to working with the gentleman for the rest of this Congress, and I know the rest of the members of the subcommittee and the full committee wish him well. So, we look forward to working with him in the balance of this Congress.

Thank you very much.

I want to thank the members who are here and the ones that will be coming, and the folks in the audience, and, especially, our distinguished panel here this afternoon.

This hearing is being called to assess the current situation in Iraq and how U.S. policy should address it. Since the withdrawal of all U.S. Armed Forces from Iraq at the end of 2011, the situation on the ground has, in my view, degenerated significant, in no small part due to a sectarian political crisis which has been triggered by

the actions of Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki. Shortly after the last American convoy left Iraq, Maliki issued an arrest warrant for the Iraqi Vice President, Tareq al-Hashimi, currently the country's most senior Sunni official. This was followed by another provocative and divisive decision by Maliki to remove Saleh Mutlaq, Iraq's Sunni Deputy Prime Minister, without taking the appropriate constitutionally-mandated steps.

Maliki's actions have been widely interpreted as part of a brazen effort to consolidate his power by weakening Sunni politicians whom he considers to be threats. And these incidents, along with a recent uptick in violence, have set off a crisis which, if not checked, has the potential, in my view, to sink the entire country back into widespread sectarian conflict that so many of our best men and women spent years working to contain. Just this morning, al Qaeda in Iraq took responsibility for a recent wave of attacks that have claimed the lives of over 40 people, and that's just recently.

Any of these incidents viewed in isolation could perhaps be written off as happenstance. When viewed together, however, and when viewed in the context of the withdrawal of all U.S. military personnel, it is difficult to deny at least some causal link. For over 8 years, U.S. servicemen and women have labored in Iraq and sacrificed beyond comprehension to achieve real tangible gains.

Despite this, Iraq remains in a precarious position, and it seems painfully clear to me, and to many analysts, that Iraq requires a greater American investment than this administration appears willing to make. Although the Iraqi army has progressed remarkably from where it once was, it is plainly clear that Iraq is not yet prepared to defend itself from the threat posed by its nefarious neighbor to the east. And although Iraqi democratic institutions have certainly come a long way over the past years, the current political crisis makes it all to clear that the work is not yet finished. Many of us in Congress warned long before that last convoy left that country of what would likely come to pass, and yet the administration failed to heed any of the obvious warning signs.

It is with these concerns in mind that the U.S. and Iraq labored to negotiate an agreement which would maintain a small U.S. troop presence into 2012. For months the administration had allayed Congressional concerns of potential backsliding by offering reassurance that the U.S. and Iraq would be able to resolve the outstanding differences. Unfortunately, these negotiations failed and it is my belief that they failed due to mismanagement by the White House.

Amazingly, however, the White House is now trying to tout the lack of agreement as a success, insofar as it has met a promise President Obama made as a candidate while campaigning, and it is now trying to downplay the current crisis. Saying that Iraq is "secure, stable and self reliant," as Deputy National Security Advisor Denis McDonough recently did, does not make it so. And to borrow a quote from then-Senator Clinton, it requires "the willing suspension of disbelief" to believe that our strategic interests are advanced by withdrawing our forces from Iraq at a time when Iranian agents seek to harm at every turn our country and its allies. Although I understand that Iraq is a sovereign country, I believe

there is much more we could have done to secure a larger troop presence beyond the end of this year. And as a result of our inaction, we are left with greatly diminished influence over a country that we all had once hoped would be a beacon of democracy for the Arab world and a stalwart against the repressive regimes which surround it.

With Iran looming to the east and Syria collapsing to the west, Iraq sits in the middle of a dynamic, dangerous, and deteriorating region. Iraq is, however, a developing democracy and one which the U.S. has a profound interest in assisting. This is a time not for us to carelessly cast aside allies, but rather to consolidate gains in a region which is being shaken to its very foundations. I fear, however, that this White House places too high a priority on expediency and convenience, and, as a result, we may indeed snatch defeat from the jaws of victory.

I would now like to yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from New York, Mr. Ackerman.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and, especially, thank you for those very kind words. I look forward to working with you under your guidance and the rest of the committee for the bulk of this year. I don't know what I am going to do when I leave here, but one thing is for sure, I certainly will miss all of you.

A strange narrative has taken root in some circles regarding Iraq. In this telling of events, the colossal failure and unmitigated disaster that was the war in Iraq was just about to turn out to be a huge win for America, until the terrorist-appeasing, freedom-hating, socialist Muslim Barack Obama snatched bitter defeat from the jaws of victory.

This tale is untrue. From first to last, it is a lie. Such a lie has to be admired for its audacity, but it remains untrue, not only in the fervid imaginations of the ideological zealots committed to defending the appalling wasteful, stupid tragedy that was America's decade of misadventure in Iraq is any part of this perverse claim true.

The very same hucksters of easy glory and empire on the cheap are now selling this bundle of lies to expunge their own responsibility and hang it instead around the neck of the President, who more wisely than many, including myself, opposed the misadventure in Iraq from the first place.

For my part, I can only say that after 9/11, as a New York City Congressman, I was too ready to believe the Bush administration's warning of an imminent and terrible threat. I was, to be blunt, not prepared to accept that the President and his principal advisors would lie, misrepresent, and deceitfully spin about an undertaking of such magnitude and consequence, but they did.

And much worse than the decision to go to war was the tragic, unforgivable ineptitude of both the occupation and the initial counter insurgency effort. All the many warnings of danger from actual experts on Iraq, and post combat reconstruction, both in and out of government, that were blithely dismissed in the rush to war, came back to haunt us as one by one they came to disastrous fruition.

We went to war deliberately ignorant and utterly unprepared for the aftermath, and thousands upon thousands of Iraqis have suf-

fered the consequences of our foolish misadventure. Hundreds of thousands became refugees. Thousands were murdered by their own neighbors, and vicious ethnic cleansing thousands were internally displaced and thrust into bitter poverty. These tragedies, though unintended, lie on our Nation. We are responsible.

Iraq, before the war, was an awful place, and SAddam Hussein was a vicious, bloody-handed tyrant, whose death should not be mourned by none. But, our decision to up end, and upon ourselves no less, the seething cauldron of Iraq's sectarian animosity, religious zealotry, and ethnic separatism, has to rank as one of the stupidest decisions of American foreign policy.

We sent 4,486 of our bravest men and women to their death in this farce. More than 32,000 have come home injured, crippled, or partially dismembered. The war in Iraq has cost us more than $800 billion and the tab is still running with the President asking for some $2 billion in FY 13 to continue our efforts to help Iraq get back on its feet, as a unified, independent, minimally-functioning state. Our financial obligations to our veterans is also running in the billions, and will not be fully paid for six or seven decades to come.

So, when I hear now the same cheerleaders for this immense and ruinous disaster, lamenting the failures of the Obama administration to firmly plant our military in Iraq's bosom, when I hear then decrying this President's so-called failure to understand Iraqi politics, and when I hear them expanding how our righteous powers of coercion could readily set things right in Iraq, without cost of complication, I know these ghastly lies for what they are.

Iraq's future is in great doubt, and the failure of Iraq's sectarian leaders to forge a more balanced and more viable system for sharing power and resources, will continue to produce conflict and stagnation until resolved. I believe we can and should help them where appropriate, and consistent with our own national interest and constrained resources, but, ultimately, Iraq's affairs are not ours to arrange, and they never rightfully were.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you.

I'd like to introduce our distinguished panel here now this afternoon. First, we have General Jack Keane, a Four-Star General, completed 37 years in public service in December, 2003, culminated as acting chief of staff and vice chief of staff of the U.S. Army. As the chief operating officer of the Army for 4½ years, he directed 1,500,000 soldiers and civilians in 120 countries, with an annual operating budget of $110 billion.

General Keane played a key role in formulating the surge strategy in Iraq and continues to advise senior government officials on national security and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

General Keane is a career infantry paratrooper, a combat veteran of Vietnam, decorated for valor, who spent much of his military life in operational commands. He holds a bachelor of science degree from Fordham University, and a master of arts degree from Western Kentucky University, and we welcome you here this afternoon, General.

And next will be General James Dubik, Lieutenant General James M. Dubik, a senior fellow at ISW, currently conducts re-

search, rights and briefs on behalf of the Institute. General Dubik assumed command of Multinational Security Transition Command-Iraq on June 10, 2007.

During this final command, he oversaw the generation and training of the Iraqi security forces. General Dubik has held numerous leadership and command positions with Airborne, Ranger and Light and Mechanized Infantry Units around the world. He holds a bachelor of arts degree from Gannon University, a master of arts degree from Johns Hopkins University, and a master of military arts and sciences degree from the United States Army Command and General Staff College.

His awards include the Distinguished Service Medal, Defense Superior Service Medal, four awards of the Legion of Merit, five awards in the Meritorious Service Medal, and numerous Army commendation and achievement medals.

And again, thank you, General, for being here.

Next I'd like to introduce Dr. Kimberly Kagan, who is the founder and president of the Institute for the Study of War. She is a well-published military historian, who has taught at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, Yale University, Georgetown University and American University.

Dr. Kagan previously served as a member of General Stanley McChrystal's Strategic Assessment during his campaign review in June and July, 2009. She conducted nine battlefield circulations of Iraq, and is a recipient of the Distinguished Public Service Award, the highest honor the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff can present to civilians, who do not work for the Department of Defense.

Dr. Kagan held an Olin Postdoctoral Fellowship in Military History at Yale, and was a national security fellow in Harvard's Olin Institute for Strategic Studies. She received her B.A. in classical civilization and her Ph.D. in history from Yale University.

Thank you for being here, Doctor.

And, our fourth and final witness will be Dr. Colin Kahl. Dr. Colin H. Kahl is a senior fellow at the Center for a New American Security, focusing on Middle East security and defense policy, and an associate professor in the Security Studies Program at Georgetown University's Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service.

From February, 2009, through December, 2011, Dr. Kahl served as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for the Middle East. In this capacity, he played a lead role in designing and overseeing the draw down and transition strategy in Iraq, and shaping the Pentagon's efforts to counter Iran's nuclear weapons ambitions.

In June, 2011, Dr. Kahl was awarded the Secretary of Defense Medal for Outstanding Public Service by Secretary Robert Gates. Dr. Kahl holds a Ph.D. from Columbia University and a B.A. from the University of Michigan.

And, we welcome you here as well, Doctor.

As I said, we have a very distinguished panel here this afternoon, and each witness will have 5 minutes. There will be a yellow light that should be displayed when you have 1 minute to wrap up. The red light will come on. We would appreciate it if you would complete your testimony by that time.

And, General Keane, we will begin with you.

STATEMENT OF GENERAL JACK KEANE, USA, RETIRED (FORMER VICE CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY)

General KEANE. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Minority, congratulations, Mr. Ackerman, on your distinguished career, and members of the committee thank you for inviting me to testify today.

It is always an honor to join you, as it is to be with my distinguished colleagues whom I greatly admire, General Retired Jim Dubik, a true American patriot, continues to serve so admirably, and Dr. Kim Kagan, who I spent many weeks with in Iraq conducting assessments for General Petraeus, and who provides truly outstanding leadership as President at ISW, directing their unique and significant contributions. I am also delighted to be here with Dr. Kahl, although I don't have the pleasure of knowing him as well as I know my other two associates.

My remarks today are intended to provide incite to the current state of play in Iraq, and what the implications are for the United States.

First and foremost, Iraq is a country of strategic consequence, with an educated class of people, rich in oil reserves, and one of only two Arab/Muslim countries that elects its own government.

It is a tragic foreign policy blunder that the United States forfeited our hard-earned influence in Iraq by not leaving a residual military force in place. The purpose of this force was to preserve and strengthen a fledgling democracy, to continue to assist the growth and development of the Iraq security forces, and most importantly to counter the Iranian influence.

The precedent for such a residual force was successfully demonstrated in post conflict Germany, Italy, Japan and Korea.

The origins of this blunder began with the arrival of our U.S. Ambassador, who succeeded Ambassador Ryan Crocker, who had just completed a 2-year successful assignment during the critical surge period from 2007 to 2009. Almost immediately, our envoy began to put the Maliki government at arms length, despite the fact that the Iraq Government the previous year initiated, and insisted on, a strategic framework agreement of what was, in fact, an enduring strategic partnership with the United States.

