

**Testimony of Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz**  
**Prepared for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee**  
**July 29, 2003**

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee: On behalf of the men and women who serve our country so faithfully and so well, I would first say that we are indeed grateful for your continued and unfailing support.

I returned last week from a four-and-a-half-day visit to northern, central and southern Iraq. With incredible support from the U.S. military, my staff and I were able to cover a great deal of territory in a relatively short time. In fact, I think we saw what would normally have taken a typical visitor two weeks to see—and in temperatures that hovered near or above 120 degrees. In light of this, my gratitude to our military men and women only deepened—not only for the support they gave us, but in recognition of the fact that they do so much more—in grueling heat and in conditions far less agreeable than those they provided for us—day after day, without stopping. They are doing an absolutely stunning job, and I appreciate the opportunity to discuss with you today their vital work, and offer you my firsthand testimony on the current situation in Iraq.

\* \* \*

Behind the police academy in Baghdad stands the forked trunk of a dead tree. It is unusual for the fact that, on each branch, the bark is permanently marked by two sets of ropes—one high enough to tie up a man, the other, a woman. Near the tree is a row of small cells where special prisoners were held.

Our guide on our tour of the academy was the newly-appointed superintendent; he himself had spent a year in jail for having made a disparaging comment about Saddam—to his best friend. He told us of unspeakable things that once happened to men and women tied to that tree and held in those cells. Beyond the torture tree, a small gate leads to the Olympic Committee Headquarters, run by Uday Hussein, who would often slip through the back gate at night to torture and abuse prisoners.

That is the same tree behind the police academy that was reported in such gruesome detail in the July 23<sup>rd</sup> “Washington Post.” The article focused on the sad plight of one Assyrian Christian woman who was tied to that tree and made to endure unspeakable torture. Her husband was executed at the academy and passed through the steel gate, as the article described it, “like a piece of butcher’s meat”—all because they had not received state approval for their marriage.

In many ways, the people of Iraq are like prisoners who endured years of solitary confinement—without light, without peace, without much knowledge of the outside world. They have just emerged into the bright light of hope and fresh air of freedom. It may take a while for them to adjust to this new landscape free of torture trees.

\* \* \*

Last week, the President told us why it is so crucial that we succeed in Iraq. He said: “A free, democratic, peaceful Iraq will not threaten America or our friends with illegal weapons. A free Iraq will not be a training ground for terrorists, or a funnel of money to terrorists, or provide weapons to terrorist who would be willing to use them to strike our country or our allies. A free Iraq will not destabilize the Middle East. A free Iraq can set a hopeful example to the entire region and lead other nations to choose freedom. And as the pursuits of freedom replace hatred and resentment and terror in the Middle East, the American people will be more secure.”

Make no mistake: our efforts to help build a peaceful Iraq will be equal to the stakes. We look forward to doing our part to work with the members of Congress to help make America and her people more secure. Thank you.

There is a positive aspect in the distressing story of Juman Michael Hanna—that is her courage in coming forward to offer U.S. officials what is very likely credible information, information that will help root out Baathist policemen who routinely tortured and killed prisoners. Bernard Kerik, senior policy advisor to the Iraqi ministry of the interior, is quoted as saying that that woman’s information “is an event that will lead to closure for a lot of people”—and, he added—“justice.”

Mr. Chairman, I believe that is the same police academy that you and Senators Biden and Hagel visited during your trip to Iraq just a few weeks ago. But, I believe that our understanding of the academy’s former role in the regime continued to evolve after your trip to Baghdad. This, of course, is due to Mrs. Hanna’s brave testimony about crimes committed against her and countless others and who was responsible. This evolution in our understanding of but one aspect of the regime points to one of the most formidable challenges facing us right now. The people of Iraq have much valuable information that can help us root out Baathists and help them find justice. But their willingness to tell us what they know will continue to take significant investments on our part—investments in our time, of our resources, and in our efforts to build trust among the Iraqi people. The military and rehabilitation efforts now under way in Iraq are an essential part of the War on Terror. In fact, the battle to secure the peace in Iraq is now the central battle in the global war on terror.

