



IRAQ REVISITED

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I just returned from spending three days and two nights (December 4-6) in Iraq. This was my second trip to the country this year. Like my first trip in May, I was the guest of a non-governmental organization (NGO).

Rep. Chris Shays (R—CT) accompanied me on the trip. This was his third trip to Iraq. Between the two of us, we have spent 14 days in Iraq this year and have visited the following places: Al Alamarah, Babylon, Baghdad, Al Basrah, Al Hillah, Al Kut, Mosul, Al Nasiriyah, Tikrit and Um Qusr.

We have met and talked with dozens of ordinary Iraqis during the course of our visits. In addition, we have met with representatives from several NGOs helping to rebuild Iraq and have had both on- and off-the-record conversations with military personnel and other government officials serving in and around these areas. We are extremely grateful to everyone who has helped make these trips possible.

As far as we know, no other members of Congress have spent a night in Iraq or have had the access to the people and places we have. We both believe this access has helped give us a better understanding of the daunting task before us. We also believe that staying overnight in places like Iraq—and the other countries our congressional travels have taken us through the years—gives us more of an unvarnished look into the daily life of a country and its people. That is why we often choose to make these trips with NGOs, and without military escorts.

Before going into the details of our trip, I want to express my sincere thanks to all the members of the U.S. military serving in Iraq. They are still very much in harm's



Life is getting back to normal for Iraqis living in towns like Al Kut.

way and are doing a tremendous job under very difficult circumstances. Their families here in the United States also deserve our thanks. They, too, continue to make tremendous sacrifices, and I know every family that has a husband or wife, dad or mom, or son or daughter serving in Iraq worries every day about the safety of their loved ones.

My heartfelt sympathy goes to all the families who have lost loved ones or whose family members have been severely injured during the war. We will never forget—and will always be grateful for—their service to the cause of freedom and the war against terrorism.

The civilians serving in Iraq—whether with the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), the State Department, the FBI or one of the many contractors helping support our troops or rebuild Iraq—also are doing an outstanding job. During my most recent trip I had a chance to talk with a range of civilians, from Ambassador L. Paul Bremer III to those who are helping feed our troops in Baghdad to the men and women at Baghdad International

Airport providing security. They are all to be commended. Their living conditions are less than ideal—400 civilians sleep on bunk beds set up only a few feet apart in the grand ballroom of Saddam Hussein's main palace in Baghdad—yet their spirits are high. All of the civilians I talked to volunteered to go to Iraq, some for up to a year.

I recognize there were good and reasonable people on both sides of the decision to send U.S. armed forces to Iraq. But whether or not you agreed with that decision, we are there and cannot just walk away. Too much is at stake.

The president and his administration are correct when they say we must remain steadfast. The war on terrorism is long from over; I am doubtful it will end in my lifetime. It is important that we not underestimate what we are facing. A book published this summer titled, *Through Our Enemies' Eyes, Osama bin Laden, Radical Islam, and the Future of America*, is a riveting account of what the world is up against. Written by an anonymous author who is a senior U.S. intelligence

official with extensive knowledge of the Middle East, the book provides a chilling look at Islamic extremists, often using the terrorists' own words. Osama bin Laden, himself, is quoted extensively. Consider this excerpt from the book:

Bin Laden has claimed that the United States has waged "a war against Muslims" since 1945, and that he and his allies "are only striving to give it a fitting reply." A senior Egyptian Islamist has said that bin Laden intends to incite "guerrilla warfare against Israeli and American interests not only in Arab and Muslim countries but everywhere in the world." And the literature suggests the al Qaeda forces he has created will continue to attack U.S. interests at home and abroad and will use the weapons they have at hand or can acquire, be they daggers, Kalashnikovs, car bombs, or chemical-biological weapons.

The forces of bin Laden, then, are waging war on America in God's name; they have made it clear that their goal is not a tactical one of inflicting pain, but the strategic one of defeating the United States in the same way in which the USSR suffered humiliation at the hands of the Afghan and Arab mujahedin in Afghanistan.

Later in the book, the author asserts that "the weapons most sought by bin Laden, and those his foes most fear he will acquire, are either off-the-shelf chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear weapons, or their components."