The United States Government rhetoric, particularly, from the President of the United States, emphasized ending the war and pulling out the troops, despite a very successful, first ever, provincial election in January in 2009, where all previously appointed governors were defeated, overwhelmingly secular candidates were elected, and Iran surrogates suffered a stunning defeat. This major political achievement was largely ignored by U.S. policymakers.

In time, Prime Minister Maliki, I am confident, came to recognize that his relationship with the United States Government had change dramatically from what was previously his experience under the Bush administration. This came to a head when General Lloyd Austin, the Commander of Multinational Force Iraq, recommended a residual force of 26,000, while the administration's negotiating team, who came to Iraq, put a force of 10,000 on the table.

Prime Minister Maliki, who was always a handful, and is a bit of a nefarious caricature, instinctively knew this was not a serious

proposal with real capabilities and results, and we are painfully aware that no residual force remained.

So, where are we now? Not surprising, the country with the most influence on Iraq's leadership is no longer the United States. It is sadly Iran. Meanwhile, these are the major trends. Prime Minister Maliki has consolidated power and cracked down on his major opposition party, Iraqiya. Iraqiya is overwhelmingly Sunni. He does not want the Sunnis without some political influence, he just wants them to be the Sunnis he can manage and control.

Prime Minister Maliki, while opposed to calls for federalism in principle, is not opposed to Sunni control of Anwar and Nineweh Provinces, but he is opposed, and will continue to block, any such movement in the Sunni/Shia provinces Diyala and Saladin. He knows full well this can spread to the southern Shia Provinces if he permitted them to get away with it.

While Muqtada Al-Sadr was the critical support Maliki needed to form a government, they are, in fact, political enemies. Maliki sees him as a greatest long-term political threat, and, thus, is trying to modulize Sadr while encouraging other Shia factions. Sadr is pushing back by claiming the Maliki government is incompetent and threatening that he will pull out of the government.

The Kurds are weakened politically, and any opportunity they may have to entertain to seize Kirkuk has past. They share 17 percent of the oil revenue and are dependent on Baghdad.

While Maliki's consolidation of power, and the purge of Sunni opposition leaders is the most significant internal development, the major external development is the influence of Iran, and the United States is incapable of challenging Iran's political pressure.

The Turks probably have more influence than the United States sadly. No Iraq politician can take a step against Iran. Their influence is on the rise, and Iraq and Iran's foreign policy are aligned. Indeed, Iraq is supporting the Iranian pressure on toppling the Bahrain monarchy with the stated purpose of expelling the U.S. 5th Fleet.

The infamous Ahmed Chalabi is very outspoken in support of it. And, of course, most ironic is Iraq's support of the Assad regime, who facilitated the al-Qaeda transportation networks through Syria into Iraq, and provided refuge for many of the Iraq Sunni insurgent leaders and financial backers.

Iraq's support is more than just political and financial, but provides Shia militia to assist the Iranian Quds force and the Lebanese Hezbollah to kill the Syrian people and fight against a free Syrian army.

Security in Iraq has deteriorated and is estimated to be two to five times as high as reported. The reality is, the United States has lost much of the intelligence eyes and ears previously enjoyed.

As a result of these trends, certainly the United States' relationship has changed dramatically, and Prime Minister Maliki is playing a dangerous political game to enhance his power, to diminish Sunni and Kurd influence, while not totally disenfranchising the Sunnis, which could lead to a civil war.

Moreover, he will clash at some point with Sadr, which could force a constitutional crisis, if Sadr pulls out of the Coalition and

Maliki refuses to form a new government or step down, which is a likely outcome.

Let's face it. Maliki is manipulating the United States, and nothing was more evident than a number of months ago when he visited the United States and took a victory lap with our President on the war being waged and being ended, and then returns to Iraq and purges his political opponents.

So, what are the implications for the United States? First and foremost, recognize that the character of the U.S. relationship with Iraq has changed, and, therefore, so must our means to influence. I believe we must move to much more of a hands on, condition-based, and likely more confrontational relationship.

For example, we just delivered the last M1 Abrams tank, No. 140, and we completed another foreign military sale to provide F16s, despite the fact that Iraq is operating against U.S. interests in Syria, Bahrain, aligning itself with Iran, and deposing political opponents.

While we, the United States, no longer enjoy the political clout a residential military force would provide, we are not without influence. Where is the public condemnation by the United States and the International Community, particularly, those who shared in the sacrifice to free and stabilize Iraq? Where is the condemnation and sanctions against Iraq for supporting the killing of innocent Syria citizens, and supporting the overthrow of the regime in Bahrain?

If Iraq is now aligned with our number one strategic enemy in the region, Iran, our relationship must change despite the extraordinary support we provided in liberating Iraq in 2003, and stabilizing it against internal and external insurgency. Facing up to this harsh truth now is, and must be, our first priority. However, we must embrace Iraq on multiple levels beyond the government-to-government relationship. Key to that is the civil society relationship, which is our private sector, non-government organizations, businesses, investment councils, cultural and education exchanges.

Despite the fact the government, obviously, controls the military, we should foster a middle to middle relationship, which should include Iraq officers participating in education and training opportunities in the States. Training assistance visits to Iraq, and even opportunities for combined training exercises in Iraq, should be part of our plan.

There is a next generation of officers who fought side by side with us, who will eventually be the Iraq senior leaders, and we should develop this relationship.

Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of General Keane follows:]

Congressional Testimony

House Committee on Foreign Affairs

By

John M. Keane
General
US Army, Retired

21 March 2012

1330 hours

Mr. Chairman, ranking minority and members of the committee thank you for inviting me to testify today. It is always an honor to join you, as it is, to be with my distinguished colleagues whom, I greatly admire. General, retired, Jim Dubik, a true American patriot who continues to serve so admirably and Dr. Kim Kagan who I spent many weeks with in Iraq conducting assessments for General Petraeus and who provides truly outstanding leadership as President, ISW, directing their unique and significant contribution.

My remarks today are intended to provide insight to the current "state of play" in Iraq and what the implications are for the United States.

First and foremost, Iraq is a country of strategic consequence with an educated class of people, rich in oil reserves (the 2nd largest) and one of only two Arab Muslim countries that elects its own government. It is a tragic foreign policy blunder that the United States forfeited our hard earned influence in Iraq by not leaving a residual military force in place.

The purpose of this force was to preserve and strengthen a fledgling democracy, to continue to assist the growth and development of the Iraq Security Forces and, most, importantly, to counter the Iranian influence. The precedent for such a residual force was successfully demonstrated in post conflict Germany, Italy, Japan and Korea.

The origins of this blunder began with the arrival of Ambassador Christopher Hill who succeeded Ambassador Ryan Crocker, who had completed a 2 year successful assignment during the critical surge period from 2007 to 2009. Almost immediately, Ambassador Hill began to put the Malaki government at arm's length, despite the fact that the Iraq government, the previous year, initiated and insisted on a strategic framework agreement or what was in fact an enduring strategic partnership with the United States. USG rhetoric, particularly, from the POTUS, emphasized ending the war and pulling out the troops, despite a very successful, first ever, provincial election,

where all previously appointed governors were defeated, overwhelming secular candidates were elected and Iran's surrogates suffered a stunning defeat. This major political achievement was largely ignored by US policy makers.

In time, PM Maliki, I am confident came to recognize that his relationship with the USG had changed, dramatically, from what was previously under the Bush administration. This came to a head, when General Alston the commander, multi-national force, Iraq, recommended a residual force of 26 thousand while the administration's negotiating team who came to Iraq, put a force of 10 thousand on the table. PM Maliki, who was always a handful and is a bit of a nefarious caricature, instinctively knew this was not a serious proposal with real capabilities and the result, as we are painfully aware, is no residual force.

So where are we now? Not surprising the country with the most influence on Iraq's leadership is no longer the United States it is, sadly, Iran. Meanwhile these are the major trends:

- -PM Maliki, has consolidated power and cracked down on his major opposition party, Iraqiya While Iraqiya is overwhelmingly Sunni he does not want the Sunnis without some political influence, he just wants them to be the Sunnis he can manage and control and he is pushing the Shia out of the Iraqiya party so it can be isolated as just a Sunni opposition group.

- - PM Maliki while opposed to calls for Federalism, in principle, is not opposed to Sunni control of Anbar & Ninewa provinces but he is opposed and will continue to block any such movement in the Sunni / Shia provinces of Dyala and Saladin. He knows full well this could spread to the southern Shia provinces if he permitted them to get away with it.

- -While Muqtada al-Sadr was the critical support Maliki needed to form a government, they are political enemies. Maliki sees him as his greatest long term political threat and thus is trying to marginalize Sadr while encouraging other Shia factions, notably, one under the influence of Qais al-Khazali, who was involved in the killing of 5 US soldiers just prior to the surge, captured, and released. Sadr is pushing back by claiming the Maliki government is incompetent and threatening that he will pull out of the government.

- -The Kurds are weakened politically and any opportunity they may have entertained to seize Kirkuk has passed. They share 17% of the oil revenue and are dependent on Baghdad.

- -While Maliki's consolidation of power, and the purge of Sunni opposition leaders is the most significant internal development, the major external development is the influence of Iran and that the United States is incapable of challenging Iran's political pressure. The Turks probably have more

influence than the United States. No Iraq politician can take a step against Iran, their influence is on the rise and Iraq and Iran's foreign policy are aligned. Indeed, Iraq is supporting the Iranian pressure on toppling the Bahrain monarchy with the stated purpose of expelling the US 5th fleet. The infamous, Ahmed Chalabi, is very outspoken in support of this. And, of course, most ironic is Iraq's support of the Assad regime, who facilitated the Al Qaeda transportation networks through Syria into Iraq and provided refuge for many of the Iraq Sunni insurgent leaders and financial backers. Iraq's support is more than just political and financial but provides Shia militia to assist the Iranian Qouds force and the Lebanese Hezbollah to kill the Syrian people and fight against the Free Syria Army.

- -Security in Iraq has deteriorated and is estimated to be 2 to 5 times as high as reported. The reality is the United States has lost much of the intelligence eyes and ears we previously enjoyed.

As a result of the these trends, certainly the United States relationship has dramatically changed and PM Maliki is playing a dangerous political game to enhance his power, to diminish Sunni and Kurd influence while not totally disenfranchising the Sunnis, which could lead to a civil war. Moreover, he will clash at some point with Sadr which could force a constitutional crises, if Sadr pulls out of the coalition and Maliki refuses to form a new government or step down, a likely outcome.

Lets face it Maliki is manipulating the United States and nothing was more evident a number of months ago, when he visited the United States and took a victory lap, with POTUS, on the war being over and then returns to Iraq and purges his political opponents.

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M1 Abrams tanks, number 140, and we completed another foreign military sale to provide F16's despite the fact that Iraq is operating against US interests in Syria and Bahrain and aligning itself with Iran and deposing political opponents, throwing the country into a bedlam of armed violence.

While we the United States, no longer enjoy the political clout a residual military force would provide, we are not without influence. Where is the public condemnation by the US and the international community, particularly, those who shared in the sacrifice to free and stabilize Iraq. Where is the condemnation and economic sanctions against Iraq for supporting the killing of innocent Syria citizens, and supporting the overthrow of the regime in Bahrain? If Iraq is now aligned with our number one strategic enemy in the region, Iran, our relationship must change despite

the extraordinary support we provided in liberating Iraq in 2003 and stabilizing it against an internal and extended insurgency. Facing up to this harsh truth now is and must be our first priority.

Thank you and I look forward to your questions.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you, General.

And, now we'll hear from General Dubik.

STATEMENT OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL JAMES DUBIK, USA, RETIRED, SENIOR FELLOW, INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF WAR

General DUBIK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ackerman, and members of this distinguished committee. I'm very grateful for the opportunity to speak about Iraq, specifically, the Iraqi security forces.

I believe that while the situation in Iraq is complex, the main issues with respect to the security forces are relatively straightforward, and the solutions are also relatively clear.

My testimony derives from the fact that Iraq is an important country to the United States. Our security goals relative to Iraq are also important. As last stated by the administration, those goals are listed in my written testimony.

The negative influence of Iran and the continue insurgence attacks, the porous borders, the enduring presence of al-Qaeda, all are threats to our interest, and to the Iraqi progress.