### **History of atrocities and punishment linked to future success**

In *Republic of Fear*, Kanan Makiya writes about receiving a letter from an Iraqi refugee in Europe who claims to have been an agent in the Iraqi secret police for seven years. In the letter, the former agent draws this conclusion: “Confronting an experienced criminal regime such as the present one in Baghdad can be done only with truths that strip off its many masks, bringing its demise closer.”

Traveling throughout Iraq last week, I heard many accounts of unspeakable brutality—on a scale unimaginable for Americans. I saw truths that strip away masks of legitimacy that regime dead-enders may yet cling to. And while these truths may be unpleasant to face, doing so will help hasten the demise, once and for all, of a truly criminal regime.

While we were in the North, one of our commanders in the field told us they had temporarily stopped the excavation of a newly discovered mass gravesite, after unearthing the remains of 80 women and children—some still with little dresses and toys.

In the South, in the village of Al Turabah, we met other remnants of the regime’s horrific brutality, the Marsh Arabs, for whom liberation came only barely in time to save a fragment of this ancient civilization. But, for the Marsh Arabs, the marshes are no more. For more than 10 years, Saddam drained their ancestral lands—in one instance,

The people of Iraq are not only looking ahead to the day when they have their own representative government, they are taking active steps to make that happen now. There are some who still ask the question: Is democracy possible in Iraq? There are even some who doubt that democracy could ever take root in the Arab world. But, the people of northern Iraq, beyond the reach of Saddam Hussein and his regime for a decade, demonstrated an impressive ability to manage longstanding differences and develop relatively free and prospering societies.

My meetings with newly-freed Iraqis tell me that they are looking to do the same thing. We attended a meeting of the Mosul city council, which was instructive in debunking the myth that Arabs, Kurds, Turcomen, Assyrian Christians and Yezidi cannot live and work together. The mayor of Mosul—who is a Sunni Arab and former Army commander who spent a year in prison and whose brother and cousin were murdered by the regime—said life under the regime “was like living in a prison.” He described the regime as “a ruthless gang that mistreated all Iraqis.” Investment and jobs, he said, are their top priorities. He credited the wisdom of General Petraeus in improving the security situation. He added that, jobs and investment will follow.

When I asked the mayor if ethnic differences will prevent people from working together, the Turcoman assistant mayor immediately said: “We have never had ethnic problems in the past. Saddam created them. We have always considered ourselves members of the same family. It never crossed our minds that the next person is different.” To that, the mayor added: “What caused this great [ethnic] gap was Saddam. Throughout our history we have had no problems. This has happened only in our recent history. We consider ourselves one garden with many flowers of different colors.”

Even though the enemy targets our success, we will win the peace. But, we won't win it alone. We don't need American troops to guard every mile of electrical cable. The real center of gravity will come from the Iraqi people themselves—they know who and where the criminals are. And they have the most at stake—their future.

When inevitable challenges and controversies arise, we should remind ourselves that most of the people of Iraq are deeply grateful for what our incredibly brave American and coalition forces have done to liberate them from Saddam's Republic of Fear.

When we've shown Iraqis we mean to stay until the old regime is crushed, and its criminals punished – and that we are equally determined to give their country back to them – they will know they can truly begin to build a society and government of, by and for the Iraqi people.

diverting water to create artificial lakes around the lavish palaces he built for himself near Babylon. Where there was once a lush landscape of productive, fresh-water marshes the size of New Jersey, there is now a vast, nearly lifeless void, which one observer with us likened to the surface of the moon.

According to one estimate, the population of the Marsh Arabs once stood at half a million; but after Saddam's humanitarian and environmental crimes, it is believed there are at most 200,000 left—and less than 40,000 of those were not driven from their ancestral home. At least there is still a Marsh Arab civilization capable of being preserved. But, it is likely it would not have lasted another two or three, much less another 12 years. Children in Al Turabah greeted us with loud applause and cheers of "Salaam Bush" and "Down with Saddam." Their first request was not for candy or toys. It was, instead, a single word: "Water?"