No one knows how long it will take for the world to win the war on terror. Note that I said the world. This war is not just America's fight. It is the world's. Here is a sampling of attacks around the globe in just the last few months alone where innocent civilians have perished at the hands of terrorists:

- **Turkey, November 20:** 27 people killed and nearly 450 wounded when suicide truck bombs exploded at a London-based bank and

the British consulate.

- **Turkey, November 15:** 25 people killed and 300 injured when two car bombs are detonated in front of a synagogue in Istanbul.
- **Saudi Arabia, November 8:** 18 people killed when a bomb destroyed an apartment building occupied by foreigners in Riyadh.
- **Israel, October 4:** 20 people killed when a suicide bomber blew herself up in a restaurant in Haifa.
- **Indonesia, August 5:** 12 people killed when a car bomb exploded near the Marriott Hotel in Jakarta.
- **Morocco, May 16:** 45 people killed in an almost simultaneous series of attacks in Casablanca.
- **Saudi Arabia, May 12:** 35 people, including nine Americans, killed during a series of blasts in Riyadh.

Who knows who will be next?

REASON FOR TRIP

I thought it was important to return to Iraq to see what progress has been made since I was there over Memorial Day weekend.

Security remains the top priority. Iraq is far from being safe. That was made clear from the outset when the charter plane we flew into the country had to make a corkscrew-pattern landing rather than a typical descent.

Many Iraqis we talked with during the trip said they are still afraid to go out after sunset. I heard random gunfire both nights I spent in Al Kut. The NGO staff I was staying with said gunfire and explosions after dark were commonplace. They also said that the recent random attacks outside the Sunni Triangle

have left them feeling like the security situation around them was deteriorating. One of their staff members was car jacked on the way back from Kuwait the day before we arrived.

We were aware of reports that Saddam Hussein had huge weapons caches scattered throughout the country, but it was interesting to learn that the locals were well aware of them and raided them after Saddam's troops and guards abandoned their posts. Consequently, the towns and countryside are filled with all sorts of weapons, including rocket propelled grenades and AK47s. We heard conflicting information about the CPA's efforts to buy back some of these weapons.

Until the security situation is completely under control in Iraq, our efforts to rebuild the country will be severely hampered. Case in point: an article in the December 6-12, 2003, issue of *The Economist* reports that "very few of the 1,200-odd people in the ruling Coalition Provisional Authority dare walk around Baghdad, getting to know the people and offering reassurance. Instead, they are cocooned in an array of grandiose buildings behind a massive web of concrete blocks, barricades and barbed wire in a so-called Green Zone, which they rarely leave unescorted."

We were told that when officials from USAID or other government officials visit projects in towns or villages, they arrive in armored Chevrolet Suburbans and with a military escort. Our trip back to the airport from the CPA headquarters in Baghdad required driving along a stretch of road referred to as "ambush alley." Our vehicles passed along the roadway at a very high rate of speed.

We arrived in Baghdad on Thursday, December 4—our flight origi-

nated in Jordan—and immediately drove southeast to Al Kut, which is in the Shia heartland and a little more than a two-hour drive from the capital city. We rode in old beat-up vehicles for security reasons. Just getting out of Baghdad was difficult because of traffic tie-ups. Few, if any, drivers obey traffic signals in Iraq and there were no police to direct traffic through intersections. At one intersection, we were blocked on all sides and could not move in any direction. After about five minutes of literally being “parked” in the middle of the intersection, several men got out of their cars and took it upon themselves to get traffic moving again.

During our visit we met with a number of ordinary Iraqis. We were welcomed into their homes and villages with open arms. None of them knew that either I or Rep. Shays was a member of Congress. All of them expressed their gratitude to the United States for removing Saddam from power. There

were times, however, when resentment toward America did seep out. Some said they felt like the United States abandoned them following the first Gulf War. A prominent religious sheikh we met in Al Kut told us that while he has no ill will toward the people of America, he is concerned by the policies of our government.

We also visited three schools. The first, a school for girls ages 9-14 in Al Kut, was by far the best. It had desks, blackboards and was well lighted. The walls looked recently painted. While there were no ceiling fans or air conditioning, it provided a much better learning environment than the two other schools we visited in villages outside of Al Kut. It was interesting to learn that the Baathists would often require the 700 girls at the Zarqae Al-Yamama Secondary School for Girls—and students from the other schools in Al Kut—to attend political rallies during school hours to increase the size of the crowd. That

no longer happens.

