



**The Post-Conflict Resolution Project**

*Presents*

**Walter B. Slocombe**

*Iraq's National Security Strategy*

*Chaired by*

**John J. Hamre**

*President and CEO, CSIS*

***On February 9, 2004 the CSIS Post-Conflict Resolution Project hosted Walter B. Slocombe, former Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) adviser for national security and defense and former U.S. Undersecretary of Defense for Policy, discussed Iraq's national security strategy. Slocombe addressed plans to bolster Iraq's national security and America's role in shaping Iraqi defense policy and capabilities. The transcript follows.***

Mr. Hamre: I'm delighted that so many of you are here. I said to Walt, the last time we had a crowd like this was Bill Gates, and they share nothing in common, outside of maybe height. But other than that, I can't think there's much that unifies them. But a great turnout, and I knew there would be. Such an important opportunity.

First of all, Ambassador [Surtrutsky], thank you for coming. We're delighted you're here. Ambassador Chan, thank you. We're delighted you could join us today. We're very pleased you could be with us.

We welcome back to CSIS Walt Slocombe, a friend and a very familiar figure. His training for the dangerous and difficult assignment in Iraq was actually started here by negotiating the divorce agreement between CSIS and Georgetown University about 20 years ago. We knew he was a great divorce lawyer. The question was was he any good as a marriage lawyer? Since that was his assignment in Iraq, to create something new.

I remember when I first heard that Walt was going to go to Baghdad to help form up the security side of the new government I was both terribly surprised and completely flabbergasted, and then grateful, to think that a man of this talent was willing to interrupt his personal life -- which he has a right to recover after having served eight long years in the previous Administration. He had a right to get back to his true love which is tax law. It's true. Walt is the strangest person I've ever met. [Laughter] He's got, in his law office he's got the models of the ICBMs. Remember those famous ICBMs in the Cold War we all had where it showed all the big Russians ones and all the little American ones? Well Walt had a set of those in his law office, right next to his law tax books. And at his Pentagon office he had his Tax Code. I thought this is really quite fascinating.

He really did have the right to take time off after having served so well in DoD the last eight years, and yet when the country called he stood up and went to Iraq. I was very pleased and grateful to have had a number of opportunities to meet with him when I was there in June and early July, a long with Sheba Crocker and Rick Martin. He really was enormously helpful in shaping our thinking. We're just grateful for everything he's done.

Walt, it's a real privilege to welcome you back to CSIS. It's a real privilege to welcome you as a true public servant who has done more for his country than anybody else I know. I'm grateful to call you my friend and to welcome you here and to listen to you today. Thank you very much.

Mr. Slocombe: Thanks very much, John. I guess it's a sign of my commitment to CSIS that one of the few non-Iraq related things I did was Jennifer MacBee and I are working on a chapter in a book for CSIS which I edited from my desk in the palace as the mortars came in.

The point about the divorce lawyer is interesting. I used to do a lot of bankruptcy law, and in many ways bankruptcy law has some interesting analogies for Iraq. But maybe as we move toward a political settlement we should think about the possibility of anti-nuptial agreements sometimes as a way of dealing of problems.

Can I begin on a serious note? A great friend of CSIS and a man who, whatever one's views of his particular substantive views was a great patriot and a great military leader, Tom Moore, passed away over the weekend, or at least his obituary was in the paper over the weekend. I think it's appropriate at a CSIS event -- I had the privilege of serving with Admiral Moore when I was on the NSC staff and he was kind to me as a very very junior member of the staff. I think it's appropriate to record his passing.

What I want to talk about today is not whether the war was a good idea or a bad idea or whether the diplomacy was -- Let me begin -- At the risk of sounding like a preacher, there are in fact a lot of empty seats, and the people who are sitting at the back, if they'll just be a little aggressive.

Also, whatever the distinguished people who were supposed to sit in the reserve seats haven't shown up -- [Laughter] -- and they must have been very distinguished indeed, judging by how distinguished the audience that is here. So there are plenty of seats and while I don't want to talk too long, nobody should be asked to actually stand up while I talk.

The war is likely to remain controversial for a long time, but the practical issue that we face, we the United States, our coalition partners, most importantly of course the Iraqis, the region and the national community is how to meet the challenges that lie before us in converting the opportunities that the war created into the reality of a secure, stable, Iraq.

The stakes are very high, most of all for the Iraqi people but also for the United States and the rest of the world. Success will mean that Iraq offers a decent government and a life for its own population, a system of ordered government that respects both majority rule and minority rights, and that offers individual Iraqis both personal security and personal liberty in a nation and a region that has seen far too little of both.