In the case of many tens of thousands who were killed at Al Hilla and Abu Gaharib, however, liberation did not come in time. I've heard stories about buses full of people that villagers would watch pass by, headed for a once-public field that had been closed by the government. They reported hearing gunshots, assuming that the people were celebrating, as is sometimes customary. When the buses would pass by the villagers on the return trip—completely empty—people began to suspect that something was wrong. When this happened over and over, the villagers began to fear the worst.

Of course, we know now that tens of thousands of men, women and children were brought to places like the killing fields in Hilla, gunned down, and buried, dead or alive. Today, some of their bodies have been retrieved from the earth—they now lay, wrapped in plastic bags, in neat rows on the dirt. They wait for someone to claim them. The graveyard in Hilla is only one of dozens that have been discovered to date throughout Iraq.

At the prison at Abu Ghraib, we saw the torture chamber and an industrial-style gallows that conducted group executions regularly, twice a week. We were told that 30,000 people – and perhaps as many as 100,000 – were killed there over the years. (According to a variety of witnesses, in the spring of 1998, Qusay Hussein ordered officials to kill thousands of prisoners to make room for more. As many as 3,000 prisoners were executed by the regime, as part of a larger program of "prison cleansing.")

One of my strongest impressions is that fear of the old regime is still pervasive throughout Iraq. But, a smothering blanket of apprehension and dread woven by 35 years of repression – where even the smallest mistake could bring torture or death – won't be cast off in a few weeks' time. Iraqis are understandably cautious. Until they are convinced that every remnant of Saddam's old regime is being removed, and until a long and ghastly part of their history is put to rest and overcome, that fear will remain. That

Everywhere I went, I found troops with heartwarming stories about the reception they have received from Iraqis, how wonderful it felt for them to get that kind of welcome. They expressed some bewilderment about the news coverage they see. One person asked, "don't the folks back home get it?" They understand that helping Iraqis build a free and democratic society will help make our children and grandchildren safer.

Our troops are brave when they have to fight—and they still have to fight. And they are caring and clever—extraordinarily so—when they deal with humanitarian and political and civil military challenges. What they do in a day's work is inspiring, and it's a great tribute to the superb quality of people who serve this country. They are, quite literally, soldiers and statesmen.

In Mosul, we took a walking tour of the center of town with the Army company responsible for that area. As we were passing a line of butcher shops, the Company Commander told me a remarkable story about how they dealt with a problem involving the town's meat cutters. It seems that they were slaughtering the animals on the street and dumping the carcasses in front of their shops. To get this rather unsanitary problem under control, our soldiers organized an association of the butchers, so they would have an authoritative institution they could interact with. This was a new development for the butchers, of course. In the old regime, organized associations weren't allowed—they simply shot people who dumped things in the streets. When I heard their solution, I jokingly asked the young captain if they'd taught him that at West Point. He said, no. He said, they'd had to figure it out as they went along. Of course, that is something our troops are repeating throughout Iraq on a daily basis.

I also met with a group of non-government organizations, who also uniformly praised the work of our military. They said the conditions created by our military allowed them to get on the ground fast and that has helped their programs. The USAID representative said civil-military operations are "smooth as silk."

One of the big impressions I came away with is that the Iraqi people understand that our people are there to help. I sensed an enormous gratitude on their part for what has been done to bring about the liberation of the Iraqi people. That gratitude was obvious across all the communities we encountered.

### **Iraqi People are With Us**

The mayor of Karbala expressed his personal gratitude, telling us they would never forget that America saved us and delivered us from the regime." He went on to say, "We want to establish a national government and maintain relations with America."

history of atrocities and the punishment of those responsible are directly linked to our success in helping the Iraqi people build a free, secure and democratic future.

What happened to the Hussein brothers last week is essential to the process of building that future. Their demise is an important step in making Iraqis feel more secure that the Baathist tyranny will never return, in restoring order and in giving freedom a chance. Even in Baghdad, far from the Shi'a and Kurdish areas that we associate with Saddam's genocidal murders, enthusiastic and prolonged celebrations over the news of their deaths erupted almost at once—suggesting something else I observed: Saddam and his sons were equal opportunity oppressors.