The other two schools were in such poor condition that they were being replaced. At the first village we visited, the old school, a mud building, had already been leveled. We were told learning was next to impossible at the school, especially in the extreme heat of the day. Its replacement is much larger and has windows.

The school being built in the second village we visited is going to be a vast improvement over the existing building. The classrooms in the existing school building are small and dark. The roof leaked and the walls were stained from water and mud. Classes were cancelled any time it rained because of the leaks.

Both schools are being built with the help of an NGO and the financial backing of USAID. All of the NGO's projects require a “community match” of at least 15 percent of the cost of the project. This match can come in the form of land or sweat equity. The benefit to the



I attended a traditional Iraqi wedding while in Al Kut. There are separate feasts for the men and the women. Left, two men partake in their feast. Center, tables set end-to-end stretching about 30 yards were covered with plates of lamb, vegetables, rice and flat bread. Right, the bride and groom.

community, or in these two cases, villages, is pride in ownership.

At both school sites we had the opportunity to meet with the local sheikh—the most revered man in the village whose leadership authority is passed through the same family generation after generation—and several of the men in the village. We were invited into their homes and the welcome we received was warm and genuine.

We also visited a neighborhood in Al Kut where an NGO worked with the community to fill in what was once a garbage dump and de-facto collecting point for raw sewage. The area was drained, and new soil was brought in and leveled. The goal is to make the area a playground.

We were told the sewage was about a meter deep before it was removed.

We also were told the children in the neighborhood were often sick and rarely played outside because of the smell.

There is a concern that if a reliable system of collecting trash in the neighborhood is not quickly

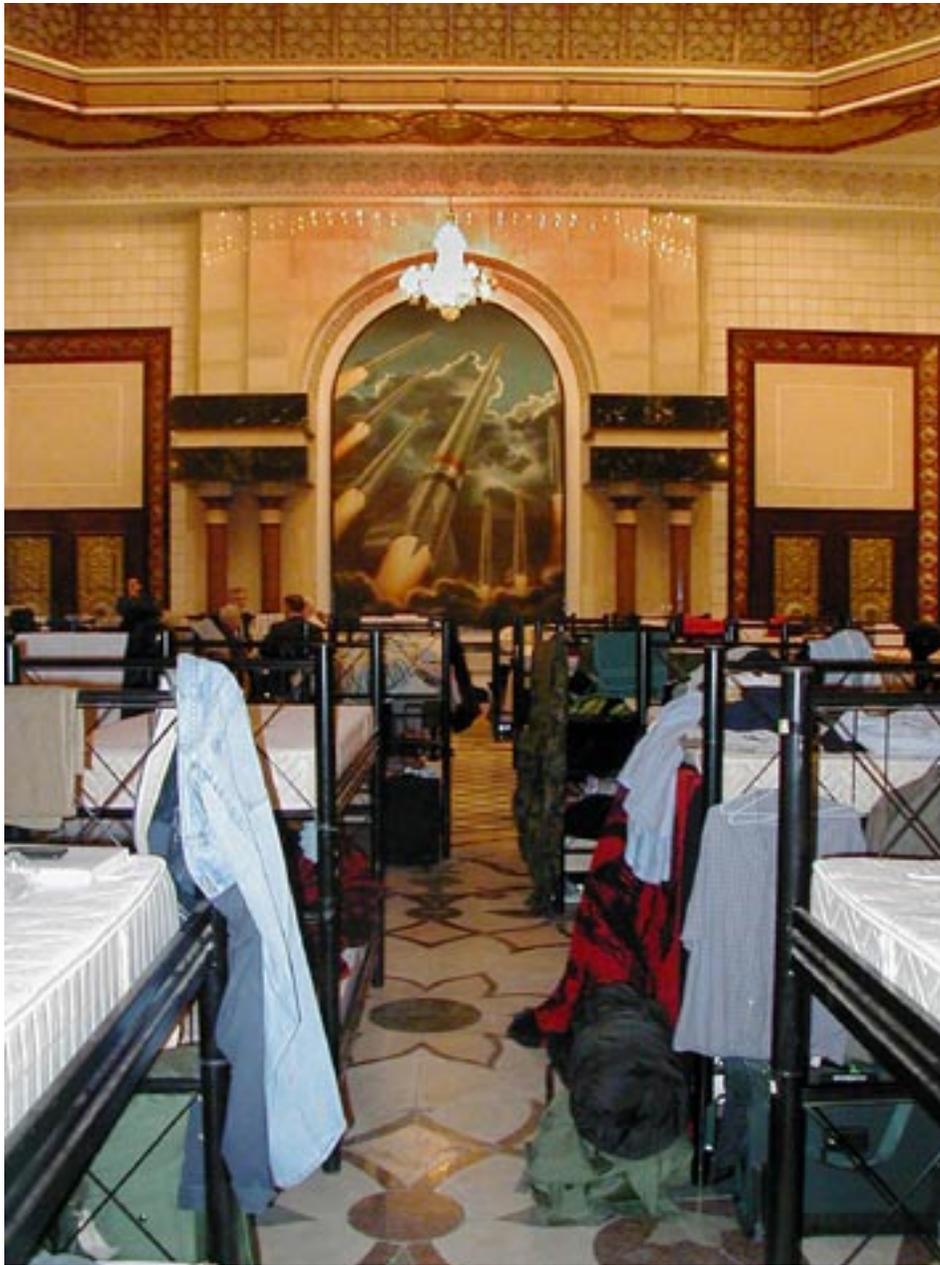
implemented, the plot of land will revert back to a dumping ground. Iraqis do not have trash service. Most just throw their garbage out into the street. Many in our country have been critical of our govern-