U.S. strategic inattention is also a threat. Though the U.S. and Coalition part to the fighting is over, the war is not, ending the fighting and ending the war are two related but distinct activities. To end this war in a way to create a better peace, and to secure our Nation's interest, we must remain involved in Iraq.

Yes, in my view, a small U.S. footprint, low-cost approach, is correct, and I do not advocate returning to large numbers and large spending. But, a small footprint and low cost should not mean inadequate relative to our own national security objectives.

This year the trend in violence is increasing, and the progression of attacks is even more disturbing, from isolated individual attacks to isolated small-scale coordinated attacks, to more frequent small-scale coordinated attacks, and now just yesterday to a large scale nation-wide coordinated attack.

The next move along this continuum is sustained large-scale coordinated attacks. This is not good direction. These attacks are aimed at eroding Iraqi sovereignty, self-reliance, increasing instability, creating more distance between the U.S. and Iraq, and to prevent Iraqi economic growth. And, I think the case can be made that these attacks will move Iraq closer to Iran than to the United States. That is, these attacks are directly countered to our security goals.

Granted that these are Iraq's problems to solve, and the solutions are mostly political. Granted also, the Iraqi security forces, military and police, have performed better than many had predicted, but the Iraqi security forces still need our help, and there are gaps in our current strategy.

The 150 plus members of the Office of Security Cooperation in Iraq, and the current Department of State's approach to police training, are unlikely to secure our interest. Both need some modifications.

In the military side of things, we cannot execute our current plan to use exercises in a rotational presence, without some form of strategic framework agreement or status of forces agreement. So, the

first requirement is to be more aggressive in negotiating the proper set of agreements so that our security interests and the security interests of Iraq both be achieved.

Even as this negotiation goes on, I believe there are five important areas where we can advanced in the meantime. First, intelligence. The U.S. should provide, in my view, in all the right ways to protect that which needs protection, direct support to the Iraqi police, military counterterrorist units. Intelligence-based operations are key in all forms of war, more important counterinsurgencies, and, perhaps, most important at the end are the counterinsurgencies. The recent nationwide coordinated attacks demonstrate that Iraqi intelligence is deficient. Our goals would be better served if we provided direct intelligence support.

Second, border security. The Iraqi borders are too porous. A nation that cannot control its borders is less sovereign than one that can. Not only would better border security contribute to producing illicit trade and corruption, it would also decrease various nefarious actors from crossing into Iraq, and from Iraq into Syria. The Iraqis want to build this capability, and we should do all we can to accelerate their desires.

Third, foreign military sales. The U.S. foreign military sales program is too lethargic, too bureaucratic, to serve our Nation's interests in Iraq. Three improvements are necessary. First, during the surge period the Defense Department set up a special task force to accelerate processing of cases and delivery of equipment. This special task force should be resurrected and placed once again directly under the Secretary of Defense. Second, more case officers should be assigned to the Office of Security Cooperation in Iraq to help expedite case development within the Ministries of Defense and Interior. And third, Iraq should be granted a special status that allows them to pay for their FMS cases, as those cases are executed. Right now, they are still required to place 100 percent of the cost of a case up front, even if this case is to be executed over a number of years. Granting them this special status would make purchase of U.S. equipment more attractive.

Fourth, police development. A better police force is linked to each of the U.S. security interests. Yet, for whatever set of reasons that are opaque to me, any objective assessment of the current State Department plan to assist the Iraqi police must be called inadequate. The Iraqi police are brave and dedicated. True corruption remains too present, but we should remember that the Iraqi police have suffered 9,000 casualties, deaths, between 2003 and 2011, far more than any other professional group. They remain one of the main insurgent targets. The Iraqi police are trying desperately to make their country safer. They are well on their way, but they still need our help as well.

When last I spoke to the Deputy Minister of Interior, Adnan Al-Asadi, he acknowledged his police need help in many areas, and that he would like this help to come from the United States. But, as he said publicly, the current plans are too costly and deliver too little to what his police actually need.

Number five, military professionalization and leader development. This is a generational challenge that has already started, with the expansion of the US./Iraqi relations that formed during

the war. English language proficiency is a limiting factor in expanding Iraqi attendance at U.S. or NATO schools, but movement toward professionalization can be accelerated by expanding capacities of schools in Iraq. Senior Iraqi military officials would welcome this kind of acceleration.

There are other areas in which the Iraqi security force capacity is deficient, and I've listed them in my testimony. But, the top five that I mentioned here are near-term security force capabilities that are both in our Nation's interest and can be largely paid for by Iraq.

We nearly lost this war once. Defeat was averted by combined efforts of U.S./Iraqi and coalition security forces, diplomats, U.S. and coalition Iraqi political leaders, and the Iraqi people themselves, turned against insurgency. Following the success of the surge period, we drew down our forces in a responsible way, and although the US. coalition fighting is over, our relationship should not end.

Thank you very much. I look forward to questions and discussion.

[The prepared statement of Lt. General James Dubik follows:]

James Dubik

Lieutenant General, U.S. Army (retired)

Senior Fellow, Institute for the Study of War

March 21, 2012

Halting the Descent: U.S. Policy toward the Deteriorating Situation in Iraq

Testimony before the House Foreign Affairs Committee,

Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia

Thank you. I am grateful for the opportunity to speak about U.S. policy toward Iraq.

My testimony is short because I believe that, while the situation in Iraq may be complex, the main issues with respect to the Iraqi security forces are relatively clear and that the solutions are also relatively straight forward.

My testimony derives from the fact that Iraq is an important country to the United States.

Iraq, situated between Saudi Arabia and Iran, is in a key geo-strategic location.

Our security goals relative to Iraq are also important.

Last stated by the Administration, those goals are to:

--prevent terrorists' safe havens,

--assist Iraq in becoming a sovereign, stable, self-reliant, and representative government,

--help integrate Iraq into the global economy, and

--build an enduring partnership with Iraq contributing to security in the region.

The negative influence of Iran continued insurgent attacks, porous borders, and the enduring presence of al Qaeda—all are threats to our interests and to Iraqi progress. Us strategic in-attention is also a threat.

Though the U.S. and coalition part of the fighting is over, the war is not. Ending the fighting and ending a war are two related, but distinct, activities.

To end this war in a way to create a better peace and secure our nation's interests, we must remain involved in Iraq. Yes, the "small U.S. footprint, low cost" approach is correct, and I do not advocate a return to large numbers and large spending.

But small footprint and low cost should not mean inadequate relative to our own nation's security interests.

This year, the trend in violence is increasing. There have been more attacks against Iraq's government and security forces as well as against innocent Iraqis than last year.

These attacks are aimed at eroding Iraqi sovereignty and self reliance, increasing instability, creating more distance between the U.S. and Iraq, and preventing economic growth in Iraq. And I think a case can be made that these attacks are also, at least partially, trying to move Iraq closer to Iran than to the United States.

Granted, these are Iraq's problems to solve, and the solutions are mostly political.

Granted also, the Iraqi security force, military and police have performed better than many predicted. They have proven that they are capable.

But the Iraqi security forces still need our help, and there are gaps in our current strategy.

The 150-plus members of the Office of Security Cooperation-Iraq and the current Department of State police approach to police training are unlikely to secure our interests. Both need some modification.

On the military side of things, we cannot execute the current plan to use exercises and a rotational presence without some form of strategic framework agreement or status of forces agreement. Such an agreement will also help in our police development efforts.

So the first requirement is to be more aggressive in negotiating a proper agreement so that the security interests of both countries can be better achieved.

This negotiation should go on even as other more immediate actions that will advance both countries' security interests take place.

Let me list the top five from my perspective:

1. Intelligence. The U.S. should provide, in all the right ways to protect that which needs protection, direct support to Iraqi police, military, and counter-terrorist units.

   Intelligence-based operations are key in all forms of war, but even more important in complex counterinsurgency campaigns and perhaps most important in the final phases of ending an insurgency.

Our goals of preventing terrorist safe havens; assisting Iraq in becoming more sovereign, stable, and self-reliant; and building an enduring partnership would be better served if we provided direct intelligence support as the Iraqis improve their own capabilities.

2. Border security. Iraqi borders are too porous. A nation that cannot control its borders is less sovereign than one that can. Not only would better border security contribute to reducing illicit trade and corruption in Iraq, it would also decrease various nefarious actors from crossing into Iraq.

   The Iraqis want to build this capability; we should do all we can to accelerate their desires.

3. Foreign military sales. The U.S. foreign military sales program is too lethargic to serve our national interests in Iraq. Three improvements are necessary:

   A. During the surge period, the Defense Department set up a special task force to accelerate the processing of FMS cases and the delivery of equipment, supplies, and services to the Iraqi security forces. This special task force should be resurrected and placed, as it was before, directly under the Secretary of Defense.

   B. More case officers should be assigned to the Office of Security Cooperation-Iraq to help expedite case development within the Iraqi ministries of Defense and Interior.

   C. Iraq should be granted the special status that allows them to pay for FMS cases as those cases are executed. Right now, I believe they are still required to place 100 percent of the cost of a case into a U.S. bank up front, even if the case is to be executed over multiple years. Granting them this enhanced status would also make purchase of U.S. equipment much more attractive.

4. Police development. A better police force is linked to each of the U.S. security interests that I mentioned at the start.

   Yet, for whatever set of reasons that are opaque to me, any objective assessment of the current Department of State plans to assist in the development of the Iraqi police must be called inadequate.

   The Iraqi police are brave and dedicated public servants. True, corruption remains too present, but we should all remember that the Iraqi police have suffered about 9,000 deaths between 2003 and 2011, by far the largest toll of any of the professional groups. They live and work under very tough conditions.

They remain one of the main insurgent targets. In my time in Iraq, for example, the Ministry of Interior's director of internal affairs was the subject of nearly a dozen assassination attempts.

The Iraqi police are trying desperately to make their country safer. They are well on the way to becoming a "serve and protect" police force. They have transformed their federal police.

When last I spoke to the deputy minister of interior, Adnan al Asidi, he acknowledged that his police need help in many areas and that he would like that help to come from the united states, but as he has said publicly, the current plan is too costly and delivers too little toward what his police needs.

In my view, we need to engage the Iraqis more fully in determining a police development plan that meets their needs and do so in a way that is much more cost effective than the current plan.

5. Military professionalization and leader development. Senior leader and staff officer development is the key to achieving the U.S. and Iraqi long-term goals of contribution to regional stability and is a means toward our goal of establishing an enduring partnership with the Iraq.

   This is a generational challenge that has already started with the expansive U.S.-Iraqi relationships that formed during the war.

   English language proficiency is a limiting factor in expanding Iraqi attendance at U.S. or NATO schools, but movement toward professionalization can be accelerated by expanding the capacity of schools in Iraq. These can be taught by U.S. and NATO officers and civilians, and it could be done in Arabic. Each course could have a mandatory English language element.

   Senior Iraqi military official would welcome this kind of acceleration.

There are other areas in which the Iraqi security force capacity is deficient.

--Iraq cannot control its air space.

--It cannot fully protect is oil platforms in the gulf.

--Its military logistics and sustainment capacities remain underdeveloped.

--At some time, the Iraqi army will have to transition from its internal security focus to an adequate self-defense force.

All of these will take time. They will require both more equipment and better training. And they will require continued U.S. involvement in Iraq.

But the top five that I mention are near-term security force capabilities that are in both nations' interests and can be largely paid for by the Iraqis. They fit our "innovative, small footprint and low cost" approach.

We nearly lost the Iraq war once. Defeat was averted by the combined efforts of Iraq, U.S., and coalition security forces—military and police, uniformed and civilian; and by the hard work of diplomats—again us and coalition—as well as Iraqi political leaders at the local, provincial, and national levels. Defeat was also averted by the Iraqi people themselves who turned against the insurgents.

Following the success of the surge period, we drew down our forces in a responsible way.

Although the U.S. and coalition part of the fighting is over, the war is not. Ending the fighting and ending a war are two related, but distinct, activities.

To end this war in a way to create a better peace and secure our nation's interests, we must remain involved in Iraq. Again, the "small U.S. footprint, low cost" approach is correct. But small and low cost should not mean inadequate relative to our interests.

Thank you. I look forward to questions and discussion.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you, General.