It was a significant step forward to get Numbers 2 and 3 on our most-wanted list of regime criminals. That same day, we captured Number 11 on the list, the commander of the Special Republican Guard, the unit whose job was to spy on the Republican Guard. But, we've learned in our days on the ground that the roots of that regime go deep—burrowing into precincts and neighborhoods, like a huge gang of organized criminals. So, it is the coalition's intensified focus on mid-level Baathists that we think will yield even greater results in apprehending the contract killers and dead-enders who now target our soldiers and our success. Recently captured functionaries have revealed new and helpful information, and we are working to encourage this trend.

According to Major General Ray Odierno, commander of the 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, tips are on the rise following the deaths of Uday and Qusay. But, even before that happened, he said that the number of Iraqis providing information to our troops had been increasing in the last couple of weeks. He thinks the rise is because they feel confident that we will act on the information. Tips have led to the seizure of significant weapons caches, as well, to include some 660 surface to air missiles. It is important to remember that the people who want the return of the old regime are a small fraction of the Iraqi people.

As Ambassador Bremer pointed out when he was here last week, ongoing and aggressive military operations pick up a number of detainees every day, following up on information provided by Iraqis. They are pursuing Fedayeen Saddam and mid-level Baathists. They are arresting them and interrogating them. In fact, during one of our briefings, we saw an impressive 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division flow chart that goes from the mid-level Baathists through the facilitators down to the individual perpetrators.

And it's important to remember that before the start of military operations in Iraq, Saddam released tens of thousands of prisoners who have also been part of the violence. In Nasiriyah, for example, Iraqis have told us about offers of \$200 to attack a power line and \$500 to attack an American.

And it cost us in an even larger way as well. The American presence in the holy land of Saudi Arabia, and the sustained American bombing of Iraq as part of that containment policy, were principal grievances cited in Osama bin Laden's notorious 1998 fatwa that called for the killing of Americans.

It is also worthwhile to consider what we might spend on reconstruction in Iraq against the billions that we've already spent in Bosnia and Kosovo. I think most would agree that those investments have been a worthwhile expenditure. But, stability in Iraq is vastly more important. It is directly related to the future of one of the most important regions in the world and to our own security. When we completely defeat Saddam's brutal regime, it will be a defeat for terrorists globally. The value of that victory is incalculable.

Iraq is already contributing to its own reconstruction and rehabilitation, and Iraq's share will increase as oil production and the Iraqi economy recover. At this early stage, it is impossible to estimate what recovery in Iraq actually will cost. What we do know is that resources will come from a variety of sources. The costs of recovery in Iraq will be shared widely. The international community has a vital interest in successful recovery in Iraq and must share responsibility for it.

The international community has recognized its responsibility to ensure that Iraq can take its place among peace-seeking nations. In fact, 19 nations are now providing more than 13,000 troops on the ground.

Coalition support is significant, and it continues to increase. Our continued progress will depend on international assistance, including that of the United Nations. As we proceed, there should be no underestimating the task before us, and there should be no underestimating its importance.

## **Troops**

When President Bush spoke in the Rose Garden last week with Ambassador Bremer at his side, he encapsulated what I've tried to sketch out for you with these simple words. He said, "our military forces are on the offensive." Indeed they are. They are doing an incredible job. Because they are so aggressively rooting out the dead-enders who are targeting the successes of the Iraqis and the coalition, we must be prepared for more American casualties and possibly even more dramatic attacks.

Our troops understand what they face, and I can tell you that their morale is almost uniformly high. They are committed to their mission. They know exactly how important it is—to the people of Iraq and to America. And their obvious commitment to getting the job done right is having a positive effect on the people of Iraq.



## Successes, Region by Region

While many Iraqis may still remain in the grip of fear, our troops, our coalition allies and the new national and local Iraqi councils are making significant progress in lessening its iron hold. Mr. Chairman, I think you and Senators Hagel and Biden can attest to the fact that there is far more good news in Iraq than is routinely reported. I'd like to give you a snapshot tour of what I saw and heard last week.