with CPA officials serving in the area and with a group of four Army MPs from a reserve unit out of Germantown, Maryland. All four of the MPs have been called up multiple times in the past three years to serve.

They and their families deserve our thanks and appreciation for the sacrifices they have made.

The CPA officials working in Al Kut were upbeat and very optimistic about the future of Iraq. They are working on several projects, with the refurbishing of schools being one of the top priorities. They said 40 schools in Al Kut are in the process of being renovated. They, too, are working to solve the trash and sewage problem, including repairing and unclogging the “canal system” that runs through the town. There are no sewers in Al Kut.

All the sewage runs through these “canals”—essentially the middle or side of the street—into the nearby river. Pools of standing water—called black water—are commonplace. Trash was often floating on the top or near the edge of the standing water.



Some 400 civilians sleep in bunk beds in the grand ballroom of Saddam's main palace in Baghdad. Note the painting of missiles on the wall.

ment spending U.S. tax dollars to purchase trash trucks. Not only does Iraq need trash trucks, it needs trash dumpsters. Trash is strewn all along the streets and is clearly a breeding ground for disease.

While in Al Kut we also met

The CPA officials acknowledged that rebuilding Iraq was going to take a considerable amount of time and hard work. Aside from the security issues, they said another major stumbling block will be getting the Iraqi people to trust each other. The Iraqis have been oppressed for so long—and were so fearful of speaking out against Saddam or the Baathist Party—that they have absolutely no faith in each other.

Corruption, CPA officials said, is another problem. Again, because government corruption was so commonplace under Saddam, the problem is now endemic. We were told that for many Iraqis, lining their own pockets was the first priority.

One of the interesting aspects of the trip was the opportunity to attend an Iraqi wedding feast. It was held in an alley in an Al Kut neighborhood. Light bulbs were strung across the alley to provide light. Tables set end-to-end stretching about 30 yards were covered with plates of lamb, vegetables, rice and flat bread. At the appointed hour the groom motioned for the hundreds of men and boys gathered in the alley to come forward and partake in the feast. While the feast was going on, the bride was in a nearby house with all the women and young girls in the community.

After the meal, the groom was escorted to where the bride was staying. Only the groom went into the house. A few moments later both emerged to a waiting car. As the couple was about to drive away, one of the men in the crowd fired off several rounds from his automatic rifle into the sky. All the men then walked behind the car to the home where the couple were to spend the night. The men followed the bride and groom into the house—the bride quickly disappeared—and



Rep. Chris Shays (R—CT), left, and I met with a local governing sheikh and several men in a village outside of Al Kut.

toasted the groom with songs and chants for about 15 minutes.

On Saturday, December 6, we left Al Kut at daybreak to head back to Baghdad. Again, we rode in old, beat-up cars. In Baghdad, we met with Ambassador Bremer, the head of the CPA; British Ambassador Sir Jeremy Greenstock, Great Britain's

top official in Iraq, and senior U.S. and British military officials. We also met with FBI agents detailed to Iraq and with the senior adviser to the Iraqi Ministry of Strategic Communications. This office is responsible for putting together the radio and television broadcasts to provide news and commentary to the Iraqi people as part of the public diplomacy effort to win their hearts and minds. All these meetings were held at CPA headquarters, formerly Saddam's main palace in Baghdad.