Dr. Kagan, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF KIMBERLY KAGAN, PH.D., PRESIDENT, INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF WAR

Ms. KAGAN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member.

Iraq is not heading in a good direction. Administration talking points attempt to deflect criticism by the President, by comparing conditions today with conditions at the height of violence and the height of the surge in 2007.

Vice President Biden, National Security Advisor Tony Blinken, recently noted in a public speech that weekly security incidents have fallen from 1,600 in 2007 and 2008 to 100 today. He, and others, dismissed the notion that Iraq is heading toward insurgency, terrorism and civil war. Reality is different.

The discussion about security incidence is, in fact, misleading. No one suggests that Iraq today is as bad as it was at the very height of violence. Neither is it true, however, that violence is continuing to fall.

Dr. Mike Knights, the Lafer Fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, recently noted that according to an incident-based database that he produces at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, violence in February was nearly double that of what it was in November, November, 2011.

Comparing violence today with violence in 2007 misses the point. The fact is that violence has been increasing since the Obama administration announced that it would be withdrawing completely from Iraq, and the trends are getting worse.

These comparisons are also misleading, because they are not apples to apples comparisons. You can see in my written testimony for a fuller description of this problem, but the violence trends that we are seeing today are now almost all Iraqi-on-Iraqi violence, which is exactly the metric we need to be looking at in order to see indications of incipient civil war.

And, we can see such indications in the locations in which violence is flaring. According to Dr. Knights, violence is increasing in the areas that were traditional sectarian flash points in Iraq, and bases for both al-Qaeda in Iraq and Baathist insurgents. Diyala Province is increasingly unstable, with violence in both Sunni and Shia areas.

Historical AQI bases in Fallujah, Taji and Abu Ghraib, appear to be reactivating. Another traditional AQI base in Suwayrah in northern Wasit Province, has been reactivated and is being used to protect terrorism into the southern Shia heartland. And, in what used to be known as the Triangle of Death, we see, again, the reemergency of a flash point and a facilitation area for attacks into Baghdad.

This activity suggests that what we had predicted would occur after the complete withdrawal of U.S. forces has, indeed, begun. Al-Qaeda in Iraq, in the Islamic State of Iraq, which had been badly damaged by Iraqi and Coalition operations during the surge, are reconstituting in their historical safe havens. We see a spectrum of violence, including ISI attacks, against collaborators, so-called, and

former Sons of Iraq, ISI attacks against Iraqi Government and security officials, conflict with Muqtada Al-Sadr's movement, and conflict along the Arab-Kurd seams, particularly, in the disputed territory.

Three months after the withdrawal of American forces, it is far too soon to declare that civil war is not coming to Iraq, particularly, in light of the indications suggesting that it is.

At least some of the instability is being driven by an increasingly sectarian political struggle in Baghdad. Prime Minister Maliki regained his premiership after failing to secure a plurality of the vote in the 2010 parliamentary election, by agreeing to a number of conditions that would ceded some real power to a wider cross sectarian and cross ethnic coalition, including the Iraqiya party, the party that did win the plurality of votes, and the Kurds. This concord, the agreement has been unilaterally stopped by Maliki, who has refused to abide by its conditions or implement its provisions, and is talking about a national dialogue or conference at some time to come, in which this issue will come back to the fore.

More so, Maliki has accelerated a pattern of sectarian and political purging within the security forces, and within the highest level of the Iraqi Government. For example, the movement of the Baghdad brigade against Vice President—Sunni Vice President Tareq al-Hashemi, and his home causing the Vice President to lead into the Kurdish region, and right now Prime Minister Maliki is preparing to try Vice President Tareq al-Hashemi in absentia.

He subsequently deposed Sunni Deputy Prime Minister Saleh Mutlaq, and banned him from participating in the Council of Ministers, even though he did not obtain a parliamentary vote of new confidence as the constitution requires.

Maliki has promoted loyal Iraqi security force commanders by appointing them in acting positions, avoiding the requisite parliamentary approval, and at the same time he has fired or arrested hundreds of current and former security force personnel over alleged ties to Baathism or terrorism.

The Sunni Arab population in Iraq is now under great pressure. Maliki disbanded the Awakening Councils and stopped the efforts to incorporate Sons of Iraq into the government and security forces, as U.S. forces were withdrawing. The elimination of Hashemi law from the government strips the more conservative and centrally located Sunnis of emblems of their government representation. Increasing ISI and Baathist activity have been met with increasing Iraqi security forces activities in Sunni areas, including widespread arrests, targeted strikes, sweeps, and the removal of local commanders in Anbar and elsewhere.

Maliki has also attempted to weaken and fracture provincial councils in Dayl and Saladin, prompting them to declare their intention to seek Federal status, and Anbar has followed their lead.

Maliki has denounced these attempts to exercise powers explicitly granted to the provinces by the constitution, and used force to prevent them from moving forward. In this context, it is not surprising that elements of the Sunni population may be feeling increasingly disenfranchised, vulnerable to violent groups, and more susceptible to the blandishments and intimidation of insurgents and terrorists.

This is exactly the Iraq that the United States did not want to leave behind. Presidents Bush and Obama wanted an Iraq that was no longer a safe haven for terrorists, but the terrorists are returning. More still, AQI has begun projecting violence from Iraq into Syria, reversing the historical rat lines that its reported attacks against the U.S., and Iraqi forces in Iraq.

The U.S. wanted an Iraq in which the Sunni minority felt that its stake in government was safe and effective, and in which elections mattered, and in which violence would not be used to revise political settlements. Instead, the U.S. has tolerated, and even encouraged, the overturning in electoral result, and has stood by Maliki and his government, as it has used force to revise political settlement it had agreed to.

Tony Blinken, Vice President Biden's National Security Advisor, said that Iraq today is less violent, more democratic, and more prosperous, and the U.S. more deeply engaged than at any time in recent history. The fact that Iraq is less violent, more prosperous, more democratic, and with more U.S. engagements than it was under Saddam Hussein is the result of the efforts of the previous administration, not this one. But, Iraq is more violent, less democratic, and the U.S. less engaged than it was 6 months ago, and it has poisoned the knife's edge of a civil war. The United States has not achieved its core national security objective in Iraq.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Kimberly Kagan follows:]

Kimberly Kagan

President, Institute for the Study of War

March 21, 2012

Halting the Descent: U.S. Policy toward the Deteriorating Situation in Iraq

Testimony before the House Foreign Affairs Committee,

Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia

Iraq is not heading in a good direction. Administration talking points attempt to deflect criticism from the president by comparing conditions today with conditions at the height of the violence (and the surge) in 2007. Vice President Biden's National Security Advisor Tony Blinken recently noted that weekly security incidents had fallen from 1,600 in 2007 and 2008 to 100 today. He and other officials point to the continuation of politics in Baghdad as proof that the situation is stabilizing. They dismiss the notion that Iraq is heading toward resurgent insurgency, terrorism, and civil war. Those are talking points. Reality is different.

The discussion about security incidents is, in fact, misleading. No one suggests that Iraq today is as bad as it was at the very height of violence. Neither is it true, however, that violence is continuing to fall. Dr. Michael Knights, the Lafer Fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, recently noted that, according to the incident database produced by the Washington Institute for Near East Policy (which fuses reporting by the Iraqi Security Forces and open sources), violence in February was nearly double what it had been in November. The Iraq Body Count database showed January 2012 as the most violent month since August 2010, and, again, close to double the violence of November 2011. Comparing violence today with violence in 2007 misses the point. The fact is that violence has been increasing since the Obama Administration announced that it would be withdrawing completely from Iraq, and the trends are getting worse.

These measures of violence are also misleading because they are not apples-to-apples comparisons. At the height of the surge there were close to 165,000 American troops in Iraq constantly patrolling. Their "weekly security incident" roll-ups included IEDs that were found and cleared as well as those that detonated—more often than not aimed at U.S. convoys and military installations. The complete withdrawal of those forces has naturally denied insurgents hundreds of thousands of targets but has also denied us access to information. The figures we now have are almost entirely Iraqi-on-Iraqi violence, which is the metric that we need to be watching in order to see indications of incipient civil war.

And we can see such indications in the locations in which violence is flaring. According to Dr. Knights, violence is increasing significantly in the areas that were traditional sectarian flashpoints and bases for both al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) and Ba'athist insurgents. Diyala Province is increasingly unstable, with violence in both Sunni and Shi'a areas. Historical AQI bases in Fallujah, Taji, and Abu Ghraib appear to be re-activating. Another traditional AQI base in Suwayrah in northern Wasit Province has been re-activated and is being used to project terrorism into the southern Shi'a heartland. And what used to be known as the Triangle of Death, including the historical operational hub at Jurf al Sukr, is re-emerging as a flashpoint and facilitation area for attacks into Baghdad.

This activity suggests that what we had predicted would occur after the complete withdrawal of U.S. forces has begun. Al Qaeda in Iraq and the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI), which had been badly damaged by Iraqi and Coalition operations during the surge, are reconstituting in their historical safe havens. We see a spectrum of violence including ISI attacks against "collaborators" and former Sons of Iraq, ISI attacks against Iraqi government and security officials, conflict within Moqtada al Sadr's movement, and conflict along the Arab-Kurd seam and particularly in the disputed territories. Three months after the withdrawal of American forces, it is far too soon to declare that civil war is not coming to Iraq, particularly in light of these indicators suggesting that it is.

At least some of this instability is being driven by an increasingly sectarian political struggle in Baghdad. Maliki has been moving to consolidate his power and drive his opponents out of government and the security services for years. He regained the premiership after failing to secure a plurality of the votes in the 2010 parliamentary election by agreeing to a number of conditions that would have ceded real power to a wider cross-sectarian and cross-ethnic coalition including Iraqiyya, the party that did win the plurality, and the Kurds. This concord, the Irbil Agreement, has been unilaterally scrapped by Maliki, who has refused to abide by its conditions or implement its provisions.

Worse still, Maliki has accelerated a pattern of sectarian and political purging within the security forces and the highest levels of the Iraqi government. On the plane back from Washington after meeting with President Obama, Maliki ordered the extra-constitutional arrest of Sunni Vice President Tariq al Hashemi and sent his son, Ahmed Maliki, with the Baghdad Brigade to surround Hashemi's house. Hashemi fled and is now sheltering in Kurdistan while Maliki-influenced courts prepare to try him in absentia. Maliki subsequently deposed Sunni Deputy Prime Minister Saleh Mutlaq and banned him from participating in the Council of Ministers even though he did not obtain a parliamentary vote of no-confidence as the constitution requires. Maliki has promoted loyal Iraqi Security Force commanders by appointing them in acting positions, avoiding the requisite parliamentary approval. At the same time, he has fired or arrested hundreds of current and former security force personnel over alleged ties to Baathism or terrorism.

The Obama Administration now believes that Iraqiyya is no longer viable—which is true, since the Administration facilitated its collapse. The U.S. signally failed to stand up for the implementation of the Irbil Agreement, has taken no position on Hashemi's arrest or Mutlaq's ouster, has been silent about purges within the ISF, and pressured Iraqiyya to end its boycott of Parliament and the Cabinet, which it had begun in protest of the violence being done to its members, without receiving any concessions from Maliki.

This development is hardly positive for Iraqi democracy. Iraqiyya was a seriously flawed coalition, and its Shi'a leader, Iyad Allawi, is stubborn, ineffective, and uncooperative. These traits have contributed powerfully to Iraqiyya's failure to gain power despite having won the election. But Maliki's moves—and America's—have not been directed against Allawi. They have, rather, fallen on two of the central Sunni leaders of Iraqiyya who have historically been extremely pragmatic—if not entirely savory—players in the Iraqi political system. The net result of these moves has been destruction of anything resembling a meaningful loyal opposition and the de facto subordination of Parliament to the whims of Maliki and to the single-party rule of his Da'wa Party. It would be one thing if the Administration had worked to replace the flawed Iraqiyya Party with a less-flawed coherent, cross-sectarian, opposition that had the power meaningfully to check Maliki. But the rump Iraqiyya based on the factions of Osama Nujaifi and Rafe al Issawi does not have such power and is exclusively Sunni. It cannot form a meaningful check on Maliki's actions but is likely rather to become the Sunni fig-leaf for his increasingly authoritarian one-party state.