One interesting thing I would note first is that the military commanders I talked with who have experience in the Balkans uniformly agreed that, in Iraq, we are far ahead of where we were in Bosnia and Kosovo at comparable times, and in some cases, we are ahead of where those places are today. Lieutenant General Ric Sanchez, the outstanding new commander of Joint Task Force 7, is a veteran of Kosovo. During one of our briefings, he commented that things are happening in Iraq after three months that didn't happen after 12 months in Kosovo. I asked him to elaborate, and off the top of his head, he jotted down a list of 10 things. I'd like to share General Sanchez's list with you.

1. The judicial system is functioning at a rudimentary level. Investigative judges are working and misdemeanor trials are ongoing with convictions.
2. The political infrastructure is functioning. Neighborhood, district and city councils have been stood up. Over 90% of major cities have city councils and there is a National Level Interim Governing Council.
3. The police force is at about 80% of the requirement. Police are conducting joint and unilateral effective operations.
4. Customs, fixed site security are all well on the way to being stood up. Multiple ports of entry are being operated by the Iraqis.
5. Schools were immediately stood back up. At all levels the school year was salvaged.
6. The medical system is operating.
7. The media, all types, are available across the county.
8. The local economies are bustling – oil, agriculture and small business.
9. Public Services – electrical, water, sewage are nearly up to pre war levels.
10. Recruiting for the New Iraqi Army has started with training to begin within a couple of weeks.

In fact, the entire south and north are impressively stable, and the center is improving day by day. The public food distribution is up and running. We planned for a food crisis, but there isn't one. Hospitals nation-wide are open. Doctors and nurses are at work. Medical supply convoys are escorted to and from the warehouses. We planned for a health crisis, but there isn't one. Oil production has continued to increase, and for about the last week, has averaged 1.1 million barrels per day. We planned for the possibility of massive destruction of this resource of the Iraqi people, but our military plan helped preserve the oil fields for the Iraqis.

- Third and most important, what we need are Iraqis fighting with us. We've begun recruiting and training Iraqis for an Iraqi civilian defense force that would take over some important tasks from our troops such as guarding fixed sites and power lines. There is no reason that Iraqis could not be guarding the hospital from which someone threw a grenade that killed three of our Marines last week. To accelerate this process, we urgently request that you assist the Armed Services Committee to restore in conference the \$200 million in authority that we requested from the Congress in our budget this year. It was dropped, apparently because the Congress in its wisdom did not believe that it was necessary. I hope that it is clear now why it is necessary. It is much better to have Iraqis fighting and dying for their country than to have Americans doing the job all by themselves. There is no shortage of Iraqis who are willing to help us. We should not find that we are held back by a shortage of authority and money to give them the proper training and equipment to do the job.

I urge you and your colleagues on the Armed Services Committee to understand that this is an extremely urgent need, and special consideration must be given to provide this critical training and equipping authority to the Department.

One reason our commanders don't want more troops is that the function of American troops is to go after enemy that have been identified through actionable intelligence. When it comes to patrolling the streets of Iraqi cities, it is a disadvantage to have American troops. It means that our people are colliding with ordinary Iraqis trying to go about their day-to-day business. We are trying to get out of that posture as quickly as possible. In fact, the 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division in the city of Kirkuk has already managed to turn the entire policing job over to Iraqi police for that crucial city of mixed ethnic population. Where we have to use American troops, we will do so, but no one should think that it is the desirable solution.

As we place our investments into a larger context, we must realize that greater stability in this critical region will save our resources in the long run. We must not forget that containing Saddam and his regime was the goal. According to some estimates, it cost the United States slightly over \$30 billion to maintain the containment of Saddam Hussein for the last 12 years.

And, of course, it cost us far more than money. It cost us American lives—in Khobar Towers, in the USS Cole, for example—and routinely put Americans in danger in enforcing the no fly zones.

The school year has been salvaged. Schools nationwide have reopened and final exams are complete. There are local town councils in most major cities and major districts of Baghdad, and they are functioning free of Baathist influence.

There is no humanitarian crisis. There is no refugee crisis. There is no health crisis. There has been minimal war damage to infrastructure. There has been no environmental catastrophe, either from oil well fires, or from dam breaks.