Ambassador Bremer told us that the coalition had made "enormous progress in essential services," such as restoring electricity, rebuilding roads and opening hospitals. He also said turning over power to the Iraqi people on July 1, 2004, will be a huge step forward. While acknowledging much more was yet to be done, he stressed that the president, the administration and the coalition were committed to rebuilding Iraq.

Speaking to the issue of local corruption, he said an Office of Public Integrity would soon be established and would be funded for five years to ensure that it can effectively deal with the problem.



The future of Iraq will depend on the success of the reconstruction.

During the course of our briefings we were told both the military and the FBI were making progress in capturing and detaining individuals suspected of trying to undermine the efforts of the coalition, whether by helping make or plant the improvised explosive devices (IEDs) that are being used to blow up U.S. military convoys or tearing down power lines to steal the copper wire for cash. We also were told they are developing new “sources” of information on a daily basis. For example, we were told four young Iraqi girls recently turned in their parents for making IEDs. The girls are now living in a safe house somewhere in the country.

I do believe we are making some progress in Iraq. It is not going as fast or as smoothly as everyone would like, but comparing what I saw in May with my observations on this recent trip, things are moving in the right direction.

While security remains a very real and serious problem, electricity has been restored to pre-war levels and other infrastructure improvements, such as repairing roads and telecommunication lines, are progressing. Schools are being rebuilt and health care is steadily improving. Life for the average Iraqi seems to be getting back to normal and every Iraqi I talked with said life was better now than under Saddam.

I cannot stress enough, however, that the rebuilding of Iraq is going to be a long and arduous process. Patience is a must. While I wish we had gotten off to a faster start, that is now in the past; belaboring the point does no good. Too much is at stake for the United States, the world, and the Iraqi people to be debating the past. We must move forward, focusing on being successful.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations are based on my observations and conversations with people I met during the course of my visit and from discussions I have had with people inside and outside of the U.S. government over the last several months.

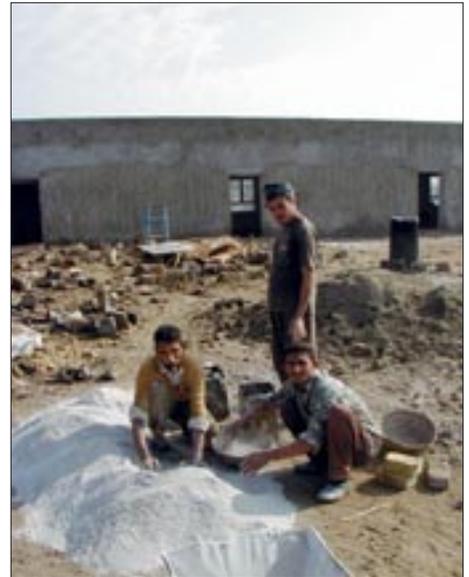
EXPAND THE COALITION

The coalition in the war on terror must be expanded. It is imperative that more nations be involved. This fight is not just America's. In just the last few months alone, dozens of innocent people—young children, brothers, sisters, mothers, fathers, grandparents—around the globe have been the target of deadly terrorist attacks.

No one anywhere in the world should think they are immune from a terrorist attack. Terrorism is a worldwide evil. Until 9/11, Americans never really thought terrorism would reach our shores. It did, the results were tragic and it changed us forever.

The first attacks against Americans, however, date back to 1983 when 241 Marines were killed when their barracks in Lebanon were bombed. Other attacks against Americans include the bombing of the Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia in 1996, the embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998 and the attack on the USS Cole in Yemen in 2000.

People who follow and track terrorists movements are confident there will be another attempted attack on America. The only question is when. But America is not alone in being a target. Every day the news is filled with stories and images of terrorists' brutal and homicidal attacks on those they despise. Innocent people will be injured or killed at the hands of terrorists before this war is won.



Iraqis are rebuilding schools that were neglected by Saddam.

INTERNATIONALIZE EFFORT

The effort to rebuild Iraq must be expanded. The administration needs to redouble its efforts to internationalize the reconstruction. Failure cannot be an option. More countries need to provide financial assistance and other resources to help rebuild Iraq. The American people—and the world—have to understand, however, that rebuilding Iraq is going to take time and require patience.