The Arab Sunni population in Iraq is now under great and growing pressure. Maliki disbanded the Awakening Councils—and stopped efforts to incorporate Sons of Iraq into the government or security forces—as U.S. forces were withdrawing. The elimination of Hashemi and Mutlaq from government strips the more conservative—and centrally-located—Sunnis of emblems of their representation. Increasing ISI and "Ba'athist" activity has been met with increasing Iraqi Security Forces activities in Sunni areas, including widespread arrests, targeted strikes, sweeps, and the removal of local commanders in Anbar and elsewhere. Maliki has also attempted to weaken and fracture provincial councils in Diyala and Salah-ad Din, prompting them to declare their intention to seek federal status. Anbar has followed their lead (as have a number of Shi'a provinces, most notably Basra). Maliki has denounced these attempts to exercise powers explicitly granted to the provinces by the constitution and used force to prevent them from moving forward. In this context, it is not surprising that elements of the Sunni population may be feeling increasingly disenfranchised, vulnerable to violent groups, and more susceptible to the blandishments and intimidation of insurgents and terrorists.

This is exactly the Iraq the United States did not want to leave behind. Presidents Bush and Obama wanted an Iraq that was no longer a safe haven for terrorists, but the terrorists are returning. Worse still, AQI has begun projecting violence from Iraq into Syria, reversing the historical ratlines that had supported its attacks against the U.S. in Iraq. The U.S. wanted an Iraq in which the Sunni minority felt that its stake in government was safe and effective, in which

elections mattered, and in which violence would not be used to revise political settlements. Instead, the U.S. has tolerated and even encouraged the over-turning of an electoral result and stood by the Maliki government as it has used force to revise political settlements it had agreed to.

Tony Blinken, Vice President Biden's national security adviser, said that Iraq today is "less violent, more democratic, and more prosperous, and the U.S. more deeply engaged there than at any time in recent history." The fact that Iraq is less violent, more prosperous, more democratic, and with more U.S. engagement than it was under Saddam Hussein is the result of the efforts of the previous administration, not this one. But Iraq is more violent, less democratic, and the U.S. less engaged than it was six months ago. And it is poised on the knife's-edge of a civil war. The United States has not achieved its core national security objectives in Iraq.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you very much, Doctor.

Our final witness this afternoon will be Dr. Kahl. You are recognized.

STATEMENT OF COLIN H. KAHL, PH.D., SENIOR FELLOW, CENTER FOR A NEW AMERICAN SECURITY

Mr. KAHL. Chairman, Ranking Member, distinguished members of the committee, thank you for inviting me to talk to you today, again, about the situation in Iraq. I was up here frequently in my previous post, and I should reinforce the point that I'm up here today in my individual capacity, obviously.

Iraq is undeniably more stable, more sovereign, and more self-reliant than it was 3 years ago, when the Obama administration came into office. The country remains a highly-imperfect experiment in democracy, and the security and political environment remains turbulent. And, Iraqi leaders must address lingering political challenges in the years ahead to avoid back sliding toward greater instability.

But, Iraq is not nearly as fragile as some of the other witnesses on this panel suggest. There has been a discernible uptake in high-profile attacks by al-Qaeda in Iraq since December. It is not yet clear whether this represents a short-term spike or a new steady-state reality in the face of diminished pressure against AQI networks.

However, it is important to remember that these types of attacks occurred even when we had 150,000 troops in the country, or when we had 50,000 troops in the country, and likely would have continued to occur even if we had had 5,000, 10,000 or 20,000 troops left in the country after 2011.

Moreover, although the attacks clearly demonstrate that AQI remains a deadly terrorist organization, they are not, as Dr. Kagan asserts, a nationwide insurgency. They hold no territory. They do not have widespread popular support among Sunni Arabs, and nor have AQI attacks sparked the type of militia mobilization or tit-for-tat sectarian bloodshed so common in the 2006–2007 period.

The Iraqi security forces continue to enjoy substantial overmatch, vis-à-vis AQI and other Sunni militant groups. As such, it remains the assessment that these groups do not currently represent a strategic threat to the viability of the Iraqi state.

The increase in AQI activity since December notwithstanding, open source reporting that's used by the U.S. intelligence community suggests that overall levels of violence do not appear to have significantly increased, and remain at much lower levels than they did during the 2005–2007 period, contradicting the statistic that Dr. Kagan cites.

In particular, Shia militant attacks are down substantially, in large part due to the withdrawal of U.S. forces. Levels of violence remain intolerable and unacceptable to the Iraqi populous, but Iraq is not on the cusp of falling back into civil war.

Political tensions have also been running high in recent months. Since December, several moves by Prime Minister Maliki, noted by our witnesses and by the chairman, most notably accusations that Vice President Tareq al-Hashemi was running a death squad out

of his office, haven't seen its attempts to side line prominent Sunni members of the Iraqiya political block.

However, with the active involvement of U.S. diplomats in Iraq, and the Vice President's office, the political crisis has abated, with Iraqiya ending its boycott of the Council of Representatives and Council of Ministers, and with President Jalal Talabani putting in place a senior leader process that aims to address the broader set of power sharing arrangements animating crisis. This is good news.

So long as Iraq's major factions remain committed to the political process to resolve their disputes, political crises like these are unlikely to lead to Iraq's unraveling. Still, these crises are symptoms of deeper political challenges that have to be overcome.

Outstanding requirements for lasting stability include, reining in extra-constitutional powers accrued to the Office of Prime Minister, and fully implementing power sharing agreements, resolving lingering Arab/Kurd disputes, addressing endemic corruption and problems with essential services, and improving protections of human rights and the commitment to the Rule of Law.

The United States must continue to help Iraqis find solutions to these challenges. Our Embassy in Baghdad is, and should remain, deeply involved in helping Iraqi leaders navigate their unresolved political challenges.

Although we cannot dictate terms to the Iraqis, we should criticize abuses of power when they occur, and we should use of considerable relationships with all sides to act as a convener, facilitator, and honest broker, helping to identify and push political compromises.

I now want to say a few things about Iranian influence. When U.S. forces departed in December, there was considerable anxiety in Washington, and, apparently, still on this panel, and in the region, that Iran would fill the void left by our forces. In actuality, that hasn't happened. To be sure, Tehran enjoys considerable influence in Iraq, as we do, but the narrative of Iranian domination is widely exaggerated.

A profound sense of Iraqi nationalism, lingering grievances from the Iran/Iraq war, and competition between the religious establishments in Najaf and Qom, as well as the desire among Iraqi leaders, including most Shia politicians, for strategic partnership with the United States and positive relations with other countries in the region, put fundamental limits on Baghdad's willingness to do Tehran's bidding.

Signs of independence from Iran can be seen even in areas where Tehran has exerted extraordinary pressure. Last summer, Maliki's government sent clear messages to Iran demanding that they curtail support for Shia militants attacking our troops.

More recently, Syria, actually, provides an example of this as well. Iran has pressured Iraq to support Bashar al-Assad battle regime in Syria, but Iraq has come around to supporting the Arab League's position calling for Assad to step down, and Maliki did not invite Syrian representatives to the upcoming Arab League Summit in Baghdad.

According to media reports, Iraq has also asked Iran to stop using Iraqi air space to ship weapons to Assad's regime, although Iraq has limited ability to enforce their air space violations.

There will certainly continue to be times when Iraq cooperates with Iran in ways that we don't like, but Iraq is not, and will not, be a puppet dangling at the end of Iran's strings. Withdrawing of U.S. forces did not represent the end of our security relationship with Iraq. It represents instead a beginning of a new phase in that relationship. The Obama administration continues to be committed to a long-term security partnership with Iraq, and I urge Congress to be supportive of U.S. and Iraqi Government efforts to cement that relationship.

Contrary to the assertions of some critics, the inability to reach a follow-on security agreement in 2011 is not due to administration political considerations and absence of U.S. political will or negligence. Indeed, at great political cost President Obama signaled his willingness to leave a modest training force in Iraq beyond 2011, upon the request of the Iraqi Government, and the administration invested a lot of energy in that effort.

The inability to reach an agreement stems from Iraqi domestic political concerns, not ours, and the unwillingness among all of Iraq's factions to submit an agreement to the Council of Representatives to ensure binding legal protections for our forces, something that everybody in the administration, and I believe most Members of Congress, agreed with.

Despite the absence of a follow-on accord, the administration has established a sizeable Office of Security Cooperation, to ensure a robust long-term security relationship. The Office of Security Cooperation oversees nearly $10 billion in foreign military sales, making iraq the fourth largest FMS customer in the region and the 9th largest in the world. And, this alone guarantees a close relationship with the U.S. military for decades to come.

The OSCI and the U.S. Central Command are also committed to maintaining active engagement with the ISF, aimed at deepening security cooperation and addressing some of the gaps that General Dubik pointed to.

U.S. forces may have departed Iraq, but the Obama administration remains thoroughly engaged and committed to helping Iraqis build a more peaceful and prosperous future. It is imperative that we, as a Nation, share this commitment.

Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Colin Kahl follows:]

CONGRESSIONAL TESTIMONY

Halting the Descent: U.S. Policy Toward a Deteriorating Situation in Iraq
Prepared Statement of Dr. Colin H. Kahl

March 21, 2012
Testimony before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs

Prepared Statement of Dr. Colin H. Kahl
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Chairwoman Ros-Lehtinen, Ranking Member Berman, distinguished members of the Committee, thank you for inviting me here today to discuss current developments in Iraq. As you know, I served for nearly three years in the Obama administration as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for the Middle East. During that time, I was intimately involved in overseeing the responsible drawdown of U.S. forces and developing the strategy for a long-term U.S. partnership with Iraq.

Iraq is undeniably more stable, sovereign, and self-reliant than it was three years ago. The country remains a highly imperfect experiment in democracy, the security and political environment remains turbulent, and Iraqi leaders must address lingering political challenges in the years ahead to avoid backsliding toward greater instability. But Iraq is not nearly as fragile as some assume, and the Iraqi people have a tremendous opportunity to build a better future.

U.S. forces may have departed, but Iraq's importance to the United States is undiminished. Over the past two decades, we have invested an enormous amount of blood and treasure in Iraq, and we continue to have a powerful national interest in a positive outcome. Therefore, as Iraqis attempt to consolidate the hard-fought gains of recent years, the United States must help them identify solutions and work with them to forge a lasting partnership.

My testimony this afternoon will briefly discuss the security and political environment in the aftermath of the U.S. military withdrawal, Iranian influence in Iraq, and the prospects for continued U.S.-Iraq security cooperation.

Security Trends

There has been a discernible uptick in high-profile attacks by Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) since December, including car bomb and suicide attacks that have produced hundreds of casualties. It is not yet clear whether this represents a short-term spike or a new steady-state reality in the face of diminished pressure on AQI networks. However, it is important to remember that these types of attacks occurred even when we had 150,000 or 50,000 troops in the country.

Moreover, as horrific as these incidents are, they should be placed in their proper perspective. The attacks clearly demonstrate that AQI remains a deadly terrorist organization, but they are not a nationwide insurgency. They hold no territory and do not have widespread popular support among Sunni Arabs. Nor have AQI attacks sparked the type of militia mobilization and tit-for-tat sectarian bloodshed so common in the 2006-2007 period. The Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) continue to enjoy substantial "overmatch" vis-à-

vis AQI and other Sunni militant groups. As such, these groups do not currently represent a strategic threat to the viability of the Iraqi state.

The increase in AQI activity since December notwithstanding, overall levels of violence do not appear to have significantly increased and remain at much lower levels than the 2005-2007 period. In particular, Shia militant attacks are down substantially, in large part due to the withdrawal of U.S. forces. Levels of violence remain intolerable by the standards of most countries and unacceptable to the Iraqi populace, but Iraq is not on the cusp of falling back into civil war.

Political tensions

Political tensions have also been running high in recent months. Since December, several moves by Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's government, most notably accusations that Vice President Tariq al-Hashimi was running a death squad out of his office, have been seen as attempts to sideline prominent Sunni members of the Iraqiyya political bloc. The charges prompted Iraqiyya to temporarily boycott the government and forced Hashimi to flee to Iraqi Kurdistan, where he remains despite demands by Baghdad for him to return to face trial. Notwithstanding the validity of the particular allegations against Hashimi, the incident clearly increased sectarian tensions in the immediate aftermath of the U.S. military's withdrawal.