However, as I related to this Committee in May, Saddam's legacy of destruction and decay is another story entirely.

South: In the South, the Marines are making wonderful progress. Major General Jim Mattis, commander of the First Marine Expeditionary Force, told us how effective his battalion commanders—typically lieutenant colonels—have been as the hub of activity in the cities. They have stressed creating a supportive environment, by parking their tanks out of sight, and getting in among the people to win their trust and confidence. In one example, the Marines gave out chilled water—a precious commodity as you can imagine—to demonstrators at political rallies. Whenever the Marines have rebuilt a school—and in Karbala alone there are nine such schools—they present a brass bell with the inscription: “To the children of Iraq from the First Marine Division.”

Our Army Civil Affairs teams are equally impressive. They have created functioning local governing councils free from Baathist influence. The governor of Karbala captured this development best when he told me: “We Shia have theological ties to Iran, but we refuse to be followers of any country outside Iraq. I want to stress, we aspire to independence and democracy. We want to heal the wounds from the past regime's atrocities. We want to build factories, bring in the internet, practice our religious rites in freedom, have good relations with our neighbors and the world. The Marines in Karbala – Commanded by LtCol Lopez – work day and night with our Governing Council to provide security and services.”

North: Stability in the north is another success story. General Dave Petraeus and his troops of the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne arrived in Mosul on 22 April and over the next 30 days they put together this impressive list of accomplishments:

- Met with community leaders;
- Agreed on an election plan;
- Established an elected interim city council;
- Re-opened hospitals, schools, banks and businesses;
- Set up a Civil-Military Operations Center (CMOC);
- Repaired the strategic bridge on the Mosul-Irbil road;
- Fixed the benzene and propane shortages;

they are in the Balkans.

And if the stakes are huge in Iraq—and they are, since tyranny breeds terror—there is no question that our commitment to secure a peaceful Iraq must be at least equal to the stakes—it is related to nothing less than our security and the peace of the world. As the Vice President said last week, “a more peaceful, stable Middle East will contribute directly to the security of American and our friends.”

I applaud the determination and dedication of this Committee, Mr. Chairman, in helping the American people understand the stakes we have in securing success in Iraq.

Also last week, President Bush said that “our nation will give those who wear its uniform all the tools and support they need to complete their mission.” It is vital that our commanders in the field and Ambassador Bremer get what they need. The payoff will be much greater than the investments we make now.

Mr. Chairman, I would add that there is no artificial ceiling on the number of troops that we will deploy to Iraq to defeat this enemy. Our commanders have been asked repeatedly whether they need more troops, and the answer from General Abizaid, as well as his subordinate commanders, has repeatedly been, not only don't they need more, they don't want more. What they do want more of is this:

- Forces from other countries. We're making some substantial progress in that regard. I visited the Polish general who will be commanding the multinational division in southern Iraq. The Polish brigade in that division will have responsibility for the Province of Karbala, one of the most important cities in the Shi'a heartland that many people predicted would be difficult to manage. It has not proven difficult, and the Poles are enthusiastic about taking on the assignment. In that same multinational division, the Spanish brigade will be taking charge of the other major holy Shi'a city, Najaf. Further south, under the British multinational division, an Italian infantry brigade—which will include some 400 *carabinieri*--will be performing security and stability operations.
- The second thing they need more of is actionable intelligence. And the key to getting more intelligence is cooperation from Iraqis, as I mentioned earlier in my statement. That cooperation has been increasing substantially. One product of that cooperation, of course, was the Iraqi who turned in the two miserable brothers who were killed last week. That event itself has led to a large increase in the amount of intelligence that Iraqis are bringing to us,-- indeed such a large increase that we now have the challenge of sorting out the wheat from the chaff.