Iraq is not struggling to rebuild itself due to damage inflicted by the coalition forces. It is struggling because of 30-plus years of oppressive rule at the hands of Saddam Hussein. Saddam and his two sons, Uday and Qusay, lived in the lap of luxury in grand palaces that had swimming pools, tennis courts and private hunting preserves while the average Iraqi lived in squalor. Much of the “Oil for Food” money that went to Iraq following the first Gulf War was used to build grand palaces and on other extravagances for Saddam and his sons. Very little went to feed the Iraqi people or to provide adequate health care. Moreover, following the first war,

Saddam went out of his way to make life as miserable as possible in towns like Al Kut as punishment for attempting to challenge his authority.

I am concerned, however, that many Iraqis are waiting for the “government” of the United States to sweep in and “fix” all that is broken in Iraq. Clearly, an over dependence on “government” persists in Iraq. I think this is born out of the oppressed socialist society to which the people are so accustomed. Saddam clearly damaged the psyche of the Iraqi people. Changing this approach will take time. That is why it is important for the Iraqi people to have a role—and a stake—in the rebuilding of their country.

ALLIED LAW ENFORCEMENT

The administration should push for the creation of an alliance for law enforcement that is modeled after the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. This would allow for the FBI and its counterparts around the globe to work hand-in-hand and more easily share information about potential terrorists and terrorist threats. Such an effort could be headquartered in Europe with the existing NATO headquarters. The more countries—and law enforcement agencies—working multilaterally to track and/or apprehend terrorists the better.

Since the end of World War II, NATO military forces have worked together in close cooperation. These coordinated efforts helped defeat communism and continue to play a crucial role in the Balkans and other areas around the world. In Baghdad, we received a dual briefing from an American general and a British general at the headquarters of the coalition forces. The two generals sat side-by-side and were almost able to finish each other's

sentences. Their respect for each other and the level of coordination between them and their respective forces was obvious. Shouldn't the same level of cooperation exist between the world's law enforcement agencies which have a critical role in the war against terrorism?

An article in the December 6-7 edition of the *International Herald Tribune* makes a strong case supporting the need for this type of alliance. The following are the first five paragraphs of the story:

MILAN: A string of recent arrests of terror suspects has shown that al Qaeda and groups linked to it have established a Europe-wide network that is moving recruits into Iraq to join the insurgency targeting American and coalition forces, European intelligence agents said this week.

Over the past year, the officials estimate, the network of recruiters working in at least six European countries—Italy, Germany, France, Spain, Britain and Norway—has assisted hundreds of young men trying to get to Iraq.

The network provided high-quality fake documents, training, money and infiltration routes into the country, the officials said.

They said the evidence indicated that the campaign to recruit young militant Muslims for Iraq had become better organized and coordinated in recent months.

According to an investigating judge in Italy, the new network is building on an underground that helped smuggle fighters out of Afghanistan and Pakistan in the autumn of 2001, when Taliban and al Qaeda forces were routed by the American-led coalition of troops. But since the end of last year, the flow of recruits, including young men from Europe and North Africa, has turned toward the new front in Iraq, the judge said.

Cooperation among law enforcement agencies is a key piece of the puzzle to winning the war on terror. Prior to 9/11, the FBI, CIA and

DIA did not readily need to share information because of their varying missions. However, information sharing will be key to success in the post 9/11 atmosphere. With the creation of the Terrorist Threat Integration Center, the FBI, CIA, DIA and Department of Homeland Security are now better able to share information and analysis, thus tightening the noose on terror.

Ideally, this new international law enforcement structure would work to create a similar environment to share information. Like the two generals mentioned above, imagine senior FBI agents working side-by-side with Scotland Yard or Germany's Bundeskriminalamt.

ARAB-ISRAELI ISSUE LINK

The secretary of State should appoint a special envoy to focus like a laser beam on the Arab-Israeli issue in the Middle East.

Solving the Middle East issue, I believe, is directly linked to winning the war on terror. Some say it would go toward solving 25 percent of the problem, others say 50 percent. Whatever the percentage, no one doubts that it is linked to the success of the battle. Ask the question today about who is the “lead person” in the State Department on this issue and no one can say.