However, with the active involvement of U.S. diplomats, the political crisis has abated, with Iraqiyya endings its boycott of the Council of Representatives (CoR) and the Council of Ministers. President Jalal Talabani has also put in place a senior-leader process aimed at addressing the broader set of power-sharing arrangements animating the crisis. This is good news. So long as Iraq's major factions remain committed to the political process to resolve their disputes, political crises such as these are unlikely to lead to Iraq's "unraveling."

Still, these crises are symptoms of deeper political challenges that must be overcome if Iraq is to consolidate security gains and prevent future backsliding. Outstanding requirements for lasting stability include: reigning in extra-constitutional powers accrued to the office of the Prime Minister and fully implementing power-sharing agreements; resolving lingering Arab-Kurd disputes over contested territory and hydrocarbons; addressing endemic corruption and problems with the provision of essential services; and improving protections for human rights and commitment to the rule of law.

The United States must continue to help Iraqis find solutions to these challenges. Our embassy in Baghdad is, and should remain, deeply involved in helping Iraqi leaders navigate their unresolved political disputes. In the past three months, Ambassador Jim Jeffrey has met with Prime Minister Maliki nine times and with his top aides dozens of times, and our embassy reaches out to President Talabani, KRG President Massoud Barzani, parliamentary Speaker Osama Nujaifi, and other key leaders virtually every day. The White House also remains engaged, with Vice President Biden continuing to run point.

We can no longer determine outcomes in Iraq – indeed, we could not prevent recurring political crises or impose accommodations even when we had 150,000 forces in the country. But the United States continues to have substantial influence due to: the significant American diplomatic presence throughout the country; long-standing relationships with most key Iraqi factions; the provision of substantial technical and security assistance; Iraq's desire for help on the world stage (including support to Iraq's regional reintegration and addressing outstanding issues at the United Nations); and the general desire among Iraqi leaders for a long-term strategic partnership with Washington.

Although we cannot dictate terms to the Iraqis, we should criticize abuses of power when they occur, and we should use our considerable relationships with all sides to act as a convener, facilitator, and honest broker, helping identify and push political compromises wherever and whenever we can. In most instances, direct threats to suspend U.S. assistance or cooperation unless Iraq accedes to our demands will prove ineffective. But we should communicate clearly and consistently that our long-term partnership with Iraq is only sustainable if Iraqi leaders show a commitment to political compromise and make progress toward institutionalizing more just, representative, and accountable governance.

Iranian Influence

When U.S. forces departed in December, there was considerable anxiety in Washington and the region that Iran would fill the void. That hasn't happened. To be sure, Tehran enjoys considerable influence in Iraq – as we do. But the narrative of Iranian domination is widely exaggerated.

Several powerful dynamics limit the prospect of long-term Iranian hegemony in Iraq. Historically, Iraq has been one of the three most powerful states in the Gulf region, alongside Saudi Arabia and Iran. The 2003 U.S. invasion transformed Iraq from a key regional player into a playing field for regional competition. But as Iraq re-emerges as a sovereign state and the country's economic and military strength grows, the natural equilibrium of the system will tend toward rivalry with, not subservience to, Iran. A profound sense of Iraqi nationalism will further this tendency, as will lingering grievances from the Iran-Iraq war and the competition between the religious establishments in Najaf (Iraq) and Qom (Iran) for influence over the broader Shia community in the Middle East. Polls show that the majority of Iraqis have an unfavorable view of Iran; even Moqtada al-Sadr supporters hold a 3 to 1 negative opinion of Iran. The desire among Iraqi leaders, including most Shia politicians, for a strategic partnership with the United States and positive relations with Turkey and Iraq's Arab neighbors, puts further limits on Baghdad's willingness to do Tehran's bidding.

Signs of independence from Iran can be seen even in areas where Tehran has exerted extraordinary pressure. Last summer, Maliki's government sent clear messages to Iran demanding that they curtail support for Shia militants attacking our troops. More recently, Maliki has shown patience during international efforts to relocate the Mujahideen-e-Khalq residents of Camp Ashraf, despite repeated urgings from Tehran to accelerate the process.

Syria provides another example. Iran has pressured Iraq to support President Bashar al-Assad's embattled regime, and Iraqi leaders are justifiably concerned about the spillover effects of growing sectarian strife in Syria. Consequently, the Maliki government's statements regarding Syria have not always been consistent. But Iraq has come around to supporting the Arab League's position calling for Assad to step down, and Maliki did not invite Syrian representatives to the upcoming Arab League summit in Baghdad. According to media reports, Iraq has also asked Iran to stop using Iraqi airspace to ship weapons to Assad's regime, although Iraq has limited ability to enforce airspace violations.

There will certainly continue to be times when Iraq cooperates with Iran in ways we don't like. But Iraq is not, and will not be, a puppet dangling at the end of Iran's strings.

The Future of the U.S.-Iraq Security Relationship

The drawdown of U.S. forces does not represent the end of our security relationship with Iraq; it represents the beginning of a new phase in that relationship. The Obama administration remains committed to a long-term security partnership with Iraq, and I urge Congress to be supportive as both the U.S. and Iraqi governments continue to explore ways to expand cooperation in this area.

Contrary to the assertion of some critics, the inability to reach a follow-on Security Agreement in 2011 was not due to administration political considerations, an absence of U.S. political will, or negligence. Indeed, at great political risk, President Obama signaled his willingness to leave a modest training force in Iraq beyond 2011, upon the request of the Iraqi government, and the administration invested considerable time and energy in the endeavor.

The inability to reach an agreement stemmed from other factors. First, the key Iraqi political blocs were ultimately unwilling to submit a follow-on agreement to the CoR due the unpopularity of a continued U.S. military presence among the majority of Iraqi people. These domestic political concerns applied not only to Maliki and his allies; the October 4, 2011 decision by bloc leaders not to submit an agreement to the CoR was unanimous. No amount of additional administration lobbying would have changed this fundamental calculus.

Second, when the previous Security Agreement was reached in 2008, Iraqi dependence on the U.S. military, especially for internal security, was sufficiently high to motivate Iraqi leaders to assume short-term political risk to keep some U.S. troops in the country for a period of time. But even in 2008, it was only politically possible for the Iraqis to reach an agreement by committing to a timetable for the departure of U.S. forces. In 2011, the Iraqis had considerably greater self-confidence in the security arena. Although they continue to lack adequate external defense capabilities—gaps a continued U.S. presence could have helped address—it proved insufficient to overcome their political concerns about a follow-on agreement.

Finally, the Obama administration justifiably insisted that any follow-on force have binding legal protections at least equivalent to those provided by Article 12 of the 2008 Security Agreement. The

President, the Secretary of Defense, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff all agreed on the absolute requirement that any American forces remaining in Iraq beyond 2011 have adequate legal protections, especially given the non-permissive security environment they would be operating in. Although a small Office of Security Cooperation can operate under the Embassy with diplomatic immunity, there was a consensus within the U.S. interagency that legally-binding protections for a larger training force required an agreement ratified by the Iraqi CoR—a view shared by Prime Minister Maliki's legal adviser and not contradicted by any Iraqi legal authority. The fact that the previous Security Agreement had been submitted to the CoR also made it difficult to envision a viable agreement that bypassed Iraq's democratic institutions. Therefore, when Iraqi bloc leaders proved unwilling to submit a follow-on agreement to the CoR, the die was cast.

Yet, despite the absence of a follow-on accord, the administration stood up a sizable Office of Security Cooperation-Iraq (OSC-I) to ensure a robust long-term security relationship. The OSC-I oversees nearly $10 billion in Foreign Military Sales, making Iraq the fourth largest FMS in the region and the ninth largest in the world. That alone guarantees a close relationship with the U.S. military for decades to come. The OSC-I and U.S. Central Command are also committed to maintaining active engagement with the ISF aimed at deepening security cooperation, building Iraqi capabilities, and encouraging continued professionalization.

Building on this foundation, we should continue to look for ways to: enhance intelligence and counterterrorism cooperation; develop a robust schedule of rotational exercises inside and outside Iraq to address lingering gaps in ISF capabilities and improve interoperability with U.S. and regional forces; and remain open to future Iraqi requests for additional assistance in the area of external security.

Conclusion

U.S. forces may have departed Iraq, but the Obama administration remains thoroughly engaged and committed to helping Iraqis build a more peaceful and prosperous future. It is imperative that we—as a nation—share this commitment. Our country would not have fought two wars, spent more than a $1 trillion, and asked so many of our sons and daughters to pay the ultimate sacrifice if Iraq didn't matter. Iraq may be off the front pages, but it should not be neglected by anyone who cares about vital U.S. interests in a critical region.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you very much, Doctor.

We do have a series of votes on the floor for, my guess is we are looking at 40 minutes, 45 minutes, and we have to go over and vote. And then, we will be right back, and then the panel members will ask questions.

So, we will be in recess here for a little bit. Thank you.

[Recess.]

Mr. CHABOT. The committee will come back to order. I want to thank the witness panel and members of the audience for your patience. We are now finished with votes on the floor, and so we are back in session here.

I'd like to address the first question to you, General Keane. I would welcome the comments from any of the other panel members to this question, too.

In your testimony, you stated, and I quote,

> "It is a tragic foreign policy blunder that the U.S. forfeited our hard-earned influence in Iraq by not leaving a residual military force in place. The purpose of this force was to preserve and strengthen a fledgling democracy, to continue to assist the growth and development of the Iraq security forces, and most importantly to counter the Iranian influence."

As I mentioned in my opening remarks, this is a fear that I have had for a long time, and I am really amazed that anyone is surprised by the recent backsliding in Iraq, when you consider the fact that our troops are now out.

Do you believe that the current crisis in Iraq could have been averted had the U.S. maintained a relatively small or whatever number, I don't know if it was 20,000, or 10,000, or 30,000, but if we had maintained some troop presence do you believe that we could have averted some of the problems that we are seeing there now?

General KEANE. Well, I honestly don't know for sure, but this much I do know. We kept our forces post conflict, you know, in World War II and the Korean War, because we clearly wanted to maintain influence. And, that is what this was about. It was about maintaining influence.

And, the influence we had with Prime Minister Maliki, as I said before, he always was a handful, and he has a dark side to him, to be sure. And, left to his own devices, that dark side manifests itself.

But, we were all in with Maliki. Obviously, we had lots of forces there, and we had the extraordinary capacity of Ryan Crocker to shape and influence him. Maliki, by and large, was moving in the right direction, even though at times he would frustrate us.

I think Maliki, because we stood apart from him very quickly when the new administration came in, he quickly realized that he had a different relationship with us. What was so astounding about that is, it was Maliki that insisted on the strategic framework agreement, not us. We began to negotiate over a status of forces agreement. It was Maliki that said, no, I want a long-term strategic partnership with the United States, that's the first thing I will negotiate, not force levels. This was 2009, and we hammered out that agreement. I was there for part of those negotiations. So,

that was extraordinary. It was a pleasant surprise that that's what they wanted.

But, certainly, in 2009—that was 2008, excuse me, 2009, that relationship deteriorated gradually over time, and it was accented when General Austin had requested the 26,000 forces to meet all the requirements he had, and the President's negotiation team came in with 10,000. Maliki knew right then and there that this force would not have the capabilities that they needed, and that there was a different agenda on the table.

Now, people want to blame the Iraqi Government and Maliki for us winding up with no force levels, and the degree of immunity surrounding our forces. I believe those are false issues. What really took place is a relationship that grew apart over a 2-year period, that's so deteriorated that we wound up with no force levels at all. And, certainly, the activity that Maliki has been exercising since that level is dramatically different than what was taking place prior to 2009, when we did have that kind of influence over him.

I believe we would have continued to have some influence to shape his geopolitical thinking, if we had a residual force. But, equally important, had an administration that was focused on the strategic partnership and it wanted to advance that partnership, was as important as the forces themselves.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you very much.

I've only got about 30 seconds left.

Dr. Kagan, why don't we go to you at this point. I have a short period of time.

Ms. KAGAN. Thank you very much.