Conversely, failure means a risk of civil war and other authoritarian regime with the potential to destabilize the region and to acquire weapons of mass destruction and in general a huge setback to the interests of the nations of the coalition, the region, the world, and the hopes for peace in that region.

To succeed, the Iraqis with the support of the coalition and such other members of the international community as choose to help must accomplish four different but related tasks: to provide adequate essential basic services; to build the economy; to help set up a government that is both representative and legitimate; and to establish the level of security necessary for those other goals to be achievable.

I yield to no one in making the point that the first three goals -- services, economy and government -- are critical not only for their own sake but they're critical as measures of security.

It's interesting, there was a recent poll. Iraqis in major cities were asked what's the most important thing that would help you feel more secure? And they said if the economy was better. So there is a close relationship between security and these other goals. But since security is a necessary though far from sufficient condition for success since it's mostly what I worked on when I was out there, it's what I'll concentrate on today.

Observing only that progress on the other goals is being made and that that progress contributes to security because it gives the Iraqi people a stake in stability and confidence that future lies with democracy, prosperity and order, and not with the enemies of those goals, and that cooperation will produce results.

It's important to begin by pointing out that the security situation in Iraq is a lot less desperate than most media reports imply. Iraq even inside the Sunni Triangle, much less outside it, is not a nation in chaos. Of course no part of the country is entirely safe as we saw from the terrible suicide bombings in Kurdistan recently. But in much of the country incidents are quite rare. And even in the cities and in the Sunni Triangle, streets and stores are full of

people; basic services are improving; schools, universities and hospitals are open; crime is down; employment is up; currency is stable, actually it's appreciating against the dollar like most currencies. That may be a comment on the quality of the economic leadership in the two countries, but that's a different issue. A civil society is beginning to function; the statistical risks to ordinary Iraqis for political violence are almost certainly far less than from traffic accidents. For most Iraqis, most ordinary Iraqis who are not involved in politics or the security services, the security issue is that of ordinary crime, not politically motivated violence.

All that said, the security situation is obviously far from what it needs to be for success and much remains to be done.

Casualties to American and coalition military forces and civilian workers understandably generate the greatest concern outside Iraq, but from the point of view of the prospects for success, the critical vulnerability is not attacks on foreigners but on Iraqis who cooperate with the coalition and are working to build Iraq.

One of the things which is most remarkable and most heartening is the number of Iraqis who at very considerable personal risk are prepared to work in the security services, to work in the government, to work in the political process.

Meeting the security challenge is compounded by the multiple threats. Broadly, all the threat groups share the common goal of making the place too dangerous for outsiders and too fearful for Iraqis and too costly for the coalition to stay, and all take advantage of porous borders and foreign financial and physical havens. In all, if they succeed, would certainly establish regimes that would not respect basic human rights, individual or collective, or pursue a peaceful foreign policy.

Moreover, and this is underlined by the interesting story in the New York Times today, these disparate groups are often prepared to cooperate tactically and sometimes to masquerade as one another. One can make a logical judgment about who's responsible for something. It's a little bit like the joke about this is the Middle East. You can never be sure that because something obviously looks like it was done by one group, it was in fact done by that group as opposed to another group in an effort to discredit or to foment trouble.

But for all these similarities, the threat groups differ in composition, motivation and tactics, and therefore in the responses that will be effective against them.

The most numerous and militarily significant group is the surviving, unreconciled core of Saddam's support. This is extended families, almost all Sunni, who did very well under the old regime and who dream of somehow regaining power by mounting attacks that they hope will intimidate Iraqis and exhaust coalition and American resolve. The military calls them by the clumsy name former regime loyalists. And sometimes when we were talking about American politics I would describe myself as a former regime loyalist. I prefer, and in fact it's not bad in another one, these groups are best characterized by the names that they've chosen for one of their front organizations, that is the Party of the Return.

The capture of Saddam has further damaged the reputation and cohesiveness of the old Ba'ath party leadership but there remain elements that imagine they could somehow regain influence and even full control.

This group, which is likely to number no more than a few thousand out of a population of something like 28 million, and a former Ba'ath party membership of well over a million is responsible for most of the military-style attacks. The actual operations sponsored by these elements, however, are often conducted not by the hard core Ba'athist bitter enders themselves who need to survive personally to succeed, but by hired thugs and dukes.