The person appointed as a special envoy should be of great stature—and have the ear of the secretary. Two names immediately come to mind: former President George H. W. Bush or former Secretary of State George Schultz. I am sure there are others with equal stature; former ambassadors or senior officials in previous administrations. Whoever is appointed should do nothing but work to resolve this issue.

Former Senator George Mitch-

ell clearly made a difference in resolving the situation in northern Ireland. Former Senator John Danforth appears to be having similar success in Sudan—a preliminary peace accord was signed between the government of Khartoum and the SPLA in the south last week. Solving the Arab-Israeli issue is a tall order, but is it an effort worth undertaking. Both sides of the issue want to live in peace. The senseless violence that has claimed so many lives must come to an end. To date, nothing else has worked. Based on the successes of northern Ireland and Sudan, what would be the downside to making such an appointment?

AUDIT OF U.S. EFFORTS

The administration should consider an audit of its efforts in Iraq and in the war on terror. A team from outside the administration in whom the president has confidence should go to Iraq in January to examine our efforts to date. A number of things should be examined, such as:

- What are the major challenges still facing us in Iraq?
- How is the military effort going? Do we have the right mix of soldiers in the theater and what are we doing to change the perception that we can defeat conventional forces, but cannot deal with paramilitary and guerrilla forces?
- Do our soldiers have the necessary equipment to do the job they are being asked to do?
- Are the thousands of reservists and National Guardsmen serving in the country receiving the same benefits and access as active duty soldiers?

- Are we winning the hearts and minds of the Iraqi people?
- Are enough schools being rebuilt?
- Is adequate health care being provided?
- Are the American contractors who have been brought in to repair Iraq's infrastructure making progress?
- Is there a system in place to prevent corruption?
- Are there proper checks and balances to ensure that America's tax dollars are not being wasted?
- Are the television and radio programs produced by the CPA and paid for by the United States being watched or listened to, and if so is the message the right one?
- How are our efforts to bring local governance to Iraq going?
- What is being done to ensure religious freedom for all individuals in the new Iraq constitution?
- Should U.S. civil servants detailed to the CPA be posted for longer terms?
- What happens June 30, 2004, when CPA dissolves? Who runs and advises in Iraq? What will be the role of security forces?

This team of auditors could be split into three groups: one to look at the Kurdish areas in the north; one to report on the Sunni areas around Baghdad; and one to examine the Shia-dominated south. The group should be prepared to provide a candid assessment of our efforts. While our efforts to rebuild Iraq have only just begun, it will be much easier to correct any mistakes



Too much is at stake for the United States to fail in Iraq.

or alter any strategies earlier rather than later.

In all candor, mistakes have been made and time has been lost because the plan for rebuilding Iraq was not properly vetted before the hostilities began. There were no plans for protecting vital infrastructure or valuable historic sites in the country. The CPA was slow in getting up and running. The NGO community was slow in responding for a wide variety of reasons. Everyone makes mistakes. The key is whether we learn from them.

OUTSIDE EXPERTS INSIGHT

The administration should bring in a group of outside experts and scholars on the Middle East, Islam and terrorism to sit down with the president and other high-level administration officials to have a frank, off-the-record discussion on the potential roadblocks and solutions to rebuilding Iraq and Afghanistan and all aspects of the war on terrorism.

I am confident the administration has the best of its best working

the issue. Nevertheless, it is always good to get a second opinion. We all do it in our everyday lives so I am asking that the Administration seek an outside opinion on this very important issue. These experts could provide insight on what they think motivates our enemies. Below is a list of some people who could be considered to provide this counsel:

- Professor Samuel Huntington, Harvard University
- Professor Ruth Wedgwood, Johns Hopkins University
- Dr. Bernard Lewis, professor emeritus, Princeton University
- Professor Stephen Biddle, U.S. Army War College
- Larry Goodson, U.S. Army War College
- Bruce Hoffman, senior terrorism analyst with the Rand Corporation
- Robert Kaplan, author and foreign correspondent for *Atlantic Monthly*
- Peter Bergen, author and terrorism analyst for CNN and *Vanity Fair*
- Mark Helprin, novelist and editorial board member for *The Wall Street Journal*
- Professor Daniel Byman, Georgetown University
- Professor Richard Norton, Boston University
- Professor Jessica Stern, Harvard University
- Ralph Peters, retired, U.S. Army
- Robert Steele, Open Source Solutions
- Tony Cordesman, CSIS

PUBLIC DIPLOMACY POST

A cabinet-level counselor to the president for public diplomacy should be created as recommended by the Advisory Group on Public Diplomacy for



These two Iraqi women are teachers at the Zarqae Al-Yamama Secondary School for Girls in Al Kut. Some 700 girls, ages 9 - 14, attend.

the Arab and Muslim World.