- Opened the airport to humanitarian assistance flights;
- Signed the Makhmur harvest accords between Kurds and Arabs;
- Completed the wheat harvest;
- Re-opened the border with Syria so trade could resume;
- Set up the new Mosul newspaper;
- Paid government workers;
- Re-established train service;
- Established Task Force Neighborhood and Task Force Graffiti and helped clean up the city; Task Force Pothole employs Iraqis and improves the roads;
- Conducted joint police patrols;
- Began training a new police force;
- Diplomatically removed Peshmerga forces from disputed areas to back above the green line;
- Average 300 day, 300 night, and 90 joint sector security patrols (U.S. with local police); and have established air and ground quick reaction forces to respond to Baathist attacks.
- They are currently supporting 10 major CPA funded reconstruction projects.

General Petraeus said they have invested in water, electricity, roads, schools, hospitals, banks, agriculture, summer youth leagues, community swimming pools, orphanages, and kids amusement park projects. He believes there are reasons for continued optimism in the north. They include: the quality of interim government leadership; citizen trust and confidence in Coalition forces; a good university and school system; functioning food and fuel distribution systems; access to trade with Turkey and Syria; relatively good infrastructure; natural resources (water, oil, farm land); growth of small businesses; educated, hard-working, entrepreneurial populace; and as the locals have said, there is a “thirst for democracy.”

Center (4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division): General Ray Odierno has a more difficult security challenge in the predominately Sunni areas and in areas close to the Iranian border. He understands the nature of the Baathist and foreign terrorist threat and how that interacts with and affects his civil-military programs. He said they have incredible tactical intelligence on the reactionary cells and are making solid progress in defeating this threat. He cites Operation Peninsula, Operation Sidewinder, and Operation Soda Mountain as effective in rooting out these forces. He said as we capture or kill the foot soldiers, it is becoming increasingly more difficult for the mid-level Baathist financiers to organize, recruit and maintain an effective force.

As he deals more and more effectively with the Baathist forces, he too has been able to complete an impressive array of civil-military projects in his area of responsibility. As in the north and south, they have established Battalion Commander

“safe houses” throughout Kirkuk to more effectively interact with the population. They have stood up and are training a police force. An interim Governing Council has been established whose members are reportedly working effectively together—and, like in the north, are multi-ethnic. And three are women. In two weeks Council members will be taking phone-in callers on local radio shows. Contractors are busy repairing the oil infrastructure in the Kirkuk oil fields. And the Badr Corps influence has calmed down considerably.

My meeting with the Kirkuk Interim Governing Council members was perhaps the most heartening of all. Many of the 18 members spoke of their gratitude to President Bush and our troops for their liberation. The word “liberation” was used repeatedly by the members. An Arab member spoke eloquently of the need to return Kurdish property to their rightful owners. “All Iraqis were victims of the last regime,” he said. Others spoke of American troops working with us “in a nice way to help solve our problems,” that “doors are always open to us” and that “we found out the Americans are our brothers who came as liberators not as conquerors.”

One member said: “Please tell President Bush thank you for his courageous decision to liberate Iraq. Many American soldiers have volunteered their lives [for liberation].” The Turcoman member asked that I convey to President Bush the Turcoman communities thanks for liberation. Another member commended the “tireless efforts of General Odierno and his army” in helping the Iraqi people. And finally, a member, speaking English, asked me when the U.S. government was going to “confront Arab television for their incitement to kill Americans?” Obviously, he pointed to another challenge we must face.

\* \* \*

Mr. Chairman, you recently said that our victory in Iraq will be based on the “kind of country we leave behind.” Just 89 days after the end of major combat operations, our forces and their coalition partners are making significant progress in helping Iraqis build the kind of country that will reflect their enormous talents and resources, and that they can be proud of one day.

### **Resources to Get this Job Done**

Getting rid of the Hussein regime for good is not only in the interest of the newly liberated Iraqi people, it enhances the security of Americans and of people throughout the Middle East. We will not conclude our efforts until the Baathist regime is dead, and the Iraqi people have begun to build an Iraq that is whole, free, and at peace with itself and its neighbors. To those who question American resolve and determination, I would remind them that we are still playing a crucial role in Bosnia eight years after the Dayton Accord, long after we predicted we would be gone. And we continue to be the key to stability in Kosovo and in Macedonia. But the stakes in Iraq for us are even greater than