Of course, we cannot tell how Iraq would have been different because that's a counterfactual question. What is certain, and very important here, is that the United States has chosen not to use influence that it has, or had I should say, with the Iraqi Government over the course of 2009, and 2010, and 2011. And, as General Keane said, therefore, found itself with less leverage than it needed to have in negotiating a long-term presence of troops.

Secondly, I think it is also important to note, and to ask, whether it is really technically necessary for a Council of Representatives of any country to approve immunities and set up force agreements between the United States and their countries. I am not aware that that is a standard that we hold all administrations, governments and regimes to, and, therefore, in a certain sense the constraints that the administration placed on itself exacerbated the crisis within Iraqi politics that, ultimately, caused the Iraqis to decide, and the administration to decide, to pull forces out.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you very much. If I heard you right, I think, perhaps, it was used as an excuse rather than something legally that we were bound by. But, I am out of time, so I will yield for 5 minutes to the gentleman from New York.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I am somewhere in between the Beatles and Alice and Wonderland right now. I am hearing the rewriting of a song, and it seems to be coming out give war a chance, and I am viewing the whole thing through the looking glass, and everything is coming in back upside down and backwards.

I just head two different things. One, "that is was always about exerting influence." I remember voting to give the President the authority to go after terrorism, because of weapons of mass destruction. I did not vote to kill 4,300 or have killed 4,300 and change American men and women to exert influence. It was to protect the United States against an eminent threat of danger.

I remember the President, President Bush, who I voted to give him the authority to do all this, landing on a ship, aircraft carrier, with the banners and the band, that the mission was accomplished. I do not know how this continues to go on, the band plays on.

It is often attributed to President Obama, and I just heard it just again from the good Doctor, but it is really President Bush and his administration, under that administration, that, actually, negotiated the withdrawal of forces, under two separate treaties that were signed on November 17, 2008. It was not this administration. That strategic framework agreement specified Bush specified, President Bush specified, we signed it under his leadership, that the United States may not "seek or request permanent bases or permanent military presence in Iraq." The security agreement established a deadline of withdrawal for all U.S. forces. That's President Bush, not President Obama. They are pinning the tail on the wrong donkey.

Maybe you can help us out on that, Dr. Kahl.

Mr. KAHL. Well, I will defend the donkey that I rode on for three—the democratic donkey I guess in this case.

You know, I took 16 trips to Iraq in the last 3 years. I sat where I met with all of our officials there, all the senior Iraqi officials involved in these negotiations. I sat in countless meetings in the situation room at the deputies and the principals level, and met with our senior military commanders on a weekly basis on this issue. So, I think I can speak with a fair amount of authority about what has been described up here. I just cannot agree with the reality as portrayed with the rest of the witnesses.

It is true that General Austin proposed a range of options, the highest one being 23,000, not 26,000, but a range of options, including a number of options that were much lower. So, let us think that clear.

It is also true that the larger options largely envisioned a very robust mission set in northern Iraq, which proved, actually, something that the government in Baghdad was not interested in. By July and August they were not interested in having that large of a mission up north, which I think belies or goes against the criticism that somehow if we had offered more troops it would have been easier for the Iraqi domestic political environment to accept them.

Then the question becomes whether we, basically, set ourselves——

Mr. ACKERMAN. How many troops would they have accepted? What did they want?

Mr. KAHL. It was not about troop numbers. At the end of the day, the fundamental issue was about our requirement for legal immunities for our troops that were put in Article 12.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Right, under the Status of Forces Agreement.

Mr. KAHL. Correct.

So, under the current security agreement, or under the security agreement that the Bush administration negotiated, that you made reference to, it called for our forces to be out by the end of 2011.

Under Article 12 of that agreement, we had a certain level of protection for our forces, jurisdictional protection. All the Obama administration asked is, that if there was going to be a follow-on agreement it had the same article in it. That is it. It was not an unreasonable request. It was the same request of the Bush administration.

Mr. ACKERMAN. President Obama was trying to protect the security of our troops.

Mr. KAHL. And, in fact, had he done anything otherwise, this body and most of the folks on this panel, would have crucified him for doing it.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Did we or did we not have an obligation under international law for this administration to follow what the previous administration obligated us to?

Mr. KAHL. Well, there is two things. Under Iraqi—there was a consensus in the U.S. Government's interagency to include folks who were in the Bush administration before, that it was a legal requirement for protections to go through the Council of Representatives if they were going to be binding under Iraq's constitution. That was our legal communities' views, not the Pentagon, State Department, the White House, but also Prime Minister Maliki's legal advisors' views, and there was nobody in Iraq that contradicted it.

And, the last agreement went through the Council of Representatives. So, contrary to Dr. Kagan's point that there was no reason it had to go through the Council of Representatives, there was every reason that it had to go through the Council of Representatives, because the previous agreement did.

So, the Obama administration did not manufacture some hurdle that was new and came out of no where, it simply said, if you want forces to remain in the country you have to give them the same protections you gave them before. And, that proved politically untenable for the Iraqis.

Mr. CHABOT. The gentleman's time has expired.

The gentleman from California, Mr. Rohrbacher, is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ROHRBACHER. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Let me see if I can poll the witnesses here on a yes or no, if possible.

Given what we know now, and what has happened in Iraq, was the decision to send U.S. forces to liberate Iraq from the Saddam Hussein dictatorship, was it the right decision, with all that we know now? Just a yes or no, or if you cannot answer that is fine.

General? Was it the right decision?

General KEANE. Yes.

Mr. ROHRBACHER. All right.

General DUBIK. I would have to say for myself, I am ambiguous.

Mr. ROHRBACHER. Ambiguous? Okay.

Ms. KAGAN. I do not think that the question can be answered, because the decision makers at the time knew what they knew at the time.

Mr. ROHRBACHER. No, no. I am asking you, knowing what you know now, was it worth it?

Ms. KAGAN. I am not sure that that question can be answered.

Mr. ROHRBACHER. Okay. So, we have, yes, and two ambiguous, and, Doctor?

Mr. KAHL. Not based on the premises for which the war was originally justified, and probably not worth $1 trillion and 4,500 American dead.

Mr. ROHRBACHER. But, knowing what we know now, was it worth it going in with U.S. troops?

Mr. KAHL. Not based on the premise for which the war was.

Mr. ROHRBACHER. Okay. We have a no, yes, and two ambiguous.

Let me just say that I have been around for a while, 24 years now here in Congress, and worked in the Reagan White House for 7 years in Washington. A lot of these decisions had to be made, and I will say the worst decision, foreign policy decision, that I have seen in my 30 years of service at high levels in Washington, this was the worst decision.

I am sorry, General. Over 4,500 American troops are dead, and tens of thousands wounded, $1 trillion of added debt to our country, and from what I can see the people of Iraq are not even appreciative of what we have done.

I think that was, it is beyond, there is not even anything that comes close to how bad that is. And, for us not to be able to say that outright, and understand that the American people are so war weary now, that we will not be able to do other commitments that might be really important for our national security.

Keeping Saddam Hussein in power might have been the best deal for our national security, considering that the mullah regime in Iran is the regime that we have to fear the most, in terms of our own national security interest in that part of the world.

And, when you think of that, and then you think that we lost all of these lives, well, I think that we ought to do some soul searching, all of us Americans who are engaged in policy, and I went along with it. I mean, I did not listen to Gary Ackerman, I went along with it, and the President, it was after 9/11, and I was going to support our President in this war against radical Islam, and this had nothing to do with the war in radical Islam. It had everything to do with something, and I still do not know what it is, that drove us to say that we had to get rid of that dictatorship, because there are lots of dictators around the world.

And, let us just note this other thing for the people on the other side of this issue. I am sick and tired of also hearing that all of these casualties that were caused by America's intervention, Saddam Hussein murdered 100,000 of his own citizens prior to our liberation. There are mass graves that were found.

Now, we do not have, there is no reason in the world we should be trading American lives to stop every dictator who is slaughtering his own people. But, those people who would like to suggest that the United States troops in some way were responsible for a higher level of killing of innocent civilians are wrong. They are wrong as well, and they are wrong because the killing that took place after we liberated that country from Saddam Hussein, most of it was done by interfaith Muslim-on-Muslim killing each other,

not American troops going into neighborhoods and shooting up neighborhoods because we wanted to exert our influence.

So, I find a little bit of an inability on both sides of this issue looking back, the ability on both the left and the right, to be able to look very honestly at this issue. And, I would implore my fellow Members of Congress, and those of you who testify before Congress, and are influenced—have influence here in Washington on decision makers, to do some soul searching on this. I am trying to be honest about it, and I think it behooves us to remember those 4,500 men who gave their lives, and all those tens of thousands whose lives are probably ruined because of this, and what we got out of it. It is not even close, that was not worth their lives.

Thank you very much.

Mr. CHABOT. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Chairman?

Mr. CHABOT. His time has expired.

Mr. ACKERMAN. The gentleman invoked my name, if I could just interject for 30 seconds.

Mr. CHABOT. All right. The gentleman is recognized for 30 seconds.

Mr. ACKERMAN. I just want to say to the gentleman, despite your years of experience that you've echoed my word sand sentiments exactly. I did mean culpa during my opening statement, following President Bush so blindly into this, and expressed the same sentiments, and almost the same words. I'll share them with you later.

I want to thank you for your honesty as always.

Mr. CHABOT. We will go into a second round at this point, and I yield myself 5 minutes.

Just commenting on the gentleman from California, who I have great respect for, and I have to agree a bit, but mostly disagree with his statement. I don't know that it's fair to say knowing what we know now would you have gone in, et cetera, you are free to ask that question.

But, the answer to that question is complicated, I believe, by the fact that this administration pulled out American troops, all the troops out here, which was not anticipated or expected by our military or anybody, really, or the Iraqis or anybody else, until it actually happened. That was not expected. That's not what we did in Korea. That's not what we did in Bosnia. That's not what we did in a whole range of other places where we had troops.

The idea of they would be there to maintain the peace, to maintain our influence, to, actually, make sure that that blood and treasure that we expended did mean something.

But, I would argue, by pulling those troops out, by, essentially, indicating to Maliki right at the end there that that's what we were going to do, as the General said when we said 10,000, and then not 10,000 but zero, that sent the message out, the United States is getting the heck out. And so then, they had to scramble and do whatever they needed to do to survive. And, that's where the Iranian influence is coming through in spades there at this point, I mean, huge influence. And, that's about the last thing that's in the best interest of our country, or the region, or the Iraqi people.

I think they had a chance. Maybe they still do. I am not sure about that at this point. I don't know if they are going to be able to make it with our folks, essentially, out of there. How in the world, you know, they turned over to the State Department, how are the State Department people supposed to be out there and dealing with folks, they can not leave the compound now because there is no military folks there to protect them.

And then, we rail against Black Water or the folks that have followed in their footprints at this point. I mean, so we made it an impossible situation. I would argue this administration did that to maintain, to keep a campaign promise, and that was a terrible mistake in my view.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Chairman?

Mr. CHABOT. I have two more things I have—okay, I yield, just briefly, because I have two questions I want to ask.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Just on that point.

Mr. CHABOT. Yes.

Mr. ACKERMAN. This administration did not do that to keep a campaign promise, although it kept it. This administration did it to keep President Bush's word, and the word of the United States, that by December 31, 2011, all, all, all, 100 percent, said President Bush and signed it, of our troops would be out. This should not come, as you said, a surprise to us.

Mr. CHABOT. Reclaiming my time, I mean, it was understood, and the excuse given at the end was, we could not get the Iraqis permission for the indemnification of our troops.

Mr. ACKERMAN. No, President Bush could not get it.

Mr. CHABOT. I think it was a lackadaisical effort that was made in order to attain that permission of Iraq for our folks to be there without being prosecuted, et cetera. But, let me flip into two other quick questions here.

One, Dr. Kagan, there is a bit of confusion here that I think Dr. Kahl raised here, relative to your statement about the security in Iraq, that it is deteriorating. Dr. Kahl raised some doubt about your data. How do we know what is actually occurring on the ground there? What level of confidence do we have that our information and our intelligence is good? And, what are the sources of your data?

And then, one other quick point, and any of the members can do this, how does the PKK's presence in northern Iraq affect our interests, and what are we doing about that?

So, Dr. Kagan on the one, and then any of the other witnesses who would like to take the other one quickly. I've got not too long on either one.