Among the numerous recommendations included in the recently released report by the Advisory Group on Public Diplomacy for the Arab and Muslim World—established by the FY 2003 Commerce-Justice-State Appropriations bill at my urging and chaired by Ambassador Ed Djerejian, former ambassador to Syria and Israel—is the creation of a cabinet-level counselor to the president for public diplomacy. At the height of Cold War diplomacy, there was a person in each administration who had the president's ear on public diplomacy issues: Edward R. Murrow with President Kennedy; Leonard Marks with President Johnson; and Charlie Wick with President Reagan. I urge the president to appoint such a counselor by Executive Order. Clearly, this person would be someone with whom the president has great faith and could share candid opinions and advice.

In addition to serving as the pres-

ident's special counselor, this person would chair a board of experts from outside of government to provide strategic analysis to the White House on both broad themes and short-term issues concerning U.S. communications abroad. This group would be somewhat analogous to the long-established Presidential Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board (PFIAB), which performs the critical function of auditing the intelligence community to assess the quality of its work and the level of internal cooperation among its various agencies. Like PFIAB, the proposed board of experts on public diplomacy and communications would meet twice a year with the president. The experts would serve on a temporary basis thereby allowing flexibility in the group's composition as it addresses any future challenges.

I believe we are losing the battle of ideas and perceptions regarding our intentions and actions abroad, not just in Muslim societies, but across the world. Two great Re-

publican presidents, Eisenhower and Reagan, constantly emphasized during our successful Cold War fight that, ultimately, the “perceptions” dimension of that struggle would be the decisive one. We must take a page from their book and the highly successful experience of the Cold War. The war on terror needs to be won abroad and at home.

AN IRAQI AS SPOKESPERSON

An Iraqi should be hired to serve as the primary spokesperson for the CPA.

The spokesperson conveying information about the efforts to rebuild Iraq should be an Iraqi. The average Iraqi is more inclined to identify with an Iraqi than a foreigner. An Iraqi spokesperson also will better understand the idioms and nuances of the culture.

WEAPONS BUYBACK

In order to improve security and stem attacks on coalition forces, a more aggressive effort should be mounted to secure or buy back weapons.

Regional CPA officials need greater authority to purchase the smaller caliber weapons being used to attack coalition forces, including AK47s and rocket propelled grenades.

OPEN TO NEW IDEAS

Finally, as we continue to approach all the issues surrounding the rebuilding of Iraq and the war on terror, I urge the administration to be open to outside ideas and practice more humility.

In Matthew 23:12 it says that “for whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.” I hope I am making this recommendation in the right spirit and am heeding my own advice. I care deeply about our



All of the Iraqis we met like these men expressed their gratitude to the United States for liberating them from Saddam Hussein’s long reign of terror. We were welcomed into their villages with open arms.

country, and I care deeply about the administration. I want the United States to be successful in the war on terror, in Iraq, and in Afghanistan.

CLOSING REMARKS

In closing, I want to thank all those who helped make my trip possible. For security reasons I cannot mention people by name, but I am forever grateful for their assistance.

I also want to thank all the NGOs who continue to provide humanitarian assistance in Iraq. The people who work and volunteer for these organizations are extremely dedicated. They work long hours and give up the many comforts of home to serve others, often in very dangerous places around the globe, like Iraq and Afghanistan. They are a special breed and deserve our thanks and praise.

Finally, I want to thank several members of my staff for their help in putting together this report. Dan

Scandling, my chief of staff, accompanied me on the trip, helped write this report and served as photographer; Janet Shaffron, my legislative director, edited the report; Samantha Stockman and Stuart Mallory also contributed. Colin Samples did the layout and design.

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Congressman Frank Wolf represents Virginia’s 10th District in the U.S. House of Representatives. He is the chairman of the Commerce-Justice-State Appropriations subcommittee and the co-chairman of the Congressional Human Rights Caucus. A copy of Rep. Wolf’s report from his first trip to Iraq in May is available online at: <http://www.house.gov/wolf>