The Returnists have no overarching value but power, but they are quite prepared to espouse in name at least the causes of Iraqi nationalism, Islamic fundamentalism, or Sunni sectionalism and to work with other groups with whom they have essentially no ideological affinity.

The second element are the various Iraq-based Islamic terrorist groups, notably Ansar al Islaam which has renamed itself Ansar al Suna, mostly, as the name suggests, with some element of a radical Sunni Islamic agenda. Their

support base is potentially broader than the Returnists because they have more appeal to the general Sunni community which is understandably apprehensive about its future. But they certainly do not represent the bulk of Iraqi people or even of Sunni communities.

These Sunni elites and their clients have no great loyalty to Saddam and his Ba'athist clique, but they do suffer the loss of past privilege and the prospect of an Iraq in which the minorities and indeed the Shia majority have real power.

With their strong Islamic radical foundation, these groups are in a better position to recruit suicide bombers but they lack the organizational base of the Ba'ath party or its vast hidden resources of funds and weaponry.

Then there are external terrorist groups, al Qaida being the leading one, that potentially find Iraq a congenial environment. Even more than the indigenous Sunni radicals, these groups are able to organize spectacular suicide bombings and are also particularly inclined to strike at Shia targets.

Finally, and as I say, far more important than most outsiders realize, is Iraq faces an acute problem of ordinary greed-based criminality. And moreover, some of the disorder is the result of various elements of score settling after generations of problems or discontent at practical difficulties -- riots over electricity, blackouts, or low incomes. Exacerbated by a culture of dependence and an over-developed sense of entitlement that is quick to blame the current authorities for any practical problems.

In the longer run there's also a threat to a just Iraqi state from hyper-nationalists or hyper-religious groups possibly with significant outside support who reject the basic notion of a state that accommodates the diversity of ethnic, religious and cultural groups that constitute the population of Iraq.

Corresponding to the complexity of the challenge there are many mutually supporting elements to the response. Central to all is better intelligence which will rely less on technical measures, though those have potential, than on improved human intelligence and painstaking professional regional expert analysis. Especially since the capture of Saddam there's been important progress particularly in securing information from ordinary Iraqis who understand both that their interests lie with the coalition and the Iraqis who work with it and that ours is more likely to be the winning side.

U.S. and other coalition intelligence efforts have been adjusted and refined to increase our ability to understand the threats, both strategically and tactically, and the development of indigenous Iraqi capabilities for intelligence will become increasingly important. However the enemy groups remain extremely difficult intelligence targets with extraordinarily effective counter-intelligence systems.

Second, once adequate intelligence is at hand robust coalition military operations can strike effectively to preempt and disrupt the opposition forces.

The responsibility for security operations will increasingly devolve on the Iraqis, but effective coalition military operations will remain critical.

Coalition military forces were never as passive as sometimes portrayed but backed by better intelligence and increasing experience they have in recent months undertaken even more aggressive and better focused operations. The ongoing rotation will involve significant realignment of the forces to emphasize mobility and precision and to take advantage of lessons learned since April, even as the total force level declines modestly.

The risk of aggressive military action is of course that such action is not informed by precise intelligence and results in unnecessary civilian casualties, it's both militarily ineffective and politically and psychologically very counter-productive.

Central to the security effort and indeed to much else in the transition is Iraqis assuming an increasing share of the burden of providing for their own security. To that end a range of security forces are being developed. A key element in this is the creative initiative of the American military leadership to establish an Iraqi Civil Defense

Corps, the ICDC, to work closely with coalition military forces. These people are locally recruited and live and work in their communities. They receive a few weeks of initial training and then operate as an integral part of U.S. and other coalition military units bringing special skills of familiarity with the country and the communities in which they operate.

There are now about 20,000 on the ICDC roles and the goal is to roughly double that. They will be in operations with coalition forces within the next few months.

I should note that these target numbers, like those that follow, are obviously subject to some adjustment as conditions and experience dictate.

I also should note that although I was honored to have had the privilege -- I should have said this at the beginning. I was honored to have the privilege to serve as part of CPA, I have now left government service, and although I'm an unpaid consultant to CPA and OSD, my remarks are very definitely -- especially the cracks about the economy -- are very much unofficial and my personal views.

Because of their close links to coalition units these ICDC units are not full scale, independent military forces for they depend for most of their support on the associated coalition units. In the long run they or at least selected elements will receive more equipment and be strengthened by the training of working with experienced coalition units and will probably transition into some kind of reserve under the Iraq [inaudible] Ministry of Defense.