Ms. KAGAN. On the subject of our data, of course, when the U.S. military had a large presence within Iraq it had and created its own sources of data through its refined and granular knowledge of what was going on on the ground in Iraq, because it was disbursed throughout the country.

As we pulled out our troops, we lost situational awareness, because every soldier is a sensor, and if you were a soldier you had less situational awareness.

Right now, the data that I am using, as I said, is the data of Dr. Michael Knights, the Lafer Fellow at the Washington Institute for

Near East Policy. He has retained and maintained a database for years, and his data is accrued from both Iraqi security forces and open sources, and sources throughout the country.

What I think is, actually, interesting about his data that I think is probably not reflected in all of our data is that he has excellent sources in southern Iraq, and it is in southern Iraq where we do see Shia-on-Shia violence actually re-emerging. The re-emergency of Shia militant groups, likewise a clerical struggle in Najaf that really does put into doubt whether or not the Iraqis will be able to retain their religious independence from Iran.

The point is that our situational awareness should come from competing data sources right now, rather than being reliant on a single assessment.

Mr. CHABOT. Okay. Could I have unanimous consent to yield myself an additional minute here, just—would anyone like to comment on the PKK question?

Okay, if not, I will yield back that time, and Mr. Ackerman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ACKERMAN. I would ask Dr. Kahl to comment on that, but first I want to ask a question of General Keane, if I may.

Try as he might, President Obama could not get an extension of the deal with the change to protect the American troops. Should he have left the American troops in Iraq, without being able to get the guarantee that we needed?

General KEANE. In my judgment, no. Also, but I would like to correct something that you said. It is a fact that the Bush administration negotiated the Status of Forces Agreement, and that Status of Forces Agreement terminated our involvement with forces by the end of 2011. That is a fact.

But, it is also a fact that no Iraqi politician could participate in that agreement who was facing an upcoming election, and the wink and the nod that was very well understood with the Iraqi Government, its highest officials, and our Ambassador and our senior military commanders, that after their election we would renegotiate what the size and capability of a force would be in Iraq.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Dr. Kahl?

Mr. KAHL. Well, if there was a wink and a nod between the Bush administration and the Maliki government, nobody told either the Bush administration or the Maliki government, because, actually, the negotiations led up by the Obama administration were led by Ambassador Jeffrey, a Bush administration official, and Brett McGurk, a Bush administration official, negotiating with the same leaders that General Keane referenced, supposedly were in on this secret agreement to extend the troop presence beyond 2008.

The reality is, the same political pressures that the Iraqi politicians faced in the fall of 2008, which required the time line for the departure of U.S. forces, also was the reason why on October 4th they were unanimous in not being willing to send a follow-on agreement to the Corps, with adequate legal protections, which General Keane admits, you know, was required for us to leave forces behind.

And, by the way, it is a view that was shared by the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Secretary Gates, Secretary Pannetta, and the President of the United States.

All we were asking for was the same protections that they had under Article 12 of the existing agreement. It was not domestically possible for the Iraqis, so we are where we are.

I want to say one thing about the data. All the data is suspect for some of the reasons that Kim points out, that Dr. Kagan points out, which is that we don't have high visibility so we are relying on various open source materials, although that visibility of reduction was a result of us leaving largely the cities in the summer of 2009 under the security agreement, not the departure of our forces from the country.

I do think we can say a couple things about the data. One, there has been an uptick in AQI activity, nobody is disputing that.

Second, there has been a decrease in violence in the south, in fact, the data that Dr. Kagan references shows that, and largely Shia militant activity has gone down.

And lastly, overall our intelligence community looking at the Knights' data that Dr. Kagan references, and comparing it with that data and other open source material, concludes that the overall levels of violence have not actually gone up since the departure of U.S. forces.

So, I do not know which is right, although that strikes me as a more comprehensive assessment, and our intelligence community, you know, has, basically, concluded that overall level of violence has not gone up, even as AQI activity has ticked up.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you.

General, I am curious, was there anything else to this secret wink and nod agreement that the Bush administration had with the Iraqis?

General KEANE. I mean, in terms of it being secret, I would not go that far. I mean, it was well documented in the media. I am confident, I do not want to speak for him, but Ryan Crocker was here he would flat tell you that we all knew that is what had been discussed.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Without the agreement, can you enforce a wink and a nod if somebody picked up American troops and decided to prosecute them, to say to the Iraqis, didn't we have a wink and a nod agreement?

General KEANE. No, no.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Or, would they rely on the written documents?

General KEANE. What that—what the so-called other official agreement actually was, is that they would renegotiate a new Status of Forces Agreement that would permit a residual force to stay post 2011, to extend that document beyond what the current document did. That is all that—that is all that was intended to be.

Mr. ACKERMAN. And, would it have——

General KEANE. It was a common understanding that the government wanted that force to stay, and so did we.

Mr. ACKERMAN [continuing]. Would it have been under the terms that the Iraqis wanted it?

General KEANE. Yes, absolutely they wanted it.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Not the terms that we wanted?

General KEANE. We both wanted it.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Same terms?

General KEANE. Well, the terms would have been negotiated. They both wanted a force.

Mr. ACKERMAN. But, the negotiation up until that moment failed, that is why we did not have an agreement.

General KEANE. The fact of the matter is, negotiations broke down, I think, as I tried to indicate, I think at some point the Maliki government realized it was in a totally different relationship with this administration.

Mr. ACKERMAN. But, they had the same agreement that they had with the Bush administration.

General KEANE. Certainly the Bush administration agreement, the SOFA——

Mr. ACKERMAN. That was a legal agreement.

General KEANE [continuing]. That was a legal document that was in place at the time. It ended in 2011, correct.

Mr. ACKERMAN. But, that was President Bush's agreement.

General KEANE. That is correct.

Mr. CHABOT. The gentleman's time has expired.

The gentleman from California is recognized, Mr. Rohrbacher, who, by the way, is the chairman of the Subcommittee on Investigations and Oversight.

Mr. ROHRBACHER. Let me just suggest that all of this, you know, back and forth on whether or not Maliki was going to allow us to leave our forces there or not, I found—frankly, I find it totally irrelevant. It is assuming that people—that it is in the interest of the American people to have our forces there.

The bottom line is, once we had decided that the people of Iraq were going to defend themselves, the sooner we got out of there the better. And, if we lose 50 more, 100 more, or 200 more, or 500 more American lives, what for?

Just, I mean, this is absurd. Oh, we are going to negotiate so we can keep our guys in jeopardy. Who is watching out for the American soldier, the Marine out there giving his life? We should be caring about him. That is who we should be caring about, and I was raised in a Marine family, and I remember going to breakfast with my Dad when I was 7 years old. And, we had two 19-year-old young Marines with us, and they both had no legs. They just got back from Korea. I often wondered what happened to those guys, whether or not they have families, whether or not they had a decent life, like they gave to all of us.

I do not think that a lack of forces is what has driven a Shiite population, a majority Shiite population, toward a better relationship with the mullahs. I do not believe that that is what is driven there, and what we have seen is a fight in the Muslim world between two sects that are, you know, at a blood feud with one another. I do not see Maliki, and the Sunnis in his country, after we would leave no matter when that was, would not re-establish a closer relationship with the mullahs.

And now that we have this pro-mullah regime, am I still hearing that you fellows think that we should be pouring more money into this? I mean, training, we are going to provide training, there is a proposal to spend $900 million dollars, to train the Iraqi police force. So, we are borrowing $900 million from China to train the

police force of a country that is headed by people who were demonstrably anti American? Is that what we should do?

I ask the panel, should we be spending $900 million training their police force?

General DUBIK. I would be happy to answer that, Mr. Representative. The answer is no, as I said in my remarks. The current State Department plan for training police is not the plan we should follow. We do not need to spend that much money, but we do need to be involved with the development of the police department, and the police forces, as well as the security forces, for our interest.

Mr. ROHRBACHER. Should we be giving them credit after $1 trillion that we have already borrowed from China?

General DUBIK. We should be giving them lots of credit.

Mr. ROHRBACHER. Okay.

General DUBIK. You are talking about money credit, I am talking about credit for what they have achieved.

Mr. ROHRBACHER. No, no, I am talking about budget credit here. I mean, we have borrowed, and we demonstrably have borrowed 1 trillion extra dollars in order to deal with them, not to mention all the other sacrifices that we have made in blood.

Should we be borrowing hundreds of millions of dollars more now? It is my understanding, my understanding, I went to Iraq and they kicked me out of the country, because I had the timidity to accept and suggest that maybe when the oil and gas money comes in they might start repaying us. And, there answer was, get the hell out of my country. And, Maliki gave me about, you know, 1½ hours to get out. Well, that is fine. I mean, he is in charge of his country.

He is not in charge, he would not be in charge, except for all the American lives that have been lost getting him there and getting rid of Saddam Hussein. And again, no one should ever, and this is what really gets me mad about the left, is they are always talking about, yes, Americans came in and all these lives were lost. Saddam Hussein was a bloody, vicious dictator, and it is good that he was gone, and, actually, he was probably costing more Iraqi lives than during the liberation. But, that is not America's business to be spending thousands and thousands of American lives and trillions of dollars of our wealth all over the world.

As it has resulted, we now are less respected everywhere in the world. We, actually, when we took a step too far, we have ended up with less respect than had we not gone in in the first place.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you very much.

Whereas, the panel up here does not necessarily agree on all these things, I think one thing we do agree on is that there was tremendous sacrifice by the men and women from this country that went over there, some who lost their lives, some who lost limbs, and some are in hospitals around the country. We need to do everything humanly possible to take care of those people, and make sure that they have the best quality of lives that can possibly happen. That should be our number one concern, I think, at this point. I think we would all agree on that.

I want to thank the distinguished panel here for their testimony this afternoon, thank the members that are here this afternoon,

and with unanimous consent the members will have 5 days to supplement their statements, ask questions, and submit to the panel.

If there is no further business to come before the committee, we are adjourned.

Thank you very much.

[Whereupon, at 3:47 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

APPENDIX

Material Submitted for the Hearing Record

SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING NOTICE
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, D.C.

Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia
Steve Chabot (R-OH), Chairman

March 20, 2012

You are respectfully requested to attend an OPEN hearing of the Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia, to be held in Room 2172 of the Rayburn House Office Building **(and available live, via the WEBCAST link on the Committee website at http://www.hcfa.house.gov)**:

DATE: Wednesday, March 21, 2012

TIME: 1:30 p.m.

SUBJECT: Halting the Descent: U.S. Policy toward the Deteriorating Situation in Iraq

WITNESSES: General Jack Keane, USA, Retired
(Former Vice Chief of Staff of the United States Army)

Lieutenant General (Ret.) James Dubik
Senior Fellow
Institute for the Study of War

Kimberly Kagan, Ph.D.
President
Institute for the Study of War

Colin H. Kahl, Ph.D.
Senior Fellow
Center for a New American Security

By Direction of the Chairman

The Committee on Foreign Affairs seeks to make its facilities accessible to persons with disabilities. If you are in need of special accommodations, please call 202/225-5021 at least four business days in advance of the event, whenever practicable. Questions with regard to special accommodations in general (including availability of Committee materials in alternative formats and assistive listening devices) may be directed to the Committee.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

MINUTES OF SUBCOMMITTEE ON MESA HEARING

Day Wednesday Date 3/21 Room 2172

Starting Time 1:35 Ending Time 3:47

Recesses [ ] (2:24 to 3:11) (to) (to) (to) (to) (to)

Presiding Member(s)

Steve Chabot

Check all of the following that apply:

Open Session [x]
Executive (closed) Session [ ]
Televised [ ]
Electronically Recorded (taped) [ ]
Stenographic Record [ ]

TITLE OF HEARING:

Halting the Descent: US policy toward the Deteriorating Situation in Iraq

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:
Chabot Wilson Ackerman
Rohrabacher Turner Connolly

NON-SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: *(Mark with an * if they are not members of full committee.)*

HEARING WITNESSES: Same as meeting notice attached? Yes [x] **No** [ ]
(If "no", please list below and include title, agency, department, or organization.)

STATEMENTS FOR THE RECORD: *(List any statements submitted for the record.)*

TIME SCHEDULED TO RECONVENE ____
or
TIME ADJOURNED ____

Subcommittee Staff Director