I believe the key to the long term security of Iraq is the major programs to create professional, highly trained, well-equipped police and military forces. These programs will reach full scale in the coming months. The current military is by late this year to have trained nine brigades of light infantry, a small coastal defense force, and a very small air transport unit with a total manpower of something like 35,000 to 40,000.

A critical feature of the army that is being created is that it is truly a national army. Units are representative of the demography of the country as a whole, and units are deployed around the country without regard to the original homes of the individual soldiers and the units.

The emphasis in the training is on creating a cadre of Iraqi officers and NCOs who will then train and lead their units. As the units begin to deploy they, like the forces contributed by the 30-plus nations that have troops in Iraq, will be under operational command of and will work with coalition units but they will be under the administrative control, again like the contributions from other countries, they will be under the administrative control of Iraqi officers and they will have a full suite of equipment in their own base and support structure.

This force will form the core of a continuing independent Iraqi military. It will be overseen and managed by a civilian-led Iraqi Ministry of Defense which is in the process of being established. The Iraqi armed forces, like all armies, will be primarily oriented towards the defense of the nation against external threats but also, like all armies, it will be available to supplement police and other security units in dealing with the internal threats where necessary.

The police is the second high end part of the program. CPA over the next year or so will train some 25,000 or 30,000 new entrant policemen who will then work with international trainer mentors to complete their preparation and then go into full time service. These new professionally trained policemen will join the current force which is based largely on the old regular police but has had some new training and equipment and the target number is a total police force of something like 75,000 to 80,000 which turns out to be a reasonable relationship with total police to total population for a country like Iraq.

A critical specialized police units for investigation, forensics, community policing and so on are also being created. As in the case of the military the emphasis is on training leaders and creating a force that's appropriate in its professional standards, integrity, systems of discipline and leadership and technical skills and equipment for a democratic and diverse society, and one which is under serious security threat.

The police who will be a national force subordinate to the National Ministry of the Interior will have the primary responsibility for dealing with ordinary crime but they will also have specialized capabilities to fight violence and terrorism.

At the lower end of the spectrum of capability and therefore of cost, are site security guards with training sufficient for their limited but important role. These are the so-called Facilities Protection Corps which will number some 80,000 to 100,000, mostly subordinate to the individual ministries whose facilities they're protecting. However, the Ministry of the Interior will have overall oversight responsibility. There are also a number of specialized security forces, particularly for, well for border control and also for parts of the economy like oil production, electricity, and transportation that have complicated and extended and vulnerable infrastructures.

Essential to dealing with the criminal side of the security problem and to some degree with the political and terrorism side as well is the continuing progress on getting the Iraqi judiciary, prosecutorial and penal systems working. All these elements of the criminal justice system now come under the independent Ministry of Justice which significantly is separate from the Ministry of the Interior.

In large part creating these forces is a matter of resources. There's \$5 billion in U.S. funds in the supplemental committed to these programs. Work has already, for example, begun to build bases for the new army and to buy the equipment it will need. Salaries, for the most part, come from Iraqi funds.

Realistically, however, even completing the current programs won't finish the job of establishing Iraqi security institutions. More outside support is likely to be required in the future. Some of that should come from other countries, but the United States as a nation should be prepared to continue to invest in building a free Iraq's capability for both internal and external security.

The challenges of building these institutions, however, go well beyond resources. In all these programs effectiveness requires even more than professional training and bases and equipment, fundamentally reformed and reoriented leadership. This requires not just removing those who were actively loyal to the old regime or operated at very high levels in it or were involved personally in abuses, but moving to a transformed ethos of discipline, integrity and leadership. Replacing the old habits in the security sector institutions which were characterized by a mixture of brutality, passivity, politicization and corruption will not be easy, but it's essential. Fortunately there are a large number of Iraqis -- some from the old institutions, some new to the field -- who accept the need for these changes. And indeed as I said, one of the most hopeful signs is the willingness of many Iraqis to run really great risks to be part of the new security institutions and to commit to operating security institutions in a whole new way.

The schedule for the creation of these forces is rapid to an unprecedented degree. For example, the police training program envisages training in about 18 months a cadre of new police officers. That is something like three or four times as many as New York City trains in an equivalent period, and New York City has the largest police training operation in the United States.

In any event, even if the schedules continue to be met the buildup efforts will still be very much underway on July 1st when sovereignty is scheduled to be transferred to a provisional government.

There will be pressures both from some Iraqis and some Americans to cut corners to meet the schedule by compromising on standards and to imagine that Iraqi units can take over difficult missions before they are really ready or indeed missions which no one ever thought they would be ready. The immediate challenges require quick action and the overall program includes some necessary short term measures. However, the long run goal of transferring the great bulk of security tasks to the Iraqis requires paying the costs and taking the time to do the job right. That is to create fully independent, properly trained, equipped and based units, particularly in the military and the police.

There are serious challenges and Iraq will need outside help for many months to come on security, but the Iraqi security forces are steadily growing in capability and responsibility. Ordinary crime rates are down as the police conduct regular patrols and develop the capability to investigate crimes and apprehend offenders. Virtually all routine guard duty is now being performed by Iraqis.

The ICDC is serving as a critical supplement to American and other coalition military forces and the initial high end professional trained battalions of the new army are coming on line. Specifically three battalions of newly trained army troops are now being deployed in newly rehabilitated bases in different regions of the country.

From the point of view of the long term, however, the task is not just overcoming the current violent opposition. Success requires not just dealing with the immediate crisis but establishing an effective governmental order that's both strong enough to manage the nation's security and limited enough to respect the rights of its people. And Iraq, unlike many other nations that over the past couple of decades have faced the task of security sector reform and building a new constitutional order, will almost certainly face a continuing internal and external threat of a serious nature. I'm particularly pleased that some of our Polish friends are here today. Poland and the other countries in Central and Eastern Europe at least has the luxury of doing its transformation without people shooting at it, which is not a luxury that the Iraqis will have.

Coalition forces are likely to remain in Iraq for some years to come, but Iraq needs to move steadily to a situation where it takes care of its own security, at least its internal security, with only limited direct participation by outside forces. That's a political goal of Iraqis every bit as much as it is of the coalition. Therefore Iraq's new security institutions must be most effective and just, which is not an easy combination anywhere.

To start with, the legitimate political authority must have full control of the security organs. That was certainly not the case in the past. In Iraq the task of ensuring that the government has a monopoly of armed force is made the more difficult by demography. The Shia majority has a justifiable sense of having been mistreated and deprived of its rights not just by Saddam, but arguably ever since the Turkish conquest centuries ago. Similarly, the Kurdish communities have a strong desire to protect the de facto autonomy they've enjoyed since 1991. At the same time the Sunnis not only regret the loss of their former privileges, but they fear retribution and oppression by other groups. And the smaller but numerically not insignificant Turkmen, Yazidi, Assyrian, Shaldian and other minorities also have their fears and claims.

Partition is simply not an option. A constitutional order must be found that will accommodate these conflicting interests, and fortunately despite all the conflicts within Iraq there is no strong tradition of popularly based largescale ethnic or sectarian violence and there's a considerable group of moderates, both formally secular and religious who are willing to tolerate other faiths and other branches of Islam and to recognize the necessity of finding mechanisms whereby Iraq's diverse population can live peacefully together.

An issue that will assume greater and greater importance as time goes by is the handling of the various regional and party-based militia. Of these, the largest and best known are of course the Kurdish Peshmurga, but there are also the Shia-based organizations such as the Baader Corps, the Madi Army, and some of the other tribal and political groups have smaller armed forces rationalized either as for the personal security of the leadership or as ad hoc community protection.

In a state based on the rule of law there can be no permanent place for armed units that are not clearly and effectively under the control of legitimate political authority. Moreover, obviously, if some groups have such militias, others will want them and there will be a danger of the country descending into warlordism.

Accordingly, one of the key tasks in the next few months will be to find mechanisms to deal with this problem that recognize both the long term goal and the near term reality for many of these groups that continue to exist in some form or another of some kind of armed capability as an assurance against unfavorable political developments as the structure evolves.

The solution is going to require a range of measures -- pensions for bonafide retirees, absorption of parts of these militias into the regular security forces, retraining and job programs for former militia members, and stern actions against any groups that use their forces improperly during the transition period.

Again, the difficulties are real but not hopeless. I know from my own conversations with them that both Kurdish and Shia leaders realize that there needs to be real changes in the current system and accept in principle that

militias, a term which they resolutely reject as failing to acknowledge the historic role of these armed forces, have to be reduced and the residue transformed into elements of the established security system, although they also want to be sure that that security system reflects their local interests and avoids past over-centralization.

The transformation will likely produce some significant regionally based security organizations and provided they can be brought within the overall control of legitimate political authority it's not necessarily a bad thing in a nation characterized previously by tremendous over-centralization of security responsibility, but there are some potential counterweights to the abuse of central authority.

A key issue will also be defining Iraq's relationship with the United States and other coalition states in the security field. In the longer run, even after the internal security situation is adequately dealt with, Iraq will have to consider its external security requirements and their implications for its relationship with the United States, friendly regional states, and others.

A free Iraq should be a model and a beacon in the region, but for those and other reasons they will also likely have potential enemies and they will have many competing demands for available resources besides the military and other security forces. Accordingly, both Iraq and the United States and other concerned countries will need to address the issue of possible mutual security agreements in which Iraq would not be left entirely to its own resources for its own defense. Obviously this is not an issue which can be decided unilaterally, either by the Americans or the Iraqis or anybody else. It will require agreement.

Moreover, the task of creating a national security system has to go beyond simply creating competent forces, phasing out the militias, and coping with immediate security threats, or even dealing with long-term external requirements.

The critical part of the transfer of full authority to a sovereign government will be setting up a constitutional and legal framework for setting and conducting Iraq's national security policy and for maintaining and commanding its military, intelligence, police and other security forces.

As I've already mentioned, the Ministry of Defense is in the process of being created with civilian leadership, significant civilian staffing, and clear authority over budgets, personnel and policy.

The Ministry of the Interior already exists, but there will need to be a formal legal structure for it, defining its powers and its relationships to other institutions.

The security organs must be controlled by legitimate civilian government and accountable to the public and to the parliament.

Specific areas where decisions will be made, and the decisions have to be made by Iraqis although the coalition and other can provide advice and support, will include setting objectives, establishing procedures, and in particular setting the requirements for making sure that the security forces are free from political involvement, defensively oriented, reasonably representative of the population as a whole, financially affordable, and subject to clear standards both substantive and procedural in the use of extraordinary measures such as the use of military forces for internal security.

Moreover, in addition to dealing with the issues of respect for human rights and subordination to legal authority a reformed security system will have to end the pervasive corruption and abuses of power for personal gains that have characterized the Iraqi security institutions and much of the rest of the government in the past.

And as I said, all of this is compounded by the fact that the security organs of the new state must be effective. If the system is incapable of providing security the fact that it's a model of democracy won't do much good.

But the experience of decades of oppression has I think made all groups, and many in the perspective security organizations themselves fully conscious of the need for a whole new approach.



For all the problems, there's reason for hope. Despite all their profound differences, the overwhelming bulk of Iraqis is measured by polling data as well as by the comments of most leaders recognizing that for all their arguments over the political structure they have an opportunity which may prove fleeting to create a decent government for their nation.

They also recognize with very few exceptions that continued coalition efforts will be needed to maintain and improve security well after the formal restoration of sovereignty. Iraq has many resources -- not just oil -- a reasonably well educated professional class including the legal field. There are many things about my experience in Iraq that made me proud to be a lawyer. Including, the professional class understands the rewards that will come for a country if a decent security and legal system is in place.

My impression from my work in Iraq and my more peripheral involvement since I returned, remains that the prospect is essentially a favorable one. Much is accomplished and the essential context exists for success. The fall of Saddam has been deeply welcomed, even by most Sunnis and by virtually all the other groups, and there is genuine gratitude to the United States for liberation and widespread if grudging recognition that winning the security battle will require continued coalition effort. The capture of Saddam alive has further discredited him and his movement and reduced though hardly eliminated the fears that as in 1991 and earlier in the late '70s, the Ba'athist regime still somehow phoenix-like return to power.

At the same time we have to acknowledge there's also deep resentment of the occupation and impatience for Iraqis to take over full authority. The progress on all fronts is real. It's not yet irreversible and there is much more to do in the face of serious challenge.

Overall, however, this is a struggle that can and must be won. The enemy's goals are not military but political -- to intimidate Iraqis who seek change, to destroy the public's confidence in the competence of a new authorities, and the prospects of reform, and to exhaust the patience of American and other external supporters of the process.

Accordingly the key requirement is resolve, to bear the costs in money, political and military effort, and the most painful in human life necessary to overcome the forces that seek to prevent success.

One of the great privileges in my life was the opportunity to work with the American military, coalition militaries and the many brave and Iraqis who are working on this cause. The Iraqis will have to bear the main burden, but the international community has a critical contribution to make.

Thanks for your attention, and I will be glad to try to answer questions.

[Applause]

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS TO FOLLOW